

# Making an Imperial Compromise: The Calico Acts, the Atlantic Colonies, and the Structure of the British Empire

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**I**N January 1697 a mob of woolen and silk weavers stormed the East India Company's office in London, egged on by yells that "the Company had not made a Dividend for some years, but they would make one now."<sup>1</sup> It was true that the Company had not paid dividends to its shareholders for six years, but these weavers did not own shares. The weavers rioted, sent petitions, and published tracts to demand protection from the apparently devastating competition of cotton calicoes imported by the Company to London and then distributed to the rest of Britain, Europe, West Africa, the West Indies, and the Americas. Woolen and silk producers constituted two of England's most important manufacturing sectors, and their suffering posed major economic, human, administrative, and political problems. In 1700 Parliament attempted to solve these problems with "An Act for the more effectual employing the Poor, by encouraging the Manufactures of this Kingdom," the first Calico Act.<sup>2</sup> The act prohibited the

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<sup>1</sup> Trial of William Norman, Feb. 24, 1697, ref. no. t16970224-34, in Tim Hitchcock et al., *The Old Bailey Proceedings Online, 1674–1913*, version 7.0, April 2012, <http://www.oldbaileyonline.org> (quotation). See also [London] *Post Man, and the Historical Account, &c.*, Jan. 21–23, 1696 [1697], [2]; [London] *Post Boy*, Jan. 21–23, 1697, [2]; [Thomas] Salmon, *The Chronological Historian: Containing a Regular Account Of all Material Transactions and Occurrences, Ecclesiastical, Civil, and Military . . .* (London, 1747), 1: 394.

<sup>2</sup> Owen Ruffhead, [ed.], *The Statutes at Large . . .*, new ed. (London, 1786), 4: 44. For a classic account of the weavers' struggle, see P. J. Thomas, *Mercantilism and the East India Trade* (1926; repr., London, 1963). For a more recent and brief overview, see Tim Keirn, "Parliament, Legislation and the Regulation of English Textile Industries, 1689–1714," in *Stilling the Grumbling Hive: The Response to Social and Economic Problems in England, 1689–1750*, ed. Lee Davison et al. (New York, 1992), 1–24.

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retail and consumption of India's dyed, stained, and printed cotton calicoes and silks in England but, importantly, not in the Atlantic colonies. In 1719 the weavers rioted again, in part because of the colonial exception. This time, instead of attacking the East India Company, they doused women in calico with aqua fortis, tore the calico from women's bodies, threatened to pull down a house, and marched on the increasingly successful calico-printing workshops in Lewisham. Witnesses saw Thomas Hardy "with a Piece of Callicoe in his Hand flourishing it over his Head, crying, down with the Callicoes."<sup>3</sup> In 1721 Parliament responded to this renewed campaign in the streets and in print with a second Calico Act that more strictly regulated consumption throughout Britain—but again not in the colonies. Historians of England and Britain have considered how the debates over the Calico Acts reflected the remarkable rise of the calico fashion, followed general patterns of late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century political protest, focused concerns about women's consumption, and may have contributed to the development of factory production.<sup>4</sup> The Calico Acts have seemed to have little to do with British colonists, and indeed colonists did not riot or publish much about calicoes. Yet a wide cross section of people, particularly in London, rhetorically invoked the colonists in the calico debates, and the acts themselves represented an important imperial compromise that assigned the colonists new functions and positions as distinct consumers of India goods within the empire's economic system.

The Calico Acts created different categories of imperial consumers by directly regulating consumption differently in the colonies than in England and later Britain—regulation stimulated in part by colonial activities and with significant economic, moral, and political implications. Pirates, illicit traders, and interlopers venturing from colonial ports in North America

<sup>3</sup> Trial of John Humphreys, Sam Bains, George Picket, Tho[mas] Hardy, Charles Child, July 8, 1719, ref. no. 117190708-56, in Hitchcock et al., *Old Bailey Proceedings Online* (quotation); [London] *Post-Boy*, June 11–13, 1719, [1].

<sup>4</sup> On riots in English political culture, see Robert B. Shoemaker, *The London Mob: Violence and Disorder in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2007), 114–15, 242. On the Indian calico fashion in England, see Beverly Lemire, *Fashion's Favourite: The Cotton Trade and the Consumer in Britain, 1660–1800* (Oxford, 1991), 3–42. And for Britain and America, see Phyllis Whitman Hunter, *Purchasing Identity in the Atlantic World: Massachusetts Merchants, 1670–1780* (Ithaca, N.Y., 2001), 96–101. For the classic account of the linkages among the calico debates, fashion, and the rise of materialism, as well as a brief survey of the debates over the importance of cotton cloth production in Britain, see Chandra Mukerji, *From Graven Images: Patterns of Modern Materialism* (New York, 1983), 166–250. On the Calico Acts and women, see in particular Chloe Wigston Smith, "'Callico Madams': Servants, Consumption, and the Calico Crisis," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 31, no. 2 (Spring 2007): 29–55. On the Calico Acts and economic change, see Patrick O'Brien, Trevor Griffiths, and Philip Hunt, "Political Components of the Industrial Revolution: Parliament and the English Cotton Textile Industry, 1660–1774," *Economic History Review* 44, no. 3 (August 1991): 395–423.

and the West Indies to the Indian Ocean and Red Sea helped to create a sense of valuable colonial demand. These pirates and traders often brought goods and treasure directly from the Indian Ocean to the colonies with varying levels of merchant and local government support. Mughal India was a distinct core of global production and wealth with inimitable calicoes, silks, and spices as well as tempting possibilities for the pillage of non-Christians. In many ways England, later Britain, and its Atlantic colonies were economically, politically, militarily, and technologically peripheral to India, and that was part of the problem that English fabric producers faced.<sup>5</sup> From the colonial perspective, direct access to India, by hook or by crook, offered cheaper prices and greater wealth than importing Asian goods from London. From the imperial government's perspective, sensational reports of colonial participation in piracy and trade in the Indian Ocean suggested both a dangerous, costly problem of law and order and a valuable new opportunity for marketing the East India Company's goods. On the one hand, the Calico Acts gave colonists more consumer freedom than their metropolitan counterparts. On the other, that freedom depended on an increasingly entrenched belief that colonists were not equal to English or British people as either producers or consumers. They were, instead, different types of subjects to be used to support not only private English or British shippers and manufacturers but also the East India Company through the consumption of goods considered economically, morally, and politically unacceptable in England and later Britain itself.

Restructuring the empire into different types of consumers modified the century-old understanding, most notably expressed in the Navigation Acts, that the Atlantic colonies were most valuable as suppliers of raw materials and consumers of English manufactures. The English government had intended the Navigation Acts to protect English shippers from Dutch merchants and English producers from a range of foreign competitors by stimulating bilateral trade between the Atlantic colonies and England, on English ships. This protected bilateral trade was intended to draw colonial raw materials into England for manufacture and to encourage the export of those manufactures back to the colonies. Yet the Navigation Acts did not specifically or directly regulate consumption, and they could not adequately counter the strong and intensifying demand for India's calicoes that the East India Company encouraged as part of a general rise in consumerism. In compromising to protect both English manufacturers

<sup>5</sup> For more on the relative strengths of India and England and on India's role as a global core, see in particular Andre Gunder Frank, *ReOrient: Global Economy in the Asian Age* (Berkeley, Calif., 1998), 52–130; Victor Lieberman, "Transcending East-West Dichotomies: State and Culture Formation in Six Ostensibly Disparate Areas," in *Beyond Binary Histories: Re-Imagining Eurasia to c. 1830*, ed. Lieberman (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1999), 19–102, esp. 28.

and the Company's trade to Asia, participants in the calico debates shifted the political, legal, and economic emphasis away from using the colonies to cultivate Asian raw materials for English manufacturing and toward using them as reexport markets for Asian manufactured goods imported to London by the East India Company. This colonial relationship with the Company would, during the tea crisis of 1773, take on revolutionary importance.<sup>6</sup>

IN THE 1690S Parliament faced complaints from the East India Company about competition from English Atlantic pirates and interlopers, as well as from the domestic woolen and silk interests about competition from colonial, European, and East Indian weavers. The intertwined solutions to these complaints would solidify London as the pivot between Indian production and Atlantic markets. The Company and its supporters argued that trade generated most of England's wealth and that the Company's monopoly was necessary to protect and control access to Asia. England's weaving interest, in contrast, argued that woolen production generated England's wealth and that importing manufactured textiles from Europe, America, and India sucked wealth away. The woolen interest quickly gained legal restrictions on exports of raw wool to European manufacturers and on the trade in woolens manufactured in the colonies; they then turned on the East India Company.<sup>7</sup> Parliament needed to navigate a course among the East India

<sup>6</sup> For a classic overview of the Navigation Acts, see Lawrence A. Harper, *The English Navigation Laws: A Seventeenth-Century Experiment in Social Engineering* (New York, 1939). For a discussion of the use of Atlantic colonies for raw materials to simulate Asian goods produced in England, see Maxine Berg, "In Pursuit of Luxury: Global History and British Consumer Goods in the Eighteenth Century," *Past and Present*, no. 182 (February 2004): 85–142, esp. 132–42. Many works discuss the rise of consumer society in the seventeenth-century Atlantic world. For essential examples, see Joan Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1978); Simon Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches: An Interpretation of Dutch Culture in the Golden Age* (New York, 1987); Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660–1760* (New York, 1988); Carole Shammas, *The Pre-industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford, 1990). On the Tea Act and the selling of tea in America as a support for the East India Company, see Benjamin Woods Labaree, *The Boston Tea Party* (New York, 1964), 67–73.

<sup>7</sup> Much of the slack demand was likely caused more by wartime recession than by competition (Keirn, "Parliament, Legislation and the Regulation," 1–2). Parliament briefly discussed the matter of calicoes competing with woolens in 1677. See Anchitell Grey, *Debates of the House of Commons, From the Year 1667 to the Year 1694* (London, 1763), 3: 430. Yet as late as 1696 the East India Company's directors had recruited woolen producers to support them in Parliament as the only customer buying their woolens during the recession. Dec. 30, 1693, Mar. 24, 1695 [1696], *Journals of the House of Commons, From November the 7th 1693, in the Fifth Year of the Reign of King William and Queen Mary, to November the 23d 1697, in the Ninth Year of the Reign of King William the Third* ([London], 1803), 11: 43–44, 529. A range of artisans—including japaners, joiners, and fan makers, all of whom had developed businesses imitating goods

Company's interest in a protected trade to India, the domestic weavers' interest in a protected market in England, and consumers' interest in fashion. Meanwhile, English Atlantic pirates and private traders bringing back treasure and calicoes from the Indian Ocean reinforced the notion that Asia was a source of fantastic treasure, sensationalized the size and importance of colonial markets, and illustrated the risks of allowing an open India trade. The activities of pirates and merchants, a problem for both the Company and the weavers, would unwittingly point toward a course for compromise.

