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978-1-107-04442-5 - Print and Public Politics in the English Revolution

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Excerpt

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## *Introduction*

To anyone who witnessed the extraordinary events of the English Revolution, it was hard not to conclude that there were two spectres haunting public life. The first was a new intensity to public interest in parliament and its business; and the second was that this was linked to developments in print culture. It is these observations that provide the foundation for this book, and that suggest avenues of enquiry which historians have only rarely pursued. The pamphlets and newspapers of the Civil War era have obviously figured prominently in modern scholarship, but attention has tended to focus on the *nature* and *content* of such material. Historians have been preoccupied by their value as evidence about the events of Civil War and revolution, about the strengths and weaknesses of successive regimes to control and exploit the press, and about the ideas and characters of their authors and publishers. Print has tended to be seen, in other words, as providing the key to understanding the period's extraordinary creativity and experimentation, in terms of the collapse of censorship, the increasingly sophisticated use of 'propaganda' to manipulate public opinion and the emergence of a 'public sphere' of political debate.<sup>1</sup> What has less obviously been explored is the *impact* that such material had on political culture and the lives of ordinary citizens. This book represents an attempt to take up this challenge, and its aim is to assess how print affected political processes and practices; how it influenced the attitudes and behaviour of contemporaries; and how it helped to transform the nature and shape of the political nation. The aim of this introduction is to set out the book's methodology and arguments (section III), and to situate it historically (section II), but it begins by discussing the shock with which contemporary observers encountered a new political mood and novel

<sup>1</sup> J. Raymond, *Pamphlets and Pamphleteering in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 2003); J. Raymond, *The Invention of the Newspaper* (Oxford, 1996); J. Peacey, *Politicians and Pamphleteers* (Aldershot, 2004); M. Braddick, *God's Fury, England's Fire* (London, 2008).

political texts, and the ways in which they sought to connect the two phenomena.

### i Contemporary reactions to print and ‘popular’ politics

That political culture was taking a popular turn in the mid seventeenth century seemed clear from both extraordinary episodes and everyday life. Parliamentary elections, for example, became notably febrile and quite often disorderly. The Kent election for the Long Parliament saw an unusually large crowd, and amid the clamour to ensure that voters’ preferences were recorded, the walls of the ‘shire house’ were ‘broken down’. Elections at Maldon and Sandwich witnessed interventions by ‘a rabble’, with the ‘commonalty’ assembling ‘in a tumultuous manner . . . without any authority, warrant or command’. A ‘tumultuous rabble’ also appeared at Newport (Isle of Wight) in 1645, where the ‘scum of the town’ were ‘apt for a mutiny’ and sought to ‘awe the freeholders in their election’.<sup>2</sup> More generally, England’s middling sort, and even its lower orders – including yeomen, husbandmen, and servants, and tradesmen from cutlers to worsted combers – were thought to have become ‘bold talkers’. They were sensible of their grievances and clamorous for news, and they were willing and able to discuss political and religious affairs in an argumentative fashion, and in ways that led to high language and bitter divisions – in private houses, in drinking establishments and in the streets. All too often such scenes became ‘tumultuous’ and boiled over into festivities that bordered on disorder, not least as the ‘multitude’ demanded new and ‘free’ parliaments, amid bonfires, bell-ringing and shouting.<sup>3</sup>

Struck by this intense public engagement with parliament and current affairs, contemporaries sought to understand how it had come about, and very often they emphasized the role of cheap print. Recognizing what historians have subsequently described as the ‘print revolution’, in other words, their critical gaze focused on the emergence of political and religious pamphleteering and news reporting, and on the undermining of the *arcana imperii*. Although some contemporaries regarded such material as little more than ‘bum fodder’, many others were less sanguine and were fearful

<sup>2</sup> CKS, U47/57/O1, p. 15; FSL, W.b.600, p. 132; EKRO, Sa/AC7, fos. 366, 367v; PA, MP 24 Nov. 1645; BL, Add. 70005, fos. 174–7v; *Proceedings*, 599.250, p. 3968.

