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THE SOCIO-CULTURAL IMPACT OF
THE WAR OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE
UPON LIVERPOOL, 1775-1783

INTRODUCTION

The War of American Independence (1775-1783) was a significant eighteenth century conflict. It began as an internal revolt within the British Empire, pitting the mother country against thirteen rebellious colonies in North America. Both protagonists clashed over economic, social, and political differences. However, the publication of the Declaration of Independence by the United States in 1776 transformed this struggle into a revolutionary duel. Indeed, it set American republicanism against British monarchism. Following the defeat of British forces at Saratoga in upstate New York in 1777, the conflict gradually escalated into a global war between Britain and its European rivals (France, Spain, and the Netherlands). After the British failure at Yorktown, Virginia, in 1781, the Westminster Parliament voted to suspend military operations in North America. Two years later the Treaty of Paris was signed, which recognised US independence.[1]

Numerous historians have analysed how this conflict impacted upon the British Isles.[2] Stephen Conway is chief amongst them, and found that the war produced both positive and negative economic consequences. Whilst the expansion of the armed forces increased demand for manufactured goods, the struggle also disrupted overseas trade.[3] The war affected the relationship between central government and the localities too. Conway noted that the scale of the hostilities required the British state to imposed greater logistical and monetary burdens upon

the populous, namely in the form of paying higher taxes (this is a key characteristic associated with the 'fiscal-military state').[4] But such initiatives antagonised some local interests, which responded by trying to shape the agenda to their advantage. Furthermore, in matters such as military mobilisation, the importance of local efforts was often evident. This challenged ministerial management, and presented the picture of a weak British state. On balance, whilst local elites and initiatives proved influential, the national state still demonstrated a formidable war-making capability.[5] Conway also addressed the theme of unity and division amongst the people. British opinion was clearly divided over the American War, which reflected both socio-economic and religious differences in society. Regardless, foreign intervention in the conflict subsequently generated a greater sense of British patriotism.[6]

Such research undoubtedly makes a valuable contribution to the historiography. Still, Conway and others made only few references to the port-town of Liverpool.[7] This was probably because works on the impact of warfare upon Britain cannot consider every community in detail. Liverpool was a significant location during the long eighteenth century. The town's population grew 'spectacularly' from over 5,000 inhabitants in 1700 to almost 90,000 by century's end.[8] This was partially because Liverpool emerged as a major industrial centre within the North West regional mineral economy, consuming Lancashire coal and processing Cheshire salt.[9] Georgian Liverpool and the River Mersey were also closely linked to the Atlantic World.[10] In 1702 the port owned 8,600 tons of shipping, but by the late-1780s this figure mushroomed to 106,000 tons.[11] Hanoverian Liverpool was synonymous with the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and by the 1740s the town was dispatching more ships to Africa than either Bristol or London.[12] However, one can over-state the value of the African market to Liverpool, as local mercantile

firms often enjoyed diverse portfolios.[13] Consequently, the port traded with other destinations, including around the British Isles and mainland Europe. By 1750 Liverpool was second only to London in terms of the size and value of its Anglo-American trade.[14]

This article considers the socio-cultural impact of the American War upon Liverpool. It synthesises existing knowledge of the subject, taps into sources previously un-used in this context, and relates to key historiographical debates. The essay also redresses an imbalance in the literature on Georgian Liverpool. A large body of the work on the town during this period emphasises social, economic, and political history.[15] Whilst military factors are considered in these studies, they are rarely given central emphasis.[16] As a result, Liverpool's involvement in eighteenth century wars, and the repercussions thereof, can sometimes appear side-lined. This article makes strides towards changing such unevenness. Three key points will be stressed here. The first is implicit throughout the article: that military conflict did impact upon British society during the eighteenth century. Indeed, some contemporary sources only rarely mention how warfare affected everyday life. Therefore, it is conceivable that war only had a limited direct impact upon the British population. Nonetheless, H.V. Bowen contended that this was simply not the case – troops did move around Britain, and civilians did encounter foreign prisoners, especially in south-eastern England.[17] By looking at Liverpool c.1775-1783, this article extends Bowen's argument to incorporate the northern English provinces. More specifically, this paper supplements (and indeed supports) Conway's work. Thus, the second point is an analysis of the relationship between the central British state and local authorities in Liverpool. During the American War, military considerations became increasingly evident in the town. This included the

construction of defences and the housing of prisoners of war. This forced both local and national government to interact with each other, and both were influential in shaping the course of events. But the directing nature of the national fiscal state remained present. Finally, we consider division and unity. Hanoverian Liverpool was a diverse society, and henceforth the revolt in the colonies split opinion within the town along religious and socio-economic lines. The result was that different groups supported and opposed the war. This disparity exposed deeper fissures within British imperial ideology. In Liverpool during the late-1770s and early-1780s, some locals used different interpretations of British imperial ideology to justify their views, either to back or criticise the war. The revolt in the colonies also highlighted different 'identities' within Liverpool. Identity can be defined as a 'negotiation between individual conceptions of self and collectivity'.[18] Whereas some Liverpudlians found comfort in their status as Englishmen, others saw themselves as unified 'Britons' fighting against Catholic Bourbons and American republicans. These are important considerations, as local case studies on the impact of warfare during the eighteenth century often stress military mobilisation and economic impacts. This article extends this analysis to consider the consequences for ideology and identity too.

STATE AND LOCALITY

In peacetime Liverpool's local government, or Corporation, worked within the framework prescribed by its charter. Henceforth, it enjoyed considerable 'influence' (defined here as the ability to set the agenda and to enact solutions) over local affairs, such as poor relief and overseeing investment in the docks.[19] However, during wartime, although the Corporation continued to enjoy powers over local affairs

defined by the charter, the locality was required to interact more with national authorities. We will see that whilst local government could be vocal and influential in some matters, the ability of the national government to direct the overall war effort remained considerable. The powers of local government were soon tested not long after the commencement of hostilities. Exact details of Liverpool's Sailors Riot of August 1775 vary according to individual accounts. Nonetheless, a general chronology of events is discernible. Riots were not unknown in eighteenth century Britain, and in Liverpool they were often instigated by the activities of press gangs and fuelled by the consumption of alcohol.[20] Some contemporaries believed that the war in the colonies disrupted the trans-Atlantic slave trade, and consequently forced the laying up of a 'great number of Guinea [African] ships'. In Liverpool up to 3,000 sailors became unemployed, and the wages were cut for those who retained their jobs. On Friday 25 August, the crew of *Derby* responded by unrigging their vessel. Some offenders were committed to prison, but a gang of armed sailors later released them (as well as a female accomplice).[21] Protesting continued into the following week, as mariners ransacked the homes of several merchants who had cut their wages. The Corporation was the first to respond to the unrest, hiring armed men and reading the Riot Act. But when these initiatives proved insufficient, Liverpool council sought assistance from elsewhere. On the Thursday troops arrived from Manchester and Chester, which later restored order.[22]

