7 Crafts and Construction

In April 1661, Thomas Chapman, broad-weaver of Studley, Wiltshire, bought some Spanish white wool from a local clothier, which he took to Edward Baylie of Trowbridge to be dyed. After Chapman 'mixed … and broke' the dyed wool himself, his wife and sister spun it into yarn; he later took this to the shop of another broad-weaver of Studley, who wove it into cloth for Chapman on his loom.[1] Nearly a century earlier, in 1564, three local artisans were contracted to patch up the dilapidated vicarage of Bradford St Peter, Yorkshire. The slater William Dockley was hired to make repairs to the building 'in stone', while 84-year-old wright John Hayre and 50-year-old carpenter Thomas Hayre were paid £8 and bound to do the same 'in timber work'.[2] In the same county, about hay harvest in 1669, John Corker of Rotherham, cobbler, came to the shop of blacksmith James Tomson in Whiston to sell pieces of scrap iron, which he had received in payment for 'mending shoes for the workmen' and their wives at a Rotherham forge. Tomson, then being sick, directed his journeyman servant John Oldfield to weigh and pay for the iron, some of which the journeyman and Tomson's apprentice Richard Carr 'presently wrought up' in the shop.[3] Unlike Tomson and his servants, James Fisher and Thomas Oxenham of Ottery St Mary, Devon, carried out their craftwork away from the household. In 1614, the two tailors worked at their trade some 10 miles distant 'in the house of Mr John Stone of Luppitt', alongside Stone's daughter Dorothy, who sat 'near the window … making bone lace'.[4]

These four episodes illustrate the range of craftwork and construction captured in the work-task database, and how it can speak to the experience of industry in early modern England. The various steps of textile production delineated in Chapman's case imply a sharp but not immutable gender division of labour in England's largest industry. As the case

[1] WSHC, A1/110/1662T, 185. [2] BI, CP.G.1164, *Taylor v. Oakden*.
[3] WYAS, QS1/9/2/2, 3–4; QS1/9/2/3, 1–2.
[4] DHC, Chanter 867, *Follett v. Stone and Tottle*.

from Devon suggests, this extended to the process of turning textiles into clothing. Women like Dorothy were more likely to engage in the making of lace, stockings, and underclothing, while men like James Fisher could pursue the professional trade of tailoring, associated with outerwear production. The latter dichotomy highlights how the apprenticeship system excluded women from many industries, like those of building, smithing, and shoemaking referenced above. John Oldfield and Richard Carr grant some insight into the realities of this training system in a master craftsman's household, revealing the delegation and division of commercial and artisanal tasks. Apprenticeship for seven years was mandatory for rural crafts like blacksmithing under the Statute of Artificers, but this case suggests the law was not always strictly followed; Carr only served apprentice to Tomson 'for the space of three years' before he became a smith in his own right. In addition to issues of gender, occupation, training, and regulation, all of these cases bring to light the fine details of industrial or manufacturing work in the countryside, from workplace to employment and wage arrangements.

This chapter explores these themes using the tasks in the crafts and construction category of the work-task dataset. This includes mining and quarrying, building and construction work, working with wood and metal, mill maintenance, textile and clothing production, and other miscellaneous forms of manufacture. Work in this category was the most sharply gendered in the dataset, often being the remit of men with specialist occupations, described as craftsmen or artisans, who entered those occupations via apprenticeship. Textile and clothing production are the two largest subcategories, and the only subcategories in which women outnumbered men: these are examined in detail below. Building and construction, a form of work that dominates studies of wages and living standards, as well as some detailed studies of employment practices, are also given particular attention. In contrast to textile and clothing production, women were almost entirely absent from this subcategory.

To understand the sharp gender division of labour in craft production, it is necessary to consider how people entered these forms of work, and, conversely, how they were excluded from some occupations. In early modern society, apprenticeship was the dominant means of entering specialist occupations. The 1563 Statute of Artificers made it illegal to enter 'any craft, mystery or occupation' without serving a seven-year apprenticeship, although the extent to which this was enforced remains unclear.[5] Apprenticeship registers from guilds in large towns indicate

[5] Statutes of the Realm: 5 Elizabeth, chapter 4, clause 24. On enforcement, see Davies, *Enforcement of English Apprenticeship*.

that girls were only rarely apprenticed, although the apprenticeship of women became more common in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in London and elsewhere.[6] How apprenticeship was organised away from large towns remains poorly documented, although private apprenticeship agreements must have been common. Craft apprenticeships should not be confused with pauper or parish apprenticeships, compulsory unpaid work placements which were organised for orphans and the children of the labouring poor.[7] However, the records of charities and overseers of the poor suggest there was always a range of apprenticeship agreements: high premiums were paid to enter profitable trades and crafts, smaller premiums to enter occupations with more limited prospects, while householders might be paid to take on parish apprentices.

