Domestic Disorder: Crime, Kinship and Space in Bedfordshire, c. 1650-1790

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Abstract

Using criminal court records from Bedfordshire, this dissertation explores the relationship between space, crime and kinship across the long eighteenth century. It applies a spatial analysis to criminal court cases, further nuancing our understanding of how concepts of space and time interacted and informed one another. A focus on space not only reveals the ways that crimes were exposed, but it also draws attention to the permeability of boundaries within the domestic space. Objects, people, gossip, and reputations moved within, without, and across domestic spaces, underscoring how the thresholds of spaces were not fixed and inflexible, but porous and permeable. This dissertation also reveals the complexities of relationships between, within, and outside of spaces within the domestic realm. In doing so, it not only underscores the vital role of the community in exposing crimes, but the role that space played in shaping relationships between kin and non-kin.

Introduction

Using Bedfordshire as a case study, this thesis explores the relationship between crime, space, and kinship across the long eighteenth century. It investigates what criminal behaviour in domestic spaces reveals about the interactions, dynamics, and relationships between members of kin and non-kin networks in long eighteenth century rural communities. It considers how criminal activity illuminates the ways in which 'space' was understood, moulded, shaped, and navigated between 1650 and 1790. Across the latter half of the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, England's rural locations were regulated by a series of secular courts, such as the Assizes and Quarter Sessions, that have left depositions and testimonies which provide access to a range of everyday people. This project interrogates the depositions and testimonies produced by these courts to access contemporary understandings of space, crime, and kinship.

Contexts and Definitions

In the eighteenth century, England and Wales saw a considerable increase in population, in part due to the decreased death rates and rise in birth rates.[1] For Bedfordshire, the percentage increase from 1671 to 1800 was slightly higher than the percentage increase of the population of England and Wales from 1700 to 1801; the total sum of the estimated population for each parish across the county in 1671 was 39,874, increasing to 63,393 in 1801.[2] This was perhaps due to the development of local industries and the positioning of Bedfordshire to London, as the development of Bedfordshire's roads and river transport enhanced the communication networks and commercial possibilities between Bedfordshire and London, thus, influencing population and industry growth.[3] Moreover, market towns in Bedfordshire saw the greatest population increase between the mid sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries.[4] Between 1563 and 1603, seven market towns nearly doubled their population, compared to a growth of between 63% and 78% for the rest of the county.[5]

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[1] Lydia M. Marshall, *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Volume XVI*, (Woodbridge: Boydell & Brewer, 1934), pp. 13-14

[2] Marshall, *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Volume XVI*, pp. 13-14

[3] John Henry Burgess, 'The Social Structure of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire 1524-1674, Volume One', (Doctor of Philosophy Thesis, University of York, 1978), p. 17; Marshall, *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Volume XVI*, pp. 20-21

[4] Burgess, 'The Social Structure of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire 1524-1674, Volume One', p. 53

[5] Burgess, 'The Social Structure of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire 1524-1674, Volume One', p. 53

There were ten main market towns in Bedfordshire, including Dunstable, Woburn, Leighton Buzzard, Toddington, and Luton in the Southern region, Campton, Shefford, Biggleswade, and Ampthill in the East, and Bedford in the Northern region.[6] Market towns were integral to agricultural provisions, with their main industries being developed from these agricultural products.[7] For example, Dunstable, Bedford, Luton, Biggleswade, and Shefford contributed to the region's thriving corn industry.[8] The proximity of London to Bedfordshire, as well as the commercial possibilities of river transport, helped to foster these industries.[9] Whilst agriculture was the staple of eighteenth-century Bedfordshire's economy, the county was also known for its straw-plaiting and lacemaking industries.[10] South Bedfordshire faced an expansion of the straw-plaiting industry in the seventeenth century, with nearly a thousand families said to be dependent on the trade in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, and Hertfordshire.[11] Lacemaking, on the other hand, flourished during the eighteenth century. Although it was mostly confined to the Western part of the county, Luton, Dunstable, Caddington, Eaton Bray, and Houghton Regis were notable 'seats of the industry' in Bedfordshire.[12] This industry employed three-quarters of the entire female population (other than domestic servants), and superseded spinning and fieldwork as employments for women.[13] As with straw plaiting, lacemaking also provided work for young children.[14]

This thesis sits against the backdrop of several areas of scholarship on long eighteenth-century family life and engages with definitions that have emerged from these discussions. A central feature of previous scholarship has been understanding the nature of early modern and eighteenth-century households. While recognising the importance of the 'household' as a concept, this project employs the term 'domestic space' to provide a deeper investigation into the meanings of space and the usage and function of spaces.[15] A spatial analysis is key to this

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[6] Burgess, 'The Social Structure of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire 1524-1674, Volume One', p. 17

[7] Burgess, 'The Social Structure of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire 1524-1674, Volume One', p. 21

[8] Burgess, 'The Social Structure of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire 1524-1674, Volume One', p. 21

[9] Burgess, 'The Social Structure of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire 1524-1674, Volume One', p. 38

[10] Marshall, *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Volume XVI*, pp. 14-15

[11] Burgess, 'The Social Structure of Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire 1524-1674, Volume One', p. 38; Marshall, *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Volume XVI*, pp. 14-15; for context, Marshall notes that a petition to parliament in 1689 from those working in the straw-plait industries in Beds, Bucks, and Herts, suggested it was nearly a thousand families who were dependent on the trade.

[12] Marshall, *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Volume XVI*, pp.14-15; David H. Kennett, 'Lacemaking by Bedfordshire Paupers in the Late Eighteenth Century', in *Textile History*, 5.1, (1974), p. 111

[13] Marshall, *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Volume XVI*, p. 15

[14] Marshall, *The Publications of the Bedfordshire Historical Record Society, Volume XVI*, p. 15

[15] Previous scholarship which has focused an analysis of family life on the household includes: Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage*, (Cambridge:

thesis; using the term 'domestic space' uncovers the nuances in the role and function of various spaces by differentiating between interior, exterior, and small business spaces. 'Domestic space' is employed in this thesis to mean the home, including its dual role as living and work space, as well as encompassing yards and any outbuildings, as these remain a part of the domestic realm despite sitting on the exterior boundaries. Amanda Flather notes that by the seventeenth century, homes frequently incorporated barns and stables, which were set apart from the main dwelling house on farms.[16] Many prosperous farmers in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries sought more space and storage to accommodate work activities, suggesting an overlap or blurring between domesticity and work across the home and yard.[17] Likewise, Cynthia Herrup notes that in cases of theft, thieves usually took items that were 'immediately useful and not readily identifiable as out of place in an average home', such as house or farm goods like food or small livestock.[18] Herrup's specification of house or farm goods as being part of the 'average home' situates these goods within the domestic realm.[19] Thus, this thesis includes outbuildings, such as barns, as part of the 'domestic space'. Lastly, the term 'domestic space' brings into sharper focus the blurred boundaries between home and work, as there was at times a lack of clear separation between living and work within the walls of the home – a theme that becomes particularly prominent in chapter four.

As part of the domestic space, the terms 'home' and 'household' will also be used. Whilst 'home' is taken to mean the physical structure of the interior domestic space, the term 'household' is used to connote to the social dynamics that were central to long eighteenth-century domestic life, and the interactions between those present within the home.[20] 'Household' is also a term commonly employed by historians to analyse the family unit and their dynamics, including those associated with living and working in the home. Moreover, when focusing on spaces where there is an explicit overlap of living and work, the term

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Cambridge University Press, 2001); Garthine Walker, 'Keeping it in the family: Crime and the early modern household', in *The Family in Early Modern England*, ed. by, Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007)

[16] Amanda Flather, 'The Organisation and Use of Household Space for Work in Early Modern England: 1550-1750', in *European History Quarterly*, 51.4, (2021), p. 483

[17] Flather, 'The Organisation and Use of Household Space for Work in Early Modern England: 1550-1750' p. 483

[18] Cynthia Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies: Investigative Responses to Theft in Seventeenth-Century East Sussex', in *The Historical Journal,* 27.4, (1984), p. 820

[19] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies' p. 820

[20] Other terms used by historians to describe the physical structure include 'dwelling', as used by Joanne McEwan, or 'house'; Joanne McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange: Space, Authority and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century London', in *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor, C. 1600-1850*, ed. by. J. McEwan, and P. Sharpe, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), p. 51

'small business spaces' or 'domestic business spaces' will be used. Examples of these include shops and inns.

Historical studies of crime and the family tend to follow a distinct periodisation, focusing on either the early modern era or the eighteenth century. Straddling the long eighteenth century, this project takes a broader chronological view to explore how domestic spaces, their inhabitants, and the activities occurring within these spaces, functioned over time.[21] In doing so, it also engages with wider historiographical debates surrounding this period that argue for significant shifts. Firstly, it has been argued that during the eighteenth century, there was a clear pattern of decline in the power of the ecclesiastical courts in England, most notably in relation to the ability of the church to discipline the lay community for sexual misbehaviour.[22] Recent scholarship by Joanne Begiato and William Gibson has revised historical interpretations of the pace and scope of this decline, and their work underscores how moral policing continued into the late eighteenth century, particularly in rural, less industrialised areas.[23] Focusing on the long eighteenth century, this dissertation considers the extent to which public policing, in the form of gossip and neighbourly spying, persisted in the civil courts too.[24]

The consideration of kin and non-kin interactions undertaken here, furthermore, contributes to long-standing discussions about the nature of families and neighbourhoods in this era. Bernard Capp underscores the importance of networks of friendship and gossip prevalent in early modern England, as women's daily lives often brought them together both inside and outside the home.[25] He argues that these networks of gossip were about bonding and belonging, and that these networks held emotional and practical value; they allowed women to negotiate patriarchal social order.[26] Capp also recognises the role of female

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[21] J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Elizabeth Foyster & Helen Berry, *The Family in Early Modern England*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Malcolm Gaskill, *Crime and mentalities in early modern Englan*d, (New York; Cambridge University Press, 2000)

[22] For a discussion of the historiography, see Joanne Begiato and William Gibson, *Sex and the church in the long eighteenth century* (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), pp. 1-4.

[23] Begiato and Gibson, *Sex and the Church in the Long Eighteenth Century*, p. 12

[24] Other historians who have countered the idea of a decline in moral policing in Scotland and Ireland include Katie Barclay and Leanne Calvert; Katie Barclay, 'Marriage, Sex, and the Church of Scotland: Exploring Non-Conformity Amongst the Lower Orders', in *Journal of Religious History,* 43.2, (2019), pp. 163-179; Leanne Calvert, ''To Recover His Reputation Among the People of God': Sex, Religion and the Double Standard in Presbyterian Ireland, c.1700–1838', in *Gender & History*, 35.3, (2022), pp. 898-915

[25] Women could meet and form friendships through agricultural work, in the marketplace, or in church; Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 50-68

[26] Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, p. 58, 68

networks in policing others.[27] Despite proving divisive and disruptive at times, women's networks of gossip served to reinforce moral boundaries, and at times could influence the development of local public opinion.[28] More recently, Charmian Mansell has argued that city centre streets provided women with the opportunity to exchange gossip, news, and form friendships.[29] This thesis interrogates how people navigated relationships and interacted with each other within a rural setting. It develops Mansell's work to focus on spaces beyond urban streets, instead looking across the space of the home, yard, and wider neighbourhood.

Secondly, historical scholarship examining this period has debated the shifting meanings of public and private. In the 1970s, historians such as Lawrence Stone traced the development of the private sphere to the end of the eighteenth century, tying its emergence with that of the 'nuclear family' and its increasing desire for privacy.[30] Scholars have not only revised the public-private dichotomy, but they have also highlighted the fluidity between what was public and private.[31] Tim Meldrum, for example, argues that although social withdrawal or seclusion may have been possible, privacy was a culturally contingent concept in the eighteenth century.[32] Likewise, Janay Nugent argues that a binary understanding of the public-private divide is inaccurate; both extremes existed simultaneously.[33] Whilst many people sought to 'safeguard' the ideal of private family life, this world of privacy could be breached when the interests of the wider community clashed with the actions of the family.[34] This thesis further problematises the public-private dichotomy by reconsidering the temporality of space, its meanings, and the crossing of thresholds. It reveals how people both used and adapted their understandings of privacy, boundaries, and space to navigate criminal activity.

The focus on rural Bedfordshire also contributes to debates on the links between space and temporality. Mark Hailwood, in his study on time consciousness and work-related time-use in sixteenth and seventeenth-century rural England, argues that English rural society had a relatively high degree of clock-time awareness, in part due to the demands of rural life

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[27] Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, p. 59
[28] Capp, *When Gossips Meet*, p. 60
[29] Charmian Mansell, 'Beyond the Home: Space and Agency in the Experiences of Female Service in Early Modern England, in *Gender & History*, 33.1, (2021), p. 45
[30] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage, 1500-1800*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977), p. 27
[31] Janay Nugent, '"None Must Meddle Betueene Man and Wife": Assessing Family and the Fluidity of Public and Private in Early Modern Scotland', in *Journal of Family History*, 35.3, (2010), p. 220
[32] Tim Meldrum, 'Domestic service, privacy and the eighteenth-century metropolitan household', in *Urban History*, 26.1, (1999), p. 38
[33] Nugent, 'None Must Meddle Betueene Man and Wife"', p. 227
[34] Nugent, 'None Must Meddle Betueene Man and Wife"', p. 227

in a complex, commercialised economy.[35] This thesis reveals numerous instances where an awareness of time was crucial to criminal activity and the witnessing of such activities across the long eighteenth century, thus supporting and extending Hailwood's findings into discussions of crime. Focusing on a rural setting brings into sharper focus crimes such as thefts from barns and yards, to extend our understanding of space and time, and how the time of day and knowledge of a space could shape when, where, and how a crime took place.

Working within these contexts the thesis is driven by three main research questions:

1) What does crime in domestic spaces reveal about the navigation of relationships between kin and non-kin?
2) In what ways did the home function as a criminal space and shape interactions and relationships between household members?
3) How did individuals utilise understandings of space to navigate interactions with others in the context of crime?

Historiography

In addition to engaging with the broader contextual discussions previously outlined, this thesis develops existing scholarship in its three chosen primary areas of investigation: space, kin, and crime. It examines occurrences of crime within spaces to understand how crime disrupted or supported social norms within the domestic context and, with that, whether space could influence crime and the dynamics between individuals. Applying a spatial analysis demonstrates whether space shaped the practicalities of criminal activity, and reveals how understandings of space shaped people's understandings of crime, and how people simultaneously navigated space and relationships.

Space

Central to this thesis is a spatial analysis. Katrina Navickas's work on space and place argues that space is now 'defined as a social construction, formed by culture and in itself forming culture, shaping power and enabling agency'.[36] Although Navickas's work is focused on the politics of space and place in relation to protest, her definition of space and the suggestion that people were important in creating connections between space and agency in the

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[35] Mark Hailwood, 'Time and Work in Rural England, 1500-1700', in *Past & Present*, no. 248, (2020), p. 121
[36] Katrina Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789-1848,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 13, 14

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries is useful to this thesis.[37] Like Navickas, Flather's work highlights the importance of the connections between people and spaces, recognising that spaces constituted more than just physical locations, and instead became grounds of social construction though the ways in which the 'social actors' move through and use these spaces every day.[38] This project uncovers how people used spaces and the role of domestic spaces in influencing behaviours and shaping crime.

This thesis explicitly draws upon Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather's concept of 'space of place', which refers to the link between places and their meanings, by investigating how the meanings of spaces could change depending on individual circumstances and factors such as gender, age, marital status, and social rank.[39] Although the meanings of space can be difficult to define, she notes that these meanings could differ depending on the individual – something that becomes particularly prevalent in chapter two.[40] Katie Barclay posits a similar idea, observing that space is a process – one which is 'continually produced in the everyday'.[41] This thesis demonstrates how the ways in which people moved through and used spaces is what establishes space as a process that resists linearity, as Barclay argues; that spaces were not neutral is a prevalent idea throughout this thesis.[42]

Kinship

Furthermore, this thesis combines its spatial analysis with an investigation into the relationships between members of kin and non-kin networks within the domestic space, expanding Naomi Tadmor's concept of the 'household-family'.[43] Tadmor examined the definitions of kinship and 'family' that were commonly used in scholarship, arguing that as well as relating to blood and marriage, 'family' could also mean a household, including its dependents – such as servants, apprentices, and co-resident relatives. She also posits that the 'household-family' was widely prevalent throughout the eighteenth century, used either

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[37] Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789-1848,* p. 15
[38] Amanda Flather, 'Space, Place, and Gender: The Sexual and Spatial Division of Labor in the Early Modern Household', in *History and Theory*, 52.3 (2013), p. 345
[39] Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* (London: Routledge, 1999), p. 2
[40] See Chapter Two
[41] Katie Barclay, 'Space and Place', in *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, ed. by., Susan Broomhall, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 21
[42] Barclay, 'Space and Place' p. 21
[43] Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 19, 41

alongside or in conjunction with other types of 'family', such as those related through blood or marriage.[44]

More recently however, historical scholarship has challenged Tadmor's work to ascertain the types of relationships that existed within the household, and the variety of people who were likely to come in and out of the home.[45] By focusing on the connections between those drawn together by shared economic, social, and biological needs, Susan Broomhall argues that domestic units could be units through which behaviour and relationships between unrelated individuals, including wet-nurses, lodgers, apprentices, adopted children, and servants, could 'be learnt in a formally structured environment'.[46] Conversely, in her work on the relationships between parents and their sick children, Emma Marshall argues that distant children continued to be central to their parent's imagining of 'family', despite the children not living in their parental home.[47] Marshall complicates Tadmor's equation of 'family' with 'household' by extending Broomhall's work, arguing that the emotional space of the household extended beyond its walls to encompass former members living elsewhere.[48]

Although the 'household-family' is a useful base concept for considering family dynamics, the cases analysed in this thesis reveal how other members of kin and non-kin networks, who might not necessarily be a part of the family unit, could interact within the same space. The thesis considers those who might not neatly fit into the concept of the 'household-family', such as lodgers, visitors, or customers.[49] By looking beyond the typical 'family', this thesis underlines the complexities of the dynamics between individuals both within and between domestic spaces, revealing how people could be connected by space.

Crime

Prior to the intervention of gender historians, historians of crime had largely focused on the quantitative trends of criminal behaviour.[50] More recently, historians such as Garthine Walker

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[44] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 41
[45] Susan Broomhall, 'Emotions in the Household', in *Emotions in the Household, 1200-1900*, ed by., Susan Broomhall, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Emma Marshall, 'Absent parents, sick children, and epistolary relationships in England, c.1640-c.1750', in *The History of the Family,* (2024), pp. 1-28
[46] Broomhall, 'Emotions in the Household' p. 1, 3, 18
[47] Marshall, 'Absent parents, sick children, and epistolary relationships in England, c.1640-c.1750' p. 8
[48] Marshall, 'Absent Parents, Sick Children, and Epistolary Relationships in England, c.1640-c.1750' p. 8
[49] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 19
[50] Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1987); J.A. Sharpe, 'Domestic Homicide in Early Modern England', in *The Historical Journal*, 24.1 (1981), pp. 29-30; J.S

have used gender as a framework for analysing criminal activity, using a qualitative analysis to investigate the gendered dimensions to crime. Not only does using a quantitative analysis highlight the issue of the 'dark figure', but as Walker argues, it can also cause historians to 'count and discount women', often resulting in a preoccupation of recognising 'female' crimes as abnormal.[51] Hence, Walker considers the contexts of crimes to interrogate the experiences of both men and women, as well as familial and household participation in crime, arguing that the 'dynamics of collective participation in criminal activities were far more varied' than simply observing a 'crude patriarchal model'.[52]

Walker's work has since proved to be a turning point in the historiography of crime, with others utilising her approach. K.J Kesselring, although only focusing on homicide, argues that when we consider the victims of both men and women who were accused of killing, and how jurists and jurors responded to those crimes, it becomes clear that social and cultural factors were at work.[53] She also looks at how men and women killed, as well as their victims, to illustrate the gendered disparities in the histories of homicide.[54] Conversely, Saane Muurling, who places a particular focus on women's licit and illicit behaviours, argues that in early modern Bologna, the nature of men and women's public lives, their labour opportunities, and their social relationships played a role in determining how, why, and when crimes were committed.[55] Muurling's work emphasises the importance of gendered analysis to understanding crime across early modern Europe. This thesis considers gender, alongside other shaping factors such as age, marital status, and social rank. Its spatial analysis extends ideas on the gendered dimensions to crime by revealing people's understandings of space, and how their use of it was gendered in cases of infanticide, violent assault, and accidental deaths.

Cockburn, 'Patterns of Violence in English Society: Homicide in Kent 1560-1985', in *Past and Present,* 130.1 (1991), pp. 73-75

[51] J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England, 1550-1750,* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), pp. 60-61; Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 4

[52] Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England,* p. 12; Garthine Walker, 'Keeping it in the family: Crime and the early modern household', in *The Family in Early Modern England,* ed. by. Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 92

[53] K.J Kesselring, 'Bodies of Evidence: Sex and Murder (or Gender and Homicide) in Early Modern England, c.1500–1680', in *Gender & History,* 27.2 (2015), p. 256

[54] Kesselring, 'Bodies of Evidence: Sex and Murder (or Gender and Homicide) in Early Modern England, c.1500–1680', p. 246

[55] Saane Muurling, *Everyday Crime, Criminal Justice and Gender in Early Modern Bologna,* (Leiden: BRILL publishing, 2021), p. 12

Furthermore, in recognising the importance of people as 'social actors' in shaping the meanings of space, this thesis also focuses on crime as a lens through which we can investigate the role of people as central actors in establishing the connections between individuals and space. Cynthia Herrup's work provides an insight into the role that the wider community played as an 'unofficial' authority in prosecuting crimes.[56] In her analysis of seventeenth-century East Sussex, she notes that communal responsibility was vital for a successful prosecution.[57] This dissertation considers the communal aspect to crimes, to identify the influence of individuals as witnesses and observers, as well as identifying perpetrators, accomplices, or victims. It considers the role of people other than perpetrators and victims to bring into sharper focus how other members of the community could observe or enter domestic spaces, thus, playing a vital role in the exposure of criminal activity. Furthermore, considering the role of others in the wider community exposes various attitudes and behaviours that were vital to the functioning of long eighteenth-century society, such as the spread of information or gossip, networks of neighbours, the shaping of personal credit and reputation, and the upholding of social norms.

Sources and Methodology

Two main types of criminal court records are used for this analysis: Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes (HSA), 1653-1688, and Bedfordshire Quarter Sessions (QSR), 1700-1790. The High Sheriff Assize records are a limited collection of archival material held by Bedfordshire archives. These records are 'the files of clerks of Assizes on the old "Norfolk circuit", which included Bedfordshire' and its surrounding counties.[58] The Assizes were a type of secular court which often acted as the main forum for more serious crimes than those heard at the Quarter Sessions. From the late sixteenth century, crimes such as homicide, grand larceny, burglary, arson, rape, and witchcraft were all tried at the Assizes.[59] The High Sheriff Assizes, more specifically, 'have been classed as H.S.A, because the Sheriff was the County Officer, responsible […] for executing the judgments of the Court after the Assizes'.[60]

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[56] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies', p. 829
[57] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies', p. 829
[58] HSA Records, Bedfordshire Archives Service catalogue online, [accessed on: 24/05/2024] https://bedsarchivescat.bedford.gov.uk/Details/archive/110012921
[59] J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England, 1550-1750,* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 33
[60] HSA Records, Bedfordshire Archives Service catalogue online

The Quarter Sessions acted at county level and oversaw minor criminal matters, such as petty offences, misdemeanours, and administrative and regulatory offences.[61] This collection of records is deployed here to cover 1700 to 1790, as Bedfordshire Archives only holds Quarter Session records from the eighteenth century onwards; many records pre-1700 did not survive. Using the Quarter Session records alongside the High Sheriff Assize records allows this thesis to overcome the limitations of only using Assize records, as the two sets of criminal court records not only cover the period in question, but also represent a variety of crimes and incidents that occurred.