<sup>3</sup> Aberdeen UL, MS 2538/1, fos. 33v, 44; Birch, *Charles*, i. 130; BL: Eg. 2536, fo. 443; Add. 38855, fo. 56; Add. 70106, fo. 164; Add. 70110, fo. 74; Add. 78194, fo. 66; Add. 78221, fos. 98–v; *HMC 2nd Report*, p. 47; *Rugg*, p. 39; *Civicus*, 298.084, p. 769; Devon RO: ECA Book 63, fos. 380–v, 391; ECA Book 64, fos. 6v–7, 8v, 20v; Worcs. RO, BA1714, p. 714; Bodl. MS Tanner 65, fo. 278.

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about the effect of cheap print. In some senses, of course, such fear had obviously been evident for many decades. A 1586 Star Chamber decree described the 'abuses and enormities' of an unregulated printing industry, and James I bemoaned the 'disorderly printing, uttering and dispersing' of 'seditious, schismatical and scandalous books and pamphlets'. James sought to restrict access to the 'corantos' (newsbooks) that emerged during the Thirty Years' War, and he protested about the 'great inconveniences' that were caused by 'seditious, popish and puritanical books'. He became concerned that authors of cheap literature were 'traducing . . . religion and the state', and his concerns were later echoed very clearly by his son, Charles I.<sup>4</sup> This hostility, moreover, was also echoed in popular discourse. A tract called *A Scourge for Paper-Persecutors* complained about 'a confused world of trumpery', and about 'infectious swarms' of 'guilty sheets' that could be observed 'walking in the streets'. It was also noted that 'each wall and public post' was 'defiled' by the 'cuckoos of our times'. However, such attacks became much more prevalent when the collapse of censorship in 1641 heralded ever larger waves of cheap print. Divines of all persuasions grumbled about 'the late overflowing of the presses', and about living in a 'scribbling age' when 'so many needless, useless, senseless pamphlets come every day sweating from the press'. They bemoaned the prevalence of 'gall and bitterness and devilish calumnies', and they likened pamphlets to 'a swarm of locusts' that had ascended from Hell, 'so grossly scurrilous, malicious, and contumelious'. Even Civil War journalists expressed wonder that more care was not taken to suppress 'dangerous books', which were 'enough to put the world into a combustion'.<sup>5</sup>

The foundations of such hostility were fairly clear. First, print was thought to threaten royal authority, and pamphleteers were considered to be 'state meddlers' and 'busy fellows' who 'peer into the art of our government'.<sup>6</sup> Secondly, cheap print was thought to have displaced scholarship with trivialities and lies, as learned works were supplanted by pamphlets that were 'new and old in six days', and by 'lascivious, idle and unprofitable books, pamphlets, playbooks and ballads'. Such material, it was claimed, led to 'the increase of all vice, and withdrawing people from studying, reading and

<sup>4</sup> *Tudor Constitutional Documents*, p. 182; Larkin and Hughes, i, 583, 599; BL, Add. 72439, fo. 2; *CSPD 1631-3*, p. 426; *CSPD 1633-4*, p. 222.

<sup>5</sup> *Scourge* (1625, 6340), pp. 2, 5; *Returne* (1641, G1199), sig. A8; BL, Add. 20065, fo. 123v; *Continuation* (1642, C5960) p. 5; FSL, V.a.454, p. 69.

<sup>6</sup> Birch, *James*, ii, 355; BL, Add. 72439, fo. 2; Lupton, *London* (1632, 16944), pp. 140-1; Nott UL, Gal 12768/618; *CSPD 1625-49*, p. 567; Northants. RO, IC 463; Bodl. MS Eng.hist.e.184, fo. 7v.

learning the word of God'.<sup>7</sup> Thomas Fuller likened the press to an unruly horse that had 'cast off its bridle', such that serious books which 'dare fly abroad are hooted at by a flock of pamphlets'. Edward Browne argued that 'lying and scandalous pamphlets fly about the city in every corner, and prove vendible ware, whereas solid and learned men's works are nothing regarded'.<sup>8</sup> Scholars were thus usurped by 'pettifogging scribes', and writers worried about contributing to 'the riot of . . . luxuriant pamphlets'. They strove not to be confused with those who 'ply their pens as plow-men do their plow, and pester posts with titles of new books', and with those who 'torment both paper, press and pen'.<sup>9</sup> Thirdly, and most importantly, contemporaries feared the *participatory* impact of cheap print, and they worried that print would foster unwelcome debate and division among the commonalty. They feared, in other words, the influence of 'clubs and clouted shoes', and an undermining of social distinctions by 'a sea of democracy'. They feared for the prospects of political stability when 'every man' of 'base condition' could do whatever 'seemeth good in his own eyes'. The danger, as the Earl of Dorset stated in 1647, was that 'apprentices turn privy councillors' and that 'confusion' would become 'the mother of order'.<sup>10</sup>