Much of the literature about apprenticeship in economic history stresses its role in human capital formation, seeing apprenticeship as an investment by parents in training that improved their children's future standard of living.[8] Yet Ogilvie's gendered perspective on guilds and apprenticeship emphasises the darker side of this system, which seems to have excluded women from profitable occupations.[9] It is notable that England's labour legislation, the main method for regulating apprenticeship outside of large towns, did not explicitly restrict women from apprenticeship, but nonetheless the work-task data confirms that women are notably absent from apprenticed crafts. There were alternative routes for women to participate in craft occupations. Non-apprenticed training allowed women to become skilled in crafts such as spinning, plain sewing, lacemaking, and stocking knitting. Women who married craftsmen might help to run their businesses, and ultimately run the businesses themselves after their husband's death. Yet as the work-task data on artisans' wives makes clear, even if a woman ran a blacksmithing or carpentry business or contributed to the financial management tasks necessary to run businesses, she did not undertake the metalworking or woodworking.[10]

Historians studying work in early modern crafts and industry have relied primarily on wage accounts, occupational descriptors in parish,

[6] Snell, *Annals*, pp. 270–319; Ben-Amos, *Adolescence and Youth* pp. 133–45; Gowing, *Ingenious Trade*.
[7] Fisher, 'Bound to the Soil (Part I)' and 'Bound to the Soil (Part II)'; Wallis, 'Apprenticeship in England'; Lane, *Apprenticeship in England*, pp. 71–83; Dunlop and Denman, *English Apprenticeship*, pp. 248–60.
[8] Mokyr, 'Economics of apprenticeship', offers a summary.
[9] Ogilvie, *Bitter Living*, pp. 320–52, esp. 329–31 and *European Guilds*, pp. 232–305.
[10] See Table 2.18 for the repertoires of artisans' wives.

legal, and probate records, and records of labour law enforcement.[11] For certain types of industries, like mining, the records of specialist courts have also proved valuable.[12] Together these sources, while rich, tend to prioritise large building projects and enterprises, exclude the contributions of women and workers engaged in non-apprenticed trades, and privilege occupational designations over the actual experience and practice of work. The work-task data can cast light on some of these blind spots, but it is of course shaped and sometimes limited by the type and provenance of the depositions used to collect it. The largest share of textile, clothing, and metalwork-related tasks, for instance, comes from quarter session theft cases, with defamation cases from the church courts making up the second-largest source. In contrast, the source profile for building, woodwork, and groundworks is made up predominately of coroners' reports into accidental deaths and church court cases related to ecclesiastical property, such as pew disputes and vicarage dilapidation cases.

There are also some forms of industrial labour which the work-task approach has been less successful at recording. Very few mining and quarrying activities have been collected, totalling less than 0.5 per cent of all male tasks. However, this is likely an accurate reflection of the small size of the sector relative to the national labour force, as well as its highly localised nature.[13] More concerning is the underrepresentation of spinning in the dataset. Craig Muldrew has estimated that carding and spinning made up between 50 and 65 per cent of the labour required to turn wool into cloth, depending on the type of cloth, during the period.[14] Spinning and carding activities combined make up around 43 per cent of the total (female adjusted) textile production tasks in the database; somewhat less than might be expected.[15] The reason for this underrepresentation is not wholly clear, but it is likely that spinning was so ubiquitous as to be hardly worth comment in testimonies. It is also a consequence of it frequently being described simply as 'work'. When in

[11] See for example Stephenson, *Contracts and Pay;* Airs, *Tudor and Jacobean Country House;* Woodward, *Men at Work;* Muldrew, '"Th'ancient distaff"'; Keibek and Shaw-Taylor, 'Early modern rural by-employments'; Thirsk, 'Industries in the countryside'; Davies, *Enforcement of Apprenticeship*.

[12] See for example Wood, *Politics of Social Conflict*.

[13] This aligns with CamPop's findings that 'in 1600 only around 0.3 per cent of the adult male labour force were miners': 'Share of the labour force in mining', CamPop, Economies Past [website].

[14] Muldrew, '"Th'ancient distaff"', pp. 504–5.

[15] This total excludes integral tasks, which inflate the number of 'gather wool' tasks, but also bring the percentage of 'spinning' down. Female multiplier applied; without the multiplier, spinning tasks make up 26 per cent of textile production, excluding integral.

1679 Mary Skatt of Warminster, Wiltshire, described herself and 'other neighbours sitting at their doors at work, as is custom in summertime', they were probably spinning, but this is never specified.[16] Nonetheless, as the example of the actions of Chapman's wife and sister at the start of the chapter shows, the depositional evidence does pick up illuminating details about spinning, and these are explored in greater depth below. Tasks like spinning, which were almost wholly done by non-apprenticed women, throw light on the tangled ideas of specialism, skill, and gender, which shaped craftwork during this period. The rest of the chapter works to unravel this web, starting with an overview of artisanal occupations, apprenticeship, and their relationship to work tasks in the category of craftwork and construction.

