Social and Economic Lives of the Ordinary Poor in Ipswich, 1570-1620

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‘Social and Economic Lives of the Ordinary Poor in Ipswich, 1570-1620’,
Tiffany Shumaker, Lincoln College, *Doctor of Philosophy*, Trinity Term 2019

Using a tailored combination of methodologies and an array of sources, this thesis offers a case study of the ordinary social and economic lives of ‘the poor’ in the town of Ipswich between 1570 and 1620. Inspired by the well-known work of Amartya Sen, it defines poverty in a broad sense, aligning with many contemporary perceptions of ‘the poor’, but breaking with current historiographical norms for the boundaries of poverty, which are typically more restrictive in scope. Moreover, it argues against the use of terms including ‘marginal’ or ‘labouring’ poor to denote those who lived in more mild hardship. Instead, it offers a new descriptive term for this diverse group: the ‘ordinary poor’.

Overall, it analyses and juxtaposes the life experiences of the ‘ordinary poor’ and their relief-dependent counterparts in relation to the composition of these groups, their families, and how they approached their financial lives and their children’s futures. Its findings show more similarities than differences. For example, both groups were susceptible to hardship migration and the effects of epidemic disease, but only the relief-dependent poor were particularly susceptible to broken family units. They also engaged in similar varieties of occupations (lawful and unlawful), worked hard to provide secure financial futures for their children, and held comparable levels of wealth, the latter being determined more by the size of their nuclear family than their socio-economic status. In addition, this study considers how the tax structures of the period and the influential poor law statutes of 1598 and 1601 impacted the lives of the poor, arguing these factors created forms of entrenched socio-economic disadvantage, which resulted in ‘poverty traps’ that impeded the efforts of many among the poor to improve their situations.

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This thesis comprises a case-study of the ordinary social and economic experiences of urban poverty in one early modern English town. The study’s approach has been inspired by the work of Amartya Sen, and it suggests that the definition of poverty widely accepted by early modern historians is too restrictive and distorts our understanding of the subject because of its primary focus on the experience of absolute poverty (e.g. destitution and dependency upon relief). Moreover, it contends that by so often equating the poor with the destitute (or those in receipt of, or vying for, official relief) and those perilously close to destitution our current definition does not take full account of the fact that contemporaries frequently defined poverty in much broader social and economic terms. It shows that urban authorities often considered ‘the poor’ or the ‘poorer sort’ to include all those who could not afford to pay towards local poor rates (termed here as the ‘ordinary poor’) as well as those living in, or on the verge of relief-dependency. Evidence from Ipswich suggests that throughout the period of study these two groups comprised over half of the town's settled population, with the ordinary poor including roughly 53 per cent and the relief-dependent poor an additional 5 per cent. Even though the vast majority of the poor lived above the level of destitution and outside of official relief schemes, the subject's historiography remains dominated by discussions focused on the relief-dependent and their experience of poor relief administration. My thesis enlarges this debate by emphasising the experiences of those who lived in 'ordinary' poverty whilst comparing them with those of their relief-dependent counterparts.

Since the ordinary poor largely did not seek nor receive official relief, the group is normally absent from most records that deal with poverty and studying them can be difficult. This study uses a tailored combination of methodologies including record-linkage,

family reconstitution, and life-cycle reconstruction in order to locate the ordinary poor in the historical record. Ipswich was chosen as a good urban case-study because at this time the town's population was relatively large (roughly 5,000 inhabitants), its economy went through periods of prosperity and decline, and its authorities generated copious amounts of administrative and judicial records, most of which survive. The core of my research rests on the full reconstitution and socio-economic classification of nearly 800 resident families and the partial reconstitution and classification of several hundred more. I achieved this by developing a Microsoft Access database to link and analyse data from the town's parish registers, local rate assessments, poor relief records, and the town's census of the poor. This allowed me to set the social backdrop of ordinary poor and relief-dependent families by comparing their normal family types and developmental cycles, both with each other, and with those higher up the socio-economic scale. Overall, the evidence counters the reigning notion that poor families were normally small, fractured, and vulnerable units. Whereas relief-dependent families often experienced such instability, ordinary poor families normally contained many children who lived in a relatively stable environment under the care of two parents. Both groups also experienced normal rates of childhood deaths for the period, which suggests that the poor in both groups largely had access to acceptable vital nutrition and medical provisions (as they were available at the time).

This thesis also offers a detailed exploration of the economic lives of poor adults and children, including their employment patterns, accumulation of wealth, and the transmission of wealth and economic opportunity between generations. This was accomplished by analysing the town's petty court depositions, census of the poor, quarter sessions presentments and indictments, and the probate inventories and wills of poor residents. My research shows that the ordinary poor and the relief-dependent often experienced similar norms in employment types (which were distinct from the norms of wealthier groups) until the introduction of the Elizabethan poor law statutes of 1598. Until

that date, most poor parents were able to adapt to changing demands in the labour market and use them to their children's economic advantage. More often than not, they secured their children 'normal' apprenticeships, official education, or other training in the most secure and potentially prosperous work available to them. The Poor Law's emphasis on providing prescribed employments to the poor halted this practice and forced certain groups, particularly poor women and children, to learn and perform much less lucrative work than had previously been the case. Furthermore, my research suggests that many ordinary poor families had access to substantial savings, which they gained through their employments, including lawful and unlawful work. Evidence indicates that the poor accumulated savings not only to buffer themselves against hardship and counteract entrenched forms of socio-economic disadvantage, but also to fund the employment training and early economic life of their children. Indeed, both the ordinary and relief-dependent poor appear to have placed a great deal of importance on the transfer of assets and the improvement of economic opportunity from one generation to the next. Nevertheless, the poor typically hid these savings from local authorities because of deleterious tax implications which may have been imposed on them had their modest ‘wealth’ been discovered. As a result, both the tax structure in the period and elements of social welfare policy operated as ‘poverty traps’, which impeded many of the poor’s efforts to improve their lives between 1570 and 1620.

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As my research drew from an array of sources located at many repositories, I am also grateful for the help of the archivists who assisted in my source collection efforts. I must, however, especially thank Cindy O'Halloran whose help was invaluable during my final reference checks. I am similarly grateful to Cai Marshall who assisted me with the initial compilation of my Bibliography, and Jonathan Healey who kindly read and commented on this work in its final stages. Indeed, no work happens in a vacuum, and I have been fortunate to benefit from discussions with a truly inspiring and talented group of colleagues and friends. Special thanks must also be given to Caroline Litzenberger, Annette Walton, Jo Edge, Stuart Minson, Gemma Allen, Mark Hailwood, and the team at Young Lives, Oxford headed by Prof. Jo Boyden.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CKS	Centre for Kentish Studies
EcHR	*The Economic History Review*
ERO	Essex Record Office
LPS	*Local Population Studies*
NRON	Norfolk Record Office, Norwich Branch
OED	Oxford English Dictionary
RSEH	Records of Social and Economic History
SROI	Suffolk Record Office, Ipswich Branch
STRO	Staffordshire Record Office
TNA	The National Archives
TRHS	*Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*

LIST OF FIGURES AND TABLES

Figure 2.1: Suffolk in 1603, Pietre Van Den Keere (Adapted) p. 34

Figure 2.2: Essex in 1603, Pietre Van Den Keere (Adapted) p. 35

Figure 2.3: Key Areas in Ipswich c. 1610, John Speed (Adapted) p. 40

Figure 2.4: Economic Ties between Ipswich and Regional Locales p. 45

Figure 3.1: Prior Population Estimates for Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century Ipswich p. 67

Figure 3.2: Parish Percentages of Poor Rate Payers (1590) to Communicants (1603) p. 71

Figure 3.3: Economic Categorisation of Parishes in Ipswich p. 72

Figure 3.4: Revised Numbers of Communicants in 1603 Using Averaged Multipliers p. 73

Figure 3.5: Estimated Numbers of Communicants in 1574 Using Averaged Multipliers p. 76

Figure 3.6: Annual Totals of Parish Register Events in Ipswich, 1550-1660 p. 77

Figure 3.7: Socio-Economic Distribution of Households in August, 1590 p. 86

Figure 4.1: Nuclear Family Types Grouped by Duration in the Records p. 109

Figure 4.2: Number of Ephemeral Families by Decade p. 112

Figure 4.3: Number of Single Men and Women by Decade p. 113

Figure 4.4: Distribution of Families by Socio-Economic Category p. 116

Figure 4.5: Family Type by Socio-Economic Category p. 117

Figure 4.6: Average Number of Years Lived in Ipswich p. 119

Figure 4.7: Developmental Cycle of Nuclear Family (Fam) Size (FS) in Five-Year Increments p. 122

Figure 4.8: Differences in Mean Nuclear Family Size Development by Socio-Economic Category p. 124

Figure 4.9: Average Percentages of Childhood Deaths by Socio-Economic Category p. 125

Table 5.1: Distribution of Petty Court Deponents in Ipswich by Socio-Economic Category p. 137

Figure 5.1: Occupations of Petty Court Deponents and Those on the Census of the Poor (Combined) p. 147

Figure 5.2: Occupations of Poor Men in the Census of the Poor, 1597 p. 150

Figure 5.3: Occupations of Ordinary Poor Male Deponents, 1573-85 p. 150

Figure 5.4: Occupations of Poor Women in the Census of the Poor, 1597 p. 157

Figure 5.5: Occupations of Married Couples in the Census of the Poor, 1597 p. 158

Figure 5.6: Occupations of Women Requiring 'Teaching' in Order to Spin, Census of the Poor, 1597 p. 160

Figure 5.7: Women Given Wheels, Cards, or Stock in the Census of the Poor, 1597 p. 161

Table 5.2: Entries for Unlawful Victualling, 1587-1598 p. 180

Figure 5.8: Socio-Economic Status of New Unlawful Victuallers by Year, 1587-1598. p. 182

Figure 5.9: Socio-Economic Status of All Offenders by Year, 1587-1598 p. 183

Table 5.3: Occupational/Legal Status of Poor Adults Charged for Victualling Without Licence, 1587-1598 p. 185

Figure 6.1: Poor Girls' Work in the Census of the Poor, Ipswich 1597 p. 226

Figure 6.2: Poor Boys' Work in the Census of the Poor, Ipswich 1597 p. 227

Figure 6.3: Children's Work in Relief-Dependent Households: Boys p. 228

Figure 6.4: Children's Work in Ordinary Poor Households: Boys p. 229

Figure 6.5: Children's Work in Relief-Dependent Households: Girls p. 236

Figure 6.6: Children's Work in Ordinary Poor Households: Girls p. 236

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Short Abstract p. i

Long Abstract p. ii

Acknowledgements p. v

List of Abbreviations p. vi

List of Figures and Tables p. vii

CHAPTER ONE: The ‘Ordinary Poor’ p. 1

CHAPTER TWO: Ipswich, c. 1570-1620 p. 33

CHAPTER THREE: People, Poverty, and Demographic Trends p. 64

CHAPTER FOUR: Urban Families and Poverty p. 89

CHAPTER FIVE: The Economic Lives of Poor Adults p. 129

CHAPTER SIX: The Economic Lives of Poor Children p. 199

CONCLUSION: Poverty, Solvency, and the ‘Ordinary Poor’ p. 247

APPENDICES:

Appendix 4.1: Detailed Averages of Mean Nuclear Family Size by Socio-Economic Group p. 254

Appendix 5.1: Occupations of Male Inhabitants of Ipswich, 1573-1597 p. 255

Appendix 6.1: Pauper Apprentices and ‘Kept’ Children in the Overseers of the Poor’s Accounts from Two Parishes – St Nicholas (1598-1620), and St Lawrence (1599-1620) p. 256

BIBLIOGRAPHY p. 257

CHAPTER ONE:

The 'Ordinary Poor'

This thesis is driven by a series of fundamental and challenging questions. Who comprised the bulk of 'the poor' or 'the poorer sort' in late Elizabethan and early Stuart England? What were their experiences of 'poverty', however defined? How 'poor' were they? Assuming a wider definition of 'poverty', how were so many able to remain solvent without turning to official forms of poor relief? In addition, how were the efforts of the poor helped or hindered by the influential poor law statutes of 1598 and 1601? As this chapter shows, a large body of work has suggested a variety of answers to these queries and each contribution has helped to build, clarify, and expand our knowledge of the nature and extent of poverty, and its social and economic contexts, at this time. Nevertheless, what follows rests upon the assertion that, despite these gains, our understanding of the most *ordinary* experiences of poverty, or perhaps 'entrenched' socio-economic disadvantage, remains unclear.[1] As A. L. Beier once noted, this has been caused primarily by an absence of consensus on the best social and economic criteria for defining 'the poor' as a group, and the tendency of early modern historians to focus their research on certain types of 'poverty' more than others.[2]

Defining what it means to be 'poor' – in any age – is a tricky business. Since the early twentieth century key studies in what we now term the social sciences, such as Seebohm Rowntree's detailed survey of the labouring population in late-nineteenth century

[1] The terminology used here derives from K. Roelen and L. Camfield, 'Universal Truths or Hidden Realities – Chronic Poverty in Rural Ethiopia', *Journal of International Development*, 26/7 (2013), pp. 1024-38; Committee for Economic Development of Australia (CEDA), *Addressing Entrenched Disadvantage in Australia April 2015* (Melbourne, 2015).

[2] A. L. Beier, 'Poverty and Progress in Early Modern England', in A. L. Beier, D. Cannadine, and J. M. Rosenheim (eds), *The First Modern Society: Essays in English History in Honour of Lawrence Stone* (Cambridge, 1989), pp. 201-40. As work on this thesis comes to a close, three large-scale research projects related to the experiences of 'the poor' in a broader sense are underway and will, undoubtedly, do much to address this existing historiographic imbalance. This includes work undertaken and directed by Alexandra Shepard, Jane Whittle, and Andy Wood.

York and, more recently, Peter Townsend's work on poverty in the United Kingdom,[3] and Amartya Sen's ground-breaking development of the 'capability approach' (a flexible analytical framework that seeks to clarify the wider and more multi-dimensional experience of systemic socio-economic adversity and disadvantage), have made it well known that poverty is a relative and multi-faceted concept tied to ever-shifting economic and cultural factors, often specific to a time and place.[4] As a result, no researcher can put forward a universal definition of what it means to be 'poor', particularly when they are engaged in the comparison of groups which experienced various forms of deprivation across regions and periods. Nevertheless, to study poverty it must be defined and, in general, social scientists and historians have come to accept three main approaches to that end. These methods include 'absolutist', 'relativist', and 'cultural' definitions of poverty, and the benefits and drawbacks of each in isolation are now widely known.[5] What is required for the matter at hand is a combination of all three because such an approach tempers any set boundaries for socio-economic groups and ensures they are as inclusive and representative as possible.

Widely championed by Rowntree, absolutist definitions typically involve the creation of a clear economic 'poverty line' which is calculated by comparing income levels with an assumed level of expenditure necessary to meet a basic level of subsistence. Because of this, they tie the concept of poverty most firmly to the exceptional experience of destitution, rather than the more typical experience of chronic, but milder, forms of want and systemic socio-cultural disadvantage. The enduring importance of Rowntree's

[3] B. S. Rowntree, *Poverty. A Study of Town Life* (London, 1901); P. Townsend, *Poverty in the United Kingdom* (London, 1979).
[4] A. Sen, 'Poor, Relatively Speaking', *Oxford Economic Papers*, New Series, 35/2 (1983), pp. 153-69; idem, *Inequality Reexamined* (Oxford, 1992); M. Marmot and R. Bell, 'Socioeconomically Disadvantaged People', in B. S. Levy and V. W. Sidel (eds), *Social Injustice and Public Health*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 2013), pp. 21-41. For some critiques of Sen's work see B. Agarwal, J. Humphries and I. Robeyns, 'Exploring the Challenges of Amartya Sen's Work and Ideas: An Introduction', *Feminist Economics*, 9/2-3 (2003), pp. 3-12; A. Knecht, 'Understanding and Fighting Poverty – Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Related Theories', *Social Change Review*, 10/2 (2012), pp. 153-76.
[5] P. Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1988), pp. 2-5; J. Henderson and R. Wall (eds), *Poor Women and Children in the European Past* (London, 1994), Introduction, pp. 1-8.

discovery of what we now term 'life-cycle poverty' (or the regular movement of individuals in and out of destitution at certain life stages) demonstrates that using absolute definitions to explore the experience of hardship can yield significant results. Even so, this approach on its own cannot reveal the full extent of deprivation within a given society, and it is now generally accepted that – in a broader and more relative cultural sense – the concept of 'the poor' also should include many individuals who somehow remain solvent, yet live diminished lives because of entrenched social factors which create disadvantage and adversity for certain groups.[6]

Over the past several decades, researchers have become increasingly aware of, and sensitive to, those in this category, which has moved the general study of poverty away from the imposition of socially cleaving hard 'poverty lines' and towards more inclusive, nuanced approaches which facilitate greater analysis of the ranging experiences of need. Indeed, Sen's pioneering work has underscored that the concepts of 'poverty' and 'socio-economic disadvantage' can be synonymous, and members of poorer groups are greatly affected by the social and economic *capabilities* (i.e. opportunities) readily available to them.[7] As Sen explained, 'a person's capability to achieve *functionings that he or she has reason to value* provides a general approach to the evaluation of social arrangements, and this yields a particular way of viewing the assessment of equality and inequality'. In this usage, '*functionings* relate to many different dimensions of life – including survival, health, work, education, relationships, empowerment, self-expression and culture.' For, as Sen astutely summarised, 'human lives are battered and diminished in all kinds of different ways, and the first task [of understanding this]…is to acknowledge that deprivations of very

[6] E.g. Beier, 'Poverty and Progress', pp. 203-39; J. Healey, *The First Century of Welfare: Poverty and Poor Relief in Lancashire, 1620-1730* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 25-6, 113-26.
[7] Sen, *Inequality Reexamined*; Marmot and Bell, 'Socioeconomically Disadvantaged People', pp. 21-41.

different kinds have to be accommodated within a general overarching framework.'[8] The recent development and implementation of the 'Global Multidimensional Poverty Index' by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and the United Nations Development Programme indicate that a variety of differences in health, education, and living standards can provide new and richer insights into the experiences and causes of poverty, and the efficacy of social welfare policies. Key to this is Sen's argument that 'poverty should be seen as capability deprivation'. [9] To Sen and many others, then, 'poverty' is not merely about personal income, material assets, and the threat or experience of destitution: it is about what individuals – even solvent individuals – can expect to do more broadly with whatever resources they are able to acquire. This includes access to basic nutrition and medical care, meaningful education or training, and the potential to achieve a 'capable' standard of living.

As influential as Sen's work has been within the social sciences, it has taken some time for historians of the early modern period to embrace the spirit of his revolutionary methodology and more inclusive definition of poverty.[10] This is at least partly because it is related to a broader topic, that of the social order of early modern England. This itself has a longstanding and highly contentious historiography, which Keith Wrightson once described as 'a conceptual, methodological, and ideological minefield'.[11] No doubt, few topics have such a number of sources which are so easy to examine, but difficult to assess, as the

[8] Emphases have been added and all quotes can be found in S. Alkire and S. Deneulin, 'The Human Development and Capability Approach', in S. Deneulin and L. Shahani (eds), *An Introduction to the Human Development and Capability Approach: Freedom and Agency* (London, 2009), pp. 29-33.
[9] S. Alkire, J. Foster, S. Seth, M. E. Santos, J. M. Roche, and P. Ballón, *Multidimensional Poverty Measurement and Analysis* (Oxford, 2015), pp. 1-23.
[10] For an example of Sen's work used in early modern studies see M. Ågren (ed.), *Making a Living, Making a Difference: Gender and Work in Early Modern European Society* (Oxford, 2017), Introduction, p. 12.
[11] K. Wrightson, 'The Social Order of Early Modern England: Three Approaches', in L. Bonfield, R. M. Smith, and K. Wrightson (eds), *The World We Have Gained: Histories of Population and Social Structure. Essays Presented to Peter Laslett on his Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford, 1986), pp. 178.

relative ranking and form of England's lower social groups.[12] Moreover, though historians often have explored issues connected to poverty and 'the poor' in this period, initially their focus was chiefly on charting the legal and administrative development of social welfare legislation and the implementation of social policy and poor relief schemes at a local level.[13] As a result, from the outset, historiographical concepts and interpretations of poverty for this period have been most connected to the people, institutions, and environments associated with destitution, sometimes referred to as 'deep', 'primary', or 'acute' need.[14] Self-evidently, terms such as 'poverty' and 'the poor' include, at minimum, those who faced acute hardship, and the following study is, in part, concerned with their experiences. Even so, as the work of Sen and others indicate, broader perspectives are also required. The longstanding influences of Christian humanism and increasing effects of nineteenth-century Marxism and democratic socialism early in the twentieth century led R. H. Tawney to draw attention to the wider array of socio-economic disadvantages which he found present amongst England's rural 'peasantry' and 'poorer classes'.[15] The subsequent development of what we now term 'Marxist history' furthered this more general approach

[12] P. Laslett, *The World We Have Lost* (London, 1965); idem, *The World We Have Lost – Further Explored* (London, 1983); L. Stone, *The Crisis of the Aristocracy, 1558-1641* (Oxford, 1965), pp. 21-64; idem, 'Social Mobility in England, 1500-1700', *Past and Present*, 33 (Apr. 1966), pp. 16-55; Wrightson, 'Social Order of Early Modern England', pp. 177-202; idem, 'Estates, Degrees and Sorts: Changing Perceptions of Society in Tudor and Stuart England', in P. Corfield (ed.), *Language, History and Class* (Oxford, 1991), pp. 30-52; idem, '"Sorts of People" in Tudor and Stuart England', in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1994), pp. 28-51.

[13] E. M. Leonard, *The Early History of English Poor Relief* (Cambridge, 1900); D. Marshall, *The English Poor in the Eighteenth Century: A Study in Social and Administrative History* (London, 1926); B. Webb and S. Webb, *English Local Government, Vol. VII: English Poor Law History, Part One: The Old Poor Law* (London, 1927); E. M. Hampson, *The Treatment of Poverty in Cambridgeshire, 1597-1834* (Cambridge, 1934).

[14] For some examples of these terms in use see Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 39-40, 53-60; N. Goose, 'The Rise and Decline of Philanthropy in Early Modern Colchester: The Unacceptable Face of Mercantilism?', *Social History*, 31/4 (2006), pp. 469-70.

[15] The work of Karl Marx had a profound effect on the early development of British social and economic history. For a concise overview see K. Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain, 1470-1750* (London, 2000), pp. 10-17. Also, Tawney's work has been very influential, though his categorisations of the rural 'peasantry' and 'poorer classes' remain problematic for they include all individuals below the level of the gentry (i.e. from relatively wealthy yeomen to indigent paupers); R. H. Tawney, *The Agrarian Problem in the Sixteenth Century* (London, 1912), pp. 19-173. In addition, the concept of an English 'peasantry' has been soundly refuted. See H. R. French and R. W. Hoyle, *The Character of English Rural Society: Earls Colne, 1550-1750* (Manchester, 2007), pp. 12-23.

by highlighting the experiences of Britain's heterogeneous 'working classes' or 'landless proletariat', and how they might relate to the development of capitalism, changes in agricultural land-holding, and shifting control over the economic means of production.[16]

Nevertheless, it was only with the advent of the 'new social history' movement in the 1960s that the study of poverty moved decidedly away from an institutionally-focused 'top down' approach and towards others which would better illuminate 'the poor' as a social group and the varied experiences of its members.[17] Whilst an interest in the development of social welfare policy and practice has endured, the methodologies available to social historians and the topics of importance to them have expanded rapidly since the business of writing history 'from below' began.[18] Seminal works examining the early modern 'social order', combined with foundational case studies outlining regional and, eventually, national demographic, economic, and social trends, all established a richly fertile environment grounded in robust methodological frameworks which have enabled the

[16] Notable examples of early 'Marxist history' include, E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London, 1963); C. Hill, *Society and Puritanism in Pre-Revolutionary England* (London, 1964).
[17] The 'new social history' movement was a diffuse historiographical phenomenon. Notable works most related to the subject at hand include, Laslett, *World We Have Lost*, ch. 2; Stone, 'Social Mobility', pp. 16-55; A. Everitt, 'Social Mobility in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 33 (Apr. 1966), pp. 56-73; idem, 'Farm Labourers' in J. Thirsk (ed.), *The Agrarian History of England and Wales, Vol. IV: 1500-1640* (Cambridge, 1967), pp. 396-465; J. F. Pound, 'The Social and Trade Structure of Norwich, 1525-1575', *Past and Present*, 34 (July 1966), pp. 49-69; A. L. Beier, 'Poor Relief in Warwickshire, 1630-60', *Past and Present*, 35 (Dec. 1966), pp. 77-100; K. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century England* (London, 1971); P. Clark, 'The Migrant in Kentish Towns, 1580-1640', in P. Clark and P. Slack (eds), *Crisis and Order in English Towns, 1500-1700: Essays in Urban History* (London, 1972), pp. 117-63; idem, *English Provincial Society from the Reformation to the Revolution: Religion, Politics and Society in Kent, 1500-1640* (Hassocks, 1977); C. Phythian-Adams, 'Ceremony and the Citizen: the Communal Year at Coventry, 1450-1550', in Clark and Slack (eds), *Crisis and Order*, pp. 57-85; idem, *Desolation of a City: Coventry and the Urban Crisis of the Late Middle Ages* (Cambridge, 1979); *Poverty in Early-Stuart Salisbury*, ed. P. Slack (Wiltshire Record Society, xxxi, 1975); M. Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villagers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (London, 1974); A. B. Appleby, *Famine in Tudor and Stuart England* (Liverpool, 1978); K. Wrightson and D. Levine, *Poverty and Piety in an English Village: Terling, 1521-1700*, 2nd edn (Oxford, 1995 [1979]). For some recent discussions of 'top down' and 'bottom up' history see J. Healey, 'Marginality and Misfortune: Poverty and Social Welfare in Lancashire, c. 1630-1760' (D.Phil. thesis, University of Oxford, 2008), ch. 1; M. Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge: Regulating Sex in England, 1470-1600* (Cambridge, 2017), pp. 17-8, 82-6.
[18] For more recent work on welfare legislation and relief schemes see P. Slack, *From Reformation to Improvement: Public Welfare in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1999); P. A. Fideler, *Social Welfare in Pre-Industrial England: The Old Poor Law Tradition* (Basingstoke, 2005); M. K. McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England, 1350-1600* (Cambridge, 2012); Healey, *First Century of Welfare*; for good overviews, see P. A. Fideler, 'Introduction: Impressions of a Century of Historiography', *Albion*, 32/3 (2000), pp. 381-407; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 1-26.

in-depth exploration of early modern society.[19] This vibrant pool of research has spawned successive generations of enlightening and diverse scholarship, no small portion of which has concerned the experience of 'primary' (i.e. deep) and/or 'secondary' (i.e. shallow) need. Of particular relevance to this study has been the interrelated development of demographic,[20] local,[21] urban,[22] and family history,[23] associated with a growing concern with describing who the poor were, establishing their numbers and standard of living, determining why they were poor, and piecing together their various methods of survival.[24] From this work much has been gained. For example, we now know that from the early

[19] A particularly notable work concerning the social order in addition to those already cited is D. Cressy, 'Describing the Social Order of Elizabethan and Stuart England', *Literature and History*, 3 (Mar. 1976), pp. 29-44. Some foundational case studies in addition to those previously cited include W. G. Hoskins, *Industry, Trade and People in Exeter, 1688-1800* (Manchester, 1936); W. T. MacCaffrey, *Exeter 1540-1640* (Cambridge, 1958); various essays in Clark and Slack (eds), *Crisis and Order*; P. Laslett, 'England: The Household over Three Centuries', in P. Laslett and R. Wall (eds), *Household and Family in Past Time* (London, 1972), pp. 125-58; Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*; N. Goose, 'Household Size and Structure in Early Stuart Cambridge', *Social History*, 5/3 (1980), pp. 347-85; A. L. Beier, 'The Social Problems of an Elizabethan Country Town: Warwick, 1580-90', in P. Clark (ed.), *Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England* (Leicester, 1981), pp. 46-85; R. Finlay, *Population and Metropolis: The Demography of London, 1580-1650* (Cambridge, 1981); A. L. Beier and R. Finlay (eds), *London 1500-1700: The Making of the Metropolis* (London, 1986); J. F. Pound, *Tudor and Stuart Norwich* (Chichester, 1988).

[20] E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541-1871* (London, 1981); see also E. A. Wrigley, R. S. Davies, J. E. Oeppen and R. S. Schofield, *English Population History from Family Reconstitution, 1580-1837* (Cambridge, 1997); D. M. Palliser, 'Tawney's Century: Brave New World or Malthusian Trap?', *EcHR*, 35/3 (1982), pp. 339-53; P. Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (London, 1985).

[21] In addition to those works already cited, see M. Spufford, 'The Significance of the Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax', *Proceedings of the Cambridge Antiquarian Society*, 55 (1962), pp. 53-64; R. Fieldhouse, 'Social Structure from Tudor Lay Subsidies and Probate Inventories: A Case Study: Richmondshire (Yorkshire)', *LPS*, 12 (1974), pp. 9-24; M. K. McIntosh, 'Local Responses to the Poor in Late Medieval and Tudor England', *Continuity and Change*, 3/2 (1988), pp. 209-45.

[22] J. Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society: A London Suburb in the Seventeenth Century* (Cambridge, 1987); S. Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds: Structures of Life in Sixteenth-Century London* (Cambridge, 1989); I. W. Archer, *The Pursuit of Stability: Social Relations in Elizabethan London* (Cambridge, 1991); D. Levine and K. Wrightson, *The Making of an Industrial Society: Whickham, 1560-1765* (Oxford, 1991); and D. Underdown, *Fire from Heaven: Life in an English Town in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1992). For further discussion of the rise of urban history see P. Clark (ed.), *The Cambridge Urban History of Britain, Vol. II: 1540-1840* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 25-6.

[23] L. Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500*-1800 (London, 1977); M. J. Ingram, *Church Courts, Sex, and Marriage in England 1570-1640* (Cambridge, 1987); S. D. Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1988); R. Houlbrooke, *The English Family, 1450-1700* (London, 1984); M. Abbott, *Family Ties: English Families, 1540-1920* (London, 1993); A. Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800* (London, 1995); idem, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (London, 2008); P. Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children in England, 1580-1800* (Oxford, 2010).

[24] Some additional notable works concerning these themes include J. F. Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy in Tudor England*, 2nd edn (London, 1986 [1971]); A. L. Beier, *The Problem of the Poor in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (London, 1983); idem, *Masterless Men: the Vagrancy Problem in England 1560-1640* (London, 1985); idem, 'Poverty and Progress', pp. 201-39; S. Hindle, *On the Parish? The Micro-Politics of Poor Relief in Rural England c.1550-1750* (Oxford, 2004), pp. 15-22, 35-42.

sixteenth century the overall depth and prevalence of poverty rose significantly throughout England, despite various attempts by local and national authorities to address the resulting problems as they saw them. Notoriously, the issues resulted from sustained population growth in the context of a perennially insecure and occasionally disrupted economy, marked by bouts of harvest failure, virulent epidemics, trade stoppages, and periods of war, the effects of which sometimes overlapped and reinforced each other. Indeed, by the close of the sixteenth century, these forces combined with the effects of rising inflation and the erosion of real wages to bring about the so-called 'crisis of the 1590s', which led to acute poverty for many amongst the population.[25] Punctuated by further episodes of crisis and economic and social disorder, particularly in the 1620s and 1640s, this trend of growing impoverishment largely continued in most communities until the mid-seventeenth century, when the total number of those experiencing acute need began to decline.[26]

In addition, Tim Wales and others have argued (in the manner of Rowntree) that throughout this period 'the poor' commonly experienced 'life-cycle poverty', or the movement in and out of acute need based on differences in gender, age, and family situation. As a result, women, children, elders, and young families 'overcharged with children' typically comprised most people dependent upon relief.[27] Moreover, the work of Olwen Hufton on poverty in eighteenth-century France has drawn attention to the

[25] Clark, *English Provincial Society*, chs. 7, 8; idem, 'A Crisis Contained? The Condition of English Towns in the 1590s', in idem (ed.), *The European Crisis of the 1590s: Essays in Comparative History* (London, 1985), pp. 44-66; M. J. Power, 'London and the Control of the "Crisis" of the 1590s', *History*, 70 (1985), pp. 371-85; idem, 'A "Crisis" Reconsidered: Social and Demographic Dislocation in London in the 1590s', *London Journal*, 12 (1986), pp. 134-45; Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, pp. 1-17; J. A. Sharpe, 'Social Strain and Dislocation, 1585-1603', in J. Guy (ed.), *The Reign of Elizabeth I: Court and Culture in the Last Decade* (Cambridge, 1995), pp. 192-211.

[26] Slack, *Impact of Plague*, chs, 6, 10; idem, *Poverty and Policy*, chs. 3, 6, 9.

[27] T. Wales, 'Poverty, Poor Relief and the Life-Cycle: Some Evidence from Seventeenth-Century Norfolk', in R. M. Smith (ed.) *Land, Kinship and Life-Cycle* (Cambridge, 1984), pp. 351-404; W. Newman-Brown, 'The Receipt of Poor Relief and Family Situation: Aldenham, Hertfordshire, 1630-90', in ibid., pp. 405-22; M. Pelling, 'Old Age, Poverty, and Disability in Early Modern Norwich: Work, Remarriage, and other Expedients', in M. Pelling and R. M. Smith (eds) *Life, Death and the Elderly* (London, 1991), pp. 74-101; L. A. Botelho, 'Aged and Impotent: Parish Relief of the Aged Poor in Early Modern Suffolk', in M. J. Daunton (ed.), *Charity, Self-Interest and Welfare* (London, 1996), pp. 91-111; eadem, *Old Age and English Poor Law, 1500-1700* (Woodbridge, 2004).

widespread existence of the 'economy of makeshifts'. This has become central to our understanding of the 'survival strategies' of the pre-modern poor, and it is now taken for granted that – before turning to official forms of relief – the poor typically made ends meet through a combination of formal and informal economic activities. Fundamentally, this notion rests on the idea that poor adults had a piecemeal approach to their economic strategies, and the exploitation of various sources of money, credit, and goods (including, at times, unlawful sources) enabled most to remain self-sufficient, or dependent on neighbours and kin – rather than official poor relief schemes – for support during periods of need.[28] Of related importance has been the 'nuclear hardship' theory, which suggests that in societies such as England, where autonomous nuclear households are the expected microstructural social norm – and extended kin are not obliged to be interconnected – few reliable safety nets exist to support families which experience unmanageable forms of hardship. It is suggested that, as a result, in such societies the responsibility to assist poorer members typically falls to the 'collectivity' – or, the community – instead of wider kin networks, usually 'in the form of public sector institutions such as the English Poor Law.'[29]

Meanwhile, historians also have become keenly interested in the histories of crime and social regulation, which have opened new avenues of exploration of relevance to the experiences and motivations of those in disadvantaged groups. Thanks to a series of pioneering studies, the connections between the histories of certain types of what might be considered 'social' crime (or 'behaviour which was defined by officials as illegal, but which many of its perpetrators, and large sections of the populace, did not regard as

[28] O. Hufton, *The Poor of Eighteenth-Century France, 1750-1789* (Oxford, 1974); Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 56-7. For more recent overviews of this topic and work on the poor's strategies of 'making shift' see the collected essays in L. Fontaine and J. Schlumbohm (eds), *Household Strategies for Survival 1600-2000: Fission, Faction and Cooperation* (Cambridge, 2000); A. Tomkins and S. King (eds), *The Poor in England, 1700-1850: An Economy of Makeshifts* (Manchester, 2003), Introduction, pp. 1-38; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 15-22, 35-42; and Healey, *First Century of Welfare*, ch. 5.

[29] P. Laslett, 'Family, Kinship and the Collectivity as Systems of Support in Pre-industrial Europe: A Consideration of the "Nuclear Hardship" Hypothesis', *Continuity and Change*, 3/2 (1988), pp. 153-75; Healey, *First Century of Welfare*, pp. 21-5, quotation at p. 25.

"criminal"', including perhaps poaching and food riots), poverty, and 'authority' are today well established, if somewhat controversial.[30] Meanwhile, critical works detailing the fundamental concepts and realities of Tudor and Stuart 'order', 'disorder', and social regulation, including – more recently – the 'micro-politics' of parish poor relief, have provided us with a greater understanding of the plight and agency of those in disadvantaged groups, versus the intentions of and mechanisms deployed by those who held official positions of power. There was (and remains) an important gender dimension to this work, since women comprised a large portion of the former, while the latter were male dominated.[31] As they relate to poverty and the poor, these works typically underscore the relatively close social proximity of local authorities to their poorer neighbours, whilst still emphasizing the economic, cultural, and political distinctions found between these adjacent groups. Such differences are typically discussed in terms of family life, education, employment, health, and wealth, but these distinctions should never be pushed too far. Indeed – as so many studies remind us – in this period of marked instability the experience of any number of misfortunes could undo nearly anyone, even members of the gentry.[32]

Historians have also given a great deal of attention to the histories of work and labour in this period, for it is well known as a time of dynamic change and numerous

[30] For a full discussion of 'social' crime and its challenges see J. A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750*, 2nd edn (London, 1999 [1984]), ch 6, quotation on p. 18.
[31] Some early key publications include J. S. Cockburn (ed.), *Crime in England 1550-1800* (London, 1977); V. Pearl, 'Change and Stability in Seventeenth-Century London', *London Journal*, 5 (1979), pp. 3-34; A. J. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (eds), *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1985); Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 173-220; Ingram, *Church Courts*; Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*; P. Griffiths, A. Fox, and S. Hindle (eds), *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1996); and M. K. McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior in England, 1370-1600* (Cambridge, 1998). For an excellent overview of the development of the history of crime and its influences see Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England*, pp. 1-28. More recent works on these themes include S. Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England, c. 1550-1640* (Basingstoke, 2000); idem, *On the Parish?*; the collected essays in M. J. Braddick and J. Walter (eds), *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society: Order, Hierarchy, and Subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001); A. Wood, *Riot, Rebellion and Popular Politics in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 2002); G. Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003), particularly chs. 6-7; A. Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2003); P. Griffiths, *Lost Londons: Change, Crime, and Control in the Capital City, 1550-1660* (Cambridge, 2008); T. Hitchcock and R. Shoemaker, *London Lives: Poverty, Crime and the Making of a Modern City, 1690-1800* (Cambridge, 2015); and Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge*, pp. 29-32.
[32] For a particularly eloquent and recent reminder of this, see Healey, *First Century of Welfare*, ch. 4.

regulatory experiments – in rural and urban locales, and on land and in the seafaring trades – which ultimately led to an increase in overall economic productivity and the creation of England's highly-diversified 'capitalist market economy and society'.[33] This has engendered a plethora of studies concerned with the changing structure, nature, and regulation of employment within a variety of environments (agricultural production, manufacturing, retailing, the 'household economy', the sex trade, etc.), and for diverse occupations within these sectors.[34] It has also led to detailed studies outlining the changes in everyday consumer patterns found in this period, which some have taken to suggest the rise of a 'consumer society'.[35] Research on the experience and regulation or 'policing' of economic activities carried out by those in disadvantaged groups, including women, children, and 'the poor' more generally, has been particularly fruitful.[36] For example, we now know that poorer women and children played an integral, active, and, often, highly

[33] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 21-6, quote on p. 26; C. Wilson, *England's Apprenticeship 1603-1763* (London, 1965); C. G. A. Clay, *Economic Expansion and Social Change: England 1500-1700* (2 vols, Cambridge, 1984); C. Muldrew, *The Economy of Obligation: The Culture of Credit and Social Relations in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 1998).

[34] M. Overton, *Agricultural Revolution in England: The Transformation of the Agrarian Economy, 1500-1850* (Cambridge, 1996); R. C. Allen, 'Tracking the Agricultural Revolution in England', *EcHR*, 52/2 (1999), pp. 209-35; C. Muldrew, *Food, Energy and the Creation of Industriousness: Work and Material Culture in Agrarian England, 1550-1780* (Cambridge, 2011); E. Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1985); N. Cox, *The Complete Tradesman: A Study of Retailing, 1550-1820* (Aldershot, 2000); Wrightson, *Economic Lives*; A. Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1981); P. Griffiths, 'The Structure of Prostitution in Elizabethan London', *Continuity and Change*, 8/1 (1993), pp. 39-63; D. Woodward, *Men at Work, Labourers and Building Craftsmen in the Towns of Northern England, 1450-1750* (Cambridge, 1995); V. Harding, 'Employment and Opportunity: The Building Trades in London, 1450-1600', in S. Cavaiocchi (ed.), *L'edilizia prima della Rivoluzione Industriale secc. XIII-XVIII* (Prato, 2005), pp. 991-1011; C. Muldrew, '"Th'ancient Distaff" and "Whirling Spindle": Measuring the Contribution of Spinning to Household Earnings and the National Economy in England, 1550-1770', *EcHR*, 65/2 (2012), pp. 498-526.

[35] J. Thirsk, *Economic Policy and Projects: The Development of a Consumer Society in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 1978); M. Spufford, *The Great Reclothing of Rural England: Petty Chapmen and their Wares in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1984); M. Overton, J. Whittle, D. Dean and A. Hann, *Production and Consumption in English Households, 1600-1750* (London, 2004); P. Slack, *The Invention of Improvement: Information and Material Progress in Seventeenth-Century England* (Oxford, 2015).

[36] T. Wales, '"Living at Their Own Hands": Policing Poor Households and the Young in Early Modern Rural England', *Agricultural History Review*, 61/1 (2013), pp. 19-39; A. Clark, *Working Life of Women in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 1919); M. Prior, 'Women and the Urban Economy: Oxford 1500-1800', in M. Prior (ed.), *Women in English Society, 1500-1800* (London, 1985), pp. 93-117; D. Willen, 'Women in the Public Sphere in Early Modern England: The Case of the Urban Working Poor', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 19/4 (1988), pp. 559-75; M. K. McIntosh, *Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620* (Cambridge, 2005); T. Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London* (Basingstoke, 2014); Ågren (ed.), *Making a Living*.

visible role in the economic lives of their families and communities, particularly in the textile manufacturing, retail, and hospitality trades. This was so, despite the entrenched patriarchal structure of society at this time, which officially subordinated women and children to men, and indeed 'the poor' of all ages and genders to those in positions of official authority.[37] Though men still commanded higher wages and benefited from more employment opportunities than women, it is clear that women often operated as semi-autonomous, and even at times autonomous, economic agents. In the case of poorer women, this was often a matter of concern to local authorities, hence an increase in the regulation of women's work (and the work of the poor more generally) is apparent in many areas by the end of the sixteenth century.[38]

It is in studies of labour, employment, and the development of social welfare that historians most commonly adopt the term 'labouring poor', in order to signify the mass of waged workers and to differentiate them from others either unable, or unwilling, to work.[39] Though the term has proved attractive to many early modern historians (and, consequently, is ubiquitous), it must be emphasised that it is a phrase originating in the mercantilist 'long eighteenth century' and therefore born from that particular social, economic, cultural, and political milieu. This stressed the concept of productivity and often commodified the act of labour including, at times, the workers themselves.[40] Despite recent arguments for its use,

[37] M. Ingram, 'Men and Women in Late Medieval and Early Modern Times', *English Historical Review*, 120/487 (2005), pp. 732-58.
[38] J. M. Bennet, *Ale, Beer, and Brewsters in England: Women's Work in a Changing World, 1300-1600* (Oxford, 1996); L. Gowing, 'The Freedom of the Streets: Women and Social Space in London, 1560-1640', in P. Griffiths and M. S. R. Jenner (eds), *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social History of Early Modern London* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 130-51; McIntosh, *Working Women*; V. Harding, 'Working Wives and Economic Growth: Urban Families in the Pre-Industrial Era', in S. Cavaiocchi (ed.), *Il Ruolo Economico della Famiglia, secc. XIII-XVIII* (Prato, 2009), pp. 545-68; Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge*, ch. 12.
[39] See, most recently, J. Boulton, 'The "Meaner Sort": Labouring People and the Poor', in K. Wrightson (ed.), *A Social History of England, 1500-1750* (Cambridge, 2017), p. 310-29.
[40] P. Slack, *The English Poor Law, 1531-1782* (Basingstoke, 1990), p. 4; Muldrew, *Food, Energy*, pp. 18-28; Healey, *First Century of Welfare*, p. 114. For one example of the commodification of 'labouring people' see Gregory King's tabulations of the social groups he considered to be 'increasing' and 'decreasing' the wealth of England in G. King, *Natural and Political Observations and Conclusions upon the State and Condition of England 1696*, appendix in G. Chalmers (ed.), *An Estimate of the Comparative Strength of Great Britain* (London, 1804), pp. 47-9.

no compelling case has been made for its suitability for the period studied here. It is worth pointing out also that the term 'labouring' often was associated with beasts of burden (e.g. 'labouring cattle') in this earlier period, and so holds inappropriate connotations for many of the poor, including – at least – poor artisans and other skilled workers.[41] As a result, using the term runs the risks of anachronism and demeaning our subjects, which are best avoided. The negative connotations of the contemporary term 'meaner sort' are self-evident and similarly problematic as a term denoting the poor.

As is well known, the historiographical debate on how best to categorise 'the poor' owes much to the fact that contemporary political authorities and commentators defined them in a variety of ways.[42] It is true that, as the sixteenth century progressed, the conceptual limits of poverty, particularly in legal and administrative settings, increasingly became defined by the changing terms and definitions used within the framework of England's developing poor relief system. From the early sixteenth century, the rising influence of Christian and civic humanist ideals combined with the widespread impoverishing effects of the period, led many local and national authorities to reconsider their longstanding notions of who 'the poor' really were, what determined the need for relief or official intervention, and how social policy might best remedy specific types of claimed need. This occurred both in England and across Europe, though the extent to which such new ideas wholly re-shaped national policies and attitudes towards the poor varied between countries, which makes continental and comparative histories so enlightening and constructive.[43] It is well established that the development of England's social welfare

[41] 'labouring | laboring, adj.', *OED* (Oxford, July 2018), http://ezproxy-prd.bodleian.ox.ac.uk:2355/view/Entry/104741?rskey=TXJ0tj&result=3&isAdvanced=false (07 May 2019).
[42] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, p. 38; Henderson and Wall (eds), *Poor Women and Children*, pp. 1-4; C. Dyer, 'The Experience of Being Poor in Late Medieval England', in A. M. Scott (ed.), *Experiences of Poverty in Late Medieval and Early Modern England and France* (Farnham, 2012), p. 25.
[43] Some notable works, in addition to those already cited, include B. Pullen, *Rich and Poor in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford, 1971); N. Z. Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France: Eight Essays* (Stanford, 1975), ch. 2; C. Lis and H. Soly, *Poverty and Capitalism in Pre-Industrial Europe* (Hassocks, 1979); R. Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1994); S. Cavallo, *Charity and Power in Early Modern Italy* (Cambridge, 1995).

policies owes much to the exchange of religious and civic beliefs and practices by the authorities there with their counterparts on the continent. In the case of Ipswich, the town that forms the basis of this study, this was particularly (but by no means exclusively) true of exchanges with the Low Countries, with which the town had strong economic and social ties via overseas trade. Across Europe and in England, a sixteenth-century ideological wave heralded statutory movements away from officially-tolerated indiscriminate begging, and towards more targeted relief measures, eventually including the provision of money to those whom authorities considered to be 'deserving', and work or correction to those who were underemployed, or of the 'undeserving' poor.[44] By the 1570s, English legal prescriptive texts typically defined 'the poor' as only those who required official intervention or assistance in order to achieve a basic standard of living. In such texts, 'the poor' usually comprised three main groups: those who experienced significant physical or mental impairment and/or illness which precluded them from work and hence entitled them to various forms of official relief (the 'impotent' poor); those sound in mind and body but, supposedly, wilfully unemployed (the 'idle' poor); and the underemployed or overextended whose income was not adequate to support themselves and their families (including 'decayed householders' and those 'overburdened with children').[45] Indeed, by 1601, prescriptive guidance to those implementing the poor law statutes of 1598 and 1601 (i.e. the newly created officials called the 'overseers of the poor') firmly insisted that 'those generally are to be deemed poore, which cannot live without reliefe of the lawe'. This has led to one recent perspective suggesting that the poor merely comprised 'anyone unable to maintain him- or herself by their own labour'.[46]

[44] P. Slack, *English Poor Law*, pp. 3-13, 51-3; idem, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 61-112.
[45] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, ch. 2; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, p. 2; McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, pp. 4-6.
[46] As quoted in Boulton, 'The "Meaner Sort"', pp. 318-19. For broader discussions concerning the boundaries of poverty see Shepard, *Accounting*, ch. 4.

Historians' understanding of the implementation of the Tudor poor laws is still evolving and the related issues remain fairly controversial. Though consensus has been reached that the short-lived acts of 1536 and 1547 were not typically enforced, Marjorie McIntosh has recently argued that the act of 1552 (re-enacted with minor modifications in 1555 and 1563) played a vital role in the eventual widespread implementation of parish-based relief structures.[47] In her view, the acts of 1598 and 1601 were of lesser importance and merely corrected and consolidated this existing system, rather than establishing a comparatively novel approach for authorities to implement on the ground.[48] Certainly, McIntosh has found enough evidence of the appointment and activities of 'collectors for the poor', along the lines envisaged in 1552 and 1563, to suggest that historians have underestimated the extent of implementation of those acts. It remains unclear, however, how typical it was for such 'collectors' to hold significant responsibility in their parishes for the actual setting of rate payments, or determining individuals' eligibility for, and their extent of entitlement to, relief.[49] McIntosh has shown that those appointed as 'collectors' often had less education and came from more humble backgrounds than other parish officers, such as churchwardens. This led her to concede that more substantial local officials (such as churchwardens and, at a much higher social level, Justices of the Peace) 'may have advised [collectors]' in those more supervisory activities. Moreover, central borough officials apparently took the lead in relief efforts in many incorporated towns.[50]

Sources relating to poverty in the town of Ipswich during this period suggest that 'collectors' there simply were those charged by its governing officials to collect the proceeds meant to be raised by a local tax. Indeed, from at least the mid-fifteenth century, borough officials regularly appointed such 'collectors' – often on a parish basis – to gather

[47] Slack, *English Poor Law*, p. 10-8; McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, pp. 130-8.
[48] McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, pp. 8-9, 279-83.
[49] Ibid., pp. 294-5.
[50] Ibid., pp. 130, 262.

the funds required by the central government in the form of its 'fifteenths and tenths' tax, and later to gather the local rates of 'scot and lot' among others levied by the town on its inhabitants. Ample evidence exists that such 'collectors' were appointed throughout this period for many different kinds of local rates as the need arose. This was so when the common quay required repairs in 1472; when the town wished to pay for costs associated with hosting the Corpus Christi plays in 1505 and 1508; and when 'dammages' were to be extracted from 'tresspassers upon the Town Marsh' in 1549.[51] Interestingly, it was most usual for other officials, called 'assessors', to be appointed in addition to 'collectors' at such times; they appear to have comprised a variety of the town's resident freemen and some held relatively humble socio-economic standings. Presumably, this was done to bolster the confidence of the general public in the assessors' resultant tax figures.

In any case, in some areas – particularly towns – it remains apparent that the statute of 1572 (clarified by the act of 1576) most influenced the implementation of poor relief efforts on the ground prior to the introduction of the later Elizabethan poor law statutes of 1598 and 1601. For example, these earlier statutes ensured relief efforts in Ipswich were directed centrally by borough officials and not parish officers. This approach largely endured in the same format there until the later statutes decentralised this control and placed it in the hands of the parish 'overseers of the poor' from 1598 onwards.[52] Moreover, any concise summary of the provisions of the acts of 1598 and 1601 demonstrates their general importance. As Paul Slack has similarly highlighted, they effectively banned begging; made poor rates compulsory; enacted the appointment of 'overseers of the poor' which replaced the 'collectors' and 'overseers' associated with the statute of 1572; placed the relief system on a parish-controlled basis even in towns; and made provision for the

[51] For several examples, see N. Bacon, *The Annalls of Ipswche (1654)*, ed. W. H. Richardson (Ipswich, 1884), pp. 107-10, 113, 133, 145, 157, 159, 161, 163-4, 168, 171, 174, 177, 178, 185, 187, 226, 232-3, 240, 242, 251, 264, 271, 281, 299.
[52] SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1; SROI, C/5/3/2/2/1; also see Chapter Two for more detail.

apprenticeship of poor children.[53] Furthermore, even McIntosh concedes that overall they embodied 'a new emphasis on supervision, record-keeping and accounting'.[54] It is this element, resulting in better record survival, that now enables historians to be more certain about the impact – not always positive, as will be shown in Chapters Five and Six – of the poor laws of 1598 and 1601. Writing in the late 1980s, Slack cautiously suggested that the implementation of these statutes in many areas of the country remained sporadic until the later seventeenth century.[55] On the basis of extensive new local research, however, Steve Hindle and Jonathan Healey have demonstrated convincingly that some degree of implementation was general by the 1630s. Studies of related topics, such as Martin Ingram's recent work on sexual regulation, also indicate that 1598/1601 was indeed a watershed for parochial regulatory efforts.[56]

To return to the question of how contemporaries viewed poverty and 'the poor' more generally: in contexts outside of systems of relief, their descriptions and definitions of 'the poor' were not always so restrictive. Indeed, as Paul Slack once summarised, 'in our period the economic station of the poor was taken for granted … they were broadly and simply the opposite numbers of the rich, who were an equally mixed bag.'[57] In this broader sense, the 'poor' included numerous individuals and families who somehow remained solvent and either rarely, or never, experienced abject need. One early social historian defined this group as all those who 'depended wholly or very largely on wages, and could exist with some degree of anxiety so long as work was regular and harvests about normal.'[58] Many local and national authorities and social commentators similarly describe 'the poor' or 'poorer sort' of people as a heterogeneous mix comprising most of the

[53] McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, pp. 8-9, 279-83. Slack, *English Poor Law*, pp. 52-3.
[54] McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, p. 282.
[55] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, chs 6, 8; idem, *English Poor Law*, pp. 17-8.
[56] Hindle, *On the Parish?*, ch.3, pp. 251-3; J. Healey, 'The Development of Poor Relief in Lancashire, c. 1598-1680', *The Historical Journal*, 53/3 (2010), pp. 551-572; Ingram, *Carnal Knowledge*, pp. 26, 318, 404, 412, 415, 423.
[57] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, p. 17.
[58] W. G. Hoskins, 'English Provincial Towns in the Early Sixteenth Century', *TRHS*, 5th ser., 6 (1956), p. 18.

population. For example, parliamentary statutes concerned with issues other than poor relief and the local orders for the city of London in this period often make reference to this broad and diverse group. In the Statute of Artificers (1563), they were 'the poore labourer and hired man'; in another act dealing with the regulation of leather, tallow, and raw hides in 1572, they were 'the poorest sorte, who are now compelled to paye for their bootes and shoes almost double the pryse that the[y] did before'. In the City's orders issued in 1600, they were the 'poore handicraftsmen or day laborers' and 'the poorer sort' whom the authorities hoped the 'richer sort' would provide with grain at reduced prices in that time of scarcity.[59] Other sources are similarly revealing. A description of the effects of the depressed cloth trade in Coggeshall (Essex) in 1629 referred to 'the multitudes of the poorer sort [who] must starve or use unlawful means to support themselves' unless something was done to reinvigorate cloth production.[60] Similarly, Natalie Zemon Davis has shown that in sixteenth century France poorer craftsmen and journeymen were often simply termed '*menu peuple* – the little people'.[61]

To take an altogether different set of sources, in an educational treatise published in 1586, Richard Mulcaster suggested that wealth determined the primary status of all those below the gentry, for 'some of them be called rich men, which have enough and more, some poore men, which have no more then enough: some beggers which have lesse then enough.'[62] Those writing more exclusively for the gentry, with classical educations, and focused on high politics, such as Sir Thomas Smith and William Camden, often had less to say about 'the poor' because – to them – the group held no significant political power. Even so, Smith and Camden's lowest social categories consisted largely of the same broadly

[59] 5 Eliz. c. 4 [1562-3] in *Tudor Economic Documents*, ed. R. H. Tawney and E. Power (3 vols., London, 1924), i, pp. 338-50, quote on p. 338. 14 Eliz. c. 4 [1572] in *The Statutes of the Realm*, ed. J. Raithby (11 vols., London, 1810), iv, p. 590; *Speciall Orders and Directions* (London, 1600).
[60] *Seventeenth-Century Economic Documents*, ed. J. Thirsk and J. P. Cooper (Oxford, 1972), p. 225.
[61] Davis, *Society and Culture*, p. 1.
[62] R. Mulcaster, *Positions Concerning the Training Up of Children* (London, 1581), p. 198.

'poor' groups – day labourers, craftsmen, artisans, husbandmen, and all those who lacked any land held outright – which they each independently equated with the classical Roman terms *capite censi* and *proletarii*.[63] These were largely synonymous terms which referred to all Roman citizens considered too poor by the authorities to be required to pay tribute (or tax) to the government. In other words, at the time of the Roman census they were 'counted by the head', instead of their property, since they were 'too poor to contribute anything to the state except their children (*proles*).'[64]

With such ideas in mind, it is perhaps not surprising that in areas where local Tudor and Stuart authorities levied mandatory poor rates on all 'able' households, contemporary perceptions of an individual's socio-economic standing commonly became tied to whether or not their family was deemed capable of paying that tax. This has led many historians to turn to national and local tax assessments levied upon contemporaries' goods, property, and wages as one essential approach to identifying 'the poor' as a group and detailing the overall distribution of wealth in English society. W. G. Hoskins, Margaret Spufford, John Pound, Keith Wrightson, David Levine, and others used evidence from Tudor and early Stuart lay subsidies and later seventeenth-century Hearth Tax returns to isolate the main bands of household wealth and show their distribution among regional populations.[65] Whilst it is widely recognised that such sources commonly are plagued by serious problems (particularly, evasion and underassessment), some appear to have been relatively effective attempts to extract money from the lay population and a few, including the subsidies of the early 1520s and the Hearth Tax returns of the 1660s and early 1670s, have come to be seen

[63] T. Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. Mary Dewer (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 64-77; W. Camden, *Britain*, tr. Philemon Holland (orig. 1586; tr. 1610) (STC 4509).
[64] A. Lintott, 'Proletarii', *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (Oxford, Mar. 2016) doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780199381135.013.5361 (3 Mar. 2018); M. Dillon and L. Garland, *Ancient Rome: Social and Historical Documents from the Early Republic to the Death of Augustus* (Abingdon, 2015), p. 399.
[65] Hoskins, 'English Provincial Towns', pp. 1-19; Spufford, 'Significance of the Cambridgeshire Hearth Tax', pp. 53-64; eadem, *Contrasting Communities*, pp. 28-45; Pound, 'Social and Trade', pp. 49-69; idem, *Poverty and Vagrancy*, pp. 25-6; Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 31-6; Fieldhouse, 'Social Structure', pp. 9-24.

as reasonably reliable guides to the distribution of wealth in the period. Initially, work on these sources gave rise to a general belief that exemption from such levies could be taken as one hallmark of early modern poverty.[66]

More often than not, the results of such early studies were to emphasise the existence of widespread poverty and polarised socio-economic inequality. Hoskins spearheaded this work when he analysed the Lay Subsidy of 1522 and concluded that in that year up to two-thirds of urban and nearly 60 per cent of rural inhabitants 'lived below or very near the poverty line'. Pound came to similar conclusions for Norwich and suggested that throughout the sixteenth century over 60 per cent of the town's inhabitants were likewise 'poor or very poor'.[67] Similarly, for sixteenth-century Yorkshire, it was argued that nearly 50 per cent of the population experienced 'bleak' living conditions and had a 'very low level of subsistence'. Later evidence from the Hearth Tax returns suggested that the situation had not improved by the late seventeenth century and, in general, supported the assertion of the contemporary political arithmetician, Gregory King, that by 1700 roughly half the population of England was living in hardship and 'decreasing the wealth of the kingdom'.[68] Nevertheless, a few of these early studies did acknowledge that the majority of early modern people probably did not experience *abject* need. For example, Spufford's work suggested that in Cambridgeshire merely 30 to 50 per cent of residents lived below the poverty line, and Hoskins once noted that 'the poor' in any 'true sense' probably comprised 'about one-sixth of the population at the most'.[69] Even so, to most historians it seemed that poverty in this period was both profound and relentlessly grim. So grim, even Hoskins once wondered why more people had not turned to suicide when 'life

[66] In addition to works cited previously, see P. Clark and P. Slack, *English Towns in Transition, 1500-1700* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 111-25.
[67] Hoskins, 'English Provincial Towns', p. 18; Pound, 'Social and Trade', p. 50.
[68] Fieldhouse, 'Social Structure', p. 18; as quoted in G. S. Holmes, 'Gregory King and the Social Structure of Pre-Industrial England', *TRHS*, 5th. ser., 27 (1977), pp. 41-68.
[69] Spufford, 'Significance of the Cambridgeshire Hearth', p. 59; W. G. Hoskins, *The Midland Peasant: The Economic and Social History of a Leicestershire Village* (London, 1957), p. 202.

was hard as hell for at least half the population.' Perhaps, he surmised, the readily available 'cheap drink' of the period gave the masses a means of 'temporary oblivion' which could 'soften the hardness of their working lives'.[70] This appears rather cynical today, but it provides a good indication of historians' understanding of the experience of poverty in this period some forty years ago.

The ambiguity that surrounded what 'poverty' meant to contemporaries in this period and the variable criteria that historians could use to determine who was 'poor', eventually led a new wave of scholars to question the assumptions of this early research and the dismal picture of poverty it presented. In general, this work embraced the notion that poverty was, at least in part, socially constructed and how contemporaries *perceived* poverty fundamentally shaped who 'the poor' were in this period.[71] Spurred by a concurrent blossoming in the areas of demographic, urban, and cultural history, this fresh approach typically turned away from national tax assessments and towards urban censuses, local rate assessments, parish registers, and other contextual sources which helped proponents to devise alternative interpretations of the meaning, extent, and experience of poverty in this period. Overall, Paul Slack has become the most well-known and enduring champion of this effort. His groundbreaking work on Salisbury restricted the parameters of poverty to include only those listed in urban censuses of the poor, whom he found commonly comprised less than a third of an area's inhabitants.[72] Slack's analysis of a wider sample of these censuses was reflected in his work in the now essential textbook, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (1988). There he argued that even though the concept of poverty had a variety of meanings to contemporaries in this period, 'the poor' (as a socio-economic group) normally referred to both the destitute and those 'who were given charity

[70] W. G. Hoskins, *The Age of Plunder: The England of Henry VIII, 1500-1547* (London, 1976), pp. 42-52.
[71] See, for example, T. J. Tronrud, 'Dispelling the Gloom. The Extent of Poverty in Tudor and Early Stuart Towns: Some Kentish Evidence', *Canadian Journal of History*, 20/1 (1985), pp. 1-21.
[72] P. Slack, 'Poverty and Politics in Salisbury, 1597-1666', in Clark and Slack (eds), *Crisis and Order*, pp. 164-203.

or the dole, not because they were already starving, but because they could not, for the moment, buy clothes or food for themselves or their children or fuel for their fires.' This led him to suggest that the most realistic 'poverty line' should be drawn just above the level of destitution, which typically included between 5 and 20 per cent of the population, depending upon the period and locale.[73]

Meanwhile, others offered similarly compelling arguments against what was still the reigning approach to the study of poverty (particularly the use of national assessments to demarcate 'the poor'), urging greater clarification of the criteria historians used to define such social groups. For example, Charles Phythian-Adams showed that in early Tudor Coventry many inhabitants who might be deemed 'poor' on account of their exemption from Tudor lay subsidies, actually exhibited signs of modest wealth in other sources, which he argued were inconsistent with presumed lives of hardship.[74] In addition, A. L. Beier analysed local poor relief accounts and a census of the poor from Elizabethan Warwick and found (like Slack) that many contemporary authorities attributed poverty to only about a third of the population, including both those who received relief and those they considered to be on the verge of need, or, as contemporaries put it, 'ready to decay'.[75] Tom Arkell's analysis of late-seventeenth-century Hearth Tax exemptions produced similar results, and his scrutiny of the criteria of such exemptions (including, principally, exemptions from local rate assessments) led him to conclude that 'local levies or rates for the church and poor [appear to be] the best yardstick for measuring the upper limit [of poverty]'.[76] More recently, Steve Hindle has underscored this argument and highlighted that a 'pauper' by that time was not simply defined 'by his receipt of regular parish relief but by his inability to contribute to parish rates for the maintenance of the poor and of the church fabric, a

[73] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 2-5, 53.
[74] Phythian-Adams, *Desolation of a City*, pp. 131-4.
[75] Beier, 'Social Problems', p. 59.
[76] T. Arkell, 'The Incidence of Poverty in England in the Later Seventeenth Century', *Social History*, 12/1 (1987), pp. 32-6, 43-4, quote on p. 44.

status indicated in exemption from liability to make hearth tax payments.'[77] Moreover, Thorold Tronrud suggested that early Tudor national tax assessments were 'unlikely to be a true reflection of real wealth', even though 'they may mirror accurately the great economic inequality in urban society'. This last point is important because, in the light of Sen's work, it suggests that such tax bands may still be one way to ascertain the very upper limits of multi-dimensional pre-modern poverty (which would include the solvent poor), or at least the upper limits of some kind of perceived socio-economic disadvantage. For, as A. L. Beier once noted, it was very possible in Elizabethan and early Stuart England to be taxed and 'poor'.[78] Be that as it may, in line with Slack's suggestion that the period's censuses of the poor best represent those whom contemporaries thought to be living in poverty, Tronrud analysed three such censuses – related to New Romney (Kent) in 1596 and 1602 and Faversham (Kent) in 1595 – and determined on that basis that merely 20 to 30 per cent of the population fitted the criterion. Meanwhile, Peter Clark emphasised that the poor more generally in Elizabethan and early Stuart Kent were not simply a homogenous mass who all lived desperate lives at, or below, the poverty line. Indeed, he drew attention to a group who were listed in many censuses but did not require relief, and who significantly outnumbered those who needed official support in order to survive.[79]

In many communities, then (including, as will be shown, the one highlighted in this study), there existed a large group of 'poor' individuals which simply included everyone whom the authorities considered too poor to pay towards the relief of others, but not yet poor enough to require relief themselves.[80] Further corroboration for this can be found in the language some contemporary authorities used to demarcate the different types of poverty which they believed existed in their communities at the time they compiled the

[77] Hindle, *On the Parish?*, p. 283.
[78] Beier, 'Poverty and Progress', p. 211.
[79] Tronrud, 'Dispelling the Gloom', pp. 1-5, 10-1, 20-1; Clark, *English Provincial Society*, pp. 239-40.
[80] Beier, 'Poverty and Progress', pp. 205-6.

