

JYU DISSERTATIONS 398

Zachris Haaparinne

Voice of the People or Raving of the Rabble?

Petitions and Disputes on Political
Representation in Britain, 1721–1776



UNIVERSITY OF JYVÄSKYLÄ
FACULTY OF HUMANITIES AND
SOCIAL SCIENCES

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ABSTRACT

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Representation has, in one form or another, been one of the cornerstones of organised societies throughout their history. It is also an extensively studied topic in the fields of political history, political science, and philosophy. Most studies have, however, approached the subject by focusing on intellectuals and philosophers, often emphasising sudden ruptures and paradigmatic changes.

In order to understand representation from a pragmatic and less paradigmatic perspective, this thesis examines parliamentary representation in eighteenth-century Britain through petitions. It is based on 464 petitions submitted to parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne in 1721–1776; located and gathered through digital methods. It also scrutinises debates on petitions and petitioning in parliament and the press.

The studied petitions demonstrate that rather than being defined by a clear-cut dichotomy between the free mandate and the imperative mandate of representation, the process of defining representation in Britain contained far more nuance. The thesis argues that most petitioners used implicit means to influence the petitioned, from representative claims to ideals and counter-ideals. Such means provided petitioners more leeway than the explicit forms of persuasion, enabling them to suggest that the petitioned ought to act as requested without explicitly demanding so.

By focusing on the practical aspects of representation, the thesis argues that rather than being a fact, or something primarily defined through high-minded theories, representation was a constant process of negotiation between the representatives and those they represented.

Keywords: representation, petitions, parliament, political culture, eighteenth century, Britain, conceptual history

ABSTRAKTI

Edustuksellisuus (*representation*) on kiistatta yksi länsimaisen poliittisen ajattelun kulmakivistä. Se on samalla myös yksi tutkituimmista historian, poliittisen historian, politiikantutkimuksen ja filosofian aiheista. Usein edustuksellisuutta on kuitenkin lähestytty pitkälti intellektuellien, filosofien ja muiden merkkihenkilöiden kautta. Huomio on usein keskittynyt historian murroskohtiin ja paradigman muutoksiin. Tämä väitöskirja sen sijaan lähestyy aihetta arkisemmasta, usein sivuutetusta näkökulmasta.

Väitöskirjassani keskityn vetoomuksiin (*petition*) tarkoituksena ymmärtää edustuksellisuutta määrittävää kielellistä neuvotteluprosessia käytännön politiikan näkökulmasta. Tutkimus perustuu 464:ään parlamentille, Britannian parlamentin jäsenelle ja kuninkaalle lähetettyyn vetoomustekstiin. Vetoomuskorpusten kokoamiseen on käytetty digitaalisia arkistoja ja työkaluja. Edellä mainittujen lisäksi väitöskirjassa tarkastellaan myös sitä, miten vetoamisesta puhuttiin parlamentissa, pamfleteissa ja lehdistössä.

Tutkimusta varten koottu vetoomuskorpus osoittaa, ettei perinteisesti parlamentarismien kivijalaksi mielletyn vapaan mandaatin edustusteoria ollut niin ehdoton kuin on perinteisesti ajateltu. Vetoajat käyttivät sekä eksplisiittisiä että implisiittisiä keinoja haastaakseen edustajien riippumattomuutta. Käyttämällä implisiittisiä argumentteja vetoajat saattoivat haastaa parlamentin ja edustajien itsenäisyyden muodollisen nöyrästi; vetoajat kavensivat näiden poliittista liikkumatilaa ilman eksplisiittistä käskyttämistä.

Keskittymällä edustuksellisuuden käytännöllisiin puoliin tutkimus osoittaa, ettei edustuksellisuutta määritelty suurten ajattelijoiden toimesta. Sitä määrittävä neuvotteluprosessi oli sen sijaan usein korostetun käytännöllinen.

Asiasanat: edustuksellisuus, representaatio, parlamentti, poliittinen kulttuuri, 1700-luku, Britannia, käsitehistoria

CONVENTIONS

The use of quotation marks is always an indication of quoting (rather than of paraphrasing, or some other form of characterisation of the studied actors' use of language). With the exception of capitalisation, the quotations are in their original form. Dates are given in the same form as during the studied period (O.S. before September 1752 and N.S. after that).

References to petitions contain three types of information: the place of origin, the date (year), and a specific reference number. Using the reference number, readers can obtain more information on the said petition. Appendix 1 (separate document) contains information on the subject of the petition, in whose name it was submitted, and to whom it was addressed. It also contains information on the amount of published copies and from where the petition can be found. The letter *a* at the end of the reference number, as in *Westminster 1741 (#122a1)*, indicates that it is a reference to a specific reply to the said petition. All the studied replies are listed in Appendix 2 (separate document).

References to newspapers consist of information on the database (either BC for *Burney Collection* or BNA for the *British Newspaper Archive*), the newspaper, and date. A complete list of abbreviations can be found in Appendix 3. References to pamphlets, on the other hand, consist of a shortened name, date (year), and ESTC number (English Short Title Catalogue). All pamphlets are derived from the Eighteenth Century Collections Online (ECCO).

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Here and there,
18 May 2021.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Conundrums of Representation

Representation may be one of the most debated ideas and concepts in the spheres of politics. It has attracted enormous amounts of interest from politicians, scholars, and members of the public at least since the times of Solon, Cleisthenes, Ephialtes, Pericles, and Eucleides. It is, indeed, one of the founding principles of organised societies (and, therefore, one of the cornerstones of modern political thought). But representation is also one of the most obscure and complicated concepts. It is an established concept in the fields of aesthetics, where it is used to interpret the representational aspects of different artforms, and mathematics, where it is used to evaluate the representativeness of samples. The concept is also used in the fields of linguistics and politics. However, even in the spheres of politics, which is the focus of this thesis, representation can refer to multiple subjects. It can indicate elected actors, such as councillors and members of parliament, as well as unelected ones, from ambassadors to monarchs. Some use the concept to describe labour unions and scientific societies, representing their members (and often producing other sorts of representative claims, too). In addition to the confusion regarding the definition of the concept in different traditions, the meaning of representation also depends on its function. Most scholars use it as a descriptive concept, either defining the focus of their studies or describing the parlance of the studied subjects. However, uses of the concept can also be normative. In such cases, scholars and politicians, amongst others, tend to emphasise the need to define the prerequisites of proper representation.

In order to elucidate the concept and to structure their approaches, scholars have developed copious sets of theoretical tools. One of the most prominent dichotomies used to elucidate the concept, at least in studies focusing on the spheres of politics, as in this thesis, is that of the free and imperative mandate. The free mandate of representation is based on the notion that representatives in

parliament are independent of their constituents. Bernard Manin, a prominent scholar on representation, has argued that representative governments, being peculiar combinations of both 'democratic and undemocratic' elements, are based on representatives' independence. First, the 'absence of imperative mandates', along with other sorts of binding pledges, 'gives representatives a degree of independence from their electors', thus separating 'representation from popular rule'¹. Second, representatives are independent of the 'promises made to voters'.² The free mandate is a principle integrated into most theories, interpretations, and applications of representation, both in past and present, though the precise nature of that principle differs from case to case. The imperative mandate, on the other hand, is based on the idea that representatives are dependent on the electorate; the represented have a right to impose binding instructions on those representing them and, at least in some interpretations of the principle, a right to rescind their mandate of representation. Jean-Jacques Rousseau is one of the most cited supporters of the imperative mandate of representation³.

The free mandate is most conspicuous in the English tradition of parliamentarism. One of the core premises of the English parliament (and, after the union, the British parliament) is the principle that parliament is sovereign⁴. Its sovereign

¹ Manin notes that electors' right to proclaim their opinions prevents representatives from becoming the sole 'actors on the political scene'. The right of the people to 'remind representatives of their presence', Manin argues, provides a democratic counterbalance to 'the undemocratic independence of representatives'. Manin 1997, 237.

² However, as incumbents, representatives are 'subject to reelection' and thus dependent on the electors' retrospective judgment. Manin claims that 'prudence dictates' representatives to prepare themselves for that 'popular judgment', encouraging them to be receptive to the opinions of the electorate. Manin 1997, 237, see also 163 - 167 and 169 - 171.

³ Even if Rousseau himself rejected the idea of representation. Rousseau rejected the idea of representation 'because representation entails alienation', insisting that the people and its representatives cannot be sovereign at the same time. Instead of representation, Rousseau favoured delegation. The mandate of the 'deputies of the people' (being 'nothing other than its commissaries'), Rousseau argued, ought to be based on the imperative mandate, delegates being bound to observe the instructions of the people. Urbinati 60 - 69, 71 - 72; Manin 1997, 163 - 166; Ihalainen 2010, 126 - 127. For Rousseau's influence on the French Revolution, see, for instance, Ihalainen 2010, 346 - 348; McNeil 1945.

⁴ Meaning that parliament is the highest political, legislative, and interpretative institution in the realm, possessing the privilege to interpret the constitution and enact and repeal legislation as it desires. Its decisions cannot thus be overturned in courts. Goldsworthy 1999, 1 - 16. During the eighteenth century, however, most actors tended to describe parliament as independent rather than sovereign. Paul Seaward and Pasi Ihalainen, for instance, have noted that after the Restoration, 'it remained rare to associate sovereignty with Parliament on its own: late seventeenth-century debates recorded by Anchitell Grey used the term only to deny the association'. Even after the Glorious Revolution, 'the word 'sovereignty' was still treated with caution'. Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 35 - 35. Pasi Ihalainen has further argued that although 'the principle of political power being derived from the people already played a role in classical political thought - in one way or another - and was widely recognized by natural law theorists in the seventeenth century', 'these philosophers ... did not necessarily associate the origin of power in the people with some distinct concept of 'popular sovereignty', as we might be inclined to do in reading their texts'. Ihalainen 2010, 6. See also Lieberman 2006, 321 - 324.

status evolved, according to Jeffrey Goldsworthy, from 'that of the medieval English King'; though, *de jure*, bound to observe the legislative restrictions in a similar manner as his subjects, the King also functioned as the fountainhead of 'temporal jurisdiction and judgment'. Political means, thus, functioned as the sole method of confining the Monarch's conduct.⁵ During the ensuing centuries, parliament assumed more functions and privileges, becoming 'the most authoritative institution in the realm in temporal matters' (bar the King himself) at the turn of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries⁶. However, the principle gained its settled form, or at least the form that most parliamentarians and constitutional scholars recognised during the eighteenth century, in the aftermath of the Glorious Revolution. The Bill of Rights (1689), for instance, undermined the idea of absolute kingship, limiting the prerogatives of the monarch and strengthening the privileges of parliament. It accused James II of copious misdeeds and malpractices and imposed restrictions on the monarchs to come. The Coronation Oath Act (1689) and the Act of Settlement (1701) further strengthened the position of parliament in defining the succession to the Throne.⁷ Parliament's privilege to raise supplies also became settled during the post-Revolution period. The introduction of the Civil List in 1689, and the act that reinforced the custom in 1697, separated the finances of the monarch from those of the state, rendering the Monarch dependent on the decisions of parliament.⁸

Most post-Revolution interpretations recognised that the justification of parliament had a dualistic origin. In principle, parliament gained its right to rule from the King (or the Queen). The notion of 'King in Parliament' asserted, in principle, that parliament used privileges that the King had permitted it to use; it advised and consented to the decisions of the King. The principle gained different meanings in different interpretations, and became thus applied in different manners during different periods. It could be interpreted as 'the King, in Parliament'; an interpretation that asserted that parliament only advised and consented to the decisions of the King, the head of the political realm. However, it could also be understood as 'the King-in-Parliament', a sort of 'composite institution of three partners' that shared the right to legislate.⁹ Even though the Throne continued to possess significant prerogatives (such as the right to appoint ministers and dissolve the parliament)¹⁰, the House of Commons achieved a - more or less -

⁵ Goldsworthy 1999, 229 - 232, see also 22 - 50.

⁶ Goldsworthy 1999, 229 - 230. Empiricist historians, however, tend to be more cautious with such trajectories. Paul Seaward and Pasi Ihalainen have noted that 'the seventeenth century saw the gradual emergence of notions resembling parliamentary sovereignty (derived from representation) as opposed to monarchical sovereignty (derived from religious ideas)'. Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 33 - 36.

⁷ Goldsworthy 1999, 159 - 165.

⁸ Jacob M. Price maintains that the King, Lords, and Commons 'were like the three interconnected gears of a mighty machine: properly meshed and properly driven, they worked together beautifully, and the machine achieved wonders of production'. 'But let them be ill made or ill fitted', he asserts, 'and the machine could be brought to an immediate stop or reduced to disappointing levels of output'. Price 1983, 257, see also Goldie 2006, 42; Lieberman 2006, 318 - 320, 324 - 336. For further elaboration on the balanced (or mixed) constitution, see Chapter 6.5 (In Defence of the Constitution).

⁹ Goldsworthy 1999, 9, 53, 63 - 75, 230 - 231.

¹⁰ As demonstrated in Chapter 4.2.1 (Enemies of the People).

dominant position in post-Revolution England. In practice, though, parliament gained its justification from the electorate¹¹. The 558 members of parliament obtained their seats in the House of Commons through elections, held on a septennial basis after 1716. In spite of being, *de jure*, members of parliament, the constituents in the 314 constituencies tended to regard them as their representatives. However, although gaining their seats from the electorate, representatives became independent after assuming those seats in parliament. Constituents could neither command nor control the conduct of their representatives. Instead of promoting the interest of their constituencies, or those of their constituents, members of parliament served the common interest (or the interest of the nation, as it often became referred to as).¹²

This thesis focuses on the tensions that the combination of representatives' independence and the popular origins of parliament produced in 1721 - 1776. Most actors and theorists active in the spheres of politics recognised the ideals and postulations that constituted the basis of the free mandate of representation. However, representatives' independence also had its critics. Some of them used explicit means to challenge that independence¹³. With that said, most of the challenges on the principle of free mandate were asserted in implicit terms. In such cases, actors tended to recognise that members of parliament ought to be free to use their discretion in promoting measures that served the interest of the nation. However, if representatives' perception of the common good differed from those of the represented, constituents tended to become less prone to appreciate their independence (at least in the short term)¹⁴. The implicit methods used to stretch the boundaries of representatives' independence have often been deemed reac-

¹¹ Paul Seaward has described representation as 'a dual activity, facing both backwards to the constituents and forwards to the Crown'. Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 39.

¹² 'Parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests; which interests each must maintain, as an agent and advocate, against other agents and advocates; but parliament is a deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole; where, not local purposes, not local prejudices ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole', as Edmund Burke famously noted in his speech to the electors of Bristol in 1774. 'You chuse a member indeed', Burke continued, 'but when you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of parliament'. Mr. Edmund Burke's Speeches at His Arrival at Bristol 1775/28 - 29 (T41525).

¹³ One of the most cited of such cases is the Levellers, a political group active during the 1640s. *An Agreement of the People* (1647), a prominent Leveller declaration, emphasised the salience of parliament but asserted that even the privileges of the House of Commons ought to be confined. First, it argued that parliament ought to be inferior in regard to its electorate. Second, the declaration restricted the subjects parliament could legislate on. Sabbadini 2016, 164 - 165, 181 - 186; Ihalainen 2010, 12 - 13, 61.

¹⁴ Virtually all actors and groups active in the spheres of politics recognised the legitimacy of representatives' (and thus parliament's) independence. But their interpretations of the nature of representatives' independence could vary drastically. Petitioners, especially those opposed to Walpole and the decision to exclude John Wilkes from representing Middlesex, underlined the independence from ministerial corruption, undermining representatives' ability (and willingness) to defend the true interest of the nation. Their critics, on the other hand, tended to emphasise representatives' independence from popular pressure; endeavouring to reduce them into mere puppets of popular licentiousness.

tive, even opportunistic. Because of such conclusions, and the fact that most actors using implicit methods refrained from both citing and formulating coherent theories on representation, scholars have tended to focus on the explicit methods. In order to understand the less pronounced means that became used to define and re-define representation, often from a rather practical perspective, I have decided to focus on petitions submitted to parliament (76 petitions), members of parliament (222 petitions), and the Throne (167 petitions)¹⁵. Besides the corpus of 464 petitions, I also scrutinise debates concerning petitions in parliament, pamphlets, and the press. In order to understand petitioners', and their critics', perceptions on representation, this thesis focuses on five specific questions:

1. How was the meaning of representation negotiated?
2. What kind of discursive practices did petitioners use to define and re-define representation?
3. How did the genre of petitions enable actors to challenge the ideals of free mandate through both implicit and explicit means?
4. How do the changes in petitions function as indicators of the changing political culture?
5. Why should those interested in the concept of representation also recognise the importance of the concepts, discourses, and other practices around the actual concept?

The seven chapters of this thesis explore these questions. Chapter 1 (Introduction) clarifies the premises of the thesis, describing in detail its focus (representation), sources (petitions, pamphlets, the press), and theoretical premises (conceptual history). It describes the four main traditions of studies on representation, elaborating the features that distinguish the focus of this thesis from what I refer

¹⁵ Although often understood as different genres, this thesis considers petitions to parliament, instructions to members of parliament, and addresses to the Throne as part of the same genre. Hence, they are all regarded as petitions (even though often referred to as instructions and addresses to give readers a more detailed description of the discussed petition). There are several reasons behind the decision. First, the studied petitions (whether submitted to parliament, individual representatives, or the Throne) were all used to influence the conduct of parliament and members of parliament. Even those submitted to the Throne were used to increase the pressure on parliament, as demonstrated in Chapter 1.4.1 (Petitions). Second, the different sub-genres of petitions did not only resemble each other with regard to their function but also with regard to their form. They were usually structured in a rather similar fashion; often sharing the same basic sections and features regardless of to whom they were addressed. Third, petitioners and their supporters often understood the different sub-genres to be part of the same process. Even if regarded as different sorts of documents in most of the manuals, those submitting them tended to be far more eclectic when using them to influence the conduct of parliament. That is not to argue that the three sub-genres were identical. There are genuine differences with regard to their uses and linguistic conventions, as this thesis demonstrates in detail. However, by reading the three sub-genres side by side, the thesis challenges the somewhat formalistic assumption that petitions to parliament, instructions to members of parliament, and addresses to the Throne are inherently different. Their differences and similarities are further elaborated in Chapters 1.4.1 (Petitions) and 2.1 (Introduction to Petitions).

to as functionalist, objectivist, and intellectualist approaches. The chapter elaborates the decisions to approach representation from a conceptual standpoint and to focus on the cluster of concepts, discourses, and other discursive practices around the concept of representation (in contrast to focusing on the concept itself). In order to provide readers with a comprehensive introduction, it also describes the sources that constitute the basis of the thesis: petitions (the principal corpus of sources) and debates in papers, pamphlets, and parliament (to understand perceptions on petitioning). Chapter 2 (Petitions and Petitioning: Practices, Procedures, and Previous Studies) focuses on the genre of petitions. It discusses the different forms of petitions (petitions to parliament, addresses to the Throne, and instructions to members of parliament), arguing that each of them became used to define and re-define representation. In addition to the differences regarding petitions, instructions, and addresses, and the procedures that became used to regulate them, the chapter also provides readers with a general introduction to the petitioning campaigns during the period from 1640 to 1838 (including the crises that produced most of the petitions studied in this thesis). It also discusses earlier studies on petitioning and petitioners' descriptions of their reasons to submit petitions.

Chapter 3 (Representing the Sense of the People: Petitioners Uses of Representative Claims), the first of the four source-based chapters, demonstrates the significance of petitioners' uses of representative claims in the process of defining representation. It introduces readers to a three-point model, tailored to analyse on whose behalf petitioners claimed to speak. In the first case (*primary petitioners*), petitioners claimed to speak on behalf of themselves and the subscribers of their petitions. The emphasis on subscriptions became most prominent after the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions¹⁶ in 1768, when petitioners and publishers of petitions started to emphasise the importance of scale. However, petitioners could also claim to speak on behalf of others. In the second case (*secondary petitioners*), petitioners claimed to speak on behalf of the industrious poor, the sufferers of financial difficulties, and the tortured seamen. Petitioners could also claim to represent actors in specific occupations, branches of trade, and their brethren in America. In contrast to primary petitioners, the secondary petitioners neither authored nor submitted the petitions; they were present in the petitions only through the representative claims of the primary petitioners. This is also a defining feature of the third case (*tertiary petitioners*). However, whereas the claim-making in the case of secondary petitioners consisted of representative claims on behalf of concrete actors, those on behalf of the tertiary petitioners consisted of claims on behalf of abstractions. In such cases, petitioners could claim that their petitions represented the people, the trade of the nation, and entire generations. The chapter demonstrated how the use of representative claims enabled petitioners to significantly expand the appeal of their petitions.

Chapter 4 (Public Interest and Private Influence: Ideals and Counter-Ideals of Representation and Participation) discusses the ideals and counter-ideals petitioners used to define the legitimate forms of representation and participation.

¹⁶ In this case meaning petitions distinctively emphasising the scale of subscriptions.

The first part of the chapter focuses on the ideals of participation (being the ideals that petitioners claimed inspired them to submit petitions) and the ideals that petitioners expected their representatives to conform to. It demonstrates that the concept of interest functioned as the most important concept in characterising such ideals. Petitioners often claimed to champion the interest of the nation and tended to expect their representatives to share their definition of that concept. Petitioners could also assert that representatives ought to be disinterested - a concept that signified the absence of private interests. In order to legitimise their requests, petitioners could also represent their private interests as collective interests. In such cases, petitioners tended to represent their interests either as collective interests as such or as interests that benefitted the interest of the nation (as in the case of trade). The second part of the chapter, on the other hand, discusses the counter-ideals petitioners used to persuade their representatives. It discusses accusations of mismanagement and the use of concepts such as *faction*, *ambition*, and *design*. It also contemplates the criticism on placemen and pensioners, represented as the tools of malicious ministers, and references to traitors and enemies of the people. Besides the other accusations, the chapter also discusses in detail the uses of the concept of influence - the most important concept petitioners used to describe the undesirable elements of politics.

Chapter 5 (Requests and Requirements: Petitioners' Perceptions on the Representative Relationship) scrutinises petitioners' perceptions regarding the impact that petitions ought to have on the petitioned. It demonstrates that discursive patterns, in cases of consistent genres in particular, can be used to provide innovative insights into popular perceptions on representation. In contrast to most conceptual approaches, which emphasise the importance of nouns, the main focus of the chapter is on the verbs petitioners used to influence the future conduct of the petitioned. First, the chapter observes the use of humble verbs, which constitute around 80 per cent of the verbs used in petitions. With such verbs, petitioners desired, entreated, implored, and beseeched the petitioned to act as suggested. Second, the chapter discusses the use of imperative verbs. In such cases petitioners could insist, enjoin, and require their representatives to act as instructed. The uses of imperative verbs demonstrate that regardless of the predominance of the free mandate of representation, petitioners could also explicitly challenge representatives' independence. In addition to the use of verbs, the chapter also discusses the other discursive practices petitioners used to challenge the boundaries of representatives' independence. In order to influence their conduct, petitioners could emphasise their dependence on the people out-of-doors and the beneficial consequences of observing their requests. The chapter also discusses the replies petitioners received from the petitioned (65 individual replies, 211 published copies).

In contrast to earlier chapters, Chapter 6 (Protectors of Parliament and the Constitution: the Critics of Petitions and Petitioning) focuses on criticism of petitioning. In order to understand the critics, it concentrates on debates and discussions in parliament, pamphlets, and the press. It contemplates, among other things, the criticism on petitioning actors. In order to undermine petitions, critics

could claim that their submitters consisted of delegitimate actors, ranging from popular usurpers to misguided members of the multitude. Critics also challenged the emphasis on scale after the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions in 1768 - 1770, claiming that instead of representing the sense of the nation, mass-petitions manifested the misguided passions of the populace. The chapter also discusses critics' concerns that petitions undermined the independence of parliament. Critics could accuse petitioners attempting to reduce representatives, the ablest men in the realm, into mere delegates, thus endangering the true interest of the nation. Petitions could also be criticised through procedural arguments and accused of subversion. In this last case, critics claimed that petitioners undermined and challenged the constitution and the balanced form of government, thus encouraging discord and division. Instead of protecting the post-Revolution settlement, as legitimate actors ought to, petitioners became accused of supporting democratic and ochlocratic principles. In criticising petitions and petitioners' requests and demands, the critics, too, participated in the process of defining representation.

Chapter 7 (Representation and Reciprocation) concludes that representation is a process of continuous negotiation. Instead of being a fact, or something that can be counted and measured, representation is a negotiated abstraction. In order to understand that abstraction, the chapter argues, the focus should be on the manners in which it became defined and understood. Scholars have often approached representation from an intellectualist standpoint, focusing on an established canon of intellectuals and genealogies of representative ideas. Such approaches can provide interesting insights into the paradigmatic changes in representative thought. Most historical actors, however, had neither the time to formulate consistent theories nor the interest to read comprehensive tracts on representation. In order to understand representation from a broader perspective, scholars should recognise the significance of actors outside the established canon. This thesis, the chapter argues, demonstrates in a concrete manner that such actors participated in the process of defining and re-defining representation, discussing in detail the means and methods petitioners used to do so. Their formulations may have been less coherent than those of prominent intellectuals, but the assortment of discursive means and methods petitioners used to influence their representatives enables scholars to understand representation from a practical perspective. Petitions, the chapter and thesis concludes, constitute a crucial genre for those endeavouring to understand representation from the perspective of past actors themselves.

1.2 Earlier Studies on Representation

The ambiguous character of the concept has encouraged scholars to approach representation from numerous different perspectives. Some have focused on the idea of representation itself. Political theorists, among others, have often focused on defining the essence of representation, pure and simple. Most scholars, on the

other hand, have tended to approach representation from less direct perspectives. Numerous scholars have, for instance, focused on parliaments and other representative institutions, constituting a major component of representation in practice. This thesis, too, approaches representation from the perspective of parliament, emphasising the importance of institutions (parliament), indirect practices (petitioning), and other practical aspects of representation. Studies on representative institutions have often focused on parliaments and parliamentarism as such, but also on elections and electioneering, the evolution of electoral practices and campaigning, and participation in representative politics. Although most scholars have approached such subjects from qualitative perspectives, studies on elections and electoral participation have also emphasised quantitative aspects. Others have focused on the more recent components of representation. In such cases, scholars have tended to emphasise the significance of parties and democratic norms. The connection of representation and democratic participation, in particular, has attained enormous academic interest. However, parties, elections, parliaments, and democratic practices represent but a fraction of subjects and themes that can be used to scrutinise representation.

For analytical purposes, I divide studies on representation into four main categories, the categories being (1) functionalism, (2) objectivism, (3) intellectualism, and (4) historical empiricism. In order to understand the categorisation, some further clarifications are imperative. Instead of coherent and established schools of thought, the categories should be understood as traditions in the broader sense of the concept. First, the categories contain far more variation than is possible to demonstrate in this thesis, most of them containing competing theories, methods, practices, and schools of thought. Second, at least some of the categories are overlapping. Functionalist and objectivist approaches, for instance, often share the same problem-solving attitude, both of them emphasising present-day challenges and the importance of having an impact on the studied societies. Intellectualist and empiricist approaches, on the other hand, tend to share a common interest in the past. The Cambridge School, for instance, often approach past intellectuals, from Niccolò Machiavelli to Thomas Hobbes, from an empiricist perspective. Regardless of these specifications, the categorisation provides readers with a comprehensive description of the current state of studies on representation. Instead of being a homogeneous field of interest, studies on representation consist of numerous divergent traditions, clusters, and subjects, ranging from functionalist and normative approaches to political and empiricist traditions.

1.2.1 Functionalism, Objectivism, Intellectualism, and Empiricism

Functionalist studies on representation, the first of the four categories, have often focused on both locating and solving perceived problems of representative practices, structures, and institutions. Such scholars have often emphasised the seriousness of the alleged problems, producing numerous references to the crises of

democratic norms, representative institutions, and electoral engagement. The declining turnout at elections¹⁷, decreasing share of people belonging to established parties¹⁸, deteriorating trust in members of parliament and other politicians¹⁹, and diminishing faith in democratic institutions²⁰ are among the most cited indications of such crises. Such scholars have also discussed the impact of globalisation, some of them focusing on supranational representation and others on the global influence on representation in national politics. Some functionalists have emphasised the opportunities of globalisation and international co-operation, underlining success stories such as the European Union and United Nations. Others have remained more sceptical, often focusing on the adverse effects and practical challenges. In the latter case, scholars have often emphasised that although levels of transnational co-operation and the movement of people, goods, capital, and services are at their highest, the representative institutions and practices in the European Union remain problematic.²¹

In order to (re-)modernise representation, functionalists have emphasised the importance of reforming representative practices. One of the most popular trains of thought has focused on inclusion, participation, and deliberation²². Here, scholars have underlined the need to re-determine the focus on representation, emphasising the role of democratic citizenship and the participative dimensions of representative politics. Instead of depending on parties and parliaments, both of them institutions that have, according to numerous functionalist scholars, ignored minorities and other sections of the population for centuries, the focus should be on re-engaging citizens. A booming count of scholars have focused on formulating and promoting measures that encourage minorities to participate in representative politics. In order to secure ethnic minorities²³, indigenous people²⁴, and other disregarded communities a share in representative institutions and processes, scholars have often promoted representative quotas, group representation, and further emphasis on the needs of disregarded and misrepresented groups.²⁵ Nadia Urbinati, an intellectualist scholar on representation, has pointed out that in such cases representation is understood as 'a subset

¹⁷ LeDuc 2007; Tormey 2014; Kernell 2013, 114. See also Saward 2010, 1 - 2.

¹⁸ Kernell 2013, 114 - 115; Tormey 2020, 70; Tormey 2014; Verma 2019, 3; Pünder 2015, 714 - 715.

¹⁹ Tormey 2020, 70; Gastil 2000, 1 - 2; Pünder 2015, 714 - 715.

²⁰ Warren 2004; Tormey 2020, 77 - 78; Gastil 2000, 1 - 2; Armingeon & Guthmann 2013.

²¹ Lawrence LeDuc, for instance, has argued that 'levels of interest and participation continue to be low [when electing members for the European Parliament], except on those occasions when they have important implications in the national politics of a particular country'. LeDuc 2007, 155. See also DeBardeleben & Hurrelmann 2007; Brack 2014; Goodhart 2007; Ives 2004; Warren 2004, 203 - 204.

²² See, for instance, Laycock 2004, ix - x, xiv - xv; Jung 2009; Steiner 2020; Gastil 2000; Williams 2000.

²³ Hajnal & Trounstine 2013; Banducci, Donovan, & Karp 2004; Hayward 2009; Jung 2009; Krook 2020; Lovenduski 2020; Hänni & Saalfeld 2020.

²⁴ Maddison 2010; Tomaselli 2017; Williams 2004.

²⁵ Williams 2004; Laycock 2004, ix; Williams 2000; Jung 2009; Rehfeld 2009; Krook 2020; Hänni & Saalfeld 2020; Kymlicka 1995; Verma 2019.

of theories of justice', used to solve the representative problems 'in our advanced pluralist democracies'²⁶.

Objectivist studies, on the other hand, have focused on the normative interpretations of representation. Even though seldom describing themselves as objectivists, such scholars have tended to assume that the state of representation can be evaluated through an objective set of standards. Some have suggested that it is possible to use objective standards to 'evaluate [electoral] fairness and bias[es]'²⁷ and scrutinise constituents' control of their representatives²⁸. Others have emphasised the objective need for impartial and compliant bureaucracies²⁹, inclusion of electors³⁰, and diversity among representatives³¹. However, most such scholars, it appears, prefer to use negations to define the normative standards of representation, claiming that the alleged deficiencies in representative practices cause misrepresentation. The United States is the most common subject of such criticism. Numerous objectivists have criticised features such as the electoral college, the absence of unified regulations on elections, the first-past-the-post (FPTP), structural biases favouring established parties, partisan manipulation of district boundaries, and voter suppression³². André Blais, a Canadian scholar on electoral practices, has claimed that 'the United States has odd institutions, which most comparativists judge negatively (and do not recommend for new democracies), yet American citizens seem to be relatively satisfied'. According to Blais, the 'comparativists are right and the people are wrong'.³³ Even though most objectivists are not as obstinate as Blais, the normative character of the tradition is evident.

Functionalist and objectivist approaches share many features. Both of them tend to approach representation from the perspective of the present. Functionalist studies emphasise the problem-solving perspective³⁴, endeavouring to recognise and solve the alleged problems of representative practices and institutions.

²⁶ Urbinati 2006, 8.

²⁷ McGann 2013, see also van der Hout & McGann 2009a; van der Hout & McGann 2009b; Kedar, Harsgor & Sheinerman 2016; Sterling 1981; Panagopoulos 2010; Sterling 1981.

²⁸ Achen 1978.

²⁹ Chhibber & Ostermann 2013.

³⁰ Thompson 2013; Hayward 2009.

³¹ Thompson 2013; Hayward 2009.

³² Blais 2013; McGann 2013, 105, Thompson 2013; Gastil 2000, 71 - 76; Sterling 1981; Panagopoulos 2010.

³³ Blais further claims that 'Americans should not be satisfied with what they have. So the question becomes: why are Americans satisfied with their institutions (when they should not be)?' Blais 2013, 15. He has also described the representative institutions of the United States as both 'exceptional and "incorrect"' and claimed that the two-year electoral terms in the House of Representatives are 'crazy'. Blais 2013, 17 - 18. John Gastil, on the other hand, has argued that 'there are two fundamental problems in American politics. The first is that most Americans do not believe that elected officials represent their interests. The second is that they are correct.' Gastil 2000, 1, see also 2 - 6.

³⁴ Although in many ways a functionalist (and a political theorist), Michael Saward has greatly contributed to the study of representation from an empiricist perspective. His assertion that those interested in representation should recognise the importance of what he refers to as representative claim-making is certainly one of the most promis-

In order to solve such problems, functionalists often propose concrete solutions. Objectivist studies, too, often focus on recognising problems in established practices of representation. In addition to containing functionalist elements, however, objectivist approaches emphasise that representation, and thus misrepresentation, can be defined and measured through an objective set of standards. Functionalist approaches often contain normative assumptions and assertions but also tend to recognise the subjective character of their diagnoses and propositions. Objectivists' affection for quantitative methods might, at least to a certain point, explain the difference. Instead of convincing scholars of the negotiated character of most subjects in the spheres of politics, the use of comprehensive sets of data might encourage them to believe that the true state of things can be calculated. Despite their similarities, the functionalist and objectivist approaches differ from each other. Though most objectivists might be functionalists, not all functionalists are objectivists (as such).

Intellectualist studies on representation, constituting the third of the four categories, have focused on intellectual debates and authors. Like the other categories, the intellectualist tradition consists of numerous different modes of approach. Some of the intellectualist scholars have focused on the genealogies of representative thought. In such cases scholars have tended to emphasise the evolution of representative ideas and principles. Hanna Fenichel Pitkin is certainly the most recognised of such scholars. Her pioneering book, *The Concept of Representation* (1967), is one of the first comprehensive studies on the idea representation.³⁵ Even if depending less on established thinkers than certain genealogists, *The Concept of Representation* contains numerous references to the usual canon of intellectuals. Thomas Hobbes, the focus of its first chapter, is referred to as one of the earliest and most significant theorists on representation³⁶. The eighth chapter discusses the significance of Edmund Burke, and the ninth chapter the ideas of Jeremy Bentham, John Stuart Mill, and James Madison. Besides the numerous references to the canon, the study also contains a pronounced defence of 'major political theorists'. As 'political theorists are still among the most persistent and important' commentators on representation, at least according to Pitkin, scholars interested in the subject should compare their conceptual findings to their perceptions³⁷.

ing ideas in the field. According to Saward, 'a representative claim is a claim to represent or to know what represents the interests of someone or something'; representation being 'a dynamic process of [such] claim-making and the reception of [such] claims'. In order to understand the process of representation, scholars 'need to look at the meanings of makers and recipients of claims, meanings in the assessment of claims' and understand 'patterns of representative claims, looking at the resources different actors deploy in making and evaluating claims'. Saward 2010, 8, 17 - 18, 38, see also 36 - 37, 43, 46 - 47, 103. Saward's notions are further elaborated in Chapter 3 (Representing the Senses of the People: Petitioners' Uses of Representative Claims).

³⁵ Although political representation is the main focus of her analysis, Pitkin also recognises other forms of representation. She claims to have 'looked beyond political contexts to all the areas of human life in which this family of words is used'. Pitkin 1967, 6 - 7. However, due to the focus on the theoretical aspects of representation, *The Concept of Representation* is light on empirical content.

³⁶ See also Pitkin 1967, 4.

³⁷ Pitkin 1967, 7.

Bernard Manin and Nadia Urbinati, on the other hand, function as more recent demonstrations of the genealogist tradition. Bernard Manin, the author of *The Principles of Representative Government* (1997), has contemplated 'the constant elements' of representation that have, according to him, remained unchanged and unchallenged since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries³⁸. These elements, Manin argues, constitute the 'principles of representative government', the core of political representation. However, instead of referring to 'abstract, timeless ideas or ideals', as numerous other intellectualist scholars have done, Manin understands the principles of representative government as 'concrete institutional arrangements'.³⁹ He argues that these principles, 'observed in representative regimes, ever since [the invention of] this form of government', determine that governors are elected on regular basis, the elected retain 'a degree of independence' from the electorate, the governed are free to voice their opinions, and 'public decisions undergo the trial of debate'⁴⁰. Nadia Urbinati, meanwhile, has focused on formulating a 'comprehensive defense of the normative core that makes it [representation] democratic'⁴¹. In order to do so, Urbinati has presented three specific arguments. She maintains that (1) 'public discourse is one of the main features that characterize and give value to democratic politics'; (2) 'indirectness', representation being one of its most important forms, has a central 'role in forging the discursive democratic character of politics, and aids rather than obstructs participation'; and (3) 'representation highlights the idealizing and judgemental nature of politics'.⁴² Both Manin and Urbinati discuss representation through the usual canon of intellectuals, ranging from Aristotle and Machiavelli to Rousseau and Kant⁴³.

In addition to the genealogist approach, intellectualist scholars have also focused on specific intellectuals and their perceptions on representation. Such studies have discussed the perceptions of intellectuals from Cicero⁴⁴ and Marsilius⁴⁵ to Carl Schmitt⁴⁶ and Mao⁴⁷. But despite the endless number of prominent thinkers, most studies have focused on a rather confined set of intellectuals. Ed-

³⁸ Manin 3 - 4, 6. See also Urbinati 2006, 1, 15.

³⁹ Manin 1997, 3 - 4.

⁴⁰ Manin 1997, 6. 'In some countries, such as Britain and the United States', Manin argues, 'these arrangements have remained in place ever since their first appearance.' 'In others, such as France,' the arrangements have been abolished (and re-established), meaning that 'the regime ceased, during certain periods, to be representative'. Manin 1997, 4.

⁴¹ A claim Urbinati considers unconventional and even controversial. Most political theorists, she maintains, understand representation as an antithesis of democratic participation, as an arrangement 'created to neutralize political participation'. Urbinati 2006, 3 - 8.

⁴² Urbinati 2006, 5.

⁴³ Both studies also contain extensive reflection on Paine, de Condorcet, Burke, Madison, Montesquieu, Locke, Hobbes, Tocqueville, Schumpeter, and Sieyès. Manin 1997; Urbinati 2006.

⁴⁴ Remer 2010.

⁴⁵ Lee 2008.

⁴⁶ Kelly 2004.

⁴⁷ Frakt 1979.

mund Burke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, for instance, are among the most studied members of the canon. Burke's notion that 'parliament is not a congress of ambassadors from different and hostile interests' but a deliberative institution of the entire nation, members of parliament serving the common good instead of 'local purposes ... [and] prejudices'⁴⁸, has made him a household name in the field of representation⁴⁹. Rousseau, on the other hand, is most recognised for his rejection of representative forms of government. In *Du contrat social*, Rousseau claims that 'the sovereign' alone can represent itself - a claim that has fascinated and inspired scholars on representation ever since.⁵⁰ Others have focused on James Madison and Thomas Hobbes⁵¹. Madison, a founding father and one of the authors of *The Federalist Papers*, and his principles of representation, underlining the importance of representation of interests and the role of responsive but independent representatives, have generated enthusiasm among historians, politologists, and constitutional scholars⁵². Intellectualist scholars focusing on genealogies and specific intellectuals share a common focus. Both focus on intellectuals, and in most cases on an established canon of intellectuals, and settled principles, conundrums, and contradictions defining representation.

Historical empiricism constitutes the last of the four categories. Instead of focusing on the problems of representative practices or on the genealogies of intellectual principles, empiricists, most of them historians, tend to focus on confined subjects, both in temporal and spatial terms. Copious studies have discussed past practices and perceptions in Britain⁵³, Ireland⁵⁴, France⁵⁵, Scandinavia⁵⁶, the Netherlands⁵⁷, the Habsburg Empire⁵⁸, and the United States⁵⁹. Such scholars have often focused on parliaments, electoral practices, reforms of representation, democratic participation, and popular perceptions. Some of them have focused on local conflicts and practices and others on national debates and transnational influences. Despite the broad assortment of themes and topics, however, most empiricist studies have tended to emphasise the practical applications of representation. H.T. Dickinson, a historian who has studied popular politics during the long eighteenth century, has succeeded in combining most of the above-

⁴⁸ Mr. Edmund Burke's Speeches at His Arrival at Bristol 1775/28 - 29 (T41525).

⁴⁹ Conniff 1977; Conniff 1993; Eulau, Wahlke, Buchanan & Ferguson 1959; Williams 1996; Bourke 2015.

⁵⁰ Fralin 1978; Douglass 2013; Putterman 2003; Putterman 2005; Scott 2005; Schwartzberg 2008; Wade 1976; Baczko 1988; Garsten 2009, 93 - 98. For similar studies on Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, see, for instance, Baczko 1988; Goldoni 2012.

⁵¹ Skinner 2005; Runciman 2009. For similar studies on John Locke, see, for instance, Stevens 1996; Marini 1969; Dunn 1967. For studies on John and John Stuart Mill, see Krouse 1982.

⁵² Yarbrough 1979; Morgan 1974; Sheehan 1992; Sheehan 2002.

⁵³ Dickinson 2007; Seaward 2007; Seaward & Ihalainen 2016; Foxley 2013; Ihalainen 2010; Turnbull 2007; Knights 2005. For similar studies on European colonies, see for instance, Greene 2007; Bailyn 1992; Ihalainen & Haaparinne 2020; Dabhoiwala 2017. Ohlmeyer 2007; Dennehy 2018; Crooks 2010.

⁵⁴ Bell 2007; Garrigues & Anceau 2016.

⁵⁵ Jespersen 2007; Ihalainen & Haaparinne 2020; Kurunmäki 2000; Ihalainen 2010.

⁵⁶ Beyen & te Velde 2016.

⁵⁷ Fortea Pérez 2007.

⁵⁸ Huston 2017; Wood 1998; Wood 2006; Argersinger 1989.

mentioned themes and topics. In his influential *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (1994), Dickinson maintains that the manners in which 'elite politics and popular politics inform, influence [each other], and interact' have been, at least to some degree, neglected and misunderstood. He further argues that one cannot 'understand the politics of the governing elite' unless also attempting 'to appreciate the political actions, beliefs, and organisations of the people at large'.⁶⁰ The contrast to those emphasising the importance of intellectuals is more than evident. Though far from regarding them as irrelevant, empiricists tend to favour broader and more historical perspectives, often approaching representation from the practical perspective of past actors themselves.

Mark Knights, focused on print culture and the role of the public, and Pasi Ihalainen, specialised on parliaments and transnational perspectives, have also emphasised the need to understand the more practical aspects of representation. Knights, the author of *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain* (2005), has argued that the period from 1670 to 1720 functioned as a transformative phase for representative practices in Britain. The combination of frequent elections, the birth of political parties, the end of pre-publication licensing, and the creation of national debt established, in the national sense, 'a partisan political culture' that encouraged the public to participate in the spheres of politics. 'The partisan press, clubs, coffee houses, electioneering, addresses, and petitions' became, according to Knights, used to both inform 'a reified public' and to incite 'passion, and even rage'.⁶¹ The focus of his approach is dualistic: to demonstrate the importance of 'the public to politics'⁶² and to understand the past attitudes and concerns on 'public judgment'.⁶³ Ihalainen has also emphasised the importance of practical uses of language and the role of non-canonised actors. Instead of focusing on 'some philosophical or sociological concept' of the people, the focus of his *Agents of the People* (2010) is 'the use of references to the people to legitimate political order in the past'. In order to do so, Ihalainen has focused on 'the long-term formation of political concepts through debates in representative bodies and in published literature'.⁶⁴ In both cases, the empiricist emphasis is evident.

This thesis represents the last of the four traditions. As a historical empiricist, I emphasise the importance of understanding representation and representative practices from the perspective of past actors. In contrast to functionalist and objectivist approaches, the function of this thesis is neither to reveal nor to resolve the problems and challenges of representative practices⁶⁵. Neither does it aim to

⁶⁰ Dickinson 1994, 1. For a thematically similar study on popular politics, see Kathleen Wilson's *The Sense of the People*. Wilson argues that 'the claim to represent the "sense of the people" became an important legitimizing rhetorical strategy in the Hanoverian decades, a crucial part of the wider political contestation under way that had been produced by the emergence of a vibrant, national and predominantly urban extra-parliamentary culture'. Wilson 1998, 3.

⁶¹ Knights 2005, 3 - 5, 11 - 30.

⁶² As electors, readers, and 'umpires and judges of state and church'.

⁶³ Knights 2005, 4 - 5.

⁶⁴ Ihalainen 2010, 1 - 2, 15, 19 - 20.

⁶⁵ Though neither is the purpose to contradict the possibility of such problems.

provide a normative definition of representation, describing its true meaning. Studies that maintain that representation can be measured and evaluated through a set of objective standards and reference points tend to undermine the competence of the studied actors. Functionalists, on the other hand, tend to focus on solving the alleged problems of representative practices and structures - an objective that often includes determining the preferred form of representation. This thesis, on the other hand, focuses on understanding constituents' and other actors' perceptions of representation, discussing in detail the linguistic means such actors used to influence the decisions of parliament and members of parliament. In order to do so, one needs to listen and understand the studied actors, instead of judging them or evaluating the truthfulness of their perceptions.

The focus of this thesis also differs from the intellectualist approaches. Instead of focusing on the established canon of authors, or other intellectuals, the thesis emphasises the perceptions and discursive practices of less recognised actors. The principal emphasis is on petitioners - a diverse set of actors, ranging from borough officials to mercantile actors, as demonstrated in Chapter 3 (Representing the Sense of the People: Petitioners Uses of Representative Claims). Such petitions could be submitted on behalf of corporate actors, members of grand juries, portreeves, justices of the peace, sheriffs, and bailiffs. Petitions could also include constituents and electors in different forms (freemen, burgesses, and principal inhabitants) and members of different professions and occupational groups (merchants, traders, druggists, planters, printers, clothiers, manufacturers, and stannators). Some of them were authored and submitted during official meetings, as in the case of assizes, courts of quarter sessions, and corporate meetings, but petitioning meetings could also be organised on ad hoc basis. In addition to petitioners, the thesis also studies editors', pamphleteers', and representatives' perceptions of representation. In most cases, the details of the petitioners, such as name (most petitioners using their titles), affluence, and political alle-

giance, remain obscure; in the case of subscribers, it is even more difficult to obtain such information⁶⁶. Even databases⁶⁷ on members of parliament contain only modest amounts of information on most representatives from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

In addition to the obstacle created by the shortage of information, petitions and petitioners are often regarded as mundane, ambivalent, and even insignificant. Instead of containing coherent perceptions, petitions are often seen as reactions to crises. As ad hoc reactions, the argument goes, petitions illustrate but their submitters' eagerness to oppose unfavourable schemes and request measures to further their private interests. This can either be seen as a problem or as a strength, depending on the perspective. Some suggest that the mundane and sometimes ambivalent nature of petitioners' perceptions of representation

⁶⁶ Who actually drafted the petitions is, in similar manner, challenging to establish. Faramerz Dabhoiwala, while discussing in detail the more practical aspects of petitioning in seventeenth-century England, has pointed out that 'the most fundamental problem in analysing [petitions of individuals] is that, as in other partially literate cultures, most [of such] petitions were not written by the supplicants themselves, but penned on their behalf'. A significant amount of those scribes were, according to Dabhoiwala, 'amateurs'. Dabhoiwala 2017, 127 - 128, 131 - 142, see also Houston 2014, 73 - 79, 94 - 97. It is entirely possible that a considerable amount of the private petitions submitted during the eighteenth century were also drafted by such scribes. But I remain sceptical to the idea that their role would have been as strong in the case of publicised petitions; most of them concerning explicitly political issues. It is more than likely, at least when submitted in the name of corporations and other administrative bodies, that petitioners consulted professional scribes, attorneys, and clerks. But even if consulted, there is no indication that they dominated the process of drafting petitions. That is not to argue that the drafting process was not (potentially) influenced by a diverse set of actors. As noted in Chapter 5.5 (Replies from the Petitioned), representatives could participate in the petitioning meetings, especially when also having other functions (matters of election, criminal justice, local administration and so on). Petitioning and the content of petitions could also be encouraged and influenced by those with an interest in the constituency. In order to succeed, especially in the case of private bills, petitioners often needed assistance from their representatives and, as D.L. Rydz has pointed out, parliamentary agents; managing and promoting their petitions in parliament. Rydz 1979. The content of petitions could also be influenced by actors organising campaigns; something that became increasingly common since the Wilkesite petitioning in the late 1760s. But eighteenth-century petitioners should not be understood as drones, pushing propositions dictated by others. British petitioners, and those in England in particular, had far more influence over their petitions than in most political cultures in Europe, at least when concerning matters of public interest. Instead of being determined by scribes (or other actors of similar character), it is more probable that the content of the studied petitions were influenced by published literature; periodicals, pamphlets, and other publications providing them further means to conceptualise their reasoning and structure their argumentation. It is also possible, even probable, that at least some of the petitioners used other petitions as models. In such cases they could use historical as well as more recent models; both being readily available in most boroughs. Older petitions were usually available through administrative records and monthly magazines (often preserved since they contained useful information for different purposes, including manuals), whereas the more recent ones could be accessed through pamphlets, periodicals, and other sorts of publications. But even when using historical models, sometimes circulated in the press to encourage petitioning during periods of political turmoil, it is my belief that petitioners were more commonly influenced by other petitions during the same crisis, at least in the petitions studied in this thesis.

⁶⁷ Such as the History of Parliament (HoP). Most of the biographical information used in this thesis is derived from HoP.

render them useless, or at least trivial⁶⁸. However, the mundane and sometimes ambivalent nature of petitions can also be seen as an advantage. It is true that petitioners seldom formulated coherent theories, but one should also consider if such theories provide the most suitable method of understanding historical actors and their perceptions. The intellectualist emphasis on pronounced perceptions of representation can also be subjected to similar forms of criticism. In order to broaden and deepen our understanding of representation in eighteenth-century Britain, this thesis focuses on the often neglected features of representation - actors that participated in debates on ad hoc basis, often using implicit means to influence their representatives.

1.3 Theoretical and Methodological Choices

In order to understand petitioners' (and their proponents' and critics') perceptions on representation, I approach the subject from a linguistic and constructivist perspective. Theoretically, the thesis is based on a tradition often referred to as *conceptual history*, usually associated with Reinhart Koselleck. Although consisting of numerous sub-traditions⁶⁹ emphasising different aspects of concepts and their changing character, conceptual history in general tends to maintain that conceptual change is not merely an indication of the changing language but also of more profound trajectories. In addition to utilising Koselleckian notions and assumptions, the thesis also embraces theoretical elements from Quentin Skinner. Skinner, along with others associated with the so-called Cambridge school of the history of political thought, usually emphasises the need to place individual texts and actors into a wider intellectual context. Although sometimes considered mutually exclusive, even opposites, this sub-chapter demonstrates that these approaches can be used together. The combination of the Koselleckian and

⁶⁸ Petitions are, as demonstrated in detail in Chapter 2 (Petitions and Petitioning: Practices, Procedures, and Previous Studies), often used to confirm conclusions derived from more traditional sources, such as parliament, but seldom the focus of scholars' interest as such.

⁶⁹ That conceptual history in the twenty-first century is a diverse field of study is, of course, beyond doubt. Willibald Steinmetz and Michael Freeden have described the field as 'simultaneously discontinuous and intra-referential, scattered and centripetal'. They also maintain that 'over the past twenty years' the study of conceptual history 'has been experiencing a rebirth', 'its practitioners are multiplying; its investigations have spread across many languages and cultures - within Europe and beyond; its assumptions and contentions are becoming more nuanced; and it has entered into a fertile mutual give-and-take with neighbouring disciplines'. Rather than being 'an orthodoxy', conceptual history 'continuously reinvents itself'. Steinmetz & Freeden 2017, 1, 31, see also Steinmetz 2017, 65 - 66, 82 - 83; Fernández-Sebastián 2017, 284 - 285. For the interpretations associated with *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* and *Handbuch politisch-sozialer Grundbegriffe in Frankreich*, see, for instance, Richter 1995, 3 - 4, 19, 79 - 123; Richter 1990, 39 - 40; Richter 1987, 247 - 251, 255; Richter 1986.

Skinnerian approaches has previously been championed by scholars such as Melvin Richter⁷⁰, Kari Palonen⁷¹, and Pasi Ihalainen⁷². In order to clarify the exact manner in which I combine them in this thesis, this sub-chapter describes the different elements adopted from the Koselleckian and Skinnerian traditions. As well as contemplating their differences and similarities, this sub-chapter also demonstrates how such a combination is applied in practice.

Despite a diverse (and constantly evolving) field of scholarly interest, the brand of conceptual history employed in this thesis is mostly inspired by the Koselleckian tradition. The *Geschichtliche Grundbegriffe* (GG), an ambitious eight-volume study of the basic concepts in German-speaking Europe, published in 1972 - 1992, is the most well-known example of the Koselleckian interpretation of Begriffsgeschichte. Edited by Koselleck, Werner Conze, and Otto Brunner, the GG contains articles on 119 basic concepts, written by 109 different authors. In addition to providing a comprehensive overview of the use and evolution of German concepts in general, the editors of the GG also argue that it demonstrates the connection between conceptual and social change.⁷³ One of the GG's - and, indeed, Koselleck's - main arguments is that the period from 1750 to 1850, usually referred to as the Sattelzeit, functioned as a transformative period in terms of both conceptual and social change. 'During that time', to quote Melvin Richter's characterisation of Koselleck's reasoning, 'changes in the meaning of concepts proceeded at an extremely rapid pace.'⁷⁴ However, even if one regards the GG and Sattelzeit as irrelevant to one's scholarly endeavours⁷⁵, the Koselleckian tra-

⁷⁰ Richter 1986; Richter 1987; Richter 1990; Richter 1995. For Richter's impact, see, for instance, Olsen 2012, 194 - 195; Skinner 2002, 177. Although often seen as initially critical of conceptual history, Skinner has recognised the value of Begriffsgeschichte in his *Visions of Politics* (2002). Skinner argues that 'it is worth adding that the view at which I have arrived is in some respects similar to the one embodied in Reinhart Koselleck's now celebrated programme for the study of Begriffsgeschichte, histories of concepts'. 'Koselleck and I both assume', Skinner notes, 'that we need to treat our normative concepts less as statements about the world than as tools and weapons of ideological debate'. Skinner 2002, 175 - 187, see also Richter 1995, 133 - 134; Palonen 2017, 98 - 100.

⁷¹ For Palonen's impact, see, for instance, Olsen 2012, 194 - 196; Skinner 2002, 186 - 187.

⁷² See, for instance, Ihalainen 1999; Ihalainen 2005; Ihalainen 2010.

⁷³ Tribe 2004, viii - xvi; Richter 1995, 26 - 78, 167 - 201; Richter 1990, 40 - 43, 46 - 48; Richter 1986; Richter 2006; Richter 1987; Steinmetz & Freedon 2017, 4 - 5; Jordheim 2017, 49. I regard the argument possible but also highly ambiguous. Skinner has aptly noted that 'I have no general theory about the mechanisms of social transformation, and I am somewhat suspicious of those who have'. Skinner 2002, 180 - 182.

⁷⁴ 'Such conceptual transformations', Richter continues, 'both registered and directed irreversible alterations in political, social, and economic structures'. Richter 1995, 16 - 18; Richter 1990, 41 - 42, 46 - 47; Richter 1986, 612, 614 - 615; Richter 2006, 347 - 348; Koselleck 2002, 5 - 6, 154 - 169; Olsen 2012, 1 - 2, 170; Steinmetz & Freedon 2017, 5 - 6. For a detailed summary of the hypotheses (temporalisation, democratisation, ideologisation, and politicisation of concepts) regarding Sattelzeit, see, for instance, Richter 1990, 46 - 47; Richter 1986, 616 - 618; Richter 2006, 349 - 351; Richter 1987, 252 - 253; Steinmetz 2017, 65 - 68.

⁷⁵ As Willibald Steinmetz has noted, 'the Sattelzeit hypothesis may be a characteristic feature of Begriffsgeschichte as conceived by Reinhart Koselleck in the late 1960s and early 1970s, but it is important to stress that it is by no means essential to its methodology'. Rather than understanding it as an inherent part of conceptual history, 'even

dition of Begriffsgeschichte also provides scholars with other, more general theoretical tools to understand language and legitimacy, as this sub-chapter demonstrates.

Quentin Skinner, on the other hand, is most well known for his contributions in the field of history of political thought. Together with J.G.A. Pocock, John Dunn, Peter Laslett, James Tully, and a number of other scholars, Skinner is associated with the so-called Cambridge School, united by the criticism of the allegedly unhistorical emphasis of earlier traditions. In order to understand the studied actors and their thinking, the scholars associated with the Cambridge School have tended to emphasise the importance of what is usually referred to as historical contextualism.⁷⁶ Rather than focusing on the Cambridge School in general, however, the approach of this thesis has mostly been influenced by Skinner, whom I have found most useful in understanding past actors' use of language. In regard to his theoretical and methodological contributions, Skinner is most recognised for his notions concerning speech acts and the emphasis on authors' intentions. In the first case, Skinner is influenced by the thinking of Ludwig Wittgenstein and J.L. Austin; instead of being mere rhetoric, the use of language is a form of acting. The emphasis on intentions, on the other hand, derives from the endeavour to understand the functions of those speech acts. 'The understanding of texts', Skinner argues, 'presupposes the grasp of what they were intended to mean and of how that meaning was intended to be taken'. 'To understand a text', he continues, 'must at least be to understand both the intention to be understood, and the intention that this intention be understood, which the text as an intended act of communication must have embodied'.⁷⁷ Although both revered and controversial, Skinner and his approach have had a lasting impact on the history of political thought and beyond.

This thesis is based on a combination of the two approaches, adopting (and rejecting) elements from both of them. It shares the Koselleckian notion that concepts are essential to language (and thus to social interaction and societies in general), providing actors with not only the means to describe their surrounding reality but also to mould it.⁷⁸ Rather than being mere words⁷⁹, concepts are the

Koselleck himself only thought of it as a point of secondary importance'. 'To conclude from this that Begriffsgeschichte as a line of inquiry should forever be bound to repeat, or be instrumental to prove, that particular Koselleckian view of modern history', Steinmetz argues, 'is nonsense'. Steinmetz 2017, 65 - 66.

⁷⁶ Richter 1995, 124; Tribe 2004, vii - ix.

⁷⁷ Skinner 2002, 86 - 87, see also 96 - 97; Palonen 2017, 98 - 100. In contrast to numerous other scholars, Skinner distinguishes intentions from motives. He argues that in addition to (usually) being impossible to recover and understand, 'the recovery of motives is indeed irrelevant to the activity of interpreting the meanings of texts'. For the distinction between intentions and motives, see, for instance, Skinner 2002, 96 - 102.

⁷⁸ Koselleck 2002, 30 - 32, 36 - 37, 125, 129; Koselleck 2004, 75 - 92, 156 - 159; Richter 1990, 41; Richter 1986, 618; Richter 2006, 345.

⁷⁹ According to Koselleck, the focus of his approach has been on 'concepts whose semantic "carrying capacity" extends further than the "mere" words employed in the sociopolitical domain'. Although 'each concept is associated with a word, ... not every word is a social and political concept' as concepts 'possess a substantial claim to generality and always have many meanings'. Koselleck 2004, 75 - 76, 84 - 85. See also Richter 2006, 345; Olsen 2012, 172 - 173, 181; Richter 1995, 9 - 10, 35, 41 - 42.

cornerstones of language, crucial in the process of structuring argumentation and necessities in defining the boundaries between legitimate and de-legitimate. Due to their centrality, concepts usually function as both means and subjects of conflict. Whereas legitimate concepts usually are used to describe the speakers' and writers' (and their allies' and associates') intentions, causes, and perceptions, de-legitimate concepts are most commonly employed to characterise the conduct of their opponents. Besides making use of the established definitions of concepts, actors may also re-define them. Legitimate concepts may, for instance, be re-defined in a manner that enables actors to use them to describe their own endeavours in legitimate terms. Pejorative ones, on the other hand, may be revised in ways that make them suitable for criticising others.⁸⁰ Most actors in the spheres of politics tend to regard freedom as a legitimate concept. However, although widely recognised, the concept signifies different things to different actors: freedom, but from what? The concept may be used to justify both the nationalisation of private property and the reduction of regulation and state interference. Another common example is the freedom of speech. Although commonly recognised as legitimate, and claimed by most groups within the spheres of politics, the numerous definitions of the concept may differ drastically from each other. In order to utilise the legitimacy associated with such concepts and promote their definitions of them, actors compete with those defining them in different ways. Concepts, in other words, function both as central platforms of conflict and important indications of the boundaries of legitimacy.

The focus on concepts is based on an assumption that language, and thus legitimacy, is structural. Rather than being invented individually, language is a socially shared and mostly inherited structure; actors using words and concepts tend to rely on linguistic conventions and connotations invented and consolidated by others. The structural character of language is also what makes it understandable. Rather than using random expressions, speakers and writers tend to use language that is both understandable and, more importantly, regarded as convincing and suitable to their audiences. This is also evident in the case of petitions. To legitimise their claims, petitioners tended to favour the use of legitimate concepts; in other words, concepts that their audiences recognised as legitimate⁸¹. Instead of representing their petitions as manifestations of private interests, a highly pejorative concept during the eighteenth century, petitioners claimed to champion the common good, something that almost all of their contemporaries recognised as legitimate. Many actors may have disagreed with their

⁸⁰ Particularly by actors, Skinner refers to as innovative ideologists. Skinner 2002, 148 - 157.

⁸¹ Skinner, too, recognises the structural character of language, though often discussing it in different terms than Koselleck. He maintains that 'whatever intentions a writer may have, they must be conventional in the strong sense that they must be recognisable as intentions to uphold some particular position in argument, to contribute to the treatment of some particular topic, and so on'. In order to understand speech acts and intentions, 'we need, in short, to be ready to take as our province nothing less than the whole of what Cornelius Castoriadis has described as the social imaginary, the complete range of the inherited symbols and representations that constitute the subjectivity of an age'. Skinner 2002, 101 - 102, see also 5, 86 - 87, 114 - 118, 142, 178 - 179. See also Richter 1990, 60 - 61.

characterisation of the common good, but they nevertheless recognised its importance in principle. Due to the socially shared character of concepts, their uses do not only function as indications of their private thoughts, but also of those of their intended audiences (and, to a certain extent, of society in general). The use of concepts can thus be used to understand what was perceived as legitimate and delegitimate, or at least what actors thought others considered as legitimate and delegitimate.

In addition to recognising the structural character of language and legitimacy in general, this thesis also focuses on a more specific linguistic structure. In order to understand representation, it examines the genre of petitions. Due to its relatively coherent character, discussed in detail in Chapters 1.4.1 (Petitions) and 2 (Petitions and Petitioning: Practices, Procedures, and Previous Studies), the genre of petitions functions as an excellent corpus of sources to examine the linguistic patterns of legitimacy. The focus on a specific genre enables one to recognise and locate conventions, features, and formulations that would appear trivial if discussed in the context of individual texts. When focusing on such conventions, features, and formulations through 464 publicised petitions, submitted and published during the span of 55 years, however, patterns start to emerge. These linguistic patterns, some of them conceptual and others more general⁸², can be used to shed light on two particular aspects. First, they demonstrate petitioners' perceptions of representation. Instead of being explicit, like most of the studied writings of eighteenth-century intellectuals, the preponderance of petitioners' means were implicit. The focus on such patterns thus enables scholars to understand the often neglected means to define and re-define representation from a practical perspective. Second, the patterns function as indications of what was legitimate and de-legitimate in eighteenth-century Britain. As petitioners endeavoured to convince various audiences, ranging from representatives to reading publics in general, they favoured the use of concepts, conventions, and arguments that in general were considered recognisable and legitimate.

Although embracing the Koselleckian emphasis on the structural aspects of language⁸³, the thesis also recognises the importance of the Skinnerian emphasis

⁸² Though the main focus of the thesis is on concepts and their uses, it also contains references to discourses; a rather ambiguous and even controversial concept. However, rather than using it as a theoretically strong notion, I use the concept in a practical and descriptive manner. The concept of discourse is mostly used to describe wider expressions. Petitioners could, for instance, emphasise their love and esteem for their country (instead of describing themselves as patriots, a more conceptually-minded way of saying, more or less, the same thing). Even in such cases, petitioners used concepts to structure their argumentation, but in a different manner than when employing the concept of patriot. The use of adjectives, adverbs, and verbs, on the other hand, are referred to as discursive means. Though being neither concepts nor discourses by themselves, such means were constantly used to define both of them.

⁸³ Although almost categorically recognised by scholars studying language, the explicit emphasis on its structural character varies from case to case. Whereas Koselleck, for instance, places much emphasis on its structural aspects, sometimes in a manner that might seem as dismissive towards those actors actually using it, Skinner tends to focus on individuals and their speech acts. But he also emphasises the need to understand the studied speech acts within wider intellectual contexts, thus recognising the importance of linguistic structures.

on individuals, their agency, and their speech acts. Although far from denying the importance of individuals, Koselleck is also modest in emphasising their role. Instead of focusing on individual actors and their use of language, the *Begriffsgeschichte*, and the *Geschichte Grundbegriffe* in particular, tends to discuss concepts in rather passive terms. In this respect, the influence of social history on Koselleck's thinking is more than evident⁸⁴. Though greatly influencing actors' use of language, as earlier demonstrated, such structures are never self-sustaining; language (or structures in general) never acts by itself, but is used to perform (speech) acts⁸⁵. Actors could, for instance, contradict established conventions by inventing new concepts and altering the meanings of established ones by re-defining them. Rather than being mindless drones, ordered by the structure to use

⁸⁴ Koselleck 2002, 20 - 37, 129; Koselleck 2004, 75 - 92; Richter 1990, 43, 45 - 46; Richter 1986, 614 - 620; Richter 2006, 348 - 349; Richter 1987, 253; Richter 1995, 6, 11, 18, 27 - 28, 34 - 39, 42; Olsen 2012, 178 - 186. However, instead of understanding conceptual history as a sub-tradition of social history, Koselleck maintains that the two traditions have genuine, even fundamental, differences. He states, for instance, that 'social history and conceptual history are different', even insisting that 'social history ... and conceptual history stand in a reciprocal, historically necessitated tension that can never be canceled out'. Instead of being part of the same tradition, Koselleck understands them as mutually beneficial. Koselleck 2002, 20 - 24, see also 30 - 31, 36 - 37. Although influenced by what is often referred to as social history, Koselleck's exact definition of the concept, and, indeed, that of *social*, remains ambiguous. It appears that he understands the tradition in a far broader manner than a great deal of his non-German-speaking readers, representing it as the branch of history that 'deals with intersubjective relationships, with forms of sociability or with social stratifications'. Koselleck 2002, 20 - 24, see also 31. Though understandable, such use of the concept, together with the uses of other similar concepts, supposedly describing the different traditions within the field of history, is challenging to those not familiar with the vocabulary and conventions of German-speaking historiography. Besides often using such concepts without explicitly defining them, Koselleck's distinctions between the different branches of historiography remain somewhat nebulous. One could, for instance, argue that the rather expansive definition of social history would render political history, cultural history, economic history, and, indeed, conceptual history useless, all of them focusing on subjects based on intersubjective relationships. However, although often formulated in a manner that might appear as programmatic, even formalistic, Koselleck usually emphasises aspects that Skinner, and others associated with the Cantabrigian tradition, would simply refer to as historical contexts.

⁸⁵ In this respect, I remain critical of Mark Knights' characterisation of the linguistic turn. Knights asserts that the linguistic turn 'involves the recognition that language 'acts' ... [and that] certain words and phrases have a power of their own, because the way in which they are understood can shape and order behaviour and experience'. Knights 2005, 42, see also 44 - 45. For similar notions regarding Koselleck's work, see, for instance, Koselleck 2002, 29, 36 - 37; Koselleck 2004, 75; Richter 1995, 38 - 39; Richter 1990, 47; Richter 1987, 253. The flawed logic of such argumentation can be demonstrated by a mechanical analogy. It seems safe to assume that most scholars would recognise that the general design of hammers tend to influence the manners in which such tools are used. Due to its design, those using such a tool tend to grab it by its handle, thus using its weighted head to hit the intended object. But does that mean that the hammer has agency? Such claims tend to confuse influence (of structures) and agency. Even if the use of the hammer is certainly influenced by its design, it is not the hammer that acts; it is the actor using the hammer that uses his agency to use it, usually influenced by the design the designer of the hammer used his agency to design. Scholars are, of course, free to define the concepts they use in whatever manner they want, but to include the influence of structures into the concept of agency would render the concept, de facto, useless. For Cantabrigian criticism of such notions of agency, see, for instance, Skinner 2002, 180.

a pre-determined set of concepts, actors used their discretion to contemplate and decide which concepts would be most suitable to describe their perceptions and serve their purposes⁸⁶. This is not to claim that Koselleck understood structures, whether linguistic or social, as self-sustaining, but to underline the dangers of relying on structural explanations and, thus, the need to recognise the role of individual agency.

However, although more empathetic towards individuals and their choices, the Skinnerian approach, too, has its limitations. Two of them are particularly relevant from the perspective of this thesis. First, Skinner and those associated with the Cambridge School have tended to focus on historical actors often described as intellectuals. Although interpreting them from a more historically-oriented perspective than earlier brands of intellectual history, the Cantabrigians tend to focus on a rather similar canon of intellectuals, ranging from Hobbes and Harrington to Locke and Machiavelli. However, rather than being an intrinsic part of the Skinnerian approach, this is, to a large extent, a consequence of individual choices⁸⁷. The contrast to this thesis is, however, more than evident. In order to understand the practical perspectives of representation, I focus on actors often deemed mundane. Second, Skinner has tended to emphasise the importance of intentions, an intriguing but demanding focus. The focus on intentions is most useful in cases of well-known actors, especially when those actors have produced large amounts of source material on their reasoning. Again, the

⁸⁶ In this sense, I understand the use of words as fundamentally political. Kari Palonen has aptly pointed out that politics can be, in general, understood in two fundamental manners: as a sphere and as an activity. In the first case, politics is understood as a space where politics is made, parliaments and party organisations being the most common examples of such an understanding of politics. In the second case, on the other hand, politics is understood as an activity; everything containing the possibility to choose being categorically political. Although occasionally employing concepts based on the first (as when using the expression spheres of politics, being a general reference to those actors and institutions usually considered as explicitly political), I concur with Palonen in regard to the primacy of the second. Instead of being something confined to parliament and other spheres regarded as political, politics is something that is present in our everyday life. Such an understanding of politics, and the use of language, enables scholars to understand the studied actors and their use of language in a much more comprehensive manner. For further elaboration on the subject, see, for instance, Palonen 2003. As the use of language is understood as something inherently political, it would be convenient to label the thesis as political history. It certainly is a label I could accept. But it is also a label that is highly ambiguous. Since the umbrella concept can be used to refer to an endless amount of different, often contradictory, traditions, I have preferred the use of conceptual history. Although a diverse field of study, as earlier noted, it tends to give the readers a clearer picture of what is actually done.

⁸⁷ Rather than any assertion that scholars ought to focus on canonical thinkers, the focus of Skinner's studies tend to function as demonstrations of his own preferences. Skinner notes that 'the social actors in whom I am interested are those whom I shall describe (following Weber) as innovating ideologists', being actors that were significantly more likely to be part of an established canon than actors in general. Skinner 2002, 148 - 157. For Skinner's criticism regarding the manner of treating canonical authors and texts as separate entities from their historical surroundings, see, for instance, Skinner 2002, 42, 57 - 58. For criticism of Skinner's focus on canonical authors, see, for instance, Knights 2005, 45 - 47. See also Fernández-Sebastián 2017, 288 - 289.

contrast with the actors studied in this thesis is rather obvious. Although petitioners' immediate objectives are described in detail in their petitions, little is known of the true authors, their affiliations, or their affluence, as demonstrated in the subsequent sub-chapters.

Both of the features I regard as limitations are closely associated with what is usually referred to as historical contextualism. In order to understand past actors and their intentions, Skinner has emphasised the need to understand the wider intellectual context in which the actors operated. He maintains that 'once we recognise that an understanding even of a received canon of major figures requires us to surround them with whatever intellectual context makes best sense of them, we cannot afford to be too quick about dismissing any feature of that context as tedious or irrelevant'⁸⁸. However, rather than formulating a general theory, Skinner simply emphasises the need to recognise both (1) the available sources regarding the studied subject in a manner as holistic as possible⁸⁹ and (2) the general intellectual context during the studied time period. This thesis, too, recognises the importance of the second point, comparing petitioners' use of concepts to what could be characterised as the general intellectual context through literature, but differs with regard to the first. Instead of endeavouring to find as much information on all of the 464 petitions, it focuses on the patterns within the genre of petitions, as earlier demonstrated. This also means that instead of focusing on the content of the petitions in general, it emphasises but those elements related to defining representation. In order to do so, I de-contextualise the petitions from their immediate temporal and spatial contexts and re-contextualise them in regard to other petitions⁹⁰. This does not mean that temporal and spatial

⁸⁸ Skinner 2002, 42 - 43, see also 3 - 6, 42 - 44, 86 - 87, 101 - 102, 116 - 117, 121, 142. What that holistic context exactly is, or how it is compiled and revealed, remains unclear. However, it also demonstrates that Skinner's vision of historical contextualism is far more flexible than his critics often assume. Skinner recognises, for instance, that 'even when an utterance can be assigned to a highly determinate context, Derrida remains right to insist that we can never hope to know "for sure" or by any "infallible means" what may have been meant'. 'The outcome of the hermeneutic enterprise', he notes, 'can never be anything resembling the attainment of a final, self-evident or indubitable set of truths about any text or other utterance whatsoever. Even our most confident ascriptions of intentionality are nothing more than inferences from the best evidence available to us, and as such are defeasible at any time.' Skinner 2002, 121. Rather than having a single context, or one that would somehow be more natural than others, the process of contextualisation is always a decision made by scholars, whether they recognise it or not.

⁸⁹ Skinner argues that 'the injunction is to think holistically, and thus to begin by focusing not on the individual action to be explained, but rather on the conventions surrounding the performance of such actions in the relevant social context'. 'We need to begin not by trying to recover the actor's motives by studying the context of social rules', he continues, 'but rather by trying to decode their intentions by situating their action within this larger structure of values and practices.' Skinner 2002, 142, see also 43, 116 - 117.

⁹⁰ Although emphasising the importance of recognising as many relevant contexts as possible, Skinner also notes that 'there is no implication that the relevant context need be an immediate one'. He argues that 'the appropriate context for understanding the point of ... writers' utterances will always be whatever context enables us to appreciate the nature of the intervention constituted by their utterances. To recover that context in any particular case, we may need to engage in extremely wide-ranging as well as detailed historical research.' Skinner 2002, 116.

factors will not be taken into account; the content of petitions is widely discussed in the coming chapters, often with regard to literature on the subject. Neither, however, is the focus of this thesis on events as such or on political microhistory.

Besides placing more emphasis on individual agency than those associated with the more traditional forms of *Begriffsgeschichte*, the thesis also differs in regard to its linguistic focus. Instead of exclusively focusing on the concept of representation as such, I place more emphasis on the concepts and discursive practices around it. The reason for this is mainly practical; though a central concept, representation was rarely a contested concept as such. Whereas, in numerous cases, the conceptual conflict, or the conflict regarding the definition and meaning of the concept, occurred within the concept itself⁹¹, the conflict regarding representation usually took place outside the actual concept⁹². The reason for this is twofold. First, representation was usually considered a legitimate concept. Even if the legitimacy of representation could be challenged in principle, as in the case of Rousseau, such challenges remained rare for most parts of the eighteenth century. Most actors in the spheres of politics recognised representation as something desirable, even though their exact vision of its character could differ drastically. Second, representation was commonly used as a descriptive concept rather than a normative one. In such cases, it was used to describe the political system, based on parliamentary representation. For these two reasons, actors rarely focused on the concept of representation as such.

In order to understand representation and its negotiated character⁹³, I have decided to focus on the concepts and other discursive practices around the concept of it. This thesis focuses, among other things, on how petitioners used representative claims, ideals and counter-ideals, and other indirect characterisations of the representative relationship to define representation in practice. In contrast

⁹¹ As in the case of democracy, for instance. For a detailed analysis of the changes within the concept itself, see, for instance, Ihalainen 2010.

⁹² Steinmetz and Freedon have also noted that conceptual history has 'become increasingly aware of the interconnections among concepts and of the limits of studying any concept in isolation from others'. They argue that 'a concept does not only inhabit a narrative line that requires nothing else than the recounting of its own story as it mutates, but is located in complex semantic fields in which concepts inform and shape each other'. Steinmetz & Freedon 2017, 26 - 27, see also Freedon 2017, 125 - 127; Fernández-Sebastián 2017, 284 - 285.

⁹³ By asserting that representation is something negotiated, I emphasise that 'representation is not just there, a thing', as Michael Saward has put it. Instead, 'it is made, or constructed, by someone, for someone, and for a purpose'. As Saward, I recognise the 'need to move away from the idea that representation is first and foremost a given, factual product of elections, rather than a precarious and curious sort of claim about a dynamic relationship'. Saward 2010, 13, 34, see also 3, 8, 26 - 28, 36 - 37, 103. Representation can, of course, be negotiated in numerous manners. But although also negotiated in non-linguistic ways (and, indeed, influenced by non-linguistic factors), this thesis focuses on the negotiative character of representation from a linguistic perspective. By using linguistic means, petitioners participated in defining what was possible and how representation should work. It is not, in the restricted sense of the concept, a straightforward negotiation process between clearly defined parties, engaged in concrete discussions. Instead, it is a process in which petitioners engaged in defining representation through public debates, discursively moulding and restricting how representatives (and the represented) ought to act, what means they ought to use, and which ideals they ought to defend.

to the more traditional forms of conceptual history, usually focusing on nouns, this thesis also discusses the use of adjectives, adverbs, and verbs in detail. Most of the studied means were distinctively implicit. Instead of explicitly describing their intentions to define and re-define representation, petitioners tended to favour the use of suggestive notions. Some of them used associative argumentation to influence the conduct of the petitioned, claiming, for instance, that in order to defend the common good and the constitution, the petitioned ought to observe their requests. Besides often being implicit, the means petitioners used were also distinctively practical. Instead of formulating coherent theories on representation, or even relying on such theories, petitioners tended to emphasise rather practical objectives and means of persuasion. Rather than discussing Lockean notions of consent, or contemplating the ideas of Hobbes and Harrington, petitioners tended to focus on the practical aspects of protecting their interests in parliament. The focus on extra-conceptual means should not be seen as a rejection of the conceptual tradition. On the contrary, it demonstrates that other means were also used to define concepts.

The theoretical and methodological notions described above form the basis of this thesis. In order to understand petitioners and their perceptions of representation, I recognise the importance of both linguistic structures and individuals operating within those structures, usually making use of established conventions but, at times, also challenging and re-defining them. Rather than providing readers a normative interpretation of how language ought to be understood, or endeavouring to form a general theory of some sort, the sub-chapter provides a detailed description of the assumptions that have guided my reading and understanding of the studied sources and subjects. I have found Reinhart Koselleck and his *Begriffsgeschichte* and Quentin Skinner and his language-oriented methodological individualism as most useful in understanding representation from a practical perspective. But instead of endeavouring to replicate the Koselleckian approach, or to supplement the Skinnerian understanding of concepts, I use elements from both approaches to understand representation.

1.4 Sources

In empiricist studies, good theories and methods are useless unless applied to suitable sources. Instead of forcing sources into strict theoretical frames and methodological models, different sorts of questions need different sorts of sources. In order to understand representation, and the concepts and other discursive practices used to define it, I have decided to focus on four categories of sources: (1) petitions, (2) parliament, (3) pamphlets, and 4) the press. To focus on public sources - and public debates in parliament, pamphlets, and the press in particular - is an established practice among scholars focused on the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Numerous scholars have emphasised the significance of debates in parliament. As both legislative and deliberative assemblies, parliaments, and the British parliament specifically, are significant both because of

their impact and focus on discursive practices⁹⁴. Pamphlets and papers, on the other hand, have often been seen as sources that enable scholars to scrutinise the opinions of the so-called common people (and the middling orders in particular)⁹⁵. Although copious studies have emphasised the importance of specific corpora, scholars tend to agree that combining different forms of public debates is possible (despite the differences regarding their interpretation of the precise nature of that combination)⁹⁶.

Sub-chapters 1.4.1 (Petitions) and 1.4.2 (Parliament, Papers, and Pamphlets) discuss the use of public sources and debates in this thesis. The first sub-chapter describes the rationales behind the decision to approach representation through the genre of petitions, an often neglected genre of sources and one that distinguishes this thesis from most other studies. The second discusses the sources from parliament, pamphlets, and the press, used to understand perceptions on petitioning (and, therefore, representation).

1.4.1 Petitions

In order to understand past actors and their perceptions of representation, the thesis uses petitions as the main group of sources. Instead of focusing on petitions en masse, however, an enormous and at least to some degree uncharted genre,

⁹⁴ Pasi Ihalainen and Kari Palonen have argued 'that the existence of continual parliamentary debates in itself supported change in political language and culture by providing a forum for the expression of political opinions through the use of language and concepts'. Ihalainen & Palonen 2009, 10. See also Ihalainen 2010, 29 - 36, 472 - 473; Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 43 - 44; Black 2004, 1 - 8; Black 2008, 213 - 217, 220. Although receptive towards the idea that parliamentary debates were in many ways more influential than those out-of-doors, at least from the conceptual perspective, I also use significant amounts of more popular sources in this thesis. The main reason for this is, however, practical; most debates on petitions and petitioning occurred outside parliament.

⁹⁵ As in the case of Kathleen Wilson's *The Sense of the People*. Wilson maintains that 'the most cursory examination of the artifacts of the press in this period [1715 - 1785] - newspapers, pamphlets, prints, magazines, broadsides, squibs and sermons - (sources which historians intent on denying the existence and purchase of alternative idioms of political discourse largely ignore) shows that various strands of populist political argument, from the most mild to the most fractious and radical, were alive and well, a seemingly irrepressible part of the legacy of the two revolutions and an exuberant out-of-doors political culture that took national politics - and national history - to heart'. Wilson 1998, 19.

⁹⁶ Though critical of the emphasis on popular sources, Ihalainen and Palonen recognise that 'a combined study of parliamentary records and published literature might ... provide the most balanced account of how politics was understood by various echelons of the political and intellectual establishment'. Ihalainen & Palonen 2009, 8 - 11.

this thesis scrutinises those published in papers and pamphlets (publicised petitions⁹⁷). The thesis is based on 464 such petitions⁹⁸, gathered from different digitised collections⁹⁹. Besides the petitions themselves, I have also collected data on the amounts of published copies of these petitions; the 464 petitions generating 1,453 published copies in total, ranging from one to 24 copies per petition (an average of 3.1 copies per petition). The decision to focus on publicised petitions is both practical and principled¹⁰⁰. The fire that ravaged parliament in 1834 consumed a significant share of the original parliamentary records, including a great

⁹⁷ Meaning petitions published in papers, pamphlets, and other publications. Why they were made public, and by whom, varies from case to case. In some cases copies were sent directly to the press by the petitioners themselves. In other cases they became publicised through a different set of agents. Making petitions public could be a way of increasing the pressure on parliament and the petitioned. They could also be publicised to encourage others to submit petitions on the same subject. But despite their differences, they were all publicised.

⁹⁸ Including only petitions from England, Wales, and Scotland. Though at times submitted to parliament and the King, especially during the 1760s and 1770s, a great deal of colonial petitions were addressed to the Board of Trade. I also exclude private petitions (with a few exceptions). For the changing character of petitions and declining importance of private petitions, see Leys 1955, 46.

⁹⁹ The main collections being the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (mainly pamphlets), *Burney Collection* (papers), *British Newspaper Archives* (papers), and *Google Books* (monthly magazines). The studied petitions are gathered from the collections through OCR and full-text search engines, enabling the location of the scattered documents from corpuses containing millions of pages of material. I have mainly used key words such as petition(s), petitioner(s), petitioning, petition*, instructions, instructing, instruction*, address(es), addressing, and address* to locate both petitions and debates on petitioning. While the various full-text search engines have been an irreplaceable help in the process, the actual analysis of the potential sources have been done manually.

¹⁰⁰ Due to the focus on publicised petitions, the results of this thesis should not be understood as reflective of the genre of petitions in general. The studied petitions represent but a modest share of the total amount of petitions in eighteenth-century Britain. Jacob M. Price, for instance, has noted that even though almost 60 petitions were submitted against excises in 1733, an impressive number in itself, it was far from being something extraordinary in terms of scale. Shopkeepers protesting 'against the unfair competition of hawkers and peddlers', for instance, submitted 79 petitions (from different communities) to the House of Commons between 18 February and 24 April 1730; a further 25 being submitted in 1731. Price 1983, 293. But although safe to assume that most petitions (including instructions and addresses) were submitted to parliament in 1721 - 1776, only 76 of the 464 petitions studied in this thesis were addressed to the House of Commons or the House of Lords (or both). It is also more than likely that controversial assertions and arguments were far more common in publicised petitions than in petitions in general. Chapter 5 (Requests and Requirements: Petitioners' Perceptions on the Representative Relationship), for instance, demonstrates that almost all of the imperative verbs occurred in instructions to individual representatives. But the relative prevalence of controversial means in publicised petitions is also a consequence of their temporal concentration; 86 per cent of the studied petitions being submitted during eight crises, as demonstrated in Figure 2 (Incidence of Petitions and Published Copies, 1721 - 1776). It is thus more than probable that if the focus of this thesis would have been on all surviving petitions, the results would have been rather different, especially in the case of representative claims and verbs. But although not a representative sample of the genre in general, publicised petitions provide an excellent corpus for studying how political representation became negotiated in practice, as this sub-chapter demonstrates.

deal of the original copies of petitions¹⁰¹. Though other forms of copies have endured¹⁰², some of them published in papers and pamphlets and others stored in local archives¹⁰³, the main collection of petitions submitted to the House of Commons has perished. The second challenge is the informal status of petitions to members of parliament. Instead of being recognised in the official sense of the concept, as petitions to parliament and the Throne, petitions to members of parliament remained informal. Because of their informal nature and the hundreds of receivers of such petitions, it is more than challenging to compile a comprehensive collection of them.

The decision to concentrate on publicised petitions is also principled. It is important to recognise that in the case of publicised petitions certain actors - in most cases petitioners, receivers of petitions, and editors and authors of papers and pamphlets - made conscious decision to publish them. Such actors' reasons to publish and circulate them, of course, differed from case to case. Petitioners could publish them to praise the petitioned. The receivers of petitions, on the other hand, could publish approving petitions to enhance their reputation among their constituents and the reading publics. In the case of unsatisfied and hostile constituencies, petitions could also be published to increase the pressure on representatives to act as requested. The influence of editors and pamphleteers should neither be disregarded. The decision to publish petitions could derive from editors' and authors' political allegiance; opposition papers and pamphleteers, in particular, tended to publish petitions criticising the administration. Pro-administration papers, some of them subsidised, could also publish petitions, as during the American crisis. Others published petitions, and other forms of content, in order to increase their sales. The precise nature of such actors' intentions is almost impossible to determine, but in each of the cases, the actors considered

¹⁰¹ Petitions to the House of Lords, however, survived the destruction. Loft 2016, 2; Loft 2019a, 345.

¹⁰² A significant number of parliamentary petitions has survived through the Journals of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. Some of the petitions were included in the Journals in full but some only in form of short descriptions. For the use of such petitions, see, for instance, Loft 2016; Loft 2019a; Loft 2019b. While the Journals provide scholars a promising corpus, as Philip Loft in particular has demonstrated, these sources are not included in this thesis. Unlike the sources I have used to understand publicised petitions, the Journals were not public in a similar way as newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets. Although something I look forward to using in the future, I have excluded them from this thesis. Formal petitions to the Throne, on the other hand, have survived through the *London Gazette* (<https://www.thegazette.co.uk/>). I have used the *Gazette*, though mainly through the Burney Collection.

¹⁰³ Paul Langford has, however, aptly noted that petitions could also be authored and submitted without producing further records, neither official or unofficial. He argues that 'corporate procedures were not sufficiently regular to ensure that the despatch of parliamentary instructions, a transaction which did not normally require the expenditure of corporation funds, nor even necessarily the application of the corporation seal, was automatically recorded'. Langford 1975, 51 - 52.

the petitions important enough to be published. Even though the scale of published copies should not be seen as a definite indication of petitions' importance, it provides an indication of their influence¹⁰⁴.

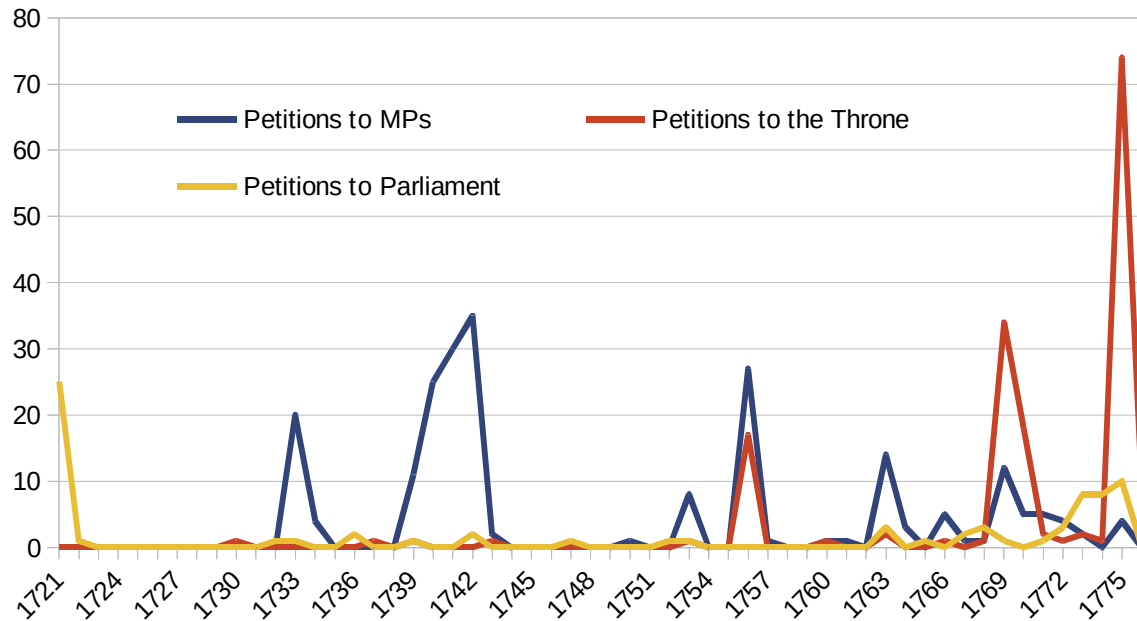


Figure 1 Incidence of Different Forms of Petitions, 1721–1776.

Petitions form a diverse group of sources. Those studied in this thesis can be further divided into three specific categories: (1) petitions to parliament, (2) petitions to members of parliament (often referred to as instructions), and (3) petitions to the Throne (often referred to as addresses). Petitions to the House of Commons (74 petitions) and the House of Lords (six petitions) represent the most conventional form of petitioning. Such petitions tended to recognise the independence of parliament; instead of demanding change as such, petitions became used to request parliament to consider petitioners' grievances and to implement solutions it considered most suitable. Parliament also recognised petitioners' right to submit petitions. In order to process them, it used a standardised set of procedures, the most notable of them being recorded in the manuals discussed in Chapter 2.1 (Introduction to Petitions). Petitions could also be submitted to members of parliament (222 petitions). In contrast to petitions to parliament, those

¹⁰⁴ Although not the primary focus of this thesis, the data regarding the published copies is something that in the future could be used to understand the dynamics of petitioning more comprehensively. Such data could also be used to analyse the dynamics of the press in eighteenth-century Britain. Focusing on published copies would be a useful way of approaching the interaction between the London and provincial press, for instance. Where were the petitions published first? How and in what pace did they spread to other papers? Through what kind of connections did petitions spread from one paper to others? How did local circumstances and party allegiance influence the publication of petitions? The information regarding the publication of petitions in different papers and pamphlets could be very useful when elaborating such questions. The data regarding the copies studied in this thesis is available in Appendix 1 (columns I and J) and Appendix 2 (columns H and I).

submitted to individual representatives represent a more informal mode of petitioning¹⁰⁵. Regardless of the absence of procedural recognition, however, petitioners used instructions to influence the conduct of their representatives. Due to their intimate and informal nature, instructions tended to contain more imperative formulations than petitions to parliament and the Throne. It is more than probable that most petitions during the period from 1721 to 1776 became submitted to parliament¹⁰⁶, but it is the petitions to members of parliament that form the most numerous set of petitions studied in this thesis.

Besides the petitions to parliament and members of parliament, this thesis also scrutinises petitions, or addresses, to the Throne (167 petitions). Like petitions to parliament, addresses to the Throne represent an established form of petitioning; petitioners recognising the position of the Throne and the Throne recognising petitioners' right to submit petitions¹⁰⁷. However, as the focus of this thesis is representation, I have chosen to focus on a limited set of addresses. Instead of scrutinising publicised addresses en masse¹⁰⁸, I have decided to concentrate on addresses that (1) concerned issues parliament deliberated on and (2)

¹⁰⁵ The inclusion of instructions may appear unconventional, especially from an international perspective. In numerous political cultures such documents were not considered as petitions at all; being commonly understood as (private) letters rather than petitions. But the English tradition of instructing, I argue, differs from those on the continent. It is true that their status in Britain, too, remained unofficial; being, at least in principle, informal correspondence. But in practice instructions were used in rather similar ways as petitions, at least the ones studied in this thesis. As demonstrated in Chapters 1.1 (Conundrums of Representation) and 2.1 (Introduction to Petitions), the studied instructions tended to share the same basic sections as petitions to parliament and addresses to the Throne. Petitioners and their supporters also tended to consider them as part of the same process. As petitions to parliament (and the studied addresses), instructions were used to influence the conduct of members of parliament, although in a more exclusive manner.

¹⁰⁶ Philip Loft has demonstrated that the House of Lords alone received almost 4,000 petitions between 1688 and 1720. Loft 2016, 2. See also Innes 2005, 118; Hoppit & Innes 1997. Mark Knights, on the other hand, has estimated that 'over 5,000 addresses were presented between 1679 and 1716 to the crown on public, non-legislative matters'. Knights 2005, 116 - 118. It is difficult to determine the exact number of petitions submitted to both parliament and members of parliament, but it is more than improbable that instructions to individual members of parliament reached such scales during the eighteenth century.

¹⁰⁷ The differences and similarities of the different sub-genres of petitions are further elaborated in Chapters 1.1 (Conundrums of Representation) and 2.1 (Introduction to Petitions). Steve Poole has argued that the right to petition (and approach) the King was closely associated with the fact that 'the divine side of monarchy had once found full expression in 'the royal touch', the practice of curing scrofula by the laying on of royal hands'. Even if in theory 'abandoned by the secular Hanoverians ... [.] the practice survived through the process of petitioning for redress'. He has suggested that 'the 1689 Bill of Rights replaced the superstitious intercession of the touch with the 'rational' intercession of the petition'; 'in its popularly understood form as a right to approach the body of the king in person, the petition, and the readiness of the king to respond, became the royal touch of the secular proto-modern state'. What those petitioning the King wanted was, according to Poole, 'to be taken seriously and to receive a reply'. Poole 2000, 26 - 27, see also 28 - 42 and Dabhoiwala 2017, 129 - 131.

¹⁰⁸ If addresses would be studied in general, it would certainly influence the quantitative conclusions of this thesis. Whereas it focuses on the addresses that petitioners used to influence the conduct of parliament and members of parliament, often being more controversial than addresses in general, most eighteenth-century addresses tended to serve different purposes. This is not to say that addresses in general would

addresses that became used to pressure parliament and representatives to act as petitioners desired¹⁰⁹. Most of the studied addresses occurred on three occasions: 1756, 1769 - 1770, and 1775 - 1776. The loss of Minorca generated copious addresses to the Throne in 1756; the petitioners endeavouring to increase the pressure on parliament to punish those responsible for the disaster. In 1769 - 1770, addresses became used to criticise parliament and its decision to bar John Wilkes from representing Middlesex. In order to solve the crisis, petitioners urged the King to intervene - to dismiss his ministers and dissolve the parliament. During the American crisis in 1775 - 1776, on the other hand, addresses became used to both support and criticise the conduct of the administration. Although submitted to the Throne, petitioners used such addresses to influence the conduct of parliament.¹¹⁰

The decision to focus on parliament, members of parliament, and controversies concerning parliament is, in a similar manner as the decision to concentrate on publicised petitions, both practical and principled. First, most of the publicised petitions studied in this thesis are addressed to either parliament or members of parliament. Of the petitions studied in this thesis, 222 are addressed to members of parliament, 74 to the House of Commons, and six to the House of Lords (in contrast to the 167 petitions addressed to the Throne). Second, the disputes and conundrums of representation are most pronounced in the case of parliament and the House of Commons in particular. Parliament gained its right to legislate from the electorate; constituencies elected their representatives to the House of Commons, thus giving their consent to the House to act on behalf of them. However, although representatives gained their seats from the people out-of-doors, electors could neither command nor demand favours from them. Once elected to parliament, representatives became independent. With that said, the absence of the imperative mandate did not prevent petitioners from attempting to command their representatives, as the petitions discussed in this thesis demonstrate. This tension distinguishes petitions to the House of Commons and members of parliament from the those to the Throne (and, in some sense, the House

be uninteresting from a scholarly perspective; on the contrary. But in order to understand how representation was negotiated in practice, this thesis focuses on a rather specific set of addresses.

¹⁰⁹ Thus excluding generic addresses on royal marriages and births, military victories, and other commemorative addresses. Although potentially interesting, such addresses served different purposes than those studied in this thesis.

¹¹⁰ Such addresses being the most common form of submitted petitions during the reign of George III, as demonstrated in Figure 1 (Incidence of Different Forms of Petitions, 1721 - 1776). Although studying addresses to the Throne, this thesis does not focus on the representative role of the King as such. Despite being unelected, Kings can also be understood as representatives (of some sort); often seen to symbolise (and thus represent) their realms. In this sense their representative character resemble that of ambassadors; representing their respective nations, but in a rather different sense than those elected to parliament. This thesis focus on representation in the parliamentary sense of the concept. As earlier noted, the studied addresses are studied due to their function. Instead of studying addresses as such, this thesis focuses on addresses used to influence the conduct of parliament. Whether used to request the King to dissolve the parliament or submitted to increase the pressure on members of parliament in a more indirect manner, the studied addresses were specifically used to influence the conduct of elected representatives.

of Lords). Such an emphasis enables, in both practical and principled terms, a focus on the most urgent questions, debates, and controversies regarding representation.

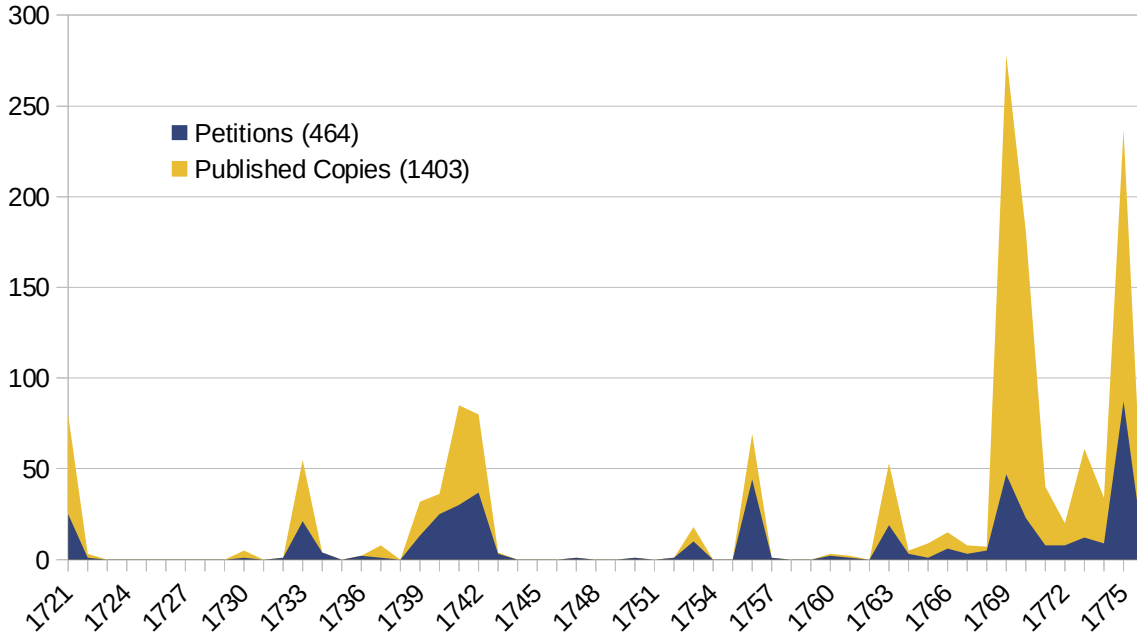


Figure 2 Incidence of Petitions and Published Copies, 1721-1776.

The focus on publicised petitions means that the studied petitions are clustered in both temporal and spatial terms, as demonstrated in Figure 2 and Map 1. In the temporal sense, the focus has translated into an emphasis on eight major crises (1721, 1733, 1739 - 1742, 1753, 1756, 1763, 1769 - 1771, 1775 - 1776), discussed in detail in Chapter 2.2 (English Tradition of Petitioning). Of the 464 petitions studied in the thesis, 397 (86 per cent) were submitted during these crises, ranging from 10 petitions in 1753 to 105 in 1739 - 1742. The concentration is also evident in the case of published copies. Of the 1,453 published copies, 1,258 (87 per cent) occurred during the crises. The concentration of publicised petitions is a consequence of the reactive character of the petitions. Even though petitioners, and the people out-of-doors in general, participated in national politics more than is often assumed, their participation remained sporadic. Most of them used petitions to oppose proposed duties, as in 1733 and 1763; enacted legislation, as in 1753; and the conduct of either parliament or the administration, as in 1739 - 1742 and 1769 - 1771. Others used petitions to address different sorts of grievances. In 1721, petitioners urged parliament to alleviate the grievances of those suffering from the South Sea Bubble, and in 1756 to enquire the causes behind the loss of Minorca. In 1775 - 1776, on the other hand, petitioners reacted to both the harsh measures on the colonies and the colonists' refusal to recognise parliament and its decisions. In both cases, petitioners reacted to the outcomes of spe-

cific decisions and events. Instead of being active actors in the sense of parliamentarians, petitioners participated in national politics on sporadic basis and in most cases to oppose proposed measures¹¹¹.

In addition to the temporal clusters, the studied petitions also formed spatial clusters. Such clusters are recognisable on at least three different levels. First, the preponderance of the studied petitions are from England. Of the 439 known locations actors submitted petitions from¹¹², 385 are located in England (87.7 per cent). The contrast to Wales (16 petitions and 3.6 per cent) and Scotland (38 petitions and 8.7 per cent) is more than evident. The contrast can be, at least up to a certain point, explained by the uneven distribution of population across Britain, the population of England being 5.8 million and that of Scotland 1.3 million in 1750 - 1751¹¹³. The population of Wales, on the other hand, stood at 0.7 million around the same time¹¹⁴, the total population of Britain thus being around 7.8 million at the start of the 1750s. This means that the population of England constituted 74.4 per cent of the British population, the Welsh share standing at nine per cent and the Scottish at 16.7 per cent. The dominance of England is also evident in the case of constituencies and representatives. Of the 314 constituencies, 245 were located in England (78 per cent), returning 489 of the 558 members of parliament (87.6 per cent). Due to being single-seat constituencies, the 24 Welsh (7.6 per cent) and 45 Scottish (14.3 per cent) constituencies elected but 4.3 (24) and 8.1 per cent (45) of the total number of representatives, respectively.¹¹⁵ Regardless of these factors, it appears that England is still slightly over-represented. Its share of the known locations is 17.9 and 12.4 per cent higher than its share of the population and constituencies¹¹⁶. Scotland and Wales, on the other hand, remain statistically under-represented; Wales by 60 and 52.6 per cent and Scotland by 47.9 and 39.2 per cent.

¹¹¹ Often resembling what Michael Mullett has conceptualised as popular traditionalism, being 'a mixture of acceptance of traditional hierarchy, deference, xenophobia, intense localism along with neighbourly solidarity, a sense of natural justice, royalism, and the economic conservatism of maintaining restrictive practices and protective prices'. Mullett 1987, 130. H.T. Dickinson has similarly noted that 'although the common people believed that they were free men, not slaves, they were usually on the defensive', engaging 'in direct collective action in order to protect their traditional rights and to preserve their established customs'. Dickinson 1984, 61 - 62, see also Dickinson 1984, 217 - 218. See also O'Gorman 2006, 121.

¹¹² Not all petitioners revealed or explicitly emphasised the location their petitions were submitted from, something that is most evident in the case of mercantile petitions. It is more than likely that most of them were submitted from London, but their location is still counted as unknown in this thesis.

¹¹³ Schofield 1994, 61, 64, 93. For estimates on Scottish petitions to Westminster parliament, see, for instance, Loft 2019a, 360.

¹¹⁴ O'Gorman 2006, 322.

¹¹⁵ HoP/Constituencies 1715 - 1754.

¹¹⁶ Although closely resembling the share of known locations, the comparison to the share of representatives is misleading for three specific reasons. First, the vast majority of the English constituencies differed from those in Wales and Scotland. Whereas English constituencies usually elected two representatives, those in Wales and Scotland elected but one. Second, the English constituencies usually submitted their instructions to both of their representatives. Although counted as one petition, the English instructions addressed twice the amount of representatives than the Welsh and

Second, the spatial concentration is also evident in the case of counties. A number of English counties formed the four most significant of such clusters, as demonstrated in *Illustration 1*¹¹⁷. The first of the four clusters is located around Yorkshire, the most active county in submitting petitions. Of the 24 petitions from Yorkshire, 11 arrived from the county itself and six from York¹¹⁸. Lancashire (15) and Nottinghamshire (12), too, submitted notable amounts of petitions during the studied period. Second, a significant amount of petitions arrived from mid-west England; Staffordshire submitting 13, Warwickshire 14, Herefordshire 12, and Worcestershire eight petitions in 1721 - 1776. Around 27.7 per cent of the petitions (13) were submitted by the counties themselves; most petitions being submitted from cities, boroughs, and other localities (34). The most notable of such localities were Lichfield (four), Hereford (four), Worcester (five), and Coventry (nine). The third cluster, on the other hand, is located in south-west England. Devon and Gloucestershire both submitted 21 petitions, Somerset 19, and Wiltshire and Cornwall both eight. Actors in Devon (eight), Somerset (seven), and Cornwall (four) were particularly active in submitting county-wide petitions. Fourth, counties around London submitted a significant share of the studied petitions: Middlesex (22), Kent (15), Surrey (13), and Essex (nine). The numbers of Middlesex and Surrey were certainly influenced by petitions from Westminster (12) and Southwark (10). The scale of petitions from Middlesex was also influenced by the Wilkite controversies, the county submitting 12 of the 22 petitions in 1768 - 1770.