7.1 Occupations and Apprenticeship

The Statute of Artificers aimed to restrict most crafts to specialists trained via a seven-year apprenticeship, but to what extent did rural reality reflect these rules? Men with craft occupations account for nearly 65 per cent of craftwork tasks performed by male workers.[17] Figure 7.1 breaks down these artisans into categories, according to the character or materials of their industry.[18] Makers of textiles, clothes, and leather products together form the largest proportion, while artisans linked to food (food processors and millers) and construction (builders and many woodworkers such as carpenters) make up sizable groups as well.[19] These proportions align well with other occupational surveys of the period, suggesting that the work-task sample is largely representative of craftsmen in the English population as a whole.[20]

Also illuminating here is the strong correlation between craftwork and the recording of occupational descriptors. Overall, witnesses or scribes were much more likely to note occupational descriptors when craftwork was involved, even incidentally in a case, as opposed to other activities such as agriculture or transport. Occupational descriptors were recorded

[16] WSHC, D1/42/61, 136. See also DHC, Chanter 867, *Bully v. Turpyn*.
[17] When workers lacking any descriptors are included, artisans account for around 50 per cent.
[18] Integral tasks have been excluded because they inflate the number of food processors (specifically butchers).
[19] Millers might be involved in textile production (fulling mills) instead of or in addition to grain milling, but such details are rarely provided in the sources.
[20] See CamPop's 'The share of the labour force in the secondary sector', Economies Past [website]. The work-task percentages line up well with CamPop's shares of adult male labour force c.1600, although the work-task results record significantly more builders when carpenters are included in the tally. See also Sections 1.1 and 2.4.

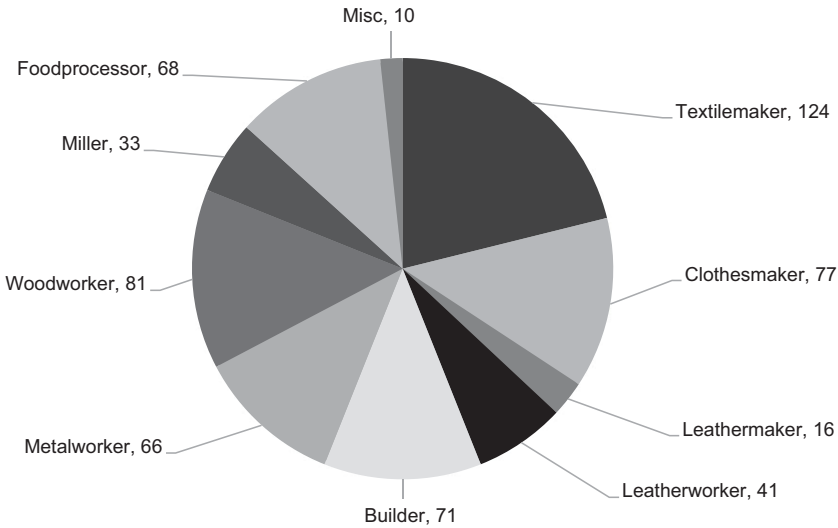

Figure 7.1 Male artisan actors in the dataset.
Notes: Integral excluded. The graph categorises those male actors (individuals who performed a work task) with artisanal occupations, according to the character or materials of their industry. Textilemaker includes comber, cardmaker, clothmaker, clothier, draper, dyer, feltmaker, flax-dresser, fuller, roper, and weaver. Clothesmaker includes button-maker, fringe-maker, hatter, hosier, sheet-maker, stockinger, and tailor. Leathermaker includes currier, fellmonger, skinner, and tanner. Leatherworker includes cordwainer, glover, saddler, and shoemaker/cobbler. Builder includes bricklayer, dauber, glazier, hellier/thatcher/slater/tiler, mason, millwright, plumber, and waller. Metalworker includes bellfounder, brasier, cutler, farrier, furbisher, ironmonger, nailor, pewterer, pinmaker, smith (black, gold, lock, white), tinker, and tinner. Woodworker includes carpenter, cooper, joiner, ploughwright, sawyer, shipwright, turner, and wheelwright.

for 72 per cent of male craftwork and construction tasks compared to 57 per cent of male tasks overall. Upon describing craft or building work, deponents often volunteered how they or the worker was 'a joiner by trade', 'a goldsmith by his occupation' or 'wrought at his trade of a weaver to which he had been apprentice'.[21] This pattern implies that witnesses deemed occupational details more relevant in such cases,

[21] SHC, D/D/Cd/75, *Needes v. Harris*; DHC, Chanter 859, *Buller v. Denys*; Chanter 875, *Osborne v. Andrewes*.

reflecting a popular association of craft labour with skilled occupations, as well as a desire to justify artisanal work with relevant qualifications. After all, even the seemingly incidental description of labour associated with regulated trades or crafts could have legal implications for witnesses, because practising a trade without apprenticeship remained a target of public presentments and private informants throughout the period.[22] Indeed, while the data points towards high rates of apprentice-training in rural craftwork, craft activities performed by those who were not apprenticed may be underrepresented due to the influence of the labour laws. Whatever the reality of craftwork, the *idea* that it should be specialised, male, and entered via apprenticeship seems to have been deeply embedded. Most crafts, trades, or 'mysteries' of early modern England were inextricably interwoven with the institution of apprenticeship, as the first step and primary means to acquiring skills and credentials.

