TOWN, COUNTY AND REGION: SPATIAL INTEGRATION IN THE EAST MIDLANDS, 1700-1830

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Claire Townsend

School of Historical Studies

University of Leicester

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Abstract

Town, county and region: spatial integration in the East Midlands, 1700-1830

Claire Townsend

This thesis investigates the nature of spatial integration in the East Midlands in the long eighteenth century, assessing the relative importance of different scales of interaction between people and institutions – from the most localised, intra-urban scale, to the county, regional and national scales. In contrast to the historiographical picture of the emergence of distinct, internally integrated regions in eighteenth-century England, the East Midlands was an ill-defined, incoherent space, within and across which multiple layers of spatial interaction co-existed. Whilst intra-regional interaction appears to have been dominant in regions such as the North West and West Midlands, in the East Midlands, both more localised and more extensive (extra-regional) connections were more common.

The thesis adopts an explicitly spatial frame of reference, drawing on Lefebvre's 'triad', and thus being based on the premise that spaces were shaped by the conceptions of outsiders, the attitudes and perceptions of their inhabitants, and, most importantly, the practices of individuals within those spaces. Several types of spatial practice are considered, covering economic, social, political and cultural activity, and relating to a spectrum of social groups. The space-economy of the hosiery industry is reconstructed through an analysis of different factors of production, and the nature of the transport network with which these production processes were associated. The influence of the county – as both an administrative and socio-cultural reality and an imagined community – is also discussed. Patterns of migration and the socio-spatial features of will-making illustrate the spatial scales at which social and economic life most commonly operated in the East Midlands.

Thus, the thesis demonstrates the complexity of regional development in this period, concluding that, in the East Midlands, the most localised scales of spatial interaction were of greater importance than the regional in structuring the lives of its inhabitants. This apparent lack of region-wide integration can be explained, firstly, by the unusual dominance of three county towns at the head of weak county urban networks, and secondly, by the persistence of a proto-industrial structure in the East Midlands' staple hosiery industry.
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## Abbreviations

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<td>D.R.O</td>
<td>Derbyshire Record Office</td>
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<td>L.J.R.O</td>
<td>Lichfield Joint Record Office</td>
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<td>Notts Archives</td>
<td>Nottinghamshire Archives</td>
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<td>PCC</td>
<td>Prerogative Court of Canterbury</td>
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<tr>
<td>ROLLR</td>
<td>Record Office for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland</td>
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<td>TNA</td>
<td>The National Archive</td>
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<tr>
<td>UBD</td>
<td>Universal British Directory of Trade and Commerce</td>
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<td>VCH</td>
<td>Victoria County History</td>
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Introduction

In January 2004 the East Midlands made a rare appearance in the national press. A storm of controversy had erupted over the decision to rename East Midlands Airport. Reports in The Guardian on January 20th and 21st recorded:

The east Midlands was in uproar yesterday, with delight in Nottingham and disappointment in Leicester and Derby. The fragile unity of the region has been undermined by the rebranding of the area’s airport...The airport’s managing director, Graham Keddie, confirmed that the destination will now be known as Nottingham East Midlands airport. The move follows a year-long lobbying campaign by low-cost carrier Bmibaby, which claimed the airport’s old name left potential visitors — especially those from abroad — with little or no concept of where they might be travelling to...

“Nottingham is the only city in the region that is widely known [said Mr Keddie]. We conducted months of research, including talking to passengers from overseas...I’m afraid Leicester and Derby just didn’t register.”...But hopes that the change will lead to new clarity may not translate into reality. The newly named Nottingham EMA is located not in Nottinghamshire but in Leicestershire, it has a Derbyshire postal address and its phone number uses the Derby dialling code...Roger Blackmore, the leader of Leicester city council, said the city would resent the name change and the way in which people felt one airline had pushed it through...Maurice Burgess, the disgruntled leader of Derby council, said local people would boycott the misnamed airport and take their custom to Birmingham or even Manchester and Humberside instead.¹

Though this controversy arose around two centuries after the period with which this study is concerned, it highlights a number of features of the East Midlands which were of importance in that earlier period also, and which will be explored in this thesis. Most tellingly, perhaps, it demonstrates a continued debate over exactly what and where the East Midlands is. Regions have been described as geographical expressions or cultural constructions² but the East Midlands appears to have been subject to a greater

² S. Daniels, ‘Inventing the East Midlands’, East Midland Geographer, 17 (1994), 3; E. J. Hobsbawm and T. Ranger (eds), The Invention of Tradition (Cambridge, 1983); S. Daniels, Fields of Vision: Landscape
variety of definitions than most. Many of these definitions have been imposed by outsiders, whose notions of a particular space do not always run in tandem with the experience of its inhabitants. In the case of the East Midlands, the naming of its airport had been the responsibility of planners and developers, while the decision to rename it was prompted by fears of falling incomes from tourism because visitors were unaware or unsure of the location of the East Midlands. This raises questions about the symbolism and meaning of places and regions. How do people recognise or identify with places, and what spatial scales are most important to them? The consensus in 2004 seemed to be that sub-regional units, particularly cities, were of more relevance to both inhabitants and visitors in the East Midlands. Clearly, urban centres are important 'markers' within a regional space. The East Midlands, however, is characterised by rivalry between its three largest towns – Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. The decision to rename the airport 'Nottingham East Midlands Airport', even though it is geographically closer to Leicester, provoked heated debate within local media. The assumptions of Nottingham's superiority, greater significance to outsiders and visitors, and ability to integrate and unite the region were hotly contested, and even now some residents of Leicester refuse to refer to the airport by its full title.

These themes – the role of external factors in shaping and defining a region, the importance of urban centres in spatial integration, the relative significance of different scales of interaction, and the independence of and rivalry between towns – will all find resonance in this thesis. The intention is to investigate the nature of spatial integration in the East Midlands in the long eighteenth century, and in particular the degree to which it formed an internally integrated, distinctive region, rather than being composed of a series of discrete parishes, urban hinterlands, or counties. In doing so, the aim is to further our understanding not only of the historical development of the East Midlands in a period of substantial economic, social and cultural change, but also to make a contribution to the wider debate about the spatial impact of these changes on the regions of England – in particular whether the changes helped to strengthen or weaken regional coherence and identity.

The East Midlands – an unusual ‘region’

The starting point for this study is a seminal debate between two leading historical geographers which began more than two decades ago but seems never to have been fully resolved. The debate centred around the spatial effects of industrialisation in England in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The two protagonists, Jack Langton and Derek Gregory, acknowledged that this period witnessed a growth in national integration (as communications improved), and alongside this, a measure of regional distinctiveness, but differed as to which of these processes was dominant. While Langton argued that greater national integration paradoxically served to heighten awareness of the great differences between regional economies and cultures, Gregory, though noting that the uniqueness of places and the interdependence of places are two sides of the same coin, assigned prominence to inter- and extra-regional flows of capital and information in structuring regional growth.3

My intention in this thesis is to use the East Midlands as a context for addressing and taking forward this debate. In particular, the aim is to assess the relative importance of intra-regional linkages and extra-regional connections in the East Midlands, as well as investigating whether a third scale of interaction – at county level – was in fact more important, both in structuring space in the minds of the inhabitants and in terms of actual interaction ‘on the ground’. The East Midlands is a particularly challenging case study, being a space which has always been perceived as lacking any obvious regional integration, and thus might seem to be an unpromising place for research on regions. It could be argued, though, that the East Midlands is of interest to historians and geographers precisely because it is ill-defined, and thus receptive to historical and geographical analysis.4 Drawing on the example of a less coherent and distinctive region should enable us to test the Gregory-Langton debate more thoroughly, by assessing the extent to which it can be applied to places outside the ‘conventional’ industrial regions such as the North West and West Midlands.

It has always been difficult to define a coherent and consistent regional identity for the East Midlands. Its boundaries and constituent parts have changed over time, as it has been defined as an entity for a variety of purposes. After the east midlands area was divided up into shires in the tenth century, few formal links existed between the counties. Then, as now, the East Midlands lacked a 'capital' around which a unified region could develop. Although Nottingham may have been a contender, its close proximity to Leicester and Derby, both of which experienced similar growth patterns, meant that no one town could dominate, and thus the area remained oriented around several county centres rather than one regional capital. Indeed the East Midlands was only defined as a spatial entity by planners, geographers and historians in the twentieth century. Its first formal definition, as the North Midlands, was in 1939, for Civil Defence purposes, when it encompassed Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire. It was not renamed the East Midlands until 1965. As Daniels has pertinently pointed out: 'Such official, or semi-official, regions may be only weakly related to established geographical loyalties or patterns of economic and social organization.' The difficulty of defining and describing an East Midlands region, and the apparent lack of interest in doing so before the twentieth century, seem likely to reflect the area's lack of coherence in terms of physiography, scenery, culture, livelihood, popular consciousness and so on, as well as the attachment of various parts of the region to other geographical entities.

The apparent lack of strong regional coherence and identity in the East Midlands, in contrast to other industrial regions of the eighteenth century, highlights the fact that industrialisation in England was a spatially uneven process, which varied in its timing and effects across the country. The trend for studying the industrial revolution in a regional context reflects this thinking. However, while much of this literature focuses on

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7 Daniels, 'Inventing the East Midlands', 3.
well-known 'industrial regions', strongly associated with a particular industry, whose production processes, labour markets and capital flows acted as strong integrating forces within each region, this thesis will demonstrate that the East Midlands was something of an exception. Although it was significantly affected by industrialisation, the East Midlands seems to have lacked any concomitant growth in wider regional integration and identity, unlike regions such as the North West and West Midlands. These latter regions, it would appear, were far from abstract concepts, divorced from their inhabitants' own lived experience. Rather a picture emerges of people's everyday lives being organised on a regional basis. It has recently been claimed that regions 'represented the spatial and functional scale at which many aspects of life operated in pre- and early-industrial England: they were the reality for most people and businesses'⁹ The overarching aim of this thesis is to investigate the extent to which the East Midlands fits this model of an industrial region integrated by economic and social activities, and if not, to explore the reasons for its apparently unusual lack of regional integration. In doing so, a number of themes which emerge from the literature on the definition, shaping and integration of regional spaces will be drawn upon, and these are discussed below.

Interrogating the region

Three key themes underlie the discussion of spatial development in the East Midlands in this thesis. The first is the notion that the spatial extent of a region and its coherence as a regional space are defined by the activities of its inhabitants — in other words, that everyday human practices and experiences can help to shape space. There has been a recent reassertion of space in social theory, as a reaction against the prevailing tendency to privilege a temporal, historical approach, whilst viewing space as a fixed, abstract given.¹⁰ Increasingly, space is treated not simply as a physical context for social life, but as 'a product of social translation, transformation and experience.'¹¹ In other words, space

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⁹ Stobart, First industrial region, 3.
¹⁰ This represents a move away from the Kantian conception of space, as an empty and primordially-given container, to space as process.
¹¹ E. W. Soja, Postmodern Geographies: the reassertion of space in critical social theory (London, 1989), 80. There is now a large and rapidly expanding literature on the social production of space, much of which owes its origins to the work of the French Marxist philosopher Henri Lefebvre. See, for example, D.
is socially produced. The predominance of theoretical work on this concept would appear to be testament to the challenges of testing it empirically. When seeking historical evidence of the social production of space the challenge is magnified further. Nevertheless, although it is difficult to define and measure spatial integration and interaction in the past, tangible evidence of linkages between people and places are used in this thesis as a means of reconstructing the degree of regional integration in the East Midlands. These linkages include those associated with migration, inheritance practices, trading connections, customer and supplier networks, transport links, and the transmission of cultural practices and fashions. Although it is impossible to document all social, economic and cultural connections within and beyond the East Midlands, interaction between places is of course the aggregate of links between individuals. Thus, while not offering a comprehensive picture of spatial integration, this study draws out patterns and trends evident from the movements of and contacts between samples of individual people. Whilst these samples cannot be claimed to be random, they are representative of everyday social and economic activities, from which patterns can be extrapolated. These trends are rendered more convincing by the fact that different types of linkages exhibit very similar spatial patterning. Moreover, there is an established precedent for such an approach. In his study of the North West, Stobart looked at the links between towns and their market areas, as well as transport and communications networks and individuals' personal contacts within the region. In the West Midlands, Money has argued convincingly that co-ordinated activity, in poor law administration, canal construction, or the building of amenities fostered regional integration and identity in the later eighteenth century. Thus, regionality can often be found in the territorial links between people and institutions, as much as in the territory itself.


12 Stobart, First industrial region.

Movement, networks and linkages have been viewed as shaping the space of the city\textsuperscript{14}, but I would argue that the same principle can be applied to regional space as well. A useful framework is provided by Hägerstrand’s time-geography, further developed by Pred, which focuses on people’s everyday activities, and how the movements of individuals through time and space intersect both to shape their own experiences and the wider space in which they live.\textsuperscript{15} These ‘spatial practices’ are one part of a conceptual triad developed by Lefebvre, and later refined by Soja, which was intended to overcome the traditional duality of society and space, material and mental, real and abstract.\textsuperscript{16} Spatial practices – what Soja terms ‘Firstspace’ – are the everyday and routine activities of individuals (Pred’s daily pathways) that subconsciously construct and transform space.\textsuperscript{17} It is these everyday practices that this thesis intends to capture, linking them to the development of a regional space.

A regional space can be shaped and defined not only by the practices of its inhabitants, however, but also by external forces. The relative importance of, and occasional tension between, internal and external forces in shaping space forms the second underlying theme in this thesis. This theme is rooted in Lefebvre’s belief that landscapes and spaces are not passive and neutral backdrops for the lives of communities and individuals, but are actively involved in structuring and shaping societies, just as societies are involved in structuring and changing spaces. The second element of Lefebvre’s triad – representations of space or ‘Secondspace’ – are ‘conceived’ spaces, shaped and controlled by professionals or elites (such as town corporations or gentry), who impose order on space by control over knowledge, signs and codes. Thus these are the spaces of thought, vision and imagination, rather than concrete, empirically measurable spaces. In essence, these spaces are usually shaped by forces and actors external to the inhabitants of those spaces, and reflect the operation of broader structures of power and knowledge.

\textsuperscript{15} Hagerstrand, ‘What about people in Regional Science?’; Pred, ‘The choreography of existence’.
\textsuperscript{17} This socially produced, empirical space is termed ‘perceived’ space, and can be measured and described.
The contrasting notion of internal forces shaping space can be linked to the final element of Lefebvre’s triad: spaces of representation, which are spaces of everyday experience, in which the individual (rather than society) may be ‘represented’.\footnote{These are often associated with counter-spaces or ‘Thirdspaces’, which challenge or subvert dominant spatial practices and spatialities – as, for instance, when people reappropriate space for uses other than those for which it was intended.} It is through these ‘lived’ spaces that people construct meaning for themselves, often through the use and interpretation of signs and symbols. These spaces of representation – or ‘Thirdspace’ – are distinct from the other two spaces but also encompass them, by combining both the real and the imagined.\footnote{Soja, *Thirdspace*, 65-9.} Although people’s perception of and identification with spaces in the past can be difficult to recover, the notion of spaces of representation will be used in this thesis to refer to institutions, traditions and practices (such as local newspapers or the activities of the county community) through which space in the East Midlands was given meaning.

The importance of both internal and external forces in producing and changing regions is one of the key elements of ‘new regional geography’. Processes operating at the national or global scale, such as the advancement of capitalism, can create new regions or enhance regional differences, as well as impacting upon the lives of the inhabitants of specific regions. At the same time, the people, institutions and practices within the region itself also affect the development of the region. Clearly, then, processes occurring in other regions and at the national scale will need to be taken into account when explaining the industrial and social life of the East Midlands. As Paasi has argued, the history of a region reflects and is part of the history of the wider society in which it is situated. At the same time, the region is produced and evolves through a variety of social practices taking place within it.\footnote{A. Paasi, ‘Deconstructing regions: notes on the scales of spatial life’, *Environment and Planning A*, 23 (1991), 249.} Thus the social production of space and the influence of wider social and economic processes are brought together in the historical study of regions.

The third theme guiding the discussion of spatial development in the East Midlands in this thesis concerns the role of urban centres in integrating regional space. Large towns were one of the key drivers of integration within regions, through their role
as the centres of regional space economies.\textsuperscript{21} Despite this, the literature on regional geography has paid surprisingly little attention to the role of towns within regions. Consideration of cities did not fit the remit of traditional regional geography, with its emphasis on the study of the natural and morphological aspects of regions.\textsuperscript{22} Admittedly, the later notion of the ‘functional region’ was more city-oriented. Such a region was defined by connections between a city and its hinterland.\textsuperscript{23} However, as a reaction against this older regional geography, founded on a notion of regions as bounded spaces and containers into which masses of descriptive material could be placed, new regional geography emphasises the fluidity, ambiguity and subjectivity of regions, and analyses them in terms of their relationship to wider spatial structures and social practices.\textsuperscript{24} In this conception, there seems to be little room for discussion of specific spaces, such as cities, within regions. Indeed, regional boundaries themselves cannot be defined with any certainty because of the fluid and dynamic nature of regional spaces. As Paasi has argued, regions are increasingly being understood by geographers as ‘processes that are performed, limited, symbolised and institutionalised through numerous practices and discourses that are not inevitably bound to a specific scale.’\textsuperscript{25}

I would argue, however, that in order to understand the historical development of regions, we should return to ‘first principles’ and consider the important role of large urban centres (which by definition represented concentrations of population, capital and power within eighteenth-century English society) in ‘articulating’ the regional space

\textsuperscript{22} See, for example, P. Vidal de la Blache, Principles of Human Geography, tr. Millicent Todd Bingham (London, 1926); A. J. Herbertson, ‘The major natural regions of the world: an essay in systematic geography’, Geographical Journal, 25 (1905), 300-312.
\textsuperscript{25} A. Paasi, ‘Place and region: regional worlds and words’, Progress in Human Geography, 26 (2002), 805. This view is borne out by the recent preference for the more flexible, open term ‘place’ rather than ‘region’.
around them. Such an approach takes up Murphy’s call for more examination of why and how regions came to be as they are, rather than treating them merely as backdrops for our analysis of regional and social change. As noted above, the history of a region reflects and is part of the history of the wider society in which it is situated, but a region also evolves and is produced through a variety of social practices taking place within it. These practices include the socio-economic connections between towns and their hinterlands. As Massey has pointed out, cities have always been open and hybrid spaces, sites of cultural mixing and connections to the outside world, through trade, politics and migration.

Models of urban systems in geography stress the role of certain key centres in the processes of spatial integration. Central place theory accords most importance to settlements at the top of the urban hierarchy, which offer high-order functions and services to a wide hinterland. Vance’s model states that ‘gateway cities’ are the key centres, while Lepetit claims that this role is performed by places that dominate diffusion networks. Major production locations are the key centres in industrial specialisation models. Indeed, most industrial regions had an urban hub, which acted as a centre for marketing, a trading entrepot, and a source of finance and labour — all essential factors for industrial success. Using empirical data to test these models in the North-west, Stobart found a complex system of interaction centred on the ‘gateway cities’ of Liverpool, Manchester and Chester, which drew the region together economically and linked it to wider economic, social and cultural systems in the country as a whole. Alan Everitt has also viewed an urban focus as crucial to the development of a region, arguing that certain towns were important in fostering both economic integration and a regional society and culture. So-called ‘entrepreneurial towns’ played a key role in the development of

26 The notion of close ties between a town and its surrounding region reflects the essentially symbiotic relationship between towns and their hinterlands, as opposed to the picture painted by some historians, such as Estabrook, of a divide between urban and rural as a reflection of their distinctive cultures. See C. Estabrook, Urbane and rustic England: cultural ties and social spheres in the provinces, 1660-1780 (Manchester, 1998).
27 Murphy, 'Regions as social constructs', 22-35.
28 Paasi, 'Deconstructing regions', 249.
29 Massey, 'The conceptualization of place', 64.
31 Stobart, First industrial region, 175-218.
occupational regions during the eighteenth century, each of which specialised in a particular industry, such as glovemaking or lace manufacture, and had its own traditions, identity and culture.\textsuperscript{32} Investigating the relationship between towns and their hinterlands, at a variety of scales, is central to this thesis. In particular, the aim is to test the contention that the picture of whole regions being drawn together by the centripetal pull of their towns was less applicable to the East Midlands. It seems reasonable to suggest that if the nature of the urban system was often an important driver of regional integration – or indeed spatial integration more generally – then it could also foster disunity or lack of integration in some spaces. My contention is that the characteristics of the urban hierarchy in the East Midlands, marked by the sustained dominance of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby within their counties, meant that regional integration, so typical elsewhere in industrialising Britain, could not be achieved. In other words, the historical distribution of towns here, such that there were three large towns of relatively similar size located in fairly close proximity, rather than a single dominant urban centre, precluded the integration of the East Midlands as a single regional space. As Stobart has pointed out, a poorly developed central place hierarchy implies low levels of inter-connection between urban centres, which in turn is associated with a fragmented regional economy.\textsuperscript{33}

This questioning of the importance of towns in fostering regional economic integration finds resonance in European historiography. Many historians on the continent have argued that there was no inevitable or necessarily strong relationship between towns, industry and regional economic development.\textsuperscript{34} Indeed, urban areas could often be described as dependent rather than independent variables in the foundation and development of regional economies. In Sweden, for instance, regional industrialisation


\textsuperscript{33} J. Stobart, 'The spatial organisation of a regional economy: central places in North-west England in the early-eighteenth century', Journal of Historical Geography, 22 (1996), 149.

\textsuperscript{34} For an interesting and useful summary of the rich European literature on regional history, see S. King, 'Towns, industries and regions: a European perspective on theoretical and practical relationships', in Stobart and Raven, Towns, regions and industries, 228-45. It should be noted that a number of European historians do see urbanisation as crucial to industrial and regional development. Hohenberg, van der Wee, Lepeit, Birke and Kettenacker, and Freudenberg, amongst others, have shown that the character of urban centres of all types could significantly shape the pace, scale and longevity of regional industrialisation, through their roles as manufacturing centres and foci of consumer demand.
occurred despite rather than because of the presence of Stockholm.\textsuperscript{35} In Germany, the town of Aachen depended on industrialisation in surrounding rural areas for its economic revival, as was the case in some important German metalworking areas.\textsuperscript{36} In the European literature urbanisation is seen as one of a number of influences on where industry developed and flourished (others including movement of entrepreneurs, state intervention, labour market structure and the particular product type), rather than being sufficient in itself to underpin regional industrialisation.\textsuperscript{37} As in the East Midlands, urbanisation could even retard regional integration, firstly because individual towns each had their own, often competing spheres of influence (rather than forming region-wide urban networks), and secondly because some towns were tied into wider economic markets beyond the region.

Having discussed the underlying themes within the thesis, I now go on to outline my approach to this particular study.

\textbf{Approach to the study}

My intention in writing this thesis is to move beyond purely economic and/or industrial studies of regions, and to consider a variety of different aspects of the history of the East Midlands – including social and cultural factors – in order to build up a fuller picture of the nature of the East Midlands’ development as a regional space. In his seminal article on the regional geography of England in the industrial revolution, Langton called for more studies of the geographical interplay of economic, social and cultural factors – in a sense, therefore, a return to regional geography in its purest form.\textsuperscript{38} Whilst discrete fields of study continue to define the work of many historians, with ‘economic history’, ‘social history’ and ‘cultural history’ being not merely convenient labels but substantive categories of historical study, the work of geographers tends to cut across epistemological boundaries. This is typified by the new regional geography, characterised as it is by a

\textsuperscript{37} King, ‘Towns, industries and regions’, 230-31.
\textsuperscript{38} Langton, ‘Industrial revolution’, 164.
greater understanding of the complexity of regions and localities, in which economic, social, cultural and political factors are interlinked. Regions are no longer merely convenient spatial frameworks for descriptive accounts, but are viewed as active in shaping economic, industrial and cultural development. Hudson has recently championed the region as a legitimate and effective spatial scale for historical study also. She predicts a resurgence of regional studies, reflecting a desire to 'eschew the compartmentalised disciplinary boundaries of modern academic analysis.' The fragmentation of historical study into different specialisms prevents us from understanding historical processes 'in the round'. This can be better achieved with regional studies which by their nature consider a variety of aspects of human experience. Renewed interest in a regional approach is also a product of a changing intellectual climate within the humanities and social sciences. A belief that regional and local processes hold the key to understanding wider economic, social and cultural phenomena ties in with growing interest in the impact of globalisation on local systems and cultures rather than nation states as a whole, as well as a climate of postmodernism, with its concern for otherness and difference and rejection of overarching theories of society or economic change. Postmodernism does not seek to privilege any particular aspect of life over another — rather it encourages an interest in the totality of people's lives, focussing on multiple identities grounded in everyday practices. These are best understood and analysed at local and regional levels.39

The recent 'cultural turn' in the social sciences has also meant that the economic is now seen as embedded in the cultural, both of which have particular yet related geographies. The idea that regional and localised agglomerations of industry and commerce are key to understanding cultural as well as economic phenomena has been discussed extensively in the literature on institutional economics, the 'new economic sociology', and economic and cultural geography.40 As Peet has argued, economic


40 The notion of embeddedness is to a large extent derived from the ideas of K. Polanyi, The great transformation (New York, 1944). For more recent literature on this subject see Hudson, 'Regional and local history', 5 (note 3).
motives and logics, consumer preferences and worker attitudes are not created by
economy alone, but instead derive from the identities of agents, which are socially
constructed and culturally produced. This thesis seeks to avoid the economically
determinist approach challenged by Peet. Instead, I start from the premise that cultural
practices and processes such as kinship, friendship and sociability were as influential as
economic factors in structuring space. This sets my study apart from Stobart and Raven's
recent book on industrialisation and urbanisation in the Midlands as a whole, which
covers a similar time period. Whilst not ignoring social and cultural processes, the focus
of that work is largely on economic factors, with its analysis of the spatial relationship
between urbanisation and economic and industrial development. Indeed most historical
studies of regions have tended to take an economic approach, probably reflecting the fact
that we are more advanced in researching and theorising economic aspects of regions,
given the difficulties inherent in researching their cultural and social characteristics. It is
difficult to find 'cultural markers' of regional identity (such as myths, customs, clothing,
vocabulary or dialect), partly because of a paucity of sources in Britain, but also because
there could be distinct cultural differences within as well as between regions, based on
class, age, immigration, race or gender. In any case, it is difficult to capture or 'measure'
something as mutable and subjective as culture or identity using such markers.

Given these difficulties, the intention of this thesis is not to 'measure' or analyse
the nature and extent of regional identity in the East Midlands in any more than anecdotal
terms (by recovering some fragments of the culture of the 'region'). Rather it seeks to
redress the balance in regional studies, countering the predominance of economic
approaches by demonstrating that economic, social and cultural change were interlinked
in the East Midlands. For instance, kinship and social or religious ties often structured
local capital and credit networks. This corroborates one of the principles of the new

41 R. Peet, 'The cultural production of economic forms', in R. Lee and J. Wills (eds), Geographies of
42 Stobart and Raven, Towns, regions and industries.
43 Hudson, 'Regional and local history', 13-14. On the fluid and ever changing nature of regional identities
examples of regional studies which have included reference to the importance of myths and folk tales in the
creation of regional identities. See for example D. Rollison, The local origins of modern society:
Gloucestershire 1500-1800 (London, 1992); T. Koditschek, Class formation and urban industrial society:
institutional economics — that business networks are often founded upon close personal relationships. The advantages of this are that members of the network are likely to have a common value system based on shared goals and aspirations, thus making joint action more successful. In addition, networks based on trust and reputation give their members knowledge of where information can be acquired and the extent to which it can be relied upon, which helps to reduce risk and cut business transaction costs. In general, the spatial practices and decisions made by individuals will be governed by the cultural milieu in which they live as well as by economic and institutional imperatives. Increasingly, therefore, the literature on industrial agglomeration is stressing the advantages of social and cultural as well as economic concentration. The interlinkage of economic and cultural institutions was also evident in the activities of the urban elite in the East Midlands: many industrialists were actively involved in promoting local social and cultural institutions. To take another example, executors of wills were often chosen from amongst a testator’s family and friends, as well as his or her business associates, indicating that relationships of trust could be based on both economic and social ties. In a similar way, migration was commonly undertaken for a variety of motives — in many cases economic, though moves could also be prompted by familial or cultural circumstances. In summary, the remit of the thesis is necessarily broad, exploring a variety of different aspects of life in the East Midlands, but the focus will be on how these economic, social, political and cultural processes were both affected by and in turn influenced the spatial structure of the East Midlands.

For the purpose of this study, I regard a region as an area larger than a single county, and have defined the East Midlands as the counties of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. There is a certain artificiality in imposing regional structure on an area which seemed to lack regional coherence, but county borders are being used in this context simply as a convenient spatial framework in which to situate

and structure the research. This is more reflective of the practicalities of data collection and analysis than any firm conviction that these boundaries formed tangible and widely accepted limits. My focus is on three adjacent counties that possessed some linkages related to their common involvement with the hosiery industry, and which also shared a similar experience of urbanisation. A putative East Midlands could also include the counties of Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire and Rutland, but they were predominantly agricultural, and their county towns did not experience the strong and prolonged growth seen in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. Their inclusion in this study would simply have reinforced the point that the East Midlands lacked regional coherence. The region is being used here simply as a methodological device. As Hudson contends, regions do not have to exist ‘in every or any concrete sense for there to be regional processes and relationships worth investigating.'

Defining regions on the basis of administrative boundaries does have limitations, however, particularly when studying industrialising regions, since industrialisation and urbanisation processes did not correspond neatly with county boundaries. While large conurbations such as Birmingham and Manchester spilled across several counties, many industrial ‘regions’ were focussed on a relatively small geographical area. The East Midlands hosiery district, for example, was concentrated in north and west Leicestershire, south Nottinghamshire and south Derbyshire. Meanwhile, the heartland of cotton textile production was situated in a very specific part of Lancashire, a county which also contained agricultural land, coalfields and wetlands. Indeed the spatial extent of industrial regions was often influenced more by geological factors than administrative boundaries. For instance, the coalfields of Tyneside, South Yorkshire, south-east Lancashire and north Staffordshire served as territories of distinct industrial societies. Thus, contrasts of landscape and socio-economic characteristics within counties were often greater than the contrasts between counties. Parts of south-east Derbyshire, for

46 In part reflecting the fact that English archives are organised on a county basis, but also following a long tradition of writing county histories.
47 Apart from some shoe manufacture in Northampton.
48 Hudson, ‘Regional and local history’, 8.
example, are very different from the majority of the High and Low Peak. It is also important to note that the boundaries of industrial regions, agricultural regions, administrative regions, cultural regions, religious regions and urban regions rarely coincided, and so a particular set of spatial boundaries cannot encompass all aspects of a region.

As well as the lack of congruence between administrative boundaries and the reality of industrial regions on the ground, the way in which the inhabitants of a region imagined or experienced it was often very different from the way it has been defined by administrators and historians. Several historians have recently pointed to the importance of viewing regions 'from below' – that is, from the point of view of their inhabitants. These 'regions of the people', as Rollison terms them, are more fluid and dynamic than regions based on the historical record (such as parishes, counties, nations or empires.)

As Royle has claimed, a region is not a fixed concept, but 'a feeling, a sentimental attachment to territory shared by like-minded people.' Clearly it is difficult for historians to reconstruct such 'imagined communities', precisely because they are so subjective and fluid, and do not leave tangible records. Individuals tended to define their own particular 'regions' on the ground, based on their business and trading connections and their physical mobility. As Lefebvre has argued, the society-space or human-environment relationship is a dialectical one, so ultimately, the nature of a region is shaped by what humans make of their environment, and how they use it. People tended to define the extent of their region not on the basis of county boundaries, but on topographical features or landmarks, well-used routes, the location of market centres, or family and kinship groups. For instance, Phythian-Adams has identified the 'societal group' as an important unit. This was an extended group of families covering a number of parishes, but associated with a specific area through tradition and limited movement.

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50 J. D. Marshall, 'Proving ground or the creation of regional identity? The origins and problems of regional history in Britain', in P. Swan and D. Foster (eds), Essays in Regional and Local History (Cherry Burton, 1992), 15.
51 King and Timmins, Making sense of the Industrial Revolution, 37.
within that area. Therefore, in delimiting the East Midlands as a region for study, I am acutely aware that contemporaries could perceive and experience this space in a multiplicity of ways, and that as a historical researcher I can only lay down arbitrary boundaries, which reflect my own perceptions of the 'region', and the particular research questions I have posed.

Nevertheless, provided that there is an awareness of the limitations outlined above, a regional approach is still valid, as long as the region is not considered in isolation. Marshall has argued that good regional history should always include an awareness of inter-regional connections and comparisons, which, paradoxically, serve to aid our understanding of the identity and workings of each individual region. As this thesis will demonstrate, places within the East Midlands often had just as many connections with locations outside the 'region' as within it. Indeed one of the features of this study will be its consideration of a variety of different scales of interaction: local, rural-urban, inter-urban, intra-county, intra-regional and national, with the relative strength of each being assessed. The analysis will demonstrate that often competing and contradictory forces were at work in the East Midlands - some encouraging localised interaction, others promoting regional or indeed national integration. The relative weight of these different forces helps to explain the development of the East Midlands space-economy.

A related element of my approach to this study will be the use of a comparative perspective. The similarities and differences between the three county towns of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby will be drawn out explicitly throughout the thesis, and comparisons and contrasts will be drawn with other regions where data are available. This will enable me to assess whether certain components of economic and social change were particular to certain places or common to all of them.

Finally, the time period for the study - 1700-1830 - has been chosen so as to encompass a period of profound urban, industrial and social change not only in the East Midlands but in England as a whole. During this time, towns grew at a faster rate than ever before, industrial activity mushroomed in scale and complexity, and a vibrant and

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55 Marshall, 'Proving ground', 18.
56 Ibid, 22.
self-assured provincial culture developed. In the East Midlands, this period coincided with the dramatic expansion of the staple hosiery industry, prompting the larger county capitals to evolve into industrial as well as social and political centres. The content of the thesis rarely strays beyond 1830, because this marked the beginning of an era of substantial legislative reform, as well as the coming of the railways and the shift of hosiery production into factories. All of these elements changed the character of the East Midlands significantly, and it is beyond the scope of this study to consider the wide-ranging implications of these changes.

Structure of the thesis
The East Midlands was (and is) a complex space. The individual chapters in this thesis interrogate that space in different ways, and when brought together, they can help us to understand its complexity. Space, according to Lefebvre, exists in three dimensions – perceived, conceived and lived – and this study is based on the premise that a space such as the East Midlands can only be understood effectively if attention is paid to all three dimensions. Therefore, the chapters that follow deal with everyday spatial practices, representations of space conceived by those in positions of power and authority, as well as spaces of representation – ‘lived’ spaces bringing together the real and the imagined. To add further complexity, the East Midlands as a regional space represents just one level within a ‘layering’ of space from the global to the very local. Interaction between people and places can occur at a variety of scales – that is, within different layers. An assessment of the relative importance of these different layers forms a central tenet of this thesis. It is my contention that the regional layer of interaction was of no greater importance than any other layer in the East Midlands, thus suggesting that regional integration was weaker here than in some other English regions. The following chapter outline demonstrates how this argument is advanced throughout the thesis.

Chapter 2 illustrates one of the more extensive layers of spatial interaction – the national level – by focusing on one aspect of this: the East Midlands’ political, socio-cultural and economic links with London. These are explored in the context of both representations of space (conceived space) and spaces of representation (lived space) in order to assess how far the notion of a region was projected from ‘outside’, by people and
institutions in the metropolis, and the extent to which it was constructed from 'within', by the inhabitants. For instance, a government enquiry into the condition of framework-knitters, and reporting of Luddite disturbances in the London press in the nineteenth century could both be seen as creating representations of space, in contrast to the spaces of representation associated with a resurgence of provincial culture and civic pride in the eighteenth century. In effect, therefore, this chapter considers both national and regional layers in opposition to each other, with the East Midlands being used as a ‘case study’ to contribute to important and ongoing debates about the nature of central-local interaction and its relationship to regional development in eighteenth-century England. The chapter demonstrates that the layering of space has a temporal dimension, with different layers coming to prominence at different times and in different contexts. As the eighteenth century progressed, links with London became less prominent as local and regional cultural and economic connections began to take precedence.

Having demonstrated the co-existence of local, regional and national layers of spatial interaction in the East Midlands, in Chapter 3 the focus narrows to the regional scale, as I discuss the extent to which the East Midlands could be described as an internally integrated industrial region. This reaches to the heart of my central research question, though at this stage I am concerned specifically with industry and transport, since the economic and industrial structure of the region was so closely connected to its spatial development. Arguably the single feature of the East Midlands which lent it coherence and identity as a region was its staple industry – the manufacture of hosiery. However, through an analysis of the spatial practices associated with four key factors of production – machinery, raw materials, capital and labour – the chapter illustrates the co-existence of, and occasional tension between, different layers of interaction in the East Midlands (both region-wide industrial linkages and highly localised connections) and makes an assessment of the relative importance of each. One of the driving forces behind the spatial integration of industrial regions was the transport network, which forms the second theme of the chapter. Transport linkages are an embodiment of the relationship between everyday spatial practices and the conceived spaces of planners and other individuals in authority. Road and canal infrastructure was shaped by the spatial practices associated with industrial production, but in turn the design of the transport network
influenced the nature and location of industrial production and trading flows. A comparison between the transport networks of the East and West Midlands demonstrates that the East Midlands differed from conventional industrial regions. Using information from trade directories to reconstruct the spatial patterns and frequency of road and water transport in both the East and West Midlands reveals significant differences between the two 'regions', which can be explained by their contrasting industrial structures. Cross-regional transport linkages were much more common in the West Midlands, while the transport network in the East was characterised by connections both beyond the region and at a much more localised scale – neither of which were indicative of strong regional integration.

If, as suggested in Chapter 3, regional integration was relatively limited in the East Midlands, which other layer of spatial interaction was the most important? The process of answering this question begins in Chapter 4, which argues that county-level spatial connections were of more significance than those at regional level in the East Midlands. Here the focus is on the importance of the lived space of the county community, and more particularly, the county town which stood at its heart, acting as the hub of the political, administrative, social, cultural and economic life of its surrounding county. The argument is founded upon the unique position of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby amongst English county towns: they were the only county centres to experience rapid and sustained growth throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The chapter seeks to explain why this pre-industrial pattern of county towns dominating their respective counties persisted into the industrial period. The three towns were unusual in that, as well as being established political and cultural capitals of their counties, they also became the main industrial centres, which explains why they continued to grow and flourish. Analysis of occupational structures from a range of sources is used to explore how successfully the industrial and socio-cultural functions of these towns were brought together. I contend that the main reason for the co-existence of these functions was the composition of the urban elites. Many leading figures in the three towns were successful industrialists who also championed social and cultural activities.

Whilst Chapter 4 demonstrates how influential the spaces of representation associated with the county community were, the following two chapters focus on the
spatial practices of individuals in the East Midlands, and the degree to which they served to integrate the region. Chapter 5 presents a picture of patterns of migration to Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, drawing principally on data from marriage registers (as a proxy for social connections), apprenticeship registers (as indicative of economic connections), and settlement examinations which provide some individual case studies. The intention is to present further evidence—focussing more on the lower orders than the elite—on the extent of these towns’ spheres of influence, and the nature of their connections with other settlements in the county, the rest of the East Midlands, and beyond. Despite the fact that the movement of people underlay the majority of connections between towns and their hinterlands, migration has been surprisingly little studied, particularly for the period from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Using migration as a means of analysing the relationship between towns and their hinterlands, I aim to shed further light on the role of urban centres in spatial integration. The evidence corroborates the picture of three dominant yet distinct county towns presented in the previous chapter: the spheres of influence of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby—as defined by their migration fields—generally extended only as far as their county boundaries, and very often were even more localised than that. I conclude, therefore, that the structure of the urban system in the East Midlands was an important part of the explanation for its disunity and incoherence rather than integration.

In Chapter 6, the focus on spatial practices continues, as I investigate the nature and extent of individuals’ networks of family and friends through a study of testamentary connections. In this chapter, however, I demonstrate the co-existence of different layers of interaction, highlighting how spatial practices could 'produce' space at a number of scales. Using a large sample of wills and administration bonds left by individuals in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, I seek to give a flavour of the nature and extent of social linkages amongst the urban population. Analysing the occupations and places of residence of executors, as well as their relationship to the testator by whom they were nominated, enables an assessment to be made of the relative importance of kinship, neighbourhood and occupational networks in shaping the social worlds of people in the three towns. The data allow me to challenge the rather 'black and white' approach to some historical debates on kinship and community, by demonstrating the co-existence
and ever-changing nature of ties to both the nuclear and extended family, as well as the fact that individual testators had contacts both with members of their local community and relatives and friends further afield.

The chapters in this thesis therefore provide a progression of evidence, from a wide range of sources, of spatial interaction at different scales. The intention is to combine empirical analysis of spatial practices with some sense of how space in the East Midlands was conceived, represented and experienced, in order to build up as full a picture as possible of the three-dimensional, multi-layered space that was the East Midlands in the long eighteenth century, and, more specifically, to establish whether and how this layering of space questioned the integrity of the East Midlands as a region.
Metropolitan influence and provincial independence

The eighteenth century witnessed growing cultural, economic and political integration in England, fostered by the expansion of print media; a revolution in transport and communications links across the country, as roads were turnpiked and canals constructed; the development of postal services; and the growth of inter-regional trading and credit relationships. At the centre of this newly-integrated nation was its capital – London. London's population was at least ten times bigger than that of the next largest English town, and the city formed the heart of the country's financial markets, commerce and trade. The huge concentration of population and wealth in the capital generated great demand for food, fuel and manufactured goods from the rest of the country. London acted as the hub of England's road, and later railway, networks, and the nation's political and legal system was administered from the metropolis. The city was also a source of innovation, in finance and insurance, and in many consumer goods. Indeed, it was the centre of fashionable aristocratic social life, with gentry families from across the country drawn to London and its royal court for the winter 'season'.\(^1\) As the *Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce* noted in 1766, 'London consumes all, circulates all, exports all, and, at last, pays for all...this greatness and wealth of the city is the soul of the commerce to all the nation'.\(^2\)

This picture of London's centrality and dominance has recently been qualified, however. It is now recognised that the simple model of provincial dependence on an increasingly populous, wealthy and powerful metropolis represents only part of the story.


While the capital undoubtedly exerted significant influence over provincial economies, societies and cultures, the English provinces were still able to remain culturally and socially distinctive, and their relationship with London was a symbiotic one: wealth and innovation flowed from the provinces into the metropolis as well as outwards from London. The eighteenth century witnessed a flowering of provincial culture, as the urban renaissance spread across the country. Growing provincial self-confidence was reflected in the reassertion of distinctive local and regional values, history and traditions, in opposition to the homogenising influences of London.3

The intention of this chapter is to explore this shifting relationship between London and the provinces, using the East Midlands as a 'case study' to contribute to important and ongoing debates about the nature of central-local interaction and its relationship to regional development in eighteenth-century England. Three themes will run throughout the chapter. The first relates to temporal change, charting the gradual erosion of metropolitan influence and growth in provincial independence during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The second is more explicitly spatial, offering a comparison between different regions of the country in terms of the nature and importance of their links with London. This helps us to shed light on the East Midlands' unusual lack of regional integration (identified in Chapter 1) by assessing whether, if at all, external linkages were stronger here than in other regions. The third theme focuses specifically on the East Midlands, exploring how it was shaped spatially by its relationship with London. In particular, did metropolitan institutions (like parliament) construct the East Midlands as a region, even if smaller spatial units were of more importance to its inhabitants? The overarching question tying these themes together is the extent to which a regional space was constructed from 'within', by the inhabitants, and how far it was projected from 'outside', by people and institutions in the metropolis.

These themes will be explored within political, socio-cultural and economic spheres. In the first part of the chapter, the relationship between central government and local authorities in the East Midlands will be considered and compared with other regions, through a discussion of different facets of that relationship. The 1844 government inquiry into the condition of the framework-knitters, and press reportage of the Luddite disturbances of the early nineteenth century both demonstrate how the East Midlands was constructed as a region by outsiders, despite there being little evidence that an East Midlands region – either real or imagined – had existed before. Indeed, the political experience of a large proportion of the East Midlands’ population centred on the smaller scales of borough or county, as is highlighted by a discussion of petitioning and the passage of local acts, and the election of MPs. The second part focuses on urban society and culture in the East Midlands, exploring the degree to which the identity of provincial towns was externally imposed – shaped by imitation of London, and how far it was internally generated – that is, based on indigenous culture and civic pride. A sample of advertisements from newspapers printed in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby will be compared with samples from other regions, looking particularly at the provenance of advertisements in each case, in order to determine the relative importance of connections at different spatial scales for towns in each region. At the same time, evidence from town histories will be used to demonstrate the vitality of provincial civic culture. In the final part, economic linkages between the provinces and London will be discussed, with reference to regional industries such as the East Midlands’ hosiery trade, as well as evidence from the apprenticeship registers of London livery companies and account books of East Midlands’ tradesmen. The intention is to assess the extent to which the local and regional economy of the East Midlands was dependent on a metropolitan-centred national economy, rather than being autonomous and self-contained.

Central government and the localities

Whilst there is a consensus that the balance of power between centre and localities shifted from the late seventeenth century, the consequences of this have been subject to debate. On the one hand, it has been argued that central government’s links with and influence over local authorities were confined to furthering the power of the fiscal-military state,
and thus the centre became disengaged from domestic activities in the localities. More convincing, however, is the suggestion that there was a reconfiguration of central-local relations in the eighteenth century, whereby local authorities maintained close contact with central government yet also retained significant autonomy. For example, local authorities were able to draw on the state's newly augmented military and fiscal resources for their own benefit, and to discuss their concerns at central government level, encouraged by more frequent and lengthy parliamentary sessions. Day-to-day contact between central government and local authorities was maintained through the passage of legislation and issue of proclamations and grants. At the same time, local activity was less closely monitored than previously, and in some instances provincial towns or counties took a lead on policy, which central government then followed.

