Calcutta, from fort to city:
A study of a colonial settlement, 1690-1750

Fort William at Bengall.

Abstract: Calcutta, from fort to city: A study of a colonial settlement, 1690-1750 by Thomas Mansfield

Despite the vast amount of interest in the history of Calcutta as both a colonial metropolis and as the birthplace of the British Empire in India, very little work has looked at the origins of the colony. Previous work has focussed upon the incidents of the 1750s without analysing the foundation and development of Calcutta which was integral to the power and success of the East India Company servants living and trading in Bengal. The history of the Company in India has been hitherto shaped by analysis of political and commercial events. However, the meticulously recorded diaries and consultation books of the Company allows us to look at the colony in a new way. The many thousands of pages of official material and private papers detail the formative sixty years of the colony before the events of the 1750s. This can be analysed by asking different questions about the causes for British actions in India and the growth of British colonial spaces. This analysis has yielded new understanding of how the British understood and controlled the urban colonial environment and population of Calcutta. In particular, the control of the space, behaviour and infrastructure of the colony developed due to a mixture of local contexts and European influences. This research therefore sheds new light upon how the Company survived and grew in Bengal before the Battle of Plassey and also illuminates wider historical themes of authority, space, urban development and cultural interactions in new unexplored setting.

Title Image: British Library Maps Collection K.Top.115.46.8, View of Fort William at Bengal by Lambert and Scott. 1736

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As always the strengths and best insights of this thesis would not have been possible without the help of these people but let any mistakes or omissions be my responsibility alone.

In memory of my mother
1958-2009

Contents

Tables and figures

Abbreviations

BL	*British Library*
CFR	*Calcutta Factory Records*
CPC	*Calcutta Public Consultations*
CDST	*Charters, Deeds, Statutes and Treaties*
COLR	*Copies of letters received*
COLD	*Copies of letters dispatched*
DAC	*Diary and Consultations*
EIC Corr.	*East India Company Correspondence with the East*
Eur. Mss.	*European Manuscripts*
IOR	*India Office Records*
MCR	*Mayor's Court Records*

Introduction

Founded in 1690, Calcutta (now Kolkata) at the height of its power was the most important city in the British Empire and it was the hub from which the domination of the rest of the subcontinent by the British was organised. This domination came about following a direct attack and challenge to the Company who ran the colony in 1757. It is this Black Hole incident and the events that followed that has so often been seen as a catalyst for the emergence of English East India Company dominance and rule over India.[2] The retaking of Calcutta and the Battle of Plassey symbolised a change in the relationship between the Company servants and the Mughal state. For some, the decades before Plassey are periods without the same importance, having little relation to the emergence of the new British Empire in India in the later eighteenth century.[3] However, this event has distracted historians into the false belief that all of importance in the history of the British Empire in India comes after 1757.[4] This thesis is an attempt to reassess this idea by looking at Calcutta from its founding to the events just before the battle of Plassey in 1757. By the 1750s Calcutta was a key component in the commercial network of the East India Company, seventy years earlier there was nothing at the site of Calcutta other than tigers, a few villages and a pilgrimage route. The creation of a colony at Calcutta was the bridgehead and gateway for all

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[2] Noel Barber, *The Black Hole of Calcutta* (London, 1965) provides a modern narrative of the events surrounding the Black Hole incident. B.K. Gupta, 'The Actual English Losses in the Fall of Calcutta in 1756', *The English Historical Review,* vol. 75 (1960), pp. 90-91 and B.K Gupta, *Sirajuddaullah and the East India Company, 1756-1757* (Leiden, 1966) was amongst the wave of Indian historians which began to reassess the events that occurred around the Black Hole incident and Plassey. Eric Stokes, 'The First Century of British Colonial Rule in India: Social Revolution or Social Stagnation', *Past & Present*, No. 58 (1973), pp. 136-160, provides an excellent reassessment of how the British gained power and challenges nineteenth century arguments of Indian despotism. For example administrator historians such as Alfred Lyall, *The Rise and Expansion of the British Dominion in India* (London, 1896), p. 129 identify the events at the Black Hole as evidence of this despotism in action.

[3] C.R Wilson, *The Early Annals of the English in Bengal* vol. 1 (Calcutta, 1996), p. VII, describes the first half of the eighteenth century as a dark age of British India. William Forster, *A Guide to the India Office Records 1600-1858* (London, 1966), p. 40, almost skips over the period 1700 to 1750 arguing that the Bengal Public Consultations 'flow on quietly for half a century'. Also, J. Keay, *The Honourable Company: A History of The English East India Company* (London, 1993), p. 220 has commented on the tendency for historians to rapidly skip over the events of the first half of the eighteenth century.

[4] Robert Travers, 'The Eighteenth Century in Indian History', *Eighteenth-Century Studies*, Volume 40, Number 3 (2007), p.493 has described the debates around the importance of 1757 as 'supercharged'.

Company trade with the Mughal Empire in Eastern India. We can see in detail the emergence of a colony in Bengal and the actions of the men who would live and work for the East India Company over the period. Many different ideas, relationships, and infrastructures would guide Calcutta's development until the events of 1757. The Black Hole incident was the product of broken relationship between the Company and the Mughal elite which was informed and shaped by the experience of Company servants living in Bengal. We should not separate the importance of place or the actions of the colonists from the context of events. The emergence of a British Empire in India is underpinned by Calcutta's urban growth and the importance of space and urban factors in this growth should be examined more closely.

This has not been the approach of historians to date, however. Two types of study have been written that involve Calcutta for the period 1690 to 1750. The first is the broad sweep approach that treats the events before the Black Hole as analogous with the colonial period of the later eighteenth century. Many of these approaches do discuss events of the earlier eighteenth century but without mentioning individuals or specific events and the source material is rooted firmly in this post-Plassey period.[5] Whilst this is work of excellent quality it does not account for the differences between the early and later parts of the eighteenth century. Much of this work has influenced my own research in this area, in particular looking at Anglo-Indian interaction. However, the lack of personal focus and failure to fully detail events before 1757 meant that there was always scope for new research.

The second approach is tied into the role of the Company in creating the British Empire. Here the focus has been to identify whether the British absentmindedly created colonial India or were exploitative and scheming in trying to take wealth and power from the Mughal state.[6] This has been one of the oldest questions in the history of the Company in India even asked during the 1780s during critiques of Company conduct.[7] Again, much of this work has focussed upon the events

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[5] H.V. Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise and the making of the British Overseas Empire, 1688-1775* (London 1996), pp5-6. Has pointed out that such broad sweep approaches to history have become unfashionable with increased focus upon narrower perspectives of individual colonies and territories.

[6] P.J. Marshall (ed.) *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (Oxford, 2000), has collected many different arguments on how events of the eighteenth century changed India with articles by Frank Perlin, Burton Stein and Abdul Majed Khan. The viewpoint of the Company as exploitative schemers has been taken up by Indian historians such as Shubhra Chakrabarti, 'Collaboration and Resistance: Bengal Merchants in the English East India Company, 1757-1833', *Studies in History*, 10.1 (1994), pp. 105-129, and in particular Sushil Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire: Plassey Revolution 1757* (Delhi, 2000).

[7] Edmund Burke was particularly scathing in his attack on Warren Hastings and other Company servants whose attitude towards trading in India and extracting profit had resulted in fraud, death and catastrophe. Edmund Burke, *Mr. Burke's Speech, on the Motion Made for Papers Relative to the Directions for Charging the Nabob of Arcot's Private Debts to Europeans, on the Revenues of the Carnatic* (London, 1785), p. 14.

leading up to Plassey. In these studies certain projections about the agency and character of the Company servants have been made. These works, like studies that broadly examine the growth of the British Empire in India, have failed to see the importance of placing Company actions before the 1750s in their own context. Although much of this work is within the time period of this thesis, it is written with one eye to the conflict and tragedy of Plassey in 1757. Therefore, although useful in analysing the events leading up to Plassey and in exploring many of the issues and themes faced by the Company, these studies again fail to investigate the lives and urban environment that were so essential to Company success.

One of the reasons that these approaches have been taken is due to the source material that is available. Although extensive, East India Company sources are predominantly commercial in nature. Therefore, they are unparalleled resources in identifying the commercial relationships and growth of the Company. This sort of data therefore lends itself easily to economic and political analysis and much less so to social and urban considerations. This is especially true considering the wealth of information that is available in the period after 1757 compared to before this period.[8] However, the primary source material that is available is useful for more than commercial analysis and, as we shall see throughout this thesis, there is important material in these documents that tells us of the daily lives and strategies of survival utilised by the European population in the colony.

The approach of this thesis has been to look at all of the material that survives relating to Calcutta as a built urban environment and its population. The core of this material is still the official Company records held in the British Library.[9] These are mostly the Factory and Public Consultation records of the Company leadership in the colony. Although they are almost entirely commercial accounts of the Company, many important features of life in Asia survive and are of use to the historian. This material is the heart of this thesis, distilled down and reassessed for evidence of the development of the colony over our period. Other material also exists, including church records, private letters, court records and maps that are vital in fully understanding the challenges faced by the colonists. Together these will be combined to show the formation of the colony over our sixty year period.

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[8] M. Moir, *A General Guide to the India Office Records* (London, 1988), xii.

[9] Only one volume of Company records from the period of this thesis has been transcribed and printed and again it shows the Black Hole and Plassey bias to the historical approach by covering the period 1748-1756, K.K. Datta (ed.), *Fort William Correspondence 1748-1756* (Delhi 1958,). This is part of a larger series that covers the period 1748-1800.

The material is well preserved and organised but several features of the sources should be explained.[10] Firstly, eighteenth-century handwriting, whilst easily understandable with practice, does utilise different spelling, syntax and grammatical conventions. To simplify the process of comprehension I have where suitable put modern spellings and abbreviations, in brackets within quotes and I have not amended the syntax or grammar of the source material. Equally, for proper nouns or Indian words I have predominantly spelt them in a modern way to assist comprehension, as eighteenth-century spellings did change considerably throughout, with not one regular spelling for many words. The use of British versus English also presents a problem as although the East India Company was the English Company several of its employees in Calcutta were Irish or Scottish. To avoid confusion references to the 'English' have been replaced with 'British' to avoid confusion although I am aware that that there was no unified state as was present in later centuries. Additionally, Calcutta remains Calcutta and is not changed to Kolkata as that is a modern usage and I feel that a distinction between a modern Kolkata and an old Calcutta should be respected despite the ongoing debate about the origin of human habitation at the site of the city.

It is the human side of the colony that I want to explore. Urban history is not just about the buildings or the infrastructure of a place but also about the people that lived in those places and how they engaged with their environment to live in that place. Therefore, this thesis is an attempt to 're-people' Calcutta and extract details of the lives, concerns and strategies for living that are available in the vast quantity of commercial records. Those historians that have focussed upon the eighteenth century have suggesting the late 1750s was when attitudes began to change. In this thesis I do not want to enter into the discussions around the reasons for the Black Hole as this begins to take the focus of the thesis towards traditional work on the causes of empire post 1757. The timing for this thesis is going to be from the founding moment of the colony in 1690 till 1750. This will cover a neat sixty year period, cover the beginnings of a shift in Company attitudes from the 1740s and also avoid the discussion being dragged into the debates around empire and later colonial domination. Although 1757 remains an important date, the dates of this thesis are chosen to specifically try and remove some of the historical baggage associated with working in and around this pivotal date in colonial history. Additionally, the use of Anglo-Indian is primarily used to highlight the relationship between the British and the Indians of Bengal. Although it can be applied to people of mixed race heritage or to label Europeans in India it is primarily used here to provide an identifying label for the various commercial, political, social and personal interaction that occurred in Calcutta.

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[10] The majority of the material for the thesis comes from the British Library and the India Office Records there. The footnote reference for material used from the British Library will be recorded as follows. British Library India Office Records will be shorted to BL IOR followed by the record series.

This source material reminds us that Calcutta in 1690 was very different from the Calcutta of 1727 or even 1750. However, at what point did it become a city? This is an important question, part of a wider debate about the nature of urban places. When considering Calcutta in this thesis it will be referred to as a colony and a town but it would be too early in Calcutta's history to consider it a city. Calcutta is very rare in that unlike many older cities we can identify the precise moment of its birth and chart the milestones in its journey towards becoming a city. This useful because it will help to remind us throughout this thesis that Calcutta's fate as this great colonial metropolis was neither predetermined nor immediate. This thesis will help to chart the change from village to trading place to town to city. By reminding ourselves of Calcutta's more humble origins we can perhaps shed new light upon the more general processes of urban growth and see whether certain factors or events assisted in the growth of the colony and the success of the Company merchants.

In trying to tell the story of the development and growth of Calcutta as a place, it is important for us to understand the context and the types of relationships the Company had throughout Bengal. We will look specifically at the importance of the different connections the Company maintained and developed during the first decades of the colony's founding. Specifically we will examine how the Company operated within the framework of the Mughal state and the different strategies used to maintain Company independence. We will then examine how the Company won the freedoms to build the colony. Finally we will look at how the colony was not isolated but was part of a web of connections with various different European rivals and looking at how these relationships changed will help to contextualise the activities of the Company throughout our period.

The second chapter is an attempt to identify the principle actors and decision makers within the colony. This chapter will explore how they were connected to markets and communities in both Europe and other parts of Asia. This helps us to understand how the colonists were connected and supported and how this benefitted the purpose and longevity of the colony. These relationships could be either formal or informal and the Company utilised both in different policies/strategies that connected the inhabitants of the Company to its operations. This made the development of the Company and its trade central to the success of the colony and the fortunes of its inhabitants.

Chapter three is an attempt to place Calcutta within its physical context. Specifically it will be an examination of the issues surrounding Calcutta's founding and the subsequent challenges faced by the Company elite in keeping Calcutta independent and successful when faced with the physical and political constraints present in Bengal. We will identify how these constraints were overcome and explore how the location of Calcutta provided independence for the Company to develop Calcutta as a trading place. We will then explore how Calcutta was connected to the Mughal urban network and how this web of connections manifested in the form of subordinate factories.

The next chapter will look in greater detail at the European population that chose to live, and work in Calcutta. We will try and identify the complexities and makeup of the colonial population and try and challenge some of the assumptions about colonial life in Calcutta. This chapter argues that preconceptions about Calcutta, (that it was sickly and temporarily inhabited) are not accurate. This chapter will try to look objectively at a range of data to suggest that life in Calcutta was far less deadly and that the population of the colony was much more diverse and complex than previously understood. To this end we will look at evidence of stability and community that is evident in the source material.

In chapter five we will identify how the Company understood and managed colonial authority. In particular we will look at personalised forms of control by early leaders of the colony such as Sir John Goldsborough and Charles Eyre. We will then explore how Company authority was codified in the 1720's and argue that the forms of authority that were implemented were typical of other colonial places but also reflect the desire to see distinctly British forms of authority. Finally we will examine how authority was executed in practice and the use of intermediaries to help govern the colony. We then examine the benefits and problems this relationship may cause.

Chapter six is an exploration of how the President and Council managed and controlled its urban space. Specifically it argues that the Company primarily focussed upon developing infrastructure that supported its commercial ambitions. The management of space was also essential and ensured that the inhabitants of the colony we're encouraged to settle in Calcutta knowing that their personal investment was protected. It was only when under pressure from external sources did the Company make changes to the built environment. With the threat of attack the free flowing nature of Calcutta's built space was strictly controlled and a distinction between the European and Indian populations emerged.

In chapter seven the methods used to define and control different types of behaviour are investigated. As a commercial place the regulation of commercial activity was essential in maintaining Company authority. However, there was more to controlling behaviour than just regulating commercial practices. Larceny, violence and sexual crime also threatened the power of the colonial elite. The second part of this chapter will look at how the Company regulated criminal behaviour and the patterns and methods used in controlling such behaviour amongst the European population. The final part of this chapter will look at how the influences and morals of the Company elite shaped attitudes and approaches to moral issues and also how religious values were protected and promoted in the colony. Overall, this will help us to see how the Company managed the actions of the colonists to maintain their position as the main administrative and legal authority in the colony.

The final chapter looks at Anglo-Indian relations/partnerships in greater detail. The Company did not trade alone and had multiple contacts and resources drawn from the Asian

community. Identifying the changing relationship between the two is essential in understanding how the colony was more than just a trading place. This can be seen in the second part of this chapter where the different strategies used to control the Indian population are examined. In particular the methods used to encourage Indians to live and work in Bengal but also Company attitudes to controlling the behaviour of this population. To ensure that we examine what is particular about Calcutta we should look at the complex dynamic between the Company and the Indian inhabitants of the colony. This reflected Company attitudes and shows how managing their relationship with the Indian community protected and supported Calcutta.

When we consider the beginnings and outcomes of the story of Calcutta, from a bare empty riverbank to a successful and vibrant colonial city, we see the many varied factors behind the colony's success. The transition from a group of tired and disgruntled merchants cooped up in a Company ship, to stunned and violated men and women in the courtyard of a captured colonial fort is a reminder that the journey the colony and its colonists underwent was neither simple nor a guaranteed success. We have the narrative of many thousands of Indians and Europeans who called Calcutta home so we must explore more than just the balance sheet of Company history and forget the Raj and a future historical setting and focus upon the fears and challenges faced by the men and women who comprised Calcutta in the early years of this important colonial story.

Chapter 1: Regional connections and their impact upon Calcutta's development

It was early in the morning and the heat of the Indian sun was beginning to spread across the stonework of Fort William. In a few hours, the midday sun would be punishing to those caught exposed and all those that could stay in the shade would do so till the cooler afternoon and evening. A file of Indian soldiers strode across the central courtyard of Fort William and after laying their weapons to one side, opened the heavy wooden doors exposing the darkened interior to the bright Bengal sunlight. The smell of sweat, vomit and faeces was the first to emerge from the room followed by a few ragged European men and women, their clothes soiled and unkempt, pale weak hands clutching each other as they blinked, adjusting to their surroundings. The soldiers disappeared through the stone pucka doorway and began to bring out the bodies of those that had failed to emerge. Some groaned in agony, heads lolling from side to side, but many more were still as they were laid out in the courtyard. It was hard to tell how many had died, but the dead soon began to outnumber the survivors, who now stood silent and shocked in the shade of the Fort William's walls.[11] The room had been too small to hold them all and overnight, despite the protection of the cooler night air, many had asphyxiated, overheated or been crushed by the mass of Europeans who had been forced into the small room. The room was later to be called the Black Hole of Calcutta and those that survived that terrible night would never forget the ordeal and never forget the failure of their relationship with the Mughal state that had resulted in such a horrendous night.[12]

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[11] C.S.S. Hill, *List of Europeans and Others in the English Factories in Bengal at the time of the siege of Calcutta in the year 1756* (Calcutta, 1902), gives a good list of those that were employed by the Company on the eve of the Black Hole.

[12] John Zephaniah Holwell, *Narrative of the Deplorable Deaths of the English Gentlemen, and Others, who were suffocated in the Black-Hole in Fort-William, at Calcutta, in the Kingdom of Bengal; in the Night succeeding the 20th Day of June, 1756* (London, 1758). This first paragraph condenses Holwell's sixty-eight page account but retains its major elements. Linda Colley, *Captives: Britain, Empire and the World 1600-1850* (London, 2003), pp. 256-257 also condenses Holwell's account but focuses upon the less heroic elements of the event.

The above narrative description of the events of the Black Hole demonstrate both the precarious position of the Company in the earlier part of the eighteenth century but also the variety of connections made and pressures experienced by the British inhabitants of Bengal. It could be argued that the events of the Black Hole were representative of the failure of the East India Company to navigate the complex political, economic and physical environment that the British were part of in Bengal. This complex setting shaped the operations, actions and built environment of the Company men who lived and worked in Calcutta. To understand how Calcutta developed as an urban place it is essential to explore and understand these connections and relationships that enabled and constrained the Company in Bengal. We need to look closely at the particular types of relationships and limitations experienced by the Company servants over the period. This will allow us to understand some of the pressures and foundations that would inform how the Company acted and which we will explore in the rest of the thesis.

To this end, this chapter will be split into three parts that explore the different types of regional connections and interactions made by the President and Council. Firstly, we will explore the general relationship of the Company to the Mughal state and the challenges this relationship presented to the President and Council in settling and building a settlement in Bengal. The second part of this chapter examines the impact of crisis's within the Mughal state and what these threats and opportunities meant to the Company's operations throughout our period. Finally, there will be an examination of the impact of European rivalry upon the development of the colony. In particular how relationships between European groups were another type of connection the President and Council had to manage when developing Calcutta as a successful trading place. Together, these three sections will show that the Company's future and progression to the heights of the later eighteenth century cannot be assumed. This chapter will show that the interaction of the English merchants with Indian and European groups was central to how the English East India Company built Calcutta. The Company's success was reliant upon good relationships but also reliant upon how they mitigated threats caused by these relationships.

Part 1: The farman, Nawabi politics and the challenge of permanent settlement

The Company was not free to build the colony and trade without engaging with Indian politics, laws and cultural practices. European attitudes to Indian law and politics have been explored by historians from the later eighteenth century onwards but a similar appraisal for the period before has not been so thoroughly investigated. The freedom to build Calcutta under the control and influence of the English East India Company was something that had to be fought and negotiated for over many years. It was not until the 1760s that the Company diverged from this model and broke away from Mughal interference in Company affairs. The challenge of establishing Calcutta

under the control of the President and Council before the 1760s was overcome through the use of legal documents and political negotiation. It was the *farman* of 1717, won through hard work and serendipity when dealing with the Imperial Court, which was the landmark moment that finally gave the Company the protection to build in Bengal legally. The tale of the gaining of the *farman* has become part of colonial folklore but the story can be retold and re-examined in an urban context to see the impact of this simple document in enabling the Company to govern Calcutta.[13]

The uncertainty that surrounded the Company's position before the granting of the *farman* had its origins in Company policy before 1690. As part of his policy of forcing Company success in India, Josiah Child in the 1680s had provoked the Mughal state into conflict and caused the Company to be expelled from Bengal.[14] The negotiations that repaired the damage done by Child allowed Calcutta to come into existence but did not provide firm foundations for expanding the colony. The problem was not that the Company could not carry out trade, but that the freedom to invest in infrastructure such as warehouses, factories and other commercial buildings was not protected under the basic trade agreement with the Mughal state. Calcutta represented many thousands of pounds of investment from the Company and to lose it because of a lack of political influence and protection was an unpalatable, though ever present risk. So far from home and so isolated from European support, the Council needed to gain security and clarity on its position in Bengal. To do this, the Council could not use the European forms of security and influence they were so expert at utilizing in London. In Europe the Company entwined its fortunes with the authority of Parliament and protected its position with monopoly rights. The Company servants had to carry out their search for security using Indian systems and channels which operated in completely different and unfamiliar ways.

Late in 1698 and armed with the latest agreement from the Mughal governor the Council thought they had achieved the permanent right to build and run the settlement. This right had been awarded by the Mughal governor of Bengal after the Company had supported him in the recent internecine conflict in the region. However, like previous promises and understandings this agreement was only temporary and provided little protection and power to the Council. The first level of agreements they had established - Dastaks - were exemptions from import and export duties.[15] Though a useful privilege, it did not go far enough in protecting Company property, only

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[13] Wilson, *Early Annals*, Vol.2 part 2 devotes a whole volume on the issue of the *farman* and the mission to the Mughal court. More general studies of the Company have also placed importance on the events of the Surman embassy for example Keay, *The Honourable Company*, pp. 232-270.

[14] Richard Grassby, 'Child, Sir Josiah, first baronet (*bap.* 1631, *d.* 1699)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5290, accessed 29 Oct 2011].

[15] Referred to as Dustucks in the Company records.

legitimizing the right to trade.[16] The 1698 agreement was the next step up in legal protection; the Council secured the right to act as Zamindars or landlords of Calcutta by purchasing these rights from existing Zamindars. The Zamindari rights the Council sought would have given the Council authority over the people that lived within the Zamindari area as well the rights over their labour, an expectation of their deference and their crops.[17] However, the rights granted in 1698 were not these desirable Zamindari rights but only the right to buy them from their existing holders. The Company failed to buy the Zamindari rights of others and failed to gain headway with the Mughal Governor of Bengal. The Company realised that at the regional political level it was out of options. After ten years in Bengal the Company was no closer to gaining the security it desired and continued to increase its financial risk as they invested more and more into Bengali and Calcuttan markets. The Company needed to go right to the source of power in Mughal India, the Emperor, and seek his favour, in the form of a *farman*, at the Imperial Court in Delhi.

However, the Emperor, Aurangzeb, had been a staunch opponent of granting such a general power as the Zamindari rights to the Company. A separate attempt by the rival New East India Company to establish an ambassador at the Mughal court had been unsuccessful, William Norris the chosen man, was ignored and marginalised by both the Old Company and the Mughal elite. His vastly expensive ambassadorial venture cost £80,000 and achieved nothing.[18] Even worse, the Company again had its rights suspended in 1701 because of a failure to protect Mughal shipping from piracy perceived to be British in origin.[19] Things needed to drastically change for the Company to gain the imperial support it needed. The Company had its chance in 1707 following the death of Aurangzeb. The Mughal monarchy was thrown into disruption as Aurangzeb's descendants all vied for power and destroyed the stability Aurangzeb's reign had provided. It was a period when three Emperors ruled within 10 years and saw the rise to power of the Syed brothers, who closely controlled Farrukhsiyar the new emperor from his ascension in 1713. However, the Syeds also provided an alternate route of access to the Imperial ear. The Company, who by 1713 had united together with the New East India Company to form the United Company, took its time to prepare, seeking guidance from London and avoiding the repeat of Norris's mistakes. When the time came, the Council began preparations for a new embassy to the imperial court.[20]

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[16] Keay, *The Honourable Company*, p. 222.

[17] J.R. McLane, *Land and Local Kingship in Eighteenth-Century Bengal* (Cambridge 1993), pp. 8-9. describes the role and function of the Zamindar which is an area we will explore in chapter seven of this thesis.

[18] Keay, *The Honourable Company*, p. 190

[19] Keay, *The Honourable Company*, p. 192.

[20] Wilson, *The Early Annals* Vol.2 pt.2, pp. xii-xxi.

Thomas Pitt, the Governor of Madras, was the mastermind behind Company attempts to gain the *farman*.[21] Pitt's aims for the negotiations had been carefully discussed with the Emperor's Lord High Steward Ziau-ud-Din to ensure that the Company approached the request of Imperial favour correctly. Pitt's aim was to seek protection of the Company's privileges both commercial and territorial throughout India. Additionally, Pitt sought the grant of an old Portuguese town near Madras, the right to mint the silver imports in Bengal, and the ability to protect the country and river trade.[22] These requests were not covered by simple Zamindari rights but were useful additional bargaining chips and safeguards for Company activity. Pitt had another tool available and this was the use of a present to the Emperor. The present was more than just a bribe, it showed to the Mughal Emperor that the Company respected his position as the ruler of India and was to Indian eyes a gesture of respect. The present was designed to show the wealth and luxury the Company had at its command and could bring to India. In total the present consisted of a staggering array of paraphernalia including 1001 gold coins, a globe six feet across, a rhinoceros horn (labelled as a unicorn's horn), a clock set with precious stones, a gold escritoire, ambergris and a silver ewer and basin.[23] The group chosen to accompany this present was led by John Surman a member of the Council at Calcutta and it was from here the ambassadorial party set out in 1714. Once the entourage arrived at court and delivered the present, the Emperor was suitably impressed. However, the timing of the Company's arrival could not have been poorer and, as with Norris before, the whole enterprise was at risk of failure.

Although Farrukhsiyar was pleased to receive the present from the Company he was less pleased to resolve the tedious matter of dealing with British requests. The Company's timing interrupted his wedding and honeymoon and once he was free to discuss the British requests he was struck down by two lengthy bouts of sickness. It was four months before the Emperor was willing to see the British representatives. William Hamilton, the British doctor with the embassy, had helped to treat the Emperor's illness and although he was rewarded handsomely by the Emperor for his work it was not enough to gain the *farman*. All the Company had attempted through diplomacy had failed. It took a threat to leave Surat, and the trade that went with it, to create a breakthrough. Letters from the Mughal Governor at Surat describing the impact of Company withdrawal were enough to get Farrukhsiyar's attention and after a year of frustration the *farman* was finally granted.[24] This shows the importance of generating connections with Indian elites that could be leveraged for later gain. Though the Mughals saw the British as mere traders they did recognise the

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[21] Perry Gauci, 'Pitt, Thomas (1653–1726)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/22333, accessed 29 Oct 2011].

[22] Wilson, *The Early Annals*, Vol.1, Pt.2, p. 73.

[23] Keay, *The Honourable Company,* p. 226.

[24] Keay, *The Honourable Company*, p. 228.

important role in the international and regional trade that flowed into India from the ports the Company built.[25] As a result, although purely diplomacy was ineffectual, the threat to withdraw from Surat highlighted how much European trading companies were integrated with Indian commercial networks. Integration threatened Company independence, trade and space in Bengal but integration was also essential to gain the legal right to permanently settle at Calcutta through seeking the Zamindari rights.

The Zamindari rights the Company had sought through the *farman* were gained for a paltry 3000 rupees a year in tribute. The *farman* gave the Company the Zamindari rights to the three villages that made up Calcutta but even more interestingly it gave them access to the thirty-eight surrounding villages and the chance again to buy up those Zamindari rights. Additionally, the Dastaks the Company already owned were expanded in scope ensuring Company ships were exempt from being stopped and searched.[26] The Bengal Governor was understandably incensed and actively resisted these additional rights. Although the right to settle in Calcutta had been granted by the *farman* the Bengal Governor was able to raise other costs and duties such as demands for tribute, preventing the export of certain goods and ignoring the Dastaks of the Company. Although the President and Council protested and occasionally had these duties reduced they at last felt secure legally to stay where they were and trade in peace. Over the next thirty years although the Mughal Governors, squeezed the Company for cash, challenged Company authority and actions, they were unable to prevent them from investing more men, money and goods into the region. The result was further integration between the Indian and European commercial interests and as the Company continued its commercial success the urban space and property it controlled stayed firmly within Company jurisdiction and influence.[27] Nawabi power over the period continued to grow and as the Company succeeded in stabilising the colony the desire to remain and increase Company independence lead to an increasingly combustible situation.[28] The Company in London absorbed monetary fines from the Bengal Governor much more easily than if they had lost Calcutta or its trade infrastructure was compromised and thus the *farman* allowed the Company to consolidate and to spread its influence within the region until the crisis of 1757.

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[25] Abdul Majed Khan, 'Introduction: The Twilight of Mughal Bengal' in P.J Marshall (ed.) *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (Oxford 2000), pp. 360-1.

[26] Keay, *The Honourable Company*, p. 232.

[27] Julian Hoppit, 'Checking the Leviathan, 1688-1832' in Donald Winch and Patrick K. O'Brien (eds.) *The Political Economy of British Historical Experience 1688-1914* (Oxford 2002) p. 269 has argued for the strength of fiscal independence to the growing power of Parliament in the first half of the eighteenth century. The *farman* granted similar fiscal independence to the Company in Bengal.

[28] Robert Travers, 'Ideology and the British expansion in Bengal, 1757-72', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 33:1 (2005), p. 11

Overall, the story of the fight to get the *farman* was not just a story of property protection but was one of showing the importance of developing regional and imperial connections in India. The Bengal governor obviously saw the *farman* as undermining his dominance by giving the British a solid base in his region. It ensured more than just independence though. It ensured that the British were now able to trade in Bengal on terms they understood. The cycle of monetary concessions to gain legal protection was well understood by them following years of debate and competition in dealing with Parliament in Britain.[29] The Company was able to turn the situation from one where the Mughal government had the initiative, able to make the President and Council act on Indian terms, to one where the British were able to act increasingly independent of Mughal interference. By 1733 it was clear to the Mughal Governor of Bengal that the British had exploited their early permissions from the Emperor and now represented a challenge to the Bengal Governor's authority. This realisation may answer why tensions appear to increase between the Company and Mughal state from the 1730s, but by then the Company was independent, commercially, legally and physically and able to defend its colonial activities.[30] Although the actual legal protection offered by the *farman* was questionable it gave the Company the confidence, initiative, and the opportunities to formulate new connections and integrate further into Bengal markets.

Part 2: The Marathas and the threat to Calcutta

The Company's response to physical threats also helped to shape Calcutta's built environment. Specifically conflict within the Mughal state and the threat of attack prompted several specific developments and reactions from the Company in our period. To see this development we should look at the way the fort in Calcutta, Fort William, was built. It was 1694 before the Company was sufficiently well-established to begin fortifying the first Factory building which was the main Company building in Calcutta. Charnock (who died in 1692) and his successors in the Council (established in 1690) had spent this time trading with its Indian contacts and trying to rekindle its relationship with the Mughal government. In the early years, the British merchants worked hard to prove the profitability of Bengal to the London Directors whilst negotiating basic promises of safety from the Mughal state. Following the recommendations of Sir John Goldsborough, the

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[29] Travers, 'Ideology and the British expansion' p. 8. C.A. Bayly has suggested for the later period that Company strategy was to turn general trading rights into legal immunity. Although legal protection was desired in our period, the desire for complete immunity from Mughal authority is not as identifiable.

[30] Rajat Kanta Ray, 'Calcutta or Alinagor: Contending Conceptions in the Mughal-English Confrontation of 1756-1757' in Indu Banga (Ed.) *Ports and their hinterlands in India: 1700-1800* (New Delhi 1992), p. 48.

Council began to consider ways to strengthen Calcutta for the longer term. After gaining basic permissions from the Mughal governor in the early 1690's, this led to the first injection of support in terms of permissions, resources and capital from the London Directors.[31] The new buildings the Governor and Council built were more permanent, although the Council informed the London directors that:

> We have begun no brick buildings in your place except a godown or warehouse which was of necessity to be built for pricing and sorting your honours goods this year and shall build no more than just what is necessary for your honours business until we have the Nabob and Duans Pwanna a firm settlement here.[32]

This shows the need of the Company to gain Mughal permission and that the ability to build more permanent buildings and defences was dependent upon the continued support of the Mughal state. The Company's desire for a firm settlement was hampered by its inability to negotiate such a permanent settlement with the Nawab. Consequently, by 1696 there was still no obvious fort. The factory was simply a combined storage and living space and the Governor, Charles Eyre, lived in chambers separate from his subordinates. The majority of the Factory comprised godowns which stored a variety of goods safe from the damaging Indian rains and humidity. Despite increased commercial success by the Governor and Council, the settlement was unable to expand beyond simple commercial functions.[33] The Company could hide behind the walls of the Factory if they were attacked but it would do little to protect them in any protracted conflict. However, the tempestuous nature of Indian politics provided an opportunity for the Company merchants to establish Calcutta as a colonial city rather than just a colonial enclave.

Charles Eyre, who succeeded Charnock as Governor and later President, understood the value even flimsy defences gave to a simple factory. Eyre had experienced with Charnock the disruption caused when the Company had been unceremoniously booted out from Bengal in 1688.

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[31] A basic *farman* or right to trade and settle was agreed in the December of 1690, BL IOR CFC DAC G/7/1 17th December 1690 and other rights such as landlord rights and freedoms to trade without duties were granted. These rights would later be called into question which is a topic focussed upon in the next chapter.

[32] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 December 1695.

[33] G.H. Martin, 'The Town as Palimpset', in H.J. Dyos, (ed.), *The Study of Urban History* (London, 1968), p. 156 has argued that towns founded for different reasons had different forms whilst Max Weber, *The City* (London, 1958), pp. 66-67 suggests that cities exhibit evidence marketplaces, a protective lord and a certain amount of economic versatility are all features that are highly visible in Calcutta. This suggests that Calcutta's initial function as a trading place shaped its growth but as it developed other urban features were required to function.

However, things changed in 1696 when a former Zamindar the Mughal Governor, rebelled. This former Zamindar raised an army that attacked the towns and villages around the town of Hooghly. This rebellion got so far as to reach across the river from Calcutta.[34] The conflict culminated in an attack on Hooghly by the rebel army and attacks on the British, Dutch and French factories there. The British were understandably alarmed. The Dutch Factory had only remained safe by fortifying themselves. A show of strength against the rebels by the British confused the Indian traitors which ultimately saved the Dutch Factory.[35] There was increased political pressure on the Council when the rebel army tried to make the Company pay them tribute, whilst the Mughal Governor also demanded support from the Europeans to stave off the threat of the rebels. The British managed to skilfully placate both sides to the extent that both groups thanked the Council for its support.[36] The confusion and crisis caused by these events show the tenuous position of the Company when Mughal politics began to encroach upon the Company's activities. Although the Company survived this situation the close proximity of the conflict and the example of the attack on the Dutch factory reported in the Company records was representative of what risks potentially threatened Company operations at any time.

The President, Charles Eyre, took matters into his own hands. Writing to Ibrahim Khan he asked for permission to fortify the Factory which would provide the protection needed against future conflict and present dangers.[37] This shows how politically restricted the British were in Bengal when trying to protecting their property. Requesting permission to fortify from Khan was an acknowledgment Mughal power and authority. It shows that security was not determined by the Company merchants and thus their power was limited. Khan agreed to let all the Europeans fortify their factories but did not explicitly state they could build forts.[38] This was an important distinction

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[34] Wilson, *Early Annals, Vol. 1*, pp. 147-9 describes the events surrounding the rebellion. The concern of the Company men over the close proximity of the rebel forces can be seen in BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/6 November 1696.

[35] BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/6 September 1696.

[36] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/52 letter 162.

[37] D. Lieberman, 'Property, Commerce, and the Common Law. Attitudes to Legal Change in the Eighteenth Century', in John Brewer and Sarah Staves (eds.) *Early Modern Conceptions of Property* (London, 1996), pp. 144-58, details the intricate relationship between liberty and property that would have informed Eyre's desire to secure the rights to building and legitimising Fort William. For the period before 1688 Henry Horwitz, 'Law, Liberty and Property', in J.R. Jones (ed.), *Liberty Secured? Britain Before and After 1688* (Stanford, 1992), pp. 285-98, gives a similar treatment and this shows a consistency in understanding that would have inspired Eyre in his actions at Calcutta.

[38] BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/6 September 1696, November 1696, January 1697, May 1697 all provide examples of how the Company co-ordinated with Madras to fortify the settlement.

not lost on Eyre when he wrote home to tell of the fortifying process. In his letter copied out carefully into the Company records he informed his employers that

> We fear your honours &ca misapprehend us in what we wrote about a fortification, which we never designed in the nature of a well modelled fort but to have built a strong factory, on the grounds the commissary pitched on equivalent to a Fort but to look like a factory which government could never disproved, neither shall we have the like opportunity probably whilst we live in India for the Rajah's forces have lately assaulted Hooghly and made themselves masters of the Fort taking the government prisoners.[39]

Eyre and his successor John Beard worked hard to build for the long term whilst not raising the suspicions of the Mughal government. The commercial factory building remained, but its interior was strengthened and made suitable for storage of gun powder, small arms and the mounting of cannons facing the river.[40] By keeping a commercial façade Eyre and Beard had cleverly complied with their masters' wishes in saving money by using existing buildings. Equally they were able to avoid the ire of Ibrahim Khan by ensuring the Factory was not an obvious military structure. In a letter to the Directors they claimed that the new defences were not to be surpassed anywhere in Bengal.[41] Though such a comment was undoubtedly hyperbole to gain funds and support from the London Directors it does suggest the British were now taking more control of their own defence needs.

This rebellion was one of many internecine conflicts that the British would only be able to observe from the sidelines. Indian military mentalities continued to follow Indian ideas of tactics, strategy and composition even as late as the 1780s.[42] The rebellion in 1696 was an example of the frequent rebellions and uprisings that typified Mughal Empire. The Company in 1708 was able to repeat this opportunistic act when following the death of the Emperor they elected to strengthen the Fort as 'no one likely to take notice of what we are doing'.[43] What this suggests is that the Company were conscious of the need to protect its space but to do so whilst preserving its relationships with the local Mughal state. Both the building of the fort in 1696 and strengthening it in 1708 were done when the Company felt they had the freedom to do so without fear of reprisal. What is clear is that although good relations with the Mughal state and the regional Bengal elite

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[39] BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/6 April 1696.

[40] C.R.Wilson (ed.), *Indian Records Series, Old Fort William in Bengal,* (London, 1906), p. 21, 1 January 1697.

[41] BL IOR CRF COLD G/7/6 January 1697.

[42] G.J. Bryant, 'Asymetric Warfare: The British Experience in Eighteenth-Century India', *The Journal of Military History,* Vol.68, No. 2 (2004), p. 442.

[43] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 April 1707.

were important the Company also identified opportunities to fortify and increase Company security in the region.

The Company's security was again challenged in the 1740s when the Maratha's invaded Bengal from the West and threatened the Company's space. This threat saw further fortification of the Fort but also wider changes to the ordering of space in Calcutta. It was Bartholomew Plaisted's role as the surveyor in the town to measure and repair Calcutta's urban environment and when the threat of Maratha attack occurred he was the man responsible for fortifying the colony.[44] This suggests a determination to better fortify Calcutta in the face of increased external threats and a desire to use Plaisted's building expertise to do so. Because of Plaisted's work the town became polarized between the European and the Indian spaces as the European elite attempted to protect and isolate themselves from attack.

The physical threat to the viability of Calcutta was not unique to Calcutta nor was it unique to the British experience of India. Early modern colonial history is full of examples of physical attacks against colonial places. For example Madras was captured by the French in the 1740's and the British inhabitants had to leave until they regained control of the colony a few years later. The Dutch at Hooghly were attacked in the same 1696 conflict that the English Company used to fortify Calcutta. In North American colonies along the frontier were under continued threat of attack from the indigenous population and other European settlers. Physical risk was an understood part of building a colony and therefore the fortification of Calcutta shows a typical response by the President and Council in trying to minimise this risk. Calcutta was a port city that was at the frontier of European experience in India and therefore purely economic or legal protection was not considered enough to secure the colony.[45] What is important to note is that this desire for protection had a specific impact upon how the Company elite reacted to its built environment.

When analysing Calcutta as an urban space, examining the reactions to the construction and funding of the Fort can show a different narrative that looks at Fort William as a component of the

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[44] Robert Home, *Of Planting and Planning: The Making of British Colonial Cities* (London, 1997), pp. 9-14 has explored how Atlantic colonies planned their urban space, the role of Shaftesbury's *Grand Modell* in building many of these colonies and the role of individual surveyors in laying out these changes. Charles van den Heuval, 'Multilayered Grids and Dutch Town Planning, Flexability and Temporality in the Design of Settlements in the Low Countries and Overseas' in Piet Lombaerde and Charles van den Heuvel (eds) *Early Modern Urbanism and the Grid: Town Planning in the Low Countries in International Context, Exchange in Theory and Practice, 1550-1800* (Turnhout, 2011), pp. 27-29 suggests that Dutch colonies developed in grids because of a codification of methods that reflected the studies and practices of Dutch surveyors that were carried overseas. The same cannot be said of Calcutta.

[45] Bhaswati Bhattacharya, 'The hinterland and the coast: The pattern of interaction in Coromandel in the late eighteenth century' in R. Mukherjee and L. Subramanian (eds.) *Politics and Trade in the Indian Ocean World: Essays in honour of Ashin Das Gupta* (Oxford 2003), pp. 20-21.

urban growth of the colony rather than just a military building. The regional disruption and the militarised nature of Indian society were external pressures that made the upgrading of the Factory to a Fort a tactical necessity. The more militaristic features of the Company in Bengal compared to how they behaved in Europe (where they had no military or urban presence) shows the Company were forced to adapt to the cultural and political situation they found themselves in. The most obvious benefit of the Fort lies in the security it provided the British merchants knowing that they had some protection from regional disturbances or small scale interference.[46] Having such a source of protection encouraged investment by the Company in London which benefited those merchants who gained both prestige and opportunities for gaining personal wealth if Calcutta became more secure. Such security also allowed increased trade operations by the Company but also for merchants own private trade. As a result the Fort /Factory complex remained at the heart of the British community in Bengal throughout our period and was seen as a typical response to the instability of Indian politics. It is not possible to separate the security and the commercial aspects of the Fort as they both supported the same ideal of a sustained and less risky commercial investment in an urban trading place.

Part 3: The impact of European rivalries

The factors that surround Calcutta's settlement, in particular the political and geographical conditions that were present, all provide clues as to how the colony developed during our period. The complex and uncertain political situation in 1690 had the potential to isolate and restrict Calcutta's growth. French or Dutch aggression or changes in Mughal political power in Bengal were all likely threats to the British merchants. But Calcutta was not the only colony in India, and the experience and connections of men who had lived and worked in places like Madras, Bombay and Surat all helped to guide Calcutta carefully along a course of economic stability. Political interaction and spatial conditions were a constantly changing dynamic that were limiting factors that determined the ability of the Company merchants to fulfil their economic ambitions. The British merchants in Bengal worked hard to create strong relationships with the local Indian merchants and also to define their urban space and we shall explore in later chapters how they did this. Although the situation in Bengal was potentially unstable, we should also ask whether this was the norm of colonies in general?[47] To understand this requires us to move to the other side of the globe and explore the colonies of the New World.

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[46] Farhat Hasan, 'Indigenous Co-Operation and the Birth of a Colonial City: Calcutta, c.1698-1750', *Modern Asian Studies*, 26, 1 (1992), p. 71.

[47] Fernandez-Armesto Felipe, 'Britain, the Sea, the Empire, the World' in David Canadine (ed.) Empire, the Sea and Global History: Britain's Maritime World, C1760-1840 (Basingstoke 2007). pp.11-15 has stressed

The large tracts of empty space that greeted settlers to the New World were viewed as a *tabula rasa* or blank slate. The indigenous Native American population had been weakened by European diseases in the decades before settlement and no powerful urbanized competitors existed to prevent European expansion.[48] Surprisingly, the initial settlements of the New World remained similar to those of Asia. The towns of the New World retained the highly nucleated shapes evident in the factory model of Company settlements with important commercial, administrative and community functions at the heart of the settlement, then residential plots spreading out from this point. However, this nucleation was done for different reasons. The towns of Chesapeake and Caribbean colonies did so for protection and expediency whilst the founders of New England towns controlled development to facilitate a utopian society. For New England towns Alison Games has concluded that there was a clear process of transplanting the ideas and culture of the settler's place of origin. [49] The shape of these towns and the way they were administered reflect this transplantation process. For Puritans, nucleation was seen as the ideal urban form.[50] This shows that colonial urban organisation and morphology was linked to the power of the urban elite to control the colony. This is an important feature that should be remembered when looking at Indian examples such as Calcutta.

The New World was not a homogenous political and ideological haven. [51] The more southern states in the Chesapeake and the Caribbean islands were settled much more for their economic potential than the ideological opportunities that were sought by settlers in New England. It was the hunger for the silver and gold and then later tobacco, sugar and cotton of the Americas that drew Europeans to compete for its wealth. Hot swampy coasts, small islands and thick jungle typified the terrain of these first colonies. Mortality in many of these locations was phenomenally high. The average life expectancy for a colonist in Virginia around 1700 was about forty years, ten years lower than Britain.[52] The local Indian populations of the Chesapeake regions were much more aggressive than in the north and Indian attacks (provoked via more aggressive European

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the importance of looking at the British Empire in relation to other empires and in relation to other geographies. He suggests that there was not one big difference between the British Empire and others but the many individual differences should be examined to better formulate the problem.

[48] John Darwin, 'Civility and Empire', in Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (eds) *Civil Histories: Essays presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (Oxford 2000), pp. 326-327 describes how a blank slate encouraged the transmission of English Common Law in the New World.

[49] Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (London 2001), p. 1.

[50] Home, *Of Planting and Planning*, p. 9.

[51] Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise,* has suggested that American scholars have begun to take an 'Atlantic perspective' and consider American colonies as part of a greater organic whole.

[52] J.K. Martin, R. Roberts, S. Mintz, L.O. McMurry and J.H. Jones, *America and its People* (New York 1993), p. 57.

populations) were more numerous.[53] These problems restricted these colonies from spreading further into the continent until vital bridgeheads into the New World were secured. This meant that many of these southern colonies began their lives as military garrisons.[54] Violence and strategic manoeuvring by European powers encouraged piracy, sacking and isolating rival colonies to promote individual colonies commercial interests. This made the political situations in many of these places much more uncertain. The combination of restricted space and political uncertainty (like Calcutta) ensured that for a colony to survive, it had to remain highly nucleated to efficiently exploit the riches of the New World. Unlike New England colonies those of the Chesapeake and Caribbean show that the threat of external interference (either violence or sanctions) by rivals could impact upon the development of these colonies. Therefore it is important to look at the relationships the Company had with not just Indian elites but also how they interacted with other Europeans who might threaten or restrict its commercial activities.

The biggest European rivals to the Company were the French who in Bengal were based at Chandernagore from 1672. The several wars between Great Britain and France from the beginning of our period to the end, oftentimes spilled out into India. The Company wrote several times of concerns over the threat of French warships in the Bay of Bengal.[55] The men they employed to protect the river vessels were not just protecting against Indian attacks on the river trade but also to deter obstructions by the French. At the battle of Plassey the army of Sirajudaulah had a contingent of French artillery to assist his forces. Although not the only rivals to the Company in India, the threat of attack by any European rival played heavily on the mind of Calcutta's Presidents.[56] However, the typical connection between the English Company and the French Company was through economic competition. The two sides were competing in the same market and for similar goods. This was a concern not lost on the President and Council who in 1736 acknowledged the incentives the French at Chandernagore were providing for local merchants to settle in the area. The English Company consequently dropped its licenses for Indian shopkeepers to encourage competition.[57] Also, the Company came down harshly on those that assisted the French in their economic activity because it was a detriment to Company operations. In 1721 a river pilot was

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[53] This contrasts with the New England colonies where local Indian tribes were more quickly subjugated as explored by K.J. Bragdon, 'Crime and Punishment among the Indians of Massachusetts 1675-1750', *Ethnohistory* , Vol. 28. No.1 (1981), pp. 23-25.

[54] Martin, Roberts, Mintz, McMurry and Jones, *America*, pp. 25-29.

[55] BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/5 letter 15 details how the Company would deal with French shipping now England and France were at war.

