

**Bucolic Politics: The Administration of Sir Robert  
Walpole and the Rise of the Country Interest**

Thesis submitted in accordance with the requirements of the University of  
Liverpool for the Degree of Doctor in Philosophy

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September 2016

## **Abstract**

Through an examination of a variety letters and printed works, this thesis argues that the political influence of the Country interest during the administration of Robert Walpole has been systematically underestimated in the historiography. New and previously neglected archival sources have been uncovered to form a better understanding of how the Country interest operated during the period. The emergence of the Country helps to address wider historical issues, such as why a 'rage of party' under Queen Anne disappeared during the reigns of George I and George II, only to be replaced by shifting associations of power. This examination of the Country platform in the eighteenth century challenges the notion of Walpole's adept mastery of party and patronage in developing a Whig oligarchy.

This thesis is concerned primarily with the traditional, textbook treatments of Walpole's tenure in office and how orthodox views (most notably of the Whiggish variety) continue to permeate into the present historiography, affecting how the eighteenth century is interpreted.

A variety of methodological approaches have been deployed to answer how the Country rose to prominence and why they became effective in their opposition to Walpole's administration. Inspiration has been drawn from the prosopographical approach to scholarship, frequently associated with Sir Lewis Namier. In this instance, prosopography was an effective tool to reveal that there is important evidence to be examined concerning the role of the Country outside of London. Micro-historical practices favoured by historians such as Steve Hindle are also utilised, with emphasis placed on tracing the methods in which individuals used language to demonstrate their alignment with Country politics, alongside how they implored others to join them. Finally, the Cambridge school of political thought, linked with the analysis of changing linguistic practice and most associated with Quentin Skinner and John Pocock is also adopted to place the ideas mentioned above in context. The emphasis on language used in private correspondence provides important insights when examining the link between political motivations and action.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

**Add. Ms**, Additional Manuscripts (A British Library Collection Series).

**B**, Box.

**BL**, British Library, Department of Manuscripts, London, UK.

**BM**, British Museum, London, UK.

**Bodl.** Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, UK.

**BoE**, Archives of the Bank of England, London, UK.

**Carlisle Mss**, HMC (eds), *The Manuscripts of the Earl of Carlisle, Preserved at Castle Howard* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1897).

**CHA**, Chatsworth Estate Archives, Derbyshire, UK.

**Chesterfield Mss**, Bonamy. Dobrée (ed), *The Letters of Philip Dormer Stanhope, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Chesterfield*, 6. vols (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1932).

**CH(H)**, Cholmondeley (Houghton) Collection.

**Coxe, Walpole**, William. Coxe, *Memoirs of the Life and Administration of Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford*, 3. vols (London: T. Cadell & W. Davies, 1800).

**CUL**, Cambridge University Library, Cambridge, UK.

**EG**, Egerton Manuscripts.

**Egmont Mss**, R. Roberts (ed), *Manuscripts of the Earls of Egmont, Diary of Viscount Percival*, 3. vols (London: HMSO, 1905–1923).

**HA**, Hastings Papers.

**Hardwicke Corr**, Philip. Chesney (ed), Philip. Yorke, *The Life and Correspondence of Philip Yorke, Lord Chancellor Hardwicke*, 3. vols (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1913).

**Hervey, Memoirs**, Romney. Sedgwick (ed), *John Hervey, Some Materials Toward the Memoirs of the Reign of King George II*, 3. vols (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1931).

**HL**, Huntington Library, San Marino, California, US.

**HM**, William Brydges, Family Collection.

**HMC**, Historical Manuscripts Commission.

**HMSO**, Her/His Majesty's Stationery Office.

**LO**, Loudoun Papers.

**Marchmont Mss**, G. Rose (ed), *A Selection from the Papers of the Earls of Marchmont*, 3. vols. (London: George Murray, 1831).

**MssST**, Stowe Manuscripts.

**NMM**, National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, London, UK.

**NPG**, National Portrait Gallery, London, UK.

**NS**, New Style (Date Format).

**ODNB**, Oxford Dictionary National Biography.

**OFA**, Ombersely Family Archives.

**OS**, Old Style (Date Format).

**PD**, *A Collection of Parliamentary Debates in England*, vols. 7–20 (London: John Torbuck, 1742).

**Polwarth Mss**, Paton, H (ed), *Report on the Manuscripts of Lord Polwarth, preserved at Mertoun House, Berwickshire*, 3. vols (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1911).

**Portland Mss**, HMC (eds), *Report on the Manuscripts of the Duke of Portland, Preserved at Welbeck Abbey*, vols. 5–7 (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1899–1901).

**SP**, State Papers.

**SRO**, Sussex Record Office, Sussex, UK.

**STG**, Stowe-Temple-Grenville Papers.

**STN**, Stowe-Temple-Nugent Papers.

**TNA**, The National Archives, Kew, London, UK.

**WRAS**, Worcestershire Record and Archaeology Service, Worcester, UK.

**WSRO**, West Sussex Record Office, Chichester, UK.

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## Introduction

### Reinterpreting the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole through Court, Country and Faction

The abrasive practices of Robert Walpole's ministry reignited the appeal of interest groups in the eighteenth century.<sup>1</sup> Various factions emerged, such as the Patriots, virulent young firebrands intent on seizing office. The responsibility of managing such people was no easy task. According to John Dalrymple, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Stair, a prominent Scottish soldier and diplomat, it required 'great skill and temper to make an army comprised of so many different troops, who have different interests and views to act together'.<sup>2</sup> Convinced that Walpole was a corrupting influence on government, Stair would assist various factions who opposed the First Lord, expending his time and energy guiding a new generation of politicians to pursue noble causes, rather than seeking to obtain places.<sup>3</sup> Stair found confidants in those such as Sarah Churchill, Dowager Duchess of Marlborough, herself a doyenne to 'discontented anticourtiers' and somebody willing to support their efforts financially.<sup>4</sup>

Confident that he would be vindicated by posterity, Stair intimated to Marlborough that Walpole seemed above reproach, stating 'the scenes we see appear very strange to us, but they will certainly appear most monstrous and incredible when a few years hence, they come to be related to word in

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1 Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, p. 201; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 151.

2 Lord Stair to Lady Marlborough, 13 October 1737, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 27.

3 Lord Stair to Lady Marlborough, 4 April 1738, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 74.

4 Elizabeth Finch to Countess Burlington at Bath, 22 May 1735, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 230.4.

history'.<sup>5</sup> It remains clear that scholarship has followed an entirely different path to what Stair envisaged. The historiography devalues the abuses Walpole's ministry committed, claiming they were 'acceptable' to contemporaries, diminishing the plight of Walpole's detractors.<sup>6</sup> The failings of the First Lord are omitted, with historians focussing on his strengths overwhelmingly and in some cases, even praising his shortcomings as 'rough English common sense' or ingenious measures of statecraft instead.<sup>7</sup>

This thesis incorporates the letters and prints of individuals belonging to various interest groups and factions. Upon examining their manuscripts, Walpole's contemporaries can be seen to be highly attuned to their changing political environment, susceptible to its evolving language and aware of their ability to alter politics according to their principles. Among the most important movement of individuals shaping the structure of politics, was the Country interest. The writings and efforts of Country advocates have been completely neglected in scholarship of the eighteenth century, with this thesis addressing numerous misconceptions that have formed in the historiography as a direct result of their omission.

## I

The Country interest upheld three fundamental tenets: an aversion to corruption, an aversion to war and an aversion to political parties. The continuation of such practices was deemed corrosive to good government, with associates of the Country bringing these contentions to public attention. The

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5 Lord Stair to Lady Marlborough, November 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 33.

6 Bruce Buchan & Lisa Hill (eds), *An Intellectual History of Political Corruption* (New York: Palgrave, 2014), p. 125.

7 Whig history and its more diluted, neo-Whig counterpart is particularly guilty of this, see, Basil Williams, *The Oxford History of England: The Whig Supremacy 1714–1760* (London: Oxford University Press, 1930), p. 172; This was a psychological disposition others have sought to emulate in their own writing styles about Walpole, the most prolific offender being, Edward Pearce, *The Great Man, Sir Robert Walpole: Scoundrel, Genius and Britain's First Prime Minister* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2007); contemporaries such as Lord Hervey argued the contrary, see, Lord Hervey to Mary Montagu, 25 June 1741, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, f. 111.



renaissance of Country fervour in the early eighteenth century has long required explanation. A minuscule amount of work addresses this subject, and despite Julian Hoppit, J. R. Jones and Paul Monod contributing valuable context on the Country interest, their research does not cover the period fully.<sup>8</sup> Isaac Kramnick, who has written one of the most illuminating texts on the subject of Court and Country politics during the eighteenth century, has explained the period through the lives of two contemporaries: Lord Bolingbroke and his adversary, Robert Walpole.<sup>9</sup> This thesis examines the fundamental grievances of the Country interest, alongside how Country contentions survived into and lasted throughout Walpole's administration. In a bid to venture beyond the scholarship of Kramnick, to explain the mechanisms and impact of the Country interest, new methodologies have been explored, with a wider variety of primary sources and the writings of Court and Country politicians incorporated.

The existence and importance of faction and interest groups have often been ignored and downplayed in the historiography. For example, Caroline Robbins's work on Commonwealthmen in the eighteenth century contains many insights into the period, but rather harmfully, asserts that philosophies linked with the Country cause are often exaggerated, with regard to their influence and impact on contemporaries.<sup>10</sup> Country principles, such as the desire to encourage government scrutiny, liberty of conscience and the need to nullify corruption, was according to Robbins, only carried on by an ineffective minority of Commonwealthmen during the early eighteenth century.<sup>11</sup> Robbins's monograph failed to recognise the rise of the Country interest, especially the role its associates achieved in spearheading a highly popular quest to obtain a better system of government

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8 J. R. Jones, *Country and Court, England: 1658–1714* (London: Edward Arnold, 1978); Julian Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England 1689–1727* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); Paul Monod, 'Jacobitism and Country Principles in the Reign of William III', *The Historical Journal*, 30.2 (1987), p. 290.

9 Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle, The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968).

10 Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen* (New York: Atheneum, 1968), p. 4

11 Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 20.

scrutiny, a political system free from parties and a nation devoid of the perils of war.<sup>12</sup>

The omission of political interest groups in the historiography concerning the period Walpole held office, arises from prominent agendas developing in scholarship over time. The most influential perspectives of early-modern politics, causing a wider misunderstanding of the period, can be plotted as follows: compromise and conflict centred upon Court and Country interests competing in the reign of Charles II, to Geoffrey Holmes advancing views that a 'rage of party' developed in the reigns of William III and Anne, with John Plumb claiming a Whig oligarchy was established in the reigns of George I and II.<sup>13</sup> Lewis Namier, writing before Holmes and Plumb, upheld the view that faction signalled the near dissolution of parties during the reign of George III.<sup>14</sup>

The views of these historians continue to dominate works on the periods they studied, with each widely regarded as authoritative in their field. Despite the findings of Holmes conflicting with those of Namier, David Hayton and William Speck mention that Lucy Sutherland argues that Holmes admitted 'there was no two party system, but rather, as Namier had argued, a mixed government'.<sup>15</sup> A significant complication continues, for if the work of Namier is to be accredited value, with his research rightly concluding that party played a significantly lesser role than faction during the reign of George III, then little has been said as to how a partisan oligarchy was eroded in the eighteen years that passed between Walpole leaving office and faction enduring with the accession of a new

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12 Robbins argues the very contrary in Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 274.

13 Paul Halliday, *Dismembering the Body Politic: Partisan Politics in England's Towns, 1650–1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 10; Robert McJimsey, 'Crisis Management: Parliament and Political Stability: 1692–1719', *Albion: Quarterly Journal of British Studies*, 31.4 (1999), p. 559; Plumb's Ford Lectures witnessed the first coinage of the phrase 'Rage of Party', see, Clyve Jones (ed), *Britain in the First Age of Party: 1680–1750, Essays Presented to Geoffrey Holmes* (London: Hambledon Press, 1987); Clyve Jones & David Jones (eds), *Peers, Politics and Power, The House of Lords: 1603-1911* (London: Hambledon Press, 1986), p. 76; Geoffrey. Holmes, *British Politics in The Reign of Queen Anne*, 2nd ed (London: Hambledon, 1975), pp. 15–19; Geoffrey Holmes, *Britain after the Glorious Revolution: 1688–1714* (London: Macmillan, 1962), p. 14; John Clark, 'A General Theory of Party, Opposition and Government: 1688-1832', *The Historical Journal*, 23.2 (1980), pp. 295–296; Tim Harris, 'From Rage of Party to Age of Oligarchy? Re-thinking the Later Stuart and Early Hanoverian Period', *Journal of Modern History*, 64.4 (1992).

14 Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, 2nd ed (London: Macmillan, 1957), p. 11.

15 David Hayton & William Speck, 'In No One's Shadow', in, Clyve Jones (ed), *British Politics in the Age of Holmes* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 5.

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The most emulated perspectives in the scholarship of the eighteenth century belong to Holmes, who remained sceptical of the 'Court-Country interpretation' of history. Holmes claimed that contrary arguments 'appeal beyond the evidence as to how MPs voted to the language of debate and the literature of polemic'.<sup>16</sup> The myriad of divisions lists, correspondence and published material that survive, which have been used to corroborate anti-partisan views, Holmes regarded as 'selective'.<sup>17</sup> This thesis demonstrates that a wealth of previously unincorporated evidence exists, being equally valid and far from selective when helping to explain eighteenth-century politics. Utilising private papers and popular press pieces, an understanding of how the Country rose to prominence, who formed their ranks and what they represented can finally be achieved. Including these sources amends a conspicuous failing in the historiography, bringing the plight and impact of interest groups, alongside the individuals who comprised them to the fore of historical discussion.

During the period Walpole held office, onus was placed on individuals to operate in politics independently. Daniel Finch, 8<sup>th</sup> Earl Winchelsea and Montagu Venebles-Bertie, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Abingdon were but two of a growing number of people who spoke and voted on their own whims, contacted for their assistance by Jacobites and the Court alike. Abingdon was an archetypal Country politician of the old school, being cool, collected and moulded by its first proponents in the age of Charles II. Winchelsea on the other hand formed a stark contrast, being an enterprising and determined prototype for the newly formed Patriot faction in the mid eighteenth century. Both are representative of a wider group of people who have been whitewashed from the history of the period however. With no loyalties but to their own families and principles, the writings and actions of Winchelsea, Abingdon and others like them are cited continually throughout this thesis. Sources

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<sup>16</sup> Geoffrey Holmes & Daniel Szechi (eds), *The Age of Oligarchy: Pre-Industrial Britain, 1722–1783* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 46.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*, p. 46.

illuminating the lives of such people are vital to show that independents, alongside the interest groups and factions they often worked within, were not only on the increase, but served to transform the eighteenth-century political environment completely.

In a world where party loyalties had been in the process of crumbling, rising political stars relied on the momentum of those such as Abingdon and Winchelsea to represent certain causes faithfully. They and many others became yardsticks, whose independent political principles were measured and observed by others with an attentiveness not properly considered in the historiography. While the likes of Henry Pelham, who held a secure job in the treasury voted alongside Walpole consistently, those without a steady source of state patronage or an office in government to lose could afford to act on matters differently, many deciding to do so as their conscience afforded. The direction in which Abingdon and Winchelsea would move, alongside whether they would renounce certain principles and associations had greater ramifications than observing the speeches and voting patterns of sycophantic pensioners, who were regarded with derision. This thesis argues the labours of many prominent individuals have not been identified in adequately in the historiography. Since the manoeuvring of such people is of great importance, it has prevented a proper understanding of the period being reached. Several misconceptions purveyed in modern monographs of the period stem from this problem; a central claim of this thesis is that interest groups, factions and independents were at the centre of realigning politics during Walpole's tenure in office.

Small pressure groups, supporting personal causes, became the normal operating procedure in politics throughout the mid-eighteenth century. Political interests, such as the Court and Country were formed of various factions and sometimes worked in competition or cooperation with each other. These organisations of autonomously motivated politicians experienced conflict rooted in

contested principles and extensive family connections.<sup>18</sup> A recurrent theme in this thesis will be how ties of kinship, and the role they played, proved equally important as party loyalties in shaping political attitudes. What will be seen is that amid the increasing absence of two formerly established parties, politicians of the Country began to serve as the official opposition to the administration of the day, the Court.

The impetus of Country politicians is explained throughout, with this thesis arguing that adherents of the Country cause did the most to pave the way for faction and independent politicians becoming the common method for political manoeuvring in the eighteenth century.<sup>19</sup> One way in which this was achieved was through political writings and speeches undertaking pastoral overtones, conceived from a distinctive Country culture. A major theme of this thesis centres upon how Country efforts in shaping language culminated in the wide-scale abandonment of party terminology. This is a crucial factor in helping to explain the period effectively and one that will be shown throughout this thesis to clash with claims upheld in the current historiography. The evolution and prolific use of Country language, located in evidence used throughout, maintains the credibility of claims substantiated in this thesis.

The terms Whig and Tory had become increasingly ambiguous by the time Walpole secured office. New and fluid alliances formed and it was not strange to find Whigs aligning themselves with Tories and even Jacobite sympathisers when their ambitions aligned. It was a matter of personal pride that prevented Charles Seymour, 6<sup>th</sup> Duke of Somerset, from obeying party loyalties Walpole attempted to enforce on him, losing Somerset lucrative job prospects. The 'modern' brand of corrupt, degenerate and liberty endangering Whiggism that Walpole seemed to embody, was 'not consistent'

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18 Brian Hill, 'Executive Monarchy and the Challenge of Parties, 1689–1832: Two Concepts of Government and Two Historiographical Interpretations', *The Historical Journal*, 13.3 (1970), p. 387; Norma Landau, 'Country Matters, "The Growth of Political Stability" A Quarter Century On', *Journal of British Studies*, 25.2 (1993), p. 264; Lewis Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, 2nd ed (London: Palgrave, 1961), p. 4.

19 Gareth Bennett, 'Conflict in the Church', in, Holmes, *Britain after the Glorious Revolution*, p. 166.

with the 'old principles' that 'true Whigs' such as Somerset believed they subscribed to.<sup>20</sup> Despite being a personal friend to Walpole, the entrepreneur James Brydges, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Chandos, voted on the side of 'Country gentlemen' regularly, in order to 'inspire others to tread in their steps and not spend so much of their time in party tangles and contests'.<sup>21</sup>

Thomas Winnington, a parliamentary minister 'bred a Tory', but described by others as an 'Old Corp Whig', was met with derision from numerous opposition forces when he chose to defend some policies of the 'Robinarchs', or in other terms, Walpole's 'Monied' and 'Treasury' Whigs.<sup>22</sup> Defection and trimming was far more commonplace and effective than the historiography has acknowledged, with Jeremy Black claiming political organisation without regard to parties was easier said than done.<sup>23</sup> This thesis demonstrates that interest groups such as the Country, returned as viable political forces not simply because they could 'rouse some of the backwoods peers from their rural hibernation', but because they could mobilise individuals in a period where parties were fragmenting.<sup>24</sup>

The views of Robert, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Molesworth and John Trenchard encapsulate how erroneous party labels had become. As self-professed 'True Whigs', both were wealthy landowners and parliamentarians, the former a staunch monarchist, the latter an implacable republican. In his lifetime, Henry Boyle, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Carleton had been considered a Tory, a Whig, a spokesperson for the Country and a member of the Court. The reality was that Carleton was the personification of an

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20 Lord Somerset to Lord Hardwicke, on the Sussex election, 24 July 1740, Petworth, BL. Add. Ms. 35586, f. 263.

21 Lord Chandos to Sir Robert Maude, 27 December 1721, HL. MssST. 57, v. 18, f. 325; Henry Pelham to Lord Essex, 12 October 1732, OS, London, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 18.

22 Tone Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets, The Use of Literature as Pro Government Propaganda: 1721–1742* (London: Associated University Press, 1999), p. 110.

23 Jeremy Black (ed), *The Tory World and the Tory Theme in British Foreign Policy, 1679–2014* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 54.

24 Robin Eagles, 'Geoffrey Holmes and the House of Lords Reconsidered', in Jones, *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*, p. 23.

independent politician.<sup>25</sup> William Pulteney, arguably the most implacable opponent to Walpole and formerly one of his most enterprising colleagues was regarded a Whig. Despite this, Pulteney was happy to welcome support from a variety of Tories of 'High Church' and 'Hanover' denominations soon after he abandoned the Court.<sup>26</sup> John Carteret, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Grenville, Philip Stanhope, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Chesterfield, William Wyndham, Pulteney and others sometimes aligned with both the Country and Patriots, maintaining intermittent relationships as rivals and allies when expediency afforded it.<sup>27</sup>

Contemporaries such as those mentioned above require greater consideration, with their actions incorporated in wider studies, as many represented the core of an emergent set of causes, responsible for remoulding their political environment significantly. During the period, a Country resurgence urged many to work independently, rather than for their party. Whig and Tory crumbled under schism, descending into interest and eventually to faction. Upon examining the manuscripts and printed material of the period with greater scrutiny than has been afforded previously, a pattern emerges. Those who professed themselves to be 'a true wigg, a thorough honest man', 'an honest Whig and no courtier', eventually renounced party terminologies altogether, adopting more agreeable, apolitical perspectives which served them better.<sup>28</sup>

This thesis shows that many who embraced Country or factional causes rarely reverted back to Whigs and Tories, neither in their personal writings or in the press, nor with their votes and speeches in parliament. Many integrated themselves in shifting networks of power instead, with this thesis revealing how salient political associations became. The complexity of these political

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25 A Letter from Henry St. John, 6 April 1725, BL. Add. Ms. 34196, f. 30.

26 Portland Mss, v. 7, p. 407.

27 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 256.

28 Elizabeth Fitzroy, Widow of Lord Augustus Fitzroy to Lord Newcastle, 2 March 1742, Henrietta Street, BL. Add. Ms. 32699, f. 86; William Pulteney to Duchess Marlborough, 22 November 1734, Petersham, BL. Add. Ms. 61477, f. 52.

associations does not fit within the neat lines of existing scholarship, with historians failing to do justice to the task of explaining the realities of eighteenth-century politics.

## II

David Hayton summarises that after the Revolution of 1688, 'Court and Country ceased to represent a standing political division'.<sup>29</sup> Hayton's essay concludes in 1720, one year before Walpole entered office, a juncture where Brian Cowan argues that a 'resilient' Whig oligarchy forms its genesis.<sup>30</sup> The point Hayton makes, that divisions existing between Court and Country were ephemeral, ebbing and flowing under the more permanent undulations of Whig and Tory conflict can also be said of party. The claim that the Country experienced periods of empowerment and stagnation should not signify that such groups are unworthy of investigation, nor that they could never return as an enduring political force. This thesis incorporates a multitude of sources Hayton did not include in his studies, which argue the opposite, such as correspondence from several individuals using distinctive vocabulary indicating their factional or independent political stances. Upon examination of this evidence, the Country interest is seen rising to prominence and maintaining its momentum, their actions and writings nullifying the claim that a Whig oligarchy existed.

The omission of Court-Country perspectives in the scholarship of the eighteenth century can often derive from an assumption that history is linear. This is an archaic overhang from the Whig tradition, with the influence of some of the oldest proponents of the Whig school of thought, such as Thomas Macaulay, still persistent in modern texts of the period.<sup>31</sup> A number of conceptual and

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29 David Hayton, 'The Country Interest and the Party System: 1689–1720', in, Clyve Jones (ed), *Party and Management in Parliament: 1660–1784* (Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1984), p. 65; Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. xii–xii.

30 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. xv; B. Cowan, 'Geoffrey Holmes and the Public Sphere', in, Jones, *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*, p. 166.

31 Thomas Macaulay, *Critical and Misc Essays*, v. 3 (New York: Sheldon, 1860), pp. 166–167.



'long view' scholars, such as Stephen Baxter, assume that early-eighteenth-century society progressed exponentially.<sup>32</sup> There is a tendency in the present historiography for scholars to draw teleological conclusions that society moved on an unalterable course to a more enlightened state. This is encapsulated in the general endearment for Walpole as the solitary minister responsible for the fortification and 'tranquillity' of Britain's political settlement.<sup>33</sup> These misconceptions are nuanced in various disciplines, from parliamentary and economic history to the study of popular politics, where Jürgen Habermas claims a vibrant, politicised 'social sphere' proliferated continually, following the turbulent events of the seventeenth century.<sup>34</sup>

Larry Neal, Jan Glete and David Stasavage link fiscal innovation, born out of war and revolution, with the notion of national solidity and the inception of modern democracy in Britain.<sup>35</sup> This thesis contends that political movements such as the Country, rooted in tradition and retaliating against insidious changes, experienced a revival during the period Walpole held office. Innovation and the notion of progress did not always prove beneficial to some, with the rise in power of one set of people often at the subjugation of another. Evidence brought forward in this work shows that many people feared their stake in society was being subverted and as a result, powerful interest groups emerged while others, such as parties for instance, decayed.

The ascension of the Country represented a sceptical force in a rapidly changing society, reacting to what they perceived to be corrupt, subversive and warmongering individuals. This thesis will

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32 Steven Baxter (ed), *England's Rise to Greatness: 1660–1763* (Berkeley: UCLA University Press, 1983), p. 92.

33 Pearce, *The Great Man*, pp. 2–17, 34, 426; another blatant example also found in, Corinne Harol, 'Misconceiving the Heir: Mind and Matter in the Warming Pan Propaganda', in Helen Deutsch & Mary Terrall (eds), *Vital Matters, Eighteenth-Century Views of Conception, Life and Death* (Toronto: Toronto University Press, 2012), p. 155.

34 Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Cambridge: Polity, 2011), *passim*; for a concise summary of his views, see: Christina Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790–1845* (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 2010), p. 9.

35 David Stasavage, *Public Credit and the Birth of the Democratic State, France and Great Britain: 1688–1789* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Larry Neal, *The Rise of Financial Capitalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Jan Glete, *War and the State in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Routledge, 2002), pp. 59–60.

examine the nature and momentum of their reactionary counter culture to the Court. One important area in which this can be seen is in the realm of the 'public sphere'. The influential view of Habermas that political discussion had broken free from its private bonds forever to be held in a more open environment can be challenged by the perspectives adopted in this thesis. Coffee house conversation debased into gossip, with political intrigue and scandal confined to smaller, factional networks, discussed in underground societies, exclusive clubs and secretive meetings around private dinner tables.

Credible information was called into question in the public arena increasingly, a direct result of Country efforts in the press and coffee houses. The trust and discretion afforded people in important political matters was granted to those who withdrew into smaller, family based factional alliances, out of sight and ear-shot of others, in secluded stately homes and exclusive clubs. Just as individuals began to operate in politics on a more traditional, interest based level, so too the way in which politics was being discussed was also polarising, returning to a form which the historiography has so far overlooked.<sup>36</sup> Contrary to the conclusions proposed by Habermas, this thesis shows that it was not popular discourse in public locations that catalysed major political shifts, but the appeal of private meetings and confidential conversations.

The effectiveness of the Country in mobilising support for their cause worried Walpole's ministry. The level of scrutiny that could be levelled at government through popular politicking was amplified through Country efforts. This spurred the First Lord to take pains to hide his political manoeuvres, to maximise the chances of surpassing his opponents. Coupled with restrictions that Walpole's ministry sought to impose on the popular press to silence their adversaries, this culminated in a retrenchment of public conversation regarding matters of state. The focus of

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36 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, pp. 28, 152.

discussion maintained throughout this thesis, is concerned with private politics and the way this occurred behind closed doors. As a result, there are far fewer sources, spread thinly across archival repositories, making the organisation of Court and Country politics difficult to uncover.

It can be argued that historiography has relegated Walpole's contemporaries to the margins of history, promoting the appearance of interest groups as being disorganised factors in the background. Associates of the Country cause, were not, as Christine Gerrard and Henry Roseveare claim, simply 'mythical', superannuated prudes on a doomed quest to halt their 'imaginary' adversaries.<sup>37</sup> Evidence presented in this thesis will reveal that it is prejudicial to dismiss these groups as unimportant spectres locked in futile conflict against the inevitable triumph of party and oligarchy. Far from being the detritus of a revolution that many had failed to limit, the Country were not, as John Brewer suggests, part of a lineage of 'failure,' nor were they vestigial limbs of the body politic who refused to evolve, destined to pass into the ether.<sup>38</sup> While Edward Pearce went to extremes, claiming Walpole's opponents were simply all wrong to hinder his 'great work', this thesis reveals his policies were not always beneficial, and that it is neglectful and misleading to ignore the genuine concerns of those who opposed the First Lord and his administration.<sup>39</sup>

Recurrent misconceptions eclipse the area of study and wider understanding of the period. The early writings of prominent Whig historians, such as William Coxe, William Cobbett and Macauley, still shape the views of several generations of their modern counterparts, with Hiram Catton and Black each building their theses around the strength, dominance and ingenious management of Walpole's administration.<sup>40</sup> As a result, the history of the early eighteenth century languishes under a

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37 Christine Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole: Politics, Poetry and the National Myth, 1725–1742* (London: Clarendon, 1995), p. 17; Henry Roseveare, *The Financial Revolution: 1660–1760* (New York: Longman, 1991), p. 41.

38 John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), p. 155.

39 Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 318.

40 A selection of publications from various decades, citing Walpole in similar terms regarding his power and legacy,

neglectful consensus, with political interests disavowed and ignored continually as viable forces operating with appeal and longevity.

One of the most enduring imprints has been left by Plumb. The majority of scholarly works on the early eighteenth century still follow sentiments expressed in *The Growth of Political Stability* and his two-volume biography of Walpole.<sup>41</sup> Plumb's legacy in the historiography should not be underestimated, for his studies portray Walpole to have dominated all before him.<sup>42</sup> Reminiscent of earlier Whig interpretations, Plumb misleadingly portrays Walpole as the first 'prime minister', a politician cited by Pearce, Andrew Pettegree and others as being responsible for the foundation of an enduring political settlement in Britain.<sup>43</sup> Sources that contradict this claim are seen frequently as anomalies, a futile effort in the face of an unalterable shift to enlightened and balanced government.<sup>44</sup> The prominence of the Country is dismissed, Plumb having stated 'their presence greatly complicates the politics of the period'.<sup>45</sup> To bring the plight of these interest groups to the fore is to unravel presentist and anachronistic arguments upholding this historical consensus surrounding Walpole's administration.

This thesis serves to dispel several myths, chiefly that a Whig oligarchy formed its genesis under

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Jeremy Black, *Walpole in Power* (Gloucestershire: Sutton, 2001), pp. 45, 76; for Whig traditionalists see, William Cobbett, *A Parliamentary History of England: 1066–1803* (London: R. Bagshaw, 1806); David Mallett, *Memoirs of the Life and Ministerial Conduct, With Some Free Remarks on the Political Writings of the Lord Visc. Bolingbroke* (London: R. Baldwin, 1752), p. 333; Thomas Macaulay, *The History of England from the Accession of James the Second* (London: 1858); the sentiments of the following monographs are encapsulated in their titles, Harry Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy* (London: The English University Press, 1973); Brian Hill, *Sir Robert Walpole, "Sole and Prime Minister"*, 1st ed (London: H. Hamilton, 1989); for Neo-Whig views see, Hiram Caton, *The Politics of Progress* (Florida: Florida University Press, 1998), p. 264.

41 John Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England: 1675–1725* (London: Palgrave, Macmillan, 1967); this work developed from his earlier Ford Lectures, presented at Oxford in 1965; John Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole: The Making of a Statesman*, v. 1 (London: Cresset Press, 1957); John Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole, The King's Minister*, v. 2 (London: Cresset Press, 1960).

42 Pearce, *The Great Man*, pp. 3, 424.

43 Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 1; Andrew Pettegree, *The Invention of News* (London: Yale University Press, 2014), p. 11; a caveat to this view is provided helpfully in, Black, *Walpole in Power*, p. 54.

44 Landau, 'Country Matters', p. 262.

45 Plumb, *The Making of a Statesman*, p. 65; a view shared by, David Hayton, 'Moral Reform and Country Politics in the Late Seventeenth-Century House of Commons', *Past and Present*, 128 (1990), p. 48.

the guidance of Walpole. As the work of Ian Gilmour attests, the period 1721–1742 contains numerous breaches of peace, with the First Lord amid public crises.<sup>46</sup> An age of prolific crime, riots and demonstrations, the Country mastered a burgeoning press network, fuelling popular outcry against corruption and parties. Through these channels, the success of Walpole's patronage was curtailed, severing his reliance on places and pensions to ensure party consistent political support.

The early eighteenth century 'was an age of stability in politics and in social observations'.<sup>47</sup> Basil Williams proudly made this remark his opening in a work that has permeated into many studies to the present day. Robbins claimed that under Walpole, 'England was rich, peaceful, contented', with the threat of insurrection or instability a latent prospect.<sup>48</sup> Hoppit argues that hindsight affords historians the legitimacy to claim that 'changes in the conduct of politics in the 1690s can be seen to have led towards a dramatically more stable political system'.<sup>49</sup> Only Holmes argued that the entrenched notion that political stability was achieved under Walpole, in reality, 'has never been seriously debated'.<sup>50</sup> Under close scrutiny, following a realignment of what is considered 'stable', this thesis shows that the economic and political situation in Britain continued as precariously as it had since the Revolution. The major tumults that occurred during the period were specifically concerned with the Country waging a crusade in public and private politics, inciting people to do all they could to impede the process of government they believed corrupt, restricting of freedom, tainted with dogmatic party loyalties and perched dangerously on the verge of war.

With the perceived emergence of the office of prime minister, decisive moves were also taken in the

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46 Ian Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution: Governance and Violence in Eighteenth Century England* (London: Pimlico, 1992), pp. 73–103.

47 Williams, *The Whig Supremacy*, p. 1.

48 Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 278.

49 Hoppit, *Land of Liberty*, p. 132.

50 Geoffrey Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society in England: 1679–1742* (London: Hambledon, 1986), p. 250.

historiography to explain the rise of 'the first modern opposition'.<sup>51</sup> Most these works rarely feature the impact of factions and interest groups such as the Country, but focus on party divisions instead. Jonathan Clark states the Revolution of 1688 had polarised the Nation into two distinct parties.<sup>52</sup> The deep-seated contentions that fuelled civil wars during the mid to late seventeenth centuries is agreed to have continued unresolved into the next decade.<sup>53</sup> It was the view of Plumb that 'Hanoverian stability' was only ensured with Walpole presiding over 'the ascendancy of single party government'.<sup>54</sup>

The motives of Walpole's contemporaries are oversimplified when the labels Whig and Tory are wrongfully applied to them.<sup>55</sup> Bill Speck and Holmes have misleadingly defined contemporaries as 'probably' and 'usually' belonging to a specific party.<sup>56</sup> This has led to implications that many politicians expressed entrenched ideological beliefs, with Colley adding they could be 'independent' from court, but were not immune from 'proprietary party attitudes', and therefore cannot be classified as non-partisan.<sup>57</sup> Henry Horwitz went further, claiming wrongly that parliamentary

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51 Herbert Atherton, *Political Prints in the Age of Hogarth: A Study of the Ideographic Representation of Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 192; Jeremy Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2007), p. 20; Walpole is not the first politician in English history to be accredited the anachronistic title of prime minister, see, Clayton Roberts, 'The Fall of the Godolphin Ministry', *Journal of British Studies*, 22.1 (1982), p. 84; E. Roscoe, *Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, Prime Minister: 1710–1714* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1902), p. 142; Antonia Fraser, *King James VI & I of Scotland and England* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1974), p. 120; Walter Sichel, *Bolingbroke and His Times: The Sequel* (London: James Nisbet, 1902), p. 259.

52 Clark, 'A General Theory', p. 296.

53 Edward Ellis, 'William III and the Politicians', in, Holmes, *Britain After the Glorious Revolution*, p. 119.

54 Richard Connors, 'The Nature of Stability in the Augustan Age', in, Jones, *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*, p. 30; Plumb's doctoral student provided a significant caveat, explaining a virulent Tory opposition existed, see, Linda Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy: The Tory Party 1714–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), pp. 5–7; Linda Colley & Mark Goldie, 'The Principles and Practice of Eighteenth-Century Party', *The Historical Journal*, 22.1 (1979), p. 242; Holmes claimed the Tory party ceased to operate by 1714, see, Geoffrey Holmes, 'Harley, St. John and the Death of the Tory Party', in, Holmes, *Britain after the Glorious Revolution*, pp. 216–237.

55 Tim Harris, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts, Party Conflict in a Divided Society 1660–1714* (London: Longman, 1993), p. 148; Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 170; Henry Horwitz, 'The Structure of Parliamentary Politics', in, Holmes (eds), *Britain after the Glorious Revolution*, p. 97.

56 Basil Henning, *The House of Commons: 1660–1690, Introductory Survey, Appendices, Constituencies, Members A–B* (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1983), p. 31; Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts*, pp. 150–151; Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 9–14; an archetypal example of the 'usually' approach can be found in, Giles Strangeway, *The Life of Sir Charles Hanbury Williams* (London: Thornton Butterworth, 1929), p. 25; William Speck, *Stability and Strife: England, 1714–1760* (Cambridge Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1977), pp. 219–239.

57 Colley & Goldie, 'The Principles and Practice of Eighteenth-Century Party', p. 243.

legislation was 'voted consistently on party lines'.<sup>58</sup> Dennis Rubini, Brian Hill and Barry Burrows are in a minority of historians reticent to accept party politics as the ultimate point of conflict and compromise, avoiding denouncing Court and Country politics as irrelevant.<sup>59</sup>

Hill has done much to locate correspondence from a number of individuals who operated outside of established parties, a process expanded upon in this thesis. Searching carefully for contradictory evidence proving that politicians 'classified individuals not parties', Hill argues 'professions of indifference to parties were made not only by genuine non-partisans but even by those politicians whom their fellows were unanimous in considering to be party men'.<sup>60</sup> Holmes carefully reiterated this notion and limiting his own emphasis, claiming that parties were not 'monolithic' and pointed to the lack of references to specific parties in manuscripts.<sup>61</sup> Susceptible to contrary views, although not always including them in his work, Holmes admitted the Country tradition survived and court management remained important, claiming that parties were in effect, loose pressure groups.

This thesis does not follow the 'non-party' or 'anti-party' interpretation of Augustan politics that Hayton argues is 'shaky in specialist academic circles'.<sup>62</sup> Careful not to overreach the claims made throughout this work, caution is urged instead, recognising the diminishing presence, language and utility of parties during the period. While parties continued to exist, it is argued that they were fading rapidly from many facets of society and government.

Assertions that party politics prevail in political history permeate into other aspects of historical

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58 Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts*, pp. 150–151.

59 Hill, 'Executive Monarchy and the Challenge of Parties', p. 386; Colley & Goldie, 'The Principles and Practice of Eighteenth-Century Party', p. 293; John Murrin, 'The Great Inversion, or Court Versus Country: A Comparison of the Revolution Settlements in England, 1688–1721 and America 1776–1816', in John Pocock (ed), *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1980); Pat Rogers, 'Swift and Bolingbroke on Faction', *Journal of British Studies*, 9.2 (1970); Dennis Rubini, 'Party and the Augustan Constitution, 1694–1716: Politics and the Power of the Executive', *Albion*, 10.3 (1978), pp. 193–208.

60 Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 15–17; Hill, 'Executive Monarchy and the Challenge of Parties', p. 386.

61 Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 9, 14.

62 Hayton & Speck, 'In No One's Shadow', p. 3.

discussion, including the realms of economics. Steve Pincus and Christopher Dudley link the rise and fall of British finances to the views and actions of Whigs and Tories, who dictated the pace of commerce and the direction of industry.<sup>63</sup> Gary Stuart DeKrey supports these views, establishing that bias existed between corporations and the two major parties operating throughout the period.<sup>64</sup> Perry Gauci has pioneered a new direction in the historiography, revealing that scholars should 'remain wary of rigid categorization' between Whig and Tory in the study of economics and finance.<sup>65</sup>

Surveying the historiography, Gauci notes that Anne Murphy, Douglass North and Barry Weingast are among a number of historians who find the financial environment of the period apolitical, where 'a coalition of interests, acting rationally, individualistically and self-interestedly, came together to solve England's financial problems'.<sup>66</sup> Major revisions have been undertaken in this area, but despite attempts by Sheila Lambert and Joanna Innes to do the same in the subject of political history, it remains clear the discipline has yet to catch up.<sup>67</sup> This thesis amends this shortfall, revealing that the world of business and politics was not only linked inextricably, but also that its members operated on a more self-interested basis.

The prolific number of studies mentioned above focusing on party paradigms, helps to explain why there have been few sustained attempts to understand politics through the perspective of various

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63 Christopher Dudley, 'Party Politics, Political Economy and Economic Development', *Economic History Review*, 66.4 (2013), p. 1086; William Speck, 'Conflict in Society', in, Holmes, *Britain after the Glorious Revolution*, p. 151; Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (London: Yale University Press, 2009), pp. 393, 399; Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 98.

64 Gary DeKrey, *A Fractured Society: The Politics of London in the First Age of Party* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985).

65 Perry Gauci, *The Politics of Trade: The Overseas Merchant in State and Society: 1660–1720* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 113.

66 Perry Gauci, *Regulating the British Economy: 1660–1850* (London: Ashgate, 2011), p. 43; for reference to article mentioned, see, Douglass North & Barry Weingast, 'Constitutions and Commitment: The Evolution of Institutions Governing Public Choice in 17<sup>th</sup> Century England', *Journal of Economic History*, 49.4 (1989).

67 Joanna Innes, *Inferior Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 4; for Innes' views on Sheila Lambert, see, *Inferior Politics*, p. 24.



interest groups. As John Pocock argues, the period 'can often better be understood in a Court Country context rather than in a Whig, Tory or an official Whig intellectual one.'<sup>68</sup> In John Pocock's work on *The Varieties of Whiggism*, he argues that Whigs and Tories who manoeuvred their two substantial parties to battle one another in the seventeenth century, grew ever splintered in response to the constitutional and societal crises witnessed in the early eighteenth century.<sup>69</sup> Pocock correctly attributes this ideological fragmentation with the momentum for contemporaries to alter their political direction and language. This was used to counter new threats effectively, with oppositional debate centred less around narrow Whig-Tory differences, but on wider principles, such as the struggle between virtue and corruption or liberty against tyranny. Pressure groups such as the Country interest became a focal point to rally disparate Whigs and Tories, in a reaction to what individuals from all party denominations believed pernicious, treacherous and dangerous people, politicians such as Walpole. The terms Court and Country were highly flexible, both reinvigorated and remoulded to rearrange the structure of politics in the absence of party.

Advocates of the eighteenth-century Country interest were responding to the perception that they were in grave danger of losing their political, spiritual and financial independence. David Armitage asserts that Bolingbroke and proponents of the Country cause identified the need to tap into the desire to return to virtuous political principles, with the Country interest becoming synonymous with a popular crusade for a government of checks and balances, free of corruption, excessive power, war and parties. Armitage identifies that the Country interest was used as a 'platform' to 'combine Old Whig and Tory elements to put Walpole's regime on the defensive' against charges that his ministry threatened liberty of conscience, action and thought.<sup>70</sup>

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68 John Pocock, *Language, Politics and Time* (London: Methuen, 1972), p. 107.

69 John Pocock, 'The Varieties of Whiggism, from Exclusion to Reform', in John Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 215-310.

70 David Armitage (ed), *Bolingbroke, Political Writings* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1997), pp. xi-xii.

Pocock and Armitage demonstrate that political operations during the period Walpole held office were far from monochromatic. Umbrella terms such as Whig or Tory have limited use, often hindering more than helping to explain a dynamic political environment, filled with fluid interests, contrasting principles and shifting allegiances. This thesis imposes a greater comprehension, if not a semblance of order on a largely unexplored and complex political landscape.

### III

For Stair and Winchelsea to help organise the Patriot faction, or Marlborough and Abingdon to operate within the Country interest, each needed to maintain a broad network of correspondence. The letters they sent are scattered across various archives and their respondents were often individuals rarely focused upon in the historiography. The reason manuscripts of a similar vein have not been utilised more effectively in modern works is due to historians placing undue focus on the papers and perspectives of 'great men' and their cabinets. Cowan mentions this is also a shortcoming of Namierism, where there tends to be 'a narrow focus on high politics, especially the histories of parliament and the ministries of the crown'.<sup>71</sup>

Following in the footsteps of Habermas, Cowan updated the historiography of the period by helping it become more interdisciplinary. Reinforcing the importance of researching sociability and literary culture, Cowan's research places less emphasis on using documents of high office. The 'reams of gilt-edged paper' left by the Duke of Newcastle, Secretary of State, during the period, which bored Walter Sichel with content he found 'dilatatory', inappropriate and 'hurriedly written', can still be invaluable to historians however.<sup>72</sup> The Newcastle papers, like other political documents of state are crucial to understanding the Court and revising the history of Walpole's tenure in office. A

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<sup>71</sup> Cowan, 'Geoffrey Holmes and the Public Sphere', p. 169.

<sup>72</sup> Sichel, *Bolingbroke and His Times*, p. 175.

frequently tapped resource in the British Library, they form an immense collection of early-eighteenth-century material that survive for modern revaluation, but have yet to be used in conjunction with micro-history, prosopography and linguistic methodologies, which are mentioned later and adopted throughout this thesis, serving to question the present historiographical consensus.

This thesis draws upon a number of official state manuscripts written by advocates of the Court, from Walpole's personal papers at Cambridge University Library to domestic and foreign correspondence found in larger repositories such as the British Library, National Archives and Huntington Library. Without placing overbearing emphasis on a particular type of evidence, such as pamphlets or state papers, this thesis incorporates a wide variety of sources, written by and referencing people of various social standings and backgrounds in equal measure. Evidence is acquired from papers held at private residences and local record offices also, alongside the use of both popular and printed material. A range of methodologies are used to understand this wide spectrum of sources effectively, with biographical, linguistic, thematic and narrative based approaches adopted throughout. Using these sources and methods, conclusions contrary to what the historiography has argued previously are drawn in this thesis. The methods in which political society transformed, from the point Walpole secured office to his resignation is finally revealed.

While many state and printed papers mentioned above have been used in studies previously, albeit examined through the lens of different methodologies, in this thesis, a unique form of evidence is used also. Manuscripts documenting hidden political manoeuvres form a particularly important aspect of this work. These sources reveal how individuals, formerly excluded in monographs, are wrongfully assumed as unimportant because they worked behind the spotlight. They were in fact operating politically to great effect, albeit in the shadows. Crucial to understanding the machinations of interest groups and factions, the lives of such people, if not the written and verbal

exchanges they engaged in are scarce, having proved difficult to locate formerly. Collating their letters to understand their motives reveals how public channels for discussion underwent a retrenchment during the period, a matter that has not been considered extensively.

Political conversation in public spaces became increasingly private, a factor Markman Ellis reports as having occurred with the passing of coffee-house culture in the eighteenth century. Evidence in this thesis shows wider causes were at play to explain this transition than simple innovations in cheap, home brewing techniques that drew customers away from high-street drinking establishments.<sup>73</sup> Using a wide spectrum of sources helps to explain what has been until now, a curious gap in the historiography, that is, how party transitioned to interest. The renaissance of the Country, the secrecy of the Court and the prevalence of faction transformed the way in which business was conducted. This thesis strengthens the view that privacy, compromise and self-interest, faction and family became the common vessels to obtain political power in the early eighteenth century.

Two forms of historical approaches assist the process of interpreting the wide range of sources mentioned above. They are found in the micro-historical and prosopographical methodologies pioneered by Carlo Ginzburg, Simona Cerutti, Herbert Butterfield and Giovanni Levi.<sup>74</sup>

Prosopography can map and tabulate history by focusing predominately on statistical evidence, helping to elucidate the lives and actions of those operating in interest groups, such as the Country. Lists, tables, graphs and charts can all bring quantifiable order to a complex history of ideas and actions. Databases of statistical information serve to form an understanding of social networks, by

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<sup>73</sup> Markman Ellis, *The Coffee House, A Cultural History* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 2004), Chp, 13.

<sup>74</sup> Carlo Ginzburg, 'Microhistory, Two or Three Things I Know About It', *Critical Inquiry*, 20.1 (1993), pp. 10–35; Giovanni Levi, *Inheriting Power: The Story of an Exorcist* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1988); Simon Cerutti, 'Microhistory, Social Relations Versus Cultural Models', in, Anna-Maija Castrén, et-al (eds), *Between Sociology and History, Essays on Microhistory, Collective Action and Nation Building* (Helsinki: SKS, 2004); S. Sigurður Magnússon & István. Szijártó (eds), *What is Microhistory? Theory and Practice* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 7–39; Herbert. Butterfield, 'The Role of the Individual in History', *History*, 40.138 (1955).

drawing upon subscriptions to journals and membership to institutions, alongside records concerning the attendance of parliament, clubs and coffee houses. In this study, prosopography is used to reveal correlations between voting patterns and political sentiments.

Pocock and Quentin Skinner claim that systematic surveys of opinions using data can be destructive to intellectual history.<sup>75</sup> Prosopography is used sparingly in this thesis, being deployed in conjunction with correspondence and printed documents, or filling in gaps when there is a dearth of manuscript material contextualising the political landscape. Tracking the exploits of interest groups who actively worked to conceal their papers and designs can be problematic. To counteract this pitfall, prosopography and the investigation of smaller spaces and geographical regions has been implemented. This work moves away from both city-centric and global perspectives, sourcing evidence from a variety of repositories, alongside the movements of individuals outside of London.

While it is important to prevent the complete atomisation of history, more appreciation can be afforded the many small, but significant changes occurring over time, which alter the trajectory of broad historical themes. Thus, local approaches to history, utilised extensively by Kathleen Wilson and Innes have informed this work extensively.<sup>76</sup> Wilson reveals the impetus of writers and printers throughout Britain, who shaped wider concerns and values. Innes examined the role of local magistrates, officials and community leaders, unveiling the extent of their responsibilities and importance to the people they assisted. The works of Innes and Wilson proved inspiring, as Country politicians often held similar positions simultaneously, being landlords, writers, civil servants and local administrators. Similar approaches have been used throughout examine the efforts of the Country interest, which has also been underestimated.

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75 Pocock, *Language, Politics and Time*, pp. 10, 106; Quentin Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', *History and Theory*, 8.1 (1969), p. 42.

76 Innes, *Inferior Politics*, p. 24; Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 5–6.

Micro-history forms the central methodology used throughout this thesis. This structure has been helpful in constructing multiple biographies of people that have not had one written about them previously. The collation of disparate, rarely cited manuscripts is especially informative when seeking to rejuvenate history through the experiences of relatively forgotten individuals. The formulation of case studies, alongside seldom-used sources from a number of prominent people reveal the broader philosophies of a number of interest groups.

Micro-historical practices are effective when exploring misunderstood communities, with Brodie Wadell using this outlook to document how individuals applied pressure, found security and forged a shared culture through group interactions in the late seventeenth century.<sup>77</sup> John Walter found utility in a similar variation of micro-history to bolster his own studies in the realm of popular politics.<sup>78</sup> Each followed the scholarship of Edward Thompson, who revealed that historians had robbed lesser known individuals of their voice in history.<sup>79</sup> Micro-history, a vital methodological approach when writing 'history from below', has become synonymous with scholars who desire to contextualise crowds and the more humble, under-represented groups in society.

Steve Hindle revitalises the use of micro-history in his research of early-modern charitable organisations, showing it is not always the tool of cultural historians who desire to focus solely on the poorest people in society. Reconciling the use of social and political discourse, Hindle uses a diverse array of evidence produced by individuals from all stratifications of society in localised,

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77 Brodie Wadell, *God, Duty and Community in English Economic Life: 1660–1720* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2012), pp. 87, 205.

78 John Walter, *Crowds and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006), p. 24; John Bohstedt, 'The Moral Economy and the Discipline of Historical Context', *Journal of Social History*, 26 (1993), p. 268.

79 David Williams, 'Morals, Markets and the English Crowd in 1766', *Past and Present*, 104 (1984), p. 56; Edward Thompson, 'The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth-Century', *Past and Present*, 50 (1971).

compound studies.<sup>80</sup> The influence and extent of ideas during the period can be investigated effectively as a result. With this historical cartography of the sources, patterns may be observed, with precarious shortfalls in the historiography exposed and redressed. The objectives Hindle achieved in his work are applied in this thesis. It will be seen that the Country philosophy did not just matter to the higher echelons of political society, but appealed to a grass root support base also, from the constituent and yeoman to many middling associates in between, such as freeholders and business owners.

In this thesis, many of the forgotten individuals studied in nanoscopic detail were not landless, illiterate peasants, as focused on by micro-historians previously. They were landed politicians, important men in their own localities and areas of influence; but they were also political outsiders whose contributions on the national stage have been all but forgotten, and whose absence from conventional histories focusing on the 'great man' has led to political realities of the period being fundamentally misrepresented.<sup>81</sup> Advocates of the Country cause were vociferous, but their exploits, like their papers, have been ignored. Without prosopography and micro-history, effective ways to study the Country have been inaccessible previously.

Heinz-Gerhard Haupt and Jürgen Kocka claim micro-historical approaches should not be applied to find contrasts alone, but similarities also, reinforcing the observation that macro-levels of analysis all too easily 'tramples on the fine details of historical process and structure that are often relevant to the actual actors and events of history.'<sup>82</sup> This nuance was helpful when explaining how the Country,

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80 Steve Hindle, *On the Parish: The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England: 1550–1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004).

81 Donelson Forsyth, *Group Dynamics*, 5th ed (Belmont: Cengage, 2009), p. 225; this is a misleading approach to scholarship entrenched by Thomas Carlyle, who argued the power of a 'hero' or 'great man' always had more capacity to mould their environments than be moulded by them.

82 Heinz-Gerhard Haupt & Jürgen Kocka, 'Comparative History: Methods, Aims, Problems', in, Deborah Cohen and Maura O' Connor (eds), *Comparison and History: Europe in Cross National Perspective* (New York: Routledge, 2004), p. 29; Elizabeth Clark, *History Theory, Text, Historians and the Linguistic Turn* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 76.

formerly an inveterate enemy of the Court, united with them over certain principles. To remain in office, Walpole understood that he had to abstain from entering the Nation into foreign conflicts. The emergence of the Patriot faction spurred the Court and Country to ally as a combined force seeking to prevent hostilities. The desire for people to align themselves as belonging to, or acting in support of specific groups is important to understanding the transformation of political attitudes in the eighteenth century.

Reinvestigating who subscribed to the associations mentioned above has limited importance for John Brewer, who claims that 'whether the most appropriate configuration of politics was Whig and Tory or Court and Country is less relevant' to the understanding of the British state 'than might first appear'.<sup>83</sup> Focusing on mechanisms, not political groupings, Brewer leaves a gap in the historiography, omitting many factors for change during the period. Institutions had been the focus of Brewer's monograph, *The Sinews of Power*, but these were not self-autonomous and empty shells, they were driven by those who often found business and politics inextricable. Allan Hanson makes the distinction that 'institutional ideas are not about people at all. They inquire into beliefs, customs, forms of social organisation', rather than 'motives, aims and desires of people' in studies of the individual.<sup>84</sup> Stressing that 'institutional questions are not reducible to individual ones, nor vice versa', Hanson stresses 'they move at different levels, asking different questions and receiving different answers'.<sup>85</sup> This thesis considers the logic, rationale and operation of interest groups, such as the Country, alongside the institutions they worked in an around, such as parliament and parties. It does not omit the history and motive of the individual, however. Achieving a clearer view of how groups interacted in institutions such as parliament can be achieved when looking at how culture and society shaped individuals. Reconciling the study of institutions and individuals, this thesis

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83 Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, p. 155.

84 Allan Hanson, 'Meaning in Culture', in, George Haydu (ed), *Experience Forms: Their Cultural and Individual Place and Function* (London: Mouton, 1979), p. 302.

85 *Ibid*, p. 302.



does not focus unduly on one aspect alone, but investigates the experiences of the individual on a socio-political level, in a hope to better inform history on an institutional level. There is another omission that Brewer claims has been missing from the history of Court and Country. Brewer argues 'much less attention has been paid to the effects of Country ideology and to the impact of what most historians would characterize as Country measures'.<sup>86</sup> Rather than focusing on the history of monolithic institutions, the micro-historical and prosopographical aspects of this thesis help to recover the agency and actions of individuals involved in the daily operation of powerful networks.

While micro-historical perspectives are beneficial in recovering what should be known about the activity of previously unknown Country adherents, other methodological tools have been useful in making sense of their contributions to contemporary political discourse. In this regard, the methodological orientations of the 'Cambridge School', exemplified most consistently in the works of Pocock, have proved particularly effective when addressing the shortcomings in the historiography. The emphasis on language and linguistic context which Pocock employs, has proved crucial in interrogating the new material presented throughout this thesis, especially when revealing its importance in the political landscape. Finding the prevalence of certain phrases in contemporary language is crucial to understanding the past and as Pocock suggests, 'to know a language is to know the things which may be done with it'.<sup>87</sup> This approach helps to gauge the intent and signification in published papers and private manuscripts, allowing a more complete interpretation of the period to be achieved, by recovering political discourses that have not been fully understood before. The prolific use of certain Court and Country terms in both verbal and written sentiments represented a conscious shift in political attitudes, the ramifications of which are revealed throughout, witnessed in the transformed thoughts and actions of contemporaries.

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86 Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, p. 155.

87 Pocock, *Language, Politics and Time*, p. 28.

While recognising a Country 'party' existed sporadically, Hayton claims its members 'did not lose their identity. They still remained Whigs and Tories first and foremost'.<sup>88</sup> Stephen Farrell concludes that Country politicians were inexperienced statesmen, having also put forward the case that those who identified themselves as members of a 'Country party' had reneged on their principles. In other words, they formed a 'contradiction in terms as they eschewed partisan politics'.<sup>89</sup> This rather damning appraisal was published by the *History of Parliament*, an institution dedicated to micro-historical approaches, yet Farrell's work seems to have omitted a substantial amount of contextual evidence proving the complete opposite to his findings. Recent scholarship continues this trend, with Max Skjönsberg arguing fervently that the Country interest fulfilled all the parameters necessary of a party and that the main thinkers of the Country, such as Bolingbroke, were certainly party politicians.<sup>90</sup> Pocock's approach serves to address these misconceptions in the historiography, with this thesis exploring language and dispelling the misleading notion that the Country was a 'party'. The Country, as a group, possessed no formal structure or entrenched set of policies other than an aversion to war, corruption and parties. These were popular doctrines, advocated by many different people, but came to define and be associated with the Country cause specifically.

To denote Country politicians as members of a party misrepresents them completely, as both Whig and Tory enshrined a different set of terminologies and extolled narrow policies. The term 'Country' and the language surrounding it was all encompassing, invoking a sense of patriotism and inclusiveness, a broad church inviting all political creeds and persuasions, from Whigs, Tories, monarchists, republicans, Jacobites and independents. The 'barrenness of Country ideology' and 'sterility' of political associations during the period that Pocock and Lewis Wiggins refer to,

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88 Hayton, 'The Country Interest and the Party System', p. 65.

89 Stephen Farrell, 'County Members and Country Politicians,' *History of Parliament Trust*, <<http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/themes/politics/country-gentlemen>> [accessed: 29 March 2016]

90 Max Skjönsberg, 'Lord Bolingbroke's theory of party and opposition', *The Historical Journal* (November, 2016), pp. 1-17.

underlines the idea that the Country had no definitive spiritual, economic or political policies. Rather, Country politicians and activists shared a broad set of overarching principles established on a fundamental desire to ensure honest government.<sup>91</sup> Conversely, the term 'Court' implied the opposite, having negative undertones, rather than positive connotations. Court became akin to exclusivity and mistrust, it conjured up notions of juntas, oligarchies, cabals and 'evil councillors' found in political documents dating back to the reign of James II.<sup>92</sup>

This thesis demonstrates that when an extensive examination of archival sources is consulted, the loaded term 'party' gradually disappears from public and private lexicons. It is replaced with other labels, more fitting with an environment increasingly sceptical of party language and the effect it could have. Sir William Chapman, a director of the South Sea Company handling the national debt, organised elections to 'set up a person fit to represent them on the Country interest'.<sup>93</sup> Across a number of constituencies, meetings were held 'to consider proper persons in the Country interest to represent them in the ensuing parliament'.<sup>94</sup> In such situations, Country terminology was utilised and understood widely, repeatedly countering the 'unjust machinations of the Court', a grievance appearing in numerous correspondence in several variations.<sup>95</sup>

#### IV

Spanning five chapters, this thesis forms the first systematic study of the anatomy of the Country interest during the early eighteenth century. While serving as a thematic revision of Walpole's tenure in office, this work addresses the transition of power from party to faction and from peace to

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91 Pocock, *Language, Politics and Time*, p. 124; Lewis Wiggin, *The Faction of Cousins, A Political Account of the Grenvilles: 1733–1763* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958), p. 24.

92 William Speck, *James II* (London: Pearson, 2002), p. 1.

93 William Chapman to Lady Marlborough, 31 August 1733, London, BL. Add. Ms. 61477, f. 52.

94 Printed Letter, 1 November 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 101.

95 Henry Johnson to Earl Strafford, 8 December 1734, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 573.

war, documenting paths of conflict and compromise based on the rise and fall of rival interest groups. By 1741, these groups had evolved into an unmovable bulwark to force Walpole's resignation. The dramatic changes that occurred when factions obtained the reins of government signified a shift in power from monarchy to parliament. Following a struggle for prominence, the Court and First Lord are seen to have been swept aside, alongside the prominence of the Country cause, which collapsed at its zenith. In its place, a set of headstrong ministers, starved of high office for twenty years, proceeded to alter the course of British politics fundamentally.

The First Chapter of this thesis implements the methods mentioned previously, opening with a discussion of the re-emergence of the Country interest and explaining how its members operated in the public eye. The pursuit of rustication prevailed over direct participation in state political affairs. Applying Hindle's micro-historical techniques to new sources, Chapter One uses popular press pieces and private correspondence to demonstrate that associates of the Country, from farmer to peer of the realm operated far from parliament, court and London. This distance was no obstacle, but a platform through which to associate with others, facilitating their rise to prominence. The Country maintained an external pressure on government, and as a result, exacted change without always being present at the centre of power.

Chapter Two takes its inspiration from the local histories of Innes and Wilson, tracing influential political operators back to their own boroughs and family seats, uncovering secretive conversations sometimes held in the confines of their own homes. While Chapter One focuses on the 'public sphere' primarily, Chapter Two concerns the power and proliferation of private politics. The movement of operations to more secluded environments is seen to assist in the breakdown of party structures. Small political associations maintained their momentum by hiding their endeavours, with faction, family connections and private social gatherings becoming all-important methods for the

Court and Country to manoeuvre effectively. Focusing on the collation of disparate manuscripts, the secret sphere of politics is penetrated, revealing how small groups of like-minded people colluded to see their business completed.

The purpose of Chapters Three, Four and Five will be to address the concerns of Brewer, reinvigorating attention of the subject by focusing on the measures, actions, or rather the principles of interest groups. The Country cause forms a central point of focus throughout, its renaissance, composition and rivals explained. The three main points of contention – corruption, parties and war serve as platforms through which to understand the political structures of the period effectively in Chapters Three, Four and Five. This reveals how the Country attempted to overcome their concerns, using private and public political channels outlined in Chapters One and Two, as a basis to explain how the Country instigated changes to their political environment, by putting their principles into practice.

Chapter Three examines how the Country prevented Walpole from exercising power, by developing a culture that shamed corruption rather than accepted it. This chapter reveals how the Country helped form a society that largely detested patronage rather than embraced it. Chapter Four deals with the primary Country issue, a belief that the prevalence of Whig and Tory was fundamentally dangerous to the process of good government. Throughout Chapter Four, associates of the Country interest are seen to dismantle political parties in both practice and public perception. Walpole's grip over domestic politics is revealed in a new light, with the power of his ministry diminished, representing a success for the Country that has never been accredited them in the historiography. Chapters Three and Four bring the actions and impact of the Country, if not their entire existence during the mid-eighteenth century to the fore of research, situating them where they belong, not in the peripheries of politics or the footnotes of monographs, but at the centre of historical debate.

While the Country aversion to corruption and party politics are addressed in Chapters Three and Four, the Fifth and final Chapter focuses on the last major concern of the Country cause, the prevention of war. As the closing chapter of this thesis, Chapter Five documents the rise of a powerful faction, the Patriots, an extended family of bellicose politicians who sought to embroil Britain in a global war. At the point when intervention in a foreign war was being discussed, Walpole's ability to preside over his administration had been weakened by Country efforts, which had severed the ability of the Court to control government with party loyalties and patronage.

Chapter Five explores the transformed nature of early-modern politics, with the outbreak of war and the events that followed shaping a new face of statecraft irrecoverably. In Britain, faction reached its peak, with associates of the Court and Country cast aside. Using a broader set of sources and methodologies, the findings of Namier are corroborated, with this thesis plotting the route taken in politics as moving from partisan to factional within the space of two decades. In this thesis, it is emphasised that Walpole was far from being a prime minister, with Chapter Five making it clear he had little option but to operate as one individual among many.

The First Lord is seen to struggle when asserting himself amid the turbulent era of political turmoil and social instability, his tenure in office proving to be a watershed for new foreign and domestic measures. Amid the failing diplomatic and military efforts of Britain during the War of Jenkin's Ear, the factional opposition to Walpole, his successors, had evolved into an unmovable bulwark to force his resignation. A set of headstrong ministers entered government, proceeding to alter the character and capacity of British politics fundamentally, in such ways that Country politicians and even Walpole's penchant for the status quo would never have permitted. This series of dramatic events had been spurred mostly by the efforts of Country politicians, whose associates formed to protest

corruption, parties and armed conflict. Seeking to advise monarch and ministers alike on how to govern justly, prudently and honestly, the Country interest experienced a renaissance. Their power and influence, established on rustication, allowed Country politicians to form strong bonds with their rural communities. Retreating to their estates, advocates of the Country found inspiration to write polemic and satire that moulded political dialogue to their whim, captivating a public audience to support their cause, a subject that will now be explored in Chapter One.

## Chapter One

### The Roots of the Country Interest: Language, Rustication and Publication

The view of Pocock, emphasised in the introduction, is that the study of language helps form an effective understanding of history.<sup>1</sup> Tone Urstad claims a media driven political climate was created after 1688, where 'certain words and phrases acquired distinct political overtones'.<sup>2</sup> In her view, Walpole's administration was fraught with bitter ideological differences, forming a 'sensitivity to language only possible at times of extreme political polarisation'.<sup>3</sup> Despite these insights, Urstad fails to research the distinctive language of interest and factional based politics, claiming instead that 'writers routinely divided along party lines'.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, Urstad argues that printers were also 'generally sympathetic to the party line'.<sup>5</sup> This chapter reveals an alternative conclusion to those upheld by Urstad. Through an exploration of the language used in polemic and satire, advocates of the Country interest are seen to both write and publish non-partisan works, which were circulated in large quantities frequently. What made these popular works so appealing was the language used, which became increasingly disparaging of Whig and Tory divisions. A broader vocabulary was instituted in Country writings, attracting supporters from conflicting ends of the political spectrum and compelling readers to focus their efforts on wider principles, such as the prevention of war, corruption and parties.

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1 Pocock, *Language, Politics and Time*, p. 31.

2 Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, pp. 12, 16.

3 *Ibid*, p. 16.

4 *Ibid*, p. 30.

5 *Ibid*, p. 40.



With focus placed on the examination of language in printed ephemera, far more politically neutral writers are found to be in operation than has been reflected in the historiography. It is argued that Country journals and pamphlets see regular contributions from politically independent individuals, a factor that has been underestimated by historians. Another group of scribblers for hire, known to contemporaries by the colloquial term 'bureaucrats', wrote on behalf of multiple, conflicting patrons for money. Daniel Defoe was one such bureaucrat, who tapped into the use of Country jargon, to increase the reach and profitability of his works.<sup>6</sup> In contrast to Urstad's view, printers also abandoned contracts with unprofitable party rags, cashing in on publishing increasingly popular Country journals instead. For example, Henry Haines faced dangerous threats when spearheading the manufacture of Country fervour in the press. This chapter reveals those who organised, printed, promoted, sponsored and contributed to Country works opposing Walpole, often risked imprisonment, sabotage, fines, even the prospect of bodily harm and murder for making their views public.

Despite their efforts to dominate the minds of others, Walpole's administration struggled to monopolise the press in London and its surrounding regions. The fierce competition between rival interest groups to control the flow of confidential political information is explored in greater detail. Through their persistence in the press, Country politicians became arbiters of state affairs. What Habermas declared as the ever burgeoning 'public sphere' is argued to have contracted instead.<sup>7</sup> This chapter uncovers how a paper war developed that became so controversial, both Court and Country were driven underground to conduct their political operations with greater secrecy.

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6 *Ibid*, p. 57.

7 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, p. 131.

The renaissance of the Country interest owed its success to one major factor. This was the way its adherents overcame pernicious and derogatory words, developed by their opponents to suppress them. Advocates of the Country were painted and subsequently tainted by the views of their detractors, who used party terminologies in the press to divide and rule, alongside specific phrases disparaging those of a Country disposition. Examining this language, Chapter One focuses on several contemporaries, who engaging in a war of words, recaptured the vocabulary used to blandish them. Transforming a formerly negative vernacular, the Country transmuted insults against them into principles they believed represented their cause in a positive light, which helps to explain their successful rise to prominence.

In their letters to friends and family, it will be shown that politicians began including terms such as Court, Country and interest, rather than Whig, Tory or party, which was disappearing from public usage as it became unfashionable. This marked a shift in the political landscape, with people beginning to write political tracts and personal correspondence in a certain style, adapting to changes witnessed in their environment. The formulation of a distinctive Country *patois* throughout the early eighteenth century is revealed.

The correlation between rustication and the formulation of a distinct Country culture has not been addressed properly in the historiography before now. Scholars of eighteenth-century history often support the method of linking contemporary motivations and behaviour, praising its benefits, yet none have ventured to investigate the important relationship between rustication and Country politics. Habermas argues for a greater synergy between the study of thought and actions in history.<sup>8</sup> Harry Dickinson stresses the need to forge links between rhetoric and reality, ideas and

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8 Jane Braaten, *Habermas's Critical Theory of Society* (Albany: New York University Press, 1991), p. 17.

behaviour.<sup>9</sup> In doing this, Linda Colley and Mark Goldie argue that Dickinson endorses Skinner's view, that 'politicians who proclaim their principles are engaged in the process of "legitimation" in which political activities (albeit self-interested) are justified and constrained by the attitudes which a society is prepared to admire and condemn'.<sup>10</sup>

Chapter One begins with an application of the approaches mentioned above, explaining the close political relationship between rustication and self-reflection, which contributed greatly to the survival and transformation of Country principles. The language of the Country interest derives from the activities of its advocates in their pastoral environment. Secluded from the contemporary spotlights and the scope of historians, who tend to focus on central state affairs and Walpole's ministry as they operated it in the City, a broader range of individuals are investigated, alongside their writings and actions as they attempted to 'legitimise' the Country cause.

Since their inception, rustication had been a hallmark of the Country interest. This tradition defined many of its advocates as much as it saw them maligned by those of the Court. From the view of their detractors, Country politicians were stereotyped as isolationists, who never ventured beyond their garden gates to understand the realities of the wider world and complexities of central politics. These disparaging remarks, which continue to stain their reputation and downplay their importance, are reasons why historians have rarely focused on their cause in modern works. It can be stated however, that the Country interest formed extensive social and literary networks, with Chapter One unearthing the widespread, organised logistics of this external pressure group to government.