In the prototypical apprenticeship, teenage boys were bound to live, work, and train with a master craftsman or tradesman for a set number of years. Upon graduating to the rank of journeyman, they would then labour for wages, in a position similar to an annual servant, until they accumulated enough capital to establish their own household and trade as a master. While medieval guilds and companies had long regulated trade and craftwork in urban communities through this mechanism, the 1563 Statute of Artificers made a minimum seven-year apprenticeship mandatory across the kingdom. Yet because most source material on apprenticeship derives from civic guilds and corporations, very little scholarship has explored its experience in the countryside, where the majority of English craftsmen resided.[23] It is here that the work-task database provides a valuable perspective. About 86 per cent of the work tasks attributed explicitly to apprentices or artisan servants in the task data took place outside the guild-dominated large towns. This section gives a quantitative overview of this evidence, followed by a qualitative exploration of artisanal training in rural contexts.

While apprentices, journeymen, domestic servants, and labourers were all discrete types of workers employed by tradesmen, contemporaries did not always honour these distinctions with precise terminology. In building and farm accounts, for example, craftsmen's assistants were often simply described as their 'men' or 'boys'.[24] Similar issues of ambiguity

[22] Davies, *Enforcement of English Apprenticeship*, pp. 77–107.

[23] Wallis, 'Apprenticeship in England', esp. p. 248, n. 2. According to the estimates of Wrigley, *People, Cities, and Wealth*, p. 170, around 22 per cent of the total English population in 1600 was 'rural non-agricultural', while just 8 per cent lived in urban areas.

[24] Woodward, *Men at Work*, p. 40; Whittle and Griffiths, *Consumption and Gende*r, p. 227.

hamper the identification of apprentices and journeymen in the depositional evidence. For example, in a case from Somerset in 1668, some witnesses described Augustine Sellwood as a servant to locksmith Thomas Dryer, while others, Sellwood included, used the word 'apprentice'.[25] The broad 'servant' designation may thus obscure additional apprentices in the sample. As is explored in more detail below, even when workers were explicitly described as apprentices, the possibility remains that they were parish apprentices, rather than traditional craft apprentices. Identifying journeymen and tradesmen's servants is fraught for similar reasons. Deponents very occasionally testified as a 'journeyman' or spoke of doing 'journey work' of a certain trade, but it is often difficult to discern the exact employment arrangement.[26] More frequently, people might be described as both a servant and a 'cutler', for example. This implies journeyman status but not necessarily employment with a master tradesman. In other cases, they were defined more explicitly as the servants of tradesmen, but we cannot be certain they were also journeymen. Moreover, details on servants' masters and their occupations were not always supplied, so again the 'servant' occupational descriptor may hide further examples.

Given this ambiguity, it is likely that the 26 male apprentices and 31 male tradesmen's servants specified in the database represent a minimum. Yet despite the small size of the sample, it aligns well proportionally with contemporary population estimates. Apprentices make up 1 per cent of male workers in the task data. Wallis found that in c.1710 apprentices who paid premiums were around 12 per cent of England's male teenage population, which itself made up 4 per cent of the total male population at that time.[27] The sample is large enough to compare the respective work-task repertoires of apprentices and journeymen and explore how their work experiences overlapped and differed. Table 7.1 situates these within a larger spectrum of established artisans, farmers, and agricultural servants. Apprentices were observed doing a wide array of activities, and though they did more craftwork than agricultural workers, it made up a relatively small share of their repertoire, compared to established craftsmen. Apprentice engagement with craft labour is explored further below, but these results suggest that they contributed to their masters' trades primarily through tertiary activities like commerce.

[25] SHC, Q/SR/111, 47–8.
[26] For examples, see WSHC, D1/42/6, 1v (1564); D1/42/6, *Turley v. Mathew*, 31 (1565); NAS, QSR Unorganized Box 1694–1696, Info of Griffith Knight, Exam of Anne Adams (1696).
[27] Wallis, 'Apprenticeship in England', p. 256; Lee and Schofield, 'British population', pp. 22–3.