Third, individual cities, boroughs, and other localities also formed clusters. Such settlements submitted 285 petitions in total, a considerable amount if compared to the 132 from counties, 44 from mercantile meetings, and four from universities and religious communities¹¹⁹. By far the most industrious submitter of petitions was London, the origin (and co-origin¹²⁰) of 59 petitions, constituting 13.4 per cent of the known locations petitions were submitted from¹²¹. Cities and

Scottish ones. Third, a significant amount of petitions was submitted to other instances (King, parliament) than individual representatives. In such cases, the share of representatives is irrelevant.

¹¹⁷ *Illustration 1* presents all the known locations petitions were submitted from by their counties, whether being submitted from counties, cities, boroughs, or other localities. London, however, is listed separately as the city was not part of any of the surrounding counties. Both *Illustration 1* and *Illustration 2* are based on data and map templates provided by the *Historic Counties Trust*.

¹¹⁸ The rest of the Yorkshire petitions being submitted from Ripon (1), Beverley (1), Halifax (1), Kingston upon Hull (3), and Leeds, Wakefield, Bradford, Birstall, Dewsbury, Calverley, Guiseley, and Otley (1). For population estimates regarding British counties, see, for instance, Wrigley 2007; Wrigley 2009.

¹¹⁹ The categorisation is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.2 (Petitioners and Subscribers).

¹²⁰ A number of petitions were submitted by actors from different counties, cities, boroughs, and other localities. One of the Wilkite petitions, for instance, was submitted by the '1247 liverymen of the city of London [and] 1292 freeholders of the county of Middlesex'. London & Middlesex 1768 (#262). See also Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126); Yorkshire & Nottinghamshire 1767 (#257); Yorkshire 1768 (#258); London & Westminster 1774 (#362); London & Westminster 1774 (#363); Wiltshire 1775 (#389).

¹²¹ Although by far the most common origin of petitions, London's share of the studied petitions is, in fact, rather modest. Philip Loft, for instance, has pointed out that around 20 per cent of the 330 'large responsive petitions' submitted to the House of Lords in 1689 - 1720 were submitted from London. Loft 2016, 8.

boroughs around London, too, submitted numerous petitions; 12 arriving from Westminster and 10 from Southwark. Besides being the economic and political centre of Britain, London and its surrounding areas were also exceptionally populous. In 1750 London already had a population of 675,000¹²², constituting around 11.6 per cent of the total English population and around 8.7 per cent of the total British population. Together with Westminster and Southwark¹²³, London constituted a more than considerable part of the population. Similar clusters also occurred outside London. In mid-west England, the most notable sources of petitions were Hereford (four), Coventry (nine), Worcester (five), and Lichfield (four)¹²⁴. In the south-west, on the other hand, petitions were submitted from Bristol (12 petitions, population 50,000), Exeter (five petitions, population 16,000), and Taunton (four petitions)¹²⁵. Significant clusters also occurred in Scotland and northern England; four petitions being submitted from Edinburgh (65,000¹²⁶), five from Newcastle upon Tyne (29,000), six from York (11,000), seven from Liverpool (22,000), and 9 from Nottingham (12,000)¹²⁷. Most of such clusters were regional centres; besides being populous, such centres also often possessed administrative functions. However, although most of the local clusters were of considerable importance due to their population, petitioning should not be reduced to such a factor alone. Birmingham and Manchester, for instance, submitted but two petitions each despite having around 24,000 and 18,000 inhabitants, respectively¹²⁸. Petitioning was also influenced by administrative functions, the right to elect members of parliament, conflicts and partisan struggles, and local actors and organisations¹²⁹.

¹²² The population estimates are based on 1750 unless otherwise mentioned. Wrigley 1990, 42. Frank O’Gorman has even argued that London at the time of the Glorious Revolution provides an example of ‘concentration of population unmatched anywhere in Europe’. O’Gorman 2006, 1.

¹²³ Reading (5,000 to 5,500 inhabitants during the 1660s and 1670s) and St Albans, both of them close to London, submitted four petitions each during the period. On the east coast, on the other hand, Canterbury (around 7,500 inhabitants in 1676) submitted seven petitions and Colchester (around 9,500 inhabitants in 1670) four petitions. Chalklin 1974, 34; Chalklin 2000, 57.

¹²⁴ Hereford having 5,600 (in 1757), Coventry 13,000, Worcester 10,000, and Lichfield 3,000 (in 1695) inhabitants. Wrigley 1990, 42; Chalklin 1974, 8, 13, 30.

¹²⁵ Wrigley 1990, 42.

¹²⁶ According to Jeremy Black, Edinburgh ‘and its environs had about 65,000 people’ by the mid-century. Black 2008, 117.

¹²⁷ Wrigley 1990, 42.

¹²⁸ Wrigley 42. Although their combined population was 3.2 times higher, Birmingham and Manchester submitted less than half of the amount of petitions from Coventry. Unlike Coventry, having returned representatives to parliament since 1295, Birmingham and Manchester became constituencies as late as in 1832. Philip Loft has, however, noted that between 1688 and 1788, ‘150 responsive petitions’ to parliament were submitted from Manchester. Loft 2019a, 358.

¹²⁹ H.T. Dickinson has argued that ‘in about ninety boroughs there were signs of party organisation by the late eighteenth century. In a dozen major boroughs, including London, Westminster, Bristol, Leicester, Nottingham and York, party involvement with the voters was very strong.’ He also notes that ‘in another 19 boroughs, including Norwich, Coventry, Oxford, Worcester, Maidstone, and Newcastle upon Tyne, it was significant’. Dickinson 1994, 53 - 54. For a detailed analysis of the actors and organisations in Newcastle upon Tyne and York, see, for instance, Wilson 1998.

Regardless of the clusters, the studied petitions are, more or less, evenly distributed in both temporal and spatial terms. The temporal distribution of petitions is, of course, crisis-centered and in this sense uneven. A clear majority of the studied petitions were submitted and published during relatively short periods, as demonstrated in Figure 2. The disparities regarding the number of petitions during different crises is also evident, 26 (83 copies) being submitted during the 1720s and 155 (590 copies) during the 1770s. Despite the temporal concentration, petitioning clusters occurred during each of the studied decades. This variation, combined with the mass of petitions, enables scholars to recognise and understand the changes and continuities in the patterns of petitioning. Though less pronounced than the temporal ones, the existence of spatial clusters, too, is more than evident. In spatial terms, the dominance of England is pronounced (though so is its share of population, constituencies, and representatives). Certain counties and cities submitted significantly more petitions than others, but the clusters are, in general, scattered around Britain (and England in particular), as demonstrated in *Illustration 1* and *Illustration 2*. Although London and the cities and boroughs around it form by far the strongest of the spatial clusters, the total share of studied petitions from the area is, in fact, relatively modest. To conclude, the studied petitions provide scholars an interesting and, more or less, representative overview of petitions and petitioning practices in eighteenth-century Britain. Besides being from different decades, the petitions also represent a significant share of Britain in spatial terms.

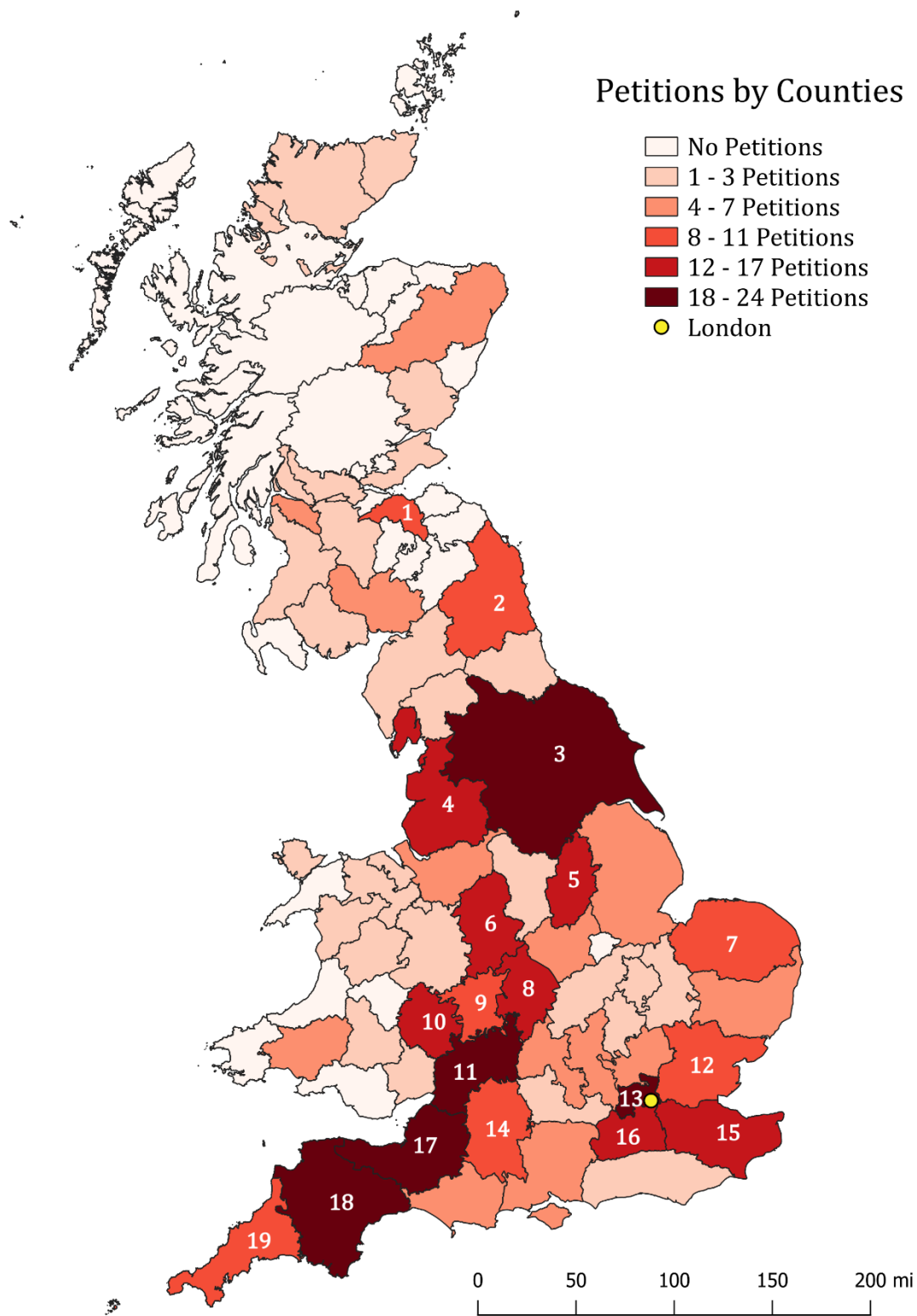


Illustration 1 Petitions by Counties, 1721 - 1776. 1 Edinburghshire, 2 Northumberland, 3 Yorkshire, 4 Lancashire, 5 Nottinghamshire, 6 Staffordshire, 7 Norfolk, 8 Warwickshire, 9 Worcestershire, 10 Herefordshire, 11 Gloucestershire, 12 Essex, 13 Middlesex, 14 Wiltshire, 15 Kent, 16 Surrey, 17 Somerset, 18 Devon, 19 Cornwall.

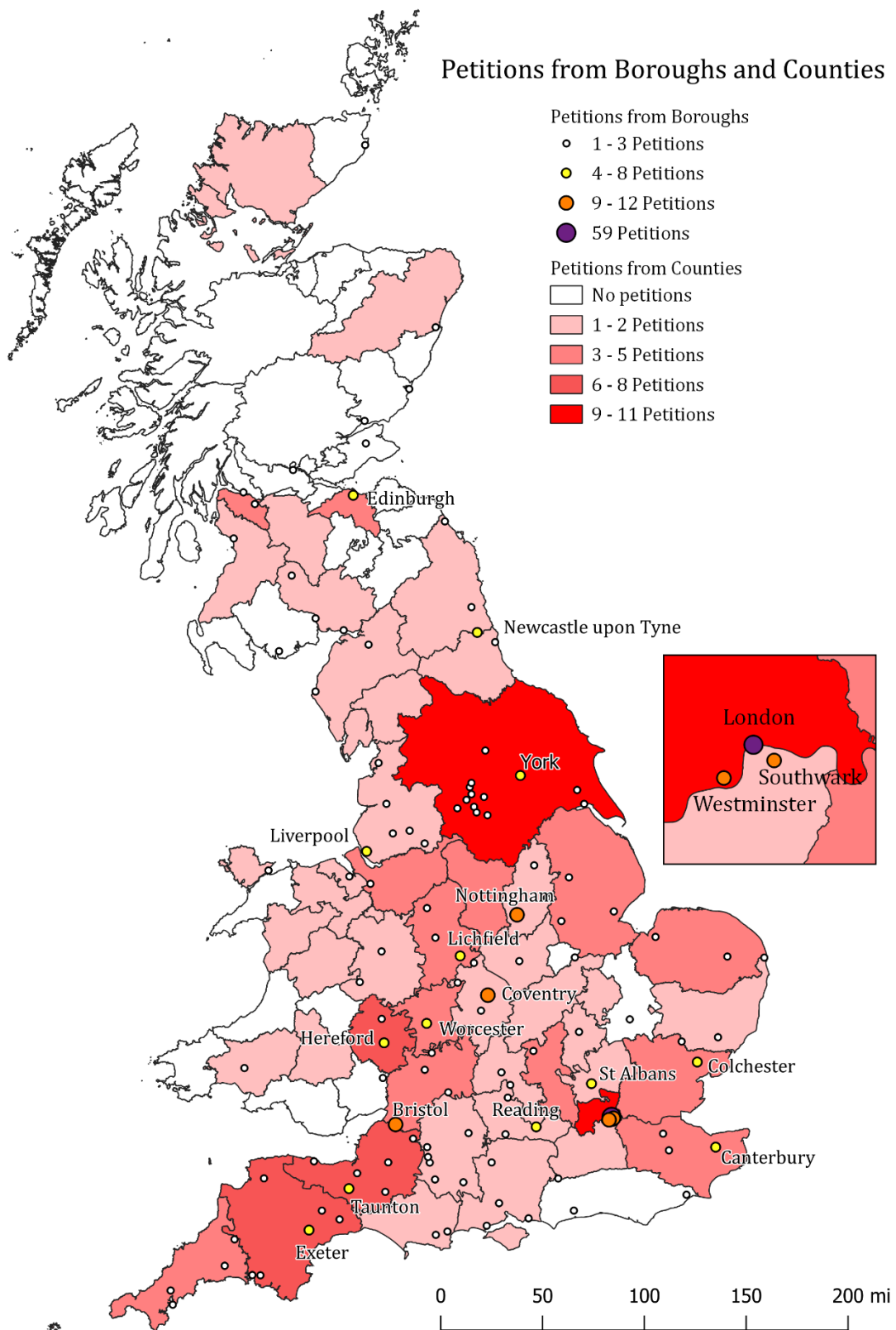


Illustration 2 Petitions by Location, 1721 - 1776.

1.4.2 Parliament, Papers, and Pamphlets

Parliament, papers, and pamphlets form the second part of the sources. Such sources have a dualistic function in the thesis. First, pamphlets and published papers are used to locate copies of petitions. Second, parliament, pamphlets, and the press are used to understand perceptions of petitions (and, thus, representation), as demonstrated in this sub-chapter¹³⁰. This sub-chapter describes the different forms of sources and discusses the features and peculiarities that defined them. It contemplates the features that united and differed debates in parliament, pamphlets, and the press from each other and the reasons such documents provide the most suitable combination of sources to understand petitioners' and their contemporaries' perceptions on representation. Publicness is the most significant feature the different forms of sources share; even debates in parliament, confidential in principle, became semi-public through the reports and accounts circulated in the press.

Debates in parliament constitute one of the most important sources for scholars interested in language and the processes of legitimation. The decision to use such debates is apparent both because of the thesis' focus on representation and the use of petitions as the main corpus of sources. First, the tensions and conundrums of representation are most evident in the case of parliament; constituents elected the members of parliament, but could neither direct their conduct nor command the House of Commons. It is unsurprising that such a combination produced recurring disputes on the character of representation. Second, most of the petitions studied in the thesis are addressed to either parliament or members of parliament. Even those submitted to the Throne concerned affairs and controversies on which parliament deliberated, as earlier demonstrated. Debates in parliament also provide an ideal corpus of sources for those interested in the discursive aspects of the past. Parliaments, and the British parliament in particular, have functioned as the most important decision-making institutions in numerous political cultures for centuries. Their most distinctive feature is the focus on language. In contrast to several other institutions, parliaments have embraced the salience of debate and dissensus. Even the concept of parliament derives from the Italian *parlare* and the French *parler*, referring to speaking¹³¹. The emphasis on language, regular debates, and the prestigious status of the institution mean that the debates in parliament form one of the most prominent corpora of sources for those endeavouring to understand discursive legitimation and representation.¹³²

¹³⁰ Debates in parliament, pamphlets, and the press are used to understand both those who defended and criticised the use of petitions. Those defending petitioning are mostly discussed in Chapters 3, 4, and 5. Actors criticising petitions and petitioners, on the other hand, are discussed in detail in Chapter 6. Whereas pro-petition argumentation usually resembles the argumentation in petitions, their critics' argumentation is discussed in a more detailed manner to give a broader picture of the different perspectives. But although used to contextualise petitioners' argumentation, it is important to remember that the primary focus of this thesis is on the actual petitions.

¹³¹ Ihalainen, Ilie & Palonen 2016, 1, 11; Ihalainen & Palonen 2009, 6.

¹³² Ihalainen, Ilie, & Palonen 2016; Ihalainen & Palonen 2009.

Because of the fire that consumed parliament in 1834, scholars interested in the debates and proceedings of the House have mostly been forced to use second-hand reports. Most of such reports appeared in pamphlets, periodicals, and magazines. But as parliament often regarded such reports as a challenge on its privileges, accounts of the debates and proceedings continued to cause controversies throughout the period from 1721 to 1776.¹³³ In 1728 and 1729, parliament disciplined the printer of the *Gloucester Journal* and the authors of a smaller London publication, and in 1738, it reasserted its privilege to control the publication of debates and proceedings. Measures against printers intensified after parliament reasserted its privilege again in 1762, the House prosecuting and punishing printers in 1764, 1765, 1767, and 1768.¹³⁴ However, because of the political fluctuation, Britain having seven short-lived ministries in 1760 - 1770, and the burgeoning press, parliament's control over the publication of its debates started to crumble during the 1760s, collapsing in 1771¹³⁵. The failure to punish the printers of eight papers in 1771, three of them refusing to attend parliament to hear the charges¹³⁶, forced the House of Commons to end the campaign to suppress the publication of its debates. After the Printers' Case, as the incident is often referred to as, reports on debates and proceedings became a common feature in the press.¹³⁷

Regardless of the counter-measures against printers, an abundance of reports became published even before the Printers' Case. Pamphlets, papers, and magazines published end-of-session reports at least since the 1720s, often circulated in both administration and opposition papers 'as part of their propaganda campaigns'¹³⁸. Even the controversial in-session reports became available to the reading public before the *Printers' Case*, although on sporadic basis.¹³⁹ Printers and editors often used pro forma disguises to avoid prosecution. Printers could publish debates but use fillets to censor the names of the debaters. Pamphleteers and the printers of dailies, in particular, used such means to avoid penalties and forfeitures. Others published debates in the form of allegories, as tales from foreign and fictitious countries. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, supporting the opposition during the 1730s and 1740s, published debates as reports from the *Senate of Lilliput*. Samuel Johnson, the editor of the section from 1741 to 1743¹⁴⁰, used ana-

¹³³ Although end-of-session summaries became common already during the 1720s, the House continued to enforce the ban on in-session reports and detailed accounts on debates. Harris 1987, 169 - 173; Harris 1984, 205 - 207; Harris 1996, 32 - 33; Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 32; Ihalainen 2016, 30; Black 2001, 129 - 130.

¹³⁴ Harris 1996, 32 - 33; Ihalainen 2010, 52 - 54; Black 2001, 129 - 130; Thomas 1996, 125 - 140.

¹³⁵ Black 2001, 127 - 130; Harris 1996, 40 - 41.

¹³⁶ For petitions on the subject, see London 1771 (#335); Stafford 1771 (#338); Carmarthenshire 1771 (#339); Sunderland 1771 (#340).

¹³⁷ Harris 1996, 40 - 41; Black 2001, 129 - 139; Barker 1998, 36; Black 2008, 219 - 222; Ihalainen 2016, 30; Ihalainen & Palonen 2009, 12 - 13; Jupp 2006, 225 - 227; Ihalainen 2010, 35 - 36; Langford 1992, 705 - 706; Jupp 2006, 206 - 207; Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 43 - 44.

¹³⁸ Harris 1987, 169 - 173.

¹³⁹ Harris 1984, 205 - 207; Harris 1987, 169 - 173; Harris 1996, 32 - 33; Ihalainen & Seaward 2016, 32.

¹⁴⁰ Hoover 1953, 23 - 29.

grams, such as Gega (Thomas Gage), Adonbing (Lord Abingdon), and Golphindo (Lord Godolphin), and place names from *Gulliver's Travels*; *Mildendo* being a reference to London and *Blefuscu* to France. The *London Magazine*, a pro-administration paper, and the *Scots Magazine*, a Scottish magazine focused on religion, politics, entertainment, and public affairs, on the other hand, published reports on the debates of the *Political Club* - a disguised but evident reference to the parliament. Both of them used latinised names of the members of parliament, *M. Valerius Corvus* being Sir John Barnard and *T. Quintius* Lord Talbot. Such reports became later compiled into more or less coherent collections¹⁴¹.

Besides containing reports on debates in parliament, the press also published an abundance of other sorts of useful material. Material from the press constitute one of the most used group of sources in studies on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Periodicals, from dailies to monthlies, are often used to scrutinise subjects such as popular politics¹⁴². Scholars interested in post-1695 politics have, indeed, good reasons to use press material as sources. The lapsing of the Licensing Order in 1695, de facto abolishing pre-publication censorship, revolutionised the print culture, the scale of published papers increasing at unprecedented speed during the subsequent decades. The amount of stamped paper increased from 2.5 million in 1713 to 7.3 million in 1750, 9.4 million in 1760, 12.6 million in 1775, and 14 million in 1780.¹⁴³ The rise of the press is most evident in the capital. London gained its first periodical in 1702 and in 1712 some 20 regular single-leaf papers appeared in the capital.¹⁴⁴ Because of its distinctive position, the capital being both the political and economic centre of Britain, the London press differed from other papers. Besides being predominant in terms of scale, the London papers also constitute the most diverse, specialised, and influential part of the press. The political press, in particular, evolved into a strenuous field of print culture¹⁴⁵.

The printing revolution also had an impact on Britain outside of London. However, despite certain cities gaining their first periodicals around the same time as London, the provincial press began to evolve later than that of the capital. Due to the improvement of turnpikes and postal services, and the increasing influence of London papers, the 1720s signified a turning point of a sort; some 24 provincial papers appeared in 1723, 42 during the first half of the 1740s, 32 in 1753, 35 - 40 in 1760, and 50 in 1782. The number of professional printers, too, started to increase in the provinces during the 1720s, though from a modest base

¹⁴¹ As in the case of *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England*, the main corpus of parliamentary debates used in this thesis.

¹⁴² See, for instance, Wilson 1998; Dickinson 1994.

¹⁴³ Black 2001, 8 - 9, 73, 135 - 136; Harris 1996, 9 - 10, 12, 26 - 27, 51; Harris 1984, 196 - 197; O'Gorman 2006, 127 - 129; Downie 1987, 114 - 117. For earlier developments, see Knights 2005, 226 - 227; Wiles 1965, 13 - 14.

¹⁴⁴ Harris 1987, 19 - 20, 113; Black 2008, 219 - 222; Wilson 1998, 30.

¹⁴⁵ The first issue of Nicholas Amhurst's the *Craftsman* was published in 1726 whereas the first monthlies appeared in the 1730s; the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1731 and the *London Magazine* in 1732. Harris 1984, 193, 205 - 207; Black 2001, 10 - 12; Brewer 1976, 146 - 147, 157 - 158; O'Gorman 2006, 127 - 129; Wilson 1998, 30.

of 30 printers in 1720.¹⁴⁶ Instead of being separate entities, the London and provincial papers tended to interact. Provincial papers could, for instance, re-publish content from London papers.¹⁴⁷ Despite often being less ambitious than some of the London papers, such as the *Craftsman*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and the *London Journal*, provincial papers had other important functions. First, such papers intermediated information from the capital to the provinces, strengthening the national print culture and engaging the reading publics throughout Britain. Second, provincial papers could be used to advertise meetings and other events¹⁴⁸, something that made it easier to debate and organise petitions outside London and other cities. Provincial papers also used to be the firsts to publish local petitions.

Pamphlets, too, constitute a distinctive group of sources. Pamphlets contained both polemical comments and observations on high politics, often discussing the decisions of parliament and administration. Periodicals and pamphlets shared several features; both concentrating on current topics and often addressing more popular audiences. However, although used to discuss the same issues as parliament and the press, pamphlets differed from the reports on the speeches in parliament and commentaries published in periodicals. The main difference is a temporal one. Parliamentarians debated according the schedules of parliament, and periodicals published commentaries on regular basis, thus providing a continuous transmission of information. Pamphlets, on the other hand, became published on ad hoc basis. This made them the preferred form of publication prior to the lapsing of the Licensing Order in 1695.¹⁴⁹ Even though their importance decreased after 1695, pamphlets as a genre continued to flourish. Pamphlets provided petitioners' contemporaries a de-centralised form of publication, one that could be used impromptu and protected authors from repercussions. The contrast to periodicals is evident. The *Gentleman's Magazine*, for instance, used an illustration of its headquarters at St John's Gate, the building in which the magazine was printed, sold, and, at times, authored, on its cover page.

The ad hoc character of pamphlets and their authors' use of pen names can be seen as both strengths and challenges¹⁵⁰. It can be argued that such features

¹⁴⁶ Black 2001, 8 - 9, 110 - 111; Jupp 2006, 95 - 98; Brewer 1976, 158 - 159; O'Gorman 2006, 127 - 129; Wiles 1965, 14 - 24. The functions of the provincial papers differed from those of the press in London, though the precise nature of their differences remain a matter of debate. Jeremy Black has argued that the 'early provincial press was very important in distributing metropolitan news and news of foreign affairs', mainly consisting 'of material pirated from the London press'. This has led Black to conclude that the provincial press 'in its first flush was actually spreading metropolitan opinion, rather than reflecting local views'. Black 2008, 220 - 222, see also Black 2001, 115 - 118. Hannah Barker, on the other hand, has argued that 'provincial papers provided a uniquely local view of politics and events, for readerships which were - on the whole - more homogeneous than in the capital'. Barker 1998, 3 - 5.

¹⁴⁷ London papers, too, could re-publish material from provincial papers; something that is more than evident in the case of provincial petitions re-published in London papers.

¹⁴⁸ Black 2001, 117 - 118.

¹⁴⁹ Black 2008, 219 - 220; Harris 1996, 4, 39; Black 2001, 9, 36.

¹⁵⁰ Pamphleteers used such means to disguise their identity, at least in the case of pamphlets concerning parliamentary affairs. But pamphleteers could also use their real

make it more difficult to understand their true intentions. However, the use of pen names and impromptu publications also enabled authors to publish controversial tracts and disclose confidential information. Pamphlets provided members of parliament, and those in the opposition in particular, a method to inform the public out-of-doors of projected bills and schemes. Such publications could also be used to educate people out-of-doors on the arguments that became used in the debates of the House of Commons - pro et contra, depending on the pamphleteers' intentions. In that sense, pamphlets enabled actors to mobilise opposition, and opposition to opposition, outside parliament. The press could also be used to organise opposition out-of-doors, as earlier demonstrated, but pamphlets provided authors, and other actors, a more elaborate platform to do so. Commentaries in periodicals ranged from single columns to couple of pages, providing their audiences with only short summaries and perspectives. Most pamphlets, on the other hand, ranged from 10 to over 100 pages, enabling the authors to discuss their arguments in detail. This is more than evident in the case of debates on petitions. Pamphlets constitute the most important source of criticism on petitions, as demonstrated in Chapter 6 (Protecting Parliament and the Constitution: the Critics of Petitions and Petitioning). Even though sometimes regarded as paid propaganda, pro-administration pamphleteers often presented coherent and considerate arguments.

The increasing amount of published pamphlets and papers, as well as reports on the debates in parliament, demonstrates the amplification of the print culture¹⁵¹. However, the multiplication of published papers is but one part of the changing culture of politics. In addition to being a crucial period for printing, it also became at least as important to the consumption of such publications. Papers and pamphlets became read and circulated in public on an unprecedented scale, inspiring the reading public to deliberate on their subjects. The rise of coffee houses, and coffee-house culture, illustrates the changing patterns of politics. Besides serving coffee and other beverages, coffee houses also provided their customers pamphlets and papers. Some of them preferred to read them in private, but prints could also be read aloud.¹⁵² The coffee-house culture had its critics, too. The government of Charles II considered regulating coffee houses during the 1660s before 'issuing a proclamation for their suppression' in 1675, for the most part due to the pressure from high churchmen¹⁵³. The government soon retracted, but the scepticism regarding the coffee-house culture continued to flourish. Georgian critics continued to ridicule the so-called coffee-house politicians,

names, though this was a significantly less common practice. I have mainly used data from the *Eighteenth Century Collections Online* (ECCO) to discern the authorship of the studied pamphlets.

¹⁵¹ Mark Knights has noted that in terms of scale, the print culture started to grow after the abolition of the Star Chamber in the 1640s, gaining more momentum during the Exclusion Crisis in 1679 - 1681. Knights 2005, 15 - 18. See also O'Gorman 2006, 126 - 129; Wilson 1998, 29 - 54; Jupp 2006, 95 - 98; Dickinson 1994, 205 - 207; Black 2001, 1 - 21.

¹⁵² Knights 2005, 17 - 18, 248 - 256; Pincus 1995, 821 - 822, 833 - 834; Cowan 2004a; Cowan 2004b; Barrell 2004.

¹⁵³ Pincus 1995, 822 - 823, 831; Cowan 2004a, 21 - 22, 29 - 44.

often describing them as frivolous actors, encouraging distrust and sedition. Instead of promoting the common good, as true statesmen in parliament, the coffee-house politicians became accused of ambition.¹⁵⁴ Despite the ridicule, the coffee houses continued to provide people out-of-doors a place to read and debate politics, thus promoting the interest in (semi-)public affairs.

The rise of clubs, societies, and associations also demonstrates the changing culture of politics. Such organisations began to increase and flourish during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, evolving into 'one of the most distinctive social and cultural institutions of Georgian Britain'¹⁵⁵. Clubs, societies, and associations represented a diverse set of interests, ranging from masonic and pseudo-masonic orders to debating and gambling clubs. Religious groups used such bodies to further their causes and to provide assistance to the poor and unfortunate. Merchants and traders, too, established societies and lobbies to defend their interests.¹⁵⁶ However, it is the rise of political clubs, societies, and associations that, at least from the perspective of this thesis, constitutes one of the most interesting trajectories of the changing political culture. Because of annual parliaments, reduction of regulation, and the rise of parties and factions, the scale and importance of political clubs soared after the Glorious Revolution.¹⁵⁷ Some of them had close ties to parties and other groups in parliament. Proponents of the administration, for instance, favoured the Kit-Cat Club, established around 1699; its membership containing numerous prime ministers and pro-administration parliamentarians¹⁵⁸. Tories, on the other hand, favoured the October Club and the Cocoa Tree Club¹⁵⁹. However, the greater part of the clubs, societies, and associations that focused on politics remained both informal and independent. Although their influence and impact on parliament remain a matter of debate, the rise of political clubs, societies, and associations encouraged an increasing number of citizens to participate in the spheres of politics.

¹⁵⁴ Knights 2005, 19, see also Pincus 1995, 825, 827 - 830; Cowan 2004b, 353 - 356.

¹⁵⁵ He has further noted that even if their precise number is difficult to determine, 'there may have been up to 25,000 different clubs and societies meeting in the English-speaking world' during the eighteenth century. Clark 2000b, 2. Kathleen Wilson, too, has emphasised the importance of clubs and societies. She has argued that 'the critical advances in population, communications and publishing in this period [1715 - 1785] were supplemented by a new universe of associational activities undertaken by local residents to enhance the urban environment that had in themselves political implications'. Wilson 54, see also 55 - 73.

¹⁵⁶ Clark 2000b, 2, 26, 58 - 60, 128 - 134; Wilson 1998, 61 - 63. For the means mercantile lobbies used to influence decision-making processes, see Langford 1975, 58 - 61, 148, 151 - 152; Dickinson 1994, 60 - 81; Jupp 2006, 91 - 92; Wilson 1998, 124 - 127, 129 - 132, 163 - 165; Dickinson 1984, 52 - 53; O'Gorman 2006, 117; Black 2008, 220.

¹⁵⁷ Clark 2000b, 61 - 62, 73 - 74; Wilson 1998, 63 - 73. The impact of clubs and societies had on petitioning in 1721 - 1776 is most explicit in the case of Wilkite petitions and the SSBR, the society being used to organise and co-ordinate the petitioning campaigns in favour of Wilkes across Britain. Similar organisational structures were later used by anti-slavery and Chartist petitioners.

¹⁵⁸ Clark 2000b, 61 - 62, 73.

¹⁵⁹ Clark 2000b, 62; O'Gorman 2006, 149. Linday Colley has, however, noted that 'with the exception of the October Club, which was the creation of a group of dissident backbenchers and not a supervised instrument for party control, Augustan toryism had lacked an effective socio-political club'. Colley 1982, 71.

2 PETITIONS AND PETITIONING: PRACTICES, PROCEDURES, AND PREVIOUS STUDIES

The second chapter focuses on describing the essence of petitions by examining four aspects. First, it clarifies the features that defined the genre of petitions. Chapter 2.1 (Introduction to Petitions) describes the defining features of different forms of petitions, but argues that petitions to parliament, instructions to members of parliament, and addresses to the Throne formed a consistent genre of petitions despite their differences. It also discusses the procedures that petitioners' contemporaries used to regulate them (as is also demonstrated in Chapter 6). In contrast to certain countries¹⁶⁰, the British manuals and procedures focused on the reception of petitions (in parliament) instead of determining the structure and formulations petitioners ought to use. Second, the chapter demonstrates that the petitions that are studied in this thesis belong to a much longer political tradition. In order to emphasise the continuance of the genre and practice of petitioning, Chapter 2.2 (English Tradition of Petitioning) provides a general description of the most prominent cases of petitioning from the 1640s to the 1830s (including the cases studied in this thesis). Both aspects are important in understanding the focus of the thesis. It is paramount to understand that the position of the petitioned influenced the formulations of the petition, something that is most evident in Chapters 4 and 5. It is also essential to recognise the impact of continuity. The earlier petitioning campaigns influenced the use of petitions in 1721 - 1776 and the petitions studied in this thesis, on the other hand, had an impact on the use of petitions after 1776.

In addition to describing the features that defined the different forms of petitions and the events and crises that generated bursts of petitions, the chapter also discusses earlier studies on petitions and the rationales petitioners used to

¹⁶⁰ Most notably Sweden. Martin Almbjär, who has studied Swedish supplications in 1719 - 1772, has argued that 'for a fully literate person without the necessary rhetorical and formal knowledge, a letter-writing manual would ... provided the necessary knowledge to compose a standard supplication'. He has also noted that the Swedish supplicants could also consult notaries and scribes, the use of the latter being 'not unusual'. Almbjär 2016, 120 - 122, 126.

legitimise their use of petitions. The third aspect of the chapter focuses on the premises of earlier studies on British petitions. Chapter 2.3 (Earlier Studies on Petitions) demonstrates that most of earlier studies have scrutinised petitions either from the perspective of parliament (petitions being part of the established structure of parliament) or popular politics (petitions being signals of popular discontent and demonstrations that the common people, too, participated in politics). The sub-chapter points out that most studies tend to regard petitions as demonstrations of other, often more profound trajectories. This thesis, on the other hand, focus on petitions as such and, in contrast to most studies, on the language of petitions. Fourth, the chapter focuses on the justifications petitioners used to rationalise their decisions to submit petitions. Chapter 2.4 (Rationalising Petitioning) discusses the five discursive categories I have identified from the studied petitions. The chapter demonstrates that petitioners (1) used crises to legitimise their petitions, (2) emphasised their obligation to submit petitions, (3) used petitions to inform and (4) commend the receivers of their petitions, and (5) used them to enforce the right to petition. The sub-chapter argues that in order to understand petitioners and their intentions, scholars ought to recognise petitioners' descriptions of their reasons for submitting them.

2.1 Introduction to Petitions

Petitions are common to most political cultures in Europe. During the early modern period, they were commonly used in the political cultures of Britain, France¹⁶¹, the Netherlands¹⁶², Scandinavia¹⁶³, Italy¹⁶⁴, Spain¹⁶⁵, and German-speaking countries¹⁶⁶. In most cases, the practice was of medieval origin. In England, petitions emerged during the thirteenth century, as Edward I encouraged his subjects to submit petitions to parliament. During the fourteenth century, the number of submitted petitions forced parliament to redelegate private petitions, or petitions from individuals, to other courts and to focus on petitions from entities such as guilds, shires, and corporations.¹⁶⁷ Petitions were also used as judicial appeals. Subjects could, for instance, use petitions to the House of Lords as appeals against court verdicts; though fallen into disuse under the Tudors, the practice was revived in 1621, reinstating the House of Lords as the highest court of appeal.¹⁶⁸ During the fourteenth century, petitions also gained an explicitly political function, as the House of Commons started to use them to address the Throne. Eventually, such petitions evolved into a procedure of introducing bills;

¹⁶¹ Shapiro & Markoff 2001; Cerezales 2020.

¹⁶² Oddens 2017; Janse 2019; Reinders 2011; van Nierop 2000.

¹⁶³ Paloheimo 2012; Bregnsbo 1997; Bregnsbo 2011; Almbjär 2016; Almbjär 2019; Bowie & Munck 2018.

¹⁶⁴ Nubola 2001; Rose 2012.

¹⁶⁵ Cerezales 2019.

¹⁶⁶ Würgler 1995; Kumin & Würgler 1997; Würgler 2001. See also Lipp & Krempel 2001.

¹⁶⁷ Brand 2012, 13; Given-Wilson 2012, 22 - 23; Payling 2012, 78 - 79.

¹⁶⁸ Smith 2012, 34 - 35.

petitioners used petitions to propose legislative measures and the answers of the Throne determined the structure of the acts. Since the fifteenth century, the Throne also used petitions to inform the House of Commons of propositions it was prepared to assent.¹⁶⁹

However, even if the genre of petitions became more established and consistent during the reign of Stuarts, the practice retained different functions. Petitions could be submitted to institutions such as the House of Commons, the House of Lords, and the Throne. Petitions to parliament constitute the most traditional form of petitions scrutinised in this thesis; their contribution to the debates on representation is often pronounced. Such petitions could be submitted by individual subjects, mercantile organisations, companies, and constituencies, the last-mentioned being the most common source of petitions. Actors in constituencies could, for instance, use conventional petitions to the House of Commons to promote desired legislation and declare their concerns on proposed bills on issues such as trade and regulation. Such petitions, like institutional petitions in general, tended to recognise the authority and legitimacy of the petitioned institution. Rather than demanding the parliament to act in a specific manner, petitions to the House of Commons became used to inform the House of both alleged grievances and petitioners' sentiments. Their tone was imploring rather than imperative, as is demonstrated in Chapter 5.2 (Desires, Requests, and Recommendations). Hence, at least from the perspective of representation, such petitions were seldom controversial as such.

Petitions to the Throne, often referred to as addresses, represent an alternative form of institutional petitioning. Addresses were often used to congratulate the King on royal births and military successes, thus making them particularly humble¹⁷⁰. Most of the addressing campaigns from 1640 to 1843 were, as exemplified by Mark Knights, loyal and uncontroversial (and often outstanding in terms of scale). The Throne received at least 1,044 addresses on military successes from August 1704 to December 1709 and from September 1714 to August 1716 petitioners submitted further 763 addresses to the Throne to praise the accession of George I and commemorate the suppression of the Jacobite uprising in Scotland.¹⁷¹ Loyal addresses to the Throne often outnumbered petitions to parliament and members of parliament. However, despite their often loyal nature, addresses too could be employed in non-conventional and even controversial manners. They could, for instance, be used to increase the pressure on parliament, as in the case of the Minorca crisis of 1756, to undermine the decisions of parliament, as during the American crisis in 1775 - 1776, and to denounce the legitimacy of the parliament, as during the crisis on Wilkes' seat in 1769 - 1770. Such use of addresses tended to provoke fierce controversies on the nature of representation¹⁷².

¹⁶⁹ Given-Wilson 2012, 22 - 25; Payling 2012, 78 - 79.

¹⁷⁰ Knights 2012, 59; Knights 2005, 118, 154 - 155.

¹⁷¹ Knights 2009, 39 - 40, 45 - 48; Innes 2005, 116 - 117.

¹⁷² See, for instance, Bradley 1986, 10 - 13, 37 - 38; Innes 2005, 115; Langford 1992, 521. It is, of course, evident that addresses were used in controversial ways even before the crisis on Wilkes' seat. *Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle*, for instance, had already defended such addresses during the Seven Years' War. The paper insisted in 1758 that 'the people have a right, by the constitution of our country, to petition or

Hence, the focus of this thesis is on the non-conventional addresses rather than on addresses in general, as noted in Chapter 1.4.2 (Petitions).

Petitions to parliament and addresses to the Throne represent the most legitimate forms of petitioning. In such cases, the petitioned institutions tended to recognise the petitions as legitimate, thus processing them according to established sets of procedures¹⁷³. In the case of parliament, and the House of Commons in particular, the procedural status of petitions became described in the parliamentary manuals, John Hatsell's *Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons* being the most authoritative of them. Hatsell, whose interpretation of procedures was inspired by Arthur Onslow¹⁷⁴, the speaker of the House of Commons from 1727 to 1761, recognised conventional petitions as legitimate¹⁷⁵ (with the exception of petitions on money bills¹⁷⁶). 'To receive, and hear, and consider the petitions of their fellow subjects, when presented decently, and containing no matter intentionally offensive to the House' was, according to Hatsell, 'a duty incumbent upon them, antecedent to all rules and orders that may have been instituted for their own convenience; justice and the laws of their country demand it from them.'¹⁷⁷ Similarly, Thomas Erskine May regarded the right to petition parliament as an established practice in his *A Treatise upon the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*. May, whose manual discusses the linguistic conventions of petitions¹⁷⁸ and the procedures on presenting petitions¹⁷⁹, reminded that 'the language of a petition should be respectful and temperate, and

address their Sovereign, when, and as often as they apprehend the common interest requires their application immediately to the Throne, where wisdom and justice are seated; without incurring any legal censure, and without deserving the slanderous aspersion of indecency, and of an irrational conduct'. BC/LIEP 9 - 11 October 1758, see also A Letter to a Leading Great Man 1721/16 - 17 (T69216); An Address to the Electors 1739/45 - 46 (T128373); A Letter to a Member of This New Parliament 1742/63 - 64 (T63003); Considerations on the Addresses Lately Presented to His Majesty 1756 (T161153); BC/GNDA 28 April 1763; BC/SJCBEP 26 - 28 April 1763. But since the crisis on Wilkes' seat, the support for such addresses became far more common. See, for instance, BC/GNDA 27 June 1769; BC/LC 27 - 29 June 1769; BC/NB 28 October 1769; BC/PS 12 December 1769; BC/IC 13 - 15 December 1769; BC/MJCL 11 - 14 November 1769; BC/LIEP 15 - 17 November 1769; BC/SJCBEP 14 - 16 November 1769; BC/MJCL 15 - 17 August 1771; BC/W 31 August 1771.

¹⁷³ Bradley 1986, 17.

¹⁷⁴ Palonen 2014, 40 - 42.

¹⁷⁵ See, for example Hatsell 1796 (2), 179 - 180, 193; Hatsell 1796 (3), 210 - 212.

¹⁷⁶ Hatsell considered the practice of not receiving petitions on money bills as a standing order of the House, as did authors such as Thomas Erskine May and Henry Hallam. The standing order was, most usually, legitimised by precedents from 1706 and 1713. Hatsell 1796 (3), 149 - 151, 173 - 174, 200 - 215; May 1844, 273, 305, 325 - 326; May 1912 (1), 377 - 378; Hallam 1846 (2), 436; Jupp 2006, 70. Hatsell noted, however, that 'the House ought to be particularly cautious, not to be over rigid in extending this rule beyond what the practice of their ancestors, in former times, can justify them in.' Hatsell 1796 (3), 210 - 212. The issue of petitions on money bills is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.4 (Procedural Constraints and Petitioning).

¹⁷⁷ Hatsell referred to a precedent from 1669 and approvingly cited the resolution of the House of Commons declaring petitioning 'an inherent right of every commoner of England'. Hatsell 1796 (3), 212.

¹⁷⁸ May 1844, 303 - 305.

¹⁷⁹ May 1844, 302, 305 - 308.

free from offensive imputations upon the character or conduct of parliament¹⁸⁰. The right to submit petitions to the Throne, May insisted, was protected by the fifth clause of the Declaration of Rights, declaring 'all commitments or prosecutions for such petitions' illegal¹⁸¹.

In addition to institutional applications, petitions could also be used in more direct and personal manners. Instructions, as these petitions are often called, are examples of petitions submitted directly to members of parliament¹⁸². Instructions containing dictates and imperative demands represent the most controversial form of petitioning¹⁸³. Instead of imploring members of parliament to consider certain aspects, the authors expected compliance from their representatives. Such claims demonstrate the core logic of the imperative mandate; as members of parliament were bound to represent the sentiments of the electorate, petitioners possessed the right to oblige them. Yet imperative instructions constituted a minority of the petitions submitted to members of parliament. Most of the instructions contained rather humble formulations and most petitioners used them to inform representatives of their concerns. Although instructions differed from petitions to parliament and addresses to the Throne, regarding instructions as imperative as such has a tendency of overemphasising the differences between different forms of petitions. Instructions were, indeed, more forthright both in terms of procedures and formulations, but not all authors enunciated their sentiments in a similar manner.

Letters of Thanks, referred to as letters though written in the form of petitions, are examples of instructions submitted to members of parliament without explicit imperative demands. Instead of focusing on persuading members of parliament either to support or oppose forthcoming legislative measures, the au-

¹⁸⁰ May 1844, 304 - 305, see also Blackstone 1771 (1), 143; Blackstone 1771 (4), 147. It was, according to a precedent cited by Hatsell, 'the undoubted right and privilege of the House of Commons to adjudge and determine, touching the nature and matter of such petitions, how far they are fit and unfit to be received'. Hatsell 1796 (3), 212.

¹⁸¹ Hallam 1846 (2), 267 - 269; Blackstone 1771 (1), 143; Bradley 1986, 37 - 38.

¹⁸² For election pledges, see May 1912 (1), 355 - 357; Dickinson 1994, 39 - 40.

¹⁸³ The use of instructions was usually accepted in principle but often disputed in practice. Unsurprisingly, it was the petition-supporting opposition publications that tended to defend their use most explicitly. The *Craftsman*, in particular, was adamant in defending the use of instructions; often explicit in its criticism of those undermining their use. During the aftermath of the excise crisis, the paper argued that instead of being 'a dangerous innovation', the use of instructions was 'as old as our constitution itself'. GM May 1733/Cr 26 May 1733 (no. 360). In 1739, on the other hand, it insisted that 'where grievances are felt, or dangers apprehended, complaints and remonstrances to any branch of the three estates are very consistent with the duty of the calmest Briton'. 'Approbation and disapprobation, complaints and information, either by petition, instruction, or remonstrance, are the natural right of every freeman', the paper concluded. GM December 1739/Cr 8 December 1739 (no. 700), see also GM December 1739/Cr 22 December 1739 (no. 702); GM February 1741/Cr 7 February 1741; GM February 1741/CS 7 February 1741 (no. 209); GM December 1742/Cr 25 December 1742; BC/R 30 January 1748; BC/Pr 16 June 1753; BC/MJCL 24 - 27 June 1769; A Review of the Excise-Scheme 1733/44 - 49 (T60580); A Letter to my Lord Mayor 1742/5 - 6, 10 - 14 (T1104); A Letter to a Member of This New Parliament 1742/5 - 12, 58, 63 (T63003). Opponents' perceptions on instructing are discussed in detail in Chapter 6.4 (Procedural Constraints on Petitioning).

thors of such instructions declared their satisfaction with the conduct of their representatives in parliament. Petitioners could, for instance, use Letters of Thanks to declare their support for representatives acting against specific bills and ministerial measures in general. In this regard, Letters of Thanks form an explicitly loyal and distinctively retrospective collection of petitions. Petitioners' satisfaction in the petitioned did not, however, translate into general acceptance of the state of the politics; most such instructions remained blatantly partisan. Letters of Thanks could be used to foment opposition against ministries and ministerial policies, as during the anti-Walpolean campaigns of 1732 - 1733 and 1739 - 1742, and could, at times, be submitted to only one of the constituency's two representatives, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.4 (Petitioners' Indirect Means of Influence). In such cases their function was twofold: (1) to encourage the opposition representatives and (2) to put pressure on those voting in favour of the ministry. In a sense, Letters of Thanks used subtler means than imperative instructions; instead of criticising the receivers, their authors criticised the actors that did not receive one. Their principal function, however, resembled the function of imperative instructions - to influence the conduct of members of parliament.

Submitting instructions was legitimate in principle. Hatsell, for instance, characterised instructing as 'an undoubted right ... if done decently', insisting that such instructions 'ought to be respectfully received, and well confirmed' by members of parliament. But as members of parliament represented the nation, instructions could 'be only of information, advice, and recommendation' and 'not absolutely binding upon votes, and actings, and conscience, in parliament'.¹⁸⁴ Such an interpretation was also confirmed by David Hume, who argued that 'were the members of the House obliged to receive instructions from their constituents, like the Dutch deputies, this would ... introduce a total alteration in our government, and would soon reduce it to a pure republic'¹⁸⁵. The controversial reputation of

¹⁸⁴ Hatsell 1796 (2), 71 - 72. In the case of representing the nation in general, Hatsell referred to William Blackstone and Algernon Sidney. Blackstone 1771 (1), 159; Sidney 1805 (1), 359. There are also several examples of members of parliament explicitly recognising the role of instructions. See, for instance, Cobbett 1739 - 1741 (HoC) 380/Thomas Gage (Tewkesbury); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 900/Velters Cornwall (Herefordshire). However, even such representatives, most of whom opposed the administration, tended to consider them as legally non-binding. Admiral Vernon, a Tory representing Ipswich, argued during the debate on repealing the Jewish Naturalisation Act in 1753 that 'people chuse one of the branches of the legislature, and have a right to instruct those they do chuse, under the penalty of never being chosen by them again'. Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 160 - 161/Edward Vernon (Ipswich). Colonel Barré, an ardent opponent of the harsh measures on the colonies, asserted in 1771 that 'the instructions of your constituents, you should be always ready to obey'. Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 151 - 152/Isaac Barré (Chipping Wycombe). But even if maintaining that representatives should act as requested, they abstained from claiming that representatives had a legally binding duty to do so. The subject is further discussed in Chapters 5 (Requests and Requirements: Petitioners' Perceptions on the Representative Relationship) and 6 (Protecting the Independence of Parliament). Scotland appears to have formed a sort of exception to this rule between 1707 and 1832. Scottish members of parliament were, according to Paul Kelly, obliged to adhere to electoral instructions, a remnant exemplifying the medieval conception of representation as attorneyship. Kelly 1984, 178 - 179, see also Dickinson 1994, 38.

¹⁸⁵ Hume 1764 (1), 34 - 35.

instructions did not derive from the practice of instructing members of parliament as such, but from the content and formulations of certain instructions. However, to distinguish legitimate instructions from illegitimate ones proved to be far more complicated than in the case of petitions submitted to parliament. Whereas the authority of parliament was protected by an established set of procedures and a collective form of decision-making, individual representatives resisting electoral instructions faced their constituents alone. Parliament could refuse to hear petitions it regarded as illegitimate, but members of parliament faced a tougher choice.

Despite the different names, petitions to parliament, addresses to the Throne, and instructions to members of parliament are different forms of the same genre. The different forms of petitions shared a set of features. First, petitions, addresses, and instructions often shared a common structure: a preface focusing on introducing the authors of the petition, a middle part describing petitioners' grievances, and a concluding section that determined the nature of their application. Second, the authors of the different forms of petitions endeavoured to influence the decision-making processes¹⁸⁶. This is most explicit in the case of petitions to parliament and imperative instructions. Petitioners submitted petitions to parliament and instructions to members of parliament to oppose proposed schemes, as in the case of anti-excite petitioning in 1733 and 1763; to repeal legislation, as in the case of the Jewish Naturalisation Act of 1753; and to request them to act, as during the South Sea Crisis in 1721 and after the loss of Minorca in 1756. Influencing decision-making processes was also the purpose of the authors of addresses and Letters of Thanks. Addresses could be used to create pressure on parliament and members of parliament, as earlier demonstrated, and Letters of Thanks provided petitioners with means to signal retrospective recognition and to establish future incentives. Petitioners used commendations to encourage supportive representatives to continue their efforts in parliament and others to follow their example.

Most eighteenth-century actors regarded petitions, addresses, and instructions as different forms of the same genre. Despite the customary use of such concepts in eighteenth-century Britain, strict codes of using them hardly existed. Petitions to parliament were quite systematically referred to as petitions (or humble petitions), but petitions submitted to members of parliament could be referred to as letters, petitions, instructions, applications, and representations. The concept of instructions could be used as a pejorative characterisation by ministerial actors, though most of the authors of such petitions regarded instructions either as a neutral or even positive concept. Petitions to the Throne could similarly be referred to as addresses, the most common characterisation, or petitions¹⁸⁷. Such petitions were rather systematically referred to as addresses prior

¹⁸⁶ For more detailed analysis of the petitioners' intentions, see Chapter 2.4 (Rationalising Petitioning).

¹⁸⁷ See, for instance, Kent 1769 (#267); Gloucestershire 1769 (#268); Somerset 1769 (#269); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Yorkshire 1770 (#319); Middlesex 1770 (#320).

to 1769, but the use characterisations such as 'humble remonstrance and petition'¹⁸⁸ and 'humble address, remonstrance, and petition'¹⁸⁹ began to appear during the crisis on Wilkes' seat. At times, the authors and publishers of the petitions used different characterisations of the same petitions. As the similarities outnumber the differences of the different forms of petitions, and petitioners and their contemporaries perceived them as part of the same genre, this thesis, too, regards addresses to the Throne and instructions to members of parliament as petitions.

2.2 English Tradition of Petitioning

The impact of tradition and continuity is particularly strong in the case of petitions and petitioning. In order to understand petitioning from 1721 to 1776, one needs to understand that the practices and precedents that influenced the studied petitions were of older origin. The sub-chapter also demonstrates that the impact of tradition continued to influence petitioning after 1776. Even though petitioning as a practice is of medieval origin, as earlier demonstrated, its more modern forms started to emerge during the seventeenth century. The significance of petitions as a procedure to introduce legislation decreased while its role in organising extra-parliamentary campaigns started to increase. The use of petitions on the eve of the Civil War exemplifies the changing nature of petitioning. Around 15,000 Londoners signed the Root and Branch petition in December 1640, requesting the Long Parliament to abolish the episcopacy from within the Church of England. Inspired by the London petition, and the agitation of radical puritans, 19 counties submitted similar petitions to the parliament in 1640 - 1641.¹⁹⁰ A year later, the Root and Branch campaign was followed by an even larger petitioning campaign. Influenced by John Pym and the Grand Remonstrance, counties and boroughs used petitions to voice their concerns on the Catholic influence in parliament and the country at large. Besides fearing that papists conspired to invade England, petitioners accused them, or the 'malignant party', of thwarting reforms in parliament.¹⁹¹ Thirty-eight (out of 40) English counties submitted petitions to parliament between December 1641 and August 1642¹⁹². It also received similar petitions from numerous English boroughs and Wales, leading Anthony

¹⁸⁸ Coventry 1770 (#312).

¹⁸⁹ Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#315); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#323); London 1770 (#324); Westminster 1770 (#325); Westminster 1770 (#326); London 1771 (#335); London 1772 (#344); London 1773 (#350); London 1775 (#375); London 1775 (#376).

¹⁹⁰ Anthony Fletcher has argued that 'it is appropriate to speak of a national petitioning campaign' due to the scale of petitions. Fletcher 1981, 91 - 99, 221 - 222, see also Knights 2009, 39 - 40, 45.

¹⁹¹ Fletcher 1981, 191 - 227.

¹⁹² Twenty-two of them submitted further petitions to both Houses. The presentation of petitions was often ritualised. The Buckinghamshire petition, for instance, was accompanied by 3,000 mounted participants. The county was soon imitated by Kent (7,000 - 10,000 participants), Essex (3,000), and Bedfordshire and Suffolk (1,000 each). Fletcher 1981, 196 - 197.

Fletcher, a historian on early modern England, to conclude that petitioning 'had become the most potent weapon in the provincial armoury'¹⁹³.

The use of petitions decreased after the restoration of Charles II. In 1661, the Cavalier Parliament enacted the Tumultuous Petitioning Act, regulating and restricting the number of presenters and subscribers of petitions to 10 and 20, respectively, 'unless with the previous order of three justices of the county, or the major part of the grand jury'¹⁹⁴. However, although submitting petitions to parliament became infrequent during the late seventeenth century, the Exclusion Crisis briefly revived the use of mass-petitions (in terms of signatures) in 1679 - 1681. As during the 1640s, petitioners were concerned of the Catholic influence in England. Alarmed by the alleged popish plot to assassinate Charles II, a conspiracy fabricated by Titus Oates, the Meal Tub plot, a design by a group of Catholics to 'manufacture evidence of a presbyterian plot', and the catholic faith of Charles' brother, the heir presumptive, the authors of seven petitions requested the King to let parliament sit and investigate the plots. The 'Monster Petition' of London is certainly the most famous of the seven petitions, attracting around 16,000 - 18,000 signatures. Although the language of the London petition was of rather modest character, the petition(s) infuriated Charles, claiming that petitioners 'endeavoured to invade his prerogative'.¹⁹⁵ Most of the petitioning campaigns during the last decades of the seventeenth century, however, consisted of bursts of loyal addresses. Charles II received hundreds of loyal addresses congratulating him on dissolving the parliament in 1681, similar campaigns being organised to condemn Shaftesbury in 1682 and the Rye House Plot in 1683.¹⁹⁶

Controversies regarding petitions became more common after the turn of the century. The case of the Kentish petition, for instance, became to constitute one of the most prominent incidents of petitioning during the eighteenth century. The freeholders of the county of Kent, assembled at quarter sessions in April 1701, decided to petition the House of Commons, controlled by Tories critical of William III's policies abroad, to grant supplies for raising a standing army and form alliances against the French¹⁹⁷. Though modest in terms of language, the

¹⁹³ Fletcher 1981, 191 - 193. Mark Knights has estimated that 46 petitions were submitted to parliament from December 1641 to August 1642 of which the Kentish petition contained 30,000 signatures. Knights 2009, 45.

¹⁹⁴ Hallam 1846 (2), 27; Knights 1993a, 41; Knights 2005, 121 - 123; Loft 2016, 3 - 4, 11 - 12; Innes 2005, 113.

¹⁹⁵ Knights 1993a; Knights 1993b; Knights 1993c; Knights 2005, 121 - 123, 234 - 239; Knights 2009, 45, Tapsell 2007, 35 - 39.

¹⁹⁶ The three campaigns consisted of 210, 199, and 323 addresses, respectively. Similar addressing campaigns also occurred during the reign of James II. James received 361 addresses congratulating him on his accession in 1685, 254 addresses praising the two declarations of indulgence in 1687 - 1688, and 201 condolences on the death of Queen Mary in 1694 - 1695. Knights 2009, 45. 'From the 1680s onwards', Paul Seaward and Pasi Ihalainen have claimed, 'the relationship between constituencies and representatives could become difficult and contested, with voters claiming that their views were being misrepresented, or demanding that their representatives commit themselves to certain positions through formal instructions'. Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 40.

¹⁹⁷ In September 1701, Britain, the Holy Roman Empire, and the United Provinces signed the Treaty of the Hague, renewing the Grand Alliance of 1689 against France. A few weeks later when James II died, Louis XIV declared James Francis Edward Stuart, or

petition enraged the Tories in parliament; the House of Commons ordered some of the organisers to be imprisoned, which, in turn, provoked a fierce counter-reaction from the Whigs.¹⁹⁸ Daniel Defoe, the author of the *Legion's Memorial* (1701)¹⁹⁹ and the de facto leader of the public campaign in favour of the petitioners, published numerous pamphlets on the issue and encouraged counties to petition the parliament. At the least, Buckinghamshire, Bedfordshire, and Yorkshire petitioned the House of Commons, while 17 constituencies submitted instructions²⁰⁰ to their representatives in parliament.²⁰¹ The controversy on the Kentish petition initiated a series of debates on the right to petition parliament and the nature of representation. A number of Whigs, for instance, used the controversy to conclude their support for popular sovereignty (in contrast to the more conventional principle of parliamentary sovereignty).²⁰² Later petitioners, on the other hand, used the Kentish petition as a precedent for petitioning²⁰³.

The collapse of the South Sea Company (S.S.C.) in 1720 initiated another burst of petitions to parliament, which is the first case studied in this thesis. Besides a mercantile body, possessing a monopoly of supplying slaves to South America (Asiento de Negros) after the Peace of Utrecht in 1713, the joint-stock company also served as an important instrument in reducing the formal national debt, de facto managing and assuming some of the debt. The enactment of the Bubble Act of 1720, supported by the company, further consolidated the position of the S.S.C., requiring joint-stock companies to obtain a royal charter. After reaching the pinnacle in August 1720, however, the South Sea stock started to tumble, ruining the finances of numerous investors and, through the indirect consequence of the crash, an abundance of other actors.²⁰⁴ The crash and its consequences led to a flood of petitions, complaining of the stagnation of trade, scarcity of credit, and of the general decay of the state of the nation. In addition to the

the Old Pretender, the rightful King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. The Grand Alliance declared war on France in 1702, thus entering the War of the Spanish Succession (1701 - 1714). Black 2004, 26 - 29; Black 2008, 234 - 235, 269 - 270; O'Gorman 2006, 51 - 54.

¹⁹⁸ Knights 2005, 124 - 125; Kelly 1984, 175 - 176; Fraser 1961, 200 - 201; Innes 2005, 112; Gunn 1983, 74 - 75; Speck 1987, 45 - 46; Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 39 - 40; Knights 2009, 44 - 50.

¹⁹⁹ For more pamphlets, see the *History of the Kentish Petition* (Daniel Defoe 1701) and *Jura Populi Anglicani* (John Somers 1701).

²⁰⁰ Of which instructions from London, Westminster, Southwark, York, Gloucestershire, Shaftesbury, Bristol, Buckinghamshire, Wiltshire, Sussex, Wilton, Cornwall, and Launceston were published full in *The Electors' Right Asserted* (Unknown 1701).

²⁰¹ Knights 2005, 124 - 125.

²⁰² Kelly 1984, 176 - 177; Knights 2005, 124 - 125, 130 - 132.

²⁰³ Later petitioners and debaters made constant references to the Kentish petition of 1701. See, for example, GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726); GM December 1733/LJ 15 December 1733 (no. 755); GM December 1739/Cr 22 December 1739 (no. 702); GM January 1741/DG 16 January 1741; BC/LEP 5 - 8 May 1764; BC/GNDA 27 June 1769; Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 144 - 145/Henry Pelham (Bramber); Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 148 - 149/William Northey (Calne); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 972 - 973/Lord Shelburne; A Letter to a Leading Great Man 1721/16 - 17 (T69216); A Review of the Excise-Scheme 1733/47 (T60580); A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/28 - 29, 34 - 35 (N21193).

²⁰⁴ Hoppit 2002; O'Gorman 2006, 70 - 71; Black 2008, 238; Jubb 1984, 134 - 136; Carlos & Neal 2006, 501 - 502; Kelly 1992, 61 - 65.

explicitly economic issues, numerous petitions also requested parliament to either initiate or finalise an inquiry into the frauds relating to the management of the company and its stock. Petitioners explicitly requested that parliament punish, usually in most severe manner, those deemed responsible for the crash, ranging from the directors of the S.S.C. to stock-jobbers and, indeed, certain members of parliament. Julian Hoppit, who has maintained that the economic impact of the crash was, in fact, modest outside London, has observed that 87 petitions were 'submitted to the House of Commons in the parliamentary session after the Bubble, complaining in some way about the crisis'.²⁰⁵ The temporal concentration of petitions and their similar language suggest, according to Hoppit, that the South Sea petitions were part of an organised campaign and thus 'less expressions of actual economic experience than exhortations to MPs to keep on straight and narrow in their work of retribution and repair'²⁰⁶. During the restructuring of the company, petitions were also submitted by various proprietors of the company debt. Submitted to the House of Commons, and often praising its conduct in inquiring the causes of the disasters, the South Sea petitions were often pronouncedly humble.

Whereas petitions during the South Sea Crisis were modest in terms of language, and most of them submitted to the House of Commons, the period from 1732 to 1742 signified a shift towards a more aggressive and controversial form of petitioning. The most notable of such petitions, often addressed to individual members of parliament, were distinctively anti-ministerial and closely associated with the Country Opposition, a coalition of Tories and Patriot Whigs. What united Tories and Patriot Whigs in parliament was their abhorrence of the so-called Robinocracy, or the rule of Britain's first and longest serving prime minister (1721 - 1742), Robert Walpole²⁰⁷. It was the scheme of Walpole to convert the custom duties of tobacco and wine into excise duties that initiated the first of the major controversies including intense use of petitions. The campaign, which lasted from late 1732 to mid 1733 and continued to dominate the public debates until the general election in mid 1734, produced over 50 petitions against the scheme²⁰⁸, eventually forcing 'one of the strongest governments in the eighteenth century to withdraw one of its most important measures'²⁰⁹. Walpole managed

²⁰⁵ A vast majority of them (72) being submitted between mid-April and late May 1721.

²⁰⁶ Hoppit 2002, 154 - 155. Philip Loft has also observed that in 1717 - 1720, both Houses of parliament received significantly more petitions than between 1701 and 1716. Loft 2016, 5, 10. Despite their scale, the South Sea petitions remain one of the most understudied group of eighteenth-century petitions. The lack of scholarly attention may well be a consequence of the dual character of the petitions; being regarded, in the spirit of Hoppit, as political manifestations by economic historians and as too economic to intrigue those interested in political history.

²⁰⁷ See, for instance, O'Gorman 2006, 71 - 86; Hayton 2002, 57 - 58; Langford 1975, 5 - 6, 148 - 150; Dickinson 1994, 62, 68, 208 - 212; Cruickshanks 1984; Dickinson 1984; Jubb 1984; Black 1984a; Goldie 2006, 64 - 74.

²⁰⁸ The exact number being 54 according to Paul Kelly, Frank O'Gorman, and H.T. Dickinson and 59 according to Kathleen Wilson. Kelly 1984, 170 - 171; Wilson 1998, 125 - 126; O'Gorman 2006, 81 - 82; Dickinson 1994, 39; Price 1983, 293. For a list of the places submitting instructions in 1733, see Langford 1975, 172.

²⁰⁹ Dickinson 1994, 67, see also Price 1983, 258. Perry Gauci has argued that 'the salutary experience of Walpole's failure to control the patriotic furore over the excise reforms

to maintain his majority in the general election despite heavy losses, but the controversy continued to inspire his opponents through the rest of his premiership.²¹⁰ The excise petitions continued to inspire anti-Walpolean petitioners in 1739 - 1742 and anti-excise petitioners in general; actors opposed to duties on cider and perry produced constant references to the campaign in 1763 - 1766²¹¹, as did the Massachusetts campaigners against the proposed excise on spirits in 1754²¹².

The anti-Walpolean petitioning reached its pinnacle in 1739 - 1742. During the early phase of the crisis, petitions focused on foreign affairs and Walpole's refusal to declare war on Spain. When the Spaniards started to stop and search British vessels in American waters in 1738, disrupting British commercial activities in the area, merchants became engaged in petitioning the House of Commons to intervene. Pressed by the growing opposition both in parliament and out-of-doors, Walpole's ministry engaged in talks with Spain and negotiated the Convention of Pardo in 1739, a rather disappointing agreement from the British perspective. The treaty turned out to be enormously unpopular, provoking constituencies to submit petitions against the treaty, and in late 1739 Walpole became forced to declare war on Spain.²¹³ However, the concern for foreign affairs quickly transformed into an anti-Walpolean petitioning campaign of more general nature. Members of parliament became bombarded with instructions from 1740 to 1742, most of which contained demands to remove Walpole from office, repeal the Septennial Act of 1716 (and thus restore triennial parliaments), and constrain ministerial corruption by restricting the use of places and pensions. After the fall of Walpole in February 1742, petitioners demanded a parliamentary inquiry into the abuses committed during his premiership.²¹⁴ The petitioning campaign against Walpole was extensive not only in terms of duration but also in terms of scale. Thirty-two constituencies, 27 of them from England and five from Scotland, instructed their representatives between September 1739 and October 1740, whereas 47 constituencies did so in 1741 - 1742. Over 40 constituencies submitted instructions after the fall of Walpole.²¹⁵ Most of the petitions were widely circulated in newspapers and pamphlets²¹⁶.

of 1733 or war with Spain in 1739 highlighted the potential resonance of commercial issues in an increasingly imperial era'. Gauci 2001, 271.

²¹⁰ Kelly 1984, 170 - 171; Dickinson 1994, 67, 133 - 134, 209 - 210.

²¹¹ See, for instance, BC/GLDA 28 April 1763; Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/22 (T53010); Woodland 1989, 69; Langford 1975, 1 - 2.

²¹² Boyer 1964. For an analysis of the colonial aspects of the excise crisis of 1733, see Price 1983.

²¹³ Wilson 1998, 140 - 142, 163 - 165; Cruickshanks 1984, 39 - 40; Dickinson 1984, 54 - 57; Black 1984b, 154; Dickinson 1994, 68, 205 - 207, 210 - 211; Langford 1992, 50 - 53; Black 2004, 73 - 75. Walpole had already struggled to pass the treaty in the House of Commons. It was approved by a mere 28 votes, 61 supporters of the administration being absent. Cruickshanks 1984, 39 - 40. For a map of places submitting instructions in 1739 - 1742, see Wilson 1998, 144.

²¹⁴ Kelly 1984, 175; Wilson 1998, 144, 149 - 150; Dickinson 1994, 39; Rogers 1989, 241 - 246.

²¹⁵ Wilson 1998, 149 - 150, 163 - 166; Kelly 1984, 175; Jupp 2006, 89; Colley 1982, 242.

²¹⁶ See, for instance, Great-Britain's Memorial 1741 (T35834) and The Second Part of Great-Britain's Memorial 1742 (N24306).

Intense petitioning campaigns became sporadic after the fall of Walpole, not reaching momentum of similar scale before the 1760s. There are, however, two examples of campaigns from the 1750s that involved intense use of petitions as a mean to influence decision-making processes. The first of the campaigns was provoked by the naturalisation of Jews by the Broad Bottom ministry of Henry Pelham in 1753. Most of the resistance against the act came from within the Church of England and certain mercantile communities, but it was the English counties that submitted most of the petitions. Although modest in terms of numbers, the campaign was effective; the act was repealed in 1754.²¹⁷ However, while the campaign against the naturalisation was a demonstration of a rather conventional policy-related campaign, containing more persuasion behind-doors than petitioning, the campaign in 1756 was a manifestation of petitioning based on public outrage. Provoked by the fall of Minorca²¹⁸ during the early days of the Seven Years' War, the use of petitions focused on establishing an inquiry into the causes of the military disaster, eventually leading to the trial and execution of admiral John Byng. The petitions also contained more traditional Country causes, such as limiting the number of places and pensions, restoring triennial parliaments, and replacing standing armies and foreign mercenaries with a national militia. Petitions were submitted to members of parliament, but also to the Throne in order to increase the pressure on parliament to act firmly. At least 36 constituencies (16 counties and 19 boroughs) submitted petitions in 1756.²¹⁹

The early 1760s marked a return to anti-excise petitioning. Petitions were submitted against the excise duties on cider and perry, proposed by Bute in 1763, upheld by Grenville in 1764, and finally repealed in 1766 by Rockingham. However, whereas the petitioning campaign of 1733 was explicitly mercantile, the campaign from 1763 to 1766 was distinctively regional and land-related. The campaign was organised by actors in the so-called cider counties, consisting of Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Devon, Somerset, and Cornwall. The repeal of the duties was strongly influenced by the appointment of William Dowdeswell, member of parliament for Tewkesbury from 1747 to 1754 and Worcestershire from 1761 to 1775, as the chancellor of the Exchequer in the Rockingham ministry.²²⁰ At least 37 instructions, some of them in

²¹⁷ 12 formal protests and 17 instructions were submitted on the issue, according to H.T. Dickinson. Dickinson 1994, 39 - 40, 82, 212 - 213.

²¹⁸ In addition to its military function, the island was also 'strategically important for the protection of England's commercial interests in the Mediterranean'. Rogers 1989, 95.

²¹⁹ Wilson 1998, 182 - 183; Knights 2009, 47; Dickinson 1994, 213; Colley 1982, 276 - 277; Rogers 1989, 99 - 104.

²²⁰ Woodland 1985; Woodland 1989, 78 - 79; Woodland 1992; HoP/William Dowdeswell; Langford 1992, 527. H.T. Dickinson has insisted that 'one of the most best organised and most succesful extra-parliamentary campaigns on an economic issue was waged in the mid-1760s against the cider excise tax of 1763'. Such a description is, indeed, more than reasonable. Dickinson 1994, 71 - 72. Most of the petitioning campaigns studied in this thesis failed to achieve their immediate objectives. Petitioners in 1740 - 1742 failed to achieve a comprehensive place bill, abolish parties, and impose harsh punishments on Walpole. Petitioners defending Wilkes and opposing the coercive measures on the colonies also failed to achieve their immediate objectives. The impact of the South Sea petitions in 1721, the Minorca petitions in 1756, and the coercive petitions in 1775 - 1776 is, at best, debatable. Only in the cases

the form of Letters of Thanks, were sent to members of parliament. The House of Commons, the House of Lords, as well as the Throne received a number of petitions on the issue. Most of them were submitted during the early phase of the crisis in 1763, but the campaign against the duties continued until their repeal in 1766.²²¹ Despite similarities to the petitioning campaign during the excise crisis in 1733, both of them opposing excise duties, a number of factors distinguished the campaign against the duties on cider and perry from the earlier campaign. Whereas the anti-Walpolean campaign was rather general, containing as much resentment against Walpole himself as the excises his ministry had dared to propose, the campaign from 1763 to 1766 focused on repealing a specific piece of legislation. Consequently, petitioners' means to influence decision-makers in 1763 - 1766 also differed from those in 1733.

The 1760s signified a general increase in publicised petitioning. One of the most intense petitioning campaigns occurred after John Wilkes, expelled from the House of Commons after being confronted with charges of obscene and seditious libel in 1764, was elected to represent the county of Middlesex in the general election of 1768. After being expelled from the House again in 1769, Wilkes was re-elected and re-expelled several times until the House of Commons declared him incapable of election, choosing his opponent, Henry Luttrell, as member of parliament for Middlesex.²²² The Middlesex election dispute provoked a fierce petitioning campaign in favour of Wilkes. Most of the early petitions focused on preserving freedom of election and constitutional order, but the campaign soon became associated with more controversial measures. Petitioners, following the example of a Westminster petition, started to submit addresses to the Throne calling for a dissolution of parliament, thus enraging the political establishment.²²³ Middlesex, Westminster, London, Bristol, and Newcastle upon Tyne submitted instructions to their members of parliament, and from May 1769 to January 1770, 27 petitions, containing around 55,000 to 60,000 signatures, were submitted in favour of Wilkes²²⁴. The Wilkite petitioning was distinctively organised. The Society of Supporters of the Bill of Rights (SSBR), the most influential of the pro-Wilkes associations, organised petitioning in London, Westminster, and Southwark and influenced petitioning in Surrey, Essex, Wiltshire, Devon,

of 1733, 1739, 1753, and 1763 - 1766 is petitioners' immediate influence on decision-making evident.

²²¹ Woodland 1985, 116 - 118, 126 - 127; Woodland 1992.

²²² O'Gorman 2006, 223 - 227; Wilson 1998, 228 - 236, 340 - 343; Dickinson 1994, 235 - 236, 242, 271 - 272; Royle & Walvin 1982, 16 - 24; Dickinson 1977, 195, 205 - 206, 211 - 216; Innes 2005, 115; Phillips 2014, 256 - 257; Langford 1992, 357 - 359, 374 - 388, 521, 529; Hampsher-Monk 2006, 663 - 664.

²²³ Fraser 1961, 201; Rudé 1962, 116 - 117; Bradley 1986, 37 - 38; Innes 2005, 115; Dickinson 1994, 242; Wilson 1998, 229; Poole 2000, 34 - 37.

²²⁴ A further 76 addresses were submitted against Wilkes. Knights 2009, 46; Rudé 1962, 105, 133 - 134. The scale of signatures in the Wilkite petitions equals one-fifth of the total electorate. Bradley 1986, 2 - 3, 208 - 209. H.T. Dickinson regards the Wilkesite campaign, organised by the SSBR, as 'the first nationwide petitioning campaign clearly initiated and fully orchestrated by extra-parliamentary groups rather than being inspired by opposition elements within parliament'. Dickinson 1994, 242; Poole 2000, 34 - 35.

Cornwall, Bristol, and Exeter.²²⁵ The Wilkite petitioning campaign also signified a shift towards the emphasis on scale; petitioners started to emphasise the scale of subscriptions in order to legitimise the content of their petitions, as demonstrated in detail in Chapter 3.2 (Petitioners and Subscribers).

The use of mass-petitioning continued in 1775 - 1776 as constituencies submitted petitions both for and against the American policies of the North ministry. Petitioners had emphasised colonial grievances already in 1756, as demonstrated in Chapter 3.3 (Protectors of the Poor), and at least 20 petitions were submitted against the Stamp Act in 1765²²⁶, but petitioning on colonial issues reached an unprecedented scale and intensity in 1775 - 1776. Petitions were submitted to parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne, of which the last-mentioned received most petitions²²⁷. The first phase of petitioning occurred in early 1775, when mercantile actors started to submit petitions in favour of peaceful concessions, most of which were addressed to the House of Commons and concerned the adverse consequences of the Coercive Acts of 1774. Parliament, however, refused to hear petitions on trade, which encouraged later petitioners to submit petitions to the Throne instead of the House of Commons.²²⁸ News of the outbreak of hostilities in America reached Britain in mid 1775, and on 23 August, George III proclaimed the colonies in a state of rebellion, provoking petitions and addresses both in favour and against the coercive measures²²⁹. However, it was the Prohibitory Act of 1775, establishing a blockade on colonial ports, that incited the fiercest petitioning campaign.²³⁰ There are different estimates concerning the scale of petitioning during the crisis in the colonies. Mark Knights, for instance, has estimated that at least 78 such petitions were submitted in 1775²³¹, whereas

²²⁵ Rockinghamites, on the other hand, organised petitioning in Yorkshire, Derby, Durham, Lancashire, and Cumberland and influenced petitioning in Worcestershire and Herefordshire. Grenvillites organised petitioning in Buckinghamshire and Kent. Rudé 1962, 105 - 108; Dickinson 1994, 242 - 244. For more detailed analysis of Wilkite petitions, see Rudé 1962, 105 - 148.

²²⁶ Knights 2009, 46. H. T. Dickinson estimates that around 25 petitions were submitted against the stamp duty. Dickinson 1994, 242 - 244.

²²⁷ Bradley 1986, 35, 210 - 211.

²²⁸ Bradley 1986, 2 - 3, 11 - 13, 17 - 22.

²²⁹ Petitions in favour of reconciliation and coercive measures equalled in terms on numbers, but 'there were more unsigned addresses for coercion than signed petitions for peace'. Bradley argues that 'the majority of people who signed these documents favoured peaceful concession rather than coercive measure.' Bradley 1986 4, 6 - 7, 17 - 18. H.T. Dickinson, too, notes that though the loyal petitions criticising the conduct of the colonies outnumbered the petitions in favour of reconciliation, they were signed by fewer people. Dickinson 1994, 275 - 276, see also Wilson 1998, 238 - 240. The campaign was also particularly divisive if compared to earlier petitioning campaigns. Bradley 1986, 4. For more detailed analysis, see Bradley 1986, 22, 65, 67, 69, 78 - 79, 81.

²³⁰ Bradley 1986, 11 - 13. According to H.T. Dickinson, petitions in 1775 gathered around 40,000 signatures in England (and 10,000 in Lancashire alone) and 'several thousand' in Scotland and Ireland. Dickinson 1994, 242 - 243.

²³¹ Knights 2009, 46. H. T. Dickinson's estimate resembles the estimate of Knights: more than a dozen counties and nearly 60 towns in England submitted petitions in 1774 - 1776. Dickinson 1994, 242 - 244.

James E. Bradley has argued that 11 counties and 47 boroughs and towns in England submitted petitions from 1775 to 1778.²³²

The organised mode of petitioning and the emphasis on scale continued to influence the use of petitions after the focus period of this thesis. Christopher Wyvill and the Yorkshire Association, for instance, used petitions to champion parliamentary reforms, endeavouring to restore annual parliaments and to form more balanced constituencies²³³. The petitions may not have been exceptional in terms of numbers - 40, at most²³⁴- but they were numerous signed in the same manner as those presented in favour of Wilkes. Although the Yorkshire Association had already begun to disintegrate in 1782, Wyvillites produced 35 petitions in 1782 - 1783 and 14 in 1785.²³⁵ The objectives of the Association Movement were hardly unprecedented, as they had been long championed by the Country Opposition, but its distinctive focus on petitions encouraged Thomas Erskine May to argue that 'it was not until 1779, that an extensive organisation to promote measures of economical and parliamentary reform, called into activity a general system of petitioning'²³⁶. The second petitioning campaign during the late 1770s and 1780s focused on repealing the Catholic Relief Act of 1778²³⁷. The Protestant Association, chaired by Lord George Gordon, emphasised the scale of subscriptions; though producing relatively few petitions, its London petition attained

²³² Bradley estimates that the English petitions contained 44,000 signatures and the Scottish and Irish petitions at least 6,000 signatures. Bradley 1986, 2 - 4, 17 - 18; Dickinson 1994, 242 - 244. According to Bradley, 'more than one-fifth of the parliamentary constituencies in England were involved in some form of popular expression concerning America.' The number of voters in general elections during the second half of the eighteenth-century ranged from 47,600 in 1761 to 97,600 in 1774. Bradley 1986, 4, 208 - 209.

²³³ By championing annual parliaments, and other measures of similar character, the Wyvillites drew inspiration from a long tradition of opposition causes, most notably associated with the country platform of the early eighteenth-century (and, later on, with the radicals of the 1760s). For a comprehensive list of petitions for parliamentary reform between 1739 and 1785, see Wilson 1998, 229. For the connections between the anti-Walpolean opposition and the 1760s, see, for instance, Royle & Walvin 1982, 15.

²³⁴ According to Mark Knights, 24 counties and 11 cities submitted such petitions in 1780. Knights 2009, 41.

²³⁵ Knights 2009, 47; Fraser 1961, 202 - 203; Cannon 1973, 72 - 97; Dickinson 1994, 243; O'Gorman 2006, 228 - 231; Barker 1998.

²³⁶ May 1912 (1), 350 - 351.

²³⁷ The Protestant Association was certainly influenced by the long and relatively strong tradition of English anti-Catholicism, inspired by the religious disputes from the reign of Henry VIII to the collapse of the rule of James II. Protestantism, and anti-Catholicism as an integral part of it, evolved into a defining feature of the English and, to a lesser extent, British national identity. Besides being threatened by Catholic powers abroad, most notably by France and Spain, Britain was also represented as being under threat from Catholic enemies within. Jacobites, attempting to restore the Stuarts to the British throne, and other Catholic groups were often seen as the enemies from within, undermining the Protestant faith and succession with the help from France and the pope. In order to protect the nation from popery and priestcraft, the Corporation Act and other test acts excluded Catholics (and other religious minorities) from holding public offices. Clark 2000a, 46 - 51, 65 - 70, 437 - 440; Ihalainen 2005, 94 - 96, 258 - 259, 299 - 324, 494 - 503, 588 - 589; Innes 2002, 112; Wilson 1998, 89 - 90, 96 - 97; O'Gorman 2006, 29 - 36; Dickinson 1994, 278 - 280.

some 45,000 signatures, being the most popular of the eighteenth-century petitions in terms of scale.²³⁸ Both associations produced petitions with significant amounts of signatures but remained functional for a relatively short period of time. The Yorkshire Association disintegrated after the resignation of prime minister North in 1782 and the conclusion of the Peace of Paris in 1783, and the Protestant Association became dysfunctional after being associated with the Gordon Riots in mid 1780²³⁹.

Despite the disintegration of the Yorkshire Association and the Protestant Association, the emphasis on scale continued to flourish²⁴⁰. The abolitionist petitioners, most active from 1782 to 1838, employed the means of the earlier campaigns. The first significant campaign against slave trade occurred in 1787 - 1788 during which, according to Thomas Erskine May, 'a greater number of petitions were presented for this benevolent object, than had ever been addressed to parliament, upon any political question'²⁴¹. May argued that 'never yet had the direct influence of petitions upon the deliberations of parliament, been so remarkably exemplified'²⁴² as the campaign resulted in the enactment of the Slave Trade Act. The anti-slavery campaigners' focus on scale is evident; they submitted 102 petitions in 1788 and around 519 petitions in 1792, attaining around 60,000 - 75,000 and 350,000 - 450,000 signatures respectively²⁴³. Similar petitioning campaigns occurred in 1814 (800 petitions and 750,000 signatures) and 1833 (5,020 petitions and 1.5 million signatures). In 1837 - 1838, anti-slavery campaigners submitted a further 4,175 petitions against the 'negro apprenticeship'²⁴⁴. The anti-slavery campaigns of the late eighteenth century and early nineteenth century employed a profusion of means, both in parliament and out-of-doors, to abolish slavery. The success of the abolitionist cause should not, however, be reduced to the scale of petitions, regardless of the impressive numbers.

A number of scholars have endeavoured to quantify the progress of eighteenth-century petitioning. The most authoritative of such attempts is the estimate by Julian Hoppit and Joanna Innes, which focuses on petitions submitted to parliament from 1660 to 1796²⁴⁵. Mark Knights has provided another eminent estimate of publicised petitions and addresses from 1640 to 1847. Knights' compilation of cases focuses not only on the amount of petitions and addresses, but also

²³⁸ Knights 2012, 46 - 47, 56 - 59.

²³⁹ Further discussed in Black 1963; Wilson 1998, 260 - 269; Clark 2000a, 410 - 413; Royle & Walvin 1982, 31.

²⁴⁰ Innes 2005, 119.

²⁴¹ May 1912 (1), 351 - 352.

²⁴² May 1912 (1), 351 - 352.

²⁴³ Knights 2009, 41, 47; Innes 2005, 119. Joanna Innes has pointed out that due to the French Revolution and 'an upsurge of domestic radical activity', the modes of petitioning were further restricted in 1795. The new restrictions limited the amount of people that could participate in publicised petitioning meetings (unless summoned by lord lieutenants, sheriffs, JPs, grand juries, mayors, or aldermen). Innes 2005, 113 - 114; Fraser 1961, 202 - 204.

²⁴⁴ Knights 2009, 41, 48; Pickering 2001, 372. Thomas Erskine May estimated that almost 20,000 petitions were submitted on the subject between 1824 and 1833 and 7,000 in 1833 alone. May 1912 (1), 353.

²⁴⁵ Hoppit & Innes 1997, 19. See also Innes 2005, 118.

on the number of signatures.²⁴⁶ There are several similar estimates²⁴⁷, but those of Hoppit, Innes, and Knights form the most comprehensive demonstration of the scale of petitioning. These are, of course, but approximate estimates. Julian Hoppit and Joanna Innes characterise their estimate as a 'crude count' and assessment of petitions as 'particularly tentative, limited and impressionistic' due to the scarcity of sources²⁴⁸. Mark Knights similarly notes that his compilation is only 'a best guess, given the current state of research, about the pattern and size of national petitioning and addressing campaigns'. Yet Knights maintains that 'it does at least allow us to demonstrate its truly vast scale, to chart its fluctuations, and to compare campaigns over time', concluding that 'it is clear that mass petitioning was most prolific in the period 1640-1720 and again 1780-1850'.²⁴⁹

Quantification of petitions is, however, challenging in two particular ways. The first of the challenges is the representative sample. Even if quantification of petitions submitted to the House of Commons, whose original copies were largely destroyed in 1834, or parliament in general were possible²⁵⁰, it would not provide scholars a comprehensive sample of petitions in general²⁵¹. Petitions to the House of Commons represent only one form of petitioning. Though closely related to the proceedings of parliament, instructions lacked an established status in there, as earlier demonstrated. Rather than addressed to parliament, these applications were submitted to individual members of parliament. Hence, instructions have never been collected and compiled into a comprehensive corpus. The problems regarding the different forms of petitions compel scholars to choose from two options: to either (1) analyse the quantitative trends of parliamentary petitions or (2) focus on locating the petitions submitted to members of parliament. Both options contain (different sorts of) challenges. Analysing quantitative trends on grounds of parliamentary petitions ignores a significant number of petitions. If the number of petitions indicates the importance of the case, as is often implied, ignoring vast amounts of petitions tends to produce insufficient results. A comprehensive quantification of instructions submitted to members of parliament, on the other hand, remains an unrealistic exercise due to their informal nature.

Second, the quantification of political impact is challenging. The scale of petitions, or subscribers of petitions, determined neither the importance nor the

²⁴⁶ Knights 2009, 42, 45 - 48. Knights, unfortunately, excludes petitions on economic legislation and hence ignores the campaigns in 1721, 1733, and 1763 - 1766.

²⁴⁷ For estimates of petitions submitted to the House of Lords from 1689 to 1720 and both Houses from 1660 to 1720 and 1779 - 1789, see Loft 2016, 5, 10. The scale of petitions examined in this thesis is exemplified in Figure 2 (Incidence of Petitions and Published Copies, 1721 - 1776).

²⁴⁸ Hoppit & Innes 1997, 18 - 19.

²⁴⁹ Knights 2009, 40 - 41.

²⁵⁰ For the best available estimates of the scale of parliamentary petitions, see, for instance, Hoppit & Innes 1997; Loft 2016; Loft 2019a; Loft 2019b. Hoppit, Innes, and Loft have mainly used the Journals of both the House of Commons and the House of Lords to recover information on parliamentary petitions.

²⁵¹ See, for instance, Knights 2009, 40 - 41.

effectiveness of petitions or petitioning campaigns in eighteenth-century Britain²⁵². Campaigns could succeed without large-scale support from petitioners and fail despite being supported by petitions and subscribers of enormous scale. Petitioning campaigns in favour of Wilkes in 1769 - 1770 and reconciliation with the colonies in 1775 - 1776 may have been among the most numerous campaigns in terms of subscriptions but their immediate impact on parliament remained modest. The campaign against the naturalisation of Jews in 1753 - 1754, on the other hand, involved relatively few petitions and subscriptions, but was highly effective. Measuring influence and importance, let alone content and language, by quantitative means is exceedingly challenging. This is not to say that quantitative information on petitions is useless as such. If the intention is to illustrate the scale of electoral participation or socio-economic variation²⁵³, a quantitative approach may well be an adequate option. If the focus is on petitions as political texts and their significance within the political culture, as in this thesis, however, petitions ought to be understood primarily as qualitative rather than quantitative objects. The scale of petitions and subscriptions hardly mattered if contemporaries did not consider scale a relevant factor²⁵⁴. Why it did or did not matter is something that becomes understandable only by reading petitions and debates on petitioning.

2.3 Earlier Studies on Petitions

Numerous studies make references to eighteenth-century petitions, yet few of them focus on petitions and petitioning as such. One of the main reasons for this is the absence of a comprehensive collection of petitions; most of the original copies submitted to the House of Commons burned in 1834²⁵⁵, and instructions sub-

²⁵² As noted by Hoppit, Innes, Jupp, and Bradley. Hoppit & Innes 1997, 18 - 19; Jupp 2006, 217; Bradley 1986, 14; Price 1983, 293. For petitioners contemporaries' criticism of scale, see Woodland 1985, 125 - 126 and Chapter 6.2 (Mobs, Multitudes, and the Scum of the Earth). Though a often neglected aspect of petitioning, measuring the published copies of petitions could prove useful for those interested in the impact and reception of petitions. The scale of published copies of the petitions studied in this thesis is demonstrated in Figure 2 (Incidence of Petitions and Published Copies, 1721 - 1776).

²⁵³ As, for instance, in the case of Mark Knights' prosopographical article on the London petition of 1680. Knights 1993a. Carola Lipp and Lothar Krempel, on the other hand, have used statistical means to provide a 'microhistorical actor-centred network analysis' on the petitions submitted to the national assembly in Frankfurt in 1848 - 1849. Lipp & Krempel 2001.

²⁵⁴ Charles James Fox, for instance, criticised arguments emphasising scale in 1771, as demonstrated in Chapter 6.3 (Protecting the Independence of Parliament). The critics of petitions could also claim that petitioners' and their supporters' arguments of scale were insufficient, as noted in Chapter 6.2 (Mobs, Multitudes, and the Scum of the Earth). For a detailed analysis of petitioners' arguments emphasising scale, see Chapter 3.2.4 (Subscriptions and the Emphasis on Scale).

²⁵⁵ For the discussion on the petitions derived from the *Journals*, see Chapter 1.4.1 (Petitions).

mitted to members of parliament have never been compiled into such a collection, as earlier demonstrated. In order to examine petitions, scholars have been forced to trace published copies from newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets. In the pre-digital era, this process was both labour-intensive and time-consuming; a systematic review of newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets was, in many ways, inconceivable before the introduction of digital corpuses and full-text search engines. The lack of a comprehensive corpus of petitions has encouraged scholars to concentrate on single campaigns in order to manage the abundance of potential sources. In this sense, digital archives such as the Eighteenth Century Collections Online, the Burney Collection, the Nichols Collection, and the British Newspaper Archive have revolutionised the study of eighteenth-century petitions. Instead of manually reading the papers and pamphlets, the digital archives enable scholars to locate petitions and debates on petitioning far more efficiently.

Two specific academic traditions have contributed to the understanding of petitioning in eighteenth-century Britain. The first one is parliamentary history, which has focused on petitions as a parliamentary genre and procedure. Scholars of parliamentary procedure and constitutional history have discussed the role of petitions since the heydays of petitioning - in John Hatsell's *Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons*²⁵⁶, Thomas Erskine May's *A Treatise upon the Law, Privileges, Proceedings and Usage of Parliament*²⁵⁷ and *Constitutional History of England since the Accession of George III*²⁵⁸, and Henry Hallam's *Constitutional History of England from the Accession of Henry III to the Death of George II*²⁵⁹, to mention some. The roles and functions of petitions have also been observed in more recent studies on parliamentary history, as is the case in Peter Jupp's *The Governing of Britain 1688 - 1848: The Executive, Parliament and the People*²⁶⁰, Clyve Jones' (ed.) *A Short History of Parliament*²⁶¹, Peter Fraser's *Public Petitioning and Parliament before 1832*²⁶², and Philip Loft's *Involving the Public: Parliament, Petitioning, and the Language of Interest, 1688 - 1720*²⁶³. Parliamentary approaches have tended to emphasise the role of procedures and the receiving end of the petitions (in contrast to the authors of petitions and popular perceptions on them). Its main focus has been on parliamentary petitions rather than on petitions in general.

The second tradition contributing to the understanding of petitions is the history of popular politics. The tradition, the formation of which was influenced

²⁵⁶ Hatsell 1796.

²⁵⁷ May 1844.

²⁵⁸ May 1912 (1); May 1912 (2); May 1912 (3).

²⁵⁹ Hallam 1846 (1); Hallam 1846 (2).

²⁶⁰ Jupp 2006.

²⁶¹ Jones 2012. See also Fraser 1961; Innes 2005; Loft 2016; Hoppit & Innes 1997.

²⁶² Fraser 1961.

²⁶³ Loft 2016, see also Loft 2019a.

by scholars such as George Rudé²⁶⁴, E.P. Thompson²⁶⁵, and John Brewer²⁶⁶, may be seen as a some sort of reaction against the more traditional form of political history and its focus on high politics, also influenced by the more general rise of social history. Early scholars on popular politics argued that the more traditional interpretations of political history misrepresented early modern societies by neglecting their diversity and complexities. Hence, scholars associated with the tradition have tended to focus on crowds, popular action, and resistance against elite cultures. Even though most of the previous studies on popular politics have concentrated more on riots and rituals than petitions and petitioning, more recent ones have proved indispensable for those interested in petitioning. James E. Bradley's *Popular Politics and the American Revolution in England: Petitions, the Crown, and Public Opinion*²⁶⁷, H.T. Dickinson's *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain*²⁶⁸, Kathleen Wilson's *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715–1785*²⁶⁹, and Mark Knights' *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture*²⁷⁰ are examples of studies with explicit references to petitions and petitioning campaigns.

These traditions have approached petitions from different perspectives. Petitioning, indeed, contained both parliamentary and popular elements. Petitions were submitted to parliament and members of parliament in order to influence decision-making processes in the House. Regardless of their impact or procedural legitimacy, the parliamentary nature of petitions is hardly debatable. Yet petitioning was organised out-of-doors by extra-parliamentary actors and was often influenced by local customs and circumstances. Though at times denounced as riotous and unconstitutional by the House of Commons, the authors of illegitimate petitions endeavoured to influence parliamentary politics in the same manner as the authors of legitimate petitions. The dual nature of petitions explains the dominance of these particular traditions. However, regardless of the interest from numerous perspectives, petitions have rarely been the main focus of historians²⁷¹. Most general studies on eighteenth-century politics refer to petitioning campaigns, yet few studies focus on petitioning as such. For most parliamentary historians petitions represent only one particular form of procedure, whereas scholars interested in popular politics often understand petitions as indications of more fundamental trajectories. Besides understanding petitions as demonstrations of political diversity and proto-democratic participation²⁷²,

²⁶⁴ See, for instance, *Wilkes and Liberty: A Social Study of 1763 to 1774* (1962), *The Crowd in History: A Study of Popular Disturbances in France and England, 1730-1848* (1964), *Hanoverian London, 1714-1808* (1971), and *Ideology and Popular Protest* (1980).

²⁶⁵ See, for instance, *The Moral Economy of the English Crowd in the Eighteenth Century* (1971), *Whigs and Hunters: The Origin of the Black Act* (1975), and *Customs in Common: Studies in Traditional Popular Culture* (1993).

²⁶⁶ See, for instance, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (1976).

²⁶⁷ Bradley 1986.

²⁶⁸ Dickinson 1994.

²⁶⁹ Wilson 1998.

²⁷⁰ Knights 2005.

²⁷¹ Knights 2009, 40 - 41; Knights 2012, 46; Loft 2016, 1 - 2; Miller 2017, 43 - 44.

²⁷² David Zaret, most notably, has claimed that 'in the 17th century, innovative use of petition facilitated the "invention" of public opinion'. 'This episode of petitioning', he

scholars focusing on the significance of popular protests tend to emphasise physical action (petitioning) rather than the use of language (petitions)²⁷³.

In addition to the numerous case studies and general references, a number of studies have focused on petitions and petitioning as such. Peter Fraser's article on petitions submitted to parliament before 1832²⁷⁴, Philip Loft's on petitions to the House of Lords from 1688 to 1720²⁷⁵, and Paul Kelly's *Constituents' Instructions to Members of Parliament in the Eighteenth Century*²⁷⁶ are excellent examples of such studies. Derek Hirst and Richard W. Hoyle have discussed petitioning during the English Republic²⁷⁷ and the sixteenth century²⁷⁸, whereas Henry Miller and Colin Leys have produced similar analyses on petitioning in 1800 - 1850²⁷⁹ and during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries²⁸⁰. Mark Knights, again, is one of the most prolific scholars in the field of petition studies. Besides publishing case studies on petitioning campaigns²⁸¹, Knights has authored several long-term studies on petitions. *Representation and Misrepresentation in Later Stuart Britain: Partisanship and Political Culture*²⁸² and *Participation and Representation Before Democracy: Petitions and Addresses in Premodern Britain*²⁸³ certainly are among the most comprehensive studies on petitions in eighteenth-century Britain. David Zaret, on the other hand, has produced an audacious interpretation of the role of printed petitions in early modern England. According to Zaret, the practice of printing petitions was crucial if not decisive for the development of 'the early democratic public sphere'²⁸⁴ and democratic culture in general.²⁸⁵ Though a popular point of reference, its Habermasian premises are more than challenging from the empiricist perspective.

further argues, 'reveals democracy's practical origins, when public opinion, well before the Enlightenment, began to mediate between the state and civil society.' Zaret 1996, 1498. See also Zaret 2000. Zaret's interpretation of petitions and popular politics is, of course, a rather extreme example of studies emphasising the link between petitions and democracy.

²⁷³ R.A. Houston's *Peasant Petitions: Social Relations and Economic Life on Landed Estates, 1600 - 1850* (2014) is one of the few studies focusing on the linguistic patterns of petitions. Houston examines 'petitions as texts and as speech acts, but more importantly 'as concrete historical artefacts strongly rooted in particular contexts''. Houston 2014, 30. But whereas this thesis focuses on petitions that were used to discuss national issues, the petitions studied by Houston were distinctively local.

²⁷⁴ Fraser 1961.

²⁷⁵ Loft 2016.

²⁷⁶ Kelly 1984.

²⁷⁷ Hirst 2006.

²⁷⁸ Hoyle 2002.

²⁷⁹ Miller 2017. Henry Miller and Richard Huzzey co-organised the 'Re-thinking Petitions, Parliament and People in the Long Nineteenth Century' in 2016 - 2019. The project, funded by the *Leverhulme Trust*, focused on petitioning between 1780 and 1918.

²⁸⁰ Leys 1955.

²⁸¹ As on the London campaign of 1680 and the Protestant Association's campaign in 1780. Knights 1993a; Knights 1993b; Knights 2012.

²⁸² Knights 2005.

²⁸³ Knights 2009.

²⁸⁴ Zaret 2000, 217 - 221.

²⁸⁵ Zaret 1996; Zaret 2000.

Scholars have traditionally focused on a rather limited number of petitioning campaigns. Most previous studies on the eighteenth century have emphasised the salience of two particular incidents: the Kentish petition of 1701 and the Association Movement²⁸⁶. Though certain studies have scrutinised petitions from 1702 to 1720²⁸⁷, and most scholars recognise the importance of Wilkite petitions in changing the pattern of petitioning²⁸⁸, a significant number of studies have tended to disregard the significance of petitions between the Kentish petition and the controversies of the late eighteenth century. Peter Fraser, for example, has argued that the Tumultuous Petitioning Act of 1661 remained authoritative enough to function 'as an effective check on all political petitioning far into the eighteenth century' and, hence, 'in the century before 1779, one has to search hard to find anything resembling political petitioning, and when one does there is always some special justification'²⁸⁹. Paul Pickering has similarly argued that 'it was not until the late 1760s, during the campaign over the fate of the irascible John Wilkes, that the prohibition on publicised petitions began to break down' and 'the line between individual grievance and criticism of government policy [became] blurred'²⁹⁰. While the existence of mid-century petitions is unchallenged, their importance has commonly been undermined.

Several factors have contributed to the temporal gap, of which the scarcity of sources and accessible petitions from pre-1760s Britain are among the most

²⁸⁶ Although endeavouring to compile a comprehensive survey on 'public petitioning' before 1832, Peter Fraser's article contains only few references to petitioning prior to the nineteenth century. Fraser 1961. Even Mark Knights' otherwise excellent article on petitioning excludes a vast number of cases between 1720 and 1770. Although his article discusses the anti-Jacobite addresses, Minorca petitions, Wilkite petitions, and petitioning regarding America, it excludes those regarding the S.S.C., the excise scheme, the Naturalisation Act, and the duties on cider and perry. Knights 2009.

²⁸⁷ Mark Knights, for instance, has examined petitions from 1675 to 1720, and Philip Loft petitions to the House of Lords from 1688 to 1720. Knights 2005; Loft 2016.

²⁸⁸ See, for instance, Fraser 1961, 201; Knights 2012, 59; Pickering 2001, 371; Innes 2005, 116.

²⁸⁹ Fraser 1961, 201. Fraser's interpretation derives from his definition of *political*. He argues that 'in the case of the petitions against the septennial bill, the petitioners could claim that they were defending their basic constitutional rights, while the petitioners against the cider tax were similarly defending the sanctity of their homes, and also speaking for their trade after the manner of private bill petitions. They spoke as parties before a court: they were not presuming to teach the senators wisdom.' The contrast between the Wyvillite petitions and petitions from 1739 - 1742 and 1769 - 1770, for instance, is hardly as fundamental as claimed by Fraser. The anti-Walpolean petitioners demanded comprehensive reforms and the Wilkite petitioners the King to dissolve the parliament. For the problematic character of such definitions of *political*, see Chapter 1.4 (Theoretical and Methodological Choices). Philip Loft has aptly concluded that 'the pattern and history of Restoration and 18th-century petitioning to Westminster has previously only been subject to partial surveys and studies of particular campaigns'. Loft 2019a, 343. His more recent articles have focused on understanding the long-term patterns of petitioning parliament during this period.

²⁹⁰ Pickering 2001, 371. Joanna Innes, on the other hand, has represented a more moderate interpretation. According to Innes, 'the rise of parliamentary reform movements from the 1780s led to renewed testing of the limits of acceptable conduct. The greater part of the eighteenth century, however, was unmarked by controversy of quite this kind, and in general, throughout the period - such occasional controversies apart - all parties appear to have operated with a clear understanding of prevailing conventions.' Innes 2005, 112.

significant. However, even more influential has been the manner of emphasising precedents, closely associated with constitutional and parliamentary approaches. Most of such studies have emphasised the significance of the Kentish petition²⁹¹ and the period from 1769 to 1787 in reinvigorating the practice of political petitioning. Henry Hallam, for example, has traced the practice of convening public meetings to debate political questions and prepare petitions back to the campaign of 1769 and 'the great multiplication of petitions on matters wholly unconnected with particular interests ... [to petitions] for the abolition of the slave trade in 1787'²⁹². Thomas Erskine May, on the other hand, regarded Christopher Wyvill and the Yorkshire Association 'as the origin of the modern system of petitioning, by which public measures, and matters of general policy, have been pressed upon the attention of parliament'²⁹³. Interpretations of eighteenth and nineteenth century constitutional scholars have continued to influence studies on petitions and thus contributed to the neglect of mid-century petitions. Though numerous case studies have focused on petitions between Kent and Wyvill, more general studies have tended to undermine their significance.