In contemporary discourse, therefore, we witness concerns about popular *participation* that were intimately connected with the print revolution. This was clear from Laud's desire to avoid 'more noise' by allowing controversies to be 'further stirred', as well as from claims about pamphlets being 'scattered' and 'dispersed abroad', geographically and socially, such that they were 'in sight of all'. These worries were generated by evidence that pamphlets could be found in 'kitchen-cobweb-nooks' and that they were being read by 'apprentices' and 'maids'. Indeed, since cheap print circulated through webs of communication that involved networks of travellers, pamphlets came to be described in the same fearful terms as the wandering poor; as 'vagabond books, which like rogues are to be whipped to the place of their births'.<sup>11</sup> Underpinning such concerns were fears about simple folk

<sup>7</sup> Lupton, *London*, pp. 140–1; Nalson, i. 666; BL, Harl. 4931, fos. 87–v; *Duppa Corr.*, p. 91; *HMC Verulam*, pp. 55–6; *Life of Dugdale*, p. 264; Davis, *Heaven* (1656, D422A), sigs. A2–v, A4v; Fuller, *Sermon* (1648, F2460), sig. A3.

<sup>8</sup> Fuller, *Holy State* (1642, F2443), sig. A2; Browne, *Paradox* (1642, B5103), sigs. A3–v.

<sup>9</sup> Lupton, *London*, pp. 141–2; *Scourge*, pp. 5, 7, 10, 17; HEH, HM 22039; Heath, *Clarastella* (1650, H1340A), pp. 36–7.

<sup>10</sup> BL: Add. 78233, fo. 44; Add. 33058, fo. 71; Cary, *Memorials*, i. 293; Northants. RO, IC353; CKS, U269/1/CP147; U269/C248.

<sup>11</sup> *CSPD 1629–31*, p. 404; TNA, SP 16/176, fo. 75; Nott. UL, Cl/C/27; BL, Sloane 1983B, fo. 47; Birch, *James*, ii. 355; *Scourge*, pp. 1, 3; CCL, U85/38/8, fos. 1, iv, 36v; Durham UL, MSP 70, pp. vii, 129–30; HEH, EL 7908; J. Peacey, 'The paranoid prelate', in *Conspiracies and Conspiracy Theories*, ed. B. Coward and J. Swann (Aldershot, 2004), pp. 113–34; Fox, *Oral and Literate*, pp. 336–43, 348.

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being 'abused' and 'seduced', and about the danger of 'awaking . . . unquiet and turbulent spirits'. Some contemporaries felt that pamphlets would 'stir up sedition' and 'poison the hearts' of the part of society that had 'no voice or authority in our commonwealth', and that had no place meddling with political affairs.<sup>12</sup> Certain topics, in other words, were thought to be unfit for public discussion, and it was felt that ordinary subjects would become 'statesmen' and that the authorities would be 'exposed to the rancour of the rude', as well as to the 'witless multitude'.<sup>13</sup> This attitude had been evident in Henry VIII's complaint about scripture being 'disputed, rhymed, sung and jangled in every alehouse and tavern', and in his injunctions that the Bible was not to be read by 'women', or by 'artificers, apprentices, journey-men, serving men . . . husbandmen nor labourers'.<sup>14</sup> It was revealed in Ben Jonson's mocking commentaries on the burgeoning culture of news, as well as in Shakespeare's tale of the disreputable Autolycus and dopey Mopsa.<sup>15</sup> And it was eminently clear from James I's attacks on 'lavish and licentious speech' regarding matters of state. Indeed, James repeatedly complained about 'an itching in the tongues and pens of most men', and he was appalled by the tendency for people to 'meddle with things above their capacity' and 'above their reach and calling'. To him 'matters of state' were 'no themes or fit subjects for vulgar persons'.<sup>16</sup>