Table 7.1 *Work repertoires of male servants and apprentices compared*

	Artisans repertoire (%)	Artisan servants repertoire (%)	Apprentices repertoire (%)	Agricultural servants repertoire (%)	Farmers repertoire (%)
Agriculture and land	13.1	20.4	36.6	43.7	44.6
Carework	1.6	2.0	0.0	1.8	2.5
Commerce	28.9	16.3	26.8	6.3	21.0
Crafts and construction	27.4	26.5	9.8	6.3	4.5
Food processing	8.3	18.4	0.0	9.2	5.8
Housework	1.8	6.1	9.8	5.2	1.7
Management	6.8	0.0	4.9	6.0	6.1
Transport	11.2	10.2	9.8	20.2	12.9
Other	1.0	0.0	2.4	1.3	0.9
Total	100.1	99.9	99.8	100.0	100.0
Total tasks	1,264	49	41	382	1,165

Notes: Artisans = manufacturers and food processors. Farmers = yeomen, husbandmen and agricultural trades. Artisan servants = servants of artisans, journeymen artisans, and artisans also labelled servants. Agricultural servants = all male servants except those labelled artisan servants. Integral included due to small sample sizes.

Illustrative examples include the aforementioned Augustine Sellwood, who helped set up and attend his master's 'standing' or stall at 'the fair day at Taunton', or the plumber's apprentice from Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, who ran his master's shop and bought lead in October 1664.[28] More surprisingly, a large share of craft apprentices' time seems to have been devoted to agriculture. In September 1668, for instance, carpenter's apprentice Isaac Ashly gleaned corn in a close in Fakenham, Norfolk, while Radulphus Grub, a tanner's apprentice from St Albans, Hertfordshire, corked hay during the harvests of 1586 and 1587. Before the Dissolution, William Stratford likewise made, loaded, and carted hay during the eight years he served as apprentice and then servant to a blacksmith in Hursley, Hampshire.[29]

Table 7.1 shows that as apprentices became journeymen, the agricultural share of their repertoire decreased, while the craftwork increased. Their repertoires thus became more closely aligned to those of established

[28] SHC, Q/SR/111, 47–8; NAS, QSR/1/36, 46–7.
[29] NRO, C/S3/48, Info of Edward Reynolds; HALS, ASA8/6, 22–7; HRO, 21M65/C3/11, 454–67.

artisans, as they acquired specialised skills. Yet as the example of William Stratford suggests, agricultural labour continued to play a significant role in the working lives of artisanal servants as they transitioned out of apprenticeship. This may speak to the makeshift economies which precarious journeymen relied on for their survival. But it also further illuminates the contours of artisanal by-employment discussed in Section 2.5. Not only did many rural artisans participate in the agrarian economy themselves, but they relied on their servants and apprentices to shoulder a large amount of the household's agricultural labour, with examples ranging from the watching and foddering of livestock, to the reaping and transportation of crops.[30]

Although agriculture clearly remained an important source of work as artisans progressed through life, apprentices' large repertoire share in this sector derives partly from the presence of parish apprentices in the sample. Both the Statute of Artificers and the Poor Law Acts of 1598 and 1601 empowered parish officers to bind children as apprentices to local householders as a means of poor relief. Most of these apprentices were bound in husbandry or housewifery, effectively serving as unpaid servants in exchange for maintenance. While the majority of the apprentices in the dataset had craftsmen for masters, agrarian pauper apprentices can occasionally be identified. Waren Aren, for instance, was apprenticed to a husbandman in Cruwys Morchard, Devon, for whom he 'led a horse before the plough' in 1660.[31] Girls were also frequently bound by the parish, and the few female apprentices positively identified in the dataset likely fell into this category. From the age of 10, Elizabeth Michell acted as 'servant or apprentice' in the household of John Tucker of Gittisham, Devon, where she was 'able to milk the cows, make beds, attend children or any other ordinary work about the house'. Witnesses in the latter defamation case from the 1680s praised Michell's work ethic, saying she 'very well deserved her meat and maintenance'.[32] Such a positive outlook on parish apprenticeship was rare in the court records. Examples of controversy and resistance appear more regularly, usually in response to the forcible removal of poor children from their families, or their compulsory placement with an unwilling householder.

While parish apprenticeships and traditional apprenticeships in trade and manufacture were distinct, they shared an ostensible purpose of training and skill acquisition in a contractual exchange for labour. Most of historians' knowledge about training and how such arrangements

[30] For examples, see WYAS, QS1/13/4/2, 12–3, QS1/13/4/ 3, 5–6; HRO, 21M65/C3/11, 389–92; NRO, DN/DEP/29/31, 164–8.
[31] DHC, QS/4/Box 66, Epiphany, 22. [32] DHC, Chanter 880, *Eveleigh v. Tucker*.

were brokered comes from urban guild contexts and London in particular.[33] Young men often came from far afield to find a master in cities, with contracts arranged through paid premiums and the exact terms of service delineated in written indentures.[34] To what extent was this urban model replicated in the countryside? It is difficult to track the geographic origins of rural apprentices, but anecdotal evidence suggests that many, like servants, came from nearby locations, and mostly from within the same county. Examples of father-and-son teams among builders and textilemakers suggest some rural apprenticeships stayed in the family, while others took a place only slightly further afield. Hugh Bincks, for example, the son of a thatcher from Middleton, Norfolk, travelled about 10 miles to be bound to a thatcher in Oxborough in 1659.[35]