'censuses of the poor'. The census taken in Norwich in 1570 shows that authorities there often noted the solvent poor as 'indifferent' in contrast to others they noted as 'poor' or 'verie poor'; interestingly, most of those listed in all of these categories did not receive relief.[81] Later, in 1598, authorities in Strood (Kent) not only noted all those required to pay towards the parish's poor rate and the additional few who required official relief, they also detailed a much larger group of poor who were described as 'the poorer sorte of people w[hi]ch as yeete are able to woorke and dothe neyther geve nor take, but if the husband shoulde dye are liklie to be a parishe chardge.'[82] A similar situation was revealed in 1615 when authorities in the town of Sheffield (Yorkshire) surveyed the situation there and concluded that, in fact, almost everyone lived in some degree of recognisable poverty. Those who paid rates were deemed 'the best sorte…but [still] poor artificers', recipients of relief were summarily called the 'begging poore', and the large group of solvent 'householders not able to relieve others' still apparently lived in a precarious state of 'not [being] able to abide the storme of one fortnight's sickness but would be thereby driven to beggary.' That latter group comprised the majority of the town's inhabitants, and included those that 'live of small wages, and are constrained to work sore to provide [their families'] necessaries.'[83] As we have seen, in a broader sense those in this group can be typified across England as poor husbandmen, labourers, and their families whose modest livelihoods might be swept away with failed harvests, or those in the seafaring and textile trades whose prosperity was heavily reliant on the cloth industry and its volatile overseas markets.[84]

Over the past few decades, historians have come to call this more solvent group the 'marginally poor' and defined them broadly as all those who, despite their fragile economic

[81] *The Norwich Census of the Poor, 1570*, ed. J. F. Pound (Norfolk Record Society, xl, Norwich, 1971).
[82] STRO, D/593/5/4/55/1; for similar language in other accounts from neighbouring Kentish parishes, including some rural locales, see Clark, *English Provincial Society*, p. 240.
[83] As quoted in Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy*, pp. 93-4.
[84] Clark, *English Provincial Society*, p. 240.

circumstances, largely made ends meet without turning to official forms of relief.[85] Using the term 'marginal' in this way entails some difficulties to which we will return shortly, but let us first consider the challenges posed by the inclusion of those who were clearly solvent amongst those considered to be 'the poor'. Though historians have long been well aware of the existence of 'shallow' or 'marginal' poverty, the classification of primarily solvent individuals and families (particularly those who never sought or claimed official relief) as 'poor' has proved consistently contentious. Indeed, despite contemporaries' obviously broad use of the term, many historians remain sceptical as to whether or not the practical concept of poverty can be so inclusive and still be representative of the experience of 'real' hardship at this time. This thesis takes the view that the adaptable framework and widespread reception in many academic fields of Sen's capability approach shows that conceptions of poverty and 'hardship' can – and indeed – should be similarly inclusive in historical research, if the goal is to understand the full experiential range of disadvantage and socio-economic inequality within a past society.[86] Furthermore, as we have seen, contemporaries also often used broad definitions of poverty in contexts outside of systems of relief, so following suit in a flexible, but methodical, manner seems an appropriate choice to answer the questions posed here.

Further complications for understanding this subset of the poor have arisen from our developing awareness of the period's vaguely-defined 'middling sort' which has caused, far too frequently, one historian's solvent member of the 'poor' to be another's struggling

[85] E.g. Clark, *English Provincial Society*, p. 240; Tronrud, 'Dispelling the Gloom', pp. 9-21; *Churchwardens' Accounts of Cratfield, 1640-1660*, ed. L. A. Botelho and D. P. Dymond (Suffolk Records Society, xi, Woodbridge, 1999), p. 9; Botelho, *Old Age and English Poor Law*, ch. 3; Healey, 'Marginality and Misfortune', chs. 1, 5-6; idem, *First Century of Welfare*, ch. 4.
[86] I. Robeyns, *Wellbeing, Freedom and Social Justice: the Capability Approach Re-examined* (Cambridge, 2017).

contingent of 'middling' society.[87] Of course, establishing a clear boundary between 'the poor' and the 'middling sort' is impossible, partly because such broad categories defy precise definition and, more importantly, because so few sources directly illustrate the lives of the unremarkably self-sufficient. These compounding problems explain why historians of poverty have given less attention to the solvent poor and, instead, have focused their research on more clearly discernible and less controversial forms of poverty, such as those closely linked to official systems of relief. Indeed, the current state of historiography shows that most of what we know about the experience of 'poverty' concerns primarily those who faced extreme forms of hardship at some point during the course of their lives. This includes the relatively few who either were dependent at some point upon official relief, or faced prosecution or persecution for leading unsettled or 'idle' lives. But what of the much larger and more typical group of poor who were settled, working, did not receive official relief, and struggled to make ends meet in an increasingly hostile economic and demographic environment? It is this bulging and relatively neglected group and their common experiences of poverty and disadvantage, which are the primary concerns of this thesis.

Though use of the term 'marginally poor' has become routine, a more descriptive term has been adopted here in order to counter the possibility of confusion with other similarly named social categories frequently discussed by historians, such as the 'marginal poor' or 'marginalised poor'. Over the past fifty years these and related words, such as

[87] A useful historiographical summary of contradictory definitions of 'the poor' and this group's intersection with the 'middling sort' can be found in P. Fumerton, *Unsettled: The Culture of Mobility and the Working Poor in Early Modern England* (Chicago, 2006), pp. 29-30. For more specific examples see Hoskins, *Midland Peasant*, p. 202; Clark, *English Provincial Society*, pp. 239-41; Beier, 'Social Problems of an Elizabethan Country Town', pp. 58-9; Arkell, 'Incidence of Poverty', pp. 23-47; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 115-16; Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 7-8, 37-60; Botelho, *Old Age*, ch. 3; Healey, 'Marginality and Misfortune', chs. 5-6. Also, for more specifics concerning the problems associated with the definition and study of the 'middling sort' see Barry and Brooks (eds), *Middling Sort of People*; M. R. Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender, and the Family in England, 1680-1780* (London, 1996); H. R. French, 'The Search for the "Middle Sort of People" in England, 1600-1800', *Historical Journal*, 43/1 (2000), pp. 277-93; idem, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England, 1600-1750* (Oxford, 2007); R. D. Smith, *The Middling Sort and the Politics of Social Reformation: Colchester, 1570-1640* (New York, 2004).

'marginality', have become ingrained in social history research, but their problematic vagaries remain largely ignored. As a result, such phrases can be (and frequently have been) used to signify markedly different concepts. For example, for Bronislaw Geremek 'marginal' people in late medieval Paris were not only poor but those 'on the margins of the world of work' and considered by others to be 'of no use to anyone' or 'of no fixed abode'.[88] Similarly, Slack has deemed 'marginality' and 'marginal' to mean 'outside rather than inside society', and Robert Jütte has followed suit and connected these terms further with a process of social 'marginalization'. In contrast, Davis has used the term to denote a life on the margins of 'power', which was determined by a wealthy and educated, but not gentle, background.[89] Others, such as Peter Clark, have taken a different approach and deployed these terms as descriptors for all those whom contemporaries considered broadly to be 'poor' even though they had attained some degree of financial stability; for him, the 'marginal poor' included those who experienced life 'on the margins' of poverty.[90] Such a series of enduring differences in the interpretation of this concept indicates that it is advisable to use the word 'marginal' and its derivatives with clarity and caution. Since the relatively solvent poor were the largest subset of those living in poverty at this time and their experiences can be taken to be the most 'ordinary' amongst those who faced hardship, they are collectively referred to in what follows as the 'ordinary poor'.

It must be emphasised that the group in question are the 'ordinary poor', and not 'ordinary people' as used more generally. The latter term would exclude all those who enjoyed a peerage, titles of honour (knight, esquire, or gentleman and their female equivalents), substantial wealth, or other marks of elite status such as holding a high office.

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[88] B. Geremek, *The Margins of Society in Late Medieval Paris* (Cambridge, 1987), p. ix.
[89] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 22-7; Jütte, *Poverty and Deviance*, pp. 4, 6, 18, 158-92; N. Z. Davis, *Women on the Margins: Three Seventeenth-Century Lives* (London, 1995).
[90] Clark, *English Provincial Society*, pp. 240-1; Tronrud, 'Dispelling the Gloom', pp. 1-5, 10-11, 20-1, Botelho, *Old Age*, ch. 3; Healey, 'Marginality and Misfortune', chs. 1, 5-6; idem, *First Century of Welfare*, ch. 4.

Because of their special status and functions, it would normally exclude the clergy as well, however modest their living conditions might be.[91] In a similar vein, Amy Erickson has suggested 'ordinary people' comprised those who held under three hundred acres in land, or the equivalent in moveable goods. At the upper end, this included many quite wealthy people, such as yeomen and substantial merchants, who cannot reasonably be included among the 'ordinary poor'.[92] Even so, these exclusions leave a substantial and diverse portion of the population.

A useful point of reference concerning the composition of this group is Alexandra Shepard's recent analysis of the self-reported statements of status and 'worth' (expressed in monetary terms) that prefaced the depositions of witnesses who came before the ecclesiastical courts in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In her terms, these statements are how 'ordinary people' or 'ordinary men and women' rated themselves and their social positions.[93] Crucially, Shepard's method is a 'bottom up' approach, alert to the subtle status gradations among relatively humble people, yet at the higher levels it clearly includes many substantially wealthy individuals. At the other extreme, Shepard demonstrates not merely that people in receipt of alms or parochial relief rarely were called as witnesses but that, when they were, they were very reluctant to admit to this degree of dependency. As Shepard states, 'the receipt of charity was a borderline to be avoided at all costs'.[94] There were, however, many witnesses of modest substance and in situations which might be equated with mere solvency. This appears to have been conventionally expressed as a worth of 40*s* in the sixteenth century, a sum which was gradually replaced by £5 over the course of the next hundred years. There were also many who rated themselves as worth

[91] M. Jacob and C. Secretan (eds), *In Praise of Ordinary People: Early Modern Britain and the Dutch Republic* (Basingstoke, 2013), Introduction, pp. 1-16; A. Wood, *The Memory of the People: Custom and Popular Senses of the Past in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2013); A. Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself: Worth, Status, and the Social Order in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2015).
[92] A. L. Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London, 1993), pp. 17-20.
[93] Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, pp. 1, 303.
[94] Ibid., p. 119.

'nothing' or 'little or nothing', or said they were poor or depended upon their own labour for a living.[95] It would seem that people who, while not dependent on charity or relief, were worth 40*s* or less may be roughly equated with those I have termed the 'ordinary poor'. Whether these statements of nominal worth accurately reflect the true wealth of these individuals is rather open for debate, and is something which will be explored further in the study that follows.

By comparing the social and economic experiences of the primarily solvent or 'ordinary poor' and the relief-dependent poor this thesis seeks to shed additional light on the general experience and effects of entrenched socio-economic disadvantage in the spirit of Amartya Sen's work. It does so by utilizing a case study of the family lives and economic situations of these groups in one English town. This enables a 'bottom up' approach to closely consider some of the ingrained and emergent systemic constraints which affected these groups in the areas of health, education, work, and living standards at this time, whilst also highlighting their concerted attempts to overcome these obstacles and attain some degree of financial security for themselves and their families.

In this study, the family life and economic situations of the ordinary poor will be analysed and juxtaposed with those higher up and lower down the socio-economic scale. Since, by definition, the majority of the ordinary poor did not seek or receive official relief, nor were they liable for most local and national tax assessments, they are usually absent from records which deal directly with poverty and studying them can be difficult. As Shepard has remarked, 'the "penumbra" of households in each parish that did not receive formal relief but were exempt from contributing rates towards it has left few direct archival traces, representing a challenge to historians attempting to discern the shadowy economy of makeshifts by which they survived and the material circumstances of the poorest two-fifths

[95] Ibid., pp. 84-94.

of the population.'[96] To overcome that problem, this thesis uses a tailored combination of methodologies including elements of record-linkage, family reconstitution, and life-cycle reconstruction in order to locate the more solvent poor in the historical record. This provides the basis for a reassessment of some of our more widely held assumptions concerning who 'the poor' typically were and how they survived between 1570 and 1620. This has been accomplished by way of a local study which focuses specifically on the varying experiences of urban poverty in Ipswich (Suffolk), one of the largest towns in England at that time.

There are some particular aspects of Ipswich which make it a good case-study for this purpose. Most importantly, the town's economy was in most respects like many other relatively large urban areas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and it experienced episodes of both prosperity and decline. Overall, the wealth of the town was tied to its long-standing rights of self-governance as an incorporated borough, its role as the principal port town in the county of Suffolk, and its heavy involvement in the international seafaring and coastal trades, which were dominated by the export of cloth to the Low Countries and the provision of foodstuffs to the growing population of London. With roughly 5,000 settled inhabitants in 1600, Ipswich was a sizeable town, and as the eighth-highest tax-yielding town in England, it was also reasonably prosperous.[97] All of this made Ipswich a place of some significance during this period; it was an economic hub and an important place of social gathering and cultural exchange. Critical for the methodologies used in this research, the town's highly-centralised government and its early development of social welfare schemes spurred its authorities to generate copious amounts of administrative and judicial records, their survival rate for the period 1570-1620 being particularly good. These can be used in combination to categorise and analyse the social and economic lives of the town's

[96] Ibid., p. 117.
[97] The characteristics of Ipswich are discussed more fully in the next chapter.

poor inhabitants, and they provide a rare glimpse of the experiences of the poor both before and after the implementation of the widely influential poor law statutes of 1598/1601.

The overarching purpose of this project has been to dig deeply and sensitively into the lived experiences of endemic socio-economic disadvantage in a period marked by major social, economic, and demographic change and fluctuations. Indeed, what follows is an earnest attempt to describe and analyse both the readily discernible and less visible aspects of the social and economic lives of the 'ordinary poor' and the 'relief-dependent' in one early modern English town. Overall, its results throw into question whether those in either category of the 'poor' (or 'poorer sort') actually had a reasonable chance, at any point in this period, of attaining a wealthier, respectable, and distinctly valued life as an 'able' householder (the most modest of those among the 'richer sort'). In so doing, it provides a fuller and more nuanced picture of the wealth these groups could hope to achieve, and demonstrates how so many at least found the means to withstand the challenging circumstances of their day.

The following chapter develops the thesis with a general overview of the geographic, social, economic, cultural, and political characteristics of the town of Ipswich, particularly during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Building upon this, Chapter Three introduces a new methodological approach to determining the town's social structure and related population sizes. It also provides an in-depth analysis of the town's general demographic trends with a particular focus on the experiences of those living in poverty compared with those of wealthier groups. Chapter Four establishes the primary social context for the ordinary poor and their relief-dependent counterparts through a detailed exploration of their 'families'. Here, families are considered to be nuclear families instead of 'households', and this chapter explains the tailored methodology used to reconstruct nuclear families and how they have been assigned to socio-economic groups. Furthermore, it compares each group's normal family types and developmental cycles, both with each

other, and those higher up the socio-economic scale. It also considers the prevalence of childhood deaths among each group. In combination, this data implies each group's general access to the basic nutrition and effective medical treatment available in this period. Chapters Five and Six examine the economic lives (i.e. work, education/training, and living standards) of poor adults and children, with a particular emphasis on their gendered employment patterns, accumulation of wealth, and the transmission of wealth and economic opportunity between generations. Chapter Five focuses on how and why 'ordinary poor' adults might remain solvent and even develop savings during a period marred by many bouts of acute economic and demographic stress. In contrast, Chapter Six is concerned with the various methods poor parents used to set their children on promising paths towards what they hoped would be a stable economic future in various lucrative labour markets. It also considers the effects of the poor laws of 1598 and 1601 on poor children's employment, arguing that local authorities immediately began intermeddling in the affairs of poor children and their families in ways that were not necessarily to their longer-term benefit. The thesis concludes with some observations about the various experiences of socio-economic disadvantage and poverty amongst the 'ordinary poor' and the 'relief-dependent' in Ipswich, and offers some suggestions for related avenues of future study.

CHAPTER TWO:

Ipswich, c. 1570-1620

A Time of Transition

Throughout this period the geographical, political, economic and cultural characteristics intrinsic to the town of Ipswich and its broader region greatly influenced the experiences of its inhabitants. These forces helped to shape the town's social structure, the changing nature of its economy, and the development and implementation of its social welfare schemes. As a result, it is important to consider these factors closely before drawing any conclusions about the inhabitants' social and economic lives. For many years, Ipswich has been of some interest to historians and this existing body of research provides an invaluable basis for the following analysis.[1] Nevertheless, some key economic changes which affected the town in this period have been so far overlooked, including the damaging effects of the Cockayne Project (1614-17) and the growth of the hospitality sector towards the end of the sixteenth century. In order to fill these gaps this chapter synthesises and builds upon the existing historiography and presents a more complete picture of Ipswich and how it changed between 1570 and 1620.

[1] Some of the more detailed studies include Bacon, *Annalls*; G. R. Clarke, *The History and Description of the Town and Borough of Ipswich* (London, 1830); J. Wodderspoon, *Memorials of the Ancient Town of Ipswich* (London, 1850); G. H. Martin, 'The Borough and the Merchant Community of Ipswich, 1317-1422' (D. Phil. Thesis, University of Oxford, 1955); J. Webb, *Great Tooley of Ipswich: Portrait of an Early Tudor Merchant* (Suffolk Records Society, xii, Ipswich, 1962); R. L. Cross, *Justice in Ipswich, 1200-1968* (Ipswich, 1968); M. Reed, 'Ipswich in the Seventeenth Century' (Ph.D. thesis, Leicester University, 1973); idem, 'Economic Structure and Change in Seventeenth-Century Ipswich', in P. Clark (ed.), *Country Towns in Pre-Industrial England* (Leicester, 1981), pp. 88-141; D. MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors: Politics and Religion in an English County 1500-1600* (Oxford, 1986); D. MacCulloch and J. Blatchly, 'Pastoral Provision in the Parishes of Tudor Ipswich', *Sixteenth Century Journal*, 22/3 (1991), pp. 457-74; P. Bishop, *The History of Ipswich: 1500 Years of Triumph and Disaster* (London, 1995); R. Malster, *A History of Ipswich* (Chichester, 2000); *Ipswich from the First to the Third Millennium: Papers from an Ipswich Society Symposium* (Ipswich, 2001); M. Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk: An Economic and Social History, 1200-1500* (Woodbridge, 2007); N. Amor, *Late Medieval Ipswich: Trade and Industry* (Woodbridge, 2011).

Placing Ipswich: Water, Land, and Influence

Over the course of its history, the nature and purpose of Ipswich has been defined primarily by its geographic position. Located in eastern England in the county of Suffolk, the town is situated at the point where two navigable rivers, the freshwater Gipping and saltwater Orwell, meet with the North Sea tide (2 in Figure 2.1). When connected, these bodies of water form a channel which, by 1600, had been for centuries an important route for travel and trade.[2] Lying at the heart of this broad estuary, the town is an inland port in a naturally defensible position. This made it far less vulnerable to attack than its neighbouring coastal ports, such as Harwich (Essex), and by the 1550s it had become the principal port between Great Yarmouth (Norfolk) and the city of London (5 and 3 in Figure 2.1, and 4 in Figure 2.2).[3]

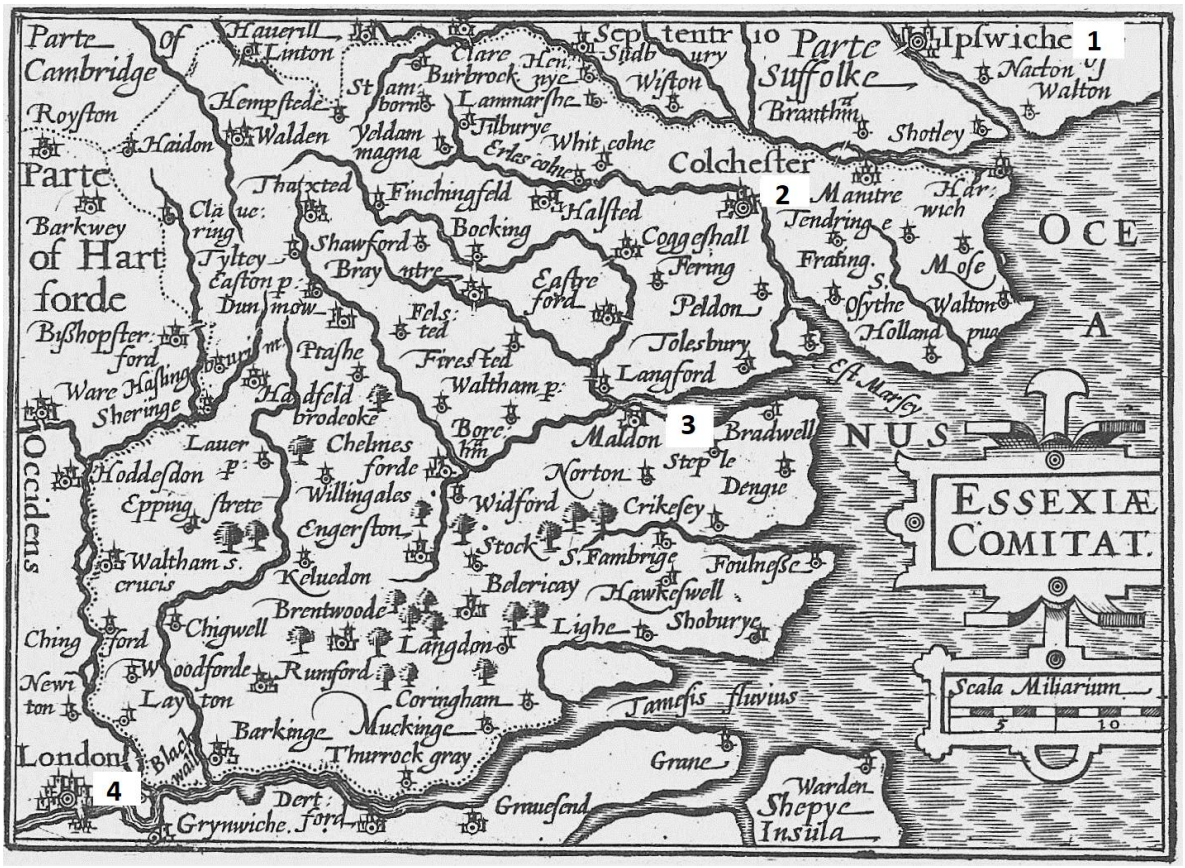
FIGURE 2.1: SUFFOLK IN 1603, PIETRE VAN DEN KEERE (ADAPTED)



[2] See for example, Amor, *Late Medieval Ipswich*, pp. 20-4;
[3] W. White, *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of Suffolk and the Towns near its Borders* (Sheffield, 1844), p. 34.

Much of the regional influence the town had in this period came from its extensive admiralty jurisdiction, which crossed county borders. From the fourteenth century Ipswich held official dominion over the port of Orwell, the river, and all of its tributaries, even though Harwich sometimes stirred to challenge that position (5 in Figure 2.1).[4] Moreover, in 1564, the maritime jurisdiction of Ipswich was expanded to include the oversight of 64 ports, creeks, and landing places, which included many settlements along the eastern waterways of Suffolk and two of the most important ports and economic centres in Essex: Colchester and Maldon (2 and 3 in Figure 2.2). As a result, when any maritime judicial and administrative matters arose in these areas they were dealt with at the admiralty court in Ipswich, and only Ipswich collected the customs from those port havens.[5]

FIGURE 2.2: ESSEX IN 1603, PIETRE VAN DEN KEERE (ADAPTED)



[4] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 64-6.
[5] Ibid., pp. 64-6; Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 97.

Throughout this period the regional economies of counties such as Suffolk, Norfolk, and Essex heavily depended upon international seafaring and the coastal trade, which were dominated by the export of wool and textiles to the Low Countries, and the provision of foodstuffs to the ever-expanding population in London. This meant that the role Ipswich played as a primary port made it a place of great significance in the wider region; it was an economic hub, an area of social gathering, and a cauldron of cultural exchange.[6] In addition it ensured that for most of this period the primary focus, purpose, and wealth of the town were firmly connected to markets dependent upon maritime activities. It is within this general context that the urban nature of sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ipswich must be primarily viewed, since many of the town's inhabitants (elites and non-elites alike) earned their living and set the tempo of their lives by the physical and economic demands of the sea.[7]

Whilst the widespread influence and revenue that came with the town's maritime responsibilities elevated the importance of Ipswich above nearly all other East Anglian towns except Norwich, there remained clear limits to its influence over both sea and land. Comprising modern day Norfolk and Suffolk — with parts of Cambridgeshire and Essex often included as well — East Anglia has long been known as a region with strands of a shared identity stemming from its origins as an early medieval Anglo-Saxon kingdom. Although the effects of war and conquest during the middle ages destroyed the collective political structure of the area, it continued to be intrinsically linked through the medieval development of strong political, religious, and administrative ties, as well as the continued economic, social and cultural exchange of its people.[8] Certainly, in the sixteenth century similar economic pursuits and overlapping administrative jurisdictions still united much of

[6] D. H. Sacks and M. Lynch, 'Ports 1540-1700', in Clark (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History, Vol. II*, pp. 377-424.
[7] See Chapter Five and Reed, 'Economic Structure', pp. 103-5.
[8] Bailey, *Medieval Suffolk*, p. 65; P. Corfield, 'East Anglia', in Clark (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History, Vol. II*, pp. 31-48.

this area. For example, the search for work or trade often drove inhabitants to cross county borders, as did the desire to press matters in the ecclesiastical or secular courts. Indeed, under the overall jurisdiction of the Bishop of Norwich, residents of Ipswich might travel great distances if there was a need to attend their religious administrative centre.[9] Plus, even if the residents had no need to travel, Ipswich was the seat of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, so the Bishop's commissaries routinely held the town's parochial officials accountable for any inhabitant's nonconformity or moral offences.[10] That activity consistently demonstrated the Bishop's influence on religious matters in the town and continued to highlight the ties within the wider region. Also, the area's combined shrievalty under the High Sheriff of Norfolk and Suffolk further underscored that connection, and the sheriff typically was appointed in alternation from each of the two counties.[11] In addition, the region's mutual economic reliance on the production and preparation of wool and cloth, the shipment of cloth, and the subsistence and commodity trade, caused many urban and rural East Anglian locales to remain firmly connected, and often interdependent. Such ties regularly were strengthened through shared business dealings and entertainment experiences at county fairs, and socially solidified by the frequent intermarriage of the region's influential families.[12] All of these elements worked together to create a social, economic, and political mixture that broadly defined the early modern East Anglian community.

Although the counties were in many ways enmeshed, the communal feeling between them from the sixteenth century onwards should not be overstated, since the fall of Thomas Howard, Duke of Norfolk, in 1572 heralded the first major crack in the foundations of these enduring regional bonds. After Norfolk's treason, Elizabeth I declared his position and its holdings forfeit, including those in Suffolk, and the title that had

[9] R. Houlbrooke, *Church Courts and the People during the English Reformation* (Oxford, 1979), pp. 22-30; NRON, DN/DEP/13-40; NRON, MF/X 195/DEP/30-3.
[10] SROI, JC1/1(4) (Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of St. Peter's Ipswich, 1563-1664).
[11] MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors*, pp. 7-8.
[12] Ibid., pp. 7-8; C. G. A. Clay, *Economic Expansion*, i, p. 201; Corfield, 'East Anglia', pp. 31-48.

politically united much of Norfolk and Suffolk for centuries, remained defunct until after the Restoration in 1660. To address the administrative burden and power vacuum left by the Duke's removal, the Crown separated the shrievalties of the two counties in 1575, after which, Norfolk and Suffolk began to assert more autonomous control over their own affairs. Indeed, by 1600, the diocesan boundaries and admiralty jurisdictions were the only official cross-county administrative structures that remained in the region. Then, when a series of ineffective bishops led to increased business in the archdeaconry courts in the seventeenth century, even one of those bonds had begun to fray.[13]

While there is no doubt that at this time Ipswich was an important economic centre in East Anglia, the sizeable grain port of King's Lynn (Norfolk) and the feeder seaport for Norwich, Great Yarmouth, competed regionally with the town for maritime trade and had equally large spheres of influence. Furthermore, throughout this period the city of Norwich (1 in Figure 2.1), which was second in population size only to London, remained the principal urban centre in East Anglia. As a result, Norwich was securely settled as East Anglia's primary distribution centre for goods to and from London (4 in Figure 2.2), and London in turn acted as the main hub for most of the goods sent to and from the Continent.[14] This meant that even at the height of its economic power, Ipswich never rivalled the size and influence of early modern Norwich, although evidence suggests that some in the town had that ambition.[15] Despite those dreams, the town simply was unable to break the hold held by Norwich and London on overland and overseas trade. All the same, Ipswich retained a monopoly on the shipment of Suffolk-produced butter and cloth, which

[13] Houlbrooke, *Church Courts*, pp. 22-30.
[14] E. Kerridge, *Trade and Banking in Early Modern England* (Manchester, 1988), p. 15; Amor, *Late Medieval Ipswich*, p. 24.
[15] In 1572, two residents of Ipswich, John Johnson, stapler, and Christopher Goodwyn, merchant adventurer, urged the government to establish Ipswich as the official English 'mart town' for trade with the Low Countries. If this plan had gone forward then Ipswich would have become the official trading counterpart to Antwerp. This would have given Ipswich a veritable monopoly on the lucrative trade route with the Low Countries, which would have cut Norwich out of the market by hindering the number of ships travelling to Great Yarmouth. The plan was rejected primarily because the government was concerned that such a monopoly would harm London's economic primacy in international trade. Wodderspoon, *Memorials*, pp. 199-204.

enabled the town to control a comparatively small but nonetheless significant portion of the region's overseas and coastal trade.[16] This lucrative activity led Ipswich to become not only the largest town in Suffolk, both in population and economic output, but also the eighth highest tax-yielding town in England by 1600.[17]

At the same time, within its own county the influence of Ipswich was most curtailed by the town's western neighbour, Bury St Edmunds (4 in Figure 2.1). Founded during the medieval period, the town of Bury was closely governed by the members of its nearby Abbey and at the start of the sixteenth century it was widely considered to be Suffolk's administrative seat. Nevertheless, the Dissolution in the late 1530s shattered the administrative structure of the town and the resultant disorganisation hampered its ability to remain the premier urban centre in Suffolk. This occurred just as Ipswich was experiencing rapid growth in the early sixteenth century from the enriching effects of England's booming cloth industry and the ensuing expansion of overseas trade.[18] Because of that development, by 1600, contemporaries widely began referring to Ipswich as 'the county towne', and while Bury retained the honour of hosting the assizes until later in the seventeenth century, Ipswich customarily held the county elections and housed the registry of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk.[19] The successful rise of the town ultimately was depicted in John Speed's map of Suffolk from 1610, which shows a detailed plan of Ipswich (not Bury) as an inserted image.[20]

The Borough, Town, and Governance of Ipswich

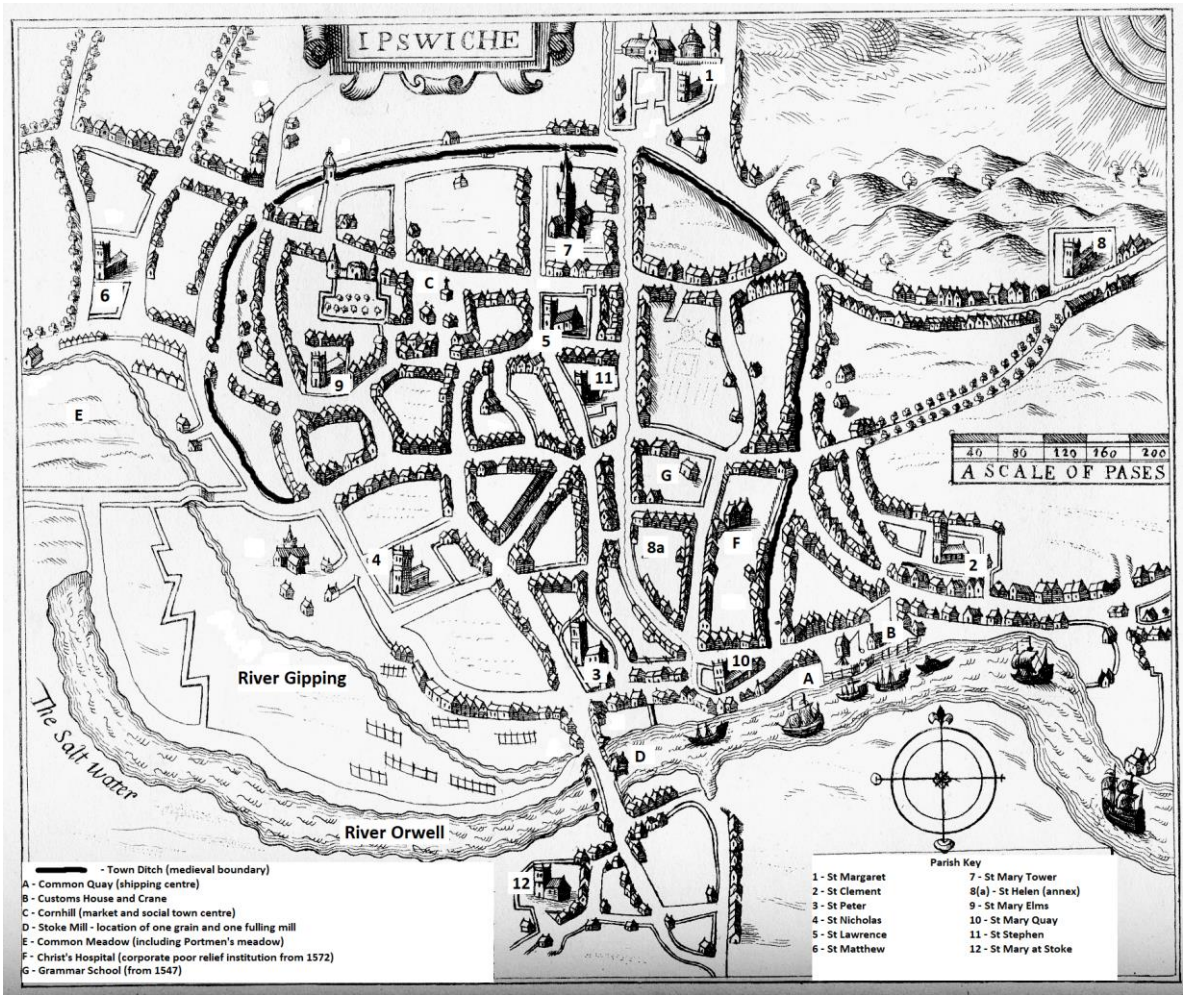
Since King John granted Ipswich its first charter at the beginning of the thirteenth century, by 1570 the town's free burgesses had already enjoyed several centuries of direct,

[16] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 97.
[17] MacCulloch. *Suffolk and the Tudors*, p. 22. The population figures for the town are discussed in Chapter Three.
[18] Clay, *Economic Expansion*, ii, pp. 108-13.
[19] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 97.
[20] Sacks and Lynch, 'Ports', p. 383; MacCulloch, *Suffolk and the Tudors*, p. 23; J. Speed, *The Counties of Britain: A Tudor Atlas*, ed. N. Nicolson and A. Hawkyard (new edn, London, 1995), pp. 166-7.

autonomous, and relatively inclusive self-government. Indeed, at that time Ipswich was one of the oldest incorporated towns in England, and the constitution which had been established in 1200 remained fundamentally unchanged until the nineteenth century. This meant that, throughout this period, the town had a long tradition of local authority and self-governance which defined much of its overarching character.[21]

Figure 2.3 illustrates how the borough of Ipswich extended well outside the medieval ditches that signified its urban core and covered approximately 19 square miles. This jurisdictional area included 12 full parishes and portions of an additional six, since the liberty and regional parish boundaries did not coincide.[22]

FIGURE 2.3: KEY AREAS IN IPSWICH C. 1610, JOHN SPEED (ADAPTED)



[21] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 7.
[22] Reed, 'Economic Structure', pp. 89-90.

Figure 2.3 also highlights the mixture of land types and clearly defined spaces of social, economic, and political importance which were found within the town's jurisdiction. These helped to create a dynamic heterogeneous urban and suburban society that necessitated overt and effective administration and governance in order to keep order and harmony in the town.

Located on the town's Cornhill, the seat of government was also the marketing centre for the town (C in Figure 2.3). As Figure 2.3 shows, the main buildings which shaped this area embodied the corporation's administrative and mercantile regulation of the town and its inhabitants. The three most imposing of these structures, the Town Hall, the Guildhall and the Market Cross, were positioned in the middle of the market square and dominated the proceedings there. At some point during the fifteenth century the town converted the building in the west of the square (originally the medieval parish church of St Mildred) into the sixteenth and seventeenth-century seat of town government, known interchangeably as the Moot Hall, Hall of Pleas, and later, Town Hall.[23]

It was in this structure that the governing authorities and free burgesses met several times a month to undertake the corporation's administrative and judicial business at the borough's Great (General) Court, General Sessions,[24] and Petty Sessions. In theory, the Great Court comprised the entire body of the town's freemen who were then further differentiated by the town's political hierarchy. The most powerful groups within this governing structure were the municipal authorities. They included 12 of the 'wisest and truest' Portmen and 24 Common Councillors (also known simply as the Twenty-four). Together these two groups made up the town's legislative Assembly. The Assembly met monthly to discuss town matters and decide which issues to bring before the General Court,

[23] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 79, 167, 210, 254, 309, 339.
[24] N.B. These were different sessions from the similarly named 'General Court'. See the summary at the beginning of the section 'Justice and the Courts', in D. Allen (ed.), *Ipswich Borough Archives, 1255-1835: A Catalogue* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 41-198.

and court business usually dealt with town property, provision for the poor, maintenance of the highways, provision of town lecturers, and defence against outside encroachment upon the corporation's liberties.[25] This court also set most of the local rates assessed upon the town's inhabitants, such as the rates for scot and lot and the rates to relieve the poor.[26] Annually on 8 September, the Great Court, which typically included between 40 and 100 regular freemen in addition to the Assembly, chose two bailiffs to act as the chief governors of the town. The voting rights of ordinary freemen at the court suggest that, similar to what others have argued (albeit contentiously) for Norwich, the upper echelon of government was not an 'oligarchy' in the strictest sense. Nevertheless, in practice the bailiffs were normally chosen from among the twelve Portmen, although this may have been the case because they were also typically those who most easily could afford the financial risk associated with such an office.[27]

The first official act of new bailiffs was to choose four Justices of the Peace (JPs) who would assist them in the governance of the borough. More often than not JPs were picked from the remaining portmen, and together these six men were charged with maintaining the law, order and proper governance of the town.[28] Most of the work shouldered by JPs came from their role overseeing actions taken against disorderly individuals in the town (e.g. vagrants) and presiding over the town's legal courts, including both the General Sessions and Petty Sessions. General Sessions met fortnightly, most commonly as 'Sessions of the Peace', and once a quarter as Quarter Sessions. As a rule,

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[25] Reed, 'Economic Structure', pp. 90-1.
[26] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 254.
[27] Reed, 'Economic Structure', pp. 90-1; For some discussion of whether or not oligarchy reigned in Norwich at this time see J. T. Evans, 'The Decline of Oligarchy in Seventeenth Century Norwich', *Journal of British Studies*, 14/1 (1974), pp. 46-76; R. O'Day, 'The Triumph of Civic Oligarchy in the Seventeenth Century, in R. O'Day (ed.), *The Traditional Community under Stress* (Milton Keynes, 1978), pp. 103-36; M. C. McClendon, 'Religious Toleration and the Reformation: Norwich Magistrates in the Sixteenth Century', in N. Tyacke (ed.), *England's Long Reformation 1500-1800* (London, 1998), pp. 87-115; and M. Reynolds, *Godly Reformers and Their Opponents in Early Modern England: Religion in Norwich, c. 1560-1643* (Woodbridge, 2005), pp. 30-6; for a summary of the financial risk that came with office-holding see I. W. Archer, 'Politics and Government 1540-1700', in Clark (ed.), *Cambridge Urban History, Vol. II*, p. 246.
[28] Cross, *Justice in Ipswich*, p. 13.

both of these courts dealt mainly with criminal matters. Misdemeanours, petty larceny, and similarly routine issues were heard at the regular sessions of the peace, whereas more serious matters, including most felonies, were tried at the quarter sessions.[29] In contrast, pleas heard in the town's Petty Sessions ranged across many aspects of town life and included both public and private actions and grievances.[30] The only civil matters beyond the scope of the petty court included the admission of burgesses, election of town officers, and the hearing of land actions. All of these were overseen instead by the Great Court, which was the main court that dealt with administrative matters in the town.[31]

Since the bailiffs, JPs, and the town assembly conducted their business in the town hall which was adjacent to the public market (C in Figure 2.3), that area became the primary space for municipal authorities to share their regulatory and penal decisions with the wider public. This square was the customary location for most public punishment and it was on the Cornhill that petty thieves and avaricious millers were pilloried, vagabonds and drunkards committed to the stocks, and where the less frequent and harsher penalties of whipping, carting, and public execution occurred.[32] In addition, when the municipal government finally began to enforce the full provisions of the Elizabethan Statute of Artificers (1563) in 1575, they regularly posted the maximum wage rates for the town's artificers, handicraftsmen, and millers at the town hall.[33]

As will be borne out by the bulk of this thesis, in general, evidence from Elizabethan and early-Stuart Ipswich suggests that local authorities usually approached town government in a highly organised and efficient manner. Furthermore, although it is clear that throughout this period the corporation actively sought to establish ties of civic patronage with some of the region's landed elite, there is little indication that members of

[29] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8.
[30] SROI, C/2/3/8/1.
[31] Martin, 'Borough ... Merchant Community', pp. 132-4.
[32] Cross, *Justice in Ipswich*, pp. 4-9; Bishop, *History of Ipswich*, p. 49; N. F. Layard, *The Martyrs of the Cornhill* (Ipswich, 1886).
[33] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 309.

the local gentry or nobility were particularly overbearing in their dealings with the town. Indeed, it appears such ties more often strengthened the borough's ability to protect its interests than undermined it.[34] As a result, because of the town's longstanding status as an incorporated borough and the right to self-governance upheld by its charter, the power of local officials to order and regulate much of the town's society and economy was rarely interfered with by outside authorities. This created a robust and highly centralised base of power for those who governed the town.

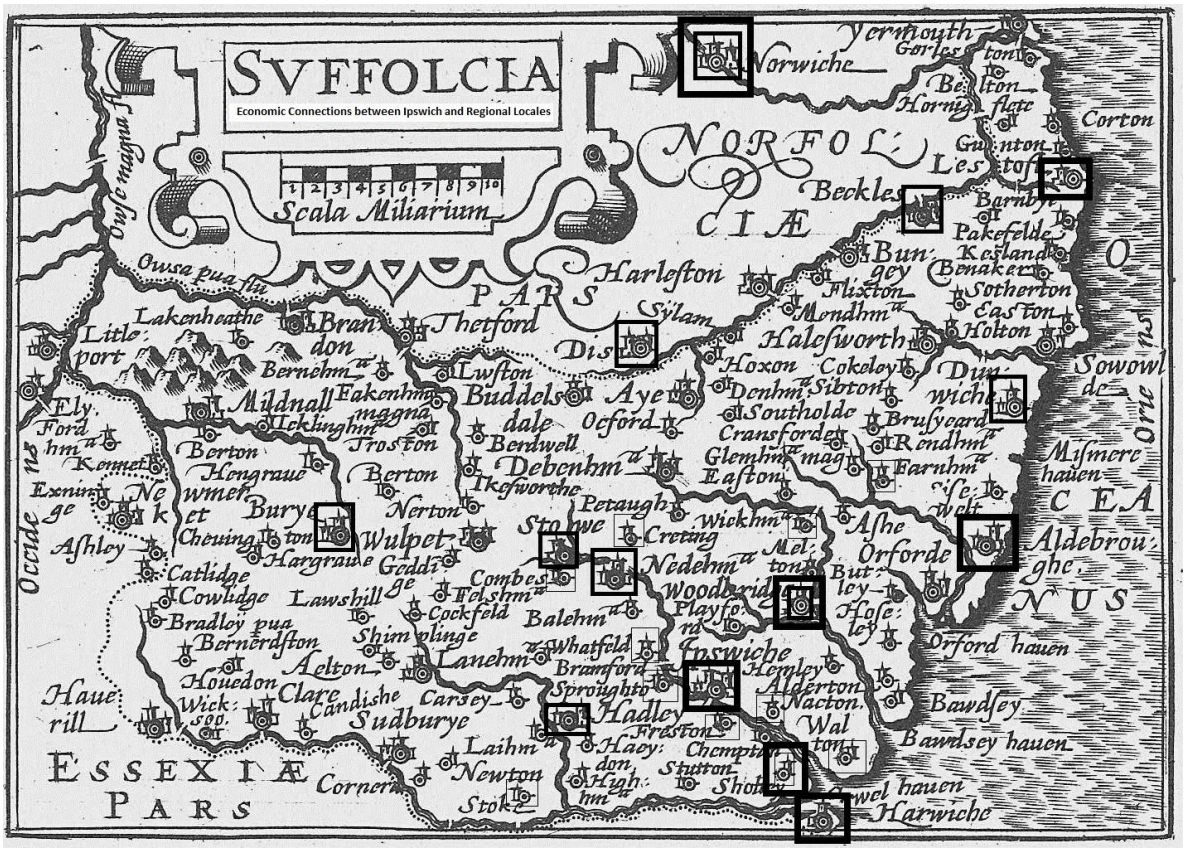
The Economy of Ipswich c. 1570-1620

As Suffolk's premier town and main port, Ipswich played many vital roles within its wider regional economy. From an economic standpoint, the most critical of these were its functions as an agricultural consumer, a regional market and distribution centre, and a centre for maritime exchange. Figure 2.4 shows the most frequently cited places of abode for non-resident deponents who came before the town's petty court in the later sixteenth century.[35] It is possible to use the detail of these depositions to establish the main economic connections between Ipswich and its hinterlands because the petty court often dealt with defaulted debts, broken business deals, and other economic concerns. Nicholas Amor has suggested that the core trading area for late medieval Ipswich included a radius of perhaps twenty miles.[36] Overall, Figure 2.4 shows that in some ways this was still the case in the later part of the sixteenth century. Rural agricultural villages which were located within 12 miles of Ipswich along the Gipping and Orwell had the greatest reliance on the town's economy. Corn from Bramford and Westerfield (Whatfeld), rye from Shotley, hemp from Needham Market (Nedeh[a]m), barley from Combs (Combes), as well as wheat, bacon and

[34] See for example C. F. Patterson, *Urban Patronage in Early Modern England: Corporate Boroughs, the Landed Elite, and the Crown* (Stanford, 1999), pp. 37, 53-4, 71-2, 81, 85, 157-8, 182-3.
[35] See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of this source. There are 703 depositions included in this collection, of which more than half were given by non-resident deponents. SROI, C/2/3/8/1.
[36] Amor, *Late Medieval Ipswich*, p. 228.

butter from Hemingstone (not shown) all were carried along the Gipping and Orwell to either be used in or distributed from Ipswich.[37]

FIGURE 2.4: ECONOMIC TIES BETWEEN IPSWICH AND REGIONAL LOCALES



Key: Agricultural Trade — Local Inter-Market Trade — Local Maritime Trade —

Even so, more far-ranging seafaring settlements also had economic links to the town. Sailors and mariners from Woodbridge, Aldeburgh and Southwold, roughly 10, 25 and 50 miles from the town respectively, found employment on ships sailing from Ipswich, or were hired by the town's merchants to carry wholesale goods, such as white herring, for distribution to other regions.[38]

Yet the town's connections based upon international and coastal maritime trade were even more diffuse than Figure 2.4 shows. By the seventeenth century the town's overseas trade had ships from Ipswich carrying goods to and from many distant lands, such as the Low Countries, the Baltic, France, Spain, and Greenland, and by the 1630s some

[37] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 3r-4, 19, 23, 82, 200-1.
[38] Ibid., fols. 30, 42, 396-9.

were even bound for New England as well.[39] Exports of English cloth to the Low Countries, and particularly the coarse blue 'Suffolk' cloth, dominated this trade and ships returned from their voyages with spices and other commodities that were available in the Dutch market. These often included hops, which were in demand from the town's burgeoning numbers of beerbrewers, and woad which was necessary to dye the Suffolk cloths their customary blue colour.[40] Because of this, between 1570 and 1620, much of the economic stability of Ipswich remained tied to the cloth industry and the town's trade with the Low Countries.

But the cloth trade was hardly stable at this time, and trade stoppages resulting from England's repeated religious, political, and economic clashes with Spain (who claimed dominion over the Dutch) plagued the period. Trade was halted in 1569-73 during the Dutch Revolt, then again for much of the Anglo-Spanish war (1585-1604), and after James I permitted the nationwide implementation of the Cockayne Project in 1614.[41] Born from the ideas of Alderman William Cockayne, a prominent merchant in London, this project sought to bypass the need to trade in unfinished textiles with the Dutch (who were skilled dyers) by revamping England's dying processes and thereby making the kingdom a major international producer of finished cloth. In his support of this ambitious plan, James I forbade the export of cloth to the Low Countries and granted the newly revamped company of Merchant Adventures, most of whose members were in London, a monopoly on the export of English cloth. This caused major problems for most cloth-producing regions in England, and seriously affected the economies of not only Ipswich, but all those who relied on Dutch trade. Furthermore, it shifted the nexus of the cloth trade towards London and forced many previously autonomous provincial merchants to buy into the new Company of

[39] Reed, 'Economic Structure', pp. 97, 104.
[40] Ibid., pp. 97, 104; Amor, *Late Medieval Ipswich*, pp. 154-6; Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures*, p. 17.
[41] Clay, *Economic Expansion*, ii, pp. 115-7.

Merchant Adventurers in the hope of remaining economically viable.[42] More targeted research needs to be done on the effects of the Cockayne Project in specific cloth-producing regions, however it seems that the project's spectacular collapse in 1617 probably wreaked havoc on the economies of many English locales, including Ipswich. There, the crippling effects of the project are readily apparent and brought to life in vivid detail by the rash of discharged apprentices which began to be noted in the town's quarter sessions records from 1615. Many were discharged in the same vein as Thomas Brown, a haberdasher's apprentice, whose master in 1615 was recorded as 'now decayed and did not keepe any house nor exercise his trade and hath not found his aprentice meate drincke nor aparell'.[43]

Amidst such high political and economic tensions, over the course of this period the town began to rely more heavily on coastal trade and other markets to strengthen its faltering economy. Coastal trade was of utmost importance and a variety of commodities were shipped from Ipswich to regions along the English shoreline. The bulk of revenue came from shipping foodstuffs to London, such as beer, butter, cheese, wheat, rye, and hops, and until the middle of the seventeenth century the town also participated in transporting coal from Newcastle to the capital.[44] In addition, evidence suggests that by the end of the sixteenth century the hospitality trades were growing at a rapid rate in Ipswich, particularly in the brewing and victualling trades. Indeed, Michael Reed has shown that the retail food and drink sector continued to expand throughout the seventeenth century, which suggests that significant growth in the hospitality market may have been one of the key reasons the economy of Ipswich remained fairly secure despite a series of economic crises in the cloth trade during this period.[45]

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[42] A. Friis, *Alderman Cockayne's Project and the Cloth Trade: The Commercial Policy of England in its Main Aspects, 1603-1625* (London, 1927), chs. 5, 6; B. Supple, *Commercial Crisis and Change in England, 1600-1642* (Cambridge, 1959), chs. 2, 3, 7; R. Hentschell, *The Culture of Cloth in Early Modern England: Textual Construction of National Identity* (Aldershot, 2008), pp. 159-62.
[43] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/7.
[44] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 97.
[45] Ibid., p. 102. This is developed more fully in Chapter Five.

The Local Social, Economic, and Cultural Context

The important role that Ipswich played as a centre for social, economic, and cultural exchange brought significant economic benefits, particularly once the cloth trade had begun to wane. Certainly, throughout this period, the town remained a vital hub for those who lived within its sphere of influence or travelled through the wider region.[46] As a large market town and distribution outlet, Ipswich had a constant stream of native and non-native people coming and going from its hinterlands. Indeed, resulting from a combination of religious persecution in their home countries and the established maritime trade links with Ipswich, men and occasionally women from the Netherlands, Germany, France, and Norway often made their way to conduct short term business or start a new life in the town.[47]

As Figure 2.3 shows, early modern Ipswich contained several distinct social and economic centres which drew people into the town for a variety of reasons. One of the most important of these was the town's maritime centre, the common quay (A in Figure 2.3) which was described by one contemporary in the 1580s as being a 'commodious harbour…[with] a great trade'.[48] The quay was located on the southeast banks of the Orwell and housed the traditional economic structures associated with early modern ports and shipping. The most visible of these was the Customs House and the large crane which was used to weigh goods that were transported within the town's admiralty jurisdiction, such as coal, corn and salt (B in Figure 2.3).[49] Records for St Mary Quay, the parish that included the common quay, suggest that it was one of the least populated regions in the town, so it might be tempting to think of the quay as a primarily economic area with little social

[46] For example, Ipswich was one of the main rest points noted on the travel route from London to Great Yarmouth: J. Ogilby, *Brittania* (London, 1675), pp. 107-8.
[47] Reed, 'Economic Structure', pp. 104-5, 109-10.
[48] As quoted in D. Defoe, *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain* (3 vols., London, 1724-7), i, pp. 59-60.
[49] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 123.

function (10 in Figure 2.3).[50] Yet deeper analysis suggests that the quay had some similar social facilities to the main town centre which made it, in itself, an important social gathering place. Local rates raised to fund the maintenance of the town's parish churches show that properties in this parish included several dwelling houses and at least two licensed alehouses or inns, The Ship and The Angel, which would have been convenient meeting places for residents and visiting sailors, mariners, and merchants to socialise and conduct business.[51] The customs house at Ipswich, which housed the town's maritime administrative offices and storage space for dry goods, also had an ornate portico which ran the length of the building. This area was commonly referred to as 'Mariner's Walk' and was somewhat reminiscent in the style and function of the covered Market Cross envisioned for the town's Cornhill in 1610 and constructed in 1628.[52] Both of those areas provided significant outdoor space for social interaction within these distinct economic environments.

The two parishes most associated with the quayside had a great mixture of inhabitants from divergent socio-economic and cultural backgrounds. Sixteenth and seventeenth-century parish church rates show that many successful merchant-mariners lived within close proximity to the water. Most notably, Henry Tooley, the great Tudor merchant and benefactor of the poor in the town, had his primary family residence with private courtyard and garden in Key Street on the western side of the quay.[53] Further to the west and into the parish of St Clement (2 in Figure 2.3) lay several dwellings of mariners,

[50] The 1603 communicants return lists St Mary Quay parish (10 in Figure 2.3) as having 82 communicants, which ranks the parish as having the third smallest population in the town. From the same communicants return, the average parish size in the town would be approximately 175 communicants – more than double that of the Quay parish. See Chapter Three.
[51] SROI, C/3/2/2/2 includes the 1574 parish church rate for St Mary Quay, which determined rate payment by the value of property each inhabitant held within the parish. It shows at least three public drinking houses were in operation in the parish. Interestingly, this is the same number of public drinking houses listed in a 1572 parish church rate for St Mary Tower parish (7 in Figure 2.3), which included the Cornhill social and economic centre. The names of two of the alehouses or inns in St Mary Quay (The Angel and The Ship) are listed in the 1637 church rate, and the names of the The King's Head, The Queen's Head and The White Horse are listed in St Mary Tower in the 1637 church rate, as well. See Chapter Five for more discussion of the importance of alehouses, inns, and taverns in Ipswich.
[52] Wodderspoon, *Memorials*, pp. 4-5, 237-8.
[53] Bishop, *History of Ipswich*, p. 54.

merchants, and sailors. The homes of wealthy mariners, such as William Cock and John Lowe, usually had private moorings on the Orwell, whereas those of the many 'ordinary poor' sailors like Thomas Grimble and William Cotly did not.[54] There was a distinct prevalence of seafaring residents in St Mary Quay and St Clement because of the close proximity of those parishes to the town's centre of maritime activity. Nonetheless, after 1568 when the town established its municipal poor relief institution, Christ's Hospital (F in Figure 2.3), the area became as important to many of the town's poor as it was to its seafaring inhabitants.

Whilst a great deal of economic and social activity occurred near the quayside, nearly half a mile away in the centre of Ipswich (C in Figure 2.3) the town's weekly markets and its urban amenities created another vortex of social and economic interaction. Northeast of the geographic town centre and far from the river on more elevated terrain lay the Cornhill, which was the town's mercantile-based social and economic centre. Its distance from the waterfront reflected medieval concerns regarding tidal flooding, however one can imagine many residents appreciated being removed from the raucous activity at the quay.[55] Several markets were held within the buildings on the Cornhill, in the square, and along the immediately adjacent streets. They occurred weekly on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays and each provided an arena of economic and social exchange for inhabitants and strangers alike. The principal market place was on the Cornhill itself, but local trade restrictions stipulated that only freemen of the town had the right to erect stalls in that central location.[56] Corporate market regulation also required foreign traders (i.e. those who did not have the freedom of the town) to pay a fee (i.e. 'foreign fine') in order to establish stalls even on the streets adjacent to the Cornhill. Because of those restrictions clusters of

[54] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 89. The register entries for St Mary Quay and St Clement show that Thomas Grimble and William Cotly were established householders in each of these parishes, however neither was wealthy enough to be rated for either the parish church rates or poor rates. SROI, C/3/2/2/2.
[55] St Mary Quay parish church was built on marshy ground prone to flooding in the warm and wet summer months. Even a restoration effort in the 1870's failed to remedy the situation, and there were complaints of the flooded vaults creating an unbearable smell at that time.
[56] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 124.

stalls specialising in various goods emerged. For example, although corn was the principal commodity sold on the Cornhill (hence the name), the corn market actually spilled into many of the eastern side streets. The butchers' shambles also were located on the Cornhill and, in theory, the sale of meat was meant to be restricted to that area. Nevertheless, butchers' stalls appear to have crept outside the set boundary because the town records repeatedly underscore the need to enforce this regulation.[57] Unlike the others, the fish market was removed from the central marketing area and located instead in the square directly south of St Lawrence parish church (5 in Figure 2.3). The town's butter market and bread stalls lined the street to the south which connected the fish market to the central market on the Cornhill. This widespread marketing region with specialist trading areas created frequent reasons and opportunities for both inhabitants and visitors to interact across parish boundaries and throughout the town.

The Cornhill also housed the administrative centre for mercantile activity in Ipswich. Amalgamated trade companies, such as the company of Mercers, Drapers, Tailors and Shoemakers (created in 1576 and reconfigured into the company of Clothworkers, Shearmen and Dyers in 1591) conducted their public trade at the Guildhall. Located southeast of the Town Hall, many of the major cloth trades had specific areas within this structure to carry on their business, the most significant of these being the Cloth Hall. As we have seen, the town usually separated wholesale and retail trade so not all of the town's mercantile trades were represented in the Guildhall. Indeed, the Corporation often erected other premises particularly for retail traders as circumstances warranted. Such was the case for the butchers when a shambles was erected with room enough for 30 trading stalls only for their use.[58] Despite these dispersed trading areas, the Guildhall still housed the town's official weights and measures which applied to all those trading within the town. As a result

[57] Ibid., p. 124.
[58] Ibid., p. 124.

it could be argued that the building served as a symbol of the town's mercantile unity and regulation.

Although the Guildhall played an important economic role in Ipswich, the ultimate power of the trade companies which were created (and often subsequently dissolved) in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries remained closely checked by municipal authorities who never allowed them to grow large enough to threaten the town's chartered privileges. For example, in 1620 the town complained to the Privy Council that the company of Clothmakers was impinging upon its corporate rights. As a result, the corporation was eventually allowed to 'restructure' the company, which 'left the new company almost entirely under the control of the merchants and all but destroyed it as an organisation of small tradesmen and artisans.'[59] Since all of the town's twelve governing Portmen were successful merchants, mercers, or grocers, this outcome was remarkably advantageous to them. Such an outcome also suggests a conscious effort by the town governors to safeguard their own economic interests before those of others in the town. The meddling power of municipal authorities meant that the trade guilds never played a vital role in shaping economic regulations in Ipswich at this time. Instead, the unifying purpose of trading fellowships appears to have been overshadowed by the proven and effective unity and regulation provided by the town's incorporated structure.[60] The general weakness of trade companies also can be seen in the absence of any local maritime company which would have overseen seafaring employment and maritime trade in Ipswich. As it was, such regulation was left primarily to the town's admiralty court, which in practice remained largely unconcerned with regulating most seafaring occupations throughout this period.[61]

The weak political status of the town's trade companies meant that their administrative positions became largely ceremonial over the course of the sixteenth

[59] Ibid., pp. 121-3.
[60] Martin, 'Borough ... Merchant Community', p. 27.
[61] See Chapter Five.

century. Indeed, by the 1590s burgesses were increasingly reluctant to take on the office of Guild Alderman for the town's amalgamated guild and there was growing concern over the shoddy execution of the guild's annual feasts. The records of the Great Court indicate that from the 1580s, those appointed to be guild aldermen by the Assembly often paid the substantial fine of 20 marks in order to decline the offer, and it was not unusual for this to happen three or four times before someone accepted the position.[62] The organisation of the guild's annual feasts was the responsibility of the aldermen and from the 1570s they were normally held on the Sunday after midsummer.[63] Although these feasts may have played an important social role for merchants, clothiers, and other wealthy tradesmen earlier in the sixteenth century, the failure of the feast in 1589 shows that its importance had begun to wane. In July 1590 the Great Court ordered the aldermen to pay 20 shillings each for 'their disorderly and insufficiently holding of their dinner.' In 1601, the feast was pushed out into the middle of July and was downgraded to a 'dinner and supper'. After this, it appears that the annual feast was not held until 1607, by which time aldermen who held the post for a year were thereafter 'discharged for the future'.[64] This suggests that, although the Guild Hall was an important structure because it housed a significant portion of the town's market space, the Guild itself did not compete with the Assembly for urban political power; it was the Assembly which held primary control over social and economic regulation in the town.