Depositions were taken for administrative purposes and as the basis for later trial evidence.[62] They were sworn statements taken in English, in answer to questions.[63] Unlike indictments, depositions and examinations are made up of witness statements, and include more details of the crimes that took place. Indictments only outline facts – so, who committed the crime, where it happened, and what the crime was. Instead of using these sources to ascertain the verdict of a criminal trial, this thesis uses a qualitative analysis to extrapolate and analyse information on those present in domestic spaces, the relationships between them, and other aspects of long eighteenth-century life. Although criminal depositions provide an exciting insight into the everyday lives of people, we must remain aware that these records might not be entirely *factual*, thus potentially affecting the reliability of these sources – an issue commonly noted in previous scholarship. Cynthia Herrup argues that 'the rambling characteristic of [depositions] provides an insight into the realities of daily life', often revealing 'details about subjects such as investigations or local rumour that had no place in formal records'.[64] Depositions provide 'the broadest access to a wide range of historical actors', and supply evidence of the ways in which stories were narrated.[65] Hence, as Frances Dolan notes, analysing depositions requires us to pay more attention to the 'relations among the person telling the story, the characters they describe, and the clerk who teases out and take down the depositions'.[66] The depositions analysed in this thesis at times include confessions, as well as eyewitness accounts. Therefore, the way in which a story is told, and who is telling

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[61] Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England, 1550-1750,* p. 33
[62] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies', p. 812
[63] Frances Dolan, *True Relations: Reading, Literature, and Evidence in Seventeenth-Century England*, (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), p. 111
[64] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies' p. 812
[65] Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 12
[66] Dolan, *True Relations,* p. 153

it, is a vital aspect of the analysis throughout each chapter; the analysis throughout this thesis extracts information about individuals by examining the language used in each deposition.

The pre-trial court depositions and examinations taken from the High Sheriff Assizes and Quarter Sessions, are supplemented, where necessary, with published literature and images, which are used to aid an analysis of societal attitudes and life. Published literature illustrates the expectations people had of kin interactions and the operation of household hierarchies and relationships. The images used in this thesis provide a visual insight into the spaces where the crimes being analysed took place, such as shops and barns.

Chapter Outlines

As this dissertation is focused on the connections between space, kinship, and crime, each chapter considers the types of domestic spaces in which crimes occurred, to provide an in-depth analysis on how the varying functions and uses of different spaces shaped the dynamics and relationships between members of kin and non-kin networks.

Chapter one focuses on the interior domestic space. It explores the idea that the interactions and dynamics between those present in the home were flexible and subject to negotiation. As the cases investigated in this chapter reveal, these relationships could work both up and down the household hierarchy, as well as working horizontally. Furthermore, these household relationships were much more complicated than the 'typical' family structure; household relationships could be affected by the presence of those who did not *neatly* fit into the concept of the 'household-family'.[67]

Chapter two explores the movement between the interior and exterior space, placing a particular emphasis on the meanings of space and the intersection of space and temporality. It reveals how space was not neutral and held various meanings for different people, depending on wider factors such as gender, social rank, marital status, and age. Moreover, this chapter also considers the violation of the home's physical boundaries to uncover the permeability of the space.

Moving beyond the home's boundary, chapter three demonstrates the role of exterior domestic spaces, and how they often acted as spaces of high opportunity and high risk, particularly due to their accessibility and function as workspaces. Additionally, this chapter brings into sharper focus the idea that boundaries worked on a criminal and spatial level. In

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[67] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 19

doing so, it illustrates how the physical boundaries of these exterior spaces shaped the relationships between people by complicating perceptions of chastisement and correction, and the threshold of 'acceptable' violence.

Chapter four investigates domestic business spaces, revealing the commercial and transient nature of these spaces which enabled social interaction to take place. This chapter emphasises the role of the commercial and social aspects of small business spaces impacting the making and breaking of one's personal reputation and credit. As well as this, the blurred boundary between living and work becomes prevalent throughout the chapter, particularly when considering the social function of spaces such as inns, and the vulnerability of innkeepers and their wives to visitors whose credit and reputation were unknown. This chapter highlights the vital role of domestic business spaces as central hubs in the wider community in the spreading of information and thus, the shaping of one's credit.

Chapter 1

Cellars, Ceilings, and Crevices: Shaping and Navigating Relationships in the Home

This chapter focuses on crimes that took place in interior domestic spaces, specifically, the home. Key to this chapter is Naomi Tadmor's concept of the 'household-family'.[1] Tadmor posits the idea that as well as relating to blood and marriage, 'family' could also mean a household, including its dependents – such as servants, apprentices, and co-resident relatives.[2] This chapter will consider how the 'household-family' functioned. It also considers the problematic aspect of using the term 'family' to describe dynamics within the interior space. Instead, by looking beyond the 'typical' family structure, this chapter argues that household relationships were much more complicated. In this chapter, various themes relating to household relationships, and how these were shaped by space and criminal behaviour emerge. It reveals that household dynamics were subject to negotiation, as well as arguing that these relationships could be affected by the presence of temporary residents. In doing so, it is clear that space shaped crime and household relationships, arguing that the home could both facilitate and expose crimes.

This chapter argues that there was a complicated flexibility inherent in the household hierarchy. Tensions existed between household members, and could result in and shape criminal activity. Moreover, criminal behaviour facilitated subversions of household authority, which becomes particularly evident when investigating how servant/master relationships were navigated inside the home. Furthermore, this chapter demonstrates that criminal behaviour in the home, whilst exposing how household relationships functioned, could also increase good fellowship – particularly when we consider how relationships between household members could simultaneously work horizontally and hierarchically. The cases explored in this chapter also reveal the disruption of the 'household-family', caused by

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[1] Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship and Patronage*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 19

[2] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 19; Tadmor's concept of the 'household-family' is innovative in the field of kinship. For further reading on kinship, see: Will Coster, *Family and Kinship in England 1450-1800,* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 2016), pp. 52-53; David Cressy, 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England', in *Past & Present*, no. 113 (1986), pp. 38-69; R.A. Houlbrooke, *The English Family 1450-1700,* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis group, 1984)

the presence of temporary residents, and the messy relationships that could arise with other household members.[3] Therefore, this chapter argues that criminal cases vividly evoke the complexities and nuances of household relationships and how they functioned. Lastly, this chapter explores how space could facilitate and expose crimes through various means, including an investigation into the accessibility and permeability of spaces, as well as the intersection between space and time.

i.   Flexibility of household relationships

Hierarchical relationships were central to the functioning of households in long eighteenth-century society. The household hierarchy was rooted in patriarchal ideals, where masters theoretically sat at the top of this hierarchy, holding authority over their wives, children, and servants. Certain expectations and behaviours of members residing in the home were embedded within the ideal household hierarchy, reinforcing the position of the husband or master as the head of household. Tim Meldrum notes that the ideals expressed in prescriptive literature or legal injunctions 'delineated clearly the perimeters of patriarchal authority'.[4] This idea was reflected in various types of prescriptive literature, which outlined the behaviours expected of servants who lived in their master's household. An example of this is the 1792 pamphlet, *Advice to servants. Of Every Denomination*, which explained that servants were to maintain a 'good character' by adhering to the following instructions: 'vi. Be strictly honest; for it is shameful to be thought unworthy of trust/…xv. Be careful of your Master's Property; for wastefulness is a sin'.[5] These ideals and expectations had evidently continued from previous centuries, as illustrated in: *The husband's instructions to his family: or, Household observations fit to be observed by wife, children, and servants*, published in 1685. Arranged in the form of a poem, the narrator tells the audience, 'I hate a sawcy Knave; And in a Lyar I no Pleasure have'.[6] By providing 'instructions' to his servants in this section, the husband's expectations reflect the hierarchical ideals that were prevalent in society. Despite being published in different centuries, the underlying messages in these two examples of didactic literature remained the same; an emphasis was placed on being truthful, not lying or breaking

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[3] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 19

[4] Tim Meldrum, *Domestic service and gender, 1660-1750: Life and work in the London household,* (Harlow: Longman publishing, 2000), p. 66

[5] Anonymous, *Advice to servants. Of Every Denomination*, (Walsall: F. Milward, 1792) https://data.historicaltexts.jisc.ac.uk/view?pubId=ecco-0876201700&terms=advice&date=1650-1800&undated=exclude [accessed on: 20/11/2023]

[6] Anonymous, *The husband's instructions to his family:, or, Household observations fit to be observed by vvife, children, and servants*, (London: William Downing, 1685) https://data.historicaltexts.jisc.ac.uk/view?pubId=eebo-ocm64551319e&terms=household&date=1650-1800&undated=exclude [Accessed on: 20/11/2023]

your master's trust, and taking care over your master's property. As Laura Gowing notes, order was at the heart of these 'ideals'.[7] To guarantee order, obedience was expected. R.C. Richardson argues that the importance of good order in households and the state was no less appreciated in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.[8] Household order required trust, but this was not always enacted in practice; servants were not always honest and did not care for their master's wares.

Crimes that took place inside the home are useful in revealing the flexibility of household relationships, and that household members did not always conform to prescribed hierarchical ideals. Acts of subversion symbolised an attack on household order; crimes committed by servants in the households of their masters highlight the malleability of the supposedly rigid hierarchies of power. The case of William Albone, a servant who was accused of a series of thefts in 1787, serves as a good example. The records for this case consist of two depositions: one from William Albone, and the other from his master, Thomas Blain. In William's deposition, he voluntarily confessed to the frequent thefts of ale and elder wine between Candlemas and Michaelmas in 1787.[9] William related that he, and the other servants who worked/lived in Thomas Blain's household, frequently used a 'false key' to access a locked cellar in which the stolen goods were kept.[10]

The language used in Thomas Blain's deposition directly addressed the ideas of waste and open honesty seen in the didactic literature. He stated that he had reason to suspect that the goods 'were by some indirect means or misconduct embezzled, drank in waste or secretly stolen and carried away out of his Cellar belonging to the dwelling house of him'.[11] In comparison to William's confession, Thomas placed a heavy emphasis on the criminality of the act. He stated that 'he hath not the least Doubt that … his own Servants did feloniously steal or embezzle and waste the said Ale and wine'.[12] Thomas also 'prayed that the said parties may be prosecuted', emphasising the gravity of this offence and his desire to see them punished.[13] Naomi Tadmor argues that patriarchal authority was built into the framework of

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[7] Laura Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early Modern England*, (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis group, 2012), p. 33

[8] R.C. Richardson, *Household Servants in Early Modern England*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), pp. 145-146

[9] Deposition of William Albone, September 1787, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1787/73

[10] Deposition of William Albone

[11] Deposition of Thomas Blain, July 1787, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1787/72

[12] Deposition of Thomas Blain

[13] Deposition of Thomas Blain

the 'household-family' – something which becomes apparent when we consider the disorder in Thomas Blain's household.[14] That the 'felonious' crime was committed by 'his own Servants' and not strangers underscored the subversive nature of the crime: this was not just theft, it was an attack on the household order.[15]

Thomas's deposition is couched in the language of victimhood: he has been cheated and deceived by his own servants.[16] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos argues that 'strong norms governed the relationship between masters and their servants', with masters not only being considered as just employers, but also something akin to parents; masters could act 'in loco parentis'.[17] These 'norms' were upheld by reciprocities and mutual dependencies, including masters depending on their servants' loyalty and trustworthiness.[18] Cynthia Herrup also notes that masters were to 'feed clothe and train those in their service', giving them a 'start towards providing for themselves'.[19] Thomas's emphasis of the gravity of the offence highlighted the betrayal of the servants involved in this act, especially since he was supposedly akin to a parent in his loco-parentis status. This is further reinforced by the repetition of possessive pronouns, such as 'his' (for example, 'his cellar', 'dwelling house belonging to him', 'his own servants').[20] The language serves as a reminder that this was *his* property – one which they had no right to steal from, despite being members of the household. Furthermore, any order or disorder in the household reflected on Thomas as the head of household. A master who could not exert authority over his servants was 'a danger not only to his own household but also, potentially to society'.[21] This also reflected the loco-parentis status of a man who could not control his wife and children and was similarly seen as a threat to society. Hence, Thomas Blain reasserts and reclaims his authority through the language of his deposition.

Thomas's case also underlines the ways in which space and place were intimately tied to household relationships. The fact that Thomas had locked his goods away suggests that certain spaces inside the home were regulated, and that the movement of household members inside the home was restricted. The locked door was a mechanism intended to protect his

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[14] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 19
[15] Deposition of Thomas Blain
[16] See *The husband's instructions to his family* and *Advice to servants. Of Every Denomination*, which both emphasise the desire for servants to remain loyal to, and obey their master and the household hierarchy.
[17] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving: Informal Support and Gift-Exchange in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), p. 59
[18] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving,* p. 59
[19] Cynthia Herrup, 'The Patriarch at Home: The Trial of the 2nd Earl of Castlehaven for Rape and Sodomy', in *History Workshop Journal*, no. 41, (1996), p. 10
[20] Deposition of Thomas Blain
[21] Richardson, *Household Servants in Early Modern England,* p. 148

goods. Amanda Flather has argued that almost all spaces were accessible to everyone and were multifunctional throughout the early modern period.[22] Conversely, Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett have suggested that there were instances where apprentices and servants had restricted access to certain areas of the home during specific hours, with the only exception being to perform their duties.[23] It is possible that Thomas was already suspicious of his servants and did not trust them, prompting him to restrict access to the room, which might otherwise have been freely accessible. However, at the time of the thefts, Blain's home reflected the restrictions identified by Barker and Hamlett.[24] Additionally, Flather argues that the way space was used reflected, and had effects on, the social relations between masters, mistresses, and employees.[25] The servants evidently had knowledge about the home, as their work placed them in different household spaces depending on their duties, and knew how to circumvent the restrictions on access.[26] The locked space, therefore, reveals the precarious relationship between Thomas and his servants, whilst the thefts underline how the servants navigated this distrust for their own ends.

The restricted access to this space necessitated practical steps to enable the crime. As revealed in the depositions, William and his fellow servants used a false key to gain access to the locked room. Amanda Vickery discusses the lock and key system, arguing that having access to privacy was an index of power.[27] She notes that usually, there was only one set of keys per household, which was a deliberate attempt at regulating and controlling access to spaces within the home and monitoring the flows within it.[28] Carrying of the keys was gendered, as although masters were the head of household, it was the wife who usually retained the keys.[29] Most importantly, keys were 'emblems of authority'; by creating a false key, the servants subverted their master's authority and arguably gained a degree of power of their own, therefore shifting the 'typical' hierarchical power structure within the household.[30] Evidently, space and its access were key in shaping this crime and influencing the

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[22] Amanda Flather, 'Gender, Space and Place: The Experience of Servants in Rural Households 1550-1750', in *Agrarian World,* 18.39 (2017), p. 10

[23] Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett, 'Living above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', in *Journal of Family History*, 35.4 (2010), p. 318

[24] Barker and Hamlett, 'Living above the Shop', p. 318

[25] Flather, 'Gender, Space and Place', p. 10

[26] Flather, 'Gender, Space and Place', p. 10

[27] Amanda Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle? Thresholds, Boundaries and Privacies in the Eighteenth-Century London House', in *Past and Present*, no. 199, (2008), p. 167

[28] Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle?', p. 168

[29] Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle?', p. 168

[30] Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle?', p. 168

relationships and dynamics between household members; even when reinforced with mechanisms such a lock and key, boundaries in the home remained permeable.

That William did not act alone also highlights the competition between hierarchical and horizontal relationships in early modern domestic spaces. Thomas Blain's servants worked together to steal the ale and wine, thus providing an insight into the dynamics between servants who lived and worked in the same household. A significant aspect of this case is the fact that William 'did sometimes think of telling his master' about the thefts, but was concerned about how the other servants would react if he did.[31] This suggests that not only was William partly willing to confess to his master, but indicates that he valued what the other servants thought of him. William felt conflicted about the certain duties he owed to his master, and the affinity to his fellow servants. This reveals that relationships and obligations were not always clear-cut, and instead, could become messy due to competing obligations. In this case, household relationships simultaneously existed hierarchically and horizontally – so, between master and servant, as well as amongst servants.

In *Advice to Servants*, one of the expectations of servants was to 'live friendly with your fellow servants; for the contrary destroys the peace of the house'.[32] Similarly, *The Husbands Instructions to his family* stated that the speaker detested those who 'Quarrel with Fellow-Servants and abuse'.[33] These ideals suggest that servants should maintain friendly, or at least civil, relationships with one another to keep the peace in the household. Tim Meldrum notes that domestic servants interacted with others who lived in the same household, and it was possible for them to strike up friendships.[34] William Albone's case illustrates how these ideals were navigated. William felt affinity to his fellow servants and maintained friendly or civil relationships with them. Yet, in maintaining these relationships, ideals about household hierarchy were being subverted, as the servants stole from their master, demonstrating dishonesty and deceit.

The complexities of household relationships can also be demonstrated in cases involving apprentices, whose position was different to that of a paid servant. These complexities are prevalent in a case of coining, in which we see how the dynamics between household members could differ depending on their position. Coining offences included

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[31] Deposition of William Albone
[32] *Advice to servants. Of Every Denomination*
[33] *The Husbands Instructions to his family*
[34] Meldrum, *Domestic service and gender, 1660-1750,* p. 124

clipping, counterfeiting, and uttering; not only diminishing legal tender and the creation of counterfeit coins, but also being caught in possession of the tools that facilitated the production of these crimes as well.[35] Coining offences were considered treasonous, because they were perceived to undermine the state and its economy.[36] In 1680, Matthew Smythes, an apprentice to Richard Robinson, deposed that William Robinson, Richard's son, had brought several 'halfe crownes' to his father's house.[37] William had apparently taken these from the lodging room of Valentine Hollofield.[38] Counterfeit money and parcels of 'whiteinge' were found in Hollofield's chamber, and in William Robinson's lodgings at his father's house.[39] Moreover, William sent Matthew to the grocer's to 'utter a bad shilling for sugar', but the money was refused by the grocer's servant.[40] Matthew also deposed that William had been in 'frequent contact' with the 'saltstone man' (a known figure implicated in multiple cases of uttering) at Richard Allen's house, where the criminal activity initially took place; counterfeit coins were also found at Richard Allen's house.[41]

Matthew's interactions and relationship with Richard Robinson, his master, and William, his master's son, shaped the events of the case. Firstly, the relationship between Matthew and his master's son. Matthew deposed that William 'did once hang this informant by the middle until hee was all most dead' and threatened to tie a bag of stones upon him [Matthew], and throw him into the river to drown him.[42] It is possible that William threatened Matthew because he knew that Matthew was aware of his criminal activities, and therefore had the knowledge to incriminate him; Matthew was sent to the grocers with a 'bad shilling', and overheard William telling his father about his dealings with counterfeit money.[43] Another possibility could be due to the broader household dynamics, suggesting that William did not view Matthew as part of their 'household-family'.[44] In this household, William did not owe

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[35] Nicholas Tosney, 'Women and 'False Coining' in Early Modern London', in *The London Journal*, 32.2, (2007), p. 104-105
[36] Tosney, 'Women and 'False Coining' in Early Modern London', p. 105
[37] Deposition of Matthew Smythes, December 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/100
[38] Examination of William Robinson, December 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/103
[39] Deposition of Anthony Hardinge, December 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/103
[40] Deposition of Matthew Smythes; 'uttering' refers to the deliberate circulation of counterfeit money.
[41] Whilst a definition is unclear, the term 'saltstone man' is used to refer to this individual as he was implicated in more than one case of uttering; he was a known figure. Deposition of Matthew Smythes
[42] Deposition of Matthew Smythes
[43] Deposition of Matthew Smythes
[44] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p 19

Matthew anything, as it was the master who acted in 'loco parentis'.[45] When advising on behaviours and relationships between masters and servants, didactic literature in this period rarely placed any expectations on other members of the master's family in relation to their servants.[46] Therefore, this would have influenced the relationship between William and Matthew. William's behaviour towards Matthew seemingly had no boundaries, as revealed by the fact that William potentially incriminated Matthew for uttering, as well as threatening and abusing him.

Furthermore, this case reveals the role that Richard played as a father and master. Matthew's relationship with his master, was evidently secondary to that between father and son. Matthew 'acquainted his Master with these abuses but had no reliefe'.[47] The lack of response from Richard to being informed of the physical abuse that Matthew received highlights the difference in Richard's role as a father and master.[48] This is particularly evident when we consider how Richard responded to his own son's criminal wrongdoings. According to the depositions, William brought the counterfeit money that he acquired from Hollofield's chamber back to his father's house, suggesting that he perhaps trusted his father not to disclose his wrongdoing. William may have also brought the money home to boast about what he had acquired, as he apparently told his father about the coins and his dealings with the 'saltstone man'. What is significant, however, is that although deposing he would often 'chid his sonne for keeping the saltstoneman's company', Richard confessed that he took from William 'an halfe Crowne', and 'saw severall other…peeces' in William's possession.[49]

Richard's response to his son's criminal activities, was markedly different to his interactions with Matthew, his apprentice. William was engaging in criminal behaviour, and although being 'chide[d]', faced no serious consequences – instead, Richard took one of the counterfeit coins from William and only warned William what would happen if Mr Christie (whom we can assume to be a magistrate or JP) found out.[50] Richard's dismissal of his apprentice versus the lack of consequence in response to his son's criminal actions underlines the distinction between his role as father and master; the duties Richard owed as a father may

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[45] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 59
[46] This is reflected in 'The husband's instructions to his family' and 'Advice to Servants'
[47] Deposition of Matthew Smythes
[48] Deposition of Matthew Smythes
[49] Deposition of Richard Robinson, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/103; Some parts of this deposition were obscured, which is why I have speculated that Richard Robinson stated that he saw several pieces in William's possession.
[50] Deposition of Matthew Smythes

be *like* a parent, but they were not necessarily familial.[51] As Herrup argues, 'masters were to be fatherly, not fathers towards their servants', thus, underscoring the distinction between parent/child relationships, and those between masters/servants or in this case, apprentices. Moreover, Ben-Amos argues that 'for all the contractual qualities that characterised any service arrangement … personal loyalties and obligations penetrated it'.[52] In this case, Richard's 'personal loyalties and obligations' lay with his son rather than his apprentice, and this bond influenced the relationship between Matthew and his master, and determined the priority of these competing household relationships and obligations.[53]

Within this household, Richard was not the only member with competing obligations. Matthew told his mother about William's criminal wrongdoings and the abuse he faced.[54] Yet, Matthew's competing obligations complicated this matter. On one hand, Matthew owed a sense of duty and loyalty to his master, which was likely outlined in his contract. Contracts could either be verbal, or, like apprentice indentures, were written down and signed.[55] Printed indenture forms prescribed roles and relationships, and included the necessary names, dates, and places for the period of service.[56] These contracts were also often incomplete; conflicts and disputes between masters and apprentices partly arose from circumstances unforeseen in the initial agreement.[57] According to Peter Rushton, conflicts between masters and apprentices often reflected the 'intensely claustrophobic atmosphere of personal relations in the domestic sphere'.[58] As a result, it was not uncommon for apprentices to leave their period of service incomplete; as many as half of all male apprentices during the seventeenth century did not complete their contracts.[59] Matthew was likely conflicted between the loyalty he owed to his master, but also the 'unforeseen circumstances' that arose: the abuse he received from his master's son, and the criminal activities which took place in the home.[60] Matthew may have been aware of the legal ramifications of being involved, especially considering that

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[51] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 59
[52] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p, 59
[53] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 59
[54] Deposition of Mary Smythes, December 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/100
[55] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 59
[56] Laura Gowing, 'Girls on Forms: Apprenticing Young Women in Seventeenth-Century London', in *Journal of British Studies,* 55.3, (2016), p. 456
[57] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 59
[58] Peter Rushton, 'The Matter in Variance: Adolescents and Domestic Conflict in the Pre-Industrial Economy of Northeast England, 1600-1800', in *Journal of Social History,* 25.1, (1991), p. 100
[59] Gowing, 'Girls on Forms', p. 455
[60] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 59

William potentially implicated him with a 'bad shilling'.[61] Matthew overheard his master tell William that if Mr Christie knew about William's dealings with counterfeit money, he would send William to prison, suggesting that he was aware of the legal risks associated with William's wrongdoings.[62] Therefore, it is evident that, despite servant and apprentice contracts being rooted in ideals and expectations, tensions and, as the case of William Albone revealed, complete subversions of authority could still exist within household structures.