After the Glorious Revolution, the East India Company struggled to defend its monopoly over the India trade against pirates and illicit traders as well as a hostile Parliament. Ironically, the Company's own recent war against the Mughal emperor, Aurangzeb, had suggested the wealth of opportunities for seizing booty from Mughal shipping. The war also helped to establish the Muslim empire as an enemy in the minds of many in England and America, even when it was no longer an official enemy of the Company. In a typical non-Company voyage in 1691, the vessel *Bachelor's Delight* departed from either Jamaica or South Carolina for the Red Sea. It attacked a "Moors" ship and netted each crew member a prize rumored at between £1,100 and £2,000, approximately one hundred times more than an average seaman made per year.<sup>8</sup> The *Bachelor's Delight* returned to South Carolina, and from there the crew dispersed along the Atlantic seaboard. More vessels left the colonies for the Indian Ocean in 1692 and 1694, re-aggravating tension between the Company and Aurangzeb. Meanwhile, the post-Glorious Revolution Parliament looked askance at the Company, which was seen as a Tory establishment. In 1694 Parliament ended the Company's monopoly. Private trading was now permitted, but piracy remained illegal. The Company, however, continued to see its monopoly as

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imported by the East India Company—unsuccessfully attempted to join the weavers in their complaints. As imitators and without a major economic position, these artisans played little role in the outcome of the debates. Thomas, *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*, 102. For numerous examples of petitions and reports on the export of raw wool, see Colonial Office (CO) 388/5, National Archives of the U.K. (NA), Kew. For the legal restrictions gained by the woolen interest, see "Answer of the Commissioners of Trade & Plantations on Order of the Honorable the House of Commons," Mar. 22, 1699/1700, CO 389/17, fol. 13v, *ibid.*

<sup>8</sup> "Deposition of Adam Baldrige. May 5, 1699," in John Franklin Jameson, ed., *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period: Illustrative Documents* (New York, 1923), 180–87 (quotation, 181); Lieutenant-Governor Francis Nicholson to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, July 16, 1692, no. 2344, in J. W. Fortescue, ed., *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and West Indies* (London, 1901), 13: 674–75, esp. 13: 674. According to an East India Company officer, the piracy problem began in earnest around 1690 or 1691. Officer of an East-India Ship, *Piracy Destroy'd; or, A Short Discourse Shewing the Rise, Growth, and Causes of Piracy of Late; With a Sure Method How to Put a Speedy Stop to that Growing Evil* (London, 1701), 2. On sailors' wages, see George F. Steckley, "Litigious Mariners: Wage Cases in the Seventeenth-Century Admiralty Court," *Historical Journal* 42, no. 2 (June 1999): 315–45, esp. 319.

a right with the king's support and all competitors as illicit interlopers or even potential pirates.<sup>9</sup>

To generate support, the Company's leader, Josiah Child, defended calicoes and the monopoly as vital parts of a trading system encompassing both India and the Atlantic colonies. Child claimed, "The *Dutch* with good reason esteem the trade of the *East-Indies* more profitable to them than are the Mines of Gold and Silver in *America* to the *King of Spain*."<sup>10</sup> Since, Child argued, trading and not hoarding bullion brought in more wealth and ultimately more bullion, banning the calico trade would reduce the wealth of England and enrich the Dutch, who would become the sole carriers of India goods. For Child, the Atlantic colonies were primarily valuable as markets. Of all the trades with the Atlantic colonies and India, Child saw the production and illicit trade of New England as the main competitive threat to English producers and merchants. He claimed that Indian calicoes did not create significant competition for English woollens or silks, being so different in quality and price. Child blamed the recession, which had also hurt the Company, for the weavers' difficulties, and he feared that the India trade would collapse without a strong monopoly Company to deal with India's powerful rulers. With these justifications in place, the Company's Court of Directors sought to use their capital in England to bribe Parliament, and in India to outspend rival traders.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> For more on pirates in this period, see Nicholson to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, July 16, 1692, no. 2344, in Fortescue, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and West Indies*, 13: 674; Robert C. Ritchie, *Captain Kidd and the War against the Pirates* (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), 83, 112–20; John Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of the English East India Company* (New York, 1994), 186. Historians agree that Parliament disliked the East India Company in the 1690s, but they do not agree on whether the Company was hated more by Whigs or Tories. For the case that Whigs and Tories both hated the Company, see Thomas, *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*, 94–97. For Tory hatred, see Steve Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, Conn., 2009), 386, 398. On the opening of the trade, see Jan. 19, 1693 [1694], *Journals of the House of Commons*, 11: 64–65. For the company's belief in its monopoly rights and the similarities of pirates and interlopers, see general letter to Fort St. George, Oct. 3, 1690, E/3/92, fol. 58v, India Office Records (IOR), Asia, Pacific, and Africa Collections (APAC), British Library (BL), London; "General Letter to Fort St. George," Apr. 16, 1697, in *Despatches from England* (Madras, 1929), 11: 5–18, esp. 11: 13; "General Letter to Fort St. George," Jan. 26, 1698, *ibid.*, 11: 36–42, esp. 11: 39; "General Letter to Bombay," July 19, 1698, *ibid.*, 11: 21–24, esp. 11: 22. On the conflicted legal footing of the Company's monopoly, see William Wilson Hunter, *History of British India*, vol. 2, *To the Union of the Old and New Companies under the Earl of Godolphin's Award* (London, 1900), 313–15.

<sup>10</sup> Josiah Child, *A New Discourse of Trade, Wherein is Recommended Several Weighty Points Relating to Companies of Merchants* . . . ([London], 1693), 143–44 (quotation, 144).

<sup>11</sup> [Josiah] Child, *The Great Honour and Advantage of the East-India Trade to the Kingdom, Asserted* (London, 1697), 21–33; Child, *New Discourse of Trade*, 81, 143–53, 165–208. Most of Child's arguments can be traced back through the work of Company supporters throughout the seventeenth century. *New Discourse of Trade* appeared in

The weavers, meanwhile, focused less on questions of global trading systems and much more on the threat that they saw calicoes posing to woolen production, the fount of English wealth. The weavers argued that the woolen industry employed perhaps as many as a quarter of a million English people. Some wealthy individuals, such as India goods dealer William Arnold, who held ten thousand pounds sterling's worth of calico, might lose their fortunes or livelihoods under a calico prohibition. But if the Company and its allies wanted to argue over the number of people employed domestically, the woolen interest claimed the advantage. Additionally, high demand for sheep meant high demand for land, which meant high rents for landowners. This latter point no doubt attracted the attention of the members of Parliament, many of whom were substantial landowners. The weavers agreed with Child that New England's manufactures posed a threat, but they saw that threat as similar to the threat posed by imported calicoes—both put England's woolen producers out of work, which would eventually impoverish the kingdom.<sup>12</sup>

English planners and adventurers since Richard Hakluyt had hoped that encouraging the colonial cultivation of silk, and to a lesser extent cotton, for manufacture in England would solve the problem of competitive manufactures, and the colonies' failure to provide these raw materials shaped the weavers' political strategy. England did not yet have a major cotton industry, but London, in particular, had a growing silk industry. London's silk production involved large numbers of politically difficult French Protestant immigrants, and large-scale production took place in few other English communities. Supporters agreed that the use of colonial raw

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multiple editions throughout the 1690s. For more on the Company's efforts at bribery and outspending their rivals, see "General Letter to Bengal," Aug. 26, 1698, in *Despatches from England*, II: 79–83, esp. II: 80–81; Court of Directors to the President and Council of Fort William at Calcutta, Jan. 5, 1699/1700, E/3/93, pp. 272–73/fol. 136v–37r, IOR, APAC, BL; Benjamin Mews and Charles Brooke to the New Company, Dec. 12, 1699, E/3/55, fol. 363, *ibid.*; Henry Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics in the Reign of William III* (Manchester, 1977), 149–51. For the data on the Company's increased purchasing of goods, see K. N. Chaudhuri, *The Trading World of Asia and the English East India Company, 1660–1760* (Cambridge, 1978), 286, app. 5, table C.2.

<sup>12</sup> *The Interest of England Considered: In an Essay upon Wooll, Our Woollen-manufactures, and the Improvement of Trade. With Some Remarks upon the Conceptions of Sir Josiah Child* (London, 1694), 1–6; John Cary, *An Essay on the State of England, in Relation to its Trade, its Poor, and its Taxes, For carrying on the present War against France* (Bristol, 1695), 52–56; Mar. 7, 1695 [1696], *Journals of the House of Commons*, II: 495–98. For later examples, see [John Pollexfen], *England and East-India Inconsistent in Their Manufactures. Being an Answer to a Treatise, Intituled, an Essay on the East-India Trade . . .* (London, 1697), 4, 20; T[homas] S[mith], *Reasons Humbly Offered for the Pasing a Bill for the Hindering the Home Consumption of East-India Silks, Bengals &c. . . .* (London, 1697), 3; "Answer of the Commissioners of Trade & Plantations," Mar. 22, 1699/1700, CO 389/17, fol. 13v, *ibid.*

silk instead of foreign raw silk would help the industry to expand and make it a much more clear and valuable benefit to the kingdom. Efforts to cultivate silk in the colonies thus occurred throughout the seventeenth century. Yet colonial silk cultivation consistently failed to deliver, leaving London's silk weavers to import raw silk from outside the empire. Woolens, in contrast, depended on domestic supplies of raw wool and had a long history of production throughout England. Silk weavers were a major force in the London Weavers' Company and a growing force in Canterbury but, given the less domestic nature of silk compared to wool, the weaving interest focused publicly on the plight and value of England's woolen producers.<sup>13</sup>

Bristol merchant and influential trade writer John Cary thought that the colonies might be much more successful cultivating cotton than silk fiber for manufacture in Britain and that cotton might save the domestic weavers. Cary agreed with Child's criticism of New England's attempt to produce manufactured goods. But, like the weavers, Cary saw little economic difference between importing finished goods from India and importing them from the Atlantic colonies. Cary explained that overall no trade was as "profitable to to [*sic*] us as that we manage to *Africa* and our own Plantations in *America*" for raw materials, "and none so detrimental as that to the *East-Indies*" for manufactures. If calicoes were made in England from the great quantities of cotton supposedly already grown in "our own Plantations in *America*," it would benefit the empire. He explained in more detail, "I take *England* and all its Plantations to be one great Body, those being so many Limbs or Counties belonging to it, therefore when we consume their Growth we do as it were spend the Fruits of our own Land." "No doubt we might in time," he argued, "make Calicoes equal in their sorts with those Imported from *India*, and afford them as cheap as that Company now sells them, enough not only for our home Expende, but also for Exportation."<sup>14</sup> The

<sup>13</sup> Richarde Hakluyt, *A Particuler Discourse Concerninge the Greate Necessitie and Manifold Commodities That Are Like to Growe to This Realme of Englande by the Westerne Discoveries Lately Attempted, Written in the Yere 1584*, ed. David B. Quinn and Alison M. Quinn (London, 1993), 27; "Instructions for such things as are to be sent from Virginia, 1610," in Edward Wright Haile, ed., *Jamestown Narratives: Eyewitness Accounts of the Virginia Colony: The First Decade: 1607–1617* (Champlain, Va., 1998), 25–26; Raphe [Ralph] Hamor, *A True Discourse of the Present Estate of Virginia . . .* (1615), *ibid.*, 795–856, esp. 828–29; Samuel Hartlib, *The Reformed Virginian Silk-Worm; or, A Rare and New Discovery of a Speedy Way, and Easie Means . . .* (London, 1655), 8–14; Linda Levy Peck, *Consuming Splendor: Society and Culture in Seventeenth-Century England* (Cambridge, 2005), 103–7. The silk weavers did send many petitions to Parliament. Mar. 7, 1696, *Journals of the House of Commons*, 11: 495–98; Natalie Rothstein, "The Calico Campaign of 1719–1721," *East London Papers* 7, no. 1 ([1964]): 3–21, esp. 13–19; Alfred Plummer, *The London Weavers' Company, 1600–1970* (London, 1972), 9–10, 16, 144–58.

<sup>14</sup> Cary, *Essay on the State of England*, 47 ("profitable"), 59–70 ("our own Plantations," 59, "I take *England*," 66–67, "No doubt," 60), 6, 15, 25. For later examples, see N. C., A Weaver of London, *The Great Necessity and Advantage of Preserving Our Own*



lack of experienced cotton manufacturers in England and Cary's qualification, "in time," made his plan a nonstarter with the weaving interest.