In what follows, this reconfigured relationship between centre and localities will be explored with reference to the East Midlands, highlighting the divergence between the London-centred view of the East Midlands — as a region — and the political experience of its own inhabitants — based on the smaller scales of borough and county. Drawing on Lefebvre's spatial triad, I will demonstrate that the 1844 Inquiry into the Condition of the Frame-work Knitters could be seen as creating a 'representation of space' — that is, an abstract or conceived space of politicians, while the Luddite disturbances and the reaction to them in the press could be viewed in terms of 'spaces of representation' (encompassing both real and imagined space) while petitioning and elections can be described as 'spatial practices.'

The 1844 Frame-work Knitters Inquiry is a good example of the construction of a region by a central body for political purposes. It was one of a number of large-scale government inquiries into issues of concern in the localities during this period, but unusual in being regional in scope. Whilst most inquiries were intended to lead to the

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7 Other inquiries included investigations of poor relief, charitable provision and gaols.
establishment of standardised, national-level criteria for local government to follow, the 1844 Inquiry was commissioned because of the particular circumstances of distress within the East Midlands hosiery industry at the time: namely low wages and long periods out of work. The commissioner’s report is a particularly rich resource for a study of the state of the hosiery industry at a time when it dominated the economy and labour market of the East Midlands, and a powerful lens through which to view the interaction between central government and individual workers in the provinces – and in particular the way in which the government defined a region in the East Midlands for its own purposes.

Though 1844 lies just beyond my period of study, the inquiry represented the culmination of framework knitters’ concerns and demands over a long period, during which they had repeatedly petitioned parliament for relief of their grievances. Moreover, arguably it was not until the nineteenth century that ‘regions’ were constructed as representations of space by government. Prior to this, it was not part of the remit of government to define or represent regions in this way. Thus, even if the East Midlands existed as a regional space in economic or social terms in the eighteenth century, it was not given political shape and articulated as a region until the nineteenth century – as evidenced by the 1844 Inquiry. The remit of the Commissioner appointed to carry out the inquiry, Richard Muggeridge, was ‘to inquire into the manner in which the wages of the persons engaged in the trade of Frame-work Knitting in the counties of Leicester, Nottingham, and Derby are paid; and generally into the condition of the Frame-work Knitters in the said counties.’ Thus, by defining a spatial unit consisting of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire within which to frame the inquiry, it could be argued that the government was constructing a ‘hosiery manufacturing region’, even though there is little evidence that such a region had been consciously defined.

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8 Specific grievances with which the inquiry dealt included the manufacture of cheap, high-fashion hosiery of inferior quality, payment by truck, and extortionate frame rents. See British Parliamentary Papers: Report of the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the condition of the frame-work knitters (London, 1845), 1.


before. In this sense, then, the East Midlands had become a 'representation of space' –
conceived as a region for a particular purpose by outsiders.

Despite the framework knitters' apparent lack of consciousness of a hosiery
manufacturing region, it was not the case that individual hosiery workers were isolated
from their counterparts in neighbouring parishes or counties. On several occasions during
the eighteenth century there had been co-operation between hosiery workers in the three
counties, sending joint petitions for improved working conditions, while their employers
had occasionally joined together to back a counter-petition (see Chapter 3.) Indeed, the
decision to institute the commission of inquiry in 1844 seems to have been triggered by a
petition presented to parliament in 1843 and signed by 25,000 framework knitters from
across the three counties. It was quite common for workers and manufacturers from a
particular economic region to act in concert to lobby parliament or press for legislation.11
What was unusual about the East Midlands was that its identity as an economic region
seems to have been constructed more by parliament than by the economic interests within
it.12 Evidence of regional consciousness amongst hosiery workers, rather than simply
intra-regional co-operation, is hard to find. The short-lived and ultimately unsuccessful
attempts to form region-wide trade unions suggest a lack of strong regional affinity. By
the 1830s, any new unions were relatively small bodies established on a branch basis,
such as the Sock Branch Union, formed in 1830 when about 1000 Leicestershire sock
hands who had already suffered two reductions in wages struck for a wage rise.13 The
different priorities and concerns of the various branches of the hosiery industry were also
evident when the 1843 petition was drawn up. There was disagreement amongst
framework knitters over its content, as Leicester stockingers were opposed to the
resolution to revive the provisions of the Framework Knitters' Company charter, on the
grounds that it was outdated and impossible to implement.14 Nonetheless, the resolution

11 Other examples include a petition by clothiers in the South West against gig-mills in 1802, a petition for
regulation of the wool trade in 1805, and a cotton weavers' petition in 1807 for a minimum wage bill. See
J. Gregory and J. Stevenson (eds), The Longman companion to Britain in the eighteenth century, 1688-
1820 (Harlow, 2000), 307-8.
12 See Chapter 3 for evidence of the greater importance of sub-regional scales of economic activity in the
East Midlands, rather than region-wide economic integration.
13 Wells, Hosiery and knitwear industry, 88-105, 113-115.
14 W. Felkin, A history of the machine-wrought hosiery and lace manufactures (1867), 472.
remained in the petition, suggesting that framework knitters from the three counties were not speaking with one voice when the petition was presented to parliament.

Looking at the methods used to carry out the 1844 Inquiry (as outlined at the beginning of the commissioner's report) reveals something of the nature of the relationship between central government and workers in the East Midlands. Muggeridge was at pains to point out both the personal attention and the desire for detail which had characterised the inquiry. He had visited in person all the principal hosiery towns in the three counties, as well as outlying settlements – some 22 locations. His reasoning for this suggests that he was sympathetic to the needs of the framework knitters in these places: he explained that in order to give them the fullest opportunity to discuss their grievances, with minimal loss of valuable work time, he visited them rather than expecting them to come to him. The large scale of the inquiry also indicates the seriousness with which the framework knitters' concerns were viewed by parliament. More than 600 people were examined, including workmen and employers in every single branch of hosiery manufacture, with witness statements running to several hundred pages in total. Moreover, all the evidence from witnesses was to be presented verbatim in the report, thus eliminating the danger of misrepresenting their statements, and allowing them to speak for themselves. However, while the government was sympathetic to individual interests, it did not wish to be seen as a 'prisoner' of any one interest. Thus, tellingly, Muggeridge noted that he made a point of emphasising to the framework knitters that they should not expect immediate legislative measures for relief. He suggested that improvement in their circumstances was more likely to come about through increased demand for hosiery products, rather than through 'direct legislative interposition'.\textsuperscript{15} So, although central government was willing to listen to voices from the provinces, it ultimately left the fate of local economic interests in the hands of the market.

Individuals in the localities were not always content with this seemingly subordinate position, however. The most striking manifestations of provincial discontent with central government policy were the riots and popular disturbances of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Although many riots concerned local economic issues, such as food shortages, opposition to enclosure, or industrial disputes, a significant number of

\textsuperscript{15} Report of the Commissioner appointed to inquire into the condition of the frame-work knitters, 2-3.
disturbances had a national dimension, being prompted by government actions such as
the imposition of unpopular taxes or the use of forcible recruitment to the army, navy or
militia. These disturbances took place across the country, with no one region or locality
being particularly prone to protest, as is evident from the chronology of protests against
central government in Appendix 1.

Not all popular disturbances were enacted nationwide, though. Some arose as a
response to the consequences of central government policy in a particular region.
Luddism is a good example of this, with disturbances being sparked off by great distress
in the hosiery industry caused by the closure of American markets in 1811, as the US
responded to the Orders in Council. Reaction to the Luddite disturbances at national level
is another instance of the way in which the East Midlands was framed as a region by
outsiders despite not being identified as such by its inhabitants. In other words, central
government and the London press used verbal imagery to portray the East Midlands as a
'space of representation', which was at odds with the reality of Luddite activity. Incidents
of frame-breaking were sporadic and apparently uncoordinated, suggesting that the rioters
were not consciously acting in concert as part of a regional movement. In any case,
Luddism soon spread beyond the East Midlands, into Sheffield, the textile districts of the
West Riding (principally around Leeds and Huddersfield), and Stockport, after which
disturbances took place throughout the cotton districts of south-east Lancashire and
north-east Cheshire.\textsuperscript{16} There were no obvious organisational linkages between these three
centres of Luddism – the East Midlands, Yorkshire and Lancashire. Disturbances in each
area simply reflected a common grievance – the threat to livelihoods posed by new
machinery, made more sharply apparent during a period of depressed markets.

Despite the disparate and uncoordinated nature of Luddism, however, substantial
coverage in the London press served to frame it as a \textit{regional movement}. Newspapers
provided a detailed chronicle for their readers of disturbances as they happened, helping
to build up a picture of the spatial concentration of Luddism. \textit{The Times}, for instance,

\textsuperscript{16} Read, \textit{English provinces}, 61-3; A. Randall and A. Charlesworth, ‘The Luddite disturbances, 1811-12’, in
A. Charlesworth, D. Gilbert, A. Randall, H. Southall and C. Wrigley, \textit{An atlas of industrial protest in
Britain, 1750-1990} (Basingstoke, 1996), 32-46.
printed daily reports from a local correspondent in the East Midlands in 1811.\textsuperscript{17} Throughout the period of the disturbances, it seems that Nottingham was regarded as the centre of Luddite activity. A report in \textit{The Times} in January 1812 began: ‘According to letters received yesterday from Nottingham, it appears that frame-breaking and other outrageous proceedings continued as usual, in Nottinghamshire and the adjacent counties,’\textsuperscript{18} while an article in 1816 was based on ‘numerous accounts from Nottingham and its vicinity.’\textsuperscript{19} Although Luddism was perceived as a regional movement, associated in the popular mind with the East Midlands, the Luddite disturbances, like most popular protests, were prompted both by localised grievances in particular branches of industry and opposition to central government policy more generally, and as such could not be confined neatly to one region.

Contemporary fears that any combined activity amongst the workers posed a threat to the established order fuelled alarmist reports in the press and within central government. One report in \textit{The Times} declared that there was ‘a real \textit{reign of terror}’ [original emphasis] existing in Nottingham and its district.\textsuperscript{20} Luddites were portrayed as a secretive, conspiratorial body, who would stop at nothing to see their demands met: ‘Such is the regularity with which their plans are laid, and the dexterity with which they are carried into effect, that is has been found impossible to detect them...They are marshalled and disciplined like a regular army, and are commanded by one particular leader, under whose banners they swear to conquer or die!’\textsuperscript{21} Indeed, rumours abounded that Gravenor Henson of Nottingham, who had long been openly supportive of framework knitters’ trade combinations in the East Midlands, was the mastermind behind the Luddite disturbances. According to Home Office papers of 1811, the ‘plan for a general and simultaneous tumult was in great measure laid by him,’ while one informant believed Henson to be ‘equal to the perpetration of anything Robespierre ever committed.’\textsuperscript{22}

Portraying Luddism as an organised movement, headed by an influential individual

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\begin{itemize}
\item\textsuperscript{17} L. Brown, ‘London’s knowledge of the provinces in the early nineteenth century’, \textit{Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History}, 3 (1986-87), 12.
\item\textsuperscript{18} \textit{The Times}, Thursday, 30 January, 1812.
\item\textsuperscript{19} \textit{The Times}, Saturday, 19 October, 1816.
\item\textsuperscript{20} \textit{The Times}, Saturday, 19 October, 1816.
\item\textsuperscript{21} \textit{The Times}, Friday, 31 January, 1812.
\item\textsuperscript{22} Home Office papers, 1811, 42, 160, 162, quoted in Wells, \textit{Hosiery and knitwear}, 95.
\end{itemize}
\end{flushright}
capable of uniting workers scattered over a wide area (rather than an outbreak of sporadic, largely non-political disturbances), would clearly give greater weight to the argument that workers' combinations and unions posed a threat.

Whilst the reaction to Luddism provides a striking example of the construction of a regional space 'from outside', another movement which found support amongst framework knitters in the nineteenth century – Chartism – was organised as a regional movement amongst its supporters within the East Midlands from an early stage. The Chartists' critique of industrial capitalism found resonance with framework knitters in the East Midlands, whose trade was characterised by increasing control of merchant capital over labour, unregulated competition, which rendered finer hosiery skills redundant as the market was flooded with inferior 'cut-ups', and demands for a 'fair' wage for knitters' labour. Because of the shared grievances of framework knitters in Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Derbyshire, contact between the Chartist leaders of the three counties was close, as were the political sentiments of the stockingers. In March 1839 the Three Counties Chartist Association was formed at a meeting of delegates in Nottingham, and in 1840 the Chartists of the three counties formed the Charter Association for the Midlands Counties, as part of the National Charter Association. This example therefore illustrates the importance of considering how a regional space could be created and 'imagined', not only from the outside, but also from the inside.

Having suggested that the notion of the region 'from above' did not necessarily accord with the experience of its inhabitants, it is important now to consider the political experience of the East Midlands' population, and in particular the spatial scales at which everyday political life operated here. This will be compared with other parts of the country to provide some context. In what follows, the focus will be on petitioning and elections, since they represented two means by which people in the English provinces most commonly interacted with central government. These were in effect the 'lived spaces' of politics in the provinces.

Petitioning was a particularly powerful instrument in the relationship between centre and locality, since it represented an attempt to mould national policy for the benefit

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of local interests, by ensuring the passage of legislation that was beneficial to the interests of a particular locality or preventing the passing of legislation that would be detrimental to local concerns. Petitions tended to be initiated at borough or county level, and more rarely formed a regional movement. Indeed, petitioning campaigns against government policy were often co-ordinated by special interest groups, usually based in particular towns or counties, which in many cases offered a means for constituencies without MPs to have their voices heard in parliament. For instance, the Manchester Committee for the Protection and Encouragement of Trade was formed in 1774, and the Birmingham Commercial Committee in 1783, followed by similar organisations in Halifax, Leeds, Exeter and elsewhere. The intention of all these groups was to promote local business interests and monitor government economic policy, sometimes acting in concert. They led opposition to the unpopular fustian tax of 1784, for example.

A good example of a county-based movement is the Yorkshire Association, initiated in the 1770s by a group of gentry, clergy and freeholders who petitioned parliament to voice their disapproval at the government's handling of the American War and to demand economic and parliamentary reform at home in order to reduce corruption. Existing county administrative structures provided a basis for the organisation of the Association. Its founder, Christopher Wyvill, deliberately sought support from 'gentlemen of weight and character' in Yorkshire, many of whom already held prominent positions in the life of the county. The activities of the Association were also directed and authorised using the existing structure of county meetings – gatherings of gentry and yeoman seen as representative of opinion amongst the 'county community'.

Though the Association was clearly delineated as a county movement, it also sought to mobilise support from other areas of the country, in order to make a more potent case to parliament. Following its presentation of a petition to parliament in 1779,

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24 Though note that there were a number of region-wide petitions from framework knitters across the East Midlands in the eighteenth century, which are discussed in Chapter 3. The greater propensity for economic-based petitions to be cross-county in origin could perhaps reflect the fact that political culture was much more centrifugal than economic culture, and thus economic grievances were likely to be wider in scope.

25 A good example of a county-based movement is the Yorkshire Association, initiated in the 1770s by a group of gentry, clergy and freeholders who petitioned parliament to voice their disapproval at the government's handling of the American War and to demand economic and parliamentary reform at home in order to reduce corruption. Existing county administrative structures provided a basis for the organisation of the Association. Its founder, Christopher Wyvill, deliberately sought support from 'gentlemen of weight and character' in Yorkshire, many of whom already held prominent positions in the life of the county. The activities of the Association were also directed and authorised using the existing structure of county meetings – gatherings of gentry and yeoman seen as representative of opinion amongst the 'county community'.

26 Such as commissioner of the peace, sheriff, or juror at the assizes.

28 other counties and many cities and towns sent similar petitions. Amongst them was Nottingham, whose petitioners (the mayor, burgesses and a majority of the Common Council) requested that the House of Commons reduce its extravagant spending, abolish all ‘superfluous’ and nominal offices, and redirect the resultant monies to ‘the Necessities of the State.’ As evidence that Nottingham’s petitioners were part of a national reform movement, they formed a committee of correspondence to keep in touch with other pro-reform counties and towns, and sent the well-known radical parliamentary reformer Major John Cartwright to act as the town’s representative at a meeting of petitioners from across the country in London in March 1780. Thus despite its local origins, the Yorkshire Association became a wider petitioning movement, because of its concern with issues of interest and relevance to people across the country.

But how commonly did petitions for legislation involve more than one town or county? A way to assess this is to calculate the proportion of local legislation, both successful and failed, which related to more than one place (since nearly all local bills originated in petitions from the localities and/or interest groups with which the proposed legislation was concerned.) In particular, it is interesting to note the subject of the bills which related to more than one location, in order to assess how far these bills had involved genuine cross-county or inter-town co-operation (as with turnpikes for instance), or whether they simply covered geographically contiguous places (as was the case with many estate and enclosure bills.) For convenience, and for ease of comparison between the East Midlands and other parts of the country, bills have been grouped by region, even though the majority of individual bills related to a small area within a region.

29 Nottingham Journal, January 22, 1780.
31 For the purpose of this study, local legislation includes acts relating to estates and enclosure which represented between 40 and 60 percent of all local acts, and acts concerned with the provision of amenities or social services. By far the majority of these latter acts (over half) dealt with turnpikes and other road improvements, while other acts were concerned with paving, lighting and watching town streets; rebuilding of churches; improvements to bridges and harbours; the establishment of theatres, county halls and prisons, small debt courts, workhouses and boards of guardians. See Innes, ‘Local acts of a national parliament’, 23-4. Failed local legislation refers to bills which were initiated usually by a petition from a particular locality, but were rejected (or simply lost or forgotten) during their passage through lengthy parliamentary procedure before they could become law.
Table 2.1: Numbers of successful acts and failed bills concerning more than one town or county.32

As Table 2.1 shows, successful acts were far more likely than failed bills to concern more than one town or county, thus reinforcing the point that securing support for a bill from more than one locality increased its chances of becoming law. Nevertheless, only about one third of local acts in the East and West Midlands and North West related to more than one town or county, with the proportion being even lower in other regions – between a fifth and a quarter. A substantial proportion of such legislation concerned estates or enclosure, which usually involved a single landowner who happened to own property in more than one county, rather than being prompted by a concerted petitioning campaign. A smaller proportion of acts concerning more than one town or county related to transport links, such as turnpikes and river navigations, which would usually involve co-operation between several places along the proposed route. Overall therefore, if we consider both successful and failed bills, it appears that inter-town or cross-county petitioning was relatively infrequent.

Despite the localised nature of most petitions, however, their rhetoric frequently appealed to broader themes which were of importance at national level. Because of the

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32 Table created using a database of legislation compiled from Statutes at Large by Dr Andrew Hann under the direction of Joanna Innes. I am grateful to Andrew for allowing me to use these data. The counties included in each region are as follows: East Midlands – Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire; West Midlands – Staffordshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire; North East – Co. Durham and Northumberland; North West – Cheshire and Lancashire; East Anglia – Cambridgeshire, Huntingdonshire, Norfolk, Suffolk; South West – Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Somerset, Wiltshire.
prevailing political culture at the time, which privileged the public good over the perceived narrowness and private interest associated with local petitions, their authors tended to couch their requests in the language of the national interest, focusing on the public benefit the proposed legislation would bring, or the distress it would cause to the public at large. For instance, petitions for the improvement of trade and communications through river navigations, turnpikes and canals were nearly always presented as of national benefit, since faster communications meant lower costs for manufacturers and thus increased trade. To take a more specific example, a petition for a new church in Liverpool in the early eighteenth century noted that many inhabitants had to walk two miles to reach a parish church, often stopping off for a drink in a public house in a village on the way. This cannot have been the only reason a new church was needed in the city, but by highlighting this question of social order, the petitioners consciously attempted to tap into parliament's concern with the reformation of manners and the moral education of the lower orders more generally. Nonetheless, despite this rhetoric, the actual intention of petitioners was to encourage the government to bolster local rights and privileges, by granting further powers or autonomy to local authorities, for instance by sanctioning the establishment of improvement commissions or turnpike trusts.

It would seem, then, that the methods used by petitioners in different parts of the country were broadly similar, as they all were obliged to operate within a legislative framework which privileged national over local interests. But were there any differences between regions in the concerns over which they petitioned or the success rate of their campaigns? This can be assessed by calculating the number of local bills - both successful and failed - in different categories, making comparisons between different regions and time periods. As Table 2.2 shows, there were relatively few differences between regions in the number and type of successful local acts, suggesting that no region had a significantly greater need or ability to seek parliamentary sanction for its activities at local level. An increase in the number of acts passed as the eighteenth century

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34 R. Sweet, 'Local identities and a national parliament, c. 1688-1835', in J. Hoppit (ed), Parliaments, nations and identities in Britain and Ireland, 1660-1850 (Manchester, 2003), 48-63.
35 Though it is interesting to note that there was a correlation between the number of MPs in a region and the total number of attempts to secure legislation (both successful and failed). Thus the North East and
progressed is clear, particularly in the North West and East Anglia. This mirrors the
dramatic rise in levels of parliamentary activity during the eighteenth century, with the
total number of acts passed rising from 564 in the period 1660-1688, to 1,298 between
1689 and 1706, and 4,157 in the period 1782-1800. In all regions, the most important
categories of legislation, in terms of the number of acts passed, were personal acts
(mostly concerned with estates), land, roads (nearly all turnpikes), water, and to a lesser
extent, amenities and improvement.

Acts concerned with turnpikes, river navigations and canals frequently involved
cross-county or inter-town co-operation, as suggested earlier. Thus they encouraged intra-
regional integration, bringing people and places together in a collective response to
economic imperatives such as the need to reduce the excessive cost of road maintenance
by establishing a turnpike trust, or to promote trade across a region by constructing a
canal network. Some regions seem to have had stronger tendencies towards integration
than others, however. For instance, acts under the category 'water' (relating to rivers,
canals, bridges, ports and quays, and shipping) were more numerous in the North West
and West Midlands, probably because of the extensive canal building programme in these
areas which served to tie the region together economically, as Langton has argued. In
contrast to transport-related legislation, acts concerned with amenities and improvement
tended to reflect a desire for local autonomy (through the establishment of urban
improvement commissions, for instance), local pride, and competition between places.
The provision of new services or leisure facilities was viewed as a marker of wealth and
prosperity, and enabled individual towns to set themselves apart from their less well-
provided neighbours. Fairly similar numbers of acts relating to amenities and
improvement were passed for each region, and all areas demonstrated a marked increase
in such acts by the early nineteenth century. This not only reflects the greater need for
regulation of urban space as towns became more populous and witnessed an expansion in

North West were under-represented in parliament, and also sent the smallest number of petitions to
Westminster, whilst the South West, with the highest density of MPs, was also the region with the most
petitioning activity.

36 J. Hoppit, 'Introduction', in Hoppit, Parliaments, nations and identities, 6-7.
37 J. Langton, "The industrial revolution and the regional geography of England", Transactions of the
Institute of British Geographers, 9 (1984), 162-3.
their industrial functions, but also suggests a similar growth in civic pride and inter-town competition in all regions from the end of the eighteenth century.

Patterns of failed legislation also tended to be broadly similar in all six regions, as Table 2.3 demonstrates, with bills relating to enclosure, turnpikes, waterways and personal estates being most numerous. There were some differences between regions in the total number of failed bills, though, with the North East and North West recording significantly lower numbers than the South West and West and East Midlands. Purely looking at the number of unsuccessful bills is not an accurate indicator of the legislative 'success rate' in different regions, however. The proportions of local bills which were successful were in fact broadly similar in all regions, at between 70 and 80 percent, although interestingly the percentages for the North East and South West were lower than those for the other regions throughout the period from the late seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth. This suggests that greater distance from London could prove a hindrance when attempting to secure the passage of legislation through parliament.

Overall then, this analysis of petitioning and the passage of local legislation has demonstrated that while interaction between the provinces and central government increased during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, as the number of petitions and local acts grew, these requests for legislation were usually highly localised in origin and scope. Although wider petitioning movements, or intra-regional co-operation over transport legislation for example, were not uncommon, responsibility for handing over a petition or lobbying parliament usually fell on only a small number of individuals from the provinces. The majority of people had no direct contact with central government, and found that their political experience was organised and mediated at borough or county level, rather than at a regional scale.
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| Region     | 1770-1800 |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|------------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|        |        |
|            | Personal  | Central gov. | Local gov. | Financial | Law and Order | Church of England | Armed services | Amenities/Improvement | Poor relief | Land | Trade and Industry | Water | Roads and Railways | TOTAL |
| E. Mids.   | 20        | 0       | 0       | 0       | 0       | 1       | 1       | 0       | 2       | 0      | 201    | 0      | 28     | 87     | 340    |
| W. Mids.   | 43        | 1       | 1       | 3       | 3       | 0       | 1       | 10      | 3       | 138    | 1      | 45     | 105    | 354    |
| NE         | 12        | 1       | 0       | 0       | 2       | 2       | 1       | 5       | 2       | 28     | 5      | 9      | 28     | 95     |
| NW         | 40        | 0       | 0       | 3       | 7       | 8       | 1       | 10      | 1       | 38     | 2      | 35     | 81     | 226    |
| E. Anglia  | 35        | 0       | 0       | 2       | 0       | 3       | 0       | 7       | 14      | 168    | 2      | 11     | 48     | 290    |
| SW         | 63        | 3       | 4       | 1       | 2       | 3       | 7       | 18      | 11      | 142    | 5      | 24     | 124    | 407    |

| Region     | 1800-1830 |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |        |
|------------|-----------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|--------|        |        |
|            | Personal  | Central gov. | Local gov. | Financial | Law and Order | Church of England | Armed services | Amenities/Improvement | Poor relief | Land | Trade and Industry | Water | Roads and Railways | TOTAL |
| E. Mids.   | 25        | 1       | 2       | 0       | 3       | 4       | 0       | 11      | 2       | 98     | 0      | 2      | 150    | 298    |
| W. Mids.   | 34        | 0       | 0       | 3       | 4       | 14      | 0       | 28      | 0       | 119    | 9      | 31     | 156    | 398    |
| NE         | 13        | 0       | 1       | 1       | 6       | 8       | 0       | 13      | 2       | 32     | 0      | 16     | 58     | 150    |
| NW         | 38        | 0       | 0       | 3       | 6       | 27      | 1       | 55      | 2       | 57     | 7      | 32     | 175    | 403    |
| E. Anglia  | 37        | 3       | 1       | 1       | 3       | 7       | 0       | 19      | 14      | 387    | 1      | 14     | 72     | 559    |
| SW         | 31        | 7       | 1       | 8       | 3       | 13      | 7       | 19      | 2       | 213    | 12     | 51     | 190    | 557    |

Table 2.2: Number of local acts passed in different categories, relating to six different regions, 1660-1830. (See Note 29 for source).
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Table 2.3: Number of failed attempts at legislation under different categories, from six different regions.\(^{38}\)

Electoral politics, too, were founded upon the borough and county, yet they also offer insight into the nature of the relationship between parliament and the localities, demonstrating the differing balance between metropolitan influence and provincial autonomy both over time and between regions. In the East Midlands, as elsewhere, MPs often found their loyalties divided between constituency and party, and between local and national imperatives. In eighteenth and early-nineteenth century England, the prevailing political dogma was Edmund Burke’s notion of ‘virtual representation’, whereby local interests were regarded as subordinate to the national interest, and the role of an MP was to represent the nation rather than a particular constituency, promoting the ‘general good’ instead of being influenced by local prejudices. In practice, however, MPs were a key point of contact and mediation between central government and the localities. Provincial town corporations, for example, saw MPs as vital in promoting and protecting local interests in parliament. Indeed, although there was no specific residence requirement for borough members, most corporations took steps to ensure that at least one of their town’s MPs was a local man. Roughly two thirds of members elected for the boroughs of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby between 1715 and 1820 lived in or near the town which they represented. (See Appendix 2.) MPs were more likely to retain the support of their constituents if they demonstrated local affinity. As O’Gorman puts it, ‘The ideal candidate should be accessible, approachable, and sensitive to the wishes of the constituency. This meant that he should be a local man, of honour, reputation, and integrity, known to everybody.’

Paying careful attention to local interests was particularly important for MPs representing constituencies like Leicester and Nottingham, which were amongst a group of twenty to thirty ‘open’ boroughs (containing two thirds of the borough electorate in England and Wales) which had a large number of independent voters whose opinion of a

40 Gauci, ‘Parliament as a point of contact’, 14.
41 P. Langford, ‘Property and “virtual representation” in eighteenth-century England’, The Historical Journal, 31 (1988), 92. Indeed, Langford points out that any MP who owned property in a particular locality had an interest in it and was in a sense accountable to that locality, even if he did not represent it in parliament.
candidate could have a significant influence on the result of an election. For instance, Daniel Parker Coke was elected MP for Nottingham in 1780, and initially proved popular, being granted the freedom of the borough in 1785 for his conscientiousness in promoting the trading and manufacturing interests of Nottingham. However, he fell out of favour in 1797, when the municipal government believed that the Jurisdiction Bill he was promoting in parliament contravened the charters of the corporation. He subsequently lost his seat at the election of 1802, and was only reinstated after intervention by parliament prompted another election in 1803, at which Coke narrowly beat the corporation's candidate Joseph Birch thanks to the rural and freeholder vote. Numerous similar examples can be cited from other regions. The MP for Chester in 1732, Sir Richard Grosvenor, made himself very unpopular by his opposition to a Whig proposal for the widening of the River Dee in order to resurrect the town's ailing trade. He argued that the proposal would be detrimental to the interests of landowners who owned the salt flats of the Wirral. The Grosvenor family's long-standing interest in the borough was only saved by Sir Richard's generous benefactions to the town, and more importantly, his eventual willingness to negotiate with local landowners and townspeople over the navigation. In 1733 Thomas Winford lost the support of the Hereford electorate and forfeited his seat the following year because of his support for an unpopular local turnpike trust. And, at the general election of 1734, Lord Gower had to reassure the voters in Newcastle-under-Lyme by announcing that he would oppose any plan to enclose common land in the town.

Local concerns were clearly of great significance in determining the course of an election campaign and the eventual outcome of that election, not only in open boroughs, but also in so-called 'patronage boroughs' like Derby, Newark and East Retford, which formed the largest group of constituencies in England and Wales. Electoral politics in these boroughs were based on long-standing relationships of deference and obligation: as

43 O'Gorman, Voters, patrons and parties, 28-45, 55, 90-1. Other large, open boroughs included London, Liverpool, Bristol, Norwich, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Colchester, Gloucester and Canterbury.
long as a patron fulfilled his paternalistic obligations, it was expected that the voter would reciprocate by offering electoral loyalty to him. Crucial to maintaining voter loyalty were personal attention and local knowledge on the part of the patron, manifest in traditional mechanisms of patronage such as offering custom to local tradesmen, allocating local offices to constituents, building municipal amenities, and providing welfare and charity. The importance of paying careful attention to local opinion was made clear at a by-election in Derby in 1748, when the Stanhope family, who shared the representation of the borough with the Devonshires, decided without consulting the freemen to run a relative stranger, Thomas Stanhope, following John Stanhope's death. There is some evidence that the Devonshires colluded in this plan. Local Whigs resented this and put forward their own candidate, Thomas Rivett, who soundly beat Stanhope. The family's interest unsurprisingly lapsed after this, and even the dominant Devonshire interest was threatened. 47

While local issues were of importance in all East Midlands' boroughs, Leicester and Nottingham were unusual amongst English constituencies in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, in that they also demonstrated significant awareness of and ties to national parliamentary politics. This was evident in the importance of national issues during elections in the two boroughs; the formation of political clubs along parliamentary party lines from an early stage; and the unusually strong involvement of party organisations in the political life of the two towns. Turning to the first point, Leicester and Nottingham were amongst a relatively small number of constituencies in which national issues played a central role electorally. Even in the period from the later 1760s to the early nineteenth century – usually viewed as a time during which the electorate became increasingly conscious of national politics following a period of stultification in local electoral politics 48 – a significant proportion of constituencies remained immobilised by key parliamentary debates. At the general elections of 1780 and 1784, for example, coinciding with the American War and the conflict between Pitt and Fox, national issues played a central role in only 9 of the 40 counties and 32 of the 203

boroughs in England and Wales. Amongst these were Leicester and Nottingham. Indeed, in Nottingham in particular, regular contested elections focussed directly on national parliamentary politics. As larger and more open constituencies, the electorates in these two boroughs were more likely to insist that MPs should conduct themselves in a particular way in parliament or risk losing their votes at the next election. For instance, the corporation of Nottingham eventually decided to withdraw their support from their MP Daniel Parker Coke because he had failed to oppose the war with France in the previous parliament, and was identified with the repressive, anti-Radical measures of Pitt’s government in the 1790s. However, although awareness of parliamentary debates and controversies was particularly strong in Leicester and Nottingham, this does not mean that political life in other constituencies solely revolved around local concerns. A number of issues dividing the parties at Westminster also featured strongly in local election campaigns.

Given the relatively prominent role of parliamentary politics in election campaigns in Leicester and Nottingham, it is not surprising that the influence of party organisations was also unusually marked in the two boroughs. Leicester and Nottingham were amongst just a dozen major boroughs where the involvement of parliamentary parties with voters was very significant (the others included London, Westminster, Bristol and York.) In Leicester, the dissenting opponents of the Tory corporation allied themselves openly with the Foxite Whigs, forming the Revolution Club in 1784 in support of Charles James Fox. In opposition to this, the pro-government Constitutional Society was established in the town after the French Revolution. In Nottingham, too,

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49 O’Gorman, Voters, patrons and parties, 296. Although this represented up to half the electorate, and a significant proportion of all contested constituencies, it seems that national concerns were far from dominating extra-parliamentary politics. Indeed, some elections of this period, such as those in 1806 and 1812, were fought almost entirely on local issues. Beckett, ‘Parliament and the localities’, 63.
50 These included the succession issue and the prospect of war in 1701-2, the cry of the ‘Church in Danger’ in 1705, the controversial impeachment in parliament of the high Tory cleric Dr Henry Sacheverell in 1710, and later in the period, Catholic emancipation, the Corn Laws and parliamentary reform. A striking example of voters’ response to their MPs’ stance on national issues was the reaction to Walpole’s unpopular Excise Bill of 1733. At the general election of 1734, Members who supported the bill lost their seats in several boroughs, including Bristol, Coventry, Worcester and Newcastle. See O’Gorman, Voters, patrons and parties, 293-5; Rogers, Whigs and Cities, 256-7; K. Wilson, The sense of the people: politics, culture and imperialism in England, 1715-1785 (Cambridge, 1995), 124-8.
52 O’Gorman, Voters, patrons and parties, 330-32.
party distinctions were perpetuated by the founding of rival political clubs – the Whig Society and the Tory White Lion Club (1774-6), with the labels 'Whig' and 'Tory' being used to refer not simply to local allegiances but to the local supporters of national parties. The relative distinctiveness of Leicester and Nottingham is highlighted by the fact that in 58 percent of borough seats (124 out of 215), party activity was irrelevant, and in a further 25 boroughs, party debates were much less important than local concerns. In Derby, for instance, the old Whig-Tory conflict was superseded by local debate over the independence of the constituency by the mid-eighteenth century. Although divisions between Whigs and Tories lingered in Derby, the borough was not contested after 1796.53

Even though national party debates seem to have been more prominent in the political life of Leicester and Nottingham than in many other boroughs, and even in those boroughs where constituents were aware of and sought to influence their MPs' stance on issues of national importance, I would argue that these national issues did not replace local debates and concerns - rather they served to enlarge the sphere of local politics. Rogers' argument that issues at national level were crucial in determining the vitality of local urban politics, with provincial towns invariably following London's lead in political culture seems too one-sided, rendering the vitality and autonomy of extra-parliamentary politics subordinate to metropolitan-centred politics.54 As Wilson has pointed out, political consciousness was created as much through the involvement of individuals in localised power struggles as through participation in national movements aimed at parliamentary reform or dismissal of a government minister.55

To sum up, we return to the three themes outlined at the beginning of this chapter. Firstly, the evidence for growing provincial independence over time in the political sphere is equivocal. Whilst it could be argued that local authorities were exercising their autonomy and independence in petitioning for greater powers at local level, or taking their MPs to task if they failed to champion local interests, on the other hand, the fact that local bodies continually had to resort to central government to sanction their actions could be seen as a sign of the localities' continuing dependence on the centre. Secondly, regional comparison has revealed some distinctive features in the East Midlands – such as

53 O'Gorman, Voters, patrons and parties, 337-354.
55 Wilson, Sense of the people, 15.
the particularly strong influence of party politics in Leicester and Nottingham from the later eighteenth century. Moreover, with reference to the third theme, whilst the majority of political interaction between the provinces and London took place at the borough or county level (in the election of MPs, for instance, or the sending of petitions requesting local legislation), the East Midlands was unusual in being framed as a region, for the purpose of a government inquiry, and in newspaper reportage of Luddism (albeit only in the nineteenth century.) What was most distinctive about the East Midlands was that it was defined as a 'region' by metropolitan institutions, rather than by its own inhabitants. These three themes - the tension between dependence and initiative at local level; the distinctiveness of the East Midlands; and the relative importance of a regional scale of activity - were also echoed in the social and cultural spheres, to which we now turn.

London's dominance? Society and culture in the provinces

Social and cultural connections between London and the provinces were numerous, but the extent to which the capital led while the rest of the country followed has been subject to recent debate. In this section, the relative importance of metropolitan, regional and local cultural influences on the populace of the East Midlands will be assessed, drawing comparisons with other parts of the country for which comparable data exist on the extent of London's influence. Due to the nature of the sources used, the focus will be primarily on urban society and culture in the provinces. Attention turns first to the mechanisms and conduits of metropolitan influence. The notion of London as a model for provincial town culture will be discussed, highlighting the prestige associated with a metropolitan connection and the means of transmission of London fashions to the provinces, both of which were evident in travel writings and newspaper advertisements. A comparative study of several regions will then be used to shed light on the relative strength of metropolitan influence in different parts of the country. Using newspaper advertisements it will be shown that metropolitan references were significantly more frequent in the North and North East than in the East Midlands. This suggests that local and regional linkages and associations were of more importance in the East Midlands. The second part of this section thus focuses on intra-regional cultural associations, drawing on evidence from newspaper advertisements and circulation areas, urban histories, and the provision
of urban amenities. In the third part, it will be argued that despite this evidence for the importance of regional cultural linkages, it was at the level of the individual town that the majority of people in the East Midlands (and elsewhere) felt most attachment and affiliation. Indeed the desire of individual towns to trumpet their own identity could be seen as a way of distinguishing themselves within a broader urban region. Evidence of the vitality of civic identity and pride will be drawn from town histories and urban art and architecture.

London acted as a powerful magnet for many people in the provinces, particularly the gentry, who 'decamped' to their West End town houses for several months of the year, enjoying the London 'season', which was well established by the end of the seventeenth century. The impact of this temporary migration to the metropolis on the localities from which the gentry came was mixed. On the one hand, gentry could act as what Borsay terms 'cultural carriers', transmitting aspects of London culture to their home locality on their return. On the other hand, the autonomy and authority of the local 'county community' could be maintained, even when its members were away from their country seats. During the London season, county societies often met and dined in the capital, initially simply to offer support to those who were feeling isolated away from home, but later to transact important county business, 'as if the counties were colonies administered from a distant metropolis.'

Even for those amongst the wealthier classes and middling sorts who could not visit London so regularly, imitation of metropolitan fashions and culture remained a preoccupation. As the eighteenth century progressed, the use of London as a model for architectural design, social facilities and consumer culture became increasingly evident in provincial towns. As Trusler declared in 1777: 'The several cities and large towns of this island catch the manners of the metropolis... the notions of splendour that prevail in the

56 Dyos, 'Greater and greater London', 54; Reed, 'London and its hinterland', 70.
Capital are eagerly adopted; the various changes of the fashion exactly copied. For instance, many provincial town churches followed the model of James Gibbs' St Martin-in-the-Fields (1721-6), and indeed All Saints' church in Derby (built 1723-5) was designed by Gibbs himself. Pleasure gardens in several provincial towns, including Leicester, were named 'Vauxhall', in a conscious imitation of their London model. In musical terms, subscription concerts, music clubs, festivals and opera all originated in the capital after 1660, before being exported to the provinces in the eighteenth century. The Birmingham musical festival, which was established in 1768 to raise funds for the town's General Hospital, was modelled on Handel's concerts in aid of the London Foundling Hospital (established in 1739). The event was advertised in local newspapers in both Leicester and Nottingham in September 1820, with the promise of a 'Full Cathedral Service, as chanted at Westminster Abbey', and a performance of Mozart's Requiem with wind instruments borrowed 'by the gracious permission of His Majesty...from the Royal Household Band.'

London also dominated England's print culture, acting as the centre of the publishing industry for both books and newspapers. By 1789, more than 65,000 newspapers per week were distributed to the provinces - a figure which had reached nearly 12 million by 1829. Meanwhile, a significant proportion of any issue of a provincial newspaper consisted of news from London, often culled from metropolitan newspapers.

A number of reasons can be cited for London's cultural dominance. Part of the explanation lies in the capital's enormous size relative to other towns, and hence the availability of a large pool of consumers, who demanded substantial quantities of high-quality goods, as well as providing a critical mass of users for cultural facilities. Such a market was unavailable in provincial towns, and thus, it is argued, they turned to London to initiate and to finance developments in fashionable culture. A second important reason for the pervasive influence of London was people's desire for the status that was

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60 Borsay, 'London connection', 22.
61 L. J., 15 September, 1820.
conferred by a metropolitan association. Contemporaries viewed the capital, and its Royal Court, as setting a benchmark for taste, against which other towns should be measured. Thirdly, London’s widespread cultural influence was fostered by the transmission of metropolitan fashions by architects, craftsmen and retailers as they travelled across the country, as well as through the medium of print. Evidence for these latter two factors can be found in contemporary travel writings and town histories as well as newspaper advertisements.

The texts of advertisements and narratives of travel writers constructed a particular image of London as a centre of fashion and taste, worthy of emulation, and thus they created a ‘space of representation.’ Travel writers of the time were characteristically London-centric in their narratives, making constant comparisons between the features of provincial towns and the metropolis. When visiting Nottingham, Celia Fiennes noted that the town was ‘built of stone and delicate large and long Streetes much like London’, adding that ‘the Market place is very broad – out of which runns 2 very large streetes much like Holborn.’ Turning her attention to the water supply in Leicester, she recorded that there was ‘a water house and a water mill to turn the water into the pipes to serve the town, as it is in London.’ Almost a century later, John Throsby, in his history of Leicester, recorded how the townspeople had raised money to pave the streets ‘after the London fashion.’ Towns across the country were portrayed in similar vein. Celia Fiennes described brick houses ‘of the London mode’ at Colchester, Norwich and Liverpool, while Daniel Defoe declared in his Tour that ‘no town in England, London excepted...can equal Liverpool for the fineness of the streets, and beauty of the buildings.’ Such was the importance attached to a ‘London connection’ that many provincial towns incorporated features named after places in the metropolis.

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63 Borsay, ‘London connection’.
64 The Journeys of Celia Fiennes, ed. C. Morris (London, 1947), 143, 183-4, 72, 163
65 J. Throsby, The history and antiquities of the ancient town of Leicester (Leicester, 1791), 170.
67 Examples include the Vauxhall Gardens in Leicester (mentioned previously), and the main shopping street in Norwich – Cockey Lane – which was renamed ‘London Street’ in the eighteenth century. In Bath, the field which accommodated the riding ring was known as ‘Hyde Park’. See Borsay, ‘London connection’, 24.
The prestige associated with a metropolitan connection, and the process of transmission of fashions and innovations from the metropolis to the provinces were evident in the pages of advertisements in local newspapers. The evidence that follows is drawn from a sample of newspaper advertisements from the *Leicester Journal*, *Nottingham Journal*, and *Derby Mercury*. Advertisements help to reconstruct the nature and extent of a town's external linkages because they almost always stated the location of the product or service they were promoting and/or the place of residence of the advertiser. Looking in particular at the frequency with which London was mentioned in advertisements enables us to gauge the relative importance of connections to the capital for readers of a particular newspaper. Moreover, because newspapers are readily available, cover a fairly lengthy timespan, and are relatively standardised in format allowing direct comparison between towns to be made, they are useful sources for this enquiry. They have been used in studies of other regions too, enabling comparison between the East Midlands and other parts of the country. Well over one quarter of any issue of a newspaper was usually devoted to advertisements, which therefore provide a large set of data from which to draw conclusions. Provincial newspapers do have limitations, though. They are not available for a substantial portion of my period, since many were not established until the later eighteenth century. Moreover, the number and to some extent the type of advertisements printed in any one issue depended on factors such as the ability of advertisers to pay a fee to place their notice, the amount of news that the editor wished to include, and editorial decisions to target a specific audience by selecting particular types of advertisements to publish. Some newspaper proprietors devoted more space to job advertisements, notices from prospective parliamentary candidates, advertisements for books, or shipping notices, for example. Advertisements could be used simply as a 'filler' if news was limited, or alternatively could be cut out to provide room for coverage of more important news. These factors may skew my sample

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68 Advertisements were drawn from one issue per month for each of the following years and from the following newspapers: *Leicester and Nottingham Journal*, 1760; *Leicester Journal*, 1790 and 1820; *Derby Mercury*, 1740, 1780 and 1820; *Nottingham Journal*, 1790 and 1820. The *Stamford Mercury* also included parts of Rutland, east Nottinghamshire and east Leicestershire in its area of circulation, but as it was not published in any of the three counties covered by this study the decision was taken not to include it in the analysis.


slightly. Nevertheless, newspapers provide a systematic means of analysing the external linkages of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, which can be complemented by more anecdotal evidence of metropolitan linkages, drawn from travel writings and town histories.