From a social perspective, it is quite clear that Ipswich was home to a diverse community. Along with a great variety of people from among the native English population, Ipswich also had a substantial community of foreign immigrants and visitors from various socio-economic and employment backgrounds.[65] The town's parish registers and petty court depositions note several foreign brewers, mariners, and weavers, and a smattering of coopers, joiners, painters, and goldsmiths, among other trades and

[62] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 357-63.
[63] Ibid., p. 304.
[64] Ibid., pp. 407, 445.
[65] The variety of native English inhabitants is discussed in detail in Chapters Four, Five, and Six.

professions. Throughout the latter half of the sixteenth century, various flashpoints of religious unrest on the continent, particularly in the Low Countries and France, spurred Protestant refugees to emigrate to England, and many found their way to towns in East Anglia.[66] At the height of immigration in the 1580s, over 40 per cent of the population in Norwich, and nearly 30 per cent of those in Colchester, were of Dutch or Walloon origin.[67] It is difficult to estimate the immigrant population in Ipswich during this period because the relevant extant sources, such as the Lay Subsidy of 1568, do not provide comprehensive figures. Still, combining this source with other evidence provides the overall impression that immigrants and foreign visitors had a significant and often sustained presence in the town. In 1568, foreign residents constituted nearly 15 per cent of all those rated for the lay subsidy taken in that year, and there is every indication that this figure captures only a fraction of the immigrants who lived in Ipswich.[68] Comparing this subsidy list with the town's view of frankpledge taken in 1573, which details most of the masters and servants within the town (including immigrants), shows that the subsidy usually did not include servants or family members of foreign householders. For example, even though the Dutch joiner William Cornelius was assessed 2*d* by poll on the subsidy, William's five 'servants', including his son William, his sons or brothers Richard and Jeremy, and two apparent non-relatives, are noted in the later view of frankpledge but absent from the subsidy.[69]

Immigrants and foreign visitors also remain very visible in the court records of the period. Among the petty court depositions taken in the town between 1573 and 1585, the number of foreign deponents equalled the number of deponents who were residents of London, and both were the second most represented group after native residents of

[66] N. Goose, 'Introduction', in N. Goose and L. Luu (eds), *Immigrants in Tudor and Early Stuart England* (Brighton, 2005), pp. 4, 15, 27-9.
[67] Ibid., p. 18; Smith, *Middling Sort*, p. 28.
[68] Of the 294 inhabitants rated for the lay subsidy, 43 were rated as foreign strangers. *Suffolk in 1568: Being the Return for a Subsidy Granted in 1566*, ed. S. H. A. Hervey (Suffolk Records Society, xxvii, Bury St Edmunds, 1909), pp. 156-66.
[69] SROI, C/2/8/3/2 (Records of the View of Frankpledge).

Ipswich.[70] Detail from the depositions and the town's parish registers indicates that foreigners who settled in Ipswich brought a variety of wealth and skills with them. Wealthier men like Gilbert Maynard, a Dutch beerbrewer who probably emigrated to Ipswich during the Dutch rebellion of 1566, usually made significant efforts to establish and integrate themselves, both economically and socially, within their new community. By the early 1570s, Gilbert had not only established a household and an apparently thriving brewing business, he was mediating disputes between native residents and foreign business partners, making regular contributions to the town's poor rates and towards the wages of the Town Preacher, and he oversaw the poor rate collection for one of the town's parishes in 1574.[71] Though Maynard was perhaps a particularly bright star of foreign integration, most of the economically substantial immigrants to the town followed his example and made regular payments towards the relief of the town's poor and the upkeep of the Town Preacher.[72]

It is significant that so many settled immigrants paid towards the wages of the Town Preacher because this behaviour along with their settlement patterns may provide some indication of the religious climate in Ipswich during this period. Diarmaid MacCulloch and John Blatchly have argued that a strong 'grass-roots Protestant movement' existed in the town before, during and after the English Reformation. Before the Dutch Reformed Church was formally established in the early 1570s, parishioners in Ipswich had established what was to become a customary right to choose, appoint, and dismiss their own parish clergy. This gave each of the town's parishes an 'unusual degree of local autonomy' and a degree

[70] In the petty court depositions taken between 1573 and 1585, there are 15 foreign-born deponents and 15 Londoners, while there are 331deponents who are native residents of Ipswich. SROI, C/2/3/8/1.
[71] SROI, C/2/8/3/2; SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fol. 4; unless otherwise stated, all church rates, poor rates, rates to raise the town preacher's wages and poor relief lists can be found in SROI, C/3/2/2/2 (Registry of Enrolments of Deeds and Wills from 25 Eliz. to 1651).
[72] There were several substantial immigrant households that paid regularly towards both the poor rates and the rate for the Town Preacher's wages between 1574 and 1590 including the households of Gilbert Maynard, Richard Cornelius, George Myllen, Adam Fowles, William Nicholas, Adrian Weywell, and Edward Rickard. Furthermore, the households of John Cornelius, James Glashurst, and Derick Pulham paid the preacher's rate of 1577, and Cornelius de Hoghe and William Mylles, and Cornelius Hubright and John Maynard paid towards the poor rate in 1574 and 1583/1590, respectively.

of control over their own religious direction.[73] John Foxe's *Actes and Monuments* provides some evidence that signs of enduring protestant radicalism existed in Ipswich after the Dissolution. According to Foxe, under the Catholic Mary I in 1556, 10 of the parishes in Ipswich contained several inhabitants who fled from persecution, refused the sacrament or abstained from certain religious ceremonies, such as baptisms, as a testament to their reformed faith. Foxe lists 84 separate nonconformists from approximately 59 households within the town, with clusters often found in specific parishes.[74] The majority of these religiously radical households (41 of 59) also lived in the four most populous parishes, St Margaret, St Clement, St Peter, and St Nicholas (1, 2, 3, and 4 in Figure 2.3). But a parish's population did not always indicate the presence or lack of radical inhabitants. The fifth largest parish, St Matthew, had only one radical household (a husband and wife), whereas St Stephen, one of the least populated parishes, had the same number as the much larger parish of St Margaret (6, 11, and 1 in Figure 2.3). St Matthew was not the only parish which contained very few radical households – Foxe lists only one in St Mary Quay, two in St Mary Elms, and none among some of the least populated parishes, St Helen and St Mary Stoke (10, 9, 8, and 12 in Figure 2.3).[75] This evidence suggests that the religious leanings of the parishioners in Marian Ipswich spanned the contemporary spectrum, with St Matthew, St Mary Stoke, and St Mary Elms on the conservative end and St Stephen, St Clement, St

[73] M. Konnert, *Early Modern Europe: The Age of Religious War, 1559-1715* (Peterborough, 2008), p. 142; MacCulloch and Blatchly, 'Pastoral Provision', p. 459.
[74] Foxe's listing is a copy of one originally compiled by Marian agents sent to the town to uncover the extent of anti-catholic practice there. The list appears quite comprehensive and includes the names of servants, wives and children across all socio-economic levels. J Foxe, *Actes and Monuments* (London, 1583 edn), pp. 2089-90.
[75] Ibid., pp. 2089-90. While no radicals are listed in either St Helen or St Mary Stoke, Foxe cites an example of a parishioner of St Peter (a parish with 8 listed radical households) refusing the 'paxe' at mass in St Mary Stoke. Ostensibly, the parishioner was refusing to kiss the 'paxbred' (a small disk or tablet bearing religious icons passed from the priest to the congregation for their adoration before communion). For more detail, see C. Marsh, *Popular Religion in Sixteenth-Century England* (Basingstoke, 1998), pp. 32, 223.

Peter, St Margaret and St Nicholas on the more radicalised opposite.[76] Even so, 'radical' households remained a minority in all parishes throughout this period.

After the 1560s, the settlement pattern of Dutch and other continental protestants emigrating to Ipswich demonstrates that, for the most part, the town's parishes continued to display these religious leanings under Elizabethan Protestantism. Evidence from the town's parish rates and registers shows that immigrants who came to Ipswich after 1560 most often settled in the parishes of St Margaret, St Nicholas, St Stephan, and St Mary Quay. [77] Three of these parishes had an established history of native 'radical' Protestantism, and the fourth (St Mary Quay) included the town's common quay, which would have been the main entry point for most immigrants coming to the town. Because so many protestant immigrants settled in the town's more religiously radical communities, this may suggest that there was a degree of identification and agreement with the religious practices of some of their native neighbours.

The general outpouring of financial support for the upkeep of the Town Preacher which the majority of wealthier immigrants displayed further suggests strong spiritual links and helps to demonstrate the religious position of the municipal authorities (and thus the 'corporate body') of the town at this time. Established under Edward VI in 1551, the office of Town Preacher was widely used by town authorities as a platform to extol radical religious reform to the town's inhabitants.[78] From the office's inception, and with only a short interruption under Mary I, town authorities consistently appointed highly reformed preachers to this post. Such choices were epitomised in the appointment of the infamous Puritan preacher Samuel Ward in 1605, a choice which has led modern historians to

[76] That is not to say St Matthew did not have connections to radical Protestantism – Foxe lists the joint curate of St Mary Elms and St Matthew as being married. Still, it is unclear how connected and or attentive he was to either parish.
[77] Most of the 170 entries of registered events and rate payments in the years between 1560 and 1620 came from these four parishes. The complete figures are: St Margaret (31), St Nicholas (27), St Stephen (23), St Mary Quay (23), St Laurence (15), St Mary Tower (11), St Matthew (11), St Clement (8), St Mary Elms (8), St Peter (7), St Mary Stoke (5), and St Helen (1).
[78] Wodderspoon, *Memorials*, p. 366; MacCulloch and Blatchly, 'Pastoral Provision', pp. 457-74.

conceive of and refer to Ipswich as one of the great 'godly cities' and 'Puritan citadels' of the age.[79] It seems unlikely that wealthier immigrants were compelled by the town to pay towards the maintenance of the Town Preacher. As has been shown, a few did not pay towards the preacher's wages, but still paid the poor rate, and most were not assessed the local rate for the maintenance of their parish churches. This suggests that wealthier immigrants chose to provide financial support to Town Preachers for other reasons. The most probable of these was that they agreed with the preachers' religious work and identified with and benefited from their spiritual guidance.

Although it is clear that more radically reformed religious sentiments existed in Ipswich, especially within the social circles of the corporate elite, the extent to which their beliefs permeated those of more humble people (or were even deeply considered by them) remains doubtful.[80] It may have been the case that more inhabitants embraced the tenets of radical religious reform after Samuel Ward became the Town Preacher in 1605. By all accounts Ward was particularly charismatic and popular with townsfolk. Nevertheless, well into the 1630s he continued to lament that many of his flock retained their 'vulgar superstitious' views, such as 'whosoever works on any of the twelve days [after Christmas] shall be lousy.'[81] Indeed, it must be stressed that throughout this period 'the town' (meaning the body of inhabitants) had a distinct culture of diversity when it came to the religious nature of the parishes and their inhabitants. As we have seen, some parishes were religiously conservative and others were more reformed, so it seems overly simplistic to view 'the town' as particularly radicalised in any general sense. This is important because it has been argued that the nature of local authorities' piety could have some effect on how

[79] For Ipswich as a 'godly city' see P. Collinson, *The Religion of Protestants: The Church in English Society, 1559-1625* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 170-7; Hindle, *State and Social Change*, p. 180; and for a 'Puritan citadel' see Fideler, *Social Welfare*, p. 92.
[80] Cf. Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, ch. 6; Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, p. 14; M. Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 73-4.
[81] As quoted in Hill, *Society and Puritanism*, p. 147.

they viewed and treated 'the poor' in their areas.[82] Be that as it may, it appears the actions of the town authorities towards the poor in Ipswich were not driven primarily by religiously radical beliefs during this period. Instead they were motivated by the 'practical divinity' underpinned by Christian humanism (which was acceptable to most in society at this time), political opportunity, and the changing reality of economic conditions in the town.[83]

The Development of Relief Schemes in Ipswich

The strong and centralised power of municipal government in Ipswich made it easier and more straightforward for its Assembly to develop, implement, and oversee social welfare schemes which would tackle the issues commonly faced in early modern urban environments. This is perhaps best exemplified by the town's early and successful development of several official poor relief policies, methods, and institutions. Drawing much of their inspiration from the Christian humanist schemes developed on the continent in the early sixteenth century, by the 1550s London, Norwich, and Ipswich all were pioneering new approaches to dealing with the problem of urban poverty in England.[84] Integral to the change in policy in Ipswich was the movement away from begging and informal almsgiving, which had been common at the turn of the sixteenth century, and toward the institution of a compulsory poor rate given by the townspeople to their local parish authorities. This movement can be seen through the development in Ipswich of

[82] There has been quite a spirited debate about the extent to which piety affected the actions of authorities in a uniform way when it came to dealing with the poor. Cf. Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 174-83; M. Spufford, 'Puritanism and Social Control?', in Fletcher and Stevenson (eds), *Order and Disorder*, pp. 41-57; M. J. Ingram, 'Reformation of Manners in Early Modern England', in Griffiths, Fox, and Hindle (eds), *Experience of Authority*, pp. 47-88; P. Collinson, 'Puritanism and the Poor', in R. Horrox and S. Rees-Jones (eds), *Pragmatic Utopias: Ideals and Communities, 1200-1630* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 242-58.

[83] M. Todd, *Christian Humanism and the Puritan Social Order* (Cambridge, 1987), pp. 18, 172-5; McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, pp. 115-38. In Ipswich, it is clear that local authorities only implemented widespread work schemes for the poor when it was politically 'safe' to do so (i.e. concurrently with the poor law statutes of 1598). This suggests that, regardless of their religious beliefs, town authorities were unwilling to risk the negative public reaction that may have occurred if they had tried to implement such a scheme simply through municipal policy. For more detail see Chapters Five and Six.

[84] Todd, *Christian Humanism*, pp. 172-5; Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy*, chs. 4, 5, 6; Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, pp. 49-57, chs. 4, 5.

beggars' licences during the first half of the sixteenth century.[85] Eventually, such licences became so restrictive that only the diseased were allowed to beg in order to gather funds for a cure. Ipswich also instituted a public survey of the town's poor as early as 1551, and in 1556 the Assembly elected eight persons 'for the ordering of the maintenance of the poore and impotent people, for providing them work, [and] for suppressing of vagabonds and idle persons'.[86] Shortly thereafter, in 1557, the town established its first compulsory poor rate, which was set to raise funds in order to provide various forms of assistance to the town's poorest inhabitants and which made continued default by those liable punishable by imprisonment.[87] Initially, no minimum payment was set, but most obligated members of the town gave what they could and imprisonment was rare.

Around this same time the influence of Christian humanism on wealthy residents also brought about an increase in large scale charitable bequests which established and perpetually funded new almshouses, foundations, and other philanthropic schemes for the relief of the town's deprived residents.[88] The most notable of these was the bequest of one of the wealthiest merchants in the town, Henry Tooley. Upon his death in 1551 Tooley instructed that the majority of his vast wealth should be used to fund the building of five new almshouses which were to relieve ten of the town's poor residents in total. By 1562, the town authorities had established the Tooley Foundation. Initially this foundation provided financial relief to a vetted group of aged, widowed, and disabled individuals in their own homes, since the building plans for Tooley's almshouses took years to finalise. As a result, ultimately the town authorities combined the requirement to erect Tooley's almshouses with an existing plan to refurbish the old Blackfriar's priory in order to

[85] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 247.
[86] Ibid., p. 246.
[87] For the date of the first poor survey in Ipswich, see ibid., p. 235; Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, p. 123. For the date of the instituted poor rate see Clark and Slack (eds), *Crisis and Order*, Introduction, p. 19.
[88] Slack, *English Poor Law*, pp. 41-3.

establish a municipal hospital.[89] Unlike early medieval hospitals, which (more often than not) were established as ecclesiastical institutions for the care of the physically infirm, the municipal hospital in Ipswich was to serve various, mostly non-medical, functions which were associated with alleviating poverty.[90] Spurred by the financial windfall of Tooley's bequest, in 1568, the authorities in Ipswich started renovations of the priory with the grand design of establishing a multi-purpose centre there for dealing with the many and varied needs of the town's poor. This hospital, locally called the Blackfriars and officially known as Christ's Hospital of Ipswich, served as the town's orphanage, workhouse for 'idle' resident poor, correctional facility for poor vagrants, and housing for the almspeople of the Tooley Foundation.[91] As Figure 2.3 shows, Christ's Hospital was located in the parish of St Mary Quay (F). It was there that the poor of the hospital were obliged to attend weekly religious services and, upon their death, both the 'deserving' relief-dependent poor of the Tooley Foundation and the 'idle' poor of the hospital were buried in the same parish churchyard.[92]

In addition to the establishment of the municipal hospital, by the 1570s the corporation had instituted a compulsory weekly poor rate which each of the town's wealthier inhabitants was required to pay, according to their means. Also by this time, town authorities typically made payments of weekly 'outdoor' poor relief (i.e. cash payments to the poor living outside of institutions) in order to relieve the relatively large numbers of non-instutionalised dependent poor.[93] Furthermore, during the frequent outbreaks of acute epidemics which often devastated poor communities, authorities raised and collected

[89] *Poor Relief in Elizabethan Ipswich*, ed. J. Webb (Suffolk Records Society, ix, Ipswich, 1966), p. 11.
[90] N. Orme and M. Webster, *The English Hospital, 1070-1570* (New Haven, 1995), p. 23; McIntosh, *Poor Relief in England*, pp. 61-2, 71.
[91] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, p. 12. It is important to note that the name of the municipal hospital in Ipswich was almost certainly inspired by its predecessor in London of the same name, though that institution focused on the care and instruction of poor children. The functions of the hospital in Ipswich are discussed more fully in Chapter Six.
[92] Burial entries in the parish registers of St Mary Quay often note when the deceased was one of the residents of the hospital or alternatively a recipient of relief from the Tooley Foundation. SROI, FB100/D1/1.
[93] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 322.

special supplementary rates in order to provide the stricken poor with medicine and other necessities. Since the relief rates of all parishes were combined by the town treasurer, and all parishes were not financially equal, the town's wealthier parishes subsidized their poorer neighbours.[94] Until the poor law statutes of 1598 placed the administration of poor relief firmly in the hands of parish officials (namely, the 'Overseers of the Poor'), the poor rates in Ipswich routinely were collected by the town's parish authorities and then transferred to the central municipal coffers until the time for disbursement came; usually once a week for outdoor relief and as expenses arose for institutional relief.[95] After the statutes of 1598 and 1601, however, the implementation of routine efforts to relieve the poor (outside of institutions, such as Christ's Hospital) rested squarely with parish 'Overseers of the Poor', though the town authorities continued to oversee the election of these officers at the General Court, provide the poor in times of scarcity with subsidised corn and wood, and organise the provision of materials and implements (e.g. stocks of wool, wool cards, and spinning wheels) for the poor to be set on work in their own homes.[96]

Conclusion

Overall it is evident that in the latter half of the sixteenth century Ipswich developed a robust framework for the treatment of poverty and the administration of poor relief. As in many urban areas in England, this system was tested by the rapid increase in the town's population in the latter half of the sixteenth century, which inevitably put serious strain on the resources of the town and its inhabitants. Increased economic migration of rural residents seeking work in the town combined with repeated interruptions in trade with the continent led to prolonged periods of employment shortages which affected all levels of the

[94] Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy*, p. 70. Also, regarding central holding of the Ipswich poor rate see J. Webb, 'Introduction', in *Town Finances of Elizabethan Ipswich: Select Treasurers' and Chamberlains' Accounts*, ed. J. Webb and D. MacCulloch (Suffolk Records Society, xxxviii, Ipswich, 1996), pp. 1-4.
[95] For specific examples see *Town Finances of Elizabethan Ipswich*, ed. Webb and MacCulloch; *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb.
[96] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 392-3, 398, 404.

town's society. Periods of dearth and epidemics throughout the period further exacerbated problems for the town's municipal authorities and its growing base of 'poor' residents. On a basic level, these issues ensured that towards the end of the sixteenth century the population of the town experienced more downward social mobility than upward. Additional economic and demographic crises in the opening decades of the seventeenth century meant that inhabitants also found little respite from these problems. As a result, between 1590 and 1620 those who were already considered broadly to be 'poor' almost always remained so and even previously prosperous artificers, such as Richard Mimpres, a thirty-five year old male tailor, might be plunged into being dependent upon official relief.[97] Ultimately the long-term instability and decay of the cloth trade in Ipswich led its inhabitants to look for more stable and lucrative work in the town's other economic sectors. Their choices began to shift the town's economy away from the textile market and towards coastal distribution and the hospitality trades. This movement suggests that Ipswich c. 1570-1620 was a town in economic transition, the direction of which primarily was determined, at least in the closing decades of the sixteenth century, by the choices of its inhabitants, not the corporation. This was the case because regulatory efforts at that time appear to have been largely ineffective, particularly for seafaring occupations and the hospitality sector.[98]

Now that the social, economic, political, and cultural characteristics of Ipswich have been made plain, it is time to consider the town's population in more detail. The next chapter re-examines the total population estimates of the town, and the socio-economic distribution of households in each parish and in Ipswich overall. It also offers a re-interpretation of the town's demographic patterns for this period.

[97] These issues are all discussed in more detail in Chapter Three; *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, p. 122.
[98] This will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five.

CHAPTER THREE:

People, Poverty, and Demographic Trends

Population Trends and a New Approach

Before describing the varied lives of poor families who lived in Ipswich between 1570 and 1620, it is important to explore, more generally, the characteristics and experiences of the town's population in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Determining plausible estimates of the total number of inhabitants at specific points throughout this period provides a basic framework for the subsequent analysis of the parish registers, which allows us to understand in more detail the demographic trends of the period. In addition, a new methodology has been developed to estimate population size and it is presented in what follows. This methodology combines data from the town's communicant returns, parish poor rates, and poor relief payments, in order to determine the social structure of the town, the relative wealth of the town's parishes, and the approximate population sizes of the town's main socio-economic groups.

Estimating Populations and Analysing Demographic Trends

Producing reliable estimates of the size of early modern populations is a difficult task. All demographic historians who study this period face certain challenges, such as incomplete sources which necessitate the use of broad multipliers to arrive at estimated totals.[1] Because of this, when it comes to calculating population estimates, including those for Ipswich in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the quest is not so much to determine the 'right' number, but the best sources and approach to calculate and verify the figures. What follows

[1] For an excellent overview of these issues see N. Goose and A. Hinde, 'Estimating Local Population Sizes at Fixed Points in Time: Part I - General Principles', *LPS*, 77 (2006), pp. 66-74; idem, 'Estimating Local Population Sizes at Fixed Points in Time: Part II - Specific Sources', *LPS*, 78 (2007), pp. 74-88.

examines the attempts historians have made heretofore to calculate the population estimates of Ipswich in this period. Furthermore, it provides a new approach and new estimates for the town's population during that period.

Unlike its northern neighbour Norwich, the population of early modern Ipswich has not been closely scrutinised. Indeed, only a few substantial efforts have been made to understand the size and demographic trends of the town's inhabitants over the course of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the late 1970s, John Patten sketched an initial demographic outline for Ipswich in his work on population distribution change in early modern Norfolk and Suffolk. Just a small portion of Patten's analysis deals with Ipswich specifically, but he offers the first attempt to estimate and analyse its fluctuating total population across the benchmark years of 1524/5, 1603 and 1670.[2] Basing his analysis on a variety of sources including muster returns, poll/hearth tax lists, and diocesan communicant returns, Patten calculates that the population of Ipswich was roughly 3,100 in 1524/25, 5,000 in 1603, and 7,900 in 1670.[3] By comparing these figures with his estimates for Norwich for the same years, which he places at 8,000, 11,000, and 20,000 respectively, Patten notes that the populations of both Ipswich and Norwich increased rapidly during this time, despite the adverse effects of frequent periods of epidemic disease and harvest failure. He also suggests that Ipswich probably grew more quickly than Norwich.[4] Although the causes of this trend are unclear, it must have helped that the severity of epidemic outbreaks generally was less severe in Ipswich than Norwich.[5] Overall, Patten's analysis is valuable because it provides relatively accurate population figures for sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ipswich.

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[2] J. Patten, 'Population Distribution in Norfolk and Suffolk during the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries', *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 65 (1975), pp. 45-66.
[3] Ibid., p. 48.
[4] Ibid., p. 58.
[5] It is clear that plague epidemics had devastating effects on the population in Norwich. Paul Slack has argued that at least 30 per cent of the population in that city was 'swept way' in the plague of 1579. On the other hand, Figure 3.6 shows only a moderate spike in burials when the plague came to Ipswich in the same year; Slack, *Impact of Plague*, pp. 129-31.

Nevertheless, only a few years after their publication Patten's figures and methodology were questioned. Initially, the population estimates and methodology put forward by Michael Reed appear more robust than those provided by Patten because of his chosen source material. Focusing specifically on Ipswich in the seventeenth century, Reed judiciously evaluates the available sources and identifies the Ecclesiastical Census returns for 1603 as the earliest reliable source upon which to base calculations of the town's population.[6] Nonetheless, Reed concedes that the 1603 returns for Ipswich still have significant faults. On their own the returns are limited because they are extant for only 9 of the 12 parishes and often, especially in the larger parishes, record obviously rounded numbers. Reed attempts to compensate for these drawbacks by suggesting that the three missing parishes comprise 40 per cent of the population and that the average household held 2.7 communicants. Although this seems a straightforward approach, Reed's reasoning behind his averaged figure of 2.7 communicants per household is glossed over, which is puzzling because it is different from other estimated averages for the whole of England (2.8 communicants per household).[7] By multiplying the available data by 2.7 and the unavailable figures (40 per cent of the population) by Peter Laslett's average household size of 4.75, Reed calculates a population of 4,300 at the time of the 1603 return, a figure somewhat lower than the 5,000 suggested by Patten for the same year.[8] To flesh out his demographic analysis, Reed turns to the Hearth Tax returns for 1664 and 1674 and the 1695 parochial listing of men and women, which was created in response to the Marriage Duty Act of the same year. Again, following Laslett's example, he uses 4.75 to represent the average number of individuals in a household and reaches the population estimates of 9,100

[6] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 92.
[7] A. Dyer, 'The Bishops' Census of 1563: Its Significance and Accuracy', *LPS*, 49 (1992), p. 25.
[8] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 92; Laslett, 'England: The Household Over Three Centuries', pp. 126-32. Laslett's work and the calculation of mean household size are discussed in detail in Chapter Four.

in 1664 and 7,400 in 1674. Reed is less transparent with his method for calculating 8,000 inhabitants in 1695, as well as the 7,400 he suggests for 1640.[9]

Since household size could fluctuate significantly in line with wealth, occupation and locale, Reed's decision to calculate many of his population figures by using the average household size put forward for all of early modern England necessarily implies that his findings have a potentially large margin of error. The importance of limiting this kind of fault is apparent from Figure 3.1 which illustrates how Patten and Reed's methodologies create very different impressions of population trends for sixteenth and seventeenth-century Ipswich.

FIGURE 3.1: PRIOR POPULATION ESTIMATES FOR SIXTEENTH AND SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY IPSWICH

	1524/25	1603	1640	1664	1670	1674	1695
Patten	3,100	5,000			7,900		
Reed		4,300	7,400	9,100		7,400	8,000

On the one hand, Patten's estimates indicate that Ipswich was growing at quite a steady pace for most of this period. On the other, Reed's numbers point to only limited growth in the sixteenth century followed by an upsurge of growth in the first half of the seventeenth century. Furthermore, Reed's data suggests this development was suddenly halted by a plummeting population in the late 1660s which, if Patten and Reed's figures are taken together, only began to recover at the very end of the century.

So where does this conflicting data leave us? Since Patten and Reed's methodologies are based on several debatable assumptions, and this thesis concerns the period 1570-1620, the critical task is to scrutinise further the population figures that Patten and Reed have calculated for 1603. Certainly, at first glance, much of Reed's approach has greater credibility than Patten's. For instance, Reed analyses sources that yield not only

[9] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 92. Although Reed's method is not mentioned specifically, it can be assumed that he is rounding the figure of 7,943 noted as the population in the 1695 account. SROI, C/3/10/1/1/1/4r (An Account of the Men, Women, and Children Wthin the Towne of Ipswch).

static population estimates (such as the 1603 communicant returns), but also data from the town's surviving parish registers, which reflect broader demographic trends. In contrast, Patten relies solely on sources that provide static population estimates and therefore lacks some critical context to verify his findings. Whatever his reasons for this, it remains the case that parish registers are notoriously difficult sources, which are often limited by illegibility, incompleteness and questionable social representation.[10] The registers for Ipswich are no exception to that rule; just eight of the twelve town parishes have extant registers covering the period 1570-1620, and one of them records only christenings until 1615.[11] Despite these drawbacks, analysis of the data that exists for Ipswich suggests its overall reliability. Generally, each parish register reflects internal consistency in the script over long periods of time. For the period before the seventeenth century, this probably indicates that the data was copied into the vellum register from paper originals. In contrast, consistency after 1600 suggests that one person systematically recorded the parish's vital events, most likely the sexton (who sometimes doubled as the parish clerk) or the minister. Across the period, the registers also usually provide full dates for recorded events as well as the full names of the relevant individuals. By the early seventeenth century many of the registers also include descriptive information in the entries, such as the names of both fathers and mothers and marital status before marriage or at death. In addition, as will be discussed later in more detail, the results of calculating the total annual vital statistics for the eight parishes parallels the established demographic trends found in other areas during this period, notably Terling and Norwich.[12]

[10] Wrigley and Schofield's work on the use and treatment of English parish registers as sources for demographic exploration fully explores the drawbacks and benefits of such material. Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History of England*, pp. 1-152.

[11] Reliable registers for this period exist for the parishes of St Margaret SROI, FB93/D2/1-2 (1537-1717), St Clement SROI, FB98/D1/1 (1563-1667), St Nicholas SROI, FB94/D1/1 (1539-1710), St Lawrence SROI, FB106/D2/1 (1539-1663), St Matthew SROI, FB95/D1/1 (1559-1701), St Mary Elms SROI, FB104/D1/1 (1554-1652). The register for St Stephen covers the majority of the period SROI, FB107/D2/1 (1584-1679). Only christenings exist for St Mary Tower until 1615 when burials and marriages are recorded SROI, FB91/D1/1 (1538-1684).

[12] Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, p. 46; Slack, *Impact of Plague*, p. 131.

Where sources are available which enable the calculation of static population figures, it seems self-evident that historians should compare these with other local records that can reveal broader demographic characteristics and trends. The resulting analysis generates a more complete demographic representation and provides a necessary basis upon which to check the validity of any assumptions. Therefore, the most promising means of revising Reed and Patten's population figures appears to be via the combined analysis of the town's 1603 Ecclesiastical Census returns, a poor rate levied in Ipswich in 1590, and the demographic trends found in my own analysis of the data from the parish registers. Since only 9 of the 12 parishes in the town are represented in the 1603 returns, comparison of this source with the 1590 poor rate, which lists rate payers for 11 of the 12 parishes (including all parishes not listed in the 1603 returns), provides a reliable way to estimate the percentage of the population missing from each source. As the description of this methodology implies, the 1603 Ecclesiastical Census and the 1590 poor rate each suffer from distinct drawbacks. Both are incomplete sources for the town as a whole, but they do consistently represent specific parishes well. This internal consistency becomes even more apparent when the sources are compared with each other. As has been mentioned, many of the 1603 figures reflect rounded numbers, though a few of the smaller parishes appear to have provided actual counts. Any population total calculated, even partially, on the basis of this source must therefore be viewed (like Reed and Patten's) as a rounded estimate. Also, because the 1603 census is incomplete and potentially unreliable, another source is required in order to calculate accurate figures for the missing population and to provide a basis to test the validity of any results.

The 1590 poor rate was chosen for that purpose because of its near completeness and its proximity to the date of the 1603 census. This rate is found among the town's administrative records in a book containing town rate assessments and apprenticeship bonds. The fact that the 1590 rate is one among many raised between 1574 and 1590

suggests that by this date the administrative aspects of the town's poor rate would have been well established and reliably recorded.[13] The scribe's clear and systematic entries of both poor rate payers and receivers of relief in 1590 (which were conscientiously revised when the circumstances of people in either group changed) add further support to this suggestion. [14] The rate's potential drawback is that it is a recorded copy which would have been based on a working document created at the time rate payment amounts were set for that year. Even so, the diligence the scribe demonstrates through his consistent circumstantial updates suggests that any errors in transcription would have been minimal. For these reasons the 1590 poor rate can be considered a trustworthy source to use in comparison with, and to check the reliability of, the 1603 Ecclesiastical Census.

A distinct method was created in order to generate a revised population figure from the combination of these sources. This method has at its core the calculation of the proportion of rate payers to communicants for each parish. For example, the parish of St Stephen had 17 listed rate payers in the 1590 poor rate and 74 listed communicants in the 1603 Ecclesiastical Census.[15] Taking the figure of 17 rate payers and dividing it by that of 74 communicants shows that roughly 23 per cent of St Stephen's communicants probably paid the poor rate during this period. Numbers for both rate payers and communicants are available for 8 of the 12 parishes in Ipswich, and by repeating the above process it is possible to determine the ratio of rate payers to communicants for the majority of the town. Figure 3.2 represents the outcome of that process.

[13] For the details of the establishment of poor rates in Ipswich see Chapter Two.
[14] SROI, C/3/2/2/2.
[15] Ibid.; *The Diocesan Population Returns for 1563 and 1603*, ed. A. Dyer and D. M. Palliser (RSEH, New Ser., xxxi, Oxford, 2005), p. 471.

FIGURE 3.2: PARISH PERCENTAGES OF POOR RATE PAYERS (1590) TO COMMUNICANTS (1603)

Parish	1590 Poor Rate Payers	1603 Communicants	Ratio %[1]
St Margaret	44	440	10%
St Peter	35	-	-
St Clement	56	-	-
St Nicholas	31	-	-
St Lawrence	40	250	16%
St Matthew	29	250	12%
St Mary le Tower	41	202	20%
St Helen	11	120	9%
St Mary Elms	11	100	11%
St Mary Quay	28	82	34%
St Stephen	17	74	23%
St Mary at Stoke	-	72	-
Totals	343	1590	-

1. Percentages have been rounded to one percentage point.

After determining the spread of percentages for the majority of the parishes in the town, one might be tempted simply to average the percentages and use that figure as a multiplier to calculate the probable population of communicants for the missing areas. However, further comparison of the number of poor relief recipients to the number of rate payers listed in each parish in 1590 allows compensation for economic differences between the parishes. This is crucial because it provides a more accurate basis to calculate the average ratio multipliers for each of the missing parishes. By differentiating the parishes according to their levels of poverty, this step enables the establishment of three average percentages of rate payers to communicants based on whether the parish was economically 'prosperous', 'average', or 'poor'.[16] Figure 3.3 shows how the previous figure is revised by that process.

[16] A ratio can be determined by dividing relief recipients by rate payers in each parish. Economic levels were assigned on the basis that parishes with ratios of between 0 and 10 per cent were 'prosperous', 11-33 per cent were 'average', and above 33 per cent were 'poor'.

FIGURE 3.3: ECONOMIC CATEGORISATION OF PARISHES IN IPSWICH

Parish	1590		Rate %[1]	1603	Rate %[1]	Economic Category
	Poor Rate Payers	Relief Recipients		Communicants		
St Margaret	44	14	32%	440	10%	Average
St Peter	35	17	49%	-	-	Poor
St Clement	56	4	7%	-	-	[Average]
St Nicholas	31	8	26%	-	-	Average
St Lawrence	40	2	5%	250	16%	Prosperous
St Matthew	29	10	34%	250	12%	Poor
St Mary le Tower	41	3	7%	202	20%	Prosperous
St Helen	11	9	82%	120	9%	Poor
St Mary Elms	11	1	9%	100	11%	Prosperous
St Mary Quay	28	0	0%	82	34%	Prosperous
St Stephen	17	2	12%	74	23%	Average
St Mary at Stoke	-	-	-	72	-	-
Totals	343	70	-	1590	-	-

1. Percentages rounded to one percentage point.

In all relevant parishes the appropriate category seems clear when the numbers of paupers are considered alongside poor rate payers and communicants. For the most part, these figures appear to represent the general economic situations in each parish accurately. However, the numbers for St Clement parish pose an interesting problem because its few relief-dependent poor would seem to indicate it was a 'prosperous' parish. That conclusion is not consistent with the knowledge that St Clement comprised predominantly seafaring men and their families, many of whom were poor.[17] Other sources from Ipswich show that the seafaring culture of this parish probably caused those listed as receiving relief to be so few. At least one of the town's residential poor relief foundations gave priority placement of funds and care to seamen, their widows and their families.[18] Given that the benefactor of this foundation was a merchant-mariner, and many in the seafaring community chose to cluster together in one parish, it seems probable that seafarers in Ipswich provided a network of unofficial support to their own poor. Further evidence suggests that the authorities in the town also approached the provision of seafarers' official relief in a

[17] See Chapters Two and Five.
[18] In 1551 Henry Tooley bequeathed money to establish a foundation to relieve the deserving poor of the town. As many 'deserving' poor as possible were to be admitted, however Tooley also stipulated that priority should be given to seamen and their widows living in penury. See Chapter Two and *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, p. 11.

different way to the relief of other inhabitants. Indeed, funding for such relief of poor sailors and mariners appears to have been raised through a special rate on ships which passed through the town's admiralty jurisdiction, and that relief was administered to poor seafarers by way of the town's municipal hospital (presumably as 'outdoor' relief payments).[19] Because of this, the economic category for the parish of St Clement has been bracketed and designated as 'average' instead of 'prosperous' in Figure 3.3, which better reflects the parish's probable condition overall. Despite the conundrum caused by St Clement, the spread of parishes across the categories (3 'poor', 4 'average', and 4 'prosperous') indicate the general accuracy of this method.

With the data in Figure 3.3 it is possible to calculate an average percentage of rate payers to communicants for the parishes in each economic category. The resulting averages are 20 per cent, 16 per cent, and 10 per cent for 'prosperous', 'average', and 'poor' parishes, respectively. Having determined these average multipliers it is now possible to estimate the numbers of communicants in the three parishes that have missing data in the 1603 communicant returns. Figure 3.4 shows these results.

FIGURE 3.4: REVISED NUMBERS OF COMMUNICANTS IN 1603 USING AVERAGED MULTIPLIERS

Parish	1590 Poor Rate Payers	1603 Communicants	Ratio %[1]
St Margaret	44	440	10%
St Peter	35	[350]	[10%]
St Clement	56	[350]	[16%]
St Nicholas	31	[200]	[16%]
St Lawrence	40	250	16%
St Matthew	29	250	12%
St Mary le Tower	41	202	20%
St Helen	11	120	9%
St Mary Elms	11	100	11%
St Mary Quay	28	82	34%
St Stephen	17	74	23%
St Mary at Stoke	-	72	-
Totals	343	2490	-

1. Percentages rounded to one percentage point.

[19] See Chapter Five and Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 292.

Adding the new estimates for the parishes of St Peter, St Clement and St Nicholas brings the revised total of communicants in 1603 to 2,490. Using this figure, it would appear that 36 per cent of the town's communicants, almost the 40 per cent suggested by Reed, lived within the three parishes missing from the original returns.[20]

A wealth of scholarship focuses on the best method to convert numbers of early modern communicants into total population estimates. Alan Dyer and D. M. Palliser have discussed at length how the 1603 Ecclesiastical Census represents merely a portion of an area's inhabitants. Most notably, the figures often only reflect inhabitants who were routinely present in church, of age to receive communion, or well-established recusants. As a result, calculating an area's total population from this source requires yet another multiplier to compensate for the parishes' non-communicant children and circumstantial absentees. Dyer and Palliser highlight that most historians have followed Wrigley and Schofield's example of considering communicants to represent 65 per cent of the population, with children comprising a further 35 per cent. However, Dyer and Palliser argue persuasively that an additional 10 to 15 per cent should be added in many areas to represent those who were circumstantially unable to attend communion.[21] Since Ipswich was a busy coastal and international port with many of its inhabitants in the seafaring trades, it was unavoidable that a sizeable portion of parishioners often could not attend communion in their home parish. These absences would have been in addition to those caused by normal circumstances, such as illness or personal travel. Furthermore, it should be noted that by July 1603 a plague epidemic had arrived in Ipswich. This suggests that church attendance probably was lower than normal when the returns were tabulated.[22] For these reasons, to be most accurate the communicant multiplier for Ipswich at this particular

[20] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 92.
[21] *Diocesan Population Returns*, ed. Dyer and Palliser, pp. lxix-lxxii.
[22] Slack has argued that while some among the population may have been fervently moved to attend services during plague outbreaks, it is probable that many more would have tried to stay away from the contagion. Slack, *Impact of Plague*, p. 287.

time should take into account the usual 35 per cent representing non-communicant children, as well as at least an additional 15 per cent for circumstantial absentees. By using these multipliers, the final revised estimated population can be calculated to be a rounded 5,000. From this we can see that Patten's population estimate, despite the constraints of his sources, is more viable than Reed's.

To have only one population estimate for a town during such a dynamic period of study would be hardly adequate. In light of this, one of the most exciting aspects of the method presented here is that it allows an area's population to be estimated *without having communicant returns* for the same period as a series of poor rates and relief payments. Although having the communicant returns helps to strengthen the validity of the method's estimates, it must be emphasised that the returns themselves often are rounded numbers. As a result, once the communicant lists for a location have been used to establish the average ratios for rate payers to communicants in 'poor', 'average', and 'prosperous' parishes, using those ratios to calculate estimated numbers of communicants for earlier or later periods (within reasonable limits) should provide broadly accurate results. Therefore, by using this method and applying it to an additional nearly-complete set of poor rates and relief payments from 1574, a new population estimate for Ipswich can be calculated for that year.

As sources go, the reliability of the poor rate and relief payment lists from 1574 mirrors that of the 1590 series. As noted before, both of these listings of rate and relief payments (among others from the 1580s and 90s) are included in the same bound book of administrative records; they also both exhibit consistent script, and corrective notations, and can be considered generally reliable.[23] The set of rate and relief lists from 1574 has complete information for 11 of the 12 parishes in Ipswich. The only parish for which information is missing is the outlying suburban parish of St Mary Stoke, however rate and relief payments were recorded there in 1581. Because the source for Stoke is close to the

[23] SROI, C/3/2/2/2.

date of the more complete lists from 1574, those figures will be used here for this missing parish and distinguished by brackets. As before, the economic category of each parish has been determined by dividing relief recipients by poor rate payers. Then the previously established average rates of poor rate payers to communicants have been applied. Figure 3.5 shows how these steps have been used to calculate the estimated communicants in Ipswich in 1574.

FIGURE 3.5: ESTIMATED NUMBERS OF COMMUNICANTS IN 1574 USING AVERAGED MULTIPLIERS

Parish	1574		Est. 1574 Communicants	Avg. Rate %	Economic Category
	Poor Rate Payers	Relief Recipients			
St Margaret	37	27	370	10%	Poor
St Peter	31	12	310	10%	Poor
St Clement	49	10	306	16%	Average
St Nicholas	27	6	169	16%	Average
St Lawrence	33	0	165	20%	Prosperous
St Matthew	39	14	390	10%	Poor
St Mary le Tower	43	1	215	20%	Prosperous
St Helen	6	3	60	10%	Poor
St Mary Elms	8	4	80	10%	Poor
St Mary Quay	29	2	145	20%	Prosperous
St Stephen	9	1	56	16%	Average
St Mary at Stoke	[19]	[0]	95	20%	Prosperous
Totals	330	80	2361	-	-

Taking the estimated figure for communicants in 1574 (2,361) and adding the additional 35 per cent for children and 15 per cent for circumstantial absentees provides a rounded population estimate of 4,700 for that year. This estimate is significant because, when compared with Patten's figures of 3,100 for 1524/5 and 5,000 for 1603, it suggests that the town's population increased rapidly between 1525 and 1575; in contrast, it also indicates this growth had stalled by the turn of the seventeenth century.

The town's net growth of merely 300 people between 1574 and 1603 seems rather small, particularly when considered next to Reed's assertion that the population of Ipswich grew markedly throughout the sixteenth century. Since the population of Ipswich probably was larger than Reed believed when he developed his outline for the demographic trends of the town, it is necessary to re-evaluate his findings in the light of new evidence and

techniques. By comparing the total number of events registered in five-year periods, Reed echoes Patten when he concludes that between 1560 and 1640 Ipswich experienced rapid population growth despite the negative effects of frequent demographic crises. It is significant that Reed offers no explanation for the population growth seen in the latter part of the sixteenth century, however he suggests that high fertility and an increase in urban immigration sustained and increased this trend from 1601. For Reed, this growth spurred the population to jump from 4,300 in 1603 to 7,400 in 1640. [24]

FIGURE 3.6: ANNUAL TOTALS OF PARISH REGISTER EVENTS IN IPSWICH, 1550-1660

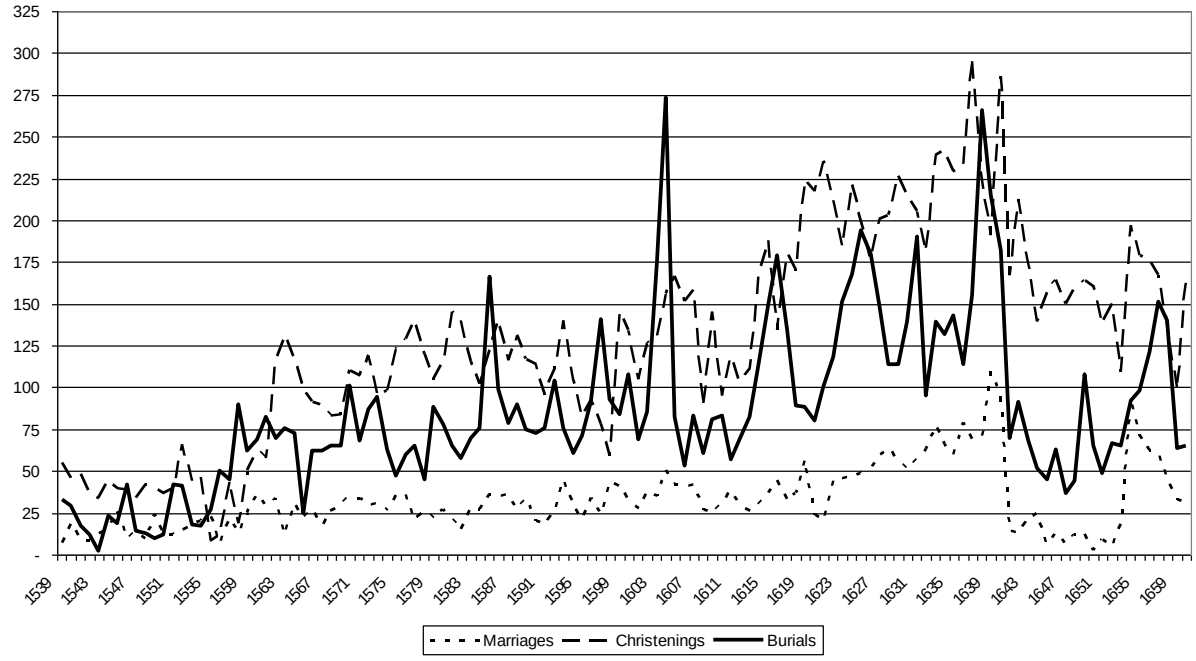


Figure 3.6 generally supports the idea that the population was naturally increasing over much of this period. It shows that throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries christenings normally surpassed burials in Ipswich in non-crisis years. High natural growth periods such as 1574-1584, 1586-1594, 1605-1615 and 1617-21 would have supported the town's ability to rebound from the interspersed demographic crises of 1585-6, 1597, 1603-

[24] Reed, 'Economic Structure', p. 94.

4, and 1616, supporting recent arguments by Nigel Goose against the widespread existence of the 'urban graveyard' effect.[25] Still, the town's ability to withstand demographic stagnation and potential decline in the latter part of the sixteenth century should not be overstated. Figure 3.6 does not support Reed's argument that the population continued to increase rapidly in the decade leading up to the plague of 1603-4. Indeed, after 1594, the gap between the number of christenings and burials began to contract swiftly, moving from a total of 244 christenings and 137 burials over 1593-4 to only 174 christenings and 162 burials over 1595-6. Furthermore, between 1597 and 1600 the 426 total burials actually exceeded the 416 christenings. To put that into a wider context, before this four-year period the number of burials had not exceeded the number of christenings since the plague epidemic of 1585-6.[26] This suggests that the population at least stagnated and probably even decreased, if only slightly, in the years leading up to the 1603 communicant returns. This stagnation appears to have been at least partly the result of widespread harvest failure, which began to affect living conditions in 1594 and culminated in dearth and sickness-related deaths over the course of 1597-1600.[27]

Further evidence that Ipswich was rapidly losing settled families at the turn of the seventeenth century can be seen by close examination of the parish registers from one of the more populous parishes in the town. Detailed reconstitution of the parish of St Nicholas reveals that between 1595 and 1605 the parish 'lost' a sizeable portion of its long-term settled households. By completing a basic reconstitution of the 2,027 entries for the parish of St Nicholas which were registered between 1560 and 1620, and comparing the resulting

[25] By subtracting recorded burials from christenings and dividing that figure by the number of inhabitants who lived in the 7 parishes (by my calculations a rounded 3,400 people, or roughly 69 per cent of the total population) it is possible to calculate the mean combined natural growth rate of these 7 parishes. This has been done for the sample growth periods 1580-83 ((516-269)/3400=0.073), 1592-94 ((355-241)/3400=0.034), 1605-07 ((475-218)/3400=0.076), and 1618-20 ((611-257)/3400=0.104), with the resulting natural growth rates of 7 per cent, 3 per cent, 8 per cent and 10 per cent respectively. See a summary of a paper presented by Nigel Goose on this subject in L. Boothman, N. Goose, T Heritage, 'LPSS Spring Conference Report, 2013', *LPS*, 91 (2013), pp. 5-9.

[26] According to the registers for the seven parishes in 1585-6 there were 265 burials and only 262 christenings in that year.

[27] Slack, *Impact of Plague*, p. 73.

surname groupings with the parish's rate payers and poor relief receivers between 1574 and 1609, 253 distinct households can be identified.[28] For 224 of these 253 households enough evidence exists to determine an approximate length of settlement in the parish and the years when the household arrived, left, or was swept away by disease. The data for these 224 families shows that 54 of them dropped off the register between 1595 and 1605; 2 in 1595-7, 16 in 1598-1602, 33 in 1603-4, and 3 in 1605. The loss of these 54 households represents more than double the 26 households that were lost between 1578 and 1586 — a period that included two outbreaks of plague. Furthermore, even the loss of those 26 families between 1578 and 1586 represented double the normal attrition figures found in non-crisis periods, namely 11 households in 1571-7 and 14 households in 1587-94. As a result, the loss of 54 households between 1595 and 1605 marked an intensely negative and rather novel demographic trend for the town. This data suggests that the natural growth of the population in Ipswich was greatly affected by the crises of the later sixteenth century and, possibly, authorities' attempts to address the causes of those crises, as they saw them (e.g. through increased oversight and regulation of the poor's activities as a means to counteract a perceived rise in poverty). Such a policy may have driven poor families to leave the town of their own volition at this time.[29]

But did new migrants help to offset those natural losses? Certainly, whilst the parish lost a significant number of its settled inhabitants at the turn of the seventeenth century, it also received an equal share of urban immigrants. Indeed, after 1599, 'new' households which continued to endure through the remaining crisis years of 1603-4 represent 56 of all

[28] The households referenced here are different from the families discussed in Chapter Four. The rough family reconstitution of St Nicholas used for this exercise was very basic and captured far more 'incomplete' families than the 793 families analysed in that chapter. For the purposes of this chapter it was necessary to capture as many families as possible in order to have a data set that would accurately represent when families suddenly appeared and disappeared from the historical record. When I completed a similar exercise for the 793 households analysed in Chapter Four, it was apparent that data set was too skewed to long-term settled families and their natural life-cycles. Also, although I have the aggregative data for all of the parishes with reliable registers in Ipswich, the size of that dataset makes it impractical to redo this exercise for the entire town here.

[29] This will be discussed further in Chapters Five and Six.

the reconstituted households (224). The remaining 63 households (i.e. not 'lost' and not 'new') often were the economically more prosperous, but also the brave or simply lucky souls who had managed their families through a protracted period of adversity. Since 119 households can be traced in St Nicholas between 1605 and 1620, and only 63 households (or 53 per cent) were resident before that period, we can conclude that even though the population did not experience a significant decline in numbers it certainly experienced a distinct change in its composition. This supports Reed's assertion that urban immigration helped to stem the effects of crises during this period. Moreover, that the 56 'new' households evenly replaced the 54 'lost' ones between 1595 and 1605 further underscores the importance of immigration to the growth and demographic trends of the town. Nevertheless, it is clear from the previous figures that concurrent high natural growth rates would have been essential for the population to attain the explosive increase that Reed argues began in 1601. Calculating the growth rates for 1595-9 and 1600-4 reveals that such an increase in population would have been nearly impossible. Both periods were marked by more burials than christenings, with 1,191 burials and 1,107 christenings registered over the ten-year span. This suggests that the town had a growth rate of -0.025 per cent over that period, which would mean the natural population was in decline. It was not until 1605 that high growth levels returned with a nearly 8 per cent growth rate for 1605-7 and a 10 per cent growth rate by 1618-20. Given this evidence, it would seem that the population of Ipswich in the early 1590s was roughly the same size as it was at the start of 1605. As a result, the greatest population growth must have come before and after this period.

Prior to 1595, two periods stand out as times of surging demographic growth. One period occurred between 1574 and 1578 when 610 christenings were recorded in contrast to only 280 burials. It would have been difficult to calculate an accurate natural growth rate for this period previously, since no related population figure existed; however, this can now be done using the estimated population figure of 4,700 for 1574. Roughly 69 per cent of the

population lived in the seven parishes with parish registers that are complete enough to be studied for this purpose. Using the rounded proportionate population figure of 3,200 for the seven parishes in 1574 suggests a growth rate of more than 10 per cent. Likewise between 1580 and 1584 the town experienced a wave of population growth. Registered christenings for this period reached 618 with burials totalling only 347. Although the growth was not as pronounced as in the previous period, the figures suggest that the population in the early 1580s was growing at a rate of well over 8 per cent. These periods of overall demographic growth before 1595 were marred by only one period of mortality crisis. Indeed, a plague epidemic which hit the town in 1585/86 took an acute toll on the inhabitants. For those two years the total deaths in the seven parishes rose to 166 and the 122 registered christenings did not compensate naturally for that loss. Even so, the crisis seems to have had little effect on the town's overall demographic growth, since the decline brought on by the plague probably amounted to less than 1 per cent. The 15 years of substantial population growth between 1570 and 1585 were followed then by a period of slowed growth and stagnation leading up to 1603. Such trends remain consistent with Patten's population estimates, which suggest a 60 per cent increase in population between 1524 and 1603; however, the additional population estimate of 4,700 for 1574 highlights that the most enduring population growth must have occurred before that year. To sum up, in light of this contextual data, Patten's population figure of 3,100 in 1524/25, my estimate of 4,700 in 1574 and Patten's and my population figure of 5,000 for 1603 appear the most reliable estimates for Ipswich in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.

From 1605 to 1620 further trends of population growth can be identified. Between 1605 and 1614, 1,303 christenings and 764 burials are recorded. This suggests a natural growth rate for this period of nearly 16 per cent. Such significant growth would have done much to help re-launch the town's population after the volatile 1590s and early 1600s. The short period of demographic strain and acute mortality crisis between 1615 and 1617 was

not severe enough to halt, let alone reverse, this renewed growth as burials amounted to only 464 and christenings remained greater at 503. Growth continued at record levels in Ipswich between 1618 and 1620 with 611 registered christenings in contrast to a mere 257 burials. Thus at the close of the period covered by this thesis, the natural population of Ipswich was once again surging upwards. It is that evidence which supports Reed's findings that the population was quickly expanding in the first half of the seventeenth century. Still, it seems unlikely that the population could have grown at the rate suggested by his original population estimates (4,300 in 1603 and 7,400 in 1640). Since the town experienced similar periods of substantial growth in the sixteenth century and probably only increased 61 per cent over 71 years, an increase of 72 per cent in 37 years (as Reed's figures suggest) seems doubtful. It is more believable that the population had already reached 5,000 by 1603 and only grew 48 per cent in the 37 years between that date and 1640.

Poverty, Population, and Demography

Having discussed the overall population and demographic situation of Ipswich between 1570 and 1620, we must now turn our focus to the population sizes of the groups which contemporaries broadly considered to be living in poverty at this time. What proportion of the town's population were generally considered to be 'poor', and how many of them could be counted among the 'ordinary poor' and 'relief-dependent'?[30] Furthermore, how did these demographic trends appear to have affected those living in poverty? The remainder of this chapter will begin to address these questions in turn and thereby provide a basis for the more nuanced analysis of the experience of poverty which follows.

Two methods have been used to analyse the social structure of Ipswich according to economic wealth, both relying on the use of various rate assessments raised in the town

[30] See Chapter One for more discussion of these terms and how they are used in this thesis.

throughout the period studied. These rates include the parish poor rates as well as the parish rates collected to fund the salary of parish clergy and maintain parochial property (i.e. church rates). Both types of rates were raised across the period and often at similar times, and comparison of the sources shows that many households which were not expected to pay towards the poor rate were expected to pay towards the church rate. As a result, the church rates represent a broader economic cross-section of the population of Ipswich over this period and present a challenge to determine where the line between the 'middling sort' and 'the poor' should be drawn. It has already been shown that contemporaries often considered the ability to pay the poor rate as the general dividing line between these two broad social groups.[31] But to test the reliability of this assertion, the first method used here analyses the poor rates and church rates in conjunction with the parish registers to determine the population sizes of all of the town's main socio-economic groups.

The first method employed to ascertain the population of the poor rests on comparing the 253 total households apparent from the basic family reconstitution of St Nicholas to the poor rates and church rates raised by the parish between 1570 and 1609. Using evidence from the poor rates as a baseline, economic thresholds were determined for the parish church rates in this period. This was done primarily in order to check the validity of the basic economic categorisation provided by analysis of the poor rates. Additionally, it is hoped that this process will be useful for other historians studying areas where poor rates do not exist. Four church rates from 1572, 1599, 1604 and 1609 were chosen for this process because they include rates raised in periods of both general socio-economic stability and strain. By comparing the household payments of those who were listed as poor rate payers and those who were not in 1574, 1578, 1581, 1584, 1590, 1601 and 1605, with the household payments listed for the four church rates the resultant broad economic thresholds of 'poor', 'middling sort' and 'urban elite' are distinctly recognisable. For the

[31] Ibid.

1572 and 1599 church rates, overwhelmingly those households rated as paying under 2*s* a year were not listed among the parish's poor rate payers. In contrast, those who paid 2*s* and over each year were almost always listed as poor rate payers. This suggests that, broadly speaking, the contemporary poverty threshold was a payment of under 2*s* a year towards the parish church rate in this period. Similar thresholds can be found for middling sort and urban elite households. The majority of those listed as paying both the poor rates and church rates made payments of between 2*s* and 6*s* a year. This suggests that that group comprised the 'middling sort' of the parish. A much smaller number of parishioners paid above 6*s* a year and on this evidence can be categorised as members of the 'urban elite'. These initial thresholds increase overall for the 1604 and 1609 church rates, probably as the result of parochial officials' attempts to compensate for rising inflation during that time. As a result, the thresholds for the rates in those two years rose to under 3*s* a year for the 'poor', 3-8*s* a year for the 'middling sort', and over 8*s* a year for the 'urban elite'. Once those thresholds were established, the 253 households from St Nicholas parish then were analysed against the poor rate, poor relief, and church rate lists; after which, the families were categorised as 'poor', 'middling sort', or 'urban elite'. The outcome of that analysis shows that 139 households were 'poor', 85 were 'middling', and 29 were from the 'urban elite'. Therefore, the corresponding percentages which may be taken to reflect the *general* economic distribution of households between 1570 and 1620 are 55 per cent 'poor', 33.5 per cent 'middling' and 11.5 per cent 'urban elite'.

Whereas the first method outlines the general economic distribution of households in one parish across the entire period covered by this thesis, the second method calculates the economic distribution of the entire town's population in 1590. This process is valuable because it provides benchmark population percentages for the poor and non-poor using data from all of the parishes. This in turn allows us to determine an estimated population size for each category as well as check the validity of the results from method one. The second

method analyses the 1590 poor rate and poor relief lists extant for 11 of the town's 12 parishes. As mentioned previously, the small suburban parish of St Mary Stoke remains the only parish not included in that source, however this has been compensated for here by using an average of the figures given for the parish in the poor rates of 1581 and 1584. By tallying the numbers of poor rate payers and poor relief recipients for each of the parishes, it is possible to arrive at total 'poor' and 'non-poor' household figures for the town. These figures can be further broken down into estimates of the total number of 'ordinary poor' and 'relief-dependent' households.

Much debate has surrounded the process of converting early modern households into 'real' population figures. This is mainly the result of the significant variations that have been found for mean household sizes across socio-economic groups and geographic areas.[32] The best approach to conversion here is to use two multipliers: 1) a mean 'poor' household size calculated for each parish based on the town's poor census which was taken in 1597 and 2) a multiplier of 5.2 which is an established mean household size figure for urban poor rate payers.[33] Using the described approach the result of converting the related households in 1590 is shown below in Figure 3.7. The resulting percentages for the socio-economic distribution of households in Ipswich in 1590 are 41.1 per cent for rate payers (all the 'non-poor'), 53.5 per cent for the 'ordinary poor' (i.e. solvent non-rate payers) and 5.4 per cent for the 'relief-dependent' poor (i.e. those who received regular poor relief). This suggests that overall 58.9 per cent of the town's population was broadly considered 'poor' at this time. Although that is a slightly higher poor population than the 55 per cent suggested by the first method, these figures fit well with the general outline of economic distribution across 1570-1620.

[32] For a useful overview of established mean household sizes across the sixteenth century, see Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 31. Jeremy Boulton also discusses fluctuations of mean household size, especially in relation to London and other urban areas in Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 122-4. See also a more detailed discussion of this issue in Chapter Four.

[33] See Chapter Five for a thorough discussion of the poor census taken in Ipswich in 1597. Also, for the household multiplier for urban poor rate payers see Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, p. 124.

FIGURE 3.7: SOCIO-ECONOMIC DISTRIBUTION OF HOUSEHOLDS IN AUGUST, 1590

Parish	Rated (Non-Poor) Households	Relief-Dependent Households	Combined Total Households	Rated (Non-Poor) Population	Relief-Dependent Population	Combined Population
St. Clement	56	4	60	291	12	303
St. Mary Tower	41	3	44	213	6	219
St. Margaret	44	14	58	229	49	278
St. Laurence	40	2	42	208	3	211
St. Peter	35	17	52	182	59	241
St. Nicholas	31	8	39	161	26	187
St. Matthew	29	10	39	151	38	189
St. Mary Quay	28	0	28	146	0	146
St Mary Stoke	20	3	23	104	11	115
St. Stephen	18	2	20	94	7	101
St. Helen	11	9	20	57	31	89
St. Mary at Elm	11	1	12	57	4	61
All Parishes	364	73	437	1893	247	2140
Estimated Percentage of Population				41.1%	5.4%	46.5%
Estimated Population of 'Ordinary Poor' (Not rated and not on relief)						2460
Estimated Population Percentage of the 'Ordinary Poor'						53.5%
Total Estimated Population Percentage of the Poor Overall (Ordinary and Relief Dependent)						**58.9%**

All percentages are based on a reduced population estimate of 4,600 derived from the figure of 5,000 in 1603 and the demographic trends of the time.
Data for St Mary Stoke is based on average of rate payers and those in receipt of relief between 1580 and 1584.