Instead, the weaving interest focused on blaming the East India Company not only for the collapse of the English economy but also for the moral corruption of Englishwomen and the potential downfall of all "Christendom," a powerful charge in both England and avidly Protestant colonies in America.<sup>15</sup> In 1692, for instance, Massachusetts Puritan minister Cotton Mather argued against debilitating foreign luxuries such as silks and calicoes. He dreamed of a time when "the vertuous woman" would spin wool and flax to occupy her hands and her soul.<sup>16</sup> Writers in England supporting the weavers agreed. John Blanch explained that the rakish Company corrupted Englishwomen by teaching low-paid Indian weavers to produce cotton cloth "impossible to be withstood by a Feminine Power." Blanch imagined a sort of reverse colonialism, writing that Englishmen must "redeem our Female-Sex from the Government of the *Indians*."<sup>17</sup> A few years later, another author wrote that the East India Company had been "forced to ransack all *Christendom* for Silver" to pay for India "Muzlins."<sup>18</sup> Another dubbed the Company's directors "Enemies to the Nation" for aligning with a Muslim emperor and employing his calico-producing subjects to put English people out of work.<sup>19</sup> Such notions harked back to the Umayyad Caliphate's eighth-century conquest of the Iberian Peninsula and other medieval Muslim threats against Europe. Charles Davenant, hired by the East India Company to lead its defense in print, responded that God had intentionally made India better suited to cotton production than England. As an anonymous Company defender put it, the purchase of expensive woolens instead of cheap calicoes was the real "extravagant Fancy" impoverishing the nation.<sup>20</sup> It was difficult, however, for the Company

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*Manufacturies; Being an Answer to a Pamphlet, Intitul'd, the Honour and Advantage of the East-India Trade, &c.* (London, 1697), 7–9, 30; [John Pollexfen], *A Discourse of Trade, Coyn, and Paper Credit: And of Ways and Means to Gain, and Retain Riches . . .* (London, 1697), 105.

<sup>15</sup> *Britania Expirans; or, A Brief Memorial of Commerce Humbly Offer'd to the Parliament* (London, 1699), 19.

<sup>16</sup> Cotton Mather, *Ornaments for the Daughters of Zion; or, The Character and Happiness of a Vertuous Woman . . .* (Cambridge, Mass., 1692), 9.

<sup>17</sup> [John Blanch], *An Abstract of the Grievances of Trade Which Oppress Our Poor. Humbly Offered to the Parliament* (London, 1694), 13 (quotations), 10–11.

<sup>18</sup> *Britania Expirans*, 19.

<sup>19</sup> *A Reply to a Paper, Intituled, Reasons against the Prohibiting the wearing East-India and Persian Wrought Silks, &c. Humbly offer'd to the Honourable House of Commons* ([London], [1700?]), 4 (quotations).

<sup>20</sup> *An Answer to the Most Material Objections That Have Been Raised Against Restraining the East-India Trade; with Five Queries* ([London?], [1699?]), 1 (quotation); [Charles Davenant], *An Essay on the East-India-Trade. By the Author of The Essay upon Wayes and Means* (London, 1696), 27–32.

to displace several hundred years of friction between Christians and non-Christians, particularly Muslims.

As English people attacked the Company in print for aligning with the Mughal Empire, English Atlantic pirates expanded their operations against Mughal shipping in the Indian Ocean and Red Sea. In 1695 infamous pirate commander John Avery assembled a fleet of vessels from English Atlantic colonial ports to attack the annual Hajj pilgrimage ships. Avery's fleet looted two Mughal treasure ships—one, the *Ganj-i-Sawai*, owned by Aurangzeb. The pirates netted from £155,000 to £180,000, tens of millions or perhaps even hundreds of millions of pounds in today's money, off the *Ganj-i-Sawai* alone. Making matters worse, the pirates raped several of the women returning from Mecca. Aurangzeb's representative in Surat imprisoned the English factors there for most of a year and demanded that the French, Dutch, and English companies provide protection for future voyages. The sensational story of the *Ganj-i-Sawai*, increased penalties for nonpiratical illicit trade, and a sharp reduction in legal privateering opportunities caused by the end of the Nine Years' War combined to encourage more English Atlantic pirates to head east.<sup>21</sup>

Meanwhile, throughout 1696 Parliament attempted to negotiate a middle course between the weavers and the Company, using the colonies as a bargaining chip. In March Henry Hobart, leader of the Rose Club that orchestrated the Whig ministry and a staunch opponent of the Company, proposed a bill banning, in both England and the Atlantic colonies, printed and stained calicoes and silks made in India. Davenant and the East India Company responded not only by arguing that the Company deserved access to the domestic market but also by specifically elaborating on the value of the colonial markets. Davenant explained that gold and silver from South America paid for goods in India, which were then exported to Europe and the Americas for profit. "Calicoes," Davenant explained, "are a useful wear at Home, and in our own Plantations, and for the *Spaniards in America*."<sup>22</sup>

<sup>21</sup> John Avery was also known as Henry Every. Khafi Khan, "Capture of a Royal Ship: The English at Bombay," in J. N. Das Gupta, *India in the Seventeenth Century: As Depicted by European Travellers* (Calcutta, 1916), 233–38 (with thanks to Mark Hanna for this reference); Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 131; Joel H. Baer, "'Captain John Avery' and the Anatomy of a Mutiny," *Eighteenth-Century Life* 18, no. 1 (February 1994): 1–47, esp. 3–17; Baer, ed., *British Piracy in the Golden Age: History and Interpretation, 1660–1730* (London, 2007), 2: 109–10; Lawrence H. Officer and Samuel H. Williamson, "Purchasing Power of British Pounds from 1245 to Present," *MeasuringWorth*, 2011, <http://www.measuringworth.com/ppoweruk/>.

<sup>22</sup> [Davenant], *Essay on the East-India-Trade*, 12–15 (quotation, 14), 51–55; Mar. 31, 1696, *Journals of the House of Commons*, 11: 530–31. Charles Davenant later projected that on a per capita basis colonists in New England and the mid-Atlantic consumed three times more "Cloaths, and House-hold Furniture" than the people of England, and, if the English did not manage this trade, the Dutch would gain the benefit from both the English and the Spanish Empires in the Americas. [Davenant], *Discourses on the Publick Revenues, and on the Trade of England* (London, 1698), 2: 225–26 (quotation, 2: 226).

The House of Commons amended the bill to strip the language involving the colonies, but the bill ultimately failed. In December 1696 Hobart presented a new calico bill that duly exempted the colonies from the ban. The Company, however, convinced the House of Lords to amend the bill to forbid all imported cottons and silks, not just those from India, and to levy a penalty of fifty pounds against wearers. The latter amendment impinged on the House of Commons' prerogative over fiscal policy, and the amended bill failed primarily on this constitutional point.<sup>23</sup> The difficulty over this bill was what inspired the weavers to attack the East India Company offices in early 1697. The Company had won its point on the Atlantic colonies and defeated both bills, but it faced an increasingly agitated weavers' interest as well as a growing piracy problem, and it lacked parliamentary affirmation of its monopoly.

In 1697 tensions escalated to a new high in India when six ships hailing from Boston, Philadelphia, Rhode Island, and New York attacked the pilgrimage fleet. The pirates' outright robbery and abuse stimulated well-placed and well-founded fears in the East India Company that Aurangzeb might banish all English traders from his dominions. The Company directors encouraged their servants to stress "the great care cost and charge the Company have been at to bring those Pyrativall Villains to Justice."<sup>24</sup> The situation in India was spinning out of control, and in 1698 Parliament legally closed the India trade to private English merchants. Instead of re-asserting the Company's monopoly, however, Parliament opened bidding and legalized a second company (the New Company) to compete with the

<sup>23</sup> Once the March 1695/6 bill had failed, the woolen and silk interests sought to get the language banning calicoes in the Atlantic colonies back into future bills. Mar. 7, 24, 1695 [1696], Dec. 4, 1696, Feb. 22, 1696 [1697], Mar. 25, 1697, *Journals of the House of Commons*, 11: 496–97, 529–30, 612, 716, 755–56; Mar. 12, 19, 23, 1697, *Journal of the House of Lords*, vol. 16, 1696–1701, 121, 129, 132–33, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/source.aspx?pubid=40>; Eveline Cruickshanks, Stuart Handley, and D. W. Hayton, eds., *The History of Parliament: The House of Commons, 1690–1715*, vol. 4, *Members G–N* (Cambridge, 2002), 371; Horwitz, *Parliament, Policy and Politics*, 190–91.

<sup>24</sup> "General Letter to Fort St. George," Apr. 16, 1697, in *Despatches from England*, 11: 13 (quotation); "General Letter to Fort St. George," Jan. 26, 1698, *ibid.*, 11: 38–39. The men working for the East India Company were described as, and described themselves as, servants of the Company. They were not typically financially indebted to the Company, and they were not indentured servants in the American sense; instead, they were more akin to employees. The current term *employee*, however, was not in use in seventeenth- or eighteenth-century English, nor were these men employees in precisely the standard modern sense. They often enjoyed their appointments through privilege, they served the Company in exchange for a range of benefits not limited to or even necessarily including a salary, and they often operated extensive side businesses that competed with the Company. For a brief and classic statement on the changing understanding of the term *servant* in America, see Lucy Maynard Salmon, "Domestic Service since the Colonial Period," in Salmon, *History and the Texture of Modern Life: Selected Essays*, ed. Nicholas Adams and Bonnie G. Smith (Philadelphia, 2001), 30–38, esp. 37.

old. The Commons needed the cash that the New Company offered, and it hoped the New Company would satisfy several Whig supporters who had been cut out of the Old Company. Regulating the trade in the Commons, however, was easier than regulating it in practice.<sup>25</sup>

Sensational reports arriving in London suggested that English Atlantic pirates, merchants, and governors had developed complex systems to bring booty and illicit goods into the colonies from the Indian Ocean. Robert Quarry claimed that at multiple points along the Atlantic seaboard vessels loaded with India goods sat at anchor offshore, awaiting smaller coastal boats that eagerly took on and disbursed the cargo. He wrote that an “abundance of East India goods” had been landed in small New Jersey ports such as Cape May, Cohanzey, and Salem. The India goods were packed “so as that they may pass for other goods” and brought to Philadelphia “without the least no[tice] taken of t.”<sup>26</sup> Quarry reported that not a single cask or bale had been searched in Philadelphia for two years and that twenty thousand pounds’ worth of India goods were smuggled through Cape May in one summer alone.<sup>27</sup> Richard Coote, the Earl of Bellomont and governor of New York, also wrote that “great quantities of East India goods” came into New York from Madagascar.<sup>28</sup> He accused colonial officials and other colonial governors of sheltering pirates bringing booty from the east and colluding with “plain breaches of the Acts of Trade and Navigation.”<sup>29</sup> In New York a mob confined customs officials

<sup>25</sup> Hunter, *History of British India*, 315–23. The New Company was a threat, but the Old Company quickly outmaneuvered it on multiple economic and political fronts. The Old Company increased the volume and quality of its own purchases in India, portrayed the New Company as illicit to Indian leaders, and became one of the New Company’s largest stockholders. “General Letter to Bombay,” July 19, 1698, in *Despatches from England*, 11: 22; “General Letter to Bengal,” Aug. 26, 1698, *ibid.*, 11: 80–81; “General Letter to Fort St. George,” Oct. 28, 1698, *ibid.*, 11: 60–65, esp. 11: 63; “General Letter to Fort St. George,” Dec. 15, 1698, *ibid.*, 11: 72–76, esp. 11: 73; J. Hiller to Thomas Bowrey, Feb. 26, 1700, fol. 345, Mss Eur D1076, APAC, BL; for more on the politics of the two companies in London, see Bruce G. Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (Princeton, N.J., 1996), 150.