It will be seen that provincial homes, farms and rural estates became an effective platform for the

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9 Harry Dickinson, *Liberty and Property, Political Ideologies in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London: Methuen, 1977), pp. 6–7; for Dickinson's view on the Country interest, see *Liberty and Property*, p. 170.

10 Colley & Goldie, 'The Principles and Practice of Eighteenth-Century Party', p. 245.

Country to protest and influence. Organising political affairs there became so effective that Walpole and his fellow ministers emulated it. To nuance the view of Pocock, it was not the town in which politicians began to meet instead of court, but the wider countryside in its totality.<sup>11</sup> From these locations, the development of a Country press occurred, whose contributors and readership not only lived in London, but across Britain and even Europe. Gerrard states that there 'was no organised literary opposition to Walpole, just as there was no such thing as a monolithic parliamentary opposition'.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to this view, the Country interest is argued to have provided structure and sponsorship for a powerful literary and political opposition to Court.

Section One begins with an analysis of how contemporary language was used to depict the Country cause, from the view of its supporters and opponents. Section Two reveals how and why politicians used their rusticated, pastoral platform and language to remodel the Country image and establish a press network, culminating in their success as they rose to prominence. The Third and final section reveals how advocates of a resurgent Country interest attracted talented writers to print and publish on behalf of their cause, securing them literary acclaim and public support at the expense of their Court rivals. Language, rustication and the press are themes that overlap significantly in every part of this chapter, displaying how important and interwoven they were to the efforts of Country.

### **The Use and Impact of Pastoral Language**

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11 John Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History: Essays on Political Thought and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 237.

12 Christine Gerrard, 'Political Passions', in John Sitter (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 45.

The ascendancy of a Country administration during the closing years of Anne's reign had threatened the hegemony of politicians such as Joseph Addison and his Court patrons. In his government newspaper, the *Freeholder*, Addison ridiculed many of his opponents, portraying them as bigoted, xenophobic 'fox-hunters'.<sup>13</sup> At the time of publication for Richard Steele's satire, *Sir Roger De Coverley*, the Country interest had become synonymous with 'fox-hunters', represented ultimately as 'old fashioned', 'amusing' and the detritus of a 'bygone age'.<sup>14</sup> The language of pastoral politics continued into the tenure of Sir Robert Walpole, where canvassing for votes was likened to a 'great chase'.<sup>15</sup> In an attempt to nullify the stigma attached to the term 'fox-hunter' by Court writers, Country polemicists reiterated that they were the hunt masters, never willing to be political creatures such as a minister's horse or hounds.<sup>16</sup> Wriothesley Russell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Bedford delighted in how Alexander Pope, one of the most fearsome social critics of his day often waxed lyrical in the defence of Country principles.<sup>17</sup> Jonathan Swift also championed the cause of Country politicians, writing poetry in praise of his friends who took their sport to parliament, in order to harry their quarry, Walpole, from public office-

Then, honest Robin, of thy corpse beware;

Thou art not half so nimble as a hare;

So keen thy hunters and thy scent so strong,

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13 Joseph Addison, *The Freeholder*, Monday, 5 March 1715, no. 22 (London: J. Tonson, 1744), pp. 122–128.

14 Mandy Belin, *From the Deer to the Fox: The Hunting Transition and the Landscape: 1600–1850*, v. 6 (Hertfordshire: Hertfordshire University Press, 2013), p. 127; John Hampden (ed), *R. Steele & J. Addison, Sir Roger de Coverley* (London: Folio Society, 1967), p. 68.

15 Richard Wardman to Earl Strafford, 24 May 1734, Wentworth Castle, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 157; also see a letter from Lord Bolingbroke to William Wyndham in Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 8.

16 Alexander Pope to Mrs Howard, October 1727, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 3.

17 Lord Bedford to Earl Strafford, 5 August 1725, BL. Add. Ms. 31141, f. 311; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. xlii–xlv; for an excellent collection of poetry and remarks by Pope and John Dryden on rustication and Country principles, see Rachel Miller, 'Regal Hunting: Dryden's Influence on Windsor-Forest', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 13.2 (1980), pp. 169–188.

Thy turns and doublings cannot save thee long.<sup>18</sup>

Several other hunting poems were written in a similar style, sometimes published and disseminated as political songs, ballads and jigs. Stanzas of Country poems were often formed around recognisable tunes such as *Lillibullero* and *Packington's Pound*, with Kate Horgan stating these verses were often cheaper for larger numbers of people to acquire than copies of newspapers.<sup>19</sup> Containing lyrics that were simple, popular, musical and memorable, they resided in contemporary memory, spreading through word of mouth to people who might not be able to read but were interested in politics nevertheless.<sup>20</sup> These copy-cat poems were incredibly useful to the Country cause, who could reach out with their rustic message to the farmworker as much as they did the highly literate and wealthy noble. Contemporary dramatist, Aaron Hill, encountered such poems in some of the most isolated regions of Britain, informing his friend Pope, that he found one in the possession of 'an old fashioned country gentleman's, who lives in a hole at the foot of a hill, and a wood, like the cave of some captain of Banditti'.<sup>21</sup> Individuals throughout the period were continually inspired by pastoral poetry, producing bucolic verses frequently, with one such example shown below, referencing politics in Country terms.

As with hounds and with horn,

We rise in the morn,

With vigour the fox to pursue:

Corruption our cries,

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18 Jonathan Swift, 'On Mr Pulteney being put out of the Council, 1731', in Jonathan Swift, *The Poetical Works of Jonathan Swift*, v. 3 (London: William Pickering, 1834), pp. 164–165.

19 Kate Horgan, *The Politics of Songs in Eighteenth-Century Britain, 1723–1795* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 21.

20 Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 121; also, see examples of these poems printed in D'anvers, *Craftsman*, 2 December 1729, 7.178, p. 335.

21 This anecdote can be found in Ian Jack, *The Poet and His Audience* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), p. 179.

Shall chase, 'till it dies:

Tis a worthy, a British True-Blue.<sup>22</sup>

Sporting themes in poems appealed to readers during the period and William Somerville's tracts on fox hunting were copied into the journals of biographers such as George Ballard.<sup>23</sup> So too, at court, 'those who talk with no more eloquence and the no more interesting subjects of a fox chase or the newest fashions of gluttony are reckoned at the top of polite conversation'.<sup>24</sup> During the annual meeting of the Westminster Scholars in 1731, Walpole's detractors opened proceedings with rhetorical verses on rural sport, forming allusions to the ministry of the day.<sup>25</sup> The First Lord was not ignorant of these allusions being cast upon him, having remarked to a friend on one sporting excursion — 'you see, I hunt whilst others hunt me'.<sup>26</sup> Throughout the early eighteenth century, these typically neutral subjects assumed political overtones, with metaphorical devices used to represent the nature of Walpole's administration instead.<sup>27</sup>

The pastoral and political became an appealing concoction and due to its language and content, this style had become associated with the writings of the Country interest, having evolved from earlier periods. It is estimated that 100,000 copies of Henry Sacheverell's sermon were produced in the wake of his attack on Anne's ministry, a vitriolic Country oration that likened Lord High Treasurer, Sidney Godolphin, to Volpone.<sup>28</sup> With a high volume of sales, the comparisons drawn between

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22 Milton Percival (ed), *Political Ballads Illustrating the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole*, song 41 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1916), p. 108.

23 William Somerville, Hunting Song, Bodl. Ballard Ms. 47, 10833, f. 4.

24 Lord Hervey to Lady Bristol, 2 December 1738, St. James, SRO. Ickworth MS. 941/47/2, ff. 263–264.

25 The London Medley, *Containing the Exercises Spoken by Several Young Noblemen and Gentlemen at the Annual Meeting of the Westminster Scholars, 28 January 1731* (London: 1731), p. 1.

26 Egmont Mss, 24 February 1742, v. 3, p. 257.

27 Terry Gifford, *Pastoral: The New Critical Idiom* (London: Routledge, 1999).

28 There has been significant debate regarding the original amount sold, the figure was first provided by, William Speck, in John Kenyon, *Revolution Principles, The Politics of Party 1689–1720* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p. 230; for caveats, see Frederick Lock, *Swift's Tory Politics* (London: Duckworth, 1983), pp. 10–11;

politician and animal proved popular, capturing public imagination. In the Country press during the eighteenth century, Walpole also took on the form of several beasts. While he was often made to epitomise the sly and cunning fox, a wily prey that required culling, Swift also insinuated Walpole's intent was to subvert the foundations of government secretly, 'for the rabbit is an undermining animal that loves to work in the dark'.<sup>29</sup>

Despite fox hunting being a widely popular activity in Britain, Allyson May argues the term became a weapon in the press to depict Country politicians as rustic bumpkins, 'dunces' and 'sots', who idled their time in endless leisure, only stopping to involve themselves in domestic and foreign matters they did not fully comprehend.<sup>30</sup> Contrary to the misconceptions of Addison, Country politics did not appeal to an illiterate backwoods gentry, nor did it exemplify its advocates as 'Little Englanders'.<sup>31</sup> Some supporters of the Country cause were learned individuals. Thomas Rawlinson and Robert Harley were Country bibliophiles who read as many books as they collected.<sup>32</sup> Edward Harley, successor to the Earldom of Oxford inherited his father's library and Country principles. Likening good government to the effective management of a country home, Harley argued:

Nothing but a strict control and a constant and exact inspection into their acts can prevent abuses which is in their power to commit. Every office of government is subjected to these, and so ought to be the management of every large estate and I see where this thoroughness

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the figures are corroborated (but not verified) by others, including, Leslie Stephen & Sidney Lee, (eds), *The Dictionary of National Biography*, v. 17 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1885–1900), p. 570; original sermon, see Henry Sacheverell, *The Perils of False Brethren, Both in Church and State, Set Forth in a Sermon Preached 5<sup>th</sup> November 1709* (London: Henry Clements, 1709).

29 Jonathan Swift to Mrs Howard, 27 November 1726, Dublin, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 7.

30 Allison May, *The Fox Hunting Controversy: 1781–2004, Class and Cruelty* (London: Routledge, 2016), pp. 1–10; Robert Malcolmson, *Popular Recreations in English Society: 1700–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 158.

31 Ellis, 'William III and the Politicians', p. 128; Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* p. 400.

32 Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* p. 176.



has been neglected, distress has been brought upon families.<sup>33</sup>

Harley framed his perspectives around the experiences he encountered in his rural seat, but this did not mean that he was ignorant of the realities of the wider world, nor that it was the only life he understood. The renaissance in Country fervour during the early eighteenth century coincided with the childhood of dramatist, Henry Fielding, who used the views of people such as Harley, for material to lampoon Country politicians later in his life.<sup>34</sup> In the comic novel, *Tom Jones*, Fielding's satire of the Country interest, squire Western personified the limited education of its adherents, a man 'incapable of describing anything without a hunting analogy'.<sup>35</sup> Elaine McGirr explains how Fielding, a member of the Patriot faction in the 1730s, vilified associates of the Country interest as closet Jacobites and uncultured grumblers.<sup>36</sup> In literary terms, the fox-hunter, according to Mandy Belin, was viewed at best as a 'figure of fun', and at worst a dangerous 'villain'.<sup>37</sup>

Addison also claimed the Country interest 'lived out of the way of being better informed or educated', acting merely as 'ornaments' to political affairs, immaterial to the world they lived in and 'critical of foreigners'.<sup>38</sup> As an opponent of the Country, Addison believed his friends at Court were more qualified for positions of state because they embarked on the Grand Tour or were better acquainted with urban life. This Whiggish ideological stance is upheld in the writings of Macaulay and still permeates through works of political history today, dissuading efforts to properly explain

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33 Edward Harley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Oxford to Edward Harley, 27 July 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 73081, f. 112.

34 Ros Ballaster, 'A Gender of Opposition: Eliza Haywood's Scandal Fiction', in Kelly Saxton & Rebecca Bocchicchio (eds), *The Passionate Fictions of Eliza Haywood, Essays on Her Life and Work* (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 2000), p. 146.

35 Belin, *From the Deer to the Fox*, p. 128.

36 Elaine McGirr, *Eighteenth Century Characters: A Guide to the Literature of the Age* (London: Palgrave, 2007), p. 58.

37 Belin, *From the Deer to the Fox*, p. 127.

38 Joseph Addison, *The Freeholder*, no. 14 (London: 1715), p. 9.

the composition, principles and capabilities of the Country interest.<sup>39</sup> Wisdom being the astute application of knowledge, or as Walpole's friend, John Hervey, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron Hervey, stated, to 'know everything but understand nothing', was a peril both the First Lord's ministry and the Country squirearchy avoided.<sup>40</sup> Country politicians in particular did not find it acceptable to assume the most important qualifications for office derived purely from the experience of other cultures.

James Brydges, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Chandos, refused to send his son abroad until he made a tour of England first, confirming the prejudice levelled against him by his detractors. It was Chandos' view, however, that his son must learn about 'a country which they owe so much improvement'.<sup>41</sup> Only then, did he believe that a person could properly contrast the situation in Britain with that overseas, allowing him to return with a better appreciation of the need to make his nation a better place. Country politicians rusticated to better assist their local communities, seeking respite from the damage caused by parties and warmongering, which seemed to emanate from a corrupt centre of government. Many felt obliged to undertake this paternal aspect of Country philosophy.<sup>42</sup> What is seen throughout this thesis, found within the writings and actions of Country advocates, is that the group possessed far more sophisticated and complicated outlooks than has been suggested.

## **Politics from the Peripheries: Rustication and the Country Cause**

Rustication inspired Country sentiment throughout the period. Despite individuals forming a

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39 For an excellent summation of Whig history on this subject, see Pocock, *Virtue, Commerce and History*, p. 237.

40 Lord Hervey to Horatio Walpole, 31 October 1735, St. James Palace, BL. Add. Mss. 73773, f. 81.

41 Lord Chandos to Lord Athol, 22 July 1720, HL. MssST. 57, v. 18, f. 91.

42 Jennifer Mori, 'Hosting the Grand Tour, Civility, Enlightenment and Culture, c. 1740–1790', in Mary Hilton & Jill Shefrin (eds), *Educating the Child in Enlightenment Britain: Beliefs, Cultures and Practices* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2009), p. 129.

Country philosophy from this measure, it has been a vital part of the eighteenth-century political process long ignored by historians. Misconceptions about rustication prevail in the historiography, primarily because interest groups of the period operated outside the usual field of vision of political historians, away from the traditional institutions of state administration, such as court and parliament. This omission does not mean those of a Country disposition ceased to affect the politics of the day however. In this chapter, it is emphasised that obscured from the visible centres of power, the Country interest accomplished their endeavours to great effect. New appreciation is given to the scale and complexity of pressure groups during the period, by understanding how associates of the Country interest envisioned their goals and aspired to attain them in a rural environment, far from London and in some cases, their neighbours also.

The composition of the Country interest was not sustained by a mass of amateur and bullish aspiring statesmen, as Farrell has been apt to suggest.<sup>43</sup> The Country interest drew support from several different advocates of various skills and talents. Some associating themselves with the Country cause were seasoned politicians, experienced diplomats and prominent landowners. Chandos, like the archetypal Country politician, Thomas Wentworth, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Strafford, possessed extensive contacts in the City, alongside an intimate knowledge and involvement with industrial and commercial enterprises.<sup>44</sup> Paul Foley, responsible for bankrolling Country politicians to obtain office in 1710, had made his fortune as an iron-master in the Midlands. Establishing foundries across the nation, Foley shared his time and knowledge in ventures not just in London, but across Britain.

Numerous others gravitated toward the Country cause during the period, such as the gregarious,

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43 Stephen Farrell, 'County Members and Country Politicians'.

44 Samuel Lambley to Earl Strafford, 22 March 1739, Ipswich, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 4.

Philip Stanhope, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Chesterfield, who travelled Europe extensively in his capacity as an ambassador. An independent politician, Chesterfield was said to be 'generally beloved by everybody', considered 'the prettiest gentleman of our time' and 'the greatest wit in all England'.<sup>45</sup> Sometimes working for and against Walpole, he was learned, precocious and aligned himself frequently behind the momentum of Country sentiments in the press and parliament. Not adverse to speaking his mind to friend and foe alike, Chesterfield often supported traditional Country measures to prevent corruption, war and parties, but also professed little tolerance for what he deemed the more unrefined fox-hunters of his day, calling them dimwitted 'boobies'.<sup>46</sup>

A natural balance was sought in Country politics, appealing to the moderate, independent nature of its members forming the body of the cause. Rustication had its pitfalls, just as being a city dweller did; it was a fine line that Chandos hoped his son would tread carefully. On one side of the moral precipice on which his son could fall, was that he might 'become good for nothing, but to lead a negligent life and to turn a downright simple country gentleman', where Chandos argued he would 'spend time amongst horses, dogs and bowling with the meanest of company, or else to turn rake about town and run into all the extravagances of that race of people'.<sup>47</sup> To be a courtier was often perceived to be an apologiser for decadent and imprudent men. So too, it was difficult to shake the vision of a fox-hunter being anybody other than somebody akin to Country politician, Henry Boyle, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Lord Carleton, a famously solitary individual who bemoaned government, flanked by his hounds continually amid the glow of his fireplace.<sup>48</sup>

While some Country advocates rusticated to escape the ills of court and city life, not all did so with

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45 John Delaporte to Lord Essex, 15 March 1736, London, BL. Add. Ms. 27735, f. 110; November 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 31; Lady Suffolk to Earl Chesterfield, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 115.

46 Raymond Carr, *English Fox Hunting, A History* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1976), p. 198.

47 Lord Chandos to Lord Carnarvon, 23 July 1722, HL. MssST. 57, v. 21, f. 33.

48 Lord Chandos to Earl Burlington, 26 July 1725, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 25, f. 184.

honourable intentions. Robert Knight found in the Country cause a means to atone for his past behaviour. Knight had been notorious for his role as the absconding cashier of the South Sea Company, fleeing to France in 1721 to escape imprisonment for embezzlement. For all his ill-gotten gains, on clement days he would stand on the shores of Calais, gazing upon the cliffs of Dover 'perfectly unhappy that he may never breath the air of dear old England again'.<sup>49</sup> Knight desired the best for his family and to avoid the sins of the father being visited upon his son. The advice Knight imparted on his son, young Robert, was to travel, but never abandon 'a country life' or his Country friends, so that he may always 'understand and relish the management of Country affairs'.<sup>50</sup>

One such friend Knight could never abandon and had great esteem for was Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, who was himself no stranger to vacating Britain also. Pledging his support for James III and emigrating in 1714, Bolingbroke escaped a warrant that had been issued for his arrest, but found it difficult to settle in Europe without closure as to his fate in England. As the architect of eighteenth-century Country ideology, Bolingbroke had observed the politics of other countries during his flight and would later declare himself 'an inhabitant of the world'.<sup>51</sup> By no means a 'Little Englander', it was a global outlook his friends related with increasingly during the period. Sir William Wyndham and others, speaking on behalf of the Country interest in parliament frequently brought up the subject of British politics and how they related to other governments in Europe.<sup>52</sup>

The reversal of Bolingbroke's attainder in 1723 permitted his return to England, allowing him to focus on political matters in Britain with greater confidence. In private conversation, Walpole had

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49 Carlisle Mss, p. 28; Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 1, p. 257.

50 Robert Knight (The Elder) to Lord Bolingbroke, 1734, BL. Add. Ms. 45889, f. 3.

51 Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, 29 November 1735, Paris, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 19, f. 37.

52 Debates in Parliament, Tuesday, 7 May 1728, BL. Add. Ms. 47000, f. 31.

proved one of the more reluctant politicians to facilitate Bolingbroke's restoration.<sup>53</sup> Bolingbroke was a popular figure among the Country interest and because of this, Walpole did little to help secure his full pardon. The First Lord did not assist Bolingbroke in his full capacity, which ensured the undying hostility of a man who would haunt the Walpole's tenure in office, setting the Country on a collision course with Court.<sup>54</sup>

Frequently embittered with the miasma of high politics, Bolingbroke voluntarily returned to exile in 1735, taking rustication to its conclusion, by spending much of the remainder of his life in Touraine.<sup>55</sup> Bolingbroke's retreat to France was lamented by his companions in Britain, who relied on his guidance, especially those who had rusticated in its rural environs. As Matthew McCormack states and Brean Hammond corroborates, 'Country theorists' maintained that cities were synonymous with 'vice, luxury and death, whereas the countryside embodied the traditional Old English values of purity, benevolence and healthy vigour'.<sup>56</sup> John Gay, one of Bolingbroke's fellow Country politicians embodied this outlook, with Kramnick stating that Gay always waxed lyrical about Augustan Humanism and how it prospered in the rural countryside, his Arcadia, where free from 'venal corruption', both 'men and life were genuine and natural'.<sup>57</sup>

With many studies of statecraft focused on London-centric people and their papers, it is often taken

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53 Robert Walpole to Lord Townshend, 23 June 1723, Whitehall, BL. Stowe. Ms. 251, ff. 13–14; Harry Dickinson, *Bolingbroke* (London: Constable, 1970), pp. 178–179; Lord Chandos to Lord Bolingbroke, 18 July 1723, HL. MssST. 57, v. 22, f. 185; Chandos at Cannons served as arbiter between Walpole and Bolingbroke.

54 Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, pp. 181, 212; Lord Bathurst to Mrs Howard, 24 September 1727, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 16; Lord Bathurst was part of Bolingbroke's circle and prepared to keep quiet if Walpole ensured their return to politics on good terms; Lord Newcastle to Edward Becher, 5 July 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 270; Lord Gower was also part of the aggrieved party, but Newcastle believed Walpole and He 'would be too cunning for them', offering nothing but false promises.

55 Anon, *Memoirs of the Life and Ministerial Conduct, with some Free Remarks on the Political Writings of the Late Lord Viscount Bolingbroke* (London: R. Baldwin, 1752), pp. 323–325.

56 Matthew McCormack, *The Independent Man: Citizenship and Gender Politics in Georgian England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2005), p. 65; Brean Hammond, 'The City in Eighteenth-Century Poetry', in Sitter, *The Cambridge Companion to Eighteenth-Century Poetry*, p. 90.

57 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, pp. 223–227.

for granted that most of the British population resided in the countryside. In the historiography, less emphasis has been placed to reveal rural inhabitants were politicised also, largely thanks to the Country press and its rusticated politicians, who proliferated the cause in their communities, spreading its message to those who worked for and engaged with them in social activities. The most ignored aspect of this subject however, was the important role that women played in the renaissance of Country attitudes.

Jennifer Mori argues 'the rural world and its values had changed little over the course of a century', with country life and Country politics linked inextricably in the 1750s as much as they were in earlier periods.<sup>58</sup> This not only appealed to rustivating men, but influenced their female family members also. Mori shows convincingly, that many women enjoyed describing themselves as a 'Country Lady'.<sup>59</sup> Like their Country husbands, several ladies were far more comfortable in their rural environments than living within the corrupting influences of the city. They were uninterested in engaging with the formalities and duplicities of court life. As Nicole Pohl attests, but also revealed in later chapters of this thesis, the rural family unit became extremely important to political manoeuvring in the early eighteenth century, with mothers of talented, rising politicians playing an active role in shaping their political culture.<sup>60</sup>

Not merely conjugal coordinators of their households, Country ladies wrote to each other and read political discourses also, of which Bolingbroke and his pen was considered a 'master of that art'.<sup>61</sup>

Despite his regretted move to France, Bolingbroke showed his friends that power could be achieved

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58 Jennifer Mori, *The Culture of Diplomacy in Britain and Europe, c. 1750–1830* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), p. 77.

59 *Ibid*, p. 77.

60 Nicole Pohl, 'Cosmopolitan Bluestockings', in Deborah Heller (ed), *Bluestockings Now! The Evolution of a Social Role* (Oxon: Ashgate, 2015), p. 93.

61 Anne Bedingfield to Henrietta Howard, 1728, HL. HM. 6685.

to affect change on government through the press and rustication, without ever stepping foot at court. Henrietta Howard, Countess of Suffolk, received a letter from her retired maid, Anne Bedingfield, who let her know that Bolingbroke had triggered a reinvigoration in the Country cause 'by way of encouragement', having 'wrought a miracle amongst them (Country politicians)'. The Country message was spread across rural counties of Britain, its principles injecting exuberance into the despondent, Bedingfield noticing 'the old are young again and as gay as the present spring'.<sup>62</sup>

Bolingbroke's withdrawal to the Continent reflected a conflictive situation in Country politics. It brought into question what Hoppit considers 'public service', and whether this could only be achieved through direct political participation.<sup>63</sup> John Hough, Bishop of Worcester, lamented 'an unavoidable condition of retirement was that whoever seeks after it must become a stranger to great men and great affairs'.<sup>64</sup> Others reiterated this sentiment, believing 'a young man should be in the World', and that 'only old men retire into the country'.<sup>65</sup> Countering these beliefs, Bolingbroke evinced to his protégée, Wyndham, that 'he who is out of the fray sees the progress of it in every part and foresees upon the whole events of it better than any who is in it can'.<sup>66</sup> This inspired confidence in the Country, who working externally to government, found ways to extol their politics, by setting up an extensive press network to dismantle their opponents.

Gerrard states that in early-modern Britain, classical philosophers 'never lost their exemplary appeal'.<sup>67</sup> It certainly affected Bolingbroke, who advocated the exemplary appeal of classic history, having read the ethical lessons of Dionysius, who taught that 'history is moral philosophy teaching

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62 *Ibid*,

63 Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* p. 158.

64 Bishop of Worcester to Lord Hardwicke, 24 August 1741, Hartlebury, BL. Add. Ms. 35586, f. 391.

65 Robert Knight (The Elder) to Lord Bolingbroke, 1734, BL. Add. Ms. 45889, f. 3.

66 Viscount Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, 9 June 1737, WSRO. Petworth Ms; Bolingbroke, *Of The True Use Of Retirement And Study, To Lord Bathurst*, in Bolingbroke, *The Works of Lord Bolingbroke*, v. 2 (Philadelphia: Carey & Hart, 1841).

67 Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole*, p. 9.



by examples'.<sup>68</sup> Bolingbroke's example was emulated by Country politicians, who also modelled themselves on benevolent individuals from antiquity. While Hervey wrote for the Court, he drew inspiration from different people than his opponents, claiming he 'plundered Ovid like a Country person does Tillotson'.<sup>69</sup> Popular prints written on Country subjects were informed by history routinely, alongside poetical works from John Dryden, William Marvell and others.

Sheila Burttt deploys the claims of Michael Zuckert, to attest that humanism was spread during the period, because of a revival in the thoughts and actions of 'Country gentlemen', who expanded the debate for rationality, critical thinking and empiricism in politics.<sup>70</sup> The philosophies of John Locke were prized highly by Country politicians also, notably because Anthony Ashley Cooper, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Shaftesbury, one of the earliest and highly notable Country politicians, acted as Locke's sponsor.<sup>71</sup> Robbins was justified in claiming that Shaftesbury's writings (and later Newtonian thought), could instil in people the idea that if they understood and abided by the laws of nature, then they could live a virtuous existence.<sup>72</sup> Country thinkers often drew their own parallels between the concepts of natural rights and laws with their own rusticated platforms, pastoral views and bucolic language.

As James Van Horn Melton identifies, the Country looked to the past, not the future for moral lessons to establish the basis for good government.<sup>73</sup> Justin Champion argues the contemporary need to replicate ancient virtue formed a 'civil theology', with freethinkers such as John Toland proclaimed by his peers as a 'Cicero of the Country'.<sup>74</sup> Kramnick reiterates this point, arguing that

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68 William Dennison, *In Defence of Eschaton, Essays in Reformed Apologetics* (Eugene: Wipf & Stock, 2015), p. 97.

69 Lord Hervey to Mary Montagu, SRO. Ickworth MS.941/47/2, f. 9; referencing John Tillotson.

70 Shelley Burttt, 'Ideas of Corruption in Eighteenth-Century History', in William Heffernan & John Kleinig (eds), *Private and Public Corruption* (Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield, 2004), p. 105.

71 Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p. 79.

72 Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 14.

73 James Melton, *The Rise of the Public in Enlightenment Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 27.

74 Justin Champion, *The Pillars of Priestcraft Shaken: The Church of England and its Enemies, 1660–1730*

Country writers used historical examples of villains and heroes from around the world, to shame their opponents or reinforce their virtues.<sup>75</sup> Stoicism, in the examples of Cato the Younger and Marcus Favonius came to epitomise Country ideology. The works of these classicists had a profound impact on the Country, who became sceptical of the benefits of 'innovation'. The 'new' Whig desire for rapid 'progress', which McCormack identifies as being perpetuated by ministers of the Hanoverian government during the period, clashed with the cautious views of the Country, who were believed dogmatic and mentally antiquated by the Court as a result.<sup>76</sup>

Pocock explains that during the period, both Court and Country were locked in a 'battle of the books', each side using historical examples to justify their motives.<sup>77</sup> Associates of the Country interest attached themselves to the agrarian, prudent, ascetic, self-mastered and public Greeks, who valued the importance of individuals defending themselves militarily, representing themselves directly in politics and supporting themselves economically, without reliance on others. Advocates of the Court on the other hand, which Pocock argues 'so much of this was aimed at, strove to annex the Roman ideal to their own cause'.<sup>78</sup> Courtiers such as Addison professed themselves urban, leisurely, both cultured and cultivated. They abandoned the classical ideal of the sovereign citizen as 'armed proprietor' and in a modern, Roman fashion, borrowed money to pay for others to defend and govern on their behalf.<sup>79</sup> It was for this reason Country politicians believed themselves at risk of being subdued by a standing army funded by their Court opponents. It was for these same reasons why advocates of the Country feared being barred from a parliament that would fail to represent them, in a system of government dependent on money, open to oligarchy and corrupting

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(Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 184.

75 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, pp. 22, 28-29.

76 McCormack, *The Independent Man*, pp. 65-66.

77 Pocock, 'The Varieties of Whiggism', p. 235.

78 *Ibid*, p. 235.

79 *Ibid*, p. 235.

influences. It therefore rested on the shoulders of the Country to form a balance in politics, to safeguard against these dangers.

Primarily, the most important lesson a Country politician could learn was the value of political independence. To be devoid of partisan views was deemed a highly-coveted quality.<sup>80</sup> Bereft of party bias, an ideal Country politician was to remain impartial and moderate for the benefit of the nation. At court, Hervey scoffed at this ennobled and seemingly untenable stance, writing to Walpole's brother with much sarcasm about how Chesterfield claimed 'his kinsmen are too fond of the ancient Greek and Roman virtue to be the slave of power or the tool of an administration'.<sup>81</sup> These were views underpinning the appeal of the Country cause, preventing many of its advocates from forming lasting links with supporters of Walpole's administration, who were viewed to retain their power through party loyalties, pensions and patronage.

On the surface of events, it appears strange that Walpole was vilified by his rural opponents, the First Lord being 'a typical country squire' himself, emerging from a modest background usually attracting landed support.<sup>82</sup> Walpole upheld two cherished Country strategies also, a commitment to reduce the national debt and maintaining peace at all costs. Despite these appealing to the Country interest, the First Lord proved deficient in his efforts to curtail corrupt practices in government. Walpole proved a perpetual disappointment to the Country, with leadership from others sought.

Presiding over an administration packed with members of his own family and having formed a reliance on sycophants and pensioners loyal to salary or his own party, Walpole rarely sought the assistance of independents. The reason Walpole survived politically for such an extensive period,

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80 *Vain Glory: A Pretty Independent Print*, Adam Stanup of Eden Pinxit, December 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 78.

81 Lord Hervey to Horatio Walpole, 23 December 1735, St. James Palace, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 84.

82 Norris Brisco, *The Economic Policy of Sir Robert Walpole* (London: Columbia University Press, 1987), p. 21.

was due to the fact his opponents found him a lesser of other evils. Walpole proved less nefarious than his bellicose alternatives, such as the Patriot faction, whose jingoism the Country feared. Thus, it became a staple for the Country to assist opposing factions, only when they advocated policies to the benefit of ending corruption, war and parties. Country politicians held no entrenched allegiances, other than to their own conscience, moral codes and principles.

As the Country cause gathered strength during the early eighteenth century, its adherents became content with a lame government in the form of Walpole's administration. Rustication prevented politicians seeking office deliberately. Unable to influence from a place in government, Country politicians found a limited ministry required less effort to oppose, as Walpole chose either not to wield power, or was unable to do so in the face of scrutiny. For the Country interest, Walpole's administration was often a workable alternative to expending their energy preventing more youthful, energetic factions, such as the Patriots controlling matters of state, who were proactive in destroying a peace the Country valued highly. Walpole initiated legislation as his monarch required it and not in a proactive fashion, without the blessing of the king's council. When this process occurred, he often faced significant opposition and in some cases, was forced to abandon measures completely. Mistrusting of the Patriots and Walpole's administration, the Country focused on forming rival political associations instead. Attracting several dissidents to block policies they disagreed with, the Country began to use the press to ridicule those who threatened their cause.

As venerable conservators, political philosophers and defenders of moral principles, those who identified with the Country proclaimed to have 'stood fast in "true" patriotic opposition against corruption and Court politics'.<sup>83</sup> As the Country rose to prominence, its associates became

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83 Robert Voitle, 'The Third Earl of Shaftesbury: 1671–1713', in Howard Nenner, 'Review: Politics, Principles, and the King's Business in the Late Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth-Century', *Journal of British Studies*, 24.4

increasingly worried that armed forces would be used to oppress their views. According to Pocock, 'the standing army was a bogey intended for Country gentlemen, part of a hydra headed monster called Court influence or ministerial corruption, whose either heads were placemen, pensioners, national debt, excise and high taxation'.<sup>84</sup> Reflecting Pocock's metaphor, Martin Sandys intimated to his brother, the independent politician, Samuel Sandys, that 'these hydras must have all their heads chopped off at once or we shall never have done with them'.<sup>85</sup> The Country cause influenced from the peripheries, becoming associated with the process of defending the nation against 'standing armies of pensioners and soldiers, both of which could invade the common rights of Englishmen'.<sup>86</sup>

### **A Country in Schism: To Lead or Not to Lead?**

During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, advocates of the Country interest such as Bolingbroke and Swift, expressed fears that when the undermining of the political sphere was achieved, the destruction of the 'Old Constitution', alongside its societal and legal frameworks easily ensued.<sup>87</sup> If one generation tolerated corruption, the next would grow to accept it as normal practice. Eustace Budgell, a paranoid polemicist who believed Walpole intended to assassinate him, conveyed the sum of these fears to Lord Chancellor Hardwicke, shortly before he committed suicide, stating that 'it is certain we live in a most corrupt and wicked age'.<sup>88</sup>

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(October, 1985), p. 507.

84 Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time*, p. 122.

85 Martin Sandys to Samuel Sandys, 18 April 1730, Worcester, WRAS. OFA, 705:56 (1402).

86 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 6 April 1734, 12.405, p. 189; *Memoirs of Lord Viscount Bolingbroke*, p. 333.

87 Jonathan Swift, *The Examiner*, Thursday, 29 March-5 April 1711, 1:36 (London: J. Morphew, 1711), p. 1; D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 15 July 1728, 3.106, pp. 144–146; Vincent Carretta, *The Snarling Muse: Verbal and Visual Political Satire from Pope to Churchill* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 1983), p. 42; Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 213.

88 Eustace Budgell to Lord Hardwicke, Friday, 18 March 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 35586, f. 12; Paul Baines, 'Eustace

'This degenerate age' was lamented across Britain and not only by its extreme fringes, with Stair laying blame at the foot of Walpole's door, believing that 'luxury and corruption are upon the point of extinguishing the spirit of liberty in this nation'.<sup>89</sup> Stair needed look no further than to his own government to observe the breakdown of society and its values. In the eyes of Walpole's contemporaries, the ills of their era seemed to stem from the corrosive examples set by 'the First Minister that taught corruption systematically'.<sup>90</sup> The Country interest worked busily to reinvigorate its image through popular pamphlets, journals and treatise. By doing so, the Country established itself as Britain's leading interest group, helping to inform the public of the dangers they faced.

Bolingbroke's *Dissertation Upon Parties* and *The Patriot King* were two examples of tracts hoping to inform future generations. The former book shunned bipartisan loyalties, with the latter work hoping to divert people away from pursuing war, to achieve more virtuous ends, such as maintaining peace and targeting corruption in office. These works combined old Country verve with modern Patriot vim, influencing the political outlooks of prince Frederick and George III.<sup>91</sup>

Kramnick argues that Bolingbroke's publication of his *Remarks of the History of the England* contoured public debate about the utility of parties and defined constitutional issues for the Country interest at large.<sup>92</sup> At the time of their publication, each tract represented a disgust for those who identified themselves as Whigs or Tories and in particular, singled out the First Lord and Court as major societal problems. As Harry Dickinson attests, had 'succeeding generations studied them

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Budgell', *ODNB*.

89 Nicholas Morice to Humphrey Morice, 13 June 1721, BoE, Morice Ms, 10A97/1, f. 215; Lord Stair to Lady Marlborough, 1 March 1738, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 65.

90 Thomas Davies, *The Characters of...* (London: T. Davies, 1777), pp. 18–22; Reginald Lucas, *George II and His Ministers* (London: Humphreys, 1910), p. 110.

91 For a caveat, see Oliver Cox, '*Rule Britannia!*' *King Alfred the Great and the Creation of a National Hero in England and America: 1640–1800* (D.Phil Thesis, University College, University of Oxford, 2013), pp. 132–133.

92 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, pp. 24–25.

more there would have been less confusion about parties and politics in the age of Walpole'.<sup>93</sup>

Shelley Burt in *Virtue Transformed*, reveals such works sped up the transformation of politics from parties into faction and interest.<sup>94</sup> Contemporaries no longer adhered to older examples of 'public virtue', as they struggled to access high office to change the state from within. The examples set by Bolingbroke and later in the century, William Pitt, was that being a good and honest individual was enough to be regarded virtuous. In the Country press, this message strengthened the desire to rusticate, arguing change was achieved only when aloft from the corruption of central office.

As the Country interest had been formed as a broad church, the cause suffered under schism, especially concerning one aspect of its philosophy, the merits of working either in or out of Walpole's ministry. Republican sentiments located in *Cato's Letters*, a series of essays cherished by Country politicians, were also evident in the personal correspondence of Chandos.<sup>95</sup> Weighing the strengths of active participation in politics against those of retirement, Chandos derived inspiration from classical antiquity, claiming some were happy they 'should never desire to see the face of either minister nor courtier again, but as we are not for ourselves alone, we must sometimes in order to obtain that ends undergo vexations which otherwise would be avoided'.<sup>96</sup> There had been a 'palace revolution' in 1710, and at its head, a Country ministry had dislodged the seemingly indispensable, Whig Junto from government.<sup>97</sup> It was not beyond the realms of possibility this outcome should occur again based on the resurgence of Country fervour. As a result, optimistic minds of the Country cause struggled to reinforce the requirement of their peers to involve

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93 Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 304.

94 Shelley Burt, *Virtue Transformed. Political Arguments in Britain: 1688–1740* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 14.

95 When examining the view of Chandos in the following footnote, much of his philosophy can be seen to have derived from classical works by Plato, which in this instance is: Paul Shorey (trans, ed), 'Plato in Twelve Volumes', in Plato, *The Republic*, book 1, 347c (London: William Heinemann, 1969).

96 Lord Chandos to Mr Ferguson, 28 December 1741, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 55, f. 33.

97 MacLachlan, 'The Road to Peace', p. 202.

themselves in high politics, and were always vigilant to answer calls to guide the Nation.

Criticising a long-standing tradition of peculation and party, the Country interest pitted themselves against Walpole directly, who wrote in support of the viability of Whig loyalties and pensions.<sup>98</sup> Each side defended their conduct, with courtiers and 'state writers' denoting those with a Country disposition as romantic, anachronistic and 'antiquated prudes'.<sup>99</sup> What annoyed the Court in particular was the Country penchant for providing a constant criticism of government without always participating in it.<sup>100</sup> While it could be construed as dishonourable to snipe from the sidelines, it was not expected that places at court would be given to those who could not renounce their conscience, or to vote and defend policy running contrary to their principles. Allen Bathurst, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Bathurst, one of Walpole's most consistent and vociferous enemies had resigned himself to this fate, intimating to Henrietta Howard 'that a poor country gentleman should be forgot by his court friends is no new thing. I'm convinced I will make but an awkward courtier'.<sup>101</sup>

Hervey, the quintessential courtier of his day, being more realistic than cynical, noted 'if people were allowed to correct us only by example, we should have but few teachers'.<sup>102</sup> It was a difficult task for the Country to maintain their purity, foregoing temptation to join the Court and lead from the fore. When Henry Lowther, 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Lonsdale, acquired the office of Privy Seal, it proved 'a great mortification to all the opposition, who had always revered him as a sort of political idol

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98 Robert Walpole, *The Sense of an Englishman on the Pretended Coalition of Parties, and the Merits of the Whig Interest* (London: T. Cooper, 1735).

99 The Member of Parliament's Reply to the Gentleman in Worcestershire, WSRO, Petworth Ms. 7616, f. 5; William Yonge, *Sedition and Defamation Display'd* (London: J. Roberts, 1731), p. 32.

100 Michael Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole* (London: Associated University Press 1987), p. 110; Bolingbroke, *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism, on the Idea of a Patriot King, and on the State of Parties at the Accession of King George I* (London: A. Millar, 1749), p. 61.

101 Lord Bathurst to Mrs Howard, September 1727, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 17.

102 Lord Hervey's Maxims, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/15, f. 5.



and looked upon him as one of their own'.<sup>103</sup> This awkward position at court proved too much for someone, who like Bolingbroke, 'always delighted in country life'.<sup>104</sup> Lonsdale took nothing but his basic salary and retired quickly, upon which he frequently 'ruminated on the present corruption of the times'.<sup>105</sup> To dispel notions that a place at court was corrosive to the character of honest men, Walpole's spokesperson, Thomas Coke, Lord Lovell, discredited Lonsdale's rustication. For Elizabeth Finch, whose deceased husband had been one of the first to defect the Country for the Court in 1730, it was a poignant matter that cast bad aspersions on her family.<sup>106</sup> Interested to learn more about the veracity of Lovell's claims, she wrote to Dorothy Savile, Countess of Burlington, doubting the news that Lonsdale's leaving was 'wholly owing to a lazy indolent disposition, not caring for trouble or business and not from any dislike to the present administration of affairs'.<sup>107</sup>

Country politicians who landed positions at court could rarely expect sympathy from their rural neighbours and colleagues. To accept high office to alter government for the better was regarded as suspect, especially when a mistrusted administration remained in charge of national affairs.

Wyndham and Thomas Hamilton, 6<sup>th</sup> Earl Haddington, were but two of a score of politicians with problems accepting employment in return for appeasement, preferring a life of opposition or neutrality, rather than accepting government emolument.<sup>108</sup> Testament to the impact of Country philosophies, some individuals felt the need to forego accepting state pensions to maintain their conscience and credibility. No longer able to stomach or alter the inconsistencies they witnessed around them, independents such as Sir Paul Methuen, viewed initially as 'a courtier without profit',

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103 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 289; Lonsdale was appointed 3 May 1733. He took the post to quash his gambling debts.

104 Sichel, *Bolingbroke*, p. 75; Lonsdale had previously resigned as Constable to the Tower of London in 1731, something his friends hoped he would not countenance; Charles Cathcart to Hugh Campbell, 21 May 1730, London, HL. B14, LO. 7913.

105 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 450.

106 Finch's husband being Robert Benson, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Bingley.

107 Elizabeth Finch to Countess Burlington at Bath, 17 May 1735, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 230.3; Lonsdale later accompanied his dying brother to France.

108 Robert Walpole to Lord Townshend, 20 June 1723, Whitehall, BL. Stowe. Ms. 251, f. 2; Polwarth Mss, v. 5, p. 255.

grew tired of being exposed to corruption. He went on to bolster the swelling ranks of Walpole's opposition, so strong were his inclinations that 'his friends could not prevail with him to continue'.<sup>109</sup>

Several other independents remained trapped in political Limbo, unable to find a middle way in Court employment or a Country opposition, and often being accepted by neither. While forming decisions based on personal inclinations, rather than partisan loyalties, the haughty John Powlett, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Bolton was 'troublesome at court and hated in the country'.<sup>110</sup> Sir Thomas Hanmer, an altogether more amiable figure, was likewise 'admired without being followed, and disliked at court without being beloved in the country'.<sup>111</sup> Throughout their lives, both were beholden to themselves alone, proud of their ability to act in political situations according to their own choices.

Ministers of state such as Newcastle underestimated Methuen, Bolton, Hanmer and others as simply 'a party of discontented Whigs'.<sup>112</sup> They proved far more than that however, with many non-partisan independents operating in government than has been given credit for in the historiography. David Jarrett has proved the most dismissive to the idea of large numbers of independents operating during the period, arguing that in 1962, Namier made modest claims for the numbers of independent Country members of parliament, but since this, historians have eagerly 'sought to populate the eighteenth-century political scene with such men'.<sup>113</sup>

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109 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 402; Methuen resigned his position as Treasurer of the Royal Household, see Lord Chandos to Mr Brydges of Avington, 17 May 1729, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 3, f. 108.

110 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 176; Lord Chandos to the Duke of Bolton, 7 August 1724, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 24, f. 194; Bolton was detested not only for his perpetual arrogance, but his unreliability in paying other country gentlemen the substantial debts he owed them. Furthermore, his virulent role in seeking to oppose the reinstatement of Bolingbroke to parliament earned him no favours.

111 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 78.

112 Lord Newcastle to Lord Townshend, 6 August 1725, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 137.

113 David Jarrett, 'The Myth of Patriotism in Eighteenth-Century Politics', in John Bromley & Ernst Kossmann (eds), *Britain and the Netherlands, Some Political Mythologies*, v. 5 (Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), p. 122; Lewis Namier, *Crossroads of Power* (London: Hamilton, 1962), pp. 229–230.

Jarrett cited the work of John Owen, as his archetypal example of an historian too cavalier in the application of the term Country independent. Owen stood alone in the historiography when he provided statistical evidence in 1971, to reinforce a claim that 'career politicians in the eighteenth-century House of Commons were always outnumbered.... by those of a predominantly independent political character'.<sup>114</sup> Alfred Rowse provided a summary of Namier's views, who maintained 'the men in power were vigorously opposed by the men who were out, in between stood large numbers of neutral-minded gentlemen'.<sup>115</sup> This assertion has been largely accepted by political historians studying the reign of George III, but the findings of Owen, who maintained the same views as Namier but claimed the situation existed earlier during Walpole's tenure have been ignored since.

Jarrett had formed his conclusions in 1975, and could not predict that Owen's work was not to be used as the benchmark for understanding early to mid-eighteenth century politics. Party narratives, championed by Plumb and Holmes have formed the historical orthodoxy instead. Works focusing on Whig-Tory dichotomies, such as those by Holmes, or monographs similar to Plumb's, arguing that a Whig Oligarchy existed greatly influence the historiography regarding matters of political philosophy, but disavow the view that Country independents made up the bulk of parliament and the electorate.<sup>116</sup> Owen, Namier and Jarrett centred their studies on the composition of political institutions from 1750 onwards, while Holmes examined the same before 1714, two periods residing both after and before Walpole's tenure in office.<sup>117</sup> These skirt the question of whether a

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114 Jarrett, 'The Myth of Patriotism', p. 122; John. Owen, 'The Survival of Country Attitudes in the Eighteenth-Century House of Commons', *Britain and the Netherlands*, v. 4 (Hague, 1971), p. 48.

115 Alfred Rowse, *The English Spirit: Essays in Literature and History* (London: Macmillan, 1966), p. 90.

116 Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 15–19; Holmes, *Britain after the Glorious Revolution*, p. 14; Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England*.

117 For the works of Holmes, see above, for Namier and Owen see Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, p. 11; Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, 2nd ed, p. 4; Owen, 'The Survival of Country Attitudes in the Eighteenth Century', pp. 50–51; John Owen, *The Pattern of Politics in Eighteenth-Century England* (Routledge, Historical Association, 1962); John Owen, *The Rise of the Pelhams* (London: Barnes & Noble,

viable, independent Country opposition existed during the early to mid-eighteenth century. The purpose of this section seeks to solve this problem, by placing emphasis on the Country philosophy of the period, alongside how extensive and influential it was to its adherents.

Namier and Owen had relied on statistical data to corroborate their claims. By looking at voting records in parliament, their onus was not always placed on investigating the spread and appeal of wider Country sympathies in the press or within rural British communities. Focusing on members of parliament and those in office, relatively few historians have sought to investigate the rise of the Country interest in Walpole's time, and with a wide variety of sources as this thesis has done. This chapter reveals how effective explanations of the political landscape are put in jeopardy, when historians are eager to refute the extent and impact of independents. It is misleading to assume that Whig and Tory were all encompassing, or mattered more to people than other networks of power and allegiance during the period, such as the burgeoning Country interest.

Walpole's political landscape was not dominated by a rigid adherence to Whig and Tory creeds, nor should his contemporaries be lumped into the categories of 'ins' and 'outs'.<sup>118</sup> Robbins claims that politicians such as Chesterfield were simply men turfed out of office who 'wanted power', but pursued no discernible policy, other than to grumble in their country seats.<sup>119</sup> The reality is far more complex and multifaceted, as not everybody in office was a Whig or a Tory, nor did they always desire the ministerial roles they had to endure. Country efforts to lionise the merits of rustication, alongside the notion that court was a corrupting realm, also ensured that not every 'out' was jealous of the 'ins', or sought to obtain their positions. Even from 1723, early in Walpole's tenure, William

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1971).

118 Holmes & Szechi, *The Age of Oligarchy*, p. 48; Holmes and Szechi applied these terms to politics during Walpole's tenure: 1721–1742. As mentioned earlier in this section, the terms 'ins' and 'outs', derives from an expression used by Namier to discuss politics after Walpole left office. It was subsequently used by historians widely.

119 Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 274.

Cadogan, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Cadogan, Nicholas Lechmere, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Lechmere, Peter King, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron King, James Berkeley, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Berkeley, alongside a larger score of others, were all known to be wandering the political wilderness, trying to find fresh alliances in which to effectively oppose or apply themselves to Walpole's ministry as independents.<sup>120</sup> Advocates of the Country chose to rusticate, rather than procure positions in government. In the Country press, they tried to persuade other independents that they could better maintain their integrity, dignity and honour, by avoiding Court life that would see them made vulnerable to vice and corruption.<sup>121</sup>

Precedents had been set during the administrations of Charles Spencer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Sunderland (1718–1721) and by Oxford (1710–1714), for each had frowned on peculation. Oxford left office more penurious than his entry, a political manager who desired to retire with the least amount of blood and public treasure on his hands.<sup>122</sup> Sunderland also complained he 'made a sort of minister without power, rank or wages'. Unlike Walpole, Sunderland believed himself a slave to his surroundings, 'constantly asking favours for the public' rather than wielding patronage to purchase support.<sup>123</sup> Both Sunderland and Oxford administered government on broader Country principles, strict in moderation and attracting support from a wider spectrum of factions as a result. In 1721, without a ministry sympathetic to Country principles in power, politicians were reticent to expend energy involving themselves at the centre of Court affairs, as they would only face extreme resistance.

The Country remained torn in its approach throughout the period, with the question of whether to rusticate preventing them from completely dominating the directions Walpole's ministry decided to

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120 Lord Townshend to Robert Walpole, 5 October 1723, NS, BL. Stowe. Ms. 251, f. 55.

121 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, 27 February 1727, 1.29, pp. 210–215.

122 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 11 May 1728, 3.97, p. 82; Sheila Biddle, *Bolingbroke and Harley* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1973), p. 24; Speck, *Stability and Strife*, p. 228.

123 Lord Sunderland to Lord Godolphin, August 1719, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 16; Lord Abergavenny to Lord Sunderland, 7 January 1720, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 34; Sunderland expected politicians to work out of their own pocket, which disgruntled several of his ministers.

take. Unlike former periods, during the early eighteenth-century, Country principles dissuaded aspiring politicians from attempting to lead by example as paragons in office. This was largely the result of Bolingbroke's impetus on Country philosophy, for he had been barred from his own seat in the House of Lords and therefore believed ministers 'could do no real service to their country until the independence of parliament was restored'.<sup>124</sup> Opinion was ambivalent on whether independence could be restored by placing Country politicians at the head of government or through various other vessels of extra-parliamentary pressure. The Whig party faithful to Walpole, alongside his friends and family quickly monopolised positions at Court. Opponents of the First Lord, the Country, sought to establish a popular rapport with the public in the press instead, to garner support, legitimise their cause and apply political pressure externally.<sup>125</sup>

Outside of court and parliament, Country politicians were willing to defend members of their local communities against corrupt government, a measure welcomed by many of their neighbours. Petitioners frequently requested the support of emeritus Country politicians, one example being MP Walter Plummer, who wrote to Strafford in the hopes that he will 'quit retirement and give your helping hand to put a stop to evils which make every man's estate precarious'.<sup>126</sup> In such cases, Strafford was expected to 'give an early and constant attendance in parliament for the persuasion of our rights and liberties for on such do they only depend'.<sup>127</sup> Letters of advice from constituents reminded elected, Country representatives that they 'have much corruption to encounter with', and that they should seek to mend a 'broken constitution and the sinking rights and liberties of an injured, oppressed, and I might almost say, an enslaved nation'.<sup>128</sup> William Villiers, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Jersey considered himself 'that contemptible thing a fox-hunter', jesting that he was 'forced from his home'

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124 Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 189.

125 Jonathan Swift to Lady Howard, 27 July 1731, Dublin, BL. Add. Ms. 22625, f. 22.

126 Walter Plummer to Earl Strafford, 16 January 1725, Queen's Square, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 178.

127 Thomas Scawen to Earl Strafford, 29 November 1735, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 225.

128 An Independent Elector, 5 January 1742, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 96.

and his life as a pastoral politician, forever summoned to parliament.<sup>129</sup> While Country politicians represented their constituents readily, they were reluctant to accept any positions that would bring them into the payroll of Walpole's ministry.

### **Rustication, Self-Reflection and the Formulation of Country Philosophy**

The desire to be considered honest men drove individuals to live out their days away from the aulic environment of genuflections and career politicians at court. Earlier in this chapter, it was argued that secession from court affairs led to Country associates being mistrusted, even suspected as prime suspects to usurp government and overturn the Hanoverian monarchy. Arthur Onslow, Speaker of the House of Commons, was proud of his indefatigable impartiality, a requirement of his office. While a friend to Walpole, the independent sensibilities of Onslow were disturbed, when he recounted that Walpole always 'pursued with great delight, his plan of having everybody to be deemed a Jacobite who was not a professed and known Whig'.<sup>130</sup> The assumption that rusticated politicians posed a threat were not always true however, as the overarching principles of the Country cause dissuaded its adherents from being used by others in politics. Just as Court positions were unpalatable to Country politicians, so too was the allure of turning to Jacobitism. Black argues that 'Walpole's undoubted control of the House of Commons', presented a situation where the Jacobites could not successfully restore themselves to power in Britain.<sup>131</sup> Throughout the period, Walpole was often at the mercy of what his Country opposition allowed him to get away with. It

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129 William Villiers to Peter Collinson, 15 November 1737, Middleton, BL. Add. Ms. 28736, ff. 34–35.

130 HMC (eds), *The Manuscripts of the Earl of Buckinghamshire* (London: HMSO, 1895), p. 465; Thomas McGeary, *The Politics of Opera in Handel's Britain* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 135.

131 Jeremy Black, *Foreign Policy in the Age of Walpole* (London: John Donald, 1985), p. 36.

was certainly not Walpole's firm grasp of domestic politics that prevented the Jacobites exercising a foothold in Britain, it was a myriad of other factors, most important of which was the impact of the Country interest.

It can be argued that Country politics in some ways prevented the nurture and appeal of Jacobitism, because it provided adherents to this creed an effective soap box on which to express their more conservative political beliefs. Former supporters of James III, found contentment by joining the ranks of the Country cause instead. The Jacobite platform in the eighteenth century required war and bloodshed to see its goal fulfilled, the restoration of a deposed monarch. This was a dangerous endeavour and contrasted with the pacifism found in Country principles. The Country cause formed a structure for its proponents to express their grievances legitimately, to change government in the press, parliament and rural Britain, without having to take militaristic actions. Country politicians were not an easily manipulated target for the agents of James III, simply because they disagreed with Walpole's government.

Thomas Bruce, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Ailesbury, was one of the oldest Country politicians alive during the period. He had spent 23 years of his life rusticated in Brussels by the time Walpole obtained office.<sup>132</sup> Ailesbury had fled due to his unwavering loyalty for the Stuart dynasty, which always brought him under suspicion after the Revolution. Respected by many friends in Britain and abroad, he remained discontented with the Hanoverian government and its ministers, such as Walpole. This made Ailesbury a prime candidate for recruitment into the ranks of the Jacobites. When the Jacobite court requested his assistance however, promising his return to favour, Ailesbury disappointed them. His response echoed the Country sentiment for rustication, having told his would be supporters that he

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<sup>132</sup> Bruce was a living link between two Country causes, the emergence of the Country interest under Charles II and the Country interest operating during Walpole's tenure in office.



preferred 'quiet retirement in my garden and with my family and attended with some little discretion, which may not please some that give themselves not time to think'.<sup>133</sup>

For his support of the exiled James II, Colin Lindsay, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Balcarres, was confined to his estate under armed guard, accepting the fact that he would never be permitted to meddle in public affairs again. He looked forward to a life of reading, horticulture and rest, for he was 'like a ship in a storm until I made shipwreck,' having 'refitted a small boat, laying in a quiet harbour'.<sup>134</sup> His grandson, James Lindsay, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl Balcarres, marred by the history of the family embraced the perpetuity of a rural existence. It was his choice to 'have lived the life of a farmer all this winter, tired at a long and useless attendance at London, desirous of a little quiet'.<sup>135</sup> His duty done, James nursed his dying family, tended to a frosty farm and wrought all the hardships of pastoral life during a time of war, high taxes and poor harvests.<sup>136</sup> These Country politicians chose to rusticate, not to atone for past transgressions, but to abide by the law and live the remainder of their lives with a clear conscience. The allure of rustication made advocates of the Country cause almost unreachable and incorruptible, especially for those who desired their support, such as the Court or Jacobites, who desired them to accept corrupt practices or engage in warlike activities against their honour and principles.

Despite the seclusion a rustic life afforded, in an age of letters, absconding from London life and parliament did not necessarily result in the alienation of those who sought to influence. Bolingbroke intimated to his friends the desire to become an 'old, retired, attained philosopher and hermit'.<sup>137</sup>

Even from his position as a political anchorite, Bolingbroke proved incredibly effective in moulding the political environment, with the allure of current affairs too attractive for him to ignore. This was

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133 Lord Ailsebury, 12 January 1725, BL. Add. Ms. 78796, f. 121.

134 Lord Balcarres to Hugh Campbell, 25 May 1721, HL. B33. LO 8666.

135 Lord Balcarres to John Campbell, 26 January 1740, Edinburgh, HL. B33. LO 7534.

136 Lord Ailesbury died while rustivating at the age of 86, in the year 1741, amid the growing European war.

137 Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, 29 November 1735, Paris, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 19, f. 40.

also true of Chandos, who claimed that because he did not frequent court, he maintained no influence there, reiterating this line to appease those who pestered him for favours. Despite his estate of Cannons being situated a mere ten miles from London, Chandos enjoyed reminding people that he had retired as if he 'was in the highlands of Scotland'. This was a welcome comfort for Chandos, who despite maintaining friends in high places, claimed he was well rid of attending court cock-fights that seemed both fruitless and troublesome. It was the view of Chandos that people could 'easily judge what interest one of such a life and temper can have in a court where new faces are every day appearing and new parties and cabals perpetually forming'.<sup>138</sup>

The 'new faces' and 'cabals' were a regular facet of court life that Marlborough also thought tedious enough to renounce. Her friends regularly tried to tempt Marlborough back into the political arena, after she had embraced Country politics and its rusticated lifestyle. Marlborough's wealth, beauty, wit and above all, her ingenious capacity for business and political ventures was duly noticed, if not sought after when she visited the Capital. William Pulteney, who masterminded the opposition to Walpole in parliament, posed Marlborough a question that 'surely you cannot be earnest in resolving to spend the remainder of your time in the country and see London no more?'

Pulteney worked closely with Bolingbroke and other rusticated Country politicians. Despite being understanding of their motives, Pulteney was not of their ilk and was troubled that more would not engage in direct political means, such as attending parliament frequently or hosting regular social events in the City to promote causes. Some women found they did not have to ingratiate themselves with powerful men at court to press their interest, the Country platform allowed and encouraged

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<sup>138</sup> Lord Chandos to Sir David Williams, 27 January 1729, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 33, f. 4.

them to exercise power independently. Choosing not to remarry after the death of her husband, Marlborough used her extensive finances to bankroll Walpole's opponents, alongside her own literary networks and talents to spread the Country message to others.

Unable to accept that Marlborough had embraced the Country cause and rustication, Pulteney was at a loss as to why she would not return to London in person, where they could both combine their skills to influence its indigenous citizens. As Walpole's tenure elapsed, Marlborough would invest more time and effort promoting the Country cause away from Pulteney, who pleaded her return, stating 'you have friends, you have credit, you have talents, you have power and you have spirit still to do an infinite deal of service if you will please exert them, and why you should lock yourself up I cannot conceive'.<sup>139</sup> Despite frequent invitations from others to represent their cases, some chose 'pleasant retirement' and to reside in the country indefinitely, envisaging futility in the participation of corrupt government that could not be changed from within.<sup>140</sup>

More time and freedom were afforded those who seceded from public office. Even Hervey surprised himself with the realisation 'that nature certainly designed me to live in the country'.<sup>141</sup> During a brief respite from court and recluse in the ascetic comfort of Ickworth Park, Hervey stated he 'had ten times a better understanding. I see things just as they are and so plain that like self-evident propositions they allow no reasoning upon them. I contemplate and reflect upon them all'.<sup>142</sup> It became his view that 'the happy are only fit to live in the country, for one ought to be very well satisfied with their lot to bear so much time to reflect upon it'.<sup>143</sup>

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139 William Pulteney to Lady Marlborough, 24 November 1734, London, BL. Add. Ms. 61477, f. 89.

140 John Darnall to Earl Strafford, 3 October 1728, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 269; Lord Bolingbroke to Robert Knight, 12 June 1738, BL. Add. Ms. 34196, f. 136.

141 Lord Hervey to Mary Montagu, 16 May 1741, Ickworth Park, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, f. 103.

142 *Ibid*,

143 Lord Hervey's Maxims, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/15, f. 1.

Observing the World from a country seat, individuals could easily leave politics, but politics seldom left them. From the noble earl to the humble yeomen, each had a stake in their political environment. Thomas Prendergrast, the most demanding of Charles Lennox, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Richmond's dependants, cut one of his letters short, admitting to his benefactor that 'I am running deep into politics, but it is what we country farmers are great dealers in, especially on Saturday nights'.<sup>144</sup> Rustication had significant ramifications, it was a platform allowing diverse interest groups to engage in the political process, without obtaining public office. Taking the time to write, meet and organise pressure groups, Country politicians organised their own courts from the comfort and privacy of their own homes, to counter what they believed to be nefarious forces operating within the Nation. It was a tradition lauded in the writings of Shakespeare as the mark of good statecraft, for retreating to the country meant politicians could begin to acquaint themselves with a harmonious way of life; that of peace, rest and tranquility, something Country advocates hoped to replicate for everybody on a broader scale, throughout Britain.<sup>145</sup>

Wisdom, wit and wealth demanded responsibility, and this understanding shaped the lives of Country advocates, who found their political paths shaped during contemplation in a rusticated hideaway. Ensclosed in their local communities, Country politicians had to envisage innovative and powerful methods to operate externally to court. If government had little chance of being changed from within, then more potent measures were to be developed to change it from without. This would not arrive in the form of revolution and bloodshed. The horrors of two civil wars remained vibrant in contemporary memory, both through lessons in history and recent experience. Hervey's warning to his literary friend, Conyers Middleton, was echoed by many of the Country

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144 Sir Thomas Prendergrast to Lord Richmond, 25 August 1731, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 107.

145 Vivian Thomas, *Shakespeare's Political and Economic Language* (London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 143.

also, lamenting the primal human condition, that 'to endeavour to oppress by power, when one cannot answer by argument has been and will be the practice of Mankind'.<sup>146</sup>

The utilisation of the sword, subjecting the will of one group to another, reminded the Country that more astute methods should be exacted when emphasising political points. Above all weapons, the tongue and the quill possessed capabilities to tear the minds of men asunder. To reinforce the Country message, the power of the spoken and printed word served as two such vessels to initiate changes throughout eighteenth-century society. It was the development of a Country press, monumental to spreading the message of their cause that is addressed in the next section. A vibrant new Country interest had rusticated, reflected and formed its core principles on this rural platform. To achieve power and influence from this position, the Country focused on making contemporary society believe as they did. The formulation of a Country press helped them obtain popular and political support, allowing its associates to exact significant changes to the direction of policy.

### **A Satirist, The Most Dangerous Form of Politician**

With interest groups operating externally to the ambit of court and sometimes, even parliament, their advocates formulated measures to make an impact politically. In this section, the literary endeavours of the Country will be explored, with investigation into the publication of oppositional

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<sup>146</sup> Lord Hervey to Dr. Middleton, 14 February 1736, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 103; The two civil wars mentioned refer to the English Civil War: 1642–1651 and the violence surrounding the Revolution of 1688.

tracts. The wide dissemination of ideas, alongside the propensity to alert people to political scandal formed the basis of a counter revolution regarding freedom of the press. As the Country interest branded itself anew in the public eye, so too grew its appeal and respect. Walpole's administration found this damaging and sought to restrict the flow of information his opposition presented, by pushing to enact legislation for censorship. This would force whistle-blowers, critics and even Walpole's ministry underground; each looking for secrecy and the need to safeguard the direction of their plans.

The dexterous application of ink and paper formed strong connections between those in positions of state power, the public and the country at large. As party lines dissolved in the political arena, so too the same is seen to occur in the world of print. The fluidity of independent and diverse individuals writing for the Country cause assisted this process. With private and political exploits frequently merged, the personal became public, with the Country interest finding better options to hold government to account. Not only were gateways formed to scrutinise Walpole's administration, a backlash ensued that would shape the structure and process of government for generations after.

Whatever their political ethos, ministers of state realised that in order to obtain wider popular support, and thus to get parliamentary power, they had to instigate a collaborative settlement with their Country counterparts. This permitted access to lucrative financial favours and the good graces of their literary friends, renowned as the 'most elegantly styled' and influential of their age.<sup>147</sup> The Country did not rely on Court patronage in order to push their own political weight.<sup>148</sup> Many fox-hunting literati would convey artistic freedom to their patrons, rising stars such as William Oldsworth, editor of the *Examiner*, who were often employed after they had spent their own money

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<sup>147</sup> Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 261; Chesterfield Mss, v. 2, p. 437; Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 220.

<sup>148</sup> Henning, *The House of Commons 1660–1690*, p. 14.

and demonstrated their inclination to support an opposition or Country agenda.<sup>149</sup> As Dustin Griffin states, Walpole's detractors, despite their complaints of ministerial patronage, were also patrons of the arts. Contradicting Gerrard's claims that Walpole's opposition had no organised literary circles, Griffin contends that 'many of the patrons and writers of the 1730s were connected by means of a kind of opposition', normally centred at the rural estates and houses of notable politicians.<sup>150</sup>

What Griffin fails to mention is how extensive and powerful these connections were and to what extent the Country interest spearheaded Walpole's literary opposition. Benefits were available when writing for the Country, both in terms of money and power. The proliferation of a 'paper war' pitted writers of a Country persuasion against Walpole's army of spin-doctors and mercenary scribblers.<sup>151</sup> As a patron, Walpole had access to large sums of money and could also ignore acts of libel committed by his own writers.<sup>152</sup> In many regards, the Country defamation of Walpole in the press only cost themselves money. It spurred the First Lord to be proactive in the spending of public revenue, which was siphoned from the Secret Service Fund for the defence of his own character.<sup>153</sup>

Evolving rapidly to beat the censor, Country writers pioneered stylistic approaches that proved incredibly difficult to prosecute for libel. Distinctive Country language, metaphor, allegories and examples were deployed to embarrass Walpole, methods that writers from different factions also adopted. Fielding was persuaded the public should not prefer 'one pack (of prigs wearing hats) to another, while both are aiming at their purses'.<sup>154</sup> In his widely-celebrated satire, *Jonathan Wild*, the

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149 Portland Mss, v. 6, pp. 36–37; Eddy Alfred (ed), *Memoirs of Martin Scriblerus*, *Swift: Prose Works*, v. 2, 1741. Reproduced from Pope's Works, v. 7, 1754, in Jonathan Swift, *Satires and Political Writings by Jonathan Swift* (London: Oxford University Press), p. 117.

150 Dustin Griffin, *Literary Patronage in England, 1650–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), p. 35.

151 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 33; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 21.

152 Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 96.

153 *Ibid.* p. 46; Nicholas Paxton, Treasury Solicitor, was paid £200 per-annum as a collator of opposition libels attacking Walpole.

154 Henry Fielding, *The History of the Life of the Late Mr Jonathan Wild the Great* (London: Routledge, 1743), pp. 67–

biography of an infamous contemporary highwayman, 'prigs' were a *Cant* term meaning both Whig and thief, of which, a certain 'great man', in this case Walpole, was their head. The allusions made would not have been missed by the First Lord or Fielding's readership.

With numerous political factions to write for, polemicists could remove the straitjacket of Court apologetics and join those who would allow artistic freedom or spur their intellectual development. Pope, Swift and Bolingbroke surpassed the talent of any Court author. In their own way, each became respected, feared and notorious in the press.<sup>155</sup> The art of ridicule had become so prevalent during the period that even the king was advised to abandon his masquerade balls, 'for fear he should be affronted, for indeed they are hellishly rude with pamphlets and tongues'.<sup>156</sup> As mentioned previously, this sophistry was attractive to many looking to secure power. The fox-hunter tutelage of Walpole's opposition became extremely beneficial to groups in parliament.<sup>157</sup> As David Armitage attests, when not in temporary exile, Bolingbroke occupied his role as the ennobled and enigmatic schoolmaster<sup>158</sup>. He acted as mentor to aspiring politicians, encouraging an influx of polemicists and politicians into the Country fold, such as William Wyndham and Alexander Hume-Campbell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Marchmont. In return, the Country used the networks and oratory talents of the parliamentarians they influenced as vessels to direct a change in ideology, exercise political philosophy and instil Country principles, affecting the politics of the day at Westminster without

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68; Wags and Ranter Boys (Whigs and Tories) wore different hats and dressed differently, but were both equally as corrupt in their trade as thieves when in power, accepting bribes and believing they genuinely differed.

155 Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, pp. 10, 21; Although a chasm existed between the skills of Walpole's satirists and that of his opposition, Urstad has raised valid points when stating Walpole's government was not just supported by 'the very worst Grub Street hacks, with their feeble efforts' to counter his opposition; *Ibid.* pp. 218, 222; 'Pope was not a party man, but close to the *Craftsman*'; *Ibid.* pp. 220, 216; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 71; Martin & Ruth Battestin (eds), *Henry Fielding: A Life* (London: Routledge, 1989), p. 78; Carlisle Mss, p. xii; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. xlii–xliv.