Additionally, a similar percentage of poor rate payers between 1581 and 1590 has been calculated for Colchester by Richard Dean Smith. According to Smith the rate payers there constituted 40.4 per cent, which implies a poor population of 59.6 per cent.[34] The consistent results provided by both methods, as well as the similarities found with other urban areas in the period suggests the validity of the findings as well as the utility of both the sources and methodologies.

Having ascertained that the majority of the population of Ipswich at any given time in this period was broadly considered to be 'poor' according to these criteria, and that the vast majority of the poor were not in receipt of relief, it is important to understand how demographic change affected the poor in a general sense between 1570 and 1620. The data from the parish registers and the basic family reconstitution from St Nicholas provide much insight into this topic. It is clear from the family reconstitution that at all points during this period the poor population was more changeable than its middling and urban elite counterparts. During both crisis and growth periods, the number of poor households which

[34] Smith, *Middling Sort*, pp. 23-4.

were ‘lost’ exceeded their relative population percentage. For example, out of the 11 households that dropped off the parish register in 1571, 7 (or 64 per cent) were broadly poor. Similar figures can be calculated for the growth period 1587-94 when the parish lost 14 households, 12 of which were poor (86 per cent). Periods of demographic strain and crisis witnessed a dramatic rise in the total number of households lost across socio-economic divides. Between 1595 and 1605, 42 out of the total of 54 households which fell off the parish register were poor, and the remainder comprised 10 middling and 2 elite households. All of these figures suggest that poor households disproportionately disappeared from parish registers. It may be that this was the result of mobility by choice during growth periods or periods of intense employment regulation, and susceptibility to epidemics and hardship migration during crises.

Conclusion

It was noted earlier that at the turn of the seventeenth century the town experienced a substantial population turnover, with new households comprising a large portion of the total population. In conclusion, it is worth discussing further how this phenomenon changed the economic distribution of the population. It is significant that in St Nicholas parish 40 poor households were lost between 1598 and 1605 and only 29 new poor households arrived. In contrast, merely 10 middling sort and 2 elite households disappeared, while 21 new middling sort and 6 new elite households arrived. To put it simply, many of those who replaced the lost poor population at this point were in fact of middling wealth or above. This suggests that by 1605 more of the town’s population were financially stable than had been the case before. It seems possible that this population turnover could have been one of the main causes of the dramatic demographic growth directly following the plague of 1603-4. For, as will be shown in the next chapter, those with discretionary income often had more children. Nevertheless, the loss of so many poor families serves to underscore one point

above all: it was the poor in a broad sense who were most susceptible to the effects of social, economic, and demographic change. While a town could easily rebound from periods of crisis, often the poor faced the very real threat that they could not.

CHAPTER FOUR:

Urban Families and Poverty

Defining Households and Families

As is well known, ties of kinship, employment, or patronage connected nearly everyone in early modern England to some type of family group. Yet the term 'family' often meant different things at different times to contemporaries (and particularly those who had means), which generally included the concepts of the family as a household group, an ancestral line, or a circle of kin.[1] It is well established that many contemporaries used the term 'family' to denote all those who lived within a household, such as a husband, wife, children, and in some cases servants, apprentices, and lodgers. This has led historians to argue that the building block of early modern society was the 'household-family', instead of the nuclear family group. As a result, many historians today commonly use the terms 'family' and 'household' interchangeably.[2] Still, it remains unclear whether the notions of 'family' and 'household' were synonymous to those living in poverty at this time and there are benefits to studying a society's nuclear family groups, so this chapter does not follow in that fashion. Certainly, regardless of where poor servants actually lived, it seems unlikely that they ceased to be 'family' members in their natural nuclear family groups once they took on that status in wealthier households, even though the formation of close bonds between masters and servants certainly could and did occur.[3] Evidence from Ipswich throughout the period shows that the social and economic ties between poor parents and

[1] N. Tadmor, 'The Concept of the Household-Family in Eighteenth-Century England', *Past and Present*, 151 (May 1996), p. 139.
[2] Ibid., p. 139; eadem, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage* (Cambridge, 2000).
[3] V. Harding, 'Sons, Apprentices, and Successors: The Transmission of Skills and Work Opportunities in Late Medieval and Early Modern London', in F-E. Eliassen and K. Szende (eds), *Generations in Towns: Succession and Success in Pre-Industrial Urban Societies* (Newcastle, 2009), pp. 153-68.

their offspring usually remained quite strong even after children left the family home.[4] Furthermore, the commentary of wealthy contemporary diarists, such as Samuel Pepys, shows how masters assumed the continuation of those strong nuclear family ties. One example of this can be seen at the height of the plague epidemic in London on 3 May 1666, when only two days after his maid-servant complained of a headache, Samuel Pepys writes:

> Up, to send up and down for a nurse to take the girl *home*, and would have given anything … sent for the girl's mother; she came, and undertakes to get her daughter a lodging and nurse at next door to her, though she dare not for the parish's sake, whose sexton her husband is, have her into her own house.[5]

Such an experience must have been a common reality for servants in the period: after a poor child left their parents' household to enter service or an apprenticeship, their perceived 'home' to their masters — when it mattered — might often have remained where their parents lived. This suggests that the poorer sections of society may well have considered the concept of 'family' to be more connected with bonds of nuclear kinship than a specific place of residence.

In any event, the surviving evidence of the social significance of the early modern 'household-family' is ubiquitous, and at the time was highlighted by a plethora of literature, art, and drama on subjects ranging from marriage and parenting to the proper government of households and families.[6] In its 'well-governed' and idealised form the household unit theoretically provided considerable benefits to all; individuals gained protection and support from one another during periods of social tension, economic strain, or demographic crisis, and a socially recognised figure of patriarchal authority (the 'head of household') enabled contemporary authorities to maintain social order and communal harmony in an efficient manner. How this operated in reality was complex and often failed to reach the idealised norm, however, in view of the important role of the household in English society

[4] This is discussed in detail in Chapter Six.
[5] Emphasis added, *The Diary of Samuel Pepys: 1666*, ed. H. Morley (New York, 1887), pp. 57-8.
[6] M. J. Ingram, 'Family and Household', in A. F. Kinney (ed.), *A Companion to Renaissance Drama* (Oxford, 2002), p. 93; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 193-4.

at this time, it is not surprising that determining its various types, sizes, and compositions has become a frequent starting point for analysis of the early modern social experience.[7] Certainly, 'ideal' households, as broadly defined above, can be found within all social ranks, but generally they have been most studied in relation to the 'middling sort' and above. Even though it is clear that such households existed amongst the poor, historians have often used data from poor relief accounts, censuses, poor relief petitions, and various court depositions to portray poor households in one of two ways; either as small, fractured, and vulnerable units headed by widows, single mothers, and abandoned wives, or as units headed by a husband and wife who (presumably through the combination of poor planning and economic vulnerability) had become suddenly and critically 'overburdened' with children.[8] Whilst records related to poor relief may accurately typecast households of the 'relief-dependent', it remains unclear if these enduring generalisations typify households of the 'ordinary poor', who often lived without receiving official relief. Moreover the primary study of 'households', without a comparable body of work concerning nuclear kinship groups, means that these long-held beliefs potentially do not reflect the actual experiences of poor nuclear families overall. Likewise, straightforward analysis of censuses of the poor only can be taken to describe the household situations of the poorest in a given community. In order to discuss the experience of poor family groups across the full spectrum of poverty in Ipswich, other sources and methods necessarily have been employed. This chapter, then, will discuss how households and families have been studied in the past, and how a new approach to the study of nuclear family groups can expand our understanding of the social experience of early modern poverty and, by implication, enlighten some areas concerning the poor's health, such as through comparisons of their nuclear family sizes, developmental cycles, and rates of childhood deaths.

[7] Archer, *Pursuit of Stability*, pp. 215-18.
[8] Many historians have typified poor households in this way, but in particular see Wales, 'Poverty, Poor Relief and the Life-Cycle', pp. 353, 369; Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 72-8; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 122-31; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 224-6.

Studying Households and Family Groups

In 1972, Peter Laslett published the results of an immense international study concerned with the general trends of household size and family structure across continents and centuries. The overall importance of that work cannot be overstated; at a stroke, Laslett destroyed the general assumptions of modern historians and social scientists who were interested in the make-up of households and families in the distant past, by arguing for the widespread prevalence of nuclear-family households instead of co-habiting extended-family groups. Conversely, however, his calculation of 4.75 as the approximate mean household size (MHS) for all of England between 1574 and 1821, while still often quoted, is of less enduring value.[9] The main drawbacks to this calculation stem from the sources which Laslett used and the extended time period that he studied. Central to the methodology employed by Laslett and his collaborators was the collection and analysis of documents which contain 'reliable recordings of total population and of total number of households'. Using such censuses as a source for household analysis is not, by itself, a cause for concern. However, of the 100 censuses analyzed in the project merely five date from before 1650 and all, except Chester with a population of 3,700 in 1645, reflect total population sizes of under 1,600. This causes two significant concerns: first, that the calculation of an overall MHS for England between 1574 and 1821 is skewed by an overwhelming amount of data from post-1650 sources; and second, that the MHS of 5.073 calculated for the specific period of 1574-1645 is heavily biased towards the experience of households in rural parishes and small towns.[10] Of course, concern over Laslett's figures would be reduced if the MHS calculated for each of the parishes in the restricted period closely resembled his standard mean of 4.75, but the calculated averages of 5.28 for Poole in 1574, 4.75 for Ealing in 1599, 4.05 for Stafford in 1622, 5.30 for Cogenhoe in 1624, and

[9] Laslett, 'England: The Household', pp. 126-32.
[10] Ibid., p. 138.

5.62 for Chester in 1645, range too widely to inspire confidence. Even Laslett notes serious problems with the data when he concedes that the aggregated results gloss over the probability that households were smaller in 1650-1749 than they were in 1750-1821; and more basically when he describes the sample-size of the five sources from before 1650 as 'too small to be of much use.'[11]

Over the past few decades, several revised methodologies and estimates of household size have sprung from the debates surrounding Laslett's seminal work. Issues such as the inability of Laslett's data to reflect important differences in MHS based on economic situation or region have become well established. In response, many historians have turned to analysis of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century censuses or surveys of the poor in order to better reflect variations in household size, particularly within broad social groups. For example, in his analysis of a listing of the poor taken in the rural parish of Cawston (Norfolk) in 1601, Tim Wales has shown how MHS could vary based on social and economic circumstances. There, Wales found that household size fluctuated from 5.0 for poor households on relief to 4.0 for the self-sustaining poor. From this evidence Wales concludes that higher numbers of children (and consequently larger household sizes) caused greater impoverishment among the poor.[12] In contrast, Paul Slack has shown that the MHS of the urban poor often was significantly smaller than 4.75. His study of six censuses of the poor taken between 1557 and 1635 in towns across England makes plain that, in the majority of those towns, the MHS of the poor was 3.0 or less. Even so, Slack's calculations of a MHS of 2.3 in Salisbury in 1635, and 4.5 in Huddersfield in 1622, compels him to point out that 'local variation could be important.'[13] Likewise, Jeremy Boulton's analysis of poor households listed in two London surveys taken in 1618 and 1631 shares similar findings. For the city, Boulton concludes that the MHS of the poor remained fairly static at

[11] Ibid., p. 137.
[12] Wales, 'Poverty, Poor Relief and the Life-Cycle', p. 372.
[13] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 76-7.

3.2 between those decades, and further suggests that it was typical for poor households to be much smaller than wealthier ones, which on average had a household size of 5.2.[14] The disparity of mean household sizes calculated by historians following Laslett's work has caused those such as Nigel Goose, Tom Arkell and Anne Whiteman to call into question the utility of attempting to determine a fixed mean household size for early modern England. Instead they suggest the calculation of a MHS range which better reflects inherent variation. In any event, since the first comprehensive 'census' was not taken in Ipswich until 1695 (well outside of the parameters of this thesis), Laslett's methodology is of limited use for the current study.[15]

More recently, the historiography concerning poor families has witnessed a shift in focus from quantitative analysis to a more qualitative approach. Moving away from the preoccupation with how large or small a poor family was, Steve Hindle's work studies the range of social and political situations faced by the most impoverished groups in early modern society. Similar to this, Patricia Crawford's monograph concerning parenting practices of the poor also eschews numbers.[16] Presumably, such choices are made in order to emphasise the varied nature of people's lives, even when they lived broadly within the same socio-economic group. To be sure, qualitative research is vital because it keeps historians in touch with the singular experiences of actual people during the period. To that point, Crawford insists that 'numbers can be misleading' and ultimately lead historians 'to lose all sense of individual people', as Margaret Spufford also once argued.[17] While it is helpful to be cautionary, polarising rhetoric against either quantitative or qualitative research is a step too far. Certainly, the best works by modern historians usually include elements of both. With that in mind, this thesis breaks away from some current

[14] Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, p. 123.
[15] N. Goose, 'Household Size', pp. 347-85; T. Arkell and A. Whiteman, 'Mean Household Size in Mid-Tudor England: Clackclose Hundred Norfolk', *LPS*, 60 (1998), pp. 20-33; SROI, C/3/10/1/1/1.
[16] Hindle, *On the Parish?*; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*.
[17] Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 10-11; M. Spufford, 'The Cost of Apparel in Seventeenth-Century England, and the Accuracy of Gregory King', *EcHR*, 53/4 (2000), pp. 677-705, 685.

historiographical trends: first, by focusing its study on nuclear family groups as opposed to households, and second, by reconnecting quantitative and qualitative methods in order to explain both the range of experiences of the poor, and the normal experiences of those living in either 'ordinary' or 'relief-dependent' poverty.

But, how does one quantify the families of early modern England without the availability of comprehensive censuses? On balance, the methodologies of family reconstitution (based on parish register data) and life-cycle reconstruction (based on family reconstitution combined with the record linkage of other sources, such as wills and tax records) appear to be two of the most accurate ways to calculate and analyse the size and make-up of most nuclear families groups (i.e. parents, step-parents, and children), and particularly the families of those who held a socio-economic status of 'ordinary poor' or above. Nonetheless, there remain several challenges that come with using data based on these methods. As it has been applied to the study of English sources and in its envisioned form, the purpose of family reconstitution (and another related methodology called 'parish reconstitution') is to study demographic change within a given population. Indeed, those two methods were created to be complementary; with parish reconstitution providing a way to analyse demographic change holistically at a parish or national level, and family reconstitution allowing more focus on 'the range of demographic experience' within a community or region. This emphasis has meant that while the resulting data provides helpful context for all historians, the methodology has been of most use to historical demographers.[18] In contrast, the process of life-cycle reconstruction has been used most often by social historians interested less in demographic change and more in analyzing the punctuated life experiences of particular groups within a community.[19]

[18] Wrigley, Davis, Oeppen, and Schofield, *English Population History*, pp. 3-17; and Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, pp. 1-12.
[19] Some examples of this can be found in Newman-Brown, 'The Receipt of Poor Relief', pp. 405-22; P. Sharpe, 'Total Reconstitution: A Tool for Class Specific Study?', *LPS*, 16 (1991), pp. 41-77; and S. King, *Poverty and Welfare in England 1700-1850: A Regional Perspective* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 111-41.

Both family reconstitution and life-cycle reconstruction are subject to certain biases. Although the benefits and challenges inherent to these methodologies have been thoroughly discussed by many historians, Steve King's article, 'Historical Demography, Life Cycle Reconstruction and Family Reconstitution', most effectively addresses most of each method's strengths and weaknesses.[20] Perhaps the greatest strengths of family reconstitution are its 'strict rules of linkage, problem resolution, and observation.' By only recognizing 'completed life-cycles' (when a person named at marriage can be traced back to their baptism and forward to their burial), the goal of family reconstitution is primarily to create 'small, ostensibly "pure", demographic datasets.'[21] Even though it may be true that the emphasis on ensuring the inclusion of only 'pure' data causes historians to be, as King argues, 'blinded by the apparent science of family reconstitution', the use of a clear method that minimizes the chance of including large amounts of flawed data must be considered a core strength. Be that as it may, King rightly points to serious limitations which plague family reconstitution. Most significantly, the restriction of data to include only completed life-cycles necessarily means that only the least mobile section of a community will be analysed.[22] Similarly, the nature of the sources dictates that the data cannot include life-cycles of those who for many reasons may never have registered events (such as servants, apprentices, squatters, single persons, etc). Also, since the poor comprise some of the most migratory sections of communities, 'pure' family reconstitution can be biased by a disproportionate amount of data from wealthier and more geographically stable families.

Patricia Crawford's recent arguments against family reconstitution, while reiterating many of King's points, are even more damning. She insists that poor families often were unstable, migrating for work, unable to afford marriage, and living and breeding in unions that were illegitimate in the eyes of the English church. Because of this Crawford argues

[20] S. King, 'Historical Demography, Life Cycle Reconstruction and Family Reconstitution: New Perspectives', *History and Computing*, 8/2 (1996), pp. 62-77.
[21] Ibid., p. 63.
[22] Ibid., p. 64.

that often the poor cannot be found within the parish registers.[23] This seems to be an extremely cynical view of the scope of destitution experienced by the poor at this time. Although it is true that family reconstitution cannot capture the unsettled poor or those who had illegitimate unions, the number of poor who lived in such a state were relatively few when compared to the overall number of the settled and legitimate poor. That said, perhaps this problem is of most concern to those focused on the experiences of the relief-dependent, vagrant poor, criminals, or those concerned with periods later than this study. Crawford's own work primarily stems from poor relief accounts and London's Old Bailey court records, much of which dates from the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Since London's population comprised more migrant and relief-dependent poor than any other region, this could explain why her evidence seems skewed towards the experiences of those two extraordinary groups.[24] In contrast, King notes that in many areas the 'labouring poor' were more geographically stable than those in the groups below them.[25] Because this thesis is mainly concerned with the experiences of the 'ordinary poor' — the poor who were most numerous in early modern society — Crawford's concerns do not seem to be generally applicable. Finally, King further criticizes the inability of family reconstitution to distinguish between two parish inhabitants with the same name when one registered all events and the other did not. This, he argues, leads to skewed findings that the incorporation of data from other sources through record linkage would help to minimize.[26] Therein lies the underlying point of King's argument: what family reconstitution can do life-cycle reconstruction can do better.

Overall, King makes a persuasive case for the superiority of the methods of life-cycle reconstruction over those of family reconstitution. He suggests that whereas family

[23] Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 10-11.
[24] Ibid., pp. 1-29.
[25] King, 'Historical Demography', p. 65. See Chapter One for a discussion of the problems with using the term 'labouring poor' as a general descriptor for the poor in this period.
[26] Ibid., p. 66.

reconstitution summarily discards 'incomplete' people, life-cycle reconstruction seeks to 'complete' them. By compiling data from other sources (such as wills, tax records, life histories, poor accounts, depositions, etc.) and linking it to one parish's registers, King shows how life-cycle reconstruction effectively catches more individuals in its dataset than family reconstitution for the same parish.[27] In turn, this means that full life-cycle reconstruction is better suited than family reconstitution for the historian who wants to capture the data of at least some of the migratory population in a given community. Life-cycle reconstruction also helps to mitigate the problem of tracing women who remarry, who, as Crawford has argued, often cannot be traced by simple family reconstitution.[28]

While there are many merits in full life-cycle reconstruction, some drawbacks must be mentioned. As King notes, the inclusion of source material written for different purposes and by numerous scribes increases the probability of misinterpretation of context and content when linking the sources together. This is most noticeable when one document may refer to someone as 'Widow' or 'Mr' and their surname while in another they may be denoted simply by their forename and surname.[29] Challenges such as this are difficult, but can be overcome to some degree with sensitive and careful use of the available sources. More daunting specifically for urban social historians is the vast amount of source material required to perform a full life-cycle reconstruction of inhabitants within a town. It may be true that 'the technical difficulty of the multiple-source record linkage which underlies life-cycle reconstruction has been somewhat overstated', but performing a full life-cycle reconstruction on a town such as Ipswich still would be a feat of several years.[30]

[27] Ibid., pp. 74-5.
[28] Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, p. 11.
[29] King, 'Historical Demography', p. 63.
[30] Ibid., p. 62.

Compiling the Raw Dataset

In view of the constraints imposed by the volume of sources generated by the inhabitants of early modern Ipswich and after close consideration of the purposes, strengths and weaknesses of family reconstitution and life-cycle reconstruction, a tailored methodology has been created to locate and analyse the size, composition, and experience of poor families in comparison with those of other social-economic groups. Since the nature of the sources often dictated choices of method, the following discussion will outline the sources used and the methodological steps taken in conjunction. It is hoped that this description will enable other historians to perform analysis on similar urban areas with comparable sources. First, as the purpose of the method was primarily to analyze the composition and economic categories of families and not demographic trends, a wide range of sources was collected that would provide as much of the information as possible to reconstruct the existing families of the period. These sources included parish registers, church rates, rates to raise the town preacher's annual wages, poor rates, poor relief accounts and frankpledge listings. Initially, these sources were chosen because of the data that they contained and the period which they covered. The criterion for selection was that each source had to include at least one of the following types of information: names and vital events (births, deaths and marriages) of conjugal family members (husband/father, wife/mother and children); names of servants and apprentices attached to conjugal families; names of household heads; rate assessments paid; poor relief payments received.

Following the methodologies of both family reconstitution and life-cycle reconstruction, the registers from ten of the twelve parishes in Ipswich comprise the core

dataset to which all other sources have been linked.[31] Even though the dates of this study are 1570-1620, information from the registers was collected for the slightly extended period of 1560-1620. This was done in order to capture families which may have existed throughout the period, but happened to be 'created' (by a marriage entry in the register) shortly before the period of study began. All of the entries from the ten parishes (including those that were either partially or fully illegible, but clearly represented an event) were then transcribed and entered into a Microsoft Access database that had been developed specifically for this study. This resulted in a massive list of 17,215 events that outlined full names, familial connections and vital life-cycle events for the majority of the town's inhabitants. Occasionally, burial registrations also provided information on socio-economic connections and status. Such was the case in 1570 when one John Caterson was noted as being 'servant with John Smyth a smyth by occupation', or in 1610 when John Clement was recorded as 'a poore sadler.'[32] This kind of 'bonus' information was also entered into the database so that it could be included in the overall reconstruction analysis.

In order to successfully link multiple-source records to specific families, a core set of households had to be painstakingly reconstituted. Therefore, the fruitfulness of this entire endeavor rested predominantly on the ability to determine a head of household for nearly all of the events contained in the parish registers. For the vast majority this was a straightforward process. Registered baptisms were perhaps the easiest to determine because most entries name the child's father who then was assumed to be the head of the household. The only exception to this occurred when children were born out of wedlock. In those

[31] Full reliable registers for this period exist for the parishes of St Margaret SROI, FB93/D2/1-2 (1537-1717); St Clement SROI, FB98/D1/1 (1563-1667); St Nicholas SROI, FB94/D1/1 (1539-1710); St Lawrence SROI, FB106/D2/1 (1539-1663); St Matthew SROI, FB95/D1/1 (1559-1701); St Mary Elms SROI, FB104/D1/1 (1554-1652); and St Mary Stoke SROI, FB92/D1/1 (1563-1669). The register for St Stephen reliably covers all events in the majority of the period SROI, FB107/D2/1 (1584-1679). Reliable entries can be found in the registers of St Mary at Quay SROI, FB100/D1/1 for baptisms (1559-1653), burials (1559-1600, 1605-7, 1628-29), however the pages containing marriages were 'torn away' at some point in the past. Only baptisms exist for St Mary Tower until 1615 after which burials and marriages are also recorded SROI, FB91/D1/1 (1538-1684).

[32] SROI, FB93/D2/1, fol. xx; SROI, FB107/D2/1, fol. xvii.

circumstances, either the mother was taken to be the head of household or, if she clearly belonged to a household at the time of baptism, the head of her household (normally her father) was taken to be that of her child's. At marriage a named husband was always assumed to be the head of his household. The majority of burial events related to wives and children whose head of household was inferred to be that of the listed husband or father. Overall, determining the head of household was the most difficult for burial entries for adult males because they often provide only the deceased's name and date of burial. As in the examples of John Smyth and John Clement, noted above, in some cases contextual information can be used to establish whether each man headed their own household. When such data was missing the deceased's surname was assumed to be the same as his head of household's, however the forename of the head of household was left blank. As a result, the database reflected the general grouping of families which the deceased may have belonged to, but not their specific household. Further analysis of these problematic entries was then left to be done after the forenames and surnames of household heads had been standardized and the data had been linked to information from the other sources.

Despite the fact that data from ten of the twelve parish registers was entered into the database for analysis, the core number of households was not generated from all of these parishes. The population of Ipswich was highly migratory – many moved not only in and out of the town, but also within the town from one parish to another. Regularly, inhabitants held simultaneous affiliations to several parishes. This occurred most often through marriage to someone from another parish, but also as the result of the occupation or ownership of property in more than one jurisdiction, or membership of the town's corporate body (which was customarily linked to St Mary Tower parish). Even if someone was officially tied to only one parish that did not mean that their home parish registered all of their family's vital events. The registers indicate that occasionally people strayed to neighbouring parishes for the baptisms of children, perhaps for religious reasons or because

their own parish minister was unavailable at the time. For these reasons it became clear that the database needed to include the register entries of all of the ten parishes despite the fact that only a portion would be used to establish existing households. By doing this, the resulting household groupings would be most likely to catch vital events registered outside of a family's home parish. This also increased the likelihood of being able to follow a family if it moved from one parish to another.

To ensure that the core source material used to create family groups met the high standard necessary for valid results, only households that were established in parishes with registers deemed to be reliable by Wrigley and Schofield were considered for this study. The only exception to this is the parish of St Margaret. This parish was not included in Wrigley and Schofield's study, but has been included as a reliable parish here because the registers for the period 1560-1620 are consistent, though they are defective later. On the other hand, although Wrigley and Schofield analysed the parish of St Peter in Ipswich, these registers do not begin until 1657 and so are too late to use for this study.[33] Overall, only households originating from the eight parishes of St Matthew, St Clement, St Margaret, St Lawrence, St Mary Elms, St Nicholas, St Stephen and St Mary Stoke comprise those used to count family size here. Data from the remaining two parishes, St Mary Tower and St Mary Quay have been used in the ancillary way described above. After the entries from the parish registers had been compiled and the names of the head of households had been standardized they were then sorted into an Access report by the head of household's surname, forename and the dates of events. This created an alphabetical listing of the head of households with a chronological sub-listing of events attached to each one.

Once that report had been created, data from several types of parish rates, poor relief accounts, and accounts of the town's poor relief institutions was compiled into a separate Access table. The sources for this data included poor rates, church rates, rates to

[33] Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 488.

raise the town preacher's annual wages, listings of poor relief payments, and admissions to the Tooley Foundation and Christ's Hospital. While these records survive in a variety of combinations and dates for each parish, when analysed together they provide a wealth of economic information for the majority of the families in Ipswich during this period.[34] The key data retrieved from these records included the names of those paying rates and/or receiving poor relief and the monetary amount related to each rate or relief payment. All named rate payers and poor relief recipients were assumed to be the head of their household unless the source expressly stated otherwise. Such was the case in 1583 when a payment was made 'to Scottes wife for Sylvester and Bramfords children'.[35] In that instance Robert Scott was noted as the head of household because his wife received several payments from various parishes for keeping poor children. The resulting list of households who paid rates or received relief was then combined with the list of families generated from the parish registers and a second wave of name standardization was performed. This step was crucial

[34] Unless otherwise stated, all church rates, poor rates, rates to raise the town preacher's wages and poor relief lists can be found in SROI, C/3/2/2/2. Details of the sources analysed by parish are as follows: St Nicholas – church rates from 1572, 1599, 1604, 1609 and 1613, one rate for the preacher's wages from 1577, poor rates from 1574, 1578, 1581, 1583, 1590, 1609 and 1613, poor relief payments from 1574, 1578, 1583, 1590, 1609 and 1613 (the poor rate receipts and relief payments from 1609 and 1613 can be found in the accounts of the overseers of the poor in St Nicholas SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1); St Matthew – one church rate from 1572, rates for the preachers wages from 1577 and 1585, poor rates from 1574, 1581 and 1590, poor relief payments from 1574, 1583 and 1590; St Lawrence – church rates from 1572 and 1608, rates for the preacher's wages from 1577 and 1585, poor rates from 1574, 1581, 1590, 1598, 1608 and 1613, poor relief payments from 1581, 1590, 1598, 1608 and 1613 (poor rate receipts and payments from 1599-1613 can be found in the accounts of the overseers of the poor in St Lawrence SROI, C/5/3/2/2/1); St Clement – rates for the preacher's wages from 1577 and 1586, poor rates from 1574, 1581 and 1590, and poor relief payments from 1574, 1581 and 1590; St Mary Elms – one church rate from 1606, rates for the preacher's wages from 1577 and 1586, and poor rates and relief payments from 1574, 1583 and 1590; St Stephen – rates for the preacher's wages from 1577 and 1586, and both poor rates and relief payments from 1574, 1581, 1590 and 1614 (the last year of which can be found in the St Stephen Parish Book, 1613-1711 SROI, FB107/A1/1); St Margaret – rates for the preacher's wages from 1577 and 1586, poor rates from 1574, 1583 and 1590, and poor relief payments from 1579, 1583 and 1590; St Mary Stoke – one poor rate and one relief list from 1581; St Mary Tower – church rates from 1572, 1578, 1608 and 1614, rates for the preacher's wages from 1577 and 1585, and poor rate payments and relief lists from 1574, 1583 and 1590; and St Mary Quay – church rates from 1573 and 1578, rates for the preacher's wages from 1577 and 1586, and poor rates from 1574, 1581 and 1590; Admissions to the Tooley Foundation and Christ's Hospital are found in SROI, C/5/1/1/3/1 (Register of Admissions to the Tooley Foundation 1569-1597). The Tooley Foundation and Christ's Hospital were the two largest poor relief institutions in Ipswich. Tooley's was established to provide relief to many of the 'deserving' destitute poor of the town, while Christ's Hospital was created to house and provide for orphans, and provide work and 'correction' to the 'undeserving' destitute poor. See Chapters Two and Six for more detail on these institutions.

[35] This quote is from a relief payment made in St Mary Elms parish in 1583. SROI, C/3/2/2/2.

because, as was illustrated in Chapter Three, in Ipswich the payments given in parish-based rate and relief lists are an excellent source to determine a household's specific socio-economic rank. As a result, this body of additional data made it possible to determine a family's general economic status and enabled comparison of family attributes and experiences between socio-economic groups.

After these steps had been completed three problems still remained. First, there was no concrete way to guard against counting 'inflated households' which could be caused by the existence of two similarly named household heads resident in the town at the same time; secondly, none of the sources so far mentioned included a reliable listing of the servants and apprentices attached to each family; finally, in most instances, there was no way to know at what point children moved out of their parents' homes for service or other activities. Fortunately, the views of frankpledge taken in the four town wards (encompassing all of the town's parishes) between 1565 and 1597 provide solid solutions to most of these problems.[36] The views of frankpledge provide a comprehensive listing of all the male inhabitants 12 years or older. Crucially, the records analysed here are lists of all those men who *should* have appeared at the frankpledge viewings and not simply those that came; those who appeared were noted with an 'a' and those who did not were either assessed a fine (written next to their names) or noted as deceased. As a result, the views of frankpledge seem to enable reliable detection of all male inhabitants over the age of 12 as well as two similarly named heads of households. Even so, if both heads actively had children at the same time it remained difficult to assign family and household members accurately to each head. Occasionally, this kind of family extraction can be done if each household was relatively small, their wives had different forenames, or they consistently

[36] The view of frankpledge was an ancient institution of justice and law-enforcement that subsequently became attached to the manorial court system. The views were held annually and their purpose by this time was primarily to encourage social policing and to ensure that all male inhabitants over the age of 12 swore publicly not to engage in (or support) illicit behaviour. P. R. Schofield, 'The Late Medieval View of Frankpledge and the Tithing System: An Essex Case Study', in Z. Razi and R. Smith (eds), *Medieval Society and the Manor Court* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 408-49; SROI, C/2/8/3/2 (Records of the View of Frankpledge).

registered vital events in different parishes. Nevertheless, often these families had to be excluded from the final dataset used to analyse family size and composition. Perhaps of even greater import is that prior to 1574 the views of frankpledge differentiated between 'masters' and 'servants' and clearly grouped them by household — linking masters and servants together by direct lines. This meant that entering the data given in the view of frankpledge for 1573 into a new table in Access yielded a comprehensive listing of the majority of male servants and apprentices attached to specific household heads. Notably, this list captures neither female servants and apprentices nor those who were male and under the age of twelve, though this gap in data probably would affect analysis of the households of the 'middling sort' and above more so than those of the poor.[37] Combining this list with one containing both the parish register and rate/relief data, and performing a final standardisation of household head forenames and surnames, generated the final comprehensive raw dataset including 21,782 entries. This data was then used to establish, count and analyse the poor families in Ipswich between 1570 and 1620.

The difference (or lack thereof) between 'household' and 'family' lies at the heart of the final issue which still troubles this dataset; for the majority of the period studied there is no concrete way to determine when most children left their parents' homes. The town's census of the poor from 1597 is the only source available which provides reliably complete 'household' information. As discussed in detail in Chapter Six, this source indicates that whereas most poor boys left home for apprenticeship or service between the ages of seven and thirteen years old, poor girls usually did not leave until they were over the age of thirteen.[38] As suggestive as this data is, it is still relevant to only a small portion of all the town's families. The view of frankpledge from 1573 only lists male servants over the age of 12 so it cannot be taken to provide complete household data for families with servants at

[37] Comprehensive censuses, such as the one taken in Ealing in 1599, show that there were few female servants and apprentices listed in the households of tradesmen or other 'labouring' sections of society. K. J. Allison, 'An Elizabethan Village "Census"', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 36 (1963), pp. 91-103.
[38] See Chapter Six.

that time. Consequently, as has been mentioned, it is the nuclear family group — instead of the household — that is the focus of this chapter. This shift in approach will uncover how socio-economic factors may have influenced the size, growth and composition of nuclear families and whether the impact of these factors changed over time.

Counting Families

The aims of analysing the reconstituted data hinged on the ability to count various elements within a family unit accurately. As a result, before counting could begin the raw dataset established in the steps above needed to be pruned of families which had noticeably incomplete, suspicious, or problematic entries. Criteria were set which the family data had to meet in order for it to be included in this project's final analysis. Firstly, the data needed to capture the likely 'beginning' of the family. Families with registered marriage entries from one of the parishes immediately fit this criterion. Other families without known registered marriages were also included if at least one of the following applied to them: source documentation before baptisms began (i.e. a rate payment entry); they had children named after the parents or grandparents within the first few baptisms; or they were included on the poor census of 1597 (which includes age information for both parents and children). Secondly, the data had to clearly pertain to one family group. As noted above, where similarly named heads of households existed and the entries could not be clearly assigned then all related data was disregarded. Thirdly, gaps in family data needed to appear reasonable. It was assumed that some families may have been childless or had few children, and that as parents aged the frequency of births would decrease.[39] These families were included as long as there was supporting evidence to suggest that the family remained in the town for the duration. The only exceptions to this were the families of many of the town's wealthier burgesses and the few apparent local gentry. In several cases these families had

[39] Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, pp. 254-63.

consistent entries for rate payments but few, if any, registered vital events. Some of these urban authorities, like Thomas Eldred, mariner and merchant, may have not had any children. Yet others like Robert Barker, Edward Gooding, and William Acton may have been among the many urban authorities in the town who held religiously radical beliefs.[40] If so, this may have led to the under-registration of their children's' births. In contrast, the local gentry, such as Sir Henry Seckford and Edward Grimston held lands and estates outside of the town's parishes and registered events only occasionally. Presumably, this was done to underscore their social and political ties to the town.[41] For such reasons patchy and suspicious data of this kind was also discarded. Finally, men and women were only counted as 'single' if they were noted as such in their burial record or if other factors (such as lifelong mental illness) indicated that marriage or being in service would have been unlikely. After applying these criteria to the raw dataset, 793 families comprising 11,501 entries remained. It is this data that forms the core source for social and economic analysis of the town's inhabitants for the remainder of this chapter.

The Importance of Mean Natural Nuclear Family Size

With the wealth of research that has been done on household size and related methodologies, it is surprising that early modern social historians have given so little attention to the possible changes in the size and structure of natural nuclear family groups over time. For decades, demographic historians like Wrigley and Schofield have been using family reconstitution data to look at broad societal changes such as those affecting family

[40] The religious climate of the town and the general leanings of urban authorities is discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

[41] J. M. Blatchly, 'Eldred, Thomas (1561–1624)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Jan. 2008), http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/8616 (19 April, 2013); S. M. Maxwell, 'Seckford, Sir Henry (*d.* 1610)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, Jan. 2008), http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/61385 (19 April 2013); C. S. L. Davies, 'Grimston, Edward (1507/8–1600)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford, May 2008), http://ezproxy.ouls.ox.ac.uk:2117/view/article/11638 (19 April 2013). Also, by providing such things as social hospitality and symbolic freedom of the town, authorities in Ipswich often tried to create a space within urban culture that allowed involvement of the local gentry even though they were not residents of the town. See Chapter Two and Patterson, *Urban Patronage*, pp. 19, 71, 85.

fertility, nuptiality, and the effects of wage fluctuations on vital family events.[42] Hence it is well known that the population of England grew substantially between 1540 and 1640 and fertility rates peaked in the 1570s and early 1600s. Yet we know very little about how such trends may have changed the composition of natural nuclear families and thereby influenced social activity from generation to generation.[43] This lack of context can cause historians to overlook the possible effects of natural generational shifts when comparing sources that contain households from different decades, but within the same era.

By focusing their efforts predominantly on analysing static households, social historians often have missed answering many critical questions. For example, Laslett's study champions the prevalence of nuclear families in pre-industrial England, but fails to categorise the various types of nuclear families found. Similarly, Slack's study emphasises a wide gap between the size of wealthier and poorer households, but remains silent on potential gaps between nuclear family size based on socio-economic status. By studying the natural nuclear family (parents, children, half-siblings, and step-parents) instead of simply the actual household (all those living together in a domestic unit) the remainder of this chapter begins to answer some of these key questions: What types of nuclear families existed and in what proportions within the population? What was the typical size and developmental cycle of a nuclear family? How often did the socio-economic standing of nuclear families change both within and between generations? Did socio-economic standing significantly affect the type, size, or developmental cycles of nuclear families? Did socio-economic standing influence health as implied by the sizes of nuclear families and their rates of childhood deaths? And finally, does this evidence support current generalisations concerning early modern poverty, or must new impressions be formed?

[42] Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, pp. 254-63, 417-21.
[43] Ibid., pp. 161-2, 231.

Types of Nuclear Families and Duration in the Historical Record

Generally, the 793 nuclear family groups in this study can be categorized into one of four categories: simple, complex, childless, and ephemeral families. Additionally, singletons were separated into groups by gender as single males, or single females. 'Simple' families have been defined as those where the husband and wife had only one spouse and at least one child. In contrast, 'complex' families were those where at least one of the marriage partners had more than one husband or wife and also had at least one child from any marriage. 'Childless' families were distinct because no children had come from any marriage. The death of a spouse within two years of marriage and the subsequent disappearance of the family from the historical record made families 'ephemeral'. Finally, men and women were counted 'single males' and 'single females' if they had been specifically noted as such in the records. Whilst counting the numbers of each type of family, the duration of each family in the records was also noted. This was done in order to see whether or not the distribution of family types was affected by the number of years they were present in the sources. The combination of this data is represented in Figure 4.1.

FIGURE 4.1: NUCLEAR FAMILY TYPES GROUPED BY DURATION IN THE RECORDS

Family Type	0-10 Yrs.	%	11-20 Yrs.	%	21-30 Yrs.	%	31-60 Yrs.	%	Total	Overall %
Simple	166	63.60%	174	64.44%	91	59.09%	59	54.63%	490	61.79%
Complex	36	13.79%	65	24.07%	43	27.92%	40	37.04%	184	23.20%
Childless	14	5.36%	11	4.07%	8	5.19%			33	4.16%
Ephemeral[1]	16	6.13%							16	2.02%
Single male	11	4.21%	2	0.74%	1	0.65%	1	0.93%	15	1.89%
Single female	9	3.45%			2	1.30%			11	1.39%
ND[2]	9	3.45%	18	6.67%	9	5.84%	8	7.41%	44	5.55%
Total	261	100.00%	270	100.00%	154	100.00%	108	100.00%	793	100.00%

[1] Ephemeral families are defined by their short duration in the records. Still, they are included to show the total family type data.

[2] In all tables 'ND' means that sufficient data was not available for these families.

Predictably, the vast majority of families in Ipswich were either simple or complex. With an overall total of nearly 62 per cent, simple families dominated the family types reflected in the sources. Even so, because 261 out of 793 families (nearly 33 per cent) can be traced

in the records for only 10 years or less the results seem skewed towards younger families which were more likely to be simple in form. Regardless of this bias, since the percentage of simple families never fell below roughly 55 per cent — even in families traced over several decades — one must underline the dominance of this family type in early modern society. Furthermore, this suggests that despite the apparently precarious nature of early modern life, at least half of all families in Ipswich included original marriage partners who survived together into old age.

Even though simple families were ubiquitous, the town's significant contingent of complex families cannot be ignored. Similar to the findings of Wrigley and Schofield, the spread of these results shows the infrequency of remarriage within the first 10 years of family formation (14 per cent).[44] Interestingly, remarriage jumps 10 percentage points (from 14 to 24 per cent) between 11 and 20 years of family tracking and then jumps again nearly 10 percent (from 28 to 37 per cent) after 30 years. These spikes in remarriage could have several interpretations. First, it could suggest that adults were more likely to perish within the second and final decades of family formation. If, as Wrigley and Schofield assert, the average age at first marriage for the period is assumed to be 28 for men and 26 for women then the potentially most fatal periods for adults were at early middle age (36-48 years) and then towards the end of natural life expectancy (56-88 years).[45] It is tempting to think that this might be explained by an increase in female mortality as a result of child-bearing later in life (36-48 years) and an increase in overall mortality as couples approached old age. Further research into possible gender differences in mortality during these years could shed a great deal of light on this subject.[46] On the other hand, such spikes

[44] As quoted in H. Berry and E. Foyster (eds), *The Family in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2007), Introduction, pp. 1-17.
[45] Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 255.
[46] Remarriage intervals have been analysed as they relate to the age of men and women at the time of widowhood. Even so, these results are based on data solely of widows and widowers who remarried and not widows and widowers overall. That research suggests that the greatest number of widows and widowers remarried between the ages of 30 and 39. Wrigley, Davis, Oeppen and Schofield, *Family Reconstitution*, p. 172.

in remarriage may not reflect the age of actual mortality, but the times at which widows and widowers were most likely to remarry. Jeremy Boulton has found that in seventeenth-century London men often were spurred to remarry after their wives had died and either left them with young children or bedridden in old age.[47] The evidence of spikes in remarriage during the second and later decades of family life could suggest that this was the case in Ipswich as well. Alternatively, these spikes could indicate a reluctance of widows and widowers to remarry during a period when they had older children who had not yet left the household.

Regardless of why and when remarriage happened, the data from Ipswich shows that at least 37 per cent and perhaps over 40 per cent of all families contained parents who had experienced the loss of a spouse *and remarried* by the age of 60.[48] This is a striking figure as it means that more than one in three families experienced some combination of step-parent, step-child, step-sibling, and half-sibling relationships. As Amy Erickson once noted, the frequency in occurrence during the period and the enduring social experience of step-family relationships today necessitates the need for more targeted research.[49] The several additional families that included a widow or widower who chose not to remarry have remained categorised as simple families. Even so, it seems likely that their numbers were at least 5 to 10 per cent of the total figure of simple families captured in Figure 4.1. The addition of these figures to those of the widows and widowers that remarried supports Alan Macfarlane's suggestion that nearly 50 percent of married adults had lost their spouse

[47] Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, p. 131. It should also be noted that numbers of dependent children may have had little effect on marriage intervals of widowers, but had profound effects on marriage intervals for widows. See Wrigley, Davis, Oeppen and Schofield, *Family Reconstitution*, pp.181-2.
[48] It is probable that many of the uncategorized families in this study (7.41 per cent) were complex in nature; adding even half of these families to the counted complex families pushes their figure over 40 per cent.
[49] Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 199. The Barna Group has recently released the results of a large study concerning the prevalence of divorce in America. It should be noted that this group does have religious ties which could create bias, however the results seem to be treated in an even-handed way. By conducting phone interviews with over 3,000 people of different social, cultural and economic backgrounds they found that 33 per cent of Americans in 2008 had been married and divorced at least one time. This suggests that the percentage of the population that experienced the step-family dynamic in early modern England was possibly even greater than today's. Barna Group, 'New Marriage and Divorce Statistics Released' http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released (1 December, 2010).

by the age of 60. [50] Clearly, the loss of a spouse and early loss of a parent was experienced by a large portion of the population. That coupled with high levels of remarriage must have created punctuated effects on both parents and children as they experienced certain phases of their life-cycle. It seems almost certain that this phenomenon helped to spur many parents to plan quite carefully for their children's future in order to mitigate the negative effects that such an occurrence could have.[51]

Only small contingents of the families in Ipswich fell into the remaining family categories which suggests the overall rarity of these types. Childless families were the most numerous of these small groups, between 4 and 5 per cent of all families falling into this category at any one time. Ephemeral families represented roughly 2 per cent of the total families in Figure 4.1, which highlights the infrequency of marriages that ended by the early death of a spouse. Although the total number of ephemeral families is too small to support significant conclusions, some suggestive trends may be found. As Figure 4.2 illustrates marriages seem to have been at least twice as likely to be ephemeral between 1610 and 1620 than they had been in any previous decade.

FIGURE 4.2: NUMBER OF EPHEMERAL FAMILIES BY DECADE

	1560-69	1570-79	1580-89	1590-99	1600-09	1610-20	Total
# of Fam	2	0	2	3	3	6	16

Interestingly, ephemeral marriages also do not seem to cluster around periods of mortality crisis. For example, only one ephemeral marriage is noted during the plague year of 1603. Other factors must have been at work to create such a spike in ephemeral marriages. One possibility is that this spike reflected an overall jump in the numbers of inhabitants that were of age to marry. Demographic analysis of Ipswich from Chapter Three highlighted the combination of high numbers of baptisms and low numbers of burials in the 1570s and

[50] A. Macfarlane, *Marriage and Love in England: Modes of Reproduction, 1300-1840* (Oxford, 1986), p. 231.
[51] See Chapter Six.

80s.[52] It is interesting to note that increases in ephemeral marriages happened during the decades approximately when these 'baby boom' children would have hit marrying age.[53] Still, the total number of ephemeral marriages are extremely small so apparent fluctuations may not be significant.

Likewise the fragmented data found for the remaining categories of single men and single women makes meaningful analysis difficult. Only one parish (St Margaret) systematically recorded the marital status of single men and women at burial, therefore the results in Figure 4.1 skew the percentage of singletons (a little over 3 per cent) far too low. Indeed, Wrigley and Schofield have shown that between 1596 and 1616 those never marrying probably comprised between 4 and 8 per cent of those who reached the age of 40 to 44.[54] Moreover, Amy Froide has found that in urban areas perhaps a third of all early modern adult women were single at any given time.[55] Although the evidence for Ipswich may be sparse, analysis of the grouping of burials for single men and single women during specific decades (Figure 4.3) offers some suggestive data.

FIGURE 4.3: NUMBER OF SINGLE MEN AND WOMEN BY DECADE

	1560-69	1570-79	1580-89	1590-99	1600-09	1610-20	Total
Single Men	0	7	1	2	1	4	15
Single Women	1	4	2	3	1	0	11

Overall, Figure 4.3 highlights that more men than women were likely to be described after their death as 'single' in the parish registers, though that is not to say that necessarily more men than women actually died single. This pattern probably reflects the fact that across England single women often lived as dependent daughters in their parents' households.[56]

[52] This trend was not unique to Ipswich. Wrigley and Schofield have found that the birth rate during this period reached record highs across England. Similarly high birth rates would not occur in England again until the beginning of the nineteenth century. Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 178.
[53] The *OED* defines 'baby boom' to be 'a temporary marked increase in the birth rate', which categorically describes the phenomenon that occurred during this period.
[54] Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, pp. 260-4.
[55] A. M. Froide, *Never Married: Singlewomen in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 3, 16.
[56] Ibid., p. 19.

Such women were generally designated as the 'daughter' of their parents at death and because of this would have escaped being counted among the single women here. Although single women may have been numerous in society, Froide has also found that only between 4.5 and 5.9 per cent of single women lived independently.[57] Therefore, the small number of single women noted in the registers could indicate that the term was only applied to never-married women who lived outside of their parent's household. Nevertheless, care should be taken not to place too much emphasis on single women as a special case. The general parity in numbers of single men and women (15 men to 11 women) suggests that men also were considered 'single' only if they lived autonomously.

Social Stratification and Geographical Mobility of Nuclear Families

How far was family type influenced by differences in socio-economic standing? At the heart of this matter is whether or not people were more likely to have a certain family type if they had more or less wealth. As has been mentioned, being 'rich' or 'poor' could mean different things to different people at different times. The discussion of early modern social stratification has often centred around analysis of people's wealth and occupation. As Christopher Brooks has argued 'early modern trades and crafts fell into a distinct status hierarchy which corresponded roughly to John Stow's division of the citizens of his native London into wholesalers, retailers and artisans.'[58] It has already been shown that the early modern family's socio-economic status was often distinguished at the local level by their ability or inability to pay a town's poor rate. Generally, in Ipswich those who were unable to pay the town's poor rate would have been considered 'poor' or 'unable' and those who could pay the rate would have been considered, at least 'able' if not 'rich'. Of course, the

[57] Ibid., p. 19.
[58] C. W. Brooks, 'Apprenticeship, Social Mobility and the Middling Sort, 1550-1800', in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550–1800* (Basingstoke, 1994), p. 60. Also see Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds*, p. 302.

families who were on the economic margins, such as urban elites or the destitute, were further distinguished from these two basic groups of 'poor' and 'able.'

Overall, a family's socio-economic standing in Ipswich often was determined by how they (or their head of household) interacted with (and then in turn were socially expected to interact with) their community and its institutions. For example, 'able' families (many of whom would not have been attached to positions of authority in the parish or the town) were still expected to actively contribute to the benefit of the community by paying (at least) both the church and poor rate assessments. Similarly, when a head of household became a parish or town official it was this attachment to institutional authority that affirmed or reaffirmed his family's higher standing above the mass of 'able' households. In order to illustrate these subtle gradations, more meaningful categories other than 'elite', 'middling sort' and 'poor' have been used to categorise the families in this study. In descending order of wealth these categories include: town authorities, parish authorities, able householders, ordinary poor, and the relief-dependent.[59]

Enough relevant data has been found to assign at least one socio-economic category to 614 of the 793 families. Clearly, some families moved between socio-economic groups at certain points in the family life-cycle, but, as will be discussed later in more detail, this type of social mobility in Ipswich was surprisingly rare and often short-lived. Therefore, initially, in order to discuss social stratification overall within the town each family was assigned the socio-economic standing within which they spent most of their life. Figure 4.4 shows this socio-economic distribution of families.

[59] Town authorities have been deemed to be all those who held an office within the town's corporation, for example bailiffs, justices of the peace, portmen, members of the common council, coroners, town clerks and the like. Parish authorities were considered all those who held parish offices, like churchwardens, overseers of the poor and sextons. Able householders were all those who were not listed as holding an office, but who were able to pay the town's poor rate. In contrast, the ordinary poor were those who were clearly resident in the town but not able to pay the poor rate. Relief-dependent families were those that were in direct receipt of poor relief or being provided for by one of the town's poor relief institutions.

FIGURE 4.4: DISTRIBUTION OF FAMILIES BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORY

Socio-economic Category	# of Families	% of Total
Town Authority	12	1.95%
Parish Authority	47	7.65%
Able Householder	191	31.11%
Ordinary Poor	323	52.61%
Relief-dependent Poor	41	6.68%
Total	*614*	*100.00%*

This figure shows that the majority of the families captured in this study (over 52 per cent) were among the 'ordinary poor' - those that were unable to pay towards the poor rate and also did not receive official poor relief. When combined with the percentage of relief-dependent families the data suggests that nearly 60 per cent of the families in Ipswich were deemed too poor to pay towards the poor rates. This evidence echoes the socio-economic breakdown of families in the town that was determined by other methods and discussed in the last chapter. Similar evidence has been found for the town of Colchester (Essex) where only 40 per cent of the town's families contributed towards the poor rates there between 1581 and 1590.[60] This finding for Ipswich is significant because it underscores the prevalence of modest poverty, if not outright destitution, in English urban areas during this period. Comprising over 31 per cent of this sample the 'able householder' was the second most numerous of the socio-economic groups. Among them were the householders who paid the parish poor rate but who did not hold any office of parochial or corporate authority. Significantly, when combined, these two groups comprise over 80 per cent of all traceable families in Ipswich between 1560 and 1620. In comparison, Figure 4.4 highlights that the relief-dependent poor and local authorities consisted of relatively few families. Despite their small size, these minor groups are the ones most studied by historians of the early modern era. This suggests that more targeted research needs to be done on the experiences of the majority of the population, particularly in urban areas, to test and flesh out our

[60] Smith, *Middling Sort*, pp. 23-4.

existing concepts of early modern English society. By explaining the make-up and experiences of ordinary poor urban families, this thesis begins that critical work.

The distribution of family types among each of the socio-economic categories is shown in Figure 4.5.

FIGURE 4.5: FAMILY TYPE BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORY

Socio-economic Category	Family Type	# Fam	% of Total
Town Authority	Simple	8	66.67%
Town Authority	Complex	4	33.33%
Total	*All*	*12*	*100.00%*
Parish Authority	ND	7	14.89%
Parish Authority	Simple	27	57.45%
Parish Authority	Complex	11	23.40%
Parish Authority	Single male	2	4.26%
Total	*All*	*47*	*100.00%*
Able Householder	ND	15	7.85%
Able Householder	Simple	121	63.35%
Able Householder	Complex	43	22.51%
Able Householder	Childless	9	4.71%
Able Householder	Single male	2	1.05%
Able Householder	Single female	1	0.52%
Total	*All*	*191*	*100.00%*
Ordinary Poor	ND	15	4.64%
Ordinary Poor	Simple	212	65.63%
Ordinary Poor	Complex	80	24.77%
Ordinary Poor	Childless	12	3.72%
Ordinary Poor	Ephemeral	2	0.62%
Ordinary Poor	Single female	2	0.62%
Total	*All*	*323*	*100.00%*
Relief-depenent Poor	ND	4	9.76%
Relief-dependent Poor	Simple	26	63.41%
Relief-dependent Poor	Complex	6	14.63%
Relief-dependent Poor	Single male	2	4.88%
Relief-dependent Poor	Childless	2	4.88%
Relief-dependent Poor	Single female	1	2.44%
Total	*All*	*41*	*100.00%*

Surprisingly, this data illustrates that most people's family type was little affected by their relative wealth. Mimicking society overall, all of these socio-economic groups had

predominantly simple families. The town authorities and the ordinary poor were only slightly more likely than the others to have simple families since each group contained roughly 67 per cent and 66 per cent respectively. Likewise, similar percentages of complex families are found in three out of the five groups, as nearly 25 per cent of the ordinary poor and roughly 23 per cent of parish authorities and able householders fit that type. Additionally, three out of the five groups had comparable proportions of childless families with the figures for the relief-dependent, ordinary poor, and able householders hovering around 4 and 5 per cent. Some differences can be seen in the percentages of ephemeral and single families; however, the number of families that experienced these family types is so small that the apparent variations probably lack significant meaning.

Similar to the argument made by Amy Erickson concerning female remarriage trends, only on the economic extremes can potentially significant differences be found. At just under 15 per cent, the percentage of complex relief-dependent families is between 8 and 18 percentage points lower than the other socio-economic groups. Alternatively, the percentage of town authorities who remarried was over 33 per cent - between 9 and 18 percentage points higher than the others. It must be said that the data concerning marital patterns are biased towards the activities of the 793 male heads of households and the women who married them. So, although the data captures all widowers who married again, it only includes widows whose first and subsequent marriages were to a male head of household in the cohort. As a result, widows who remarried men outside of the cohort or outside of the town are not represented. Nevertheless, the disparate findings for the occurrence of remarriage in the poorest and wealthiest families still suggest some interesting trends. First, that relief-dependent families headed by both widowers and widows seem to have faced more obstacles to remarriage than those in any other socio-economic group. This contradicts the notion that poor widows, in particular, faced slim

chances of remarrying.[61] The figures also suggest the possibility that the poorest families were more likely to migrate out of the town (perhaps then to remarry elsewhere) after the death of a spouse. In contrast, the high percentage of complex families for the town authorities suggests that greater wealth and prestige encouraged higher rates of remarriage. Although the sample for this wealthy family type is small, if accurate, it is striking. It suggests that both wealthy widowers and widows remarried more often then those less well off. Such a finding opposes Erickson's assertion that widows with substantial wealth often chose not to remarry.[62] Regardless of these variations in remarriage at the economic extremes, it must be emphasised that the ordinary poor's family type in Ipswich often would have been the same as their economic superiors.

As was shown earlier, the duration of a family in the records could affect the classification of their family type. If a family migrated out of the town relatively soon after family formation, then it would be expected that the records would capture them only as a simple family. It has become axiomatic that the poorest families were often the most mobile in early modern society, at least for the period studied here.[63] As a result the significantly low percentages of complex relief-dependent families may be misleading if these families typically migrated from Ipswich much sooner than the other groups. Thus, it is necessary to discuss in more detail the average duration in the historical record for the families from each socio-economic category.

FIGURE 4.6: AVERAGE NUMBER OF YEARS LIVED IN IPSWICH

Socio-economic Category	Avg. Duration (Years)
Town Authority	28
Parish Authority	24
Able Householder	27
Ordinary Poor	26
Relief-dependent Poor	21

[61] Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 198.
[62] Ibid., pp. 196-200.
[63] Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 81-2.

It is not surprising that the average duration of each socio-economic group was quite lengthy since this type of reconstitution mainly captures the least mobile families within a community. Interestingly, Figure 4.6 shows that the average number of years that families lived in Ipswich did not decrease simply alongside the wealth of the families. Although, as expected, relief-dependent families had the shortest average duration within the records, it is notable that the figure for the families of parish authorities was only three years longer (21 versus 24 years). This suggests that both the relief-dependent and parish authorities were the first to disappear from the registers probably because of either migration or death. Remarkably, the ordinary poor, able householders and town authorities remained in the town for the most lengthy periods (26, 27 and 28 years respectively). Considering these figures alongside those of Figure 4.1 shows that even the least enduring families still lived long enough in Ipswich to have reached the first peak period for remarriage, which was 11-20 years after family formation. This suggests that the relatively small number of complex families found among the relief-dependent poor cannot be predominantly explained by migration. Instead it seems more probable that, for those on relief, after the triumph of marriage itself, remarriage was simply one hurdle too many. Nevertheless, that was only the experience of the poor on the economic margins; the majority of the poor — the ordinary poor — had just as much chance of remarrying as the large number of wealthier families within their community.

It is important to note that Suffolk and, more specifically, the town of Ipswich have been argued to be areas of great socio-economic mobility during this period. Evidence for this has come predominantly from the movement of middling sort merchant families into the wealthy landed gentry, often within a generation.[64] Yet there is little evidence to suggest that more ordinary people had the same ability to raise their socio-economic standing even by one level. By tracking the changes in economic situation for each of the relevant 614

[64] A. Everitt, 'Social Mobility', p. 60.

family groups across their developmental cycles the real extent of socio-economic mobility within early modern Ipswich can be found. Of these families, the great majority (466 or 75.9 per cent) experienced no real change in their socio-economic category. Moreover, a further 10 per cent that did experience change moved down instead of up the socio-economic ladder. From this evidence it seems clear that most families did not experience socio-economic mobility on the scale of the privileged middling merchants. Changes in socio-economic status between generations (father to son) can also be traced with similar results. Of the 40 such family group comparisons, 32 (80 per cent) held the same socio-economic distinction as their father had previously. Additionally, of those that did experience a change, seven of the family groups (17.5 per cent) moved down the socio-economic scale. Significantly, there was only one (2.5 per cent) family where the son improved upon the father's initial economic lot. All of this evidence clearly suggests that early modern Ipswich was not a society characterised by even moderately accessible upward socio-economic mobility.

Developmental Cycles of the Nuclear Family

Every nuclear family experienced either a static or dynamic developmental cycle. As defined here, a nuclear family's developmental cycle is the process by which a family's size naturally increased and decreased within a generation. The size of certain family types which by their nature excluded children, such as childless and ephemeral families, would have remained largely static across the generation because changes would only occur when a spouse died or remarried. On the other hand simple and complex family types would have experienced more dynamic development. As Figure 4.1 has already shown, nearly 85 per cent of families in Ipswich were either 'simple' or 'complex'. Therefore, by definition, at some point those families began to expand and contract their family size with each birth, death of a child, or death and remarriage of a parent. To be sure, each family's

developmental cycle would have been unique. Still some general trends can be found by tracing the positive and negative changes to family size over 5-year increments and across a developmental span of up to 40 years. The developmental cycles of each of the 793 reconstructed families are outlined in Figure 4.7. Overall, this data highlights how varied nuclear family size could be throughout the developmental cycle. For example, the spread of family sizes within the first five years of family formation ranged dramatically between zero and nine. Moreover from the 10-year mark onwards the range increased to zero to 14 and the experience of the majority of families became more fragmented. Even so, averaging the most commonly found family sizes for each period reveals some important trends.

FIGURE 4.7: DEVELOPMENTAL CYCLE OF NUCLEAR FAMILY (FAM) SIZE (FS) IN FIVE-YEAR INCREMENTS

	5-yr		**10-yr**		**15-yr**		**20-yr**		**25-yr**		**30-yr**		**35-yr**		**40-yr**
# Fam	**FS**	***# Fam***	**FS**	***# Fam***	**FS**	***# Fam***	**FS**	***# Fam***	**FS**	***# Fam***	**FS**	***# Fam***	**FS**	***# Fam***	**FS**
119	ND	*235*	ND	*374*	ND	*505*	ND	*606*	ND	*675*	ND	*733*	ND	*758*	ND
262	4	*132*	5	*76*	5	*45*	6	*31*	5	*17*	6	*10*	9	*6*	7
186	3	*113*	6	*70*	6	*42*	5	*28*	4	*17*	4	*9*	6	*5*	6
103	5	*103*	4	*61*	4	*40*	4	*25*	7	*16*	7	*9*	5	*5*	4
92	2	*76*	3	*56*	7	*39*	7	*24*	6	*15*	5	*7*	7	*3*	10
20	6	*60*	7	*42*	3	*29*	8	*22*	8	*14*	8	*6*	4	*3*	5
7	1	*49*	2	*37*	8	*29*	3	*17*	3	*10*	3	*5*	8	*3*	3
1	9	*12*	8	*31*	2	*16*	10	*11*	2	*9*	9	*5*	3	*2*	12
1	8	*8*	1	*27*	9	*16*	9	*9*	9	*8*	2	*4*	2	*2*	9
1	7	*3*	0	*7*	10	*16*	2	*8*	10	*6*	10	*2*	10	*2*	8
1	0	*1*	11	*6*	1	*6*	11	*5*	1	*2*	11	*1*	12	*2*	2
		1	9	*3*	0	*6*	1	*4*	11	*2*	1	*1*	11	*1*	1
				2	11	*3*	12	*2*	0	*1*	12	*1*	1	*1*	0
				1	12	*1*	14	*1*	12	*1*	0				
Top 66% Mean	3.5		5		5.5		6		6		6		6.2		6.4

In Figure 4.7 the most prevalent family sizes for each five-year period are distinguished by a black border. These boxed figures represent the family sizes experienced by at least 66 per cent of all families for which relevant data was available. The figures suggest that by the end of the fifth year of marriage most families had a total family size of between three and four people, which would have included at least one and more likely two living

children. Between the sixth and twentieth year of family formation the average nuclear family size steadily increased. Commonly, families gained at least two people despite the occasional deaths of children or a parent (as was shown in Figure 4.1) at this time. As a result, by the end of the twentieth year of marriage nuclear family size often reached an average of 6 people, although many families were slightly more or less numerous. Subsequently, between 20 and 30 years after marriage the growth of nuclear families often stagnated. This stagnation usually continued until after the thirtieth year of marriage when some small but significant growth sometimes resumed.

