

## Introduction

### New Beginnings

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[The friendly society] seems to be a Project that we are led to by Divine Rule and has such a Latitude in it, that, for ought I know, as I said, all the Disasters in the World might be prevented by it, and Mankind be secur'd from all the Miseries, Indigences and Distresses that happen in the world.<sup>1</sup>

Daniel Defoe, 1697

Provision is thereby made against the contingencies of fortunes, to which all are subject; and the nation, providing for such of its poor as are unable to provide for themselves, appears in the character of one great . . . Friendly Society . . . to which all may contribute according to their ability, and upon which all may come in misfortune.<sup>2</sup>

William Palmer, 1844

For, mutual assurance is economy in its most economical form; and merely presents another illustration of that power of co-operation which is working out such extraordinary results in all departments of society, and is in fact but another name for Civilization.<sup>3</sup>

Samuel Smiles, 1875

So at last human society may become a friendly society – an Affiliated Order of branches, some large and many small, each with its own life in freedom, each linked to all the rest by common purpose, and by bonds that serve that purpose.<sup>4</sup>

William Beveridge, 1949

This book examines the ways in which the English, and later the British, grappled with questions of collective responsibility – of who owes what to whom and why – during the great transformation of British society from the late seventeenth century to the late nineteenth. They answered these questions in myriad ways over that vast expanse of time, but one answer that became increasingly important was the concept and practice of friendly society. As urbanization and commercialization transformed

<sup>1</sup> Daniel Defoe, *An Essay upon Projects* (London, 1697), 122.

<sup>2</sup> William Palmer, *Principles of the Legal Provision for the Relief of the Poor: Four Lectures Partly Read at Gresham College in Hilary Term, 1844* (London, 1844), 38.

<sup>3</sup> Samuel Smiles, *Thrift* (Chicago: Donohue, Henneberry & Co., 1875), 133.

<sup>4</sup> William H. Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1948), 324.

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the social and economic landscape in this period, contemporaries adapted the concept to generate new relationships and to structure new organizations that could make promises of collective responsibility effective – even among strangers. At the same time, laborers and artisans refashioned their own practices of mutuality by designing new kinds of mutual aid societies capable of linking local clubs to those in distant places, ultimately connecting millions of working people into international networks of reciprocity.

While this second story about friendly societies, where laborers joined together for mutual aid, is familiar to us, the first is not. That is to say, we do not usually think of friendly society as a concept. The term friendly society has become synonymous with the working-class mutual aid society that proliferated throughout the nineteenth century. In some ways, it is not surprising that we associate the term friendly society exclusively with the eponymous working-class organization. Nineteenth-century friendly societies comprised the largest social movement of the age and provided significant financial security for millions of working-class households. These societies provided some form of what we would now call social welfare – material relief during periods of unemployment due to accident or illness, a lump sum for a proper burial, and pub-based sociability. The majority of these organizations were exclusively for men, but women formed friendly societies that also provided financial assistance during sickness and burial, as well as for sex specific needs like lying-in.<sup>5</sup> While friendly societies were mostly concentrated in the

<sup>5</sup> Building on Anna Clark's work on female friendly societies, scholars have taken up the question of the material impact that male-only clubs had on the lives of women and the household economy, as well as the extent to which female-only friendly societies were a result of their exclusion from male societies or a function of differing needs. Because this book focuses on the institutional problem of trust among strangers from the local to the national, I do not specifically address female friendly societies, which with few exceptions remained local through the period I study. Although they represented a bigger proportion of the whole in the late eighteenth century, by the early 1870s, female friendly societies represented only 1 percent of the friendly societies in existence. (Simon Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750–1914* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 24.) For more on female friendly societies, see Anna Clark, *The Struggle for the Breeches: Gender and the Making of the British Working Class*, Studies on the History of Society and Culture, No. 23 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995); Daniel Weinbren, "The Fraternity of Female Friendly Societies," In *Gender and Fraternal Orders in Europe, 1300–2000*. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 200–222; Evelyn Lord, "'Weighed in the Balance and Found Wanting': Female Friendly Societies, Self Help and Economic Virtue in the East Midlands in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries," *Midland History* 22, no. 1 (June 1997): 100–112; Dot Jones, "Self-Help in Nineteenth Century Wales: The Rise and Fall of the Female Friendly Society," *Llafur*, 4, no. 1 (1984): 14; Andrea A. Rusnock and Vivien E. Dietz, "Defining Women's Sickness and Work: Female Friendly Societies in England, 1780–1830," *Journal of Women's History* 24, no. 1 (2012): 60–85.