156 Captain Powell to Earl Strafford, 6 November 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 108.

157 David Armitage, 'A Patriot for Whom? The Afterlives of Bolingbroke's Patriot King', *Journal of British Studies*, 36.4 (October, 1997), pp. 401–402; Thoma. Lockwood, 'The Augustan Author – Audience Relationship vs. Comic Forms', *English Literary History*, 36.4 (December, 1969), p. 251.

158 Armitage (ed), *Bolingbroke, Political Writings*, pp. xi–xii.



even having to be present or elected.<sup>159</sup>

Much of this schooling was achieved with the establishment of a Country press. The Country cause quickly became one of the most popular and bestselling political viewpoints to read about during the period. Black estimates that over 44,000 copies of 'privately sponsored' newspapers were printed in London per-week at the turn of the eighteenth century.<sup>160</sup> During the time that passed between the Revolution of 1688 and the beginning of Walpole's tenure in 1721, this figure had risen exponentially to 70,000.<sup>161</sup> News, polemic and satire were read widely and descended on London 'thick as hail' according to Swift, a tribute to the success and boldness of the Country press, which enticed other sponsors to join them and invest in the nullification of Walpole's political influence.<sup>162</sup>

With the development of a Country press, sustained and funded by Country authors, avenues were opened to help provincial politicians have their say on government affairs. These inroads proved readily accessible to women also, who opened correspondence with Country writers, sometimes sponsoring, promoting and even subscribing to them. Catherine Douglas, Duchess of Queensbury, was one such example. The poet, John Gay, maintained a literary relationship with Queensbury, who witnessed many of her political inclinations inserted into his pamphlets, operas and plays, which satirised Walpole's administration and caused the First Lord significant pains. Intending her political voice to be heard in a wider audience, Queensbury let her friend know that 'you see that we in the country speak truth and are willing that others think we do so'.<sup>163</sup>

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159 Davies, *The Characters of...* pp. 29, 69; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 263; William Musgrave, *A Brief and True History of Sir Robert Walpole and His Family from the Original to the Present Time* (London: E. Curll, 1738), p. 40; *Memoirs of the Life of Bolingbroke*, pp. 313–325; Hardwicke Mss, v. 1, p. 188; Portland Mss, v. 6, p. 24.

160 Jeremy Black, 'Party Strife and the Augustan Press', *Publishing History*, no. 23 (1998), p. 101; Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 30.

161 Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* p. 178.

162 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 32.

163 Catherine Douglas to Henrietta Howard, 9 August 1729, Middleton, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 35.

The publication that dominated as a public voice of the period was the *Craftsman*, otherwise known as the *Country Journal* and formerly printed as the *Country Gentleman*.<sup>164</sup> Michael Harris estimates that from 1730, the *Craftsman* could boast of sales of 12,000 copies per-week, as opposed to 3,000 of the most popular Court papers.<sup>165</sup> While the *Craftsman* and opposition papers, such as *Fog's Weekly Journal* 'explained the mysteries of government to the crowd', selling many copies as a result, Black argues they were not meant for posterity, but 'designed to do more' and with immediate consequences; they were to 'play a role in the fall of Walpole's ministry', a campaign which 'failed'.<sup>166</sup> Colin Nicholson and Speck corroborate these views, arguing the 'opposition press could claim that the sense of the nation was in favour of the Country rather than the Court', but in reality, they were 'beside themselves', because they were ineffectual in toppling Walpole.<sup>167</sup>

As a detailed analysis of the dynamics, people and principles of the Country interest during Walpole's tenure in office has never been undertaken, historians have sometimes placed false outcomes on the efforts of its adherents during the period. As mentioned previously, the Country were for the most part, not always interested in ousting Walpole, as Black and Speck are apt to suggest. Country politicians invented ways to lame the First Lord instead, blunting the influence of his ministry in politics and Walpole's ability to commit corrupt acts. The *Craftsman* existed to warn and inform against policies the Country believed dangerous. Its readership, several of whom were rusticated, did not always scour the pages of Country journals for content that would help them obtain places in office. Many had chosen to leave that life behind deliberately, yet still wanted to make an impact in politics and feel involved in the process of government. During the time-frame it

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164 The first edition was made on Francklin's press, in Covent Garden on 5 December 1726. He printed a volume every day of the week until 1727, where printing was limited to Saturdays only.

165 Harris, *London Newspapers in the Age of Walpole*, p. 117.

166 Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (Kent: Croom Helm, 1987), p. 100.

167 William Speck, 'Politics and the Press', in Michael Harris & Alan Lee (eds), *The Press in English Society from the Seventeenth to Nineteenth Centuries* (New Jersey: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press), p. 60; Colin Nicholson, *Writing and the Rise of Finance: Capital Satires of the Early Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 188.

was published, the *Craftsman* succeeded in a major goal, it granted confidence to individuals who believed they had possession of an instrument in which to help enforce societal values. It was a series encouraging others to act according to Country principles, convincing people to join a cause benefiting the entire nation.

A running critique on Walpole's administration, the *Craftsman* scrutinised government, investigated corruption, lambasted parties, exposed plots to revoke liberties and extolled the virtues of maintaining peace. Contributions to Country journals by various writers of talent, including Bolingbroke and Pulteney, ensured a constant subscription, profit and most important of all, influence over large groups of the political community.<sup>168</sup> The *Craftsman* became Britain's leading opposition journal and by 1735, in its 'tenth year of political warfare', it had quickly become 'the chief support to our spirits in the country'.<sup>169</sup> Pettegree claims that 'newspapers were quickly identified as Whig or Tory', but the invention of the *Craftsman* was not simply a Tory mouthpiece as he suggests.<sup>170</sup> The inclinations of its authors, alongside its anti-partisan language and content meant the *Craftsman* represented one of the first major cross-party Country journals of the period.

Political literature and news were in high demand during the early-modern period, with gentry scholars such as Chandos seeking to exchange sections of their libraries with other like-minded individuals, especially when the acquisition of new books could help inspire the writing of future political pamphlets.<sup>171</sup> Horatio, Walpole's younger brother, acquired a substantial portion of a library in Hamburg.<sup>172</sup> Contrary to stipulations in his will preventing the sale of property, when

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168 Stephen Miller, *Conversation: A History of Declining Art* (New York: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 100.

169 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 20 December 1735, 14.494, p. 216; Portland Mss, v. 7, p. 464.

170 Pettegree, *The Invention of News*, p. 268.

171 Lord Chandos to Lord Egmont, 5 February 1736, Canons Park, BL. Add. Ms. 47013A, f. 21; Roger Emerson, *An Enlightened Duke: The Life of Archibald Campbell* (Kilkeran: Humming Earth, 2013), pp. 128–129.

172 Princess Amelia to Horatio Walpole, 1736, BL. Add. Ms. 73770, f. 92.

Sunderland passed away in 1722, Marlborough was willing to spend up to £8000 in the hope of purchasing his expansive book collection.<sup>173</sup> Both were examples of politicians seeking to expand their holdings of political knowledge. Horatio would use his works in defence of Walpole's administration, while Marlborough would deploy her repositories in a bid to inform Country writings.

Robert Darnton has done much to reveal the extensive nature of international literature networks during the eighteenth century. The explosion of print culture and inexpensive courier services had catalysed a myriad of writers and readers to establish 'a circuit for transmitting texts'.<sup>174</sup> The *Craftsman* was no exception; an influential work of its time, it not only circulated Britain but reached further ashore to regions such as Florence, where Pulteney despatched 'a set of the *Craftsman*' to his friend, 'which you must put like the monks into that part of your library which they call the Inferno, and be sure, like them, to read these books more than any in the rest of the library'.<sup>175</sup> French translations were made of this publication, adding succour to the views of Robbins and Kramnick, who argue that Country views influenced continental philosophers such as Charles Montesquieu and Voltaire profoundly.<sup>176</sup>

Kate Loveman argues that print circuits not only provided a vessel for authors to persuade and influence others, but enticed readers to communicate and engage with the writers of Country publications also.<sup>177</sup> The success and popularity of the *Craftsman* was due to its highly interactive

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173 Francis Godolphin to Duchess of Marlborough, 8 May 1727, BL. Add. Ms. 61437, ff. 39–41.

174 Robert Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1990), p. 125.

175 William Pulteney to Francis Colman, Resident at Florence and Parma, 12 June 1731, OS, Arlington Street, BL. Add. Ms. 18915, f. 6.

176 Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 305; Country writers were also influenced by Montesquieu, with his *Persian Letters* inserted in the *Craftsman* in 1727, causing uproar in Britain, see Ursula Gonthier, *Montesquieu and England: Enlightened Exchanges, 1689–1755* (Oxon: Routledge, 2010), p. 66; Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 276; Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 2.

177 Kate Loveman, *Reading Fictions: 1660–1740: Deceptions in English Literary and Political Culture* (Hampshire:

format. Country journals were dispatched abroad for those curios to learn how the English political system was changing in accordance with Country principles, and in many ways, invited those who lived under different systems of governments or followed different political philosophies to weigh in on the English political debate. Writers in the *Craftsman* and other Country journals were diligent to anticipate the reactions of the reading public and susceptible to their opinions, behaviour and interpretations. The *Craftsman* tapped into a voracious desire for public debate, a widespread scepticism of government power and party prejudice.

Throughout his rustication in Brussels, Ailesbury, a Country politician of the old school, received excerpts of *Fog* and the *Craftsman* from one of Walpole's closest friends.<sup>178</sup> Charles Townshend, Secretary of State, sent copies to Hardwicke inviting his legal opinion on whether the publishers could be prosecuted.<sup>179</sup> Hervey believed that 'all the best writers against the Court were concerned in the *Craftsman*' and frequently wrote to Horatio, discussing the extensive damage that Country journals inflicted on his brother regularly.<sup>180</sup> The high volume of sales and the explosion of different oppositional publications, indicates the Country press received substantial attention during the period, with Country journals and pamphlets distributed widely, possessing the ability to affect politics throughout Europe.

A thriving market centred around London, which became an environment providing opportunities for the employment of satirists who used their talents to aid the opposition.<sup>181</sup> The growing influence of print culture had not been confined to the Capital alone. Wilson reveals that throughout

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Ashgate, 2008), pp. 3–4.

178 Lord Ailesbury to Lord Richmond, 29 October 1732, Brussels, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 110.

179 Lord Townshend to Lord Hardwicke, 2 May 1730, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 78909, f. 5/10; Lord Townshend to George II, May 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 78909, f. 5/36.

180 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 263; Lord Hervey to Horatio Walpole, 12/23 September 1735, Kensington Palace, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 76.

181 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 455; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, pp. 233–235.

the environs of Britain, provincial writers, printers and booksellers flourished, especially during the period Walpole held office.<sup>182</sup> The creation of a relatively stable financial environment for writers was a deliberate incentive to entice Walpole's prospective allies into the Country fold. A welcome alternative was provided to the unreliable patronage granted by the First Lord. One prospective Court writer, John Simpson, found Walpole particularly ungenerous, with another by the name of William Arnall pleading for a permanent salary, so that he could remain safe in his endeavours.<sup>183</sup> Those joining the Country were granted immunity from blandishments, with writers targeting sycophantic authors loyal to Walpole's administration instead.<sup>184</sup>

The lapse of the *Licensing Act* in 1695 had proved a catalyst for growth in popular politics.<sup>185</sup> Walpole had been one of the first politicians to face the rise of this new sphere of public pressure. Walpole's administration employed several measures to curtail the Country impetus in government affairs. The First Lord quickly revived the *Stamp Act* that had been enacted under Harley's ministry, a tactic used to price people out of expressing a public voice.<sup>186</sup> To hit the pockets of Walpole's opposition, the printer of *True Briton* was prosecuted, 'and by that shall put the Duke of Wharton (its editor) to some expense'.<sup>187</sup> Newspapers grew in size, with tabloids transforming into broadsheets, a deliberate attempt to negate a tax based on the number of pages in each release. In some cases, writers and news organisations could be bought out. From 1731 to 1741, the First Lord spent over £50,000 in bribes and hostile takeovers to achieve this end.<sup>188</sup> Concessions were offered

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182 Wilson, *The Sense of the People*, pp. 5-6, 29.

183 John Simpson to Sir Robert Walpole, 19 December 1732, London, HL. HA, 16213; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 95.

184 Portland Mss, v. 6, pp. 35-36; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, pp. 58, 45-46, 64, 68.

185 *An Act for Preventing Abuses in Printing Seditious, Treasonous, and Unlicensed Books and Pamphlets, and for Regulating of Printing and Printing Presses* (The Licensing Act), 1662, 13, 14, car. 2, c. 33; Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 30; Raymond. Astbury, 'The Renewal of the Licensing Act in 1693 and its Lapse in 1695', *Durham University Library*, 33.5 (1978), pp. 296-322; Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p. 68.

186 Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* p. 181.

187 Lord Newcastle, 28 June 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 266.

188 *A Further Report from the Committee of Secrecy, Appointed to Enquire into the Conduct of Robert, Earl of Orford*,

by Walpole to writers of significant talent, especially if they possessed enough money to resist prosecution or had their papers printed abroad.<sup>189</sup> The journal entries of Nathaniel Mist were produced in France. They had become so influential in Britain that Walpole offered the exiled Jacobite a full pardon if he would cease and desist in his vitriolic attacks.<sup>190</sup>

Factional opposition to Walpole had quickly learned to enjoy their new right to freedom of expression and would not have it impeded. With the First Lord under scrutiny from the press, Walpole pressured his ministers to stem the animus levelled against his administration. Hardwicke was kept busy intercepting information that was circulated by publishers on how to loophole the censor.<sup>191</sup> Newcastle had his own informant among opposition scribblers. His insider located booksellers to shut down and warned Newcastle of impending publications that targeted Walpole. Above all other forces, 'Mr D'anvers and his associates', the pseudonym for Nicholas Amhurst, general editor of the *Craftsman*, were among those deemed most dangerous. Newcastle's every-man, 'John Smith', identified various other contributors to the *Craftsman* as 'persons against whom the government should point both its offensive and defensive weapons'.<sup>192</sup>

The activity of Walpole's administration to sever the hands of his Country opposition did not go unnoticed. Before Mist fled London, he was both fined, imprisoned and had his property raided

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(London: T. Leech, 1742), p. 128; Bob Clarke, *From Grub Street to Fleet Street* (Aldershot, Ashgate, 2004), p. 270; L. Hanson, *Government and the Press, 1965–1763* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1967), p. 106; The *London Journal* cracks under Court pressure in 1721 and was forced to capitulate to Walpole who subsidised the paper.

189 Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 216.

190 The 'Persian Letter' can be found in Nathaniel Mist, *Mist's Weekly Journal*, Saturday, 24 August 1728; printed in France, this triggered a clamp-down on the British press with over twenty-four arrests made; Jeremy Black, 'An Underrated Journalist: Nathaniel Mist and the Opposition Press During the Whig Ascendancy', *Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History*, 5.2 (Spring, 1989).

191 Charles Delafaye to Lord Hardwicke, on the prosecution of the *Craftsman*, 15 September 1729, BL. Add. Ms. 36137, f. 265.

192 John Smith to Lord Newcastle, 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 518.

continuously from 1721 to 1727.<sup>193</sup> Richard Francklin, an opposition printer, was issued eight writs over a three-year course and arrested every six months by Walpole's government.<sup>194</sup> In December 1729, the First Lord found that endearment to the Country cause ran deep, with officials presiding over the Francklin case working hard to keep him out of prison. Judge Robert Raymond's meticulous scrutiny of libel legislation, Sheriff John Barber's influence over the jury, Judge William Noel's impressive skills in oratory alongside a dose of judicial sympathy from Hardwicke all combined to see the litigation dropped in a case against Francklin, to the jubilation of many.<sup>195</sup>

Upon this occasion, it was remarked that 'a defeat has not for these many years been given to what was long called the practice of the Court', although it was foreseen that 'the Great One' was to move prosecution 'to another judicature'.<sup>196</sup> Undeterred and fulfilling his opponent's expectations, Walpole ordered Francklin's shop to be ransacked and 'he finally stood trial in a packed court, a result of the Jury Act created specifically to prosecute him'.<sup>197</sup> It was censorship that made opposition arguments more credible and drove the press deeper underground, just as banning certain works made people all the more eager to find and read them. Increasingly difficult to locate, printers understood the tactics used to silence them, becoming secretive and astute in how and what they wrote.

Bolingbroke took Mist's printing press before the government could seize it. It was a machine used shortly after to establish *Common Sense*, another journal opposing the Court.<sup>198</sup> Francklin donated a

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193 Philip Woodfine, 'Government Harassment of the Press in the Late 1730's', *Journal of Newspaper and Periodical History*, 5.2 (Spring, 1989), p. 20; Nathaniel Mist fled in 1728; *Mist's Weekly Journal* then had its title changed to *Fog's Weekly Journal*.

194 Black, *Walpole in Power*, p. 155.

195 Hardwicke Mss, v. 1, pp. 82-84; W. Pulteney, *The Honest Jury, or Caleb Triumphant: A New Ballad, to the tune of Packington's Pound* (London: 1729).

196 Henry Dunster to Sir John Rushout, 11 December 1729, Temple, WRAS. Churchill Archive. 705:66/26.

197 Anti-Bolingbroke Pamphlet including a History of Printing and the Prosecution of the *Craftsman*, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 44/3, pp. 11–12; Simon Varey, 'Prose Studies', 16:1, in Alan Downie & Thomas Corns (eds), *Telling People What to Think, Early Eighteenth-Century Periodicals from The Review to The Rambler* (London: Frank Cass & Co, 1993), p. 63; Bolingbroke, A Letter from the Hague, 2 January 1731, in D'Anvers, *The Craftsman*, 1.235, p. 84.

198 Christophe Henke, *Common Sense in Early 18th-Century British Literature and Culture* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2014), p. 174; Anti-Bolingbroke Pamphlet, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 44/3, p. 11.



press to Henry Haines, in order to abscond responsibility if he was discovered by Walpole. When Haines was arrested, he ran his newspaper from prison, while Francklin took his gift back in the dead of night, establishing operations in another undisclosed location.<sup>199</sup> The Country voice proved difficult to silence. Internment proved no deterrent, it only promoted clandestine scribbling.

In the press, Walpole found he had met a force that he could not destroy, but in an attempt to censor he almost demolished himself instead. Anne Ingram, Viscountess Irwin, maintained strong literary connections, and as a poet herself, used rhyme and meter to defend her conduct against critics such as Pope. Expertly placed to observe the exploits of the writing community, Irwin intimated to her husband that Walpole was 'baited like a bull', believing that 'his assailants will in time bring down the mighty man'.<sup>200</sup> Bolingbroke was one such individual who understood how to incur the odium of the First Lord. Provoking with his pseudonymous piece in the *Occasional Writer*, Bolingbroke spurred Walpole to abandon his usual equanimity and strike back, the First Lord warning 'I shall find you out'.<sup>201</sup> With some members of his ministry sympathetic to the Country and others unable to compete with or stifle their efforts, Walpole himself engaged in writing rebuttals. In one satirical poem, it was noted that even 'Bob the Great has stooped to pamphleteering'.<sup>202</sup> When a piece 'supposed to be written by Sir Robert Walpole himself' was released to the public in 1731, Pulteney, the person it targeted, was again forced to retaliate and 'dip his pen in gall'.<sup>203</sup> The suppression of Walpole's most vocal enemies proved a pyrrhic victory for his administration. Both Stair and Bolingbroke stated that policing the press had become a parallel to the trial of Sacheverell, in that censoring and prosecuting a popular opposition only threatened the government's own

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199 *Ibid.* 44/4, p. 14.

200 Carlisle Mss, p. 70.

201 Sir Robert Walpole, 'Abstract of the Minister's Answer to the Occasional Writer', in David Mallet (ed), *The Works of the Late Honourable, Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke*, v. 1 (Dublin: P. Byrne, 1793), p. 175.

202 Bob and Harry, BL. Add. Ms. 48036, f. 29.

203 William Pulteney to Francis Colman, Resident at Florence and Parma, 12 June 1731, OS, Arlington Street, BL. Add. Ms. 18915, f. 7.

destruction.<sup>204</sup> Responding with retaliatory pamphlets only served to weaken the position of the First Lord. For Walpole to avoid criticism, he would have to take heed of what the Country message stated in the popular prints and change his ministry and ways accordingly. This was, of course, something Walpole was unwilling to do.

Wit and satire were widely appealing, emotionally evocative and closely embraced by communities who found it could direct people into supporting a different way of life, personally, politically and spiritually.<sup>205</sup> The press had the power to effect policy, it could move men to lobby government, reveal secrets, deceptions and all other 'politricks'.<sup>206</sup> For example, Norton Defoe was arrested for leaking information from the secret committee investigating the South Sea Bubble, to the printer of *Cato's Letters*, having provided evidence of Court cover-ups and Walpole's screening of corrupt financiers, causing outrage and bringing the First Lord into disrepute.<sup>207</sup> Contemporaries were aware that popular politics, if 'well timed and written', could influence and bind ideologically adverse factions.<sup>208</sup> Print had the capacity to maximise support in elections and parliamentary divisions and it could even 'produce a change in the ministry'.<sup>209</sup> Public pressure proved to be a constant opposition which scrutinised Walpole's administration relentlessly. It provided a 'check on fraud' and with the help of different factions in parliament, forced Walpole to be 'rather passive, undertaking little, contenting himself to repel attacks'.<sup>210</sup> Walpole's administration became

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204 Bolingbroke, *A Letter to the Examiner* (London: 1730), p. 15; Lord Stair to Lady Marlborough, 9 January 1738, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 44; comparisons can be drawn between the prosecution of John Lilburne in Austin Woolrych, *Commonwealth to Protectorate* (Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1976), pp. 235, 257–58.

205 Alfred, *Satires and Political Writings by Jonathan Swift*, p. 117.

206 Fielding, *The History of the Life of the Late Mr Jonathan Wild*, p. 66.

207 John Trenchard & Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters*, v. 1, p. 85; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 60.

208 Hardwicke Mss, v. 1, p. 85.

209 Carlisle Mss, v. 1, p. 108; Lady Irwin compared the force of polemic and its consequences in the Sacheverell trial to the Excise Scheme; Portland Mss, v. 7, p. 464; Bolingbroke, *A Letter to the Examiner*, p. 14; *Memoirs of the Times, in a Letter to a Friend in the Country, Containing an Account of and some Reflections on Some Remarkable Occurrences* (London: Anne Dodd, 1737), p. 3.

210 Philip Yorke, *Walpoliana* (London: 1783), p. 11; Sedgwick, *The House of Commons*, p. 517.

apprehensive to enact reform required by his monarch.<sup>211</sup> With every parliamentary motion, the First Lord expected a public backlash. By 1741, opposition forces, especially those of the Country interest had effectively undermined Walpole's tenuous grip over government, to which he is said to have proclaimed 'I oppose nothing, I give into everything, am said to do everything, and yet God knows I dare not do what I think is right'.<sup>212</sup> This had been the principal aim for many independents when they established the Country press. Contrary to views predicated in the historiography, the Country witnessed success in securing their platform and spreading their message through the press, with some even profiting from it.<sup>213</sup>

### **Business and Pleasure: The Country in the Coffee House**

Those averse to Walpole's administration did not confine their animosity to pseudonymous prints. Opposition was verbal, with a number of Walpole's supporters observing the mood of the people soberly, from within the many pubs and inns situated across Britain.<sup>214</sup> The popular press was seen to have made a significant impact on public perceptions. When the Sussex based estate agent, Richard Buckner, frequented a number of taverns on his journeys, he could not help but notice that -

Politics is the only prevailing conversation at present. These discourses perpetually produce murmurings and when they are warm with ale and argument, they launch out into such a liberty of speech as if they had letters patents of indemnification in their pockets. They

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211 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 173.

212 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 3, p. 131.

213 Anti-Bolingbroke Pamphlet, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 44/3, p. 13.

214 The subject of ale-house sociability has been covered recently in Mark Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014).

loudly complain of such general topics extracted from the *Craftsman* and *Fog* as furnishes them with sufficient matter for reflection and of which they are never sparing, but level it directly at one Great Man, and often accompanied with imprecations and curses.<sup>215</sup>

Public discontent was not merely found at the bottom of an empty beer tankard, for even in upmarket establishments such as the *Grecian* coffee-house, a stronghold of Whig tenets and frequented by party men loyal to the Walpole's administration, Bolton could be found dissenting from The First Lord's policies.<sup>216</sup> Unlike private salons, Steve Pincus claims 'a boatman and a lord could smoke at the same table', with the spread of news between various social hierarchies prevalent.<sup>217</sup> Pincus goes on to argue that in the early eighteenth-century, London had become 'the epicentre of the English coffee-house culture'.<sup>218</sup> Urstad estimates that in 1739, the Capital could boast more than 551 coffee-houses, 207 inns and 447 taverns.<sup>219</sup> Most of these establishments were factional, with various clientèle transferring ideas based on mutual political sentiments and shared interests.<sup>220</sup>

Robbins claims that prominent Commonwealthmen such as Andrew Fletcher, John Trenchard, John Toland and Matthew Tindal all shared comfort in each other's views, when meeting at the same coffee houses in London.<sup>221</sup> *White's Chocolate House* attracted many wealthy and noble gentlemen to converse over a game of cards. The *Jerusalem Coffee House* in Exchange Alley, *Wednesday's Club* in Friday Street and the *Olive Tree* in Poultry invited speculators to gamble not only with their

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215 Richard Buckner to Lord Richmond, 25 November 1728, Whitehall, WSRO. Goodwood Ms, 110.

216 Lord Newcastle, 18 July 1723, Newcastle House, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 279.

217 Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p. 77; Steve Pincus, "Coffee Politicians Does Create", *Coffee-Houses and Restoration Political Culture*, *Journal of Modern History*, 67.4 (December 1995).

218 Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p. 75.

219 Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 48.

220 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 22.

221 Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 6.

money, but stocks also.<sup>222</sup> *Pontack's* was a fine dining eatery, equivalent to the most expensive and fashionable of modern restaurants, it was here that members of financial corporations held their trustee meetings.<sup>223</sup> *Lloyd's* was the epicentre of the merchant shipping community, a place to avoid crimpers, to scrutinise weather forecasts, discuss insurance contracts and organise commercial dealings.<sup>224</sup> Beefsteak clubs also sprang up across Britain, the most infamous of these styled the 'Rump Steak Club'.<sup>225</sup> It became a prime haunt for Haddington, one of Walpole's most audacious Country opponents.<sup>226</sup>

Coffee-houses often fulfilled the requirements of meeting spaces, public libraries and reading clubs, a factor Markman Ellis has been instrumental in proving.<sup>227</sup> Some publicans and keepers even took annual subscriptions to furnish their tables with the latest news.<sup>228</sup> These meeting places became the primary interface for the spread of ideas, a vessel where popular prints could be disseminated and discussed. Here pamphleteering met public debate, outside the realms of court and parliament. Securing the support of these factional drinking establishments was important to Sunderland's administration, especially during a crisis. Sunderland believed 'the government has but few to support it in action and conversation. I believe it will be easily remembered that great regard has been paid to very great men of some who had but a coffee house of two under their care'.<sup>229</sup>

Discussing matters of state over a drink became an integral part of British politics, with curious overseas correspondents writing home to inquire 'how goes the chit-chat of the coffee-house

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222 George. Mackenzie to Earl Strafford, 20/31 March 1734, Paris, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 72.

223 Lord Chandos to Humphrey Waleof, 12 April 1729, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 33, f. 74.

224 Anon, *A Brief History of the Trade of England* (London: 1702), pp. 152–153, in Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth-Centuries* (London: Newton & Abbott, 1972), p. 163.

225 Polwarth Mss, v. 5, p. 85.

226 Another example was the Sublime Society of Beefsteaks, est. 1735.

227 Markman Ellis, 'Coffee-House Libraries in Mid Eighteenth-Century London', *The Library*, 10.1 (2009), pp. 3–40.

228 Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty?* pp. 180, 169; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 48; Wilson, *Sense of the People*, p. 32; Darnton, *The Kiss of Lamourette*, pp. 109, 117.

229 Lord Sunderland to Lord Godolphin, August 1719, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 18.

politicians and the *beau monde* about Kensington and St. James?<sup>230</sup> In 1721, people could readily respond that even during the early years of his tenure, many were 'in hopes of better things' from Walpole, 'against whom there seems to be a general clamour'.<sup>231</sup>

The discourse of government affairs had grown in popularity due to the spread of coffee-houses, alongside a greater acceptance of freedom of speech and expression that had not been witnessed prior to the Revolution of 1688. When Gilbert Burnet, a famous contemporary biographer published a celebrated *History* of his life and times, fellow clergyman, Conyers Middleton, likened its narrative to 'the common chit-chat of a talkative, credulous old fellow that frequents coffee-houses and reads newspapers'.<sup>232</sup> A distinct and recognisable style of conversation had arisen from the salons and political syndicates, comprising the hub of communication in large urban centres. Matters of discussion varied from scandals and science to politics and poetry.

In 1729, the extramarital affair of Katharine Tatton, Lady Abergavenney, quickly became 'the chit-chat of every tavern, coffee-house and ruelle in London'.<sup>233</sup> Her misfortune was one prominent example of how quickly news disseminated via these social establishments. Little could be kept quiet or private, be it government activity or 'the daily tales of coffee-house romances'.<sup>234</sup> With the emergence of coffee-house politics, Brian Cowan demonstrates it was evident that government faced a wider demand for accountability, a result of the steady flow of tea, information and customers.<sup>235</sup> Walpole had inherited a significant check on his authority and Pincus claims it was

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230 Mr Blair to Earl Strafford, 3/14 August 1735, Hanover, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 174.

231 John Morice to Nicholas Morice, 30 March 1721, BoE. Morice Ms, 10A97/1, f. 133.

232 Lord Hervey to Dr. Middleton, 1734, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 53.

233 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 13 November 1729, London, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 89.

234 Lord Hervey to Dr. Middleton, 20 June 1733, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 2.

235 Brian Cowan, *The Social Life of Coffee* (London: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 176.

evident that drinking establishments spurred a greater capacity for 'public scrutiny'.<sup>236</sup> This was a new and powerful addition to contemporary public life that Walpole had to contend with.<sup>237</sup>

Believing social grumblings to be far from benign and that public discontent could even go so far as to burgeon Jacobite sympathies, Walpole found it difficult to ignore, despite confident reassurances that 'sociability led to stability' and that politicians should 'let the City drink coffee and quietly groan, they that conquered the father will not be slaves to the son'.<sup>238</sup>

Habermas identifies the eighteenth-century world of letters as an optimum environment to nurture the development of the 'the public sphere'. In this open forum, coffee-houses, taverns and clubs flourished, allowing public opinion to mediate between society and state.<sup>239</sup> Popular politics became more accessible for people to contribute and be involved with than ever. It was a situation encompassing benefits and adversities in equal measure, especially for those hoping to use it as a tool to scrutinise government. The rising popularity of these social establishments enticed spies to relay delicate political information to various opponents. External influence on state affairs was exploited by various factions, with both the Country and Court finding utility in retrenching their centres of power, a situation opposed to Habermas' findings. This had a significant effect in shaping how politics was structured and organised. As long as such meeting spaces remained inclusive and frequented, there was an inability to prevent delicate political matters from being compromised. The interest for embarrassing stories such as Abergavenny's affair, reveals the subject and style of coffee-house chatter was transforming during the period, it focused on celebrity gossip increasingly, rather than discussing state politics. This was a direct result of members of Walpole's ministry and his Country opposition privatising their sphere of influence, moving discourse to inaccessible areas,

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236 Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p. 81.

237 John Morice to Nicholas Morice, 30 March 1721, BoE, Morice Ms, 10A97/1, f. 133.

238 Pincus, "Coffee Politicians Does Create", p. 832.

239 Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, pp. 30–32; Parolin, *Radical Spaces: Venues of Popular Politics in London, 1790–1845*, p. 9.

in order to plan ahead of their political rivals. It was this covert transfer of power and what it signified for political society that will form the basis of investigation in the following chapter.



## Chapter Two

### Rural Retreats: The Shift to Private Politics

Throughout the eighteenth century, lines defining official state meetings and esoteric gatherings continued to be blurred. Walpole appreciated the value of different forms of political organisation outside what Hervey described as the 'tragedy of a cabinet' and worlds apart from the solemnity of the privy council, where Hervey had to suffer sitting alongside Spencer Compton, who could always be found performing his duty as Lord President 'with a great deal of dull dignity and becoming formality, his hands full of papers, his nose full of snuff and his mouth full of nonsense'.<sup>1</sup> This chapter reveals how both Court and Country increasingly moved their political operations away from London, the traditional nexus of power, to private estates and family gatherings in their local communities. Keeping their manoeuvrings secret and informal, Walpole's ministry and their Country opponents competed to attract support for their causes. While the Country press reinforced the message for people to act independently, free from corruption and dismissive of parties, it was in the tight-knit private meetings of the Country where political action could be found.

During the Elizabethan, Jacobean and Caroline era, political authority often rested on individuals accessing power through public channels, being ushered in through the front door of the royal closet. For those permitted this overt level of admittance, it was a visible signal to others of their respect and importance at court, a ceremony cementing their social position and authority. Following the Revolution of 1688, Country politicians Harley and Bolingbroke avoided making their presence

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<sup>1</sup> Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 25 January 1733, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 354; Sir John Norris, Journal Entry, May 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 28133, f. 4.

known in antechambers, obtaining audiences with queen Anne through a hidden entrance that led to her bedroom instead.<sup>2</sup> More subtle methods to influence the crown had been required after James II abdicated, following an increased scepticism of absolute monarchical power, alongside a public disgust for court favourites and 'evil councillors'.

Meeting with powerful faction members could be a lucrative affair. These encounters altered the balance of political power in Britain, where the favour of the monarch was not always required, for it was more important to receive the support of wealthy and influential families instead. These changes had been a direct result of the appeal of dinner politics, which transformed how government and opposition was conducted during the period.

In Chapter One, the Country platform of rustication and their use of printing was explored. This was revealed to have led to the retrenchment of political discussion and the organisation of interest groups away from court and London. Chapter Two explores the repercussions of this shift in greater detail. The appeal of dinner politics and the reliance on family connections are two fundamentally important aspects, as they contributed to the reshaping of the political environment. It was in private homes and secretive clubs throughout rural areas, not the City or parliament, where power politics was discussed and managed. Fluid networks of people, established on extensive family connections, rendered old partisan ties redundant. This platform, established by the Country and emulated by the Court, resulted in interest and faction becoming the most efficient and influential mode of political manoeuvring during the period.

Political speeches in parliament were mostly concerned with managing public perceptions; critical political matters belonged to another realm entirely and this was often discussed in private, granting

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<sup>2</sup> Elizabeth Hamilton, *The Backstairs Dragon: A Life of Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1969).

Walpole security through obscurity.<sup>3</sup> If the adversarial world of the House of Commons proved a theatre, it was well noted that Walpole's opponents were on a mission to 'lead him under the necessity of quitting the stage'.<sup>4</sup> The lifestyle, impact and composition of various political interests explained throughout, contrast the view of politics presented by Plumb, Clark and George Rudé. The way in which state politics operated is found to be increasingly bereft of party intrigue. Indeed 'the two party system was at an end' during the period, but it was in the form of a battle between Court and Country, not the beginning of Whig oligarchy as Plumb suggested.<sup>5</sup> Political organisations were almost devoid of formality also, a factor Clark denies, with operations undertaken far from London, which Rudé disagreed with.<sup>6</sup> Greater consideration is placed on the studies of Robert Walcott instead, who argued that politicians embraced stronger ties than kinship, fraternity, family and faction provided, preferring their own rural seats of power as an environment to hold political discussion.<sup>7</sup>

The establishment and success of the Country press mentioned in the previous chapter, held the government to account and forced its ministers to react to scrutiny targeting them. A proliferation of Country writings, which levelled criticism at Walpole at every juncture had ramifications, shaping how the Court behaved. This chapter shows that while the Country moved to clandestine printing and hidden meetings to bypass the censor, the Court also learned that rural meetings were effective for maintaining support. As a result, Walpole's ministry emulated this tactic, going underground to forge closer networks of power and to avoid their activities being leaked in the press.

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3 Parliament was not 'the centre of political power' during the period, as suggested flippantly by, Peter Stamatov, *The Origins of Global Humanitarianism, Religion, Empires and Advocacy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 153.

4 Lord Chandos to Mr Watts, 20 April 1733, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 41.

5 Plumb, *Growth of Political Stability*, p. 160.

6 Jonathan Clark, *The Crisis of the 1750's and English Party Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 20; George Rudé, *Hanoverian London, 1714–1808* (Berkeley: California University Press, 1971), p. 143.

7 Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century*.

Writing by the penny post became increasingly risky, with Country politicians having to send reports that might damn them via private courier, which sometimes took more time and at a greater expense.<sup>8</sup> Walpole's ministry was notoriously efficient when it came to tampering with the public mail. Information that was critical to the First Lord ebbed and flowed through his office.

Forewarned was to be forearmed and with state money and machinery at his disposal, Walpole often got news first, slowing the networks of his competitors.<sup>9</sup> To this end, the role of Postmaster was a lucrative and important position. Walpole needed somebody he could trust, with Galfridus, Walpole's younger brother appointed to this position in April 1721.

At the highest echelons of government, Townshend could be found opening letters and sending them to his king for closer inspection, inquiring whether the authors deserved legal action to be taken against them.<sup>10</sup> Systems were developed for sifting through large amounts of information quickly. Certain correspondence was flagged for reading if letters failed to include the proper reverences to the king or his ministers.<sup>11</sup> Country politicians were aware their despatches were being intercepted, and they deliberately enclosed messages addressing state censors. Walpole claimed 'tis plain they suppose we see what they write, that everything is now wrote on purpose to be read'.<sup>12</sup> Bathurst 'saw nothing remaining for him and others to do, but to retire to their country houses, and there, if possible, enjoy their estates within their own families, since the least correspondence, the least intercepted letter might be made criminal'.<sup>13</sup> Others believed Walpole's rifling through the post was 'illegal and tyrannical', that those who do it 'are a disgrace to their government, a scandal to its enemies' and the chief cause of growing contentions against

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8 Polwarth Mss, v. 5, pp. 68–69.

9 Lord Townshend to George Tilson, 14 January 1729, BL. Add. Ms. 48982, f. 142.

10 Lord Townshend to George II, 27 January 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 78908, ff. 2/24–30.

11 Lord Townshend to George II, BL. Add. Ms. 78909, f. 5/2.

12 Robert Walpole to Horatio Walpole, 29 May 1722, London, BL. Add. Ms. 63749A, f. 10.

13 Debate in the House of Lords, Monday 13 May 1723, in, PD. v. 8, p. 365.

corruption.<sup>14</sup> It will be seen that many people began to cut out the middle-man, in this case, sending letters through the post, by choosing to meet their allies in person instead. By doing so, they could discuss politics in private, without letters being intercepted or their conversations overheard if given in a public space.

The reason gossip was discussed in public frequently, was because less information pertaining to major political events was being put on display or leaked for the public to write about, criticise or lampoon. Being granted access to such information meant a reliance was placed increasingly on well-connected people who were invited to private meetings where politics was discussed. The wrangling between Court and Country continued behind the scenes, involving people and events that are rarely mentioned in modern historical works. Few historians have approached this subject with any vigour. The works of those who have, such as Andrew Hanham, are engaged with later in the chapter, although the following sections rely heavily on collated primary sources that have not been cited in the historiography previously.

The appeal of secretive gatherings to organise political endeavours is a factor of eighteenth-century history that is largely omitted in the historiography. Transitions from public to private political interactions that occur during the period have gone undocumented. No full-length studies link the growing popularity of dinner politics and family power with the rise of Court and Country. Emrys Jones has written one of the strongest pieces on the subject recently, and despite finding utility in the Court-Country paradigm, he is reticent to discuss the concept of *Friendship and Allegiance* in this framework.<sup>15</sup> Urstad remains in a minority of scholars who investigate this subject, albeit briefly. Her study on government propaganda during the period reveals how Walpole organised 'restricted audiences' in his rural home, with Urstad evidencing how the First Lord discussed with a

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14 John Macgregory to Hugh Campbell, May 1720, HL. B34, LO. 9140.

15 Emrys Jones, *Friendship and Allegiance in Eighteenth-Century Literature: The Politics of Private Virtue in the Age of Walpole* (London: Palgrave, 2013), p. 5.

select few others, the best methods to counter poetry that if widely circulated, could prove harmful to the public reputation of their ministry.<sup>16</sup> In the few pages Urstad introduces this topic, attention is focused overwhelmingly on literary discourse, a subject Jones also concentrates his work on.

How Walpole dealt with poetry in the Country press is elucidated by Urstad and Jones, but their studies fall short of illuminating the most important aspect of private dinner politics. This fundamental link is an explanation of the activities that associates of the Court and Country engaged in during their time ensconced away from London. It was the nature and location of these meetings, alongside the people who were involved and formed associations with that shaped government activity. It was not just what policies or principles people discussed that has needed research, but how and where they discussed politics also. This chapter asserts that an informal, rural setting often proved crucial in forming a bond of trust between all those who attended private social engagements. Advocates of the Court and Country who organised and participated in these private events are seen to transform the political process of the century.

To make sense of the murky world of private politics, the following chapter is segmented, covering all the important points mentioned above that need addressing. Section One begins with an exploration of dinner politics, explaining why associates of the Court, Country and various factions did their utmost to pioneer the art of conducting business at the dinner table. The Second Section of this chapter examines the role of suburban meeting spaces. Exploring their symbolic and practical significance, this section shows how these locations helped form a private system of politics during the period. Section Three focuses on what made rural, secretive networks of political influence so successful, the fact that many were formed on a bedrock of fraternal language and the bond of kindred blood. Walpole's little known, but highly exclusive society, the *Charleton Congress*, is used

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16 Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, pp. 121–122.

as a case study to expand on the wider repercussions of secret politics. In Section Four, having revealed the importance of fraternal language as a tool for binding government and opposition, the importance of family influence is explored. The final and Fifth Section of this chapter examines how the brokering of allegiances became reliant on the need to appeal to the principles of individuals and their families. As party splintered into interest and faction, the battle for support and political consent was taken into the heart of many households. Court, Country and faction recognised the family unit as the most important hub for political influence. Family connection, communication and loyalties were crucial for politicians to see their ambitions achieved, especially during a time when the appeal of party ties and patronage seemed to be fading from the political landscape.

### **Dinner Politics: Conducting Business at the Table**

The Georgian period marked a significant transition concerning the location of influence in politics. Lucy Worsley claims the social experience of the Georgian court proved enticing for those seeking power and influence in politics.<sup>17</sup> While courtiers such as Richard Lumley, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Scarborough, still believed that to stand directly before the royal presence was to stand at the centre of power, this section reveals that politicians focused frequently on securing an audience with premier ministers instead, external to court.<sup>18</sup> Walpole was identified as a prominent gatekeeper of government, a channel through which to convey a favourable word in the ear of the king. The stature of the First Lord as middle-man to the crown enhanced his powers of mediation. It became increasingly

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<sup>17</sup> Lucy Worsley, *Courtiers: The Secret History of the Georgian Court* (London: Faber & Faber, 2010).

<sup>18</sup> Lord Scarborough to Lord Newcastle, 10 August 1733, Lumley Castle, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 60; Lord Carteret also displayed this inclination, that the influence of the king was all that mattered for a politician.

important for politicians to 'stand (behind the curtain) exceedingly well with Sir Robert Walpole'.<sup>19</sup> While this observation is recognised by numerous scholars, few mention how such a closed system of access developed or the ramifications it would have in the political arena. For instance, Pasi Ihalainen claims it is only after the fall of Walpole that 'political power shifted from parliament to the Court and the ministry'.<sup>20</sup> While much of this statement is true, it exaggerates the importance of parliament, while dismissing the extensive and early role that the Court and Country played to facilitate a transition from public to private politicking before 1740.

Friends and enemies alike had to contact Walpole for support, and as a minister frequently in demand, the First Lord began to organise his own meetings, not at court, but his own private residence. This retrenchment allowed political adversaries the chance to contact Walpole discreetly, which was especially useful for those not wanting to be seen engaging in political dealings with the Court.<sup>21</sup> William Pulteney and Lord Essex, two of Walpole's opponents, dined with the First Lord at the estates of Ickworth and Cassiobury for this reason. Pulteney even enjoyed dinner conversations with close members of Walpole's ministry, such as Charles Lennox, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Richmond, at his seat in Goodwood.<sup>22</sup> The decline of privy council meetings is attributed to its unappealing form. Each session served as a public, formal environment in which to discuss politics. The First Lord organised his ministry to coincide with the popularity for social engagements. This became the norm over more orthodox methods of statecraft.<sup>23</sup> Walpole enjoyed the level of control this afforded him, as he could preside over business on his own terms, controlling access as master of the house.

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19 Lord Chandos to Colonel Bladen, 12 November 1730, Shaw, HL. MssST. 57, v. 36, f. 242.

20 Pasi Ihalainen, *Agents of the People, Democracy and Popular Sovereignty in British and Swedish Parliamentary and Public Debates, 1734–1800* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), p. 119.

21 Thomas Prendergrast to Lord Richmond, 11 January 1738, OS, Whitehall, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 107.

22 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 5 January 1731, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 150.

23 Charles Delafaye to Hugh Campbell, 12 June 1727, Whitehall, HL. B21. LO 8557.



Dinner politics is a frequently neglected and unappreciated area of study in early-modern history, particularly due to the absence of primary sources, for much that went on behind closed doors tended to remain there. By design, contemporaries did not publish discussions, leave a paper trail or admit wandering eyes, for some subjects were as Chandos stated, 'better for conversation than writing'.<sup>24</sup> In order to understand this seemingly impenetrable world of secret politics, the evidence and locations where people gathered must be traced carefully. This investigation spreads outward from a traditional centre of power, the City, to its environs across Britain. Adapting similar exploratory perspectives used by Innes and Wilson, who have done much to explore political interactions in the countryside, this chapter emphasises how vital it is to collate sources documenting political life, as it transpired in neglected geographical areas of power.<sup>25</sup> While many of the Country interest believed rustication brought them comfort and conviviality to which they were accustomed, attracting support in their local communities, this section examines why the Court moved its base of operations from London also. The homes of prominent politicians became primary locations to administer politics via exclusive networks, granting both security and secrecy.

Court had the potential to harbour moles and saboteurs, a reality Hervey knew all too well when he advised others to 'speak not in palaces, for the walls have ears'.<sup>26</sup> Members of Walpole's ministry convened in London instead, at the Cockpit, Prince's Chamber, and from 1731, two houses situated in Downing Street. Adjacent to parliament and in close vicinity to the treasury, Walpole did not have to waste time or money organising his administration via postal courier or amid the curiosity of coffee house politicians. Even at Downing Street, Walpole had to contend with Jacobites living next door, such as Charles Boyle, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl of Orrery. For a time, the First Lord used these places to prepare the business of the day to be presented before the king and issue instructions to his placemen. Not all of Walpole's friends were permitted to attend privy council meetings at Whitehall.

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24 Lord Chandos to John Drummond, 22 December 1738, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 51, f. 10.

25 Wilson, *Sense of the People*, p. 10; Innes, *Inferior Politics*, p. 2.

26 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 26 August 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 295.

Furthermore, while each privy councillor swore an oath of secrecy, some concealed animosity toward the government, such as Thomas Trevor, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Trevor. Walpole's most trusted advisers had to be organised by other means, a necessity in order to maximise support and avoid being scuppered by his enemies.

Elected officials lived and spent a great deal of their time in the country, with many appearing in London only when parliament was in session, sometimes attending only to vote on a particular bill. When business concluded in the capital, it was known that all the taverns go 'unfrequented and all the fashionable private houses in their ancient dull tranquillity'.<sup>27</sup> While integral members of the Court were expected to stay at the interface of national politics for longer periods of time, as a matter of expediency, Walpole and his associates preferred to remove themselves to greener pastures. Hanham remains one of the few historians to provide a degree of insight into these political meetings, especially in his article on the 'Norfolk Congress', which comprised of a series of 'private meetings at Sir Robert Walpole's House'.<sup>28</sup> In his brief article for the *Oxford Dictionary National Biography*, Hanham makes it clear that a great deal of political intrigue was occurring in private, at country estates across Britain than has been suggested previously. It is unfortunate Hanham never continued his investigations any further than a few brief articles, which has resulted in the historiography suffering, in need of detailed examinations into the extent and impact of private dinner politics.

Following Hanham's trail, this chapter moves away from the investigation of political organisations in the Capital, explaining the appeal and utility of private meetings in its rural environs. When meetings were held in the City, they were attended at No. 17 Arlington Street, Walpole's London

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27 Lord Hervey to Lady Mary Montagu, December 1729, SRO. Ickworth MS. 941/47/2, f. 43.

28 Sir John Norris, Journal Entry, October 1739, BL. Add. Ms. 28132, f. 63; Andrew Hanham, 'The Norfolk Congress, 1722–1741', *ODNB* (2004–2013); Andrew Hanham, 'The Leicester House Faction' and 'The Hanover Club', *The History of Parliament Trust* (1964–2013).

residence, but directly flanked by nosy neighbours, opponents Pulteney and John Carteret, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Granville, often a more secluded environment was required.<sup>29</sup> Walpole's country haunt, Houghton Hall, suited this role perfectly. It was here politics was discussed over lavish banquets and sporting activities.<sup>30</sup> Studies on the materiality of property found in grand estates, such as Andrew Moore's monograph on Houghton, have proved limited in their attempts to explain the link between house and politics, something this section remedies.<sup>31</sup> Through the medium of undisclosed observations from several guests, the extent and informality of these meetings is revealed, with Hervey depicting Walpole's Norfolk abode as well suited 'to foxhunters, hospitality, noise, dirt and business'.<sup>32</sup> When Walpole's ministry sojourned to Houghton, Charles Cathcart, who resided at court mostly, noticed that 'there's very little politics stirring, the great men are all in Norfolk'.<sup>33</sup> Bearing a similar composition to the privy council but without the decorum, infiltrators and recorded minutes, guests included an alternating range of individuals desiring to be close to Walpole. Those he invited were people skilled in matters of diplomacy, politics and finance.<sup>34</sup>

The work of Hanham barely scratches the surface of what was occurring throughout the nation regarding the transformation of political culture. This change was found in associates of the Court and Country interest spending significant time in their rural communities, shifting power from London to its localities. Liaising in secret with their networks of friends and family, both groups are seen to benefit from organising their movements in a private environment. This chapter ventures beyond existing scholarship to reveal how the appeal of dinner politics realigned the outlook and allegiances in contemporary society.

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29 Bolingbroke's London residence was also chosen to face that of Walpole's. It was a symbolic gesture of defiance.

30 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Newcastle, 24 October 1723, Houghton, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 362.

31 Andrew. Moore, *Houghton Hall: The Prime Minister, The Empress and the Hermitage* (London: Philip Wilson, 1996).

32 Giles. Fox-Strangeways, *Lord Hervey and His Friends* (London: John Murray, 1950), p. 72.

33 Charles Cathcart to Hugh Campbell, 30 November 1730, London, HL. B14, LO 7899.

34 Lord Chandos to John Drummond, 15 July 1728, Tunbridge Wells, HL. MssST. 57, v. 32, f. 59.

Associates of the Country, working externally to the Court, used the press and rustication as platforms to self-reflect and influence others. Working to prevent the spread of parties, corruption and war through these methods, the Country cause strengthened its position, pursuing these goals by expanding efforts to establish fluid political networks from their rural neighbourhoods. It will be shown that Country politicians organised functions in their residencies and local communities, inviting a wide range of individuals to celebrate and toast their achievements, in the hope that guests would leave proponents of their principles. Walpole quickly tapped into the effectiveness of this growing trend, on one occasion heading to Knowsley, to dine with a prospective supporter, Lionel Sackville, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Dorset. Hesitant about his chances of winning Dorset over, Walpole wrote to Newcastle, worrying whether he 'shall do it well'.<sup>35</sup>

Focusing efforts on forming a trusted circle of proponents of his ministry, Walpole built an exclusive core of people allowed to wine, dine, be entertained and politic with him on a regular basis. Plumb believed this was the beginning of a Whig oligarchy in British politics, with this thesis proposing alternative evidence that Walpole's close-knit coterie relied on nepotism primarily, rather than various Whig politicians aligning with Walpole from different dynasties.<sup>36</sup> This occurred because of the effectiveness of the Country in undermining Walpole's appeal to traditional, Whig party loyalties, which forced the First Lord to rely on family ties instead.

Guarding the plans of his ministry by organising people through secretive dinner engagements, Walpole did all he could to screen those wanting to learn state affairs or seeking audiences with his retinue and monarch. While the First Lord fell back on relatives, friends and the few people who believed themselves stalwart Whigs, during a breakdown of parties and patronage, the more

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35 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Newcastle, 22 August 1723, BL. Add. Ms. 34727, f. 313.

36 John Plumb, *The Making of an Historian*, v. 1 (London: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1988), p. 113.

Walpole realised his power ebbed at the expense of rival families and interests, who presided over dinner politics in ways that he could not.

Creating a loyal nexus of family power and orchestrating ventures over dinner became the blueprint for subsequent generations to master politics and remain ahead of their opponents. The next section reveals that for Court, Country and faction alike, significant political discussions were held routinely at informal societies and private houses. Following this, Section Three provides a case study of Walpole's exclusive club, the *Charleton Congress*, proving how important dinner politics became to maintaining power. The final part of this chapter traces the lineage of dinner politics to its roots, examining the vital but underestimated role family connections had in supporting the ambitions of aspiring politicians and the security of premier ministers.

### **The Role of Meeting Spaces for Secret Societies**

Construction of Houghton Hall began during the first half of the 1720s, Walpole remarking 'the house is a very large old seat, the park very fine indeed, but all this in a country that the Devil would not live in'.<sup>37</sup> John Macky, government spy, observed it was a 'fine house' and frequently suggested art installations to decorate the walls of Walpole's home, of which, hunting scenes by John Wootton were the preferred choice.<sup>38</sup> It was clear Walpole had a particular outlook when building Houghton, with focus placed on the entertainment of guests primarily. The most skilled landscapers of Walpole's age found it difficult to transform the barren scenery of Houghton into the

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37 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Newcastle, 1 September 1724, Houghton, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 54.

38 John Macky to Robert Walpole, 21 September 1723, Brussels, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 330.

picturesque, but much was done to make the interior of the house more inviting, with the famous architect, William Kent, employed for this task.<sup>39</sup>

When the wandering antiquary, Jeremiah Milles, visited a completed Houghton in 1735, he noticed 'the inside of this house exceeds the outside'. Upon first entering the great hall, he was presented with a full length portrait of Walpole dominating the lobby, under 'a very noble lantern' which loomed overhead symbolically, 'so famous for its size'.<sup>40</sup> Walpole's study was 'not a very large one', a minuscule space compared to those of Harley and Sunderland, who built estates around their bookshelves.<sup>41</sup> Much like the apartments at Houghton, described as 'mean for such a grand house', it shows Walpole was interested more with imploring people to wine, dine and enjoy sporting activities with him, not read or sleep for the short duration of their stay.

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39 Lord Hervey to Prince Frederick, 14 July 1731, Houghton, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, ff. 200–205.

40 Jeremiah Milles Travel Diary, July 1735, BL. Add. Ms. 15776, f. 62; A. Matikkala, *The Orders of Knighthood and the Formation of the British Honours System: 1660-1760* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2008), p. 348.

41 Jeremiah Milles Travel Diary, July 1735, BL. Add. Ms. 15776, f. 65.

Space Formerly Containing a Third-Party Image

Space Formerly Containing a Third-Party Image



Robert Halsband claimed 'politics was not much discussed' by Walpole's guests, who entranced by his house, were eager to debate the finer points of pleasure instead.<sup>42</sup> On the contrary, Walpole designed Houghton for an express purpose, the reception of political guests, with evidence abundant in features found within the grounds of his estate. Grand parties for twenty to thirty people were sometimes held over two banqueting tables on the second floor, allowing Walpole to impress.<sup>43</sup> Hervey claims that Walpole's more frequent visitors used only the 'rustic ground floor', as the First Lord did not need to wow his close friends, who normally eat meals together not in his magnificent dining hall, but its smaller antechambers.<sup>44</sup> This was an intimate, almost hidden set of rooms, perfect for drinking and expressing political opinions. Dana Arnold argues forcefully that Houghton was 'one of the first great houses where the formal system began to crumble'.<sup>45</sup> No longer host to rigid, ceremonial visits where business was kept strictly separate from leisure, the two aspects were combined seamlessly. The configuration of Walpole's home, made way for a new age of dinner politics, where state affairs could be integrated into leisurely activities in an easy, relaxed and convivial environment.

Walpole's design for Houghton demonstrated a wider conflict between political interests, which had been engrained in the brick and mortar of the period. John Summerson, Jim Bennett, David Watkin and Joseph Bettey address the role landscaping played to reflect the arcane or unabashed political views of Walpole's contemporaries.<sup>46</sup> At Stowe, Richard Temple, Viscount Cobham, father to the

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42 Robert Halsband, *Lord Hervey: Eighteenth-Century Courtier* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 121.

43 Carlisle Mss, p. 85.

44 Maurice Barley (ed), *The Buildings of the Countryside, 1500–1750, Chapters in the Agrarian History of England and Wales*, v. 5 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp. 102–103.

45 Dana Arnold, *Reading Architectural History* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 156.

46 David Watkin, *The English Vision, The Picturesque in Architecture, Landscape and Garden Design* (London: John Murray, 1982), pp. 1–25; John Summerson, *Heavenly Mansions* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1963); Jim Bennett, *The Garden, The Ark, The Tower, The Temple* (Oxford: Museum of the of History of Science, 1998); Joseph Bettey, *Estates and the English Countryside* (London: B. T. Batsford, 1993).

Patriot faction, constructed lasting monuments to his hatred of the First Lord, aesthetics that delighted his guests at garden parties.<sup>47</sup>

The estate of Strafford, a quintessential Country politician, was designated an 'earthly paradise', while the residence of courtier George Dodington, who was lambasted for his pomp, had his home described as 'a vast heap of stones that has the look of a great hospital'.<sup>48</sup> Hervey remarked Dodington's 'head was turned to appear a country gentleman, and if he still carried the ensigns of a courtier about him, it was only some religion of *la vieille cour* and no new acquisition'.<sup>49</sup> Paul Langford stated 'Hervey was incapable of offering a charitable explanation where a malicious one would do', but Black is also correct in highlighting 'there is no better guide to the court in the 1730's'.<sup>50</sup> Meticulous in chronicling the characters of several politicians during the period, Hervey scoffed at the Country maxims of his age, especially those who believed the 'beauty of nature being so much superior to all art'. It was Hervey's view that his Country counterparts 'might just as well say they had rather live in a hollow tree than the finest house that Vetruius or Palladio ever built'.<sup>51</sup> This contention highlights a popular ideal of fox-hunters, the notion that country estates, like Country politics, should be modest and refined. In essence, each property should work in harmony with nature, not against it. Dodington's vulgar and foppish display of wealth only served to reflect the artifice and Court decadence Country politicians abhorred.

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47 Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 16; Lord Cobham may have obtained his architectural ideas from Sir Robert Walpole's Speech, 7 December 1719, in, PD. v. 7, p. 244; Charles Cathcart to Hugh Campbell, 28 August 1730, Windsor, HL. B14. LO. 7952.

48 Mr Powell to Earl Strafford at Wentworth Castle, Yorkshire, September 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 5; Lord Berkeley to Lord Staffordshire, 16 October 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 31141, f. 381; for a different perspective on this estate, see Jeremiah Milles Travel Diary, July 1735, BL. Add. Ms. 15776, f. 110.

49 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 30 December 1731, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 334.

50 Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: 1727–1783* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 15; Black, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Walpole*, p. 41; also, see renewed importance on the subject in, Stephen Taylor & Hannah Smith (eds), "Hephaestion and Alexander" Lord Hervey, Frederick, Prince of Wales and the Royal Favourite in England in the 1730's, *English Historical Review*, 124.507 (4 March 2009), pp. 283–312.

51 Lord Hervey to Mary Montagu, 18 June 1737, Ickworth Park, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, ff. 44–45.

Architecture was not the only place where clashes between interest groups spilled over. Thomas McGeary mentions the management and subscription of opera companies also left musicians unable to escape the divisive nature of politics.<sup>52</sup> When Frederick went into open opposition against Walpole, he deliberately employed rival composers such as Thomas Salway, requesting the production of works promulgating 'Englishness' in all aspects. Oliver Cox, a recent scholar of the life of Frederick, claims the music of the prince became a font for patriotism, a jibe at his estranged father and his German composer, George Handel.<sup>53</sup> These 'opera feuds' brought political conflict to the forefront of public arts, resulting in rival musicians being 'hissed at and cat called'.<sup>54</sup> It was often clear to see 'the crowd assemble themselves, even in their pleasures according to their inclinations in political affairs'.<sup>55</sup>

Verbal parodies and comedic characters 'that resembled a Great Minister' had spread as far afield as Brussels by 1732.<sup>56</sup> In Britain, public orations attacking Walpole, designed to attract jeering crowds ranged from allegorical lectures by Mr Henley at Lincoln's Inn Fields, to highly successful plays such as John Gay's *Beggar's Opera*, which the *Craftsman* claimed testament to the 'influence powerful examples have on the minds of the multitude'.<sup>57</sup> Many who attended this particular theatrical display drew parallels to members of Walpole's ministry, although it is difficult to discern whether this was Gay's intention. His follow-up play, *Polly*, left little to the imagination however and was a production infinitely more provocative than his last. Walpole quickly applied pressure on his government censor, Charles FitzRoy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Grafton, to quash its license, 'rather than

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52 McGeary, *The Politics of Opera in Handel's Britain*.

53 Lord De La Warr to Lord Richmond, 16 June 1738, WSRO. Goodwood Ms, 103; Oliver Cox, 'Rule Britannia!' *King Alfred the Great and the Creation of a National Hero in England and America*, p. 107.

54 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 13 June 1737, SRO. Ickworth Ms, 941/47/4, f. 57.

55 Richard Steele to Lord Chamberlain, Thomas Pelham Holles, 21 December 1721', in, Rae Blanchard (ed), *The Correspondence of Richard Steele* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1941), p. 166.

56 Lord Ailesbury to Lord Richmond, 29 October 1732, Brussels, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 110.

57 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 2 March 1728, 3.87, p. 10; other examples of plays with anti-Walpolean sentiments include two by Henry Carey, *The Dragon of Wantley* and *Chrononhotonthologos*.

suffer for thirty nights to be portrayed as a highwayman for people's applause'.<sup>58</sup> Deprived of entertainment, contemporaries 'wonder why it could not be given liberty for it being acted', for *Polly*, like other operatic diatribes, was said 'there is a great deal of just satire in it'.<sup>59</sup> Far from being an insignificant event, these incidents struck at the heart of Court life. Charles Douglas, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Queensbury and patron of Gay, resigned his position as Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, despite the king protesting that he should stay.<sup>60</sup> Having stormed out of the royal closet, Patriot faction member, George Grenville, claimed the Queensbury's held 'assemblies at their house every court night and have more company than their majesties'.<sup>61</sup>

Luminaries of the arts were close to their patrons and the attraction was mutual. Masters of their craft were steeped in esoteric fraternities, often producing work with distinct political undertones.<sup>62</sup> Ophelia Field shows that Sir John Vanbrugh, one of the most celebrated architects of his day, frequently sat at a table with Walpole and other members of the *Kit-Kat Club*, a nuclei of Whig interests.<sup>63</sup> Harley and Bolingbroke, Walpole's Country predecessors, operated certain arms of their administration from the safety of the *Scriblerus* and *October Club*, often because informal meetings would degenerate into 'much drinking, little thinking'.<sup>64</sup> Tenebrous societies such as the *Hellfire Club*, the *Society of Dilletanti* or the Anglo-French *Club de l'Entresol* did not exist merely because people enjoyed supping themselves to a stupor, or wearing silly attire away from frowning scrutiny, they were exclusive, political think-tanks.<sup>65</sup>

The exploits of Thomas Coke, Lord Lovell, are but one example of how synonymous family, dinner

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58 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 98.

59 Thomas Carte to Corbert Kynaston, 7 April 1729, Prince's Court, BL. Add. Ms. 21500, f. 11.

60 Jonathan Swift to Mrs Howard, 25 November 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 22625, f. 20.

61 Letter to George Grenville, 19 March 1729, London, BL. Add. Ms. 57804, f. 31.

62 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 24.

63 Ophelia Field, *The Kit-Kat Club: Friends Who Imagined a Nation* (London: Harper Collins, 2008); Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 297.

64 Biddle, *Harley & Bolingbroke*, pp. 67-68.

65 Sichel, *Bolingbroke*, pp. 170, 211, 216-217; Mark Blackett-Ord, *Hellfire Duke* (Berkshire: Kensall Press, 1982); Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, pp. 156-158; this last book explains much on the Anglo/French *Club de l'Entresol*.

politics and secret societies had become. A Norfolk neighbour and distant relative of Walpole, Lovell acted as Grand Master of the English Freemasonic Lodge from 1731–1732. During this period, Lovell presided over a five-day ceremony held at Houghton Hall. It was there, Francis, Duke of Lorraine and later Holy Roman Emperor was elevated to the rank of Master Mason in the Order.<sup>66</sup> The hosting of political galas was not the sole preserve of the Court however. Henry Pelham, Walpole's trusted treasury official noted 'the lords are discontented and join clubs and cabals of an ugly nature'.<sup>67</sup> Middling traders, English royalty and even African princes would grace Chandos' table at Cannons on Sundays, where the friendly and malcontent to Walpole's administration discussed politics.<sup>68</sup> A host of Europe's most formidable wits gravitated to the comity of Cirencester Park, home of the Bathurst dynasty, or to the sanctuary of Pope's riparian dwelling at Twickenham.<sup>69</sup> Dawley Farm, the infamous rural retreat of Bolingbroke had been purchased in-lieu of his abortive restoration to parliament. Until Bolingbroke left for France and sold the property in 1736, it served as Country headquarters for many travelling pastoral politicians.<sup>70</sup> Its designation and architectural styling was not just an idealistic nod to Country politics, Dawley was a fully functional farm, an iconic landmark for opposition forces across the nation.<sup>71</sup>

An increasing number of Country associates travelled great distances to meet like-minded acquaintances and discuss political affairs.<sup>72</sup> Bolingbroke, Pulteney and others made frequent visits to Orchard Wyndham at Williton, a manor in the possession of parliamentarian Sir William

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66 Malcolm Davies, *The Masonic Muse* (Utrecht: Royal Dutch Society for Music, 2005), p. 39.

67 Henry Pelham to Lord Essex, 18 January 1734, London, BL. Add. Ms. 27733, f. 11.

68 A Book of Strangers to Stowe and Cannons, 1721–1722, HL. MssST. 59; Lord Chandos to Mr Hendricks, 18 September 1720, HL. MssST. 57, v. 18, f. 159; Lord Chandos to the Lord Grafton, 8 June 1729, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 33, f. 134.

69 Alexander Pope, *The Works of Alexander Pope*, v. 4 (London: 1979), p. 77; Sichel, *Bolingbroke*, pp. 215–217, 220, 265; Anna Temple to Richard Temple, 17 June 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 57806, f. 6.

70 Lord Bolingbroke to Lord Luxborough, 22 April 1736, BL. Add. Ms. 45889, f. 18.

71 Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 213.

72 Lord Hervey to Prince Frederick, 6 November 1731, Redlinch, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 267.

Wyndham.<sup>73</sup> Reciprocating the gesture, Wyndham became famous for spending a great deal of his time alongside Walpole's opposition, far from court. Although a rarity, when Wyndham appeared at a royal palace, he was welcomed with all the panic and confusion akin to Charles Stuart rapping on the door of the king's chamber. On one occasion, Wyndham 'greatly alarmed all the courtiers', some even speculating 'he was come in with a flag of truce from the ones at Dawley'.<sup>74</sup> Maintaining these rural networks, alongside the dinner engagements they necessitated was valued by politicians as a sign of trust, respect and influence. To be omitted from a guest list or prevented from attending political soirées was a grave insult. The discretion of political guests became so important that not even members of the royal family were above being barred from entry. When Newcastle failed to invite Walpole's opponent, prince Frederick to his welcome party for the Duke of Lorraine, an event to be hosted at his estate, Frederick made his displeasure known, putting Newcastle 'in a real fidget, equal to any he ever put on when he had a mind to appear as a man of business'.<sup>75</sup>

Whether a patron of the Court or an advocate for the Country cause, each looked to keep their finger on pulse of what was considered the pinnacle of hosting political discussions, to be amid good company in an informal venue. Compton was avoided by his peers because of his awkward demeanour, alongside his want to impress on others an adherence to decorum. Informality brought success, a factor the 'proud' Duke of Somerset failed to recognise also, attending breakfast clothed in the finest attire, complete with his blue ribbon. Milles was unfortunate enough to observe the peculiar social etiquette of Somerset, while travelling across Britain, remarking-

His table, though spread in a grand manner as if company were expected, consists of his own family, the duchess and his two daughters, and when he has a mind to be gracious, the

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73 Sir Robert Walpole to Horatio Walpole, 15 July 1738, Chelsea, BL. Add. Ms. 63749, f. 316; Lord Hervey to Prince Frederick, 6 November 1731, Redlinch, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 267; Lord Gower to Lord Essex, 15 October 1732, London, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 26.

74 Erasmus Jones to Lord Strafford, 19 October 1731, London, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 521.

75 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 23 October 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 258.

chaplain is admitted. He treats all his country neighbours and indeed, everybody else with such uncommon pride and distance, that none of them visit them.<sup>76</sup>

The benefits of establishing rural clubs was evident to political contemporaries. The Country cause in particular organised everything from informal dinners to contesting elections and framing bills in parliament.<sup>77</sup> For example, the 1740 *Place Bill*, which targeted patronage and corruption was developed by the most talented Country politicians, who convened at Wyndham's house.<sup>78</sup> It became standard protocol to organise 'a meeting of a great number of rank and property' before any local government vote, and many squires indulged in this practice.<sup>79</sup> Newcastle's spy was informed that - 'the heads of the opposition, especially those identified as contributors to the *Craftsman*, were - 'exceedingly busy in taking measures for acting rigorously against lasting sessions of parliament and as I am well informed have had several conferences in the country already'.<sup>80</sup>

One such Country conference concerned the reconstruction of the port of Dunkirk, which contrary to its terms of sale, threatened a breach between France and Britain. Dunkirk had been purchased by France in October 1662, with strict stipulations forbidding the repair and fortification of the destroyed harbour.<sup>81</sup> In 1728, conflicting information circulated in the press and private correspondence that a construction project had restored access to the port, with rumours that military preparations were being undertaken.<sup>82</sup> One of Walpole's informants had intimated Dunkirk

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76 Jeremiah Milles Travel Diary, Account of a Tour in Hampshire and Sussex, 15 September – 20 September 1743, BL. Add. Ms. 15776, f. 230.

77 Thomas Carte to Corbert Kynaston, 17 October 1738, Princes Court, BL. Add. Ms. 21500, f. 7; Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 231.

78 Lord Chandos to Mr Jefferies, 13 December 1739, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 52, f. 101.

79 Thomas Chester to Lord Bellamont, 11 October 1739, Gloucestershire, WRAS. Lechmere Archives. 899:169/4084/1.

80 John Smith to Lord Newcastle, 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 519.

81 Extract of Sundry Papers relating to the sale of Dunkirk and Mardyke, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/1; Extract of a letter from His Grace the Duke of Newcastle to Mr Walpole, 4 April 1728, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/5; Extract of a letter from Mr Walpole to the Duke of Newcastle, 29 April 1728, NS, Paris, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/6; Advice from Dunkirk, 30 April 1728, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/8.