The influence of mid-century petitioning is evident both in terms of content and scale. Even if less efficacious in terms of impact on legislation or parliamentary procedures as certain precedential cases, mid-century petitioning influenced both the genre of petitions and the practices of petitioning. Joanna Innes, for instance, has discussed the influence of 'model campaigns'. Earlier campaigns could inspire both the ends and means of petitioners, as 'record-breaking campaigns must have changed ideas about what it was possible to achieve, perhaps also about what it was desirable, even necessary to achieve ... [and] though not all campaigns employed the same means, means conjured into being to support one campaign might none the less subsequently facilitate others.'²⁹⁴ Mid-eighteenth century petitioners adapted elements from earlier campaigns and continued to influence the means and manners of subsequent campaigns. Besides the explicit references to earlier campaigns, certain features continued to conjoin the otherwise disconnected campaigns. Petitioners of 1733 continued to inspire later anti-excite petitioners, and the manner of emphasising the scale of subscriptions became (re-)conventionalised by the Wilkite petitioners in 1769 - 1770²⁹⁵. Even the practice of submitting imperative petitions was more common during the mid-century than usually assumed. By systematically examining petitions from 1721 to 1776, this thesis demonstrates the significance of mid-century petitions in preserving and revising the practices of petitioning. It also exemplifies that although most of the campaigns were modest in terms of scale, if compared to the campaigns of the early nineteenth century, their contribution to the debates on representation was significant.

²⁹¹ See, for instance, Hallam 1846 (2), 433 - 436; May 1912 (1), 350. John Hatsell, whose *Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons* was based on the speakership of Arthur Onslow (1728 - 1761), emphasised the significance of the excise petitions in 1733. Hatsell 1796 (3), 206 - 210.

²⁹² Hallam 1846 (2), 436.

²⁹³ May 1912 (1), 350 - 352.

²⁹⁴ Innes 2005, 119 - 120.

²⁹⁵ As demonstrated in Chapter 3.2 (Petitioners and Subscribers).

2.4 Rationalising Petitioning

The predominance of interpretations emphasising petitions' specific, micro-level contexts is one of the consequences of earlier studies' focus on individual campaigns. It is most conspicuous in analyses of petitioners' intentions. Many studies have tended to represent petitioners as actors motivated by concrete objectives, submitting petitions to oppose projected schemes, to repeal legislation, and to request compensation. Such notions are pertinent in the sense that most petitioners submitted petitions to pursue concrete solutions to concrete challenges; petitioning was, for most parts, reactive rather than proactive, as noted in Chapter 1.4.2 (Petitions). However, such reading of petitions' intentions is also potentially problematic in two particular ways. First, if the method of interpretation is too determined by petitions' micro-level contexts and interest-related functions, it tends to disregard petitioners' perceptions of petitioning. Second, the focus on singular campaigns, or petitions, often prevents scholars from distinguishing patterns that characterised the genre of petitions. In order to understand such patterns, this sub-chapter concentrates on petitioners' self-described rationales for submitting petitions between 1721 and 1776. It demonstrates that five distinctive discourses are distinguishable from the petitions examined in this thesis. Actors tended to portray petitions (1) as reactions to crises, (2) as the petitioners' obligation, (3) as a way to inform the petitioned, (4) as a way to commend the petitioned, and (5) as a method to enforce the right to petition.

Crises defined most petitioners' descriptions of their reasons to submit petitions. Petitioners represented Britain as a nation surrounded by threats and dangers, from commercial catastrophies to impending threats of invasion. One of the most common conceptualisations used to emphasise the momentous, even decisive nature of the occasion was the use of metaphors such as 'juncture' and 'conjuncture'²⁹⁶. In such cases, petitioners legitimised their petitioning by referring to 'the present critical juncture, upon which, we apprehend, the fate of this kingdom depends'²⁹⁷, as the members of the council of the burgh of Annan described the dismissal of Walpole in 1742, or 'the present difficult conjuncture, when the honour of the Crown, the interest of the kingdom, and the tranquillity of Europe, demand the attention of the legislature'²⁹⁸, as the corporation of Bristol characterised the dangerous state of affairs caused by the ambitions of France during the early phase of the War of the Austrian Succession. The use of such metaphors was often amplified with negative attributes. In order to emphasise

²⁹⁶ At times conceptualised as 'occasions', 'situations', and 'states'.

²⁹⁷ Annan 1742 (#136), see also Dumfries 1742 (#138). For similar arguments, see Coventry 1733 (#036); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Bristol 1741 (#100); Coventry 1741 (#108); Preston 1741 (#116); Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126); Westminster 1742 (#156); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); Ipswich 1753 (#185); New Sarum 1756 (#187); Bristol 1756 (#208); Cheshire 1756 (#213); Sanquhar 1776 (#463).

²⁹⁸ Bristol 1742 (#152).

the importance of the occasion, petitioners characterised these junctures and conjunctures as 'critical'²⁹⁹, 'dangerous'³⁰⁰, 'alarming'³⁰¹, 'unhappy'³⁰², 'melancholy'³⁰³, 'perilous', 'dejected', 'deplorable', 'desperate', 'calamitous', 'distressed', 'disgraceful', 'difficult', and 'exposed'³⁰⁴. The emphasis on crises derived, to a great extent, from the crisis-oriented use of petitions³⁰⁵. Metaphors such as junctures and conjunctures, often combined with exceedingly negative attributes, were further used to emphasise the responsibilities of the petitioned; they could either recognise and act upon petitioners' warnings or, as copious petitioners implied, imperil the interest of the nation. Besides exemplifying petitioners' fears and concerns, and their perceptions of the exceptionality of the moment, such conceptualisations could also prove useful in legitimising more controversial forms of petitioning.

Petitioning could also be described as petitioners' obligation, a discourse closely connected with those emphasising crises. A significant amount of petitioners claimed to be 'bound'³⁰⁶ and 'obliged'³⁰⁷ to submit petitions, representing themselves as 'obliged by the duty and loyalty we owe to the best of kings, as well as by our love for the constitution'³⁰⁸, as the electors of Southwark defending Wilkes and the colonies asserted in 1769, and 'called upon by the duty we owe to

²⁹⁹ For critical junctures, see Rye 1733 (#039); Devon 1740 (#089); Suffolk 1741 (#111); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Carmarthen 1742 (#130); Bristol 1742 (#152); Coventry 1742 (#159); Dorset 1756 (#181); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Birmingham 1775 (#400). For critical conjunctures, see St Albans 1733 (#035); Nottingham 1742 (#133); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Westminster 1742 (#156); Oxford 1756 (#183); Lichfield 1756 (#186); New Sarum 1756 (#187); Bristol 1756 (#208); Southwark 1756 (#215); Sanquhar 1776 (#463). For critical situations and states, see Maidstone 1756 (#191); Somerset 1756 (#199); London 1756 (#216); Staffordshire 1775 (#398).
³⁰⁰ Maidstone 1721 (#009); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Buckinghamshire 1756 (#182); Yorkshire 1770 (#319). It was also, at times, conceptualised as 'impending danger' or 'imminent dangers', as in Maidstone 1721 (#009), Rye 1733 (#039), and Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393).

³⁰¹ Maidstone 1756 (#191); Norfolk 1756 (#201); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); Southwark 1775 (#408).

³⁰² Worcester 1742 (#143); London 1742 (#153); Coventry 1742 (#159); Breconshire 1756 (#184); Nottingham 1756 (#203); Lincolnshire 1756 (#205); Cheshire 1756 (#213); London 1756 (#216); London 1775 (#372); Lymington 1776 (#462).

³⁰³ Lichfield 1756 (#186); Herefordshire 1756 (#194); Bristol 1756 (#209).

³⁰⁴ Bristol 1742 (#152); Coventry 1742 (#159); Devon 1756 (#180); Buckinghamshire 1756 (#182); New Sarum 1756 (#187); Exeter 1756 (#190); Herefordshire 1756 (#194); Somerset 1756 (#198); Lincolnshire 1756 (#205).

³⁰⁵ Of the 464 petitions studied in this thesis, 397 (86 per cent) occurred during eight crises and controversies (1721, 1733, 1739 - 1741, 1753, 1756, 1763, 1769 - 1771, and 1775 - 1776), as noted in Chapter 1.4.1 (Petitions).

³⁰⁶ Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Herefordshire 1770 (#330); London 1775 (#375). For the uses of 'necessity' and 'necessary', see Maidstone 1721 (#009); St Albans 1733 (#035); Wigan 1733 (#040); Merchants 1737 (#056); Merchants 1739 (#069); Kent 1769 (#267); Devon 1769 (#272); Westminster 1770 (#326); Herefordshire 1770 (#330); London 1771 (#336); EIC 1773 (#355); London 1773 (#360).

³⁰⁷ Somerset 1721 (#007); Nottingham 1721 (#011); Lincoln 1721 (#012); Yorkshire 1721 (#018); Woodstock 1733 (#041); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Marlborough 1741 (#109); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); York 1769 (#286); Southwark 1769 (#290); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); London 1771 (#336); London 1773 (#360).

³⁰⁸ Southwark 1769 (#290), see also New Woodstock 1742 (#141).

our country, ourselves, and posterity³⁰⁹, as the Northamptonshire petitioners lamented the burden imposed by the land tax in 1771. Actors could also use expressions such as 'duty [to petition]³¹⁰, 'must [petition]³¹¹, and 'cannot [but petition]³¹² to describe their reasons to petition. The electors of Westminster, for instance, insisted they 'cannot longer be silent on the subject of a late violent and most alarming invasion of their liberties', a reference to the exclusion of John Wilkes from parliament, as it 'threatens the certain and speedy annihilation of our excellent constitution itself³¹³. The freeholders of Merionethshire, on the other hand, criticised William Vaughan, a Tory representing the county constituency from 1734 to 1768³¹⁴, for being absent from the division on Hanoverian troops in 1742, further claiming that 'we must intreat you, sir, to guard our purses, already almost exhausted by a 20 years rapacious administration³¹⁵. The emphasis on duties, necessities, and obligations became used to diminish petitioners' own agency and de-politicise both their decision to petition and the content of their petitions. Instead of choosing to petition, petitioners represented themselves as obligated, as public-spirited Britons, to submit them, thus as instruments of the common good rather than parties of interest.

References to obligations, necessities, and duties became used to elucidate petitioners' reasons to petition, but did not determine the content or the representative nature of the petitions as such. Hence, such rationales and justifications could occur in different sorts of petitions. Most of the uses of obligations, necessities, and duties occurred in deferential petitions, petitioners using them to inform decision-makers of their grievances and pleading to be heard. But obligations, necessities, and duties could also be used to legitimise more controversial

³⁰⁹ Northamptonshire 1771 (#333).

³¹⁰ London 1721 (#002); Newark-upon-Trent 1721 (#020); Hindon 1733 (#032); Coventry 1733 (#036); Edinburghshire 1734 (#052); Cupar 1739 (#063); Carmarthen 1740 (#070); Sutherland 1740 (#076); Lancashire 1740 (#085); Middlesex 1741 (#095); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Bishop's Castle 1741 (#104); Lichfield 1741 (#107); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); London 1741 (#124); Worcester 1742 (#142); London 1742 (#153); York 1753 (#172); Cirencester 1753 (#174); Breconshire 1756 (#184); Ipswich 1756 (#185); Lichfield 1756 (#186); New Sarum 1756 (#187); Maidstone 1756 (#191); Herefordshire 1756 (#194); Leominster 1756 (#197); Liverpool 1757 (#222); London 1761 (#225); Cullompton 1763 (#227); Tewkesbury 1763 (#235); Southwark 1766 (#249); Surrey 1769 (#271); Essex 1769 (#276); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Southwark 1769 (#288); Southwark 1769 (#289); Southwark 1769 (#290); London 1769 (#293); London 1769 (#294); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Yorkshire 1770 (#319); Middlesex 1770 (#320); Herefordshire 1770 (#330); Northamptonshire 1771 (#333); Honiton 1771 (#334). The duty was often described as indispensable, as in Cupar 1739 (#063); Worcester 1742 (#142); London 1742 (#153); Lichfield 1756 (#186); Leominster 1756 (#197); Tewkesbury 1763 (#235); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277); London 1769 (#293); Honiton 1771 (#334); London 1771 (#336); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

³¹¹ Bath 1741 (#102); Herefordshire 1741 (#106); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Herefordshire 1742 (#149); Merionethshire 1743 (#162).

³¹² Liskeard 1740 (#078); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Southwark 1742 (#146); Westminster 1742 (#156); Breconshire 1756 (#184); Westminster 1769 (#284); Westminster 1770 (#325); Morpeth 1770 (#329); London 1772 (#344).

³¹³ Westminster 1769 (#284).

³¹⁴ HoP/Williams Vaughan.

³¹⁵ Merionethshire 1743 (#162).

petitions. Crises and necessities could function as justifications for obliging members of parliament to act, as in the case of the Woodstock petition of 1733. The corporation of the borough addressed one of its representatives in parliament, John Spencer³¹⁶, claiming that the proposed increase of excise officers endangered their privilege of freely electing their representatives to parliament. The petitioners thus claimed that the circumstances obliged 'us to have recourse to you ... and think it our duty, on so extraordinary an occasion, to put you in mind of yours, which is to serve us'³¹⁷. However, in both cases, references to obligations, necessities, and duties were used to rationalise actors' use of petitions. The use of more general ideals (and counter-ideals) that were used to define the exact nature of such rationalisations is discussed in detail in Chapter 4 (Public Interest and Private Influence: Ideals and Counter-Ideals of Representation and Participation).

In other cases petitioners claimed to use petitions to inform decision-makers³¹⁸. In such cases, petitioners often used verbs such as 'represent'³¹⁹, 'express'³²⁰, 'communicate'³²¹, 'declare'³²², 'offer'³²³, and 'acquaint'³²⁴ to describe their petitioning. Petitions could also be used 'to lay before this honourable House the melancholly concern we lye under', as the petitioners from Lincoln during the South Sea Crisis, and 'to lay before you how deeply we are affected with the present deplorable situation of our foreign and domestic affairs'³²⁵, as the Somerset

³¹⁶ The other, Samuel Trotman, being unable to serve his constituents due to his ill health.

³¹⁷ Woodstock 1733 (#041).

³¹⁸ Philip Loft has also emphasised the role of informing in the case of parliamentary petitions. According to Loft, 'petitions provided a means of transferring knowledge and expertise held by local companies, corporations or individuals to the centre, helping to inform the quality of parliamentary deliberations'. Loft 2019a, 343, see also 352 - 354, 361. It is safe to assume that the role of (profession-based) informing was even more central in parliamentary petitions than in the publicised petitions studied in this thesis; the latter being, in general, more confrontational and often less constructive than those submitted to parliament.

³¹⁹ London 1721 (#002); Somerset 1721 (#007); Kent 1721 (#008); Maidstone 1721 (#009); Lincoln 1721 (#012); Tamworth 1721 (#013); Haslemere 1721 (#016); Colchester 1721 (#019); London 1742 (#154); London 1742 (#155); Essex 1756 (#179); Cheshire 1756 (#213); Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265); Berwick-upon-Tweed (#278); London 1769 (#294); Yorkshire 1770 (#319); EIC 1772 (#347); Bristol 1773 (#349); EIC 1774 (#368); Bristol 1775 (#371); London 1775 (#377); London 1775 (#384); Worcester 1775 (#392).

³²⁰ Derbyshire 1740 (#088); Chester 1756 (#212); Southwark 1756 (#215); London 1756 (#218); Unknown 1756 (#220); Yorkshire 1770 (#319); Stafford 1771 (#338); Carmarthenshire 1771 (#339); Wiltshire 1775 (#389); Birmingham 1775 (#400); Bolton 1775 (#405); Hampshire 1776 (#458).

³²¹ Wigan 1733 (#040); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087); Wiltshire 1753 (#173); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238).

³²² Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074); Liskeard 1740 (#078); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Coventry 1741 (#108); Marlborough 1741 (#109); Ipswich 1756 (#185).

³²³ New Sarum 1739 (#059); Sutherland 1740 (#076); Westminster 1742 (#157).

³²⁴ Preston 1741 (#116); Westminster 1741 (#122); London 1741 (#124); Reading 1742 (#125); Annan 1742 (#136); Southwark 1769 (#288); Manchester 1775 (#383); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

³²⁵ Lincoln 1721 (#012) and Somerset 1756 (#198), respectively. For similar formulations, see St Albans 1721 (#006); Nottingham 1721 (#011); St Albans 1721 (#023); Nottingham 1742 (#133); Southwark 1742 (#146); London 1742 (#153); Merionethshire 1743 (#164); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); London 1761 (#225); London 1767 (#256); Kent 1769

petitioners claimed after the loss of Minorca in 1756. Using petitions to inform decision-makers of petitioners' grievances became frequent during economic crises. During the South Sea Crisis, for instance, petitions became used 'to represent unto this honourable House the present condition of this once flourishing county' and petitioners' 'present miserable condition from the great decay of their trade in common with the rest of this kingdom'³²⁶. However, informing could also be communicated in more general manners, petitions being used 'to open our bleeding hearts ... of (what we think) a national grievance' and 'to express our heartfelt concern at present ills and impending dangers'³²⁷. While most petitioners focused on informing decision-makers of various grievances, some of the studied petitioners used petitions also to inform parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne of their sentiments. In such cases, petitioners used them 'to communicate to you our sentiments', as the corporation of Wigan in 1733, further desiring their representatives to 'oppose all attempts that shall be made to introduce' excises 'on any pretence whatsoever'³²⁸. Most of the petitions intended to inform

(#267); Gloucestershire 1769 (#268); Essex 1769 (#276); Berwick-upon-Tweed 1769 (#278); Westminster 1769 (#284); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); London 1769 (#294); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); Newcastle upon Tweed 1770 (#316); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); London 1770 (#323); Morpeth 1770 (#329); Northamptonshire 1770 (#333); London 1775 (#379); Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393); Berkshire 1775 (#394); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); London 1775 (#410); Hampshire 1776 (#458); Whitehaven 1776 (#459); Cumberland 1776 (#461); Lymington 1776 (#462); Westmoreland 1776 (#464).

³²⁶ Somerset 1721 (#007) and Maidstone 1721 (#009), respectively. See also St Albans 1721 (#006); Nottingham 1721 (#011); Lincoln 1721 (#012); Tamworth 1721 (#013); Haslemere 1721 (#016); Colchester 1721 (#019); St Albans 1721 (#023). For similar arguments during the Spanish depredations, see London 1742 (#154) and London 1742 (#155). For experts, mercantile ones in particular, providing information to parliament, see Loft 2016, 18 - 19.

³²⁷ Nottingham 1739 (#064) and Chester 1756 (#212), see also Somerset 1756 (#198); Suffolk 1756 (#200); Bristol 1756 (#209); London 1756 (#218); Unknown 1756 (#220); London 1767 (#256); Gloucestershire 1769 (#268); Devon 1769 (#272); Westminster 1769 (#284); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Southwark 1769 (#288); London 1769 (#294); Essex 1769 (#298); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Yorkshire 1770 (#319); London 1770 (#323); Morpeth 1770 (#329); Northamptonshire 1771 (#333); London 1771 (#335); Stafford 1771 (#338); Carmarthenshire 1771 (#339); London 1773 (#350); London 1775 (#379); Worcester 1775 (#392); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); London 1775 (#410); London 1776 (#457); Whitehaven 1776 (#459).

³²⁸ Wigan 1733 (#040), see also Hindon 1733 (#032); Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074); Sutherland 1740 (#076); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Coventry 1741 (#108); Marlborough 1741 (#109); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); Worcester 1742 (#142); Southwark 1742 (#156); London 1742 (#153); Reading 1753 (#175); Tewkesbury 1763 (#235); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238); Bristol 1775 (#371); Manchester 1775 (#383); Berkshire 1775 (#394); Cumberland 1776 (#461). Similar arguments were also common in parliament and in pro-petition publications, especially in cases concerning merchants and mercantile issues. John Barnard, a fiercely trade-oriented member of parliament for London, declared during the debate on the Seamen's Bill in 1741 that the mercantile petitioners' 'request of being heard by their counsel, cannot be denied, without exposing us to the censure of adhering obstinately to our own opinions, of shutting our ears against information, or preferring expedients to security, and disregarding the welfare of our country'. The mercantile actors, using their petition to declare their sentiments on the clause for limiting the wages of seamen, 'do not come before us with loud remonstrances and harrassing complaints, they do not apply to our passions but our understandings, and offer such informations as will very much facilitate the public service'. 'The

their receivers remained rather uncontroversial. Instead of emphasising receivers' duties to oblige, most informers endeavoured to provide the petitioned an account on the sentiments of their constituents and encourage debate on various grievances.

In the fourth case, petitions were used to commend decision-makers. This was the least controversial of the petitioners' self-declared rationalisations to submit petitions for two reasons. First, it was distinctively retrospective; petitioners commended the petitioned of their past votes and decisions. Hence, such petitions seldom contained imperative demands concerning the future conduct of the petitioned. Second, petitioners commending decision-makers focused on approving their past conduct. In order to emphasise the approving nature of the petitions, petitioners employed attributes such as 'hearty [thanks]³²⁹, 'sincere [thanks]³³⁰, and 'warmest [thanks]³³¹. Petitioners could use petitions to praise specific decisions, as when they commended representatives for their struggles against proposed duties, the influence of placemen and pensioners, and the Convention of Pardo³³², as well as commend representatives on their past decisions in a more general manner, praising their 'faithful services', 'past services', and '[their] many favours'³³³. Others focused on representatives' principled 'behaviour'³³⁴ and 'conduct'³³⁵ in more abstract terms. In such cases petitioners commended members of parliament 'for [their] steady endeavours to promote and

merchants', Barnard insisted, 'are enabled by their profession to inform us, are deterred by their interest from deceiving us'. Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 123 - 125/John Barnard (London). William Pulteney, the leader of the Opposition Whigs, similarly declared that the petitioners' 'abilities and importance have been hitherto so generally acknowledged, that no parliament has yet refused to attend to their opinion, and surely we ought not to be ambitious of being the first House of the representatives for the people, that has refused an audiences to the merchants'. Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 134 - 135/William Pulteney (Middlesex).

³²⁹ Renfrewshire 1739 (#061); Gloucestershire 1740 (#083); Cheshire 1740 (#084); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Canterbury 1741 (#101); Hereford 1741 (#105); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Minehead 1742 (#129); Worcester 1742 (#142); Dorset 1742 (#147); Herefordshire 1742 (#149); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); Leominster 1743 (#163).

³³⁰ Buckingham 1740 (#073); Stafford 1740 (#090); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Bishop's Castle 1741 (#104); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Carmarthen 1742 (#130); Lichfield 1742 (#144); Dorset 1742 (#147); Leominster 1743 (#163); Lancashire 1756 (#192); Ilchester 1763 (#234); Cornwall 1763 (#237); Somerset 1763 (#240); Portsmouth 1764 (#246).

³³¹ Herefordshire 1763 (#229); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238); Yorkshire 1769 (#305); Honiton 1771 (#334).

³³² See, for instance, Flintshire 1740 (#080); Gloucestershire 1740 (#083); Devon 1740 (#089); Yorkshire 1740 (#093); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); Stirling 1742 (#134); Leominster 1743 (#163); Essex 1753 (#169); Norfolk 1756 (#202); Southwark 1756 (#214); Devon 1763 (#226); Cullompton 1763 (#227); Herefordshire 1763 (#229); Exeter 1763 (#230); Cornwall 1763 (#237); Somerset 1763 (#240).

³³³ See, for instance, York 1739 (#066); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Devon 1742 (#135).

³³⁴ Cornwall 1740 (#092); York 1741 (#099); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Cromartyshire 1742 (#127); Herefordshire 1742 (#149); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); Portsmouth 1764 (#246).

³³⁵ Flintshire 1740 (#080); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Carmarthen 1742 (#130); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131); Stirling 1742 (#134); Annan 1742 (#136); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); Southwark 1742 (#146); Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Essex 1753 (#169); Warwickshire 1753 (#170); Norfolk 1756 (#202); Devon 1763

establish the undoubted rights and liberties of a British people', like the corporation of Stafford in 1740, a borough constituency of around 400 freemen³³⁶, and 'for [their] steady adherence to the true interest of the nation, and for [their] zeal in asserting our common rights and privileges'³³⁷, like the Staffordshire petitioners assembled at the assizes in August 1740. In certain cases, petitioners endeavoured to commend the petitioned 'in the most publick manner'³³⁸, in order to emphasise the impact of their compliments.

Petitioners could also praise more concrete aspects of representation. In most such cases, they emphasised the importance of attendance in parliament. The London corporation commended Humphry Parsons, John Barnard, Micajah Perry, and Robert Willimot, the four representatives of the city, due to their 'faithful and diligent attendance in parliament, particularly while the place-bill was depending last sessions' in 1740³³⁹. The high sheriffs, grand jury, gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Yorkshire, on the other hand, petitioned one of their representative, Miles Stapylton, 'to thank [him] for [his] constant attendance in parliament, and particularly for [his] endeavours ... to obtain a bill for reducing and limit the number of placemen in the House of Commons'³⁴⁰. Representatives'

(#226); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238); York 1769 (#286); Yorkshire 1769 (#305); Honiton 1771 (#334).

³³⁶ HoP/Stafford 1715 - 1754.

³³⁷ Stafford 1740 (#090) and Staffordshire (#091), see also Lancashire 1740 (#085); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Canterbury 1741 (#101); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126); Carmarthen 1742 (#130); Honiton 1742 (#139); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Worcester 1742 (#142); Dorset 1742 (#147); Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Leominster 1743 (#163); Essex 1753 (#169); Yorkshire 1770 (#319); Honiton 1771 (#334).

³³⁸ Buckingham 1740 (#073), see also Cheshire 1740 (#084); Lancashire 1740 (#085); Stafford 1740 (#090); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Stirling 1742 (#134); Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Cullompton 1763 (#227). In such cases, the petitioned could submit replies to the petitioners. William Beckford, the lord mayor of London, reacted to the commendations presented by the gentlemen, freeholders, and inhabitants of Cullompton, praising his struggle against the duties on cider and perry in 1763. He asked Joseph Bruton, the intermediary between the petitioners and Beckford, to 'be pleased to present my most respectful compliments to the [petitioners], and acquaint them, that I have received a very distinguished, tho[ugh] unmerited, mark of their approbation of my conduct in parliament'. Beckford also promised to oppose 'every extension of those laws [of excise], as they are contrary to the spirit and letter of our free constitution'. Cullompton 1763 (#227a1). For a detailed analysis of the replies from the petitioned, see Chapter 5.5 (Replies from the Petitioned).

³³⁹ London 1740 (#075).

³⁴⁰ Yorkshire 1740 (#093), see also Cromartyshire 1742 (#127); Lichfield 1742 (#144).

attendance in parliament was often characterised by attributes such as 'diligent'³⁴¹, 'constant'³⁴², 'faithful'³⁴³, 'punctual'³⁴⁴, 'unwearied'³⁴⁵, 'strict'³⁴⁶, and 'assiduous'³⁴⁷. Such commendations were often far from being mere courtesy. Though consisting of 558 members, the rate of attendance rarely reached its maximum. Even when attending parliamentary sessions, representatives could remain inactive and abstain from votes. The debates in parliament were dominated, in the words of Frank O'Gorman, 'by an inner core of some 50 - 60 MPs, many of whom were placemen'³⁴⁸.

Lastly, petitions could be used to enforce the right to petition, the most explicitly political of petitioners' self-declared rationales. In such cases, the act of petitioning became represented either (1) as an exercise to enforce the right to petition or (2) as following the example set by other cities, boroughs, and counties. In the first case, petitioners represented themselves as obliged, 'at this time of national discontent and anger', to exercise their 'undoubted right to instruct' their representatives in parliament, as the electors of Southwark, concerned of the impact of Wilkes' expulsion on their constitutional liberties³⁴⁹. The freeholders of Yorkshire, on the other hand, assured George III of their 'zeal for your Majesty's illustrious family ... [and attachment] to that system of laws, which your Majesty's ancestors were called to protect'. According to 'these laws', the freeholders argued, 'it is the undoubted right of the subject to petition the King'.³⁵⁰ Claims of enforcing the right to petition was closely connected with discourses on crises and petitioners' duties; critical situations, petitioners often claimed, forced them to defend their right to submit petitions³⁵¹. It could also be associated

³⁴¹ London 1740 (#075); Devon 1740 (#089); Minehead 1742 (#129); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Southwark 1756 (#214).

³⁴² Stafford 1740 (#090); Yorkshire 1740 (#093); York 1741 (#099); Bishop's Castle 1741 (#104); Herefordshire 1741 (#106); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Honiton 1742 (#139); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Worcester 1742 (#142); Herefordshire 1742 (#149); Norfolk 1756 (#202).

³⁴³ London 1740 (#075).

³⁴⁴ Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126).

³⁴⁵ Worcester 1742 (#142); Dorset 1742 (#147).

³⁴⁶ Leominster 1743 (#163).

³⁴⁷ Lancashire 1756 (#192).

³⁴⁸ O'Gorman 2006, 43.

³⁴⁹ Southwark 1769 (#290), see also Nottingham 1739 (#064); Carmarthen 1740 (#070); Huntingdonshire 1740 (#072); Lichfield 1756 (#186); Bristol 1756 (#208); Plymouth 1763 (#239); Devon 1769 (#272); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277); Bristol 1769 (#282); London 1769 (#293); London 1773 (#360). For similar conceptualisations, see New Sarum 1739 (#059); York 1739 (#066); Bristol 1741 (#100); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Bath 1769 (#264); Devon 1769 (#272); Middlesex 1770 (#320); Westminster 1770 (#327).

³⁵⁰ Yorkshire 1769 (#285), see also Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Middlesex 1770 (#320); Lancaster 1775 (#403).

³⁵¹ See, for example New Sarum 1739 (#059); York 1739 (#066); Carmarthen 1740 (#070); Huntingdonshire 1740 (#072); Bristol 1741 (#100); Lichfield 1756 (#186); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Bristol 1756 (#208); Plymouth 1763 (#239); Bath 1769 (#264); Devon 1769 (#272); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Southwark 1769 (#290); London 1769 (#293); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Middlesex 1770 (#320); Westminster 1770 (#327); London 1773 (#360).

with informing the petitioned³⁵². Regardless of its discursive entanglements, however, the emphasis on petitioning as a right contained distinctively defiant elements. The citizens of Bristol, concerned of the loss of Minorca, described themselves as 'determined to act the part of free-born Englishmen (however others amongst us may be inclined to bow their necks to the yoke)' and, 'at this critical conjuncture, ... exercise our undoubted right of instructing our representatives in parliament'³⁵³. In the second case, petitioners legitimised their use of petitions by referring to petitions submitted by others. In such cases, petitioners could claim to follow 'the example lately and gloriously set to us by the grand inquest for our county [of Cornwall]'³⁵⁴ or to petition 'in imitation of so laudable an example [of a London petition]'³⁵⁵, thus portraying themselves as a part of a larger movement.

The analysis of petitioners' self-described rationales to submit petitions reveals a set of distinctive patterns. The five categories discussed in this sub-chapter demonstrate that petitioners understood, or at least portrayed, their reasons to petition in different manners. Some of them represented their uses of petitions as duties and obligations, necessitated by the dangers and challenges the nation encountered, while others claimed to use them to defend their rightful privilege to petition parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne. Petitioners could also use them to inform the petitioned of their sentiments and grievances and, as in the case of Letters of Thanks, to commend representatives' conduct in parliament. With that said, reacting to crises constituted the most fundamental of petitioners' reasons to submit petitions, according to the petitioners themselves. Besides being the most numerous of the five categories, it also influenced the other forms of rationalisations for petitioning. Petitioners focused on informing decision-makers of their sentiments and grievances produced copious references to crises, striving to convince them of the urgency to act (as instructed), and those defending their right to submit petitions feared for their liberties and constitutional privileges, as during the crisis on Wilkes' seat. The petitioners studied in this thesis clearly understood their use of petitions as something exceptional. Though petitioning was often a practice of rather mundane character, customarily used to settle practical problems, the use of publicised petitions and petitioning campaigns clearly changed the nature of petitioning. Because of their focus on periods on crises, the studied petitions also contain more straightforward characterisations of constituents' and representatives' relationship, as is demonstrated in the following three chapters.

³⁵² See, for instance, Nottingham 1739 (#064); Bristol 1741 (#100); Lichfield 1756 (#186); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Bristol 1769 (#282).

³⁵³ Bristol 1756 (#208). Lincolnshire petitioners, on the other hand, endeavoured 'to lay open, with freedom, our sentiments before you [their representatives in parliament], and to claim that privilege which every British elector has a constitutional right to exert'. See also York 1739 (#066); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Bath 1769 (#264); Devon 1769 (#272); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Southwark 1769 (#290); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); London 1773 (#360).

³⁵⁴ St Mawes 1740 (#077), a probable reference to Cornwall 1740 (#092).

³⁵⁵ Southwark 1742 (#146), see also Worcester 1742 (#143); Lichfield 1742 (#144); York 1742 (#148); Hereford 1742 (#158); Coventry 1742 (#159); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); Worcester 1750 (#166).

3 REPRESENTING THE SENSES OF THE PEOPLE: PETITIONERS' USES OF REPRESENTATIVE CLAIMS

3.1 Representative Claims

In order to understand petitioners' perceptions on representation, one needs to understand how they perceived themselves and their role in the process of political representation. Who were they and how did they describe themselves and those on whose behalf they claimed to act? To understand such aspects of representation and petitioning, this chapter examines in whose names the petitions were submitted and whom or what the petitioning actors claimed to represent. Most of the studied petitions were authored and organised in constituencies. Hence, it may appear axiomatic that petitions were communication between the constituents and their representatives in parliament (or, as in certain cases, communication with parliament and the Throne). In reality, the process contained far more nuances than is often assumed. Even in as formal an institution as the British parliament, representation was something constantly negotiated in a multitude of different ways, by a multitude of different actors, and within a multitude of structural frameworks. In order to understand the nuances regarding those taking part in the process of petitioning and negotiating representation in practice, this chapter discusses how petitioners characterised themselves and those they claimed to defend. It also elaborates what the descriptions reveal about the ideals of representation and how the changing patterns of such descriptions function as indications of wider changes within the spheres of politics.

The most interesting feature of petitions is not who actually signed them, but how these requests were legitimated and who the petitioners claimed to represent. Michael Saward, a political theorist associated with the constructivist turn in studies on political representation, has referred to such claims as representative claims. Saward maintains that representation is 'a constant process of mak-

ing, receiving, or rejecting representative claims'³⁵⁶. Rather than focusing on representation as a fact, as normative traditions tend to, scholars should focus on representation as 'a process of claim-making'³⁵⁷ and understand representative claims as being 'made, or constructed, by some, for someone, and for a purpose'³⁵⁸. Although Saward addresses an audience of political theorists rather than empiricist historians, the notion of representation as a construction rather than a fact is something historians, too, ought to acknowledge³⁵⁹. Rather than emphasising only the number of petitions and subscribers, empiricist historians should also focus on what sort of representative claims were made and how the nature of representation was constructed through such claim-making.

Representative claim-making is, of course, not something apart from society in general. Those making representative claims 'cannot conjure claims out of the air (or if they do they are highly unlikely to succeed)', but 'must invoke the recognisable as well as (indeed, in order to) create something new; must iterate features of political culture to cross a threshold of potential acceptability', as Michael Saward has aptly noted³⁶⁰. When performing representative claims, the eighteenth-century petitioners did not only define themselves and those who they claimed to represent, but also whom it was legitimate to represent and on behalf of whom it was legitimate to make such demands. By conceptualising themselves, their agency, and their agenda, the petitioners engaged in an active process of constructing political legitimacy. Changes in patterns of representative claims may, for instance, indicate changes in political legitimacy and, as in certain cases, of more fundamental long-term changes. This chapter demonstrates that there were several noticeable changes of pattern with regard to representative claims between 1721 and 1776; from concrete to abstract and from particularistic to universalistic. The (re-)introduction of mass-petitions (in terms of the scale of subscriptions) during the crisis on Wilkes' seat, on the other hand, exemplifies the growing focus on the scale of petitioners and subscribers (in contrast to the more traditional focus on petitioners' status).

This chapter analyses the representative claims in the studied petitions. The emphasis is on both explicit and implicit claim-making, but mere associative argumentation is not regarded as representative claim-making as such³⁶¹. Everything petitioners associate themselves with is, of course, a representative claim of some sort (in the same way everything is representation of something), but in order to be of analytical use, the concept needs to be defined in a more specific manner. In this chapter, the focus is on representative claim-making as a form of

³⁵⁶ Saward 2010, 140.

³⁵⁷ Saward 2010, 44.

³⁵⁸ Saward 2010, 13.

³⁵⁹ As Mark Knights and Pasi Ihalainen, for instance, have done. Knights 2005; Ihalainen 2010. See also Chapter 1.2.1 (Functionalism, Objectivism, Intellectualism, and Empiricism).

³⁶⁰ Saward 2010, 17, 46, 48. 'Cultural context', Saward further asserts, 'clearly will have a strong impact on how claims, and claimants, are received'. Saward 2010, 103, see also 147.

³⁶¹ The more general use of ideals and counter-ideals is examined in Chapter 4 (Public Interest and Private Influence: Ideals and Counter-Ideals of Representation and Participation).

agency, representative claims being consequences of petitioners' choices. It demonstrates that three specific categories of alleged agency can be distinguished from petitioners' uses of representative claims:

- 1) *primary petitioners*, or those in whose names the petitions were presented (e.g. traders as petitioners)
- 2) *secondary petitioners*, or those concrete actors on whose behalf the primary petitioners claimed to act (e.g. traders in general)
- 3) *tertiary petitioners*, or those abstractions on whose behalf the primary petitioners claimed to act (e.g. trade in general)

Agency is, of course, something categorically individual. Though influenced by structures and the agency of others, choices are nevertheless acts of individuals. In this sense, the primary petitioners alone were actors in the analytical sense of the concept, being the only ones participating in the processes of authoring, approving, and submitting petitions. The other two categories are what could be referred to as political fiction³⁶². Rather than actors as such, these categories are forms of representative claim-making the primary petitioners employed to legitimise their requests. Secondary and tertiary petitioners gained presence only through the acts of the primary petitioners, the latter portraying themselves as surrogate actors acting as substitutes of those without a voice. It closely resembles the Ankersmitian conception of representation as a process of 'making present (again) of what is absent'³⁶³, primary petitioners functioning as advocates representing the alleged interest of the secondary and tertiary petitioners. But though not actors as such, secondary and tertiary petitioners were represented as entities with a will (which the primary petitioners claimed to represent), thus making them important in understanding the dynamics of both representation and the political culture of eighteenth-century Britain.

The chapter is divided into three main sections. First, Chapter 3.2 (Petitioners and Subscribers) focuses on the primary petitioners. Sub-chapters 3.2.1 (Boroughs and Other Localities), 3.2.2 (Counties), and 3.2.3 (Companies and Mercantile Meetings) discusses the impact the different surroundings had on the composition of petitioners. These sub-chapters demonstrate that the dominant part of petitions was authored and submitted by members of the local administration in boroughs and counties. However, despite this, the sub-chapters also demonstrate that petitioners endeavoured to represent their petitions as collective voices of their communities. Sub-chapter 3.2.4 (Subscriptions and the Emphasis on Scale), on the other hand, discusses the increasing emphasis on scale. Whereas most pre-Wilkite petitioners underlined their status, post-1768 petitioners (and publishers of petitions) tended to emphasise the scale of subscriptions. Second, Chapter 3.3 (Protectors of the Poor) focuses on secondary petitioners. It discusses

³⁶² Although not petitioners as such, I refer to them as secondary and tertiary petitioners for analytical purposes. Primary petitioners tended to represent both secondary and tertiary petitioners as being part of the petitioning process; their petitions being mere reflections of the grievances, sentiments, and interests of others.

³⁶³ Ankersmit 2002, 108 - 109.

the way in which petitioners claimed to act on behalf of actors seen as incapable of acting by themselves. Most of such claims of surrogate agency focused either on the inhabitants of the American colonies or on the impoverished part of the population. Third, Chapter 3.4 (Champions of the People) discusses representative claims on behalf of abstractions such as the people, the nation, and past and future generations. Petitioners also claimed to represent mercantile abstractions such as trade and commerce.

3.2 Petitioners and Subscribers

The category of primary petitioners consists of those actors who were explicitly named as the authors, submitters, and subscribers of the studied petitions. These petitioners can be further divided into more specific sub-categories of *active* and *passive petitioners*. The first one of the sub-categories consists of those who authored, approved, and submitted the petitions, being the group most commonly recognised as petitioners proper³⁶⁴. Such petitioners were mostly functionaries (or other actors participating in the meetings of corporations, assizes, and court of quarter sessions) or actors associated with electoral and mercantile meetings, as will be demonstrated in this sub-chapter. The second of the sub-categories, on the other hand, consists of those actors that signed the petitions. These actors did not, in most cases³⁶⁵, take part in the formal decision-making processes as such, but expressed their support for the petitions by signing them. Although an important feature of petitions, especially since the crisis on Wilkes' seat, the role of the subscribers was certainly not as active as those who participated in drafting and organising petitions.

Petitions could be organised in different surroundings, three of them being particularly distinctive in the studied petitions. The petitions were predominantly organised in (1) boroughs and other localities, (2) counties, and (3) mercantile meetings. Most of them were submitted from boroughs and other localities (285 petitions) and counties (132 petitions), though mercantile meetings (44 petitions) could also submit petitions to parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne. A modest number of petitions (four petitions) were also submitted

³⁶⁴ One could, of course, argue that petitioners' descriptions of themselves (and the subscribers of their petitions) are not, strictly speaking, representative claims at all; being instead factual descriptions of their titles and professions. But such descriptions, too, can reasonably be seen as representative claim-making. Petitioners emphasising their role in the borough administration, for instance, did only describe their actual position within the administrative structure, but also tended to imply that they spoke not only on behalf of the local administration but also on behalf of the borough in its entirety. Petitioners could always have used their names rather than their titles, but chose, in most cases, to emphasise the latter. That petitioners' descriptions of themselves are representative claims is even more evident in the case of titles such as inhabitants and freeholders. Even if submitted in the name of the inhabitants of Rye or freeholders of Middlesex, for instance, it is more than likely that the petition was neither subscribed nor supported by all the inhabitants of Rye or all the freeholders of Middlesex.

³⁶⁵ Although the actors of the first sub-category also tended to sign the petitions.

by universities (Cambridge and Oxford) and religious communities (Quakers³⁶⁶), all of them addressed to the Throne. Although counties submitted petitions during each of the major crises and controversies studied in this thesis, boroughs and other localities remained the most common origin of petitions throughout the eighteenth century. Mercantile petitions, on the other hand, were submitted on more irregular basis, most either during periods of economic hardship, such as during the South Sea Crisis and after the imposition of sanctions on the colonies, or regarding bills endeavouring to regulate trade and commerce (most notable in the cases of proposed regulations on the East India Company). Even though a complicated combination of different factors, the origin of the petitions was one of the most significant factors determining in whose names the petitions were presented.

3.2.1 Boroughs and Other Localities

Most of the petitions in the first category were submitted from boroughs, though also including a number of petitions from other sorts of localities³⁶⁷. Despite being an established part of local government in England and Wales (and, in the form of burghs, in Scotland), the concept of borough could refer to a variety of different sorts of administrative entities. In most cases, the concept referred to incorporated boroughs, also known as corporations (though unincorporated towns, too, could be referred to as boroughs). Some of the boroughs also possessed the privileges usually vested in counties, often referred to as county boroughs or county corporates³⁶⁸. Boroughs could also function as constituencies, or parliamentary boroughs. In such cases, the boroughs can be further divided into different categories according to the definition of franchise, the most significant

³⁶⁶ According to H.T. Dickinson, 'the Quakers were a tiny group with no direct representation in parliament, but they were the first to develop a nationwide pyramid structure of closely linked cells', meeting on regular basis. 'Through this structure', Dickinson argues, 'the Quakers developed the capacity to engage in regular, constant and peaceful political agitation', both on local and national level. Dickinson 1994, 83 - 84.

³⁶⁷ Including parishes, liberties, unincorporated towns, and London liveries. Most administrative duties and functions in eighteenth-century Britain were carried out on the local level. Although most commonly endeavouring to influence the conduct of the central government, most petitioners remained far more familiar with the conduct of the local government. Frank O'Gorman, among others, has concluded that 'the degree of decentralization of state power was remarkable and, arguably, increasing during the century'. O'Gorman 2006, 135, 139.

³⁶⁸ At least Bristol, Canterbury, Carmarthen, Chester, Coventry, Exeter, Gloucester, Haverford West, Leicester, Lichfield, Lincoln, London, Kingston upon Hull, Newcastle upon Tyne, Norwich, Nottingham, Poole, Southampton, Worcester, and York possessed such a status. In Norwich, the courts of the county corporate convened just before those of the wider county. In August 1746, for instance, the justices attended the city assizes in the Norwich Guildhall before moving to Norwich Castle, marking the beginning of the county assizes. Whereas county assizes took place twice a year, many of the county corporates held assizes on annual basis. Durston 2017, 141; Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 313.

of them being scot-and-lots, potwalloper, burgh-based boroughs, corporation-based boroughs, freeman boroughs, and freeholder boroughs³⁶⁹. Boroughs without constituency status, on the other hand, were represented in parliament through county constituencies³⁷⁰. Although most towns in England and Wales remained unincorporated throughout the eighteenth century³⁷¹, almost all of the borough petitions studied in this thesis were submitted from (incorporated) parliamentary boroughs³⁷². This is mostly a consequence of two factors. First, the administration of such boroughs tended to operate on more regular basis than

³⁶⁹ Franchise in eighteenth-century boroughs was, indeed, notoriously complicated. The freemen boroughs constituted the most numerous group of borough constituencies (92), granting the right to vote to those declared as freemen (a criterion that greatly varied from borough to borough). In the 37 scot-and-lot boroughs, on the other hand, the franchise went, to quote Frank O'Gorman, 'to resident householders or occupiers of household property' paying the local poor rate. In burgh-based boroughs (29), the franchise was associated with specific pieces of land and property. In such cases, it was often restricted to a rather limited group of influential landowners, severely reducing the scale of the electorate. Corporation-based boroughs (27), on the other hand, limited the franchise to the members of the corporation. In most cases such a franchise severely restricted the scale of the electorate, often consisting of the mayor and aldermen and containing, on average, but 37 voters. According to Joanna Innes and Nicholas Rogers, all Scottish burgh constituencies defined their franchise in such a manner. In the 12 potwalloper boroughs (also known as householder boroughs), such as Northampton, all male inhabitants not receiving poor relief or charity were entitled to vote. In the six freeholder boroughs, the franchise was restricted to those holding freeholds. The contrast with county constituencies is more than conspicuous. Whereas in borough constituencies the franchise varied from borough to borough, counties formed a rather consistent group of constituencies with regard to the right to vote; those possessing freehold property worth at least 40 shilling in annual rent could vote in the such constituencies. Phillips 2014, 37 - 38, 41 - 42, 61 - 62, 68 - 72, 174 - 176, 203 - 204; Innes & Rogers 2000, 557 - 558; Black 2008, 206 - 207; Dickinson 1994, 16 - 22, 31 - 33; O'Gorman 2006, 140 - 141.

³⁷⁰ Borsay 1990a, 27; Innes & Rogers 2000, 558.

³⁷¹ There were 44 incorporated boroughs and cities in England in 1540, rising to 182 - 193 by 1640 (including Wales). During the eighteenth century, the amount of incorporated boroughs and cities remained rather stable; the amount of such settlements stagnating at around 200. By 1835 the number had increased to 246. Withington 2004, 207 - 208; Dickinson 1994, 99- 100; Durston 2017, 119 - 120; O'Gorman 2006, 114 - 115; Innes & Rogers 2000, 530 - 531. The rather modest number of incorporated towns and cities meant that most towns in Britain remained unincorporated throughout the eighteenth century; later seventeenth-century and early eighteenth-century England and Wales containing around 750 to over 900 towns, depending on the definition. Scotland, on the other hand, contained around 80 towns during the period. Innes & Rogers 2000, 530 - 531. Frank O'Gorman has noted that 'non-corporate towns were governed by whatever was left over from the old manorial system, an unlikely collection of Courts Leet, Lords of the Manor and parish vestries'. O'Gorman 2006, 114. See also O'Gorman 2006, 139; Dickinson 1994, 100 - 103; Innes & Rogers 2000, 530 - 534; Chandler 2007, 11 - 12.

³⁷² Numerous incorporated boroughs also functioned as constituencies. Of the 314 constituencies in eighteenth-century Britain, 230 were some sort of borough constituencies. Many of them were, indeed, incorporated, but borough constituencies could also be unincorporated. HoP/Constituencies 1715 - 1754; HoP/Constituencies 1715 - 1754: Appendix I; HoP/Constituencies 1754 - 1790. The connection between the constituency status and the amount of inhabitants remained vague throughout the century. Some of the borough constituencies were not even proper towns; certain rotten boroughs containing less than 10 voters. Manchester and Birmingham, on the other hand, remained unincorporated and without the constituency status until 1832, though each of them containing around 20 000 inhabitants in 1750. O'Gorman 2006, 115, 139; Innes 2002, 110; Dickinson 1994, 100 - 101; Withington 2004, 207 - 208.

those in most boroughs, making it easier to organise petitions. Second, boroughs that also functioned as constituencies often had a more direct relationship with their representatives in parliament, encouraging the corporations to petition them.

The predominance of members of the local government is more than evident in the petitions submitted from boroughs and other localities. Of the 809 references petitioners used to describe themselves, 493 referred to some sort of an administrative position or structure³⁷³, as is demonstrated in Figure 3 (Primary Petitioners in Petitions from Boroughs and Other Localities, 1721 - 1776). *Mayor* (138 references), in most cases the administrative head of the corporation, is the most common title mentioned in the petitions from boroughs and other localities³⁷⁴. The process of choosing mayors was often determined locally. In Liverpool, for instance, the mayor was annually elected by the freemen of the town. In Norwich, on the other hand, the freemen elected the mayor from among its 24 aldermen. Besides serving as a justice of the quorum during the mayoralty, the mayor became a justice of the peace after finishing his term. However, in most cases, the mayors were elected by the members of the common council, severely

³⁷³ A complete list of titles and characterisations petitioners used to describe themselves is included in *Appendix 1*.

³⁷⁴ Including 41 references to the lord mayors of London and York. All of the references to mayors occurred in petitions from corporate boroughs, with the exception of St Mawes. Willis Browne, a member of parliament for Buckingham in 1705 - 1708 and the author of *Notitia Parliamentaria*, noted that St Mawes had 'never before sent members, nor had it any corporation: but like St. Germain's was under a portreeve, occasionally called mayor.' Browne 1750. The studied petitions contain but two references to portreeves, both of them occurring in petitions from Honiton. Honiton, an unincorporated parliamentary borough of 300 to 400 electors in 1715 - 1754, was headed by the portreeve and the bailiff, chosen annually. The *Parliamentary Gazette* of 1851 notes, however, that the jurisdiction in the borough 'is vested in the county magistrates, the portreeve merely acting as the returnng officers'. Fullarton 1851, 413; Jewitt 1895, 148; HoP/Honiton 1715 - 1754. For disputes regarding the franchise of the borough, see Merewether & Stephens 1835, 2009 - 2011.

restricting the electorate.³⁷⁵ Such petitions also contained other references to influential members of borough administration. Officers such as bailiffs (29)³⁷⁶, recorders (16)³⁷⁷, and sheriffs (10)³⁷⁸, for instance, possessed significant administrative privileges, though the exact nature of their duties varied from borough to borough. Petitions also contained numerous references to aldermen (104) and councillors (83³⁷⁹), both of whom constituted important bodies in the borough administration. Aldermen were usually of higher social standing than councillors. They also tended to possess significantly wider privileges than those in the latter case, being involved in the enforcement of by-laws and performing various judicial functions. Their exact amount and the length of their term varied both in the case of aldermen and councillors. The corporation of London, by far the largest in the country, enabled the livery companies to elect its 234 councillors on

³⁷⁵ Some of the petitioners described themselves as provosts and lord provosts (nine), the Scottish equivalents of mayor and lord mayor. In seigneurial boroughs bailiffs could manage the functions usually vested in mayors. Dickinson 1994, 99 - 100; O'Gorman 2006, 137 - 138; Innes 2002, 109 - 110; Wilson 1998, 292 - 293, 311 - 313; Innes & Rogers 2000, 531 - 533; Durston 2017, 122 - 123; Chandler 2007, 12 - 13, 20; Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 322.

³⁷⁶ The duties of bailiffs, in particular, varied significantly from borough to borough. In 40 boroughs, bailiffs served as the heads of the corporation. In around 30 additional boroughs, bailiffs could be characterised as chief officers, but in around a 100 boroughs, they remained rather minor officials. Bailiffs could also be ex officio justices of the peace, sometimes presiding over the borough sessions. The post of bailiff was usually granted as an appointment by the council. Gregory & Stevens 2000, 322; Durston 2017, 124; Innes 2002, 109 - 110; Innes & Rogers 2000, 532 - 533; Chandler 2007, 12 - 13.

³⁷⁷ Recorders, assisted by stewards, were the legal advisors to the corporation. Recorders often supervised the quarter sessions in boroughs and could also serve as justices of the peace. Both recorders and stewards were, according to Gregory J. Durston, 'barristers of at least seven years' standing'. Durston 2017, 123 - 124; Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 322; Innes 2002, 114.

³⁷⁸ The manner of appointing sheriffs varied from borough to borough. In Norwich, for instance, one of the two sheriffs was elected directly by the freemen of the city, the other one being appointed by the mayor and aldermen. H.T. Dickinson has described sheriffs as 'invariably men of property' and Frank O'Gorman as members of the gentry. In Scotland, sheriffs were usually lawyers. Black 2008, 183; Dickinson 1977, 161 - 162; Wilson 1998, 311; Chandler 2007, 16 - 17; O'Gorman 2006, 25.

³⁷⁹ Consisting of references to members of the common council (36), 'commons' (29), and 'commonalty' (18). Petitions also contained references to 'assistants' (four), 'jurats' or 'jurates' (three), and 'stewards' (three), all of them members of borough administration. Scottish petitions, on the other hand, contained several references to magistrates (21), councils (eight), and town councils (eight). In contrast to English borough constituencies, Scottish burghs were often paired with other burghs to form constituencies; nine of the 14 of such constituencies consisted of five burghs and five of four burghs. In such cases the burgh councils chose delegates whom, with the delegates from the other burghs, elected the member of parliament for the coalition of burghs. HoP/Constituencies 1715 - 1754; HoP/Constituencies 1754 - 1790; Black 2008, 207. Scottish constituencies, often returning but one representative each, contained, on average, smaller electorates than those in England. They also tended to be more venal than the English ones. Scottish members of parliament usually provided a steady source of support for the administration in exchange for securing support for regional interests (and, sometimes, other kinds of favours). Chandler 2007, 12 - 13, 16 - 17; Innes & Rogers 2000, 553 - 554, 557 - 560; Black 2008, 207; Jupp 2006, 84; O'Gorman 2006, 140 - 141; Dickinson 1994, 14.

annual basis³⁸⁰. Its 26 aldermen, representing the wealthiest inhabitants, were elected for life. Between 1725 and 1746, the court of aldermen possessed the right to veto the decisions of the court of common council. The corporation of Norwich, on the other hand, contained 23 aldermen and 60 councillors, directly elected by its 3,400 freemen. Leicester's 24 aldermen were chosen by its 48 councillors.³⁸¹ Together with the chief officers of the borough, the aldermen and councillors formed the court of common council, an administrative court closely associated with drafting and submitting petitions³⁸². Petitions could also be submitted in the name of corporations (12) and under the common seal (27), both of them references to different combinations of the above-mentioned members of borough administration.

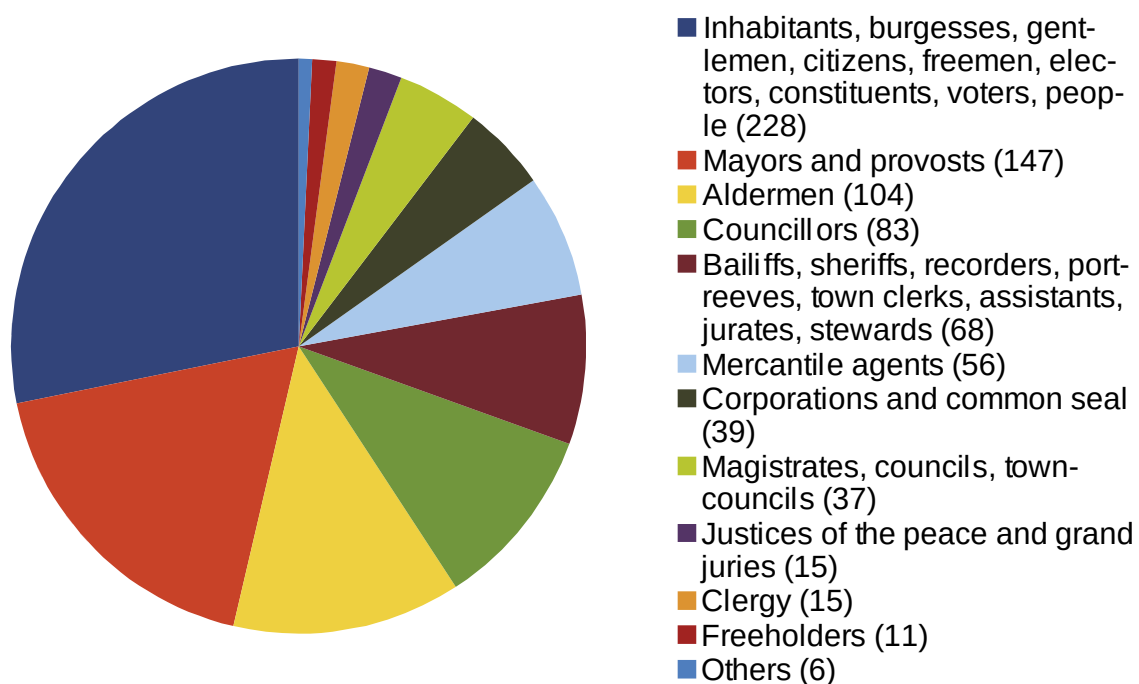


Figure 3 Primary Petitioners in Petitions from Boroughs and Other Localities, 1721-1776.

³⁸⁰ For the 'social' composition of the London common council, see, for instance, Rogers 1989, 142 - 145.

³⁸¹ O'Gorman 2006, 137 - 138; Rogers 1990, 270 - 288; Wilson 1998, 292 - 293, 311 - 312; Dickinson 1994, 99 - 101, 117 - 120; Phillips 2014, 104 - 105; Durston 2017, 122 - 124, 234 - 235; Durston 2012, 295 - 296; Borsay 1990a, 24 - 25; Withington 2004, 205 - 206; Fraser 1961, 200 - 201; Chandler 2007, 12 - 13, 15 - 16; Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 322.

³⁸² Numerous petitioners asserted that their meeting had occurred in the council, council chamber, or common council (75).

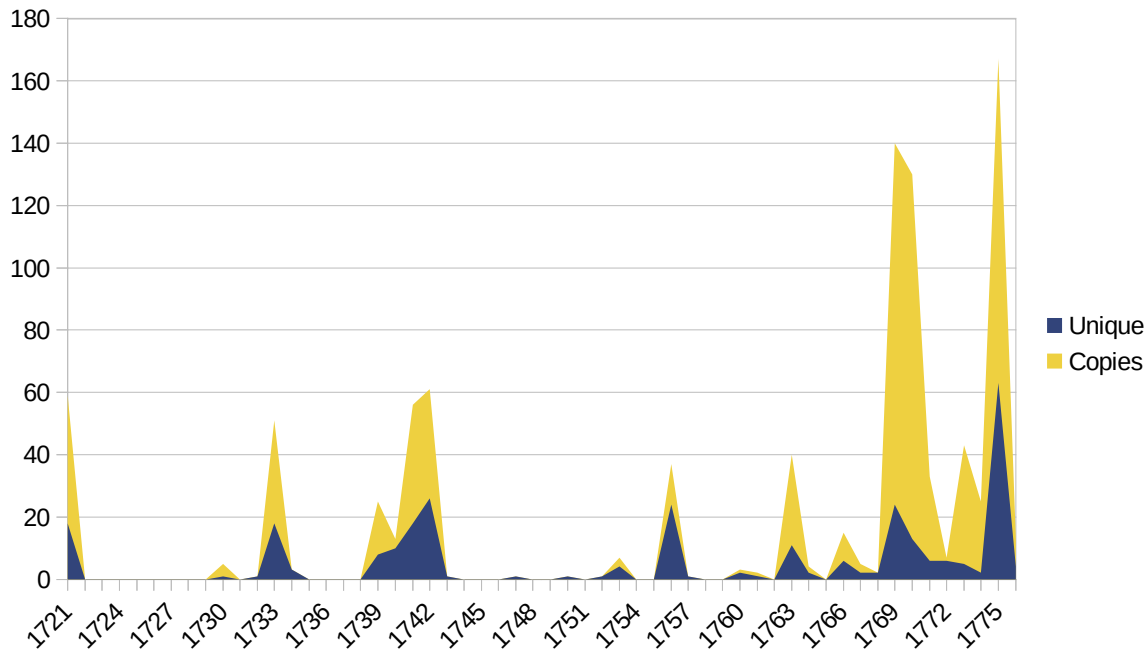


Figure 4: Incidence of Petitions from Boroughs and Other Localities, 1721–1776.

Borough functionaries could submit petitions without consulting the inhabitants of their boroughs and other localities. Yet, in most cases, petitions also contained references to actors without specific administrative positions or functions. Petitioners were often submitted in the name of inhabitants (75³⁸³), burgesses (66³⁸⁴), gentlemen (29), citizens (19³⁸⁵), freemen (17³⁸⁶), electors (13³⁸⁷), and constituents (13). Such titles could refer to a variety of different occupations, but it is safe to assume that most of the actors were entitled to vote. It is evident in the case of titles such as *constituent* and *voter*, but to determine whether citizens, freemen,

³⁸³ Often referred to as 'principal inhabitants'. For criticism on petitions from such actors, see, for instance, Loft 2016, 17. The anti-excise petitioners from Ripon, a burgh-based constituency of around 180 voters, submitted a petition to one of their representatives in the name of the people of Ripon. Ripon 1733 (#034); HoP/Ripon 1715 - 1754. According to Paul Langford, the petition was submitted by the chief retailers of the borough. Langford 1975, 56 - 57.

³⁸⁴ Including references to chief burgesses, capital burgesses, principal burgesses, capital and inferior burgesses, common burgesses, comburgesses, and free burgesses. Burgesses' role in local government could vary significantly. Westminster, for instance, 'was governed by twelve burgesses chosen for life by the High Steward'. Dickinson 1994, 100 - 101. In most towns and cities, however, they remained less influential than in the unincorporated Westminster. For the use of similar attributes in parliamentary petitions, see, for instance, Loft 2019a, 355.

³⁸⁵ Including references to chief citizens, capital citizens, principal citizens, free and independent citizens, and general meeting of free citizens.

³⁸⁶ Including references to independent freemen.

³⁸⁷ Including references such as 'independent electors', as in the Honiton petition of 1742, and 'committee of the electors', as in the Westminster petition of 1770. Honiton 1742 (#139); Westminster 1770 (#328). The Liskeard petition of 1740 was submitted in the name of 'the mayor, grand jury, and every voter in the town except three'. Liskeard 1740 (#078). The claim is rather credible as the electorate of Liskeard consisted of around 30 freemen in 1740. HoP/Liskeard 1715 - 1754.

gentlemen, burgesses, and inhabitants were entitled to vote is more complicated. Freeman, for instance, possessed the right to vote in certain boroughs (though the qualification of becoming a freeman varied from borough to borough)³⁸⁸. The petitions that included references to freemen were submitted from Bedford, Bristol, Canterbury, Coventry, Exeter, Gloucester, Liverpool, Plymouth, St Mawes, Tewkesbury, Worcester, and York - all of them constituencies that enabled freemen to participate in parliamentary elections. It is more than likely that most of the citizens³⁸⁹, gentlemen³⁹⁰, and burgesses³⁹¹ were also enfranchised actors, though their right to participate in elections is harder to confirm.³⁹² The title of inhabitant, on the other hand, probably functioned as a reference to unenfranchised actors, though the exact nature of such references are harder to determine.

The most interesting feature of such references is not their scale as such, but their function. The copious references to actors without an official position in the local government demonstrate petitioners' endeavour to represent the petitions as the collective voices of their boroughs. Such argumentation conferred two particular advantages. First, assertions of political consensus could be used as counter-arguments against accusations of self-interest and partisanship³⁹³. Second, constituencies could use claims of consensus to pressure their representatives in parliament³⁹⁴. But claims of consensus could also provoke protests and counter-

³⁸⁸ In 92 constituencies, according to Frank O'Gorman. O'Gorman further notes that the status 'could be obtained by a variety of different methods, including by apprenticeship, by marriage to the daughter of a freeman and by purchase'. O'Gorman 2006, 140. See also Black 2008, 206 - 207. Freeman were usually granted certain privileges, such as practicing a trade, buying and selling goods, and using the properties and charities of the town. They could also be exempted from certain duties. Due to their right to vote, corporations could create a large number of freemen to influence the outcome of parliamentary elections. Dickinson 1994, 112 - 120; Phillips 2014, 104 - 106; Wilson 1998, 297 - 300; 311 - 313, 350 - 351; Innes & Rogers 2000, 531 - 532; Knights 2005, 69 - 70, 85. H.T. Dickinson has noted that although corporations were sometimes restricted oligarchies, their interest of corporations were 'rarely entirely divorced from the interests of the freemen or the other moderately prosperous inhabitants of the borough'. Dickinson 1994, 101 - 102.

³⁸⁹ A title that could refer to freemen residing in cities.

³⁹⁰ In most cases, a reference to a member of the upper circles of society, described as being part of the 'elite' by John A. Phillips. Phillips 2014, 321 - 322; Langford 1975, 153 - 154, 156; Jupp 2006, 93 - 94.

³⁹¹ Usually a rather close equivalent of a freeman, in most cases associated with mercantile and other closely-connected occupations and professions. Dickinson 1994, 99 - 101, 117 - 120; Durston 2017, 122 - 123; Durston 2012, 311 - 314.

³⁹² Although common in petitions from boroughs and other localities, titles such as citizens (0), burgesses (1), inhabitants, and freemen (1) were rare in petitions from counties. County petitions, however, contained 53 references to gentlemen. For engaging unenfranchised agents in the process of petitioning, see, for instance, Loft 2019a, 351.

³⁹³ Philip Loft argues that the emphasis on the scale of subscriptions was often used in a rather similar manner. He claims 'that greater numbers signed petitions in order to swear to the truth of an argument, or to demonstrate that all the constitutive interests of society were onside'. Loft 2019a, 344.

³⁹⁴ Efforts to represent their petitions as the collective voices of their communities is something that united petitions from boroughs and counties. In order to emphasise their claims of unity, petitioners often asserted that their petitions had been agreed unanimously. Even when dissent occurred, petitioners emphasised the scale of support in favour of the petitions. The grand inquest of Cornwall, for instance, claimed in 1740 that their instructions had been signed by 'all the gentlemen of the grand jury

petitions. The counter-petitioners from Liverpool, for instance, challenged the legitimacy of a pro-Wilkes petition by representing it as 'resolved on by a small, partial, and inconsiderable meeting of the inhabitants of this town', organised 'to serve the sinister views of factious and designing men'³⁹⁵. Instead of representing the general sense of Liverpool, the petition embodied the 'tumultuous and riotous proceedings' and the 'loose and violent opinions of the populace'.³⁹⁶ Counter-petitions could also be used to delegitimise petitions submitted by the chief officers of boroughs and corporations. A counter-petition in 1742, submitted in the name of the Corporation of Guardians³⁹⁷, denounced the petition presented in the name of the mayor, aldermen, and citizens of Worcester³⁹⁸. The counter-petitioners described the petition 'so assuming, so menacing, and so indecent a nature, so derogatory to [the] honour and just merits [of their representatives], so repugnant to truth and justice' that it was 'disagreeable to almost all [of their] constituents'.³⁹⁹ Though formally criticising the tone of the corporate petition, the petitioners also implied that the corporation did not represent the general sense of its inhabitants.

3.2.2 Counties

Despite the similarities regarding their content, petitioners' descriptions of themselves differed petitions from boroughs and other localities from those submitted from counties. The presence of mercantile actors is one of the factors distinguishing borough and county petitions. Whereas borough petitions contained 56 references to mercantile actors⁴⁰⁰, county petitions contained but three references to

(except one)¹. Cornwall 1740 (#092). Regardless of their claims, however, corporations, counties, and other settlements and administrative units tended to remain far from harmonious in regard to parliamentary politics. For examples of conflicts within corporations, see, for instance, Dickinson 1994, 107 - 115; Wilson 1998, 358 - 359, 386 - 387.

³⁹⁵ The petition was submitted in the name of 'the freemen and inhabitants' of Liverpool. Most of the papers that published the petition reported it to be 'credibly informed, [that] the Liverpool petitions is signed by near 1100 freemen, which is an undoubted majority'. Liverpool 1770 (#317). The counter-petition, on the other hand, was submitted in the name of 'the mayor, aldermen, common-council, clergy, gentlemen, merchants, tradesmen, and other principal inhabitants of this town'. Liverpool 1769 (#279).

³⁹⁶ Liverpool 1769 (#279), see also Manchester 1775 (#383). For similar accusations in the press, see, for instance, BC/OE 28 January 1749.

³⁹⁷ A corporation authorised under a local act to organise and manage the poor relief within the city. The Exeter corporation of the poor, established in 1698, consisted of the mayor, eight aldermen, and 40 guardians of which the last ones were elected by the householders paying the poor rate. Bristol, too, established a similar incorporated body during the 1690s. For the Norwich guardians of the poor, incorporated in 1712, see Wilson 1998, 311. These bodies often met, according to H.T. Dickinson, 'with hostility from the corporations over their tax-raising powers and because they claimed to be more representative of local opinion'. Dickinson 1994, 104, 110.

³⁹⁸ Worcester 1742 (#143). The corporation of Worcester criticised their representatives in parliament, Samuel Sandys and Thomas Winnington. The petition and the role of Sandys are discussed in Chapter 5.4 (Petitioners' Indirect Means of Influence).

³⁹⁹ Worcester 1742 (#142).

⁴⁰⁰ Including 19 references to merchants, 13 to traders, 11 to manufacturers, 11 to liveries and liverymen, one to ship-owners, and one to clothiers. Most of the petitions

traders, manufacturers, and liverymen. References to land-related actors is the second major factor that differs petitions from boroughs and counties. Such actors formed the basis of county petitions, as demonstrated in Figure 5 (Incidence of Petitions from Counties, 1721-1776). Borough petitions, on the other hand, contained but 11 references to freeholders. However, even though the differences in these respects are evident, one should be careful in drawing socio-economic conclusions. A significant number of primary petitioners in both borough and county petitions became described with ambiguous titles that could refer to actors associated with both mercantile and land-related occupations. Moreover, around half of the petitioners were referred to by their administrative titles without specifications of their occupation or background in general. Aldermen, councillors, and members of grand juries, for instance, could refer to a plethora of different actors. Actors who submitted petitions from boroughs could also possess freeholds in the surrounding counties. The freemen of Gloucester, for instance, petitioned the representatives of Gloucestershire⁴⁰¹, claiming that it would 'be vain' to petition 'a sharer in the late minister's councils, as well as improper to one whom we cannot acknowledge to be our legal representative'⁴⁰². In order to bolster their petition, the freemen asserted that many of them were 'freeholders likewise in the county of Gloucester'.⁴⁰³

Temporal concentration is also something that distinguishes county petitions from those submitted from boroughs and other localities. Though a clear majority of the studied petitions were submitted during the eight crises and controversies⁴⁰⁴, described in detail in Chapters 1.4.2 (Petitions) and 2.2 (English Tradition of Petitioning), the share of petitions submitted during these periods is even higher in the case of county petitions. While 86.7 per cent of the petitions from boroughs were submitted during these crises and controversies, the equivalent share in the case of county petitions was as high as 94.4 per cent. The impact of crises is even more pronounced from the perspective of published copies; 87.1 per cent in the case of petitions from boroughs and other localities and 95.8 per cent in the case of county petitions.⁴⁰⁵ Some of the differences regarding the temporal concentration of petitions can be explained, at least to some extent, by the

classified as mercantile petitions (and further discussed in Chapter 3.2.3) were submitted from boroughs, but are not included in the borough statistics. If they were, the contrast regarding the share of mercantile titles would be even more evident.

⁴⁰¹ Thomas Chester and Norborne Berkeley, both of them Tories opposing the administration. HoP/Thomas Chester; HoP/Norborne Berkeley.

⁴⁰² The first being a reference to John Selwyn, a loyal supporter of Walpole and his administration, and Benjamin Bathurst, who had defeated the 'pure Tory' candidate, Benjamin Hyett, in 1741. Hyett had been 'ten votes ahead of Bathurst in the poll but lost on a scrutiny'. HoP/John Selwyn; HoP/Gloucester 1715 - 1754.

⁴⁰³ Gloucester 1742 (#128).

⁴⁰⁴ Concerning the South Sea Company (1721), the proposed excises on wine and tobacco (1733), the Spanish depredations and Walpole (1739 - 1742), the naturalisation of Jews (1753), the loss of Minorca (1756), the duties on cider and perry (1763), John Wilkes and the Middlesex election dispute (1769 - 1771), and the hostilities in the American colonies (1775 - 1776).

⁴⁰⁵ Only seven out of the 132 county petitions and 15 out of the 360 copies were submitted and published during the years between these crises and controversies. Bor-

differences regarding the composition of petitioners in boroughs and counties. Counties submitted only two petitions against the proposed excise duties on tobacco and wine, a scheme that mostly affected the mercantile actors operating in boroughs, a modest amount if compared to the 18 petitions submitted from boroughs in 1733. In 1763, on the other hand, counties submitted seven petitions (in contrast to the eleven from boroughs) against the imposition of excise duties on cider and perry, claiming that the duties unjustly punished the planters and producers in the so-called cider counties⁴⁰⁶.

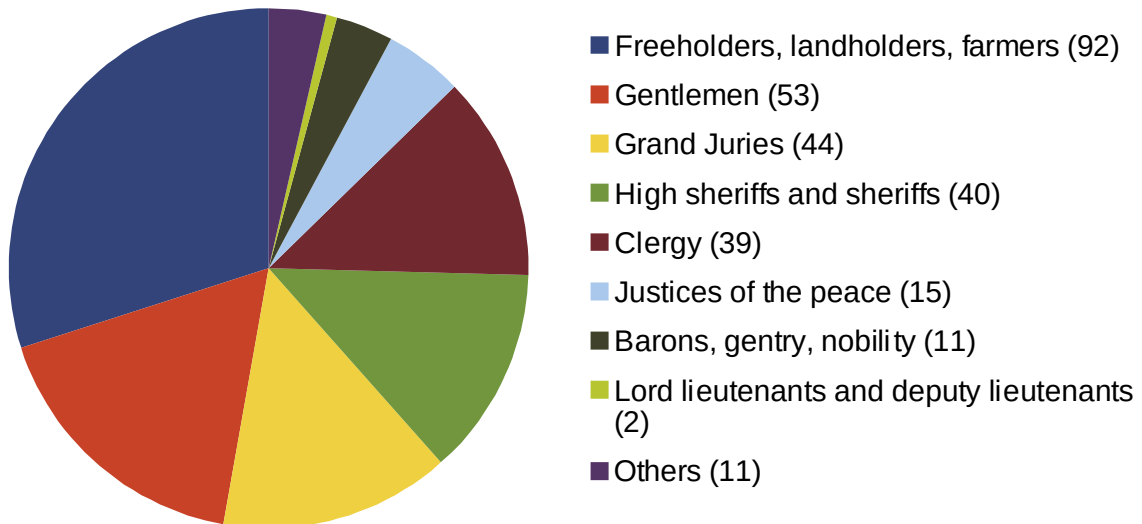


Figure 5 Primary Petitioners in Petitions from Counties, 1721–1776.

oughs, of course, remained the dominant source of petitions throughout the eighteenth century. Only in 1740 (15 petitions and 23 copies), 1743 (two petitions and three copies), and 1753 (five petitions and nine copies) did counties submit more petitions than boroughs and other localities, as demonstrated in Figure 4 (Incidence of Petitions from Boroughs and Other Localities, 1721 - 1776) and Figure 6 (Incidence of Petitions from Counties, 1721-1776).

⁴⁰⁶ Consisting of Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Monmouthshire, Devon, Somerset, and Cornwall. For further elaboration on the subject, see, for instance, Woodland 1985, 117 - 120, 122 - 123, 126 - 127, 133; Woodland 1989.

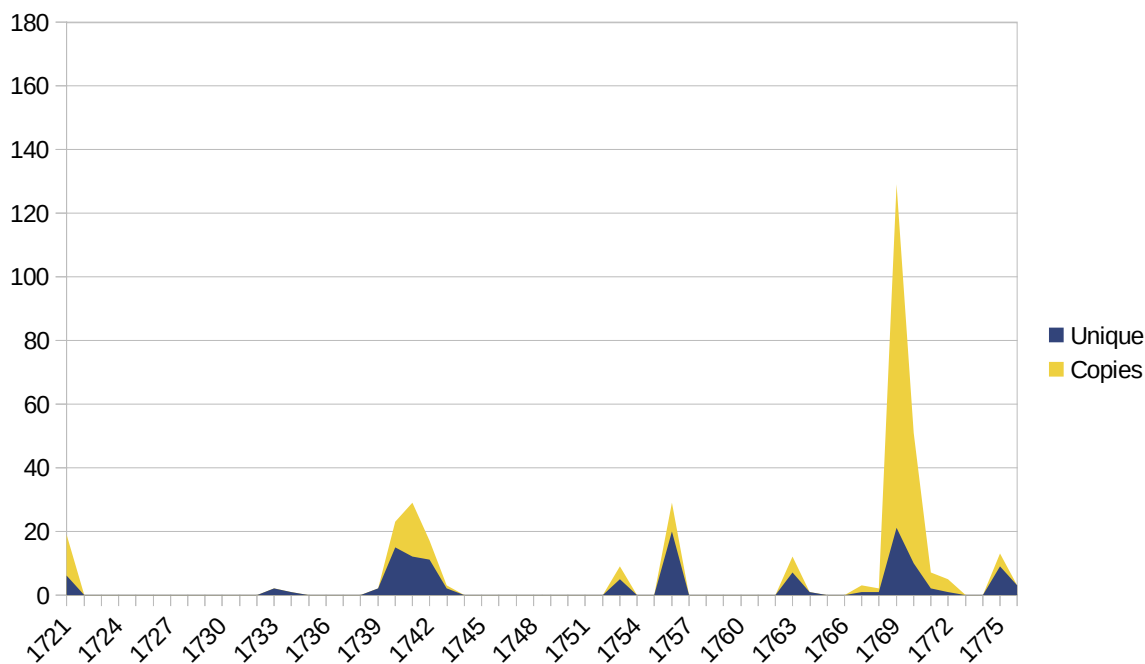


Figure 6 Incidence of Petitions from Counties, 1721–1776.

The reliance on established administrative meetings tended to confine the incidence of county petitions. A significant share of such petitions were drafted and organised during courts of quarter sessions (11 explicit references) and assizes (18 explicit references)⁴⁰⁷, the first being the lower of the county-wide courts, which dealt with criminal cases and heard appeals against decisions by local justices, and the second, handling the most serious criminal matters, considered by a pair of judges from the three courts in Westminster, the highest of the provincial courts. Both also served as important administrative meetings, though the court of quarter sessions tended to focus more on the regulatory matters within the county. The assizes convened twice a year (during Lent and summer) and courts of quarter sessions four times a year (on Epiphany, Easter, Midsummer, and Michaelmas).⁴⁰⁸ The centrality of such meetings made it harder for actors in counties to react to controversies as swiftly as those in boroughs. Whereas actors in boroughs could organise spontaneous meetings, enabling them to react promptly to controversial bills and incidents, actors in counties were often forced to wait until the chief officers and principal inhabitants convened at assizes or court of quarter sessions. It was also more convenient to organise ad hoc meetings in boroughs, most of them urban settlements with a higher concentration of population than the surrounding counties, than to convene county meetings without other

⁴⁰⁷ It is, however, more than certain that a far higher share of the county petitions were organised during the court of quarter sessions and assizes than these numbers indicate. County petitions also included two references to sessions of the head court in Ayrshire (1739) and Aberdeenshire (1740).

⁴⁰⁸ Glassey 1987, 168 - 169; O'Gorman 2006, 136 - 138; Durston 2017, 97, 105 - 119, 133 - 134, 142 - 145, 236; Chandler 2007, 3, 8 - 9; Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 315 - 316. For the social aspects of assizes and quarter sessions, see Borsay 1990b, 173 - 174; Durston 2017, 142 - 143; Langford 1975, 110.

functions than to submit petitions⁴⁰⁹. There were, of course, exceptions, as the crisis regarding Wilkes' seat demonstrates. In 1769 - 1770, freeholders in numerous counties organised additional county-wide meetings to defend their rights as electors.

The influence of assizes and courts of quarter sessions is also evident from the titles petitioners used to describe themselves. County petitions contained numerous references to titles reflecting the judicial and administrative functions of such meetings. Justices of the peace (15 references), the 'mainspring of the country's criminal justice system as well as of much of its civil administration', to quote the apposite characterisation by Gregory Durston, executed significant functions from both the judicial and a more general perspective. Even though most of their tasks consisted of civil matters, ranging from poor relief to the maintenance of highways, justices of the peace (JPs) also focused on upholding statutes and ordinances in counties, processing all but the most serious crimes, and issuing warrants. In contrast to most European countries of the time, JPs in England and Wales were usually unpaid and untrained, often serving as part-time magistrates, most of them gaining their posts either *ex officio* or due to the prestige associated with being a JP (though the influence of the latter was significantly reduced after the seventeenth century).⁴¹⁰ Justices of the peace were usually members of the local gentry (and, towards the end of the century, of lesser gentry in particular). The acts of 1732 and 1744, further restricting the qualifications regarding property, required justices to possess freehold or copyhold property worth at least 100 pounds a year (after encumbrances). Such restrictions were designed, according to Paul Langford, 'to ensure that landowners of genuine independence would man the rural benches'.⁴¹¹ Although the number of JPs had increased from 1,200 in 1600 to over 3,000 in 1714, and to a further 8,400 in 1761, their willingness to serve as active magistrates had significantly decreased, especially among those from the highest circles of society. Durston has pointed out that in numerous counties, 'the vast majority of work was done by as few as 30 magistrates, with a handful of these men sometimes being almost run ragged'.⁴¹²

Grand juries (44 references), on the other hand, convened at assizes and courts of quarter sessions to consider criminal matters on indictment, offences

⁴⁰⁹ See, for instance, Langford 1975, 57.

⁴¹⁰ O'Gorman 2006, 136 - 138; Black 2008, 183, 191; Durston 2017, 49, 52 - 54, 67 - 70; Durston 2012, 298 - 302; Chandler 2007, 8 - 10, 20; Glassey 1987, 151 - 156, 159 - 166; Innes & Rogers 2000, 532 - 533; Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 315 - 316.

⁴¹¹ O'Gorman 2006, 25, 136; Black 2008, 95, 185, 212 - 213; Durston 2017, 50, 58 - 59, 63, 65; Innes 2000, 103 - 104; Durston 2012, 295 - 296; Durston 2012, 297 - 299, 305 - 306; Chandler 2007, 8 - 9; Dickinson 1977, 161 - 162; Langford 1992, 302 - 304; Glassey 1987, 159 - 161. For the explicitly political aspects regarding the nomination of JPs, a practice that came, more or less, to an end after 1745, see Durston 2012, 297; Durston 2017, 51 - 52.

⁴¹² O'Gorman 2006, 136 - 137; Black 2008, 185, Durston 2017, 54 - 59; Durston 2012, 305 - 306, 322 - 324. Due to the reluctance to serve as active magistrates, the role of clerical JPs increased. Gregory Durston has noted that in late eighteenth-century Lincolnshire, 47 per cent of the active JPs were clergymen. Durston 2012, 306 - 308; Durston 2017, 60 - 65; O'Gorman 2006, 137.

against 'the public peace, convenience, and good order', and presentments regarding the neglect of duties by parishes and hundreds. They were also commonly associated with petitioning. Members of the grand jury were usually considered both authoritative and representative enough to present petitions in the name of the county. Grand juries usually contained 12 to 24 members.⁴¹³ As JPs, members of grand juries were usually landed gentlemen, sometimes containing baronets and esquires. Whereas the qualification for members of petty juries stood at 10 pounds worth of freehold or copyhold, grand jurors had to possess similar forms of property for at least 80 pounds (on an annual basis). Serving as a grand juror in assizes was the most prestigious post associated with the title, something that was usually reflected in its social composition, whereas the practical requirements for serving as a grand juror in the court of quarter sessions (and, indeed, borough sessions) tended to be lower. Serving as a grand juror could also function as an assessment for the suitability of becoming a JPs. Gregory Durston has noted that 36 per cent of the grand jurors in Norfolk in 1661 - 1707 were JPs, half of whom had served as members of the grand jury before their appointment.⁴¹⁴

County petitions also contained references to lord lieutenants (one reference), deputy lieutenants (one), high sheriffs (34), and sheriffs (six). Lord lieutenants, assisted by deputy lieutenants whose number depended on the size of the county, served as the highest officials in counties. Besides being responsible for appointing the JPs and other major officials in their counties, lord lieutenants also commanded the militia. They were usually, to quote Gregory J. Durston, 'major regional aristocrat[s] that served as the main local vehicle for Crown patronage', holding the position for life.⁴¹⁵ High sheriffs, on the other hand, were responsible for managing county courts and parliamentary elections, suppressing tumultuous proceedings within the county boundaries, and nominating jurymen. Although a rather short-term post, appointed on annual basis, 'the office of [county] sheriff was not competed for, as it involved both expense and much unavoidable work' according to Lionel K.J. Glassey.⁴¹⁶ It is likely that the six references to sheriffs in county petitions referred to either under-sheriffs, appointed by the high sheriffs to manage their practical duties⁴¹⁷, or to those holding jurisdiction in towns and county corporates. The county petitions also contained explicit references to the nobility (one), barons (five), and the gentry (five).

County meetings could also have explicitly political functions. In addition to being used to draft and submit petitions, most of them concerning subjects that petitioners regarded as political, assizes and courts of quarter sessions were also used to organise elections in county constituencies. They could also be used to announce one's candidacy and to organise support for various campaigns. In

⁴¹³ Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 317 - 318; Durston 2017, 231, 236 - 242; Chandler 2007, 3; Knights 2005, 83, 109 - 110, 127 - 129.

⁴¹⁴ Durston 2017, 232 - 235; Knights 2005, 83.

⁴¹⁵ Durston 2017, 49 - 50; Chandler 2007, 8 - 9; O'Gorman 2006, 25, 136 - 137; Black 2008, 183; Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 314.

⁴¹⁶ Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 314 - 315; Jupp 2006, 93 - 94; Glassey 1987, 157.

⁴¹⁷ Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 315.

contrast to borough constituencies, most of them modest in terms of electorate and complicated in terms of franchise, electorates in county constituencies usually consisted of thousands of enfranchised actors, most of whom gained the franchise from possessing freeholds worth at least 40 shillings in annual rent⁴¹⁸. The importance of freeholders is also evident in the case of county petitions; 68.2 per cent of the petitions submitted from counties contained references to them⁴¹⁹. Most of such petitions also contained references to judicial, administrative, and clerical actors⁴²⁰, but in around a third of the cases, petitions were presented in the name of freeholders alone⁴²¹. The majority of such petitions (22 out of 33) were submitted during the crisis on Wilkes' seat. The pronounced presence of freeholders in the Wilkite petitions derived, to a large extent, from the specific circumstances of the election dispute in 1768 - 1769. Although often perceived as a general assault on the electoral rights of Englishmen, most of his supporters being occupied in other branches, the freeholders tended to interpret the decision to exclude Wilkes from representing Middlesex as an attack on their particular privileges. As the election(s) had occurred in a county constituency, the votes in favour of Wilkes, de facto annulled by parliament's refusal to recognise him, had been cast by actors possessing freehold property worth at least 40 shillings a year.

3.2.3 Companies and Mercantile Meetings

The third group of petitions consists of those submitted primarily by mercantile actors (44 petitions). Merchant (19 references) and trader (13 references) were the

⁴¹⁸ Although more consistent than qualifications in borough constituencies, the 40 shilling franchise could also be interpreted in different ways. Jeremy Black has noted that the 40 shilling could 'refer to a property valuation for the land tax, to rent paid, or to annual yield'. The qualification was clarified through legislation in 1745 and 1780. Black 2008, 206. See also O'Gorman 2006, 140. Electorates in county constituencies tended to be far more numerous than those in boroughs. The 82 county constituencies (40 in England, 12 in Wales, and 30 in Scotland) contained around 60 per cent of the total electorate (being at around 340,000 in 1754), but returned only 122 members of parliament (of a total of 558). Whereas about half of the borough constituencies contained less than 100 voters (and less than 30 boroughs more than 1,000 voters), the voters in counties were usually counted in thousands, reaching 20,000 in Yorkshire. Dickinson 1994, 31 - 33; O'Gorman 2006, 140 - 141; Black 2008, 205 - 207; HoP/Constituencies 1715 - 1754: Appendix I. County constituencies tended to be less susceptible to the influence of local patronage due to the size of their electorates and the rather uniform character of the county franchise.

⁴¹⁹ County petitions also contained references to landholders (one) and farmers (one).

⁴²⁰ County petitions contained 39 references to clergy (in contrast to the 15 references in borough petitions).

⁴²¹ Renfrewshire 1739 (#061); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Middlesex 1740 (#071); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265); Kent 1769 (#267); Gloucestershire 1769 (#268); Somerset 1769 (#269); Surrey 1769 (#271); Devon 1769 (#272); Wiltshire 1769 (#274); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Middlesex 1769 (#291); Middlesex 1769 (#292); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Essex 1769 (#298); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Middlesex 1769 (#302); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); Surrey 1770 (#314); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Yorkshire 1770 (#319); Middlesex 1770 (#320); Herefordshire 1770 (#330); Durham 1770 (#331); Durham 1770 (#332); Berkshire 1775 (#394); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

most common titles petitioners used to describe themselves in such petitions⁴²². Petitions submitted in the name of merchants and traders also tended to be the most explicitly political of the mercantile petitions, most of them concerning foreign affairs and hostilities at sea⁴²³. During the late 1730s, for instance, merchants and traders submitted petitions to emphasise the destructive impact the Spanish depredations had on colonial trade. In 1737, merchants and traders involved in the trade with the British plantations in America petitioned the Throne to condemn 'these violent and unjust proceedings'. The petitioners claimed that the depredations endangered 'that valuable branch of commerce' and, thus, also 'the interest of Great Britain'⁴²⁴. Though most of the early petitions had requested, or

⁴²² Widely considered to be legitimate actors by both the administration and the opposition. The anti-Walpolean opposition, in particular, was eager to represent the mercantile part of the nation as an united force opposing the administration. Members of parliament could argue that 'no time can be improper for our taking into our consideration a petition signed by such a number of considerable traders', like Micajah Perry, a tobacco merchant representing London, during the debate on a mercantile petition against excises in 1734, and that merchants 'are the best judges' when discussing the consequences of the Convention of Pardo, and that merchants 'are the best judges' regarding the consequences of the Convention of Pardo, as William Wyndham, the parliamentary leader of the Tories, argued in 1739. Samuel Sandys, on the other hand, described the merchants of London as 'a body of too much importance to be thus contemptuously rejected'. Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 239 - 241/Micajah Perry (London); Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 1058/Micajah Perry (London); Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 1306 - 1308/William Wyndham (Somerset); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 130/Samuel Sandys; HoP/Micajah Perry; HoP/William Wyndham. See also Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 237 - 238 (HoC)/John Barnard (London); Cobbett 1739 - 1741 (HoL) Duke of Argyll; Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 134 - 135/William Pulteney (Middlesex); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 119/John Barnard (London); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 123 - 124/John Barnard (London); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 132 - 134/Henry Pelham (Sussex); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 859 - 860/Thomas Pownall (Tregony); Cobbett 1774 - 1777 (HoC) 246/William Mayne (Canterbury). Most of the mercantile petitions were organised in boroughs, though mercantile petitions could also be submitted from counties. See, for instance, Stan-nators 1753 (#177) and Manufacturers 1768 (#259).

⁴²³ For exceptions, see Nottingham 1733 (#042) and Yorkshire 1768 (#258).

⁴²⁴ The preamble published alongside the petition in the *Gentleman's Magazine* represented the petition as a reaction against the seizures of George (of Bristol) and Dispatch and Royal Jane (of London), the last of which had carried, among other valuable commodities, 200 hogsheads of sugar. GM/October 1737. Merchants 1737 (#056), see also Dundee 1739 (#068) and Merchants 1739 (#069). The mercantile influence on petitions war particularly strong during the campaign against the Spaniards. The 1738 petition from London, for instance, was presented to the House of Commons by Micajah Perry, a prominent Opposition Whig. Besides representing London, the commercial capital of Britain, Perry was also deeply involved in colonial trade; his grandfather being, according to Eveline Cruickshanks, 'the greatest tobacco merchant in England and agent for Virginia'. Perry inherited the business before his parliamentary career and continued to manage the affairs of the Virginia planters in London while serving in parliament. Already in 1732 - 1733 had Perry, alongside John Barnard, a prominent wine merchant from London, led the campaign against the proposed excise duties. Cruickshanks 1984, 39 - 40; Dickinson 1984, 54 - 57; Black 1984b, 154; Dickinson 1994, 68, 210 - 211; Langford 1992, 50 - 53; Black 2004, 73 - 75; Wilson 1998, 140 - 142, 163 - 165; Price 1983, 259; HoP/Micajah Perry. H.T. Dickinson has also emphasised the role of the S.S.C., which held trading privileges with the Spanish America, in pressuring the administration to declare war on Spain. Dickinson 1994, 62.

demanded, the government to use force to suppress the *Guarda Costa*, mercantile actors continued to submit petitions even after the declaration of war in 1739. Merchants and traders from London, for instance, submitted a petition to the House of Commons in 1742, complaining of the 'growing insolence of the Spanish privateers' and criticising the shortage of protection for mercantile ships. The petitioners claimed that around 'three hundred [British] ships and vessels' had been seized and carried into Spanish ports during the course of war, many of whose capture could have been prevented if British 'ships of war [had] been properly station[e]d, and the commanders [had] kept strictly to their duty'.⁴²⁵ Due to the emphasis on foreign affairs, most of the merchants and traders who submitted petitions were involved in colonial trade. In 11 out of the 19, cases merchants and traders described themselves as actors having a mercantile interest regarding the colonies.

The emphasis on foreign affairs became even more pronounced in 1775 - 1776. However, whereas most petitions during the late 1730s urged the administration to declare war on Spain, the mercantile petitioners in 1775 - 1776 tended to favour reconciliation⁴²⁶. In such cases, merchants and traders used petitions to emphasise the egregious impact the hostilities had on commerce, interrupting

⁴²⁵ The petitioners claimed that there had been 'various neglects and delays in the appointment and sending out of convoys' and 'that out of those few, which [had] been granted, some of the commanders have paid so little regard to the ships under their care, that they have deserted them at sea, and left them as a prey to the enemy'. *Merchants 1742* (#155). H.T. Dickinson has argued that 'in 1739 many independent merchants, in both London and the other major ports, combined with the South Sea Company in whipping up public opinion, petitioning parliament and lobbying MPs in order to ensure that the government would attempt to protect British ships from Spanish attacks'. According to Dickinson's normative assessment, 'this public clamour reached such heights that it drove Britain into an unnecessary and largely unsuccessful war with Spain that eventually brought Walpole down'. Dickinson 1994, 68. See also Wilson 1998, 163 - 165; Rogers 1989, 56 - 63.

⁴²⁶ For exceptions, see *Merchants 1775* (#378) and *Merchants 1775* (#411). Although a combination of numerous factors, the change was certainly influenced by the changing character of the parliamentary opposition. During the 1730s the administration was opposed by an organised opposition coalition of Tories and Opposition Whigs, united by their repugnance of Robert Walpole. But whereas the late-Walpolean opposition remained determined to replace the prime minister, the parliamentary opposition during the 1770s was of different character. Keith Perry has aptly noted that 'the chief reasons for the failure of the opposition to the American policy of North's administration lay in the near unanimity of political support for parliamentary sovereignty, ... the divisions within the parliamentary opposition, the weakness of extra-parliamentary movements and the pressures of patriotism reinforced by the entry of the Bourbon powers into the arena'. Perry 1990, 96. It is probable that petitioners, and mercantile petitioners among them, supposed that a crisis concerning the empire could be most effectively addressed by encouraging the King to intervene, especially when ministers still served the Throne rather than parliament. It is also safe to assume that the use of petitions in 1775 - 1776 was influenced by the example of Wilkesite petitioners, using addresses to the Throne to increase the pressure on parliament.

the trade with the colonies⁴²⁷, thus threatening 'thousands of industrious artificers and manufactures with utter ruin'⁴²⁸. Merchants and traders often used their expertise to demonstrate the importance of colonial trade to Britain⁴²⁹. The merchants, traders, and manufacturers of Bristol, for instance, argued that their city alone had received 'more than one million bushels of wheat' from the colonies during the previous 12 months⁴³⁰. The merchants and traders of London, on the other hand, claimed to have 'great reason to believe, from the best information they can obtain', that the trade between the North American colonies and London amounted to up to two million pounds 'and upwards' on annual basis⁴³¹. Most of the mercantile petitions in 1775 - 1776 criticised the government's American policy in general, but merchants and traders could also focus on the grievous effects of single acts. At least three of the petitions criticised the bill that would become the New England Trade and Fisheries Act, restraining the trade between the colonies in New England and Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies in the West Indies⁴³², claiming that it would devastate the British fishing industry (and, thus, benefit the French)⁴³³. Merchants trading to the West Indies, on the other hand, petitioned the House of Commons to voice their concerns regarding the First Continental Congress, a meeting of the delegates from 12 colonies in Philadelphia in September and October 1774 for organising counter-measures against the coercive legislation imposed by parliament⁴³⁴, and the colonial endeavours to ban the importation of 'melasses, syrups, paneles, coffee, or pimento, from the British plantations' if the so-called Coercive Acts were not repealed⁴³⁵.

⁴²⁷ See, for instance, Merchants 1775 (#373), Merchants 1775 (#377), and Merchants 1775 (#379). For references to planters (3), see Merchants 1739 (#069); Merchants 1775 (#386); Merchants 1775 (#387).

⁴²⁸ Merchants 1775 (#373), see also Merchants (#379); Merchants 1775 (#384); Merchants 1775 (#410); Merchants 1776 (#459).

⁴²⁹ In order to emphasise their expertise, merchants and traders could also emphasise the extent of their personal involvement in different branches of trade, as in the case of the mercantile petition from London. Merchants 1775 (#373).

⁴³⁰ In addition to the 'great quantity of other valuable commodities essential to our navigation and commerce'. Merchants 1775 (#371).

⁴³¹ The petitioners also claimed that colonial trade to London employed 'some thousands of ships and vessels ..., and many thousands of seamen are bred and maintained, thereby encreasing the naval strength and power of Great Britain'. Merchants 1775 (#373). An another mercantile petition from London, on the other hand, estimate that the trade between the New England and London amounted up to one million pounds 'and upwards' and year. Merchants 1775 (#384).

⁴³² The act was the first of two acts passed by parliament in 1775, commonly known as the Restraining Acts. The second act, usually referred to as the Trade Act of 1775, extended the sanctions the New England Restraining Act had imposed on the colonies of New England to colonies that had joined the Continental Association and the boycott campaign. Magra 2009, 142 -158; McCurry 1971, 150 - 152.

⁴³³ Merchants 1775 (#379); Merchants 1775 (#384); Merchants 1775 (#410).

⁴³⁴ Georgia did not send delegates to the First Continental Congress, but took part in the Second, thus joining the boycott on British goods in 1775. Marson 2014, 357; Ryan 1959, 147; Irvin 2011, 146.

⁴³⁵ Merchants 1775 (#386). In order to emphasise the importance of the West Indies, the petitioners asserted that 'the British property of stock vested in the West India islands, amount upwards of thirty million sterling'. See also Merchants 1775 (#387). In order to increase the pressure on parliament to repeal the coercive legislation, the Congress threatened to impose a continent-wide boycott on British goods. The non-

Although petitions from merchants and traders form the dominant part of the mercantile petitions, such petitions could also be organised and submitted by occupational groups and mercantile bodies. The druggists, grocers, chinamen, and other dealers in tea, for instance, submitted a petition to the House of Commons in 1736, complaining of the adverse effects of the smuggling of tea had on their trade⁴³⁶. The petition of the journeymen silk-weavers in 1765 contained complaints similar to those in the petition from the dealers of tea. The petitioners claimed that the 'increase of the use and wear of all sorts of foreign wrought-silks, which are continually imported and smuggled' to Britain had reduced them and their families into 'the utmost poverty and want'. In order to alleviate the hardships of their profession, the journeymen silk-weavers prayed both the House of Commons and the House of Lords to 'grant a general prohibition of foreign wrought-silks'.⁴³⁷ Printers (one) and booksellers (four) of London, Westminster, and Edinburgh, meanwhile, submitted four petitions concerning the statutory limits of copyright in 1774⁴³⁸. Mercantile bodies, too, could submit petitions. The

importation boycott came into force on 1 December 1774 whereas the non-exportation ban was set to begin on 10 September 1775. The outbreak of hostilities in April 1775, however, severely limited the impact of the decision regarding the latter. Mars-ton 2014, 43 - 48, 73 - 74, 100 - 122; Oaks 1973, 153 - 154; Ryan 1959; Irvin 2011, 20, 26 - 27, 31 - 33; O'Gorman 2006, 192 - 194.

⁴³⁶ The petitioners claimed that they 'had the strongest reason to believe, near one half of the tea consumed in this kingdom paid no duty'. If such illicit trade of tea would not be suppressed, it would subject them and other fair traders 'under extreme difficulties in carrying on their trade, by reason of the disadvantages they were under, from the practices of smuggling', the petitioners argued. Merchants 1736 (#054).

⁴³⁷ Merchants 1765 (#248). In 1773, the journeymen weavers submitted a petition of more general nature to the Throne. As in the earlier case, the journeymen weavers used the petition to inform the petitioned of their grievances. But unlike in 1765, the journeymen in 1773 blamed their hardships on the crisis in America. Merchants 1773 (#354). The studied petitions also contained four references to manufacturers. Two of the descriptions were of a rather general nature, while half of them referred to manufacturers of broad-cloths and other woollen goods. Joanna Innes has noted that 'all sorts of affected parties might and did petition on matters of commerce, in whatever groups they chose to organize themselves'. 'Small masters and journeymen', for instance, 'might and did - not commonly, but recurrently - petition parliament seeking redress of grievances they felt as working people: seeking, for example, authority for magistrates to regulate wages, or the suppression of new machinery thought to be causing unemployment'. Innes 2005, 116.

⁴³⁸ Petitioners claiming to represent the booksellers of London and Westminster urged the House of Commons to protect their copyrights. The petitioners claimed that the Copyright Act of 1710, providing the authors of pre-1710 publications a 21 year copyright and post-1710 publications a 14 year copyright, 'did not interfere with any copy-right that might be invested in your petitioners by the common law'. Due to the interpretation, confirmed 'by a judgment of the Court of King's Bench' in 1769, 'many thousand pounds have been at different times invested in the purchase of ancient copy-rights, not protected by the statute of Queen Anne, so that the support of many families, in a great measure, depend upon the same'. Rival petitions from the booksellers of London and Westminster, the booksellers, printers, and others associated with the book trade in Edinburgh, and Alexander Donaldson disputed such claims. Booksellers & Printers 1774 (#361); Booksellers 1774 (#362); Booksellers 1774 (#363); Donaldson 1774 (#364). For the background and impact of the case of *Donaldson v. Becket*, in which the House of Lords sided with the counter-petitioners, declaring the claims of perpetual copyright void, see Rose 1988; Baloch 2007; Deazley 2003.

stannators of Cornwall, assembled at their stannary parliament, the body representing the tin-miners in the county, submitted a congratulatory petition to the Throne in 1753. The stannators, assembled at Truro, commended the King for his 'choice of a person to preside over the stannaries', a probable reference to Earl Waldegrave⁴³⁹, the lord warden of the stannaries in Cornwall and Devon from 1751 to 1763, who also presented the said petition to the Throne.⁴⁴⁰ Petitions submitted by groups organised according to their occupational status tended to produce petitions with rather specific functions, most of them concerning the conditions of specific trades and professions.

In addition to the petitions from merchants, traders, and other occupational groups, petitions could also be submitted by mercantile companies and actors associated with such companies. During the early years of the 1720s, actors associated with the South Sea Company (S.S.C.), a joint-stock company founded in 1711 to reduce the national debt⁴⁴¹, submitted such petitions to the House of Commons and the House of Lords. A group of proprietors of redeemable debts, claiming to act 'in behalf of themselves, and several thousand other persons interested therein', submitted a petition to the House of Lords in 1721 to protest against converting 'the supposed subscriptions of their debts into the stock of the said company'⁴⁴². A second petition criticising the restructuring of the company was submitted to the House of Commons in 1722 in the name of those 'who have stock allowed them' in the S.S.C.⁴⁴³.

However, the majority of petitions from mercantile companies were submitted by the East-India Company (E.I.C.)⁴⁴⁴ and actors closely associated with it. Most of the petitions from the E.I.C. were submitted either in the name of the company (five) or its court of directors (one), the executive body of the company,

⁴³⁹ After inheriting his titles in 1741, the earl became a favourite of George II. Although his reputation as 'a man of pleasure' prevented him from becoming the secretary of state after the resignation of the Duke of Bedford, the King granted him a seat in the regency council and the post of lord warden of the stannaries in 1751. From the latter, he would receive a salary of 450 pounds a year. According to J.C.D. Clark, Waldegrave 'thereby became the administrator of the Duchy of Cornwall's considerable patronage powers, and was soon at work dispensing jobs at Newcastle's behest'. Clark 2002, 48 - 52.

⁴⁴⁰ Stannators 1753 (#177). The stannary parliament that convened in 1752 - 1753 appears to have been the last parliament held in Cornwall. De la Beche 1839, 618. The studied petitions also contained references to other mercantile bodies and actors associated with such bodies; dean of guild (one), incorporations (one), masters and wardens of the company of bakers in London (one), the Edinburgh merchant company (one), and the Brotherhood of masters and pilots seamen in Kingston upon Hull (one).