industrial cities of the northwest, they were a regular feature of the social landscape throughout Britain and much of its vast and growing empire. They hosted a great number of social events where they opened their doors to the community, including their annual feasts, dances, lectures, and charity dinners of all kinds. Particularly in towns in the American south and west as well as in towns all over the West Indies and Australia, friendly societies became the center of social life. By the middle of the nineteenth century, their membership numbers were bigger than those of trade unions, cooperatives, and Methodist societies combined.<sup>6</sup> By 1913, 6.6 million Britons were members of registered friendly societies, with an estimated 2.4 million more in unregistered friendly societies. This means that friendly societies provided welfare benefits to something like 75 percent of the British workforce.<sup>7</sup> Along with other “approved societies,” they became the basis for national welfare distribution in 1911 under the National Insurance Act, and William Beveridge proposed to continue using them in the later National Insurance Acts, which formed the basis of the welfare state.<sup>8</sup>

Given their obvious importance as a working-class organization, Eric Hobsbawm admonished historians in 1957 for leaving friendly societies “surprisingly, and quite unnecessarily neglected.”<sup>9</sup> Since then, social and labor historians have worked to remedy that neglect. We now know a great deal about the institutional life of friendly societies, particularly their numbers, growth, and geographic distribution, as well as their socio-economic and occupational composition.<sup>10</sup> Because the biggest concentrations of friendly societies were found in industrial, northwestern, urban centers and seemed to comprise a largely working-class membership, historians first interpreted them as evidence of an “independent working-class

<sup>6</sup> P. H. J. H. Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England, 1815–1875* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1961), 7.

<sup>7</sup> David G. Green, *Reinventing Civil Society: The Rediscovery of Welfare without Politics*, Choice in Welfare, No. 17 (London: IEA Health and Welfare Unit, 1993), 26, 34. The estimate that friendly societies insured 75 percent of the workforce comes from David Green, “The Evolution of Friendly Societies in Britain” (caledonia.org, 1993), [www.caledonia.org.uk/friendlies.htm](http://www.caledonia.org.uk/friendlies.htm).

<sup>8</sup> Beveridge, *Voluntary Action: A Report on Methods of Social Advance*, see chapter 2.

<sup>9</sup> Eric Hobsbawm, “Friendly Societies,” *Amateur Historian* 3, no. 3 (1957): 98.

<sup>10</sup> David Neave, *Mutual Aid in the Victorian Countryside: Friendly Societies in the Rural East Riding, 1830–1914* (Hull: Hull University Press, 1991); Geoffrey Crossick, *An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society: Kentish London, 1840–1880* (London: C. Helm, 1978); Dot Jones, “Did Friendly Societies Matter? A Study of Friendly Society Membership in Glamorgan, 1794–1910,” *Welsh History Review* 3, no. 2 (1985): 324–349; Martin Gorsky, “The Growth and Distribution of English Friendly Societies in the Early Nineteenth Century,” *Economic History Review* 51, no. 3 (1998): 489–511; Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England, 1815–1875*.

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culture,” as E. P. Thompson put it. Consequently, these organizations figured prominently in the debates over working-class political action, the “labour aristocracy,” and standards of living among the working classes.<sup>11</sup>

Friendly societies emerged from these debates with their working-class credentials somewhat tarnished, however. In particular, it seemed that they never took full advantage of the fact that the Friendly Society Act (1793) made them the only type of association in which it was legal for laborers to meet freely, an opportunity otherwise denied to the working classes by the repressive legislation of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.<sup>12</sup> To be sure, there were cases where friendly societies supported trade unions out of their funds or organized and participated in strikes.<sup>13</sup> And, there were trade unions that hid their activities under the guise of a friendly society.<sup>14</sup> On the whole, however, friendly

<sup>11</sup> E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (New York: Vintage, 1966), 460–461; E. J. Hobsbawm, *Labouring Men; Studies in the History of Labour*. (New York: Basic Books, 1965), 273–274; Crossick, *An Artisan Elite in Victorian Society: Kentish London, 1840–1880*; Robert Gray, *The Labour Aristocracy in Victorian Edinburgh* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1976).