[56] Carl H. Nightingale, 'Before Race Mattered: Geographies of the Color Line in Early Colonial Madras and New York', *American Historical Review*, Vol. 113, No. 1 (Feb., 2008), pp. 51-53 describes the influence worries over Dutch and Portuguese attacks on Madras had on fortifying that colony.

[57] BL IOR CPC P/1/11 October 1736.

fined 500 rupees for guiding a French ship downriver.[58] What both of these particular examples show is that the English merchants felt the need to keep separate their affairs from those of others, the French in particular. The threat they presented was different and less fundamental to the success of the Company but it was one of the factors behind shaping Company actions in our period.

This rivalry was also seen but to a lesser degree with the Dutch VOC whom Kerry Ward has suggested used, like the English merchants, exchange networks, culture, laws, administration, transportation, and military norms to manifest their authority overseas.[59] A shared religious backing and a reduction of military conflict was enough to see less direct conflict between the two trading companies although they remained commercial rivals. In several instances the two companies cooperated. For example in 1729 the two groups negotiated and signed treaties to facilitate cooperation between the two.[60] In another treaty in 1736 the English and Dutch both agreed a shared approach to their economic dealings with the Bengal Nawab so as to protect their shipping interests.[61] Both sides also worked together to return deserters from each other's service as happened in 1715 when the Company sent soldiers upriver to assist in the search for Dutch and English deserters.[62] For both nations the primary competition came from the activities of the French and later the Ostend Company.[63] This closer interaction between the two sides also shows how the Company was able to use European connections that they had trust in to support operations in Bengal. Although both sides were economic rivals there was little fear of direct physical confrontation between the two.[64] It was for the benefit of both sides to cooperate with each other to better their position in Bengal.

Another group that we can see Company interaction with were the remains of the Portuguese colonies which were by the time of this thesis limited to catholic missionary activity in the region. The Portuguese were therefore not rivals in the same way as the French and Dutch but they were threats to the authority and values of the Company and also as P.J Marshall has

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[58] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 April 1721

[59] Kerry Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge2009), p. 6.

[60] BL IOR CPC P/1/8 December 1729

[61] BL IOR CPC P/1/11 July 1736

[62] BL IOR CPC P/1/3 May 1715

[63] Femme S Gaastra, 'War, Competition and Collaboration: Relations between the English and Dutch East India Company in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries' in H.V. Bowen, Margaret Lincoln and Nigel Rigby (eds.) *The Worlds ofthe East India Company* (2002 London), p. 56.

[64] For example the conflict between the two companies had culminated in the Amboyna massacre where English Company men were tortured and killed by the Dutch over the valuable nutmeg trade. See Giles Milton, *Nathaniel's Nutmeg* (London 1999) for a narrative of the massacre and Anglo-Dutch rivalry in the century before 1690.

explained, a cautionary tale about the risks of a militaristic trading company.[65] The Company responded strongly against Catholic missionary activity and tried to limit their influence upon the English population of the colony. We will explore examples of this in other chapters but the response by the Company shows that English Company connections to its European rivals was not just in the commercial realm but also related to the power and authority the Company demanded over its own colonial space. This compliments the idea of gaining legal and physical protection as we have explored at the beginning of this chapter. The Company did recognise that the 'Portuguese' (primarily mixed race inhabitants of the colony) were an important demographic component of the community in Calcutta and allowed a Portuguese church, employed Portuguese soldiers in the garrison and wrote official public decrees in Portuguese. The President and Council by managing the Portuguese inhabitants and minimising the impact of Catholic priests were (as they had done with its legal and physical protections) attempting to minimise a potential risk and maintain control over its colonial space.

Controlling who was able to access the physical space of the colony was also important. The Company came down heavily on those that tried to operate and interact in Bengal without the permission of the Company or the accepted permissions of her sister companies (the Dutch, French etc.), the best example of this can be seen in relation to the ships of the Ostend Company, who had not been accepted as legitimate rivals and thus were marginalised and driven out of Bengal.[66] The *Heathcote*, an Ostend Company ship, was excluded very quickly by the Council in Calcutta. They banned all contact with the Ostend Company by all Europeans under the English Company's patronage and threatened banishment from India or removal of privileges for all those that dealt with the Ostenders. Written notices of these orders were to be disseminated throughout Calcutta in multiple languages and placed in prominent locations.[67] The same warnings regarding the Ostend Company were repeated in 1723 and 1732.[68] This is not the first example of the Company excluding aid and support for all that dealt with outsiders though it is the best example. At times of conflict, the co-operation between the different European nations could also see decrees against trading with an enemy nation as happened to the Portuguese in 1733, 1737 and 1740.[69] Utilising such controls over the inhabitants of Calcutta provided the Company with a very easily understood and enforceable means to protect Company markets and borders from competing trade. Though

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[65] P.J. Marshall, 'The Portuguese in British Historiography', *Portuguese Studies,* Vol.20 (2004), pp. 40-42.

[66] Rosanne Rocher (ed.) *Holden Furber: Private Fortunes and Company Profits in the India Trade in the 18th Century* (Aldershot, 1997), pp. 15-17, briefly explores the impact of the Ostend Company in Bengal.

[67] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 October 1720.

[68] BL IOR CPC P/1/5 June 1723 and BL IOR CPC P/1/9 August 1732.

[69] Sukumar Bhattacharya, *The East India Company and the Economy of Bengal from 1704-1740* (London 1954), p. 78.

they had the ability to use force to do the same, by refusing aid and controlling Calcuttan's interaction with interlopers it acted as an incentive in maintaining the space and borders of Calcutta. Passes and other forms of documentations legitimised certain activities within the colony and punished behaviour that undermined the Company's position.

The relationships that the Company had with Indian groups and other Europeans might suggest a desire to segregate the English Company servants from any contact with rivals. However, the restricted connections between Company servants and other groups was designed to protect the interests of the London Directors. The population of Calcutta was by no means universally British but was a mixture of many different groups and nationalities. Therefore complete control was not possible and we need to separate the official attempts to regulate unacceptable interaction with European 'others' with the day to day presence of these groups in the colony. We will look in chapter eight to Anglo-Indian interaction in the colony and chapter four for the wider demographic nature of the European population. Many of the soldiers and sailors employed by the Company were French and Dutch and references to 'Portuguese' soldiers appear in a large proportion of the monthly muster rolls of the Company's soldiers. What is important to recognise is that the Company utilised European relationships to promote Company aims but that these relationships were part of an ever changing interaction that changed throughout our period.

Conclusion

Although there were many threats to the stability of Company operations in Bengal the English East India Company were from the beginning of the period already connected or trying to form relationships with the Mughal state and the Indian mercantile elite. This was designed to help legitimise and sustain the building of a colonial place in India. Despite attempts to form these connections, the Company experienced severe political, physical and economic threats. The Company attempted to overcome these threats by trying to legitimise its operations in Bengal through legal and built forms. Positive connections with Mughal elite groups, government and other mercantile groups were central to how the Company ensured stability in its operations. This inherent weakness of the Company in the period of this thesis changed as they became more established in Bengal and by 1750 the Company could better use its political relationships, legal and physical security to support its position and protect its investment in Bengal. This provided the platform for later events but also the increase in Company independence allowed the emergence and implementation of the tools and strategies used by the President and Council to develop Calcutta as an urban place.

Chapter 2: The men of the Company and their relationships

Charles Eyre had been a merchant in the Company's service at Calcutta since it had been founded in 1690 and in 1699 he had returned to London. However, much had changed. St Paul's was almost complete after many years of rebuilding after the Great Fire in 1666. The western side of the city had been much developed whilst he had been gone. Many of the streets were now cobbled and were much wider with grand facades, regular, well proportioned windows and symmetrical compositions. The old East India Company building remained with its old carved wooden facade but it seemed out of place compared to many of the changes to the rest of the city. It was certainly different to Calcutta so many miles away. As a merchant, Eyre would have appreciated how London was the hub of trade entering and leaving the country. He would have met his masters at the wooden fronted Company headquarters and listened to the debates about the quantity of goods coming from India and discussed with his contemporaries opportunities for trade in Bengal and the fortunes of the Company in India. Eyre was sent back to Calcutta after only a short time back in London and he was to take up the new position of President responsible for developing the trade and fortunes of Calcutta further.

For us to understand the developments within the colony during our period we must understand how the people that lived and worked in Calcutta were connected to the world around them and how they related to those they traded with in both Europe and Bengal. Early modern relationships could be formal and informal, held together by trust or by contract and a combination of both is evident at Calcutta. These relationships did not just operate for those in close proximity to one other but could be continued across the massive distances between Europe and Asia. The patchwork of different relationships that is evident in the history of Calcutta also extends to the non-Company people that lived there and many different European groups formed distinct groups that lived and worked in the colony. Not all of these groups were employed by the Company but each was controlled or encouraged by the Company to settle in Bengal. It is important to identify the characters that inhabit the narrative of Calcutta in our period and in chapter four we will examine the community makeup in more detail. However, we must first identify the relationships and connections of the men in the colony and explore how the Company's strategies and policies linked them explicitly to the European, Mughal and Company worlds.

The study of the personnel of the Company is a well trodden topic. The personalities and ambitions of those that made up the English East India Company have been the subject of historical interest for many years. This research has primarily been commercial in nature, looking at the trade

and connections of these men and identifying how the relationship between the metropolis and the frontier operated.[70] This historical work is useful in identifying general trends in how Company servants traded throughout South East Asia. What is important to do is to try and extend this analysis to other groups but also look not just to inter-Company relationships but also examine their relationships to the other European people of Calcutta. This will allow us to identify the different types of connections that made up the colony and also look for unexplored strategies that ensured the inhabitants of the colony remained connected. Identifying the similarities and differences as well as specifics of how the Company developed a relationship with the European population of Calcutta will help us contextualise our examination of Calcutta in the rest of this thesis.

To this end, this chapter will be split into three parts; firstly we will explore how the men of the Company were connected to their London masters and also ways that they were connected to other Company colleagues in India. This will give us an understanding of the importance of both formal (contractual Company ones) and informal relationships (private ones formed through mutual trust but sometimes protected by contract). This will show how the Company employees were able to survive and function in India. The second part of this chapter will explore how the Company interacted with different groups within the colony. This will look at both the Company employees but also other Europeans who were vital to the development of Company trade. The final part of this chapter will explore the different policies of the Company and how they formally tied inhabitants to Company authority but also encouraged people to settle and trade in the colony. Overall this will introduce us to the European traders and Company staff that built the commercial infrastructure of Calcutta. These men will be the principle actors in the history of Calcutta throughout the thesis so understanding how they interacted with those they shared a colonial space with will provide a richer narrative and analysis of the population of Calcutta in its first years.

Part 1: Connections of the Company

Calcutta did not exist in isolation and it is important to examine how its population was connected to colleagues and partners in both Europe and India. What we can see is a population that was

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[70] Nandini Bhattacharya, *Reading the splendid body: gender and consumerism in eighteenth century British writing on India* (London 1998) argues about the popular opinions on those that lived and worked in India. Søren Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant at Work: Madras and the City of London 1660-1740* (Copenhagen 2005) has looked at the links between Madras merchants and London whilst H.V. Bowen, *The business of empire: the East India Company and Imperial Britain, 1756-1833* (London 2005) has explored how the EIC was linked to the development of Britain.

strongly connected to other communities and that relied upon these connections to live and operate in Calcutta. We should therefore look at the different ways that the Company men built and managed connections both in India and to Europe.

The men of the East India Company were right at the heart of the financial revolution that emerged following the Glorious Revolution. The rise of stocks, trading companies and money lending to the government all coincided to change the financial and commercial landscape of Britain. Especially reviled in our period were those men who were involved with joint stock companies. Often they were accused of trading to the detriment of the nation, encouraging stock-jobbing and other shady financial practices, damaging to the natural industry of Britain. It was this class of men that our Company servants in Calcutta were drawn from. Many Company servants were from the middle gentry or from connected mercantile backgrounds.[71] These men were connected through personal ties to the mercantile elite of London. Important commercial ideas and concerns that were played out in London markets should be searched for in the Bengal context. Company concerns about costs, independence, stability and growth are evident in the way the Company operated throughout the period and manifested itself in many ways as we have already seen in chapter one. The influence of London and the attitudes of the Company directors meant Britain was a central source of authority and knowledge that extended to the Company's overseas enclaves like any county town absorbing London fashions and attitudes. The connection between London and Calcutta can be overstated (this thesis tries to look for both metropolitan and regional influences on the colony) but it is important to point out the links between the financial world and thought of London and the Company Directors and the commercial lives of Company servants in India.

The source material that is available tells us much about the relationship between the Company in Bengal and the Company in London. The will of the Directors would need to be executed on-the-spot in India and in a time when communication between Europe and Asia could take months they needed someone who would represent their best interests in India. In Calcutta this would be the Council and specifically the President who were the direct representatives of Company ambitions in Calcutta. Originally, this President position had been known as the agent or governor but once the colony became a presidency town in 1698 this changed. This position was generally granted on the basis of longevity of service with the most experienced member of the Council given the position once the previous President left the position. The President was the most prominent link between London and Calcutta and he translated the London Directors' vision for the colony into reality in Bengal. The Council was led by the President and in most areas his decision

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[71] P.T. Nair, *Calcutta in the Seventeenth Century* (Calcutta 1986) and Nair, *Calcutta in the Eighteenth Century* (Calcutta, 1984) has identified many of the histories of individuals who were employed in Calcutta such as Charles Eyre who was the grandson of Oliver Cromwell.

was final with each Council member reporting to him. The London Directors had the authority to dictate how the Council should act but this was mostly utilised for guiding the broader political and commercial activities of the colony and acting as a check upon costs, rather than the day to day management of Calcutta. This responsibility was shared around the rest of the Council which met weekly to discuss the political, commercial and urban issues that occurred.

Although the Company servants in Calcutta were many thousands of miles from home, the British merchants were still accountable to the London Directors and had to deliver commercially without jeopardising the viability of the colony. The President and Council were held accountable through the letters and reports that they wrote to the London Directors. These were sent on a regular basis and were the primary means of informing their London masters of events in Bengal. In addition, each year the public consultations (earlier the factory records) were sent back to Europe and they were even more detailed in recording the commercial actions of the President and Council. These records were primarily commercial but did include other information that was thought to be of interest to the Company. The connection of Calcutta to Europe was framed in commercial terms rather than detailed discussions of community and colonial development. Such documents were evidence that upheld the formal contract between the Company employees and their London masters. The commercial nature of these records should not be mistaken for ambivalence towards issues of colonial growth but it serves to remind us that the function of Calcutta as a commercial place. It was first and foremost settled to make the Directors a profit and this would have informed how the Company servants built and developed Calcutta during our period. The strength and regularity of this communication meant that the President and Council would have found it difficult to divert from the aims of the Directors in keeping Calcutta commercially viable and not an excessive drain on Company profits.

The Company servants in Calcutta were not just connected to London but had connections with other merchants and inhabitants of other colonies. For example, Governor Pitt of Madras traded with several members of Calcutta's council and often merchants looking for a change of air for their health would spend time in Madras to recover.[72] As we shall see in the next chapter, Calcutta was also connected to the subordinate factories of Bengal. All these connections between Calcutta and other colonies in India are important to highlight as they represent both a transfer of knowledge and personnel through the commercial network of the Company but also the building of informal networks of trust throughout India. These transfers are important to highlight as the tools the Company had to grow and develop Calcutta were not just formed through the connection to London but also through the experience and knowledge gained from connections between colonists. In particular the subordinate factories in Bengal were a barometer of the markets in Bengal and

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[72] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 November 1704 gives the example of Benjamin Adamms who went to Madras for 'the healths sake'.

connections to places such as Bombay and Madras provided examples of how to run a large Presidential town. We will identify examples of these connections and their impact upon the growth of the colony in the rest of the thesis.

On a more personal level the connections between the inhabitants of Calcutta and other places provided opportunities for personal gain. Company servants when sent to India often operated with a broker back in London who would manage the sale and investment of private trade sent from India. These relationships were often between family members or between close trade partners.[73] The communication between Britain and the Calcutta merchants kept them abreast of developments in Britain but kept them connected to support networks in Britain. The Company men could not successfully trade privately in India without their connection to the financial and trade markets of London. The result of this Servant and broker relationship was the connecting of London and Indian trade markets but also knowledge, capital and contacts in India. This is important as it provided the introductions and initial resources necessary to creating a life in Asia. Some squandered this support but for most this support network in London made the transition from a life in Europe to one in Calcutta easier and more likely to succeed.[74] Similar support networks existed in Bengal for merchants once they arrived in Asia with systems of brokers and trade partnerships that encouraged a shared investment in the fortunes of the Company and the colony. These relationships were formed through trust and personal integrity and they helped a commercial community to become a colonial community through shared links and relationships.

Overall it is important to examine the connections between the Company merchants and the other points on its trade network. By examining these connections, both official Company ones and private ones, we can identify both the structure of the relationships that existed but also how the social and urban networks of the Company grew and developed. These connections anchor the activities of the Company whilst in Asia and ensure that trade investment is managed effectively. We will see the ways that such connections between Calcutta and other places/groups had upon its development throughout the rest of the thesis.

Part 2: Factions within the colony

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[73] Elizabeth Lee Saxe, 'Fortune's Tangled Web: Trading Networks of English Entrepreneurs in Eastern India, 1657-1717' (Yale PhD Thesis, 1979) has explored many of the personal links between London and Indian based Company merchants.

[74] Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant at Work,* p. 240 gives the example of a young merchant wasting all of his investment through a debauched lifestyle in Madras.

The Company servants as they were known were not a faceless homogenous group. They were organised in a strict hierarchy and with clearly defined roles. Of these Company servants the main group who ran the colony was the Council. A Council was an ever present part of the administrative structure of the colony and was the typical label for the leaders in Company colonies. It comprised the most senior East India Company merchants in the colony and it was five members strong from the earliest record and eight members strong at certain times such as in 1711 and 1738, but the average was around six members.[75] Each Council member was selected based upon conduct and seniority and many had been long term members of the colony for around a decade.[76] If a member of the Council left Calcutta or died in office each member of the Council would get promoted to the position above. This gave each Council member a broad experience of the various responsibilities they would need to effectively govern the colony. Each member of the Council was given a particular task within the colony from import or export warehouse keeper to Zemindar to Buxy. The pay of the Council was significantly higher than for less experienced merchants. However, the level of responsibility for each member also increased and they were individually responsible for each area they were assigned. In addition to these broad responsibilities each member of the Council was responsible for other less senior merchants working in their area and had to ensure they acted appropriately.

Besides these commercial responsibilities the Council also controlled the governance of the colony. Any major decisions or decrees would be debated in the Council sessions and in several cases the Council would vote on issues and each would give their opinion.[77] Until the creation of the Mayor's Court in 1727 the Council had to decide on how criminal or deviant behaviour within the colony should be controlled. One area where there was a challenge for President and Council in managing the colony was in balancing the needs of the Company with individual attitudes towards how the colony should be governed. As a result personal factions did exist within the colony and also within the council. It is hard to identify any such factions from the Company records in our period but in the later eighteenth century they are much more evident. The 'President and Council' formed a unified and prominent persona within the colony and as the source of Company power shaped and controlled much of the development within the colony.

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[75] The membership of the Council was recorded in the annual list of Company servants recorded at the back of the factory records (IOR G series) and public consultations (P series). These were recorded in April and November and list all the different ranks and wages of the Company servants.

[76] The longevity of Company servants and the Council especially will be dealt with in greater detail in Chapter 4.

[77] For example British Library India Office Records Calcutta Public Consultations (BL IOR CPC) P/1/1 May 1704 the Council each gave an opinion and voted on what the official response to challenges and duels against the Council should be.

The number of British merchants generally grew in the period but stabilised at between thirty-five and fifty men around 1711. However, it would be misleading to suggest the total population of the colony was made up of European settlers, in fact only a minority of the population could be categorized as European. Modern estimates have put the European population as no more than a thousand in number. This estimate is comparable to the suggestion of Samuel Briercliffe (who was the minister to the colony till his death in 1719) that the population was 'not one two thousand'.[78] Furthermore, this population was not homogenous and several divisions within the European population are identifiable. It is clear that only about fifty or so Europeans worked for the Company as merchants and other servants in a mercantile capacity.[79] In addition, dozens of private merchants who had permission to work in the region were part of this mercantile population of Calcutta. No regular list of private merchants was kept, though one from October 1726 lists thirty-six men trading as independent merchants. All these merchants had English sounding surnames and of these thirty-six men, ten shared surnames with prominent Company servants in our period suggesting that direct Company connections extended into the wider European community. Another list of free merchants from the personnel register of 1722 listed fifteen men again with similar links to Company merchants.[80] This Company core was vital in how the colony was controlled and managed as we shall explore in the rest of this study. However, they made up less than ten percent of the European population and less than one percent of the population as suggested by Hamilton in 1727. Such concentration of power in a small group of men was an important feature of the colony throughout our period and was similar in other Company colonies in India. The Presidents and Councils of both Madras and Bombay were of a similar composition and size and they held identical powers. The European and Company servant populations of these places were of comparable size and utilised a central core of Company servants to achieve the goals of the Company. Although all these colonies were places to live and many Europeans lived in these places they were not colonies of settlement (like in the New World) and the colonial elite was principally very small and dominated the positions of power and the colonial institutions of these places.

Another important group within the colony were the non-mercantile employees of the Company. These were the ships captains, ministers, surgeons, surveyors, carpenters and river pilots that assisted in the management and maintenance of the colony. The information recorded about river pilots in particular show us much of how the long term inhabitants of the colony outside of the

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[78] The total of one thousand Europeans comes from Marshall, 'The White Town of Calcutta', p. 309. Samuel Briercliffe was an Anglican chaplain in Calcutta between 1713 and 1719 and this quote comes from Wilson, *Early Annals, Vol2 pt.1,* p. li.

[79] This is seen through the annual register of Company servants around October then also in May from the 1730s in the Public Consultations (BL IOR CPC P series).

[80] BL IOR CPC P/1/6 October 1726 and BL IOR CPC P/1/5 October 1722 respectively.

Company elite created lives in Calcutta. These river pilots were responsible for guiding shipping up and down the river Hooghly and they were skilled seamen that ensured that Calcutta was a successful trading place. Though poorly paid, a skilled pilot was in a position by working on river vessels to mitigate the risks of a normal life at sea.[81] Pilots supplemented their low wages with private trade like other Company servants. John Cassels, a pilot, was successful enough to buy a vessel of about 50 tonnes that he used to trade throughout Asia.[82] Pilots like Company servants were long term inhabitants of the colony and became integrated through marriage and trust, such as fulfilling the terms of fellow pilots' wills. They left each other money and goods and made each other executors and witnesses to wills.[83] The daughter of the pilot Robert Hill, for example, married Philip Parsons, another pilot, in 1725.[84] Examples of intermarriage and inclusion in each other's wills suggest a strong connection between the Company's river servants which remained robust even as the city grew and changed. The pilots were a distinctive group of men who made understanding the river and sailing the Hooghly their lives' work. They were a constant presence in the city throughout our period and were the primary tool the President and Council had at its disposal to get the most out of using the river. The presence of groups such as the pilots suggest that the colony was much more diverse in the occupations and class of its inhabitants and not all Europeans who were invested in the colony's development were merchants.

These men were still sailors and their conduct was unpredictable compared to the writers and factors at Fort William who were under more direct Company control. The example of Philip Parsons, the new husband of Robert Hill's daughter, shows this difference between the pilots and other servants. In one example in late 1733, Philip Parsons was confined to the hold of a Company ship, which was heading downriver to Calcutta. He had just been placed there by the Captain of the ship following the events of the day before. Whilst sailing downriver, they had passed a French ship and what had started out as typical insults traded across the bows had escalated later that night. After the sun set the French crew snuck on board the British ship and kidnapped Parsons who was asleep drunk.[85] This incensed the British crew who then fought to seize him back. Consequently,

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[81] The typical pilot received 45 rupees a month (about £10) which was comparable to the lowest ranked Company merchants though they had the opportunity to trade privately to a much larger extent. The wage was poor enough for one Pilot to quit in search of alternative employment. He wrote that 'I am deprived of every benefit I might have hoped from my labour for a term of two years in which time my family may more than probably be reduced to such extremities as I cannot think of but with utmost uneasiness'. BL IOR CPC P/1/8 October 1730.

[82] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 September 1719.

[83] BL IOR MCR P/154/40 will of Francis Oaking 1728 has John Clarke a pilot as his executor. John Stevens a pilot died in the same year and the records have Robert Hanson (another pilot) an executor.

[84] BL IOR CPC P/1/6 November 1725.

[85] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 November 1733.

the French had complained and demanded he be sent upriver to be tried for his part in the supposed assault on the French crew.[86] This was not the first time Parsons, had experience of being on the wrong side of the Council. Three years previously he had been fined nearly 500 rupees for failing to bring up Company ships waiting at Ballasore at the mouth of the Hooghly.[87] Parsons was not a particularly incompetent pilot but his relationship and conduct with the Council is representative of how the Company expected its pilots to behave. However it shows the temptations for the pilots to act in less acceptable ways.[88] Pilots were not considered equals to the Company merchants but as permanent representatives of the Company on the river and valuable experts in navigating the Hooghly. Therefore, pilots needed to be controlled more carefully than others. The Company accounts tell of other times when the pilots failed to fulfil their duties in bringing ships up the river. For example in June 1732, Ephraim Roberts was to pay a fine of 450 rupees for bringing up an Indian ship and then deserting his post. In another case a pilot was fined 500 rupees and threatened with being sent back to England in irons for piloting a French ship.[89] These examples show not just the expected standards of conduct but also that the President and Council had to control the various factions within the colony to ensure that the colony fulfilled its commercial goals.[90]

Overall, we can identify a much more diverse composition of what could be considered the Company population of the colony. The President and Council were only one small part and the Company employed or allowed a variety of different groups to work in Calcutta to ensure Company operations ran smoothly or were promoted. The relationship of the Company to the colony should never be in strict terms of 'The Company' but should be explored in a more nuanced manner.

Part 3: Company policies

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[86] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 October 1733.

[87] BL IOR CPC P/1/8 October 1730.

[88] By acting in line with the perceptions of other more common sailors, pilots were at risk of being associated with the concerns and stereotypes relating to sailors. This concern continued into the later nineteenth-century as noted by Harald Fischer-Tiné, 'Flotsam and jetsam of the Empire?: European seamen and spaces of disease and disorder in mid-nineteenth century Calcutta' in Ashwini Tambe and Harald Fischer-Tiné (eds.), *The Limits of British Colonial Control in South Asia: Spaces of Disorder in the British Ocean Region* (New York, 2009), p. 121. Dana Rabin, 'Drunkenness and Responsibility for Crime in the Eighteenth Century', *Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 44, (2005), pp. 457-477, shows in detail the distinction between the poor's use of alcohol and more civilised members of British society for whom alcohol was a private and controlled vice. The role of alcohol in crime is a feature repeated in almost all crimes by sailors and soldiers in Calcutta.

[89] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 April 1721

[90] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 June 1732.

The trade operations of the Company were underpinned by the transfer of silver bullion to India which was then used to buy goods for remittance back to Europe. The main policy employed by the Company to protect this trade was through the use of monopoly rights which restricted people's access to trade in India. The Company also restricted what could be traded within India and what could be sent back to Europe as private trade. This ensured they protected their margins in goods that were the most profitable and ensured that prices were not affected by private trade competition. For example the salt petre trade was restricted by the Company and only limited amounts was allowed to be sent back to Europe without Company approval. The Company also controlled access to Dastak's, passes that allowed trade duty exemptions for the holder. The Company were notorious for selling these passes to anyone who would pay.[91] The result of this was that European traders could be controlled by threatening to remove their duty exemption which would be a significant cost to the trader. These types of policies reflected a desire by the Council to ensure that the Company remained the prime British trader in Bengal and it would not be usurped by any private trade rival. This was a potential risk to the Company as seen by the founding of a rival East India Company which attempted to get the monopoly rights of the old Company revoked. The New Company tried to win the support of the Mughal Governor at the expense of the Old Company merchants at Calcutta. The Old Company Council moved rapidly to prevent this attack by refusing to assist New Company servants and forbidding Old Company servants from contact.[92] The New Company was eventually absorbed into the Old Company (forming a United Company) but it showed the risk that unregulated trade might present to the Company's operations in Bengal.

Another policy employed by the Company was to use a bond system for all Europeans that wished to trade or work under the protection of the Company. Such bonds were a typical method to ensure that the aims of the Company were upheld and that the authority of President and Council was guaranteed. Breaking the terms of the bond could result in fines or being sent back to Europe. By 1740 the Company was using a template for the bond that enshrined the responsibilities expected of its employees. Much of it was standardised, such as upholding Company trade and not acting in a corrupt manner. In particular they demand that:

> [the servant will] to the utmost of his power and skill, resist and withstand all, and every such person or persons, as shall break, or endeavour to break the said orders, instructions, or directions or any of them...that he will not do, attempt, or practice, not shall wittingly or willingly permit or suffer, any other person or persons whatsoever, to do, attempt, or practice, any matter or thing whatsoever, to the hindrance, hurt, prejudice, damage, defrauding of the said Company...shall and will, from time to time, and at all times

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[91] Ashin Das Gupta, 'India and the Indian Ocean in the Eighteenth Century' in Ashin Das Gupta and M.N Pearson (eds.) *India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800* (Oxford 1999), p. 149 details how British freedom from duties was abused by Indian merchants.

[92] Wilson, *The Early Annals* Vol.1 p. 156.

henceforth, give notice and intelligence, with all convenient speed unto the said Court of Directors for the time being, of all the deceits, wrongs, abuses, breach of orders, inconveniences, and hindrances.[93]

The bond continues listing the requirements for good conduct. In particular a Company servant was to keep account of all Company transactions, and pay all debts, if they traded privately it should not be not in competition with the Company, they were also to obey Company commands and submit to the Company's authority. The language of the bonds tell us that the Company wished to be run in such a way that trade activity was measurable and that the policies of the Company and its position within the trade network of Bengal would not be undermined.

This desire to control the covenanted servants of the Company was extended to private merchants in 1722. The Company ordered that all free merchants renew their bonds and covenants which reaffirmed their commitment and acknowledgement that the Company was the sole governing authority in the colony.[94] The use of bonds and the attempt to control the private merchant population along similar lines suggests that the Company were to preserve the idea that Company values should dominate the understanding of good governance amongst the colonists.[95] The bonds did not represent the adoption of shared values amongst the colonists but were a means through which the Company maintained authority over the colonists. This form of control also limited the autonomy of Europeans in the colony who were kept to account by the terms of their bonds. The use of bonds was not a new idea unique to East India service but they were a useful tool in ensuring that that the population of the colony adhered to Company authority.

One way that the Company encouraged shared interests between the Company and the Europeans of the colony was by borrowing private funds from colonists at interest. The Company had yearly deliveries of silver from Europe that were used to pay for work orders that had been arranged a year in advance.[96] This ensured that a steady stream of work could be maintained and if prices for goods were known early enough this bullion shipment would cover the promised investment. However, this left the Company with very little liquid capital to take advantage of developments in the market or to pay for additional or hidden costs. The Council therefore operated

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[93] BL IOR O series O/1/1 Bonds and Agreements 1741-1791 Vol. 1.

[94] BL IOR CPC P/1/5 October 1722.

[95] S.R.H. Jones and Simon P. Ville, 'Efficient Transactors or Rent-Seeking Monopolists? The Rationale for Early Chartered Trading Companies', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 56, (1996), pp. 901-905, argues that in chartered trading companies increased opportunity for private profit was a threat to the capacity of the employing company to control its employees. Santhi Hejeebu, 'Contract Enforcement in the English East India Company', *The Journal of Economic History*, Vol. 65, (2005), agrees to an extent but also argues that coupling private trade to contract enforcement proved a masterful strategy in keeping Company servants invested in the success of the Company.

[96] This was known as the Dadni system and was replaced as inefficient by the post-Plassey Company.

a system whereby they borrowed money from the inhabitants of the colony. This money lending was at a rate of interest at around twelve per cent which made it a very attractive option. Samuel Briercliffe, the Anglican minister for the colony, wrote 'we have always opportunities of putting it out to interest, which is 12 percent and may command it in again as we have occasion.' This quote suggests that it was an option that was available for many colonists and was a flexible arrangement.[97] The running costs of the Company remained low throughout the period, never more than several thousand rupees per month, which was normally covered by the rents, duties and other sources of revenue within the colony.[98] The money lent to the President and Council by the population of the colony was therefore usable for other means. This opportunity was not just an option for the merchants of the colony (they could often get higher returns from private trade opportunities such as *responditia*) but also for the wives and children of colonists as it provided a place to safely invest their money.[99] An example of the levels of money being lent to the Company in these Bills of Exchange can be seen with the example of Elizabeth Pattle who was the wife of Edward Pattle, a Company merchant and a member of the Court of Justice until his death in 1715. The figures quoted here are typical of the amounts lent to the Company which began to be recorded annually from the 1720s. In one year, 1718, the interest owed to Mrs Pattle on her investment of 17682 rupees 8 annas and 9 paise was 2121 rupees, 14 annas and 5 paise.[100] Such lending shows an important relationship between the European colonists of Calcutta and the Company. The amount of money produced from the interest was high enough to sustain Elizabeth Pattle, much more than the subsistence salary of four rupees a month that Sir John Goldsborough had suggested in 1693. Most property was being sold at around 1-2000 rupees and a Council members diet allowance was about 125 rupees a month. This level of interest equated to around £65 per annum. This was a reasonable sum allowing a basic level of subsistence for a person of her station.[101] In addition this was a higher salary than that of most Company merchants.[102]. This system provided both a source of income for the Company but also created shared interest between the Council and the other inhabitants of the colony.

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[97] Hertfordshire Record Office D/EP F53 Letters of Samuel Briercliffe.

[98] BL IOR CPC (P series) provide record of the monthly costs and revenues of the colony.

[99] Holden Furber goes into considerable detail about the development and use of *Responditia* and other types of commercial investment between merchants. Rocher , *Holden Furber: Private Fortunes*.

[100] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 December 1718.

[101] Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727-1783* (Oxford 1992), pp. 76-77 suggests that the middling sort would feel impoverished on £10-20 per annum. Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society, and Family Life in London, 1660-1730* (Los Angeles, 1989), p. 14 suggests that an annual income of £50 would allow a middling sort person to live comfortably in London.

[102] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 September 1699.

When Anthony Weltden was chosen as President of the Council at Calcutta in 1710 he brought with him a huge amount of goods and personal effects to make his life in India comfortable. Amongst the boxes of clothes, linen, books, cider and other more unusual artefacts, such as a harpsichord and escritoire, was £4,000 in silver bullion.[103] The purpose of taking such a large amount of silver to India was to sell it in the East for minting new coinage for the Mughal state. The money raised from such an activity could then be used to buy goods prized in Europe, and transmit them home for large profits. The average salary for a Company man was £40 whilst the President of Calcutta received £200 per annum.[104] Although not a pittance compared to average British wages it paled in comparison to what contemporaries in the City of London were able to make.[105] £40 would sustain a decent standard of living but was not enough to invest in trade and to make a name for oneself in the trading markets of Europe. Allowing private trade was a core attraction for those that wished to come and live in India. The attraction of private trade for servants saw many invest in private trading to boost their wages and a fleet of fifteen private vessels doubled by the 1720s and again in the 1730s.[106]

No one has explored the importance of Private trade upon the growth of British influence in India more than Holden Furber. His work has stressed the importance of private trade in allowing the British to dominate the Asian trade and overtake the French, Dutch and Portuguese as the biggest trading power in the Indian market. His work points to the dynamic nature of Europeans within the Indian trading markets. Specifically, he recognised the importance of tying the actions of individuals into the wider web of commercial activities in Bengal. Furber argues that as the men of the English Company invested more of their own money in private commerce they developed trading relationships and contacts that could be more easily exploited for the Company's means.[107] This previously had been the preserve of the Dutch Company who had pioneered this type of employer-employee relationship in the later seventeenth century.[108] The opportunities offered by private trade made competition to work for the Company fierce. The selection process in London for new Company servants required sponsorship and existing connections in the Company to gain a

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[103] Wilson, *The Early Annals*, p.v

[104] The IOR records in the P Series and G Series. P/1/1-26 and G/7/1-4 at the end of each year or in October released lists of employees and their length of service and annual salary.

[105] To establish a modest sized sugar plantation in the Caribbean required around £5000 and would have made extensive returns if successful.

[106] P.J. Marshall, 'Private British Trade in the Indian Ocean before 1800', in Ashin Das Gupta and M.N Pearson (eds.) *India and the Indian Ocean 1500-1800* (Oxford 1999), p. 289.

[107] Rocher, *Holden Furber: Private Fortunes,* p. 4

[108] Om Prakash, The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720 (Princeton 1985), p. 4

chance of appointment.[109] These links of commerce and trust are central to most business transactions and in a time before modern financial regulation and protections of trade, trusting business partners was even more important. Furber suggests that these links of trust and the transmission of commercial information were important in grafting the foreign English, Dutch and French Company's into the existing Bengal trading and financial markets.[110] The money Europeans invested in setting up private trade attracted Indian merchants, workers and other sectors of the Indian economy to Calcutta. It also shows how the Company's policy of allowing private trade encouraged people to settle in Calcutta and attracted Indians to trade and helped the Company access the market.

The policies and strategies employed by the Company show both the formal and informal ways of tying the interests of inhabitants to the interests of the Company. These formal and informal ways were based either around a desire for strict contractual arrangements such as the use of bonds or more informal means such as Dastak's and private trade interest. Dastak's and interest encouraged cooperation with the Company rather than forced it in the form of bonds. Such an approach was much cheaper and easier to manage than formal systems of control. This dual approach towards encouraging partnership is a mechanism (and also the cost reasons behind it) that we will see in many other areas of the thesis.

Conclusion

It is important to identify the main actors that will drive the narrative through the rest of the thesis. This can be principally seen through an examination of the merchants of the East India Company. This chapter has attempted to look at how the men that represented the authority of the London Directors and other skilled groups that settled in Calcutta were connected to each other, the world around them and importantly to the interests of the Company. Primarily this was done through formal contractual arrangements and connections such as between the Directors and the Council or through contractual devices like bonds of employment. Less formal relationships that encouraged cooperation and personal investment in the colony can be seen through the building of relationships of trust. Therefore, encouraging private trade, lending to the Company and maintaining links with

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[109] BL IOR O/1/1 Bonds and Agreements 1741-1791 parts 1 and 2. The bonds new employees signed mention who their contact and sponsor in Britain was.

[110] Holden Furber, 'Glimpses of life and trade on the Hughli 1720-1770', *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol.86, No.152 (Calcutta 1967), pp. 13-15. H.V Bowen, 'Privilege and Profit: Commanders of East Indiamen as Private Traders, Entrepreneurs and Smugglers 1760-1813', *International Journal of Maritime History,* (December 2007), pp. 43-88 has continued the work of Furber and argues that private trade was linked to how Company servants interfered in Bengali politics.

London brokers all combined to encourage inhabitants to support the Company and to encourage their investment in living and trading in Bengal. This was a cost effective strategy as expensive methods to tie employees to the Company's service would have been prohibitive to growth and increased the risk to Company investment. The variety of connections formed between the Company employees and the world around them shows how important building strong relationships was for the survival and development of Calcutta as a stable place.

Chapter 3: Calcutta's founding and its place within the East India Company system

The English East India Company was one of the many joint-stock companies that dominated the commercial world of seventeenth and eighteenth-century Europe. Each company received a charter by the crown which allowed each company to fulfil its commercial objectives overseas. Once a charter was secured, each company would then send out men and resources to run its commercial operations around the world. The East India Company, like other companies such as the Royal African Company, the Virginia Company and the Hudson's Bay Company invested in the creation of commercial outposts in the places where they traded to overcome the barriers to their commercial activities be they political, physical or logistical.[111] Every overseas voyage required extensive planning by the leadership of the joint-stock company. These companies all planned and managed their overseas ventures from offices in London, hoping that each ship would return with exotic goods that would make the Company and its investors a fortune. The English East India Company organised its voyages from its docks along the Thames and once ready sent them eastwards towards India and China. Returning ships brought cloth, spices and other luxury goods to be sold around Europe. From London, East India Company goods and personnel were shipped for six months across nearly 14,000 miles of turbulent ocean to then trade and live in Company outposts throughout Asia. Those men arriving in Bengal, who stumbled ashore, legs re-adjusting to terra firma, from that point remained separated from their friends, family and countrymen back in Europe. In India they had to build new lives and survive in a new and unfamiliar environment.

However, it would be too simple to imply that these merchants arriving in Bengal were isolated and detached from their European heritage.[112] Regular letters, reports from patrons and

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[111] There have been many general histories of the East India Company, Keay, *The Honourable Company*. Philip, Lawson, *The East India Company: a History* (London, 1993), being two of the most recent. Bruce G. Carruthers, *City of Capital: Politics and Markets in the English Financial Revolution* (Princeton, 1996), pp. 137-159 details how three famous joint stocks developed and were part of London's commercial world.

[112] Percival Spear, *The Nabobs: A Study of the Social Life of the English in Eighteenth-Century India* (Oxford, 1998) in 1933 argued that in the period up to 1740 the British created a separate diaspora that was separate from both Europe and Indian society. Søren Mentz, 'Cultural Interaction between the British Diaspora in Madras and the Host Community, 1650-1790' in Honeda Masashi (ed.), *Asian Port Cities 1600-*

brokers, as well as the arrival of new inhabitants, ensured that despite separation, those in India were not exiled from European contact. As each new European came to the colony they arrived bringing the latest ideas and fashions with them, thus assisting the reinforcement of European cultural norms and practices. In addition it allowed regular communications and orders to pass between the London directors and their servants in India. Equally, Calcutta did not exist in a vacuum. It was connected to the many other European trading posts and settlements in India especially the other important Company towns: Madras, Surat and Bombay. European exploration and settlement overseas was occurring rapidly throughout Asia and the New World from the mid seventeenth century. The success and experience of these settlers was dependent upon overcoming local challenges against European relationships. Researching the development of Calcutta is an examination of such complex relationships. This chapter will look at the founding of the colony and what the physical and political constraints were. We will also identify some of the tools and infrastructure put in place by the Company to ensure the colony took hold in Bengal but also could overcome the constraints of its location.

Whilst some historians have remained tied to the traditional geographical boundaries of their research topics, there is an increasing trend by some to look at colonial history in broader global terms. Philip J Stern has suggested that comparing constitutional, operational and ideological features of the first period of British Empire would be the best way to advance greater comparison.[113] This approach is not entirely new. Historians of colonial America have traced the transmission of ideas and culture from the Old World to the New World for many years. The works of David Hackett Fischer and Edmund S. Morgan have been important in understanding colonies not as separate offspring of the European parent but as constituent parts of the same dynamic entity.[114] Hackett Fischer, Morgan, and their contemporaries have looked at how standard modes of governance, community interaction and legal structures were transplanted almost wholesale from the areas that the colonists originated from. Although there are limitations to using this approach in an Indian context, broadening the analysis of British life in India beyond the purely commercial or

1800 Local and Foreign Cultural Interactions (Kyoto, 2009), pp. 162-174 has challenged this viewpoint suggesting that metropolitan links were essential to survival and allowed a mirroring of the mother society.

[113] Philip J Stern, 'British Asia and British Atlantic: Comparisons and Connections', *William and Mary Quarterly*, LXIII, No.4 (2006), p. 699.

[114] David Hackett Fischer, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (Oxford, 1989), Edmund Sears Morgan, *The Puritan Family: Religion and Domestic Relations in Seventeenth-Century New England* (New York, 1966). Hackett Fischer introduced a whole new approach in studying American colonial history and Morgan was one of its earliest champions. Others such as J.S. Wood, *The New England Village* (Maryland 1997) and Richard Archer, *Fissures in the Rock: New England in the Seventeenth Century* (London, 2001), have begun to reassess the idea of New England as a homogenous society. Newer work is beginning to identify a complex and often conflicting community and this approach will be useful to apply to this thesis.

political, might shed new light upon the history of the period. Specifically, the desire to look at colonies and the systems they were part of (common amongst Anglo-American scholars and increasingly popular in maritime history) has often been avoided by colonial/imperial historians who tend to skip ahead in the story of empire to issues of conquest and rule, forgetting about the importance of origins and relationships between places in the historical narrative.[115] The desire to develop a more global comparison to the history of Calcutta can be taken too far, which results in the separation of context from events. Although when comparisons are done carefully it allows a historian to identify more clearly the concerns and challenges experienced by the inhabitants at the time.

This chapter will try to place Calcutta within its specific colonial context and identify the different concerns and influences that shaped colonial development. It will identify three areas that explain the context of the East India Company merchants who ran the city. Firstly, I will explore the founding, location and physical environment of Calcutta as experienced by British merchants. Understanding the founding events of the colony tempers any assumptions about European influences in the development of Calcutta as a place. This approach is vital for a proper analysis of the colony. Secondly, I will look at the constraints that existed when setting up the colony, in order to identify, the enabling and restricting factors behind the growth that may have influenced the Company leadership in Calcutta. Finally, I will look at the regional urban network that centred on Calcutta and the important part it played in supporting and integrating Calcutta into the Mughal urban and commercial network. When examined in relation to the challenges faced by the Company it allows us to see how the Company built urban places as foundations of its operations. The benefits of these other colonial places and how they interacted with Calcutta will help us to understand the dynamic and changing circumstances the President and Council in Calcutta had to face. Together this will present an analysis of the influences and limitations that those creating an urban environment experienced. This will assist the analysis of events in Calcutta in my later chapters. And such an approach makes it much easier to explain and understand the experiences of the men and women who lived in the city during the first sixty years.

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[115] As discussed in the introduction to this thesis. Some specific examples of research that has tended to pass over the period before 1750 include Kapil Raj, 'The historical anatomy of a contact zone: Calcutta in the eighteenth century', *Indian Economic Social History Review,* 48:55 (2011), p. 62 only provides one paragraph on the growth of the Mayor's Court and then rapidly skips to 1757. Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire,* doesn't credit the decades before 1757 as important in the forming of the British Indian empire. Chakrabarti, 'Collaboration and Resistance', p. 107-10 barely credits the period before 1757 as being a time when English and Indian merchants collaborated.

Although the English East India Company had been trading in Bengal for several decades before the foundation of Calcutta, it was not an easy transition to move from simple merchants to permanent residents.[116] The official record of the first moment in Calcutta's life provides a small clue as to the conditions awaiting the men of the East India Company. Job Charnock who was leader of the British merchants noted in August 1690:

> we arrived about noon but found the place in a deplorable condition nothing being left for our present accommodation and the rain falling day and night we are forced to be take ourselves to boats which considering the season of the year is very unhealthy.[117]

Additionally, many of the houses that they had hoped to occupy had been ransacked or had suffered from exposure to the elements. This left the British merchants the task of building a colony from nothing. However, this was not a blank slate on which the Company could build its colony unrestricted. A delicate balancing act was required to ensure that geographical, political and economic factors did not undermine the British merchants' progress.

Placing Calcutta at a distance from the established urban network around Hooghly did present a slight problem. Nor did Calcutta have existing buildings suitable for international trade. These needed to be built from scratch.[118] To house the Company merchants they built temporary buildings and houses made from mud and thatch which were cheap and quick to build. This provided basic conditions for the Company to re-establish commercial links with local merchants. No long term structures followed the first few years of commercial activity as the Council did not know how permanent their stay at Calcutta would be. The main focus of Company activity at the site of the colony was the Factory. In a measured but scrawling hand the Council recorded some of the first buildings they needed to survive in India. They wrote to the London directors that:

> In consideration that all the former buildings here are destroyed it is resolved that such places be built as necessity requires and as cheap as possible viz, 1 a warehouse, 2 a dining room, 3 The secretary's office to be repaired, 4 A room to sort cloth in, 5 A cook room with conveniences, 6 An apartment for 4 company servants 7, The Agent and Mr Peachie houses to be repaired which were paid standing and a house to be built for Mr Ellis the

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[116] William Hedges, *The Diary of William Hedges, Esq. (afterwards Sir William Hedges), during his Agency in Bengal: as well as on his Voyage Out and Return Overland (1681-1687) vols. 1-3* (New York, 1887), is the best source of information of Company activities before the founding of the colony.

[117] Please see the note about the recording of sources at the beginning of the thesis. BL IOR, Calcutta Factory Records (CFR), G/7/1 August 1690.

[118] Sukanta Chaudhuri (ed.), *Calcutta the Living City, vol.1 The Past* (Oxford, 1995), p. 10.

> former being so fully demolished [and] 8 The grand house. These to be done with mud walls and that be till we can get ground whereon to build a factory.[119]

The types of rooms built all reflect the very basic commercial and residential needs of the Company merchants in the first few years. No big warehouses or specialist commercial buildings were commissioned and repairs to older buildings were encouraged where possible. The choice of simple mud walls for building materials was different from later buildings and reflected the uncertainty of settlement in Calcutta. These buildings formed the kernel of the Factory and later the Fort. Until the Factory proved profitable, British merchants were limited by the resources promised by the Directors in London who insisted on tying Calcutta's administration to the Presidency at Madras. The Directors in turn were not entirely sure whether Charnock's colony could be maintained whilst Anglo-Mughal relations were still so fragile. So, huddled in temporary buildings, in a swampy wet landscape, lacking complete support from home and unsure of their future in Bengal, the British merchants of 1690 could be forgiven if they were not entirely confident of the long term success of the colony.

Despite uncertainty at the beginning, by 1700 Calcutta was a much more established place. A visitor to the settlement would have been greeted by the Factory which was beginning to be converted into Fort William. The strong brick walls and the mounting of cannon ensured that the Company was well placed to protect the numerous Company ships now anchored in the river. It was beginning to take on the urban shape that European settlements in Asia tended to adopt. Important buildings and services were clustered around the Fort and the settlement remained highly nucleated.[120] Warehouses, which were larger and more numerous than those from 1690, were also under construction. At least four punch houses (the terminology for drinking establishments) were licensed for the entertainment of the sailors and soldiers who were employed to ship and protect the Company's goods. Permanent housing for the Company Servants and families was now appearing near the Fort and the paraphernalia of shipping and international trade (packing rooms and naval stores) could also be seen when walking around the town.[121] The success of the first ten years and the ambitions of the London directors saw Calcutta designated as a Presidency Town (like the other major Company towns at Madras, Bombay and Surat) and it was now responsible for the whole of the Company's trade in the eastern part of India. The Governor became known as the President and Mughal political protection was ensured via treaties signed with the Mughal governor. The threat of conflict with the French was also rapidly subsiding after the conflict in Europe stopped in 1697.