Such concerns about participation, and about 'idle discourse' by members of the public, obviously became even more apparent during the 1640s, although it is important to recognize that they were in no sense hegemonic. Commentators complained about 'a prateing of news', about how 'the giddy tattling crowd . . . talk their fancied grievances aloud' and about the 'wrangle and jangle' of tongues in taverns and alehouses, bakehouses and barbers' shops. The result, according to one observer, was 'a confusion of babbling and pro and conning'.<sup>17</sup> Confronted by 'talkative' subjects, of course, many contemporaries were determined to control the press and to

<sup>12</sup> TNA, SP 16/177, fos. 8–v; Laud, *Works*, vii, 317, 326–7; Hughes and Larkin, iii, 15; BL, Sloane 1983B, fo. 47; T. Smith, *De Republica Anglorum*, ed. M. Dewar (Cambridge, 1982), ch. 24.

<sup>13</sup> CSPD 1629–31, pp. 404, 411; TNA: SP 16/176, fo. 75; SP 16/176, fo. 75; SP 16/177, fos. 8–v; Nott, UL, Cl/C/27; BL, Sloane 1983B, fo. 47; CSPD 1628–9, p. 187; Hughes and Larkin, iii, 14–15; *Rous Diary*, p. 121; *Scourge*, p. 2.

<sup>14</sup> SR, iii, 896.

<sup>15</sup> B. Johnson, *Staple of News*, ed. A. Parr (Manchester, 1988); W. Shakespeare, *Winter's Tale* (Cambridge, 2007), 4.3.23–5, 4.4.249–64, 5.2.24–5.

<sup>16</sup> Larkin and Hughes, i, 243, 495–6, 519–21.

<sup>17</sup> BL, Add. 72439, fo. 6; CSPD 1631–3, p. 426; *Crosfield*, p. 61; HEH, HM 55603, fo. 10v; FSL, W.b.600, p. 129; Northants. RO, IL4298; Howell, *Informer* (1643, H3122), p. 30; Warmstry, *Pax Vobis* (1641, W886), p. 29; Durham UL, MSP 9, p. 215; Taylor, *St Hillaries* (1642, T508), pp. 3, 5; *Remonstrance* (1642, R991), sigs. A2–v, A4–v.

produce ‘propaganda’ that would ‘undeceive’ the public. This response was epitomized by Sir Roger L’Estrange, who famously exclaimed that ‘tis the press that has made ‘em mad, and the press must set ‘em right again’.<sup>18</sup> Others, however, were more sanguine about the participatory effects of cheap print, and were even willing to embrace the print medium. During debates over church reform in the 1640s, for example, the vicar of Ashington was said to have ‘solicited hedgers at the hedges and plowmen at the plough, [and] threshers in the barns’, and he apparently did so with literature aimed at ‘the ploughman and artisan’ and intended for the ‘satisfaction of the common people’. Samuel Hartlib went even further. He actually championed the impact of print on popular politics, by predicting that ‘the art of printing will so spread knowledge that the common people, knowing their own rights and liberties, will not be governed by way of oppression’.<sup>19</sup>

In other words, evidence from the mid seventeenth century indicates that contemporaries were struck by the emergence of cheap print and anxious to connect it with the events of their troubled age. They did not necessarily agree on whether such material was welcome, but they were fairly united in trying to grapple with what it might do to political life and popular participation. And it is precisely *this* desire – to think about the impact of cheap print on everyday life – that underpins this book, and its goal is to engage with both the methodology of the ‘print revolution’ and the historiography of seventeenth-century political culture.

## ii The historiography of the print revolution

The ‘impact’ of print has been hotly contested by historians of the early modern period, and the purpose of this section is to draw attention to these debates and to the methodological and conceptual issues that they raise. The aim is to argue that the ‘print revolution’ offers valuable ways of enhancing our understanding of seventeenth-century political culture, but that the field remains inadequately conceptualized and that new questions and approaches are required.