<sup>12</sup> The British government’s stance on friendly societies differed markedly from its continental neighbors. In France, the relationship between the state and the *sociétés des secours mutuel* vacillated between repression and direct control during the various regime changes of the nineteenth century. In Prussia, whose welfare programs became the model for Bismarck’s late nineteenth-century reforms, membership in trade-based or municipal-welfare organizations was generally compulsory. In Britain, by contrast, friendly societies remained voluntary throughout the century. Indeed, even as the state became increasingly interested in their potential as a national system of social welfare through the nineteenth century, registration remained voluntary. For more on welfare and insurance reform in Europe, see Michael David Sibalis, “The Mutual Aid Societies of Paris, 1789–1848,” *French History* 3, no. 1 (March 1, 1989): 1–30; Paul V. Dutton, *Origins of the French Welfare State: The Struggle for Social Reform in France, 1914–1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), chapter 2; Jean-Louis Robert, Antoine Prost, and Chris Wrigley, eds., *The Emergence of European Trade Unionism* (Aldershot: Ashgate Pub Ltd, 2004), 218; George Steinmetz, *Regulating the Social: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany: The Welfare State and Local Politics in Imperial Germany* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993), 125–126; Timothy Guinnane, Tobias Jopp, and Jochen Streb, “The Costs and Benefits of Size in a Mutual Insurance System: The German Miners’ Knapfschaften, 1854–1923,” In *Welfare and Old Age in Europe and North America: The Development of Social Insurance*, Perspectives in Economic and Social History, No. 21 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012).

<sup>13</sup> Francis Place, *The Affairs of Others: The Diaries of Francis Place, 1825–1836*, ed. James Alan Jaffe, Camden Fifth Series, v. 30. (New York: Cambridge University Press for the Royal Historical Society, 2007); W. H. Oliver, “Tolpuddle Martyrs and Trade Union Oaths,” *Labour History*, no. 10 (1966): 5–12; Herbert Vere Evatt, *The Tolpuddle Martyrs: Injustice within the Law* (Sydney: Sydney University Press, 2009).

<sup>14</sup> “Union at Derby,” *Preston Chronicle*, December 14, 1833. Some of the confusion on this point is due to the fact that many trade unions offered the same benefits that friendly societies did. For more on this point, see Malcolm Chase, *Early Trade Unionism: Fraternity, Skill and the Politics of Labour* (Aldershot and Brookfield, VT: Ashgate, 2000), 2, 107; Cordery, *British Friendly Societies, 1750–1914*, 45, 54–55, 135.

societies were some of the most visible supporters of the Victorian moral and social order and openly courted elite patronage.<sup>15</sup> Because of this, friendly societies eventually became an important part of the explanation for why the working classes failed to live up to the radical potential implicit in their organizational structures. And thus, the largest working-class organization of the nineteenth century consequently drifted to the margins of British history.<sup>16</sup>

Focusing on the failure of friendly societies in this respect, however, leaves us with some rather puzzling questions. Why did late eighteenth-century British parliamentarians, who also noted the radical potential of friendly societies, nevertheless offer them special legal protections? The year 1793 was an inauspicious time to grant an organization that involved regular, alcohol-fueled gatherings of workers the right to meet freely and to roam the country without regard to settlement restrictions. With the alarming rise of political radicalism and poverty at home and the French Revolution raging on the continent, why should friendly societies warrant such gentle, even generous, treatment at the very moment when all other working-class associations in the country were outlawed? And, why did the upper classes continuously offer them patronage when friendly societies steadfastly refused to allow these outsiders any influence on the operations of their societies?