There are additional examples of Liverpool Corporation contributing to the agenda, but that national considerations remained important. During the preceding Seven Years War of 1756-1763, there had been attempts at constructing batteries and a fort in Liverpool. Nevertheless, these projects were not fully completed, and so failed to provide adequate security for an ever-expanding port.[23] With the nation

again at war, by 1776 the port-town was calling for enhanced defences. That autumn Liverpool petitioned the Privy Council for a fort and barracks to lodge two companies of soldiers.[24] The following May the Master-General of Ordinance reported that construction of a battery on a pier was insufficient, as the breadth of the Mersey allowed enemy vessels to fire at the docks and town. Thus, an alternative of two batteries was proposed, with one at Hoxhey Nook (between present-day Collingwood and Princes Docks) and another at Seacomb Point (on the Wirral). The crossfire would dissuade hostile shipping from attacking the town. But this plan would take two years to complete, and therefore hulks were deployed in the river as short-term solutions.[25] Construction of a fort also commenced on the north shore by Princes Dock, with barracks for 500 troops. Batteries were erected by the docks as well.[26] Whilst the construction of these defences satisfied the needs of the locality, the overall direction of the British state remained paramount. Liverpool Corporation believed that national authorities had agreed to supply the fort with gunpowder, and when this commodity did not arrive Liverpool petitioned Westminster to procure it.[27] But, in a sign of central authority, the Privy Council rejected Liverpool's appeal in 1779.[28] The body reasoned that if national authorities acquiesced to this call, then it would prompt similar unsustainable requests from other towns.[29]

Liverpool served as a detention centre for foreign prisoners of war, the experience of which illustrated the roles played by both local and national government. As a hub for privateers (private ships of war), Liverpool often witnessed the arrival of new inmates during wartime.[30] Between 1775 and 1783 these internees were housed at the Tower Prison on the end of Water Street, as well as the Gaol on Mount Pleasant.[31] From the start of the conflict, there were American prisoners in Liverpool - although the exact number is uncertain.[32] Then, following Bourbon entry

into the struggle, there were detainees from mainland Europe too. Between 1778 and 1782, Liverpool housed 1,283 French inmates, 69 Spaniards, and 84 Dutch - totalling 1,436 Europeans.[33] Contemporary sources show that Liverpool received more foreign detainees than the fellow port-town of Bristol, but did not hold as many foreign nationals as Mill Prison, Plymouth (which totalled 10,352 foreign inmates between 1777 and 1783).[34] Regardless of these numbers, the housing of foreigners clearly imposed strains upon Liverpool's resources. Local authorities were especially concerned about French and Spanish inmates, because of the 'racial animosities' between the two.[35] Thus, the Corporation actively solicited their removal from Liverpool, which brought the body into contact with national authorities. In November 1778 Liverpool sent a memorial to the Privy Council, requesting that French detainees be transferred to an inland location.[36] This yielded some results, as a number of inmates were conveyed to nearby Ormskirk and Chester. But the centre did not always acquiesce to provincial requests. Even when prisoners were moved from Liverpool, there were often more to take their place.[37] In another sign of the influence of the national state, the Navy Board ordered that inmates be 'victualled and supplied with clothes and necessaries'. Yet it was alleged that Mr. Oliphant, the agent at Liverpool, did not carry out this order with respect to the American prisoners. Presumably, this was because Oliphant did not regard the rebels as foreign prisoners, but as traitors to the mother country. The Navy Board therefore asserted its authority by terminating Oliphant's employment at Liverpool.[38]

Foreign prisoners in Liverpool were also subject to interrogations. Whilst personnel on the spot implemented this process, it seems quite possible that the questions were framed at a national level. Typically during the early modern period, there were two obvious ways of conducting intelligence gathering - either through

resident diplomats in other countries or networks of agents.[39] However, with the advent of privateering at port-towns, opportunities for acquiring information multiplied. Enemy vessels were brought into British ports, their papers confiscated, and crews interrogated. Over twenty standard questions were prepared for interview, such as where the ship had sailed from and whether the cargo was insured. Supplementary questions could also follow, including details on passenger's passports.[40] Crucially, these interrogations shed light on the activities of local and national government. In Liverpool, local merchants often conducted and transcribed these examinations. For example, the merchant Johnson Gildart interviewed crewmembers from *Canister* in 1778 at the Golden Lyon (an inn or coffee house on Dale Street). This was because Gildart was fluent in French.[41] The importance of central government in these cross-examinations is also inferred. Interrogation documents were highly formalised and conformed to a similar style, which suggests that they were centrally designed.

Liverpool contributed numerous land forces towards eighteenth century conflicts. For example, the town raised a regiment to supress the 1745 Jacobite uprising. Later, between 1793 and 1815, Liverpool assembled several thousand volunteers for the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars. The latter operated on a scale 'larger…than ever before' known in Liverpool's history.[42] Crucially for this essay, the experience of Liverpudlians serving in land forces c.1775-1783 illustrates the broader pattern of mobilisation during this conflict, as well as the potency of both local and national agency. In 1775 there were few attempts at raising land forces in Liverpool. This was largely because George III opposed creating new regiments. The monarch was worried that officers in new corps would be appointed on the basis of personal relationships, as opposed to military competency.[43] Instead, existing corps were to be augmented. Thus, in early-1775 Banastre Tarleton (the son of a

prominent Liverpool slave trader) purchased a commission in the 1st Dragoon Guards. During his service in America, Tarleton incurred the wrath of the rebels for his allegedly bloody tactics, and he earned the praise of British commander Lord Cornwallis for his military skill.[44]

By 1777 local initiative was clearly evident, as provincial towns pledged to raise regiments at their own expense. In Liverpool this was a response to the Declaration of Independence, which seemed to make reconciliation with America less likely.[45] The arrival of these new regiments divided national and military authorities. Whilst some officers were glad to receive fresh troops to bolster their numbers, others feared for the quality of the new recruits. Lord North's government also suspected that volunteer regiments could be used as tools by the Opposition to remove government supporters in the provinces.[46] Nevertheless, the War Office asserted its authority, and on 8 January 1778 outlined the specifications of the Liverpool regiment. It would contain eight battalions, one company of grenadiers, and a company of light infantry. None of the enlistees were to be less than 5ft 4 inches tall, and had to be aged 18 to 30.[47] National considerations were also on show when the regiment received their colours. Indeed, the commanding officer praised his men for their loyalty. Not only would they be fighting to defend King and country, but they would also 'PRESERVE THE UNION OF THE EMPIRE'.[48] Thereafter, the Liverpool force (79th Regiment of Foot) was at the operational disposal of the state. Initially numbering just over one thousand men, they received their training in the Midlands, and were posted overseas to Jamaica. With the spread of global warfare, the Liverpool troops were subsequently deployed in an abortive attack upon Spanish America. They were later disbanded at the end of the conflict.[49] When North fell from power in 1782, he was replaced by a ministry that favoured

mass arming. Shelburne, the new home secretary, sent a circular to major towns about the desirability of forming a new militia. The result was the raising of another force in Liverpool 1782 – the details of which remain obscured by limited evidence.[50] These example from 1777 and 1782 show that local agency and national authority were important in mobilisation – even if the latter did change its positions.