Whilst the household hierarchy existed and had associated ideals that were 'expected' to be upheld by members of the household, the reality was much different. Instead of being rigid and only hierarchical, household relationships were flexible and subject to negotiation, which is made evident through criminal activity. Hierarchical household relationships co-existed alongside horizontal lines of kinship and affinity. Although masters theoretically sat at the apex of the household hierarchy and supposedly had absolute authority, they were vulnerable to misbehaviour by their servants, who could attempt to subvert the household structure and authority. Similarly, tensions could arise within the household and complicate relationships, often as a result of competing obligations.

ii. Good neighbourliness/fellowship

Cases involving crimes committed by servants also reveal how concepts of fellowship and good neighbourliness shaped relationships among individuals who worked in the household. In the case of Thomas Blain and his servant William Albone, the latter confessed that he and his fellow servants had stolen the ale and wine 'for the purpose only of drinking the same, which they generally had share of together'.[63] While it is possible that the servants had stolen the goods in order to get one over on their master, the act of colluding together in the theft and drinking together may also be read as a means of increasing their bonds of good fellowship. Moreover, the fact that they stole the ale and wine to drink 'together', suggests that they did not steal the goods for material gain.[64]

In his work on early modern alehouses, Mark Hailwood has argued that such spaces facilitated one of the most important processes of social bonding: good fellowship.[65] Practices of good fellowship could bring people together, and, as Hailwood argues, could

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[61] Deposition of Matthew Smythes
[62] Deposition of Matthew Smythes
[63] Deposition of William Albone
[64] Deposition of William Albone
[65] Mark Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England*, (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2014), p. 2

even 'transcend gender boundaries and class boundaries'.[66] People tended to choose drinking companions with whom they were already connected– so, in this case, the servants worked together and had already established connections and relationships to one another.[67] Stealing the ale and wine to drink together suggests that we can apply Hailwood's ideas to the space of the home, which functioned as a space for servants to reinforce their bond with each other and strengthen the good fellowship amongst them.

As well as the good fellowship amongst the servants, this case also reveals the role that good neighbourliness played in exposing the crime. Thomas Blain was told about his servants' wrongdoings by a labourer named William Breed. According to Thomas's testimony William Ayres, one of his 'own servants', had told William Breed about the crime.[68] It is not clear why William Ayres told William Breed about the theft. On one hand, he may have had a guilty conscience. However, he may have had boasted of the crime to impress the other man. Indeed, if we reconsider Vickery's argument that keys were emblems of authority, it is possible that William Ayres wanted to display his newfound sense of power or authority that he derived from the carrying of keys.[69]

While William Breed may have boasted of the crime to solidify a relationship with William Ayres, so too did the latter when he exposed the servants' misbehaviour to Thomas Blain. Existing scholarship surrounding the topic of neighbourliness has debated whether there was a decline in neighbourliness across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Steve Hindle outlines some of the key arguments in this debate, including Lawrence Stone's argument that there was a general decline in 'neighbourliness', which paved the way for the rise of individualism.[70] Hindle, however, argues that 'neighbourliness was continuously fractured and reconstituted'.[71] Furthermore, whilst recognising the complexities in this debate, Amy Burnett, drawing on petitions, argues that there was a strong and stable presence

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[66] Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England*, p. 169
[67] Hailwood, *Alehouses and Good Fellowship in Early Modern England*, p. 216
[68] Deposition of Thomas Blain
[69] Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle?', pp. 167-168
[70] Steve Hindle, 'The Keeping of the Public Peace', in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*, ed. by. Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle, (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), p. 214; for more on this debate, see also, Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800,* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1977); J.A. Sharpe, 'Such Disagreement betwyxt Neighbours: Litigation and Human Relations in Early Modern England', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West,* ed. by. John Bossy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990); Brodie Waddell, 'Shaping the state from below: the rise of local petitioning in early modern England', in *The Power of Petitioning in Early Modern England*, ed by., Brodie Waddell and Jason Peacey (London: UCL Press, 2024)
[71] Hindle, 'The Keeping of the Public Peace', p. 216

of acts of neighbourliness throughout the early modern period.[72] Although this case cannot be used to evaluate whether or not there was a general decline in neighbourliness, it demonstrates how concepts of 'good fellowship' complicated relationships between household members, and between neighbours. The case demonstrates that neighbourliness could be a key component in disrupting criminal activity that threatened the stability of household hierarchies.

iii.   Temporary residents and their relationships with household members

Whilst this chapter has already dealt with the dynamics between those who lived and worked in the same home, or were part of the 'household family', we also need to consider the role of temporary residents.[73] Existing historiography on temporary residents has focused on the types of negotiation that took place between lodger and householder, including expectations of authority and the extent to which knowledge within the space should be shared.[74] It also has been established that a key factor in shaping the experiences of lodging was social rank.[75] Lodging arrangements for the poor were predominantly determined by financial necessity, but for those of a middling or upper social rank, their wealth and status meant that their lodging arrangements were 'accompanied by choices'.[76] Temporary residents did not always neatly fit into the category of the 'household family', thereby having the potential to disrupt dynamics within the home.[77] The case of Thomas Merrill and William Wellbye highlights this idea, demonstrating how relationships functioned between lodgers and other members of the household.

Elizabeth Barcocke, wife of William Barcocke, deposed that in February 1679, one night around midnight, she heard a noise coming from the lodging chamber of Thomas Merrill.[78] Upon investigating with her maid, she found Thomas's door locked, but saw a light

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[72] Amy Burnett, 'Group Petitioning and the Performance of Neighbourliness in the West Midlands, 1589-1700', in *Cultural and Social History*, 20.5, (2023), pp. 630-631

[73] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 19

[74] See Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe, ''It Buys Me Freedom': Genteel Lodging in Late-Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century London', in *Parergon,* 24.2, (2007), pp. 139-161; Joanne McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange: Space, Authority and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century London', in *Accommodating Poverty: The Housing and Living Arrangements of the English Poor c.1660-1850*, ed. by. Joanne McEwan & Pamela Sharpe, (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010).

[75] S.J. Wright, 'Sojourners and lodgers in a provincial town: the evidence from eighteenth-century Ludlow', in *Urban History*, vol 17, (1990), pp. 14-35

[76] Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe, ''It Buys Me Freedom': Genteel Lodging in Late-Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century London', p. 140, 161

[77] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p.19

[78] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke, February 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/98

shining at the top of the ceiling when her and her maid looked through the crevice of the door.[79] Fearing that the house was on fire, Elizabeth went downstairs to light a candle and call William Wellbye, her manservant.[80] William was not in his chamber, but when she went back upstairs to Thomas's chamber, she saw William and took a candle from him. She also noticed that his hand was covered in blood.[81] The deposition notes that Elizabeth asked William why his hand was covered in blood. William's reply to her is obscured in the deposition transcript, however, it is noted that he replied, 'with feeling for the rogue'. Elizabeth then went back to Thomas's chamber, only this time, she found it unlocked, and 'found a candle in a candlestick … standing light at the top of the seeling, and a great part of the seeling broken down'.[82] Upon entering his chamber, Elizabeth found Thomas 'grovelling in bed', with his hands, shoulders, face, and sheets all covered in blood; Thomas's throat had been cut, and his 'thumb cut to the bone'.[83] Thomas apparently said to Elizabeth and her maid 'that the said William Wellbye had soe wounded him'.[84]

Thomas was a 'sojourner', which may have shaped his relationships with other household members.[85] Joanne McEwan notes that the terms 'sojourner', 'lodger', and 'inmate' were often used interchangeably, denoting that Thomas was a temporary resident in this household.[86] Moreover, it is useful to consider the layout of the interior space and where household members would sleep. Although focusing on eighteenth-century London, McEwan's exploration of lodging spaces is useful for understanding the lodging arrangements of Elizabeth Barcocke's home in Staploe, Bedfordshire. McEwan notes that within private homes, first floor front rooms were the most favourable, followed by first floor back rooms, and then second floor front and back rooms.[87] This was then followed by ground rooms.[88] Sasha Handley has shown that by the 1660s, 73% of the total number of rooms that contained at least one bedstead were located on the upper floors or the household.[89] By 1760,

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[79] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[80] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[81] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[82] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[83] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[84] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[85] Deposition of Ann Flawne, February 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/98
[86] Joanne McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange: Space, Authority and Knowledge in Eighteenth-Century London', p. 51
[87] McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange', p. 54
[88] McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange', p. 54
[89] Sasha Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2016), p. 112

sleeping in the main living space became the exception rather than the rule.[90] In Elizabeth's household, Thomas appears to be sleeping on the first or second floor, as Elizabeth notes in her deposition that she was 'goeing upp to the said chamber door'.[91] To compare, it seems as though William was sleeping downstairs, as implied by the deposition from Elizabeth's maidservant. She notes that, after thinking Thomas' chamber was on fire, she 'runn immediately downe staires and went together [with Elizabeth] to the chamber of William Wellbye'.[92] Therefore, we gain an insight into how the status and social rank of household members could be reflected by their sleeping arrangements.

Whilst we have already seen how hierarchical relationships and authority in the household could be subject to negotiation, this case illustrates who retained authority when the space of the home functioned as a lodging space for temporary residents. In discussing the rights of access to certain spaces, McEwan investigated a case study where a mistress 'claimed authority to breach the boundary' between the general household space and the space of the lodging room, underscoring her 'right to access the room in the interest of controlling activities that took place within her house'.[93] This idea of controlling activities and access to rooms is a common theme across the crimes explored in this chapter. In the case of Thomas Merrill, however, it is suggested that upon trying to gain access into his chamber and realising that it was locked, Elizabeth did not try to forcibly gain access; it was only later, when his door was unlocked and open, when her and her maidservant went inside. Whilst this could be due to her believing that there was a fire in Thomas's chamber, and therefore not wanting to put herself at risk, this case reveals how the dynamics between temporary and household residents could play out in high-risk situations.

The living situations of lodgers shaped the relationship of reciprocal exchanges between lodgers and landlords and their experiences of privacy. Ben-Amos argues that while these contractual agreements meant that privacy was practically unknown for lodgers, this was often compensated for by favours, services, and goods provided by the landlord.[94] Gillian Williamson contends that these exchanges required 'co-operation and adjustments on both sides, together with a willingness on the lodger's part to be appreciative of those little

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[90] Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England,* p. 113
[91] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[92] Deposition of Ann Flawne
[93] McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange', p. 58
[94] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, pp. 62-63

extras'.[95] Williamson also notes that there were sociable lodgers who 'hit it off' with their landlords/ladies, integrated with the household, and developed friendships.[96] The relationship between Thomas and Elizabeth is perhaps an example of a relationship based on these reciprocal exchanges 'based on personal loyalty and trust'.[97] Whilst it is clear that Thomas was able to pay for a more favourable lodging chamber, the fact that Elizabeth did not forcibly break the boundary between his chamber and the rest of the home suggests that a mutual respect or amicability existed between the two.

However, whilst the relationship between Thomas and Elizabeth was amicable, the attack on Thomas suggests that there was conflict between Thomas and William; McEwan argues that it was not uncommon for conflict to occur between lodger and landlord, but in this case, the conflict was between lodger and servant.[98] William Wellbye told Ann Flawne, the maidservant, that Thomas was a rogue.[99] In her discussion on the language of insult, Laura Gowing notes that men were often called 'cuckolds', 'bawds', or were insulted with non-sexual words like 'knave' and 'rogue'.[100] Likewise, Alexandra Shepard notes that in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the terms 'knave' and 'rogue' became associated with deviance, low-status, and dishonesty, and were excluded from patriarchal manhood.[101] William's labelling of Thomas as a 'rogue' signals that there was a pre-existing conflict or dislike between the two men.[102] William's labelling of Thomas as dishonest, combined with Thomas's own claim that William was the perpetrator, indicates why Elizabeth suspected him of the attack. Perhaps Thomas was rude to him, or the two were involved in a dispute over money. Therefore, it becomes clear that the 'household family' could be disrupted by the presence of temporary residents in the household, and in this case, could even be thought to lead to criminal behaviour. As a temporary resident, Thomas did not neatly fit into the concept of the 'household family'.[103]

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[95] Gillian Williamson, *Lodgers, Landlords, and Landladies in Georgian London*, (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021), p. 128

[96] Williamson, *Lodgers, Landlords, and Landladies in Georgian London,* p. 128

[97] Krausman Ben-Amos, *The Culture of Giving*, p. 62

[98] McEwan, 'The Lodging Exchange', p. 63

[99] Deposition of Ann Flawne

[100] Laura Gowing, *Domestic Dangers, Women, Words, and Sex in Early Modern London*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996), p. 63

[101] Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), p. 175-176.

[102] Deposition of Ann Flawne

[103] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 19

iv.   Space and time facilitating criminal behaviour

Thus far, we have explored how space was closely linked to crime and household relationships. Assessing how the permeability and temporality of the home could facilitate and expose criminal behaviours furthers this analysis. Firstly, the permeability of the home is key in the case of Thomas Merrill and William Wellbye. Despite not forcibly entering Thomas's chamber, Elizabeth and her maidservant were able to look through the crevice of the door, which is how they noticed the light coming from the ceiling of the room.[104] Peering and spying on others was prevalent in sexual misdemeanour cases, including that of the Norwich Libertines, investigated by Lawrence Stone, where people peered through keyholes and even drilled spyholes to look into bedrooms.[105] The physical structure of the home enabled this through holes and gaps in doors and walls. Janay Nugent also notes that in early modern Scotland, walls were thin and poorly constructed, and loud noises were 'often the catalyst for eavesdropping', resulting in members of the household and community placing each other under surveillance.[106] This idea of proximity and permeability within the home allowed spying to occur. In the case of Thomas Merrill, the chain of events that led to the discovery of the crime were triggered by the sound of the ceiling falling. The loud noises travelled easily within the home, alerting members of the household to the crime that had taken place. Then, despite coming to the wrong conclusion by assuming that the house was on fire, the home's physical structure enabled Elizabeth to peer through the crevice of Thomas's door. Therefore, it is evident that the physical structure of the home and its rooms could expose criminal behaviour in the same way that it could expose illicit behaviours and wrongdoings within the interior domestic space.

In the case of coining, the space of the home both hid and revealed criminal activity. Opportunities for privacy and the flow of information within and beyond the domestic boundaries shaped the extent to which criminal activities could be hidden. For example, William claimed that he found the money in Valentine Hollofield's chamber, which he then took home to show his father.[107] Here, the money was moved between interior domestic spaces, one of which functioned as a hiding space, while the other exposed the criminal activity. Ann Arnold's deposition reinforced this depiction of the spaces. Ann and her

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[104] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[105] Lawrence Stone, 'Libertine Sexuality in Post-Restoration England: Group Sex and Flagellation among the Middling Sort in Norwich in 1706-07', in *Journal of the History of Sexuality,* 2.4, (1992), p, 522
[106] Janay Nugent, '"None Must Meddle Betueene Man and Wife": Assessing Family and the Fluidity of Public and Private in Early Modern Scotland', in *Journal of Family History*, 35.3, (2010), p. 223
[107] Deposition of William Robinson

daughter were looking after Richard Allen's children, when they found the money in Allen's lodging room 'upon the cupboards head'.[108] As has been suggested, in this period there was no clear-cut distinction between public and private.[109] Vickery argues that the inherent lack of privacy in eighteenth-century domestic spaces meant that householders tended to have several hiding places scattered around the house.[110] Hollofield's hidden 'bagg' of 'silver coyne' found 'upon the top of the bed' and Richard Allen's storing of the coins on top of a cupboard reveals that seventeenth-century homes operated in a similar fashion. [111] The lack of privacy, even in domestic spaces, therefore shaped the actions of criminals within the walls.

Despite offering hiding places, the home could simultaneously expose the criminal acts that took place in the interior domestic space. This is particularly prevalent in the home's role as a workplace for Matthew Smythes as an apprentice. Matthew's work placed him within the space of the home and in close proximity to William and Richard Robinson. It was this proximity which allowed Matthew to find out about William's criminal behaviour; Matthew overheard his master telling William about the consequences of his actions.[112] This suggests that, regardless of the restrictions of access that may or may not have been present in Richard Robinson's household, sounds, sights, and gossip still circulated around spaces within the home, as well as in and out of it. Amanda Capern argues that 'things seen, remembered, and then spoken about formed the prosaic gossip that arose during the multiple social transactions of daily life'.[113] Matthew overhearing a conversation between his master and William almost mimics the ways in which gossip was rooted in things that were seen or heard. This emphasises the importance of sight and sound in facilitating the flow of information around the home, often leading to the exposure of crimes – something which we have already seen with the case of William Albone, where we saw the flow of information in and out of the home between William Ayres, William Breed, and Thomas Blain. The importance of sight and sound is an idea that will become prevalent in later chapters.

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[108] Deposition of Ann Arnold, December 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/85
[109] See Introduction
[110] Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle?', p. 164
[111] Deposition of Anthony Hardinge; Deposition of Ann Arnold
[112] Deposition of Matthew Smythes
[113] Amanda L. Capern, 'Rumour and Reputation in the Early Modern English Family', in *'Fama' and Her Sisters : Gossip and Rumour in Early Modern Europe*, ed. by, Claire Walker and Heather Kerr, (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2015), p. 86

As implied here, the auditory permeability of the home was key in exposing criminal behaviours. In the case of Thomas Merrill and William Wellbye, the noise which everybody heard, and which revealed the attack on Thomas, is said to be the sound of the ceiling breaking when William broke into Thomas's room.[114] The permeability of the home and the idea of sound travelling is something that is demonstrated across the long eighteenth century. An example of this, is a case of theft, which occurred in 1743. Thomas Clarke claimed that his servant, Thomas Branklin, broke open a chamber and stole a shirt.[115] Another servant, Thomas Smith, deposed that he was sitting up waiting for his master, when he heard a noise coming from the maid's chamber.[116] He went up to the maid's chamber, and found Thomas Branklin hiding under the bed.[117] Eventually, Branklin confessed to stealing the shirt.[118] Here again, the sound of Branklin's movements in the home exposed his criminal actions. The physical structure of the home allowed sound to travel easily, alerting household members to any wrongdoings or incidents going on inside the home. The visual and auditory permeability of the interior domestic space including, sights, sounds, and gossip, could expose crimes within the home.

As well as considering how these crimes were exposed, we also need to consider how the perpetrators were able to commit these crimes, and the roles of space and time in facilitating this. This is particularly evident in the case of Thomas Merrill; if William was indeed the perpetrator, his knowledge of the space and its intersection with temporality enabled the crime to take place, as he was able to break through the ceiling and access the correct lodging chamber. It is not specified whether Thomas was asleep or not when the attack took place.[119] Sasha Handley argues that we cannot define a 'typical' set of bedtimes in this period.[120] Instead, a wide range of influences existed which shaped the timing and length of sleep.[121] These layers intertwined to create a 'complicated jigsaw of bedtimes' that differed depending on the individual and stage of life.[122] After the attack, Thomas was found 'grovelling in his bed' with his hands, face, shoulders, sheets, and linen all bloody.[123] The fact

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[114] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[115] Deposition of Thomas Smith, November 1743, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1743/68
[116] Deposition of Thomas Smith
[117] Deposition of Thomas Smith
[118] Deposition of Thomas Smith
[119] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke
[120] Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England,* p. 213
[121] Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England,* p. 213
[122] Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England,* p. 213
[123] Deposition of Elizabeth Barcocke

that his sheets and linen were all bloody implies that Thomas was in bed when the attack took place. Therefore, this opens the possibility that he was asleep. If Thomas was asleep, then the space of the chamber shaped the crime. Handley argues that bedsteads and sleeping environments were understood as sites of security and relief, as sleep was understood as having the potential to endanger the household and its occupants by exposing them to various dangers: forces of nature, supernatural agents, and human action.[124] She suggests that there was a common desire for a safe and secure sleep.[125] Breaking in and attacking at night suggests a level of premeditation and desire to violate the 'safe' space of the chamber where Thomas slept – William's knowledge of the space, the home's physical permeability, and the time of day at which Thomas might be asleep, would have allowed William to take advantage of Thomas's vulnerability at night if he was the perpetrator.[126]

Conclusion

Cases which took place inside the space of the home reveal how household relationships functioned within the interior domestic space, and how these were shaped by crime and space. Whilst prescriptive literature laid out the 'ideal' behaviours expected of household members, the reality was much different, as household relationships were much more flexible and open to negotiation. This idea of flexibility was demonstrated through criminal behaviours which subverted authority, as seen in the case of William Albone. In addition to this, the tensions and competing obligations faced by household members revealed how household relationships could work both up and down the household hierarchy, and, as seen with William Albone and his fellow servants, horizontally. The crimes explored in this chapter also illustrate how tensions and relationships within the household could be affected by the presence of temporary residents who may not have *neatly* fit into the concept of the 'household family', such as Thomas Merrill.[127] Finally, it is evident that space could facilitate, but also expose criminal behaviours inside the home. Space could intersect with time to shape the outcome of crimes, providing household members with the means to commit crimes undetected. However, the home's physical, audible, and visual permeability often alerted others to the crime taking place, therefore exposing the perpetrator; even with

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[124] Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England,* p. 7
[125] Handley, *Sleep in Early Modern England,* p. 7
[126] Similarly, Thomas Blain's servants were said to enact their theft before their master was awake, demonstrating the importance of understanding the daily cycles of people's activities within the domestic space.
[127] Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 19

added steps to ensure security, like the locking of doors, the home and its rooms remained permeable.