82 Translation of an extract of a letter from Paris, Mr Finch (information from a pensionary) to Lord Townshend, 15 March 1728, NS, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/3; Copy of address relating to the harbour at Dunkirk, CUL.

was to be the staging point for a Jacobite incursion.<sup>83</sup> The First Lord had been willing to overlook the matter, not wanting to cause a rupture with France. It was the investigation and scrutiny of Walpole's opposition that brought this affair to public attention. More importantly, the manoeuvrings of Country politicians in their private meetings used this incident to enact political change at Court, against Walpole's inclinations, while going as far as to intervene in matters of French political sovereignty. Under pressure from his opposition to validate the intelligence gathered, Walpole despatched Colonel John Armstrong to inspect the harbour. Upon closer investigation, Armstrong found that the works that had been established did pose a military threat and suggested the harbour be dismantled.<sup>84</sup> This resulted in Walpole's hand being forced to entreat with the French court, to carry out a controlled demolition on mutually agreed terms.

An affidavit from two mariners serves to illuminate how private meetings managed to raise 'the complaints and noise about Dunkirk', which according to a government official who documented the testimony, was made to 'overturn Sir Robert Walpole'.<sup>85</sup> Subversion was achieved when merchant George Colcott was requested to attend a local tavern. Upon his arrival, Colcott was met by Bolingbroke's personal secretary, John Brinsden, who asked him various questions about his commercial experience and trading contacts, luring him to a second rendezvous with an offer of employment in a new venture.<sup>86</sup>

Throughout the month of February 1729, Colcott and his fellow seaman, Robert Jones, were invited to be lodged, wined and dined at Brinsford's expense, alongside other mariners operating out of

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CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/7; Translation of Mr Ricourt's (Officer of Marines) letter to the Count de Maurepas, enclosed in Walpole's letter, 10 June 1728, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/11; Advices from Dunkirk, 19 April 1728, Mr Ricourt's Answer, 2 June 1728, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/12.

83 Memorandum by Thomas Reed (Jacobite Spy), BL. Add. Ms. 37395, f. 109.

84 Lord Chesterfield to Charles Townshend, Translation of a letter from Dunkirk, 6 May 1729, Hague, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers* 25/34.1; Report of Colonel Armstrong and Monsieur Cronstrom (translated from French) 23 September 1728, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/24.3.

85 Some Necessary Notes and Animadversions on an Affidavit made by George Collcot and Robert Jones, Mariners Concerning the Affair of Dunkirk. With an Affidavit Sworn: 11 March 1729, CH(H), *Political Papers*, 73/14.

86 Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 230; BL. Add. Ms. 34196, f. 54, in, Sichel, *Bolingbroke*, p. 116.



Dunkirk. On several occasions, each had been invited to Brinsford's residence, where Wyndham, Pulteney and Bolingbroke interrogated them on the state of the harbour at Dunkirk. After information was extracted at these covert meetings, the mariners were prepared to testify at the Bar of the House of Commons as to what they had witnessed, information that with the right amount of vetting and £4,000 of leverage did much to press the cause of the opposition in ruining Walpole's credibility.<sup>87</sup> The Dunkirk incident proved an archetypal example of how Walpole's opposition financed political schemes, spent their time farming intelligence, organised people to bring information to parliament and exposed uncomfortable truths that Walpole had wanted to keep disclosed. This had been achieved through a mixture of dinner politics and a series of meetings at the private residencies of prominent politicians.

Extracting information from two mariners required them to be well fed and watered, but wining and dining were not the only activities a politician could indulge in during their time spent in the country. Cricket had become increasingly popular, with Richmond, John Philip Sackville, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Dorset and Alan Brodrick, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Middleton all patrons and players of this sport. One match witnessed prince Frederick wager his team against the best Sir William Gage could muster. On 11 August 1733, 'on the hill, where both parties appeared in great numbers', a friendly contest of cricket ensued followed by the entertainment of the Patriot faction at breakfast.<sup>88</sup> At Lewes, it was claimed 'there is a club formed in the opponent party', consisting of fifty two members and headed by Sir Cecil Bishop.<sup>89</sup> They met at pubs, inviting popular sporting celebrities to endorse their cause and provide keynote speeches.<sup>90</sup> At the popular gentry retreat of Bath, a number of politicians found

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87 Sichel, *Bolingbroke*, p. 255; Bolingbroke funded the press campaign. Pulteney did not contribute any monetary sum but lent his weight against Walpole in parliament, a place Bolingbroke could not venture.

88 William Hay to Lord Newcastle, 9 August 1733, Glyndebourne, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 72; Sir William Irby to Lord Guildford, 19 July 1727, Bodl. MS. North, D.4, Fo. 133; also, see the matches played at Sevenoaks Vine and others in, Henry Waghorn, *Cricket Scores, Notes, Etc: 1730–1744* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood, 1899).

89 Richard Burnett to Lord Newcastle, 25 September 1733, Lewes, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 383.

90 Richard Burnett to Lord Newcastle, 25 October 1733, Lewes, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 584; as the century progressed, these informal sporting arrangements became more professionalised with its members focusing on bettering the game and distancing themselves from discussing politics, see Anthony Bateman & Jeffrey Hill (eds),

time to gamble and dance together. Yet even when trying to unwind, it was noted that people 'cannot forbear thinking sometimes of the odd situation of public affairs', with policy and panacea being linked inextricably.<sup>91</sup> These activities provided a relaxed and convivial backdrop in which to form intimate political networks. Important and personal matters could be discussed privately, deals could be struck and there was one past time that made this convergence of business and pleasure such an alluring prospect in the eighteenth century, the pursuit of game.

### **Outfoxing the Opposition: Walpole's Exclusive Club, The Charleton Congress**

For a person of nobility in the early eighteenth century, it was 'impossible to live in the country and not be a sportsman'.<sup>92</sup> Walpole was a keen horseman, but long before his corpulence prevented him from hunting altogether, he was viewed by one of his more caustic Country opponents, Nicholas Morice, as 'a great fumbler in the field'.<sup>93</sup> Excessively fond of rich food and fine clarets, the First Lord was obese and unhealthy. As one of the wealthiest politicians in Britain, Walpole could afford to glut himself, with princess Amelia noticing on one occasion that 'Sir Robert has been very childish, he drunk more than he should upon arrival', having entered court dizzy with a hangover.<sup>94</sup> Hunting was Walpole's passion, a sport he hoped would countermand the negative effects of his daily calorie and alcohol intake. To this end, he was known to ride forty miles on horseback, with Walpole's concerned friends believing 'two or three stag chases more will go near to demolish him'.<sup>95</sup>

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*The Cambridge Companion to Cricket* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), pp. 28–29.

91 Lord Chandos to Colonel Bladen, 23 October 1726, Bath, HL. MssST. 57, v. 27, f. 41.

92 Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, 24 August 1723, London, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 19, f. 5.

93 Nicholas Morice to Humphrey Morice, 10 July 1725, Werrington, BoE, Morice Ms. 10A97/2, f. 286; a life of pleasure and excess spurred Walpole to seek medical help, see Helen Berry, 'The Pleasures of Austerity', *Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 37.2 (June, 2014), p. 272.

94 Princess Amelia to Horatio Walpole, 30 December 1736, BL. Add. Ms. 73770, f. 96.

95 Lord Chandos to Mr Mr Brydges, 20 September 1739, Cavendish Square, HL. MssST. 57, v. 52, f. 2; Walpole had

Hunting was not an activity the First Lord participated in alone. Financial magnates, Godolphin and William Cavendish, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Devonshire, regularly chased hare, stag and fox with Walpole at Houghton.<sup>96</sup> In 1730, Richmond and Charles Bennet, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Tankerville, had inherited the first organised fox hunting club in Britain, the Charleton Hunt. Named after the village forming its hub, it was regarded 'a great resort of the nobility and in the hunting season, many of them have hunting houses there'.<sup>97</sup> Bolton, its original master, was a man renowned as one of the foremost hunters in Britain and a highly successful specialist on all matters equestrian.<sup>98</sup> His prize race horses were sold to the only people who could afford them readily, such as Godolphin, whose stallion was 'said to be the best stud in England and is said to run the fastest'.<sup>99</sup>

When Bolton relinquished control of the Charleton Hunt, Richmond's estates in Sussex were to provide the main arena for activities. Problematically, they bordered on an ambit of land held by Tankerville. The sporting pursuits of his neighbours heavily affected his game and coverts. At a meeting of the Charleton Hunt in 1729, the friendship between these two individuals was sealed in a jestful peace treaty, mocking the informality of the political club and signed in the presence of all members present.<sup>100</sup> Tankerville and Richmond were both close supporters of Walpole and as conjugal masters, they doubled the lands and resources available to its members, maintaining the future of what was to be known from one poem as 'the Charleton Congress'.<sup>101</sup> This cohort of Court fox-hunters possessed a deep political significance. What will be seen in the following paragraphs,

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fallen off his horse while hunting before, see Lord Chandos to Mr Watts, 14 September 1739, HL. MssST. 57, v. 51, f. 339; Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 27 August 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 161.

96 Robert Walpole to Lord Newcastle, 2 October 1723, Houghton Hall, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 361.

97 Jeremiah Milles, *Travel Diary, Account of a Tour in Hampshire and Sussex*, BL. Add. Ms. 15776, f. 244.

98 Lord Bolton to Lord Richmond, 1 April 1736, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 110; Rosemary Baird, *Goodwood: Art, Architecture, Sport and Family* (UK: Frances Lincoln, 2007), pp. 12, 49.

99 Susan Peck (Hamilton) to John Campbell, 12 May 1737, HL. B32, LO. 9040.

100 Treaty of Peace between Charles, Duke of Richmond and Charles, Earl Tankerville, 18 March 1729, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 10913/1.

101 Anon, 'The Historical Account of the Rise and Progress of the Charleton Congress, February 1737', in, Charles Lennox-March, *Records of the Old Charlton Hunt* (London: Elkin Matthews, 1910), p. 14.

is that individuals at these sporting sessions attended primarily because they were close friends to Walpole and admitted to lofty positions of state quickly because of it.

The Master of the Horse and the Buckhounds were not just ceremonial sinecures, they were specially reserved positions and specifically suited the keenest hunters and the most constant of the king's subjects. Hunting usually involved the use of firearms, so only the most trusted and careful confidants of the king were allowed access to him at such times.<sup>102</sup> William Rufus had been murdered by his entourage when on a hunt, and in an age of Jacobitism, contemporaries were aware of the dangers involved. Talbot Yelverton, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Sussex, was a living example of just how clumsy a weapon could be in the hands of an inexperienced hunter. John West, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl De La Warr, had the misfortune to witness Sussex discharge his musket accidentally on a hunt, which obliterated a partridge neither were aiming at.<sup>103</sup>

The lucrative places of Master of the Horse and the Buckhounds conveyed responsibility on recipients to oversee all aspects of royal game and sport, it also gave rare and regular access to the king when he hunted, alongside a chance to discuss business informally and in person. Scarborough, Richmond and Tankerville filled these positions respectively, the latter two having proven their prowess as leaders of the Charleton Hunt. Being a member of this group provided personal access to the king, permitting them an audience with the royal family at their most relaxed and susceptible to requests, during leisurely activities. While the monarch held court regularly, political favours were not always asked for or granted in the antechamber for all to see. Without direct access to hold conversation privately with the king, petitions, letters and favours had to be filtered through Walpole's ministry instead.

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<sup>102</sup> Andrew Thompson, *George II: King and Elector* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), pp. 64–66; Thompson mentions that George preferred hunting without firearms, 'par force'. Later excursions with courtiers and royals involved shooting.

<sup>103</sup> Lord De La Warr to Lord Richmond, 21 April 1738, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 103.

The importance of this level of access was exemplified when 'at the rendezvous for the stag hunting, Marlborough was seen 'flying in an easterly wind in an open chase' and upon meeting the hunting party, 'many *douceurs* passed between her, the king, the queen and Sir Robert'.<sup>104</sup> Marlborough had seized an opportunity to bypass the stringent protocols of the court, to directly meet the king in the field. When Hervey accompanied the queen to a hunt in Richmond, 'Sir Robert received the king at the park gate dressed in green and gold and a cap as ranger, with a leash across his shoulders, which gave occasion to a joke, we all sung it the whole day'.<sup>105</sup> This allusion pivoted on the present state of politics and Walpole's opposition, a subject that was the staple conversation piece on most outings.

For many of its members, the *Charleton Congress* was a fraternity associated with being a member of the inner sanctum of government. Bolton called his companions 'brother fox-hunters' and Newcastle 'our brethren'.<sup>106</sup> Familial language concerning politics was not merely a novelty, previous examples can be found in the 'Brothers club' established during the reign of Anne, of which Bolingbroke was a prominent member but Harley was excluded, with only the staunchest supporters of a certain political outlook admitted.<sup>107</sup> Hervey, among an army of hacks writing for the Court and First Lord also proclaimed themselves the 'Grub Street Brotherhood'.<sup>108</sup> Walpole used the *Charleton Congress* in an attempt to bind his administration. Whether at work or at play, in the field or in parliament, the First Lord and his friends spent much of their time together, closely concerting measures to enjoy the company of each other and see all matters of political business completed.

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104 Lord Hervey to Lady Bristol, 27 September 1730, Windsor Castle, SRO. Ickworth MS. 941/47/2, f. 186.

105 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 17 August 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 158.

106 Lord Bolton to Lord Richmond, 24 December 1737, Hackwood, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 110; Lord Newcastle to Lord Richmond, 26 July 1739, Newcastle House, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 1160, f. 18.

107 Biddle, *Harley & Bolingbroke*, p. 45.

108 Pat Rogers, *Grub Street: Studies in a Subculture* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p. 59.

Space Formerly Containing a Third-Party Image

Space Formerly Containing a Third-Party Image

Forming a highly exclusive society, members of the *Charleton Congress* were wealthy and distinguished individuals. Some were ordained in the Order of Bath, others were Knights of the Garter, three lords had royal blood flowing through their veins.<sup>109</sup> It was a hunting club based on loyalty, trust and mutual protection in all aspects of friendship and politics, for when Dorset came under attack, he told Richmond confidently 'I shall expect from the fox hunting club that they would forthwith take up arms in my defence'.<sup>110</sup> This hunting association proved the ultimate interface of power for its members, with those involved regarding themselves kindred at the very interface of Court and high politics. From the royal backstairs to Walpole's Norfolk abode, obtaining a private audience with the king or the First Lord meant personal and often surreptitious business could be properly concluded. It was this form of dinner politics that proved instrumental in shaping the contours of early-modern politics.

### **Blood is Thicker than Water: The Importance of Family Connections**

The familial language uttered by members of the *Charleton Congress* reflected the structure and activities of secret societies. Although discussed fully in later chapters, the efforts of the Country helped dissolve the widespread allure of patronage and party, used to cement political allegiances. Moves were made to form close family relationships in politics instead, emphasising the loyalty of kin as something to build a constant support on. Traditional methods of statecraft were being dismantled, with interest groups promoting the merits of political independence, urging the abandonment of patronage and party that Walpole counted on to maintain power.

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109 These were, Charles Lennox, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Richmond, Charles FitzRoy, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Grafton, Charles Beauclerk, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of St. Albans. They were illegitimate grandchildren to Charles II.

110 Lord Dorset to Lord Richmond, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 107.



Countering these changes to remain in a position of authority, the First Lord emulated a formula for success set by his Country counterparts. As mentioned previously, Walpole rusticated to his estate increasingly, where he hosted dinner parties for his ministry, allowing close friends access to important people in secret groups. Most importantly however, the First Lord became reliant on the loyalty that blood connections afforded him. This was a kindred bond, formed between his family members and something Walpole found sanctuary in.

Exclusive societies and the political factions sprouting from them, were often formed around particularly ambitious or independent individuals hoping to assert their family name in history. Despite being of no relation to each other, people regarded as trustworthy in their factions were referred to, if not treated like siblings of the family who sponsored them. If an outsider followed a similar political outlook to the leading members of a family, they were allowed to marry into the dynasty, especially when it was convenient for business. Well-connected families not only enjoyed dining as one, but relished the opportunity to invite company and enjoy discussing politics with them together at the table. This produced an atmosphere that fostered personal loyalties to be struck, between those invited and those a family trusted. In this penultimate section, attention is placed on the increasing shift toward family orientated dinner politicking. This contributed to the development of faction becoming the standard structure for effective political manoeuvring, displacing parties.

Since its publication, the sentiments expressed in Walcott's *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century* have not been considered properly. In his monograph, Walcott attempted to reinforce a view that factional and family politics proved a more informative method of explaining political dealings during the period.<sup>111</sup> Hayton and Speck consider it a 'vulgar' copy of Namier's work, which relies on 'desiccated tables of family groups and associations', without any biographical or wider

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111 Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century*.

contextual support.<sup>112</sup> The impetus of family and factional connection used by Namier to describe politics under George III, was transposed by Walcott onto the party driven reign of Anne. This is just as misleading as Walcott's detractors claiming party politics increased in scope from Anne to the period Walpole held office.<sup>113</sup> Walcott shoehorned the typical, political structure found in one reign, back in time onto another, but failed to substantiate it with evidence, just as some party historians attempt to claim later periods operated in the same fashion than those they study.<sup>114</sup>

It is unfortunate Walcott's 'ideas were never taken seriously again', rather than dismissing his methodology as being flawed fundamentally, as it discourages investigation into the extent of family connections, which can be extremely rewarding and informative.<sup>115</sup> Walcott's study has been used as a poisonous example, allowing historians to once more justify 'restoring the centrality of party to early 18<sup>th</sup>-century English politics'.<sup>116</sup> While it is not particularly useful to sift through family trees and dynastic lineages, much can be done to explore the contextual significance of manuscripts penned by families who did operate politically, something Walcott never attempted.

The discrediting of Walcott's monograph left the study of political kinship networks a stigmatised subject. It is an area of history that has not been revisited in detail. Walcott's research left much to be desired, but his focus on the importance of family and faction contains more truth than has been credited previously, as it contained a myriad of substantial claims of benefit to the historiography. Many of Walcott's views, running contrary to the prevalence of party politics, have been 'demolished' by Plumb and Holmes subsequently.<sup>117</sup> According to Cowan, Walcott's work became a

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112 Hayton & Speck, 'In No One's Shadow', p. 7.

113 Eagles, 'Geoffrey Holmes and the House of Lords Reconsidered', p. 19.

114 Cowan, 'Geoffrey Holmes and the Public Sphere', pp. 169–170.

115 Hayton & Speck, 'In No One's Shadow', p. 9.

116 *Ibid*, p. 9

117 Walcott, *English Politics in the Early Eighteenth Century*, p. 160.

study invoking the odium of 'just about every other political historian of the period'.<sup>118</sup> The damage wrought by his book and its treatment is certainly apparent in the historiography, which is bereft of incisive investigations into family and factional political networks.

At the core of Namier and Walcott's theses, each maintained that family interest and dynastic grievances became the most important aspect of shaping political beliefs than party lines ever could. Conflict, nurtured in the family home could endure through centuries, with the persistent hatred of one generation instilled by another. Local boroughs at election time were often locked in conflict between issues concerning 'family interest'.<sup>119</sup> In many cases, such assertions are credible upon looking at the evidence. When Lords Rockingham and Stanhope came of age and through writ of acceleration, took their seats in the House of Lords, their first initiative was to oppose the First Lord, for as Hervey observed, 'all the Stanhopes and Spencers are taught to look on a Walpole as one whom they are to hate by inheritance'.<sup>120</sup> Horace Walpole, son to the First Lord remained bitter about his father's treatment, continuing feuds in print long after his father's death. The First Lord had only just resigned when a matter of family honour led William Chetwynd and Horatio Walpole, at a combined age of one hundred and twenty-three, to lay down their crutches and unsheathe their swords to duel in parliament.<sup>121</sup>

Many substantial landowners who relied on maintaining a good standing in their local community complained that 'bribery and corruption has rendered all family interest insignificant'.<sup>122</sup> Working to resolve this issue, Country politicians used their rusticated platform to encourage individuals to

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118 Cowan, 'Geoffrey Holmes and the Public Sphere', p. 170.

119 Lord Chandos to Colonel Fowke, 11 August 1727, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 30, f. 201.

120 Lord Hervey to Horatio Walpole, 3 January 1735, St. James, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 84; Charles Spencer, 3<sup>rd</sup> Duke of Sunderland & Thomas Watson-Wentworth, Earl of Malton, were both families that had seats in Yorkshire.

121 Francis Hastings to Theophilus Hastings, 15 March 1742, HL. HA 5010, B.83.

122 Edward Harley to Lord Oxford, 12 December 1727, Eywood, BL. Add. Ms. 73081, f. 22.

stand removed from party, and in some cases their patrons and sponsors also.<sup>123</sup> Thomas Henry Coventry, Viscount Deerhurst of Stourbridge, was a man of independent wealth. His pride stemmed from the notion that he could not be hurt with the 'invidious title' of pensioner.<sup>124</sup> Deriving from an old and respected pedigree, Coventry found it an insult to be paid by others, especially what he styled 'inferior gentry', of which, Walpole, for some, was the epitome of a low-born upstart.<sup>125</sup> One Country politician, Nicholas Morice, always refused to 'stoop and submit, cap in hand, to a man who I fear not and value much less and who in every respect since the king's reign was my inferior'.<sup>126</sup> An inherited sense of bigotry was sometimes enough to keep certain families in opposition to another, for they would sooner resign all established posts than work alongside a member of a certain branch of a rival family.<sup>127</sup>

The decision for a junior family member to join the Court was an extremely divisive choice that could bring shame and dishonour. When Tankerville was offered political support by a keen young relation to him, his mother believed her boy to have been used as a 'tool'; for it had been 'too great a crime' in a son, whom she felt duty bound to denounce.<sup>128</sup> Margaret Bradshaw, cousin to Henrietta Howard, held a dim view of the corrupting nature of such an environment, remarking 'a courtier is a detestable thing, I am glad none of my family are so'.<sup>129</sup> Howard would also lament that a 'town is a very uncomfortable situation' to live in, imparting her experience on a weary sister, advising that she would do better 'married to some honest country gentleman'.<sup>130</sup> This implied no honest individuals could be found at court, reinforcing the notion addressed in Chapter One, that the countryside and Country politics it was associated with, provided a purer environment for mothers to raise their children. Throughout discussions held between female correspondents, the letters of

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123 Godfrey Wentworth to Lord Strafford, 4 November 1733, Wooley, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 106.

124 Lord Deerhurst to Lord Coventry, 24 August 1740, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

125 *Ibid*,

126 Nicholas Morice to Humphrey Morice, 1724, BoE, Morice Ms, 10A97/2, f. 275.

127 Martin Sandys to Samuel Sandys, 1 January 1725, Worcester, WRAS. OFA. 705:56/1402.

128 Lord Tankerville to Lord Newcastle, 22 October 1733, Nottingham, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 554.

129 Margaret Bradshaw to Lady Suffolk, BL. Add. Ms. 22627, f. 107.

130 Henrietta Howard, on the marriage of her sister, Dorothy, 1722, HL. SP Ms. HA. 6696.

Bradshaw and Howard reveal Country women intervened in choosing who their relatives could work with. This was a result of the increasing importance of family connections and influence during the period, allowing matriarchs a say in how the family organised itself politically.

Family mattered to Walpole as much as it did to his Country opposition. The inability of the First Lord to rely on those outside of his bloodline led him to secure lucrative pensions for a number of his relations.<sup>131</sup> Walpole's nepotism knew no bounds, with the fear of betrayal spurring the First Lord to provide his family not only sinecures, but positions of state where their unwavering loyalty could make all the difference. Bradshaw, taking an interest in how the First Lord treated his children noticed 'a great man seems to have layed it down for a rule that none nearly related to him are to be trusted'.<sup>132</sup>

Only a select few who were not directly descendent to the Walpole family were afforded the privilege of trust. Judge William Fortescue was one rare example, marrying into the Walpole family despite being a friend to some of the First Lord's most caustic opponents. Walpole was content to find him an unwavering supporter, permitting Fortescue into his world as a personal secretary. This was a level of access those outside the Walpole namesake were not afforded easily.

Upon attaining office, Walpole brought his brother in law, Townshend, into the ministry as Secretary of State. He elevated his sons and brothers to various ranks and titles, installing Galfridus as Postmaster General, allowing the First Lord increased control over the national hub of communications. Walpole opened doors for those he considered *de facto* members of his family, close friends from his constituency of Kings Lynn. Benjamin Keene was one such individual, who from humble origins, quickly procured extremely important credentials as Ambassador to Spain.

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131 Horatio Walpole to Sir Robert Walpole, 18 August 1740, Wolterton, BL. Add. Ms. 74064.

132 Margaret Campbell to John Campbell, 17 March 1737, Loudon, HL. B12, LO. 7462.

When Carteret's placeman was removed in favour of Walpole's brother, Horatio, as Ambassador to France, it was rejoiced 'the king putting so near a relation of ours over Schaub's head'.<sup>133</sup>

### **A Family Affair: The Fight for Control of Political Households**

Despite family being an important aspect of forging and maintaining political connections during the period, it did not always ensure the bond of unadulterated kinship or lasting sense of loyalty that was expected. As the terms Courtier, pensioner and placeman were used by the Country interest to bring disrepute upon politicians, so too, the sizzling brand of Jacobitism was applied by Walpole's ministry to stigmatise his detractors. As mentioned in the General Introduction, political connections during the eighteenth century were far more diverse and muddled than has been portrayed in the historiography. The reality of the situation proved complex and subjective to the individual. This thesis reinforces the idea that allegiances changed rapidly within a short space of time, with members of political interests, factions and family all fluid in who they supported.

William Shippen, MP for Newton in Lancashire, was a curious anomaly, rarely voting with those working against James III. An indefatigable supporter of parliamentary protocols, rules that kept a Jacobite in his elected seat, Shippen was not averse to hindering or assisting Walpole when honour and regulation required it.<sup>134</sup> Nicholas Leke, 4<sup>th</sup> Earl Scarsdale and Sir Watkins William-Wynn operated in the same circles as Sir John Hynde Cotton, another well-known Jacobite sympathiser, yet Cotton was also a supporter of Walpole. Philip Wharton originated from a staunch 'Whig' family.

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<sup>133</sup> Lord Townshend to Robert Walpole, 26 October 1723, NS. Gohrde, BL. Stowe Ms. 251, f. 60.

<sup>134</sup> Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, p. 98; the cause of Shippen's peculiar conduct can be traced to a session where Walpole opposed the motion for the sale of the Derwentwater Estate. Despite the motion passing and the estate being sold, the opposition from some Court members exhorted Shippen to claim that 'he should ever honour him (Walpole) for his justice'; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1. p. 78.

Quickly rising to prominence as Jacobite envoy to Vienna, Wharton worked with Walpole's administration until 1723, where his eloquent defence of the nonjuror bishop, Francis Atterbury, signalled the end of his short attachment to the ministry, alongside his titles and estates in Britain. In each case, a politician's allegiances could not be taken for granted or categorised rigidly, as they acted on behalf of their own principles and formed their own allegiances when convenient.

Corruption, or rather the acceptance of it could be spread through family influence. Just as Country principles were taught as family values, an indifference to corrupt practices could filter through generations and be nurtured from a young age. Family members had a biological inclination to defend their kin unquestionably, obey their elders out of respect, or toe the line to inherit a fortune. During the period, a battle was being waged between rival interests to infiltrate the family unit, the nurseries of future politicians, in the hopes of making them susceptible to the outlook of their group.

Walpole was not immune to rifts and schisms occurring within his own family, with some members leaving Court to array themselves against his administration.<sup>135</sup> One notable person declining dinner invitations at Houghton was Townshend, his empty chair at Walpole's table an indication of the bitterness surrounding the unpalatable ways they had parted company in 1730. In this year, the efforts of the Country to vilify and shame those complicit in corruption had made a substantial impact. Only Townshend could be trusted to defend the *Pension Bill* in parliament with authority, a policy securing the hegemony of placemen. A reticent Townshend sacrificed his reputation doing this and upon resigning in disgust, 'resolved to concern himself no more in business', having retired to 'the country to spend the rest of his days'.<sup>136</sup>

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135 While Townshend did not oppose Walpole overtly when he resigned, he neither helped the First Lord when he required it. Walpole lost in him a valuable ally, an experienced parliamentarian and ministerial aid.

136 Lord Chandos to Mr Pitt, 11 February 1731, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 37, f. 60; Richard Grenville to George Grenville, 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 57804, f. 36; it was later believed Townshend and Walpole apologised to each other, the former desiring to return in Lord Devon's place as President of the Council.

With each passing year, Walpole relied increasingly on family as his detractors increased in number and talent. For his opponents, no amount of patronage would be enough to reconcile them and no amount of pressure capable of procuring their silence. The promise of Walpole's imminent downfall inspired hope in many for the chance to obtain places or a change in national political perspectives. Walpole realised how deep the Country message had spread, finding he was not safe from the rebukes of family members of his leading ministers. Despite having friends in high places, Henry Clinton, brother in law to Newcastle, was dismissed as Cofferer of the Household in 1725 for supporting Walpole's opponents.<sup>137</sup> William Hay was another notable example, being married into Newcastle's family, he spent a great deal of time beside the First Lord in parliament. Despite this, Hay brought Walpole into severe disrepute in 1742, for escaping impeachment with a pension.

Recognisable sub-groups regularly emerged in politics, such as the Vernon Cult, Hanover Tories and 'The Boys', many of them were born from political events and in reaction to certain policies.<sup>138</sup> These factions aligned themselves under a prominent politician or family to pursue their own interests. Country efforts to disintegrate parties and patronage spurred a host of articulate politicians joining Walpole's opposition. This resulted in 'very warm debates in the House of Commons', with Pulteney in particular, showing 'himself a much more considerable man than anybody imagined'.<sup>139</sup> The Pulteneys were a family well known for their oratorical expertise, with William's older brother, Daniel, being a particularly intimidating public speaker.<sup>140</sup> Passing away at a young age, his mantle was bestowed upon William, with the influence of his family urging him to throw his weight against Walpole as a considerable opposition leader.

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<sup>137</sup> Despite Walpole thinking them his adherents, Henry Clinton, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl of Lincoln, William Cappell, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl of Essex and Henry Vane, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Darlington were close supporters of Pulteney also.

<sup>138</sup> Polwarth Mss, v. 5, p. xvi.

<sup>139</sup> Thomas Carte to Corbet Kynaston, 7 April 1729, Prince's Court, BL. Add. Ms. 21500, f. 11.

<sup>140</sup> Lord Newcastle, 28 June 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 266.



In parliament, individuals like Pulteney renounced their allegiance to party, concerting measures with diverse groups instead. These assemblies of power were organised and financed by formidable opposition builders such as Cobham. Slighted by Walpole for voting according to his conscience, Cobham elevated his 'young cubs' to positions of power. His protégés, popularly styled 'Cobham's cubs', were a wolf-pack of politicians bred selectively to hunt the First Lord down.<sup>141</sup> According to Gerrard, this preoccupation ensured Cobham's primary concern remained 'the downfall of Robert Walpole'.<sup>142</sup> In the midst of a royal quarrel, Cobham even called on the service of prince Frederick, who made a personal visit to his estate at Stowe for dinner.<sup>143</sup> Shortly after, in February 1738, places in the prince's household were given to Cobham's family members, William and Thomas Pitt, George Lyttelton, George Grenville, John Russell and Richard Grenville-Temple.<sup>144</sup>

The study of the Patriot faction by Lewis Wiggin has done much to support the idea family had become the most important aspect for political organisation during the period. His case study, Cobham, proved an archetypal example of an opposition builder who engineered his family to alter politics and shape its manoeuvrings to his will during the mid-eighteenth-century. Wiggin argues that no records exist that Cobham spoke in parliament, nor did he write many letters, he was in many ways an untutored soldier.<sup>145</sup> Fielding, who wrote about the characters of his contemporaries, described Cobham as no true party man, but connected with faction and family. Fielding mentioned Cobham 'was long in a kind of political purgatory betwixt the two parties. He talked for one and voted for the other, till at last he was in danger of being disowned by both and then he took which

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141 A Letter Repeated to His Majesty, 28 February 1745, BL. Add. Ms. 73770, f. 265.

142 Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole*, pp. 10, 36; for more context in Cobham's pursuits, see Chesterfield Mss, v. 2, p. 434; Wiggin, *The Faction of Cousins*, pp. 3–6, 10; Nicholas Rogers, *Whigs and Cities: Popular Politics in the age of Walpole and Pitt* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1989), p. 235; Gerald Jordan & Nicholas Rogers (eds), 'Admirals as Heroes: Patriotism and Liberty in Hanoverian England', *Journal of British Studies*, 28.3 (July, 1989), p. 202; Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, p. 196; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 19.

143 Lord Hervey to Dr. Middleton, 12 July 1737, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 123; Prince Frederick makes a second trip to Stowe, in, Anna Temple to Richard Temple, 11 May 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 57806, f. 27.

144 Upon entering opposition politics in 1734, most of Cobham's Cubs were under 30 years of age.

145 Wiggin, *The Faction of Cousins*, p. 3.

his private connections and friendships dictated'.<sup>146</sup> Much like his Country counterparts, who operated from their rural networks, Cobham used his local power and family as his main leverage in politics, having little respect or time for party loyalties. Cobham learned that power could be forged in the country and operating behind the scenes, he could manipulate others to speak and act on his behalf. This was an influence Bolingbroke had also understood. While he could never return to parliament to exercise his authority, Bolingbroke, through the rural press, rustication and local networks attracted others to visit him instead. Both Cobham and Bolingbroke were examples of political leaders and patriarchal figures, who tutored others to write and act as they desired.

In Wiggin's work on the Patriots, he cites the observation of John Petty, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Lord Shelbourne, a contemporary who regarded Cobham as 'factious, and no speaker, but who passed his whole time in clapping young men upon the back, keeping house with good economy, and saying things at his table which nobody else would say in a private room'.<sup>147</sup> To reiterate what was said previously, Cobham realised that power could be exercised from his estate at Stowe, without ever stepping foot at court. From the comfort of his dinner table, Cobham would mastermind Walpole's resignation. An exceptionally powerful and prudent individual, Cobham kept his family and finances in lock step with his personal ambitions, running his estates and parading his children as he organised his regiment of dragoons, with strict discipline and efficiency. While Cobham did not spend his time leading the charge in parliament or on foreign battlefields, he ruled his family and accounts with a rod of iron. Cobham ensured he had a ready cash flow and a pack of politicians of his own blood, ready and primed to ruin anybody who dared oppose him.

The battle between interests, parties and factions to infiltrate and win over certain members of powerful families did not stop with the country gentry, it extended into the royal family also. The

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<sup>146</sup> Henry Fielding, *An Historical View of the Principal Writers in Great Britain* (London: 1740), p. 5, in, Wiggin, *The Faction of Cousins*, p. 3.

<sup>147</sup> Wiggin, *The Faction of Cousins*, p. 3.

Hanoverian dynasty, as rulers of Britain, presided over multiple reigns fraught with family intrigue.<sup>148</sup> As Frederick joined the Patriots and entered open opposition against George II and Walpole, the Country interest became a moderating influence on his household, forming middle ground in a bid for reconciliation. Some Country politicians had pledged their service to the prince, providing cautious advice on the principles of good government. Acting as independent beings for the most part, the Country, welcome or not, sometimes found common cause with the Patriots. It was for this reason that Richard Grenville could be seen talking politics, walking arm in arm through the park with Bathurst, a magnate of the Country cause.<sup>149</sup>

Many older advisers to the prince held Country sentiments but were prepared to vote with his forces against the Court on a number of mutually beneficial matters, focusing their shared animus against speculation. It was not unsurprising to find the Country also voting with the Court against the Patriots, when the latter hoped to drum up support to pursue their most cherished policy, a bellicose foreign policy. This was a measure the Country interest could never lend their hand to sanction. With politics no longer a matter of Whigs against Tories, each faction, individual and family pursued their own agendas, forming salient political networks.

This flexibility was often the reason Walpole struggled to maintain control, but also a major stumbling block to a united opposition against him. The prince found that partisan politics could not effectively bind opposition forces at constant variance with each other. The numerous flavours of Whig and Tory had become unfashionable and unworkable. Chesterfield, Bolingbroke, Wyndham and Carteret, the most senior and experienced ministers in the company of the prince were forced to compete with an influx of youthful Patriots, in a frequently conflictive 'broad-bottom' alliance.<sup>150</sup>

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148 Romney. Sedgwick, *The House of Commons*, v. 2 (London: History of Parliament Trust, 1970), p. 514.

149 Richard Grenville to Anna Chambers, 5 December 1736, BL. Add. Ms. 57804, f. 83; Richard also canvassed with Country politician, Lord Gower; Anna Temple to Richard Temple, 11 April 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 57806, f. 15.

150 Polwarth Mss, v. 5, p. xviii; Argyll is accredited with coining the phrase 'Broad Bottom Alliance'; Yorke,

Country politicians joining the ranks of the prince often proved tentative to engage in parliamentary politics as passionately as their young accomplices did, preferring rustication instead.<sup>151</sup> The Patriots held no such qualms, believing themselves to be fighting a righteous cause. In the view of George Lyttleton, secretary to the prince, singularity could only be achieved with the overthrow of Walpole and obtaining positions of authority in a new government, 'for virtue without power is useless as power without virtue is hurtful to us'.<sup>152</sup> Not only acting in defiance of his father, but also against the corruption of the First Lord, Frederick was a prince who operated amid a growing company of virile young firebrands and venerable Country philosophers, of which both had infiltrated the royal family.

Politicians found safety, friendship, family and a platform to express themselves under the protection and formidable talents of their leaders. No longer adhering to strict party lines, many acted independently and with their family to oppose Court measures. Walpole had deemed a traditional adherence to Whig and Tory his most valuable asset to maintaining unity. Loyalty to entrenched party views had been a bulwark for the First Lord, a guarantee he could formerly rely on. It was this political safety net that would be removed by the Country interest. The role of their families and wider networks to eradicate party and patronage played a key part in toppling Walpole's administration and transforming the future political process.

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*Walpoliana*, p. 11; many of the country gentry disliked the land tax and war, yet indirectly supported those with a *casus belli* during the English Civil War, another point in history where diametrically opposed factions combined for a shared goal, see Peter Gaunt, 'Oliver Cromwell and his Protectorate Parliaments: Co-operation, Conflict and Control', in Ivan Roots, "*Into Another Mould*", *Aspects of the Interregnum* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1998), p. 91; D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, 8.264, Saturday, 24 July 1731, p. 66.

151 Thomas Peck to Lord Percival in Pall Mall, 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 26; some individuals with Country sentiments, such as William Fortescue, resigned from Frederick's service with the influx of Patriot politicians and out of deference to his friend, Walpole.

152 George Lyttelton to Lady Marlborough, Showing Lord Stair's Letter, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 9.

The rise of the Country interest in the early eighteenth century, explained throughout the last two chapters, can be attributed to their development of an effective platform to influence others. Success was achieved through continual retrenchment, rustication, an underground press alongside the establishment of rural clubs, societies and dinner meetings to liaise with like-minded individuals. Emphasis was placed on the power of smaller groups of people, with a reliance on families and the discretion of trusted individuals. Faction, Court and Country assigned themselves to particularly powerful figureheads, helping guide these fluid networks effectively. Competing in a tug of war, the Patriots had the support of the prince, Walpole had access to the king and the Country had reinforcement from the people. With the political landscape changing, having moved further away from traditional centres of power, the Country focused on using all aspects of their platform to achieve three main ambitions, the eradication of parties, war and corruption, the last of which will be examined fully in the next chapter.

## Chapter Three

### Preventing Corruption: The First Country Principle

The renaissance of the Country interest has often been side-lined in modern monographs, with conceptions of early eighteenth-century politics centred firmly on discourse between Whigs and Tories instead. Pearce's biography of Walpole did just this, providing 'a modern, completed full length life that has never quite happened'.<sup>1</sup> The comments of Iain Sprout, emblazoned proudly on his blurb state 'Walpole dominates King, Parliament and Government until 1742', corroborating Pearce's assessment that Walpole 'dominated his times'.<sup>2</sup> In this publicly accessible, widely popular book, no challenges were posed to the axioms of the period, namely that Walpole's adept use of patronage helped the First Lord establish a Whig oligarchy in politics.

No uncomfortable or ulterior arguments were incorporated in Pearce's work, not even those by Colley, who claims a resurgent Tory party existed during the period to challenge Walpole's hegemony.<sup>3</sup> Kramnick states that during Walpole's tenure in office, the Tories 'sulked in their country houses' or sat quietly on the backbenches of parliament, not engaged in the game of politics, helpless against Walpole's 'creation of a parliamentary majority in an age of consensus'.<sup>4</sup> Eveline Cruickshanks and Colley suggest otherwise, disagreeing that the Tory party was a moot force in

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1 Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 3.

2 *Ibid*, p. 424.

3 Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*; was read by Pearce, but only appears in the bibliography on p. 453. Not a single reference appears in his book on the arguments contained in the aforesaid work.

4 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 111.

government. Cruickshanks claims that the Tory party became heavily associated with Jacobites, with Paul Monod reinforcing this Tory stance became widely popular for many echelons of contemporary political society.<sup>5</sup> Colley disagrees, putting forward the view that members of the Tory party re-branded themselves as virulent supporters of the Hanoverian regime.<sup>6</sup> Like the Whigs, it is clear that the Tory party during the period was a complex, splintered and multifaceted association, comprised of individuals subscribing to different points of view. Neither Cruickshanks or Colley have properly recognised that compliance to both Whig and Tory party affiliations was in decline. Whatever their former creed or denomination, Whigs and Tories are shown in this thesis to abandon their divisive party straitjackets, to join the ranks of a broader Country interest, a cause with principles and platforms that provided individuals a greater chance at fulfilling their ambitions.

Scholarly pieces from professional historians, such as Langford and John MacClelland, have been more careful in the treatment of the subject than Pearce. They still remain heavily reliant on bipartisan narratives however, devoting little space in the pages of their monographs to describe Court and Country views of patronage and often establishing their perspectives on the presupposition that Walpole reigned supreme over all his opponents, because of his mastery of patronage.<sup>7</sup> Even those susceptible to the idea that party was becoming less important during the period, such as Chris Cook and John Stevenson, claim the role of patronage took the place of Whig-Tory loyalties to secure support.<sup>8</sup> Arnold Heidenheimer and Michael Johnston presume that 'it is well known' Walpole was the 'first to organise' a system of government, where his undoubted

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5 Eveline Cruickshanks, *Political Untouchables: The Tories and the '45* (London: Holmes & Meier, 1979); Paul Monod, *Jacobitism and the English People: 1688–1788* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1989); Eveline Cruickshanks, 'The Political Management of Sir Robert Walpole: 1720–1742', in Jeremy Black, *Britain in the Age of Walpole*, (London: Macmillan: 1984), pp. 28–33.

6 Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*, pp. 25–26.

7 Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*, p. 207; Langford was astute to distinguish that the Court and Treasury party wielded this all-encompassing patronage however, see Paul Langford, *The Excise Crisis, Society and Politics in the Age of Walpole* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975), p. 5; John McClelland, *A History of Western Political Thought* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 333.

8 Chris Cook & John Stevenson (eds), *Modern British History: 1714–2001*, 4th ed, fp 1983 (Abingdon: Routledge, 2001), p. 414.

control of patronage ensured an ever compliant parliamentary majority.<sup>9</sup> Under closer inspection, these views are seen to be untrue, as people gravitated to the Country cause and factions instead, voting on their own principles and becoming increasingly dismissive of patronage.

Only a tiny fraction of scholars, such as Brewer, Dickinson and Owen recognise the importance of the Country contribution to a reconfiguration of politics during and after Walpole's tenure in office, especially with regard to their views on patronage.<sup>10</sup> The two previous chapters in this thesis revealed that the presence of interest groups should not be underestimated. A strong case for the vibrant existence of the Country interest was made, placing them at the forefront of political discussion. A problem exists in the historiography, namely that advocates of the Country interest receive no credit for being the political force engineering the weakening of patronage used by Walpole to purchase votes in parliament. Donald Kagan states 'even with the extensive use of patronage, many members of parliament maintained independent views'.<sup>11</sup> While true and useful, Kagan never mentions the Country interest and what part its independent associates played in this wider scheme of curtailing patronage based politics.

Historians investigating the Jacobite cause were the first to re-address how extensively patronage dominated politics during the period. This process began in response to the reception that Jacobites received in the historiography. Holmes claimed they were a defunct political group and ineffective in their efforts to topple government, because of the role patronage played in stabilising the political system, which became too powerful, lucrative and homogeneous for them to exploit.<sup>12</sup> Countering these claims, Frank McLynn argues that Jacobites could not be purchased so easily. In his view,

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9 Arnold Heidenheimer & Michal Johnston (eds), *Political Corruption, Concepts and Contexts*, 3rd ed (New Brunswick: Transaction, 2002), p. 19.

10 John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976), p. 46; Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 152; John Owen, 'The Survival of Country Attitudes in the Eighteenth-Century House of Commons', in John Bromley & Ernst Kossman (eds), *Britain and the Netherlands*, v. 4 (Hague: Nijhoff, 1975), pp. 50–51.

11 Donald Kagan, et-al (eds), *The Western Heritage to 1715* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1998), p. 524.

12 Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society*, p. 167.



Walpole's patronage 'bought off some critics, but not nearly enough', with 'its benefits restricted' to a small group of venal politicians.<sup>13</sup> Daniel Szechi, another historian of the Jacobite cause, states 'there were serious limits to what patronage could accomplish in parliamentary terms'.<sup>14</sup>

The powerful role patronage is perceived to have in politics during the period often dismisses the organisation and principles of the Jacobites. By claiming patronage was all encompassing, the allure of money is put in a position where it is seen to overcome the strongly held principles of the Jacobites, denigrating the strength of their convictions. Viewing patronage as the key to political success also underestimates the spread and appeal of the Jacobite creed. These problems affect the research of the Country interest in similar ways, whose associates, views and actions have gone ignored in modern works. While Jacobite studies have experienced a revival of interest, historians have not defended the conduct and actions of Country adherents in their efforts to prevent corruption, which they believed synonymous with patronage in government.

This chapter provides evidence that Walpole's patronage was more limited than has been suggested previously. Misconceptions will be dispelled that the hegemony of the First Lord over parliament was due to his masterful ability to purchase votes and bankroll a 'single party' oligarchy, as William Palmer and Ian Gilmour assert.<sup>15</sup> Michael Rush argues that under Walpole, 'two old parties clearly existed, even though the same system of placeman and patronage was its essential foundation'.<sup>16</sup>

Venturing beyond existing scholarship, this chapter challenges the views of Rush. Country principles are seen to render Walpole's patronage largely ineffective in securing support and ensuring party loyalties through pensions and salaries. This triumph for the Country cause was not achieved during the latter half of his tenure in office, but explained to have occurred during the

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13 Frank McLynn, *Bonnie Prince Charlie: Charles Edward Stuart* (London: Random House, 2011), p. lix.

14 Holmes & Szechi, *The Age of Oligarchy*, p. 24.

15 William Palmer, *Engagement with the Past, The Lives and Works of the World War II Generation* (Lexington: Kentucky University Press, 2001), p. 240; Gilmour, *Riot, Risings and Revolution*, p. 82.

16 Michael Rush, *The Role of the Member of Parliament from 1868* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 37.

earliest years of his time spent as First Lord. The shifts made to limit patronage and ensure honest government are attributed to its proper cause, the Country interest, whose exploits in the press and private rural networks limited Walpole's appeal, influence and authority.

The stigmatisation of the Country cause and their views on patronage in the historiography derives from the views of Clark, who claims the Country were nothing more than a bunch of old grumblers, skulking in rural isolation, doing little but criticising from the press.<sup>17</sup> As stated in previous chapters, the world of the Country politician was far more complex and integrated than has been understood previously. They were far from ineffective and powerless outside of their rusticated environment. Their writings, enterprises and networks reached into the heart of political affairs. In this chapter, advocates of the Country cause will be seen to visit the City, in person and en masse, often to vote in parliament when certain bills required their attention. They maintained their seats in the House of Commons by swaying voter sentiments to their cause in rural constituencies. As many Country politicians refused to be purchased and often attended parliament solely to oppose Court measures, their presence in London often blocked Walpole's plans to ensure the passing of legislation, whose reliance on patronage was not always enough to pass the bills his monarch desired him to.

Modern historical works do not reflect the true extent, if not the existence of the Country cause during the period. As a result, there has been little impetus to show how associates of the Country interest used their talents and momentum to inspire a transformation in politics. Brewer's research encountered this neglect in the historiography, and as a result, he was unable to continue his investigations further, urging historians to concentrate on 'Country measures'.<sup>18</sup> The works of Dickinson and Skinner help answer the call of Brewer, by revealing the importance of forging links between rhetoric and reality, ideas and behaviour. Their methodologies are emulated throughout

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17 Jonathan Clark, 'The Decline of Party, 1740–1760', *English Historical Review*, 93.368 (July, 1978), p. 508.

18 Brewer, *The Sinews of Power*, p. 126.

this thesis when focusing on the Country cause.<sup>19</sup> Moving away from looking at Brewer's point of focus, those being political structures and institutions, this chapter provides a greater synergy between the study of thought and action in history, correlating patterns and anomalies between principle and action. Chapters One and Two explored how the press, rustication and private rural gatherings formed the Country platform, which elevated their rise to power. The following chapters go on to explore how Country politicians transposed their core principles into action, by persuading others to engage in the political process to end parties, prevent war and in this case, forego the acceptance of Court patronage.

As the Country was established on a conglomeration of independent politicians, every associate of the cause embodied a host of different ambitions, many of which were based on family concerns, business dealings and localised politics affecting the communities they helped to administer. Their shared animus against war, parties and corruption united these usually disparate politicians to convene as the Country interest, to debate the bigger state domestic and foreign policy issues of the period. Since its inception, the responsibility to monitor government had been in the remit of the Country, allowing its adherents considerable leverage, appeal and legitimacy steeped in tradition.

Undue emphasis has been placed in the historiography on the allure of bribery. The endemic peculation and venality witnessed during the period has been reiterated constantly, with Walpole's supposedly deft utilisation of patronage contributing to the genesis of a 'Whig Supremacy' in English politics. This chapter argues that one of the most vibrant of political oppositions, swept along on a renaissance of Country principles, is seen to be in operation from 1721–1742. Historical views disparaging Country efforts will be addressed, the most problematic of which being the

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19 Quentin Skinner, "Hermeneutics and the Role of History", *New Literary History*, 7.1 (1975), pp. 215–216; Dickinson, *Liberty and Property*, pp. 1-10; Quentin Skinner, 'Some problems in the Analysis of Political Thought and Action', *Political Theory*, 2.3 (1974), pp. 277–303; for an overview of Skinner's and Dickinson's work, see Colley & Goldie, 'The Principles and Practice of Eighteenth-Century Party', p. 245.

notion that corruption was tolerated as a staple of British politics.

We must not allow ourselves to be biased by the many criticisms that historians have made of Walpole. To the average student, Walpole is known as the prince of bribers. Historians have forgotten that he was a man of the times. They have overlooked the fact that it was the age of the “Spoils System”.<sup>20</sup>

This was the antiquated process adopted by Norris Brisco, having followed an old Whiggish example set by Edmund Burke, who assumed that corruption in early-modern society was ignored, because several scholars believed it a widely-accepted practice.<sup>21</sup> Upon more careful inspection, administrations prior to 1720, under the direction of Harley and Sunderland had actually avoided the 'spoils system'. In many cases, although he was not the originator, it can be argued that Walpole set new precedents for corruption.<sup>22</sup>

Contrary to early oversights in the historiography, it will be demonstrated that several contemporaries did campaign against corruption energetically. This was not due to sentimentalism or naïve idealism, but with dissent grounded on specific principles. Documenting past reactions to unscrupulous behaviour is a subject that has been handled with greater care since Brisco. Even Gerrard, who has been sceptical to the extent of a Country renaissance during the period, recognises that Walpole's tenure in office, dubbed as a 'period of unprecedented stability and prosperity', was not how it appeared to Walpole's contemporaries.<sup>23</sup> Gerrard argues 'virtually all the leading writers of the day' were hostile to parties, reluctant of war and disgusted with corruption.<sup>24</sup> Only Ronald

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20 Brisco, *The Economic Policy of Sir Robert Walpole*, p. 27.

21 Edmund Burke, *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, v. 3, (London: Henry Bohn, 1854), p. 50; Buchan & Hill, *An Intellectual History of Political Corruption*, p. 125; Burt, *Virtue Transformed*, p. 112.

22 Pearce, *The Great Man*, pp. 57-58; Heidenheimer & Ohnston, *Political Corruption: Concepts and Context*, p. 19.

23 Gerrard, 'Political Passions', p. 45.

24 *Ibid*, p. 45.

Wraith, Edgar Simpkins and select few others now claim from 'a quick glance', that patronage was beneficial and accepted widely, a stance deriving from Horace Walpole's biased, public defence of his own father's conduct.<sup>25</sup>

These Whiggish views are present in modern historical works, albeit in a diluted form. An overhang continues, with Clyve Jones claiming that patronage established political stability as the redoubtable asset to Walpole's dominance.<sup>26</sup> Walcott and Holmes's historiographical feud had been instigated in the mid-1950s over the subject of patronage. Walcott claimed patronage replaced party, while Holmes later argued that it exacerbated party struggles.<sup>27</sup> Ann Orloff reveals that Namier provided another contrast, having claimed patronage worked to solidify parties, not break them asunder.<sup>28</sup> Clark engaged Owen in a similar discussion in the 1970s, the latter having investigated divisions in parliament, uncovering 'the myth' Walpole ruled by a dominant grip over patronage, a premise Clark believed was a 'logical fallacy'.<sup>29</sup>

Upon closer observation of the evidence, it is revealed neither Holmes, Walcott, Clark, Namier or Owen were completely justified in their findings. It is argued firstly, that the very nature of patronage undermines the arguments supporting party allegiances, questioning why a politician would need to be paid to vote on behalf of a deeply entrenched, party-political principle. Secondly, the view is presented that principle became far more important than patronage when achieving consent to enact policies, a direct result of Country efforts. This struggle to curb patronage, a political tool the Country viewed synonymous with corruption, caused political turmoil (instability) and prevented Walpole exercising his will to form a parliamentary majority.

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25 Ronald Wraith & Edgar Simpkins (eds), *Corruption in Developing Countries* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 88.

26 Clyve Jones, 'The House of Lords and the Growth of Parliamentary Stability', in, Jones, *British Politics in the Age of Holmes*, p. 91.

27 Hill, 'Executive Monarchy and the Challenge of Parties', p. 387.

28 Anne Orloff, *The Politics of Pensions* (Madison: Wisconsin University Press, 1993), p. 197; Clark, 'The Decline of Party, 1740–1760', p. 500.

29 Clark, 'The Decline of Party, 1740–1760', p. 502.

As mentioned previously, Namier's view was that patronage supported rigid party alliances. If this is true, then this chapter reveals how Country measures eroded the appeal of patronage, which in turn, dissolved the prevalence of parties that money reinforced. Black argues that Namier believed corruption and self-interest eventually displaced parties, implying that self-interest was always viewed as a negative aspect in politics.<sup>30</sup> The Country message however, was that self-interest should be viewed as independence from corruption and a freedom to act honestly, in accordance with a personal conscience, and it is this contrast that will be explored more fully.

Authors of the works mentioned above employ sentiments expressed by Plumb in the mid-1960s, who stated misleadingly that 'place was power, patronage was power'.<sup>31</sup> Such sweeping statements damage contextual approaches to history, alienating genuine concerns expressed by the contemporaries they studied. It presents a simplistic axiom where few question how effective the impetus of the Country was in preventing corruption. This chapter avoids neglecting important matters of political principle and conscience, showing that conflict over the issue of patronage was far more complex, muddled and chaotic than imagined previously.

How the Country helped make the allure of money increasingly unimportant in comparison to conscience and principle will be demonstrated throughout. Walpole, although discontented, was forced to accept that his reliance on patronage would expose him to be vilified as a 'pension mongering, state projector'.<sup>32</sup> Those wanting to support the First Lord, by serving in his ministry, were dissuaded from doing so, feeling contaminated by his reputation, a taint that could put the honour of their families at risk. The Country used its platform to assassinate Walpole's personal character and political credibility, to the point where others became wary of suffering a similar fate

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30 Jeremy Black, *The Politics of Britain: 1688–1800* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1993), p. 92.

31 Plumb, *The Growth of Political Stability in England*, p. 189.

32 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 12 July 1729, 5.158, p. 57.

through mutual association with him.

The authority patronage afforded ministers to secure political hegemony forms the central theme in Black's monograph, *Walpole in Power*, where it is argued that state money played a considerable, if not primary role in the First Lord's control over government.<sup>33</sup> Important areas remain unaddressed as to why some of the most astute and enterprising contemporaries refused to be purchased. If being a supporter or placeman to Walpole's measures was such a lucrative profession, then the question remains unanswered as to why many chose to join a diverse and insuperable opposition against his ministry. If what Black states is correct, that 'patronage occupied much of Walpole's time', then a closer inspection of Country efforts reveals why the domination of parliament and the implementation of domestic policy, centred on the use of patronage, proved unrewarding and self-destructive for Walpole and his ministry.<sup>34</sup>

This chapter reveals how the Country targeted patronage, blocking Walpole's attempts to secure power in parliament and why this was effective in breaking his grip over government. Section One begins with an examination of the Country's rural networks and how they used their local communities to spring themselves into central state affairs. Stamping out corruption and without reverting to patronage themselves, the Country interest used their platform to influence others and secure their ticket to parliament as elected representatives. Once it is revealed how the Country interest arrived in parliament, Section Two explains how Country politicians deployed a variety of ingenious methods to circumvent the corrupt methods Walpole used to control the House of Lords and Commons. Section Three re-addresses the extent of Walpole's ability to wield patronage, using evidence to show that the First Lord was not as well equipped to administer places, favours and money than has been proffered in the historiography. The Fourth and final section concludes with a

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<sup>33</sup> Black, *Walpole in Power*, pp. 45, 76.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid*, p. 76.

number of examples concerning how the Country passed and blocked parliamentary bills in defiance of the Court, nullifying corruption and patronage, extolling principles and turning Walpole's ministry against him. The Country cause is seen to formulate a political society far less accepting of patronage, all of which ultimately unglued Walpole's cohesiveness in parliament.

### **Branching Out: Transforming Local Attitudes to Patronage**

Few individuals who aligned themselves with the Country interest accepted positions of state. Some voted in elections or on parliamentary bills, others worked to publicise causes, sign petitions and lobby government. In this First Section, the public sentiment can be examined when investigating local electoral campaigns, alongside the methods contemporaries used to canvass for votes to obtain support. This helps reveal what members of boroughs believed, what attributes they desired in their politicians and what principles they valued in state politics. In many cases, a battle for votes was often a battle for the hearts and minds of a local population. Both Walpole's ministry and his opponents operated in the same constituencies, organising campaigns in contested neighbourhoods. Throughout the period, adherents of the Court and Country fought to obtain a mandate. Over the course of the eighteenth century, the Country cause would erode the strong connection Court patronage had on securing election results.

When Innes examined the role of local magistrates and officials in her work, *Inferior Politics*, new life was breathed into the idea that rural contemporaries undertook a lot more government work than they have been credited with previously.<sup>35</sup> The study of local communities is extremely important to decipher the period, for politics was not just about appeasing a city elite. For his PhD

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35 Innes, *Inferior Politics*, pp. 2, 11.



thesis, Stephen Baskerville investigated election results and polls in Lancashire and Cheshire during the early eighteenth century.<sup>36</sup> Although not a famous study, it did much to inform Colley, who inspired by his research found that a Tory party still existed *In Defiance of Oligarchy*.<sup>37</sup> This section seeks to prove that contested elections during the period were far more than a battle between Whigs and Tories; almost every poll had a significant Country element that has gone unresearched. What gave the Country their clout in elections, without needing to resort to patronage, was family power and the respect they gained by what they did for their local communities. The actions of the Country interest, coupled with their reputation for upholding three cherished principles of rooting out corruption, keeping peace and ending chimerical divisions between parties attracted widespread electoral support.

The importance of tracing the Country back to rural Britain, its origins of power, has long needed to be established. Rarefied air could lead to rarefied perceptions in the Capital, with politicians often growing tired of the political climate at Westminster. Embittered with state affairs, one of Strafford's constituents desired to leave London, remarking that he 'shall be glad of country air'.<sup>38</sup> While some possessed property in the City, such as Devonshire, those who visited parliament were mostly absentee politicians, spending a significant amount of time on their rural estates.<sup>39</sup> London not only had a reputation for vice, but disease also. Country politicians rusticated for as long as possible, to keep their health. In 1733, when the *Excise Bill* was being contested in parliament, a score of Country politicians were drawn from across Britain, to counter an economic policy claimed to threaten liberty, facilitate corruption and aggrandise central state power.<sup>40</sup> A fever also raged in

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36 Stephen Baskerville, *The Management of the Tory Interest in Lancashire and Cheshire, 1714–1747* (PhD. University of Oxford, 1976).

37 Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*, p. 335.

38 Mr Hanbury to Lord Strafford, 9 September 1732, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 420.

39 For example, after 1727, Devonshire became increasingly incapacitated with gout and could neither walk or travel via coach to and from his country estate. Walpole visited him at Devonshire House in the heart of London instead.

40 For several contemporary opposition views on excise, see Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 204; Carlisle Mss, pp. 95, 107; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. 147–149; Pearce., *The Great Man*, p. 301; Polwarth Mss, v. 5, p. 175; Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole, The King's Minister*, v. 2, p. 243.

the Capital, with Chandos observing that 'it falls more severely upon those who come fresh out of the country than upon those who have been sometime in town'.<sup>41</sup> With parliament in attendance, the contagion spread quickly, killing many and debilitating Walpole.<sup>42</sup>

Many of those who lived away from London, ascribing themselves as country gentlemen, were Country politicians also. This was demarcated through the language they used, the pursuits they cultivated and the distinct political viewpoints they espoused. William Bromley, Wilfrid Lawson, Samuel Sandys and Thomas Pengelly, occupied a number of occupations as magistrates, merchants and ministers, but each believed themselves to be Country politicians at heart. Their desire to oppose corruption, war and parties aligned them with the Country interest. Furthermore, each supported popular and to some extent, philanthropic policies also. Not only did the sponsoring of Country bills endear them to the electorate, it improved their communities and the natural world around them. These projects were not always conceptualised for the sake of personal ambition, instead they cost the Country politician an inordinate expense. When those of the Country cause introduced a bill 'for raising a fund for encouraging the tillage and draining bogs', it was understood there was no other motion in 'the House of Commons that they had 'set their hearts as upon that'.<sup>43</sup> This 'commendable design' was a policy the Country interest rallied behind unequivocally, 'but instead of that', many were first called upon to prevent those 'ruined by party divisions' from sabotaging the bill 'to gratify their several resentments'.<sup>44</sup>

Before the Country interest could begin working together, to enact bills shaping their rural communities, they first had to deal with a Court whose adherents sometimes blocked their path. Securing the independence of parliament rested upon a fundamental tenet, the need to remodel the

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41 Lord Chandos to Mr Brydges, 2 February 1733, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 1, f. 123.

42 In one week, 1588 Bills of Mortality were issued in London, almost double the record number up to that point.

43 Thomas Wyndham to Lord Hardwicke, 7 February 1729, Dublin, BL. Add. Ms. 35585, f. 110.

44 Lord Chandos to Sir Robert Maude, 12 February 1730, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 34, f. 171.

perceptions and principles of politicians. This was not only achieved by applying pressure when sitting in St. Stephen's Chapel, but also in rural constituencies, where ministers and courtiers resided to gather wider support.

Deep in Walpole's heartland, King's Lynn, it seemed a futile task to counter the might of the public treasury, concerning the number of bribes that could be dispensed. A despondent Bathurst claimed he 'had enough of elections', expecting defeat and having taken 'it for granted that the Norfolk election must be carried on, (one way or another), as a Great Man would have it'. Despite his reservations, Bathurst bucked a growing trend of politicians hoping to get 'some of our own Country Party returned among those sixteen' standing for election.<sup>45</sup> In other constituencies, meetings were held 'to consider proper persons in the Country interest to represent them in the ensuing parliament'.<sup>46</sup> Across the nation, in many elections, people were happy to be given 'an opportunity to recommend some gentleman of character, especially of the Country party to be chosen'.<sup>47</sup> At Epsom, 'gentlemen, clergy and freeholders' wanted to 'set up a person fit to represent them on the Country interest'.<sup>48</sup> Walpole's ministry also tried to appeal to Country sympathies, to bolster their reputation among the squirearchy. During an election at Horsham, to prove he had the Country interest at heart, Richmond brought 'some of our top farmers that we call yeomanly men' to canvass for the Court.<sup>49</sup>

In a struggle for the mandate of Surrey, a specialised Country headquarters was established to discuss electoral proceedings. Associates of the Country did all they could to wine and dine their rural networks of power, in order to have their local candidate chosen. It was here they opposed the re-election of Arthur Onslow, a popular individual among those sympathetic with the Country cause.

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45 Lord Bathurst to Lord Strafford, 13 May 1734, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 131.

46 Printed letter, 1 November 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 101.

47 Thomas Peck to Lord Percival in Pall Mall, 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 26.

48 William Chapman to Duchess Marlborough, 31 August 1733, London, BL. Add. Ms. 61477, f. 52.

49 Lord Richmond to Lord Newcastle, 27 July 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32694, f. 25.

Although a vehement independent, Onslow was still deemed by some as uncomfortably close to Walpole, merely by association of his friendship with the First Lord. Possessing credentials desirable to Country politicians, Onslow still drew suspicion, because Walpole's administration supported his election. When Onslow made a speech to ensure people voted for him, Marlborough's election manager, William Chapman, let her know that 'the Court party to a man being there came attended by a great number of common freeholders, and in our opinion, they brought the best of their strength thither. This raised an uncommon indignation in the Country party'.<sup>50</sup>

Appearing throughout election registers in increasing numbers during the period, Country politicians challenged those paraded by Walpole's administration. Unlike Onslow, whose motives were difficult for the Country to pinpoint, several individuals who Walpole sponsored for election were his unabashed supporters, such as Joint Secretaries of the Treasury, William Lowndes and Henry Pelham. Country efforts to oppose such people gaining seats in parliament got so heated, that they spilled into violence.<sup>51</sup> This was not a measure Country politicians advocated, but their encouragement for others to oppose such people often whipped freeholders into a frenzy that could spiral out of control. As a result, election managers for the Country interest focused on seeking independent candidates with 'no dependency' to stand against Walpole. This had been the wish of Marlborough, who rather than see an election in her borough guaranteed to a Court nominee, would support one of her independent detractors instead, selecting an opponent as the standee, 'for when he was an enemy', she claimed, 'he was a fair one'.<sup>52</sup>

To enable a return to parliament after their revival in the 1720s, the Country began converting their rural support into votes, allowing them to obtain seats and watch over government affairs. It was

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50 William Chapman to Lady Marlborough, 31 August 1733, London, BL. Add. Ms. 61477, f. 54.

51 Robert Walpole to William Lowndes, 6 November 1722, TNA. T. 48/20; Richard Burnett to Lord Newcastle, 15 September 1733, Dullington, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 338.

52 Lady Marlborough to Sir John Rushout, 6 August 1727, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

quickly found that patronage was barring their effective takeover of local constituencies. To counter this practice, advocates of the Country began a campaign to disenfranchise people from accepting bribes.<sup>53</sup> Understanding the Court utilised public money to purchase votes, the Country resisted mimicking this method, as their principles opposed using the 'public purse to gain and bring in any interest'.<sup>54</sup> The Country used their extensive networks and appealing philosophies instead, to press on 'vast numbers of independent freeholders who have always expected the civility of a pot of ale'.<sup>55</sup> Although not as direct as putting money in the pockets of their peers, the use of dinner politics and a family's local reputation for honesty proved extremely effective as a tool to acquire support.

Country politicians had a genuine interest in trying to eradicate nefarious practices from elections, with Chandos remarking that 'boroughs are bought and sold like stocks in exchange alley'.<sup>56</sup> It was disturbing for him to learn that 'all corporations in England as well as almost all sorts of ranks of people are really infected with such an infamous degree of corruption, there is hardly a possibility of getting into parliament without it'.<sup>57</sup> If the Country interest stood any chance of solving this problem, they had to level their concerns at the grass roots of society first, their rural neighbours and constituents. Kramnick states that Country politicians were beholden to themselves alone and did not have to consult their constituents, but to stand apart from Court, they decided to appeal to the wider public and asked for their advice on numerous political matters.<sup>58</sup> In order to make a substantial impact, the Country maximised the use of their platform, beginning press campaigns, organising galas and enlisting their siblings; close relations who were persuaded that family should always come before party or patronage. These manoeuvres were effective in securing their elections, so much so that the Court emulated them.

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53 Henning, *The House of Commons 1660–1690*, p. 30.

54 Sir John Bland to Lord Strafford, 11 November 1733, Kippax Park, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 110.

55 *Ibid*,

56 Lord Chandos to Colonel Townshend at Gibraltar, 11 August 1727, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 30, f. 204.

57 Lord Chandos to Mr Brydges of Tybberton, 8 August 1727, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 30, f. 187.

58 Kramnick. *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 174.

When Walpole realised he could not tempt Country politicians to his side with patronage directly, he resorted to dinner politics instead, hoping to attract the most powerful Country adherents to support his ministry. One of the most potent orators of his age, Sir Simon Harcourt, was admitted as a Privy and Regency Councillor in 1722, having first accepted an invitation to join the *Charleton Congress*. Newcastle flattered himself, believing Harcourt's admittance was a clever ploy to conquer the Tory party, having stated 'he comes in entirely to support the Whig interest'.<sup>59</sup> To the limited knowledge of Newcastle, a vehement party man, Harcourt was beholden to nobody other than himself.<sup>60</sup> Acting as an independent, Harcourt assisted Walpole executing measures agreeable to the Country cause, but as a loyal friend and supporter of Swift, Oxford and Bolingbroke, and similar to many other Country politicians participating in the parliamentary crossfire, he was not afraid to speak against the ministry on matters of corruption and other vices troubling him.<sup>61</sup>

### **Tricks of the Trade: Country Measures to Overcome Patronage in Parliament**

With former members of parties moving into Court, Country, factional and independent stances, political groups brokered temporary deals with friends and adversaries. This was one of the only workable parliamentary procedures for enacting private legislation.<sup>62</sup> As Basil Henning suggested, those who were regarded 'politically independent' had private wealth and status 'making them immune to government threats and blandishments', including patronage also.<sup>63</sup> It was for this reason,

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59 Lord Newcastle, 25 August 1722, Newcastle House, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 236.

60 Lord Chandos to Lord Bolingbroke, 5 October 1720, HL. MssST. 57, v. 18, f. 206; Harcourt was ruined from the South Sea Bubble, which is why he accepted this post, although he tried to remain his own man.

61 Robert Walpole to Lord Newcastle, 10 August 1723, Haland, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 301.

62 Hill, 'Executive Monarchy and the Challenge of Parties', pp. 380, 383; Harris, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts*, pp. 194, 197; two examples being the Earl of Carlisle and the Earl of Exeter's grip over tenants and land/leaseholders. On salaried petitions and dependencies of interest, see Horwitz, 'The Structure of Parliamentary Politics', p. 99.