The British Navy was also mobilised to suppress the American rebellion – the experience of which prompted Liverpool to respond to the demands imposed upon it by the centre. Nevertheless, the national state overcame any local opposition in this field. One of the first initiatives to expand the Senior Service was the requisitioning of vessels from private owners. To that end, the Navy sent agents to Liverpool in 1776. Two local transports were forthcoming, and sent to Plymouth for refitting. However, it seems that no other private vessels were supplied to the state from Liverpool. Several craft were foreign-built, and therefore ineligible to serve in American waters under the terms of the Navigation Acts. The owners of some ships simply refused to hand over their property under the terms and conditions offered.[51] This suggests that the localities would not always comply with the centre. Nevertheless, the overall picture is one where the directing nature of the state remained crucial. Several warships were built on the Mersey between 1777 and 1784, some of which were moored in the river for defensive purposes.[52] Indeed, Captain John Paul Jones (often referred to as the 'Father' of the US Navy) had been sighted sailing off Whitehaven in 1778. The Lieutenants Logbooks of one of the vessels stationed at Liverpool, H.M.S. *Assistance*, suggests a mundane routine on-board. Crews were frequently mustered, sent ashore to receive supplies, and maintained the rigging. In such an environment several hands deserted, which prompted remaining crewmembers to go ashore to impress new sailors.[53]

Impressment was an issue that profoundly tested the boundaries between local and national government. For the most part, Liverpudlians had opposed this practice prior to the American War.[54] In 1770 a letter from the Admiralty Office noted that the town's mayor refused to support press warrants, 'alleging that the mob, who are very numerous, would set fire to his house'.[55] The American Revolutionary War proved no exception to this pattern. During this conflict ships bound for Liverpool often evaded the press gangs by landing some of their crews before arriving at port.[56] The Corporation also tried to neutralise the rationale for these gangs, by providing bounties to encourage men to serve in the Navy.[57] In addition, there were violent clashes between the press gangs and local community. For example, in March 1780 a gang assembled in front of a house in Hackins Hey, where a number of sailors resided. The mariners refused to open the door to the pressmen, which resulted in a disturbance. The outcome was that a member of the Yorkshire militia shot dead, and the master of the house was rushed to the infirmary.[58] By 1781 press gangs were 'Worried almost every excursion' in Liverpool, and they acknowledged that they were fortunate to escape with their lives.[59] This evidence seems to indicate the power of the locality. Whilst local people were undeniably active against impressment, this opposition did not stop national authorities. Press gangs continued to operate in Liverpool throughout the duration of the war, as there was a supply of sailors to be tapped.

The expansion of the armed forces during the American conflict had other ramifications for the localities, including the provision of veterans' charities. This was hardly surprising, given that the famous Greenwich Naval Hospital had been established almost a century earlier to house retired mariners.[60] Nor was charitable activity in Georgian Liverpool unknown, with the establishment of hospitals and

schools for deprived children.[61] Hence, in 1775 a local charity was established for soldiers serving in the colonies, as well as to support the troop's widows and orphans. This scheme was funded by voluntary local subscriptions from both genders, and the subscribers hailed from various socio-economic backgrounds (including the landed elite, merchants, and retailers). Furthermore, a 26-member committee received these sums, and deposited them in a Liverpool bank. As of 17 November 1775, this charity had raised £1,049. Significantly, although this was a Liverpool-based organisation, the scheme was modelled upon on an institution in London.[62]

DIVISION AND UNITY

In general, the American War divided opinion in Britain - and Liverpool proved to be no exception. However, in order to understand the patterns of local division, some background knowledge is first required. Georgian Liverpool was a diverse society. At the apex of the town stood the governing Corporation, which enjoyed powers over local governance. The Corporation's membership was dominated predominantly, although not exclusively, by merchants. This was made possible through their wealth and social prestige.[63] Furthermore, many of these merchants shared business, familial, and religious ties, thereby preserving their influence on the council.[64] In general, these businessmen were a clubbable people, and attended several local societies. Yet such organisations in Hanoverian Liverpool were rarely 'polite'.[65] These clubs emphasised dining and gossip, as opposed to educated cultural pursuits. Granted, some locals did attend the theatre and frequented the library. But for most of the eighteenth century, Liverpool-based societies for the advancement of literature and science were short-lived. Even despite the outpouring of ideas during

the American Revolution, this had little direct impact upon the character of Liverpool's elite social clubs. In the 1790s it was claimed that 'the only pursuit of [Liverpool's] inhabitants is COMMERCE.' It was not until the nineteenth century that more permanent cultural establishments emerged in the town.[66]

Significantly, there were critics of the Anglican-mercantile elite that dominated the Corporation. The merchants themselves were hardly a single homogenous group, and not all of them sat on local government forums. They hailed from mixed social and religious backgrounds, and their businesses often enjoyed different remits.[67] Mercantile divisions therefore emerged over personalities, and issues such as the funding of docks. Hence, by the mid-1770s, an independent Chamber of Commerce existed alongside a pro-Corporation Committee of Trade, with both serving as lobbying organisations.[68] Furthermore, in an ever-expanding urban area, there were other interests besides the merchants and Corporation. Liverpool's parish and probate records up to 1750 confirm that the town's occupational structure was unspecialised, reflecting a range of employments such as transportation and (to a lesser extent) manufacturing.[69] There were several houses of worship too, reflecting different faiths besides Anglicanism. This included churches and chapels for Quakers and Catholics, as well as a Jewish synagogue.[70] Thus, Liverpool's 'civic elite…was increasingly isolated by and under pressure from all quarters…old and new political cultures were existing side-by-side'.[71] These differences often surfaced between pro-Corporation and independent candidates during local and parliamentary elections.[72] Hence by the time of the American Revolution, there was no one all-encompassing Liverpool identity. Some individuals were undoubtedly proud of their town's emergence as a major commercial centre during the eighteenth century. But because local society was pluralistic and often transitory (there was a great deal of

movement amongst sailors and migrant workers) this mobility frustrated the development of a truly Liverpudlian identity.[73]

The revolt in America exposed these differences within the town. Therefore, local opinion was divided between the advocates of coercion against the colonists, and those who favoured conciliation. Such views were transmitted through different mediums, such as church groups and word of mouth.[74] Another outlet for expression was print culture. Indeed, *Williamson's Advertiser* was established in Liverpool in 1756, and this newspaper had a wide circulation reaching London, Glasgow, and Dublin.[75] Splits in Liverpool over the American War soon became evident. On 11 September 1775 Liverpool Corporation was one of the first towns to send a loyal address to the King calling for coercion in the colonies. The inhabitant's address later that month, which also favoured coercion, collected over 500 signatures from gentlemen, clergy, and merchants. In contrast, a Lancashire-wide petition for conciliation with the colonies was produced that November. It collected 4,000 signatures, of which 292 came from Liverpool.[76] Table 1 shows a breakdown on the socio-economic background of the Liverpudlian signatories. It also contrasts this data with Bristol, which reveals some important differences between the two port-towns. The percentage difference has been added to demonstrate the degree of polarisation within the socio-economic groups.