<sup>26</sup> Robert Quarry to the Commissioners of Customs, Mar. 6, 1700, no. 190, in Fortescue, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and West Indies*, 18: 106–9 (quotations, 18: 108). The Board of Trade also received from Quarry letters and depositions on India goods coming into America. See for example Quarry to the Board of Trade, Aug. 25, 1698, CO 5/1267, fols. 132r–33v, NA.

<sup>27</sup> Quarry to the Commissioners of Customs, Mar. 6, 1700, no. 190, in Fortescue, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and West Indies*, 18: 108.

<sup>28</sup> Earl of Bellomont to the Board of Trade, May 18, 1698, no. 472, *ibid.*, 16: 221–24 (quotation, 16: 222).

<sup>29</sup> “Report of the Earl of Bellomont, on the irregularities of Rhode Island,” Nov. 27, 1699, in John Russell Bartlett, ed., *Records of the Colony of Rhode Island, and Providence Plantations, in New England* (Providence, 1858), 3: 385–88 (quotation, 3: 387). For more on Bellomont’s actions against pirates as governor, see Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 168–73.

attempting to seize the illicit India goods of Ouzel van Sweeten. New York merchants denied that their colony protected pirates and argued that their India goods had been purchased legally in Madagascar—which, for the brief period in the mid-1690s when Parliament had opened the India trade, might have been correct. Quarry, Bellomont, and others may have trumped up the prevalence and atrocities of pirates and gubernatorial and colonial corruption in the hope of personal political gains in London. The point, however, is that these stories, whether exaggerated or not, sensationalized the pirates, the wealth of India, and colonists' demand for India goods.<sup>30</sup>

By providing India goods directly to the Atlantic colonies, pirates and illicit traders fed into emerging but small colonial markets. The smaller populations of the colonies could not consume as much as the populations of Europe, though how much less the colonists consumed remains unclear. Customs records for 1700 show approximately £17,000 in India calicoes reexported from England to the Atlantic colonies, compared to approximately £284,000 in calicoes reexported to Europe. There are many reasons to expect these statistics to be somewhat misleading. Merchant and probate inventories show that the colonists rapidly followed the fashion for India goods in the late seventeenth century. Additionally, fraud was frequent, merchants had little reason to accurately report goods upon which they paid few or no export duties or received negligible drawbacks, and the customs had no record of goods that came to the colonies from pirates, smugglers, or traders in Europe.<sup>31</sup> Pirates did not need to account for the prime cost of

<sup>30</sup> Bellomont himself had previously supported Captain William Kidd. "Report of the Earl of Bellomont," Nov. 27, 1699, in Bartlett, *Records of Colony of Rhode Island*, 3: 387; Officer of an East-India Ship, *Piracy Destroy'd*, 2–16; Patrick Pringle, *Jolly Roger: The Story of the Great Age of Piracy* (New York, 1953), 132–34, 167; Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 171–75; Baer, *Eighteenth-Century Life* 18: 1–2, 17–18; Baer, *British Piracy in the Golden Age*, 2: 109–10.

<sup>31</sup> This disparity between the value of calicoes reexported to the Atlantic colonies and the value of those reexported to Europe was typical for surrounding years as well. Ledgers of Imports and Exports, CUST 3/1–4, NA. On merchant inventories, see Robert S. DuPlessis, "Cottons Consumption in the Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century North Atlantic," in *The Spinning World: A Global History of Cotton Textiles, 1200–1850*, ed. Giorgio Riello and Prasanna Parthasarathi (Oxford, 2009), 227–46, esp. 229–31. For examples of personal probate inventories containing calicoes and other India goods, see inventory of Thomas Willett, Aug. 25, 1674, "Plymouth Colony Records, Wills, Inventories and Estates, 1633–1686," 3: 117–28, Plymouth Plantation (also available at <http://www.histarch.uiuc.edu/plymouth/P231.htm>); *The Probate Records of Essex County Massachusetts* (Salem, Mass., 1920), 3: 121, 154, 156, 178, 206, 208, 364, 412, 424; Annie Lash Jester, *Domestic Life in Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Williamsburg, Va., 1957), 54, 64, 66–67; Teresa C. Farris, *From England—to Barbados—to Carolina, 1670–1700: Recovering the Material Culture of First Generation Carolinians* (n.p., 2000), 84, 96. For more on general fabric consumption in the colonies, see Susan Prendergast Schoelwer, "Form, Function, and Meaning in the Use of Fabric Furnishings: A Philadelphia Case Study, 1700–1775," *Winterthur Portfolio* 14, no. 1 (Spring 1979): 25–40; Adrienne D. Hood, *The Weaver's Craft: Cloth, Commerce, and Industry in Early Pennsylvania* (Philadelphia, 2003).

buying their goods, nor did pirates or direct traders need to account for the duty, wharfage, commission, and other charges incurred when India goods were transshipped via London. Pirates and merchants who bought goods in Madagascar could thus easily undercut the prices of London's reexported India goods in colonial markets.

Regardless of the relative total quantity of consumption, the perception of the valuable extent of both English and Spanish colonial demand filtered into both sides of the pamphlet debate. In strikingly similar terms to Davenant, one advocate for the weavers noted that "a great part of the *India* Manufactured Goods were spent in *England*, and our Plantations, in the room of our Manufactures."<sup>32</sup> Additionally, the Spanish colonies, also discussed by Davenant, had particular importance in the equation. The notorious pirate Captain William Kidd, for instance, sold off his cargo of East India fabrics in Hispaniola, not for markets in English North America but for those in the Spanish colonies and Europe. Many of the calicoes reexported from London to Europe, Barbados, and Jamaica were ultimately distributed to the Spanish colonies. Moving these goods through the English West Indies typically provided one of the easiest means around Spanish regulations.<sup>33</sup>

Finally, in 1700, the Calico Act passed both chambers. The preamble echoed the weavers' arguments, affirming that the calico trade weakened the nation by draining bullion and pushing manufacturers out of employment. In omitting the colonial markets from the ban to help offset the East India Companies' loss of the English market, Parliament gave legal support to the notion that colonial consumers differed fundamentally from domestic English consumers. The Board of Trade vigorously objected that omitting the colonists was a mistake; they were, after all, English and they might resupply England. This objection underscored the novelty of Parliament's decision. Meanwhile, the government adopted a multifaceted plan to secure the companies' trade. It attacked the Madagascar pirate

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For more on the difficulties with customs records, see G. N. Clark, *Guide to English Commercial Statistics, 1696–1782* (London, 1938), 15, 33–40.

<sup>32</sup> *Reasons Humbly Offered for Restraining the Wearing of Wrought Silks, Bengals, and Dyed, Printed, and Stained Callicoes, of the Product and Manufacture of Persia and the East-Indies, in England and our Planta[t]ions* (n.p., [1699]), 1.

<sup>33</sup> Ritchie, *Captain Kidd*, 167. For more on the importance of reexports of goods through Jamaica before the 1692 Port Royal earthquake, see Nuala Zahedieh, "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655–1692," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 43, no. 4 (October 1986): 570–93, esp. 576–83. Certainly many of the India goods from the pirates flowed into Europe. Of ninety-two bales of calicoes brought back by another pirate ship in 1698, only "some" remained in America, with the majority going to Hamburg. "Abstract of several depositions, taken before Sir Charles Hedges, as to the ship Frederick, belonging to Frederick Phillips [Flypse] of New York," Sept. 6, 1698, no. 794, in Fortescue, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and West Indies*, 16: 413–14 (quotation, 16: 414).

settlement, appointed governors to enforce laws against pirates returning to the Atlantic colonies, and established special courts and commissions of oyer and terminer in the Atlantic colonies and Company factories in India.<sup>34</sup> In addition to omitting the colonies from the act and cracking down on pirates, Parliament exempted white Indian fabric printed by England's nascent domestic calico-printing industry from the prohibition. Parliament thus reaffirmed the importance of domestic English producers, whether woolen makers or calico printers, while creating a new precedent for the colonists to support not only English production but also the East India Companies' trade. Plans for producing Asian raw materials in the Atlantic colonies for export to England did not end, but they were partly displaced in the empire's power center by the new plan to use colonists, both English and those of other European empires, to consume Asian goods.

PARLIAMENT HAD SOUGHT A BALANCE between competing interests, but it did not anticipate the speed at which the weights would reposition themselves from one side of the beam to the other. Nor did it predict that the growing weight of smugglers would collapse the entire mechanism. A rapid growth in interloping traders and smugglers ignoring both the East India Companies' monopoly and the Calico Acts, combined with growth in the English calico-printing industry, quickly made the Calico Act ineffectual. Within two years of its passage, the Board of Trade had received petitions complaining that the act "hath not had the good Effect which was expected thereby."<sup>35</sup> The Old and New Companies, moreover, were uniting their stock, capital, and membership in exchange for a loan of 3.2 million pounds to the state. In effect, the Company had bought itself substantially greater importance to the government. Instead of attacking the newly powerful Company, the weavers elevated their own self-fashioned identity as the nation's defenders against a range of salient and largely imaginary enemies

<sup>34</sup> For the text of the act, see Ruffhead, *Statutes at Large*, 4: 44. "Answer of the Commissioners of Trade & Plantations," Mar. 22, 1699/1700, CO 389/17, fol. 14, NA. The show trials of a few of John Avery's men and of Captain Kidd may have had some effect, but shows of maritime force likely mattered much more. In 1699 a royal fleet under Commodore Thomas Warren arrived off Madagascar to destroy the pirates' primary supply base at St. Mary's "and seiz on all such Pyratie Villains as they can meet with" ("General Letter to Fort St. George," Jan. 26, 1698, in *Despatches from England*, 11: 39). A sort of show battle also occurred in June 1700, when Virginia's governor Francis Nicholson, on HMS *Shoreham*, defeated a powerful pirate vessel off the Virginia coast. Pringle, *Jolly Roger*, 166–74.

<sup>35</sup> "The Humble Memorial of George Morley," Oct. 23, 1702, CO 389/17, fol. 220, NA (quotation); Board of Trade, "Representation Relating to the Woollen Manufactory," Oct. 28, 1702, CO 389/17, fol. 232, *ibid.*; "Despatch from the Company to Fort St. George," Mar. 6, 1702, in *Despatches from England, 1701–1706*, vol. 12/13, 21–29, esp. 23.

of domestic production, social stability, and the Protestant faith. In the streets, the press, and Parliament, the woolen and silk interests sought to increase divisions between men and women, between wealthy and poor, between manufacturers and consumers, and among Protestants, Catholics, and heathens. They focused on demeaning the production and consumption of calicoes, making the fabric an ideal medium through which Englishmen could exert their domestic authority over their wives and daughters as well as their imperial authority over colonists. The weaving interest blamed colonial smugglers and fought plans to grow cotton in the colonies, pushing against the notion, held by authors from Richard Hakluyt to John Cary, that the raw produce of the colonies was more or less equivalent to the raw produce of England. These strategies made it difficult for the Company to argue for a repeal of the prohibition in England, but they also sharpened the political differences between English cultivators and consumers in the home islands and those in the colonies.