These general trends outline three key stages in the developmental cycles of most early modern nuclear families. The first stage occurred sometime between one and 15 years after family formation and was characterised by rapid growth. In Ipswich, the pattern of births normally followed those found across England at this time. Regularly, the first child was born within a year of marriage and subsequent siblings followed roughly every two years. If we continue to assume that the average age for women at marriage was 26 then this first developmental stage generally coincides with a mother's peak age of fertility between 20 and 39 years of age. [65] Subsequently, during the second stage of family development —normally between 16 and 30 years after marriage — the mother passed beyond her most fertile years. This led her family's growth to slow and eventually cease when she entered menopause and eventually perished. As was shown in Figure 4.1, most nuclear families in early modern Ipswich were simple in form and as a result they only experienced these first two developmental stages. However, many of the substantial number of complex families went on to experience the third and final stage in family development. Old widowers who married again with younger women still in their period of peak fertility typically experienced a sudden continuation of family growth after what had been a period of stagnation with their former wife. When compared with the growth

[65] M. K. McIntosh, *A Community Transformed: The Manor and Liberty of Havering, 1500-1620* (Cambridge, 1991), p. 47; Wrigley and Schofield, *Population History*, p. 254.

experienced in stages one and two of family development, the growth in stage three was often small. This can be seen by averaging the number of children born to first, second and third wives of widowers. First wives were almost always the ones to have children during the first stage of family development and often the second stage as well. As a result, it is not surprising that the number of births to each wife declines with each remarriage. On average, first wives could expect four children (3.8), second wives two (2.03) and third wives merely one (1.02).

Even though many families experienced growth similar to the general developmental trends outlined above, economic factors could significantly influence how and when families grew. Again, by averaging the family sizes found for at least 66 per cent of the families in each socio-economic group, figure 4.8 shows the average changes in nuclear family size for each of the groups over the standard forty-year developmental cycle.[66]

FIGURE 4.8: DIFFERENCES IN MEAN NUCLEAR FAMILY SIZE DEVELOPMENT BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORY

5-Year Period	5-yr FS	10-yr FS	15-yr FS	20-yr FS	25-yr FS	30-yr FS	35-yr FS	40-yr FS
Town Authority	4.00	5.00	6.50	7.33	7.00	6.20	7.00	7.00
Parish Authority	4.00	5.60	6.00	6.33	5.00	6.14	7.00	10.00
Able Householder	4.00	5.50	6.00	7.00	5.83	6.40	5.00	6.60
Ordinary Poor	3.50	4.50	5.50	5.00	6.00	6.00	6.50	5.50
Relief-Dependent Poor	3.50	4.67	5.00	4.67	4.80	4.00	2.50	1.50

Figure 4.8 highlights the significant differences between the average nuclear family sizes found for each of the economic categories. First, at most of the five-year intervals the groups that wielded some level of disposable income (the able householders, parish authorities and town authorities) all had larger average family sizes than the groups that struggled financially (the ordinary poor and the relief-dependent). This was true not only overall, but also at the end of five, ten, fifteen and twenty years of marriage. The data

[66] These averages were calculated in a similar way to Figure 4.7 and further detail of those calculations can be found in Appendix 4.1.

further suggests that families in the three wealthiest groups almost always had two living children by the end of the first five-year period. In contrast, it also implies that poor families more often had only one living child by the same time.

Although Patricia Crawford's work may have recently reaffirmed that poor families 'were the most vulnerable to failures of health and to mortality', the economic disparity in family sizes found in Ipswich does not appear to be the result of greater child mortality within the poorer sections of society. Figure 4.9 illustrates this by comparing the total average number of baptisms with childhood deaths for all of the families in each of the socio-economic categories.

FIGURE 4.9: AVERAGE PERCENTAGES OF CHILDHOOD DEATHS BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORY

Socio-economic Category	# of Baptisms	# of Deaths	% of Child Deaths
Town Authority	9.58	1.75	18.26%
Parish Authority	9.20	2.73	29.71%
Able Householder	9.31	2.91	31.30%
Ordinary Poor	6.82	1.98	29.09%
Relief-Dependent Poor	5.35	1.53	28.59%

These calculations show that children from almost all of the socio-economic groups perished between roughly 29 and 31 per cent of the time. Only the children of the wealthy town authorities had a marked improvement in their chances of survival with merely 18 per cent of them dying before adulthood. Such evidence strongly advocates that most children, excepting only those of the very elite, faced similar chances of perishing regardless of their parents' relative wealth. This implies that poorer families still had normal access to vital nutrition and basic medicine (as it was conceived of at the time, e.g. the assistance of midwives), despite their lower status. Indeed, instead of the poor being more susceptible to death in childhood, it appears that, at least in Ipswich, poor families simply had fewer children. This was the case not only overall because of the parents' typical older age at marriage, but also during the early stages of their families' development. This finding is

significant because it calls into question the belief of many contemporary writers and modern historians that early modern poor families commonly experienced hardship because they planned badly and were overburdened with children. Whilst that situation could occur, it does not appear to have been the norm here.

The timing of family growth and decline also appears to have differed between the socio-economic groups. The families from the three wealthier groups typically experienced steady growth in family size between five and 20 years of family formation, and it was not until nearly the 25th year that these wealthier families usually began to experience some form of decline. In contrast, the ordinary poor and the relief-dependent regularly faced decline at least five years earlier — sometime between the 15th and 20th year. This earlier decline probably resulted primarily from the later age at which the poor typically married. It was that phenomenon which necessarily caused the total length of family development experienced by broadly poor families to be somewhat shorter than that experienced by their wealthier counterparts. Still, the way decline was experienced by the poor was not equal. As Figure 4.8 shows, only the relief-dependent poor experienced sustained decline during the second phase of family development. Whereas the ordinary poor could expect potential regeneration by remarriage to young fertile women, the relief-dependent could not since their chances of remarriage were slight at best. This meant that as time passed families on relief were prone to becoming small, fractured and less stable whilst, at the same time, the larger number of ordinary poor families often remarried and continued to thrive.

Conclusion

A case study of one ordinary poor family's experience of these stages can be taken to be typical for the majority of those among the poorer ranks. John Bugg lived in Ipswich between 1585 and 1606 and over this 21-year period John married two women, witnessed the birth of several children, and buried at least one child and one wife. After John married

his first wife Alice in 1585, she quickly expanded their family by giving birth to five children within 15 years, three of whom were born within the first five years of marriage. Towards the end of this period the interval between Alice's births lengthened significantly and her penultimate child seems to have been the only one who perished young. Alice herself died sometime between the birth of her last child in 1599 and her husband's remarriage in 1604. At the time of Alice's death her family had undergone the first two stages of development (rapid expansion and stagnation). As expected, the movement between these stages occurred within a compressed period of time, which indicates that Alice was perhaps older than the norm at the time of her marriage. Notably, at the end of the second developmental stage John Bugg's nuclear family included six people: three sons, one daughter, his first wife and himself. This figure remained static for at least six years and is equal to the average prevalent family size for poor families at the close of this developmental stage shown in Figure 4.8. It was not until John's second wife, Elizabeth, bore him another son in 1607 that his family once again began to grow. This late birth bumped Bugg's nuclear family from six to seven members and catapulted the family into the third stage of development. Even so, that final birth was the last to be recorded for the Bugg family, which underlines the assertion that most late marriages produced few, if any, children.

John Bugg's family development is telling since it both reaffirms and casts doubt on certain long-held assertions concerning the families of the poor. It is clear that, as historians have argued, spouses in poor families typically married later in life which curtailed their ability to have as many children as their social superiors. Even so, despite many inequities of wealth and resources, poor families more often than not still had several children and most of these children lived to reach adulthood. Records relating to poor relief payments and admissions to the town's main poor relief institutions show that the majority of these poor families never resorted to formal kinds of financial and institutional assistance. But

that did not mean that these families were not poor. Instead, it suggests that poor families generally were able to raise several children by their own means and perhaps in times of difficulty turned to informal assistance from family and friends. Additionally, the majority of poor families seem not to have been the small, fractured and vulnerable units that historians have long asserted. Surely, the relief-dependent poor faced great obstacles, especially after the death of a spouse, which often led to fractured family units. Nevertheless, the majority of the poor — the ordinary poor — had families which typically contained many children, who lived in a relatively stable environment, under the care of two parents.

CHAPTER FIVE:

The Economic Lives of Poor Adults

Living in Poverty

The previous chapter shows that, despite real differences in their levels of wealth, the majority of nuclear families resident in Ipswich between 1570 and 1620 shared many characteristics. Most 'wealthy' and 'poor' adults had broadly the same chances of marrying and remarrying, raising their children to adulthood, and remaining settled inhabitants in the town. Only those who lived on the economic extremes, which included less than 10 per cent of the population (i.e. the town authorities and those dependent on relief), had reason to believe that their wealth would make their experience of starting and raising a family significantly better or worse than the majority of their neighbours. As we look more closely at the economic lives of poor adults and review their efforts to accumulate wealth, these findings lead us to consider to what extent increases in wealth benefited those living in poverty. In particular, if, as was shown in the last chapter, modest upward social mobility (i.e. raising one's socio-economic category by one degree) was theoretically possible, was it really an enticing prospect for the poor?

Throughout this period the wealth of poor adults could rise or fall for several reasons. Probate records and other sources from Ipswich show that it was common for the poor to benefit from small inheritances and other financial gifts,[1] and to increase their earnings by negotiating higher wages, changing their trade, or taking on lucrative by-employments. Of course, for some, the primary boon of this additional wealth may have been the acquisition of consumer goods and other material comforts. But, during this time of marked economic volatility, it was more usual for poor adults to save or invest these

[1] This will be discussed more fully in the next chapter.

assets in order to give their family some degree of financial security. Although it is clear that many among the poor in Ipswich worked hard to gain more wealth, there is little doubt that the opportunities to do so became more constricted as the sixteenth century drew to a close. The town was not peculiar in this regard, and today historians often take it for granted that this period of demographic and economic upheaval made the economic lives of the poor throughout England increasingly straitened and potentially miserable. Certainly, in Ipswich, dearth in 1574, 1585, and 1594-7, and epidemic disease in 1578/9, 1585/6, 1597/8, 1603/4, and 1616, disproportionately endangered the lives of the poor, whilst the damaging effects of rapid inflation, falling real wages, overseas trade disruptions, and over-subscribed labour markets threatened their livelihoods.[2] By the time parliament enacted the influential poor law statutes of 1598 and 1601, the combination of these challenges had already rendered several of the poor's previously reliable routes to economic solvency, and a respectable standard of living, extremely tenuous. From at least the early fifteenth century, the fortunes of many in the town were fundamentally tied to the textile trades. As a result, for those in Ipswich, repeated disruptions in trade with the Low Countries, and London's growing monopoly on overseas shipping in this period, made employment in textile production and distribution particularly precarious.[3] These problems continued well into the seventeenth century and affected the prosperity of many cloth-producing regions and their inhabitants.

Such ongoing problems meant that as the sixteenth century progressed, the poor in Ipswich had to become more creative and take greater risks in their efforts to accumulate

[2] See Chapters Two and Three.

[3] For a general discussion of the economy of late-medieval Ipswich see Amor, *Late Medieval Ipswich*, ch. 3; for problems associated with the trade disruptions caused by the Dutch Revolt (1568-1648) see Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, pp. 97-104. A detailed discussion of the continued problems with overseas trade in Ipswich in the seventeenth century can be found in Reed, 'Seventeenth Century Ipswich', p. 104. Also, as was shown in Chapter Two, the town was hit hard by the implementation of the Cockayne Project in 1615, which sought to bypass trade with the Low Countries by revamping England's wool dying processes and thereby making the kingdom a major international producer of finished cloth. Despite its ultimate failure in 1617, the plan shifted the nexus of the cloth trade towards London and forced many of the merchants of Ipswich to buy into the Company of Merchant Adventurers in the hope of remaining economically viable.

wealth. Even so, the cards remained stacked against them and earning enough to meet their family's immediate and anticipated needs was all that most could hope to achieve. It is little wonder then that historians have often marvelled at how the majority of the poor in England continued to provide for themselves and their families without turning to official forms of poor relief. Regional case-studies and wider surveys which focus on the poor, their standard of living, and household economic strategies can produce conflicting accounts of the changing experience of poverty at this time.[4] Indeed, it remains debatable whether the poor in urban or rural regions suffered most, and if generally they were 'deeply mired in a perennial struggle for economic survival ... [whilst they] ... struggled to feed and clothe themselves and shivered in cottages "not fytte for any honest man to dwell in but onlie for beggars"', or instead resembled the poor of London who, it has been argued, retained 'a hitherto unsuspected resilience to economic depression and seasonal unemployment'.[5] This chapter suggests that between 1570 and 1620 the poor in Ipswich were remarkably successful in their efforts to combat the economic problems of the day. By taking advantage of some of the town's more lucrative and stable employment sectors they could, and did, accumulate enough wealth to meet most, if not all, of their anticipated needs.

We have seen, however, that, apart from the urban elite, very few inhabitants in the town appear to have accumulated enough wealth to trigger modest upward social mobility. Whereas it was common for the poorest among the ordinary poor to become occasionally dependent upon relief because of periods of economic crisis, life-cycle changes, and bouts of misfortune, it was rare for the better off in this group to move, even fleetingly, into the ranks of the town's able householders.[6] The troubles of the period undoubtedly hindered the aspirations of the more financially stable poor to raise their socio-economic standing;

[4] For more pessimistic interpretations of the experience of poverty, see: Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 22-6; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 146-9, 194-201; Woodward, *Men at Work*, pp. 209-49; Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 5-6, 38-9, 67-90; idem, 'Poverty and Politics in Salisbury', pp. 164-203; and Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy*, pp. 79-85. For more optimistic accounts see Palliser, 'Tawney's Century', pp. 339-53; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 60-98; and Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, pp. 87-161.
[5] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, p. 200; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 62, 98.
[6] See Chapter Four.

however, the economic consequences of moving from the upper echelon of the relatively poor to the lower echelon of those who had means also probably outweighed the associated benefits. Whilst the reclassification of an ordinary poor adult into an able householder would have increased their social esteem, underlined the reliability of their social and economic 'credit', and offered the opportunity to be more engaged in civic government (for example, as jurors or rate collectors in the town), the burden of taxation levied upon able householders, when compared with the level imposed upon groups living in poverty, suggests that the attendant cost of these privileges was daunting.[7] Ian Archer has shown that in the 1590s the less prosperous members of the middling sort in London paid a total of roughly 27*s* per annum in various national and local assessments, but the city's poor were exempted from most rates and had an annual liability of only 3*s* 6*d*.[8] Ipswich also had a great disparity between the tax obligations of its 'poor' and 'able' householders. By the 1570s even the most borderline able householders (i.e. those with the lowest assessments for all of the four main levies, including the national lay subsidies, local parish church rates, poor rates, and rates to pay for the town preacher's wages) were expected to pay a total tax bill of roughly 11*s* each year. In contrast, the town's ordinary poor usually were exempted from all but the parish church rate, which normally gave them an annual liability of merely 1*s* 4*d*. Lower down the socio-economic scale, those dependent upon relief typically were exempted from all national and local rates, until they became liable for the town's parish church rates during the early seventeenth century.[9] Such figures show that the difference between the tax burdens of those on relief and those who lived in ordinary poverty normally was rather small in Ipswich (i.e. less than 2*s*), which makes the difference between the tax burdens of the town's ordinary poor and its less affluent able householders (usually in the

[7] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 187-213; Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, pp. 148-72; Smith, *Middling Sort*, pp. 58-86.
[8] I. Archer, 'The Burden of Taxation on Sixteenth-Century London', *Historical Journal*, 44/3 (2001), pp. 626-7.
[9] *Suffolk in 1568*, ed. Hervey, pp. 156-66; SROI, C/3/2/2/2.

region of 9*s*) appear massive in comparison. Overall, this evidence suggests that it was much more manageable for the poor who were dependent on relief to cover the increased tax liabilities that came with moving into the ranks of the ordinary poor, than it was for those among the ordinary poor to cover the costs associated with becoming an able householder.

In addition to the advantages of tax abatement, the ordinary poor faced the prospect of losing other financial benefits if they attained the status of an able householder. Even though, by definition, the ordinary poor did not routinely receive official relief, they still occasionally received other forms of incidental support from their local authorities. For example, in times of dearth, town authorities consistently acquired large stocks of corn, which were sold to 'the poor' at subsidised prices. Such stocks normally consisted of about 300 quarters (or 2,400 bushels) of rye, which would have fed over 320 families (two adults and two children, or 1,280 people) for more than six months, even if it was the only grain consumed.[10] It is important to note that the town's main poor relief institutions, Christ's Hospital and the Tooley Foundation, drew on a different stock of corn to feed the poor in their care, so these high figures indicate that it was probably normal for both the ordinary poor and the relief-dependent to benefit from the town's corn subsidies.[11] Those among the ordinary poor also had the distinct advantage of requesting the abatement of routine municipal fines. They usually did so by appealing to the sympathies of urban authorities by claiming that they were 'poor' and 'not hable to paye it'. This was the regular response given by many in this socio-economic group when it was time for local authorities to collect foreign fines, which were levied each year on all non-freemen who traded in the town. According to the town chamberlain's accounts from 1586/7, the normal fine set for

[10] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 345, 381, 387, 423, 425; it has been estimated that a man required seven bushels of rye a year if that was the only grain in his diet, and a woman required only four and a half bushels. Based on this I have assumed that children probably required an additional three and a half bushels annually. See: W. Hagen, *Ordinary Prussians: Brandenburg Junkers and Villagers, 1500-1840* (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 228-9; W. Tinwell, *A Treatise of Practical Arithmetic and Bookkeeping* (Newcastle, 1805), p. 22.
[11] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 354, 429.

ordinary poor traders was 12*d* per annum which, in truth, was not particularly expensive. Despite this, there were at least 16 ordinary poor men who did not pay their foreign fines in that fiscal year, and 14 of them specifically claimed poverty as the reason.[12]

Taken as a whole, this evidence suggests that although some ordinary poor adults accumulated assets that pushed them towards the top of their socio-economic bracket, they had a vested interest in keeping their wealth (or perhaps their perceived wealth) at the level of those whom authorities broadly considered to be 'poor'. This appears to have been the case no matter how such wealth was accumulated, but it was probably particularly true for those who earned a large portion of their income from illicit activities, since (in addition to the reasons already mentioned) any significant increase in demonstrable wealth might raise the suspicions of local authorities. From this we can see that although accumulating enough wealth to escape the socio-economic confines of poverty was theoretically possible in this period for those among the ordinary poor in Ipswich, the increased tax liabilities and loss of municipal perquisites associated with such a move combined to create a very real 'poverty trap'. Keeping this in mind, we will now discuss in more detail how so many ordinary poor adults were able to remain solvent and accumulate wealth. In addition, we will consider more fully the levels of income and wealth that could be achieved by the ordinary poor and the poor dependent on relief amidst the mounting economic pressures of the period.

Sources and Methodology

The following analysis is principally based on depositions recorded at the Ipswich Court of Petty Pleas (usually termed the Petty Court by contemporaries) [13], a census of the town's poor taken in 1597, lists of presentments and indictments from the borough's quarter sessions, and a selection of probate inventories of the town's poor inhabitants. Using such varied material for different analytical purposes is challenging and necessitates some

[12] *Town Finances*, ed. Webb and MacCulloch, pp. 120-33.
[13] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 372-458.

discussion. As will be shown, the economic strategies of the town's poor relied on their engagement in a combination of lawful and unlawful employment. Because of this several sources had to be analysed in order to produce an accurate depiction of the poor's most common types of work. Data for the official (i.e. lawful) occupational structure for Ipswich had to be gathered from two unrelated sources because no source was adequate on its own. The occupations given by deponents in their testimonies to the town's petty court, combined with the employments and work activities noted for poor adults in the town's census of the poor, provide a broadly representative sample of the town's official occupational structure—official in the sense that in both circumstances nearly all inhabitants told authorities their occupation was one that they were lawfully allowed to practise.

As was discussed in Chapter Two, the Petty Court was one of the main judicial arms of the borough and the core body of litigation that came before its sessions included real, personal and mixed property actions. These normally concerned defaults in debts, trade bargains, wage agreements, the loss of goods at sea, the occupation of property, and in some instances, slander.[14] Less frequently, but still regularly, the judicial boundaries of the court were expanded to include some misdemeanours. Such cases often involved common assault and petty larceny. The wide jurisdiction of the court meant that inhabitants from most socio-economic levels were called upon to act as deponents. In addition, their depositions could concern actions of varying economic value — the condition of borrowed sheets that were returned 'fylthylye used', the theft of a sixpence coin, defaulted debts for as little as 14*d* or upwards of £70, and a husband's physical assault on his wife (with threats

[14] For more detail regarding the jurisdiction of the Petty Court in Ipswich see Chapter Two, and G. H. Martin, 'C/2/3 Petty Court', in D. Allen (ed.), *Ipswich Borough Archives, 1255–1835: A Catalogue* (Woodbridge, 2000), pp. 58-9; idem, 'Borough and the Merchant Community', pp. 132-4. Concerning the large volume of cases heard in urban Petty Court sessions, including Ipswich, see Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, pp. 216-54.

to ‘torne [her] out of the dors a begginge’) — all shared centre stage at the town’s petty court.[15]

The petty court depositions used for this chapter come from the first in a series of two depositions books which together cover the period 1573-1651.[16] This first book contains transcripts of 704 depositions given by deponents to the court between 1573 and 1585 and occasional lists of ‘interrogatories’ (i.e. questions posed to deponents). The depositions mostly appear in chronological order, but probably were not recorded at the time of testimony; they show only occasional (and usually minor) corrections (or duplications) and they are not attested by the deponents’ signatures or marks. Presumably, the Common Clerk of the court initially recorded the depositions onto loose sheets with the intention of later transcribing the data into the books.

From the 704 depositions taken in this period, 260 discrete deponents can be identified who lived in Ipswich and whose socio-economic data was captured in the database discussed in Chapter Four. Table 5.1 below shows that a solid majority of these deponents (165 of 260, or roughly 63 per cent) lived in officially-recognised material comfort (i.e. were able householders, parish authorities, or town authorities). It is important to note, however, that ‘town authorities’ and ‘able householders’ constitute a larger percentage of the deponents, and the ‘ordinary poor’ a smaller percentage, than they would have within the town’s general population.[17] Despite this fact, Table 5.1 shows that the poor remain fairly well represented in this source. Yet, because it was rare for those on relief to act as deponents, the employment data gathered from these depositions more commonly represents the work of the ordinary poor instead of those dependent on relief.

[15] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 38-9, 265, 506-8, 609.
[16] SROI, C/2/3/8/1 and C/2/3/8/2.
[17] The town authorities and ordinary poor constituted 11.15 per cent and 33.08 per cent of deponents (see Table 5.1), while they headed 1.95 per cent and 52.61 per cent of the town’s households (for other divergences see Table 4.4 in Chapter Four).

TABLE 5.1: DISTRIBUTION OF PETTY COURT DEPONENTS IN IPSWICH BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC CATEGORY

Socio-economic Category	*No. of Families*	*% of Total*
Town Authority	29	11.15
Parish Authority	14	5.39
Able Householder	122	46.92
Ordinary Poor	86	33.08
Relief-dependent Poor	9	3.46
Total	**260**	**100.00**

A great problem with using court depositions to determine an area's occupational structure is that they rarely note the occupations of female deponents. It is well known that a woman's marital status normally defined her legal standing and, in a court of law, justices often considered her occupation to be irrelevant unless it was of particular interest to a case.[18] Indeed, none of the female deponents who came before the petty court sessions in Ipswich had a clearly defined occupation noted in these records. Instead, where the depositions usually indicate the occupation of male deponents, they note female deponents by their marital status as wives, widows, or spinsters. Of course, during this period 'spinster' could also refer to a person who made her living spinning wool and other fibres, but the lack of married or widowed deponents noted as 'spinsters' suggests the word was not being used in that way.

On the other hand, the town's census of the poor reveals much more about the work of women because it outlines the ages, occupations, and wages of nearly all those described in its pages.[19] It is a particularly useful source because it notes the official employments of

[18] Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 39.
[19] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 119-40.

many ordinary and relief-dependent poor, and provides further data for two of the most under-represented social groups among the petty court deponents: women, and those on relief. Although its title might suggest that the census could be used on its own to illustrate the official occupational distribution of the poor, a close inspection shows that only part of the town's poor inhabitants were included in this source. For example, the census only contains data for 9 of the 12 parishes in Ipswich, and the parishes that are missing (St Margaret, St Peter, and St Helen) were among the poorest and most populous in the town. Indeed, 40 of the 70 households that received outdoor poor relief in 1590 (roughly 57 per cent) lived in these three parishes.[20] Furthermore, although the census includes the parishes most known to house seafaring inhabitants (St Clements and St Mary Quay), the source suspiciously lacks any mention of poor sailors or their families. This omission is troubling because there is ample evidence that many seafarers lived in poverty.[21] This suggests that the town's census of the poor can only be taken to include specific sections of the town's poor, probably amounting to less than half the total. These problems have been at least partially overcome here by combining the occupational data from the census with that of the petty court deponents. Doing so not only provides a more accurate depiction of the official employments of poor men overall, it also allows the employments of poor males to be compared with men in wealthier groups, and it enables the detailed analysis of the work of poor women.

Uncovering the presence of unlawful employments among poor adults, such as unlicensed victualling,[22] milling, and prostitution, is a more difficult task. The prospect of prosecution, fines, and harsh punishments gave the poor every reason to hide such unlawful

[20] For more detail on the extent of poverty in each parish see Chapter Three.
[21] This lacuna and the poverty of seafarers is discussed more fully later in this chapter.
[22] There were of course millers and victuallers (i.e. sellers of food and drink) who operated lawfully under licences granted by the town's government, but in Ipswich these were fewer in number than those who operated unlawfully, as will be shown later in this chapter.

work from authorities.[23] Normally, the glimpses we have of this activity come from criminal court records, and for Ipswich they can be found most readily in records of the town's quarter sessions. Accordingly, this chapter analyses two alphabetical listings which contain the names of those presented or indicted at this court between 1587-93 and in 1598, as well as the chronological entries of presentments and indictments made between 1598 and 1620.[24] These records have been taken from four of the town's 'Sessions Books' which appear to have been created as legal reference books for the town's courts. They most commonly contain the recognisances, indictments, presentments, and judgments that pertain to the town's quarter sessions and more regularly-held sessions of the peace. [25]

The relevant entries have been used here to create a quantitative baseline for the participation of the poor in some unlawful employments between 1587 and 1598, and to examine why these figures may have changed through time. Although such sources are useful they also present some challenges. Most importantly, whereas the list for 1587-1593 is complete, the list for 1598 is missing its initial pages and thus only includes the names of defendants who had surnames beginning with the letters L through Z. This means that the total number of entries analysed for that year is artificially low. Furthermore, using presentments or indictments to analyse change through time is always hampered by the fact that the material only represents offenders who were discovered and prosecuted by authorities. As is commonly known, the cause of changes in the number of such entries over time is not always clear. A shift could suggest the growth or decline of authorities' interest in a particular issue, the actual increase or decrease in those participating in such activities, or a concurrence of these events.[26] Again, there is no easy answer to this

[23] See discussion of the possible punishments for unlawful activity in Chapter Two.
[24] The quantitative data is based on lists found in C/2/9/1/1/8/4, fols. 535-55, and qualitative analysis is based on these lists and other entries in C/2/9/1/1/8/5, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, C/2/9/1/1/8/7, as specifically referenced when used later in the chapter.
[25] Allen, *Ipswich Borough Archives*, pp. 126-7.
[26] K. Wrightson, 'Two Concepts of Order: Justices, Constables and Jurymen in Seventeenth-Century England', in J. Brewer and J. Styles (eds), *An Ungovernable People: The English and their Law in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London, 1980), pp. 21-46.

dilemma, but the addition of contextual evidence from other sources, such as royal proclamations and regulatory orders enacted by town officials, can provide some clues to why the participation in unlawful employment may have changed between the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

This chapter is also concerned with how, why, and to what degree poor adults accumulated wealth. In particular it explores the general levels of income associated with the most common lawful and unlawful occupations of the poor, and analyses how this income allowed them to save for their and their families' futures. Arguments concerning these themes are derived chiefly from the data for wages presented in the town's census of the poor, and data noted in the Sessions Books, which can be used to calculate approximate incomes for some of those engaged in unlawful employments. Probate inventories of the town's poor inhabitants have also been used to investigate the levels of wealth that were commonly connected to those living in poverty. Although the benefits and drawbacks associated with analysing the census and sessions books have already been discussed, a few words must be said on the challenges of using probate records for this purpose. There is much to recommend the use of probate inventories to analyse the relative wealth of the poor, since they normally provide a detailed list of the type and value of an individual's moveable goods at the time of death. Because of this, probate inventories can allow us to see the kinds of items that poor inhabitants often acquired and assess their relative worth. However, it is routinely acknowledged that, generally, 'the poor' did not own enough of value upon their death (at least openly) to trigger a probate inventory. Certainly, this was not always the case and, of the 72 extant probate inventories created by the town's inhabitants between 1583 and 1631, 20 relate to poor residents. [27] Even so, these inventories represent certain types of poverty and poor individuals more than others. Work on similar

[27] *The Ipswich Probate Inventories, 1583-1631*, ed. M. Reed (Suffolk Records Society, xxii, Woodbridge, 1981), pp. 18-19, 20, 25, 28, 33-4, 37, 38-9, 40-1, 47, 50-1, 51-2, 59-61, 64-5, 69-70, 74-5, 79-80, 92-3, 97, 104-5, 108.

English sources has shown that the deaths of married men and widows caused the creation of probate records more often than the deaths of those in other social groups.[28] In general, the sample from Ipswich follows this pattern, but it does include some records from poor singletons. It is also the case that the majority of these sources, including 18 of the 20 probate inventories, represent individuals who lived in ordinary poverty. So, only two of the probate inventories pertain to those who were dependent on relief. Although these records are illuminating, the small number frustrates any firm conclusions regarding the value of the possessions of those who received relief in the town. Nevertheless, this issue is less problematic than one might think. As will be shown, the wealth of both the ordinary poor and those on relief could range widely, and in Ipswich the relief-dependent were not always (or even usually) the individuals with the least overall wealth.

Earning a Living

It has become axiomatic that before turning to official forms of relief, the poor made their living through a combination of formal and informal economic activities that together have been termed the 'economy of makeshifts'. This theory rests on the idea that poor adults had a piecemeal approach to their economic strategies, and the exploitation of various sources of money, credit, and goods enabled most to remain self-sufficient, or dependent on neighbours and kin rather than the authorities for support during periods of hardship. The activities associated with the 'makeshift economy' ranged widely and could include forms of waged labour, the collection of natural resources (e.g. fishing or gathering shellfish in coastal regions, or 'gleaning' in agricultural regions), support from family and friends, and

[28] Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 207.

crime.[29] The extent to which the poor engaged in such activities was often dictated by regional forces and depth of deprivation. For example, in order to ease their cost of living the rural poor in some regions might heavily rely upon the use of common land and other free sources of food and fuel.[30] In contrast, the urban poor might rely more on the diverse employment opportunities that were available to them in towns and cities.[31]

Regardless of the region, the poor could seek economic support from their kin and neighbours, but how much the poor in Ipswich routinely relied upon such assistance remains rather opaque. The petty court deposition of Thomas Locke (an ordinary poor pedlar) taken in 1576 provides one example of the reluctance some extended family members could exhibit when situations arose that might prompt them to seek or provide financial assistance from, or to, each other.[32] In this account, Thomas explains that his brother-in-law, Edward Gyles (an ordinary poor labourer) did, indeed, seek and receive 10*s* from his older brother, Matthew, so that Edward could make a payment on an outstanding debt for a cloak. Despite this fact, the account also makes it clear that Edward took that course of action only as a last resort. According to Thomas, Edward's creditor, Joan Jenynges (the wife of an able householder), publically accosted Edward and Thomas in the street in order to demand the outstanding payment. After which Edward pleaded with Joan that he had 'no monye now but [would] see [her] paid for yt'. Unmoved, and with a growing audience, Joan continued to insist on an immediate payment. When it became clear that he was faced not only with an unsympathetic creditor, but also public embarrassment, Edward finally offered to 'borrow' money from his brother, Matthew (an ordinary poor

[29] There is a long-standing historiography for the existence of the poor's 'economy of makeshifts', a term first coined by Olwen Hufton to explain the economic strategies employed by poor households in eighteenth-century France. For a recent overview of this topic, and a discussion of the role of 'gleaning' (i.e. collecting leftover crops from fields after the harvest was complete) in the rural poor's strategies of 'making shift' see Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 15-22, 35-42. For some examples of the gathering of shellfish and fishing by the poor in Ipswich see Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 317, 325, 330, 332, 409. For a perspective questioning the reliance of the poor on common sources of food and fuel in Lancashire, see Healey, *First Century of Welfare*, pp. 131-2.
[30] Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 27-48.
[31] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, pp. 96-122; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 62-87.
[32] Petty court deposition of Thomas Lock taken on 19 November, 1576, see SROI, C/2/3/8/1, f. 110.

labourer), who also lived in the town. In order to ensure a completed transaction, Joan followed Edward and Thomas to Matthew's house, and when they arrived, Matthew gave Joan the 10*s* and she left placated. We cannot know from the account how readily Matthew provided his brother with this money, but the appearance of the suit in the court records suggests that the rest of Edward's debt was probably never repaid. Since Matthew appears to have been a potential source of funds only for Edward's first payment, it seems probable that he had limits to the financial assistance he was willing to provide to his brother. On the other hand, the account also suggests that Edward was generally reluctant to request financial help from his family members, including both his brother-in-law who was with him throughout the incident, and his natural brother whom he visited for that purpose only under duress. Such evidence illustrates how, although the support of kin and neighbours was undoubtedly helpful to many of the poor from time to time, it is doubtful that such generosity could be called upon on a regular basis.

Overall, the main economic strategy of poor men and women in Ipswich was finding work that best guaranteed a stable and lucrative income. As will be shown, this strategy depended on their ability to recognise changes in the town's labour markets and adapt their employment situations accordingly. The argument that people moved between occupations during periods of economic stress is not wholly new; both Steve Rappaport and Jeremy Boulton have discussed such activity to varying degrees in connection to sixteenth- and seventeenth-century London.[33] Nevertheless, analysing the employment changes of the poor remains rather under-developed. This is the case because it is usually impossible to track the poor's occupational changes since most shifts were largely unrecorded.[34] That said, some of the poor's employment shifts into highly-regulated occupations can be traced with some accuracy.

[33] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, pp. 96-122; Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 62-87.
[34] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, p. 110.

In Ipswich, the poor's ability to lawfully switch between occupations became increasingly restricted by the introduction of local and national labour regulations in the latter half of the sixteenth century. Although by 1550 the town's medieval trade guilds had lost almost all of their power, at this time the magistrates in Ipswich became increasingly concerned with controlling trading practices within their jurisdiction. Their attempts to reassert control began in 1551, and by 1561 the town had elected six wardens who were charged with searching for suspicious trading activity, and ensuring that all who practised 'any craft or mystery' in the town did so only with the town's official licence.[35] Two years later when Parliament enacted the Statute of Artificers, the town was well-placed to enforce the new regulations, which included among other clauses, the requirement that all who practised any trade had been 'brought uppe therin' by way of a seven-year apprenticeship. The statute's prescribed fine for infringing the orders was steep (40*s* per month for the period of transgression) and, if consistently enforced, would have certainly deterred the poor from unlawfully switching occupations without good cause. [36] Although there remains some doubt as to how far this legislation was enforced throughout England, local authorities in urban areas often made vigorous attempts to regulate trading practices in their region.[37] This was certainly the case in Ipswich; however, evidence from the town's quarter sessions presentments and indictments, petty court depositions, and census of the poor suggests that the authorities in Ipswich regulated some occupations, such as those related to the cloth industry and the food and drink trades, more forcefully than others. In itself, close regulation did not necessarily deter the poor from illicitly branching out into different trades, and many who were attached to poor and unstable occupations flouted the law despite the possibility of punishment. Indeed, by 1600 a great number of the poor in

[35] These were a group of men appointed from among the town's legislative assembly (i.e. Portmen and Common Councillors - see Chapter Two for more details) to discover unlawful trading practices and other breaches of town orders; Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 235, 245, 260.
[36] *Tudor Economic Documents*, ed. R.H. Tawney and E. Power (3 vols., London, 1924), i, p. 347.
[37] M.G. Davies, *The Enforcement of English Apprenticeship: A Study in Applied Mercantilism, 1563-1642* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956), pp. 6-17, 244-9, 267; Wales, '"Living at Their Own Hands"', pp. 19-39.

Ipswich were employed in some combination of lawful and unlawful work, and the pooled income from this work played a critical role in the ability of many to meet their immediate economic needs and long-term financial goals.

Lawful Employment

Living in a large urban centre and port town meant that the men and women of Ipswich benefited from access to a great variety of official occupations. Of course, the period's patriarchal norms and strict social hierarchy meant access to most employments was not equal and was determined primarily by gender and socio-economic status. Indeed, whatever their economic situation, adult men normally had different and more varied official employment options than adult women. For that reason, this section considers their official work and wages separately.

Appendix 5.1 shows that at least 58 different occupations were officially claimed by either local male deponents or men listed in the town's census of the poor. These employments included agricultural cultivation, most of the major handicrafts, and the mercantile, victualling, and seafaring trades. Although occupational diversity was present in the town, 179 of the 315 men (roughly 57 per cent) were engaged in only eight occupations. The town's heavy involvement in the textile trade, agricultural production, and brewing makes it predictable that, in order of frequency, most male inhabitants were merchants, labourers, tailors, yeomen, mariners, sailors, weavers, and brewers.[38]

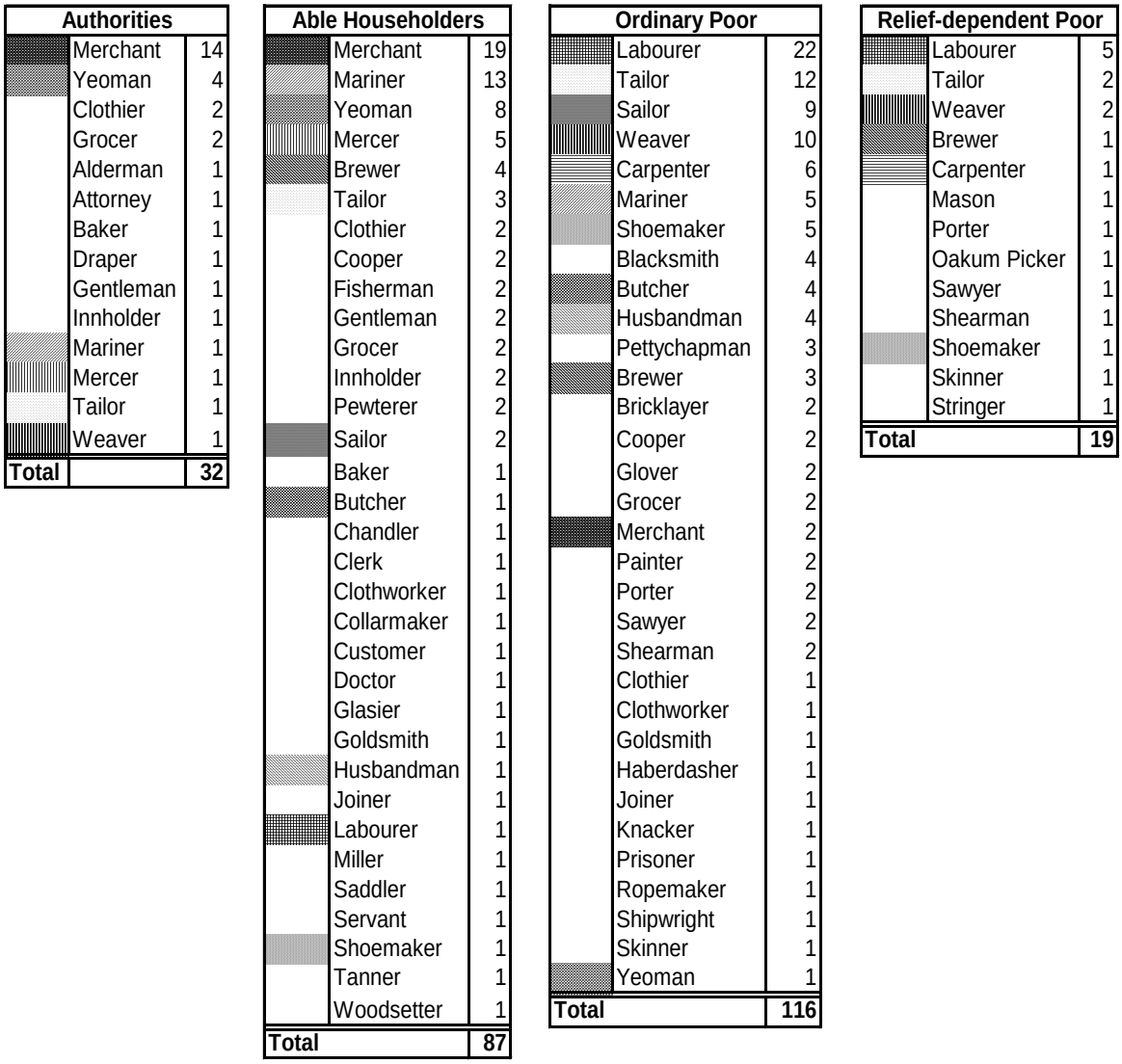
Comparing the occupations of ordinary poor male deponents with their equivalents in wealthier and poorer groups, Figure 5.1 below shows a significant divide between the lawful occupations of financially secure men and their poorer counterparts. Whereas poor men were most commonly noted as labourers, tailors, sailors, and weavers, men of means were normally merchants, mariners, and yeomen. The general socio-economic divide

[38] See Chapter Two for more discussion of the town's economy.

between the types of occupations claimed by the broadly poor and those claimed by the broadly wealthy also coincides rather neatly with contemporary perceptions of poor and wealthy trades. The period's labour regulation supported discrimination against the poor who sought to enter the most lucrative employments, and although the goals of the Statute of Artificers were manifold, controlling social mobility was certainly among them. From 1563 it tied opportunities in most lawful employments directly to a person's family situation and level of wealth.[39] For example, the statute forbade the children of all husbandmen and labourers to be lawfully apprenticed in the most lucrative trades (i.e. merchants, mercers, drapers, goldsmiths, ironmongers, embroiderers, and clothiers), and further restricted apprenticeship in these trades to those who had either a father lawfully practising the trade, or property worth at least 40*s* a year. Thus, those who did not meet these financial requirements, or were the children of husbandmen and labourers, were legally restricted to apprenticeship or service with other, usually poorer, tradesmen. According to the statute these included husbandmen, smiths, wheelwrights, ploughwrights, millers, carpenters, masons, plasterers, sawyers, lime, ore and ash burners, brickmakers and layers, tilers, slaters, tilemakers, linen weavers, turners, coopers, potters, woollen weavers, fullers, thatchers, and a few more obscure trades.[40] The range of lawful occupations found in the town among the poor and wealthier groups obviously conform with the divide supported by these precepts. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that the resident poor in Ipswich always followed the regulations of the statute, but it does suggest that when officials enquired about their employment they usually provided one that would not be suspicious to their local authorities. For even if local authorities were not constantly on the lookout for unlawful trading, it certainly favoured the poor engaged in such practices to remain as unremarkable as possible.

[39] D. Woodward, 'The Background to the Statute of Artificers: The Genesis of Labour Policy, 1558-63', *EcHR*, 33/1 (1980), p. 40.
[40] i.e. in profit or rents; *Tudor Economic Documents*, ed. Tawney and Power, i, pp. 345-6.

FIGURE 5.1: OCCUPATIONS OF PETTY COURT DEPONENTS AND THOSE ON THE CENSUS OF THE POOR (COMBINED)



Authorities	
Merchant	14
Yeoman	4
Clothier	2
Grocer	2
Alderman	1
Attorney	1
Baker	1
Draper	1
Gentleman	1
Innholder	1
Mariner	1
Mercer	1
Tailor	1
Weaver	1
Total	**32**

Able Householders	
Merchant	19
Mariner	13
Yeoman	8
Mercer	5
Brewer	4
Tailor	3
Clothier	2
Cooper	2
Fisherman	2
Gentleman	2
Grocer	2
Innholder	2
Pewterer	2
Sailor	2
Baker	1
Butcher	1
Chandler	1
Clerk	1
Clothworker	1
Collarmaker	1
Customer	1
Doctor	1
Glasier	1
Goldsmith	1
Husbandman	1
Joiner	1
Labourer	1
Miller	1
Saddler	1
Servant	1
Shoemaker	1
Tanner	1
Woodsetter	1
Total	**87**

Ordinary Poor	
Labourer	22
Tailor	12
Sailor	9
Weaver	10
Carpenter	6
Mariner	5
Shoemaker	5
Blacksmith	4
Butcher	4
Husbandman	4
Pettychapman	3
Brewer	3
Bricklayer	2
Cooper	2
Glover	2
Grocer	2
Merchant	2
Painter	2
Porter	2
Sawyer	2
Shearman	2
Clothier	1
Clothworker	1
Goldsmith	1
Haberdasher	1
Joiner	1
Knacker	1
Prisoner	1
Ropemaker	1
Shipwright	1
Skinner	1
Yeoman	1
Total	**116**

Relief-dependent Poor	
Labourer	5
Tailor	2
Weaver	2
Brewer	1
Carpenter	1
Mason	1
Porter	1
Oakum Picker	1
Sawyer	1
Shearman	1
Shoemaker	1
Skinner	1
Stringer	1
Total	**19**

Figure 5.1 suggests that labourers were the most widespread lawful occupational group among poor men. This is hardly surprising since it is well-known that labourers are ubiquitous in sources dealing with the poor and, accordingly, it is their experiences which often dominate discussions of early modern poverty.[41] Among the individuals noted in the town's census of the poor and petty court depositions, roughly twice as many poor labourers can be found (27) as poor tailors (14) and weavers (12), and three times as many

[41] Some examples can be found in: Everitt, 'Social Mobility', pp. 56–73; K. Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (New Brunswick, 1982), pp. 33-8; Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 6-7; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 22-6.

as poor sailors (9). The term 'labourer' usually denoted a person that worked for an employer on a short-term basis, often seasonally, daily, or weekly, to perform various types of basic physical labour.[42] Although neither the petty court depositions, nor the census of the poor, regularly specifies the work that labourers performed in the town, detail given in depositions from six of the town's ordinary poor labourers indicates that the work could include labouring in enclosed fields, chopping, collecting, and selling wood from an employer's land, assisting with menial building work, and packing, loading, carrying, and delivering dry goods and other merchandise.[43]

Although many poor adult labourers may have spent time as servants in husbandry or even apprentices in a trade, it is important to note that in this period labouring was one of the few lawful occupations for poor men that did not require a set period of official training or apprenticeship. Indeed, the requirement of little more than sound strength and basic competency defined the labourer's work.[44] Because of this it was a particularly accessible occupation for very poor men who were unable to acquire the necessary tools, materials, or land to practise husbandry or a trade. The records show, however, that not all labourers in Ipswich lacked access to significant capital. For example, the official occupation of Matthew Gyles (mentioned earlier) was that of a labourer, yet he was able to loan his brother 10*s* on short notice, which equated to roughly 10 to 12 days of wages for a labourer in the town at this time. Matthew's ability to make such a loan probably stemmed from the fact that he was one of several labourers who consistently pursued unlawful work alongside their official occupation.[45] Cases like this indicate that the prevalence of this employment might not accurately reflect the number of actual labourers in the region's population. Instead, they suggest that poor men may often have claimed or were ascribed this relatively

[42] Kussmaul, *Servants in Husbandry*, p. 135.
[43] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 47-8, 89-91, 194, 268-9.
[44] D. Woodward, *Men at Work*, p. 97.
[45] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/4, f. 541.

open and unregulated form of work when a large portion of their income came from unclear (and, possibly, unlawful) activities.

Figure 5.1 also shows that it was common for the poor in Ipswich to be officially connected to the less lucrative trades associated with the cloth industry. It is well established that the poor often were tailors and weavers, particularly within East Anglia.[46] In Norwich, poor textile workers comprised over 20 per cent of those listed in the city's census of the poor taken in 1570, and a comparable percentage can be calculated for the poor men in Ipswich.[47] In Figure 5.1, 26 tailors and weavers are noted among the ordinary poor and the poor dependent upon relief, which equates to roughly 19 per cent of all the poor men (135) in these sources. Seafaring occupations were similarly common among the town's poor (and presumably in other coastal regions), but the experience of poor sailors has received less attention from historians. This is probably the case because the sources normally used to study poverty in this period, such as the town's poor census from 1597, often do not include any seafaring men, as Figure 5.2 (below) indicates. It is notable that when the data for ordinary poor and relief-dependent men are combined (as in Figures 5.1 and 5.2) the result shows that labourers and tailors were the most common official occupations for poor men. In contrast, as Figure 5.3 (below) shows, the most common employment among ordinary poor deponents was that of sailor. If we then combine the numbers of poor sailors and mariners noted in Figure 5.1 (which are the same as in Figure 5.3 because of the lack of seafaring occupations in the census), the results place seafaring work (14) as the next most common official employment type for ordinary poor men after labouring (22). Thus, despite the under-representation of sailors and mariners in the census,

[46] For some discussion of this see J. Patten, 'Changing Occupational Structures in the East Anglian Countryside, 1500-1700', in H.S.A. Fox and R.A. Butlin (eds), *Change in the Countryside: Essays on Rural England 1500-1900* (London, 1979), p. 111; P. Collinson, 'Christian Socialism in Elizabethan Suffolk: Thomas Carew and his Caveat for Clothiers', in H. A. Smith, C. Rawcliffe, R. Virgoe, R. G. Wilson (eds), *Counties and Communities: Essays on East Anglian History Presented to Hassell Smith* (Norwich, 1996), p. 166.
[47] Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy*, p. 26.

the figures still show that poor seafaring men outnumbered poor male inhabitants who were either tailors or weavers.

FIGURE 5.2: OCCUPATIONS OF POOR MEN IN THE CENSUS OF THE POOR, 1597 (TOTAL: 63)

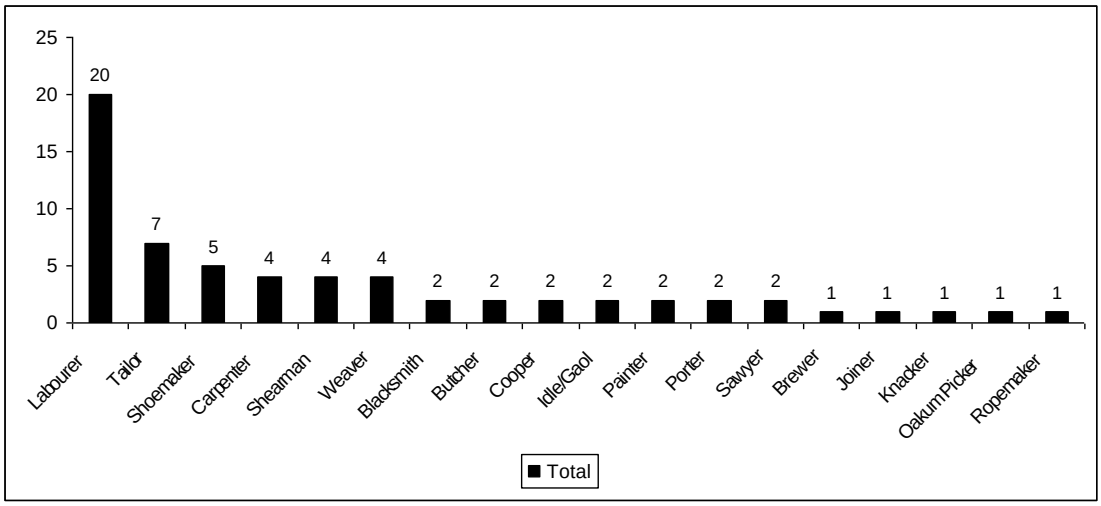
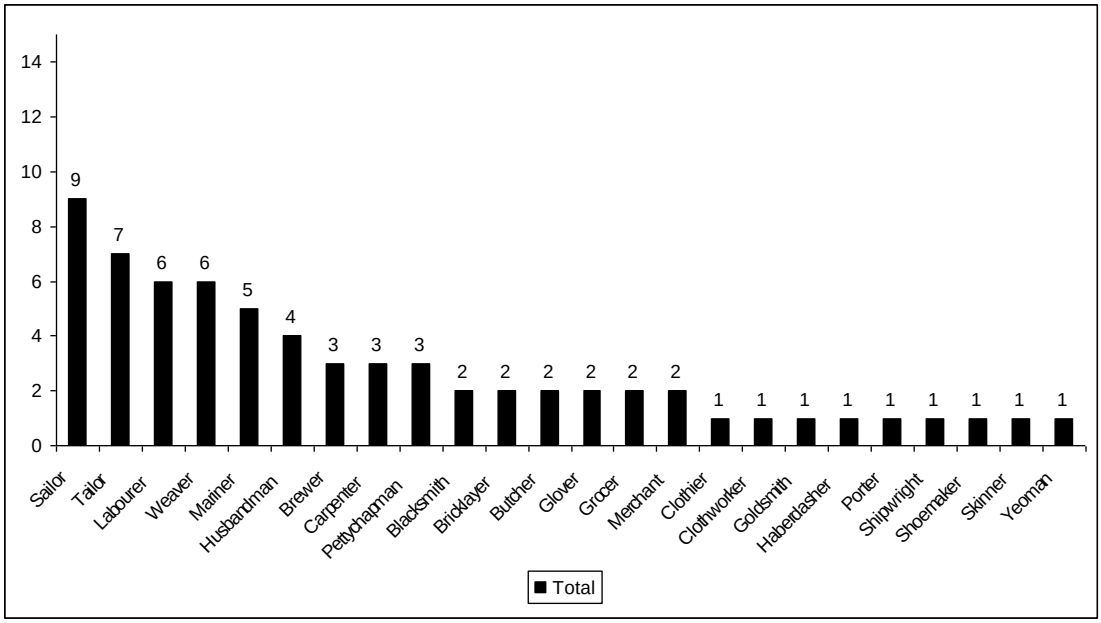


FIGURE 5.3: OCCUPATIONS OF ORDINARY POOR MALE DEPONENTS, 1573-85 (TOTAL: 67)



Since it is unclear how the sources from Ipswich distinguish between the occupations of ‘sailor’ and ‘mariner’, contemporaries’ use of these terms deserves some

further comment. The depositions show that both ordinary poor men and able householders regularly became mariners, but Figure 5.1 indicates that it was more common for ordinary poor men to become sailors (9) than their wealthier counterparts (2). None of the wealthiest deponents in Figure 5.1 (the parish and town authorities) became sailors, whereas at least one became a mariner. This suggests that a person's economic circumstances probably helped to determine when contemporaries used the occupational labels of 'sailor' and 'mariner'. That mariners were distinguished from sailors because they either owned or were master of a watercraft plausibly fits this local pattern. A vessel of any size would have represented a significant outlay of capital and even a modest boat, such as a skiff, wherry, or yawl, could cost between 20*s* and 30*s* during this period. [48] Although costly, this initial expense was manageable for some ordinary poor households, and others inherited such craft from family members.[49] In contrast, larger masted boats that were used in the town's international and coastal trade (often described in depositions as 'hoys', 'barks' or 'ships') were normally beyond the poor's economic grasp. Evidence from the petty court depositions suggests that even able householders went in on 'part ventures' with other men to share out the cost of such ships.[50] Only one ordinary poor mariner was noted as the master of a modestly-sized hoy, but he was a waged employee and not among the owners.[51] All of this indicates that the large numbers of 'sailors' noted in the sources from Ipswich were probably poor seafaring men who manned the decks of wealthier mariners' or merchant-mariners' ships.

[48] These were all principally river vessels used to carry passengers and small goods short distances, or to and from larger ships in port. See W. Falconer, *An Universal Dictionary of the Marine* (London, 1815), pp. 48, 292. At the Ipswich Admiralty Court on 17 September, 1551 a stolen 'bote' was valued at 26*s* 8*d*, Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 235; a deposition from the town's petty court in 1578 refers to a small vessel being bought on the common quay by an ordinary poor householder for 30*s*, SROI, C/2/3/8/1; and in Westminster there is evidence of poor relief officials spending 20*s* on a new 'boat' for a poor man whose vessel had been lost, J. F. Merritt, *The Social World of Early Modern Westminster: Abbey, Court, and Community, 1525-1640* (Manchester, 2005), p. 280.
[49] SROI, C/2/3/8/1; SROI, IC/AA1/29/196.
[50] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 71-2, 265-6.
[51] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 396-99.

Indeed, sailors were in many ways the 'labourers' of the sea. In practice, becoming a sailor did not require an apprenticeship and was primarily contingent upon physical capacity and, perhaps, competency and reliability. It also required little, if any, initial investment of capital. In theory, the Statute of Artificers implied the regulation of the maritime trades through its generic clauses that covered 'any arte mystery or manuall occupacion' practised in the kingdom. These clauses included the requisite period of apprenticeship, but did not place any economic restriction on who could become seafarers.[52] Even so, the enforcement of seafaring labour regulations was left largely to local governments and maritime companies who, it seems, generally failed to enforce the statute's requirements.[53] In Ipswich, this responsibility fell to the town's admiralty court which oversaw the seafaring activity within its jurisdiction. The 'Articles of Inquiry' that defined this court's areas of interest show that it was mainly concerned with regulating the occupations of loadsmen,[54] pilots, and masters of ships, presumably because the safety of waterborne lives and goods depended upon the skill and training of such men.[55] Thus, they left the regulation of sailors' employment largely up to employers, and as a result formal apprenticeships were not usually required.[56]

The petty court records and a selection of apprenticeship bonds relating to some of the town's seafarers show that taking up the most common seafaring trades required minimal expenditure, which made them very accessible to poor men. The draw of going to sea to realise one's economic potential had long been present in the town. In particular, during the many periods of dislocation in the cloth trade, such as in the late 1560s and early 70s, some poor textile workers in Ipswich may have been drawn to the higher pay and

[52] *Tudor Economic Documents*, ed. Tawney and Power, i, pp. 338-50.
[53] C. Fury, *Tides in the Affairs of Men: The Social History of Elizabethan Seamen, 1580-1603* (London, 2002), pp. 1-22.
[54] From the context of the document this occupation probably referred to those who operated the loading crane at the town's common quay. The term may also have included those who transferred cargo to and from large ships anchored in the channel.
[55] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 552-7.
[56] Fury, *Tides*, pp. 1-22.

lucrative perquisites that came with employment in seafaring.[57] Adopting a career as a sailor appears to have been relatively easy if one was able-bodied and could find a ship in need of men. The crew of most ships contained sailors with varying levels of skills, including the most experienced 'able seamen', 'ordinary seamen' (or those who could make themselves useful on board), 'landmen' who had never before been to sea, and 'boys' (or apprentices).[58] In Ipswich, at least one 30-year old poor and single weaver summarily left his work to become a landman on a ship. In 1575, Thomas Naylor explained to the petty court that he had recently ignored the terms of the Statute of Artificers and left his employer's work partially unfinished to '[go] serve uppon the sea' because he was unsatisfied with his wages and it was 'a verye ill pece of worke to doe as ever he wrought in his lif[e].'[59] Furthermore, a sample of 38 seafaring apprenticeship bonds made between 1598 and 1604 indicates that the children of poor men unconnected to the seafaring trades (such as tailors and carpenters) often became sailors in this period, normally at minimal cost. Parents and guardians were usually required only to provide decent clothing for the child at the outset of their apprenticeship term.[60] This was the case because many seafaring masters benefited from their apprentices almost from the start, since they could claim their apprentices' labour, wages, and shares from any voyages. Moreover, when at sea, the boarding cost for apprentices was borne by the owners of the venture.[61]

Although it will be shown that poor sailors could be relatively high wage-earners, it is also the case that many sailors and their families were periodically threatened with serious deprivation.[62] This suggests that Figures 5.1 and 5.2 almost certainly under-represent the presence of poor sailors and mariners in Ipswich because of the omission of seafarers from the town's census of the poor. A similar anomaly was discussed in Chapter

[57] Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, pp. 96-8.
[58] For the definitions of able seamen, ordinary seamen and landmen see Falconer, *Dictionary Marine*, pp. 2, 327, 214; for the use of 'boys' implying apprentices at sea see: SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 93-4, 418-9.
[59] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, f. 81.
[60] SROI, C/3/2/2/2.
[61] Fury, *Tides*, p. 14.
[62] Ibid., 96-7.

Three in relation to the ascription of levels of wealth to the town's parishes. There it was shown that the number of relief recipients recorded in 1590 for the parish of St Clement appeared too low for a parish known to house numerous sailors and their families. It was also suggested that other sources of support or income must have existed for seafaring men and their families which they could draw upon during periods of hardship, such as sailors' prolonged absences at sea. Further evidence shows that town authorities usually approached the official support of poor seafaring men differently than other poor inhabitants. Indeed, at the Great Court on 19 September 1571, it was ordered that:

> every shipp of 100th tunns and upward, that shall cross the sea, shall pay to the hospitall 12d, and all under 60 tunns 6d. And all others travailing to Newcastle 4d, and those that goe to London 3d, and those to Ireland 12d, and others yt usually crosse the sea, shall pay for every hiher[63] 2d, and suche as goe along the cost, 1d. Uppon condicon that every mariner wthin the liberty, whoe shall be inhabitant in the Towne by the space of 3 yeres, and shall stand in need of releife by reason of poverty, shall be kept wthin the Hospitall.[64]

From this we can see that funding for the relief of poor sailors and mariners was normally raised through a special rate on ships that travelled through the town's admiralty jurisdiction. In addition, it appears that mariners 'in need of relief' who were resident in Ipswich were provided for in the town's main poor relief institution, Christ's Hospital, not in their own homes. Records from the Medway region in Kent (Rochester, Chatham, and Gillingham) show that at least one other institution, Hawkins' Hospital, was operating similarly to this scheme at Ipswich. Indeed, it was even more geared towards the relief of seafarers because it had been established solely to relieve local civilians in these specific occupations.[65] Yet, at least one historian has argued that, overall, the mercantile seafaring community 'had neither the infrastructure nor the resources to provide long-term maintenance for its needy members'.[66] This might well have been the case in other regions, but Ipswich appears to have been a notable exception. It remains unclear, though, how these

[63] In this context, 'hiher' probably refers to the act of commissioning a vessel for a voyage.
[64] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 292.
[65] TNA, GB/1204/CH/108 (Records of the Hospital of Sir John Hawkins KT. in Chatham, 1594-1987).
[66] Fury, *Tides*, p. 180.

schemes related to the wives, widows, and children of seafaring men. The policy in Ipswich may have implied the provision of their support as well, and they probably had access to other forms of informal support from the seafaring community.[67] More importantly though, as was the case for labourers, the town's quarter sessions entries show that seafaring families often engaged in lucrative unlawful work which undoubtedly helped to offset the economic stress of a sailor's absence.[68]

Even though those who officially worked as labourers, tailors, and sailors often lived in poverty, Figure 5.1 shows that there were some occupational overlaps between wealthier and poorer men. In particular, tailors, brewers, and mariners could be found amongst most socio-economic groups. Whereas the distribution of mariners has already been discussed, a few words must also be said about tailors and brewers and why, overall, these three occupations may have been particularly prone to cross socio-economic divides. The majority of tailors found in the sources were among the ordinary poor (12), but some were able householders (3), others were relief-dependent (2), and one, Christopher Tolson, served as a parish official in 1574.[69] In contrast, brewers were rather evenly represented among the able householders (4) and ordinary poor (3), but only one, Peter Barren, was on relief, and none was counted among the town and parish authorities. All of these trades had at least one thing in common: the Statute of Artificers barely, if ever, mentions them. Of course, the general clauses of the statute still covered brewers, tailors, and mariners, but they were not subject to any of the statute's clauses that prescribed an economic requirement for a trade's prospective practitioners. Moreover, tailors, brewers, and mariners could lawfully retain the children of husbandmen and labourers as apprentices because they were not mentioned in those prohibitive clauses.[70] This means that these trades were legally accessible to those from most socio-economic backgrounds, and they were not stigmatised

[67] Ibid, p. 211.
[68] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/4, fols. 536, 539, 541, 546, 552, 555.
[69] Tolson is noted in 1574 as a collector of the poor rate in the parish of St Matthew. See SROI, C/3/2/2/2.
[70] *Tudor Economic Documents*, ed. Tawney and Power, i, pp. 338-50.

by being among the occupations that the statute officially prescribed to poorer men.[71] In truth, these occupational labels covered men who might practise their employments with widely differing levels of resources and responsibilities. For such reasons these employments may have been equally attractive to wealthier parents looking to place their younger sons in an acceptable trade, and poorer parents who sought to provide their children with potentially lucrative employment prospects.