⁴⁴¹ O'Gorman 2006, 70 - 71; Black 2008, 238; Jubb 1984, 134 - 136; Carlos & Neal 2006, 501 - 502; Kelly 1992, 61 - 65; Hoppit 2002, 141 - 143. Frank O'Gorman has noted that 'those national debt-holders who had mistakenly agreed to convert to South Sea stock' were recompensated after the crash, receiving between 60 and 80 per cent of their original sums. O'Gorman 2006, 70. See also Kelly 1992, 67 - 68. For mercantile petitioning in 1660 - 1714, see, for instance, Gauci 2001, 211 - 219.

⁴⁴² S.S.C. 1721 (#025).

⁴⁴³ S.S.C. 1722 (#026).

⁴⁴⁴ For the influence of E.I.C. and other chartered monopolies, see, for instance, Dickinson 1994, 60 - 66; Jupp 2006, 91.

consisting of 24 annually elected directors⁴⁴⁵, though petitions could also be submitted by certain proprietors (two⁴⁴⁶). Like most mercantile petitions, and petitions in general, those submitted by the E.I.C. were distinctively reactive; seven out of the eight petitions were submitted in 1772 - 1774 to oppose proposals to regulate the company⁴⁴⁷. In 1772, the E.I.C. submitted a petition against the report from the 'committee of secrecy appointed to enquire into the state of the East-India Company' and other endeavours to introduce legislation to regulate the company⁴⁴⁸. The company, and actors closely associated with it, submitted further six petitions in 1773 to protest against the introduction of the bill that would later become the Regulating Act of 1773. The general court of the proprietors of East India stock, for instance, argued that if passed, the act would 'effectually destroy every privilege which the petitioners hold', thus establishing 'a precedent dangerous to the property of the people at large'⁴⁴⁹. The act transformed the annual elections of the court of directors into quadrennial ones and introduced stricter voting qualifications in the general court of the E.I.C. After the passing of the act, the members of the general court had to possess at least 1,000 pounds worth of stocks (in contrast to the pre-1773 criterion of 500 pounds). The act also increased the influence and control of parliament over the company's affairs and possessions in India.⁴⁵⁰

Petitions submitted by companies and mercantile meetings represent a relatively modest portion of the studied petitions. That is, to a large extent, a consequence of three specific factors. The first of them is the emphasis on publicised petitions. As mercantile petitions tended to focus on rather specific and practical issues, most of them remained either non-public or attained little attention in the press. Petitions from occupational groups tended to focus on subjects that generated modest amounts of partisan interest in parliament. The second factor behind

⁴⁴⁵ The directors had to possess 2,000 pounds worth of stocks to stand for office. Buchan 1994, 53; Bowen 1991, 859; Bowen 1989, 192 - 193. As Perry Gauci has noted, 'the representations of the trading companies ... were usually signed by a leading company official on behalf of its membership'. Gauci 2001, 129.

⁴⁴⁶ One in the name of the general court of proprietors, in principle the sovereign body of the company, nominating its court of directors, and the other by proprietors possessing between 500 and 1,000 pounds worth of capital stock in the company. EIC 1773 (#352) and EIC 1773 (#356). Proprietors had to possess 500 pounds worth of stocks to cast a vote. Buchan 1994, 53; Elofson 1989, 954. For the structure, functions, and culture of the general court, see Bowen 1991 and Bowen 1989.

⁴⁴⁷ The court of directors submitted one petition to the Throne in 1763, congratulating George III on the Treaty of Paris, formally ending the Seven Years' War. The petitioners also praised the 'peculiar attention your Majesty has on this occasion been pleased to bestow on the interests of that great branch of the national commerce, which we have the honour to conduct'. EIC 1763 (#243).

⁴⁴⁸ EIC 1772 (#347).

⁴⁴⁹ The petitioners also argued that the bill was 'tending to destroy the liberties of the subject, from an immense addition of power it must give to the influence of the Crown'. EIC 1773 (#352). See also EIC 1773 (#356); EIC 1773 (#357); EIC 1773 (#358); EIC 1774 (#367); EIC 1774 (#369). The small-scale proprietors even 'humbly pray[ed], that this honourable House will not annex such terms to the loan requested by the East India company, as will tend to weaken the good faith and confidence, which the subjects of this country ought ever to have in the justice of the legislature'. EIC 1774 (#367).

⁴⁵⁰ O'Gorman 2006, 212 - 213; Langford 1992, 532 - 534; Elofson 1989, 953 - 974.

the modest amount of mercantile petitions is the focus on parliamentary representation. Although often submitted to parliament and members of parliament, mercantile petitions could also be addressed to other instances; petitions from the colonies, for instance, being often submitted to the Board of Trade. Third, chartered companies tended to use means other than petitions to convince parliament and members of parliament of the importance of their requests. Most of the mercantile petitions studied in this thesis became public due to their connections to wider issues and partisan disputes. When gaining traction, they were most commonly associated with explicitly political crises, initiated by economic shocks (as in 1721), controversial bills (as in 1733 and 1763), and hostilities (as in 1739 - 1740, 1756, and 1775 - 1776).

3.2.4 Subscriptions and the Emphasis on Scale

In addition to the petitioners who authored, organised, and submitted the petitions, petitions could also contain references to a more passive group of petitioners - the subscribers. Though often absent from the more active processes of drafting and organising petitions, subscribers signed the petitions to endorse petitioners' causes. The emphasis on subscriptions is also one of the features that changed most during the period from 1721 to 1776. Prior to 1768, petitions contained but scarce references to the scale of subscriptions⁴⁵¹. Petitioners could, of course, represent their petitions as being 'signed by a great number of the principal inhabitants', as in the case of the Gloucester petition in 1733⁴⁵², and claim that the meeting that produced the petition 'was the greatest appearance of gentlemen at Bodmin assizes that has been known for several years past', as in the case of the Cornwall petition in 1740⁴⁵³. Papers and pamphlets could also publish subscribers' names, though most of them referred to the actors that drafted and submitted the petitions. In most such cases, the number of names ranged from 16 to 22⁴⁵⁴. The Yorkshire petition of 1740, however, contained a list of actors present at the meeting, including 89 names in total, and the copy of the Gloucester petition of 1742 published in the *Gentleman's Magazine* noted that the petition had been signed by 67 subscribers⁴⁵⁵. The scarcity of references to the scale of subscriptions does not, however, mean that the organisers of petitions did not collect signatures to their petitions prior to the late 1760s. It is, on the contrary, safe to assume that most of the petitions contained subscriptions. However, it appears that either petitioners

⁴⁵¹ For estimates on the scale of subscriptions in petitions submitted to the House of Lords in 1688 - 1720, see Loft 2016, 2, 5.

⁴⁵² Gloucester 1733 (#033), see also the copies of the Somerset petition of 1740 (#086) published in BC/C 30 August 1740 and Great Britain's Memorial 1740 (T35834).

⁴⁵³ Cornwall 1740 (#092).

⁴⁵⁴ As in Cheshire 1740 (#084); Lancashire 1740 (#085); Devon 1740 (#089); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Kent 1753 (#168); Wiltshire 1753 (#173 [GM/October 1753; BNA/NCo 7 July 1753]); Yorkshire 1768 (#259). In the case of the Derbyshire petition of 1740, the amount of names reached 33. Derbyshire 1740 (#088 [BC/C 30 August 1740]). For similar lists published after 1768, see Merchants 1775 (#387); Merchants 1775 (#400); Lancaster 1775 (#403 [BC/LG 12 September 1775]); Southampton 1775 (#421); Devon 1775 (#447); Kingston upon Hull 1775 (#455).

⁴⁵⁵ Yorkshire 1740 (#093) and Gloucester 1742 (#128 [GM/May 1742]).

or the publishers of the petitions, or both, decided to emphasise neither the subscribers nor their scale of subscriptions.

The function and emphasis on subscriptions changed during the late 1760s. Instead of being gradual, like most changes regarding petitions, the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions⁴⁵⁶ was abrupt, and closely associated with the Wilkite protests⁴⁵⁷. The first of the studied petitions to emphasise the scale of subscriptions was submitted in 1768 by 1,247 freemen of London and 1,292 freeholders of Middlesex, encouraging George III to display 'clemency and mercy' on John Wilkes who, according to the petitioners, had been 'tempered by exile and experience'⁴⁵⁸. However, after returning to Britain in 1768, and being barred from representing Middlesex in the House of Commons in 1769, Wilkes did little to moderate his conduct, encouraging his supporters to submit mass-petitions. York⁴⁵⁹, Essex⁴⁶⁰, and Herefordshire⁴⁶¹, for instance, submitted petitions containing around 500 signatures to defend Wilkes and his right to represent Middlesex. Most of the mass-petitions, however, contained more than 1,000 subscriptions: 1,100 freemen in Liverpool (a constituency of about 2,000 voters)⁴⁶², 1,349 and 1,355 freeholders in Durham (about 3,000 voters)⁴⁶³, 1,494 freeholders in Surrey

⁴⁵⁶ Meaning petitions emphasising the scale of subscriptions. The concept can, of course, also be used to describe large-scale petitioning campaigns, mass being a reference to the total amount of submitted petitions, but in this thesis it is used to describe those petitions emphasising the scale of subscriptions. More specifically, the concept is used to refer to those petitions represented as mass-petitions (either by the petitioners themselves or by those publishing their petitions) in the above-mentioned sense. Instead of focusing on validating (or disproving) the accuracy of such claims, this thesis focuses on how such claims were used to legitimise the use of petitions.

⁴⁵⁷ H.T. Dickinson has estimated that the petitions organised by the SSBR contained nearly 60,000 signatures. Dickinson 1994, 242; Poole 2000, 34 - 36.

⁴⁵⁸ London & Middlesex 1768 (#262).

⁴⁵⁹ It was, according to its publishers, signed 'by near 500'. York 1769 (#286).

⁴⁶⁰ Essex 1769 (#298 [BC/WEPLI 16 December 1769; BC/GNDA 18 December 1769; BC/LIEP 15 December 1769]). The *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* and *Lloyd's Evening Post* further asserted that 'notwithstanding the badness of the weather, and several successive days of rain, there were supposed not less than nine hundred freeholders in town', most of them signing the petition.

⁴⁶¹ Hereford 1770 (#330 [BC/LIEP 12 January 1770; BC/LEP 11 January 1770]). The *London Evening Post* claimed it was signed 'by a majority of near 500 freeholders, and by almost all the nobility, gentry, and clergy of the county, who were unplaced, unpensioned, and unbiassed'. The paper also asserted that 'no kind of persuasion or compulsion was made use of, to induce the freeholders to sign it; on the contrary, every species of cunning was used in preventing it, and numbers of freeholders, who did not sign it, approved of it, and wished to have it in their power to join with their fellow-subjects, but my lord such-a-one, or person such-a-one, has desired them not'.

⁴⁶² Liverpool 1770 (#317 [BC/GNDA 19 January 1770; BC/IC 17 - 19 January 1770; BC/LIEP 17 - 19 January 1770; BC/MJCL 18 - 20 January 1770; BC/IC 17 - 19 January 1770; BNA/KG 16 January 1770]).

⁴⁶³ Durham 1770 (#331); Durham 1770 (#332).

(about 4,000 voters)⁴⁶⁴, 1,565 freeholders in Middlesex (about 3,500 voters)⁴⁶⁵, 1,800 freeholders in Buckinghamshire (about 4,000 voters)⁴⁶⁶, 2,445 freemen in Bristol (about 5,000 voters)⁴⁶⁷, 4,216 - 5,137 electors in Westminster (about 12,000 voters)⁴⁶⁸, and nearly 11,000 freeholders in Yorkshire (about 20,000 voters)⁴⁶⁹ signed petitions concerning the Middlesex election dispute. The emphasis on subscriptions is most evident in the Wilkite petitions. One of the most important reasons influencing the scale of subscriptions in 1768 - 1770, differing the Wilkite petitions from other petitioning campaigns, was the role of counties. Whereas the majority of petitions during most campaigns were submitted from boroughs, the Wilkite petitions tended to arrive from counties. If compared to boroughs, their franchise was rather uniform, emphasising the role of freeholders, and less vulnerable to manipulation. The amount of voters, too, tended to be significantly higher in counties, usually measured in thousands.

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- ⁴⁶⁴ Surrey 1769 (#271 [BC/MJCL 22 August 1769; BC/SJCBEP 22 August 1769; BC/LIEP 23 August 1769; BC/WEPLI 24 August 1769; BC/LC 24 August 1769; BC/GNDA 25 August 1769; BNA/KG 23 August 1769; BNA/StM 31 August 1769]). The publishers of the petition asserted that the petition was 'never once offered' in 'several parts of the county' because of 'the want of time for that purpose'. This, it was implied, made the amount of subscriptions even more respectable.
- ⁴⁶⁵ Middlesex 1769 (#292 [BC/NB 10 June 1769; BC/NB 15 November 1769; BC/DuM 3 June 1769; BC/WEPLI 30 May 1769; BC/MJCL 30 May 1769; BC/LC 30 May 1769; BC/SJCBP 27 May 1769; GM/June 1769; LM/May 1769; A Petition of the Freeholders of the County of Middlesex 1769 (T43921)]).
- ⁴⁶⁶ Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265 [BC/LC 28 November 1769; BC/LIEP 29 November 1769; BC/IC 29 November 1769; BC/GNDA 30 November 1769; BC/MJCL 28 November 1769; BC/PA 30 November 1769; BNA/DM 8 December 1769]).
- ⁴⁶⁷ Bristol 1769 (#281 [BC/PA 6 January 1770; BC/IC 5 January 1770; BC/GEP 4 January 1770]).
- ⁴⁶⁸ Westminster 1769 (#284 [BC/GNDA 6 November 1769; BC/IC 3 November 1769; BC/LC 4 November 1769; BC/LIEP 3 November 1769; BC/PA 6 November 1769; BC/WEPLI 4 November 1769; BNA/BCWG 9 November 1769; BNA/SWJ 13 November 1769]). Most of the publications claimed the petition would be submitted once it gained 5 000 subscriptions. The *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser*, on the other hand, claimed that 'a considerable number of the electors of Westminster, for presenting the petition to his Majesty, dined with Sir Robert Barnard and Mr. Jones, at the Standard Tavern, in Leicester-fields. Many loyal and constitutional toasts were drank; and a determination unanimously formed to support their own independency on every future occasion.' BC/GNDA 8 December 1769.
- ⁴⁶⁹ Yorkshire 1770 (#318). Some of the Wilkite petitioners also employed more traditional means to emphasise the scale of their support. The *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty*, for instance, claimed that the Cornwall petition of 1769 would be signed 'by nineteen out of twenty of the freeholders throughout the county'. The *London Chronicle*, *Whitehall Evening Post* or *London Intelligencer*, and *Lloyd's Evening Post*, on the other hand, claimed that 'all the gentlemen of the militia ... except two, have signed the petitions'. Cornwall 1769 (#263 [BC/MJCL 24 - 26 October 1769; BC/LC 24 - 26 October 1769; BC/WEPLI 24 - 26 October 1769; BC/LIEP 23 - 25 October 1769]). The Southwark petitioners of 1769 claimed that their petition 'was signed by more than three-fourths of the electors of Southwark, notwithstanding there are always many at sea, and the Quakers neither address nor petition the King, but as a body by themselves'. Southwark 1769 (#289). The constituency consisted of about 2,000 voters. The *Whitehall Evening Post* or *London Intelligencer* insisted that the Worcester petition of 1769 was 'so well approved of, by the citizens in general, as to have already met with the signature of almost every person to whom it has been offered for that purpose'. Worcester 1769 (#296 [BC/WEPLI 30 November - 2 December 1769]).

The emphasis on the scale of subscriptions became a standard feature of petitions after the crisis on Wilkes' seat. Numerous petitioners and publishers emphasised the scale of subscriptions during the crisis regarding the colonies in 1775 - 1776. Although the subscriptions did not reach similar scales as in 1769 - 1770, at least partly because most of them were submitted from boroughs, most of them having smaller electorates than counties, the most numerous petitions in 1775 - 1776 contained 700 to 2,700 subscriptions. During the crisis 751 of the principal traders and inhabitants of Bolton⁴⁷⁰, 756 independent electors of Southwark (a constituency containing about 2,000 voters)⁴⁷¹, 840 actors from Berkshire (about 3,000 voters)⁴⁷², 'above 900 of the gentlemen, clergy, freeholders, and traders' of Staffordshire (about 5,000 voters)⁴⁷³, 901 - 945 and 966 - 979 actors in Bristol (about 5,000 voters)⁴⁷⁴, 763 - 941 and 920 - 1,203 actors of London (about 7,000 voters)⁴⁷⁵, 1,219 respectable inhabitants of Newcastle upon Tyne (about 2,500 voters)⁴⁷⁶, 1,540 freeholders from Westmorland (about 2,000 voters)⁴⁷⁷, 1,848 gentlemen from Halifax⁴⁷⁸, around 1,900 inhabitants of Hampshire (about 5,000 voters)⁴⁷⁹, and 2,700 freeholders of Cumberland (about 4,000 voters)⁴⁸⁰ submitted petitions regarding the crisis in the colonies⁴⁸¹. Besides informing the reading publics of the scale of subscriptions, and thus implying that the petitions represented the true sense of the people, papers could also publish lists of subscribers.

⁴⁷⁰ Bolton 1775 (#405). Bolton became a constituency in 1832. Prior to the Reform Act, the freeholders of Bolton took part in elections in Lancashire.

⁴⁷¹ Southwark 1775 (#408).

⁴⁷² Berkshire 1775 (#394).

⁴⁷³ Staffordshire 1775 (#398).

⁴⁷⁴ Bristol 1775 (#370) and Merchants 1775 (#371 [BC/GNDA 13 October 1775; BC/LEP 10 - 12 October 1775; BC/GEP 12 - 14 October 1775; BC/CSW] 14 October 1775]).

⁴⁷⁵ London 1775 (#377 [BC/GEP 14 - 17 October 1775; BC/WJLPM 21 October 1775; BC/CSW] 21 October 1775; BC/LEP 14 October 1775; BC/PA 16 October 1775; BC/SJCBEP 14 - 17 October 1775; BC/MCLA 17 October 1775; GM/October 1775]) and London 1775 (#378).

⁴⁷⁶ Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#383 [BC/LEP 14 - 16 November 1775]).

⁴⁷⁷ Westmorland 1776 (#464).

⁴⁷⁸ Halifax 1775 (#404). Halifax became a parliamentary borough in 1832. Before the Reform Act, the freeholders of the parish participated in the elections in Yorkshire.

⁴⁷⁹ Hampshire 1776 (#458).

⁴⁸⁰ Cumberland 1776 (#461).

⁴⁸¹ For petitions containing from 76 to 406 subscriptions, see Coventry (400 - 406 subscriptions), Westbury, Warminster, and Trowbridge (138), Poole (144), Great Yarmouth (228 and 345), Taunton (154 and 191), Liverpool (471), Warwick (213), Hampshire (210), Colchester (125), Dumfries (122), Abingdon (115), Arundel (64), Bridgewater (147), Barnstaple (149), Carmarthen (168), Carmarthenshire (160), Nottingham (327), Kingston upon Hull (171), Lymington (130), and Sanquhar (76). Coventry 1775 (#388); Wiltshire 1775 (#389 [BC/SJCBEP 16 - 18 November 1775; BC/MCLA 20 November 1775; BC/LEP 18 - 21 November 1775; BC/LEP 21 - 23 November 1775]); Poole 1775 (#391); Great Yarmouth 1775 (#402); Great Yarmouth 1775 (#450); Taunton 1775 (#409); Taunton 1775 (#435); Liverpool 1775 (#408); Warwick 1775 (#414 [BC/LG 3 - 7 October 1775]); Hampshire 1775 (#420); Colchester 1775 (#427); Dumfries 1775 (#434); Abingdon 1775 (#437); Arundel 1775 (#439); Bridgewater 1775 (#440); Barnstaple 1775 (#441); Carmarthen 1775 (#443); Carmarthenshire 1775 (#442); Nottingham 1775 (#451); Kingston upon Hull 1775 (#453); Lymington 1776 (#462); Sanquhar 1776 (#463). See also Canterbury 1772 (#342).

Most of them contained less than 400 names⁴⁸², but they could also publish more comprehensive lists. The most numerous of such lists contained almost 1,200 individual names⁴⁸³. But whereas in 1768 - 1770 the scale of subscriptions was emphasised, in a rather distinctive manner, by the opponents of the administration, using the number of subscriptions to demonstrate the scale of the anger against the decision to exclude Wilkes from parliament, in 1775 - 1776 it was used by both the opponents and proponents of the North administration. The wider adaption of this form of persuasion indicates that the importance of scale became also recognised by those in power, either genuinely or to exploit the zeitgeist.

The late 1760s marked a rather drastic change regarding the character of representative claims. Although still emphasising their status, like most petitioners throughout the eighteenth century, petitioners also started to emphasise the scale of subscriptions⁴⁸⁴. Since 1768 - 1769, the emphasis on the scale of subscriptions increased drastically, eventually evolving into a more or less standard feature of petitioning. During the American crisis, for instance, petitioners used the scale of subscriptions to represent their petitions as the unanimous voices of their constituencies, even publishing comprehensive lists of subscribing actors. The practice of the Wilkite petitioners continued to influence petitioning even after 1776. Christopher Wyvill and the Association Movement used mass-petitions to promote parliamentary reform during the 1770s and 1780s. The campaigns against the slave trade, slavery, and Catholics also used similar means to champion their causes; the anti-Catholic petition from Kent, for instance, attained as many as 81,000 subscriptions in 1829. However, it was during the Chartist campaigns, demanding parliamentary reform, that the emphasis on scale reached its pinnacle. Petitions from the reform movement attained 1.2 million signatures in 1839, 1.4 millions in 1841, 3.3 millions in 1842, and 2 millions in 1848. The Grand

⁴⁸² Wiltshire 1775 (#389 [BC/LEP 21 - 23 November 1775]); Poole 1775 (#391); Warwick 1775 (#414 [BC/LG 3 - 7 October 1775]); Hampshire 1775 (#420); Colchester 1775 (#427); Plymouth 1775 (#428); Dumfries 1775 (#434); Taunton 1775 (#435); Abingdon 1775 (#437); Arundel 1775 (#439); Bridgewater 1775 (#440); Barnstaple 1775 (#441); Carmarthenshire 1775 (#442); Carmarthen 1775 (#443); Great Yarmouth 1775 (#450); Nottingham 1775 (#451); Kingston upon Hull 1775 (#453); Lymington 1776 (#462); Sanquhar (#463).

⁴⁸³ Bristol 1775 (#370 [BC/LG 3 - 7 October 1775]); Merchants 1775 (#371 [BC/LEP 10 - 12 October 1775]); London 1775 (#377 [BC/LEP 14 October 1775; BC/PA 16 October 1775]); London 1775 (#378 [BC/LG 10 - 14 October 1775; BC/PA 16 October 1775; BC/LEP 14 October 1775]); Coventry 1775 (#388 [BC/LEP 21 - 24 October 1775]); Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393 [BC/LEP 14 - 16 November 1775]); Berkshire 1775 (#394 [BC/LEP 23 - 25 November 1775]).

⁴⁸⁴ Philip Loft, however, remains sceptical on how dramatic that change actually was. He has pointed out that those emphasising the 1760s tend to ignore 'the fact that many pre-1760 petitions were subscribed by large numbers'. Loft 2019a, 345. Even if concluding, on the basis of the publicised petitions studied in this thesis, that the Wilkite campaign was, indeed, a watershed of some sort, I remain somewhat sympathetic towards his assertion. It is entirely possible that petitioners emphasised, in one form or another, the scale of subscriptions throughout the eighteenth century. But if petitions were commonly subscribed 'by large numbers', as Loft argues, why was their scale not emphasised by those publishing petitions? That something changed during the 1760s with regard to the emphasis on scale, is - I reckon - beyond doubt. But what exactly changed, and how, is something that future studies could shed more light on.

Petition of 1842 was six miles long and was accompanied to parliament by 50,000 members of the public.⁴⁸⁵ Rather than being the first to emphasise the scale of subscriptions, however, the Wilkites had revived a far older feature of petitioning. Actors defending episcopal government, for instance, had submitted mass-petitions in 1641 - 1642, as had those promoting restoration in 1659 - 1660. The most notable of the pre-1721 petitions emphasising the scale of subscriptions was the petition from London in 1680. Requesting the King to let the parliament sit, the petition attracted around 15,000 to 18,000 signatures, comprising a list of sheets around 52 yards long. However, despite being used during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, petitions emphasising scale in such a manner remained rarities.⁴⁸⁶

The emphasis on scale and the emphasis on status should not, however, be seen as mutually exclusive⁴⁸⁷. Although the emphasis on scale increased significantly after the late 1760s, petitioners (and publishers) continued to emphasise their status. The Wilkite petitioners, for instance, tended to emphasise their status as freeholders. Although the exact nature of the title varied from case to case, it usually signified that the actors were entitled to vote, thus possessing freehold land worth at least 40 shillings per annum. Freeholders could also serve as justices of the peace and members of the grand jury, as earlier demonstrated. Others continued to present petitions in the name of corporations and conventional meetings, though also emphasising the scale of subscriptions the petitions had amassed. Despite the continued emphasis on status, the (re-)introduction of mass-petitions suggests that the ideals defining the legitimacy of petitions started to change during the late 1760s. Two possible observations emerge from the change of pattern. First, it functions as an indication of the growing role of participation in the spheres of politics. Instead of being mere voters or passive observers, numerous actors started to emphasise the importance of movement-based campaigns, endeavouring to influence the course of parliamentary politics. Second, it is likely that the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions further influenced the development of mass-politics, thus paving the way for reforms of franchise

⁴⁸⁵ Knights 2009, 41 - 42, 47 - 48; Pickering 2001; Miller 2017; Dickinson 1994, 74; Loft 2016, 1; Wilson 1998, 364 - 368; Jupp 2006, 252; Leys 1955, 53 - 58. The Anti-Corn Law League, the movement co-ordinating the popular opposition against the Corn Laws, attempted to maximise the number of both petitions and subscriptions. Its associates presented over 17,000 petitions (with 5.8 million signatures) to the House of Commons between 1839 and 1843. The League abandoned the use of petitions in 1843 due to their modest impact on the conduct of the House of Commons. Miller 2017, 45 - 46, 53 - 56; Knights 2009, 48.

⁴⁸⁶ Knights 2005, 81, 137 - 138, 155 - 160; Knights 2009, 45; Knights 1993a; Knights 1993c; Loft 2016, 1. The pre-1721 and post-1776 uses of mass-petitions are further discussed in Chapter 2.2 (English Tradition of Petitioning).

⁴⁸⁷ Mark Knights has also recognised the two different strategies in petitions submitted during the later Stuart period. Knights observes that the petitioners were confronted with a dilemma regarding the strategy of promoting their petitions: 'should they seek large numbers, to show the weight of public feeling, or should they narrow support to the perceived leaders of a community?' By using the Kentish petition of 1701 as an example, Knights demonstrates that 'the decision about whether or not to canvass for mass subscriptions ... had an ideological dimension, for it raised issues about the legitimacy of popular involvement in national politics'. Knights 2005, 136 - 137.

and parliamentary representation during the nineteenth century. Although used before the eighteenth century, the change after 1768 - 1769 appeared to be more permanent (though not total). The practice of emphasising the scale of subscriptions became, more or less, a standard feature of publicised petitioning on matters considered to be of political significance, an indication that the change was of more profound character.

3.3 Protectors of the Poor

The category of secondary petitioners, on the other hand, consists of those concrete actors on whose behalf the primary petitioners claimed to act. Secondary petitioners were explicitly named in the petitions, but unlike the primary petitioners, they did not participate in the formal decision-making processes regarding petitions. They could sign petitions and, at least in certain cases, take part in meetings, but they did not draft or submit petitions as such. In this sense, secondary petitioners were political fiction, appearing in petitions only through the representations of the primary petitioners. Rather than being active actors, secondary petitioners were used to legitimise the use of petitions. Unlike the categories of primary and tertiary petitioners, the category of secondary petitioners remained rather constant throughout the eighteenth century, experiencing only modest changes between 1721 and 1776. This is, first and foremost, a consequence of the modest amount of thematic variation within the category, most of the petitions concerning trade, the price of provisions, or the inhabitants in the North American colonies.

The salience of trade-related actors is one of the most distinctive features of the category of secondary petitioners. It mainly consists of actors being influenced by economic crises and trade-related bills: traders, merchants, manufacturers, branches of trade, and impoverished actors (due to either a lack of work or the price of provisions). Although thematically a rather consistent category, the focus on trade and manufacturing also meant that most of the representative claims on behalf of secondary petitioners were temporally concentrated. Representative claims on behalf of secondary petitioners were particularly common during the controversies regarding the South Sea Company in 1721, the introduction of excises in 1733 and 1763, the Spanish depredations in 1739 - 1742, and the hostilities in American colonies in 1775 - 1776. Speaking and acting on behalf of traders and merchants mostly occurred in 1733, 1739 - 1742, and 1775 whereas representative claims on behalf of actors associated with the woollen industry were most pronounced during the 1720s and 1740s. Claim-making on behalf of impoverished actors, on the other hand, mostly occurred during the crisis of 1721 and after the price of grain started to climb during the 1760s⁴⁸⁸. Representative claims on behalf of the British subjects in America became a standard feature of

⁴⁸⁸ Black 2008, 30; Langford 1992, 445 - 459. For grain and food riots, see Durston 2017, 643 - 669; O'Gorman 2006, 122.

petitions during periods of hostilities; during the Spanish depredations in 1739 - 1742, the loss of Minorca in 1756, and the American crisis in 1775 - 1776.

Many of the representative claims were of rather general nature. A significant number of them were submitted in behalf of merchants and traders⁴⁸⁹, sometimes referred to as the 'mercantile part of the nation'⁴⁹⁰, and manufacturers⁴⁹¹ in general. However, petitioners could also claim to act in behalf of specific trades and professions: farmers⁴⁹², landholders⁴⁹³, actors employed in fisheries⁴⁹⁴, and those 'concerned in bookselling, paper manufacture, the art of printing, and other branches therewith connected'⁴⁹⁵. Others claimed to act on behalf of entire branches of commerce - such as the West Indian trade⁴⁹⁶, East Indian trade⁴⁹⁷, African trade⁴⁹⁸, and American trade⁴⁹⁹ - and thus also in behalf of the actors employed in those specific branches. There are, of course, numerous cases in which petitions were submitted but not published, something that is most evident in

⁴⁸⁹ Westminster 1721 (#003); Somerset 1721 (#007); Dealers 1736 (#054); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Journeymen 1773 (#354); London 1776 (#457).

⁴⁹⁰ London 1733 (#037), see also London 1769 (#293).

⁴⁹¹ See, for instance, Leicester 1721 (#004); London 1733 (#037); Preston 1741 (#116); London 1756 (#217); London 1763 (#242); Nottingham 1766 (#250); Yorkshire 1768 (#258); Southwark 1769 (#290); London 1769 (#293); London 1775 (#372); London 1775 (#373); London 1775 (#379); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); London 1775 (#410); London 1776 (#457).

⁴⁹² Berwick-upon-Tweed 1732 (#028).

⁴⁹³ Norfolk 1772 (#346), see also Taunton 1763 (#244); London 1775 (#384); Westmoreland 1776 (#464). The landholders and farmers of Norfolk claimed in 1772 that the landholders of the kingdom possessed 'the stock from which all the other branches of community originate'. Norfolk 1772 (#346). The free burgesses of Newcastle upon Tyne, on the other hand, claimed to speak on behalf of the coal industry, the 'great nursery of English security and strength'. Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277).

⁴⁹⁴ London 1775 (#382); Merchants 1775 (#384); Westmoreland 1776 (#464).

⁴⁹⁵ Booksellers 1774 (#361), see also Booksellers 1774 (#363) and Donaldson 1774 (#364).

⁴⁹⁶ Westmorland 1776 (#464). 'The West India interest did not have the same close links with the government as the great chartered trading companies', as H.T. Dickinson has noted. However, 'this combination of absentee West Indian proprietors and London merchants trading with these colonies made up for these deficiencies with the sophistication of their pressure-group tactics'. Those associated with the West India trade organised extensive petitioning campaigns, lobbied members of parliament, provided information for parliamentary committees, and 'secured favourable press comments'. The enactment of the Molasses Act of 1733 and the Sugar Act of 1739 demonstrates that such campaigns could have an enormous impact on their trades. Dickinson 1984, 53, see also Dickinson 1994, 65 - 68; O'Gorman 2006, 177; Jupp 2006, 91 - 92.

⁴⁹⁷ EIC 1763 (#243).

⁴⁹⁸ Westmoreland 1776 (#464).

⁴⁹⁹ See, for instance, London 1752 (#167); Southwark 1769 (#290); London 1769 (#293); Bristol 1775 (#371); London 1775 (#372); London 1775 (#373); London 1775 (#379); London 1775 (#382); Worcester 1775 (#392); Middlesex 1775 (#396); Birmingham 1775 (#400); Taunton 1775 (#407); Whitehaven 1776 (#459); Westmoreland 1776 (#464). The America trade was commonly described as the 'most valuable branch of our commerce' and 'of the utmost importance to the manufacturers of Great Britain'. Middlesex 1775 (#396) and (Southwark 1769 (#290), see also London 1775 (#372); Birmingham 1775 (#400). Peter Jupp has noted that 'by far the most influential of such groups [involved in mercantile lobbying] were those involved in trade in the West Indies and North America'. Jupp 2006, 91.

cases of local petitions and petitions on issues considered to be of minor importance but to petitioners themselves. It is more than safe to assume that representative claims in behalf of specific professions were more common in petitions in general than in the publicised petitions examined in this thesis, the latter focusing more commonly on national crises and thus emphasising representative claims of broader and more general nature.

Most of such claim-making was distinctively associated with economic shocks and crises, such as the South Sea Bubble and the crisis regarding the Spanish depredations. The South Sea petitioners, for instance, claimed to act on behalf of the 'innocent' sufferers and the 'honest credulous people'⁵⁰⁰ who had lost their possessions due to the management of the South Sea Company. Petitioners emphasising the detrimental impact of depredations, on the other hand, claimed to represent the merchants, those trading with the Americas in particular, and the English seamen subjected to 'the barbarities and inhuman cruelties' by the *Guarda Costa* and Spanish privateers⁵⁰¹. Both crises were seen as shocks, either caused by the managers of the S.S.C. or by the government's failure to protect its merchants and traders at sea. In order to alleviate the grievances of these innocent sufferers, petitioners requested the government to compensate their losses and provide them further protection at sea⁵⁰². Such claim-making was also common in petitions concerning grievances in local communities.

Petitioners could also claim to act on behalf of those that suffered from economic decline in more indirect manners. Many claimed to speak on behalf of the 'honest industrious man'⁵⁰³ and the labourers without employment⁵⁰⁴, emphasising the 'distresses of the industrious poor'⁵⁰⁵. The gentlemen, principal traders, and inhabitants of Coventry, for instance, claimed to represent the 'many of our fellow-subjects, betrayed from an useful opulency, to an useless and burthensome poverty; nay, to despair and death itself', in 1721⁵⁰⁶. Petitioners could also

⁵⁰⁰ Leicester 1721 (#004), see also London 1721 (#002); Westminster 1721 (#003); St Albans 1721 (#006); St Albans 1721 (#010); Nottingham 1721 (#011); Southwark 1721 (#017); Colchester 1721 (#019); Newark-on-Trent 1721 (#020); East Retford 1721 (#021); Buckinghamshire 1721 (#024).

⁵⁰¹ London 1739 (#058), see also Merchants 1737 (#056); Cupar 1739 (#063); Middlesex 1740 (#071); Lichfield 1741 (#107); Merchants 1742 (#155); London 1752 (#167).

⁵⁰² See, for instance, Westminster 1721 (#003); St Albans 1721 (#010); Nottingham 1721 (#011); Southwark 1721 (#017); Buckinghamshire 1721 (#024); London 1739 (#058); London 1752 (#167).

⁵⁰³ Nottingham 1766 (#250). For general references to representative claims on behalf of labourers, see Somerset 1721 (#007); London 1767 (#256); Yorkshire 1768 (#258); Yorkshire 1768 (#259); Norwich 1768 (#261); Norwich 1771 (#337); Wiltshire 1775 (#389); Carlisle 1776 (#460).

⁵⁰⁴ Leicester 1721 (#004); Nottingham 1766 (#250).

⁵⁰⁵ London 1767 (#256), see also Yorkshire 1768 (#259); Norwich 1768 (#261); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

⁵⁰⁶ Coventry 1721 (#001).

emphasise the impact the economic decline had on labourers' 'starving families'⁵⁰⁷ and others living on the brink of poverty⁵⁰⁸. In such cases, petitioners claimed to represent the 'miseries of millions'⁵⁰⁹, 'the cries of our starving fellow subjects'⁵¹⁰, 'the poorer sort of his [Majesty's] people'⁵¹¹, and 'the lamentable complaints and pitiful cries of thousands of our countrymen'⁵¹². In order to emphasise the urgency to act in 1766, the gentlemen, clergy, and tradesmen of Nottingham asserted that the 'luxurious profusion of the great, and the comfortable way of life enjoyed by those of middle rank, gives a keen edge to the real calamities of the poor', something that could push them 'into acts of destructive violence'⁵¹³. Most of the claims on behalf of the poor and impoverished occurred during the South Sea Crisis in 1721 and after the price of provisions started to climb during the 1760s⁵¹⁴.

Although petitioners claimed to act on behalf of a variety of mercantile actors and trades, one particular branch gained more references than others – the woollen industry. Petitions referring to the woollen industry were particularly numerous during the first part of the eighteenth century. Most occurred during the 1720s and the 1740s, though the branch also gained sporadic references during the 1760s. During the crisis regarding the South Sea Bubble, petitioners lamented the impact the decay of trade and credit had on the industry. The grand jury and freeholders of Somerset, for instance, claimed that the 'woollen manufactures, the riches and support of the kingdom, but of this county in particular, are in a manner entirely laid down, and many substantial wealthy families are reduced to difficulties, by contributing to the support of the necessities of the numberless poor' incapable of earning 'a comfortable subsistence by their labour, and from the several employments in the cloathing trade'⁵¹⁵. During the 1740s, on the other hand, petitioners complaining of the decay of the woollen industry focused on two particular challenges. First, the Spanish depredations and the general decay of trade also undermined the trade and manufacturing of woollen

⁵⁰⁷ Coventry 1721 (#001), see also Maidstone 1721 (#009); St Albans 1721 (#010); Tamworth 1721 (#013); Reading 1721 (#015); Southwark 1721 (#017); Yorkshire 1721 (#018); Colchester 1721 (#019); Herefordshire 1763 (#229); Tewkesbury 1763 (#235); Nottingham 1766 (#250); Journeymen 1773 (#354); Westmoreland 1776 (#464).

⁵⁰⁸ See, for instance, Lincoln 1721 (#012); Reading 1721 (#015); Yorkshire 1768 (#258); London 1775 (#382).

⁵⁰⁹ Cirencester 1767 (#255), see also Southwark 1721 (#017); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Westmoreland 1776 (#464).

⁵¹⁰ Cirencester 1767 (#255).

⁵¹¹ Yorkshire 1768 (#258), see also Leicester 1721 (#004); Somerset 1721 (#007); Liverpool 1757 (#222); Southwark 1766 (#249); Nottingham 1766 (#250); London 1767 (#256); Yorkshire 1768 (#258); Yorkshire 1768 (#259); Norwich 1768 (#261); Norwich 1771 (#337); Colchester 1772 (#343); Coventry 1775 (#388); Wiltshire 1775 (#389); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

⁵¹² St Albans 1721 (#006); St Albans 1721 (#023).

⁵¹³ Nottingham 1766 (#250); London 1767 (#256).

⁵¹⁴ See, for instance, Nottingham 1766 (#250); Cirencester 1767 (#255); London 1767 (#256); Yorkshire 1768 (#258), Norwich 1768 (#260); Colchester 1772 (#343); London 1772 (#344); Journeymen 1773 (#354).

⁵¹⁵ Somerset 1721 (#007), see also Coventry 1721 (#001); Leicester 1721 (#004); Nottingham 1721 (#011); Lincoln 1721 (#012), Norwich 1768 (#261).

commodities⁵¹⁶. Second, the exportation of wool impaired the domestic manufactures, being 'the cause of the fatal decay of that manufacture in this kingdom, and of the prodigious increase of the poor'⁵¹⁷. The depredations and general stagnation of trade certainly affected the woollen trade and manufacturing, but the branch also encountered other challenges, especially in regard to exportation of commodities. The challenges of the woollen industry in Britain started to mount during the 1730s, both because of the growing production of woollen products on the continent and, to quote Michael Jubb, 'the French increased their penetration of important markets such as the Levant'. Demands for the ban of exportation of British and Irish wool was, at least to some extent, influenced by the growing market share of the French. Such a ban, it was argued, would impair the production in France and increase the share of English producers. Some of the proposed restrictions were also influenced by the increasing strength of the cloth industry in Ireland.⁵¹⁸

Petitioners speaking on behalf of secondary petitioners tended to emphasise the importance of local interests, often insisting that their requests benefitted the nation in general and their boroughs in particular. Such argumentation was also common in woollen petitions, most of them submitted from regions and communities closely associated with woollen manufacturing. Petitioners concerned about the decline of manufacturing, such as the mayor and burgesses of Nottingham, tended to describe their boroughs as 'long famous for the manufacturing of English wool'⁵¹⁹, and emphasise their communities' prosperous past. The mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses of Leicester asserted that combed wool had 'once [been] the staple and glory of our industrious corporation', while the independent freemen of Coventry described their woollen manufactures as 'once the riches and glory of this antient trading city'⁵²⁰. The woollen industry in eighteenth-century Britain was closely associated with regions such as Yorkshire and the West Country. Yorkshire, according to Maxine Berg, increased its share of the national output from 20 to 60 per cent during the century. However, although part of the great process of concentration, especially during the second part of the century, the branch was significantly less centralised during the earlier decades. The importance of the woollen branch in regions such as Suffolk and Essex, for instance,

⁵¹⁶ Bristol 1741 (#100); Bath 1741 (#102); Hereford 1741 (#105); Coventry 1741 (#108).

⁵¹⁷ Suffolk 1741 (#111), see also Minehead 1742 (#129); Honiton 1742 (#139); Westminster 1742 (#156); Hereford 1742 (#160). In order to strengthen the industry, petitioners encouraged the petitioned to 'procure a proper law for the security and encouragement of the woollen manufacture'. Devon 1742 (#135), see also Bath 1741 (#102); Gloucester 1742 (#128); Coventry 1742 (#159); Yorkshire 1768 (#258).

⁵¹⁸ The duty on Irish yarn exports, a measure rejected by the House of Lords in 1731, was removed in 1739, increasing the importation of Irish wool. Although supported by those involved in manufacturing, the measure was opposed by English wool-combers, spinners, and producers of raw wool. Jubb 1984, 125 - 127; Black 2008, 70 - 71; Langford 1992, 167 - 168; Dickinson 1994, 68 - 70; Wilson 1998, 394; Jupp 2006, 92. Nottingham 1721 (#011).

⁵²⁰ Leicester 1721 (#004) and Coventry 1742 (#159), see also Somerset 1721 (#007); Lincoln 1721 (#012); Coventry 1741 (#108).

decreased significantly during the century.⁵²¹ The significance of the West Country in particular is evident in the 19 petitions containing references to the woollen branch⁵²². Woollen petitions were also submitted from Coventry (three), Leicester, Nottingham, Westminster, Lincoln, Suffolk, and Norwich⁵²³. The lack of petitions from Yorkshire (one) is, most likely, a consequence of the temporal concentration of the woollen petitions; 17 of the 19 petitions were submitted between 1721 and 1742.

In order to strengthen their claims on behalf of the labourers and manufacturers of woollen commodities, petitioners insisted that the decline of the branch also damaged the trade of the nation. The Somerset petitioners, for instance, described the woollen manufactures as 'the riches and support of the kingdom' in 1721, and the Bristol petitioners referred to the industry as 'that most valuable branch of commerce' in 1741⁵²⁴. The independent electors of Honiton, on the other hand, encouraged one of their representatives in 1742 to promote a 'bill, or bills, which may countenance trade in general' as 'trade, particularly that of the woollen manufacture, is the strength and glory of this nation'⁵²⁵. The woollen industry was, indeed, an important branch of trade and manufacturing in eighteenth-century Britain, both in terms of domestic and foreign trade. Although its share of domestic exports decreased from 70 to 50 per cent between 1700 and 1770, it remained one of the most important branches of export⁵²⁶. Due to its significance, both in terms of domestic production and foreign trade, the branch was supported by influential interest groups. When threatened, woollen manufacturers and merchants organised prominent campaigns to protect their trade, often involving petitions⁵²⁷ and support from their local members of parliament.⁵²⁸

Speaking on behalf of entire branches of trade was also common in anti-excise petitions, submitted to oppose the proposed excises on tobacco and wine

⁵²¹ Berg 1994, 27 - 28, 41 - 42, 209 - 212, 215 - 217; Mokyr 2009, 97 - 98; Langford 1992, 167.

⁵²² Five petitions were submitted from the region of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, and Somerset. Four additional petitions were submitted from Gloucestershire and Herefordshire, often included in the broader definitions of the West Country.

⁵²³ East Anglia, in this case including Suffolk and Norwich, had a long tradition of woollen manufacturing. Its role was still notable in the early decades of the eighteenth century. Berg 1994, 42.

⁵²⁴ Somerset 1721 (#007) and Bristol 1741 (#100).

⁵²⁵ Honiton 1742 (#139), see also Nottingham 1721 (#011).

⁵²⁶ According to Maxine Berg, the share of woollens of manufactured exports was as high as 85 per cent in 1700, decreasing to 61.9 per cent in 1750 and 22.1 per cent in 1800. Berg 1994, 48, 112, 119 - 120; Mokyr 2009, 22 - 23, 129 - 130; Langford 1992, 167 - 168.

⁵²⁷ Although frequently submitted to the consideration of parliament (and, presumably, to individual members of parliament), only a modest amount of the petitions are included to this study. As in the case of most petitions concerning specific trades and professions, woollen petitions were but rarely circulated in the press and by pamphleteers. Even though the 19 petitions contained claims regarding the branch, none of them concerned primarily woollen trade and manufacturing. Philip Loft, among others, has noted that those associated with the woollen branch were, indeed, active in submitting petitions to parliament. He has pointed out that 'in the years up to 1760, some 1,500 petitions were presented on the woollen industry'. Loft 2019a, 348.

⁵²⁸ Jupp 2006, 73 - 75, 92; Dickinson 1994, 68 - 70; Jubb 1984, 124 - 127.

in 1733 and the excises on cider and perry in 1763. As excise duties were particularly unpopular among merchants, traders, and producers of excised commodities, anti-excise petitioners often claimed to speak on behalf of mercantile actors. In 1733, the anti-excise petitioners claimed to represent 'the merchants, tradesmen, and manufacturers of this kingdom'⁵²⁹, the 'mercantile part of the nation'⁵³⁰, the 'fair traders'⁵³¹ (in contrast to the unfair traders, or smugglers, the administration endeavoured to punish), retailers and vendors⁵³², and actors subjected to the inspections of excise officers⁵³³. Though primarily concerning mercantile actors, the majority of petitions in 1733 were submitted either by corporations or electoral meetings rather than by mercantile bodies. However, although seldom the authors of published petitions, most of the anti-excise petitioners claimed to speak on behalf of merchants, traders, producers, and other mercantile actors, exemplifying their importance within local communities.

However, whereas the argumentation of petitioners in 1733 emphasised the importance of merchants and traders, the speaking-on-behalf in 1763 focused on more specific and spatialised branches of trade. The fiercest opposition against the excises on cider and perry occurred in the cider-producing counties of

⁵²⁹ London 1733 (#037), see also Nottingham 1733 (#042); Newbury 1733 (#043); London 1733 (#045); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098). The mercantile opponents of excises were, in a certain sense, right when accusing Walpole of favouring the landed interest. Besides attempting to make taxation more efficient, Walpole also endeavoured to reduce the land tax in 1733. In order to compensate the loss of income from the land tax, Walpole planned to convert the custom duties on wine and tobacco into more efficient excise duties. One could also argue that a general excise, strongly opposed by the mercantile part of the nation, was, from the mercantile perspective, a fear within the realm of possibility. Walpole had already converted the custom duties on coffee, tea, chocolate, and coconuts into excises in 1723 and revived the salt duty, an excise, in 1732. As in the case of the proposed excises on wine and tobacco, the salt duty, too, was enacted to reduce the land tax. Black 2008, 194 - 195; Langford 1975, 26 - 39, 159 - 160; Langford 1992, 28 - 30; O'Gorman 2006, 81; Price 1983. Neither did Walpole's unfortunate notion of 'sturdy beggars', a phrase he used to criticise his mercantile opponents in London in 1733, calm the mercantile actors opposing his scheme. Langford 1992, 30; Wilson 1998, 130 - 131. The excise scheme was eventually defeated by an alliance of commercial lobbies and popular agitation out-of-doors, united by the perceived significance of trade. Paul Langford has argued that 'initially the agitation against the excise was to a considerable degree a contrivance of the commercially interested parties' and that 'Walpole's proposals remarkably succeeded in uniting the diverse elements in the commercial world, the great merchants of London, Bristol and Liverpool on the one hand and the tradesmen and retailers of the small towns on the other'. Wilson 1998, 124 - 32; Langford 1975, 55 - 61, 101 - 103, 151 - 152.

⁵³⁰ The petitioners claimed that the imposition of new excises would render 'the mercantile part of the nation ... not only less able to trade to advantage, but unwilling to trade at all'. London 1733 (#037). The lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London used an identical sentence in their anti-excise petition in 1763. London 1763 (#242).

⁵³¹ Canterbury 1733 (#044); London 1733 (#045); Dealers 1736 (#054). Michael Jubb has described wine and tobacco as the 'two of the most extensively smuggled commodities'. Wine was, for instance, smuggled through the Romney Marsh whereas the frauds regarding the importation of tobacco was conducted primarily through 'collusive underweighing'. Jubb 1984, 138 - 141. For a detailed analysis on the endeavours to regulate the tobacco trade, see Price 1983, 260 - 279.

⁵³² Ripon 1733 (#034).

⁵³³ Wareham 1733 (#029); Ripon 1733 (#034); Canterbury 1733 (#044); London 1733 (#045); Colchester 1733 (#046). For later uses of such claims, see Somerset 1763 (#240); Taunton 1763 (#244).

Worcestershire, Herefordshire, Gloucestershire, Devon, Somerset, and Cornwall⁵³⁴. With the exception of the four petitions from London, the studied anti-excise petitions were submitted from Devon (six petitions), Somerset (three), Gloucestershire (two), Herefordshire (two), Worcestershire (one), and Cornwall (one). The spatial focus on cider counties is also evident from the petitioners' use of representative claims; the anti-excise petitioners claimed to speak on behalf of actors such as planters and growers⁵³⁵, owners of estates⁵³⁶, farmers and cottagers⁵³⁷, labourers and 'the industrious part of the people'⁵³⁸, and the makers of cider and perry⁵³⁹. In fact, the lord mayor, aldermen, and common council of London were the only petitioners to speak on behalf of 'the merchants, tradesmen, and manufacturers of the whole kingdom' and 'the mercantile part of the nation' in 1763⁵⁴⁰. The role of London, of course, differed from those of the cider counties. Rather than opposing excises on cider and perry as such, the London petitioners opposed excise duties in general; insisting that the 'burthen [of taxes] will grow too heavy to be born, if it be encreas[e]d by such vexatious and oppressive methods of levying and collecting the duties, as they are assured, by melancholy experience, that the nature of all excises must necessarily produce'⁵⁴¹.

Even though a clear majority of the representative claims on behalf of secondary petitioners were associated with mercantile actors, petitioners could also claim to represent the sentiments of actors with explicitly political objectives. The first of the two examples of such surrogate agency is the speaking on behalf of John Wilkes and the freeholders of Middlesex. The free and independent citizens of Canterbury, for instance, petitioned their representatives in parliament, William Lynch and Richard Milles, requesting them to 'see justice done to the long and great sufferer in the cause of his country, John Wilkes ... in whom the privileges of Englishmen have been repeatedly violated'⁵⁴². However, besides the claims of speaking on behalf of Wilkes and his electors, petitioners could also use

⁵³⁴ Woodland 1985; Woodland 1989; Woodland 1992. Although a cider county, Monmouthshire 'remained completely uninvolved in these activities, nor did it instruct its members or hold any meetings' according to Patrick Woodward. Woodward 1985, 129. H.T. Dickinson has claimed that 'one of the best organised and most successful extra-parliamentary campaigns on an economic issue was waged in the mid 1760s against the cider excise tax of 1763'. Dickinson 1994, 71 - 72.

⁵³⁵ Ilchester 1763 (#234); Plymouth 1763 (#239); Herefordshire 1763 (#241).

⁵³⁶ Plymouth 1763 (#239).

⁵³⁷ Tewkesbury 1763 (#235); Taunton 1763 (#244).

⁵³⁸ Tewkesbury 1763 (#235).

⁵³⁹ London 1763 (#233); Taunton 1763 (#244).

⁵⁴⁰ London 1763 (#242).

⁵⁴¹ The London petitioners claimed to have expected the administration to repeal excise duties in general due to the 'undisturbed tranquillity at home, and a general peace so firmly established abroad'. But 'if the excise-laws, instead of being repealed, are extended to other species of merchandize not yet excised, and a door opened for extending them to all, your petitioners cannot ... conceal their apprehension that the most fatal blow which ever was given, will be given on this occasion to the trade and navigation of Great Britain'. London 1763 (#242). See also London 1763 (#231); London 1763 (#232); London 1763 (#233).

⁵⁴² Canterbury 1769 (#270), see also Newcastle upon Tyne (#277); Berwick-upon-Tweed 1769 (#278); Westminster 1769 (#284); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Southwark 1769 (#289); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Yorkshire 1769 (#305); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Middlesex 1770 (#321); Morpeth 1770 (#329); Durham 1770 (#332); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

broader claims of representation to legitimise their petitions. The mayor, free-men, freeholders, and inhabitants of Exeter, imploring the King to dissolve the parliament due to its decision to bar Wilkes from representing Middlesex, claimed to be incapable of imagining 'that our prayer, which is the prayer of millions, can be rejected or disregarded'⁵⁴³. The gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Northumberland used similar forms of persuasion to encourage the King to use his constitutional prerogative, hoping 'for a gracious compliance with the request of millions of your Majesty's subjects'⁵⁴⁴. Though eventually evolving into a crisis of far broader character, most of the Wilkite petitions from 1769 to 1770 focused on defending the rights of freeholders. Instead of representing but themselves, Wilkite petitioners often claimed to speak on behalf of the freeholders and electors in general.

The most significant form of explicitly political surrogate agency occurred on behalf of the British colonies and their inhabitants in America, a form of claim-making that changed rather drastically during the second half of the eighteenth century. During most of the century, the colonies remained but an insignificant feature of the British petitions. In most petitions prior to the 1760s, they were portrayed as distant entities performing few functions beyond strengthening the British mercantile and blue-water policy. Though the Seven Years' War, and the loss of Minorca in 1756 in particular, prompted petitioners to emphasise the importance of the British possessions in North America, often claiming that 'our colonies [are] shamefully neglected or betrayed'⁵⁴⁵, the colonies continued to be represented as amorphous entities⁵⁴⁶. In most cases, the colonies gained recognition but during periods of hostilities, and even then only through the representations of British petitioners.

During the 1760s and 1770s, however, the conceptualisations used to define the colonies started to change. Instead of being but amorphous and distant entities on the other side of the Atlantic, petitioners started to emphasise the importance of their inhabitants. The citizens of Bristol, for instance, accused the administration of 'alienat[ing] the affections of our American brethren' whereas the freeholders of Middlesex used their petition to emphasise the grievances of 'our suffering fellow-subjects in that part of the world' in 1769⁵⁴⁷. The conceptual change became even more pronounced during the 1770s, when most of the petitions submitted to parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne concerned the crisis in the colonies. Petitioners in 1775 - 1776, and those championing reconciliation in particular, often conceptualised the inhabitants of the colonies as

⁵⁴³ Exeter 1769 (#275).

⁵⁴⁴ Northumberland 1769 (#301).

⁵⁴⁵ Breconshire 1756 (#184). See also Wilson 1998, 179 - 185, 188.

⁵⁴⁶ London 1752 (#167); Devon 1756 (#180); Breconshire 1756 (#184); Ipswich 1756 (#185); Herefordshire 1756 (#194); Shropshire 1756 (#196); Leominster 1756 (#197); Somerset 1756 (#198); Nottingham 1756 (#203); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Lincolnshire 1756 (#205); Bristol 1756 (#208); Bristol 1756 (#209); Bristol 1756 (#211); Cheshire 1756 (#213); Southwark 1756 (#214); London 1756 (#218). For exceptions ('our fellow-subjects in America'), see Norfolk 1756 (#201) and London 1756 (#216).

⁵⁴⁷ Bristol 1769 (#281) and Middlesex 1769 (#292).

their 'fellow-subjects'⁵⁴⁸ and 'American brethren'⁵⁴⁹. The gentlemen, clergy, clothiers, manufacturers, and inhabitants of Westbury, Warminster, and Trowbridge, concerned of 'the present unfortunate and unnatural contest with America', claimed to act as the 'intercessors on behalf of their afflicted brethren in the colonies'⁵⁵⁰. The lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London, on the other hand, emphasised the shared heritage of the British subjects at home and in the colonies, claiming that their 'fellow-subjects' in America 'descended from the same ancestors with ourselves, [and] appear equally jealous of the prerogatives of freemen, without which they cannot deem themselves happy'⁵⁵¹. Rather than distant outposts on the other side of the Atlantic, as during most parts of the eighteenth century, petitioners since the late 1760s started to emphasise the political communion of the subjects in Britain and the colonies.

Representative claims on behalf of secondary petitioners represent a sort of fusion of the categories of primary and tertiary petitioners. Secondary petitioners were concrete actors in a similar way as the actors that authored and submitted the petitions (though usually less engaged in the formal processes regarding petitioning). Claims on behalf of the poor, said to be distressed by the rise of price of provisions and lack of employment, and the victims of the South Sea scheme, suffering from both direct and indirect consequences of the bubble, exemplify the communal dimensions of petitioning. In such cases, the petitioners, most commonly the corporation or some other administrative body, used petitions to defend and care for the distressed members of their communities. However, most representative claims on behalf of secondary petitioners were also more abstract than those in the case of primary petitioners. Claims on behalf of entire branches of trade and the colonies in America, for instance, concerned such a large number of people that petitioners could not reasonably be familiar with them all in personal terms. Such claim-making enabled the authors of petitions to claim that

⁵⁴⁸ London 1775 (#375), see also Bristol 1775 (#370); Bristol 1775 (#371); London 1775 (#372); London 1775 (#374); London 1775 (#376); London 1775 (#378); Quakers 1775 (#380); London 1775 (#382); London 1775 (#384); Manchester 1775 (#380); Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#3393); Middlesex 1775 (#396); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); Great Yarmouth 1775 (#402); Southampton 1775 (#406); Taunton 1775 (#407); Southwark 1775 (#408). For references to his Majesty's subjects in America, see Bristol 1775 (#371); London 1775 (#374); London 1775 (#377); London 1775 (#379); London 1775 (#381); London 1775 (#410); Cumberland 1776 (#461).

⁵⁴⁹ Southampton 1775 (#407_162), see also Bristol 1775 (#370); London 1775 (#374); London 1775 (#377); Quakers 1775 (#380); Wiltshire 1775 (#389); Poole 1775 (#391); Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); London 1776 (#457); Whitehaven 1776 (#459); Westmoreland 1776 (#464).

⁵⁵⁰ Wiltshire 1775 (#389).

⁵⁵¹ London 1775 (#374), see also Wiltshire 1775 (#389). Petitioners often described the hostilities in America as a civil war (or represented it as a conflict that would soon become one). The gentlemen, clergy, freeholders, merchants, traders, and inhabitants of Poole, assembled in the guildhall, petitioned his Majesty to prevent 'the greatest of all national evils, the unspeakable horrors, misery, and destruction of civil war; by which the external supports, and internal strength of this mighty empire, must be violently and dangerously shaken, if not totally destroyed, and become an easy prey to our natural and avowed enemies'. Poole 1775 (#391). See also London 1775 (#379); Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393); Middlesex 1775 (#396); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); Southwark 1775 (#408); London 1775 (#410); London 1776 (#457).

they acted as surrogate actors, thus representing the sentiments of a far more numerous group of people than just those of the primary petitioners themselves. Though not as abstract as the claims on behalf of tertiary petitioners, such suggestions could increase the weight of petitioners' claims and help them in their endeavours to convince the decision-makers of the importance of acting as requested.

3.4 Champions of the People

The category of tertiary petitioners, on the other hand, consists of representative claims in the name of a variety of abstract entities. Instead of speaking on behalf of concrete actors, as in the case of secondary petitioners, petitioners claimed to represent collective abstractions such as trade and commerce, the people and the nation, and past and the future generations⁵⁵². The use of representative claims in the name of such abstractions illustrates the collectivistic tendencies of petitioning. Though claim-making on behalf of secondary petitioners could also involve speaking on behalf of larger communities, as in the case of claims on behalf of entire branches of trade and the colonists in North America, the categories of primary and secondary petitioners consist of more specific forms of representative claim-making. The use of representative claims on behalf of such abstractions enabled petitioners to emphasise the importance of their causes and grievances; instead of representing themselves alone, or in addition to other actors and entities in their constituencies, petitioners could claim to act on behalf of abstractions that formed the basis of the country's financial and political establishment. Because of the focus on abstractions, petitioners claiming to act on behalf of tertiary petitioners tended to emphasise national grievances and the importance of scale.

⁵⁵² With the exceptions of ancestors and forefathers, collective concepts in plural forms, these abstractions tended to be what Reinhart Koselleck has referred to as collective singulars (concepts containing references to a multitude of actors, ideas, and experiences though being, in the formal sense, in singular forms). Koselleck 2004, 33 - 36, 50 - 53, 85; Kopusov 2011. Collective singulars have a tendency of both homogenising and depersonalising complicated groups, issues, and ideas, reducing their inherent diversity by representing them in singular form. Such abstractions are neither actors nor proper entities as such. There were no such homogeneous entities as *trade* or *commerce*, but an abundance of trades and commerces, as earlier exemplified. Neither did nation nor people have a collective will or agency. If they had, they would have authored the petitions themselves, thus rendering petitioners' surrogate agency useless. Although neither entities nor actors as such, however, these concepts were represented as entities on behalf of which the primary petitioners claimed to act. Koselleck has argued that 'it is possible to articulate or linguistically create a group identity through the emphatic use of the word "we," while such a procedure becomes conceptually intelligible only when the "we" is associated with collective terms such as "nation," "class," "friendship," "church," and so on'. 'The general utility of the term "we"', Koselleck noted, 'is substantiated through these expressions, but at the level of conceptual generality'. Koselleck 2004, 85.

Trade was certainly one of the most influential abstractions petitioners claimed to represent. Mercantile actors and bodies could function as primary petitioners and appear in petitions as secondary petitioners, as earlier demonstrated. However, in addition to representing actors that operated in the mercantile sphere, petitioners could also claim to represent the mercantile sphere itself⁵⁵³. In such cases, they could claim to act on behalf of commerce⁵⁵⁴, commercial interest or interests⁵⁵⁵, and trade and navigation⁵⁵⁶, often complaining of the decay of trade⁵⁵⁷, requesting the petitioned to encourage trade and navigation⁵⁵⁸, and pledging to oppose discouragements on commerce⁵⁵⁹. As in the case of claim-making on behalf of merchants and traders, most of the claims on behalf of trade and commerce occurred during periods of hostilities. The loss of Minorca in 1756 generated fierce accusations of endangering the trade of the nation, the Mediterranean island being portrayed as crucial for 'the naval strength and commercial interest of this kingdom'⁵⁶⁰. Petitioners also used similar claims during the Spanish depredations in 1739 - 1742. The corporation of Preston, for instance, claimed

553 Petitioners often portrayed Britain as a trading nation and Britons as a commercial people. See, for instance, London 1775 (#375); London 1775 (#376); Middlesex 1775 (#396). The lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London declared trade and navigation as 'that great spring from which the wealth and prosperity of the publick flows' in 1733, and the burgesses and freeholders of Nottingham portrayed trade as 'essential to the welfare and prosperity of this nation' in 1739. London 1733 (#037) and Nottingham 1739 (#064), see also York 1739 (#066); Honiton 1742 (#139); London 1742 (#154); London 1752 (#167). Similar characterisations were also common in parliament and within the press. William Pulteney, the parliamentary leader of the Whigs in opposition, asserted in 1741 that 'no commerce shall be carried on to the detriment of the public, the merchants' profit must be the profit of the nation, and their interests inseparably combined'. Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 134 - 136/William Pulteney (Middlesex). The author of *The Right of British Subjects, to Petition and Apply to Their Representatives*, an anti-excite petition published in 1733, portrayed mercantile actors as 'a body of men, who, I am sure, ought to be cherished and esteemed as the most useful and most beneficial of any of his Majesty's subjects'. The Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post also defended petitioning in 1722 by asserting that 'it is not to be supposed, that every gentleman can come to that House, with capacity sufficient to comprehend very little inconvenience which may happen to any society of men in a mighty kingdom, like this, which support itself by trade'. The Right of British Subjects 1733/6 (T138253); BC/WJSP 19 October 1722. See also Loft 2016, 18 - 19.

554 See, for instance, Nottingham 1739 (#064); Gloucester 1742 (#128); London 1742 (#155); Wiltshire 1775 (#389).

555 London 1742 (#154); Devon 1756 (#180); Somerset 1756 (#198); London 1775 (#373); London 1775 (#384).

556 London 1733 (#037); Nottingham 1739 (#064); Bristol 1741 (#100); London 1742 (#155); London 1763 (#242); London 1767 (#256); London 1769 (#293); Bristol 1775 (#371); Taunton 1775 (#407).

557 Leicester 1721 (#004); Lincoln 1721 (#012); Reading 1721 (#015); Haslemere 1721 (#016); Colchester 1721 (#019); East Retford 1721 (#021); Bath 1741 (#102); Coventry 1741 (#108); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); London 1773 (#354); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

558 Nottingham 1739 (#064); Gloucester 1742 (#128); Minehead 1742 (#129); Honiton 1742 (#139); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Staffordshire 1742 (#145); Bristol 1742 (#152); Coventry 1742 (#159); Lichfield 1756 (#186); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277).

559 Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Dumfries 1742 (#138); London 1742 (#154); London 1753 (#176); London 1763 (#242); Wiltshire 1775 (#389); Staffordshire 1775 (#398).

560 Devon 1756 (#180), see also Brecon 1756 (#184); Exeter 1756 (#190); Herefordshire 1756 (#194); Huntingdonshire 1756 (#195); Shropshire 1756 (#196); Leominster 1756 (#197); Somerset 1756 (#198); York 1756 (#207); Cheshire 1756 (#213).

in 1741 that 'the protection of our trade and navigation [were] neglected, to a degree that no other period of time can equal'⁵⁶¹. However, whereas petitioners in 1739 - 1742 and 1756 requested the administration to protect British trade and navigation by force, a significant number of petitioners in 1775 favoured reconciliation in securing the commercial interests of Britain and its empire. Petitioners could declare, like those from Wiltshire in 1775, that 'the vital principle of trade is peace and confidence, not war and destruction', thus encouraging the House of Commons to reconcile with the colonies in North America 'for the sake of peace, for the sake of our trade and commerce, and for the general safety, concord, and prosperity of the whole empire'⁵⁶².

Such claim-making exemplifies the importance of trade and mercantile actors in eighteenth-century Britain. It also demonstrates the significance of surrogate agency in the case of petitions. Of the 464 petitions studied in this thesis, 44 (9.5 per cent) were submitted primarily by actors who described themselves by titles referring to trade and manufacturing. Fifty-six of the 807 titles the petitioners used to describe themselves in borough petitions referred to mercantile occupations. The share of such titles was even lower in the case of county petitions; three of the 307 titles, or around one per cent (in contrast to 6.9 per cent in borough petitions), referred to actors employed in trade and manufacturing. The lack of references to mercantile titles in county petitions was certainly influenced by the 40 shilling franchise. Whereas borough constituencies often enabled mercantile actors to vote, county constituencies emphasised the importance of landed property, something that most mercantile actors did not possess. However, although traders and merchants were rarely the main authors of the published petitions, the influence of mercantile voices remained significant. Rather than signifying the exclusion of mercantile actors and entities, most of the petitions from boroughs and counties contained claims on behalf of mercantile actors and abstractions. In a trading nation, commerce was not only a private matter, concerning only those involved in trade, but also of great public importance. Instead of being about the profits of private individuals, the interest of trade, and thus those of mercantile actors, was commonly represented as the public interest.

However, the most explicit examples of speaking on behalf of abstractions occurred in cases in which petitioners claimed to represent entities such as the people and the nation⁵⁶³ and other closely related conceptual variants (such as

⁵⁶¹ Preston 1741 (#116), see also Bristol 1741 (#100); Hereford 1741 (#105); Westminster 1741 (#122); Devon 1741 (#135); Southwark 1742 (#146); London 1742 (#155); Exeter 1756 (#190); York 1756 (#207).

⁵⁶² Wiltshire 1775 (#389). Frank O'Gorman has maintained that 'it was no accident that every war in which Britain was engaged in the long eighteenth century was a commercial war in which colonial issues loomed large'. O'Gorman 2006, 177.

⁵⁶³ See, for instance, Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074); London 1740 (#075); Denbighshire 1740 (#096); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Boston 1756 (#188); Middlesex 1769 (#292). Pro-petition members of parliament, too, often emphasised that petitioners did not only speak for themselves but also for the nation in general. William Pulteney claimed in 1738 that 'never was nation more unanimous than our people now are, in their demands of satisfaction for the injuries they have so long borne from the Spaniards'. While accusing Walpole of acting 'for twenty years in opposition to the gen-

kingdom⁵⁶⁴, country⁵⁶⁵, and public⁵⁶⁶). *Nation* was certainly the most normative and explicitly political of these concepts, often described as a harmonious political entity, whereas concepts such as *kingdom* and *country* tended to be of more descriptive character. Although this chapter focuses on petitioners who understood the concept of the people as a reference to a political collective, the concept could also be used as a descriptive reference to various groups of individuals. In the first case, petitioners could, for instance, claim to represent 'the general sense of the nation'⁵⁶⁷ and 'the voice of the people ... which is in some sense the voice of God'⁵⁶⁸, a Whig mantra from the turn of the century, later adopted by a rather diverse set of groups⁵⁶⁹. They could also claim to champion what 'we think are of the highest concern towards the good of the country'⁵⁷⁰ and resist measures they

eral desires of the whole nation, and often in open defiance of their petitions, remonstrances and menaces', George Lyttelton declared that 'it is now ... in my opinion, necessary to comply with the general petition of the people'. The Earl of Westmorland, also criticising Walpole in 1742, declared that 'these are the petitions [demanding Walpole to be punished] which ought never to be rejected; all parties are now united, and all animosities extinguished'. Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 858 - 859/William Pulteney (Middlesex); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 585 - 586/George Lyttelton (Okehampton); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoL) 850/Earl of Westmorland. See also Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoL) 691/Earl of Chesterfield; Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 679 - 680/William Dowdeswell (Warwickshire); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 689 - 690/Lord George Sackville (East Grinstead). See also BC/SJCBE 26 - 28 April 1763; BC/Pr 4 August 1753; BC/PS 23 January 1770; BC/MPDA 13 February 1775; A Letter to a Leading Great Man 1721/iv, 12 - 13, 16 - 17, 20, 24 - 25 (T69216); Considerations on the Addresses Lately Presented to his Majesty 1756/5 (T161153).

⁵⁶⁴ See, for instance, St Albans 1721 (#023) and Bristol 1742 (#152).

⁵⁶⁵ Newark-upon-Trent 1721 (#020); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Bristol 1742 (#152); Maidstone 1756 (#191); Cheshire 1756 (#213); Southwark 1756 (#214); Bath 1769 (#264); Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393); Bolton 1775 (#405).

⁵⁶⁶ Cornwall 1740 (#092); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Norfolk 1772 (#346); London 1774 (#364).

⁵⁶⁷ Cornwall 1740 (#092), see also Cupar 1739 (#063); Hereford 1741 (#105); Lichfield 1756 (#186); Bristol 1756 (#208); Exeter 1769 (#275). Petitioners could also claim to speak on behalf of 'the whole nation'. Lincoln 1721 (#012); East Retford 1721 (#021); Edinburgh 1739 (#060); Hereford 1741 (#105); Herefordshire 1741 (#106); Bristol 1742 (#152); Hereford 1742 (#158); Middlesex 1769 (#292); Rochester 1772 (#341).

⁵⁶⁸ The petitioners further claimed that the voice of the people 'never was, surely, louder or stronger, or more unanimous'. Cirencester 1753 (#174). See also Somerset 1721 (#007); Kent 1721 (#008); Colchester 1721 (#019); York 1741 (#099); Chester 1741 (#110); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Southwark 1742 (#146); Bedfordshire 1756 (#193); Suffolk 1756 (#200); Southwark 1756 (#214); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); London 1770 (#323).

⁵⁶⁹ Though the mantra, usually represented in the form of 'vox populi, vox dei', was commonly associated with the radical Whigs, it was later adopted by the Jacobites and the Patriot Opposition, representing the ruling Whigs as a corrupt force. It was also commonly used during the controversy regarding the Jew Bill in 1753. Gunn 1983, 271 - 279; Wilson 1998, 115 - 117; Ihalainen 2010, 91, 102 - 103, 113. BC/Pr 4 August 1753. For criticism of such arguments, see A Review of the Proposed Naturalization of the Jews 1753 (T44905), 99 - 100; BC/PA 20 November 1770.

⁵⁷⁰ Renfrewshire 1741 (#098), Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Stirling 1742 (#134); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Worcester 1742 (#143); Bolton 1775 (#405).

potrayed as injurious to the nation⁵⁷¹ and its people⁵⁷². Others claimed to represent the public interest⁵⁷³ and to speak on behalf of the interest of the nation, country, and kingdom⁵⁷⁴. Speaking on behalf of abstractions such as the people, nation, and country represents one of the most traditional forms of representative claim-making in the spheres of politics. Such claims were especially common and legitimate in political systems based on parliamentary representation. Although rejecting the use of binding instructions, Edmund Burke portrayed the House of Commons as the 'deliberative assembly of one nation, with one interest, that of the whole' in his speech to the electors of Bristol⁵⁷⁵. Petitioners claiming to speak on behalf of the people and nation tended to agree. By representing themselves as the surrogate actors of such abstractions, petitioners suggested that parliament ought to recognise their requests to defend the interest of the whole. Instead of promoting their private interests, they presented themselves as the champions of the people.

In order to emphasise the importance of their surrogate agency, petitioners used accentuating attributes to describe the abstractions they claimed to represent. In the case of representative claims on behalf of entities such as the nation and the people, and their conceptual variants, two distinctive discourses stand out: claims on behalf of (1) an injured people or nation and (2) a brave people or nation. The first one of the discourses was somewhat more common, especially during the first part of the eighteenth century. It was common for petitioners to claim to act on behalf of an injured⁵⁷⁶, poor and impoverished⁵⁷⁷, miserable⁵⁷⁸, oppressed and exhausted⁵⁷⁹, divided⁵⁸⁰, unwary and credulous⁵⁸¹, and 'almost despairing' people⁵⁸². The burgesses and inhabitants of Westminster, encouraging their representatives to punish Walpole and his supporters in 1741, noted that 'as the strictest enquiry only can satisfy, so nothing but the most rigorous justice ought to avenge an injur[e]d people'. 'Lenity to such a one [Walpole]', the petitioners insisted, 'would be cruelty to the nation'.⁵⁸³ Petitioners from St Albans, on

571 See, for instance, Edinburgh 1739 (#060); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Dumfries 1742 (#138); Lincolnshire 1756 (#205); Bristol 1769 (#281).

572 See, for instance, Lincoln 1721 (#012); Cirencester 1767 (#255); London 1769 (#294).

573 Bath 1741 (#102); London 1747 (#165).

574 Rochester 1733 (#031); St Albans 1733 (#035); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Nottingham 1739 (#064); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); York 1742 (#148); Bristol 1742 (#152); Coventry 1742 (#159); Leominster 1743 (#163); Essex 1753 (#169); London 1753 (#176); London 1763 (#242).

575 Mr. Edmund Burke's Speeches at His Arrival at Bristol 1775/28 - 29 (T41525).

576 London 1721 (#002); Somerset 1721 (#007); Kent 1721 (#008); Reading 1721 (#015); Colchester 1721 (#019); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1721 (#022); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Canterbury 1741 (#101); Hereford 1741 (#105); Suffolk 1741 (#111); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Westminster 1741 (#122); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Bristol 1756 (#208); Bristol 1769 (#281); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#323); Westminster 1770 (#325); Durham 1770 (#332).

577 Coventry 1721 (#001); St Albans 1721 (#010).

578 Yorkshire 1721 (#018).

579 Bath 1741 (#102); Leominster 1756 (#197).

580 Coventry 1775 (#388).

581 Leicester 1721 (#004); St Albans 1721 (#006); Reading 1721 (#015); St Albans 1721 (#023).

582 Leicester 1721 (#004); Westminster 1741 (#122); Minehead 1742 (#129); Dumfries 1742 (#138).

583 Westminster 1741 (#122).

the other hand, blamed the 'boundless avarice of griping sycophants, and knavish invaders', a reference to the directors of the S.S.C. and their 'abettors and confederates', of betraying 'an unwary people, into poverty, ruin, and destruction'⁵⁸⁴. Such petitioners tended to represent themselves as surrogate actors defending a credulous and abused people, deceived and defrauded by malicious and often influential actors. In order to protect itself from the ambitious schemes of those in power, and to punish the authors of destruction, it needed petitioners to defend its interests.

Petitioners used similar attributes to characterise the representative claims on behalf of the nation, often claiming to represent an injured⁵⁸⁵, abused⁵⁸⁶, and distressed nation⁵⁸⁷. In order to 'retrieve the credit and restore the trade of this injured and almost sinking nation', the bailiffs and magistrates of Lichfield urged their representatives, Thomas Anson and Henry Vernon, to discover and punish 'those who have been the cause of our fatal miscarriages in the Mediterranean' in 1756. 'The nation cries aloud for justice', the bailiffs and magistrates claimed, 'and is entitled to it'.⁵⁸⁸ Petitioners could also claim to represent the honour of the nation⁵⁸⁹, and, at times, the 'the British flag' and 'the British name'⁵⁹⁰. In such cases,

⁵⁸⁴ St Albans 1721 (#006).

⁵⁸⁵ Westminster 1721 (#003); Hertfordshire 1721 (#005); St Albans 1721 (#006); Nottingham 1721 (#011); St Albans 1721 (#023); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Cromartyshire 1742 (#127); York 1742 (#148); Lichfield 1756 (#186); New Sarum 1756 (#187). For references to an injured country, see Yorkshire 1721 (#018); Colchester 1721 (#019); Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265).

⁵⁸⁶ St Albans 1721 (#006); St Albans 1721 (#023); New Sarum 1756 (#187).

⁵⁸⁷ Maidstone 1721 (#009).

⁵⁸⁸ Lichfield 1756 (#186). A certain reference to admiral John Byng. Byng, sent to the Mediterranean to defend the strategically important garrison on Minorca, became engaged in an indecisive naval battle with the French in May 1756. After failing to capitalise on his advantage during the battle and chase the retreating French fleet, Byng decided to return to Minorca to repair and supply his fleet. However, the news of his failure to protect Minorca from the French enraged the administration and the reading publics back in Britain. Instead of criticising the insufficient resources Byng had been provided with, the numerous pamphleteers, parliamentarians, and members of the mob accused the admiral of negligence and cowardice. In order to protect the administration and the British war efforts, Byng was arrested, court-martialed, sentenced to death, and, regardless of the the numerous requests of clemency, executed on 14 March 1757. Spector 2015, 16 - 36; Griffin 2014, 178 - 180; Starkey 2013, 23 - 26; Dull, 2005, 50 - 54; Dull 2009, 74 - 76; Robson 2016, 27 - 44; Wilson 1998, 180 - 182. According to Nicholas Rogers, the administration also recognised the seriousness of the loss of Minorca. 'As soon as it received official confirmation of the capture of the island's fortress', Rogers maintains, 'it sought to lay the blame upon ... Byng'. 'Carefully edited extracts of Byng's correspondence' were published in the London Gazette, 'suggesting that the fall of the island was his sole responsibility, omitting such evidence as might have exonerated Byng's actions by showing the difficulties which he encountered'. Rogers 1989, 95 - 96.

⁵⁸⁹ Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Nottingham 1739 (#064); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Gloucester 1742 (#128); Minehead 1742 (#129); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Bristol 1742 (#152); Bristol 1756 (#209); London 1756 (#218); Poole 1775 (#391); Lancaster 1775 (#403). For claims on behalf of a dishonoured and disgraced nation, see Reading 1721 (#015); London 1741 (#123); Devon 1742 (#135); Annan 1742 (#136); Southwark 1742 (#146); London 1742 (#155); Bristol 1756 (#209); Cheshire 1756 (#213).

⁵⁹⁰ For references to the British flag, see Lichfield 1756 (#186); Herefordshire 1756 (#194); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204). For references to the British name, see Dumfriesshire 1741

they could request their representatives to pursue 'a vigorous and active war' against the Spaniards to regain 'the honour of the nation', as the freemen of Gloucester⁵⁹¹, and 'concur in every vote, and in every measure, that may tend to restore our constitution and retrieve the honour of the British nation', as the freeholders of Montgomeryshire⁵⁹². Claims on behalf of the British flag, on the other hand, occurred in petitions during the Minorca crisis in 1756. The high sheriff and grand jury of Herefordshire, eager to defend the British honour and the colonies in America, complained of the 'deplorable loss of Minorca, ... aggravated by the unprecedented dishonour sustained by the British flag in the Mediterranean'⁵⁹³. Most of the petitioners claiming to represent conceptual abstractions such as the people and the nation used the concepts in rather synonymous ways. In both cases, petitioners claimed represent collective entities, though petitioners claiming to act on behalf of the nation tended to emphasise the more symbolic aspects of speaking-on-behalf.

In the case of the second discourse, petitioners used more positive attributes to describe the abstractions they claimed to represent. In such cases, they often claimed to speak on behalf of a free⁵⁹⁴ and a brave people⁵⁹⁵. The petitioners from St Albans claimed in their petition to the House of Commons in 1721 that the nation 'have their eyes fix[e]d upon you, their representatives', requesting the House to deliver 'speedy and exemplary justice' and 'increase your zeal for your injured country, that a brave and lately a wealthy people may not become despicable to the whole earth'⁵⁹⁶. During the Minorca crisis, on the other hand, petitioners claimed to speak on behalf of a people determined to defend Britain from a French invasion. The corporation of Salisbury, for instance, requested their representatives in parliament, William Bouverie and Julines Beckford, both of them Tories⁵⁹⁷, to champion legislative measures to replace foreign troops and mercenaries with 'a well regulated militia'. 'Such a law, founded on truly British principles', the petitioners insisted, would 'revive the drooping spirit of our constitution, encourage the natives of these kingdoms to exert their antient bravery, in retrieving the sinking glory of the British arms'.⁵⁹⁸ The inhabitants of Southwark, on the other hand, argued that the copious petitions from boroughs and counties in 1756 'sufficiently testify that we are, and have a just sense of our happiness, in being a free people'. Despite the disaster regarding the S.S.C. and the loss of the strategically important island of Minorca, numerous petitions in both 1721 and 1756 contained expressions of defiance. Although betrayed by men of influence,

(#117); London 1742 (#154); London 1756 (#216). For English/British spirit, see for example York 1742 (#148); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); Devon 1763 (#226).

⁵⁹¹ Gloucester 1742 (#128).

⁵⁹² Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132).

⁵⁹³ Herefordshire 1756 (#194).

⁵⁹⁴ Woodstock 1733 (#041); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Herefordshire 1741 (#106); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); Hereford 1742 (#158); Essex 1756 (#179); Southwark 1756 (#214); Devon 1763 (#226); London 1773 (#350); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

⁵⁹⁵ St Albans 1721 (#010); Carmarthen 1740 (#070); Essex 1756 (#179).

⁵⁹⁶ St Albans 1721 (#010).

⁵⁹⁷ HoP/William Bouverie; HoP/Julines Beckford.

⁵⁹⁸ New Sarum 1756 (#187).

from the South Sea directors to admiral Byng, the petitioners presented themselves, and Britons in general, as determined to restore the nation into its past glory.

Besides abstractions such as trade, the people, and the nation, petitioners could also claim to act on behalf of entire generations. Most of such petitioners focused on defending either past or the future generations. In the case of past generations, petitioners could claim to defend 'that precious liberty maintain[e]d by our ancestors at the expence of their blood, and transmitted to us in the frame of our happy constitution', like the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Denbighshire in 1741⁵⁹⁹. The mayor, jurats, and commonalty of Rye, on the other hand, used representative claims on behalf of previous generations to emphasise their astonishment at the administration's decision to introduce excise duties in 1733. As such 'an infamous method of raising taxes' was 'unknown to our forefathers, even in their greatest necessities', the petitioners could not 'imagine this to be the reward of so much blood split, and treasure spent in the defence of our dear liberties'.⁶⁰⁰ Petitioners could also use similar claims to defend John Wilkes and his claim to one of the Middlesex seats in parliament. The citizens of Bristol accused his Majesty's ministers of 'endeavouring to subvert those sacred laws which our renowned forefathers established at the expence of their blood, and left us as our noblest inheritance'⁶⁰¹. The lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London, eager in their defence of Wilkes, portrayed themselves as 'determined to abide by those rights and liberties, which our fore-fathers bravely vindicated, at the ever-memorable revolution, and which their sons will ever resolutely defend'⁶⁰². Such claims on behalf of past generations exemplify both the reactive nature of petitioning and the legitimacy of tradition. Instead of requesting changes to the established order of politics per se, petitioners demanded that parliament and the King's servants in the administration abided by the established rules of government and respected the settled rights and privileges of the people. Even Wilkes and his supporters, often portrayed as radicals, emphasised the importance of restoring the ancient rights for which generations of Britons had fought.

In the case of claims on behalf of the future generations, on the other hand, petitioners emphasised the calamitous consequences of the opposed bills and measures. Petitioners could portay, like the burgesses and inhabitants of Westminster in 1741, the 'present crisis of affairs' as decisive for the future generations of the nation. These petitioners, having assembled at the Fountain Tavern in the Strand⁶⁰³, claimed that the crisis 'must determine the fate of us and our posterity,

⁵⁹⁹ Denbighshire 1741 (#097).

⁶⁰⁰ Rye 1733 (#039).

⁶⁰¹ Bristol 1769 (#281), see also London 1742 (#153); Middlesex 1769 (#292); London 1769 (#294); Northumberland 1770 (#301); London 1770 (#324).

⁶⁰² London 1770 (#324).

⁶⁰³ The Fountain Tavern served as the meeting place for the Fountain Club, one of the most prominent anti-Walpolean associations. On 12 February 1742, almost 300 members of parliament, including the Duke of Argyll, William Pulteney, and most members of the parliamentary opposition, attended a meeting to discuss the composition

and render this kingdom either a glory, or scoff among the nations.' Instead of simply removing Walpole and his 'creatures' from the administration, the petitioners encouraged Lord Perceval and Charles Edwin, their representatives in the House of Commons, to 'procure us such a constitutional security as may prevent this kingdom from suffering by the like errors or iniquities for the future'.⁶⁰⁴ Petitioners could also persuade the petitioned by promising them praise on behalf of the future generations. The petitioners from St Albans, assembled at the court of quarter sessions in 1721, assured the members of parliament that if they continued to act as petitioners requested, 'the generations to come shall call you blessed'⁶⁰⁵. The freeholders of Middlesex, on the other hand, requested the King to dissolve the parliament due to its decision to exclude Wilkes from the House of Commons and thus 'draw down upon yourself and your posterity, the blessings of grateful millions'⁶⁰⁶. In the cases of both the St Albans petition of 1721 and the Middlesex petition of 1770, petitioners used the promise of canonisation to persuade the petitioned instances to support the content of their petitions. Such promises could, of course, signify a wide variety of things. In the case of members of parliament, promises of esteem from posterity could mean both electoral support and support for maintaining their influence in general in the constituency. Similar promises to parliament and the King, on the other hand, could be interpreted as assurances of general support for the administration and the political establishment during periods of crisis. But such promises also contained strong elements of political martyrdom.

Petitioners using representative claims on behalf of past and the future generations often represented themselves as the protectors of the political continuum. Some of the petitioners in 1733 presented their struggle against the imposition excise duties as a means 'to distinguish ourselves to our posterity', claiming to defend the constitutional settlement 'our fore-fathers have, at the expence of their lives and fortunes, deliver[e]d down safe to us, and which we hope, we shall

of the future administration. Langford 1992, 187; Timbs 1872, 421; Colley 1982, 73 - 74.

⁶⁰⁴ Westminster 1741 (#122), see also Ipswich 1756 (#185). The justices of the peace and the principal inhabitants of Southwark, on the other hand, were concerned that the miseries of the South Sea Bubble would 'be handed down, and too severely felt by posterity' Southwark 1721 (#017). See also Bedford 1734 (#053); London 1740 (#075); Worcester 1742 (#143); London 1742 (#153); London 1742 (#154); Merionethshire 1743 (#164); Breconshire 1756 (#184); Ipswich 1756 (#185); Yorkshire 1764 (#247); Bristol 1769 (#281); Middlesex 1769 (#292); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Wiltshire 1775 (#389).

⁶⁰⁵ St Albans 1721 (#010).

⁶⁰⁶ Middlesex 1770 (#320), see also Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087). The gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Northumberland represented their request to dissolve the parliament as 'our duty to your Majesty, to ourselves, and to posterity', whereas the lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London claimed to be 'indispensably obliged by the duty we owe to justice, to liberty, to the present age, and to posterity'. Northumberland 1770 (#301) and London 1771 (#336). See also Westminster 1741 (#122); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Breconshire 1756 (#184); Bristol 1769 (#281); London 1769 (#294); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Westminster 1771 (#328); Northampton 1771 (#333).

have the virtue and courage to deliver to latest posterity'⁶⁰⁷. Wilkite petitioners used similar arguments during the 1770s. The freeholders of Surrey, imploring the King to dismiss his ministers and dissolve the parliament, claimed to represent 'a constitution which has hitherto been preserved by the blood and treasure of our ancestors, and which, in justice to our posterity, at the risque of all that is dear to us, we will transmit unimpaired to our descendants'⁶⁰⁸. By doing so, the petitioners represented themselves as essential links between the past and the future. In addition to protecting their own liberties, both ancient and those granted after the revolution of 1688, the petitioners also protected those of their descendants, so that also they could enjoy the privileges of true Englishmen.

Representative claims on behalf of tertiary petitioners exemplifies the more abstract forms of claim-making and surrogate agency. Even though petitioning is often evaluated from a rather functional perspective, petitioners representing only themselves and their economic interests, the claim-making on behalf of the abstractions described in this sub-chapter demonstrates the need to also recognise the other aspects of petitioners' agency. That is not to deny the possible existence of such interests, but to emphasise that if petitioners are understood only as selfish actors, moved by short-term gains, a tremendous amount of aspects and nuances influencing petitioners' decisions are disregarded. The patterns of representative claims enable us to understand on whose behalf it was legitimate to speak and act in eighteenth-century Britain. Although corporate and other administrative actors formed the core of petitions throughout the studied period, claims on behalf of the inhabitants of the colonies and the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions, emphasising scale over status, demonstrate the changing patterns of representation. Such claims also exemplify petitioners' ambitions. Instead of representing but themselves, and those in their immediate social and geographical vicinity, most of the petitioners also portrayed themselves as champions of broader, sometimes rather universalistic, causes. The numerous claims on behalf of different abstractions, and actors other than the primary petitioners themselves, clearly demonstrate that representation was neither something rigid nor static, but a process of constant negotiation.

⁶⁰⁷ Reading 1733 (#038) and St Albans 1733 (#035), see also Cheshire 1740 (#084); Somerset 1740 (#086); Denbighshire 1741 (#097); York 1742 (#148); Boston 1756 (#188).

⁶⁰⁸ Surrey 1770 (#314).

4 PUBLIC INTEREST AND PRIVATE INFLUENCE: IDEALS AND COUNTER-IDEALS OF REPRESENTATION AND PARTICIPATION

4.1 Petitions and the Collective Interest

Besides the utilisation of representative claims, petitioners also used other forms of discursive practices to define representation. This chapter focuses on petitioners' conceptualisations of ideals and counter-ideals of representation (how representatives ought to act) and participation (who had the right to participate in the process of negotiating representation and in what manner). Petitioners used the ideals and counter-ideals to define the boundaries of representative politics; ideals to describe how representatives and other actors in the spheres of politics ought to act and counter-ideals to determine whom and what representatives ought to oppose. By doing so, petitioners endeavoured to influence the conduct of the petitioned (and, indeed, representatives in general). Although usually presented in implicit terms, such assertions were often used to restrict the leeway of the petitioned. In order to convince their audiences, petitioners used concepts that were commonly recognised as legitimate. Some of the petitioners' conceptualisations were creative, often in the form of conscious revision of concepts' usual connotations and associations. Others utilised customary concepts and definitions, producing copious references to constituents' liberties and the constitution. In both cases, petitioners used concepts and discourses their audiences could recognise and accept.

By elaborating petitioners' uses of ideals and counter-ideals, the chapter demonstrates in a detailed manner how petitioners defined representation in practice. Chapter 4.1 (Petitions and the Collective Interest) focuses on petitioners' ideals of representation and participation. It also discusses their endeavours to represent their private interests as necessities to the common good. Chapter 4.2 (Counter-Ideals of Representation and Participation), on the other hand, focuses

on petitioners' use of counter-ideals. Chapter 4.2.1 (Enemies of the People) focuses on biases, conspiracies, and malpractices, and Chapter 4.2.2 (Odious Influences and Scandalous Schemes) on petitioners' references to parties, factions, and influences.

Interest functioned as one of the main concepts petitioners used to characterise the ideals of representation and participation⁶⁰⁹. Most uses of the concept emphasised the collectivistic features of petitioners' ideals⁶¹⁰. Copious petitioners used collective identities to characterise the concept of interest, often claiming to champion the interest of politico-geographic entities such as the country⁶¹¹, the kingdom⁶¹², and the nation⁶¹³. Others claimed to defend the interest of entities such as the people⁶¹⁴ and the public⁶¹⁵. In such cases, petitioners could claim that 'the removal of the person of a minister from the helm, is insufficient for securing the interests and liberties of a people, while his creatures, his maxims, and his

⁶⁰⁹ Dictionarists defined the concept of interest as 'concernment', 'advantage', and 'influence over others'. It could also be described as a 'benefit', 'right', 'power', and, according to Samuel Johnson, 'share; part in anything; participation'. Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735; Johnson 1768. As the dictionarists' definitions indicate, interest functioned as a concept that could be used to describe and capture a wide variety of ideas and issues. Hence, it is also one of the most ambiguous basic concepts examined in this thesis. J.A.W Gunn, on the few who have studied the concept somewhat systematically, has argued that 'the word, "interest," has a special place in the growth of modern political vocabulary'; as being 'the most fashionable political concept in the seventeenth century, it enjoyed an international reputation, first as a hallmark of Machiavellian ruthlessness and later as a necessary tool for the description of human designs'. It had initially been used as a legal concept, but after the civil war and the republican period also became to refer 'to all designs and concerns, whether or not sanctioned by legal recognition; furthermore, it also began to be applied to those groups that shared certain concerns'. Gunn 1968. Though a complicated and ambiguous concept even before the 1640s, it became even more complicated and ambiguous towards the eighteenth century. However, in the case of most petitions, and the parliamentary sphere of politics, it tended to signify having a share or being involved in something, bet it a joint-stock company, a branch of trade, or a constituency.

⁶¹⁰ Such interests are referred to as *collective interests* in this thesis. Rather than being a concept used by petitioners and their contemporaries, it is a purely analytical concept. Petitioners and their proponents – and, indeed, opponents – used them to describe the alleged interests of collective constructions such as the nation and the people, as is further demonstrated in this chapter. In this sense they resembled the use of representative claims; claims of collective interests often included speaking and acting on behalf of such interests.

⁶¹¹ Reading 1721 (#015); Rochester 1733 (#031); St Albans 1733 (#035); London 1733 (#037); Rye 1733 (#039); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Flintshire 1740 (#080); Truro 1740 (#081); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Denbighshire 1741 (#097); Hereford 1741 (#105); Suffolk 1741 (#111); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Honiton 1742 (#139); York 1742 (#148); Bristol 1742 (#152); Leominster 1743 (#163); Essex 1753 (#169); Wiltshire 1753 (#173); Worcestershire 1763 (#228); London 1763 (#242); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

⁶¹² Lancashire 1740 (#085); Marlborough 1741 (#109); Bristol 1742 (#152); London 1753 (#176); Maidstone 1756 (#191); Shropshire 1756 (#196); London 1761 (#225).

⁶¹³ Reading 1721 (#015); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); Westminster 1741 (#122); Reading 1742 (#125); London 1742 (#154); Coventry 1742 (#159); Exeter 1756 (#190); Bristol 1756 (#211). For the interest of Great Britain and the British Isles, see Merchants 1737 (#056); Merchants 1739 (#069); Ipswich 1756 (#185).

⁶¹⁴ Bedford 1734 (#053); Preston 1741 (#116); Westminster 1741 (#122); York 1756 (#207).

⁶¹⁵ Edinburgh 1739 (#060); Bath 1741 (#102); Carmarthen 1742 (#130); Somerset 1756 (#199).

views, are entail[ed] upon the government', like the anti-Walpolean petitioners of Westminster in 1741⁶¹⁶. The Merchant Company of Edinburgh, on the other hand, claimed in 1739 that representatives ought to reduce the number of placemen in parliament so 'that our legislature may, as far as possible, be freed from all other influence, than that of the publick interest, and the happiness of the nation'⁶¹⁷. Petitioners could also claim to defend the interest of institutions such as the Crown⁶¹⁸. The burgesses and inhabitants of Westminster, a vibrant constituency of around 8,000 householders paying scot and lot⁶¹⁹, encouraged their newly elected representatives, Lord Perceval and Charles Edwin, to 'extirpat[e] those party distinctions ... industriously fomented among us, in order to serve the mischievous purposes of a ministerial tyranny, and in opposition to the real and permanent interests of the present royal family'⁶²⁰. Though the petitioners did not further elaborate the exact meaning of their claim, it is more than safe to assume that the burgesses and inhabitants referred to the legitimacy of the House of Hanover and, in an indirect manner, the post-Revolution political order.

Besides the use of references to collective entities, most petitioners also used the concept of interest in its singular form⁶²¹. Instead of recognising the diverse nature of entities such as the nation and the people, petitioners often represented them as collectives unified in purpose and pursuit. Because of the emphasis on singular interests, petitioners often implied that the collective entities possessed an organic interest. While others, in most cases the administration, claimed to champion the interest of the nation in order to legitimise their schemes, petitioners claimed to defend its 'true' and 'real' interest. The lord mayor, aldermen, sheriffs, and commons of York, for instance, thanked their representatives, Godfrey Wentworth and George Fox, both of them Tories opposing the administration, for being 'men of such steady principles, that no false honour or other temptations can make you swerve from the real interest of your country'. Instead of accepting favours from the administration⁶²², both of their representatives had voted against the government in the case of the Chippenham by-election in 1742,

⁶¹⁶ Westminster 1741 (#122).

⁶¹⁷ Merchants 1739 (#060).

⁶¹⁸ Preston 1741 (#116); Westminster 1741 (#122); Edinburgh 1742 (#151).

⁶¹⁹ HoP/Westminster 1715 - 1754.

⁶²⁰ Westminster 1741 (#122).

⁶²¹ See, for instance, Lancashire 1740 (#085); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Westminster 1741 (#122); Westminster 1742 (#157); Salisbury 1756 (#187); Exeter 1756 (#190); Bedfordshire 1756 (#193); York 1756 (#207); London 1761 (#225); Tewkesbury 1763 (#235); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238); Plymouth 1763 (#239); Herefordshire 1763 (#241); Southwark 1769 (#290); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); Yorkshire 1770 (#319); London 1775 (#377); Coventry 1775 (#388); Wiltshire 1775 (#389); Middlesex 1775 (#395); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

⁶²² Although most certainly making use of corruption and patronage throughout his career as the prime minister, Walpole used the same measures and instruments that most of his predecessors and successors used to manage parliament. Paul Langford has pointed out that 'the means of corruption did not multiply under Walpole; official patronage and the national debt, cited by his antagonists as the main sources of improper influence, were both stable during his ministry'. Langford 1992, 20 - 21; O'Gorman 2006, 86; Cruickshanks 1984, 42 - 43; Langford 1975, 18 - 20; Black 1984a, 20 - 21. For accusations regarding corruption after his fall in 1742, see Chapter 4.2.1 (Enemies of the People).

a vote that the administration had declared a motion of no confidence⁶²³. However, although the government was defeated, prompting the prime minister to resign, the petitioners requested their representatives to further prove their 'integrity' and commitment to the true interest of the nation by bringing Walpole and his abettors to 'to an open and fair trial'.⁶²⁴ The members of the corporation of Carmarthen used similar arguments and conceptualisations to commend John Philipps, the sole representative of the constituency. The petitioners praised Philipps, a Tory with strong Jacobite sympathies⁶²⁵, for his 'strict adherence to the true interest of the publick in general' and further encouraged him to punish 'the authors of national calamities'⁶²⁶.

Due to its collective nature, the concept of interest became efficacious in determining the ideals of representative politics. It could be used to define the ideals of both the participative and representative parts of representative politics. In the first case, petitioners used the concept to assure the petitioned and the reading publics of the benevolence of their intentions⁶²⁷. They could assert that 'our concern for the honour and interest of our country fixes our care and attention on the present war with Spain', like the freeholders of Aberdeenshire in 1741⁶²⁸, and that 'a just concern for the interest of our country ... have moved us to represent ... our entire disapprobation [of excises]', like the mayor, aldermen, and commons of Rochester in 1733⁶²⁹. Petitioners could also represent themselves as defenders of the collective interest by claiming to resist measures and policies injurious to the interest of the nation⁶³⁰. In the second case, petitioners used collective interests to describe the duties of representatives. They could submit Letters of Thanks to their representatives due to their support of the collective interest⁶³¹ and ap-

⁶²³ Langford 1992, 54 - 57; Cruickshanks 1984, 42 - 43; O'Gorman 2006, 84.

⁶²⁴ York 1742 (#148); HoP/Godfrey Wentworth; HoP/George Fox, see also Reading 1721 (#015); Flintshire 1740 (#080); Truro 1740 (#081); Lancashire 1740 (#085); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Denbighshire 1741 (#097); Hereford 1741 (#105); Suffolk 1741 (#111); Preston 1741 (#116); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Carmarthen 1742 (#130); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Honiton 1742 (#139); Leominster 1743 (#163); Essex 1753 (#169); Wiltshire 1753 (#173); Liverpool 1756 (#178); Salisbury 1756 (#187); Maidstone 1756 (#191); York 1756 (#207); London 1761 (#225); Middlesex 1775 (#396). For similar conceptualisations in representatives' replies, see, for instance, Hereford 1741 (#105a1).

⁶²⁵ HoP/John Philipps; HoP/Carmarthen 1715 - 1754.

⁶²⁶ Carmarthen 1742 (#130).

⁶²⁷ See, for instance, Rochester 1733 (#031); London 1733 (#037); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Bristol 1742 (#152); London 1763 (#242).

⁶²⁸ Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112).

⁶²⁹ Rochester 1733 (#031).

⁶³⁰ Rochester 1733 (#031); London 1733 (#037); Rye 1733 (#039); Bedford 1734 (#053); Merchants 1737 (#056); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Merchants 1739 (#069); Flintshire 1740 (#080); Denbighshire 1741 (#097); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); London 1747 (#165); London 1753 (#176); Ipswich 1756 (#185); London 1763 (#242). When the lord mayor, aldermen, commons, and livery of London requested the King to dissolve the parliament in 1770, the King refused to do so, claiming that 'I should ill deserve to be considered as the father of my people, if I could suffer myself to be prevailed upon to make such an use of my prerogative, as I cannot but think inconsistent with the interest, and dangerous to the constitution of the kingdom'. London 1770 (#352a1).

⁶³¹ Reading 1721 (#015); Flintshire 1740 (#080); Truro 1740 (#081); Lancashire 1740 (#085); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Denbighshire 1741 (#096);

plaud the House of Commons for 'faithfully pursuing the real interest and honour of their country'⁶³². They could also request representatives to support bills and propositions protecting the collective interest and resist measures that endangered it⁶³³. Such conceptualisations enabled petitioners to portray themselves and supportive representatives as actors sincerely concerned for the state of the nation. Instead of promoting vested interests, as their opponents in the administration, petitioners claimed to champion measures that were necessary for securing the future of the nation.

Some petitioners conceptualised the advancement of the collective interest as disinterestedness. Dictionarists such as John Kersey and Nathaniel Bailey defined the concept of 'disinterested or disinterested' as 'void of self-interest' and as being 'impartial [and] unbiassed'⁶³⁴. Samuel Johnson's *A Dictionary of the English Language* defined 'disinterest' as 'indifferent to profit'⁶³⁵, 'disinterested' as 'superior to regard of private advantage'⁶³⁶, and 'disinterestedness' as 'contempt of private interest'⁶³⁷. Most petitioners, however, used the concept more straightforwardly. Disinterested conduct usually signified opposition to ministerial schemes; disinterested petitioners and representatives opposed, among other things, places and pensions⁶³⁸ and 'the infamous convention with Spain'⁶³⁹. The bailiff, burgesses, and principal inhabitants of Ilchester, a 'venal borough' according to John Brooke⁶⁴⁰, described the conduct of Joseph Tolson Lockyer and William Wilson, their representatives in parliament, as disinterested because of their opposition to the duties on cider and perry⁶⁴¹ - even though the duties directly affected the interest of the Somerset borough. But instead of being partisan and

Denbighshire 1741 (#097); Marlborough 1741 (#109); Suffolk 1741 (#111); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Carmarthen 1742 (#139); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Honiton 1742 (#139); Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Bristol 1742 (#152); Leominster 1743 (#163); Essex 1753 (#169); Wiltshire 1753 (#173); Worcestershire 1763 (#228). For similar uses of the concept of unbiased, see Lichfield 1741 (#107); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); Bristol 1742 (#152); Salisbury 1756 (#187); Southwark 1769 (#286); Honiton 1771 (#334).

⁶³² Reading 1721 (#015).

⁶³³ Reading 1721 (#015); St Albans 1733 (#035); Rye 1733 (#039); Bedford 1734 (#053); Flintshire 1740 (#080); Denbighshire 1741 (#097); Marlborough 1741 (#109); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Preston 1741 (#116); Coventry 1742 (#159); Ipswich 1756 (#185); Maidstone 1756 (#191); Shropshire 1756 (#196); York 1756 (#207); London 1761 (#225); Middlesex 1775 (#396). For similar arguments containing references to the concept of unbiased, see Leicester 1739 (#067); Bristol 1742 (#152); Salisbury 1756 (#187).

⁶³⁴ Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735.

⁶³⁵ Or 'superiority to regards of private advantage'.

⁶³⁶ Or 'not influenced by private profit'.