63 Henning, *The House of Commons 1660–1690*, p. 14.

according to Hill, that 'politicians could freely move between Court and Country as individuals'.<sup>64</sup> In parliament, shifting coalitions were constructed, forming brief majorities. The links between politicians were not forged by party or patronage, but for the sake of passing particular bills. Horwitz encapsulates this notion, claiming that deals were formed, based on a 'dependency of interest'.<sup>65</sup> With less emphasis on the appeal of patronage and the two predominate parties, Whig and Tory, parliamentarians had to compromise on political matters and seek the support of competing factions and interest groups instead.

In a bid to make a significant difference to curtail corruption and oligarchy, in March 1734, a motion was moved to repeal the *Septennial Act*, 'which the Patriots rightly regarded as the talisman of Walpole's dictatorship'.<sup>66</sup> It was a bill introduced in the hope of reducing a seven-year election cycle to three, the way it had been before the original act passed in 1716. This was to price cyphers out of Westminster and break Walpole's bankroll, for he could not afford to keep purchasing voters in parliament and elections during frequent intervals.<sup>67</sup> The Country joined with the Patriots in their attempts to prevent Walpole packing parliament with his placemen. Wyndham's speech on this matter proved one of his most impeccable, imparting that Country politicians would always vote as their conscience allowed and that this should be the model for future governments. Cushioning his defence under the language of party, security and stability, Walpole countered that if the septennial legislation was repealed, government would descend into faction, with little or no measures being passed amid the squabbling. Having warned that an abundance of unqualified politicians would also be elected to office, the Country took great offence at the First Lord, using his rhetoric as motivation, gathering support to remove patronage from parliament altogether.

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64 Hill, 'Executive Monarchy and the Challenge of Parties', p. 382.

65 Horwitz, 'The Structure of Parliamentary Politics', p. 99.

66 Sichel, *Bolingbroke*, p. 298.

67 Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time*, p. 124.

Securing cooperation in parliament without patronage was not always enough to ensure votes were cast in favour of the Country cause. Independent politicians developed various tactics to pass legislation and their own 'darling bills'.<sup>68</sup> The utilisation of 'salaried petitions', 'surprise attacks' and tacking bills were just some of the methods both Court and Country used to capitalise upon politically divided or sparsely attended sessions.<sup>69</sup> The number of Country politicians in parliament had grown so large during the period, that they became a crucial factor as to how votes were cast, with their absence lamented by constituents but often enjoyed by the Court. On important matters such as the *Scots Bill*, where the political representation of Scotland was to be decided, it was noticed 'the Country members are out of town'. Clerks of the House of Commons lit the midnight oil and after a long, arduous debate, a deadlock on the bill came down to the Chairman's vote to carry a crucial motion.<sup>70</sup> The recurring and prolonged rustication of Country politicians was capitalised upon by Walpole's ministry, to spring quick debates and votes, of which only dedicated, London based Court politicians could attend.

The Country were aware that an extensive involvement in their rural communities was being used against them in London. To maintain their hegemony, the Country supported many City based informers, with Pulteney keeping a judicious eye on their vulnerabilities, forewarning his friends of imminent, surprise sessions.<sup>71</sup> Before the *Excise Bill* was to be first discussed in parliament, Strafford observed,

That a meeting of our friends at London is necessary, for this whole affair will turn upon the determination of the absentees, who must either support us in another manner than they have

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68 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 294.

69 Horwitz, 'The Structure of Parliamentary Politics', p. 106; Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 305; Thomas Carte to Corbert Kynaston, 3 February 1729, Princes Court, BL. Add. Ms. 21500, f. 9.

70 Lord Egmont to Lord Percival in Jersey, 18 June 1737, Charleton, BL. Add. Ms. 47013A, f. 38.

71 William Pulteney to Sir John Rushout, 24 October 1741, London, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.



hitherto done, or not expect that a handful of us Country gentlemen can oppose ourselves against the united interest of the Court.<sup>72</sup>

Following the defeat of the *Excise Bill* and during the parliamentary session that followed, Newcastle in a display of counter-intelligence informed the Court:

The enemy this day have given us notice, that we are to have business of consequence in our House on Wednesday next. It is to be a surprise upon us, that is what they are to go upon. Sir Robert Walpole has some notion that he is to be personally attacked and by the secrecy it is to be sure some point they think material.<sup>73</sup>

Newcastle whipped the Court into shape, stating 'whatever the mine is that is to be sprung, we are very desirous to have all our friends present, that they may judge whether we deserve censure or not'.<sup>74</sup> Throughout the period, members of the Court found it increasingly difficult to rely upon the absence of their Country counterparts. Walpole was no longer able to take missing members for granted, with Country politicians remaining secretive in their plans to arrive in parliament both unexpectedly and in force. Such people could not be purchased or silenced and this presented a growing problem for the First Lord and his control over both Houses of Parliament.

The Country found difficulty balancing their responsibility to serve their rural communities and fulfilling their duties in parliament simultaneously. This led to a lack of attendance in the Irish and English assemblies, with very few parliamentarians of all political denominations present. Despite this being helpful to Walpole, they were increasingly viewed in a negative light.<sup>75</sup> Thomas

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72 Sir John Bland to Earl Strafford, 11 November 1733, Kippax Park, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 110.

73 Lord Newcastle to Lord Richmond, 11 February 1734, Newcastle House, Goodwood. Ms. 1160. f. 2.

74 *Ibid*,

75 Lord Macclesfield to Hugh Campbell, 31 October 1721, House of Lords, HL. B40. LO. 12422; not everybody was

Wyndham, judge and independent politician, believed them to be a sign of apathy, stating that 'such is our privy council grown consisting of above sixty, and on a favourable point on a friends bill, there are seldom fewer than twenty attending'.<sup>76</sup> Despite these misgivings, it was often beneficial for splinter groups, who were low on members or money, to pass what mattered to them in a sparsely populated house that posed no concentrated opposition. If a bill was particularly decisive or predicted to attract significant attention however, then the Country would arrive, using different tactics to secure support, without having to revert to patronage.

The standardised method to pass a bill, without paying people to do so, depended on a person's good standing with other members of their rural networks. If a certain individual was well connected, respected, or had been exceptionally generous with his company at the dinner table, then a lot could be achieved. John Boyle, 5<sup>th</sup> Earl of Orrery was one such example, doing all he could to circulate letters concerning the predicament of his companion, John Lysaght, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron Lisle, who was 'to have a cause heard in the House of Lords, and has desired me to try to get the House as full as I can'.<sup>77</sup> Godolphin became a master at canvassing for votes in parliament also, travelling on extensive circuits. There he wined, dined and lobbied to assign signatures to causes, alongside promises for orations to reinforce the interest of his family.<sup>78</sup> When a particular case of Godolphin's was raised, his diligent work was seen to have paid off, it being remarked that 'the House was very full', with many ministers willing to speak on his behalf freely.<sup>79</sup>

Patronage became less important as the Country asserted themselves during the period. The Court noticed their success and emulated the traditional forms of support the Country used throughout the century increasingly. The extent of vote wrangling without patronage reached its zenith when

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as diligent as Sir Edward Turner or William Hay in their attendance.

76 Thomas Wyndham to Lord Hardwicke, 7 February 1729, Dublin, BL. Add. Ms. 35585, f. 110.

77 Lord Orrery to Lord Strafford, 17 February 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 150.

78 Francis Godolphin to Lady Marlborough, 29 February 1728, BL. Add. Ms. 61437, ff. 79–83.

79 Francis Godolphin to Lady Marlborough, 8 March 1728, BL. Add. Ms. 61437, f. 87.

impeachment proceedings against Walpole began in 1741. Newcastle termed it 'the great day', a pinnacle of his career, where all of his skills as a parliamentary manager would be put to the test assisting his beleaguered colleague. Explaining that 'proxies upon this occasion will be of no use', Newcastle was 'very desirous to have the appearance of all our friends upon this occasion'.<sup>80</sup>

A year later, opposition had continued to chip away at Walpole's majority by diminishing the role of patronage. Highly enamoured with the cause to persecute corruption, Judith Coote corresponded regularly with her father, Richard Coote, 3<sup>rd</sup> Earl Bellamont, about the progress of the Country in parliament. In 1742 however, Coote was forced to confide in her father, being distraught to learn that the 'Court party' had cause for celebration.<sup>81</sup> This event was the screening of Walpole for charges of maladministration and it was evident that Court notables had worked hard to eventuate this outcome. Newcastle expressed his excitement in a letter to Richmond, writing 'Joy, joy, ten thousand joys to you my dear Duke, we have flung out the Secret Committee by two. Noes 244. Ayes 242. The 244 all old friends, but our new ones prevailed upon some to be absent'.<sup>82</sup> This evidence from one of Walpole's most trusted political managers reveals the extent of networking and forced abstentions, with no mention of purchasing support in the correspondence.

This initial victory could not stop the Country from hounding Walpole from office on charges of corruption however. Later in the month, a seven-vote majority established a committee for investigating the conduct of the First Lord over the past twenty-years. Balloting commenced for the appointment of its members and parliament convened for a six-hour debate, by the end of which, Coote was ecstatic to find 'the Country party got it'.<sup>83</sup> This motion aimed to cut the heart of

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80 Lord Newcastle to Lord Richmond, 21 February 1741, Claremont, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 104, f. 256.

81 Judith Coote to Lord Bellamont, 7 December 1742, WRAS. Lechmere Archives. 899:169/4084/1.

82 Lord Newcastle to Lord Richmond, Tuesday, 9 March 1742, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 1160, f. 47.

83 Judith Coote to Lord Bellamont, 30 March 1742, London, WRAS. Lechmere Archives. 899:169/4084/1.

corruption from politics by impeaching Walpole. The way in which it was successfully brought to bear in parliament proved testament to the success of Country efforts throughout the period.

The Country showed time and again that they could operate effectively, to block or pass a variety of state and private bills, without having to rely on patronage. Building power groups in parliament was vital for helping independents and Court ministers pass legislation. Many of these shifting parliamentary relations were established upon family, friendship, mutual goals, faction and interest. They had roots in the rural countryside, where an individual with a trusted reputation could attract others to support their cause with passion, something money could not always buy. The failure of patronage is explored in the next section, revealing how little influence Walpole wielded with money. As the Country grew stronger, the appeal to principles undermined the allure of patronage increasingly, much to the surprise of the First Lord, who witnessed even his closest of supporters, even those in the *Charleton Congress*, to think twice about orders issued to them.

### **Perceptions of Patronage: The Role of the Monarch and Personal Principles**

One crucial but overlooked factor regarding patronage in the early eighteenth century was the role of the king in dispensing titles, honours and pensions. Black reveals the monarch had a substantial impetus in the matter of wielding patronage.<sup>84</sup> This point shows how Walpole was not, as some historians claim, a prime minister, but merely as Black asserts, 'head of the treasury, not the government'.<sup>85</sup> Subordinate to the king, Walpole 'was unlike the opposition of the Stuarts in terms of 'authoritarianism', Black arguing further that he was a 'royal minister' and 'completely committed

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84 Jeremy Black, *The Hanoverians: A History of a Dynasty* (London: Hambledon, 2004), p. 17.

85 Black, *Walpole in Power*, p. 44.

to the service of the Georges'.<sup>86</sup> The monarch could appoint and remove government officials at his discretion, without adhering to cabinet responsibility.<sup>87</sup> Walpole had to be on good terms with the king to ask for appointments and more often than is mentioned in the historiography, those drafted into service would not be 'loyal or subordinate' to the First Lord.<sup>88</sup>

Reactive to political and economic events, Walpole professed himself to be 'no saint, no Spartan, no reformer'.<sup>89</sup> The First Lord initiated legislation as his monarch required it. When this occurred, Walpole faced significant opposition and in some cases, was forced to abandon measures completely. The First Lord found that money could not always remove these obstacles. Contrary to the views of Robert Bucholz and Newton Key, the king did not in fact 'allow Walpole free play to distribute the government's patronage so as to increase his following'.<sup>90</sup> Kramnick overreaches this argument also, by claiming that Walpole's control and dispensation of royal patronage was virtually all encompassing.<sup>91</sup> Tracy Borman corroborating a misleading view, mentions that George II and Caroline had 'virtually free rein in government', having put 'all household resources' at Walpole's 'disposal so that he could achieve his political ends'.<sup>92</sup> British monarchs had access to diplomatic and military patronage. These two important areas of government Walpole could advise upon, but never dictate to the king, especially regarding where salaries and positions should be granted. This section will reveal how limited Walpole's influence over patronage could be, proving that the First Lord was unable to encroach into all aspects of state patronage, because he never possessed the power to do so.

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86 *Ibid*, p. 43; Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole, The King's Minister*, v. 2, p. 327.

87 Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy*, p. 66; Black, *Walpole in Power*, p. 44.

88 Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy*, p. 66.

89 Geoffrey Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society*, p. 177.

90 Robert Bucholz & Newton Key (eds), *Early Modern England, 1485–1714: A Narrative History*, 2nd ed (Chichester: Wiley Blackwell, 2009), p. 355.

91 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, pp. 111–112.

92 Tracy Borman, *King's Mistress, Queen's Servant: The Life and Times of Henrietta Howard* (London: Vintage, 2010), p. 247.

George I possessed a strong hold over patronage from the outset of his arrival in Britain.

Townshend mentored Walpole on the caution they should both use when discussing military matters, for the king 'would never bear to be controlled' in that affair, neither in Hanover or England.<sup>93</sup> When Carteret pressed the king to allow his friend, Cadogan, command of his troops in the monarch's absence, George refused outright.<sup>94</sup> Lechmere mused that 'Cadogan would be king in a week' through a military coup if something unfortunate befell the monarch, a jest that hit all too close to home for the crown.<sup>95</sup>

Cadogan had served as adjutant to John Churchill, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Marlborough, and was no stranger to military engagements. Despite his loyalty and industry, Cadogan found it difficult to control his temper. An impatient individual, Cadogan perceived any hindrance of his authority a personal insult. This volatile temperament almost bordered on treason when the king left for Hanover in 1723. Recently dismissed from military service, Cadogan attempted to seize control of the army, countermanding the authority of Sir Thomas Wynn, 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet Newborough, who was reviewing the Foot Guards on behalf of the Regency.<sup>96</sup> With the crown struggling to come to terms with its limited constitutional position after 1688, such incidents, coupled with the fear of losing control, meant that British kings lodged power, authority and patronage jealously, away from Walpole's grasp.

George II proved as much a 'confectioner general' in matters of patronage as he was in battle.<sup>97</sup> Like his father, when he possessed an abundance of soldiers under his command, the king did not like seeing their numbers depleted in combat. Both were equally prudent with the money their roles as

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93 Lord Townshend to Robert Walpole, 6 August 1723, NS, Hanover, BL. Stowe Ms. 251, f. 21.

94 George I had imprisoned his wife at Ahlden. Unlike the reign of his son, George II, the Regency could not be directed by his spouse and had to be entrusted to a council instead.

95 Lord Newcastle, 5 July 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, ff. 267–268.

96 Lord Newcastle, 18 July 1723, Newcastle House, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 278.

97 Torsten Riotte & Brendan Simms (eds), *The Hanoverian Dimension in British History: 1714–1837* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 314.

Commander-in-Chief generated. In Walpole's hours of need, the First Lord was often refused financial aid to attract political support. George was not willing to relinquish his personal military sinecures to bolster Walpole's grip over government. Walpole did not press the matter with his sovereign either, often accepting refusals, reluctant to invoke the displeasure of a king he depended upon for support. Even during the War of Jenkin's Ear in the 1740s, when Britain was under threat of invasion with a shortage of sailors to man the Channel Fleet, Walpole was willing to risk his own reputation and the security of the Island, rather than disoblige the king. The First Lord wanted to overturn the rights of merchants by impressing them into sea service, rather than following the advice of Admiral Sir John Norris for augmenting the fleet with soldiers from the army.<sup>98</sup>

When Paymaster of the Forces, Sir William Yonge and Walpole pressured the king to appoint supporters of their ministry in parliament to vacancies in the army, George II was purported to have blustered to the First Lord 'you understand nothing about troops. I will order my army as I think fit, for your scoundrels of the House of Commons you may do as you please. You know I never interfere nor pretend to know anything of them, but this province I will keep to myself'.<sup>99</sup> Even Spencer Compton, the king's closest confidant, could not receive stipends for his placemen.<sup>100</sup> The death of Queen Caroline in 1737 hastened Walpole's ever haemorrhaging support, for she had been one of the few people that could convince her husband and others at court to defend the First Lord in government. It was an event understood and manipulated by many of Walpole's contemporaries.<sup>101</sup>

Mentioned frequently throughout this thesis is the notion that women were no less socially skilled

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98 Minutes of the Cabinet Council, Monday, 5 May 1740, Cockpit, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 951/47/11, f. 18.

99 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 3, p. 772.

100 William King, *Political and Literary Anecdotes of His Own Time* (London: John Murray, 1819), p. 41; Francis Killigrew to Sir Spencer Compton, 28 October 1725, Church Street Soho, in, HMC (eds), *The Manuscripts of Marquess Townshend* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1887), p. 142; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, pp. 557, 559; Yorke, *Walpoliana*, p. 13.

101 Chesterfield Mss, v. 2, p. 311; Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 502.

and ambitious than their male counterparts during the period. The wit, guile and allure of 'learned English ladies' at court, in the Country and for the Patriot faction propelled them up social ladders.<sup>102</sup> As close confidants of powerful men, they were privy to secrets and shared their confidence. Coxe, one of Walpole's first Whig biographers, believed George II was 'almost entirely governed by his wife'.<sup>103</sup> These rather dated and misleading notions were influenced by the writings of Hervey and permeated into the modern works of historians such as Hugh Trevor-Roper.<sup>104</sup>

It was speculated in political circles that 'if the queen governed the king, It cannot be denied that she herself was much under the direction of Sir Robert Walpole'.<sup>105</sup> George II was aware of this popular assumption, but oblivious to the extent of the animosity regarding the relationship between his spouse and First Lord. The king was reported to have blustered 'Charles I was governed by his wife, Charles II by his whores, James by his priests, William by his men, Anne by her women, and who do they say governs now?'<sup>106</sup> It is only in modern works by Andrew Thompson, Michael Schaich and Hannah Smith that these claims have been questioned.<sup>107</sup> All reveal George and Caroline had a deep, mutual affection for one another, with both possessing complex and independent inclinations.

Although the patience of George II often ran thin with regard to politics, his wife, Caroline, could in most cases convince the king to support Walpole 'in keeping quiet, often in contrary to my opinion, and sometimes I have thought even contrary to my honour'.<sup>108</sup> The First Lord was never loved in the way George II regarded Compton, or in the same fashion George I had treated Sunderland.<sup>109</sup>

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102 Elizabeth Elstob to George Ballard, 15 June 1736, Evesham, Bodl. Ballard Ms. 43, f. 25.

103 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 5.

104 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 69; Hugh Trevor-Roper, *History and the Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), p. 86.

105 Davies, *The Characters of*, p. 14.

106 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 69; *Ibid*, v. 2, p. 611.

107 Thompson, *George II*, p. 71; Hannah Smith, *Georgian Monarchy, Politics and Culture, 1714–1760* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 206; Andreas Gestrich & Michael Schaich (eds), *The Hanoverian Succession, Dynastic Politics and Monarchical Culture* (Oxon: Ashgate, 2015).

108 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, pp. 348, 417; *Ibid*, v. 3, p. 657.

109 Chesterfield Mss, p. 312; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. 221, xlix; Carlisle Mss, p. 30; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 342;



Although Caroline possessed a stronger relationship with Johann Philipp von Hattorf and Hervey, Walpole understood the advantage of having 'the right sow, by the ear', the queen knowing the First Lord had the best intentions for the king also.<sup>110</sup>

Walpole recognised the bond George I and Caroline maintained with one another. Forging a lasting loyalty with the queen, not the king's mistresses, the First Lord found someone who could steer the temper of the monarch and curtail the animosity of his detractors at court, leaving Walpole time to counter his Country and factional opposition. When the queen passed away, Walpole's influence declined, his limits were stretched and he lamented to Devonshire 'the loss to me is irreparable, from want of that powerful and ready assistance which seldom failed me'.<sup>111</sup>

It was Walpole's penchant for the widespread use of patronage, which clashed with the limited views of the monarchs he served under. George II would create no more than four peers at the start of his reign in 1727. Without the power to dispense these relatively low costing honours, many difficulties were presented for Walpole. When it came to ribbons, even Richmond, a close adherent of Walpole's ministry, found it difficult to have his aspirations confirmed, Walpole finding no way for the king to bestow upon him the Order of Bath.<sup>112</sup> This stung Richmond and was used by Prendergrast, who had pestered Richmond for twenty-years in a bid to acquire the position of Postmaster General of Ireland. Being led to believe his patron was on the verge of being allocated the position, Richmond was told that Charles Fielding, Walpole's candidate, was the successful beneficiary. Prendergrast then despatched several letters to Richmond, testing his loyalty to the First

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Black., *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 91.

110 Yorke, *Walpoliana*, p. 6; Black, *Walpole in Power*, p. 31; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. 68–69; Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 1, p. 5.

111 Sir Robert Walpole to the Lord Devonshire, 4 December 1737, CHA, Devonshire Ms, f. 114.9.

112 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Montagu, 29 April 1725, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 107; conversely, Walpole had opposed a peerage bill in 1719. This matter returned to haunt him.

Lord, by pleading he should show 'the whole world that Sir Robert Walpole has dared to use you'.<sup>113</sup> With a finite supply of money and places to reconcile enemies susceptible to accepting bribes, Walpole's ability to deliver patronage to his friends also had its limits. The First Lord and his ministers were forced to tiptoe around two monarchs. When Walpole attempted to promote Robert Trevor to the position of Envoy and Plenipotentiary, the king 'refused this letter in a pretty peremptory way'. Trying once more, Walpole 'renewed the attack' which was again rejected. While Trevor was asked to remain patient, Walpole confessed to his brother 'I am afraid my advice had no other effect upon him than to make him suspect my friendship'.<sup>114</sup>

Patronage was not wielded by Walpole as effectively as depicted in the prevailing historiography. When the First Lord was offered an early chance to cement Chesterfield's support, Walpole was again found wanting. Chesterfield's brother was refused a place in the admiralty and his son refused a peerage. Diplomat, Stephen Poyntz, remarked that Chesterfield 'did not entirely reckon upon his brother being so personally disagreeable to Sir Robert Walpole, but the latter he says, the king had absolutely promised him'.<sup>115</sup> Newcastle, Townshend and Walpole had 'recommended him in the strongest manner to the king', assuring Chesterfield they had not disqualified either promotion over personal disagreements.<sup>116</sup>

The failure of Walpole to secure these places only served to foment a wide distrust for his ministry. As mentioned in the previous chapter, family connection and influence was extremely important, with the First Lord soon finding his inability to dole out places causing entire families to align against him. To this end, when Chesterfield's kinsman, Charles Stanhope, was passed over for continuation in office, Walpole made an enemy of his father, James Stanhope. Having lost his place

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113 Thomas Prendergrast to Lord Richmond, 13 March 1736, Dublin, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 107.

114 Sir Robert Walpole to Horatio Walpole, 28 August 1739, London, BL. Add. Ms. 64749, f. 322.

115 Stephen Poyntz to Lord Townshend, 9 June 1728, Paris, BL. Add. Ms. 48982, f. 131.

116 Stephen Poyntz to Lord Townshend, 3 June 1728, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 48982, f. 135.

in the treasury to Pelham, Charles demanded an audience with the king to plead his case directly. Finding the king in a state of prevarication, stating that his hands were tied, Stanhope mentioned to George that he supposed his 'friend Mr Walpole had suggested that to him, at which he smiled'.<sup>117</sup>

When it came to matters of patronage, Walpole was forced to play the role of a grey man, for as he told a disappointed Essex, 'changes of dispositions in these sort of affairs are not new things in court'.<sup>118</sup> While Stair was 'not ignorant that at court, good words don't always produce great affects', Prendergrast felt betrayed, claiming the First Lord 'invents new pretexts never alleged before, owning that it is not absolutely in his power to fulfil his engagement'.<sup>119</sup> Hervey mentions the First Lord was talented at feigning his emotions, deploying a poker face that often led more to his mistrust than believing his sincerity.<sup>120</sup> While possessing a grounded charm, Walpole proved unpalatable for some courtiers to engage in conversation with, with Swift mentioning he was 'loud in his laugh and course in his jest'.<sup>121</sup> Hervey enjoyed witnessing Walpole's gaudy, unrefined duplicity take effect. This was required at court, although Walpole seemed to deploy it with less grace and subtlety. Walpole would neither promise nor dismiss, or in the words of Godolphin, would 'do us no good, so neither will he do any hurt'.<sup>122</sup>

'A prince never lacks legitimate reasons to break his promise', and this Machiavellian function of politics was exemplified by the two Georges who utilised similar courses of action. Painfully aware of the limits patronage afforded him, Walpole remarked 'the king must not admit what he has done has been wrong, nor must he engage not to grant any more, which makes it impossible to give

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117 Charles Stanhope to Lord Newcastle, 26 August 1721, London, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 191; Charles Stanhope was cousin to James Stanhope, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Stanhope and brother to William Stanhope, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Harrington. Rather ungratefully, he had been spared from ruin by the king for his part in the South Sea Bubble.

118 Robert Walpole to Lord Essex, 3 March 1733, London, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 121; Lord Godolphin to Lady Marlborough, 30 June 1727, BL. Add. Ms. 61437, f. 28.

119 John Dalrymple to Hew Dalrymple, 18 December 1731, HL. B20, LO. 7602; Thomas Prendergrast to Lord Richmond, 16 December 1735, Dublin, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 107.

120 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 30 December 1731, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 337.

121 Character of Sir Robert Walpole by Jonathan Swift, BL. Add. Ms. 22625, f. 26.

122 Lord Godolphin to Lady Marlborough, 2 March 1728, BL. Add. Ms. 61437, f. 82.

anything but a general answer'.<sup>123</sup> Walpole was often denied access to dispense diplomatic and military places by his monarchs, some of the richest veins of patronage the court possessed. This attracted resentment against Walpole's ministry, leading the First Lord to rely instead on squeezing every last bit of government money from the treasury instead, much of which was used to procure support for his efforts in parliament.

Advocates of the Country cause began to recognise this was Walpole's flaw however. What will be seen in the next section, is that associates of the Country interest formed to manoeuvre as a united bloc, to prevent Walpole using their tax revenue for corrupt acts, such as purchasing a parliamentary majority. Refusing to accept that corruption would be predicated with their money and in a government they felt duty bound to monitor, the appeal of the Country message for politicians to abandon patronage is investigated in the next section. The Country are seen to pioneer ways in which to diminish Walpole's control of patronage successfully, in the only place the First Lord could have exercised it effectively, the Houses of Parliament.

### **The Best Opposition Money Cannot Buy: Politicians Beyond Purchase**

Walpole's tenure in office coincided with a golden era of crime, corruption and public protest. Bands of heavily armed 'ruffians' threatened insurrection in the countryside, while in London, Poyntz claimed 'everybody is afraid of being out after night comes on'.<sup>124</sup> It was an age of street robbers, house breakers and clandestine smuggling. For Country politicians, avarice was a disease that refused to confine itself to a single host. This greed could affect the political environment and it

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<sup>123</sup> Robert Walpole to Lord Newcastle, 30 October 1723, Houghton, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 374; Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 12 January 1734, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 455.

<sup>124</sup> Stephen Poyntz to Lord Newcastle, Friday, 3 August 1722, Cleveland Court, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 233; Thomas Carte to Monsieur Kynaston, 17 October 1728, Prince's Court, Westminster, BL. Add. Ms. 21500, f. 7.

was deemed the duty of every advocate of the Country cause to administer the antidote before it could spread. The source of this contagion was found in Walpole, whose endemic peculation and subornation invoked the derision of his Country counterparts. A prolific practitioner of corruption, even Walpole's close friend, Hervey, claimed there was an extraordinary exception to be made with the First Lord, who became 'a sanctuary for corruption, a man who had cheated the public of an immense sum'.<sup>125</sup>

Contemporaries found it difficult to refuse what Walpole coined 'the eloquence of a banknote'.<sup>126</sup> These were individuals willing to collude for perpetual employment and sell themselves as 'professional politicians'.<sup>127</sup> While Whig historians argue a degree of corruption was expected in statesmen, often tolerated and sometimes justified as beneficial, it can be seen the dose made the poison. For Walpole's contemporaries in the Country interest, they were 'certain, both from reason and experience that vice and corruption are always fatal to liberty, the life and soul of our government'. As a result, those sympathetic to Country sentiments argued they 'who promote vice and corruption destroys liberty in consequence, the effect is sometimes slow, but ever sure'.<sup>128</sup>

Prized above all other maxims, Stair claimed 'Sir Robert has long maintained that every man is to be bought if his price is paid him'.<sup>129</sup> The host of venal pensioners accompanying Walpole to parliament testified to this, but the First Lord had to contend with many Country politicians whom money could not buy also. For independents such as Shippen, principles had no monetary price and 'incorruptible by money', he was far from being the exception to the rule.<sup>130</sup> In direct competition to one another, Court offered places and money while the Country extolled pride and principle, both

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125 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. 185–187; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 365; other notable predecessors, such as Sir John Aislabie and Richard Jones, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Ranelagh, rivalled the peculation Walpole achieved.

126 Davies, *The Characters of...* p. 22.

127 Owen, *The Pattern of Politics in Eighteenth-Century England*, p. 4; the modern terminology for such people is 'career politicians'.

128 The Member of Parliament's Reply to the Gentleman in Worcestershire, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 7616, ff. 4–7.

129 Lord Stair to Lady Marlborough, 15 February 1738, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 59.

130 Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 246.

contended for political support. Placemen could be readily identified and received popular contempt, while those deemed independent acquired respect in equal measure to their credibility.<sup>131</sup>

The patronage Walpole valued was geared to maximise support in the division lobby, a strategy neglecting the ability to attract able and influential statesmen. Parliamentary oratory was an invaluable weapon in the arsenal of a politician, its potency exemplified in one of Wharton's powerful speeches, which was rumoured to have provoked the fatal stroke of his opponent, Stanhope.<sup>132</sup> When three charismatic and independent speakers, Lords Trevor, Lechmere and Harcourt were not attending parliament, it was deemed a 'seasonable opportunity' to pass a bill without them working their charm to persuade people otherwise.<sup>133</sup> 'Warmly opposed by many of the best speakers in the house', Walpole only had a few of 'the most eminent sticklers of the Court' to rely on.<sup>134</sup> It was in the ranks of Walpole's Country detractors where the most powerful speakers could be found. The failure to entice convincing orators to press Walpole's cause in parliament led him on many occasions to 'suffer the adjournment of a pass without division', merely because he found the 'sense of the house against him'.<sup>135</sup> With so many independents to win over and a decreasing pool of supporters and paid sophists, it was noticed by Chandos that Walpole's 'misfortune is he has nothing equal to himself to support him in the debates, so that the fatigue of business he undergoes in and out of the House is almost incredible'.<sup>136</sup>

What remained, if a public voice could not be bought, was the purchase of votes. Throughout Walpole's tenure, patronage needed to be constantly renewed and sufficient to ensure loyalty, with

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131 Charles Cathcart to Hugh Campbell, 22 February 1718, London, HL. B14, LO. 7945; politicians were threatened by the Court if they voted according to their principles.

132 Speech given in the House of Lords, 4 February 1721, in, *The Penny Cyclopaedia for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge*, v. 22 (London: Charles Knight, 1842), p. 441.

133 Charles Cathcart, 18 March 1718, London, HL. B14, LO. 7924; Martin Sandys to Samuel Sandys, 28 March 1726, Worcester, WRAS. OFA, 705:56/1402.

134 Debate for Augmenting the Royal Navy, 25 March 1726, in, PD, v. 9, p. 215.

135 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 403.

136 Lord Chandos to Mr Pitt, 11 February 1731, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 37, f. 60.

ministers becoming increasingly voracious to obtain it as the First Lord lost support. Walpole could rely on a few stalwarts to press his cause with conviction, providing he continually renewed their friendship. A notable triumvirate of support was found in Sir William Strickland, Thomas Winnington and Yonge, who trailed the First Lord wherever he led. Pelham, Walpole's counterpart in the treasury, helped the First Lord to view parliament in terms of 'majorities', always hoping for 'a well united Court' and spurring the First Lord to spend ever larger amounts on patronage.<sup>137</sup> Devonshire was a close friend to Walpole also, a man with 'the most profound attachment to Sir Robert and resolution not to assist anyone who stood ill against him'.<sup>138</sup>

The surety of these people was not enough for Walpole's ministry to control government and so in the division lobby, the First Lord could pay for the services of John Selwyn and James Primrose, who would 'always vote for the Court list', whatever the bill, affirming regularly that 'the government shall always find me firm to their measures and ready to serve them'.<sup>139</sup> Others willing to trim with the ministry expected to be rewarded amply for their loyalty, with placemen seeking titles, peerages or large monetary sums. Lovell, despite being related to the First Lord, was not averse to being infuriated when Walpole failed to deliver his regular pay-cheque. Prendergrast, bitter from not securing his place as postmaster, scoured to find embarrassments caused by Walpole's failed promises of patronage. On this occasion, Prendergrast didn't need to explore far, as he claimed Lovell's 'swearing about it was known to the whole town and Sir Robert pretended at that time very little to regard it'.<sup>140</sup>

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137 Henry Pelham to Lord Essex, 27 June 1734, Horse Guards, BL. Add. Ms. 2733, f. 99.

138 Thomas Prendergrast to Lord Richmond, 11 January 1738, OS, Whitehall, WRSO. Goodwood. Ms. 107; Walpole and Devonshire were in many ways alike; Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 15 October 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 244.

139 James Primrose to Sir Robert Walpole, February 1739, HL. B40. LO. 7235.

140 Thomas Prendergrast to Lord Richmond, 16 December 1735, WRSO. Goodwood. Ms. 107.

Independent members of parliament denounced or spoke in favour of certain policies, rather than from the allegiance of certain parties.<sup>141</sup> Walpole could find assistance being offered by individuals such as Thomas Hanmer on occasion, who was regarded as 'one of the few honest men in politics' and a formidable speaker. Hanmer was independent and moderate, a pliable man who worked either in favour or disgust of Court, according to his principles and the motion in question.<sup>142</sup> These politicians were respected, informed, often witty, but relatively unreliable as a constant base of support for the First Lord. The pressure wrought by the Country interest, ensured the allure of money would not be enough to convince people to sanction Court resolutions consistently, especially those which ran against their private values.

Robbins claims that Country manoeuvres to curb patronage and corruption 'made singularly little difference'.<sup>143</sup> However, through excessive use, patronage immunised individuals to its effects. This breakdown of the appeal of patronage affected Walpole's ciphers in the division lobby, with the First Lord witnessing numerous time consuming and heavily funded motions to be defeated. Shortly before his resignation, the First Lord lost a number of crucial votes on siphoning money from the Sinking Fund. This was a 'sacred' deposit of ring-fenced money, specifically earmarked for the payment of the national debt. Outside of parliament, disillusionment with patronage and the First Lord's ministry affected the outcome of a contested election in Walpole's own seat in Norfolk. The failure to return his costly candidates, William Morden and Robert Coke, represented Walpole's final attempt to counter his opposition with patronage.<sup>144</sup> A string of defeats preceded this calamity, marking the end of Walpole's ability to control parliament effectively.

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141 Their modern equivalents are designated 'cross-benchers'.

142 John Dalrymple to John Campbell, 23 June 1742, Hague, HL. B20, LO. 7618; Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, pp. 48–49.

143 Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 278.

144 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, pp. 47, 331.



The repeal of the *Test* and *Corporation* acts in the summer of 1732 proved a bitter blow for Walpole. Having failed to uphold the bill, Benjamin Hoadly, Bishop of Salisbury, alongside other Protestant dissenters associating themselves with the First Lord's ministry felt 'betrayed'.<sup>145</sup> On 11 May 1737, the *Bill of Pains and Penalties* was successfully opposed and despite Walpole managing to force it through the Commons a month later, a second reading of the bill saw it rejected again.<sup>146</sup> The failure of the *Quaker Relief Bill* was blamed on Edmund Gibson, a Bishop of London that Newcastle and Walpole had once proclaimed 'their pope'.<sup>147</sup> Having passed the Commons on 4 May 1736, with a large majority, the bill was swiftly dropped nine days later. Hardwicke had been the one to strike the bill down, another government minister relied upon to support the Court.<sup>148</sup> Through a long series of expensive and fruitless gambits, Walpole's opposition nullified the role of patronage, undermining his administration and shifting support from Court to Country.<sup>149</sup>

Opposition had been building out of Walpole's ministry exponentially, but it could be found increasing at the heart of government also. Onslow, Hardwicke and Newcastle were all appointments who supported opposition policies, contrary to the inclinations of Walpole. Richmond rebelled against the Court also, bringing Walpole into disrepute. This betrayal centred upon the office of John Ker, 1<sup>st</sup> Duke of Roxburgh, whose position as Scottish Secretary of State was annulled by Walpole when he entered office.

Roxburgh and his faction, the *Squadron*, were believed to be the 'authors and advisers of every measure' concerted to bring about disorder in the North.<sup>150</sup> The First Lord could not keep an

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145 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp 121–131.

146 *Ibid*, v. 3, pp. 712, 729.

147 Lord Newcastle, 18 October 1723, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 353.

148 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 370.

149 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 294; *Ibid*, v. 2 pp. 417–18; Black, *Walpole in Power*, p. 42.

150 Robert Walpole to Lord Devonshire, 23 August 1725, London, CHA. Devonshire Ms. f. 114.1.

opponent on his payroll who he 'dare not trust with any thought or resolution'.<sup>151</sup> Although Walpole considered Roxburgh vanquished, two years later, Richmond pressed for him to be elected on a ballot as one of the Sixteen Peers to represent Scotland in parliament.<sup>152</sup> The king was disgruntled at this and Walpole took the liberty to deliver a minatory warning to Richmond 'not to make any difficulties upon this occasion, because I apprehend such a step may be more unkindly taken than I wish may ever happen to you'.<sup>153</sup> Through gritted teeth, the First Lord advised his recalcitrant companion that peers of the ministry must adhere to the lists the Court had sanctioned.<sup>154</sup>

Of all the bills presented before parliament, none struck at the heart of Court and Country affairs more than the *Pension Bill*, first introduced in 1730, by the voracious and independent Samuel Sandys. This proved an attempt to cripple Walpole, by disabling placemen from holding a parliamentary seat. Strafford, a paragon of the Country cause, could not help but 'observe on this occasion that we had some of the Court, that had places or pensions that voted with us and many that left the House, not being willing to vote against their honour and conscience and yet afraid of losing their places or pensions'.<sup>155</sup>

This bill, sponsored in the most part by the Country cause and the Patriots, placed Walpole in the public eye and threatened the cohesion of his cabinet. Aware that such a popular motion could not be quashed in the lower assembly, the First Lord allowed the bill to pass the Commons in order to escape the odium as its opponent. This dishonour befell a disgusted Townshend, where in the House of Lords, it was left to him to veto the proposal. The king showed his displeasure to those he felt did

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151 *Ibid.*

152 Lord Roxburghe to Lord Richmond, 25 August 1727, London, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 112.

153 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Richmond, 10 August 1727, London, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 112.

154 Lord Townshend to Lord Richmond, 15 August 1727, Whitehall, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 112.

155 Lord Strafford to Lord Huntingdon, 4 March 1731, HL. HA 13211, B.72.

not have the courage to vote with the Court, including Richmond again, who claimed that doing so went against his best principles and inclinations.<sup>156</sup>

The *Pension Bill* proved a significant breach between Walpole and Townshend, who resigned after tensions came to a violent head. The debate was reignited once more in 1740. This time, the Country were in a better position to engage in discussions regarding corruption reckoned by Chandos as 'one of the best that has been in the House of Commons for some time'. By a narrow margin, the bill was again defeated, however, the 'moderation with which the bill was declared' attracted a far greater deal of support, including thirty individuals who had never before voted against the Court having abstained their support for Walpole.<sup>157</sup> This discussion of this bill reveals the growing importance of the Country interest, whose platform, powerful orators and message against corruption appealed to others in parliament. Not only could these factors sway politicians to abandon links to Walpole's patronage, it gave ministers the confidence to debate and vote according to Country principles. The growth of a strong, organised, independent and private opposition meant that many of Walpole's patrons and grantees on his payroll began to blackmail him with desertion. With every accident, fatality and opportunity, Chesterfield noted that 'his corrupt and shameless followers will be looking out sharp and raising their demands and making his management of the Commons extremely difficult'.<sup>158</sup>

The most flagrant episode, highlighting Walpole's inability to dominate through patronage is seen with the outcry he received, upon opening parliament with his budget speech in March 1733.<sup>159</sup> Despite calling on all loyal Whigs in a secret meeting at the Cockpit to endorse a new excise scheme, in the House of Commons, Walpole claimed the policy 'should not be considered a party

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156 Lord Richmond to Lord Newcastle, 29 February 1734, Charlton, BL. Add. Ms. 32689, f. 160.

157 Lord Chandos to William Leigh, 2 February 1740, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 52, f. 188.

158 Chesterfield Mss, v. 2. p. 312; Portland Mss, v. 5, p. 145.

159 Charles Delafaye to Lord Essex, 8 March 1733, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 132.

cause, if gentlemen will be persuaded it is, they will pay dearly for party prejudice'.<sup>160</sup> A reaction was spurred in the countryside, where 'a majority, much more greater than expected' had written 'to their representatives to oppose the scheme'.<sup>161</sup> Chandos remarked excise was 'supported (in some measure) by the belief of his being able to do whatever he has a mind to in parliament'.<sup>162</sup> Yet patronage failed Walpole at this critical juncture, as did the congealing effect of party spirit. It was observed that if Walpole faltered in this endeavour, he could not be 'so secure of the continuance of his Court's favour'.<sup>163</sup> When Walpole requested a delay on the question of excise, his retreat was revealed to the opposition. Anxious of Jacobite intrigue and in the face of Walpole's unbudging detractors, the bill was withdrawn and the First Lord offered his resignation to the king.<sup>164</sup>

The revocation of the *Excise Bill* uncovered Walpole's administration publicly as a lame duck in politics, one fearful of enacting any other major reform thereafter.<sup>165</sup> Opposition from the Country made Walpole 'act with vigour' in defence of his policies, with 'every division showing a decrease in majority, the king grew more and more uneasy'.<sup>166</sup> Walpole's ability to present a bill with confidence was dismantled following this defeat, a level of intransigence that flew in the face of the king, who 'never knew the opposition on any occasion in his reign, so strong, so sanguine and so insolent'.<sup>167</sup> Pulteney claimed excise 'eased the rich at the expense of the poor', Wyndham stated it threatened liberty. Whatever the rebuke, it was clear the opposition ranks had swelled, having become more organised and effective.<sup>168</sup> The reaction had been popular as well as parliamentary,

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160 Robert Walpole's Notes, BL. Add. Ms. 74065, f. 72.

161 Charles Delafaye to Lord Essex, 15 March 1733, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 138.

162 Lord Chandos to John Drummond, 6 April 1738, HL. MssST. 57, v. 41, f. 238.

163 *Ibid*, f. 239.

164 Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, p. 101; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. 157, 160; Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole, The King's Minister*, v. 2, p. 267.

165 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 173.

166 Chesterfield Mss, v. 2, p. 314; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 150; Polwarth Mss, v. 5, p. 172.

167 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 3, p. 150.

168 Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 289; Carlisle Mss, p. 89.

with polemicists having whipped crowds into a frenzy, resulting in petitioners filling the Court of Requests, where they almost trampled Walpole to death.<sup>169</sup>

In the wake of what came to be known as the 'excise crisis', Walpole's capabilities were hindered further. Instead of reconciling dissenters by accepting Walpole's resignation, George II, in a fit of temper stated that 'mutiny should not go unpunished'.<sup>170</sup> The king purged influential ministers from Court who had voted against the bill, leaving Walpole with empty places that he found difficult to fill with anybody other than inexperienced sycophants or virulent enemies.<sup>171</sup> As with others who had defied their patrons, Hugh Boscawen, 1<sup>st</sup> Viscount Falmouth and Hugh Fortescue, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Clinton, were sent short and scathing messages that 'His Majesty has commanded me to acquaint your Lordship that he has no further occasion for your service'.<sup>172</sup> Cobham, Bolton and Stair, who despite not attending parliament had 'so disoblged the Court', that each lost command of their regiments.<sup>173</sup>

This proved many would rather vote with their conscience than follow Walpole on every measure, even if he was simply acting on orders from the king directly. Offices were left vacant in the aftermath, with sickness, resignation and dismissal having removed a considerable swathe of politicians from active service. What became apparent was that 'the poor fellows suffer themselves to be turned out of their places and they that have none refuse to accept them on their terms'.<sup>174</sup>

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169 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 204; Carlisle Mss, p. 107; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. 147–149; Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 301; Polwarth, Mss, v. 5, p. 175; Carlisle Mss, p. 95; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 3, p. 670; *Ibid*, v. 1, p. 199; Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole, The King's Minister*, v. 2, p. 243.

170 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1 p. 162; Henry Pelham was dismissed, alongside Clinton, Chesterfield and Dorset's patrons.

171 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 680; Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole, The King's Minister*, v. 2, p. 264; Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 2, p. 403.

172 Lord Newcastle to Lord Clinton, 13 April 1733, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 3.

173 Lord Chandos to Mr Pitt, 17 June 1733, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 42, f. 51.

174 Richard Elliot to Anna Craggs, 20 April 1734, Mollenick, Cornwall, HL. STN. 85.

A counterproductive strategy, Walpole had not been the prime advocate behind the removal of his colleagues, yet it was believed that he alone instigated the changes in his ministry. John Gay mentioned that it was no wonder politicians of good quality were hard to find in government, for when they were, if they voted with their conscience against the wishes of their patrons, then they would be removed quickly. Alluding to Walpole, it was stated that 'a highwayman never picks up an honest man for a companion, but if such a one accidentally falls in his way, if he cannot turn his heart, he like a wise statesman discards him'.<sup>175</sup> In light of new evidence, the powerful grip that Black and other historians state Walpole held over patronage should be evaluated again, as having become undermined from the beginning of his earliest years in office.<sup>176</sup>

Through continuous efforts to eradicate patronage in parliament, the Country interest grew stronger, capitalising on those abandoning Walpole's majority. As a result of prolonged campaigns to eradicate corruption, the political environment devolved into faction, interest and a chaotic free-for-all, where no bill was guaranteed success, no matter how much money was used to fund its passage. As a result, the Court experienced little political stability, with Walpole's continued use of patronage providing less results for his ministry but more social upheavals and protests.

Patronage is frequently said to be the principal method in which Walpole dominated government. This entire premise undermines prior notions that party politics reigned supreme during Walpole's tenure. If people were constantly and unscrupulously paid to vote in a majority by a particular administration, then the idea that contemporaries subscribed to parties based on widely held and deeply prevalent principles remains tenuous. Presiding over a period where there was a widespread disgust for patronage in government, the Country had been successful in stripping Walpole of one of his major facets of power. The early eighteenth-century political environment proved

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175 John Gay to Mrs Howard, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 32.

176 Black, *Walpole in Power*, pp. 45, 76.

increasingly susceptible to change and with many contemporaries refusing money and places, Country politicians were set to enact their next transformation in politics, the widespread renunciation of party politics, the last bulwark of Walpole's hegemony.

## Chapter Four

### Preventing Parties: The Second Country Principle

With the Country interest effective in diminishing the allure of bribery, Walpole was forced to rely on measures other than offering money, to bind his ministry and counter opposition forces. One method of importance to the First Lord, centred on moulding popular perceptions of politics to his will. Contributors to the *Craftsman* were diligent in letting their Country readership know they were locked in a battle with Walpole, who took 'great pains to justify the distinction of parties'.<sup>1</sup> This chapter will show how the Country not only endeavoured to fight civic corruption, but what they perceived to be the corruption of language also. Emulating their Greco-Classical inspirations, Country politicians strove for purity in politics and polemic alike.<sup>2</sup> With the quill and spoken word, the Country targeted Whig and Tory party terminologies for destruction, which many perceived to be indicative of a manipulative and corrupt political system.

Howard Campbell provides context on the origins of the terms Whig and Tory, which he claims had been coined in 1679, during the heated struggle over the bill to exclude James, Duke of York (afterwards James II) from succession.<sup>3</sup> Generalisations and labels often carrying negative connotations were used by Walpole's supporters as branding tools to discredit, stigmatize and divide

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1 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 22 June 1728, 3.103, pp. 121–122.

2 Ralph Trask, *Language, The Basics*, 2nd ed (New York: Routledge, 1999), p. 137.

3 Howard Campbell (ed), *Political and Social Movements that Changed the Modern World* (New York: Britannica, 2010), p. 24.



those against his administration.<sup>4</sup> Bishop Francis Hare encapsulated the futility of these techniques employed by party politicians when he asserted that a 'Jacobite seems to be no juster a character of a Tory, as to the body of them, than Republican is of Whig; tis' the dirt each side throw at one another, and that in such plenty as some will stick'.<sup>5</sup>

As Holmes and Hill indicate, the 'blanket terms' of Whig and Tory were rarely referenced by contemporaries before 1705.<sup>6</sup> This dichotomy was invoked to incite conflict, so that politicians could obtain office by appealing to party prejudice. During the reign of Anne, Holmes and Robbins claimed that the Tories 'used the queen and their sanctity of monarchy for propoganda, rattling the noisy ghosts of Leveller republicanism and genocide from Oliver's reign found in the early Whig party'.<sup>7</sup> During Walpole's tenure in office, this had become a radical background many Whigs had abandoned and was no more representative of them as a group, as the Tories being regarded as Jacobites.<sup>8</sup> Parties meant little increasingly, a factor the Country interest drew public attention to throughout the period, as they sought to attract people to align with their cause instead.

While contemporaries understood that political allegiances were complex and should be judged upon the views of individual subjectively, modern historians have taken a contrary view about parties. Frank O'Gorman states that Whig-Tory political division began to weaken only after Walpole left office, dismissing Country efforts that happened prior, which led to a wide-scale

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4 Plumb, *Sir Robert Walpole, The King's Minister*, p. 245; Henning, *The House of Commons 1660–1690*, p. 29; Horwitz, 'The Structure of Parliamentary Politics', p. 97; Martyn Thompson, 'Daniel Defoe and the Formation of Early Eighteenth-Century Whig Ideology', in Gordon Schochet, *Politics, Politeness and Patriotism* (Washington D.C: Folger Shakespeare Library, 1993), pp. 109–124; Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 15; Bolingbroke, *A Dissertation Upon Parties, In Several Letters to Caleb D'Anvers Esq, Dedicated to the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole* (London: Henry Haines, 1735); Fielding, *The History of the Life of the Late Mr Jonathan Wild*, pp. 67–68; Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 185.

5 Sarah Churchill, *The Private Correspondence of Sarah, Duchess of Marlborough*, v. 1 (London: Henry Colburn, 1831), p. 402.

6 Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 15–19, 33; Hill, 'Executive Monarchy and the Challenge of Parties', p. 386.

7 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 96; Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 7.

8 Pincus, 1688: *The First Modern Revolution*, p. 14.

abandonment of party prejudice.<sup>9</sup> Richard Brown attests 'Whig hegemony was supreme' during the period Walpole held office, further diminishing the existence of the Country cause and their measures to weaken party struggles before 1750.<sup>10</sup> These misconceptions are not confined to professional scholarship either. The widely accessible and inviting piece on Walpole's administration by Pearce has become a staple text for a general audience and the academic community also. His biography is littered with sweeping statements such as 'pure party politics underlay everything', without regard to providing an assessment of conflicting ideas, such as the prevalence of Court and Country attitudes to party during the period.<sup>11</sup>

Ashley Marshall claims that in recent works, 'modern historians have noted the common ground between the two parties', stating members of the Whig and Tory parties were conservative forces, both working in opposition to arbitrary power with little left in their creeds to disagree over.<sup>12</sup> 'Old Whigs' desired maximum political liberty and believed Walpole did not share these ambitions, with the actions of the First Lord endangering what they valued. As McCormack states, Whigs and Tories frequently thought 'faith should only be placed in the independent "outs", a group of adherents known collectively as the Country interest.<sup>13</sup> The Country formed a new political middle ground, but their identity and actions have not been readily accepted in the historiography. Only a few historians, such as Dickinson and Hoppit, have mentioned that Whigs and Tories rallied under a

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9 Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History, 1688–1832*, 2nd ed (London: Bloomsbury, 2016), p. 95.

10 Richard Brown, *Church and State in Modern Britain, 1700–1815* (London: Routledge, 1991), p. 43.

11 Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 42; some examples regarding how contentious the utilisation of 'party politics' in the eighteenth-century historiography has become, see Robert Beddard, 'Review, Untitled' *The Historical Journal*, 12.1 (1969), p. 175; John Plumb (Review), 'Robert Walcott', *The English Historical Review*, 72.282 (January, 1957), p. 126; Henry Horwitz, 'Parties, Connections and Parliamentary Politics, 1689–1714', *Journal of British Studies*, 6.1 (November, 1966), p. 45; Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, p. 11; Barry Burrows, 'Whig versus Tory – A Genuine Difference?' *Political Theory*, 4.4 (November, 1976), p. 455; Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 9, 14.

12 Ashley Marshall, *Swift and History, Politics and the English Past* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), p. 202.

13 McCormack, *The Independent Man*, p. 65.

broad banner. United as the Country interest, its associates abandoned party attachments that had left them discredited, divided and ruled by others.

The categorisation of Whig and Tory meant little to the Country, as party labels were viewed as tools, born from polemical approaches to politics which on the one hand, bound together adverse people while using the other to divide and discredit a common enemy.<sup>14</sup> The dichotomous terms, Court and Country were sustained in the same manner and meant for a similar outcome however. This was part of a bitter battle to control the words people used to represent themselves politically. As the Country cause proffered their lexicon for public acceptance, the more power and legitimacy its politicians could exercise. Enticing people to see politics on their terms and using their language, individuals could associate with the overarching principles of the Country better.

It can be argued that proponents of the Country were socially aware, if not conscious of their political environment and how to manipulate it with the use of language. Gareth Stedman Jones reveals in his work that Edward Thompson believed that a 'particular linguistic ordering of experience' could lead people in history to believe 'their exclusion from power' was the cause of their 'social anomalies'.<sup>15</sup> Although Stedman Jones was explaining the context of a different period, the ramifications were the same for the Country, whose advocates shared the same sentiments, believing themselves at the risk of being excluded from the political process by a corrupt oligarchy, who at every turn threatened their way of life. In this regard, the Country interest was reconstructed anew by its supporters, using Bucolic language and Greek virtues to counter contemporary threats, such as war, parties, corruption and Walpole's ministry. Above all, as Darrin McMahon and Samuel Moyn argue, it was social vocabulary that 'reified' formerly abstract concepts, such as the conglomeration of Platonism and the desire to end parties, vice and war that comprised the Country

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14 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 93; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 110.

15 Gareth Stedman Jones, *Languages of Class: Studies in English Working Class History: 1832–1982* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 101.

cause. The Country interest, therefore, was not just a word that represented a certain set of principles, but an organic ideology that people subscribed to. The bucolic language and overtones of its creed were used to cement a Country philosophy that defined contemporaries and implored them to act on behalf of its wider goals, people who believed in its fundamental tenets politically and put them into practice on physical level.<sup>16</sup>

During the period Walpole held office, politics operated more in terms of a conflict of interests. Politicians needed to obtain wider electoral and parliamentary support from individuals who did not agree with them to enact legislation.<sup>17</sup> Party paradigms had been scripted on Grub Street as smear campaigns and rally cries, with the belief in Whig and Tory being sustained in the press. During the early-eighteenth century, political society was beginning to tire with the prolongation of party politics in print. Henrietta Howard maintained an extensive network of Court and Country intellectuals. Deaf at a young age, she delighted in reading, frequently receiving political tracts from friends of competing political persuasions, such as Horace Walpole and Jonathan Swift. The mail on Howard's desk encapsulated a tug of war between parties, invoking a guarded scepticism in her that 'newspapers are not always to be depended upon'.<sup>18</sup>

The private correspondence and public prints utilised throughout this chapter will reveal that there was a growing belief during the period that 'party is the madness of many for the gain of the few'.<sup>19</sup> It was a view shared by many independent politicians and found in numerous letters and pamphlets of the period. The dangers of party were filtered through Country spokespersons, with Marlborough impressing on a newly elected parliamentarian, Sir John Rushout, that 'since all men of sense must

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16 Darrin M. McMahon & Samuel Moyn (eds), *Rethinking Modern European Intellectual History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), p. 66.

17 Tim Harris (Review), 'From Rage of Party to Age of Oligarchy? Rethinking the Later Stuart and Early Hanoverian Period', *Journal of Modern History*, 64.4 (December, 1992), p. 713; Holmes, *British Politics*, pp. 286, 314.

18 Lord Dorset to Mrs Howard, 1731, Dublin Castle, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 21.

19 Jonathan Swift, *The Works of Jonathan Swift*, v. 4 (London: C. Bathurst, 1768), p. 312.

have seen long ago that Whig and Tory are but names to support the ambitious for their own ends, in both parties that support their own power they equally do mischief'.<sup>20</sup>

The prevalence of interest-based politics during the period is not reflected in the historiography. Robert McJimsey mentions that since the publication of works by Plumb and Holmes, party 'has gripped the attention of England's early-modern historians'.<sup>21</sup> Party interpretations remain a central point of focus, on which various other aspects of history pivot. Jeffrey Wigelsworth echoed the sentiments of Tim Harris, claiming Walpole's tenure signalled the first 'firm party platforms' to take shape.<sup>22</sup> Lee Ward argues Walpole established an oligarchy reliant on the 'intellectual hegemony' of the Whigs, who alongside the Tories, underwent an 'ideological homogenisation' of their two parties.<sup>23</sup>

Ward's assertion that party politics dominated the period is underpinned by a single footnote deferring to Plumb's 'classic treatment'.<sup>24</sup> It represents a historiographical consensus, one shared by other scholars including Robert Harris, who citing Plumb also, claims Walpole 'succeeded' in establishing a 'stable' unchallenged system of 'oligarchical rule'.<sup>25</sup> This chapter uses contrasting printed and manuscript evidence to reveal that Whigs, Tories and even the use of the word party was in the process of remission. In modern historiography, there is little mention of this shift from parties, to interest and faction as having occurred.

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20 Lady Marlborough to Sir John Rushout, 6 August 1727, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

21 Robert McJimsey, 'Crisis Management: Parliament and Political Stability, 1692–1719', *Albion: Quarterly Journal of British Studies*, 31.4 (1999), p. 559.

22 Jeffrey Wigelsworth, *Selling Science in the Age of Newton, Advertising and the Commoditization of Knowledge* (Surrey: Ashgate, 2010), p. 41.

23 Lee Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 306.

24 Ward, *The Politics of Liberty in England and Revolutionary America*, p. 306; Ward cites Plumb's entire work, *The Growth of Political Stability* in his footnote.

25 Robert Harris, *Politics and the Nation Britain in the Mid-Eighteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 1: Like Ward, Harris cites Plumb's entire work.

Wigelsworth, Ward and Harris provide no explanation as to how and why a two-party system, alongside oligarchy collapsed immediately after 1742. It is often assumed this change happened following Walpole's departure from office. This chapter reveals that the transformation was occurring during Walpole's tenure. This section uncovers the Country interest as the driving force behind the dissolution of party loyalties. Country advocates are seen to be locked in a struggle to influence popular perceptions. Using their rusticated platform and private networks mentioned in earlier chapters, they uncoupled party ties, just as Walpole did his best to help them remain.

Misconceptions about party, mentioned in the works above are not limited to political history purely; the dominance of Whig and Tory narratives infiltrate works on early eighteenth century economic history also. Recent studies on this subject are established on party struggles and notions of oligarchy. David Eastwood exemplifies this outlook, claiming that from 1699 onwards, politics was 'fiercely bi-polar', with only Walpole possessing the force of will to impose 'a powerful and persistent Whig ascendancy'.<sup>26</sup> As a result, this chapter explores the realm of economics and finance to address the views which party scholars have leaked into other confines of history. What will be revealed is that in matters of politics and business, the terms Whig and Tory were shunned increasingly.

What will be demonstrated throughout, is that the two-party paradigm of Whig and Tory proved not as entrenched as previously stated by historians such as Holmes, Colley, Black and Pincus. While party remained a conflictive subject during the period, it was not an argument between whether to join the Whigs or Tories, but rather those who supported parties and those who sought to dismantle them. Whether politics operated amid a vibrant Tory backlash, as suggested by Colley, or centred on a Whig oligarchy as Plumb asserts, few question that parties were decreasing in importance.

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26 David Eastwood, 'Tories and Markets: Britain 1800–1815', in, Mark Bevir & Frank Trentmann (eds), *Markets in Historical Contexts* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 4.

Using Pocock's methodologies to evaluate the style and propensity of language in manuscripts and prints, perspectives about party politics will be challenged, revealing that misleading historiographical approaches have caused many misconceptions in early eighteenth century history.

Section One begins with a contextualisation of parties in the eighteenth century and how contemporaries reconciled the abandonment of them throughout the period. The Second Section shows how the Country cause used measures in the press, their rural networks and parliament to facilitate this transformation in politics. Often teaching through example, Country politicians led the way as political independents, spurring others to follow in their footsteps. Section Three investigates the use, effects and appeal of Country language, which was tailored to compete and displace party vocabularies used throughout the period. Advocates of the Country cause formed new focal points, such as the king and constitution for contemporaries to support, rather than parties, using distinct language to cement this change in the political landscape. The Fourth and final Section reveals how the Country cause was prevalent in the realm of economics and finance also, particularly with their attempts to prevent corruption and parties. This concluding section dispels the view that Whig and Tory divisions were the driving force behind economic disputes in Britain.

### **No Longer a Party to Prejudice: The Political Shift to Faction**

Since the arrival of Walpole in office, the First Lord found parties a useful medium to organise his administration. Holmes was certainly correct in his claim that Walpole and his ministers perceived the politics of their day as a genuine contest between Whig and Tory.<sup>27</sup> Kramnick is also justified in stating that Walpole 'was one of the first of a long line of Whigs to see the eighteenth century as a

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<sup>27</sup> Holmes, *Politics, Religion and Society*, p. 164.

struggle between two parties'.<sup>28</sup> The popular consensus that Walpole presided over a Whig oligarchy in British politics is due, in part, to historians focusing on members of Walpole's administration and their writings unduly. This ignores the writings of contemporaries operating in the wider political environment, distorting the historicity of early-modern politics, as Walpole employed ministers who believed themselves staunch Whigs of the same party line and creed. Richmond believed 'the Whigs are our sheet anchor and always will be so'.<sup>29</sup> Townshend promised he would never leave the confines of his party to entreat with the Tories on political affairs.<sup>30</sup> Newcastle professed during his whole life, that 'everywhere, and in all stations' he 'supported the Whig cause' to the utmost of his power'. Yet even Newcastle did not fail to notice the Whig cause undergoing schism, lamenting 'if the Whigs be differing amongst themselves' it only served to 'confound their own interest'.<sup>31</sup>

Despite their adherence to a specific party line, being a Whig was not always enough to be admitted into Walpole's coterie. Inspecting their own party, Walpole's ministers located different brands of Whigs at court, recognising faction within their ranks. According to Townshend, the Bishop of Salisbury, Benjamin Hoadly, was known to be 'in high reputation with the mob of the Whig party', so to check his popularity, Walpole deemed his influence should not be increased by granting him the post of Closet Keeper.<sup>32</sup> The mob of the party Townshend referred to was the Country Whigs, who were abandoning their party alias increasingly, becoming highly critical of Walpole's administration. To give a bishop with such views regular access to the king threatened Walpole's control at court. It was Newcastle's scheme, therefore, 'to make some insignificant man, Clerk of the Closet, who could not be trouble'.<sup>33</sup>

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28 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 119.

29 Lord Richmond to Lord Newcastle, 5 August 1733, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 46.

30 Copy of a Letter from Lord Townshend to Robert Walpole, July 1723, NS, Hanover, BL. Stowe Ms. 251, f. 6.

31 Lord Newcastle to Messrs Plumptre, White & Gregory, 24 August 1731, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 405.

32 Lord Townshend to Robert Walpole, Wednesday, 8 September 1723, BL. Stowe Ms. 251, f. 29.

33 Lord Newcastle to Robert Walpole, 25 August 1723, Haland, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 317.



What came to be known by contributors of the *Craftsman* as 'Robinarchs', alongside 'The Old Corp', 'Court' and 'Treasury' Whigs, were the preferred statesmen in Walpole's government.<sup>34</sup> This was the Whig party the First Lord was said to be associated with by Country politicians. If a zealous supporter could not be employed first, then penurious and pliable politicians were preferred over the wealthy and independent. Walpole supported those who served their patrons unflinchingly, with little toleration for dissent. This was to be the litmus test for a loyal, enduring and trusted placeman, the only proper and acceptable Whig candidate for Walpole to consider joining him. Such a transformation in the Whigs was unacceptable for many of its 'true' and 'old' members to stomach.<sup>35</sup>

Despite his tenuous grip over politics, Walpole continued to incite party prejudice, appealing to those who professed themselves as Whigs to support his administration. The prevailing historiography is clear to show that no eighteenth-century political leader could rely on their party alone, in order to form a workable majority in parliament. It can be said however, that Walpole did not enjoy the luxury of a political landscape fertile with party prejudice, in which to drive a wedge between for his own benefit, and this hindered his capacity in government significantly. The reliance of the First Lord on manipulating what was left of Whig-Tory divisions, would suffer a substantial erosion upon the arrival of his arch nemesis in Britain, Bolingbroke, an individual who would rise to prominence as the chief philosopher of the Country interest. When Bolingbroke returned from exile in 1724, he made his intentions clear to Wyndham that he had 'as little as the spirit of party about me as any man living'.<sup>36</sup> Bolingbroke had reflected much on his situation while in Europe, observing British political affairs through incoming correspondence. It was necessary for Bolingbroke to overcome the futility of prolonging spurious differences between Whigs and Tories.

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34 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 9.

35 Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 3.

36 Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, 13 October 1737, WSRO. Petworth. Ms, f. 94.

After all, it was party prejudice that had barred him from returning to office in 1716, a realisation that fuelled his actions in the Country cause.

To a resurgent Country interest, not only did the menace of party seem confined to Britain, it was viewed as a threat to free government. When colonial governor, John Pitt, returned from Bermuda, his correspondent, Chandos, stated he would find politics upon his return in 'the same divided state' as he left, 'parties at court, parties in the city, parties in the country', which 'spoil all friendship and good neighbourhood, a fatality upon England'.<sup>37</sup> Correspondence reiterating that party prejudice was a negative aspect in politics destabilised Walpole's influence. The Country believed the First Lord wielded party prejudice as a tool to form a corrupt, single party oligarchy. Sceptical of falling prey to this, independent politicians grew interested in campaigns steering their contemporaries away from bipartisan divisions. It was Bolingbroke who would do the most to see this ambition fulfilled.

John Spurr highlights the view of Shelley Burt, who claims Bolingbroke was 'weakened' by his 'narrowly partisan politics'.<sup>38</sup> While this was true before his return to Britain, he finally abandoned his Tory sentiments upon his return, accelerating himself to lofty positions in the Country interest. Walpole's party orientated administration became the focus for Bolingbroke, who carried an arsenal of international perspectives on government from the various countries he had been exiled in. These international views on government, coupled with his 'Country sincerity', would reinvigorate the desire for independence in politics.<sup>39</sup> Dickinson reveals that 'it was this discovery which impressed on him the necessity of ending party divisions. By the 1730's he was describing what was virtually an accomplished fact, the ending of a real Whig-Tory contest'.<sup>40</sup>

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37 Lord Chandos to Mr Pitt at Fort St. George, 25 November 1731, Shaw, HL. MssST. 57, v. 37, f. 337.

38 John Spurr, 'Revolution and the Languages of Liberty', *The Historical Journal*, 37.2 (June, 1994), p. 473.

39 Biddle, *Harley & Bolingbroke*, p. 75.

40 Dickinson, *Bolingbroke*, p. 152.

The need to rally disparate factions and independents against a mutual enemy was the aspiration of people on all sides of the political spectrum. What was at stake for these political groups was no less than the means to a preferred way of life. The Country desired to pass legislation bereft of party prejudice, enshrining their wider beliefs to prevent war and corruption.<sup>41</sup> The strain of Whiggism of which Walpole's ministry subscribed to, required a great deal of conformity to the First Lord as leader. It left little room for independence and proved unpopular, leaving his support base narrow. The rise and appeal of an opposing Country interest attracted advocates from parties that would have supported Walpole's government otherwise. Aware of this shift, Townshend understood Walpole's ministry had to secure a wider audience to survive. On a mission to cement the dominance of their party in government, Townshend expressed notions to Walpole that 'it will be absolutely necessary for us to restore the Whig bottom'.<sup>42</sup> The Country interest had manoeuvred itself into the centre of political discussion instead, successful in becoming the premier, all-encompassing protest group of the period. Working independently and often externally to court, being a Country politician put individuals in a far more inviting situation than joining Walpole's ranks.

In an appeal to like-minded contemporaries, party politics had also been used throughout the period to secure votes in elections and to apply for places and patronage.<sup>43</sup> The cohesion of Walpole's cabinet, established on loyalty through party ties, was a deliberate incentive to devolve individual responsibility and public accountability. Ministers possessed a duty to support each other collectively, an act of solidarity to present a strong and unified front. The result of this precedent was that when Walpole's ministry came under fire, certain people could be screened from impeachment, for everyone was to hang together, as they could not be hanged separately.

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41 Holmes, *British Politics*, p. 112; Bennett, 'Conflict in the Church', p. 170.

42 Lord Townshend to Robert Walpole, 6 August 1723, NS, Hanover, BL. Stowe. Ms. 251, f. 21.

43 Sir John Dutton to Lord Hardwicke, 14 March 1739, Sherbourne, BL. Add. Ms. 35586, f. 154.

Through relentless campaigning in the press and in their rural communities, the Country interest succeeded in terminating the segregative effects of party terminologies. This resulted in a temporary unification of the various factions of Walpole's opposition, who instead of quarrelling with each other, set their sights on the First Lord's dwindling parliamentary support and public reputation.<sup>44</sup> Among others, Stair noticed 'what sort of eloquence Sir Robert makes use of to keep his party so tight to him'. Stair questioned that 'surely the arguments he uses must grow weightier and weightier everyday, within doors, opposition seems to be very near the same to judge by numbers, but without of doors, Sir Robert seems to have no party at all'.<sup>45</sup> The First Lord was deemed to believe in a myth of his own creation, having surrounded himself with people who corroborated his world view. This instilled in Walpole a false sense of security, in the misconception that party remained the most important aspect of politics, but outside his ministry, the reality was that it was no longer applicable.

Historians have been eager to impose party terminology onto those they studied in a bid to make their realities more understandable, something Walpole's contemporaries also did in order to come to terms with their changing environment. During the period, several individuals struggled to realise that institutions and government could be anything other than based on parties. When a viable alternative was offered in the form of faction and family orientated interest, established on widely embraced principles, such as the Country and Patriots, some did occasionally refer to their groups as parties, although they did not encompass the common attributes of them.

Some politicians never reverted back to declaring themselves working behind Whig and Tory lines once they abandoned them, either in the press, parliament, their constituencies or their personal

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<sup>44</sup> Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 150; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 142; Carlisle Mss, p. xiv.