Beyond their radical credentials, questions about the role friendly societies played in providing social welfare have also proved vexing for historians. Rather than use their precarious funds exclusively for the purpose of providing financial assistance to members, friendly societies also spent their money on expensive practices of ritualized sociability, including regular club-night drinking. Data collected internally by the leading Affiliated Orders constitutes most of what we know about the health of the working classes in the nineteenth century. The data that they collected on sickness and death rates in the 1850s led to significant advances in actuarial science, especially with respect to morbidity

<sup>15</sup> Of course, this was a two-way relationship. Aspiring local elites patronized friendly societies to help establish their authority both in the agricultural south of the eighteenth century and the industrializing north of the nineteenth. For examples, see Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, 1689–1798* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991); Theodore Koditschek, *Class Formation and Urban-Industrial Society: Bradford, 1750–1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); Dan Weinbren, “Imagined Families’: Research on Friendly Societies,” *Moving the Social [Online]* 27 (September 2014), 130.

<sup>16</sup> In *British Friendly Societies, 1750–1914*, Simon Cordery makes a convincing case that friendly societies may not have been radical, but they were far more politically active than earlier labor historians had understood.

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predictions. In spite of this, most friendly societies did not reform in accordance with actuarial principles until the very end of the nineteenth century. And even those societies that did make some financial reforms nevertheless refused to give up their ritualized practices of sociability. Historians are generally sympathetic toward friendly society finances in the first part of the century before accurate actuarial tables existed, but they have deemed the continued refusal to reform after 1850 and the insistence on maintaining practices of sociability “unconscionable.”<sup>17</sup> Indeed, while some scholars of the welfare state in Britain attribute the demise of voluntary friendly societies in the early twentieth century to the competition posed by state administered programs,<sup>18</sup> the consensus view is that friendly societies destroyed themselves from within due to this so-called inherent conflict between the demands of fraternalism and insurance.<sup>19</sup>

The fixation on what friendly societies did not do once again leaves us with unanswered questions, however. Why, it seems worth asking, were friendly societies so insistent on maintaining their practices of sociability in the face of dwindling resources and contemporary critics who railed against what they called the “utter incongruity in combining notions of beer and insurance?”<sup>20</sup> Why did the societies continue to engage in these practices even after they began actuarial reforms in the second half of the century? More to the point, if fraternalism and insurance were inherently at odds, how was it that the societies with the most elaborate and expensive social lives became the most popular *and the most successful*

<sup>17</sup> The idea that there was a necessary contradiction between the demands of fraternalism and those of insurance is generally assumed among historians, but it originated in the work of Gosden and Bentley. (Gosden, *The Friendly Societies in England, 1815–1875*, 11, 220; Bentley B. Gilbert, *The Evolution of National Insurance in Great Britain: The Origins of the Welfare State*. (London: Joseph, 1966), 170–171.)

<sup>18</sup> Stephen Yeo, “Working-Class Association, Private Capital, Welfare and the State in the Late Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” In *Social Work, Welfare, and the State*, Noel Parry, Michael Rustin, and Carole Satyamurti, eds., (Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications, 1980); David Green and Lawrence G. Cromwell, *Mutual Aid or Welfare State: Australia’s Friendly Societies*. (Sydney: G. Allen & Unwin, 1984); David T. Beito, *From Mutual Aid to the Welfare State: Fraternal Societies and Social Services, 1890–1967* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000); E. P. Hennock, *The Origin of the Welfare State in England And Germany, 1850–1914: Social Policies Compared* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> Two important exceptions are John Macnicol, *The Politics of Retirement In Britain, 1878–1948* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Nicholas Broten, “From Sickness to Death: Revisiting the Financial Viability of the English Friendly Societies, 1875–1908,” In *Welfare and Old Age in Europe and North America: the Development of Social Insurance*, Perspectives in Economic and Social History, No. 21 (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2012).

<sup>20</sup> “Mr. Tidd Pratt’s Office Can Be No Sinecure,” *The Times*, November 6, 1863.

providers of social welfare in the second half of the nineteenth century? The neglect of friendly societies by British historians has been remedied, then, but the results are muddled, and some important questions remain unanswered.