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[119] BL IOR CFC DAC G/7/1 28th August 1690.

[120] Meere Kosambi and John E. Brush, 'Three Colonial Port Cities in India', *Geographical Review*, Vol. 78 No.1 (Jan. 1988), p. 32 outlines the standard layout and growth patterns of the major Company towns in India.

[121] The importance of these developments will be explored later in the thesis.

Despite their unceremonious ejection in 1688 the settlement was now at the frontier of Company investment and a location for expanded commercial growth.

To carry out this commercial growth required an investment of ships and men from Europe. After nearly six months at sea, a ship arriving in Bengal was faced with the prospect of having to travel some eighty miles up the river Hooghly.[122] The Hooghly, a tributary of the Ganges gave good access to the interior markets of Bengal. However, the Hooghly had heavy silt whose shifting currents could prove a trap for unwary ships captains and crew.[123] Mangrove swamps initially greeted European ships at the mouth of the river but eventually gave way to the diverse Bengal flora and fauna that crowded the river banks. After a few days traversing the treacherous river course, ships would eventually arrive at Calcutta. Once the ship laid anchor, the Europeans onboard could then examine the site of Calcutta which occupied the eastern river bank. A new arrival in the first years of the colony coming from the older more established colonies at Madras, Bombay or Surat, would have been dismayed at the conditions to be found. To the east of the settlement was swampy marshland that at some parts of the year was a small brackish salt lake. To a European observer the spot provided no evidence of major Indian habitation with only three small villages hidden by trees close to the river. To the north and south of the anchored ships were few inhabited sites. The region was known mostly for its scattered villages and the old pilgrimage road to the Temple of Kalighat a few miles to the south.[124] The western boundary of the colony was the river, whose banks provided a natural levee protecting the land the colony was to be built upon. The first few years saw little construction beyond the most basic commercial buildings. The awkward access, lack of immediate urban network and swampy location did nothing to suggest any strong potential for urban growth. It was understandable then why Job Charnock and his contemporaries desired to stay aboard their ship when they first arrived. We are then faced with a challenge in trying to identify how by the 1770s Calcutta had become the premier British settlement in India.

The captains of the large ocean-faring vessels from Europe could be forgiven for perceiving the Hooghly as an obstacle rather than a platform for trade. The river was deep enough to allow the ocean hulls of European ships access to Bengal markets, but the shifting sands and mud banks made the journey treacherous and complex. It was for this reason that the Company employed river pilots and their job was difficult and time consuming. Every ship that came to Bengal waited for a Company pilot to guide them upriver safely. Pilots were skilled sailors and

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[122] P.T. Nair (ed.) *A Historical and Topographical Sketch of Calcutta* (Calcutta, 1986), p. 1. Originally published by H. James Rainey in 1876.

[123] R. Murphy, 'The City in the Swamp: Aspects of the Site and Early Growth of Calcutta', *The Geographical Journal*, Vol. 130 (1964), pp. 246-249 gives a good account of the problems the silt in the river caused.

[124] Murphy, *The City in the Swamp*, p. 241.

respected for their knowledge and experience of the river. Such knowledge of the river was gained from years spent as general mariners on the Company ships as boatswains, sloop masters and formastmen.[125] In many cases the pilots had been in India as long as the most senior Company servants. Jonathon Rainbow a pilot in the Company's service had been working in Calcutta from as early as 1704 and although he retired in 1712, he lived for a further ten years with his wife Mary in Calcutta until his death in 1722.[126] She went on to marry the president Charles Eyre (previously governor until the creation of the Presidency in 1699) and herself or her daughter were still living in Calcutta in 1760.[127] Pilots were there a dedicated resource available to the Company to help maximise the features of the Bengali river location to support the Company's commercial activities.

In fact pilots were trusted in their knowledge of the river and many disputes between ships Captains and pilots, with Captains refusing to sail, had the Company side with the pilot's judgement more often than not.[128] This was the case in one typical example, when a Captain Raymond refused to sail downriver, claiming his ship was not ready. The Council after hearing the pilot's account demanded Raymond sail or face punishment.[129] This knowledge was retained in a series of maps updated and kept by the pilots from year to year. One of these maps still survives in Calcutta today in the Victoria Memorial and was drawn in 1734 though based on a map drawn in 1710. Another map of the river is also available in the *Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris which was produced from a series of pilots observations by the noted hydrographer John Thornton.[130] Such maps show the many landmarks along the river the pilot used to judge a ship's position, but also represent the evidence of a pilot's skill in gathering this knowledge.[131] This expertise was supported by the use of a flag system to show where ships should wait for pilots safely (dependent upon the weather) and later the use of buoys for a similar purpose.[132] This is important because the Company had a dedicated company of employees who had the expertise to manage the river for the benefit of

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[125] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 April 1711 lists all the Company's river servants. Some of these men later become pilots such as John Deane and Jonathon Bashpool.

[126] His death is recorded in IOR N/1/1 Bengal Births, Deaths and Marriages 1713-1754.

[127] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur D691, John Gray Surgeon, letterbook, mentions a letter to a Mary Rainbow who was still in Calcutta in 1760.

[128] Miles Ogburn and W.J. Withers, 'Travel, Trade and Empire: Knowing other Places 1660-1800' in Cynthia Wall (ed.) *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 15-17, argues that pilots were a convergence of commerce, navigation and knowing ones bounds through geography.

[129] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 March 1704.

[130] De la Roncière, 'Manuscript Charts', pp. 46-50.

[131] Currently part of the Victoria Memorial collection in Calcutta.

[132] BL IOR CPC P/1/3 November 1715 for the signalling flags and BL IOR CPC P/1/13 April 1739 for the implementation of buoys.

the Company. Their skill and investment in the affairs of the colony meant that the river which could be a barrier to successful trade in Bengal, was a vital resource in ensuring Calcutta's independence. However, despite trying to limit the impact of nature upon river shipping, there were other risks associated with river travel that the pilots could do little to change.

In 1737 Calcutta was hit by a hurricane which severely damaged the Company's shipping on the river and threatened the lives of those living there. Francis Russell, who was second in the Council and one of the most senior Company men in the colony, provides the only account of the impact of the hurricane. He writes that:

> our church steeple was blown down as also eight or ten English houses and numbers belonging to the black merchants the whole town looked like a place that had been bombarded by an enemy. Such a havoc did it tis impossible to find words to express it all our beautiful shady roads laid bare which will not be the like again this twenty years....[133]

This hurricane highlights how the river could also be a risk to the Company's operations. The hurricane had destroyed most of the entrances to the colony, in particular the many gatehouses and pikes surrounding the town, and also the road near the river was nearly washed away.[134] Although hurricanes were rare events, regular flooding of the river was an ever present risk that, combined with Calcutta's low lying position, required the Company to fortify the town against the river.[135] Without protecting the colony from the river, property could be destroyed, urban infrastructure weakened, personal investment lost and the stability of the colony brought into question. The town therefore was built to accommodate and adapt to these seasonal threats. The riverbanks were annually surveyed and regularly reinforced whilst problem areas of land that were swampy were drained. Although no regular budget was put aside for such maintenance the Company did develop strategies for maintaining access to the river.[136] The lack of a specific budget for river maintenance was typical of how the Company managed other infrastructure. However, the lack of long term serious problems surrounding events such as the hurricane shows that the river was most often an advantage rather than a burden upon the Company.

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[133] C.R. Wilson, 'A Contemporary Account of the Great Storm of Calcutta 1737', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* (1898), pp. 29-33.

[134] BL IOR CPC P/1/12 October 1737

[135] A less well recorded storm hit the shipping of the Company in 1711, where ships were 'drove ashore and sunk' BL IOR CPC P/1/2 October 1711.

[136] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 February 1710 and June 1714 are two examples where the Company wanted to improve the quality of the river banks to stop it flooding. We will explore other measures used to protect the river in chapter seven.

Although there were potential problems with Calcutta's site there were also several distinct advantages to Calcutta's location.[137] Firstly, the traditional port town on the Hooghly was Satagoan which, due to the silting up of the river, was becoming inaccessible. By establishing a colony at Calcutta the Company replaced Satagoan and reduced the risk of losing ships in the river silt.[138] Secondly, it allowed the British to trade away from the strong Mughal influence at Hooghly. Before 1690 the Company merchants in Bengal had complained about the intrusions of Mughal tax collectors and the complexity of duties that restricted their commercial freedom. Building away from established urban centres and the Mughal state allowed the British merchants to avoid as much direct interference in their trade as possible.[139] By building away from the Mughal centre at Hooghly, the Company ensured that they were free to carry out profitable trade unmolested unlike their French and Dutch counterparts.[140] Additionally, the factory building in Hooghly where the Company had originally been situated was cramped and in the centre of the town and thus harder to defend and protect.[141] This made expanding the Company's infrastructure and interests in Hooghly harder and riskier due to the influence of the Mughal state there. Bombay and Madras were also built away from Mughal power centres. Thus for any Bengal Presidency town to emerge, it would need to be away from Hooghly. The site of the town, although marshy and boxed in on one side by the river, provided generous natural fortifications and access to the ocean. This provided the freedom for the Council to develop its commercial interests in the region, knowing that interference from the Mughal state would be much easier to minimise in the event of future hostility.[142] Such hostility could also be managed through European access to the river. Calcutta's riverside location

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[137] Suprekas Ghosh, 'The Urban Pattern of Calcutta', *India, Economic Geography,* Vol.26, No.1(1950), p. 51. This work is very outdated and lacking in suitable referencing of primary sources but reflects how geographers immediately recognised Calcutta's site as being of vital importance to its growth.

[138] J.P. Losty, *Calcutta, City of Palaces: A Survey of the City in the Days of the East India Company 1690-1858* (London, 1990), p. 11.

[139] Rila Mukherjee, *Strange Riches: Bengal in the Mercantile Map of South Asia* (New Delhi 2006), pp 320-321 has argued that the subordinate nature of Bengal in relation to the wider Mughal trading world encouraged European access. Calcutta therefore benefitted from both avoiding regional political barriers but also benefitted from Bengal marginality.

[140] Om Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company and the Economy of Bengal, 1630-1720* (Princeton, 1985), p. 44 suggests being based at Hooghly meant the VOC had to pay duties on goods even though their Farman was supposed to prevent this.

[141] Losty, *Calcutta, City of Palaces*, p.12.

[142] D.B. Massey, 'The Basic:Service categorisation in planning', *Centre for Environmental Studies Working Paper 63* (July 1971), p. 11. suggests that the relationship between location and industry is important when looking at the industry or population that lives in a place.

supported European power on water. The Council were free to create their own docks and maritime stores safe from Mughal regulation, observation and interference. Although Calcutta's location could not prevent any full scale attack from land, it provided an escape route and more reliable connections to other Presidency Towns and Europe. The creation of distinct European space was the first step in allowing Calcutta to develop strongly. Good harbours do not equate to good ports and conversely good ports do not require good harbours.[143] Calcutta's location and relationship with the urban network of Bengal meant that the Company were able to succeed with developing Calcutta. By creating space between the Council and the Mughal Governor it provided the security for the Company to increase its trade to the region and to provide a platform for increased trade.

Part 2: Political and legal constraints

The British merchants in Calcutta were dependent upon the river Hooghly which provided commercial access to the Bengal hinterland. Exploiting the river also ensured independence from Mughal, Dutch or French interference. It was the primary pathway for the transfer of information, personnel and goods around Bengal and was the main protective barrier from external influence. Therefore, it was vital that it was managed and protected effectively to allow the British to continue living and trading in the region. Historians of colonial ports have focussed upon the relationship between Europeans and the waters they built their settlements adjacent to. In an attempt to understand these port cities better some historians have relegated the maritime character of the port to the shadows.[144] This may have been done because historians have tried to find a hidden side of port cities whose sources focus heavily on the waterfront.[145] However, for Calcutta the relationship between the colony and the river are intertwined. It is the river that was the site of the legal and political battles for dominance between the Company and its rivals (both Indian and Europeans). Examples of conflict on the river show the challenges overcome by the Company to secure its independence and domination of Bengal in the later part of the century.

The successful eighteenth century version of Calcutta might never have come to be. The East India Company in the 1680s was trying to seize more territorial power in India through the policies of its then Governor, Josiah Child. This manifested itself through Child's attempt to browbeat the Mughal governor in Bengal into a more favourable attitude towards the influence and trade of the Company. Child's aggression led to a brief military conflict between the Company and

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[143] Atiya Habeeb Kidwai, 'Conceptual and Methodological Issues: Ports, Port Cities and Port-Hinterlands', in Indu Banya (ed.), *Ports and their Hinterlands in India: 1700-1950* (New Delhi, 1992), p. 25.

[144] Habeeb Kidwai, 'Conceptual and Methodological Issues', p. 10.

[145] Sinnappal Arasaratnam, 'Pre-Colonial and Early-Colonial Port Towns', in Indu Banya (ed.), *Ports and their Hinterlands in India: 1700-1950* (New Delhi, 1992), pp. 368-9.

the Mughal Empire. A disastrous attempt to seize the Mughal town of Hooghly exposed the limitations of the Company in asserting itself militarily. Child had presumed that the Mughal state would be a weak target, easy to push aside. However, the European merchants were expelled and those trading in Bengal, including Job Charnock, were forced to flee to Madras. The result of this conflict was the unmitigated failure of Child's aggressive policies.[146] The impact of the conflict on Company trade was enough to have the Company sue for peace. Following promises of future good conduct, and with the appointment of a new Mughal governor more sympathetic to Company trade, the British merchants were allowed to return. The events of the late 1680s highlight how precarious the Company position was and remained an aberration in the Company's operation until the events of 1757.[147] Child's expansionism had been a threat to the Company's way of life in India. As a result, Company men, especially Elihu Yale at Madras, warned against the establishment of Calcutta as a trading post for fear of provoking the Mughal state.[148] More importantly, it set the tone for future British mercantile action in the years following. Knowing how disastrous conflict with the Mughal state had been, the Company men both in London and in Bengal remained unsure of the stability of their position in India. As a consequence, the British merchants decided to focus upon trade based upon commercial and collaborative policies rather than overt militaristic principles.[149] A robust regional Mughal government was an important ingredient in the colonial recipe when considering how the British viewed their position in India. Such political uncertainty was an important limiting factor in establishing Calcutta as a Bengali trade hub.

The political uncertainty of the 1680s was not resolved during our period. As we shall see throughout the thesis, the Company had to carefully manage its relationship with the various Mughal governors of Bengal and the government officials they employed. However, historians have fiercely debated the strength of the Mughal state both centrally and regionally as a factor behind British success in India.[150] The traditional argument is that the Mughal state throughout our period was moving from its golden age into a period of decline at the imperial court.[151] Emperor Aurangzeb who died in 1707 had ruled for nearly fifty years and following his death nine new

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[146] Keay, *The Honourable Company*, pp. 143-147 provides a good description of the events of the 1680s.

[147] Bruce P. Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars, 1688-1783* (Harlow, 2001), p. 83.

[148] Chaudhuri, *Calcutta the Living City*, p. 10.

[149] For later critics of the Portuguese empire it was a similar failure to adhere to commercial principles that had cost them their empire. See Marshall, *The Portuguese in British Historiography*, p. 41 for a discussion of how comparison with the Portuguese Empire informed opinion about the British overseas.

[150] Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire,* has tried to synthesise the various arguments surrounding Mughal power in the early eighteenth century.

[151] Stokes, 'The First Century', p. 136-8.

emperors succeeded over the next fifty years. [152] Such central instability led early historians of the British in India to suggest that a power vacuum was created which allowed the East India Company to replace Mughal power. Although such a rotation of emperors destabilised the central bureaucracy, the effect on regions of the Mughal Empire such as Bengal are not so clear. Historians such as Frank Perlin and Burton Stein have looked at these eighteenth-century developments in greater detail, concluding that weakness at the Mughal centre precipitated regional economic growth and an increase in regional power.[153] A strong Mughal governor of Bengal as argued for by historians such as Perlin would have had an impact upon the Company's ability to trade without interference.[154] However, increased regional strength as a concept has not gone unchallenged. Recent scholarship has tried to argue that the Mughal governor of Bengal was kept in check through his relationship with local elites and their growing ties with European traders.[155] Despite the varied arguments surrounding this issue, the impact of changes to the Mughal state upon how the East India Company ran Calcutta has not been investigated, this is an area this thesis will attempt to explore.

The failure of militaristic policies did not make the trading world of the President and Council peaceful and conflict free. Sailing along the river exposed ships to attack and robbery. Ships' captains would have soldiers stationed on board as they sailed past overgrown parts of the river that could conceal attackers. This was always an ever present risk, especially during the annual shipping of goods down to Calcutta for transport to Europe.[156] Despite the inconvenience and cost of having soldiers on board, many British ships had been held up or attacked on the river by Mughal officials or by rivals and this protection became a necessity. This Anglo-Indian interaction was a yearly dance of avoiding the criminals that preyed upon unsuspecting captains and

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[152] Khan, 'Introduction', pp. 359-373 suggests that despite the weakening at the centre, 1757 did not represent a change or collapse of the Mughal system but the British remained merchants and the imperial dynasty continued.

[153] Burton Stein, 'The Eighteenth Century: Another View' in P.J Marshall (ed.) *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (Oxford 2000), pp. 62-89.

[154] Frank Perlin, 'The Problem of the Eighteenth Century' in P.J Marshall (ed.) *The Eighteenth Century in Indian History: Evolution or Revolution?* (Oxford 2000), pp. 53-61. Also see Frank Perlin, 'Proto-Industrialization and South Asia', *Past and Present*, No.98 (1983), pp. 30-95.

[155] Chakrabarti, 'Collaboration and Resistance', pp. 107-10, also see Sushil Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire,* p. 87.

[156] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 March 1720 the Council sent twenty soldiers to find and clear robbers from the side rivers of the Hooghly. F Martin, *Rogues River: Crime on the River Thames in the Eighteenth Century* (Southampton 1983), p. 2. Has pointed out how much activity on the Thames was criminal in nature and therefore the benefits of river trade in Bengal would have been understood as also having inherent risks and needed to be controlled.

of misdirecting the interference of Mughal officials, who were trying to extract duties and customs.[157] Often reports would come in that several of the Company ships were being stopped on the river and tribute was being demanded by officials. This was the case in July 1708 when a change in the Mughal governor at Hooghly prompted the President and Council to warn,

> he having imprisoned our people and stopped our goods, ordered that they forbid to go to Hooghly for some time and that they are in a readiness under arms on summons to prevent any insolence.[158]

This showed the risks that a hostile Mughal governor could pose to river shipping. Therefore to stop such Mughal interference from delaying the return journeys of the European ships any more than had been already, the President and Council would send some men up the river, to 'clear' or forcefully free Company ships.[159] Such obstructions had been a problem for the Company since they had arrived in Bengal though the intensity fluctuated and changed depending on which petty Indian official the Council were acquiescing to. The Company tried to get help from the Mughal governor in the matter of river obstructions. However, his failure to protect the Company ships had forced the Council to send annually a large contingent of the garrison up to Patna north of Calcutta to watch over the returning river vessels.[160] In 1739 the Patna party was called upon to prevent the invading Maratha forces from attacking in Patna which the European troops succeeded in defending.[161] The Company managed to prevent any major incidents, but as long as bandits and

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[157] IOR G/7/8 William Bugden to Council 23 February 1703 describes how the Mughal governor seized Dutch and British shipping as compensation for perceived European piracy. The idea of protecting shipping was neither new nor unique to Bengal. Piracy was still prominent in the Caribbean which has been dramatically told by Peter Earle, *The Pirate Wars* (London, 2003). The word pirate had significant connotations. In December 1698 the Company attempted to get an interloping ship branded a pirate. BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/3 December 1698. Attacks by foreign shipping and pirates based in Madagascar was also a risk to the Company as explained by Kevin P. McDonald, '"The Dream of Madagascar": English Disasters and Pirate Utopias of the Early Modern Indo-Atlantic World' in Chloë Houston, *New Worlds Reflected: Travel and Utopia in the Early Modern Period* (Farnham, 2010), p. 104.

[158] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 July 1708.

[159] As the Council were forced to do in December 1709 following more obstruction by the Mughal Governor and his officials. BL IOR CPC P/1/1 December 1709. Again in January 1713 an Ensign in the Company's service had to fire upon a Chowky or river toll checkpoint that had tried to stop him bring some ships down to Calcutta BL IOR CPC P/1/2 January 1713.

[160] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 April 1709 the Company beat some Indian men who had tried to hold up shipping with a split rattan cane as a deterrent to others attempting to do the same. The use of a specific force of soldiers to clear the river appeared from the 1720s.

[161] Das Gupta, *India and the Indian Ocean*, p. 145.

other obstructions existed, the Company's profits were under threat. Banditry and bureaucracy aside, there were other threats to the Company's trade on the river that the Company could do little about.

There also existed limitations to the effectiveness of the colony's legal system. The jurisdiction of the Calcutta courts only extended to the boundaries of the colony. The Company was primarily operating within the wider Mughal state. This meant that incidents outside the borders of Calcutta had to be resolved either through Mughal channels or outside their jurisdiction which risked the wrath of the Mughal governor. There are several examples where the capacity of the Company to enforce the law and protect its personnel from criminal acts was hindered by these limitations. In one case, John Ecklund, who was being held after stabbing and killing a sailor employed by the Company, was to be sent to Hooghly and to be tried under the Mughal legal system. This had happened because 'being an inhabitant of Hooghly, his wife applied herself to the Moor Government' and thus was removed from Company jurisdiction.[162] This particular case shows that the Council was powerless to enforce order within the borders of the colony when their authority was directly challenged by the Mughal state. The reality of this interference was infrequent but the situation remained that the Council was clearly not the ultimate authority in the colony. The Council's weakness was even more pronounced outside the boundaries of Calcutta in 1732:

> An English Barber belonging to this place going in a budgerow privately to Hughly was seized on the way and carried thither, a robbery and murder being charged upon him by the Hughly government...agreed that we write them to acquaint the Nabob we are of opinion the man is innocent, but however depend upon his fair scrutiny into the matter not doubting but he will do justice and clear him...[163]

This passage suggests that the Company had no effective mechanism for challenging the Mughal state directly in individual legal cases such as this and had to rely upon pleas and negotiation. Although the charter for the Mayor's Court gave the Company legal power to enforce its authority up to ten miles from Calcutta, the reality was that this was incompatible within the existing Anglo-Mughal legal dynamic.[164] By the 1730s the Company was beginning to fight back against this Mughal interference. In 1732, they wrote to London arguing that 'we hold our resolution of protecting our tenants as the consequence of delivering them [to the Mughal Courts] may be the utter ruin of the place since it will induce every merchant to leave us, when they find themselves not safe under our protection'.[165] This came about following an incident the year before when the

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[162] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 December 1698.

[163] BL IOR CDST A/1/70 pp. 369-456.

[164] BL IOR CDST A/1/70 p. 391.

[165] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 May 1733.

Company began seeking advice from London over whether to comply with every request made by the Nawab for delivery of prisoners.[166] These cases suggest that the relationship between the Mughal state and the Company was changing over the period as the Company felt more able to challenge the Nawab. Also it shows that the Company's concern was over losing power and over what the impact of acquiescing to the Mughal state would have on trade. We will explore later in this chapter how the Company responded to such limitations to its authority.

The failure of the legal structure utilised by the Company was not limited to interactions with the Mughal state. Just as the Calcutta Company servants had problems in maintaining their position from Mughal interference so too did the Company have to compete against the interests of the other European trading companies. As with the case of John Ecklund who removed himself from the Company's jurisdiction, so too Europeans could escape to other European colonies and not fear extradition back to Calcutta. Primarily these deserters were soldiers and sailors. In 1715 for example desertion became such a problem that the Company sent twenty other soldiers to capture any that could be found out in the country.[167] Such forays into the Bengal hinterland were common for the Company in the early years of the colony. However, the Council in some occasions did manage to secure the return of those that fled the Company's service. The most prominent was the 1699 case of Jonathon Windsor a Company servant who had fled to the Dutch after accusations against his conduct.[168] Windsor's position as a Company servant with knowledge of Company operations and interests meant the Company had more to lose by allowing him to desert and thus pursued his case more vigorously. The Windsor case also shows that across the European population the most realistic approach in avoiding Company authority was simply to flee upriver. By the end of the period the Council was dealing with the problems of desertion regularly and used notices placed around the colony to advertise that desertion would not be tolerated.[169] The Council also decreed that all people of the Company's shipping staying at a punch house were to be reported to the officer of the guard.[170] Although this did not remove the problems of desertion it did help to ensure that inhabitants did not just ignore Company authority or benefit other nations in deserting the British merchants. However, at times of conflict or disagreement amongst the trading companies the mutual arrangement could break down, showing an inherent weakness in the

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[166] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 June 1732.

[167] BL IOR CPC P/1/3 May 1715.

[168] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 August 1699.

[169] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 December 1704 was the first of these public notices and thus shows a consistent approach throughout the period. BL IOR CPC P/1/6 January 1722. Another case the Company responded directly to reports of deserters committing crime on the river by sending a band of soldiers to hunt them down.

[170] BL IOR CPC P/1/11 August 1735 and BL IOR CPC P/1/10 September 1734

authority of the Company.   Overall, the structure of authority and legal power in the colony became more ordered and robust over time. The Company was interested in a system of authority that best reflected its commercial interests in Bengal and the language and content of the Royal Charter reflected this.

Part 3: The Subordinate Factories

In many of the contemporary accounts of British towns in India it is the region of Bengal rather than the colony that is mentioned. Focussing on specific key colonies such as Madras, Bombay and later Calcutta seems to be a modern approach to British colonial study. This suggests that it was the regional opportunity that was of importance to contemporaries. It would now seem anachronistic to refer to Calcutta and Bengal as one, with historians acknowledging their distinct and separate natures. However, Calcutta was not viable as an urban place without its links to the wider Mughal network.[171] The British in Bengal developed a network of smaller subordinate factories to feed into Calcutta's broader mercantile connections. Such factories were often found in existing Indian urban centres providing the means for British merchants to trade directly with Indian producers.[172] To trade effectively, the Council needed to communicate and work with Indian merchants throughout Bengal. To understand how Calcutta's network affected the city requires us to understand how the British merchants in Calcutta integrated their trade with that of the wider Mughal economy.

Throughout India and throughout Bengal the Company had subordinate factories that they built to gain access to the Indian commercial markets. In Bengal the main subordinate factories were at Murshidabad, Patna, Ballasore, Cassimbuzar and Dacca. The Company employed two or three men to work out of these factories where they were responsible for filling orders and ensuring that deals made with local merchants were fulfilled. Some of the more important subordinate factories had members of the Council lead operations there such as Patna and Cassimbuzar. In our period none of these factories grew to the size of Calcutta and did not threaten to overtake Calcutta as the main Company settlement in Bengal. The goods, cash and personnel of these places were all controlled and designed to support the Company in Calcutta. We should therefore seem them as part of the colony's urban network. This is not unique to Calcutta and the use of a central hub to control a region along with smaller outposts that would feed into and support the main colony can be seen elsewhere. Calcutta was originally this type of settlement, its independence was limited and

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[171] Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise,* p. 7 suggests colonies should be seen as part of an organic whole rather than distant outposts exploited by a London elite.

[172] The British had factories at Hooghly and Dacca two centres of Mughal administration in the period. Also settled was Patna were goods were collected and shipped downriver and at Cassimbuzar which was another place of commercial activity.

it was founded as part of the presidency of Madras. In north America the best example of a similar system can be seen in the development of Boston as the central hub that controlled the colonists of New England. We should therefore identify some of the specific benefits such a system had for the development of Calcutta.

In 1711 Robert Hedges was promoted by President Russell to run the Cassimbuzar factory some eighty or so miles north of Calcutta.[173] When he arrived he would have been greeted by his new subordinates. Two junior British merchants lived there and an Indian broker arranged negotiations and communicated with the local merchants on their behalf. His two junior clerks' first responsibility was to hand over the Factory books and to report on the Factory's business and condition.[174] Problems that needed resolving were relayed to Hedges. For example the factory building often required minor repairs; Indian merchants had to be chased for delivering on promised goods and the local Mughal official would need to be prevented from increasing checks as to whether ships flying the English Company's colours had the correct documentation.[175] This would have been Hedges' first taste of life running an operation outside Fort William and there his role had been working with the goods sent from factories like those at Cassimbuzar. Hedges' superiors had placed their faith in him to succeed and being successful was a step towards a more prestigious and lucrative Council position.[176] Being posted to a subordinate factory was risky as it placed the Company servant under increased Mughal scrutiny away from Company protection but it also provided several opportunities for private trade as well as experience of the frontier of the commercial process first hand. However, these subordinate factories also provided several benefits to the Company in its commercial activities in Bengal.

After Robert Hedges had been at Cassimbuzar for nearly three years, he was presented with an opportunity in November 1714 to bring the experience of running a subordinate factory back to Calcutta. In that time he had overseen the Company's trade at Cassimbuzar and the constant challenge to fulfil the many different sized contracts arranged with local merchants. Hedges had received word from Calcutta that John Russell President of the Council had died. Hedges was to settle his affairs and to repair downriver and take his place on the Council. John Page was to be his successor at Cassimbuzar who had been his second in command at the Factory. Page would take

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[173] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 October Register of personnel mentions Robert Hedges as the chief at Cassimbuzar.

[174] This was standard commercial procedure for the Company as they had done when the two companies merged and their records were exchanged. Equally, accounts of different departments such as the Import and Export warehouses were monthly handed into the Council for examination. Examples of the handover and exchange of information between Company servants is a constant theme of Council sessions and shows the importance of collective knowledge for the running of the colony.

[175] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 April 1713 provides an example of such repairs being required when Charles Eyre and a Gunner were to report on the quality of the factory building there and prevent it from being washed away.

[176] By 1714 Hedges was the President of Calcutta BL IOR CPC P/1/2 November register of personnel.

charge of the books, correspondence, and all the responsibilities of running the Factory on behalf of the Company in Calcutta. This was an opportunity for Page to prove himself as Hedges had done before him. In another case Mr Halsey (second in command at Cassimbuzar in 1699) was promoted because he had experience with local merchants, was already settled at Cassimbuzar and had experience of local conditions which prevented losses at the Factory.[177] Such examples of the changing experiences of Company servants reflect one of the benefits of subordinate factories. They taught essential leadership and responsibility to merchants. Placing them in charge of these locations trained them in what was needed to take a senior role on the Calcutta Council. Experience in the subordinate factories also provided Council members with expertise in how the goods they traded in made it from loom and niter-bed, to the Company godowns as finished cloth and saltpetre.[178] Council members who had spent their time away from Calcutta would have been more aware of regional practices and conditions knowing commercial contacts firsthand. This ensured that the Company agreed and assigned investment for Indian mercantile partners, using up to date knowledge and contacts. It ensured that links created through interaction in a regional Bengal setting were exploited fully. Thus Calcutta's network was held together by its personnel and their knowledge of the conditions and operations of subordinate factories. This system ensured that Calcutta's emergence as part of the existing Mughal urban network was sustained by direct Company control.

Robert Hedges had been back in Calcutta for several months following his promotion to the Council when the Council received the regular letter from the Cassimbuzar Factory. Once again, the senior company merchant there was writing to tell of the obstruction of the Mughal governor.[179] Despite all the investment and gifts given to the Mughal officials at Dacca, little of worth was being generated by the Factory. The Council therefore met to determine whether to keep the Factory open or whether to recall the British merchants to Calcutta. Obstructions to the English servants in the subordinate factories were common, however, the Company had limited personnel in India and so redeploying them to other factories would be a better use of resources. Additionally, the withdrawal from Cassimbuzar might panic the Mughal merchants whose complaints to the Mughal governor at Hugli could encourage co-operation elsewhere[180] Subordinate factories which were not profitable or

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[177] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/3 August 1699.

[178] Wilson, *Early Annals* Vol. 2 part 1, p. lviii, when Edward Pattle left the position at the Patna Factory in 1711 his replacements were sent up to *'to learn the country language and to qualify themselves for the Company's service.'*.

[179] Wilson, *Early Annals* Vol. 2 part 1, p. xli, explains how Hedges used force in this occasion to clear the Mughal obstruction and to help protest against the Mughal Governors arbitrary stopping of the river trade.

[180] BL IOR CPC P/1/5 January 1723, the Company banned all trading with subordinate factories until the Mughal Governor was convinced to provide the Company more protection.

which faced significant barriers were quickly scaled back or removed. This had been a tactic Job Charnock had used once he arrived in Bengal and it was continued over the years by successive Presidents.[181] Often these factories were resettled at a later date once conditions improved.[182] This strategy therefore granted the Company the flexibility to react to local conditions, political or mercantile, and to ensure that they did not over-investment and risk financial loss and ruin. In the same way that subordinate factories were used as training grounds for Council members, keeping factory numbers and locations fluid allowed the network to adapt to suit the needs of the central administrative and commercial hub at Calcutta.

Protecting the shipping on the Hooghly was the constant responsibility of the soldiers employed by the Company but at certain times of the year the numbers of men sent upriver was dramatically increased.[183] This was known as the Patna party and its purpose was to ensure the safe delivery of goods back to Calcutta for the return of the European ships. We know that these men were sent upriver due to the monthly muster rolls which record the number and composition of the different companies of soldiers employed by the Company. The dispatch of the Patna party occurred every year and it served well to discourage any local bandits or desperate interlopers from seizing and obstructing Company operations. It was a reactive policy utilised at times of peak river trade and allowed the safe transition of goods from the frontier of commercial exchange to the regional hub at Calcutta. Other small factories had a small number of soldiers to protect their trade but it was the Patna party that formed the prime vanguard for Company shipping.[184] These subordinate factories were also the boundary and frontier of British commercial operations in Bengal.[185] Effectively they were an extension of Calcutta's own urban boundary and without Calcutta's direct support in terms of capital and personnel, the factories at Dacca, Hooghly,

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[181] Wilson, *Early Annals* Vol. 2 part 1, p. Lviii, describes the various settling and abandonment of subordinate factories.

[182] Such as happened at Cassimbuzar in May 1715 BL IOR CPC P/1/3 May 1715.

[183] These season fluctuations are discussed in greater detail in the next chapter.

[184] IOR BL IOR CPC P/1/5 October 1723 muster of the Company's soldiers for September mentions groups of no more than ten men at Dacca, Malda and Cassimbuzar.

[185] This has been examined by historians of North America but not really been attempted for studies of colonies in India in their formative years. Stephen Hornsby, *British Atlantic, American Frontier, Spaces of Power in Early Modern British America* (Lebanon, 2005), pp. 180-186 explores the changing balance between the frontier and the creation of metropolitan centres in colonial North America. William R. Nester, *The Great Frontier War 1607-1755, Britain, France and the Struggle for North America* (Westport, 2000), p. 2, has tried to compare French colonies with English ones and feels they utilised different models. The French model of enclaves and tribute is similar to the Company's approach in India and reflects similar problems of external threats and a need to integrate with Native American groups.

Cassimbuzar and the like would have ceased to exist.[186] They helped to present the image of Calcutta as a safe and viable place to trade, where goods and personnel could more easily and profitably flow around the urban network.

The 'network' that emerged around Calcutta was the end point of the wider international communications and trade network of the East India Company. We have already seen some of the examples of how the subordinate factories communicated with the President and Council at Calcutta. Communication was primarily done through official communication either through the use of letters or reports. Official documentations came through the form of the Factory records or Public consultations. These would be transported back to Calcutta each trade season and then approved and sent to London as part of the yearly package of documents for the London Directors. These documents used the Company's river vessels to courier this communication between the factories and very little communication between Company men occurred overland. This meant that the river played a vital role in connecting the different factories and personnel of the Company together. Therefore protecting access to it was central to supporting the urban and commercial network of the Company. Calcutta as a node of the wider Company network followed the same structure as in Bengal. Calcutta at first fed into Madras and once it became a Presidency town Calcutta reported directly to London through annual reports and regular letters to the Directors. This is important because we can see the flow of information from the men in the subordinate factories all the way to the London Directors. For Calcutta to succeed it needed to retain contact and support from Europe as well as ensure strong links to the subordinate factories in Bengal. The communications systems of the Company helped to ensure Calcutta was not isolated and remained the central hub of its operations in Bengal.

Overall, these small factories were a vital tool to accommodate the trade network and personnel into the existing foreign Mughal markets and thus preventing Calcutta's marginalisation and failure. Protecting these factories was a vital part in maintaining Calcutta's viability as a settlement and helped the Company to integrate more safely into Indian commercial and urban networks.

Conclusion

Calcutta is often thought of in terms of its later colonial and commercial successes. However before these successes could occur there were significant challenges in the location and political situation that the Company would need to overcome. This chapter highlights these physical and political constraints but also the methods the President and Council used to create stability and lay the

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[186] Indeed when the Company were forced out of Bengal in 1688 and 1757 the Company's trade in Bengal almost entirely shut down.

foundations for future success. In particular this chapter has suggested that the Company elite in Bengal were aware of the precarious position they held and that they attempted to secure the colony both physically and also politically. This can be seen in the way that the President and Council measured and controlled their environment. Specifically, this can be seen in the desire of the Company to separate themselves from the influence of the Mughal state through the position of Calcutta, the control of the river through its shipping and finally the use of subordinate factories that allowed interaction with Indian markets to be done without compromising the independence of Calcutta. All of these solutions helped to prevent interference in Company affairs and to ensure that Calcutta remained under the authority and control of the President and Council. The tenuous position of the colony is essential to remember when evaluating the growth and development of the colony in the rest of the thesis. Later success was not guaranteed but it is important to remember that the Company had solutions that they could employ to overcome the political and physical constraints of life in Bengal.

Chapter 4: Calcutta's European Population

The European ship had spent month's at sea crossing two oceans to reach its destination in India. It had been guided up the river and now lay opposite Fort William anchored in the centre of the river. Its arrival caused an exchange of gunfire between the Fort and the ships. However, this exchange was not part of an attack or military conflict. The ship involved was an East India Company vessel bringing goods to the settlement, one of several that would arrive that year. Such gunfire had a ceremonial function to announce the arrival of a ship so that the residents of Calcutta knew that a new shipment of European goods, personnel and correspondence had reached Bengal. Following the ceremonial exchange, the larger ship began to unload new colonial inhabitants, various dignitaries and other important crew into a river vessel to be ferried to the shore. Amongst those taken ashore was the ship's doctor. He was to report to the Council on the state of the ship's crew, to request payment for the men he had kept alive in the crossing and then to arrange for the sick sailors aboard to be transferred to the hospital. The arrival of a ship catalysed the lives of the men and women of Calcutta, bringing new people into the settlement and taking old friends back to Europe. The flow and movement of human life in the colony was facilitated by these vessels and their cyclical arrival was essential to maintaining the colony and the lives of its inhabitants.[187]

Just as we are able to understand a little more about the lives of those living in Calcutta from the commercial ships that came into the settlement each year, so we can tell a little more about the lives of the inhabitants from other commercial activities and records. The source material available to the historian is predominantly commercial in nature but details about the lives of those living in Calcutta can be found hidden amongst the figures and lists. Despite a need to record every transaction for the Directors in London, details of the daily lives of the European community can be found. From personal disputes, to marriages, pensions and wills the Company recorded many events in the lives of the men and women in the colony. In addition, other sources such as the letters of those living in and travelling to the colony survive. However, it is from Company records

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[187] Ships arriving at the Fort signalled their arrival with cannon fire and in one case a ship's captain was so incensed that his cannon fire greeting was not returned he challenged a member of the Council to a duel BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1704. There are regular accounts of surgeons being paid for safely delivering people to Calcutta for example in 1715 James Morrison was paid 112 rupees for safely delivering twenty-nine soldiers to the colony BL IOR CPC P/1/3 February 1715.

that much of the data about the lives of those in Calcutta is drawn. The Company kept registers of its covenanted servants (the merchants), at first yearly, then from the 1730s, twice a year. Once a church was established in the town a register of births, deaths and marriages was kept and the Mayor's Court and the Public Consultations recorded copies of wills. Monthly muster rolls were kept of the garrison continuing almost uninterrupted from the early eighteenth century onwards. Together these resources are an excellent source for piecing together the changes and patterns of the inhabitants of the colony.

Life and death in a colonial setting has presented a problem for historians. Research on nineteenth-century perceptions of colonial mortality contrasted the 'Orient's' sickly nature with comparative healthfulness in Europe.[188] Little has been done to challenge this assumption for the period before 1750. It has been easy to find accounts of early mortality that portray Calcutta and other colonial towns as death-traps where inhabitants were unlikely to live for long, let alone make lives there. The most recent work on mortality in India has continued these trends.[189] However, there is strong evidence to suggest that mortality was not all consuming in a place like Calcutta. A good life could be had in Bengal and families and communities were able to form. The source material available provides us with the evidence to explore more fully the life cycle of those living in Calcutta. In particular it allows us to suggest that the European community was a relatively stable place especially for its core elite. The evidence also suggests that the Company elite (merchants, ships captains and their families) were segregated from the soldiers and seamen from Europe and that each group lived lives that had strong contrasts. Finally, the sources allow us to see how such a European community rationalised its experience in India and the strategies that were used to found a new life in Calcutta. It is therefore possible to see how personal connections and shared social experiences held the community together. Exploring these concepts of stability, and community creation are key to understanding the urban growth and character of the colony.

The central task of this chapter is to identify the ways the Europeans who came to Calcutta adapted to the colonial environment and to identify the strategies they used to adjust to a life in India. I will explore the lives of the town's inhabitants in three ways. Firstly, I will look at the lives people led in the colony, their successes and failures and the impact this had upon their health and life experiences. I will especially focus upon how far European patterns and routines were

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[188] Mark Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions: Health, Race, Environment and British Imperialism in India 1600-1850* (Oxford, 1999), pp. 27-28.

[189] Travers, 'Death and the Nabob', pp. 87-92 has argued that the ritualising of death was important in projecting British power in Calcutta during the eighteenth century but does not challenge the figures provided by P.J. Marshall, *East India Fortunes: The British in Bengal in the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 1976), pp. 218-219, though Travers does acknowledge that there is room for more statistical analysis of the data presented by Marshall.

replicated in India. I will contrast this by looking at death in the second part of the chapter. I will identify how death was understood, the impact of mortality on certain groups and in comparison to other colonies. The management of community will form the last part of this chapter. I will explore how Europeans built their new lives in an alien place and the importance of shared colonial experience in assisting with the transition to Bengal. Together, these sections will help to overturn conceptions of high rates of mortality destabilizing the European community in Calcutta. I will instead argue that Calcutta's success was in part due to the stability amongst the colonial population.

Part 1: Life

East India Company records primarily record Company costs and income and events that affect this bottom line. Little personal opinion is given and much has to be inferred. The absence of direct descriptions of colonial life is particularly acute in the source material for Calcutta. However, the Company's obsession with lists and the recording of commercial documents does provide some insight into some of the major events in the lifecycles of those men and women who lived in Bengal. Very few historians have attempted to tap into these resources for our period. The birth records of the Company are untouched and little analysis has gone into the registers of personnel that were recorded annually. Historians have not analysed the composition of the European population which is treated far too homogenously. As a result the European population of Calcutta is not understood in any detail. However, we can take this source material and identify some of the particular trends in the lives of Calcutta's inhabitants previously overlooked by other historians.

Job Charnock landed with a small band of soldiers and Company servants who were to become the founding population of Calcutta. Following the success of Charnock and his colleagues the settlement grew and increased over time. However, it is hard to make an accurate estimate of the European population in the period and none seemingly was attempted by the Company till the 1750s. A non-Company estimate by the private merchant Captain Alexander Hamilton around 1727 suggested around 10-12,000 people including Indians and Europeans lived in the town.[190] Some historians have suggested that Calcutta grew as big as 120,000 by 1720.[191] Eighteenth century

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[190] C.R.Wilson, *The Early Annals,* Vol. 1, p. 192 originally in Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies, Being the Observations and Remarks of Captain Alexander Hamilton Who Spent his Time There from the Year 1688 to 1723 Trading and Travelling by Sea and Land, to Most of the Countries and Islands of Commerce and Navigation, between the Cape of Good Hope and the Island of Japan* (1727), ed. William Forster, 2 vols. (London, 1930).

[191] C.A. Bayly, *Indian Society and the Making of the British Empire* (Cambridge, 1988), p. 68, Travers, 'Death and the Nabob', p. 84, and Marshall, 'Eighteenth-Century Calcutta'*,* p. 91.

estimates are much higher with John Zepheniah Holwell's 1752 estimate of about 409,000 people living in Calcutta. This seems implausibly large, putting Calcutta on a similar size to London in 1700 and larger than any other British town.[192] Holwell's estimate if true suggests massive growth in the period after 1732 which, if compared to Hamilton's estimate, would imply a thirty-three fold increase in thirty years. However, Holwell's estimate is most likely inaccurate, based upon computations from the tax records made by the Company and assumptions about land ownership amongst the Indian population rather than a direct census. It suggests either a blind devotion to the arithmetic without critical appraisal or the perception that there really were around 400 Indians for every European in the town.   These estimates suggest that by the end of our period the population balance between the Europeans and Indians might have been changing. Holwell might also have been projecting his fears over European marginalisation in arriving at his figure.[193] Despite the potential inaccuracies in the estimates by commentators it is clear that Calcutta was growing and that by the standards of the time it was perceived as home to a large population at least comparable if not exceeding many towns in Great Britain. This is a simple statement but provides the context for many other observations about European life in the colony and the impact this had upon their settlement in Bengal.

The majority of the European population in the colony were soldiers who made up about 4-500 men.[194] In addition the Company employed European sailors to man the Company ships which along with sailors from the European ships made up another 400 or 500 men.[195] It is important to note that most of these sailors arriving from Europe would have been European. There is little evidence to suggest that these arriving sailors were Lascars. The work done on Lascars as employees of the Company's shipping does not tackle our earlier period and the Company provide no accounts of Lascars or Indian seaman as being part of the marine employment of Calcutta. In fact the Company had a rule that meant that ships coming from Europe were to be 75 percent ethnically British and it was not until the Napoleonic period that the Company was forced to

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[192] Wilson, *Early Annals, Vol.1,* p. 192.

[193] This is a point echoed by Wilson in his analysis of the figures that Holwell based his calculations upon and comparing those figures to previous records, Wilson, *Early Annals, Vol.1,* p. 192.

[194] Again soldier numbers can be estimated from the Public Consultations (BL IOR CPC P series) which list monthly muster rolls from the Company's servants regularly from the 1720s. Though the makeup did change slowly overtime the basic composition of three companies of men each around 250 European soldiers survived untouched until the reforms of the 1740s.

[195] The Company's accounts of employing sailors does not mention their race but ships Captains often complained about European sailors deserting their ships whilst at Calcutta and the shortage of European sailors to sail on the return journey home. BL IOR CPC P/1/1 December 1704 Is one example of a ship's Captain complaining about the impact of sailors deserting his ships upon the capacity of his ship to function.

increase the numbers of Lascars it employed.[196] Oftentimes the London Directors often decreed that all departing ships were to be all British and in 1760 only 137 Lascars were reported as coming to Europe from Asia suggesting a division between the Europe and Country shipping.[197] At peak times following the seasonal arrival of European ships, the balance of the European population in Calcutta could be completely overwhelmed by sailors who had joined Company shipping in London. It is difficult to estimate the size of the crews of European ships though Peter Earle suggests around 100 men was the standard complement of crew for an East India Company ship travelling to Asia.[198] One list of crew which survives shows a crew of about 115 men. This confirms Earle's estimate and when applied to shipping numbers for the period 1715 to 1732 we can get an estimate of the scale of transient population within Calcutta.

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[196] Shompa Lahiri ,'Contested Relations: the East India Company and Lascars in London' in H.V. Bowen, Margaret Lincoln and Nigel Rigby (eds.) *The Worlds of the East India Company* (2002 London), p. 170.

[197] Michael H. Fisher, 'Working across the seas: Indian Maritime Labourers in India, Britain and in Between, 1600-1857', *International Review of Social History* (2006), pp. 29-36.

[198] Earle, *A City Full of People,* p. 79. This estimate is supported in H.V. Bowen, J. McAleer, Robert J. Blyth (eds) Monsoon Traders: The Maritime World of the East India Company (London 2011) p. 118 which quotes a similar number.

Year	# of ships per year	Average tonnage per ship	Total tonnage	Estimated population of sailors
1715	19	70	1325	2185
1716	27	N/A	N/A	3105
1718	27	67	1820	3105
1719	32	69	2205	3680
1720	31	81	2525	3565
1721	28	144	4024	3220
1722	32	149	4783	3680
1723	39	143	5583	4485
1724	27	158	4257	3105
1728	23	141	3243	2645
1729	33	160	5293	3795
1730	23	311	7161	2645
1732	27	164	4420	3105
1733 (Spring)	29	154	4473	3335
1733 (Autumn)	10	117	1165	1150

Table 1: Estimates of the annual seasonal mariner population of Calcutta 1715-1733[199]

The steady increase in average ship tonnage suggests that not only was the volume of sailors increasing over time but that they were arriving in larger groups as ship sizes and crews increased due to the bigger ships. The military population was also transitory; soldiers who were would be sent to the subordinate factories to protect goods coming down to Calcutta. In addition, many soldiers were hired on a temporary or seasonal basis dependent on conditions.[200] However, the

[199] This table is comprised from several sources. The number of ships and their average tonnage per year figures come from the yearly lists of ships and their sizes available in the public consultations BL IOR CPC P/1/3, P/1/4, P/1/5, P/1/6, P/1/8 and P/1/9. The average number of ships crew is based upon are based upon the sample of a ship captured by the East India Company with a crew of 115 people, 110 English sailors, 5 Dutch IOR E/3/53 p. 389.

[200] Seasonal hires can be seen in the monthly muster rolls from the BL IOR CPC P Series. The Company would sometimes record when they would dismiss soldiers from their employment for example BL IOR CPC P/1/9 December 1732 the excess soldiers of the Patna party were released and BL IOR CPC P/1/2 October 1714 the Company also released soldiers but kept European over Indian and Portuguese men.