In this survey of newspapers I noted the location of products and services advertised (or in some cases the location of the person placing the advertisement if this was given instead) and calculated the total number of advertisements falling into each of the following categories in each month surveyed: books and other printed material; moveable goods for sale; medicines; services; leisure activities or facilities; situations vacant; lost and found items; missing or absconded people. I also classified the location of each advertised product or service as being within the town in which the newspaper was published, or in the county of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire or Derbyshire, elsewhere in the East Midlands, London, or another place. This enables an assessment to be made of the relative importance of local, intra-regional and metropolitan linkages. My intention at this stage is to focus on references (particularly to London) which were used to add prestige to goods and services advertised, rather than to undertake a survey of all advertisements, including those that simply stated the location of an item or service for information purposes. Thus I have excluded from my sample advertisements for property sales, lottery tickets, legal notices and political advertisements, because even if they make mention of London, they tell us little about its role as an influential social centre, and there is no reason to believe that any one town or region would have a significantly greater frequency of metropolitan references in these categories of advertisement. Moreover, by excluding these categories my results are directly comparable with studies of other regions, rather than potentially being skewed by the inclusion of a mass of local real estate sales, for example. In a later part of this section I will use places mentioned in all advertisements as an indicator of the circulation area of each newspaper.

As Berry has observed, references to London in newspaper advertisements were commonly used to highlight the status, quality and novelty of goods and services on offer.71 Some of the most frequent metropolitan references are found in advertisements

placed by retailers and tradesmen, who visited the capital in the slack season to find out about the latest styles and to purchase new fashionable items to sell to customers at home. Milliners were particularly responsive to changes in fashion. Bath’s milliners, for example, were frequent visitors to London to pick up the latest news from Paris, and often subscribed to the fashion-plate magazines which emerged in the 1770s. Tradesmen in the East Midlands seem to have been little different. A typical example was the draper and milliner E. Bass from Melton Mowbray, who reported that she had ‘obtained in London patterns of the most approved Dresses, and selected various articles of fashionable Millinery.’ A Derby milliner, Rebecca Orme, advertised that she had ‘just brought from LONDON a fresh Assortment of MILLINERY GOODS, black and colour’d Stuff Shoes, Silk Quilted Coats, &c.’ The importance of immediacy is a recurrent theme in newspaper advertisements from towns across the country. Tradesmen were keen to point out that they were ‘just up from London’ or had ‘recently returned from London’, thus emphasising that their stock was at the cutting edge of fashion. In Nottingham, for instance, the carver and gilder Thomas Fitzwalter noted that ‘having lately returned from London, he has had an Opportunity of seeing the most approved Patterns of GLASS and PICTURE FRAMES &c which he trusts he is enabled to execute in a superior Style of Elegance.’ One dress shop owner in Nottingham, Mrs Thorpe, even placed an advert to inform her customers that she was in London at that very time, ‘selecting FASHIONS for the SEASON’.

Another means by which metropolitan fashions and styles were transmitted to the provinces was via skilled craftsmen, professionals or tradesmen who left London for the provinces (either permanently or temporarily), and advertised their services in the local press, stressing their metropolitan credentials. Advertisements in East Midlands’ newspapers were typical in this respect. In 1790, for instance, a jeweller and silversmith from Market Harborough, Abraham Samuel, informed the public that he had engaged ‘an

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72 T. Fawcett, ‘Eighteenth-century shops and the luxury trade’, Bath History, 3 (1990), 64.
73 L. J., 12 May, 1820.
74 D. M., 5 May-12 May, 1780.
75 N. J., 15 July, 1820.
76 N. J., 11 November, 1820.
77 Cranfield, Development of the provincial newspaper, 212-14.
able and experienced workman' from London to repair and clean watches and clocks. Comparisons and associations with London were often deliberately employed to suggest high quality. In 1790 an advert was placed in the *Leicester Journal* by William Wakeman, a silk-dyer, who had moved from London to take a house and shop in Leicester. He noted that he was capable of dyeing ribbons, feathers, silk gowns, stockings and gloves, 'and finishes them as well as in London.' Similarly, the *Derby Mercury* carried an advert in 1740 for a tailor in Chesterfield: 'JOHN DRANFIELD, Senior...is lately come down from London, and makes Mens Cloaths, Womens Gowns, Habits, and Cloaks, as fashionable as in London.' A piano tuner visiting Derby for a short period in 1820 was recommended on the strongest terms: 'his testimonials are from the first Professors of Music in London.'

References to London in newspaper advertisements in the East Midlands were significantly less frequent than in some other regions, however. My survey of local newspapers in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries reveals that on average, references to London represented less than 15 percent of all places mentioned in advertisements in any one month, with the figure being lowest in the final survey year, 1820 (7 percent for Leicester, 8 percent for Derby and 10 percent in Nottingham.) Moreover, even if the town in which the paper was published is excluded, over half of all the places mentioned in advertisements in any one year were in the East Midlands. The exceptions were the 1740 and 1780 samples for the *Derby Mercury*, where a lower percentage of places mentioned were in the East Midlands - 24 percent and 37 percent respectively - with London and places outside the East Midlands being mentioned more frequently than in Leicester and Nottingham. In general, though, it seems that mentions of a London connection were deemed less necessary for marketing purposes by tradesmen or vendors in the East Midlands, which suggests that local or regional connections were viewed as just as valuable markers of quality as a London association.

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78 *L. J.*, 9 April, 1790.
79 *L. J.*, 19 November, 1790.
80 *D. M.*, 2 April, 1740.
81 *D. M.*, 16 August, 1820.
By contrast, Hannah Barker, in her work on newspaper advertisements in Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield from 1760 to 1830, found that between 41 and 48 percent of all locational references in advertisements related to the metropolis.\textsuperscript{82} Moreover, she noted a tendency for the proportion of metropolitan references in her sample of newspapers to increase over time, whereas the opposite trend was apparent in the East Midlands. The findings for the northern towns are explained by changes in the relative importance of advertisements for print, medicines and clothing. Whilst medicine advertisements, often stressing a local link, declined in importance after 1800 (which was also the case in the East Midlands), the proportion of advertisements for printed matter from London and for women's clothing (often referring to the capital) both rose significantly.\textsuperscript{83} In the East Midlands, by contrast, advertisements for printed material published in London were more common in the earlier eighteenth century than later. The proportion of advertisements in the \textit{Derby Mercury} falling into this category dropped quite dramatically, from 21 percent in 1740, to 13 percent in 1780 and just 4 percent in 1820. Similarly, in the \textit{Leicester Journal} the figures were 18 percent in 1760, 7 percent in 1790 and 2 percent in 1820. In addition, despite some growth in the importance of advertisements for clothing in the East Midlands' newspapers, this seems to have been offset by the increasing preponderance of notices about local sales of moveable goods by 1820.

The results from the East Midlands also contrast with evidence from newspapers in North East England, where Helen Berry found frequent references to London in advertisements not only for printed matter and luxury goods, but also for theatrical performances, music festivals, and even schools. In Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield, advertisements for theatrical performances, concerts and assemblies were also common, but references to the capital in these adverts were very rare,\textsuperscript{84} as was the case in the East Midlands. The frequent references to London in the Newcastle press may be explained by the town's unusually extensive communications links with the capital, despite its distance from the metropolis. The long-established coastal trade in coal from Newcastle to London

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{84} Ibid, 184.
provided a conduit for luxury goods to be brought north from the capital on the return journey. Writing in the early nineteenth century, Aeneas Mackenzie, noting the elegant dress of Newcastle ladies and the tasteful window displays in the town’s shops, suggested that this was a reflection of the ‘constant and extensive intercourse that exists between Newcastle and London.’ He contended that there were ‘more people in proportion in Newcastle, who have visited the metropolis, than in many towns two hundred miles nearer to it.’\textsuperscript{85} Indeed it could also be argued that the greater distance from London made comparison with the capital more effective, since it suggested greater effort on the part of the shopkeeper or service provider, or alternatively, added to the ‘mystique’ of London.

A further important difference between the East Midlands and northern regions related to advertisements for products from abroad. Whilst in Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield about 10 percent of adverts mentioned foreign products or influences, such references were extremely rare in the East Midlands. This can be explained in part by its landlocked position geographically. It is not surprising that the newspapers publishing advertisements with the most foreign references were those in Manchester, reflecting the town’s extensive overseas trading connections. Indeed, in all commercial and trading centres, the structure and content of newspapers reflected and encouraged a preoccupation with war, trade and imperial expansion amongst their readership. Advertisements for luxury goods from abroad, along with notices of the movements of ships and their cargoes, and news of foreign wars could make up one third of the contents of individual issues of newspapers such as Farley’s Bristol Journal, the Newcastle Courant, Norwich Gazette and Liverpool General Advertiser in the mid-eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{86} References to foreign locations not only had a practical purpose; they were also used to convey exoticism in order to enhance the attractiveness of particular goods, imbuing them with opulence and luxury. This can be seen vividly in some trade cards, or advertisements like the example below, produced by a Nottingham tea dealer.

\textsuperscript{86} Wilson, \textit{Sense of the People}, 38-9.
Evidence from newspapers suggests, then, that London connections were less numerous, and, by extension, less important in the East Midlands than in northern regions. It follows, therefore, that local and regional associations were of greater significance in the former. Rather than aping London, towns in the East Midlands were more likely to co-operate and compare themselves with places nearer at hand. Indeed, this is evident from newspaper advertisements which increasingly began to invoke comparisons between towns in the same region. This was symptomatic of the growing provincial self-confidence and independence which were features of later eighteenth-century England. Metropolitan ideas and fashions were complemented or even superseded by indigenous provincial culture in many regions as the eighteenth century progressed, encouraged by the growth in wealth and influence of provincial middle class elites.87

A variety of evidence can be collated which demonstrates the importance of local and intra-regional associations. Firstly, as suggested above, some intra-regional connections were evident in newspaper advertisements, suggesting a degree of regional affinity. Hannah Barker has argued that a regional pattern of advertising became evident in the North of England in the late eighteenth century, ‘in which nearby towns were used

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as points of reference and indicators of trustworthiness.\textsuperscript{88} This was also apparent in the East Midlands. Newspapers in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby frequently carried adverts for medicines which were produced locally and sold in a long list of places within the East Midlands and its immediate vicinity. Not all medicines originated in London. For instance, the 'Universal Eye-Water', advertised in the \textit{Leicester and Nottingham Journal} in February and March 1760, was available in Lincoln, Stamford, Nottingham, Newark, Gainsborough and Leicester.\textsuperscript{89} Medicine 'for consumptions' from Breadsall in Derbyshire was advertised in Leicester in 1790, and in the same year, a doctor from Sutton in Nottinghamshire published an extensive list of cures he had on offer, with testimonials from satisfied patients, and noted that he would be visiting Leicester, Nottingham and Derby to offer his services.\textsuperscript{90} In 1740 the \textit{Derby Mercury} printed an advert for the locally-made 'Squire's Genuine Grand Elixir', which included a recommendation from a patient in Rutland.\textsuperscript{91} A similar pattern was evident for books, which were often advertised as available to buy in a variety of places in the East Midlands and its vicinity. For instance, in 1760 a book written and printed in Northampton was advertised in the \textit{Leicester and Nottingham Journal}, being sold in Leicester, Derby, Nottingham, Uppingham and Oakham, as well as Sheffield.\textsuperscript{92} Similarly, a spelling book for children, written and printed in Nottingham, was available in Derby, Leicester, Mansfield, Lincoln, Grantham, Sleaford, Gainsborough and Southwell, as well as Sheffield and Leek.\textsuperscript{93} Agricultural or industrial products that were manufactured and sold regionally made occasional appearances amongst newspaper advertisements. In 1780 a 'Preservative for Steel items' was advertised in the \textit{Derby Mercury}, being sold in Derby, Harborough, Nottingham, Chesterfield, Daventry, Northampton and Leeds.\textsuperscript{94} A cattle remedy known as 'Friendly Oils' had a slightly more restricted market area, being available in numerous locations within Derbyshire, as well as Stone in neighbouring Staffordshire.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{88} Barker, '“Smoke cities”', 185.
\textsuperscript{89} \textit{L. N. J.}, 9 February, 1760, 1 March, 1760.
\textsuperscript{90} \textit{L. J.}, 30 July, 1790, 26 March, 1790.
\textsuperscript{91} \textit{D. M.}, 29 October, 1740.
\textsuperscript{92} \textit{L. N. J.}, 9 February and 1 March, 1760.
\textsuperscript{93} \textit{L. N. J.}, 26 April, 1760.
\textsuperscript{94} \textit{D. M.}, 13-20 October, 1780.
\textsuperscript{95} \textit{D. M.}, 15 March, 1820.
Secondly, the sharing of ideas in the development of urban institutions such as libraries, hospitals or scientific societies often encouraged links between towns within the same region, thus strengthening intra-regional integration. These links were based upon individuals' cultural and social networks — such as correspondence between the founders of different urban institutions, or discussions amongst members at meetings of learned societies. The innovative use of industrial technology in William Strutt's design of the Derbyshire Infirmary provided inspiration for the governors of several other hospitals nearby. The Pauper Lunatic Asylum in Wakefield, Yorkshire most closely followed the Infirmary in structure and design, but Derbyshire's influence was also apparent in Leicester, where the Infirmary installed water closets with ventilators on the Strutt model in 1815, and at the North Staffordshire Infirmary at Etruria (1819), which, like the Derby hospital, had a symmetrical stone structure with a central staircase surrounded by wards, plus a Strutt thermo-ventilation system. The architects of the Derbyshire Infirmary also acted as consultants to the governors of the Nottingham County Asylum in 1815 and the Bristol Infirmary in 1818.\footnote{P. Elliott, 'The Derbyshire General Infirmary and the Derby Philosophers: The application of industrial architecture and technology to medical institutions in early-nineteenth-century England', Medical History, 46 (2000), 87-9.} To take another example, the circle of elite intelligentsia known as the Lunar Society, was based, broadly, in the West Midlands, centred on Birmingham, with members also drawn from Lichfield, Stoke-on-Trent and Derby. The group began meeting informally in the 1760s either at Matthew Boulton's house in Birmingham or sometimes at Erasmus Darwin's in Lichfield. A number of other notable industrialists and medical men belonged to the Society, including Josiah Wedgwood, Joseph Priestley, Dr William Small, John Whitehurst, and Dr William Withering. Their involvement in the Society helped to foster professional and social networks across a broad Midlands region.\footnote{J. Money, Experience and Identity: Birmingham and the West Midlands 1760-1800 (Manchester, 1977), 10; M. Craven, Derby: History and Guide (Stroud, 1994), 59-60.} Thus, the Lunar Society was both a manifestation of regional intellectual co-operation and a means of effecting this synergy.

Thirdly, in addition to these tangible intra-regional linkages, it could be suggested that ‘imagined communities’ of producers, distributors and consumers were constructed at regional level by provincial newspapers, as ‘regions’ were defined by newspapers’...
areas of circulation,98 and thus formed a ‘space of representation’. Newspapers were often distributed over an extensive area, and so, in theory, helped to draw together distant locations, as readers were made aware of activities and incidents across the circulation area through reports and advertisements published in the newspaper. By purchasing a newspaper, readers demonstrated at the very least their interest in, and often also their sense of affinity and belonging to a particular place.99 The circulation area of a newspaper can be reconstructed in two ways: by consulting the list of agents who distributed the newspaper and received advertisements, or by noting the places mentioned in advertisements. The *Leicester Journal* in 1790 had an extensive area of circulation, but, interestingly, it was oriented towards the north and west of Leicester.100 The list of agents receiving advertisements included individuals across Derbyshire, north Leicestershire and in south Nottinghamshire, as well as in Yorkshire (Sheffield and Rotherham) and Staffordshire (Uttoxeter and Burton-upon-Trent.) The only agent who was located south of Leicester was a Mr Parker in Market Harborough.101 By contrast, the *Nottingham Journal* in 1790 had a more easterly orientation, being distributed in several places in Lincolnshire (Grantham, Gainsborough, Boston, Sleaford and Lincoln) as well as parishes in eastern Nottinghamshire like Newark and Bingham. It was also circulated across Derbyshire, Leicestershire, and in Yorkshire, though.102 Meanwhile the *Derby Mercury* was sold in the northern and western midlands in 1780, principally in Derbyshire and Staffordshire, with agents also based in Ashby, Loughborough and Mansfield.103 The differing orientations of the three newspapers probably reflect a desire not to encroach too much upon the circulation area of a neighbouring (and competing) publication. However, like many provincial newspapers, their areas of circulation did overlap somewhat, and so they were unable to define independent, distinctive ‘regions’ of their own. In fact the area of overlap corresponds with the ‘core’ of the East Midlands,

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98 See Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 40, on the ways in which newspapers helped construct spaces and identities.
99 It should be noted, though, that the circulation areas of newspapers did change over time, as they were encroached upon by competing publications.
100 Probably reflecting the fact that the *Stamford Mercury* included eastern parts of Leicestershire in its area of circulation.
101 *L. J.*, 1 January, 1790.
102 *N. J.*, 16 January, 1790.
103 *D. M.*, 7 January-14 January, 1780.
suggesting that readers in this area had access to news and information from across the East Midlands. Nevertheless, newspapers tended to focus most attention on a restricted area - their 'home' town and its immediate neighbourhood - because of the importance of local sales for the survival of the newspaper. Country readers were left to choose which paper to purchase depending on which town they had most affinity with or interest in.104

While the locations of agents represent what newspaper owners conceived as being the circulation area of their newspaper (in other words, a representation of space), the locations of products and services advertised are representative of the area that advertisers believed to be the genuine circulation area of the newspaper (the space of representation.) So, while the locations of agents reflected the aspirations of newspaper proprietors, advertisements were arguably closer to reality, since people would only advertise a product or service if they believed that it would be conveniently located for readers of a particular newspaper. In some ways, the distribution of locations mentioned in advertisements reveals somewhat different patterns from the distribution of agents – in particular it suggests relatively restricted, county-based circulation areas. As Table 2.4 shows, between one fifth and one third of references related to the town in which the newspaper was published, and an even larger proportion referred to places within the surrounding county. In addition, differences in the orientations of the three newspapers are less evident in these data. References to places in other East Midlands counties were similarly infrequent in all three towns (generally less than 10 percent of all locational references), although in both the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century samples, the Nottingham Journal had the highest percentage of references to places in the East Midlands but outside the three counties with which this study is concerned. This probably reflects Nottingham's connections with Lincolnshire evident from the list of newspaper agents discussed above. The largest proportions of references to places 'elsewhere' were found in the Derby Mercury (23 percent in 1780 and 19 percent in 1820), suggesting that Derby was less orientated towards the East Midlands than either Leicester or Nottingham.

A final strand of evidence for the importance of regional affinity and co-operation can be found in the pages of urban histories, where inter-town comparison and competition are more evident than comparisons with the metropolis. By seeking to emulate or outdo their neighbours, provincial towns revealed their awareness of and linkages to other towns within the regional urban hierarchy. London’s enormous population and wealth placed it in a different league from the rest of England’s urban centres, and so it was more realistic for them to compare themselves with other provincial towns. Urban dwellers were keen to rate their town’s antiquity, wealth, population growth, or artistic and cultural development against that of other neighbouring towns. For instance, John Throsby, in his history of Leicester, referred to the town’s competitors in the manufacture of hosiery, declaring that ‘of all these none comes in competition with Leicester for quantity of goods’, but he added, in more candid tones, ‘even this very town, though it may boast of its large concerns, yet must confess that its best goods are made at Nottingham.’ Not surprisingly this was a sentiment with which Charles Deering, the historian of Nottingham, concurred. He also claimed that Nottingham’s racecourse was ‘one of the best in England’ and in earlier years ‘could have vyed with

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Table 2.4: Percentage of locational references in newspaper advertisements relating to different places.\(^{105}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Town of publication</th>
<th>Leics. %</th>
<th>Notts. %</th>
<th>Derbys. %</th>
<th>Northants, Lincs or Rutland %</th>
<th>London %</th>
<th>Elsewhere %</th>
<th>Total references</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>L.N.J. 1760</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.M. 1780</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.J. 1790</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>L.J. 1820</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D.M. 1820</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N.J. 1820</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


\(^{106}\) Throsby, History and antiquities, 403.
any Course in the Kingdom for a grand Appearance of Nobility; neither Newmarket nor Banstead-Downs boast of better Company nor Horses.\textsuperscript{107} Similar examples can be cited from other town histories. For instance, the qualities of Chester, which were said to distinguish it as a ‘provincial metropolis’ in opposition to nearby trading and manufacturing towns, included ‘the pleasures of cultivated society on easy terms’, as well as cheaper food and greater life-expectancy.\textsuperscript{108}

Not only did provincial towns seek to compete with other urban centres; they also looked to other towns as a source of emulation. In an age when people were increasingly aware of other towns, through exposure to printed topographical material and travel to other urban centres, many features of provincial life took inspiration from examples in neighbouring towns.\textsuperscript{109} Assembly rooms, for instance, were often modelled on leading leisure towns, rather than large-scale London examples. The ‘Egyptian Hall’ in the York Assembly Rooms (built 1731-2) became an influential design idea, widely imitated in classical architecture across England, and was in fact adopted in London, where the Mansion House (1739-53) contains a version of the Egyptian Hall.\textsuperscript{110} Literary and scientific societies around the country followed the lead of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society, rather than London’s Royal Society, Society of Antiquaries or Society of Arts.\textsuperscript{111} In Birmingham, a flourishing musical and theatrical life was based in part on London models, but also followed the example of the town’s more ‘genteel’ neighbour, Lichfield.\textsuperscript{112} This culture of comparison and competition between towns could be viewed as symptomatic of regional integration, since in order for a town to compare itself with another nearby it was necessary for it to be aware of that town and have some connection with it. In this sense, therefore, the lessening of London’s influence and the concomitant growth in provincial self-confidence during the eighteenth century were associated with greater intra-regional integration, in the East Midlands as elsewhere.

\textsuperscript{107} C. Deering, Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova, or an Historical Account of the ancient and present state of the town of Nottingham (Nottingham, 1751), 76, 101.
\textsuperscript{109} Ellis, ‘Comparison, competition and civic identity’, 329-332.
\textsuperscript{111} J. Ellis, The Georgian Town (Basingstoke, 2001), 140; R. Sweet, The English Town, 1680-1840 (Harlow, 1999), 262.
\textsuperscript{112} Money, Experience and Identity, 80-97.
Despite this evidence for the importance of regional socio-cultural linkages, however, arguably it was at the level of the individual town that the majority of people in the East Midlands (and elsewhere) felt most attachment and affiliation. The culture of comparison and competition between towns could be symptomatic not only of regional awareness but also of civic pride and self-consciousness. In other words, it could be suggested that the desire of individual towns to trumpet their own identity was a way of distinguishing themselves within a broader urban region. It has been convincingly argued that the eighteenth century witnessed a (re)assertion of civic consciousness. In many towns, including those in the East Midlands, civic identity remained strong, often based on a sense of history and tradition. In tandem with this, urban centres like Leicester, Nottingham and Derby participated fully in the flowering of provincial culture which characterised this period in all regions. Both this provincial self-confidence and flourishing urban culture were evident in town histories, new leisure facilities, art, music and architecture, in the East Midlands as much as other English regions.

Contemporaries' sense of pride in the antiquity of their town was evident in the pages of eighteenth-century urban histories, and went hand in hand with the rhetoric of inter-town comparison and competition in these works. Whilst popular travelogues of the time, with their London-centric bias, constantly compared provincial towns (usually unfavourably) with the metropolis, locally written town histories, by contrast, tended to emphasise the long traditions of independent thought and action enjoyed by provincial towns. The long and successful history of Nottingham was clearly of importance to Deering, who was at pains to point out that although he was not a native of the town, what attracted him to it and motivated him to write its history was 'the Antiquity of the Place, its extremely inviting natural as well as acquired Beauties, its Importance in ancient Times and its flourishing State in our Days.' What was evident in the pages of many town histories was a sense of urban self-confidence and self-sufficiency, much more than a desire to emulate London. John Blackner was typically effusive in his

114 See, for example, Barry, 'Provincial town culture', 198-233.
116 Ellis, Georgian Town, 141.
117 Deering, Nottighamia, vii.
affirmation of Nottingham's indigenous strengths: 'in point of manufacturing and commercial genius – in industry and useful invention, it yields preference to no town or city in the British empire, and in its progress in the fine arts it will give up the palm but to few.' Towns in the East Midlands were not unusual in trumpeting their independence – this was also evident in Yorkshire, Lancashire, and the West Midlands, amongst other places.

In architectural terms, many towns consciously sought to assert local values and independence in the face of a flow of metropolitan-influenced modern ideas. Nevertheless, there was a tension between a desire to emulate fashionable modern building styles and a wish to maintain distinctive vernacular architectural features because of their uniqueness to the locality in contrast to standardised classical models. In Leicester, for instance, three-storey master hosiers' houses were built with elegant Georgian frontages which concealed the more utilitarian framework-knitters' workshops attached at the rear. Similarly, the medieval Chester 'rows', though disparaged as outdated, were retained by the corporation but refronted in a modern style during the eighteenth century. When Blandford Forum in Dorset was rebuilt following a fire in 1731, an older Baroque style of architecture was used, although a modern Palladian town hall was also constructed, demonstrating that the town's elite was aware of new fashions, but chose to maintain regional building tradition as well.

In artistic terms, too, provincial town culture involved negotiation and adaptation of national tastes and fashions at local level. Provincial towns were far from being the cultural 'deserts' described by those who argue for the cultural pre-eminence of London; many individuals nurtured their talents at local level before gaining a national or international reputation. Derby was home to a number of nationally-acclaimed artists,

118 J. Blackner, The History of Nottingham (Nottingham, 1815), 8.
119 See, for example, W. Hutton, An History of Birmingham, to the end of the year 1780 (Birmingham, 1781); S. Midgeley, The History of the Famous Town of Halifax in Yorkshire (London, 1708); J. Wallace, A General and Descriptive History of the Ancient and Present State of the Town of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1795). See Sweet, Writing of urban histories, 242-50, for an example of particularly strident urban assertiveness in histories of Hull.
120 M. Palmer and P. Neaverson, Industrial landscapes of the East Midlands (Chichester, 1992), 170-1.
123 Examples include the classical architects John Carr at York, Francis Smith at Warwick and the Woods at Bath, and the musicians Charles Avison in Newcastle-upon-Tyne and Venanzio Rauzzini in Bath.
including the famous painter Joseph Wright, who was born in the town and apprenticed in London before returning to Derby in 1758, at the age of eighteen. He also spent time in Italy and Bath in the 1770s, but could never be persuaded to move to London because of his attachment to his native town and his family ties there. Kinship and community ties were also important to one of Wright’s predecessors, Thomas Smith (died 1767), who was among the most famous landscape painters in mid-Georgian England, exhibiting at the Society of Artists. His son John Raphael Smith (1751-1812) became nationally famous as an artist and engraver and in 1784 returned briefly to Derby to sell prints and drawings from Noton’s shop in the Cornmarket. The portrait painter Richard Samuel was an exhibitor at the Royal Academy and based in Derby. The town’s musical life was also of national standing, with its Handelian music festivals of 1788 and 1793 being among the largest events of the English provincial music season, involving performers of both national and international fame, such as the tenor Samuel Webbe, Wilhelm Cramer, Maria Parke and Gertrude Mara. Leicester was also home to a number of social and cultural figures of national standing. The well-known local gentleman Charles Loraine Smith had a nationally acclaimed talent for painting, while several literary women of Leicester became famous around 1800. Mary Linwood was a composer and author, who had both a local and an international reputation for her skilful needlework pictures, which were mostly copies of famous oil paintings. Susannah Watts, the daughter of a local gentleman, possessed great poetic and artistic talent, and met regularly with a select group of educated women in the town.

This analysis has demonstrated the variety of social and cultural influences acting upon provincial towns. The influence of London was undoubtedly felt in these places, through the fashionable goods available to purchase, the large volume of printed material emanating from the capital, and the architectural styles and musical tastes exported to the provinces. At the same time, other provincial towns served as sources of inspiration,

innovation and comparison in social and cultural amenities. Ultimately, however, the most powerful forces shaping these towns culturally and socially were their own histories, traditions, identity and independence. Yet, whilst the autonomy and self-confidence of the English provinces undoubtedly increased during the eighteenth century, it was possible for provincial independence to co-exist with metropolitan influences. Dror Wahrman's argument that the middle class faced a choice between participating in a London-centred genteel culture or an alternative, communal-provincial culture is thus an artificial dichotomy. 128 This section has demonstrated that a third scale of cultural and social activity can also be identified, based on interaction between towns within a region. Comparison and competition between nearby towns was associated with and, in turn, helped to encourage intra-regional integration. At the same time, though, civic identity was strengthened as towns compared themselves with others. The continued vitality of provincial culture was common to most English regions; there is little evidence that civic identity in the East Midlands was any more marked than in other places, or that its indigenous cultural life was noticeably more vibrant. Nevertheless, evidence from newspaper advertisements has demonstrated that the East Midlands' connections with London were noticeably fewer than in the North and North East, and that rather than increasing over time, as they did in these latter regions, they tended to decline. Intra-regional linkages remained much more important in the East Midlands throughout the period.

London's influence was not confined to social, cultural and political life in the provinces; the capital was also the centre of a national and international economy. But at a time when regional industries were growing in size and importance, what was the extent of metropolitan influence over economic life in the provinces? The last section of this chapter explores that question.

Metropolitan economy and provincial industry
The preceding two sections have demonstrated how London’s influence over the provinces declined during the eighteenth century, with a concomitant growth in the independence and autonomy of towns and counties outside the capital. Although these smaller scales of borough and county remained the most significant spheres of provincial political activity, there is also evidence of greater intra-regional integration in social and cultural spheres. The rise of independent regions at the expense of dependence on the metropolis was also evident in economic life. This section explores this contention, drawing principally on apprenticeship records of London livery companies and account books of East Midlands’ tradesmen as evidence of the development of regional labour markets and supply networks by the end of the eighteenth century.

For generations of historians of the British economy, Defoe’s claim that London ‘sucked the vitals of trade in this island to itself’ has been an appealing one. As early as 1700, four-fifths of the nation’s imports passed through the capital, along with 70 percent of exports and 86 percent of re-exports. Although London’s share of total British trade fell below two-thirds after 1730, it remained at around half the total during our period.129 The demands of the London market stimulated production of agricultural and industrial goods across the country. In the Home Counties, agricultural production and specialisation both increased, while the proportion of people outside the capital working in the tertiary sector (including drovers, carters, brokers, cattle dealers and innkeepers) also grew, as greater quantities of agricultural produce were consumed at a distance from where they were produced. London’s need for fuel made it the principal market for coal from the North East, consuming 650,000 tons from this region every year by 1750, as well as generating thousands of jobs for people in transporting coal down the East coast to the Thames. Not only did London dominate the market for staple goods, it also took the lead in more specialised markets. It was the main centre for naval purchasing, for instance, and thus served as a key market for the iron industry and timber trade.130 The capital also acted as a hub for provincial industrial activity, providing specialist stockbrokers, money-dealers, discount houses, merchant bankers and commodity brokers.

Indeed many provincial industries depended on credit extended in the metropolis. When the value of Liverpool’s foreign trade overtook that of London for a time in the early nineteenth century, this development was dependent on the London money market.  

The East Midlands’ hosiery industry was typical of regional industries in this period, in that its success was founded upon links with the capital. Hosiery manufacture originated in the East Midlands when many framework-knitting firms were driven out of London by high wage costs and the stringent regulations of the Framework Knitters’ Company, and moved along main transport routes to the nearest source of cheap labour. Eight hundred frames were transferred from London to Nottingham between 1732 and 1750. A number of leading hosiers in Leicester, Nottingham and Hinckley had direct trading connections with London by the first half of the eighteenth century, often lodging at inns off Cheapside, which by the 1760s had been turned into stockrooms, and acted as a market where hosiery manufacturers bargained with London dealers and retailers. Many of Nottingham’s 149 master hosiers (in 1799) had warehouses in the capital. A few larger firms had a partner permanently resident in London. Hall, Hardwick and Northage of Nottingham, for example, took on a partner at their Aldermanbury warehouse in 1773, while Unwins of Sutton-in-Ashfield was in partnership with a City wholesaler by 1781. London was the chief market for hosiery goods, since the capital co-ordinated both the industry’s national distribution networks and its substantial export market. Over 200,000 dozen pairs of stockings were being exported by 1750, mostly to central and southern Europe, although sales to America were increasing.

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138 Ibid, 75-7.
However, as with social and cultural life, the economic dependence of the provinces on the metropolis can be overstated. The emergence of relatively self-contained industrial regions during the eighteenth century, coupled with provincial self-confidence fuelled by commercial success, meant that the economic influence of London during the industrial revolution was less than it had been in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries and was to become from the late nineteenth century onwards, when the national economy became more integrated.  

Within each industrial region, large urban centres (such as Manchester and Birmingham) acted as ‘capitals’, with their own bankers, merchants and brokers who supplied credit, raw materials and specialist goods to other towns in the area. The East Midlands lacked an obvious capital, so systems of production were more localised, with many framework knitters working in their homes in small towns and villages in the vicinity of the county towns from which hosiers issued raw materials to them. Moreover, because the three East Midlands counties specialised in different branches of hosiery manufacture, firms were able to act as suppliers for each other, rather than relying on purchasing or selling materials in places further afield like London. For instance, the chief market for Derbyshire silk and cotton thread was the East Midlands’ hosiery industry. Meanwhile, the main suppliers of a large firm of hosiers in Belper – Brettles – were all located in the East Midlands - mostly in Leicester, Nottingham, Loughborough and Hinckley.  

Nevertheless, despite the separation between metropolis and provinces that this evidence implies, in fact the two depended on each other, because of their different roles in the British economy. For instance, the City’s position as the commercial centre of the nation relied on the production of manufactures for domestic and export markets, which was concentrated in the provinces. Networks of correspondence within the English banking system provide a specific illustration of the two-way relationship between provincial economies and the metropolis. The principal role of the City of London banks was to co-ordinate flows of credit from regions of surplus (agricultural districts like East Anglia) to deficit regions (industrial areas like Lancashire), through the rediscounting of bills of exchange. Country banks themselves were active in discounting bills in order to

139 Hudson, Industrial Revolution, 105.
140 Chapman, Hosiery and Knitwear, 90.
provide ready cash for industrialists in the North and Midlands, but if demand was too
great for the banks to deal with, they could send bills to London for rediscount. Handley’s
of Newark, for example, had intensive dealings with the London money market, enabling
the bank to reinvest capital generated through agricultural surpluses into industries in
nearby districts of the Midlands and North. Thus, while more localised intra- and inter-
regional business was important for provincial banks, a significant amount of this
business was facilitated by flows of finance capital and commercial information from
London. Similarly, although credit transactions often took place intra-regionally,
reflecting a preference for more accessible and trustworthy local sources, this did not
mean that such regions were isolated from and totally unaffected by events in London’s
capital markets. For instance, a recent study comparing London interest rates with
property transactions in Middlesex and West Yorkshire during the eighteenth century
demonstrated that the relationship between the two, though weak between 1730 and
1770, strengthened after that date. This suggests that this later period saw the transition
from regionally segmented capital markets to an integrated national capital market
centred on London.

As well as being linked to London via flows of commercial information and
credit, the English provinces were connected to the capital through labour mobility and
the transactions of individual tradesmen. Both of these processes, however, provide
evidence of a decline in London’s economic influence during the eighteenth century,
associated with a ‘retrenchment’ of economic activity into the regions. Many young men
were sent to London from across the country over the course of the eighteenth century to
be apprenticed to members of the capital’s livery companies, reflecting the limited
opportunities for ambitious young men in the provinces in the early eighteenth century.
Figure 2.2 illustrates the changing volumes of this migration from five different regions
of the country. The most important point to note is the trend of falling numbers during the
first third of the century followed by low but fluctuating totals, which was similar in all
regions. The decline in apprenticeship migration in part reflects the lessening importance

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141 I. Black, ‘Geography, political economy and the circulation of finance capital in early industrial
of the London livery companies and the shrinking of the apprenticeship system more generally as the eighteenth century progressed, but it can also be explained by the growth of regional industries and the increased demand for labour that accompanied this. It seems that apprentices' horizons were becoming more localised, as evidenced by the fact that greater numbers were sent to London from a neighbouring region like East Anglia, while smaller numbers originated from the more distant North West and North East.

Figure 2.2: Apprentices to London livery companies from selected regions, 1700-1810

Account books of provincial tradesmen also demonstrate that intra-regional business linkages were much more common than metropolitan connections. Evidence from the accounts of tradesmen in the East Midlands points to the existence of regionally-based supply networks. The ironmongers Carr and Co. of Nottingham, for example, had suppliers across the Midlands as well as the North of England in the 1830s, with a particular concentration in the metalworking heartlands of Birmingham and Sheffield. Though they also dealt with several firms and individuals in London, these connections represented less than 10 percent of their business dealings. Indeed, it has been argued

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143 Source: London Apprenticeship Abstracts, 1660-1810, available online at http://www.britishorigins.org
144 The better examples of these documents include the place of residence of customers and suppliers, enabling us to gauge the geographical orientation of a tradesman’s business links.
145 Notts Archives, Carr & Co. of Nottingham, ironmongers: account book 1831-1858, DD854/1.
that by the later eighteenth century, retailers' supply networks were oriented less towards the metropolis and centred more on local and regional business linkages. The grocer and general provisions dealer Abraham Dent of Kirby Stephen, for instance, whose accounts survive for the period 1756-77, drew the majority of his supplies (81 percent) from his home county of Cumbria or neighbouring counties, while only six percent of his suppliers lived in London. 146 Earlier in the century, by contrast, of those who supplied the Stafford mercer John Webb in the late 1730s and early 1740s, only 23 percent came from the same or adjacent counties, while 40 percent were from London. 147 More cloth was sourced regionally by the later eighteenth century, with the development of the textile industries of Lancashire and Yorkshire.

Nevertheless, this neat chronology is complicated by the fact that the geography of supply networks depended upon the type of product a tradesman sold or dealt in. Tradesmen offering luxury consumer goods tended to have most linkages with the metropolis because their products were usually imported through London rather than manufactured locally. Thomas Simnitt of Newark was a hairdresser and perfumer whose list of creditors in the early nineteenth century included not only fourteen people from Newark itself, but also nine in London, as well as one each in Birmingham, Sheffield, York, Great Yarmouth and Redditch, representing in total almost half the debt owed by Simnitt. 148 Similarly, the mercer and draper Thomas Becket of Newark owed money to 26 different firms and individuals outside Newark in 1835, including five in Manchester, three in Huddersfield (accounting for a quarter of the total debts owed by Becket) and five in London (which represented over a third of his total debts). 149 Groceries were also sourced from London more commonly than other goods. To give an example from the West Midlands, one fifth of the suppliers of the Worcester grocer Thomas Dickenson were located in London in the 1740s, with others spread across a range of locations in the

147 Staffordshire Record Office, Account books of John Webb of Stafford, mercer (1738-44), D1798/HM 28/10-11.
148 Notts Archives, List of creditors of Thomas Simnitt of Newark, hairdresser and perfumer, 1810-1818, DDH 180/131.
149 Notts Archives, List of creditors of Thomas Becket of Newark, mercer and draper, 1835, DDH 180/17.
west of England, including Bristol, Gloucester, Ludlow, Preston, Chester, Bewdley and Stoke.¹⁵⁰

The increased importance of regional supply networks is one manifestation of the broader process of development of regional economies. Provincial ports grew in size and importance, handling larger quantities of domestically manufactured goods as the reliance on imports lessened and hence the volume of goods flowing through London declined. In Lancashire, for instance, cotton brokers and warehousemen in Manchester supplied raw cotton to spinners, yarn to weavers, and provided facilities for the sale of yarn and cloth to foreign markets, while in Liverpool, merchants and ship-owners imported raw cotton from the US, provided credit for sales in foreign markets, and owned ships to handle imports and exports. Meanwhile, the export trade in woollen cloth from the West Riding, which had once passed entirely through the Blackwell Hall factors in London, was increasingly conducted by Yorkshire merchants dealing direct through Hull from the mid-eighteenth century, and later through agents in Liverpool.¹⁵¹ Moreover, expansion in the numbers of provincial newspapers and the growth of the postal network provided conduits for commercial information to pass between provincial merchants and tradesmen, and thus lessened the dependence on London to supply business intelligence.

As would be expected, customer networks were more localised than supply linkages. Most people purchased goods from tradesmen near to their home, particularly those items that were required regularly, such as groceries or medicines. To take a typical example, between 1818 and 1820 fewer than 10 percent of customers listed in the account book of Francis Dewick of East Retford in Nottinghamshire, a general provisions dealer, lived outside East Retford, and of those that did, the vast majority lived in other nearby places within the county.¹⁵² The distribution of customers for so-called ‘higher-order’ goods (those that were required less frequently and tended to be more costly), or goods which were themselves raw materials for other tradesmen was often wider, however. The accounts of the iron founder John Redgate of the Albion Foundry in Nottingham show

¹⁵⁰ Worcester Record Office, Accounts of Thomas Dickenson, grocer, of Foregate St., Worcester, D1798 HM 29/1-5.
¹⁵² Notts Archives, Account book of Francis Dewick of Retford – general provisions dealer, 1818-20, DDHO 30/1.
that his customers in the early 1830s were located across the East Midlands – particularly in Leicestershire, Lincolnshire and Derbyshire, as well as Nottinghamshire. There were exceptions to this pattern, however. The transactions of Samuel Deacon, a clock and watch-maker in the small village of Barton in the Beans in Leicestershire, were overwhelmingly local – usually involving people in nearby parishes such as Market Bosworth, Odstone, Ibstock and Heather, or in Leicester. An alphabetical list of all his customers and a small number of suppliers between 1775 and 1830, running to over 370 entries, included just 31 people from outside Leicestershire. Over half of these were from Warwickshire (principally Birmingham) while just four lived in London. The very localised nature of this business can be explained by the fact that clocks were unusual amongst consumer goods in being more commonly owned by rural dwellers than urban residents, and by yeomen more than gentry, at least in the first half of the eighteenth century. A study of probate inventories in Kent and Cornwall has suggested that the presence of clocks in rural farming households (often in the kitchen) reflected the need for household and farming tasks to be timed accurately. Thus it is not surprising that Deacon’s customers were overwhelmingly rural agriculturalists. More generally, it has been shown that shopkeepers in the market towns of pre-industrial England rarely attracted customers from more than ten miles away. Most retailers at the time tended to trade within the market area of their town, typically supplying local tradesmen and/or gentry from the surrounding area.

So, as with the social and cultural spheres, what we have seen from an economic perspective is a dilution in the strength of London’s relationship with the provinces as the eighteenth century progressed. The metropolis was undoubtedly a useful source of capital, and acted as both a key domestic market and co-ordinator of export trade for many regional industries, particularly in the early stages of their development. As these industries grew, however, they became increasingly self-sufficient, handling production

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153 Notts Archives, Day book of John Redgate, iron founder, Albion Foundry of Nottingham (1833-6), RGA/1.
154 ROLLR, Account book of Deacon family of clockmakers, 1775-1830, 9 D51/1/5.
155 M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean and A. Hann, Production and consumption in English households, 1600-1750 (Abingdon, 2004), 169.
156 Shammas, Pre-industrial consumer, 247-8.
and credit internally, with local entrepreneurs more likely to deal with London merchants directly, or act as exporters in their own right. This greater provincial independence encouraged a strengthening of intra-regional connections. Not only did the influence of London on production lessen, but the capital’s influence on consumption also declined, with the development of more regionally based supply networks within central place hierarchies. The growth of a wider range of retail outlets in more places provided consumers with access to luxury goods locally, thus reducing the need for the wealthy to go to London to make purchases. Moreover, it seems that the economic linkages between London and the East Midlands - in terms of the marketing of industrial products, supply networks for local tradesmen, and the migration of apprentices to London - were not significantly different in nature and importance from those enjoyed by other regions.

Conclusion

The debate over the extent of London’s influence on the English provinces has been a long-running one, not least because reconstructing the nature of the metropolitan-provincial relationship is crucial to understanding the history of the eighteenth century. The political life of the English regions in this period was shaped by their interaction with the capital, both formally, through the passage of local legislation or government-sponsored inquiries, and informally, via popular disturbances or discussions with Members of Parliament. In social and economic life, by contrast, this interaction between centre and locality was not sustained, but weakened as the century progressed. The flowering of provincial culture and growth in civic self-confidence witnessed during the eighteenth century were a reflection of growing independence from London in social and cultural life. In the economic sphere, the rise of regional industries began to challenge London’s once-dominant role as the centre of a national and international economy, while the development of regionally based retail networks reduced provincial dependence on metropolitan retailers and wholesalers.

These different scales of spatial interaction - local, regional, and national - were not mutually exclusive, however. The evidence presented in this chapter has indicated that provincial ties to London, though lessened, were not replaced by fully autonomous, independent regions in the eighteenth century. Instead, what has emerged is a picture of
an East Midlands consisting of a group of localities – parishes, towns or counties – which sometimes acted in concert, but also competed with each other and asserted their own identity. Ironically, both co-operation and rivalry between places could be viewed as symptomatic of a sense of regional affinity and integration. However, there is a great difference between a sense of regional integration and the existence of a coherent, identifiable region on the ground. Indeed, as this chapter has demonstrated, parts of the East Midlands forged and maintained important relationships with places outside the ‘region’ and with London. The following chapters will demonstrate that although some intra-regional connections were evident in the East Midlands, other scales of spatial interaction were equally if not more important during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.
‘The stocking country’: Industrialisation and the space economy

When William Hutton coined the phrase ‘the stocking country’ in the early nineteenth century, he encapsulated one perspective on the East Midlands amongst contemporaries and historians. Arguably the single feature of the East Midlands which lent it coherence and identity as a region was its staple industry – the manufacture of hosiery. In 1812, 85 percent of Britain’s stocking frames were located in the East Midlands. Industry often acted as a strong integrating force within regions, as production processes depended upon raw materials, capital and labour drawn from across the region – in the Lancashire cotton industry and the metalworking of the West Midlands, for instance. More recently, however, it has been argued that the particular characteristics of the hosiery industry in the East Midlands worked against regional integration. The persistence of the putting-out system created highly localised webs of production centred on larger towns, while the fact that each county specialised in a different branch of hosiery manufacture meant that each was tied to separate supply chains and labour markets. What this chapter will demonstrate, though, is that both of these perspectives require qualification: on the one hand, the hosiery industry was not as great a unifying force as has sometimes been suggested, yet at the same time the contrast between the East Midlands and ‘conventional’ industrial regions can be overplayed. In considering four key factors of production – machinery, raw materials, capital, and labour – it will be shown that aspects of the hosiery industry were organised at both a regional and a much more local (or, conversely, national) scale. The intention is to explore the relationship between industrialisation and regional formation outside the more commonly studied heartlands of

1 W. Hutton, The life of William Hutton (Birmingham, 1817), 110.
3 See J. Blackner, The History of Nottingham (Nottingham, 1815), 238-43, for a listing of the number of frames in each of the counties where stocking manufacture was undertaken.
the industrial revolution, illustrating the variety of spatial scales at which economic units formed and functioned. A range of sources will be drawn upon in building up a picture of spatial integration in the hosiery industry, including statistical evidence from the parliamentary inquiry into the condition of the framework knitters in 1844, histories of the hosiery industry written by contemporaries, business records of hosiery firms, apprenticeship registers, and probate documents.