TABLE 1 Socio-economic backgrounds of petitioners and addressers in Bristol and Liverpool by percentage (1775, 1780)

	BRISTOL			LIVERPOOL		
	Conciliation	Coercion	Difference	Conciliation	Coercion	Difference
Gentleman	15.0	33.2	(18.2)	18.5	28.4	(9.9)
Merchant	15.0	20.0	(5)	35.8	27.6	(8.2)
Retail	26.1	16.5	(9.6)	18.5	23.1	(4.6)
Artisan	42.2	27.7	(14.5)	25.9	20.9	(5)
Labourer	1.1	2.3	(1.2)	1.3	0	(1.3)
Other	0.6	0.3	(0.3)	0	0	(0)
TOTAL	100	100		100	100	

Source: J.E. Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism: Nonconformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 374.

This data must be treated with some caution, as those who collected the signatures likely favoured those who were inclined the same way, and possibly did not seek the views of those at the bottom of society.[77] Regardless, socio-economic background was a key factor in determining opinion. This was especially true in Bristol. Amongst the gentleman of that town, a noticeably greater percentage favoured coercion than conciliation - by as much as 18 per cent. It is believed that the upper classes held a greater vested interest in preserving law and order, and therefore opposed the Revolution.[78] Alternatively, Bristolian retailers and artisans were more inclined

towards conciliation. This was probably because they could ill-afford wartime economic dislocation.[79] This socio-economic interpretation works in Liverpool too, but to a lesser extent. Within this sample, local gentlemen generally favoured coercion, whilst artisans supported conciliation. The difference in views amongst the Liverpool merchants was higher than in Bristol (8.2 per cent compared to 5). This chimes with the view that Liverpool merchants were a heterogeneous group. Interestingly, unlike their Bristolian counterparts, Liverpool merchants formed a larger percentage of conciliatory petitions than coercive addresses. Liverpool mercantile sentiment is even more remarkable given that, in a broader sample of provincial opinion, Kathleen Wilson found that by 1775 merchants generally supported coercion.[80] Presumably Liverpool merchants took a different view because they enjoyed a significant volume of trade with America, and feared any economic backlash from coercion. This may also explain why few Liverpudlian businesses handed over their vessels to the government at the outbreak of hostilities (although they were clearly happy to accept contracts for building warships on the Mersey). Nevertheless, on the whole, the level of polarisation within the social-economic groups was less pronounced in Liverpool than Bristol. Unlike the latter, the percentage differences for Liverpool do not reach double figures. This correlates with the finding that, generally, socio-economic factors were not so important in determining the outcome of Liverpool elections during the Georgian era.[81]

Bradley found that religion was the 'clearest predictor of opinion over America'. Indeed, Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Baptists, and Quakers, were restricted in their political activities by the Test and Corporation Acts. Therefore, they were statistically rebel America's closest friends.[82] In a sample of Bristolian petitions and addresses, Dissenters were a significant percentage of signatories to

conciliatory petitions. In contrast, Anglicans leaned more towards coercion. [83] A similar pattern occurred in Liverpool. Within Bradley's sample, Anglican clergy comprised 10 per cent of those signing coercive addresses, whilst they were a mere 2 per cent for conciliatory petitions. Presumably Anglicans feared that the rebellion would challenge the position of the Church of England. In contrast, Liverpudlian Dissenters constituted 14.3 per cent of those signing conciliatory petitions, compared to 9.3 per cent for coercive addresses. However, it is significant that of those signing conciliatory documents, in Bristol 29.1 per cent of the signatories were Dissenters - whilst in Liverpool the figure for Dissenters was appreciably lower at 14.3 per cent. Evidently fewer Liverpudlian non-conformists displayed a preference for conciliation. This was due to several local factors, not least that some Liverpool Dissenters held interests in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. Therefore, they held a vested interest in preserving the established imperial order.[84]

As a result of these divisions in opinion, the war unleashed a debate over the nature of British imperialism in Liverpool. Jack Greene argued that, in general, between 1688 and 1783 Britons regarded themselves as living in a Protestant and constitutional empire. Liberty was enshrined, people and goods were shipped across the seas, and the colonies contributed towards the imperial economy. [85] Yet the precise details of this ideology were open to debate. Often anonymously, locals on both sides of the debate used a key component of imperial ideology, constitutionalism, to justify their respective views. In its coercive address of 1775, the Corporation claimed that imperial authority was structured through 'our glorious constitution', which included both the monarchy and legislature. This particular reference supports the view that the British prosecuted the war to secure parliamentary sovereignty over its colonies.[86] Common throughout these sources is

the reference to the familial relationship within the Empire, headed by the King's 'paternal care'. This gave further impetus to constitutional and legalistic arguments, with the advocates of coercion being 'ready and willing to exert our utmost Endeavours for the Discouragement of all such illegal Proceedings.'[87] The people's coercive address also vowed to crush the American rebellion on constitutional grounds, because the revolt showed 'contempt…to the legal authority and constitutional power'.[88] A pro-government letter in Liverpool dated 27 October 1775 was also signed by 'A Friend of the British Constitution'.[89] Conversely, opponents of the war used constitutionalism to support their opinions too. A letter to the *Liverpool General Advertiser* noted that the colonists constituted 'no efficient part' of the Westminster Parliament. This raised the prospect that the Americans were 'no longer subjects, but slaves' (an issue that will be discussed below). The same author then decried the impolitic nature of the situation: 'Would not an Englishman be moved with indignation, was he to be told, that what he procured….was at the disposal of an American power!'[90] This evidence from Liverpool supports Wilson's argument that the American War provoked a crisis in British imperialism.[91] There was clearly a schism between an earlier form of imperial ideology that had a 'libertarian fervour', and the empire of authority that emerged by mid-century. The latter was a more controlled response to the difficulties of managing an empire, which had expanded its territorial borders after 1763.[92]

The previous reference to slavery invites a brief discussion of Liverpool's association with this activity during the War of Independence. Indeed, because Britain, Africa, and America, were part of the 'triangular trade', the outbreak of war affected trans-Atlantic slavery. Even in peacetime, this business was subject to great uncertainty. Fluctuations in supply and demand, as well as events during individual

voyages, resulted in both sizable profits and losses.[93] After 1775 Liverpool slavers had to respond to an even more uncertain environment. Initially the trade was not prosecuted with the 'usual spirit', but it was 'far from being at a stand'.[94] However, by 1779 things had changed. William Davenport, a prominent Liverpool slave trader, noted that the African market had been 'dead for sometime'.[95] This was because an Order in Council, issued by George III, restricted the exportation of gunpowder overseas from the UK.[96] Liverpool slavers were adversely affected because they used gunpowder for defence and barter on the African coast. In addition, trade was complicated by American (and eventually European) privateers attacking British vessels. One Liverpudlian captain remarked that when US privateers captured enemy slaving vessels, they engaged in economic warfare by selling Africans at discount - in a bid to undercut British slave traders. [97] These problems were exacerbated by rising maritime insurance costs.[98] British colonists in the West Indies also recognised that they were vulnerable to Bourbon attacks. Richard Watt, a trader in Jamaica with Liverpool connections, noted: 'if France and Spain declares war…we here are badly situated…I am afraid they Spaniards will appoint a Governor'. The same letter speculated that there would be reduced demand for colonial sugar in Liverpool, and a rise in mercantile bankruptcies.[99] Thus, Davenport lost as much as £1,000 on several slave voyages between 1775 and 1783. However, there were also instances when he earned £4,000 profit during this period. [100] Davenport's is a mixed picture, and it is not certain how reflective he was of other Liverpool slave traders (he is frequently cited because his manuscripts have survived in detail). What can be said with greater certainty is that the American War did not destroy Liverpool's participation in trans-Atlantic slavery. This would officially end in 1807, with the abolition of the slave trade.