The first point to make is that the historiography of the print revolution – in terms of how it is studied and why it matters – has become excessively polarized. This can be seen fairly clearly in the debate between Elizabeth Eisenstein and Adrian Johns. Where Eisenstein made enormous

<sup>18</sup> *Crosfield*, p. 40; *CSPD 1639*, pp. 233–4; *CSPD 1639–40*, p. 305; TNA, SP 16/441, fos. 128–29v; Birch, *James*, ii, 276; *Observer*, 1 (13 April 1681).

<sup>19</sup> Antony, BC/24/2, fo. 65; *Dialogue* (1642, D1346); Hartlib, *Macaria* (1641, P2409A), p. 13.

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claims for the link between printing and the Reformation, the Renaissance and the Scientific Revolution, and for its role in the development of nations, languages and individualism, Johns stressed the need to examine local situations and specific individuals. He argued that the 'print revolution' played out differently in different counties and that the 'impact' of print depended on how individuals reacted in particular circumstances. Another way of putting this is to say that where Eisenstein emphasized structural change, Johns stressed contingency and human agency, and if Eisenstein was a 'parachutist' – surveying huge swathes of historical territory from a great height – then Johns was a 'truffle-hunter', who adopted a somewhat microscopic approach to both problems and evidence.<sup>20</sup> More obviously, of course, this polarization can also be observed in broader debates about political and religious upheaval in Tudor and Stuart Britain, where the issue of print has rarely been far from the surface. Thus, while pamphlets and newspapers were central to the work of Marxist historians like Christopher Hill – for whom print technology was linked to social change and the emergence of new voices and radical movements – his critics considered such material to be much less relevant.<sup>21</sup> Such 'revisionists' refocused scholarly attention away from 'society' and the radical fringes, in favour of a narrative of 'high politics'; away from printed sources towards manuscript archives; and away from London towards the localities. The latter proved crucial to a characterization of the early seventeenth century as a period in which political and religious divisions were thought to have been unwelcome intrusions into an otherwise harmonious and orderly world. Indeed, revisionists downplayed the idea that 'provincial people were generally conscious of the political problems of the period', and they actively denied the value of printed texts as historical sources.<sup>22</sup>

A second and much more important point involves the ways in which historians have responded to such provocative claims, and to the sense that neither Marxists nor revisionists offer a satisfactory account of early modern political culture. Here, my aim is to suggest that, while social historians and 'post-revisionists' have dramatically enhanced our understanding of both elite and popular politics, and of *how* as well as *why* the

<sup>20</sup> E. Eisenstein, *Printing Press as an Agent of Change* (Cambridge, 1979); A. Johns, *Nature of the Book* (Chicago, 1998); A. Johns, 'How to acknowledge a revolution', *AHR*, 107 (2002), 106–25; E. Eisenstein, 'An unacknowledged revolution revisited', *AHR*, 107 (2002), 87–105.

<sup>21</sup> C. Hill, *World Turned Upside Down* (London, 1972).

<sup>22</sup> A. Everitt, *Community of Kent and the Great Rebellion* (Leicester, 1966), p. 121; J. Morrill, *Nature of the English Revolution* (London, 1993), p. 215.



revolution happened, significant problems remain unresolved and unaddressed, not least in terms of how the revolution unfolded and how it was experienced.

Among social historians, therefore, significant challenges have been made to the revisionist account. This has involved questioning the idea of the insular ‘county community’, the idea of political harmony within provincial communities and the idea that political awareness was restricted to a narrow elite. Considerable emphasis has been placed on the vitality of popular politics at a local level, on evidence of genuine beliefs among the ‘hazily documented multitudes’ and on the idea that social deference could be taken for granted. Attempts have been made to overcome a polarized model of ‘elite’ and ‘popular’ political cultures, and to argue that there existed a spectrum of consciousness, awareness and activity, which stretched from local elites through the gentry and the ‘middling sort’ and down to the humblest members of society.<sup>23</sup> And a wealth of research has recovered the political meanings of customary practices and disorderly episodes, which have been shown to have involved ‘popular’ legalism, respect for customary rights and determination to enforce justice and good governance. The upshot has been an enhanced appreciation that local communities were politicized and participatory, and that even humble citizens were able to make decisions about how to overcome grievances through tactics that ranged from petitioning to direct action.<sup>24</sup> In local settings, in other words, popular practices provide an insight into what the anthropologist James C. Scott calls ‘weapons of the weak’, and a way of connecting violent and riotous behaviour – exceptional and apparently spasmodic episodes – with less dramatic everyday interactions – from grumbling and cursing to formal interventions in political processes. Such practices enabled problems