⁶³⁷ Johnson 1768. The 1755 edition of Johnson's dictionary also defined it as 'neglect to personal profit'. It could also be conceptualised as 'disinterested' ('without regard to private advantage; impartial') and 'disinterestment' ('disregard to private advantage'). Johnson 1755; Johnson 1768. These conceptual forms derived, according to Johnson, from the French *dis* and *interesse*, but 'it is written disinterested by those who derive it immediately from interest, and I think more properly'. Johnson 1755. Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Oxfordshire 1741 (#114); Flintshire 1742 (#137).

⁶³⁸ Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082).

⁶³⁹ HoP/Ilchester 1754 - 1790.

⁶⁴⁰ Ilchester 1763 (#234).

self-interested, petitioners characterised such forms of disinterestedness as 'appear[ing] on the side of liberty'⁶⁴², 'the true spirit of constitution'⁶⁴³, and the 'honour and interest of this nation'⁶⁴⁴. Even if the concept of disinterestedness could be understood to signify the absence of interests, most petitioners used the concept to describe the absence of disadvantageous interests.

Regardless of the differences regarding the implications of the concept, the uses of disinterestedness resembled petitioners' references to collective interests. Petitioners could applaud the 'generous disinterestedness of the senate', like the gentlemen and freeholders of Flintshire praising the passing of the place and pension bills in 1742⁶⁴⁵, and the 'disinterested conduct' of members of parliament, like the barons and freeholders of Aberdeenshire commending their representatives for their opposition to the Convention of Pardo in 1740⁶⁴⁶. Disinterestedness

⁶⁴² Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082), see also Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); Honiton 1771 (#334). For similar arguments by the country opposition to Walpole, see Dickinson 1977, 176 - 180.

⁶⁴³ Bath 1769 (#264), see also Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Oxfordshire 1741 (#114). The freeholders of Edinburghshire wished that members of parliament 'would impartially concur in every measure that might contribute towards the re-establishment of a once happy constitution, now almost torn to pieces, and moulder[e]d to a shadow, by a long progressive series of corrupt and enslaving practices'. Edinburghshire 1742 (#150).

⁶⁴⁴ Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112), see also Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); Essex 1756 (#179). The mayor, bailiffs, and burgesses of Newcastle-under-Lyme assured Baptist Leveson Gower, a Tory whose family controlled the constituency, that 'we believe you have proposed no end to yourself in this service but the publick good, and desire no reward but the approbation of you country; and we are confident it will add such strength to your zeal, that nothing will be able to indimidate, seduce, or weary you in your endeavours to promote these necessary laws, when you know these endeavours will be acceptable to us, honourable to yourself, and (if successful) of infinite advantage to your country, in this, and all succeeding generations'. Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087); HoP/Baptist Leveson Gower; HoP/Newcastle-under-Lyme 1715 - 1754.

⁶⁴⁵ Flintshire 1742 (#137), see also Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112). The opposition against places and pensions, alongside the resistance against the Septennial Act and standing armies, formed the backbone of the country opposition. Parliament had already restricted the number of placeholders in 1694 (excluding land tax collectors and salt duty commissioners from sitting in parliament), 1699 (excise officials), and 1701 (custom officials). However, the anti-Walpolean opposition endeavoured to further limit the influence of such places and pensions, allegedly used to frustrate the true voice of the people. The place bill of 1740, championed by the petitioners studied in this thesis, was defeated by 222 votes against those 206 in favour of it. The former members of the opposition succeeded in passing a place bill in 1742, but the act fell well short of the promises the country opposition had made during the premiership of Walpole. O'Gorman 37, 79 - 80; Black 1984a, 32 - 33; Black 1998, 122 - 123; Dickinson 1994, 198 - 201; Dickinson 1977, 184, 217; Dickinson 1987, 71 - 73; Gunn 1983, 9 - 11, 26, 63; Langford 18 - 20, 101 - 102; Royle & Walvin 1982, 14; Skinner 1974, 97 - 98, 125; Langford 1992, 53, 185 - 187.

⁶⁴⁶ Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082), see also Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); Ilchester 1763 (#234); Honiton 1771 (#334); Rochester 1772 (#341a1). Petitioners often associated disinterested conduct with attributes such as 'worthy', 'honest', 'steady', and 'unbiassed'. Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087); Kent 1753 (#168); Essex 1756 (#179); Ilchester 1763 (#234); Honiton 1771 (#334). Impartial conduct, on the other hand, became characterised by concepts and conceptualisations such as 'publick spirit', 'fortitude', 'honour', 'courage', and 'zeal'. London 1721 (#002); Nottingham 1721 (#011); Colchester 1721

could also be used to assure the petitioned, and the reading publics, of the candour of petitioners' intentions. Such argumentation could be explicit; petitioners could portray petitions as symbols of '[our] unfeigned zeal for the honour of God, and a disinterested concern for our country's peace'⁶⁴⁷. They could also promote disinterestedness in more implicit manners. The mayor, aldermen, and commons of Rochester, for instance, requested their representatives, John Jennings and David Polhill, to oppose the excise scheme as such duties were 'universally disliked by all impartial and disinterested people'⁶⁴⁸. In order to prove their impartiality and disinterestedness, the representatives ought to oppose the imposition of excises on tobacco and wine⁶⁴⁹. Though not as common as the other conceptualisations of the collective interest, the concept of disinterestedness functioned as a fusion of eighteenth-century ideals. It combined the emphasis on collective interests (despite the implication of the opposite), the abhorrence of malicious influences, and the ideal of representatives' independence.

Petitioners also used other concepts to describe their ideals. Most of them, such as the concept of spirit, closely resembled their uses of interest. *Public spirit*⁶⁵⁰, for instance, became used in similar manners as the concepts of disinterested and impartial. Petitioners could praise their representatives for their 'noble and public-spirited opposition' against the 'partial and unconstitutional laws of

(#019). For 'disinterested behaviour' and 'services', see Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Kent 1753 (#168); Bath 1769 (#264).

⁶⁴⁷ Wiltshire 1753 (#173). See also Westminster 1770 (#328a1). The mayor and commonalty of York assured the Crown of their 'firm and disinterested zeal for the advancement of your majesty's just power and greatness'. York 1756 (#207).

⁶⁴⁸ Rochester 1733 (#031).

⁶⁴⁹ Despite the petition, both Polhill - a staunch supporter of the administration and the brother-in-law of the Duke of Newcastle, then the secretary of state for the southern department - and Jennings, the rear-admiral of England since February 1733, voted in favour of the bill for imposing an excise duty on tobacco. HoP/David Polhill; HoP/John Jennings; HoP/Rochester 1715 - 1754; GM/November 1733.

⁶⁵⁰ London 1721 (#002); Somerset 1721 (#007); Tamworth 1721 (#013); Reading 1721 (#015); Colchester 1721 (#019); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1721 (#022); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Worcester 1742 (#142); Worcester 1742 (#143); Staffordshire 1742 (#145); Herefordshire 1742 (#149); Maidstone 1756 (#191); Devon 1763 (#226). For other references to the concept of spirit, see Westminster 1721 (#003); Leicester 1721 (#004); Maidstone 1721 (#009); York 1739 (#066); York 1741 (#099); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Chester 1741 (#110); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Monmouth 1741 (#119); London 1741 (#123); Reading 1742 (#125); Annan 1742 (#136); York 1742 (#148); Westminster 1742 (#157); Coventry 1742 (#159); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); York 1753 (#172); Devon 1763 (#226); Bath 1769 (#264). Even though most of the references to the concept of spirit in the studied petitions were distinctively positive, emphasising the role of the public spirit and the English or British spirit, petitioners also produced a number of negative references to the concept. The gentlemen, clergy, merchants, manufacturers, and inhabitants of Manchester, for instance, criticised the involvement of two justices of the peace in promoting 'and publicly abetting this petition [in favour of reconciliation], which though mild in its pretensions is nevertheless calculated to fan the flames of sedition, and keep alive the restless spirit of opposition, so destructive to society, and serving only the purposes of faction and discontent' in 1775. Manchester 1775 (#383), see also Essex 1769 (#276); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Berkshire 1775 (#394). The lord mayor, aldermen, and livery of London, on the other hand, requested the King to dismiss his ministers 'from your person and counsels for ever' and to dissolve 'a parliament, who, by various acts of cruelty and injustice, have manifested a spirit of persecution against our brethren in America'. London 1775 (#375).

excise', like the high sheriff, gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Devon in 1763⁶⁵¹, and their endeavours to unite 'parties in one common interest, and [to turn] our private contests into publick spirit and love of our country', as the high sheriff and grand jury of Staffordshire in 1742⁶⁵². Petitioners could also praise the 'true British zeal and spirit' of the parliament, as the Westminster petitioners during the South Sea Crisis in 1721 did⁶⁵³, and 'the glorious spirit of liberty' that defined the opposition against Walpole, like the lord mayor and commonalty of York in 1741⁶⁵⁴. Others used references to the common good to describe the ideals of representation and participation⁶⁵⁵. Such conceptualisations could be used to describe petitioners' intentions⁶⁵⁶, commend representatives' conduct⁶⁵⁷, and encourage them to act in a specified manner in the future⁶⁵⁸. It could also be conceptualised as the 'publick good'⁶⁵⁹. In such cases, petitioners could emphasise their representatives' 'zeal for the publick good', like the Cornish petitioners endeavouring to restrict the amount of placemen and restore triennial parliaments in 1740⁶⁶⁰, and 'distinguish[e]d services for the publick good', like the principal burgesses and inhabitants of Tewkesbury, who requested one of their representatives to protect 'with your utmost efforts, such good and wholesome laws as will preserve the ancient freedom of our constitution'⁶⁶¹. Although explicit references

⁶⁵¹ Devon 1763 (#226). Pasi Ihalainen, among others, has discussed the influence of religion on the spheres of politics, arguing that 'it is not surprising that some of the terminology applied by political rivals to each other was a direct loan from the sphere of religion'. He has pointed out that 'independently of their conviction as Christians, the introducers of these terms could rely on commonly shared associations of terms such as spirit, zeal and bigot and the traditional discourse on Protestant religion, which was familiar to all readers'. Ihalainen 1999, 188 - 191, see also 199, 216 - 219, 267 - 268, 274. J.A.W Gunn, on the other hand, has argued that public spirit 'was one of the most characteristically British political concepts of the eighteenth century'. Gunn 1983, 168 - 271.

⁶⁵² Staffordshire 1742 (#145).

⁶⁵³ Westminster 1721 (#003), see also York 1742 (#148) and Merionethshire 1743 (#162). The high sheriff, gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Devon claimed that excises were 'contrary to the spirit of the Great Charter, that sacred Palladium of English liberty'. Devon 1763 (#226). Petitioners could also refer to the 'cause of liberty' and commend members of parliament for their 'appearance on the side of liberty'. Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Bath 1741 (#102); Hereford 1741 (#105); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Worcestershire 1763 (#228). For references to 'love of liberty', see Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Maidstone 1756 (#191); London 1756 (#218); Kent 1769 (#267); Bristol 1769 (#281).

⁶⁵⁴ York 1741 (#099), see also Chester 1741 (#110); Reading 1742 (#125).

⁶⁵⁵ See, for instance, Lincolnshire 1756 (#189) and Middlesex 1770 (#320).

⁶⁵⁶ Rochester 1733 (#031); Reading 1733 (#038); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098).

⁶⁵⁷ Newcastle-under-Lyme 1721 (#022); Stirling 1742 (#134); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Lichfield 1742 (#144); Coventry 1742 (#159). See also Coventry 1741 (#108a1). Representatives could also be characterised as 'well-wishers to our constitution'. Warwickshire 1753 (#170), see also Coventry 1741 (#108) and Monmouth 1741 (#119).

⁶⁵⁸ See, for instance, Rochester 1733 (#031); Hindon 1733 (#032); Bishop's Castle 1741 (#104).

⁶⁵⁹ Liskeard 1740 (#078); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087); Canterbury 1741 (#101); Coventry 1741 (#108); #Monmouth 1741 (#119); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120).

⁶⁶⁰ Liskeard 1740 (#078).

⁶⁶¹ The petition was addressed to Thomas Gage, an opposition Whig since his vote against the Convention of Pardo in 1739. The petitioners did not mention Robert Tracy, the pro-administration representative of the borough, in their petition.

to the concept of good remained scarce in petitions, the idea of common good constituted one of the most profound ideals of politics in eighteenth-century Britain.

Petitioners endeavouring to legitimise their petitioning and influence their representatives in parliament could also use collective identities such as Englishness and Britishness⁶⁶². The citizens of Bristol, instructing their representatives to deliver their address to his Majesty, portrayed themselves as actors 'determined to act the part of free-born Englishmen (however others amongst us may be inclined to bow their necks to the yoke)'⁶⁶³. South Sea petitioners, on the other hand, represented the calamitous state of the nation as a crisis that 'ought to be the concern of every true Briton'⁶⁶⁴ and described the 'just abhorrence which every honest Englishman ought to have against such detestable treachery [of the S.S.C.] as the 'true motive of our humbly petitioning this honourable House'⁶⁶⁵. Petitioners could also portray the opposition to ministerial bills and schemes as the duty of every true Briton and Englishman. The mayor, jurats, and commonalty of Rye, one of the cinque ports, a confederation of medieval trading posts⁶⁶⁶, expressed their astonishment upon hearing rumours of the administration's endeavours to convert the custom duties of tobacco and wine into excises. 'Not supposing it could enter into the heart of any Englishman to impose such a burden upon the nation', the petitioners declared under their common seal, 'we looked upon it as

Whereas Gage voted in favour of the place bill, as the petitioners had instructed, Tracy abstained, losing his seat in Tewkesbury in May 1741. Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); HoP/Thomas Gage; HoP/Robert Tracy; HoP/Tewkesbury 1715 - 1754; Langford 1975, 119.

⁶⁶² Mark Knights has shown that the 'word (and concept)' *English* was 'redefined under the pressure of party politics' during the early eighteenth century, becoming 'particularly charged in 1702, after Queen Anne described her heart as 'entirely English''. As it was 'deemed to be a reflection on the Dutch William, and hence on the Revolution', the word was, according to Knights, 'taken up by high church Tories'. However, it was also claimed by Whigs (and others). 'Partisans', Knights concludes, 'thus competed to claim Englishness'. Knights 2005, 286 - 287. But even if the two first Hanoverian monarchs were, at times, mocked as foreigners, especially by those sympathetic towards the Jacobite cause, there are no indications that the studied petitioners used the concept to emphasise ethnicity as such. Petitioners could also use such ideals to turn formally humble requests into de facto demands, as is demonstrated in Chapter 5.4 (Petitioners' Indirect Means of Influence).

⁶⁶³ Bristol 1756 (#208), see also Nottingham 1742 (#133). The high sheriffs, grand jury, gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Yorkshire, criticising the number of placemen in 1740, claimed to 'recomm[en]d [what] is the sentiment of every Englishman, who is not influenc[e]d by his own private interest or expectation', whereas the mayor, bailiff, and commonalty Monmouth, endeavouring to punish Walpole, reduce the number of placemen, and abolish the Septennial Act in 1741, claimed to champion measures 'as we believe they are [the sentiments] of every True Briton and well-wisher to his country'. Yorkshire 1740 (#093); Monmouth 1741 (#119).

⁶⁶⁴ Colchester 1721 (#019), see also Salisbury 1733 (#059); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Berkshire 1775 (#394).

⁶⁶⁵ Coventry 1721 (#001).

⁶⁶⁶ The original ports being Hastings, New Romney, Hythe, Dover, and Sandwich. These five ports were supported by the 'ancient towns' of Rye and Winchelsea. Later on, a number of settlements became 'limbs' for the original ports and towns. Folkestone and Faversham, for instance, became parts of the confederation as 'limbs' of Dover. Murray 1935a; Murray 1935b; Rodger 1996.

a story invented to create uneasinesses in the minds of the people'.⁶⁶⁷ By asserting that no true Englishman could support such duties, the petitioners increased the pressure on their representatives; supporting such a scheme, the petitioners implied, would render them unworthy of representing them in a truly British parliament⁶⁶⁸. Petitioners could also describe members of parliament as 'example[s] worthy the imitation of every independent Englishman'⁶⁶⁹ and describe their conduct as 'the greatest satisfaction to every independent Briton'⁶⁷⁰. Some of the conceptualisations may have been more explicit than others, but the implications of such argumentation remained consistent. True Britons shared petitioners' intentions and conclusions.

Concepts such as *patriot*⁶⁷¹, *patriotic*⁶⁷², and *patriotism*⁶⁷³ could also be used to describe petitioners' ideals of representation and participation. Petitioners as-

⁶⁶⁷ Rye 1733 (#039), see also Rippon 1733 (#034); Rye 1733 (#039); Lancashire 1740 (#085); Somerset 1753 (#171); Wiltshire 1753 (#173); Devon 1763 (#226); Worcestershire 1763 (#228); Taunton 1763 (#244); Bath 1769 (#264); Kent 1769 (#267); Southwark 1769 (#288); Canterbury 1769 (#303).

⁶⁶⁸ Phillips Gybbon, the opposition representative for the borough, voted against bringing in the tobacco bill in 1733. Matthew Norris, the other representative for the borough from January 1733 to 1734, is marked as absent, being 'at Bath' during the vote. His father, Sir John Norris, who replaced his son in Rye in 1734, however, voted against the tobacco bill while representing Portsmouth in parliament. HoP/Phillips Gybbon; HoP/Matthew Norris; HoP/Sir John Norris; HoP/Rye 1715 - 1754; GM/November 1733.

⁶⁶⁹ The freemen of Canterbury, an independent constituency, praised the conduct of John Sawbridge, then one of the representatives of Hythe, for his motion to shorten the duration of parliaments. The petitioners instructed their representatives, William Lynch and Richard Milles, to 'attend the House of Commons on the motion to be made there this session' and support 'such motion to the utmost of your power'. Canterbury 1773 (#353); HoP/Canterbury 1754 - 1790; HoP/John Sawbridge.

⁶⁷⁰ York 1741 (#099), see also Reading 1742 (#125); Leominster 1743 (#163).

⁶⁷¹ Colchester 1721 (#019); Newark-upon-Trent 1721 (#020); London 1739 (#057); Renfrewshire 1739 (#061); Dundee 1739 (#068); Canterbury 1741 (#101); Coventry 1741 (#108); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Worcester 1742 (#143); Dorset 1742 (#147); Coventry 1742 (#159); Leominster 1743 (#163); Kent 1769 (#267). The uses of *patriot* resembled petitioners' references to the 'true lovers of their country'. Rye 1733 (#039), see also Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Warwickshire 1753 (#170); Somerset 1756 (#199); Portsmouth 1764 (#246).

⁶⁷² Cornwall 1763 (#237); Yorkshire 1768 (#259); Flint 1770 (#310); Birmingham 1775 (#400). Petitioners' uses of the concept closely resembled conceptualisations such as 'love of our country'. Staffordshire 1742 (#145), see also Tamworth 1721 (#013); Buckinghamshire 1721 (#024); Rye 1733 (#039); Huntingdonshire 1740 (#072); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); Cirencester 1753 (#174); Maidstone 1756 (#191); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Sunderland 1771 (#360); Coventry 1775 (#383).

⁶⁷³ Worcester 1742 (#142); Nottingham 1766 (#250); Westminster 1770 (#328). Notions of patriotism could also be criticised and ridiculed by the opponents of those using such labels. A mock-petition in the name of 'the unfortunate word PATRIOTISM', for instance, was published in Lloyd's Evening Post and the London Chronicle in August 1765. The mock-petition begged to represent 'that your petitioners has, for so many years past, been very cruelly used by a number of people, who constantly placed the basest actions they committed to your petitioner's account; and always set forth, that they were labouring for her interest, when they were actuated by nothing but a most despicable consideration for their own'. The author further accused the 'two powerful factions in particular, called Whig and Tory' of 'acting by the authority of your petitioners, to endanger the honour of their King and the welfare of their country, and

sociated patriotic conduct with the support of measures that 'shall be most conducive to the happiness and prosperity of this nation'⁶⁷⁴ and with the 'principles of liberty and publick spirit'⁶⁷⁵. Eighteenth-century dictionarists, too, recognised the resemblance of patriotism and the other forms of collective ideals. Nathaniel Bailey, for instance, defined *patriot* as 'a public benefactor', a description closely resembling the definition of Kersey⁶⁷⁶, and *patriotism* as 'publick spiritedness'. Samuel Johnson, on the other hand, defined the concepts as 'one whose ruling passion is the love of his country' and 'love of one's country; zeal for one's country'. Most uses of the concepts of patriot, patriotic, and patriotism were associated with petitioners' endeavour to commend their representatives' conduct. Petitioners could praise the 'true patriotic zeal' of their representatives⁶⁷⁷ and 'highly applaud your espousal of those principles of liberty and publick spirit, so essential to the happiness of Britons, and which are the distinguishing characteristics of true patriotism'⁶⁷⁸. They could also encourage their representatives to oppose ministerial measures 'in conjunction with such worthy patriots as shall be willing', as the dean of guild, merchants, incorporations, and other inhabitants of Dundee in 1739, requesting John Drummond⁶⁷⁹, the sole representative of Perth Burghs, to promote a bill to limit the number of placemen in parliament⁶⁸⁰. But although petitioners' uses of the concepts resembled the more general conceptualisations of the common good, the concepts contained more partisan nuances than most of the more conventional conceptualisations.

Despite its ancient origins, the concept of *patriot* entered the English language relatively late. It first emerged during the sixteenth-century, as a reference to compatriots, but gained traction but during the later seventeenth century. According to Mary G. Dietz, the concept of patriot became 'a fully-fledged part of English political discourse' during the Glorious Revolution. Dietz suggests that the change of the concept can be contributed to a set of factors. First, it became

omitted no opportunity of disturbing the tranquillity of the publick'. In order to clear the name of the concept, the author begged the papers 'to inform the world, that since the absolute expulsion of her deadliest enemy James II. she has had little to do in the affairs of this kingdom; and acquaint your readers, moreover, that they have been entirely managed by a couple of wicked wretches, who always strive to wear her appearance, and whose names are Private Interest and Resentment'. BC/LIEP 7 - 9 August 1765; BC/LC 8 - 10 August 1765.

⁶⁷⁴ Leominster 1743 (#163).

⁶⁷⁵ Worcester 1742 (#142).

⁶⁷⁶ Kersey defined the concept as 'a father of his country, a great benefactor to the publick'. Kersey 1708.

⁶⁷⁷ Cornwall 1763 (#237), see also Coventry 1741 (#108); Yorkshire 1768 (#259); Birmingham 1775 (#400).

⁶⁷⁸ Worcester 1742 (#142).

⁶⁷⁹ As a member of parliament mostly interested in trade and commerce, Drummond tended to support the administration. He represented Perth Burghs from 1727 to his death in January 1743. HoP/John Drummond; HoP/Perth Burghs 1715 - 1754.

⁶⁸⁰ Dundee 1739 (#068), see also London 1739 (#057); Renfrewshire 1739 (#061); Canterbury 1741 (#101); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Worcester 1742 (#143); Dorset 1742 (#147). For historical allegories referring to the patriots of former times, see Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112) and Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126). See also Worcester 1742 (#142); Leominster 1743 (#163); Flint 1770 (#310); Westminster 1770 (#328); Birmingham 1775 (#400).

'tied to a particular set of political principles' such as to the defence of the constitution, the rights and liberties of Englishmen, and the spirit of the Glorious Revolution. Second, post-revolution actors dissociated the concept from the allegiance to absolutist monarchs and, instead, defined it as the defence of one's country.⁶⁸¹ The change is apparent in the eighteenth-century dictionaries. Rather than defining patriot as one's compatriot, it became characterised as an explicitly political concept. John Kersey, and Nathaniel Bailey, defined patriot as 'a father of his country, a great benefactor of the publick' whereas Samuel Johnson, much in the same spirit, defined the concept as 'one whose ruling passion is the love of his country'. Although absent from Kersey's dictionary, Bailey and Johnson defined 'patriotism'⁶⁸² as 'the acting like a father to his country; publick spiritedness' and as 'love of one's country; zeal for one's country', respectively.⁶⁸³ In addition to being used as a reference to such ideals, the concept also became partly monopolised, at least during the 1730s and early 1740s, by the anti-Walpolean opposition. The coalition of Tories and Opposition Whigs often referred to themselves as the Patriot Opposition.⁶⁸⁴ It is more than certain that at least some of the petitioners' references to the concept primarily referred to the members of the opposition (though still, at the same time, referring to the more general definitions of the concept). As claims of promoting the common good and the interest of the nation, acting in the name of patriotism enabled the members of the opposition to portray themselves as the servants of the nation, struggling against the avarice and corruption of the administration of Walpole⁶⁸⁵.

The pronounced emphasis on collective ideals also influenced the presentation of the particularistic claims petitioners used to convince the receivers of their petitions. Even when explicitly championing measures that benefitted themselves and their constituencies, they tended to represent them as measures that enhanced the common good. Petitioners could, for instance, urge their representatives to 'have a constant regard for the interest of your country, and especially of this borough', like the corporation of St Albans, criticising the size of land

⁶⁸¹ Dietz 1989, 182 - 184. For the ancient origins of the concept, see Dietz 1989, 177 - 182. Kathleen Wilson has noted that 'the patriotic appeal had a broad purchase among different political and interest groups in this period, and could be used with good effect by government and opposition alike, largely because there was essential agreement about its central features'. Wilson 1998, 123 - 124.

⁶⁸² A concept that, according to Dietz and Christine Gerrard, entered the English language as late as in 1726, as part of the 1726 edition of Bailey's dictionary. Dietz 1989, 185; Gerrard 1994, 4 - 5.

⁶⁸³ Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735; Johnson 1768. See also Skinner 1974, 99; Skinner 2002, 168.

⁶⁸⁴ The opposition, supported by the *Craftsman*, reinforcing the discourse of the opposition as a selfish and patriotic force against the corrupt administration, was influenced by Viscount Bolingbroke after his return from exile in 1725. In 1738, Bolingbroke published *The Ideal of a Patriot King*, a pamphlet that would continue to influence the country opposition long after the demise of the anti-Walpolean opposition. Gerrard 1994, 4 - 18; Dietz, 1989, 184 - 186; Skinner 1974, 98 - 100, 111 - 113, 126 - 127; Wilson 1998, 123 - 124; Dickinson 1977, 176 - 181.

⁶⁸⁵ It could, as Kathleen Wilson has argued, 'be used to mask a multitude of partisan and sectional interests'. Wilson 1998, 123 - 124.

forces and the excise scheme in 1733⁶⁸⁶, and declare their confidence that the petitioned 'will behave in a manner agreeable to the constitution and particular interest of this county', like the barons and freeholders of Sutherland in 1740⁶⁸⁷. Instead of requesting their representatives to champion their particular interests exclusively, the petitioners from St Albans and Sutherland framed their interests in terms of those of the nation and the constitution. Most of such claims pertained to trade; petitioners being concerned about the impact of incidents and proposed measures on the trade of the nation and on that of their borough in particular. The lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London, for instance, insisted in 1739 that 'the citizens of London are too deeply interested in whatever effects the trade of this nation, not to express the utmost anxiety for the welfare and prosperity of that only source of our riches'. But besides being of the utmost importance to London in particular, petitioners also emphasised 'the high importance this trade [to the colonies in North America] is of to the kingdom in general'. Hence, the petitioners requested both the House of Commons and House of Lords to prevent the Spaniards from stopping and searching British vessels and oppose the Convention of Pardo.⁶⁸⁸

The petitioned members of parliament often used similar conceptualisations in their replies to the petitioners. John Louis Ligonier, a naturalised Huguenot refugee and one of the representatives for Bath⁶⁸⁹, for instance, proclaimed his 'great satisfaction at the approbation [the petitioners] are pleased to express of my endeavours to serve my King and country as [their] representative'. He further assured the members of the corporation that the 'interest and honour of [their] city of Bath, it will be over my study to promote'⁶⁹⁰. Instead of being separate entities, Ligonier portrayed his endeavours to serve the King and country and promote the interest and honour of Bath as mutually consistent. But as in the

⁶⁸⁶ St Albans 1733 (#035), see also Hindon 1733 (#032); Bedford 1734 (#053); Wiltshire 1753 (#173).

⁶⁸⁷ Sutherland 1740 (#076), see also Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Bath 1760 (#224).

⁶⁸⁸ Petitioners further claimed that the American trade 'is of the utmost importance, and almost the only profitable trade this nation now enjoys, unrival[e]d by others'. London 1739 (#058). In 1753, the lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London claimed that the naturalisation of Jews would 'tend greatly to the dishonour of the Christian religion, indanger our excellent constitution, and be highly prejudicial to the interest and trade of the kingdom in general, and this city in particular'. London 1753 (#176). See also Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Bristol 1741 (#152); London 1752 (#167); Devon 1756 (#180); Exeter 1756 (#190); Bedfordshire 1756 (#193); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238); Plymouth 1763 (#239); Honiton 1764 (#245); Bristol 1769 (#282); London 1769 (#293). For similar claims regarding the woollen industry and other branches of trade, see Chapter 3.3 (Protectors of the Poor). Similar arguments were also used in parliament. The Duke of Bedford, opposing the administration in the House of Lords, argued during the debate on the petitions submitted against the Convention of Pardo that 'I have in my hand a petition from a very great body of men, no less a body, my Lords, than the citizens of London'. 'The importance of this juncture', he continued, 'called upon them to assemble and deliberate upon the most proper means of preventing the effects of the Convention, which they apprehend to be ruinous, not only to them, but the whole kingdom, from taking place'. Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoL) 1040/Duke of Bedford.

⁶⁸⁹ Ligonier served as the commander-in-chief from 1757 to 1766 and master-general of ordnance from 1759 to 1763. HoP/Sir John Louis Ligonier.

⁶⁹⁰ Bath 1760 (#224a2). See also Coventry 1741 (#108a1); Hereford 1741 (#105a1).

case of petitions, most of such assertions concerned trade and commerce. George Pocock, one of the representatives of Plymouth, assured the petitioners encouraging him to oppose the excise duties on cider and perry that they 'may rest satisfied my conduct in parliament shall ever be conformable to that duty I owe my King and country, and watchful over the particular interests of the borough I have the honour to represent'⁶⁹¹. George Yonge, to whom the portreeve, bailiffs, and the other principal inhabitants of Honiton had submitted a petition, emphasised in a similar manner his adherence to 'the true principles of liberty and the constitution, as well as by my attention to your commands, with regard to the interest of the county, so deeply and immediately affected by the cider act, as well as the whole kingdom in general by its consequences'⁶⁹². Both Pocock and Yonge promised to champion the interest of their borough and county, Devon being one of the so-called cider counties that opposed the excise duties on cider and perry. However, they also represented themselves as champions of the common good.

The conceptualisations of petitioners' ideals are often seen as mere slogans, even as partisan propaganda, used to disguise their selfish intentions. But the discursive patterns in petitions are too pervasive to be mere slogans. Petitioners used collective ideals from *popular interest* and *common good* to *patriotism* and *public spirit* to numerous ends; to substantiate the righteousness of their intentions, commend their representatives and other actors, and propose measures that the petitioned ought to champion. Parliament became defined as a sphere of collective ideals and members of parliament as servants of the common good. However, most petitioners also regarded members of parliament as representatives of their constituencies in parliament. In order to legitimise their requests concerning their particular interests, petitioners represented them as necessities for the common good. Instead of supporting propositions because of their impact on themselves and their communities, petitioners claimed to champion measures that also strengthened the interest of the nation. In order to persuade parliament, members of parliament, the Throne, and the reading publics, petitioners referred

⁶⁹¹ Plymouth 1763 (#239a1). William Wildman Barrington, the treasurer of navy and the other representative for Plymouth, on the other hand, focused on emphasising petitioners' particular interests. In his letter to John Morshead, the mayor of the city, Barrington declared that 'I am sensible of the right which my constituents have, to instruct me with respect to my conduct in parliament; for my seat there, is entirely owing to their confidence and favour; they can never more properly exercise that right, than in a case where their peculiar interests are particular concerned'. He further insisted that 'I should act a part very unbecoming the relation I bear to them, and full of ingratitude after the singular and repeated favours they have conferred on me, if I had not the most earnest desire to comply on every occasion with their wishes, and to obey their commands'. Plymouth 1763 (#239a2); HoP/William Wildman Barrington. See also Canterbury 1772 (#348a1).

⁶⁹² Honiton 1764 (#245a1). George Yonge was the only surviving son of Sir William Younge, a member of parliament for Honiton from 1715 to 1754 and Tiverton from 1754 to 1755. Whereas his father had supported the excise scheme in parliament in 1733, George Yonge 'led the opposition to the cider duty in Devon and tried to secure the support of the Tory country gentlemen'. HoP/George Yonge; HoP/Sir William Yonge. See also Devon 1763 (#226a1); Coventry 1766 (#253a1). Replies from the petitioned are discussed in detail in Chapter 5.5 (Replies from the Petitioned).

to ideals and concepts their audiences could recognise and embrace. Even those criticising petitioners used similar ideals and conceptualisations to delegitimise their use of petitions, as demonstrated in Chapter 6.3 (Protecting the Independence of Parliament). Instead of being isolated ideals and conceptualisations, petitioners' descriptions of the legitimate forms of representation and participation also illustrate the boundaries of politics in a broader sense.

4.2 Counter-Ideals of Representation and Participation

4.2.1 Enemies of the People

Ideals could also be defined in more implicit manners. Petitioners could use negations, or counter-ideals, as this thesis refers to them, to describe their ideals of representation and participation. Uses of such negations tended to function as indications of the ideals petitioners claimed to support. Claims and assertions against the influence of parties and placemen, for instance, could be used to indicate petitioners' support for ideals such as the interest of the nation and disinterestedness. Petitioners could also claim to oppose the corrupt influence of ministers, and other actors conspiring against the public interest, to demonstrate their commitment to the true interest of the people. One could even argue that the use of counter-ideals constituted one of the most common forms of defining ideals. In order to understand their perceptions on representation and participation, scholars ought to recognise the impact of such practices. However, despite being part of the same process, petitioners' uses of ideals and counter-ideals also differed from each other. First, their immediate functions tended to differ from each other. Petitioners used ideals to describe their intentions, commend their representatives and other actors, and promote bills and measures enhancing the common good. Counter-ideals, on the other hand, became used to criticise petitioners' opponents and their schemes. Second, in contrast to ideals, most of them emphasising collective interests, the uses of counter-ideals focused on those actors and measures that undermined collective ideals.

Some of the counter-ideals, such as self-interest and private interest, were diametrical opposites of petitioners' ideals. In contrast to the conceptualisations regarding collective interests, most of them used either as compliments or assurances of righteousness, the conceptualisations of private interest were, in most cases, used to condemn the conduct of others⁶⁹³. Petitioners could, for instance,

⁶⁹³ For positive uses of the concept, see Yorkshire 1770 (#319a1) and Yorkshire 1770 (#319a2). George Saville, a member of parliament for Yorkshire from 1759 to 1783, claimed that 'it is the most perfect self-interest, and the highest ambition to join with you [the petitioners] in the other, that I may be in any degree the fortunate instrument in preserving those rights [of freemen]'. Yorkshire 1770 (#319a1); HoP/Sir George Saville. Edwin Lascelles, another supporter of Rockingham, on the other hand, asserted that 'it has always been my greatest ambition to gain the approbation of gentlemen of your characters. If I have been so fortunate to succeed, I must think I

criticise the influence of placemen and pensioners, whom most of the opposition-minded petitioners opposed throughout the eighteenth-century, by representing them as actors 'who, regardless of the true interests of their King and country, sacrifice every thing to their own private views'⁶⁹⁴. The free burgesses, traders, and inhabitants of Newcastle upon Tyne, on the other hand, insisted that most of the pro-administration addresses to the Throne, supporting the harsh measures on the American colonies, had been 'industriously sought by those interested men who have plunged an happy and united people into all the horrors of a CIVIL WAR'⁶⁹⁵. Instead of being the voice of free and independent citizens, defending the interest of the nation, the authors and 1,210 subscribers of the opposition address portrayed the other addresses as pro-administration orchestrations. Such conceptualisations could also be used for more mundane purposes. The principal merchants, burgesses, and inhabitants of Liverpool, for instance, claimed that the 'high price of corn', tormenting the poorer sort of people in particular, derived from 'the prosecution of private interest'⁶⁹⁶. Accusations of private interest enabled petitioners to represent their opponents as men of voracious character, unfit for holding office and steering the nation, and themselves as actors that confronted such actors and, thus, guarded the true interest of the people.

Uses of concepts such as *partial*, *dependent*, and *biased* closely resembled petitioners' references to private interests. As in the case of private interest, petitioners used accusations of biases, partiality, and dependency to criticise the conduct of placemen, pensioners⁶⁹⁷, and other proponents of the administration⁶⁹⁸. The freeholders of Lanarkshire, for instance, described the administration of Robert Walpole as a regime 'supported by the submissive obedience and dependence of a servile legion, hired for the destruction, tho[ugh] paid at the expense of the publick' in 1741⁶⁹⁹. Petitioners could also use such concepts to describe the ideals

am more indebted to your partial opinions, than to any real or substantial merit of my own'. Yorkshire 1770 (#319a2); HoP/Edwin Lascelles.

⁶⁹⁴ Salisbury 1756 (#187). The Merchant Company of Edinburgh claimed that placemen 'may have a different interest from that of the nation' and hence incapable of 'exerting themselves in parliament for the good of their country, but in the favour of a minister, whose schemes and projects they may be tempted to support, however ruinous to their country'. The petitioners encouraged members of parliament 'to reduce and limit the number of placemen ... [so] that our legislature may, as far as possible, be freed from all other influence, than that of the publick interest, and the happiness of the nation'. Edinburgh 1739 (#060). See also Denbighshire 1741 (#097).

⁶⁹⁵ Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393). For the use of references to the civil war, English republic, and Cromwell, see, for instance, Ihalainen 1999, 143 - 144, 152, 183 - 184, 190 - 191, 265 - 266; Ihalainen 2010, 84 - 85, 107 - 108, 187 - 188. The use of such metaphors is further discussed in Chapter 6.4 (In Defence of the Constitution).

⁶⁹⁶ Liverpool 1757 (#222).

⁶⁹⁷ For dependence, see Middlesex 1740 (#071); Devon 1740 (#089); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Yorkshire 1740 (#093); London 1741 (#124); New Woodstock 1742 (#141). For partiality, see Leominster 1743 (#163).

⁶⁹⁸ In most cases, referring to excise officers, as in the case of Wareham 1733 (#029) and Devon 1763 (#226).

⁶⁹⁹ Lanarkshire 1741 (#118). The counter-petitioners from Liverpool objected to such allegations, declaring that 'to say that the House of Commons is partial, unjust, or corrupt, or does any thing out of malice, is, in our opinion, highly criminal, and tends to raise a scandal upon the whole nation, whose representatives they are'. Liverpool 1769 (#279).

of representation in a rather straightforward manner. 'Every man' in parliament, the magistrates and other members of the council of Dumfries insisted after the fall of Walpole in 1742, ought to be 'regarded only as he prefers the welfare and liberties of his country to any private dependence, or partial consideration whatsoever'⁷⁰⁰. John Wilkes, too, used such concepts in his address to the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Middlesex in April 1770. Wilkes, whom still claimed to be 'the legal member for the county' despite being rejected three times by the House of Commons, promised his constituents that, as a member of parliament, he would 'form no connection which may, in the smallest degree warp me from my duty to you, either as the dependent of a minister, or even as the servant of the Crown, for I think a representative of the people ought to be perfectly free and unbiassed'⁷⁰¹. The resemblance between such concepts and those of private interest and self-interest is more than evident. Both sets of concepts demonstrate petitioners', and their contemporaries', perceptions of the most fundamental ideals of representation - that decision-making actors ought to be independent and public-spirited.

Though using counter-ideals to criticise a diverse set of actors and institutions, most petitioners focused on castigating ministers and their henchmen. Numerous petitioners regarded ministers, and prime ministers in particular, as manifestations of the decay and degeneration of the political establishment. In such cases, petitioners tended to accuse ministers and ministries of misconduct, criticising their 'enormous abuses'⁷⁰², 'series of mismanagement'⁷⁰³, and 'male-practices in administration'⁷⁰⁴ and charging them of 'a train of errors and misconduct'⁷⁰⁵ and 'prostitution of public honour'⁷⁰⁶. Others emphasised the dangerous nature of ministers' principles and conduct. The corporation of Canterbury, for instance, accused the administration of conspiring against John Wilkes and the freeholders of Middlesex, suppressing the rights 'purchased by the blood of our illustrious ancestors' by the implementation of 'tyrannical measures'⁷⁰⁷. Petitioners could also accuse ministers of 'despotic measures', like the citizens of Bristol,

⁷⁰⁰ Dumfries 1742 (#138), see also Westminster 1770 (#325).

⁷⁰¹ LM April 1770.

⁷⁰² Flint 1770 (#333), see also Canterbury 1741 (#101); Coventry 1741 (#108); Marlborough 1741 (#109); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Westminster 1741 (#122); Dumfries 1742 (#138); Westminster 1742 (#157); Bristol 1769 (#281).

⁷⁰³ Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131), see also Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Chester 1741 (#110); Preston 1741 (#116); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Renfrewshire 1741 (#121); London 1741 (#123); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Salisbury 1756 (#187); London 1756 (#218). For non-ministerial uses of the concept of mismanagement, see London 1721 (#002); Somerset 1721 (#007); Oxford 1756 (#206).

⁷⁰⁴ London 1770 (#324), see also Kent 1769 (#267).

⁷⁰⁵ Cornwall 1769 (#263), see also Lanarkshire 1741 (#118) and Middlesex 1770 (#320).

⁷⁰⁶ Middlesex 1769 (#292), see also Canterbury 1741 (#101); Suffolk 1741 (#111); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Westminster 1741 (#122); Devon 1742 (#135); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Southwark 1742 (#146); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); London 1742 (#153); Middlesex 1769 (#292); London 1769 (#294); Canterbury 1769 (#303).

⁷⁰⁷ Canterbury 1769 (#303). For accusations of 'ministerial tyranny', see Preston 1741 (#116). See also Westminster 1741 (#122); Cromartyshire 1742 (#127); Flint 1770 (#310). Nathaniel Bailey defined tyranny as a 'cruel and violent government; empire, or dominion unlawfully usurped; outrageous cruelty or oppression'. Bailey 1735, see also Kersey 1708. Johnson, on the other hand, defined it as an (1) 'absolute monarchy

criticising the conduct of the administration during the crisis on Wilkes' seat in 1769⁷⁰⁸. The lord mayor, aldermen, and livery of London, on the other hand, proclaimed in their address to the Throne in 1775 that 'the power contended for over the colonies, undue the specious name of dignity, is to all intents and purposes despotism'. 'The exercise of despotic power, in any part of the empire', the petitioners further claimed, 'is inconsistent with the character and safety of this country'.⁷⁰⁹ Although most petitioners criticised specific ministers, petitions could also contain less personified forms of criticism, most evident in petitions submitted after the 1750s. In such cases, petitioners tended to criticise ministries instead of specific ministers. The change of pattern can, to a large extent, be explained by the fragmentation of parliamentary politics⁷¹⁰. Whereas Robert Walpole governed for 21 years, from 1721 to 1742, the period between the Pitt-Newcastle ministry (1757 - 1762) and the North ministry (1770 - 1782) witnessed the rise and fall of five prime ministers. Instead of being a period of strong ministries and systematic policies, as during the premiership of Walpole, the 1760s were defined by factious feuds and fragmentation.

During the 1730s and 1740s, ministers faced harsher and more personified criticism compared to the 1760s and 1770s. Petitioners described Robert Walpole, the subject of most petitioners' contempt from 1733 to 1742, as 'an ambitious, self-seeking minister'⁷¹¹ and 'the author and contriver of our miseries and disgrace, the forger and intended riveter of our chains'⁷¹². Petitioners continued to criticise Walpole even after his resignation in February 1742, prompted by his defeat on the vote on the Chippenham by-election. In order to prevent future ministers

imperiously administred', (2) 'unresisted and cruel power', (3) 'cruel government; rigorous command', and (4) 'severity; rigour; inclemency'. Johnson 1768. For accusations of arbitrary conduct, see, for instance, Dorset 1742 (#147); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); Canterbury 1769 (#270); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Canterbury 1769 (#303); Flint 1770 (#310); London 1771 (#335); London 1775 (#376). Petitioners could argue, like the lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London in 1770, that in order to 'to overthrow the choice of the electors, and nominate to a seat in parliament, a person not chosen by the people' ministers had used their 'influence' and 'arbitrary discretion, the law of tyrants'. London 1770 (#323).

⁷⁰⁸ Bristol 1769 (#281), see also Edinburghshire 1742 (#150) and Canterbury 1769 (#270). John Kersey defined 'despotical or despotick' as 'absolutely supreme, arbitrary' and a 'despote' as 'a prince or governour in the Turkish empire; as the Despote of Valachia'. Kersey 1708, see also Bailey 1735 and Johnson 1768. Besides being associated with the 'Turkish empire' and Wallachia (and also with Persia and other distant and mostly historical powers), the concepts of despotism and tyranny were also commonly associated with France and Denmark. France, in particular, functioned as a powerful warning and point of reference, whether being an example of the adverse consequences of despotic Kings or, as after the revolution, of the tyranny of the people. London 1775 (#375). See also Sunderland 1771 (#340); London 1775 (#376); Middlesex 1775 (#395).

⁷¹⁰ See, for instance, O'Gorman 2006, 201 - 204.

⁷¹¹ Edinburghshire 1742 (#150). The freeholders of Lanarkshire described the influence of Walpole as an 'over-bearing weight of a minister, intoxicated with the possession of above twenty years power, supported by the submissive obedience and dependence of a servile legion'. Lanarkshire 1741 (#118). For similar criticism in parliament, see, for instance, Ihalainen 2010, 97 - 100.

⁷¹² Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131). The mayor, aldermen, and commons of New Woodstock, on the other hand, referred to Walpole as 'that Leviathan of power'. Woodstock 1742 (#141).

from abusing their privileges, petitioners demanded exemplary justice. The freeholders of Ayrshire, for instance, argued that 'publick example has the greatest influence upon men's behaviour'⁷¹³. Petitioners could also claim that the prime minister ought to be punished so 'that others may hereafter be deterr[e]d from the like evil practices', like the general meeting of independent freemen in Bristol⁷¹⁴, and 'succeeding statesmen ... may be intimidated from pursuing measures destructive of the publick interest, and support our constitution in its original purity', like the electors of Bath⁷¹⁵. The House of Commons had, indeed, established an inquiry into Walpole's conduct as the prime minister. However, against the desires of the most ardent of his opponents, as well as the promises the country opposition had used to foment anti-Walpolean sentiments, the scope of the inquiry was restricted to the past 10 years (instead of 20). The bill that would have granted immunity to those testifying against Walpole was also defeated by the House of Lords. The inquiry found, eventually, but little that could be used to prosecute and punish Walpole. A further motion to establish another secret committee to investigate the past 20 years was defeated by 244 votes against 242 in March 1742, numerous of Walpole's old enemies, such as William Pulteney, being absent from the division. Instead of being punished, or executed, as the Herefordshire petitioners had suggested in 1741, Walpole was made the Earl of Orford and was thus elevated to the House of Lords.⁷¹⁶ To the opposition-sup-

⁷¹³ Ayrshire 1741 (#115). For requests to investigate and punish Robert Walpole, see Bath 1741 (#102); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Coventry 1741 (#108); Chester 1741 (#110); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Preston 1741 (#116); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Renfrewshire 1741 (#121); Westminster 1741 (#122); London 1741 (#123); Cromartyshire 1742 (#127); Carmarthen 1742 (#130); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Stirling 1742 (#134); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Honiton 1742 (#139); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Southwark 1742 (#146); York 1742 (#149); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); Coventry 1742 (#159). 'Should the disturber of the publick be permitted the enjoyment of private tranquillity, or his influence remain in those councils from which his person is removed', the burgesses and inhabitants of Westminster argued, it 'must give a fatal encouragement, or rather sanction, to a wanton and wicked exercise of power in all succeeding ministers'. 'Lenity', the petitioners claimed, 'would be cruelty to the nation'. Westminster 1741 (#122). In 1742, the burgesses and inhabitants declared that 'the justice we demand does not proceed from an impotency of revenge, but from a deep conviction of that such a precedent of impunity will expose us to the scourge of any future minister, who, unawed by the terror of example, may renew the same abuse of power, and thus this country be reduced to the melancholy alternative of having recourse either to the violence of popular contention, or groan under the yoke of oppressive government'. Westminster 1742 (#157). Petitioners could also claim that one could not 'think the change of men of any consequence to the nation, if the like iniquitous measures are pursued'. Preston 1741 (#116), see also Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); London 1741 (#123); Cromartyshire 1742 (#127). See also Middlesex 1775 (#396).

⁷¹⁴ Coventry 1741 (#108).

⁷¹⁵ Bath 1741 (#102), see also Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150).

⁷¹⁶ The legislative changes after the fall of Walpole were, in general, more than modest. Arguments against standing armies were abandoned first, Britain being engaged in a war against Spain and, since 1742, in the war regarding the Austrian succession. The Septennial Act, on the other hand, continued to determine the general elections until 1911. The Place Act of 1742 was also a disappointment in the standards of the opposition promises; barring but few junior officials in the administration from taking seats in the House of Commons. Instead of being 'a prelude to an era of reform and virtue',

porting petitioners, the outcome of the inquiry and the process in general, signified that justice had been 'obstructed by the secret power of those men, whose crimes have made it necessary'⁷¹⁷, thus leaving 'the author [Walpole] of all our miseries skreen[e]d from publick justice'⁷¹⁸.

Ministers' conduct was often represented as secretive and conspiring. Petitioners criticised their use of 'secret power'⁷¹⁹, portaying their 'secret malignant influence'⁷²⁰ as 'the secret source of all our grievances'⁷²¹. Their policies and schemes could also be conceptualised as 'arts'⁷²², 'artifices'⁷²³, and 'evil designs'⁷²⁴ and their conduct as 'artful'⁷²⁵ and 'designing'⁷²⁶. In order to delegitimise their character and conduct, petitioners described ministers as 'cunning and designing men'⁷²⁷ and accused them of 'evil designs'⁷²⁸, 'treacherous artifices'⁷²⁹, and 'artful

as Frank O'Gorman has described the opposition promises, the fall of Walpole turned out to be a profound disappointment to those that had believed in the promises of change. Langford 1992, 185 - 189; O'Gorman 2006, 87 - 88; Hayton 2002, 65 - 66.

⁷¹⁷ Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132).

⁷¹⁸ Southwark 1742 (#146). The burgesses and inhabitants of Westminster encouraged their representatives in parliament 'to oppose every confederacy that may be formed either to screen the offender or perpetuate the offence'. Westminster 1742 (#157).

⁷¹⁹ Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132). For references to *conspiring*, *conspirators*, and *conspirations*, see Coventry 1721 (#001); Leicester 1721 (#004); Kent 1721 (#008); London 1742 (#153); Coventry 1742 (#159); Reading 1753 (#175); Ipswich 1756 (#185); London 1770 (#323).

⁷²⁰ London 1770 (#322).

⁷²¹ Surrey 1770 (#314). For the use of the concept of *secret*, see Coventry 1721 (#001); Hertfordshire 1721 (#005); St Albans 1721 (#010); Lincoln 1721 (#012); Colchester 1721 (#019); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Lichfield 1741 (#107); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); London 1741 (#123); Reading 1742 (#125); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Annan 1742 (#136); Dumfries 1742 (#138); London 1769 (#294); Surrey 1770 (#314); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#324); Westminster 1770 (#326); London 1775 (#375).

⁷²² Lancashire 1740 (#085), see also Hertfordshire 1721 (#005); Kent 1721 (#008); Southwark 1721 (#017); Bath 1741 (#102); Honiton 1771 (#334); Coventry 1775 (#388).

⁷²³ Dorset 1742 (#147), see also London 1721 (#002); Westminster 1721 (#003); Hertfordshire 1721 (#005); Southwark 1721 (#017); Colchester 1721 (#019); Bath 1741 (#102); London 1742 (#153); Salisbury 1756 (#187); Bristol 1756 (#208); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); London 1775 (#376); Middlesex 1775 (#395).

⁷²⁴ Coventry 1741 (#108), see also Hertfordshire 1721 (#005); Lincoln 1721 (#012); Herefordshire 1741 (#106); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Worcester 1769 (#296); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#323); Manchester 1775 (#383); Coventry 1775 (#388); Manchester 1775 (#390).

⁷²⁵ Essex 1770 (#311), see also Maidstone 1721 (#009); Colchester 1721 (#019); Oxfordshire 1741 (#114); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Coventry 1742 (#159); Liverpool 1769 (#279); London 1775 (#375); Manchester 1775 (#390).

⁷²⁶ Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112), see also Truro 1740 (#081); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Dorset 1742 (#147); Coventry 1742 (#159); Yorkshire 1756 (#206); London 1767 (#256); Liverpool 1769 (#279); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); Essex 1770 (#311); Manchester 1775 (#383). For references to crafty and cunning actors, see St Albans 1721 (#006); East Retford 1721 (#021); St Albans 1721 (#023); St Albans 1741 (#112); #Dorset 1742 (#147); Nottingham 1766 (#250).

⁷²⁷ Dorset 1742 (#147), see also Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Coventry 1742 (#159); Yorkshire 1756 (#206); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297). For other uses of 'designing men', see Liverpool 1769 (#279); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Essex 1770 (#311).

⁷²⁸ Coventry 1741 (#108).

⁷²⁹ Worcestershire 1769 (#295).

misrepresentations'⁷³⁰. Such concepts and conceptualisations were used to undermine the legitimacy of ministers' authority. Instead of commanding legitimate majorities in parliament, as the administration ought to, ministers employed secretive methods to bribe and threaten the institution that ought to represent the will of the people. Petitioners uses of these concepts closely resembled those of the country opposition, an anti-Walpolean coalition of Tories and Patriot Whigs, during the 1730s and 1740s. Caleb D'Anvers, the pen name of Nicholas Amhurst, the editor of the infamous *Craftsman*⁷³¹, for instance, claimed to use his paper to expose the 'dark secrets of political craft'⁷³². Similar pejorative characterisations of politics and ministerial abuse were also used by Lord Bolingbroke, most notably in his *The Idea of a Patriot King* and *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism*. In his pamphlets, Bolingbroke claimed, among other things, that a 'cunning minister ... neither sees nor is concerned to see any further, than his personal interests, and the support of his administration require'. He also warned his readers that 'if the wicked arts I speak of prevail, faction will be propagated thro[ugh] the whole nation, ... and the contest among parties will be who shall govern, not how they shall be governed'.⁷³³ Besides closely resembling the argumentation of the country opposition, such arguments also signified petitioners' and their contemporaries' general dislike of organised politics and of those granted ministerial privileges.

Petitioners also used mechanistic concepts and metaphors to describe the methods used to deceive the parliament, the Throne, and the people. Ministers

⁷³⁰ Oxfordshire 1741 (#114).

⁷³¹ *The Craftsman* was founded in 1726 to voice the opinions of the newly established Patriot Opposition. The paper was edited by Amhurst, but its content was also heavily influenced by Viscount Bolingbroke, who had returned to England from his exile in 1725, and William Pulteney, commonly regarded as the parliamentary leader of the Whigs in opposition. It was, indeed, the *Craftsman* that started the campaign against the excise scheme by its article, published on 28 October 1732. Although the *London Evening Post* and the *Champion*, too, gained recognition as opposition papers, the *Craftsman* was the most influential opposition paper during the 1730s, after which its influence started to wane. The paper reached its apex in terms of circulation in 1734 - 1735, when around 12,000 to 13,000 copies of the paper were circulated on a weekly basis. Harris 1984, 197, 201 - 210; Dickinson 1984, 64; Langford 1975, 44; Dickinson 1994, 198 - 201, 205 - 207; Wilson 1998, 123; Royle & Walvin 1982, 14; Hope 1865, 54; Skinner 1974, 95; Langford 1992, 24 - 26, 46 - 48; Black 2001, 28 - 37, 44; Colley 1982, 210.

⁷³² Cr 5 December 1726.

⁷³³ *The Idea of a Patriot King* 1740/90 (T55173); *Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism* 1749/127 (T88242). For Bolingbroke's influence on the anti-Walpolean opposition, see Skinner 1974; Gunn 1983, 59 - 60; Cruickshanks 1987, 39 - 41; Wilson 1998, 123 - 124; O'Gorman 2006, 79 - 80; Royle & Walvin 1982, 14; Langford 1992, 25 - 26.

could, for instance, be accused of the use of 'engines'⁷³⁴ and 'devices'⁷³⁵. Petitioners described corruption as 'the sole engine made use of by the late administration to accomplish the ruin of Great Britain'⁷³⁶ and encouraged members of parliament to oppose any 'device that strikes at the root of the liberties of Great Britain'⁷³⁷. Concepts such as 'tools'⁷³⁸ and 'instruments'⁷³⁹, too, could be used to describe ministers' means and methods. The petitioners from Denbighshire, a single-seat constituency with a strong Tory interest⁷⁴⁰, praised Watkin Williams Wynn⁷⁴¹, their representative in parliament, for 'bringing one of the tools of corruption to shame'⁷⁴². The gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Cornwall, on the other hand, insisted that excluding Wilkes from taking his seat in parliament would constitute a dangerous precedent, undermining the freedom of election and turning the 'representatives of the people' into 'creatures of ministers, and

⁷³⁴ Lanarkshire 1741 (#118). Pasi Ihalainen has noted that the use of concepts such as *machine* and *engine* started to become more common after 1720, entering the parliamentary debates during the last years of Walpole. Wilkes, too, criticised his critics of abusing the engines of state. 'In this period', Ihalainen argues, 'the term "state-engine" was almost always used to express some questionable phenomenon, despite the importance of engines in demonstrating the potential applications of the new science in everyday life.' Ihalainen 2009, 13 - 15, 18 - 19, 25, 38 - 39. As most of their contemporaries, the freeholders of Lanarkshire, too, used the concept of engine in a distinctively pejorative sense.

⁷³⁵ Coventry 1742 (#159), see also Cullompton 1763 (#227).

⁷³⁶ Lanarkshire 1741 (#118). The gentlemen, principal traders, and inhabitants of Coventry described the architects of the South Sea Crisis as 'wicked engineers', whereas the counter-petitioners from Liverpool, defending the government against calls to dissolve the parliament, argued that '[i]f a dissolution of parliament is to be wished or expected in the present case, and at the instance of a minority of the House of Commons, because they have differed from the majority, in a matter of judicial opinion, may we not soon expect to see this high piece of prerogative converted into a political engine to detruide one administration, and force another into the King's closet, which, we believe, is the only thing intended?' Coventry 1721 (#001) and Liverpool 1769 (#279).

⁷³⁷ Cullompton 1763 (#227).

⁷³⁸ Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Gloucester 1742 (#128); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Coventry 1742 (#159).

⁷³⁹ Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Westminster 1741 (#122); Carmarthenshire 1742 (#130); Cornwall 1769 (#263); Launceston 1769 (#266); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#324); London 1775 (#376). For non-ministerial references, see Reading 1721 (#015); Buckinghamshire 1721 (#024); Exeter 1756 (#190).

⁷⁴⁰ HoP/Denbighshire 1715 - 1754.

⁷⁴¹ According to Eveline Cruickshanks, Williams Wynn was a member of the Cycle of the White Rose, 'a secret Welsh Jacobite society'. In 1722, during the election campaign, Williams Wynn participated in burning the picture of George I, and in 1740, 'an emissary from the Pretender, sent to sound the English Jacobite leaders as to their attitude towards a project for a Jacobite rising combined with a French invasion, reported that Wynn was 'hearty and may certainly be depended on'. HoP/Watkin Williams Wynn; Cruickshanks 1987, 40; Langford, 52, 122 - 123; Gunn 1983, 176; Colley 1982, 33 - 34, 76. Linda Colley has, however, reminded that even if including influential Jacobites (such as Williams Wynn, John Hynde Cotton, and Charles Noel Somerset), 'it would be wrong to characterise the tory 'front bench' in this period as uniformly Jacobite'. Colley 1982, 68 - 69.

⁷⁴² Denbighshire 1741 (#096), see also Gloucester 1742 (#128); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Coventry 1742 (#159). For similar uses of the concept of instrument, see Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Westminster 1741 (#122); Carmarthenshire 1742 (#130).

the instruments of their illegal power⁷⁴³. Ministers' proposals could also be characterised as 'machinations'⁷⁴⁴. The emphasis on mechanistic concepts demonstrates a broader discursive change in the spheres of politics. Pasi Ihalainen has argued that use of mechanistic metaphors began to emerge during the 1720s⁷⁴⁵, mostly because of the growing influence of science and mechanics⁷⁴⁶. However, although the growing influence of mechanistic metaphors contributed to the decline of organic ones⁷⁴⁷, petitions contained references to both sorts of metaphors. Corruption, for instance, could be conceptualised as a cancer on the constitution⁷⁴⁸ and places and pensions as an infection consuming the House of Commons⁷⁴⁹. But it is evident that the scale of organic metaphors remained modest compared to the use of mechanistic ones.

As links between the King and his parliament, operating in the second but officially serving the first, ministers were often accused of misleading the Throne to gain control over the House. Instead of serving the King and country, as ministers ought to, petitioners accused them of abusing his authority for their own private ends. Robert Walpole, for instance, was accused of abusing 'the admission to his royal master's ear'⁷⁵⁰ and Lord North of 'cut[ting] off the communication between [his] Majesty and [his] people'⁷⁵¹. Others used allegories to challenge ministers' methods. The mayor, aldermen, commonalty, and citizens of Canterbury, which was the residence of the archbishop and a closely contested constituency throughout the eighteenth-century⁷⁵², used references to Exodus to criticise the administration. The petitioners, astonished at the expulsion of Wilkes, compared the members of the administration to 'Egyptian task-masters', the brutes that tormented the Israelites during their enslavement⁷⁵³. However,

⁷⁴³ Cornwall 1769 (#263), see also Launceston 1769 (#266); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1775 (#376).

⁷⁴⁴ London 1770 (#324). The counter-petitioners from Manchester used the concept to legitimise the administration's American policy in 1775, characterising protests against it as 'machinations of designing men' and petitions as 'unwearied machinations of a self-elected junto'. Manchester 1775 (#383). See also Lincoln 1721 (#012) and Newark-upon-Trent 1721 (#020).

⁷⁴⁵ Ihalainen 2009, 7 - 9, 16 - 17, 19 - 20.

⁷⁴⁶ Ihalainen 2009, 5 - 6, 8 - 9, 16 - 17, 26.

⁷⁴⁷ Ihalainen 2009, 7 - 9, 22.

⁷⁴⁸ Aberdeen 1741 (#113) and Westminster 1741 (#122).

⁷⁴⁹ Edinburghshire 1742 (#150), see also Lanarkshire 1741 (#118).

⁷⁵⁰ Lanarkshire 1741 (#118), see also Middlesex 1769 (#292) and Westminster 1770 (#326).

⁷⁵¹ Middlesex 1770 (#320). Such argumentation emphasised the conflicting interests of ministers and the King (and the people the Crown ought to defend). Ministers were accused of acting 'in opposition to the true interest of his Majesty and his people' and of spreading 'universal dissatisfaction among [his] faithful subjects'. Preston 1741 (#116) and Worcestershire 1769 (#295). Instead of promoting the common good, ministers 'prostituted [his] Majesty's sacred name and authority, to justify, applaud, and recommend their own illegal and bloody actions'. London 1769 (#294), see also Lanarkshire 1741 (#118).

⁷⁵² HoP/Canterbury 1690 - 1715; HoP/Canterbury 1715 - 1754; HoP/Canterbury 1754 - 1790.

⁷⁵³ KJV/Exodus 1:11, 3:7, 5:6, 5:10 - 14. Biblical allegories and metaphors provided the petitioners and their contemporaries a useful point of reference. Besides being commonly recognised, present in most households, the Bible constituted an authoritative

even if challenging the conduct of the ministers, the petitioners also expressed their confidence that such cruelties could not originate from 'the command of pharaoh', the allegorical figure of George III.⁷⁵⁴ The grand jury, gentlemen, and freeholders of Herefordshire, on the other hand, compared Robert Walpole to Georg Heinrich von Görtz, the notorious advisor of Charles XII, the King of Sweden between 1697 and 1718. The petitioners accused Walpole of endeavouring 'to create in his Majesty a dissidence of his people', being 'a practice (which if detected) would deserve the same punishment inflicted upon Baron Gortz in Sweden for the same crime'⁷⁵⁵. After the death of Charles, Görtz was arrested, tried by a special commission, sentenced to death, and executed in public.⁷⁵⁶ Such allegories enabled petitioners to criticise the conduct of the administration without excoriating the Throne. Instead of blaming the King for the conduct of his servants, petitioners encouraged him to dismiss and punish them.

Appeals to the Throne demonstrate a sometimes neglected feature of eighteenth-century politics. Regardless of the salience of parliament, and the House of Commons in particular, the Throne continued to possess substantial prerogatives even after the revolution in 1688. Ministers, for instance, continued to serve and represent the Throne; enabling the King to dismiss his ministers *ad libitum*, and, at least in principle, dissolve the parliament.⁷⁵⁷ Hence, constituents, and other

collection of allegories that could be used to legitimate and delegitimate various endeavours in the spheres of politics. For a detailed analysis of the use of such allegories in Britain, the Netherlands, and Sweden in 1685 - 1772, see Ihalainen 2005, 86 - 173.

⁷⁵⁴ Canterbury 1769 (#303), see also Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Middlesex 1769 (#292); Westminster 1770 (#326); London 1775 (#375); London 1775 (#376). The lord mayor, aldermen, and commons of London argued that 'a fatal conspiracy of malevolent influences around the throne' had prevented 'the innate goodness of [his] Majesty' in resolving petitioners' 'just complaints'. London 1770 (#323).

⁷⁵⁵ Herefordshire 1741 (#106).

⁷⁵⁶ Although not one of the more common allegories, parliamentary circles and some sections of the reading publics were certainly familiar with the fate of baron Görtz. His dealings with the Jacobites had been made public in Britain soon after the failed rebellion of 1715, numerous pamphlets being published on the subject in 1717. An account of his execution was also published in Britain in 1719. *The Craftsman*, too, had likened Walpole to Görtz during the 1730s. Letters which Passed between Count Gyllenborg, the Barons Gortz, Sparre, and Others 1717 (N19033); Three Letters 1717 (T81021); An Account of the Swedish and Jacobite Plot 1717 (T106276); Copy of a Letter Written to Mr. Petkum 1717 (T34120); Copies and Extracts of Several Letters 1717 (T104370); The Last Sentence, and Dying Speech of Baron de Gortz 1719 (T231897). See also Murray 1945; Weinbrot 1997; Berggren 2010.

⁷⁵⁷ Frank O'Gorman has argued that 'particular political crises, such as those of 1733 and 1742, may give the impression that parliament had permanently weakened the powers of the monarchy because it could demand a change of measure or of minister, but these were exceptional occasions'. Parliament could protest against ministers, and impeach them, but the Crown retained, in principle, the sole right to both nominate and dismiss them. O'Gorman 2006, 41, 129 - 130; Jupp, 2006, 110. William IV used his prerogative as late as 1834 to dismiss Lord Melbourne, and thus the Whigs, from government. Jupp 2006, 7 - 18. Paul Seaward and Pasi Ihalainen have argued that the 'notion of its [the executive] accountability to Parliament only emerged very gradually: since ministers were appointed by, and reported to, the Crown, they could not be held formally responsible or accountable to the Commons'. It was, eventually, the 'ability to audit and check the activities of executive agents' that 'offered a means of formalizing the responsiveness of the king's government to parliamentary pressure'. Seaward & Ihalainen 2016, 36 - 39.

actors, used petitions to encourage the Throne to intervene. Petitioners could, for instance, implore the King to dissolve the parliament⁷⁵⁸, accused of distorting the will of the people, and dismiss his 'evil ministers'⁷⁵⁹ and 'evil counsellors'⁷⁶⁰ from the administration. The lord mayor, aldermen, and livery of London, for instance, requested the King 'to dismiss [his] present ministers and advisers from [his] person and counsels for ever' and 'dissolve a parliament, who, by various acts of cruelty and injustice, have manifested a spirit of persecution against our brethren in America' in 1775⁷⁶¹. Requests to dismiss ministers and dissolve the parliament became particularly conspicuous since 1769. During the crisis on Wilkes' seat petitioners strived to create an alliance between the King and the people out-of-doors in order to replace the administrations of the Duke of Grafton and Lord North. But instead of becoming Bolingbroke's patriot king, delivering the nation from factious discord and self-interest, George III's refusal to dismiss Lord North became to infuriate some of those hoping to change the political culture.

The counter-ideals described in this sub-chapter closely resemble those used by petitioners to determine their ideals of representation and participation. Some of the concepts used to define the counter-ideals derived from the same conceptual root as those used to describe the ideals. Concepts such as partial, biased, and dependent, for instance, functioned as the conceptual opposites of those of impartial, unbiased, and independent. Interest, on the other hand, could be transformed from a positive concept to a highly negative one by using attributes; self-interest and private interest, for instance, became used to explain why

⁷⁵⁸ See, for instance, Westminster 1769 (#284); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#315); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#324); London 1771 (#335). Such claims were also common in opposition publications. An article published in *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty* under the name of John Freeman, for instance, argued that 'the present House of C[ommon]s is not a House of parliament; they have no lawful power of authority, for they are not chosen by the people'. The author further argued that 'it is the very essence of a House of C[ommon]s to be the just and full representative of all the electors of this kingdom'; something that could not be said of the House after it had refused John Wilkes to take his seat. In order to resolve the crisis, the author encouraged the people to petition the King 'to change the present malignant ministry, who have abused the power delegated to them, and to dissolve a parliament, whose repeated breaches of trust have rendered them contemptible and odious to the whole nation'. BC/MJCL 24 - 27 June 1769, see also BC/MJCL 19 - 22 August 1769; BC/MJCL 24 - 27 June 1769; BC/LIEP 15 - 17 November 1769; BC/SJCBEP 14 - 16 November 1769; BC/PS 12 December 1769; BC/IC 13 - 15 December 1769. See also Goldie 2006, 60 - 61.

⁷⁵⁹ See, for instance, London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#324), see also London 1770 (#323). For demands to dismiss evil counsellors, see Cornwall 1769 (#263); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#323); London 1773 (#350). For demands to dismiss ministers and counsellors in general, see Somerset 1769 (#269); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#315); Westminster 1770 (#326); London 1771 (#335); London 1775 (#375); London 1775 (#376). For general references to evil ministers and counsellors, see Worcester 1742 (#143); Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265); Kent 1769 (#267); Worcester 1769 (#296); London 1770 (#323).

⁷⁶⁰ Middlesex 1770 (#320) and London 1770 (#324).

⁷⁶¹ London 1775 (#375). Petitioners could implore George III to 'banish from [the] royal favour, trust, and confidence, for ever, those evil and pernicious counsellors who have endeavoured to alienate the affection of [his] Majesty's most sincere and dutiful subjects'. Middlesex 1769 (#292), see also Norfolk 1769 (#299).

the supporters of the administration opposed the true interest of the nation. Although the discourses and conceptualisations of evil advisors differed in the conceptual sense from those used to describe petitioners' ideals, they often shared the same quintessential function. Whereas the ideals of independent and unbiased Britons were used to encourage the petitioned to support those measures the petitioners favoured, the conceptualisations of evil advisors were used to describe those actors and measures the actors defending the interest of the nation ought to oppose. Albeit a rather simple and traditional form of criticism, common in organised societies throughout their history, the counter-ideals of evil advisors provided petitioners a safe and legitimate way to criticise the political establishment. Instead of denouncing the King and the post-1688 settlement, petitioners criticised those actors and principles that threatened the true interest of the nation and the legitimacy of the House of Hanover.

4.2.2 Odious Influences and Scandalous Schemes

In addition to the accusations of selfish intentions and criticism of evil advisors, petitioners also used the concept of influence to describe the counter-ideals of representation and participation. Though deriving from a different conceptual root, *influence* functioned as a counter-concept to *interest*. Whereas the concept of interest was used to characterise petitioners' ideals of representation and participation, as demonstrated in Chapter 4.1, *influence* was the most common concept used to describe those ideas, intentions, and methods the petitioned ought to oppose⁷⁶². However, despite its prevalence, *influence* remained one of the most ambiguous concepts in petitions. Nathaniel Bailey, the author of the *An Universal Etymological Dictionary*, described the noun as 'a sending forth power or virtue'⁷⁶³ and the verb as 'to sway, or have power over'⁷⁶⁴, both of them definitions that closely resembled those of John Kersey's *Dictionarium Anglo-Britannicum*⁷⁶⁵. Samuel Johnson, on the other hand, defined *influence* as 'power of directing or modifying'⁷⁶⁶, but also recognised its pejorative connotation; 'to influence' could mean

⁷⁶² For exceptions, see Somerset 1753 (#171); Lincolnshire 1756 (#205); Liverpool 1757 (#222); Plymouth 1763 (#239); Bristol 1769 (#282). Petitioners could also use attributes such as undue and dangerous to emphasise the destructive nature of those influences they opposed. The use of such attributes implies that influences could also be seen as legitimate. For references to dangerous influences, see 1739 (#064); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); London 1775 (#375). For undue influences, see Leicester 1739 (#067); Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074); Sutherland 1740 (#076); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); London 1741 (#123); Stirling 1742 (#134); Annan 1742 (#136); Dumfries 1742 (#138); Worcester 1742 (#143); Middlesex 1769 (#292).

⁷⁶³ And also as 'the power of a superior over an inferior'. Bailey 1735.

⁷⁶⁴ The concept of influential became characterised as 'influencing, or bearing sway'. Bailey 1735.

⁷⁶⁵ Kersey's and Johnson's dictionaries also contained traces of the concept's origins. One of Kersey's definitions described influence as 'the effect of the heat and light of the heavenly bodies' (Kersey 1708) and Johnson's as the 'power of the celestial aspects operating upon terrestrial bodies and affairs' (Johnson 1768).

⁷⁶⁶ Johnson also defined influence as 'ascendant power'. Johnson 1768.

'act[ing] upon with directive or impulsive power'⁷⁶⁷. But the elastic nature of *influence* also enabled petitioners to use the concept to numerous purposes, from opposing the influence the excise officers had on elections⁷⁶⁸ to criticising the influence of wealthy Jews 'which their ample possessions must naturally give [them]'⁷⁶⁹.

Although criticism of influence could be used to delegitimise numerous actors and institutions, most of them focused on the influence of prime and other ministers. Petitioners could, for instance, accuse ministers of a 'baneful'⁷⁷⁰ and 'notorious influence'⁷⁷¹. In their address to the Throne in 1770, the freeholders of Middlesex criticised the 'secret and malignant influence, which has thwarted and defeated almost every measure that has been attempted for the good of your subjects, and has given birth to others, totally subversive of the liberties and constitution of these once flourishing and happy kingdoms'⁷⁷². The freeholders of Surrey, also criticising the administration's conduct regarding Wilkes and the Middlesex elections, encouraged the King to dismiss 'those ministers who advised a violation of our privileges' in order to 'discountenance that over-ruling influence which has been the secret source of all our grievances'⁷⁷³. Petitioners could also use implicit references to criticise the influence of ministers⁷⁷⁴. In such cases, they castigated the influence of the administration⁷⁷⁵ and used euphemisms such as

⁷⁶⁷ Johnson 1768.

⁷⁶⁸ Wareham 1733 (#029).

⁷⁶⁹ Essex 1753 (#169).

⁷⁷⁰ Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#315).

⁷⁷¹ Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074) and Somerset 1740 (#086). For general references to ministers' and counsellors' pernicious influence, see Denbighshire 1741 (#097); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Bristol 1741 (#110); London 1741 (#123); Stirling 1742 (#134); Worcester 1742 (#143); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); Cornwall 1769 (#263); Westminster 1769 (#284); Southwark 1769 (#289); London 1769 (#294); London 1770 (#323); London 1770 (#324); Westminster 1770 (#326); Durham 1770 (#331); London 1773 (#350); London 1775 (#375); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

⁷⁷² Middlesex 1770 (#320), see also London 1769 (#294); London 1770 (#322); Westminster 1770 (#326). Petitioners could blame the 'secret malignant influence, which, through each successive administration, has defeated every good, and suggested every bad intention' and the 'fatal conspiracy of malevolent influences around the throne' of the decay of their country. London 1770 (#322) and London 1770 (#323). Surrey 1770 (#314).

⁷⁷³ See, for instance, Dumfries 1742 (#138) and Canterbury 1769 (#270).

⁷⁷⁴ See, for instance, Buckinghamshire 1721 (#024); Sutherland 1740 (#076); Westminster 1741 (#122); Dumfries 1742 (#138). The mayor, aldermen, and common council of Exeter required punishments for those responsible for the loss of Minorca in 1756, demanding 'that no influence will be powerful enough to protect, no connections sufficiently extensive to screen the man, who shall, for the future, dare to be deficient in his duty, or to separate his own interests from those of the nation'. Exeter 1756 (#190).

'evil genius'⁷⁷⁶, 'junto of persons'⁷⁷⁷, and 'great personages'⁷⁷⁸ to criticise ministers' use of influence. In this sense, the use of the concept often resembled the general criticism of ministers and ministries. As in the case of the general criticism, petitioners often used the concept of influence to imply that instead of counting on reason and deliberation, prime ministers used their influence to deceive and coerce members of parliament to support their disastrous propositions and policies.

While most petitioners focused on criticising ministers and the administration, some of them also challenged the influence of the Crown. The barons and freeholders of Sutherland, for instance, claimed to champion measures 'preserving a just balance of power betwixt the several branches of the legislature' to secure 'the rights of election, and method of proceeding in elections of members to represent the shires and boroughs in Scotland, so as that the same may proceed with freedom and impartiality, according to the real sentiments of the electors, and may be guarded against all undue influence from the Crown, or those in the administration'⁷⁷⁹. Besides being modest in terms of electorate, franchise being restricted to privileged tenants and confined corporations, most constituencies in Scotland also tended to be controlled by nobilities and dominant families⁷⁸⁰. Most constituents in Sutherland, a group of around 10 electors in 1754⁷⁸¹, participated in elections under the supervision of the Earls of Sutherland, the landlords of most of the electors⁷⁸². Though the barons and freeholders abstained from criticising the state of affairs in Sutherland, the petitioners identified a common feature of politics north of the border; the closely controlled Scottish constituencies tended to support the administration⁷⁸³. The high sheriff and grand inquest of Lancashire, on the other hand, praised Richard Shuttleworth, a staunch Jacobite sympathiser and the father of James Shuttleworth, member of parliament for Preston (1741 - 1754) and Lancashire (1761 - 1768)⁷⁸⁴, and Peter Bold, a Tory, for resisting the 'flood of corruption and court influence, which for many years has

⁷⁷⁶ Lichfield 1741 (#107). For the influence of 'certain evil-minded persons', see Middlesex 1769 (#292).

⁷⁷⁷ Coventry 1741 (#108). *Junto*, a concept deriving from Spanish, was an ambiguous though predominantly pejorative concept in eighteenth-century politics. It could function as a reference to 'a meeting of men to sit in council', as noted by John Kersey and Nathaniel Bailey. It could however, also contain other, more pejorative connotations. Kersey also defined the concept as 'a cabal, private faction, or party'; a characterisation that Bailey, too, recognised. Johnson, on the other hand, defined *junto* simply as 'a cabal', thus ignoring the earlier, more neutral definitions in Kersey's and Bailey's dictionaries. Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735; Johnson 1768. The Whig *junto*, a group of leading Whigs during the reign of William and Anne, contained elements from both definitions, depending on the perspective. It could, in a rather descriptive sense, refer to the group formed by John Somers, Charles Montagu, Thomas Wharton, Edward Russell, and the Earl of Sunderland, influential both among the Whigs and within the circles of government. But it could also be interpreted as a reference to a secretive group, who abused the King's trust and despised parliament.

⁷⁷⁸ Edinburghshire 1742 (#150).

⁷⁷⁹ Sutherland 1740 (#076), see also Nottingham 1739 (#064) and Newcastle-under-Lyme 1740 (#087).

⁷⁸⁰ Black 2008, 207.

⁷⁸¹ HoP/Sutherland 1715 - 1754.

⁷⁸² Black 2008, 207.

⁷⁸³ Black 2008, 207.

⁷⁸⁴ HoP/Richard Shuttleworth.

prevail[e]d, and almost overspread the land'⁷⁸⁵. It is difficult to determine the precise nature of such references. Accusations of court influence could concern numerous actors other than the King himself. It is more than likely that the Lancashire petitioners referred to the influence of those advising the Throne.

Corruption, something petitioners described as the 'canker of our constitution'⁷⁸⁶, embodied one of the most common forms of alleged use of influence. Accusations of corruption, indeed, constitute one of the corner stones of political argumentation. J.A.W Gunn has described the rise of such accusations after the Restoration, whereas Kathleen Wilson has focused on the 1720s. Although a standard feature of argumentation in the spheres of politics, it gained fresh momentum after the formation of the anti-Walpolean coalition of Tories and Opposition Whigs, claiming that 'a corrupt faction at Court must be opposed by a patriotic Country party representing the interests of the whole nation'⁷⁸⁷. Eighteenth-century petitioners accused ministers and the administration of corrupt influence in three distinctive manners. First, ministers and the administration could be accused of explicit corruption. In such cases, petitioners described the administration as 'corrupt and treacherous'⁷⁸⁸ and accused ministers of 'corrupt influence'⁷⁸⁹ and the use of bribes⁷⁹⁰. Petitioners could also encourage members of parliament to champion bills and other measures 'to restore the ancient freedom

⁷⁸⁵ Lancashire 1740 (#085).

⁷⁸⁶ Westminster 1741 (#122). The gentlemen and freeholders of Anglesey and the capital burgesses of Beaumaris described the 'perncisious influence of corruption' as something that 'has, in all ages, prov[e]d fatal to the most powerful states and empires under the sun'. Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126). For general references to bribes and corruption, see Bedford 1734 (#053); New Sarum 1739 (#059); Middlesex 1740 (#071); Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074); Sutherland 1740 (#076); Truro 1740 (#081); Gloucestershire 1740 (#083); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); York 1741 (#099); Bristol 1741 (#100); Bishop's Castle 1741 (#104); Hereford 1741 (#105); Suffolk 1741 (#111); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Westminster 1741 (#122); Reading 1742 (#125); Gloucester 1742 (#128); Minehead 1742 (#129); Carmarthen 1742 (#130); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Annan 1742 (#136); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Dumfries 1742 (#138); Honiton 1742 (#139); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Worcester 1742 (#143); Southwark 1742 (#146); Coventry 1742 (#159); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); Leominster (#163); Bath 1769 (#264); Canterbury 1769 (#270); Southwark 1769 (#290); London 1769 (#293); London 1769 (#294); London 1770 (#322); Westminster 1770 (#326); London 1773 (#350); Canterbury 1773 (#353); London 1773 (#360); London 1775 (#376).

⁷⁸⁷ As aptly characterised by H.T. Dickinson. Dickinson 1977, 169 - 175, 178 - 179, 182; Wilson 1998, 122 - 123; Gunn 1983, 9 - 22, 26; Royle & Walvin 1982, 14. Paul Langford has even claimed that 'corruption was the single most important political issues of the eighteenth century. It never lost its importance, yet there was never much danger of a root and branch approach to eliminating it. Everybody denounced it; most politicians dealt in it.' Langford 1992, 716. See also Knights 2007.

⁷⁸⁸ New Woodstock 1742 (#141), see also Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); Westminster 1741 (#122).

⁷⁸⁹ London 1773 (#350), see also Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Coventry 1741 (#108); Bristol 1741 (#110); Westminster 1741 (#122); London 1741 (#123); Stirling 1742 (#134); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Canterbury 1769 (#270); Middlesex 1769 (#292); Canterbury 1773 (#353); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

⁷⁹⁰ See, for instance, Salisbury 1739 (#059); Sutherland 1740 (#076); York 1741 (#099); Bath 1741 (#102); Bishop's Castle 1741 (#104); Chester 1741 (#110); Reading 1742 (#125); Leominster 1743 (#163); Canerbury 1769 (#270); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277).

of our constitution, and secure it against all future attempts, either of open or secret corruption, or of any undue influence whatsoever⁷⁹¹. Such accusations represent a rather concrete form of claims of corruption. Although corruption could also be defined in rather abstract terms, being 'the destruction of the proper mode of existence, or being of any natural body', as John Kersey described the philosophical definition of the concept in his dictionary in 1708⁷⁹², the use of bribes is an example that most of the petitioners' contemporaries must have recognised as an explicit form of corruption.

Second, petitioners accused ministers of using places and pensions to influence the decision-making processes⁷⁹³. By *pensions*, petitioners referred to grants paid from the civil list and places to offices granted by the administration and the Crown. In both cases, critics claimed that the administration exploited economic dependence to corrupt and command members of parliament. To restrict the use of places and pensions constituted one of the corner-stones of the country opposition. From 1730 to 1742, the opposition in parliament presented 11 bills to re-

⁷⁹¹ London 1741 (#123), see also Annan 1742 (#136) and Dumfries 1742 (#138). The council of Edinburgh represented the restoration of the ancient constitution and the independence of parliament as 'the only preservatives against all undue influence ... and the certain antidote against the effects of corruption and ministerial influence'. Edinburgh 1741 (#103).

⁷⁹² Kersey also recognised the corporal aspects of the concept, describing it as 'rotteness, the corrupt, or rotten matter of a sore'. Kersey 1708, see also Bailey 1735 and Johnson 1768. The Westminster petitioners, describing corruption as the 'canker of our constitution' must have recognised this aspect of the concept, too.

⁷⁹³ See, for instance, Coventry 1741 (#108); London 1741 (#123); Dumfries 1742 (#138); New Woodstock 1742 (#141). Petitioners described places and pensions as Walpole's 'lucrative influence over the representative body of this nation' and argued that 'those, whom we intrust with an unrestrain[e]d power of making all laws, affecting our trade, properties, liberties and lives, should be uninfluenced by any lucrative considerations'. Westminster 1742 (#157) and London 1739 (#057). For general references to places and pensions, see, for instance, New Sarum 1739 (#059); Edinburgh 1739 (#060); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Cupar 1739 (#063); Nottingham 1739 (#064); York 1739 (#066); Dundee 1739 (#068); Middlesex 1740 (#071); Huntingdonshire 1740 (#072); Buckingham 1740 (#073); Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074); London 1740 (#075); Liskeard 1740 (#078); Grantham 1740 (#079); Flintshire 1740 (#085); Truro 1740 (#081); Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Gloucestershire 1740 (#083); Cheshire 1740 (#084); Lancashire 1740 (#085); Somerset 1740 (#086); Devon 1740 (#089); Stafford 1740 (#090); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Yorkshire 1740 (#093); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Denbighshire 1741 (#097); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Canterbury 1741 (#101); Bath 1741 (#102); Hereford 1741 (#105); Herefordshire 1741 (#106); Coventry 1741 (#108); Chester 1741 (#110); Suffolk 1741 (#111); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Ayrshire 1741 (#121); London 1741 (#123); London 1741 (#124); Reading 1742 (#125); Cromartyshire 1742 (#127); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Stirling 1742 (#134); Devon 1742 (#135); Annan 1742 (#136); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Dumfries 1742 (#138); Honiton 1742 (#139); Newcastle-under-Lyme 1742 (#140); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); Southwark 1742 (#146); Westminster 1742 (#156); Oxford 1756 (#183); Salisbury 1756 (#187); Leominster 1756 (#197); Nottingham 1756 (#203); Bristol 1756 (#208); London 1756 (#216); Bath 1769 (#264); Canterbury 1769 (#270); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277); Bristol 1769 (#282); Southwark 1769 (#290); London 1769 (#293).

strict the use of places and pensions; most references to them occurred in petitions promoting such legislation.⁷⁹⁴ Petitioners characterised placemen and pensioners as 'dependents'⁷⁹⁵, 'servile placemen'⁷⁹⁶, and 'mercenary hirelings'⁷⁹⁷. Instead of being proper representatives, such actors formed 'a body under ministerial influence'⁷⁹⁸; 'as places are the gifts of ministers', the mayor, aldermen, and commons of New Woodstock argued in their petition, 'placemen consequently [are] their votaries and dependents'⁷⁹⁹. In addition to distorting the true nature of representative politics, placemen and pensioners were also perceived as dangerous. Petitioners described such actors as the 'source of our present distresses, and productive of our future ruin'⁸⁰⁰ and of 'dangerous influence'⁸⁰¹. The Merchant Company of Edinburgh, opposing the Convention of Pardo and the influence of places and pensions, asserted that placemen 'may have a different interest from that of the nation [and may not exert] themselves in parliament for the good of their country, but in the favour of a minister, whose schemes and projects they may be tempted to support, however ruinous to their country'⁸⁰². Petitioners often urged their representatives to restrict the scale of places and pensions to redeem parliament 'from all other influence, than that of the publick interest, and the happiness of the nation'⁸⁰³. According to petitioners, places and pensions combined the most despicable features of politics - self-interest and factious allegiance. Such complaints and accusations of misrepresentation were, indeed, more than common in the unreformed House of Commons.

Third, ministers and, at times, the Crown could be accused of influencing elections. In the first part of the eighteenth-century such claims focused on the alleged impact of excise officers⁸⁰⁴, the accustomed enemies of mercantile actors and opposition politicians in parliament⁸⁰⁵. From the 1760s, however, assertions

⁷⁹⁴ As demonstrated in Chapter 4.1 (Petitions and the Collective Interest).

⁷⁹⁵ Middlesex 1740 (#071); Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074); Somerset 1740 (#086); New Woodstock 1742 (#141). For uses of 'dependence', see Devon 1740 (#089) and Monmouth 1741 (#119).

⁷⁹⁶ Flintshire 1740 (#080).

⁷⁹⁷ Edinburghshire 1742 (#150), see also Flintshire 1740 (#080).

⁷⁹⁸ Flintshire 1740 (#080).

⁷⁹⁹ Woodstock 1742 (#141).

⁸⁰⁰ Flintshire 1740 (#080).

⁸⁰¹ Nottingham 1739 (#064), see also Somerset 1740 (#086).

⁸⁰² Edinburgh 1739 (#060), see also Somerset 1740 (#086).

⁸⁰³ Edinburgh 1739 (#060). Petitioners could also claim that the reduction of places and pensions was 'the only remedy to revive our drooping liberties, and animate a languishing constitution' as 'the security of our liberties is entirely founded upon the independence of our representatives'. Flintshire 1740 (#080) and Somerset 1740 (#086).

⁸⁰⁴ See, for instance, Wareham 1733 (#029) and Hereford 1741 (#105). For accusations against other actors, see Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074); Denbighshire 1741 (#097); London 1769 (#293).

⁸⁰⁵ Most of the critics of excises opposed excisemen for two particular reasons. First, excise officers possessed the right to search and inspect private premises. Although authorised to execute such inspections, the critics represented them as arbitrary, infringing the sanctity of private homes. Second, excisemen could, according to their critics, be used as tools of Crown patronage and thus influence the outcome of elections. Black 1984a, 35; Jubb 1984, 141; Langford 1975, 74 - 75; Wilson 128 - 130; Dickinson 1977, 182 - 183; Langford 1992, 29 - 30. John Brewer, however, has argued that petitioners' and their contemporaries' fears were, to a large extent, unfounded. Despite being one of the most efficient branches of administration, managed through a

regarding the Crown's influence started to change. Petitioners concerned of the Middlesex election crisis claimed that the prime minister manipulated the House of Commons to restrict constituents' right to choose their members of parliament⁸⁰⁶. Petitioners complained of 'the influence of pernicious counsellors', defying the principles of the 'free constitution'⁸⁰⁷, and accused the House of Commons of being 'under the immediate influence of [his] Majesty's ministers'⁸⁰⁸. But whereas petitioners opposing excises perceived increasing the Crown's influence as dangerous, petitioners defending John Wilkes recommended and, at times, demanded that the Crown use its prerogatives to counter the House of Commons. Petitioners could entreat the Throne to dismiss ministers and counsellors⁸⁰⁹ and, as in the most contentious cases, to dissolve the parliament to enable the electors of the nation to choose a new one, representing the genuine sense of the people⁸¹⁰. Despite their differences, each of the three discourses focused on delegitimising ministers' right to manage the executive part of the government. In order to undermine the parliamentary majority the administration more or less relied on, actors out-of-doors undermined the legitimacy of the pro-administration sentiments in parliament.

Besides criticising corruption, petitioners also criticised parties and factions. Both of the concepts remained distinctively pejorative throughout the eighteenth century⁸¹¹; most petitioners using them to disassociate themselves from parties and factions. Petitioners could, for instance, use the concepts to assure the petitioned of the public-spiritedness of their intentions. Samuel Peach, the chairman of the petitioning meeting in 1769, assured members of parliament that the freeholders and freemen of Bristol were 'not dictated by the spirit of faction' nor endeavoured 'to inflame' the public⁸¹². The gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of

highly centralised organisation, excise officers were also under closer scrutiny than the managers of land taxes and custom duties. Brewer recognises that excise officers, too, 'needed a political patron to secure appointment', but notes that officers were 'periodically transferred to new stations', making them 'less likely than custom men to be complicit with local traders and smugglers', avoiding 'local political entanglements'. Brewer 1989, 101 - 114.

⁸⁰⁶ See, for instance, Cornwall 1769 (#263); Westminster 1769 (#284); Southwark 1769 (#289); Middlesex 1769 (#292); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#323); Westminster 1770 (#326).

⁸⁰⁷ Southwark 1769 (#289).

⁸⁰⁸ Westminster 1769 (#284).

⁸⁰⁹ See, for instance, Cornwall 1769 (#263); Surrey 1770 (#314); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#324); Westminster 1770 (#326); London 1773 (#350).

⁸¹⁰ See, for instance, Westminster 1769 (#284); Southwark 1769 (#288); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#315); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#324); London 1771 (#335).

⁸¹¹ Terence Ball has noted that the concept of *party* 'was not much used in political contexts until the seventeenth century'. He has suggested that that changed after becoming increasingly understood in contractual terms after the Restoration. Ball 1989, 166 - 167, see also Knights 2005, 96 - 98, 280 - 281; Gunn 1983, 57 - 58; Ihalainen 1999, 159 - 256. For observations on the differences regarding the concepts of *party* and *faction*, see, for instance, Ihalainen 1999, 195 - 210.

⁸¹² LM/April 1769.

Huntingdonshire, a constituency dominated by the Whig-supporting Montagu⁸¹³, on the other hand, proclaimed their abhorrence of 'factious principles' to persuade Robert Pigott and Charles Clarke, both of them pro-government Whigs⁸¹⁴, to support the reduction of places in parliament and the struggle against the Spaniards⁸¹⁵. The mayor, aldermen, and burgesses of Reading, opposing the naturalisation of Jews in 1753, claimed to submit their petition to the three candidates contesting the constituency⁸¹⁶ in a public manner so that 'the world may see we act without any party prejudice or private attachment'⁸¹⁷. Petitioners could also use such negations to explicitly define the ideals of representation. In such cases, they encouraged members of parliament to abandon the 'invidious distinctions of parties'⁸¹⁸ and 'join heart and hand with men of probity and virtue, without distinction of names and parties'⁸¹⁹. Such references to parties and factions closely resembled petitioners' uses of public spirit and disinterestedness.

Petitioners could also use the concepts of party and faction to dispute others' intentions. Counter-petitioners from Liverpool and Manchester, for instance, accused petitioners of being 'seditious advocates' and 'a motley crew of fanatics and Aminadabs'⁸²⁰, serving the 'sinister views of factious and designing men'⁸²¹ and 'machinations of a self-elected junto'⁸²². Most of such allegations occurred

⁸¹³ HoP/Huntingdonshire 1715 - 1754.

⁸¹⁴ HoP/Robert Pigott; HoP/Charles Clarke.

⁸¹⁵ Huntingdonshire 1740 (#072), see also Coupar 1739 (#063); Devon 1769 (#306).

⁸¹⁶ All three candidates promised to oppose the naturalisation of Jews. John Dodd, whom eventually lost the election by one vote to Charles Fane, asserted that 'if I should have the honour to be elected one of your representatives, as I have the greatest regard for our holy religion, I will use my utmost endeavours to get it repealed, and will oppose any subsequent bill in favour of any of the Jews'. Reading 1753 (#175a1), see also Reading 1753 (#175a2) and Reading 1753 (175a3). HoP/Reading 1715 - 1754; HoP/Reading 1754 - 1790.

⁸¹⁷ Reading 1753 (#175).

⁸¹⁸ Coventry 1742 (#159). The magistrates and other members of the council of Annan emphasised that, after the banishment of Walpole, parliament should consist of representatives 'qualified by their virtues and abilities ... and that no distinction will remain, but of those who are friends or enemies to the constitution'. Annan 1742 (#136).

⁸¹⁹ Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131).

⁸²⁰ Manchester 1775 (#338).

⁸²¹ And of endeavouring to disquiet 'the minds of many well-disposed subjects, and [teach] them to complain of matters that are neither within their cognizance or understanding'. Liverpool 1769 (#279). Mark Knights' work on representation and misrepresentation in later Stuart Britain contains numerous examples of similar argumentation. During the early part of the eighteenth century, for instance, a Whig pamphleteer argued that 'people of late are very hot and contentious about things they seem to have no notions of, except in name ... [they have been] set a madding about terms they have no meaning to'. Knights 2005, 284 - 285.

⁸²² The gentlemen, clergy, merchants, manufacturers, and inhabitants of Manchester claimed that the petitions in favour of reconciliation were 'calculated to fan the flames of sedition, and keep alive that restless spirit of opposition, so destructive to society, and serving only the purposes of faction and discontent'. Manchester 1775 (#383). The bailiff, corporation, borough, and barony of Flint, on the other hand, accused the 'ecclesiastics' of 'intermeddling in civil cases, and leave their cures and pulpits, to teach seditious principles to the people, and point out the road to political perfection, depending on popular licentiousness, and the timidity of the dioceses'. Flint 1770 (#310).

during the crisis in America. Opponents of reconciliation often accused the colonists and opposition representatives of spreading confusion and inciting a rebellion. Such petitioners could criticise 'the artifices of disappointed and impotent faction'⁸²³ and 'factious and evil-minded men, both at home and abroad' of 'sowing the seeds of sedition among us'⁸²⁴. The mayor, aldermen, sheriffs, and common council of Chester even argued that 'the daily publications of factious subjects' at home, a reference to the numerous opposition newspapers and pamphlets, encouraged the insurgents in the colonies to take arms against Britain⁸²⁵. Proponents of reconciliation, of course, disputed such allegations. The principal citizens, inhabitants, manufacturers, and traders of Coventry, for instance, challenged the claim that 'the resistance of America' could be attributed to 'to the arts and designs of a few factious men', the continent of America being 'united in one mind'⁸²⁶. The merchants, traders, 'and others concerned in the commerce of North America' in London, on the other hand, emphasised the 'just distinction between the turbulence of a faction and the eager contentions of a free people'⁸²⁷. Instead of being opposition concepts, such references to parties and factions also demonstrate petitioners' contemporaries' scorn of divisions in the spheres of politics. Most actors regarded parties and factions as institutions that challenged the interest of the nation, reducing them into servants of vested interests.

Others used the concepts to propose far-reaching reforms on the political establishment, such as the unification of parties to reduce partisanship in the spheres of politics. Petitioners from Staffordshire, an uncontested county constituency from 1660 to 1746⁸²⁸, complained of the challenges of the political transition in 1742, a probable reference to the establishment's failure to punish Walpole and his associates, but recognised the role of parliament in initiating 'a change in the administration [that] will ... end in uniting all parties in one common interest, and in turning our private contests into publick spirit and love of our country'⁸²⁹. Petitioners also encouraged members of parliament to form 'a firm coalition of parties', from which 'disunion the most noxious effects have arisen, and have been already so sensibly felt by the nation'⁸³⁰, and 'continue and perfect that happy coalition, and extinction of parties, from which alone we can hope for redress of all our grievances'⁸³¹. The mayor, aldermen, and commons of Bath encouraged John Sebright and John Smith⁸³², their representatives in parliament, to

⁸²³ Middlesex 1775 (#395), see also Manchester 1775 (#390). For similar arguments during the Wyvillite campaigns, see, for instance, Barker 1999, 90 - 91.

⁸²⁴ Beverley 1775 (#397).

⁸²⁵ Chester 1775 (#401).

⁸²⁶ Coventry 1775 (#388), see also Berkshire 1775 (#394).

⁸²⁷ London 1775 (#379).

⁸²⁸ HoP/Staffordshire 1660 - 1690; HoP/Staffordshire 1690 - 1715; HoP/Staffordshire 1715 - 1754.

⁸²⁹ Staffordshire 1742 (#145).

⁸³⁰ Lanarkshire 1741 (#118).

⁸³¹ Dorset 1742 (#147). The mayor, recorder, aldermen, sheriffs, and councillors of Bristol, on the other hand, argued that the ruinous premiership of Walpole had 'awakened the fears of good men of every party in the kingdom'. Bristol 1742 (#152).

⁸³² According to J.A. Cannon, Smith 'voted consistently with the opposition'. Sebright, on the other hand, supported the administration from 1767 to 1780. HoP/John Smith; HoP/John Sebright.

use their utmost 'endeavours to reconcile the present unhappy divisions' in 1769⁸³³, a conceptualisation that could refer to both the deteriorating situation in America and the polarisation of British politics in general. Regardless of the sporadic references to parties and factions during the 1760s, most occurred in petitions submitted during the early 1740s. Such assertions illustrate the burst of optimism and the sudden expansion of the horizon of expectations in 1741 - 1742. Being capable of purging a prime minister as strong as Robert Walpole from office encouraged petitioners, and certain opposition representatives in parliament, to believe that the culture of politics could be reformed.

Some petitioners encouraged the petitioned to abolish parties altogether. The authors of such petitions often used explicit demands to members of parliament to promote the 'entire abolition of parties'⁸³⁴ and 'extirpation of party distinction[s]'⁸³⁵, expecting 'every odious name of distinction ... soon [to] be lost amongst us'⁸³⁶. Petitioners from Preston, a stronghold of Tories⁸³⁷, requested James Shuttleworth and Nicholas Fazakerley, the latter being one of the architects of the opposition plan to force the prime minister out of office⁸³⁸, to disband parties as their proponents used them to protect and encourage 'ministerial tyranny, in opposition to the true interest of his Majesty and his people'⁸³⁹. The critics of parties perceived them as distractions impairing the people and its collective interest. Instead of maintaining factious divisions, the actors operating in the spheres of politics were encouraged to focus on divisions that mattered: support the friends of the constitution and confront those acting against the true interest of the people. Such reasoning is evident in the petition submitted from Herefordshire in 1741, recommending the representatives in parliament toward

'the extirpation of party distinction (which can be only of use to serve the purposes of persons in power) and we hope there will no other difference subsist amongst us, but of those who are friends and enemies to our constitution, those who will maintain the freedom and independency of parliament, and such who would subject it to corrupt ministerial influence.'⁸⁴⁰

⁸³³ Bath 1769 (#264).

⁸³⁴ Dumfries 1742 (#138), see also London 1741 (#123); Annan 1742 (#136).

⁸³⁵ Stirling 1742 (#134), see also Preston 1741 (#116); Westminster 1741 (#122); London 1741 (#123); Dorset 1742 (#147).

⁸³⁶ London 1741 (#123), see also Chester 1741 (#110).

⁸³⁷ According to Eveline Cruickshanks, the elections in Preston were 'dominated by the neighbouring country gentlemen, most of whom were Tories, if not Jacobites'. HoP/Preston 1715 - 1756.

⁸³⁸ HoP/Nicholas Fazakerley.

⁸³⁹ Petitioners could also associate parties with 'ministerial dependence, and every other venal consideration', challenging 'the freedom and independency of parliament, and the welfare and liberties of their country'. Preston 1741 (#116). The grand jury, gentlemen, and freeholders of Herefordshire, on the other hand, recommended their representatives 'to endeavour to put an end to all party distinctions, invented and encourag[e]d by wicked ministers, to divert the general attention from their pilfering practices and treacherous design'. Herefordshire 1741 (#106). For similar arguments, see Westminster 1741 (#122); London 1741 (#123); Stirling 1742 (#134); Annan 1742 (#136); Dumfries 1742 (#138).

⁸⁴⁰ Stirling 1742 (#134), see also Herefordshire 1741 (#106). The burgesses and inhabitants of Westminster similarly claimed that 'the common interest ... has now united all

Petitioners' conceptualisations of the ideals and counter-ideals of representation and participation illustrate the salience of collective ideals in eighteenth-century politics. The profuse references to collective ideals, and counter-ideals, demonstrate their legitimacy; even requests to promote particular interests, from borough to mercantile ones, became represented as protecting the common good and the interest of the nation. Although usually chosen to represent boroughs and counties, and often seen as some sort of advocates of their constituencies, both petitioners and members of parliament tended to describe representatives' duties and responsibilities in collective terms. The use of similar concepts, discourses, and metaphors is, of course, far from being a demonstration that petitioners and representatives shared a coherent conception of collective interests; opposition-minded petitioners tended to understand the interest of the nation in different ways than the pro-administration representatives. Whereas petitioners often used the collective ideals and counter-ideals to pressure the petitioned to share their perception of the common good, pro-government representatives tended to use similar ideals to counter the influence of opposition out-of-doors (as demonstrated in Chapter 6). Regardless of their differences, however, both opposition and pro-administration actors recognised the collective character of representation. Once representation became defined as something collective, claims on behalf of the people and nation became persuasive arguments.

parties and persuasions, and every man will be regarded only as he prefers the welfare and liberties of his country to any private dependence, or venal consideration whatever'. Westminster 1741 (#122).

5 REQUESTS AND REQUIREMENTS: PETITIONERS' PERCEPTIONS ON THE REPRESENTATIVE RELATIONSHIP

5.1 Patterns of Humbleness

In addition to the use of implicit means, such as representative claims and ideals and counter-ideals, petitioners also used more pronounced methods to influence the petitioned. In order to understand petitioners' use of such means and methods, this chapter focuses on petitioners' uses of verbs and other pronounced characterisations of the representative relationship. The main focus is on those verbs petitioners used to influence the future conduct of the petitioned and test the boundaries of legitimate pressure on representatives, parliament, and the Throne⁸⁴¹. Although constituting a rather modest part of the discursive mass of petitions, petitioners' choices of verbs mattered for three specific reasons. First, the assortment of verbs petitioners used and the differences regarding their uses illustrate the deliberate nature of petitioners' choices. Instead of using verbs in a random manner, petitioners often placed much emphasis on them. Second, petitioners' choices of verbs and other formulations tended to correlate. Petitions containing imperative verbs, in particular, also tended to contain other forms of imperative utterances. Third, petitioners and their contemporaries often emphasised the importance of such verbs⁸⁴². In order to understand petitioners' perceptions on representation and the means petitioners used to influence the petitioned, this chapter focuses on the patterns such verbs formed during the period from 1721 to 1776.

⁸⁴¹ Petitioners also used verbs to describe their intentions. Such verbs, and other conceptualisations, are discussed in Chapter 2.4 (Rationalising Petitioning).

⁸⁴² See, for instance, Sudbury 1733 (#030); Hindon 1733 (#032); Gloucester 1733 (#033); Colchester 1733 (#046); Yorkshire 1769 (#287).

We are too truly affected with the great Debt the Nation labours under, not heartily to wish all proper Methods were found out to lessen the same: But as the late Scheme of the South-Sea Company (upon which our Hopes were built for an immediate Relief of a considerable Sum) has proved Abortive, by the Avarice of the late Managers thereof, so we fear the Consequence of insisting upon that Contract with the South-Sea Company, towards the Discharging of the Publick Debts, would be the Loss of the little Credit that remains.