European population was not static. One of the things that typified the European presence in India was the almost constant fluctuation of the European population. Merchants would travel throughout Asia on business. Soldiers spent weeks or months out of port on guard duties, whilst European sailors were only inhabitants for the months European ships took to resupply, take on cargo and return to Europe. The migration of poorer Europeans into the colony provided the major source of non-mercantile employees for the Company. As was common in London, sailors could make the transition from a life at sea to a life on land and these men would have started new lives as soldiers and country ships sailors.[201] The division between the Company elite and its military and naval servants was determined by more than just wealth or status but was also spatial.[202] Though not different from other ports, the situation in Calcutta was even more extreme than the normal European port of the period as the main static population of the port was Indian rather than European. The Company core elite were further segregated from the European population with its own routines, accommodation and living conditions. Therefore there was little-to-no intermediary population between the European poor and the European elite. This creates a peculiar social division within the colony which has not been properly explored in the period up to 1750.

Certain norms and pleasures of European life, such as the theatre, dinner with friends and more aristocratic pursuits such as hunting were all encouraged amongst the Company elite whilst in Bengal.[203] In particular, Indian attitudes towards the climate and other customs of Indian life were also taken up by the Company men and their families. Captain Alexander Hamilton wrote that

> Most Gentlemen and Ladies in Bengal live both splendidly and pleasantly, the forenoons being dedicated to business, and after dinner to rest, and in the evening to recreate themselves in chaises or palanquins in the fields,.[204]

The use of palanquins instead of coaches, Indian food, housing and servants, ensured Company men were mixing the best of both European and Indian cultures in adapting to the colonial

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[201] Earle, *A City Full of People,* p. 81.

[202] David Washbrook, 'Avatars of Identity: The British community in India' in Robert Bickers (ed.) *Settlers and Expatriates: Britons over the Seas* (Oxford 2012), p. 179. Has suggested that community implies permanence and that the 'British' community was too diverse and transient to fit with that description. However, the core European elite who kept themselves mostly separate from other transient groups can be seen to have features of a permanent community group as shown in this chapter.

[203] Forbes, '"Our Theatrical Attempts' in this Distant Quarter": The British Stage in Eighteenth-Century Calcutta', *Theatre Notebook*, 61, (2007), p. 66, describes the emergence of theatres in Calcutta from the 1760s but only mentions the theatre of the pre-Plassey period briefly. The Council outside of the shipping season arranged a hunting trip in 1710, BL IOR CPC P/1/2 27 March 1710.

[204] Laura Sykes (ed.) *Calcutta through British Eyes 1690-1990* (Oxford, 1992), p. 40. quoting Captain Alexander Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies* (Edinburgh 1727).

situation. The maintenance of privileged community functions and behaviours was vital in maintaining the power and position of the European elite.[205] This was important for the President and Council who had no other elite groups that could help protect its dominant position. Therefore strategies that encouraged particular genteel pursuits and separated the elite from the urban poor were beneficial to the Company position.[206]

Another way long term Company servants segregated themselves from the temporary European population of the colony was through the creation of family units. When Judith Weston arrived in Bengal in 1727 it was to live with her brother who was one of the free merchants allowed to trade in Calcutta. Upon settling in Calcutta she married another free merchant, John Fullerton, in August 1728.[207] Judith Weston's arrival in Calcutta united her with other members of her family, Thomas Weston the Free Merchant, William Weston who was a writer in the Company's service and Henry Weston who worked on the Company's river ships and was respected enough to be made Master of Attendance (a leadership position amongst the river pilots) in the 1730s. The links created by Judith's marriage to John Fullerton are highlighted by a bill of exchange drawn up by Fullerton to be paid to Henry Weston. The cash from European inhabitants was frequently exchanged into paper notes of exchange to be repaid upon demand at interest at a later date. William Weston and John Fullerton were the providers of the cash and the bill tied all members of the Weston/Fullerton group together.[208] Marriage helped to strengthen the economic relationships between groups and the continuation of marriage in this capacity suggests that marriage in India fulfilled the same social and personal benefits as in Europe.[209] Judith Weston's arrival, connections and subsequent marriage all highlight an unacknowledged aspect of the European population of Calcutta: that women were useful assets for merchant families to settle, survive and gain wealth in Asia. It is clear that European women did come to the colony and for many they came for the

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[205] Liza Picard, *Dr Johnson's London* (London, 2000), p. 201, identifies the daily routines of London merchants which seem remarkably similar to the daily routines of Company merchants in India.

[206] Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, p. 329 details how 'genteel' as a concept could be applied to the those that acted in a genteel manner rather than had become of the middling sort purely by wealth. The application of this to the Company merchants is clear. The infrastructure around the fort and the activities carried out by the inhabitants of the colony reflected their character and desire to maintain their status whilst living in Bengal.

[207] IOR N/1/1 Bengal Births, Deaths and Marriages, 1728

[208] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 January 1734.

[209] The economic features of eighteenth-century marriage have been explored by Lawrence Stone, *Uncertain Unions: Marriage in England 1660-1753* (Oxford, 1992) and the prime role the Anglican church had in conducting marriages has been restored in a recent study by Rebecca Probert, *Marriage, Law and Practice in the Long Eighteenth Century: A Reassessment* (Cambridge, 2009). Although Probert's work deals primarily with the changes after 1753 she bases her conclusions on a reassessment of marriage before and after the act.

chance to find a husband and to live with family. This helped to improve their own position and provided chances of wealth for themselves and their families through marriage and private trade. The idea that Calcutta was a marriage market for the families of its merchants is not improbable and was a feature of towns for similar economic groups in Britain.[210] Calcutta was seemingly as much a place for continuing European family life as it was for trade.

Although it is hard to gauge the exact size of the female population of the colony, certain things are apparent when examining the full range of surviving source material.[211] On Judith Weston's ship to Calcutta there were four women.[212] For this year at least, about as many women arrived in Calcutta as the yearly intake of new writers into the Company's service. This is not to suggest that women were of equal number to men in the colony, however, most Company men appear to have been married, and the majority of women who were recorded in the marriage records appear to have been Protestant European rather than Portuguese (terminology for Catholic mixed race inhabitants of the city) or Indian based upon their surname and first name.[213] Looking at the marriage records in more depth we can see that the records distinguish between marriages between Europeans and mixed race marriages. If we take a snapshot of the records, looking at the three years 1727-1729 of the forty marriages that occurred only nine involved Indian or Portuguese named inhabitants.[214] What is important to note is that non-European women are clearly identified as being non-European (most being referred to as 'a black woman'), suggesting that the remainder

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[210] Peter Borsay, *The English Urban Renaissance: Culture and Society in the Provincial Town, 1660-1770* (Oxford, 1989), p. 244, identifies the potential for towns to raise the status of those living there through marriages between the middling sort.

[211] Durba Ghosh, 'Legal and Liberal Subjects: Women's Crimes in Early Colonial India', Journal of Womens History, Vol. 22, No. 2 (2010), pp. 153-4 has suggested that locating the female subject requires more than just looking at judicial records.

212 BL Eur. Mss. Mss Eur B162 Account by Judith Weston, later Mrs John Fullerton, of a voyage to Madras in the East Indiaman `Stretham' under Capt George Westcott, East India Company commander 1720-47, to join her brother William Weston. fol.1.

[213] These records cover the entire period 1713 to 1750 and even a quick glance sees the names of many Company merchants marrying and then subsequent relatives marrying, dying etc. Basic analysis of the lists provides many examples of Company men marrying and having families and in some cases having families or remarrying. They provide us with knowledge of how inhabitants lived their lives. In addition if these marriages were between Europeans and local women there seemed to not be the same costs associated with interracial marriage as described by Durba Ghosh, Sex and the Family in Colonial India: The Making of Empire (Cambridge 2006), pp. 109-110.

[214] British Library IOR N/1/1 Bengal Births, Deaths and Marriages 1713-1754. 1728 in particular we can identify three of the brides as being of British decent being family members of Company men. Although we do not have a definitive answer on the subject in the period up to 1757 there appears some stark differences from events and attitudes in the later eighteenth century.

were European or were integrated to the extent that their original origin didn't require commentary.[215] This is not to say that there is a massive influx of European women to the colony but considering the comparable numbers of new female arrivals to the numbers entering Company employment, the connections of women to existing inhabitants and the distinction made in the records between Indian women and Christian named women, the idea of a purely male settlement is no longer supportable.

We can explore the marriage patterns further by looking at marriage records preserved by the church ministers. Marriage rates increased from 1715 onwards as the settlement became more stable following the granting of Zamidari rights in 1717 and the creation of a Mayor's Court in 1727. Marriage rates decreased around 1740 following the problems surrounding the Maratha conflict and following the 1737 hurricane. This suggests that women were not encouraged to come to the settlement and that marriage was not a viable option amongst the colonists at those times. Although these records only cover Protestant ceremonies they suggest that marriage was a regular event amongst the Protestant population and across the range of social and economic groups. It also suggests that the changing volumes of women moving to Calcutta reflect the changing stability of the colony as a place to settle.

The incidence of christenings mimics the rise and fall in marriage and the records again suggest that childbirth was a more common event than previously understood. If the unrecorded marriages and children between Portuguese women and British inhabitants (most likely sailors and soldiers) are also taken into account, it indicates that women did make up a significant proportion of the population and that marriage and family creation was certainly a regular event (even if it isn't just between Europeans). The evidence does not suggest an equal gender balance but the idea of a purely male European population can be disregarded. This is important as it suggests that Company servants benefited from informal familial links and stronger relationships within the European population. This replication of European life overseas is not unexpected but has hitherto not been explored in the period before 1750. This is not the only preconception about life in India that can be challenged.

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[215] Durba Ghosh, 'Decoding the nameless: gender, subjectivity and historical methodologies in reading the archives of colonial India' in Kathleen Wilson (ed.) *A new Imperial History: Culture, Identity and Modernity in Britain and the Empire 1660-1840* (Cambridge 2004), pp. 299-306 has set out many of the issues that a historian dealing with Gender issues must think of when examining the records (especially church records) of the Company. She argues that although much is hidden by the records the language used to describe women sets them apart from Europeans. She admits that it is from the 1770's that a tightening of restrictions against mixed-race couplings and her work is best applied to the period 1760-1840.

Year	1713-1715	1716-1720	1721-1725	1726-1730	1731-1735	1736-1740	1741-1745	1746-1748	Average per year
Christenings	16	10	22	50	68	53	37	10	7.6
Marriages	14	5	35	43	64	40	22	11	6.69

Table 2: Total numbers of marriages and christenings Calcutta 1713-1748[216]

Thomas Braddyll had first arrived in Calcutta on 19 November 1711 and started work in the export warehouse. By 1745 he had risen to the rank of President of Calcutta. His career in India spanned thirty-four years and when he decided to quit the Company's service in 1745 he sailed back to Europe having spent the majority of his adult life in India.[217] Though Braddyll was one of the longest serving members of the Council, long service was certainly normal in most cases of Council membership. However, Søren Mentz has suggested, that the average stay in Madras for a merchant was only around four to six years.[218] This is not supported from looking at the records of Company servants in Calcutta. A sample of five different Council compositions over the sixty years of the archival data produces thirty-three different members of Council.[219] Of those thirty-three men only six had been in India for less than ten years. Of those six men, two - Jacob Williamson and John Deane - served in India for nineteen and twenty-nine years past the point at which they appear in the sample. Later in 1733 the President and Council rejected the forced promotion of John Hinde to the Council as his ten years of service was not as much as several men who had been serving in Bengal for ten to fifteen years.[220] This suggests that seniority and longevity were features expected in Council members and valued in Company servants.[221] Longevity extended further down the

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[216] These figures come from the Bengal register of births deaths and marriages which is available in the British Library IOR N/1/1 Bengal Births, Deaths and Marriages 1713-1754. It records all the Protestant marriages and christenings within the colony. 1724, 1726 and 1741 were unreadable and not included.

[217] He first appears in the personnel register of 1711 BL IOR CPC P/1/2 and was last recorded in the September 1745 register BL IOR CPC P/1/17.

[218] Søren Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant*, p. 79.

[219] The years sampled were 1690, 1699, 1711, 1720 and 1731. These terms of service are determined by their first appearance in India, their length of time on the Council then their last mention in the registers. All of this data is available from cross referencing the personnel registers in the Factory Records G series and the Public Consultations P series.

[220] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 August 1733.

[221] Makepeace Margaret, *The East India Company's London Workers: Management of the warehouse labourers, 1800-1858* (Woodbridge 2010), pp. 140-1 has shown how longevity and job security were features found throughout the employment structures of Company servants back in Britain. The fact this extended only to the Company elite in Calcutta suggests that the Company wished to segregate themselves from non-Company Europeans.

command chain and less senior Company servants can be found in these registers many years after their first appearance. The importance of seniority can be seen in the way that Company servants justified and argued about promotion within the Company ranks. There are several examples of brief arguments between Company men where seniority was the main tool to resolve such arguments as per Company policy.[222] Longevity of service amongst the Company elite produced a tightly knit and stable core. Such a core group was essential to the stability and management of the colony and assisted the Company in managing the colony. The available evidence fits together to highlight that the European community in India was not temporary but was able through the transmission of European ideas, values and social structures to permanently settle in Calcutta.

Part 2: Death, class and occupation

Most of the physical evidence of the early period before 1750 has not survived over the centuries. The exception to this is the Job Charnock mausoleum built around 1695 by his son-in-law Charles Eyre. The monument to Charnock has been added to by many other inhabitants of the city from that early period.[223] Stone markers tell of the men and women who were buried in the church grounds near the city's founder. This reminds us that the story to be told about Calcutta and its inhabitants is as much about death as about life. Just as historians have failed to analyse fully the lives of Calcutta's inhabitants, they have provided little analysis of the role of death on the success of the settlement. We must therefore consider the instrumental role of death in shaping the colony and in highlighting links and relationships amongst the community.

One of the most common ways that death showed how the community interacted was through the use of wills. When William White died he asked that money and mourning rings should be given to his sister Elizabeth King and his niece who were resident in Calcutta. As an unmarried man, he wanted his estate to go to his niece. His next request was to be buried in the same tomb as his brother Jonathon White.[224] William White's will is not atypical of the average will available in the records nor is it different from British wills. Many provided gifts to relatives and provision for wives and children whilst the executors and witnesses were trusted friends and business partners. This was standard practice in Europe and the replication of this behaviour in Bengal supported the social ties within the European community. Though only one volume of the wills recorded by the

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[222] P.J. Marshall, 'The British State Overseas', in Bob Moore and Henk Van Nierop (eds.) *Colonial Empires Compared: Britain and the Netherlands, 1750-1850* (Aldershot, 2003), p. 176. The Company recorded several disputes about promotions happening outside of the seniority arrangement for example BL IOR CPC P/1/3 February 1715 where the President objected to the Company Directors promoting a man out of turn.

[223] This aspect has been explored by Travers, 'Death and the Nabob', pp. 89-97.

[224] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 June 1710.

Mayor's Court survives they show some trends and insights into the lives and relationships within Calcutta. In the available five year period 1727-1733, of the fifty-three wills recorded by the Mayor's Court, twenty-four had evidence of families, explicitly mentioning legacies to be given to wives and offspring.[225] For example, Samuel Blount who died in October 1711 left his estate to his wife and children, his wife to receive 15,000 rupees and each of his children 32,000 rupees.[226] Interestingly these wives were predominantly European women; there is little evidence of Anglo-Indian sexual relationships amongst the elite which became much more common after 1750.[227] These women were also resident in Bengal as wills normally mention whether the legatee lived in Europe or elsewhere in India to assist in the transmission of the estate. The provision for women in rupees (European gifts were recorded in pounds) combined with the evidence of marriage and childbirth suggests that women did stay in the colony and that references to women were not automatically 'Portuguese' or Indian women.

Wills were also used to control European relationships. The wills of some poorer members of the community threatened to withhold legacies if a spouse or child married a person not approved of by the executors such as a catholic or non-Englishman.[228] Similar conditions were not found amongst Company servants' wills, either suggesting that for the elite, marriage in our period was naturally assumed to occur between Europeans or that poorer Europeans feared that their legacies would be wasted by their surviving family. The desire to maintain community homogeneity and bonds can be seen in another common feature of wills. Many left instructions to leave money to the church and local charity school.[229] Wills provide evidence of the idea that communal interaction and trust was important for maintaining community within the colony. One of the features of wills is that they show the links between members of the community and thus

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[225] The volume of wills recorded by the Mayor's court can be found in BL IOR MCR P/154/40.

[226] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 October 1711.

[227] Ghosh, *Sex and the Family*, p. 40, suggests that between 1780 and 1785 1/3 of wills reference a native concubine or companion. Many Company men shipped their wives to India to live with them. If the Company men died their wives would often remarry.

[228] For example BL IOR CPC P/1/5 August 1724 Robert Hill, pilot stipulated that if either his daughter or wife marry a non-Englishman they were to not receive their share in his estate. Other examples of this form of control can be found at BL IOR CPC P/1/6 July 1726. and BL IOR MCR P/154/40. Richard Wall, 'Bequests to widows and their property in early modern England', *History of the Family*, 15 (2010), p. 222 supports this mechanism as a feature of some wills in Britain but also goes into greater detail about how property, goods, cash and other items were bequeathed.

[229] For example Elias Bates a mariner left 800 rupees to the church in 1730 and Isaac Berkley in July 1720 gave 2000 rupees for the founding of a school. BL IOR MCR P/154/40 and BL IOR CPC P/1/4 respectively.

highlight some of the networks of trust and patronage within the European elite in Calcutta.[230] Wealth and family would stay in the colony amongst the small core European population rather than being leeched away by Catholics, Indians and others who did not share the values of the Company merchants. This further compounds the idea that the colony ensured the European colonists could live lives that were similar to their experience of communities in Europe.

Mark Harrison has tried to challenge the later Victorian belief that India was a place of high mortality. He points out that before 1760 many commentators argued that living in India was actually more healthy for a European, citing the opinions of famed scientist Robert Boyle and interestingly Captain Alexander Hamilton. Hamilton described areas north of Bengal as 'very healthful and fruitful' which contradicts his more frequently cited statement about Calcutta as a sickly place. In fact many Company men would travel to other parts of Bengal for the benefit of their health and shows that the elite of the colony adapted to their conditions.[231] The key to surviving in India was to 'live in harmony with their new surroundings.[232] At no point did the Company servants write in the records that operations were threatened by a personnel shortage or that sickness threatened trade, surely key pieces of information for the London Directors. Apart from temporary shortages in soldier or sailor employment the Company's position was never threatened by unsustainable death rates whilst soldier and sailor shortages were frequently commented upon. Such a silence in this regard is not convincing enough on its own but does suggest, however, that we should look elsewhere to identify the effect of death on the colony.

The oft quoted account by Captain Alexander Hamilton about death in Calcutta was recorded in his memoirs about his life in the East. Hamilton was a private merchant who lived and worked in Calcutta from at least the 1690s till around 1723. The memoirs have been used by historians as the primary evidence of death and mortality in the colony. He wrote that,

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[230] Natasha Glaisyer, 'Networking: Trade and Exchange in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire', *Historical Journal*, 47, (2004), pp. 451-476 highlights the many ways that the British Empire was linked to the 'small island' including looking at trust as central to commercial activity especially money lending. Peter Mathias, 'Risk, Credit and Kinship in early modern enterprise' in John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan (eds.) *The Modern Atlantic Economy* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 16 argues that kinship and face to face interaction was central to minimising risk amongst merchants. This is a mechanism that was central to the survival of the European community in Calcutta and also in maintaining the power and authority of its Company elite.

[231] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 March 1709 Ralph Sheldon and William Bugden went downriver to improve their health. The year after once the European shipping had gone the Council en masse went hunting to take in the air and for recreation BL IOR CPC P/1/2 March 1710.

[232] Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions,* pp. 26-44.

the Company has a pretty good hospital at Calcutta – where many in to undergo the penance of physick, but few come out to give account of its operation...one year, I was there and there were reckoned in August to be about 1,200 English, some military, some servants to the Company, some private merchants residing in the town and some seamen belonging to the shipping at the town, and before the beginning of January there were 460 burials registered with the clerks book of mortality.[233]

Although such a description paints a bleak picture regarding life in Calcutta, Hamilton does not provide the only evidence of mortality in the colony. Seasonal mortality due to an influx of malnourished and sick European sailors peaked in August. Such an influx of potentially mortally ill men could see the European population almost double depending on the numbers of ships in port that year. The death rate also peaked around that time. The records kept for the Company give us insight into how typical Hamilton's account was. Most importantly, the burial records give the occupation of the deceased which allows us to identify mortality rates within the different social and economic groups. Collecting this data together produces the following information about deaths of Europeans in the colony:

Year	1713-1715	1716-1720	1721-1725	1726-1730	1731-1735	1736-1740	1741-1745	1746-1750	Total or average per year
Total number of deaths (yearly average in brackets)	128 (42.66)	337 (65.8)	210 (42)	331 (66.2)	349 (69.8)	255 (51)	359 (71.8)	215 (111.6)	64.03
Number of Company Servants deaths (yearly average in brackets)	20 (6.66)	43 (8.6)	20 (4)	37 (7.4)	25 (5)	14 (2.8)	35 (7)	28 (9.33)	6
% of average yearly deaths made up of Company men	15.61	13.07	9.52	11.18	7.16	5.49	9.75	8.36	9.62

Table 3: Mortality in Calcutta 1713-1750[234]

[233] Originally printed in Hamilton, *A New Account of the East Indies*, pp. 5-6. It has been used by Sykes, *Calcutta through British Eyes,* pp. 142-3, Wilson, *the Early Annals,* Vol. 1, p. 214, and Travers, 'Death and the Nabob', p. 87, as evidence for high mortality in the colony.

[234] These figures come from BL IOR N/1/1 Bengal Births, Deaths, and Marriages 1713-1754. The occupation of each person was recorded but 1724, 1726 and 1741 were unreadable and not included.

These figures suggest that the total number of deaths varied between a low of 42 per year on average and a high of 111.6 at its height. This differs from Hamilton's evaluation and as we can determine occupation we can also pinpoint how much the Company elite were a part of these numbers. The Company elite (the Council, ships captains, merchants and auxiliary staff) were a decreasing proportion of those dying in the colony. This coincided with the idea of seasoning: that survival of the first fever or illness in India would allow the European body to adjust to the Indian climate.[235] In fact the average rate of death of Company elite groups (which includes ships Captains and some other miscellaneous Company servants not included in the register of Company servants) was around six people a year which was easily sustainable and the population was maintained through new recruits brought each new shipping season. Looking at the bigger picture, if we take Marshall's estimate of a European population of around 1000 as a good low end estimate, the total death rate was around 6.4 percent a year. This is a manageable rate of loss and helps to revise the hyperbole in Hamilton's account of Calcutta as a place of death.[236] Rather it suggests a stable European elite population that was well suited to, adapted to and capable of surviving, their time in Bengal.

In his description Hamilton was discussing the hospital owned by the Company built in 1707 and used primarily for its soldiers and sailors.[237] For these groups it is much easier to see Calcutta as the sickly death-trap. A fact appreciated by the President and Council when they decided to build a barracks to house the soldiers of the colony, because 'if they lodge about the town as usually which creates sickness and other inconveniencies to themselves and others'.[238] This suggests that the elite European population saw mortality as Hamilton understood it to be: an attribute of the poorer European population. Looking at the death records we can see that these

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[235] Harrison, *Climates and Constitutions*, pp. 44-45.

[236] Mary J. Dobson, *Contours of Death and Disease in Early Modern England* (Cambridge, 1997), p. 227 looks at mortality across a range of urban places in the counties surrounding London in eighteenth and seventeenth century. She supports the traditional viewpoint that cities were 'demographic drains' that could generate excessive mortality excesses. Allan Sharlin, 'Natural Decrease in Early Modern Cities: A Reconsideration', *Past & Present*, No. 79 (1978), pp. 127 has argued that immigrant mortality contributed to death rates but their illegitimate children did not contribute to birth records and that looking at mortality in terms of just raw immigration does not give the whole picture.

[237] Wilson, *Early Annals* Vol.1, p. 214. Geoffrey L. Hudson, 'Internal Influences in the Making of the English Military Hospital: The Early-Eighteenth-Century Greenwich' in Geoffrey L. Hudson, (ed.), *British Military and Naval Medicine, 1600-1830* (New York, 2007), p. 253-272 gives a good description of the methods and care for sailors. Also Patricia Kathleen Crimmin, 'British Naval Health, 1700-1800: Improvement over Time?' in Geoffrey L. Hudson, (ed.), *British Military and Naval Medicine, 1600-1830* (New York, 2007), pp. 183-200.

[238] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 February 1710.

groups were the most vulnerable to the impact of disease. As the table below shows, soldiers and sailors made up between 65 and 75 percent of total deaths in the records.

Year	1713-1715	1716-1720	1721-1725	1726-1730	1731-1735	1736-1740	1741-1745	1746-1748
# of deaths	128	337	210	331	349	255	359	215
# of soldier and sailor deaths	86	223	152	232	234	154	255	166
Soldier and sailor deaths as percentage of total deaths (%)	67.19	66.17	72.38	70.09	67.05	60.39	71.03	77.21

Table 4: Soldier and sailor deaths as a percentage of total deaths 1713-1748[239]

The fact that soldiers and sailors made up such a large proportion of the deaths in Calcutta is primarily due to their position as the biggest occupational groups within the European population. However, it was the lifestyle and work environments of soldiers and sailors that made them most vulnerable. Lengthy periods at sea and on the river coupled with lower wages, alcohol abuse and poor accommodation all contributed to mortality in these groups.[240] Many ships captains complained that they did not have the crews available to sail their ships following death and desertion whilst in port. By the 1730s the situation had become so bad that the Company issued orders each year for the hunting down of deserted sailors.[241] A simple analysis of the burial records suggests that those living in Calcutta experienced variable rates of mortality, most notably between the core elite and maritime and military personnel. This is important because when we consider the

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[239] These figures are based upon the BL IOR N/1/1 Bengal Births, Deaths and Marriages 1713-1754. 1724, 1726 and 1741 were unreadable and not included.

[240] P.T. Nair, *Calcutta in the Eighteenth Century* (Calcutta, 1984), p. 95 gives the account of James Mitchell who came to Calcutta in 1748 and he wrote that after landing ashore after a long voyage sailors would create 'a scene of riot and debauchery' and he describes how immediately four young midshipmen came down with illness and one died. Paul E. Kopperman, '"The Cheapest Pay": Alcohol Abuse in the Eighteenth-Century British Army', *Journal of Military History*, 60, (1996), pp. 445-470 has explored similar themes about soldiers lifestyles as a factor in their mortality.

[241] BL IOR CPC P/1/11 August 1735.

growth of the colony the stability of the Company elite was a useful factor in explaining how the colony grew as it did.[242]

       To test the claim of Calcutta as place of sustainable mortality we should consider how typical it was in comparison to other colonial experiences. Madras had been acquired nearly fifty years previously to Calcutta and was a well established colony. Like Calcutta it was a vital port for Company trade and the Company governed those that lived there through a President and Council.[243] Many of the men who lived in Calcutta had Madras friends and business acquaintances and the two Councils communicated regularly. In terms of size, Calcutta and Madras were broadly comparable with both colonies having similar numbers of merchants, women and soldiers (Madras had about one to two hundred merchants, thirty to forty women and a few hundred soldiers) whilst the list of Company servants is roughly similar in size.[244] Like Calcutta the births, deaths and marriage records for Madras also survive which allows us to see a basic picture of how typical Calcutta was.[245] Comparing the two colonies side by side shows that they had broadly comparable numbers of deaths. Although Calcutta had a higher mortality rate than Madras, it was not significantly more deadly as a place. Neither place appears to have experienced epidemics or other surges in death rates. The graph below shows the results of this comparison.

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[242] The stability of the urban elite over the immigrant population is typical of many urban places as Sharlin, 'Natural Decrease', pp. 126-138, argues. Dobson, *Contours of Death*, p. 127, reminds us that the reasons for this remain individual for each place and require more accurate examination of the statistics across different categories such as social class and origin.

[243] Susan M. Nield, 'Colonial Urbanism: The Development of Madras City in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 13, (1979), pp. 217-246 provides a broad sweep of Madras's urbanisation arguing that Madras developed due to the quantity of its multiple villages that fell under the influence of the Company men who presided over the development of a black and white town.

[244] Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant*, p. 78.

[245] BL IOR N/2/1 Madras Births, Deaths and Marriages 1698-1788.
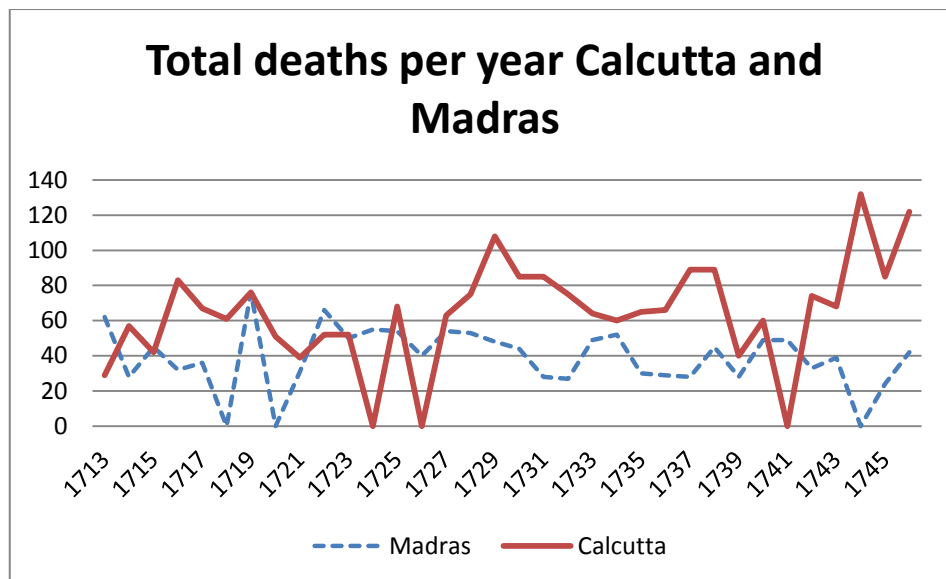
Figure 3: Yearly deaths Calcutta compared to Madras 1713-1745[246]

Calcutta's death rates were comparable to those in Madras until the early 1740s when Madras came under French control and the British population was expelled. This suggests that that Calcutta at least in comparison to other older and well established Company towns was not significantly more dangerous to its colonists. The Madras records, unlike the Calcutta records, do not document the occupation of the deceased and it is difficult to identify any occupational differences between the two settlements. However, the growth and success showed by both colonies does suggest that each colony was able to sustain its population and that the mortality in each settlement did not destabilise commercial operations.

The years 1727 to 1730 had been bad years in Britain for many people. In many places the number of names recorded in the register of deaths rose by a third.[247] The deaths were the result of disease and poor harvests. In these years, a particularly bad malaria epidemic had swept through many towns in the South East of England and killed many of those who plied the waterways of the local area.[248] Even in the early eighteenth century seasonal outbreaks of disease still had an impact upon lives in Britain which suggests that seasonal mortality was a common experience both in Europe and India. High mortality rates in Britain were one of the factors along with fertility and migration that kept population growth in check.[249] Mortality was cyclical with particularly bad

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[246]Calcutta data is from the IOR N/1/1 Calcutta Births, Deaths and Marriages 1713-1754 and the Madras data is from N/2/1 Madras Births, Deaths and Marriages 1698-1788.

[247] Ralph Houlbrooke, 'The Age of Decency: 1660-1760' in Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings (eds.) *Death in England an Illustrated History* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 174-8.

[248] Houlbrooke, 'The Age of Decency', p. 178, also Dobson, *Contours of Death*, p. 287-368 explores the changes in mortality due to malaria and marshes during the early modern period.

[249] Houlbrooke, 'The Age of Decency', pp. 174-8.

times seeing it rise to thirty percent above normal levels. Lower peaks of around ten percent increase in death rates were not uncommon.[250] The impact of death in London has been studied very thoroughly in part due to the availability of the Bills of Mortality.[251] There are several features of mortality in Calcutta that are similar to London. In particular, certain groups were more vulnerable: new arrivals and the labouring poor displayed higher mortality rates. Lifestyle, wealth and class were clearly significant factors in mortality. This is not entirely surprising but is useful in explaining the difference in death rates between the Company elite and the European population of the colony who were separate along lines of lifestyle, wealth and class as they were in London.

Mortality amongst the European elite in Calcutta stood at around six percent which was entirely countered by new immigration. Amongst all these examples of death and instability in other colonies, Calcutta did not experience the same problems and maintained its population by rather modest immigration of perhaps a dozen or so people per year.[252] The Company suffered no shortages of servants in the period and when a quick appointment was needed the Council was often able to hire non-Company people from the Company's European ships.[253] For example they hired Philip Richardson in 1706 for three years as a surgeon.[254] This extended to the military population of the town. There was always a ready surplus of men who had either been sent by the Company or had stayed in Calcutta once their ships had returned to Europe. They could be employed as soldiers and the muster rolls make clear that these seasonally hired soldiers were increasingly European Protestants rather than mixed race 'Portuguese' Catholics or Indian troops.[255] By 1721 around a quarter of each company of soldiers was labelled as Portuguese where before that

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[250] Houlbrooke, 'The Age of Decency', pp. 174-8.

[251] Robert Woods, 'Mortality in eighteenth-century London: a new look at the Bills', *Local Population Studies,* 77 (2006), pp. 12-23 has provided a recent commentary on mortality in London focussing specifically on the Bills of Mortality. John Landers, *Death and the Metropolis: Studies in the Demographic History of London 1630-1830* (Cambridge, 1993), p. 89 has applied a thorough statistical approach to the Bills of Mortality and suggests that mortality in London was cyclical and sustained by migration and pools of endemic disease. Gill Newton, 'Infant Mortality Variations, Feeding Practices and Social Status in London between 1550 and 1750' *Social History of Medicine*, Vol. 24, No. 2 (2011), p. 265 provides another case study exploring the relationship between mortality and migration.

[252] C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals,* Vol. 2 Part 1, pp. 341-344, gives lists of those who booked passage aboard Company ships and these would have been the independent elite that sustained Calcutta.

[253] When the Company realised that mortality amongst the new sailors was too high they hired an additional surgeon to look after the sick. BL IOR CPC P/1/1 August 1705.

[254] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 December 1706.

[255] The muster rolls were recorded monthly in the Public Consultations from around June 1713 BL IOR CPC P/1/2 and split the number of soldiers available by company, rank and also their status (Europeans were a distinct category from 'Portuguese' mixed-race soldiers).

time it was almost half. In 1726 no more than around ten percent of the five hundred or so soldiers employed were Portuguese and by 1732 no Portuguese soldiers were employed suggesting an increase in the Company's capacity to fill and maintain their ranks with European soldiers. This suggests that Calcutta was not as damaging to the lives of its inhabitants as many other fatal and unstable places and a large unattached pool of European men lived in the colony. This is not to say that Calcutta was a place of good health, but rather that as a factor in limiting the growth of the colony, high mortality amongst the European population did not impact upon the operation and growth of the colony especially amongst the European elite.

Part 3: A Connected Community

We have so far explored the general trends in the lives and deaths of those living in Calcutta. However, we should also try and understand how Europeans integrated within the colony and the methods used to do so. Official records only tell us so much of the actual relationships between members of the colony. We need to look at the several personal accounts and surviving correspondence of those who lived in Calcutta. Although there are not many, those that do provide some excellent insights that help us to understand community interaction in Calcutta.

One important feature that is discussed in personal accounts is the experience of first arriving in India. One surviving letter from 1727 provides a unique insight into the routine and importance of connections in living in the India. Judith Weston described her experience of landing in Madras on the way to Bengal. After landing in Madras, Weston was greeted onshore by a senior Company servant. Weston was then taken to meet the President and her description of the exchange between them is recorded in detail. Her description is too long to reproduce in full but the most appropriate passages following her discussion with the President are reproduced below:

> The governor was seated in a large hall and when he had saluted me he asked me (I thought in a gruff manner) for the letters I had brought him.
>
> 'Letters Sir' said I
>
> 'Yes Letters' he says
>
> I mean letters of communication that your friend ---- in England have wrote to me of you.
>
> Recommendation thinks I, what does he mean by that. With a humble curtsie I assured him I had none at which he laughed and turned my ignorant friends ---- into ridicule for were I

to send out a young woman experience has taught me that she ought to have a letter from proper people to every governor. [256]

This exchange reveals an important feature of travelling to the India for women. Firstly, that integration into the European community was through the use of letters of introduction. Although this is unlikely to have been unique to the Company community in India, the emphasis that the Governor placed on these letters suggests that they were essential tools in how the Company managed new arrivals. In two cases the Calcutta Council sent women back to England because they had no support or connections in the colony and there was a risk that they would become a burden upon the community. One of these cases involved Hannah Pikes who not having friends that could support her was returned to England without paying the passage lest she 'become a burden to this place or be under extreme necessity'.[257] The expectation with regard to Pikes and Weston was that women were to be equipped to travel effectively and safely but also that once arrived in Calcutta the woman was to become integrated into the European community. Letters therefore were a practical solution and protection for women travellers.

Judith Weston travelled to Bengal with several other women. She struck up a friendship with one of these women a Miss Russell. Russell was the niece of the then President of Calcutta Robert Frankland. However like Miss Weston, Russell had sailed to India without letters of recommendation. Weston had been brought up to see the President of Madras because her brother had visited a few months before. If he had not, Weston would have had to fend for herself in Madras as Russell was forced to. Miss Russell arranged her own accommodation in a punch house, a rather unseemly place for a young well-to-do lady.[258] Weston observed that she 'was very sorry for [her situation] and wondered that their cousins attorney had not taken more care of them that as their father Governor of Fort William had not wrote to him he thought he had nothing to do with

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[256] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur B162, 'Account by Judith Weston, later Mrs John Fullerton, of a voyage to Madras in the East Indiaman `Stretham' under Capt George Westcott, East India Company commander 1720-47, to join her brother William Weston', fols. 6-7

[257] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 February 1714. Whilst the other case was BL IOR CPC P/1/3 January 1716 involving Mary Hubbard who was to be supported until she could be sent back to England.

[258] Karen Harvey, 'Barbarity in a Teacup? Punch, Domesticity and Gender in the Eighteenth Century' *Journal of Design History*, Vol. 21 (2008), pp. 205-221, has explored the gendered divisions between punch use and other drinks such as tea. She has looked at how punch contrasted with tea drinking as a masculine drink however, British based punch houses were not specifically divided based upon social status and punch was enjoyed by many different groups. The same is not apparent in Calcutta as punch was sold and drank amongst the poor of the colony whilst the elite are often recorded buying and trading Madeira wine eg. C.R. Wilson, *Early Annals,* Vol. 2 Part 1, p.196 records the sale of the stores of wine at auction.

them.'[259] Thus the family name alone did not carry weight enough to replace letters. Weston also remarked in her account upon what the President at Madras said about the failure to have suitable letters:

> they [travelling women] generally are loaded with ridiculous ones [letters] to private persons who are very unfit to serve them, I mean bachelors. I will leave any one to judge how these letters of recommendation are received by men given up to business and pleasure without a nimble woman belonging to them.[260]

This suggests that the letters were in theory designed to protect the honour and status of women carrying them. Russell, who slept at the punch house was not staying somewhere suitable for her station and risked her safety and reputation.[261] The letters were not foolproof in this regard though as the President of Madras observed. Although women sometimes arrived burdened with many letters the lack of suitable vetting or misplaced trust may also have put the women at risk of unsuitable male attention. Additionally, a lack of judgement or knowledge of whom to trust if they had multiple contacts might result in increased risk. However, the expectation expressed by the President and echoed by Weston was that connections mattered and accessing the right people made settling in India much easier.

Once settled in Calcutta, Judith Weston married John Fullerton around 1734. The correspondence recorded in John Fullerton's letter book shows a similar use of letters of introduction. Letters served an additional purpose for men such as Fullerton who had come to Calcutta as merchants. Fullerton's uncle wrote several letters to various Company men he was acquainted with to look after John Fullerton as he established himself in India.[262] This letter is

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[259] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur B162, 'Account by Judith Weston, later Mrs John Fullerton, of a voyage to Madras in the East Indiaman `Stretham' under Capt George Westcott, East India Company commander 1720-47, to join her brother William Weston'. fol. 9.

[260] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur B162 'Account by Judith Weston, later Mrs John Fullerton, of a voyage to Madras in the East Indiaman `Stretham' under Capt George Westcott, East India Company commander 1720-47, to join her brother William Weston'. fols. 6-7.

[261] Garthine Walker, 'Expanding the Boundaries of Female Honour in Early Modern England', *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Sixth Series, Vol. 6 (1996), p. 240 has suggested that female honour and reputation was as much about conduct as well as place. Female honour was contested in public spaces and she specifically mentions public houses as spaces of conflict. Amanda Vickery, *Behind Closed Doors: At Home in Georgian England* (London, 2009), p. 60 argues that for men such places were home away from home and intrinsic to their routines. Russell was therefore encroaching upon a very male environment that was only suitable for her to inhabit if she was a servant or prostitute thus tarnishing her status.

[262] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur D.602, 1 unnumbered volume, Letter book of John Fullerton, John Fullerton to Samuel Court', December 1734.

interesting because it establishes John Fullerton as a person under the patronage of his uncle. The mention of his employment by the Company also establishes his trustworthiness. The letter was written to three separate contacts of Fullerton's uncle and was a tool to facilitate and ensure Fullerton's integration into commercial life. The support of Fullerton's uncle is reaffirmed in a letter to his nephew which states:

> I hope this will find you safe arrived at Bengal and in a good health. No Company's servants came out this year and you may be assured of my best endeavours to serve you. Pray be observant of whatever my broker William enjoins you either on point of business or behaviour to whom I have wrote...
> I have lately heard from Scotland that your parents and family are well as is Dr Fullerton and his wife. My wife sends her love and has sent in my brokers box some things for you, I wish you health, welfare and prosperity, and you may be always assured that I'll neglect no part to serve you. [263]

Fullerton's uncle was more than just the broker for his private trade remittances to Britain. He was able to provide information on Company affairs and also to continue supporting his nephew in India sending items requested aboard Company ships. The recipients of these letters were established Company servants such as Samuel Court, John Wederburn, William Barwell and Thomas Coales.[264] The relationship between John and his uncle shows that arranging a support network for new arrivals was intended to help the new arrival to settle quickly but also to introduce and vouch for their character and thus to integrate them into life in the community.

Another example of strong community connections is demonstrated by the success of the merchant Robert Nightingale. Arriving in Bengal in 1699 he used his connections to build a fortune before returning to London in 1709.[265] Like Fullerton, he used his connections in Europe (the London broker Francis Chamberlain), to support his reputation and to encourage others to trade with him. However, he differed from Fullerton in that his introduction to commerce in India allowed him to trade expansively across the various Company colonies. Initially he worked with ships captains and others based upon the recommendations of Chamberlain. Once he was trusted and considered reliable, Nightingale began to expand the scope and calibre of his commercial partners. He became a close trade partner of Thomas Pitt the Governor of Madras, Ralph Sheldon a member of the Calcutta Council and later the French Chardin merchant family.[266] Nightingale made a significant fortune and following ten years in India he returned to England.[267] However, the

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[263] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur D.602, Robert Fullerton to John Fullerton 1733.

[264] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur D.602, Robert Fullerton to William Barwell, Robert Fullerton to Francis Wederburn and Robert Fullerton to Thomas Coales, 1733.

[265] Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant,* p. 102.

[266] Lee Saxe, 'Fortune's Tangled Web', p. 192.

[267] Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant,* p. 102

importance of Nightingale's story is not the money that he made but that his integration within the community was not limited to just those relationships with merchants in Calcutta. Merchants would have regularly worked with other merchants in the various colonies in India. Therefore Nightingale is representative of the way that good commercial connections from Europe were linked into the whole Company colonial network. Life in India was continental in scope for many of the most successful and powerful men from Europe.

Such personal connections were not just limited to surviving the transition to India but also were useful in the return journey. Those who settled in India often maintained connections with people that survived once they had returned to Britain.[268] For example John Gray a Company surgeon for many years still maintained connections with many ex-Calcuttans both in Britain and Bengal including the Westons, Mary Rainbow the wife of a long serving Company pilot, Mrs Beard the wife of old Company president John Beard and his own son George now living in Calcutta.[269] In another case, a Miss Fitzackerley came to England with her husband whom she had married in Calcutta, but after he died in Bristol she returned to Calcutta to find a new husband. As James Mitchell who recorded her story said:

> Miss Fitzackerly an agreeable Girl of a respectable family was Passenger (then about 16 years of age) in one of the Ships we convoyed from England for Bengal where she was to be under the care of Lady Russell at Calcutta her aunt.[270]

Such examples show both the strength of the relationships between inhabitants of the colony but also how good associations with the right people, as in the case of Miss Fitzackerly, made the whole transition to life in Bengal much easier to accomplish.

The experience of creating a life in Bengal can be seen through the stories of those that came to India and the accounts and descriptions of their encounters. We see the importance of personal connections in ensuring rapid assimilation into the European elite. Home connections remained important and letters and presents to family and contacts in Europe helped to support Europeans overseas. Such support helped new arrivals to succeed in living overseas whilst also allowing patrons and family to ensure success and continue their correspondence and support. The elite community in Calcutta was formed through these deep connections between inhabitants and

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[268] This is the strength of the research of Nair and Wilson who both comment upon the connections Company servants made both abroad and once back in Britain. For example see Nair, *Calcutta in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 1-2 and Wilson, *The Early Annals, Vol.2 pt.2*, pp. 323-335. More recent studies of our period tend to focus upon well known individuals such as Robert Orme, for example Sinharaja Tammita Delgoda, '"Nabob, Historian and Orientalist." Robert Orme: The Life and Career of an East India Company Servant (1728–1801)', *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain & Ireland,* 2 (1992), pp. 363-376.

[269] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur D691 John Gray Surgeon, letter book.

[270] P.T. Nair, *Calcutta in the Eighteenth Century*, pp. 100-102.

old world contacts. The lives led by the Company men and women were made all the more stable and bearable through such interaction and shared experience.

Conclusion:

By examining the European population of Calcutta in more detail it sheds new light on previously neglected aspects of the colony's history. The idea that Calcutta should be considered as having only one type of inhabitant (a male Company servant) does not hold up to scrutiny. From looking at various archival sources we can see that the European population was identifiable along gender, class and racial lines. In addition this population was successful in remaining stable, in terms of its growth, length of service and the relationships that formed in the community. Finally, this population also utilised special tools and strategies to strengthen and create a community in Calcutta based upon European norms and relationships. Altogether this chapter argues that Calcutta was successful in part because of the resilience and adaptability of European population in the colony. This chapter challenges and rejects existing arguments by historians about the mortality of the colony and puts forward a new point of view based upon a range of both statistical and narrative source material.

Chapter 5: Calcutta's Institutions of Law and Governance

Fluttering above Fort William, the Union Flag was a constant reminder of the link the people of Calcutta had with Britain and also the source of the Company's authority.[271] Other replications of British life were also visible around the colony. Church bells called people for morning service, ships sat secured in the river full of goods from Europe and men entered and left the courthouse clutching stacks of papers to support their cases. The role of the Company President and Council was essential in maintaining these institutions, but the members of the Company were not the only people who had chosen to live in Bengal. All of these buildings and institutions were created by a variety of inhabitants. Structures that were essential to the community such as the church were a product of a petition by godly minded inhabitants, whilst the Mayor's Court was governed and operated by a mix of the European elite. Calcutta was inhabited by colonists all trying to make the most of life in Bengal but each with their own priorities and interests. To trace the development of Calcutta from a collection of small damp, ramshackle buildings to a colony with important urban infrastructures is complex and a story of competing interests.

Throughout this thesis the focus has been upon the actions of the Company merchants how they established themselves in Bengal despite problems and challenges. In particular, I have tried to identify how the Company elite played a defining role in the growth of the colony. It is important to look at the infrastructures of law and governance built by this elite and how other non-Company inhabitants also impacted upon the governance of the colony.[272] The actions of the colonists both Company and non-Company were based around ideas of personal gain, comfortable living, a more stable government or community. These expectations of 'good' management of the colony were not restricted to those living in Calcutta. In the first years after Calcutta was founded, the London based Company Directors tried to shape the early structure of power in their own image. Over the next

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[271] Some early maps of the colony show Union flags being flown from flagpoles and in August 1695 the Company paid 153 rupees for two new flags. There are no recorded opinions about the use of flags and symbols of identity in the archives but it does at the least show one of the ways the President and Council could mark the area under their influence. BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/2 August 1695 and BL Maps k.top.115.40 a plan of Calcutta and the adjacent country drawn in 1742.

[272] Non-Company influence in the colony can be seen for the later eighteenth-century in Marshall, 'The White Town of Calcutta' and Suresh Chandra Ghosh, *The British in Bengal: a Study of the British Society and Life in the Late Eighteenth Century* 1757-1800 (Leiden, 1970).

sixty years, many other ideas and institutions shaped the colony and its institutions of law and governance. What is noteworthy is how different ideas about the management of the colony life were transplanted and how they changed when influenced by and used in the Bengal setting. The role of the President and Council remained important, but just as important was how the Council reacted to the input of others when governing Calcutta.

How we treat the source material is vital in understanding how the President and Council governed the colony. Official sources were generated to provide evidence of the commercial activity of the Company men in Bengal and to satisfy the interests of the London Directors. The commercial records of the Calcutta Council tell us much about how they carried out business effectively in Bengal. However, the range of material available for analysis - Company records, Mayor's Court records, letters sent to Europe and even personal accounts - provide examples of change within the colony beyond the commercial interests of the Directors. The main type of source material is the Company's own records which describe changes in the colony and show how the President and Council governed the colony in their own manner. Other official records exist such as the Royal Charter for the founding the Mayor's Court and also letters from the elite about how they felt the colony should be run. Therefore, the balance between ideas of good governance from Europe and the Council's understanding or rejection of these ideas about the management of the colony can be investigated. The source material available provides a unique insight into the dynamics how European forms of government were changed by the users and managers of these governmental institutions in a colonial setting.