Chapter 2

Kitchens, Communities, and 'Safe' Spaces: Movement Between Spaces and the Meanings of Them

Focusing on crimes that demonstrate movement between domestic spaces, this chapter nuances our understanding of the usage of space and its meanings, and the permeability of boundaries and thresholds. Whilst spaces were not neutral and held different meanings for different people, it is useful to look at different types of crime to investigate how these meanings could be shaped by the ways they are used and who is using them. This idea is also posited by Geographer Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather, who refers to the link between place and meaning as the 'space of place'.[1] Whilst difficult to define, Kenworthy Teather notes that these meanings could be different for individuals.[2] Similarly, Katie Barclay argues that space is a process, something that is 'continually produced in the everyday' and resists linearity.[3] She also draws upon similar ideas to Teather's 'space of place', recognising that space is often understood as a relationship between locations, the activities and bodies in that location, and the social norms or cultural meanings attached to these.[4] Building on the work of Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather and Katie Barclay, this chapter argues that space was not neutral, and instead held various meanings depending on factors such as gender, social rank, marital status, and age.[5]

This becomes particularly evident when comparing cases of suspected infanticide, which demonstrate movement from the interior domestic space to the exterior, with cases of assault that demonstrate the reverse. Moreover, a key idea in each of these cases is the temporality of spaces; the meanings of spaces could change depending on different stages of the crime. Furthermore, this chapter explores the role of people as central actors in shaping the meanings of spaces, and what insight this provides into relationships and interactions between members of kin and non-kin networks. The chapter also considers the physical

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[1] Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* (London: Routledge, 1999)
[2] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies*, p. 2
[3] Katie Barclay, 'Space and Place', in *Early Modern Emotions: An Introduction*, ed. by., Susan Broomhall, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), p. 21
[4] Barclay, 'Space and Place', p. 21
[5] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* pp. 1-12; Barclay, 'Space and Place', p. 21

structure of the home, and the symbolism of this through crimes that involve an attack on the home's physical boundaries and the crossing of boundaries and thresholds.

i.   The meanings of spaces and the navigation between them

Cases of infanticide demonstrate movement between spaces by beginning inside the home but often ending in the yard. Firstly, it must be noted that convictions for infanticide significantly increased after 1624, when a new statute was passed. The Infanticide Act made the concealment of a stillborn child a capital offence; concealment is an important element to consider when investigating space and place, especially when considering where stillborn children were being hidden.[6] The policing of infanticide was shaped by an intersection of gender, social rank, and marital status, with unmarried female servants being one of the most common groups indicted for infanticide.[7] While much has been written about the crime of infanticide and the individuals convicted of it, the spatial dimensions of the crime have been largely overlooked. The intersection of these factors could influence the meanings and usage of domestic spaces for women who gave birth to illegitimate children.[8]

Women's narratives of birth often situated the event of childbirth inside the domestic space, especially the kitchen. In 1669, Mary Dazey claimed that she delivered her child 'about tenne of the clocke […] in the Kitchin of George Bury her master', in Henlow.[9] Her examination stated that 'a little before she was delivered', she was drawing a bucket of water at her masters well, when the bucket fell in, 'and the sweepe strooke hir, on the side of hir body a great blow, whereupon she immediately fell in Labour'.[10] She claimed that she 'fell into a swoond, and soe lay for some tyme'.[11] Although unclear as to where exactly she 'fell into a swoond', Mary told the Justice of the Peace (Samuel Bedford Esq. J.P) that her labour was induced prematurely by this blow.[12] A similar case occurred in 1683, when Elizabeth Glover claimed that she gave birth to a stillborn child in the home of George Abbott – the master of the child's father.[13] Thomas Broockes, the father of the child, deposed that he came

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[6] Will Coster, *Family and Kinship in England 1450-1800,* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 2016), p. 84

[7] Coster, *Family and Kinship in England 1450-1800,* p. 62

[8] For scholarship on infanticide, see: Josephine Billingham, *Infanticide in Tudor and Stuart England,* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2019); Mark Jackson, *Infanticide: Historical Perspectives on Child Murder and Concealment, 1550-2000*, (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis group, 2002)

[9] Deposition of Mary Dazey, March 1669, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1669/S/59

[10] Deposition of Mary Dazey

[11] Deposition of Mary Dazey

[12] Deposition of Mary Dazey

[13] Examination of Thomas Broockes, March 1682, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1683/S/31

to his master's house at eleven o'clock, when he found Elizabeth alone in the kitchen having just delivered her child.[14] He then took the child, carrying it into his master's garden, and buried it in between two asparagus beds.[15]

Traditionally, childbirth was accompanied by various rituals, such as preparing for the lying in period and having 'gossips' attend the birth.[16] Another key aspect of the childbirth process was the establishment of a birthing chamber. As Sarah Fox notes in her work on the eighteenth century, birth was an event that was traditionally secluded in one particular space of the home.[17] These spaces were created using material elements, like a bed or bolster, which were objects that provided the 'backdrop for multiple births across different households'.[18] Focusing on the space of the birth chamber, Fox argues that we can 'view birthing as a combination of physical environment, material objects and people that created a framework that was flexible and therefore difficult to displace'.[19] Moreover, the birthing chamber was a temporary, yet important space in the home.[20] However, whilst Fox includes a discussion on the nuances of social rank in shaping the structure and experiences of birthing chambers, she lacks an exploration into the intersection of social rank and marital status that Laura Gowing investigates in her work on illegitimate births.[21] In the cases of Mary Dazey and Elizabeth Glover above, both were denied the rituals of childbirth, including the ability to give birth in a birthing chamber, because they were unmarried servants.[22]

The location where Mary and Elizabeth gave birth is a significant aspect of these cases. Before considering the movement to the yard, we must also consider the broader meanings of the home and household for unmarried women who gave birth. such as Mary Dazey and Elizabeth Glover. In the household, 'attempts to make secret or private space might be seen as suspicious in themselves 'the walls of the household were as much a threat to order as a safeguard of it'.[23] Illegitimate pregnancy was an active problem for the

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[14] Examination of Thomas Broockes
[15] Examination of Thomas Broockes
[16] David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage, and Death: ritual, religion and the life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 56, 84
[17] Sarah Fox, *Giving Birth in Eighteenth-Century England*, (London: University of London press, 2022), p. 65
[18] Fox, *Giving Birth in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 53
[19] Fox, *Giving Birth in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 53
[20] Fox, *Giving Birth in Eighteenth-Century England,* p. 77
[21] Laura Gowing, 'Secret Births and Infanticide in Seventeenth-Century England', in *Past & Present,* no. 156, (1997), pp. 87-115
[22] Deposition of Mary Dazey; Deposition of Isaac Bringhurst, March 1682, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1683/S/31
[23] Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies: Women, Touch, and Power in Seventeenth-Century England*, (London: Yale University Press, 2003), p. 27

household and wider community, and was perceived as an act of transgression; it subverted the patriarchal norms that the ideals of the household were rooted in. Therefore, the home became a space imbued with the threat of punishment – something which was evident in the case of Mary Cambers. In 1668, Mary Cambers, a pregnant widow, left the parish of Bedford where she resided, to deliver a 'bastard female child at the house of John Clarke, [in] an alehouse […] in Sherrington'.[24] Despite returning to Bedford briefly, as the overseers of the poor in Sherrington directed her, she immediately left, claiming that 'she durst not stay for feare of punishment'.[25] A week later, she went to Great Paxton and left her child in a close, hoping that some maids would find it.[26] She only willingly returned to Bedford once she no longer had the child with her; Mary travelled a significant distance between parishes post-birth.[27] In this case, the spaces associated with punishment were seen to extend beyond the home and into the wider neighbourhood.[28]

Both Mary Dazey and Elizabeth Glover gave birth in the kitchen; by utilising a spatial analysis, we can ascertain how the kitchen functioned as a safe space in these cases.[29] If finding 'secret or private space' inside the home was suspicious and therefore difficult, we must question why these women chose to give birth in the kitchen.[30] Although unmarried women were not entirely free from threat by giving birth in the kitchen, their chosen location could still be a way of attempting to reclaim some control or familiarity in circumstances that were otherwise transgressional or unsafe. Amanda Flather argues that the kitchen was a place where different household members co-existed and went about their tasks within a gendered division of labour.[31] Likewise, Sara Pennell has argued that the kitchen was, and still is, frequently at the heart of everyday activity.[32] Moving away from the equation of the 'everyday' with the female realm, Pennell also notes that the space of the kitchen did not exclude male labour.[33] Spaces were not gendered; instead, there was a gendering of activities

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[24] Deposition of Mary Cambers, April 1668, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1668/S/48

[25] Deposition of Mary Cambers

[26] Deposition of Mary Cambers

[27] Deposition of Mary Cambers

[28] Deposition of Mary Cambers

[29] Deposition of Mary Dazey; Deposition of Thomas Broockes

[30] Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies,* p. 27; Samantha Williams also notes that between 1760 and 1866 in London, sixteen women gave birth in the kitchen; Samantha Williams, The Experience of Pregnancy and Childbirth for Unmarried Mothers in London, 1760–1866, in *Women's History Review*, 20.1, (2011), p. 74

[31] Amanda Flather, 'Gender, Space and Place: The Experience of Servants in Rural Households 1550-1750', in *Agrarian World,* 18.39 (2017), p. 4

[32] Sara Pennell, et al., *The Birth of the English Kitchen, 1600-1850*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), p. 1

[33] Pennell, et al., *The Birth of the English Kitchen, 1600-1850,* p. 7

at specific times and in certain circumstances.[34] Both Pennell and Flather suggest that spaces such as the kitchen were not static, and instead were fluid and multifunctional.[35] If we consider the gendered division of labour within the household, we know that domestic servants who were largely female likely spent more time in the kitchen, as Pennell suggests; the kitchen was a space where their work placed them.[36] Yet, this 'did not inevitably make it a place of oppression and servitude for them'.[37]

The cases in question evidently contrasted the traditional event of childbirth that Fox explores, by moving it outside of the female-dominated space of the birthing chamber, to the gender-neutral space of the kitchen. We can infer that the kitchen was likely an easily accessible and familiar space for these women; it was not unusual for these women to be in the kitchen, and they would not have appeared out of place if found there. The kitchen where Elizabeth gave birth was not in her own home. The fact that she was still able to access the kitchen in the home of George Abbott, Thomas Broockes's master, suggests that the home was somewhat permeable to outsiders. Yet, her knowledge of the space might have only been limited to the kitchen, as the kitchen was a space where her job often likely placed her. So, although she may not have had knowledge of the home as a space in its entirety, the kitchen remained a familiar environment, creating a 'safe' space. Furthermore, although the kitchen was a multifunctional space and hub of activity where various people were moving in and out, Mary Dazey claimed that 'there was noe person in the house, or present, att the birth of the sd. child', thus, reducing the risk of anyone walking in on her whilst she gave birth. Additionally, the kitchen held various practical elements that could be useful for both Mary and Elizabeth during childbirth, including water and linens – this is reflected in the case of Mary Dazey, as her child was said to be found to be 'wrappt upp in a linen cloth'.[38] Therefore, during childbirth, the kitchen acted as a 'safe' and practical space for these women in the home that was otherwise associated with risk and punishment.

The burial of Elizabeth and Mary's children in the exterior domestic space exemplifies the movement between spaces. According to the depositions, Mary buried her child in her master's rickyard, and the father of Elizabeth's child buried it in his master's

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[34] Pennell, et al., *The Birth of the English Kitchen, 1600-1850,* pp 131, 133
[35] Pennell, et al., *The Birth of the English Kitchen, 1600-1850,* p. 133; Flather, 'Gender, Space and Place', p. 10
[36] Pennell, et al., *The Birth of the English Kitchen, 1600-1850,* p. 7
[37] Pennell, et al., *The Birth of the English Kitchen, 1600-1850,* p. 7
[38] Examination of Damaris Bury, March 1669, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1669/S/59

garden.[39] A rickyard was a farmyard or similar enclosure where ricks (stacks of hay formed in a regular shape and thatched) were stored.[40] In many cases of illegitimate pregnancies and infanticide, Laura Gowing notes that burying stillborn children in a garden, yard, or field was the most obvious option for many mothers.[41] However, although recognising that burial in a garden, yard, or field was not without its problems, Gowing does not explain *why* these were the most obvious options for many mothers. In the case of Mary Dazey, if, as she claims, there was no one in the house whilst she gave birth, this gave her the freedom to move into the yard without being seen. Although Mary removed the child over the home's threshold, she did not go further than the domestic boundary, beyond the yard. Going beyond the domestic boundary increased the risk of being seen by others a, hence why burying a stillborn child in a yard or garden was an 'obvious option'.[42]

Furthermore, with the home becoming a space of threat for these mothers, physically removing the child from the walls of the home reveals the intersection of space and time in cases of infanticide. As Gowing suggests, the 'walls of the house were imagined to safeguard the household's honour'; illegitimacy was a clear violation and subversion of the patriarchal norms and ideals that the household was rooted in.[43] For cases of illegitimate pregnancies, the newborn child was a symbol of the transgressive behaviour. Therefore, by physically removing the newborn child from the walls of the home, we can interpret this action as an attempt to remove the transgression out of the 'heart of economic, social and gender order': the patriarchal household, returning it to a space of safety for these women.[44] The meanings of these spaces were inherently tied to time. Whilst the kitchen was a place of safety and familiarity during pregnancy and childbirth, the home (including the kitchen) became a space of threat once the child was born. Therefore, the negotiation of threat and safety depended on the stages of birth; the kitchen only returned to a space of safety once the child was removed over the threshold.

When looking at the interactions and relationships between people in these cases, the relationship between the mother and father of the child is brought into sharper focus.

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[39] Deposition of Mary Dazey; Deposition of Thomas Broockes
[40] Oxford English Dictionary online, https://www.oed.com/dictionary/rickyard_n?tab=meaning_and_use [accessed on 17/08/2023]
[41] Gowing, 'Secret Births and Infanticide', p. 108
[42] Gowing, 'Secret Births and Infanticide', p. 108
[43] Laura Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early Modern England*, (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 2012), p. 39
[44] Gowing, *Gender Relations in Early Modern England,* p. 29

Elizabeth Glover was the servant of Isaac Bringhurst in 'Tuddington', and the father of her child, Thomas Broockes, was George Abbott's gardener; they worked in different households.[45] Elizabeth gave birth in George Abbott's home, but Thomas Broockes was the one who took the child and buried it: he 'tooke the said Child and carried it into his Master's Garden and there immediately buried it'.[46] Firstly, we must consider the practical aspects to his actions; his job as a gardener suggests that he had the necessary knowledge of the garden space and the correct tools to bury the child quickly and efficiently. In the same way that the kitchen acted as a familiar space for Elizabeth, the garden was a familiar space for Thomas – he would also likely be aware of suitable spots to bury the child.

However, homes were occupied by numerous actors beyond the couple themselves. The deposition of Richard Waller, another gardener, stated that he was the one who found the child's body. Richard claimed that he was digging in George Abbott's garden and found 'the bones of a little Child buried, which he immediately discovered to the rest of the family'.[47] Therefore, it becomes clear that, although being a familiar space to Thomas – and one which he had knowledge about, the role of other actors like Richard Waller in these spaces were central in shaping the meanings of spaces and the outcome of the case; finding the body of the child inevitably raised the level of threat, resulting in Elizabeth's indictment.

The cases in question also illuminate the role of the household in facilitating relationships between servants. While the father of Mary Dazey's child was not present during the birth or its aftermath, her deposition reveals that the pair had once resided and worked together. According to Mary, 'John Timms who was the last yeare her fellow servant in Clifton was the father of her sd. Bastard child'.[48] Bernard Capp notes that in larger households, employers were concerned with the 'possibility of sexual liaisons between male and female servants'.[49] Although the details of their relationship are unclear, it is suggested that Mary and John met whilst working in the same household; their relationship was facilitated by the spaces in the home. Moreover, not only did sexual liaisons between servants in the same household occur, but the fact that Elizabeth Glover gave birth in Thomas's place of residence demonstrates how servant networks extended beyond their immediate space.

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[45] Deposition of Isaac Bringhurst; Deposition of Thomas Broockes
[46] Deposition of Thomas Broockes
[47] Deposition of Richard Waller, March 1682, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1683/S/31
[48] Deposition of Mary Dazey
[49] Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), p. 162

Charmian Mansell argues that when servants left households and moved to different parishes, 'physical departure undoubtedly destabilised connections, but emotional bonds … weren't altogether lost'.[50] Although Elizabeth and Thomas resided in different parishes, this did not mean their relationship had broken down. Intimate relationships and emotional bonds transcended the walls of the home and stretched across geographical borders; relationships could be maintained across space and time, irrespective of proximity.

Infanticide cases also illuminate the role of the wider community in crime. Cynthia Herrup argues that communal responsibility was vital for a successful prosecution, as the wider community could act as an 'unofficial' authority in prosecuting crimes.[51] When applied alongside a spatial analysis, we can establish links between the role of people and space, focusing on how members of the community shaped the meaning of the neighbourhood by acting as an 'unofficial authority'.[52] That Mary Cambers, mentioned previously, was unwilling to return to Bedford until she had abandoned her child due to the 'feare of punishment', suggests that her neighbourhood became an unsafe space for her – much like how the home was an unsafe space for Mary Dazey and Elizabeth Glover.[53] For Mary, the neighbourhood became an extension of that unsafe space, due to the role that the wider community played. The court depositions indicate that members of the community had been observing Mary's body, leading them to suspect that she was pregnant. Ann Skellern, one of Mary's neighbours, deposed that she 'did observe [Mary's] body to bee bigger than usual and did veryly believe that she was with child'; suspicions about Mary's pregnancy were also 'commonly reported by the neighbourhood'.[54] The fact that Mary was a widow explains the community's interest in her changing body, as the parish would have had to pay to support the child since it was illegitimate. Whilst we do not know the details of Mary's relationship with her neighbours, by 'commonly reporting' their belief that she was with child, members of the neighbourhood played an important role in establishing the neighbourhood as an unsafe space – one which became associated with the threat of punishment for Mary Cambers.[55]

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[50] Charmian Mansell, *Female Servants in Early Modern England,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024), p. 247
[51] Cynthia Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies: Investigative Responses to Theft in Seventeenth-Century East Sussex', in *The Historical Journal,* 27.4, (1984), p. 829
[52] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies', p. 829
[53] Deposition of Mary Cambers
[54] Deposition of Ann Skellern, April 1668, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1668/S/47
[55] Deposition of Ann Skellern

Kenworthy Teather notes that one of the attributes of space and place is 'positionality', which contributes to the construction of the neighbourhood as an unsafe space for Mary:

> Positionality implies that there are places where we are welcome and others from which we are excluded by convention or by law because of sex, age, class or colour, or other reasons. Because we all occupy different 'positions', there can be no single, objective account of social situations.[56]

Whilst Mary's position was not as clear cut as being 'welcome' or 'excluded' from the neighbourhood, we can still consider her position in relation to her neighbours.[57] When secret pregnancies were suspected, the bodies of suspected women became open to 'various kinds of public scrutiny and inspection'.[58] By observing Mary's body, her neighbours acted as an 'unofficial authority' upholding the patriarchal norms that allowed others to place women's bodies under surveillance and scrutiny.[59] Imbued with the power of surveillance, the community transformed the neighbourhood into a space of risk and punishment for unmarried mothers. To reinforce this idea, as Katrina Navickas argues, thinking about space as a site of power emphasises the importance of people and behaviour in creating connections between space and agency.[60] That Mary's neighbours observed her suspected pregnancy not only established a link between them and the space of the neighbourhood, but allowed her neighbours to gain power and agency in their position as witnesses.

The fact that Mary left her parish to give birth further reiterates this idea; she travelled somewhere where people were not likely to recognise her. It is also interesting to note Mary's claim 'that there were present at her delivery the woman of the sd. House and […] severall other women whose names shee knowes not'.[61] The event of Mary giving birth was somewhat reminiscent of the rituals that were commonly associated with childbirth – for example, the presence of other women could be interpreted as them acting as gossips. Although we do not know what Mary said to those in the alehouse in Sherrington upon her arrival about her circumstances, she was able to give birth and have her child baptised. These

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[56] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* p. 3
[57] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* p. 3
[58] Gowing, 'Secret Births and Infanticide', p. 90
[59] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies', p. 829
[60] Katrina Navickas, *Protest and the Politics of Space and Place, 1789-1848,* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2015), p. 13, 14
[61] Deposition of Mary Cambers

events were able to take place without the fear of Mary being placed under further scrutiny by those who knew her and knew her husband died fifteen months prior. Therefore, a connection was created between her neighbours and neighbourhood, establishing it as a space associated with 'feare of punishment'.[62] This is reinforced by the fact that Mary only returned once she no longer had her newborn child with her. By going elsewhere, Mary, like Elizabeth Glover and Mary Dazey, attempted to find a safe space for an otherwise transgressional act.

Each of these cases of suspected infanticide have demonstrated movement from the interior domestic space to the exterior – either taking the form of the home's yard, or the wider neighbourhood itself. These cases illuminate ideas on how individuals had the ability to shape the meanings of spaces, depending on the circumstances. A common theme that becomes evident in these cases is how domestic spaces could be deemed safe or unsafe for unmarried women, forcing them to adapt to the situation by finding accessible and familiar spaces, such as the kitchen, to give birth in. Furthermore, whilst the interior of the home became a space associated with threat and risk, we can also see the wider neighbourhood acting as an extension of that, with members of the community acting as an 'unofficial authority' by placing women under surveillance.[63] Thus, unmarried pregnant women were at risk of punishment in their own neighbourhoods. In addition to this, each case demonstrates how particular spaces, like the home, moved along a spectrum of safety and threat depending on the stage of pregnancy and birth; the meanings of spaces changed alongside the changing bodies of these women, thus, constantly moving in flux and illustrating the temporality of spaces.

ii.   The construction of 'safe spaces'

Assault and violence are topics that have been extensively investigated by historians. Scholars have suggested a decline in the rates of violent crime between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries, and have suggested reasons for this, such as the civilisation of the 'violence-prone poor', and a 'shift from the values of a feudal to those of a bourgeois society'.[64] Peter King, who focuses on the punishment of assault, argues that whilst the mid eighteenth century saw the treatment of interpersonal violence as a civil rather than criminal

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[62] Deposition of Mary Cambers
[63] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies', p. 829
[64] Lawrence Stone, 'Interpersonal Violence in English Society 1300-1980', in *Past & Present*, no. 101, (1983), p. 30; for other work on crime that uses a statistical decline in the rates of violent crime, see Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present Revisited*, (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1987); J.S Cockburn, 'Patterns of Violence in English Society: Homicide in Kent 1560-1985', in *Past and Present,* 130.1 (1991), pp. 73-75

matter, by the late eighteenth century, the tolerance toward violent action by the poor and to some extent, the middle classes, had been 'fundamentally eroded'.[65] Moreover, Richard McMahon, Soachim Eibach, and Randolph Roth have argued that the extent of lethal interpersonal violence in the medieval and early modern periods was not a 'neat narrative of decline', but instead, was one of 'fluctuation and variation across time and space'.[66] Historians have also considered the gendered dimensions of violent crime, drawing out similarities and differences in the experiences of women and men, as outlined in the introduction.[67] Moreover, much has been written about power and violence, particularly interpersonal violence, and how assault was used as a tool of manly authority.[68] Using a quantitative analysis of domestic homicide statistics, J.A. Sharpe touches on where violent crimes took place, arguing that, as their victims were often other members of the family, women were largely restricted to the home.[69] By focusing on spaces, the assaults analysed here extend previous scholarship by investigating the links between where assaults took place, and how the spaces used in these cases held different meanings. To understand how the links between space and its meanings could differ, we also need to consider how the intersection of factors such as gender and age could shape these meanings. Furthermore, using a spatial analysis emphasises the importance of thresholds, and extends this chapter's analysis on space and temporality.

In 1670, William Pearles and John Keyes were at Thomas Flint's house.[70] A series of events led to John Keyes hiding a stick that belonged to William, culminating in a physical altercation.[71] They both went outside into the close, where William struck John across the face. According to the depositions, 'the sd. Keyes [was] upon the ground and the sd. William Pearles [was] kneeling upon him'.[72] Mary Flint, the wife of Thomas, heard about the fight

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[65] Peter King, 'Punishing Assault: The Transformation of Attitudes in the English Courts', in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 27.1, (1996), p. 72

[66] Richard Mc Mahon, Joachim Eibach, Randolph Roth, 'Making sense of violence? Reflections on the history of interpersonal violence in Europe', in *Crime, Histories & Societies*, 17.2, (2013), p. 21

[67] Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); K.J Kesselring, 'Bodies of Evidence: Sex and Murder (or Gender and Homicide) in Early Modern England, c.1500–1680', in *Gender & History,* 27.2 (2015), pp. 245-262

[68] For violence and manhood, see 'Men's non-lethal violence' in Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England*; Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage,* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 1999); Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008)

[69] J.A. Sharpe, Domestic Homicide in Early Modern England', in *The Historical Journal*, 24.1 (1981), pp. 35-36

[70] Deposition of John Keyes, February 1670, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1670/W/38

[71] Deposition of John Keyes

[72] Deposition of Mary Flint, February 1670, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1670/W/39

from her maid and unsuccessfully attempted to break it up. William 'pulled his arme away from her and strok the sd. John Keyes two or three blowes and then came the sd. Thomas Flint', who pulled William off John, and 'went with [John Keyes] into the house againe'.[73] However, the deposition of Ann Pearle (William's mother) differs from this. She deposed that when William eventually confessed to her what had happened, he claimed that he had received his 'mortal wound' at Shillington, stating that Thomas Flint had held him by the neck and Mary Flint held him by the hair, whilst John Keyes kicked him.[74]

A similar case involving a physical altercation occurred in 1684. John Usher was passing through Maulden on the way back to Clophill, with Henry Lisle and Henry Line, when some 'quarrelsome' words were exchanged between John Usher and John Linn, a mason at work in a yard.[75] William West, who was working with John Linn, told Linn to 'hang him kill him' (meaning John Usher).[76] Most of the depositions concur with the same story – that John Usher was lying on a heap of lime, and John Linn was 'striking and beating the sayd Usher with his fists'.[77] John Linn's deposition, however, claimed that John Usher came over to hm, 'whipt hym with his cart whip', and then threw John Linn into a heap of lime after fighting'.[78]

These cases provide an insight into how spaces shaped the interactions between kin and non-kin and their behaviour. The space of the home was highly significant in each outburst of violence. In both cases, the participants of the fight went inside the home only once the violence had stopped. In the case of William Pearles/John Keyes, despite the conflict being initiated inside, the actual fight was taken outside into the close. The deposition of Ann Pearles, William's mother, reveals how the home functioned as a safe space, as well as the relationship between the pair. Upon William's return home, Ann 'perceived hee was nott well and asked him divers times what hee ayled, and if anybody had hurt him'.[79] Ann's repeated questioning indicates her concern over her son's wellbeing.[80] The relationship between

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[73] Deposition of Mary Flint
[74] Deposition of Ann Pearles, February 1670, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1670/W/37
[75] Deposition of Henry Line, May 1684, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1684/S/49
[76] Deposition of Henry Line
[77] Deposition of Henry Line
[78] Deposition of John Linn, May 1684, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, HSA1684/S/47
[79] Deposition of Ann Pearles
[80] Deposition of Ann Pearles

parents and children was a reciprocal one, as Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos notes.[81] Joanne Bailey (Begiato) agrees with this idea, positing the notion of the 'good mother' in the eighteenth century.[82] Ann Pearles embodied the 'nurturing' and caring qualities of a 'good mother', as demonstrated.[83] The interactions that occurred in the Pearles's household, particularly between mother and son, are also indicative of how the home functioned as a space of safety. Ann's concern for her son established the home as a space of respite and care. Although seemingly unaware of the fact that it was William who initiated the physical confrontation, care was provided for William – whether provided through his mother's concern or the actions of others. For example, William was visited by Elizabeth Crouch. Whilst we do not know the relationship between Elizabeth and the Pearles's, 'she came … to visitt William Pearles whome shee heard was very ill of some hurts hee had received att Shitlington and shee this informant stayed there till the sd. William dye'.[84] Evidently, some spaces, like the Pearles's home, became sites of safety and protection; the 'space of place' in William's case is family. He was surrounded by those who offered emotional support and practical care.