Your Petitioners, in full Confidence of the Wisdom of this Honourable House, most humbly pray, that no Artifices whatsoever may be able to divert you from those just Measures which you are taking to restore Publick Credit, make Trade flourish, and do Justice to a most injured Nation.

And your Petitioners shall ever pray, &c.

Illustration 3 Last Paragraphs of the Herefordshire Petition of 1721. BC/PB 22 April 1721.

The advantages of focusing on patterns are most evident in cases of consistent genres such as petitions. Although addressed to different instances, and often divergent in terms of appearance, petitions shared a common form (in the general sense of the concept) and purpose⁸⁴³. The conventions regarding the use of verbs are most evident in petitions submitted to parliament. South Sea petitioners, most of them submitting their petitions to the House of Commons, tended to place the principal verb of the petition in the last paragraph. In such cases, petitioners tended to use indentation to emphasise the importance of the ending, as the last paragraphs of the Hertfordshire petition of 1721 demonstrate in Illustration 3 (Last Paragraphs of the Herefordshire Petition of 1721). The Hertfordshire petition is, of course, an utmost illustration of the formalistic conventions that influenced petitions and petitioners. Most petitioners and publishers of petitions abstained from emphasising the principal verbs in such ways. Numerous petitioners used, for instance, more than one verb to encourage and instruct the petitioned; the use of such verbs ranged from zero to 12 per petition⁸⁴⁴. The 464 petitions scrutinised in this thesis contain 619 verbs in total; 1.33 verbs per petition

⁸⁴³ Although petitions from instructions to members of parliament to addresses to the Throne, lacked, in the strict sense, a standardised form and set of conventions, eighteenth-century petitions form a rather uniform genre of documents. The most imperative conventions concerned petitions to parliament and the Throne. Petitions, or instructions, to members of parliament, on the other hand, represent the least regulated form of petitioning, as noted in Chapters 2.1 (Introduction to Petitions) and 6.4 (Procedural Constraints on Petitioning).

⁸⁴⁴ A complete list of the verbs petitioners used in their petitions is included in Appendix 1.

on average (and 1.75 if the 111 petitions containing no references to such verbs are omitted). Furthermore, the purpose of this chapter is not to scrutinise only the principal verbs. Petitioners often had good reasons to use different verbs on different issues in the same petition. Each of the 619 verbs functioned as some sort of indication of petitioners' perceptions on the representative relationship, as this chapter demonstrates.

This chapter is divided into four additional sub-chapters. Chapter 5.2 (Desires, Requests, and Recommendations) focuses on the humble verbs petitioners used in their petitions. It demonstrates the abundance of humble verbs and contemplates their differences. Chapter 5.3 (Enjoiners and Requirers), on the other hand, scrutinises petitioners' uses of imperative verbs. Although a much smaller group of verbs, the imperative ones tended to contain more nuances. The sub-chapter discusses, for instance, the differences regarding the uses and meanings of verbs such as *insist* and *require*. Besides using verbs to constrain the conduct of the petitioned, petitioners also used other means to pressure parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne. Chapter 5.4 (Petitioners' Indirect Means of Influence) focuses on those indirect means petitioners used to impose orders and commands on the petitioned. Chapter 5.5 (Replies from the Petitioned), on the other hand, examines on the replies the petitioned submitted to the petitioners. Replies to petitioners, a sort of sub-genre of petitions, enable us to have a glimpse on representatives' and the King's perceptions regarding the boundaries of petitioning.

5.2 Desires, Requests, and Recommendations

Early modern petitions are often described as courteous and deferential, used to plead for support and inform parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne of petitioners' grievances. Though an oversimplification, as this thesis demonstrates, certain aspects, indeed, support that characterisation. Dictionarists, for instance, described the concept of petition as 'a supplication or request' from 'an inferior to a superior'⁸⁴⁵ - a definition that certainly embraces the interpretation emphasising petitioners' deference. Numbers, too, can be interpreted as evidence in favour of such reading of petitions. If quantified, as in Figure 7 (Verbs in Petitions, 1721 - 1776), the pattern is clear; most petitioners, indeed, used humble verbs in petitions. Around 80 per cent (498 out of 619) of the verbs petitioners used to influence the future conduct of the petitioned can be classified as humble⁸⁴⁶. Although humble, however, the group also contained

⁸⁴⁵ Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735.

⁸⁴⁶ The category of humble verbs contains *recommend, hope, trust, doubt not, rely, depend, implore, entreat, beseech, beg, pray, desire, request, wish, conjure, and supplicate*. The category of imperative verbs, on the other hand, contains *expect, enjoin, instruct, direct, insist, and require*. The relative share of the verbs is demonstrated in Figure 7 (Verbs in Petitions, 1721 - 1776). The categorisation was created specifically to analyse the verbs used in petitions studied in this thesis.

verbs with different connotations and nuances. Some of the humble verbs, such as *beg* and *beseech*, were mostly used to court the petitioned through the assertion of allegiance and obedience. The use of such verbs often indicated that petitioners recognised representatives' independence and the sovereignty of parliament. But humble verbs could also be used in other ways. Petitioners' uses of verbs such as *recommend* and *request*, for instance, tended to emphasise participation and the reciprocal nature of representation while still recognising the independence of the petitioned.

In the first case, petitioners did not merely recognise the sovereignty of parliament, the independence of representatives, and the prominence of the Crown, but did so in an accentuated manner. In such cases, they favoured verbs such as *desire*, *hope*, *trust*, *entreat*, *depend*, *implore*, and *beg*. Uses of such verbs often remained rather generic. Verbs such as *desire*, *beg*, *supplicate*, *conjure*, and *entreat*, for instance, were used rather innocuously. Most petitioners used them to encourage the petitioned to either promote or resist specific bills, acts, and measures⁸⁴⁷, plead with them to accept their commendations⁸⁴⁸, and implore members of parliament to debate and discuss certain issues⁸⁴⁹. Others used similar verbs to assure parliament, representatives, and the Throne of their confidence in them. In such cases, petitioners favoured verbs such as *rely*, *trust*, *depend*, and *doubt not*. The freeholders of Middlesex, for instance, used such verbs to protest against the decision to exclude John Wilkes from representing them in the House of Commons in 1770. The petitioners, assembled at the Mile End Assembly Room on 30 March, claimed to trust the King, as 'the father of [his] people', to provide 'a remedy adequate to the disease [plaguing parliament]'. In order to cure the disease,

⁸⁴⁷ For such uses of *desire*, see Rye 1733 (#039); Wigan 1733 (#040); Woodstock (#041); Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Stafford 1740 (#090); Staffordshire 1740 (#091); Stamford 1740 (#094); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Denbighshire 1741 (#097); Bristol 1741 (#100); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Herefordshire 1741 (#106); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); Renfrewshire 1741 (#121); London 1741 (#124); Reading 1742 (#125); Stirling 1742 (#134); Annan 1742 (#136); Dumfries 1742 (#138); Lichfield 1742 (#144); Worcester 1750 (#166); Essex 1753 (#169); Buckinghamshire 1756 (#182); Oxford 1756 (#183); Lancashire 1756 (#192); Bedfordshire 1756 (#193); York 1756 (#207); Chester 1756 (#212); Southwark 1756 (#214); Ilchester 1753 (#234); Tewkesbury 1763 (#235); Gloucestershire 1763 (#236); Yorkshire 1764 (#247); Canterbury 1769 (#270); Canterbury 1772 (#348); Middlesex 1775 (#396). For similar uses of the verbs *beg*, *supplicate*, *conjure*, and *entreat*, see East Retford 1721 (#021); Sudbury 1733 (#030); Hindon 1733 (#032); Rye 1733 (#039); Nottingham 1733 (#042); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Westminster 1741 (#122); Gloucester 1742 (#128); Dumfries 1742 (#138); New Woodstock 1742 (#141); London 1742 (#153); Westminster 1742 (#156); Westminster 1742 (#157); Worcestershire 1742 (#161); Merionethshire 1743 (#162); Breconshire 1756 (#184); New Sarum 1756 (#187); Maidstone 1756 (#191); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Bristol 1756 (#208); Chester 1756 (#212); Worcestershire 1763 (#228); Tewkesbury 1763 (#235); Canterbury 1763 (#270); Berwick-upon-Tweed 1769 (#278); Norfolk 1769 (#299); London 1771 (#335); London 1773 (#350); London 1774 (#366); London 1775 (#379); Coventry 1775 (#388); Halifax 1775 (#404); Whitehaven 1776 (#459).

⁸⁴⁸ For *desires*, see London 1756 (#216); Coventry 1766 (#253); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277); Westminster 1770 (#328). For similar use of *beg* and *entreat*, see Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297) and Southwark 1775 (#409).

⁸⁴⁹ Newark-upon-Trent (#020). For similar uses of *supplicate* and *entreat*, see London 1766 (#251); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); London 1773 (#350); London 1776 (#457).

petitioners encouraged the King to dismiss his ministers and dissolve the parliament.⁸⁵⁰ They could also refuse to doubt the fortitude of the House of Commons, like the petitioners from Kent, assembled at the court of quarter sessions at Maidstone on 18 April 1721. 'We doubt not', these petitioners declared, 'this honourable House, the constant guardian of our rights, will think it becoming their great wisdom' to punish those 'conspirators' who had used the S.S.C. to plunder the people.⁸⁵¹ In both cases petitioners emphasised the humbleness of their petitions. The use of such verbs tended to demonstrate petitioners' deference; instead of being peers, the petitioners recognised the petitioned as their superiors.

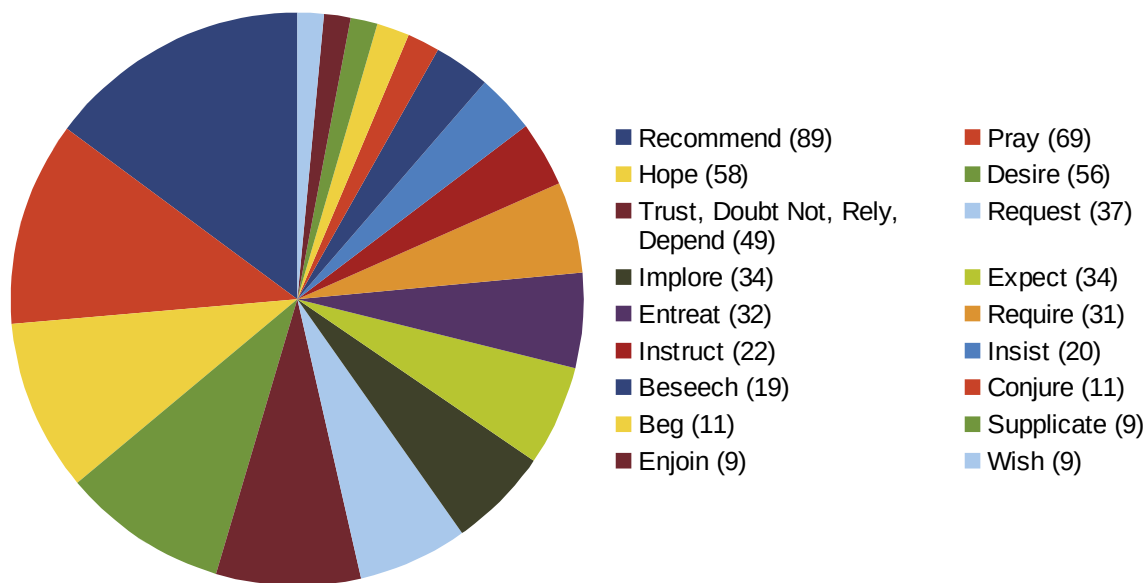


Figure 7 Verbs in Petitions, 1721–1776.

Regardless of the rather generic use of humble verbs in general, the uses of certain verbs formed patterns that distinguished them from other humble verbs. *Pray*, for instance, became distinctively used in petitions submitted to parliament; of the 69 uses of the verb, 50 occurred in petitions addressed to the House of Commons and House of Lords - a significant over-representation. One reason for

⁸⁵⁰ Middlesex 1770 (#320), see also Southwark 1769 (#288); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Flint 1770 (#310); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); Southwark 1775 (#409); Exeter 1775 (#417); Stirling 1775 (#423); Hereford 1775 (#426); Nottingham 1775 (#451). For similar conceptualisations and discourses in petitions to parliament and members of parliament, see Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126); Northamptonshire 1771 (#333); London & Westminster 1774 (#363). For similar uses of the verb *rely*, see Bristol 1756 (#211); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); Westminster 1770 (#326); Lancaster 1775 (#403); Halifax 1775 (#404); Exeter 1775 (#417); Shrewsbury 1775 (#422); Taunton 1775 (#436).

⁸⁵¹ Kent 1721 (#008), see also London 1721 (#002); St Albans 1721 (#006); Somerset 1721 (#007); Kent 1721 (#008); Maidstone 1721 (#009); Southwark 1721 (#017); Colchester 1721 (#019); East Retford 1721 (#021); St Albans 1721 (#023); Wareham 1733 (#029); Devon 1740 (#089); Edinburghshire 1742 (#150); Leominster 1743 (#163); Warwickshire 1753 (#170); Devon 1756 (#180); York 1756 (#207); Yorkshire 1769 (#287). For similar uses of *depend*, see Kent 1721 (#008) and Newcastle-under-Lyme 1721 (#022).

the pattern might be procedural. An established set of procedures, as demonstrated in Chapter 2.1 (Introduction to Petitions)⁸⁵², regulated and influenced the form and function of petitions addressed to parliament - something that differed them from petitions, or instructions, submitted to individual representatives. In addition to the procedural incentives, the distinctive use of the verb could also stem from the nature of parliament. It could be argued that petitioners, as constituents, ought to direct or at least influence their representatives' conduct in the House of Commons, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.4. However, to impose similar claims on the institution of the House of Commons, or that of the Lords, differed from endeavours to influence the conduct of individual representatives. Such efforts could be interpreted as attempts to command the House and, thus, the representative choices of other constituencies. The peculiar character of the verb also influenced its uses. The verb became often used to persuade the House of Commons to accept certain premises⁸⁵³ and 'important matters into their most serious consideration'⁸⁵⁴. Others used it to be heard⁸⁵⁵; endeavouring to provide the House further evidence on the adverse consequences of proposed bills and schemes and offer testimonies on their grievances in general. In both cases, petitioners recognised parliament as an institution that could not be commanded.

Besides encouraging parliament to consider their concerns and grievances, petitioners also used the verb to demonstrate their confidence in the competence and compassion of parliament. In such cases petitioners prayed the House of Commons to 'provide such remedies' as it judged most advantageous to 'the real and permanent interest' of the nation⁸⁵⁶ and, as in the case of petitioners complaining of the high prices of corn and other necessities in 1768, provide 'such effectual remedies for the distresses of the labouring and industrious poor' as the House considered most favourable to the 'real and lasting interest both of the farmer and consumer'⁸⁵⁷. The most pronounced demonstrations of such discourses occurred in the South Sea petitions. During the crisis, which generated 25 humble but urgent petitions in 1721, petitioners prayed the House of Commons to be 'pleased to take such further measures' the enlightened deliberation of the House 'judge[d] proper'⁸⁵⁸. The petitioners from Hertfordshire, a county

⁸⁵² For critics' use of procedural arguments, see Chapter 6.4 (Procedural Constraints on Petitioning).

⁸⁵³ London 1742 (#155), London & Middlesex 1768 (#262); Norwich 1768 (#337); EIC 1773 (#355); Wiltshire 1775 (#389).

⁸⁵⁴ London 1767 (#256), see also Nottingham 1721 (#011); Norwich 1768 (#261); London & Westminster 1774 (#362); Planters & Merchants 1775 (#386).

⁸⁵⁵ See, for instance, London 1742 (#155); London 1763 (#242); EIC 1773 (#357); Edinburgh 1774 (#361); London & Westminster 1774 (#363); Planters & Merchants 1775 (#387).

⁸⁵⁶ London 1767 (#256), see also Norwich 1768 (#260); Norwich 1771 (#337); Merchants & Planters 1775 (#386).

⁸⁵⁷ Norwich 1768 (#261). For similar uses in addresses to the Throne, see, for instance, Merchants & Traders 1737 (#056); Merchants & Planters 1739 (#069); Annan 1775 (#429); Kirkcudbright 1775 (#432).

⁸⁵⁸ London 1721 (#002), see also Somerset 1721 (#007); Nottingham 1721 (#011); Tamworth 1721 (#013); Yorkshire 1721 (#018); Colchester 1721 (#019).

constituency represented by Thomas Saunders Sebright⁸⁵⁹ and Ralph Freman, both Tories⁸⁶⁰, on the other hand, 'most humbly pray[ed]' that 'no artifices' could 'divert [members of parliament] from those just measures' the House endeavoured to use to restore public credit, encourage trade, and 'do justice to a most injured' nation⁸⁶¹. The South Sea petitions, most of them addressed to the House of Commons, constitute the most humble cluster of petitions. This is, for the most part, a consequence of the peculiar circumstances of the crisis; parliament recognised the problem, embraced drastic measures (some of them rather controversial⁸⁶²), and intended to punish at least some of those actors petitioners regarded as responsible for the crash⁸⁶³.

The verb *hope* illustrates another distinctive form of humble verbs. Although humble, its uses distinguish it from the other verbs discussed in this sub-chapter. Some petitioners, of course, used it in rather generic ways; to promote bills and other measures⁸⁶⁴ and encourage the petitioned to hear and consider certain issues⁸⁶⁵. However, it could also be used to necessitate the petitioned. The corporation of Rochester, for instance, hoped that John Jennings and David Polhill⁸⁶⁶, their representatives in parliament, had 'the good of our country ... sincerely and solely at heart' when determining the fate of the proposed excise duties in 1733⁸⁶⁷. Rather than being humble in the traditional sense of the concept, *hope* was used in a rather obliging manner: to protect the nation, the representatives ought to oppose the scheme. The corporation of Boston, concerned by the loss of Minorca

⁸⁵⁹ Sebright had received stocks from the S.S.C. without paying for them in 1720. HoP/Thomas Saunders Sebright.

⁸⁶⁰ HoP/Hertfordshire 1715 - 1754; HoP/Ralph Freman; HoP/Thomas Saunders Sebright.

⁸⁶¹ Hertfordshire 1721 (#005), see also Buckinghamshire 1721 (#024).

⁸⁶² Walpole, for instance, persuaded the Bank of England and the East India Company to assume South Sea stocks worth of almost 20 million pounds to balance its value. O'Gorman 2006, 70; Black 2008, 238.

⁸⁶³ John Aislable, the chancellor of the Exchequer from 1718 to 1721, receiving 20,000 pounds of company stock without paying for it, was declared guilty of the 'most notorious, infamous, and dangerous corruption' by the House of Commons. He was, alongside James Craggs the younger, then the secretary of state, expelled from the House and imprisoned to the Tower. The government also confiscated property from Aislable, James Craggs the elder, the postmaster-general and the father of the secretary of state, and the company's directors to compensate the losses of the sufferers of the scheme. Walpole, however, sought, successfully, to limit the scope of reprisals. Some contribute this screening to corruption, others to his endeavour to protect the stability of the political establishment and the Hanoverian succession. O'Gorman 2006, 70; Kelly 1992, 66 - 68; Langford 1992, 21 - 22; Jubb 1984, 135; HoP/John Aislable; HoP/James Craggs; HoP/James Craggs.

⁸⁶⁴ See, for instance, Hertfordshire 1721 (#005), Haslemere 1721 (#016); Cornwall 1740 (#092); Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Ayrshire 1741 (#115); Westminster 1741 (#122); Minehead 1742 (#129); Dumfries 1742 (#138); Dorset 1756 (#281); Cheshire 1756 (#213); London 1756 (#216); Unknown 1756 (#220); Yorkshire & Nottinghamshire 1767 (#257); Montrose 1775 (#444); Aberdeen 1775 (#446).

⁸⁶⁵ See, for instance, Haslemere 1721 (#016), Proprietors 1721 (#025); London 1739 (#058); Middlesex 1769 (#302); EIC 1773 (#356); EIC 1774 (#367).

⁸⁶⁶ Both Jennings and Polhill voted for bringing in the tobacco bill in 1733. GM/November 1733.

⁸⁶⁷ Rochester 1733 (#031), see also Reading 1733 (#038) and Merionethshire 1743 (#162).

in 1756, represented the establishment of militia⁸⁶⁸ as the sole means by which Britons could 'hope to preserve freedom and independence to ourselves'⁸⁶⁹ - a rather uncompromising statement to be included in a petition addressed to the Throne. The corporation York, on the other hand, commended only one of their representatives, Godfrey Wentworth, a newly elected Tory opposing the administration, in 1741⁸⁷⁰, hoping that the other one, Edward Thompson, a Whig who, according to Romney R. Sedgwick, died 'ruined by his election expenditure' in 1742⁸⁷¹, would act in the future 'as to deserve the same' treatment from his constituents⁸⁷². The verb could also be used to express that representatives considered it proper 'to speak in parliament the language of [their] constituents', as the citizens of Bristol asserted in their petition in 1756⁸⁷³. Some of the applications of the verb remained more pronounced than others, but its uses demonstrate that even humble verbs could be used in urging, if not imperative, manners. It enabled the petitioners to influence the petitioned in less ostentatious and principled manners than those using explicitly imperative verbs.

The presence of humble verbs is most distinctive in the petitions addressed to the Throne. Around 80 per cent of the verbs used in petitions are humble, but the share is even higher in addresses to the Throne; addresses, constituting around 36 per cent (166 out of 464) of the studied petitions, contained only one

⁸⁶⁸ Despite the loss of the strategically important island of Minorca, numerous petitions in 1756 contained expressions of defiance. Instead of accepting the reliance on Hessian and Hanoverian troops, brought in to protect Britain from a French invasion, most of the petitioners in 1756 championed the establishment of a citizen militia. Promoted by William Pitt, the first of the many militia acts was passed in 1757. The act endeavoured to create a militia of 60,000 men. Its members were recruited through quotas and by a ballot among the able-bodied men between 18 and 50 years of age. Those chosen could avoid the three-year service by finding a substitute for them or by paying 10 pounds. The ideas of both foreign mercenaries and standing armies, indeed, remained unpopular throughout the eighteenth century. Some of the critics opposed such ideas on the basis of rather theoretical, even high-minded, postulates. Deeply rooted in the ideological landscape of the country opposition, mercenaries and standing forces were, among other reasons, opposed due to the potential danger of increasing Crown patronage and the perceived impact on the strength of the nation. The country opposition insisted, according to H.T. Dickinson, that 'a nation which hired mercenaries to defend its liberties and its interests was corrupting its own public spirit'. 'The spirit of patriotism, the virtù needed in a free state', Dickinson notes when describing the country ideology, 'could not survive when men forgot their primary duty of being prepared to fight and even to die for their liberty'. 'A nation which lost the willingness to defend itself', he concludes, 'had already surrendered its right to remain free'. However, mercenaries and standing armies could also be opposed on the basis of their cost, the perceived disloyalty of foreign troops, and their impact on the civilian population when stationed in Britain. Dickinson 1994, 171 - 172, 198 - 201; Dickinson 1977, 181 - 182, 186; Gunn 1983, 53 - 56; Langford 1992, 185 - 187; Gregory & Stevenson 2000, 209; Royle & Walvin 1982, 14; Skinner 1974, 125; Starkey 2013, 36 - 37; Spector 2015, 14 - 15, 34 - 49; Dull 2005, 59; O'Gorman 2006, 151, 181 - 182; Middleton 1985, 6, 9, 10.

⁸⁶⁹ Boston 1756 (#188).

⁸⁷⁰ HoP/Godfrey Wentworth; HoP/York 1715 - 1754.

⁸⁷¹ In 1742 Thompson complained to the Duke of Newcastle that he was being opposed by 'the power of the magistracy, the partiality of the returning officers, the fury of the mob, the papist influence, and the rage of faction'. HoP/Edward Thompson; HoP/York 1715 - 1754.

⁸⁷² York 1741 (#099).

⁸⁷³ Bristol 1756 (#208), see also Colchester 1733 (#046) and Reading 1752 (#175).

imperative verb⁸⁷⁴. Instead, petitioners preferred verbs such as *beseech*, *implore*, *hope*, and *pray*, as demonstrated in Figure 8 (Verbs in Petitions to the Throne, 1721 - 1776). Uses of certain humble verbs, such as *implore* (32 out of 34), *beseech* (18 out of 19), and *supplicate* (9 out of 9), de facto occurred only in addresses. In addition to the absence of imperative verbs, there are other patterns that differ addresses to the Throne from petitions to parliament and members of parliament. One is the absence of the most common verb in petitions in general - *recommend*. It demonstrates the settled but tense relationship of petitioners and the Throne; petitioners ought to be courteous and subservient to the Throne but also efficient in influencing its decisions. Even if humble, the use of *recommend* implied that petitioners could provide advices to the petitioned, something that contradicted the common discourse of petitioners' submission to the judgment of the Throne.

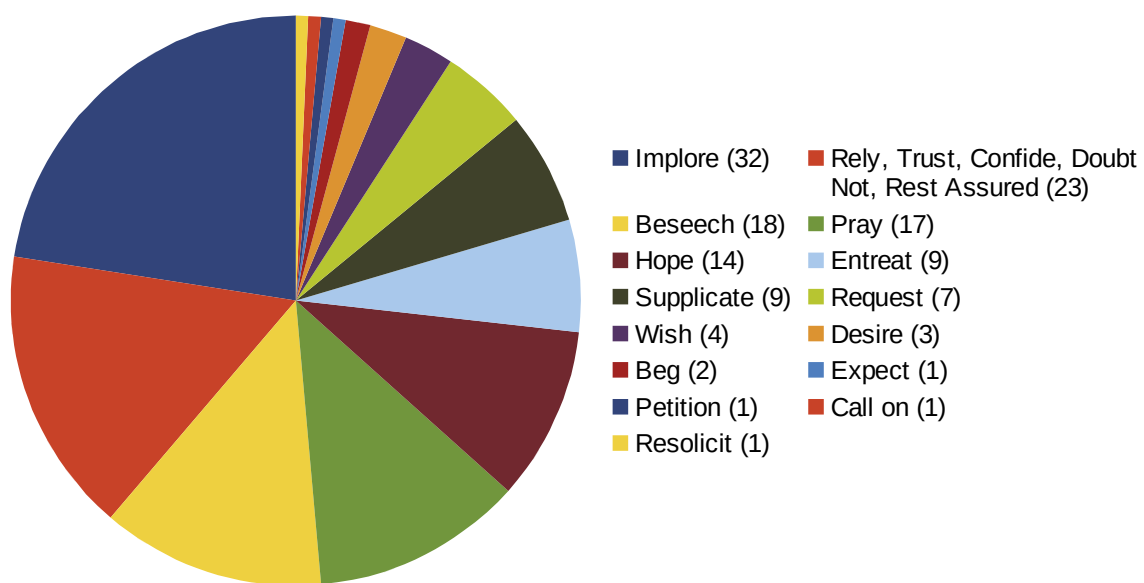


Figure 8 Verbs in Petitions to the Throne, 1721-1776.

In addition to the use of humble verbs, addresses to the Throne also contained other forms of discursive practices emphasising deference. Petitioners often described themselves as his 'Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects'⁸⁷⁵ and insisted that their intentions stemmed from 'an affectionate and dutiful regard for

⁸⁷⁴ Even in that case, petitioners used it in a non-imperative manner. Herefordshire 1770 (#330).

⁸⁷⁵ Cornwall 1753 (#177), see also Liverpool 1756 (#178); Norfolk 1756 (#201); Bristol 1756 (#210); Cheshire 1756 (#213); Southwark 1756 (#215); London 1756 (#218); Cornwall 1769 (#263); Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265); Gloucestershire 1769 (#268); Somerset 1769 (#269); Surrey 1769 (#271); Wiltshire 1769 (#274); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Bristol 1769 (#281); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Southwark 1769 (#288); Southwark 1769 (#289); Middlesex 1769 (#292); London 1769 (#294); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Worcester 1769 (#296); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); Essex 1769 (#298); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Castle Rising 1769 (#300); Canterbury 1769 (#303); Flint 1770 (#319); Coventry 1770 (#312); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon

[his] ... virtues¹⁸⁷⁶ and the 'firmest attachment to [his] Majesty's person' and the House of Hanover⁸⁷⁷. Petitioners also produced numerous references to his Majesty's 'august¹⁸⁷⁸ and 'sacred person¹⁸⁷⁹ and described him as 'the true father of [his] people¹⁸⁸⁰. They praised the King's 'paternal care¹⁸⁸¹, impartial justice¹⁸⁸², 'vigilance for the honour of the nation¹⁸⁸³, and 'innate goodness¹⁸⁸⁴. The mayor,

Tyne 1770 (#315); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Liverpool 1770 (#317); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Middlesex 1770 (#320); Middlesex 1770 (#321); Westminster 1770 (#326); Morpeth 1770 (#329); Herefordshire 1770 (#330); Durham 1770 (#332); London 1771 (#335); London 1771 (#336); London 1772 (#344); London 1773 (#350); London 1773 (#354); London 1774 (#366); Bristol 1775 (#370); Bristol 1775 (#371); London 1775 (#374); London 1775 (#375); London 1775 (#376); London 1775 (#377); London 1775 (#378); London 1775 (#379); Manchester 1775 (#383); Poole 1775 (#391); Worcester 1775 (#392); Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393); Berkshire 1775 (#394); Middlesex 1775 (#395); Beverley 1775 (#397); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); Chester 1775 (#401); Lancaster 1775 (#403); Bolton 1775 (#405); Southampton 1775 (#406); Taunton 1775 (#407); Southwark 1775 (#408); Southwark 1775 (#409); London 1775 (#410); Liverpool 1775 (#412); Liverpool 1775 (#413); Hampshire 1776 (#458); Carlisle 1776 (#460); Cumberland 1776 (#461); Sanquhar 1776 (#463); Westmorland 1776 (#464).

876 Manchester 1775 (#390).

877 Middlesex 1770 (#320), see also Coventry 1775 (#415); Shrewsbury 1775 (#422); Dumfriesshire 1775 (#433).

878 London 1773 (#354), see also Canterbury 1769 (#303).

879 York 1756 (#207), see also Merionethshire 1743 (#164); Cornwall 1753 (#177); Liverpool 1756 (#178); Lincolnshire 1756 (#189); Somerset 1756 (#199); Norfolk 1756 (#201); York 1756 (#207); Bristol 1756 (#209); Bristol 1756 (#210); Chester 1756 (#212); Cheshire 1756 (#213); Southwark 1756 (#215); London 1756 (#216); London 1756 (#218); London 1756 (#219); Unknown 1756 (#220); Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265); Surrey 1769 (#271); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Canterbury 1769 (#303); Liverpool 1769 (#309); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Middlesex 1770 (#321); London 1770 (#323); Morpeth 1770 (#329); Durham 1770 (#332); Poole 1775 (#416); Hampshire 1775 (#420); Stirling 1775 (#423); Lichfield 1775 (#424); Barnstaple 1775 (#441); Carmarthen 1775 (#443); Cumberland 1776 (#461); Lymington 1776 (#462); Sanquhar 1776 (#463).

880 Exeter 1756 (#190), see also Ipswich 1756 (#185); Maidstone 1756 (#191); Nottingham 1756 (#203); Cheshire 1756 (#213); Cornwall 1769 (#263); Kent 1769 (#267); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Flint 1770 (#310); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#324); London 1771 (#335); London 1772 (#344); London 1775 (#377); Poole 1775 (#391); Hampshire 1776 (#458). The use of such characterisations function as demonstrations of the representative character of the King. Although unelected, the King was commonly seen as symbolising and thus representing the nation, as noted as noted in Chapter 1.4.1 (Petitions). In addition to representing the nation, the King was also widely seen as a representative of the House of Hanover, the Protestant faith, and the post-1688 establishment in general.

881 London 1739 (#058), see also New Sarum 1756 (#187); Lincolnshire 1756 (#198); Somerset 1756 (#199); Bristol 1756 (#209); Bristol 1756 (#210); Bristol 1756 (#211); Cheshire 1756 (#213); London 1756 (#218); Unknown 1756 (#220); London 1763 (#232); Cornwall 1769 (#263); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Southwark 1769 (#289); Middlesex 1769 (#292); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); Castle Rising 1769 (#300); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Oxford 1769 (#307); Middlesex 1770 (#321); London 1770 (#323); Morpeth 1770 (#329); London 1775 (#377); London 1775 (#379); Berkshire 1775 (#394); Middlesex 1775 (#395); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); Poole 1775 (#416); Stirling 1775 (#423).

882 Somerset 1756 (#199), see also Exeter 1775 (#417).

883 Lincolnshire 1756 (#189), see also Exeter 1756 (#190); Bristol 1756 (#211); Poole 1775 (#416). See also London 1756 (#218).

884 Castle Rising 1769 (#300), see also London 1739 (#058); Boston 1756 (#188); Bristol 1756 (#210); Cheshire 1756 (#213); London 1763 (#232); Gloucestershire 1769 (#268); Surrey 1769 (#271); Southwark 1769 (#288); Worcester 1769 (#296); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Coventry 1770 (#312); London 1770

aldermen, and burgesses of Castle Rising, a pocket borough controlled by the Walpoles and Howards⁸⁸⁵, even described 'the people of Great Britain' as his Majesty's 'children'⁸⁸⁶. During times of hostilities, some petitioners, like the corporation of Liverpool in 1756, emphasised their eagerness to 'protect and defend [his] sacred life, support and maintain [his] undoubted right to these realms, and the protestant succession' at 'the hazard of our lives and fortunes'⁸⁸⁷. Such a discourse became common during the Minorca crisis in 1756 and after the escalation of the crisis in the American colonies in 1775. For most parts of the period from 1721 to 1776, discourses emphasising deference united addresses to the Throne, regardless of petitioners' political leaning and the precise function of the address. In 1775, however, declarations of allegiance to the King started to gain partisan functions; proponents of the coercive measures on the colonies, for instance, started to use their affection for George III to defend his government's use of force.

Petitions to the Throne also contained other sorts of distinctive patterns. First, petitioners used the *beg leave* to structure to stress their deference and the humbleness of the petitioners' intentions. They could, for instance, beg leave 'to approach [his] sacred person'⁸⁸⁸, like the stannators of Cornwall in 1753, and address the Throne 'on the present critical situation of affairs'⁸⁸⁹, a reference to the

(#323); Herefordshire 1770 (#330); Poole 1775 (#391); Berkshire 1775 (#394); Bolton 1775 (#405); Warwick 1775 (#414); Plymouth 1775 (#428); Great Yarmouth 1775 (#450); Kingston upon Hull 1775 (#453); Lymington 1776 (#462).

⁸⁸⁵ HoP/Castle Rising 1754 - 1790.

⁸⁸⁶ Castle Rising 1769 (#300).

⁸⁸⁷ Liverpool 1756 (#178), see also Merionethshire 1743 (#164); Boston 1756 (#188); Lincolnshire 1756 (#189); Norfolk 1756 (#201); Bristol 1756 (#209); Bristol 1756 (#210); Canterbury 1769 (#303); Liverpool 1770 (#317); Kingston upon Hull 1775 (#455).

⁸⁸⁸ Cornwall 1753 (#177), see also Liverpool 1756 (#178); Devon 1756 (#180); Boston 1756 (#188); Lincolnshire 1756 (#189); Bristol 1756 (#211); Chester 1756 (#212); London 1756 (#218); Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265); Kent 1769 (#267); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Southwark 1769 (#288); Essex 1769 (#298); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Castle Rising 1769 (#300); Cambridge 1769 (#306); Coventry 1770 (#312); Derbyshire 1769 (#313); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); London 1775 (#371); London 1775 (#379); Quakers 1775 (#380); Manchester 1775 (#383); Poole 1775 (#391); Newcastle upon Tyne 1775 (#393); Southampton 1775 (#406); Southwark 1775 (#408); Southwark 1775 (#409); London 1775 (#410); Liverpool 1775 (#412); Liverpool 1775 (#413); Exeter 1775 (#417); Andover 1775 (#419); Hampshire 1775 (#420); Stirling 1775 (#423); Plymouth 1775 (#428); Renfrew 1775 (#431); Dumfriesshire 1775 (#433); Dumfries 1775 (#434); Taunton 1775 (#436); Bridge-water 1775 (#440); Barnstaple 1775 (#407_216), Aberdeen 1775 (#407_221), Great Yarmouth 1775 (#407_224), Great Yarmouth 1775 (#441); Lymington 1776 (#462). In some cases petitioners even begged to voice their eagerness to 'throw ourselves at your royal feet'. Middlesex 1769 (#292), see also Bristol 1769 (#281); York 1769 (#286); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); London 1775 (#374).

⁸⁸⁹ Somerset 1756 (#199), see also Norfolk 1756 (#201); York 1756 (#207); Bristol 1756 (#209); Bristol 1756 (#210); Cheshire 1756 (#213); Southwark 1756 (#215); EIC (#243); Berwick-upon-Tweed 1769 (#278); Edinburgh 1769 (#280); Bristol 1769 (#281); Westminster 1769 (#284); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Middlesex 1769 (#292); London 1769 (#294); Liverpool 1769 (#309); Coventry 1770 (#312); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#323); Westminster 1770 (#325); Westminster 1770 (#326); Morpeth 1770 (#329); London 1771 (#335); Bristol 1775 (#370); London 1775 (#374); London 1775 (#376); London 1775 (#377); London 1775 (#378); Manchester 1775 (#383); Manchester 1775 (#390); Beverley 1775 (#397); Staffordshire 1775 (#398); Lancaster

loss of Minorca in 1756. In such cases, petitioners used the structure to inform the Throne - one of the most common, and most humble, functions of petitioning⁸⁹⁰. Second, petitioners also used the *permit us* structure to address the Throne, largely in a similar way to their use of the *beg leave* (and further distinguishing addresses from petitions to members of parliament). During the Minorca crisis of 1756, for instance, petitioners used the structure to beg the King to permit them to voice their 'utmost concern and resentment' of the deplorable situation⁸⁹¹ and to propose the establishment of a militia to protect their island nation⁸⁹². In 1769 - 1770, it became used in more pressing ways, as did addresses to the King in general. Petitioners begged the King to permit them to assert that the House of Commons could not consist of representatives 'but of the people's electing'⁸⁹³, thus declaring their distrust of the parliament. In order to 'restore the confidence of [his] people in the justice of parliament'⁸⁹⁴ and to preserve 'the constitutional rights of [his] people sacred and inviolable'⁸⁹⁵, petitioners begged the King to permit them to implore him to use his prerogative to dissolve the parliament⁸⁹⁶. However, in both cases, most uses of the structures remained humble, as did most addresses to the Throne.

Petitioners' pronounced use of courteous discourses and conceptualisations is something that distinguishes addresses to the Throne from petitions to representatives in parliament. The reason for this is, I argue, threefold. First, the position of the King differed from the position of members of parliament, as earlier argued. Petitioners could characterise representation as a reciprocal process; even though independent *de jure*, representatives gained their seats in parliament from their constituents. However, petitioners could not anticipate similar reciprocation from the Throne. Second, addresses to the Throne represent one of the oldest and most established forms of petitioning and, therefore, contained more rituals and conventions than the informal petitions to members of parliament. Third, members of parliament could be replaced. Petitioners could

1775 (#403); Southampton 1775 (#406); Leicester 1775 (#418); Colchester 1775 (#427); Abingdon 1775 (#437); Dundee 1775 (#438); Kingston upon Hull 1775 (#455); London 1776 (#457); Whitehaven 1776 (#459); Carlisle 1776 (#460); Sanquhar 1776 (#463).

⁸⁹⁰ As demonstrated in Chapter 2.4 (Rationalising Petitioning).

⁸⁹¹ Boston 1756 (#188), see also Lincolnshire 1756 (#189) and Southwark 1756 (#215).

⁸⁹² Cheshire 1756 (#213); London 1756 (#218).

⁸⁹³ Exeter 1769 (#275). The mayor, freemen, freeholders, and inhabitants Exeter used their petition to defend John Wilkes and the freeholders of Middlesex. 'This right of election', the petitioners argued, 'is inherent in your Majesty's subjects; a right which they cannot forfeit: it is of the essence of government, and prior to every delegated authority whatsoever; to counteract it therefore is highly injurious to the subject, it is repugnant to the true honour of the crown, for it tends to confusion, it threatens the very being of the British constitution.'

⁸⁹⁴ Yorkshire 1742 (#318).

⁸⁹⁵ Berwick-upon-Tweed 1769 (#278).

⁸⁹⁶ Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Essex 1769 (#298); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316). For later uses of the structure, see London 1775 (#374); London 1775 (#379); Worcester 1775 (#392); Great Yarmouth 1775 (#402); Southwark 1775 (#408); Warwick 1775 (#414); Poole 1775 (#416); Lichfield 1775 (#424); Plymouth 1775 (#428); Taunton 1775 (#435); Bridgewater 1775 (#440); Nottingham 1775 (#452); Kingston upon Hull 1775 (#453).

threaten to resist the re-election of disobedient representatives, a credible prospect in certain boroughs and counties, and use other legitimate forms of intimidation to prevent members of parliament from representing them. The King, on the other hand, could not be replaced, nor could his right to rule be legitimately criticised in a legitimate manner. Due to the threats and challenges the House of Hanover encountered⁸⁹⁷, including the Jacobite uprisings and profuse riots⁸⁹⁸, petitioners refrained from using discourses and conceptualisations that could be interpreted as seditious, in particular during the rules of George I and George II⁸⁹⁹. However, the pronounced deference did not mean that petitioners abstained from attempts to influence the decisions of the Throne, at times causing tensions, as further demonstrated in Chapter 5.5.

Besides the use of verbs of pronounced humbleness, petitioners also used verbs that refrained from challenging the free mandate of representation, but, in contrast to verbs such as *beg* and *beseech*, also abstained from asserting constituents' dependence on representatives' judgment. *Request* is one of such verbs. Older dictionaries tended to describe *request* in humble terms, defining a request as a 'supplication, petition' and comparing the verb to entreating and desiring⁹⁰⁰. Most of Samuel Johnson's definitions, too, characterised request as something humble; to request meaning, for instance, was 'to sollicite' and 'to entreat'. However, Johnson also noted that the noun could be defined a 'demand'.⁹⁰¹ The contradictory nature of the verb is also evident in the petitions. Most petitioners, of course, used it humbly. The people of Ripon, as the petitioners described themselves in 1733, requested William Aislabie⁹⁰², one of their representatives in parliament, to 'be pleased to use [his] utmost interest' in resisting the proposed excise

⁸⁹⁷ Especially after the accession of George I, a German-speaking Lutheran. H.T. Dickinson, for instance, has argued that 'neither George I nor George II was widely popular with the people at large', being 'too foreign, too attached to Hanover, too aloof, and too much associated with partisan Whigs to be personally attractive to their ordinary subjects.' Dickinson 217 - 220, 259 - 260.

⁸⁹⁸ After James II fled England in 1688, replaced by his Protestant daughter, Mary, and William of Orange on the throne, the Stuart restoration became championed by the Jacobites. After his death in 1701, the Stuart claim to the throne was inherited by his son, James Francis Edward Stuart, or the Old Pretender. The Jacobites attempted to restore the Stuarts to the throne by force in 1715, 1719 (supported by Spain), and 1745 - 1746 (supported by France). Plans to restore the Stuart monarchy also occurred in 1708, 1717 (by the support from Sweden), 1722 (Atterbury Plot), and 1744. In 1745 - 1746, the Stuart cause was championed by the Old Pretender's son, Bonnie Prince Charlie, or the Young Pretender. After the failure in 1745 - 1746, the Jacobite cause started to wither, eventually losing the vital support from France during the 1750s. Wilson 1998, 93 - 117, 165 - 177, 319 - 322, 333 - 336; Ihalainen 2005, 182 - 186, 305 - 308, 313 - 319; O'Gorman 2006, 152 - 158; Dickinson 1994, 260.

⁸⁹⁹ During the early Hanoverian period, the Whigs were, indeed, eager to portray the Tories as Jacobites. Dickinson 1984, 45; Dickinson 1977, 166 - 168.

⁹⁰⁰ Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735.

⁹⁰¹ Johnson 1768.

⁹⁰² During most of his 60 year tenure as a member of parliament for Ripon, Aislabie voted against the administration. He opposed the Walpole administration on each

duties and to communicate their request to his 'cousin Aislable'⁹⁰³, the other representative of the borough, and the rest of his friends in a manner he considered most proper⁹⁰⁴. Petitioners could also request their representatives to continue to give 'attention to this important subject', like the corporation of Plympton Erle, opposing the excises on cider and perry in 1763⁹⁰⁵, and continue to 'preserve our ancient constitution, both in church and state'⁹⁰⁶. A request to preserve the constitution could, of course, function as an implicit demand as it contained an assumption that petitioners and representatives shared a common interpretation of the true nature of that constitution. However, in this case, and in copious other cases, it remained a rather innocent request.

Most petitioners used *request* to ask for representatives to either support or resist specific acts, bills, and other measures. In such cases, they requested representatives to oppose proposed duties⁹⁰⁷, support bills restoring triennial parliaments⁹⁰⁸, establish a militia to defend the nation from a French invasion⁹⁰⁹, to restrict the number and influence of places and pensions⁹¹⁰, and to regulate certain branches of trade⁹¹¹. It could also be used to promote more controversial measures, such as requesting the Throne to dissolve the parliament⁹¹². In certain cases, they used it in manners that could be interpreted as obligations on the petitioned. Petitioners from Leominster, for instance, requested their representatives, and their pro-administration representative in particular⁹¹³, to join 'the true patriots [in parliament], and endeavour to procure' such measures 'as shall be

recorded division. Some of his resentment against Walpole might be explained by the fate of his father, John Aislable, a representative for Ripon from 1695 to 1702 and 1705 to 1721. As the chancellor of the Exchequer in 1718 - 1721, John Aislable was responsible for negotiating and introducing the South Sea Bill in 1720, providing the S.S.C. with public funding for assuming national debt on behalf of the government. After the parliamentary committee inquiring the causes of the South Sea Crisis accused Aislable of speculation and receiving bribes from the S.S.C., the House of Commons expelled him from parliament; imprisoning him to the Tower, seizing his possessions acquired during his tenure as the Chancellor, and barring him from sitting in parliament and holding public office. Although offering some assistance, Walpole's administration did little to protect Aislable's conduct and reputation. HoP/William Aislable; HoP/John Aislable; Kelly 1992, 67 - 68.

- ⁹⁰³ William Aislable's namesake cousin served as the other representative for Ripon from 1721 to 1734. According to A.N. Newman, 'he does not appear in any recorded division list, seems to have made no speeches, and did not stand again'. HoP/William Aislable.
- ⁹⁰⁴ Ripon 1733 (#034). It could also be used to request the 'most gracious Sovereign' to receive petitions and plead for his 'most gracious acceptance' of their assertions of 'affection and attachment' to his person, House, and government. Bolton 1775 (#405); Annan 1775 (#429); Kirkcudbright 1775 (#432).
- ⁹⁰⁵ Plympton Erle 1753 (#238).
- ⁹⁰⁶ Wiltshire 1753 (#173).
- ⁹⁰⁷ Coventry 1733 (#036); Reading 1733 (#038).
- ⁹⁰⁸ Rochester 1733 (#048); Coventry 1734 (#050).
- ⁹⁰⁹ Essex 1756 (#179).
- ⁹¹⁰ Denbighshire 1741 (#096); Coventry 1741 (#108); Canterbury 1769 (#270).
- ⁹¹¹ Honiton 1742 (#139); Canterbury 1769 (#270).
- ⁹¹² Southwark 1769 (#288); Essex 1769 (#298); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Canterbury 1769 (#303).
- ⁹¹³ Petitioners commended Robert Harley, an opposition-minded Tory. They hoped that Capel Hanbury, a pro-administration representative, would imitate Harley's example in parliament. HoP/Robert Harley; HoP/Capel Hanbury.

most conducive to the happiness and prosperity of this nation' in 1743. As the encouragement to support the constitution, the request to join patriots⁹¹⁴ in parliament functioned as a discursive attempt to oblige representatives to support bills and measures the petitioners (and, at least in this case, the opposition in parliament) considered necessities. In order to further pressure their pro-administration representative, the petitioners emphasised the conduct of their opposition-minded representative.

However, it is *recommend* that represents the most notable form of such verbs, being also the most common single verb used in petitions (89 uses). As in the case of *request*, its users did not challenge representatives' mandate and recognised that representatives and parliament possessed, at least in principle, a right to independent deliberation. Some of the petitioners' recommendations remained rather abstract, recommending that representatives 'support his Majesty's government'⁹¹⁵ and preserve 'our rights and privileges, and the freedom of the constitution'⁹¹⁶. In most cases, however, petitioners used it to propose or oppose rather specific measures⁹¹⁷. In this sense, uses of *recommend* resembled the uses of *request*. It was, in particular, used to advise the petitioned to further different sorts of enquiries. In the 1740s petitioners that recommended their representatives 'persist in proper enquiries into national grievances'⁹¹⁸, in order to punish Walpole and his supporters, and after the French invaded Minorca in 1756, petitioners recommended that representatives and the Throne 'discover the authors of these our misfortunes'⁹¹⁹ and punish them⁹²⁰. In most cases, the verb functioned as genuine recommendations, petitioners using to propose measures to members of parliament and the House of Commons. Though containing an idea of reciprocation of some sort, its uses and meanings remained, for the most part, humble.

⁹¹⁴ The concept could refer to both the public-spirited benefactors promoting the true interest of Britain, as most dictionaryists tended to characterise the concept of *patriot*, and to the parliamentary opposition against Walpole, consisting of Tories and Patriot Whigs and commonly referred to as the Patriot Opposition.

⁹¹⁵ Nottingham 1742 (#133).

⁹¹⁶ Renfrewshire 1741 (#098), see also Edinburghshire 1734 (#052); Sutherland 1740 (#076); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Breconshire 1756 (#184).

⁹¹⁷ See, for instance, Canterbury 1733 (#044); London 1733 (#045); New Sarum 1739 (#059); Middlesex 1740 (#071); Liskeard 1740 (#078); Flintshire 1740 (#080); Derbyshire 1740 (#088); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Lichfield 1741 (#107); Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); London 1741 (#124); Reading 1742 (#125); Stirling 1742 (#134); Westminster 1742 (#156); Hereford 1742 (#160); Devon 1756 (#180); Lincolnshire 1756 (#204); Lincolnshire 1756 (#205); London 1763 (#233); Southwark 1769 (#290); Rochester 1772 (#341).

⁹¹⁸ Herefordshire 1741 (#106), see also Bristol 1741 (#100); Bath 1741 (#102); Edinburgh 1741 (#103); Aberdeen 1741 (#113); Lanarkshire 1741 (#118); Monmouth 1741 (#119); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); London 1741 (#123); Reading 1742 (#125); Westminster 1742 (#156); Worcestershire 1742 (#161).

⁹¹⁹ New Sarum 1756 (#187), see also Lancashire 1756 (#192); Salop 1756 (#196); Yorkshire 1756 (#206); Southwark 1756 (#214).

⁹²⁰ A thinly veiled reference to admiral Byng, as noted in Chapter 3.4 (Champions of the People).

In addition to presenting proposals to the petitioned, *recommend* could be used to put pressure on representatives. Petitioners could, for instance, use *recommend* alongside imperative verbs to emphasise the seriousness of their recommendations. Petitioners could recommend that representatives contact them 'from time to time' and inform them of matters 'intended to be brought' to parliament; regular correspondence, the petitioners claimed, enabled constituents to inform representatives of their sentiments and 'of such facts' the petitioned might have ignored⁹²¹. In order to preserve the constitution, the justices of the peace and freeholders of Edinburghshire, convened at the court of quarter sessions on 29 October 1734, recommended that Robert Dundas⁹²², their sole representative in parliament, concur in promoting bills to secure the independence of parliament and the right of election. These petitioners also recommended that Dundas to act in a fashion 'agreeable to the sentiments of those' who 'have chosen [him] as their mouth in parliament'⁹²³ - an undeniable requirement of reciprocity. The independent freemen of Coventry, eager to 'restore our constitution, and retrieve the honour of Great Britain', on the other hand, recommended, 'in the most pressing manner', the London instructions, described as 'dictates', for their representatives' 'strict observation'⁹²⁴. Though refraining from challenging the principle of free mandate as such, the justices of the peace, freeholders, and freemen of the said constituencies appeared to regard representatives, or at least their representatives, as constituents' advocates in parliament.

Most petitioners used, at least in the formal sense, humble verbs to influence the petitioned. Though humble, however, each of the verbs possessed different nuances and connotations. Some of the verbs demonstrate a more pronounced form of humbleness than others. In cases of pronounced humbleness, petitioners used verbs such as beg, hope, desire, implore, and beseech to emphasise their

⁹²¹ Edinburghshire 1734 (#052), see also Sutherland 1740 (#076).

⁹²² As the representative for Edinburghshire (1722 - 1737), Dundas tended to oppose proposed duties. In 1725 - 1727, he opposed the introduction of the English malt tax into Scotland, defending the Glasgow magistrates accused of inciting rioting, encouraging the Edinburgh brewers to resist the duty, and blaming the government for the violence. He opposed, according to Romney S. Sedgwick, 'a loyal address of the court of session [in 1727], proposing a counter-address against the malt tax'. Dundas opposed the re-introduction of the salt duty in 1732 and supported the 'motion designed to secure the outright rejection of the excise bill, instead of allowing it to be withdrawn' in 1733. HoP/Robert Dundas.

⁹²³ Edinburghshire 1734 (#052).

⁹²⁴ Coventry 1742 (#159), see also Plymouth 1763 (#239). The freeholders of Renfrewshire, a county constituency with a modest electorate of around 40 voters, 'recommended, and expressly require[d]' their representative, Alexander Cuninghame, an Opposition Whig, to use obstructionist methods in parliament until the House of Commons agreed to restrict the number and influence of places and pensions. Renfrewshire 1739 (#061); HoP/Renfrewshire 1715 - 1754. According to Paula Watson, Cuninghame 'voted consistently against the administration till his death' in 1742. HoP/Alexander Cuninghame. The high sheriff, grand jury, gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of Derbyshire, assembled at the assizes on 2 August 1740, used their petition to recommend, 'and insist upon it', that Lord Charles Cavendish and Nathaniel Curzon, their representatives in parliament, would use their 'utmost endeavours in the ensuing parliament, to promote a bill' to reduce the number of places. Derbyshire 1740 (#088). At least Cavendish voted against the government on the place bill. HoP/Lord Charles Cavendish.

concerns. Uses of such verbs illustrate the most emblematic form of petitioning: humble and recognising the independence of the petitioned. However, humble verbs could also be humble in less pronounced manners, as argued in the second section of this sub-chapter. *Request* and *recommend* are the most obvious illustrations of such verbs, constituting around 25 per cent of the uses of humble verbs. Although humble, uses of *request* and *recommend* demonstrate a different, less submissive form of humbleness. Uses of *recommend* in particular emphasised the petitioners' participative role in the spheres of high politics. Nonetheless, in both cases, the process remained rather unambiguous: petitioners petitioned, and the petitioned acted (if the petitioned considered petitioners' requests desirable). However, the use of humble verbs does not mean that petitioners abstained from using other practices to pressure the petitioned, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.4 and, indeed, in Chapters 3 (Representing the Sense of the People: Petitioners Uses of Representative Claims) and 4 (Public Interest and Private Influence: Ideals and Counter-Ideals of Representation and Participation).

5.3 Enjoiners and Requirers

Though most of the verbs used in petitions elucidate the formal humbleness that tended to define the genre, petitioners could also use more imperative verbs to influence the conduct of the petitioned. Petitions containing such verbs, constituting around 20 per cent of the verbs in total, tended to attract the most criticism from the petitioners' opponents, as demonstrated in Chapter 6.4 (Procedural Constraints on Petitioning). Although a much smaller group of verbs (121 out of 619), uses of imperative verbs also formed distinct patterns. First, petitioners preferred to use imperative verbs in petitions submitted to members of parliament. Those addressed to the House of Commons and the Throne, on the other hand, contained only one reference to imperative verbs. Petitioners could argue that representatives ought to be dependent on constituents' sentiments and thus regard themselves as entitled to regulate their conduct in the House of Commons. However, to impose such principles on the Throne and the House of Commons constituted a far more contentious path, as earlier noted. Second, the uses of imperative verbs occurred in temporal clusters. The share of imperative verbs surpasses their average share (19.6 per cent) only in 1733, 1739 - 1742, 1761 (due to the modest size of the sample), 1766 (*idem*), and 1772 - 1773 (*idem*). Over half of them (75 references) occurred in petitions from 1739 to 1742, as demonstrated in Figure 9 (The Incidence and Share of Imperative Verbs, 1721 - 1776). The modest use of imperative verbs in 1756, 1769 - 1770, and 1775 - 1776 is mostly a consequence of the preponderance of addresses to the Throne, as demonstrated in Figure 1 (Incidence of Different Forms of Petitions, 1721 - 1776).

Imperative verbs can be further divided into categories of suggestive and commanding verbs. In the first case, petitioners could use suggestive but ambiguous verbs such as *instruct* and *direct*. To instruct could, as noted in Chapter 6.4

(Procedural Constraints on Petitioning), refer to both imperative and non-imperative discourses. It could be described as teaching, training, or bringing up⁹²⁵, all definitions emphasising the humble character of the verb, and as submitting instructions, a controversial concept in itself. However, it could also possess authoritative connotations. Samuel Johnson, for instance, suggested that the verb could be defined as 'to inform authoritatively'⁹²⁶. The ambiguous character of the concept is also conspicuous in the verb's uses in petitions from 1721 to 1776. Instead of being used to plead or provide information to the petitioned, as most of the humble verbs, *instruct* tended to function as a stronger encouragement to act on issues petitioners regarded as urgent. In most cases, petitioners used the verb to provide clear and specific instructions on pressing matters⁹²⁷. It is, nonetheless, rather difficult to determine the specific nature of such encouragements. Petitioners' uses of *instruct* could be commanding, though that element is far from obvious in many cases. However, if petitioners had endeavoured to emphasise their deference, they might have been better served by verbs such as *hope*, *desire*, and *recommend*.

⁹²⁵ Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735.

⁹²⁶ Johnson 1768. The *Craftsman*, too, suggested that instructing could be something less humble than providing information. In January 1733, the paper argued that 'it is the undoubted privilege of Englishmen to petition the parliament, and apply to and even instruct their representatives, when they apprehend their interests, or liberties are concern[e]d'. Although still ambiguous, the use of the word 'even' suggest that instructing could be, in one form or another, something imperative. GM January 1733/Cr 27 January (no. 343), see also GM December 1741/Cr 18 December 1742 (no. 860).

⁹²⁷ St Mawes 1740 (#077); Middlesex 1741 (#095); Dumfriesshire 1741 (#117); Herefordshire 1756 (#194); Leominster 1756 (#197); Southwark 1766 (#249); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277); Westminster 1769 (#283); Middlesex 1769 (#291); London 1769 (#293); Westminster 1770 (#327); Canterbury 1772 (#342); Bristol 1772 (#345); Canterbury 1773 (#353); London 1775 (#381); Middlesex 1775 (#396).

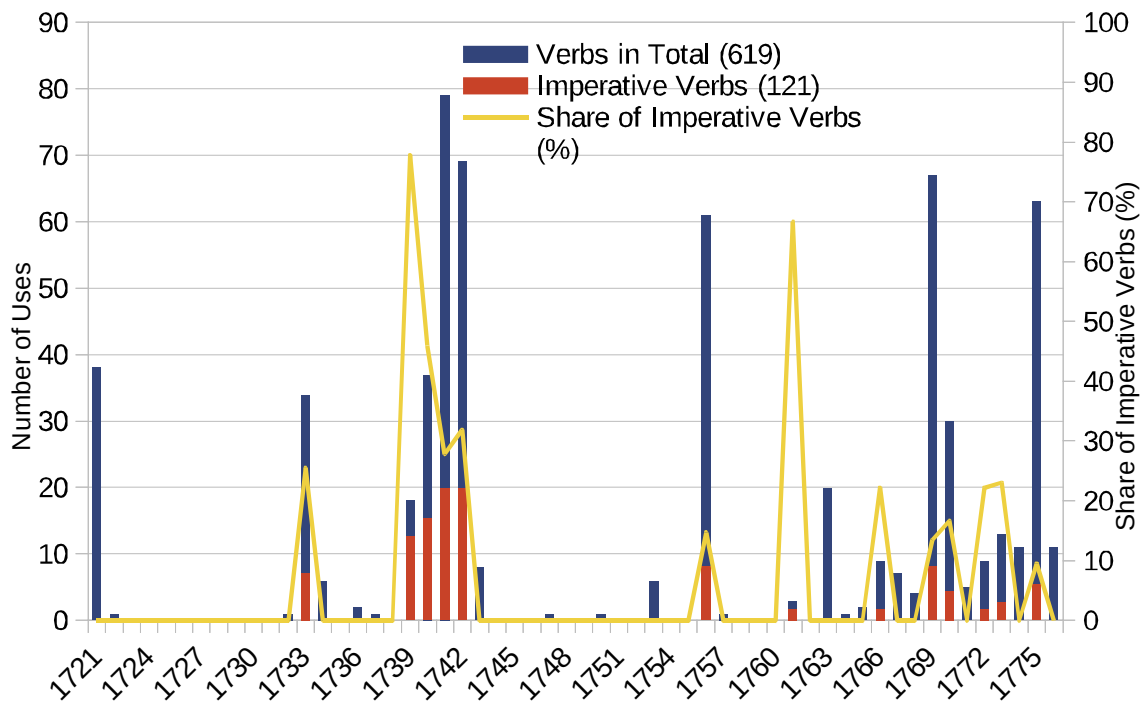


Figure 9 The Incidence and Share of Imperative Verbs, 1721–1776.

Expect is another borderline case. Although containing strong imperative connotations, it could also be used in non-commanding ways. It could, for instance, be used to demonstrate petitioners' confidence in representatives' future conduct, functioning as proof of petitioners' good faith in their representatives. The burgesses and inhabitants of Westminster, for instance, expected their representatives, Lord Viscount Perceval and Charles Edwin, to oppose schemes to protect the late administration from prosecution and defend their constituents from 'anticonstitutional servitude' in 1742. The petitioners further assured their representatives that the petition did not stem from 'the least distrust of [their representatives'] virtue and abilities'.⁹²⁸ In other cases, the non-imperativeness of the verb becomes evident only from the general tone of the petition. The petitioners praised their representatives' 'honest and disinterested conduct in parliament'⁹²⁹ and 'faithful discharge of that important trust ... that has been reposed in [them]'⁹³⁰ before claiming to expect them to continue their endeavours to promote desirable measures⁹³¹. It is evident that in such cases, petitioners abstained from commanding the petitioned. Instead of functioning as orders, petitioners used the verb to declare their confidence in the representatives' conduct. In most

⁹²⁸ Westminster 1742 (#157), see also Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Cheshire 1740 (#084); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); Reading 1742 (#125).

⁹²⁹ Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082), see also Cheshire 1740 (#084); York 1741 (#099); Chester 1741 (#110); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); London 1741 (#123); Reading 1742 (#125); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Westminster 1742 (#157).

⁹³⁰ Flintshire 1740 (#080).

⁹³¹ Flintshire 1740 (#080); Aberdeenshire 1740 (#082); Cheshire 1740 (#084); York 1741 (#099); Chester 1741 (#110); Tewkesbury 1741 (#120); London 1741 (#123); Reading 1742 (#125); Flintshire 1742 (#137); Edinburgh 1742 (#151); Westminster 1742 (#157).

of such cases petitioners based their reasoning on their representatives' earlier conduct in parliament.

Despite the sporadic gestures of deference, most uses of *expect* contain imperative connotations. The corporation of St Albans, a borough under the influence of the Duchess of Marlborough⁹³², a staunch opponent of Robert Walpole⁹³³, reminded William Grimston and John Merrill⁹³⁴ that the petitioners had chosen them 'to be [their] representative[s] in parliament ... the highest trust [constituents could] repose' in them; 'in return for so great a confidence', the petitioners expected them to resist the excise scheme in 1733. By acting against the proposed excise duties, the representatives would demonstrate their opposition to the 'entire subversion of our ancient constitution'⁹³⁵. Though presenting their claim in a positive light - opposing the proposed duties providing the representatives an opportunity to prove their love for the constitution - it could also be interpreted from a different perspective. Supporting the duties would, according to the logic of the corporation, signify representatives' willingness to sacrifice the constitution. The bailiffs and magistrates of Lichfield declared, much in the spirit of St Albans, that the 'nation cries aloud for justice, and is entitled to it', claiming that the loss of Minorca had dishonoured the 'British flag' in 1756. Hence, the petitioners expected their representatives to 'afford [their] utmost assistance in bringing in justice' those responsible for the disaster.⁹³⁶ The corporation of Colchester, on the other hand, claimed to 'hope, nay, ... expect' compliance from their representatives in opposing the proposed excise duties in 1733, thus recognising that humble verbs, such as hope, differed from imperative ones⁹³⁷. Such uses of the verb illustrate the imperative connotations of expecting. Instead of offering assurances of petitioners' good faith in the petitioned, petitioners used the verb to restrict their political latitude. They claimed to assume that the petitioned acted as anticipated, but, in fact, also endeavoured to increase the pressure on representatives to act as petitioned.

⁹³² HoP/St Albans 1715 - 1754; Langford 1975, 53 - 54.

⁹³³ Although initially allies, the Duchess and Walpole developed a bitter rivalry during the 1720s. She encouraged the opposition against the excise scheme in 1733 and actively opposed the administration in the general election of 1734, then continuing to oppose Walpole's influence even after his fall in 1742. According to the private correspondence, the Duchess noted in 1741 - 1742 that 'I find that those who can judge very well, think that Sir Robert cannot fail of being punished; and I wish it may go as far as he deserves, not out of any malice or revenge, but because I really think the constitution cannot be recovered, without some example being made. No government can be so bad as it has been.' Harris 1991, 236 - 238, 265 - 269, 297 - 300, 306 - 308, 316 - 319, 329 - 333; Colburn 1838, 212; Gerrard 1994, 93.

⁹³⁴ Merrill, recommended to the Duchess by William Pulteney, the leader of the Patriot Whigs and one of the founders of *the Craftsman*, voted against bringing in the tobacco bill, whereas Grimston, often at odds with the Duchess, voted in favour of the proposition. Due to Grimston's refusal to support one of the Duchess' grandsons at the by-election in 1730, the Duchess joined forces with the corporation to oust him at the general election in 1734. Merrill, on the other hand, did not stand in the election and died of gout in December 1734. HoP/John Merrill; HoP/William Grimston; HoP/St Albans 1715 - 1754; GM/November 1733.

⁹³⁵ St Albans 1733 (#035), see also Rye 1733 (#039); London 1741 (#124).

⁹³⁶ Lichfield 1756 (#186), see also Woodstock 1733 (#041).

⁹³⁷ Colchester 1733 (#046), see also Cupar 1739 (#063); Bridgewater 1739 (#065); London 1741 (#124).

Insist, on the other hand, belongs to the category of commanding verbs. In a similar manner as *expect* - used, among its other functions, to proclaim petitioners' confidence in the petitioned - *insist* also had a rather specific function: to emphasise the need for urgent action. Dictionarists defined the verb as 'to stand much upon, to urge, to be instant'⁹³⁸, 'not to recede from terms or assertions', and 'to persist in'⁹³⁹. The emphasis on urgency is also present in petitions. The principal inhabitants of Gloucester, concerned about the consequences of the excise scheme in 1733, claimed that 'the importance compels us to insist [our]' representatives, 'according to the trust reposed' in them, to use their 'utmost efforts in discouraging' attempts to put them 'under the bondage thereof'⁹⁴⁰. The burgesses and freeholders of Nottingham claimed, much in the same spirit, that their 'ancient rights and privileges are ... declining'. Hence, the petitioners 'insist[ed] upon [their representatives'] assistance' in promoting the opposition bill for limiting the scale and influence of placemen in 1739⁹⁴¹. The mayor, aldermen, and capital burgesses of Truro, on the other hand, insisted in 1740 that Kelland Courtenay and Robert Trefusis, both of them representing the Cornish constituency from 1734 to 1741⁹⁴², attended the ensuing session of parliament and used their 'utmost efforts' to restrict the number of placemen and shorten the duration of parliaments⁹⁴³. Both Courtenay and Trefusis voted in favour of the bill in 1740⁹⁴⁴. Petitioners tended to represent their grievances as given truths, assuming that the petitioned shared their postulates. Instead of persuading the petitioned that such grievances threatened the nation, petitioners insisted them to act upon their postulates.

Insist could also be used in more imperative manners. Petitioners could recommend, 'and insist upon it', that representatives use their 'utmost endeavours' to regulate places and pensions⁹⁴⁵ and to 'require and insist' that members of parliament to oppose bills and schemes that endangered the trade of the nation⁹⁴⁶. Others 'entreat[ed], insist[ed] and require[d]' that representatives obstruct the proceedings of parliament until the House of Commons agreed to further scrutinise the alleged crimes of the previous administration⁹⁴⁷. However, one of the most incisive demonstrations of imperative uses of *insist* occurred in the petition

⁹³⁸ Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735.

⁹³⁹ Johnson 1768.

⁹⁴⁰ Gloucester 1733 (#033). Benjamin Bathurst, representing Cirencester, Gloucester, and Monmouth during his parliamentary career spanning from 1713 to 1768, voted against bringing in the tobacco bill. Charles Selwyn, a loyal supporter of the administration during his tenure as a representative for Gloucester, was absent from the division. HoP/Benjamin Bathurst; HoP/Charles Selwyn; GM/November 1733.

⁹⁴¹ Nottingham 1739 (#064), see also Huntingdonshire 1740 (#072). The bill was, eventually, defeated by a margin of 16, as noted in Chapter 4.1 (Petitions and the Collective Interest).

⁹⁴² HoP/Truro 1715 - 1754.

⁹⁴³ Truro 1740 (#081).

⁹⁴⁴ HoP/Kelland Courtenay; HoP/Robert Trefusis.

⁹⁴⁵ Derbyshire 1740 (#088), see also London 1739 (#057); York 1739 (#066); Stamford 1740 (#094); Coventry 1741 (#108); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#132); Dorset 1742 (#147); Westminster 1769 (#283); London 1773 (#360).

⁹⁴⁶ London 1741 (#124), see also London 1739 (#057); Worcester 1742 (#143).

⁹⁴⁷ Worcester 1742 (#143).

from Lichfield in 1742. The constituents and citizens of Lichfield, concerned about the conspiracies to protect Walpole from prosecution, begged leave to remind their representatives, George Venables Vernon and Lister Holte, of their earlier instructions and to further insist that the representatives observed them. Furthermore, the petitioners praised the London instructions⁹⁴⁸, 'desir[ing] and insist[ing] upon' Venables Vernon and Holte to pursue the 'dictates' of the instructions from the 'grand metropolis'.⁹⁴⁹ Though the representatives of Lichfield, both of them Tories, supported the opposition⁹⁵⁰, there is little doubt of the imperative character of petitioners' use of the verb *insist*. The petition demonstrates that the use of imperative verbs cannot be reduced to opposition constituencies commanding pro-administration members of parliament. Many opposition-minded corporations and constituencies submitted petitions containing imperative verbs to representatives supporting the opposition in parliament.

Uses of verbs such as *require* and *enjoin*, on the other hand, represent the most imperative form of verbs in petitions. The first cluster of such verbs occurred in 1739 - 1742, as petitioners used them to urge their representatives to oppose the administration⁹⁵¹. During the turbulent period, petitioners started to require their representatives to promote opposition bills in more pressing manners. The corporate actors of Carmarthen, for instance, requested their representative, Arthur Bevan, a steadfast supporter of the administration⁹⁵², to 'enjoin and require' him to assist opposition representatives in parliament in 1739⁹⁵³. Petitioners from Cupar, part of the Perth Burghs, required John Drummond, another supporter of the government⁹⁵⁴, to observe their instructions on reducing

⁹⁴⁸ A probable reference to London 1742 (#153).

⁹⁴⁹ Lichfield 1742 (#144).

⁹⁵⁰ HoP/Lichfield 1715 - 1754; HoP/George Venables Vernon; HoP/Lister Holte.

⁹⁵¹ Opposition members of parliament, too, could use similar notions in parliament. During the debate on the Place Bill (1740), cherished by the Country Opposition and supported by numerous petitions, Lord Gage declared that 'I shall add but one reason more, why I shall be for this bill, and that is, because I am required so by my constituents, who, I think, have a right to direct those that represent them'. In order to increase the pressure on those representatives opposing the bill, Lord Gage further noted that 'I am not ashamed to own, that the instructions I have in my pocket, will weigh with me, and do not in the least doubt but that those gentlemen, who oppose this bill, will find the weight of theirs in their pockets'. Cobbett 1739 - 1741 (HoC) 380/Thomas Gage (Tewkesbury). Even if entirely possible that Lord Gage did, indeed, receive instructions from his constituents in Tewkesbury (as suggested by HoP), the said instructions are not among those studied in this thesis. The following year, however, the principal burgesses and freemen of Tewkesbury instructed Gage to support further measures to restrict the scale of places and pensions and repeal the Septennial Act. The instructions, also commending Gage for his conduct in parliament, was exclusively addressed to the opposition representative; containing no references to John Martin, the newly elected pro-administration representative. HoP/Tewkesbury 1715 - 1754; HoP/John Martin; Tewkesbury 1741 (#120).

⁹⁵² HoP/Arthur Bevan.

⁹⁵³ Carmarthen 1740 (#070), see also London 1739 (#057); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Bridgewater 1739 (#065); York 1739 (#066); York 1739 (#066); Middlesex 1740 (#071); London 1740 (#075); Somerset 1740 (#086); Renfrewshire 1741 (#098); Oxfordshire 1741 (#114); London 1741 (#124); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131); Southwark 1742 (#146); Coventry 1742 (#159).

⁹⁵⁴ HoP/John Drummond.

the amount of placemen and restoring annual parliaments⁹⁵⁵. In addition to being requiring representatives to further opposition bills, petitioners also used the verbs to require representatives to impede the administration endeavours in parliament. The dean of guild, merchants, incorporations, and other inhabitants of Dundee required John Drummond, Dundee also being part of the Perth Burghs, to make the passing of opposition bills 'previous steps to the voting' in favour of bills of supplies⁹⁵⁶. Petitioners from Somerset, assembled at the assizes in 1740, enjoined Thomas Horner, one of their representatives⁹⁵⁷, 'according to the ancient usage of parliament', to refuse to give his assent to bills of supplies 'until the grievance abovementioned [minister's influence on members of parliament] be ... redress[ed]⁹⁵⁸. The confident use of imperative verbs demonstrates the increasing confidence of the Patriot Opposition in 1739 - 1742. Although weakened by the excise crisis, losing ground in the general election of 1734, albeit only modestly if compared to the opposition expectations⁹⁵⁹, the opposition started to gain momentum in 1738 - 1739 due to the hostilities with Spain. The public, encouraged by the opposition, demanded war, and Walpole's reluctance to wage it would eventually develop into a crisis of more general nature, ending his premiership in 1742.⁹⁶⁰

Though uses of *require* and *enjoin* became rarer after the 1740s, petitioners continued to use the verbs on a sporadic basis. However, in contrast to 1739 - 1742⁹⁶¹, the later uses of tended to focus on more legitimate and less divisive issues. Petitioners in 1739 - 1742 aspired to transform the political culture, mainly by altering the composition of the House of Commons and increasing constitu-

⁹⁵⁵ Cupar 1739 (#063). According to Nicholas Rogers, 'the rash of Instructions from the Scottish shires and burghs, from Angus, Aberdeen, Ayrshire, the Cupar burgh in Fife, and Sterling, were probably associated with Argyll's defection from the Court and the collapse of the Walpole-Ilay connection'. Rogers 1989, 243.

⁹⁵⁶ Dundee 1739 (#068).

⁹⁵⁷ Their other representative, William Wyndham, a staunch Jacobite and the parliamentary leader of the Tories, had died two months earlier. HoP/William Wyndham.

⁹⁵⁸ Somerset 1740 (#086), see also London 1739 (#057); Renfrewshire 1739 (#061); Ayrshire 1739 (#062); Bridgewater 1739 (#065); Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131), Worcester 1742 (#143).

⁹⁵⁹ The *Craftsman* certainly approved, and even encouraged, the use of such verbs in 1742. The paper argued that 'if you have a right to elect a representative; if you have a right to give instructions after what manner you will be served, you have a right, likewise, to enjoin, I had like to have said, command your said representative, to appear in your behalf'. GM December 1741/Cr 18 December 1742 (no. 860). For the electoral impact of the excise scheme, see Dickinson 1984, 50 - 51; Langford 1975, 124 - 150, 170 - 171; Langford 1992, 32; Wilson 1998, 128. Linda Colley has, however, argued that the 'extent to which Walpole's decline was predetermined by 1734 should not be over-stressed'. Even if 'his majority had been reduced, but so too had the opposition's effectiveness'. Colley 1982, 222 - 223.

⁹⁶⁰ O'Gorman 2006, 83 - 85; Hayton 2002, 64 - 65; Dickinson 1984, 54 - 57; Langford 1975, 148 - 150; Dickinson 1994, 62, 68, 208 - 212; Langford 1992, 54 - 57; Wilson 1998, 140 - 153, 163 - 165.

⁹⁶¹ And in 1733 when the mayor, magistrates, and inhabitants of Wareham 'intreat[ed] and require[d]' their representatives to 'attend diligently and oppose strenuously this proposition [the excise scheme] in every step it shall take in the House'. Wareham 1733 (#029).

ents' influence on their representatives. However, in 1756 the constituents of Leominster⁹⁶² enjoined their representatives to use their 'utmost vigour' to protect Britain from its foreign enemies⁹⁶³, and the citizens of Bristol⁹⁶⁴ 'to search deep into the ... causes of these calamities [the loss of Minorca]'⁹⁶⁵. The 'numerous meeting' of the grand jury and other principal inhabitants of Southwark, assembled at their town hall on 13 January 1766, 'require[d] and intrust[ed]' Joseph Mawbey and Henry Thrale to use their 'best endeavours in parliament' to regulate the price of provisions⁹⁶⁶. Most of the differences regarding the post-1740s uses of *require* and *enjoin* can be explained by the divergent circumstances in parliament during the different decades. Whereas the 1730s and 1740s became defined by the partisan struggle against Walpole and his administration, petitioners during the 1750s and 1760s focused on less partisan issues, such as endeavouring to protect the nation from foreign threats and alleviate the distresses of the poor. With that said, even though less combatant and controversial, the post-1740s uses of *require* and *enjoin* remained, at least in principle, as imperative as the earlier uses of the verbs.

Although the verbs discussed in this sub-chapter constitute only a fifth of the total amount of verbs used in the studied petitions, the share of imperative verbs is surprisingly high. Instead of emphasising deference, petitioners using such verbs tended to portray representation as a reciprocal process. However, the category of imperative verbs also contained significant variation; some of the verbs contained more imperative nuances and connotations than others. Verbs such as *instruct* and *direct*, for instance, could be used in both imperative and non-imperative manners. Instructing could mean both commanding and informing members of parliament of petitioners' sentiments. In other cases, the imperative-ness is more evident. Uses of *insist*, for instance, tended to function as indications of petitioners' despair, urging the petitioned to act as suggested. In the most pronounced cases, petitioners used verbs such as *require* and *enjoin*. Instead of offering propositions or requesting the petitioned to recognise their concerns, petitioners used these verbs to submit orders. Most of the methods petitioners used to urge, pressure, and command parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne consisted of implicit means, as argued in the preceding chapters. However, the uses of imperative verbs demonstrate that such endeavours could also be performed in more pronounced manners. Instead of being independent, as the dominant interpretation of representation asserted, petitioners treated their representatives as servants. By undermining the independence of these representatives, they also challenged the sovereignty of parliament.

⁹⁶² A relatively open constituency of around 500 constituents paying scot and lot. HoP/Leominster 1754 - 1790.

⁹⁶³ Leominster 1756 (#197).

⁹⁶⁴ Being one of the largest constituencies in Britain. Its electorate consisted of around 5,000 freemen and freeholders. HoP/Bristol 1754 - 1790.

⁹⁶⁵ Bristol 1756 (#208), see also Devon 1756 (#180); London 1756 (#216).

⁹⁶⁶ Southwark 1766 (#249).

5.4 Petitioners' Indirect Means of Influence

One could argue, on the basis of the verbs used in petitions, that around 20 per cent of the petitions from 1721 to 1776 contained imperative connotations and suggestions of some sort. However, such an interpretation overemphasises the humbleness of the petitions. Uses of verbs provide an intriguing insight into petitioners' pronounced perceptions on the representative relationship but ultimately demonstrate only one feature petitioners used to define representation. In addition to verbs, petitioners also used other discursive methods to pressure and command the petitioned, most of which remained more implicit than the uses of imperative verbs, the most pronounced method of imposing orders on members of parliament. However, petitions also contained pronounced assertions regarding the legitimation of parliament and the substance of representation. Petitioners could, for instance, argue that parliament gained its privileges from the people⁹⁶⁷, a claim that could be used to legitimise popular interventions and even represent the 'voice of the people' as 'the voice of God'⁹⁶⁸. Those interested in petitioners' perceptions on representation cannot ignore such assertions.

Petitions regarding the restoration of triennial parliaments, for instance, tended to contain assertions emphasising the reciprocity of representation. Most petitioners submitting such petitions emphasised representatives' dependence on people out-of-doors, including petitioners from Bedford⁹⁶⁹ arguing in 1734 that representatives 'ought [to] ... have a natural dependance on the people'⁹⁷⁰. Petitioners from Denbighshire, castigating the influence of placemen and septennial parliaments in 1741, described triennial parliaments as the surest method to prevent electors and their 'representatives ... to become strangers to each other'⁹⁷¹ in their petition, submitted to Watkin Williams Wynn, a Tory member of the Cycle of the White Rose, a secret society of Welsh Jacobites⁹⁷². Instead of electing members of parliament on triennial basis, as after the enactment of the

⁹⁶⁷ Norfolk 1769 (#299), see also Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Middlesex 1770 (#320).

⁹⁶⁸ Cirencester 1753 (#174). See also BC/Pr 5 August 1753. J.A.W. Gunn has suggested that 'the expression *vox populi* became - for a time, at least - less current and was replaced by a host of expressions closer to modern political vocabulary' after 1734. Gunn 1983, 273.

⁹⁶⁹ Like the mayor, bailiffs, burgesses, common council, and freemen of Bedford, a constituency under the influence of the Duke of Bedford, an opponent of Walpole. HoP/Bedford 1715 - 1754. After the fall of Walpole in 1742, Bedford joined the administration, gaining a post in the admiralty and serving as the secretary of state from 1748 to 1751. As the leader of his namesake faction, the Bedford Whigs, the duke became the lord lieutenant of Ireland in 1756 and the lord privy seal in 1761. See, for instance, Langford 1992, 27, 187, 194 - 195, 206, 223 - 224, 233, 374 - 375.

⁹⁷⁰ If parliaments were triennial, the petitioners argued, it would be 'highly probable that a member's actions would, in the first year, be influenced by gratitude, in the last, by expectation. And when a gentleman in trust is so happily situated, there is little reason to doubt but his conduct, in the intervening year, would have a just regard to once, or both of those popular engagements.' Bedford 1734 (#053).

⁹⁷¹ Denbighshire 1741 (#096).

⁹⁷² HoP/Watkin Williams; HoP/Denbighshire 1715 - 1754.

Triennial Act in 1694, imposing restrictions on the King's right to dissolve parliament⁹⁷³, the enfranchised constituents had been choosing their representatives on septennial basis since the enactment of the Septennial Act in 1716. Long parliaments, petitioners argued, endangered the liberties of the British constituents. Septennial parliaments could, according to the freeholders of Aberdeenshire in 1741, encourage 'the delegates of the people', a controversial reference to members of parliament⁹⁷⁴, to 'become their tyrants, or betray them to those that are so, and therefore frequent course ought to be the fountainhead'⁹⁷⁵. Others described septennial parliaments as 'an innovation as dangerous as this constitution ever suffer[e]d' as it made 'a trust of such importance irrevocable for more than half the computed term of life'⁹⁷⁶, depriving electors the right to reject representatives that 'from motives destructive of freedom, deviate from the principles that alone recommended them to their constituents'⁹⁷⁷. Resistance against the Septennial Act functioned as one of the defining characteristics of the Patriot Opposition. Besides deeming it against the revolutionary settlement, and thus unconstitutional, the country opposition also represented it as dangerous to the very being of parliament. Walpole, it was argued, used the act to frustrate the will of the people, increasing the cost of contested elections (and, therefore, the impact of corruption) and restricting the influence of electors on the conduct of parliament. Aiming to re-establish the constitutional order, and to oust the Whigs of corruption from the administration, the country opposition championed the restoration of triennial, or even annual, parliaments.⁹⁷⁸

Because electors, often referred to as *the people*, provided parliament its *raison d'être* through the practice of elections, petitioners often emphasised their dependence on their representatives. In order to do so, many petitioners empha-

⁹⁷³ Due to the act, the period between the Triennial Act and the Septennial Act witnessed as many as 10 general elections. O'Gorman 2006, 36 - 37; Jupp 2006, 86. For the arguments used to overturn the act, replacing triennial parliaments with septennial ones, see Knights 2005, 360 - 375.

⁹⁷⁴ The British tended to refer to members of parliament as representatives. Delegates, on the other hand, could be interpreted as a reference to the Dutch model of representation, as demonstrated in Chapter 6.3 (Protecting the Independence of Parliament).

⁹⁷⁵ Aberdeenshire 1741 (#112).

⁹⁷⁶ The exact meaning of the notion by the high sheriff and grand jury of Oxfordshire remains unclear. Jeremy Black has noted that the life expectancy at birth increased from around 30 years in the 1680s to 42 by the 1750s. Black 2008, 13. It is rather safe to assume that the number was even higher in the case of enfranchised actors, being wealthier and of higher social standing than the people in general. Although a significant portion of one's life, seven years did not constitute 'more than half the computed term of life' in 1741. It is, of course, possible that the petitioners referred to the period during which the enfranchised actors were actually entitled to vote.

⁹⁷⁷ Oxfordshire 1741 (#114). The magistrates and town-council of Aberdeen, praising the conduct of the opposition in parliament, feared that the 'delegation for seven years of so important a trust, as that of representative in parliament ... is of the most dangerous consequence to liberty, as the nation may be ruin[e]d before it can be resum[e]d by the people'. Aberdeen 1741 (#113).

⁹⁷⁸ O'Gorman 2006, 79 - 80; Langford 1975, 101 - 104; Dickinson 1977, 186 - 188; Royle & Walvin 1982, 14; Skinner 1974, 97 - 98, 125; Jupp 2006, 64, 68, 98; Dickinson 1994, 198 - 201.

sised the importance of that trust. The principal inhabitants of Gloucester, opposing the proposed duties in 1733, insisted that their representatives oppose attempts to subjugate them 'under the bondage' according 'to the trust reposed' in them⁹⁷⁹. The electors of Bath, on the other hand, represented themselves as obliged to remind their representatives⁹⁸⁰ of 'the importance of the charge' their electors had trusted them⁹⁸¹. The corporation of St Albans similarly declared that the borough had chosen Lord Viscount Grimston and John Merrill 'to be [their] representative[s]', this being 'the highest trust' constituents could repose in them, and hence, 'in return for so great a confidence', anticipated them to 'have a constant regard for the interest' of the nation and that of borough of St Albans in particular⁹⁸². According to the corporation of St Albans, protecting the interest of the nation, and that of the borough, meant opposing the duties the administration prepared in 1732 - 1733.

As constituents had placed their highest trust in their representatives, petitioners expected them to embrace their petitions and instructions. The high sheriff and grand inquest of Lancashire, praising their representatives' conduct in parliament in 1740⁹⁸³, represented submitting instructions as their obligation, their representatives' obligation being to follow such instructions⁹⁸⁴. Others, such as the citizens of Bristol in 1756, encouraged their representatives to 'speak in parliament the language of [their] constituents'⁹⁸⁵ - an euphemism for observing their instructions. Petitioners could also claim to assume that their representatives desired petitions and instructions from them, as in the case of the petition from the principal inhabitants of Gloucester in 1733; their representatives could only anticipate and 'desire our sentiments and instructions'⁹⁸⁶, the petitioners claimed. Petitioners submitted such instructions to members of parliament regardless of their political affiliation, earlier compliance, and benign behaviour in parliament. Although commending their earlier conduct, petitioners sometimes emphasised the importance of communicating 'these our thoughts [to their representatives], as a rule for [their] conduct in the ensuing session of parliament'⁹⁸⁷.

⁹⁷⁹ Gloucester 1733 (#033), see also Rye 1733 (#039). The citizens of London, as the petitioners described themselves, noted that constituents had 'elected [representatives] to serve [them] in parliament', thus considering it proper to remind their representatives of the duties attached to 'the great confidence'. London 1741 (#124).

⁹⁸⁰ George Wade and Philip Bennet, both of them steadily supporting the administration. As one of the representatives for Shaftesbury (1734 - 1735, 1738 - 1741), Bennet had abstained from the divisions on the Convention of Pardo in 1739 and the place bill in 1740. General Wade, the commander-in-chief in Scotland from 1724 to 1740, on the other hand, missed, according to R.S. Lea, only one of the recorded divisions in 1716 - 1746. HoP/Philip Bennet; HoP/George Wade; HoP/Bath 1715 - 1754.

⁹⁸¹ Bath 1741 (#102).

⁹⁸² St Albans 1733 (#035), see also Sudbury 1733 (#030).

⁹⁸³ The representatives had, according to the petitioners, 'resist[ed] that flood of corruption and court influence, which for many years has prevail[e]d, and almost overspread the land'.

⁹⁸⁴ Lancashire 1740 (#085). Petitioners could also represent instructing as 'a right founded in the very nature of [constituents and representatives] mutual connections'. Plymouth 1763 (#239).

⁹⁸⁵ Bristol 1756 (#208).

⁹⁸⁶ Gloucester 1733 (#033).

⁹⁸⁷ Montgomeryshire 1742 (#131).

In ideal circumstances, petitioners claimed, representatives informed their constituents of the issues parliament deliberated on; the constituents, in turn, informed their representatives of their sentiments on these issues. Such formulations could contain commanding connotations, but in most cases such encouragements functioned as a method to inform the petitioned of petitioners' sentiments.

Others emphasised the consequences of observing their desires and recommendations. Such discourses tended to focus either on the propitious consequences of compliance or on the more obliging aspects of representation. In the first case, petitioners could, like the corporation of Monmouth under their common seal in 1741, requesting their representative to oppose places and pensions and septennial parliaments, represent their 'sentiments and requests' as the sentiments of 'every true Briton'. If Lord Charles Noel Somerset⁹⁸⁸, their representative in parliament, 'pleased to give them a due attention', it should put them 'under the strongest obligation'⁹⁸⁹; a *de facto* promise to support his re-election⁹⁹⁰. The independent electors of Honiton, on the other hand, assured that as long as Henry Reginald Courtenay, their opposition-minded representative⁹⁹¹, supported 'the general advantage' of the nation, he could count on 'the esteem and friendship of us', his 'most humble and obedient servants'⁹⁹². The corporation of London, requesting their representatives to prosecute Walpole in a similar manner as the petitioners from Honiton, promised that the 'vigorous prosecution of petitioners' propositions ensured the representatives 'the lasting favour and affection of this great metropolis'⁹⁹³. Some of such discursive practices contained more imperative connotations than others. Buckinghamshire petitioners, the authors of one of the more suggestive petitions in 1740, recommended - 'as far as [the representatives] regard our opinion and favour', a clear indication of petitioners' seriousness - that their representatives further legislation protecting

⁹⁸⁸ 'A most determined and unwavering Jacobite' representing both Monmouthshire (1731 - 1734) and Monmouth (1734 - 1745) during his tenure in parliament. Both he and his brother, then the Duke of Bedford, supported the Jacobite cause in 1745, encouraging the French to support the Jacobite invasion and the Stuart restoration. He succeeded his brother, becoming the fourth Duke of Bedford in 1745. HoP/Lord Charles Noel Somerset; Black 2004, 87.

⁹⁸⁹ Monmouth 1741 (#119), see also Nottingham 1742 (#133); Stirling 1742 (#134); Lichfield 1742 (#144); Southwark 1742 (#146); Hereford 1742 (#158); Essex 1756 (#179); Huntingdonshire 1756 (#195).

⁹⁹⁰ Even though Monmouth remained an uncontested constituency from 1690 to 1818 (with the exception of the general election of 1715). HoP/Monmouth 1690 - 1715; HoP/Monmouth 1715 - 1754; HoP/Monmouth 1754 - 1790; HoP/Monmouth 1790 - 1820.

⁹⁹¹ Courtenay, a Tory, opposed the administration in every recorded division. Their other representative, William Yonge, the secretary at war and a fervent supporter of Walpole and his administration appears to have not received a similar petition from the independent electors of Honiton. HoP/Henry Reginald Courtenay; HoP/William Yonge; Cruickshanks 1984, 26 - 27.

⁹⁹² Honiton 1742 (#139), see also Tewkesbury 1741 (#120).

⁹⁹³ London 1742 (#153), see also Sudbury 1733 (#030); Ripon 1733 (#034); Huntingdonshire 1740 (#072); Reading 1753 (#175).

members of parliament from undue influences⁹⁹⁴. The corporate actors of Stamford, on the other hand, recommended that William Noel and John Proby, both of them Tories⁹⁹⁵, complied in reducing the amount of placemen if the representatives desired to maintain their 'love and esteem'⁹⁹⁶. Promises of praise and recognition functioned as positive incentives to act as petitioners requested. Pursuing such requests, the petitioners often claimed, benefitted both the petitioners and the petitioned.

Some addresses to the Throne contained similar promises of praise and devotion. Most of such cases occurred in 1769 - 1770, during the crisis on Wilkes' seat, and contained more controversial formulations than most addresses to the Throne. The freeholders of Buckinghamshire, claiming that sinister forces in politics endeavoured to overturn constituents' right to free elections, enshrined in Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights, implored the King to intervene. In removing the causes of petitioners' grievances, and thus securing the 'continuance of [their] fundamental rights', the King would ensure 'the grateful hearts of an united people'.⁹⁹⁷ Other petitioners defending Wilkes and the freeholders of Middlesex used rather similar conceptualisations, claiming that assuaging the 'afflictions of millions of [his] subjects' would secure him the 'grateful acclamations' of his entire people⁹⁹⁸ and the 'blessings of [the] grateful millions'⁹⁹⁹. As in the case of petitions submitted to members of parliament, petitioners endeavoured to convince the petitioned - in this case, the King - that compliance would secure him praise from petitioners and those petitioners claimed to represent. The King, of course, did not depend on constituents' favours and acceptance as representatives did, at least in principle, but that did not prevent petitioners from using similar practices to persuade him.

In the second case, petitioners emphasised the more obliging aspects of representation. The mayor, grand jury, and electors of Liskeard, a constituency of around 30 enfranchised freemen¹⁰⁰⁰, described representatives' compliance as

⁹⁹⁴ The Buckinghamshire petitioners declared that 'since the bills of this kind, which have been hitherto unsuccessfully attempted, are only so many melancholly proofs of the necessity of them, we think it the more incumbent upon us to declare our unanimous sentiments, that whoever, upon the late enormous increase of placemen in parliament, does not promote any bill or bills tending to the lessening so growing and dangerous an evil, will be justly responsible to the latest posterity for every other grievance, mischief and publick dishonour, which, in future times, according to the course of human affairs, must attend the corruption of parliaments, and the impunity of male-administration.' Buckinghamshire 1740 (#074), see also Lancashire 1740 (#085).

⁹⁹⁵ During the 1734 general election, Noel and Proby had used harsh means of pressure to prevent Savile Cust from gaining one of the seats in Stamford. In addition to the financial pressure, Noel and Proby had 'led their riotous mob in person ... and made a formal attack upon Mr. Cust's house', provoking his friends to 'discharge a shower of stones at them'. Around 30 people suffered injuries from the incident. HoP/Stamford 1715 - 1754; HoP/John Proby; HoP/William Noel.

⁹⁹⁶ Stamford 1740 (#094), see also Worcester 1742 (#142).

⁹⁹⁷ Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265), see also Cornwall 1769 (#263); Exeter 1769 (#275); Bristol 1769 (#281); London 1773 (#350).

⁹⁹⁸ Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#315).

⁹⁹⁹ Middlesex 1770 (#320).

¹⁰⁰⁰ HoP/Liskeard 1715 - 1754.

'the best proof of [their] earnest desire to serve us, and induce us ... to entrust our liberties in [their] hands for the future' in 1740¹⁰⁰¹. Compliance, the Cornish petitioners argued, functioned as a sort of guarantee; representatives ought to prove themselves honourable to gain the trust of their constituents. Others chose to underline that representatives could be deprived of that trust. The general meeting of the independent freemen of Coventry, requesting their representatives to use their utmost endeavours to punish Walpole and his confederates in 1741, promised to serve as their 'most humble servants' as long as the representatives acted in favour of the public good¹⁰⁰². In 1742, the independent freemen used similar claims to convince the Earl of Euston and William Grove¹⁰⁰³, claiming that observing their instructions would demonstrate the representatives' eagerness to act as 'patriots'¹⁰⁰⁴. In both cases, petitioners emphasised the conditional nature of representation. However, some petitioners used even more demanding formulations to emphasise their argument. The grand jury and other inhabitants of Leominster, a constituency famous for its venality¹⁰⁰⁵, described representatives' compliance as the sole means to obtain 'the future approbation and esteem of us'¹⁰⁰⁶. The general meeting of the free citizens of Rochester, on the other hand, declared that their representatives' conduct around reducing the duration of parliaments enabled them 'to judge of [their] regard for our essential interests' and, therefore, whether the representatives would be 'intituled to our future favour'¹⁰⁰⁷. Though such petitioners often abstained from asserting that constituents ought to control their representatives' conduct in parliament as such, their language contained obvious suggestions of the potential consequences of refusing to observe their petitions.

Petitioners could also use pronounced criticism of representatives' past behaviour to influence them. The freeholders of Merionethshire, a county constituency represented by the Vaughans of Corsygedol from 1701 to 1768, both of them Tories¹⁰⁰⁸, criticised William Vaughan for being absent during the division on the Hanoverian troops in 1742, thus depriving his constituents of their voice in parliament. The freeholders used their petition to remind Vaughan that they, being

¹⁰⁰¹ Both Richard Eliot and Charles Trelawny were supporters of the Prince of Wales, voting against the administration until the fall of Walpole in 1742. At least Eliot voted for the place bill in 1740, as the mayor, grand jury, and voters of Liskeard had requested. Both representatives were re-elected in 1741 without contest. HoP/Richard Eliot; HoP/Charles Trelawny; Liskeard 1740 (#078), see also Sudbury 1733 (#030) and Worcester 1742 (#143).

¹⁰⁰² Coventry 1741 (#108).

¹⁰⁰³ The petitioners praised the conduct of William Grove, a Tory voting against the administration in all recorded divisions. Even though abstaining from directly criticising the conduct of Lord Euston, who had been absent from the vote on the Convention of Pardo and had supported the administration on the place bill, the petitioners used implicit means to pressure him. HoP/William Grove; HoP/George Fitzroy; HoP/Coventry 1715 - 1754.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Coventry 1742 (#159).

¹⁰⁰⁵ HoP/Coventry 1715 - 1754.

¹⁰⁰⁶ Leominster 1743 (#163).

¹⁰⁰⁷ Rochester 1772 (#341).

¹⁰⁰⁸ HoP/Merioneth 1715 - 1754; HoP/Merioneth 1754 - 1790; HoP/Richard Vaughan; HoP/William Vaughan.

his constituents, possessed the right to expect their representative's attendance at the debates and divisions in parliament, according to 'all the ties that can engage an honest man'.¹⁰⁰⁹ Others criticised their representatives' past conduct but also provided them with a path to redemption. By observing petitioners' recommendations, representatives could restore their confidence in them. The dean of guild, merchants, incorporations, and other inhabitants of Dundee, for instance, claimed in 1739 that their representative, John Drummond, a steadfast supporter of the government from 1730 to 1740¹⁰¹⁰, had consciously opposed his constituents' desires. However, the petitioners also declared their readiness to provide him with an opportunity to 're-establish [himself] in the good opinion of [his] constituents' by supporting the place bill and restoration of triennial parliaments.¹⁰¹¹ The mayor, sheriffs, and burgesses of Carmarthen criticised Arthur Bevan, a steady proponent of the administration¹⁰¹², for supporting the Convention of Pardo in 1739, a settlement 'disagreeable to ... the nation in general, and ... to us in particular'. However, like the Dundee petitioners, the corporate actors of Carmarthen encouraged their representative to support the place bill, restoring and 'preserv[ing] a sinking nation from immediate ruin', to 'retrieve their love'.¹⁰¹³ Complaints on representatives' past conduct represent one of the most common forms of criticism in petitions. However, such petitions could also contain promises of redemption. Instead of claiming that representatives had an obligation to observe petitioners' requests, the petitioners implicated that representatives could restore their constituents' confidence in them.

Some petitioners used selective criticism and commendations to pressure their representatives. Although petitioners could commend only one of their representatives because of the other's poor health, as in the case of the petition from New Woodstock in 1733¹⁰¹⁴, most of such petitions contained commendations for one of the representatives and criticism for the other. The general meeting of the independent freemen of Coventry, for instance, commended William Grove, an opposition-minded Tory¹⁰¹⁵, in 1741, praising his 'true patriot zeal and behaviour for the honour and service' of the nation and claiming to 'entertain not the least doubt or suspicion of [his] perseverance at this important juncture'. However, the petitioners also criticised their other representative, Lord Euston. They condemned him for being absent from the division on the Convention of Pardo in 1739 and voting against the place bill in 1740¹⁰¹⁶, expressing hope that he would demonstrate 'a just abhorrence' of 'the source of these grievances' in the future¹⁰¹⁷, an obvious reference to Walpole and his administration. The grand jury and other

¹⁰⁰⁹ Merionethshire 1743 (#162), see also Ayrshire 1738 (#062).

¹⁰¹⁰ HoP/John Drummond.

¹⁰¹¹ Dundee 1739 (#068).

¹⁰¹² Despite his support for the administration, Bevan voted against the excises in 1733. HoP/Arthur Bevan.

¹⁰¹³ Carmarthen 1740 (#070).

¹⁰¹⁴ Woodstock 1733 (#041), see also Somerset 1763 (#240). The elections in New Woodstock were strongly influenced by the Duchess of Marlborough. HoP/New Woodstock 1715 - 1754.

¹⁰¹⁵ HoP/William Grove.

¹⁰¹⁶ HoP/George Fitzroy.

¹⁰¹⁷ Coventry 1741 (#108), see also Coventry 1742 (#159).

inhabitants of Leominster used similar means to commend Robert Harley, a Tory voting against the administration¹⁰¹⁸, for his 'conduct and strict attendance in parliament' and his 'zeal for the public service'. The petitioners also requested that their other representative, Capel Hanbury, a supporter of the administration¹⁰¹⁹, join 'the true patriots' in parliament. Although claiming that his 'conduct in parliament hath not hitherto been agreeable to our sentiments', petitioners offered him a chance to redeem himself by supporting the opposition endeavours to reduce the amount of places and pensions and restore triennial parliaments.¹⁰²⁰ In contested constituencies petitioners' praise of one of their representatives, and the criticism of the other, could prove to be decisive, even though petitioners' true influence on elections varied from case to case.

One of the most critical applications of selective criticism occurred in the petition submitted by the corporation of Worcester in 1742. The petitioners, endeavouring to restore the secret committee to inquire the crimes of Walpole and his past administration, claimed to have had 'great hopes' for Thomas Winnington, one of their representatives. But instead of acting as promised, Winnington had, according to the petitioners, 'deviated from the principles ... [petitioners] thought to be the rule of [his] actions'¹⁰²¹. Unless pursuing their instructions, the petitioners claimed, his endeavours to be re-elected would be 'vain' - a clear and obvious threat. But the most ferocious criticism in the petition focused on the other representative, Samuel Sandys. He had followed William Pulteney into opposition in 1725, soon becoming second-in-command to the Whigs in opposition. In February 1741, Sandys had presented a motion of no confidence on Walpole. Although once the favourite of the opposition, petitioners accused him of betrayal. Sandys had once been one of the most strident opponents of the administration, producing 'so solemn declarations, against evil ministers, and their undue influence', accusing them of corruption and the abuse of public funds, but had, according to the petitioners, embraced the first occasion for 'getting into place'. Sandys had, indeed, conducted a 'political volte-face' in 1742, voting in favour of the Septennial Act and against the revival of the secret committee¹⁰²². His deception, the petitioners claimed, had deprived the nation of the justice he had once claimed to champion. But petitioners also claimed to hope that their representatives changed their behaviour and joined 'the real and true patriots ...

¹⁰¹⁸ HoP/Robert Harley.

¹⁰¹⁹ HoP/Capel Hanbury.

¹⁰²⁰ Leominster 1743 (#163), see also St Mawes 1740 (#077) and Portsmouth 1764 (#246).

¹⁰²¹ Although speaking and voting with the opposition until 1729, Winnington spent most of his career in parliament defending Walpole and his administration.

HoP/Thomas Winnington; Cruickshanks 1984, 26 - 27; Black 2004, 69 - 71.

¹⁰²² Sandys soon became the chancellor of the Exchequer, holding the post until December 1743, and the cofferer of the Household, a post he enjoyed until December 1744.

HoP/Samuel Sandys; Cruickshanks 1984, 32 - 33; Turkka 2007, 34 - 44. In this sense, Sandys' career resembled that of his mentor, William Pulteney. Like Sandys,

Pulteney had been one of the most vocal supporters of the opposition after 1725. After the fall of Walpole, however, he surprised his allies by shielding the former premier from further inquiries and prosecution. Pulteney also joined the cabinet in 1742.

HoP/William Pulteney; Gerrard 1994, 12; O'Gorman 2006, 87 - 88; Langford 1992, 185 - 189.

in this important crisis'; observing the London instructions¹⁰²³ and restoring the secret committee to inquire Walpole, among other things, could serve as demonstrations of their regret.¹⁰²⁴ Sandys and Winnington, however, refused to observe petitioners' instructions. Winnington continued to protect Walpole, retaining his post as the cofferer of the household and becoming paymaster general in 1743. Sandys, on the other hand, continued to serve as the chancellor of the exchequer, gaining peerage in 1743. Unlike Winnington, re-elected to represent Worcester after his appointment to office in 1743, Sandys abstained from electoral politics after being appointed as the cofferer of the household in December 1743, 'never again playing a significant part in politics' according to Romney R. Sedgwick.¹⁰²⁵

Petitioners could also use indirect means to influence the decisions of parliament. During the crisis on Wilkes' seat in 1769 - 1770, for instance, petitioners used addresses to the Throne to increase the pressure on parliament and members of parliament; encouraging the King to use his prerogatives against the parliament., as demonstrated in Chapter 2.2 (English Tradition of Petitioning). In order to strengthen their argument for the dissolution, the supporters of Wilkes used pamphlets and the press to encourage actors out-of-doors, and freeholders in particular, to submit such addresses. One Wilkite actor, using the pseudonym of *A Citizen of London*, encouraged 'all the sons of liberty [to] associate, and unite strongly in defence of their laws, and ancient constitution ... in order to petition the Throne for redress of grievances'. The author also underlined that 'you have the noble petition of the county of Middlesex printed in all the papers; read it over and over again'.¹⁰²⁶ Another article, published in the name of John Freeman, encouraged 'the public meetings of the electors be called in every part of the kingdom, let humble addresses be prepared, and let your grievances be carried in a dutiful and submissive manner to the foot of the Throne, to be beloved King and father of us all'. Although emphasising the humble mode of petitioning, the Wilkite author also explicitly instructed such meetings to 'supplicate his Majesty to change the present malignant ministry, who have abused the power delegated to them, and to dissolve a parliament, whose repeated breached of trust have rendered them contemptible and odious to the whole nation'.¹⁰²⁷ Pamphlets and

¹⁰²³ A reference to London 1742 (#153).