<sup>23</sup> D. Underdown, *Revel, Riot and Rebellion* (Oxford, 1985), p. 163; D. Underdown, *A Freeborn People* (Oxford, 1996), pp. 10–11, 50; T. Harris, ‘Problematising popular culture’, in *Popular Culture in England*, ed. T. Harris (Basingstoke, 1995), p. 14; T. Harris, ‘Introduction’, in *Politics of the Excluded* (Basingstoke, 2001), pp. 21–4; M. Braddick and J. Walter, ‘Grids of power’, in *Negotiating Power in Early Modern Society* (Cambridge, 2001), pp. 1–42.

<sup>24</sup> Underdown, *Revel*, pp. 119, 123; Underdown, *Freeborn*, pp. 46–9; A. Wood, *Politics of Social Conflict* (Cambridge, 1999); A. Wood, ‘Collective violence, social drama and rituals of rebellion in late medieval and early modern England’, in *Cultures of Violence*, ed. S. Carroll (Basingstoke, 2007); J. Walter, ‘A “rising of the people”’, *P&P*, 107 (1985), 90–143; K. Wrightson, ‘Two concepts of order’, and J. Walter, ‘Grain riots and popular attitudes to the law’, both in *An Ungovernable People?*, ed. J. Brewer and J. Styles (New Brunswick, 1980), pp. 21–46, 47–84; R. Manning, *Village Revolts* (Oxford, 1998); J. Kent, ‘Folk justice and royal justice in early seventeenth century England’, *Midland History*, 8 (1983), 70–85; P. Clark, ‘Popular protest and disturbance in Kent’, *ECHR*, 29 (1976), 365–82; K. Lindley, *Fenland Riots* (London, 1982); B. Sharp, *In Contempt of all Authority* (Berkeley, 1980).



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to be resolved and policies to be negotiated, even to the point that elite power could be said to have become constrained.<sup>25</sup>

The challenge, however, has been to think beyond the issue of class domination, to connect local practices with participation in national politics and to address the impact of print. First, therefore, attempts have been made to challenge that idea – which remained central to the work of historians like David Underdown – that ‘popular’ politics was real but limited in scope. This has sometimes taken the form of scholarship regarding ‘state formation’, in terms of the growing reach of the state and the need to respond to the ‘experience of authority’, and it has also involved ideas about the ‘monarchical’ or ‘unacknowledged’ Republic. Considerable emphasis has thus been placed on the integrative and educative potential of a governmental system that involved extensive office-holding and local self-government.<sup>26</sup> At other times, the aim has been to demonstrate how ‘micro-political’ struggles in the localities interlocked with national issues and generated involvement in national institutions.<sup>27</sup> Here, numerous studies have argued that arenas like parliament served as ‘points of contact’ for members of the public, as voters, petitioners, lobbyists and libellers, and it has been demonstrated that ‘little businesses’ in provincial England revealed the interplay of local and national issues, as well as considerable knowledge about political proceedings and the workings of the state.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> J. Walter, ‘Public transcripts, popular agency and the politics of subsistence in early modern England’, in *Negotiating Power*, pp. 145–7; Braddick and Walter, ‘Grids of power’, pp. 5–7.

<sup>26</sup> Underdown, *Freeborn*, p. 10; M. Goldie, ‘The unacknowledged republic’, and S. Hindle, ‘The political culture of the middling sort’, both in *Politics of the Excluded*, pp. 125–52, 153–94; P. Withington, *Politics of Commonwealth* (Cambridge, 2005); S. Hindle, *The State and Social Change in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke, 2000), pp. 16, 23–6, 89, 115; S. Hindle, ‘Hierarchy and community in the Elizabethan parish’, *HJ*, 42 (1999), 835–51; A. Fletcher, ‘Honour, reputation and local officeholding in Elizabethan and Stuart England’, in *Order and Disorder in Early Modern England*, ed. A. Fletcher and J. Stevenson (Cambridge, 1985), pp. 92–115; J. Kent, ‘The rural “middling sort” in early modern England’, *Rural History*, 10 (1999), pp. 27–8; P. Griffiths, ‘Secrecy and authority in late sixteenth and seventeenth century London’, *HJ*, 40 (1997), 925–51; K. Wrightson, ‘The politics of the parish in early modern England’, in *Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*, ed. P. Griffiths (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 10–46.