It has been argued that one of the driving forces behind the spatial integration of industrial regions was the transport network, which forms a second theme of this chapter. Using listings of carrier, coach and water transport services in trade directories, comparisons will be drawn between the East Midlands and a more 'conventional' industrial region – the West Midlands. The aim will be to test the contention that transport linkages were denser in the East (connecting a larger number of places over shorter distances) but more intense in the West (with a smaller number of heavily used region-wide linkages.) The complex relationship between transport, industrialisation and spatial integration will be explored, demonstrating that the nature of the transport system both reflected and influenced the timing, location and character of industrialisation, and, in turn, the degree of regional integration.

Industry and regional integration

As a counterpoint to the dominance of national econometric interpretations of British industrialisation that play down the importance of regional economic development, it has been argued convincingly that a regional perspective is crucial to understanding the industrial revolution. Early industrialisation was greatly assisted by the existence of defined regions, because ideas could reverberate and gain strength within this limited geographical area. Moreover, the later success of the industrial revolution was founded


upon the contrasting advantages and limitations of different regions. The variety of resources (human and physical) available, and the fact that untapped resources always existed—such as engineering talent, unused water-power, or trained textile workers—allowed all stages of the industrialisation process to be completed. As Pollard puts it, the process ‘required different nourishment and a different soil at successive stages’.7

The corollary of this is that industrial growth itself encouraged regional integration. From the mid-eighteenth century, distinct, internally integrated and economically specialised regions began to emerge, such as the West Riding, dominated by woollen textiles, the West Midlands, with its small metalware and hardware trades, the cotton textile districts of Lancashire, and earthenware manufacture in the Potteries. Langton has described such regions as having their own ‘economic dynamic’, fostered by local resource endowments, traditional skills, and the character of the markets served. These initial advantages, and their geographical concentration, generated multiplier effects which stimulated further growth in the same regions: pools of skilled labour were created, agglomerations of subsidiary trades and finishing and marketing functions developed, and transport and information networks were focussed in these regions.8 Thus capital and labour markets, information flows, and commercial and credit networks were predominantly intra-regional in nature. Most finance raised by industrialists was obtained through a network of commercial, social and familial links, reflecting the importance of face-to-face contact and trust. Banking transactions were much denser within regions than beyond, interest rates varied between regions, and many commercial crises and waves of bankruptcies were regional.9

Labour markets for particular industries also tended to be spatially as well as sectorally segmented. Mining was a notably insular trade. Employment of colliers from outside the local area was highly unusual, and would have been viewed as a threat, because of the very particular work practices in each coalfield and the culture with which they were associated. Indeed the colliers of south-west Lancashire controlled recruitment

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7 Pollard, Peaceful conquest, 21.
9 Hudson, Industrial Revolution, 104.
through family labour groups and kinship networks. The regionally specific nature of labour supply is borne out by work on migration, which has demonstrated the existence of regional migration systems in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, characterised by short-distance sex-specific flows of migrants, reflecting the particular labour needs of different regions, and relatively low levels of interchange between regions. Employers' associations were almost all regional, since the extent of their market, economic interests and power was regional rather than national. Similarly, trade unions and protest movements also tended to be regionally based, reflecting the specific employment practices and socio-economic conditions in different regions. For instance, workers in the West Riding and West Country, both of which were dominated by wool textile production, were unable to link their interests in a common cause (such as opposition to the deregulation of the woollen industry in the early nineteenth century) because of their different experiences and expectations of work, which were rooted in fundamental differences in regional class structures and social relations.

Ostensibly the concentration of hosiery in the East Midlands should qualify it as an industrial region of the type discussed above. By the mid-eighteenth century over 70 percent of Britain's 14,000 stocking frames were found in Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. In 1812 there were 29,588 stocking frames in Britain, of which 85 percent were located in the East Midlands. Other much smaller concentrations of frames were found in Gloucestershire, Northamptonshire and Oxfordshire, Yorkshire, London and Surrey. The predominance of the East Midlands was still greater by 1844, when the national total of stocking frames was 48,482, of which 90 percent were located in the three East Midlands' counties. The only notable concentration of frames outside the East Midlands by this time was in Gloucestershire.

12 Langton, 'Industrial revolution', 151-4; Pollard, Peaceful conquest, 34.
13 A. Randall, 'Work, culture and resistance to machinery in the West of England woollen industry', in Hudson, Regions and industries, 175-200.
14 Blackner, History of Nottingham, 238-43.
with 930 frames in Tewkesbury and at least another 100 in other parts of the county.\textsuperscript{15} The extent to which the East Midlands dominated hosiery production was also clearly apparent to contemporaries. Deering's list of ten towns outside London engaged in framework knitting in the 1740s included only two outside the East Midlands — Towcester in Northamptonshire and Godalming, Surrey.\textsuperscript{16} On visiting Leicester in 1725 and noting its 'considerable manufacture' of hosiery, Daniel Defoe exclaimed: 'one would scarce think it possible that so small an article of trade could employ such multitudes of people as it does; for the whole county seems to be employ'd in it: as also Nottingham and Darby' [sic].\textsuperscript{17}

The hub of the framework knitting industry in the seventeenth century had been London, but during the eighteenth century the centre of gravity shifted to the East Midlands,\textsuperscript{18} reflecting a variety of factors which influenced the location of other industrial regions as well. The most important trigger for the move was the need for cheap labour. Traditionally, stockings had been made of silk, making them a luxury item with a restricted market. However, when fashions changed and plainer, more affordable goods made from wool and worsted began to be produced, the greater demand for hosiery meant that cheap labour was required in order to compete with hand-knitted products and with French goods in this expanding market. Wages in London were relatively high, and the regulations of the Company of Framework Knitters prohibited the employment of large numbers of apprentices which would help to reduce labour costs. Thus, manufacturers sought new workers outside the capital and away from Company control. Not only was labour cheaper in the East Midlands, it was also readily available in the sizeable towns of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, as these centres possessed no other industrial specialism at the time. For the same reason there was also a ready supply of capital in these towns. Another important influence on the geographical concentration of industry was the availability of raw materials, and again the East Midlands held an

\textsuperscript{15} Report of the commissioner appointed to enquire into the condition of the frame-work knitters, British Parliamentary Papers (1845), VIII, 15-16, 18.
\textsuperscript{16} C. Deering, Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova, or an historical account of the ancient and present state of the town of Nottingham (Nottingham, 1751), 101.
advantage, firstly because wool suited to the requirements of framework knitting was available locally, and secondly because of the presence of a successful silk-throwing mill in Derby – the first of its kind in Britain. Finally, an embryonic hosiery industry had already been established in the Nottingham district. It is likely that these knitters had already developed crucial functional linkages in the locality – to supplies of skilled labour, frame manufacturers and repairers, and finishing and marketing facilities.

So, as was common to many industrial regions, the establishment of hosiery in the East Midlands resulted from a combination of pre-existing advantageous conditions for industry in the area itself, and developments outside the region, particularly in London, which encouraged manufacturers to seek new sources of labour and raw materials. However, this is where the parallels with other regions end. What was unusual about the East Midlands was its highly localised, discrete systems of production connecting towns and their hinterlands, rather than linking key urban centres in an integrated regional production system; at the same time, though, some cross-regional connections were evident. We now need to focus on the nature and spatial organisation of hosiery manufacturing within the East Midlands, in order to unpick the variety of spatial scales at which industrial production operated.

The space-economy of the hosiery industry

In this section, the hosiery industry will be explored through a discussion of four factors of production – machinery, raw materials, capital and labour. The intention is to illustrate the co-existence of and occasional tension between region-wide industrial linkages and highly localised connections in the East Midlands.

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19 Following the invention of the stocking frame by William Lee of Calverton in 1589, and the later return of his brother, James, to Nottingham.
Framework knitting was one of a number of industries which operated a domestic system of production; other examples included glove making in Worcestershire, handloom weaving in Lancashire, boot and shoe making in Northamptonshire and the manufacture of nails and chains in the West Midlands. What was unusual about the hosiery industry, though, was that while other industries shifted to factory production from the 1780s, putting-out persisted in hosiery as late as 1850, which had a distinctive effect on the spatial patterning of industrial production in the East Midlands. Indeed, in many ways the industry remained at a proto-industrial stage, characterised as it was by rural production, sometimes combined with farming, manufacturing goods for markets beyond the immediate region, with nearby towns acting as centres of finishing, dyeing and merchant capital. Overall, the industry has been described as more small-scale, more evolutionary, more craft based, more fashion-conscious and more parochial (in cultural terms) than the textile industry of northern England.

The majority of framework knitters worked on rented frames in their own homes, and so hosiery production was highly dispersed across the East Midlands, being found in more than 250 parishes. However, there were marked concentrations of frames in particular districts. (See Figure 3.1.) Most framework knitting was carried out in a zone extending from the area around Matlock, Mansfield and Southwell in the north to Hinckley, Lutterworth and almost as far as Market Harborough in the south. Within this area there were several more concentrated zones of production. These included over 4,000 frames in the Mansfield and Sutton-in-Ashfield district, and a large concentration in the Nottingham area, including 3,490 frames in Nottingham itself, nearly 1,400 in Arnold, around 3,000 in the villages of the Leen valley to the west, and more than 1,500 in the villages to the east of Nottingham. A large concentration of frames also clustered around Shepshed in Leicestershire (about 1,200 frames) and Loughborough (900) extending up the Soar valley to Leicester, which was the most important hosiery

21 In the case of the West Midlands, metalworking was based in workshops rather than factories, with a spatial division of labour whereby different stages of the production process were completed at different sites.
manufacturing town in Britain at the time, with a total of 4,140 frames. A further focus of production was in the villages to the south of Leicester, and to the west in Hinckley and its surrounding parishes, where around 3,500 frames were in operation.\textsuperscript{23}

\textbf{Figure 3.1:} Distribution of stocking frames in the East Midlands, 1844. (Source: Smith, 'British hosiery industry', 130.)

\textsuperscript{23} Report of commission on frame-work knitters (1845); Felkin, Hosiery trade, 7; D.L. Wykes, 'The origins and development of the Leicestershire hosiery trade', Textile History, 23 (1992), 34.
Figure 3.2: Main putting out centres in the East Midlands and their spheres of influence, 1844. (Source: Smith, 'British hosiery industry', 134.)

This concentration of production in well-defined districts was a consequence of the putting-out system. Hosiers in key urban centres would issue yarn at the beginning of each week either direct from their warehouses to stockingers or through middlemen, to be knitted into stockings or parts of stockings in the workers' homes or occasionally in small workshops, in surrounding villages as well as in the town itself. The items would then be returned to the hosiers at the end of the week, to be finished by other workers before
being sold. This process had a distinctive geography. As Figure 3.2 demonstrates, the main putting-out centres in the East Midlands were Belper and Nottingham (with spheres of influence covering the framework-knitting districts of Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire), Leicester (from which work was put out across much of Leicestershire), and Loughborough. Smaller spheres of influence 'nested' within these larger ones, in a pattern reminiscent of the hierarchy of urban centres described in Christaller’s Central Place Theory. These more restricted spheres of influence were centred on the secondary putting-out centres of Derby, Ruddington, Shepshed and Hinckley. Since many knitters transported their materials and finished goods on foot, the radius of the 'hosiery hinterland' around each putting-out centre was generally restricted to the distance that could be walked in a day (about 10 miles.)

Outside these centres of production, the outer reaches of the East Midlands (North Derbyshire, northern Nottinghamshire and south-east Leicestershire) were effectively cut off from the hosiery industry because of their distance from the main organising centres and the difficulty of communicating with them. Even in some of the hosiery manufacturing districts framework knitting was an unimportant or non-existent activity in certain parishes because of the presence of other industries. So while hosiery centres like Sutton-in-Ashfield and Shepshed were very heavily dependent on framework knitting, with respectively 34.7 and 31.7 frames per 100 people, this ratio was much lower (less than 1.0) in the coal-mining district of eastern Derbyshire or the more prosperous agricultural districts of east Nottinghamshire, east Leicestershire and south-west Derbyshire. Competition from other textile industries could also limit the growth of hosiery, as in some of the villages to the west of Nottingham, where the machine lace industry drew some labour and capital away from the hosiery trade in the nineteenth century, while in Derby the silk industry was always more important than hosiery manufacture. In other areas local landowners restricted the development of hosiery because they viewed framework knitters as a burden on poor rates during periods of trade

25 For a detailed explanation of Central Place Theory, see K. S. O. Beavon, Central Place Theory: A re-interpretation (London, 1977).
26 Smith, 'British hosiery industry', 136.
depression. On the Duke of Rutland’s estates on the Leicestershire/Nottinghamshire border, for example, poor rates were kept low by the deliberate exclusion of stockingers.27

So the conventional picture of the three county towns acting as putting-out centres for their county hinterlands is too neat, and does not accommodate the fact that, firstly, several other putting-out centres were in operation, whose importance sometimes belied their size. For instance, Belper had a wider sphere of influence than Derby. Secondly, it does not take into account the fact that the hosiery district of the East Midlands was far from homogenous: the degree of economic dependence on hosiery manufacture could vary significantly even between neighbouring parishes, reflecting local socio-economic conditions.

Having considered the distribution of frames at a large scale, and noted the tension between dispersal and concentration, we now focus on the ownership of these frames, looking in particular at the locations of their owners. The majority of individual stockingers working at home rented rather than owned frames, which was very unusual for industrial machinery in this period. Although some weavers rented frames, in no other industry was the rent system so characteristic and pervasive as in framework knitting.28 The largest proportion of frames (three quarters according to Felkin) was owned by hosiers, who let frames to knitters or to middlemen who then sub-let them to knitters. By the 1830s individual hosiery firms often possessed huge numbers of frames. I. & R. Morley of Nottingham, one of the dominant hosiery manufacturers of the nineteenth century, owned little more than a dozen frames in 1800, rising to 400 in 1821 and 1,000 in 1834, making it one of the largest frame-owning firms at the time.29 The spatial distribution of company-owned frames offers evidence of the localised systems of production in the hosiery industry. Arthur and Francis Beardsley of Lenton and Nottingham sold their frames after being declared bankrupt in 1758; they had 112 frames scattered through 25 villages, but these were mostly within 10 miles of Nottingham.30

28 Wells, Hosiery and knitwear industry, 63.
Less commonly, middlemen owned and rented out frames, either to knitters in their homes or in workshops. Joseph Black of Nottingham, for example, who was described as a framework knitter in his will of 1780, possessed 28 silk frames which he bequeathed to a fellow framework knitter in Nottingham, Francis Gibson.\(^{31}\) The large number of frames owned by this individual suggests that he was acting as a middleman, since he was not described as a hosier. The fact that all the frames were left to another hosiery worker in the same town illustrates the localised occupational linkages which were common in the hosiery industry at the time. The hosier Richard Eaton of Derby, whose will was proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1741, left all his personal estate to two other hosiers in Derby.\(^{32}\) In his will of 1780 a hosier of Nottingham, Samuel Ingham, appointed three trustees of his personal estate, including two of his friends – Mark Huish and Andrew Hornbuckle – who were both hosiers in Nottingham.\(^{33}\)

A significant number of frames were owned by independent capitalists, often with no direct connection to the hosiery industry, but seeking a profitable investment. These owners included tailors, bakers, shoemakers, bricklayers, labourers, butchers, framesmiths and innkeepers. Because they tended to let their frames to hosiers and middlemen in bulk, but rarely to individual knitters, they were often based in towns. In rural areas, though, many innkeepers used their premises as distribution and collection centres for scattered spinners and knitters. A few individuals of more modest means, as well as some retired hosiers, bought one or two stocking frames as a secure investment, while many widows rented out frames as a means of avoiding reliance on parish relief.\(^{34}\)

This analysis of the distribution of stocking frames has demonstrated the extent to which the persistence of putting-out within the hosiery industry influenced the space-economy of the East Midlands. Ownership of frames was concentrated in the county towns and other putting-out centres, while many individual frames were rented by workers in settlements surrounding these centres. Distinctive economic units were thus

\(^{31}\) Notts Archives, Archdeaconry wills of Nottingham and Bingham, Will of Joseph Black, 1780 (Fiche 599).

\(^{32}\) TNA, Records of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Will of Richard Eaton, 1741, PROB 11/708.

\(^{33}\) Notts Archives, Archdeaconry wills of Nottingham and Bingham, Will of Samuel Ingham, 1780 (Fiche 602).

\(^{34}\) Head, 'Putting out in the Leicester hosiery industry', 53-4; Chapman, 'Genesis of the hosiery industry', 39; M. Palmer, 'Housing the Leicester framework knitters: history and archaeology', Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, 74 (2000), 62.
created, each consisting of a ring of hosiery villages linked to a nearby town which acted as a putting-out centre. The importance of connections between towns and their rural hinterlands in the East Midlands sets it apart from ‘classic’ industrial regions, in which interaction between towns was more important, and seen as crucial to successful industrialisation. In the North West, for instance, specialist production, trading and service centres were in direct contact, with links between Manchester and other textile towns such as Bolton and Bury, or between ‘mineral’ towns like Liverpool, Wigan and Northwich. Although links did exist between merchants in Manchester and rural workers, these were often mediated through middlemen in smaller towns nearby. Moreover, in a recent study of the Midlands it has been claimed that spatial integration through a network of towns was (and is) fundamental to economic and industrial growth in this region. We now trace the production line back one stage further, as we consider where the frame-owning hosiers sourced their raw materials.

**Raw materials**

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<th>Nottinghamshire</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No. of machines</td>
<td>% of total</td>
<td>No. of machines</td>
<td>% of total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4,380</td>
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<td>6,933</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wool + worsted</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>11,457</td>
<td>62.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Silk</td>
<td>1,454</td>
<td>25.4</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>0.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>5,836</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>18,495</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1: Type of material used in the East Midlands framework knitting industry, 1844.

Three types of raw material were used in the knitting of stockings in the East Midlands—silk, cotton and wool—and their relative importance differed between counties, as Table 3.1 illustrates. This reveals a more complex pattern than that suggested by the

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36 Stobart and Raven, *Towns, regions and industries*, 16.
37 Report of the commission on frame-work knitters, British Parliamentary Papers (1845).
conventional view that each county specialised in a different branch of hosiery manufacture.

The dominance of wool and worsted in Leicestershire is clear (cotton was only used in the Loughborough and Hinckley areas), whereas cotton was the most important yarn in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire. Silk was also worked on a significant proportion of frames in Derbyshire, and indeed had been the dominant yarn in the county before the advent of mill-spun cotton in the 1780s encouraged a shift to the manufacture of cheaper cotton hose. Nearly all the 620 stocking frames in Derby in 1844 were producing silk goods, with silk worked in a number of places nearby, including Duffield, Heanor, Melbourne, Ockbrook and Spondon. However, the most important town for silk hosiery by this time was in fact Nottingham. Nearly 1,800 frames in the district used silk, as did 255 machines in Mansfield.38

A significant proportion of raw materials used in the hosiery industry were drawn from within the East Midlands, thus adding some weight to the argument that the East Midlands formed an integrated industrial region. Cotton was spun and silk produced in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, for framework knitters in both counties. The first steam-driven cotton mill in Nottinghamshire was established at Papplewick in 1785, and by 1818 there were eight cotton mills in Nottingham and a further 23 in the county, which supplied the hosiery and emerging lace trades. A number of cotton mills were built in Derbyshire following Richard Arkwright’s move to the East Midlands. He joined with the Strutts to establish mills at Cromford, Masson and Belper by 1781. As an example of cross-county linkages, Hollins’ cotton mill was built at Pleasley in Derbyshire in 1784 to spin yarns for Nottingham hosiers.39 The wealthy hosier Joseph Paget of Loughborough part-owned Hollins’ mill in Pleasley as well as a mill in Mansfield Woodhouse, which he bequeathed in his will of 5th September 1842.40 Meanwhile, wool from Leicestershire sheep was ideally suited to the production of woollen hose in the county.

Not all yarn was sourced locally, however, and so different parts of the East Midlands were tied into separate supply networks beyond the region. In Leicestershire,

38 Felkin, Hosiery trade, 12-15; Smith, ‘British hosiery industry’, 139; Chapman, Hosiery and Knitwear, 9-10.
39 Wells, Hosiery and knitwear industry, 56; Pigott, Hollins: a study of industry, 13-14.
40 TNA, Wills proved at Prerogative Court of Canterbury, PROB 11/1968/628.
the persistence of hand spinning until the late 1790s meant that local supplies of spun wool could not keep pace with rising demand from knitters as the hosiery trade expanded. This meant that manufacturers in Leicestershire had to purchase additional worsted yarn from centres of the woollen industry where spinning had been mechanised – in Nottinghamshire, Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Yorkshire and Aberdeen. As well as being supplied by silk mills in Derby, framework knitters working with this material used reeled silk from Italy and the Levant (imported through London.) Much spun cotton for knitters in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire was supplied by the East India Company, with significant quantities also drawn from Lancashire, particularly from the 1780s, when cotton spinning increasingly came to be concentrated in the county. The hosiery firm Ward Bettle and Ward of Belper, for example, was supplied with yarn by cotton spinners in Manchester, such as McConnel and Kennedy. Thus the geography of supply networks within the industry does not suggest a completely integrated hosiery manufacturing region, but rather one that reached outside the East Midlands.

Looking at the supply networks of individual hosiers or hosiery firms enables us to see in more detail the range of locations from which raw materials were sourced. William Spencer was a Leicester hosier who, unable to pay his debts, compounded with his creditors in 1743. He provides a rare example of an eighteenth-century hosier who left records of the location of his suppliers. The majority of his creditors (21 out of 37) came from Leicester, but others were located in the wider East Midlands region, including Joseph Langford of Nottingham (a framework knitter), Samuel Fox of Derby (soap boiler) and Thomas Davye of Oakham (a dealer in wool.) A handful of creditors originated outside the East Midlands, such as William Pearce of Cirencester (a woolcomber), Thomas Bird of Coventry (silkmaker), and John and William Hewell of the City of London (mercers.) Local creditors included Daniel Ward of Wigston Magna (framework knitter), William Bentley and Sampson Choyce (who were described as mercers but were in fact Leicester’s earliest bankers), three dyers, two hosiers, and a

carrier. Some creditors, then, were suppliers of raw materials for Spencer, while others—the framework knitters—supplied finished stockings which he bought wholesale. One of Spencer's creditors was a carrier from Bristol, suggesting that he was exporting stockings to the West Indies.\textsuperscript{44} Other hosiers seem to have had a much more localised network of suppliers. John Blackwell of Nottingham, for example, was a hosier, dealer and chapman who left bankruptcy records dated April 1753. His three creditors were George and Abel Smith, the Nottingham bankers, and John Knowles, a woolcomber, also from Nottingham.\textsuperscript{45} Large hosiery firms such as Ward, Bettle and Ward of Belper tended to have more suppliers dispersed across a wider area than those linked to an individual hosier like William Spencer or John Blackwell. Most suppliers of the Belper firm were located in the East Midlands, though. Accounts for the period 1816-22 show that the firm's main suppliers were thirty hosiers in Leicester, twelve in Nottingham, six each in Loughborough and Hinckley, four in Derby and one or two firms in Chesterfield, Mansfield and Earl Shilton. A total of four suppliers were based in Tewkesbury, Aberdeen and Hawick.\textsuperscript{46}

\textit{Capital}

Whilst raw materials, unsurprisingly, were often supplied from across the East Midlands or indeed further afield, what is probably more significant is that sources of capital and credit for the hosiery industry tended to be highly localised—often drawn from individuals within the same family, religious denomination or town. The well-known Nottingham hosiery firm I. & R. Morley, for example, was closely associated with nonconformity in the town, and had links with other local manufacturing families, as well as Wells the lawyer and Wrights the bankers. In the late 1830s and early 1840s, between £20,000 and £30,000 was deposited in the firm through these connections.\textsuperscript{47} As Muldrew and others have argued, capital and credit networks were essentially social, because they were based on networks of mutual trust and neighbourliness. It follows, therefore, that

\textsuperscript{44} ROLLR, Deed of Release of lands in Smeeton Westerby, two messuages in the Northgate, Leicester, in trust to settle a mortgage and the creditors of William Spencer, hosier, 16 August 1743, 14 D57/71.
\textsuperscript{45} TNA, Bankruptcy Docket Books, B4/13.
\textsuperscript{46} Chapman, \textit{Hosiery and knitwear}, 90.
\textsuperscript{47} Chapman, 'Colossus of the hosiery trade', 13.
they were often localised in scale, since 'the most reliable means of judging someone's
credit was direct interpersonal contact with the person who was to be trusted.'48

Capital from land fuelled much of the early success of the hosiery industry. Family or inherited land was often used to raise capital for new ventures in hosiery through mortgages. For instance, Thomas James mortgaged family land in Hockley, Nottingham to finance his partnership with Hargreaves, while the Haynes brothers raised £7,000 on the security of their ancestral estates at Ashbourne to fund their pioneering manufacture of point-net.49 The success of the Pougher family, key players in the Leicester hosiery trade for 120 years, was also based on hereditary capital. Many female members of the family married leading local businessmen and gentry, ensuring continued accumulation of the family fortune in land and money.50 More generally, it can be argued that the growth of the hosiery industry in Leicester and Nottingham in the early eighteenth century was greatly assisted by financial support from local landowners, as well as bankers. For instance, John Watts of Danet Hall was also the Receiver-General for Leicestershire, and therefore was able to lend money to hosiers to support their fledgling businesses. The banker Abel Smith of Nottingham performed a similar service for hosiers in Nottinghamshire, as Receiver-General for that county.51 In a small sample of bankruptcy records from the 1750s, Abel Smith was named as a creditor of the Nottingham hosier John Blackwell and the hosiers John Battison and Thomas Taylor of Mansfield.52

As the eighteenth century progressed, however, capital was increasingly sourced from other branches of the textile industry, or from other trades such as malting, rather than from land. Chapman has compiled a list of 37 individuals contributing capital and enterprise to the East Midlands hosiery industry between 1660 and 1750, and even in this relatively early period significant numbers of these men were described as woolcombers


49 Chapman, 'Genesis of the hosiery industry', 28.

50 Wykes, 'Origins and development', 41.

51 Chapman, *Hosiery and Knitwear*, 44.

52 TNA, Bankruptcy Docket Books, B4/13.
and hosiers, or mercers and hosiers - nine and seven respectively (24 and 19 percent.) Mark Huish, for instance, was a Leicester woolcomber who moved to Nottingham in the early eighteenth century and prospered. His son Robert and grandsons Mark II and Robert II became eminent hosiers in the area. John Knowles, a woolcomber from Nottingham, provided credit to the hosiers John Blackwell, John Battison and Thomas Taylor in the 1750s. Battison and Taylor also owed money to Henry Frost, a woolcomber from Bonsall in Derbyshire. Eight of the 37 individuals identified by Chapman were employed in other textile-related occupations, such as dyer or tailor, while a further thirteen were involved in the drink trade, as brewers, maltsters, victuallers, innkeepers and so on. Many individuals in the malting trade invested capital in hosiery, partly because of the good returns available (from frame rents, for example) but also because maltsters and innkeepers had an extensive rural trade, and so it was sensible to bring back wool on their return, which they could then supply to hosiers. William Peters of the White Hart Inn in Leicester became a wool dealer, for example. A relatively high degree of occupational homogeneity was also evident in Pearson and Richardson's study of the business and social networks of insurance company directors in Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. The great majority of directors in Manchester and Leeds were involved in the textiles industry, while merchants and ship-owners were dominant amongst co-investors in the Liverpool company.

Since the centres of the hosiery industry in our period, Leicester and Nottingham, were also strongholds of nonconformity, it is not surprising that many hosiery manufacturers turned to fellow dissenters as sources of credit or business partnerships. Indeed, credit had a strong ethical as well as social meaning in the early modern period, with the granting of credit being based on individuals' or families' reputations for honesty and religious virtue. Members of credit networks frequently shared moral attitudes and value systems, since these would help to reduce the risk, and therefore also the cost, of commercial transactions. The hosier John Coltman of Leicester was a

54 Pearson and Richardson, 'Business networking', 663.
55 Muldrew, Economy of obligation, 148-9; Pearson and Richardson, 'Business networking', 657, 673.
member of the Presbyterian Great Meeting, along with a significant number of leading local tradesmen and manufacturers, with whom he made fruitful connections. For instance, his company had an account with the bankers Bentley and Buxton, and in some years was granted an overdraft by William Bentley, who was also treasurer of the Great Meeting. Religious linkages could also stretch further afield than a single town. John Coltman's father-in-law, Samuel Cartwright, a yeoman from Duffield near Derby, provided a loan to his friend and fellow Presbyterian, Samuel Unwin, of Sutton-in-Ashfield near Mansfield to set up a hosiery business, which later became one of the largest in the country. In summary, it seems that ties based on pre-existing personal and social networks were most commonly drawn upon by hosiers seeking credit. While the majority of these connections were highly localised (reflecting the importance of trust based on personal acquaintance), a not insignificant number of sources of finance originated further afield – usually elsewhere in the region, and occasionally beyond. This reflects the fact that as the eighteenth century progressed, an increasing number of transactions were made over longer distances, and so credit relationships were increasingly initiated and mediated through chains of friends and business associates. The structure of credit networks also changed with the development of factories, private banks and insurance companies, which began to provide more economic security for the middle class in the form of investment capital.\footnote{Muldrew, Economy of obligation, 152.}

**Labour**

The origins and behaviour of the hosiery workforce can also shed light on the degree to which the East Midlands formed an integrated industrial region. Three features of labour will be considered here: firstly, mobility, looking at the origins of apprentices to the hosiery trade in Leicester and Nottingham; secondly, petitioning, demonstrating that both region-wide and more localised appeals were sent to parliament; and thirdly, workers' associations, charting the attempts to form region-wide trade unions and organise large-scale strikes.
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<thead>
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<tr>
<td>Shropshire</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Northamptonshire</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: Origins of apprentices who moved to Leicester and Nottingham to work in hosiery trades, 1720-1840.57

Apprenticeship registers reveal that the majority of young men who moved to Leicester or Nottingham to work for masters in hosiery had come a relatively short distance. As Table 3.2 demonstrates, by far the largest proportion of apprentices was drawn from the surrounding county, with significant numbers from other counties in the East Midlands, particularly in the case of Nottingham. Although, of course, the employment of apprentices cannot represent the whole of the labour market in hosiery, apprenticeship registers provide a convenient means of isolating hosiery workers specifically and analysing their geographical origins. Whilst they offer some evidence of a regional labour market for the hosiery industry, it seems that hosiers most commonly employed local apprentices. Indeed, the figures in Table 3.2 hide the fact that at least as many apprentices as originated outside Nottingham or Leicester were resident in these towns already before taking up an apprenticeship there.

57 Sources: H. Hartopp, Records of the Borough of Leicester, New Series, Vol. 1: Register of the Freemen of Leicester, 1196-1770, including the Apprentices sworn before successive Mayors for certain periods, 1646-1770 (Leicester, 1927); Vol. 2: 1770-1930; Notts Archives, Register of Apprentices from 1723. (Unfortunately apprenticeship registers for Derby do not survive.)
We can deduce readily the extent to which the East Midlands formed a 'hosiery region' by looking at the origins of hosiery workers, but to assess how far these workers were conscious of being part of an industrial region is more difficult. One way of doing so is to consider what groupings were involved in petitioning parliament for improvements to working conditions in the hosiery industry. There were several region-wide petitions during the eighteenth century, suggesting that both a shared sense of purpose and tangible linkages existed between framework knitters and hosiers across the East Midlands. In 1700, for example, framework knitters in Leicestershire joined with those in Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire to petition the House of Commons against the stringent by-laws of the London Company of Framework-Knitters (such as a limit on the number of apprentices a framework-knitter could employ and a ban on the entry of aliens into the trade.) It was not until 1753 that the government responded to these demands, following a further large-scale petition, from hosiers and framework knitters in Nottingham, supported by workers in Mansfield and Leicester as well as Godalming and Guildford. The petitioners argued that the Company's by-laws were 'contrary to general liberty', and the House of Commons Committee that looked at their case agreed, resolving that the Company's charter was 'injurious and vexatious to manufactures'.

During a depression in the hosiery industry, petitions were sent to parliament in 1778 by framework knitters in all districts, pressing for a bill to regulate wages. Though it seems that these petitions were separately organised by framework knitters in each individual district, there is evidence of co-operation between hosiers in Nottingham and Derby, who sent a counter-petition arguing that wages could not be fixed by legislation because of the wide range of products made in the industry and the variations in skill required to produce them. Following the failure of the framework knitters' petition in 1778, Nottingham stockingers took the lead in petitioning Parliament the following year, prompting similar petitions from other districts complaining of low wages and abuses in the trade.

So, while it is likely that region-wide petitions were sometimes simply a reflection of poor working conditions suffered by framework knitters across the East Midlands, there seems to be much evidence for deliberate region-wide collaboration and

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58 Pigott, Hollins: a study of industry, 15; Wykes, 'Leicestershire hosiery trade', 37.
59 Wells, Hosiery and knitwear industry, 76-7.
co-operation as well, both between framework-knitters and hosiers. This may go some way towards explaining why the East Midlands was represented as a hosiery region by the Inquiry into the condition of the frame-work knitters in 1844 (discussed in Chapter 2). Indeed, a somewhat weary comment by Felkin in his summary of evidence presented to the hosiery commission in 1844 suggests some degree of collusion between hosiery workers across the East Midlands: 'statements differing but little either in substance or language...might be quoted from almost every part of the three midland counties. The repetition would be too tedious if not too painful.'

The existence of region-wide co-operation between hosiery workers in petitioning contrasts with the difficulty of establishing regional trade associations. In 1776, framework knitters began forming associations in different centres of the hosiery trade, aiming to encourage workers to take up freedom and oppose non-apprenticed stockingers. In 1778 the Nottingham association marched through the town following the election of Abel Smith as the borough's MP, and was joined by representatives from Leicester, Derby, London and most other hosiery districts. Despite this early display of unity and strength, the trade organisation did not last, mostly because of the difficulty of organising the scattered hosiery workers who were such a distinctive feature of the industry at this time. Another reason for the failure of trade organisations was the opposition of powerful hosiers. In 1812, for example, an attempt was made to establish a national trade organisation, principally intended for the relief of unemployment, consisting of small local societies linked together by central committees in major hosiery centres. However, hosiers were fearful of these organised and proactive workers, and so they arranged a meeting in London to pursue every legal means to break up the workers' union. Ironically, then, in order to suppress a cross-regional workers' movement, hosiers had to resort to inter-regional co-operation themselves. Despite the short-lived nature of these early trade unions, it seems that solidarity amongst framework knitters was not extinguished. Two general strikes in the early nineteenth century were widely

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60 Felkin, *Hosiery trade*, 18.
supported across the East Midlands. Following the rejection of a bill against cut-ups\(^62\) in 1819, 14,000 stockingers joined a strike throughout the three counties, while a more extensive strike was called in 1821, to draw attention to the low prices for hosiery goods. According to Felkin, during this time 'scarcely a dozen of hose was made in the three counties for two months.'\(^63\)

To sum up, at first sight there would seem to be much evidence for the existence of a regional space-economy in the East Midlands, based on the production of hosiery. Framework knitting was concentrated in the East Midlands, with a large proportion of parishes involved in manufacture; numerous supply linkages existed between different branches of the hosiery industry within the region; capital and labour were mostly sourced from within the region; and there were several examples of co-ordinated region-wide petitioning campaigns. However, the East Midlands was not a completely self-contained, internally integrated industrial region. Not only were linkages forged beyond its boundaries (in supply chains, for example) but, more importantly, many industrial linkages were highly localised in scale, rather than region-wide. Unlike 'conventional' industrial regions, hosiery manufacture in the East Midlands was based upon interaction between key urban centres and their rural hinterlands rather than inter-town, cross-regional linkages. This point will be explored below, through a comparison of transport networks in the East and West Midlands.

**Transport and the space-economy: comparisons between East and West Midlands**

Transport routes are regarded as key agents of spatial integration, connecting different elements of the urban system, linking towns to their hinterlands, and tying together disparate sites of production.\(^64\) The nature of the transport network in any one region could both influence and be influenced by the characteristics of industry in that region, and the scales of spatial integration there, as the following comparison between the East

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\(^{62}\) Cheaper hose made from pre-cut sections of fabric, deemed to be of poorer quality than entirely handmade products, requiring much less skill on the part of the stockinger, and being produced much more quickly.


and West Midlands will demonstrate. These two neighbouring 'regions' had contrasting experiences of industrialisation and regional integration, which are evident in the structure of transport links in each case. The first important difference to note is that innovations in transport — turnpiked roads, river improvements and canal building — occurred later and less intensively in the East Midlands than in the West. One of the earliest concentrations of turnpiking activity in England was evident in the West Midlands, with 76 miles of roads around Worcester being turnpiked in the 1720s, along with routes around Birmingham and Evesham. By contrast, turnpiking did not take off in the East Midlands until the 1750s and 1760s, with 242 miles of road turnpiked in Derbyshire in the 1750s and 196 miles in Leicestershire, while 114 miles of Nottinghamshire's roads were improved in the 1760s. Similarly, a large number of canals had been completed in the West Midlands well before canals and navigations were developed in the East. For instance, the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal was constructed between 1766 and 1772 and the Birmingham Canal between 1768 and 1772, while the Droitwich Canal was begun in 1768, and the Dudley and Stourbridge Canals in 1776. The earliest improvement to the East Midlands' waterways came with the opening of the Trent-Mersey Canal in 1777, but it was not until the canal 'mania' of the 1790s that a series of canals was constructed on the coalfields of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, to move landlocked coal and iron. These included the Cromford Canal (completed in 1794) and the Nottingham Canal (1796).

Differences between the transport systems of the East and West Midlands have been explained in terms of their contrasting industrial bases. Heavy, mineral-based industries in the West Midlands, characterised by punctiform production, generated intense traffic between sites of concentrated production, to which a network of canals was ideally suited. By contrast, the predominance of the domestic system in the East Midlands' hosiery industry meant that production was dispersed across a range of

66 Pawson, Transport and economy, 129; J. V. Beckett, The East Midlands from AD 1000 (Harlow, 1988), 263; Simmons, Leicester past and present, 131-2; Kaye, History of Nottinghamshire, 82-4; C. Weir, The Nottinghamshire heritage (Chichester, 1991), 96; Childs, History of Derbyshire, 103-4; J. Heath, The illustrated history of Derbyshire (Buckingham, 1982), 116, 121.
locations, each of which was linked to a finishing and marketing centre. This generated a
dense network of roads, radiating from important organisational centres.\textsuperscript{67} These differing
forms of industrial production, and the distinctive transport systems with which they were
associated, both influenced and reflected the nature and extent of spatial integration in the
East and West Midlands. In the West (as in other 'conventional' industrial regions) a
small number of region-wide links, often connecting principal towns, helped to integrate
the region spatially, whereas the East Midlands was characterised by a dense web of
short-distance linkages between large towns and their hinterlands, reinforcing more local
scales of interaction. The contrasts can be usefully summarised using Simmons' model of
urban systems, based on a sequence of spatial structures — and in particular the middle
two stages of the model, which he terms 'staple exports' and industrial specialisation. In
the first of these, growth in the regional economy is based upon the export of a limited
range of goods (such as the products of rural industry), and the urban system is
characterised by hierarchical linkages focusing on a dominant centre which provides
extra-regional links. This approximates to the situation in the East Midlands. In the
second stage of the model, which accords more with the West Midlands, growth is
fuelled by the interchange of goods and services between specialist industrial centres
within the region, and the spatial structure is determined by these specialisations rather
than relative position in an urban hierarchy.\textsuperscript{68} However, although models such as this can
provide a useful framework for analysis, the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate
that the theoretically neat contrast between the space economies of the East and West
Midlands (or staple export and industrial specialisation systems) does not always accord
with evidence from the historical record.

\textsuperscript{67} N. Raven and J. Stobart, 'Networks and hinterlands: transport in the Midlands', in Stobart and Raven,
*Towns, regions and industries*, 82.
\textsuperscript{68} J. W. Simmons, 'The organization of the urban system', in L. S. Bourne and J. W. Simmons (eds),
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Table 3.3a: Carrier services from towns in the East and West Midlands in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. ("-" indicates no data available.)
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Table 3.3b: Coach services from towns in the East and West Midlands in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. (‘-’ indicates no data available.)
Much of this evidence has been drawn from trade directories for three different periods: the *Universal British Directory* (UBD) covering the period 1797-9, and *Pigot’s Commercial Directories* (hereafter Pigot’s) for 1819-20 and 1822 and for 1835. These have been chosen because of their national coverage, enabling comparison between regions. Listings of carriers, coach services and water transport services in all sizeable towns were included in these directories, detailing the destinations of vehicles and the frequency of services. Directories provide the most comprehensive means by which to reconstruct transport services in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Although toll books of turnpike trusts or canal companies could also be used for this purpose, the survival of such material is patchy at best. Moreover, there is a well-established precedent for the use of directories to analyse transport networks.\(^6\) The limitations of directories have been discussed elsewhere\(^7\) – in particular, questions have been raised about the comprehensiveness of their coverage, especially for smaller towns and local services. The proportion of towns covered by the *UBD* varied between counties, depending on the availability and conscientiousness of agents. It tended to be higher in the south, perhaps because the directory was published in London and targeted a metropolitan audience. Nevertheless, the depth of coverage of any one town was generally good.\(^7\) Moreover, Pigot and Co. are seen as amongst the most reliable of early nineteenth-century directory compilers.\(^7\) Although the *UBD* and *Pigot’s* were compiled using different methods and thus are not directly comparable, they should each be *internally* consistent, so that meaningful comparisons can be made between towns of the East and West Midlands listed in the same directory. Indeed, there is a precedent for


\(^7\) Norton, *Guide to directories*. 

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using both directories in a single study. Moreover, using directories compiled between
the dates covered by the UBD and Pigot's 1835 – namely Pigot's directories for 1819-20
and 1822 – serves as a check on accuracy. Because of the relatively short period between
the publication of the different directories, there should not be major discrepancies
between their figures. If, however, figures from the UBD were substantially lower than
those recorded in Pigot's directories, for example, this would suggest that the coverage of
the former was less comprehensive, and thus it is a less reliable source.

Raven and Stobart have provided a snapshot of transport services in Midlands
towns at the end of our period, using Pigot's Directory of 1835 to calculate the number of
destinations to which selected towns were linked by a direct carrier or coach service, and
the frequency of services to each destination. Their findings support the contrasts drawn
earlier between transport systems in the East and West Midlands: carrier and coach
services were much denser in the East but more intense in the West. However, comparing
their data with information from earlier directories suggests that the patterns they found
were in fact relatively new and not representative of the later eighteenth and early
nineteenth century period. Notwithstanding the problems inherent in comparing
directories compiled by two different organisations, the patterns evident from both the
UBD and the earlier Pigot's (for 1819-22) are noticeably different from those in Pigot's
1835 directory, as shown in Tables 3.3a and 3.3b.

The most obvious trend is an increase over time in the number of destinations
served by carrier and coach services from the majority of towns, and a concomitant
growth in the number of services per week to each destination. This can be readily
explained by the spread of turnpike roads and expansion of industry, both of which
encouraged greater volumes of road traffic. The early nineteenth century also saw the
growth of coaching, as a result of road improvements, advances in coach design, and

73 See N. Raven, 'Chelmsford during the industrial revolution, c. 1790-1840', Urban History, 30 (2003),
44-62.
74 Sources: P. Barfoot and J. Wilkes, Universal British Directory of Trade, Commerce and Manufacture,
vols. II-IV (London, 1797-9); Pigot's Commercial Directory for 1819-20; Pigot's Directory of
Leicestershire (London, 1822); Pigot's Directory (1835). Note that the third column of each table
essentially represents average figures, and it should not be inferred that each destination had the same
number of wagons or coaches running to it.

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better horse breeding. What is of greater interest here, however, is a comparison between the East and West Midlands. In both the 1790s and 1820s there seems to have been little difference between the two regions in terms of the density and intensity of road transport services. Whereas Raven and Stobart claim that in 1835 towns in the East Midlands were linked to a much greater number of places than towns in the West Midlands, particularly by carrier, this contrast is not so noticeable at an earlier date. Although Leicester stood out in the 1790s with a far larger number of carrier services than any other midland town (serving 64 destinations), other towns in both the East and West Midlands had similar levels of services, with most being connected to fewer than 15 destinations by coach or by carrier in the 1790s. Indeed, a number of towns in the West Midlands had a greater density of connections than the East in this period. Worcester, for instance, served 25 places by carrier and sent coaches to 12 destinations, while Stourbridge was connected by carrier to 20 locations and Newcastle-under-Lyme by coach to 14. By contrast, Chesterfield served just eight destinations by carrier and only four by coach, and for Loughborough the respective figures were seven and four. Even in Nottingham, coaches are recorded as serving only six locations in the 1790s.