However, William did not tell his mother what happened straight away – unlike John Usher who came home and immediately informed his wife. Despite being united in the 'safe' space of the home, they remained separated by the crime that occurred. Ann was not present during the events at Thomas Flint's house, yet William denied her the knowledge of what happened immediately upon returning home. Whilst Ann played the role of the devoted mother by showing concern for her son, William seemingly tried to distance himself from her. William's actions, both at Thomas Flint's home and at his own, might represent an attempt to assert his manhood and his independence from his mother. Through an exploration of service and the coming of age of young men in seventeenth-century England, Ben-Amos notes that most households were simple, usually containing parents and unmarried children.[85] Despite not knowing William's age, it is suggested that William was a young man who had not reached adulthood yet, as he was still living at home with his parents. Ben-Amos argues that

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[81] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, Reciprocal Bonding: Parents and Their Offspring in Early Modern England', in *Journal of Family History*, 25.3, (2000), p. 298

[82] Joanne Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting in eighteenth-century England', in *The Family in Early Modern England*, ed by. Helen Berry and Elizabeth Foyster, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 224

[83] Bailey, 'Reassessing Parenting in eighteenth-century England', p. 224

[84] Deposition of Elizabeth Crouch, February 1670, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1670/W/41

[85] Ilana Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Service and the coming of age of young men in seventeenth-century England', in *Continuity and Change,* 3.1, (1988), p. 43

young men were considered as standing on the threshold of manhood, as they were more mature and rational than infants and children.[86] Additionally, Anthony Fletcher posits that early modern adolescence was a liminal time, and that passing into manhood meant separation from one's mother.[87] Therefore, if William was standing on the threshold of manhood in this liminal period of his life, by omitting information from his mother, his actions served as a way of asserting his manhood, and thus, his independence too.

This case further exemplifies how the thresholds and liminality of spaces could hold symbolic meaning, particularly for adolescents. John Keyes retreated inside the home when Thomas Flint broke up the altercation and helped him inside - William could have entered this space if he wanted to but did not. This exposes the home's threshold as a means of facilitating a symbolic withdrawal from conflict. Christopher R. Corley notes that, in urban France, spaces around homes were ones that adults could not claim as their own; it was the liminality of these spaces that the youth often identified with.[88] Moreover, Corley argues that spaces between the home and street were permeable, with many criminal court cases involving youth taking place in these spaces, much like how William and John go out into the close to fight. [89] In the same way that spaces changed depending on the stages of pregnancy in cases of infanticide, spaces are revealed here as physically and temporally fluid, mirroring the stages of William's life. The home was a site of safety and protection for William, due to his family connections. However, the home also posed a risk to his emerging adolescent independence and desire to restrain access to information about his activities. On the other hand, William used the liminal, exterior domestic space to his advantage; not only did the liminality of the space reflect his adolescence, but it was also beyond the 'adult' space of the home, where he did not have complete authority, making it the ideal arena for asserting his manhood.

Evidently, the intersection of gender and age shaped William's criminal behaviour as well as the interaction and relationship with his mother. Whilst the case of John Usher revealed similar ideas regarding the home as a 'safe' space, the ways in which the interactions and relationships functioned in his household differed from the case of William Pearles. He

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[86] Krausman Ben-Amos, 'Service and the coming of age', p. 43
[87] Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England, 1500-1800,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), p. 89
[88] Christopher R. Corley, 'On the threshold: youth as arbiters of urban space in early modern France', in *Journal of Social History*, 43.1, (2009), pp. 145-146
[89] Corley, 'On the threshold', p. 147

returned home to his wife, saying: 'Mary help me to bed for I am almost kild John Linn has given me my deaths wound'.[90] This case is different in terms of the type of relationship that we see, and the interaction between John and his wife becomes significant – especially in comparison to the conversations that we can infer between William and his mother. Like Ann Pearles, Mary does not know what happened in the yard between John Usher and John Linn because she remained in the home; her knowledge of the crime depends on what her husband tells her. Yet, Mary's deposition states that John came 'home to hir' and told her that he had received his 'deaths wound'.[91] Bernard Capp argues that marriage was a 'highly flexible institution', with the reality of most marriages depending on individual circumstances and temperaments.[92] In Mary and John's case, they appear to have an open relationship, with John willingly telling his wife how he received his injuries straight away. Unlike William and Ann Pearles, who remain separated despite being at home, Mary and John Usher were united in this domestic space. Therefore, we can see how the home could hold different meanings depending on who was involved and the circumstances – whilst the home became a space associated with disorder and threat to an unmarried pregnant woman, it held a different meaning to men like John Usher and William Pearles, whose homes acted as a 'safe' space for them. Joanne Begiato argues that from the late eighteenth century, even when men were physically absent from the home, they were still considered to be emotionally and psychologically inseparable from it.[93] John and William returning home suggests that, even in the seventeenth century, men knew they were able to return to their space of respite, care, and safety.

In the case of William Pearles, when challenging John for his stick, the two went out into the close to deal with their dispute: 'William Pearles challenged [John Keyes] for the sd. stick and [John] then told him that if he would goe forth hee would show him where his stick was and then the two went out immediately into the close', where 'William Pearles stroke [John Keyes] upon the face and stroke upp his his heeles and heat him when hee was down'.[94] The language in this case is reminiscent of a duel, as William 'challenged' John for his stick. In his discussion of the rise of 'civil courtesy' in Stuart England, Markku Peltonen suggests that the only efficient means to respond to insults and 'words of discourtesy' was to

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[90] Deposition of Mary Usher, May 1684, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, HSA1684/S/46
[91] Deposition of Mary Usher
[92] Capp, 'When Gossips Meet', p. 83
[93] Joanne Begiato, *Manliness in Britain, 1760-1900: Bodies, Emotion, and Material Culture*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 139
[94] Deposition of John Keyes

challenge your opponent to a duel.[95] Such formal challenges were not the preserve of aristocrats and gentlemen, as ideas about manhood were 'intricately linked to ideas about violence in early modern England'.[96] As Elizabeth Foyster argues, one aspect of maintaining manhood was the ability to defend one's honour with their fists. Manhood had to be continually asserted and proved. [97] Thus, we can infer that perhaps William read John Keyes's actions as a 'sign of discourtesy', provoking him into trying to prove his manhood by 'challenging' and assaulting John Keyes.[98] Similarly, in the case of John Usher and John Linn, the latter claimed that the former had called him a 'foole', after saying 'you will not have too shillings for this days worke'.[99] Although John Linn's deposition is the only account of the quarrel that initiated the physical violence, we can interpret his actions in a similar manner to William Pearles – a way of retaliating against 'words of discourtesy' and insult to his honour.[100]

In addition to this, both cases reveal the function of the exterior space, and its role in the movement between domestic spaces. The exterior space where the conflict took place becomes associated with violence, compared to the 'safe space' of the home. The roles of gender and age illuminate how the spaces where the conflict took place acted as arenas for proving one's manhood and defending honour; William Pearles and John Linn both believed that they had reason to physically retaliate against words or actions of dishonour.

Furthermore, conflicts that occurred in taverns were likewise shaped by the exteriority of these spaces. Although discussing early modern Lyon, Susanne Rau notes that conflict in taverns was much less violent than those on the street, as they often had their own rules of behaviour and mechanisms for restoring order. Taverns, she argues, were highly controlled spaces.[101] However, the conflict in the cases of William Pearles and John Usher escalated to the point where fatalities occurred. In the case of William Pearles, both Thomas and Mary Flint had to intervene to stop William, further demonstrating the notion that the exterior spaces of the yard and close were not as controlled as spaces such as taverns. This was

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[95] Markku Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England: Civility, Politeness and Honour,* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 44

[96] Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender and Social Order in Early Modern England*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 37, 48

[97] Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England : Honour, Sex and Marriage,* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 1999), p.55, 177

[98] Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England,* p. 44

[99] Deposition of John Linn

[100] Peltonen, *The Duel in Early Modern England,* p. 44

[101] Susanne Rau, 'Public order in public space: tavern conflict in early modern Lyon', in *Urban History*, 34.1, (2007), p. 113

perhaps due to the lack of mechanisms for restoring order and retaining control. Therefore, the yard and close not only acted as arenas for defending one's honour and manhood, but become spaces associated with uncontrolled violence.

iii.   <u>Violating the boundaries of domestic spaces</u>

The physical boundaries of domestic spaces, and violations of their borders, reveal other aspects of long eighteenth-century life. Crimes that involved attacks on the walls of the home serve as a good example. In 1678, three women entered the house of Anne Crouch. They came into her home and 'staid a while pretending to come for drinke', then gave her 'ill language and threatening to doe her a mischief'.[102] An hour and a half later, when Anne was in bed, she heard a noise.[103] She then looked out the window, and saw the three women come out of her barn.[104] Upon investigating, Anne found that some linen was missing, and the wall was broken.[105]After the women threatened to 'doe her a mischief', they broke her windows.[106] It is noted that these women were of the same parish as Anne, suggesting that they may have been Anne's neighbours. Naomi Tadmor argues that human interaction in early modern communities was first and foremost amongst neighbours, positing that norms of neighbourliness remained crucial; neighbours were to live in peace and avoid conflict and strife.[107] Neighbourliness was also shaped by gender. [108] As Reinke-Williams has pointed out, 'female neighbours borrowed and lent domestic implements to each other; gave and received charity and hospitality […] but they engaged in sociability too'.[109] Good neighbourliness not only cemented relationships between women, but it also exposed them to risk. As demonstrated in the case of Anne, neighbours could manipulate the 'space of place' of the home as a space of good neighbourliness, to cause damage.[110]

In addition to crossing the threshold of domestic spaces, attacks were also made on the boundaries of the home. In 1730, Thomas Lett of Leighton Buzzard was said to have

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[102] Deposition of Anne Crouch, March 1678, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c.1653-1688, HSA1678/W/59
[103] Deposition of Anne Crouch
[104] Deposition of Anne Crouch
[105] Deposition of Anne Crouch; See Chapter Three for a more in-depth discussion on theft from barns and yards.
[106] Deposition of Anne Crouch
[107] Naomi Tadmor, 'Friends and Neighbours in Early Modern England: Biblical Translations and Social Norms', in *Love, Friendship and Faith in Europe, 1300-1800*, ed by. Laura Gowing et. al. (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p. 150
[108] Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 128
[109] Reinke-Williams, *Women, Work and Sociability in Early Modern London,* p. 129
[110] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* p. 2

thrown stones against William Whipsham's window, 'and much broke the same'.[111] Allegedly, Thomas Lett was also heard saying that 'he would set on fire the house of William Whipsham'.[112] Whilst we have no indication of a motive, or relationship between Thomas Lett and William Whipsham, the act of throwing stones at the windows and the physical breaking of the boundary was an extremely visible one, and could potentially call into question William Whipsham's reputation. Jacqueline Marie Musacchio argues that house-scorning, in Florence, involved the throwing of stones, animal parts or excrement at houses, often targeting the thresholds of homes such as windows or doors; these attacks allowed perpetrators to metaphorically penetrate the home.[113] Furthermore, she argues that buildings were tied to honour, as they represented the 'public face' of those who resided within.[114] For example, affixing horns to the home's exterior in cases of cuckoldry was a shaming ritual – something which was also a vital element of skimmingtons and charivaris, alongside throwing stones.[115] Thomas's actions are arguably reminiscent of these shaming rituals, as demonstrated by the act of attacking William's property by throwing stones against his window. These rituals usually indicated that a man had been cuckolded and/or undermined in his role as patriarch. However, as Ingram suggests, charivaris could also enable disorder on the part of 'troublesome members of the community', who were 'ill qualified to mock the follies of their neighbours'.[116] The fact that Thomas was overheard threatening to set William's home on fire arguably goes beyond the intent to shame, due to the extreme nature of the act; this suggests that Thomas was one of these 'troublesome members of the community'.[117] Furthermore, Walker notes that infracting household boundaries was a violation, due to the fact that the home was perceived as being akin to a body whose boundaries encompassed its inhabitants and resources; violating this threatened the family's ability to operate as an economically and socially reliable unit.[118] Amanda Vickery expands on the meanings of the home, suggesting that 'the external perimeter of the house was a

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[111] Examination of William Whipsham, June 1730, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1730/70

[112] Examination of Mary Jeffs, June 1730, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1730/71

[113] Jacqueline Marie Musacchio, 'Adultery, Cuckoldry and House-Scorning in Florence: The Case of Bianca Cappello', in *Cuckoldry, Impotence and Adultery in Europe (15th and 17th Century),* ed by., sara F. Matthews-Grieco, (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2014), p. 19

[114] Musacchio, 'Adultery, Cuckoldry and House-Scorning in Florence', p. 20

[115] Musacchio, 'Adultery, Cuckoldry and House-Scorning in Florence', p. 19; Martin Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', in *Past & Present*, no. 105, (1984), p. 86

[116] Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', p. 103

[117] Ingram, 'Ridings, Rough Music and the "Reform of Popular Culture" in Early Modern England', p. 103

[118] Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England,* p. 35

frontier in custom and law'.[119] She notes that the weak points of the house were its orifices – so, doorways, windows, chimneys, and the hearth.[120] Furthermore, not only were these the weak points of the home, but they also made the home's boundary permeable. Thomas Lett and the women in the case of Anne Crouch broke the windows, demonstrating how boundaries could be forcefully violated, increasing the permeability of the home within. These ideas relating to the symbolism of the home's structure persisted into the 1800s, suggesting that these meanings can be applied to the cases of Anne Crouch and William Whipsham. Evidently, the physical structure of the home acted as a proxy for the person who resided within. In terms of its 'space of place', the meanings that were attached to the home by the person attacking its exterior boundary were shaped by their dislike of the person who inhabited it; their relationship to the building was determined by their personal relationship with the person inside it.[121]

Conclusion

This chapter has explored various cases which involve some degree of movement between the interior and exterior domestic spaces, investigating what these spaces can mean for different people and in different circumstances. Whilst cases of suspected infanticide have demonstrated a clear intersection of gender, marital status, and social rank, the cases of assault have likewise demonstrated the importance of gender and, at times, its intersections with age. The movement between the interior and exterior spaces and the intersection of these factors is also significant in suggesting that the home could become a 'safe' space for some, but could become a space of threat, transgression, and punishment for others – leading these individuals with no choice but to try and reclaim an element of control through their usage of certain spaces. In considering 'space of place', we can ascertain that the meanings of domestic spaces depended on the individual and their circumstances, but could also be shaped by the role of others as central actors in these spaces.[122] This movement between spaces is also a key element in exploring how the interactions and relationships between members of kin and non-kin networks functioned. Furthermore, in looking at the boundaries and thresholds of these domestic spaces, it becomes evident that criminal activities could emphasise the permeability of spaces.

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[119] Amanda Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle? Thresholds, Boundaries and Privacies in the Eighteenth-Century London House', in *Past and Present*, no. 199, (2008), p. 153
[120] Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle?', p. 153
[121] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* p. 2
[122] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* p. 2

Chapter 3

Yards, Barns, and Boundaries: Enabling and Exposing Criminal Behaviour

This chapter examines the relationship between crimes that took place in exterior domestic spaces, such as accidents, assaults, and thefts, and family/kinship relationships. It demonstrates how exterior domestic spaces were spaces of high opportunity and high risk for criminals; their function as agricultural workspaces both enabled and exposed criminal behaviour. The nature of these opportunities and risks varied throughout the day, and so emphasises the important links between space and time. The chapter also argues that the physical boundaries of exterior spaces shaped the relationships and interactions between people by complicating perceptions of chastisement and correction, and the threshold of 'acceptable' violence. In doing so, this chapter considers the central themes of gender and age in shaping the incidents or crimes that occurred, as well as influencing the relationships between kin and non-kin. Spatial and criminal boundaries worked on different levels across the types of crimes or incidents in question. Particularly with accidents, whilst not necessarily crimes in themselves, these were events that can be defined as being on the edges of crime, existing on the boundary of potential criminal activity.

Previous scholarship surrounding exterior spaces has largely focused on the features and symbolism of gardens or urban spaces.[1] Charmian Mansell, for example, has argued that investigating a city centre street as a working and living space provides wider insight into female-servant interactions, friendships, and experiences.[2] She argues that the 'female servant's sphere of interaction' was not restricted to her family or employers, and instead broadened both within and beyond the home, thus providing women with opportunities to exchange gossip, news, and form friendships.[3] This chapter extends Mansell's work by focusing on what domestic exterior spaces beyond urban streets (such as yards) reveal about relationships between kin and non-kin. Focusing on exterior spaces illustrates how space influenced criminal behaviours and relationships. This chapter explores whether relationships

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[1] Examples include: Jill Francis, 'Order and Disorder in the Early Modern Garden, 1558-C.1630, in *Garden History*, 36.1, (2008), pp. 22-35; 'Delectable Sightes and Fragrant Smelles': Gardens and Health in Late Medieval and Early Modern England', in *Garden History,* 36.1, (2008), pp. 3-21

[2] Charmian Mansell, 'Beyond the Home: Space and Agency in the Experiences of Female Service in Early Modern England, in *Gender & History,* 33.1, (2021), p. 45

[3] Mansell, 'Beyond the Home', p. 45

and interactions between people changed depending on the space that they were in –
something which becomes particularly evident in cases of assault.

i.   Spaces of high opportunity and risk

Cases of theft that occurred in the exterior domestic space reveal the accessibility of exterior
spaces, how they functioned, and how these spaces were ones of both opportunity and risk.
These ideas add to existing scholarship on theft, which has often focused on the types of
objects that were stolen, the perpetrators of theft, and the gendered dimensions of the crime.[4]
Scholars have also considered the investigations and responses to theft, arguing that
communal actions in the policing and prosecution of thefts were central to many cases.[5]
Focusing on the spatial dimensions of theft adds another level of analysis by recognising the
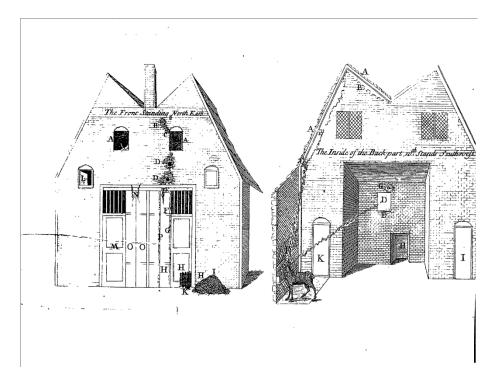importance of space and time in enabling and exposing crime.

Figure 1: Image of a brick outbuilding, in 'A true and particular account of a storm of thunder & lightning',
(London, 1711), https://data.historicaltexts.jisc.ac.uk/view?pubId=ecco-
0140500200&terms=thunder&pageId=ecco-0140500200-230

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[4] Garthine Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England,* (Cambridge: Cambridge
University Press, 2003); Manon van der Heijden, *Women and Crime in Early Modern Holland*, (Leiden: BRILL,
2016), pp. 62-76
[5] Cynthia Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies: Investigative Responses to Theft in Seventeenth-Century East
Sussex', in *The Historical Journal,* 27.4, (1984), pp. 811-830; Sharon Howard, 'Investigating responses to theft
in early modern Wales: communities, thieves and the courts', in *Continuity and Change*, vol 19, (2004), pp. 409-
430

Firstly, we need to consider the layout and accessibility of domestic spaces in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as this allows us to consider how space and crime were interwoven and provide an insight into the accessibility of spaces. Amanda Flather notes that by the seventeenth century, homes incorporated barns and stables on farms set apart from the main dwelling house, suggesting that space was needed for work and agricultural tasks.[6] Figure one depicts a brick building, noted to be 'distinct from any House', consisting of stables and coach houses, 'over which were Hay-lofts and Rooms for Servants to lie in'.[7] The inclusion of outbuildings such as barns or henhouses, or like the one depicted in figure one, in the exterior domestic space suggest that the yard was used as an agricultural workspace – something reflected in the case of Francis Norman.

In 1728, Francis Norman was seen coming out of James Warren's barn in Elstow at about four o'clock in the morning.[8] He was seen to have something under his arm, which looked like grain or straw.[9] William Cox deposed that he saw Francis Norman 'unpin and open the door of the Barn in the yard of Master Warren'.[10] William accused Francis of frequently coming into the yard 'before day in the mornings under pretence to look after his Cow'.[11] The depositions of Robert Johnson, William Cox, and Henry Johnson all concur with the same story – that each believed that Francis had stolen grain on multiple occasions.[12] Similar details were raised in the case of Henry Johnson, who was accused of stealing from William Pearles's henhouse.[13] One night in 1681, Agnes Pearles heard her father's cry coming from the henhouse.[14] Going to the chamber window, she saw Henry Johnson emerge from the henhouse and run across the yard.[15] When it was daytime, Agnes went the way he ran and found feathers scattered.[16] She also saw several of her father's hens coming out of a

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[6] Amanda Flather, 'The Organisation and Use of Household Space for Work in Early Modern England: 1550-1750', in *European History Quarterly*, 51.4, (2021), p. 483

[7] 'A true and particular account of a storm of thunder & lightning', (1711), London

[8] Deposition of Robert Johnson, February 1727, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1728/108

[9] Deposition of Robert Johnson

[10] Deposition of William Cox, February 1727, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1728/108

[11] Deposition of William Cox

[12] Depositions of Robert Johnson, William Cox, and Henry Johnson, February 1727, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1728/108

[13] Deposition of Agnes Pearles, June 1681, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1681/S/33; it must be noted that this is not the same William Pearles mentioned in Chapter Two.