<sup>45</sup> Lord Stair to Lady Marlborough, November 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 32.

writings. Harley and Bolingbroke had set the precedent, as two of the most famous Country politicians who operated during a turbulent time fraught with party intrigue. Harley had entered parliament in 1689 as a Whig, and having converted to a Tory, he then embraced the Country philosophy. On the other hand, Bolingbroke began political life as a Tory, was said to have called himself a Whig when meeting Horatio Walpole in Paris, but finished his life in England as the archetypal Country philosopher, both respected, feared and loathed by many as such.<sup>46</sup>

Nathaniel Curzon, 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet Curzon, a wealthy Derbyshire landowner and lawyer, followed the example of Harley and Bolingbroke. His ambitious party friends heralded him as the new head of the Tories during Walpole's tenure in office, but Curzon never really suited the title bestowed upon him by others as he was thrust into the limelight of parliamentary politics. Curzon exercised his own views away from party discussions, spending most of his time being nominated to sit on scrutiny panels, where his notoriety for abandoning party prejudices and expectations made him an unbiased arbiter. Choosing to remain independent beings, Country politicians used the word party as a stepping stone to integrate themselves in shifting networks of power. During the mid-eighteenth century, fluid political associations were recognised as the norm, with the terms Court and Country party being used far more loosely than its Whig and Tory counterparts.

There were exceptions to the rule however, with Bathurst finding it difficult to differentiate the concept of parties with the Country impetus for disdaining them. Bathurst frequently referred to the group he belonged to as the 'Country party'.<sup>47</sup> During this transitional phase in British politics, where party talk and thought was in decline, a number of rural freeholders such as Thomas Peck of Norfolk still clung on to the term party, despite embracing the Country cause. Eager for members of

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46 William. Coxe, *Memoirs of Horatio, Lord Walpole*, 3rd ed, v. 1 (London: Longman, 1820), p. 107.

47 Lord Bathurst to Lord Strafford, 13 May 1734, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 131.

the 'Country party to be chosen' in local elections, Peck saw the Country as a third party in politics, revived to contest the stranglehold that Whig and Tory had over them.<sup>48</sup> Securing political independence for Country politicians rested upon a fundamental tenet, the need to remodel the perceptions and principles of the public.

The use of the loaded term 'party' gradually disappears from the political lexicon and is replaced with other, less preconceived descriptions during the period. This was a successful result of increased efforts to distance the Country cause from the stickiness of the term party. In rural communities, election managers such as William Chapman were inclined to 'set up a person fit to represent them on the Country interest'.<sup>49</sup> Across a number of constituencies, meetings were held by landowners 'to consider proper persons in the Country interest to represent them in the ensuing parliament'.<sup>50</sup> It was clear that by the mid-eighteenth century, political language had changed significantly, reflecting the success of Country measures to uncouple party terminologies from political discourse.

Subscribing to the Country cause became an attractive prospect for contemporaries, because it was a platform that supported a myriad of opposition voices. During the mid-point of Walpole's tenure, even the Whig poet, Ambrose Philips, was forced to recount that he believed 'the Country interest never was so great in this country as at present'.<sup>51</sup> Prior to its re-emergence as a viable political outlook, the best chance for a politician to express their disaffection was to join a party, factional soapbox or Jacobite circle. This linked people inextricably to unwanted associations and invited damaging or blanketed assertions to be cast on their character. Adhering to the broader principles

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48 Thomas Peck to Lord Percival in Pall Mall, 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 26.

49 William Chapman to Lady Marlborough, 31 August 1733, London, BL. Add. Ms. 61477, f. 52.

50 Printed letter, 1 November 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 101.

51 Ambrose Philips to Theophilus Hastings, 29 December 1733, Edmondthorpe, HL. HA 10197, B.74.

associated with the Country interest, many could shed their insulting stereotypes, to join what was regarded as an honest and positive force in politics during the period.

Aligning with the Country interest allowed individuals of numerous political persuasions to press their concerns legitimately and pose their solutions in a widely respected and socially accepted support group. When Chesterfield awaited the arrival of a large contingent of Walpole's opposition at a political soiree, he jested 'the grave people here are mostly malignants, or in ministerial language, notorious Jacobites, such as Stair, Marchmont, Anglesey and myself, not to mention many of the House of Commons of equal disaffection'.<sup>52</sup> The 'ministerial language' Chesterfield lampooned, was the penchant of Court members to label all those against their particular brand of Whiggism, as treasonous enemies of government. The Country became the polar-opposite of the Court, which epitomised usury, tyranny, party prejudice, corruption and oligarchy. These were imputations that Country politicians had smeared over Walpole's character and his ministry, in a bid to set up the Country cause in the public eye, as the benevolent, broad and independent watchdog of government.

Chesterfield's observation highlighted another significant point of contention that contemporaries noticed increasingly, namely, with Tory and Whig associations fading, a new political dichotomy had evolved around Court and Country instead. Walpole's ministry understood, begrudgingly, that appealing to divisions between these two parties had become useless in a bid to control politics. The First Lord accepted that Court and Country divisions not only existed, but were prevalent and powerful.

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<sup>52</sup> Lord Chesterfield to Mrs Howard, August 1733? Scarborough, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 101; Anglesey refers to Henry Paget, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Uxbridge. Stair refers to John Dalrymple, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Stair. Marchmont refers to Alexander Hume Campbell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Marchmont. Chesterfield was in attendance of a party where John Campbell, 2<sup>nd</sup> Duke of Argyll, John Carteret and William Pulteney were also present.

Less emphasis was placed on forming perceptions around old Whig and Tory stereotypes, with associates of the Court and Country identifying and vilifying each other in new and different ways. Walpole was keen to label his Country adversaries as Jacobites, despite the Country cause consisting of Whigs, Tories and independents from various families. In response, the Country did all they could to impress on others that the Court were a junto of corrupt sycophants, who desired nothing more than an end to liberty and honesty.<sup>53</sup>

As Hoppit states, 'the Country saw themselves as standing above party, seeking not office but efficient and good government. They constituted not a party, but a point of view, and one that might, as circumstances allowed, appeal to both Whig and Tory'.<sup>54</sup> Before all other principles, politicians who aligned themselves with the Country cause imagined good government was 'doing true and natural service independently of narrow party views'.<sup>55</sup> With early-eighteenth century politics demanding a greater degree of prudence, scepticism and caution to obtain power and maintain private conscience, Hoppit argues that 'fully trusting monarchy was difficult and good government had to come from or be watched for by men who were truly independent, the Country gentlemen'.<sup>56</sup> This view was personified in Chandos, whose non-partisan inclinations led him 'not in the least to desire preferment at court'. Chandos believed his duty 'to serve the king and parliament in winter and enjoy quiet in the country in summer'.<sup>57</sup> This became the utmost of Chandos' ambitions, a way in which he desired to spend the rest of his life.

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53 Henning, *The House of Commons: 1660–1690*, p. 29.

54 Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England: 1689–1727*, p. 137.

55 A letter supposedly from Lord Bolingbroke to Lord Stair at Paris, BL. Add. Ms. 40804, f. 79.

56 Hoppit, *A Land of Liberty? England: 1689–1727*, p. 140.

57 Lord Chandos to Mrs Dartinuenveve, 29 November 1719, HL. MssST. 57, v. 16, f. 393.



## The Enemy of my Enemy: Country Measures to Prevent Parties

No longer associating with parties and refusing to serve the administration, politicians of a Country variety began to channel their displeasure into external pressure on government. Political society was urged to contest the First Lord in parliament, on paper and in the streets. Guided by their desire to prevent oligarchy, the return of party and venality in politics, the Country rallied against the ambition and self-interest of presiding ministers. In the press, alongside the usual polemic and satire, panegyrics of 'honest' treasurers and independent politicians were printed, shaming embezzlers and staunch partisans to learn from example.<sup>58</sup>

In parliament, motions were introduced that invoked the spirit of independence, which extolled the virtue of working together, free from vice and party prejudice. The cash for questions scandal involving Lord Chancellor Thomas Parker, was one such act of corruption that cut across party lines. During his impeachment, one of Walpole's close friends noted that 'Macclesfield has all parties in the House against him, as well as Court and Country Whigs and Tories'.<sup>59</sup> The Country efforts to punish Parker had prevented Walpole from saving his fellow member of government. It was found that Parker had taken advantage of his clients during the South Sea Bubble, promising to recuperate their losses for extortionate fees. At the end of his trial, Parker was forced to resign, fined £30,000 and interred in the Tower of London until his debt was settled.<sup>60</sup> This proved a significant blow to Walpole, who could not screen his colleague, all the while vindicating the Country, who managed to rally disparate politicians around an exemplar of Court corruption and punish him successfully.

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58 D'Anvers, *The Craftsman*, 27 February 1727, 1.29, pp. 210–215.

59 William Wood to Humphrey Morice, 10 March 1725, Paris, BoE. Morice Ms. 10A97/2, ff. 499–500.

60 Impeachment- 12 February 1725; Trial Organised- 26 April; Trial Given- 6 May; Judgement- 27 May 1725.

While the composition of parliament was changing to reflect the different political attitudes of the nation, so too was the use of polemic and satire. The *True Briton*, launched in 1723 by Wharton, a Jacobite, frequently warned against parties, as did the contributions of Chesterfield and George Lyttelton in *Common Sense*.<sup>61</sup> According to its contributors, this last paper was deliberately set up not to 'talk on the sense of party, because Common Sense must be free from all prejudice, and party sense is observed to be rarely so'.<sup>62</sup> Entrenched views were overturned, demarcation lines became blurred and alternative philosophies appealed to those who would normally segregate themselves through party divisions. Reverend Thomas Carte was mortified to find that the Tories, whom he perceived to be his main subscribers, were not stumping up money for his historical works, but 'fonder of paying for the support of old Whig papers stuffed with quotations out of Rapin, a violent enemy of the Church and Monarchy'.<sup>63</sup> New writers on the political scene, such as Fielding, tapped into this movement and attempted to persuade his contemporaries that they should not prefer 'one pack of prigs wearing hats to another, while both are aiming at their purses'.<sup>64</sup> Associates of the Country cared little if the writers they subscribed to were Whigs or Tories formerly. If they embodied a zeal for moderation and independence, or if they valued the prevention of parties, war and corruption, then the Country would always rally to protect and sponsor them.

The partisan mindset proved increasingly difficult for contemporaries to relate to, let alone exploit for profit. The press market changed according to the politics of the day. Big money and success was to be made in Country journals, in publications that redrew former boundaries and in papers that did not adhere to preconceived limitations. Party rags were viewed frequently as 'misdirected prejudice by artful demagogues'.<sup>65</sup> Black and white were the tones of printed words, but the politics

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61 One was a Country/Jacobite paper, the second was a Country/Patriot paper.

62 Philip Stanhope, et-al (eds), *Common Sense*, Saturday, 16 July 1737 (London: J. Purser, 1738), p. 171.

63 Thomas Carte to Corbert Kynaston, 4 July 1738, London, BL. Add. Ms. 21500, f. 117; Cox, '*Rule Britannia!*', p. 94.

64 Fielding, *The History of the Life of the Late Mr Jonathan Wild the Great*, p. 6; a Prig is a play on words, the *cant* term means both 'thief' and 'Whig'.

65 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Monday, 21 April 1727, Cicero a Declamation, 1.39, p. 382.

articulated in the papers proved otherwise. Refusing to conform to stereotypes, the Country scepticism toward party politics made them aware of Whig and Tory sophists, who would brand and defame entire groups who opposed their party or Court.

According to contributors to the *Craftsman*, it was deemed fruitless to 'charge someone with tenets which he solemnly denies, and which being inconsistent with his interest, he cannot reasonably be supposed to maintain'.<sup>66</sup> It was a Country viewpoint reflected in a flourishing of anti-partisan literature, and while Mary Barber's *Poems on Several Occasions* attracted the subscriptions of Pope, Swift, Pulteney and many government dissenters, it also acquired the financial backing of Walpole and his fellow ministers. Bucking a trend, Hervey managed to secure five-hundred subscribers to support the writings of clergyman, Conyers Middleton, with money donated by the Hanoverian royal family, Court and its opposition, 'an indication that he considered the work acceptable to people of all political persuasions and that he did not wish to make a party issue of the subscription'.<sup>67</sup> The *Craftsman* was also sponsored in a similar fashion, with Colley recognising how 'solidified' the Country interest had become. Colley mentions that Walpole intercepted a mailing list for the *Craftsman*, which showed that its ranks of subscribers were filled with people the First Lord considered Whigs and Tories in equal measure.<sup>68</sup> Party politics and public writings were separated increasingly during the period. This formed a more workable situation for a wider audience to enjoy, profit and achieve success in the press, a factor the Country believed should be applied to the administration of government also.

Country politicians worked tirelessly to eradicate party lines. Leading by example, in their communities, parliament and the press, they helped relinquish Whig and Tory terminologies, in

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<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*, p. 379.

<sup>67</sup> Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 73; Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, 18 March 1736, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 19, f. 64; For Middleton's *Life of Cicero* subscription, see Lord Hervey to Dr. Middleton, 27 March 1739, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 187.

<sup>68</sup> Colley, *In Defiance of Oligarchy*, p. 211.

order to adopt an independent persona. Fluid in their interest groups, they worked to achieve compromises based on moderation, not rigid party prejudices. The effects were readily apparent, with Bolingbroke congratulating his invaluable friend, Alexander Hume-Campbell, Lord Polwarth, in autumn 1739. For having embarked on a path of independence and supporting the Country cause, Bolingbroke thanked Polwarth for his 'endeavours to expose the attempts that are made to revive party names'.<sup>69</sup> Polwarth would not be the only person to follow this trajectory in politics, others around him were also taking steps toward the Country cause, including Walpole's closest allies.

Pearce echoes the claims of Walpole's son, Horace, admitting that the First Lord 'could not endure first-rate men about him', for fear of being outshone or usurped.<sup>70</sup> As mentioned in Chapter Two, Walpole's chief weakness was his inability to let outsiders into his administration, with access permitted mostly to cyphers, sycophants and family members. This did not prevent Country politicians, such as Strafford, from being willing to abandon old prejudices in order to correspond with members of Walpole's ministry. Strafford approached Richmond, telling him that while they disagreed on many things, they should respect the purity of each-others motives and that he 'shall always prefer personal friendship to any foolish distinction of names of party'.<sup>71</sup> It was this friendship with members of the Country that prevented Richmond from obeying every order that Walpole issued him. Richmond voted based on his own principles, just as his Country friends had the liberty to enjoy, rather than as Walpole dictated, which landed Richmond in trouble with the Court frequently. The example set by other Country advocates to do as they liked, the allure of their philosophy, alongside maintaining friendly correspondence with their opponents, did much to win over people to the Country cause. In some cases, it could even turn Walpole's friends against him.

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69 George Cooke (ed), *The Memoirs of Lord Bolingbroke*, v. 2 (London: Richard Bentley, 1836), p. 189.

70 Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 426; the quote from Horace is found in, Thomas Macaulay, *Critical, Historical and Miscellaneous Essays and Poems* (Philadelphia: A. Hart, 1852), p. 229.

71 Lord Strafford to Lord Richmond, 4 June 1723, London, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 112.

Attempts to convince the First Lord to support Country principles were not as effective. Before joining Walpole's opposition, Bathurst held out an olive branch to the First Lord, urging him to find a compromise between them. Assured of obtaining support from the First Lord in an election, Walpole scuppered Bathurst's chances in secret and lost him the vote. Walpole's secession from this truce disappointed Bathurst, who would find his place as an implacable Country adversary, when he secured a seat in parliament.<sup>72</sup> Increasingly confident in the momentum of the Country cause thereafter, Bathurst alluded in a play on the word party, that Walpole could not even organise a social gathering, being so unpopular, let alone the direction of the nation under a single, oligarchical Whig platform. Bathurst was so sure 'of the opinion that a certain great man who has now by far the greatest life of any subject in England, would find it difficult, after lagging down his port, to make up a party at quadrille'.<sup>73</sup>

Whig and Tory were disappearing from the political vocabulary, with Court and Country frequently being added in their place. One of the Court's most resourceful secretaries, Charles Delafaye, began noticing that opposition to the First Lord would 'seldom work with the Court party as it is called'.<sup>74</sup> Embarking on a mission to maximise local votes, Sackville Tufton, 7<sup>th</sup> Earl Thanet, hailing from a family sympathetic to the Country cause, begged John Percival, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Egmont, 'not to keep up any party distinctions and to avoid any personal reflections to have been alleged against you'.<sup>75</sup> Such insinuations damaged the reputation of candidates during elections and when George Brydges secured the majority vote at Winchester in a similar event, Chandos congratulated his relation on remaining neutral throughout.<sup>76</sup>

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72 Lord Bathurst, 27 April 1734, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 1.

73 Lord Bathurst to Lady Suffolk, upon her retiring from court, 26 November? BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 19.

74 Charles Delafaye to Lord Essex, Whitehall, 15 March 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 138.

75 Lord Thanet to Lord Egmont, 9 November 1731, Newbottle, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 55.

76 Lord Chandos to Mr Brydges of Avington, 11 December 1729, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 34, f. 46.

While the Country hoped that inspiring independence in its advocates would propel politicians to do honourable deeds, such as working without reward for the sake of their communities and conscience, it had an ulterior effect to break party politics into faction. Associates of the Country were encouraged to bear responsibility that independence granted them, by watching over government for corruption without any private financial gain. Without a strict dichotomy between Whigs and Tories however, factions sprung up, filling the void left in power politics, where the ambition of certain individuals and their families propelled them to seek office, riches and power.

Despite contributing to the Country efforts in the press, Pulteney was also a parliamentary leader and builder of opposition forces to Walpole in parliament. His position made him the most qualified person to gauge how the political process was transforming around him. Without parties, Pulteney claimed 'so often, those who voted for the Court did it against their real sentiments and mostly for self-interest'.<sup>77</sup> Chesterfield, interested in how politicians represented themselves, clamoured that-

All experience convinces me that ninety men out of a hundred, when they talk of forming principles mean no more than embracing parties, and when they talk of supporting their party, they mean serving their friends, and the service of their friends implies no more than consulting self-interest. By this gradation, principles are fitted to party, party degenerates into faction and faction is reduced to self. For this reason, I openly declare that I think no honest man will implicitly embrace any party.<sup>78</sup>

As traditional party allegiances dissipated, new conglomerations of power formed. Country and Patriot politicians stood side by side in an uneasy and awkward fashion. This stemmed from a difference of opinion between the two groups. The Country believed that the same lack of scruples,

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<sup>77</sup> Charles Delafaye to Lord Essex, Whitehall, 26 April 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 162.

<sup>78</sup> Jeffrey Broad-Bottom, 'Old England, or the Constitutional Journal', Saturday, 5 February 1743, 21.1, in, Matthew Maty, *Miscellaneous Works of the Late Philip Dormer Stanhope*, v. 3 (Dublin: W. Watson, 1777), p. 109.

dishonesty and self-serving characteristics found among the ranks of the Court, could also be found in their Patriot opposition. International merchant, Robert Payne, speaking to his friend, Sunderland, believed the political discourse was changing over time to suit the environment, and throughout Walpole's tenure was 'a truth recorded to a universal assent that to oppose the Court is the only method to get a post'.<sup>79</sup> Unwilling to seek high office, this was not an ambition the Country shared, but it would prove of primary importance for the Patriots.

The quote from Chesterfield mentioned previously highlights this uneasy gap between the Country and Patriot faction. As an independent politician, he could identify with the Court, Country and Patriots on certain matters, believing politicians in opposition to Walpole often 'mean the public good', but that 'many more mean only their private interest'.<sup>80</sup> It was a popular view that factious contemporaries hid behind virtues and principles falsely, to suit their own ambition, an attribute that politicians such as Henry Fox deplored.<sup>81</sup> The language used by independents, Country advocates and moderate politicians revealed a growing mistrust, if not disgust, at the emerging new factional culture following the breakdown of party politics. With the use of Whig and Tory decreasing during the period, the language employed by Country politicians helped speed this process exponentially.

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79 Robert Payne to Lord Sunderland, 7 March 1722, Simpua Coffee House, Pall Mall, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 132; Walpole was guilty of this when in opposition to Sunderland's ministry; Charles Cathcart to Hugh Campbell, 18 March 1718, London, HL. B14, LO. 7924.

80 Lord Chesterfield to Lord Stair, May 1740, 669.3, in, Maty, *Miscellaneous Works of the Late Philip Dormer Stanhope*, v. 3, p. 430; A sentiment echoed from, George. Saville, *A Character of King Charles II* (London: J & R. Tonson, 1750), pp. 109–111.

81 Davies, *The Characters of*, p. 52; Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, p. 188; Hardwicke spoke against the Patriots, but abandoned Walpole in support of a bellicose foreign policy; Yonge, *Sedition and Defamation Display'd*, p. 33.

## Speaking the Country Language: The Effects of Country Terminologies

The work of Pocock has proved instrumental in helping historians to use contemporary language as an 'agent' to decode the past. Indeed 'it was the nature of rhetoric, and above all of political rhetoric which is designed to reconcile men pursuing different activities and a diversity of goals and values'.<sup>82</sup> To contextualise the period effectively, Pocock states that not only the language of politics must be studied, but the politics of language also.<sup>83</sup> Skinner suggests it is difficult to gauge how important or trivial certain ideas were for an individual, although the propensity and words used in certain phrases can certainly help establish this connection.<sup>84</sup>

To coordinate an effective dialogue between philosophical discussion and historical evidence, Skinner suggests that language is the missing link to finding meaning and understanding in history. The way in which language changes from Whig and Tory to Court and Country during the period, provides an insight into the political conditions spurring this transformation. Both Pocock and Skinner show how this method to analyse history and philosophy is not just about looking at how the individual hoped to change his political environment, but how the political environment served to shape them.<sup>85</sup> Unpicking the links between language and politics, alongside how they both affected each other remains a neglected task concerning the discussion of party. Eighteenth-century contemporaries have a great deal more to offer scholarship in their writings, showing how vocabularies changed and became non-partisan. This material is not utilised by historians frequently, as it does not fit with the wider view that party contests predominated during the period.

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<sup>82</sup> Pocock, *Language, Politics and Time*, p. 17.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid*, p. 19.

<sup>84</sup> Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', p. 38.

<sup>85</sup> Skinner, 'Meaning and Understanding in the History of Ideas', pp. 49–50; Pocock, *Language, Politics and Time*, p. 19.



Kate Loveman provides an excellent summary of the view of Mark Knights, who claims that the conflictive nature of partisan politics in the late-seventeenth century encouraged close reading, with an awareness of language, prose and content visible in the behaviour of the reading public.<sup>86</sup>

Increasingly observant of competing vocabularies used to attract public support for a particular cause, contemporaries developed a scepticism to help differentiate who was being deceptive or genuine. It was not only the authors of political tracts, but their readers who became the subject of scrutiny also, regarding how they interpreted prints and responded to divisive political claims.

Anti-party rhetoric was deemed malicious and factious initially, carrying negative overtones during Walpole's early years in office. However, the message of the Country interest to abandon parties grew in popularity, alongside its proponents who led through example. The public perception of the Country changed, its associates were no longer deemed pernicious entities but sincere statesmen. Demonstrating that their point of view should not cast negative aspersions, Country politicians linked their cause and the word 'Country' with anti-partisanship, with their actions and writings reversing the public dismissal of their principles and engineering the idea that it was in fact parties that were malevolent structures in government.

Evidence of this changing vocabulary can even be found in the manuscripts of Walpole's supporters. Despite being one of the First Lord's Whig ministers, Richmond did not live in a bubble or fail to notice the language adapting and transforming around him. Writing about the variety and utility of language used by his contemporaries to express a political viewpoint, Richmond argued that many claimed to be patriots, but Cobham's Cubs, the faction working closely with the prince to subvert Walpole and enter government had co-opted the term. In making this distinction, Richmond professed 'like a true patriot, not a modern one, I declare that I prefer the public good to my own

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86 Loveman, *Reading Fictions*, pp. 128–129; Mark Knights, *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture* (Oxford: Oxford University press, 2005), pp. 356–358.

private interest'.<sup>87</sup> Just as there were different subdivisions in the Whig and Tory party, denoting certain stances and policies that individuals subscribed to, so too there were different categories within the ranks of the Patriots, with people aware and conscious of it.<sup>88</sup>

One manuscript penned by Richmond during time spent at his estate in Goodwood proves an interesting example of how politicians were conscious of the language being used around them, regarding the transformation of politics over the course of time. In a confession to Newcastle, which reflects the shifting situation of parties during the period, the crux of Richmond's letter forms a realisation that politics 'is now again the old cause, Whig and Tory'.<sup>89</sup> This statement alludes to phases occurring between the use and predominance of political terminologies, implying that parties had been 'the old' way of thinking and that Court or Country were the 'new way' of speaking.

In a letter from abroad, Andrew Crotty, a political agent to Devonshire, compared the sway of the French *parlement* to that in Britain, claiming that he perceived 'party affairs is as stiff here as I once knew that of Whig and Tory in England'.<sup>90</sup> With emphasis on the past tense, it reveals how party politics had been fading in Britain during the period. It is evident that a diversity of competing vocabularies and languages during the period had a significant impact on politics, alongside the way correspondence was written. Independents working externally to party, interest or faction, desired in their correspondence a greater capacity for cooperation. Strafford's insider at court, Erasmus Jones, despaired to his friend that 'the writers for the Court and those for their country continue to recriminate upon one another and their supposed patrons, God alone knows when we are to have an end to these entertainments'.<sup>91</sup>

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87 Lord Richmond to Lord Newcastle, 20 July 1739, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32692, f. 158.

88 Lord Richmond to Lord Newcastle, 30 July 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32694, f. 365.

89 Lord Richmond to Lord Newcastle, 14 August 1733, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 88.

90 William Crotty to Lord Devonshire, 14 November 1731, Paris, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 200.2.

91 Erasmus Jones to Lord Strafford, 19 October 1731, London, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 522.

What can be seen is that while language had the power to deconstruct former notions of party, it could also unify causes or keep factions divided. The need for cooperation became a fixation for Walpole's opposition, especially Bolingbroke, who sought to fashion the Country cause into an agent to bind as many groups as possible, in the pursuit of good government..<sup>92</sup> While first thinking of private ambition, attempting to restore himself to lands, titles and a seat in parliament, Bolingbroke later confessed to Townshend, that it was 'the spirit of party' which had obstructed his return to England, a negative influence he desired to change.<sup>93</sup> Presenting the need to carve a new path through politics, by reinforcing the dangers in which parties posed to the well-being of the nation, Bolingbroke intimated to his friends that-

Many go on with the two parties who do not mean either of their two things, but these men will be harried out of their depth by the torrent of party, unless they get on shore in time. The king cannot submit to the Whigs who now oppose the Court without falling into contempt, nor to the Tories without resigning his crown.<sup>94</sup>

Bolingbroke's letter from Paris, where he had learned much about the damaging effect of parties, centred upon a key weakness that kept the Whigs and Tories locked in conflict, the use of prejudicial stereotypes. If all Tories were suspected Jacobites and all Whigs said to promote dangerous alterations to government, then the Country cause was to form a middle way, a moderating force and a happy medium in politics. One year into Walpole's tenure, printed ephemera circulated Britain stating 'we have lived to see our ancient constitution in a manner dissolved'.<sup>95</sup> The principal breakdown in society had been conducted 'by the artifice of cunning and designing men',

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<sup>92</sup> Lord Chandos to Mrs Hartslouge, 30 September 1719, HL. MssST 57, v. 16, f. 304.

<sup>93</sup> Lord Bolingbroke to Lord Townshend, 17 September 1723, Aix-la-Chapelle, BL. Stowe Ms. 251, f. 36.

<sup>94</sup> A letter supposedly from Lord Bolingbroke to Lord Stair at Paris, BL. Add. Ms. 40804, f. 79.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from a Nobleman Abroad to His Friend in England, WRAS. Pakington Papers, 705:349, (3835/6/6).

the author, a Jacobite sympathiser, claiming people have been 'too long kept divided in parties'.<sup>96</sup> In subscribing to the Country cause, individuals on the political fringes could join with others openly in a unified centre on certain measures, alongside those who would normally be their opponents. At the core of Country politics was a disgust of party, corruption and government imposition.

Bolingbroke used these bugbears to rally their supporters around central points of focus, not an administration or leading minister, certainly not a party, but the good of the people, in defence of the constitution and monarchy. These were aspects of politics far bigger and more important than the Country cause as a whole.

Despite Bolingbroke's attempts to enthuse independent voters to work for the betterment of honest government, self-serving factions also emerged as an unintended consequence of the Country campaign. As Pocock states, 'the bareness of Country ideology came from its insistence on regarding parliament as a collection of men who had no more to do with power than exercise a jealous suspicion of it'.<sup>97</sup> To the Country politician, 'administration was to govern and government encroaches'. For those who associated themselves with the Country cause, 'it was more important to supervise government than to support it, because the preservation of independence is the ultimate political good'.<sup>98</sup> Upholding these sentiments became necessary for Country politicians to avoid the tyranny of corruption, the longevity of placemen and the perils of those seeking to invade their liberties, revoke their privacies and diminish their individual sovereignty.

A self-regulatory parliament, with frequent elections of Country gentlemen was not the only way to check corruption. A certain degree of divide and rule was necessary in order to ensure no one party or faction formed a constant, oligarchical majority. Many politicians believed they owed no

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<sup>96</sup> *Ibid*,

<sup>97</sup> Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time*, p. 124.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid*, p. 125.

allegiance to faction, no loyalty to party, only a devotion to their crown, god and conscience.<sup>99</sup>

When Sunderland relinquished his office of First Lord to Walpole, Archibald Hutcheson also retired alongside him in a show of defiance. Hutcheson reflected on a life of integrity in government that granted him comfort. Content without wealth or rank, he had

The vanity to affirm that I would not gain the empire of the world at the price of the ruin of my country. *Salus populi suprema lex esto*, is a principle I early imbibed and from which I will never depart. This is the language which free men ought to speak, and tis they and they only who will be found the best support of the British throne.<sup>100</sup>

Bolingbroke, Sunderland and Harley viewed themselves as servants of their monarch first and foremost. During the reign of Anne, where Holmes deems party politics to have become all encompassing, the monarch required Country managers not only to arbitrate multiple, conflictive perspectives in parliament, but to prevent two divisive powers eroding the central authority wielded by their sovereign. While parties were dangerous and factions disruptive, each could be divided and reunited under a common figurehead, this mutuality was found in their shared subservience to the monarch. Neither William III nor Anne had wanted to be 'prisoners of party'.<sup>101</sup>

It has been stated in the historiography that the two Georges allowed the ascension of a partisan oligarchy wilfully.<sup>102</sup> This coincided with Country concerns that the dependence of George I and II on Walpole had trapped the monarchs, with the *Craftsman* spreading fears of 'the whole power of

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99 Lord Oxford to Edward Harley, 1 July 1732, Wimpole, Royston, Cambridgeshire, BL. Add. Ms. 73081, f. 106.

100 Archibald Hutcheson to Lord Sunderland, 3 April 1722, East Barnet, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, ff. 64–65; the Latin phrase Hutcheson used was first quoted by Cicero and translates to 'let the good of the people be the supreme law'.

101 Jones, *Country and Court, England: 1658–1714*, p. 266; Harris, *Politics under the Later Stuarts*, p. 147.

102 Geoffrey Holmes & Daniel Szechi (eds), *The Age of Oligarchy: Pre-Industrial Britain 1722–1783* (London: Routledge, 2014), p. 29.

the crown having been lodged in a single hand'.<sup>103</sup> The crown's dependence on a single party was evident to the Court, when even as Walpole teetered on the verge of resignation in his most desperate of times, Pelham fanned Country flames, stating confidently that 'the king continues to employ the Whigs in his service, whom we think his best friends'.<sup>104</sup>

Those sympathetic to Country views, such as Bathurst, 'for his part, would rather see a bad prince on the throne than a corrupt House of Commons'.<sup>105</sup> It was this reason why so many Jacobites were willing to restore a Catholic James III to the throne. Under Country guidance, a Platonic monarch could be advised to uphold the public good. Above all, 'what distinguishes a most good and just prince from a tyrant is that the latter never thinks himself safe without a great number of guards and troops, whereas the first entirely confides in the affections of his subjects'.<sup>106</sup> While the Country set out to micromanage parliament, the role of the monarch was to preserve a balance of power in British politics, it was a position to operate at the highest level of arbitration over constitutional matters. Country politicians did not view their Bill of Rights as an artful arrangement of power, it represented a space in government where no power existed at all. They did not view their sovereign as a tool of party, but a vital check over an imperfect system of government.

Bolingbroke, who had formerly upheld the doctrine of passive obedience, returned from France with new views. No longer deeming it unlawful to defy the crown, Bolingbroke acted against former inclinations, stating to Wyndham that he was no longer 'one of those Oriental slaves who deem it unlawful presumption to look their kings in the face'.<sup>107</sup> Country politicians sometimes resisted the wishes of the monarch, for instance they facilitated the defeat of the *Excise Bill* in 1733, which George II had desired to see pass into legislation. Country advocates deemed it a policy that

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103 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Monday, 20 February 1727, 22.1, p. 191.

104 Henry Pelham to Lord Newcastle, 16 March 1742, Lewes, BL. Add. Ms. 32699, f. 113.

105 Carlisle Mss, p. 70.

106 Debate on a Bill for Punishing Mutiny and Defamation, 16 March 1724, in, PD, v. 9, p. 80.

107 Sichel, *Bolingbroke*, p. 369.

had been forced upon the monarch by corrupt and irresponsible ministers. Country politicians set out to appeal to the king and members of the royal family, approaching them not as Jacobites, Whigs or Tories, but those willing to serve the crown as loyal subjects and independent servants.

Although associates of the Country cause would often defer to the final decision of their monarch, sometimes their loyalty meant they had to counsel 'the king the best advice' they 'could for his service and the service of the nation and not to consider what advice he would like best'.<sup>108</sup> This contrasted with Walpole's ministers, courtiers such as William Harrington, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Harrington, who demonstrated themselves timid sycophants to George II. Newcastle begged Walpole to avoid raising matters with the king also, claiming 'there is no hazard I would not readily run, and rather venture being thought by the king to meddle with what does not properly belong to me'.<sup>109</sup>

Scarborough, the king's most loyal subject, undoubtedly feared incurring the wrath of the populace by voting with his ministry on bills such as excise and patronage, but he had a greater fear in that he might one day lose the friendship of his monarch. Writing to Newcastle in 1733, Scarborough mentioned that during his seventeen-year service to the crown, he had constantly been on hand to assist his king, and that he could not live without being continually exposed to the Royal Presence.<sup>110</sup>

The Country always faced a difficult balancing act, for its adherents, the supremacy of parliament could be viewed as one of the worst things since absolute monarchy. On one side of this chasm lay ministerial oligarchy and a puppet king, on the other, a dogmatic and unaccountable tyrant, in effect an absolute monarch embodied in the recent memory of James II. The Country sought to build a system of checks and balances in government, a factor Kramnick reinforces, by stating that

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108 Minutes of the Cabinet Council, Monday, 5 May 1740, Cockpit, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 951/47/11, f. 19.

109 Lord Newcastle to Lord Townshend, 23 September 1725, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 165.

110 Lord Scarborough to Lord Newcastle, 10 August 1733, Lumley Castle, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 60.

parliament and monarchy were manoeuvred to limit the power of one another.<sup>111</sup> As Black mentions, courtiers came and went, but 'George was constant, while they (his ministry) were ephemeral'.<sup>112</sup> Hugh Chamberlain, a supporter of the Country, argued that 'kings and countries never die', and so these were deemed solid foundations on which to build good government.<sup>113</sup>

At the zenith of their power during the period, the Country interest helped nullify a primary method in which the First Lord steered political perceptions, by instigating a successful public crusade against the ill effects of party. Walpole found the security of party loyalties fleeting, the First Lord unable to maintain hegemony this way. Whigs and Tories were reviled increasingly, with zealous party officials likened to pariahs. These actions ensured that for successive governments, links to family and faction would become important connections, rather than ties to parties. With independent principles a valuable commodity, used to pass private bills or secure a good community standing, many hesitated to undergo designating themselves as Whigs and Tories.

To maintain the reputation and social standing of their families, politicians voted and spoke as independents instead, working in conjunction with interest groups to legislate certain principles. For the Country, this would signify good and honest government, for factions it spurred the easier pursuit of private power and personal profit. The aims of both were desirable to Country and faction in government alike, factors that converged in the world of business also. A clash of political principles between interest groups, seeking independence and moderation, free from party ties, became so deeply ingrained during the period that it was a conflict witnessed in commerce, industry and finance. From the perspective of the Country, party promoted avarice, corruption and usury. Conversely, for other interests and factions, party divisions alienated those wishing to make business deals, seeing companies lose significant revenue. With recent scholarship on party in the

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111 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 157.

112 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 186.

113 Dr. Hugh Chamberlain to Horatio Walpole, BL. Add. Ms. 74064, nf.



early eighteenth century committed to proclaiming the longevity of Whig and Tory divisions in the realm of economics, the next section will reveal how far this was from being the case.

### **Money has no Allegiances: Separating Business from Politics**

The Whig view of history continues in the vein of economics and finance, stemming from the early works of William Coxe and Basil Williams, who perceived Walpole's heroic leadership as the driving force to a predestined fate of enlightened government in Britain. Trevelyan, Macaulay and later Plumb, were all of the same opinion unabashedly. All claimed to various extents that Walpole, alongside the staunch Whig businessmen of the period were charismatic and ingenious pioneers, more in tune to all economic conduits of the nation than any of their predecessors. As a result, this ensured progress, security and most importantly, stability for Britain during and thereafter.<sup>114</sup> In a seminal, inspirational and influential series of lectures, Plumb stated bitterly that the conceptual view of history he subscribed to, particularly the view of Walpole as a foundation stone of economic stability, has 'been dismissed under the convenient umbrella of Whig interpretation'.<sup>115</sup>

This rebuttal did not convince John Cannon, who upon finishing the biographies of several eminent historians of his time, concluded Plumb's research sometimes encompassed generalised and overstated agendas, that seemed spurious when investigating early-modern history.<sup>116</sup> One of Clark's main criticisms of Plumb was that he had set a standard that what mattered when measuring success in history was stability or instability. Gauged by public protest, much of which a result of economic concerns, Clark argues there were so many anomalies present during the period, that if

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114 Macaulay, *Critical and Misc Essays*, v. 3, pp. 166–167.

115 Plumb, *The Origins of Political Stability in England*, p. xiii.

116 John Cannon, 'John Plumb', *ODNB* (2011).

this was the crux of Plumb's argument, then it remained unconvincing.<sup>117</sup> Despite highlighting these concerns, the notion of progress and stability remains a popular theme in the historiography, with Pincus, Pearce, and Hill attributing stability and progress to Walpole's sole ingenuity as 'the Great Man' and 'Britain's first Prime Minister'.<sup>118</sup>

Walpole's arrival in office is frequently seen to herald an oligarchical and largely unopposed step on the path toward enlightened forms of economic and fiscal policy. Coxe, one of Walpole's first biographers, had set the benchmark that others have chosen to follow, having claimed that in 1721, 'the public voice called forth Walpole as the only man calculated to save the nation from impending destruction'.<sup>119</sup> Shifting attention from the study of the First Lord in isolation, this section will revise the Whig notion of undisputed leadership that has long served to marginalise the efforts and ideas of individuals who operated in support and opposition. Tracing the actions and outlook of such a dynamic set of people, both interested and involved in business, in order to locate what role they played in the process of foundation, ruin and recovery is still an incredibly important but neglected task. A clear picture can never be fully achieved unless historians begin to explore beyond the ambit of Walpole's influence, especially if they want to chart shifts in politics that were inextricably swept along on the changing current of industry, economics and finance.

This work presents a different approach to that of Brewer also, who focuses on the mechanisms of financial institutions. This section investigates individuals operating in them instead, people who attracted significant attention from the Country interest. Scandalous events and the actions of unscrupulous persons brought into question the security of the economy and rekindled the worry of

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117 Clark, 'The Decline of Party: 1740–1760', p. 499.

118 Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p. 483; Walpole viewed as a 'Whig prime minister'; Hill, *Sir Robert Walpole, Sole and Prime Minister*, p. 2; Kramnick argues that the term 'Prime Minister' was first coined as a pejorative insult to slander Walpole, but was only adopted by Henry Pelham as a respected and titular rank of office later, see Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 113.

119 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 1; p. 239; Paul Monod, *Imperial Island, A History of Britain and its Empire: 1660–1837* (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 117; Brisco, *The Economic Policy of Sir Robert Walpole*, pp. 20, 25; Charles Realey, *The Early Opposition to Sir Robert Walpole* (Kansas: Kansas University Press, 1931), p. 1.

corruption, usury and unethical business practices. To counter Plumb's view that in economic terms, Walpole was 'a man devoted to the Whig principle of liberty', it will be seen that the First Lord was not always regarded as a noble benefactor, acting for the good of Britain.<sup>120</sup> The Country interest not only influenced in the realm of politics. Historians continue to ignore this group in economic history and their role in monitoring industrialists, financiers and traders who threatened the spread of Country values. With the public and private sector intertwined, usurious plutocrats had the ability to collude with corrupt government officials; they could instigate war or split the economy into a race for supremacy between Whigs and Tories, something proponents of the Country could not allow.

Andre Wakefield has been one of the first scholars to urge caution on taking self-professed technocrats at face value, as the noble and benevolent Whig entrepreneurs they are credited as being in the historiography.<sup>121</sup> Despite his work focusing on international business in the late-eighteenth century, Wakefield reveals that the realm of early-modern economics was rife with fraudsters. Larry Stewart views with scepticism the commercial expertise of many self-professed projectors of the period, who banded together on ventures without much practical knowledge of business.<sup>122</sup> This made them susceptible to risk and bankruptcy, and so they had to work alongside others, often more experienced and less partisan who understood trade and commerce more intimately. Stewart and Wakefield argue businessmen of the period were far more divided, factious and discorded than has been imagined in Whig and Tory narratives of the subject.<sup>123</sup> This section shows that in early-eighteenth century Britain, it was the Country interest spearheading the breakdown of parties in the economy, much of which was achieved through the efforts of the Country in the press.

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120 Charles Rivington, 'Tyrant,' *The Story of John Barber, Jacobite and Lord Mayor of London* (York: William Sessions, 1989), p. 125.

121 Andre Wakefield, *The Disordered Police State: German Cameralism as Science and Practice* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2009), p. 12.

122 Larry Stewart, *The Rise of Public Science, Rhetoric, Technology and Natural Philosophy in Newtonian Britain: 1660–1750* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

123 Wakefield, *The Disordered Police State*, p. 12.

The appealing but contrasting philosophies of early eighteenth-century political economists, such as François Fénelon and Bernard Mandeville were not always translated, accessible or available to many, but were read by members of the literati, gentry and professionals who echoed their sentiments in different languages, through the scribbling of provincial pamphlets. This was a way of condensing, filtering and spreading discoveries in economic philosophy to the wider public. Sometimes leaking secretive information or igniting scandal, polemic and satire also centred on debates concerning economics and finance.<sup>124</sup> Produced by various interest groups, they were found in journals such as the *Craftsman* and other publications such as *Cato's Letters*. These serials attracted a larger readership, mostly because they did not adhere to Whig or Tory lines.

Widely appealing to those increasingly dismissive of partisan rhetoric and more inclined to associate themselves with branching perspectives, independent tracts had a resonance with those associating themselves with the Country interest. Encompassing a broad range of subjects for rumination, they focused on key points applicable to several political factions. Far more acceptable to the casual observer, they were not always niche musings on fiscal mechanisms and the *modus operandi* of financial institutions, instead they placed emphasis on something increasingly palatable, the reinforcement of specific attitudes and reactions to factors in their economic environment.

Printing this material was supported through subscriptions from various groups and featured contributions from a variety of rival contemporaries. Pamphlets and journals such as focused on matters of civic virtue and problems that had immediate and future repercussions, such as the national debt, they also warned against the power of nefarious individuals in business or government corruption.<sup>125</sup> Kramnick argues that Pope, Swift, Bolingbroke and several other

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124 John Trenchard & Thomas Gordon, *Cato's Letters*, v. 1 (London: T. Wilkins, 1723), p. 85.

125 Charles Geisst, *Beggar Thy Neighbour: A History of Usury and Debt* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press,

Country writers of talent set themselves against the monied interest in the press.<sup>126</sup> The *Craftsman* contained tracts that warned of dangerous fiscal innovations during the period, urging people to be weary of the spread and power of usury. One section of the *Craftsman*, published in 1732, played on the anxieties of many, when it implored readers to consider the danger of monied men who did not wield honest Country intentions-

Let us suppose that it should even be in the power of ten or twelve men for instance to control and command as many millions, what would be the probable consequences of such private wealth in a trading nation? Might not the proprietors of it control the circulation of money at pleasure, and with bare fiat stop the sources of trade, or turn it into what channels they see fit? Would it not be in their power to raise or sink our stocks at their discretion, as they found it for their interest; and to break the greatest merchants, or the richest bankers (Even the Bank of England itself) by such sudden and unexpected calls, as they could at any time make upon them? Would not the landed estates of England naturally fall into their hands and would the influence over elections, which hath been always found to accompany them change its nature?<sup>127</sup>

This style of publication had been a public staple long before the Revolution of 1688, but it rarely had the capacity to spread as widely and as effectively as it did during the early eighteenth century. This was due to improvements in the freedom and ability to print, but also that there was more financial topics to draw attention to, after the explosion of financial services during the reign of William III. The flurry of combative viewpoints in competing papers revealed an extensive reaction to the growing power of financial institutions and influential businessmen. In parliament, on 7

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2013), p. 102; Dwight Codr, *Raving at Usurers, Ant-Finance and the Ethics of Uncertainty in England, 1690–1750* (Virginia: Virginia University Press, 2016); Lucy Sutherland, *Politics and Finance in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Hambledon, 1984), p. 388.

<sup>126</sup> Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 220.

<sup>127</sup> D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 29 April 1732, 9.304, p. 102.

March 1726, Pulteney fought a bitter battle with Sir Nathaniel Gould, a prominent banker, concerning the control that monied men wielded over their Country counterparts, who were unable to reduce the interest they had to pay on the national debt. Contemporaries were fascinated to know more and the debates were published in *An Essay on the Public Debts of the Kingdom*.<sup>128</sup>

While advocates of the Country interest were diligent in their observation of government, in matters of business they also had to monitor those who displayed the worst of their fears and apprehensions. Country politicians under Charles II and James II fought corruption and 'evil councillors', under William III and Anne, they increased their efforts to curb the rise of corrupt financiers. Such people could infiltrate and control networks in parliament, undermine a vulnerable constitution or enslave foreign monarchs and their subjects under a restrictive system of public credit.

The Whig notion of 'stability' and 'modernity' of one group came at a high price, the subjection of another.<sup>129</sup> The economic policies undertaken during Walpole's tenure were in many ways, seen to have handed too greater control to the external influence of individuals who encompassed the power to put the nation into arrears.<sup>130</sup> It can be stated that joint stock companies and financial conglomerations steered policy, rather than the adversarial theatre of parliament. While 'stock jobbers' did sit in the House of Commons, they also possessed methods in which to 'lift' motions in the voting lobby, by affecting stocks from without. This necessitated a growth of politicians and polemicists, such as the Country, to openly criticise their practices.

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128 Nathaniel Gould, *An Essay on the Public Debts of This Kingdom*, 4th ed (London: J. Peele, 1727); William Pulteney, *Remarks on a Late Book Entitled an Essay on the Public Debts of this Kingdom* (London: A. Moore, 1727); these remarks were first published on 8 December 1726, in a counter to the work of Nathaniel Gould.

129 Herbert Butterfield, *The Whig Interpretation of History* (London: N & N Norton, 1965); D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 29 April 1732, 9.304, p. 102.

130 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 190; Yorke, *Walpoliana*, p. 10.

Not only did Country politicians claim to be suffering at the hands of usurious individuals, Speck notes they also profited from the exploits and turmoil of merchants and various other groups of working society, who laboured under debt, or suffered poor trade and exchange rates alongside inflation and taxation.<sup>131</sup> Far from being dogmatic anachronisms, Swift took up the Country cause to claim they were grounded on landed roots, upholding their values and principles in business and financial transactions, loathing and satirising the greediest corporate bodies in Britain.<sup>132</sup>

Tory or Whig, it mattered little in an age moving further away from party politics, where individuals were credited for carving their own fortunes and setting independent examples for others to follow.<sup>133</sup> The Country interest believed they were in the process of witnessing the 'pride and ambition' of corrupt businessmen participating in the unregulated destruction of an ancient, traditional and noble English culture. Swift thought their influence and increasing dominance corrupted mankind as it did their monarchs through financial blackmail.<sup>134</sup> Through 'schemes of innovation' and by promising to engineer 'diabolical machines' to fund war from 'thin air', ultimately bloodshed and power would be at the expense of the Country gentlemen.<sup>135</sup>

What a number of financiers achieved was the license to initiate *fiat* currency, or in the supportive words of one contemporary banker, Samuel Lambe, 'imaginary money or credit'.<sup>136</sup> In the *Examiner*, Swift argued that if honest economic customs became undermined, then government and politics the Country watched over so carefully would be susceptible to corruption also.<sup>137</sup> This knock on

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131 Speck, 'Conflict in Society', p. 143; D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 4 January 1727, 4.131, p. 87.

132 Carter, 'The Revolution and the Constitution', pp. 55–56; Speck, 'Conflict in Society', pp. 135, 145; Jonathan. Swift, *The Examiner*, 1.36 (London: J. Morphew, 1711), p. 5.

133 Colley, & Goldie, 'The Principles and Practice of Eighteenth-Century Party', p. 242; Speck, 'Conflict in Society', pp. 136–137; Jones & Jones, *Peers, Politics and Power, The House of Lords 1603–1911*, p. 16.

134 Swift, *The Examiner*, 1.36, p. 5.

135 MacLachlan, 'The Road to Peace', p. 203; Speck, 'Conflict in Society', p. 137; Swift, *The Examiner*, 1.36, pp. 4–5.

136 John Clapham, *Bank of England*, v. 1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1966), p. 4; Carl Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit; The English Financial Revolution, 1620–1720* (Harvard: Harvard University Press, 2011), p. 176.

137 Swift, *The Examiner*, 1.36, p. 3.

effect was believed to have been expedited by the invasive influence of some business interests, and while many Country politicians did not want an eradication of such individuals and their institutions, they certainly desired a greater deal of regulation and scrutiny to be applied upon them.

What worried advocates of the Country in equal measure, was the fear that certain individuals desired to control of the nation's finances based on Whig and Tory prejudices, barring their opponents from profiting in the economic environment. Simplistic, often anachronistic perspectives concerning the nature of commerce and finance during the period, fail to recognise the shift of completely different sets of people ascribing themselves to different interests, especially those who held no such party beliefs. Plumb argued that Whigs in particular had undergone a transformation following the Revolution of 1688, for it became 'the party not of the freeholder, the yeoman, the artisan, but of aristocracy, high finance and aggressive commercial expansion'.<sup>138</sup> It was similar views by Plumb and Keith Feiling, which remain popular in historiographical studies today, asserting that early-modern economics can only be explained effectively through the lens of Whig and Tory. On the contrary, it can be seen that party perspectives concerning economics and finance cannot stand up to scrutiny during the early eighteenth century, and that they hinder rather than help a holistic understanding of the period.

Unnecessary and often untrue complexities arise, when the notion is upheld that two main parties battled among the economic sphere in the same capacity as they did in the political. Even during earlier periods, where the demarcation of Whig and Tory seemed more prevalent, it was still lacklustre to view 'the debate on public credit' for example, as 'mostly conducted along party lines', with Carl Winnerlind carefully reminding the reality 'actually composed of numerous layers of complex ideological conflict, the Whig-Tory opposition generally mapped well onto the divide

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<sup>138</sup> Plumb, *The Origins of Political Stability in England*, p. xv.



between the landed and moneyed interest'.<sup>139</sup> Business groups often comprised not of Whigs and Tories, but individuals increasingly aspiring toward a world of transactions, partnerships and structures free from the constraints of party politics. Tracing the changing trajectory of business and politics helps to clarify why viewing the history of the period in terms of party has provided limited paths to misleading perspectives of how economics and finance operated.

Henry Roseveare nuances the historiography, stating not all Whigs were moneyed men, or that all Tories kept their hands clean of financial matters, this was the prevalent misconception he addressed in his leading work on economic history.<sup>140</sup> His assertions remain in the boundaries of party thought, but challenge previous notions regarding the orientation of politics and economics. It is a position in direct conflict with the findings of Speck, who argues that by the time of the South Sea Bubble, the Tories were entrenched as the landed interest, with Whigs the firm moneyed interest in the country.<sup>141</sup> 'It mattered not that many leading financiers were Tories, nor that many Tories dabbled in finance' claimed Roseveare, insisting that 'a convenient stereotype had evolved which was to influence the politics of the next half century'.<sup>142</sup>

The tendency for scholars to follow a ridged party narrative causes confusion in the historiography. Speck claims it was the Whigs who dominated the East India Company, while Pincus and Roseveare believe that not only had the Tories managed to dominate the workings of the South Sea Company, but also their supposed Whig rival, the East India Company also.<sup>143</sup> Although recognising a Court-Country aspect existed, Bruce Carruthers went beyond Brewer's work to investigate the party political allegiances of the people comprising financial institutions, in order to define the affiliation of each corporation as either Whig or Tory, finding that 'Whig dominance is

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139 Wennerlind, *Casualties of Credit*, p. 164.

140 Roseveare, *The Financial Revolution*, p. 45.

141 Speck, 'Conflict in Society', p. 148.

142 Roseveare, *The Financial Revolution*, p. 44.

143 Speck, 'Conflict in Society', p. 151; Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p. 393.

probably underestimated'.<sup>144</sup> His investigation, despite being centred on a slightly earlier period than when Walpole held office, ignore the people who were independent, with his work on the business dealings of Whigs providing a somewhat misleading conclusion.<sup>145</sup>

It is difficult to rely upon the 'usually' and 'probably' statements mentioned in the General Introduction and above, because at the core of some newer monographs, historians continue using the confusing discourse of party in the realms of economics and finance. Jeremy Atack asserts the Bank of England was dominated by Whigs, the South Sea Company by the Tories and that this party division was at the root of economic contentions.<sup>146</sup> Pearce and Pincus also claimed the Bank was 'created and supported by the Whigs', which 'explains why periods of Whig political control in Westminster led to increased credibility of debt repayments'.<sup>147</sup> Charles Rivington argues the opposite, that the City was dominated by Tories, even Jacobites, voting staunchly in unanimity against the Court, although he attributes conflict to have occurred between certain interest groups within the City, such as mayors, sheriffs and ministers against aldermen for example.<sup>148</sup>

The complexities of political contention in business and finance are rarely given credence in major works on the period. The historiographical process has long since been caught up in demarcating which institutions acted as powerhouses to buttress certain parties, ignoring the crucial point and a great deal of primary sources evidencing that old Whig and Tory affiliations were disappearing. In its place, enterprising and flexible individuals made all the difference, operating in networks formed under different societal pressures.

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144 Bruce Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 41, 155–160.

145 Carruthers, *City of Capital*, p. 179.

146 Jeremy Atack, 'Financial Innovations and Crises', in Larry Neal & Jeremy Atack (eds), *The Origins and Development of Financial Markets and Institutions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), pp. 15–16.

147 Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution*, p. 399; Pearce, *The Great Man*, p. 98.

148 Rivington, *Tyrant, The Story of John Barber*, pp. 90, 164.

This is not to say that party politics in business had been completely eradicated during the period. Walpole embodied views that his brand of Whiggism should hold precedence in matters financial, but not even the First Lord could escape the influence of the changing language of his age, which had become increasingly devoid of party terminology. Scribbling marginalia into personal notes and marking his intentions, the thought process and problems Walpole encountered reveal a great deal about his political view of economics. From his perspective, developments such as 'the project of the Land Bank at first seemed calculated to only advance the landed men's interests in opposition to the growing power of the monied men and usurers'.<sup>149</sup>

Walpole initially viewed the Land Bank as a Tory project, yet the First Lord could not help but write as his Country contemporaries did, by viewing the World through a spectrum of 'monied' and 'landed' divisions. To reveal how confusing party politics in economics had become to contemporaries, one rival leader, set to displace the supposedly indispensable Walpole was found in Wharton, who 'appeared in the City at the head of the Jacobites and whose discourse is nothing but infamous scandal against the government'.<sup>150</sup> Tipped as a financial guru to replace the First Lord, the exiled James III saw in him a 'brisk Whig' who could sort out the nation's finances as his adviser, come the restoration.<sup>151</sup>

Both Walpole and Wharton had claimed to represent the Whig party, yet they supported completely different governments and monarchs, in stark contrast to one another. By examining the papers of such individuals closely, people who had a significant impact on the financial environment of the period, an uncomfortable conclusion can be reached. The problem is that Wharton and numerous others have never conveniently fitted into the dichotomy of Whig and Tory perspectives of financial history, the reality of the situation being far less neat and simplistic than has been suggested.

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149 Abstract of the History of the Bank of England and the Land Bank, BL. Add. Ms. 74066.

150 Lord Newcastle, 28 June 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 266.

151 Charles Delafaye to Lord Hardwicke, 15 November 1726, BL. Add. Ms. 36136, f. 162.

Sir John Barnard could not be linked with parties so easily. As a wealthy independent trader, he did not express nor require partisan support and 'seemed indifferent whether he stood with Whigs or Tories'.<sup>152</sup> For such people in the City, popular reinforcements of their character and profits rested on multiple factors and wider Country principles. On one mayoral election in May 1734, opinion had been split in London, with some freeholders voting for Micajah Perry, thinking that because he was a substantial merchant, he would know best about what was right for the prosperity of London. John Barber, a Jacobite sympathiser, was supported for the converse reason, that because he was not a trader, he held no private interest to secure personal profit, which could overshadow an independent attitude required to uphold the public good.<sup>153</sup>

Similarly, at the Bank of England, in the councils and offices of the many financial corporations, moderate people were favourite to be chosen and elected as board members. Large accounts of private money were not allowed to descend into political footballs at the hands of Whigs or Tories. Members of both parties invested in the Bank of England, alongside numerous independent financiers such Francis Pereira, a Portuguese Jew, who held the largest sum deposited in the bank, a total of £104,625.<sup>154</sup> This qualified such people for the governorship of companies, individuals who were (if Jewish), restricted from acquiring other professions in England. Although small in number, extremely rich, independent financiers ensured the flotation of the national debt regularly, for in these positions, they under-write the contracts that stipulated each government transaction.<sup>155</sup>

The national debt comprised of holdings entrusted to the discretion and responsibility of individuals who had to rise above party bigotry. It can be argued that party views were a factor in regulating the

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152 Robert Payne to Lord Sunderland, 7 March 1722, Simpua Coffee House, Pall Mall, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 132.

153 Rivington, *Tyrant, The Story of John Barber*, p. 191.

154 Holmes & Schezi, *The Age of Oligarchy*, p. 152; Clapham, *Bank of England*, v. 1, p. 282.

155 Roseveare, *The Financial Revolution*, p. 68.

practices of business along certain codes of conduct. Yet in many cases, financiers did not always act *Merely for Money*, and there was more to business than profit, for as Sheryllyne Haggerty makes clear, a number of interest groups adhered to 'self-enforcing behavioural patterns as a community'.<sup>156</sup> While Haggerty's study begins in 1750, the arguments she makes concerning ethical business practices can be found in the early eighteenth century. It was here that diverse individuals operating in interest groups, frequently sought to limit usury, avoid party division, organise charities or keep financial links and networks alive.<sup>157</sup>

The growing independence of business partners was not isolated to London, the non-partisan attainment of money cut across national lines. While an entirely different political culture existed in Scotland to that of England, both countries maintained a factional landscape in politics and business. In 1716, the Bank of Scotland lost its monopoly. It was an institution closely associated with the *Squadron* political faction. Its *Argythian* rivals in Scotland were happy they had a chance to compete with a bank they thought had not been conceived in a neutral political atmosphere. One of Walpole's chief supporters, Archibald Campbell, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Ilay, helped establish the Royal Bank of Scotland, 'relying in large part on English money, since the funds to capitalise it came mostly from London investors, many of them well known to Lord Ilay'.<sup>158</sup> In Scotland, George Middleton, who operated what is now Coutts & Co, had been Ilay's personal banker and invested in the Royal Bank of Scotland, buttressing its position as an international venture.<sup>159</sup>

Evolving from the Equivalent Company, which collected debentures for Scottish investors via

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156 Sheryllyne Haggerty, *Merely for Money? Business Culture in the British Atlantic, 1750–1815* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012), p. 2.

157 Richard Saville, *Bank of Scotland, A History: 1695–1995* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1996), pp. 100–102.

158 Roger Emerson, *An Enlightened Duke: The Life of Archibald Campbell* (Kilkerran: Humming Earth, 2013), p. 236.

159 Sydney Checkland, *Scottish Banking, A History: 1695–1973* (London: Collins, 1973), p. 69.

London, the Royal Bank of Scotland was incorporated under the Great Seal in May 1727.<sup>160</sup> Roger Emerson claims that the first years of the Royal Bank of Scotland were geared towards driving the *Squadron* faction and their corporation out of business.<sup>161</sup> As the second chartered bank to be established in Scotland, the foundation of the Royal Bank allowed Walpole's ministry to use his friends in this new institution, to encroach on the financial power long exercised solely by his opposition in North Britain, with the economy being used as a political weapon. This shift in financial hegemony ultimately affected the future composition of Walpole's supporters in Scotland.

Fluid and ambitious as the directors were, Richard Saville notes that a change in political allegiances, with division often spurred by rival financiers, could also see the bank move away or even used as a tool against Walpole's ministry.<sup>162</sup> As the century progressed, the allure of money continued to nullify party lines for shrewd investors. *Squadron* members began to deposit money in the Royal Bank of Scotland, despite being barred from sitting as trustees. Just as English investors had to pander to all political ties to maximise profit, so too the alleged Jacobite sympathies of the Royal Bank of Scotland were used to attract business. This was despite the Royal Bank of Scotland being an institution linked with Walpole, Ilay and those supportive of the Hanoverian monarchy.<sup>163</sup> Not averse to banking with Jacobites and vice-versa, contemporaries from a number of different nations and political interests would often do business as quickly as banks would welcome such names in their balance books, opening accounts with Jacobites and Robinarchs alike.

The frequent interplay between people of rival parties in matters of finance proves a point that what mattered to many was a healthy bank balance and not entrenched loyalties to Whig or Tory values.

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160 Emerson, *An Enlightened Duke*, p. 237.

161 Emerson, *An Enlightened Duke*, p. 238.

162 Saville, *Bank of Scotland*, p. 102.

163 Emerson, *An Enlightened Duke*, p. 238.

What can be seen is that during the early eighteenth century, a virulent set of business people existed, who continually disavowed party prejudices, in exchange for fluid, changing and independent principles in economic theory and practice.

In a diverse realm of competing interests, where politics often encroached on economic concerns, factions developed in business. The Child banking family and members of the *Old London Company* were Jacobites, while its rivals, the *English Company*, was staffed by Whigs predominantly. What is often omitted in the historiography is the extent to which these financial institutions were willing to limit the effects that partisan politics had on the functions and process of their business. Guy Rowlands claims 'while there was a good deal of friction between rival remitters', a number of international financiers and paymasters were 'for the most part, able to work with people who were politically moderate in partisan terms'.<sup>164</sup> John Clapham argued that the political leanings of the Bank of England, 'so far as it had any, were towards the new men, but it took a business view of the struggle'.<sup>165</sup> Directors, clerks and tellers at the Bank, much like other prominent financiers would often support the most profitable interest, those promising success and posing a sound investment.

Stocks, shares and bonds quickly became some of Britain's biggest international assets, its speciality financial service and principal export. Innovations in banking and stock exchanges had been necessitated by demand, with Jacob Price having noted that during this period, 'trade and war were inextricably linked; so too were credit and revenue'.<sup>166</sup> The financial sustainability of the nation rested on the changing direction of business practices and the authorisation of expenditure in the

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<sup>164</sup> Guy Rowlands, *Dangerous and Dishonest Men, The International Bankers of Louis XIV's France* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 178.

<sup>165</sup> Clapham, *Bank of England*, v. 1, pp. 117–119.

<sup>166</sup> Jacob Price, 'What did Merchants Do? Reflections of British Overseas Trade: 1660–1790', *Journal of Economic History*, v. 49 (1989), p. 269; William Ashworth, *Customs and Excise: Trade, Production and Consumption in England, 1640–1845* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 87.

realms of international commerce, for it was here that 'public borrowing requirements met foreign policy'.<sup>167</sup> With the potential to accumulate profit increased through a number of fiscal innovations, difficulty and risk were encountered when speculating. In an uncertain and newly emerging financial environment, investors gambled in lieu of the prospect of future growth in the national revenue.<sup>168</sup>

The success of the Country interest in pushing for a party-free political society had widespread consequences. Although associates of the Country cause desired politicians and business leaders to act independently, based on Country ethics and principles, the door was opened for factions to use these Whig and Tory-free realms to embark on their own private enterprise. In politics and economics, associates of the Country pressed for a reduced land tax, for it was the staunch Country aversion to war that allowed this to happen. Annulling the national debt, which had been proliferated through war, had been a chief priority and cherished policy for Country politicians. Many sought to keep their focus on the state of public expenditure by rooting out public embezzlers and warmongers. The Country were aware that an empire of credit had arisen during Walpole's tenure in office, which poised to overshadow that of trade in Britain. A century of unremitting international conflict coincided with the genesis of central banking, for with total war had emerged total finance.

While the Country did what they could to monitor and nullify corruption, parties, usury and other practices they abhorred, they were forced to combine with the Court during the latter half of Walpole's tenure in office, to counter a threat both interests feared, the outbreak of war. Both would contend with a rising, powerful and influential faction, the Patriots. Supported by extremely wealthy

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<sup>167</sup> Bolingbroke, *A Letter to the Examiner*, p. 10; Michael Howard, *War in European History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 89; Peter Cain & Anthony Hopkins (eds), *British Imperialism: 1688–2000*, 2nd ed (London: Longman Pearson, 2002), p. 78.

<sup>168</sup> Julian Hoppit, *Risk and Failure in English Business: 1700–1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 63.



and vociferous individuals in parliament, their communities, the press, trade, finance and industry, the Patriots rallied their supporters around prince Frederick and their calls for global war and aggressive imperial expansion. This was an ambition both Walpole and the Country could not permit to happen and it is in the next chapter that this subject is addressed, explaining the rise of and supremacy of faction, the outbreak of hostilities and the collapse of the Court and Country interest.

## Chapter Five

### Preventing War: The Third Country Principle

Following their rise to prominence, the Country interest subverted Walpole's grip over government to the point he was forced to offer his resignation to the king on numerous occasions. Walpole found it difficult to enact certain legislation without their consent and assistance, the Country transforming Walpole's ministry into a void in government, where courtiers could exercise little authority on politics. The reason Walpole survived for so long in office is due to the alliance forged between Court and Country to prevent war.

Walpole and the Country shared a pacific outlook that would destroy them both, fuelling an era of factions and propelling the Grenville-Pitt family to prominence in the following decade. As Kramnick correctly states, Bolingbroke saw no merit in factions, and while warning against them, Country politicians had unwittingly diluted the political process to a point where small, powerful family networks had the capacity to overthrow them.<sup>1</sup> While the Country focused on making Court all but a null entity in domestic politics, they could not contend with a growing number of Patriots, eager to destroy what the Country and Walpole cherished. Approaching the mid-eighteenth century, the world threatened to break itself asunder on the anvil of war. Upholding the peace with the security that neutrality afforded them, Court and Country had to work together, sharing an important belief that intervention in costly and protracted conflicts should be avoided at all costs.

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1 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 166.

Richard Gaunt argues that concerns of the Country were 'largely confined to domestic political issues'.<sup>2</sup> Its associates could not afford to ignore foreign issues however, for what affected them abroad also had a substantial impact at home. The decision to embroil Britain in conflict was important, as the outcome saw Walpole ousted from office and the collapse of the Country cause, with faction becoming the new political structure.

The Country interest did not need to 'evolve' into the Tory party, in order to form cohesive views on foreign policy, as Gaunt suggests. Previous chapters have demonstrated that Country politicians were far from being rustic bumpkins. Studies incorporating the Country interest need to move away from the misconception that its associates were masters of all they surveyed, until the boundaries of their garden gates came into sight. They did not need the mechanisms of party to hold world views, Country politicians took advantage of the appeal of print culture and received news on international developments from their friends abroad. Utilising their information networks, supporters of the Country framed policies in parliament and authored public prints to influence wider groups of people, impressing on politicians and the public alike, the requirement to prevent war and the benefit of projecting the diplomatic foreign policy stance of the Country on a global scale.

Throughout the period, advocates of the Country cause regarded themselves at risk from warmongers who threatened war to usurp them. In parliament, Sir William Barker, Sir Thomas Aston, William Shippen and Daniel Pulteney were all independents who defended the wider Country principle of avoiding war.<sup>3</sup> Apprehension of conflict stemmed not only from these politicians feeling the brunt of its expense in an increased land tax, but a fear of military forces

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2 Richard Gaunt, 'From Country Party to Conservative Party: The Ultra Tories and Foreign Policy', in Jeremy Black (ed), *The Tory World and the Tory Theme in British Foreign Policy, 1679–2014* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), p. 156.

3 Sir Walter Strickland, A Move in Parliament to Consider the Estimate of Hessian Troops, 3 February 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 47000, ff. 64–65.

being mobilised against them by a corrupt government. Above all else, this aversion to war coincided with a deep mistrust of a competing and displacing monied interest. Wyndham told the House of Commons, without any disguise in 1733, that troops were 'new-fangled trappings of English Majesty' and that 'the king loved nothing but an army and his parliament nothing but money'.<sup>4</sup> The worry of a corrupt oligarchy, a bellicose monarch, alongside an increase in the armed forces and national debt was a dangerous combination that could be used against the Country interest in the event of war being declared. Why the Country platform proved unsuccessful in preventing the outbreak of war will be explored. This chapter reveals how the Country interest perceived conflict and why they found it so dangerous to their political positions as arbitrators of government.

Peter Cain and Anthony Hopkins claim that property in Britain had been viewed for generations as an 'inalienable asset', if not the primary source of political influence.<sup>5</sup> What many landed, Country gentlemen wanted to underpin the nation's finances was not *fiat*, nor even precious metals and resources, but estates and property, something Roseveare describes as 'undeniably English'.<sup>6</sup> This was a form of capital increasingly debased with a shift to stocks, bonds and shares.<sup>7</sup>

As mentioned in earlier chapters of this thesis, it has been asserted that Country philosophy was heavily influenced by Greek values. In the realms of economics and finance, Country politicians took heed of the lessons of Aristotle and their early-modern proponents, such as Montesquieu. Anthony Pagden has done much to reveal that associates of the Country preferred for financial and economic power to rest not with financial dependents, such as debtors, nor with those who lent

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4 Lord Hervey to Henry Fox, 6 February 1733, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 357.