Domestic weavers and the East India Company's directors alike believed that they suffered as a result of a sharp increase in Atlantic smugglers and interlopers who undermined the first Calico Act and the Company's monopoly. Cary explained that the act had been a total failure, "for it neither keeps our Treasure at home, nor prevents those Commodities from being worn here"; he argued that smugglers simply reentered East India Company goods illegally into Britain from the open markets in Ireland and the colonies.<sup>36</sup> Another author pointed to ships passing between the "Straits, &c." and the colonies, claiming that "notwithstanding the Laws against taking in any of the Manufactures or Merchandize of those [foreign] Countries, Sailors and Super-Cargoes will break thro them . . . and they never want Opportunities of buying *Italian Silks, French Silks, Stuffs and Druggets, Indian Silks and Callicoes, French, Dutch, and Hamburgh Linens.*" They thus bought India and other goods outside of Britain, "by which means the Money that should be brought to us, is laid out in foreign Countries." Additionally, "this irregular Navigation" encouraged sailors to settle in the colonies where they would not serve in the Royal Navy, weakening the national defense.<sup>37</sup> The colonies and Ireland were not the only channels for smuggling, however. Woolen supporter William Channing reported that an English vessel simply pretended to be Dutch to sell six thousand pounds' worth of "Callicoes, silks & spices" in a few days on the English coast. The "ship was like a faire, all ready mony," and the captain

<sup>36</sup> John Cary, *An Essay Towards Regulating the Trade, and Employing the Poor of this Kingdom*, 2d ed. (London, 1719), 43–44 (quotation, 43).

<sup>37</sup> *A Letter to a Member of Parliament, Concerning The Naval Store-Bill, Brought in last Session . . .* (London, 1720), 37 ("Straits, &c."), 38 ("irregular Navigation").



intended to return in six weeks with more fabrics.<sup>38</sup> The Company, meanwhile, reported a significant increase in Britons masquerading as foreigners to avoid the empire's laws. In 1720 it sent the Board of Trade a list of more than twenty-five ships that had sailed illicitly to the East with "English and Irish Officers, Supra Cargo's, & Mariners."<sup>39</sup>

The Company's directors, however, also saw in the Calico Act the potential to sell vastly more white cottons in England to serve the expanding and improving domestic printers. They wrote to their servants in Surat, "the Prohibition on Chints or painted or printed Callicoes is only on those manufactured beyond the Seas; because We have a great many persons here do the same work almost as good as India, so that you will do well to send us the more white Callicoes and fewer Chints if readily procurable."<sup>40</sup> From 1700 to 1720 the Company's orders of Indian fabrics, now with a higher proportion of white goods, trended upward at levels similar to those during the first boom from 1660 to 1680. English printed calicoes went to "Africa, and other hot countries" and were used in England for "Childrens Frocks, Handkerchiefs and Aprons."<sup>41</sup> Additionally, private merchants easily and frequently cleared India printed calicoes imported by the East India Company for export and then ran them back into England as English printed goods. English printed cottons were inferior imitations, but they were acceptable for many purposes.<sup>42</sup>

<sup>38</sup> "Copy of a Letter from Dorchester to a Mercer in London," Apr. 28, 1720, CO 388/21, fol. 179, NA; A Lover of the Manufacture, *Reasons Humbly Proposed to the Honourable House of Commons, for Laying a Duty upon East-India Silks, &c. Exported into Her Majesty's Dominions; and That No Drawback Be Allow'd upon Callicoes, Muslins, &c. When Exported to America and Ireland* ([London?], [1714]); David Clayton, *A Short System of Trade; or, An Account of What in Trade must Necessarily Be Advantageous to the Nation, and What must of Consequence Be Detrimental* (London, 1719), 12; A Citizen [Henry Elking], *The Interest of England Consider'd, with Respect to its Manufactures and East-India Callicoes Imported, Printed, Painted, Stained, and Consumed Therein; or, An Essay Shewing from Whence the Decay of Trade, the Melting of Coin, the Scarcity of Silver, the Increase of Poor Do Proceed* (London, 1720), 29. The Company also complained: see Charles Davenant, *New Dialogues upon the Present Posture of Affairs, the Species of Money, National Debts, Publick Revenues, Bank and East-India Company, and the Trade Now Carried on Between France and Holland* (London, 1710), 195–96; R. S——le, *An Essay upon Trade, and Publick Credit; Shewing The Advantages of the East-India Prohibition, Bankrupts Affidavits, &c. . . .* (London, 1714), 9–10.

<sup>39</sup> "Account of Ships (According to the Advices which the East India Company have rec'd) Sent Out to the East Indies Under Foreign Commissions—with English and Irish Officers, Supra Cargo's, & Mariners," Nov. 15, 1720, CO 388/22, fol. 285, NA.

<sup>40</sup> Court of Directors to the President and Council at Surat, Aug. 21, 1700, E/3/93, fol. 169v, IOR, APAC, BL (quotation); Court of Directors to the President and Council of Bengal, Aug. 21, 1700, E/3/93, fol. 173, *ibid.* See also "Humble Memorial of George Morley," Oct. 23, 1702, CO 389/17, fol. 220, NA; Thomas, *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*, 126.

<sup>41</sup> *The Stuff Weaver's Case Against Printing Callicoes Examined* ([London?], [1704]). The trends are derived from data charted in Chaudhuri, *Trading World of Asia*, 286.

<sup>42</sup> Although it was difficult to prove, this common accusation was likely rooted in fact. See for example *A Brief State of the East India Trade, as it Relates to the Other*

Several groups in England sought to expand the success of England's calico printers by revitalizing plans to use cotton wool from the Atlantic colonies to supply English manufacturers. Proponents proposed joint-stock companies to cultivate cotton plantations and train cotton spinners and weavers, much as the East India Company used a joint-stock to overcome the challenges of trading to the Indian and Pacific Oceans. Entrepreneurs ran newspaper advertisements to lure investors and laid requests for charters before the House of Lords. Members of the Lords, however, remained unconvinced that such schemes could work, and they were not alone in their doubts. Most writers saw the colonies much more in the terms set in the first calico debate, as markets for finished goods, not as cultivators of raw materials. Just in case, the woolen and silk interests published a notice in London's newspapers to "utterly disown and reject any such Proposal" for improving colonial cotton cultivation.<sup>43</sup> The weaving interest saw a complete British Atlantic prohibition, not a vigorous transatlantic cotton industry, as the answer to its troubles. Even Cary, who had supported English production of calicoes made from colonial cotton in the 1690s, now argued for a total British Atlantic ban.<sup>44</sup> Yet the continuing popularity of cotton calicoes suggested that garnering support for enhanced restrictions on cotton production would not be easy.

Unwilling to directly take on the East India Company, which operated within the law and had become increasingly valuable to the government, the woolen and silk interests targeted female consumers as the primary enemies of the nation's economic strength. In 1718 John Blanch, an old hand from the 1690s debate, indicted women from "the City" for determining "Fashions in the Consumption of *India* Silks and Calicoes (which might

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*Branches of the British Commerce: In Order to Judge, Whether, as it Is Now Carry'd On, That Trade Be Advantageous to the General Interest of the Nation, or Not* ([London?], [1710?]). Printers copied the Indian process of using a mordant on the fabric to make dyes permanent and resists to repel dyes from areas for which they were not intended. After 1686 French printers escaping a complete French calico ban further bolstered the London industry. Alfred P. Wadsworth and Julia De Lacy Mann, *The Cotton Trade and Industrial Lancashire, 1600–1780* (Manchester, 1931), 130–31; Thomas, *Mercantilism and the East India Trade*, 122–23. For a recent survey of the development of the European calico-printing industry and the role of imitation, see Giorgio Riello, "Asian Knowledge and the Development of Calico Printing in Europe in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *Journal of Global History* 5, no. 1 (March 2010): 1–28, esp. 6–17.

<sup>43</sup> [London] *Daily Post*, June 1, 1720, [2] (quotation), May 26, 1720, [1], May 31, 1720, [2], June 6, 1720, [2], June 8, 1720, 4; "The Means of a most Ample Encrease of the Wealth and Strength of England, In a few Years," 1706, MS84, fols. 50–55. Senate House, University of London; [John] Asgill, *A Brief Answer to a Brief State of the Question Between the Printed and Painted Calicoes, and the Woollen and Silk Manufactures: As Far as it Relates to the Wearing and Using Printed and Painted Calicoes in Great Britain* (London, 1719), 7–9, 14–15, 20; [London] *Daily Courant*, June 6, 1720, [2].

<sup>44</sup> Cary, *Essay Towards Regulating the Trade*, 44.

have been supply'd with Fabricks of our Wool as in the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*)."45 That same year, the London Weavers' Company offered cash rewards to people reporting unlawful Indian calico furniture and dresses to Henry Soames, a ribbon weaver. Given such instructions, it is not surprising that many more weavers soon began seizing goods and assaulting fashionable women.<sup>46</sup> The weaving interest disingenuously distanced itself from the violent attacks. Claudius Rey, a leading weaver, claimed that "these petit Disturbances are properly *among the Women themselves*, which *proceeds* from the *foolish Fancy* of some, and the *Madness and Rage* of others."<sup>47</sup> Rey falsely blamed women on both sides of the debate to diffuse criticisms of the weavers' violence. He further sought to reduce the complexity of the problem to a women's tiff, thereby making a total prohibition seem an easy solution for men to enact.

The weavers directly lobbied the Board of Trade using the same terms. In a 1719 petition, London's weavers argued that the clandestine importation of wrought silk "but more especially . . . the almost universal wearing & using of printed Calicoes and Linnens both foreign & home printed" devastated demand for domestically produced cloth, put the poor out of work, and cost much "Duties of Excise" and "an immense Treasure."<sup>48</sup> The board invited David Martin, a mercer from Ludgate Hill, to speak with them directly. Faithful to the arguments presented in print and in the street, Martin did not blame the East India Company. He derided the calico printers' claims that they employed the poor to manufacture goods, exclaiming, "These Men know not what belongs to a Manufacture." And, importantly, he told the board to cast their "eyes" upon "the Ladies & all their Sex in general dressed in these Calicoes and Linnens."<sup>49</sup> Women wearing these goods, he explained, encouraged smuggling and reduced the demand for domestic silks and woollens in proportion. The government needed to intervene to control the destructive spending of fashionable

<sup>45</sup> [John Blanch], *A Dialogue Between Sir Arthur Cleaveland and Sir Gilbert Proteus, at Garraways* (n.p., [1718?]), [1]. See also [Simon Clement], *Remarks Upon a late Ingenious Pamphlet, Entitled, A Short but thorough Search into what may be the real Cause of the present Scarcity of our Silver Coin, &c.* . . . (London, 1718), 19–24.

<sup>46</sup> [London] *Weekly-Journal; or, Saturday's-Post*, Mar. 29, 1718, 405.

<sup>47</sup> A Weaver [Claudius Rey], *The Weavers True Case; or, The Wearing of Printed Calicoes and Linnen Destructive to the Woollen and Silk Manufacturies* (London, 1719), 30–41 (quotation, 41). As an author defending the calico trade under the pseudonym "A Merchant" shot back, the real victims were the calico-wearing women and children thrown "into Fitts, insomuch that some of them, as I'm informed, died soon after." A Merchant, *The Weavers Pretences Examined. Being A Full and Impartial Enquiry into the Complaints of their wanting Work, and the true Causes assign'd* . . . (London, 1719), 16.

<sup>48</sup> "The humble Petition of the Bailiffs, Wardens, Assistants, & Comonalty of the Trade, Art, & Mistery of Weavers, London," to the Board of Trade via the Lord Justices, Oct. 17, 1719, CO 389/27, pp. 229–31, NA.