What has escaped the notice of historians – and can help answer these questions – is that friendly society had ethical as well as institutional dimensions. The working-class friendly society that appeared in the nineteenth century was just one iteration of a larger conceptual and practical mode of organizing reciprocity. Since at least the sixteenth century, the term *friendly society* was used to describe the various kinds of mutualities and obligations among different groups of people. In particular, the term was often associated with the virtues of brotherly love, harmony, and “mutual charity,” which clergymen and secular humanists alike deemed critical for the proper functioning of the community. Writing in 1593, English ecclesiastical reformer Myles Coverdale, best known for producing the first complete translation of the Bible into English, relies on this usage when he remarked that “among all living creatures, there is none created to a more loving and friendly society and fellowship than man. Hereunto serve all sciences and handy crafts, that men after a friendly manner agreeing among themselves, may relieve one another’s necessities and want, and help bear one another’s burthen[s].”<sup>21</sup> Note that Coverdale was not talking about friendly society as an organization but rather as a mode of mutuality. He was saying that humans require the help of others to live, and so they design by agreement mutually conducive relations of reciprocity.

One type of agreement about mutuality could constitute a particular friendly society. But the term friendly society itself could refer to any understood relations of reciprocity. The basis for and conditions of reciprocity in friendly society could vary widely – so too could the purpose to which those reciprocal relations were put. From Daniel Defoe’s perspective, writing in the late seventeenth century, the concept of friendly society had “such a Latitude in it, that . . . all the Disasters in the World might be prevented by it.”<sup>22</sup> Friendly society retained its conceptual richness all the way through to the twentieth century. Defoe was interested in solving particular social problems with his various conceptions of friendly society, as we will see in Chapter 1. But as the epigraphs at the beginning of this chapter from William

<sup>21</sup> Myles Coverdale, *Fruitfull Lessons, upon the Passion, Buriall, Resurrection, Ascension, and of the Sending of the Holy Ghost . . .* (London, 1593).

<sup>22</sup> Defoe, *An Essay upon Projects*, 122.

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Palmer, Samuel Smiles, and William Beveridge make clear, nineteenth- and twentieth-century Britons believed that friendly society also had the potential to refigure the basis of human society itself.

By paying attention to the more capacious sense of the term as well as to the particular institutional iterations of it in this book, I demonstrate that friendly societies were so much more than muddled might-have-beens on the margins of British history. The concept and practice of friendly society was, in fact, a robust and nimble cultural resource for thinking about and working through some of the most pressing questions facing British society in a period marked by rapid social and economic change. Questions about what people in a society owe to each other are foundational – the answers structure and legitimate social order. The reciprocity that one comes to expect from others, and the conditions under which those expectations are met, produce the diffuse bonds of social trust that hold societies together.<sup>23</sup> The transformation of British society from a collection of trading towns and agricultural communities to a highly mobile, industrial, and urban society in this period put pressure on the mechanisms through which Britons had long met those expectations. In particular, the institutions that made it possible to facilitate collective responsibility in the past, such as the charity brief and the poor laws, depended on knowing the reputations of the people involved. The same was true for the local mutual aid clubs that laborers started forming in the eighteenth century. As internal migration and urbanization made local knowledge difficult to access, much less stabilize, Britons were forced to grapple with the problem of how to make social obligations effective among people who did not know each other. *Trust Among Strangers* tells a story about how Britons used friendly societies to think and work their way through various iterations of this problem. In doing so, the book restores both the concept of friendly society and the organizations called friendly societies to their rightful place at the heart of modern British history.

This study also has implications for our understanding of trust in modern societies. Social scientists tell us that trust among strangers is critical to the functioning of modern societies and that it is substantively different from the kind of personal trust among familiars that held pre modern societies together. In the modern world, nearly every aspect of our lives involves trusting people we do not know. We get on planes piloted and buses driven by strangers; we regularly give our birth date,

<sup>23</sup> I borrow my definition from John C. Scott who treats social trust as “a kind of all-purpose social *glue*.” (John C. Scott, *Geographies of Trust; Geographies of Hierarchy, Democracy and Trust* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 275.)

social security number, and our mother's maiden name to unknown entities online. We have created systems of interdependence where it is in the interest of everyone involved to ensure that planes do not randomly fall out of the sky. When they do, we expect explanations that conform to our belief that, if everything had been working properly, a catastrophe could have been avoided. It is not so much the pilot that we put our trust in when we board a plane, in other words, but in the vast systems of regulations, training, markets, and science that keeps her focused on flying safely. Sociologists call the trust we place in these systems *social trust* and describe it as a coping mechanism – a “protective cocoon,” as Anthony Giddens puts it, or a means of “reducing uncertainty,” in Niklas Luhmann's words.<sup>24</sup> We trust because if we did not, we would be paralyzed by the infinite number of variables we would have to take into account in order to make a decision about the most mundane aspects of everyday life.