<sup>27</sup> I. Archer, ‘Popular politics in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries’, in *Londinopolis*, ed. P. Griffiths and M. Jenner (Manchester, 2000), pp. 26–7, 41–2; P. Collinson, ‘The monarchical republic of Queen Elizabeth I’, *BJRL*, 69 (1987), 394–424; D. Cressy, ‘Binding the nation’, in *Tudor Rule and Revolution*, ed. D. Guth and J. McKenna (Cambridge, 1982), pp. 217–34; J. Walter, ‘Affronts and insolencies’, *EHR*, 122 (2007), 35–60.

<sup>28</sup> G. Elton, ‘Tudor government, the points of contact: Parliament’, *TRHS*, 5th series, 24 (1974), 183–200; D. Hirst, *Representative of the People* (Cambridge, 1975); D. Dean, ‘Parliament and locality from the middle ages to the twentieth century’, *PH*, 17 (1998), 1–11; D. Dean, ‘Parliament, Privy Council and local politics in Elizabethan England’, *Albion*, 22 (1990), 39–64; D. Sacks, ‘The corporate town and the English state’, *P&P*, 110 (1986), 69–105; J. Hart, *Justice upon Petition* (London, 1991);

Secondly, and less successfully, attempts have been made to integrate print culture into this revised picture of local politics. Underdown, for example, recognized the potential impact of pamphlets and newspapers, but found little evidence that such material penetrated into local society, especially below the level of the elite. He suggested that the evidence and analysis contained within Civil War literature ‘may have been too sophisticated for the more plebeian public’, and that it was ‘unlikely’ that pamphlets and newspapers ‘made any impact on the common people’. And he thought that too little was known about patterns of readership, and that ‘regular exposure to the newsbooks may have solidified the loyalties of some partisans . . . but it made others totally cynical’. In other words, Underdown remained convinced that the bulk of the population would have had only a poor understanding of events that took place ‘far away in Westminster, remote from the daily realities of provincial life’.<sup>29</sup> More recently, of course, Underdown’s conclusions have been modified by ground-breaking research into the impact of print outside the political elite. This has involved examining literacy and the circulation of libels, ballads and broadsides, as well as the relationship between political literature and oral culture, all of which has revealed that print became both accessible to popular audiences and integral to the lives of humble citizens. Indeed, it has been suggested not just that provincial England witnessed a *literate environment* of libelling, rumour and news, but also that the pamphlets and newspapers of the 1640s helped to integrate local communities into national politics.<sup>30</sup> As yet, however, such work offers only suggestive insights into the relationship between print and local politics after 1640, and into the impact

- P. Croft, ‘Libels, popular literacy and public opinion in early modern England’, *HR*, 68 (1995), 266–85; P. Croft, ‘The reputation of Robert Cecil’, *TRHS*, 6th series, 1 (1991), 43–69; R. Cust and P. Lake, ‘Sir Richard Grosvenor and the rhetoric of magistracy’, *BIHR*, 54 (1981), 40–53; R. Cust, ‘Anti-Puritanism and urban politics’, *HJ*, 35 (1992), 1–26; P. Lake, ‘Puritans, popularity and petitions’, in *Politics, Religion and Popularity in Early Stuart Britain*, ed. T. Cogswell et al. (Cambridge, 2002), pp. 259–89; A. Bellany, ‘An “embarrassment of libels”’, in *Politics of the Public Sphere in Early Modern England*, ed. P. Lake and S. Pincus (Manchester, 2007), pp. 144–67.
- <sup>29</sup> D. Underdown, ‘Community and class’, in *After the Reformation*, ed. B. Malament (Manchester, 1980), pp. 147–65; Underdown, *Revel*, pp. 123, 162, 168, 174, 176, 208, 223, 235, 236, 239; Underdown, *Freeborn*, pp. 10, 72, 73, 76, 110.
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