<sup>49</sup> David Martin to the Board of Trade, Oct. 30, 1719, CO 389/27, pp. 250–68, *ibid.*

women. These attacks amplified more general charges of the dire effects of rising and broadening consumer spending patterns. The *Tatler* and *Spectator*, popular and widely distributed magazines, vigorously pushed the case for restrained fashion, especially for women.<sup>50</sup>

Similarly, the woolen and silk interests argued that Protestant Englishmen needed to exert their control over Catholic French printers and Scottish linen makers. Rey described most calico printers in London as “*French Roman Catholicicks*, who were forced to fly from their Country,” not because of religious persecution but because of the French ban on calico consumption.<sup>51</sup> He encouraged Parliament not to protect these few Catholic people at the expense of the poor Protestant English and Huguenot French weavers. Supporters of the ban also focused on the Scots for producing linnens that looked like Indian calicoes. They argued that English manufacturers should not be subordinated to the Scots, who had only recently been brought within a unified Britain. Besides, the weaving interest claimed, 90 percent of the linen consumed in England came from Europe, not Scotland, making Scottish linen simply a screen for foreign goods.<sup>52</sup> The Scots pointed out the inconsistency of the attacks against them, writing of the woolen and silk interests, “sometimes they tell us, That *Scots Printed Linnen* is become a general Wear . . . in *England*,” but when they wanted the Scots to voluntarily give up the trade, they called it a “Tрифle.”<sup>53</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. According to David Kuchta, in the decades following the Glorious Revolution sartorial simplicity became a marker of English masculinity, while critics directed less concern at women’s fashionable consumption. Kuchta, “The Making of the Self-Made Man: Class, Clothing, and English Masculinity, 1688–1832,” in *The Sex of Things: Gender and Consumption in Historical Perspective*, ed. Victoria de Grazia with Ellen Furlough (Berkeley, Calif., 1996), 54–78, esp. 56–62. Women’s dress, however, was a significant political issue—not only did critics use it as evidence of women’s supposed foolishness but they also argued that women should be directed to dress in simple fashions made from English fabrics, which were less conspicuous and vibrant than Indian ones. Erin Mackie, *Market à la Mode: Fashion, Commodity, and Gender in “The Tatler” and “The Spectator”* (Baltimore, 1997), esp. 7, 121–202.

<sup>51</sup> [Rey], *Weavers True Case*, 23.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 23, 38; *An Essay on Trade, Wherein The present Dispute about Callicoës, &c. Is Consider’d* (n.p., [1719?]), 8; *The Weavers Reply to the Linen-Drapers, And other Dealers in Printed Callicoës and Linnens. Wherein Their Case is Considered, And Answered Paragraph by Paragraph . . .* (London, 1720), 12; *The Case of the Printing of Linnen in Great Britain, as it particularly relates to the Printing of Linnens made in Scotland and in Ireland* ([London?], [1720?]); *The Farther Case of the Woollen and Silk Manufacturers* (n.p., [1720]). One critic of the calico prohibition argued that it would cause the Scots, not the French, to take control of the India trade and overrun England with their supposedly Catholic religion. *A Speech without Doors, which would be spoken within Doors, if the Author had the Honour to be a Member of this House of Commons, and therein to Offer his Sense of the Bill for the more Effectual Encouragement of the Manufactures of England, and Setting the Poor at Work* (n.p., [1704?]), 3.

<sup>53</sup> *The Answer of the Scots Linnen Manufacturers to the Report of the Lords Commissioners of Trade and Plantations; and to a Paper falsly call’d, The Case of the Printing of Linnen in Great-Britain, &c. . . .* ([n.p.], [1720]), [2] (quotations), [1].

In the Atlantic colonies, newspapers carried stories about the calico debates and religious leaders attacked consumer spending, but comparatively few voices strongly echoed the woolen and silk interests' specific concerns. Reverend Thomas Paine, for instance, identified the "*extravagant consumption of imported Commodities*" as the main cause of New England's "difficulties." Explaining that colonists had erred when they blamed paper money for economic decline, he argued instead that merchants had ruined the people by encouraging the consumption of ever "greater Quantities of European, and East & West-India Goods." Much like woolen supporters in England, he wrote, "Thus often are the most distant Indies searched with the greatest cost and peril, for the finest Sattins, Silks or at least Chences [Chintzes] and Callicoes to fit up thousands of Women, who really are not worthy to be advanced one Ace above the Dunghill."<sup>54</sup> And yet, without a major woolen or silk interest threatened by these imports, colonial consumption of Indian fabrics continually increased both in real terms and as a relative share of all fabrics.<sup>55</sup> Although many colonists knew something of the English calico debates and the more general charges against luxury from the press and the pulpit, most simply did not demand that they be included in the prohibition, and it is difficult to imagine why they would have.

Such prohibitions and arguments against fashion seemed to be at odds with notions of English and British liberty—a discrepancy that was overcome in part by pointing to the primary importance of men in overseeing and ordering society. The Glorious Revolution had encouraged a fundamental humanist faith in contracts and individual market freedoms (though not necessarily free trade) as central to Englishness, a shift from a premodern, pan-European culture that emphasized social inequalities. Indeed, the Scots linen makers asked why free Britons would champion despotic Catholic French models of prohibition.<sup>56</sup> As an author writing under the pseudonym "A Merchant" exclaimed, "What signifies all our Riches, and that Liberty and Property that we so justly boast of, except

<sup>54</sup> Philopatria [Thomas Paine], *A Discourse, Shewing, That the real first Cause of the Straits and Difficulties of this Province of the Massachusetts Bay, is it's Extravagancy, & Not Paper Money* (Boston, 1721), 4–6 ("extravagant consumption," 4, "Thus often," 6). See also *Boston Gazette*, May 2–9, 1720, [1]. Perry Miller described more general concerns about materialism and economic growth in New England in Miller, "Declension in a Bible Commonwealth," in *Nature's Nation* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967), 14–49, esp. 27, 29–49.

<sup>55</sup> DuPlessis, "Cottons Consumption," 229–31.

<sup>56</sup> On English conceptions of individuals and the market, see Craig Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (New York, 1998), 134–47, 319–20. For a brief review on fashion and market freedom, see Beverly Lemire, "Second-Hand Beaux and 'red-armed Belles': Conflict and the Creation of Fashions in England, c. 1660–1800," *Continuity and Change* 15, no. 3 (December 2000): 391–417, esp. 400–403. For the critique of the prohibitions as befitting not the British but instead the French, see *Answer of the Scots Linnen Manufacturers*, [1].

we have the liberty of eating and drinking, or wearing what we please, and thinking or believing what we please?"<sup>57</sup> The Glorious Revolution, however, had also empowered some women politically, and here the weaving interest saw its opportunity.<sup>58</sup> It responded that in giving such liberty to women, men had lost their own freedom. Richard Steele, speaking in the character of a boy from India, wrote, "*I cannot see . . . in what the People of this Country excell those of ours, except it be that they are govern'd by their Wives; they go to our Country to bring home to their Women fine Dresses from Head to Foot.*"<sup>59</sup> By not controlling their wives' desires for foreign luxuries, Englishmen had relinquished their masculinity, more so even than supposedly effeminate Indians. In 1720 the woolen and silk interests' attacks on women got an unexpected boost when critics of the frenzy over the South Sea Bubble, the bursting of which had cost countless fortunes in England, also blamed women and effeminate men.<sup>60</sup> In this context Daniel Defoe, chosen to lead the London weavers' defense in print, argued that A Merchant made a "Demand of exorbitant Liberty."<sup>61</sup> Fathers, husbands, and the government needed to work together to constrain women's consumer freedom and "Force" them to wear woolens for the good of the kingdom.<sup>62</sup>

Defoe and the weavers also stigmatized calicoes and their producers as dangerously heathen. Defoe opted against using the 1690s claim that calicoes were part of a Mughal plot to conquer Christians. He intended less to frighten than to embarrass Britons into wearing English woolens. He explained that "*Indians, who, as incapable as they may be to judge of their National Interests, are yet wiser in this part, by the Strength of meer Nature, than we are.*" Indians refused to wear woolens, despite Defoe's claims that fine woolens were "much Cooler, and much more suited to the Heat of the warmest Climate, than the uncouth Fashions, great Sleeves and

<sup>57</sup> A Merchant, *Weavers Pretences Examin'd*, 6. For a similar statement in a letter to the publisher, see [London] *Weekly Journal*; or, *British Gazetteer*, June 27, 1719, 1389.

<sup>58</sup> Hannah Smith, "Politics, Patriotism, and Gender: The Standing Army Debate on the English Stage, circa 1689–1720," *Journal of British Studies* 50, no. 1 (January 2011): 48–75, esp. 66.

<sup>59</sup> [Richard Steele], *The Spinster: In Defence of the Woollen Manufactures. To be continued Occasionally*, no. 1 (London, 1719), 16.

<sup>60</sup> Catherine Ingrassia, "The Pleasure of Business and the Business of Pleasure: Gender, Credit, and the South Sea Bubble," *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture* 24 (1995): 191–210.

<sup>61</sup> [Daniel Defoe], *The Just Complaint of the Poor Weavers Truly Represented, With as much Answer As it deserves, to a Pamphlet Lately written against them Entitled the Weavers Pretences examin'd, &c.* (London, 1719), 9. For more on Defoe and the London weavers, see Plummer, *London Weavers' Company*, 298–301.

<sup>62</sup> Monsieur de Brocade of Paris [Daniel Defoe], *The Female Manufacturers Complaint: Being The Humble Petition of Dorothy Distaff, Abigail Spinning-Wheel, Eleanor Reel, &c. Spinners, to the Lady Rebecca Woollpack . . .* (London, 1720), 11 (quotation). See also [Rey], *Weavers True Case*, 30–31, 34, 48.

pleated Gowns of the *Indians*.”<sup>63</sup> He sought to overturn Indian manufacturing superiority by imagining that Indians defended their interests only by “mere nature” and that, despite living in cool and damp England, he knew better than Indians the proper clothing for the tropics. Defoe pushed his attack on Indians further, describing calico as “a tawdery, Pie-spotted, flabby, ragged, low priz’d Thing . . . a Foreigner by Birth; made the L[or]d knows where, by a Parcel of *Heathens* and *Pagans*, that worship the Devil, and work for a Half-penny a Day.”<sup>64</sup> He personified calico as ugly, lowly, and un-English while dehumanizing Indians as a “parcel,” like fabric, and as groveling devil worshippers.

Some of calico’s defenders took up a similar, though ultimately self-defeating, stance of intellectual and moral superiority over Indians. John Asgill made matters worse for the Company when he agreed with Defoe that Indian peoples refused to wear woolens due to their “Superstition” and “their Religion to retain their ancient Customs and Habits as sacred.” Hoping to defend the Company, he argued that such superstition provided a terrible model for British economic policy. He sarcastically explained that Defoe’s logic would have the British wear woolens as the Indians wore calicoes, “loading, instead of cloathing, themselves.” The British should “wear three or four Coats a-piece in the Day-time, and four or five Rugs or Blankets in the Night, (both Winter and Summer) for promoting our Woollen Manufacture.”<sup>65</sup> Yet playing on British tendencies to imagine Indian peoples as stupid and heathen effectively supported Defoe’s plan to stigmatize the fabrics that Indian people manufactured.

In the 1710s the woolen and silk interests picked on women, supposed Catholics, and heathens instead of the East India Company as the prime threats to Britain’s economic survival. These scapegoats had little political capital in the metropole, and they were generally seen as inferior and under the rightful control of Protestant British, and particularly English, men. In the preamble to the second Calico Act, Parliament followed the woolen and silk interests’ lead and no longer focused on the East India trade or a debilitating drain of bullion. Instead, Parliament attacked the consumers “wearing and using . . . Callicoes in Apparel, Houshold Stuff, Furniture, and otherwise” for putting weavers out of work.<sup>66</sup> The weaving interest’s

<sup>63</sup> [Daniel Defoe], *A Brief State of the Question, Between the Printed and Painted Callicoes And The Woollen and Silk Manufacture, As far as it relates to the Wearing and Using of Printed and Painted Callicoes in Great-Britain* (London, 1719), 27–28 (“as incapable,” 27, “much Cooler,” 27–28). Defoe argued for specifically British consumers to consume specifically English goods—positioning Scottish people effectively below English ones.

<sup>64</sup> [Defoe], *Female Manufacturers Complaint*, 10.