This chapter will argue that the Company elite both in London and in Calcutta had specific strategies that they would employ to create and then manage the institutions of government in the colony. There were constraints upon the Company in these areas which we will also explore. The Company elite from the earliest years would try to implement their vision of how the colony should be run. This would be based upon the primacy of Company authority, control over the inhabitants, of the urban space, and the requirement to manage costs. We will examine restraints on this vision including the reality of the political situation in India, limitations of the monopoly rights and finally the need for and reliance upon Indian intermediaries to project the Company's authority throughout the settlement. We will therefore see a mixed approach in how the President and Council governed the colony and a pragmatic response to the realities of life in Bengal and this will be reflected in the institutions of law and governance they created.

Part 1: Goldsborough and Eyre's Reforms

Questions of governance are central to discussions on urban place.[273] Therefore, we must look at how and why the Company elite governed the colony as they did and whether their attitudes changed over the period. Although large scale appraisals or audits of the colony's operation were rare, the early assessment of Sir John Goldsborough in the 1690s was a major influence upon how the colony grew. His brief time in Calcutta helped to restructure the Company hierarchy and to also enforce his particular idea of how the colony should be run. The Governor and later President were not mindless drones, but had their own visions for how they wished the colony to develop. We can therefore see how after the Goldsborough appraisal, other influences played a part in the development of the colony and how the President and Council defined their own ideas of good governance in the colony.

Sir John Goldsborough, 'Supervisor, Commissary General and Chief Governor of East India' was sent to India to 'inspect and govern in chief all the Company's forts, factors and factory's [*sic*], officers and soldiers'.[274] Originally he had been a ship's captain in charge of the Company ship *Bengal Merchant* and had been in Bengal during the Anglo-Mughal war 1686-1690. His title reflects the fact that whilst in India he was to direct the Indian colonies to match Company ambitions. He set sail with his wife in 1692 arriving at Madras in early December. Goldsborough spent around seven months in Madras, a month in Bombay and two months in Calcutta and his influence can be seen in these colonies also. He attempted to solve the problems present at Madras, such as resolving a longstanding conflict between Governor Elihu Yale and his Council and he was also critical of the poor nature of the fortifications at Fort St. George.[275] Restoring order in Madras shows the influence and criteria that Goldsborough used to assess the Company's colonial possessions. For Goldsborough it was essential to ensure the good running, management and protection of Company resources through effective leadership and suitable fortifications. This is important because as we shall see with his appraisal of Calcutta, there was a consistent approach in how he assessed each colony. The Directors felt that 'Sutanati [Calcutta] was a place that we think will least need your ocular inspection' whilst Job Charnock was still alive, thus suggesting that Calcutta following his death in 1692 would now need Goldsborough to ensure it continued as a viable colony.[276] Calcutta at the time was little bigger than many other small factories managed by

[273] Robert J. Morris, 'Governance: two centuries of urban growth' in Robert J. Morris and Richard H. Trainor (eds) *Urban Governance: Britain and Beyond since 1750* (Aldershot 2000), p.1.

[274] *Diary of William Hedges* Vol.II p. 156.

[275] Gordon Goodwin, 'Goldsborough, Sir John (*d.* 1693)', rev. T. H. Bowyer, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008.

[276] *Diary of William Hedges* Vol.II p. 124.

the Company. But the desire of the Company to have Goldsborough's attention following Charnock's death shows both its potential as a developing colony and also the importance of maintain strong Company authority there.

Once Goldsborough arrived in Calcutta he replicated the strategy he employed in Madras. However, he faced a different proposition to that of Madras. Calcutta was still in an embryonic state, it had an official factory building but Job Charnock's death had thrown up the questions of succession amongst the members of the Council. Goldsborough's remit remained the same and he carefully assessed the Company servants' capacity to carry out their jobs for the Company. What he found he recorded in a letter that he entrusted to his confidant Captain Dorril:

> I found the honourable servants in great disorder, and that everyone did that which seemed good in their own eyes as Captain Dorril had advised me in several letters to Madras to which reference your honours who were very happy importing Captain Dorril as second [of council] here by whose prudent carriage they thought he had some secret orders and power that bridled them very much in their disorder...[277]

This extract reveals several things about the arrival of Goldsborough. Firstly, it was the signal to the Company servants in Calcutta that things were about to change. Additionally, the instruction that Captain Dorril was to become second in the Council behind a new president (following Job Charnock's death) was an indictment of the capacity of the other Company servants' quality and behaviour. Furthermore, the suggestion was that Goldsborough was representing what was good for Company interests rather than what the Calcuttan servants thought 'seemed good in their own eyes'.[278] Goldsborough immediately began assessing the situation in Calcutta and wrote that:

> [I] have begun with Captain Hill who was the Secretary and Captain of the Soldiers, who was allowed to keep a punch house and billiard table gratis when others paid for it and to make two false musters besides his pay for it and his house gave entertainment to all strangers whatsoever and he himself an open tempered man and debauched in his life who hath let his wife turn papist without control.[279]

This type of corruption and abuse perpetrated by Hill - the running of unregulated gambling, drinking and the embezzlement of Company funds - were things Goldsborough was highly critical of. However, he saw a bigger problem than just Hill's actions. In his assessment of the problems in the colony Goldsborough saw a weakness in the hierarchy whereby Charnock, who should have been in charge, deferred too often to Hill. The dominance of Hill was easy to fix by removing him

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[277] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[278] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[279] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

from the Company's employment and sending him back to Britain.[280] Goldsborough wanted to make an example of Hill but still retained the hope that 'by removing the worst of them from here to Madras. I shall be able to work a thorough reformation amongst the rest'.[281] The reform of Company servants in Calcutta was to happen at Madras a more established place more suitable for scrutiny and which would ensure good conduct. It was also where Goldsborough was to be permanently stationed and thus sending unruly servants to Madras placed them under his watchful eye. Goldsborough was not just critical of the lower ranked Company Servants. He was also concerned about the failings of Charnock's leadership. He wrote that although, 'Mr Charnock had what power your Honours could give him yet I am well informed would never have reformed this place'.[282] To Goldsborough, Charnock had abdicated his responsibility as Governor through idleness, and that for all his good in founding the colony, he had let it waste under his care.

There was another aspect to Goldsborough's visit to Calcutta. Following the death of Charnock and hearing the reports of Mr Ellis's failings as the new Governor, Goldsborough felt he had to be replaced. He described Ellis as:

> a man too easy and weak to stand alone in the head of such an affair as this is and of too loose a life to give any good example or governance this place, his weaknesses being too publicly known to all both English and Natives to have any respect or regard from them.[283]

Like Goldsborough's critique of Charnock, the complaints regarding Ellis suggest that a strong leading figure was essential in running the colony and wielding Company authority. Ellis's very public weakness was damaging to commercial dealings and confidence. His capacity to introduce reforms in the colony that brought it into line with Goldsborough's vision of a good Company settlement was questionable. As a result, Goldsborough suggested that the new Governor 'must be Mr Eyre who is [of] but little complaint if only they say he is very much for the country habit and customs'.[284] Goldsborough also recorded that the other Company merchants 'are so many that above half have business, so they become idle and study mischief and quarrels, but God willing I hope to put an end to that'.[285] Goldsborough emphasised both Ellis's weakness and the culture of idleness amongst the younger merchants because they contravened what Goldsborough believed

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[280] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[281] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[282] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[283] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[284] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173 Anglo-Indian interaction was not a slight against Eyre's character, however control and moderation were expected in this area. This was something that Captain Alexander Hamilton in his assessment of Charnock criticised, Nair, *Calcutta in the Seventeenth Century,* pp. 426.

[285] Nair, *Calcutta in the Seventeenth Century*, p. 92.

was needed for a good employee conduct. His function as the Commissary General means that he by default was representing the desires of the Company back in London. The position of Commissary General was to be the single representative of the Company's will in India and he was to travel around the different factories and bring them under control. It is telling that after landing in Madras, which was to be his base, he came first to Calcutta because of the concerns over the long term viability of the colony following Charnock's death. The role was to be above the various Councils and Courts of the different colonies and ensure that they acted in a way that was in keeping with the Company's commercial objectives. To this end, Goldsborough was attempting to create a colony that was self sufficient and capable of safely carrying out the Company's trade through the strong discipline and conduct of its servants.

Goldsborough did not just assess the Company hierarchy and structure but also reformed other elements within the colony. He seemed keen to reduce the military numbers which had become bloated due to Hill's influence. Goldsborough ordered that all but twenty were to be dismissed.[286] For Goldsborough an extensive military presence was not a necessary requirement for Calcutta and once the Factory was built there was even less need for a military force. This reflected anxiety, on behalf of the London Directors, regarding the burden of military forces upon Company profits.[287] Good management of a Company colony should not be dependent upon a large and expensive military force. Goldsborough went further, arguing that the soldiers 'are to have but 4 rupees each a month if they will not leave for it, they may go where they will for considering the plenty and cheapness of provisions this is great wages'.[288] In Goldsborough's opinion, soldiers were a plentiful resource that could be hired and released from Company service on a whim and for a small cost. Excessive military spending was to be avoided as those that did not take the Company wage were easily replaced. This suggests a very cost focused and commercial approach to how the colony should be governed and protected. Goldsborough felt that the military dominance of Hill had destabilised the position of the Governor in governing the colony on behalf of the Directors. His first task was therefore to return the primacy of the Council as the sole Company authority in

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[286] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[287] Josiah Child Governor of the Company had led an unsuccessful war against the Mughal Empire which had almost prevented Calcutta from ever being founded. Following the war the Company were much more cautious about military action in India. Marshall, 'The Portuguese in British Historiography', p. 41, has identified how Portuguese aggression and overexpansion led to their downfall in Asia. Bruce Watson, 'Fortifications and the "Idea" of Force', pp. 70-87. Bryant, 'Asymmetric Warfare', pp. 431-69, and Philip J. Stern, '"A Politie of Civill & Military Power": Political Thought and the Late Seventeenth-Century Foundations of the East India Company-State', *The Journal of British Studies,* 47 (2008), pp. 253-83, have explored the militarisation of the Company in the eighteenth century and tested the idea that military power either on land or at sea helped to promote Company interests.

[288] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

the colony. Reducing military numbers and removing Hill assisted the new Governor, Charles Eyre, in re-establishing the authority of the Company over the colony.

So far, Goldsborough's appraisal of Calcutta went along the same lines as his appraisal of Madras. There he resolved issues of governance and defence. When he came to Calcutta though, he was confronted with an additional problem. He found that Catholic missionaries had developed a hold over the Indian wives of Company men.[289] Goldsborough's response was both a personal reaction to the impact of the papist influence upon the population of Calcutta and also a reflection of his concern that property and thus the long term stability of the colony was under threat.[290] He wrote:

> One messenger an English man who had a black wife here, died at Hughly, and being a papist the padre prior made her will and gave to the church (that is to himself) her estate Mr Hartop was sent to demand those effects from him as being a silly English man who knew not his own right by our law.[291]

Goldsborough's concern over the impact of property acquisition was based around several issues. Firstly, it damaged the Company's ability to control the urban environment as the Catholic padres were outside Company control. Secondly, the property of the Company merchants, their houses, land and goods would potentially be lost on their death, as if left to their wives it might pass to the

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[289] Kenneth Ballhatchet, 'The East India Company and Roman Catholic Missionaries', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History,* 44, (April 1993), pp. 273-88, has tried to explore the Company's reaction to Catholic missionaries up to the nineteenth century. M.N Pearson, *The Portuguese in India: The New Cambridge History of India, Vol. 1* (Cambridge, 1987) pp. 116-130 describes the role of Catholicism in the Portuguese expansion in India and how it aided Portuguese integration into Indian society. Travers, 'Death and the Nabob', pp. 83-124, has explored how the religious divisions amongst the European population in Calcutta (Catholic, Armenian and Protestant) resulted in the building of a variety of burial grounds. Travers mentions the Goldsborough reaction to the Catholic priests in passing but does not explore the issue further. Despite Goldsborough's objections Catholic priests continued to come to Bengal for example the account of Father Matteo Rippa in Nair, *Calcutta in the Eighteenth Century,* pp. 53-79.

[290] C. Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in Eighteenth Century England, c.1714-80: a Political and Social Study* (Manchester, 1993), argues that anti-Catholic feeling can be identified in three parts; political distrust, theological disagreement and popular fear. All of these feelings seem prevalent in the language and context of Goldsborough's examination of Calcutta. J. Coffey, *Persecution and Toleration in Protestant England, 1558*-1689 (Harlow 2000), p.186 describes how Catholic missionary priests were particularly targeted in the 1670s as the root cause of Catholic trouble amongst the general population. This is a similar attitude to that shown by Goldsborough in his targeting of the Portuguese Catholic Priests.

[291] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

Catholic Church.[292] This became less of a problem as more British women came to Calcutta, but in the early years of Calcutta the amassing of property and wealth amongst the mercantile elite was essential to the long term sustainability of the colonial elite.[293] Finally, it shows how the Company servants carried their fear about the influence of Catholicism from Europe to Bengal.

Goldsborough therefore implemented several strategies for reducing the presence of the Catholic Church in Calcutta. Firstly, he tore down the Catholic mass house and expelled the papist priests from the colony. The destruction of the mass house was to make way for the building of a new factory building, a plan that symbolically reaffirmed the role of the Company as the sole authority in the colony. [294]

Another approach to removing Catholic influence in the colony can be seen in Goldsborough's reaction to the urban poor. He records that 'I have taken away two rupees a week that was given to the papist beggars which I take to be no better end'. This was a further assault upon the Catholic population of Calcutta that so offended the values of the Commissary General.[295] They were a burden upon the Company's resources, caused mischief around the town and contributed nothing to the building of the colony.

The response to vagrancy was not universal. Amongst those that had their alms reduced was a blind Englishman who had his allowance given to him by the Company reduced to four rupees a month, the same amount given to Company soldiers. In other cases the Council also reacted positively towards British charitable cases such as a cooper that lost his leg in 1704.[296] Although little is known about the blind Englishman or the disabled cooper it does suggest that alms for the poor were not always equal in their distribution and that there was a discriminatory element. This can again be seen in the way that widows such as Mrs Cary and Mrs King in 1710 received relief.[297] The President and Council explained that:

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[292] Many later wills protected against this eventuality by stipulating that widows would forfeit the money left to them if they married a Catholic. For example in 1726 Daniel Wilkinson's will made clear that his wife's allowance was to be invested otherwise it would be put into the Catholic Church. IOR P/1/6 July 1726.

[293] D. Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (Cambridge 2007), p. 14 suggests that Max Weber's belief in the 'state' controlling the limits of its territory as a defining feature of a successful state. The desire for Goldsborough to do the same shows a similar belief that controlling Calcutta's space ensured authority over the colony.

[294] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[295] BL IOR EIC Corr. E/3/50 pp. 169-173

[296] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 September 1704

[297] Widows would continue to be a source of charity for the Company as seen in BL IOR CPC P/1/8 January 1732 when a wife of a murdered soldier was to receive charity until she remarried.

> Mrs Cary Widow having made application to us for some relief being very poor and necessitous ordered the minister and church warden do pay her thirty rupees monthly for her subsistence and to Mrs King widow 20rs per month and for the future that they shall give no stated allowance or maintenance to any other poor person without the consent of the honourable president and Council.[298]

In this case, those who were considered part of the European community were well provided for. This differs from the approach to Catholic beggars who, rather than being brought into the Company fold and under the protection of the Anglican minister, were representative of a real burden upon the colony. Such measures show that Goldsborough's idea of a good colony was based around removing those that were the likeliest to be a burden which was a policy continued by successors. In addition, Goldsborough's provision of charity to the blind Englishman compared to his actions in dealing with other types of beggars and subversive elements, like the Catholics in the colony, suggests that British hegemony within Calcutta was an important factor for Goldsborough. Supporting foreign beggars over British inhabitants would not help in encouraging British sailors, soldiers, women and other potentially vulnerable (but essential people) to come to Calcutta.[299]

Unfortunately, Goldsborough was never able to see many of his ideas come to fruition as he died shortly after he arrived. The fulfilment of Goldsborough's wishes was left to Charles Eyre, the man appointed by Goldsborough to take over the colony. Eyre continued Goldsborough's measures and began by not repeating Charnock's mistake by keeping a closer eye on the more junior Company servants and making them live in the factory building. The Factory records state that 'besides they are not at the call or the eye of the agent, as youth ought to be, tis therefore ordered that half a dozen chambers of brick and mud be built on the north side of the compound for them to live in'.[300] This ensured the idleness that had crept into the Company servants was not allowed to return. Eyre also acted upon Goldsborough's suggestion of building the Fort. This was begun in 1696 following the granting of permission from the Mughal Governor. Eyre's vision for the Fort was as a hybrid commercial and military building that was constructed around the existing

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[298] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 November 1710.

[299] Looking at the Huguenot population in Britain and attitudes to charity there we can see that the Huguenot community provided for itself to reduce friction from the host community, Eileen Barrett, 'Huguenot Integration in Late Seventeenth- and Eighteenth-Century London: Insights from Records of the French Church and Some Relief Agencies' in Randolph Vigne and Charles Littleton (eds.) *From Strangers to Citizens: Integration of Immigrant Communities in Britain, Ireland and Colonial America, 1550-1750* (Brighton, 2001), pp. 375-82 whilst John M. Hintermaier, 'The First Modern Refugees? Charity, Entitlement, and Persuasion in the Huguenot Immigration of the 1680s', *Albion*, Vol. 32, (2000), pp. 429-49, argues that public opinion was central to a change in how Huguenot refugees were perceived as 'deserving poor'.

[300] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/2 March 1695.

commercial infrastructure of the Factory and godowns. It was a rejection of the French and Dutch model of building large purpose built half moon bastions to protect factories.[301]

This represents two departures from Goldsborough's understanding of how the colony should be governed. Firstly, the need to ask permission to build the fort from the Mughal Governor, although a practical necessity, shows that Eyre recognised that building a permanent settlement in Calcutta needed to be done in conjunction with communication with the Mughal state. This was an approach not even recognised by Goldsborough in his assessment and was perhaps Eyre's biggest contribution to the future development of the colony. He showed the other Company men the importance of keeping a strong relationship with the Mughal state and demonstrating that it made governing the colony much easier. The rejection of large Dutch and French style half moon bastions was another development of Eyre's and ensured that the Company did not overstep its place. Although Goldsborough had encouraged greater fortifications in Madras, Eyre recognised that the new fortifications should be 'in the nature of a Fort which the moors could not have disproved but that it was a real factory'.[302] This shows an appreciation of the delicate relationship the Company had with the Mughal state and that protecting the colony from attack was to be done not though the largest Fort possible but by a less conspicuous militarised building. Eyre even directly contradicted Goldsborough by increasing the size of the garrison to a higher level than had been recommended because of his appreciation that current conditions in Bengal necessitated a larger garrison.[303] Although Eyre's conception of the role of the Governor had evolved from that of Goldsborough it showed a personal quality vital in running the colony: flexibility. This important skill had been lacking in Charnock and Ellis. Eyre had adapted to conditions in Bengal to carry forward Company trade and to develop Calcutta. Furthermore, he did not reject Charnock's legacy, marrying his daughter and building a mausoleum for Charnock, thus showing that he understood his contribution and also the importance of continuity in leadership. After he returned to England he was the Company's natural choice to return in 1699 as head of the new Presidency at Calcutta. Whilst Charnock and Ellis had been criticised by Goldsborough for not having the qualities to establish a more stable colony and Company presence in Bengal, Governors and Presidents from Eyre onwards balanced Company desires with the specific needs of the colony.[304]

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[301] BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/6 September 1696.

[302] BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/6 September 1696.

[303] BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/6 September 1696.

[304] Wilson, *Early Annals of the English Vol.2*, xxxiii - xxxvii describes how John Russell (Eyre's successor) improved the infrastructure of the colony and also improved Anglo-Indian relations which satisfied the London Directors. Most notably he introduced patrols of soldiers on the streets of the colony, built a new Company house, naval stores, a wharf and a crane for loading goods.

Despite Eyre's success, we are often unable to tell what the direct influences behind the President and Council's actions were. In most cases all we can do is evaluate the actions of men like Eyre and Goldsborough as representative of their interpretation of how the colony should be run. No personal correspondence for our period remains except for one tantalising source which provides a valuable insight into what may have influenced John Frankland, a member of the Council (and later President). Frankland was the friend of Charles Russell (the cousin of President John Russell) and Russell helped Frankland send and receive goods from England. A letter from Russell's family lists a series of books to be sent to Frankland.[305] On this list were '2 volumes including Plans of all Hans towns' and 'Several books of prints, views, of palaces, cities, and towns in Europe'.[306] These books provided useful reference material in the form and layout of places that could be applied by Frankland to Calcutta's development and governance. Although the extent to which this material influenced Frankland is unknown, the fact it was sent by his request to the colony showed at least an interest in these areas which undoubtedly would have shaped his reading of the situation in his governance of Calcutta. The volumes describing the Hanseatic League towns are especially interesting. The Hanseatic League had many parallels to the Company situation in Bengal.[307] Spread over northern Europe around the North and Baltic Seas, this collection of towns operated under an economic alliance that protected the economic interests of the Hanse merchants from the thirteenth to seventeenth centuries. Hanse towns were either part of another state having negotiated special privileges for the town, or were enclaves known as *kantons*. These places were specially protected commercial and residential spaces that allowed the building of the infrastructure to support the independent and powerful Hanseatic merchants. For Frankland, an understanding of the shape and development of these towns was especially useful in understanding Calcutta's own place and development. The knowledge of the Hanse towns along with the plans of palaces, cities and towns of Europe shows a potential influence upon Frankland but also a desire to learn from the success of the Hanseatic League which had many parallels with the Company position in Bengal. It

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[305] Graham Shaw, 'The British Book in India' in Michael F. Suarez and Michael L. Turner (eds) *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain. Vol. 5, 1695-1830* (Cambridge, 2009), pp. 560-564, has laid out how books reached India from Britain but he barely mentions any material reaching Calcutta.

[306] BL Eur. Mss, Eur/Mss/D802 Mss Eur D802, Charles Russell, *Account Book and Miscellaneous Financial Papers Kept probably by Col Charles Russell (1700-54), mainly as Agent for his Father John Russell (1670-1735), East India Company Servant 1694-1711, Governor of Bengal 1710-11; for his Cousin Sir Francis Russell, 6th Bart (c1700-43), East India Company Servant, Bengal 1715-43, 3rd in Council; and Others Resident in Bengal and Elsewhere.*1 volume; 42 folios

[307] John D, Fudge, *Cargoes, Embargoes, and Emissaries: the Commercial and Political Interaction of England and the German Hanse, 1450-1510* (Toronto, 1995) has looked at the interaction between England and the Hanse as well as the stability of the arrangement. T.H. Lloyd, *England and the German Hanse, 1157-1611* (Cambridge, 1991), provides a good general history of Anglo-Hanse interaction.

suggests that Frankland felt European knowledge and urban examples might provide useful guidance in how Calcutta should grow. The availability of books as important reference material for European ideas and values is seen in other contexts too.[308] The colony was becoming more complex and thus it required greater consideration from its leadership in how to manage it as an urban place.

Part 2: Courts and Magistrates

Although the actions of Charnock, Goldsborough and Eyre can be seen as providing a blueprint for how the Company would govern the colony we need to look at the specific institutions that emerged as evidence of these ideas taking hold. The legal system utilised by the Company in Calcutta was directly influenced by the British background of the Company elite. However, the exercise of legal authority in Calcutta was not an exact replica of London or the wider British court systems. The Company was implementing a legal system for the preservation of order, whilst under a range of unique pressures from the Mughal state, other European powers, Indian elites and occidental demands from the European directors. This challenging environment produced a particular colonial interpretation of legal systems and authority. Many of the structural divisions between courts present in the British system were maintained in other colonial settings often for the continued benefit of the colonial elite.[309] However, in some cases the 'difference of condition' in a colony prompted attempts to change traditional concepts of authority.[310] The challenge is to not just identify what was similar to European courts but to see how the Company established a system of legal governance in Calcutta and also what potential 'differences of condition' there might be.

By 1750 there were four courts in Calcutta, all reporting to the President and Council. These courts were the Mayor's Court, Court of Appeal, Court of Requests and Court of Quarter Sessions. The Mayor's Court was made up of a mayor and aldermen dealing with most civil suits. The Court of Appeal was run by the President and Council and heard appeals from the Mayor's Court. The Court of Requests dealt with suits worth less than forty shillings and the Court of

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[308] BL IOR CPC P/1/5 June 1724, the minister in his will donated all his books to the vestry. BL IOR CPC P/1/6 August 1727. Also, the creation of the Mayor's Court was facilitated by the sending of a library of legal texts by the Directors in London to assist in the new courts.

[309] Diana Paton, 'Punishment, Crime, and the Bodies of Slaves in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica', *Journal of Social History*, Vol. 34, (2001), pp. 923-54 highlights some of these similarities in court structure and use in a colonial setting.

[310] John Darwin, 'Civility and Empire', in Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (eds.) *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (Oxford, 2000), pp. 326-7 discusses these differences in relation to the Chesapeake.

Quarter Sessions (known at the time as the Court of Oyer and Terminer) punished all offences except high treason.[311] The relationship between these courts and the President and Council was defined by the Royal Charter granted in 1728. Thus by 1750 the colony had developed a court system to resolve the different legal functions expected of the Company and the challenges the Company overcame to create this system of justice should be explored.

The position of the Company in 1690 was very different from what it would be in 1750. Problems of sovereignty, resources and infrastructure inhibited the creation of a legal system in Calcutta. For men such as early Calcutta presidents John Beard, Ralph Sheldon and John Frankland the challenge to maintain authority in the colony began not in Bengal but in London. The power to rule over British subjects in Calcutta was not automatic but came from the monopoly rights granted to the Company in 1600. The Company was to rule over British subjects overseas and was the monarch's direct representative's in Bengal. The most powerful right granted to the Company was the power to arrest and prevent the disruptive actions of those who challenged their monopoly.[312] The Council had basic legal powers to enforce this right and they were able to decide upon minor suits and major crimes, agreeing to 'meet in some convenient place between the hours of nine and twelve in the morning every Saturday to hear and determine small controversies but if anything difficult and of moment happens it is to be heard in full Council'.[313] The monopoly also enabled the Council to raise an army to physically protect operations in Bengal. In addition, the Council had important powers of justice, tax and law creation. All of these powers granted by the monopoly provided the President and Council with the basic tools to run Calcutta.

The monopoly was a general document granting wide powers in India to the Company. However, in practice the President and Council had several different limitations to their authority to manage. The structure of the Company meant that the internal organization of the Company settlements was decided in London by the Directors. For the first fifteen years Calcutta was a subordinate Factory of Madras. This meant that in this formative period the Council could not punish criminals. Instead the Council had to send Europeans accused of criminal acts back to Madras or in the most serious cases, Europe. For example in one case a ship's Captain was convicted of murder but had to be sent back to Europe for his case to be heard by the Court of Directors.[314] Also the weekly criminal court established by the President and Council had no defined role or rules and there is no evidence of regular court hearings. This suggests that the

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[311] Reginauld Craufuird Sterndale, *An Historical Account of the Calcutta Collectorate, Collector's Cutchery, or Calcutta Pottah Office* (Alipore, 1959), pp. 11-12.

[312] Sudipta Sen, *Empire of Free Trade: The East India Company and the Making of the Colonial Marketplace* (Philadelphia, 1998), pp. 80-81.

[313] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 August 1704.

[314] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 December 1713.

Calcutta Council only tried cases on an ad hoc basis. This lack of enforceable authority over the running of the colony meant that the Council was unable to quickly fix some of the major barriers to their permanent settlement in Calcutta. For example, the Company took nearly thirty years to establish the rights to raise taxes, which shows the reality and limitations of the monopoly powers in practice. Therefore, although the monopoly powers gave the Company the right to run and protect its operations a permanent or regular legal structure within Calcutta was slow to emerge.

Despite failures by the Company to create a robust legal system, as the colony grew, new opportunities emerged to refine what was in place. In 1727 the Company sought permission from George II, to establish a permanent court system to be known as the Mayor's Court. When the charter was delivered to the Council it came with a variety of legal volumes that gave the Council the legal tools to run the new courts and enforce law in the colony.[315] The list of texts was as follows:

King Georges Royal Charter

Statutes at large 5 volumes

Daltons Country justice

Hawkins's pleas of the crown

Abridgement of the statues 6 volumes

Officium Clerici pacis

Modern Justice

Hales Pleas of the Crown

Blackerby's Justice

Godolphins Legacy

Lex Testamentaria

Praxis Cancellaria 2 volumes

Cursus Cancellaria

Practical Register in Chancery

Copy of the New Charter[316]

These legal texts and charter defined more clearly how legal roles and authority would be structured in the Colony. The quantity and range of texts provided show that the London Directors were serious in equipping the new Courts with the legal knowledge to enforce authority in the

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[315] BL IOR CPC P/1/6 August 1727.

[316] BL IOR CPC P/1/6 August 1727.

colony.[317] Such a new court also removed the burden of enforcing the law from the day to day activities of the President and Council. The charter for the establishment of the Mayor's Court stressed that new role of the Mayor's Court was to help:

> the punishing of Vice, and administering of justice, and the better governing of the Company's factories, and settlements abroad, will not only tend to the advancement of those good ends, but also to the increase of that branch of the national trade.[318]

The language of this charter suggests that a clearer definition of roles within the colony would benefit the commercial operations of the President and Council but also benefit the running of Calcutta. The charter is clear in linking the exercise of justice and authority in the Colony to the fortunes and power of the Company. The clear division between vice and justice highlights that the codifying of a new court was designed to both protect the inhabitants of the colony but also to control their behaviours and vices as understood by the colonial elite. The new Mayor's Court was not a departure from the Company's previous methods or structure but a refinement of the system previously implemented.[319] It took its authority from the King and was not supposed to be answerable to the Company. However it was linked financially to the Company and the Council retained the right to pass bye-laws and as such they remained the most important organisation in the colony.[320] It is clear from the charter that the Mayor's Court did not displace the Company from its position of authority in the colony but that any new system of legal authority had to work with the Company and its interests. It would not be till the permanent settlement of the 1790s that a structured court system that replicated directly the courts of Britain would emerge.[321]

The Royal Charter also describes how the Mayor's Court operated, particularly how the court was managed and the scope of its operations. The primary legal role of the court was to 'to try, hear and determine, all civil suits, actions and pleas, between party and party, that shall or may

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[317] Travers Robert, 'Ideology and British expansion in Bengal, 1757-72', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, 33:1 (2005), pp. 8-9 has suggested that in the earlier period of British governance that Indian despotism and civilization were not considered in how the colony should be run but that British liberty and property were central to how the British wanted their authority to be based upon. This list of legal texts supports this belief in the primacy of British liberty for the courts of the colony. How this played out in relation to Indian ideals and how the Company felt they should govern the Indian population has been more prevalent in the literature of the later eighteenth century and is explored in chapter eight.

[318] BL IOR CDST A/1/70 p. 369.

[319] BL IOR CDST A/1/70 p. 441.

[320] BL IOR CDST A/1/70 pp. 441-451.

[321] D.A. Washbrook, 'Law, State and Agrarian Society in Colonial India', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 15 No.3 (1981), p. 652.

arise or happen'.[322] This type of court function was primarily of benefit to the urban elite within the colony. Civil suits, actions and pleas were predominantly brought to the court for cases involving money and property which also mostly involved those that had money and property. However, other costs and court demands ensured that the Mayor's Court was principally used by the rich of the colony. The need for written testimony, lawyers and frequent court adjournments were costly barriers that excluded the poor from accessing the courts. In almost all cases the Mayor's Court adjourned after the initial plea was entered into the court records. Each party then prepared evidence and suitable witnesses were arranged. All of this added costs onto the process. The intention was not to prevent legal protection for the poor but to ensure that the valuable time of the court was not wasted by smaller or frivolous cases. This mechanism was not unique to Calcutta but was the norm in both Madras and Bombay.[323] British courts also utilised the same types of costs and requirements having the same effect on access.[324] This was therefore a standard tactic and structure for courts in our period and meant that the court was primarily a tool for the benefit of the urban elite of the colony.

The composition of the Mayor's Court was similar to that in other towns and cities in Europe. A Mayor acted (like the President of the Company Council) as the highest authority in the court and he was assisted by a group of aldermen. In addition all the main Company settlements of Bombay, Madras and Calcutta all were granted a charter at the same time and they were to be structured and managed in the same way. The charters for each was identical with just the place name changed in each document and all are three are printed together in the same volume. However, in Madras the Mayor's Court there was seen as a burden to the existing courts of law and governance that they were using.[325] It has been suggested that this contributed to the lack of centralized authority there and shows that the application of the charter was particular to the attitudes of the President and Council in that place.[326] Each place was to have a full composition of Mayor and Aldermen. The numbers of the Aldermen would not officially change although they would, like the President and Council, fluctuate depending upon death and illness. The men of the

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[322] BL IOR CDST A/1/70 p. 390.

[323] Philip J. Stern, 'Rethinking Institutional Transformation in the Making of Modern Empire: The East India Company in Madras', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History*, Vol. 9, (2008) has explored how Calcutta's Mayor's Court replicates many of the successes of the Madras Courts. Also the charters for Madras, Bombay and Calcutta are identical.

[324] J.M Beattie, *Crime and the Courts in England 1660-1800* (Princeton 1986), pp. 41-3.

[325] S. Arasaratnam, 'European Port Settlements in the Coromandel Commercial System 1650-1740' in Frank Broeze (ed.) *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (Honolulu, 1989), p. 93.

[326] Mattison Mines, 'Courts of Law and Styles of Self in Eighteenth Century Madras: From Hybrid to Colonial Self', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1 (Feb., 2001), p. 41.

Calcutta's Mayor's Court were also closely linked with the East India Company as they would often be members of the Company although the charter specified that the Mayor's Court was (except for two spaces available to Europeans from allied nations) to be made up of all the British inhabitants of the colony. Of the first iteration of the Court only one man James Neville was not a Company man, although of the other participants only Charles Hampton was a Council member. This highlights the connection of the Mayor's Court to the Company, but it did not guarantee complete subservience to Company power.

Although, in principle the aldermen were to be chosen independently of Company influence with the primary qualification being an adequate knowledge of the law and seven of the nine aldermen were to British natural born subjects.[327] However, in practice the Company was able to keep close control over the personnel involved with the Mayor's Court. After the death of Richard Frankland, the brother of President Frankland, the replacement alderman Jonathon Newton was selected. He wrote home to describe his appointment as an alderman revealing that 'to secure my stay in India to depend upon my own will since which I have been at Bengal Mr Frankland made me be chose an Alderman of Calcutta...as I am unknown to any in the India House may be possibly be surprised to see a *Perr Jus* name returned'.[328] This suggests that the London directors knew who the Aldermen were and that Newton would not be recognised. His choice by Frankland mitigated this surprise to the directors. It shows the important influence of the president in determining such appointments and the importance of the Mayor's Court as an integral part of the colonial executive.[329] Also it shows how presidents both understood and used appointment to the Mayor's Court for their own ends. This ensured that despite the theoretical separation of power between the Mayor's Court and Council, the influence of men like Governor Frankland ensured the Company dominated the new Mayor's Court.

We can see how closely linked the Mayor's Court was to the Company through the financial costs of the Court. Each month the Mayor's Courts costs were presented to the President and Council, paid for and approved. This shows both that the Company was committed to the function that the Mayor's Court took on but also that their control of the purse strings was another means of ensuring that the growth of Calcutta did not pose a challenge to the Company's influence.. The Mayor's Court was not a pointless institution as the roles given to the Court served to free the Company of more mundane responsibilities and allowed the Council the freedom to focus on trade rather than petty commercial disputes amongst the colonists. The Company also gave the court additional tools to help manage the colony approving a full time translator for the court in 1735,

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[327] BL IOR CDST A/1/70 p. 388.

[328] Nottinghamshire Record Office, DD/SR/225/51/5 Letterbook of Jonathon Newton.

[329] Nandini Bhattacharya-Panda, *Appropriation and Invention of Tradition: The East India Company and Hindu Law in Early Colonial Bengal* (Oxford 2008), p. 40.

then giving the responsibility for the gaoler and crier to the Mayor's Court a year later.[330] Although these items increased the expenditure of the Mayor's Court this was defrayed by the President and Council.[331] The Mayor's Court was therefore an extension of Company power without adding to the day to day tasks of the President and Council. However the influence of the President in selecting Aldermen and the budgetary control exercised by the Council on the Mayor's Court meant that they both represented the aims and ambitions of the elite within the colony.

Overall, the structure of authority and legal power in the colony became more ordered and robust over time. The Company was interested in a system of authority that best reflected its interests in Bengal and the language and content of the Royal Charter reflected this.

Part 3: The black and white Zamindars, constables and soldiers

The creation and management of institutions of government helped the Council to establish their authority over Calcutta. However, the President and Council were not employed for their urban governance expertise. The records give occasional hints as to the challenges of governing the city. However, the Company placed a greater emphasis in the records upon commercial information. On a day to day basis the Council used specific groups and intermediaries to manage its administrative responsibilities within the city. The Company servant who took care of managing these groups and oversaw the responsibility of governing Calcutta was known as the Zamindar. This part of the chapter will look at this vital position in governing the city on behalf of the President and Council.

For the ordinary Indian living in Calcutta, the Zamindar was the person of authority they had most contact with.[332] Like most Indian concepts and terms used by the British, the name for the Zamindar changed over the period. At various times it was referred to as Zamindar, Zemindar or Jemindar. Though taken on by the Company as a title and loan word it did not retain its traditional meaning. The traditional role of Zamindar was to act as tax collector for the Mughal state. Once the Company gained the Zamindari rights in 1717 they received the power to charge rent on land within the boundaries of Calcutta. Normally the collected rent was then passed on to the Mughal state and traditionally, the Zamindar kept ten percent of the rent for himself as profit.[333] However,

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[330] BL IOR CPC P/1/11 May 1735 and BL IOR CPC P/1/12 December 1736.

[331] BL IOR CPC P/1/16, a bye law was enacted to raise money to pay for the costs of the Mayor's Court although before then the Company approved the monthly Mayor's Court charges.

[332] The history of Zamindars has been relatively unexamined though two pieces prove useful in outlining the changes to the role in the period. S. Akhtar, *The Role of the Zamindars in Bengal 1707-1772* (Dacca 1982) and Ratnalekha Ray, 'The Bengal Zamindars: Local Magnates and the State before the Permanent Settlement', *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 12 (1975), pp. 263-92.

[333] Wilson, *The Early Annals,* vol.1, p. 190.

the Company had the right to gather rents and raise duties for a fixed sum of 1500 rupees per year.[334] This meant that as long as this target of 1500 rupees was met, the Company had fulfilled its responsibility to the Mughal Treasury. The Company generated more profit from trade than from being landlords meaning that this arrangement benefited them as they could avoid spending excessive amounts of time in collecting rents. Additionally, this attitude of not farming rent as other Zamindars did, encouraged people to the colony as rent was not increased or collected at the same rate as under other Zamindars.[335] Zamindari rights were desired by the Company to ensure that they were legally in control of Calcutta and its environs rather than for their revenue generation. This difference in understanding and use of the role of the Zamindar and the rights attached to it is an important factor in how the Company controlled and regulated the colony in other ways.

The legality of the Company to act as Zamindar was repeatedly called into question until it was finally resolved in 1717 after the Company sent a diplomatic mission to the Emperor at Delhi.[336] The British continued to use the title of Zamindar but its function began to change. The Zamindar was normally the most junior member of the Council and was burdened with all the urban problems the Company wanted resolved. The role of Zamindar remained subservient to the President and Council as the lowest rung on the Council hierarchy throughout our period. Such a lack of importance granted to the Zamindar suggests that it was a post that allowed its holder to gain experience of the Council and its responsibilities and an understanding of the responsibilities of running the colony. Equally it shows that despite having urban responsibilities the Company wanted its most senior and experienced members to handle commercial affairs.

The Zamindar or Collector as he was referred to in Company records was primarily responsible for collecting rents from the population of the Zamindari area. The records suggest that the Calcutta Zamindar was limited in his effectiveness. The two major areas of revenue collection were land rents and duties on traded goods. The first of these were never regularly collected and did not raise substantial revenues for the Company.[337] The duties on traded goods in the markets were much more regularly gathered with monthly deposits into the Company accounts.[338] One possible reason rent collection could have been irregular was because the infrastructure needed to collect

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[334] Keay, *The Honourable Company*, p. 168.

[335] Rajat Datta, 'Commercialisation, Tribute, and the Transition from Late Mughal to Early Colonial India', *The Medieval History Journal*, 6 (2003), pp. 260-262 has characterised British inflexibility as the prevailing feature of British use of the Zamindari system though they did not deviate from old systems.

[336] Wilson, *The Early Annals*, Vol.2 Pt.2, gives an account of this process.

[337] Wilson, *The Early Annals* Vol.1, p. 192. Gives accounts of the sort of figures the rent collections accumulated claiming that around 480 rupees was collected a month around 1704 and this had increased to around 3200 by 1750 which equated to £60 per month.

[338] These figures are available at the beginning of each month in the Public Consultations and as the city grew this revenue from duties also increased. See the monthly accounts available in the IOR P Series.

rent (buildings, personnel, records) needed to be built up at significant cost, although these were already present for the collection of trade duties. Unlike other Zamindars who were looking to farm as much profit for themselves as possible the fixed annual gift was so small (around £40 a year) that it was collected less regularly. This allowed the Company to focus upon the more lucrative commercial profits from trading whilst having the added bonus of attracting traders to the city. As the city developed into a trading place managed by the Council the amount of money that could be levied from trade and the benefit of such trade to the Company's commercial profits, also increased. Therefore, there lacked a significant economic incentive to promote the farming and collection of rents in our period.

This structuring of the revenue collection system in the colony was in line with the Company's need to manage the city as cheaply as possible in terms of time, capital and personnel. The Zamindar's responsibilities were varied but were all linked to encouraging the growth and management of the town which benefitted the Company's activities. For example the Zamindar became responsible for the clearing of land along the riverbanks that were frequently damaged by the river.[339] He was also responsible for surveying land and the purchase of it for the Company's use.[340] In March 1732 the Company decided that Indian weavers should be encouraged to settle in the city and they:

> Ordered that the Jemindar admit them on these terms and should any gardens or convenient pieces of ground be met with cheap. Ordered that they be purchased by the Jemindar on the Company's account out of the revenues for the use of weavers.[341]

The Zamindar was therefore the caretaker of the City, allowing the Company to focus on its commercial activity. It was the Zamindar, who alongside his traditional revenue collection role, was the most active person in managing the city on a daily basis. The Zamindar was also responsible for physical changes to the city that the Company desired. As such, under the British, the Zamindar was a hybrid of traditional Indian revenue collection functions and British urban management in the city.

This can further be seen through the way the Zamindar became responsible for the enforcement of the Company's authority throughout the colony. When the Company wanted to define the leasehold arrangements in 1704 it was the Zamindar who carried out this task.[342] When the Company wished to remind people about not trading with interlopers or other European nations

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[339] BL IOR CPC P/1/3 January 1717.

[340] An example of this occurred in 1733 where following some subletting by other Indians the land they had been living on was to be surveyed. BL IOR CPC P/1/9 November 1733.

[341] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 March 1732.

[342] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 April 1704.

it was the Zamindar who stood at street corners relaying this information.[343] Finally, when the Company desired to remove undesirable strangers from the town it was the job of the Zamindar to remove them.[344] The Zamindar in these examples was the agent directly enforcing the Company's power. Again this was an extension of the role of the Zamindar away from a purely tax collecting role.

Although the Zamindar was the agent of the Company's will, he required a team around him to fulfil the Company's needs and to interact with the majority Indian population of Calcutta. To enforce Company policy in the city required the creation of a city constabulary and watchmen. The Company had been employing servants who policed the market areas since at least 1695.[345] In 1704 the Company refined this arrangement and created a permanent law enforcement force housed in the rebuilt Kotwal or police lock-up.[346] The Kotwal was situated in the Bazaar and was also the office of the Zamindar and his assistants. The 1704 arrangement saw the hiring of several Indians to help the Zamindar control the Indian population. A superintendant, forty five constables, two beadles and twenty watchmen were hired. In December 1706, following a small crime wave the size of the watch was increased to around thirty one men.[347] These constables and watchmen assisted the Zamindar in enforcing order in the many markets and around the colony.[348] They would be stationed around the bazaar near the prison and they were employed to patrol the streets protecting property, watching for suspicious behaviour and enforcing order, as a visible source of the Company's authority. This system of constables and watchmen was similar to arrangements be found in towns and cities back in Britain.[349]

The European Zamindar (or Company Collector) also had a Banian or assistant who provided access to the Indian community and expertise in gathering rents and duties from them. This Indian man was exclusively referred to as the black Zamindar. The primary assistant to the Zamindar was first assigned to Benjamin Boucher in 1705.[350] The holder of the office of Company Collector changed often, in many cases within a few years of appointment as changes to positions

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[343] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 October 1720.

[344] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 April 1733.

[345] Wilson, *The Early Annals* Vol.1, p. 146.

[346] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1704.

[347] Wilson, *The Early Annals* Vol.1, p. 196.

[348] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1704.

[349] J.M Beattie, *Policing and Punishment in London 1660-1750 : Urban Crime and the Limits of Terror* (Oxford 2001), Jennine Hurl-Eamon, 'The Westminster Impostors: Impersonating Law Enforcement in Early Eighteenth-Century London', *Eighteenth-Century Studies,* Vol. 38 (2005), Douglas Greenberg, 'The Effectiveness of Law Enforcement in Eighteenth-Century New York', *The American Journal of Legal History,* Vol. 19, (1975) provides a useful colonial comparison.

[350] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 August 1705.

within the Council meant that new Company men would become promoted to the role. Due to the high turnover of Collectors the black Zamindar was essential in educating the new Zamindar in how to fulfil his role and provided access the Indian community.[351] Only two men held the position of black Zamindar in the whole of the period 1705 till 1756. Nandaram Sett held the position until 1720 and then Gobindram Mitter continued in the role from 1720 till 1756. The role of Sett and Mitter was essential in providing continuity for the Company in its ability to manage the colony through the Zamindari position. Without the contacts, influence and help of Sett and Mitter the Zamindar would have had to develop his own expertise in managing the alien and diverse Indian population of the colony. Despite this, the Indian assistants to the Zamindar were considered untrustworthy. In November 1722, Henry Moore a European assistant to the Zamindar was praised for his loyal and trustworthy conduct and was awarded a pay increase of one hundred rupees a month.[352] His conduct was in contrast to the belief that the Indian assistants in similar positions to Moore were liable to abuse their positions.[353]

There were limitations to this Zamindari team created by the Council. The constables were as liable to corruption and bribery as the Zamindars assistants. Additionally, due to the long time the black Zamindars were in power for (fifteen and thirty six years respectively) they were able to build up large power bases and influence over the community. Gobindram Mitter was notorious as black Zamindar, using the position to accrue large personal wealth which he displayed in the building of a 'Nine Jewel Temple' in 1731. Having a black Zamindar was therefore a necessary evil for the Company. When Humphrey Cole

> led on by his natural honesty and a real zeal for this Company's Service, on coming to the Zemindary dismissed Govindra Mehe [Mitter] from his employ, nor suffered him to return to it while he continued in his, but being not supported by the governor, who on the contrary kept up Mehe's spirits in his disgrace, and by not finding proper people to substitute in his place, Mehe rather gained ground than lost any, by this step.[354]

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[351] Shani D'Cruz, 'The Middling Sort in Eighteenth-Century Colchester: Independence, Social Relations and the Community Broker' in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture Society and Politics in England, 1550-1800* (London, 1994), p.182 has highlighted the importance of 'community brokers' in holding power within social networks a position the Black Zamindar utilised for personal power and profit.

[352] BL IOR CPC P/1/5 November 1722.

[353] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 July 1705 gives an example of where the Council investigated suspected abuses by the Indian assistants to the revenue collection who were all indicted for their part in the abuses. In addition the pay rise to Henry Moore was directly contrasted to the abuses of Indian servants BL IOR CPC P/1/5 November 1722.

[354] BL IOR Eur. Mss. Robert Orme Collection, Mss Eur/Orme O.V.12 p. 156.

Mitter's power was based upon his usefulness to the Council and although he was considered corrupt, utilizing his position for his own gain, his power, prestige and 'local knowledge' amongst the Indian community made him irreplaceable.[355] Even on an occasion where the black Zamindar was imprisoned and fired from the Company's service the Council was unwilling to or unable to move away from the use of Indian intermediaries.[356] This shows either a naivety on the part of the Council or a limitation to their rule that only using a black Zamindar could amend. In the same description of Mitter in the Orme collection the quantity and value of the property he owned was suggested to be so large that a 'stranger would point out and very justly too where the greatest man I might say lord of the town dwells and this mansion has by degrees spread itself to its present extraordinary dimensions'.[357] Mitter's expertise undoubtedly benefitted the Company but also added a burden upon operations. Whilst in power Mitter siphoned off revenue from the town into his own pockets and undermined the role of the Company Collector. Robert Orme the famous Company historiographer collected many accounts of people's experiences in India, including an anonymous account of the influence of the black Zamindars role. It was written around 1751 to explain the corruption and influence of the position by a person with good knowledge of the Company's experiences with dealing with the black Zamindar through the period. Mitter's influence and the impact of it upon the Company were described in the following manner:

> Imagine in a populous city one man arrived to be not only the actual distributor of justice, but likewise the executor of it and at the same time the superintendent of all imports and customs to be regulated at his discretion, and levied with what degree of levity or severity he pleases. The influence such a man must have on the community is too evident to be insisted on, but when all this power falls to a desperate cruel and wicked man...and the most and most uncommon crimes must be expected from him.[358]

Mitter did make running the colony easier due to the continuity and contacts he had developed in his thirty-six years as the black Zamindar. However, it was a poisoned chalice for the Council. When they wished to control Mitter he was able to hold the Company to ransom by threatening to remove his expertise. The President and Council were forced to compromise, losing their complete control and significant revenue from the town, but gaining expertise that they did not have otherwise, which allowed the Company to focus upon commercial issues instead. This was a vital compromise as the Company had no inherent leverage or control over the Indian population. The

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[355] David Washbrook, 'South India 1770-1840: The Colonial Transition' in *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul., 2004), pp. 490-1.