Some arrangements deviated from the traditional or statutory format. During the 1580s and 1590s, Nicholas Duke of Romsey, Hampshire, agreed to 'teach … his trade of shoemakers occupation' to at least two different men, neither being described as 'apprentice'. John Hopkins came from Glastonbury, Somerset, to lodge with Duke for six months training, while Thomas Brown, former servant to a gentleman, paid £5 to 'practice and exercise to learn that art' in the shoemaker's house.[36] These men were not of the typical age or background for an apprentice, and the brief terms imply a crash-course education. Even in more straightforward cases of trade or parish apprenticeship, flexibility towards rules and norms, particularly the length of term, can be discerned. At the beginning of this chapter, we saw how Richard Carr was apprenticed for only three years before he became a blacksmith, while Henry Bincks' indenture stipulated a nine-year term. Similarly, in the 1680s the 10-year-old Elizabeth Renshawe was bound to a chapman in Sutton, Cheshire, for just five years, shorter than the usual term for a female parish apprentice.[37] Despite these exceptions, entries into rural apprenticeships broadly followed the classic urban or legal model; the few apprentice ages recorded in the sample fell between 16 and 24, in line with averages from London, while contemporary craftsmen sometimes spoke of 'serving their seven years'.[38]

As we have seen, apprentices spent much of their term doing tasks outside their contracted trade. Yet there are occasional glimpses of

[33] Wallis, 'Apprenticeship and training'.
[34] Lane, *Apprenticeship in England;* Wallis, 'Apprenticeship in England'; Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds,* pp. 291–322; Woodward, *Men at Work,* pp. 53–64.
[35] NRO, C/S3/44, Indenture of Hugh Bincks. [36] HRO, 21M65/C3/11, 371–4.
[37] CALS, QJF/110/2, 84–5.
[38] NRO, C/S3/26, Exam of William Johnson. On the average ages of apprentices, see Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds,* p. 295; Woodward, *Men at Work*, p. 56.

artisanal learning in progress. In an interesting case from Kingsdon, Somerset, dated to May 1630, Amy Logget retrieved her daughter from the house of Elizabeth Salapay 'who taught her to make bonelace', because Elizabeth was too sickly to 'attend her work' that day. The episode illustrates how girls could acquire skills in craftwork outside the formal apprenticeship system, through periodic tutelage from other women.[39] For apprentice boys who lived permanently with their masters, craftwork tasks were often menial and supervised, suggestive of the piecemeal attainment of skills.[40] The servants of blacksmith James Tompson, as introduced at the beginning of this chapter, weighed and paid for iron 'by his directions'. It was only when Tompson became ill that apprentice Richard Carr took a leading role with customers, stored purchased goods, and worked iron pieces in the forge. John Rindge of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, likewise showed an ability to 'dye some parcels of [cloth] ware' in his master's vats in 1655 but got into trouble for doing so 'without his privity or knowledge'. When Thomas Parker of Puckington, Somerset, attempted 'to strike at the anvil' in 1650, he did so under the watchful eyes of his master, who beat him when he failed to carry out the task successfully.[41]

Once an apprenticeship formally came to an end, the master–servant relationship might nonetheless continue. Journeymen were expected to work for annual wages until they could establish their own trade, and their old master's household was a convenient place to do so. In the early 1530s, blacksmith William Stratford stayed on with his master in Hursley, Hampshire, for an eighth year after completing his apprenticeship. Likewise, Tamnell Vines of Wisbech, Cambridgeshire, served his former master 'as a journeyman' for about two years before he 'set up the trade of a dyer for himself' in the 1650s.[42] Vines was an undeniable success, ascending from apprentice to householder in short order, but it is doubtful that his was the common experience. Donald Woodward has found that relatively few journeymen builders ever attained the rank of master in northern cities and towns.[43] While the evidence for rural journeymen is limited, examples speak to a lingering dependence on

[39] SHC, Q/SR/29–31, 55–6; for a similar case of teaching bone-lace making see Carter, 'Work, gender, and witchcraft', p. 10. On training for girls in London, through apprenticeship or otherwise, see Gowing, *Ingenious Trade*, pp. 137–77.

[40] For similar findings: Lane, *Apprenticeship in England*, pp. 76–9; Earle, *Making of the English Middle Class*, pp. 95–100.

[41] CUL, EDR/E10/1654–5, Depositions of Francis Atmore, Tamnell Vines, John Rindge; SHC, Q/SR/82, 134.

[42] HRO, 21M65/C3/11, 454–67; CUL, EDR/E10/1654–5, Depositions of Francis Atmore, Tamnell Vines, John Rindge.