Socio-culturally, there was some abolitionist sentiment in Liverpool during the American conflict. In 1777 a poem written by William Roscoe (a local religious Dissenter and lawyer) entitled *Mount Pleasant* was published. It noted that Liverpool's 'splendid tracks of opulence' were built upon the toils of 'AFRIC's [sic] swarthy sons', which constituted a 'Shame to Mankind!'[101] However, it is not clear if there was a direct correlation between the decision to publish and the timing of the American Revolution. Indeed, there was little evidence of broader abolitionism in the town during the war. This reinforces the view that for many years there was virtually no organised anti-slavery activity in Liverpool. Instead, local abolitionist sentiment relied heavily upon individuals that debated the topic. Evidently, the American Revolution did not catalyse the abolitionist cause in Liverpool. This is unsurprising given the commercial value of the trade to the town, and the physical risk posed to those who advocated its end. More importantly, the American Revolution's attitude towards African servitude was ambiguous. Although the Declaration of Independence proclaimed that 'all men are created equal', slavery continued in the US into the mid-nineteenth century. Thus, it would not be until after the establishment of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade in 1787, at the earliest, that there was more formal abolitionist organisation in Liverpool.[102]

The Revolutionary War also highlighted the different identities within Liverpool, one of which was Englishness. Indeed, a letter from November 1775 stressed the fair character of the 'English Constitution', and the good nature of 'Englishmen'. As a result, there should have been a fair reconciliation with America.[103] However, there were others in Liverpool that one might refer to as 'Britons'. Linda Colley postulated that eighteenth century warfare contributed towards the development of British national identity. She argued that Hanoverian conflicts

were wars of religion, pitting Protestant Britain against Catholic France and Spain. These clashes were also political struggles between the Hanoverian and Bourbon dynasties. Consequently, a British national identity emerged, which stressed Protestantism and elevated the monarchy to symbolise a nation unified in arms.[104] Indeed, Liverpool Corporation's minute book made several references to 'Britain' and 'British' during the years 1775-1783.[105] However, not all inhabitants of Liverpool regarded themselves as 'Britons'. The above references to Englishness suggest that the historic patriotisms of the sub-nations of the United Kingdom formed competing claims to Britishness.[106] This is not surprising, given the transient and multiple socio-religious groups in Georgian Liverpool.

Regardless, what did it mean to be a patriotic 'Briton' in Liverpool during the War of Independence? Some contemporaries defined themselves by attacking the 'Other', and contrasted foreign powers with allegedly superior British values. In due course the Americans themselves were regarded as being foreign, and not British. This had not been apparent at the start of the war, when both the proponents of coercion and conciliation regarded the colonists as their brethren. The Corporation's 1775 Loyal Address referred to 'our fellow subjects in America'.[107] Equally, an advocate of conciliation wrote about the spilling of 'kindred blood'.[108] Even by the middling stages of the conflict, the Corporation still regarded the colonists as fellow British subjects. It sent another memorial to the Crown in 1779, referring to 'your Majesty's revolted colonies in America.'[109] Yet towards the end of the war there was a hardening of attitudes against the colonists. This led to comparisons between wholesome 'Britons' and disloyal rebels. At the 1780 parliamentary election, a Liverpool voter urged his fellow freemen to elect a 'Gentlemen of Independent Fortune', who was a friend to the King and 'present Happy Constitution'. Local

electors should absolutely not support the 'Abettors of American Rebellion or promoters of Petitions and Associations of a Republican Faction'.[110] The entry of the Bourbon powers into the war intensified the fervour of those Liverpudlians who regarded themselves as patriotic 'Britons'. As a result, their criticisms of the European powers became intense. A locally published poem from the early-1780s, entitled *The Dismember'd Empire*, charged that 'Gallia' was the first to 'put in force the foul, malignant plan'. This had then been followed by 'Iberia'. Equally, the protestant Dutch were dismissed as 'low thoughted'.[111] During the 1780 poll, a Liverpool campaign song also mocked French 'frogs', and contrasted the allegedly impure French symbols with virtuous British beef and 'Liverpool Ale'.[112]

Moreover, these loyal 'Britons' criticised those who did not measure up to this vision of loyal gentlemen consuming beef and ale, and therefore sought to marginalise them. This was largely due to the deteriorating military and diplomatic environment, and some people began looking for the enemy within.[113] There were several such targets in Liverpool, including Sir William Meredith MP. First elected to represent the town in Parliament in 1761, Meredith had initially supported coercion. But following British defeat at Saratoga in 1777, Sir William gravitated towards the parliamentary Opposition - elements of which advocated peace at the cost of US independence.[114] Thus, during the 1780 election some electors branded Meredith a traitor: the MP had allegedly 'told us that…we must not fight, That America should over England prevail'. This supposedly unpatriotic parliamentarian was juxtaposed with virtuous Liverpudlians, who had previously defeated the Jacobites, and who now fought on the High Seas.[115] Richard Pennant, the town's other parliamentarian, had been a supporter of conciliation since 1775.[116] Consequently, he was labelled the 'worthy colleague' of the American revolutionary Benjamin Franklin.[117] To ensure

that Pennant would be defeated in 1780, the pseudonym *Benevolus* urged his peers to vote for another candidate who had 'not a single Seed of rebellion in his disposition'.[118] In the event, Meredith did not stand for re-election, and Pennant was defeated by the Corporation's preferred candidates. There were several reasons for Meredith's resignation, including illness, long-standing opposition from Liverpool council, and that he had made enemies by changing political allegiances in Westminster.[119] Equally, whilst Pennant was often regarded as being amiable, he was perceived by some as indolent.[120] Nevertheless, by 1780 Meredith's and Pennant's views on America did not endear them to the patriotic 'Britons' in the Liverpool electorate, which made them liable to criticism and contributed towards their political misfortunes.