¹⁰²⁴ Worcester 1742 (#143). The corporation of guardians of Worcester submitted a counter-petition, criticising the original petition of being of 'so assuming, so menacing, and so indecent a nature'. The counter-petitioners claimed that most of the representatives' constituents disapproved the petition. Instead of criticising their representatives, the counter-petitioners praised their conduct in parliament. Worcester 1742 (#142).

¹⁰²⁵ HoP/Worcester 1715 - 1754; HoP/Thomas Winnington; HoP/Samuel Sandys.

¹⁰²⁶ The author also claimed that 'the counties and the honest uncorrupt cities and boroughs will follow the glorious example set them by the freeholders of Middlesex, and the livery of London'. In order to fulfill their patriotic duty, it was claimed, the readers ought to 'proceed upon no business whatever till your petition is read on the 24th instant; you have a right to demand it, and be not diverted by trick or chicanery'. 'If you postpone it', he further insisted, 'you are betrayers of your own most essential rights and liberties'. BC/MJCL 6 - 8 June 1769.

¹⁰²⁷ BC/MJCL 24 - 27 June 1769. Such articles could be addresses to specific groups of electors and freeholders, usually encouraging such actors in places such as Middlesex, Kent, Westminster, and Southwark, or to the public in general. See also

the press had, of course, been used to promote petitioning during earlier crises and controversies. Model petitions, too, had been used to promote and influence petitioning outside London at least in 1733, 1739 - 1742, and 1763. However, the use of such means reached an unprecedented scale during the crisis on Wilkes' seat. Often emphasising the scale of both petitions and subscriptions, the Wilkites mounted a highly organised petitioning campaign against the parliament¹⁰²⁸.

During the crisis petitioners tended to emphasise the importance of constituents' right to choose their representatives. Petitioners described the freedom of election as the 'first principle of the constitution'¹⁰²⁹ and 'our most essential, our

BC/MJCL 30 May - 1 June 1769; BC/WEPLI 24 - 27 June 1769; BC/LC 27 - 29 June 1769; LIEP 11 - 14 August 1769; BC/MJCL 24 - 26 August 1769; BC/MJCL 22 - 24 August 1769; BC/LIEP 25 - 28 August 1769; BC/WEPLI 26 - 29 August 1769; BC/NB 28 August 1769; BC/MJCL 19 - 22 August 1769; BC/GNDA 28 August 1769; BC/LC 26 - 29 August 1769; BC/SJCBEP 26 - 29 August 1769; BC/GNDA 2 October 1769; BC/MJCL 5 - 7 October 1769; BC/NB 28 October 1769; BC/MJCL 9 - 12 September 1769.

¹⁰²⁸ Papers and pamphlets were, indeed, used throughout the eighteenth century to encourage the reading publics, and others, to petition. Civis Westmonasteriensis, for instance, encouraged the readers of the *London Evening Post* to 'unite with one heart and voice, in petitioning the parliament next session for the repeal of that act [Jewish Naturalisation Act], which has justly given us so much cause of uneasiness, and by so doing preserve our religion, laws and liberties entire TO LATEST POSTERITY'. BC/LEP 2 August 1753. An author in the *Lloyd's Evening Post*, on the other hand, asserted in 1758 that 'I hope they [the people] will not be silent upon so momentous an affair' and that 'they will not be forgetful of their duty, nor be afraid to express themselves with that honesty, openness and freedom, as becomes the vigilant and resolute subjects of a wise and gracious King'. BC/LIEP 9 - 11 October 1758. But such exhortations, and the use of the press in general, became far more common after 1768, Wilkes and his supporters using papers (and, to a lesser extent, pamphlets) to organise a national petitioning campaign. One of his supporters, writing in the *Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty* in June 1769, encouraged 'all the sons of liberty [to] associate, and unite strongly in defence of their laws, and ancient constitution this summer; in order to petition the Throne for redress of grievances'. 'Proceed upon no business whatever', the author continued, 'till your petition is read on the 24th instant; you have a right to demand it, and be not diverted by trick or chicane'. BC/MJCL 6 - 8 June 1769. See also BC/MJCL 30 May - 1 June 1769; BC/MJCL 24 - 27 June 1769; BC/MJCL 24 - 27 June 1769; BC/MJCL 24 - 26 August 1769; BC/MJCL 19 - 22 August 1769; BC/LIEP 25 - 28 August 1769; BC/SJCBEP 26 - 29 August 1769; BC/WEPLI 26 - 29 August 1769; BC/LC 26 - 29 August 1769; BC/GNDA 28 August 1769; BC/NB 28 August 1769; BC/MJCL 9 - 12 September 1769; BC/MJCL 11 - 14 November 1769; BC/SJCBEP 14 - 16 November 1769; BC/LIEP 15 - 17 November 1769; BC/MJCL 25 - 28 November 1769; BC/PS 12 December 1769; BC/LEP 29 - 31 March 1770; BC/W 31 August 1771; An Address to the Electors 1739/45 - 46 (T128373); A Letter to a Member of This New Parliament 1742/63 - 64 (T63003); A Modest Address to the Commons of Great Britain 1756/31 - 32 (T81155); An Alarm to the People of England 1757/31 - 32 (T21165). The Wilkesite campaign in the press also influenced the later petitioning campaigns. For a detailed analysis of the role of the press during the last decades of the eighteenth century, see, for instance, Hannah Barker's *Newspapers, Politics, and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (1998). Barker has, among other things, described how members of parliament became increasingly engaged in publishing their speeches in the press. Barker 1998, 17 - 22.

¹⁰²⁹ Surrey 1769 (#271), see also Devon 1769 (#273); Westminster 1769 (#284); Southwark 1769 (#289); Middlesex 1769 (#292); Worcestershire 1769 (#295); Essex 1769 (#298); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Middlesex 1770 (#320); Westminster 1770 (#326). For generic claims of breaching the constitution, see, for instance, Gloucestershire 1769 (#268); Somerset 1769 (#269); Exeter 1769 (#275); Westminster

dearest privilege'¹⁰³⁰. The right 'of free election, and true representation' became characterised as 'the great, original, and fundamental right of the subject'¹⁰³¹, the 'most sacred and inestimable privilege of Britons'¹⁰³², and 'the best birth-right, the noblest inheritance of an Englishman'¹⁰³³. In order to strengthen their arguments, some of the Wilkite petitioners legitimised their claims by referring to the Bill of Rights, stating that 'elections of members of parliament ought to be free', and Magna Charta, declaring that a 'judgement of his peers' alone could disseize a freeman 'his freehold, or liberties, or customs'¹⁰³⁴. Accusations of breaching the constitution represented one of the most common opposition arguments during the eighteenth century, used by opposition actors from Pulteney and Bolingbroke to Wilkes and the radicals defending the colonists¹⁰³⁵. In most cases, it remained a saturated concept¹⁰³⁶, a mere slogan that united detached groups and discontented actors. In 1769 - 1770, however, it gained a rather specific meaning and function.

1769 (#284); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Surrey 1770 (#314); Liverpool 1770 (#317); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#323).

¹⁰³⁰ Herefordshire 1770 (#330).

¹⁰³¹ Norfolk 1769 (#299), see also Berwick-upon-Tweed 1769 (#278).

¹⁰³² Wiltshire 1769 (#274), see also Liverpool 1769 (#279); Northumberland 1769 (#301); London 1770 (#286); Morpeth 1770 (#292).

¹⁰³³ Kent 1769 (#267), see also Exeter 1769 (#275); Southwark 1769 (#288).

¹⁰³⁴ Cornwall 1769 (#263), see also Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265). Besides accusing James II of 'violating the freedom of election of members to serve in parliament', the Bill of Rights (1689) also declared 'that election of members of parliament ought to be free'. A Guide to the Knowledge of the Rights and Privileges of Englishmen 1757/77 - 79 (T61073). In the case of Magna Charta, on the other hand, petitioners appeared to refer to what is commonly known as Chapter 40 (though an abundance of different versions were published and circulated throughout the eighteenth century). One version, published as a pamphlet in 1769, states that 'the body of a freeman be not taken, or imprisoned, nor that he be disseized, nor outlawed, nor exiled, nor any way destroyed. Nor that the King pass upon him, or imprison him by force, but only by the judgment of his peers, or by the law of the land.' A History and Defence of Magna Charta 1769/163 (T130225).

¹⁰³⁵ For Wilkes and those defending the colonies against the coercive measures by the British parliament, the constitution represented the rights and privileges that made Englishmen free. As in the case of the anti-Walpolean opposition, such actors, too, represented the conduct of the administration as something that endangered the very nature of being English. Whereas the administration had deprived the freeholders of Middlesex their constitutional right of choosing their representatives, the coercive measures against the colonies would deprive the brethren in America their privileges, granted to them by their heritage. See, for instance, Dickinson 1977, 176 - 182; Royle & Walvin 1982, 22.

¹⁰³⁶ Michael Freeden has described such concepts as *super-concepts*. Using the concept of democracy as an example of super-concepts, Freeden has argued that 'it acts as a host to a number of additional concepts that also have a separate and recognizable social and historical life of their own'. He also notes that 'the conceptual history of democracy cannot be divorced from the conceptual histories of its components' - something that is also evident in the case of the concept of constitution. Freeden 2017, 121 - 122, see also 126 - 127. They can also be discussed in terms of Ernesto Laclau's notion of empty signifiers. Laclau has argued that 'order', for instance, 'has no content, because it only exists in the various forms in which it is actually realized, but in a situation of radical disorder 'order' is present as that which is absent; it becomes an empty signifier, as the signifier of that absence'. 'In this sense', he continues, 'various political forces can compete in their efforts to present their particular objectives as those which carry out the filling of that lack'. Laclau 2007, 44.

In addition to claims of endangering the constitution, petitioners also criticised parliament's decision to undermine the reciprocation of representation. In such cases, petitioners emphasised that representatives' seats in parliament had been 'created on purpose to guard the sacred rights of ... constituents'¹⁰³⁷ and that the 'privileges of the House of Commons ... [had been] established for the good of the people'¹⁰³⁸. But instead of protecting constituents' rights and privileges and the interest of the people, representatives had chosen to become conquerors; the House of Commons - the electors of Westminster, assembled at Westminster Hall on 28 March 1770, argued - had become a self-electing institution, 'assuming to themselves a right of choosing, instead of receiving a member' and 'transferring to the representative' a right that 'belonged to the constituent'¹⁰³⁹. Other petitioners concluded that by barring John Wilkes from entering parliament, thus disabling him from representing the will of the Middlesex electors, members of parliament had acted in 'opposition to the voice of the real electors'¹⁰⁴⁰, hence creating a deplorable situation of 'r[epresentative]s of the people [being] in opposition to the people'¹⁰⁴¹. A betrayal of that magnitude, the gentlemen of Devon argued in their address, submitted to the Throne in 1769, deprived Middlesex 'of its privilege of representation' and, in a broader sense, 'cancelled and destroyed' the 'fundamental relation between the elector and the elected'¹⁰⁴². Such argumentation differed from other discourses regarding the representative relationship in two particular ways. First, the petitioners insisted that the dissolution of that relationship stemmed from the decision of the House of Commons. Instead of criticising the decisions of individual representatives, petitioners castigated the institution of parliament. Second, restoring the confidence in parliament required an intervention from the King. Parliament had become incapable of solving the crisis it had created.

In order to resolve the crisis regarding the legitimacy of parliament, petitioners requested the Throne to intervene. Most petitioners begged the King to enforce rather specific measures. First, petitioners urged him to dismiss his ministers, a rather common opposition demand throughout the eighteenth-century¹⁰⁴³. This demonstrates the endurance of discourses emphasising the influence of evil advisors, discussed in detail in Chapter 4.2.1 (Enemies of the People).

¹⁰³⁷ Exeter 1769 (#275).

¹⁰³⁸ Essex 1769 (#298).

¹⁰³⁹ Westminster 1770 (#326), see also Kent 1769 (#267); Essex 1769 (#298); Canterbury 1769 (#303); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Middlesex 1770 (#320).

¹⁰⁴⁰ Wells 1769 (#304), see also Somerset 1769 (#269); Berwick-upon-Tweed 1769 (#278); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297).

¹⁰⁴¹ Yorkshire 1770 (#318), see also Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Middlesex 1770 (#320).

¹⁰⁴² Devon 1769 (#273), see also Southwark 1769 (#288); Northumberland 1769 (#301). The corporation of London argued in 1770 that 'representatives of the people are essential to the making of laws; and there is a time when it is morally demonstrable that men cease to be representatives'. 'That time is now arrived', the petitioners concluded; 'the present House of Commons do not represent the people'. London 1770 (#322), see also Middlesex 1770 (#322).

¹⁰⁴³ Although formally serving the Crown rather than parliament, as earlier noted, the opposition usually treated ministers as ones accountable to both of them. Opposition actors, and those in parliament in particular, tended to portray the accountability to the two institutions either as of being of the same root or as mutually aligned. Bad

Dismissing his ministers and other advisers, the petitioners claimed, would enable the King to restore the 'confidence to [his] government both at home and abroad'¹⁰⁴⁴. Second, petitioners also requested that the Throne dissolve the parliament the 'people [could] no longer place a confidence' in¹⁰⁴⁵, a feature that distinguished the petitions from those submitted during the other crises. In such cases, petitioners implored the King, 'as the great guardian of the liberties of this free nation'¹⁰⁴⁶, to dissolve the present parliament, thus enabling the people to elect representatives that 'guard[ed] the honour' of the Throne and 'support[ed] the rights of the people'¹⁰⁴⁷. The Crown, of course, possessed the formal right to dissolve the parliament¹⁰⁴⁸. But regardless of being entitled to do so, the petitions

ministers, it was commonly claimed, betrayed the trust of both the Crown and parliament. Rather than criticising the King's choice of ministers as such, or challenging his right to choose his servants, the opposition actors claimed to protect his interests.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Cornwall 1769 (#263), see also Buckinghamshire 1769 (#265); Somerset 1769 (#269); Middlesex 1769 (#292); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#315); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#323); London 1770 (#324); Westminster 1770 (#325); Westminster 1770 (#326). In several cases, petitioners represented the King as the sole source of 'justice and goodness' the people could depend on for redress. Worcester 1769 (#296), see also Kent 1769 (#267); Surrey 1769 (#271); Bristol 1769 (#281); Westminster 1769 (#284); London 1769 (#294); Wells 1769 (#394); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316).

¹⁰⁴⁵ Somerset 1769 (#269), see also Kent 1769 (#267); Berwick-upon-Tweed 1769 (#278); Westminster 1769 (#284); Yorkshire 1769 (#285); Southwark 1769 (#288); Southwark 1769 (#289); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#297); Essex 1769 (#298); Norfolk 1769 (#299); Northumberland 1769 (#301); Wells 1769 (#304); Derbyshire 1770 (#313); Surrey 1770 (#314); Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#315); Newcastle upon Tyne (#316); Liverpool 1770 (#317); Yorkshire 1770 (#318); Middlesex 1770 (#320); London 1770 (#322); London 1770 (#323); London 1770 (#324); Westminster 1770 (#325); Westminster (#326); Durham 1770 (#332); London 1773 (#350).

¹⁰⁴⁶ Westminster 1769 (#284). Some petitioners used more pressing formulations to urge the King to act. The mayor, freemen, freeholders, and inhabitants of Exeter, for instance, portrayed themselves as incapable of imagining 'that our prayer, which is the prayer of millions, can be rejected, or disregarded; but animated by the benign idea of our King, which long since was impressed upon our hearts, we will wait in full confidence of receiving that constitutional relief, which alone is adequate to the unnatural treatment we have received from the deputies of the people'. Like most petitioners during the crisis on Wilkes' seat, the petitioners from Exeter requested their King to intervene and correct the errors made by the parliament. (#275). The corporation of London, on the other hand, refused to believe, regardless of the futile fate of their earlier addresses, that the King could 'flighth the desires of [his] people, or be regardless of their affection, and deaf to their complaints'. The London petitioners further claimed that as the King, 'both in honour and justice, is obliged ... to preserve them [the constitution and 'liberties of this realm'] according to the oath made to God, and [his] subjects at [his] coronation', he ought to dismiss his ministers and dissolve the parliament. London 1770 (#322).

¹⁰⁴⁷ Yorkshire 1770 (#318), see also Yorkshire 1769 (#285) and Newcastle upon Tyne 1770 (#316).

¹⁰⁴⁸ William Blackstone, describing dissolution as 'the civil death of parliament', asserted that it could be dissolved in three particular ways. First, and most importantly, it could be dissolved 'by the King's will', as 'the King has the sole right of convening the parliament, so also it is a branch of the royal prerogative, that he may (whenever he pleases) prorogue the parliament for a time, or put a final period to its existence'. 'If nothing had a right to prorogue or dissolve a parliament but itself', he continued, 'it might happen to become perpetual'. In order to constrain parliament from becoming perpetual, and assuming unconstitutional functions, Blackstone considered it 'extremely necessary that the Crown should be empowered to regulate the duration of

requesting the King to use his prerogative caused an outrage of gargantuan scale. Whereas the Wilkite petitioners argued that such an intervention would restore the will of the people, the majority of the House of Commons interpreted the petitions as challenges on the sovereignty of parliament¹⁰⁴⁹.

To conclude, petitioners endeavouring to influence and control the conduct of the petitioned could both encourage and oblige the recipients of their petitions. In the first case, petitioners promised that by complying with their petition, the petitioned would gain praise and esteem from their constituents and, as in the case of parliament and the Throne, the people in general. Others emphasised the obligations of the petitioned. In such cases, petitioners tended to emphasise that representatives gained their privileges from the people, a reference to the popular consent of representation. Some of them, on the other hand, combined different means of persuasion. Petitioners could, for instance, criticise representatives' earlier conduct, refer to their obligations to observe petitioners' requests, and promise redemption if the representatives agreed to change their conduct. This sub-chapter also demonstrates that rather than forming strict categories of humble and imperative petitions, many petitions contained both humble and imperative elements of some sort. Petitions containing humble verbs, such as *hope* and *desire*, could also contain suggestive and, in certain cases, even imperative notions. Most addresses urging the King to dissolve parliament during the crisis on Wilkes' seat also contained humble verbs and deferential discourses, although their authors endeavoured to use them to restrain the influence of the parliament. Instead of imposing demands on the Throne, petitioners endeavoured to use the King to restrict the influence of a hostile parliament and to defend the idea of parliament from a false parliament.

these assemblies, under the limitations which the English constitution has prescribed'. Second, parliament could be dissolved due to the death of the reigning Monarch. Although common during earlier times, it had become, according to Blackstone, an uncommon practice to dissolve the parliament in such cases. Third, 'parliament may be dissolved or expire by length of time'. After the enactment of the Septennial Act in 1716, for instance, parliament usually became dissolved in a cycle of seven years. Prior to the enactment of the Triennial Act, Thomas Erskine May noted, 'there was no constitutional limit to the continuance of a parliament but the will of the Crown'. Blackstone 1771 (1), 187 - 189; May 1844, 36 - 37; O'Gorman 2006, 41; Jupp 2006, 110.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Critics could claim that such demands were steps towards the chaos of the civil war and that of the English republic, comparing Wilkes and his allies to Cromwell (and even Nero, another anti-hero). John Wesley, the founder of Methodist theology, claimed in 1770 that the Wilkite agitation could produce consequences 'exactly the same as those of the like commotions in the last century'. First, he claimed, 'the land will become a field of blood: many thousands of poor Englishmen will sheath their swords in each others bowels'. 'Then', Wesley continued, 'either a commonwealth will ensue, or else a second CROMWELL', as noted in Chapter 6.4 (In Defence of the Constitution).

5.5 Replies from the Petitioned

Besides submitting petitions to parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne, petitioners also received replies from the receivers of their petitions. In a number of cases, such replies became public, often published alongside the petitions in papers and pamphlets. In order to understand repliers' perceptions of representation and the right to petition, this sub-chapter focuses on their replies. The sub-chapter is based on 65 replies (211 published copies)¹⁰⁵⁰; most of them from members of parliament (46) and, in a number of cases, from the Throne. Such replies could be submitted either to petitioners themselves or to actors, in most cases the head of the corporation, whom the petitioned requested to communicate their replies to the petitioners. Despite some being recorded speeches given from the Throne, most of the replies were submitted in the form of letters. The sub-chapter also includes a number of replies from petitioners, submitted after receiving replies from the petitioned. Though most of the petitioned refrained from articulating their opinions on petitions, petitioners, and petitioning in public, the studied corpus of replies enables us to take a glimpse into the sentiments of at least some of them. Most members of parliament might have preferred to be as independent as possible, but the studied replies indicate that some representatives expected, or at least claimed to expect, their constituents to submit petitions and, in some cases, outright orders. In this sense, the replies function as concrete demonstrations of dialogue.

Most replies from the petitioned can be characterised as favourable and compliant. In such cases, the petitioned tended to describe petitioners' commendations and compliments as a 'great satisfaction'¹⁰⁵¹; declaring their gratitude for the 'high sense of the honour [petitioners] had done [them]'¹⁰⁵². Members of parliament could also claim to be honoured to receive petitions and instructions

¹⁰⁵⁰ Appendix 2 contains a full list of the replies. It also contains basic information regarding their senders and recipients.

¹⁰⁵¹ Coventry 1741 (#108a1), see also Plympton Erle 1763 (#238a1). For generic commendations see, for instance, Colchester 1733 (#046a1); Hereford 1741 (#105a1); Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126a1); Reading 1753 (#175a1); Bath 1760 (#224a1); Bath 1760 (#224a2); Devon 1763 (#226a1); Cullompton 1763 (#227a1); Worcestershire 1763 (#228a1); Herefordshire 1763 (#229a1), Herefordshire 1763 (#229a2); Ilchester 1763 (#234a1); Cornwall 1763 (#237a1); Somerset 1763 (#240a1); Honiton 1763 (#245a1); Yorkshire 1764 (#247a1); Yorkshire 1764 (#247a2); Coventry 1766 (#253a1); Coventry 1766 (#253a2); York 1769 (#286a1); Yorkshire 1769 (#287a1); Yorkshire 1769 (#305a1); Yorkshire 1770 (#319a1); Yorkshire 1770 (#319a2); Westminster 1770 (#328a1); Honiton 1771 (#334a1); Carmarthenshire 1771 (#339a1); Canterbury 1772 (#348a2).

¹⁰⁵² Portsmouth 1764 (#246a1). Representatives could be present in the meetings that resolved to submit such commendations to them. They could also take part in organising and authoring petitions to parliament and the Crown. Peter Jupp has noted, while discussing petitions regarding different branches of trade, that 'local MPs were [often] aware of such an initiative and may have even suggested it'. Petitions were, indeed, often criticised for being, allegedly, authored by opposition members of parliament. Instead of representing the true sense of the people, they voiced the ambitions of discontented opposition politicians. Dickinson 1984, 54 - 57; Jupp 2006, 73 - 74; Dickinson 1994, 208 - 212; Gunn 1983, 77 - 78; Knights 2005, 136; Loft 2016, 21.

from their constituents¹⁰⁵³, often encouraging petitioners to approach them in the future¹⁰⁵⁴. Thomas Geers Winford and Edward Cope Hopton, both of them opposition-supporting Tories¹⁰⁵⁵, assured the corporation of Hereford that 'it is our ardent desire to redress' the grievances the corporation had emphasised in their petition in 1741¹⁰⁵⁶; their 'interests are our attention ... and approbation, our innocent ambition'¹⁰⁵⁷. Such notions are also evident in the replies to the corporation of Reading in 1753. John Dodd, a Court Whig and one of the three candidates¹⁰⁵⁸, promised the corporation that he would use his 'utmost endeavours' to repeal the Jewish Naturalisation Act if elected¹⁰⁵⁹. Charles Fane, an Opposition Whig representing Tavistock from 1734 to 1747¹⁰⁶⁰, on the other hand, claimed to hope that the 'apprehensions and alarms' the act had caused would induce future

¹⁰⁵³ Hereford 1741 (#105a1); Reading 1753 (#175a1); Canterbury 1772 (#342a1). Some repliers, however, criticised petitioners' tone and encouraged them to submit courteous petitions. Repliers could claim that instructions, although in general 'agreeable to our sentiments', contained 'some passages ... that are either too obscure, offensive, or improper at this juncture' to be published, thus judging 'it prudent to postpone the publishing of them' until petitioners 'are pleased to put them in an easier dress'. Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (126a1). Others recognised petitioners 'right to complain', but encouraged them to champion their 'just complaints with calmness'. Charles Kemys Tynte, one of the Somerset representatives in 1763, claimed that a petition 'pen[ned] with a proper constitutional spirit, and signed by honest men will do honour to the person that presents it; and I sincerely believe will give great weight in obtaining a repeal of this disagreeable and partial law'; a reference to the excise duties on cider and perry. Somerset 1763 (#240a1).

¹⁰⁵⁴ Herefordshire 1763 (#229a2), see also Westminster 1741 (#122a1).

¹⁰⁵⁵ HoP/Thomas Geers; HoP/Edward Cope Hopton; HoP/Hereford 1715 - 1754.

¹⁰⁵⁶ The mayor, aldermen, and citizens of Hereford criticised the influence corruption and bribery had on elections. They also criticised 'the betraying the true interest of our county; imbezzling or misapplying the public treasure; the extension of the laws of excise; the neglect of our trade, and exposing it to depredations; the discouraging of our woollen manufacture, or suffering it to decline; the inaction of our fleets and armies, at a time when they should be vigorously employed in a just war'. Hereford 1741 (#105).

¹⁰⁵⁷ Hereford 1741 (#105a1), see also Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126a1); Cirencester 1753 (#174a1); Cirencester 1753 (#174a2); Reading 1753 (#175a1); Reading 1753 (#175a2); Reading 1753 (#175a3); Devon 1763 (#226a1); Cullompton 1763 (#227a1); Worcestershire 1763 (#228); Herefordshire 1763 (#229a1); Ilchester 1763 (#234a1); Cornwall 1763 (#237a1); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238a1); Plymouth 1763 (#239a1); Plymouth 1763 (#239a2); Somerset 1763 (#240a1); Honiton 1763 (#245a1); Yorkshire 1764 (#247a2); Coventry 1766 (#253a1); Yorkshire 1769 (#305a1); Yorkshire 1770 (#319a1); Yorkshire 1770 (#319a2); Honiton 1771 (#334a1); Carmarthenshire 1771 (#339a1); Rochester 1772 (#341a1); Canterbury 1772 (#342a1); Bristol 1772 (#345a1); Bristol 1772 (#345a2); Canterbury 1772 (#348a1); Canterbury 1772 (#348a2).

¹⁰⁵⁸ John Dodd lost the election by one vote: William Strone received 324 votes, Charles Fane 296 votes, and Dodd 295 votes. Dodd, however, became a member of parliament for Reading after the death of Strode in November 1755. He continued to represent Reading until his death in February 1782. HoP/John Dodd; HoP/Reading 1754 - 1790.

¹⁰⁵⁹ Reading 1753 (#175a1). In some cases, repliers implied that their compliance depended on the content of the petition. Members of parliament could, for instance, promise to 'act conformable' as the petitioners' propositions 'are so agreeable to our sentiments'. Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126a1), see also Bristol 1769 (#282a1); York 1769 (#286a1); Bristol 1772 (#345a2).

¹⁰⁶⁰ An Opposition Whig with close connections to the Duke of Bedford. HoP/Charles Fane.

parliaments to abstain from even debating the naturalisation of Jews¹⁰⁶¹. The prevalence of favourable replies should not, however, be seen as a demonstration of representatives' acceptance of petitions and petitioners' claims in general. The studied replies concern only a fraction of petitions and represent only a modest part of the total number of replies and correspondences from 1721 to 1776. It is also more than likely that compliant replies were relayed to publishers more often than the less receptive replies.

Replies from the Throne could contain similar commendations. As most addresses to the Throne included some sort of humble assurances of allegiance, as demonstrated in Chapter 5.2, the replies and responses also tended to contain reciprocal notions of benevolence. George II, for instance, praised the corporate actors for their 'care and concern for the trade' of London in 1730, further assuring that the London petitioners could depend on his compliance¹⁰⁶². However, most of the favourable replies from the Throne became submitted to petitioners concerned about the disastrous loss of Minorca in 1756. In such cases, the King commended petitioners' affectionate attachment to his person and government¹⁰⁶³ and asserted that he had 'the firmest reliance on the affectionate assurances' from them¹⁰⁶⁴. In order to assuage their fears and concerns, George II assured petitioners of his 'utmost care and vigilance' for maintaining 'the honour of the nation, and the commerce of [his] subjects'¹⁰⁶⁵ and achieving a 'safe and honourable peace'¹⁰⁶⁶. Such replies demonstrate a rather traditional form of responding to typical addresses: gentle replies to humble addresses.

However, despite being favourable in general, repliers used different rationales to legitimise their compliance. Most emphasised either the constitution and the common good or constituents' sentiments. In the first case, members of parliament presented the constitution as their reason for observing the recommendations submitted to them; petitioners' desires and requests were represented as necessities for protecting, or restoring, the constitution. George Savile and Edwin Lascelles, both from distinguished Yorkshire families¹⁰⁶⁷, promised the high sheriff and grand jury, defending Wilkes and the freeholders of Middlesex¹⁰⁶⁸, to oppose measures that endangered 'the right of free election' and 'true representation' as long as the petitioners permitted them to 'hold the important trust' of representing them in parliament¹⁰⁶⁹. Lord Perceval, representing Westminster and Dingle in the Irish House of Commons¹⁰⁷⁰, similarly claimed that the sole

¹⁰⁶¹ Reading 1753 (#175a3).

¹⁰⁶² London 1730 (#027a1).

¹⁰⁶³ London 1756 (#218a1); London 1756 (#219a1); London 1760 (#223a1).

¹⁰⁶⁴ London 1756 / #219a1).

¹⁰⁶⁵ London 1756 (#218a1), see also London 1756 (#219a1) and London 1760 (#223a1).

¹⁰⁶⁶ London 1756 (#218a1), see also London 1760 (#223a1).

¹⁰⁶⁷ Savile was independent-minded, though also closely connected to the Marquess of Rockingham. Lascelles, on the other hand, maintained an attachment to Rockingham through Savile, who had chosen Lascelles to stand with him in Yorkshire. HoP/George Savile; HoP/Edwin Lascelles; HoP/Yorkshire 1754 - 1790.

¹⁰⁶⁸ Yorkshire 1769 (#305).

¹⁰⁶⁹ Yorkshire 1769 (#305a1), see also Bath 1760 (#224a1); Yorkshire 1764 (#247a2); Bristol 1772 (#345a1).

¹⁰⁷⁰ HoP/John Perceval.

motives directing his conduct in parliament 'are the preservation of the constitution of my country, the security of the present royal family upon the Throne, and the common liberty of Europe'¹⁰⁷¹. Others promised to pursue measures that 'shall appear to us most conducive to [our happy constitution and the liberties of the people]¹⁰⁷². The precise nature of such assertions, of course, varied from case to case. Some appeared to regard the constitution as an unproblematic, even apolitical, justification. Others, most evident in the case of Lord Perceval, as demonstrated below, pledged to protect the constitution - even if it meant dismissing the desires of his constituents.

In the second case, repliers emphasised the importance of their constituents' sentiments. In such cases, representatives could claim that their constituents' 'interests are our attention' and their 'approbation, our innocent ambition'¹⁰⁷³. George Yonge, one of the leading opponents of the excise duties in Devon¹⁰⁷⁴, claimed in 1764 that 'I feel an additional motive for continuing in the same principles and the same conduct, from the hopes of [gaining petitioners'] future confidence'¹⁰⁷⁵. Henry Bathurst, representing Cirencester in parliament and serving as the attorney-general for the Prince of Wales in 1753¹⁰⁷⁶, assured his constituents that they could depend on him, as he had 'the highest regard for [their] sentiments'; thus promising to 'assist in procuring a repeal of so much of the late act as is in favour of the Jews'¹⁰⁷⁷. Some repliers, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of the trust the petitioners had placed in them. In such cases, the petitioned could proclaim that 'I should act a part very unbecoming the relation I bear to them [constituents], and full of ingratitude after the singular and repeated favours they have conferred on me, if I had not the most earnest desire to comply on every occasion with their wishes, and to obey their commands'¹⁰⁷⁸ - a strong indication that the representative recognised representation as a reciprocal process. William Grove, an opposition-minded Tory representing Coventry from 1741 to 1761¹⁰⁷⁹, for instance, portrayed himself as incapable of acting in opposition to his petitioners' desires. As the petitioners had used their 'free choice' to place him 'in this honourable station', Grove promised them that he would use his utmost endeavours to repeal the Septennial Act, restrict the influence of placemen and pensioners, and punish Robert Walpole for his alleged crimes.¹⁰⁸⁰ Besides describing the position of member of parliament as a symbol of the highest trust in politics, the representatives recognised their dependence on the sentiments of their constituents. As constituents had placed their confidence in them, the representatives had an obligation to defend their interests.

¹⁰⁷¹ Westminster 1741 (#122a1).

¹⁰⁷² Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277a2), see also Plymouth 1763 (#239a1).

¹⁰⁷³ Hereford 1741 (#105a1).

¹⁰⁷⁴ HoP/George Yonge.

¹⁰⁷⁵ Honiton 1764 (#245a1), see also Plymouth 1763 (#239a2).

¹⁰⁷⁶ HoP/Henry Bathurst.

¹⁰⁷⁷ Cirencester 1753 (#174a1), see also Yorkshire 1769 (#287a1).

¹⁰⁷⁸ Plymouth 1763 (#239a2), see also Honiton 1764 (#245a1); Yorkshire 1769 (#287a1); Yorkshire 1769 (#305a1); Yorkshire 1770 (#319a2); Honiton 1771 (#334a1).

¹⁰⁷⁹ HoP/William Grove.

¹⁰⁸⁰ Coventry 1741 (#108a1).

Some of the replies contained references to both discourses. In such cases, the repliers tended to represent the constitution and petitioners' desires as compatible objectives. William Grove, portraying himself as 'devoted to [both his constituents'] service and the good of [his] country' in 1741, promised to champion the requests of the general meeting of the independent freemen of Coventry: 'I know of no means more effectual for the service of both, than those [the petitioners] have lately represented to me'¹⁰⁸¹. Rather than recognising the potential tensions and contradictions, the repliers represented the constitution and petitioners' sentiments as congruent. In this sense, the assertions resemble petitioners' requests to promote both their private interests and those of the nation, as demonstrated in Chapter 4.1 (Petitions and the Collective Interest). But even though most of the repliers combined the discourses in a rather nonchalant manner, some of the representatives provided petitioners with a more detailed account on their sentiments on the subject. George Savile and Edwin Lascelles, representing Yorkshire, a constituency under the influence of the Marquess of Rockingham¹⁰⁸², appeared to recognise the Janus-faced character of representation. In their reply to the petition submitted by the sheriff and grand jury of the county, used to protest the treatment of John Wilkes in 1769, the representatives promised, as 'trustees for the people', to defend their rights and, as 'members of the legislature', to protect the constitution and promote measures 'tending to maintain good order of government, and to insure and to encrease the quiet, the happiness, and the freedom of the subject'¹⁰⁸³. As in other cases, the congruence of the objectives depended on the definitions given to concepts such as *right*, *happiness*, and *freedom of the subject*. It is more than safe to assume that those opposing Wilkes and his cause did not perceive the Yorkshire petition as a declaration supporting the good order of government.

Most of the repliers recognised petitioners' right to submit instructions. Some even agreed that constituents possessed the right to submit orders and commands to those representing them in parliament. Velters Cornwall, a Tory representing Herefordshire from 1722 to 1768¹⁰⁸⁴, praised 'the instructive part of [his petitioners'] epistle', promising that 'their orders shall always be sincerely obeyed'¹⁰⁸⁵. Cornwall, of course, had nothing to fear. Like most actors in Herefordshire, one of the cider counties, Cornwall opposed the excise duties that the gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of the county had criticised in their petition submitted on 6 June 1763. Lord Barrington, the treasurer of the navy and one of the representatives for Plymouth¹⁰⁸⁶, a constituency in Devon, a cider county, similarly argued that 'I should act a part very unbecoming the relation I bear to [the petitioners], and full of ingratitude after the singular and repeated favours

¹⁰⁸¹ Coventry 1741 (#108a1), see also Plymouth 1763 (#239a1).

¹⁰⁸² HoP/Yorkshire 1754 - 1790.

¹⁰⁸³ Yorkshire 1769 (#287a1).

¹⁰⁸⁴ HoP/Velters Cornwall; Dickinson 1977, 185.

¹⁰⁸⁵ He further argued that 'it is a maxim in all wise states, to take the first occasion of repealing any law totally distasteful to the community; of this we have a recent instance in the Jew Bill; and one or two similar examples are, methinks, enough for a century'. Herefordshire 1763 (#229a2).

¹⁰⁸⁶ HoP/William Wildman Barrington; Wilson 1998, 233.

[the petitioners] have conferred on me, if I had not the most earnest desire to comply on every occasion with their wishes, and to obey their commands'¹⁰⁸⁷. John Calcraft, a representative for Rochester and supporter of Lord Chatham¹⁰⁸⁸, on the other hand, declared in 1772 that 'it shall be [his] utmost endeavour, by an independent conduct in parliament, to merit the future good opinion of [his] fellow citizens, whose commands I shall ever be ready to receive and obey'¹⁰⁸⁹. However, even in such cases the repliers' formulations concerned their private decisions. Rather than describing a precise doctrine, or arguing in favour of the imperative mandate of representation, representatives emphasised their personal willingness to observe such commands. It is, therefore, more than challenging to assess if the representatives considered members of parliament in general as obliged to observe such commands.

Discourses on representatives' duties and obligations contained similar notions of stern but ambiguous imperativeness. Besides describing themselves as petitioners' 'faithful and obedient servants'¹⁰⁹⁰, a common convention used both in petitions and replies, representatives also emphasised their duties and obligations. George Pocock, an admiral representing Plymouth from 1760 to 1768¹⁰⁹¹, assured the mayor and corporation of the borough, who submitted a petition against the excise duties on cider and perry in 1763, that 'the obligations' under which he laboured made him 'attentive to what [his] constituents please to think are their true and particular interest'. Furthermore, Pocock insisted that he retained 'the highest sense of the repeated favours [his constituents] have done [him]'.¹⁰⁹² Richard Milles, on the other hand, emphasised representatives' duties in his response to the citizens and freemen of Canterbury, urging their representatives to support the motion to shorten the duration of parliaments in 1772. Milles, having voted in favour of the said motion, claimed that 'it will always be [his] inclination, as it is [his] duty, to pay a due and respectful deference to the sentiments of [his] constituents'¹⁰⁹³. In both cases, members of parliament emphasised the importance of reciprocation, even suggesting that constituents ought to

¹⁰⁸⁷ Plymouth 1763 (#239a2), see also Hereford 1741 (#105a1); Devon 1763 (#226a1); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238a1); Honiton 1764 (#245a1).

¹⁰⁸⁸ HoP/John Calcraft.

¹⁰⁸⁹ Rochester 1772 (#341a1), see also Somerset 1763 (#240a1) and Yorkshire 1770 (#319a1).

¹⁰⁹⁰ Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126a1), see also Colchester 1733 (#046a1); Hereford 1741 (#105a1); Coventry 1741 (#108a1); Reading 1753 (#175a2); Reading 1753 (#175a3); Bath 1760 (#224a2); Cullompton 1763 (#227a1); Worcestershire 1763 (#228a1); Herefordshire 1763 (#229a1); Ilchester 1763 (#234a1); Cornwall 1763 (#237a1); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238a1); Plymouth 1763 (#239a1); Honiton 1764 (#245a1); Portsmouth 1764 (#246a1); Yorkshire 1764 (#247a1); Yorkshire 1764 (#247a2); Coventry 1766 (#253a1); Coventry 1766 (#253a2); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277a1); York 1769 (#286a1); Yorkshire 1769 (#287a1); Yorkshire 1769 (#305a1); Yorkshire 1770 (#319a1); Yorkshire 1770 (#319a2); Westminster 1770 (#328a1); Honiton 1771 (#334a1); Carmarthenshire 1771 (#339a1); Rochester 1772 (#341a1).

¹⁰⁹¹ HoP/George Pocock.

¹⁰⁹² Plymouth 1763 (#239a1), see also Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126a1); Reading 1753 (#175a2); Plympton Erle 1763 (#238a1); Portsmouth 1764 (#246a1).

¹⁰⁹³ Canterbury 1772 (#342a1), see also Coventry 1741 (#108a1); Anglesey & Beaumaris 1742 (#126a1); Cirencester 1753 (#174a1); Newcastle upon Tyne 1769 (#277a1); York

possess the privilege of controlling their representatives' conduct in parliament. However, discourses on representatives' duties and obligations did not contain pronounced assertions of imperative mandate as such. Instead, repliers tended to emphasise their personal eagerness to observe petitioners' orders and commands.

Members of parliament could also use replies to assert their independence from their constituents. The case of the Colchester petition of 1733 is one of the most incisive illustrations of representatives' pronounced refusal to observe petitioners' requests. The corporation of Colchester urged both their representatives to act against the proposed excise duties on tobacco and wine, describing the excise scheme the administration endeavour to introduce as dangerous to parliament and the constitution¹⁰⁹⁴. But one of their representatives, Samuel Tufnell, a consistent supporter of the administration¹⁰⁹⁵, refused to renounce the scheme before the introduction of the actual bills. Tufnell assured the corporation of his support of the trading interest, claiming that 'I have ever thought [trade] a matter of such consequence, as to deserve the more immediate care of the representatives of a trading people'. As a supporter of the trading interest, he could never approve a scheme that would undermine it. If the proposed duties would endanger trade, the constitution, and the liberties for the people, as the petitioners claimed, he promised to oppose them. However, if the proposed duties would encourage fair traders, reduce frauds, enable the government to reduce the national debt, or 'give ease to those branches of trade which are most burdensome to our poor manufacturers', as Tufnell believed, he, as well as the corporation of Colchester, ought to support them. He insisted that 'acting upon these principles, and upon this foundation, I can have no reason to doubt the continuance of [the corporation's] favour'.¹⁰⁹⁶ Despite receiving further criticism from the corporation¹⁰⁹⁷, Tufnell voted in favour of the proposed duties, as did Stamp Brooksbank, the other representative for Colchester¹⁰⁹⁸. Though neither Tufnell nor Brooksbank contested the Colchester seats in the general election in 1734, both became representatives for pro-administration constituencies during the 1740s¹⁰⁹⁹.

Some repliers used even more pronounced formulations to assert their independence from the petitioners. Although receiving an approving petition from the burgesses and inhabitants of Westminster in 1741, Lord Perceval, the father

1769 (#286a1); Yorkshire 1769 (#287a1); Yorkshire 1770 (#319a1); Westminster 1770 (#328a1); Carmarthenshire 1771 (#339a1).

¹⁰⁹⁴ Colchester 1733 (#046).

¹⁰⁹⁵ HoP/Samuel Tufnell.

¹⁰⁹⁶ Colchester 1733 (#046a1).

¹⁰⁹⁷ Tufnell's argumentation did not convince the corporation. The mayor of Colchester replied to Tufnell, claiming to have the 'authority to assure you, that nothing in your answer has in the least altered our thoughts'. He further claimed that if Tufnell decided to 'vote for a bill of the nature, even in the shape you seem to be pleased with, or in any other', he should not 'expect our approbation, since we are fully convinced that all excise laws are destructive to trade, innovations on our antient rights, and altogether inconsistent with the true interest of a free people'. 'The spacious pretence of serving the fair trader can no longer amuse us', the mayor concluded. Colchester 1733 (#046a2).

¹⁰⁹⁸ Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1308 - 1314.

¹⁰⁹⁹ HoP/Samuel Tufnell; HoP/Stamp Brooksbank.

of Spencer Perceval, the future prime minister¹¹⁰⁰, decided to use his reply to describe his reasons for maintaining his independence from his constituents. He claimed that his conduct in parliament was guided by his zeal to protect the constitution and defend the House of Hanover, both principles he had never concealed from his constituents. He praised the 'independent voice' of the petitioners but also hoped that his constituents would recognise that 'I ought to be independent there [in the House of Commons]'; if his constituents' sentiments differed from their 'true interests', he would oppose the first to protect the second.¹¹⁰¹ Despite being elected as an opposition candidate, Perceval became a supporter of the government after the fall of Walpole in 1742. His independent conduct enraged both his constituents and the opposition.¹¹⁰² Other representatives, too, produced similar assertions, although most of them contained less detailed accounts than the letter from Lord Perceval in 1741. Charles Fane, a supporter of the Duke of Bedford and a candidate to become a member of parliament for Reading¹¹⁰³, promised the corporation, opposing the Jewish Naturalisation Act in 1753, that if elected, he would do his utmost to repeal the act. However, Fane also hoped that his constituents would permit him to act as 'a free agent'.¹¹⁰⁴ Assertions emphasising representatives' independence did not mean that the repliers intended to act in opposition to petitioners' requests. Charles Fane, for instance, promised to act as petitioners' requested. However, they could also function as an indication of representatives' stubbornness, as the case of Lord Perceval demonstrates.

But the most critical replies did not come from members of parliament, but from the Throne. Replies from the Throne started to gain critical undertones after the politicisation of addresses during the crisis on Wilkes' seat in 1769 - 1770. Such notions are most evident in the replies to the London addresses. The corporation of London submitted three distinct addresses to the Throne in 1770¹¹⁰⁵, urging the King to dismiss his ministers and dissolve the parliament, as demonstrated in earlier chapters. In his replies, the King asserted his readiness to 'receive the requests, and to listen to the complaints' of his subjects but also noted that 'it gives me great concern' that the corporation had been 'so far misled as to offer me an address and remonstrance' he regarded as 'disrespectful to me, injurious to [his] parliament, and irreconcilable to the principles of the constitution'. He also emphasised his endeavour to refrain from infringing on the privileges of the other branches of the balanced constitution, thus securing his subjects the rights and

¹¹⁰⁰ HoP/Spencer Perceval.

¹¹⁰¹ Lord Perceval further asserted that 'when I differ from your sentiments, I shall do it with great reluctance, and then only when I am convinced that your true interests must extort it from me'. 'In such a case the crime is equal', he claimed, 'to flatter popularity, or to court power'; 'it becomes me to respect both; but it is my duty to follow neither, beyond those limits which the circumstance of time, prudence, necessity, and the publick safety can alone determine'. Westminster 1741 (#122a1), see also Bristol 1769 (#282a1).

¹¹⁰² HoP/John Perceval.

¹¹⁰³ HoP/Reading 1754 - 1790, HoP/Charles Fane.

¹¹⁰⁴ Reading 1753 (#175a3).

¹¹⁰⁵ It also submitted two similar addresses in 1771 and 1773.

privileges the people of Britain had 'called [the House of Hanover] to defend'.¹¹⁰⁶ Despite the recurrent addresses, the King asserted that his 'sentiment on that subject continue the same'¹¹⁰⁷. Though addresses to the Throne represent the most humble sub-genre of petitions, replies from the Throne contained more disapproving notions than those from members of parliament.

The replies to the three London addresses in favour of reconciliation in 1775 contained similar notions. As in 1770, the King confirmed his readiness to receive 'dutiful petitions' from his subjects, and even observe 'reasonable requests' from them, but refused to honour the requests from the corporation of London as long as some of his American subjects continued to challenge the privileges of the British parliament. He further argued that 'I owe it to rest of my people, of whose zeal and fidelity I have had such constant proofs, to continue and enforce those measures by which alone their rights and interests can be asserted and maintained'.¹¹⁰⁸ In the case of the second address, the King even declared his 'utmost astonishment' in finding his 'subjects capable of encouraging the rebellious disposition ... in some of [his] colonies in North America'. In contrast to the petitioners requests, he confirmed his support for his parliament and promised to pursue its recommendations 'for the support of the constitutional rights of Great Britain'.¹¹⁰⁹ The presentation of one of the addresses, too, caused discord. At the orders of the petitioners, the sheriffs of London had approached the King at St James's to enquire the details on the ensuing reception of addresses; the King, in turn, had informed them that such addresses are to be received at the Levee. Sheriff Plomer, requested to present the address in person, informed the King that the petitioners had decided not to present the address unless he would 'be pleased to receive it sitting on the Throne', inducing the King to note that 'I am ever ready to receive addresses and petitions - but I am the judge where'. The response from the King, on the other hand, prompted the petitioners to declare that he 'is bound to hear the petitions of his people, it being the undoubted right of the subject to be heard, and not a matter of grace and favour'.¹¹¹⁰ The responses

¹¹⁰⁶ London 1770 (#322a1), see also London 1770 (#324a1) and London 1771 (#335a1).

¹¹⁰⁷ London 1770 (#324a1), see also London 1770 (#323a1). The corporate actors of London also submitted a similar address in 1771, receiving a rather similar response from the King. George III portrayed himself as concerned of seeing his subjects receive, 'in such reprehensible terms, a request, with which, I have repeatedly declared, I cannot comply'. London 1771 (#335a1). In 1773, he declared that 'I have the satisfaction to think that my people don't doubt of my readiness to attend to their complaints, or of my ardent desire to promote their happiness, which I cannot more effectually do, than by refusing every attempt to sow groundless jealousies among them'. He also declared that the 'petition is so void of foundation, and is besides conceived in such disrespectful terms, that I am convinced you do not seriously imagine it can be complied with'. London 1773 (#350a1).

¹¹⁰⁸ London 1775 (#374a1), see also London 1776 (#457a1).

¹¹⁰⁹ London 1775 (#376a1).

¹¹¹⁰ BC/LC 4 - 6 July 1775; BC/LEP 4 - 6 July 1775; BC/LIEP 5 - 7 July 1775; BC/PA 6 July 1775; BC/PA 7 July 1775. Steve Poole has noted that until the reign of William IV, 'the rules governing the presentation of addresses and petitions to the King at the levee were actually far from clear'. Due to the procedural incoherence, conflicts regarding the presentation of petitions were far from being unprecedented. Poole 2000, 30 - 31, 38 - 39.

to the London addresses in 1770 and 1775 represent the most critical form of replies during the studied period. But such replies and addresses also demonstrate that the relationship of the petitioners and the King could, at times, be more tortuous than is often assumed.

Numerous actors discussed petitions in parliament, pamphlets, and papers. However, in most cases, the debaters consisted of actors other than the receivers, or the submitters, of the petitions. The replies, on the other hand, provide insight into the sentiments of the petitioned. While modest in term of numbers, the replies studied in this sub-chapter demonstrate that at least some representatives embraced petitioners' desires, requests, and even commands. Many repliers emphasised the importance of petitioners' sentiments and the trust their constituents had placed in them. Others portrayed recognising petitioners' concerns and observing their requests as their duties and obligations as representatives. In both cases, repliers, most of them representatives, embraced notions emphasising the reciprocal nature of representation, something that many petitioners, too, had emphasised in their petitions. But claiming that such repliers espoused theories based on the imperative mandate of representation is an overstatement. Rather than being demonstrations of articulated theories on representation, most of the repliers' assertions concerned their private choices and preferences. Nor should representatives' decisions be understood as indications of general compliance; though finding common ground on certain issues, the petitioned could also disagree on other matters. Nevertheless, the replies demonstrate that many receivers of petitions recognised the importance of petitioning.

6 PROTECTING PARLIAMENT AND THE CONSTITUTION: THE CRITICS OF PETITIONS AND PETITIONING

Publicised petitions, as well as petitioners, often attained fierce criticism. This chapter, in contrast to the earlier chapters, focuses on those actors that opposed and criticised petitions. Due to its focus, the chapter utilises different sets of sources than most of the preceding chapters, focusing on debates that occurred in parliament, press, and pamphlets. The reason for the different focus is simple; petitions, apart from counter-petitions, focused on defending and legitimising petitions and petitioning. The utilisation of different sorts of sources, on the other hand, enables one to also understand the dissenting perceptions of petitioning. This chapter demonstrates that the critics of petitions used three distinct discourses to delegitimise petitions and counter pressure from actors out-of-doors. In most cases, the criticism on petitions focused on (1) petitioners' disreputable character, (2) the independence of parliament, and (3) the need to preserve the balanced constitution. Most actors used different combinations of the above-mentioned discourses, but in order to distinguish discursive and conceptual patterns, these discourses are scrutinised in separate sub-chapters.

The chapter is divided into four thematic sub-chapters. The first sub-chapter (Mobs, Multitudes, and the Scum of the Earth) focuses on the criticism on petitioners' ethos and character. In such cases, the critics tended to represent petitioners as deluded dupes, often accusing them of tumultuous conduct. The second and third sub-chapters, on the other hand, scrutinise critics' use of the independence of parliament as a counter-argument against petitions. The second sub-chapter (Protecting the Independence of Parliament) focuses on the pronounced assertions of independence, and the third one (Procedural Constraints on Petitioning) on the procedural arguments used to protect its privileges. In both cases the critics emphasised the importance of parliament, defending its right to deliberate and legislate. The fourth sub-chapter (In Defence of the Constitution), on the other hand, focuses on counter-arguments emphasising the established order of politics and the constitutional balance. In such cases, the critics could accuse

petitioners and proponents of popular interventions of promoting democratic and ochlocratic principles, thus challenging the established form of government. Some of these discourses gained more references than others, but each of them played a significant role in the process of delegitimising petitioners' and their proponents' arguments.

6.1 Mobs, Multitudes, and the Scum of the Earth

Critical notions and comments on petitioners' status and conduct formed one of the most common forms of criticism on petitions. Petitioners, and the proponents of petitions, tended to represent their petitions as the true sentiments of concerned constituents. Petitioners could also claim to act on behalf of recognised institutions (corporations, assizes, court of quarter sessions) and respected abstractions (the people, the trading interest, the common interest, and past and future generations), as demonstrated in Chapter 3 (Representing the Sense of the People: Petitioners Uses of Representative Claims). Opponents of petitions, on the other hand, often focused on challenging the claims emphasising petitioners' reputation and the rectitude of their intentions. Critics used both qualitative and quantitative arguments to counter the claims. Qualitatively, the opponents criticised petitioners' and their supporters' character and intentions, claiming that most petitions gained their support from disreputable actors. Quantitatively, they focused on challenging the scale of petitions and subscriptions. Such criticism became more frequent after the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions in 1769 - 1770, as demonstrated in Chapter 3.2 (Petitioners and Subscribers). In both cases, the critics focused on undermining the claims that petitions represented the true voice of the people.

Rather than being genuine concerns of respectable constituents, petitions were described as complaints from the *hoi polloi*, who were incapable of understanding high politics. Most opponents either criticised the status of the petitioners themselves or represented the masses as incapable of governing due to their inclination of being misled and used for sinister purposes. In the first case, critics undermined petitioners' character. In such cases, petitioners and the proponents of their petitions were characterised as 'inconsiderable persons'¹¹¹¹. George

¹¹¹¹ Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 857 - 858/William Pulteney (Middlesex). See also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 884 - 886/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696 - 697/George Onslow (Surrey); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock); *The False Alarm* 1770/43 - 44 (T88127); *An Eighth Letter to the People of England* 1770/97 - 98 (T82445); *An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London* 1733/16 - 18 (T57527). Thomas De Grey, the brother of William De Grey, the attorney-general from 1766 to 1771, claimed that the signatories of the Wilkite petition from Westminster were 'not men of dignity or consequence'. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk); HoP/Thomas De Grey; HoP/William De Grey. Horatio Walpole, a pro-administration representative for Norwich, similarly argued that he had 'never met with one who could be called a gentleman that found fault with the [Jewish Naturalisation]

Onslow, the son of Arthur Onslow, the speaker of the House of Commons from 1727 to 1761¹¹¹², for instance, criticised the Wilkite petition from Westminster in 1770¹¹¹³ due to the absence of subscriptions from 'gentlemen' and 'men of property'¹¹¹⁴. Petitioners and their supporters were also described as 'base-born' people¹¹¹⁵ and referred to as the 'populace'¹¹¹⁶ and 'multitude'¹¹¹⁷. The author of the *An Address to Junius*, a pro-administration pamphlet accused the Wilkites of manipulating the 'unthinking multitude with obsolete names, and surd, unmeaning sounds'¹¹¹⁸. Charles Jenkinson, criticising Wilkes and his supporters in the House

Act' of 1753. Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 153/Horatio Walpole (Norwich);HoP/Horatio Walpole. For refutations of such claims, see, for instance, Cobbett 1774 - 1777 (HoC) 187/George Hayley (London); Observations on Public Liberty, Patriotism, Ministerial Despotism, and National Grievances 1769/27 - 28 (N10108); The Crisis 1770/28 - 29 (N27870); The Livery-Man 1740/5 (N3338).

¹¹¹² HoP/George Onslow.

¹¹¹³ To which exact petition De Grey referred to, remains unclear. He asserted that of the 25,000 'respectable inhabitants, many of them of the first distinction, two only, in the rank of gentleman, could be found to countenance the petition'. De Grey also claimed that the chairman of the meeting was a bookseller. It is possible that he referred to Westminster 1769 (#284), an address submitted to the King on the issue of Wilkes in the name of the 'electors of the city and liberty of Westminster'. Most copies of the Westminster petition were published between early November and early December. De Grey, on the other hand, criticised the petitioners on 9 January 1770. The said Westminster petition was also one of those emphasising the scale of subscriptions, a feature constantly criticised by the opponents of petitions. According to various reports, the petition was signed by 4,216 - 5,137 actors, usually described as electors, as noted in Chapter 3.2.4 (Subscriptions and the Emphasis on Scale).

¹¹¹⁴ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696 - 697/George Onslow (Surrey), see also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 695 - 696/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk). Onslow emphasised the absence of 'freeholders of any class' in particular. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696/George Onslow (Surrey), see also 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 815 - 816/Earl of Sandwich. Richard Rigby, a vociferous supporter of the administration, however, argued that 'the majority, even of this class [of freeholders], is not better than an ignorant multitude, whom it is absurd, in the highest degree, to suppose capable of deciding upon a question, about which the best lawyers, and the ablest men in this House, are still divided'.

¹¹¹⁵ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock); HoP/Richard Rigby. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 695 - 696/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk). William Yonge described the opponents of the Jewish Naturalisation Act as 'the lowest sort of people, who never form any opinion from their own judgment'. Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 159/William Yonge (Honiton). See also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 815 - 816/Earl of Sandwich; Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London 1742/30 - 31 (T1105).

¹¹¹⁶ Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 153/Horatio Walpole (Norwich); BC/PA 14 November 1769; Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/32 - 33, 41 (T53010); An Eighth Letter to the People of England 1770/97 - 98 (T82445). For more general uses of the concept, see, for instance, Ihalainen 2010, 71, 76 - 77, 99 - 101, 106, 324, 366; Knights 2005, 285.

¹¹¹⁷ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 691/Charles Jenkinson (Appleby); Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury). See also An Address to Junius 1770/17 - 18 (T11110); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/9 (N007621); An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/16 - 18 (T57527). The concept of multitude remained a popular (pejorative) characterisation of the people throughout the eighteenth century. Ihalainen 2010, 366; Gunn 1983, 274 - 275; Knights 2005, 285 - 286.

¹¹¹⁸ An Address to Junius 1770/17 - 18 (T11110), see also An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/9 (N007621) and BC/PA 14 November 1769.

of Commons in 1770, denounced the dependence on 'popular opinion' and 'popular voice'. If 'the authority of this House [would] depend upon the popular opinion', Jenkinson declared, 'scarce any laws would be regarded'; 'all laws, in their immediate effects, are restraint and inconvenience, and the multitude never consider remote advantages'.¹¹¹⁹ Such characterisations became used to emphasise petitioners' ineptitude. Far from being capable of informing parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne of the true state of affairs, the absence of education and the dependence on the necessities of life made the petitioners and their supporters susceptible to improper influences.

Critics also used stronger characterisations to criticise petitioners and their supporters. In such cases, the criticised actors became described as a 'mob'¹¹²⁰, a 'rabble'¹¹²¹, and as the 'scum of the earth'¹¹²². The *Daily Courant*, a pro-administration paper defending the excise scheme in 1733¹¹²³, described certain sections of the petition-supporting populace as the 'rabble, the very riraff and scum of the streets'¹¹²⁴. Nathaniel Polhill, the author of *Reflections on the Present Conduct of the Populace*, a pro-administration pamphlet defending the same scheme as the *Daily Courant*, noted that 'although the right of petitioning belongs to the meanest subject in the kingdom, our caballing gentlemen should distinguish between petitioning, and rioting, or insulting'. 'Must our parliament' and members of parlia-

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- ¹¹¹⁹ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 690 - 691/Charles Jenkinson (Appleby). Earl of Sandwich claimed that such actors became inclined to petition 'either by the general pressures of poverty, the want of an immediate meal, or the future hopes of some better establishment'. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 815 - 816/Earl of Sandwich, see also *An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/36 - 37* (T57527).
- ¹¹²⁰ Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC)/William Yonge (Honiton); Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury); *Reflections on the Present Conduct of the Populace 1733/25 - 26* (T102099). For uses of similar characterisations in other contexts during the eighteenth century, see, for instance, Ihalainen 2010, 72, 99 - 101, 366, 446; Knights 2005, 200, 305.
- ¹¹²¹ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 703 - 705/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 695/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk); *BC/Public Advertiser 14 November 1769*; *GM April 1733 /DC 17 April 1733*; *The False Alarm 1770/43 - 44, 52 - 53* (T88127); *An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/16 - 18* (T57527). For similar uses of the concept of rabble, see also Ihalainen 2010, 144, 275 - 276, 446; Knights 2005, 305.
- ¹¹²² Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk), see also *The False Alarm 1770/47* (T88127) ('the meanest and grossest of the people') and *BC/PA 20 November 1770* ('brutish, vicious, and evil-minded').
- ¹¹²³ Founded in 1702, Jeremy Black has described the *Daily Courant* as the 'first succesful daily paper'. Like the other Walpolean papers, the *Daily Courant* was subsidised by the administration. The Committee of Secrecy, inquiring Walpole's use of public funds during the period from 1731 to 1741, concluded in 1742 that the prime minister had, in the words of Michael Harris, used over 50,000 pounds 'on the production and distribution of newspapers and pamphlets'. Besides buying papers and paying authors, Walpole used the Post Office to distribute pro-administration publications, reducing expenses and increasing their penetration. Harris 1984, 197 - 202; Black 2001, 9, 28, 37; Downie 1984, 178 - 180; Harris 1996, 16 - 17; Langford 1975, 22 - 23; Downie 1987, 119 - 123.
- ¹¹²⁴ *GM April 1733/DC 17 April 1733*.

ment observe 'the dictates of a mob, or else endanger life or limb?', the pro-administration pamphleteer further inquired.¹¹²⁵ Critics could also claim that petitioners' reprehensible conduct derived from the inebriate habits of the rabble. Lord North, who would become the prime minister less than three weeks later, accused the proponents of Wilkite petitions of exalting 'the drunken ragamuffins of a vociferous mob ... into equal importance with men of the coolest judgement, the best morals, and the greatest property in the kingdom'¹¹²⁶. Samuel Johnson, on the other hand, attributed the opposition success in collecting signatures to Wilkite petitions to the combination of 'ale and clamour', claiming that thereafter 'nothing is remembered [of the petition] ... but that it spoke in much of fears and apprehensions'¹¹²⁷. The absence of status and affluence might have been interpreted as incompetence in the minds of petitioners' critics, but such attributes remained less incriminating than the malicious conduct of the mob.

For most parts of the eighteenth-century, members of parliament used more restrained characterisations to criticise petitioners and their supporters. However, uses of pejorative conceptualisations started to gain ground even in parliament after the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions in 1769. One of the most explicit illustrations of this change occurred during a debate on the Wilkite petitions in 1770. Thomas De Grey, the pro-administration representative for Norfolk¹¹²⁸, accused the opposition actors of exploiting 'the senseless clamours of the thoughtless and the ignorant, the lowest of the rabble, who naturally abhor all government'. He further claimed that the Westminster petition¹¹²⁹ carried signatures only from 'the scum of the earth' and the 'refuse of the people'.¹¹³⁰ John Glynn,

¹¹²⁵ Reflections on the Present Conduct of the Populace 1733/25 (T102099).

¹¹²⁶ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury). William Yonge, the secretary at war and member of the privy council in 1736, attributed the opposition to the Septennial Act to 'the mob, I mean such as have no business with elections, desir[ing] the repeal of this law, because they would then have an opportunity of getting drunk, committing riots, and living idly, much oftener than they have at present'. Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 453 - 454/William Yonge (Honiton); HoP/William Yonge. For similar arguments in other parliamentary debates, see Ihalainen 2010, 71 - 72.

¹¹²⁷ The False Alarm 1770/40 - 42 (T88127), see also An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/18 (T57527) and Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 703 - 705/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis).

¹¹²⁸ According to Brian Hayes, De Grey supported, in most cases, the administrations of Rockingham, Grafton, and North. He supported the government on the Middlesex election dispute in 1769. In 1771, he voted in favour of the imprisonment of Brass Crosby, the member of parliament for Honiton and one of the most ardent supporters of Wilkes. Brass was committed to the Tower for supporting the printers publishing parliamentary debates. HoP/Thomas De Grey; HoP/Brass Crosby.

¹¹²⁹ A probable reference to Westminster 1769 (#284), as earlier noted.

¹¹³⁰ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 695 - 696/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk), see also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696 - 697/George Onslow (Surrey) and Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock). George Onslow defended De Grey's notion. Onslow claimed that many of his constituents, when signing the Surrey petition (a probable reference to Surrey 1769 [#314]), 'knew no more what they were about than this table, [laying his hand upon the table before him] and I never will consent to the House of Commons joining with the people against the House of Commons'. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697/George Onslow (Surrey). Thomas Howard, a Tory occasionally supporting Grenville, on the other hand, described the Surrey petitioners as 'sensible men' in general. 'If the hon[ourable] gentleman', he continued, 'had said that

the chairman of the Society of Gentlemen Supporters of the Bill of Rights¹¹³¹, the most notable of the Wilkite pressure groups¹¹³², interrupted De Grey's speech, accusing him of 'an offence against the people of this free kingdom', insisting that the 'privileges of the people of this country do not depend upon birth and fortune'¹¹³³. De Grey's accusations illustrate the increasing frustration in parliament. Members of parliament, it appears, regarded the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions, some of them undermining the independence of parliament, as most of those submitted in defence of John Wilkes, more intimidating than most controversies regarding petitioning.

Others criticised the people out-of-doors for being susceptible to opposition influences. Critics described supporters of petitions as credulous¹¹³⁴ and deluded¹¹³⁵, thus prone to becoming dupes¹¹³⁶ and 'fools led on by knaves'¹¹³⁷. A

they did not know what they did when they chose him for their representative, his assertion would probably have found more credit'. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697/Thomas Howard (Malmesbury); HoP/Thomas Howard.

1131 Glynn, a Unitarian, had been one of the candidates in one of the infamous Middlesex elections in 1768. He continued to represent the county in parliament from 1768 to 1779. HoP/John Glynn; Langford 1992, 381, 386.

1132 Founded in 1769, the SSBR soon became the leading tool of the Wilkite radicals. Whereas the earlier Wilkite campaigns had focused on defending the person of Wilkes, thus lacking a systematic program, the campaigns organised and encouraged by the SSBR emphasised the importance of parliamentary reforms, ranging from shorter parliaments to the redistribution of seats. The movement, however, started to disintegrate in 1771. John Horne Tooke, Richard Oliver, James Townshend, John Sawbridge, and other prominent figures within the movement left the SSBR to found the Constitutional Society, a rival organisation. After the split the movement started to wither in a more general manner. By the time of Wilkes' election to parliament in 1774, the Wilkite furore had largely been replaced by the concerns (and, indeed, radicalism) regarding the crisis in the colonies. Langford 1992, 529; Wilson 1998, 228 - 230; O'Gorman 2006, 226; Dickinson 1977, 213 - 214; Royle & Walvin 1982, 19 - 20; Dickinson 1994, 235 - 236, 242.

1133 Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696/John Glynn (Middlesex). After the intervention De Grey, appeared to soften his stance. According to *Cobbett's Parliamentary History of England*, De Grey 'explained himself, and said, that he meant only, that those who had signed the petition were not men of dignity and consequence; that their chairman was no other than a bookseller'. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk).

1134 Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/41 (T53010); BC/PA 14 November 1769; An Address to the People of England 1770/23 - 25 (T165926); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury). See also An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/9 - 12 (N007621).

1135 BC/PA 14 November 1769; An Address to Junius 1770/17 - 18 (T11110); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/9 - 12 (N007621); BC/Public Advertiser 18 July 1769.

1136 BC/PA 14 November 1769; Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/41 (T53010). For opposition refutations of such claims, see Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 698 - 699/George Savile (Yorkshire) and Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 760 - 761/William Dowdesell (Worcestershire). See also Reflections on the Present Conduct of the Populace 1733/1 - 2 (T102099).

1137 GM March 1733/LJ 10 March 1733 (no. 715). The *London Journal* accused opposition actors of 'put[ting] words into their mouths; like parrots, they repeat, and then, like sheep, follow their leaders'. GM February 1733/LJ 10 February 1733 (no. 711). Owen Ruffhead, a pro-administration pamphleteer, on the other hand, expressed his astonishment on how the people 'should be still so blind to their interest, as not to perceive that these men only use them as a ladder, to reach preferment; and that when they have gained the topmost round, they will spurn at them, and requite them, as they

pro-administration pamphleteer, addressing 'the people of England', proclaimed in 1770 that the 'hearts [of the people] are in general good' and their 'designs and intentions ... not bad'. At the same time, the people remained 'too good natured' and 'credulous', often 'led astray too easily by any artful man who will tell [them] a plausible tale'.¹¹³⁸ Another pro-administration author argued in 1769 that 'the deluded, misled populace', deprived 'of the proper means of information' and used as 'the dupes of crafty and designing politicians', 'are rather objects of pity, than resentment'¹¹³⁹. Henry Pelham, defending the naturalisation of Jews in 1753, similarly insisted that the 'poor people have been misled' but 'deserve at least our compassion'¹¹⁴⁰. Rather than being malicious as such, petitioners and their supporters were characterised as naive and ingenuous. But such qualities also precluded them from directing the decisions of the House of Commons. John Willes, the attorney-general in 1734, argued against the dependence on instructions as actors in boroughs, cities, and counties 'are very liable to be mis-led, and may often be induced to give instructions directly contrary to the interest of their country'¹¹⁴¹.

In most cases, critics accused opposition actors of three distinct forms of misleading. Misrepresentation of information constituted the first form of such accusations. In such cases, critics blamed the organisers of petitions of misrepresenting the opposed legislation and debates in parliament to encourage discontent out-of-doors¹¹⁴². Horace Walpole, the brother of Robert Walpole¹¹⁴³, the prime minister from 1721 to 1742, claimed in 1753 that the Jewish Naturalisation Act had encountered only insignificant opposition until it became 'misrepresented' to the people out-of-doors¹¹⁴⁴. After the enactment of the act, Jacobites and

have formerly done for their madness and folly'. Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/41 (T53010).

¹¹³⁸ An Address to the People of England 1770/23 - 25 (T165926).

¹¹³⁹ BC/PA 14 November 1769. For similar arguments in different contexts, see, for instance, Ihalainen 2010, 72 - 73; Gunn 1983, 16; Knights 2005, 113, 152, 279 - 286; Loft 2016, 16. Mark Knights has demonstrated how a Whig pamphleteer, possibly Daniel Defoe, complained in 1716 'that whenever an 'honest, well-meaning people' were infatuated and misled, it always 'proceeded from some popular word, misunderstood by those who make the most use of it, and are most noisy in its defence'. 'Anyone who has observed the rise and progress of certain words, put into the mouths of a deluded populace for these last ten years', the pamphleteer continued, 'will agree with me that this is that case at present'. Knights 2005, 285.

¹¹⁴⁰ Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 144 - 145/Henry Pelham (Bramber).

¹¹⁴¹ Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 434 - 435/John Willes (West Looe). William Wyndham, the parliamentary leader of Tories and a close ally of Lord Bolingbroke, replied to Willes by claiming that 'for though the people of a county, city or borough may be misled, and may be induced to give instructions which are contrary to the true interest of their country, yet I hope he will allow, that in times past the Crown has been oftener misled; and consequently we must conclude, that it is more apt to me misled in time to come, that we can suppose the people to be'. Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 455/William Wyndham (Somerset); HoP/William Wyndham; Cruickshanks 1987, 39 - 41; Langford 1975, 57; O'Gorman 2006, 80.

¹¹⁴² Although often quoted and summarised by numerous editors and pamphleteers, the debates in parliament were, at least in principle, secret. Langford 1992, 705 - 706; Jupp 2006, 77 - 78, 206 - 207. The issue is discussed in detail in Chapter 1.5.3 (Parliament, Papers, and Pamphlets).

¹¹⁴³ HoP/Horatio Walpole.

¹¹⁴⁴ For the parliamentary process, see, for instance, Langford 1992, 224 - 225.

other opposition-minded miscreants started to incite 'enthusiasm' out-of-doors, rendering 'it in common prudence necessary to repeal the act that in itself is of no great importance to the nation'.¹¹⁴⁵ Charles Jenkinson, the lord of treasury from 1767 to 1773¹¹⁴⁶, used similar assertions to delegitimise the Wilkite mass-petitions in 1770. He claimed the people out-of-doors, eager to petition and protest, could not function as 'judges of the motives that lead to' decisions in the House of Commons, as opposition actors informed them of 'but one side of the question' and 'misrepresent[ed]' the speeches of pro-administration representatives¹¹⁴⁷. Critics could also accuse opposition actors of 'traduc[ing]' and deceiving people out-of-doors to support petitioners' clamours¹¹⁴⁸. Such accusations of misrepresentation illustrate a rather timeless form of criticism in the spheres of politics. Governments - regardless of time, place, and the composition of the administration - use such claims to delegitimise opposition claims. Proponents of petitions also used such accusations to discredit administrations, as demonstrated in Chapter 4 (Public Interest and Private Influence: Ideals and Counter-Ideals of Representation and Participation).

Second, organisers of petitions were accused of teaching the people to protest. Instead of being genuine concerns of the people, the petitions contained apprehensions that opposition actors had taught them to complain of. Critics also claimed that the people out-of-doors 'must have been taught to clamour against' the naturalisation act of 1753, as it 'had no good reason to clamour against' it¹¹⁴⁹, and characterised such incidents as 'false alarms'¹¹⁵⁰. Lord North similarly claimed in 1770 that if the people 'are disaffected, those trumpeters of sedition have produced the disaffection'. He further claimed that petitioners 'have been induced' to sign petitions they have 'never read, and [to] give countenance to

¹¹⁴⁵ Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 150 - 153/Horatio Walpole (Norwich). See also Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 144 - 145/Henry Pelham (Bramber) and Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 884 - 886/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 714 - 715/Lord North (Banbury); Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 159/William Yonge (Honiton). Paul Langford has attributed its fall to a coalition of 'popular, patriotic, xenophobic Whiggism, and High Church Toryism'. Langford 1992, 224 - 225. See also O'Gorman 2006, 91.

¹¹⁴⁶ HoP/Charles Jenkinson.

¹¹⁴⁷ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 690 - 691/Charles Jenkinson (Appleby), see also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 796/William De Grey (Newport/Cambridge University); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury); Cobbett 1774 - 1777 (HoC) 175/George Macartney (Ayr Burghs), Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/1 - 3 (N007621); An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/39 (T57527).

¹¹⁴⁸ A Vindication of the Petition of the livery of the City of London 1769/3 (T11223); GM February 1733/LJ 10 February 1733 (no. 711); GM April 1733/DC 14 April 1733; The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/31 (T63487); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/1 - 3, 52 (N007621); An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/39 (T57527), see also BC/PA 14 November 1769; An Address to Junius 1770/17 - 18 (T11110); Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs 1770/12 (T16540); A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London 1764/5 - 7 (T38231).

¹¹⁴⁹ Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 153/Horatio Walpole (Norwich), see also Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 153/Richard Lloyd (Maldon).

¹¹⁵⁰ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 815 - 816/Earl of Sandwich.

complaints ... [they have] never heard [of]¹¹⁵¹. In order to strengthen the impact of their tactics, the critics claimed, petitioners and their supporters endeavoured to frighten 'the minds of the peacable' and 'inflame the passions' of the 'misguided' sections of the populace¹¹⁵². In some cases, the critics used their personal encounters to delegitimise the opposition claims. Lord Clare, the vice-treasurer of Ireland, claimed in 1770 that 'I am just returned from a tour through most parts of this kingdom, and I hear of no complaints, no grievances, but from newspapers and grievance-mongers'¹¹⁵³. William Yonge, on the other hand, claimed to have travelled 'as far as the Land's End', around 300 miles from London and 140 miles from Honiton, his constituency, during summer. 'I rise up to inform the House', he continued, 'that in all my travels I never met with one man of any consideration, who so much as mentioned this act for permitting the Jews to be naturalized'. This led Yonge to conclude that 'the clamour against it has been entirely confined to the lowest sort of people, who never form any opinion from their own judgment'.¹¹⁵⁴ Such claims resemble the accusations of misrepresentation. In both cases critics accused petitioners and their proponents of deceit. But instead of focusing on the misrepresentation of bills and acts as such, as in the first case, critics accused them of teaching the people out-of-doors to complain.

One of the more innovative conceptualisations regarding such discourses is the concept of petition-hunter. Richard Rigby, the paymaster of the forces and a close ally of the Duke of Bedford¹¹⁵⁵, attributed the large number of Wilkite petitions to the 'petition-hunters'. Travelling 'from North to South, and from East to West', petition-hunters persuaded people of 'grievances which they do not feel, and apprehensions which they do not conceive'. 'I am persuaded that the people in general are content and quiet', Rigby claimed during the debate on the Address of Thanks to the Throne in 1770; further declaring that 'the name of a petition would never have been heard in more than three counties throughout the kingdom' without the 'officious diligence of these incendiaries'¹¹⁵⁶. Like numerous

¹¹⁵¹ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury), see also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 815 - 816/Earl of Sandwich and Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 682/Robert Nugent (Bristol); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock); GM April 1733/DC 17 April 1733; Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs 1770/12 (T16540). If not based on true grievances, petitions could become dangerous; 'foreign foes' and 'domestic enemies' could stir up 'a multitude to complain of [false] grievances', according to Jeremiah Dyson, the pro-administration representative for Weymouth and Melcombe Regis. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 884 - 886/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis).

¹¹⁵² Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 703 - 705/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis), see also Cobbett 1774 - 1777 (HoC) 880/William Innes (Ilchester). For counter-arguments, see, for instance, Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 721 - 722/Edmund Burke (Wendover). For a more general example of the use of the concept, see, for instance, Gunn 1983, 174 - 175.

¹¹⁵³ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 682 - 683/Robert Nugent (Bristol), see also Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 145/Henry Pelham (Bramber). For counter-arguments, see, for instance, Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 683 - 684/Charles Wolfran Cornwall (Grampound); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 721 - 722/Edmund Burke (Wendover).

¹¹⁵⁴ Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 159/William Yonge (Honiton).

¹¹⁵⁵ HoP/Richard Rigby.

¹¹⁵⁶ Petition-hunters, 'who have no way of making themselves of consequence but by distressing government', he continued, 'go round the country; meetings are advertised,

other critics, Rigby considered it impossible that the 'farmers and weavers in Yorkshire and Cumberland, should know, or take an interest in the Middlesex election of representatives in parliament'.¹¹⁵⁷ Similar forms of counter-arguments can also be found in other political cultures in Europe. Maartje Janse has demonstrated how the critics in nineteenth-century Netherlands used similar arguments to delegitimise petitioning campaigns. Johannes Bosscha, a conservative representative, criticised petitionnement, a concept deriving from the French *pétitionnement* and used to describe large-scale petitions in the Netherlands, in 1856, claiming that 'as much as I do respect the right of petition, so little do I respect a petitionnement'. According to Janse, Bosscha, and most other representatives, did not regard petitionnement as something that represented 'the will of the people, but was rather the product of manipulative agitators and represented an illegitimate attempt to influence the true representatives of the people'.¹¹⁵⁸ Both petition-hunting and petitionnement, it was argued, were used to distort the otherwise legitimate right to submit petitions. Rather than representing the true will of the people, petition-hunting and petitionnement manifested the private ambitions of crafty and industrious men.

Third, petitioners and their supporters could be accused of seditious practices. Critics accused such actors of agitation¹¹⁵⁹, propagation¹¹⁶⁰, sedition¹¹⁶¹, and inflaming¹¹⁶². The *Daily Courant*, a pro-administration paper, attributed petitioning to the use of 'false glosses and seditious harangues' in 1735 and John

speeches made, the parliament abused, government vilified, and the people inflamed; a petition ready drawn up is produced and read, and before the ferment subsides, it is hawked about from on town to another, till a sufficient number of names are collected to make a shew, and then it is passed for the sense and act of the people'.

¹¹⁵⁷ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock). George Savile, the independent-minded representative for Yorkshire, replied to Rigby by ridiculing his description of petition-hunters. 'I frankly acknowledge before this House, that I have appeared at several of the meetings that have been advertised, both in Yorkshire and elsewhere; but I deny that I ever hunted after petitions or petitioners'. He recognised that 'the annihilation, or even the diminution of the authority of this House by the people, will be a very great evil; but I cannot grant, that it is the greatest evil that can befall this nation'. 'I can tell him of a greater evil', he continued, 'and that is, the invasion of the people's right by the authority of this House'. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 698 - 699/George Savile (Yorkshire).

¹¹⁵⁸ Janse 2019, 510, 520 - 521.

¹¹⁵⁹ An Earnest Address to the Worthy Independent Freeholders of the County of York 1769/3 - 4 (T121482); Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 767 - 768/William Bagot (Staffordshire); BC/DC 20 January 1735; An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/35 - 37 (T57527).

¹¹⁶⁰ Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 144 - 145/Henry Pelham (Bramber); Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/29 (T53010).

¹¹⁶¹ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock); Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 144 - 145/Henry Pelham (Bramber); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 121 - 122/Henry Pelham (Sussex); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 704 - 705/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717/Lord North (Banbury); BC/DC 20 January 1735; GM 1733 337/DC 3 July 1733; Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/41, 47 (T53010); Reflections on the Present Conduct of the Populace 1733/4 - 5 (T102099); An Address to the People of England 1770/16 (T165926); The False Alarm 1770/40 - 46, 52 (T88127); An Address to Junius 1770/25 - 26 (T11110).

¹¹⁶² Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 796 - 797/William De Grey (Newport/Cambridge University); Cobbett 1765 - 1771

Shebbeare, a prolific author, hired by the North Administration¹¹⁶³, to the 'manifest seduction of some designing men' in 1770¹¹⁶⁴. Owen Ruffhead, previously the editor of *Con-Test*, a pro-Pitt paper criticising the administration of Newcastle, and a prolific author¹¹⁶⁵, and the author of the *Consideration on the Present Dangerous Crisis*, a pro-administration pamphlet criticising the opposition out-of-doors in 1763, declared that once 'a flame is ... raised, it quickly spreads from one to another'; an 'enraged' people is inclined to prefer 'the dictates of resentment' over 'the guidance of reason'¹¹⁶⁶. John Wesley, the father of Wesleyan theology and Methodism¹¹⁶⁷, similarly claimed that the opposition agitation tends to run

(HoC) 717/Lord North (Banbury); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 884 - 886/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); GM February 1733/LJ 10 February 1733 (no. 711); Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/21, 41, 47 (T53010); An Eighth Letter to the People of England 1770/98 (T82445); Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London 1742/6 -7 (T1105); An Address to the People of England 1770/16 (T165926); Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs 1770/15 (T16540); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/32 - 33 (N007621); The False Alarm 1770/16, 38 - 39 (T88127).

¹¹⁶³ Gunn 1983, 187, 247 - 248; Brewer 1976, 222; Wilson 1998, 184 - 185, 200 - 201, 241; Lutnick 1967, 16 - 17; Cohen 2004, 18; Sack 1999, 38, 55, 146, 200.

¹¹⁶⁴ BC/DC 20 January 1735. For 'laboured harangue', see Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 703 - 705/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis). See also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 691/Charles Jenkinson (Appleby).

¹¹⁶⁵ The editor of *Con-Test*, a pro-Pitt paper criticising the Newcastle administration, and a prolific author. Spector 2015, 20 - 21, 53, 68, 86 - 87, 127 - 128; Clark 2000a, 338.

¹¹⁶⁶ Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/32 - 33 (T53010).

¹¹⁶⁷ Besides an active preacher and theologian, Wesley was also highly involved in debates on explicitly political issues. He was, among other things, loud in criticising notions of popular sovereignty and the radical claims on behalf of the colonies. Paul Langford has described Wesley as 'an avowed High Churchman', his politics being 'thoroughly conservative, even reactionary'. Langford 1992, 243 - 257, 270 - 276; Gregory 2016, 147 - 178; Gunn 1983, 170 - 171; Wilson 1998, 241; O'Gorman 2006, 302 - 307; Black 2008, 138 - 141; Hempton 2002, 93 - 96.

'as fire among the stubble', eventually becoming an 'epidemic' among the people¹¹⁶⁸. Supporters of petitions could also be accused of spiriting¹¹⁶⁹ and fomenting¹¹⁷⁰ and of the use of influence¹¹⁷¹, arts¹¹⁷² and 'pernicious designs'¹¹⁷³. Others accused the opposition actors of the use of 'hellish arts', 'diabolical' perseverance¹¹⁷⁴, and 'fomenting of strife and sedition' against the government¹¹⁷⁵. Such forms of criticism illustrate the different sides of the same argument. In each of the three cases, critics endeavoured to delegitimise petitioners' and their proponents' means and intentions. Numerous actors, of course, used some sort of combinations of the described discourses. In most cases, the critics' accusations focused on a diverse but connected set of actors. Most opponents of petitions criticised some sort of opposition actors, some of them in parliament and others out-

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- 1168 Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs 1770/33 (T16540).
- 1169 Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 691/Charles Jenkinson (Appleby), see also BC/PA 14 November 1769.
- 1170 GM April 1733/DC 17 April 1733; An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/9 (N007621); Reflections on the Present Conduct of the Populace 1733/4 - 5 (T102099).
- 1171 Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696/George Onslow (Surrey); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury); Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/21, 32 - 33 (T53010); The False Alarm 1770/52 (T88127); BC/DC 20 January 1735; GM May 1741/DG 15 May 1741.
- 1172 Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 121 - 122/Henry Pelham (Sussex); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696 - 697/George Onslow (Surrey); A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/59 (N9879); GM September 1733/LJ 1 September 1733 (no. 740); BC/ PA 14 November 1769; GM April 1733/DC 17 April 1733. For uses of artifice, see The False Alarm 1770/16 (T88127); An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/ 37 - 38 (T57527); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/9 - 10 (N007621); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury); Cobbett 1774 - 1777 (HoC) 175/George Macartney (Ayr Burghs); GM February 1733/LJ 10 February 1733. For uses of artful, see BC/PA 14 november 1769; A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London 1764/13 - 14 (T38231); Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/32 - 33 (T53010); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/3 - 4, 8 - 9 (N007621); The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/31 (T63487); An Address to the People of England 1770/23 (T165926); Cobbett 1774 - 1777 (HoC) 880/William Innes (Ilchester); Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 249/Henry Pelham (Sussex); Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 153/Horatio Walpole (Norwich). Even though in almost all of the studied cases used as a pejorative concept, it could also be used in a more positive sense. The *Craftsman*, for instance, claimed in the aftermath of the excise crisis that 'the true art of government consists in a general knowledge of mankind, and the particular disposition of the people to be governed'. 'This is the most glorious and solid foundation of power, in a free country', the paper concluded in 1733. GM August 1733/Cr 18 August 1733 (no. 372).
- 1173 BC/DC 20 January 1735, see also An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/37 - 39 (T57527); The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/31 (T63487); A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London 1764/13 - 14 (T38231); Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/32 - 33 (T53010); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/9 - 10, 31 (N007621); BC/PA 20 November 1770; GM January 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759).
- 1174 BC/PA 14 November 1769.
- 1175 Reflections on the Present Conduct of the Populace 1733/4 - 5 (T102099).

of-doors. Critics could, for instance, blame the 'trumpeters of sedition'¹¹⁷⁶, 'despicable mechanics'¹¹⁷⁷, 'the sulphur of the declared opposition'¹¹⁷⁸, 'never-failing confederates of the rabble'¹¹⁷⁹, 'hot-headed corporations'¹¹⁸⁰, the 'most florid orators'¹¹⁸¹, and the 'emissaries' of the opposition'¹¹⁸². Opponents could also criticise the 'conduct of the ringleaders of those seditious associations'¹¹⁸³, a reference to the SSBR, and the 'officious diligence of ... incendiaries'¹¹⁸⁴. In certain cases, critics even compared the organisers and supporters of petitions to John Cade, Robert Kett, Jack Straw, Wat Tyler, and Masaniello, all of them leaders of popular (and violent) revolts¹¹⁸⁵. Others focused on the agitation of opposition journalists, papers, and pamphlets. Nicholas Amhurst, the editor of the *Craftsman*, and Junius, the author of the *Letters of Junius*¹¹⁸⁶, for instance, became subjects of constant pro-

¹¹⁷⁶ An Address to Junius 1770/25 - 26 (T11110). For 'infamous abettors of sedition', see Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock). For 'constant fomenters of sedition', see The False Alarm 1770/52 (T88127).

¹¹⁷⁷ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk). For *machinations*, see A Letter to the Common-Council of London 1765/1 - 2 (N19488). For uses of mechanistic concepts such as *device*, *engine*, and *instrument*, see, for instance, GM January 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759); GM March 1733/L J 10 March 1733 (no. 715); GM April 1733/DC 17 April 1733; Cobbett 1753 - 1765 142 - 143/Henry Pelham (Bramber); The False Alarm 1770/5 - 6 (T88127); BC/PA 14 November 1769.

¹¹⁷⁸ An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/32 - 33 (N007621).

¹¹⁷⁹ The False Alarm 1770/52 (T88127).

¹¹⁸⁰ GM July 1733/DC 3 July 1733. For 'hot-headed poet', see Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London 1742/5 - 7 (T1105).

¹¹⁸¹ GM July 1733/DC 3 July 1733. For the 'Cicero of the day', see The False Alarm 1770/41 - 42 (T88127) and for 'unmeaning jargon and ... eloquence', see An Address to the People of England 1770/23 - 24 (T165926). For references to sophistry, see BC/DC 20 January 1735; Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury). BC/DC 20 January 1735.

¹¹⁸² BC/PA 14 November 1769.

¹¹⁸³ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock).

¹¹⁸⁴ Some of the critics compared them to Henry Sacheverell and his supporters. GM April 1733/DC 17 April 1733; BC/DC 20 January 1735. Most of them were leaders of popular revolts. Jack Straw and Wat Tyler were, alongside John Ball, the popular leaders of the Peasants' Revolt of 1381. Provoked by taxes and other consequences of the black death and the Hundred Years' War, the rebels invaded and pillaged London, targeting royal servants. John Cade, on the other hand, was the leader of his namesake rebellion in 1450. As the rebellion of 1381, Cade attempted to take London and overturn the government due to its perceived failures. Robert Kett, the leader of a Norfolk rebellion, named after him, led a revolt against enclosures in 1549. After the collapse of the rebellion, Kett was executed (as were most of the figures mentioned by the petitioners). But whereas most of the rebel leaders in question were of English origin, Masaniello was Italian, leading a revolt against the Habsburg rule in 1647. He was mentioned by the *Daily Courant* on 17 April 1733, most likely drawing its inspiration either from the *A Select Collection of Novels and Histories*, published in 1729 and containing the story of Masaniello, *The Civil History of the Kingdom of Naples*, published in 1723 and translated into English in 1729, or *The History of the Rise and Fall of Masaniello*, authored by Francis Midon and published in 1729 (and, afterwards, in numerous editions). *A Select Collection of Novels and Histories* 1729 (T72423); *The Civil History of the Kingdom of Naples* 1729 (T94250); *The History of the Rise and Fall of Masaniello* 1729 (T125465).

¹¹⁸⁶ A series of letters published in 1769 - 1772 under the pseudonym of Junius, criticising both the administration and the court. Though often regarded as a radical (of some sort), at least by many of his contemporaries, Junius was also often critical of Wilkes and the SSBR. Despite intense speculation, ranging from Philip Francis to Wilkes himself, the identity of Junius remains unknown. Langford 1992, 381 - 382; Thomas 1996, 126, 143 - 146; Bowyer 1995.

administration criticism¹¹⁸⁷. Such accusations emphasise critics' eagerness to affiliate supporters of petitions with fomenters of sedition and chaos. Opponents tended to focus on the influence of caricatured actors. References to historical actors, in particular, became used to affiliate supporters of petitions to revolutionaries.

In addition to accusations of spreading misinformation and encouraging discontent, critics could accuse petitioners of promoting factious interests. As petitioners and proponents of petitions, presenting their petitions as antidotes against the influence of parties and factions, as discussed in Chapter 4.2.2 (Odi-ous Influences and Scandalous Schemes), their critics also represented themselves as the foremost opponents of parties and factious actors. Rather than manifestations of the true sense of the people, petitions became characterised as products of the 'emissaries of faction'¹¹⁸⁸ and a modest number of 'factious and discontented people'¹¹⁸⁹. Lord North, soon to be the prime minister, criticised the 'blast[s] of factious breath' and the 'influence, the promises, and threats of a jealous and restless faction', urging the people to petition for the dissolution of the parliament¹¹⁹⁰. Others used implicit references to parties and factions to delegitimise petitions and their supporters. Characterisations such as 'malecontents

¹¹⁸⁷ See, for instance, GM May 1741/DG 15 May 1741; An Address to Junius 1770 (T11110). For generic criticism of pamphlets and the press, see, for instance, GM February 1733/LJ 10 February 1733 (no. 711); GM April 1733/DC 17 April 1733; Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 703 - 705/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/8 - 9 (N007621).

¹¹⁸⁸ BC/PA 14 November 1769, see also A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London 1764/13 - 14 (T38231). For the 'influence of faction', see, for instance, Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 696/George Onslow (Surrey) and Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury). For generic references to faction, see Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 695 - 696/Thomas De Grey (Norfolk); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 885/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst); GM May 1741/DG 15 May 1741; BC/PA 14 November 1769; A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London 1764/17 - 18 (T38231); The False Alarm 1770/52 - 53 (T88127).

¹¹⁸⁹ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock), see also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 815 - 816/Earl of Sandwich; BC/PA 20 November 1770; An Address to Junius 1770/12 - 13, 22, 30 (T11110).

¹¹⁹⁰ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury), see also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 697 - 698/Richard Rigby (Tavistock); Cobbett 1774 - 1777 (HoC) 186/Hans Stanley (Southampton); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 796 - 797/William De Grey (Newport/Cambridge University); An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/37 - 38 (T57527); GM April 1733 /DC 17 April 1733; GM January 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759). For references to parties, see Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 815 - 816/Earl of Sandwich; GM May 1741/DG 15 May 1741; GM July 1733/DC 3 July 1733; A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London 1764/37 (T38231); Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/21, 33 - 34, 46 - 47 (T53010); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/1 - 2 (N007621). See also GM March 1733/LJ 10 March 1733 (no. 715) and BC/PA 14 November 1769. The *Daily Courant*, a pro-administration paper, underlined that the influence of factions could be destructive: 'the death of Socrates, the banishment of Cicero, the destruction of great and flourishing empires have been owing to the inconsiderate, ungovernable rage of the people, fomented by the most despicable instruments'. GM April 1733/DC 17 April 1733.

design¹¹⁹¹, the 'malicious voice of disappointment'¹¹⁹², and the 'feeble echoes of despondence and ambition'¹¹⁹³ functioned as implicit references to opposition actors and factions. Critics could also ridicule the opposition use of the concept of *patriot*¹¹⁹⁴. For the most part, opponents' criticism of factious actors and intentions resembles petitioners' and their proponents' pejorative references to parties and factions. Instead of championing the interest of parties, both proponents and opponents represented themselves as actors defending the common good.

In addition to criticising petitioners' status, the opponents could also focus on undermining petitions from a quantitative perspective. Actors criticising petitions, both opposition and pro-administration ones, could, for instance, claim that the petitioning actors represented only an insignificant share of those on whose behalf they claimed to act. William Pulteney, the parliamentary leader of the Patriot Whigs, an anti-Walpolean faction¹¹⁹⁵, criticised the number of signatures on a pro-government counter-petition, authored in 1738 to undermine the opposition endeavours to declare war on Spain¹¹⁹⁶. But although submitted in the name of those trading to Spain, Pulteney informed the House, its organisers managed to get a mere '5 or 6 merchants, and those I am informed were Roman Catholics, to sign it'.¹¹⁹⁷ William Hay, representing Seaford from 1734 to 1755 and

¹¹⁹¹ GM January 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759), see also GM July 1733/DC 3 July 1733; GM March 1733/LJ 10 March 1733 (no. 715); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury).

¹¹⁹² Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London 1742/18 - 19 (T1105), see also Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/32 (T53010); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/1 - 3 (N007621).

¹¹⁹³ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 816/Earl of Sandwich, see also An Eighth Letter to the People of England 1770/97 - 98 (T82445); An Address to Junius 1770/22 (T11110); Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London 1742/6 - 7 (T1105); GM February 1733/LJ 10 February 1733 (no. 711).

¹¹⁹⁴ GM May 1741/DG 15 May 1741; BC/PA 14 November 1769; An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/32 (N007621); An address to Junius 1770/26 - 27 (T11110); An Address to the People of England 1770/23 - 24 (T165926); The False Alarm 1770/38 - 39 (T88127).

¹¹⁹⁵ HoP/William Pulteney.

¹¹⁹⁶ Walpole had favoured peace from the beginning of his premiership in 1721, enabling him to focus on domestic issues and reduce the burden of taxation. In order to avoid war with Spain, which was harassing British merchants on the American seas, Walpole was determined to resolve the situation by negotiating; introducing the Convention of Pardo to parliament in January 1739. In opposition to both popular and opposition demands, the treaty endeavoured to settle the dispute by (rather modest) financial compensations. It was approved by parliament by 250 votes against 232. However, as the settlement grew even more unpopular during the course of the year, Walpole was eventually forced to declare war on Spain in October 1739. O'Gorman 2006, 72, 82 - 84; Hayton 2002, 64 - 66; Cruickshanks 1984, 39 - 40; Dickinson 1994, 62, 68, 210 - 212.

¹¹⁹⁷ Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 857 - 859/William Pulteney (Middlesex). Similar arguments also occurred during the debate on the clerical petition in 1772, requesting the House of Commons to relieve the petitioners from the subscription of the 39 Articles, the collection of principles defining the Anglican faith and the Church of England, articulated and established between 1536 and 1571. Besides its theological functions, it was also incorporated into numerous test acts, thus also used to exclude members of different religious groups and affiliations from holding public offices. Roger Newdigate, a fervent opponent of the Dissenters and one of the representatives for Oxford University from 1751 to 1780, described the number of the petitioners as 'light as dust in the balance'. HoP/Robert Newdigate; Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC)

supporting the administration in every recorded division during his tenure in parliament¹¹⁹⁸, used similar arguments against a petition on the Seamen's Bill in 1741¹¹⁹⁹. He claimed that 'it is in my opinion necessary that a petition in the name of the merchants of London should be subscribed by the whole number, for if only a few should put their names to it, how does it appear that it is any thing more than an apprehension of danger to their own particular interest'¹²⁰⁰. Such a concern becomes 'more reasonable', he noted, 'when a petition is subscribed by a smaller number, who may easily be imagined to have partial views, and designs not wholly consistent with the interest of the public'.¹²⁰¹ Instead of representing the general opinion of their trades and professions, the petitions demonstrated their authors' private sentiments. Such information could not, according to the critics, determine the conduct of the House.

The opponents of petitions could also focus on countering the claims that the petitions represented the voice of the people. Most of such arguments occurred during large-scale petitioning campaigns, becoming a rather common form of criticism after the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions during the crisis on Wilkes' seat¹²⁰². Those criticising the organisers and supporters of Wilkite petitions tended to emphasise the alleged deficiencies regarding the scale of both petitions and subscriptions. During the debate on the Middlesex election in the House of Lords in February 1770, the Earl of Sandwich, then the postmaster general¹²⁰³, emphasised that only 13 out of the 40 counties in England had submitted a petition 'for a redress of grievances'. This, he asserted, 'requires no deep calculation, no abstract knowledge of numbers to tell that thirteen is not quite one

254/Roger Newdigate (Oxford University); Langford 1992, 524, see also Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 273/Lord North (Banbury).

¹¹⁹⁸ HoP/William Hay.

¹¹⁹⁹ The bill, officially known as the 'bill for the encouragement and increase of seamen, and for the better and speedier manning of his Majesty's fleet', endeavoured, according to Cobbett's *Parliamentary History of England*, to empower justices of the peace 'to issue warrants to constables and headboroughs, to search by day or night for such sea-faring men as should conceal themselves within their respective jurisdictions'. 'These searches', it was claimed, 'vested with authority to force open doors, in case of resistance; and encouraged to this violence by a reward for every seaman they should discover'. The most severe clauses were eventually dropped, and the bill was passed with amendments. The House of Commons had already rejected a bill of the same content in 1740, often referred to as the seamen's registration bill, regardless of Walpole's personal support for it. Despite the fierce criticism from the bills' contemporaries, Denver Alexander Brunsman, has represented the two bills as 'the most serious attempts to end impressment until the 1830s'. Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 26 - 27; Brunsman 2013, 42; Langford 1992, 53.

¹²⁰⁰ Being an interest 'which perhaps the other part, their rivals in trade, may consider as an advantage, or at least regard with indifference'.

¹²⁰¹ Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 139/William Hay (Seaford).

¹²⁰² For more on the (re-)emergence of mass-petitions, see Chapter 3.2 (Petitioners and Subscribers).

¹²⁰³ The earl had followed the Duke of Bedford, then a close ally, to the administration after the fall of Walpole, serving under him in the admiralty board. He would eventually become the first lord of admiralty, holding the post in 1748 - 1751, 1763, and 1771 - 1782. See, for instance, Langford 1992, 194 - 195, 223 - 224, 540; Wilson 1998, 255 - 257.

third of forty, though it is roundly asserted, that the whole of the people of England have petitioned'.¹²⁰⁴ The author of *An Address to Junius*, a pamphlet used to criticise the *Junius Letters*, defending Wilkes and his supporters, similarly focused on delegitimising the Wilkite claims that the nation cried for justice. The pamphleteer proclaimed his particular scorn for Junius' claims that the Wilkites and their petitions represented the 'THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE'. Instead of representing 'the united voice of the people', the Wilkite petitions manifested the sentiments of John Horne, Joseph Mawbey, Robert Bernard, Francis Blake Delaval, and 'a half a dozen of the same kidney', a group of opposition actors the author of the pamphlet referred to as 'Wilkes's company of comedians'.¹²⁰⁵ He further claimed that the petitions submitted to the King contained signatures from only

¹²⁰⁴ He further claimed that when those 'led thither either by the general pressures of poverty, the want of an immediate meal, or the future hopes of some better establishment' and those 'intimidated into' signing are excluded, 'we shall, even in these thirteen counties, find the number so lessened, as not to make up really a twentieth part of his Majesty's subjects'. 'Shall the supplications', he inquired, 'of so small a number be considered as the general voice of the people?' Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 815 - 816/Earl of Sandwich. See also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 717 - 718/Lord North (Banbury); Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London 1742/27 - 28 (T1105); A Hint upon Instructions from the Electors to their Representatives in Parliament 1742/7 - 9 (T108445). Similar claims were used to delegitimise petitions in 1681. Those criticising the addresses 'pointed out that they could not be representative of the nation since only 12 out of 52 counties, and 11 out of 250 boroughs, had presented them'. Knights 2005, 81. The Earl of Chatham, challenged such counter-arguments in 1771, claiming that the critics 'have compared the number of counties, not the number of their inhabitants' and thus forgetting that the counties 'are not equally populous, and that the fifteen petitioning counties contain more people than all the rest of the kingdom, as they pay infinitely more land tax'. Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoL) 219/Earl of Chatham. John Dunning, a member of parliament for Calne and a close ally of the Earl of Shelburne, responded to similar claims in 1771 by declaring that 'the bulk of the people ... is not to be estimated by the extent of miles, or the multiplication of counties'. 'The metropolis', he continued, 'contains in itself a sixth of our inhabitants, and if we reckon the petitioners, by the more rational criterion of the land tax, we shall find that they exceed the supposed friends of the ministry in numbers, by so considerable a sum as 25,000l. a year'. Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 142 - 144/John Dunning (Calne).

¹²⁰⁵ 'What are the several petitions from Middlesex, Westminster, Surry, and Essex, but the same petition of John Horne, Sir Joseph Mawbey, and others, drawn up in different words?', the author asked. All of them central figures in the SSBR. John Horne Tooke, a priest, teacher, and a travelling tutor before his conversion to anti-ministerial radicalism, was one of the most eager and active supporters of Wilkes and his cause. But in contrast to Horne Tooke, the other persons in question had all been, or still were, members of the House of Commons (Horne Tooke would eventually become a representative for Old Sarum in 1801). Joseph Mawbey, for instance, represented Southwark from 1761 to 1774 (and, eventually, Surrey in 1775 - 1790), presenting Wilkes' petition to parliament in January 1769. Robert Bernard, representing Huntingdonshire in 1765 - 1768 and Westminster in 1770 - 1774, was one of those who had helped Wilkes to establish the SSBR. Francis Blake Delaval, on the other hand, had served as one of the representatives for Hindon (1751 - 1754) and Andover (1754 - 1768). Though a rather conventional member of parliament for most of his career, he later became one of the strongest supporters of Wilkes. Whereas Horne Tooke, Delaval, and Bernard initially switched their support from the SSBR to the Constitutional Society, Mawbey continued to support Wilkes. HoP/Robert Bernard; HoP/Francis Blake Delaval; HoP/Joseph Mawbey; HoP/John Horne Tooke; Royle & Walvin 1982, 19 - 20; Wilson 1998, 341; Dickinson 1977, 213 - 214; Dickinson 1994, 235 - 236; Gunn 1983, 309 - 310.

perhaps 'one hundredth part of the respectable freeholders in this kingdom'.¹²⁰⁶ It has been estimated that the 27 pro-Wilkes petitions submitted between May 1769 and January 1770 contained around 55,000 to 60,000 signatures. James E. Bradley has claimed that the number of signatures represented about one fifth of the total electorate.¹²⁰⁷

It might be tempting to conclude that the critics' argumentation illustrates their contemporaries' contempt of the common people. Many members of parliament, and other actors in the highest circles of society, indeed, rejected the influence of certain segments of people out-of-doors. However, numerous actors also regarded periods and incidents such as the English Republic, the Sacheverell Riots, and the anti-Hanoverian protests as ominous precedents of the deleterious impact of ochlocratic principles in action. Petitioners' contemporaries had genuine fears that the constitution, and thus the established order of politics, could be overturned, as demonstrated in Chapter 6.4 (In Defence of the Constitution). It is thus far too simplistic to reduce the criticism of petitions to the critics' prejudices and apprehensions. Instead of being disparaged, opponents' claims ought to be seen as counter-reactions to petitioners' arguments. As petitioners and their supporters used representative claims to legitimise their petitions, as demonstrated in Chapter 3 (Representing the Sense of the People: Petitioners Uses of Representative Claims), their critics focused on undermining the credibility and soundness of such claims. Rather than being or speaking on behalf of respectable actors, whose sentiments ought to be taken into account, the critics perceived - or considered it convenient to represent - the petitioners and their supporters as factious fanatics and drunken ragamuffins. The presentation of such claims and counter-claims formed a sort of dialogue between the supporters and opponents of petitions.