[43] Woodward, *Men at Work*, pp. 69–72; see also Rappaport, *Worlds within Worlds*, p. 335.

wage work and a peripatetic lifestyle, bouncing from master to master.[44] One example comes from the deposition of a Norfolk miller in 1627. Born in Stoke,[45] William Johnson was 'apprentice with … a miller at Fincham and served his 7 years' before serving a miller 'about London' for two years. He then settled down and married in Wighton, Norfolk, but did not establish his own trade. Rather, he spent eight years serving 'the miller there about three quarters of a year'. Since then, he had 'not served any except two or three days sometimes to help millers'.[46] Apprenticeship did not necessarily guarantee long-term stability and success in the countryside, any more so than it did in the cities. It was, however, the established and accepted means for training in most rural craft industries, particularly in building and workshop-based trades. The next section explores the working experience of the former group in more detail.

7.2 Construction Work

Construction work lies at the heart of many debates in premodern economic and social history. The wages of building craftsmen and labourers provide the backbone of long-run wage series, while social historians have delved into the organisation of labour and labourers on large civic and gentry building works. Such efforts have focused mostly on urban construction, or large rural projects that left rich financial records.[47] Much less has been said of rural construction in general, and particularly its day-to-day forms. While this section touches upon building works funded by the church or wealthy landowners, its novelty lies in illuminating smaller-scale and everyday experiences, as captured primarily in the craftwork and construction subcategories of building, woodwork, and groundworks, in the work-task data.[48] Donald Woodward has argued that 'building craftsmen stand out more clearly than any other group of manual workers in early-modern England', and the work tasks

[44] Examples of journeymen working in other men's households and moving between service contracts: WSHC, D1/42/6, 1–2v (1564), Turley v Mathew (1565); HRO, 21M65/C3/11, 371–4 (1592); WYAS, QS1/25/5, Deposition of Thomas Balderson (1686).

[45] Probably Stoke Ferry, Norfolk.

[46] NRO, C/S3/26, Exam of William Johnson.

[47] For wage series studies relying on building workers, see Phelps Brown and Hopkins, 'Seven centuries'; Allen, 'Great divergence in European wages'. On urban construction, see especially Woodward, *Men at Work*, and Stephenson, *Contracts and Pay*. For examples of larger rural construction projects, see Voth, 'Time and work in eighteenth-century London', 47–50; Jiang, 'Wage labour and living standards', pp. 161–212; Airs, *Tudor and Jacobean Country House*.

[48] Groundworks includes digging foundations, ditching, diking, and road and bridgework.

in these construction-related subcategories confirm this.[49] As this section explores, construction work distinguished itself from other rural sectors and forms of craftwork in three key ways: the forms such labour took and who did them, the ways in which employment was arranged and organised, and its geographic and spatial dynamics.

Perhaps the most prominent characteristic of construction work was its male-dominated nature. Out of 306 construction-related tasks in the dataset, women carried out only three. These were in ancillary roles, as when Alice Burge carried thatch up a ladder to a thatcher working on her house in Ashton Keynes, Wiltshire, in 1632, or Emmyne Thompson worked with her husband to 'build a little cote' in a field of Hatton, Cheshire, in 1661.[50] As discussed in the previous section, the apprenticeship system played a crucial role in excluding women from construction industries. The building and woodwork tasks in the dataset suggest a striking degree of specialisation relative to other forms of labour. Respectively 60 per cent and 58 per cent of tasks in these categories were completed by men with corresponding (and apprenticed) occupations like masonry or carpentry.[51] Yet women were equally excluded from groundwork activities, which did not require apprenticeship. The one exception, and the third example of a woman participating in construction, was Elizabeth Sweeting. She helped turn water into its correct course in Monksilver, Somerset, in September 1670.[52] Groundworks were much less the product of specialised labour, most tasks being done by servants, labourers, and husbandmen. Thus, apprenticeship was not the sole factor keeping women on the outside. It is likely that broader societal attitudes, customs, and gender norms shaped the building labour force.

To the extent that skilled craftsmen were involved in groundworks, contributing just 8 per cent of the tasks in the subcategory, they were employed in building bridges, wells, and waterways. Mason Richard Loe helped construct Lymford bridge, Cheshire, in 1672, with several other masons called upon to value the cost of raising a second arch in the structure. Similarly, the carpenter John Sutton was hired by 'the Adventurers' in May 1693 to 'mend the locks' near Burr Lane in Spalding, Lincolnshire, after rioters pulled them down.[53] In practice, these roles were often supervisory, and much of the work was carried out

[49] Woodward, *Men at Work*, p. 51.
[50] WSHC, A1/110/1632T, 129; CALS, QJF/90/2, 145–6.
[51] In comparison, 34 per cent of all craftwork tasks and 18 per cent of textile production were done by workers with corresponding occupations.
[52] TNA, KB/9/985/20.
[53] CALS, QJF/100/1, 97; LiA, HQS/A/1/1693, Midsummer-Spalding, 21.