[14] Deposition of Agnes Pearles

[15] Deposition of Agnes Pearles

[16] Deposition of Agnes Pearles

hedge 'about halfe a furlong from her father's house which she verily believes the said Johnson stole and dropt thereabouts because of her discovery of him in the Yard'.[17]

As figure one implies, servants were associated with these domestic/agricultural outbuildings. It was this familiarity and accessibility that was highlighted in the depositions naming Francis Norman as a thief. William Cox deposed that 'he then and there saw the before the named Francis Norman unpin and open the door of the Barn'.[18] It is also noted that Francis 'very frequently cometh of late into his Master James Warren's yard before day in the mornings under pretence to look after his cow'.[19] Not only does the yard appear to be easily accessible, considering that Francis was able to access this space 'very frequently', but the barn itself was also easily accessible, as he was able to 'unpin' the door.[20] The yard's function as a workspace enabled these crimes to take place and to be detected. Francis Norman used the function of the yard as a workspace to his advantage. Since the space was used for agricultural work, Francis was able to go under the pretence of looking after his cow to steal grain and straw – items that, as Cynthia Herrup notes, 'were immediately useful and not readily identifiable as out of place in an average home', such as farm goods like food or small livestock, without appearing out of place.[21] Henry was, likewise, able to 'runne through the yard', suggesting the permeability and easy accessibility of the exterior domestic space.[22] As Garthine Walker argues, when investigating men and women's thefts, we need to consider the context of their activities when looking at what they stole.[23] Francis's familiarity with the barn and its contents facilitated the theft of particular materials. Potential criminals were able to exploit the function of a space and relationships with others to help them to commit crime.

The practicalities of these cases underscore the role of exterior domestic spaces as spaces of high opportunity. Francis's actions demonstrate the ties between time and space in enabling criminal behaviour; a point that will be returned to later in this chapter. Robert Johnson, a witness, claimed that he saw Francis 'at four of the clock in the morning […] but it being dark, he this informant could not see' what he was carrying upon coming out of the barn.[24] Henry Johnson also deposed that he noticed that some peas and beans were missing,

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[17] Deposition of Agnes Pearles
[18] Deposition of William Cox
[19] Deposition of William Cox
[20] Deposition of William Cox
[21] Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies', p. 820
[22] Deposition of Agnes Pearles
[23] Walker, *Crime, Gender, and Social Order in Early Modern England,* p. 208
[24] Deposition of Robert Johnson

which he had left there the evening before, suggesting that Francis entered the barn and stole these goods before the morning, or the beginning of the next working day.[25] The crime took place in February, meaning that it would have been dark in the early hours of the morning. Therefore, Francis must have had knowledge of the space to be able to navigate it in the dark, and would have been aware that the barn would likely be empty. The time in which this crime seemingly took place also meant that Francis was less likely to be seen; despite being spotted by Robert Johnson on one occasion, Robert did not see what he was holding. This demonstrates how time and space were interwoven; high risk spaces encouraged people to commit crimes at certain times. Although the exterior domestic space was easily accessible, its very accessibility and permeability also increased the risk of being caught. In the case of Henry Johnson, when Agnes heard her father's cry in the henhouse, she rose 'to the chamber window [and] saw the said Henry Johnson come from the Henhouse doore and runne through the yard'.[26] The fact that she saw him suggests that the yard was a highly visible space. Moreover, William Pearles deposed that 'he went the way [Agnes] said … and found (as he believes) the track of the said Henry Johnson's foote, and several of this Informants Hens creeping out of the hedges and bushes'.[27] If these were, as William believed, Henry Johnson's footprints, this suggests that the exterior space had exposed Henry's movements. Here, the exposing nature of the space worked on two levels to incriminate Henry Johnson: not only was the space open and visible, allowing Agnes to see him run, but the physical landscape of the space also incriminated Henry by leaving his footprints on the ground.

ii.   Perceptions and thresholds of violence

Assault and violence have been extensively investigated by historians. They have examined the changing patterns and rates of violence over time, used gendered frameworks and unpacked concepts of power, and considered the role of violence and assault in displays of manly authority.[28] As demonstrated in chapter one, a focus on where assaults took place tells us something new about the relationship between crime and space. This is true also for

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[25] Deposition of Henry Johnson
[26] Deposition of Agnes Pearles
[27] Deposition of William Pearles, June 1681, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1681/S/33
[28] For scholars of crime who were interested in changing patterns in rates over time, see: Lawrence Stone, *The Past and the Present revisited,* (Boston: Routledge, 1981); J.A. Sharpe, 'The History of Violence in England: Some Observations', in *Past & Present*, 206-215, (1985), pp. 206-215
Other useful scholarship includes: Robert Shoemaker, 'Male Honour and the Decline of Public Violence in Eighteenth-Century London', in *Social History*, 26.2, (2001), pp. 190-208; Joanne Begiato, 'Beyond the Rule of Thumb: The Materiality of Marital Violence in England c. 1700–1857', in *Cultural and Social History*, 15.1, (2018), pp. 39-59

assaults that existed on the boundary of criminal activity. In these exterior domestic spaces, not all physical altercations were viewed as a crime by those who committed them. Household authority structures allowed for physical punishments and discipline. Susan Amussen notes that violence was frequently used as a disciplinary tool, and was often used to correct subordinate members in the household, for example, wives, children, and servants.[29] Cases of assault reveal this blurred boundary and the ways in which criminal behaviours were shaped by space and personal relationships.

The language of depositions is key to understanding the blurred boundaries between discipline and violence. For example, In 1727, Francis Wabey was at John Hare's home, and 'at night about nine of the clock Mr Valentine Cressy Vicar of Houghton Regis assaulted him in a violent manner with his stick'.[30] Francis's examination further stated that 'Mrs Cressy held him fast by the Hair of his head in the sd John Hares yard until her husband assaulted and beat him the sd Francis Wabey very sevearly'.[31] The word 'sevearly' reveals how the Vicar's actions went beyond the 'acceptable' threshold of violence. Correction and discipline were a part of ensuring order in the household; order in the household then ensured order in the wider community and state.[32] However, there were acknowledged limits to the severity of physical punishment that was acceptable. Amussen argues that 'some violence within the household was acceptable, which made possible its extension into the unacceptable'.[33] While we do not know what initiated these events, it is plausible that the perpetrators were thinking of their actions in terms of discipline, rather than assault. Indeed, this point is strengthened when we consider that, although writing within a Scottish context, Janay Nugent notes that 'ministers, elders, and other men such as readers were often presented as models for male heads of households to emulate', ensuring that male heads of households upheld the ideal traits and authority that was expected of them.[34] Therefore, it is possible that Cressy perceived his actions as a form of correction, to ensure that male heads of households in the

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[29] Susan Dwyer Amussen, 'Punishment, Discipline, and Power: The Social Meanings of Violence in Early Modern England', in *Journal of British Studies,* 34.1, (1995), p. 18
[30] Examination of Francis Wabey, April 1727, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1727/134
[31] Examination of Francis Wabey
[32] Amussen, 'Punishment, Discipline, and Power', p. 12
[33] Amussen, 'Punishment, Discipline, and Power', p. 32
[34] Janay Nugent, 'Reformed Masculinity: Ministers, Fathers, and Male Heads of Households, 1560-1660, in *Manhood and Masculinities in Scottish History*, ed. by. L Abrams and E.L. Ewan, (Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 2017), p. 41

wider community were upholding the ideal traits required of them. Only, in this case, he took it to an extreme and 'unacceptable' level.[35]

The physical space in which the assault took place, together with the relationships between the parties involved, shaped perceptions of the assault. In the case of Vicar Cressy, the incident took place at 'John Hares home last Saturday at night at about nine of the clock' in the yard.[36] Chapter two argued that the violation of household boundaries and domestic thresholds was key to understanding certain assault cases.[37] In this case, the idea of boundaries is also prominent, relating to correction, discipline, and violence. These depositions imply that there was a boundary that could not be crossed in somebody else's home when dealing with physical chastisement. Amussen notes that heads of households corrected members of their own household, but in the cases of both Vicar Cressy and Anne Jeffs, the act not only takes place in somebody else's household, but outside of the home itself in the exterior domestic space.[38] Also, neither party involved in this case was the head of this household. Despite arguing that the boundary between public and private in early modern Scotland was fluid, Nugent reveals that in a case study from 1605, onlookers were hesitant to interfere in a domestic abuse conflict between husband and wife.[39] As the wife's feet did not make it all the way out the door, she was still technically on the threshold between the home and neighbourhood.[40] In the cases of Vicar Cressy and Anne Jeffs, we see a reversal of this boundary, as the violence takes place outside, rather than inside the home, where the head of household would have the authority to discipline and correct. This suggests that the exterior domestic space, such as the yard, potentially acted as a pseudo-domestic realm that was outside of the head of household's dominion of control and discipline, enabling perpetrators such as Vicar Cressy to enact violence. In the case of Vicar Cressy, the yard acted as a space between the home and outside of the domestic realm, or rather, between the space where the head of household had complete authority, and the space where this instance of violence would more likely become public spectacle rather than chastisement.

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[35] Amussen, 'Punishment, Discipline, and Power', p. 32
[36] Examination of Francis Wabey
[37] See Chapter Two
[38] Amussen, 'Punishment, Discipline, and Power', pp. 17-18
[39] Janay Nugent, '"None Must Meddle Betueene Man and Wife": Assessing Family and the Fluidity of Public and Private in Early Modern Scotland', in *Journal of Family History*, 35.3, (2010), pp. 223-226
[40] Nugent, '"None Must Meddle Betueene Man and Wife"', p. 226

Furthermore, Mary's deposition claimed that that Anne 'continued beating her till she got within her Masters house'.[41] The words 'till' and 'within' reinforce the importance of the household boundary. This idea of boundaries and thresholds works on two levels in this case: the threshold of acceptable violence, as already discussed, but also the boundary of the domestic space itself. We do not know who Anne Jeffs is, or her relationship to Mary; the only information that this deposition provides is that she is a 'singlewoman'.[42] Thus, it is unclear whether Anne had the right to discipline Mary in the first place. That Anne stops beating Mary when they got 'within' the boundary of Mary's master's house strongly implies that Anne had no authority in the household.[43] The boundary itself therefore acted as a line of safety for Mary, as within the domestic space, only Mary's master had the authority to discipline her, not Anne Jeffs. Chapter two discussed the notion of how the home could act as a place of safety for those in physical altercations.[44] Similarly, this line of safety is created in this case due to Mary's household relationships, as determined by the household hierarchy between master and servant. Therefore, we can see how the boundaries of domestic spaces could influence the relationships between people and their behaviours.

iii.　The navigation of kinship and boundaries of criminal activity

Accidents provide a varied and detailed insight into kinship, as well as demonstrating the role of the exterior space in shaping the events that occurred and the interactions between kin. The records of the accidents that will be used for this chapter have been taken from Bedfordshire's High Sheriff Assizes. They form part of the preliminary investigations into possible crimes, to determine whether a situation needed to be escalated to the assizes, and thus, potential criminal prosecution; therefore, not every accident was recorded in these documents. Like some cases of assault, accidents existed on the boundaries of criminal activity. These incidents were perceived by some as criminal and so had been brought forward for investigation. Accidents are 'events and outcomes that were, in broad terms, incidental or unpredictable'.[45] What makes them suitable for this discussion, is the fact that each of the accidents in question resulted in a fatality, meaning that it was investigated as

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[41] Deposition of Mary Turner, May 1744, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1744/37
[42] Deposition of Mary Turner
[43] Deposition of Mary Turner
[44] See Chapter Two
[45] Craig Spence, *Accidents and Violent Death in Early Modern London: 1650-1750,* (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer, 2016), p. 208

potential criminal activity. That these incidents were investigated, allow us to understand criminal activity in its broadest sense.

In his study on urban accidents, Craig Spence argues that London's urban landscape cultivated opportunities for accidents to happen, as the city's 'urban fabric' presented a wide range of hazards: climbing up ladders, working on scaffolds, or climbing across roofs and gutters.[46] Spence's ideas also apply to a rural setting. Agricultural exterior spaces could also present opportunities for accidents to occur. The case of Oliver Young in 1675 serves as a good example. Oliver was mowing with Arthur Keeth, Robert Rolt, and William Flanders. According to Robert and William's depositions, they heard Oliver say, 'Lord have mercy upon mee, I feare I am undone'.[47] Arthur had apparently cut Oliver's leg with a scythe, leading to his death; all three depositions agreed that it was an accident.[48] The two were also said to be 'good friends' before the incident, therefore underlining the accidental nature of what occurred.[49] Although the testimonies of the men do not specify where exactly the incident occurred or what they were mowing, we can infer that it was likely an agricultural field – perhaps one adjacent to the main dwelling home. Mowing was an agricultural task that involved cutting down grass or corn with a scythe. If we look closely at the task being undertaken, we can see that the type of tool (a scythe) used for mowing was a hazard in itself.

A similar theme emerges from the depositions taken in the case of a shooting involving John Flint and Thomas Holstock. In 1679, Thomas Holstock (age unknown) visited his father's house in Elstow. Thomas borrowed his father's gun to shoot at sparrows in the back yard, when John Flint, a servant boy aged thirteen, came up to Thomas and 'layd hold on the small end of the said gun'.[50] John 'pulled it off his [i.e. Thomas's] arme, and said twice together Shoote mee, Shoote mee […] and he beinge all the tyme in plucking of it, at the Small end, the Gun went of', and shot him.[51] John died within twenty-four hours.[52] Thomas was also noted to have 'noe Malice or evil will towardes the said boy, nor did Intend any way to hurt him'.[53] We can see how opportunities for accidents could be created based on how the

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[46] Spence, *Accidents and Violent Death in Early Modern London: 1650-1750,* p. 99

[47] Depositions of Robert Rolt and William Flanders, July 1675, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1676/W/22

[48] Depositions of Robert Rolt and William Flanders

[49] Deposition of William Flanders

[50] Deposition of Thomas Holstock, November 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/93

[51] Deposition of Thomas Holstock

[52] Deposition of Thomas Holstock

[53] Deposition of Thomas Holstock

exterior domestic space was being used. Barbara Hanawalt notes that boys aged between eight and twelve began to undertake tasks that demonstrated their transition into adult life, as they were being trained for the work they would eventually perform as men.[54] Undertaking more adult-like tasks, meant that the accident patterns in work and play became closer to those of men.[55] This is demonstrated in the events between Thomas Holstock and John Flint, especially when we consider the activity taking place and how this was shaped by age.

The significance of age is evident in the narrative of Thomas Holstock and John Flint, especially when we consider why Thomas was shooting sparrows in the first place. It is noted that Thomas came from the City of London, to visit his father's house in Elstow. Despite his age not being specified, we can infer that Thomas had perhaps moved away from home for an apprenticeship. Although children could leave home for service as young as seven or eight, most apprentices were in the age range of fifteen to twenty-five.[56] It is possible that Thomas fell within this age bracket. As revealed elsewhere in this thesis, gender and age were closely linked to the acquisition and display of manhood.[57] Young men were trained in 'manly' pursuits that included hunting, fencing, and running.[58] When looking at the narrative of events that Thomas Holstock was involved in, there are various indications that Thomas was at this key stage of his life.[59] Firstly, shooting was a manly pursuit, as suggested by didactic literature that aimed to guide young men into manhood. The *Advice of a father: or, Counsel to a child*, published in 1664, when discussing recreational activities, recommended that the young man must not 'be effeminate in thy sports', as 'those which are most manly, will best become thee'.[60] Likewise, in *Instructions to a Son*, published in 1689, the author reiterated , that young men must choose exercise that is 'virile and masculine'.[61] The emphasis on taking part in sports that are deemed masculine is a recurring idea across didactic literature, suggesting that it is a key aspect of the journey of manhood. Moreover, the fact that Thomas went to his father's house and borrowed his father's gun to engage in this activity is

[54] Barbara A. Hanawalt, 'Childrearing among the Lower Classes of Late Medieval England', in *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 8.1, (1977), p. 19

[55] Hanawalt, 'Childrearing among the Lower Classes of Late Medieval England', p. 19

[56] Will Coster, *Family and Kinship in England 1450-1800,* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 2016), p. 58

[57] See Chapter Two

[58] Elizabeth Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England: Honour, Sex and Marriage,* (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 1999), p. 31

[59] Foyster, *Manhood in Early Modern England,* p. 57

[60] Anonymous, *The Advice of a Father; or, Counsel to a Child. Directing Him How to Demean Himself in the Most Important Passages of This Life* (London: printed for the author, 1664), p. 5,

[61] Archibald Campbell, *Instructions to a Son*, *under these following Heads*, (London: Richard Baldwin, 1689), p. 105

significant. These elements suggest that Thomas' father was the one who taught him how to be a man, by allowing Thomas to use his space to 'train'. He did so by engaging in various manly pursuits; in this case, shooting at sparrows.

Furthermore, the gun that Thomas used belonged to his father, suggesting that the gun itself was a symbol of authority and masculinity, therefore adding to the idea that Thomas went to his home in Elstow to learn and establish his masculine identity. We also need to keep in mind that Thomas had a vested interest in stating that there was no malice behind his actions. Malice was a key factor in differentiating the crimes of murder and manslaughter. The lesser charge of manslaughter was deemed an unlawful killing without premeditation or malice.[62] Murder, on the other hand, was a deliberate and malicious killing.[63] This differentiation underlines why Thomas emphasised the lack of malice behind his actions. Despite seemingly being an accident, this incident sat on the 'edges' of crime. Although the incident was likely investigated because there was a fatality, perhaps there were also suspicions that Thomas deliberately shot John. In response, Thomas underscored the narrative of this being an accident by stating there was no malice behind his actions. This might also represent an attempt at receiving the lesser charge of manslaughter. If this incident was to become a criminal case, the lack of malice suggest that Thomas' actions were not premeditated. Additionally, if this was just an accident, it further reinforces Hanawalt's suggestion that accident patterns became closer to those of men; the activity being undertaken was one used to aid Thomas' transition into manhood.[64]

In comparison, in 1672, Sara Simson was in her house with John Taylor, a neighbour's child aged eight years old. She heard a gun go off, and said that John fell down beside her on the ground.[65] Sara cried out, and then 'came in divers women who shee thinkes caried the said John Taylor home to his fathers house'. Sara then went out into the yard and found her own son, Silvanus (also aged eight) crying, stating 'indeed mother I did not know the gun was charged'.[66] Sara's comment further underscores the significance of age. Silvanus, being only eight years old, seemingly picked up the gun without any intent. On the other

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[62] 'Crimes Tried at the Old Bailey', *The Old Bailey Proceedings online,* 1674-1913 (March 2018), https://www.oldbaileyonline.org/static/Crimes.jsp

[63] 'Crimes Tried at the Old Bailey'

[64] Hanawalt, 'Childrearing among the Lower Classes of Late Medieval England', p. 18

[65] Deposition of Sara Simson, July 1672, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1672/S/47

[66] Deposition of Sara Simson

hand, Thomas used the gun with intent, perhaps because he was older and was engaging in more manly pursuits. The question of why Silvanus had the gun in the first place remains.

One interpretation of these events is that Silvanus was playing. P.J.P. Goldberg suggests that 'narrative after narrative explains that accidents befell children when they went out to play'.[67] Children's play involved exploring outside the home and in the street, often with relatively little adult supervision - Silvanus, for instance, appears to have been outside in the yard alone.[68] If Silvanus was outside in the yard playing by himself, it is possible that he picked up the gun as part of a game. Therefore, age becomes a significant factor that influenced people's actions in these semi-domestic spaces. That the yard was an open, unsupervised space, meant that Silvanus had a degree of freedom to explore and play without the supervision of an adult; there was no one around to stop him from picking up the gun and accidentally shooting John Taylor. As previously established, age and gender are key components in the dynamics of crime and interpersonal relationships. Ralph Houlbrook notes that age seven was a milestone in mental and physical developments, as 'it was believed, that the child could tell right from wrong and became capable of mortal sin and crime'.[69] Whilst this incident was not deemed a crime or a deliberate act by the courts, Silvanus was aware that he did something wrong. This exemplifies the role that age played in shaping the events of this case, as although Silvanus picked up the gun due to curiosity and play - two components of childhood - he still possessed the ability to understand his actions.

Likewise, John Flint's actions can be interpreted as shaped by his adolescence. John's apparently playful declarations of 'Shoote mee, Shoote mee' could be read as a demand for attention from Thoman who was not a regular resident in the house.[70] Alternatively John Flint was noted to be thirteen years old, putting him in a similar age bracket as Thomas – both were adolescents. It is possible that John was trying to assert his own authority over Thomas, who perhaps derived authority from it being his father's home, even though he was only visiting. Leanne Calvert's analysis of John Tennent's journal that recorded his life as an apprentice across four years in Coleraine, reveals similar concerns about developing manliness and authority.[71] Calvert notes that John was not an eager apprentice, and how this

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[67] P.J.P Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender in Later Medieval England', in *Viator*, 39.1, (2008), p. 258
[68] Goldberg, 'Childhood and Gender in Later Medieval England', p. 258
[69] Ralph Houlbrook, *The English Family 1450 – 1700,* (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 1984), p. 150
[70] Deposition of Thomas Holstock
[71] Leanne Calvert, 'The Journal of John Tennent, 1786—90', in *Analecta Hibernica,* no. 43, (2012), pp. 72-74

shaped the relationship between him and his master.[72] John and his master often argued, and as Calvert notes, there were instances where John deliberately usurped his master's authority.[73] This idea of conflict and tussles for manly authority is evident on a smaller scale between Thomas Holstock, the master's son, and John Flint, the servant. If the gun was a symbol of manhood and authority, the fact that John grabbed hold of the end, and confidently said 'Shoote mee, Shoote mee', adds to the suggestion that he was trying to assert his authority over Thomas and provoke a conflict between the two.[74]

Additionally, friendship was central to these cases. Arthur Keeth and Oliver Young, for example, were said to be 'very good friends', according to the deposition of William Flanders.[75] This was likely emphasised to underline that there was a lack of deliberate malicious motive and was reinforced by the fact that 'hee [Arthur] knew not that hee had hurt the said Oliver Young till hee heard him say Lord, Arthur thou hast undone mee'; if Arthur did not realise what he had done, it suggests that this his actions were accidental.[76] Furthermore, considering the friendship between Arthur and Oliver alongside the type of task that was being carried out provides an indication into how the two met and formed a relationship. In her study on late medieval England, Barbara Hanawalt argues that 'in rural society, men worked more outside than women and more of them died in work-related accidents'.[77] Similarly, Jane Whittle notes that men dominated in agricultural work, suggesting that Arthur and Oliver potentially became friends by working together frequently in this agricultural space.[78] The incident also took place in July 1675, which would have been the ideal season for this type of agricultural work to commence in this space, meaning that Arthur and Oliver would have seen each other regularly for work. Therefore, we can see how time, the exterior agricultural space, and thus, its usage allowed this friendship to form, but also to break, as these elements cultivated the opportunity and environment for Oliver's death. Ideas of friendship were also prominent in the narrative of events between Silvanus

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[72] Calvert, 'The Journal of John Tennent, 1786—90', pp. 72-74
[73] An example includes an instance where John takes a pistol belonging to his master from the house, p. 42; Calvert, 'The Journal of John Tennent, 1786—90', p. 73
[74] Deposition of Thomas Holstock
[75] Deposition of William Flanders
[76] Deposition of Arthur Keeth, July 1675, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1676/W/22
[77] Hanawalt, 'Childrearing among the Lower Classes of Late Medieval England', p. 8
[78] This is not to say that women did not do any agricultural work at all; Jane Whittle, 'The Project's Findings: What work did women and men do in early modern England?', in *Women's Work in Rural England, 1500-1700*, https://earlymodernwomenswork.wordpress.com/2018/03/09/the-projects-findings-what-work-did-women-and-men-do-in-early-modern-england/ [Accessed on: 06/09/2023]

and John, where we can gain an insight into relationships across households. The deposition of Theophilus East, a surgeon, claimed that before dying, John stated 'he was sure, the sd Silvanus Simson did not think to shoot him or doe him any harme'.[79] We know that the two boys were at the very least, neighbours. The fact that John was sure that Silvanus would not deliberately do him any harm, however, suggests that the two were friends.

Furthermore, the interaction of the two boys on that fateful day illustrates ideas on dispersed parenting networks. Alongside her own son, Sara was also looking after John, who was her neighbour's child; both boys were eight years old.[80] Sarah Knott has drawn attention to the labour of motherhood, arguing that 'mother' should be conceived as a verb.[81] According to Knott, maternal labour could be dispersed beyond birth or adoptive mothers, noting that there was rarely just one maternal caregiver.[82] Work by Katie Barclay and Kate Gibson has likewise revealed how parenting was also shared in the case of illegitimate children too.[83] Although we do not have much information about John's own home and his parents, it is possible that Sara was acting in the capacity of a care-giver.