The intensity of carrier and coach services did not vary markedly between the two regions in this earlier period either. The average number of wagons running to each destination per week was generally less than 2.5 for towns in both the East and West Midlands in the 1790s and 1820s, while the number of coaches per destination tended to be less than ten in both regions in the 1790s. By contrast, in 1835, the average number of wagons per destination was 2.7 for towns in the East Midlands, but 5.7 in the West, while the number of coaches per destination averaged 4.3 in the East and 6.7 in the West. Though the intensity of services from some towns was much higher than from others in the earlier period, such towns were just as likely to be located in the East as the West Midlands. Whereas in 1835, West Bromwich sent 35 wagons per week to Birmingham alone, and an average of 14 wagons per week travelled from Walsall to each of its connecting destinations (Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Cannock and London), in the 1790s and 1820s towns with such unusually intense transport provision tended to be

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located in the East Midlands. According to the *UBD*, ten wagons per week went from Ashbourne to London and six to Manchester. And in the 1820s, six wagons per week connected Hinckley to Leicester, whereas the number of wagons per destination for towns in the West Midlands was less than two on average in this period. Meanwhile, 100 coaches travelled from Market Harborough each week in the 1820s, serving London, Manchester, Leicester, Nottingham and Sheffield.\textsuperscript{76} This figure was much higher than towns of comparable size in the West Midlands.

The relatively limited differences between the East and West Midlands could be explained in part by the nature of urban systems. In general, the number of destinations with which any town was connected and the frequency of services simply reflected the size of that town and its role within the urban system. County towns like Leicester, Derby, Worcester or Warwick tended to serve a greater variety of places and offer a larger number of services per week, because they acted as social, political and — in the East Midlands particularly — industrial centres for a wide hinterland. Thoroughfare towns like Loughborough or Newcastle-under-Lyme and coaching centres such as Buxton and Leamington also tended to be linked to a large number of destinations by a high frequency of passing coach and carrier services. By contrast, small market towns were usually connected to just a handful of nearby urban centres. For instance, carrier services went from Kidderminster to Birmingham, Bewdley, Stourport, Leominster and Ludlow in 1820, while in 1822 Market Bosworth in Leicestershire offered carrier services once a week to Atherstone in Warwickshire and to Leicester.\textsuperscript{77} There is little reason to believe that the range of urban functions in the East and West Midlands was markedly different, and thus it is not surprising that when viewed as a whole their transport networks did not exhibit great contrasts.

This suggests, then, that the reason for the differences in the transport networks evident in 1835 was that this coincided with the rapid industrialisation seen in regions like the West Midlands. As towns mushroomed in size and industrial production grew and became more specialised, the number of carrier and coach services increased, as did the number of destinations served. Differences between the two regions are more evident


\textsuperscript{77} *Pigot's Commercial Directory for 1819-20; Pigot's Directory of Leicestershire*. 

108
in *Pigot’s Directory* for 1835 than in the earlier directories, reflecting the fact that while production had become increasingly spatially concentrated in the West Midlands by the 1830s, the East Midlands remained a proto-industrial district in many ways. The mineral-based energy economy of the West was dependent on heavy, bulky raw materials, with clearly defined spatial divisions of labour, which required high-intensity movements of goods and materials between specialised manufacturing centres, with Birmingham acting as a key transport node for the whole region. Indeed many towns in the West Midlands transported goods to London and other parts of the country via Birmingham. By contrast, the persistence of outworking within the hosiery industry meant that the East Midlands’ transport system continued to be structured around extensive carrier routes connecting several nodes – county capitals or market towns – with their rural hinterlands, each route being used less intensively than in the West Midlands. As dominant putting-out centres, Leicester and Nottingham, and to a lesser extent Derby, offered carrier services to a multitude of locations within their own counties (as well as nearby places in neighbouring counties.)

Nottingham was connected by weekly carrier services to 75 places within its county in 1820, as well as daily carriers to Loughborough, while carrier services from Leicester reached 43 places in Leicestershire in the 1790s and 51 in 1822, with Derby serving 28 places by carrier in 1820 (including places in north-west Leicestershire like Ashby de la Zouch and Castle Donington.)

The contrasts between East and West which had emerged by the 1830s in the provision of road transport services were also evident amongst water carriers, although the differences were just as marked in the 1790s as in 1835. Unfortunately it is not possible to reconstruct water transport networks at the same level of detail as road carriage because entries in directories did not always specify the frequency of services and the destinations to which a town was directly connected by water carrier. It was fairly

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78 Raven and Stobart, ‘Networks and hinterlands’, 86.
80 Indeed, a dense and extensive carrier network from Leicestershire towns to their surrounding villages was a striking feature of the county in the 1850s too. See A. Everitt, 'Town and country in Victorian Leicestershire: the role of the village carrier', in A. Everitt (ed), *Perspectives in English urban history* (London, 1973), 213-40.
81 *UBD*, 1797-9; *Pigot’s Commercial Directory* for 1819-20 (Manchester, 1819); *Pigot’s Directory of Leicestershire* (1822).
common for a carrier to be described as serving ‘all parts of the kingdom’, or for a long list of potential destinations to be given, encompassing most sizeable centres on the canal or river network, many of which would have been reached only by connections to other carriers. Nonetheless, clear differences between the East and West Midlands can still be drawn out. As suggested earlier, the canal network was much denser in the West, reflecting the concentration of industrial production at specific sites within the region, and the bulkiness and weight of raw materials and finished goods. Canals were less significant in the space-economy of the East Midlands, dependent as it was on short-distance carrier services linking organisational centres like Leicester and Nottingham with dispersed producers in their hinterlands. The relative lightness and low bulk of hosiery goods meant that they could be transported cheaply and conveniently by road on carriers’ wagons. Thus we find that whereas Birmingham had 102 water transport services listed in *Pigot's Directory* for 1819-20, Derby had 25, Leicester 24 and Nottingham just 19. The contrasts were even more marked in 1835, when 159 services from Birmingham were listed in *Pigot's Directory*, 90 from Stourbridge and 68 for the Potteries, while Leicester and Derby each had 23 services and Nottingham only 16. Although canal services were relatively rare in the 1790s, differences between East and West were evident even then, reflecting the earlier establishment of a canal network in the West Midlands. Twenty-six boat services from Worcester were listed in the *UBD* – most along the Severn to Bristol, a route which was used as an early outlet for manufactured goods from the West Midlands – with fourteen from Burton-upon-Trent and thirteen from Birmingham, but the only water carrier recorded for the East Midlands was one serving the Erewash Canal from Cromford via Alfreton in Derbyshire. Canals and river navigations were not entirely unimportant to the space-economy of the East Midlands, though. Good water communications were vital to the prosperity of the coal industry, while the Trent acted as a crucial artery of waterborne trade more generally, both within and beyond the region, carrying coal, iron, lead, textiles, corn, malt and cheese.

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82 Turnbull, ‘Canals, coal and regional growth’.
83 Raven and Stobart, ‘Networks and hinterlands’, 87.
The evidence presented above suggests that significant differences between the transport networks of the East and West Midlands only began to emerge in the 1830s, when both road and canal traffic became more intense over longer-distance routes in the West in response to rapid industrialisation, while transport routes in the East remained dispersed and localised. Although transport links are often seen as influential factors in regional integration, it seems unlikely that the degree of such integration in the East and West Midlands diverged as abruptly and rapidly as their transport networks in the 1830s. What is more likely is that the West Midlands had a more integrated economy at an earlier stage, which then stimulated the provision of more cross-regional transport routes and encouraged more intense traffic movements. One way to test this contention is to calculate, for each sizeable town in both the East and West Midlands, the number of carrier and coach services that ran to places in the county in which the town was situated, the number that served places elsewhere in the same region, and the number of services to places outside the region. Comparisons can then be drawn between the East and West Midlands, and between different time periods, enabling us to assess at what stage greater regional integration in the West became evident.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Destinations of carrier and coach services, 1797-9 (%)</th>
<th>Destinations of carrier and coach services, 1819-22 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Within county</td>
<td>Outside county but within region</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for East Midlands’ towns</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average for West Midlands’ towns</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.4: Average proportions of carrier and coach services destined for different locations from towns in the East and West Midlands, 1790s and 1820s.

Sources: Universal British Directory, 1797-9 (Vols. II-V); Pigot’s Directory for Leicestershire, 1822; Pigot’s Commercial Directory for 1819-20.
The data in Table 3.4 demonstrate clearly that in both the 1790s and 1820s the proportion of intra-regional connections for towns in the East Midlands was significantly lower than for those in the West. Moreover, the proportion of extra-regional linkages was much higher in the East. This suggests, therefore, that the East Midlands lacked regional coherence, partly because there were relatively few road transport linkages between the counties of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, and partly because the majority of transport services from towns in the East Midlands were destined for places outside the region. In a sense this is not surprising, given what we know of the East Midlands. Its geographical position at the centre of England is likely to have encouraged different parts of the East Midlands to look outwards towards different areas of the country. The destinations for coaches and carriers listed in the directories bear this out. Towns in Derbyshire were oriented primarily towards places in Lancashire, Staffordshire and Cheshire, Leicestershire's towns were connected mostly to Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and London, while towns in Nottinghamshire were frequently linked to Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. What is more surprising, however, is how different the patterns for the East and West Midlands are, given that the density of the road transport network and the intensity of its use were apparently relatively similar in the East and West in the period from the 1790s to the 1820s. Indeed, although it has been argued that one of the distinctive features of the East Midlands' transport network was the large number of services linking county towns to their surrounding counties, it was in the West Midlands that intra-county services were more important, representing an average of 32 percent of all carrier and coach connections in the 1790s, compared with just 19 percent in the East Midlands. It seems, therefore, that regional integration (as measured by transport linkages) was stronger in the West Midlands than in the East, from a relatively early stage. Almost half of all urban centred road transport services in the West linked places within the same county and/or region in the 1790s, compared with less than a third in the East Midlands. In both the East and West, the degree of regional integration had increased by the 1820s, with a smaller percentage of services linking places beyond the region and a greater proportion connecting places within it, but the contrasts between the two regions were still marked. Sixty-two percent of services from towns in the West Midlands were intra-regional, compared with just 34 percent in the East Midlands. In
broad terms, then, and using an important measure of regional integration, we can conclude that the West Midlands had more regional coherence than the East, and that this regional integration pre-dated the industrial take-off in the West Midlands in the early nineteenth century.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has considered two important measures and drivers of spatial integration—industry and transport. The geography of industrial and transport linkages, though complex, can reveal much about how and why a regional space such as the East Midlands developed as it did. Evidence presented in this chapter has highlighted how the situation in the East Midlands differed from the conventional picture of industrial regions as internally integrated and characterised by cross-regional economic linkages. Though there was a clear concentration of hosiery manufacture in the East Midlands, with many intra-regional supply linkages and some intra-regional co-operation over petitioning, it was not a completely self-contained, integrated industrial region. Connections were forged both beyond its boundaries and at a much more localised scale. This picture is also borne out by evidence of the structure and geography of transport links in the East Midlands. Carrier services tended to link urban centres and their immediate hinterlands, mirroring the putting-out system in the hosiery industry. A very small percentage of carrier and coach services in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries connected places in different counties of the East Midlands. Moreover, the majority of transport services were destined for places outside the region. This contrasts with the situation in the West Midlands, where the majority of transport services linked places within the region in the 1820s. Meanwhile, the proportion of intra-county services was in fact larger than in the East Midlands, where spatial integration at the county scale is usually thought to have been more dominant. So, though the East Midlands was often defined as a hosiery manufacturing region (as in the 1844 Framework Knitters Inquiry discussed in Chapter 2), such definitions were usually externally imposed. As this chapter has demonstrated, the economic and spatial practices of the East Midlands’ inhabitants themselves reveal a more complex space, in which connections and linkages at a variety of scales, from the
local to the national, co-existed, with regional spatial integration not being privileged over any other spatial scale.

Of necessity, this is a very generalised picture, however. It was the actions of individual people and their spatial practices which, when combined, determined the degree of regional integration and shaped the transport network in the East Midlands. Later chapters will focus on the social and business connections of a range of individuals – testators, migrant workers, and members of the urban elite – in order to assess the extent to which the experience of individual East Midlands’ residents accorded with the picture of the space-economy of the East Midlands presented here.
Functions and fortunes: The importance of county towns in the East Midlands

In this chapter, the focus shifts from the regional to the county scale and from industrial processes alone to a mix of cultural, social and economic practices. Having demonstrated in Chapter 3 that evidence for an integrated regional space-economy in the East Midlands is relatively limited, this chapter seeks to investigate the extent to which the county scale (or ‘layer’) of spatial interaction was of greater importance in the East Midlands. The prime focus will be on the socio-spatial practices of the elite, and in particular the continued influence of the lived space of the ‘county community’ — made manifest in the spatial practices associated with the county season and the political and administrative life of the county. The chapter takes an urban-centric approach, exploring how three county towns continued to dominate the urban hierarchy of the East Midlands, representing the foci of social, cultural and political life for the elite in their counties, and thus ensuring the continued importance of the county scale of spatial interaction.

The historiography of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century urban life has tended to focus on London, industrial towns, ports and resorts, with longer-established county towns left somewhat neglected, despite the fact that they often played equally important roles in the social and economic changes of the period. A county town can be most simply defined as the administrative capital of its county, exerting social and economic influence over a hinterland beyond its immediate market area. The size and influence of such towns varied considerably, however. Ipswich and Worcester, for instance, had populations of around 8,000 in the early eighteenth century, and significant influence over their hinterlands, while Buckingham and Dorchester had just 2,000

1 Later chapters will consider social and economic interaction amongst members of the middling sort and the lower orders, and how this served to shape space in the East Midlands.
2 J. Ellis, 'Regional and county centres, c. 1700-c. 1840', in P. Clark (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History of Britain*, volume II (Cambridge, 2000), 673. Indeed, Ellis’s work is one of the few overviews of English county towns published in recent decades.
inhabitants each and found themselves challenged by local rivals. Some county towns, such as Norwich, Shrewsbury, Exeter and York, have also been described as regional capitals, providing social and cultural facilities and acting as major centres of wholesale and retail trade for large hinterlands beyond their own county boundaries. Clearly, then, the functions and fortunes of county towns varied considerably across the country.

County towns' functions and fortunes also changed through time. The century after 1660 has been described as the 'golden age' of the county town. Most participated fully in the urban renaissance, developing as centres of conspicuous consumption, recreation and fashionable society, as their economies diversified into luxury goods and services, reducing dependence on staple industries. Norwich, for instance, was an important commercial and social centre from the late seventeenth century, with a calendar of events for local gentry, and a growing urban professional class catering for a wide rural and urban clientele. Chelmsford's economy expanded in the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, fuelled by rising demand from passing coach passengers as well as local gentry and the population of London. Similarly, Chester's prosperity was founded on its external links, both with the local area and the rest of England as well as north Wales.

However, by the later eighteenth century many traditional county centres faced relative eclipse, for a variety of reasons. Firstly, a slowing in the growth of real incomes, which had sustained widespread urban growth in service centres during the later seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, meant that many county capitals began to exhibit rates of population growth well below the national average. Secondly, lethargy and conservatism amongst some county town elites contributed to their towns' relative decline. Thirdly, many county centres lost out to competition from other towns, which had more favourable positions in new transport networks, more fashionable and

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3 Ellis, 'Regional and county centres', 674-5.
sophisticated shopping facilities, or more dynamic industrial and commercial sectors. These latter towns, such as Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds, began to take on the economic and social roles previously associated with traditional county centres. For instance, they contributed to the diffusion of new scientific and technical ideas through surrounding areas, and set new educational and cultural standards.  

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1700</th>
<th>1801</th>
<th>1841</th>
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<tbody>
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<tr>
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<td>17,412</td>
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<td>28,842</td>
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<td>9,000</td>
<td>11,520</td>
<td>17,790</td>
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<td>20,004</td>
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<td>Derby</td>
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Table 4.1: Population and rank of thirteen county towns, in 1700, 1801 and 1841. (Figures in brackets refer to the rank of the town in lists of the largest provincial towns in c.1700, 1801 & 1841.)

This picture of county towns stagnating demographically and economically and being eclipsed by more prosperous and dynamic neighbours does not hold true for the East Midlands, however. Leicester, Nottingham and Derby were unique amongst English county centres in experiencing rapid and sustained growth throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. In population terms, they were the only county capitals to rise up the rankings of English provincial towns. Between the 1660s and 1801 Derby moved up fifty places in the list of the largest provincial towns, to 48th position, Leicester by twenty-nine places to 25th, and Nottingham by seventeen places to 16th.  

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8 Ellis, 'Regional and county centres', 678, 680-84.
10 J. Langton, "Town growth and urbanisation in the Midlands from the 1660s to 1801", in J. Stobart and P. Lane (eds), Urban and Industrial Change in the Midlands, 1700-1840 (Leicester, 2000), 27.
1801-41 the county towns of the East Midlands grew faster still, outstripping their counterparts in every other English region. The population of most county centres doubled or trebled between the late seventeenth century and 1841, whereas Leicester, Nottingham and Derby grew by up to sixteen times. Table 4.1 highlights the stark contrast between the experience of these East Midlands towns and other county capitals.

The purpose of this chapter is to explain why, in the East Midlands, the pre-industrial pattern of county towns dominating their respective counties persisted into the industrial period. The first part of the chapter outlines the central role played by Leicester, Nottingham and Derby within their own counties, in political, social and cultural terms. What made the three towns unusual in industrialising Britain, however, was that these established political and cultural capitals of their counties also became significant industrial centres, a process which is discussed in the second part of the chapter. The third part centres on a discussion of occupational structures, which are used to explore how successfully the industrial and socio-cultural functions of these towns were brought together. Some explanations for the co-existence of social and industrial functions in these towns are suggested in the final part of the chapter.

'County community'

By definition, county towns were not self-contained entities but were intimately linked to their hinterlands. Alan Everitt has used the phrase 'county community'11 to describe the ways in which county towns and their surrounding countryside were tied together as an organic unit, and interacted closely in a way which shaped the identity of each. County towns represented a meeting of town and country, acting as the natural foci of both the county community and the surrounding natural countryside.12

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12 A. Everitt, 'Country, county and town: patterns of regional evolution in England', in P. Borsay, The Eighteenth-Century Town (Harlow, 1990), 95. This view of a clear-cut 'county community' has recently been challenged, however. Some county towns had cross-county influence (see Stobart, 'County, town and country'), while, conversely, it has been argued that the influence of some towns did not spread much beyond their own boundaries. (See C. Estabrook, Urbane and rustic England: Cultural ties and social spheres in the provinces, 1660-1780 (Manchester, 1998). For a strong critique of Everitt's concept of the county community, see C. Holmes, 'The county community in Stuart historiography', Journal of British Studies, 19 (1980), 54-73.
One of the ways in which shire towns were tied to their counties was through their role as administrative capitals. Leicester, Nottingham and Derby were typical in that they provided the location for county assizes, quarter sessions, petty sessions and county courts. Leicester and Nottingham were also home to the archdeaconry courts which dealt with the administration of probate for deceased individuals across the whole of each county. Activities of the county elite were co-ordinated and administered in the county town, with all manner of meetings being held there routinely, including those of the land tax commission, local militia and so on. Such gatherings served to cement the position of county towns as symbolic representatives of the 'county community'. Similarly, the county was brought together physically at one site during polling for elections, when voters were transported to the county town to cast their vote, and, frequently, to be offered hospitality by the candidates and their committees. Thousands of freeholders from across the county could also be brought together for special commissions - meetings held in the county town to decide on the contents of petitions to Parliament by newly elected members and county court assemblies. In short, county towns acted as 'a focus for the fiscal, judicial and political concerns of the whole shire.'

In essence, the relationship, in political terms, between the county and the county town was a symbiotic one. Counties tended to be under-represented in parliament prior to the reforms of 1832. Of 513 English and Welsh MPs, only 92 were elected for counties, despite the fact that no more than 30 percent of the population lived in towns. Leicestershire and Derbyshire were particularly poorly represented, with only four MPs each. Two of the Members were elected for the county town, leaving just two to serve the whole of the rest of each county. Moreover, in both counties the franchise was restricted to freemen of the borough. Ostensibly, then, the political representation of the county was determined to a great extent by county town interests. However, the county in fact exerted a significant political influence over its capital. Most county MPs were drawn

13 Borsay, English Urban Renaissance, 7.
from amongst the county community, and borough representatives were often gentlemen from the surrounding county, particularly where the borough electorate was relatively small and thus county families could exert greater influence. The Cavendish family of Staveley in Derbyshire, for instance, provided three long-serving MPs for the borough of Derby in our period: Lord James Cavendish (1715-47), Lord Frederick Cavendish (1754-80), and Henry Frederick Compton Cavendish (elected in 1812). 17 The offering of hospitality or bribes in return for votes was commonplace. For example, before the hotly-contested election of 1754 in Nottingham, Lord Howe entertained many of the town's burgesses at Langar Hall over several months, and gave their families a golden half-guinea every week. 18 Many electors were in fact non-resident freemen, drawn principally from the county. For instance, at the elections for representatives of the borough of Leicester held in 1754, 1768 and 1796, more than one fifth of voters came from the county (outside Leicester itself). 19 And, although borough residents did vote in county elections, the majority of electors were drawn from outside the town. The election of two knights of the shire in Derby in 1820, for example, drew 98 voters from the town and 137 from the county. 20 In addition, the apparent under-representation of the East Midlands counties in parliament was offset by the fact that significant numbers of MPs lived or owned land there. Derbyshire, for instance, had eight resident MPs and twelve landowning MPs, while thirteen Members owned land in Leicestershire. Although these MPs officially represented other parts of the country, the fact that they resided or owned land in these counties ensured that they had an interest in the area. They were expected to defend and promote the interests of their tenants, often representing local needs in parliament or assisting with lobbying. 21

The county as a whole was an important and clearly-defined political and administrative unit, in which the interests of town and country increasingly came to coincide. Representing one's county as a knight of the shire was seen as a great honour —


19 ROLLR, Leicester Poll Books 1754, 1768, 1796, L 324.

20 D.R.O., Poll Book, Derbyshire Election, 1820, Q/RE/27, 11.

21 Langford, Public life, 196.
hence the vigour with which the leading families competed for this office. In the early
eighteenth century county MPs were responsible for the supervision of all bills directly
affecting their own county, though later in the century this increasingly onerous workload
was shared with borough MPs. Thus, representatives of countryside and town began to
work together to represent the county. The rigidity of county boundaries in framing an
administrative unit is emphasised by the example of county coroners. People were
expected to call upon the services of a coroner within their own county of residence, even
if their nearest coroner was in fact closer to their home but lived in a neighbouring
county.23

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leics 1788-9</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>Notts 1785-6</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
<th>d</th>
<th>Derbys 1788-9</th>
<th>£</th>
<th>s</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Nottingham</td>
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<td>All Notts.</td>
<td>170</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>All Derbys.</td>
<td>135</td>
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Table 4.2: Amount of tax assessed on shops in the principal urban centres of
Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire.24

In addition to their administrative role, the three East Midlands towns acted as
important social and cultural capitals, drawing in people from the surrounding county and
sometimes beyond. At a fundamental level, county towns acted as the main shopping
centres for the population in their hinterlands. Of course, people were regularly drawn
into all towns to shop, do business and meet friends in inns and coffee houses during this
period, and retail activity was also found in rural areas, as travelling salesmen toured the

22 Langford, Public life, 200-201.
23 Personal communication from Pam Fisher, 7th April 2005.
24 Figures derived from shop tax schedules in TNA, Exchequer, Land and Assessed Taxes, E 182. No
figures existed for Nottinghamshire for the year 1788-9, so figures for 1785-6 have been used instead.
countryside and permanent shops began to appear in some villages. However, it was shire towns that dominated retail provision within their counties, as evidenced by data from the short-lived shop tax of the 1780s. The tax was payable on shop premises valued at more than £10, and was charged on a sliding scale, so that valuable town centre shops attracted the highest investment. Shops producing goods on the premises (such as bakers) were exempt. The tax returns measure only the total tax payments in each parish and thus cannot be used to estimate the total number of shops in any one settlement, but the tax does provide a useful snapshot of relative retail importance. Table 4.2 includes figures for all towns paying more than £1 in tax in each of the three East Midlands counties. The dominance of the county centres is clear, each representing at least 59 percent of all retail provision within their respective counties. The value of shops in Leicester was more than four times that in Market Harborough (its nearest challenger) while Nottingham’s retail sector was valued at five times more than Newark’s, and Derby outstripped its closest competitor, the spa town of Buxton, by a ratio of nearly 8:1.

Shire towns enjoyed not only the largest retail sector in their counties, but also more specialist retail provision than other towns in their hinterlands. There is now a consensus that Georgian England was characterised by a flowering of consumer culture, as it became increasingly common for people to purchase goods beyond basic necessities. Urban economies became more diverse and consumer-oriented, with an increase in the number of different crafts and trades practised, and a marked expansion in luxury trades such as clock and watch makers, jewellers, furniture makers and milliners. At the same time, demand for, and provision of, high-status leisure facilities increased enormously, with theatres, assembly rooms and public walks being constructed and well patronised, while regular concerts and race meetings were held in towns. These trends were most marked towards the top of the urban hierarchy, particularly in county towns, as they were

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'the traditional gathering points and service centres of society'. Indeed, a distinctive feature of county towns was the annual influx of local landed gentry for social 'seasons' which corresponded with the assizes or race-weeks.

Leicester lacked a significant population of resident gentry in the eighteenth century, yet it attracted large numbers of fashionable people from the county for its races every September, which were the highlight of the social calendar. In 1789 fireworks and music were on offer at the Vauxhall Gardens, with assemblies and a ball at the Haymarket Rooms. Nevertheless, Leicester tended to lag behind other towns in the provision of social and cultural amenities. Although an elegant Exchange and Assembly Rooms were built in 1748, prompted by the need for more fashionable meeting-places in the town, Leicester had no purpose-built theatre until 1801, and was the only town of its size in England without a public library. Moreover, several leisure facilities were short-lived. For instance, spa waters were discovered in 1787 near Humberstone Gate and initially proved popular with locals, prompting the building of a Pump Room in 1794. By this time, however, the spa was losing out to more distant competitors and being swamped by urban expansion along Humberstone Gate. Similarly, the Vauxhall Gardens, which were well-known as a place of genteel leisure and recreation in the 1770s and 1780s, were put up for sale in 1791 because of a need for land to accommodate the town's expanding industries.

Nottingham, by contrast, had acquired status as a fashionable centre for local gentry as early as 1660, following the grand rebuilding of the Castle by its owner the Duke of Newcastle. The Castle became the centre of upper class social life, setting the tone for urban elegance. It seems likely that Nottingham's large number of resident gentry encouraged the development of numerous exclusive leisure facilities and activities during the eighteenth century, designed to appeal to both resident and non-resident gentry, including bowling greens, pleasure gardens, concerts in the Exchange Rooms, and

28 Borsay, English Urban Renaissance, 117.
31 Temple Patterson, Radical Leicester, 7, 91.
32 Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 96.
plays at the new theatre in St Mary’s Gate. The popularity of Derby’s rebuilt assembly rooms amongst local gentry is evident from the initial subscription list (1762-3.) Almost all the 39 subscribers lived in Derbyshire or Derby itself, and included two dukes (the Duke of Devonshire heading the list with a subscription of £400), five baronets, one earl, two lords, and 27 esquires. Thus, these towns attracted both visitors and, crucially, wealth, which fuelled economic and demographic growth, as people moved to the towns for employment in the expanding service and leisure industries.

It would seem from the above that the hinterland of a county town was class-specific, with rural participation in urban life being restricted largely to the activities of a community of wealthy families; indeed this point has been made by several scholars. Everitt has argued that the county was a much more meaningful unit for the gentry than for the labouring classes, as it formed the locus of upper-class social life, while Estabrook notes that the political function of county towns was of most relevance to the gentry. The town courts and related social assemblies were attended mainly by country gentlemen, with people of more modest means being excluded by the high costs of litigation and travel and boarding expenses during the assizes.

However, county towns did not merely service the needs of the gentry. The emergence of a market for leisure amongst the working class encouraged the development of an increasing variety of commercialised leisure pursuits in towns, including theatrical performances, circuses, cock-fighting and bull-baiting. Race week was as important an event in the social calendar of urban workers as of the wealthy elite. The many festivals, fairs, celebrations and commemorations that took place throughout the year in county towns attracted a mass of people from across the social spectrum and drew in large numbers from the countryside. For instance, Derby’s first music festival in September 1788 attracted 1,000 people, and had become a triennial

34 D.R.O., An account of the Gentlemen subscribers to the Assembly Rooms in Derby, 1762-3, D 239 M/098.
37 Ellis, Georgian Town, 83.
event by the 1820s, at which time the town also boasted a well-attended choral society.\(^{38}\) At the opposite end of the cultural spectrum, Derby's infamous Shrovetide football (which often resulted in injury and even death) was generally supported by the elite until the 1790s.\(^{39}\) The high point of the year amongst the working class in and around Nottingham was the Goose Fair, while in Leicester a calendar of festivities each year were open to all ranks of society. In the later eighteenth century, events included the commemoration of the Restoration on 29\(^{th}\) May and a firework display and illuminations at the Vauxhall Gardens on 4\(^{th}\) June to celebrate the King's birthday.\(^{40}\) All social classes joined together for one-off celebrations such as the Peace Procession in Leicester to mark the end of the Seven Years' War in 1763. Both county and borough officials marched through the town, followed by a series of tableaux representing Leicester's chief trades. The conduit in the Market Place ran with wine, whole sheep and pigs were roasted, and the day was declared a holiday.\(^{41}\)

However, just as it would be a mistake to assume that the social and cultural sphere of influence of a county town was restricted to the gentry, so it would be inappropriate to imply that the spatial extent of that influence was delimited by the county's borders. Though the county was an important unit for political and administrative purposes, and had some rhetorical significance (as a space of representation for the 'county community', for example), individuals' choice of where to shop, socialise, or attend cultural events was to a large extent determined by geographical propinquity and topography. People living on the Leicestershire/Nottinghamshire border, for instance, would probably be more likely to travel to Nottingham for social and cultural events, while gentry living in Leicestershire but close to the border with Warwickshire would have been just as likely to socialise in Warwick. County boundaries did not act as a barrier to movement, and need to be viewed in the context of a hierarchy of central places and their nested spheres of influence (in the manner of Central Place Theory.)


Nevertheless, the county remained an important spatial unit, being a focus of attachment and affiliation, particularly for the elite. For instance, an analysis of subscription lists for new institutions in the East Midlands' county towns reveals a significant level of support for them from the county community, suggesting that these towns enjoyed county-wide influence. In the period 1772-1801, over 60 percent of annual subscribers to the Leicester Royal Infirmary came from rural Leicestershire (with most of the rest living in the town itself). By 1800, 53 individual parishes in the county subscribed an average of £2 2s per year.\(^{42}\) Since entry to the Infirmary was limited to patients who had been recommended by a subscriber, it is not surprising that most inmates also came from the borough of Leicester and its county.\(^{43}\) A similar situation existed in Derby, where just less than 60 percent of subscribers to the General Infirmary in three sample years between its opening in 1810 and 1834 lived in the county, and included a number of leading local aristocracy and gentry such as the Earl and Countess of Chesterfield and Sir Henry Crewe of Calke Abbey. Gentlemen were appointed as receivers of subscriptions in Alfreton, Smalley, Wiln Mills, Bakewell and Ashbourne, which indicates the extent of the area from which subscribers were expected to be drawn.\(^{44}\)

Leicester, Nottingham and Derby clearly fulfilled the traditional roles of county towns, acting as the social, cultural and political foci of their counties. However, this cannot be the only explanation for their continued growth and dominance of their respective counties. If other shire towns offered the same facilities, why was it only the three East Midlands towns that continued to grow so rapidly throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries? The answer lies in the fact that, unusually amongst English county towns, they also became the main industrial centres of their respective counties.

\(^{42}\) ROLLR, Leicester Royal Infirmary Annual Reports, 1771-1851, MF 471.
\(^{43}\) Frizelle and Martin, Leicester Royal Infirmary, 66.
\(^{44}\) D.R.O., Annual Reports of Derbyshire General Infirmary, 1809-69, D 1190/49/1.
Industrial development

Although the occupational structure of many county capitals was wide and varied, the success of many such towns was based on a specialist function or trade. The strong growth of the East Midlands' towns was linked to the significant contribution of industrial activities to the urban economy - notably hosiery production, and, in Derby, silk and china manufacture. The extent of dependence on one particular industry in Nottingham and Leicester is clear from trade directories. A quarter of all individuals in Leicester listed in the *Universal British Directory* (UBD) for the early 1790s were employed in the textile industry – the vast majority of these in hosiery (including needlemakers, dyers and other ancillary trades as well as hosiers.) The listing for Nottingham in the UBD reveals a similar picture: here, 23 percent of individuals were employed in textiles. However, the total number of people involved in textile trades is likely to have been under-estimated in the UBD, since only individual hosiers were recorded, each of whom may have employed a large number of framework knitters, who are absent from the directory. Therefore it is useful to consider these directory data alongside other sources.

Wills and administration bonds frequently record the occupations of testators, executors and administrators, and because they cover an extended time period (unlike the directories which are only available from the later eighteenth century) they can offer a more comprehensive picture of the occupational structure of towns from the beginning of the eighteenth century. Moreover, although wills tended to be made by individuals of quite substantial means and relatively high status, many of them do relate to individual artisans, rather than just principal manufacturers as in the UBD. As a result the dominance of the textile industries appears even more marked when considering the occupations of those recorded in probate documents. Up to 39 percent of a large sample of testators and executors in Leicester and up to 34 percent in Nottingham were employed in textile production (the vast majority in hosiery) in the period 1700-1830, and the proportions may have been even higher since many individuals recorded as 'gentlemen' were likely to have been hosiers.\(^5\) This can be corroborated with other evidence. For

\(^5\) Figures derived from a sample of 468 wills and administration bonds dealt with by the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester (held at ROLLR) and 790 from the Archdeaconry Court of Nottingham (held in Notts Archives.)
instance, in the 1740s, 41 percent of Leicester’s new freemen were employed in the hosiery trade. In Nottingham, an average of 24 percent of freemen were employed in textile trades over the period 1660-1750. The only category employing a higher proportion was ‘miscellaneous occupations’ (28 percent), which included a huge variety of smaller tradesmen serving the townspeople’s sophisticated tastes. Such was the dominance of the hosiery industry that contemporaries frequently made reference to it. The historian of Leicester, John Throsby, claimed that out of 14,000 people in the town in 1790, 6,000 were employed by or dependent on hosiery in some form. As early as 1739, Charles Deering offered evidence that the total number of workers in the hosiery industry in Nottingham and its surrounding villages (including those in ancillary trades such as woolcombers, sinkermakers and turners) exceeded 4,000.

Nottingham and Leicester had witnessed dramatic expansions in hosiery production after the stocking frame was introduced in the late seventeenth century. By 1716, there were between 500 and 600 frames in Leicester, and the town’s hosiery business was described as being ‘in a flourishing state’ in 1720. The number of frames had grown to about 1,000 by 1752, 1,600 in 1812, and as many as 6,000 in 1831. In Nottingham, meanwhile, the number of frames increased from 400 in 1727 to 1,200 in 1750, following the transfer of 800 frames from London to Nottingham. Writing around this time, Deering commented that stocking manufacture was ‘of the greatest importance to this town’. By 1824, several Nottingham firms owned more than 1,000 frames each. Framework knitting brought significant prosperity to both towns. As Throsby wrote in 1791, ‘the manufacture of Hose has been the chief means of the prosperity of Leicester’. Meanwhile, Deering had noted in 1739 ‘a considerable number of handsome houses’ being built by wealthy stocking manufacturers and traders in Nottingham, as ‘manifest

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48 J. Throsby, *The history and antiquities of the ancient town of Leicester* (Leicester, 1791), 402.
49 C. Deering, *Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova, or an Historical Account of the ancient and present state of the town of Nottingham* (Nottingham, 1751), 101.
50 Throsby, *History and antiquities*, 146.
51 *VCH Leicestershire, volume IV*, 172.
52 Deering, *Nottinghamia*, 94.
54 Throsby, *History and antiquities*, 401.
proof of the increase of riches among the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{55} The lace-making boom of the early 1800s prompted further growth in the town.\textsuperscript{56} Pigot's directory of 1841 listed 298 merchants, manufacturers and dealers involved in the lace industry in Nottingham, whereas just two lace manufacturers had been recorded in the UBD in 1798. Derby experienced a great expansion in its silk industry, following the opening of John Lombe's silk mill in 1718. Eleven more silk mills were built in the town during the eighteenth century, including those established by the Strutts for the manufacture of silk and cotton. Thus, Derby became one of the principal silk throwing towns in England.\textsuperscript{57} Hutton noted in 1791 that 'silk is now the staple trade of the place', with more than 1,000 people employed in the industry.\textsuperscript{58}

Much of the population growth in Leicester and Nottingham has been attributed to the explosion of hosiery manufacture, as migrants were attracted by the expansion in job opportunities.\textsuperscript{59} Indeed, I have found that an average of 36 percent of migrant apprentices in Leicester and 52 percent in Nottingham were employed in the hosiery industry in the period 1700-1830. Many of these migrants were drawn from existing putting-out districts within the East Midlands, such as Hinckley, Shepshed, Mansfield and Radford, thus emphasising the 'pull' of the county towns as centralised hubs of production, finishing and marketing for those working in the hosiery industry.\textsuperscript{60} So, not only did hosiery production encourage sustained demographic and economic growth in these two towns - it also cemented their dominance within their counties. The use of the domestic system within the industry meant that county towns were closely tied to their hinterlands through a localised web of linkages. In essence, Leicester, Nottingham and Derby formed part of a typical proto-industrial region, in which large urban centres stood at the head of a domestically organised textile production system.\textsuperscript{61}

\textsuperscript{55} Deering, Nottinghamia, 6.
\textsuperscript{56} C. Weir, The Nottinghamshire Heritage (Chichester, 1991), 80.
\textsuperscript{58} W. Hutton, The history of Derby; from the remote ages of antiquity to the year 1791 (London, 1815), 168.
\textsuperscript{59} Simmons, Leicester Past and Present, 97-8.
\textsuperscript{60} Sources: H. Hartopp, Records of the Borough of Leicester, New Series, Vol 1 & 2; Nottinghamshire Archives: Register of Apprentices bound by indenture to the burgesses of Nottingham from 1723.
Occupational structure
The growth and prosperity of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby were clearly underpinned by their relatively new industrial strength, as well as their more traditional roles as social centres and administrative capitals. However, the key to their unusually rapid and prolonged growth in this period lies in how successfully they combined these socio-cultural and industrial functions. One way to assess the relative importance of these two facets of county town life is to consider the occupational structures of the three towns. This enables us to investigate the extent to which these towns participated in the urban renaissance, by determining the relative strength of industry within the urban economy and the degree to which the towns experienced a growth in the provision of consumer goods and professional services in the period 1700-1830. Did these towns conform to Borsay’s model in which county centres reduced their dependence on staple industries and developed more diverse, service-oriented economies, or did they, as I have suggested, maintain and even strengthen their industrial base whilst simultaneously expanding their service sectors? Data on the occupations of testators and executors living in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, the trades in which apprentices were employed in Nottingham and Leicester, and the occupations of fathers drawn from baptism registers for each town are used to investigate this. When using probate documents it should be borne in mind, though, that only a small proportion of the population left a will, and that most wills were made by people of relatively substantial means, so the prominence of high-status service and retail occupations may be overstated in these data.62

Although any division of occupations into categories is a somewhat arbitrary and subjective process, my intention here has been to distinguish between occupations which involved industrial production (leather, textiles and clothing, metal, and building trades), and ‘service’ occupations (covered by the categories food and drink, services and professions, retailing of textiles, and luxury crafts.)63 Such a distinction enables an assessment to be made of the extent to which professional services and high-status crafts and trades were increasing their importance within these towns’ economic structures, thus


63 This categorisation is similar to that used in the VCH for Leicester.
indicating whether they were participating fully in the urban renaissance and associated growth in consumer culture posited by Borsay and others. The category ‘gentlemen’ is included as it gives an indication of the size of the resident high-status consumer population. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that not all those listed as gentlemen were members of the gentry class. Many were in fact tradesmen or professionals who began to style themselves ‘gentlemen’ from the mid-eighteenth century. However, since they were usually employed in high status occupations, the number of gentlemen is still a useful indicator of the emergence of a sophisticated, service-oriented urban economy.

| Occupational category | Leicester | | 1700-1750 | 1751-1790 | 1791-1830 | | Nottingham | | 1700-1750 | 1751-1790 | 1791-1830 | | Derby | | 1700-1750 | 1751-1790 | 1791-1830 |
|-----------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Food & drink          | 19%       | 23%       | 18%       | 24%       | 24%       | 27%       | 24%       | 23%       | 22%       |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Leather               | 6%        | 4%        | 2%        | 5%        | 4%        | 1%        | 6%        | 5%        | 6%        |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Textiles (production) & clothing | 25% | 39% | 29% | 21% | 24% | 34% | 9% | 8% | 12% |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Metal                 | 5%        | 3%        | 2%        | 3%        | 3%        | 2%        | 3%        | 8%        | 3%        |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Building              | 4%        | 4%        | 8%        | 5%        | 4%        | 8%        | 11%       | 14%       | 5%        |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Services & Professions| 14%       | 11%       | 14%       | 12%       | 15%       | 13%       | 15%       | 17%       | 19%       |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Textiles (retail)     | 3%        | 3%        | 4%        | 4%        | 2%        | 2%        | 2%        | 1%        | 2%        |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Luxury crafts         | 3%        | 1%        | 3%        | 3%        | 3%        | 3%        | 4%        | 3%        | 3%        |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Gentlemen             | 21%       | 12%       | 20%       | 23%       | 20%       | 10%       | 26%       | 21%       | 28%       |           |           |           |           |           |           |
| Total individuals     | 227%      | 161%      | 334%      | 485%      | 414%      | 382%      | 243%      | 122%      | 209%      |           |           |           |           |           |           |

Table 4.3: Occupations of testators and executors in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, 1700-1830.

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64 McInnes, 'Emergence of a leisure town', 61-4. The author notes that up to one third of those calling themselves 'gentleman' or 'esquire' in Shrewsbury in the 1740s were trading gentry of this sort.
65 Data derived from a sample of 468 wills and administration bonds dealt with by the Archdeaconry Court of Leicester (held at ROLLR), 790 from the Archdeaconry Court of Nottingham (held in Notts Archives) and 446 for Derby residents, from the Consistory Court of Lichfield and Coventry (held at L.J.R.O.) Where the same individual was named as executor or administrator several times, care was taken to ensure that his or her occupation was only recorded once.
Perhaps surprisingly, Table 4.3 shows a remarkable degree of stability within the occupational structure of the three East Midlands towns over a period of 130 years. The proportion of people employed in the food and drink trades (which included butchers, bakers, innkeepers, victuallers and maltsters amongst others) remained at around one fifth to one quarter throughout the period, even though it might be expected that the relative importance of this type of occupation would increase as county towns catered for an expanding number of visitors from their hinterlands. In fact the absolute number of innholders (which should be a good indicator of visitors) decreased in each town over the period. There is also little evidence of any marked increase in high-status or luxury trades. The proportion of people employed in the textiles (retail) category, which encompassed mercers, drapers and haberdashers, remained very small both in absolute terms (an average of six individuals recorded in a town in any forty-year period) and in relative terms (at 4 percent or less.) The number actually declined over the period in Nottingham, from twenty in the period 1700-1750 to eight for the period 1751-90 and just six in 1791-1830. Meanwhile the percentage of all workers who could be described as luxury craftsmen (such as jewellers, cabinet makers, silversmiths and peruke makers) remained low and stable, at about 3 percent. This suggests that the marked expansion in such trades during the eighteenth century, posited in the historical literature, did not occur in all towns. Nevertheless, it could be countered that by definition the absolute number of luxury craftsmen in any one town would be low and thus any increase in that number would not make a huge difference to the overall percentage of such workers in the town’s occupational structure. Though they were few in number, these craftsmen could make a significant impact on the economy of a county town, partly because the high quality of their work meant that their skills were often in demand over a wide area. For instance, Nicholas Paris of Warwick produced wrought-iron work for a wide clientele of churches.

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66 This finding could simply be a reflection of the relatively small sample size, however. In actual fact, town directories record a marked increase in the number of inns during the early nineteenth century. In Leicester, for example, 141 innkeepers and victuallers were listed in 1815, and by 1822 there were 164 inns, taverns and public houses, rising to 232 in 1835. It was also the case that capacity increased, as larger inns and hotels were built, and so the number of innholders may not have risen as significantly as might have been expected.
and gentry, and his reputation even extended into the South West, as his work was purchased by churches in Frome, Salisbury and Taunton. 67

The only occupational sector which showed a significant increase in importance over this period in all three towns was textiles production and clothing, which grew to represent over one-third of occupations recorded in the probate records in Leicester and Nottingham. This reflects the great expansion of the hosiery trade in these two towns. Indeed, it was this expansion in manufacturing activity and its accompanying population growth which served to diminish the appeal of Nottingham in particular as a social centre from the later eighteenth century, and thus may explain the surprisingly limited growth in the importance of the town’s service sector. Up until the mid-eighteenth century Nottingham thoroughly deserved its nickname ‘Garden Town’, being characterised by wide open spaces and pleasant gardens. By the early nineteenth century, however, the town was severely overcrowded, as a result of a five-fold population increase between 1715 and 1815, whilst physical expansion remained limited. Nottingham was constrained within its traditional borders because of a failure to enclose the open fields around it and the close proximity to the town of large estates belonging to two leading gentlemen – the Duke of Newcastle in the Castle mansion and Lord Middleton at Wollaton Hall. The result was infilling of the town’s remaining open spaces, so that by 1814 there were 8,000 back-to-backs in just 132 streets, with 308 courts and alleyways branching off them. Over the course of just one decade – the 1820s – 3,000 new dwellings were built in Nottingham to house the mass of lace workers who had flooded into the town, many from far afield, following the expiry of the patent on John Heathcoat’s lace machine. By the 1830s, 50,000 people were living in an area of similar size to that occupied by between 3,000 and 5,000 in the seventeenth century, and the town had become a notorious slum. 68

Such was the pressure on land that industrial activities were sited cheek-by-jowl with residential districts. A combination of a much less aesthetically pleasing environment and higher land prices prompted many wealthier residents to move out of the town completely 69 (into nearby villages such as Lenton, Radford and Basford), and would have

67 Borsay, English Urban Renaissance, 166.
69 Weir, Nottinghamshire Heritage, 80; Beckett, East Midlands, 225.
been unlikely to attract high-status visitors to Nottingham. This is borne out by the data on occupational structure (Table 4.3.) As textile production expanded markedly in the town (from 24 percent of occupations recorded in probate documents to 34 percent between the two periods 1751-1790 and 1791-1830) the proportion of gentlemen halved, from 20 to 10 percent. Over the same period, the proportion of testators and executors employed in the services and professions declined from 15 percent to 13 percent (64 and 48 people respectively.)