5 Cain & Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, p. 39.

6 Roseveare, *The Financial Revolution*, p. 40.

7 Nicholas Rodger, 'The Continental Commitment', in Lawrence Freedman, Paul Hayes & Robert O'Neill (eds), *War Strategy and International Politics: Essays in Honour of Sir Michael Howard* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992), p. 44; Ashworth, *Customs and Excise*, p. 88; Lord Chandos to Mr Jones, 30 September 1720, HL. MssST. 57, v. 17, f. 198.

money and were dependent on its repayment, but did not necessarily have property, titles or families in England. Country politicians believed that authority ultimately belonged in the hands of the wider, native English body politic and its guarantors, the indigenous and independent gentry. Pagden demonstrates that the Greek formula to maintain liberty was to bar 'dependents' from exercising too much power in the realm of economics, finance and politics, because dependence was 'believed to make a man liable to persuasion and corruption'.<sup>8</sup> Those associating with the Country interest were persuaded to live within their independent means. To 'practice the life of *negotium*, one had to have a stake in the community', this was the goal that Country polemicists lionised frequently.<sup>9</sup> Unlike foreign bankers riding on speculation and greed, supporters of the Country mantra believed themselves to have worked honestly and virtuously for their hegemony, feeling more deserving of their gains, yet forever fearful their positions would be subverted.

The promotion of usurious practices and debt, whether borrowing privately or publicly, was viewed as problematic to Country politicians. Conversely, a 'good' person, 'according to the City language,' was a prompt payer of regular loans and someone with wealth.<sup>10</sup> The vocabulary of the period was changing, moulded by a burgeoning financial environment. The 'pulse of the body politic' now related to the rise and fall of national stock.<sup>11</sup> Of all things disliked by men of principle, for a gentleman to be unable to pay his debts was regarded as one of the most shameful and rakish, and if the financial health of the country was likened to an individual, then the entire nation was regarded to be in trouble.<sup>12</sup> As Natasha Glaisyer effectively explains, the world of finance had long formed its own *patois*, with words and sentiments shaping new customs and traditions.<sup>13</sup> Darnton has also done much to aid the historian's view of sentiments in history, by tracing literary networks

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8 Anthony Pagden (ed), *The Languages of Political Theory in Early-Modern Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University press, 1987), pp. 8–9.

9 *Ibid*, pp. 8–9.

10 BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 248, Sir John Hynde Cotton to Earl Strafford, 13 July 1734, Dover Street.

11 BL. Add. Ms. 74066, Charles Delafaye, South Sea Matters, 29 May/9 June 1722, Whitehall.

12 HL. MssST. 57, V. 31, f. 247, Lord Chandos to Mr Granville, 6 May 1728, Cannons.

13 Natasha Glaisyer, *The Culture of Commerce in England: 1660–1720* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2006), p. 101.

throughout early-modern Europe. Avoiding focus on great books and studying a multitude of them instead, from the obscure to the famous, Darnton likened public writings to individuals, claiming that 'each copy' possessed 'its own character.'<sup>14</sup> At the centre of his study is the role of individuals in the development and dissemination of printed works, which is vital to understanding the various and unique interests operating during the period. Contemporary publications proved to be the most effective vessel in which to convey new languages and to shape the traditions, cultures and interests of society after the Revolution.

The normalisation of credit had been one of the most prolific and worrisome of topics expressed in journals, scripture and pamphlets after 1688.<sup>15</sup> As Peter Temin and Hans-Joachim Voth reveal, the effects of this seemed to steadily ingrain itself into the fabric of society, with irresponsible lending practices catalysing the formulation of campaigns for others to be more aware and careful.<sup>16</sup> To the delight of its Country patrons, the *Craftsman* recounted an apocryphal conversation overheard in a coffee house. A sign of the times, one landowner in financial difficulty through lawsuits and poor husbandry of his finances had asked his neighbours for advice, to which he received a response that to save money, he should 'borrow more money' and 'live just in the same manner'. Informed that 'it was undeniably a great advantage to any gentlemen to be in debt', because, as the sardonic journal entry stated in a comically counter-intuitive fashion, 'it keeps those persons who lend the money in a constant dependence on him' and 'makes money circulate, by conforming it to a few hands, encourages trade, promotes industry'.<sup>17</sup> This irony would not have been lost on contemporary readers, it was but one of the numerous calls to be prudent, frugal and fair in business, but most of all, a reminder that monied men, for the present, relied on the daily routines and lives of those not

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14 Robert Darnton, *The Great Cat Massacre* (New York: Basic Books, 1984), p. 224.

15 Charles Geisst, *Beggar Thy Neighbour: A History of Usury and Debt* (Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania University Press, 2013), p. 102.

16 Peter Temin & Hans-Joachim Voth (eds), *Promethius Shackled: Goldsmith Banks and England's Financial Revolution After 1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 74.

17 D'Anvers, *The Craftsman*, 10 February 1727, v. 1, pp. 161–162.

always significantly engaged in financial endeavours.

By 1709, David French estimates that over 10,000 foreign investors had a stake in the money machinery of Britain.<sup>18</sup> It was not only those who resided in England who involved themselves in its financial concerns. With the flick of a pen on their balance sheets, foreign investors could change the direction of a national war effort.<sup>19</sup> A small proportion even held shares and bonds riding on the non-payment or increasing debt of Britain; therefore, it would be in their benefit to spur countries to go to war, especially if they backed the arrears of multiple and conflicting parties.<sup>20</sup>

In the words of mint-master and trader William Wood, 'a war, or the belief of one, will have some effect on our credit by advancing the rate of the interest of money'.<sup>21</sup> Financial power brought political power and if war erupted, taxes and interest would be raised for the Country, but not those who acted as creditors to them. It will be shown how Country politicians did all they could to prevent the outbreak of war, as it was their belief that if hostilities erupted, their independent wealth that kept them secure from bribery would be jeopardised under heavy taxes, rendering them unable to fulfil their roles as effective watchdogs of government. Their fears and countermeasures are explored throughout this chapter, investigating why the Country believed that war proliferated military coercion, which could stifle their ability to scrutinise state affairs with candour and honesty.<sup>22</sup>

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18 David French, *The British Way in Warfare: 1688–2000* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1990), p. 23.

19 Speck, 'Conflict in Society', p. 137.

20 Malachy Postlethwayt, *The Universal Dictionary of Trade and Commerce*, v. 2 (London: 1757), p. 268; per a contemporary note found in the John Ryland's University Library and tucked away in, PD, v. 9, it was computed that in 1736, of the national debt totalling £47,866,598 some £10,000,000 belonged to foreigners.

21 William Wood to Humphrey Morice, 26 August 1726, Rouen, BoE, Morice Ms, 10A97/3, ff. 531–533; for stockholders however, the threat of an approaching war affected their investments, see Debates on a Committee to Examine the Public Debts, Wednesday, 9 February 1726, in, PD, v. 9, pp. 193–194; Sir James Campbell to Hugh Campbell, 2 December 1725, Edinburgh, HL. B7, LO. 8151.

22 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, pp. 58–59.

The previous chapter illuminated the apprehensions of the Country, who did all they could to prevent their wealth and power being displaced by a new breed of usurious individuals, who profited from the financial machinery that supported war spending. While the landed had much to lose in times of conflict, the monied stood to accrue significant benefits. Obtaining influence over foreign policy, which had become inextricably linked to economic concerns mattered greatly to Country politicians. In parliament, voting for the annual supply of the land forces always faced meteoric struggles when the Country interest were present. Pelham likened it to 'the passing of the Rubicon', witnessing countless divisions fraught with difficulties and resistance from the Country.<sup>23</sup>

The prospect of sanctioning any military strategy other than a strictly defensive one caused frequent uproar. Despite the restrictions of a limited monarchy, the crown still possessed significant powers in which to declare and direct a war. Chesterfield echoed a Country concern to his friend at court, claiming 'you frighten us Country gentlemen out of wits with your wars or rumours of wars, and as we are in a state of ignorance, we tremble at the terrors of troops and taxes'.<sup>24</sup>

With the inability of Walpole to rein in the power of the monied interest effectively, the First Lord was vulnerable to the ambitions of the Patriot faction. To prevent bloodshed and discontent abroad, which would lead to the erosion of liberties and wealth at home, the Country were prepared to travel great lengths to assist the Court when countering the more bellicose politicians pressing for war.

Investigating the methods in which the Court and Country directed foreign policy helps to understand how early-modern government witnessed such a cataclysmic transformation from being based on party politics, to being organised by interest groups and by 1742, smaller factions. In the face of dramatic events, overwhelming odds and powerful opposition, Britain would slide into war.

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23 Charles Delafaye to Lord Essex, 15 February 1733, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 114.

24 Lord Chesterfield to Lord Essex, 8 April 1734, OS, London, BL. Add. Ms. 2733, f. 55.



The resignation of Walpole and his ministry, alongside the systematic collapse of the Country marked a substantial, but overlooked turning point. The methods for peace that were advocated, the struggle for supremacy by Walpole, alongside the capabilities of Court and Country adapting to rapidly changing occurrences in the wider world help bring the study of interest groups to the fore of debate. Amid the rise of family, faction, war and empire, the Country interest proved far more significant in shaping the politics and history of Britain than has been given credit for.

### **The Prince and Patriots: The Rise of a Jingoistic Faction**

While the formation, organisation and traits of the Court and Country have rarely been explained in the historiography, a third and highly influential group operating throughout the period, the Patriots, have also suffered a similar fate. Critical, substantive explanations of the political links and ideological distances between these three groups, as they existed before 1742 have not been forthcoming in modern scholarship. Gerrard's work on *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole* remains one of the few to provide credence and thought for the role of the Country interest when countering the Patriots.<sup>25</sup> Robin Eagles notes the conspicuous lack of studies concerning the Patriots and their figurehead, prince Frederick, in the historiography.<sup>26</sup> Modern studies venturing into discussions of the Patriot faction often fail to explain their political intriguing before 1742. Carole Taylor, Kimerley Rorschach and Thomas McGeary all focus on the literary and artistic endeavours of Frederick and the Patriots instead, alongside how these endeavours reflected their political

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25 Gerrard, *The Patriot Opposition to Walpole*, pp. 5–11; for another good explanation of the rise of the Patriots, see Thompson, *George II: King and Elector*, p. 129.

26 Robin Eagles, 'No More to be Said'? Reactions to the Death of Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales', *Historical Research*, 80.209 (2007), pp. 346–367.

viewpoints.<sup>27</sup> Studies focusing on eighteenth-century foreign policy, rather than the life of Frederick primarily, have provided slightly more information on the political manoeuvrings of the Patriots.

Perry Gauci, Philip Woodfine and Richard Harding all help to explore the motives of the Patriots and how they clashed with their rivals in the press and parliament.<sup>28</sup> While studies by these historians are invaluable for contextualising the war period from 1739 onwards, how the Patriots rose to prominence during Walpole's tenure is not investigated fully. There is very little in the historiography to address how and why the Court and Country combined, in order to counter the Patriots. The way in which the Court and Country united to prevent war, in opposition to the jingoistic policies of the Patriot faction culminated in Walpole's ministry and the Country being ousted from their positions of authority at the outbreak of hostilities. Explaining the nature of this political shift is extremely important to reveal how faction reigned supreme in politics during the mid-eighteenth century, a legacy that is largely attributed to the efforts of the Country interest. It was the rusticated platform, alongside the principles and political initiatives of the Country interest that helped to splinter large blocs of power such as parties and government into smaller political groups. The Country emphasis on the importance of family and the power of personal conscience helped steer individuals who normally found safety and comfort in the ambit of the Whigs and Tories, to restructure their outlook and effectively press their personal ambitions independently.

The strenuous and complex relationship between Court, Country and Patriots, with regard to their views on foreign policy will be explained in this section. The constant fluctuations of allegiances between each group and faction proved crucial in framing a new political culture for the period. At

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27 Carole Taylor, 'Handel and Frederick Prince of Wales', *Musical Times*, 125.1692 (1984), pp. 89–92; Kimerly Rorschach, 'Frederick Prince of Wales, as Collector and Patron', *Walpole Society*, 55 (1990), pp. 1–76; McGeary, *The Politics of Opera in Handel's Britain*.

28 Perry Gauci, *William Beckford, First Prime Minister of the London Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), p. 79; Philip Woodfine, *Britannia's Glories: The Walpole Ministry and the 1739 War with Spain* (Suffolk: Boydell, 1978); Richard Harding, *The Emergence of Britain's Naval Global Supremacy: The War of 1739–1748* (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 2010); Richard Harding, *Amphibious Warfare in the Eighteenth-Century: 1740–1742* (London: Boydell, 1991).

various times throughout Walpole's tenure in office, all three forces would collide, collaborate and cause catastrophe. This section explains how the Patriots would rise to prominence at the head of a new ministry, and without adhering to party loyalties, displaced Walpole and nullified the Country interest. Emulating the most successful parts of the Country platform, the Patriots were formed through close family pacts, initiating an era of factional politics, affecting the course of eighteenth-century history in dramatically different ways to those of their predecessors.

Disgruntled politicians could find their services welcome as mentors in the ranks of the Country and Patriots, their sophistry sharpened the minds, hearts and tongues of aspiring ministers who proved to be formidable weapons in parliament. Just as Leicester House was used as the base of operations for prince George (later George II) and Walpole to form a new government, so too Carlton House was used as the court of Frederick and his Patriots. The prince was a headstrong and unpredictable individual, with authority enough to reprimand those who tried to abuse his position and use him as a political tool. Spying potential for the Country to bring Frederick on side in 1729, Chandos noted 'the prince, who is the most amiable youths in the world diverts himself with hunting twice or thrice a week and is the joy of the court and kingdom'.<sup>29</sup> Influential individuals took it upon themselves to attempt to educate the king's eldest son in matters of politics, and it was in the interest of rivals to send memorials to court, wrangling over who should be sanctioned to school the young prince.<sup>30</sup>

Arriving on British shores in 1728 and in severe financial crisis, Frederick managed to retain independent wealth outside the civil list from his duchy of Cornwall. Walpole also sought an ally in Frederick, as his Patriot and Country counterparts did. The First Lord thought Frederick would be pliant to Court, as Walpole could attempt to alleviate his debts and make him beholden to the king. Perusing his financial accounts, Walpole was unnerved to find that Frederick had accrued

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<sup>29</sup> Lord Chandos to Colonel Townshend, 8 March 1729, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 33, f. 46.

<sup>30</sup> A Memorial of Several Noble Gentlemen of the First Rank and Fortunes, on the Education of the Prince of Wales, BL. Add. Ms. 73770, f. 203; Charles Cathcart to Hugh Campbell, 18 June 1718, London, HL. B14, LO. 7954.

substantial revenue from rents and 'considerable profits by fines'.<sup>31</sup> The combined increase in his allowance and charges had afforded the prince opportunities to sponsor his own set of politicians on his own terms, a position of power in the royal household that Frederick embraced wholeheartedly.

George II had enjoyed a larger allowance than Frederick when he was Prince of Wales. The king forced Frederick to be prudent, limiting his capacity for dissent when bankrolling opposition politicians. Permitting Frederick £2,000 per-month, plus his duchy revenue, it was only after Frederick's marriage that George was forced to concede and upgrade his son's allowance to £50,000 per-annum. The prince had married in April 1736, but in order to support his family, household establishment and to pay off his debts, Frederick had requested an increase in his living allowance to the sum of £100,000.<sup>32</sup> Hardwicke bore witness to the problems the Court was set to endure, a key turning point being evident when 'Sir Robert Walpole came out of the king's closet in a great hurry with a piece of paper in his hand and calling all lords of the cabinet then present about him at the upper end of the room'.<sup>33</sup> In Walpole's grasp was an authorisation to 'pursue' the granting of the prince's allowance, which the First Lord had finally persuaded the king to accept.

Following a recent spate of defeats in the House of Commons, Walpole had been under tremendous pressure to acquire consent from the king on a matter that George always forestalled and permitted begrudgingly.<sup>34</sup> In both Houses of Parliament, Pulteney and Carteret had used this tension to their advantage, ingratiating themselves with the prince, by raising the motion to secure the full amount of his allowance that had been proposed initially.<sup>35</sup> Limiting the extent of money that Frederick could wield, Walpole ensured a lower sum was voted for alongside strict stipulations that the prince

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31 Sir Robert Walpole's Calculations on the Net Produce of the Duchy of Cornwall to the Prince of Wales for the Years: 1729–1735, BL. Add. Ms. 74066, nf.

32 Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, pp. 161–169.

33 Lord Hardwicke's Memoranda, Saturday, 19 February 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 35870, f. 19.

34 Hardwicke Corr, v. 1. p. 164.

35 The House of Commons' motion to increase Frederick's allowance to £100,000 was narrowly cast in the negative, 234–204.

would be paid in instalments, pending good behaviour and providing he kept nobody in his company that disoblged the king.<sup>36</sup>

While Andrew Thompson, Francis Vivian, Michael De-la-Noy and Lucy Worsley provide modern, fair, if not neutral assessments of the prince, others such as Matthew Kilburn, do not always credit Frederick as having the potential for sincerity, portraying him instead as bipolar, erratic and duplicitous.<sup>37</sup> John Bullion reveals this view stems from a contemporary assessment by John Perceval, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl Egmont, who while admiring Frederick, found the prince a 'childish' libertine, who with regard to politics, 'thinks he knows business but attends to none'.<sup>38</sup> As mentioned in previous chapters, Frederick's appeal was that he provided an informal political atmosphere for others to enjoy his company. This was a world apart from what Hervey claimed to be 'stiffness and dullness' found at the courts of kings George I and II.<sup>39</sup> Walpole and his Country counterparts achieved political success because they identified that people would endear to their cause better in jovial, informal political environments, such as a minister's home or secret society. The prince also embarked on similar social activities, but it was not all play, Frederick was both active and assertive in politics, even when hunting or playing cricket. This negative view of Frederick has led James Crathorne, Natalie Livingstone and Michael Farquhar to claim Frederick was 'reckless', doing everything to antagonise his parents.<sup>40</sup> They fail to understand that a more complex series of events unfolded, of which Frederick possessed far more intuition and sincerity than has been credited him.

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36 George II did not want to be governed by, or forced to appoint politicians that were themselves influenced by Frederick. The king was extremely hesitant of being ruled or bullied by his son through this method.

37 Thompson, *George II*, p. 120; Frances Vivian, *A Life of Frederick, Prince of Wales, A Connoisseur of the Arts* (Lewiston: Edwin Mellen, 2006); Michael De-la-Noy, *The King Who Never Was: The Story of Frederick, Prince of Wales* (London: Peter Owen, 1996); Worsley, *Courtiers: The Secret History of the Georgian Court*; Matthew Kilburn, 'Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales', *ODNB*.

38 John Bullion, 'Princess Augusta and the Political Drama of Succession', in, Clarissa Campbell-Orr (ed), *Queenship in Britain: 1660–1873, Royal Patronage, Court Culture and Dynastic Politics* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), p. 209.

39 Christine Gerrard, 'Queens-in-Waiting, Caroline of Anspach and Augusta of Saxe-Gotha as Princess of Wales', in, Campbell-Orr, *Queenship in Britain: 1660–1873*, pp. 147–148.

40 James Crathorne, *Cliveden, The Place and the People* (London: Collins & Brown, 1995), pp. 54–55; Natalie Livingstone, 'A Hanoverian Soap Opera', in, Natalie Livingstone, *The Mistresses of Cliveden, Three Centuries of Scandal, Power and Intrigue* (London: Random House, 2015), p. 2; Michael Farquhar, *Behind the Palace Doors*,

The poor aspersions cast on Frederick's character centre around a particular rift that opened between son and father, one in which George II was determined to punish Frederick for his disobedience. The First Lord had tried to keep the peace between king and prince initially, but in September 1737, 'Sir Robert Walpole declared his opinion that as the prince had plainly set himself at the head of opposition, it was right to carry the war into the enemy's country'.<sup>41</sup> One month later, Walpole had intimated to Devonshire that he felt comforted and justified that 'mankind is universally on our side'.<sup>42</sup> To serve the wishes of the king, Walpole helped draft a letter that was sent to the prince on the 10 September 1737. While this was a firm resolution by the First Lord, it proved a rash action that he would later lament as an 'innocent mistake' and one which would eventually ruin his career.<sup>43</sup>

Rumours circulated, alarming court, that the king and queen were both ill and unpopular in Britain. It was thought Frederick had been preparing to take over the reins of government with a new group of politicians.<sup>44</sup> Some of Walpole's most voracious enemies, such as Stair, believed that a significant proportion of this crisis was originally contrived by the First Lord, who attempted to acquire the king's authority to purge Frederick of his council to administer politics with greater ease.<sup>45</sup>

The letter Walpole had sent to the prince was worded strongly and pivoted on the matter that ignited this division, stating Frederick had 'exposed both the princess and her child to the greatest perils', by

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*Five Centuries of Sex, Adventure, Vice, Treachery and Folly from Royal Britain* (London: Random House, 2011), p. 180.

41 Lord Hardwicke's Memoranda, Monday, 5 September 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 35870, f. 25.

42 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Devonshire, 4 October 1737, London, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 114.6; this was a sentiment expressed (in some cases verbatim) by supporters of Frederick also.

43 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Devonshire, 31 December 1737, London, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 114.11.

44 Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, 9 June 1737, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 19.

45 John Dalrymple to Lady Marlborough, 13 October 1737, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 27.

removing them from Hampton Court when she was in the process of delivering an infant.<sup>46</sup> George and Caroline believed this a measure orchestrated to spite them deliberately. Court physicians had misdiagnosed when princess Augusta was due to give birth, and while Crathorne, Livingstone and Farquhar have been quick to fault Frederick as his parents did, they omit that when going into labour with no midwife in attendance, Augusta was said to have begged the prince to take her for treatment.<sup>47</sup> Caroline had even gone so far as to have the temerity to tell the princess that she was mistaken regarding the events that had happened, despite the queen not being present during the arrival of Augusta's child.<sup>48</sup> Injured by letters from his father, Frederick took advantage, enabling his status as a martyr at court, having his replies publicly printed to dispel what George Lyttleton described as 'a thousand malicious lies upon this subject, particularly that the princess herself refused to go and was forced by the prince against her will, the very contrary of which is true'.<sup>49</sup>

For airing the dirty laundry of the royal family in public, the prince and his family were promptly banished from Hampton Court and forced 'to abstain from appearing any more in His Majesty's presence'.<sup>50</sup> The king's servants were forbidden to express any honours and distinctions or seek the company of the prince also.<sup>51</sup> Mediators found it tedious, on the verge of ridiculous, when delivering messages between disaffected family members.<sup>52</sup> In debt, Frederick attempted to relent, sending carefully worded letters to his father, all the while remaining in the same Patriot company who opposed the king's ministry, leaving neither George or Caroline satisfied of his repentance.<sup>53</sup>

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46 Copy of the King's Response to Prince Frederick, Carried to Him by the Dukes of Grafton, Richmond and Earl Pembroke, 10 September 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 35870, ff. 33–34.

47 Lord Jersey's Copy of Prince Frederick's Letter to King George II, 3-4 August 1737, St. James, WSRO. Goodwood Ms, 41, ff. 4–6.

48 Queen Caroline to Princess Augusta at Kew, 20 September 1737, WSRO. Goodwood Ms, 41, f. 30.

49 George Lyttleton to Lady Marlborough, 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 5.

50 Lord Egmont to Colonel John Schutz, Gentleman of the Bedchamber to the Prince of Wales, 13 September 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 47012A, f. 3.

51 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Devonshire, 22 October 1737, London, CHA. Devonshire Ms. f. 114.7.

52 Lord Baltimore to Lord Grantham, 13 September 1737, London, WSRO. Goodwood Ms, 41, f. 22.

53 Lord Hervey to Dr. Middleton, 8 November 1737, St. James, SRO, Ickworth Ms, 941/47/7, f. 131; Prince Frederick to King George II and Queen Caroline, 20 August 1737, Transmitted by Lord Carnarvon, WSRO: Goodwood Ms, 41, ff. 14–16.

It was no easy task to unite disparate factions and interests against the First Lord, who in the view of the prince and his Patriots, represented the chief instrument of corrupt Court politics and a cruel king. At this juncture, Bolingbroke had sold Dawley and left for France, with a significant proportion of Walpole's detractors left without a central leader or headquarters. The Prince repaired this breach as the new figurehead of Walpole's opposition, his support provided a royal legitimacy to the opposition cause and swelled their ranks, wiping 'off the imputation of Jacobitism'.<sup>54</sup>

Unfortunately for Walpole, it was learned that two astute and implacable individuals were providing counsel to the prince, 'Lord Chesterfield and Carteret were known to be with him in private everyday'.<sup>55</sup> When the king's messenger conveyed a letter to Frederick concerning his banishment, they were both found 'stood each side of the prince's chair'.<sup>56</sup> Some stated Chesterfield was chief advisor to the prince, while others believed 'Carteret at present governs everything at that court'.<sup>57</sup> Rumours circulated but no single person was ever permitted to hold influence for an extended period of time. The young prince quickly learned how to exercise his power, purging trimmers from his counsel.<sup>58</sup> Mediating political differences and relying on the advice of a wide range of individuals, the prince demonstrated this by replacing Chesterfield and Carteret with his friends, Charles Calvert, 5<sup>th</sup> Baron Baltimore and John Perceval, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Egmont.<sup>59</sup>

Walpole had twice been counsellor to a royal family in turmoil, but this time the breach threatened to destabilise the monarchy and ultimately, the position of the First Lord. The prince was approached in 1741 with a further offer of £50,000 to form a reconciliation, alongside a sweetener

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54 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 680.

55 Lord Hardwicke's Memoranda, Monday, 5 September 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 35870, f. 25.

56 Lord Newcastle to Lord Devonshire, 27 September 1737, Claremont, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 182.3.

57 John Dalrymple to Lady Marlborough, 1 January 1737, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 40; Lord Hervey to Dr. Middleton, 8 November 1737, St. James, SRO, Ickworth Papers, 941/47/7, f. 131.

58 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 386; Charles Spencer to His Royal Highness, 7 April 1738, BL. Add. Ms. 47012A, f. 6.

59 Lord Chandos to Mr Brown, 2 September 1732, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 40, f. 40.



that the king 'would not require any terms from him'.<sup>60</sup> Frederick's response was that 'he could not hearken to it, so long as Sir Robert Walpole was in power'.<sup>61</sup> The prince insisted 'it is to him (Walpole) I attribute all our misfortunes, both home and abroad'.<sup>62</sup> Without the support of the prince and his friends, Walpole would struggle to continue in office. Frederick continued to see Walpole as the chief instigator that had driven a wedge between his father and himself. The First Lord had earned the enmity of an unyielding prince and was identified as the man who meddled in his family's affairs, interfered in his private life and then tried to buy his way out of trouble.

The Country and Patriots shared similar principles, both were disgusted with party divisions and each became synonymous with the defence of an 'ancient constitution'.<sup>63</sup> In 1739, Bolingbroke had written a warning to his friend, Polwarth, declaring that 'Walpole is your tyrant today. You know my principles, you know my heart. I would contribute at any risk to save the British Constitution and to establish an administration upon national principles'.<sup>64</sup> Unlike the codified American model, the constitution of Britain was never intended to be a written document, merely a widely shared and continually upheld set of principles. Pocock mentions that seventeenth-century Country philosophers such as Shaftesbury had through his works, filtered the language of an 'ancient constitution' into the eighteenth century, where the phrase 'became part of the consciousness of the period'.<sup>65</sup> The ancient constitution referred not to the 1689 Bill of Rights, but something much older, a 'Gothic' pattern of government that was 'free, stable and natural'.<sup>66</sup> Kramnick states that this Gothic constitution had medieval origins and became synonymous with the 'spirit of liberty' in the writings of Bolingbroke and other Country politicians.<sup>67</sup> Robbins claims that most upholders of this

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60 Memorandum on the King's Overtures to the Prince of Wales, 1741, SRO, Ickworth Ms, 941/47/10, ff. 325–327.

61 The Prince's Answer to His Royal Highness, 5 January 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 63749A, f. 333.

62 A Section of the Prince's Message to the King, January 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 63749A, f. 334.

63 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 6 April 1734, 12.405, p. 189.

64 Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 189.

65 Pocock, *Language, Politics and Time*, p. 33.

66 *Ibid*, p. 120; See also, John. Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957).

67 Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and his Circle*, p. 25.

pattern of constitution 'were dead by 1727', but this was not true.<sup>68</sup> For a resurgent Country cause during Walpole's tenure in office, achieving this constitution was a necessary requirement to avoid the tyranny of corruption, the longevity of placemen and the perils of those wanting to invade their liberties, revoke their privacies and diminish their individual sovereignty.

With momentum continuing from the Revolution of 1688 to safeguard the constitution, there was a drive to establish it upon Country philosophies, a notion that many believed in.<sup>69</sup> Concerning the need to build government upon the broad 'national principles' Bolingbroke alluded to, associates of the Country became locked in turmoil. While they would support the Patriots when their interests met in rooting out corruption, safeguarding the constitution and preventing parties, they could not endorse this faction officially, because of one major policy, their pursuit of war and aggressive imperial expansion. This explains why during the mid-stages of the eighteenth century, the Country would reinforce Walpole on matters of foreign policy, due to both Court and Country subscribing to the same overarching goals, to prevent conflict. It was an alliance forged on this issue where the Country and Walpole's ministry would be vanquished.

### **Peace at all Costs: The Conflicting Views of Interest and Faction**

Walpole's foreign policy encountered numerous challenges throughout the period from the swelling ranks of his opposition. Organised campaigns in the press and highly contested debates in parliament ushered in the pursuit of warlike measures. Support came from a growing number of disgruntled politicians and merchants seeking placements and reparations. The failure to press

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<sup>68</sup> Robbins, *The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthmen*, p. 5.

<sup>69</sup> Judge Fortescue to Lady Howard, July 1726, BL. Add. Ms. 22628, f. 40; Carter, 'The Revolution and the Constitution', pp. 55–56; Burrows, 'Whig versus Tory -A Genuine Difference?', pp. 456, 463–466.

British interests abroad as effectively as hoped had brought Walpole's leadership into question.

Frederick spoke on behalf of his Patriot supporters, who placed sole responsibility at the door of the First Lord, claiming 'Sir Robert Walpole has not only made himself odious to the people, but rendered the nation despicable in all foreign courts'.<sup>70</sup>

This statement by the prince echoed the intractable nature of a new breed of politicians who would no longer tolerate the pacific inclinations of Walpole or the Country interest. Thomas Grenville, a young Patriot naval captain was eager to hasten conflict, remarking to his friend that if 'war breaks out, as everything now seems to promise, it will I think, be for your own interest as well as mine'.<sup>71</sup> It was an ambition of the wider Patriot faction to justify the outbreak of war, to undermine Walpole's diplomatic initiatives of using peaceful measures and political compromise to resolve international disputes.<sup>72</sup>

The potency of opposition to Walpole increased throughout his tenure in office, with a continuous catalogue of grievances and depredations from merchants used to undermine his political authority.<sup>73</sup> Petitions being presented to the king, prior to the outbreak of war increased, forcing George to demand satisfaction on behalf of his subjects. In turn, this put pressure on Walpole to address the disputes, to prove that peaceful measures such as treaties could deliver a viable alternative to settle matters without resorting to war.<sup>74</sup> Throughout 1739, Benjamin Keene had been busy negotiating an international claims settlement, overcoming complications such as Spain

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70 Prince Frederick to King George II, January 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 63749A, f. 334.

71 Lieutenant Grenville to Thomas Smith, 1740, HL. MssSTG. 22, b. 14, f. 2.

72 In the Spanish historiography, this rupture is known instead as the *Guerra del Asiento*.

73 Translation of de la Guera's Letter to Benjamin Keene, 21 February 1728, Pardo, BL. Add. Ms. 35884, ff. 1–2; Lord Newcastle to Benjamin Keene, 1 January 1731, Whitehall, BL. Add. Mss. 35883, ff. 133–144; Cain & Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, p. 92.

74 Copy of the Court of Directors of the South Sea Company to the King's Most Excellent Majesty, 21 December 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 35883, ff. 181–185; George II is presented with the petition on 27 July 1737, at Hampton Court by Lord Newcastle; An account of the progress which has been made by the commissaries appointed by His Majesty in consequence of the Treaty of Seville, 26 February 1730, London, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/41; Account of losses sustained by British subjects from Spain in America, between the Treaty of Utrecht and the Treaty of Hanover in 1725, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 17/1–2.

demanding the restitution of ships and effects seized before Walpole had obtained office.<sup>75</sup>

Arthur Stert, director of the South Sea Company had also submitted claims that purposely overvalued the losses that merchants sustained. In the end, both the British and Spanish plaintiffs were required to humble their demands.<sup>76</sup> Walpole seemed to have defeated the aspirations of his opponents when Keene informed his countrymen that 'for the sake of peace, Spain will pass over the compensation that has been made in England, sums that run into the million-pound mark'.<sup>77</sup> On 10 January 1739, the Spanish king, Philip V, consented to the Convention of Pardo, with Britain set to emerge from the deal with significant monetary gains.<sup>78</sup>

Walpole's Country contemporaries had been willing to wait patiently, to see the reparation contract through and were in support of the measures. The Patriots proved less willing, believing the promises and monopolies offered by Philip to be worthless, or that Spain deserved no counter claims be granted to them.<sup>79</sup> Discontent with peace or an amicable financial settlement, Walpole's opposition focused on using the Sixth Article of the 1729 *Treaty of Seville*. This reinforced the mutual rights for Britain and Spain to search each others trading ships, granting 'authority to the *guardacostas* to do what no treaty has yet given them authority to do'.<sup>80</sup>

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75 Copy of a paper signed by Mr Stert of the company appointed in pursuance of the Treaty of Seville, laid before the Committee of Council, 14 June 1738, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 35884, f. 72; The pretensions of His Majesty's commissaries delivered by order to those of His Britannic Majesty, April 1732, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/45.1.

76 Total demands of Great Britain and Spain, sent to Spain by Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/55–57.

77 Duplicate of Benjamin Keene's letter to Lord of Newcastle, 28 July 1738, Segovia, BL. Add. Ms. 35884, f. 85; Sir Benjamin Keene to Lord Newcastle, 24 April 1739, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 35884, f. 98.

78 Sebastián de la Cuadra y Llarena, Declaration of King Philip V (translated by M. Stepney), 10 January 1739, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/103–4.

79 George Lyttleton, *In Consideration of Our Present State of Affairs at Home and Abroad, In a Letter to a Member of Parliament from a Friend in the Country* (London: T. Cooper, 1739).

80 Benjamin Keene to Lord Newcastle, 13 December 1737, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 35883, ff. 207–209; Hugh Hume, *A State of the Rise of Progress of Our Disputes with Spain and the Conduct of Our Ministers Relating Hitherto* (London: T. Cooper, 1739), p. 6; Observations on the Treaty of Seville, 19 August 1730, OS, BL. Add. Ms. 35883, ff. 61–63; William Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Eighteenth-Century Spain: 1701–1788, A Political, Diplomatic & Institutional History* (Totowa, New Jersey: Rowman & Littlefield, 1979), p. 75; Order for Taking into Further Consideration the Convention Lately Concluded Between Britain and Spain, BL. Add. Ms. 47000, f. 100; Hervey

It was argued that legislation superseding the treaty prohibited the Spanish inspection of British vessels.<sup>81</sup> This claim was underpinned by the common view that 'nothing can provide navigation but trade' and because of this, many merchants believed 'that fatal convention, by which the trade of the nation was entirely given up' had also seen 'the freedom of navigation in the American seas sacrificed to the power of Spain'.<sup>82</sup> It was often forgotten that Spain had a bountiful set of exclusive trading rights in America, just as the British did in India. Furthermore, the hypocrisy of the East India Company was not recognised, which lobbied Walpole's ministry one year prior for their vessels not only to search rivals past the equinoctial line, but seize them also.<sup>83</sup>

As war loomed on the horizon, evidence was accumulated that revealed the Spanish *guardacostas* had been working with pirates to oust British traders from the Caribbean.<sup>84</sup> Taking advantage of the delicate political situation, politicians reported that 'the seas begin to swarm with privateers who have already taken several prizes which render our navigation very precarious'.<sup>85</sup> British merchants became increasingly hostile to Spanish shipping, taking liberties and conducting reprisals without state approval.<sup>86</sup> Walpole was put in a vulnerable position; facing financial ruin, the complete loss of trade relations with Spain and the erosion of his political authority, the First Lord was determined not to let his opposition to push Britain into war.<sup>87</sup>

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claimed, contradictorily, that the eighteenth-article of the *Assiento* granted the Spanish the right to search; Notes for a Speech on the Behaviour of Benjamin Keene, 1737, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 47/10, f. 65.

81 Benjamin Keene and Abraham Castres to Lord Newcastle, 13 October 1738, Segovia, BL. Add. Ms. 35406, ff. 57–58.

82 RO. Treaty Papers, 107, Reports endorsed by Charles Townshend at Hanover, 30 July 1725, OS, in, Arthur. McCandless-Wilson, *French Foreign Policy During the Administration of Cardinal Fleury* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1936), pp. 7–8; A historical narrative of the principle transactions between Great Britain and Spain for the last two years, 1740, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45.

83 Edward Harrison to Lord Hardwicke, 12 October 1728, Windsor Castle, BL. Add. Ms. 35908, f. 202.

84 Lord Newcastle to Benjamin Keene, 24 March 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 33028, f. 281; Henry. Kamen, *Philip V: The King Who Reigned Twice* (London: Yale University Press, 2001), pp. 183, 207.

85 Letter dated, October 1739, Genoa, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/110.

86 The General Demands made by Spain, laid before the House of Commons in 1734, delivered, 21 April 1732, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/78/1-2.

87 A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45; Sailing Orders, 1738, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 17/8.1; Several letters to a friend concerning the present war and the fruits we might expect from a peace could it

Observing a shift in political power, Delafaye remarked 'these gentlemen (the merchants) upon this have assumed a quite different air from what I have formerly known. They used in times past to come cap in hand to the office praying for relief, now the second word is *You shall hear of it in another place*, meaning in parliament'.<sup>88</sup> In the House of Commons, Captain Robert Jenkins, the infamous merchant whose name became synonymous with the War of 1739, was called to testify at the Bar. The notoriety of this sailor derived from the fact that he had his ear cut off by the *guardacostas* in April 1731, but had lived to spread the tale of this gruesome encounter across Britain.<sup>89</sup> Woodfine states that worse crimes had been committed at sea by members of each side.<sup>90</sup> The long period from the violation of captain Jenkins, to his testimony in parliament, reveals that the incident had proved unimportant initially. It was an event rekindled to scrutinise, denounce and pressure Walpole's administration. For the Patriots, this was the perfect chance to legitimise retribution and hostilities.

### **A World on the Brink of War: Why the Country Sued for Peace**

'In a word, my politics are to be kept free from all engagements as long as we possibly can. I am mightily inclined to be cautious'.<sup>91</sup> This was the personal stance of Walpole regarding foreign affairs. It was a view he shared with his friend, Hervey, who believed 'England is always a great

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soon be restored, 1739, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/43.

88 Charles Delafaye to Benjamin Keene, 1 October 1731, OS', in, Wilson, *French Foreign Policy*, pp. 114–115; it was the same at sea with the admiralty, see Baugh, *Naval Administration*, p. 9; Thomas Hill to Lord Richmond, Saturday 21 November 1741, Plantation Office, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 41.

89 Kamen, *Philip V*, p. 207; Alfred Mahan, *The Influence of Seapower Upon History: 1660–1783*, 10th ed (London: S. Low, 1889), p. 250.

90 Woodfine, *Britannia's Glories*, pp. 1–2; Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Eighteenth-Century Spain*, p. 76; in 1723, English pirate, George Lowther, cut the ear off a Portuguese merchant. Worse atrocities were committed by his lieutenant, the psychotic Edward Low.

91 Robert Walpole to Lord Townshend, 23 June 1723, Whitehall, BL. Stowe. Ms. 251, f. 12.

loser by a war whilst it lasts, and can never be a great gainer when it is concluded'.<sup>92</sup> From his embassy at Madrid, Keene also conveyed a letter to Walpole, a piece of correspondence that seemed to have a profound resonance with the First Lord, for it was retained in his personal collection of papers. The letter mirrored Walpole's sentiments from the perspective of a Spaniard, who lamented

The experience of the evils caused by a war teaches us to know and desire the advantages of peace. But it is a school where our lessons are dearly bought and cruel. War, being according to the opinion of all prudent persons, a work of necessity and not merely of our will, I have never been able to comprehend to this day what necessity could drive your brave nation to declare a war which all impartial people have thought to be far from a necessary one. The complaints of both nations were reciprocal, each of them accused the other of insults.<sup>93</sup>

The endeavours of Walpole's ministry to secure peace relied on support from Country politicians. Although the Country interest had not supported the Court on many domestic issues, they were staunchly opposed to the outbreak of war. Country advocates had been appreciative that Walpole's overarching ambition was to prevent the descent into conflict. The goal of the First Lord to attain tranquillity in Europe would not suffice for other opposition factions. The means of achieving peace were scrutinised, with Country politicians fending off the bellicose Patriots in debates, while at the same time, claiming the Court had not done enough to secure British interests. It was a bitter pill to swallow for Country politicians and for long-standing opponents like Bathurst and Strafford, as both felt duty bound and 'obliged to pay to support to those engineers of the government who have

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<sup>92</sup> Lord Hervey to Horatio Walpole, 18/29 November 1735, St. James, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 80.

<sup>93</sup> Paper from Spain, handed to Sir Robert Walpole by Benjamin Keene, BL. Add. Ms. 74065, nf.

laboured under a long and fruitless peace'.<sup>94</sup>

In their rustication, Country politicians worried about the outbreak of war. When Strafford concussed himself on a low hanging branch while fox hunting, Bathurst sent him well wishes in the form of a reassuring political life lesson, claiming 'I think the Duke of Argyll's maxim is a very good one, that one ought not to run any hazards in times of peace'.<sup>95</sup> Away from Court, Chandos warned his family about the Patriots and their intentions, claiming 'they who delight in war will soon be convinced of their bad taste and as this country must be the seat of it, let anyone consider how many years it will require to repair the damage and recover the destruction that an army of fourscore thousand Spaniards and French will commit in one'.<sup>96</sup>

Chesterfield also reflected the Country aversion to military intervention. It was argued that although war had not been declared, Walpole's diplomatic initiatives, such as subsidy and blockade had increased the price of peace unduly, forcing people to labour under heavy taxes. To escape these impositions, it was believed that only two options were available. The first was to risk the rewards accrued from engaging in a costly war, the second was to accept the framing of ill-informed treaties that maintained peace. This was something the First Lord was thought to have understood, it being said 'his people begin to talk that language already and that he is too wise to risk the whole, in order to comply with popular fury and prejudice'.<sup>97</sup>

Unwilling to supply the tax revenue required to augment fighting forces, the Country did not want to fund the aggrandisement of the office hungry Patriots or a monied interest. It would be they who would benefit almost solely from warlike endeavours. As David Baugh argues, the treasury

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94 Lord Bathurst to Lord Strafford, 11 August 1735, Cirencester, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 133.

95 Lord Bathurst to Lord Strafford, 28 October 1732, St. James Square, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 49.

96 Lord Chandos to George Brydges, 27 June 1739, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 51, f. 257.

97 Lord Chesterfield to Lord Stair, 22 July 1739, Tunbridge, BL. Add. Ms. 74065, nf.



received no prize money from vessels captured during times of war. Therefore, it was questioned why a Country politician should endorse conflicts in a supposed 'national effort', for only a few to reap the rewards and satisfaction.<sup>98</sup> Hutcheson encapsulated the views of many Country politicians at the outset of Walpole's tenure in office, claiming 'the insupportable load of public debts, instead of diminishing, will encourage daily to form the ends of only foreign acquisitions and quarrels, in which Great Britain have not, nor ought to have any concern'.<sup>99</sup>

Politicians zealous to the memory of William III found the distanced stance to foreign affairs that the Country advocated neither realistic nor reasonable. They argued that the Country confused themselves, and that to influence European policy meant paying the high price of having to police changes with force. Wyndham had been accused of talking 'as if we were the arbiters of Europe' and at other times, 'pleased to tell us that Great Britain is an island'. He would extol Britain's 'maritime power and show how much the Empire of the sea contributes to make her in some sort the mistress of the world', and at other junctures claim that Britain cannot defend against an invasion force in the Channel or even from the North.<sup>100</sup>

This detached outlook meant that advocates of the Country interest were labelled by their opponents as insular and backward. The Patriot faction claimed in a pejorative fashion, that they encompassed an isolationist, island mentality. The alliances Country politicians supported with Bourbon powers flew in the face of those who believed the Revolution Settlement could only be upheld through military intervention. For Country gentlemen however, a harmonious union with France and Spain was beneficial to the national interest. There had been little in the way of xenophobia at this prospect, a point zealous Whigs deplored in their attempts to divide the Bourbon family and uphold

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98 David Baugh, *Naval Administration in the Age of Walpole* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1965), pp. 16-18.

99 Archibald Hutcheson to Lord Sunderland, 3 April 1722, East Barnet, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 65.

100 The Member of Parliament's Reply, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 7616, f. 16.

a balance of power in Europe. 'That the union between the court of France and Great Britain was become more perfect union than ever' was unwelcome news for a number of hard-liners.<sup>101</sup> Horatio had disliked that in Britain, Cardinal Fleury, the French premier minister, was regarded as an 'old, bigoted, Popish Jesuit and a declared enemy not only of our religion but our government and present happy establishment and that he delights in confusion'.<sup>102</sup> For Country politicians, the conducting of wars prompted invasions of their homeland by foreign forces and encroachments on their civil liberties, through arbitrary power wielded by governments in times of national emergency. Compromising for international peace was far more cost effective and beneficial.

It was in the Country interest, therefore, to maintain peace at all costs, for conflict exacerbated the national debt and the augmentation of a standing army. Both were dangerous to the Country, with the military and money normally under the control of those they mistrusted. To maintain a 'balance of power' was to engage in an early form of collective security, this was a dangerous precedent, drawing people into wars not of their making, for troubles not of their concern. It is no surprise Country politicians continued to express that they 'cannot but think it the true interest of Great Britain, to inter-meddle as little as possible in the quarrels of Europe, and then by our good offices chiefly, without declaring any resolution to support our mediation by force, or making ourselves either principals or parties in wars that do not immediately concern us'.<sup>103</sup>

Outside the realm of political philosophy, war could also affect other aspects of society, such as economics, with conflict increasing the insurance premiums for traders on their goods and ships.<sup>104</sup> On the surface of events, hostilities closed major foreign markets to British goods as boycotts took

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101 Horatio Walpole to Lord Newcastle, 13 July 1724, NS, Paris, BL. Add. Ms. 37395, f. 97.

102 Horatio Walpole to Lord Newcastle, 28 April 1727, NS, Paris, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 200.

103 PD, v. 8, p. 207.

104 Robert Walpole to Horatio Walpole, 3 August 1739, London, BL. Add. Ms. 3749A, f. 318.

effect.<sup>105</sup> Furthermore, for Britain to engage in hostilities effectively, it required press gangs to man the Royal Navy for service. In turn, this limited the pool of personnel available to conduct trade, diminishing revenue toward the war effort.<sup>106</sup> The peaceful measures both Court and Country advocated attracted a good deal of support from merchants initially. The traders' parliamentary representatives in parliament, Sir John Bernard and Micajah Perry, were delighted to let their constituents know in 1728 that 'peace was as good as concluded and that they might send their ships to all the Spanish territories with full assurance of safety'.<sup>107</sup> It was a support base that Walpole's ministry and his Country corroborators would lose, as the cries for war became more vociferous.

William Hay, Newcastle's election manager, had been canvassing for Walpole's ministry when he encountered one opponent who gave 'himself the airs of a great patriot and politician', who because of his orations for aggressive action, was tipped to replace the Court candidate 'because he understood trade'.<sup>108</sup> The bellicose Patriots, for all their efforts to represent the grievances of the trading community did not hold a monopoly over securing the support of merchants simply because they were proactive on the subject of protectionism. A vocal supporter of the First Lord, John Crookshanks, claimed that 'Sir Robert Walpole in his particular prudence, considering that the case of the Bristol and Liverpool merchants was become very popular, made a motion more favourable than any of their clamorous patriots had done'.<sup>109</sup> It was on this point that many Country politicians departed significantly from supporting the Patriots. Abandoning their alliance to prevent corruption, Country politicians could not in good conscience sanction hostile policies. This marked the beginning of the Court and Country combining to face a more dangerous foe, the Patriots.

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105 There is a telling graph revealing the substantial fall in Anglo-Spanish trade, when war had been declared in 1739, see Kamen, *Philip V*, pp. 240–241; it was the Dutch who bore the slack in British trade with Spain, revealing the benefits of neutrality.

106 Gabriel Ayres to Lord Newcastle, 15 February 1741, Lewes, BL. Add. Ms. 32699, f. 60.

107 Thomas Carte, 19 August 1728, London, BL. Add. Ms. 21500, f. 6.

108 William Hay to Lord Newcastle, 24 September 1733, Glyndebourne, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 279.

109 John Crookshanks to Lord Newcastle, 10 March 1730, London, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 395.

## Deadline to Destruction: Why the Country Failed to Prevent War

In the face of increasing opposition, both Keene and Walpole attempted to ensure that peaceful measures for resolving grievances were pursued. The *Convention of Pardo* was eventually laid before parliament on 8 March 1739, where the 'green heads', young firebrands who titled themselves 'Patriots', were 'dictating to grey hairs', the Country, on the merits of war over peace.<sup>110</sup> The age and oratorical dexterity had been noted when they discussed the *Place Bill* in 1735, it being noted by Elizabeth Finch, that the point was 'wholly carried on by young men and so well that not one old senator would venture upon speaking after them'.<sup>111</sup> This time, the older Country politicians would respond with vigour.<sup>112</sup>

The debate over whether to sanction peaceful or bellicose action raged for twenty hours, with Walpole's dwindling majority eventually managing to grant Spain an ultimatum, to pay the first instalment of the reparations, a sum of £95,000 within four months, or suffer the consequences.<sup>113</sup> This was despite the Patriot faction deploying their most brazen supporters, the 'Amazons', which Mary Montagu claimed no men or laws could resist. These 'Heroines', all noble ladies, were barred from parliament on the debate of whether to go to war. For eight hours they besieged Westminster, banging on its doors to prevent Court and Country politicians being heard. Feigning a lull in their noise, to trick William Saunderson (the Black Rod) into thinking they had left, the doors were opened and the 'tribe of dames' rushed to the front of the Gallery, laughing in contempt at all those

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110 A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45.

111 Elizabeth Finch to Countess Burlington, April 1735, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 230.8.

112 Lord Chandos to Mr Watts, 14 September 1739, HL. MssST. 57, v. 51, f. 339; an emergency meeting was convened at parliament to debate whether to go to war. Many Country politicians made the long journey from their provincial estates to support the motion for peace. When proceedings to discuss the war effort began on 9 December 1740, it was noted that many who had never spoken previously had voiced their opinion.

113 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Eighteenth-Century Spain*, p. 75; A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45; James Henretta, "Salutary Neglect", *Colonial Administration Under the Duke of Newcastle* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 195.

who opposed the Patriots in the House of Commons.<sup>114</sup> After a further six hours of haranguing, the House rose and the Heroines jeered the Court and Country, who had prevented war.

'When peace was actually concluded, Heaven and Earth were moved in order to break it'.<sup>115</sup> On 20 March 1739, over one-hundred politicians 'left the service of the House' while it was in session.<sup>116</sup> The press worked hard to depict 'those gentlemen who by the name of the seceders' as acting in the best interests of their nations.<sup>117</sup> Likened to consuls of the Roman Republic, abstaining politicians were rustivating a corrupt system and going to the crux of democracy, the populous, who had flooded the streets of London. For those more cautious of the effects of war fever, it was noted 'one might soon have expected to see the little merchant (Robert Jenkins) marching at the head of his forces, and like one of our ancient reformers, burning the statute books and threatening to destroy every peer and courtier who was able to write and read'.<sup>118</sup> A secession of this magnitude had immediate repercussions. On the streets and in the dockyards, 'war, immediate war, was the general outcry', alongside 'No convention! No search!', a reference to the peaceful but unfair compromise found in the Pardo treaty that so many merchants disliked.<sup>119</sup>

At this climactic juncture, Hare observed 'we have had here on occasion of the late convention, the greatest party struggle there has been since the Revolution. The Patriots were resolved to damn it before they knew a word of it, and to inflame the people against it, which they have done with great success'.<sup>120</sup> It was a popular manoeuvre that did not escape the attention of foreign diplomats, who promptly conveyed news of the events back to their own courts.<sup>121</sup> The most damaging effect it had

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114 Mary Montagu, *Complete Letters of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu*, v. 2 (London: R. Halsband, 1965), pp. 135–137.

115 A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45.

116 *Ibid*; Wilson, *French Foreign Policy*, p. 287.

117 Lord Chandos to George Brydges, 5 September 1739, Cannons, HL. MssST. v. 51, f. 319.

118 A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45; the seceders returned in October to great *eclat*.

119 *Ibid*,

120 Bishop Hare to his Son, 14 March 1739, OS, Hare MSS, HMC, rep. 14, App, Part 9, p. 243, in, Wilson, *French Foreign Policy*, p. 287.

121 Benjamin Keene (via his messenger Raddon) to Lord Newcastle, 9 July 1739, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 73983, f. 85;

was to display to Spain that many in Britain were intent on war, that they disregarded the policy advocated by Walpole and that the divisive political situation could be exploited.

With the deadline for payment approaching and many Spaniards distressed at the continual presence of Admiral Nicholas Haddock in the Mediterranean, Philip V defaulted on the payment of his first reparation instalment.<sup>122</sup> James Henretta states that Newcastle, who working in league with Walpole's opposition for the sake of beginning hostilities, had ignored Walpole's wishes to recall Haddock, countermanding his naval orders and sanctioning him to remain off Cádiz.<sup>123</sup> Upon reading the Spanish manifesto, Chandos found 'nothing in it pretending to any promise that Haddock should be recalled, or that the order previously sent for him to return should be countermanded'.<sup>124</sup> It mattered little however, for Haddock remaining on station seemed to break the agreement made at Pardo and provided the Spanish plenipotentiaries with a reason to curtail negotiations, with both nations preparing to defend themselves in a war that many had longed for.

The claims of Walpole's opposition that powder and artillery were the most efficacious, sure and conciliatory measures the nation could adopt soon persuaded 'His Majesty, who was determined, agreeable to the advice of his parliament and the sense of the nation to pursue hostile measures, for doing himself and the nation justice, which the conduct of that court had now made necessary'.<sup>125</sup>

Contrary to the wishes of the First Lord, war was to be waged against Spain 'for the preservation of the balance of power in general, for the honour of the British crown, or for the particular support of

Benjamin Keene to Lord Newcastle, 31 August 1739, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 73983, f. 141.

122A detection of the author of the late spurious pamphlet entitled 'The Lord's Protest' vindicating the Treaty of Seville, minuted by William Coxe, corrections in the hand of Lord Hay, 1730, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/13.

123 Henretta, "*Salutary Neglect*", pp. 150, 195; Leopold Wickham-Legg, 'Newcastle and the Counter Orders to Admiral Haddock, March 1739', *English Historical Review*, 46.182 (April 1931); Brian. Ranft (ed), *The Vernon Papers* (London: Navy Records Society, 1958), p. 3.

124 Lord Chandos to Mr Watts, 6 September 1739, HL. MssST. 57, v. 51, f. 328.

125 Lord Newcastle to Benjamin Keene (Most Private Cypher), 14 June 1739, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 35884, f. 129; My phrasing is borrowed from David McCullough, *John Adams* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2001), p. 95.

our trading interests'.<sup>126</sup> There had been no official vote on whether to engage in war and Walpole would have had the support of the Country if parliament had come to such a resolution. Facing increasing isolation at the Spanish court, Keene also prepared to leave. With a deep sense of regret that a peaceful settlement could not be secured, Philip V granted Keene his papers, wishing him a safe passage home.<sup>127</sup>

The outbreak of war coincided with some of the harshest weather ever known in England. The Thames froze thick, animals died en-masse and crops were ruined. Richmond observed 'the face of the country is actually at present a melancholy prospect. Nothing but cold and misery abroad'.<sup>128</sup> At home, Country politicians faced an equally bleak situation. Having failed to prevent a war, displaced by the Patriots and lumbered under a high land tax, they returned to their country seats, a barren wilderness, stripped bare from the bad climate, finding it difficult to cultivate revenue and sustenance from.<sup>129</sup> Reverting to a traditional Country measure, many rusticated from parliament also. Chandos in 1740, found it 'very strange that none of the gentlemen of the Country will stand themselves, there are several of good estates and fit to serve their country in any station and it is much that no one of them will endeavour to do it'.<sup>130</sup>

## **The Road to Hell: How War Undermined the Court and Country Interest**

When war had been declared in October 1739, Admiral Edward Vernon had been despatched to the

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126 A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45.

127 Benjamin Keene (via his messenger Raddon) to Lord Newcastle, 9 July 1739, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 73983, f. 85; Benjamin Keene to Lord Newcastle, 31 August 1739, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 73983, f. 141.

128 Lord Richmond to Peter Collinson, 17 December 1742, BL. Add. Ms. 28736, f. 125.

129 Not only did the bad weather destroy an abundance of corn, apple, hops and grass crops for the war effort, but the tenants farming the land were not able to pay above quarter rent revenue sustained from the harvest.

130 Lord Chandos to Mr Price, 5 August 1740, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 53, f. 178.

West Indies, to conduct the primary engagements necessary to cripple the wealth and power of the Spanish empire.<sup>131</sup> Vernon had long been one of the chief Country adversaries to the First Lord and while on expedition, he remained in correspondence with Pulteney, who presided at the head of Walpole's opposition in parliament. Together, they managed to alienate Walpole from receiving any credit in future military endeavours.<sup>132</sup>

Bryan Ranft states that Vernon had not been chosen for service for Walpole to rid himself of a rival from the political scene. Employment was awarded him because Vernon was a professional naval commander, experienced in the Caribbean theatre of operations.<sup>133</sup> Richard Harding, Vernon's principal biographer dismisses this, claiming many other commanders had declined offers for the commission before Vernon was given the post.<sup>134</sup> With regard to his contemporaries, it was the decision of First Lord of the Admiralty, Charles Wager, who had insisted Vernon be chosen, with Samuel Sandys claiming that 'Vernon, a Country gentlemen, was the only man who could be found fit and willing to be sent to the West Indies, but yet was not perfectly restored to his rank'.<sup>135</sup>

Hardwicke congratulated Vernon on his promotion, despite Walpole trying to distance his ministry from supporting somebody whom he considered a poor choice.<sup>136</sup> Frank Bowen suspected Walpole deliberately sabotaged the mission, to ruin Vernon's career, for when the admiral claimed he could take Portobello with only six vessels, the First Lord obliged him on his word. 'Apart from the ships, Walpole did everything possible to undermine the expedition'.<sup>137</sup> The reality was that Walpole had wanted to remain in office and not scupper his own credibility as a wartime commander,

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131 Extract of His Majesty's Instructions to Vice Admiral Vernon, 16 July 1739, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 16/9.

132 William Pulteney to Edward Vernon, 25 November 1739, London, in, Ranft, *The Vernon Papers*, p. 39; Pulteney was the first person to receive reports from Vernon; William Pulteney to Sir John Rushout, 20 June 1741, London, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

133 Ranft, *The Vernon Papers*, p. 4.

134 Richard Harding, 'Edward Vernon: 1684–1757', in, Fevre & Harding, *Precursors of Nelson*, p. 165.

135 Baugh, *Naval Administration*, p. 6; Speech in Parliament, 13 February 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 74068, f. 145.

136 Lord Hardwicke to Edward Vernon, 3 December 1740, London, BL. Add. Ms. 35586, f. 318.

137 Frank Bowen, *Men of the Wooden Walls*, 1st ed (London: Staples Press, 1952), p. 65.



understanding that he would receive the odium for disastrous military engagements.

It did not help Walpole to find that his new allies, the Country interest, were locked in schism. Chandos still hoped to secure peace, wanting the First Lord to secure a ceasefire and prevent further expense as European conflict left Britain exposed as 'the seat of war'.<sup>138</sup> As long as hostilities continued as a purely maritime operation, without scope for a proliferation of the army, even staunch Country politicians such as Henry Hyde, Viscount Cornbury, would support Walpole's efforts to remain in office. There was still a sense of mistrust between Court and Country, despite their uneasy alliance. Sandys and Walpole's most implacable Country enemies, William Chetwynd, 3<sup>rd</sup> Viscount Chetwynd and Thomas Thynne, 2<sup>nd</sup> Viscount Weymouth, were still trying to hound the First Lord from office on charges of corruption. Another Country politician, Sir John Molesworth, refused to sit in parliament while a war was being undertaken and had rusticated with others, leaving Walpole to fight alone against the Patriots, who were hoping to displace government.<sup>139</sup> Faction was set against faction, and while Walpole, alongside the remnants of a crumbling Country cause were doing their best to prevent losing hegemony in politics, it was clear to contemporaries that their fate would be dependent on the inclinations of specific individuals acting on their own principles. Vernon was one such man who, through his actions, helped cripple Walpole's administration and the Country simultaneously.

Vernon had the reputation of a fighting captain, somebody who would make a bad diplomatic commander and because of this, he had usually been posted as the subordinate of Wager when on European operations. Known as the 'angry admiral', Vernon was a proud, fiery and outspoken individual who like his friend Pulteney, could explode into fits of temper.<sup>140</sup> To deploy him caused no end of concern for Walpole's friend, Richmond, who worriedly intimated that 'I wish Vernon

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138 Lord Chandos to Mr Mr Brydges, 20 September 1739, Cavendish Square, HL. MssST. 57, v. 52, f. 1.

139 Thomas Henry Grenville to Richard Grenville, 12 June 1742, *HMS Romney*, Off Toulon, HL. MssSTG. 17, b. 192.

140 Cyril Hartmann, *The Angry Admiral* (London: Heinemann, 1953).

does not do mischief to our affairs by some rash enterprise. It is now more evident than ever, how right it would have been to have sent Ogle to the West Indies'.<sup>141</sup>

The 'rash enterprise' Richmond feared, would arrive in the form of an assault on Cartagena, which resulted in a huge loss of life and the systematic breakdown of the war effort. Woodfine states the War of Jenkins' Ear, in which Walpole's ministry was engaged had 'neither the geographic range or epic victories of the more famous Seven Years War'.<sup>142</sup> The harbour of Portobello had been taken in November 1739, but soon after this initial victory, Vernon sailed to procure the Spanish port of Cartagena, commencing with two raids on the 25 February 1740 and 9 March 1741.<sup>143</sup>

It was to be learned a day later that Vernon had met his match, suffering defeats at the hands of the cunning and grizzled Spanish admiral, Don Blaz de Lazo.<sup>144</sup> Opposition forces worked hard to deflect the blame of this expedition onto Walpole, which succeeded with great effect. Vernon returned a hero, bringing all his fame and vitriol with him to fight an election against the Court in 1742. To the dismay of Walpole, it was here that 'the brave Vernonians, not brooking, they boldly withstood their adversaries and thus the war was carried on at home, with greater fury than abroad against the Spaniards'.<sup>145</sup> These threats to Walpole's political power amplified every setback in foreign affairs and despite the Patriots clamouring for war, the outbreak of hostilities failed to unite all factions in the nation behind the Court. Half the Country interest remained despondent with the war effort, while others had either rusticated or focused on attacking the First Lord in parliament. Walpole's own ministry had started to turn against him, with Newcastle and Hardwicke beginning to doubt Walpole's abilities. The First Lord and the remnants of his Country supporters, placid in

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141 Lord Richmond to Lord Newcastle, 7 September 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32695, f. 22.

142 Woodfine, *Britannia's Glories*, p. 1.

143 William Pulteney to Sir John Rushout, 20 June 1741, London, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

144 Lord Augustus Fitzroy to Lord Richmond, 25 April 1741, Cartagena, Commander of *HMS Orford*, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 110.

145 The Full and Whole Examination of the High Bailiff of Westminster, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 90.

their foreign policy, had to depart in the eyes of the Patriots if the war would carry on with any conviction. Contemporaries started to believe that Walpole should not leave office because of the ambition or jealousy of his detractors, but because of 'their own superior merit compared with the weakness and inability of our present ministers, to support the weight of their present stations'.<sup>146</sup>

French diplomats took full opportunity of the confusing situation and by operating from Orbetello and Barcelona, their ships liaised with the Spanish to trap Haddock in the Mediterranean.<sup>147</sup> 'This great affair', claimed Walpole, 'is come to that crisis which I always so much feared in vain, this step is not a declaration of war but in its consequence, an actual war and that must be pushed with all the resolution and activity that is possible'.<sup>148</sup> It was a confirmation from the First Lord that peace could not be concluded, a step that would ultimately see the Country split their alliance with the Court, leaving a power vacuum in politics which faction would fill.

In other maritime theatres, the Royal Navy had lost the upper hand at sea, leaving the relaying of information concerning Spanish fleets a mystery.<sup>149</sup> After a series of protracted events, a number of Royal Navy squadrons had been laid up, tied up or sent to refit, with service vessels hard pressed to redeploy. The worry regarding the maritime disasters Britain suffered were to be nothing in comparison to a bigger fear that was beginning to surface. With so many French and Spanish fleets operating out of their harbours, no longer blocked, the Court believed that a Bourbon armada was being prepared, one that could not be resisted if they were to attempt an invasion.<sup>150</sup>

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146 A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45.

147 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Eighteenth-Century Spain*, p. 78.

148 Sir Robert Walpole to Lord Devonshire, 9 September 1740, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 114.5; it was rumoured that a motion to declare war on France during a council meeting was carried by one vote; Judith Coote to Lord Bellamont, 6 November 1739, London, WRAS. Lechmere Archives. 899:169/4084/1.

149 Andrew Stone to Lord Richmond, 17 April 1742, Whitehall, WSRO. Goodwood Ms, 104, f. 322.

150 Minutes of the Cabinet Council, Monday, 5 May 1740, Cockpit, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 951/47/11, f. 13.

## **Damned are the Peacemakers: The Collapse of Court and Country**

A voluntary well-wisher expressed to Walpole 'that while the passions of men are held alarmed by expectations of events which promise glory to the public, they are too intensely diverted to receive the impressions of faction'.<sup>151</sup> This was a warning that Walpole's ministry must deliver victory swiftly, for if he did not, his lack of momentum would sink his administration. With major political blocs such as Whigs, Tories, Court and Country disintegrating into smaller splinter groups, Walpole would find these factions almost impossible to reconcile, if he proved incapable of providing a substantial triumph. With so many damning reports of losses filtering back through private correspondence in Britain, public news of the failure at Cartagena was to be the final straw, with Pulteney remarking 'I verily think there is not ten majority on the side of the Court'.<sup>152</sup>

Shortly before the outbreak of hostilities, the First Lord intimated that 'I envy no man's good fortune, but I lament my own ill one'.<sup>153</sup> Control had been taken out of Walpole's hands, with the direction of his foreign policy increasingly subverted. It was a trend that would develop, as few of Walpole's supporters had participated in large scale, continental conflict before. George Wade had been a favourite of the First Lord, but the Patriots in parliament would demand older experts be called upon, Cobham and Argyll, opponents who had little faith in Walpole's ability to direct a ministry at war.<sup>154</sup>

Walpole's lack of authority had been noticed by Stair, another of these older military advisers, who was 'very sure that Sir Robert never had so many strong circumstances for carrying against him. I

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<sup>151</sup> Voluntary Well Wisher to Sir Robert Walpole, 9 November 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 74065, nf.

<sup>152</sup> William Pulteney to Sir John Rushout, 20 June 1741, London, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

<sup>153</sup> Draft Note by Sir Robert Walpole, 24 August 1738, BL. Add. Ms. 52474, f. 49.

<sup>154</sup> Sir John Norris, Journal Entry, December 1739, BL. Add. Ms. 28132, f. 116; according to Walpole's military advisor, Lord Cathcart, both army commanders mentioned had improved their regiments into 'a state of perfection'; Charles Cathcart to Hugh Campbell, 27 June 1730, Windsor, HL. B14. LO. 7901.

think no minister ever had that did not fall. This crisis must be the end of him or the end of a nation'.<sup>155</sup> Later British wartime leaders would come to understand the perils Walpole faced, in that 'the statesman who yields to war fever must realise that once the signal is given, he is no longer the master of policy but the slave of unforeseeable and uncontrollable events'.<sup>156</sup>

Just one year into the war, Walpole's ministry showed signs of collapse in the face of a string of defeats, with Britain facing the full attention and military might of Spain and France. Newcastle had initially entertained dreams of colonial wars filled with victory and plunder, but all this had devolved into despair. With the fear of invasion and the sovereignty of Britain at stake, Newcastle admitted 'I have particularly pointed out what I am afraid is all that is left for us to do, defend ourselves'.<sup>157</sup> A few months before war had been declared, Chandos had reflected with the grim but cautious prognostication of a Country gentleman that

One may, without incurring the censure of being a conjurer, foretell that in a year or two's time, we may expect to have the joint powers of France and Spain landed in this island.

Miracles have often saved us. Pray God may have such another instance of the goodness of providence on this occasion, for I really think that nothing less can preserve us.<sup>158</sup>

The situation had become dire in 1740 and many Britons were to be humbled, for 'the maritime strength of this island, that had so long been boasting of it being singly match by sea for the united naval power of all of Europe', was instead finding it enough trouble to deal with Spanish privateers in its home waters, let alone a combined Franco-Spanish fleet.<sup>159</sup> It was at this critical juncture that the nation increasingly looked to men of the sea for their salvation.

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155 Lord Stair to Lady Marlborough, 3 February 1739, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 102.

156 Winston Churchill, *My Early Life: A Roving Commission* (London: 1930), p. 246.

157 Lord Newcastle to Lord Hardwicke, 10 January 1742, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32699, f. 14.

158 Lord Chandos to William Leigh, 15 May 1739, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 51, f. 201.

159 Minutes of the Cabinet Council, Monday, 5 May 1740, Cockpit, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 951/47/11, f. 28.

Plans for conquest in the West Indies, where the extensive reach of the navy could be demonstrated were shelved. Naval commanders were recalled, especially Sir John Norris, who was placed in charge of the Channel defence force, one of the few admirals who could master the command of squadrons that comprised of first-rate ships primarily. During times of war, many Britons felt exposed with every rumour of invasion. In 1739, the Duke of Ormonde was claimed 'to command a great number of forces now assembling at Galicia with an intent to make a descent upon Great Britain'.<sup>160</sup> The prioritisation of defending the British coastline coincided with news that a considerable Jacobite force was expected from Corunna and Ferrol and set to land in Scotland.

The return of the Royal Navy's most capable captain came not a moment too soon. According to one Spanish magazine master attempting to organise the Jacobite expedition, it was questioned 'if we had transport, how do you imagine that we could pass when Admiral Norris lies in wait for us with so strong a squadron?'<sup>161</sup> Commanding the English Channel was deemed paramount to national defence. Norris acted as a bulwark, with his 100 gun vessels the last line of defence between continental armies and English liberties.<sup>162</sup> The acumen and expertise of Norris was such that Walpole broke traditional, legal protocols and invited him to attend the privy council at Houghton and Arlington Street, without Norris being a sworn member.

At these meetings, Newcastle was in shock at how Britain had fallen to such a low point and began to question the competency of the admiralty. Walpole did not want his naval commanders to feel they were unsupported, interjecting in defence of the conduct of naval officers and advising against

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160 Examination of Henry Guin, before Chaloner Ogle and Nicholas Haddock, 29 February 1739, Gibraltar Bay, BL. EG. 2528, f. 189.