[356] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 March 1712

[357] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur/Orme O.V.12 p. 160.

[358] BL Eur. Mss, Mss Eur/Orme O.V.12 p. 157-8

black Zamindar helped to bridge this gap between Company power and its capacity to exercise control over the whole population of the colony.

P.J. Marshall has tried to explore the differences between the black and white towns in the middle of the eighteenth century. In the early part of the century it is clear that the Zamindar was the vital link between these two emerging areas of the city. The British Zamindari role is an example of the exchange of cultures that developed within the city. For example the Kotwal or prison lock-up was the centre of the Company Collector's operations in the period up to 1728. For the Indian population it fulfilled the traditional chauk function of a Mughal city. Normally the chauk was at the centre of the city and the bazaar grew up around it.[359] It was a place for spectacle, punishment and celebration in Mughal culture.[360] By mimicking this in the layout of the colony and using the traditional Zamindar role based in a central chauk, the pattern of traditional Mughal authority was replicated. This made running the city easier and empowered the English Zamindar and his team of Indian intermediaries. The English Zamindar role was not contested in the period and although his authority was undermined by the activities of the black Zamindar from 1720, the city remained an engine for Company trade in the period.

Conclusion:

The institutions of government utilised by the East India Company to control Calcutta evolved over the period. Initial attempts to create order in the colony were done through the personal authority of Company servants who represented the desires of the London Directors. Although this remained an important mechanism throughout the period other systems of governance and law did emerge to assist the Company governing Calcutta. Specifically, the foundation of the Mayor's Court and the utilization of both a white and black Zamindar allowed the President and Council to shift the day to day responsibilities of running the colony to others. Although this produced a system that provided the tools required by the President and Council to control the colony it added additional layers of bureaucracy and corruption to the system. An examination of this more complex relationship between the Company and the institutions show that a more mature system of urban governance emerged earlier in the history of the colony that was based upon both European institutions and also leveraged Indian intermediaries to assist in running the colony. This is important because it shows both a willingness to control the urban space but also a pragmatic desire to uphold this commitment using both local and European forms of authority and governance.

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[359] Sen, *Empire of Free Trade*, pp. 26-7.

[360] Sen, *Empire of Free Trade,* p. 38.

Chapter 6: Controlling Calcutta's Space

Many great cities have a story or myth attached to their origins. The archetypical urban foundation myth has been Rome's and the story of Romulus and Remus. In the story of Calcutta's founding we have Job Charnock. As we discussed in Chapter Three the myth tells of how Charnock chose the spot to settle at Calcutta whilst resting under the shade of a tree by the banks of the Hooghly. An analysis of this origin story might focus upon his mercantile status, resting against the strong trunk of the banyan tree for his relaxation, thus symbolizing the need for Indian support to fulfil the mercantile ambitions of Charnock and his successors. Alternative symbolic analysis of the image could portray Charnock huddling under the branches of the tree hiding from the oppressive Bengal sun, the shade of the tree providing a safe haven and the chance for him to collect his thoughts and plot his next commercial adventure. This second interpretation is suggestive of the moment when Calcutta was established away from the influence of the Mughal state. Like all stories, origin myths reflect features of the society that created them. In the case of Calcutta, although the interpretation of the founding of the colony is variable, one common theme was the need for the Company to establish its own space and the importance of controlling the spatial environment to allow the Company to live and operate in Bengal.

The existing histories of Calcutta have tried hard to reconcile the Anglo and the Indian elements of the city. P.J Marshall has explored this theme consistently and his articles on the white town (the predominantly European part of the colony) and the use of Indian labour have been important contributions in an otherwise unfortunately sparse historiography of Calcutta.[361] Though there are many excellent articles highlighting many important themes in the development of British presence in India, the problem is that the basic steps in how British merchants established an empire in India and created their own urban space, has not been studied with the same vigorous analysis. Much of the history of British colonialism has avoided examining Calcutta as a place that was peculiarly British, based upon British institutions and infrastructure, but instead focussed upon the economic and political activities the Company carried out. This is not unique to Calcutta and

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[361] P.J. Marshall, 'The Company and the Coolies: Labour in Early Calcutta', in Pradip Sinha (ed.), *The Urban Experience: Calcutta, Essays in Honour of Professor Nitish R. Ray* (Calcutta, 1987) and Marshall, 'The White Town'.

the form and function of early colonial port towns has not been discussed.[362] There exists therefore a gap in the historiography, where historians have taken for granted the idea of the development of a colonial place with both European and Indian influences in Bengal. The emergence of Calcutta's built environment and the management of its infrastructure requires more exploration, and that is the purpose of this chapter.

There are many examples of the everyday strategies employed by European inhabitants and the Company to make their new home stable and suitable to their needs. The main source material here remains the records of the Company kept in the British Library. From this material we need to tease out the different types of infrastructure utilised to manage the urban environment of the colony. The source material is limited by a lack of direct references to the Indian areas of the colony. However, the broader challenges faced by the Company in managing Calcutta's urban environment and the strategies used to overcome them will help to counter this deficiency in the source material. As we shall find throughout the chapter it is almost impossible to separate the urban space and the fortunes of the European and Indians of the colony.

It is the relationship between the Company elite and the management of the colonial space that will be examined in this chapter. It would be easy to use the model of separate white and black towns that emerged in the later eighteenth century and to look at the space used by the Company elite. However, this is a teleological mistake and the borders between the white and black were not so distinct or separate. Factors such as wealth, residency and religion all played a part in the physical ordering of the colony and this has not been explored in the early years before 1750. This chapter suggests that we should identify the strategies used by the British in creating their own urban environment and how these strategies defined and protected this space. To do this I will explore three major areas. The first part will explore the infrastructure that was built in the colony and then looking at its management over the period. The second part will identify the development of the built environment of the colony looking at the different types of buildings and more broadly how the colony was divided amongst the different populations of the colony. The final section will examine the specific strategies employed by the Company and inhabitants to control and define their space. Between these three approaches I hope to be able to show the growth of the colony as being more fluid and dependent upon a variety of factors that may or may not have been within the Company's control.

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[362] Arasaratnam, Pre-Colonial and Early-Colonial Port Towns, pp. 368-9.

Part 1: Controlling and defining Calcutta's infrastructure

In the rest of this thesis I have explored how the Company built up Calcutta to support long term commercial operations. In Calcutta this required the building of important trade and community infrastructures for the Company personnel on the spot. These Company representatives were responsible for generating profit but also maintaining the capital invested by the Company directors in London. The President and Council had to maintain the city to ensure it did not jeopardise the Company's investment. This required the management of the transport, defence and sanitation of the city. These are the major ways the President and Council fulfilled their urban responsibilities.

Chronologically, the development of infrastructure was evenly spread over the period, although the Company focussed upon securing the land of Calcutta first. Once this was done, the Council began to slowly invest in the infrastructure of the city. First to be built after stability was secured was a series of drains in 1709.[363] The Council continued to improve the drainage of the city over the next five years.[364] This reflects part of the fundamental problem of the location of Calcutta. Because the town was built on swampy ground next to a river, buildings were susceptible to the Bengal climate and the onslaught of the monsoon season.[365] When Charnock returned to Calcutta in 1690 after leaving during the Anglo-Indian conflict he found 'the place in a deplorable condition nothing being left for our present accommodation and the rain falling day and night we are forced to be take ourselves to boats which considering the season of the year is very unhealthy'.[366] Such a description also reflects the health concerns of settling at Calcutta and a pragmatic response by the Council in fixing the problems of Calcutta's site by building drainage early in the colony's life. A swampy location encouraged the spread of disease and this threatened the capacity of the Council to run Calcutta. Therefore improving the drainage was a first important step.

One of the characteristic features of an urban society is that due to higher density of the population more waste is produced. Many cities of the eighteenth century were beginning to modernise and to improve street layouts, drainage systems and water supplies. Calcutta too, experienced these developments. The Company carried out many surveys of the land and assessed

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[363] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 1709.

[364] Following the river breaking its banks in June 1714 the Company built a drain to prevent the river from flooding the rest of the town BL IOR CPC P/1/2 June 1714.

[365] Sophie Gee, 'The Sewers: Ordure, Effluence, and Excess in the Eighteenth Century' in Cynthia Wall (ed) *A Concise Companion to the Restoration and Eighteenth Century* (Oxford, 2005), pp. 101-105 highlights how bad waste and poor drainage was an urban problem in the eighteenth century. Elizabeth McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London: The Development and Design of the City 1660-1720* (Manchester 1999), p. 58, reminds the reader that 'sewers' in London at the time did little more than drain waste water away from properties. Calcutta's swampy location would necessitate a similar drain system.

[366] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/1 August 1690.

the quality of the drainage and water supplies in the city.[367] Calcutta is built on naturally marshy ground which produced many sources of water known as tanks.[368] Therefore to manage the site (for the benefit of trade) they invested money and personnel into the creation of a drainage system. In 1709 the surveyors reported back to the Council that:

> the Company having given us liberty and direction to make drains and necessaries for the fort and we having a small tank to the eastward which in some measure defends one bastion and yields good water...agreed that we lengthen them somewhat may be thought convenient and deepen what is made so that next season at least we may reap the benefit.[369]

This quote suggests that improving the water supply of the colony would improve the quality of the colony as a place to inhabit but also that more permanent infrastructures such as drainage and water management would benefit the position of the European population in the colony. The Company over the period began to use a more permanent surveying team to assist in gathering knowledge about the state of the colony. In 1710, two men, former gunners in the Company's service, were hired to keep the drains clear.[370] Later that year, the Company ordered that channels from several stagnant pools of water should be cut to guide water to the central drain and holes filled to prevent the pools reforming.[371] This flurry of activity around 1710 suggests that the Company was working to establish the city as 'wholesome and healthful' following the resolution of the Old and New Company conflict of the previous decade.[372] This shows that the Company followed the eighteenth century understanding that stagnant water was a threat to the health and prosperity of the colony.[373] Therefore, surveys provided knowledge of the ways that, like military threats to the colony, stagnant tanks of water could be identified and dealt with.

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[367] Examples of some of these surveys of the drainage in the city are BL IOR CPC P/1/2 January 1710, P/1/8 May 1730, P/1/5 March 1722 and P/1/2 10th June 1714.

[368] Murphy, 'The City in the Swamp'.

[369] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 1709.

[370] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 January 1710.

[371] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 August 1710.

[372] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 August 1710 describes the purpose of draining the land was to make the city 'wholesome and healthful'.

[373] Harrison, *Climates & Constitutions,* has explored the role of the environment in a colonial setting whilst more general work such as Gee, 'The Sewers' and Michael Corcoran, *Our Good Health: a History of Dublin's Water and Drainage* (Dublin 2005) has looked at the issues surrounding drainage in another Dublin's growth.

The next stage in the development of the infrastructure was to focus upon the transport links. The roads throughout the colony were repaired when necessary.[374] Other than brief details that the roads needed repairs no specific regulations for maintaining the roads was recorded early in the period. From 1727 a scavenger was employed to keep the roads clear of obstructions and each road in the colony was to be thirty-six feet in width.[375] The scavenger was also to survey the bridges and to enforce the order that roads were to be kept clear. However it was not until 1745 that the Company was able to get an experienced surveyor to look at the roads.[376] This involvement of a surveyor in 1745 was more a practical response to the defence needs of the colony. What was being implemented in Calcutta was not unique, the eighteenth century saw increasing urbanisation of a similar nature in other British towns. However like Britain the building of roads and other improvements was not sweeping, but gradual. There was no concerted effort to expand, regulate or control the road network in the colony in any meaningful way. Repairs and examination of the streets, like many other things, were done in an ad hoc manner by the Council.

The problem was that the Company men in Calcutta were not experienced colonial planners. They needed to develop a way to gather information about changes to their urban environment so they knew what their resources were and what to improve or replace. It was not until the later part of the eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century that measurement of India by the Company emerged on a large scale.[377] The Company used different surveys as a tool for understanding and controlling the environment.[378] In particular, these surveys asked questions about the ownership, quality and quantity of the land and buildings within the borders of Calcutta. Those running the surveys reported to the President and Council with their findings and recommendations on how to deal with problems. The information generated by these surveys allowed the Company to effectively allocate resources and to spot problems in the built environment and infrastructure. This is important because the President and Council could only rely upon resources generated in India or resources that arrived irregularly from England. Surveys were extensions of the commercial audits the Company servants carried out almost constantly in their

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[374] For example BL IOR CPC P/1/1 June 1704 money gained from fines was to be used to fix the roads and to make 'the town more wholesome and convenient'. Later BL IOR CPC P/1/5 March 1722 land was drained to build a road.

[375] BL IOR MCR P/155/72 p. 8

[376] BL IOR CPC P/1/17 October 1745.

[377] C.A. Bayly, *Empire and Information: Intelligence Gathering and Social Communication in India, 1780-1870* (Cambridge, 2000) and Bayly, *Indian Society*, discuss these developments.

[378] Home, *Of Planting and Planning,* has looked at methods of planning and gathering knowledge of colonial environments as being an important feature of Atlantic colonies but has not looked at the Indian setting in the same detail.

commercial lives.[379] They emerged as an important tool in providing knowledge about the colony and also understanding how to maintain the colony's buildings and infrastructure. Surveys were carried out by carpenters and later a surveyor was employed. Surveys were a solution to this lack of experience and an essential tool in bridging the gap between the commercial expertise of the Council and their inexperience in urban governance.

Throughout the first half of the eighteenth century the Company made regular checks on the quality of the building work in the colony factory.[380] In the 1690s after a centrally walled courtyard had been built, several bastions were added to provide greater protection and coverage of the river for cannons.[381] However, the humid summers and hot winters saw the woodwork and the brickwork of buildings frequently degrade. This led periodically to structurally unsafe roofs and walls.[382] The Company was consequently keen to prevent the high cost of having these buildings collapse and the Company regularly examined the quality of other buildings such as the hospital and commercial properties. One of the largest types of survey undertaken by the Company were surveys of defence structures around the colony. However, the Company less regularly surveyed Fort William itself.[383] The only major survey was undertaken in 1728 where Thomas Snow and John Alose (two men employed to survey all the Company's properties, ships and land) provided the following report:

> [we] find the whole to be very much out of repair, there being several cracks in the walls, brick work wanting in many places, and plaster work almost all over...Notwithstanding a report went home to the honourable company of the badness of the beams, we think it our duty to acquaint you that those of the rooms at the end of the long row, and armoury are so rotten and bad that if other reparations are not ordered this season the honourable company will be great sufferers thereby.[384]

This quote suggests that the Company had not been very active in maintaining the Fort and did not possess the knowledge to carry out basic repairs. Partly this may have been due to the absence of major threats from land and thus little incentive to spend resources on repairs. In addition the English Company at Calcutta did not try and express its power through the military strength of its

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[379] The Company in its public consultations (IOR P Series) kept records of multiple commercial minutiae such as 'Dead Stock' or singular and irregular goods almost monthly.

[380] Normally carried out by a Carpenter and a Bricklayer such as in BL IOR CPC P/1/1 November 1706.

[381] BL IOR CFR COLD G/7/6 September 1696 gives an account of how the factory and the fort were combined into the same building.

[382] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 May 1719 gives an example of the damage the climate could do to the built environment.

[383] Mitter Partha, 'Early British Port Cities of India: Their Planning and Architecture Circa 1640-1757', *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians*, Vol. 45, No. 2 (Jun., 1986), p. 104-5.

[384] BL IOR CPC P/1/6 October 1728.

buildings.[385] The French and Dutch in particular built grander defences and more regularly maintained their forts and when possible ensured their settlements were explicitly fortified. For example Cochin was modified and encircled by a wall to aid in the defence and segregation of the Dutch population.[386] The English in Calcutta were concerned about defence but protected themselves in a different manner. The major challenges to the Company came from attacks on its river trade. Therefore, the Company annually surveyed its ships (which provided the first line of defence and a mobile response to attack) but had no regular system for assessing its Fort.[387] From 1728 this appears to have changed. In 1730 the Company hired a full time surveyor of its buildings.[388] This may have been due to a combination of factors. The new Nawab of Bengal Shuja-ud-Din Muhammad Khan was increasingly challenging the commercial freedom of the Company, demanding more tribute, stopping ships on the river and clamping down on misuse of the Dastaks. The new Nawab did not directly challenge the colony. However, the increased range and potential impact of the Nawab's threats put additional pressure on the Company. This realisation of Mughal pressure coupled with an increased threat of Maratha invasion from the late 1730s, forced the Company to reassess its military position.

At previous times of military threat the Company had become more cautious and had increased its military footing.[389] This continued to the end of the period when in 1742 the Company asked the garrison commanders William Holcombe, John Lloyd and E.J. Reade to survey how the different approaches into Calcutta could be protected and gun batteries erected.[390] By the later part of the decade the Company became so concerned about its capacity to protect the city that it hired an engineer from Madras, Bartholomew Plaisted, to suggest how the colony's defences could be

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[385] Frank Broeze, 'Introduction: Brides of the Sea' in Frank Broeze (ed.) *Brides of the Sea: Port Cities of Asia from the Sixteenth to the Twentieth Centuries* (Honolulu 1989), p. 15.

[386] Anjana Singh, *Fort Cochin in Kerala, 1750-1830: The Social Condition of the Dutch Community in an Indian Milieu* (London 2010), p. 23.

[387] Regular surveys carried out can be found throughout the whole IOR P Series Calcutta Public Consultations. Despite this Calcutta was considered a safe place for Indian merchants to come and trade which contributed to its success. Hasan, 'Indigenous Co-operation' and Lenman, *Britain's Colonial Wars,* p. 90.

[388] BL IOR CPC P/1/8 October 1730 the Company record that 'Wanting a person to oversee the Company's building and having now met with a person well versed in mechanics and architecture. Agreed that he be entertained as surveyor'.

[389] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 July 1708 provides an example of the Company response to the appointment of a new hostile Mughal governor to Bengal.

[390] BL IOR CPC P/1/15 April 1742.

improved. It was also decided that all European members of the colony were to be mustered into a militia. [391]

Another threat to the capacity of the Company to carry out trade was the deterioration of the river banks and ability to safely navigate the river. The majority of commercial activity in Calcutta was carried out down the Hooghly River and the loss of access to the river would have severely damaged Company trade. Good access required adequate docking places and warehouses for the storage of goods. The Company carried out many surveys of the river banks to ensure that there was no deterioration and also repaired the docks on the riverbank which would secure it for little cost.[392] Additionally, the river service carried out yearly surveys of the river to determine how the constantly shifting sandbanks and currents had changed.[393] These measures combined to ensure that the city was not isolated from its trade network and that the Company could manage the trade that arrived at the city. As a report in 1710 suggests:

> We have duly considered the Company's orders in relation to building a wharf before the Fort and find it will be a great security to the banks and a strengthening thereto tis therefore agreed we instantly set about it and make it with brick and raise a breastwork to plant cannon there[394]

Seven years later the Company ordered that some of the houses built along the river's edge should be pulled down to prevent further damage to the bank.[395] The biggest concern seems to have been that following the rainy season the riverbank would be damaged. As the city grew the need to maintain the river as a lifeline also grew. The surveys of the river remained annual events, providing key information for ship's captains.[396] The Council was also aware that it was necessary to maintain land transport links too. Along with the extension of shipping and building other factories throughout Bengal, in 1730 the President and Council built a bridge to the other side of the Hooghly to improve links to the rest of Bengal. [397] Additionally, roads were regularly kept clear and

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[391] BL IOR CPC P/1/19 March 1747 has an account of the different fortifications of the colony in detail and the costs associated with building these up.

[392] Examples of river surveys include BL IOR CPC P/1/2 February 1710, P/1/3 January 1717, P/1/9 April 1733. An example of the Council repairing the docks occurred in 1715 P/1/3 March 1715.

[393] We have examined the role of the pilots service in chapter 3.

[394] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 February 1710.

[395] BL IOR CPC P/1/3 January 1717.

[396] River maintenance was not a new idea for the Company. London regularly used its river service to survey the Thames and also repaired its riverbanks, for example Carry van Lieshout, 'Floods and Flood Response in Eighteenth-Century London' in James A Galloway (ed.), *Tides and Flood: New Research on London and the Tidal Thames from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century* (London 2010). pp. 29-43.

[397] BL IOR CPC P/1/8 May 1730.

in 1722 the Company ordered that land be drained and a new road be built to connect the town with the village of Govindpore nearby.[398] The desire to maintain transport links, both river and land based, shows the commitment by the Company to building and maintaining the infrastructure of the colony. Doing so benefitted its commercial operations and also developed Calcutta as an urban place.

The infrastructure of the colony was essential in maintaining the Colony as a viable place to inhabit. Infrastructure like roads and drainage supported the Company's commercial operations ensuring trade by the Company was not limited by the urban site they had chosen. The Company were conscious of the need to maintain this infrastructure and regularly used surveys and inspections of this infrastructure to ensure that it was maintained, this was a mechanism that would continue and grow in the later part of the century and into the next. Infrastructure was essential to controlling the urban space of the colony and it was the foundation that the rest of the colonies built environment was built upon.

Part 2: The development and management with Calcutta's Built Environment

Country or urban, colonial or metropolitan, powerful or powerless are all dualities that have been explored in urban and colonial history.[399] However, looking at the history of Calcutta means considering more than just strict divisions between Indian-British, Company-non Company and residential-industrial. The records of the Company have captured many of the early changes and approaches to the forming of an urban environment on the banks of the Hooghly. These sources provide us with more than just descriptions of building construction but also attitudes as to where and how people resided within the colony. We can take this source material and explore in much more detail the urban environment created over the sixty years of our period.

Although the factory building dominated the lives of the Europeans who lived in Calcutta, other important structures by 1750 had made their mark.[400] A factory building at the centre of the colony was the standard European model, giving a variety of benefits to the colonists based around pooling resources, expertise and ensuring easier protection of goods and personnel.[401] However, as

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[398] BL IOR CPC P/1/5 March 1722.

[399] Malcolm Cross, *Urbanization and Urban Growth in the Caribbean* (Cambridge, 1979), discusses some of the theorist's ideal types of settlement when discussing the urban-rural duality. Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant,* explores the relationship between the colony and the metropolis in this book, while Eric Stokes reminds readers that South Asian histories are full of dichotomies, 'The First Century', p. 136.

[400] J.P. Losty equates the British settlement primarily to the factory building. Losty, *Calcutta: City of Palaces,* p. 11-12.

[401] Losty, *Calcutta, City of Palaces,* p. 12.

the settlement developed, Calcutta became much more than the single factory building it had once been. By the time the Courthouse was built in 1727 it joined other major buildings that supported the social and administrative functions of the colony. These included a hospital, church, jail, barracks and the aforementioned playhouse. The Company continued to pay money each month for general building works spending on average 765 rupees a month for new buildings between February 1698 and October 1699 and similar sums continued to be paid throughout the period showing the continuous support given to maintaining the infrastructure and buildings in the colony.[402]

The standard model for East India Company commercial operations overseas was through the use of a Factory or Fort building. The Factory in Calcutta was a multi-purpose building combining defence, living and commercial functions for the core Company population living there. Factories were built depending on local conditions and availability of resources. Some were purpose built, some were just rented buildings. Additionally, not all factories were fortified and the norm for most was a small seasonal garrison.[403] When discussing European settlements in Asia historians have also recognised the role of the Factory building in providing a good foundation for colonial and commercial growth.[404] The Fort as a colonial theme has been exploited by historians trying to look at wider debates of British colonies. However, the Fort has never been analysed as the foundations of colonial society and the importance of this building in anchoring the East India Company servants in Bengal should be examined in more detail. The Factory building was more than just a hybrid business and military structure but was the hub of the colony where the maintenance and repair of the urban infrastructure of Calcutta was directed. It is clear from looking at the maps that still exist that unsurprisingly Fort William was the central location for European life in the city. Three maps survive from our period, two from 1742 and one from 1753.[405] Although no earlier maps are available they tell us much about how the city took shape and the role of the Fort in supporting this growth. In all of these maps it is Fort William that is at the centre and often depicted in the greatest detail. Following the resolution of regional unrest and more certain promises from the Mughal state, the Company continued to invest in Calcutta and the city grew

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[402] See BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/3 for the monthly accounts showing expenditure on new buildings. The corresponding references to the founding of these buildings can be found in BL IOR CPC P/1/1 September 1704, BL IOR CPC P/1/1 October 1707, and BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1704 respectively.

[403] The monthly muster rolls suggest that when at peak trading times goods were to be shipped downriver more soldiers were sent to subordinate factories. These muster rolls can be found monthly in the BL IOR CPC P series.

[404] Losty, *City of Palaces,* pp. 11-19 in particular explores the role of a factory amongst the European trading companies. Also Mitter, 'Early British Port Cities, pp. 95-114 describes many of the roles and types of factories used in Asia.

[405] BL Maps collection Maps K.Top.115 40, Maps K.Top.115 41 and Maps K.Top.115 42.

from strength to strength. Looking more closely, the maps show the Fort making up one side of a central square that the majority of the important European buildings were clustered around.[406] The maps also show European housing radiating out into the rest of the city. It is clear from the sources and maps that many of the richer Europeans also built extensive houses with large gardens further out from the city along the river.[407]

The maps and sources give us insight into the building and importance of the commercial space of the colony.[408] This was primarily through the building and buying of warehouse space. These buildings known as 'godowns' are the most frequently mentioned building in the Company records and in several instances the private warehouses of other merchants were acquired to meet the expanding interests of the Company. Other commercial interests on the part of the Company consisted of weaving shops, a wax pit for the packing and transportation of silk and a tank for storing tar for ship repairs.[409] All of these buildings were important in the mercantile operations of the Company; however, these types of building show a very narrow focus in the type of building supported by the Council. Especially in the early period up to 1709, the Council worked hard to expand the industries that had brought them to Bengal in the first place. The President and Council stated that it was important to encourage industry for the benefit of the town and to that end they hired an Indian man to ensure the weavers fulfilled their contracts.[410] In one case the Company even went so far as to allow a British merchant to build a house only if he built two warehouses that the Company could make use of.[411] Such expansion by the Council shows that all the commercial functions of the colony could no longer be contained within the single factory building. By the 1730s the Company had several storage areas for goods around the colony which resulted in the expansion of urban infrastructure. The Factory remained the location for the primary offices of the Company, however, the expansion of commercial activity out into the colony helped to further integrate the Council with the rest of the colony as Calcutta grew in size.

At the heart of the colony, in the neighbourhood around the Fort, was the location where most of this integration between the Company and general European population occurred. In 1753

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[406] BL Maps Collection Maps K.Top.115 42 A Plan of Fort William and Part of the City of Calcutta 1753.

[407] Chaudhuri, *Calcutta the Living City*, p. 11.

[408] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/2 many godowns were built throughout the period though two explicit examples of early godowns were built in May and August 1695.

[409] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/2 July 1697 100 rupees 2 annas and a ¼ paise were supplied to build an additional weaving shop. Sushil Chaudhury , 'International Trade in Bengal Silk and the Comparative Role of Asians and Europeans, circa.1700-1757', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 29, (1995), pp. 373-86, describes the changing market for silk export in Bengal during the period up to 1757 and how Indian merchants dominated the market.

[410] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1706.

[411] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 March 1704.

the houses of Mr Eyre, Mr Coales, Mr Collett and Mr Bellamy (all long term inhabitants of the colony) took pride of place surrounding the square.[412] However, the pattern of housing Company employees had changed over the period. The initial policy was not to legislate at all for where Company servants should live. The first merchants coming to India already had experience of living there so did not need the Factory to train and ease them into Indian life. However, as the colony grew and new and younger merchants arrived, the Council began to feel the lack of provision for these new servants was a problem. In 1695 they argued that:

> There arising many inconveniences from the Right Honourable Company's factors and writers having lodging out of the right honourable company's factory or compound which their agent lives in, and those thatched lodgings being yearly blown down with the southerly storms which causes often repairs, besides they are not at the call or the eye of the agent, as youth ought to be.[413]

This quote shows several aspects of the relationship between the Council and the younger Company servants. The complaint of the Council was both practical and professional. The younger servants living away from the Factory were living in poor quality accommodation which was collapsing almost annually. This impacted not only upon the servants' ability to work and live in Bengal but also their professional performance for the Company. The bigger concern was more that the behaviour of these younger servants also declined when living away from the Factory. The problems of mixing youth with the vices of the urban poor (drinking, gambling, violence and other forms of improper conduct) also had the potential to undermine the concentration and performance of the susceptible young men of the Company. More importantly it also undermined the image, power and authority of the Council as rulers and leaders of the colony. Throughout our period the Company merchants did not socialise with the rest of the colonial population due to similar concerns that their authority and control of the colony would be undermined and commerce damaged. After this was written in the Company records, new servants were to live at the Factory until they could live independently. The change in policy brought the young merchants back under the wing of the Company agent and protected the Company's authority. The aim was to keep control of the young writers with the suggestion that they could be taught to behave as was expected by the Company.

We can see this also in how the Company reacted to the living arrangements of the older members of the Company. Buying property was primarily an activity carried out and recorded in relation to the older Company men. For example, Benjamin Bowcher, who was one of the first

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[412] BL Maps K.Top.115.42 A Plan of Fort William and Part of the City of Calcutta 1753 shows the locations of these houses around the big tank which would become Dalhousie Square in the nineteenth century and in the twentieth century B.B.D Bagh.

[413] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/2 March 1695.

Zemindars of the colony, asked permission to build upon some unoccupied land in 1704, a request granted by the President and Council.[414] Asking Council permission to build in the colony was a standard mechanism for Company servants from even the earliest stages of the founding of the colony. Early records show that most property was sold as leaseholds and that there were various ways that these properties were leased as we shall see later in this chapter. The Company recorded the sale of many leasehold properties amongst many Company and local landowners: for example, the sale of a compound to Ralph Sheldon in 1704, Josiah Jounsen's purchase of a house from Mr O'Neal in 1706, and Mrs Hill's sale of her property to Captain Herbert in 1709.[415] Over time individual records of housing sales ceased to be recorded but the monthly accounts continued to record the duty collected on house sales.[416] The Company particularly encouraged married men and the senior servants to move out into the town.[417] In one case Ralph Sheldon was compensated for having to live in the Factory even though he was on the Council. This was most likely because he was unmarried and living alone might have left him susceptible to forming relationships with the wrong sort of people or damaging the image of the Company. The Council stated that it was normal for married men to live away from the Factory.[418] He was to receive ten rupees a month more than other merchants on the Council due to this unusual situation.[419] Similarly, at the beginning of 1704, Edward Littleton who was joining the Council had to choose between a house in the town or lodgings in the Factory, when asked,

> to chose whither he could have an apartment provided for him within the Fort...or in the town. He thinks a house in the town will be most convenient for him being but few good rooms finished in the new house in the Fort.[420]

The implication from Littleton was that returning to the Factory was beneath his position as a senior officer of the Company and that the quality of his living standard was key to displaying his status amongst his peers. He had been offered the room as a new member of the colony to help him settle

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[414] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 March 1704.

[415] These three examples can be found in BL IOR CPC P/1/1.

[416] For example BL IOR CPC P/1/2 May 1711, the monthly accounts of the revenue state 137 rupees, 14 annas and 6 paise were generated from the duties on the sale of houses (however the quantity of the property sold is not available). Each month the Company recorded the revenue generated within the colony and these figures can be found in the BL IOR CPC P Series.

[417] Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe, ''It Buys Me Freedom': Genteel Lodging in Late-Seventeenth and Eighteenth-Century London', *Parergon*, Volume 24, Number 2, (2007), pp. 139-161, discusses many of the options that would have been available to the Company men's contemporaries in London.

[418] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1704.

[419] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 April 1704.

[420] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 January 1704.

but being wealthy he was able to support himself. However, as the map from 1753 shows, by the end of our period the most prominent and richest members of the community gravitated back towards Fort William. The increasing size of the black town and the nucleation of the white town towards the end of the period made living near the Fort a much more attractive and socially desirable option. Later maps of Calcutta show that once stability to the region returned in the 1760s Europeans were beginning to build further away from Fort William again. Calcutta like other colonies saw the area around the Fort develop into an area with better quality housing and higher rents.[421] Living in the centre had several benefits including easier access to the infrastructure of the urban core and the ease of communication with other merchants both Indian and European who were clustered around Fort William.[422] For the Company servants, the Factory acted as an anchor that allowed easier access for settling in Calcutta.

The same could not be said of the lives of the poorer Europeans in the city. As we explored in the previous chapter, much of the European population in Calcutta comprised soldiers and sailors and a significant number of these poorer inhabitants were part of the seasonal fluctuations in the European population. The Factory records note that soldiers and sailors from the early years often rented houses near the bazaar as the Council did not provide them with lodgings as they did for other Company servants. Although housing there was cheaper it was also of a poorer quality with flammable thatch roofs and tightly packed together. It therefore left them more vulnerable to fire and other natural disasters as shown by the example of a fire in 1695, which destroyed many of the houses around the bazaar.[423] These groups could rent an empty house or a room at the several punch houses in the town or at private residences, or if a sailor they might remain aboard their ships. It was not until 1710 that soldiers received permanent lodgings at the hospital. As the Council noted:

> There being a great many Europe Soldiers in the Garrison who if they lodge about the town as usual which creates sickness and other inconveniencies to themselves and others therefore tis agreed the hospital be walled round and that barracks be made in it for the soldiers to lodge in and that some of the officers do likewise lodge there and see a good decorum kept among them.[424]

The building of the barracks by the Company was not enacted for the same reasons of integrating the soldiers within the community, which had been the policy for young Company writers. The accommodation provided for soldiers was a form of control rather than a means of supporting

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[421] Henry Dodwell, *The Nabobs of Madras* (Delhi, 1986), pp. 165-6.

[422] Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial Uncanny* (New York 2006), p. 77 argues that the white and black town was distinctly separate however this is based upon a later analysis of the colony. In our earlier period this distinction is not so clear.

[423] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/2 March 1695.

[424] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 February 1710.

integration within the permanent European community. This provision was only for the full time soldiers, no lodging was provided at all for soldiers and sailors who were part of the cyclical seasonal hiring. Consequently, these groups gravitated towards the cheaper areas away from the Fort, nearer the punch houses and the bazaars in the black town.[425] This created a mixed area of the same poor thatched housing as had burnt down in 1695 where Indians and Europeans shared space. This 'grey town' shows that it is not entirely accurate to posit a stark division between the European and Indian space of the colony.[426] The white town, centred as it was around the Factory, was accessible only for the elite mercantile European population.

However, this would change by the end of our period. From at least 1742, the white neighbourhood surrounding Fort William was surrounded by wooden palisades. The can be seen in figure 1 titled, 'A plan or birds eye view of that part of Calcutta within the compass of the palisades, wherein live the European and Christians'.[427] These wooden palisades laid out by Plaisted created a physical boundary between the white and black towns, passing directly through the mixed 'grey town' to the north. The area inside the palisades did include some poorer parts of the city north of Fort William stretching as far as the Armenian and Portuguese churches. Although the placement of the palisades did not completely separate the Indian and European populations it was designed to provide protection and defence for the Christians of the colony who were all expected to drill as part of the new militia units. These areas were also the homes of the transient population - the sailors and soldiers - who were vital in keeping the town protected and maintaining its commercial operation. The use of a palisade was intended to break up the spectrum of white, grey and black neighbourhoods, bringing the Europeans of the grey town into the fold of the white town for mutual protection and control. This artificial distinction, which went against the evolved layout of the colony, remained for the next twenty years as external threats continued to threaten

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[425] William Baer, 'Housing for the Lesser Sort in Stuart London: Findings from Certificates, and Returns of Divided Houses', *The London Journal*, vol. 33, (2008), pp. 61–88 explores some of the housing options for the poor of London in the seventeenth century. Vanessa Harding, 'Families and Housing in Seventeenth-Century London', *Parergon*, Volume 24, (2007), pp. 115-138 contrasts the changes in poor and genteel parts of London and notes the same clustering and segmentation of the urban population of London.

[426] Thomas R. Metcalf, 'Imperial Towns and Cities', in P.J. Marshall (ed.) *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (Cambridge 2001), p. 225 has suggested that colonial authority decreed where people should live. For our period, although this can be seen with how Madras and Bombay were organised, the same is not evident in how Calcutta was defined. The idea of spacious and grand streets in the European part of the colony and Indian narrow and dirty streets is not visible before 1757.

[427] BL Maps K.Top.115.41 A Plan or Birds Eye View of that Part of Calcutta within the Compass of the Palisades, wherein live the European and Christians 1742.

the operations of the President and Council.[428] It finally broke down again later in the eighteenth century when external threats stopped and the spectrum of white, black and grey town would re-emerge.[429]
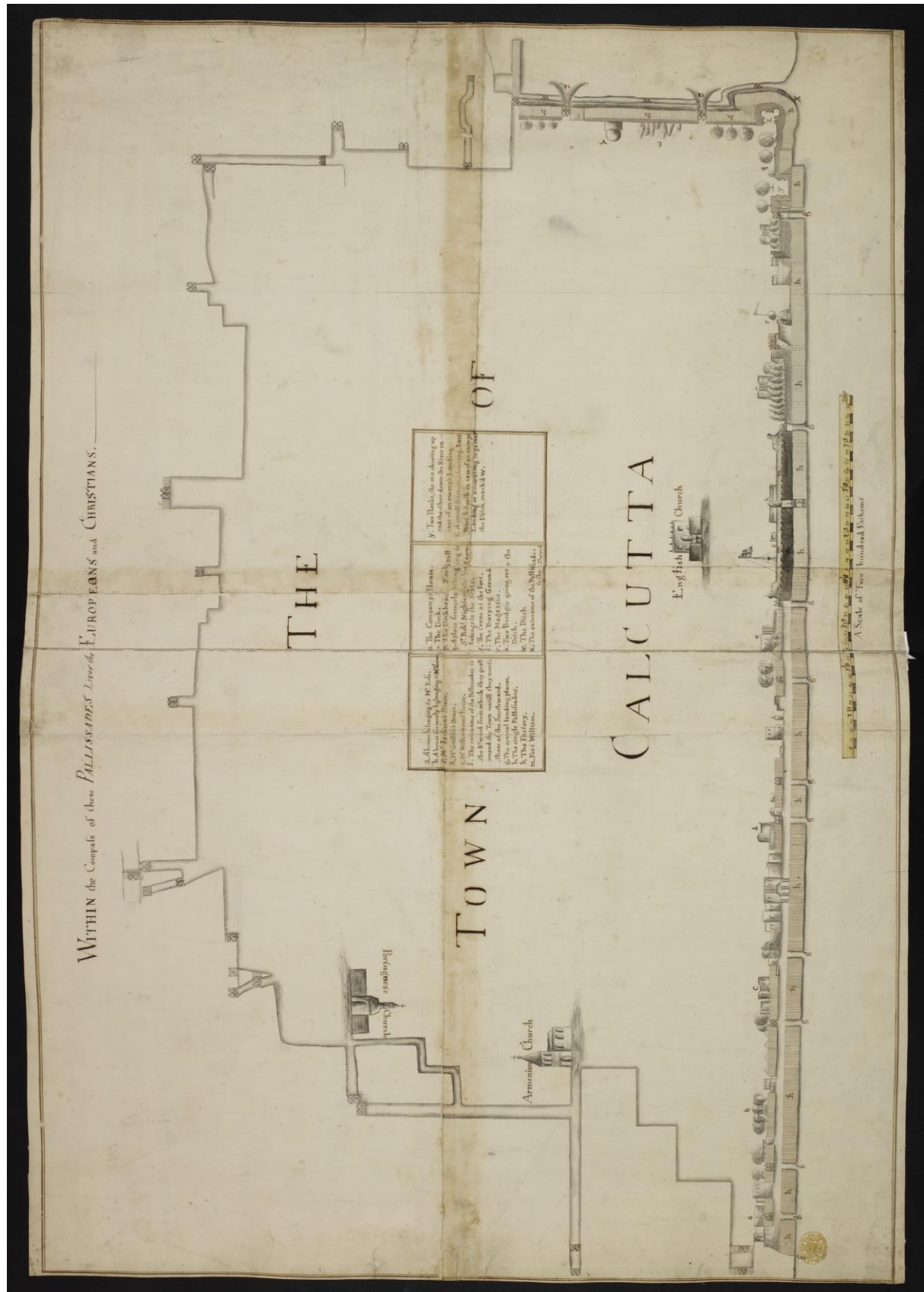

Figure 2: A map of Calcutta from 1742

Understanding how the colony developed from nothing to a principal Presidency town requires us to look at more than just Company interest. There are many examples of areas where the wider interests of the European population were protected. The capacity of the Company to govern was assisted by those who wished to tie their fortunes to that of Calcutta and its ruling Company elite. Looking at how the built environment of Calcutta was regulated and how this extended to the wider population of the colony will tell us much about how the colony was built to support a wide range of interests not just those of the Company.

The men of the Mayor's Court were one of the only groups outside the President and Council to have a role in managing the urban environment of the colony. This difference in how urban infrastructure increasingly represented a wider European population in Calcutta can be seen in another action by the Mayor's Court. One of the first actions of the new Mayor's Court was to order the clearing and ordering of the streets and layout of the colony. Although the Council had carried out similar improvements the actions of the Mayor's Court were more focussed and more organised, based around a new series of laws and prohibitions. For example they wrote:

> That persons laying timber, Chunsum, bricks etc in the streets and high ways of this town and that the roads of the town are encroached upon and made scarce passable by some people being permitted to build little matt huts to sell fruit and Jui, all which is to the great inconvenience and danger of passengers and inhabitants.[430]

The concern of the Mayor's Court is clear here. The current policy of unregulated urban space was unsuitable for many inhabitants of the colony. The Mayor and Aldermen identified the source of the disorder amongst the Indian population of Calcutta. In particular it was the way that they built where they pleased that was so offensive to the Mayor's Court's idea of an ordered colonial space. They suggested 'that the black people housing themselves under the wharves along the riverside is very offensive' and:

> That many small bridges in the back part of the town are out of repair. That the by lanes and back streets of this town are very dirty and full of filth for want of drains and not being mended to the great danger and inconveniency of the inhabitants of this town.[431]

Small backstreets and lanes were the areas of the colony predominantly inhabited by the poorer Indian population. The rich European mercantile elite remained clustered around the main

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[430] BL IOR MCR P/155/72 p. 4.

[431] BL IOR MCR P/155/72 p. 4.

thoroughfares near Fort William. This assessment of the colony shows that it was the areas of the black town, in particular the backstreets and lanes that were of biggest concern.[432] These areas were predominantly populated by the Indian inhabitants of the colony and before the founding of the Mayor's Court in 1727 had not been managed by the President and Council. Also important were the particular policies used for then controlling this space:

> Ordered that in the high roads and streets of this town thirty six foot to be kept clear from side to side and that the laying any timber, rubbish etc impediments within that space be a fine of ten rupees, and also that the bye lanes and Buzaars be kept clean and clear by each person before their own doors and that on their neglect they be fined each aggressor ten rupees and the said fine to be increased on a second or more frequent default.[433]

For the men of the Mayor's Court these two quotes show the implementation of their understanding of controlling the urban environment. The areas they struggled to regulate were predominantly Indian and the focus of their work was in preventing the Indian population from neglecting the urban space of the colony and undermining the Mayor and Aldermen's vision of an ordered environment.

Another form of controlling the urban space of the colony was in the form of leases. This method of accountability helped to encourage trade but also allowed efficient use of the Company's land as leases, like licences, could be granted conditionally. Leases were typically granted either on a yearly basis or on a thirty-one year cycle. The thirty-one year lease was the standard for established members of the settlement while yearly leases were provided to those whose dwellings may have been of questionable quality or where the occupants were transitory. There are many examples within the records of short leases for many different sizes of land. However, it is important to note that longer leases were given primarily to the most established residents of the town or those with immediate vested interest in maintaining the settlement for the future. For example John Beard who became president of the settlement was granted a thirty-one year lease in 1704.[434] Samuel Browne, the Zemindar, was granted a similar lease in 1714.[435] While Thomas Coales who remained in India for over fifteen years and whose relatives also played a part in the running of the colony, was granted a lease of 31 years for several plots of land in 1727.[436] The consequence of a mixed short- and long- term lease system was that the Council could more easily

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[432] Harding, 'Families and Housing', pp. 130-132, has looked at how crowded and impoverished those living in London's alleys were in the late seventeenth-century.

[433] BL IOR MCR P/155/72 p. 4.

[434] IOR P/1/1 March 1704 mentions the granting of the lease whilst BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1707 describes how his 31 year lease was to be dealt with after his death.

[435] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 March 1714.

[436] BL IOR CPC P/1/6 May 1727.

control tenancy and habitation within the colony. The Council could decline to renew short term contracts if they wished to improve a part of the town or they could lock in the value and investment of capital through longer lease agreements.

Providing stability and security for long term tenants (primarily the long-term and vested interests of the community) was a major function of leases. The Company reported that:

> Several of the British Inhabitants being willing to take leases for ground rent having laid out considerable sums of money in handsome buildings, agreed that we give them the same paying a year's rents in hand and obliged to renew the same at the term of thirty one years as the ground rents shall increase in value paying a year's rent in hand upon renewing the lease.[437]

This suggests that thirty-one year leases increased the value of the land and the buildings built upon them. Those that had these leases could build, invest and improve the land they were renting for the thirty-one years. The option to promote investment in the settlement was of great benefit to the Company as well as inhabitants. Interestingly, the push to introduce such longer and formal leases came from the inhabitants rather than the Council. The Factory Records (the precursors to the Public Consultations) state:

> Several inhabitants who pay ground rents to the right honourable company for the compounds they live in desiring leases for the ground as customary in other places agreed that we write to the president and Council at Fort St George to send us the form of lease given there how often renewed and what else necessary about this affair.[438]

This suggests an agreed approach between long term inhabitants and the Company on how to regulate and promote the land use and quality of the colonial space they both shared.[439] This approach became the normal relationship in British imperial activities over the eighteenth century.[440] However, the Company recognised during the period of this study the importance of encouraging investment in property and encouraging inhabitants to settle in Calcutta with little or no obstructions.[441] Certain areas of the town and some of its buildings were controlled and planned

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[437] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/4 September 1703.

[438] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/4 May 1703.

[439] Summerson, *Georgian London* (London 2003)*,* p. 24 mentions sixty-one year leases being the norm in London by the end of the eighteenth century. McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London,* p. 59 describes similar length of lease.

[440] Bowen, *Elites, Enterprise,* p. 3.

[441] This goes against Rhoades Murphy's argument that Calcutta was designed and operated with a temporary mentality, Murphy, 'The City in the Swamp', p. 251.

but the majority of Calcutta was not subject to formal planning.[442] Leases also benefited the Company in ensuring that the colony did not grow out of control or in a way that encroached upon the commercial activities of the Company. For example, the Company forbade private residents from building tanks (artificial water sources) or building walls without the Company's permission.[443] Planned new buildings required the permission of the Council but also the Company from 1704 surveyed the land people inhabited to ensure it was legally leased and the Council then provided the Indian inhabitants new guarantees for the land they inhabited.[444] This is another example of how the President and Council wanted to control the use of the space within the colony by all inhabitants. Such permissions ensured the development of the settlement remained under the control of the Council while not discouraging those who wished to come to Calcutta as personal investments in goods and property would be protected.

The attempt to encourage permanent settlement for the benefit of the colony can be seen in another area. In 1706 there was a change by the Council to the traditional Company duty on the sale of houses to benefit the population as a whole. It was changed to a flat five percent duty that was levied on all property. Previously duties of two percent on large houses and twenty five percent on small houses had been the norm. By 1706 the old system was thought of as a hardship to the poor of the colony.[445] This shows the other side of the Company's power over the way land was distributed and accessed. Though the Council proportionally increased the duty on larger houses they saw that to promote new settlers and Indian migrant workers, it would be of benefit to drop the duties on lower quality accommodation. This can be seen as an attempt to improve Company profits in the future and to build up the quality of the property in Calcutta.[446] The Company dictated how its territory was used and acted to prevent the problems of misuse or neglect that such new settlers might bring. Leases were certainly not unique to Calcutta but their existence shows how norms of control from Europe provided the Company with the tools to easily manage their urban environment.[447]

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[442] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/3 September 1699 provides a good example of this though there are many other examples.

[443] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 March 1701.

[444] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 April 1704 and July 1705 provide two examples of early attempts to measure the space within the colony.

[445] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 April 1706.

[446] Summerson, *Georgian London*, p. 24 has suggested a similar mechanism in London's development.

[447] Summerson, *Georgian London*, pp. 22-24 has examined how leases encouraged development and ultimately retained control of the property by the developer. McKellar, *The Birth of Modern London,* pp59-68, has argued that leases to be successful needed to balance cost and length of lease against the profits of the developer. Leases would control and motivate and allowed building work to begin amongst the complex layers of ownership that was present in London.

Control of physical space and the development of the built environment was vital in ensuring that Company expansion was cheap and easy while also maintaining the flow of investors and skills into the settlement. However, the one grey area of Company and indeed Mughal control was access to the settlement and Bengal via the river Hooghly. Although the Company had the right to protect its trade on the river it was a constant frontier of conflict between the European inhabitants of the city and the Mughal governor. To protect its monopoly of trade to Asia the Company implemented a pass system and fortified the river trade. Passes protected the borders of the Company's territory, ships without passes were denied docking access and all resources available to legitimate shipping with passes were also denied. Passes were granted for set periods of time and were based on the tonnage of the ship meaning a sliding scale of control for the Company. Large ships had more to lose by returning to Europe empty-handed and also presented a bigger risk to the viability of the town if they traded with rivals' colonies or damaged the Company's reputation with the Mughal state. Again this shows the dynamic approach the Company took to controlling and managing its space. Passes with variable cost ensured that smaller traders were not excluded from trading in India but ensured that threats from larger competitors were restricted. The additional burden any larger vessel placed upon the resources of the colony (docks, housing, warehouse space etc) was paid for thereby ensuring the Company was not disadvantaged as it sought to increase access Indian markets and incentivise trade.