But this is how social trust works if a modern society is working properly. There are other, less savory ways of reducing uncertainty. People and their intentions can be made transparent through stricter security measures and more information, on the one end, or force, on the other. And if that fails, enemies can be named and separated from society. Endless and anxiety-producing shades of grey can be made to conform to clear distinctions of black and white. Under such conditions, strangers, usually of specific types, do not fare so well. This is where the current research on social trust falls short. While there is broad consensus among social scientists about the critical importance of social trust for the functioning of modern societies, there is little agreement on how to rebuild trust when it breaks down and devolves into distrust. In other words, we know what function social trust serves, but we do not fully understand the processes through which it comes into being or how it can be rebuilt when existing foundations are undermined.

A historical perspective can help. A historical perspective can also move us beyond false dichotomies between a personal, “premodern” world and an anonymous, modern one. We have historical evidence that can help us trace the actual transformation in Britain from a society where reciprocity was administered and structured through the local relationships of the parish community, to one that Adam Smith

<sup>24</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Modernity and Self-Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1991), 3; Niklas Luhmann, *Trust and Power* (New York: John Wiley, 1980), 4. There is a voluminous social scientific literature on social trust and the role it plays in modern societies. A good place to start is Barbara Misztal, *Trust in Modern Societies: The Search for the Bases of Social Order* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 1996).

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described as a society of strangers.<sup>25</sup> Yet, while personal trust may have been based on face-to-face relationships in the early modern period, with the exception of family and close intimates, the relationships comprising local communities were not, as Keith Wrightson puts it, “in the final analysis, personal.”<sup>26</sup> Instead, early modern Britons “personalized” social relationships, which were themselves guided by convention. Just as the term *local community* should not be reduced to an idealized image of a small, tight-knit group of people who mutually cared for one another, so *society of strangers* should not necessarily signal an atomized world of anonymous individuals. Strangers are not, as Georg Simmel pointed out, simply those who are unknown in a society, but rather those who have “not belonged to it from the beginning.”<sup>27</sup> The question *Trust Among Strangers* addresses is how did Britons, over the course of roughly two centuries, create conditions of belonging that could incorporate people who were unknown to each other – and who could remain strangers?

What constituted “belonging” and “the beginning” in the case of England and later Britain will be considered more fully throughout this book. I will tackle it in a preliminary fashion here, however, in order to introduce how specific historical problems of trust forced Britons to develop new conditions of belonging and how friendly societies played a critical role in creating them.

For centuries in England and Wales, the parish and the various corporate bodies that structured civic life had been the specific places where governance happened, justice was served, and deprivation was ameliorated.<sup>28</sup> All the customary rights associated with the parish – the right to the commons, charity, poor relief, and employment, for example – belonged to those who lived within the parish bounds. When the old

<sup>25</sup> Adam Smith, *The Wealth of Nations*, 5th ed. (New York: The Modern Library, 1789), 85–86, 456; For more on Smith’s characterization of Britain as a society of strangers, see Richard Teichgraeber III, “Rethinking Das Adam Smith Problem,” *The Journal of British Studies* 20, no. 2 (Spring 1981): 106–123; And for more on the social conditions that produced a society of strangers, see James Vernon, *Distant Strangers: How Britain Became Modern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2014), especially the introduction.

<sup>26</sup> Keith Wrightson, *English Society: 1580–1680* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 72.

<sup>27</sup> Georg Simmel, *The Sociology of Georg Simmel*, trans. Kurt H. Wolff (New York: The Free Press, 1950), 402.

<sup>28</sup> For more on the importance of local structures of governance and belonging throughout the early modern and modern periods, see David Eastwood, *Government and Community in the English Provinces, 1700–1870* (New York: St. Martin’s Press, 1997); Brodie Waddell, *God, Duty and Community in English Economic Life, 1660–1720* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2012); K. D. M. Snell, *Parish and Belonging: Community, Identity and Welfare in England and Wales, 1700–1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006).