161 Mr Thomas to Robert Walpole and Charles Wager, BL. Add. Ms. 74068, f. 32.

162 Baugh, *Naval Administration*, p. 25.

judging too harshly for they had a tough job to complete.<sup>163</sup> Richmond had high hopes in Norris, even wishing 'the French fleet would attack him, for I am confident he would beat them and that at least would secure us, although we could do no good to the rest of Europe'.<sup>164</sup> On Thursday, 24 June 1740, Norris embarked once more on his flagship, *Victory*, where he would preside over the defence of Britain and orchestrate plans for the security of the nation.

Despite Norris being a safe pair of hands, Horatio Walpole, who frequently disparaged the maritime capabilities of Britain had fretted the Royal Navy would falter. Fearing invasion would be unstoppable, he stated 'nothing but a diversion on the continent can save us'.<sup>165</sup> The need for a miracle, prayed for by Chandos and Horatio were answered a month later, when the death of Holy Roman Emperor, Charles VI, plunged Europe into the War of Austrian Succession.<sup>166</sup> The opening of another theatre of war provided little respite for the First Lord. Having pledged to uphold a balance of power and with Hanover under threat, Britain was forced to intervene.<sup>167</sup>

Shortly before Charles passed away, Austria had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of the Turks, severely destabilising the country. The new Prussian king, Frederick II, sensed weakness and had used this as an opportunity to seize Silesia. Alongside the disastrous expeditions in the Caribbean, George II delivered a spectacular blow to Walpole's credibility in directing foreign affairs. Upon the monarch's visit to Hanover in May 1741, he ignored Walpole's advice and allowed Prussia to invade Bohemia, in return for security of his electoral dominion, which severely damaged Britain's alliance with Austria.<sup>168</sup>

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163 Minutes of the Cabinet Council, Monday, 5 May 1740, Cockpit, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 951/47/11, f. 15.

164 Lord Richmond to Lord Newcastle, 30 September 1741, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32698, f. 86.

165 Horatio Walpole to Robert Hampden-Trevor, 23 September 1740, OS, Trevor Papers, HMC. rep, 14, app, part, 9, p. 54, in, Wilson, *French Foreign Policy*, p. 324.

166 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Eighteenth-Century Spain*, p. 76; in 1742, three centuries of Hapsburg rule in the Holy Roman Empire came to an end. Charles Albert of Bavaria, a Wittelsbach elector was declared King of Bohemia.

167 Memorandum, 7 October 1740, BL. Add. Mss. 32993, ff. 108–9.

168 Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, p. 204; Black, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Walpole*, p. 21.

Neither revolution nor invasion had occurred during Walpole's tenure in office, but he was not able to repel a force that had arrayed against him closer to home. The war had been carried on in parliament and the First Lord succumbed to the formidable opposition that had developed against him. Before the collapse of his ministry and at the peak of 'this extraordinary crisis', ministers staged a vote of no confidence, acquiring a majority to veto every motion presented by Walpole in the House of Commons.<sup>169</sup> Facing impeachment, Walpole was forced to resign. This had been the product of the poor performance in which Britain had conducted itself in war, the failure to maintain peace and the efforts of the opposition to commandeer the image, initiative and direction of Walpole's foreign policy. For the First Lord, peace would come in the form of his departure from court, a factor long desired by his opponents. The goal of his foreign policy, the maintenance of peace that prevented Britain from being embroiled in a general war had become his ultimate failure.

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<sup>169</sup> Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 263.



## Conclusion

Having been forced to fight a bitter war of attrition in parliament, as well as directing conflict in the West Indies and Europe, the longevity of Walpole's position in office made rival politicians resentful. 'War therefore, was the only expedient left by which any favourable prospect could arise'.<sup>1</sup> A letter intercepted from a Spaniard, residing in London, was kept by Walpole in his notes, its content an indication the First Lord realised his situation was untenable. The manuscript reads

On the one hand, Walpole is forced to support the odium of the greatest and wealthiest part of the kingdom for not going to war with Spain. On the other, if he does enter a war and the least appearance of ill success should happen, he is to expect nothing less than to give account of all things imaginable he would choose to avoid.<sup>2</sup>

Opposition forces did not only need to force Walpole to sanction war against his will, but ensure through political sabotage, that the failure of his efforts to secure victories would see Walpole impeached. The diplomatic initiatives advocated by the First Lord had crumbled in the face of overwhelming domestic opposition, it being said that 'solemn treaties are the only security that can be given to sovereign powers, but neither power can prevent the breach of public faith'.<sup>3</sup> The maintenance of peace proved to have been purchased at a high price. Walpole's character received the enmity of the nation, a minister vilified as responsible for Britain's failure in war and dishonour

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<sup>1</sup> A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45.

<sup>2</sup> *A letter from a Spaniard in London to his friends at Madrid* (London: J. Standen, 1739), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup> A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45.

in peace.<sup>4</sup> The Country, disgusted by corruption and parties had long diminished Walpole's influence over politics, the Patriots merely exacerbated failure in war to scupper his administration.

Removed from government before he had the opportunity to realise the result of his labours, Walpole by his own admission had eventually lost the direction and momentum of his own foreign policy.<sup>5</sup> Walpole's contemporaries remarked bitterly that 'our ministers were deprived of reaping the fruits of an honourable vengeance'.<sup>6</sup> Cain and Hopkins, following the earlier work of William Munro and Aemric Fitzroy encapsulate the view of numerous historians, arguing that 'before the Seven Years War, administration' as with capitalism, 'was conducted in a gentleman-like and easy-going fashion'.<sup>7</sup> Managing foreign policy had not been professionalised and was reliant on the discretion of diplomats, sometimes unrestrained by state imposed regulations they had to obey.

David French has reiterated the view that 'Walpole's overriding passion was peace'.<sup>8</sup> It was a stance the Country encouraged and consequently supported. There is little doubt the principal objective of the First Lord was to pursue peace, by placing a greater importance upon the tools of diplomacy such as naval and military pressure, intelligence gathering, mediation, treaties and subsidy. Non-interventionism had been the foreign policy pursued prior to the Revolution of 1688, but the diplomats serving under William III to George I arrived at foreign courts, safe in the knowledge they were representing a nation at war. As a minister presiding over the long peace that concluded the War of Spanish Succession, the tenure of Sir Robert Walpole marked a significant transition in the direction of British foreign policy.

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4 Budgell, *A Letter to the Craftsman*, p. 28; Mary. Clavering, *The Diary of Mary Clavering, Countess Cowper: 1685–1724* (London: J. Murray, 1864), p. 58; Yorke, *Walpoliana*, p. 11; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 17; Jerry Beasley, 'Portraits of a Monster: Robert Walpole and Early English Prose Fiction', *Eighteenth Century Studies*, 14.4 (Summer 1981), p. 419; Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 177.

5 Speech of Sir Robert Walpole upon his resignation, in, Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 3, p. 131.

6 A historical narrative, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/45.

7 William Munro & Aemric Fitzroy (eds.), *Acts of the Privy Council of England, Colonial Series, 1720–1745*, v. 3 (Hereford: HMSO, 1910), p. v; Cain & Hopkins, *British Imperialism*, p. 8.

8 French, *The British Way in Warfare*, p. 41.

Throughout the period, many measures were adopted that reversed the initiatives that enforced British interests through active participation in European conflict.<sup>9</sup> The repercussions of the South Sea Bubble in 1721 led many of Walpole's predecessors to resign from office. With the arrival of the First Lord and his family into positions of power within the state, a new ministry of politicians worked toward the shared goal of developing and implementing policies 'among the most innovative of the peacetime era'.<sup>10</sup>

With the resignation of Walpole and some of his cabinet who shared his sentiments, the path was made clear for a different breed of minister to obtain public office, military not diplomatic men such as 'that terrible cornet', William Pitt the Elder.<sup>11</sup> The authority of the sword replaced that of the pen, with many of Walpole's policies reversed in following administrations.<sup>12</sup> The Seven Years War (1756–1763) witnessed increased military interventionism, state building and an inflexibility to compromise in foreign affairs. Britain was set to emerge from conflict in diplomatic isolation, war having eroded the international relationships that Walpole's ambassadors had forged prior.<sup>13</sup>

The power of a nation should not always be measured by its ability to fight wars but equally in its ability to prevent them. It was an adage demonstrated admirably when foreign policy was placed under the direction of Walpole's administration. Contemporaries of the First Lord were on more than one occasion proud to state George II had 'given peace to all Europe'.<sup>14</sup> Many hostile situations, which threatened to spill into war were encountered, resisted and overcome. The methods and

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9 Hargreaves-Mawdsley, *Eighteenth-Century Spain: 17001–1788*, p. 63.

10 Chris. Ware, 'George Byng, Viscount Torrington: 1663–1773', in, Le Fevre & Harding, *Precursors of Nelson*, pp. 97–98.

11 Davies, *The Characters of*, pp. 67–71.

12 Jeremy Black, *The British Seaborne Empire* (London: Yale University Press, 2004), p. 122.

13 Jeremy Black, *British Diplomats and Diplomacy: 1688–1800* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2002), p. 9.

14 Lord Newcastle to James Waldegrave, 26 March 1731, BL. Add. Ms. 32772, in, Black, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of Walpole*, p. 10.

direction of Walpole's foreign policy, alongside the acumen of his ambassadors left a significant imprint on the events of the eighteenth century. For twenty-one years, it was claimed that Britain remained in a peculiar state of 'peace without rest and war without hostilities'.<sup>15</sup>

The Country and the Patriots had longed to 'either come to blows or a perfect peace', but were kept in a constant state of suspense, with every diplomatic initiative used by Walpole to stem the tide of war.<sup>16</sup> With the support and guidance of the Country in matters of foreign policy, Walpole allowed Britain the capacity to press its interests across the globe and obtain that most lucrative and difficult factor in diplomacy, the maintenance of an honourable peace. As Clark Reynolds summarises, 'the eighteenth century belonged to Great Britain'.<sup>17</sup> This was, in many ways, the result of the Country interest, whose associates strived for a nation bereft of corruption, parties and embroilment in wars.

## I

Throughout this thesis, it has been demonstrated that political measures, such as voting in accordance with Country principles defined conflict, compromise and opposition during the period. Party ties and patronage during Walpole's tenure in office are seen to have played a lesser role in shaping the political landscape than historians have claimed previously. The abandonment of Whig and Tory loyalties, alongside the refusal of pensions, places and various forms of political bribery were all due to the efforts of the Country interest, whose advocates sought to make changes to the structure of government based on their principles instead. From 1721 and into the 1730s, the Patriot faction and the Country interest fought alongside each other against Court corruption and parties. While the Country were happy to lame Walpole's ministry but allow him to remain in office, this

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<sup>15</sup> Carlisle Mss, p. xiv.

<sup>16</sup> William Wood to Humphrey Morice, 26 August 1726, Rouen, BoE. Morice Ms, 10A97/3, ff. 531–533.

<sup>17</sup> Clark Reynolds, *Command of The Sea* (New York: William Morrow & Co, 1974), p. 211.

prevented the Patriots from securing the reins of government they desired. In the build-up to the Fifth and final Chapter of this thesis, the influence of the Patriots is to be seen to have grown. Breeding resentment for the loss of trade and a lack of direct involvement in foreign affairs, the Patriots instigated their own popular campaign which called for war.

Without the extensive influence of parties and patronage, political connections became increasingly fluid during the period, allowing the Country to abandon the Patriots and join with the Court to support a principle they both shared, namely, preventing hostilities. The hallmark of the Country interest became their ability to respond to particular policies, actions and events that disgruntled them, by liaising flexibly with others who they usually opposed. At its core, the Country cause was directed by independent individuals. Supporting or defaming any group they required, Country politicians are shown in this thesis to join with self-professed Whigs and Tories, without adhering to a raft of entrenched party views themselves. What has been revealed extensively, is that Country politicians acted according to their own conscience, sometimes reinforcing the Court without being paid to do so, as many took great pride in not being beholden to Walpole as their employer or political leader.

Previous chapters of this thesis show that by the time the Country and Court put aside their differences, they had done a great deal of damage to each other's reputation and authority, through their conflict in the press and parliament. Both had manoeuvred to limit the momentum and influence of each other, through sabotage in their secretive networks of power. There had been another unexpected consequence of the renaissance of Country thought, one which had not always been desirable. This curious side effect was that the philosophy of the Country cause had been underpinned by the importance of the role of independent individuals. Advocates of the Country found they had created a monster, the Patriots, who had formed amid the splintered situation of

large competing political blocs, such as the Whigs and Tories. With Country philosophies focusing attention on the importance and power of personal principles and the bond of kinship, it was to be the perfect political environment in which the Patriot faction could arise.

The combined efforts of the Court and Country found it difficult to counter such a young and energetic group of politicians. The Patriots were bankrolled by wealthy and astute individuals, furthermore, their primary policies—the preservation of trade, the instigation of war and the pursuit of empire were appealing for many. An overarching aim of this thesis was to reveal how party and patronage made way for interest-based politics during the mid-eighteenth century. The final chapters show ultimately that interest-based politics could be displaced with faction and family, the Patriots ensuring that Walpole's ministry and the Country were banished to the political wilderness. Following a transition from parties, to interests, to small splinter groups operating on their own inclination, the pattern was complete by 1742. Hervey noticed that politics and government had descended into faction, with 'court divided into classes, knots, parties and cabals of men, all with different views, different principles (if they have any) and different interest, contending with one another for power, each thinking to deceive and overreach the other'.<sup>18</sup> This new factional structure became the model for statecraft after the fall of Walpole. Politics had transformed a great deal since the 'rage of party' witnessed in previous reigns.

While the First Lord retired a highly affluent figure, despite his name disgraced by many, the fate of the Country interest proved its paradox. Unable to stop the global conflict in which Britain was involved, alongside the rapid manoeuvrings in parliament and Court, politicians of the Country rusticated to safeguard their families, incomes and communities. Bracing for the potential of heavy taxation to shoulder the cost of an emerging war, they would struggle for hegemony, countering the

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18 Lord Hervey to his Father, 5 July 1742, Kensington Gravel Pits, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/11, f. 69.

exploits of the Patriots and monied interest who would displace them. Many surviving advocates of the Country cause lost considerable wealth and dynastic influence. Unlike Walpole, their legacy for upholding virtuous principles, even during times of extreme hardship and adversity earned them respect and honour long after their passing.

The efforts of the Country to curb party, corruption and conflict were admirable to contemporaries, despite their actions resulting in failure, faction, war and the loss of monarchical power. This thesis has shown that while not a long-lasting metamorphosis, the Country interest succeeded in changing the political environment dramatically during their resurgence. Prior to substantiating these claims, there had been a widespread scepticism in the historiography, concerning whether the Country was influential and widespread, or in some cases, even existed at all. The neglected historical plight of the Country, alongside their thoughts, actions and writings have been brought to bear throughout the past five chapters, rectifying misconceptions of the prevailing historiography. What is shown is that the Country interest not only endured, but succeeded in changing politics to the whims of its adherents. Organised, effective and influential, the Country cause operated vibrantly from the arrival of Walpole in high office until his resignation. Upon closer inspection of numerous public prints and private documents, many of which having been overlooked by historians, the existence and potency of the Country interest during this period has been brought to the fore of historical discussion. Studying the actions and writings of Country associates are instrumental in uncovering the hidden, murkier, complex history of the early eighteenth century.

Concerning the examination of multiple historical issues, from domestic and foreign policy to popular and private politics, this thesis reveals the vital but neglected components required to explain the history of the early eighteenth century effectively. Without the supporting evidence to challenge historical axioms and the status quo set by previous historians, explanations concerning

the politics of the period have languished. Pocock, Namier, Owen, all like Andrew Marvell before them, identify three stratifications of ministers in parliament. These ranged from placemen, whose allegiance rested with their patrons and employers, to office seekers, who were loyal to factions or individual leaders rather than to parliament as a whole. Lastly, the independent Country gentlemen were loyal only to the country, one another and themselves.<sup>19</sup> Although understood to exist by a minority of historians, such people are rarely ever studied by scholars of the period.

This study of the rise of the Country has also helped to address misunderstandings surrounding Walpole's administration in the historiography. The research of interest groups, rather than Walpole's ministry or Whigs and Tories alone, helps to form a number of different conclusions to be arrived at altogether. The history of the period is better understood when the efforts of the Country are introduced as a major factor in changing politics. For example, Country politicians prevented Walpole establishing a Whig oligarchy as a result of their measures to vilify Court patronage and party prejudice. This left the First Lord unable to dominate government as historians such as Plumb have asserted. A point that has been reiterated throughout, is that the Country was not a minimal or mythical force in the political landscape, its adherents were significant contributors to overturning the appeal of place, patronage and party. These facets of government were replaced with a widespread desire to uphold personal principles, family status and political independence instead. Other prominent misconceptions forcefully addressed are that political manoeuvrings occurred mainly in London, at court or in parliament. By contrast, it was in rural communities that Walpole, the Country interest and other factions discussed important political matters. Providing a nuance to the view of Habermas, Chapters One and Two did much to reveal that political dealings occurred mostly in private networks and organisations, rather than through the press or in a public arena.

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19 Pocock, *Politics, Language and Time*, p. 124; Owen, *The Pattern of Politics*, pp. 5–6.



The conclusions arrived at in this thesis have been achieved through an array of methodologies. This exposition of the Country cause has relied on the micro-historical, prosopographical and linguistic examination of a wide range of sources. A greater clarity in understanding the dynamics of power groups was achieved as a result of explaining how the use of language changed during the period. Linguistic studies were especially helpful in showing how and why party and patronage faded from the political landscape so quickly. The vocabulary of a new Country cause, which took the place of older Whig and Tory lexicons, reveals who subscribed to certain factions or interests, how such individuals defined themselves politically and what principles they represented in government.

Through micro-historical approaches this thesis has demonstrated that a wide strata of people, from yeomen to members of the gentry, both male and female identified with the Country cause. This, in turn, lends gravity to the point made throughout that the Country interest was both popular and influential, comprising of many different people from all walks of society. This realisation was achieved by approaching politics on a localised level, showing how the Country penchant for rustication led to a contraction of the public sphere into close-knit, private realms of influence instead. These approaches all help to reveal the complexity of the Country's integration in politics, which has often been difficult to understand, as it does not fit neatly with paradigms adhered to in many other studies.

This thesis, in part, aimed to show that because the period before and after Walpole's tenure in office is marred by party, patronage and warfare, that it should not be taken for granted that early-eighteenth-century politics belonged to the Whigs and Tories, spurred on by the drive of a prime minister who dominated all before him. By examining the lives and writings of multiple, forgotten

individuals, alongside the changing language more precisely, these misconceptions have been remedied. It is seen that the Country nullified the allure of patronage, alongside a move towards punishing the corrupt, a shift to faction away from parties and a long-standing struggle to prevent the nation being embroiled in war.

As Clark observes, Namier claimed in his monograph on politics in the reign of George III, that his next book would be on the rise of party, for he discussed nothing about the decline of Whig and Tory that happened before.<sup>20</sup> While Clark mentions party declines only after 1740, with Namier not including it at all (not being able to write another book before his death), this thesis has shown the process was occurring much sooner than anticipated, with the re-emergence of the Country interest. It was only after 1750 that British politics slithered once more into a contest between Whig and Tory, in the face of war, industrialisation and revolution, showing how fluid and fickle both history and politics can be.<sup>21</sup>

Constantine Caffentzis states 'this period was and remains quite confusing', asking the question, 'was the Court/Country distinctions of the pre-Civil War period applicable to the 1720s and 1730s?'<sup>22</sup> Over five chapters, this thesis has attempted to impose some semblance of order and understanding to this muddled reality of politics, something historians have glossed over with more simplistic and anachronistic claims. It shows unequivocally that Court-Country dimensions in politics survived and more importantly, that they can and certainly should be applied to the period, for not to do so ignores the views and impetus of many important people, leading to a warping of the historiography and a stagnation of history.

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20 Clark, 'The Decline of Party, 1740–1760', p. 499.

21 Stewart, *The Origins of Canadian Politics*, p. 15.

22 Constantine Caffentzis, *Exciting the Industry of Mankind, George Berkeley's Philosophy of Money* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2000), p. 396.

Reinvigorating discussions about the Country interest does more than just fit pieces of the historical puzzle into a clear image, helping to reveal the true nature of politics during Walpole held office. The Country message was that of stoic resolution to change government, acting against the folly of party, the danger of corruption and the tragedy of war. Country principles made a significant impact on prince Frederick, who would predecease his father. It was Frederick's son, the soon to be king George III, who once again allowed Country sentiments to seep into his reign and broader philosophies. The existence of the Country resided in contemporary memory, its lessons and deeds recounted in writings and the actions of its politicians. In modern scholarship however, the Country cause is maligned, underestimated if not forgotten completely. What makes this omission so conspicuous, was that the Country interest formed the fundamental link between the decline of party and the rise of faction in the early-eighteenth century. The Patriots in particular had learned much from the example of the Country, in how they used innovative measures and platforms to influence politics away from court. Upholding the cause for war and seeking to obtain places in government, the Patriots would achieve their ambitions, changing the framework of state politics dramatically, dislodging Walpole and the Country from power. It was a fall from grace that is explained as the conclusion to this thesis.

## II

The conservative disposition of the first two Georges toward British domestic politics, allowed both monarchs to remain supportive of Walpole's management of parliament, despite the large amounts of popular and political opposition levelled at him. An awkward, but mutually beneficial relationship formed between the king and Walpole, understanding they both needed each other for self-preservation. Both George I and II in many ways exploited monarchical infallibility, using

Walpole as a lightning rod for the rebukes of the opposition instead. In return, the Georges provided the First Lord with assurances of support and protection from most of the hostility he received.<sup>23</sup>

During the latter days of Walpole's tenure, the First Lord struggled to maintain the confidence of his monarch without Caroline. George II could be hesitant and frustrated easily, in terms of his character, he suffered 'not a lack of control, but a sense he lacked control'.<sup>24</sup> While assertive in the supervision of his native dominion of Hanover, George was all too aware of his limited political role in Britain, outside the army.<sup>25</sup> As Black mentions, contemporaries 'widely believed that George could be manipulated'.<sup>26</sup> It can be seen that the fundamental authority George wielded was compromised easily. The resignation of Walpole resulted in George being bullied by politicians, who remained implacable in opposition to his prerogative.<sup>27</sup>

During this transition period, fraught with intrigue and faction, Hervey intimated to his monarch 'the great crisis in which it is to be determined, whether your majesty is ever to be really king and supreme governor again in this country, or not'.<sup>28</sup> It was during 'the rule of the Pelhams', directly after Walpole resigned, where significant, dramatic changes in the demeanour of subsequent ministers could be located, especially with regards to bowing to the authority of their sovereigns. Henry Pelham, among others, became a 'defiant no man', the beginning of a bold new lineage of politicians, tipping the scales of balance in the established British political settlement.<sup>29</sup> It was a legacy based on the power and influence of family, individual and faction, providing a continuous erosion of the authority of the king thereafter, resulting in a monarchy that is viewed in the present day as a tradition, figure-head and rubber-stamp of government.

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23 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 158.

24 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 109.

25 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 680; Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 10.

26 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 119.

27 Sedgwick, *The House of Commons: 1715–1754*, p. 514.

28 Lord Hervey to Lord Bristol, 6 July 1742, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 951/47/11, f. 83.

29 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 178.

The Hanoverian monarchs had the peculiar task of reigning as absolute kings at Hanover and limited ones when in Britain, but in most cases, before Walpole resigned, both monarchs enjoyed more power and freedom in domestic and foreign affairs than their ministers held in both kingdoms.<sup>30</sup> Although Black claims 'George had no particular political agenda', it was his subjects who would eventually mould domestic and foreign policy for him.<sup>31</sup> Proactive in opening parliaments that set agendas for the year, their opening speeches were scripted by Court ministers and in the case of George I, read aloud on their behalf also.<sup>32</sup>

Both Georges abandoned the use of mixed ministries seen under William and Anne.<sup>33</sup> The politically timid nature of the George II proved self-destructive for royal prerogative. George harboured detested ministers, such as Walpole and Carteret, who were trusted to implement domestic policy in parliament and political society.<sup>34</sup> With both George I and George II dependent on their administrations to help them rule the nation effectively, each were hard pressed to understand the intricacies of the British constitutional system and reticent to seek the guidance of a wide counsel. George II knew he could not trust his advisers to have his interest alone, knowing ultimately that private ambition drove them. Transferring substantial direction to ministers alienated their roles as king, alongside their presence in government.<sup>35</sup>

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30 Cook, 'Enlightened Absolutism, new wine in old bottles', para. 12; Jeremy Black, 'George I, & II: Limited Monarchs', *History Today*, 53.2 (February 2003), para. 7.

31 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 115; Black, 'George I, & II: Limited Monarchs', para. 13.

32 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1. p. 26; Plan of a Speech sent by Robert Walpole, 10 January 1736, NS, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, ff. 182–185; for another private gathering at Walpole's house to draft speeches, see Lord Dashwood's Journal, Tuesday, 9 October 1722, WRAS. Dashwood Ms. D2, f. 9; also, see a meeting with Newcastle to draft a speech for the king in, Lord Stafford to Lord Huntington, 11 January 1732, London, HL. HA. 13212, B.73.

33 Ellis, 'William III and the Politicians', pp. 119, 123–6.

34 Budgell, *A Letter to the Craftsman*, p. 28; Clavering, *The Diary of Mary Clavering*, p. 58; Yorke, *Walpoliana*, p. 11; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 17; Beasley, 'Portraits of a Monster', p. 419; Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* pp. 177, 185; Hardwicke Corr, p. 201; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, pp. 68, 151.

35 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 1, p. 239; Harris, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts*, p. 147; MacLachlan, 'The Road to Peace 1710–13', p. 208; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 158; Yorke, *Walpoliana*, p. 15; Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 177.

The twenty-one year 'Robinocracy' that Walpole held office, as the *Craftsman* coined the period, allowed strong, powerful and effective oppositions to be built against Court, which could operate outside the graces and favour of the monarch and their administrations.<sup>36</sup> The efforts of the Country interest ensured the dominance of independent politicians, the influence of family connections, the importance of communities external to court and the organisation of political groups bereft of party loyalties. This catalysed the growth of factions such as the Patriots, one of many, emerging by emulating the successful measures Country politicians developed to press their cause. Forming an alliance with Frederick in opposition, 'the constitutional equivalent of heading an insurrection against his father', the Patriots twisted the Country platform to achieve power and were born from animosity the Country had levelled at Court.<sup>37</sup>

These changes signified a remarkably different political landscape, from the period Walpole held office until his resignation. Culminating in the toppling of the Country interest and Walpole's ministry, Pelham and Pitt would impose their service upon a reluctant George II, having been dismissed from government by their sovereign. These two ministers refused to be subservient managers to their monarch. George could appoint and remove ministers at his discretion initially, but this prerogative was annulled with the use political blackmail, deployed most aptly with resignation and embargo of his ministry when under the direction of Pelham and Pitt.<sup>38</sup>

Country politicians believed they provided the monarch with a contingency government, their loyalty based on a maxim that 'the king can do no wrong' and that 'the ministers are wholly accountable'.<sup>39</sup> Those of a Country disposition often worried that parliament had lost its ability to

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36 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 18 October 1729, 5.172, p. 153; Romney, *The House of Commons: 1715–1754*, v. 2, p. 514.

37 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. xxxiii.

38 Dickinson, *Walpole and the Whig Supremacy*, pp. 66, 72; Black, *Walpole in Power*, pp. 44, 58; Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* pp. 191–192.

39 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Monday, 26 December 1726, 1.7, p. 60.

counter corruption and malpractice of the king's ministers, who were always poised to usurp royal authority and alter the constitution to their liking.<sup>40</sup> Always ready to advise and assist the monarch upon matters of government, the Country could act as an extra-parliamentary council, a credible alternative to government as many could operate free from the corruption of Court.<sup>41</sup>

Anne had been no stranger in allowing the Country to manage government for a short period of time, to provide her weary subjects rest from war and heavy taxation. Where Anne had no scruples to purge her household and ministry on behalf of her subjects, George II limited himself. Despite threatening his ministers with ushering in the opposition to change his government, the king never decided to call upon the Country to assist him in government.<sup>42</sup> Upon the resignation of Walpole, at a time when George II may have needed Country politicians the most, the cause had collapsed. Unable to break away from his inclination to support the Whig party, the king believed the Country to be nothing but a byword for Tories, and subsequently, all Jacobites, of which, asking for their help would damage his reputation and see him usurped for James III.<sup>43</sup> When Bolingbroke wrote to Wyndham in 1739, he echoed the wisdom of his long dead friend, for 'Daniel Pulteney used to say that the Pretender would never subdue us, but his name would'.<sup>44</sup>

### III

The lack of investigation into the mechanisms of the Country interest has spurred the continual reappraisal of party politics in the historiography of the period. This has led several historians to cite Walpole as the first 'prime minister', who at the head of Whig oligarchy, presided over a

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40 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 20 September 1729, 5.168, pp. 127–133.

41 Bennet, 'Conflict in the Church', pp. 167–8; Horwitz, 'The Structure of Parliamentary Politics', p. 97; Harris, *Politics Under the Later Stuarts*, p. 4; Davies, *The Characters of*, p. 31; D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Monday, 3 April 1727, 1.34, pp. 316–17.

42 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 3, p. 680.

43 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 194.

44 Lord Bolingbroke to Sir William Wyndham, November 1739, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 19, f. 117.

ministry credited with establishing structures of government recognisable today. These methods of statecraft range from conducting his administration in a party 'cabinet' and the implementation of 'sofa style' government, to organising an effective system of lobby whips.

The reality, however, is that Walpole presided over an enduring twenty-year term in high office as First Lord of the Treasury, a politician following a string of monarchical favourites and political managers, each to have later bestowed upon them the anachronistic title of prime minister.<sup>45</sup> Many contemporaries, most notably those of a Country persuasion, believed 'the office of prime minister is, in its nature of dangerous consequence to a free people'.<sup>46</sup> It has been asserted, throughout this thesis, that the Country were successful in their efforts to ensure Walpole could not exercise power as effectively as the historiographical consensus has emphasised.

It is easy to see why historians have claimed Walpole acted in the capacity of a prime minister. With the use of language, Country politicians did all they could to vilify the title and position of prime minister, assigning it to Walpole in order to disparage him. Much like the term 'great man' was used to ridicule the First Lord in a sardonic fashion, historians seem to have taken these assertions at face value, as sincere terms of endearment and real positions of state.

Both the Patriots and the Country were 'persuaded that a sole or even a first minister is an officer unknown to the laws of Britain, inconsistent with the constitution of this country and destructive of liberty in any government'.<sup>47</sup> As a result of this popular mistrust, Walpole's seemingly lofty position

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45 Clayton Roberts, 'The Fall of the Godolphin Ministry', *Journal of British Studies*, 22.1 (Autumn, 1982), p. 84; E. Roscoe, *Robert Harley, Earl of Oxford, Prime Minister 1710–1714* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1902), p. 142; Fraser, *King James VI*, p. 120; Black, *Walpole in Power*, p. 54; B. Burke, *A Genealogical of the Dormant, Abeyant, Forfeited and Extinct Peerages of the British Empire* (London: Harrison, 1866), p. 665; Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 20; Herbert Atherton, *Political Prints in the Age of Hogarth: A Study of the Ideographic Representation of Politics* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1974), p. 192.

46 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Monday, 20 February 1727, 1.22, p. 190.

47 A Humble Address Presented to Advise and Beseech His Majesty to Remove the Right Honourable Sir Robert Walpole From His Presence and Council Forever, 13 February 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 47000, f. 109.



in public office left him continually exposed to attacks on his personal character and political reputation.<sup>48</sup> Walpole himself stated that 'I am called repeatedly and insidiously prime and sole minister'.<sup>49</sup> Despite the refutations of Walpole, posterity has continued to label Walpole as a prime minister, misconstruing the language of the period.

The way in which Walpole interacted with his monarch has also led to a profound misunderstanding of the politics of the period. The fragile political situation for the Hanoverian monarchs made them easily susceptible targets for an ambitious politician. Despite the Revolution of 1688, where the crown was coerced to abstain from power, ministers dared little to defy their sovereigns, with many loyal and compliant servants of the crown found during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Despite the prevalence of Country rhetoric claiming Walpole influenced the monarch in a dangerous fashion, the First Lord advised the Georges but did not dictate. Walpole was the last of an older breed of privy counsellors who followed a Stuart example.<sup>50</sup> Walpole was remarkably different to the intractable and often intransigent politicians who superseded him in office.

What many of Country politicians resented, was that like many of Walpole's predecessors, the First Lord accrued significant wealth for his trouble in government, amassing a huge fortune from the public purse, unashamedly. Walpole did not always serve the needs of his own avarice however, he respected and served the prerogative of the king, having kept the British political system in a state where the monarch could still exercise the authority to act as the primary force in government. In many cases, the longevity of ministers such as Walpole often depended merely 'upon the breath of their sovereigns'.<sup>51</sup>

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48 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, 27 February 1727, 1.29, p. 209.

49 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 3, p. 184.

50 The Member of Parliament's Reply, WSRO. Petworth Ms. 7616, f. 30; George Lyttelton to Lady Marlborough, 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 1.

51 Black, *Walpole in Power*, p. 30.

In a limited monarchy, politicians had the capacity to possess more power than they had previously, although this would not be wielded until Walpole resigned. When the First Lord left office, George II was forced to 'concede the management of domestic politics to his ministers, he had long done so, but now he did so on different terms'.<sup>52</sup> The *Craftsman* warned this balance of power between monarch and minister was in danger of being eroded, with the embracing of Country attitudes proffered as the only hope to protect and uphold a delicate system:

The king was often told both in parliament and in print that the crown had been the gift of the people, that it was given on conditions, and that it behoved him to observe these conditions. As it would be both as easy and lawful, in case he broke any of them, for the people to resume that gift, as if it had been for them to bestow it.<sup>53</sup>

William III threatened to abdicate in anger, after claiming that he had 'been used like a dog' by his politicians.<sup>54</sup> George II was no exception, for in his usual sense of frustration, he gave an emotional bluster, claiming 'ministers are kings in this country'.<sup>55</sup> It was at this point where limited monarchs in limited governments showed they were reliant on the inclinations of their ministers. The warnings of Country politicians failed to resonate with George II, who found that his subjects could create 'cabals and alliances, that the power of the king had little to counter', and in relation to the Pelham administration, the Country were providential when they stated 'it may become dangerous for the king to displace his ministers'.<sup>56</sup> George II, through gritted teeth jested that he presided over a nation of republicans who had 'killed their kings' and whom he 'had to pay not to cut his throat'.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 194.

<sup>53</sup> Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 282; D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Saturday, 28 September 1734, 13.430, p. 29.

<sup>54</sup> Ellis, 'William III and the Politicians', p. 122.

<sup>55</sup> Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 185–7.

<sup>56</sup> D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Monday, 20 February 1727, 1.22, p. 192.

<sup>57</sup> Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2. p. 486; this was said in jest to Lady Sundon.

While Walpole may not have been the first choice of his king to preside over government, their doubt and hesitation toward other ministers who could take his place ensured an almost desperate trust being afforded the First Lord. Clayton Roberts has argued that Walpole could not plead the commands of his monarch to parliament in order to justify his actions.<sup>58</sup> In keeping with their principles, the Country kept Walpole at arm's length from implying the king was responsible for poor policy decisions. This was useful for George also, but he still attempted in other ways to facilitate the continuation of Walpole in office, mitigating the political and popular resentment he faced.<sup>59</sup> It was emphasised that Walpole, like Buckingham during the reign of James I, was a mere favourite who 'lingers' in power.<sup>60</sup>

#### IV

During the closing years of Walpole's tenure, Hervey warned Walpole repeatedly that his fellow ministers such as Hardwicke and Newcastle were out to usurp him. The First Lord was reported to have rebuked him in anger, stating 'they don't govern me, nor they shan't govern me'.<sup>61</sup> It was a reply that portrays a desperate side of Walpole, who battled to keep his administration intact and unified in the face of cataclysm. As the First Lord faced a Court power struggle, so too were his opposition, which began to divide in factions, with the traditional Country politicians pitted against their Patriot counterparts.<sup>62</sup> Chesterfield and Polwarth believed during their time in opposition, that

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58 Clayton Roberts, *The Growth of Responsible Government in Stuart England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008).

59 Clayton Roberts, 'The Growth of Political Stability Reconsidered', *Journal of British Studies* (1993), pp. 251–252.

60 D'Anvers, *Craftsman*, Monday, 8 May 1727, 1.44, p. 408.

61 Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, pp. 191–193; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. li.

62 A schism in the ministerial opposition appeared also. Without Court, Pulteney forms a government with Sandys, Carteret, Argyll, Tweeddale, Winchelsea and Gower. In opposition to them are the other half of the Patriots, most notably Cobham's Cubs, Pitt, Waller, Lyttelton, Pelham alongside Lords Bedford, Sandwich and Chesterfield.

politicians such as Pulteney were on course to destroy the Court and Country effort, and 'will get as much power and as soon as he can, and upon any terms'.<sup>63</sup>

Chetwynd and Cobham were also proved wrong in thinking that a removal of one man could provide ample satisfaction for the Country and Patriots. The most poignant observation of this was delivered by Bolingbroke, who wrote to his dismay, 'they are preparing to continue Walpole's scheme of government in other hands and that the sole object of their pretended patriotism is to deliver the government of their country from faction to faction'.<sup>64</sup> The Country found it difficult to target Walpole for impeachment successfully, as politicians scrambled for power in-lieu of bartering the best deal to obtain office. Letters circulated stating-

The persons you allude to, that you think might be prevailed with to act against Sir Robert are not to be moved. They have been tried and their own interest in so doing has been manifestly shown them, but to no purpose. They consider money as their only interest and would not venture the suspension of a quarters salary to save the whole nation.<sup>65</sup>

Before the peak of 'this extraordinary crisis' was reached in 1741, Walpole remained defiant to the overwhelming opposition that had built against him.<sup>66</sup> Less than one year later, the First Lord complained bitterly that 'the panic was so great among what I should call my own friends, that they all declared my retiring was become absolutely necessary as the only means to carry on public business'.<sup>67</sup> With some of his most staunch supporters intimating that government could not be conducted any further under his guidance, it seemed that even George II had set his face against the

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63 Chesterfield Mss, v. 2, p. 314, 467; Davies, *The Characters of...*, pp. 30–35; Polwarth Mss, v. 5, p. 175.

64 Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 204.

65 Chesterfield Mss, v. 2, p. 402.

66 Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 263.

67 Sir Robert Walpole to William Cavendish, 2 February 1742, CHA, Devonshire Ms, f. 114.19.

continuance of Walpole at the head of his ministry.<sup>68</sup>

'The grand and final assault' upon Walpole's political authority was dealt with the utmost force.<sup>69</sup> Contemporaries mentioned 'the great joy I have in the victories obtained in the House of Commons, which arises from the unanimity that I have remarked in the Country party there'.<sup>70</sup> This upheaval, otherwise known as 'the great revolution at Court', forced Walpole to surrender his employments, for 'it was high time for him to do so'.<sup>71</sup> Walpole's final death throws portray him to have 'turned as a drowning man snatches at a straw, to negotiations that would not serve him', and in his desperation, he offered prince Frederick a substantial sum to support his prolongation in office, a motion that was rejected distastefully.<sup>72</sup>

As the Country moved to ensure the First Lord would not escape prison, Britain buzzed with intrigue upon how Walpole would meet his downfall. Marlborough spread gossip, claiming that she heard 'Sir Robert says it is better to buy the members after they are in the House, than to trouble himself about them before, but I believe he will take all ways to save himself, since whatever it costs it will be out of the public money'.<sup>73</sup> Walpole's 'safe conveyance from power' had been planned however, with the king assisting him by adjourning parliament for a fortnight to settle a new administration, where Walpole understood that he should 'go up immediately to the House of Lords with the title Earl of Orford, Lord Wilmington will be put at the head of the treasury'.<sup>74</sup>

To the shock of many, and to the dismay of the Country, Walpole retired without successful attempts of prosecution and impeachment for corruption being brought against him. The First Lord

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68 Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 258.

69 Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, pp. 199-200; on 13 February 1741, Carteret makes a move to have George II dismiss Walpole from his council.

70 Marchmont Corr, v. 2, p. 264.

71 Lord Chandos to Sir Robert Maude, 24 February 1742, London, HL. MssST. 57, v. 56, f. 19.

72 Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, p. 204.

73 Marchmont Corr, v. 2, p. 234.

74 Sir Robert Walpole to William Cavendish, 2 February 1742, CHA, Devonshire Ms, f. 114.19.

was thought to have burnt many incriminating documents and was certainly aided by the king, who 'screened him from future resentments'.<sup>75</sup> Pulteney was singled out, as the only man who held the power to break Walpole. A club of worthy citizens in the City sent a letter to Newcastle, claiming they were confident Walpole's colleagues 'can never approve, much less consent to the screening of a minister, whose maladministration he himself has been opposing for these 15 years, with the greatest eloquence and greatest strength of argument'.<sup>76</sup> At this time, Pulteney had the greatest 'weight' in parliament, both politically and physically, but lay extremely ill, 'his constitution, corpulence and short neck no good signs of long life'.<sup>77</sup>

The recent loss of three of the most able Country politicians, Marchmont, Wyndham and Strafford left a void in parliament and an ailing Pulteney lamenting that 'my friends that are men of worth drop so thick around me and there is so little worth living for, that methinks I wish to go too, at least I should rejoice to go out of this cursed, corrupt country, if I could quit it with honour'.<sup>78</sup> Closeted by the king and coerced that he should accept a peerage for his discretion, Pulteney was threatened not to continue the investigation of Walpole, or else matters would get personal between them.

Walpole had access to public expenditure to defend his character in the press. As a result, the Country believed his ministry's political decisions were often made by people who paid no real price for being wrong. Impressing this concern on as many that would listen, Country politicians were disappointed in the Patriots who were fonder of securing places, rather than standing beside them against corruption. Instead of making the First Lord an example of, the Patriots were

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75 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 176; Hardwicke Corr, v. 1, pp. 198–200; Vernon's motion for *Flagrante Bello* was closely contested, see *Ibid*, p. 202; on the 11<sup>th</sup> hour of the impeachment motion, with all 136 peers present to vote, it was rejected when George II made it clear that he wanted an annulment of proceedings, in, Coxe, *Memoirs of Horatio, Lord Walpole*, v. 2, p. 46; Yorke, *Walpoliana*, p. 8.

76 Mark Lane to Lord Newcastle, 16 March 1742, BL. Add. Ms. 32699, f. 111.

77 Lord Chandos to Mr Watts, 17 November 1740, Cannons, HL. MssST. 57, v. 54, f. 49; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 3, p. 953; the only person larger than Pulteney during this period was John Hynde Cotton.

78 William Pulteney to Sir John Rushout, 6 June 1741, London, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

preoccupied trading former principles for temporary positions in a new ministry.<sup>79</sup> George II, as a token of loyalty even granted Walpole an annual pension of £4,000, which he drew when his passing from court had faded from recent memory.<sup>80</sup> This was in stark contrast to the generation of Country politicians who died either penniless or disappeared back into political non-existence, removing themselves to their rural seats, increasingly unwilling to advise government further.<sup>81</sup>

The Patriots had reinforced the view throughout their opposition to Court and Country, that 'it is plain Britain must lose our trade or engage in war'.<sup>82</sup> With the ousting of Walpole and the Patriots placed in power, contemporaries proclaimed that Pitt had 'retrieved the sinking honour of the nation'.<sup>83</sup> The Patriots were a faction who would channel a bloody but celebrated furrow into history, through war, family politics and intrigue. George II received what he had long awaited, the chance to pursue his image as the soldier king, but this was to be at the highest price possible, as one group was again subjected over another. Walpole had turned out to be part of a valuable double team, a sincere bulwark as the only minister who had stood between a vulnerable monarch and a new caste of headstrong ministers, who shifted the balance of power from monarch to politician.

Although the administration of Walpole was markedly different to that of the Patriots, both groups benefited at the expense of their former allies. Walpole had successfully resigned with titles and money, avoiding imprisonment, but in doing so, had allowed ministers such as Pelham and Thomas Pitt to bully and 'force George's hand'.<sup>84</sup> The Patriots obtained the reins of government, resulting in the wider Country interest to become a spent force, redundant without their younger, parliamentary support. Walpole departed from politics after more than twenty years in high office, his reputation

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79 Marchmont Mss, v. 2, p. 240.

80 Coxe, *Walpole*, v. 3, pp. 591-2.

81 Davies, *The Characters of*, p. 43.

82 Portland Mss, v. 7, p. 407.

83 Davies, *The Characters of*, p. 71.

84 Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* p. 191

unblemished *de jure*, yet his image detested *de facto*.<sup>85</sup>

Having resigned on the day he was to stand a public trial, Walpole was immediately raised to the peerage by the king. Stepping out of the House of Commons, he uttered to a grateful audience, 'Gentlemen, I shall never enter this house again'.<sup>86</sup> Here he made a short walk into a busy House of Lords, where, as Lord Orford, he was greeted magnanimously by 'the whole court of requests, who followed him wishing him long life, health and prosperity'.<sup>87</sup> Bonfires were lit on the streets 'which made him fret a little', but many public and private individuals were in their own way relieved to see the First Lord abstain from the forefront of politics finally.<sup>88</sup> The quintessential 'parliamentarian, courtier and man of business', Walpole was a minister who held 'the longest hand at hazard ever' and with more skill and dexterity than fate, deserves to be known as more than just 'the luckiest dog that ever meddled in public affairs'.<sup>89</sup>

Walpole embraced the chance to rusticate and at age sixty-seven, away from the betrayal and intrigue of Court, he walked in his garden at Houghton, by 'the oaks, the beeches, the chestnuts'. In this natural world, Walpole found his plants and paintings 'cannot deceive, they will not lie in sincerity and have as many beauties about me as fill up all my hours of dangling'.<sup>90</sup> For all the Country platforms Walpole emulated over his years in office, his rustication would be short lived, with the king requesting his assistance constantly. Overworked, elderly, exhausted and in 1745, ailing with excruciating liver stones, Walpole's trip from Norfolk to London would prove his last, the bumpy overland coach ride to London at last extinguishing his life.

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85 Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 1, p. 138; *Ibid*, v. 2, p. 531.

86 Francis Hastings to Theophilus Hastings, 4 February 1742, HL. HA 5006, B.82

87 Lord Huntington to Theophilus Hastings, 1742, HL. HA 5004, B.82.

88 Francis Hastings to Theophilus Hastings, 4 February 1742, HL. HA 5006, B.82.

89 Sedgwick, *The House of Commons: 1715–1754*, v. 2, p. 516; Urstad, *Sir Robert Walpole's Poets*, p. 29; Hervey, *Memoirs*, v. 2, p. 517.

90 Sir Robert Walpole to General Charles Churchill, 24 June 1743, Houghton, HL. HA. 13052.



During the last years of Walpole's life, shortly after he resigned from office, Orford found the political environment of the 1740s an entirely different landscape to that when he started. While this thesis began with a quote by Stair, it is only fitting that he should appear once more at its closing. An old survivor and independent during the period, Stair over the course of his own life had associated himself with the Country cause and the Patriots. Balcarres found that Stair had turned full circle in 1742 to 'become a better courtier than I ever thought he could have been', and was even seen laughing and joking with Walpole and Argyll, his inveterate enemies formerly.<sup>91</sup>

Sir John Dalrymple, 4<sup>th</sup> Baronet, a relation to Stair, would eventually seek to 'revive Whigs and Tories to restore stability', claiming in 1769 that 'great partys are at an end, and a hundred little ones have come in their places'. After the passing of Walpole and the Country cause, Dalrymple and others would forever wish 'the two great and useful partys of Whig and Tory will take their place again in the nation', so that people could unite as either one or the other, for the good of the crown and their country.<sup>92</sup> Politics without party was not a new thing, a point often forgotten. Dalrymple would eventually have his wish fulfilled, but how this political situation ever came to occur should not be ignored. Faction had led people to yearn for parties once more, with this state of affairs stemming from the efforts of the Country interest during Walpole's tenure, who had laid the foundations for acting and thinking on behalf of an individual's personal principles alone.

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92 Stair Mss, ScRO GD35/60/82; Add. Ms. 35639, f. 144, in, Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III*, p. 278.

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- Grenville, Lieutenant to Thomas Smith, 1740, HL. MssSTG. 22, b. 14, f. 2.
- Grenville. Richard to Anna Chambers, 5 December 1736, BL. Add. Ms. 57804, f. 83.
- Grenville, Richard to George Grenville, 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 57804, f. 36.
- Grenville, Thomas Henry to Richard Grenville, 12 June 1742, *HMS Romney*, Off Toulon, HL. MssSTG. 17, b. 192.
- Hanbury, Mr to the Earl of Strafford, 9 September 1732, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 420.
- Hanbury, Mr to the Earl of Strafford, 24 November 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 421.
- Hardwicke, Lord to Edward Vernon, Vice Admiral of the Blue, 3 December 1740, London, BL. Add. Ms. 35586, f. 318.
- Harley. Edward, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Oxford to Edward Harley, 1 July 1732, Wimpole, Roystone, Cambridgeshire, BL. Add. Ms. 73081, f. 106.
- Harley. Edward, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Oxford to Edward Harley, 27 July 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 73081, f. 112.
- Harley, Edward to 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl of Oxford, 12 December 1727, Eywood, BL. Add. Ms. 73081, f. 22.
- Harrison, Edward to Lord Hardwicke, 12 October 1728, Windsor Castle, BL. Add. Ms. 35908, f. 202.
- Hastings, Francis to Theophilus Hastings, 4 February 1742, HL. HA 5006, B.82
- Hastings, Francis to Theophilus Hastings, 15 March 1742, HL. HA 5010, B.83.
- Hay, William to the Duke of Newcastle, 9 August 1733, Glyndebourne, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 72.
- Hay, William to the Duke of Newcastle, 24 September 1733, Glyndebourne, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 279.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 13 November 1729, London, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 89.
- Hervey, Lord to Lady Mary Montagu, December 1729, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, f. 43.
- Hervey, Lord to Lady Bristol, 27 September 1730, Windsor Castle, SRO. Ickworth MS. 941/47/2, f. 186.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 5 January 1731, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 150.

- Hervey, Lord to Prince Frederick, 14 July 1731, Houghton, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, ff. 200-205.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 17 August 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 158.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 26 August 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 295.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 27 August 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 161.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 15 October 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 244.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 23 October 1731, Hampton Court, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 258.
- Hervey, Lord to Prince Frederick, 6 November 1731, Redlinch, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 267.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 30 December 1731, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 334.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 25 January 1733, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 354.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 6 February 1733, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 357.
- Hervey, Lord to Dr. Middleton, 20 June 1733, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 2.
- Hervey, Lord to Dr. Middleton, 1734, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 53.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 12 January 1734, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/4, f. 455.
- Hervey, Lord to Horatio Walpole, 3 January 1735, St. James, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 84.
- Hervey, Lord to Horatio Walpole, 12/23 September 1735, Kensington Palace, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 76.
- Hervey, Lord to Horatio Walpole, 31 October 1735, St. James Palace, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 81.
- Hervey, Lord to Horatio Walpole, 18/29 November 1735, St. James, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 80.
- Hervey, Lord to Horatio Walpole, 23 December 1735, St. James Palace, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 84.
- Hervey, Lord to Dr. Middleton, 14 February 1736, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 103.
- Hervey, Lord to Henry Fox, 13 June 1737, SRO. Ickworth Ms, 941/47/4, f. 57.
- Hervey, Lord to Lady Mary Montagu, 18 June 1737, Ickworth Park, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, ff. 44-45.
- Hervey, Lord to Dr. Middleton, 12 July 1737, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 123.
- Hervey, Lord to Dr. Middleton, 8 November 1737, St. James, SRO, Ickworth Ms, 941/47/7, f. 131
- Hervey, Lord to Lady Bristol, 2 December 1738, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, ff. 263-

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Hervey, Lord to Dr. Middleton, 27 March 1739, St. James, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/7, f. 187.

Hervey, Lord to Mary Montagu, 16 May 1741, Ickworth Park, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, f. 103.

Hervey, Lord to Mary Montagu, 25 June 1741, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, f. 111.

Hervey, Lord to his Father, 5 July 1742, Kensington Gravel Pits, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/11, f. 69.

Hervey, Lord to the Earl of Bristol, 6 July 1742, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 951/47/11, f. 83.

Hervey, Lord to Mary Montagu, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/2, f. 9.

Hill, Thomas to the Duke of Richmond, Saturday 21 November 1741, Plantation Office, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 41.

Howard, Henrietta, on the marriage of her sister, Dorothy, 1722, HL. SP Ms. HA. 6696.

Huntington, Lord to Theophilus Hastings, 1742, HL. HA 5004, B.82.

Hutcheson, Archibald to Lord Sunderland, 3 April 1722, East Barnet, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, ff. 64-65.

Irby, Sir William to Lord Guildford, 19 July 1727, Bodl. Ms. North, D.4, Fo. 133.

Johnson, Henry to the Earl of Strafford, 12 June 1733, OS, Sanlúcar, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 507.

Johnson, Henry to the Earl of Strafford, 8 December 1734, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 573.

Jones, Erasmus to the Earl of Strafford, 19 October 1731, London, BL. Add. Ms. 22221, f. 521.

Keene, Benjamin to the Duke of Newcastle, 13 December 1737, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 35883, ff. 207-209.

Keene, Benjamin and Abraham Castres to the Duke of Newcastle, 13 October 1738, Segovia, BL. Add. Ms. 35406, ff. 57-58.

Keene, Sir Benjamin to the Duke of Newcastle, 24 April 1739, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 35884, f. 98.

Keene, Benjamin (via his messenger Raddon) to the Duke of Newcastle, 9 July 1739, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 73983, f. 85.

Keene, Benjamin to the Duke of Newcastle, 14 July 1739, BL. Add. Ms. 35884, f. 125.

Keene, Benjamin to the Duke of Newcastle, 31 August 1739, Madrid, BL. Add. Ms. 73983, f. 141.

Knight, Robert (The Elder) to Lord Bolingbroke, 1734, BL. Add. Ms. 45889, f. 3.

Lambley, Samuel to the Earl of Strafford, 22 March 1739, Ipswich, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 4.

Lane, Mark to the Duke of Newcastle, 16 March 1742, BL. Add. Ms. 32699, f. 111.

Letter dated, October 1739, Genoa, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/110.

Letter from a Nobleman Abroad to His Friend in England, WRAS. Pakington Papers, 705:349, (3835/6/6).

Letter to George Grenville, 19 March 1729, London, BL. Add. Ms. 57804, f. 31.

Lord Dashwood's Journal, Tuesday, 9 October 1722, WRAS. Dashwood Ms. D2, f. 9.

Lord Hardwicke's Memoranda, Saturday, 19 February 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 35870, f. 19.

Lord Hardwicke's Memoranda, Monday, 5 September 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 35870, f. 25.

Lord Hervey's Maxims, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/15, f. 1.

Lord Hervey's Maxims, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 941/47/15, f. 5.

Lord Jersey's Copy of Prince Frederick's Letter to King George II, 3-4 August 1737, St. James, WSRO. Goodwood Ms, 41, ff. 4-6.

Lyttelton, George to the Duchess of Marlborough, Showing Lord Stair's Letter, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 9.

Lyttelton, George to the Duchess of Marlborough, 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, ff. 1-5.

Macgregory John, to Hugh Campbell, May 1720, HL. B34, LO. 9140.

Macky, John to Robert Walpole, 21 September 1723, Brussels, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 330.

Mackenzie, G. to the Earl of Strafford, 20/31 March 1734, Paris, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 72.

Marlborough, Duchess of to Sir John Rushout, 6 August 1727, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

Memorandum, 7 October 1730, BL. Add. Mss. 32993, ff. 108-9.

Memorandum by Thomas Reed (Jacobite Spy), BL. Add. Ms. 37395, f. 109.

Memorandum of the Cabinet Council, Relating to the Spanish Convention, 4 June 1739, Cockpit, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 41, f. 58.

Memorandum on the King's Overtures to the Prince of Wales, 1741, SRO, Ickworth Ms, 941/47/10, ff. 325-327.

Milles, Jeremiah, Travel Diary, July 1735, BL. Add. Ms. 15776, ff. 62-65.

- Milles, Jeremiah, Travel Diary, July 1735, BL. Add. Ms. 15776, f. 110.
- Milles, Jeremiah, Travel Diary, Account of a Tour in Hampshire and Sussex, 15 September – 20 September 1743, BL. Add. Ms. 15776, f. 230.
- Minutes of the Cabinet Council, Monday, 5 May 1740, Cockpit, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 951/47/11, ff. 18-19.
- Morice, John to Nicholas Morice, 30 March 1721, BoE. Morice Ms, 10A97/1, f. 133.
- Morice, Nicholas to Humphrey Morice, 13 June 1721, BoE, Morice Ms, 10A97/1, f. 215.
- Morice, Nicholas to Humphrey Morice, 1724, BoE, Morice Ms, 10A97/2, f. 275.
- Morice, Morice to Humphrey Morice, 10 July 1725, Werrington, BoE, Morice Ms. 10A97/2, f. 286.
- Newcastle, Duke of, 25 August 1722, Newcastle House, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 236.
- Newcastle, Duke of, 28 June 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 266.
- Newcastle, Duke of, 5 July 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, ff. 267-268.
- Newcastle, Duke of to Edward Becher, 5 July 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 270.
- Newcastle, Duke of, 18 July 1723, Newcastle House, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 279.
- Newcastle, Duke of to Lord Townshend, 6 August 1725, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 137.
- Newcastle, Duke of to Lord Townshend, 23 September 1725, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 165.
- Newcastle, Duke of to Lord Townshend, 5 November 1725, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 183.
- Newcastle, Duke of, 28 June 1723, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 266.
- Newcastle, Duke of to Sir Robert Walpole, 25 August 1723, Haland, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 317.
- Newcastle, Duke of, 18 October 1723, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 353.
- Newcastle, Lord to Benjamin Keene, 24 March 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 33028, f. 281.
- Newcastle, Duke of to Benjamin Keene, 1 January 1731, Whitehall, BL. Add. Mss. 35883, ff. 133-144.
- Newcastle, Duke of to Messrs Plumptre, White & Gregory, 24 August 1731, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, f. 405.
- Newcastle, Duke of to Lord Clinton, 13 April 1733, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 3.
- Newcastle, Duke of to the Duke of Richmond, 11 February 1734, Newcastle House, Goodwood. Ms.



1160. f. 2.

Newcastle, Duke of to the Duke of Devonshire, 27 September 1737, Claremont, CHA. Devonshire Ms, f. 182.3.

Newcastle, Duke of to Admiral Haddock, 19 February 1739, Whitehall, BL. EG. 2528, f. 168.

Newcastle, Duke of to Benjamin Keene (Most Private Cypher), 14 June 1739, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 35884, f. 129.

Newcastle, Duke of to the Duke of Richmond, 26 July 1739, Newcastle House, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 1160, f. 18.

Newcastle, Duke of to the Duke of Richmond, 4 September 1740, Whitehall, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 1160, f. 26.

Newcastle, Duke of to the Duke of Richmond, 21 February 1741, Claremont, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 104, f. 256.

Newcastle, Duke of to Lord Hardwicke, 10 January 1742, Claremont, BL. Add. Ms. 32699, f. 14.

Newcastle, duke of to the Duke of Richmond, Tuesday, 9 March 1742, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 1160, f. 47.

Norris, Sir John, Journal Entry, October 1739, BL. Add. Ms. 28132, f. 63.

Norris, Sir John, Journal Entry, December 1739, BL. Add. Ms. 28132, ff. 113-116.

Norris, Sir John, Journal Entry, May 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 28133, f. 4.

Notes for a Speech on the Behaviour of Benjamin Keene, 1737, SRO. Ickworth Ms. 47/10, f. 65.

November 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 31.

Observations on the Treaty of Seville, 19 August 1730, OS, BL. Add. Ms. 35883, ff. 61-63.

Order for Taking into Further Consideration the Convention Lately Concluded Between Britain and Spain, BL. Add. Ms. 47000, f. 100.

Orrery, Earl of to the Earl of Strafford, 17 February 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 150.

Paper from Spain, Handed to Sir Robert Walpole by Benjamin Keene, BL. Add. Ms. 74065, nf.

Parker, Thomas to Hugh Campbell, 31 October 1721, House of Lords, HL. B40. LO. 12422.

Payne, Robert to Lord Sunderland, 7 March 1722, Simpua Coffee House, Pall Mall, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 132.

Peck, Susan (Hamilton) to John Campbell, 12 May 1737, HL. B32, LO. 9040.

- Peck, Thomas to Lord Percival in Pall Mall, 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 26.
- Pelham, Henry to Lord Essex, 12 October 1732, OS, London, BL. Add. Ms. 27732, f. 18.
- Pelham, Henry to Lord Essex, 18 January 1734, London, BL. Add. Ms. 27733, f. 11.
- Pelham, Henry to Lord Essex, 27 June 1734, Horse Guards, BL. Add. Ms. 2733, f. 99.
- Pelham, Henry to the Duke of Newcastle, 16 March 1742, Lewes, BL. Add. Ms. 32699, f. 113.
- Philips, Ambrose to Theophilus Hastings, 29 December 1733, Edmondthorpe, HL. HA 10197, B.74.
- Plan of a Speech sent by Robert Walpole, 10 January 1736, NS, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, ff. 182-185.
- Plummer, Walter to the Earl of Strafford, 16 January 1725, Queen's Square, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 178.
- Pope, Alexander to Mrs Howard, October 1727, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 3.
- Powell, Mr to the Earl of Strafford at Wentworth Castle, Yorkshire, September 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 5.
- Powell, Captain to the Earl of Strafford, 6 November 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 108.
- Poyntz, Stephen to the Duke of Newcastle, Friday, 3 August 1722, Cleveland Court, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 233.
- Poyntz, Stephen to Lord Townshend, 3 June 1728, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 48982, f. 135.
- Poyntz, Stephen to Lord Townshend, 9 June 1728, Paris, BL. Add. Ms. 48982, f. 131.
- Prendergrast, Sir Thomas to the Duke of Richmond, 25 August 1731, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 107.
- Prendergrast, Thomas to the Duke of Richmond, 16 December 1735, Dublin, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 107
- Prendergrast, Thomas to the Duke of Richmond, 13 March 1736, Dublin, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 107.
- Prendergrast, Thomas to the Duke of Richmond, 11 January 1738, OS, Whitehall, WSRO. Goodwood. Ms. 107.
- Primrose, James to Sir Robert Walpole, February 1739, HL. B40. LO. 7235.
- Printed Letter, 1 November 1733, BL. Add. Ms. 31142, f. 101.
- Pulteney, William to Francis Colman, Resident at Florence and Parma, 12 June 1731, OS, Arlington Street, BL. Add. Ms. 18915, f. 6.

Pulteney, William to the Duchess of Marlborough, 22 November 1734, Petersham, BL. Add. Ms. 61477, f. 52.

Pulteney, William to the Duchess of Marlborough, 24 November 1734, London, BL. Add. Ms. 61477, f. 89.

Pulteney, William to Sir John Rushout, 6 June 1741, London, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

Pulteney, William to Sir John Rushout, 20 June 1741, London, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

Report of Colonel Armstrong and Monsieur Cronstrom (translated from French), 23 September 1728, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/24.3.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 5 August 1733, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 46.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 14 August 1733, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 88.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 29 February 1734, Charlton, BL. Add. Ms. 32689, f. 160.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 20 July 1739, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32692, f. 158.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 27 July 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32694, f. 25.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 30 July 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32694, f. 365.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 5 September 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32694, f. 587.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 7 September 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32695, f. 22.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 19 September 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32695, f. 88.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 19 October 1740, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32695, f. 290.

Richmond, Duke of to the Duke of Newcastle, 30 September 1741, Goodwood, BL. Add. Ms. 32698, f. 86.

Richmond, Duke of to Peter Collinson, 17 December 1742, BL. Add. Ms. 28736, f. 125.

Robert Walpole's Notes, BL. Add. Ms. 74065, f. 72.

Roxburghe, Lord to the Duke of Richmond, 25 August 1727, London, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 112.

Pulteney, William to Sir John Rushout, 24 October 1741, London, WRAS. Churchill Archives. 705:66/26.

Sacheverell, H, *The Perils of False Brethren, Both in Church and State, Set Forth in a Sermon Preached 5<sup>th</sup> November 1709* (London: Henry Clements, 1709).

Sailing Orders, 1738, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 17/8.1.

Sandys, Martin to Samuel Sandys, 1 January 1725, Worcester, WRAS. OFA. 705:56/1402.

Sandys, Martin to Samuel Sandys, 28 March 1726, Worcester, WRAS. OFA, 705:56/1402.

Sandys, Martin to Samuel Sandys, 18 April 1730, Worcester, WRAS. OFA, 705:56/1402.

Scarborough, Lord to the Duke of Newcastle, 10 August 1733, Lumley Castle, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 60.

Scawen, Thomas to the Earl of Strafford, 29 November 1735, BL. Add. Ms. 22222, f. 225.

Sebastián de la Cuadra y Llarena, Declaration of King Philip V (translated by M. Stepney), 10 January 1739, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/103-4.

Several letters to a friend concerning the present war and the fruits we might expect from a peace could it soon be restored, 1739, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 73/43.

Simpson, John to Sir Robert Walpole, 19 December 1732, London, HL. HA 16213.

Sir Robert Walpole's Calculations on the Net Produce of the Duchy of Cornwall to the Prince of Wales for the Years: 1729-1735, BL. Add. Ms. 74066, nf.

Smith, John to the Duke of Newcastle, 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 32687, ff. 518-519.

Some Necessary Notes and Animadversions on an Affidavit made by George Colcott and Robert Jones, Mariners Concerning the Affair of Dunkirk. With an Affidavit Sworn: 11 March 1729, CH(H), *Political Papers*, 73/14.

Somerset, Lord to Lord Hardwicke, on the Sussex election, 24 July 1740, Petworth, BL. Add. Ms. 35586, f. 263.

Somerville. William, Hunting Song, Bodl. Ballard Ms. 47, 10833, f. 4.

Spanish sail from Cádiz, 15 November 1741, French sail from Toulon, 3 November 1741, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 17/17.

Spanish ships fitted out in the year 1738, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 15/12.

Speech in Parliament, 13 February 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 74068, f. 145.

- Spencer, Charles to His Royal Highness, 7 April 1738, BL. Add. Ms. 47012A, f. 6.
- Stair, Lord to the Duchess of Marlborough, 13 October 1737, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 27.
- Stair, Lord to the Duchess of Marlborough, November 1737, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, ff. 32-33.
- Stair, Lord to the Duchess of Marlborough, 9 January 1738, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 44.
- Stair, Lord to the Duchess of Marlborough, 15 February 1738, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 59.
- Stair, Lord to the Duchess of Marlborough, 1 March 1738, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 65.
- Stair, Lord to the Duchess of Marlborough, 4 April 1738, Newliston, BL. Add. MS. 61467, f. 74.
- Stair, Lord to the Duchess of Marlborough, 3 February 1739, Newliston, BL. Add. Ms. 61467, f. 102.
- Stanhope, Charles to the Duke of Newcastle, 26 August 1721, London, BL. Add. Ms. 32686, f. 191.
- Strickland, Sir Walter, A Move in Parliament to Consider the Estimate of Hessian Troops, 3 February 1732, BL. Add. Ms. 47000, ff. 64-65.
- Stone, Andrew to the Duke of Richmond, 17 April 1742, Whitehall, WSRO. Goodwood Ms, 104, f. 322.
- Stafford, Earl to Lord Huntington, 11 January 1732, London, HL. HA 13212, B.73.
- Strafford, Lord to Lord Huntington, 4 March 1731, HL. HA 13211, B.72.
- Suffolk, Lady (noted by her maid, Elizabeth Wagstaff) to the Earl of Chesterfield, in the handwriting of Horace Walpole, BL. Add. Ms. 22626, f. 115.
- Sunderland, Lord to Lord Godolphin, August 1719, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 16.
- Sunderland, Lord to Lord Godolphin, August 1719, BL. Add. Ms. 61496, f. 18.
- Swift, Jonathan to Mrs Howard, 25 November 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 22625, f. 20.
- Swift, Jonathan to Mrs Howard, 27 July 1731, Dublin, BL. Add. Ms. 22625, f. 22.
- Tankerville, Lord to the Duke of Newcastle, 22 October 1733, Nottingham, BL. Add. Ms. 32688, f. 554.
- Temple, Anna to Richard Temple, 17 June 1740, BL. Add. Ms. 57806, f. 6.
- Temple, Anna to Richard Temple, 11 April 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 57806, f. 15.
- Thanet, Lord to Lord Egmont, 9 November 1731, Newbottle, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 55.

- The Full and Whole Examination of the High Bailiff of Westminster, BL. Add. Ms. 47012B, f. 90.
- The General Demands made by Spain, laid before the House of Commons in 1734, delivered, 21 April 1732, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/78/1-2.
- The Member of Parliament's Reply to the Gentleman in Worcestershire, WSRO, Petworth Ms. 7616.
- The pretensions of His Majesty's commissaries delivered by order to those of His Britannic Majesty, April 1732, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/45.1.
- The Prince's Answer to His Royal Highness, 5 January 1741, BL. Add. Ms. 63749A, f. 333.
- The Use of Ships of War for Swift Sailing, Designed by William Long, BL. Add. Ms. 19035, f. 31.
- The Wind in the East, By a Sailor Aboard the Sheerness Fleet, Bodl. Ballard Ms. 47, 10833, f. 128.
- Thomas, Mr to Robert Walpole and Charles Wager, BL. Add. Ms. 74068, f. 32.
- Total demands of Great Britain and Spain, sent to Spain by Sir Thomas Fitzgerald, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 26/55-57.
- Townshend, Lord to George II, BL. Add. Ms. 78909, f. 5/2.
- Townshend, Lord to Robert Walpole, 6 August 1723, NS, Hanover, BL. Stowe Ms. 251, f. 21.
- Townshend, Lord to Robert Walpole, Wednesday, 8 September 1723, BL. Stowe Ms. 251, f. 29.
- Townshend, Lord to Robert Walpole, 5 October 1723, NS, BL. Stowe. Ms. 251, f. 55.
- Townshend, Lord to Robert Walpole, 26 October 1723, NS. Gohrde, BL. Stowe Ms. 251, f. 60.
- Townshend, Lord to Horatio Walpole, 15 April 1727, BL. Add. Ms. 73773, f. 196.
- Townshend, Lord to the Duke of Richmond, 15 August 1727, Whitehall, WSRO. Goodwood Ms. 112.
- Townshend, Lord to George Tilson, 14 January 1729, BL. Add. Ms. 48982, f. 142.
- Townshend, Lord to Lord Chesterfield, June 1729, Hanover, BL. Add. Ms. 48982, f. 160.
- Townshend, Lord to Lord Hardwicke, 2 May 1730, Whitehall, BL. Add. Ms. 78909, f. 5/10.
- Townshend, Lord to George II, 27 January 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 78908, ff. 2/24-30.
- Townshend, Lord to George II, May 1730, BL. Add. Ms. 78909, f. 5/36.
- Translation of an extract of a letter from Paris, Mr Finch (information from a pensionary) to Lord Townshend, 15 March 1728, NS, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/3.
- Translation of de la Guera's Letter to Benjamin Keene, 21 February 1728, Pardo, BL. Add. Ms.

35884, ff. 1-2

Translation of Mr Ricourt's (Officer of Marines) letter to the Count de Maurepas, enclosed in Walpole's letter, 10 June 1728, CUL. CH(H) *Political Papers*, 25/11.

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