When we turn to consider the official employments of poor women, it is immediately apparent that poor men had at least twice as many official occupations as their female counterparts. Whereas Figure 5.1 shows that in Ipswich poor men claimed at least 35 official occupations, Figure 5.4 indicates only 17 for poor women. Since the occupations of these women are based solely on the town's census of the poor, the data in Figure 5.4 may under-represent the different types of their lawful occupations. The absence of poor sailors from the census necessarily indicates the absence of their families, and implies the absence of poor seafarers' widows and children. The census offers some indication that the wives of seafarers may have participated in different types of lawful work than those attached to men in other occupations. Certain employments only appear among those who lived in the parishes of St Clement and St Mary Quay, two of the parishes most connected to the seafaring trades. In particular, the census shows oakum pickers only in the parish of St Clement; this was the tiresome and grimy work of untwisting and pulling apart old tarred ship ropes to make the fibres ready to be reused in waterproofing ships.[72] Figures 5.2 and

[71] K. D. M. Snell, *Annals of the Labouring Poor: Social Change and Agrarian England, 1660-1900* (Cambridge, 1985), p. 228.
[72] C. Waters, *A Dictionary of Old Trades, Titles and Occupations* (Newbury, 2002), p. 197; Falconer, *Dictionary Marine*, p. 222.

5.4 show that both poor men (1) and poor women (5) became oakum pickers, but many more women claimed this work.[73]

FIGURE 5.4: OCCUPATIONS OF POOR WOMEN IN THE CENSUS OF THE POOR, 1597 (TOTAL: 104)[74]

Ordinary Poor	
Spinner	36
Wool Finisher	12
Knitter	9
Seamstress	6
Helper	3
Children	2
Keeper	2
Labourer	2
Beggar	1
Buttonmaker	1
Gardener	1
Oakum Picker	1
Ropemaker	1
Tailor	1
Teacher	1
Victualler	1
Total	**80**

Relief-dependent Poor	
Spinner	20
Wool Finisher	5
Knitter	4
Oakum Picker	4
Labourer	2
Seamstress	2
Keeper	1
Lacemaker	1
Total	**39**

Although poor women had various options when it came to their official employments, Figure 5.4 shows that four occupations were much more common than the rest. Overwhelmingly, women became spinners and a small, but still significant, minority were employed in picking or carding wool (wool finishing), knitting, and sewing. There is every indication that poor women in Ipswich had developed a certain degree of specialisation when it came to their official employments. More often than not women had just one official occupation listed in the census, and only 15 of the 104 women were

[73] Over the course of the seventeenth century, oakum pickers often were destitute women, but increasingly included destitute men. By the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries oakum picking had become common for both genders and was an essential part of the work of many prisons and workhouses. See CKS, Q/SB/4/90 (Kent Quarter Sessions); TNA, ADM 106/310, f. 310 (Work on Ships at the Yard); P. Priestley, *Victorian Prison Lives: English Prison Biography, 1830-1914* (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 121-3.

[74] Note the census shows 15 women had two or more occupations, usually spinning and other work, such as knitting, sewing, or finishing wool. These women have been counted twice in this figure — once for each category.

employed in more than one official activity, usually spinning alongside other work. [75] The census also suggests that women's official employments were not normally related to those of their husbands. Figure 5.5 shows that out of the 41 married households on the census only nine of the ordinary poor wives and two of the relief dependent claimed work connected to their husbands' official occupations.

FIGURE 5.5: OCCUPATIONS OF MARRIED COUPLES IN THE CENSUS OF THE POOR, 1597 (TOTAL: 41)

Ordinary Poor (Husband/Wife)[1]	
Labourer/Spinner	11
Textiles (Both)[2]	8
Carpenter/Textiles	2
Labourer/Knitter	2
Sawyer/Spinner	2
Blacksmith/Seamstress	1
Blacksmith/Textiles	1
Butcher/Knitter	1
Butcher/Textiles	1
Cooper/Spinner	1
Joiner/Spinner	1
Labourer/Beggar	1
Labourer/Children	1
Labourer/Seamstress	1
Painter/Spinner	1
Porter/Knitter	1
Sawyer/Keeper	1
Shoemaker/Gardener	1
Wood-related (Both)	1
Total	**39**

Relief-dependant Poor (Husband/Wife)	
Labourer/Spinner	2
Brewer/Keeper[3]	1
Carpenter/Spinner	1
Oakum (Both)	1
Shoemaker/Spinner	1
Total	**6**

[1] Includes three women who had more than one occupation.

[2] Includes two women noted as 'helping' their husbands who were tailors with their work.

[3] These occupations are considered related since they both deal with hospitality.

Normally, such overlaps occurred in households engaged in textile production; several wives of tailors either spun or 'helped' with their husbands' work and at least two shearmen's wives spun as well. Occasionally, the wives of poor men claimed employments that were an offshoot of their husbands' official occupation. This was the case for the

[75] The 15 women who had two occupations noted in the census included spinning and wool finishing (8), sewing and knitting (2), labouring and spinning (1), spinning and minding children (1), spinning and keeping (1), spinning and knitting (1), and spinning and teaching (1). All categories have been standardised for ease of analysis and reporting.

carpenter's wife who was a buttonmaker (noted as 'wood-related' in Figure 5.5) and the brewer's wife who was a 'keeper of women'.[76] Nonetheless, the vast majority of ordinary poor wives (27) and most of their counterparts on relief (4) worked in occupations unconnected with their husbands' official occupational spheres. Since the census mainly represents poor tradesmen and agricultural workers, it was most common for these poor spouses to be male labourers or artisans and female spinners. This disconnect between the official occupations of wives and husbands has been found in other areas, such as London, as well and suggests that poor women probably felt little pressure from their husbands to engage in specific types of work.[77]

Although spinning was clearly the most common official occupation for poor women at this time, leading up to the poor law statutes of 1598/1601 there appears to have been little social expectation that women would learn how to spin. Figure 5.4 shows that in 1597, only a little over half of the poor women in the census actively spun (56 of 104), a figure that includes 13 women who spun alongside other employments. Furthermore, evidence suggests that many of the women in employments other than spinning probably had never learnt how to spin. According to the census, on the eve of the poor law legislation of 1598 at least 20 poor women in Ipswich (and, presumably, their female children) required a wheel and some form of 'teaching' in order to use it. Of these 20 poor women, 18 already had an official occupation, and the two that did not were married to poor men

[76] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, p. 124; buttons in this period were most often made by wrapping thread around wooden forms, see Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures*, p. 139. Small-scale brewers often ran unofficial public houses, see McIntosh, *Working Women*, p. 175. There is some evidence that a 'keeper of women' took in and nursed women for several weeks after childbirth. See E. Hubbard, *City Women: Money, Sex, and the Social Order in Early Modern London* (Oxford, 2012), pp. 215-16.
[77] See, for example, Harding, 'Working Wives', pp. 557-9.

who had once been financially secure.[78] Figure 5.6 indicates that most of these 18 poor women had existing employment in work outside of spinning (12), often as knitters.

FIGURE 5.6: OCCUPATIONS OF WOMEN REQUIRING 'TEACHING' IN ORDER TO SPIN, CENSUS OF THE POOR, 1597 (TOTAL: 18)[79]

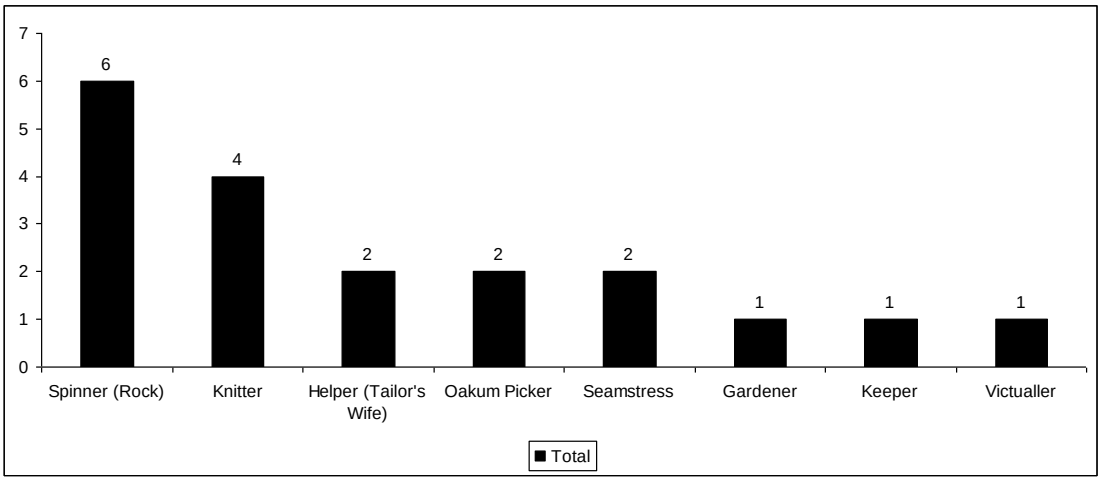


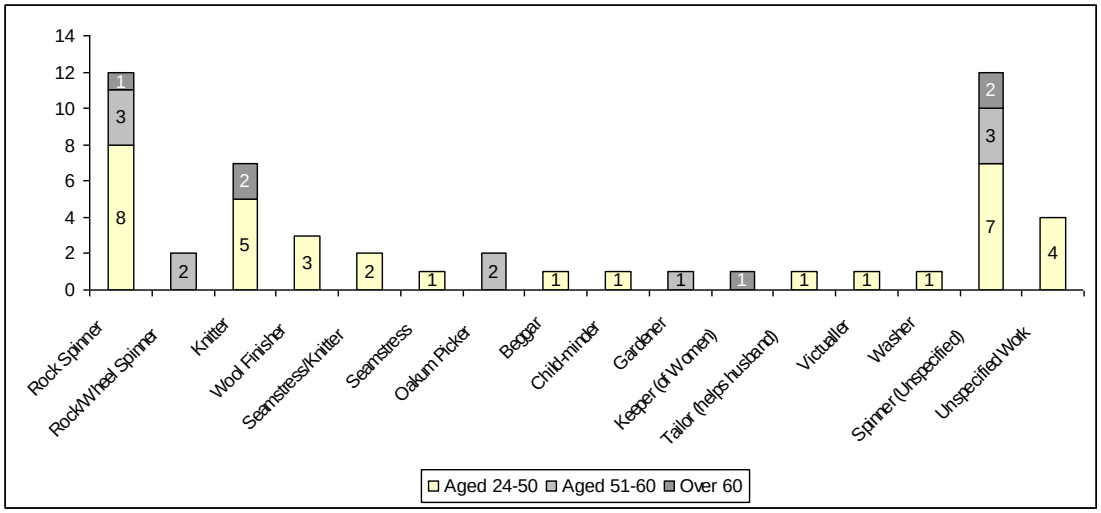
Figure 5.6 also shows that a substantial portion of these women (6) were already employed as spinners, but lacked the knowledge of how to spin on a wheel. Instead, either by situation or design, they only had learnt to spin on a handheld drop spindle, which contemporaries referred to as a 'rock'.[80]

In contrast, an even larger group of poor women (52) did not require instruction in order to spin on a wheel, but they lacked some combination of wheels, wool cards, or 'stock' (i.e. wool, or other fibres), which seemingly kept them from taking up that employment (see Figure 5.7 below). This suggests that before 1597 at least half the women with work noted in the census (52 of 104), knew how to spin on a wheel but had eschewed this activity in order to spin 'on the rock' or work in other unrelated employments. Such evidence underscores how spinning, especially on the wheel, was not a universal activity

[78] Frances Huling was the wife of Laurence Huling, who was a cooper and most likely brother to James Huling and son to John Huling, two able householders (also coopers) in the town. Margery Halle was the wife of Robert Halle, the son of a constable and parish churchwarden. Both women may have married believing that they were entering households that would not require them to have an occupation outside of running the household.
[79] Includes one woman with two occupations: sewing and knitting.
[80] Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures*, pp. 6-8, 159.

for poor women at this time. Moreover, because authorities in three of the town's recorded parishes failed to note the lack of spinning wheels or teaching amongst their resident poor, it is probable that the number of women who did not know how to spin was even greater than the census suggests.[81]

FIGURE 5.7: WOMEN GIVEN WHEELS, CARDS, OR STOCK IN THE CENSUS OF THE POOR, 1597 (TOTAL: 52)



Even though the census of the poor does not always differentiate spinners who spun on a wheel from those who spun on a drop spindle, it does make some distinction for 37 of the 56 spinners noted in Figure 5.4 (66 per cent). Overall, the data shows that slightly over half these poor spinners spun on a drop spindle (19 of 37) and slightly under half spun on a wheel (18 of 37). At first glance, this might appear to suggest that poor spinners in Ipswich did not overwhelmingly prefer one method of spinning over the other. Yet, different patterns in the ages of these two groups indicate otherwise. Figure 5.7 suggests that it was usual for poor women who spun on a drop spindle to be significantly younger than those who spun on a wheel, and analysing the data for all spinners in the census shows that this was indeed the case; those who spun on a spindle were usually in their 30s and those who spun on a wheel in their 50s, or older. Likewise, the census indicates that it was typical for

[81] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 119-40.

knitters to be much younger than spinners in Ipswich; Margaret Pelling has noted a similar pattern found in Norwich in 1570.[82]

Spinning methods appear to have had little effect on the weekly wages that spinners received, so it seems probable that the preference young women had for working with a spindle stemmed from the fact that it allowed them greater public mobility and social interaction than spinning on a wheel. Barnard Capp has shown that across this period women in England (including the poor) embraced the sociability afforded by portable work, and in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries contemporaries often commented that groups of women (perhaps four or five together) would congregate in public areas, such as churchyards, streets, markets, and 'under the hedges' in rural lanes, in order to spin and knit in good company.[83] Simply because of the size of the equipment, spinning on a traditional 'great wheel' or 'wool wheel' was perhaps best done at home, and this was also the case for the smaller, but still rather large, multi-purpose spinning wheels which were in common use by the late sixteenth century.[84] In comparison, spinning on a drop spindle provided women with much greater mobility while they worked. Unlike the wheel, the spindle allowed spinners to walk about, ride a horse, attend to their young children and/or livestock, and a myriad of other activities, all whilst they worked and chatted. Knitting was the only other common occupation for poor women that provided a similar degree of daily mobility and freedom; whereas the bulk of a spinning wheel limited the scope a woman might wander, knitting pins, yarn, and a half-finished stocking all were extremely lightweight and portable. Of course, most older women also probably welcomed social interaction during their working day. Indeed, when women worked at home they often sat beside their front door spinning on a wheel because this provided both ample light, and an increased chance

[82] M. Pelling, *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England* (London, 1998), p. 169.
[83] B. Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England* (Oxford, 2007), pp. 42-55.
[84] Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures*, p. 159.

for company.[85] Even so, the different age patterns of poor women in Ipswich who spun and knitted are particularly important because they suggest two new findings. First, in general, it seems that women engaged in the most mobile work activities in the town were often young and poor. And second, when left to their own devices, poor women usually chose settled employment which kept them in the home (such as spinning on the wheel) later in their life-cycle.

All of this evidence suggests that on the eve of the introduction of the poor law statutes in 1598, most poor women in Ipswich had encountered little familial or social pressure to choose a specific official occupation, such as spinning on a wheel. Until that date, if a poor woman was able-bodied, it seems all that mattered was that she claimed some form of lawful daily employment. There is ample evidence, however, that this situation began to change as the town started to implement the provisions of the new poor laws. Since the town's census of the poor is dated only by the year (1597), it is unclear if it was taken just before, or immediately after, the statutes were enacted by Parliament in the session held between 24 October 1597 and 9 February 1598. According to the old style of dating, the new year did not begin until 25 March, so the census could have been compiled at any point between those dates in 1597 and 1598. Either way, the town authorities appear to have acted quickly either to gear up for or immediately execute this new legislation. One of the major tenets of the statutes required authorities to provide some form of work to the unemployed or underemployed and able-bodied poor.[86] As the census of the poor and accounts from the town's overseers of the poor attest, the work provided by authorities to poor female inhabitants always came in the form of spinning wheels, wool cards, and instruction. The constant provision of these items to poor women in the town from 1598 until at least 1620 can be seen in many overseers accounts, including, for example, the

[85] Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, pp. 42-55.
[86] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 127-8; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 171-226.

parish of St Nicholas in Ipswich.[87] The systematic provision of these items shows that after 1598 poor women faced overt pressure to adopt spinning, especially spinning on a wheel, as their official employment. It seems plausible then that such pressure pushed more poor women into spinning in the closing decades of this study than would otherwise have been the case. This may have contributed to the greater fragmentation of their employments which, it has been argued, occurred at this time.[88]

Figure 5.4 shows that when a poor woman claimed official employments other than spinning, it was often picking or carding wool, knitting, or sewing. Picking wool was particularly common among the work of women in the census and the majority of those who prepared wool (10 of 17) were engaged in this activity (Figure 5.4). Picking involved using one's fingers to pull or 'open' the clean sheared fleece to make the wool fibres airy and cloud-like. This process was the initial step in the preparation of newly-sheared wool; if the wool was not picked then it was impossible to card the fibres and turn it into roving (i.e. straighten them by brushing the wool between two brushes) because the wool would be too matted and dense. For ease of presentation, Figure 5.4 (and others) combine carding wool with picking wool under the occupation of 'wool finisher', but poor women's inclinations towards these activities cannot be equated. Whereas several women were chiefly employed in wool picking, none of the seven women that carded wool did so as their sole official employment, they all also spun. Moreover, unlike the women who picked wool, none of the women who carded wool was paid a wage solely for that work. This seems to suggest that poor women were reluctant to card wool as a primary employment, probably because of the amount of physical exertion that the work required. Brushing matted wool for hours each day would have tired even the strongest of women, and in comparison all of the most common forms of women's labour, such as spinning, picking, knitting, and sewing, were much less physically demanding.

[87] SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1.
[88] Harding, 'Working Wives', pp. 562-3.

Finally, knitting was also common among the official occupations for poor women in the town, and Figure 5.4 shows that at least 13 poor women were employed in this work. Unlike spinning, which by 1597 had long been popular with women in England because of its connection to the textile trade, knitting was a burgeoning employment market that had only become viable in the second half of the sixteenth century. Before 1560 there had been little public demand for knitted goods in England, but by the early 1580s they had become a staple garment.[89] As Eric Kerridge has shown, by 1583 those at all social levels, even the 'otherwise very poor, having scarce 40 shillings of wages for the year', preferred to wear knit stockings because cloth ones were generally 'thought to be base.'[90] This fashion trend was enduring and by 1598 had created a strong demand for knitted goods. Some contemporaries even suggested earnings of up to 4*s* a week for knitters in this period, which was a substantial wage at the time, and enabled some women to live independently.[91] As the next section will show, those in Ipswich earned less than this, but the scarcity of knitters in the labour force did increase the wages for those who knitted well above those for spinners. This suggests that in 1597 when town authorities began to exert pressure on poor women to take up spinning in lieu of other official occupations, it probably caused decreased earnings for many poor households.

Lawful Income

The level of wages associated with the town's most common lawful employments is the obvious indicator of whether or not poor adults could have sustained their families from such income. This section analyses these wages in turn and suggests the feasibility of supporting an average poor family solely from the proceeds of their lawful labour. In a

[89] The timing of this new fashion trend appears to coincide with the year that Elizabeth I reportedly declared a preference for knitted silk instead of woven cloth stockings (1560), see J. Thirsk, 'The Fantastical Folly of Fashion: The English Stocking Knitting Industry, 1500-1700', in N. B. Harte and K. G. Ponting (eds), *Textile History and Economic History: Essays in Honour of Miss Julia de Lacy Mann* (Manchester, 1973), pp. 53-5.
[90] Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures*, p. 133.
[91] Ibid; M. Abbott, *Life Cycles in England, 1560-1720* (London, 1996), p. 71; Harding, 'Working Wives', p. 550.

period known for its limited supply of gold, silver, and copper coins, the relative importance of a person's wages when compared with their access to credit has been questioned. In particular, the fact that employers could sometimes continuously delay the payment of cash wages because of lack of funds, has led to the argument that they were of less real value to the poor than access to credit (either through their employer or within their community), the payment of wages in goods, and other perquisites (lawful or otherwise) which might be associated with the work.[92] There is no denying that all of these factors could contribute to the economic stability of many poor households, and this chapter's emphasis on the importance of wages does not necessarily marginalise the significance of the poor's 'makeshift economy'. Nevertheless, as has been discussed, access to these makeshifts differed between rural and urban areas, and while it may have been mutually beneficial for a rural yeoman to pay an agricultural labourer with a share of his corn, an urban mason would have struggled if he tried to pay his poor workman with bricks or hairy mortar.[93] Figure 5.1 has shown that the overwhelming majority of both ordinary poor and relief-dependent men in Ipswich worked in occupations not associated with agricultural cultivation. Therefore, more often than not, the town's poor probably worked on the expectation that their wages would be paid in cash at some point in the future. Wages, then, were of central importance to the financial stability and accumulation of wealth of poor urban adults.

Evidence of men's wages from the town's census of the poor suggests a great deal of uniformity in the recorded wages of many poor labourers and tradesmen. The wage data of 14 poor artisans (including tailors, weavers, carpenters, joiners, sawyers, and shearmen)

[92] C. Muldrew and S. King, 'Cash, Wages and the Economy of Makeshifts in England, 1650-1800', in P. Scholliers and L. Schwartz (eds), *Experiencing Wages: Social and Cultural Aspects of Wage Forms in Europe since 1500* (Oxford, 2003), pp. 155-80; A. Shepard, 'Poverty, Labour and the Language of Social Description in Early Modern England', *Past and Present*, 201 (Nov. 2008), pp. 51-95; A. Shepard and J. Spicksley, 'Worth, Age and Social Status in Early Modern England', *EcHR*, 64/2 (2011), pp. 493–530.
[93] Muldrew and King note that non-agricultural workers in urban areas most often worked on the basis of cash payment for weekly wages, however the subject is treated rather cursorily. Muldrew and King, 'Cash, Wages and the Economy', pp. 163-4.

and 13 poor labourers can be found in this source; 11 of the tradesmen and six of the labourers appear to have had an income of between 2*s* and 3*s* per week, and an implied daily wage rate of 12*d*. Even so, the spread of the daily and weekly wages for the two groups does differ. Whereas poor craftsmen normally earned between 12*d* and 3*s* each week, poor labourers earned between 6*d* and 3*s*.[94] Age appears to have been the primary cause of the low wages found among many of these labourers; all except one of those who earned less than 2*s* per week were over the age of 60, and their wages naturally would have decreased as their physical strength and stamina waned. Payments for the maintenance of the church in the parish of St Peter and other work commissioned by the town authorities suggest that, in the prime of life, male labourers usually earned between 10*d* and 12*d* a day. This was the case in 1576 when two labourers were each paid 11*d* daily to assist a tiler with paving a grave, in 1577 when Alan Slacke was paid 3*s* 4*d* for four days 'work in the church yard' (10*d* a day), in 1593 when the churchwardens paid 12*d* 'to a laborer for making cleane the churche windows', and the same year when the town treasurers paid 3*s* to a labourer for three days work (12*d* a day) on the town's springs.[95] In addition, these wages suggest that labourers in Ipswich were particularly well-paid in comparison to their counterparts in other urban regions, especially those in the North. Indeed, in Chester the average daily wage for labourers was only 8*d* in this period.[96] If we assume that, as indicated by the census, most labourers in Ipswich would have found work for at least half the working week (3 days of 6) then this data suggests that their common weekly wages probably ranged between 2*s* 5*d* and 3*s*, with the potential to earn between 4*s* 10*d* and 6*s* if a labourer was in full-time employment. Such figures put them on par with the common weekly wages of poor craftsmen noted in the town's census.

[94] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 119-40.
[95] SROI, JC1/1(4); *Town Finances of Elizabethan Ipswich*, ed. Webb and MacCulloch, p. 80.
[96] Woodward, *Men at Work*, p. 107.

The variations in the weekly wages of poor tradesmen listed in this source suggest that 12*d* was also the normal daily wage rate for those in this group; of the 14 poor craftsmen found in the census, 12 earned a total weekly income in increments of 12*d*. More concrete evidence of this can be seen in the payments to tradesmen, such as masons and carpenters, which were recorded in several of the town's parish churchwardens' accounts. For example, the accounts from the parish of St Matthew indicate that the daily rate for a mason in 1578 was usually 12*d* a day, and his boy was an additional 6*d*.[97] Furthermore, accounts from the parish of St Clement show that this rate increased from 1*s* to 1*s* 4*d* around 1600.[98] Since the average weekly income of the tradesmen in the census was between 2*s* and 3*s* (as noted) this suggests that it was common for them to work merely two or three days a week in their official employments. All of this indicates that most poor tradesmen probably earned between 3*s* and 4*s* per week if they were underemployed (3 days of 6) or between 6*s* and 8*s* if they were in full employment.

Although common wage rates for poor craftsmen can be found, evidence from other sources suggest that poor artisans in the town attempted to increase their income by negotiating their wages with prospective employers. During this period, the ability of poor men in Ipswich to successfully negotiate their wages was frequently in contention with changing market and demographic forces, as well as fluctuations in the town's enforcement of statutory wage regulation. By the 1560s the negotiation of wages between poor men and their employers had become both a common practice and a source of economic and political tension. It is true that in 1563 the Statute of Artificers, among other regulations, ordered JPs throughout the country to set annual caps on the daily wages of artificers and handicraftsmen.[99] Yet, various sources from Ipswich suggest that some poor artisans, especially those in the building trades, regularly continued to negotiate their own wages, at

[97] SROI, FB95/A2/1, f. 10.
[98] SROI, FB98/E3/1, n.p.
[99] *Tudor Economic Documents*, ed. Tawney and Power, i, pp. 342-4.

least through the 1580s. Moreover, for a protracted period of time, even the town's JPs ignored the parts of the statute that dealt with wage regulation. As a result, in the opening decade of this period many poor men appear to have retained some control over what they were paid for their work. This is important because it also overlapped with one period of general trade disruption in the cloth industry, brought on by the Dutch Revolt. Indeed, it was not until over a decade after the Statute of Artificers was enacted that the town authorities in Ipswich made their first real attempt to regulate such wages within the borough. This initial attempt was recorded at the town's Great Court on Friday, 23 December 1575 when it was decided that 'orders for artificers, handicrafts, and millers shall be put in writing, and set up in the moot hall in a table'.[100] The authorities' decision to start enforcing wage limits within the town coincides with a growth in suits in the town's petty court that dealt with wage negotiations. Starting in late 1576, depositions from the court often concern the process by which ordinary artificers agreed their wages with prospective employers; before this time, no cases dealt with such matters in detail. Between November 1576 and June 1578, several depositions outline how four ordinary poor tradesmen negotiated and agreed their employment. These depositions show that, despite the enforcement of wage regulation by authorities, ordinary poor craftsmen from various occupations continued to follow employment custom rather than the law.

Because of this, for a time, ordinary poor men retained significant bargaining power at all of the stages of their employment. William Brome, an ordinary poor sawyer, leveraged this agency when he negotiated the terms of his employment with shipwright Laurence Andrewes in August of 1576. According to another sawyer who witnessed the exchange, Brome began the negotiations by asking Andrewes 'what wages [he] wollde geve him and his boye a daye'. When, Andrewes responded that 'he wolde geve him iiix

[100] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 308.

d.[101] a daie and for his boye ... [a groat[102]]', the two began an involved process of give and take over Brome's employment terms. Once the wages were agreed, Brome insisted that he wanted to work with Andrewes only the 'best of ye yere and have [his] winter worke to seke'. When Andrewes counter-offered with a promise to provide Brome his 'whole winters worke' Brome would only accept the work if Andrewes also agreed that Brome 'might helpe his freindes at his nede one daie or two'. Ultimately, Brome and Andrewes struck a bargain that was mutually beneficial and met the expectations and needs of both the ordinary poor sawyer and his well-off employer.[103]

The ability of poor craftsmen to bargain over the amount of their daily wages with varying results can be seen in even greater detail in the experiences of two potters who were hired for the same work, but at different times, by one employer. In depositions from November of 1576, when the employer hired Thomas Erle (the first potter), Thomas agreed to work on his own at a daily rate of 10*d* plus meat and drink until he had completed a 'kilnful' of pots. In contrast, the second potter hired by the employer, William Wyggens, was only able to secure the daily rate of 5*d* plus meat and drink for the same amount of work, but the employer offered Wyggens the use of his boy as a helper. In his deposition, Wyggens explained that when he told Erle (the first potter) of his wages, Erle said 'that ii shillinges for the doinge and workinge of the promisses as aforesaid was not reasonable to contente and satisfie [him] for his said labor'.[104] Further support to Wyggens' implication that he had been grossly underpaid for his work, came from a third potter and deponent, William Lea (from Essex), who told the court that he 'wolde not doe the lyke worke as Erle ded in aboute the lodinge settinge and burnynge of the said kelfull of pottes as the said

[101] It is most probable this denotes 13*d*, which would more usually be expressed as xiii*d*.
[102] A groat was worth 4*d*.
[103] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 124-5.
[104] The 'promisses' referred to in the deposition appear to mean Wyggens' agreement with his employer to make a kilnful of pots, SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 152-3.

Willm Wiggens hathe before declared for fyve shillinges'.[105] The statements from the three potters show how each had very different understandings of the appropriate wage for their work. The depositions also underscore that all of them firmly believed that they had a right to determine the current market value of their labour nearly a year after authorities began to enforce wage regulation.

Despite the tenets of the Statute of Artificers, the petty court depositions also suggest that some poor craftsmen reserved the right to refuse, curtail, or abruptly end work that did not meet their expectations. It has already been shown how a poor disgruntled weaver left the low wages and difficult nature of his employment in the midst of weaving a piece of cloth in order to seek more lucrative opportunities as a sailor. Surely, that action was drastic and probably not the norm. Nevertheless, ordinary poor craftsmen did understand their value once a project had begun. During periods of general economic stability and growth in the town, like the latter part of the 1570s, the *threat* of packing up one's tools and walking out in the middle of a project was one tactic a poor craftsmen could use when faced with a difficult employer. In October of 1577, Nicholas Smith, one of the town's ordinary poor bricklayers, used such a threat when his employer (a gentleman in the town) began to haggle with him while they calculated the amount due for the work Smith and his journeyman, William Curtis, had so far completed. In Curtis's deposition from December of that year, Smith calculated that their employer, John Waller, owed him £4 2*s* 6*d* for the two men's partially-completed work. Yet, when Smith met with Waller to tally the amount, the employer insisted that Curtis 'had ben two daies out of the said Wallers worke' and 'he wolde staie that iis. vid. for that'. In response, Smith insisted that the disputed 2s. 6d. 'was his duetie'. When Waller did not immediately agree, Smith threatened to end the working relationship, saying, '[if you] will not tallie it upp lett me have it nowe'. The gamble worked and Waller showed his dependency on the relationship with Smith

[105] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fol. 153.

when he admitted that he had 'noe monie aboute [him] nowe'. Waller must have capitulated to Smith's demand because, as Curtis explained, soon after this statement Waller and Smith quickly 'fell to a newe matche for more worke to be done.' [106] Examples like this bricklayer's threats and the weaver who became a sailor, emphasise the opportunities poor craftsmen could have to be assertive in their employment relationships, even well after the town's official implementation of maximum wages.

Despite the fact that by the 1590s oversubscribed labour markets and an unstable economic climate curtailed the ability to negotiate wages for many land-based craftsmen and labourers, for sailors it continued to remain an integral part of their normal employment practice. Sailors' wages were usually based on an individually agreed monthly rate that was negotiated before they signed onto a voyage with the expectation that it would be paid in coin at the end of each trip.[107] As a result, the annual wages of sailors and mariners varied and can be difficult to estimate, but it has been suggested that they were usually in the region of £6.[108] Variations in sailors' wages were most dependent on wage differentials between employers and the number of voyages they made each year. By the 1590s, ordinary sailors could expect to earn in the region of 19*s* a month on merchant ships or a flat (and non-negotiable) 10*s* a month in service for the Queen's navy.[109] This might seem on level with the potential wages of fully-employed poor labourers and tradesmen, but sailors often received additional perquisites which increased their remuneration above these other groups. As mentioned previously, in addition to their wages, sailors (and seafaring apprentices) normally were given shares in the end profit of any merchant voyage, and the cost of their food and drink during the entire trip was borne by the owners of the trade venture. Furthermore, sailors on merchant ships were generally guaranteed to receive their

[106] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 171-2
[107] Fury, *Tides*, p. 85.
[108] A. Konstam, *The Great Expedition: Sir Francis Drake on the Spanish Main, 1585-86* (Oxford, 2011), p. 72.
[109] Fury, *Tides*, pp. 85-6, 93-110.

wages and shares in cash at the end of each voyage, although this was not usually the case for sailors in the royal navy.[110] Nevertheless, the fact that most sailors could return to their families after a two-month trading voyage with well over £2 in their pockets undoubtedly made this occupation extremely attractive to poor men. Even fully-employed poor labourers and tradesmen could not have dreamt of bringing home such net profit from two months of work. At the very least even highly paid poor labourers and tradesmen often had to cover the cost of their own food and drink during working hours, which literally ate into their earnings.

Overall, when we compare poor men's normal income from lawful earnings with the usual cost of sustaining an average poor family in the town, the outcome seems to support the reigning notion that most poor families must have lived in or on the verge of destitution. Paul Slack has shown that the authorities in Ipswich generally assumed an adult's weekly subsistence cost between 8*d* and 12*d* a week and between 4*d* and 6*d* for a child.[111] If we assume that the average ordinary poor labourer's family, at the prime of life, included five people (two adults and three children) as suggested in Chapter Four, then this required a weekly income of between 2*s* 3*d* and 3*s* 5*d* just for the family to subsist. As Slack has stressed, and as has been shown previously in this section, many poor labouring families in the town's census fall short of such income levels. As a result, it is hard to imagine how most poor labourers and tradesmen could provide for their families if they were reliant only on these means.

Of course, other income from family members, such as wives and (occasionally) children, could help offset any temporary shortfall in funds. Nevertheless, the records suggest that any additional income from lawful sources was often quite small. The normal wage for adult female spinners noted in the town's census of the poor was 6*d* per week, although some could earn as little as 4*d* or as much as 20*d*. On the basis of the work of Jane

[110] Ibid.
[111] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, p. 81.

Andrewes and Craig Muldrew, it is possible to calculate the probable working week of a spinner in Ipswich. Andrewes and Muldrew have each estimated that the average spinner would have spun around a pound of wool a day, and Andrewes has shown that, at the turn of the seventeenth century in Kent, spinners normally earned between 2*d* and 3*d* for every pound of spun wool.[112] Since the median wage for spinners in Ipswich was 6*d* a week, it appears that most of them probably worked in their official employment for the equivalent of two or three days every week. This correlates with the normal amount of official weekly work noted for many poor tradesmen and labourers, but unlike men's paid work which was usually done throughout the day, it is unlikely that poor women would have spun continuously each day for twelve hours. Instead, spinners, particularly married ones, would have had to fit such employment around their household responsibilities and other work, perhaps spinning a few hours on several days throughout the week.

The weekly wages of other common occupations for poor women were often more lucrative than spinning. Those who picked wool, or knitted, both normally earned between 8*d* and 3*s* each week, whereas most spinners failed to earn even the lower of these amounts, as has been mentioned.[113] Since the normal weekly wage for poor men in Ipswich was between 2*s* and 3*s*, these figures suggest that poor women employed in picking wool or knitting had the potential to earn as much, or even more, than some poor men. Nevertheless, none of the wool pickers in the town's census declared the same wage, so their remuneration clearly varied and the stability of this income remains unclear. Furthermore, nearly all of the high-earners in these two occupations were women who were also the primary breadwinners for their households, either because they were widowed or their husbands were unemployed.[114] This suggests that although it was possible for poor

[112] J. Andrewes, 'Industries in Kent, 1500-1640', in M. Zell (ed.), *Early Modern Kent, 1540-1640* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 113; C. Muldrew, *Food, Energy*, p. 242.
[113] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 119-40. It should also be noted that, like spinning, sewing was also relatively poorly paid. Weekly wages of seamstresses in the census ranged between 6*d* and 16*d*.
[114] Ibid.

women to approximate the official weekly earnings of some poor men, this often occurred in lieu of, instead of in addition to, their husband's earnings.

So what does this tell us about the ability of most poor families to rely on lawful earnings to support their households? If, as has been shown in Figure 5.5, the majority of poor men were either labourers or tradesmen, and most women were spinners, then depending upon their levels of employment, their combined normal weekly income would probably have ranged between approximately 3*s* (for two days of work each) and 9*s* (for six days of work each).[115] If we also assume that poor adults worked approximately 35 weeks a year, as the recent work of Craig Muldrew has posited, then a poor family's combined earnings from official employment was probably between £5 and £15, with most earning perhaps £7 or £8 each year.[116] As has already been shown, the cost to sustain the average poor family (two adults and three children) required a weekly income of between 2*s* 3*d* and 3*s* 5*d*. This means that to feed and house their families for the entire year (52 weeks) most poor families needed to earn an annual income of between roughly £6 and £9. Overall, this suggests that the families of many poor labourers and tradesmen in Ipswich might have earned enough income from their lawful employment to meet their food and housing requirements, but only just. In truth, this picture is more bleak than might at first appear since these figures do not include the cost of clothes and other basic necessities (e.g. beds, kitchen implements, work tools, etc.). It seems certain, then, that the income from the most common types of lawful employment for men and women would have funded a truly spartan lifestyle. From this we can see that if lawful work was the only source of income for the poor then during periods of economic stress their descent into destitution certainly seems to have been inevitable. Even at the best of times the income from their lawful employment would have provided the poor with little capital to purchase items of comfort or to spend on diversions. And for most, nothing would have been left over to save for

[115] This is assuming a 12*d* weekly wage for both poor labourers and craftsmen, and 6*d* for poor spinners.
[116] See C. Muldrew, '"Th'ancient Distaff" and "Whirling Spindle"', p. 510.

periods of economic difficulty (e.g. times of dearth, trade stoppages, bouts of illness, or growing infirmity in old age), or to invest in their children's economic future.

Unlawful Employment

But many poor men and women did not merely rely on lawful employment to provide for themselves and their families. Instead, of necessity, they participated in one of several unlawful employments which could significantly 'top up' their annual income. This section can only provide a detailed discussion of the most common of these activities in the town — the unlicensed sale of food and drink — but the involvement of the poor in other unlawful work deserves at least a brief mention. As we have seen, there is some indication that poor men switched their 'official' occupations to other more lucrative trades which they had no legal right, nor official sanction, to practice. Furthermore, even though records from the town yield little direct evidence of prostitution, it seems certain that some poor women were involved in such work, as there are references to suspected 'bawdy houses'.[117] Also, despite the fact that all inhabitants had been officially bound to grind their corn at the mills endorsed by the town since at least the fifteenth century, the town's probate records show that some poor families illicitly milled grain in their own homes.[118] A few owned 'quernes' (i.e. small corn mills that were powered by hand) at the time of their deaths, which at the very least enabled them to unlawfully save 1*d* for every bushel of bread corn that they milled, since they did not have to pay this fee to the town's official millers.[119] Some of them also may have allowed their neighbours and friends to use these mills for a small fee.

Although poor adults could engage in these and other forms of unlawful work, it is clear that unlicensed victualling was the most common illicit employment, not only in

[117] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/7, fols. 79-82.
[118] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 134, 149, 290; *Probate Inventories*, ed. Reed, pp. 19, 37, 39.
[119] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 239.

Ipswich, but many areas throughout England.[120] Indeed, such work was pervasive in the town and involved the employment of both poor men and women. Because both genders were often fully engaged (or at least complicit) in this work this section considers unlawful victualling as a family employment rather than an individual occupation. What follows, then, is a detailed analysis of such work and how it appears to have contributed to the economic stability of many poor families.

By 1600 the retail victualling trades had been vitally important to the economy of Ipswich for centuries.[121] The town's role as a major regional urban centre and international port town, its large settled population (c. 5,000), and its daily stream of new visitors (including many recently-paid sailors laden with coin), created a perpetual demand for establishments where the public could congregate, eat, drink, conduct business, and socialise. Throughout this period the term 'victualler' often included anyone who sold food and drink at retail prices. Tudor proclamations concerned with regulating the food and drink trade normally classified such traders into those who ran inns, alehouses, taverns and 'other victualling houses'.[122] The records from Ipswich also use the term 'victualling' in this way, whereas 'tippling' is used more sparingly and implies the provision only of drink, an activity that was much less common.[123] Alehouses, taverns, and inns all provided victuals and hospitality, but the extent to which they did so varied in degree and quality. Alehouses were the most common of these establishments and both their proprietors and patrons usually were among the poorer in society. Thus, as a rule, they offered simple fare, such as ale or beer, roasted meats, buns, and sugared pancakes, as well as very basic (and

[120] P. Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History, 1200-1830* (London, 1983), pp. 73-6.
[121] Amor, *Late Medieval Ipswich*, p. 150-6, 225. For a more general discussion of the importance of alehouses see Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*.
[122] *A proclamation for the due obseruation of fish dayes* as printed in *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. P. L. Hughes and J. F. Larkin (3 vols., London, 1964), iii, pp. 204-9.
[123] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/4, C/2/9/1/1/8/5, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, C/2/9/1/1/8/7.

often limited) accommodation.[124] On the other hand, inns and taverns were owned and frequented by wealthier travellers and inhabitants in the town. Taverns specialised in serving wine (a more expensive drink) and provided more sophisticated meals and well-appointed, if still limited, accommodation. Like taverns, inns were fashionable establishments, but they were much larger, and could provide more spacious accommodation. They also served elaborate fare and most types of drink, including ale, beer, and wine.[125] Of course, there were other types of victuallers in England, particularly those who sold food and drink on the streets, but such vendors appear to have been rare in Ipswich even among the poor.[126] Peter Clark has shown that most victuallers ran small alehouses in a portion of their own homes, which usually had between two and five rooms.[127] Probate records of poor unlicensed victuallers in Ipswich support this finding and suggest that several in the town operated in the 'halls' of houses that had three to five rooms.[128] Nevertheless, as Clark has argued, many others would have traded in more cramped quarters. Indeed, at least one ordinary poor victualler in Ipswich, a glover named David Musson, was trading in the 'chamber' of his one-room tenement at the time of his death in 1611.[129]

By 1570 the regulation of such victualling establishments had long been a concern for both local and state authorities.[130] In 1524, authorities in Ipswich began restricting the practices of 'Gannikers and Sellers of Ale'[131] by ordering all victuallers to seek permission from the town's magistrates to continue their operations. By 1547, the requirement of

[124] Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 5, 123-43; J. Hunter, 'English Inns, Taverns, Alehouses and Brandy Shops: The Legislative Framework, 1495-1797', in B. Kümin and B.A. Tlusty (eds), *The World of the Tavern: Public Houses in Early Modern Europe* (Aldershot, 2002), p. 66-8; ERO, Q/SR 119/56 (Essex Quarter Sessions).
[125] Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 5, 123-4; Hunter, 'English Inns', p. 70; Reed, 'Seventeenth-Century Ipswich', p. 110.
[126] Amor, *Medieval Ipswich*, pp. 153-4.
[127] Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 64-5.
[128] *Probate Inventories*, ed. Reed, pp. 20, 21, 33-4, 38-40, 74-5, 79-80; idem, 'Seventeenth-Century Ipswich', p. 110.
[129] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, fol. 28; *Probate Inventories*, ed. Reed, p. 79.
[130] Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, chs. 1, 2.
[131] A person who ran an alehouse.

official permission had transformed into the need for an official 'license', and the state Licensing Act of 1552 put similar requirements on victuallers across England.[132] In July 1575, the town attempted to tighten the reins further and capped the number of annual victualling licences at twenty each year, but this proved too few, and in October 1575 the court increased the cap to twenty-six. This figure appears to have remained fixed until at least 1620 and thus, for the purposes of this study, can be taken to be the number of lawful victuallers that operated in the town annually.[133] There is little doubt that the town's early efforts to control victualling practices were largely a failure. In 1577 the Privy Council requested local magistrates to perform a survey of the alehouses in their jurisdictions, and the return from the borough of Ipswich shows that in that year authorities found nineteen inns, two taverns, and twenty-two alehouses.[134] It was only as the sixteenth century came to a close that local and national authorities became increasingly concerned with enforcing these existing regulations. In 1587 the town's Great Court renewed its standing orders to search regularly for unlawful victuallers, and by the turn of the century it was clear that unlawful establishments had become alarmingly ubiquitous.[135] The problem was present throughout England at this time, and in January of 1600 it prompted the crown to issue a proclamation against 'the unnecessary numbers of alehouses, and victualling houses ... [which] have bene suffered greatly to increase.'[136] By the opening decades of the seventeenth century the crown and local authorities had become increasingly concerned with suppressing the continued growth of the victualling trade, especially among the poor,

[132] Hunter, 'English Inns', pp. 65-9; Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 199, 229.
[133] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 306-7; Reed, 'Seventeenth-Century Ipswich', p. 110.
[134] Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 41-3.
[135] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 557.
[136] *Tudor Royal Proclamations*, ed. Hughes and Larkin, iii, pp. 204-9.

but the prevalence and persistence of many unlawful victuallers throughout this period suggests regulatory efforts were largely ineffective before the 1620s.[137]

Analysing the quarter sessions presentments and indictments from 1587-1598 for the offence of 'victualling without license' shows that in Ipswich victualling was both the most common unlawful employment and one of the most common overall employments for the town's inhabitants. As Table 5.2 below illustrates, within this 11-year period at least 95 residents were brought before the court for acts of illicit victualling.

TABLE 5.2: ENTRIES FOR UNLAWFUL VICTUALLING, 1587-1598

Year	*No. of New Offenders*	*No. of Total Entries*
1587	5	6
1588	1	1
1589	5	7
1590	10	13
1591	13	19
1592	19	38
1593	22	33
1598[138]	20	38
Total	**95**	**155**

If we compare this figure with the numbers of merchants (38), labourers (28), and tailors (26) found in the petty court depositions and the town's poor census c. 1573-1597 (Appendix 5.1), we can begin to see just how common unlawful victualling was in Ipswich at this time. Furthermore, the occurrence of victualling overall was even greater than Table 5.2 suggests. If we add the town's 26 licensed victuallers to the 95 unlicensed ones, we can see that at least 121 inhabitants ran victualling houses at some point in this decade. This is a staggering number because it suggests that roughly one in eight resident families were

[137] K. Wrightson, 'Alehouses, Order, and Reformation in Rural England, 1590-1660', in E. Yeo and S. Yeo (eds), *Popular Culture and Class Conflict, 1590-1914: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure* (Brighton, 1981), pp. 11-22; Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 166-76; Hunter, 'English Inns', pp. 65-9; Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship*, pp. 76-7.

[138] As mentioned previously, the data for this year is missing approximately half the relevant entries, so these figures are artificially low.

engaged in this work at least on an occasional basis,[139] and most of them (79 per cent) were operating unlawfully.[140] These figures surpass those noted by Keith Wrightson for areas like rural Lancashire in 1647 (one in 12 families) and Essex in 1644 (one in 20 families).[141]

The data also indicates that unlawful victualling was increasing rapidly in Ipswich in the last decade of the sixteenth century. Table 5.2 shows that the number of new victuallers who came before the quarter sessions more than doubled from ten in 1590 to twenty-two in 1593. These figures probably doubled again by 1598 since roughly half the entries are missing from the listing for that year. Evidence suggests that this rapid increase in the number of unlawful victualling entries was the result of several factors. Clark has shown that, as the economic troubles of the 1590s intensified, many of the poor across England, especially those in decaying trades and oversubscribed employments (e.g. the cloth trades and labourers) turned to unlawful victualling as a way to support their families.[142] Since many of the poor in Ipswich relied on such occupations, these figures at least in part represent a real increase in the number of unlawful victuallers in the town. We also know that at this time town authorities became more interested in prosecuting these offenders because unregulated alehouses were increasingly thought to prolong grain shortages during periods of dearth, and also to contribute to the social problems of the day.[143] Thus, part of this marked increase probably reflects more vigorous prosecution by officials.

It is also apparent that many of the town's unlawful victuallers continued to practise their trade throughout the period despite punishment. Table 5.2 shows that these 95 victuallers were responsible for at least 155 total entries. Tracking the names of those who came before the court between 1587 and 1598 indicates that 71 of the 95 unlicensed

[139] This has been calculated using an average family size of 5 (as discussed in Chapter Three) and the approximate total population of 5,000 residents in 1600.
[140] Calculated by dividing 95 unlawful victuallers by 121 total victuallers.
[141] Wrightson, 'Alehouses', pp. 4-5.
[142] Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 73-93.
[143] Ibid, pp. 166-76; McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior*, pp. 74-6.

victuallers (nearly 75 per cent) were defendants on two or more occasions. Moreover, scanning the names of unlawful victuallers listed between 1598 and 1620 shows that many, including the widows and adult children of male unlawful victuallers, continued their family's illicit trade well into the seventeenth century.[144] This finding runs counter to that found for rural unlawful victuallers who, it has been argued, were often presented only once and presumably practised their trade only temporarily.[145] In contrast the evidence from Ipswich suggests that unlawful victualling in urban areas was more likely to have been an ongoing employment.

Analysing the economic backgrounds of all those presented or indicted for unlawful victualling in the town supports the widely-held view that unlicensed victuallers usually came from the ranks of the poor.[146] A socio-economic status can be assigned to 78 of the 95 illicit victuallers; and as Figure 5.8 shows, 60 of them (roughly 77 per cent) were ordinary poor householders, while three more (about 4 per cent) had recently received some form of official poor relief.

FIGURE 5.8: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF NEW UNLAWFUL VICTUALLERS BY YEAR, 1587-1598

	1587	1588	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	1598*	Total
Town Authority	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	**1**
Parish Authority	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	**2**
Able Householder	-	-	-	2	2	3	4	1	**12**
Ordinary Poor	4	1	4	4	8	13	12	14	**60**
Relief-dependent Poor	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	2	**3**
Unknown	-	-	1	3	3	3	5	2	**17**
Total	**5**	**1**	**5**	**10**	**13**	**19**	**22**	**20**	**95**

*The data for this year is missing approximately half of the indictments, so these figures are artifically low.

Of all the socio-economic groups, poor unlawful victuallers were also the most persistent in continuing their trade despite legal action. This is broadly indicated by Figure

[144] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/4, C/2/9/1/1/8/5, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, C/2/9/1/1/8/7.
[145] Wrightson, 'Alehouses', pp. 4-5.
[146] Ibid, pp. 1-27; Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 73-93.

5.9 which shows the total numbers of entries associated with offenders in each socio-economic category.

FIGURE 5.9: SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF ALL OFFENDERS BY YEAR, 1587-1598

	1587	1588	1589	1590	1591	1592	1593	1598*	Total
Town Authority	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	**1**
Parish Authority	1	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	**3**
Able Householder	-	-	-	2	2	5	7	2	**18**
Ordinary Poor	5	1	6	6	14	27	16	25	**100**
Relief-dependent Poor	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	**4**
Unknown	-	-	1	4	3	6	8	7	**29**
Total	**6**	**1**	**7**	**13**	**19**	**38**	**33**	**38**	**155**

*The data for this year is missing approximately half of the indictments, so these figures are artifically low.

This figure shows that the 63 poor householders noted in Figure 5.8 were the cause of at least 104 entries between 1587 and 1598. In contrast, 15 householders from wealthier groups were charged in 22 entries for the same period. Cross-referencing the names associated with these entries indicates that 49 of the 60 ordinary poor victuallers from Figure 5.8 (82 per cent) were charged with unlawful victualling on more than one occasion. In contrast, 2 of the 3 relief-dependent victuallers were charged more than once, and merely 7 of the 12 able householders, 1 of the 3 parish authorities, and none of the town authorities faced repeated charges.[147]

As has been commonly found in other regions, these records show that in Ipswich more men than women faced charges for victualling without license. Women account for only 20 of the 95 illicit victuallers in the sources reviewed (21 per cent), and most of them were clearly noted as widows. This seems to support the common argument that the victualling trades were overwhelmingly 'dominated by men'.[148] Nevertheless, as Clark has argued, other evidence suggests that presentments and indictments may not offer an accurate representation of the involvement of women in these activities. In particular, court records appear to consistently misrepresent the infractions of married female victuallers by

[147] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/4, fols. 535-55.
[148] Wrightson, 'Alehouses', p. 2; Bennet, *Ale, Beer and Brewsters*, p. 78.

routinely holding husbands officially accountable for the unlawful victualling done by their wives.[149] This was almost certainly the result of the court's general assumption that, because husbands were the lawful head of their household, they were responsible for any illicit trade conducted within their house.[150] For example, Simon Blythe, a relief-dependent porter in Ipswich, was charged twice for unlawful victualling in the 1590s. Yet, the census of the poor shows that in 1597 he was 65 years old, blind, and being given 10*d* a week in poor relief, presumably because he could not work. His wife, on the other hand, was physically sound and five years younger.[151] Thus, of the two, it seems that Simon's wife was probably more physically capable of running an unlawful victualling house at that time. Nevertheless, it was always her husband who was charged with the crime.[152]

On rare occasions the court itself suggests that women were engaged in victualling at least on par with their husbands, even though it was their husbands alone who were charged. In 1610, Elizabeth Thursby (wife of Simon) and Marie Gilham (wife of Henry) both told the court that they had unlawfully purchased barrels of beer from some of the town's licensed brewers, but only their husbands stood charged for the offence of unlicensed victualling.[153] So, too, in 1618, after George Copsie was solely accused, the court ultimately ordered that neither George 'nor his wiefe' should continue to victual without a licence.[154] This demonstrates that women probably played a much larger role in unlawful victualling than a simple analysis of quarter sessions listings can express.

Analysing the official occupations given for 50 of the men and women charged with unlawful victualling in this period suggests that families normally took on this work because the male heads of these households were either attached to poor or decaying trades, or were absent because they had died or frequently went to sea. Table 5.3 (below) shows

[149] Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 78-85.
[150] For the general roles and responsibilities of men as heads of households see Chapter Four.
[151] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, p. 123.
[152] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/4, fol. 537.
[153] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, fol. 156.
[154] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/7, fol. 10.

that male defendants most often had lawful occupations as tailors (8), labourers (5), and sailors (5), whereas all the women were widows.

TABLE 5.3: OCCUPATIONAL/LEGAL STATUS OF POOR ADULTS CHARGED FOR VICTUALLING WITHOUT LICENCE, 1587-1598

Status	*No. of Men*	*No. of Women*
Widow	-	10
Tailor	8	-
Labourer	5	-
Sailor	5	-
Blacksmith	2	-
Brewer	2	-
Cook	2	-
Glover	2	-
Wheelwright	2	-
Baker	1	-
Brickmaker	1	-
Carpenter	1	-
Chandler	1	-
Cobbler	1	-
Collier	1	-
Miller	1	-
Pewterer	1	-
Porter	1	-
Sawyer	1	-
Shearman	1	-
Weaver	1	-
Total	**40**	**10**

The prevalence of families in trades associated with economic dislocation and low earnings (such as tailors and labourers) and economically vulnerable families (such as those of poor sailors and widows) suggests that many poor families in Ipswich turned to unlawful victualling as a means to counteract the erosion of their living standards caused by the economic and demographic stresses of the period. After years of watching the value of their real wages fall, unlawful victualling in a busy port town must have been one self-evidently accessible employment sector available to the poor at this time. Despite the economic strains of the period, the town's ample supply of visitors coming to the weekly markets, freshly-paid sailors disembarking at the port, and its own large population meant that its

victualling houses had every reason to be full of patrons ready and able to spend their money. All of this suggests that victualling without licence helped many poor families escape the full negative effects of this period, at least in regions such as Ipswich.

Unlawful Profits

Although records from the town do not reveal the exact profits associated with victualling without licence, and are particularly silent concerning income from the sale of food, they do provide some indication of how much poor unlawful victuallers charged their patrons for beer, how much beer these victuallers normally purchased over periods of time, the amount they paid per barrel, and the fines which resulted from prosecution. It is important to note that even though we know ale remained a common drink in England during this period, sources from Ipswich rarely mention the sale or drinking of ale in the town's victualling establishments. This dearth of evidence probably suggests that by the end of the sixteenth century beer had overtaken ale as the main tipple provided by local victuallers in the town. Clark has shown that by 1600 this was often the case in urban areas, and particularly those who had established trade routes with the Dutch (such as Ipswich), since they were one of the main exporters of hops to the English market.[155] This makes it plausible to assume that the sale of beer probably constituted the bulk of an alehouse keeper's profits in Ipswich at this time. And so, by using the data mentioned above, it is possible to calculate the annual profits poor unlicensed victuallers might expect and thereby gain some perspective on their potential income from this unlawful work.

Throughout this period beer ranged in strength from strong, middle, to small (weak) beer, and the cost decreased in step with the potency of the drink. More often than not, small or weak beer was bought in quantity by individuals and drunk in the home, whereas

[155] Clark, *English Alehouse*, pp. 101-2.

strong beer, and less often 'middle' beer, were the main tipples of the alehouses.[156] In this period, most in Ipswich expected to purchase a pint of strong beer (or what they called the 'best beer') for 1*d*, but patrons normally bought a quart (two pints) of this beer at a time for 2*d*, which was given to them in a 'stoudd jugge'.[157] Between 1609 and 1614 several unlawful victuallers provided details at the town's quarter sessions regarding the types, amounts, and cost of beer that they had purchased to sell to their customers for periods of either two or four months. Overall, even poor victuallers normally purchased barrels of the 'best beer' which, according to the set measures of the period, would have contained 288 pints.[158] They also often paid local brewers more than the usual rates for their supply, presumably to balance the legal risk brewers took when dealing with unlicensed victuallers. Indeed, instead of the normal price of roughly 6*s* per barrel for the best beer, unlawful victuallers could pay upwards of 9*s* per barrel, but the prices ranged between 7*s* and 10*s* during this five-year period.[159] Such high prices might also indicate that the barrels were being bought on credit and the 'interest' was simply being rolled into the cost. The records shed little light on whether poor victuallers purchased these barrels on credit or with coin, perhaps gleaned from recent profits. Clark has shown that it was common for some brewers to extend generous credit to victuallers, but his sources imply that this was most often the case if the victuallers operated on a large scale and were licensed. As a result, it seems most likely that poor unlicensed victuallers purchased their goods through a combination of money and short-term credit.

Variations in the number of barrels that poor victuallers purchased over a period of four months indicate that some in the town operated on a larger scale than others.[160] As has been shown, most poor victuallers in Ipswich came from the ranks of the ordinary poor.

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[156] Muldrew, *Food, Energy*, pp. 77-8. Clark, *English Alehouse*, p. 103.
[157] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, fol. 156; SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/7, fol. 13.
[158] R. E. Zupko, *A Dictionary of Weights and Measures for the British Isles: The Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (Philadelphia, 1985), p. 27.
[159] Clark, *English Alehouse*, p. 103; SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, fols. 140, 156.
[160] It has been assumed that victuallers who provided data for a period of two months would have purchased double this amount in a four-month period.

Yet, even within this socio-economic group, their potential earnings from this work, and the level of wealth they might accumulate, could vary dramatically. In order to provide an accurate depiction of the potential profits of poor unlawful victuallers, what follows includes calculations derived from the practices of the two main types of poor unlawful victuallers found in the town.

The first type was the ordinary poor victualler who ran an alehouse in perhaps two or three rooms of their home (including their kitchen, or 'buttery'). This experience is typified by that of Elizabeth Skidmore (the wife and then widow of a cobbler), whose family were unlawful victuallers from at least 1597 to 1608, and were also included on the town's census of the poor.[161] The records show that over a period of four months in 1608, Elizabeth purchased four barrels of beer; two at a cost of 7*s* and two for 8*s*. This suggests that Elizabeth had the potential to sell 1,152 pints at 1*d* the pint, which indicates a quarterly turnover of £4 16*s*. Of course, Elizabeth had spent 30*s* (£1 10*s*) at the outset to purchase the beer, therefore her profit would have been reduced to £3 6*s*. She was also fined 12*d* (or 1*s*) by the town magistrates for her unlawful victualling, which further decreased her profits to £3 5*s*, and it is probable that she had to pay some court fees as well.[162] This suggests that even if Elizabeth was fined every quarter (which she was not) her net annual profits from unlicensed victualling — not including any additional profits from the sale of food — would have amounted to roughly £13. This indicates that even unlawful victuallers who operated on a small scale could earn more from their trade than a fully employed poor labourer or tradesman.

Such income from unlawful work begins to explain how, despite having meagre lawful wages noted on the town's census of the poor, Elizabeth and her husband, John, sustained their family and educated their three children without turning to official forms of relief. According to the census, in 1597 Elizabeth was a gardener who earned 6*d* a week,

[161] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/4, fol. 535; SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, fol. 174; *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, p. 128.
[162] Ibid.

whilst her husband earned 12*d* as a cobbler. Their teenage daughter (Katherine) had been taught to sew and was earning 4*d* each week, and her two younger brothers (Christopher and John) were attending school, almost certainly at the cost of their parents.[163] This suggests that without income from unlawful victualling, the Skidmores would have earned less than 2*s* a week, which would not have been enough to meet their basic needs, let alone pay for the instruction of their children. The town authorities appear to have become aware of the family's unlawful victualling during the course of carrying out the census. Indeed, they not only denied the Skidmores relief, but ordered them to be disciplined and provided with two spinning wheels, cards, and 'teaching', the latter of which were probably meant for Elizabeth and her daughter. Despite this punishment and a handful of prosecutions, the Skidmores continued their trade well into the seventeenth century; a decision which, in itself, suggests how lucrative and necessary this work could be to ordinary poor families.

The second type of ordinary poor victualler was more financially secure and operated on a larger scale. Representing this group is the family of Phoebe Rogman (the wife and then widow of a sailor) who lived in the town from 1571 until her death in 1620. Phoebe and her husband (and after his death in 1604, Phoebe alone) ran an unlicensed victualling house in the town from at least 1588 to 1611.[164] The records show that by 1610, she was an ageing widow who managed a large establishment in the parish of St Clement. It seems most probable that she did so with the help of a few of her five daughters and two sons, since all of them were in their 20s and 30s at that time. Still, whether or not the family had always managed such a big operation remains unclear. Certainly, throughout this period they were never assessed for the town's poor rate, thus they were considered to be among the ordinary poor, even whilst victualling. Nevertheless, in 1610, the scale of Phoebe's operation and the level of her potential profits indicate that she was earning an income that could have caused her to be reclassified into an able householder. Indeed in

[163] The education and employment of poor boys and girls will be discussed more fully in Chapter Six.
[164] SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/4, fol. 552; SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/6, fol. 83r.

1610, Phoebe purchased 20 barrels of beer in one quarter and paid 9*s* for four of them and 10*s* for an additional 16. This level of consumption matches those noted the same year for three licensed innholders in the town, Nicholas Woodfen who ran the Queen's Head, Arthur Egerton who ran the Griffen, and Elizabeth Grenelefe who ran the Lute.[165] This suggests that Phoebe was operating on a similar scale, which probably explains why she was fined 2*s* by the court for practising her unlawful trade (this was double the amount imposed on Elizabeth Skidmore in 1608). Using the same calculation as before, these figures suggest that Phoebe's turnover amounted to £24 per quarter. Thus, taking into account the £9 16*s* she paid for her supply and the 2*s* she paid the court for her fine, her net quarterly profit appears to have been £14 2*s*. This suggests her annual profits could have been well over £56. Even though in the last decades of her life Phoebe was earning a comfortable income from a large-scale unlawful victualling business, it seems probable that her family had first managed a smaller establishment, which they then grew into a larger and more profitable enterprise. As we have seen, the profits from small-scale victualling could be quite lucrative (£13), and when combined with the normal income of an ordinary poor sailor (£6) it is easy to see how the family might amass significant capital over time.