<sup>65</sup> Asgill, *Brief Answer*, 17 (“Superstition”), 18 (“their Religion”). Asgill, a convicted and shamed blasphemer, was a dubiously helpful ally to the Company to begin with.

<sup>66</sup> Ruffhead, *Statutes at Large*, 5: 229 (quotation), 4: 44.

success in reframing the debate had important imperial implications. By framing women's freedom of consumer choice in opposition to both men's freedom to rule and the country's social and economic well-being, the defenders of the woolen and silk industries suggested that a stronger domestic prohibition was in the interests of all British, especially English, men. It encouraged Protestant men to exercise control over women and supposedly Catholic and heathen men alike. Such arguments for exercising authority dovetailed neatly with metropolitan concerns over controlling Atlantic colonial trade, cultivation, and consumption. As domestic weaving supporter Martin argued to the Board of Trade, a strict prohibition needed to be enforced in "Our Plantations" so that "they are made subservient to the main Interest of the Kingdom."<sup>67</sup> Yet in elevating the political and moral stakes of consumption and trying to widen so many divisions among the different peoples within and outside the empire, the woolen and silk interests also played into the notion that cultivators and consumers in the Atlantic colonies could differ in valuable ways from those in Britain.

IN 1702 THE BOARD OF TRADE had complained that, since Parliament's Calico Act did not prohibit calicoes in the colonies, "great Quantities" were being shipped to the English West Indies. The board argued that the consumption of calicoes in the colonies "greatly obstructed" the sale of woolens and undermined the protection of English woolen and silk producers.<sup>68</sup> A few years later, an author using the pseudonym "A Lover of the Manufacture" similarly claimed that domestic silk weavers suffered from "very great Quantities of *East-India* Silks, and Silks mixt with Cotten, &c. . . . bought cheap at the *East-India-House*" and "Exported into all Her Majesty's Dominions."<sup>69</sup> In this reading of the situation, consumers on both sides of the Atlantic were thought to fulfill the same economic role as purchasers of English manufactured goods. Yet the woolen and silk interests' arguments for an imperial hierarchy of differences also supported Parliament's notion of colonists as distinct consumers of Indian silks and calicoes. Additionally, the now-united East India Company sought to use its improved political position. It boasted strong connections to both Whigs and Tories, and several new members of the Board of Trade looked

<sup>67</sup> Martin to the Board of Trade, Oct. 30, 1719, CO 389/27, pp. 279–80, NA.

<sup>68</sup> Board of Trade, "Representation Relating to the Woollen Manufactory," to the king, Oct. 28, 1702, CO 389/17, fol. 232, *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> A Lover of the Manufacture, *Reasons Humbly Proposed* (quotations). See also *A Brief State of the East India Trade, as it relates to the other Branches of the British Commerce: In Order to judge, whether, as it is now carry'd on, that Trade be advantageous to the general Interest of the Nation, or not* ([London?], [1710?]); *Reasons Humbly offer'd to the Honourable House of Commons, against a Duty intended to be laid upon Silks, Manufactured, Printed, or Stained, as far as it concerns Handkerchiefs* (n.p., [1712]).



more kindly on the Company's monopoly than had their predecessors.<sup>70</sup> The Board of Trade and important leaders of the domestic weaving interest thus became increasingly amenable to keeping calicoes legal in the Atlantic colonies in the late 1710s, creating the opportunity for a revised compromise settlement.

In 1719 the Board of Trade embarked on a serious exploration of the relationship between India and the Atlantic colonies and its potential value to the empire. In addition to studying a range of petitions and reports from the woolen and silk interests, the board solicited financial accounts for the reexport of the East India Company's goods in general, the reexport of India goods to America, and the tax revenue provided by calicoes and silks printed in England. The board learned that from June 1717 to June 1719 cottons and silks dyed, stained, and printed in England netted nearly forty thousand pounds per year to the state. Nevertheless, the board learned that the accounts showed as yet modest markets for calicoes shipped legally from England to the colonies.<sup>71</sup> The customs could not measure the extent of the trade to the colonies from Europe and from interlopers returning from India.

In autumn 1719 the Board of Trade asked the East India Company Court of Directors for their input, while the directors themselves considered how to expand trade in the Atlantic. The directors appeared exasperated with the weavers' demand for further relief from the competition of silks and calicoes both printed in England legally and illegally imported. The directors produced a vague one-page statement explaining that they had "purchased" the right to trade to India from Parliament at considerable expense, and to the benefit of the "Nation." They expected to unfairly lose a "very great Branch" of their trade if the government further restricted calico consumption.<sup>72</sup> Meanwhile, the directors hoped that the colonial markets were bigger than they had previously thought and were

<sup>70</sup> For more on the makeup of the board, see I. K. Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy: The Board of Trade in Colonial Administration, 1696–1720* (Oxford, 1968), 150–52; Caruthers, *City of Capital*, 151. Many of the new men were clients of Robert Walpole and Thomas Pelham-Holles, 1st Duke of Newcastle, who battled with opposition Whigs such as Richard Steele, a staunch weaver supporter and attacker of women for wearing calico. See [Steele], *Spinster*.

<sup>71</sup> This thirst for information followed the Board of Trade's overall approach in the later 1710s. See Steele, *Politics of Colonial Policy*, 153. For the board's account of duty revenue, see "Duties on Silks, Silk-handkerchiefs, Calicoes, Linnens, & Stuffs, Printed, Painted, Stain'd or Dyed," July 10, 1719, CO 388/21, fol. 110, NA. For the board's knowledge of exports to the Atlantic colonies, see "An Accompt Shewing the Species and Quanties of Prohibited East India Goods Re-Exported from England to Ireland, the Isles of Guernsey, Jersey and His Majesties Plantations in America, Since the Peace of Utrecht to Christ. 1716," CO 390/8, fols. 237r–48v, *ibid*.

<sup>72</sup> Court of Directors to the Board of Trade, Nov. 20, 1719, CO 388/21, fol. 278, *ibid*.

trying to take better control of the Atlantic supply. In the early 1700s, the Company brought few calicoes suitable for the African and West Indian markets to London, and many British merchants looked to Holland instead. By the late 1710s, however, the Company had begun to pay more attention to the types of goods that these buyers requested.<sup>73</sup> The Company had little reason to pursue colonial markets and push to keep calicoes legal in the colonies unless they expected worthwhile gains.

A Merchant publicly amplified Charles Davenant's arguments from the 1690s that the Company added to the nation's prosperity by bringing calicoes to London to be reexported throughout the Atlantic. The anonymous author explained that the reexport of calicoes was generally beneficial and that "there are some Trades especially, which cannot be carried on with any Success without them; as the *Guinea, West India* and *South Sea*; which Trades every one must allow, to be highly beneficial to the whole Nation." These "highly beneficial" trades involved the reexport of calicoes to Africa for slaves necessary on the valuable West Indian plantations and to the Spanish Atlantic colonies for silver. He expected that a prohibition on calicoes in the colonies would destroy these important trades. Additionally, the colonists would simply purchase India fabrics illegally from the French, Dutch, and Germans. The empire would lose substantial revenue and the East India Company's financial backing, and many people in London would lose their livelihoods. "There's hardly any one Trade in *London* that does not receive some Benefit by the fitting out of an *East-India* Ship," A Merchant explained.<sup>74</sup> Henry Martin's complex discourse supporting an open India trade also reappeared in 1720 after first being published in 1701. Martin wanted an end not only to the calico prohibition but also to the East India Company's monopoly. He argued that consuming and trading India's calicoes drove down prices, stimulated innovation, and bolstered the kingdom's wealth. Real profit came from "trading to the *Plantations*, to the *Straits*, to *Africa*, to the *East-Indies*" as much as possible.<sup>75</sup> Martin's plan was now politically unlikely: it would not have relieved the weavers, and the Company was in a newly stable political position.

In contrast, several writers for the weavers, including David Clayton and Ephraim Parker, ramped up the pressure for a colonial prohibition. Of all the calicoes exported to Europe, Clayton exclaimed, "not one tenth Part of those Goods are consum'd in the whole *United Provinces*, with their

<sup>73</sup> Richard Harris to Mr. Popple, Sept. 21, 1719, no. 388, in Fortescue, *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series: America and West Indies*, 31: 223–24, esp. 31: 223.

<sup>74</sup> A Merchant, *Weavers Pretences Examin'd*, 13–14 (quotations, 14); *Letter to a Member of Parliament, Concerning The Naval Store-Bill*, 37–38.

<sup>75</sup> [Henry Martin], *Considerations Upon the East-India Trade* (London, 1701), 102 (quotation), 12–21, 34–40, 67. Martin's text was reprinted in 1720 as *The Advantages of the East-India Trade to England, Considered . . .* (London, 1720).

Appendixes on the whole *German Empire*; but 'tis *Great-Britain, Ireland,* and our Islands and Collonies in *America*, take, as I may say, the whole." Clayton argued that such a trade "will, if not prevented, [lead] to the Ruin of the Nation." Besides, American merchants could easily substitute English "Silks, Crapes, Stuffs &c." for Indian fabric without any loss of business.<sup>76</sup> Parker argued that the greatest barrier to the success of England's weaving industry "is, by allowing all sorts of foreign wrought Goods . . . to be sent to our own Plantations, so that in Effect we have almost lost the Supplying our Fellow-Subjects in those Parts, with our own Goods."<sup>77</sup>

But the woolen and silk interests had also created a problem for themselves that made such arguments seem hollow. Their focus on creating divisions within the empire by blaming Englishwomen, supposedly Catholic calico printers, Scottish linen makers, and Indian heathens, as well as their opposition to plans for the cultivation of colonial cotton, contradicted their insistence that colonial consumers were the same as British consumers. Defoe, the domestic weavers' most capable champion, understood the situation and embraced it. He argued that even if calicoes were made not in foreign Indian factories but in British Atlantic colonies, they should still be prohibited in Britain. However, Defoe followed the logical conclusion: if colonists were different from other Britons as producers, they were also different as consumers. Shifting to align with the Company on the question of colonial consumption, he wrote, "not only great Quantities [of calicoes] should be exported, but all of them; for let us but be deliver'd from the Use of them here, we care not whether they send them, whether to *Africa, America, Germany,* or any where."<sup>78</sup> In exchange for a prohibition on calicoes in Britain, including those printed domestically, Defoe conceded that calicoes would remain legal in the British colonies. For Defoe, colonists in America were no more equivalent to domestic consumers than Africans and Germans. That difference made them valuable to the Company and the empire.

In mid-1720 the House of Lords requested that the Board of Trade follow up on its investigations and "prepare a Scheme" to prevent "the Wearing and Using of Callicoes," while "better enabling" the East India Company to "carry on a Trade so beneficial to the Kingdom."<sup>79</sup> The Company directors proposed to the board a suite of benefits to strengthen

<sup>76</sup> Clayton, *Short System of Trade*, 16 ("not one tenth Part"), 20 ("if not prevented"), 19 ("Silks"), 23.

<sup>77</sup> Ephraim Parker, *Proposals for Increasing the Trade of the Silk, Woollen, and Cotten Manufactories of this Nation, both at Home and Abroad, and consequently the whole Trade of the Kingdom; Humbly presented to the Consideration of the Honourable House of Commons* (n.p., [1720]), [1]. See also [Elking], *Interest of England Consider'd*, 37, 44.

<sup>78</sup> [Defoe], *Just Complaint of the Poor Weavers*, 35 (quotation), 17–19.