This apparent lack of significant expansion in high-status trades and services in Nottingham accords with its omission from Schwarz’s list of ‘leisure towns’ (based on the number of manservants employed.) The town was one of only twelve county centres that did not pass the threshold of more than 30 employers of manservants in the 1780s. Schwarz contends that omission from the list, whilst not proving that a particular place was not a leisure town, does suggest ‘the absence of a certain lifestyle that many towns sought to attract and to cultivate.’ Nottingham’s omission cannot be explained by competition from any nearby leisure centre. Indeed, none of the five smaller centres in the county with manservant employers were very close to Nottingham geographically. The most likely explanation is the damage done to the town’s environment and consequently its ‘social cachet’ by the rapid expansion of population and industry, which would have been evident by the 1780s.

By contrast, Derby seems to have been more typical of a ‘leisure town’, and fits more closely with Borsay’s model, in which the urban economy diversifies from dependence on staple industry to a variety of luxury goods and services, with accompanying improvements to the physical fabric and social amenities of the town. Derby certainly seems to have enjoyed a more diverse occupational structure than Leicester and Nottingham. Its textile sector, though growing, was clearly not as significant a part of the town’s economy, peaking at just 12 percent of all occupations. At the same time, larger proportions of people than in Leicester and Nottingham were employed in the building trades and services and professions, and there was a higher percentage of gentlemen. It was the only town of the three to experience an increase in

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71 Ibid, 57-60.
the importance of the latter two sectors between 1700 and 1830. As early as the 1730s, specialist retailers were advertising on a regular basis in the *Derby Mercury*. Robert Grayson, for example, advertised his linen drapery, mercery and Manchester goods\(^\text{72}\) while William Boden had ‘all Sorts of Chairs, after the best and newest Fashion’ as well as fashionable looking glasses.\(^\text{73}\) The growth in the building sector in Derby coincides with a spate of building new urban amenities from the mid-eighteenth century (such as the assembly rooms, rebuilt between 1763 and 1774, the theatre in Bold Lane, which was finished in 1773, the County Gaol, constructed in 1756, and the Infirmary, which opened in 1810.)\(^\text{74}\) Improvements to the physical fabric of the town, so important a facet of the urban renaissance, also encompassed domestic buildings, as ‘stone Palladian fronts and classical elegance replaced vernacular wood and brick.’\(^\text{75}\) The new elegant thoroughfare of Friargate was lined with fashionable town houses, one of which belonged to the highly successful architect Joseph Pickford, who, as well as designing his own house, worked on the Derby Assembly Rooms, and the houses of leading local businessmen like Josiah Wedgewood and John Whitehurst.\(^\text{76}\)

Since probate documents tended to represent only a small proportion of the total urban population, it is useful to compare the findings discussed above with those from other sources. Baptism registers and the census are both more comprehensive, covering the whole spectrum of urban society. From 1813, it was compulsory to list the father’s occupation for each child baptised in an Anglican church. I have used occupational data from the registers for each parish in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby for the period 1813-20. Some parish registers listed occupations for an earlier period – 1695-1710, while in Nottingham occupations recorded in the baptism register for the nonconformist High Pavement Chapel have been used for this earlier period. In order to trace changes through time more effectively, the data from baptism registers have been compared with the occupations of males listed in the 1851 Census for Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. (See Table 4.4.)

\(^{72}\) *D. M.*, 9 January, 1734/5.
\(^{73}\) *D. M.*, 26 June, 1735.
\(^{75}\) Elliott, ‘Derby philosophers’, 53.
\(^{76}\) Ibid, 54.
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<th>1851 %</th>
<th>Nottingham 1695-1710 %</th>
<th>1813-1820 %</th>
<th>1851 %</th>
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<td>Textiles (retail)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury crafts</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gentlemen</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labourers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total individuals</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>1,977</td>
<td>19,019</td>
<td>326</td>
<td>8,850</td>
<td>18,802</td>
<td>3,024</td>
<td>13,219</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4: Occupations of fathers of baptised children, 1695-1710 and 1813-20, and male occupations from the 1851 Census.77

The bias towards higher social groups in the probate documents becomes clear when compared with the parish register and census data. Labourers constitute up to one-fifth of all occupations in Table 4.4, while the proportions of people employed in higher-status occupations — luxury crafts, mercers and drapers, as well as gentlemen, are negligible. Nevertheless, the data from parish registers and the census seem to

77 Data derived from parish registers for Leicester: All Saints (1699-1708 & 1813-1815), St Margaret (1701-1708), St Mary de Castro (1813-20), St Leonard (1695-1710 & 1813-20) and St Nicholas (1813-20); Nottingham: St Mary, St Nicholas and St Peter (1813-20) and Register of Baptisms — High Pavement Congregation, Nottingham, 1690-1723 (Nottinghamshire Family History Record Series, vol. 53, 1986, 1-28); Derby: St Peter, All Saints, St Alkmund, St Michael, St Werburgh (1813-20). I am very grateful to Leigh Shaw-Taylor for supplying me with data from the 1851 Census, which is being used for the ESRC-funded project 'Male Occupational Change and Economic Growth 1750-1851' (RES 000-23-013), carried out by the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure at the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge.
corroborate the findings from probate documents, in that they present a picture of relative stability through time in the occupational structure of the three towns, particularly in the food and drink, metal and chemicals, building and textiles retail sectors. However, the two most notable differences between Tables 4.3 and 4.4 are, firstly, the tendency for the proportion of people employed in textile production to decline in Table 4.4 (though remaining significantly higher than in Table 4.3), and secondly, a substantial increase in the proportion of service workers and professionals (and to a lesser extent luxury craftsmen) in the parish register and census data, while the trend from probate records was for slight fluctuation rather than significant change. Thus, the evidence from parish registers and the census seems to bear out the thesis of a decline in staple industries and a growth in service industries and provision of consumer goods. These findings accord, broadly, with the emerging results from a major project on male occupational change between 1750 and 1851, which has found that at a local and regional level, changes in male occupational structure were relatively muted, with no dramatic expansion of secondary sector employment. Any radical changes in occupational structure (particularly the shift from agriculture to the secondary sector) are more likely to be visible at the national level, driven by differential migration between regions. Nonetheless, the results of the project also reveal a dramatic growth of the tertiary sector in all regions from the late eighteenth century, which is borne out by the findings presented in this chapter.

Similar trends are evident from the occupations of apprentices' masters in Leicester and Nottingham (Table 4.5.) Although apprenticeship registers are limited by the fact that young people tended to be apprenticed only to higher-status trades and that the apprenticeship system itself was dying out by the later eighteenth century, they nevertheless offer useful comparative data for this period. Like the parish register and census data, the figures in Table 4.5 seem to accord more with the classic model of urban renaissance. In Leicester particularly, but also in Nottingham, there was a significant reduction in the proportions of people apprenticed to trades involving manufacturing

78 'Male Occupational Change and Economic Growth 1750-1851', ESRC-funded project (RES 000-23-013), 2003-6. The project is being carried out within the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, under the direction of Dr Leigh Shaw-Taylor, at the Department of Geography, University of Cambridge. The main sources for the project are the censuses for 1841 and 1851, baptism registers for 1813-20 principally, and militia lists.
and/or manual work – leather, metal, building and textile production – whilst there was a corresponding increase in the importance of ‘service sector’ employment amongst apprentices. The proportions employed in the services and professions (including barbers, apothecaries, surgeons, booksellers, and so on) doubled between the early eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries in Leicester, while the percentage of apprentices working for luxury craftsmen quadrupled over the same period.\textsuperscript{79} The growth in the service sector was less marked in Nottingham (and luxury crafts actually declined in importance), partly because of the continued increase in the proportions of youngsters apprenticed in the hosiery trades which dominated the town’s economy. Nevertheless, the proportions of apprentices employed by high-status textile retailers (mercers, drapers and haberdashers) did double (from 2 to 4 percent), probably linked with the expansion of textile production in the town.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational category</th>
<th>Leicester 1718-1750 (%)</th>
<th>Leicester 1751-1790 (%)</th>
<th>Leicester 1791-1840 (%)</th>
<th>Nottingham 1723-1750 (%)</th>
<th>Nottingham 1751-1790 (%)</th>
<th>Nottingham 1791-1840 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Food &amp; drink</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leather</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles (production) &amp; clothing</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Metal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services and professions</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textiles (retail)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxury crafts</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total individuals</strong></td>
<td><strong>635</strong></td>
<td><strong>656</strong></td>
<td><strong>829</strong></td>
<td><strong>572</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,139</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,015</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.5: Occupations of masters to whom apprentices were indentured in Leicester and Nottingham.\textsuperscript{80}

\textsuperscript{79} This may in part be due to the fact that apprenticeship persisted longer in these trades.

\textsuperscript{80} Data derived from a sample of apprentices from the registers for Leicester and Nottingham: Hartopp, \textit{Records of the Borough of Leicester, New Series, Vol. 1 & 2}; Nottinghamshire Archives: Register of Apprentices bound by indenture to the burgesses of Nottingham from 1723.
Thus, a picture is emerging of three towns which experienced significant industrial growth into the nineteenth century, but which also built upon their existing function as service centres, developing a diverse consumer-oriented economy, which responded to the demands of a more sophisticated urban population and served the needs of increasing numbers of high-status visitors. Contemporaries were aware of the dual role of these towns as both industrial and service centres. Sir Richard Phillips, for example, wrote that 'Derby is a medium town, between a manufacturing and a genteel one. This, in variety, is an advantage, for while the manufacturers are improved in manners, gentility is more substantial. It is neither wholly vulgar, like some places, nor poor and proud, like others.' It was precisely this combination of industrial and cultural functions which I would argue lay at the heart of the East Midlands' towns exceptional experience of rapid and sustained growth.

Juxtaposition of social and industrial functions

It seems that the key to the sustained growth of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby and their continued dominance within their respective counties was that they were multi-functional. Their industrial and social/cultural functions were able to co-exist, in contrast to many other county towns, which may have remained noted cultural centres, but whose industrial base, where it existed, was eclipsed by the growth of new industrial towns. This point has been noted by other authors, but little or no attempt has been made to explain the co-existence of industrial/commercial and social/cultural functions in the county towns of the East Midlands. In this section, I suggest three reasons for their exceptional experience.

Firstly, at the heart of the successful combination of functions was the composition of the urban elite. As Figure 4.1 shows, many members of the corporation of each town were industrialists, and thus were more likely to encourage industrial development as well as champion new social facilities. More than half the members of

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the Nottingham corporation in 1798 were manufacturers, the vast majority of whom were involved in hosiery. Similarly, 48 percent of Leicester's corporation consisted of manufacturers in 1791, although the range of occupations was greater than in Nottingham, encompassing brewers, glovers and metal-workers in addition to a significant number of textile workers. The membership of Derby's corporation was much more evenly spread across the different occupational categories (probably reflecting the town's more diverse occupational structure, discussed earlier), with a notably larger proportion of professionals than in Nottingham and Leicester. Many of these men, such as the Rev. Charles Stead Hope and the bankers John and Samuel Crompton, were closely associated with Derby's noted intellectual life.

![Figure 4.1: Occupations of members of the corporations of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby in the 1790s. Source: Universal British Directory (1791 for Leicester, 1798 for Nottingham, 1797 for Derby. )](image)

Despite the apparent coincidence of social and industrial elites in these towns, the writers of eighteenth and early nineteenth century topographical literature tended to expound the view that commercial activities and polite culture were antipathetic. Tradesmen and nouveau riche merchants who inhabited commercial and manufacturing towns were stereotyped (by the predominantly London-centric gentlemen writers of topographical guides) as the epitome of vulgarity. They believed that 'true politeness
could not exist in a place where money was quickly gained and lavishly spent.\footnote{R. Sweet, ‘Topographies of politeness’, \textit{Transactions of the Royal Historical Society}, 12 (2002), 365.} However, this was by no means a consensus view amongst contemporaries.\footnote{Ibid., 368-9.} Many argued that the advance of trade could in fact fuel social and cultural advancement. The historian of Nottingham, John Blackner, for example, wrote that ‘trade brushes off the rust of barbarism’, encouraging civility of behaviour and polite sociability, thus promoting social harmony and freedom.\footnote{J. Blackner, \textit{The History of Nottingham} (Nottingham, 1815), 194-5.} William Hutton, too, drew a link between a modern commercial town and civility: ‘The prosperity of a town depends upon its commerce; as that increases, knowledge, freedom, taste, luxury, power and civilization increase.’\footnote{Hutton, \textit{History of Derby}, 154.} Clearly, contemporary inhabitants of commercial and industrial towns were well aware that the interests of culture and commerce were not necessarily incompatible, or at any rate it suited them to make that case.

There is much evidence from Nottingham, Derby and Leicester to support this view that success in manufacturing and trade was intertwined with cultural and social advances. For instance, the corporation of Nottingham, which, as we have seen, was dominated by manufacturers, was amongst the most generous subscribers to the town's new race stand and assembly room in 1778, offering £5 5s, and more than a quarter of the individual town subscribers were prominent hosiery manufacturers, including Robert Wright, and Messrs Hunt and Brethwaite.\footnote{Notts Archives, Subscriptions to Nottingham Races, 1778, DDE 3/2.} The corporation of Leicester paid a subscription of £10 10s to the Leicester Royal Infirmary annually from 1785, with many individual members such as the aldermen John Fisher (maltster), William Orton (gentleman) and Mark Oliver (upholsterer) each subscribing an average of £2 2s per year.\footnote{ROLLR, Leicester Infirmary Annual Reports, 1771-1851, MF 471.} The successful Leicester woolcomber Joseph Coltman subscribed three guineas for the new Infirmary in 1767.\footnote{D. L. Wykes, ‘The reluctant businessman: John Coltman of St Nicholas Street, Leicester (1727-1808)’, \textit{Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society}, 69 (1995), 73.} Thus the manufacturing fortunes and social life of these towns were closely related. In Derby, major innovations in industrial technology were often first applied to the manufacture of luxury consumer goods, as was the case with the Duesbury china works and the silk mill in the town, and the cotton mills built by
Arkwright and Strutt in the Derwent Valley. Perhaps the most interesting example of the application of industrial technology for social ends was the Derbyshire General Infirmary, built in 1810 under the direction of William Strutt, who deliberately attempted to incorporate into this institution the latest ‘fireproof’ building techniques using technology developed for textile mills. Features of the building included an iron and glass dome over the centre of the Infirmary, with iron-framed windows and a fire-proof hollow pot-vaulted ceiling over the baths; a heating and ventilation system originally used in textile mills; and in the kitchen, a more efficient roaster designed by Strutt himself. As if to underline the close connection between textile industry and medical philanthropy in this case, royal parties visiting the Infirmary were given a tour of the manufacturing and industrial premises of Derby and its surrounding area after viewing the hospital.

In Leicester it was the leading manufacturers and professionals, many of whom were nonconformists, who made the greatest contribution to social and cultural activities in the town. Amongst the manufacturers, William Gardiner played an outstanding role in Leicester’s musical life, while John Coltman (a member of the Presbyterian Great Meeting) was a noted classical scholar, antiquarian and patron of the arts. Francis Burgess, meanwhile, was a talented musician with an interest in astronomy. At the core of Leicester society were several families associated with medicine – in particular the Arnolds, Pagets and Vaughans. Dr James Vaughan led the group of doctors who proposed to found the Infirmary in 1766, and later drew up rules for the institution. The Arnold and Paget families were both prominent nonconformist liberals. Thomas Arnold was well-known for his skill in treating the insane, and played a leading role in the establishment of the Lunatic Asylum in Leicester. He was also a cultured man, with a large library, an art collection, and discerning musical taste. Medical men were viewed as setting an example of civility and politeness to Leicester society.

In Derby, the Strutt family was particularly influential in the town’s political, economic and cultural life, and offers a good example of the intersection between culture

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and commerce which, as in Leicester, was a feature of the urban elite there. The family fortune was amassed by Jedediah Strutt from cotton spinning. His son William was a founder member of the Derby Philosophical Society (established in 1784) and William's brother Joseph was also a leading member. As Unitarians, the family believed that wealth entailed certain social duties and obligations as well as privileges. Joseph Strutt's varied contributions to local life illustrate how much he was influenced by this belief. He was a member of the Derby Society for Political Information, an officer in the local militia, and donated his picture gallery to Derby. He also helped to found the town's Mechanics' Institute in 1825.\textsuperscript{94} Derby was noted for its intellectual life, and many members of its Philosophical Society, besides the Strutts, were prominent industrialists. These included members of the Wedgwood family, Robert Bage, the mill-owning radical, William Duesbury (son of the founder of the Duesbury China Factory), James Oakes, an iron master and coal merchant who was also mayor of Derby in 1819, and the Chattertons, who were successful lead merchants, plumbers and glaziers.\textsuperscript{95}

It is sometimes assumed that different factions within the urban elite were associated with different types of leisure activity – industrialists (often Whig nonconformists) supporting intellectual and philanthropic endeavours such as philosophical societies, libraries and infirmaries, while the gentry members of the elite (often Anglicans and Tories) were associated with more 'hedonistic' activities like assemblies and race meetings. To some extent this is true of Leicester, where the elite was more clearly divided along religious and political lines than in Nottingham or Derby. The dissenting community in the town was strong, and included many of the most important local families, as in Nottingham and Derby, but the corporation was dominated by Anglican Tories. As we have seen, nonconformists played a key part in certain aspects of public life, such as the running of the Infirmary, supporting charities or contributing to musical concerts, but the Tory-dominated corporation ultimately controlled the nature of the town's social life, limiting its scope. For instance, the Adelphi Society, which was co-founded by the radical bookseller Richard Phillips, and undertook scientific experiments, was suppressed by the corporation during the reactionary period of the 1790s. Pressure

\textsuperscript{94} Elliott, 'Derby philosophers', 110-111.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid, 98, 110-113.
from the Tory oligarchy ensured that polite urban culture took other forms until the 1830s. A music society was formed in 1789, for example, whereas a medical society, mechanics' institute and two philosophical societies were not established until after 1830.96 Many local Tory aristocrats participated in or acted as patrons of 'high' cultural activities. For instance, Sir John Palmer of Carlton Curlieu and Charles Pochin of Barkby were noted for their interest in music, while Francis Mundy wrote poetry, and Charles Loraine Smith of Enderby Hall, a dominant local figure, elected Tory MP for Leicester in 1784, was a painter of national acclaim, who also had a keen interest in hunting and music.97 Similarly, in a study of Liverpool's urban elite, Stobart found that the Tory corporation supported financially non-controversial and apolitical facilities, such as public walks and theatre, while refusing to support the literary, philosophical and other learned societies championed by the radical nonconformist group.98

In Nottingham and Derby, however, the elites were not divided in this way, and the fact that Tories, Whigs, Anglicans and Nonconformists were generally united in their support for a wide variety of social and cultural ventures is arguably the key to explaining why these towns continued to develop their social amenities despite industrial growth. For instance, contrary to the Tory/gentry versus Whig/industrialist categorisation outlined earlier, in Derby, many Tories and some local gentry were strong supporters of scientific culture. The prominent Tory lawyer and politician Daniel Parker Coke, for example, had several works on natural philosophy in his library. Meanwhile, 45 percent of the original supporters of the Derbyshire Infirmary were Tories, despite rhetoric at the time which associated the institution with a group of radical reformist natural philosophers. Elite groups joined together to put on cultural events such as the Derby music festivals, which were organised by the commercial and professional classes, with local aristocrats and gentry acting as patrons.99 As Stobart has argued in the case of Liverpool, the town's 'cultural renaissance' in the early nineteenth century was only possible with a united elite. Conflict between the Tory-Anglican common council (which was closely associated

with the slave trade) and a group of radical nonconformists was resolved following the abolition of the slave trade in the early nineteenth century, after which the town experienced a flowering of culture.\textsuperscript{100}

Although the composition of the urban elite was an important explanation for the successful combination of socio-cultural and industrial functions in Derby and Nottingham, and to a lesser extent Leicester, other factors must have contributed to the persistent social and industrial dominance of the three towns within their respective counties. One important additional factor was the structure of the East Midlands' urban system. None of the county towns had any serious competitor to challenge their primacy as industrial and social centres. As Table 4.6 shows, each town stood at the head of a weak county urban hierarchy, with no major industrial centres nearby, unlike in the West Midlands where Warwick and Lichfield suffered from competition with Birmingham. In Nottinghamshire, the next largest town after Nottingham (Newark) was only about one-fifth the size of the county capital, while in Leicestershire, Hinckley was just over one-quarter the size of Leicester, and in Derbyshire, Chesterfield was around one-third the size of Derby. The relatively weak urbanisation of the area outside the county towns is clearer still when comparing the East Midlands with other regions. Even the lowest ranked town in the West Midlands list was larger than all but three of the towns in the East Midlands (outside the county capitals). In the North West, even though there were two dominant urban centres (Liverpool and Manchester) the region's urban system included a number of sizeable towns lower down the hierarchy, such as Bolton, Chester and Preston. Eight of these towns were larger than Derby. No 'regional capital' existed in the East Midlands, even though Nottingham may have been a contender, so no one town could dominate the others.\textsuperscript{101} Moreover, each town was able to act as an industrial centre in its own right. Leicester, Nottingham and Derby all had the advantage of being situated on or near to coalfields to which they were closely connected by a network of canals by the early nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{102} In addition, they each specialised in a different branch of hosiery manufacture (worsted, cotton and silk stockings respectively)\textsuperscript{103}, so they

\textsuperscript{100} Stobart, 'Culture versus commerce', 1-15.
\textsuperscript{101} Dyer, 'Midlands', 108.
\textsuperscript{102} Langton, 'Town growth and urbanisation', 30.
\textsuperscript{103} Simmons, \textit{Leicester Past and Present}, 97.
complemented, rather than competed with, each other. These towns' primacy as social centres was also largely unchallenged within the region. Towns like Newark or Ashby de la Zouch were considered genteel, but were so small in comparison with Nottingham and Leicester (Ashby's population being ten times smaller than Leicester's in 1801) and were situated far enough away from the county centres that they cannot be seen as serious competitors in terms of social facilities and gentry attractions. Only Derby had any real rival for gentry custom, as Buxton became the leading resort in the region by the later eighteenth century, under the patronage of the fifth Duke of Devonshire.104

A final reason for the co-existence of cultural and industrial functions was that the proto-industrial nature of hosiery production, with manufacture carried out in workers' homes rather than giant urban factories with their associated dirt and noise, meant that the county towns, whilst acting as industrial 'hubs', remained attractive places to visit and in which to live. Even when, as in Nottingham's case, the urban environment was degraded as a result of industrial growth, and some 'social cachet' was lost, these towns retained their traditional administrative and social functions. As county towns, they remained the location of the assizes and quarter sessions, so they still attracted local gentry for the social events which accompanied them. Ultimately, as Elliott has argued, county towns could use their status, antiquity and historical and cultural importance as a means of 'fighting back' in the face of economic or demographic decline and competition from expanding commercial and industrial centres.105

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104 Elliott, 'Derby philosophers', 65.
105 Elliott, 'Geography of English scientific culture'.

146
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>East Midlands</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>West Midlands</th>
<th>Population</th>
<th>North West</th>
<th>Population</th>
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</thead>
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<td>Nottingham</td>
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<td>70,670</td>
<td>Liverpool</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Leicester</td>
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<td>Wolverhampton</td>
<td>30,584</td>
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<td>16,034</td>
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<td>6,730</td>
<td>Shrewsbury</td>
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<td>15,476</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Worcester</td>
<td>11,460</td>
<td>Chester</td>
<td>15,052</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hinckley</td>
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<td>Walsall</td>
<td>10,399</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Dudley</td>
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</tr>
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<td>Hereford</td>
<td>7,411</td>
<td>Preston</td>
<td>12,174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Hanley</td>
<td>7,039</td>
<td>Blackburn</td>
<td>11,980</td>
</tr>
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<td>Wigan</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Kidderminster</td>
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<td>Macclesfield</td>
<td>10,613</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>Warwick</td>
<td>5,607</td>
<td>Bury</td>
<td>9,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East Retford</td>
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<td>Burslem</td>
<td>5,146</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4,832</td>
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<td>Oakham</td>
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</tr>
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<td>4,550</td>
<td>St Helens</td>
<td>3,787</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6: The urban hierarchies of the East Midlands, West Midlands and North West in 1801.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰⁶ Sources: Langton, ‘Town growth and urbanisation’, 16-17. Figures for the North West were taken from a database compiled by Jack Langton using the 1801 census. I am grateful to Andrew Hann for supplying me with these.
Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated the close links between urban centres and their hinterlands, highlighting how the three county towns of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby acted as hubs of cultural and social life and industrial production for their respective counties. This ensured the continued importance of the county as a space of representation – or lived space – at least for the elite in the East Midlands, in contrast to other parts of England where a regional layer of spatial interaction increasingly took precedence during the eighteenth century. The explanation for the unusual sustained dominance of county towns in the East Midlands was two-fold: firstly, the urban hierarchy was marked by the presence of three key centres which lacked local competitors because of the weak urbanisation of the rest of the East Midlands; and secondly, the county towns themselves successfully combined socio-cultural and industrial functions, as evidenced by their diverse occupational structures and the mixed composition of their elites.

It would appear, therefore, that the traditional notion of the county town as an administrative capital and social centre cannot give a full picture of the diversity of county centres across England during the early stages of industrialisation. Moreover, a simple categorisation of such towns as either industrial or leisure towns is inadequate. The examples of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby highlight how towns could combine cultural and industrial functions. Although, like other English county centres, these towns participated in the urban renaissance, investing in a range of leisure facilities and cultural pursuits and improving the physical urban environment, this was not at the expense of their industrial strength. Indeed, the accepted picture in which county towns' economies were transformed from an emphasis on a single industry producing some basic necessity to a diversified, consumer-led economy of high-status services needs to be revised in the light of the East Midlands' experience. Nottingham, and to a lesser extent Leicester and Derby, maintained a prominent and growing manufacturing industry, while the expansion in the number and variety of professional services and luxury trades was more modest than might be expected for towns that were acting as foci of the social, economic, political and cultural life of their counties.
The explanation for this successful juxtaposition of socio-cultural and industrial functions centres on the nature of the resident urban elites. In Derby and Nottingham particularly, industrialists were prominent members of the corporation, and took a leading role in the social life of these towns as well as contributing to their industrial success. In contrast to the conventional picture of towns as fractured along political, religious and economic lines, in these towns leading individuals, often from opposite ends of the religious and political spectrum, were united in their support of philanthropic endeavours like the Derbyshire Infirmary as well as cultural activities such as the literary and philosophical societies which emerged in the later eighteenth century. This unity amongst the leading figures and 'governors' of the towns ultimately fostered both industrial growth and a vibrant social and cultural life.

However, the East Midlands' county towns were not a totally homogenous group. Although they shared a similar, exceptional, experience of rapid population growth and 'multi-functionality', significant differences between them have been drawn out in this chapter. Nottingham, for instance, found that its industrial growth tarnished its social reputation, with the town becoming a severely overcrowded slum in the 1820s. By contrast, Derby's economy was not dominated by industry to the same extent, and thus it was able to develop its function as a leisure town. The composition of the elites in the three towns was also different. While the corporations of Derby and Nottingham were dominated by Whig nonconformists, including many leading industrialists who also made significant contributions to the social and cultural lives of these towns, Leicester's corporation was predominantly Tory-Anglican, and tended to restrict the range of cultural activities on offer in the town.

Whilst this chapter has suggested that the county was more dominant than the region as a scale of socio-spatial interaction amongst elite groups in particular, further study would be required in order to prove this more conclusively. For instance, patterns of marriage, property holdings, educational choices and social connections amongst the elite would need to be analysed in order to assess fully the extent to which the 'county community' operated at more than an administrative and rhetorical level. Moreover, county boundaries were not fixed limits which determined the extent of socio-spatial interaction. Geographical propinquity was likely to have been more influential in the
choices of elite groups as to where to shop, socialise, and be entertained. Nonetheless, this chapter has served to illustrate further the layering of space in the East Midlands, with social, cultural and political interaction taking place at a variety of spatial scales. The unusually dominant position of the three county towns within the urban hierarchy ensured that they exerted a strong influence over their hinterlands – in many cases this was the surrounding county, although the sustained and substantial growth of these towns was probably also due in part to their linkages beyond the county. Their economic role as centres of the hosiery industry, for example, tied them not only to their respective counties but also to a wider region and indeed the nation.
County versus region? Migrational connections

Chapter 4 demonstrated the relative importance of the county as a 'layer' of spatial interaction, rooted in strong social and economic linkages between county towns and their hinterlands. These ideas are explored further in this chapter, through an analysis of a specific but important spatial practice: migration – principally in-migration to Leicester, Nottingham, and Derby. We have already seen how towns in the East Midlands were connected to their hinterlands through industrial and transport linkages, political and administrative ties, and social and cultural functions. In this chapter the focus narrows to the level of the individual, the aim being to assess how the spatial practices of individuals – moving for marriage, employment, or poor relief – in aggregate served to 'produce' space in the East Midlands. The sources used enable us to illuminate the 'lived space' of lower social groups than those considered in earlier chapters. Since migration underlay most of the social and economic connections between towns and their hinterlands in our period, analysing migrants' origins should tell us much about which spatial layer was of most significance in the East Midlands. Migration has been surprisingly little studied, particularly for the period from the mid-eighteenth to the mid-nineteenth century. Most studies have focussed on the description of national-scale, aggregate trends, or have concentrated on the period after 1850 when census data is available. Thus, one of the purposes of this chapter is to provide new data on a relatively under-researched topic.

The first section of the chapter relates to a large sample of the East Midlands population, using marriage registers to discuss the spatial extent of social connections between Leicester, Nottingham and Derby and their respective hinterlands. The emphasis shifts to economic connections in the second part, as the migration fields for a smaller sub-set of the population – hosiery apprentices – are analysed in order to assess the

1 Apart from a recent work, C. Pooley and J. Turnbull, Migration and mobility in Britain since the eighteenth century (Manchester, 1998), there have been very few studies of migration in England during the early stages of industrialisation since Redford's work on the movement of labour: A. Redford, Labour migration in England, 1800-1850 (Manchester, 1926).
degree to which the East Midlands acted as an integrated industrial region (building on
the analysis in Chapter 3). In the third part, the focus is narrowed still further, as
individual migration histories are traced using settlement examinations, before being
compared with aggregate patterns of pauper movement derived from a larger sample of
settlement certificates and removal orders. All these data are used to assess the relative
importance of county-, region- and national-level linkages, in order to draw further
conclusions about the relationship between urban centres and wider spatial integration in
the East Midlands, and to assess which layer of spatial interaction was of most
importance here.

Sources
Very few sources were designed to record migration specifically. Mobility was so normal
that it was rarely thought necessary to record it, unless it threatened the social order or
economic prosperity, as was the case with vagrancy, for example. Sources on migration
are particularly limited for the eighteenth century, because many informative documents,
such as church court depositions, are not extant, and others, like apprenticeship registers,
were declining in number by this time. In this chapter, migration patterns are traced from
marriage registers for Leicester, Nottingham and Derby\(^2\), apprenticeship registers for
Nottingham and Leicester\(^3\), and settlement examinations for Leicester and Derby.\(^4\) These
documents were not designed for the purpose of recording migration, and thus can only
shed light on it incidentally and incompletely. Because it is not possible to reconstruct
definitively all moves into these towns during this period, the emphasis is on highlighting
significant trends, and dealing more with proportions than absolute numbers. Although
the sources chosen relate to specific demographic groups, and thus cannot be claimed to

\(^2\) Data on the numbers and origins of marriage partners were extracted from marriage registers for each year
from 1700 to 1837 for all three parishes in Nottingham (St Mary, St Nicolas and St Peter), for four of the
six parishes in Leicester (All Saints, St Margaret, St Martin and St Nicholas) and two of Derby's five
parishes (All Saints and St Werburgh.) Of the remaining parishes in Leicester, no registers survive for St
Leonard, while the registers in St Mary run from 1739-1837. The three remaining parishes in Derby (St
Alkmund, St Michael and St Peter) all have registers for the period 1700-1812.

\(^3\) These are very comprehensive: data were extracted from the Leicester records for each year from 1700 to
1840, while in Nottingham the registers covered the period 1723-1840. However, the few apprenticeship
records that survive for Derby relate only to young people apprenticed in their parish of residence, and
therefore are of no use for a study of migration into Derby.

\(^4\) These records are held at ROLLR and D.R.O.
be representative of the population as a whole, nevertheless the sample sizes are large, and represent groups which had a propensity to migrate.

Marriage registers for urban parishes have received relatively little attention from researchers, despite being a particularly fruitful source of information on migration, since they cover a substantial proportion of the population, and record the parish of residence of the groom and of the bride on the eve of their marriage. Thus this source is one of the few which records the origins of females as well as males. It has been argued elsewhere that marriage registers cannot provide an accurate picture of migration since they give no indication of how long partners had been living in their respective parishes prior to marriage, nor whether they remained in their parish of marriage after the wedding. Nevertheless, even those who urge caution acknowledge that we should not rush to dismiss such an extensive and amenable source. Moreover, my concern is to use marriage horizons as evidence of social connections, rather than to undertake a detailed reconstruction of the migratory behaviour of marriage partners.

The second type of document consulted was apprenticeship registers, which include the place of residence of each apprentice’s father, making it possible to calculate the proportion of apprentices who had migrated to each town, as well as gaining some sense of the town’s spatial and socio-economic connections with other settlements. Although apprentices represented only one specific group of those moving to Leicester and Nottingham, they were a substantial one. During the early modern period young people constituted the most mobile section of the population, and so data from apprenticeship registers should be fairly representative of the migratory behaviour of economically active migrants who stayed for a significant length of time in their new home. Nevertheless, it should be remembered that apprenticeship registers relate mostly to the more respectable trades, and that the apprenticeship system declined in the

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7 I. D. Whyte, Migration and Society in Britain 1550-1830 (London, 2000), 20.
eighteenth century, so the proportion of all migrants picked up by the registers will tend to drop.

The third category of document used for this study is settlement examinations, in which a pauper gave a potted biography, including where they were born and the moves they had undertaken in their lives, in order to determine their parish of settlement, which was the parish responsible for administering poor relief to that person. There were a number of ways in which a person could gain, or earn, settlement: by birth for an illegitimate person; by marriage for a woman, who thereby lost her maiden settlement and now belonged to her husband’s settlement; by serving a public annual office in the parish (this did not have to be strictly a parish office); by payment of parish rates; by renting property with a combined annual value of £10 or more; by yearly service for a full year while unmarried; by serving a legal indentured apprenticeship and residing in the parish for 40 days during one’s term; by owning estate in the parish; and, if none of these applied, the person took their paternal settlement. These were the 'heads' of settlement. Settlement examinations provide a rare opportunity to study individual migration histories, which gives an interesting qualitative perspective on mobility, as a contrast to the large-scale quantitative data drawn from marriage or apprenticeship registers. However, as in most places, only a relatively small number of examinations survive for the three East Midlands towns. This study uses 21 examinations from Leicester parishes, dating between 1700 and 1837, and 26 from All Saints’ parish in Derby, covering the period 1748-1785. Nonetheless, even this small sample can provide some insight into the multiple moves commonly undertaken in an individual's lifetime, which can be overlooked when focussing on the single moves recorded in marriage or apprenticeship registers. Settlement documents also enable the movements of the poor to be analysed. This social group tends to be excluded from the other records used here.

The importance of migration to Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, 1700-1840

Since marriage registers, of all the records used in this chapter, cover the largest and most representative sample of the population, they are an appropriate source to use to illustrate the importance of migration to Leicester, Nottingham and Derby during this period of urban and industrial growth. Figure 5.1 shows that in all three towns, the proportion of marriages involving partners who originated outside their parish of marriage was high for the first half of the eighteenth century – generally between 40 and 70 percent – before declining gradually. The most likely reason for this decline is that the substantial population growth within urban parishes increased the chances of people meeting and marrying a partner within their home parish.

![Figure 5.1: Proportions of marriages in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby in which one or both partners originated outside their parish of marriage, 1700-1837.](image)

Other evidence confirms the importance of migration to Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, particularly in the earlier eighteenth century. In Nottingham, burials outnumbered baptisms in the period 1712-1739, yet the population almost doubled, from about 5,500 people to 10,100. The fact that population growth was maintained must have been due entirely to in-migration, and indeed the estimated total number of new arrivals

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9 See Note 2 for sources used to compile this chart. Total marriages in this period in Leicester were 16,172, in Nottingham 29,484, and in Derby 10,927.
in Nottingham in this period was 5,420.10 Chambers has calculated that in the period 1739-59, 66 percent of the population increase in Nottingham was due to migration, while the figure was 50 percent between 1779 and 1801.11 In Leicester in the period 1720 to 1800, the population continued to grow despite a high death rate, suggesting that much of that growth was due to migration. It is clear from Figure 5.1 that for much of the period, the highest proportions of marriages involving migrants were in Derby. The notion that in-migration may have made a greater contribution to population growth in Derby than in Leicester or Nottingham (in the longer term at least) is borne out by data from the 1851 census showing that 43 percent of Derby’s residents aged 20 or over had been born outside the county, whereas in Nottingham and Leicester the proportions were significantly lower, at 35.5 percent and 28 percent respectively.

Social connections

Having established that a significant proportion of marriage partners in East Midlands county towns had lived outside their parish of marriage, the next stage is to consider where these migrants came from, thus shedding light on the extent of the social connections of these towns, and the spatial layer at which most social interaction took place. Figure 5.2 demonstrates clearly that in all three towns, a very high proportion of migrant marriage partners had moved only a short distance. About one-third had been residing in another parish within the same town before marriage, while about half of all individuals had moved to each town from within its county. Leicester exhibited the highest proportion of short-distance migrants, with 39 percent of migrant marriage partners having originated in another parish within the town, and a total of 85 percent moving from within either Leicester or its county. It is not surprising that most people would meet and marry their partner within a relatively restricted spatial area close to their home. Indeed, it has been shown that most marriage partners at this time lived no more than 20 kilometres apart, as this allowed for regular face-to-face contact.12

It could be argued that people who moved between parishes within a town should not strictly be termed migrants, since they may have been moving less far than some couples marrying within their home parish – perhaps just across the street in some cases. However, the fact that so many individuals moved within such a localised area serves to reinforce the argument that individuals' everyday spatial practices were played out at a relatively restricted scale, with region-wide or even county-wide connections being of little importance to people. Although marriage is not representative of all social connections or spatial practices, it seems reasonable to assume that the vast majority of urban dwellers' everyday human relationships and interactions (including the courting of future spouses) took place at a very localised, often intra-urban scale.

![Bar chart](chart.png)

Figure 5.2: Origins of those married in Leicester, Derby and Nottingham between 1737 and 1837 who had been living outside the parish in which they were married.

Since the majority of migration for marriage seems to have taken place at an intra-urban or intra-county level, the proportions of migrant marriage partners from beyond county boundaries were correspondingly low. Nevertheless, marked differences between

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13 Movement between parishes would certainly be included in Lee's commonly-used definition of migration as a residential change of a permanent or semi-permanent nature. This encompasses intra-urban, inter-urban, and rural-urban moves, as well as vagrancy and seasonal movements such as transhumance. See E. S. Lee, 'A theory of migration', in J. A. Jackson (ed), Migration (Cambridge, 1969), 282-97.

14 See Note 2 for sources used to compile this chart. The total number of migrant marriage partners in Leicester was 4,899, in Nottingham 6,526, and in Derby 4,074.
the three towns are evident when the proportions of marriage partners from the East and West Midlands are considered. It seems that intra-regional links were of more significance for Nottingham and Leicester than for Derby. In Nottingham, the proportion of migrants from other counties in the East Midlands was double that for Derby (16 percent compared to 8 percent), while in Derby, the proportion of migrants originating from the West Midlands (principally Staffordshire) was almost the same as the percentage from other counties in the East Midlands. In Nottingham, by contrast, just 1 percent of people originated from the West Midlands. These findings could be explained in part by the simple fact that Derbyshire was closer to the West Midlands, sharing a border with Staffordshire. Indeed, the geographical position of Derbyshire means that it effectively straddles three regions (the West Midlands, North West and East Midlands.)

Closer inspection of the origins of marriage partners from beyond the Midlands reveals that the sphere of influence of Derby was the most limited, probably because it was the smallest of the three towns. Only a tiny proportion of migrant marriage partners moved to Derby from London, whereas the numbers from the capital were more significant in Leicester and Nottingham. In addition, migrants to Derby came from a smaller range of counties, whereas in Leicester and Nottingham almost all English counties were represented by at least one individual over the whole period. A broad pattern emerges, whereby the majority of migrants to Derby and Nottingham who originated outside the Midlands came from northern counties (Yorkshire and Lancashire especially) while in Leicester there was a bias towards southern counties. Over the period 1737-1837, 167 migrant marriage partners moved to Nottingham from counties in the North and North West, whereas less than half that number (78) came from southern counties. Leicester, by contrast, received significant concentrations of migrants from Surrey, Huntingdonshire and Cambridgeshire, for example – places which sent few if any migrants to Derby or Nottingham.

There are several possible reasons for the differing orientations of the three towns. They could be explained by geographical position, in that Leicestershire was the most southerly of the three counties and, therefore, was more likely to have connections with southern counties, as they were a shorter distance away. Indeed, since most migratory moves in this period were over short distances, it is not surprising that, aside from
migrants from their own counties, each town had most connections with bordering counties. Thus in Nottingham, by far the largest number of migrants from outside the county had originated in the neighbouring counties of Derbyshire, Lincolnshire and Yorkshire. This may also explain why so many migrants to Derby originated in Staffordshire. However, the distinct pattern of migrants’ origins was also a reflection of the differing industrial bases of the three towns. The fact that more migrants to Leicester and Nottingham came from within the East Midlands can probably be explained by the dominance of hosiery in the two counties, such that there would inevitably be some migration of workers and trading links between the two. Many of Derby’s links with Staffordshire were related to the town’s porcelain manufacturing industry. Indeed, one of the founders of the Derby China Factory in 1750 was William Duesbury from Longton in the Staffordshire potteries.\(^\text{15}\) Nottingham’s cotton industry encouraged more links with Yorkshire and Lancashire than was the case in Leicester, a town without any significant textile industries besides hosiery. The cotton industry was established in Nottinghamshire in 1768 with the introduction of Arkwright’s spinning frame at Hockley, and in the 1770s another Lancastrian, James Hargreaves, built a factory in Nottingham for twisting and spinning cotton. Cotton mills tended to be concentrated in Nottingham and parishes towards the western side of the county, reflecting the importance of proximity to the cotton manufacturing centres of Lancashire.\(^\text{16}\) To gain a clearer picture of the nature and extent of these towns’ economic connections, however, it is necessary to consider data on the migration of those whose occupations are recorded – namely apprentices.

**Economic connections**

It has been claimed that the East Midlands could only be described as a region in an industrial sense;\(^\text{17}\) indeed one of the most common ways in which the area has been distinguished by historians is as a hosiery manufacturing district. (See Chapter 3.) There was significant overlap between the ‘hosiery hinterlands’ of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. For instance, the framework knitters of Kegworth in Leicestershire were employed by firms in Nottingham rather than Leicester, and in mid-eighteenth century

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\(^{15}\) E. Lord, *Derby Past* (Chichester, 1996), 34.

\(^{16}\) D. Kaye, *A History of Nottinghamshire* (Chichester, 1987), 73.

Nottingham, a number of manufacturers traded via Leicester rather than directly with London. The principal market for Derbyshire silk and cotton thread was the East Midlands hosiery industry, and indeed, multiple linkages existed between cotton workers and employers in South Nottinghamshire and West Derbyshire, encouraged by the building of cotton mills in the later eighteenth century, mostly located along the River Derwent north of Derby and the River Trent and its tributaries in south and west Nottinghamshire. As demonstrated in Chapter 3, hosiery firms often not only sourced the bulk of their supplies of raw materials from within the East Midlands, but also drew on intra-regional sources of capital and credit. In some senses, then, the East Midlands could be described as one of Everitt’s ‘occupational regions’, integrated through the role of three ‘entrepreneurial towns’ acting as centres of regional industrial activity. One of the principal reasons for the sustained growth of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby was that these towns, which were already the political, administrative and social capitals of their counties, also became the main industrial centres. (See Chapter 4). However, as demonstrated in Chapter 3, industrial linkages could exist at a variety of scales, with intra-regional connections rarely being privileged over other scales of interaction. It is important to assess the extent to which this broad picture was borne out by the spatial practices of individual migrants.