CONCLUSIONS

This essay has analysed the socio-cultural aspects of the War of American Independence (1775-1783) upon the port-town of Liverpool. In doing so, it helps fill a gap in the historiography, as several studies on Britain and the American Revolution rarely mentioned Liverpool in detail. Conway's analysis of the war stressed the themes of locality and centre, as well as unity and division. This work considered these issues too, thereby supplementing and supporting Conway's work. By looking at the housing of prisoners of war, construction of defences, and interaction with the armed forces, it is evident that military considerations became more obvious in Liverpool between 1775 and 1783. Henceforth, this prompted the town to increasingly interact with central government. The town's Corporation successfully lobbied for some concessions from the national government – although the overall direction of the national fiscal-military state was ever-present. Evidently, the

interaction between local and national government was a complex process. In addition, the American rebellion divided opinion within Liverpool, reflecting socio-economic and religious divisions in the town. The War of Independence also revealed the schism within British imperial ideology. In Liverpool both the proponents of coercion and conciliation used constitutionalism to justify their views. Penultimately, the war illustrated competing identities within the town, with some Liverpudlians finding solace in their status as patriotic 'Britons' fighting Catholic Bourbons and US republicans, whilst others saw themselves as Englishmen. Combined, this body of evidence shows that eighteenth century warfare did impact upon British society.

On a final note, in some respects Liverpool shared characteristics with other English towns during the American War. Like Bristol, it was polarised by splits in opinion, was subject to naval impressment, and housed foreign prisoners of war. But there were some differences too (which local case studies such as this illustrate). Whilst Liverpool undoubtedly suffered physical violence as a result of the 1775 Sailors Riot, there seems to have been no example of a foreign power or their British sympathisers directly attacking Liverpool. This stood in contrast with Portsmouth and Bristol, where James Aitkin (an American-sympathising Scot alias 'John the Painter') aimed to destroy rope-houses and ships moored at the quayside.[121] Liverpool presumably escaped this fate because of the military presence in the town, and because Aitkin was caught and hanged in 1777.[122] Furthermore, contrary to the broader national trend, the Liverpool's merchants favoured conciliation over coercion. Liverpudlian Dissenters were also less opposed to coercion than their counterparts elsewhere. These differences reflected local circumstances in the town. A future project may fully determine whether Liverpool's alleged cultural

exceptionalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries (in the words of one author

Liverpool was 'in the North West, but not of it') had its roots in the eighteenth

century.[123]

NOTES

[1] F. D. Cogliano, *Revolutionary America 1763-1815: A Political History* (London: Routledge, 2000), 86-93.

[2] See K. Perry, *British Politics and the American Revolution* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1990) and H.M. Scott, *British Foreign Policy in the Age of the American Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990).

[3] S. Conway, *The War of American Independence 1775-1783* (London: Arnold, 1995), 187-211.

[4] J. Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State 1688-1783* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1989), 250-1.

[5] S. Conway, *The British Isles and the War of American Independence* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 347-53.

[6] *Ibid.*, 353-5.

[7] At the time of writing there is no overall survey of Liverpool during the American War. This stands in contrast to other locations. See P. Marshall, *Bristol and the American War of Independence* (Bristol: Bristol Branch of the Historical Association, 1977) and J. Sainsbury, *Disaffected Patriots: London Supporters of Revolutionary America 1769-1782* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1987).

[8] P. Borsay, 'Introduction', in P. Borsay, ed., *The Eighteenth Century Town: A Reader in English Urban History 1688-1820* (London: Longman, 1990), 6.

[9] J. Stobart, *The First Industrial Region: North-West England 1700-60* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003), 130-3, 220.

[10] F.E. Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey: An Economic History of a Port 1700-1970* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1971), 14.

[11] R. Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (London: Macmillan, 1962), 35.

[12] K. Morgan, 'Liverpool's Dominance in the British Slave Trade 1740-1807', in D. Richardson, S. Schwarz and A. Tibbles, eds, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 14-34.

[13] S. Haggerty, 'Liverpool, the Slave Trade and the British-Atlantic Empire c.1750-75', in S. Haggerty, A. Webster and N.J. White, eds, *The Empire in One City? Liverpool's Inconvenient Imperial Past* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2008), 17-34.

[14] P.G.E. Clemens, 'The Rise of Liverpool 1665-1750', *Economic History Review*, 29, 2 (1976), 216-7.

[15] For example see D. E. Ascott, F. Lewis, and M. Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750: People, Prosperity and Power* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006).

[16] S. Marriner, *Economic and Social Development of Merseyside* (London: Croom Helm, 1982), 37-8. These pages mention warfare, but are more about economic history.

[17] H.V. Bowen, *War and British Society 1688-1815* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 41.

[18] K. Wilson, 'Introduction: Histories, Empires, Modernities', in K. Wilson, ed., *A New Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 5-6.

[19] M.J. Power, 'The Growth of Liverpool', in J. Belchem, ed., *Popular Politics, Riot and Labour: Essays in Liverpool History 1790-1940* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1992), 28-37.

[20] M. Macilwee, *The Liverpool Underworld: Crime in the City 1750-1900* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2011), 69-88.

[21] *South Carolina Gazette*, 11 December 1775.

[22] R.B. Rose, 'A Liverpool Sailors' Strike in the Eighteenth Century', *Transactions of the Lancashire and Cheshire Antiquarian Society*, 68 (1958), 85-92. Also see Liverpool Record Office (hereafter LIVRO), Liverpool Corporation records, 11 September 1775, 352 MIN/COU 1.

[23] J. Touzeau, *The Rise and Progress of Liverpool* (Liverpool: Liverpool Booksellers Company, 1910), 512-4, 565.

[24] The National Archives, Kew (hereafter TNA), Privy Council records, Court of St James, 11 December 1776, PC1/3089.

[25] TNA, Privy Council records, report of the Master General of the Ordinance, 15 May 1777, PC1/3089.

[26] R. Muir, A *History of Liverpool* (London: Williams & Northgate, 1907), 220-1. As further evidence of the impact of eighteenth century warfare upon British society, when troops arrived in Liverpool they interacted with local civilians. Even after the 1775 riot, disgruntled sailors continued to pose a threat to law and order. Hence troops were stationed to prevent breaches of the peace. In 1781 the town's Mayor warned inhabitants that if they were caught purchasing clothes from the soldiers they would be punished. Notices in the Liverpool press also demanded information on the whereabouts of deserters. See *Williamson's General Advertiser*, 1 January 1779, *Williamson's Liverpool Advertiser*, 28 November 1781, and *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 23 January 1781.

[27] TNA, Privy Council records, Petition from Liverpool, 25 March 1779, PC1/3091.

[28] TNA, Privy Council records, Council Chamber, Whitehall, 10 June 1779, PC 1/12/113.

[29] TNA, Privy Council records, report by Board of Ordinance, 18 August 1780, PC1/12/37.

[30] F. Abell, *Prisoners of War in Britain 1756 to 1815* (London: Oxford University Press, 1914), 186-91. Also see D.J. Starkey, *British Privateering Enterprise in the Eighteenth Century* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 1990), 193-235.

[31] Abell, *Prisoners of War*, 186, and LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 13 September 1779, 352 MIN / COU 1.

[32] See Note 38.

[33] J. Howard, *The State of the Prisons in England and Wales with Preliminary Observations and an account of some foreign prisons and hospitals* (Warrington, 1784), 189-90.

[34] *Ibid.*, 185

[35] Abell, *Prisoners of War*, 186-91, and NMM, Admiralty records, Committee for the Sick and Hurt, 7 August 1779, ADM/M/408.

[36] LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, November 1778, 352 MIN / COU 1.