<sup>79</sup> As reported in *Weekly Journal; or, Saturday's-Post*, May 7, 1720, 448.

the regulation and enforcement of the Company's monopoly as well as London's position as the hub for private merchants to reexport the Company's goods throughout the Atlantic world. The directors asked for an extension of the monopoly to the west of the Cape of Good Hope so that colonial and other ships could not pick up India goods from the Dutch settlements in southern Africa and for a disallowance on India goods going to America without passing through the Company's London sales. They also requested improvements in the rate and payment periods of duties, new laws against interlopers, and the right to "bear up" against the Dutch at Bantam.<sup>80</sup> Unlike the weavers, the directors came from the elite of British society. In a face-to-face meeting, the board affirmed most of the ideas presented by the directors. The meeting also produced other potential concessions, such as the prompt payment of back interest owed to the Company by the government. The board tendered the ideas to the Commissioners of Customs for further comment. In January 1721 the board and the directors met again and settled on fifteen points to propose to the government. Nearly half of the points were specifically intended to defend the Company against interlopers and smugglers and to otherwise enhance its monopoly in supplying the merchants who shipped from London to colonial markets around the Atlantic.<sup>81</sup>

By requiring that all India goods destined for the colonies had to arrive first in London on Company ships, the East India Company would have a clear monopoly over the British Atlantic supply of India goods. The Board of Trade and the Court of Directors urged the government to "prohibit the Importation of all East India Goods into any of the British Colonies in America, except such as shall be carried thither directly from Great Britain." They likewise encouraged the application of the same penalties and laws of forfeiture as applied to goods from Europe, with "proper Encouragement" for catching cheaters. The directors also continued to argue that the domestic prohibitions hurt their business, drove up the price of clothing, reduced customs duties, and hindered national trade. They feared that these disadvantages would not be fully offset by a more rigorously protected reexport trade to the Atlantic colonies. The Board of Trade was more sanguine. It noted that its two-pronged plan of prohibition in Britain and enhancements to the Company's monopoly over the supply to the Atlantic colonies would stop the "Evil" caused to domestic weavers, while "securing to the

<sup>80</sup> Court of Directors to the Board of Trade, Sept. 15, 1720, CO 388/22, fols. 137-40, NA.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid. On the role of the Commissioners of Customs, see "Copy of a Report of the Commissioners of Customs," Jan. 20, 1720/1, CO 388/23, fols. 291-32v, NA. For more on the negotiations, see Great Britain, Board of Trade, *Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, from November-1718 to December-1722, Preserved in the Public Record Office* (London, 1925), 203-16, 230-46.

said Company their carrying on successfully a Trade so beneficial to this Kingdom.”<sup>82</sup> In early 1721 Parliament passed the second Calico Act, which banned both Indian and English printed calicoes in Britain and, now with the board’s blessing, continued to exempt the American colonies. A second act soon followed that required that Asian goods imported into the colonies must be reexported only from Britain, and therefore come from the Company sales.<sup>83</sup> Again, however, the passage of the act was only one step in securing its presumed benefits.

The Company and government soon stepped up enforcement against traders avoiding the monopoly. The Company’s ships, for instance, seized the British merchant vessel *Postillion*, returning from Madagascar to the Atlantic. Still, the directors often waited a long time between such successes, and they needed the navy’s help. In the summer of 1721, they petitioned the king to “prevent the mischief that threatens the Generall Trade of this Kingdom by the Ostenders visiting the British Ports in America, And clandestinely running in Goods to England.”<sup>84</sup> Within months a Royal Navy vessel in Virginia seized the *Eugene*, also returning from Madagascar. The *American Weekly Mercury* reported that the captain was taken to England for trial, “not for any Dealings with the Pyrates, but for having on Board East India Goods”—a shift in charge that reflected the government’s newfound interest in backing the Company’s monopoly over the British Atlantic supply of India goods.<sup>85</sup> The warning to future interlopers was clear.

In the summer of 1722, the government followed up with lengthy and detailed instructions to its colonial governors emphasizing that the enforcement of the East India Company’s monopoly of the Atlantic colonies, through London, contributed to the well-being of the empire. Similar instructions had not gone out after the first Calico Act when the Board of Trade continued to argue for a transatlantic prohibition. Now the government was united in supporting colonial consumption of the East India Company’s goods. The instructions commanded the governors to arrest the captains and crews of ships trading from Madagascar or elsewhere beyond the Cape of Good Hope “directly to Our Plantations in America, to the great Detriment of these Realms, and in Breach of the Several Laws in Force.” The instructions listed all the applicable statutes that made such transactions illegal and repeated several times that absolutely no goods could be unloaded from any ship arriving in a British Atlantic colony

<sup>82</sup> Board of Trade to Earl Stanhope, Feb. 1, 1720/1, CO 389/28, pp. 17–22 (“Prohibit,” 20, “Evil,” 17), NA.

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*; Ruffhead, *Statutes at Large*, 5: 229–31, 238–39.

<sup>84</sup> Court of Directors, Minutes, June 7, 21, Oct. 6, 1721, B/56, pp. 379 (quotation), 389, 479, IOR, APAC, BL.

<sup>85</sup> “Philadelphia. August 3,” [Philadelphia] *American Weekly Mercury*, July 27–Aug. 3, 1721, [3] (quotation).

from east of the Cape of Good Hope. Additionally, the cargo, crew, and documents of every ship with India goods onboard were to be examined to verify that the goods came only via Britain. Ships carrying India goods that had not passed through Britain as required by law must be turned away without breaking bulk, even if they appeared to “be in distress, Want, Disability, Danger of Sinking or for upon any other Reasons or Pretence whatsoever.” Anyone caught selling or bartering unauthorized India goods was to be charged to the full extent of the law. Governors and officers found negligent in “an affair of so great Importance to Our Service & the Welfare of Our Subjects” would be removed from office, penalized, and required to forfeit their bond.<sup>86</sup>

The government, Company, and others in the public hoped that a monopolization of the supply of East India goods imported into America and the West Indies would create wealth in London. The East India Company supplied white and printed cottons, domestic printers employed the poor, and the Atlantic colonies provided the markets. By funneling everything through London, the state could harness, control, and benefit from the complex calico trade. Newspapers celebrated the increase of re-exports even before the act officially took effect, but confusion remained over which markets would most support the East India Company. *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal* printed statistics showing that 207,035 pieces of calico had been exported to foreign places excluding the colonies during just four days in April 1721. The report noted that “the Account might otherwise seem incredible,” but the customs data proved the “good Effect of the late Callico Act.”<sup>87</sup> A few months later the *Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer* reported considerable exports of calicoes “for the West-Indies, Germany, Holland, New-England, New-York, Jamaica, and other Countries.”<sup>88</sup> Not only did the West Indies come first in the list, four of the six listed markets were colonial, giving readers the impression that the colonies absorbed large quantities of calicoes. In reality, the American and West Indian markets were still too small to offset the domestic British market that the Company and the calico printers lost to prohibition. Yet the potential of a monopoly over growing colonial markets seemed to brighten

<sup>86</sup> “Draft of H.M. Additional Instructions to Governors of Plantations, directing the strict observance of the Acts of Trade and Navigation, particularly in relation to the East Indian trade,” May 1, 1722, CO 324/10, pp. 443–53, NA (“directly,” 444, “be in distress,” 449, “affair,” 447); “H.M. Additional Instruction to Governors of the Plantations,” June 1, 1722, CO 324/34, pp. 136–44, *ibid.* See also Order in Council, Oct. 2, 1721, CO 388/23, fol. 220, *ibid.* The Company did not manage to increase the limits of its territory to the west of the Cape of Good Hope. The administration focused instead on enforcing the line already on the books.

<sup>87</sup> [London] *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*, May 6, 1721, 2050 (a Tory paper). See also *Applebee’s Original Weekly Journal*, Mar. 11, 1721, 2003.

<sup>88</sup> *Weekly Journal; or, British Gazetteer*, Sept. 16, 1721, 2031 (a Whig paper).

the East India Company's and the calico printers' future prospects. This complex trading structure made the distant and threatening calico producers in India a benefit to the state, while giving colonial consumers the very fashions that Londoners had taught them to love but that Londoners could no longer legally own.

THE ACTS, REGULATIONS, AND ENFORCEMENT EFFORTS surrounding calico increasingly differentiated and structured people in Britain, India, and the Atlantic colonies as producers and consumers and as different types of producers and consumers subject to different moral and economic arguments. The Calico Acts and the regulatory and enforcement efforts against pirates and interlopers also increasingly subjected British and smaller numbers of non-British people to British laws in the Atlantic and Indian Oceans alike. These efforts occurred alongside other developments in British power. In the Atlantic colonies, metropolitan power was becoming both "more responsive" and "more assertive."<sup>89</sup> Meanwhile, in the Indian Ocean the East India Company flirted with plans for colonization and conquest on Atlantic models, and it increasingly used force against India's rulers and peoples to gain market advantages. By the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, many within the Company believed that the producers they purchased from would prefer English, later British, rule and that in any case the Company should provide it to improve its profitability.<sup>90</sup> The government's approach to the calico problem may initially have been inspired by the ideals expressed in the Navigation Acts, but positioning Atlantic colonists more as consumers of goods manufactured in India and banned in Britain than as cultivators of India's raw materials for British production suggested something rather different. Unlike people in Britain, Atlantic colonists were to enjoy supposedly dangerous Asian luxuries without trading to India, without gaining the labor value added through manufacturing, and without cultivating Asian raw materials. Atlantic colonists were to be the ultimate imperial consumers.

More than fifty years before the Tea Act, Parliament had thus already decided that American consumers would support the East India Company

<sup>89</sup> Alison Gilbert Olson, *Making the Empire Work: London and American Interest Groups, 1690–1790* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 61.

<sup>90</sup> Directors to President and Council of Ft. St. George, May 30, 1690, E/3/92, fol. 52, IOR, APAC, BL; Directors to President and Council of Ft. St. George, Apr. 26, 1721, E/3/100, fols. 276v–84r, *ibid.*; Directors to President and Council in Bengal, Feb. 16, 1722, E/3/101, fols. 73–88, *ibid.*; Directors to President and Council in Bengal, Feb. 14, 1723, E/3/101, fols. 229–39, *ibid.*; J. E. Farnell, "The Navigation Act of 1651, the First Dutch War, and the London Merchant Community," *Economic History Review*, new ser., 16, no. 3 (1964): 439–54, esp. 444–45; Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (New York, 2008), 181–218. For more on the Company's ambitions as a form of government, see Philip J. Stern, *The Company-State: Corporate Sovereignty and the Early Modern Foundations of the British Empire in India* (New York, 2011), 6–7, 10–14, 23, 42, 58–60, 74–75, 83–214.

in the interests of the metropole. The popularization of the notion that the Atlantic colonists should and did consume large quantities of India goods reexported from London was an important part of an imperial compromise that historians have discussed as being about India, the East India Company, and Britain itself. That compromise, moreover, built new and reinforced old legal structures that together changed the colonists' place in the empire. The vast majority of colonists were content with this change, despite some religious protests and concerns about Asian luxury, until after the Seven Years' War. In accepting the Calico Acts and the East India Company monopoly in the early eighteenth century, colonists willingly accepted the making of an imperial compromise that rendered them outlets for goods seen as immoral by many in Britain, and that structurally subordinated their economic interests as cultivators, producers, and merchants to the interests of a powerful company and its Indian producers. It was a seductive compromise, which on the surface gave every contingent something of what they wanted—including the colonists, who kept the right to buy Indian calicoes, though only because of the East India Company's interests. Yet the entrenchment of the right of apparent consumer choice, a right much more limited by the Calico Acts within Britain itself, helped to set up the future revolutionary conflict with the Company and Parliament over tea. During the next several decades, that conflict nested in the calico compromise—an arrangement that tied together differing conceptions of the morality of consumer choice, the apparent colonial right to consumer freedom, and the legal structures that required Asian goods to come via Britain and to be subjected to the needs of a powerful British company.