Data on the origins of apprentices who moved to Leicester and Nottingham to work for masters in hosiery can be used to gauge the extent of spatial integration within the East Midlands hosiery industry, as introduced in Chapter 3. An average of 36 percent of migrant apprentices in Leicester and 52 percent in Nottingham in any one decade between 1710 and 1840 were employed in the hosiery industry (either as framework knitters or in ancillary trades such as needle-maker or framesmith), suggesting that these towns were part of a significant hosiery district. The proportions of hosiery apprentices in Nottingham were strikingly high in the latter half of the eighteenth century, peaking at

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18. Victoria History of the County of Leicester, volume III, 3-5.
21. H. Hartopp, Records of the Borough of Leicester, New Series, Vols. 1 & 2 (Leicester, 1926); Notts Archives, Register of apprentices bound by indenture to the burgesses of Nottingham from 1723.
75 percent of all migrant apprentices in the 1790s. (See Table 5.1). The data highlight Nottingham's, and to a lesser extent Leicester's roles as epicentres of the hosiery industry in the East Midlands, to which young men were attracted for training and employment in an industry which dominated the occupational structures of these towns, as demonstrated in Chapter 4.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decade</th>
<th>Total no. of migrant apprentices in Leicester</th>
<th>% of total who were employed in hosiery trades</th>
<th>Total no. of migrant apprentices in Nottingham</th>
<th>% of total who were employed in hosiery trades</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1710s</td>
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<td>No data</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1720s</td>
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<td>56%</td>
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<tr>
<td>1730s</td>
<td>193</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>199</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1740s</td>
<td>224</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
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<td>53%</td>
<td>340</td>
<td>70%</td>
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<td>46%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1780s</td>
<td>189</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>275</td>
<td>59%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790s</td>
<td>241</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>315</td>
<td>75%</td>
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<td>61%</td>
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<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830s</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.1: Number of apprentices who moved to Leicester and Nottingham in each decade, 1710-1840, and the proportion who were apprenticed to hosiery trades.  

Research on migration to urban centres in the eighteenth century has often indicated what might be expected – that the areas from which most migrants were drawn had some prior connection with the town.  

Sources as Note 21.

23 See, for example, A. Parton, 'Poor law settlement certificates and migration to and from Birmingham, 1726-57', *Local Population Studies*, 38 (1987), 23-9; Lovett et al, 'Poisson regression analysis and migration fields'.
had some connection with their destination. The apprenticeship registers suggest that individual migratory moves were often the result of connections within the industry. A number of apprentices' fathers were employed in the hosiery trade, and so were likely to have sent their sons to be apprenticed in Leicester or Nottingham after making connections with hosiery masters based in these towns. For instance, in 1729, a boy from Cossington in Leicestershire, whose father was listed as a framework knitter, was bound as apprentice to another framework knitter in Nottingham, while in 1784, a Nottingham sinkermaker took on a hosier's son from Leicester as an apprentice.24 Sometimes these apparently economic linkages were in fact based on family ties. For instance, in 1752, Andrew Miller moved from Ireland to Nottingham to be apprenticed to a framework knitter named John Miller.25 The identical surnames are unlikely to be merely a coincidence; such a long-distance move is probably explained by the fact that the apprentice’s new master was a relative. In this way, therefore, social, kinship and occupational connections served to shape spatial interaction.

Bearing in mind that the nature of the connections between origin and destination could vary between individual migrants, it is still instructive to look for broad patterns in the origins of migrants, which can highlight particular places or regions with a strong link to Leicester or Nottingham. The trends in Figure 5.3 mirror quite closely the geographical patterns of social connections deduced from marriage registers. The vast majority of hosiery apprentices moving to Leicester and Nottingham had come from the East Midlands. In part this may be explained by geographical proximity, but it also reflects the dominance of hosiery manufacture in the area. Intra-regional connections were most dominant in Nottingham, where almost 80 percent of hosiery apprentices from outside Nottinghamshire had originated in other counties within the East Midlands (compared with 54 percent of apprentices in Leicester), while just 4 percent had come from the West Midlands (compared to 18 percent in Leicester).

24 Notts Archives, Register of apprentices 1723 to 1753, M.S. 1553, Vol. 1; 1767 to 1789, M.S. 1555, Vol. 3.
25 Notts Archives, Register of apprentices 1723 to 1753, M.S. 1553, Vol. 1.
Looking at the distribution of apprentices’ origins across the country as a whole, Leicester’s migration field appears to have been wider than that for Nottingham, with slightly higher proportions of migrants to Leicester originating from counties in southern England. This finding is similar to the patterns of marriage partners’ origins. In this case, it may perhaps be explained by the fact that Leicester was thought to be the most important hosiery centre in England by the mid-eighteenth century. Nevertheless, despite its apparently wide sphere of influence, Leicester’s industrial linkages were quite geographically specific. Only very small proportions of migrant apprentices moved from the North and North West – areas which specialised in the manufacture of woollen and cotton textiles. Indeed, the only representatives from northern England in the dataset were seven apprentices from Yorkshire.

It might be expected that there would be strong intra-regional linkages within the East Midlands hosiery industry, partly because similar skills and technologies were

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26 Hartopp, Records of the Borough of Leicester, New Series, Vols. 1 & 2; Notts Archives, Register of apprentices bound by indenture to the burgesses of Nottingham from 1723. The total number of migrant hosiery apprentices in Nottingham in this period was 1,590, and in Leicester 864.

required for the production of hose across the 'region', and therefore supplies of labour and machinery were not tied to any particular location. For instance, larger numbers of people moving to Nottingham for apprenticeships in hosiery had come from Derbyshire than from Leicestershire, even though the latter county is conventionally seen as having stronger ties to Nottingham through hosiery production. However, working against these inter-county linkages was the fact that merchants and producers in the different counties were tied into separate supply networks (reflecting the particular raw materials worked in the county), which meant that each county was likely to have as many connections to places outside the East Midlands as within it (as shown in Chapter 3.) For instance, Nottingham's specialism in cotton hose linked it to the cotton industry in Lancashire. James Hargreaves and Richard Arkwright came to the town from Lancashire in 1769 partly because the experience of the local labour force in producing cotton hose meant that they were used to operating textile machinery. Silk makers in Derby were part of an industrial agglomeration that included the silk manufacturing centres of Coventry, Nuneaton, Leek, Macclesfield and Congleton. Leicestershire's emphasis on the production of woollen stockings meant that it was more likely to look towards the wool-producing districts of the South Midlands and East Anglia. The large hosiery firm Pares of Leicester, for example, had a partnership with a worsted spinning mill near Bromsgrove in Worcestershire.

Indeed, as further evidence that the East Midlands county towns were integrated into a national space-economy through the hosiery industry, Leicester, and to a lesser extent Nottingham, attracted a sizeable proportion of migrants from London (see Figure 5.3), reflecting both towns' long-standing links with the capital through the hosiery trade. (See Chapter 2). The success of many East Midlands firms was founded on the migration of men with capital and entrepreneurial skills from London. Samuel Fellows, for example, moved to Nottingham after his father's death in the early eighteenth century.

28 J. V. Beckett and J. E. Heath, 'When was the industrial revolution in the East Midlands?' Midland History, 13 (1988), 86.
and used his experience in London to build up one of the most successful silk hosiery businesses in Nottingham.\textsuperscript{31} Derby's leading industries also depended on migrants from London. In 1764 William Duesbury (who had set up the Derby China Factory the previous decade) bought the bankrupt Chelsea pottery, prompting the movement of significant numbers of skilled workers to Derby. Their expertise was drawn upon in order to produce better quality goods there.\textsuperscript{32} The establishment of the Derby silk mill also depended on migration of entrepreneurs from London. The mill was originally built by Thomas Cotchett, 'a citizen and merchant tailor of London'. He went bankrupt in 1713, so the mill was taken over and rebuilt by Cotchett's friend John Lombe, who already owned silk-throwing machines in London.\textsuperscript{33}

Ties to a national economy were clearly important, not least because the East Midlands was the country's leading centre of hosiery production, with its products sold nationwide and exported abroad.\textsuperscript{34} Nevertheless, the day-to-day production of hosiery relied upon connections at a much smaller scale – within individual counties. Linkages between both Nottingham and Leicester and their own counties are clearly evident from data on the migration of hosiery apprentices. Figure 5.4 indicates that approximately two thirds of the parishes in Leicestershire sent apprentices to Leicester in the period 1700-1840. The importance of intra-county links can be explained by the particular way in which the hosiery industry was organised in this period – namely under the domestic system.\textsuperscript{35} The nature of hosiery production meant that county towns were closely tied to their immediate hinterlands through a localised web of linkages. Indeed, Deering noted in 1751 that 60 percent of stocking frames directly employed by Nottingham manufacturers were located 'in the Villages about, who buy their Provisions and other Necessaries in this Town.'\textsuperscript{36}

\textsuperscript{31} Chapman, \textit{Hosiery and Knitwear}, 19.
\textsuperscript{32} Lord, \textit{Derby Past}, 34-5.
\textsuperscript{34} Beckett and Heath, 'When was the industrial revolution in the East Midlands?', 83.
\textsuperscript{35} G.A. Chinnery, 'Eighteenth century Leicester', in A.E. Brown (ed), \textit{The Growth of Leicester (Leicester, 1972), 64; C. Marsden, Nottinghamshire (London, 1953), 36.}
\textsuperscript{36} C. Deering, \textit{Nottinghamia Vetus et Nova, or an Historical Account of the Ancient and Present State of the Town of Nottingham} (Nottingham, 1751), 101.
This essentially proto-industrial structure of the East Midlands textile industry accords with the late arrival of the industrial revolution in the area. It has been convincingly demonstrated that in contrast to the ‘classic’ industrial heartlands of the North West, for example, the East Midlands did not undergo full-scale industrialisation and the significant changes in mechanisation associated with it until after 1850, as the arrival of the railway helped to open up this previously landlocked region. Prior to this,

Figure 5.4: Origins of apprentices who had migrated to Leicester from within its county in the period 1700-1840 for employment in the hosiery industry.\textsuperscript{37}

\textsuperscript{37} Source: Hartopp, \textit{Records of the Borough of Leicester, New Series, Vols. 1 & 2.}

\textsuperscript{38} Beckett and Heath, ‘When was the industrial revolution in the East Midlands?’, 77-94; Chapman, \textit{Hosiery and Knitwear}, ix, xxi.
the established East Midlands' industries—coal and lead mining, and iron-working—continued to be characterised by small-scale production, largely restricted to local markets, and limited technological innovation. Newer industries like framework knitting did become more sophisticated over the century from 1750, but rather than maturing into full industrialisation, it has been argued that they experienced a second stage of proto-industrialisation.39 Two key developments in this period served to cement the dominance of urban/industrial centres in the East Midlands. Firstly, manufacturing concerns became larger, as merchant entrepreneurs based in the larger towns set up their own establishments. In 1740 there were around 50 merchant houses in Nottingham employing knitters directly. The number of merchant houses had doubled by 1770 and again by 1800. The large size of these firms meant that they were concentrated in towns, where there was a plentiful supply of capital and cheap labour. By 1813 one Nottingham hosier had £24,000 invested in frames and another employed 300 workers. By 1824 several hosiers owned more than 1,000 frames each. Leicester was slower to develop such large firms, but by 1750 there were 10 principal manufacturers in the town, and 85 firms by 1794. These firms were very often based in large workshops—'proto-factories'- built across the upper floors of three-storey houses or in long yards behind town houses.40 Secondly, the hosiery industry became concentrated into fewer settlements. These included not only the county towns, however, but also smaller settlements, which were transformed into industrial villages. Shepshed in Leicestershire, for instance, was dominated by framework knitting, becoming an urban-industrial centre during the eighteenth century.41 Ruddington in Nottinghamshire experienced a similar situation in the early nineteenth century.42 It seems clear, then, that the hosiery industry required urban foci, to act as centres of finance, marketing and finishing for county- or in some cases region-wide production.

If we narrow our focus to an even smaller scale, the very localised nature of urban spheres of influence becomes evident, suggesting that region-wide linkages were of

40 Chapman, Hosiery and Knitwear, 53, 61.
42 Beckett and Heath, 'When was the industrial revolution in the East Midlands?', 84-5.
limited importance. Within individual counties, there were noticeable concentrations of hosiery migrants from particular areas. In Leicestershire, two principal tendencies are evident from Figure 5.4. Firstly, a majority of migrant apprentices seems to have originated from the central portion of the county - the area around Leicester itself. Eight of the eleven parishes bordering the borough of Leicester sent more than ten migrant hosiery workers, with 85 coming from Belgrave alone - the highest from any parish. Almost all the parishes from which more than forty migrants originated were located in a central belt of Leicestershire, while at the outer edges of the county, very few parishes sent more than five migrants, and many sent none at all. The physical location of Leicester at the centre of its county is likely to have exerted a strong influence on this spatial pattern. It could also be explained by the fact that stocking makers would have had to walk to the nearest town to receive raw materials and deliver finished goods, so most rural hosiery parishes were likely to be located no more than eight to ten miles from an urban hosiery centre like Leicester, as this was the farthest that could be walked in a single day. 43

The second broad tendency was for a larger number of migrants to originate from the west of the county than the east. This corresponds well with the uneven distribution of industrial activity in Leicestershire: the eastern side remained predominantly agricultural, while industry flourished in the west. This reinforces the point that migration was often the result of pre-existing connections within an industry, despite Colin Ellis's argument that most migrants to Leicester originated from settlements where hosiery manufacture had not taken off, largely because local landowners had discouraged the development of industry in their villages. 44 In fact, the pattern of hosiery apprentices' origins in Leicestershire mirrors quite closely the distribution of stocking frames in the county, as shown in Figure 3.1 (Chapter 3), providing strong evidence that the existing spatial distribution of hosiery production was reinforced by the spatial practices of individual hosiery workers. Larger numbers of migrant hosiery apprentices tended to originate from those parishes where hosiery manufacturing was a dominant activity (such as Loughborough, Mountsorrel, Hinckley, Wigston, Oadby and Blaby.) Meanwhile, the

44 C. Ellis, History in Leicester (Leicester, 1976), 95.
only areas not dependent on the hosiery industry by the end of the eighteenth century—
districts west of Ashby-de-la-Zouch and Market Bosworth, south of Lutterworth, east of
Billesdon and Melton, and around Market Harborough—correspond with the areas from
which very few if any apprentices moved for work in the hosiery industry.45

Nottinghamshire's industrial district was also spatially concentrated, as Figure 5.5
demonstrates starkly. The vast majority of apprentice hosiery workers came from the
southern half of the county (except for small concentrations around Tuxford and in
Worksop), with particularly sizeable numbers from the parishes around Nottingham
itself. This distribution pattern in part reflects Nottingham's geographical position in the
south-west corner of its county, and therefore could simply be the outcome of a distance-
decay effect. However, as in Leicestershire, the pattern also corresponds with the
geographical spread of the county's textile district, which only reached as far north as
Mansfield (see Figure 3.1), while towns in the north and east of the county were more
closely linked to the agricultural economy of Lincolnshire and trade along the Great
North Road.46 Similarly, it has been argued that Derbyshire could be divided into separate
economies, often with stronger connections to other counties. The north-west Derbyshire
towns of Glossop and New Mills, for instance, formed part of the cotton textile region of
north-west England, while remaining isolated from the rest of the county by the High
Peak. Meanwhile, Chesterfield was part of Sheffield's hinterland.47 This evidence would
seem to cast further doubt on the idea of the East Midlands as a self-contained industrial
region.

45 Nevertheless, this pattern not only reflects the dominance of agriculture in these districts, but also the fact
that population densities in these areas were lower, and therefore the numbers of migrants originating from
them were likely to be smaller, because of the small size of the total source population. See A. J. Strachan,
'Patterns of population change', in N. Pye (ed), Leicester and its region (Leicester, 1972), 424-54, for a
more detailed discussion of the distribution of hosiery manufacturing activity in Leicestershire.
46 Stobart, 'Regions', 1314; J. Ellis, 'Industrial and urban growth in Nottingham, 1680-1840', in Stobart
and Raven, Towns, Regions and Industries, 152.
47 Stobart, 'Regions', 1314.
Figure 5.5: Origins of apprentices who had migrated to Nottingham from within its county in the period 1723-1840 for employment in the hosiery industry.\textsuperscript{48}

\textsuperscript{48} Notts Archives, Register of apprentices bound by indenture to the burgesses of Nottingham from 1723.
Individual migration histories

As a complement to the mass of data on the movements of marriage partners and apprentices, which can do little more than reveal aggregate patterns and allows only inferences to be made as to the motives for and experiences of migration, the movements of *individuals* can be reconstructed from settlement examinations. The information they provide complicates the picture of the East Midlands, and seems to conflict, at least in part, with the notion that, rather than forming an integrated region, the East Midlands consisted of three separate counties, each given internal coherence by the centralising tendencies of its county town. The documents suggest that, for the poor and unemployed, movement over relatively long distances, and across the 'region,' was quite common. Over half the surviving examinations for Leicester concerned individuals who had been born outside Leicestershire, in places as far afield as London, Yorkshire, Manchester and Devon. Although fewer people in the Derby sample had been born outside the county, those who had included three people born in Lancashire, one in Surrey and one in Middlesex. Those who had not been born in such distant places very often originated in adjacent counties within the East Midlands. This emphasises the relatively short distances over which people tended to move during their lives, as suggested by the other data presented here.

Even if the distances over which people moved were not always particularly large, what is perhaps more illuminating for this study of spatial integration is the *frequency* with which people moved. Looking at combinations of moves, rather than the single, 'snapshot' movement recorded in marriage and apprenticeship registers enables us to reconstruct with more certainty the spatial scale over which people operated during the course of their lives. Of those people examined at Leicester, the average number of moves mentioned was three, while in Derby the number varied between one and five. Some people had moved home many more times than this, however. William Thorp, for example, had made a total of eight moves up to the point at which he was examined by officials in St Nicholas's parish, Leicester in 1770. He had been born in the parish of St Martin's in Leicester and lived there for twenty years with his family. He then spent three months in Tamworth living with one Joseph Knight, before lodging with a butcher (by whom he was employed) in Derby for nine months. He then moved to London, where he
spent nine months with a butcher in Wapping, followed by six months in Spitalfields. His next move was back to Leicester, where he lived with his brother for a month in St Martin’s parish, only to return to London for a month, before moving back to his brother’s residence in Leicester. He then married and spent six months in Uppingham, Rutland as a train driver.\(^{49}\) This is an unusual example, but it gives a flavour of the frequent moves back and forth which characterised the lives of many of those struggling to make ends meet in this period. It also highlights how commonly employment opportunities or marriage prompted movement.\(^{50}\)

The majority of people who made repeated moves did so within a relatively restricted spatial area. John Barton, examined at All Saints in Derby in 1778, was born in Kirk Langley, Derbyshire, then made three further moves within the county to serve apprenticeships, before joining the Derbyshire militia.\(^{51}\) There are numerous other instances of people moving frequently, but remaining within their own county, or even within the same town, as in the case of James Cockster, a framework knitter examined in Derby in 1780. He was born in St Werburgh’s parish, then worked for the apothecary John Cantwell in All Saints for two and a half years from the age of thirteen. He was then apprenticed to Job Day of St Werburgh for two years, before moving with his master to St Michael’s parish for one and a half years. He was then employed by his father back in St Werburgh.\(^{52}\) A significant proportion of people, though, (about one third) did move between counties in the East Midlands, which makes the notion that movement was structured by distinct, bounded counties seem somewhat artificial. On the other hand, this does not prove the existence of an integrated region either, but simply reinforces the point that connections between individuals could exist at a variety of scales.

To some extent, patterns of migration evident from the two other, more numerous, types of document generated by the Settlement Laws – removal orders and settlement certificates – corroborate the evidence from settlement examinations. Paupers could enter

\(^{49}\) ROLLR, St Nicholas, Leicester: Settlement and removal papers, 23 D52/3/1.

\(^{50}\) Settlement examinations do not necessarily cover all moves made by an individual, since they tend only to detail moves which related to the gaining of a settlement, such as apprenticeship, service or marriage.


\(^{52}\) D.R.O., Derby All Saints, Parish papers – Settlement Examinations, M609 Vol. 14, D 3372.
any parish if they had a settlement certificate from their 'home' parish, acknowledging responsibility for them. If and when a pauper became chargeable to the poor rates of the new parish, that parish could issue a removal order requesting that the pauper be sent back to their parish of settlement. Thus, these documents indicate where the pauper was likely to have come from before he or she arrived in a new parish. These sources cannot provide a completely accurate picture of migration, however, since the parish to which a pauper was ordered to be removed was not always the parish they had just moved from, and in some cases they may never even have visited their parish of settlement (if, for example, they were married women who had therefore taken their husband's settlement.) Nonetheless, information from these sources can help to build up a more comprehensive picture of the movement of paupers than that provided by a small sample of settlement examinations alone. Table 5.2 illustrates the spatial distribution of parishes of settlement for paupers who moved to parishes in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby at various times between 1700 and 1840. (Patchy document survival means there is no continuous run of settlement records.) The majority of paupers' moves were at a local scale - within a county or, more often, within a single town. However, a significant proportion of paupers had made cross-county moves within the East Midlands, though less commonly than was suggested by the sample of settlement examinations. This was particularly the case in Nottingham, although the percentage here may have been slightly inflated because of the absence of data on moves within Nottingham itself. Migration from outside the East Midlands was not unheard of, again particularly amongst paupers moving to Nottingham, of whom 10 percent had come from as far afield as Scotland, Ireland and Wales. In sum, the evidence from settlement examinations demonstrates that aggregate patterns can miss the reality of everyday mobility. The frequency of movement, in particular, is often concealed. Nevertheless, it should be borne in mind that settlement examinations (as well as certificates and removal orders) relate to a particularly mobile section of the population. Those who found themselves destitute or unemployed were more likely to travel in search of employment or poor relief. Despite the frequency of movement, the documents do tend to reinforce the relatively restricted spatial patterns of activity evident from the other sources on migration. This glimpse into the movement of individuals also highlights the need for further studies at this small scale. Although Pooley and Turnbull's
extensive study of mobility was based on thousands of individual life histories, such a huge dataset covering the whole of the country necessitates the drawing of fairly broad conclusions. Studies at a more local scale are still valuable, especially as they can shed further light on the processes of spatial integration within regions, which were, after all, a composite of individual spatial practices.

### Table 5.2: Origins of paupers who moved away from their parish of settlement to parishes in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Origin of pauper migrants</th>
<th>Leicester (%)</th>
<th>Nottingham (%)</th>
<th>Derby (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Another parish in same town</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere in same county</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elsewhere in East Midlands</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>West Midlands</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern counties</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Southern counties</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland, Ireland and Wales</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total individuals</strong></td>
<td><strong>1371</strong></td>
<td><strong>1385</strong></td>
<td><strong>609</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Conclusion

Drawing on a range of large-scale data sources, this chapter has analysed the spatial practices of population movement, at a variety of scales, from the neighbouring parish to the region of England hundreds of miles away from the East Midlands. Taken together,

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53 Pooley and Turnbull, Migration and Mobility.
54 Sources: ROLLR: St Nicholas, Leicester – Settlement and Removal papers, 23 D52/1-9; Certificates of legal settlement – St Nicholas, 23 D52/18; Settlement papers – St Margaret, 24 D65/L1/1-37; All Saints – Settlement certificates, 21 D51/8/12; Transcripts of Poor Law records – St Leonard, DE 1615/5; Notts Archives: Index of Removal Orders compiled from Quarter Sessions Record Books, CA 351-361A, 3262-67, 3270, 3282; Settlement Certificates, Examinations and Removal Orders (1696 to 1863) appertaining to Nottinghamshire – Part I, compiled by Kay Stringer (Nottinghamshire Family History Society Records Series, Vol. 43, 1985); D.R.O: Derby All Saints Parish Papers – Settlement, M609, Vol. 13.
the data enable us to draw three main conclusions about spatial integration in the East Midlands, which echo the findings from earlier chapters. Firstly, the situation within the East Midlands was not a simple case of ‘county versus region’. Rather, different layers of spatial interaction co-existed here. There is some evidence for strong linkages between the counties, related to the hosiery industry (in terms of employment of hosiery workers and recruitment of apprentices), and at the same time, linkages existed beyond the region, to the industrial heartlands of England such as the North West and West Midlands, and to London, the market for many of the East Midlands’ products. The position of Derbyshire is particularly difficult to categorise neatly. Derby itself had as many linkages with places outside the East Midlands – in Staffordshire and Yorkshire particularly – as within it. Meanwhile, parts of its county were oriented more towards the North West and West Midlands and seemed disconnected from the rest of Derbyshire. The important question is which of these various layers or scales of interaction was of greatest significance in shaping the space of the East Midlands.

This leads us to the second broad conclusion – that migration, as a socio-economic practice, served to shape space. The movement of individual people, whether for reasons of marriage, apprenticeship, or pauperism, helped to determine which layers of spatial interaction were of most importance in the East Midlands. The predominance of localised migrational connections – within a single county or even between parishes in a single town – reinforces the argument from earlier chapters that the county layer of spatial interaction was of more significance than the regional layer in the East Midlands. The relationship between migration and space is not a simple linear or one-way link, however. Migration was usually the result of pre-existing connections between places, suggesting that the configuration of space played a role in shaping migratory practices. Yet at the same time it was migratory movements that usually lay at the root of spatial connections, as people’s mobility served to forge or strengthen new or existing linkages between places. This is why it is so important to analyse the spatial patterning of migration if we are to understand spatial integration in the East Midlands.

Thirdly, this chapter has provided further evidence of the role played by large urban centres in spatial integration, by focussing this time on non-elite groups. Whilst it is conventionally argued that large towns played a vital part in drawing industrial regions
together, economically, socially and culturally, the evidence on migration into Leicester, Nottingham and Derby has suggested that the spheres of influence of these towns were more localised than this. Their migration fields generally extended no further than their county boundaries, and very often were even less extensive. Moreover, there was surprisingly little evidence from the data of migrational connections between the three towns themselves. Thus, the findings from this chapter corroborate those from the previous chapter, that the structure of the urban system in the East Midlands – marked by the dominance of three independent county towns at the head of a weak urban network – was an important part of the explanation for the relative lack of regional integration here.

The following chapter looks at another important form of spatial practice – individuals’ connections with family and friends, as evidenced through their choice of executors for their wills. As with this study of migration, it will be important to draw out how individuals’ activities in aggregate served to shape space, and to highlight which layers of spatial interaction were of most significance in shaping the social worlds of testators in the eighteenth and early nineteenth century East Midlands.
Social connections: evidence from testamentary practices

Previous chapters have demonstrated the close links between social relationships and spatial practices. Connections between individuals, whether they were members of the urban elite, apprentices and their masters, or voters and their MPs, all had a spatial as well as a social (or indeed economic or political) dimension. In aggregate, these everyday socio-spatial relationships served to shape space, by determining the particular spatial layers within which interaction most commonly took place. This chapter is concerned with one of the most intimate scales of interaction considered in this thesis: the links between family, friends and neighbours, as revealed through the socio-spatial practice of will-making.

In the early modern period, as today, individuals were connected to each other through a myriad of formal and informal networks. Such networks could be based upon family ties, residential propinquity, religious affiliation, business activity, or shared recreational interests. Whilst there have been numerous studies of social and kinship networks in rural areas, urban-based social linkages remain under-researched, particularly for the eighteenth century. It is the intention of this chapter to go some way towards filling that gap. One of the most accessible and comprehensive sources for

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2 A few scholars have only recently begun to address this. See J. Stobart, 'Social and geographical contexts of property transmission in the eighteenth century' in J. Stobart and A. Owens (eds), Urban Fortunes: Property and inheritance in the town, 1700-1900 (Aldershot, 2000); P. Lane, 'An industrialising town: Social and business networks in Hinckley, Leicestershire c. 1750-1839', in J. Stobart and P. Lane (eds), Urban and industrial change in the Midlands 1700-1840 (Leicester, 2000), 139-166; and R. Grassby, Kinship and Capitalism: Marriage, family, and business in the English-speaking world, 1580-1740 (Cambridge, 2001), which is based on an enormous and painstakingly researched database of London merchants.
reconstructing the nature and spatial extent of social connections centred on towns, is probate records – specifically, wills and administration bonds. This chapter focuses on the relationship between testators and the executors or administrators of their estates (those people chosen to take responsibility for the distribution of the deceased’s estate in accordance with his or her wishes.) Although often representing only a small proportion of a testator’s family and friends, executors and administrators tended to have a close, private and prominent, public relationship with that testator. Their role meant that they were publicly identified as trustworthy, as well as being given intimate access to the private internal workings of the deceased’s household. Through an analysis of data on the identity, familial status, occupation and place of residence of executors and administrators of wills made by individuals in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, this chapter aims to shed light on the nature and geographical extent of social linkages associated with these towns.

After a brief introduction to the will-making process and the use of wills as historical sources, the first part of this chapter addresses the ongoing debate about the relative importance of the nuclear and extended family, through a consideration of the familial relationship between testators and their executors. What proportions of executors were drawn from testators’ nuclear families, extended families, or non-kin? In the second part, the emphasis shifts to the geographical extent of testators’ social connections, as suggested by the places of residence of their executors or administrators. Were social linkages mostly spatially localised and insular, or did they extend over a wider area, such that towns were linked to places within their own counties, the wider region and beyond? The chapter concludes with a discussion of the relative importance of kinship, neighbourhood and occupational networks in shaping the social worlds of people in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby.

Wills and will-making
Wills were usually dictated to a scribe on the testator’s deathbed, although a small proportion were ‘nuncupative’ – that is, they were made by word of mouth before witnesses and tended to be very brief. Whereas in the medieval period, local parish clergy or other educated men would be called upon to write wills, by the eighteenth and early
nineteenth centuries, professional legal experts were most commonly used, particularly in towns, where they were more numerous. Very occasionally, people wrote their own will.3

Up to four months after a testator's death, a grant of probate was given, by which the executors and witnesses swore an oath that the will being proved was the testator's last. In return, the executors were given permission to administer the deceased's estate. If the executors named in the will could not or would not act, or if a person died intestate, administrators were appointed. The principal administrator was usually the deceased's widow or next of kin, though occasionally could be a major creditor or reputable neighbour. Whereas executors were chosen by the deceased, administrators were appointed by the probate courts using letters of administration, whereby they gave an oath to administer the deceased's estate faithfully by entering into a bond worth roughly double the value of the deceased's personal estate. The administrator usually had two bondsmen, at least one of whom was likely to be a relative or working associate. By the eighteenth century the second was often a court servant or even the fictional John Doe.4 So although administrators were not nominated personally by the testator, and thus did not have the same relationship with the deceased as executors, they have been included in this study because the majority of them were well known to the testator during his or her life, and in many cases were relatives.

Probate was administered through three tiers of church courts. The Archbishops' Courts (known as the Prerogative Courts of Canterbury and York) and the Consistory Courts (at diocesan level) were normally responsible for the probate of the better-off gentry and clergy. Individuals who had personal estates worth at least £5 in an ecclesiastical jurisdiction different from where they had resided were dealt with in these higher courts. Probate for most minor gentry and those of lower status was dealt with in the Archdeacons' courts (whose jurisdictions corresponded roughly with counties.)5 Unusually, there was no archdeaconry court in Derby, so the probate of the less well-off was dealt with at the Consistory Court of Lichfield and Coventry. The analysis in this

5 Ibid., 5-6, 11.
chapter is based on a sample of 300 wills proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) between 1700 and 1820\(^6\) (100 each for Leicester, Nottingham and Derby), as well as 790 wills and administration bonds dealt with by the Archdeaconry court of Nottingham, 468 from Leicester's Archdeaconry court, and 446 from the Consistory Court of Lichfield and Coventry (for Derby)\(^7\). Wills and administrations from these latter courts were sampled at five-yearly intervals over the period 1700 to 1830. The collection of data from wills proved at these different types of court enables a comparison to be made between the social connections of people of different social status.

Most testators chose one or two executors, who had several important responsibilities. They were to arrange and pay for the funeral; find appraisers for the inventory of the deceased’s goods as well as sureties and witnesses for bonds; liquidate the deceased’s stock and goods, and collect debts owing to the estate; pay all fees, taxes and charges; provide maintenance for the testator’s children; satisfy all creditors of the estate in order of priority; pay all individual legacies set down in the will; and file an account within one year, showing the net value of the estate after deducting all legal disbursements, and defend it in court.\(^8\) Carrying out these duties required a great deal of care and effort on the part of the executor; their successful completion would help to ensure the future prosperity of the testator’s dependants. Indeed, the executor often had significant power over the use and investment of family property, including adjudicating in disputed testamentary claims.\(^9\) Because of the importance and prominence of the role, therefore, executors were carefully chosen. The testator’s selection would be based on blood ties, and/or personal friendship and social respect. Trust, mutual understanding, and having something in common were all important elements in the relationship between testator and executor. A testator’s choice of executor should, therefore, be a meaningful indicator of the nature of that individual’s social connections. As Stobart has argued, relationships recognised at death must surely have been highly significant in life, and thus

\(^6\) Held at the Family Records Centre, London. The sample was chosen simply by selecting the first 100 wills from a non-alphabetical listing for each of the three towns.

\(^7\) These wills are held at Notts Archives, ROLLR and L.J.R.O.

\(^8\) Grassby, *Kinship and Capitalism*, 132.

should represent genuine social relationships. However, I would question his claim that the testator-executor relationship can enable us to gauge the nature of social networks. Such networks by definition are complex and consist of a web of multiple linkages, yet each testator only named one or two executors. I would argue, then, that analysis of the relationship between testators and executors is better suited to the more modest aim of indicating something of the nature of a testator’s social connections.

More generally, it is important to be aware of the limitations of wills as a source for the investigation of social and kinship links. Firstly, wills are not representative of the whole of the English population in the early modern period. Usually no more than one-third of people dying in any one place made a will. By the end of the eighteenth century, though, only about 6 percent of people dying in England and Wales made wills, while the proportion is estimated to have been 10 percent in 1841. Moreover, women were particularly under-represented amongst will-makers. Since most married women’s property was owned by their husband, they could only write a will with his permission, which was very rarely given. The majority of female testators were widows and spinsters, representing 20-25 percent of surviving wills in towns such as Sheffield, Birmingham and Leeds by the early eighteenth century, while in London the proportion was roughly 30 percent in the first half of the nineteenth century. Testators tended to be drawn from wealthier social groups, principally because they had more property, especially land, to bequeath. But this bias towards the wealthy can also be explained by the policy of church courts. Although it is commonly thought that only people with goods worth more than £5 could make a will, in fact it was simply the case that the church authorities could only charge for grants of probate when an individual’s personal estate was valued at over £5. Therefore, they encouraged those above this limit to apply for probate and merely discouraged those with property worth less than the £5 limit. In fact, individuals of lower social status could be quite prominent amongst testators, especially if

10 Stobart, ‘Social and geographical contexts’, 120.
11 Goose and Evans, ‘Wills as an historical source’, 44.
13 Owens, ‘Property, will making and estate disposal’, 85.
they had under-age children or lacked an obvious heir, so that a will was necessary in order to clarify the inheritance.\footnote{Goose and Evans, ‘Wills as an historical source’, 44.}

The second point to bear in mind when using wills is that the nature of the documents themselves and the information they provide can make drawing reliable conclusions from them difficult. For instance, the vocabulary used to refer to relations and friends in wills can be ambiguous. A person described as ‘brother’ could be a stepbrother or brother-in-law, as well as a natural brother; similarly, the term ‘daughter’ could apply to wives and widows of sons or step-sons. ‘Daughter-in-law’ could mean a son’s wife or a stepdaughter. ‘Uncle’ could indicate any male relative of a higher generation, and ‘nephew’ one of a lower generation. ‘Cousin’ or ‘kinsman’ were all-encompassing terms, which often did not refer only to first and second cousins or relatives.\footnote{D. Cressy, ‘Kinship and kin interaction in early modern England’, \textit{Past and Present}, 113 (1986), 66.} Similarly, the term ‘friend’ was sometimes used to describe blood relations, and it is not always clear from a will whether it referred to family or non-kin. In addition, because the format of wills is not completely systematic, it can be difficult to analyse data from them in a coherent manner. The amount of biographical information given about the executors and those to whom bequests were left, for example, varied greatly between wills, depending on what the testator, in consultation with his or her scribe, had decided to mention.

Bearing these limitations in mind, however, it is still possible to produce an informative study, which it is hoped can add to what is currently a rather limited knowledge of urban-based social linkages. One of the most hotly contested historical debates over recent decades concerns the relative importance of the nuclear family, wider kin, and friends in early modern society. The following section analyses the relationships between testators and their executors, in order to assess the nature and significance of urban dwellers’ links with friends and family.

\textbf{Family and friends}

The debate over whether the nuclear family (a couple and their children) or the extended family was the most dominant form in past societies is one of the longest running in
British (and indeed European and American) history. The ‘traditional’ argument for the rise of the nuclear family coupled with a decline in the significance of wider kinship and communal links is a key tenet of social theory. It is rooted in Toennies’ dichotomy between Gemeinschaft and Gesellschaft, the argument being that during the seventeenth century, England shifted from 'an organic, natural order to an artificial, monetary civilisation.' At the core of this modernisation model is the claim that the traditional extended family, characterised by self-sufficiency and intimacy and supported by a network of kin, was superseded by the nuclear family, based on a conjugal partnership, individualism and domesticity. At the same time, the belief is that traditional community, characterised by homogeneity, conformity and consensus was destroyed by the elements of ‘modernisation’ – the division of labour, the market economy, industrialisation and urbanisation. 18

This argument that the nuclear family household was a product of industrialisation was overturned in the 1960s and 1970s by the work of Peter Laslett in particular. He found that the multiple or extended family household was not the norm in pre-industrial England. Instead, the commonest type of household unit was the simple family household, with or without servants, and in particular the nuclear family. It would seem, then, that households had been relatively small since medieval times. 19 This conclusion was reinforced by Alan Macfarlane, who also emphasised the importance of the nuclear family in pre-industrial society, arguing that individualism and affection had emerged in England long before the major economic changes of the early modern period. His detailed study of the diary of the seventeenth century yeoman-clergyman Ralph Josselin showed that Josselin’s kinship network only extended to his nuclear family. 20

More recent work, however, has placed greater emphasis on the extended family and wider kin. In a seminal article, David Cressy argued convincingly that the early modern English kinship system was not necessarily narrow, shallow and restricted, as had long been assumed. His evidence from qualitative sources such as family letters and court documents revealed extensive and active kinship links, with kin offering each other

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18 Grassby, Kinship and Capitalism, 1-2.
20 Macfarlane, Origins of English Individualism.
financial support, preferential trading relationships, and acting as character witnesses in court cases. Barry Reay, in a study of three rural Kentish parishes in the early nineteenth century, has also found that extended families and wide, dense kinship ties were typical. Sixty percent of households in his study area were related to others in the same parish, and he adduces much evidence of kin-based reciprocity. People were commonly employed by family members, for example, as well as lending each other money, and providing accommodation for other relatives if they fell on hard times.

![Figure 6.1: Proportions of executors and administrators who were members of testators' nuclear families, extended families, or were unrelated to them, 1700-1830.](image)

What all these studies have in common, however, is that they relate to rural communities, and tend to assume that nuclear and extended families were polar opposites which could not co-exist. I aim to address these two limitations, firstly by analysing family and kinship ties in an *urban* context, and secondly by arguing that both nuclear

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21 Cressy, 'Kinship and kin interaction', 51-3.
22 Reay, 'Kinship and the neighborhood', 93, 96.
23 The total numbers of executors and administrators from which these percentages were derived were as follows: Leicester archdeaconry court, 819; Nottingham archdeaconry court, 1,430; Consistory Court of Lichfield and Coventry, 783; Leicester PCC, 167; Nottingham PCC, 168; Derby PCC, 159.
and extended family relationships could be important to people in the early modern period.

Data on the familial status of executors and administrators named in wills and administrations proved at the archdeaconry courts of Leicester and Nottingham and the Consistory Court of Lichfield (for Derby probate) reveal that, in each case, the highest proportion of executors and administrators were unrelated to the testators for whom they acted, as is clear from the first three columns of Figure 6.1. The respective values for Leicester, Nottingham and Derby were 42 percent, 40 percent and 45 percent. Almost as numerous as non-kin, though, were those executors drawn from a testator’s nuclear family. Thirty-four percent of executors in Leicester, 39 percent in Nottingham and 33 percent in Derby were spouses or children of the deceased. Over half of these were testators’ wives, which perhaps reflected women’s role in managing the household and its assets in partnership with men, and certainly showed that men trusted their spouses with the important and demanding task of acting as executor. Sons and daughters were named as executors in roughly equal numbers in Leicester and Nottingham, each representing between 7 and 9 percent of all executors. In Derby, though, sons were more commonly chosen than daughters, the respective proportions being 10 and 6 percent of all executors and administrators. The least significant category of executor or administrator were members of a testator’s extended family (defined here as all blood relations apart from husband, wife, son or daughter.) Twenty-four percent of executors and administrators in Leicester, 22 percent in Derby and just 21 percent in Nottingham fell into this category. These findings echo those of Stobart for towns in Cheshire and South Lancashire. He found that non-kin represented more than half of the links recorded in wills and administration bonds towns in these two counties, while only about one third of executors were drawn from a testator’s nuclear family and just one quarter were members

24 These figures may have been slightly inflated, however, because I counted as ‘non-kin’ all those executors whose relationship to the testator was not recorded, as well as all those who were described as ‘friends’. Each group may have contained some people who were in fact members of the deceased’s family.
26 These findings would seem to contradict Coster’s argument that kinship links were of greater importance in towns, because the greater population density and higher mortality rates meant that people were more likely to live closer to their relatives and to have to rely on them if a close family member died. See W. Coster, Family and Kinship in England, 1450-1800 (London, 2001), 46.
of the extended family. Non-kin were similarly dominant in Hinckley wills from the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, representing 52 percent of executors, while nuclear family members made up just 24 percent.

This greater reliance on non-kin can probably be explained by the fact that towns offered a much wider range of social contacts than could be found in rural settlements, simply because of their larger populations and greater variety of activity. In addition, high rates of rural-urban migration meant that many urban dwellers were likely to have been separated from some members of their family and so turned to friends, neighbours or colleagues to undertake the execution of their will. Clearly it was important to select individuals who would be present in the locality to oversee the distribution of the estate, and who were familiar with the deceased’s familial and financial situation at the time of their death. It may be expected, therefore, that in rural parishes relations played a more prominent role in the probate process. Wrightson and Levine’s data from the village of Terling in Essex in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries would seem to support this argument. Here, the great majority of executors (87 percent) were members of the deceased’s family. Of these, 95 percent were ‘first-order kin’ – mostly wives or children of the testators.

Many of the executors who were unrelated to testators in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby were described as ‘friends’. In the early modern period this term was used to refer to a wide variety of people: acquaintances, colleagues, business associates, former masters or servants, lodgers, ministers, influential patrons, as well as neighbours and sometimes even kinsfolk. Like kin, friends often acted as intermediaries at important stages in the life-course. They might arrange and sanction marriages, for example, or act as sponsors for baptisms. It seems logical, therefore, that they would play a role at times of death, and indeed it has been shown that they were especially prominent in the probate process, acting as witnesses, appraisers, trustees, and guardians of a testator’s children, as well as executors. Clearly, then, friends were people whom the testator trusted, and as

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27 Stobart, ‘Social and geographical contexts’, 112.
29 Wrightson and Levine, Poverty and piety, 99-100.
30 Grassby, Kinship and Capitalism, 241-7.
the term covered a wide variety of individuals, this may explain the frequency with which they were named as executors.

Interestingly, the prominence of non-kin amongst the executors of wills and administration bonds from the archdeaconry and consistory courts is not mirrored in the data from wills of wealthier individuals proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. As Figure 6.1 demonstrates, family members were much more commonly called upon to act as executors than non-kin, particularly by testators in Leicester and Derby. In each town, more than two-thirds of executors were drawn from testators' relatives, with roughly half of these being nuclear family members and half belonging to the wider family. In Leicester, the proportion of executors named in wills from the PCC who were unrelated to their testators was little more than half the percentage of non-kin recorded in the archdeaconry court of Leicester. The marked contrast between the data for the archdeaconry and consistory courts on the one hand and the Prerogative Court on the other may be slightly magnified by the fact that only wills have been included for the latter court, while in the archdeaconry and consistory courts a large number of administrations were dealt with, each of which involved at least two bondsmen who were usually unrelated to the testator, thereby inflating the number of non-kin recorded. Nevertheless, the small proportion of executors who were unrelated to testators at the PCC is a surprising result, as it may be expected that wealthier individuals would have a wider network of social contacts, gathered through their business and leisure activities or their tendency to have travelled more extensively, and so they would be at least as likely to call upon non-kin as upon family members to act as executors.

The key to explaining this surprising result is to appreciate the significance of kinship to people at the time, particularly the wealthy. Gentry in the early modern period were fascinated by genealogy, and believed that blood ties involved special obligations and loyalties, as well as providing proof of status. Many political alliances and business ventures were founded on family ties. Wealthier families were linked through a network of mutual subsistence relations, which tied them to other kin, even over quite long distances. These connections could be maintained through correspondence and the

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31 See J. D. Marshall, 'Communities, societies, regions and local history. Perceptions of locality in High and Low Furness', The Local Historian, 26 (1996), 36-47, for an example of the very different spheres of activity associated with people of different social status.
activities of county and court life. Family members would commonly offer each other preferential trading relationships. London dealers, for instance, might buy goods and materials from kinsfolk in nearby counties like Essex and Suffolk. People would also seek financial support from kin, again often on preferential terms, with debts sometimes being forgiven or converted into family bequests. So, the fact that wealthier individuals tended to be in regular contact with kin, often drawing on them for support and assistance, helps to explain why they would tend to choose family members to act as executors for their estate. Relationships between siblings were particularly strong, with gifts and letters being exchanged and frequent visits made. Brothers and sisters provided mutual comfort during illness or bereavement, lent money to each other, and sometimes assisted with the maintenance of each other's children, by taking them on as an apprentice or providing money for education. The importance of the sibling relationship amongst the upper classes is borne out by the probate data. Up to 10 percent of all links between testators and executors in wills from the PCC were between brothers and sisters, compared with less than 5 percent for wills and administrations from the archdeaconry and consistory courts.