The communal nature of this space is further revealed as 'divers women' came and carried John to his father's house after hearing Sara cry out.[84] This reinforces the idea of a dispersed parenting network operating within the wider neighbourhood. While these women might not have been directly caring for John before the incident, they were on hand to offer assistance; they were likely aware of this network of women like Sara who offered maternal care and labour, hence why they were on hand to help. Furthermore, we can see how kinship and space were interconnected in this narrative. The home functioned not only as a living space, but also as a workplace for Sara when she looked after other children. This brings into sharper focus the role of the wider neighbourhood, acting as a space which allowed for these networks of dispersed parenting and maternal caregiving to operate between households.

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[79] Deposition of Theophilus East, July 1672, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1672/S/49
[80] Deposition of Sara Simson
[81] Sarah Knott, 'Theorizing and Historicizing Mothering's Many Labours', in Past & Present, vol. 246, (2020), p. 6, 9
[82] Knott, 'Theorizing and Historicizing Mothering's Many Labours', p. 6, 9
[83] Katie Barclay, 'Love, Care and the Illegitimate Child in Eighteenth-Century Scotland', in *Transactions of the RHS*, vol 29, (2019), p. 110; Kate Gibson, 'Mothering Illegitimate Children in Late Eighteenth-Century England', in *Past & Present*, vol. 246, (2020), p. 143
[84] Deposition of Sara Simson

Although not necessarily construed as crimes, the narratives of accidents provide a valuable insight into how space, its usage, and relationships between kin were interwoven. The use of external domestic spaces presented physical hazards, both guns and scythes, and brought about these incidents. Having created the circumstances for these fatal accidents to occur, these spaces also shaped the relationships seen in these narratives. Taken as a whole, these cases demonstrate that gender and age were crucial in shaping the type of activity or task being carried out, and that the relationships between people in these spaces significantly shaped the perceived criminality of the event.

Conclusion

Focusing on cases and incidents that took place in the exterior domestic space, this chapter has demonstrated how space, its usage, and relationships were interwoven. Cases of theft are significant in demonstrating not only the accessibility of exterior domestic spaces, but also how these spaces were open and exposed. Whilst being spaces of high opportunity, exterior domestic spaces such as yards also served as spaces of high risk, highlighting the importance of time and space in shaping criminal behaviour. This chapter also adds to the discussion of boundaries that we saw in chapter two by investigating cases of assault, in which we see boundaries working on different levels to shape the interactions and behaviours between people. Moreover, the narratives of accidents and cases of assault that have been investigated are tied together by their motive; whilst the narratives of accidents suggest a lack of malice or deliberate motive, the cases of assault suggest that the perpetrator may not have believed that they were engaging in criminal behaviour. Furthermore, an analysis of fatal accidents that took place in these spaces has illuminated various aspects of long eighteenth-century life. This includes the significance of age and gender, which becomes particularly evident when considering the types of activities being undertaken in these narratives.

Chapter 4

Reputation, Commercial Trade, and Sociability: The Shaping of Credit in Domestic Business Spaces

Focusing on crimes and other misbehaviours that occurred in domestic business spaces, this chapter sits at the nexus of scholarship that explores the relationship between credit and reputation on the one hand, and the dual role of the home as a living space and place of work on the other. It argues that the commercial and transient nature of domestic business spaces enabled social interaction to take place. The cases in question reveal how these spaces were central hubs in the community that were vital to the spread of information and gossip, but also how the movement of, and interaction between, customers and business holders facilitated criminal behaviour in these spaces.

The themes of personal credit and reputation are key to understanding the social aspect of commercial spaces, which facilitated the trade of buying and selling within the wider community. Craig Muldrew argues that most buying or selling was done on trust or credit.[1] He emphasises the importance of trust, as an individual's creditworthiness in their community was vital; people were involved in 'tangled webs of economic and social dependency based only on each other's word, or the word of others'.[2] Additionally, K. Tawny Paul notes that for credit-based economies, personal reputation was a type of currency.[3] Reputation circulated by word of mouth, and the loss of credit had the ability to ruin a person's livelihood.[4] The making and breaking of credit was key to long eighteenth-century society: personal credit and reputation were central to commercial trade and a person's creditworthiness.

Understandings of credit and reputation can be extended by engaging with scholarship that problematises the home as both a living and workspace. In many instances, living and

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[1] Craig Muldrew, 'Interpreting the market: the ethics of credit and community relations in early modern England', in Social History, 18.2, (1993), p. 169

[2] Muldrew, 'Interpreting the market: the ethics of credit and community relations in early modern England', p. 174

[3] K. Tawny Paul, 'Credit, reputation, and masculinity in British urban commerce: Edinburgh, c. 1710-70', in Economic History Review, 66.1, (2013), p. 226

[4] Tawny Paul, 'Credit, reputation, and masculinity in British urban commerce', p. 227

work co-existed under one roof.[5] Leigh Alston highlights that in the late medieval period, the physical structures of buildings shaped the blurred boundary between living and work. She argues that shops were built to a standard, multi-purpose pattern which declared buildings as 'business' rather than just 'domestic', especially when these buildings were visible from the street.[6] The separation of living and work was difficult to achieve across various commercial and semi-domestic spaces. Jane Hamlett and Hannah Barker similarly emphasise that in the early modern era, the demarcation of living and work often depended on the nature of the business, arguing that this separation was hardest to achieve when the family business was 'concerned with domestic provision', such as innkeeping.[7] This had gendered implications. Tim Reinke-Williams has shown that in the early modern period, women were dominant in the selling of foodstuffs.[8] He suggests that the lack of clear separation between living and work in shops meant that women completed dual duties in these spaces fulfilling their domestic obligations and taking on employment.[9]

To extend these discussions, this chapter argues that the social and commercial aspect of small business spaces could affect the making and breaking of an individual's credit and reputation in a semi-domestic setting. This is brought into sharper focus with the role of these spaces as central hubs in the wider community, where people could shape an individual's future involvement in commercial trade by the spreading of information through word of mouth; the permeability of spaces in which customers were constantly moving in and out could expose and damage personal credit and reputation. Moreover, this chapter demonstrates how the blurred boundary between living and work, and the social function of spaces such as inns could become complex, often leaving innholders and their wives vulnerable to those whose personal credit and reputations they did not know, and at times leaving them victims of crime. The domino effect of breaking one's reputation was often initiated through the means of crime, thus triggering the breakdown of trust in an individual and the spreading of information in the wider community.

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[5] Hannah Barker and Jane Hamlett, 'Living above the Shop: Home, Business, and Family in the English "Industrial Revolution"', in *Journal of Family History*, 35.4, (2010), pp. 314-316

[6] Leigh Alston, 'Late Medieval Workshops in East Anglia', in *The vernacular workshop: from craft to industry, 1400–1900*, ed. by., P. S. Barnwell, Marilyn Palmer and Malcolm Airs, (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2004), pp. 58-59

[7] Barker and Hamlett, 'Living above the Shop', p, 315

[8] Tim Reinke-Williams, *Women, work and sociability in early modern London*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), p. 104

[9] Reinke-Williams, *Women, work and sociability in early modern London,* p. 104

i.   <u>Shops as spaces of sociability</u>

Shops, despite their main purpose being commercial trade, were also spaces where people met, interacted, and communicated. As public arenas of trade and social interaction, these spaces were key in the making or breaking of personal credit and reputation. This is highlighted in the case of Thomas Crawley and John Winch. On 13th October 1679, Thomas Crawley, John Winch, and some others were in a blacksmith's shop in Bedford.[10] The depositions state that John said 'heer's the Rogue that workes for eight pence a day, when others have Twelve pence', meaning Thomas.[11] The two engaged in a verbal altercation, leading John Winch to thrust a red-hot iron rod into the eye of Thomas Crawley.[12] John had apparently told Thomas that 'he would teach him to stare in his face'.[13] Important in this case are the interactions between the men, and the fact that the events took place in a blacksmith's shop.

It has been widely established that in the seventeenth century, alehouses and coffee houses were central to social interactions. Peter Clark argues that alehouses provided a 'focal point for a matrix of economic, social and cultural activities', noting that it is impossible to think about the early modern neighbourhood without considering the role of the alehouse.[14] However, the sociability of shops and their function as social meeting points is more complex. Annemarjin Douwes argues that apothecary shops in Amsterdam were not public places with an important social function, and that people would much rather visit a tavern or coffee shop to fulfil that need.[15] Even though apothecary shops did not 'actively promote socialisation', she also notes that this did not mean that no conversations would be held in these spaces.[16] Conversely, Evelyn Welch argues that sixteenth-century pharmacies allowed for a mixing of clients that meant they often acted as a key site of 'commercial and social exchange', where rumour, politics, and popular songs were shared.[17] The lack of rigid social segregation and the solidarities developed between Londoners who lived in close proximity was reinforced through sociability in streets, shops, and taverns. Welch notes that not all

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[10] Although naming some people, this case leaves some people unnamed.
[11] Depositions of Edward Mores and Nicholas Browne, October 1679, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1680/W/105
[12] Depositions of Edward Mores and Nicholas Browne
[13] Deposition of Nicholas Browne
[14] Peter Clark, *The English Alehouse: A Social History 1200-1830*, (London: Longman Publishing, 1983), p. 339
[15] Annemarijn Douwes, 'Visiting Pharmacies: An Exploratory Study of Apothecary Shops as Public Spaces in Amsterdam, c. 1600–1850', (MSc Research Thesis, Utrecht University, 2020), pp. 46-52
[16] Douwes, 'Visiting Pharmacies', p. 47, 50
[17] Evelyn Welch, 'Space and spectacle in the Renaissance pharmacy', in *Medicina Storia,* (2008), p. 128

exchanges were pleasant, and could at times lead to aggression, as was the case with John Winch and Thomas[18].

Although the space in question is neither an apothecary nor pharmacy, this case uncovers the role of the blacksmith's shop as a space where members of the community did interact with each other, as customers were constantly moving in and out. Kathryn A. Morrison notes that, for medieval shops, location was important; most shops were located in thriving commercial positions, often facing the marketplace or the streets that led off it.[19] Jan Gillisz's depiction of a blacksmith shop (see Figure 2) illustrates multiple people present at once. In line with depictions like these, David L. McDougall argues that 'the blacksmith's forge was the hub of village life, where the continuous activity produced a spectacle attracting visitors' and, like the sixteenth-century pharmacies investigated by Welch, the deliberate positioning of shops in thriving commercial locations evidently continued from the medieval period into later centuries.[20] Being the 'hub of village life' meant that the blacksmith's shop acted as a meeting place for diverse members of the community, as shown by Crawley's meeting with several other men and the blacksmith himself in this space.[21] The details of the altercation suggest that the men knew each other. Whilst not necessarily acting as a coffee house or alehouse, where people deliberately sought out others for social purposes, the blacksmith's shop was a thriving hub and meeting place in the rural community. It was a space where commercial trade, interaction, and conversation intersected.

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[18] Welch, 'Space and spectacle in the Renaissance pharmacy', p. 128
[19] Kathryn A. Morrison, English Shops and Shopping: An Architectural History, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003), pp. 20-21
[20] David L. McDougall, *The Country Blacksmith*, (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), p. 5
[21] McDougall, *The Country Blacksmith,* p. 5; From the depositions, we know that Nicholas Browne, the blacksmith, as well as Winch, Crawley, Edward Mores, and 'others' were present inside the shop.

Figure 2: Jan Gillisz. van Vliet, 'Smeden'
(1635), Rijksmuseum,
https://www.rijksmuseum.nl/en/collection/R
P-P-OB-103.706

Labour and the working relationship between John Winch and Thomas Crawley were central to the disagreement. When John accused Thomas of undercutting labour, he did so publicly and in the hearing of others. Those present in the shop witnessed the dispute, and through this were made aware of Thomas's alleged duplicitous work practices. Customers in the shop were not only passive recipients of the gossip, but potentially central actors in spreading the information they had acquired, thereby contributing to the undermining of Thomas's reputation.[22] In a society where gossip was key to the spreading of information and rumour, the fact that the blacksmith's shop was a public commercial hub meant that this dispute had potential repercussions for Thomas. As Muldrew and Tawny Paul note, a person's trustworthiness was the concern of whole towns and villages, and their reputation circulated by word of mouth.[23] The spreading of these accusations against Thomas likely damaged his personal credit and reputation not only among those who frequented the blacksmith's shop, but in the wider community too. If word about his wrongdoings travelled from the shop into the wider neighbourhood, people would no longer trust Thomas. Consequently, he would struggle to find opportunities for work, and would face a reluctance from small businesses in the community to sell to him or allow him to use their services.

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[22] McDougall, *The Country Blacksmith,* p. 5
[23] Muldrew, 'Interpreting the market', p. 178; Tawny Paul, 'Credit, reputation, and masculinity in British urban commerce', p. 227

In undermining Thomas' reputation, John called on notions of masculinity and male competition. The term 'rogue' illustrates this, and is noted to have been spoken 'severall times' during the verbal altercation.[24] As mentioned in previous chapters, this was a term commonly used in disputes between men to signal accusations of dishonesty and deviance.[25] Moreover, Alexandra Shepard argues that competition between men was often expressed violently, and that such violence 'contained precise meanings … serving simultaneously to confer authority on its perpetrators and to degrade its victims'.[26] In this case, John's words served to diminish and degrade Thomas's credit and reputation. Moreover, by doing so publicly, John Winch triggered a potential domino effect of breaking Thomas Crawley's credit, as well as undermining his masculinity.

The physical assault demonstrates the crux of this argument and reflects Shepard's argument that male violence held precise meanings.[27] Certain actions and gestures common in disputes between men were symbolic gestures and carried associated meanings, such as striking off an opponent's hat or damaging one's clothes.[28] She also argues that these actions were far more damaging than physical abuse. The nature of the blacksmith's shop facilitated the violence of the crime by providing a weapon; as seen in Jan Gillisz's depiction of a blacksmith shop (Figure 2), tools appear on the floor near to the men in the space. More important, however, is the deliberate nature of John Winch stabbing Thomas Crawley in the eye. Although not a gesture like damaging clothes, when John attacked Thomas, he not only did he damage Thomas's eyesight, but John's actions held symbolic meaning. By removing his reason to be in the blacksmith's shop, since he can no longer work, John also removed Thomas's right to be in that space.[29]

This overt act of physical abuse reveals how space intersected with temporality. Not only were the events of this case facilitated by the commercial and social aspects of this space, as it enabled these interactions to take place, but the meanings of the space also changed depending on the stage of events. Initially, the blacksmith's shop acted as a commercial business space, which is what brought the men together in the first place. Then,

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[24] Depositions of Edward Mores and Nicholas Browne

[25] Alexandra Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), pp. 175-176

[26] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood,* p. 140

[27] Shepard, *Meanings of Manhood,* p. 140

[28] Damaging one's clothes was, as Shepard notes, a literal dressing down to indicate status; Shepard, p. 144

[29] In her discussion of disability and work, Margaret Pelling notes that blindness was damaging to ones work and livelihood. Aside from a few blind or 'almost blind' people who still worked, many could do nothing; Margaret Pelling, *The Common Lot: Sickness, Medical Occupations and the Urban Poor in Early Modern England*, (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 1998), p. 85

the space turned into a public arena of masculine competition, where personal credit could potentially be broken. Finally, the verbal altercation and physical assault not only maimed Thomas, but also damaged his personal credit and reputation, therefore affecting his ability to buy or sell his labour in these commercial spaces again. The commercial element of spaces like the blacksmith's shop were closely intertwined with public notions of credit and reputation. The element of sociability within these spaces meant that one's credit could easily be made or broken.

ii.   The blurred boundaries of inns

Inns complicated the relationship between personal credit and space, due to the blurred boundary between living and work, and the vital social aspect to the functioning of the domestic business. Whilst it was possible for innholders to own a house and separate building, the inn could also serve as a semi-domestic space where living and work overlapped. In terms of what services these spaces provided, Beat Kümin notes that an 'inn' served alcoholic drinks, hot food, offered accommodation and stabling, in comparison to a tavern, which only served cold food and mainly wine; taverns had more limited rights.[30] Inns and taverns were therefore simultaneously and explicitly a domestic, commercial, and social space.

The case of Elizabeth Rogers and Henry Hayes illustrates the complex relationship between domestic spaces, businesses, and social interactions. In February 1775, Elizabeth Rogers, wife of Benjamin Rogers, deposed that Henry Hayes came to their 'house'.[31] She claimed that Henry 'called for and had some brandy and water and other liquor', as well as supper.[32] When he finished his supper, Elizabeth deposed that Henry 'threw the bones at her and told her that the Deed was to be done', which she 'apprehended was to murder her'.[33] Henry allegedly stated that the deed 'fell upon him', and 'that it should not be long before he would do the job', so she should 'make peace with God for it would be better for her'.[34] Elizabeth testified that she believed she was 'in Danger of her life on receiving some Bodily

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[30] Beat Kümin & B. Ann Tlusty, *The World of the Tavern: Public Houses in Early Modern Europe*, (Abingdon: Taylor and Francis Group, 2017), p. 6
[31] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers, February 1775, Bedfordshire Quarter Session Records, (Bedfordshire Archives), QSR1775/84
[32] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers
[33] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers
[34] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers

harm' from Henry Hayes and therefore 'require[d] Sureties of the Peace … not for Malice Hatred or evil will but simply and purely for the causes aforesaid'.[35]

Firstly, it must be noted that, despite referring to the space as her 'house', it is assumed here that Elizabeth meant the inn: their family run business. As Barker and Hamlett argue, separation between home and work was hardest to achieve in businesses such as innkeeping; at times, the 'distinction between the residential and the commercial was not necessarily clear-cut'.[36] In this case, Elizabeth deposed that she served Henry supper, brandy, and 'other liquor'.[37] The deposition notes that her husband is an innkeeper, hence, we can assume that Elizabeth was in the space of the inn, where Henry arrived as a customer. It is also not unlikely that Elizabeth was working in the inn. David Pennington notes that wives of tavern keepers and inn-holders served food and drink, and often made-up rooms.[38] He argues that it is likely many married women ran alehouses whilst their husbands, who held the license, pursued other means of work.[39] Elizabeth was present inside the inn, working and serving customers like Henry in her husband's absence, demonstrating that this was also true for inns.[40]

The threat of future danger and fear that Elizabeth felt was key to this case, which sits on the 'edges of crime', where cases make evident the boundaries of potential criminal activity.[41] Henry threw the bones from his supper at Elizabeth, stating that 'the Deed was to be done', which she apprehended was to murder her.[42] He had not yet, therefore, done anything to warrant an assault charge. When Henry told Elizabeth to 'make peace with God', his words were perceived as a future threat to Elizabeth's life.[43] Henry's language instilled fear in Elizabeth, to the degree that she sued for peace to protect herself from future violence. The horror that she felt from his words was enhanced by the throwing of bones.

The language of Elizabeth's deposition reveals how people navigated and utilised the known complexities of small business spaces, such as the blurred boundaries between living

[35] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers
[36] Barker and Hamlett, 'Living above the Shop', pp. 315-316
[37] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers
[38] David Pennington, *Going to Market: Women, Trade and Social Relations in Early Modern English Towns, c. 1550-1650*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), p. 4
[39] Pennington, *Going to Market,* p. 4
[40] We can infer that Elizabeth's husband was not likely present during the events of this case, as Elizabeth does not mention him being inside the inn in her deposition; Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers
[41] See Chapter Three for further exploration of this theme.
[42] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers
[43] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers

and work, to their advantage. In her deposition, Elizabeth shaped the narrative of events with evocative language. By referring to the space as a 'house', she emphasised the domesticity of the space, and by doing so, heightened the threat and danger faced.[44] Chapter two exhibited instances of men being able to retreat to their home by crossing its threshold, which acted as a 'safe space' for them after a fight.[45] However, in this case, it was not as clear cut for Elizabeth, thus revealing the vulnerability of innkeepers and their wives. Inns were explicitly both commercial and social spaces, and domestic dwellings. The labelling of the inn as a 'house' suggests that for Elizabeth, the inn acted as an in between space, that offered no retreat from uncomfortable social interactions. The function of the space was therefore key to both Henry's actions and Elizabeth's perception of them; the home's dual role as an inn allowed Henry to enter as a paying customer, whilst also leaving Elizabeth with no 'safe space' to which to retreat. Had Elizabeth had a secure space to retire to she may not have needed external intervention from the courts to assure her safety. The nature of her living and working arrangements, therefore, shaped her perceptions of her interactions with others.

The blurred boundary between home and work also played an important role in facilitating the events that took place. The function of the home as a business where customers were provided food, drink, and accommodation, allowed Henry to cross into this space, which Elizabeth perceived as domestic. Inns were a key feature of towns, both big and small, and often catered for travellers.[46] Although Henry is noted to be from the same parish as Elizabeth and her husband Benjamin, we do not know whether he had any previous interactions with the couple, or whether he had visited their inn before. Regardless, as a paying customer, they had to provide a service to him. Beat Kümin notes that in early modern Bern and Vaun, inns and taverns were legally obliged to admit all members of the public, apart from a small number of criminal or dangerous individuals.[47] In applying a similar idea to Bedfordshire, if Henry had not previously interacted with Elizbeth or her husband, then they likely had no reason to deny him entry. Perhaps Elizabeth had no prior knowledge of Henry's reputation or credit. Even if she did know who he was and was aware of his reputation, the unpredictability of his actions left her fearing for her life. Therefore,

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[44] Deposition of Elizabeth Rogers
[45] See Chapter Two
[46] Paul Jennings, *A History of Drink and the English, 1500-2000*, (Abingdon: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016)
[47] Beat Kümin, 'Useful to have, but difficult to govern. Inns and taverns in early modern Bern and Vaud', *Journal of Early Modern History*, 3.2, (1999), p. 5

innkeepers and their wives were vulnerable to those whose credit or behaviour had yet to be established.

The necessity of establishing someone's reputation underlines the importance of social interactions in commercial spaces. Although this incident was not as public as the assault in the blacksmith's shop and lacked witnesses, it still reveals how the interaction in the inn jeopardised or uncovered Henry's credit and reputation. Elizabeth and Benjamin's inn would have been a central point in Wyboston, the parish they lived in. As a social and commercial space, the inn was likely a well-known spot in the community, and as key individuals within that space, Elizabeth and Benjamin would have been well known. Her testimony and legal action against Henry therefore not only damaged his credit, but it also crafted a public image of him as a dangerous threat. Henry's actions and Elizabeth's accusation meant that Henry acquired a reputation of unpredictable behaviour, therefore breaking trust from the wider community, and damaging his personal credit and reputation. As with the case in the blacksmith's shop, the spreading of information was vital to the making or breaking of one's credit and reputation. Although the social and commercial function of inns left innholders and their wives vulnerable, the position of inns as central spaces meant that they played a vital role in the making and breaking of credit and reputation in the wider community.

iii.   Inns as spaces of mobility

The social purpose of inns was also key in facilitating criminal behaviour, as illustrated in the case of Sarah Spencer and William Norton. In May 1671, William Norton and his wife, Elizabeth Norton, came to Mary Farre's 'house' (inn) looking for lodging.[48] They stayed there from Friday night until Monday morning, when they both left.[49] On Monday night, however, William Norton came back to the inn alone, and stayed there until the next morning.[50] After William had left, his wife Elizabeth returned to the inn looking for him..[51] Mary told Elizabeth that he had stayed the night.[52] Eventually, they realised that William had left with Mary's maid, Sarah Spencer, and had taken several goods which they had stolen from the

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[48] Deposition of Mary Farre, May 1671, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1671/S?30; as with the case of Elizabeth Rogers, this chapter is taking the term 'house' to mean the inn owned by Mary and her husband, as her deposition states that William and Sarah came looking for lodging. Overnight accommodation was one of the main functions of an inn.
[49] Deposition of Mary Farre
[50] Deposition of Mary Farre
[51] Deposition of Mary Farre
[52] Deposition of Mary Farre

inn.[53] Mary Farre told Robert Smart, a tobacco pipe maker, that she had lost several parcels of linen, and that she was sure William Norton and Sarah Spencer had stolen them.[54] Robert deposed that Mary 'desired hym to pursure them'.[55] Once William and Sarah were apprehended, both confessed.[56] William admitted that he went away with Sarah, and that 'Sarah did carry with her a bundell wrapt in a coate and he bid her take none but her own'.[57] Most revelatory, however, was Sarah Spencer's confession, in which she deposed that William had informed her that the woman he stayed with (which we know to be his wife) was his sister.[58] He apparently told Sarah that he would 'give hyr ten pounds to leave hyr place and goe with him, that he would carry hyr into a brave country … and that he wold buye hyr new clothes and marry hyr'.[59] As a result, she went away with him and carried away some parcels of linen, which she confessed were the goods of Mary Farre.