Overall, this evidence underscores how important unlawful victualling was to the economic strategies of many ordinary poor adults and their families in Ipswich. It suggests that such activity not only allowed large numbers of the poor to stave off destitution and dependency on relief, but — even during a period of protracted economic and demographic crisis — it allowed them to earn enough funds to develop savings, educate their children, and accumulate some wealth. Just how much wealth is the subject of the final section.

[165] Ibid, fols. 83-83r.

The Wealth of Poor Adults

At the heart of any attempt to understand the economic lives of the poor lies one basic question: how poor were they? Throughout this chapter it has been shown that the experience of early modern poverty was not equal. On a basic level this could seem to suggest that, overall, the wealth of the ordinary poor differed substantially from those dependent upon relief. As will be shown, this was not always the case and factors other than a person's official poverty level, such as their participation in unlawful work and the complex needs of their family, could have a major influence on the degree of their wealth.

The process of ascribing levels of actual wealth to either group among the poor is fraught with difficulty. Most often historians have turned to tax records, such as local rate assessments, national lay subsidies, or Hearth Tax returns to calculate the general bands of wealth associated with early modern socio-economic groups. Yet, as we saw at the beginning of this chapter, those experiencing even the shallowest of poverty were routinely exempted from these fiscal burdens. Thus, on their own, such sources can provide little evidence of the actual material wealth, or depth of poverty, found among the subgroups of the poor.[166] In truth, little comparative work has been done on the assets of the poor, and some have questioned whether early modern poverty can be taken to include individuals who acquired any significant amount of wealth. Boulton and Rappaport have argued against counting among the poor those who saved for large future expenses (such as burial costs) and those whose household's contained 'servants'. This is despite the fact that such arguments run counter to contemporary evidence, and it seems certain such 'servants' were actually 'apprentices' in ordinary poor households.[167] In contrast, John Pound and Craig Muldrew have suggested that those living in poverty could accumulate savings and acquire costly or superfluous items.[168] Most importantly, though, contemporaries themselves

[166] T. Arkell, 'Incidence of Poverty', pp. 23-47.
[167] Boulton, *Neighbourhood and Society*, pp. 114-19; Rappaport, *Worlds Within Worlds*, pp. 170-1.
[168] Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy*, pp. 102-3; Muldrew, *Economy of Obligation*, pp. 30-3.

remarked upon the ability of the poor to save and purchase small luxuries. For example, in his history of Myddle (Shropshire), Richard Gough recounts how in the early seventeenth century Anne Parkes, a never-married knitter and daughter of a poor weaver, saved 20*s* from her wages 'which she said she kept to pay for her funeral'; he goes on to surmise that 'it may be she was never worth more all her life.'[169]

Though analyzing the material wealth of the poor can be difficult, it is certainly possible and for Ipswich it is best accomplished by examining the surviving probate inventories that can be traced back to the town's poor inhabitants. These inventories are particularly enlightening because, within the broad category of poverty, they offer a snapshot of the wealth of poor adults from many different social and economic contexts. Those among the ordinary poor include the inventories of three mariners, three blacksmiths, two weavers, a sailor, a tailor, a husbandman, a glover, a ship-carpenter, and a widow. They also represent the wealth of a goldsmith (who had once been able to pay the poor rate) and a labourer who were both dependent upon relief.[170]

Overall, the probate inventories of twenty of the town's ordinary poor and relief-dependent inhabitants indicate that the total value of the listed material assets of people in *both* groups varied between roughly £7 and £11. Indeed, the wealth of 12 of the 20 poor adults (60 per cent) fell into this range, a figure that includes both individuals who received official relief. This suggests that it may have been common for the material wealth of both groups to be similar. Nevertheless, these records still exhibit a broad spectrum of wealth for those living in poverty, and (excepting only one very low and one very high outlier, which will be discussed later) their total listed assets ranged in value between £5 8*s* and £19 6*s* 3*d*. In contrast, similar records for the town's wealthier inhabitants usually detailed a total of at least £20 for able householders, and significantly more for parish and town authorities. This

[169] R. Gough, *Human Nature Displayed in the History of Myddle* (London, 1834), p. 35.
[170] *Probate Inventories*, ed. Reed, pp. 18-19, 20, 25, 28, 33-4, 37, 38-9, 40-1, 47, 50-1, 51-2, 59-61, 64-5, 69-70, 74-5, 79-80, 92-3, 97, 104-5, 108.

suggests that the people contemporaries considered to be living above the poverty line usually had material assets worth above the £20 mark.

Six of the inventories (30 per cent) show that some among the ordinary poor could accumulate wealth that approached and, on one occasion, exceeded that of many able householders. Most of the more economically stable poor in these records had amassed moveable goods valued at between £15 and £18, such as Richard Boyes (a mariner worth £17 1*s* in 1590), William Skeete (a linen weaver worth £17 15*s* in 1606), Thomas Bonner (a blacksmith worth £16 10*s* 4*d* in 1583), and David Musson (a glover worth £15 5*s* in 1611). Based solely on evidence from the inventories, it would be hard to explain why these ordinary poor men had particularly more wealth than most others in their socio-economic group. Their occupations shed little light on the subject because we know weavers were attached to a decaying trade, and the inventories of the other ordinary poor mariners and blacksmiths show total values in the region of £9.[171]

Nevertheless, by cross-referencing these inventories with data from the town's parish registers and quarter sessions we can begin to see why certain ordinary poor adults accumulated more wealth than others. In particular, those who had several children, and those who practised unlawful victualling, often accumulated more wealth than those who did not. The size of a poor person's family appears to have had a major influence on their level of wealth, at least as measured by the value of moveables at death. Several of the ordinary poor men worth between £15 and £18 had relatively large families - Boyes had four children, Skeete had five, and Bonner had three. Thus, much of the wealth detailed in their probate inventories came from the bedding, furniture, and crockery that would have allowed five, six, or seven people to properly eat and sleep. Such goods represented over half the value of Boyes' inventory and about a third of Bonner's and Skeete's. Their additional wealth came mainly from goods associated with each of their lawful trades;

[171] *Probate Inventories*, ed. Reed, pp. 18-19, 33-4, 37, 69-70, 74-5, 79-80, 92-3.

Skeete's four looms, 44 stays, and stock of linen yarn were valued at £11 (or roughly 65 per cent of the total value of his goods) and Bonner's smithing implements came to roughly £9 (or 55 per cent of his goods).

It is also apparent that several of the wealthier members of the ordinary poor participated in unlawful victualling, including Bonner, Skeete, and Musson. In addition, the inventory of another ordinary poor weaver who was running a thriving unlawful alehouse in 1610, shows that occasionally poor unlawful victuallers could collect abnormally high levels of wealth. The records suggest that this activity enabled Thomas Hawkins and his wife to amass over £40 in possessions.[172] By all accounts this level of wealth should have placed Hawkins solidly among the able householders in the town, but (as we also saw in the case of Phoebe Rogman) the authorities appear not to have known about the full extent of his wealth. Hawkins's inventory is unique and interesting for several reasons; he and his wife appear to have been in their late 40s, or early 50s, and both died within a short space of time (his wife outlived him, but she passed before the appraisers had a chance to assess her husband's goods). This suggests that their deaths were related and fairly unexpected, which would have made it difficult for them to redistribute their wealth via last-minute gifts whilst they were still alive. This seems even more plausible since their only living child was in his early 20s and probably living away from home. As will be shown more fully in the next chapter, it was common for the poor to give ante-mortem gifts to family and friends. In addition to other evidence, this practice can be inferred from many of the inventories we have already discussed. For example, entries related to clothes and consumer goods are conspicuously absent from the inventories of Richard Boyes and William Skeete. Obviously, both had worn clothes while living, so this absence suggests that these items were given to relatives or friends shortly before their death.[173] This is important because such activity necessarily reduced the value of a person's assets before

[172] Ibid, pp. 74-5.
[173] Botelho, *Old Age*, p. 147.

they came to probate, and it appears that Hawkins and his wife did not have the opportunity to distribute some of their wealth in this way. It is notable that, among other items, Hawkins's inventory contains two key assets — money and clothes — which are often absent from the inventories of the poor, particularly those who had adult children. Indeed, over 40 per cent of his listed wealth came from roughly £17 which had been hidden away in his kitchen (probably folded up in the 30 napkins which make up the preceding entry). That someone considered to be living in poverty had access to this level of savings is rather unexpected. But, if we consider that Hawkins was operating a successful unlicensed alehouse in his four-room home, it should not be altogether surprising. Even though he may have extended credit to some of his regular and trusted patrons, it seems certain he would have required most to pay in coin for their food and drink. This would have given him access to relatively large amounts of money, which he could use to build up savings over time. This suggests that one of the great benefits of running an alehouse was not only the possibility of accumulating wealth, but the opportunity to accumulate *coin*, which was in limited supply during this period.

Yet, these six inventories represent only some of the most successful ordinary poor adults in the town. Others from more varied family and economic situations may provide a more realistic gauge to the accumulation of wealth among the poor in Ipswich. As has been mentioned, the inventory with the lowest total value was associated with a member of the ordinary poor, not the relief-dependent. After his death in 1590, the goods of Richard Barnes (a husbandman) were appraised at a meagre £2 9*s* 11*d*.[174] Although his overall wealth was conspicuously low, this does not necessarily indicate that Barnes was exceedingly poor. Indeed, of the 44 items in Barnes's inventory, 16 were items of clothing and the most expensive of these was his blue coat, which was valued at 4*s*. Although much of it was old, Barnes had a substantial collection of clothing for an ordinary poor man,

[174] *Probate Inventories*, ed. Reed, pp. 40-1.

which included a cloak, two coats, two doublets, two jerkins, three pairs of breeches, a pair of stockings, four shirts, and a shirt band; he had also acquired some consumer goods, such as a pewter cup and a salt cellar.[175] While Barnes owned some agricultural implements connected to his work, like scythes, hatchets, and hooks, their total value was significantly less than the value of his more discretionary possessions. Piecing together Barnes' family situation suggests that it probably determined why the overall value of his possessions was so low and consisted mainly of clothes. Entries from the parish registers show that Barnes was married, but childless. This stands his family in stark contrast to those of many others we have reviewed, such as Boyes, Skeete, and Bonner, who each had several children. There is little doubt that the needs of the Barnes household were significantly less than most others among the ordinary poor, and it is this difference which his inventory reflects. Whereas Boyes, Skeete, and Bonner *had* to acquire several beds, bedding, stools, and other necessities to meet the living requirements of their families, Barnes did not. Thus, although this caused the value of his assets to be significantly less than the others, in reality, the childless Barnes probably had more discretionary income than many 'wealthier' ordinary poor men.

By and large, the inventories of the ordinary poor and relief-dependent inhabitants who had assets valued in the normal range of between £7 and £11 follow this pattern. Nearly all had large families and the bulk of their wealth was found in household and work-related goods. For example, the inventory of John Golames (Gilome/Gilham), an ordinary poor blacksmith (whose son, Henry, and daughter-in-law, Marie, we met earlier) shows that, upon his death in 1584, John's goods were appraised at £8 2*s* 6*d*. At that point, John had a wife and three older children, and most of his itemised wealth came from useful household items and his occupational tools.[176] In the few years before he died, John was charged twice for unlawful victualling in the town, and the proliferation of kitchenware and

[175] Ibid.
[176] Ibid, p. 21.

furnishings among his goods suggests that the family had continued in this business at least until his death. John also owned a 'coffer'[177], which indicates the family was probably rather successful in this and their other work. Yet, there was no money (or barrels of beer) itemised among his possessions and it seems probable that his wife hid those assets before the appraisers arrived.

Although few superfluous goods can be found among the inventories of those who were on relief, such as William Miles (£9 6*s* 8*d*) and Peter Inglishe (£7 16*s* 4*d*), the overall pattern remains the same.[178] By definition, this group had limited discretionary income and it is not surprising that neither of the inventories include consumer goods, or even clothes. Surely, as mentioned before, Miles and Inglish would have had clothing, but it was probably of poor quality, worth little, and so was omitted from the account.[179] Nevertheless, it is significant that the total value of each of these inventories far exceeds that of Barnes, the ordinary poor husbandman who had a relatively extensive wardrobe. Here again, the parish registers show that Inglishe (a labourer) was the father of at least six children, some of whom were still living at home when he died in 1599. Like the others with large families, the value of his assets chiefly came from three beds and their related bedding, which included, among other things, six sets of 'corse canvas sheets some good some bade'.[180] The inventory of William Miles, a once-successful immigrant goldsmith who became relief-dependent in his old age, has similar hallmarks. Most of the value of Miles' belongings came from the tools of his trade, along with his bed, linens, and furniture.[181] The examples of Inglishe and Miles add further weight to the notion that family situation had a greater influence on the poor's material wealth than their socio-economic classification. Furthermore, all of this evidence suggests that as the size of poor families grew and they

[177] i.e. strongbox to hold money and valuables.
[178] *Probate Inventories*, ed. Reed, pp. 25, 50-1.
[179] Spufford, *Great Reclothing*, p. 144; Botelho, *Old Age*, p. 147.
[180] *Probate Inventories*, ed. Reed, p. 50.
[181] Ibid, p. 25.

needed to acquire more belongings (e.g. beds, bedding, stools, etc.), their material wealth naturally increased. Even so, as this occurred, their discretionary income normally became more restricted.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown that many poor adults in Ipswich were successful in their attempts to remain solvent and accumulate wealth between 1570 and 1620. They often did so by engaging in a combination of lawful and unlawful employment that provided them with relatively high levels of annual income which many used (at least in part) to develop savings. The next chapter will discuss the ways poor adults used these savings and other wealth for the benefit of their children, and will consider in more detail poor children's economic lives.

CHAPTER SIX:

The Economic Lives of Poor Children

Children and the Family Economy

We have just seen that, more often than not, by the 1590s poor adults in Ipswich had become acclimatised to the economic and demographic challenges which they repeatedly faced between 1570 and 1620. In addition, many shrewdly put this awareness to good use and adapted their employment strategies in order to continue to accumulate wealth, and meet the financial needs and economic goals of their families. Since most among the poor were parents who, by the time they were in their 40s, had three, four, or even five living children, it is easy to see why historians generally agree that the economic lives of poor children played an integral role in the structure and stability of their family economies. For those in Ipswich this was certainly the case, and when poor families in the town began to have children, their consumption patterns, forms of wealth, and access to discretionary income frequently diverged from their childless counterparts.[1]

Although it is plain that the arrival of offspring influenced parental financial decisions, and that older children often assumed various economic tasks, the current historiography shows that we know very little about how and why poor children participated in their family economies.[2] Indeed, it is rather remarkable that a century after the publication of Dunlop and Denman's seminal study, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour*, our understanding of the economic lives of poor children prior to 1650 remains

[1] See Chapters Four and Five.

[2] For some discussions of the fundamental effects of children on poor family economies, see: O. J. Dunlop and R. D. Denman, *English Apprenticeship and Child Labour: A History* (London, 1914); I. Pinchbeck and M. Hewitt, *Children in English Society Volume I: From Tudor Times to the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1969), pp. 22-5; Wales, 'Poverty, Poor Relief and the Life-Cycle', pp. 375-8; Houlbrooke, *English Family*, pp. 153-5; Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 73-90; P. Sharpe, 'Poor Children as Apprentices in Colyton, 1598-1830', *Continuity and Change*, 6/2 (1991), pp. 256-8; Abbott, *Family Ties*, Ch. 6; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 49-50; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 23-5, 194-5; Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 169-72.

reliant on only a handful of studies. Certainly, the work of those such as Ivy Pinchbeck, Margaret Hewitt, Pamela Sharpe, Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, Joan Lane, and Steve Hindle have expanded our understanding of the employment of early modern children, both poor and non-poor alike.[3] Nevertheless, this foundational research has two serious blind spots: it focuses overwhelmingly on the experiences of older children who left the family home as either 'regular' or 'pauper' apprentices, and it is chiefly concerned with the employment of children after the poor relief legislation of 1598, which brought about many changes to the work situations of the poor, including children.

Most often such studies are based upon the detailed analysis of some combination of regular apprenticeships (that is, those contracted by parents or guardians on behalf of the child) and pauper apprenticeships (those contracted by parish overseers of the poor). This methodology has led to a divide in the study of children's employment with pauper apprentices generally representing the experience of poor children, and regular apprentices the experience of the non-poor. As a result, the current historiography of children's work in England primarily reflects the study of apprenticeship in the seventeenth century, rather than the employment of children overall. This bias continues to trouble historians, particularly those concerned with the lives of the poor, their households, and their families. Without a body of detailed research to draw upon such historians are forced to describe most children's work and its effects on household economies in vague and anecdotal ways.[4] This chapter breaks from that trend by including detailed analyses of sources other than apprenticeship indentures, and portrays the employment of poor children in Ipswich from birth to the threshold of adulthood.

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[3] Pinchbeck and Hewitt, *Children in English Society*; Sharpe, 'Poor Children', pp. 253-70; I. K. Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth in Early Modern England* (London, 1994); J. Lane, *Apprenticeship in England, 1600-1914* (London, 1996); Hindle, *On the Parish?*; idem, 'Waste Children? Pauper Apprenticeship under the Elizabethan Poor Laws, c.1598-1697', in P. Lane, N. Raven and K. D. M. Snell (eds), *Women, Work and Wages in England, 1600-1850* (Woodbridge, 2004), pp. 15-46.

[4] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 81-3; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 49-50; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 24-5, 194.

Studying the lives of 'children' and defining their economic lives primarily by their 'work' necessitates some discussion of what these terms mean. Here the terms 'work', 'employment', and 'labour' are used interchangeably and they imply a great variety of economic activities that had the immediate or future acquisition of income as their main focus. This is the case because even though most children in Ipswich who engaged in such activities earned a weekly income for their work (as did child labourers or knitters), a small contingent of children, such as those who begged, simply performed a lucrative action. In addition, a significant portion of children undertook unpaid activities that had latent financial benefits, either for themselves (such as those who attended school) or their household (such as those who helped their parents with chores). This interpretation of children's employment is not new and has been used by many historians including Paul Slack, Keith Wrightson, and Steve Hindle, among others.[5] More importantly, this definition also appears to coincide with contemporary perceptions of children's employment, since all of these activities were noted by parish authorities under the heading of 'woorkes' in the Ipswich census of the poor.[6]

Over the past few decades, a growing body of work on life-cycle stages has made it clear that contemporaries generally viewed children's growth to adulthood as a series of phases including infancy, childhood, and youth.[7] The boundaries and goals of these stages and the age at which children moved from one to the next were woolly at best, therefore, defining who should be regarded as 'children' in this period can be a tricky business. As will be shown, evidence from Ipswich, such as the town's census of the poor, suggests that in practical application the divisions between these phases, and especially between 'childhood' and 'youth', were perhaps more important culturally than they were

[5] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 82-3; Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 49-50; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 24-5, 194.
[6] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40.
[7] See, for example: Abbott, *Life Cycles*, chs. 3-5; P. Griffiths, *Youth and Authority: Formative Experiences in England, 1560-1640* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 1-60.

economically. Indeed, children could enter into the world of employment at any stage, and even an infant could beg. The Statute of Artificers enacted in 1563 and the revised poor laws from 1601 offer some indication of the age at which *authorities* expected children to be productively employed; the statute of 1563 ordered compulsory service for most unemployed 12 year-olds, and magistrates commonly interpreted the statute of 1601 to suggest that children as young as seven should be set on work.[8] This suggests that most authorities probably believed that it was in the stages of 'childhood' and 'youth' that poor children were to begin some form of employment.

The following analysis also underscores that the period of 'youth' could be protracted (especially for poorer children), and sometimes extended up to and beyond the age of 30.[9] This was particularly the case for unmarried girls, and the three oldest 'children' noted in the Ipswich census, Katherine Bower (aged 26 years), Joan Powell (aged 28 years), and Elizabeth Smethe (aged 30 years), all were single, although at least one (Joan) was the mother of an illegitimate infant. By that age such 'children' usually played a critical role in their parents' household economies, and whether or not they were 'dependants' can sometimes be questionable. For example, even though Katherine (the youngest daughter of Widow Bower) lived with her mother, each contributed equally to the household income by earning 6*d* a week from spinning. This suggests that Katherine and her mother were similarly reliant upon each other for financial support. All the same, the town's census of the poor shows that local authorities commonly recorded all children, regardless of the child's age, in the same way under the specific heading of 'children'.[10] Therefore, for the purposes of this chapter the term 'children' (unless otherwise specified) should be taken to mean all those who lived at home as at least partial dependants and under the implied supervision of their parent or guardian. This may seem a large umbrella and the main

[8] *Tudor Economic Documents*, ed. Tawney and Power, i, pp. 340-1; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 212-15.
[9] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, pp. 5-17; Griffiths, *Youth and Authority*, pp. 23-4.
[10] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40.

sources used for this study do include over 170 children with recorded ages that range widely between eight weeks and 30 years old. Nevertheless, since 135 of these children, or about 79 per cent, were aged between one and 14, the vast majority of them would be considered 'children' both in contemporary terms and our own.

It seems certain that dependent children of any age were a source of financial consideration for the majority of poor parents. Obviously, as others have shown, when children were young they were primarily a drain on their household's resources, and at the outset of family development the need to sustain several young children could overstretch poor families and force them to become dependent upon relief.[11] Nevertheless, as children matured and gained competence and employable skills, their economic value grew — particularly in cloth manufacturing regions — and by the age of seven many in Ipswich were at least partially employed in various forms of paid and unpaid labour.[12] The connection between life-cycle stages and poverty has become ingrained in the studies of early modern poverty and childhood. Indeed, most contemporary observers and modern historians agree that the more children poor families had, the poorer they became, and that in order to survive parents had to financially exploit their children at the earliest possible opportunity.[13]

Yet we have seen how poor parents in Ipswich often went to great lengths to ensure that their own earnings would, by themselves, adequately provide for their family's immediate and future needs. And, even though a poor family's discretionary income usually reduced in step with its fecundity, its overall wealth normally increased as parents accumulated more goods to provide for growing numbers of children. Furthermore, the extent to which early modern poor children were ever abundantly employed has been

[11] See, for example Wales, 'Poverty, Poor Relief, and the Life-Cycle', pp. 375-8.
[12] H. Cunningham, 'The Employment and Unemployment of Children in England, c. 1680-1851', *Past and Present*, 126 (Feb. 1990), pp. 136-7; *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40.
[13] For some examples see Wales, 'Poverty, Poor Relief, and the Life-Cycle', p. 375-8; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 24, 195.

questioned.[14] This evidence forces us to pause and reconsider the prevailing assumption that poor parents in this period normally needed, or indeed expected, their children to be considerable contributors to the family economy. Certainly, some children did work, but many factors influenced whether or not this was the case. These included, primarily, the demand for child workers in regional labour markets, a child's age and gender, the makeup of a child's family, and the involvement of local poor relief authorities in a family's affairs. How these factors interacted to shape poor children's economic experiences was complex and is often obscured because the reasons behind children's employment, or lack thereof, are rarely made explicit in the records. As a result, it can be difficult to determine, for example, whether the employment of poor children was mainly because of pressure from their parents, local authorities, or some combination of both. This chapter suggests that for poor children in Ipswich we can begin to distinguish between these influences because parents and local authorities commonly had conflicting agendas when it came to children's work. The dissonance in their approaches ultimately manifested itself as distinct employment patterns for poor children in the town, and these patterns illuminate the way poor parents and local authorities usually shaped children's economic paths to different ends.

This chapter, then, is concerned with many interrelated themes. Chiefly, it explores how the economic potential of poor children in Ipswich influenced the immediate and long-term financial plans of their parents, and details the most common types of employment and economic training experienced by the children of the poor between 1570 and 1620. In so doing, it examines how poor parents endeavoured to provide for and shape their children's economic lives throughout this period. In addition, it considers the growing influence of local and national poor relief legislation on the employment of poor children in the late sixteenth century, and asks whether or not the implementation of these statutes by town

[14] Chapter Five; Cunningham, 'Employment and Unemployment', pp. 115-50.

authorities ultimately supported or undermined poor children's economic futures in the town.

Sources and Methodology

The methodologies and sources used in this chapter have been largely dictated by the different types of questions which it seeks to address. The most problematic of these is a sample of wills created by some of the town's poor inhabitants which have been used to form the basis for the subsequent analysis of parental expectation and provision for poor children's futures. It is common knowledge that the poor generally did not make wills during this period, nor did they usually own enough of value (at least openly) to trigger a probate inventory at the time of their death. As was demonstrated in the last chapter there were exceptions, to the extent that the poor inhabitants of Ipswich generated roughly 10 per cent of the probate records related to the town in the Archdeaconry Court of Suffolk dated between 1555 and 1660.[15] What follows is based on a sample of 28 of these wills proved between 1555 and 1627. [16] The level of detail found in wills varies considerably, but they usually show the possession of goods, money, and real property at the time of a testator's death. They also typically provide an outline of how this wealth was meant to be distributed, normally from one generation to the next. This makes wills a useful source when contemplating the overall economic strategies and goals of poor parents because such records can imply the purposes of any amassed goods, money, property, or savings.

[15] Of the nearly 1,200 probate records of the town's inhabitants indexed for this period, 119 relate to poor residents who were either unable to pay towards the town's poor rate or who received some form of official relief. *Index of the Probate Records of the Court of the Archdeacon of Suffolk, 1444-1700,* ed. M. E. Grimwade, W. R. Serjeant and R. K. Serjeant (2 vols., British Record Society, Keele, 1979-80).

[16] This includes a random sample of 14 original wills: SROI, IC/AA1/53/213; IC/AA1/35/113; IC/AA1/36/94; IC/AA1/27/220; IC/AA1/21/190; IC/AA1/30/22; IC/AA1/57/107; IC/AA1/31/251; IC/AA1/55/144; IC/AA1/15/17; IC/AA1/29/196; IC/AA1/37/61; IC/AA1/55/4158; IC/AA1/40/56; and 14 transcribed wills from printed sources: *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, 1620-1624*, ed. M. E. Allen (Suffolk Records Society, xxxi, Woodbridge, 1989), pp. 82, 89-90, 99-100, 101, 130, 146, 182, 271-2, 276, 325-6, 353-4, 410-11, 446-7; *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, 1625-1626,* ed. M. E. Allen (Suffolk Records Society, xxxvi, Woodbridge, 1995), p. 193.

Nevertheless, analysis of probate records must be undertaken with caution since they only rarely reveal how a testator may have distributed their accumulated assets before death. Indeed, only one of the 28 wills analysed here touches upon that subject. Even so, as has been shown, this activity was probably very common among the poor, particularly those who were engaged in forms of unlawful employment, and those who had accumulated a degree of wealth. An ante-mortem distribution of key moveable assets (e.g. money or clothes) was an easy way for a person to conceal their total wealth and thereby avoid the potential that heirs might be re-classified as 'able householders' and have to pay more in local rates. Although detail of this activity is sparse, the following analysis of the poor's approaches to the distribution of assets before death was gleaned from this set of wills, and a few anecdotal accounts found amidst the depositions given at the town's petty court.[17]

In this sample of wills, certain types of poverty and poor individuals are better represented than others. Work on similar English sources has shown that the deaths of married men and widows, especially parents who had minor children, caused the creation of probate records more often than the deaths of those in other social groups.[18] Although the legal custom in Ipswich dictated that the age of full majority was 21 years old, children gained certain rights in both the borough and church courts at the age of 14, such as the ability to convey inherited lands and to appoint their own legal guardians.[19] As will be shown, most parents had also established their offspring in some form of employment training by the age of 14, so by that age many children had begun their march towards adult independence. As a result this chapter considers 'minors' to be all children under the age of 14 years old. Cross-referencing the wills of poor residents with the compiled data from the town's parish registers shows that the sample analysed here follows the pattern found in

[17] See Chapter Five; SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 175-6, 346-7.
[18] Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 207.
[19] Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 37, 50-51, 61, 72, 75, 78; H. Swinburne, *A Treatise of Testaments and Last Wills*, 4th edn. (London, 1677), pp. 148-9.

other regions; of the 28 wills, 12 pertain to testators who had a least one minor child, 8 to those who only had children over the age of fourteen, 3 to those who were childless, 2 to unmarried men, and 3 to those who had children of unknown ages.[20] It is also the case that the majority of these sources, including 26 of the 28 wills, represent individuals who lived in 'ordinary poverty', so the 'relief-dependent' poor are rarely found in these records. Indeed, only two of the wills pertain to those who received official relief, and an additional will represents an elderly aunt whose nephew was unofficially providing her with financial support.[21]

The sources which have been used to study children's work before 1598 include principally the town's late-Elizabethan census of the poor and several apprenticeship indentures enrolled by freemen in the town's borough court between 1596 and 1605. Some of the limitations of the census have already been mentioned, and in fact both of these sources to a greater or lesser extent are incomplete, inconsistent in detail, and represent different types of poor children. Because of this it is necessary to spend some time explaining the obstacles to studying children's work in this period and how this research overcomes them. A large portion of the following discussion is based on the detailed entries of children's employments made by the town's parish authorities in a census of the poor taken in late 1597 or early 1598, near to the time parliament enacted the poor law legislation of the same year.[22] As was explained in the last chapter, this census has the potential to be very useful for studying the poor's employment because it includes the names, ages, work and wages of the town's poor adults, and specifically notes the ages,

[20] Testators with minor children include: SROI, IC/AA1/36/94; IC/AA1/57/107; IC/AA1/31/251; IC/AA1/55/144; IC/AA1/37/61; IC/AA1/40/56; *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, pp. 99-100, 101, 271-2, 353-4, 410-11, 446-7. Those with only adult children include: SROI, IC/AA1/35/113; IC/AA1/27/220; IC/AA1/30/22; IC/AA1/15/17; IC/AA1/55/4158; *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, pp. 146, 276, 325-6. Childless testators include: SROI, IC/AA1/53/213; *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, pp. 130, 182. Unmarried testators include: SROI, IC/AA1/21/190; *Wills...1625-26*, ed. Allen, p. 193. Those with children of unknown age include: SROI, IC/AA1/29/196; *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, pp. 82, 89-90.
[21] The relief-dependent poor include: SROI, IC/AA1/35/113; IC/AA1/37/61. The will of the aunt who was supported by her nephew is: *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, p. 276.
[22] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40.

wages, and 'woorkes' of each household's children. Despite this, it has two critical flaws that have hitherto made it impossible for historians to use the census to study children's labour. First, in almost all cases it does not provide the gender of the recorded children. This fact hamstrung A. L. Beier's analysis of poor children's employment in Ipswich, and in his essay on 'Poverty and Progress' he could suggest merely that some 40 per cent of children living at home and over the age of five had some kind of occupation.[23] Using data from the town's parish registers, it has been possible to ascertain the missing information for many of these poor children. The database discussed in Chapter Four has enabled me to cross-reference the names of the children's parents from this census with parish register entries of their children's baptisms, which has made it possible to assign genders and names to 170 of the 219 listed children, or roughly 78 per cent. This additional data gives the town's census of the poor new depths of meaning and allows the source to be analysed in a more profound way with regard to the employment of poor girls and boys.

The second great flaw of the census is that it represents only certain types of the town's poor inhabitants. In particular, it fails to note any poor seafaring households even though the families of sailors and mariners made up a significant portion of the town's poor population.[24] The missing data on poor seafaring families has made it difficult to analyse their children's experience of work, but this has been partially offset by analysing some information on the children of seafarers, especially older boys, from a collection of 38 regular apprenticeship indentures that were enrolled by freemen in the town's borough court between 1596 and 1605.[25] These records are part of a bound volume containing several hundred regular apprenticeship indentures for the period 1596 to 1651. Most of those who enrolled these indentures were sailors and mariners and several relate to the

[23] Beier, 'Poverty and Progress', p. 228.
[24] This problem was discussed in detail in Chapter Five.
[25] SROI, C/3/2/2/2, fols. 107-28.

children of poor seafaring residents in the town.[26] Even so, the work of children in poor seafaring families, especially girls and younger children, remains largely unclear.

It has proved more difficult to analyse the full extent to which the employment of poor children changed after the town began to implement the poor law legislation of 1598. This is the case because no source exists which accurately reflects the employment of *both* 'ordinary poor' and 'relief-dependent' children in Ipswich between 1598 and 1620. After 1597, the collection of apprenticeship enrolments (mentioned above) is the only source that concerns the official employment training of ordinary poor children, but it mainly includes the indentures of seafaring masters and, on its own, cannot be considered representative of children's work in the town. Although the work of ordinary poor children (particularly boys) after 1598 remains difficult to assess, cross-referencing the names and employments of the boys noted in the census with those of men referenced in the town's quarter sessions books in the 1630s and 40s, allows us to determine some of these boys' official occupations as adults. This, in turn, allows some inferences to be made on the subject.[27] Furthermore, an indication of the immediate effect of the legislation of 1598, particularly the 'Acte for the Releife of the Poore', on the work of ordinary poor and relief-dependent children in Ipswich can be gathered from data in the town's census of the poor.[28] The census shows that local authorities began to implement some of the provisions of this statute at the same time that they compiled the listing of the town's poor inhabitants. Specifically, at that time they started to provide some of the prescribed forms of work outlined in the act to unemployed or underemployed ordinary poor and relief-dependent households, and they noted such provisions in the census. This means that, although the census might have been taken shortly before the introduction of the 'Acte for the Releife of the Poore' in 1598, it

[26] For a more detailed discussion of this source, see J. Webb, 'Apprenticeship in the Maritime Occupations at Ipswich, 1596-1651', *Mariner's Mirror*, 46 (1960), pp. 29-34.
[27] See Chapter Five for a more detailed discussion of this source SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/7.
[28] 39 Eliz. I, c. 3.

still provides some indication of how this statute instantly affected the working lives of many ordinary poor and relief-dependent children in the town.

The records of the town's overseers of the poor (a position established by 39 Eliz. I, c. 3) shed more light on how the employment of some ordinary poor and relief-dependent children changed after 1598. Indeed, a large portion of the following argument rests on the analysis of a continuous set of accounts made by the overseers of the poor in the parish of St Nicholas between 1598 and 1620, and a similar set from the parish of St Lawrence made between 1599 and 1620.[29] The accounts from these parishes were chosen for analysis because each set appears to have been consistently and conscientiously recorded, and they represent parishes with different levels of overall wealth; whereas St Nicholas was a parish of average wealth, St Lawrence was a prosperous one.[30] Analysing data from parishes of differing economic status allows us to see more clearly whether or not a parish's overall economic situation affected how its poor relief officials approached the employment of poor children. Although these records, by their nature, normally represent the experiences of children who were being supported by relief from local officials, they also show the continued provision of prescribed employments and work tools to many ordinary poor families in the sample parishes. Furthermore, because the accounts provide details of each parish's pauper apprenticeships they showcase the fate that awaited ordinary poor children if local authorities took full control of their employment. By mining the town's quarter sessions records from the 1630s and 40s for the adult occupations of some of these pauper apprentices, it has been possible to verify the lasting effect that such apprenticeships could have on children's economic futures.

[29] SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1; SROI, C/5/3/2/2/1.
[30] See Chapter Three.

The Role of Parents

> In the name of God Amen I, Aggas Dawson, of the parishe of St Margarettes in Ipswiche will geve and bequethe unto Elizabeth Dawson, my wyefe, imediatly after my decease, my mesuage or Tenemente wherin I nowe dwell with [all] ther unto belongeinge uppon condicion not with standinge that [she] shall bringe upp or cause to be brought upp all my children.
>
> The will of Aggas Dawson [mariner], 8 February 1589[31]

> Wife Susan shall, in good sort according to her ability, bring up & provide for children till they be 21; she to have lands, tenements & hereditaments, purchased of William Allowaye, in Stoke next Ipswich, held of John Acton of his manor of Stoke. To children John, Susan, Hester & Joseph, 50s. each when 21.
>
> The will of John Huggon [husbandman/unlawful victualler], 27 May 1624[32]

Although decades separated the making of the wills of Aggas Dawson and John Huggon, two of the many 'ordinary poor' residents in Ipswich during this period, their testaments leave little doubt that when it came time for each to compose their wills, it was the economic future of their minor children and, particularly, the provision for their children's 'upbringing' that weighed most heavily on their minds. Even though neither will offers details of the dreams the fathers undoubtedly had for their offspring, nor indicates what 'bringing up' their children 'in good sort' specifically entailed, both clearly stipulate that their net assets were to be used principally for that purpose. Recently, great strides have been made in the effort to understand what it meant to 'bring up' a child in early modern England. The work of Anthony Fletcher has shown that, throughout this period, middling and wealthier parents understood that their parental responsibility to raise their offspring properly consisted of providing their children with a combination of religious, economic, and social training.[33] Furthermore, Patricia Crawford has shown that society had similar

[31] SROI, IC/AA1/31/251.
[32] *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, pp. 410-11.
[33] A. Fletcher, *Growing Up*, pp. 7-53.

expectations of poor parents — if on a more modest scale — and that the poor usually assimilated them. Nevertheless, she has also indicated that it was normal for poverty to preclude the poor from fulfilling this ideal because they so often were overwhelmed with providing for the basic needs of their families (i.e. food, shelter, and clothing), and so simply could not afford to pay for children's formal economic training (i.e. normal apprenticeships) or other instruction.[34] Certainly, as these wills attest, this was not always the case, and there is ample evidence that Dawson and Huggon were not unique in this regard. Indeed, poor parents in Ipswich and other regions often shared their concern for, and approach to raising their children.[35] For example, in 1579 a husbandman in the Sussex downs ordered the overseers of his will to remove his wife from being executrix only if '[she] do not bringe upp or cause to be brought upp all my three daughters in good order and state howe to be good membres in the common wealthe'.[36]

As we saw in the last chapter, the likelihood that poor parents could fully maintain their children based solely on lawful wages was remote, and many engaged in both lawful and unlawful employment in order to earn enough income to meet their family's needs. The wills of Dawson and Huggon and other poor residents in Ipswich suggest that one of the main reasons poor parents took risks to accumulate wealth was to meet the social expectation that they would properly raise and provide for their children. Indeed, in 1623 Thomas Barweck (an ordinary poor fishmonger) bequeathed the majority of his assets to the control of his wife, Margery, so that she could 'maintain' their young daughter, Mary, and see to her 'keeping, governance and upbringing' until Mary's marriage.[37] In a rather enlightening aside concerning his intentions, Barweck prefaces his bequests by stating: 'being assured that God according to his promise, will be a father to [Mary] if she live in his fear, & will not see her lack, yet since the law & God & nature require testator to have a

[34] Crawford, *Parents of Poor Children*, pp. 112-14, 133-6.
[35] Wrightson and Levine, *Poverty and Piety*, pp. 95-9.
[36] Quoted in Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 172.
[37] Abridged from *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, pp. 271-2.

reasonable care of daughter ... [I give to her] all that tenement ... being copyhold, bought of William Clarke [carpenter] ...'[38]

Although the wills of Dawson, Huggon, and Barweck are the only ones made by poor parents which explicitly refer to the provision for their children's 'upbringing', this appears to be the case because they were nearly the only testators who had children of an age that suggests that they had not already been set on a path of formal employment training. Dawson's eldest daughter, Anne, had probably just turned 13 years old when her father composed his will, but his other living children, Elizabeth, Susan, and Andrew, were aged merely 8, 6, and 3 at that time.[39] Similarly, Barweck's only child, Mary, was almost certainly under the age of 10, and Huggon's youngest child, Joseph, was also only 10 years old.[40] As far as can be determined from the parish registers, only one of the other nine testators who had minor offspring had a child under the age of 12 years.[41] This suggests that poor parents may only have made bequests for the 'upbringing' of their children when some of their offspring had yet to be settled in formal training for their future employment.

The fact that poor fathers were so concerned with the future of their minor children is not surprising, since there was a real possibility that their widow would remarry and her new husband would gain control over the assets which she held outright. Even though after remarriage the inheritance portions of minor children remained legally under the widow's sole oversight, fathers (and widows approaching their remarriage) often feared that stepfathers might find a way to plunder these resources and thereby destroy their children's economic prospects.[42] As one historian has explained, it was not unusual for a widow to find that remarriage had left 'her children at the mercy, or forgetfulness, of their

[38] Ibid., pp. 271-2.
[39] SROI, IC/AA1/31/251; SROI, FB93/D2/1-2.
[40] *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen,, pp. 271-2, 410-11; SROI, FB106/D2/1; SROI, FB92/D1/1.
[41] *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen,, pp. 99-100; SROI, FB95/D1/1.
[42] Harding, 'Working Wives', p. 554.

stepfather.'[43] Directly linking a widow's control over her husband's post-mortem assets to her adequate provision for their children's futures was one way poor fathers could try to ensure their widows did not succumb to such a situation. Because it was common for both men and women to remarry after the death of a spouse, some fathers also worried that their children from a previous marriage might be neglected when left to the sole care of their stepmother. Aggas Dawson faced this potential problem since his eldest daughter Anne (aged 13) was the only child from his first marriage, whereas his three younger children were the offspring of his second union with his, then current, wife. This probably spurred Dawson to explicitly state that his second wife would lose all right to his property unless she fulfilled her responsibility to 'bringe upp or cause to be brought upp *all my children*', a phrase which necessarily included her stepdaughter Anne.[44]

The twelve wills that concern minor offspring and the eight others from parents of only adult children also show that poor parents continued to plan and provide for the future support of their children even after they had placed them in some form of formal employment training, or the children had otherwise left the family home. This sustained influence that poor children had on their parents' finances suggests that for many of the poor, 'family economies' (i.e. economic ties based on nuclear family bonds) were just as important as their 'household economies' (i.e. economic ties based on living arrangements). It appears to have been most common for poor parents who had already chosen a path for their children's economic training or instruction to shift the focus of their bequests from 'bringing up' their children to simply providing them with legacies. Such legacies could include any combination of money, property, and goods, and were typically accessible only at the time children reached adulthood, usually through marriage, the completion of an apprenticeship, or by reaching 21 or 24 years of age. Thus it was that a tailor in the town named William Mymprys (who was also in receipt of poor relief) provided conditional

[43] Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 132.
[44] Emphasis added, SROI, IC/AA1/31/251.

legacies to his children after he fell sick and perished in 1597.[45] All of his children appear to have been in their teens and so were probably already in service or training. Accordingly, in his will he simply bequeathed £5 to each of his children, which was to be paid by their mother on their twenty-first birthdays.[46] Likewise in 1624, John Huggon (the aforementioned ordinary poor husbandman and unlawful victualler) bequeathed 50*s* to each child when they turned 21 years old.[47] Similarly in 1601, Agnes Boyse (the widow of an ordinary poor mariner) among other items bequeathed the family home to her youngest child, Thomas (aged 15), all of which he stood to inherit only when he reached the age of 24. Agnes also made provisions for her four adult daughters (all of whom were married); each was to receive part of the rental income from the property, various items of clothing and household stuff, and £2 of a legacy left to the children by a wealthy mariner and portman of the town.[48] Moreover the wills show that poor grandparents could provide similar legacies to their grandchildren. Such was the case in 1599 when the relief-dependent widow, Agnes Bonch, bequeathed £3 to each of her four grandchildren, the total sum being given in trust to Bonch's daughter and son-in-law until the children reached the age of 21.[49]

In addition, there is some indication that poor widows and mothers may have commonly made ante-mortem disbursements of parental wealth as their children grew to adulthood. The ordinary poor widow of a sexton of the parish of St Laurence, Margery Claydon (another unlawful victualler), specified in her will from 1621 that all of her children, save her youngest daughter Alice, already had 'in their custody their several portions', therefore Alice was to have 'the rest of the goods, chattels and household

[45] SROI, IC/AA1/37/61.
[46] Ibid.
[47] *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, pp. 410-11.
[48] SROI, IC/AA1/36/94.
[49] SROI, IC/AA1/35/113.

implements in the dwelling house' immediately after her mother's death.[50] Whereas Margery's older children were all in their 20s at this time, Alice was a few weeks away from her eighteenth birthday, unmarried, and probably living at home in order to assist her mother with the family's victualling business.[51] Since Margery's husband appears to have died intestate, this suggests that her older children had been given their 'portions' when they had begun their independent adult life and, since her death necessarily thrust Alice into independence, she had deemed Alice ready to receive her legacy despite her young age. Because Alice's 'portion' included all of the goods in the home, presumably including the necessary implements to continue victualling, it probably provided her with a promising start to her economic life as an adult.

Such situations were almost certainly more widespread than the evidence from wills suggests because so many of the poor died intestate, and it may have been usual for those in this socio-economic group to conceal or disburse specific forms of wealth prior to death, particularly money. The depositions from the town's petty court provide at least one further example of how an ordinary poor mother, well before her death, accumulated significant savings and made secret plans to provide her children with legacies outside of the system of probate. In 1578 Margaret Sproute, the wife of a husbandman, explained to the petty court that:

> aboute seven yeres last paste, her said mother ded deliver to her certen peces of golde, some of them were in a boxe and some wounde upp in yarne w[hi]ch [the] said peces of golde her [mother] said to her came to the some of [£100] and willed this deponent to laie them upp, and said, 'if god call me in the meane tyme paie yor systers ther porcions as I have tolde you and take you the residewe', wheruppon this deponent ded breake up certen brickes in the parlor chamber chimney and ther hidd it and covered it over ageine. Her mothers mynde was that her syster Ursula should have xx^{tie} markes, and Johane and Marye shoulde have xx^{tie} nobles a pece, and [that] Elizabeth had had her parte before, and said this deponent should have the reste. But [she] never see it nor anie parte therof, nor yet had anie parte therof sithens she leide it in the said chimney, but saithe she demaunded of her mother about Michaelmas laste xx s or fortie shillings 'for nowe', said this deponent, 'I have nede therof', whereunto she answered she coulde not saieing to her 'yor father had founde yt', wherunto this

[50] *Wills...1620-24*, ed. Allen, p. 157; C/2/9/1/1/8/6, fol. 83r.
[51] SROI, FB106/D2/1.

> deponent said to her [mother], 'shall I aske my father for yt? I dare aske him well inoughe'. 'Noe', said [her mother], 'I had rather make the amendes another weye'[52]

Obviously, there is much going on in Margaret Sproute's story that makes her situation rather remarkable. Her mother had not only saved a small fortune for her daughters' portions, but she had seemingly done so without her husband's initial knowledge. The deposition of another poor woman who had 'wrapped or knit upp in a clout[53]' over £5 in gold and hidden it in a pair of sheets suggests that it may not have been uncommon for poor women to hide money away in this fashion.[54] Although it remains to be seen how common this covert practice was, the fact that Margaret's mother had clearly planned to provide significant support to her children, and had already distributed such support to one adult daughter (before either parent had died), shows that she was both concerned about her children's economic stability and future, and wanted to provide them with financial support as the need arose during their adulthood. It seems reasonable to surmise from this evidence that poor parents often distributed much of their accumulated wealth in a similar fashion, and this may have been one reason so few generated probate records.

Overall, the evidence from these wills suggests that between 1570 and 1620, poor parents in Ipswich generally considered 'bringing up' their children — which, included providing them with economic training or education — to be a central component of their parental responsibilities, and they took this responsibility very seriously. The wills show that poor parents across this period considered such activity to be essential to their children's lives, and their efforts to accumulate wealth appear to have been driven chiefly by the desire to settle minor children in employment training, and provide adult children with financial legacies. As we shall see, this was the case because these were the most effective methods parents had to shape, and thereby safeguard, their children's economic futures. During a period fraught with economic and demographic problems, earning enough

[52] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 175-6.
[53] A small piece of worthless cloth (i.e. a rag).
[54] SROI, C/2/3/8/1, fols. 346-7.

to develop savings or acquire costly assets was no easy task, and often required poor parents in the town to take on various forms of employment.[55] Although the wealth accumulated from such activity may have been exploited as a source of funds if destitution struck a poor family, for the poor in Ipswich it seems to have been primarily developed (and presumably envisioned) as a means to provide their children with the most stable economic future possible.

The Role of Local Authorities

It has become well established that in the sixteenth century local and national authorities showed an increasing interest in controlling the employment training and work of poor children. As Ivy Pinchbeck has noted, 'children loomed large in the social legislation of the sixteenth century. They were regarded as an important part of the social structure and valuable assets of the commonwealth, and the problems associated with their maintenance and training were matters of national concern.'[56] Between 1536 and 1576, a string of acts ordered local authorities to search for and provide compulsory employment to children who begged or otherwise lived in 'idleness' because their parents had not provided them with employable skills.[57] Nevertheless this early legislation usually had a limited effect on the majority of poor children's lives, both in Ipswich and across the country. This was the case because until 1576 these laws primarily targeted the offspring of vagrants and beggars and not the lawfully settled poor.

Throughout this period most local authorities also lacked the institutional infrastructure and resources to provide widespread employment even to unemployed poor

[55] See Chapter Five.
[56] I. Pinchbeck, 'The State and the Child in Sixteenth Century England', *The British Journal of Sociology*, 7/4 (1956), p. 273; for a recent overview of authorities' growing concern with the employment of poor children, see Hindle, *On the Parish?*, pp. 193-212.
[57] Before the statutes of 1598 and 1601, orders concerning the employment of children were made explicit in 27 Hen. VIII, c. 25 [1536], 1 Edw. VI, c. 3 [1547], 3 & 4 Edw. VI, c. 16 [1549-50], 14 Eliz. I, c. 5 [1572], and 18 Eliz. I, c. 3 [1575-6], and reaffirmed in 5 & 6 Edw. VI, c. 2 [1551-2] and 5 Eliz. I, c. 3 [1562-3].

adults, let alone 'idle' poor children.[58] This meant that until local authorities had time to develop and fund schemes which could provide work to the idle and able-bodied poor, there was often little they could do to meet the national government's insistent demands for action. Indeed, magistrates in Ipswich refrained from creating any orders that referenced the employment of the poor until 1556, when eight townsmen were elected to oversee the 'maintenance' that was provided to 'poore and impotent people', and the 'work' which was to be given to 'vagabonds and idle persons' in order to 'suppress' them. At the same time, however, the town authorities clearly knew that this order would not take immediate effect, since it required the 'foundation of a house for the purpose' and only a fraction of the funds needed to establish such an institution had been raised by that date.[59] In the end, it took more than a decade for the town to gather enough funds to establish that institution (Christ's Hospital), so it was not until the 1570s that local authorities in Ipswich acquired the practical means to provide work to poor adults and children on any kind of large scale.

As Marjorie McIntosh has recently re-emphasised, by the middle of the sixteenth century 'hospitals' and almshouses had long been the primary institutions which provided long-term support to those living in poverty within their regional communities. Nevertheless, throughout this period in Ipswich (and elsewhere) the poor who were provided with support from these foundations were never very numerous. How such institutions relieved the poor could vary, but before the 1550s the provision of work was not among their main activities because they normally assisted only those who were seriously ill, incapacitated, or elderly. At that time hospitals typically housed and cared for those who were unable to live on their own because of illness or disability, and almshouses provided free housing and sometimes other support (e.g. weekly cash stipends, food, fuel, and clothing) to a selection of the poor, normally including only those who had reached an

[58] Pinchbeck, 'State and the Child', p. 277; Pound, *Poverty and Policy*, p. 128.
[59] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 246.

advanced age.[60] From the 1550s onwards, however, local authorities in large urban areas began to adapt and expand the roles of these institutions. This was particularly the case for hospitals because they could provide the institutional structure needed to meet the statutory requirement that authorities should not only support, but oversee and control, the activities of the relief-dependent poor in their communities. As a result, it was common for hospitals founded after the middle of the sixteenth century to serve as municipal orphanages, and work and correctional houses, in addition to their more customary functions. London spearheaded this movement when it established the institutions of Christ's Hospital and Bridewell in 1552. The first was meant 'to take oute of the streates all the fatherles children, and other poore mens children, that were not able to kepe them' and provide them with relief, basic education, and eventual placements in apprenticeships or service. The second was 'to relieve, and provide technical training for the older child "unapt for learning"'.[61] This was a role London's Bridewell continued to perform well into the seventeenth century even though it became best known as a house of correction, or penitentiary.[62] Several other urban communities followed London's example and these included (among others) Norwich, which had established two similar foundations (St Giles' Hospital and Bridewell) by 1565, and Ipswich which combined these activities under the roof of its own Christ's Hospital from 1569.[63] According to the royal charter given to the hospital at Ipswich, the institution was founded so:

> ... that in the said houses care might be taken of, and provision made for, (1.) the poor and orphans, especially such as are very young or very aged, who can of themselves have no livelihood and honest education, that they may not be unmercifully left to perish ... or be accustomed to base idleness, and evil practices, and brought up to the great detriment of the commonwealth: and that (2.) such as sickness renders unuseful to themselves and the public, so that, though they were never so willing, they could not support themselves, may by this means be piously cured, and preserved alive for honest uses; and lastly, (3.) that they whose age and health renders them strong enough for lawful employments, may neither for want of them apply themselves to

[60] See Chapter Two; Bacon, *Annalls*, pp. 429-30; McIntosh, *Poor Relief*, pp. 7-8, 59, 125-7.
[61] As quoted in Pinchbeck, 'State and the Child', p. 279.
[62] Beier, *Masterless Men*, pp. 164-9; P. Griffiths, *Lost Londons*, pp. 61-5.
[63] Pound, *Poverty and Vagrancy*, p. 64; Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 283.

> theft and evil practices; nor yet dishonestly and idly strolling, divert the alms of those who are really poor, or be suffered to endanger good people; but being busied in honest employments, may both maintain themselves, and be compelled to be useful to the commonwealth.[64]

Yet it remains questionable how much institutions such as these actually affected the upbringing and future working lives of the majority of poor children, even those who were orphans and dependent upon relief. Records from Christ's Hospital in Ipswich suggest that although it acted in part as the town's orphanage, in practice the institution housed only a fraction of the town's poor orphans. Moreover, there is no indication that it housed any poor children who had living parents that were resident in the town. A listing of 1595/6 shows that in that year only 23 children were living at this institution (11 boys and 12 girls).[65] By cross-referencing the children's names with data from the town's parish registers it is possible to assign approximate ages to 14 of them, and they appear to have ranged between 9 and 26 years old. The registers also show that at least 11 of these 14 children (roughly 78 per cent) were poor orphans, and it seems probable that most of the remainder were orphans as well. This suggests that the hospital in Ipswich probably housed only orphaned children who were over the age of eight.

Nevertheless, it is clear that just a small minority of orphans above the age of eight years old found themselves at the town's municipal hospital. Accounts from some of the town parishes' overseers of the poor show that until the late 1610s poor orphans were more often boarded in the homes of local families, and their 'maintenance' was paid for by the parish from the proceeds of the poor rates.[66] Furthermore, by 1598 town magistrates had begun to draw conceptual distinctions between these two groups of children, and only referred to those living in the hospital specifically as 'Town Children'.[67] It is also apparent that throughout this period parish officials were reluctant to send the orphans in their charge

[64] As translated from the Latin original and quoted in J. Wodderspoon, *A New Guide to Ipswich: Containing Notices of its Ancient and Modern History* (London, 1842), pp. 132-3.
[65] SROI, C/3/4/1/26, fol. 16r.
[66] SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1; SROI, C/3/2/2/2.
[67] Bacon, *Annalls*, p. 393.

to the hospital. This may have been the case because conditions at the institution were undoubtedly harsher, more labour-intensive, and less affectionate than those normally found in local families. It remains unclear, however, whether this reluctance stemmed from the desire of parish overseers to provide poor orphans with the possibility of a more nurturing environment, pressure from parish residents who knew and cared about the child, or perhaps a combination of these factors. In any event, this evidence suggests that it was probably normal for parish authorities to place orphaned children in Christ's Hospital only if they could not find a local family willing to take the child in.

As will be shown in the next section, by the age of eight most children were capable of performing some type of work, such as spinning and carding wool, and both of these were staple employments of the municipal hospital's work scheme.[68] Institutionalised orphans were in a similar situation in the Hospital of St Giles in Norwich where poor orphans were instructed in 'their letters and other exercises' and made to work in employments related to the cloth industry. According to the 'Orders for the Poor' created in Norwich in 1571, the purposes of such schemes were to ensure poor children were 'dryven to worke and lerne' until 'labore and learninge shall be easier to them than idleness and as they shall of themselves be hable to lyve of their owne workes with their families as others do'. [69] Such sentiments echo those found in the charter for Christ's Hospital in Ipswich, which has already been quoted. This suggests that the main purposes of these work schemes were to instil labour discipline and to teach poor children a set of specific skills that would allow them to start earning income as quickly as possible.

While it is evident that institutions like those in London, Norwich, and Ipswich trained some poor children in the employments of spinning and carding wool and other fibres, the possibility that hospital authorities ultimately provided their wards with a

[68] Ibid., pp. 378, 393.
[69] Pinchbeck and Hewitt, *Children in English Society*, p. 135; as quoted in Leonard, *Early History*, pp. 105, 313-14.

promising upbringing, particularly one that would ensure future economic stability (i.e. by placing children in apprenticeships or service contracts), remains doubtful. The accounts for Christ's Hospital in Ipswich made between 1583 and 1597 suggest that few children moved on from the work provided by the institution. Indeed, five of the eight boys of known age who were residents in 1595/6 were between 16 and 22, and three of them were in their early 20s. On the other hand, girls may have had a greater chance of being placed in service, since only two of the six girls of known age were over 14 (they were 15 and 26 years old).[70] Even so, there is little direct evidence that any of the hospital's residents were placed in long-term employment outside of the institution. Whereas the accounts show regular entries for the cost of providing the hospital's children with food, clothes, and working implements (particularly wool cards), there are no entries that concern the cost of placing children as apprentices.[71] Furthermore, only one entry *might* imply the placement of a young girl in service; in 1596 the governors of the hospital made a lump sum payment of 6*s* 'to Ane Aylofe for the kepinge of Elline Jobson late a pore chylde of the hospitall', with the further clarification, 'and so the Town discharged as Apearithe by warant dated the xx^{ti} of July 1596'.[72] But Helen was only 10 years old at this time, and the town's small payment to Ann combined with the suggestion that she would be 'keeping' Helen might equally indicate that a local family had decided to take the child in on a more permanent basis. Since so few children left the employment scheme of the hospital in this period, it must be questioned how often local authorities actually provided institutionalised children with an adequate 'upbringing' that would support an economically stable future. Certainly, this evidence makes it seem unlikely that such institutions were responsible for 'rescuing destitute

[70] SROI, C/3/4/1/26, fol. 16r.
[71] SROI, C/3/4/1/26.
[72] Ibid., fol. 19r.

children from the streets, and giving as many poor children as possible the sort of education and technical training then thought to be desirable', as Ivy Pinchbeck suggested.[73]

Between the Elizabethan poor laws of 1576 and 1598, institutions like Christ's Hospital in Ipswich continued to be the main conduits in urban areas for the local application of the government's insistence that poor children were to be trained and provided with work. Paul Slack has shown that, more often than not, before the acts of 1598 the influence of national legislation on established local methods of poor relief was limited.[74] Thus it is not surprising that in 1576 the town's magistrates took no action when Parliament first ordered local authorities to raise a stock of 'woole, hempe, flaxe, iron, or other stufe' so work could be given to *all* unemployed or underemployed 'poore and needye persons', including children and adults among both the vagrant and settled poor.[75] Presumably the authorities took no action because, at least in theory, the hospital in Ipswich had been founded in part to perform that role. All the same, there is little evidence that the authorities made any wholesale attempt to ensure all of the underemployed poor and their children were engaged in work before 1598. As a result, until the poor laws of that year the influence of local authorities on the upbringing and employment future of poor children appears to have been restricted, and only rarely usurped the natural and customary right of poor parents to 'bring up' their own children. When it did, it was almost always in situations where parents were deemed to have *forfeited* their right to raise their offspring, either because they were deemed to be vagrants or they were absent (i.e. through death or abandonment). This indicates that before the acts of 1598, the power of national legislation to prescribe the employments of poor children (as executed by local authorities) almost never reached into the actual homes of the poor.

[73] Pinchbeck, 'State and the Child', p. 282.
[74] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, pp. 125-9.
[75] *Tudor Economic Documents*, ed. Tawney and Power, ii, p. 332.

There is little doubt that after 1598 this situation changed in Ipswich. The legislation of that year gave local magistrates and parish overseers of the poor the explicit authority to '[set] to worke ... the Children of all such whose Parentes shall not by the saide persons be thought able to kepe and mayntaine their Children'.[76] This was a separate clause to the more contentious one that provided for the compulsory removal of relief-dependent children and their placement as pauper apprentices.[77] Although records from the town's overseers of the poor show that authorities in Ipswich were slow to implement compulsory pauper apprenticeship, they also suggest that authorities embraced the ability to prescribe work for poor children in their parents' homes. The town's census of the poor showcases one such effort, and it represents the first widespread interference of the town authorities in the upbringing and economic futures of poor children in Ipswich.

The most effective way any adult could provide poor children with a financially successful future was by placing them in employments that were attached to secure or growing labour markets. In order to determine whether it was usual for poor parents and local authorities to provide such opportunities to the children in their care, what follows considers more closely the common patterns that can be found for poor children's work in Ipswich before and after the introduction of the poor laws of 1598.

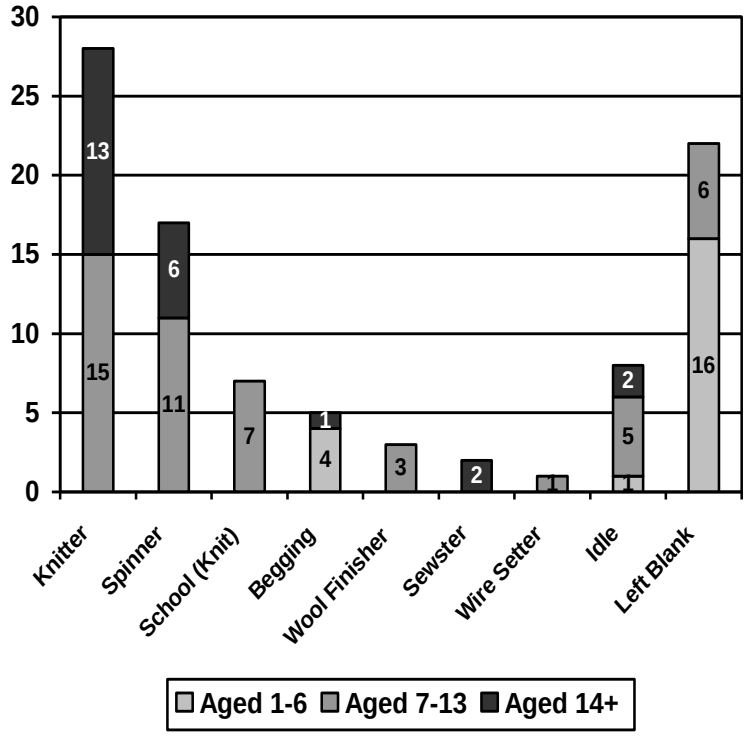
Children's Work Before 1598

Cross-referencing the data from the town's census of the poor with baptismal entries from the town's parish registers makes the census exceptionally revealing with regard to the work of poor boys and girls both before and after 1598.[78] Comparing Figures 6.1 and 6.2 shows that, overall, the poor children noted in the census usually experienced work differently across gender and age divides. These charts represent the work of either poor

[76] Ibid., p. 346.
[77] Ibid., p. 348-9.
[78] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40.