[37] National Maritime Museum, Greenwich (hereafter NMM), Admiralty records, Committee for the Sick and Hurt, 4 January 1780, ADM/M/410.

[38] NMM, Admiralty records, Committee for the Sick and Hurt, 13 February 1778, ADM/M/404, and NMM, Admiralty records, 20 October 1779, ADM/M/409. Liverpool was also visited by American Loyalist refugees. One recorded that whilst the town's docks were 'stupendously grand', the overall

character was 'nautical and so infinitely below our expectations.' A. Oliver, ed., *The Journal of Samuel Curwen Loyalist Volume 2* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), 627-8.

[39] D. Szechi, 'Introduction: The Dangerous Trade in Early Modern Europe', in D. Szechi, ed., *The Dangerous Trade: Spies, Spymasters and the Making of Europe* (Dundee: Dundee University Press, 2010), 2-3.

[40] TNA, High Court of Admiralty, Governor Johnson, in Captured ships with names beginning with G, 1775-1783, HCA 32/344.

[41] TNA, High Court of Admiralty, Canister, in Captured ships with names beginning with C, 1775-1783, HCA 32/287.

[42] Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 165-6, 233-5.

[43] S. Conway, 'The Politics of British Military and Naval Mobilization 1775-83', *English Historical Review*, 112, 449 (1997), 1182-3.

[44] See R. D. Bass, *The Green Dragoon: The Lives of Banastre Tarleton and Mary Robinson* (London: Alvin Redman, 1957) and B. Tarleton, *A History of the Campaigns of 1780 and 1781 in the Southern Provinces of North America* (London: T. Cadell, 1787). By the time of his aunt's death in 1780, Tarleton even considered asking Cornwallis to be a signatory to legal documents – see LIVRO, Tarleton Papers, letter by Banastre Tarleton, Winsbro, South Carolina, 18 December 1780, 920 TAR/4/2. Tarleton's ability to climb the social ladder and mingle with the landed elite raises the important social question of how the war affected the living standards of Liverpudlians. Some qualitative evidence paints a reasonably optimistic picture. Advertisements in the local press for silks and country homes imply that there was still demand for luxury goods (*Liverpool General Advertiser*, 19 March, 18 June, and 9 July 1779). Conversely, other records suggest a decidedly negative impact. The conflict forced some local businesses to make employees redundant. In 1778 the cotton manufacturers Craven & Rosson laid off 120 child workers because of the 'Deadness of the Cotton Branch of Trade' (LIVRO, Blue Coat School records, Quarterly Board Meetings, Minute Book, 29 June 1778, 377 BLU 15/1/1). Literature from the 1780 Liverpool poll book also criticised 'burthensome taxes' (Liverpool Athenaeum, Varro, 8 September 1780, in Liverpool Poll Book 1780). Quantitative analysis of local living standards is frustrated by major gaps in long-running data. Even if one assumes a declining quality of life, there are competing explanations for this. The Blue Coat charity school attributed the rising number of dispossessed children in the town during the early-1780s not to the fallout from the war, but from Liverpool's continued urban expansion (LIVRO, Blue Coat Hospital and School records, A Report on the State of the Blue Coat Hospital in Liverpool from 25 December 1782 to 25 December 1783, 377 BLU/12).

[45] LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 15 December 1777, 352 MIN / COU 1.

[46] Conway, 'Politics of British Military and Naval Mobilization', 1184-6.

[47] Parliamentary Register, 22 January 1778, House of Commons Papers Online, 21-2, http://parlipapers.chadwyck.co.uk/fullrec/fullrec.do?id=pr_1774_1780-000641; accessed 25 July 2014.

[48] *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 29 May 1778.

[49] See J.A. Houlding, *Fit for Service: The Training of the British Army* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 343, and Muir, *History of Liverpool*, 220-1. For primary sources on the 79th Regiment of Foot see TNA, War Office records, Regiment Reports, 1 August 1779, 1 September 1779, 1 October 1779, and 1 November 1779, WO 17/200; TNA, Colonial Office records, Lt. Polson's Journal, 1780, CO 137/77; TNA, Colonial Office records, Lt. Polson's Journal, 1780, CO 137/77; and TNA, Colonial Office records, *Mr Hodgson's Narrative: Notes on the Rise, Progress and end of the late expedition towards the lake of Nicaragua, written as matters had appeared to xxx and composed in an inconvenient corner of the dirty hold of the packet Dashwood*, 1780, CO 137/80.

[50] Conway, 'Politics of British Military and Naval Mobilization', 1189. For more on a Liverpool regiment raised in 1782 see LIVRO, Gregson Papers, Annals of Liverpool, Volume 13, in Materials towards a History of Liverpool collected by John Holt and Matthew Gregson, 943 HOL.

[51] NMM, Admiralty records, Navy Office in-letters, 31 January 1776, ADM/B/191.

[52] R. Stewart-Brown, *Liverpool Ships in the Eighteenth Century* (London: Hodder & Stroughton, 1932), 101-3.

[53] NMM, Admiralty records, Lieutenant Log Book, HMS Assistance, 1780-1781, ADM/ L/A/210.

[54] That said there were some local accomplices who benefited from impressment. The Navy drew £100 in favour of the Liverpool banker Charles Caldwell for carrying on the impress service at the port. TNA, Admiralty records, James North to Commissioners of the Navy, Liverpool, 3 April 1780, ADM 106/1262.

[55] TNA, Privy Council records, Admiralty Office, 14 December 1770, PC 1/9/63.

[56] *South Carolina Gazette*, 9 April 1777.

[57] LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 2 January 1777, 352 MIN/COU 1.

[58] *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 23 March 1780.

[59] TNA, Admiralty records, Advice Tender, Liverpool, 10 February 1781, ADM 106/1263.

[60] J. Innes, 'The Domestic Face of the Military-Fiscal State: Government and Society in Eighteenth-Century Britain', in L. Stone, ed., *An Imperial State at War: Britain from 1689-1815* (London: Routledge, 1994), 96-127.

[61] Hyde, *Liverpool and the Mersey, 22.*

[62] *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 17 November 1775. Equally, demobilisation had an impact upon Liverpool. The social reformer John Howard recorded the number of inmates incarcerated in the town over the years. His data is not unproblematic, as prison populations often fluctuated. Even if there was an increase in the number of inmates, it is not clear whether this was due to a higher incidence of crime or the increased vigilance of local authorities. Nevertheless, in November 1774 there were 58 prisoners in Liverpool Borough Gaol. By 1779 the figure had dropped to 29. This may indicate the effectiveness of the Recruitment Acts, which augmented the size of the British armed forces with criminals. Of these 29 inmates, two were listed as deserters or impressed men - suggesting a military link. By 1782, however, the number of inmates at Liverpool Borough Gaol had risen to 34. This may support the idea that demobilisation led to increased levels of crime. See Howard, *State of the Prisons in England and Wales*, 437, and D. Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft in the Eighteenth Century: The Record of the English Courts', *Past and Present*, 95 (1982), 117-60.