Conclusion

Previous historical research has not looked at how the built environment of Calcutta was vital in reflecting the growth and development of the colony. This chapter has readdressed this. I have argued that through looking at the strategies of building and regulating Calcutta's infrastructure and built environment you can see some of the fundamental features that ensured Calcutta's growth under the stewardship of the East India Company servants who ran the colony. Specifically, the building of infrastructure, surveying this infrastructure, building and maintaining diversity in the land use of the colony and controlling the built environment through legislation ensured that a complex range of tools (based upon European norms) preserved the authority of the Company over the period. Overall, this chapter supposes that the success of the colony was due to the Company utilising the strategies highlighted in this chapter to define, control and regulate the urban space of Calcutta. This is important because without controlling the urban environment of the colony it would have become harder for the Company to retain its position of authority and to maximise the commercial benefits of trading in Bengal that was so fundamental in coming to Asia.

Chapter 7: Controlling behaviour in Calcutta

The life of a ship and its crew sailing across the oceans of the early modern world was an experiment in the micromanagement of resources and infrastructures. Poorly managed ships and crews could turn on themselves or fail to make it to port after many long months at sea. Discipline on the ship could be harsh but sailors were also notorious for their exploits whilst ashore. A life as a sailor could be short, violent and dangerous. However, it could equally be as dangerous on land. Danger was part and parcel of early modern life. Violence, disease, famine in all their forms kept population and life expectancy much below present levels. Violent activities were often punished equally as violently by the state.[448] Reactions to violence and other unacceptable behaviour tell us much about the relationships and values of people within a society. Deviants in Calcutta, like in Europe, faced a range of punishments and censures. From confinement in jail, ship or home, to exile, fines and whippings, all were ways of punishing and controlling deviant behaviour. In Calcutta the management of the colony required the development of a variety of institutions of law and governance.

The challenge for the historian is in determining how colonial authority was executed and assessing how various oriental and occidental influences shaped the Company's power and authority in Calcutta. The court system used by Calcutta has its origins in the period before Plassey, but the courts as they emerged and are referred to in the historiography of South East Asia emerged from the colonial system established by Robert Clive and his colleagues post 1757. There is source material that tells us some of the basic legal structures that were implemented during our period but there was a stark difference between the detailed source material on the courts of the post 1750s period and the period of this thesis. Several of the issues that come out of the historiography of South East Asian courts can be seen in our period but we must be careful to see these developments in their specific context and also identify the influences from British law that would help to inform the Company elite in managing behaviour. In chapter five we identified the court structures that were built and the legal basis for colonial authority established through the 1727 Mayors Court charter. These events codified the authority of the colonial elite and gave them the tools to enforce British common law and Company regulations in our period. The challenge therefore is to now

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[448] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (London, 1977), examines some of the most extreme cases of an early modern society permeated by violence.

identify how the President and Council utilised this authority to manage the behaviour of the European population of Calcutta.[449]

Criminal activity has long been a topic of interest for historians but little discussion of crime in a colonial setting has occurred before the later eighteenth century. Crime in its simplest definition is the act of breaking the law. However, the definition, enforcement, punishment and effectiveness of the law are all arenas of historical debate and discussion. This makes the study of crime a malleable and complex topic, approaches to which are equally complex and varied. The historical study of crime was first approached statistically, using court records to provide a quantitative analysis of criminal activity.[450] More recent approaches have been cultural, identifying the expression and idea of crime.[451] Underpinning this approach is the issue of elite control. Lawyers, merchants, gentry, clergy and other powerful elite groups all defined crime in terms that reflected and framed their values.[452] The actions of the elite in creating and enforcing law were always in direct contrast with the common men and women who were predominantly prosecuted for these crimes. Identifying the role of the elite in defining and controlling negative behaviour has not been attempted in our period. Defining behaviour was not a static relationship but one which, as Robert Shoemaker has argued, reflects changing social dynamics in the period blurring the lines

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[449] The relationship between colonial authority and the Indian population of Calcutta will be explored in the next chapter.

[450] Douglas Hay, 'War, Dearth and Theft in the Eighteenth Century: The Record of the English Courts', *Past & Present*, No. 95 (1982), pp. 117-160 discusses the critique of statistical approaches to crime. Hay particularly focuses on the works of J.M. Beattie, 'The Pattern of Crime in England, 1660-1800', *Past and Present*, no. 62 (1974) and J. M. Beattie, 'The Criminality of Women in Eighteenth-Century England', *Journal of Social History*, (1975). Later Joanna Innes and John Styles, 'The Crime Wave: Recent Writing on Crime and Criminal Justice in Eighteenth-Century England', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 25, No. 4, (Oct., 1986), pp. 380-435 have looked at social trends in the study of crime. More recently Peter King, 'Punishing Assault: The Transformation of Attitudes in the English Courts', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History,* Vol. 27, No. 1 (Summer, 1996) and Peter King, *Crime and Law in England, 1750-1840: Remaking Justice from the Margins* (Cambridge 2010) has along with Malcolm Gaskill, *Crime and Mentalities in Early Modern England* (Cambridge 2000) begun to look at crime in new ways.

[451] Douglas Hay, Peter Linebaugh, John G. Rule, E.P. Thompson and Cal Winslow (eds.), *Albion's Fatal Tree, Crime and Society in Eighteenth Century England* (London, 1991) were amongst the first to approach crime in this way and since then Hay in particular has continued to critique the older approaches. Bruce P. Smith, 'English Criminal Justice Administration, 1650-1850: A Historiographic Essay', *Law and History Review*, Vol. 25, (2007), pp. 593-634 has produced the most comprehensive review of approaches to the study of criminal justice since the Innes and Styles piece in 1986.

[452] Kathleen Wilson, *The Island Race*; Englishness, Empire and Gender in the eighteenth century (London 2003), pp.2-3 argues that identity is a mode of differentiation and that what is permissible and what is forbidden is central to the individual.

between the elite gentlemen and the poor.[453] This changing relationship is a problem when trying to identify standard approaches to managing behaviour by the colonial elite and we must be careful to not directly link elite identity with the way that they managed behaviour.[454] The colonial setting of Calcutta however gives us a unique testing ground for seeing how the relationship between urban elites and the urban poor shaped the power and position of the President and Council. The dynamic relationship between elite desires and the actions of the poor needs to be properly illuminated, ensuring a more balanced analysis. The study of crime is more than looking at the breaking of the law. It is also the analysis of the varied responses to criminal behaviour and activities by the law makers.

The source material available to examine the development and implementation of the colonial legal system was produced primarily by the Company servants. When comparing the period of this thesis to the decades after Plassey we are much more limited in the quantity and quality of the source material that has been so widely used. We can still tell much about the approach to crime based upon the narratives of the cases that do survive.[455] Although some of this material has been lost, enough remains to show how the Company wanted to define and control deviant behaviours activities within the colony. [456] This material details different Company responses to deviant behaviour but it is hard to know whether the surviving records detail all of the responses to deviant behaviour. These records are much less complete than the material available for the later eighteenth century. Also we should not consider this sources material as being reflective of just the Company leadership. The Chaplain, captains of the European ships, officers of the military companies, the private merchants and the wives and children of these men were all part of the elite. These people within the colony were predominantly connected to the actions of the Company and thus criminal activity that threatened the authority of the Company also threatened the position of these groups. Therefore, European studies of crime that look at the role of elites in defining and punishing criminal activity will prove useful in the Calcutta context. The material available also provides a unique insight into how the Mayor's Court emerged as a new tool of colonial authority and also the way that the Company's role changed over the period because of this new court.

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[453] Shoemaker, *The London Mob*, pp. 15-16.

[454] Wilson, *The Island Race*, p. 4.

[455] Durba Ghosh, 'Household Crimes and Domestic Order: Keeping Peace in Colonial Calcutta, C.1770-C.1840', *Modern Asian Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 3 (Jul., 2004), p. 610

[456] Ghosh, 'Legal and Liberal Subjects', p. 154. has suggested that legal subjects (criminals or defendants) only exist in legal texts. This is important in reminding us that the cases we use in our analysis of the legal authority of Calcutta only reflect the recorded events rather than the total number of criminal/deviant activities of the colony.

The aim of this chapter is to examine how the Company used different policies and strategies to control and punish deviant behaviour. This will involve an examination of European behaviour as this was the primary type of behavioural control evident in the records. The next chapter will deal with how the Company dealt with the behaviour of the Indian population as this feeds into the discussion of the Anglo-Indian relationship and Company authority. This chapter will identify how the Council responded and controlled different types of negative behaviour amongst the colonists. The analysis of the sources will be done in two ways. It will look at how the South East Asian context of the colony impacted upon the control of behaviour (looking to see if the mechanisms of later colonial control are applicable to our earlier period). It will then look at how the specific cases that appear in the records were managed by the colonial elite and the factors that may have shaped the elites response and control of certain behaviour. Specifically it will look at the strategies of dealing with commercial and criminal behaviour (with a focus on violent, larcenous and sexual crime). This chapter will also look at how moral behaviour was also managed and how the Company supported certain types of behaviour that reflected their own interests. Overall, this will give us a good picture of how behaviour was managed by the colonial elite of Calcutta and the influencing factors behind this management.

Part 1: Regulating commercial behaviour

The colony was primarily founded for its commercial potential. Therefore, examining how the Company managed the commercial behaviour of the colonists is essential in demonstrating how the Company tried to regulate behaviour more generally. The Company merchants were employed based upon their contracts with the Company and all private merchants also signed agreements to abide by Company authority. Commercial behaviour was in particular regulated based upon the terms of a contract. Poor regulation of commercial behaviour was a rejection of Company authority and undermined the power and governance of the President and Council thus damaging the economic viability of the colony. Poor regulation also potentially jeopardized the private connections and commercial activities of Company servants in Bengal. To understand how such pitfalls were avoided we can use Company records to identify the methods used to control and regulate commercial behaviour and maintain the contractual arrangement between the Company and the European inhabitants of Calcutta.

Certain disruptive behaviour by the poor of the colony could impact upon the use and experience of Calcutta's urban space and therefore controlling their activities was also important.[457]

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[457] Ghosh, *Household Crimes and Domestic Order*, p. 600 has argued that British judges used the rule of law to support peace and promote stability. However, British laws also shows how the Company legitimised

It was an essential requirement for the Council to control the quality and distribution of alcohol within the colony if they wanted to avoid disruption and unrest. For example in 1743, George Heath won the licence to produce arrack for the Company. This licence was for seven years and he paid 9000 rupees a year for the privilege which was about £290 a year, hinting at the profit to be made.[458] Licences such as these were the primary form of control utilised by the Council in controlling commerce. For example, Dominga Ash, one of the longest running owners of a public house, was accused of making poor quality arrack in 1703. Following complaints, her conduct was investigated.[459] Having a licence protected Dominga Ash's business from competitors for the length of her licence. But it also made her accountable for her actions and the quality of the goods she supplied the Company. In this particular example she was cleared, however, the threat of action from the Company was explicit. As such, commercial activities that were tied directly into the profitability of the Company were regulated to prevent abuse. In this example of punch houses and arrack distillation, poor or dangerously produced alcohol was a risk to the lives of soldiers and sailors thus damaging the commercial capacity of the Company.

Licences as a contractual tool were effective in promoting the appropriate behaviour around the colony and ensuring that the Council retained control in areas not directly controlled by commercial activities of the Company. Licences were a form of contract between the Company and the licence holder where each benefitted financially.[460] Licenses were to be given to 'responsible people' and punch houses were to have accommodation suitable for people to lodge at in addition to the serving alcohol.[461] Dominga Ash, who moved to supplying arrack for public houses rather than selling directly to the Company, continued to buy licences up to 1721 and others such as Francis Vanes held licences consecutively for periods of over ten years.[462] The regular appearance of people like Ash and Vanes in the licence lists suggests that licences were an accepted tool for both Company and licence holder. The license agreement was a dynamic tool. For example the Company introduced a policy whereby punch houses were only allowed to maintain drinking tabs for sailors up to a value of five rupees. The Company recorded that 'several complaints having formerly been made by our Europe Commanders of their people running in debt to public house

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authority over the poorer inhabitants of the colony and stepped in when other forms of social regulations had broken down.

[458] BL IOR CPC P/1/16 August 1743.

[459] BL IOR CRF DAC G/7/4 February 1703.

[460] Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Liquor Licensing in England Principally from 1700 to 1830* (London, 1903), pp. 4-9 explore the function of leases arguing that they were a form of control and a form of property that could be created and destroyed based upon the wishes of the elite.

[461] *Diary of William Hedges* Vol.II p. 129.

[462] Ash last appears in the Company records in BL IOR CPC P/1/4 February 1721. Whilst Vanes first appears in 1719, BL IOR CPC P/1/4 April 1719 and last appears in July 1735, BL IOR CPC P/1/11 July 1735.

sometimes to near the amount of their wages who afterward desert and very often weaken their ships company'.[463] This shows the responsibility the licence holders were expected to show in regards to running their properties and the impact of irresponsible commerce.[464] Licences were therefore an effective solution for controlling undesirable commercial activities. However, licences for punch houses remained cheap to buy though their numbers were limited by the Company (one hundred rupees and no more than six punch houses were recorded throughout the period despite population and trade growth). By not encumbering licence holders with heavy financial responsibilities, it helped to encourage the survival of public houses for the benefit of the offshore leave of seamen. Licences were not designed to be a barrier to entry for inhabitants who wished to set up a punch house hence their low cost. They were, due to the terms of running a punch house and the accountability of the position, a direct tool of Company control.[465] License holders also benefitted, as working within the terms of the licenses also guaranteed clientele and restricted competition. Limiting the number of punch houses in the colony prevented them from becoming too numerous and/or poorly managed. Licenses therefore were of mutual benefit to each side and were essential in controlling undesired activity.

The attempts to regulate the urban space of the colony through the Mayor's Court can also be seen in other areas. In 1728 the Mayor's Court recorded several suggestions for a reorganisation of the markets within Calcutta.[466] They suggested a series of changes including:

1st   That there be three markets, two for fish and greens and the other for live cattle, butchers meat, poultry and provisions for Europeans.

2nd   That no one presume to sell any live cattle, poultry and provisions for Europeans outside the market area.

3rd   Goods to be paid for before leaving.

4th   A table of prices to ensure that goods are sold at a fair value.

5th   Dustucks or passes to be granted to sellers to prevent harassment by Mughal officials.

6th   two or three English butchers to be licensed to sell meat outside the bazaar.

7th   poor meat to be thrown in the river.

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[463] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 July 1720.

[464] Webb, *The History of Liquor Licensing*, p. 9 argues that in Britain activities and behaviour could be enforced in pubs by the use of licenses which forced license holders to comply with regulations set out by the urban elite.

[465] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1705 gives the example of when the Company chased the license holders for their payments which shows that the Company expected regular compliance with the terms of the license.

[466] BL IOR MCR P/155/72 p. 40.

8th the Company's Chokeys are to not take stock of provisions sold as it impedes business. Offenders to be fined and fired.

9th Banians that charge more than they're allowed in customs are to be fined and fired.

10th weekdays are for all meats but Saturday is for live cattle.

11th despite the customs of the past the new markets were to be paid for by duties on goods sold at the old markets.

12th duties only on goods sold.

13th bakers butter and cheese sellers/makers to be inspected.

14th bakers that sell bad bread are to be fined.

15th bakers prices set yearly and licenses renewed yearly.

16th bakers exempt on paying duty for wheat.

17th milk to be offered to the buttermen first.

18th buttermen to stick to prices set by court.

19th all penalties are to be paid half to the Company and half to the informer.

20th market clerks to have a staff of one cooley and three peons.

21st monthly accounts.

22nd public declarations.

23rd clerk to be paid 40 rupees per month.

Almost all of these new ideas about the Calcutta market replicated by-laws of British markets.[467] Like many British towns, the role of the bazaar or market was synonymous with the role of the town.[468] In Calcutta this was just as true but we can see here that the European elite were regulating the commercial space and functions of the bazaar to match British understanding of how markets should be run.

Many of the particular decrees were about changing the operation and management of the market as well as raising the standards of the goods sold there. Items such as the regulation of the quality of the bread, butter and cheese (item thirteen) show the desire to improve the quality of the produce sold at the market. The means to regulate the market came from the use of fines and

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[467] Adrian Randall and Andrew Charlesworth (eds.) *Markets, Market Culture and Popular Protest in Eighteenth-Century Britain and Ireland (*Liverpool, 1996) have examined how markets were managed and how they were spaces of conflict, while Keith Wrightson, *Earthly Necessities: Economic Lives in Early Modern Britain* (Yale, 2000) provides a good introduction into how markets intersected with peoples everyday lives.

[468] This is something explored by Sen, *Empire of Free Trade,* p. 42, who argues that particularly in Mughal urban places marketplaces were 'prominent knots in the fabric of social mediation'.

licences (items fourteen and fifteen) which were standard European methods of controlling behaviour.[469] The regulation of the market also extended to how the space was used. The markets were separated into different types and were the only places that commercial activity was to happen (item two). However, for the benefit of the European population two butchers were allowed to operate outside the designated market areas (item six). The chaos caused by daily influxes of cattle into the marketplace was controlled by making Saturdays the only day for the sale of live cattle (item ten). This control of the market space was another attempt to make the markets reflect European norms and to make it more usable for the European population. The management of the market was also more tightly controlled by strictly enforced organisation and administration including, the display of information, regular accounts, a paid clerk and the separation of the markets into different types goods sold (items one, twenty, twenty-two and twenty-three). The remainder of the items on the list were to control issues of excessive bureaucracy and potential corrupt practices amongst the traders. For example the Banians employed to regulate the market were not allowed take stock of all goods entering the market (an opportunity for bribery) and they were to stick to the prescribed charges list when levying fines, again to stop corruption (items eight and nine). Excessive bureaucracy was also prevented by the use of Dastaks for traders which prevented other Mughal officials from impeding trade by asking for duties (item five). Problems arising from corrupt market traders who might trick consumers, were dealt with by items three, four, and nineteen. Two of these items, setting standard prices and making people pay for goods upfront helped to regulate transactions and prevent problems in the market. The last item, number nineteen, is interesting because it provided an incentive for the traders and inhabitants to regulate each other's behaviour. This theoretically made the task of controlling commercial activity much easier. Although we have no evidence of these decrees being followed, they showed the intent and provide an insight into how the men of the Mayor's Court wanted to manage commercial behaviour. The image of Calcutta as understood by the Mayor's Court was that the Indian population should be controlled and British models of commerce were to take precedence. In addition the inhabitants of the colony had a duty to act in a way that upheld the interests and stability of the colony. Overall, the control of commercial activity in the colony put the commercial viability of Calcutta first but also protected the interests of the Company elite in ensuring that

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[469] Webb and Webb, *The History of Liquor Licensing,* pp. 4-6 the impact of leases in controlling behaviour, quality and access are all applicable to the use of licenses in markets. Dave Postles, 'The Market Place as Space in Early Modern England', *Social History*, 29 (2004), pp. 49-54 has looked at market places as public spaces that were used to support civil and religious authority. Emma Griffin, 'The 'Urban Renaissance' and the Mob: Rethinking Civic Improvement over the Long Eighteenth Century' in D. Feldman and J. Lawrence (eds.) *Structures and Transformations in Modern British History* (Cambridge, 2011), pp. 54-73, describes in great detail how market places were restricted and rebuilt to better control the space there.

activities that might undermine their trade or position would be controlled such as with the market, public houses and arrack distillation.

Part 2: Controlling deviancy

This contractual arrangement and method of control is also evident in how the Company regulated deviant behaviour. The methods and institutions that emerged to ensure legal authority for the Company cannot tell the whole story of how behaviour in the colony was dictated and controlled. Controlling behaviour required the President and Council to identify and punish behaviour that they felt was damaging and disrupting to their position. For violent, larcenous and sexual crimes the Company responded in particular ways that protected its authority and the position they had established. The details of these different approaches to criminal behaviour can be found in the source material recorded by the Company. The challenge is to identify the reasons behind the strategies employed by the Company and how this varied between different groups and criminal activities.

The response to larcenous crime amongst the European poor of the colony shows many of the typical approaches utilized by the President and Council in dealing with criminal activity. The low quantity of recorded crimes suggests either that Calcutta did not experience high levels of crime (unlikely) or that only certain events were recorded.[470] Primarily it was cases where the crime was considered serious or public enough, rejecting the social contract between the Company and the 'criminal', would the President and Council intervene.[471] In one prominent case involving a pilot who stole from a French ship stuck in the river (who then attempted to fence the stolen goods in Calcutta), the case was recorded in detail. The clerk of the Council recorded that:

> Yesterday information was given the president by an officer belonging to the French ship lately lost upon the long sand that the pilot Charles Johns had secreted and brought up several bags of dollars belonging to the French Company.
> The said Charles Johns declares that the French people after the Captain and Officers were gone from the ship broke open the chests of money and filled their own pockets with the dollars and threw into the boat where he was three bags of dollars and some loose ones which they had him and his comrades take for themselves.[472]

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[470] Ward, *Networks of Empire*, p. 88-9, provides evidence of the specific approach of the English company by detailing how the Dutch at Batavia were very strict upon criminal activity there prosecuting more of their own slaves and servants than any other group and feeling it necessary to execute twenty six ordinary ranking Europeans in the colony for smuggling. This is a strict contrast to how the English ran Calcutta.

[471] Ghosh, *Household Crimes and Domestic Order*, p. 601 argues that even small scale and mundane criminal activity was worth prosecuting as it served to extend Company authority as much as serious crimes.

[472] BL IOR CPC P/1/13 June 1739.

This encounter was publicly embarrassing for the Company's relations with the French. Also, the vast amount of money that was taken risked escalating the incident with the French even further. This forced the Company to investigate. Johns was called to the Council and he argued, as mentioned in the passage, that he was only following the example of French sailors already looting the ship. It was the complaint of the French officer that prompted the President and Council to seek out Johns. Had the French not notified the President it is unlikely the Council would have known about the crime. This suggests that Johns was at worst opportunistic rather than a malicious robber, a situation typical of many early modern criminals.[473] However, if Johns had not stolen such a large amount of money nor been so foolish as to be seen by several witnesses taking advantage of the situation, he might have not caused an investigation. The additional revelation of the involvement of Francis Vanes' son in handling the stolen goods was also problematic for the Company.[474] Vanes was a prominent punch house owner and had been chosen Constable of the colony.[475] The accusation created the unfortunate situation whereby the elite of Calcutta were implicated in facilitating crime that exploited the misfortunes of the French Company. The example shows that the conduct of Johns was seen as an explicit rejection of Company values and jeopardized Anglo-French relations. The Company moved to counter such accusations by thoroughly investigating the case and also informing the French Company of its progress however little came of this investigation. If they had not dealt with this case and Vanes son's involvement had been discovered by the French Company it would have risked setting a precedent for how the salvage of future shipwrecks was to be managed and would have damaged Anglo-French relations. This case suggests that the act itself was not too serious but that it was the scale and visibility of the crime and thus the explicit breaking of the agreement between Company and servant that forced action.

In other cases involving theft the Council did not record their process so completely, focussing upon the impact of their actions rather than a detailed investigation into events. In another case in 1708 they,

> Ordered that Hans Floert, Peter Hannalston, Simon Jansen and John Van Eck be sent for England on board the ship Howland they working for their passage home. They having committed several robberies at this place and that they have protected several other thieves and have received goods from them, as has been plainly made appear to us, therefore we think it very convenient to rid the town of such troublesome persons, agreed that we advise the Company thereof.[476]

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[473] J.A. Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England 1550-1750* (London, 1999), p. 167.

[474] BL IOR CPC P/1/13 June 1739.

[475] BL IOR MCR P/155/72 p. 8.

[476] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 December 1708.

The Company's response to this case compared to the Johns case shows clearly that the management of larceny in the colony was similar to how the Johns case was managed. In this case a series of serious and public thefts were direct challenges to the Company's position and therefore required swift action to prevent the crime from causing severe damage to its trade. The fact that the criminals in this example were Dutch and identified as repeat offenders were they such a direct challenge to Company authority. As Dutch inhabitants they did not have the same relationship as between the Company and its British servants. Therefore, the visibility and foreign nature of the criminals and their crime prompted swift action. In exercising such a response the Council was maintaining its authority and maintaining stability within the colony by ensuring that no inhabitant be seen to undermine the authority of British law.

The poor were predominantly portrayed as the cause of theft in the colony rather than the victims. Unlike the Company elite who had their responsibilities clearly defined by their terms of employment, transient groups, soldiers and sailors in particular, were feared as untrustworthy and as a threat to the stability of the colony if left to their own devices. In one case when confronted with a group of recently unemployed sailors the Company felt compelled to act, arguing

> [they] are wandering up and down not having victuals to eat...it is thought fitting in order to prevent their starving and any other inconveniences that may happen by their wandering idly about that they be put to board as a victualling house where they may be maintained for three rupees a month a man.[477]

In this case the increased risk that a group of unemployed sailors posed to order and stability in the colony was enough to force the Council to act. The capacity for the sailors of the colony to cause trouble shows Company mistrust in the poor of the colony. It suggests that the Council felt that the European poor and the elite of the colony were to be treated separately as idleness was a catalyst for deviancy. The belief that the urban poor were the source of crime, especially those that were vagrants, idle and at the margins of society was a common theme of eighteenth century accounts.[478] It is unsurprising that this trope of criminality amongst the poor was so easily transferred to Bengal's transient poor.

The Company did not encounter theft only amongst the poor. The President and Council also kept a watchful eye upon the mercantile elite of the colony for signs of corruption and embezzlement. The Council recorded more examples of this type of activity as it had a more direct impact upon profits and was a direct rejection of the contract between the Company and its servants. In one case, Samuel Browne and Hugh Barker were dismissed from the Company's

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[477] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 August 1699.

[478] Sharpe, *Crime in Early Modern England*, p. 141.

service for embezzling 5000 rupees at Patna whilst in charge there.[479] The money these men stole was recovered through the sale of all their goods and property to other Company men.[480] In another example in June 1727, John Clare was accused of corruption and following his investigation was cleared, whilst his accusers were to be punished following discussion with the London Directors.[481] The response to corruption was often to recall the accused and to investigate fully their actions. In many cases those accused were exonerated after the investigation but in no recorded accusations were the accused not investigated. This suggests that the mercantile elite of the colony received more scrutiny than other segments of the population as they were directly responsible for the running of the commercial activities of the colony. Theft by the poor was considered part of their nature, requiring regular management of the worst elements to prevent it escalating into wider lawlessness. Contrastingly, the elite were held to a much more stringent code of conduct. Those caught stealing from the Company were not the same as transient groups but instead were rejecting their position, responsibility and the shared values amongst the elite. By scrutinising elite behaviour much more strictly it ensured that the accused was correctly tried and that a valuable member of the Company's operations was not punished unfairly whilst a similar complete process was not followed for the poor of Calcutta. It also ensured that like the heavy scrutiny of the most serious thefts amongst the poor (like the Johns case), that risks to the Company's trade were identified and prevented before they had a serious effect.

Unlike crimes of larceny, violent crime was much more evident in the Company records. This was due to the much more visible and serious impact of violence within the colonial community. The concern was of escalation, risk to Company property and families and the hindrance of Company operations. Violence if left unresolved both undermined the Company's role as leaders of the community and also the security and safety of the elite. The way that the Company approached cases of violence followed the same mechanism as in robbery cases. The Public Consultations recorded the most violent and/or public crimes as they were the most challenging to the Company's authority. In one case:

> lately happening a quarrel in this town by some soldiers and seamen in which the gunner of Capt. Maston's vessel was desperately wounded the persons that were suspected to be concerned therein were this day brought from their confinement and the examination of witnesses taken by which it appearing that 3 soldiers vizt. Thomas Calash, Peter Pecar and Domingo Comasay were found guilty of the fact they were ordered to be kept upon guard in irons, since the wounded person is in danger of his life.[482]

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[479] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 December 1719.

[480] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 March 1720.

[481] BL IOR CPC P/1/6 August 1727.

[482] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 September 1698.

This case represents the range of issues that surrounded the Company's management of violent crime amongst the European poor. Firstly, that the most common and prominent violence was between the sailors and soldiers who worked for the Company.[483] At least ten other cases of violence involving soldiers and sailors were recorded before 1727 when the court of Oyer and Terminer began dealing with such crimes.[484] The small numbers of recorded incidents suggests that, like Company attitude to larceny, the Company was not attempting to regulate all the behaviour of the European poor.[485] The Company's response to one case in 1716 shows this desire to more closely control transient behaviour. Patrick Stewert a sailor aboard the ship *Mary* who had beaten James Crouch, breaking his head and threatening to run him through, was felt to be a,

> turbulent and abusive person and quarrelsome...therefore that other people may be deterred from the like disorderly practices, ordered that the said Patrick Stewert do return this season for England and that he gives security for his good behaviours till he leaves the shore.[486]

Regular violent incidents such as these were a part of life amongst the European poor which therefore separated them from the (comparatively) safe and polite world of the elite. In a case of violence between a soldier and his wife, where he publically attacked her then called her a whore, he was fined two month's wages. This case shows that public violence was not just disturbances between soldiers and sailors but extended to the population in general. Again the choice of the Council to deal with this case shows a separation of elite and popular values and a desire to control and maintain this distinction. Typical responses to violence amongst the poor utilised informal strategies for resolving them, as shown in the case of Captain Marston's gunner. He requested that his attackers should pay compensation for causing the injury but avoided a costly court case.[487] This shows that regulating behaviour amongst the general inhabitants of the colony were much more informal and less clearly defined as was the case with crime that challenged the elite. This sort of response was common back in Europe, and like in Calcutta crime that led to serious injury or death was more likely to be pursued in court but informal mechanisms based around parity rather than

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[483] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 October 1707

[484] There is not space to discuss each of these cases individually but they can be found in the following factory records and public consultations; two during BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 January 1699, G/7/2 October 1695, G/7/2 Monday July 1697, G/7/4 January 1703, BL IOR CPC P/1/1 February 1704, P/1/2 August 1713, P/1/3 August 1716, P/1/5 September 1722, P/1/5 May 1723 and P/1/5 May 1724 P/1/1 December 1708.

[485] Shoemaker, *The London Mob*, p. 219 has examined common violence amongst the average person in eighteenth century London and how courts encouraged parties to settle rather than to continue with the case. In addition many cases were dropped after one party offered to pay compensation. A similar pattern is seen in Calcutta.

[486] BL IOR CPC P/1/3 23rd August 1716.

[487] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 September 1698.

social contracts also existed.[488] Excessive or public violence amongst the poor of the colony was a challenge and threat to the Company's values. When a tipping point was reached, the Council felt it had to act to preserve order and the rule of law in Calcutta. Despite all these cases and the accounts of violence, the responsibility for policing behaviour amongst the European poor of the colony was only imposed in those cases that would benefit to the Company's own interests.

The colonial elite were more concerned about violence against them than between them. Very few accounts of violence against the elite of the colony (both Company and non-Company men) exist because outside commercial activity, the elite of the colony segregated themselves from the poor of Calcutta. However, at two times in our period the ultimate fear of transient violence was realized when two Presidents were attacked by military officers who had been aggrieved by the decisions of the President. The first case in 1703 was over the failure of a soldier to gain promotion whilst the second was in 1744 and reflected a similar dissatisfaction at the Presidents promotion decision. [489] This shows that for the European population the President was the pinnacle of authority in the colony and targeting them was the best way to strike back at those running the colony. Both these cases show that throughout our period members of the Council were at risk of violence from some of their employees. The events of these two attacks do not mirror the typical violent event amongst the poor.[490] Violent crimes amongst the European poor of Calcutta were crimes of passion or excess whilst these cases involving the elite were premeditated attacks. However, it is the seriousness of these crimes, violence against the President, and the rejection of Company authority by those that desired to closely tie themselves to the Company (they were both seeking promotion as officers) which ensured the Company recorded these cases in full rather than the seriousness of the violence itself, which was minimal. The second case tells of a junior officer in the Company's employment who, wanting to gain promotion and to rise up the social scale, resorted to violence which was more in keeping with the men he was in charge of. The result of his act showed his rejection of the values of the elite he wished to become part of. Both cases represent the separate sphere the colonial elite were part of. The Company utilised many strategies to separate themselves and their social peers from the soldiers and sailors of Calcutta: most visibly the walled compounds they lived in that physically separated the elite from the housing of the poor near the bazaar. However, there was no consistent strategy that segregated the different populations of the colony and the desire of the elite to remain separate was based around issues of class and wealth rather than race as was the case in places such as Madras and Cochin.

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[488] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts*, p. 75.

[489] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/4 January 1703 and BL IOR CPC P/1/17 September 1744.

[490] Shoemaker, *The London Mob*, pp. 155-158 argues that violence amongst the poor was both habitual and chronic.

The Company worked hard to control the attitudes and behaviour of the elite in relation to violence. Actual physical confrontation was much rarer amongst the elite than it was between the poor.[491] Instead, the Company when prompted, regulated how Company men should conduct themselves and not risk rejecting its position within the colony. One example of this, an incident between a ship's Captain and a member of the Council, caused a debate amongst the Council about how the mercantile elite should behave. The Company recorded that 'Captain Thomas South pretending he was affronted by Mr Robert Hedges he sent him a challenge in the following words directed on the backside'. To which the Company decreed that:

> 1st the trust [given to] us by the honourable united company and obliges us to the contrary and not to engage in such quarrels.
> 2nd The Council are under the same obligation and not to answer challenges.
> 3rd If a chairman or any of the Council be challenged without giving occasion more particularly on the present affair the whole Council are affronted but if any one gives abuses each person is to answer for himself but all ways and means and to be used to prevent such quarrels.[492]

The debate for the Council was not about the situation between Captain South and Robert Hedges but was about how appropriate conduct should be protected from others' more base violent tendencies. In another case a Company servant was rebuked and fined twenty rupees for publicly abusing another Company servant.[493] Like with duels and other crimes it was the public nature of the activity and the potential impact it had upon the position of the elite that encouraged them to act.[494] For the Company, excessive violence amongst the elite was to be restricted and those who overstepped the mark were to be punished.

In another case, violence did not have to result in direct harm against the individual. It was the threat to property and the unacceptable conduct of those involved that was considered deviant by the Company. The account states that:

> Mrs Rachel Curgenven the widow of Mr Thomas Curgenven deceased making complaint to us about five of the clock of evening that the house she lives in and particularly her bedchamber was forcibly entered and all her clothes and necessities taken out by Mr. Jonathon Curgenven brother of the deceased Mr. Thomas Curgenven assisted by Mr John Calvert and Richard Smith.[495]

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[491] V.G. Keirnan *The Duel in European History: honour and the reign of the aristocracy* (Oxford 1989), pp. 165-168, argues that the rise of enlightenment values saw a decrease in the elite's appetite for violence and duels in particular.

[492] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1704.

[493] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 December 1704

[494] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 December 1704

[495] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1705.

Ordinarily the seizure of forfeited goods by relatives did not arouse suspicion but in this case the forced entry, and seizing of property was considered excessive and dangerous. In addition as merchants and respectable inhabitants of the colony such activity was unbecoming of their position within the colony. This case ties in with the fear amongst Europeans of violence caused whilst other crimes were carried out.[496] The fear was that a criminal who hurt a person during a robbery was a greater risk as he was consciously making the decision to act violently. In this case the complaint of Mrs Curgenven was recorded in depth because of the combination of forced entry, theft and the indignity caused to a women of the colony that forced the Council to deal with the case.

The Council were more lenient in cases of elite violence towards the poor of the colony. In 1707 Francis Russell was cleared of beating his servant too harshly.[497] This suggests that although violence against servants was acceptable to the Council, it was also necessary for the European elite to show restraint.[498] Russell's excess and failure to control his actions attracted the interest of his contemporaries and forced them act. Russell broke the standard right for masters to beat servants which also stipulated that such discipline could not be without just cause.[499] Although Russell was cleared in this case, in other cases the Council did punish those that abused their position of authority For example, Lieutenant Borlace was demoted to Ensign for whipping peons unloading the boats and extorting money from them and others.[500] Whilst in another example Richard Hartopp was accused of abusing his power to punish his servant. Though found guilty he was fined only a measly five rupees but this was considered a suitable deterrent by the Council.[501] When abuse of power turned to death the Council investigated as they did other deviant activities. When another servant of Hartopp's was found dead in 1695 the body was examined by the Company surgeon and although suspicion of Hartopp beating her to death was raised, the surgeon felt the servant had committed suicide. However, Hartopp's reputation had made him a suspect and this suggests that violent tendencies were cause for greater scrutiny. Like the violent crimes of the poor, the most public crimes were recorded. The Company's management of this activity was similar to its management of crimes of corruption and was based upon providing fair justice and protection to the elite thus preserving its position. The Company elite were expected to act in a more gentlemanly

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[496] Beattie, *Crime and the Courts,* p. 74.

[497] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 April 1707.

[498] Ghosh, 'Household Crimes and Domestic Order', p. 599 points out that by the 1770s domestic violence was primarily seen as a crime of the European poor of the colony and the desire was to make 'empire respectable'. A similar mechanism is evident here in how the Company was trying to ensure the Company elite did not abuse their position of power.

[499] Richard Burn, *The Justice of the Peace, and Parish Officer. Vol. 1* (London 1755), pp. 53-57.

[500] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 February 1713, he was also to repay the money.

[501] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 Monday May 1698.

and honest manner. This is important because it further separates the strategies for managing behaviour between the elite and the poor.

The Council's strategy in dealing with criminal and deviant behaviour was not to prosecute every criminal act to approach different types of activity in different ways based upon how far they were a rejection of Company authority. This was an ideological, strategic and pragmatic response based upon the importance of English common law to how the authority of the Company manifested itself in Calcutta. The most obvious and serious offences were the most direct challenges to the position of the Company as representatives of the Kings justice in India. The Council ensured that it sent a message to the population of the colony that excessive criminal behaviour would be prosecuted although this varied between social groups.

Part 3: Controlling morals within the colony

So far we have examined the methods used to control the commercial and criminal behaviour of the colony. We should look at how relationships and morals between the inhabitants was also controlled and see whether we can identify similar strategies of control. Throughout our period the Council intervened even less in the area of sexual behaviour amongst the European poor. Calcutta had no Church Courts in our period and the regulation of sexual behaviours and other staples of the British ecclesiastical courts were left to the Council who recorded crimes in the Public Consultations and later the court of Oyer and Terminer.[502] The Council did regulate some types of behaviour but the response was varied and dependent upon the status of the individuals involved. For example no accounts of prostitution or attempts to regulate Anglo-Indian marriage are present in the records that survive today. The failure to regulate prostitution seems the most noteworthy.[503] London court records, though perhaps not representative of the scale of prostitution in the capital, do record prostitutes and a culture of bawdy houses and brothels, which would have been understood as a feature of London life. The British courts' ambiguous and often weak response to sexual crime such as rape and prostitution has been explored by historians.[504] However, the lack of

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[502] R.B. Outhwaite, *The Rise and Fall of the English Ecclesiastical Courts 1500-1860* (Cambridge, 2006), is useful in describing how church courts declined in the period. Although the failure of records to survive about these cases is a distinct possibility for Calcutta, there is no censure regarding any type of Anglo-Indian marriage or prostitution which raises questions about what the Council were willing or able to record.

[503] Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women in Eighteenth Century London: Prostitution and Control in the Metropolis 1730-1830* (London, 1999), p. 25, points out that prostitution was prosecuted along with other crimes such as theft and assault but the records in Calcutta do not record prostitution in this way and no women were charged with that offence in the records in our period.

[504] James Kelly, 'A Most Inhuman and Barbarous Piece of Villainy': An Exploration of the Crime of Rape in Eighteenth-Century Ireland' in *Eighteenth-Century Ireland,* Vol. 10 (1995), pp. 78-107 has explored the

regulation in Calcutta suggests either an inability by the Council to regulate this activity or pragmatism in their management of the predominantly male European poor population.

This standoff approach was not applicable to all sexual activity. The silence elsewhere in relation to sex crimes amongst the poor makes the following case stand in stark contrast. The Public Consultations record that:

> people belong to the Catwall [Kotwal] prison, who going the rounds as usual heard great shriekings in a house in our back streets amongst the poor people...two Portuguese women Joanna Taveriss and Maria Rederigue complained that...forced two very young girls the eldest not exceeding 9 years of age by name of Biviana and Sabina [daughter to Joanna and the other slave Maria]...they stopped their mouths with linen...They examined and found deflowered and much harmed and tore.
>   This being a crime so black a nature as undoubtedly deserves death by the laws of our nation however a public example is the only satisfaction by corporal punishment we can give to the people whose children are so notoriously ruined and likewise to deter others from such heinous crimes. Agreed they be carried to the public catcherry or common place of justice and there receive thirty nine lashes on their bare backs with rattans for so vile an offence & afterwards be shipped for England as prisoners.[505]

This case follows the standard approach adopted by the Company in determining which crimes to punish. This case was both brutal and public and the Company's response with its shocked tone and remorseful conclusion stands out from the usually factual accounts of the public consultations. This case suggests that a shared moral standard existed that ensured that Company attitudes did not deviate from the values in broader British society in the most serious cases.[506] Furthermore, the status of the men who carried out the crime, non-British transients who took advantage of a

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response to rape in the period outside of the dominant London sphere showing similar ambiguity. Faramerz Dabhoiwala, 'Sex and Societies for Moral Reform, 1688–1800', *The Journal of British Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 2 April 2007), pp. 290-319, is one of the latest pieces of research to identify the attitudes to towards sexual conduct in the period whilst his piece, 'The Pattern of Sexual Immorality in Seventeenth and Eighteenth century London' in Paul Griffiths and Mark S.R. Jenner (eds.) *Londinopolis: Essays in the Cultural and Social history of Early Modern London* (Manchester, 2000), pp. 86-106 explores similar themes. Tony Henderson, *Disorderly Women,* p. 194 has also detailed such ambiguity in relation to prostitutes who were predominantly charged not for a sexual crime but for vagrancy.

[505] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 October 1719.

[506] Anthony E. Simpson, 'Vulnerability and the age of female consent: legal innovation and its effect on prosecutions for rape in eighteenth-century London' in George Sebastian Rousseau and Roy Porter, (eds) *Sexual Underworlds of the Enlightenment* (Manchester 1987), pp. 192-194 has explored the development of child abuse within prosecutions figures and compared these with the reasons for such abuse. Martin Ingram, 'Child sexual abuse in early modern England' in M.J. Braddick and J. Walter (eds.), *Negotiating power in early modern society: order, hierarchy and subordination in Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge, 2001) , pp. 82-84 highlights the revulsion and swift punishment of those convicted which matches the Calcutta case.

vulnerable member of the community, was a direct affront to the authority and values of the Company. Several details of the case are interesting. Firstly, despite the distance the Council kept when dealing with the European poor, they protected the interests of the vulnerable when they were threatened. The age of the victims, who were both young girls below the age of consent, highlights the barbarity of the act. In British cases the attitude of the victim was often used by the accused man to cast doubt upon the honesty and integrity of the female defendant.[507] In this case the attitudes of the victims were unquestionable, especially considering the account of the struggle given by the two girls' mothers. The ways the men accused of the crime were to be treated also shows a departure from normal Company methods. In very few cases did the Company detail the punishments prisoners were to receive. This was in addition to the fact that this punishment was to occur in a public place before they were tried in Britain. Such punishment was a cathartic response by the Company and helped the Council to restore the validity of their position as representatives of the Kings justice in Calcutta. Additional punishment of the criminals reasserted the authority and control of the Council over behaviour in the colony. Overall, this case provides a unique insight into the Company's response to an extremely dark act in the colony's history in an area so normally unregulated by the Company. The Company in this case was not just responding because its power was being undermined but because of a shared understanding between right and wrong behaviour amongst the Europeans within the colony that they were to uphold as the font of legal power.

As with its approaches to larceny and violence the Company was quick to dictate how the European elite of the colony were to behave sexually. Although no direct reference to policies regarding mistresses or Indian concubines was made in the records, the moral standing and ordering of the elite was maintained much more strictly than amongst the poor. Again, it was the same typical criteria: either a publicly discovered activity or the most disruptive acts that prompted the response from the Council. The scandals that were uncovered ruined the careers of several Company merchants. In 1697 the Company wrote 'The widow Mrs Miller being arrived at this place from Ballasore and understanding she lives in a house in the town which Mr Stanley lately bought with an intention to continue in that foulness of sin of cohabiting with her'. Mr Stanley despite his protestations that he was married to Mrs Miller was debarred from the Council.[508] The outrage of the Council and the language used portrays their anger at Mr Stanley's rejection of their

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[507] Antony E. Simpson, 'Popular Perceptions of Rape as a Capital Crime in Eighteenth-Century England: The Press and the Trial of Francis Charteris in the Old Bailey, February 1730' *Law and History Review*, Vol. 22, (2004), pp. 33 details the case of a rape in detail and the tactics used by the accused to dishonour the female accuser. Vivien Jones (ed.) *Women in the eighteenth century: constructions of femininity* (London 1990), pp. 57-97 has collected many eighteenth-century sources that highlight the value and importance of female purity and honour as intrinsic to female identity.

[508] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/2 September 1697.

shared values. It suggests that gaining entry into the Council, which was the summit of colonial authority, was based upon an understanding that certain morals were upheld. Despite the chance to leave the relationship, Mr Stanley refused. The Council exerted its control again twelve years later when Lieutenant Child was to be imprisoned for having two wives.[509] All three were sent back to London with the Company claiming that it was the loss of trust that forced them to banish Child back to Europe.[510] The loss of trust brought on by immoral behaviour was an important aspect of the relationship amongst the elite. Taking an Indian mistress was deemed acceptable behaviour, because the practice was a commonly understood reality of life in Bengal. The actions of Child and Stanley however rejected these shared values and thus the trust that was vital to working and trading together. This is important because in managing the fortunes of the elite the Council required complete trust in those with whom they worked and risked their livelihoods.

The shared standards and values that were so important to the Council can be again seen in the case of Thomas Netthropp. Netthropp who was not a member of the European elite was to be sent to England for further punishment following accusations of the rape and sodomy of several Indian servants and local sailors.[511] Netthropp's behaviour breached the values expected of Europeans as well as being a serious and capital crime back in Britain. Not only was the act unacceptable but it was with men who were normally kept at arm's length by the Company merchants. Netthropp's actions represented the worst of European behaviour and conduct. The case does not appear to raise issues of race, despite the fact that Indians were involved, which suggests that the issue was the crime of sodomy, which was too serious to ignore, even amongst the poor of the colony, rather than Anglo-Indian mixing.

Issues of commerce and politics dominate early histories of the city but there are several events, the building of the church for example, where we can see the importance the built environment to enforce elite values in the colony. For many, the building of the church was an important development that benefitted the spiritual health of the colony but also made it more identifiable and secure as a place to live. The new church also represented increased British control over the colonial space and an increased stability of the British in Calcutta. The construction also shows that the church was a new opportunity to support British values and understanding of how urban space should be arranged. This encouraged further development (political, commercial and social) in the colony as European colonists felt more stable and secure in living there.

For some we see that Christian values had an impact upon their interactions with others. In one source, a Company writer Mr Harvey described his time in Bengal in the early 1750s writing that:

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[509] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1709.

[510] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 December1709

[511] BL IOR CPC P/1/3 September 1718.

One afternoon we were very merry at the house of a principal weaver, over a bowl of arrack. Several of the Company understood French, the discourse turned upon the three prevailing religions of the country, Christianity, Mahometanism [Islam], and Paganism [Hinduism]. According to custom, I supported my own, and abused the other... The village contained a pagoda whose wooden deity had a face as grim, ~~savage~~ and terrifying, as their artists were able ~~equal~~ to execute. I happened to direct my steps hither, and found about a score of these quiet silly ~~people~~ ----making their abeyances and offerings to this hideous figure. It was more than at this instant my enthusiasm could bear. I spit in the face of the idol. The people turned their eyes another way, or bowed the heads to the ground. I had a small cane in my hand, with which I gave the deity some smart strokes over the head and shoulders. The god bore them quietly, but the priest and the people did not... They seized me, regardless of my consequence as the Company's factor, and hurrying me to the banks of the Ganges, fairly and speedily plumped me.[512]

This description tells us much about the significance of Christianity for the English-speaking colonists and also how different people understood the world around them. Harvey's experience was that religion was something that defined his relationships and was intrinsic to his interactions with others. Insulting the religion of his hosts and attacking a shrine shows the strength of the emotion generated by this perceived challenge to Harvey's convictions. It also shows that for some, Indian religions were a threat to their own religious beliefs and their ability to rationalise their existence in Bengal. Whereas commercial activity could adapt to Indian customs, religious belief was an absolute part of English-speaking identity that could not be compromised. It also shows that moral behaviour was not just regulated by the Company but also that Europeans that directly offended the values of the Indian population were at risk of conflict. The records detail very little about the way that the Company managed the religious affairs of its Indian population and suggests along with how Harvey was treated that the Europeans did not try and control the moral affairs of the non-European population.

We can see the intellectual mechanism behind the response towards competing religious values but this does not show how the colonists protected and supported their own religious beliefs. The manifestation of this need to protect Christian values can be seen in the building of the church. The surviving evidence surrounding its construction provides an insight into the immediate context behind its construction. In the original petition submitted to the Company, its chaplains - William Anderson and Benjamin Adams - gathered support from the English-speaking population and asked the Company to assist in building the church. They wrote to the Council arguing:

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[512] BL Eur. Mss. Eur Mss B.248, *An Autobiography, undated but watermarked 1800, entitled 'The Fortunate Englishman', by a MR Harvey,* F. 16-17.

How much the Christian religion suffers in the esteem of these infidels and in the real effects of it even among ourselves for want of a place set apart for the public worship of god. We can none of us be ignorant and if we have any concern at all for the honour of God or any zeal for the advancement of the Christian religion in our world, we cannot but lament the great disadvantages we do at all present labour under from thence.[513]

Anderson and Adams were clearly concerned that the strength of Christianity amongst the English-speaking population was at risk due to the lack of an appropriate place to worship. Additionally, the lack of a church was a missed opportunity to advance the Christian religion in Bengal. Other opportunities to support Christian values came from the use of charity schools to which people regularly donated money in their wills.[514] By the late 1730s the school was being administered by members of the Company and their accounts were recorded in the consultations.[515] Although Joseph Bedloe was recorded as the schoolmaster the scope of the school and its participants was left unrecorded.[516] However the several families of the English-speaking population had children that would have required an education and thus an institution such as the charity school would have reinforced English-speaking values and knowledge. Together the church and the charity school, like the Fort had done for physical protection, guarded against the erosion of Christian ideas and values by Indian culture and beliefs.