The complicated relationships between William Norton, his wife Elizabeth, and Sarah Spencer demonstrates the role of the inn in enabling new relationships to form between people who were not a part of each other's existing kinship networks. Despite initially arriving with his wife Elizabeth, it is likely that when William spent the first few nights at the inn, he met Sarah Spencer, who worked there as a servant. As James R. Brown notes, female servants attended to a 'wider range of male agents from beyond the household'.[60] Additionally, Charmian Mansell argues that due to the mobility of early modern society, opportunities for people to encounter each other were abundant.[61] Whilst the mobility of women in service enabled encounters both within and beyond the parish, servants did not need to leave the home to meet others.[62] Most servants and employees lived on the premises, as they were essential to the functioning of inns and taverns; these businesses were 'twenty-four hour operations' that enabled intimate encounters between locals and strangers.[63] Although briefly encountering each other over a period of just days, we can infer that it was

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[53] Deposition of Mary Farre
[54] Deposition of Mary Farre
[55] Deposition of Robert Smart, May 1671, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1671/S?30
[56] Depositions of William Norton and Sarah Spencer, May 1671, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1671/S?30
[57] Deposition of William Norton
[58] Deposition of Sarah Spencer
[59] Deposition of Sarah Spencer
[60] James R. Brown, 'The Landscape of Drink: Inns, Taverns and Alehouses in Early Modern Southampton', (Doctor of Philosophy thesis, University of Warwick, 2007), p. 99
[61] Charmian Mansell, *Female Servants in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2024), p. 268
[62] Mansell, *Female Servants in Early Modern England,* p. 250
[63] Brown, 'The Landscape of Drink', p. 97; Kümin, 'Useful to have, but difficult to govern', p. 13.

during this time that William and Sarah interacted with each other; his position as a customer and hers as a servant enabled 'intimate encounters' between the pair.[64]

Central to the formation of this relationship was the crime that took place. Despite not knowing whether William Norton's promises to Sarah Spencer were genuine, her role as a servant in the inn provided her with the knowledge of where goods were kept, especially if she was making up rooms – something which William Norton possibly used to his advantage. Sarah Spencer deposed in her confession that 'uppon his enticing of hyr shee did goe awaye with hym'.[65] The term 'enticing' suggests that Sarah Spencer may have realised that William's promises were not genuine, and that he only used her as an accomplice to commit the crime. In her discussion of the politics of touch, Laura Gowing briefly mentions how servants could be 'tempted' by their masters, especially when it came to sexual encounters.[66] Despite not being her master, the language of Sarah Spencer's confession implies that her relationship with William was formed through the means of temptation, suggesting that their relationship was implicitly sexual.[67] The language of Sarah's confession consistently placed the blame on William. When William Norton and Sarah Spencer were in the constable's custody, Sarah was asked why she took away Mary Farre's goods in such a manner. She replied by saying William 'wished her not to goe awaye emptye-handed' and claimed that he promised to leave his wife and marry her instead.[68] Sarah's framing of the narrative, and the way that it is couched in the language of seduction emphasises William as the one who tempted and encouraged her to steal and convinced her to carry away the goods.

Although this is a case which involved a complex navigation of relationships, temptation, and crime, Mary Farre was the victim of this theft. The goods from her business were stolen, which provides further evidence of how inns could leave innkeepers vulnerable to those whose reputations and credit were unknown. When Elizabeth Norton returned to the inn looking for her husband and was informed by Mary Farre that he had stayed the night, Elizabeth's immediate reaction was to tell the innkeeper to check if any of her goods were

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[64] Kümin, 'Useful to have, but difficult to govern', p. 13
[65] Deposition of Sarah Spencer
[66] Laura Gowing, *Common Bodies,* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), p, 64
[67] Soňa Nováková notes that in late eighteenth-century narratives of seduction, there was a preoccupation with the 'virtuous heroine' being seduced into believing her lover's false vows and consenting to sex. By claiming that William promised to marry her, Sarah's deposition is reminiscent of these types of seduction narratives; Soňa Nováková, 'Em/Bedded Narratives: Marriage, Seduction and Adultery in The Eighteenth-Century English Novel', in *Prague Studies in English*, issue no. 1, (2016), p. 10
[68] Deposition of Sarah Spencer

missing.[69] Craig Muldrew argues that in the formation of credit and reputation, trust was vital; trust was acquired and maintained through neighbourly relations.[70] William Norton is noted to be a piper from 'Wooleston, Northants', yet Mary Farre's inn was in Shefford.[71] This implies that William travelled to Shefford, and likely did not know anyone there, but also that Mary Farre did not know anything about his credit or reputation; he was not a part of her neighbourhood or community. As William's wife, Elizabeth possessed the most knowledge of his potential past dealings and behaviours. Furthermore, inns catered for travellers, allowing William to use the function of the space and the lack of knowledge about his reputation to his advantage. The purpose of an inn meant that it was not unusual to stay overnight and leave the next day; inns were spaces of mobility. Yet, it was precisely these ambiguities surrounding a customer's credit and reputation which left innkeepers vulnerable to crime, and enabled people like William Norton to use this lack of knowledge and spatial mobility to their advantage.

iv.   Credit, reputation, and kinship

So far, this chapter has demonstrated how an individual's credit could be made or broken, and the risks of not knowing someone's credit in domestic business spaces. As we have already seen, an individual's credit was not the sole concern of one person, and could affect one's relationship with, and access to, the wider community. The case of the Smythes family illuminates how an individual's personal reputation and credit also affected their family. It thus reveals the layered nature of credit that existed between customers and retailers, family members, and the local community. In 1675, Thomas Newman claimed that several goods from his shop went missing over the last year, and blamed Mary Smythes.[72] Thomas blamed her because Mary's son, William Smythes Junior, lived next door to him.[73] Newman believed that Mary when visiting her son had numerous opportunities to steal from him.[74] However, Mary Smythes denied stealing anything.[75] Mary and her husband, William Smythes, had their house searched due to Newman's accusation, which resulted in a warrant; some goods were

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[69] Deposition of Mary Farre
[70] Muldrew, 'Interpreting the market: the ethics of credit and community relations in early modern England', p. 177
[71] Deposition of Mary Farre
[72] Deposition of Thomas Newman, November 1675, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1676/W/28
[73] Deposition of Thomas Newman
[74] Deposition of Thomas Newman
[75] Deposition of Mary Smythes, February 1675, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1676/W/31

found which Newman believed were his.[76] However, William Smythes Senior deposed that his son had actually embezzled these goods from his master, Lewis Higgins.[77] William Senior had paid Higgins the amount owed to settle the case, but kept the goods.[78] Therefore, the goods found in the Smythes's household were apparently not the same as the ones stolen from Newman's shop.

Firstly, it is apparent that the physical space itself fuelled Thomas's suspicions. The depositions note that Thomas Newman's shop and the shop where William Smythes Junior worked were adjoined, which is why Newman believed that Mary had the opportunity to steal his goods when she visited her son.[79] Kathryn A. Morrison argues that by 1612, the 'traditional' shop and house plan was well established, and would ensure throughout the next three hundred years.[80] This plan included dual entrances into shops; they could be entered directly from the street or from a side passage, which also gave admission to the house.[81] Whilst we do not know whether the two shops in question were adjoined to other buildings, or just each other, the structure of the two shops reveals the importance of their physical proximity.

More importantly, the fact that William Smythes Senior settled the dispute with Lewis Higgins underscores how an individual's credit could have potential repercussions on the rest of the family. William Junior's history of theft not only damaged his own credit and reputation, but it stuck fast to that of his family too. This would explain why William Senior paid Higgins 'in satisfaction for the said imbezzlement and that thereupon the said Higgins did release [William Junior] upon all accompts'.[82] In his discussion on apprenticeships and the conflicts that could arise between masters and their apprentices, Patrick Wallis argues that apprentices and masters could reach an agreement to end the contract without needing to go to court.[83] Many of these cases involved masters negotiating compensation for embezzlement.[84] William Senior may have worked to settle the dispute to prevent it from

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[76] Deposition of Thomas Newman, October 1675, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1676/W/30
[77] Deposition of William Smythes, November 1675, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1676/W/32
[78] Deposition of William Smythes
[79] Deposition of Thomas Newman
[80] Kathryn A. Morrison, *English Shops and Shopping: An Architectural History*, (New Haven, Yale University Press, 2003), p. 22
[81] Morrison, *English Shops and Shopping: An Architectural History,* p, 22
[82] Deposition of William Smythes
[83] Patrick Wallis, 'Labor, Law, and Training in Early Modern London: Apprenticeship and the City's Institutions', in *Journal of British Studies*, 51.4, (2012), pp. 795-796
[84] Wallis, 'Labor, Law, and Training in Early Modern London', pp. 795-796

escalating. Taking the dispute further to court would have run the risk of others in the community finding out about the theft, triggering the 'domino effect' of damage to the Smythes family's credit.[85] Therefore, William Senior was protecting his own credit and reputation, as well as his son's. That the Smythes had their own family business (the depositions note that he was an innholder), underscores the importance of William Senior protecting his credit; having publicly damaged credit would have affected his business, as customers would no longer trust him or use his services. This is reinforced by Mary Smythes's reluctance to allow her husband to sell the stolen goods, as she was possibly concerned that this would expose her son's wrongdoings to the wider community, risking damage to her family's reputation and credit.[86]

Mary's unwillingness to let her husband sell the stolen goods provides a further insight into the household credit and economy, as well as the running of the household. Although reaching a settlement with Lewis Higgins, Mary's uneasiness about selling the stolen goods were perhaps due to these goods being tainted with associations of bad credit and criminal activity. Ralph Smith deposed that William Senior tried to sell him the goods that were originally stolen from Lewis Higgins.[87] The reluctance of others to buy the goods from William Senior reinforces the fact that the bad credit accumulated by William Junior extended to the goods themselves. In a credit economy, customers had to evaluate sellers, including the quality and future worth of their goods.[88] Ralph's reluctance to buy the stolen goods from William were perhaps not only due them being tainted with criminal activity and bad credit, but also because there remained an uncertainty regarding the legitimacy, quality, and future worth of the goods.

Furthermore, William apparently claimed that his wife did not want him to sell them, but she would not give him money; as well as wanting to partly pay towards a debt he owed to Smith, William Senior wanted 'to have sum money to himself'.[89] David Pennington argues that many wives in towns had a great deal of influence over the running of the household economy, often dealing with much of the purchasing and managing household

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[85] Muldrew, 'Interpreting the market: the ethics of credit and community relations in early modern England', p. 178
[86] Deposition of William Smythes
[87] Deposition of Ralph Smith, October 1675, Bedfordshire High Sheriff Assizes, c. 1653-1688, (Bedfordshire Archives), HSA1676/W/29
[88] James E. Shaw, 'Reputation, Trust and Credit', in *A Cultural History of Shopping in the Early Modern Age'*, *Volume 3*, ed. by Tim Reinke-Williams, The cultural histories series (London; New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), pp. 170, 189
[89] Deposition of Ralph Smith

consumption.[90] Moreover, as demonstrated in the case of Elizabeth Rogers, women played a vital role in the daily maintenance of a family run business and maintaining credit. Although Pennington's work covers an earlier period, his argument that husbands did not have complete control over the household economy, and the vital role of women in running family businesses is reflected in the cases of Mary Smythes and Elizabeth Rogers, illustrating a continuance of these ideas into the long eighteenth century. Furthermore, the control women held over the household economy reflected the practice of wives holding possession of keys in the home. In the same way that women could hold the keys, they could also be guardians of household and family credit.[91] Therefore, it would not have been uncommon for Mary Smythes to play a key role in the running of the business and household economy, at times having more control than her husband.

Conclusion

Domestic business spaces were central commercial hubs in the community, as well as spaces where people met and interacted with each other; these were permeable spaces through which customers constantly moved. The close intertwining of sociability with the commercial aspects of these spaces illuminates how an individual's credit and reputation was publicly made or broken. The social function of inns and their blurred boundaries between living and work reveals the difficulties inherent in this system where innkeepers and their wives were vulnerable to mobile and transient visitors whose reputation they did not know, at times making them the victims of criminal behaviour. Furthermore, each of the cases explored in this chapter have underscored the vital role of the wider community in maintaining or breaking one's credit and reputation; personal credit was not the sole concern of one individual. Not only did the wider community have a key role in the spread of information regarding the trust and credit of an individual or family, but this spread of information could also shape an individual's future involvement in commercial trade. Therefore, the function of these domestic business spaces facilitated not only the crimes in question, but also the interactions between people, and the breaking of credit and reputation.

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[90] Pennington, *Going to Market,* p. 39
[91] See Chapter One; Amanda Vickery, 'An Englishman's Home is his Castle? Thresholds, Boundaries and Privacies in the Eighteenth-Century London House', in *Past and Present*, no. 199, (2008), p. 168

Conclusion

Drawing on Bedfordshire's secular court records, this thesis has made key contributions to knowledge on crime, kinship, and space. These contributions are focused on the meanings of spaces, the intersection of space and temporality, and the permeability of domestic spaces. Applying a spatial analysis to crime has also contributed to ideas on kinship and neighbourhood networks, revealing the navigation of relationships within and between households, and the role of the community in exposing crimes.

Firstly, the meanings of space were not neutral, and instead were contingent on individual circumstances. Spaces held different meanings for different people – meanings which shifted according to time and circumstance to determine ones 'space of place'.[1] As well as individual circumstances, the meanings of space could also be shaped by the intertwining of factors such as gender, age, marital status, and social rank. The dependence on these factors to determine the 'space of place' meant that spaces in the domestic realm could be construed as 'safe' for some, whilst for others, these same spaces were ones of transgression, risk, or punishment.[2]

Secondly, it is evident that gender was a key factor in determining the meaning of a space. The complex nature of space and its meanings is exemplified by the experiences of single mothers who gave birth to illegitimate children in the home, and men who engaged in physical fights, retreating into the same type of space. In cases of suspected infanticide, the home became an 'unsafe' space for unmarried mothers, due to the intertwining of gender, social rank, and marital status. Meanings of space were constantly in flux and were not fixed. Whilst the space itself was not gendered, its activities and the ways it was used was. An unmarried woman giving birth to an illegitimate child inside the walls of the home established the home as an unsafe space: one associated with risk and transgression. On the other hand, men retreated to the home as a safe space after a physical fight. They were able to return home, because it held a different meaning for them than an unmarried woman at risk of being ostracised from society and potentially prosecuted; for them, it was a space where family could provide care and safety. The ways in which a space was used, the navigation of relationships within that space, and ones 'space of place' were inextricably tied together.[3]

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[1] Elizabeth Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* (London: Routledge, 1999), p.2.
[2] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* p. 2
[3] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* p. 2

Thirdly, considering the meanings of space brought into sharper focus the intersection of space and temporality. In cases of suspected infanticide, the home moved along a spectrum of safety and threat which depended on the stages of pregnancy. Despite the home being a space of fear and transgression, the thesis has shown how women crafted safe spaces within the domestic setting. Similarly, the assault that took place in the blacksmith's shop underscored this idea. As the assault intensified, the space changed from a commercial business space to an arena of masculine competition, where personal credit and reputation could be broken. As well as shifting the meanings of spaces, temporality (such as the time of day) also enabled criminal behaviour to take place, particularly when it intersected with an individual's knowledge of the space. Thieves who were familiar with the layout of the home and its outbuildings were emboldened to commit crimes in the dark, relying on their understanding of the space to navigate without raising alarm or suspicion. The analysis mirrors Mark Hailwood's suggestion that a degree of time consciousness existed in rural society during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries; instead of analysing work-related time-use, as Hailwood does, this thesis reveals the close connection between time consciousness and crime.[4] Conversely, in spaces like taverns and inns, those whose time within a space left them unfamiliar with its layout recruited accomplices who held this knowledge to abet the attainment of goods. Illustrating the ways in which space and temporality intersected is vital to an analysis of crime in this period and creates further opportunities for scholarship to develop an analysis of the connection between space and crime.

This thesis has brought into sharper focus the permeability of spaces, revealing how the interior and exterior domestic space remained permeable, even with added security measures like the locking of doors. The physical permeability of the home and the proximity between those present within the space meant that the information flowed easily within, and beyond the space. The home's auditory and visual permeability (to sights, sounds, and gossip) facilitated the flow of information around the home, often alerting others to the crime taking place and exposing criminal activity. The flow of information within and between spaces meant that people became central actors in the spread of information and gossip. Moreover, the ways in which gossip exposed behaviours and shaped an individual's reputation in society played out on a smaller level within the walls of the home. In cases of coining, for example, members of the household overhearing conversations in the home mimicked the ways in

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[4] Mark Hailwood, 'Time and Work in Rural England, 1500-1700', in *Past & Present*, no. 248, (2020), p. 121

which gossip was rooted in things that were seen or heard, thus, exposing crimes and reflecting the ways in which the spread of gossip within a community could trigger ecclesiastical or secular investigations.[5] It has also been argued that the eighteenth century saw a decline in the Church's moral policing to expose crimes that fell within the remit of the ecclesiastical courts. Revealing the extent of the home's permeability provides evidence that the activities associated with moral policing in ecclesiastical courts, such as spying and gossip, persisted in the civil courts throughout the long eighteenth century.[6]

A key element in understanding the violation of spaces is the notion of thresholds and boundaries. An analysis of space and crime has illustrated the ways in which the spatial boundaries of the home could be violated, either by manipulating the 'space of place' to gain access into the home, or by breaking the physical structure of the building.[7] In particular, the spatial boundaries of inns could be subject to violation without needing to break the physical structure. The infraction of these boundaries was often tied to the function of the domestic space as an inn; the blurred boundary between home and work played an important role in facilitating the crimes that took place there. Furthermore, not knowing a customer's credit or reputation left innkeepers and their wives vulnerable to outsiders. Once a customer had crossed the domestic threshold, innkeepers and their wives had no place of safety to retreat to. Likewise, in cases of illegitimate births, it was only once the child had been taken over the threshold between the interior and exterior domestic space which returned the home itself to a space of safety. People used and adopted their understandings of space to navigate criminal activity.

The physical boundaries of exterior spaces could also shape interactions between people by complicating perceptions of chastisement and correction, therefore crossing the threshold of 'acceptable' violence. Physical blows that meted out beyond the confines of the home shifted condonable punishment into the blurred areas of potential criminal activity. Its positioning inside or outside of the home dictated whether people perceived it as assault or not. Vicar Cressy, who assaulted Francis Wabey, is an example of this. As this case did not take place inside the home, and therefore outside of the head of household's realm of control and discipline, Vicar Cressy possibly perceived his actions as a form of correction, rather than a crime. Furthermore, cases of assault highlighting the complexities surrounding the

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[5] Bernard Capp, *When Gossips Meet: Women, Family, and Neighbourhood in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 281-283

[6] Joanne Begiato and William Gibson, *Sex and the Church in the Long Eighteenth Century*, (London: Bloomsbury, 2019), p. 12

[7] Kenworthy Teather, *Embodied Geographies,* p. 2

perceptions of violence also demonstrate the importance of analysing the type of language used in depositions.

Additionally, focusing on crimes and the spaces where they occur elucidates kinship and neighbourhood networks. As well as demonstrating the flexibility of the household hierarchy and how relationships within the home could work horizontally and hierarchically, this thesis has demonstrated how bonds of kinship and intimate relationships could be maintained across space and time. The cases analysed in this thesis reveal how kinship was not confined to one household or space; relationships transcended spatial boundaries, and 'family' could be connected by space. This is particularly evident when considering social rank as a key factor in shaping kinship networks. People's circles extended beyond the walls of the home they lived in. Cases of suspected infanticide revealed bonds between servants across households, stretching over geographical boundaries irrespective of proximity. Similarly, accidents involving children illuminate how networks of dispersed parenting and relationships based on maternal caregiving operated between households. Hence, the term 'family' does not accurately encapsulate the plethora of relationships that existed within and between households. Within the home itself, household dynamics could also be disrupted by the presence of temporary lodgers. The attack on Thomas Merrill, a lodger, by a servant inside the home highlighted how the dynamics between temporary residents and household members could vary; whilst there was there was a sense of amicability between the lodger and landlady, there was also conflict between the lodger and a servant.

Neighbourliness was a key component in disrupting and exposing criminal activity that threatened to destabilise the household hierarchy. Although historians have debated whether this period saw a decline in neighbourliness, networks of neighbours and loyalty still existed throughout the long eighteenth century. Neighbourhood networks and the wider community also contributed to the policing of crime within the community, often acting as central actors in exposing an individual's behaviour and shaping their reputation. This was reflected in the exposure of William Albone and his fellow servants when they stole their master's ale and wine.[8] Likewise, in cases of infanticide, the wider community played a vital role in scrutinising the bodies and behaviours of unmarried mothers, therefore placing those suspected of infanticide at risk of exposure and prosecution. As well as revealing how others

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[8] Steve Hindle, 'The Keeping of the Public Peace', in *The Experience of Authority in Early Modern England*, ed. by. Paul Griffiths, Adam Fox, and Steve Hindle, (London: Macmillan Press, 1996), p. 214; J.A. Sharpe, 'Such Disagreement betwyxt Neighbours: Litigation and Human Relations in Early Modern England', in *Disputes and Settlements: Law and Human Relations in the West,* ed. by. John Bossy, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Felicity Heal, *Hospitality in Early Modern England*, (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990)

'unofficially' policed women, the actions of the community also established the neighbourhood as an extension of the unsafe space associated with the home for those accused of infanticide and illegitimacy; the space and its meanings transcended physical boundaries.[9]

Conversely, domestic business spaces such as inns and shops acted as central hubs in the community. The centrality of these spaces meant that they were vital to the spread of information and gossip. In the same way that an unmarried mother's pregnancy could be exposed within the community, so too could one's personal credit and reputation. This was revealed to be particularly the case for men who interacted in this space and found themselves open to challenges about their work and standing. Community building and its role in policing and exposing behaviours was not only central to the shaping of reputation, but was inextricably bound to space and the ways in which people navigated the spaces they moved through.

Finally, the intersection of age and gender played a prominent role in many of the cases analysed throughout this thesis, and was vital in shaping the interactions between members of kin and non-kin networks, as demonstrated in the cases of Thomas Holstock and William Pearles.[10] A further investigation into the role and intersection of these two factors could potentially open more avenues in exploring how crime, kinship, and the interactions between people were connected. Many of the incidents analysed in this thesis revealed how the construction and maintenance of masculinity often played a role in various types of violent incidents, thus shaping the relationships and interactions between individuals.

Overall, this thesis has brought together the historiographies of crime, space, and kinship in the long eighteenth century, demonstrating how experiences were interconnected and shaped by one another. As a result, this provided a vital insight into numerous areas of long eighteenth-century life in Bedfordshire, where we see how the functions and meanings of a space could shape the types of crimes committed, who committed them, and the impact this had on the navigation of relationships and interactions between members of kin and non-kin networks.

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[9] Cynthia Herrup, 'New Shoes and Mutton Pies: Investigative Responses to Theft in Seventeenth-Century East Sussex', in *The Historical Journal*, 27.4, (1984), p. 829
[10] See Chapters Two and Three.

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