6.2 Protecting the Independence of Parliament

Critics often accused petitioners and their supporters of undermining the independence of parliament. Instead of letting parliament and members of parliament protect the collective interest of the nation¹²⁰⁸, petitioners were accused of endeavouring to subjugate them; transforming the servants of the nation into servants of their private ambitions. The critics tended to recognise representatives' dependence on their constituents in elections, but maintained that members

¹²⁰⁶ An Address to Junius 1770/12 - 13, 22 - 24, 25 - 30 (T11110), see also An Eighth Letter to the People of England 1770/ 97 - 98 (T82445); Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London 1742/30 - 31 (T1105); GM February 1733/LJ 10 February 1733 (no. 711).

¹²⁰⁷ Knights 2009, 46; Dickinson 1994, 242; Bradley 1986, 2 - 3; Rudé 1962, 105, 133 - 134. For the social composition of the supporters of Wilkes, see Phillips 2014, 256 - 257; Langford 1992, 377; O'Gorman 2006, 225

¹²⁰⁸ Critics' interpretations of such interests, of course, differed from those petitioners used to legitimise their claims, discussed in detail in Chapter 4.1 (Petitions and the Collective Interest).

of parliament became independent of the influence of 'our electors, at least in so far as regards our behaviour here [in the House of Commons]', after chosen to parliament¹²⁰⁹. The author of *An Address to the People of England*, criticising the Wilkite petitioners requesting that the King dissolve the parliament, recognised constituents' undoubted right to profess their displeasure on the conduct of parliament. However, the pamphleteer, describing himself as an independent freeholder from Middlesex, added that members of parliament, elected to protect the rights of the people, ought to 'act for themselves'. Dependence on their constituents, the pro-administration pamphleteer claimed, threatened to reduce members of parliament to 'mere machines and lifeless instruments'¹²¹⁰, used to 'echo the voices of others'¹²¹¹. Such reasoning sums up the sentiments of most of those accusing petitioners of undermining the independence of parliament. Rather than serving their constituents alone, members of parliament promoted the true interest of the nation. In order to do so, representatives ought to be independent.

In order to emphasise the independence of parliament, critics underlined the importance of the concept of *representative*. True Lover of the People, the author of the popular *A Letter to a Member of Parliament*¹²¹², criticised the opposition practice of referring to members of parliament as 'deputies, attornies'¹²¹³, [and]

¹²⁰⁹ Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 434 - 435/John Willes (West Looe), see also *A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament Concerning the Present State of Affairs* 1741/16 - 18 (N21193); *Address to the Electors of Great Britain* 1742/25 - 26 (T1981); *A Letter to a Member of Parliament* 1740/1 - 4 (N9879).

¹²¹⁰ Although the concepts of *machine* and *instrument*, in the metaphorical sense, were not inherently pejorative concepts in the eighteenth-century spheres of politics, it is more than evident that the pamphleteer's use of them were. Instead of making use of their superior abilities, knowledge, and wisdom, discussed in detail in the previous sub-chapters, the pamphleteer implied that the Wilkites endeavoured to make the members of parliament the slaves of the people. Similar forms of mechanical metaphors are analysed in detail in Chapter 4.2.1 (Enemies of the People).

¹²¹¹ *An Address to the People of England* 1770/10 (T165926). For accusations of undermining the independence of parliament, see, for instance, Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1261/William Yonge (Honiton); *A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament Concerning the Present State of Affairs* 1741/28 - 25 (N21193); *Reflections upon a Pamphlet* 1733/4 - 5 (T134031).

¹²¹² According to the *Eighteenth Century Collection Online* (ECCO), the pamphlet was published in six editions in 1740. The five London editions were printed for T. Cooper at the Globe (Paternoster Row). The Dublin edition, on the other hand, was printed for and by George Faulkner (Essex Street). *A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament*, the sequel, was published in three editions in 1741, each printed for T. Cooper at the Globe.

¹²¹³ Although not a common point of reference, representatives, too, could compare members of parliament to attorneys. Even if initially supporting the motion to bar Wilkes from representing Middlesex, George Yonge informed his fellow members of parliament on 25 January 1770 that he had changed his mind. During the debate Yonge, who had served as the lord of admiralty until then, challenged the commonly held principle that 'the act of delegation in the people of England to their representatives ... is irrevocable'. He continued by claiming that 'upon every principle of constitutional right, upon every principle of general society, it is revocable: and I say there is a moral necessity that it should be so'. In order to demonstrate his point, Yonge claimed that it was 'as necessary that the people should revoke their delegation, when their representatives betray the rights they were chosen to defend, as that an individual should revoke a warrant of attorney, when his substitute for the receipt of money converts it to his own use'. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 793 - 794/George Yonge (Honiton).

agents'. Instead of using such concepts, each of them mischaracterising the true essence of the British form of representation, the pro-administration pamphleteer championed the use of *representative*; a representative being one constituents authorised to judge on behalf of themselves 'in certain matters for a certain time', as in the case of the House of Commons.¹²¹⁴ The True Lover of the People claimed that deputies, common in democracies such as the United Provinces, acted as 'creatures, and absolute dependants on the people', subjected to positive commands¹²¹⁵. Attornies and agents, on the other hand, 'are [not] ... equivalent to members [of the House of Commons]' as people could both authorise and de-authorise them *ad libitum*.¹²¹⁶ Such features distinguished deputies, attornies, and agents from representatives. Once elected, members of the House of Commons served a pre-determined term in parliament and could be de-authorised through elective means and elective means alone. Though elected to represent one of the 314 constituencies, representatives served the common good once in parliament.

Critics often used references to the United Provinces to emphasise the prodigious nature of the British form government. The True Lover of the People, for instance, criticised uses of deputies, as demonstrated above, as it referred to the United Provinces, differing from Britain in its democratic form of government,

¹²¹⁴ A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/2 - 3 (N9879). The *Daily Courant* also criticised the use of 'comissioners' in 1735. BC/DC 20 January 1735. For refutations of such claims, see, for instance, GM February 1741/CS 7 February 1741 (no. 209).

¹²¹⁵ A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/3 (N9879); A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/14 - 18 (N21193). The Second Letter responded to a number of articles in the *Common Sense*, an opposition paper that had criticised the content of the First Letter. On 3 and 10 January, 1741 the *Common Sense* asserted that 'in shewing the difference betwixt Dutch deputies and English representatives, there are two misrepresentations: the Dutch deputies are not, and the English members certainly are creatures of the people in virtue of the constitution'. GM January 1741/CS 3 & 10 January 1741, see also GM February 1741/CS 7 February 1741 (no. 209).

¹²¹⁶ A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/3 - 4 (N9879). Despite providing rather vague definitions, eighteenth-century dictionarists tended to agree with the pamphleteer's claims. Nathaniel Bailey, for instance, defined *attorney* (or *attorney*) as 'a person, as by consent, command, or request, takes care of another man's business in his absence, especially such as are employ[e]d for the management of law'. *Agent* was also defined as one acting as a substitute (of some sort). John Kersey, whose influence on the near-identical definition by Bailey is more than evident, defined an *agent* as 'a doer, a factor or dealer for another; a resident that manages the affairs of a prince or common-wealth in a foreign country'. Johnson also provided a rather similar definition; *agent* being 'a substitute; a deputy; a factor' or something 'that which has the power of operating'. Though often emphasising the rather specific nature of such titles, most commonly associated with the legal profession and diplomatic posts, the differences in regard to the concept of *representative* remain far less conspicuous than in the pamphlet in question. Bailey - and to a great extent, Kersey - defined a *representative* as 'one who represents the person of another'. Johnson, on the other hand, insisted that a representative could be defined as 'one exercising the vicarious power given by another'. Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735; Johnson 1768. But despite the rather similar definitions, it is more than likely that the pamphleteer's contemporaries recognised the concepts' different connotations. References to members of parliament by the concept of attorney, or deputy, most certainly distinguished the said speech acts from more conventional references to parliamentary representation.

or 'popular government'¹²¹⁷. Great Britain, on the other hand, emphasised the importance of balancing the different forms of government¹²¹⁸, as is demonstrated in Chapter 6.4. The States-General, the parliament of the United Provinces, was characterised as dependent on many subentities; rather than being sovereign, the parliament of the republic, residing in the Hague, had to observe the positive instructions from the provinces. In order to negotiate treaties, collect duties, raise troops, and legislate, the States-General needed 'the approbation of the states of each particular province'; requiring that actors in the provincial assemblies, too, managed to form a consensus. This meant the cities of the United Provinces, the 'dernier resort of government', possessed 'a negative voice', enabling them to veto legislative measures in the States-General. Hence, instead of being representatives in the British sense of the concept, the deputies in the States-General 'are [in fact] ambassadors from seven independent' republics, the deputies in the provinces being 'ambassadors' of, de facto, sovereign cities.¹²¹⁹

In order to legitimate their independence, those criticising petitions tended to emphasise representatives' acumen and prudence. Rather than being deputies, accountable to people out-of-doors, members of parliament defended the common good and the general interest of the nation. Due to their impartial character, members of parliament ought to determine the course of politics. The True Lover of the People, also the author of the *A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament Concerning the Present State of Affairs*, emphasised that matters 'considered in one light [could] appear just and reasonable' but, once 'considered in other lights', could be 'found [to be] unfit, and impracticable'. In order to protect the nation, parlia-

¹²¹⁷ Although a rather straightforward concept, it could be used in different manners in eighteenth-century Britain. It could function as a somewhat synonymous concept to democracy, but could also be used to describe the established tradition of parliamentary representation. It became a steadily used concept in parliamentary debates by the 1740s. Ihalainen 2010, 73, 89 - 96, 101 - 102, 105 - 117, 149, 246 - 268, 328, 333, 454 - 455. A Dutch version of the concept (*volks-regeering*) did not, according to Pasi Ihalainen, become common until the 1780s. In Sweden, on the other hand, it was commonly known either as *folk-regering* or *folk-wilde*. Ihalainen 2010, 12, 200, 223 - 226, 237 - 238, 242.

¹²¹⁸ A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/3 (N9879) and A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/13 - 20 (N21193). The author of *A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament* asserted that 'though both we and the Dutch are free, yet our freedom is greater, and more extensive than their's, and this by reason of our constitution'. A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/19 (N21193). See also BC/DC 20 January 1735.

¹²¹⁹ A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/14 - 18 (N21193). The *London Journal* similarly argued that in 'the United Netherlands' and Switzerland, 'every province, city, or canton, making a distinct body, independent from any other, and exercising sovereign power within itself, looks upon the rest as allies, to whom they are bound only by such acts as they themselves have made; and, when any new things, not comprehended in them, happen to arise, they oblige their delegates to give them an account of it, and retain the power of determining these matters to themselves.' GM December 1733/LJ 15 December 1733 (no. 755). See also GM July 1733/DJ 7 July 1733. For refutations of such claims, see, for instance, The Right of British Subjects to Petition and Apply to Their Representatives Asserted and Vindicated 1734/xxvii - xxix (T2968); GM January 1741/CS 3 & 10 January 1741; GM February 1741/CS 7 February 1741 (no. 209); A Letter to a Member of This New Parliament 1742/8 (T63003).

ment, consisting of the 'fittest persons', considered matters from different perspectives, something that most critics considered petitioners of being incapable of.¹²²⁰ Critics claimed that ministers defended 'the true interest of the people' instead of consulting the popular sentiments¹²²¹ and that instructions, scrutinised in detail in Chapter 6.3, tended to suppress the 'consciences and judgment' of members of parliament, thus 'frustrat[ing representatives'] intentions of acting' for the common good¹²²². Even proponents of petitions tended to recognise the eminence of parliament. Lord Carteret, the leader of the opposition in the House of Lords, defending the petitions against the Convention of Pardo in 1739, proclaimed 'the legislature ... [are] the best judges' in securing the common rights of the nation¹²²³. Such arguments emphasised the meritocratic features of the British constitution. First, critics implied that parliament consisted of actors of superior character. Second, the structure of parliament encouraged members of parliament to promote the common good. Rather than serving their constituents, representatives served the nation.

Members' of parliament acumen, the opponents of petitions claimed, enabled them to enact strenuous but paramount measures. People out-of-doors, on the other hand, tended to oppose such measures. Parliamentarians could claim, as the prime minister during the debate on reviving the salt duty in 1732, that proposed duties tended to encounter opposition regardless of their specific terms. 'Journals of this House [of Commons]', he continued, contained numerous instances of petitions submitted against bills and duties of 'universal benefit to mankind'.¹²²⁴ Charles Jenkinson, opposing the Wilkite petitions urging the King to dissolve the parliament in 1770, recognised that most legislative measures are 'restraint[s] and inconvenience[s]' in regard to their immediate effects. 'The multitude', he declared, 'never consider[s] remote advantages'. Dependence on 'the popular opinion' would render the House of Commons incapable of regulating 'morals' and raising 'supplies for the support of government'¹²²⁵. Hence, members of parliament ought to be 'superior to these false alarms', act as 'the real guardians

¹²²⁰ A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament Concerning the Present State of Affairs 1741/31 - 31 (N21193), see also *The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/26 - 32* (T63487).

¹²²¹ A Letter to a Member of parliament 1740/35 (N9879), see also Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 435/John Willes (West Looe). For references to the 'collective wisdom of parliament', see Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 128 - 129/Robert Walpole (King's Lynn) and Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 133 - 134/Henry Pelham (Sussex).

¹²²² A Hint upon Instructions from the Electors to their Representatives in Parliament 1742/7 - 9 (T108445).

¹²²³ Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoL) 1045 - 1047/Lord Carteret.

¹²²⁴ Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 959 - 960/Robert Walpole (King's Lynn), see also *The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/27 - 33* (T63487).

¹²²⁵ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 690 - 691/Mr Charles Jenkinson (Appleby), see also Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 132 - 134/Henry Pelham (Sussex); Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 145 - 146/Charles James Fox (Midhurst); A Hint upon Instructions from the Electors to their Representatives in Parliament 1742/7 - 8 (T108445).

of the nation'¹²²⁶, and defend the liberties of the people 'against the people themselves'¹²²⁷.

One of the most passionate speeches on the subject occurred in parliament during the debate on imprisoning Richard Oliver, the radical member of parliament for London¹²²⁸. Charles James Fox, the lord of admiralty and one of the members for Midhurst in 1771¹²²⁹, used references to the independence of parliament to counteract the influence of radicals out-of-doors. Fox maintained that, according to the constitution, representatives are the sole 'revealers of the national mind' and 'the only judges of what ought to be the sentiments of the kingdom'. Furthermore, Fox concluded that the eminence of members of parliament, 'bound to promote [the] true interests [of the people] in preference to the dearest desires of [their] hearts, and the constitution', made them 'the sole arbiters' of people's interests. Rather than being the source of public enlightenment, popular influence could become a cause of precariousness in the spheres of politics; if attempting 'to invade the constitution', the people became 'the enemies of the nation'. Hence, the pro-administration representative claimed that 'I stand up for the constitution, not for the people'; even if nine out of 10 resisted the administration, 'I shall at the same time insist, that [members of parliament] have higher obligations to justice, than to our constituents'¹²³⁰. Although expressed in a rather

¹²²⁶ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL) 816/Earl of Sandwich.

¹²²⁷ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 796 - 797/William De Grey (Newport/Cambridge University).

¹²²⁸ Oliver, a supporter of Wilkes and one of the founding members of the SSBR, serving both as an alderman and member of parliament for London, took part, alongside Wilkes and Brass Crosby, the lord mayor of London, in consciously defying parliament and its privileges in 1771. Oliver, under a plan devised by Wilkes, refused to obey the orders of parliament, participating in the process of releasing the printers that had published accounts on debates in the House. When asked to defend his conduct by the speaker of the House of Commons on 27 March, the defiant Oliver declared that 'I know the punishment I am to receive is determined upon. I have nothing to say ... I defy you'. He was committed to the Tower for the rest of the parliamentary session. Thomas 1996, 125 - 139; HoP/Richard Oliver; Hoover 1953, 31; Dickinson 1977, 213 - 214.

¹²²⁹ During his early career in parliament, Fox was a steady supporter of the administration. However, after ceasing to attend the Treasury board and criticising Lord North, then the prime minister, in the House of Commons, Fox was dismissed from his post in the Treasury and soon became classed as an opponent of the administration. Fox's decision to abandon the ministry was influenced by his doubts regarding the administration's American policies; the death of his father (Henry Fox, then the Baron Holland), a former member of parliament with close ties to the administration; and his personal dislike of Lord North. Influenced by other opposition members of parliament and the ideals of the American rebels, Fox would eventually become one of the most radical members of parliament. Johnson 1974; HoP/Charles James Fox.

¹²³⁰ He questioned people's abilities to understand 'the arcana of political rectitude' on subjects such as 'connections of kingdoms, the resources of national strength, [and] the abilities of ministers'. Hence, 'I pay no regard whatever to the voice of the people: it is our duty to do what is proper, without considering what may be agreeable: their business is to chuse us; it is our business to act constitutionally, and to maintain the independency of parliament: whether it is attacked by the people or by the Crown, is a matter of little consequence'. If, for instance, instructing 'us, their representatives, to introduce a democratical form of government', thus abolishing 'this mixed monarchy, which we celebrate as equally the pride and envy of the universe', 'should we act as good subjects to our King, or as faithful guardians to our country, if we complied

harsh manner, a habit that would continue to define his mode of oratory, the notions Fox voiced in the House during the debate on 25 March 1771 were by no means radical. A clear majority of the eighteenth-century members of parliament would have recognised the principles Fox formulated in his speeches: that parliament ought to be independent and that representatives ought to champion the interest of the nation instead of courting the sentiments of the people out-of-doors.

According to numerous opponents of petitions, dependence on the people out-of-doors could shatter the very design of parliament. Subordination to the people and petitions, the critics claimed, contradicted the essence of parliament, which combined the representation of the people, the deliberation of the prudent, and legislative effectiveness. If dependent on the people and petitions, opposition in parliament could use their 'myrmidons' out-of-doors, a reference to Achilles' soldiers, to force pro-administration representatives to support opposition schemes¹²³¹. The author of the *Reflections upon a Pamphlet*, defending the plans to transform the custom duties of tobacco and wine into excise duties in 1733, claimed that in complicated societies, each bill and act contradicted 'the private interest of some man'¹²³². If it abandoned the principle of greater good and, as a consequence, abstained from legislating, Britain would soon 'be reduced to the blessed state of a natural community'.¹²³³ The author of the pamphlet described a conundrum that concerned, and still concerns, most legislative institutions. Although, more or less, present in all societies, regardless of their specific form of government, the conundrum certainly was, and is, most influential in those involving representative institutions. The eighteenth-century House of Commons might not have been as obsessed over the mantras of electoral accountability as most of the modern representative institutions, but early modern members of parliament also had actors and instances to keep pleased, as the electoral impact of the excise scheme clearly exemplifies¹²³⁴. Mercantile groups, whether organised on a geographic or by professional basis, could wield significant influence within cities and towns, as could those owning considerable portions of land within the boundaries of the constituency.

with so dangerous an advice?', Fox asked. Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 145 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst).

¹²³¹ Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst). John Willes, the attorney-general, defined such influence 'a most dangerous dependance', even 'more dangerous and of worse consequence than a dependance upon the Crown; for in a dependance on the Crown, I can see no longer as long as the interest of the Crown is made the same with that of the people, which every man must allow to be the case at present; whereas the people of any county, city, or borough are very liable to be misled, and may often be induced to give instructions directly contrary to the interest of their country.' Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 434 - 435/John Willes (West Looe).

¹²³² The pamphleteer stated that 'it is as impossible for the legislature to make a law agreeable to every man's opinion, as for a taylor to make a suit that shall fit every shape, or a cook to season a dish that shall please every palate'.

¹²³³ *Reflections upon a Pamphlet* 1733/4 - 5 (T134031), see also *A Hint upon Instructions from the Electors to their Representatives in Parliament* 1742/7 - 9 (T108445).

¹²³⁴ As noted in Chapter 5.3 (Enjoiners and Requirers).

Second, dependence on petitions would encourage people to submit even more petitions. Critics claimed that petitions could preclude parliament from being effective¹²³⁵ and, if encouraged, function as a mechanism of conscious obstruction. The author of the *A Seasonable Address to the People of London and Middlesex*, a pro-administration pamphlet criticising the requests of the Wilkite petitioners to dissolve the parliament, claimed that 'if parliament is to be dissolved at the request' of a modest number of counties and boroughs, there would be a good reason to presume a significant increase in 'such requests'¹²³⁶. Although not a pressing problem during the studied period, later developments regarding petitioning demonstrate that such arguments were not far-fetched. Due to the drastic increase of petitions submitted to parliament¹²³⁷, consuming vast amounts of parliamentary time and enabling radicals to influence the content of the debates in the House, members of parliament started to impose restrictions on petitioning in 1832 - 1842. Instead of being debated in the House, petitions were directed to a standing committee. The restrictions also prevented members of parliament from using the petitions to initiate debates on the petitioned subject.¹²³⁸ A clear majority of the petitions studied in this thesis, too, arrived in clusters, as demonstrated in Figure 2 (Incidence of Petitions and Published Copies, 1721 - 1776)¹²³⁹. When combined with the fact that most petitions criticised the conduct of parliament, endeavouring to influence its proceedings, the concerns regarding the dangers of unrestricted petitioning appear more than understandable.

Critics' references to the independence of parliament and members of parliament epitomise one of their most important counter-arguments against petitions or certain modes of petitioning. Based on established traditions and precedents, most actors in the spheres of politics recognised the principle of representatives' independence. Petitioners and proponents of petitions could, of course, challenge the precise implementation of that principle, and, at times, even the principle in itself, as demonstrated in Chapter 5 (Requests and Requirements: Petitioners' Perceptions on the Representative Relationship). Though most petitioners and proponents of petitions recognised representatives' independence,

¹²³⁵ Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 242/William Yonge (Honiton); Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 249 - 251/Henry Pelham (Sussex); Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 1067/Henry Pelham (Sussex); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 128 - 129/Robert Walpole (King's Lynn).

¹²³⁶ *A Seasonable Address to the People of London and Middlesex* 1770/27 (T122090).

¹²³⁷ Whereas it received 880 petitions in 1785 - 1790, parliament received 24,492 and 70,369 petitions in 1827 - 1831 and 1837 - 1841, respectively.

¹²³⁸ Jupp 2006, 251 - 252; Leys 1955, 47 - 58; Fraser 1961, 207 - 211; Innes 2005, 117 - 118, 121. Parliament also imposed restrictions on petitioning meetings in 1795 and 1819 to curb the influence of radicals. The act of 1819 prohibited meetings called to consider petitioning on 'any public grievance, or upon any matter or thing relating to any trade, manufacture, business or profession, or upon any matter in church or state' unless, in the words of Joanna Innes, 'summoned by the authorities specified in the previous act, or confined to inhabitants of a single parish or township, who must however notify local magistrates'. Innes 2005, 113 - 114; Fraser 1961, 202 - 204.

¹²³⁹ Of the 464 petitions studied in this thesis, 86 per cent (397 petitions) occurred during eight crises and controversies (1721, 1733, 1739 - 1741, 1753, 1756, 1763, 1769 - 1771, and 1775 - 1776), as observed in Chapter 1.4.1 (Petitions). Petitioners could also use references to other petitions to legitimise their use of petitions, as demonstrated in Chapter 2.4 (Rationalising Petitioning).

opponents tended to focus on actors, using critical concepts and discourses. Such counter-argumentation enabled critics to represent petitioners and their proponents as radicals, endeavouring to destabilise the established order of politics and challenge the constitution. Regardless of their affiliations and interpretations, most of those involved in the spheres of politics recognised that representatives' independence constituted the core question of representation, defining the relationship of parliament and the people. However, whereas some petitioners and their proponents implied that representatives ought to act as requested, rarely being systematic in challenging the free mandate, the critics of such petitions tended to provide a rather systematic and often adamant defence of representatives' independence.

6.3 Procedural Constraints on Petitioning

In addition to the general references to the independence of parliament, critics of petitions used procedural arguments to protect the principle of independence. In such cases, certain precedents and principles gained more references than others: (1) limitations regarding money bills and (2) the right to instruct members of parliament. In the first case, opponents of petitions maintained that petitions could not be submitted on bills granting funds for the current service of the year. Most authors on procedural practices and precedents recognised the restrictions on petitioning in cases of money bills. John Hatsell, the author of the authoritative *Precedents of Proceedings in the House of Commons* (first published in 1781), claimed that 'this practice of refusing to receive petitions against bills imposing duties for the current service of the year, has ... become the established rule of the House'¹²⁴⁰. In most cases, such authors used references to precedents from 1706 and 1713 to legitimise the restrictions on such bills¹²⁴¹. Critics of petitions used similar characterisations to delegitimise petitions. John Conduitt, a pro-government member of parliament¹²⁴², criticising a petition from Rhode Island and the

¹²⁴⁰ Hatsell 1796 (3) 208, see also 149 - 151, 173 - 174, 200 - 215. Hatsell noted, however, that 'the House ought to be particularly cautious, not to be over rigid in extending this rule beyond what the practice of their ancestors, in former times, can justify them in.' Hatsell 1796 (3), 210 - 212. See also May 1844, 273, 325 - 326; May 1912 (1), 377 - 379; Hallam 1846 (2), 436; Jupp 2006, 70; Langford 1975, 62 - 63.

¹²⁴¹ According to Hatsell and May, the House of Commons resolved on 11 December 1706, that 'this House will receive no petition, for any sum of money, relating to public service*, but what is recommended from the Crown'. It was confirmed and declared a standing order on 11 June 1713. Hatsell 1796 (1), 149 - 150, 173 - 174, 200 - 201; May 1844, 325 - 326; May 1912 (1), 378. Both authors also mention a decision made on 29 March 1707, stating that 'this House will not proceed upon any petition, motion, or bill, for granting any money, or for releasing or compounding any sum of money owing to the Crown, but in a committee of the whole House.' According to May, the order was confirmed on 14 April 1707, 7 February 1708, and 29 November 1710 'and is constantly observed in the proceedings of the House in matters of supply. May 1844, 273, 326; Hatsell 1796 (1), 150 - 151, 201.

¹²⁴² The master of the Mint, representing Whitchurch from 1721 to 1735 and Southampton from 1735 to 1737. HoP/John Conduitt.

Providence Plantations¹²⁴³, described the practice as 'a custom ever since the revolution'¹²⁴⁴. Such a restriction on petitioning granted opponents of petitions a strong and solid position in countering petitions in 1733 and 1763, most of them submitted against such bills.

Most opposition parliamentarians recognised the precedents in principle but could, a times, challenge its implementation. Opposition representatives could, for instance, claim that the procedure applied to bills brought to raise supplies 'for the current service of the year', and even in such cases, parliament had found it 'proper to admit parties to be heard against them ... [if] interested therein'. It could also be asserted that the precedents concerned petitions on bills introducing additional duties instead of bills 'for altering the method of collecting' duties.¹²⁴⁵ Others challenged the precedents used to delegitimize petitions on such bills. In such, cases actors claimed that preceding parliaments had received petitions on such bills¹²⁴⁶. It ought to be remembered that although settled precedents from the perspective of procedural manuals, published in 1781 and 1844,

¹²⁴³ On 8 March 1733, the House of Commons debated a petition submitted by Richard Partridge, an actor acting on behalf of the colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations. The petition, introduced to the House of Commons by John Barnard, a mercantile-minded member of parliament representing London (Opposition Whig), opposed the Sugar Colony Bill. Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1261; HoP/John Barnard; Langford 1975, 62 - 63.

¹²⁴⁴ Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1264/John Conduitt (Whitchurch). William Yonge, member of parliament for Honiton, described it as a 'constant usage of this House [of Commons]' not to receive petitions on such bills. Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1261 - 1262/William Yonge (Honiton). See also Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1262/Thomas Winnington (Droitwich); Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 4-6; Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 1061 - 1064; Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 1067/Henry Pelham (Sussex); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 128/Robert Walpole (King's Lynn); An impartial enquiry into the late conduct of the city of London 1733/11 - 12 (T57527); GM April 1733/FB 12 April 1733 (no. 177). For opposition representatives recognising the convention, see, for instance, Cobbett 1739 - 1741 (HoC) 1446/William Pulteney (Middlesex). Initially referred to as the Standing Order 66. The list of standing orders was later re-organised and the rule is now known as Standing Order 48. The current list of Standing Orders of the House of Commons still includes a reference to the precedent of 1713. Roseveare 1973, 80.

¹²⁴⁵ Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 6 - 7, see also Cobbett 1739 - 1741 (HoC) 1446/William Pulteney (Middlesex); Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 1063 - 1064; Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1263/John Barnard (London). For refutations of such claims, see, for instance, Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1264/John Conduitt (Whitchurch); An Impartial Enquiry into the Late Conduct of the City of London 1733/11 - 12 (T57527); GM April 1733/FB 12 April 1733 (no. 177).

¹²⁴⁶ John Barnard, an eminent member of parliament for London, representing the city from 1722 to 1761, noted during the debate on the Sugar Colony Bill in 1733 that 'since I have had the honour to sit in parliament I remember, that several petitions have been received against duties to be laid on'. He further argued that 'it may be the case, that this House has sometimes refused to receive petitions from some parts of Britain against duties to be laid on; but this can be no reason why the petition, I have now in my hand, should be rejected'. Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1262 - 1264/John Barnard (London); HoP/John Barnard. See also Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1264 - 1265/William Pulteney (Hedon); Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1265/Samuel Sandys (Worcester); Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 6 - 7; Cobbett 1733 - 1737 1061 - 1063; GM January 1766/The Crisis; GM December 1739/Cr 22 December 1739 (no. 702). For Hatsell's remarks on the opposition interpretations of the practice, summarised in parliament by Samuel Sandys on 10 April 1733, see Hatsell 1796 (1), 207 - 210. Thomas Winnington, a pro-government member of parliament, admitted that 'there

most debates on the issue occurred during the 1730s. The rulings that the authors of the manuals used to restrict petitioning occurred in 1706 and 1713 - established precedents in 1781 but less so in 1733. But although at times critical of the interpretation of the precedents, most opposition actors recognised the need to restrict petitioning on money bills.

Most assertions concerning the restrictions on petitions on money bills consisted of references to precedents and other conventions. However, critics could also emphasise the rationales behind these restrictions. Most of such critics emphasised the House of Commons' right to raise and grant supplies. *Free Briton*, a pro-administration paper¹²⁴⁷, for instance, used the argument in an article published during the excise crisis in 1733. The paper accused the common council of London, one of the opposition strongholds¹²⁴⁸, of distributing copies of the tobacco bill in order to encourage rioting and petitioning. This, the editor of the paper claimed, undermined the 'most important, and most sacred' privilege of the House of Commons.¹²⁴⁹ Others argued that receiving petitions on such bills could incapacitate the House of Commons. Critics could declare, as in the case of the petition from Rhode Island and the Providence Plantations in 1733, that recognising petitions on money bills could encourage actors to submit 'multitudes of them' against the bills. Opposition, the critics claimed, could use such tactics to prevent the House from using its most important privilege, thus undermining

may be some instances to the contrary, but I am sure they are very rare, and never happened but upon some very extraordinary occasion'. Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1262/Thomas Winnington (Droitwich). Henry Pelham, a staunch defender of the government, similarly noted that 'it is almost a general rule, not so much as to receive petitions against such [money] bills'. Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 1067/Henry Pelham (Sussex).

¹²⁴⁷ Edited by William Arnall under the pseudonym of Francis Walsingham. As one of the journalists closest to Walpole, Arnall was paid a pension of 400 pounds per annum, receiving almost 11,000 pounds in total during his career as a pro-administration author. Arnall died shortly after the merger of *Free Briton*, *London Journal*, and *Daily Courant* in 1735. Downie 1984, 179 - 180; Harris 1984, 197 - 202; Langford 1992, 47; Gunn 1983, 108 - 109; Harris 1996, 16 - 17; Black 2001, 36 - 37.

¹²⁴⁸ Robert Walpole, in particular, would feel the wrath of London during his tenure as prime minister, and vice versa. In 1725, Walpole attempted to restrict the influence of 'popular Toryism', to quote the characterisation of Jeremy Black, by the City Elections Act. The act provided the court of aldermen, which the administration controlled until 1737, a veto over the decisions of the court of common council. Although an important part of the national opposition in general, the influence of London was especially notable during the excise crisis in 1733. Paul Langford, for instance, has argued that the 'heartfelt reaction' against excises in the provincial boroughs was, to a large extent, inspired by the opposition in London. He maintains that the 'reaction would not have been possible without skilled and vigorous leadership, such as came from the city of London, the home of the great plutocratic merchant houses as well as one of the strongest centres of opposition to government'. Besides being influenced by the leadership and practical management of London, the vibrant press in the city also had an impact on organising opposition in the provinces. Black 1984a, 35, 39; Dickinson 1984, 51, 58 - 60; Langford 1975, 54 - 55, 58, 78 - 79, 88, 92 - 93; Wilson 1998, 250; Woodland 1992, 61 - 62, 78; Cruickshanks 1984, 39 - 40; Horwitz 1987, 187 - 193; Dickinson 1994, 107 - 108, 205 - 212, 215 - 216; Royle & Walvin 1982, 16 - 17; Borsay 1990a, 24 - 25; Price 1983, 295 - 297; Rogers 1989, 51 - 56.

¹²⁴⁹ GM April 1733/FB 12 April 1733 (no. 177). For refutations of such claims, see, for instance, GM April 1733/GSJ 19 April 1733 (no. 173).

the constitution and the established order of politics.¹²⁵⁰ In both cases, the opponents of petitions emphasised the role of the House of Commons in regulating duties and supplies. In order to protect the interest of the people, the House ought to be free to use its privileges.

Instructions constitute the second case that critics used to emphasise the independence of members of parliament. Though often criticising petitions in practice, most critics recognised the right to petition in principle¹²⁵¹. Critics recognised the 'right of petitioning the parliament' and 'the King for redress of grievances'¹²⁵²; often describing it as a legitimate and even desirable practice¹²⁵³. But such petitions ought to meet a certain set of standards. First, petitioners ought to be humble¹²⁵⁴ and use the right sort of verbs (such as *implore* and *desire*)¹²⁵⁵. Second, petitions could be used to inform the petitioned. Friend of the English Constitution, a pseudonym attributed to both Matthew Concanen and Horace Walpole, a subsidised pro-administration pamphleteer of Irish origin and the brother of the prime minister, representing Great Yarmouth¹²⁵⁶, respectively, noted that members of parliament ought 'to hear all that can be offered upon' subjects debated, and 'representatives of trading corporations in particular' ought to gather information on the 'advantages [and] disadvantages apprehended to arise from .. bill[s] depending in parliament' from their constituents¹²⁵⁷. Actors out-of-doors could use courteous petitions to inform parliament both of the effects of proposed legislation and constituents' sentiments, but parliament retained the right to reject petitions it deemed incongruous.

¹²⁵⁰ Cobbett 1722 - 1733 (HoC) 1262/Thomas Winnington (Droitwich), see also Cobbett 1733 - 1737 (HoC) 5 - 6.

¹²⁵¹ See, for instance, Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoL) 1044/Earl of Ilay; Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 884/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); GM February 1733/LJ 17 February 1733 (no. 712); GM May 1733/L J 26 May 1733 (no. 726); Cobbett 1753 - 1765 (HoC) 144 - 145/Henry Pelham (Bramber); Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 1067/Henry Pelham (Sussex); A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament Concerning the Present State of Affairs 1741/28 - 33 (N21193); BC/DC 20 January 1735; BC/PA 20 November 1770; GM 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759); Reflections on the Present Conduct of the Populace 1733/25 (T102099); Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/21 - 22 (T53010); A Vindication of the Petition of the Livery of the City of London 1769/3 (T11223).

¹²⁵² GM January 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759) and BC/PA 20 November 1770.

¹²⁵³ Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoC) 1067/Henry Pelham (Sussex).

¹²⁵⁴ Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoL) 1044/Earl of Ilay; BC/LJ 26 May 1733; BC/WM 6 January 1733; BC/LJ 8 April 1721; BC/BJ 6 October 1722. Thomas Erskine May noted that 'the language of a petition should be respectful and temperate, and free from offensive imputations upon the character or conduct of parliament, or the courts of justice, or other tribunal, or constituted authority'. May 1844, 304.

¹²⁵⁵ Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoL) 1044/Earl of Ilay; BC/LJ 8 April 1721; GM January 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759). Most petitioners, indeed, used such verbs, as demonstrated in Figure 8 (Verbs in Petitions to the Throne, 1721 - 1776).

¹²⁵⁶ Downie 1984, 177, 179; Targett 1994, 290 - 291; Korshin 1974, 462; HoP/Horatio Walpole.

¹²⁵⁷ The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/26 - 27 (T63487), see also A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament Concerning the Present State of Affairs 1741/32 - 33 (N21193); Cobbett 1737 - 1739 (HoL) 1044/Earl of Ilay; GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733; BC/DC 20 January 1735.

Most criticism focused on the petitions failing to meet the principles described above. Such criticism tended to focus on petitions referred to as instructions. Some of the criticism stemmed from the concept itself; instructions could be used and interpreted in different manners. Instructions could be used as a mean to communicate, to inform members of parliament of constituents' sentiments on subjects discussed both in parliament and out-of-doors, and to submit recommendations to them¹²⁵⁸. In such cases, critics tended to recognise the use of instructions as legitimate. The authors of two pro-administration pamphlets in 1742 recognised constituents' right to submit instructions to members of parliament, but noted that the practice had usually been used in times of 'great emergency'. 'It has not been usual to exercise that right', the author of the *Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London* claimed, 'but in times when the publick interest has been manifestly neglected, or our liberties and properties at least secretly, if not openly invaded'.¹²⁵⁹ The author of the *Daily Courant*, a pro-administration paper also recognised the right to submit instructions in cases of 'private concerns, interests, and affairs', but dismissed their use in cases relating to the public interest¹²⁶⁰. Critics tended to recognise the right to submit courteous petitions to members of parliament but castigated the more imperative forms of instructing.

The ambiguous character of instruction-related concepts is also evident in the eighteenth-century dictionaries. Dictionarists defined *to instruct* as 'to bring up' and *instruction/instructions* as 'directions in a business of concernment' and 'directions in an affair of moment'¹²⁶¹. Such definitions associated instructions with bringing up problems and informing members of parliament of constituents' concerns. However, the dictionaries also contained definitions that can be

¹²⁵⁸ Instructions, in the analytical sense of the concept, were petitions submitted to members of parliament (in contrast to petitions submitted to institutions such as the House of Commons), as noted in Chapter 2.1 (Introduction to Petitions). However, for petitioners and their contemporaries, instructions could also refer to imperative petitions in general. In order to maintain the authenticity of their argumentation, I have chosen not to change the citations with regard to their uses of the concept in this sub-chapter. Hence, most references to instructions in this sub-chapter refer to imperative petitions in general rather than to petitions submitted to members of parliament as such.

¹²⁵⁹ *Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London* 1742/5, 31 (T1105) and *A Hint Upon Instructions from the Electors to their Representatives in Parliament* 1742/22 - 23 (T108445). 'In such extremities, when their representatives are tamely suffering their constitutional rights to be invaded, and trampled upon', the author of the *A Hint Upon Instructions from the Electors to their Representatives in Parliament* argued, 'every individual elector has no doubt a just and lawful right to stand up in his own defence, and to join in instructions to those who represent them in parliament, in order to defeat such impending dangers and destruction'. *A Hint upon Instructions from the Electors to their Representatives in Parliament* 1742/23 (T108445). See also GM November 1742/DG 23 November 1742 (no. 2309); GM February 1733/LJ 17 February 1733 (no. 712).

¹²⁶⁰ BC/DC 20 January 1735, see also GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733. *Daily Courant* differed 'orders' and 'instructions', implicating that instructions could also be non-authoritative. BC/DC 20 January 1735.

¹²⁶¹ Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735.

interpreted as authoritative. *Instruct* could mean 'to teach' or 'to train'¹²⁶², something constituents should avoid in cases regarding parliament and members of parliament, and *instruction/instructions* for 'order', 'precept', 'mandate', and 'authoritative information'¹²⁶³ - definite breaches of the established doctrine of the British form of representation. The contrast becomes even more pronounced if compared to entries on petition-related concepts. Samuel Johnson defined *to petition* as 'to sollicite' and 'to supplicate'¹²⁶⁴, both characterisations that distinguished these concepts from the instructions critics described as authoritative, and *petition* as 'a request or supplication by an inferior to a superior'¹²⁶⁵. Concepts derived from the French *instruire* and Latin *instructum* could, of course, refer to subjects other than authoritative petitions and petitions addressed to members of parliament. Instructing could, indeed, be used to refer to a multitude of subjects, ranging from education to different sorts of manuals. But the entries in dictionaries also epitomise the problematic nature of the instruction-related cluster of concepts. It is more than understandable that the opponents of such petitions could interpret them as authoritative petitions (of some sort).

Instead of being pleading and polite, as petitions ought to be, the authors of instructions were criticised for the use of imperative concepts and discourses. Such instructions were described as 'positive commands'¹²⁶⁶, 'threatning letters'¹²⁶⁷, 'insolent instructions'¹²⁶⁸, 'popular dictates'¹²⁶⁹, 'authoritative orders'¹²⁷⁰, and 'authoritative'¹²⁷¹, 'absolute'¹²⁷², and 'decisive injunctions'¹²⁷³. Opponents also criticised instructions for being 'far distant from the stile of submission and request' and 'instead of persuading, [the authors of instructions] attempt to intimidate us, and menace us'. In order to protect the House of Commons, Henry Pelham claimed in 1741¹²⁷⁴, members of parliament ought to reject such petitions and thus discourage future petitioners 'from speaking in the stile of governors and dictators'.¹²⁷⁵ Though entitled to submit petitions and, in certain cases, in-

¹²⁶² Kersey 1708; Bailey 1735; Johnson 1768.

¹²⁶³ Bailey 1735; Johnson 1768.

¹²⁶⁴ Johnson 1768.

¹²⁶⁵ Bailey 1735; Kersey 1708.

¹²⁶⁶ The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/26 - 28 (T63487). For 'authoritative commands', see GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726).

¹²⁶⁷ GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726), see also GM January 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759) and A Hint upon Instructions from the Electors to their Representatives in Parliament 1742/23 (T108445).

¹²⁶⁸ GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726).

¹²⁶⁹ BC/CT 23 April 1757, see also GM January 1741/DG 16 January 1741; Seasonable Expostulations with the Worthy Citizens of London 1742/31 (T1105); An Impartial Answer to the Doctrine Delivered in a Letter 1770/2 - 3 (N007621).

¹²⁷⁰ GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726).

¹²⁷¹ The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/29, 33 (T63487).

¹²⁷² The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/33 (T63487).

¹²⁷³ The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/26 - 27 (T63487).

¹²⁷⁴ During the debate on the Seamen's Bill. The paymaster-general and future prime minister (1743 - 1754) also claimed that 'if such petitions as these, sir, are admitted; if the legislature shall submit to receive laws, and subjects resume at pleasure the power with which the government is vested, what is this House but a Convention of empty phantoms, whose determinations are nothing more than a mockery of state?'

¹²⁷⁵ Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 121 -122/Henry Pelham (Sussex).

structions, as earlier noted, petitioners could not impose orders on their representatives. Once elected, members of parliament could be 'under no-subjection to ... orders or instructions of their respective electors, in things relating to the general good' and interest of the nation¹²⁷⁶. *Con-Test*, a pro-Pitt paper¹²⁷⁷, recognised the 'undoubted right' to petition and criticise the administration, but maintained that actors out-of-doors could not 'anticipate the duty of our representatives, by popular dictates concerning present and future measures'¹²⁷⁸. Although most petitioners preferred subtler methods of influencing members of parliament, some petitioners, indeed, used imperative formulations, as demonstrated in Chapters 5.3 (Enjoiners and Requirers) and 5.4 (Petitioners' Indirect Means of Influence).

Critics could also claim that petitions contained formulations that implied that the petitioned ought to observe their requests. Britannicus, perhaps the alter ego of John Hildrop, a county cleric¹²⁷⁹, criticised a Dissenter petition, endeavouring to overturn the Test Acts in 1733, of the use of implicit orders. He claimed that the Dissenters used their petitions to request 'strict justice' instead of 'favour[s]' from parliament. The supporters of the Dissenters' cause, the author insisted, '[are] against applying to any ministers to desire relief, because no one ought to ask, or receive a piece of justice as a favour'¹²⁸⁰. Thus, 'their application should not be drawn up in the form of a petition, but of an absolute claim or demand, since they apply for something which the parliament is not at liberty to refuse them'.¹²⁸¹ *London Journal* used similar arguments to criticise a petition from St Albans in 1734¹²⁸². The paper also criticised an opposition pamphlet for asserting that the petition contained no references to concepts such 'command, or injunction, or any word synonymous, or equivalent to it'¹²⁸³. Although lacking references to such concepts, the petition contained the phrase 'we expect'. 'Expecting', the author claimed, 'is threatening with a penalty, and is the language of superiority and power; it is the voice of authority, which the people have no share

¹²⁷⁶ BC/DC 20 January 1735.

¹²⁷⁷ The paper was founded to oppose the *Test*, a paper supporting Newcastle and his allies. It was edited by Owen Ruffhead 'under the political guidance' of Sir Philip Francis. *Con-Test*, as well as its opponent, proved to be a rather short-lived paper, running from November 1756 to August 1757. Spector 2015, 20 -22, 36 - 38, 68 - 70; Hope 1865, 87 - 88; Clark 2000a, 338.

¹²⁷⁸ BC/CT 23 April 1757, see also GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726) and Cobbett 1753- 1765 (HoC) 144/Henry Pelham (Bramber). It did not mean constituents could not influence the composition of parliament. Despite being unable to command members of parliament, constituents could seek to change their representatives through elective means. GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726). The *Daily Gazetteer*, however, criticised the threats to oust representatives that refused to observe electoral instructions. GM November 1742/DG 23 November 1742 (no. 2309).

¹²⁷⁹ Black 2008, 136.

¹²⁸⁰ Britannicus criticised the author of *The Interests of the Protestant Dissenters Considered*, published in 1732. *The Interests of the Protestant Dissenters Considered 1732* (T65659).

¹²⁸¹ BC/WM 6 January 1733.

¹²⁸² The petitioners from St Albans proclaimed that 'we expect from you, sir, a constant and steady pursuit of such measures, as will keep our constitution, as near as may be, in the same situation, under which it has long flourished'. St Albans 1733 (#035).

¹²⁸³ A Review of the Excise-Scheme 1733/42 - 43 (T60580).

of so long as the constitution subsists'.¹²⁸⁴ The criticism by Britannicus and *London Journal* illustrate the importance of both implicit means in general and the choice of verbs in particular. Such coded signals were, indeed, especially important in the case of petitions, being, at least in the formal sense, a pronouncedly humble genre. Instead of explicitly declaring that representatives were bound to follow the instructions from their constituents, petitioners tended to favour more subtle forms of persuasion. Although such choices may seem of minor importance, even trivial, it is more than likely that the petitioned understood the implicit signals petitioners endeavoured to communicate to them. Choices of verbs, at least, were, indeed, intentional decisions, as demonstrated in Chapter 5 (Requests and Requirements: Petitioners' Perceptions on the Representative Relationship).

In both cases, those opposing petitions claimed to criticise them to protect the independence of parliament. Restrictions on petitions on money bills were characterised as a necessity for protecting the privileges of the House of Commons. If enabled, such petitions could undermine the most significant privilege of the House of Commons, thus rendering it incapable of protecting the true interest of the nation. Instructions, if used in the imperative sense of the concept, could also challenge the independence of parliament. If permitted, such instructions would deprive representatives their right to deliberate and act independently, reducing them into puppets of the people. Critics may have recognised the right to petition, but in a distinctively different manner than some of the authors and supporters of the more imperative petitions. Although often portrayed as procedural matters, especially in the case of petitions on money bills, both of the cases concerned the very core of parliamentary sovereignty. The right to raise and grant supplies was central to its ability to influence the course of the nation, as struggles with James II had demonstrated. But whereas the issue regarding money bills originally derived from the conflicts between parliament and the Crown, the latter issue concerned the relation between parliament and the people. Had instructions become binding, as the critics feared, it would have changed the very design of the British parliament; transforming parliamentary sovereignty to popular sovereignty; transforming a system based on parliamentary sovereignty to one revolving around the principle of popular sovereignty.

6.4 In Defence of the Constitution

Besides criticising petitioners' character and conduct, blaming them for undermining the independence of parliament, and using procedural arguments to delegitimise petitioning, critics also accused petitioners and their supporters of challenging the constitution. In doing so, the critics utilised one of the most legitimate concepts in eighteenth-century Britain, recognised by actors from high church Tories to Wilkite radicals. The salience of the concept is evident in both petitions

¹²⁸⁴ GM January 1734/LJ 5 January 1734 (no. 759).

and the debates on them. Petitioners used references to the constitution regardless of the content of their petitions, from the South Sea petitions to those opposing the naturalisation of Jews, as demonstrated in the earlier chapters. The anti-Walpolean opposition and Wilkite petitioners in particular used references to the constitution to undermine the legitimacy of the administration and to elevate themselves. Their critics, on the other hand, tended to interpret the uncodified constitution in a diametrically opposite manner, claiming that petitioners, and the radicals supporting them, endeavoured to overturn it. The constitution remained a highly ambiguous concept throughout the eighteenth century¹²⁸⁵. Its meaning could be specified by attaching attributes to the concept¹²⁸⁶, but in most cases, it remained a generic reference to the established order of politics, especially to the post-Revolution settlement. In that sense, it signified the ideals, institutions, and practices that should not be changed.

Critics often focused on criticising the adverse impact the petitions had on the constitution. In such cases, the critics either claimed that the petitions endangered the constitution or were being used to overturn it on purpose. True Lover of the People, a pro-administration pamphleteer, criticised 'this anti-constitutional practice of instructing' in 1740, arguing that such 'artifices [are] of a dangerous nature' and might 'prove destructive of our constitution'¹²⁸⁷. The pro-administration author further emphasised the dangers of instructions in his second pamphlet (*A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament*). He claimed that the actors that 'espouse it at present do it from a presumption that ... [instructions] serve their turn for the present'. 'Perhaps it might do so', the pamphleteer noted, but it also set 'a bad precedent, and open a road to the greatest mischiefs hereafter'.¹²⁸⁸ The majorities in the House of Commons and the House of Lords used similar arguments to assert their concerns on petitions' impact on the constitution in their address, submitted to the Throne on 22 March 1770. Parliament recognised the 'undoubted right' to submit petitions but also emphasised their concerns about

¹²⁸⁵ Partly due to its uncodified character but mostly because of the lack of elaboration from those referring to it. For further elaboration on the subject, see, for instance, footnote 1036.

¹²⁸⁶ Such as *mixed*, *balanced*, and *ancient*. However, even in such cases, its meaning tended to remain rather ambiguous; the precise character of that balance, for instance, varying from case to case, as demonstrated later in the sub-chapter.

¹²⁸⁷ A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/6 (N9879). See also A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/18 - 20, 29 (N21193); The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise 1733/27 (T63487); An Eighth Letter to the People of England 1770/99 (T82445); A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London 1764/36 - 38 (T38231); Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/41 (T53010); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 796 - 797/William De Grey (Newport/Cambridge University); Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 121 - 122/Henry Pelham (Bramber); Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 703 - 705/Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis); BC/DC 20 January 1735; GM April 1733/FB 12 April 1733 (no. 177); Charles James Fox argued in 1771 that 'if the people attempt to invade the constitution, they are enemies of the nation'. Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst).

¹²⁸⁸ A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/33 - 34 (N21193). The pro-administration pamphleteer also asserted that in future ministers 'as ambitious and as great enemies to the people as some that have lived in times past' could manipulate the people to use binding instructions to 'screen themselves from the representatives of the people, behind the people themselves'. A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/34 - 35 (N21193).

the London petition¹²⁸⁹ requesting the King to dissolve the parliament. Instead of using their privilege to defend the established order, the London petitioners used their address to the Throne 'to the purpose of overturning the constitution'. Besides criticising petitioners' endeavours, parliament commended the King for his support for 'the principles of the constitution' in refusing to use his prerogative to dissolve the parliament.¹²⁹⁰ The constitution, of course, formed one of the most legitimate references in British politics¹²⁹¹. Proponents of petitions used similar references to legitimise the popular participation in politics, claiming that petitions were submitted to defend the constitution.

Some of the criticism focused on the unintended consequences of petitions. Rather than attempting to trample the constitution, petitioners' disregard of settled procedures and interpretations was said to undermine the established order of politics. However, petitions' anti-constitutional implications could also be intentional. True Lover of the People claimed that at least some of those 'promoting a place-bill' used it as a 'pretence', 'aim[ing] at altering, if not subverting the constitution'¹²⁹². In his second tract, the pro-administration pamphleteer claimed that the 'set of men' promoting instructions endeavoured 'to sap several fundamental parts of our constitution'¹²⁹³. The author of *An Address to Junius*, endeavouring to undermine the claims published in the *Public Advertiser* on 19 December 1769, used similar claims to delegitimise petitions, petitioners, and the supporters of petitions. Instead of being a champion of the people, Junius became described as a 'parricide'¹²⁹⁴ and 'modern Barabbas'¹²⁹⁵, focusing on overturning the consti-

¹²⁸⁹ London 1770 (#322).

¹²⁹⁰ Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoL)/900 - 902, see also Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC)/885 Jeremiah Dyson (Weymouth and Melcombe Regis).

¹²⁹¹ As noted in Chapter 4.1 (Petitions and the Collective Interest). Although unwritten, or at least uncodified, the constitution formed an influential and compelling point of reference. The constitution could be characterised as the aegis of 'our lives, our liberties, and properties'. Defending the constitution against its many and diverse enemies was portrayed as the obligation of every 'Englishman'. A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/6 (N9879); BC/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726). As an uncodified entity, it remained ambiguous, enabling different groups and individuals in the spheres of politics to interpret it in a manner that suited them. For the opposition, it could be a sacred charter, providing them rights and privileges that the administration attempted to undermine. However, for the representatives and pamphleteers criticising petitions and extra-parliamentary pressure, it often signified parliamentary sovereignty. Instead of defending the constitution, as the petitioners often claimed, they undermined it, threatening the balance of power and undermining the true will of the people, represented by the parliament.

¹²⁹² A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/7 (N9879).

¹²⁹³ A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/33 (N21193).

¹²⁹⁴ An Address to Junius 1770/4, 34 (T11110).

¹²⁹⁵ An Address to Junius 1770/5 - 6 (T11110). The infamous prisoner, guilty of both sedition and murder according to the Gospel of Luke, the 'chief priests and the elders' persuaded 'the multitude' to release in lieu of Jesus. KJV/Luke 23:11; KJV/John 18:40; KJV/Mark 15:10, 15:15; KJV/Matthew 27:16, 27:17, 27:20, 27:21, 27:27. Besides criticising the character of Junius, whom the pamphleteer claimed to be Wilkes, by comparing him to a notorious and well-recognised murderer and fomenter, chosen to be saved because of not being Jesus, the allegory also enabled the author of *An Address to Junius* to emphasise the dangers of ochlocracy. If the multitude had sacrificed the son of God in favour of such a man, why would it be capable of governing Britain?

tution. The author of the pro-administration pamphlet accused Junius of encouraging petitioners requesting 'the King to dissolve the parliament', thus promoting the 'annihilat[ion]' of the privileges of the House of Commons, the protector of 'our liberties'¹²⁹⁶. Such petitions, the critics claimed, illustrated the dangers of popular participation. Instead of representing the sense of the people, petitions tended to epitomise the influence of the cunning and the ambitious. Such discourses and conceptualisations resemble the counter-ideals petitioners used to defend their use of petitions, discussed in Chapter 4.2 (Counter-Ideals of Representation and Participation).

In addition to accusing petitioners and their supporters of undermining the constitution in general, critics could also use more specific accusations to delegitimise them. In such cases, they tended to focus on the balanced emphasis of the constitution and the established order of politics. Usually defined as the combination of monarchy (the Crown), aristocracy (the House of Lords), and democracy (the House of Commons), the idea of a balanced constitution was to moderate the dangers related to the absolute forms of the three forms of government. By imposing checks and balances, the elements from each of the three forms of government could prevent the others from becoming dominant and thus endangering the peace and stability in the country.¹²⁹⁷ True Lover of the People, for instance, asserted that in Britain the 'supreme power is not in the King, in the lords, or in the people, but in the King and three estates assembled in parliament'¹²⁹⁸. He further claimed that there is 'nothing more apparent' in the British form of politics 'than that the health of our government consists in the union of its several branches'. The balanced constitution also distinguished Britain from other nations. In the United Provinces, a republic emphasising the democratic elements of government, the people alone possessed the privileges and prerogatives that the three branches of government shared in Britain. Though the Dutch might be free, at least compared to the French, the British 'freedom is greater'¹²⁹⁹.

¹²⁹⁶ An Address to Junius 1770/18, 28 - 29 (T11110). James Pitt, the editor of the *London Journal*, on the other hand, criticised the political climate, claiming that it undermined 'the foundation of the constitution' BC/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726).

¹²⁹⁷ The balanced constitution is often referred to by the name of *mixed government*. This thesis, however, prefers the pronounced emphasis on balance. Though the exact nature of the balance varied from case to case (and, indeed, from time to time), the concept of *balance* better captures the crux of mixed governments.

¹²⁹⁸ In his first letter, the pamphleteer claimed that 'the executive power is sole in the King, and the legislative in Him, and his two Houses of Parliament' and that 'the reason of calling a parliament is, because the King desires the advice of his Lords, and the concurrence of his people'. A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/4 (N9879). See also GM May 1733/LJ 5 May 1733 (no. 723); GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726); GM July 1733/LJ 30 June 1733 (no. 731); GM September 1733/DC 1 September 1733; GM November 1742/DG 23 November 1742 (no. 2309).

¹²⁹⁹ 'The foundation of limited monarchy [is]', according to the pamphleteer, 'firmer and broader than that of a democracy'. Hence there is 'less danger of it's being subverted; whence it follows, that larger bodies of people may be trusted with power of electing such as are to execute their share in the government under such a form of rule.' A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/19 (N21193). In his first pamphlet, True Lover of the People compared the British form of government to 'a three-fold cord', owing its strength to 'being twisted, and if we intend to break it, separating does the business'. A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/20 (N9879). Pasi

Thus the True Lover of the People represented the actors endeavouring to change the balance of government as 'traitor[s] to the constitution' and enemies of the nation.¹³⁰⁰ Although one of the leading principles defining the political establishment after the revolution of 1688, the idea of a balanced constitution became truly established, in a more or less consensual sense, after being recognised by Viscount Bolingbroke and the Tories during the early Hanoverian period¹³⁰¹. The anti-Walpolean opposition would, in fact, use similar arguments against the ministry, claiming that Walpole's use of corruption threatened the very existence of the balanced constitution.¹³⁰² Rather than being a dispute about whether the balanced constitution was legitimate or not, it was, first and foremost, a dispute about whose interpretation would prevail.

In order to emphasise the logic of their argumentation, critics compared popular ambitions to other forms of usurpation. Instead of being innocent and desirable, as some petitioners claimed, popular usurpation could constitute a constitutional threat as dangerous as ambitious Kings and aristocrats. Owen Ruffhead, the author of the pro-administration *Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis* (1763), described the British constitution in terms of mechanics, claiming that the different parts of the political establishment 'are like different movements in one piece of mechanism'. 'Whether one or the other moves irregularly', the author claimed, 'the machine is equally disordered'¹³⁰³. The author of *A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London*, claiming that the London instructions undermined the balance of the constitution in 1764, argued that 'it is not material, gentlemen, whether the invasion comes from the King, the nobles,

Ihalainen has demonstrated that similar arguments and comparisons were also used more widely during the course of the eighteenth century. Ihalainen 2010, 114 - 115.

¹³⁰⁰ A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament 1741/18 - 20 (N21193); A Letter to a Member of Parliament 1740/20 (N9879). See also BC/DC 20 January 1735. Matthew Concane and Horatio Walpole, the authors of *The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise* (1733), claimed that 'faction (as ancient Rome found to its cost)' could be as 'subversive of a free constitution' as other absolute forms of government. *The Rise and Fall of the Late Projected Excise* 1733/35 (T63487), see also *Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis* 1763/40 - 41 (T53010).

¹³⁰¹ Prevailing over the ideas of divine right and indefeasible hereditary succession, as formulated by H.T. Dickinson. Dickinson 1977, 123 - 124.

¹³⁰² Skinner 1994, 121 - 122, 125; Dickinson 1977, 123 - 124, 129, 138, 142 - 159, 165, 181 - 182, 186 - 187, 274 - 277; Dickinson 1994, 170 - 171, 192, 198 - 201; Royle & Walvin 1982, 14; Gunn 1983, 55 - 56; Langford 1992, 683 - 692.

¹³⁰³ He also noted that 'licentiousness in the people, is as surely subversive of the constitution, as tyranny in the Crown'. *Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis* 1763/46 - 47 (T53010). He also noted that 'licentiousness in the people, is as surely subversive of the constitution, as tyranny in the Crown'. *Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis* 1763/46 - 47 (T53010). Thomas De Grey, the attorney-general, similarly endeavoured to 'preserve the independence of our own body, as involving the liberty of our people, and defend it against the people themselves misguided and inflamed by faction and self-interest, with no less activity and perseverance than against the Crown or the Lords, and look up with affection and gratitude to the prince, who, knowing the value of our constitution, as well to himself as to his subjects, has nobly rejected an opportunity which the late petitions gave him, of destroying the equilibrium of the constitution by increasing his own power, which a sovereign less virtuous and less wise would have embraced'. Cobbett 1765 - 1771 (HoC) 796 - 797/William De Grey (Newport/Cambridge University).

or the people'. 'From whatever source it arises', he continued, 'it ultimately terminates in the same point, and is equally fatal and injurious to freedom'.¹³⁰⁴ *True Lover of the People* used similar arguments in 1740 and 1741 to delegitimise the use of petitions. The author argued that 'a counsellor who advises his prince to take such measures as may conduce to the rendering himself absolute, is an enemy to his country'. But 'neither is there any reason to doubt', the pamphleteer continued, 'that such as pretend to put the people upon claiming powers, to which they have no title by the constitution, are also enemies to their country'. In both cases 'a tyranny would follow, the constitution would be subverted, and the people, notwithstanding all the fallacious promises made them, irretievably undone'.¹³⁰⁵ Such comparisons enabled critics to represent petitioners and their supporters as radicals, endeavouring to annihilate the constitution and the established order of politics. Rather than defending the political balance, protecting Britain against despotic usurpers, petitioners focused on increasing their impact on the course of politics.

However, despite the claims that the dominance of any of the three branches of government constituted an equal threat to the constitution (and, indeed, the future of the nation), the critics of petitions focused on the dangers of popular usurpation. Most critics tended to emphasise three arguments regarding the dangerous consequences of such usurpation. First, critics could claim that popular usurpation undermined the founding principles of organised societies. *Con-Test*, a pro-administration paper, castigating the conduct of the opposition in 1757, admitted that actors out-of-doors possessed 'an undoubted right' to criticise the administration. However, the paper also noted that such actors ought to abstain from using 'popular dictates [on] present and future measures'. Such use of petitions, the editor of the *Con-Test* claimed, encouraged 'anarchy', the disease that consumed the once-glorious Athens (in contrast to Lacedemon, or Sparta, protecting itself against attempts to introduce popular government).¹³⁰⁶ The author of *Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis* (1763) used similar claims as the *Con-Test*. In the spirit of the *Con-Test*, the author of the pamphlet admitted that in certain cases, 'the regular method of opposition ... [is] ineffectual to avert

¹³⁰⁴ 'To avoid these two extremes [popular licence and arbitrary will]', the author of *A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London* argued in 1764, 'should be the principal object of attention in all mixed governments, and more especially in our own'. *A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London* 1764/36 - 38 (T38231); Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst).

¹³⁰⁵ *A Second Letter to a Member of Parliament* 1741/18 - 19 (N21193), see also *A Letter to a Member of Parliament* 1740/34 (N9879).

¹³⁰⁶ BC/CT 23 April 1757, see also BC/PA 20 November 1770 and BC/DC 20 January 1735. A clear reference to the structural weaknesses of the Athenian democracy. Pasi Ihalainen has argued that 'in its pure form ... it [democracy] was considered obsolete; ever since the time of Aristotle, democracy had been viewed pejoratively as the form of government that entailed the greatest number of potential risks, because power would be given into the hands of the self-interested common people'. It was 'not only considered impractical but was also seen as leading to the despotism of the poor and uneducated, and ultimately to utter anarchy'. Ihalainen 2010, 6 - 7.

impending evils'¹³⁰⁷, forcing the people out-of-doors to resort to unusual 'remedies'. But the people ought to be cautious in using such means. If single corporations or a 'tumultuous populace' could 'determine the judgment of the legislature', enemies of the constitution could use petitions to produce 'civil discord and anarchy'. 'If turbulent and ambitious spirits ... are suffered to enflame the populace to acts of outrage and sedition', the polemicist argued, 'then the boasted constitution ... must soon degenerate into an ochlocracy, and there is an end of government'.¹³⁰⁸ Although serving as the principal source of legitimacy for the House of Commons, the people were, in themselves, deemed incapable of governing, as earlier demonstrated in Chapter 6.1 (Mobs, Multitudes, and the Scum of the Earth). In order to preserve the constitution and, indeed, an orderly form of government, decision-makers were encouraged to reject the claims of popular usurpers.

Second, critics could represent the proponents of petitions as instigators of rebellion. Opponents could accuse such actors of using threats of 'bloodshed and rebellion' to intimidate parliament¹³⁰⁹ and represent their declarations as 'little less than sallies of rebellion'¹³¹⁰. W.D., an author criticising Wilkes and his supporters in 1769, castigated the 'furious efforts of the present leaders of opposition', accusing them of encouraging the people out-of-doors to request the King to dissolve the parliament. In order 'to force themselves into administration', the author claimed, the opposition leaders agitated 'the rabble to acts of violence little short of rebellion'¹³¹¹. Some opponents of petitions used historical allegories to strengthen their arguments. The author of *An Address to Junius* criticised Junius,

¹³⁰⁷ In the past, the pamphleteer claimed, 'Kings have supported ministers and measures, and parliaments have supported them too, to the open violation of national rights'.

¹³⁰⁸ The author further claimed that the petitioners had 'the least pretence for such irregular and tumultuous applications'. Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis 1763/32 - 33, 40 - 41, 46 - 47 (T53010). See also BC/DC 20 January 1735. 'When unconstitutional attacks are made on one hand', the author of *A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London* argued in 1764, 'resentment may dictate, or necessity compel, the adoption of illegal measures on the other: and whichever party prevails in the contest, tyranny is alike the lot of the public'. 'As popular usurpation infallibly begets anarchy', the pamphleteer continued, 'so anarchy unavoidably engenders despotism: and such is the natural tendency of every opposition; which, when not founded on public virtue, and regulated by that decorum which the laws prescribe, is the cause of its own destruction'. *A Letter to the Common Council of the City of London* 1764/36 -38 (T38231), see also Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst). W.D. and Rationalis, both of them polemicists criticising Wilkes and his supporters in the *Public Advertiser*, represented the actors encouraging people to petition the King to dissolve the parliament as 'lovers of anarchy and confusion' and proponents of 'outrage, anarchy, and confusion'. BC/PA 14 November 1769; BC/PA 20 November 1770.

¹³⁰⁹ Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 121 - 122/Henry Pelham (Sussex), see also Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 122 - 123/William Yonge (Honiton).

¹³¹⁰ Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 121 - 122/Henry Pelham (Sussex), see also Cobbett 1741 - 1743 (HoC) 122 - 123/William Yonge (Honiton); Cobbett 1771 - 1774 (HoC) 149 - 150/Charles James Fox (Midhurst); *An Eight Letter to the People of England* 1770/97 - 98 (T82445).

¹³¹¹ BC/PA 14 November 1769, see also GM May 1733/LJ 5 May 1733 (no. 723); GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726).

whom he claimed to be John Wilkes, of 'nefarious attempt[s] to plunge his country into all the horrors of a civil war'¹³¹². John Wesley compared the Wilkite requests to the Throne to the dissolution of the Short Parliament, claiming that dissolving the parliament in 1770 could initiate a similar chain of events as the dissolution in 1640. Wesley claimed that the consequences of the Wilkite commotions could be 'exactly the same as those of the like commotions in the last century'. First, the pamphleteer claimed, 'the land will become a field of blood: many thousands of poor Englishmen will sheath their swords in each others bowels'. 'Then', he continued, 'either a commonwealth will ensue, or else a second CROMWELL'¹³¹³. Besides underlining the dangers of popular usurpation and the rule of the rabble, references to the civil war and the English republic provided an authoritative and well-recognised analogy. Most readers of the pamphlets, as well as the audiences of parliamentary speeches, must have recognised the cautionary tales of the civil war. *A Letter to a Member of Parliament*, portraying the tyranny of the people as the worst kind of all tyrannies, was published only 102 years after the outbreak of the war and John Wesley's pamphlet, reminding its readers of the dangers of popular radicalism, but 110 years after the Restoration.

Third, petitioners and their supporters were accused of promoting democratic principles. Most of such accusations *were* published in papers defending Walpole and his administration during the 1730s and 1740s. The *London Journal*¹³¹⁴, most notably, used such accusations during and after the excise crisis in 1733 to delegitimise the *Cratsman*, the opposition paper defending petitioning. The *London Journal* claimed that the *Craftman's* notion that 'the late [excise] scheme was crushed by so high an authority as that of the people, and by the original power of the people in their collective body' was a 'notion absolutely

¹³¹² The author further accused Junius of 'a rage unnatural as that of Nero's', 'rip[ping] up the bowels of [his] mother country'. An Address to Junius 1770/33 -34 (T11110). Owen Ruffhead, the author of the *Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis*, castigated the 'daring and inflammatory' language of the opposition, claiming that even during the 'unhappy times of the civil wars, when the brave patriots of those days opposed the oppressions of government sword in hand, they yet used their pens with discretion; and paid some respect to their Sovereign, and to themselves, by observing a due decorum and dignity in their remonstrances'. *Considerations on the Present Dangerous Crisis* 1763/38 (T53010).

¹³¹³ 'One must be', the pamphleteer concluded, 'but it cannot be determined which, King W[ilkes], or King Mob'. *Free Thoughts on the Present State of Public Affairs* 1770/34 - 40 (T16540), see also *An Eighth Letter to the People of England* 1770/99 (79) (T82445). *True Lover of the People*, on the other hand, claimed that 'we have formerly had ambitious Kings; arrogant, oppressive, and rebellious Lords; and in the days of our immediate ancestors, restless, unruly, and distracted Commons'. 'All these, whenever they carried their point', he continued, 'became tyrants; but the worst of all tyrannies was the last'. *A Letter to a Member of Parliament* 1740/34 (N9879).

¹³¹⁴ Although initially critical of Walpole, the paper had changed its course during the early 1720s. Edited by James Pitt under the pseudonym of Mother Osborne, the *London Journal* was one of the loudest proponents of Walpole and his administration. In 1735, the pro-administration papers of *London Journal*, *Free Briton*, and *Daily Courant* were merged into the *Daily Gazetteer*. Black 2001, 33 - 34, 37; Langford 1992, 47; Downie 1984, 178 - 179; Harris 1984, 198 - 202; Langford 1975, 22 - 23; Harris 1996, 10, 16; Goldie 2006, 75 - 77.

democratical'. Claiming that members of parliament were 'the attornies or creatures of the people' was, according the pro-administration paper, 'the highest affront to that honourable House, and changes the very nature of government into a democracy or popular state'.¹³¹⁵ The *Daily Gazetteer*, the main pro-administration paper after 1735¹³¹⁶, used similar arguments to criticise instructions in 1742. The paper claimed that the imperative instructions submitted against Walpole 'totally change our constitution, by erecting a new power unknown to our ancestors'. 'According to this scheme', the author insisted, 'the people in their collective capacity, make a fourth estate'. If the people in their collective capacity were given a veto on supplies, 'our government, instead of being what it has been so long thought, monarchical, is in the truth become democratical'¹³¹⁷. By such arguments, the critics portrayed the supporters of petitions not only as proponents of delegitimate ideals but also as dangerous radicals. If it was not protected from such actors and ideas, the consequences could ravage the country, as the Civil War and Cromwell had demonstrated.

Accusations of promoting democratic principles were also used in parliament to discredit the opposition. Pasi Ihalainen has pointed out that, according to the surviving records, the concept of democracy (in the form of 'democratical') was first¹³¹⁸ used in the House by prime minister Walpole during the debate on repealing the Septennial Act in 1734¹³¹⁹. Ihalainen suggests that Walpole's pejorative use of the concept was, first and foremost, a response to Viscount Bolingbroke's *Dissertation upon Parties*, published in the *Craftsman*¹³²⁰. Nonetheless, I argue that it was also strongly influenced by the *London Journal*, using the concept (both as a noun and adjective) in a distinctively similar manner during the aftermath of the excise crisis, as earlier demonstrated. In addition to the fact that Robert Walpole's uses of the concept in March 1734 closely resembled those in the *London Journal* in May 1733, there are also other reasons to believe that a connection existed between the two instances. Walpole regarded the press as an important tool in legitimising the endeavours of his administration. According to

¹³¹⁵ GM May 1733/LJ 5 May 1733 (no. 723); GM May 1733/LJ 26 May 1733 (no. 726). The *Craftsman* argued that 'that altho[ugh] our government is commonly called a monarchy, yet it partakes very much of democratical principles, and is therefore properly styled a limited, mixed monarchy, or a sort of regal commonwealth'. GM July 1733/Cr 21 July 1733 (no. 368), see also GM August 1733/Cr 25 August 1733 (no. 373). For the Daily Courant's criticism of the Craftman's notion, see GM September 1733/DC 1 September 1733.

¹³¹⁶ 'Walpole's only organ of propaganda' after the merger of the three pro-administration papers, according to J.A. Downie. Michael Harris has noted the administration distributed 10,800 copies of the Daily Gazetteer through the Post Office on a weekly basis in 1741. Downie 1984, 177 - 178; Harris 1984, 199 - 202; Black 2001, 37.

¹³¹⁷ GM November 1742/DG 23 November 1742 (no. 2309).

¹³¹⁸ In the sense of not referring to either Athenian democracy or the mixed constitution (being a combination of monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic elements). Ihalainen has demonstrated that Walpole, indeed, 'recognized the existence of a democratic element in the British constitution' but, at the same time, 'was highly critical of democracy, accusing the opposition of promoting it in a dangerous and extreme form'. Ihalainen 2010, 75.

¹³¹⁹ Ihalainen 2010, 67, 73 - 78.

¹³²⁰ Walpole was, according to Ihalainen, also 'partly motivated by [his] personal experience of mob violence' during the excise riots in 1733. Ihalainen 2010, 73 - 74.

Michael Harris, he also 'developed quite close relationships with some of his political writers'¹³²¹. The *London Journal* was, as earlier noted, one of the main papers subsidised by the administration prior to 1735. When these factors are taken into account, it is more than probable that Walpole's use of the concept of *democracy* was, indeed, influenced by the *London Journal's* criticism on those supporting petitioning during the excise crisis.

Most references to the constitution remained rather ambiguous, but there are also indications of a shared set of assumptions in arguments accusing petitioners and their supporters of undermining it. Whereas for petitioners and their supporters, the references to the constitution often signified the restoration of those ideals and practices the corrupt administration had suppressed, demanding change in principle but in practice endeavouring to restore something lost, those criticising them tended to use the concept to resist change. For the opponents of petitions, the constitution represented, above all, stability. It signified a hard-fought balance, precluding both monarchical and popular usurpers from subjugating the nation. Cromwell and the Commonwealth had demonstrated the horrors of popular absolutism, and the reign of James II the dangers of absolute monarchy. The post-Revolution constitution, on the other hand, provided, according to the critics, as perfect a balance as possible between the monarchistic, aristocratic, and democratic elements, preventing any one of them from assuming a dominant and thus absolute role. In this sense, it represented tradition, but in a different manner than when used to promote the restoration of the ancient constitution. Instead of being something that prevented change as such, it was seen as a barrier against arbitrary attempts of all sorts, serving as a bulwark of stability and moderation. Who could possibly oppose such a protection if not motivated by malign intentions?

¹³²¹ Harris 1984, 197 - 198.

7 REPRESENTATION AND RECIPROCATION

This thesis has demonstrated that rather than being a fact, or something that can be evaluated through an allegedly objective set of criteria, representation is a process of negotiation. What representation means is thus difficult to determine comprehensively, its precise character differing from case to case. That the meanings created through the use of language are negotiated (in one form or another) is, of course, rather evident from the constructivist perspective. Most constructivist historians, it seems safe to state, recognise that concepts have neither constant nor natural meanings. However, the negotiative character of representation is even more ingrained than in the case of language in general. In addition to being negotiated in the linguistic sense, representation is also negotiated through a variety of institutional means. The idea(s) of parliamentary representation in eighteenth-century Britain, the chief focus of this thesis, was strongly influenced by a number of institutional factors, ranging from regular elections and emerging parties to established constituencies and the burgeoning press. Such factors encouraged both representatives and represented to communicate and the reading publics to debate the nature of representation.

In order to demonstrate how representation became negotiated in practice, I have studied 464 publicised petitions submitted to parliament, members of parliament, and the Throne in 1721 - 1776. In many respects, the genre of petitions provides an ideal corpus to understand the negotiative aspects of representation. When addressed to parliament, petitions were usually submitted to representatives by those they represented. However, whereas petitions to the House of Commons were submitted to members of parliament in general, instructions were used to address individual representatives, usually those representing the constituencies from which the petitions were submitted. The studied addresses to the Throne, on the other hand, were often used to request the King to counter the influence of parliament, allegedly misrepresenting the true will of the people. Furthermore, the genre enables scholars to consider the negotiative aspects of representation from a distinctively practical perspective. In this respect, three specific factors stand out. First, petitions provided constituents, and others, an established method to communicate their sentiments to those representing them in parliament. Almost half

of the studied petitions were submitted to representatives who gained their seats from the electors of those constituencies from which the petitions were submitted. Second, actors used petitions to react to practical challenges. Instead of discussing grand theories, petitioners tended to focus on practical subjects, from naturalisation to economic regulation. Third, petitioners used rather practical means to convince the petitioned. Instead of endeavouring to instigate a paradigmatic shift, most petitioners used ad hoc arguments, recognising the independence of the petitioned while also arguing that they should act as requested. These factors, combined with the scale of studied petitions, have made it possible to demonstrate how representation became negotiated in practice.

In order to understand the negotiative aspects of representation, one needs to recognise the full variety of means used to mould the meaning of the concept. Although often understood as a rather explicit process, this thesis demonstrates the importance of implicit means in characterising representation in practice. Instead of relying on explicit references to popular sovereignty, or depending on the use of explicit commands to the petitioned, most petitioners favoured means of a more subtle character. Such means, of course, included significant levels of variation. Concepts and other discursive elements could, for instance, be used as coded signals, enabling petitioners to impose orders (of some sort) in a formally acceptable manner. Instead of declaring that the petitioned had a legal obligation to observe their requests, petitioners could suggest that the receivers, especially when representing the constituency from which the petition was submitted, should respect the sentiments of their constituents, or face the consequences. However, petitioners could also use implicit means to describe representation in general, thus endeavouring to influence the conduct of representatives in a more indirect manner. A request to support the constitution, for instance, could function as a mean to pressure the petitioned to abide by an interpretation of it held by the petitioners but it could also serve as a rather general description of the ideals associated with representation. Although usually innocuous, such notions tend to demonstrate what actors out-of-doors regarded as reasonable (and, indeed, possible) to expect from the petitioned. Despite their differences, both examples demonstrate the ways in which implicit means could be used to define representation in practice. Whereas most studies on representation have focused on explicit formulations, this thesis has also recognised the centrality of implicit means.

Uses of representative claims, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, represent one of the most common forms of implicit persuasion. Petitioners used such claims in diverse manners, from representing themselves as respectable actors, acting on behalf of established offices and institutions, to defending the (alleged) interest of mercantile actors. However, the endeavour to influence the conduct of the petitioned is most pronounced in the case of representative claims on behalf

of abstractions. Claims on behalf of the people and entire generations, for instance, enabled petitioners to augment the importance and potential appeal of their petitions. By representing their sentiments as the sentiments of the people, petitioners portrayed themselves as surrogate actors acting on behalf of the people. Even though often presented in implicit terms, the implications of such claims tended to be more than evident; in order to act as true representatives of the people, the petitioned ought to act as requested, or at least recognise their concerns. Such suggestions could be presented both as opportunities and obligations. Petitioners could suggest, even promise, that if they acted as requested, the petitioned would be rewarded. Others represented compliance as an obligation; as parliament represented the people, members of parliament ought to act in a manner that reflected the true sentiments of the people. Even if independent in principle, the prevalence of such suggestions indicate that petitioners remained determined to influence the conduct of their representatives. If compared to references to popular sovereignty, representative claims provided them a significantly less controversial way to do so.

Petitioners' uses of representative claims remained rather stable throughout most of the studied period. Rather than illustrating the changing patterns of legitimacy, the use of representative claims demonstrates the centrality of tradition and continuity. However, although the claims were a relatively stable set of persuasive means, one particular form of representative claim-making changed rather drastically during the period from 1721 to 1776. Whereas the principal emphasis during most of the studied period had been on petitioners' qualitative character, the emphasis on the scale of subscriptions started to increase substantially after 1768. In contrast to earlier petitions, which rarely contained information on the scale of subscriptions, the Wilkite petitioners started to submit petitions subscribed by people in their thousands. The larger the scale of subscriptions, it was implied, the more credible the petition. However, though an indication of change, the emerging emphasis on scale also shared elements with more traditional means of persuasion. The implications of the emphasis remained, to a large extent, similar as when actors submitted petitions in the name of the corporation and the inhabitants of the borough; to demonstrate that instead of acting on behalf of a faction, or promoting their private interests, the petitioners represented the genuine sentiments of those communities from which the petitions were submitted. Whereas those emphasising their titles tended to enforce their claims in qualitative terms, those underlining the scale of subscriptions were adamant in demonstrating the same in quantitative terms. In both cases, petitioners used representative claims to convince the petitioned that their concerns and conclusions represented the will of a far more numerous body of people, something that, it was implied, should persuade the receivers of the urgency to act.

Ideals and counter-ideals, too, could be used to persuade the petitioned to act in a desired manner, as demonstrated in Chapter 4. As with representative claims, most uses of ideals and counter-ideals remained implicit. Petitioners tended to use ideals, most of them underlining the collective character of politics,

to define the boundaries of participation (the conduct of those submitting petitions) and representation (the conduct of representatives). Rather than being mere descriptions, such characterisations often contained normative elements. By describing their perceptions, petitioners also implicitly described the manner in which the petitioned ought to act and the ideals they ought to support. Most of the ideals petitioners used were ambiguous in principle, but gained a rather specific function in practice. When, for instance, defining something as imperative for the protection of the common good, petitioners tended to have a rather clear picture of both the content of the concept and of the measures they endeavoured to encourage by using it. Those using the common good to justify their opposition to the proposed excise duties, for instance, not only described their own definition of that concept but also expected the petitioned to share their definition of the ideal. Others used Englishness as an implicit mean of persuasion. By asserting that all true Englishmen opposed the influence of places and pensions, petitioners presented their representatives a thinly veiled choice: either to demonstrate their true Englishness by supporting proposed measures to curb the influence of ministerial minions or to betray the interest of their country. Instead of requiring their representatives to oppose the excise duties and support the measures restricting the influence of places and pensions, petitioners used the ideals to describe the boundaries of representation, thus endeavouring to restrict the leeway of the petitioned. Representatives could always refuse to act accordingly but in doing so would, by implication, act against those ideals they were (allegedly) chosen to defend.

The uses of counter-ideals, on the other hand, demonstrate a diametrically opposite logic. Whereas ideals were used to describe those standards the petitioned ought to protect and honour, counter-ideals were used to define those elements, actors, and influences the receivers of the petitions ought to oppose. Some of the counter-ideals were, in the conceptual sense, diametrical opposites of the ideals; private interest, for instance, being the conceptual opposite of public interest. However, counter-ideals could also be used to define representation in even more implicit manners. One example of such means is the use of the persona of Robert Walpole, the prime minister from 1721 to 1742. Actors submitting petitions in 1733 and 1739 - 1742 commonly used the persona of Walpole as an (cautionary) example, implicitly demonstrating how the petitioned should not act and what sort of endeavours they should oppose. The prime minister was commonly accused of ambition and promoting the private interests of himself and his allies. Instead of defending the interest of the nation, Walpole was accused of actively acting against it. In addition to being used to demonstrate how proper representatives should not act, the persona of Walpole also provided the petitioned with a mission. By opposing Walpole and his influence, it was implied, the petitioned could demonstrate their commitment to defending the people and the true interest of the nation. As in the case of ideals, petitioners used counter-ideals to restrict the leeway of the petitioned. By describing the counter-ideals of representation, and thus implicitly the endeavours and schemes the petitioned

ought to avoid and resist, petitioners also described how representation ought to be understood.

Uses of implicit means such as representative claims, ideals, and counter-ideals might appear trivial if regarded in isolation. However, if considered through a consistent corpus of sources, such as the genre of petitions, patterns start to emerge, demonstrating that instead of being casual curiosities, such means illustrate the methods eighteenth-century actors used to define representation in practice. They provided petitioners, among other actors, with a respectable method of influencing the conduct of the petitioned. Although abstaining from claiming that representatives ought to act as their constituents or the people in general both of whom petitioners often claimed to represent, instructed, they tended to suggest that there should be some sort of resemblance between the conduct of the representatives and the sentiments of those who they represented in parliament. To what extent representatives' conduct ought to resemble the sentiments of the represented and what means could be used to enforce the resemblance varied from case to case. Disagreements on the subject, whether pronounced or not, existed not only between groups submitting petitions but also within them. However, regardless of the exact nature of their perceptions, or whether principled, practical, or something in between, petitioners still used implicit means to influence the conduct of the petitioned. Such endeavours do not mean that the petitioned agreed to act as requested or even that they recognised the importance of reciprocity; the notion of representation as a process of negotiation is not to suggest that actors out-of-doors could determine the conduct of those representing them. Instead, the endeavour is to demonstrate that rather than being passive observers, petitioners (and, indeed, other actors out-of-doors) participated in the process of defining representation in practice, often through means of far a more nuanced character than often assumed.

Besides illustrating the importance of implicit means in defining representation in practice, the thesis also demonstrates that petitioners often depended on de-politicising both the use and content of their petitions. Instead of regarding politics as a space - as something that occurs in parliament and other spaces considered to be political - this thesis is based on the idea that politics is an activity, as demonstrated in Chapter 1.3. Politics is thus understood as a chain of choices; everything containing the possibility of choosing is regarded as political. This is not to argue that every choice is political in a similar manner, but to demonstrate that each political act derives from the possibility to choose. Regardless of how limited actors' options were, choices tend to function as indications of their preferences, their understanding of what was possible, and their perceptions on what was considered as legitimate in the communities in which they operated. De-politicisation of politics, on the other hand, is the process of representing situations containing the possibility to choose as non-political, by denying or at least down-

playing the act of choosing. Instead of recognising that their perceptions, interpretations, and uses of language were matters of debate, constructions that could be challenged by using different assumptions, petitioners de-politicising the content and use of their petitions represented their choices as necessities. Rather than choosing to act, petitioners sought to diminish the role of their agency. That could be done in numerous ways.

Petitioners' descriptions of their intentions to submit petitions constitute one of the most common forms of de-politicising the use of petitions. Numerous petitioners described themselves as obliged to petition, bound by the duty they owed to their country, themselves, and their posterity. Others used less conceptually-oriented means to present similar arguments, as demonstrated in Chapter 2.4. In such cases, petitioners could claim that they had to petition and that they could not but petition. In each of the cases petitioners suggested, or at least implied, that instead of choosing to petition, they were forced to do so. Some of the petitioners represented their petitions as necessities without further elaborating their notions. However, they could also emphasise their duties in protecting the constitution, the common good, and the interest of the nation, supposedly obliging them to use petitions to convince the petitioned of the urgency to act. In order to further strengthen their claims, petitioners often represented the nation as being in a state of crisis. But regardless of the differences regarding the exact form and justification, each of the cases demonstrates how petitioners de-politicised the use and content of their petitions. Rather than choosing to petition or choosing what to oppose and defend petitioners either denied or downplayed their own agency in the process of petitioning. By representing their petitions as necessities, actuated only by the crisis that threatened their country, petitioners could reduce their potentially controversial character.

In addition to explicitly denying their agency, petitioners could also use more implicit means to downplay the influence of their personal preferences. This is most evident in the case of ideals and counter-ideals, especially when used to describe the boundaries of legitimate participation. In such cases, petitioners tended to use ideals to convince the petitioned and, at least in certain cases, the reading publics of the benevolence of their intentions and endeavours. Actors could, for instance, assure the petitioned that their decisions to submit petitions derived from their sincere regard for their country. Others portrayed themselves as concerned patriots, determined to protect the common rights of Englishmen. Instead of promoting their personal preferences, as their opponents did, petitioners presented themselves as disinterested servants of the nation, submitting petitions only for the protection of what was nominally recognised as legitimate by virtually all actors in the spheres of politics. Even when promoting measures favouring the private interests of certain groups, as in the case of petitions defending specific professions and branches of trade, petitioners tended to represent their requests as beneficial to the interest of the nation. As a trading nation, it was argued, Britain would benefit from the success of its merchants. By representing themselves as the servants of collective entities commonly recognised as legitimate, and emphasising their role as proponents of the common will, petitioners

downplayed the influence of their own agency and preferences. Rather than protecting their private interests as such, their use of petitions, it was often suggested, derived from their unselfish regard for the interest of others, and especially for that of the nation in general.

Instead of being an argumentative element distinctively associated with petitions, such argumentation was widely used in the spheres of politics in general. Those criticising petitions also used similar notions to justify their reasoning. Instead of criticising the ideals petitioners used to downplay their agency, critics focused on undermining assertions that petitioners truly represented those they claimed to. Rather than protecting the interest of the nation, the post-Revolution settlement, and other collective ideals, petitioners and their supporters were commonly accused of factious principles and unconstitutional endeavours. They might be criticised for both misleading and being misled; the first demonstrating their indifference towards the common good and the second their incapability of defending it. Such accusations were particularly common during the crisis on Wilkes' seat in 1769 - 1770. Petitioners defending the freeholders of Middlesex, most of them freeholders themselves, were commonly accused of being misled by the agitation of John Wilkes and the SSBR. However, in addition to being victims of the agitation of Wilkes and the machinations of the SSBR, they could also be accused of functioning as Wilkite incendiaries; inciting discord and division and encouraging anarchy and confusion. Whereas petitioners often represented themselves, and their allies, as proponents of the common good, the interest of the nation, and other collective ideals, conceptually diminishing their agency and preferences, their critics tended to emphasise the importance of parliament. In order to truly defend the collective ideals recognised as legitimate, they claimed, people out-of-doors ought to recognise and defend the independence of parliament.

The de-politicisation of political choices represented a common form of persuasion. Uses of such means provided petitioners a method of representing their endeavours in a less controversial form; instead of choosing to act, petitioners tended to present themselves as *forced* to act. Petitioners could explicitly deny their agency, portraying themselves as obliged by their duty to their country. However, in most cases, petitioners used more subtle means. By claiming to defend an established and commonly recognised set of collective ideals and by assuring the petitioned (and, at times, the reading publics) of their fervour to oppose the influence of those acting against them, petitioners presented themselves as champions of those ideals that most actors in the spheres of politics recognised as ideals the receivers of the petitions ought to promote. However, although nominally recognised as highly legitimate, often regarded as non-political necessities, ideals such as the common good could be understood in many different ways, as those criticising petitioners' claims demonstrated. The disputes regarding the definition of such concepts demonstrate that their uses contained far more choices than those using them usually were willing to admit. Rather than being non-political, their uses exemplify the weight of representing matters of choice as necessities.

The studied petitions also demonstrate the prevalence of imperative means. Even if based on the principle of free mandate, meaning that representatives remained independent from those electing them, in practice the British form of parliamentary representation tended to contain far more nuance. One could argue that it formed a curious combination of (sometimes) conflicting principles and practices; an eighteenth-century representative being independent but also subject to (sporadic) pressure from outside parliament. Petitions, as earlier argued, demonstrate these tensions and conundrums from a practical perspective. Instead of endeavouring to revolutionise the manner in which parliamentary representation ought to be organised, or formulating coherent theories emphasising popular sovereignty, most petitioners focused on solving practical problems. Rather than challenging the prevailing structures as such, petitioners often focused on stretching their boundaries. Such endeavours are most pronounced in the case of instructions and post-1768 addresses. Whereas most petitions to parliament remained humble and uncontroversial, mostly due to the parliamentary habit of ignoring petitions containing controversial suggestions, petitioners submitting instructions to individual representatives often emphasised their dependence on their electors. Addresses to the Throne, on the other hand, could be used to put pressure on parliament through indirect means, as the Wilkite addresses demonstrate.

The emphasis on their dependence on the conduct of their representatives, elected to guard their liberties and properties, enabled petitioners to point out that the receivers of their petitions ought to be receptive to their needs and concerns. Others suggested that true representatives of the people ought to desire instructions from their constituents, observing them being the obligation of those acting on their behalf. In such cases, petitioners tended to characterise representation as a reciprocal process. Even though independent in principle, representation became defined as a process based on the principle of *quid pro quo*. Petitioners could also use selective commendations to pressure their representatives to either support or oppose specific measures. Whereas petitioners could use their petitions to praise the conduct of one of their representatives, they could, at the same time, criticise the other. In order to regain his constituents' trust, petitioners suggested that the criticised representative ought to behave in a manner that resembled the conduct of the other representative. Such assertions recognised representatives' independence but often emphasised the consequences of disregarding the sentiments of the represented. Members of parliament were free to act as they wished in parliament, but so were their constituents when electing them.

Wilkite addresses, on the other hand, demonstrate how petitioners used indirect means to pressure the parliament to act in a desired manner. During the Middlesex election dispute in 1769 - 1770, the supporters of John Wilkes used addresses to request the King to dismiss his ministers and dissolve the parliament. By doing so, the petitioners argued, the King would enable the people of Britain to elect a parliament consisting of honest and uncorrupt representatives;

restoring the tarnished reputation of the institution. In the formal sense, the Wilkite addresses remained distinctively humble. Most of their authors used overwhelmingly humble verbs, usually begging, praying, imploring, and beseeching the King to protect his people. Such petitioners tended to emphasise their loyalty to his Majesty, presenting themselves as moved by their dutiful regard for his sacred person and the House of Hanover. Others praised his innate goodness and paternal care for his people. However, regardless of their formally humble character, the Wilkite addresses contained strong imperative elements. Frustrated by the conduct of parliament, allegedly misrepresenting the will of the people, the petitioners used their addresses to both pressure the parliament to reverse its decision to bar Wilkes from representing Middlesex and, if refusing to do so, to encourage the King to use his prerogative. Instead of transforming itself into a self-electing institution, thus severing its bond with those it claimed to represent, parliament ought to respect the will of the people, the petitioners argued.

It is, however, the use of verbs that provides the most explicit examples of the imperative means. Even if most of the verbs petitioners used to influence the future conduct of the petitioned were humble, around 20 per cent can be characterised as imperative. Some of the verbs classified as imperative in this thesis could, of course, be used in both imperative and non-imperative ways. Those expecting the petitioned to act in a specific manner could use the verb to express their confidence that they would do so, even without directly requesting it. Expecting could, however, also contain an implicit threat: act as suggested or be prepared to be regarded as an enemy by your constituents, for instance. However, even if such verbs could be used in non-imperative manners, a clear majority of the imperative verbs were, indeed, used in ways explicitly imperative manners. That is clearest when petitioners *required* and *enjoined* the petitioned to act as suggested. The use of such verbs leaves little room for speculation; the petitioners are explicitly challenging the independence of the petitioned. Uses of imperative verbs do not indicate that petitioners endeavoured to challenge the independence of parliament in the categorical sense. It might well be that most of them considered the use of such formulations as ad hoc decisions, deriving from their sense of urgency. However, the imperative verbs demonstrate that those using them regarded themselves as entitled to impose de facto orders on those representing them. That their share is as high as a fifth of the total amount of used verbs further demonstrates that rather than being isolated incidents, the choice of verb provided petitioners with an important means to inform the petitioned of their understanding of the representative relationship.

The studied petitions indicate that assertions undermining representatives' independence were far more common than often assumed. The means petitioners used to do so were usually indirect, non-coherent, and reactive, all reasons that make it easier to ignore their role in defining the meaning of representation. Whereas journalists, such as those editing the *Craftsman* and the *London Journal*, could publish entire articles discussing the nature of parliamentary representation, petitioners tended to produce far less material on the subject. The contrast is even more evident if they are compared to pamphleteers, who often dedicated

entire tracts to deliberating the principles and practices that defined representation. However, in contrast to most journalists and pamphleteers, those using petitions often had a direct representative relationship with those they endeavoured to influence, even to pressure. Petitioners' uses of imperative means indicate that this relationship did, indeed, matter. Despite the fact that petitioners could use addresses to pressure parliament, as earlier demonstrated, an overwhelming majority of the imperative means petitioners used occurred in petitions submitted to individual members of parliament. In most cases, those members of parliament represented the constituency from which the petitions were submitted. The verbs petitioners used to address parliament and the Throne, for instance, remained distinctively humble throughout the eighteenth century, the use of imperative ones being almost exclusively limited to those addressed to individual representatives. Even though formally representing the nation in its entirety (rather than their constituencies), numerous constituents, it appears, still regarded them as their representatives.

This thesis has focused on the means petitioners used in constructing representation. In order to recognise such means, I have concentrated on locating and evaluating linguistic patterns in the genre of petitions. I have, up to a certain point, de-contextualised petitions from their immediate spatial and temporal contexts and re-contextualised them in regard to other petitions, prioritising long-term aspects over short-term contexts. Such a process has made it possible to recognise both change and continuity within the genre of petitions, often functioning as indications of the changing political culture in a wider sense. The changes regarding the representative claims on behalf of the colonies and their inhabitants, for instance, become evident by comparing petitions from the 1730s to those submitted during the 1770s. Instead of remaining stable, the studied patterns demonstrate that such claims evolved from impersonal claims on behalf of inanimate entities to claims on behalf of colonial brethren. A systematic focus on patterns of representative claims has also enabled to understand the implications of the increasing focus on scale; the emphasis on the scale of subscriptions in post-1768 petitions functioning as some sort of indication of the shift towards mass-representation. The significance of patterns is also evident in the case of verbs. Though it is possible to examine their uses within the context of individual petitions, the results are far more indicative if analysed through the patterns their uses form, providing a clearer picture of what petitioners considered as possible and legitimate. It also demonstrates the differences regarding the three sub-genres of petitions (petitions to parliament, instructions to members of parliament, and addresses to the Throne).

Some patterns, on the other hand, demonstrate the persistence of tradition and the salience of continuity. Most petitions contained at least some conceptual and discursive elements that changed but little during the studied period. Claims that petitioners defended the true interest of the people, for instance, can be

found in most of the studied petitions. Whereas their opponents were allegedly driven by ambition and selfishness, petitioners tended to represent themselves and their supporters as disinterested champions of the people. That petitioners and their supporters constituted a counterforce against a corrupt administration, threatening the constitutional establishment, is also an argumentative element that can be found from petitions during most of the studied crises. Although usually far from being conceptually or discursively innovative, countless petitioners relied on the use of such assertions (and, indeed, numerous other assertions of similar character) when endeavouring to persuade the receivers of their petitions. The stable and often unchanged character of such assertions does not render them uninteresting; on the contrary. The persistence of such elements aptly demonstrates the historical embeddedness of political argumentation. Many of the means and elements that remained stable throughout the studied period are, in fact, still widely used in the spheres of parliamentary politics. Instead of endeavouring to initiate a paradigmatic change as such, petitioners often used pragmatic means and well-recognised concepts and arguments.

Although focusing on Britain in 1721 - 1776, the emphasis on patterns can also be used to understand representation and petitioning in a more general manner. The discussed patterns and other findings can, for instance, be used as a starting point for both temporal and spatial comparison. With regard to the first, the discussed patterns could be compared to those in petitions submitted both before the premiership of Walpole and after the escalation of hostilities in America. Comparing the findings of this thesis to post-1776 petitions, in particular, could be useful in understanding the changing patterns of legitimacy in a more comprehensive manner, especially with regard to the increasing focus on mass-representation. A systematic analysis of the changing patterns of representative claims could provide scholars novel perspectives on the long-term trajectories of political representation. Did the pace of the changes recognised in this thesis increase after the studied period? If so, in what manner and how did that influence the process of negotiating representation in practice? The thesis can also be used as a point of departure for spatial comparison. In such cases countries and regions with an established culture of petitioning would be of special interest; from the Netherlands (in its various forms) to European colonies beyond the ocean. Comparing British petitions to those in other political cultures could provide scholars an invaluable point of reference in understanding the differences and similarities of their representative practices. In this sense the thesis serves as a point of departure rather than as an end unto itself.

TIIVISTELMÄ

Edustuksellisuuden (representaatio) merkitys on aina tavalla tai toisella neuvoteltua. Sen sijaan että edustuksellisuus olisi yksiselitteinen fakta, jonka voi tyhjentävästi määritellä, se on jotain, jonka merkitys syntyy vuorovaikutuksesta. Tässä tutkimuksessa keskitytään vetoomuksiin (*petition*) ja havainnollistetaan, kuinka edustuksellisuutta määriteltiin kielellisesti 1700-luvun Britanniassa.

Suurten teorioiden ja ajattelijoiden sijaan tutkimuksessa keskitytään arkipolitiikan toimijoihin. Väitöskirja perustuu 464:ään Britannian parlamentille, parlamentin jäsenille ja kuninkaalle vuosina 1721–1776 lähetettyyn vetoomustekstiin. Siinä missä aiempi vetoomustutkimus on keskittynyt pitkälti yksittäisiin painostuskampanjoihin, tässä tutkimuksessa tarkastellaan tutkittuja vetoomuksia genrenä. Tarkastelemalla vetoomuksia systemaattisesti pitkällä aikavälillä väitöskirjassa paikannetaan lukuisia toistuvuuksia ja murroskohtia.

Systemaattinen tarkastelu osoittaa muun muassa, että vuotta 1768 voidaan perustellusti pitää eräänlaisena murroskohtana. Siinä missä aiemmat vetoajat olivat lähinnä korostaneet arvovaltaansa tittleidensä perusteella, John Wilkesiä tukevat vetoajat alkoivat korostaa allekirjoittajamääriä. Vetoomukset myös osoittavat, kuinka suhtautuminen siirtomaiden asukkaisiin muuttui.

Systemaattinen tarkastelu osoittaa ennen kaikkea, miten edustajia pyrittiin suostuttelemaan ja painostamaan. Vaikka brittiläinen parlamentarismi perustuikin niin sanottuun vapaaseen mandaattiin eli ajatukseen siitä, ettei edustettavilla ole oikeutta määrittää edustajiensa toimintaa, vetoajat käyttivät useita keinoja vaikuttamiseen. Väitöskirja osoittaa kattavasti sen, että vaikka esimoderni aika-kausi usein mielletään jyrkän hierarkkiseksi, vetoajat käyttivät usein rajujakin painostuskeinoja.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1:

Petitions, 1721–1776 Available: <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/76300>

APPENDIX 2:

Replies, 1721–1776 Available: <https://jyx.jyu.fi/handle/123456789/76300>

APPENDIX 3: ABBREVIATIONS

AOWJ	Applebee's Original Weekly Journal
AWC	Adam's Weekly Courant
BC	Burney Collection
BCPHJ	British Chronicle or Pugh's Hereford Journal
BCWG	Bath Chronicle and Weekly Gazette
BLJ	Bingley's London Journal
BJ	British Journal
BJUG	Bingley's Journal or the Universal Gazette
BLJ	Bingley's London Journal
BNA	British Newspaper Archive
CC	Chester Courant
CM	Caledonian Mercury
CCCI	Chester Chronicle or Commercial Intelligencer
CEA	Champion or Evening Advertiser
Cr	Craftsman
CS	Common Sense
CSEJ	Common Sense or the Englishman's Journal
CSWJ	Craftsman or Say's Weekly Journal
CT	Con-Test
DA	Daily Advertiser
DC	Daily Courant
DG	Daily Gazetteer
DJ	Daily Journal
DM	Derby Mercury
DP	Daily Post
DuM	Dublin Mercury
EA	Evening Advertiser
EP	Evening Post
FB	Free Briton
FJ	Fog's Journal
GB	Google Books
GEP	General Evening Post
GLDA	Gazetteer and London Daily Advertiser
GND	Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser
GM	Gentleman's Magazine

GSJ	Grub Street Journal
HaC	Hampshire Chronicle
HJ	Hibernian Journal
HoP	History of Parliament
HoC	House of Commons
HoL	House of Lords
IC	Independent Chronicle
ICFEP	Independent Chronicle or Freeholders Evening Post
IJ	Ipswich Journal
LC	London Chronicle
LCUEP	London Chronicle or Universal Evening Post
LEP	London Evening Post
LEPBC	Lloyd's Evening Post and British Chronicle
LG	London Gazette
LI	Leeds Intelligencer
LJ	London Journal
LIEP	Lloyd's Evening Post
LM	London Magazine
LPNLEP	London Packet or New Lloyd's Evening Post
MC	Monthly Chronicle
MCLA	Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser
MJCL	Middlesex Journal or Chronicle of Liberty
MJEA	Middlesex Journal and Evening Advertiser
MJUEP	Middlesex Journal or Universal Evening Post
MM	Manchester Mercury
MPDA	Morning Post and Daily Advertiser
NCh	Newcastle Chronicle
NCo	Newcastle Courant
NB	North Briton
NG	Norwich Gazette
NM	Northampton Mercury
OJ	Oxford Journal
OE	Old England
OENG	Old England or the National Gazette
OWCP	Old Whig or the Consistent Protestant
OWCWJ	Owen's Weekly Chronicle and Westminster Journal
PS	Parliamentary Spy
PA	Public Advertiser
PB	Post Boy
PLDRCI	Public Ledger or The Daily Register of Commerce and Intelligence
Pr	Protester
PRFJ	Public Register or the Freeman's Journal
R	Remembrancer
RM	Reading Mercury
RWJBG	Read's Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer

SJCBEP	St. James's Chronicle or the British Evening Post
SJEP	St. James's Evening Post
SM	Scots Magazine
SNL	Saunders's News-Letter
StM	Stamford Mercury
SWJ,	Salisbury and Winchester Journal
USWJ	Universal Spectator and Weekly Journal
W	Whisperer
WM	Weekly Miscellany
WEP	Whitehall Evening Post
WEPLI	Whitehall Evening Post or London Intelligencer
WJBG	Weekly Journal or British Gazetteer
WJLPM	Westminster Journal and London Political Miscellany
WJSP	Weekly Journal or Saturday's Post