[63] Ascott, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, 147-51

[64] R.J. Bennett, *The Voice of Liverpool Business: The First Chamber of Commerce and the Atlantic Economy 1774-c.1796* (Liverpool: Liverpool Chamber of Commerce, 2010), 91-116.

[65] J. Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool: 1680-1800', in J. Belchem, ed., *Liverpool 800: Culture, Character and History* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), 140-4. Also see P. Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town 1660-1770* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989).

[66] A. Wilson, *William Roscoe: Commerce and Culture* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2008), 17-28.

[67] D. Pope, 'The Wealth and Aspirations of Liverpool's Slave Merchants' in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, 208-15, and *Liverpool Directory* (1777).

[68] Bennett, *Voice of Liverpool Business*, 67-90.

[69] Ascott, Lewis and Power, *Liverpool 1660-1750*, 80.

[70] Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool', 144-5.

[71] *Ibid.*, 139-40.

[72] F.E. Sanderson, 'The structure of politics in Liverpool 1780-1807', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 127 (1978), 65-90.

[73] Longmore, 'Civic Liverpool', 152-4.

[74] See K. Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England 1715-1785* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

[75] G.A. Cranfield, *The Development of the Provincial Newspaper 1700-1760* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 24, 50, 98, 200, 231-4, 254. Also see F. O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Political and Social History 1688-1832* (London: Arnold, 1997), 126-9.

[76] J.E. Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism: Nonconformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 342-4.

[77] J.A.W. Gunn, *Beyond Liberty and Property: The Process of Self Recognition in Eighteenth Century Political Thought* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1983), 260-314.

[78] Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism,* 375.

[79] *Ibid.*, 378

[80] Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 270.

[81] Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism,* 288-9. Also see F. O'Gorman, *Voters, Patrons, and Parties: The Unreformed Electoral System of Hanoverian England 1734-1832* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 390, and J.A. Phillips, *Electoral Behaviour in unreformed England: Plumpers, Splitters and Straights* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), 308.

[82] J. Bradley, 'British Public and the American Revolution: Ideology, Interest and Opinion', in H.T. Dickinson, ed., *Britain and the American Revolution* (London: Longman, 1998), 142.

[83] Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, 389-91.

[84] *Ibid.*, 373-5, 390-3.

[85] J.P. Greene, 'Empire and Identity form the Glorious Revolution to the American Revolution', in P.J. Marshall, ed., *Oxford History of the British Empire - Volume 2: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 208-30.

[86] H.T. Dickinson, 'Britain's Imperial Sovereignty: The Ideological Case against the American Colonists', in Dickinson, *Britain and the American Revolution*, 64-96.

[87] LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 11 September 1775, 352 MIN / COU 1.

[88] *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 6 October 1775.

[89] *Ibid.*, 27 October 1775.

[90] *Ibid.*, 17 November 1775.

[91] Wilson, *Sense of the People*, 237-8.

[92] *Ibid.*,157. Also P.J. Marshall, 'Empire and Authority in the later Eighteenth Century', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 15, 2 (1987), 105-22.

[93] D. Richardson, 'Profits in the Liverpool Slave Trade: The Accounts of William Davenport 1757-1784', in R. Anstey and P.E.H. Hair, eds, *Liverpool, the African Slave Trade, and Abolition: Essays to Illustrate Current Knowledge and Research* (Liverpool: Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, 1989), 80-7.

[94] *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 6 October 1775.

[95] Merseyside Maritime Museum (hereafter MMM), Davenport Papers, William Davenport's Letter Book, Davenport, Liverpool, to Charles Ford, 23 March 1779, D/DAV/1/1.

[96] Order by the King in Council, prohibiting the transporting to any parts out of the Kingdom, or carrying coastwise, any Gunpowder, Saltpetre, or any sort of Arms or Ammunition, for the space of three months from the 23d instant, American Archives Documents of the American Revolution 1774-1776, Northern Illinois University Libraries, http://lincoln.lib.niu.edu/cgi-bin/amarch/documentidx.pl?doc_id=S4-V3-P01-sp34-D0003andshowfullrecord=on; accessed 2 February 2014.

[97] MMM, Davenport Papers, Captain Brighouse, Barbadoes, to William Davenport, 23 March 1777, D/DAV/11/2/5.

[98] MMM, Davenport Papers, William Davenport's Letter Book, Davenport, Liverpool, to Matthew Alexander, Glasgow, 4 November 1780, D/DAV/1/1.

[99] LIVRO, Watt Family Papers, Richard Watt to Ortand and Thomas Rawson, 17 June 1778, 920 WAT 1/2/1.

[100] Richardson, 'Profits in the Liverpool Slave Trade', 80-5.

[101] W. Roscoe, *Mount Pleasant: A Descriptive Poem to which is added an Ode* (Warrington: W. Eyres, 1777), 11-4.

[102] B. Howman, 'Abolitionism in Liverpool', in Richardson, Schwarz and Tibbles, *Liverpool and Transatlantic Slavery*, 293.

[103] *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 17 November 1775.

[104] L. Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 1-9.

[105] LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 11 September 1775, 352 MIN / COU 1, and *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 27 October 1775, 17 November 1775.

[106] C. Kidd, *British Identities before Nationalism: Ethnicity and Nationhood in the Atlantic World 1600-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 6. Also see S.J. Connolly, 'Varieties of Britishness: Ireland, Scotland and Wales in the Hanoverian State', in A. Grant and K. Stringer, eds, *Uniting the Kingdom? The Making of British History* (London: Routledge, 1995), 193.

[107] LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 11 September 1775, 352 MIN / COU 1

[108] *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 13 October 1775.

[109] LIVRO, Liverpool Corporation records, 6 June 1779, 352 MIN / COU 1.

[110] *Liverpool General Advertiser*, 8 June 1780. Also see D. Wahrman, 'The English Problem of Identity in the American Revolution', *American Historical Review*, 106, 4 (2001), 1238.

[111] British Library, *The Dismember'd Empire* (Liverpool, 1782), RB.23.B.929.

[112] Liverpool Athenaeum (hereafter LA), Liverpool Poll Book 1780, A New Song.

[113] G. Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740-1830* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1997), 194-200.

[114] P. Woodland, 'Meredith, Sir William, third baronet (*bap.* 1724, *d.* 1790)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18580; accessed 11 June 2015.

[115] LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1780, A New Song.

[116] J. Lindsay, 'Pennant, Richard, Baron Penrhyn (*c.*1737–1808)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/21859, accessed 11 June 2015.

[117] LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1780, Old England.

[118] LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1780, Benevolus.

[119] See Note 114.

[120] LA, Liverpool Poll Book 1780, 8 September 1780, Varro, and J. Lindsay, 'The Pennants and Jamaica 1665-1808 Part 1: The Growth and Organisation of the Pennant Estates', *Transactions of the Caernarvonshire Historical Society,* 43 (1982), 63.

[121] Marshall, *Bristol and the American War*, 7-10.

[122] N.L. York, 'Aitken, James (1752–1777)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/254, accessed 16 Oct 2015].

[123] J. Belchem, *Merseypride: Essays in Liverpool Exceptionalism* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000), xi-xvii.