It is important not to assume, however, that kin were unimportant to the rest of the populace. Since many families were disrupted and became complex as a result of the death or remarriage of a parent, kinship ties were probably all the more significant. People would address each other using the familial terms 'cousin', 'brother', 'sister' and so on, and were expected to assist other kin, particularly those who were less well off or had fallen on hard times. A brother's role, for example, was to care for his siblings if his father died. Unmarried sisters often kept house for their bachelor brothers. When a woman's husband died, other kin were expected to keep away avaricious relatives seeking a share of the estate. The fact that kin were more likely to be chosen as executors by wealthier individuals can probably be explained simply by the fact that they had greater resources and more opportunities to keep in contact with their kin, not that kinship ties were necessarily more important to them. For instance, gentry were far more likely to live in households that included kin beyond the nuclear family (partly because

they lived in larger houses, but also because of the great importance they attached to
kinship.) This conclusion is borne out by a comparison of data from the PCC wills and
those proved at the archdeaconry and consistory courts. The proportion of executors from
a testator’s extended family was much higher in the former than in the latter, while the
proportions of executors drawn from the nuclear family were similar in all courts. (See
Figure 6.1.) It seems, therefore, that close family ties were important to all groups of
testators, but the wealthier were better able to maintain links with wider kin.

Not only did the nature of kinship ties vary with social status, but it also changed
through time. Comparing the proportions of executors who were members of the
testator’s nuclear family, extended family or were unrelated to them in two different time
periods – 1700-1730 and 1790-1820 – reveals a general trend for the proportion of executors
drawn from family members to decline, whilst there was an increase in the
percentage of non-kin chosen. (See Table 6.1.) The most dramatic changes are found in
the PCC wills for Derby, where 91 percent of executors in the period 1700-1730 were
related to the testator, and 9 percent unrelated. By the later period (1790-1830), however,
these proportions had changed to 63 percent and 37 percent respectively.

Data from wills and administrations at Leicester’s archdeaconry court also
displayed significant temporal changes. The proportion of executors drawn from the
nuclear family almost halved between the two time periods, from 52 to 27 percent, while
the proportion who were non-kin rose from 27 to 47 percent. These findings would seem
to contradict those from other towns. Stobart’s data from probate records in Cheshire and
South Lancashire showed that urban dwellers in the early eighteenth century were more
likely than those later in the century to draw on a large number of friends and neighbours.
His explanation is that significant urban growth by the later eighteenth and early
nineteenth centuries led to a loss of a sense of community in towns, so people turned to
their family when dealing with personal matters and property. 35 Vann, in a study of
Banbury wills in the period 1550-1800, also found that by the later eighteenth century
there was less emphasis on wider kin, with more bequests being left to close family and a
smaller range of kin being recognised. 36 Yet, the idea that urban growth encouraged the

(1979), 366.
nuclear family to withdraw into itself is not borne out by the data from Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, though. It would seem that as these towns expanded, a greater variety of social contacts was on offer to their inhabitants, so more people chose to draw on friends, colleagues and neighbours when dealing with probate matters, rather than automatically turning to family members.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of family link</th>
<th>Leicester archdeaconry court</th>
<th>Nottingham archdeaconry court</th>
<th>Leicester PCC</th>
<th>Nottingham PCC</th>
<th>Derby PCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1700-1730 1790-1820</td>
<td>1700-1730 1790-1820</td>
<td>1700-1730 1790-1820</td>
<td>1700-1730 1790-1820</td>
<td>1700-1730 1790-1820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
<td>52 27</td>
<td>36 29</td>
<td>52 49</td>
<td>35 30</td>
<td>41 32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other kin</td>
<td>21 26</td>
<td>18 16</td>
<td>29 14</td>
<td>32 26</td>
<td>50 31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-kin</td>
<td>27 47</td>
<td>46 55</td>
<td>19 37</td>
<td>33 44</td>
<td>9 37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total executors &amp; administrators</td>
<td>127 258</td>
<td>370 422</td>
<td>48 45</td>
<td>54 27</td>
<td>57 35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.1: Temporal changes in the relative importance of family and non-kin relationships between testators and executors or administrators.

Clearly, then, the relative importance of ties to the nuclear family, extended family and non-kin varied between testators of different social status, between people in the different towns of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, and between different time periods. Earlier studies have tended to give the impression that the nuclear and extended family were two discrete family forms, of which only one could dominate over a whole time period and across the whole of England. However, evidence from Leicester, Nottingham and Derby has shown that this is too simplistic; people had active links with both their close and wider kin, and indeed people who were unrelated to them, and the density of these kinship and social links could vary over time and between individuals. Therefore, just as there is evidence for a layering of space in the East Midlands, so too was there a
‘layering’ of kinship ties, whereby linkages representing varying degrees of familial closeness (from nuclear family to distant kin or friends) co-existed, but with particular types of linkage being of greater importance at different times and in different places. This point was brought out in Levine and Wrightson’s study of the coal-mining parish of Whickham in County Durham in the period 1560-1725, where it was found that nuclear family relationships were central in the lives of the parish’s inhabitants, as they spent most of their working lives trying to maintain their family and accumulate enough to support their children in the future, but that family life was ‘conducted within a broader context of relationships with kinsfolk and neighbours.’

Contrary to Laslett’s ‘nuclear hardship hypothesis’, which states that the more dominant nuclear families are in a society, the more important will be support from non-kin sources, the existence of nuclear families does not necessarily imply weak links with wider kin. As Reay has found for rural Kent, although outside sources of support such as the Poor Law or charity were important, particularly if family members were too impoverished or were not alive to support each other, kinship links in the area were nevertheless strong. For instance, 23 percent of households were related to at least four others in the same parish.

Not only did both nuclear family and extended family ties co-exist in eighteenth and early nineteenth century England, but the relative significance of those links and their density varied over time at both a general level (as discussed above) and at the level of the individual, as they passed through different stages in the life-course. One criticism of the use of wills as indicators of social connections is that they represent a snapshot of just one moment in the lifetime of an individual. However, I would argue that by focussing on the choice of executors I am addressing this problem in part, since the important and prominent role of executor was usually assigned to someone with whom the testator had had a significant relationship during his or her life. Nonetheless, wills cannot give a complete insight into the changing volume and intensity of familial and social links forged by a testator throughout his or her lifetime. Individuals were members of different families and kinship groupings at different stages in their life. They would be born into a

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'family of orientation', then would often be temporary members of other family groups, as lodgers, apprentices and servants, before establishing their own 'family of procreation' when they formed a new household on marriage. The death and remarriage of a parent were common, resulting in a mixture of step-children and half-siblings in the same household, who brought their own family ties with them. So, as Levine and Wrightson discovered in Whickham, some people with no known relations in the parish in one particular year were found to have been surrounded by family members in other households earlier in their lives.

Perhaps the most convincing argument for the artificiality of making a distinction between the nuclear and extended family, however, is that contemporaries did not recognise these terms. Naomi Tadmor has claimed that, rather than distinguishing between 'nuclear' and 'extended' family forms, contemporaries used the term 'household-family' to refer to a co-resident group, which could encompass many different family structures, including those consisting of a single person plus servants, as well as a married couple and their children. 'Nuclear' households could absorb and shed extended family members like siblings, nephews and nieces, as well as non-kin, yet they would still be defined in the same way – as families – by contemporaries, with the boundaries between kin, servants, lodgers and guests rarely being clearly defined.

Social connections did not exist in a geographical vacuum, but were actively involved in shaping space. Therefore, having discussed the complex and changing nature of the layered social connections revealed in probate records for the three East Midlands county towns, the next step is to consider the spatial layering of these linkages, through an examination of the places of residence of executors and administrators.

The spatial dimension of social life
Every social connection between individuals has a spatial dimension, which can often be overlooked in studies of single parishes or settlements. The social linkages forged by urban dwellers (particularly in smaller towns) were often strongly influenced by the town
in which they lived. But many townspeople also had links with geographically dispersed friends and family. This section will focus first on intra-urban links, before discussing the extent to which people were tied into wider spatial entities, at the level of the county, region, or beyond. Having established already that the relationships between testators and their executors are a useful indicator of social connections, it should be possible to reconstruct something of the spatiality of these connections by analysing the places of residence of executors.

![Figure 6.2: Executors' and administrators' places of residence recorded in wills for residents of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby.](image)

It is clear from Figure 6.2 that the majority of these connections were highly localised. At least 78 percent of executors and administrators for Nottingham probates, 65 percent for Leicester and 61 percent for Derby lived in the same town as the testator for whom they were acting. It is not surprising that people would choose to appoint individuals who lived in close proximity, since many of the executors' duties required

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43 The total numbers of executors and administrators from which these percentages were derived were as follows: Leicester archdeaconry court, 717; Nottingham archdeaconry court, 1,611; Lichfield consistory court, 792; Leicester PCC, 165; Nottingham PCC, 168; Derby PCC, 157.

44 These figures may in fact have been higher, because the place of residence of a small number of executors was not recorded, but it seems likely that several of these people lived in the same town as the testator and so it was not seen as necessary to note this.
them to be ‘on hand’, and to have familiarity with the testator’s affairs at the time of their death. For instance, as we have seen, executors were expected to arrange and pay for a funeral, to collect any debts owing to the deceased, as well as paying creditors, and to ensure that maintenance was provided for the testator’s children. It was important to choose executors who understood the local economy and its workings, so that they could gain access to the people who owed the testator money and who would offer a good price for the deceased’s stock-in-trade.

Many of these executors who lived in the same town were family members (often living in the same household in the case of wives and young daughters and sons.) A significant proportion, however, were likely to have been neighbours. Studies of rural communities have pointed to the importance of mutual support between neighbours, as evidenced by networks of credit and debt relationships, appointment of witnesses to wills, and defence of another individual’s innocence in court. For urban historians, towns have often been viewed as a series of distinct neighbourhoods, forming separate ‘communities’, bound together by residential proximity, shared morals and exclusion. These ‘urban villages’, as Joyce Ellis describes them, were quite tightly-knit, with individuals often remaining in the same neighbourhood for long periods, even if they changed address within it. Strangers were easily identifiable, and people’s behaviour was closely monitored by other inhabitants, as their private lives were played out in public in the alehouse, workplace, or on the street. Neighbours applied communal sanctions (sometimes involving the disgracing or injuring of the guilty party) and arbitrated in disputes in order to preserve order in the area. As in rural communities, neighbours offered support to each other in the form of money lending, providing character references for those wishing to borrow money, and showing solidarity in times of trouble by giving evidence of a person’s honesty, business ability or generosity. It seems likely that this neighbourly support extended to acting as executor for another person’s will. Indeed, in two wills made by Derby residents, an executor is specifically described as a

46 See, for example, Wrightson and Levine, Poverty and Piety, 100-102.
'neighbour'. In the will of Elizabeth Sadler, dated 1735, William Fox, a 'good friend and neighbour' was named as sole executor, and in 1755, the widow Sarah Salt chose two executors, one of whom was William Jackson (a cooper) described as a 'neighbour'. The physical proximity that characterises a neighbourhood would have been ideally suited for establishing the friendships and trust which formed the basis of a testator-executor relationship. The importance of neighbourliness and a sense of belonging to a community was reflected in the fairly common practice of bequeathing small amounts of money to the clergy or poor of a testator's 'home' parish. For instance, Thomas Collin, a gentleman who was living in St Nicholas' parish, Nottingham at the time of his death in 1710, left several substantial bequests (of £4-£5) to the poor of the various parishes in Nottingham, as well as 40 shillings to the poor of his parish of birth in Northampton, plus one guinea to the minister of his parish of residence – St Nicholas.

Although it is difficult to reconstruct the reasons behind an individual's particular choice of executor, it seems reasonable to assume that some executors were selected primarily because of their standing within the urban community. Testators would be anxious to display their own social status by appointing prominent local 'worthies', and such appointments would also ensure some external adjudication for the property transmission process. In towns like Stockport, a number of prominent shopkeepers, businessmen and public office holders were regularly named as executors, because they were professionally competent, locally respected, and seen as trustworthy. Shani D'Cruze has termed these people 'community brokers' – powerful middle class individuals on whom urban social networks centred. Because of their power, prestige and public visibility, they were sought-after as office-holders, creditors, trustees, and executors. They were commonly employed in occupations which provided them with numerous opportunities to come into contact with people and thereby forge connections, and which gave them control of a certain amount of resources. Such occupations included

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48 L.J.R.O: Consistory Court of Lichfield and Coventry, Wills and Administrations, PG 1664 (1735 I-Z).
49 L.J.R.O: Consistory Court of Lichfield and Coventry, Wills and Administrations, PG 1726 (1755 A-L).
50 Notts Archives, Archdeaconry wills: Nottingham and Bingham deaneries, Microfiche no. 237 (will of Thomas Collin.)
51 Owens, 'Property, will making and estate disposal', 100-101.
shopkeepers, tradesmen (especially victuallers), innkeepers, and professionals (often attorneys.)

Table 6.2 shows the percentage of executors (whose occupations were recorded) that could be classified as community brokers in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. At least one third of executors could be described in this way. The proportions were significantly greater in wills proved at the PCC, which is a reflection of the higher status of testators there, who would have been more likely to be in contact with, and to select as executor, individuals who were of comparable wealth and standing. The lower value for the Derby wills at the PCC could perhaps be explained by the fact that a larger proportion of executors there were female, particularly spinsters (who, unusually, represented over one quarter of all executors.) Unless very wealthy, it is unlikely that these women would have acted as (still less have been thought of) as 'community brokers.'

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Leicester archdeaconry court</th>
<th>Nottingham archdeaconry court</th>
<th>Lichfield consistory court</th>
<th>Leicester PCC</th>
<th>Nottingham PCC</th>
<th>Derby PCC</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>38% (200)</td>
<td>32% (357)</td>
<td>30% (145)</td>
<td>54% (33)</td>
<td>66% (63)</td>
<td>42% (35)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.2: Proportions of executors who were employed in occupations commonly held by 'community brokers.' (Figures in brackets indicate the number of individuals that these percentages represent.)

Although a substantial proportion of executors had occupations typical of community brokers, without further research using other sources it is difficult to ascertain whether they in fact acted as such. There is very little evidence from the wills of certain individuals being named as executor by several different people, which would usually be a sign that those individuals were prominent local men who could well have been acting

53 These included gentlemen, hosiers, victuallers, mercers, drapers, merchants, clergymen, innholders, shopkeepers, and professionals (such as attorneys, schoolmasters and surgeons.)
as community brokers. Only a few isolated examples were found in the data. Samuel Spray, for instance, a hosier from Nottingham, acted as executor for Joseph Walters, an alderman, in 1730, as well as being appointed executor by Jonathan Clee, a framework knitter, five years later. Gilbert Beresford, a Nottingham grocer, was one of the administrators of widow Mary Parr’s will in 1730, as well as acting as executor for another widow in the same year, Mary Ridgeway, who described him as a ‘good friend’.

Where the same names are mentioned several times, the individuals concerned were usually either acting as administration bondsmen (as in the case of the victualler Stephen Todd of Nottingham who was appointed as administrator for 29 different wills between 1775 and 1795) or were being appointed executor by various different family members. For instance, the hosier William Cooper of Leicester was chosen as executor by William Green (a carpenter) in his will of 1785, as well as being one of the administrators of widow Elizabeth Simpson’s will in 1795. But he was also chosen to act as executor for his brother James Cooper (an alderman) in 1800. The large proportion of potential ‘community brokers’ amongst the executors of the PCC wills could be particularly misleading, since more testators in that dataset chose family members as executors. Familial ties and obligations rather than social status and power within the community are likely to have exerted a stronger influence on the testators’ selection in these cases. So, it seems that the notion of a community broker is a less relevant concept to apply to the relationship between testators and executors, at least in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby.

Although a majority of executors lived in the same place as the testators for whom they acted, many testators seem to have had connections beyond the town in which they lived, as evidenced in their choice of executors from further afield. Because of the need for executors to be readily available to undertake their duties in administering the deceased’s estate, however, most of these executors in fact came from a relatively short distance away - within the county: 71 percent of executors in Leicester wills who came from outside the town itself lived in Leicestershire (12 percent of all executors), while in Nottingham 59 percent of executors who lived outside the town resided elsewhere within the county (9 percent of all executors.) (See Figure 6.2.) Of the rest, the largest proportions lived in other counties within the East Midlands, or in London, though the percentages were very low, at 1-2 percent for each place. The situation in Derby was
slightly different, however. Just 50 percent of executors who came from outside Derby itself lived in Derbyshire, while 27 percent came from the neighbouring county of Staffordshire. The majority of these people lived in Lichfield, and most were administrators. This is probably a reflection of the fact that Derby probate was dealt with at Lichfield, not Derby, and therefore administration bondsmen were very likely to be appointed from Lichfield, as they were ‘on hand’ to oversee the administration of the deceased’s estate.

Compared with the archdeaconry and consistory courts, larger proportions of executors named in the PCC wills came from London, the figures being 7 percent for Nottingham wills, 6 percent for Derby and 3 percent for Leicester. This is probably a reflection of the greater wealth of people who left wills at the PCC, which meant that they were more likely to have contacts over long distances, particularly with the capital, as they could afford to travel further afield, and would more commonly make connections with people in London through their work or leisure activities. The range of counties mentioned in the PCC wills is generally no greater than that for the wills proved in the archdeaconry and consistory courts, though it should be borne in mind that the sample of PCC wills from each town was significantly smaller than the number of wills from the other courts. An interesting contrast was evident between executors’ places of residence in Nottingham wills on the one hand and Leicester and Derby probates on the other. The wills for Leicester and Derby mentioned many more places in their own counties than in other counties, while in Nottingham, the number of places in other counties was larger than the number in Nottinghamshire. This may be because, being the largest of the towns, and an unofficial ‘regional capital’, Nottingham had a wider sphere of influence, and hence the ‘social worlds’ of its inhabitants encompassed a wider area – particularly since there were more gentry in Nottingham than in the other two towns. Leicester and Derby, by contrast, seem to have been oriented more towards their own counties, in Leicester’s case perhaps partly as a consequence of its geographical location at the centre of the shire.

These findings are borne out by the data on migration to Leicester, Nottingham and Derby discussed in Chapter 5. The majority of migrants moved over short distances, predominantly within single counties, with Nottingham having a slightly wider migration
field than Derby and Leicester – evidenced by the greater range of places from which migrants were drawn. The effect of high levels of mostly localised mobility on social and kinship ties in the early modern period has been frequently debated, with little sign of consensus emerging. Some scholars have argued that high rates of population turnover meant that maintaining close ties with relatives was difficult, since entire families very often did not put down roots in a single community and live out their days there (as was once commonly assumed.)54 The implication, then, is that people would forge stronger links with friends and neighbours (i.e. non-kin) in their community, because they lived in closer proximity.

Other authors, however, have claimed that people could still retain links with kin across communal and geographical boundaries, because most migration took place over short distances. Correspondence, and attendance at family baptisms, marriages and funerals helped to maintain these kinship ties.55 In other words, it is argued that people’s kinship ties and social linkages could extend over a wider geographical area than just their own community or neighbourhood. Phythian-Adams has gone further, claiming that rapid population turnover within communities, as people left home at a young age and new families were formed, meant that wider social connections and linkages became more important than links with people in the local community. He contends that the most useful way to understand social and kinship linkages is to view them in the context of wider socio-spatial structures – what he terms ‘local societies’ – rather than spatially restricted, transitory communities. To apply this to an urban context, he argues that a town or city would be connected to certain nearby communities from the surrounding countryside, forming an ‘urban society.’56 It is true that towns and other communities did not exist in isolation, but were connected to places within their hinterlands, often through a network of kinship ties dispersed through migration. In their study of Whickham, for example, Levine and Wrightson demonstrated that a network of relatives dispersed around nearby parishes acted as a resource for Whickham’s inhabitants, offering practical

55 Coster, Family and Kinship, 43-4; Grassby, Kinship and Capitalism, 226, 228.
support, such as accommodation for kin moving out of the parish, apprenticeships for their children away from Whickham, and information about employment opportunities and housing availability for people thinking of moving. Similarly, Pooley and D'Cruze have found, using evidence of the moves undertaken by one family (the Shaws), that migrants in North West England tended to use support mechanisms and information flows generated by family and friends in the area, often moving to new communities where family members were already living, who could provide support and help.

However, I would take issue with Phythian-Adams’s claim that the community is no longer a particularly relevant concept for understanding social life. While ties of kinship and friendship over wider geographical areas were undoubtedly important to people at the time, as the studies just mentioned have demonstrated, it cannot simply be assumed that linkages between people in their local community were therefore of little significance. Indeed, King has gone so far as to claim that people lived out their lives in spatially restricted, insular networks, particularly in areas of high population turnover. He adduces evidence that in such localities, newcomers were excluded from networks of reciprocity and co-operation utilised by natives (such as lending and borrowing to cope with the uncertainty of the local economy.) I would concur with King’s more balanced conclusion, that despite apparently wide networks of contacts, people’s everyday lives [my emphasis] were generally played out in a very restricted spatial area.

The probate data from Leicester, Nottingham and Derby bear testament to this. Testators chose people with whom they had close and trusted contact to act as the executors of their wills. Although some of these executors lived in London or counties outside the East Midlands, thereby hinting at a relatively extensive network of social contacts on the part of the testator, the majority of executors lived within a very localised area – either in the same town, or elsewhere within the same county.

57 Levine and Wrightson, Making of an industrial society, 338.
Local country
One of the most influential notions that has been employed when considering the nature and geographical extent of social relations is that of the 'local country'. The argument is that people lived out their lives within a number of networks (occupational, religious, kinship and neighbourhood) which stretched beyond single communities. This idea has informed some recent work on kinship and social linkages, such as Stobart's study of urban-based social networks in the North West, in which he argued that the nuclear family could be linked to clusters of locally-resident friends and more dispersed networks of kin. The fact that social connections could be a composite of many networks is evident from data on the characteristics of people chosen as executors in Leicester, Nottingham and Derby. As we have seen, many of these people lived in the same neighbourhood as the testator, were employed in the same or similar occupation, and/or were members of the same family. In order to investigate which of these networks was most influential in shaping people's 'social worlds', it will be instructive to compare the relative importance of each of these types of linkage – kinship, occupational, and neighbourhood – in the relationships between testators and executors.

The importance of family ties and neighbourhood contacts in the choice of executors has already been demonstrated, but less has been said about the role of occupational linkages. A fairly significant proportion of executors and administrators for wills from the three East Midlands towns were employed in the same or similar occupation as the deceased or were of the same or similar socio-economic status (such as gentlemen.) Sixteen percent of executors and administrators at the Leicester archdeaconry court whose occupations were given had the same or similar occupation or status as the testator for whom they acted, while in Nottingham the figure was 14 percent and in Derby 15 percent. To express it another way, 19 percent of all testators in Leicester, 21 percent in Nottingham and 18 percent in Derby had at least one executor or administrator with the same or similar occupation to them. The figures for the PCC wills were significantly higher, with between 24 and 42 percent of executors being employed in the same occupation as the testator who appointed them, or a related occupation. The most common occupational linkages were between individuals employed in the textile trades,
or the ‘food and drink trades’ (victuallers, innkeepers, grocers, and so on), or people of
the same social status, particularly gentlemen, and widows and spinsters.

There were a number of reasons why testators chose executors with whom they had
business or occupational connections. Knowledge of, or expertise in, a particular trade
was often a necessity if executors were to carry out successfully the instructions laid
down in the will. Small businessmen had a precarious existence, often relying heavily on
extending credit to customers and accepting credit from suppliers. After death, the
payment of debts and recovery of monies owed to the deceased were easier if the
executors were familiar with the testator’s trade and the way it was conducted. Moreover,
many business owners ordered in their will that their business be terminated at death, in
order to provide for their surviving family, so again it was helpful if the executor was
someone who was familiar with that business. Other individuals wanted their business to
continue after their death, so if their widow was unable to do this, or the testator was
single or widowed, he or she would call upon other individuals in the same trade to
ensure that the business continued.  

Comparing the respective numbers of occupational, kinship and neighbourhood
linkages between testators and executors (see Table 6.3) suggests that the most
important influences on testators’ social connections were their family and neighbours.
Familial links were more dominant in wills from the PCC, where at least half of all
linkages between testators and executors involved a family relationship, while generally
less than one third of links were between people living in the same town. In both the PCC
and the archdeaconry and consistory courts, though, the proportions of all linkages which
involved a testator and executor of the same or similar occupation were low, at around 10
percent. The highest figure was recorded for Nottingham’s PCC wills, where 21 percent
of all linkages were based on a shared occupation. This suggests that for these East

61 Lane, ‘An industrialising town’, 154-5; Stobart, ‘Social and geographical contexts’, 120.
62 All characteristics of the relationship between every testator and each of their executors were included in
the analysis. If the executor was related to the testator, this was counted as one linkage. If the executor had
the same or similar occupation to the testator, this was counted as a separate linkage, irrespective of
whether or not the executor was also related to the testator. Similarly, if an executor lived in the same town
as their testator, this was counted as a separate linkage, again irrespective of whether the executor was also
linked to the testator by kinship or occupation. In other words, there are more linkages in this dataset than
there are relationships between testators and their individual executors, since any one executor could be
linked to their testator in up to three different ways at the same time.
Midlands towns at least, occupational networks were not a particularly significant force in shaping social linkages. This conflicts with Lane’s conclusion based on her study of Hinckley wills – that as urban and economic growth proceeded, it became less important to have connections with relatives, but with friends who understood and were familiar with the local and regional economy. The findings from Leicester, Nottingham and Derby would seem to concur more with Stobart’s assessment of the linkages revealed in wills from towns in the North West – namely that the family was the dominant force in shaping social networks, more so than economic, occupational or religious linkages.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>% of linkages where executors were related to their testator</th>
<th>% of linkages where executors had same/similar occupation to testator</th>
<th>% of linkages where executors lived in same town as testator</th>
<th>Total number of linkages</th>
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<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>Nottingham archdeaconry court</td>
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<td>54</td>
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<td>Lichfield consistory court</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>987</td>
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<td>Leicester PCC</td>
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<td>Nottingham PCC</td>
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<td>21</td>
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<td>230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derby PCC</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>216</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.3: Relative importance of kinship, occupational and neighbourhood linkages between testators and their executors or administrators.

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64 Stobart, ‘Social and geographical contexts’, 129.
Conclusion

People's lives in the early modern period were embedded in interlocking ties of obligation, loyalty, affection and shared interest. Reconstructing the entirety of these links for more than a handful of individuals would be almost impossible. Instead, this chapter has given a flavour of the nature and relative importance of links between family, friends, neighbours and colleagues in an urban setting. Earlier studies using wills as indicators of social networks have been criticised, since an analysis of bequests only can tell us little about the meaning and importance of kinship and social ties to the individual concerned. By focussing on the relationship between testators and executors I have overcome this difficulty in part, since the choice of executors was not determined solely by financial or familial obligation, but represented one or two genuine social relationships that were obviously important to the testator.

Data from Leicester, Nottingham and Derby have demonstrated the 'layered' nature of both social and spatial relationships, whereby linkages between family and friends at different levels of familial closeness and at different spatial scales could co-exist. The relative importance of these different 'layers' varied both between places and between social groups as well as through time and across individual life cycles. Thus, firstly it has been shown that the distinction often drawn between the nuclear and extended family, whereby one or the other form is seen as dominant, is an inaccurate and unhelpful one. Apart from the fact that contemporaries did not even seem to make such a distinction, the relationships that people had with their close relatives and wider kin were complex and ever-changing. Ties to the nuclear family were important in all social groups, but these links were embedded in a wider network of kin-based support and reciprocity, which could be drawn upon when needed. Links with the wider family seem to have been more significant in the lives of wealthier individuals, but for all people the relative importance of ties with their nuclear and extended families changed as they moved through the life-cycle. Secondly, the impression given in the literature that people made the majority of social connections either with members of their local community (whether kin or non-kin) or with relatives and friends further afield, also needs to be re-assessed. Whilst the majority of connections revealed in the dataset were localised (in part reflecting the specific requirements of the executor's task), individual testators also
had contacts with people beyond their own communities – in the county, the region, and in London.

So what were the most powerful forces shaping these individuals' 'social worlds'? As may be expected, family and locality seem to have exerted the strongest influence on people's social connections. Around half of the linkages between testators and executors in any one town involved a familial relationship, while between about one-third and one-half of connections linked people living in the same town. Overall, therefore, this analysis of a particular form of socio-spatial practice, when taken together with the evidence presented in previous chapters, demonstrates that society and space in the East Midlands were closely intertwined.
Conclusion

At first sight, the East Midlands may seem a strange location to choose for a study of regional development in the eighteenth century. Not only did it appear to lack regional coherence and a distinct identity in this period, but it was not even distinguished officially as a region until the mid-twentieth century. But in a sense this is precisely why it is such an interesting area for study. Its ill-defined, fuzzy boundaries make it an excellent place to witness the existence of multiple, overlapping layers of space, at different scales. By conceiving of space as being layered and multi-faceted, it has been possible to challenge existing notions of regional formation and the relevance of regions in the long eighteenth century. This conception of layered space can be applied equally to all regions, enabling comparison between the East Midlands and other parts of the country. Contrasts between regions reflect differences in the relative importance of different spatial layers in each region. A regional space is just one layer within a broader spatial structure, and in the East Midlands it appears not to have been privileged over any other layer. Thus, in contrast to a more unambiguously defined region such as the West Midlands or North West, the East Midlands, I would argue, offers greater insight into the complexities of spatial development.

Ironically, though, in order to study the East Midlands as a space it is necessary to define its extent, even if only loosely. By pre-defining the East Midlands as the counties of Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire, I imposed a regional structure on the area, and by extension, defined intra-regional interaction as that which occurred within and between the three counties, while extra-regional linkages stretched beyond them. This could have left me open to the charge of seeking to disprove the existence of a region in an area which I had already defined, a priori, as a region. Overcoming this conceptual problem forms the cornerstone of this thesis. Whilst initially my aim had been to assess whether or not the East Midlands formed a coherent, distinctive region in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, it soon became clear that this either/or premise was too restrictive and deterministic. Instead, I set out to investigate the different scales of interaction that existed across space,
seeking to assess the relative importance of each of these spatial scales, or 'layers' — including, but not restricted to, the regional layer. Following spatial theorists in seeing space not simply as an abstract 'container' for socio-economic connections and linkages, but as something which is actively shaped by human activity, has enabled me to move beyond the simple question of whether or not a region existed in the East Midlands, and, instead, to explore how the particular configuration of spatial layers in the East Midlands was produced by the actions, perceptions and conceptions of individual people. Clearly, though, in order to carry out any study, it is important to define a geographical area of inquiry. In this case I have delimited the 'East Midlands' simply for practical reasons — as a relatively restricted area, within which all record offices can be visited, a range of sources consulted and linkages mapped from a manageable number of towns and counties, all within the scope of a doctorate. Four main points can serve to summarise the findings of the thesis.

Firstly, this investigation has shown that space — and the configuration of spatial layers — was produced by the activities or 'practices' of individuals. Many of these practices were undertaken routinely or unconsciously, and in aggregate they served to shape space through the connections they created between places at different spatial scales. Hosiery production, for example, was based on numerous spatial linkages, between master hosiers in putting-out centres and their workers in the surrounding villages, between creditors and those to whom they provided capital, and between suppliers in neighbouring counties or regions and hosiery firms in the East Midlands. In choosing executors for their estates, testators consciously recognised the importance of familial and friendship links, but at the same time unconsciously forged spatial connections, with relatives and friends both near at hand and further afield. The social life of the 'county community' was based on connections between elite families often widely dispersed across the county, while a somewhat more transient political community was formed through the activities of petitioners or protesters. Some spatial practices, such as the migration of apprentices, paupers and marriage partners, not only created linkages between places, but could also be a result of pre-existing connections across space, which were reinforced through repeated or aggregated migratory moves.

Space in the East Midlands was not only shaped by the activities of its inhabitants, however. Thus the second conclusion to be drawn is that space was produced both by internal practices and external forces or conceptions. Lefebvre's
triad incorporates both real and imagined spaces — that is, individuals' everyday routines, networks and activities, which can be measured and described, and symbolic, conceptualised, mental space, as viewed by outsiders. These two aspects of space are brought together in spaces of representation, or lived spaces, which enable people to make sense of the space they inhabit or use. We have seen, for instance, how the county community inhabited both a real and an imagined space, shaped by a particular scale of activity, but also representing an 'imagined community' of gentry families, who were connected to each other even when they were absent from their country estates, during stays in London for example. Meanwhile, the representation of Luddism in the national press served to portray the East Midlands as a regional space, whilst the co-ordinated activities of the Chartists across the East Midlands demonstrated how intra-regional integration could sometimes be fostered by the 'region's inhabitants rather than defined by outsiders. In a sense I have contributed to the external production of space by defining an 'East Midlands region' for the purpose of this study, but, crucially, my aim has been to compare my conception of space with the way it was perceived and lived by people 'on the ground'. Arguably it is only possible to understand space by viewing it from the outside, and thus witnessing various different scales of spatial interaction operating at once. In other words, whilst viewing the East Midlands from the outside looking in, I have been able to comprehend it from the inside out.

This leads to the third point, which is that the East Midlands' apparent lack of regional integrity was a result of the particular configuration of spatial layers in this given territory. The most important of these spatial layers in the East Midlands have been shown to be the most localised. The majority of everyday social, economic and political interaction took place between people in neighbouring parishes or settlements, with connections beyond county boundaries being relatively rare. County boundaries themselves rarely structured space — rather, socio-spatial linkages were more likely to be determined by geographical propinquity than administrative structures. Whilst intra-regional linkages were clearly not dominant, neither were they non-existent. Systems of production in the hosiery industry had an intra-regional dimension (as demonstrated by the distribution of raw material sources, or supplies of apprentices), while petitioners for improved conditions in the industry occasionally joined forces across the region. There was evidence for a regional pattern of advertising in newspapers, with some products sold within but not beyond the East
Midlands. In addition, pauper migrants not infrequently travelled across the region seeking settlement. Looking for evidence of whether or not the East Midlands formed a coherent, integrated region is a rather limited exercise, however, particularly since the level at which people identified with a space is crucial to assessing whether it constituted a region, and yet the nature of people’s identification with the space around them is difficult to reconstruct in any more than speculative or anecdotal terms. Moreover, individuals’ own conceptions of space were (and are) multi-layered: for instance, they may have viewed themselves as belonging to a particular neighbourhood, parish, county, or indeed region or nation, at the same time. Thus, the purpose of this thesis has been to highlight the relative importance of regional interaction as but one of a number of layers of spatial integration within and beyond the ‘East Midlands’. Moreover, these different layers of space did not always neatly nest within each other, in a hierarchical structure. Instead the layers could often cut across each other. This was perhaps most clearly highlighted in Chapter 6, where testators’ social connections were shown to have existed at multiple spatial levels — from the neighbourhood to the distant region. Many executors were linked to the testators by whom they were chosen not only by blood ties, but through their occupation or their standing in the community. Each of these types of connection had their own spatial structure. Similarly, the hosiery industry operated through multiple overlapping layers of interaction, at the national scale (with products exported through London), the regional scale (with frames distributed across the East Midlands), the county scale (which provided a framework for the domestic system) and the local scale (as hosiers sourced capital from family, friends, neighbours and colleagues).

In essence, this thesis has shown that space was a fluid and fuzzy concept in the eighteenth century (as it is today), which is the fourth and final point to draw out. It is impossible to define clear boundaries for regional spaces, since these boundaries themselves are (and were) fluid, flexible, and personal, in the sense that they could be defined differently depending on the perceptions, attitudes and activities of individual people. Different social groups could also perceive and use space differently — something which was highlighted by a comparison between the spatial practices of the elite, the lower orders and the middling sort in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. As a reflection of the sources used, which by their nature have necessitated the choice of large samples, this thesis has shown space to be an amalgam of people’s experiences and perceptions; but it is important to remember that each of these people was an
individual, who was not necessarily acting consciously as part of a group, nor was aware of the effect their activities had on wider space. To add further complexity, not only did definitions of space vary between different people—spaces also changed through time as people's activities changed. For instance, the rapid growth of the hosiery industry during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, accompanied by a multiplication in the number of frames and hosiery operatives, had major implications for the way space was both configured and perceived. Small villages mushroomed into hosiery manufacturing centres, and webs of transport linkages developed as a means of transporting raw materials and finished hosiery products to and from putting out centres and their surrounding hosiery villages. Meanwhile, the East Midlands came to be perceived as a centre of hosiery production, reflecting the concentration of industrial activity in the area, leading to its being nicknamed 'the stocking country'.

Many of the features of spatial development in the eighteenth century East Midlands still have remarkable resonance today, as intimated at the beginning of this thesis. The East Midlands has recently been (re)defined as a region by central government, with a number of devolved agencies set up by the new Labour administration towards the end of the last century, such as the East Midlands Development Agency and the Regional Assembly. However, these bodies continually face a challenge of aligning the way space is governed with the way people experience it in their own lives. The definition of a particular space as the 'East Midlands region' by outsiders (central government) is likely to be very different from the perspectives of those who inhabit that space. Recent interest amongst policymakers in fostering collaboration between the 'Three Cities' of Leicester, Nottingham and Derby, for instance, has flown in the face of longstanding rivalries between the cities, and, indeed, deep-seated structural characteristics which work against spatial integration of this sort. As highlighted in this thesis, these include the dominance of the three county towns at the head of weak county urban systems, and the relative lack of economic, social and cultural connections between the major urban centres of the East Midlands. To take another example, the division of the East Midlands into sub-regions for the purpose of policy delivery could be seen as a relatively arbitrary carving up of space, bearing little relation to the way people behave or to their affinities. The sub-region of North Nottinghamshire and North Derbyshire, for example, is included within the sphere of influence of Sheffield as much as
Nottingham or Derby, and indeed could be argued to have closer links with Yorkshire than with counties in the East Midlands.

In sum, this thesis has intended to shed new light on regional development in England in the long eighteenth century, demonstrating, firstly, that neither industrialisation nor regional development in England was a uniform process; rather they took different forms and took place at different rates across the country; and secondly, that the configuration of any one regional space was complex and multi-faceted.
APPENDIX 1

Popular disturbances in Britain as a response to central government policies or national-level politics, 1703-1830

1703-4

1707 Riots against Act of Union Edinburgh and Dumfries


1714 Sept. Pro-Hanoverian disturbances Bristol

1716 Political disturbances Cambridge

1722 Pro-Jacobite disturbance Leicester

1725 Anti-malt tax riots Edinburgh

1736 Disturbances against the Gin Act London


1759 Anti-militia riots Huntingdonshire

1761 Mar. Disturbances against Militia Act Gateshead, Morpeth, Whittingham and Hexham.

1768 Mar. – May Disturbances in support of John Wilkes London

1 Source: J. Gregory and J. Stevenson, Britain in the eighteenth century, 1688-1820 (Harlow, 2000), 214-25. The authors note that their list is not exhaustive, but includes incidents which achieved contemporary notoriety or resulted in serious damage to people or property.
1769
Mar. Pro-Wilkes demonstration London

1771
Mar – Apr. Pro-Wilkes riots London

1778
May – Aug. Anti-militia riots Sussex and Merionethshire

1779
Jan. – Feb. Anti-Popery riots Glasgow, Edinburgh and several other Scottish towns

1780
Anti-Catholic riots Bath

1791
Priestly riots by ‘Church and King’ mobs Birmingham

1792
Jun. ‘Church and King’ demonstrations Manchester
Anti-government riots Edinburgh
Dec. Anti-Jacobin disturbances Manchester

1793
Aug. Political riots Nottingham
Oct. Protest against taxes levied for Priestly riots Birmingham

1794
Jul. Political disorders between loyalists & reformers Nottingham

1795
Apr. Anti-recruiting riots North Wales
Jul. Anti-recruiting riots London
Oct. Mobbing of the King’s coach London
Nov. Anti-recruiting disturbances North Wales

1796
Jul. Disturbances between recruiters & populace Nottingham
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>1800</td>
<td>Jan.</td>
<td>Disturbances over taxes</td>
<td>St Clears, Carmarthenshire</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1803</td>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>Riots against press-gangs</td>
<td>Bristol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Apr.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>May</td>
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</tr>
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<td>1806</td>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>Attack upon Excise officers</td>
<td>Llannon, Cardiganshire</td>
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<td>1808</td>
<td>May-Jun.</td>
<td>Disturbances after rejection of Minimum Wage Bill for weavers</td>
<td>Lancashire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1810</td>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>Disturbances at arrest of Sir Francis Burdett</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1811</td>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>Beginning of Luddite disturbances</td>
<td>Nottinghamshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1812</td>
<td>Jan.-Sept.</td>
<td>Luddite disturbances, Demonstrations to celebrate assassination</td>
<td>Yorkshire, Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>May</td>
<td>of Spencer Perceval</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1815</td>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>Riots against passing of Corn Laws</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mar.</td>
<td>'March of the Blanketeers’ sets off</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun.</td>
<td>Pentrich ‘Rising’</td>
<td>Derbyshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1819</td>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>Peterloo ‘Massacre’</td>
<td>Manchester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Reform disturbance</td>
<td>Macclesfield &amp; Stockport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1820</td>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>Cato Street conspiracy uncovered</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jun.</td>
<td>Demonstrations in support of Queen Caroline</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>Demonstrations in support of Queen Caroline</td>
<td>Across country</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Month</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Location</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
<td>-------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1821</td>
<td>Aug.</td>
<td>Riots during funeral of Queen Caroline</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1830</td>
<td>Apr.</td>
<td>Beginning of 'Captain Swing' disturbances</td>
<td>Southern counties</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>Reform disturbances</td>
<td>London</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2

Places of residence of Members of Parliament for Leicester, Nottingham and Derby

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough of Leicester</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sir George Beaumont</td>
<td>1715-1737</td>
<td>Stoughton Grange, near Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Winstanley</td>
<td>1715-1719</td>
<td>Braunstone Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Noble</td>
<td>1719-1722</td>
<td>Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawrence Carter</td>
<td>1722-1727</td>
<td>Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Wrighte</td>
<td>1727-1766</td>
<td>Brooksby Hall, near Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Wigley</td>
<td>1737-1765</td>
<td>Scraptoft Hall, near Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony James Keck</td>
<td>1765-1768</td>
<td>Stoughton Grange</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Darker</td>
<td>1766-1784</td>
<td>Clerkkenwell, London &amp; Gayton, Northants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Booth Grey</td>
<td>1768-1784</td>
<td>Budworth Magna, Cheshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eyre Coote</td>
<td>1768-1774</td>
<td>Rockburn, Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Macnamara</td>
<td>1784-1790</td>
<td>Chilton Park, Wilts., &amp; Llangoed Castle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Loraine Smith</td>
<td>1784-1790</td>
<td>Enderby Hall</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Boothby Parkyns</td>
<td>1790-1802</td>
<td>Rookley, Hampshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samuel Smith I</td>
<td>1790-1818</td>
<td>Welford, Nottinghamshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Babington</td>
<td>1800-1818</td>
<td>Rothley Temple, Leics.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Mansfield</td>
<td>1818-1826</td>
<td>Birstall House, near Leicester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Pares</td>
<td>1818-1826</td>
<td>Kirby Frith, Leics. &amp; Hopwell Hall, Derbys</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Borough of Nottingham</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Place of Residence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>George Gregory</td>
<td>1715-1727</td>
<td>Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Plumptre</td>
<td>1715-27, 1734-47</td>
<td>Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Stanhope</td>
<td>1727-1734</td>
<td>Blackheath, Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borlase Warren</td>
<td>1727-1747</td>
<td>Stapleford, Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Charles Sedley</td>
<td>1747-54, 1774-78</td>
<td>Nuthall, Notts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Augustus Howe</td>
<td>1747-1758</td>
<td>Langar, Notts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir Willoughby Aston</td>
<td>1754-1761</td>
<td>Risley, Derbys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Howe</td>
<td>1758-1780</td>
<td>Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abel Smith</td>
<td>1778-1779</td>
<td>Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robert Smith</td>
<td>1779-1802</td>
<td>Nottingham</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daniel Parker Coke</td>
<td>1780-1802, 1803-12</td>
<td>Derby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sir John Borlase Warren</td>
<td>1797-1806</td>
<td>Stapleford</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph Birch</td>
<td>1802-1803, 1818-1830</td>
<td>Prescot, near Liverpool</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Smith II</td>
<td>1806-1818</td>
<td>Blendon Hall, Kent &amp; Dale Park, Sussex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Augustus Henry Anne Parkyns</td>
<td>Elected 1812</td>
<td>Bunny Park, Notts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lord James Cavendish</td>
<td>1715-1747</td>
<td>Staveley, Derbys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Stanhope</td>
<td>1715-22, 1727-30</td>
<td>Derby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Bayley</td>
<td>1722-1727</td>
<td>Derby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Stanhope</td>
<td>1730-1736</td>
<td>Derby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John Stanhope</td>
<td>1736-1748</td>
<td>Blackheath, Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Ponsonby</td>
<td>1742-1754</td>
<td>??</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas Rivett</td>
<td>1748-1754</td>
<td>Derby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord Frederick Cavendish</td>
<td>1754-1780</td>
<td>Derby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Venables Vernon</td>
<td>1754-1762</td>
<td>Sudbury, Derbys &amp; Kinderton, Cheshire</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Fitzherbert</td>
<td>1762-1772</td>
<td>Tissington Hall, near Ashbourne</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wenman Coke</td>
<td>1772-1780</td>
<td>Longford, Derbys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lord George Augustus Henry</td>
<td>1780-1797</td>
<td>Holker, Lancs. &amp; Burlington Hse, M'sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edward Coke</td>
<td>1780-1818</td>
<td>Longford, Derbys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hon. George Walpole</td>
<td>1797-1806</td>
<td>Mayfair, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>William Cavendish</td>
<td>1806-1812</td>
<td>Savile Row, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Henry Frederick Compton</td>
<td>Elected 1812</td>
<td>Derbys.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thomas William Coke II</td>
<td>Elected 1812</td>
<td>Longford, Derbys.</td>
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</table>
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All Saints parish (1813-20)
St Alkmund’s parish (1813-20)
St Michael’s parish (1813-20)
St Werburgh’s parish (1813-20).

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All Saints (1700-1837)
St Alkmund’s (1700-1812)
St Michael’s (1700-1812)
St Peter’s (1700-1812)
St Werburgh’s (1700-1837)

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St Nicholas’ (1813-20)

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St Margaret’s (1700-1837)
St Martin’s (1700-1837)
St Mary’s (1739-1837)
St Nicholas (1700-1837)

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