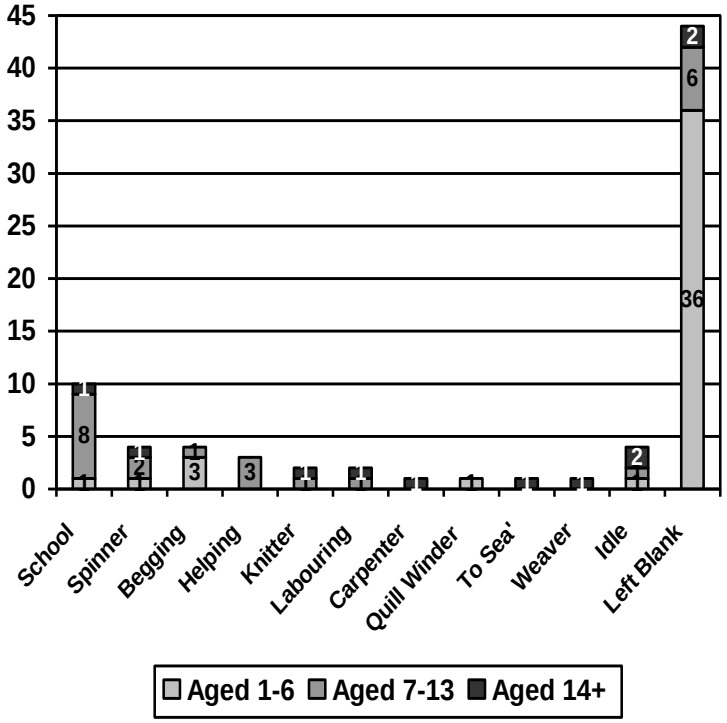
girls or boys grouped by standardised employment categories, and the total number of children found in each employment type has been divided into three age ranges, including one to 6, 7 to 13, and 14 years and older. This has been done in order to best represent the most common ages that children engaged in each type of work. To ease interpretation of these charts the grey shading signifying each age group increases in depth and intensity as the children get older. It is important to note that the age ranges in Figures 6.1 and 6.2 do not match the implied definitions of children's general life-cycle phases of 'infancy', 'childhood' and 'youth'. In particular, children up to the age of six years old probably spanned contemporary perceptions of both infancy and early childhood.[79] On the other hand, the age groupings of 7 to 13 years old, and 14 years and older, probably included most of those contemporaries considered to be in the stages of 'childhood' and 'youth', respectively.[80]

FIGURE 6.1: POOR GIRLS' WORK IN THE CENSUS OF THE POOR, IPSWICH 1597 (TOTAL: 93)



[79] Abbott, *Life Cycles*, chs. 3-4.
[80] Ibid., ch. 5.

FIGURE 6.2: POOR BOYS' WORK IN THE CENSUS OF THE POOR, IPSWICH 1597 (TOTAL: 77)



Although the census usually includes some type of work activity for children, the columns to the far right in each of these charts show that the census takers left the work section blank for a significant majority of poor boys and minority of poor girls. The breakdown of the age groups for those with no noted work suggests that this was probably the case because the children were too young to be considered capable of most work. Indeed, of the 22 girls and 44 boys who had no recorded work type, only 6 girls and 8 boys were over the age of six. These charts also suggest that there was a significant divergence in the ages at which boys and girls left the family home for apprenticeship or service. The majority of poor girls in this sample were aged between seven and thirteen years old (48 of 93 or roughly 52 per cent), which implies that girls normally did not leave the family home until after their thirteenth birthday. In contrast, only a little over a quarter of the poor boys (23 of 77) were between the ages of seven and thirteen, and the vast majority of them were

aged six and under (42 of 77 or 55 per cent). This indicates that before 1598 poor boys usually left the family home at a much younger age than poor girls.

It is unlikely that in Ipswich these early separations of poor boys from their parents were the result of local officials either forcing children to work in the municipal hospital, or placing them in pauper apprenticeships. Instead it is more probable that at this time many poor parents negotiated and paid for their sons' apprenticeships via the 'normal' route when their boys were between the ages of seven and thirteen years old. This practice was implied in the wills of poor parents, but it becomes more evident when we consider the employment patterns of boys who lived in relief-dependent households (Figure 6.3) alongside those who lived among the ordinary poor (Figure 6.4).

FIGURE 6.3: CHILDREN'S WORK IN RELIEF-DEPENDENT HOUSEHOLDS: BOYS (TOTAL: 17)

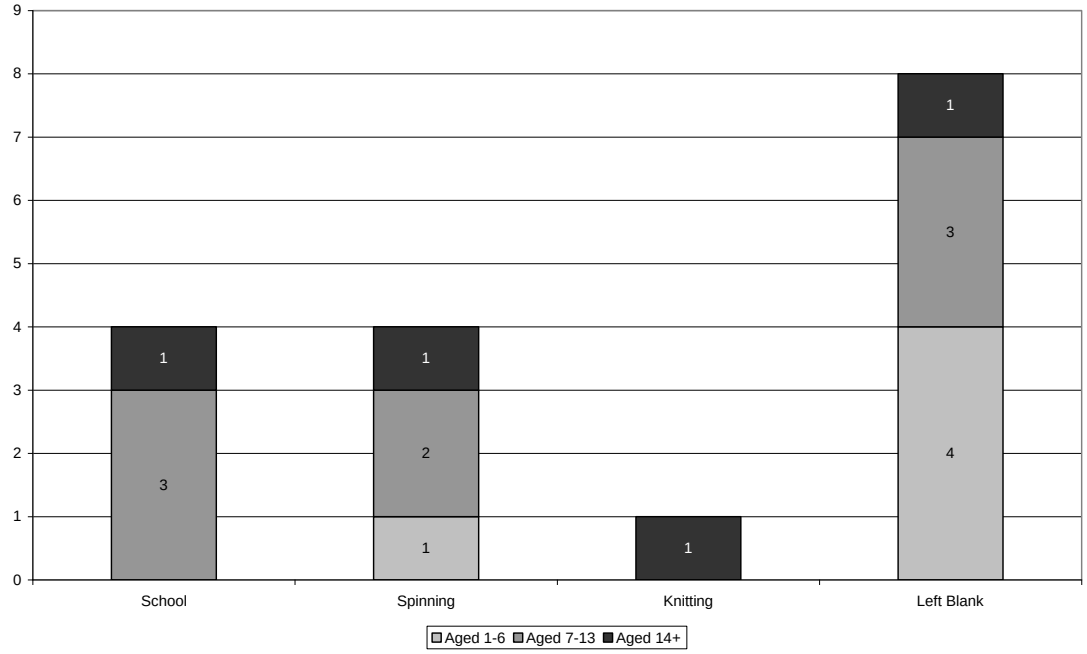
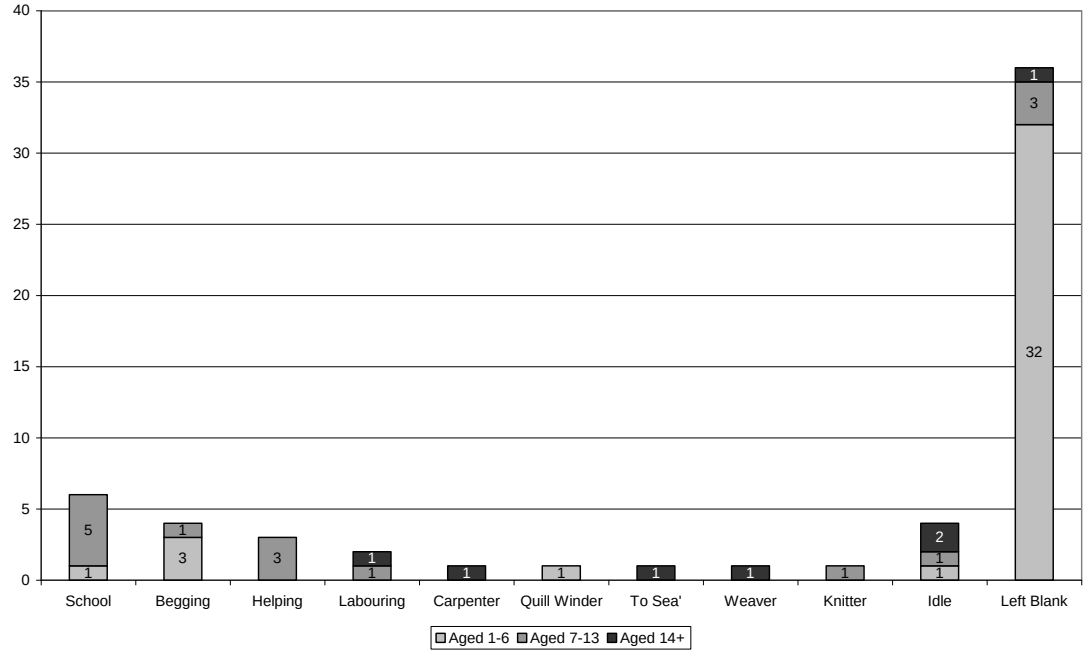


FIGURE 6.4: CHILDREN'S WORK IN ORDINARY POOR HOUSEHOLDS: BOYS (TOTAL: 60)



Comparing these two charts shows that boys in households which received relief were much more likely to remain at home between the ages of seven and thirteen than those who lived among the ordinary poor. In fact, nearly half of the boys in households that received relief were in this age bracket (8 of 17), whereas only a quarter of ordinary poor boys were this age (15 of 60). This suggests that it was probably only a minority of poor families — usually only those on relief — that failed to provide timely normal apprenticeships to their sons. Further evidence of poor parents' placements of their sons in regular apprenticeships can also be found in the town's borough court records. These records include 38 apprenticeship indentures enrolled by town freemen between 1596 and 1605.[81] Although only two of the indentures from before 1598 relate to children resident in the town, eighteen survive from the years up to 1605 of which nine (or 50 per cent) refer to children from ordinary poor households. Because so many ordinary poor children were the subject of regular indentures, it seems clear that poor parents often accumulated savings to use (at least in part) to secure apprenticeships for their sons.

[81] SROI, C/3/2/2/2, fols. 107-28.

Figures 6.3 and 6.4 also demonstrate that it was common for both relief-dependent and ordinary poor boys to attend some type of local school (4 of 17 boys, and 6 of 60 boys, respectively), and Figure 6.2 shows that roughly 25 per cent of boys who had employment or were over the age of six years old (10 of 38) went to school in the town. This is significant when contrasted with the fact that only two poor boys, aged 12 and 16, were noted as labourers in the census. The scarcity of teenage labourers is interesting, since labouring was the most common occupation for poor men in this census.[82] Such evidence, in conjunction with the frequency of poor boys' placements in normal apprenticeships, indicates that at this time many labouring parents probably sought to bring up their children in other, more potentially lucrative, forms of work. The normal age for poor scholars in the census was around 10, but they could range between the ages of 6 and 14 years old. The census does not indicate whether these boys perhaps went to the town's grammar school on waived fees, but it seems more likely that most of them were attending an *ad hoc* school in order to learn basic reading and numeracy. Others have shown that in many areas, including East Anglia, it was common for unlicensed teachers to instruct poor children in these skills for a small fee. Such services probably were in demand in Ipswich because this expertise was often considered useful for a child who planned to take on work in the commercial or seafaring trades, both of which were growing and potentially profitable employment sectors in the town.[83] It is possible to determine the adult occupations for only three of the poor scholars noted in the census, but all of them went on to work in trades that were associated with some degree of wealth. By the 1640s Christopher Skidmore, the eldest son of Elizabeth Skidmore (one of the two unlawful victuallers showcased in the last chapter) and her husband John, had become a fishmonger. Similarly, Samuel James, the youngest child

[82] See Chapter Five.
[83] Spufford, *Contrasting Communities*, pp. 186-90; W. Feyerharm, 'The Status of the Schoolmaster and the Continuity of Education in Elizabethan East Anglia', *History of Education*, 5/2 (1976), pp. 110-11; D. Cressy, *Literacy and the Social Order: Reading and Writing in Tudor and Stuart England* (Cambridge, 1980), p. 39; K. Thomas, 'Numeracy in Early Modern England: The Prothero Lecture', *TRHS*, 5th Series, 37 (1987), pp. 103-32; A. Fox, *Oral and Literate Culture in England, 1500-1700* (Oxford, 2001), pp. 16-19.

of the widow [Christen] James (noted as a 'vitteler' in the census), had become a sailmaker. And Luke Fisher, the son of the widow Helen Fisher (a seamstress), had become a ropemaker.[84] Only patchy evidence exists which can indicate the literacy level that poor scholars like these achieved, but one of those noted on the census, James Goldsmith, still lived in the town in 1642 when Parliament required all males over the age of eighteen to take the Protestation Oath. After James and two of his sons took the oath in their home parish (St Matthew), they each recorded the fact by making their 'marks' in the Parish Book. Since none could sign their names, it seems probable that learning to write was not a standard part of the education of poor scholars in the town.[85]

The clear inability of some poor parents to place their sons in timely apprenticeships or education demonstrates that not all could accumulate savings, and this fact appears to highlight why the labour of poor boys often was particularly affected by their family's degree of poverty. Figure 6.3 shows that it was common for the boys of families on relief to work in the occupations of spinning and knitting (5 of 17), but Figure 6.4 shows that this was not the case for boys who lived among the ordinary poor (1 of 60). Except for boys housed in the municipal hospital, this was unusual work for boys in the town, and it ran counter to the period's gendered labour norms because adult spinners and knitters were almost always female. [86] Closer inspection of the data in the census indicates that certain family situations probably led some poor boys to take on these types of 'women's work'. In particular, all of the boys who spun and knitted had widowed or otherwise lone mothers, and most of their households received relief (5 of 6 boys in 4 of 5 households).[87] The official weekly incomes of these households noted in the census were also very low — normally in the region of 20*d*, including the wages of both mother and children — and their

[84] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40; SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/7, fols. 224, 247, 376.
[85] SROI, FB95/A2/1, fol. 114.
[86] See Chapter Five.
[87] See the relief-dependent families of An Taylor, Widow Gouldsmith, An Morris, and Widow Arnold, as well as the ordinary poor family of Alice Clarke: *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 125-6, 137.

penury appears to have been acute. There is no evidence that any of them were engaged in unlawful victualling, or other forms of unlawful work, which might have covertly boosted their weekly income.[88] The tenuous economic situation of these families undoubtedly made it critical for the mothers to teach their children vocational skills that could be learned at a young age, and used to buoy the family economy when the need arose. The fact that fathers were usually absent from these households meant that the only profitable skills such mothers could teach their children were their own. This makes it less surprising that some young boys learned female labour skills when they grew up in relief-dependent households headed by lone mothers.

Although it was sensible for very poor lone mothers to teach all of their children employment skills at an early age, the evidence does not suggest that this was because they had to exploit their son's labour continuously in order to ensure the family's economic survival. Indeed, despite the fact that these families lived in deep poverty, many of the mothers still managed to provide their sons with a formal education. For example, whilst Widow Gouldsmith's elder son Thomas (aged 17) earned 8*d* a week as a spinner, her younger son James (aged 12) attended school, almost certainly at the family's expense.[89] This mirrored the experience of Widow Arnold's family, whose elder son Abraham (aged 17) worked as a knitter whilst his younger brother John (aged 12) gained an education. Sometimes, instead, it was the parents of lone mothers who supported the education of their grandsons, even if they, themselves, were on relief. Thus, the parents of Alice Clarke (the only ordinary poor parent whose son knitted) took in Alice's eldest son John (aged 14) during the period of his education. In the meantime, Alice's younger children, a son (aged 12) and daughter (aged 10), remained at home earning 8*d* a week each as knitters. Alice,

[88] See Chapter Five.
[89] There is no indication that the local authorities provided any form of schooling to the poor boys in these families. According to the census, the only 'teaching' authorities normally provided to such families was instruction in how to spin on a wheel. *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40.

herself, was both a spinner and knitter, and it seems almost certain that the children had learned these skills from her at an early age.[90]

Since the census provides us with only a snapshot of the labour of the children in these households, we cannot form definitive conclusions about why some sons worked whilst their brothers studied. All the same, the evidence does imply that many lone mothers who were dependent on relief in the town may have wanted their younger sons to work as spinners and knitters, not because the family was economically desperate, but because the boys needed to earn this money in order to help the family fund their future attendance at school. Differences between the normal ages at which ordinary poor and relief-dependent boys went to school lends further support to this interpretation. Although we have seen that it was common for boys in both groups to attend school, detail from the census shows that ordinary poor boys normally began their education by the age of 9, whilst boys whose families received relief usually started at the age of 12.[91] This may suggest that relief-dependent boys had to earn some income for a few years in order to help their families save enough to pay for their education. On a similar note, it seems just as probable that at the time such sons finished their education their mothers needed them to begin earning again in order to save for a future apprenticeship. This could explain why some very poor 17-year-old boys noted in the census had not yet begun an apprenticeship, and were working at home as spinners and knitters. Above all, the frequency of such arrangements among the families of the relief-dependent, where some children worked whilst others studied, certainly suggests that even the poorest of parents were reluctant to require their sons to eschew education or apprenticeships in order to start an early life of paid employment. Indeed, even if it meant a prolonged period of financial hardship, they clearly valued giving their sons educational opportunities that could lead to a more lucrative economic future.

[90] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 125-6, 137.
[91] Ibid., pp. 125, 128, 130, 134, 136-7.

So far, much has been said regarding the particular influence of deep poverty on the labour of poor boys, but there is also ample evidence that the presence, or absence, of fathers had an important effect on the overall path of their sons' working lives. For instance, among both ordinary poor and relief-dependent families, boys who were between the ages of seven and thirteen years old were more likely to remain at home and attend school if their households were headed by their mothers. Indeed, all of the four families on relief who sent their sons to school, and three of the five ordinary poor families who had sons in education were matriarchal in structure.[92] In contrast, in patriarchal families it appears to have been more usual for boys of that age in all degrees of poverty to have left the family home, presumably for an apprenticeship. If the boys remained at home under their fathers, it was common for them either to have no listed work, or to be noted specifically as 'idle', in the census. In fact, in Figures 6.3 and 6.4, all of the relief-dependent boys and three of the four ordinary poor boys who were over the age of six and had no noted work, lived in patriarchal households.[93] In addition, all of the 'idle' ordinary poor boys in Figure 6.4 had fathers who headed their families. This suggests that poor fathers and mothers may have often approached raising their sons in different ways. On the one hand, both ordinary poor and relief-dependent mothers appear to have usually wanted their sons to remain at home, be productive, and gain a formal education before embarking upon an apprenticeship. On the other hand, fathers in all degrees of poverty usually allowed their sons to remain unfettered by specific labour until it was time for them to become apprentices. It is rather unclear why this situation so often developed, but it may be that poor fathers encouraged their sons to simply shadow them throughout their working day until their sons reached an appropriate age for apprenticeship.

[92] Ibid., pp. 125, 128, 130, 134, 136-7.
[93] For example, see the families of Robert Edwards, John Tassell, Robinson, William Aggas, Henry Haule, William Webster, Ralfe Moore, Thomas Moore, and Robert Halle: *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122, 124, 127, 131, 135, 137, 139.

Comparing the most common occupations and activities for poor children of both sexes can begin to shed more light on why poor girls and boys normally left home at different times. Close scrutiny of Figures 6.1 and 6.2 indicates that girls usually were employed in activities that contributed financially to their household, whilst boys more often were not. A significant majority of poor girls who had noted employment in the census of the poor were employed, or being instructed in, the craft of knitting (35 of the 71 girls, or 49 per cent). In addition, a much smaller contingent worked in spinning (17 of 71, or 24 per cent), begging (5 of 71, or 7 per cent), and other labour, such as carding wool and sewing (5 of 71, or 7 per cent). Figures 6.5 and 6.6 show that, unlike poor boys in the town, the most common types of employments for poor girls were little affected by their family's depth of poverty. Although it was somewhat common in ordinary poor families for girls over the age of six to be noted as 'idle', or to have no listed work in the census (13 of 50 girls, or 26 per cent), it remains evident that the vast majority of girls in both categories of poverty were employed and generating income. Indeed, among families dependent upon relief, 17 of the 22 girls of working age (or 77 per cent) and 35 of 50 ordinary poor girls in this age bracket (or 70 per cent) were earning. If we combine these figures and take into account the additional four girls under the age of seven who had proceeds from begging, we see that as many as 56 of these 76 girls (or 74 per cent) were contributing weekly income to their households. In contrast, Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show that very few poor boys earned revenue from their labour; only 5 of the 17 boys in families dependent on relief (or 29 per cent), and 11 of the 60 ordinary poor boys (or 18 per cent) engaged in directly profitable work. This means that, overall, merely 16 of the 77 poor boys in this sample (or 21 per cent) were earning.

FIGURE 6.5: CHILDREN'S WORK IN RELIEF-DEPENDENT HOUSEHOLDS: GIRLS (TOTAL: 23)

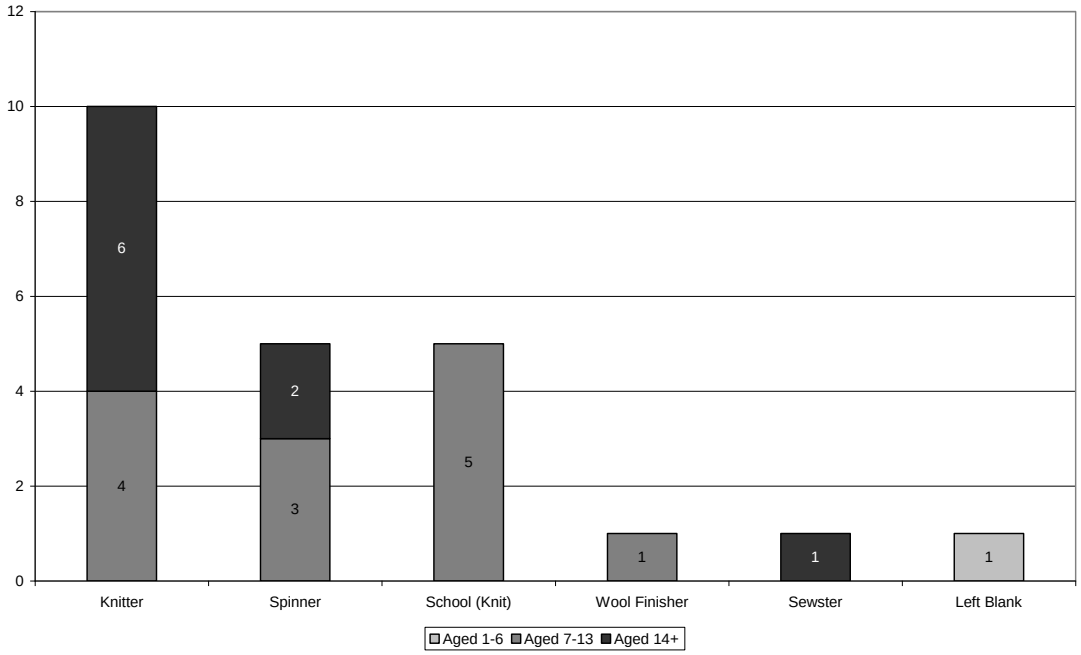
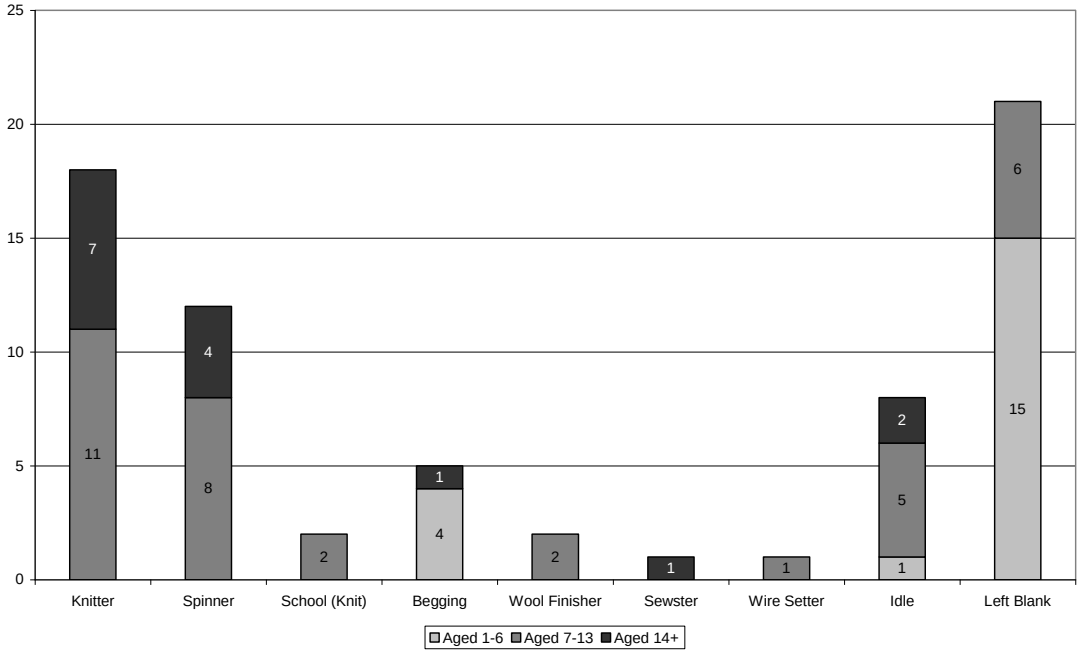


FIGURE 6.6: CHILDREN'S WORK IN ORDINARY POOR HOUSEHOLDS: GIRLS (TOTAL: 70)



Figures 6.5 and 6.6 also show that, by far, the most common occupation for all poor girls was knitting. Considering the overwhelming emphasis poor relief authorities tended to place on providing the poor with work in spinning and carding wool (as was the case for the poor orphans and others housed in the town's hospital), the dominance of poor girls' employment in knitting may seem surprising. Indeed, we have seen how at this time poor women in the town most commonly worked in spinning and carding wool, not knitting.[94] The abundance of knitting among the work of poor girls suggests that most girls were taking on work that was different from their mothers and this pattern hints at a generational shift in the norms of female employment. As was discussed in the last chapter, by the 1590s spinning had long been a common occupation for adult women because of its necessary link to the cloth industry. On the other hand, knitting had only begun to flourish as a viable occupation in the second half of the sixteenth century, when knitted garments became a staple of most wardrobes.[95] This fashion trend was enduring and by 1598 some contemporaries claimed that poor children who knitted could earn up to 4*s* a week - a substantial wage in the period even for adults.[96] Those in Ipswich never quite reached that income level, but the paucity of knitters in the labour force did push up the wages for those who knitted well above those for spinners. In Ipswich, girls who knitted could earn up to 10*d* every week, while those who spun could expect only 6*d*.[97] The difference between the weekly wages for poor women employed in each of these two occupations was even more considerable. As we saw in the last chapter, an adult knitter in Ipswich could earn up to 3*s* a week, while an adult spinner was capped at 1*s* 8*d*.[98] Although in most cases parents had to pay for their children to learn how to knit, this shows that learning the craft came with significant financial advantages both to poor girls and their families. In the short term, it

[94] See Chapter Five.
[95] Kerridge, *Textile Manufactures*, p. 133.
[96] Ibid., p. 133; Abbot, *Life Cycles*, p. 71.
[97] Range of weekly wages for girl knitters was 2-10*d* and for girl spinners was 4-6*d*. *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40.
[98] Range of weekly wages for adult female knitters was 8*d* and 3*s* and for adult spinners was 4-20*d*.

allowed poor girls to earn greater income during the period they lived at home. In the long term, knitting connected poor girls to what appeared to be a more stable and lucrative section of the labour market than that available to poor spinners. The influx of poor girls working as knitters in the town suggests that by the 1590s the lessons taught by the notorious instability of the overseas cloth trade throughout the sixteenth century, and the flood of spinners already employed in that market, were not lost on the parents of poor girls.

Whilst the majority of poor girls in Ipswich were employed and generating income, most of the poor boys old enough to be expected to work were engaged in activities that had associated costs. As we have seen, this most often involved going to school, or being placed in apprenticeships by their parents. Taken as a whole, it is a striking feature of this census that so many poor parents chose to pay fees to send their children, both girls and boys, to some kind of local school. There is little doubt that in most instances the immediate cost of sending a child to school would have been considerable for poor parents. Paul Slack has shown that a girl's attendance at a knitting school could cost as much as 6*d* a week for each child, and Amy Erickson has noted the weekly cost of 4*d* for a child to learn how to sew.[99] Sources from Ipswich suggest that at this time 6*d* was also a common weekly wage for poor adult women, therefore these fees would have been a substantial drain on poor households.[100] As a result, even though sending a child to school might allow a mother to earn more income, the cost of weekly tuition often negated any immediate financial benefit. This was probably the case for a slightly shorter period for poor girls who received tuition in knitting because they could put their new lucrative skill into practice when they achieved a basic level of competency. Data from the census indicates that girls as young as 10 years old were paid for such work. Nevertheless, tuition outside the home, in any form, normally cost poor parents a substantial portion of their weekly earnings, and in the case of

[99] Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, p. 82; Erickson, *Women and Property*, p. 58.
[100] See Chapter Five.

apprenticeships could cost a premium fee of 15*s* or more.[101] As we have seen, if most poor parents had to rely only on their lawful income, then this certainly would have been money they could not have spared. But, the data from the census shows that the majority of poor parents in the town, through a combination of their own and their children's labour, managed to find it. It is quite possible that one of the main reasons so many poor girls were gainfully employed was because it helped to offset the costs of having to pay for the education or training of their siblings, particularly their brothers. It seems rather cynical, however, to assume that poor parents typically exploited their daughters chiefly for their sons' gain. Perhaps it is more likely that parents expected all of their children who earned and lived at home to contribute some income to the family economy, but also wanted them to begin saving for their own economic future. Presumably for girls this would have included setting aside money for their marriage portions.

Overall, the combination of this data and the evidence found in the wills of poor testators suggests a great deal about the state of poor children's economic lives before the introduction of the poor laws of 1598. Principally, it seems clear that poor parents placed a great deal of importance on bringing up their children in the best way possible to increase the odds of a bright economic future. In addition, they appear to have been particularly aware of the period's emerging and potentially lucrative labour markets, and the skills required to participate in them, such as knitting for girls and basic education in reading and numeracy for boys. Finally, that so many children of a working age were engaged in education that drained their families' resources further calls into question the widely held belief that throughout this period 'survival' for the poor depended upon everyone contributing to the family income at the earliest possible opportunity.[102] Instead, the parents of poor children appear to have believed that 'survival' was much more dependent upon

[101] SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1.
[102] Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities*, pp. 49-51; Hindle, *On the Parish?*, p. 24.

their children being taught the occupations and skills that held the most stable and promising future from those available to them.

Children's Work After 1598

The changing state of poor children's employment in Ipswich over the longer period of 1597-1620 shows that the introduction of the Elizabethan poor law statutes of 1598 affected the established labour norms of children, and their overall work prospects in two fundamental ways. First, the emphasis placed in the statutes of 1598 on providing work for the unemployed or underemployed poor, including children, appears to have created a dramatic obstacle for many poor parents who wanted their children to acquire work skills in new and expanding labour markets. As the town's census of the poor shows, after 1597 the work that was normally provided to poor households by parish authorities came in the form of spinning wheels, wool cards, bundles of wool, and spinning lessons. In fact, according to the census, at this time authorities began to systematically provide such work to nearly half of all the households with children over the age of six years old (32 of 68 families).[103] In addition, parish authorities appear to have targeted their provision of such items to poor families with certain characteristics. Families who had children that knitted or went to school were particularly prone to receiving these items (19 of the 32 families, or 59 per cent), as were families with children who begged (2 families), or were idle (4 families), or had no listed work (4 families).

Although, as has been mentioned, before 1598, work provision of this kind had always been the experience of the poor in the town's poor relief institutions, such as Christ's Hospital, it had not been a universal feature of the town's support to the majority of the poor who received relief in their own homes. This meant that after 1598 poor children, especially young poor girls, whose parents may have had the dream of educating them in

[103] *Poor Relief*, ed. Webb, pp. 122-40.

more lucrative employment, like knitting, faced overt municipal pressure to abandon, or at least postpone, those plans. Instead it would seem those girls (and quite possibly the boys, as well) were to take up the much less lucrative occupation of spinning, at least for a time. As was shown in the last chapter, the continued provision of wheels, cards, stock, and instruction to poor families in the town from 1598 until at least 1620 can be seen in many overseers of the poor accounts, including, as an example, the parish of St Nicholas.[104] Yet because the town's census of the poor is the only source that comprehensively details the employments of both ordinary poor and relief-dependent children in this period, it remains difficult to say whether this work provision scheme truly halted the rise of knitting as a form of female employment. Evidence from other towns in the region, such as Aylsham and Reepham (Norfolk), suggests that by the early 1620s some urban authorities had begun to establish work schemes that ordered poor children to be put 'to Schoole to knittinge and spinninge dames', and the teachers' wages were to be paid by the overseers only 'where the parents [were] not able'.[105] Thus, it may be that by the end of this period authorities in Ipswich had also added knitting to the town's list of work types to be provided to the poor. But, even if they had, it is not clear if the wages for knitting in 1620 were as lucrative as they had been in 1598.

The second important change heralded by the statutes of 1598 was parish officials' eventual implementation of compulsory pauper apprenticeship for young poor children in the town. Accounts from the overseers of the poor in the parishes of St Nicholas and St Lawrence attest that this took some time to develop in Ipswich. Indeed, these records show that for nearly two decades parish authorities mostly eschewed compulsory pauper apprenticeship, wholly in the case of poor children whose parents were living, and even normally for poor orphans until they reached their mid-to-late teens. In fact, it seems that it was not until 1618 that the parish overseers of the poor made their first pauper

[104] SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1.
[105] Leonard, *Early History*, p. 332.

apprenticeships for children who had at least one living parent.[106] Furthermore, even between 1618 and 1620 they only took such action under fairly extreme circumstances. For example, when the eldest child of Richard Smith (a poor shoemaker) was bound apprentice by the overseers of St Lawrence in 1618/19, it was done in the same year that they paid over £1 in relief to Smith's family because Smith, his wife, and their four younger children were (according to the overseers) 'most of them sicke at one tyme or other'.[107] Moreover, when the overseers of St Nicholas bound Edward Ferye as an apprentice in June of 1620, it was less than a year after the town's magistrates had pronounced the child's father an 'Incorragblye Roge' and ordered him to be branded on the shoulder for 'departing from his wiefe [and] leving his child to the chardge of the parish'.[108] These and similar stories make it seem likely that when overseers of the poor began to place non-orphaned children in pauper apprenticeships they initially did so only in situations where the outcome of the apprenticeship would have to be quite dire in order to be worse than the prospect afforded by the child's existing home life.

Of course, even though parish authorities did not routinely turn children who had living parents into pauper apprentices, they did place poor orphans in such apprenticeships on a more frequent basis. As Tables 1 and 3 in Appendix 6.1 show, between 1598 and 1620, the overseers of the parishes of St Nicholas and St Lawrence placed a total of 28 children (22 in St Nicholas, and 6 in St Lawrence), and detail from the accounts suggest that at least 19 of these children had lost both of their parents (15 in St Nicholas, and 4 in St Lawrence). On the other hand, Tables 2 and 4 in Appendix 6.1 indicate that, at least until the 1610s, it was more usual for the same overseers to choose to place poor orphans in less permanent situations with local families, and pay those families a weekly stipend to care for

[106] See the entries for the binding of Richard Smith's child apprentice by the overseers in St Lawrence parish in 1618/19, SROI, C/5/3/2/2/1; and the binding of William Ferye's child, Edward, by the overseers of St Nicholas parish in 1620, SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1.
[107] SROI, C/5/3/2/2/1.
[108] SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1; SROI, C/2/9/1/1/8/7, fols. 31-2.

and sustain (i.e. 'keep') the children.[109] Overall, it is often unclear exactly who was charged with shaping the employment paths of these 'kept' children. On several occasions they were eventually placed by the overseers in pauper apprenticeships, but this was not always the case. What is clear, however, is how pauper indentures shaped many poor orphaned children's economic futures. Despite the fact that the overseers' accounts of both parishes only rarely provide details of masters' occupations, by cross-referencing the names of the masters with the town's court records it is possible to determine the trades that 16 of these pauper apprentices entered. Within this sample, it was most common for pauper apprentices to be placed with masters in the textile trades, eight of the sixteen children being bound to weavers, tailors, or clothworkers. It was also common, albeit less frequent (4 of 16 children), for pauper apprentices to be bound to masters in the hospitality trades (i.e. victuallers, alehouse-keepers, and brewers).

Historians have often remarked upon the sudden 'zeal' (as one has described it) with which local authorities began to place pauper apprentices starting in the late 1610s.[110] As we have seen, this sudden change is evident in Ipswich as well, although the timing may be more important than the historiography suggests. During the same period when authorities began to embrace the compulsory placement of pauper apprentices, the English cloth trade was in the grip of crisis because of the failure of the Cockayne Project in 1617. As was discussed in Chapter Two, this scheme (which began in 1614) sought to overhaul English dyeing practices in order to bypass trade with the Dutch and make England a key international producer of finished cloth. From the outset, the project caused several problems for the inhabitants of Ipswich: it seriously undermined overseas trade with the Low Countries (one of the town's main trading partners), shifted the nexus of the cloth trade towards London, and forced many of the merchants of Ipswich to buy into the newly refashioned company of Merchant Adventurers in the hope of remaining economically

[109] SROI, C/5/3/2/2/1; SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1.
[110] Hindle, 'Waste Children', p. 29-30.

viable. There is little doubt that the project's collapse in 1617 wreaked havoc on the economies of many areas in England, including Ipswich, and as a result several of the town's merchants, clothworkers, and mariners fell into deep economic crisis.[111]

As the wealth of those who worked in trades related to cloth began to decay, the overseers' accounts from the parishes of St Nicholas and St Lawrence show that beginning in 1614 fewer inhabitants were paying towards the poor rates and more were receiving some kind of relief. Because of this, there simply was less money to pay for the upkeep of poor children who were lodged in other people's homes, or in families that could not provide for them. For example, in 1608/9 the overseers of St Nicholas collected a total of £38 1*s* 6*d* for the poor rate, and paid a total of £29 8*s* 4*d* in various forms of relief. In 1613/14, however, proceeds from the poor rate dropped to £25 19*s* 6*d*, and the cost of relief outstripped the parish's funds for the first time by just over £1. By 1618-9 the situation for the overseers had become quite grim, and in that year they effectively loaned the parish well over £3, since the rates generated £26 11*s*, but they paid £29 18*s* 10*d* in relief.[112] The parish of St Lawrence faced similar problems over this period, although its difficulties were less acute because its inhabitants were generally more prosperous. In 1608-9 the overseers of St Lawrence received a total of £26 4*s* 11*d* from the poor rate, and they paid a total of £23 4*d*. As was the case in St Nicholas, in 1613/14 proceeds from the poor rates dropped to £22 5*s* 1*d*, but this was still enough for the overseers in St Lawrence to cover that year's poor relief payments, which totalled £20 13*s* 3*d*. Even so, by 1617/18 the parish's economic buffer had all but disappeared. In that year overseers collected £23 11*s* 3*d* and paid £23 2*s*, leaving merely 9*s* 6*d* to hand over to the next year's overseers. The straitened and occasionally desperate economic circumstances faced by both of these parishes after the collapse of the Cockayne project suggests that the authorities in Ipswich, and probably elsewhere, changed their approach and norms concerning poor children's work in the late

[111] Friis, *Alderman Cockayne's Project*, chs. 5, 6; Hentschell, *Culture of Cloth*, pp. 159-62.
[112] SROI, C/5/3/2/7/1.

1610s not because of any particular ‘zeal’ for pauper apprenticeship, but because of acute economic necessity. Simply put, local authorities in Ipswich probably would have continued to avoid pauper apprenticeship and, instead, pay for the ‘keeping’ of older poor orphans, at least until 1620, if they had been confident that the cost would be covered by income from the poor rates. What they were not willing to do was risk losing large sums of their own money, and bankrupting the parish, just to keep such children out of apprenticeships.

Although it took nearly twenty years and a serious economic crisis to force authorities to fully execute the pauper apprenticeship clauses of the 1598 and 1601 statutes, there is no denying that the eventual effects greatly reduced the age at which relief-dependent children were usually put to service and, as Appendix 6.1 shows, by 1620 most were being apprenticed under the age of 13. As has been discussed, this was also the most common age for poor children to attend a local school according to the data in the census from 1597. Taken as a whole, this suggests that by 1620 the poor laws had begun to interrupt what had been a growing trend to send relief-dependent children to school. Instead, many were being apprenticed to tradesmen in the cloth industry, which has been noted was a decaying market.

Conclusion

This chapter has explored the different ways poor parents and local authorities shaped the economic lives of poor children in Ipswich between 1570 and 1620. It has shown that, more often than not, parents in all degrees of poverty went to great lengths to ensure that their offspring gained some kind of formal education or training which could secure lucrative work prospects, often in employments other than their own. This was normally done at some expense to poor parents and also meant that their children were not commonly earning from a young age. Because of this it seems that the majority of poor parents in

Ipswich did not expect their children to be gainfully employed in order to support the family's economic survival. Furthermore, we have seen that it was usual for poor parents, particularly those among the ordinary poor, to make financial provisions to secure the economic stability of their children even after their offspring had left the family home. Overall, such evidence suggests that throughout this period poor parents adapted quite well to the economic problems of the time and successfully planned for their children's financial futures. In the end, most poor offspring appear to have benefited from parental guidance and support.

The same cannot be said of the role local poor relief authorities played in shaping the economic lives of poor children. Whereas poor parents appear to have regularly placed their children in work that had stable and lucrative economic potential, authorities were less discriminating and usually provided poor children with labour that would quickly generate income (even if it was in an unstable labour market and poorly paid). Although this was true across the period, there is little doubt that the poor law legislation of 1598 brought about an increase in the interference of local authorities in the employment situations of poor children in all levels of poverty. After that date, more and more poor children faced municipal pressure to take on work related to the cloth industry, even though it was an unstable and decaying market. Thus, while presumably well-intended, the poor laws of 1598 actually were a step backwards in the effort to end inherited poverty and create financial stability for the poor in England. Indeed, this evidence indicates that poor parents in Ipswich could adapt to economic crises and changing demands in the labour market and use them to their children's advantage, but the poor laws and local authorities, either by design or ignorance, could not.

CONCLUSION:

Poverty, Solvency, and the 'Ordinary Poor'

The purpose of this thesis has been to explore in depth some of the most common social and economic experiences of 'the poor' or the 'poorer sort' in one English town between 1570 and 1620. It has defined poverty in a broad sense in order to align with many contemporary usages of these terms, as was shown in Chapter One. In so doing, it has broken from current historians' usual norms for the boundaries of poverty because they are typically more restrictive in scope. Furthermore, this study has questioned whether existing historiography accurately represents the most ordinary experiences of 'the poor' in relation to the composition of this broad group, their families, and how they approached their financial lives and their children's futures in this period.

Though there exist numerous studies of the poor in urban and rural areas throughout England, more often than not this body of work has remained tied to the experiences of those who faced extraordinary forms of poverty (or 'absolute' poverty) at some point in their lives, such as those who requested official forms of relief, those who routinely relied upon such relief, or those who came to the attention of local authorities because they led unsettled, 'idle', or otherwise openly 'disorderly' lives.[1] Over the past few decades, however, the study of poverty in this period has become more sensitive to those who lived on the fringes of the official relief structures most associated with 'primary', 'deep', or 'acute' need. This has given rise to the concept of 'secondary', 'shallow', or 'marginal' poverty, which has been defined rather loosely by historians and can cause confusion concerning the boundary and experiences of those in this group.[2] This amorphous assemblage has come to be called the 'marginal' or 'labouring' poor, but both these terms

[1] See Chapter One and McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior*, pp. 74-93.
[2] For some examples of this, see Slack, *Poverty and Policy*, p. 53; Clark, *English Provincial Society*, p. 240; Botelho, *Old Age*, p. 74.

are inadequate for this segment of the population in the period studied here, as was discussed in Chapter One.[3] The period that this thesis covers is also important to note. As is well known, most studies concerned with poverty focus on the experience of the poor after Parliament enacted the Elizabethan poor laws of 1598 and 1601, because of a general lack of relevant source material in most regions prior to the implementation of that legislation throughout England. The works of Paul Slack, A. L. Beier, and Marjorie McIntosh on poverty in late medieval and early modern England are some notable exceptions to this, however their concern remains chiefly connected to the experiences of those in receipt of official relief and private charity.[4] In contrast, this study primarily concerns the social and economic situations of those who lived in more ordinary forms of poverty during this early timeframe.

In addition, this study has provided a more specific definition for more mild poverty and has offered a new descriptive term for the more solvent poor: the 'ordinary poor'. Moreover, it has shown that between 1570 and 1620 contemporary authorities most often considered the boundary for this form of relative want to be the ability of a household to pay towards a local poor rate, which confirms Tom Arkell's general suggestion that 'local levies or rates for the church and poor [appear to be] the best yardstick for measuring the upper limit [of poverty].'[5] As A. L. Beier once noted, however, it was very possible to be simultaneously taxed and 'poor', and in Ipswich this occurred most often with the assessments made for the maintenance of the town's parish churches (i.e. 'church rates'). Even so, as was shown in Chapter Three, clear thresholds for the upper limits of relative, or 'ordinary', poverty do emerge from those sources. For most of the period, this threshold was the requirement to pay under 2*s* a year towards the local church rates (with an

[3] For example, see the use of 'marginal' and 'labouring' in Healey, *First Century of Welfare*; Hindle, *On the Parish?*
[4] See, for example, Slack, *Poverty and Policy*; Beier, 'Poverty and Progress'; McIntosh, 'Local Responses'; eadem, *Poor Relief in England*.
[5] Arkell, 'Incidence of Poverty', pp. 43-4.

exemption from the town's poor rates), though after 1604 the threshold increased to under 3*s* annually.[6] As was shown in Chapters Three and Four, this generally included a large swathe of the population, and in Ipswich comprised just over half of the town's inhabitants, the vast majority of whom were primarily solvent and not dependent, even occasionally, upon official poor relief. For analytical purposes, this group has been distinguished from those who were routinely dependent upon relief, who have been referred to in this work as the 'relief-dependent' poor.

The overall approach of this study has been inspired by well-known work in the social sciences, particularly Amartya Sen's 'capability approach', which defines poverty as a relative and multi-faceted concept connected to ever-shifting economic and cultural factors typically determined by the norms of a period and place. As was discussed in Chapter One, lack of access to some key factors, such as vital nutrition and medical care, a basic standard of living, and access to normal educational and training opportunities bring about forms of the most basic 'capability' (or opportunity) deprivation for a segment of society, which results in the condition of relative poverty.[7] In Chapters Five and Six we saw that when such factors are intractable and systemic, such as when they are supported by tax structures and social welfare policy, they create forms of endemic socio-economic disadvantage for all those among the poor, which can impede many efforts by those in this group to improve their situations. As a result, this study has underscored that the historiography must take fuller account of these forms of endemic socio-economic disadvantage so we may better understand the experience of poverty in society at this pivotal time for early social welfare policy.

In order to explore these themes in detail, this thesis has used a case study which focuses on some key aspects of the social and economic lives of the majority of poor inhabitants in Ipswich (Suffolk), over the period 1570-1620, a time well known for its

[6] Beier, 'Poverty and Progress', p. 211.
[7] Sen, 'Poor, Relatively Speaking', pp. 153-69.

phases of social, economic, and political stability and change. As is well established, periods of general stability (such as the mid-1570s to mid-1580s in Ipswich) encouraged economic and demographic growth for the majority of people in the town. Nevertheless, frequent periods of difficulty brought on by often overlapping and compounding episodes of epidemic disease, harvest failure, trade stoppages, economic insecurity, and war, means this study has provided glimpses of the experience of poverty in times of general prosperity and hardship in the town. For the study here, these key factors include: implied access to basic nutrition and medical care as evidenced by the experiences of nuclear families and their developmental cycles (demonstrated in Chapter Four); the ability to achieve a respectable standard of living through officially sanctioned occupations (demonstrated in Chapter Five); and access to basic education or training opportunities for children which had a reasonable chance of providing a respectable standard of living in the future (demonstrated in Chapter Six). It is the conclusion of this study that, though the ordinary poor had widely-acceptable access to food and medical provisions, they did not enjoy similar access to a respectable standard of living for themselves, nor their children. As was demonstrated in Chapters Five and Six, this was a situation which they actively sought to counteract through a variety of means, including shrewd future planning, unlawful work, the development of savings, and hiding their modest wealth from local authorities to avoid being included in more tax assessments, or being assessed at a higher rate.

Yet, we have seen that the introduction of the Elizabethan poor law statutes of 1598 and 1601 enabled local authorities to have more direct oversight of the ordinary poor's affairs, which (ironically) often resulted in the interruption of poor families' efforts to better themselves. This was the case simply because the poor were sometimes exploiting avenues of wealth creation which were technically viewed as 'disorderly' and unlawful (such as when they changed their occupations to ones in which they had little training, or when they

engaged in unlicensed alehouse keeping).[8] As a result, the poor laws – in effect – added to the impoverishment of many ordinary poor families, rather than providing them with viable means to improve their lives and those of their children.

As we saw in Chapter Five, those amongst the 'ordinary poor' engaged in a variety of occupations and held varying levels of wealth, the latter being typically determined more by the size of their nuclear family than their official socio-economic status. Even so, several of their key life experiences remained similar and often akin to those dependent upon official poor relief. These experiences were also, more often than not, markedly different from the experiences of those higher up the socio-economic scale. For example, in Chapter Three we saw that – from a demographic standpoint – those in all degrees of poverty often had more volatile life experiences than those in even slightly wealthier groups, with many being susceptible to hardship migration and/or the catastrophic effects of epidemic disease which caused their families to disappear disproportionally from the town's historiographical record during periods of general demographic, economic, and social strain.

With regard to their family life, however, there were both similarities and differences. As was shown in Chapter Four, parents among both the ordinary poor and the relief dependent typically had three, four, or even five living children by the time they reached middle age. Yet it was only the relief-dependent poor who were particularly susceptible to broken family units. In contrast, the ordinary poor, despite their economic challenges, had roughly the same chances as their wealthier counterparts of remarrying and sustaining a stable family unit after the death of a spouse. They also had similar chances of their children living to adulthood, since only the families of town authorities had lower rates of childhood deaths. This meant that more often than not poor urban families were not small or fractured groups, but larger ones which contained several children and two parents.

[8] McIntosh, *Controlling Misbehavior*, pp. 74-8

It has also been shown in Chapters Five and Six that most ‘ordinary poor’ and ‘relief-dependent’ adults engaged in similar occupations and planned as best as they could for a financially stable future for themselves and their children. Moreover, they clearly had assimilated the existing cultural expectation that even poor parents should ‘bring up’ their children ‘in good sort’ (i.e. in officially-sanctioned ways), which included proper forms of religious, economic, and social training. By definition, the ordinary poor were more successful than those who became relief dependent in their attempts to remain solvent, accumulate wealth, and place their children in skilled and potentially lucrative employments. By and large the ordinary poor achieved these goals by engaging in work, whether lawful or otherwise, which provided them with relatively high levels of annual income. This was a surprising finding for this study and indicates that the ordinary poor were often more financially stable than they demonstrated publicly, at least to local authorities. This appears to have been the case because of the technically unlawful means by which some procured a substantial portion of their income (as shown in Chapter Five), but also because of the potentially deleterious tax implications that their modest wealth would trigger, if discovered. These factors appear to have restricted the opportunity for upward social mobility, particularly for the ordinary poor, because the significant additional tax burdens associated with being recognized as an ‘able householder’ (and thereby breaking free from the broad confines of 'poverty') would have had a major impact on the family’s ability to save for future necessary costs, such as a child’s education, apprenticeship, or inheritance. It is important to note that relief-dependent parents also made great efforts to provide a stable future for their children, but making that dream a reality was often a family affair and in many cases probably required their children to work and earn some income. Nevertheless, there is little evidence that poor parents in either category relied on such earnings to support the overall ‘survival’ of the family. Instead it appears that even the poorest adults usually set their children to work only as a means to

help pay for the child's future apprenticeship, education, and perhaps marriage. This suggests that many of the poor in both groups clearly made long-term financial plans for themselves and their children, and were not solely consumed with the concerns of everyday survival. Furthermore, many had the capacity to bring their plans to fruition, at least until the introduction of the poor law statutes of 1598 and 1601.

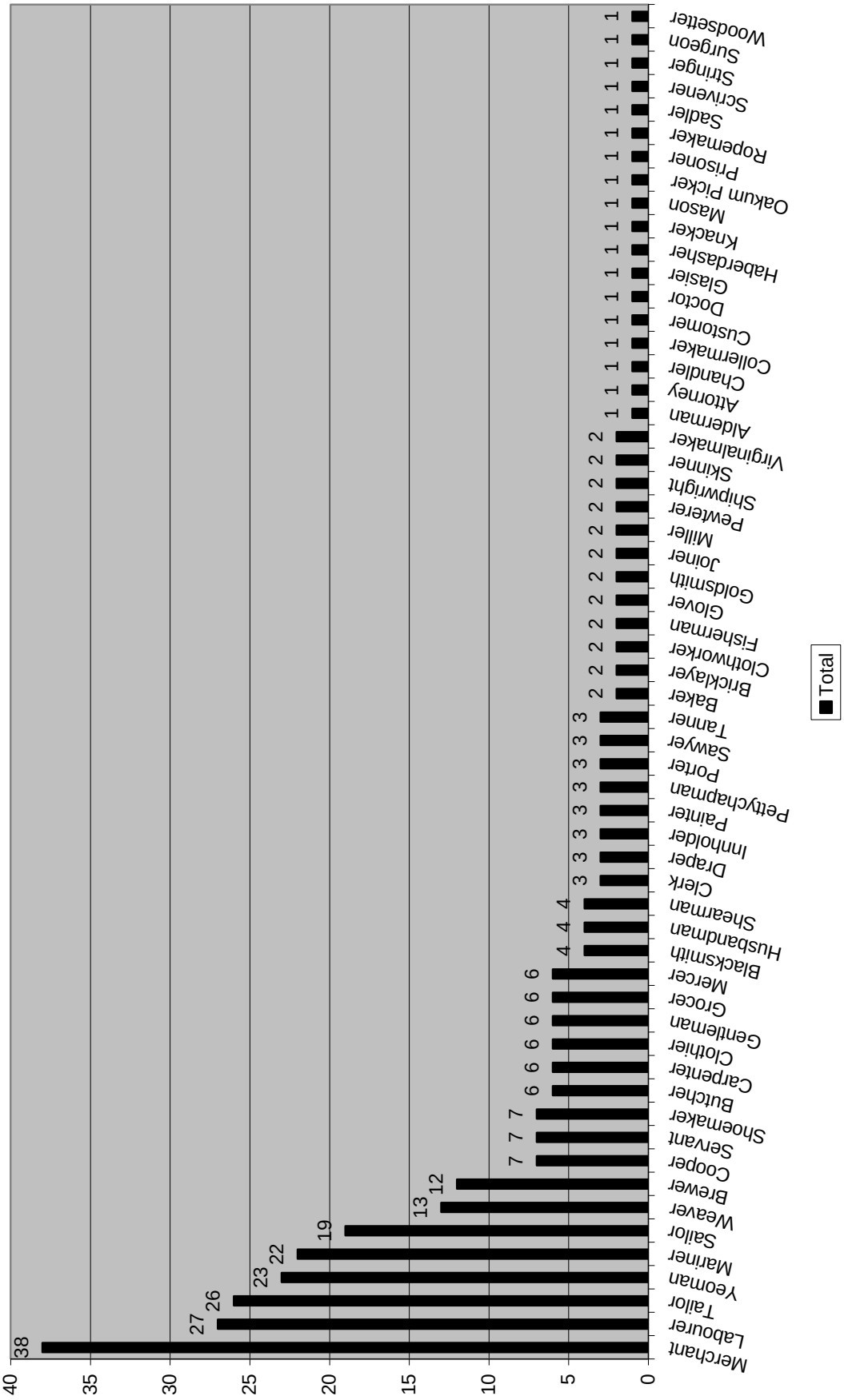
As has been shown, in Ipswich the introduction and implementation of the statutes of 1598 and 1601 had an immediate and negative impact on large numbers of the poor in both groups of poverty. This was the case, despite the fact that 'ordinary poverty' typically existed outside of official relief structures, because the authorities became concerned with regulating the work of the poor in both groups as part of their efforts to implement these laws. As a result, poverty at this time appears to have been perpetuated by these entrenched and emerging forms of social and economic disadvantage, which curtailed the opportunities available to poorer individuals to improve their lives. This included, at least, restricted access to existing and emerging lucrative employments and educational and/or training options, and a high level of taxation levied upon the non-poor, which acted as either a real, or imagined, 'poverty trap' for poorer families.

More targeted future research on these and other issues raised by this study would be very beneficial. For example, a study focused on the movements of the poor between occupations during periods of prosperity and hardship based on further evidence from the town's petty court depositions could prove enlightening. In addition, research on the employment and relief strategies of poor seafarers and their families throughout England would fill a rather large blind spot. More work on the shifts related to poor children's experience of education and training – and their ultimate outcomes as adults – also would be of great benefit. Finally, more research on the existence of a tax-based 'poverty trap' in urban and rural locales other than Ipswich would bring greater clarity to the lived experience of the poor in England during this time.

APPENDIX 4.1: DETAILED AVERAGES OF MEAN NUCLEAR FAMILY SIZE BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC GROUP

Socio-economic Category	# Fam	5-yr FS	# Fam	10-yr FS	# Fam	15-yr FS	# Fam	20-yr FS	# Fam	25-yr FS	# Fam	30-yr FS	# Fam	35-yr FS	# Fam	40-yr FS
Town Authority	1	ND	1	ND	3	ND	3	ND	5	ND	6	ND	8	ND	10	ND
Town Authority	4	3	5	4	3	7	2	7	2	8	2	7	2	7	2	7
Town Authority	3	4	4	6	2	8	2	8	1	2	1	9	1	9		
Town Authority	2	5	2	7	1	6	2	9	1	7	1	8	1	5		
Town Authority	1	6			1	9	1	10	1	9	1	6				
Town Authority	1	2			1	5	1	4	1	10	1	1				
Town Authority					1	4	1	6	1	6						
Top 66% Mean		**4.00**		**5.00**		**6.50**		**7.33**		**7.00**		**6.20**		**7.00**		**7.00**
Parish Authority	7	ND	8	ND	14	ND	20	ND	30	ND	37	ND	42	ND	44	ND
Parish Authority	11	4	10	6	7	4	5	5	6	5	4	4	2	9	1	12
Parish Authority	11	5	6	8	6	6	5	4	3	4	1	3	1	10	1	10
Parish Authority	8	3	6	7	6	8	4	6	2	6	1	10	1	5	1	8
Parish Authority	6	6	5	3	4	3	3	3	1	9	1	8	1	4		
Parish Authority	4	2	5	4	4	9	3	8	1	7	1	7				
Parish Authority			4	5	3	5	3	12	1	10	1	5				
Parish Authority			3	2	2	10	2	7	1	12	1	6				
Parish Authority					1	7	2	10	1	3						
									1	2						
Top 66% Mean		**4.00**		**5.60**		**6.00**		**6.33**		**5.00**		**6.14**		**7.00**		**10.00**
Able Householder	16	ND	35	ND	74	ND	109	ND	132	ND	151	ND	167	ND	177	ND
Able Householder	65	4	44	5	20	6	14	6	8	5	5	4	5	9	2	3
Able Householder	40	3	33	6	19	7	11	4	8	4	6	9	3	5	2	4
Able Householder	38	5	24	7	15	5	10	7	8	6	6	8	3	6	2	5
Able Householder	23	2	21	4	13	4	8	5	7	9	5	5	3	2	2	7
Able Householder	5	6	18	3	12	8	8	8	7	8	5	6	3	3	1	10
Able Householder	2	1	10	2	11	9	7	10	6	3	4	3	2	8	1	12
Able Householder	1	7	3	8	11	3	7	9	5	7	2	10	1	10	1	2
Able Householder	1	8	2	1	10	2	6	2	4	2	2	7	1	4	1	6
Able Householder			1	0	3	10	5	3	2	10	2	2	1	11	1	8
Able Householder					1	1	4	11	2	0	2	11	1	12	1	9
Able Householder					1	0	2	1	2	11	1	12	1	7		
Able Householder					1	11										
Top 66% Mean		**4.00**		**5.50**		**6.00**		**7.00**		**5.83**		**6.40**		**5.00**		**6.60**
Ordinary Poor	22	ND	73	ND	125	ND	188	ND	234	ND	269	ND	299	ND	310	ND
Ordinary Poor	129	4	62	5	46	5	24	5	16	5	10	7	6	6	4	6
Ordinary Poor	82	3	52	4	34	6	22	6	14	7	9	6	4	5	2	4
Ordinary Poor	40	5	44	6	31	4	20	7	13	8	8	5	4	7	2	7
Ordinary Poor	39	2	35	3	26	7	20	4	12	4	7	4	3	8	1	0
Ordinary Poor	6	6	24	2	20	3	16	3	12	6	6	8	2	3	1	3
Ordinary Poor	4	1	24	7	13	2	13	8	10	3	5	2	2	4	1	5
Ordinary Poor	1	9	4	1	11	8	6	2	4	1	4	3	2	9	1	9
Ordinary Poor			2	8	9	9	5	9	4	2	2	9	1	2	1	10
Ordinary Poor			1	0	4	1	4	10	2	10	1	0				
Ordinary Poor			1	9	2	10	2	11	2	11	1	10				
Ordinary Poor			1	11	1	11	2	1			1	1				
Ordinary Poor					1	12	1	14								
Top 66% Mean		**3.50**		**4.50**		**5.50**		**5.00**		**6.00**		**6.00**		**6.50**		**5.50**
Relief-dependent Poor	10	ND	14	ND	20	ND	30	ND	35	ND	37	ND	39	ND	39	ND
Relief-dependent Poor	14	4	8	6	4	5	3	2	2	4	1	3	1	4	1	1
Relief-dependent Poor	8	3	7	5	4	2	2	5	1	6	1	5	1	1	1	2
Relief-dependent Poor	5	5	5	3	3	7	2	7	1	7	1	6				
Relief-dependent Poor	3	2	4	2	3	3	1	1	1	2	1	2				
Relief-dependent Poor	1	6	2	4	3	8	1	3	1	5						
Relief-dependent Poor			1	7	2	4	1	4								
Relief-dependent Poor					2	6	1	6								
Top 66% Mean		**3.50**		**4.67**		**5.00**		**4.67**		**4.80**		**4.00**		**2.50**		**1.50**

APPENDIX 5.1: OCCUPATIONS OF MALE INHABITANTS OF IPSWICH, 1573-1597 (TOTAL: 315)



APPENDIX 6.1: PAUPER APPRENTICES AND 'KEPT' CHILDREN IN THE OVERSEERS OF THE POOR'S ACCOUNTS FROM TWO PARISHES — ST NICHOLAS (1598-1620), AND ST LAWRENCE (1599-1620)

Table 1: Pauper Apprentices — St Nicholas Parish, 1598-1620

	1598-1600	*1601-1605*	*1606-1610*	*1611-1615*	*1616-1620*	**Totals**
Aged 1-6					1	**1**
Aged 7-13	1	2		1	6	**10**
Aged 14+	1	5	3	1	1	**11**
Totals	**2**	**7**	**3**	**2**	**8**	**22**

Table 2: 'Kept' Children — St Nicholas Parish, 1598-1620

	1599-1600	*1601-1605*	*1606-1610*	*1611-1615*	*1616-1620*	**Totals**
Aged 1-6	1		3	1	6	**11**
Aged 7-13	7	8		2	4	**21**
Aged 14+	2	8		1		**11**
Totals	**10**	**16**	**3**	**4**	**10**	**43**

Table 3: Pauper Apprentices — St Lawrence Parish, 1599-1620

	1599-1600	*1601-1605*	*1606-1610*	*1611-1615*	*1616-1620*	**Totals**
Aged 1-6						**0**
Aged 7-13			1		1	**2**
Aged 14+	1	1	1		1	**4**
Totals	**1**	**1**	**2**	**0**	**2**	**6**

Table 4: 'Kept' Children — St Lawrence Parish, 1599-1620

	1599-1600	*1601-1605*	*1606-1610*	*1611-1615*	*1616-1620*	**Totals**
Aged 1-6	2	2	2	1		**7**
Aged 7-13		1	2			**3**
Aged 14+	2	1			1	**4**
Totals	**4**	**4**	**4**	**1**	**1**	**14**

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FB91/D1/1
FB92/D1/1
FB93/D2/1-2
FB94/D1/1
FB95/D1/1
FB98/D1/1
FB98/E3/1 (Parish Book – St Clement)
FB100/D1/1
FB104/D1/1
FB106/D2/1
FB107/D2/1
FB107/A1/1

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IC/AA1/21/190
IC/AA1/27/220
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