Another way that Christian values were shielded from external influences was through the sermons delivered by the ministers of the colony. Benjamin Adams wrote several sermons whilst in Calcutta which he printed on his return to London.[517] The sermons were for the inhabitants of the colony and tellingly deal with four areas that Adams felt were under threat and needed reiterating to the colonists. The sermons themes included; loving your enemies, that envy and strife are causes for evil, obeying magistrates and accepting reproof. The final two sermons in particular reinforce the authority of the President and Council and their right to act as magistrates and to administer justice within the colony. This support by the church minister is important because it suggests that Christian values are also Company values and that the spread of Company activity also supported the spread of Christianity.

However, such approaches were far less effective than a new church in assisting missionary work. Anderson and Adams were able to convince the English-speakers of the colony in this regard

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[513] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 September 1704.

[514] BL IOR CPC June, July and Sept 1720.

[515] BL IOR CPC P/1/13 August 1738

[516] BL IOR MCR P/154/40 May 1727

[517] William Anderson, *Four Sermons Preached at Fort William in Bengal in the East-Indies by William Anderson Chaplain, to the Honourable United Company trading in the East-Indies* (London 1708).

drawing upon the support of their compatriots, pointing out the donations that they had already received:

> The Commanders of ships have been very generous upon this occasion and all other gentlemen whether servants to the Right Honourable Company or other inhabitants of this place have contributed freely and cheerfully to the work...we desire gentlemen you'll assign us a spot of ground which may be proper to our purpose and that we suppose will be agreed on all hands to be as near the factory as it conveniently may.[518]

It is interesting to note that Anderson and Adams did not approach the Council first. They targeted private inhabitants and the Company's ships Captains. This, presumably, was an attempt to get a critical mass of support and to show that the Church was desired by the population before asking the Council for assistance. Although the building of the church was initiated by Anderson and Adams, it is an example of how the English-speaking population of the colony could have their opinions changed and/or mobilized.

The land provided by the Company was situated on the waterfront close to the Factory buildings:

> in the Broad Street near or pretty near Captain Wallis's house between that of Mr Soamers and that a broadway be left on the outside near the river full sixty foot broad clear from the church.[519]

Interestingly though there were complaints that this location was not suitable and the Company recorded the objections, noting that the preferred location was closer to the factory.[520] No explicit reason was given for wanting to move the church. The refusal by some donors to pay up what they had pledged shows that the placement of the church building was of paramount importance. Although the first location for the church was well located along the waterfront, its suggested location was obviously an affront to the requirements of some inhabitants. The new location was much more centrally located and was much more acceptable to those donating. The debate surrounding the placement of the church suggests a series of common assumptions about where important infrastructure should be in the colony. A church that was further from the other vital European buildings was less visible and would not have fulfilled the spiritual needs of the colonists. A more centrally located church meant secular and spiritual authority amongst the Europeans was clustered together to help the colonists support each other. This therefore links the spiritual assumptions of what a good Christian colony should have with the secular needs of the colonists.

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[518] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 September 1704.

[519] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 November 1704.

[520] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 December 1704.

The new church also had an important social function. The weekly services were a chance for the President and Council to show their position of authority within the colony. Building the church reflected the power and success of their stewardship of Calcutta. We can see how the Council made the new church a symbol of their position in the colony through how they arranged the seating in the services. A letter of complaint was registered demanding that:

> Since the women insist upon place at Church I think my wife may put in her claim among the rest. I do therefore desire on her behalf that you will be pleased to order her a seat agreeable with my station in the Company's service and consequently that the surgeons wife who has twice either ignorantly or impudently assumed her place may be no more permitted to sit above her husbands quality.[521]

This insight into the social interaction that existed between members of the English-speakers of the colony tells us much about how social status was an important factor amongst the European population. The Council member felt that his status came from his service in the Company and that the Council were the most important members of the community. This was also a closed social group and although the surgeon and his wife were welcome in the church they were to know their place and respect the authority of the Council. The importance of publically enforcing this hierarchy shows the value of the church in reinforcing the position of the Company in the colony. It also symbolically ties the Council's power with intrinsic British and Christian values. This is important because although building things like the church were built for the wider benefit of the colony the influence of the President and Council could not be removed from it.

The attempts by colonists to influence the development of the colony using their own understandings of good governance were mixed. The men of the Mayor's Court in particular had the legislative freedom from the Royal Charter to put into practice ideas of good governance whilst the establishment of the church required support from the Company to be successful. The varied opinions regarding the location of the church show there were differences in ordering of the urban space in the colony. Calcutta was more than just the sum of its commercial operations.

Conclusion:

Much of the research that deals with controlling behaviour in British colonies examines the subject utilising the much more refined and strict legal and moral framework that emerged in the later century. The earlier period did not have such explicit tools to control behaviour in the same way and thus we should re-examine how behaviour was managed in different areas. Controlling the population of the colony in their commercial, criminal and moral behaviour was essential in preserving Company authority and dominance. However, the President and Council did not control

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[521] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 March 1706.

all negative behaviour and some areas were not strictly managed by the Company. The Company did have some tools to control some types of behaviour but these techniques of control were utilised in cases where Company authority or trade operations were compromised. In many areas where the Company elite did intervene was when a failure to intervene would encourage further criminal behaviour and see the breakdown of order in the colony. This intervention was most readily seen in their management of commercial behaviour and it is here that the most detailed descriptions and decrees about regulating commercial activities occurs. All of the examples in this chapter show that the control of various behaviours was complex and varied depending upon how much it directly challenged the authority and power of the President and Council.

Chapter 8: Calcutta's Indian Population

Waterworth Collett, member of the Council for the English East India Company in Calcutta took the journey from the ghats (quays) to the Company warehouses several times a week. He would inspect the tightly packed bundles of Indian piece goods ready to be shipped back to Europe for his employer's profit. The journey took Collett from the riverside to the Company warehouses up by the factory building. He passed Indian peons working with European sailors to unload the ships anchored in the river. Further into the city he navigated past more Indian workers carrying goods, running errands, and patrolling the streets to ensure public order. Gingerly stepping over rough sewage channels cut into the street he continued towards the warehouses. Often in his regular journey he would pass his colleague John Eyre. Eyre was the Zamindar, the Company official in charge of the city. Many times Collett would spot Eyre talking to his subordinate, an Indian man who helped run the Zamindari office. Continuing on his walk, he arrived at the warehouse. Inside the cover of the big pukka brick buildings, collections of various European trinkets and knick knacks were stored. Later they would be distributed amongst Indian contacts as tribute or bribes. Checking that the gift he was preparing for dispatch was all in order, Collett straightened his wig and English style coat as he stepped out into the Bengali sunlight.[522] In moments he quickly disappeared into the throng of Indians, Dutch, Armenians and Britains crowding the streets of the city.

This description of a moment in the working life of Waterworth Collett is representative of the challenge facing a historian researching a colonial city. A colonial city was the location for a meeting of multiple different cultures and to research a colonial city like Calcutta requires an understanding of how the host and colonial cultures interacted so closely. We are therefore presented with a problem of cultural and power balance between the Company servants and the Indian population of Calcutta. The British represented by the East India Company were in India for commercial profits and Calcutta was built to help them fulfil that aim. Therefore management and control of the city was a necessary responsibility. The purpose of this chapter is to explore how the Company interacted with and managed the Indian population so that it did not impact upon Company profits. To just look at a simple balance sheet of Company governance would not account

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[522] BL Eur/Mss/D802 Papers of Charles Russell. The English merchants stubbornly stuck to European style clothing and in one delivery from Britain they received wigs, silk and lace clothes.

for its Bengal location and the dynamic relationship between the Company and Indian population. The Anglo-Indian relationship was constantly changing with many compromises and power struggles. Therefore, this chapter will explore the role of Indian intermediaries and Indian power groups upon the Company's management of Calcutta and how the Company responded to Indian influences. Together this will provide a more balanced understanding of how Calcutta was governed.

Exploring how British and Indian cultures competed and/or complemented each other is not a new historical topic. The traditional hypothesis of this problem was put forward by Percival Spear who suggested that cultural interaction in India was both difficult and resisted by the European population.[523] He suggested that the first generations of British people in India up till 1740 were a diaspora who stayed completely separate from Indian life. This view has subsequently been challenged by Holden Furber and Peter Marshall.[524] They argue that the British were reliant on intermediaries to function in the Asian market and that Indian merchants were integral to the success of the East India Company. More recently, Søren Mentz has tried to resurrect Spear's argument for a strong British diaspora in Madras.[525] However, the majority of the social interaction discussed has related either to the economic function of the Company or personal networks with the motherland.[526] Little attention in this debate has been paid to the role of a colony as an urban place in affecting the conduct and success of the British in Asia. Furthermore, even less attention has been given to how urban growth and the responsibilities of the Company were affected by relationships between Indians and British. This chapter will attempt to redress this neglect by bringing the everyday interactions necessitated by urban life back into discussion.

When analysing the role of Anglo-Indian relationships we are asking new questions of the evidence previously used to explore only political or economic themes. We need to look for examples of what specific urban responsibilities the Company had. We should identify what strategies were employed, how their implementation was determined by Indian or British norms and the conflicts that occurred. The Company's archival data, its public consultations and factory records, give insights into the responsibilities managed by the President and Council. These sources also provide evidence of how Indians were an integral part of this system. These sources exist

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[523] Spear, *The Nabobs*.

[524] H. Furber, 'Asia and the West as Partners before 'Empire' and After', *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 27 , No. 4 (1969), pp. 711-722. Marshall, 'Masters and Banians', pp. 191-215.

[525] Mentz, 'Cultural Interaction', pp. 162-174.

[526] The theme of a strong motherland-Diaspora connection is explored in further detail by Mentz, *The English Gentleman Merchant*. The benefits of maritime networks facilitating diasporas creating a 'cultural slipstream' where new ideas of knowledge and living can grow has been explored by Richard Drayton, 'Maritime Networks and the Making of Knowledge' in David Cannadine (ed.), *Empire, the Sea and Global History: Britain's Maritime World, c1760-1840* (Basingstoke 2007), p. 80

without any gaps in the data and provide many thousands of pages of information about the needs of the city. We can therefore use these public consultations and factory records to identify how the British governed the Indian population of the colony. In addition we can use other sources such as letters and accounts to see the tensions in the Anglo-Indian relationship. These sources will help us to identify methods of managing the city by the Company and how Anglo-Indian interaction, conflict or the absence of such a relationship played a part in the colony's development.

There is a need to first set out the specific ways the Company managed its relationship with the Indian population. The first part of this chapter will identify the different groups that lived in the colony and show how they were as divided and diverse as the European population that we discussed in chapter four. The second part of this chapter will examine the strategies used by the Company to control this Indian population. Specifically we will identify the differences between the relationship of the Company with Indian elites and the common Indian worker of the colony. This will be specifically explored through an examination of attitudes towards Indian crime and their use of the legal systems already described in the previous chapter. Overall, this will give us an understanding of the dynamics of governing a colonial city with its diverse population and the role of cultural interaction and management in doing so.

Part 1: The Indian population of the colony

As previously discussed the Company did not establish Calcutta on a *tabula rasa*. On the site of Calcutta were three small Indian villages inhabited by the Sett and Bysack merchant families who were active traders there in the years before 1690. Trading in India required interaction with Indian markets and this was not something the Company had immediate access to. The Company required local knowledge and contacts to become part of the Indian urban and commercial network. Indian intermediaries were predominantly used for their language skills.[527] To gain access to this Indian commercial network required permission from the national and regional Mughal mercantile elite. Amongst the Indians that helped the Company gain access to Indian markets were the Sett family. In 1709 the Company used Janarddana Sett to make contact with Mir Muhammad Raza, the treasurer of the Mughal Governor in Hooghly, and to present him with a gift of five hundred rupees.[528] In other examples the Company worked with Indians as money lenders and in accessing

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[527] D. Bosu, 'The Early Banians of Calcutta', *Bengal Past and Present*, Vol. 90 (1971), pp. 30-46, also Wilson, *Early Annals,* Vol. 1, p. 59 tells the story that the first English ship in Bengal accidently requested a washer man from the local Sett and Bysack families rather than the interpreter they had asked for. However, the washer man proved adept at the role regardless so was kept on by the Company.

[528] Wilson, *Early Annals*, Vol.1, p. 315.

the manufacturing sites elsewhere in Bengal.[529] The Council interacted with a large cohort of Indian merchants. The traditional site of commerce for Europeans in Bengal had been at Hooghly centred on the Mughal customs house. There, Indian merchants had provided a ready source of knowledge and expertise in how best to fulfil orders for goods and to access the market. On moving to Calcutta in 1690 the Company had to rebuild relationships with local Indian merchants to be able to carry out trade. Although free of Mughal interference, the trading relationship still remained on Indian terms and strong partnerships with Bengal merchants were still necessary to trade successfully.[530] This partnership and its impact upon British political involvement is something historians have debated as a key reason for the events unfolding at Plassey.[531] It has been argued that the Company had become so integral to the Bengal commercial network by utilising Indian merchants and trading in the same markets that it was disabling for Siraj'adduallah's position.[532] The Company bought Indian expertise and developed commercial relationships on their terms as soon as they settled in Bengal. Knowledge about how to carry out their trade in Bengal therefore increased Company stability.

Indian elites were not the only people to have access to Indian markets. The Council also utilised the long standing Armenian merchant community who also had access to the Mughal court system.[533] The relationship between Armenian merchants and the Company was well established and their usefulness was recognised by the Directors in London in 1688 when they decreed that:

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[529] Chakrabarti, 'Collaboration and Resistance', p. 110. Swati Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta* p. 8 also argues for commerce based upon Anglo-Indian interaction. Datta, *'Commercialisation, Tribute, and the Transition',* p. 262 Argues that this relationship was the continuation of old systems that linked money lenders to governmental power.

[530] S. Chakrabarti, Collaboration and Resistance, p. 116.

[531] Prakash, *The Dutch East India Company,* has argued that the Dutch removed indigenous merchants from the commercial equation whilst Arasaratnam, *Merchants, Companies and Commerce,* argues that a state of non-Competition in Madras meant English and Indian merchants traded in different areas.

[532] Chaudhury, *The Prelude to Empire* has portrayed this division as the British attempting to subvert the existing political order by engineering a coup by the Indian elite. Sudipta Sen, *Distant Sovereignty: National Imperialism and the Origins of British India* (London, 2002) shows how the Company worked with Mughal hegemony to legitimise its actions rather than subvert them.

[533] The historiography of Anglo-Armenian interaction is mostly mentioned in passing and has not received any serious attention from historians. Vahé Baladouni and Margaret Makepeace, 'Armenian Merchants of the Seventeenth and Early Eighteenth Centuries: English East India Company Sources' *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* Vol. 88, (1998), does provides an exhaustive list of early source material whilst Sebouh Aslanian, 'Trade Diaspora Versus Colonial State: Armenian Merchants, the English East India Company, and the High Court of Admiralty in London, 1748-1752', *Diaspora*, 13 (2004) has tried to re-evaluate the perceived relationship between the East India Company and Armenian merchants.

> Whenever forty or more of the Armenian nation shall become inhabitants of any garrison cities or towns belonging to the Company [they should] enjoy the free use and exercise of their religion but there shall be allotted to them a parcel of ground to erect a church.[534]

The decree shows how the Company wished to encourage closer relations with the Armenian community in India. As fellow Christians and merchants they had mutual understanding of the issue confronting the Company but were also principally non-Europeans who could smooth Company access to trade. The President and Council in Calcutta could also use Armenian contacts to gain important diplomatic access. The best example of Armenians providing access to the Mughal government was when trying to gain the grant of the *farman* in 1717. Access to the imperial court in the first instance would not have been possible without their Armenian intermediary Khojah Sarhad. Khojah Sarhad also provided access to the Mughal Governor in Hooghly in June 1698 assisting the process of purchasing the landlord privileges of the three villages of Calcutta, Suttanati and Govindpore.[535] This strong relationship with the Armenian merchants was a constant in our period and even in 1736 when assessing the state of the Dacca Factory George Mandeville, the Company man sent to survey the Factory, remarked that Armenians had helped to keep the charges imposed by the Mughal state low.[536] The respect shown by the London Directors was followed by the Council in Calcutta and in return for their service to the Company the Armenians were granted land, a place to build their church, and the freedom to trade under the Company's protection. All this shows is that integration into the Mughal political system was best achieved through other intermediaries.

The vast majority of the Indians that lived in Calcutta were not part of this trading elite. They were an unnamed pool of workers that were responsible for the building and staffing of the buildings in the colony. The archetypes of Indian labour in the later eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were true here also. Indians were employed as builders, warehouse workers and house servants.[537] Around this core workforce were those who fed into this workforce, market traders, shop keepers etc. unfortunately the records provide little detail about the makeup or population size of this group. Certainly as Calcutta grew so did this population. It may be surprising that the Company did not comment upon the disparity between the European population and Indian population sizes. No disquiet about being outnumbered so heavily seems apparent in the records.

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[534] Wilson, *Early Annals*, Vol.1, p. 125.

[535] Wilson, *Early Annals*, Vol.1, p. 150.

[536] BL IOR CPC P/1/12 December 1736.

[537] Makepeace, *The East India Company's London Workers,* pp.140-1 has shown how integrated the Company's warehouse staff were in the London warehouses, similar integration and support did not extend to the Indian warehouse staff who were treated much more as simple labourers.

However, we must remember that even at the end of our period the Company were not rulers concerned with full control of the colony. Instead they were well settled in the role of landlord, collecting rents and ensuring their power and control was maintained but without any desire to rule the Indians of Calcutta. As a result, the lack of commentary on the relationship between the two groups is not surprising as it was not defined in such a hierarchical ruler-subject relationship.

The Europeans especially by the end of the period were starting to keep themselves separate from the majority of the Indian population. As we have seen elsewhere, the white and black towns began to polarise and fears of invasion saw a defensive quality creep into the Company's actions. Indians had throughout the period been used to support the commercial and defence activities of the Company. At times of peace the Company would scale back on the number of Indian soldiers hired but country shipping had a heavy component of Indian sailors and the constables employed to keep order in the colony were exclusively Indian. What is important here is that the European population was dependent not just on Indians as labourers or servants but also for the maintenance of many I the colony's key functions. Calcutta should not be seen then as purely European but as somewhere that was increasingly a place for Indians to live, work and interact with Calcutta as an urban place.

Part 2: Controlling and managing the Indian population

The main record of how the Company managed its relationships with the Mughal elite of the region and other elite groups in the colony was through the use of presents. A typical present consisted of a variety of goods, mostly luxury which would be given to Mughal officials to gain access and to curry favour.[538] For the Company the use of gifts was an economic transaction that could be factored into the commercial costs of business. The Public Consultations show the entries that list gifts and costs to be distributed as presents.[539] A supply of goods was kept stored ready for when needed as evidenced by the way that the Council used the same items for gifts (swords, pistols and looking glasses were especially popular). They were a standard method of gaining support and help from Mughal officials and in several cases presents were expected to either retain support or to gain new privileges. Although the Council would protest if pushed too far (even resulting in small skirmishes involving Company troops) the typical response from the Council was negotiation and

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[538] Wilson, *Early Annals*, Vol.1, p. 253 provides one such list of goods.

[539] McLane, *Land and Local Kingship,* pp. 96-124 describes in detail the role that gifts played in Indian society and in particular English reactions to these gifts. He argues that over the eighteenth century the prestige from gift giving was changed by British influence. However, his work is predominantly based on Mughal society outside of Company co-operation and after the 1750s.

submission to the Mughal governor's request.[540] For example when the Raja of Kisnager wrote to the Company demanding a present because 'a great part of our honourable masters investment' came from his territory he felt slighted for 'want of our presenting him something and therefore has impeded our business'.[541] In another case the Mughal governor defrayed a 44,000 rupee payment in exchange for a present.[542] The use of presents in these cases facilitated good relations with the Raja and also enabled Company trade activities. The demand and provision of gifts was a threat to the Company's bottom line and independence but they fulfilled an important role in Indian society. Tributes established the hierarchy and power relationships between officials in India and were more than just simple bribes. This is something the Company quickly realised and failure to meet the expectations of the Mughal elite threatened the Company's political position. This is important because although the Company could buy in expertise and contacts within the Mughal court they were not exempt from having to use Mughal systems of political exchange. Gifts therefore represented a Mughal specific currency and method of managing Anglo-Indian relationships.

Maintaining good relations with the Indian population of Calcutta was also important. The Company servants relied upon the Indian population for manual work around the colony, building, cleaning and loading goods. Indian labour facilitated the commercial operations of the Company and encouraged other Indian merchants to come and settle and trade in Calcutta attracted by the commercial opportunities such a population provided. Markets sprang up around Calcutta from its founding and each constituent village had its own market or bazaar.[543] Unfortunately the specific details of each market were not recorded. The Council did attempt to regulate the markets in 1728 along more European lines.[544] Such markets were places for the sale and trade of a wide variety of produce from around Bengal including fruit, rice and cattle. Therefore a threat to the stability and order amongst the majority Indian population of Calcutta was a threat to the stability of the colony.

This was especially true in regards to food, which in the eighteenth century was by no means a secure resource. The Council had to ensure that the Indian population had access to supplies of food. However, throughout the early part of the eighteenth century Bengal suffered several famines that threatened to decimate the population of the city and drive poor people out of the city in search of food elsewhere. During times of famine the Company provided rice to the poor. For example in 1711 the Company bought 500 maunds of rice and suspended rent payment

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[540] Wilson, *Early Annals*, Vol.2 Pt.1, xli

[541] BL IOR CPC P/1/11 September 1736.

[542] BL IOR CPC P/1/6 December 1726

[543] The monthly accounts in the Factory Records and Public Consultations list each market by its location and so list Calcutta, Govindpore and Suttanati as the sites of the markets. These had been the villages that had occupied Calcutta's site before 1690.

[544] BL IOR MCR P/155/72 p. 40.

until food was available. They reasoned that without food the Indian population would desert the city.[545] The Company had done the same in early 1710 and again in 1712 where the Company wanted to manage the access and distribution of rice amongst the population:[546]

> Rice already being very scarce and dear and to all appearances the ensuing season threatens us with a famine for want of grain. We therefore agreed that we allow the poor tenants of this place the liberty of our dustuck for rice only and that the zamindar register all dustucks.[547]

This provision of food (imported duty free) for the poor of the city suggests that the Company was aware that it needed to support the Indian part of the population by increasing the flow of food duty free into the colony. This mechanism for providing for the poor of the colony was also repeated in the 1730s and 1740s. They again suspended duties on rice in 1734 and after rice continued to remain scarce in 1738 the Company feared 'a remonstrance from the government and dispute thereon which may cause our honourable masters business to be stopped and create a considerable expense to them' if rice continued to be exported.[548] We can therefore argue that providing for the Indian population also had benefits when dealing with the Mughal state and that neglecting these responsibilities in favour of profit would have had a negative impact. The Company even went too far, stopping all boats laden with rice going upriver and unloading them at Calcutta for the poor there. Pir Khan the Mughal Governor's assistant wrote to the Company saying that should 'this reach the Nabobs ears he would doubtless be greatly incensed at it you ought therefore to give strict orders to all your people that no more be unloaded either at Calcutta or Govindpore'.[549] This shows that the Company were willing to damage its relationship with the Mughal state to protect maintain law and order amongst the Indian population of Calcutta and protect their position of authority within the colony.

The Indian population was not just provided for in the area of food. In 1706 they hired a local Indian man to look after the interests of the weaving workforce overseeing their work and helping them to meet targets.[550] Additionally, one of the first things the Company did in 1690 was to ensure that it paid its Indian workforce regularly.[551] The Company also bought land for weavers in the 1730s.[552] This suggests that the Company knew that, despite its monetary investment in

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[545] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 July 1711.

[546] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 June 1710.

[547] BL IOR CPC P/1/2 January 1712.

[548] BL IOR CPC P/1/10 August 1734 and BL IOR CPC P/1/13 May 1738.

[549] BL IOR CPC P/1/13 July 1738.

[550] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 May 1706.

[551] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/3 January 1698.

[552] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 March 1732.

India, they could not succeed without the cooperation of the average Indian inhabitant. In 1736 following a demand from the Nabob to deliver some Indian merchants to the Mughal governor the Company was concerned that 'we hold our resolution of protecting our tenants as the consequence of delivering them may be the utter ruin of the place since it will induce every merchant to leave us, when they find themselves not safe under our protection'.[553] Other examples of managing the Indian population of the colony can be seen in the way that the Company wrote public announcements in local Indian dialects to ensure that the Indian population understood what they were being asked.[554] The maintenance of strong relationships with the Mughal government and other Indian elites has been explored by historians previously but the Company's governance also shows that supporting the Indian population in Calcutta was essential to the commercial success of the colony.

Calcutta was more than just a European colony. The majority of the population was Indian and thus under the jurisdiction of the Mughal state. In previous chapters we have examined how the President and Council managed behaviour amongst the European population. We have also explored the administrative tools they had at their disposal to execute their authority in the colony. It is important to also examine how these relationships and methods of control worked in relation to the Indian population of Calcutta. Much of the historiographical debate on this issue has focussed upon the issues that arose following the permanent settlement of the 1770s. Although this was an important shift in how the Company interacted with the Indian population, we must also examine how in the first decades of rule how the Indian population of Calcutta was controlled and how indigenous legal forms interplayed with the tools and controls of the Company.[555] The President and Council wrote to the London Directors in 1726 that:

> The Charter being principally designed for the benefit of the Europeans, and many of the natives who live with you having particular customs of their own, we are willing they should still enjoy them, so as they live quietly and do nothing that tends to the public disturbance or breaking into the settled rules of the place.[556]

This suggests that the Company in our period desired a hands off approach to the issue of incorporating Hindu law in how they related to the Indian population. However, this raises the issue

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[553] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 May 1736.

[554] We have explored this earlier but in one case in 1738 the Company when announcing publicly that all rice should be sold to alleviate the rice shortage this was also done in this manner BL IOR CPC P/1/13 June 1738.

[555] Bhattacharya-Panda, *Appropriation and Invention of Tradition,* p. 13-18 has outlined the first attempts at codifying Hindu law, however this was done from the 1760s. This later attempt at using Hindu law had many omissions and reflected much about what the European lawmakers thought was important and reflective of Hindu values.

[556] Bhattacharya-Panda, *Appropriation and Invention of Tradition,* p. 39

of how far the Company did enforce its authority over the Indian population or whether the courts and laws which we have explored so far were used as they were for the European population and in the same manner. This 'colonial' dynamic is vital as it helps us to understand how complete Company authority was in Calcutta. The challenge is to identify whether the elite had to utilize different strategies or methods in maintaining its authority over the Indian population of the colony or whether the forms of law and governance were easily made the norm for the population of the colony. The source material does provide some insight into this complex issue showing how the Company adapted its courts and colonial laws to enable Company rule to be maintained.

Exercising Company authority over the Indian population was not easy. As we have explored in chapter four, several monopoly powers that were granted to the Company carried no weight in Bengal. Freedom from the Mughal state did not automatically give the Company the capacity to rule the Indian population of the colony. Other Zamindars around the borders of the colony challenged the Company's position.[557] In one case, a local Zamindar kidnapped nine Company tenants and refused to release them. The Council responded to this by sending troops to protect the Indians that had been kidnapped.[558] Such an example shows the extra resources the Council needed to deploy in order to protect their jurisdiction from encroachment. The problem of encroachment by other Zamindars continued later in the period. In 1733 the Company ordered that all the checkpoints or Chowkeys that neighbouring Zamindars had erected should be pulled down to restore access in and out of the colony.[559] Zamindars were also protective of accidental trespass by Company men as shown by the attack on some servants who inadvertently wandered onto another Zamindar's land in 1732.[560] Under the terms of the European monopoly the Council was to be the highest authority over the European population. However, within the Mughal system the Company was nothing more than a landlord who could be challenged and ignored by others. An example of this weakness can be seen in the inability of the Company to actually buy the rights to the land it was granted by the Emperor in the f*arman*.[561] For the Council to exert authority over the colonial environment and population it needed to use more resources such as bullion for bribes and soldiers to protect trade. This highlights the structural issues the Company experienced in trying to define and enforce its authority over the Indian population of Calcutta.

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[557] Mines, *Courts of Law and Styles of Self*, pp. 36-37, has explored the same problem of Zamindari influence upon Madras and argues that this created a chaotic and antagonistic society. This is not evident in Calcutta and the Company were much better at defining the space of the colony and the boundaries of their jurisdiction.

[558] BL IOR CPC P/1/4 March 1719.

[559] BL IOR CPC P/1/9 April 1733.

[560] *Daily Post* (London, England), Wednesday, August 30, 1732.

[561] Keay, *The Honourable Company*, p. 232.

Despite these problems the Council did have some success in maintaining authority in other ways, most notably the Mayor's Court was regularly used by the Indian population of the colony. A sample of the Mayor's Court records suggests that cases with only Indian plaintiffs or cases with at least one Indian involved made up a significant proportion of cases in our period. Amongst this sample of cases the first decade saw the highest proportion of Indians using the court as shown by the table below:

Year	European only case	Percentage of total (%)	Indian only case	Percentage of total (%)	Mixed case	Percentage of total (%)	Total
1728/1729	16	17.98	61	68.54	12	13.48	89
1729/1730	13	20.00	34	52.31	18	27.69	65
1732/1733	63	35.80	73	41.48	29	16.48	176
1735/1736	22	34.92	27	42.86	13	20.63	63
1739/1740	39	54.93	12	16.90	19	26.76	71
1743/1744	40	63.49	12	19.05	11	17.46	63
1748/1749	36	36.00	40	40.00	24	24.00	100

Table 2: Table 6 Mayor's Court Usage 1728-1749[562]

Even when European cases overtook Indian cases a large number of European cases were either wills or multiple suits involving a single European normally in relation to the reclamation of debts. For example in 1743 twelve of the forty European cases involved the debtors of Mordecai Walker whilst each Indian case normally involved separate plaintiffs. This sample of cases shows that the Mayor's Court was used regularly by the Indian population of Calcutta and that it had a deeper penetration into the Indian community.[563] Indians used the Court differently from the European inhabitants. Many Indian cases were dropped after the initial reading of the case in the court.[564] This suggests that for Indian cases the Mayor's Court was used to scare other Indians into settling out of court (almost all Indian cases were to do with debt). The costs, time and alien court system were seemingly effective in solving Indian disputes before they went through the courts. The accessibility of the Mayor's Court was one of the reasons that it was used so much by Indians.

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[562] The records this data is compiled are: BL IOR MCR P/155/18, P/154/48, P/154/15, P/154/41, P/155/22, P/155/11, P/155/48.

[563] Washbrook, *Law, State and Agrarian Society*, p. 654 has argued that British attitudes to the law was Janus faced, using British forms to maintain authority but espousing 'Brahamic ideals' keep the Indian population in check based upon their own values. However, the examples in this chapter suggest that the court systems of the Company in our period were used by the Indian population in their own terms and suggest the Indian population were equally canny in their use of British law to further their own causes.

[564] This can be seen in the Court Records for 1728 BL IOR MCR P/155/11.

After only three years of hearing cases, the court suggested in 1730 that a special court that heard the cases of the poor of the colony should be held twice a week for all cases involving less than one hundred rupees. The Court reasoned that:

> There are many poor persons in this place, who cannot afford to pay the fees of this court, and consequently are debarred from justice, do hereby make it a rule of practice …that the poor may know when to apply for justice.[565]

This approach by the Mayor's Court suggests that justice, and therefore access was important for the court to fulfil its function. Furthermore, these cases brought by the poor do not survive in the Mayor's Court records, had they been so it would have increased the proportion of Indians in cases even further. The Mayor's Court also permitted Hindus to take oaths suitable to their religious views, use Indian language title deeds against Company rent receipts and also, in issues that the Mayor's Court felt were contentious, they sought clarity on how the case was resolved using Indian laws.[566] In this final example an Indian widow asked for clarity from the Court regarding an issue with her will. The Court, unsure how to proceed, asked Indian elders for their opinion on what was the most appropriate course of action.[567] In addition, when the gaol was built in 1727, a commission was established to discuss how best to build it. This commission was chosen half from the European and half from the Indian population.[568] This involvement of the Indian population was atypical of the British judicial system where Catholic and other religious or cultural groups were not catered for as Indians were in the Calcutta courts. The access granted to the Indian population is distinctly different from the court system of the later century whereby legal systems for the Indian population based upon 'ancient constitutions' and despotism were designed to force Indians to adhere to British legal authority.[569] By providing greater access it brought the Indian population

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[565] BL IOR MCR P/155/12 May 1730.

[566] BL IOR MCR P/154/48 1748-1749 March. Details the allowance of Indian documents in court and in May the swearing of Hindu oaths.

[567] BL IOR MCR P/155/11 June 1728. The later use of Pandits/Pundits has been explored by Bhattacharya-Panda, *Appropriation and Invention of Tradition*, pp. 43-46 but this intermediary relationship was not the typical approach in the period before 1760 when only complex or sensitive cases were brought to the Indian community for clarity.

[568] BL IOR MCR P/155/72, p. 10.

[569] Robert Travers, *Ideology and Empire in Eighteenth Century India* (Cambridge 2007), p. 8. and Robert Travers, 'Contested Despotism: Problems of Liberty in British India', in Jack P. Greene (ed.) *Exclusionary Empire, English Liberty Overseas 1600-1900* (Cambridge 2010), pp. 191-196, has explored how perceptions regarding Indian law were applied by the later colonial government in the 1770s to define and control Indian values and behaviour. The evidence for this in our earlier period does not exist and a more hands off approach is more visible.

into the realm of Company control and authority rather than driving them away from the colony as had happened in Madras.[570] In an environment where the Council had no capacity to control the Indian population, which had alternative forms of authority and justice, the Council needed to encourage co-operation from the Indian population.[571] The management of the Mayor's Court and its inclusiveness combined to make the task of exerting Company authority much easier.

The implementation of the Royal Charter and the *farman* gave the Company the tools and the authority to control the behaviour of the Indian population more effectively. Before 1727 there are very few examples of the President and Council hearing and recording cases of theft by Indians. In one case in 1695, the Company was unsure what to do with an Indian servant caught stealing and wrote to Madras for further guidance.[572] This suggests that the Company was unsure of its power to prosecute Indians and the manner they should attempt to punish the crime. The Council was more confident in responding to the largest, most violent or more blatant incidences of theft. These types of incidents often happened on the Hooghly and affected the Company's shipping. A failure to respond could jeopardize Company trade and encourage further thefts against Company shipping. Similarly, cases of theft by bands of robbers against the inhabitants of the colony also elicited a strong response by the Company. In one case:

> There having several robberies been committed in the town lately by the country robbers in which actions they have killed and wounded several black people, company servants, and others: so that 'tis thought necessary to keep a greater guard on the towns, for the Company's tenants safety.[573]

In this case the Council was not able to catch the robbers but felt confident that an increase in military strength was a suitable deterrent from further attack. The Council could act this way in some confidence, as fighting back against robbery on the river was never objected to by the Mughal state which never come to the aid of Indians involved or demanded that these cases should be dealt with under Mughal law. This suggests that the Company knew what the limits to its authority were and also the parameters they could work within. The granting of the *farman* and the implementation of the Mayor's Court combined to more clearly define the Company's authority in dealing with crime in the Indian population.

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[570] Arasaratnam, 'European Port Settlements', p. 93.

[571] K.J. Bragdon, 'Crime and Punishment among the Indians of Massachusetts 1675-1750', *Ethnohistory* Vol. 28, No.1 (1981), pp. 23-25. Has suggested a similar integration of Indians into Puritan towns based upon European values. This collaborative relationship towards order was shattered by the threat of Indian attacks during King Philips War.

[572] BL IOR CFR DAC G/7/2 July 1695.

[573] BL IOR CPC P/1/1 February 1705.

Only two sets of Oyer and Terminer records survive from the court's establishment in 1727 to 1729 and from 1733-1734. Although not enough statistical data survives to do a full analysis, enough remains to be able to see some of the general trends in how the Council viewed criminal behaviour. Looking at the two sets of surviving records we can see that there were changes in how crime was prosecuted even over a short seven year period. Theft remained the most common crime in the records for the earlier records accounting for thirteen of twenty-two cases.[574] Violent crime was the next most common crime recorded with six cases.[575] In stark contrast to the actions of the Council before 1727 at least five cases in the first set of Oyer and Terminer records resulted in death sentences. Amongst these convictions no European was sentenced to death showing the limitations of the Council's authority before the 1727 charter. In addition the ratio of European to Indian cases was strongly weighted towards Indian cases.[576] This suggests that Indian criminal behaviour was considered more serious and challenging to the values of the colonial elite. The new powers granted to the colonial elite meant more control over deviancy amongst the Indian population. By 1733 the balance of how criminal behaviour that was prosecuted also changed. The response to Indian violence within the boundaries of Calcutta changed position with larceny as the main crime prosecuted. Violent crime accounted for thirteen of the seventeen crimes recorded between 1733 and 1734.[577] This suggests that the Company was beginning to perceive violence in the colony more seriously and that the distinction between the Europeans and the Indians of Calcutta was strengthening. However, as a proportion of the population the numbers of recorded cases was small. This suggests the Company was mimicking the strategy they used with the European poor by only focussing on acute deviancy to set an example and to enforce their authority. The Council as a result were not attempting to control all behaviour but to just prevent the worst excesses.

The strategy of the Council in the period was to absorb certain Indian cultural values and to force acceptance of European court systems and authority amongst the Indian population. Along

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[574] Several of these cases were accounts of theft by Indian servants which up till this point had not been recorded as a regular crime in any of the records. This group were typically seen as root causes of criminal activity for example see Paula Humfrey, 'Female Servants and Women's Criminality in Early Eighteenth Century London' in Greg T. Smith, Allyson N. May and Simon Devereaux (eds.) *Criminal Justice in the Old World and New* (Toronto 1998), pp59-61. The increase in prosecuting this type of crime suggests an adoption of British standards when controlling this group and is typical of how the Company prosecuted crime in the later part of the century.

[575] BL IOR MCR P/155/72

[576] BL IOR MCR P/155/72 and BL IOR MCR P/155/73, in the period 1727-1729 there were eleven cases of Indian only crime and five of European only. In the later period there were thirteen Indian only crimes and only six European cases.

[577] BL IOR MCR P/155/73.

with making the Indian courts more accessible and attractive to Indian users it meant that the Council was able to maintain authority and control the behaviour of the Indian population.

Conclusion

The Indian population of Calcutta was integral to the management and success of the colony. The Company established relationships across the full social spectrum of the indigenous population. The Company were in a unique position of having to maintain relationships with the Indian elite whilst also being responsible for the lives of the poorer inhabitants of the city. This presented a Janus faced problem of collaboration on the one hand against the problem of urban authority on the other. The President and Council responded to this in a pragmatic way, prioritising the needs of the Company when working with local elites and supporting their Indian tenants when needed. The Company were happy to use both European forms of control but to also partner with the Indian population or use Indian values when needed. The importance of this relationship is that it puts the Company in a nuanced and sophisticated position that suggests that the Company even from this early period realised that isolation and introversion would not benefit their commercial ambitions or the development of the colony. This relationship changed over time as the Company's fortunes changed but the Company by the end of the period was unable to fully remove themselves from Indian events, relationships and responsibilities. The success of the Company was in part due to its relationship and management of the Indian population of the colony, however as they became more successful its fortunes became increasingly linked to those of the Indian population of Calcutta.

Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to weave together the many hundreds of lives described in the source material to explore the formation and management of what went on to become one of the great cities of the British Empire. Throughout the thesis we have looked at Calcutta not just as a place of commercial transaction but as a place that was constructed through the experience, knowledge and ambition of its inhabitants. The history of Calcutta is told through the interaction and experience between every group living in the colony. Although the Company has been central to previous histories of the colony we must look at the pressures, relationships and tools at their disposal to build and develop the historical analysis of Calcutta as a colonial place. This requires us to move away from a purely economic or political analysis. A reassessment of the source material will highlight several new and/or neglected themes in the story of Calcutta.

The introduction to the thesis began by highlighting a problem within the historiography of the history of Calcutta. Historians have tended to look at the period after Plassey when considering the growth of the colony's institutions of governance and its urban development. This thesis has through an examination of the stories and experiences of the earlier inhabitants, attempted to identify in the earlier period before Plassey these same themes of governance and urban development. This is not to say that Calcutta was destined to become the later iteration of the colony but that the history of Calcutta is more nuanced, interesting and related to imperial developments than previously acknowledged. This has required us to look at how Calcutta was shaped by events and relationships with the Mughal state and also the tools used by the East India Company to shape the colony. It also requires us to identify the specific pressures present during the founding of the colony that would provide the context for the events explored in the thesis. We must also look at the population as more than just the Company servants of the colony. We must look at how these groups interacted with each other to ensure the colony was a success and the different strategies the Company used to attract and control the different groups of inhabitants within the colony. To control the colony required the Company to exercise authority over these inhabitants and therefore it is important to understand the tools and governmental framework implemented that allowed the Company to do this. We can then examine how the tools and personnel used and employed by the Company overcome the pressures and limitations identified at the beginning of the thesis. We can do this through an examination of the Company's policies in controlling space, behaviour and the Indian population of the colony. In identifying the context both in Bengal and from Europe that would impact upon the stability of the colony we can better

understand why the President and Council implemented the policies and solutions identified in this thesis and that shaped the colonies development. The tools and policies that the President and Council used overcame external and internal limitations on the colony and made it stable and profitable.

The story of Calcutta as told via the source material could very easily be read through a Eurocentric gaze and without an appreciation of the challenges facing the Company in interacting with the Bengali population. However, when we see this interaction with the Indian population, we begin to see a very different picture of the English Company in India. The events described in the thesis explore Calcutta as a place shaped by local context and Indian relationships. The commercial benefits of Anglo-Indian relationships have been argued before but the impact of these relationships upon the institutions and initiatives of the Company have not been explored. The regulation of behaviour, the inclusive nature of the Company court system and the strategies utilised to encourage and protect the Indian population all benefitted the position of the Company and the growth of the colony as an urban place. This is a new approach because the history of the colony has not been thought of as being shaped by local context and by local relationships. Previously the focus has been upon commerce and politics in shaping the power and position of the President and Council. The argument of this thesis is not that Calcutta was unique but that it shows in one setting, the influences that could shape colonial urban institutions and structures.

The institutions of the colony were also tools that enabled the Company to manage the colony and to exercise its authority. This control became more robust and defined over the period. The growth of Company authority happened in several stages. Firstly, the Company had to stabilize and protect its trading relationships without which it would have had no basis to stay in Bengal and build a colony. This was secured in the 1690s but it was not just a political success but also an urban one. The Company sought a firmer basis from which to trade and manage operations in Bengal. To the British mind this required the Company to secure land and legal permissions that would support future investment and help create a safe distance between the Company and the Mughal elite. Initially this was achieved through the Zamindari powers granted by the *farman*. However, the institutions and initiatives created by the Company to consolidate its power was supported by the church, courts, markets, and other urban infrastructure that was built. The next challenge was to legitimise the administrative process in favour of the European elite which was achieved by incorporation of the colony by Royal Charter in 1727. This enabled the creation of the Mayor's Court taking many of the responsibilities of the management of the Colony away from the President and Council. From the 1730s the Company was increasingly threatened by events in the local context (military conflict, natural disasters and political unrest) which forced the Council to define and order the urban space to protect the colony.

When we look at the wider scope of this thesis and how it adds to other historical debates we can see several areas that can be re-evaluated by the urban approach of this research. Firstly, the historiography of the East India Company and the events leading to Plassey should be reassessed. Arguments that deal with the events leading up to Plassey have never considered the challenges facing the European inhabitants of Calcutta and how they built a colony to overcome them. To understand why the British acted as they did leading up to and after 1757 we need to look more closely at how the Europeans lived in Bengal not just traded there. In particular we should look at how they created their own society and community in India and managed their Indian relationships by integrating with Mughal society and networks. We can also identify several examples of Company weakness that imposed severe limitations upon its capacity to trade safely. The Council lacked legal and physical protection in the early years and this threatened the viability of the colony. Despite the strength of the commercial operations of the Company it did not translate into security and power in Bengal. This was achieved through the building of the Fort, the management of the population of Calcutta and the freedom to protect the borders of the colony. Therefore the colonial success of Calcutta was shaped as much by the commercial activities of the Company but also the building and stabilising of Calcutta as an urban place. We cannot separate urban development from any colonial development of Calcutta and this therefore changes how we should assess the development of the colonial state in the earliest years of the British in India.

Focussing upon the urban growth of Calcutta illuminates wider historical themes. Recent colonial historiography has suggested that colonial societies did not develop due to the sole influence of European power. Instead these societies adapted and accommodated themselves to the social and political systems that they interacted with. Burton Stein has written the most about eighteenth-century India whilst others such as David Cannadine, David Washbrook and C.A. Bayly have written more on later eighteenth and nineteenth century cases. The research of this thesis regarding Calcutta suggests that even in early examples of colonial societies, such adaption to Indian life was essential to the Company servant's success and survival. The urban growth of the colony shows clearly how the Company servants used Indian influences and relationships to manage and grow the colony. Without such interaction the Company would have been in a much more unstable and isolated position. The successes here can also be seen in other Company settlements throughout Asia (such as Madras and Bombay) and this research also suggests that urban changes in Calcutta occurred much earlier than previously understood by historians. By looking at the urban growth of the colony we have been able to see this adaptation as a necessary reaction to the pressures and instability experienced by the Company's servants in Bengal. Instead we should perhaps think of adaptation and adjustment to the colonial-host dynamic as a standard mechanism of colonial growth. This thesis has attempted to ask new questions of old source material. The complex interplay between European, colonial and Mughal relationships is endured

by having the colony as an anchor for this interaction. Instead of the period before 1757 being considered 'the dark age of British India' as suggested by C.R. Wilson it should be seen as worthy of new inquiry and given a new place in the debates of colonial history.[578]

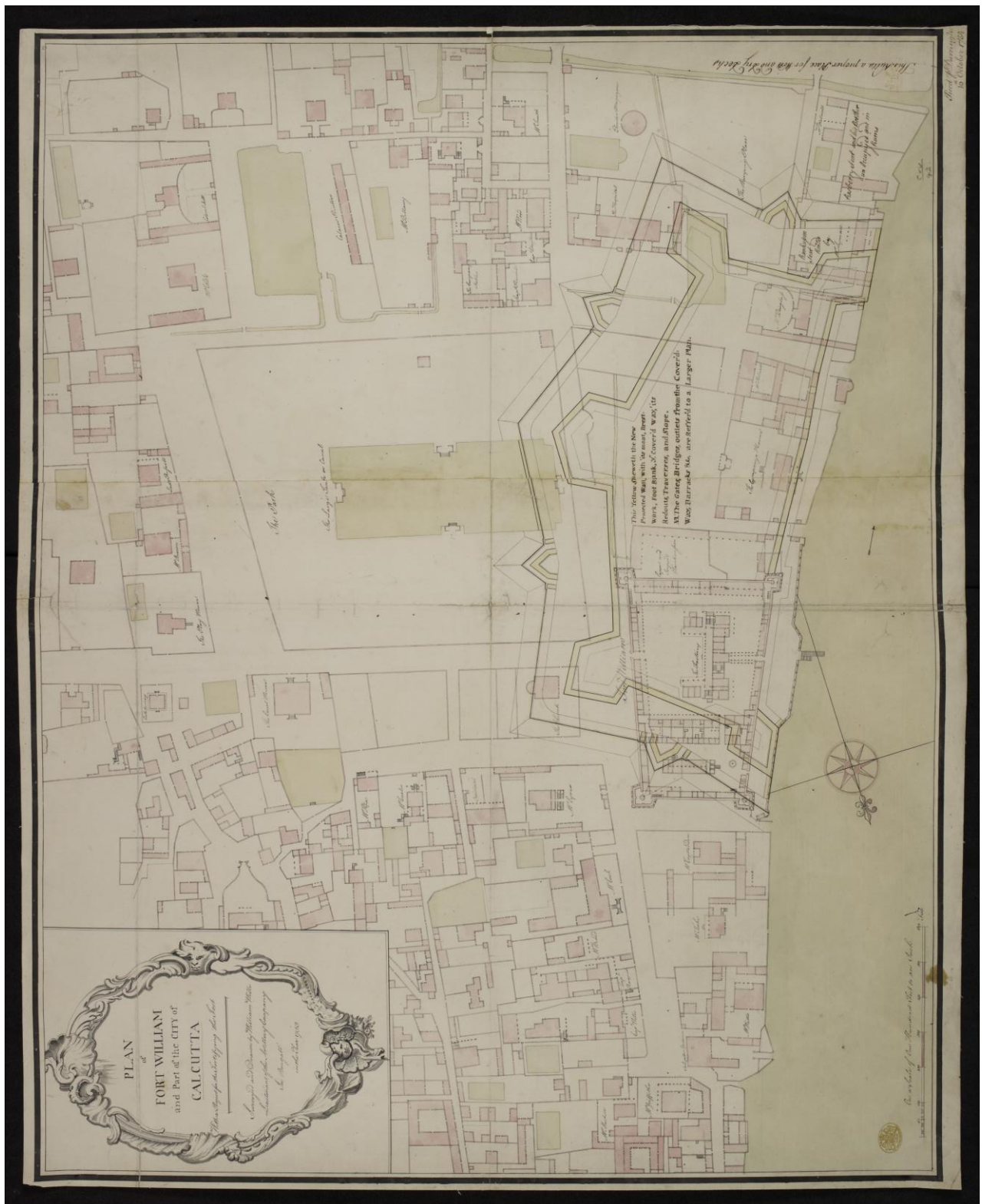[578] Wilson, *The Early Annals, vol. 1*, vii.

Appendix

A Plan of Calcutta and the adjacent country drawn in 1742

A Plan of Fort William and part of the city of Calcutta 1753

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Maps K.Top.115.42 – A Plan of Fort William and part of the city of Calcutta 1753

Maps K.Top.115.41 – A plan or birds eye view of that part of Calcutta within the compass of the palisades, wherein live the Europeans and Christians 1742

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