by non-specialists, like the two teams of labourers who fell into dispute over a 'piece of diking work between ditches' near Sutton, Cambridgeshire, in October 1637.[54] From the reign of Mary and Philip onwards, repairing highways and roads became a statutory requirement for local landholders, who had to contribute equipment and labour on appointed days.[55] Thus, we find the tucker or fuller Thomas Pollard 'shovelling gravel in the king's highway according to statute' near Poulshot, Wiltshire, in 1556, and various husbandmen involved in the tangential tasks of digging up gravel and sand from pits throughout the period.[56] Husbandmen and labourers were likewise occupied in the digging and cleaning of ditches, work that formed 22 per cent of the groundworks subcategory and was essential to the maintenance of byways and boundaries. Labourer William Pattericke recalled 'ditching and fencing' in his youth, as 'part and parcel of the common fields of Sutton' in Yorkshire when they were enclosed in 1506; while in June 1567, two husbandmen of Chedzoy, Somerset, 'lay out ditching work for the whole parish'.[57]

As Figure 7.2 shows, building work encompassed a larger range of tasks than groundworks and was largely linked to specialised work with particular materials. Nonetheless, craftsmen did not act alone. Labourers made up the second largest group of building workers with occupational descriptors and were visible at each stage of construction.[58] Carpenters like Richard Mylsent and Richard Russe erected 'a new frame of a house' in Kirtling, Cambridgeshire, in August 1567, while in February 1598, labourer Thomas Burnand fell to his death whilst 'standing on a ladder and trying to pull out one of the rafters' in an 'old house belonging to William Fairfax, esquire' of Steeton in Yorkshire.[59] Timberwork like this supplied the frame of most buildings in early modern England. Brick, stone, and plaster often accented the fabric and walls of houses, or provided essential features.[60] Bricklayer John Tyffyn, for example, used scaffolding to 'build a chimney at the house of William Woodeward' in Eltisley, Cambridgeshire, one September day in 1532. At the other end of the period, August 1693, dauber Edward Cowles worked together

[54] CUL, EDR/E10/1637, Info of John Johnson.
[55] Tait (ed.), *Lancashire Quarter Sessions Rolls*, pp. xxvii–xxix.
[56] TNA, KB9/589a/84; see also TNA, KB9/985/86; NRO, DN/DEP/29/31, 26–8.
[57] BI, CP.G.2194, *William Herrington v. Francis Atlay*; SHC, D/D/Cd/12, Thomas Myche.
[58] Out of 170 building tasks, 22 per cent were done by workers without specified occupational descriptors. Of the remainder, building craftsmen did 78 per cent, labourers 13 per cent, and husbandmen, servants, and other tradesmen 9 per cent.
[59] TNA, KB9/621/125, KB9/1040b/171.
[60] On early modern building techniques, see Johnson, *English Houses*, pp. 20–41.

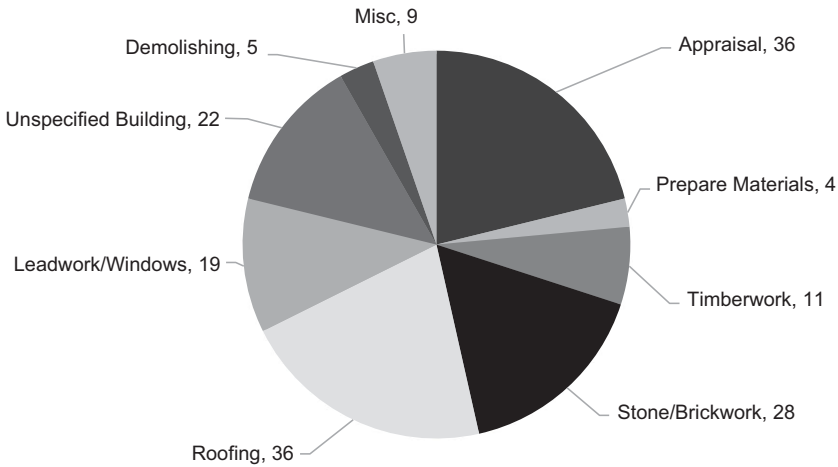

Figure 7.2 Types of building task.

with wool-comber Thomas Leader in 'striking of a wall' at 'Roger Lidster's at Scoulton', Norfolk.[61] Stonework was more prevalent on church and gentry building projects. Masons Christopher Roswell and William Babb, for instance, toiled alongside labourer Henry Langlie for 'the worshipful Mr Henry Waldron of Sear at his place at Isle Brewers' in Somerset in 1604.[62]

Roofing demonstrated a similar hierarchy of materials according to status. Thatch was more widely used on common dwellings and outbuildings, like the 'roof of John Wenne's stable' in East Dereham, Norfolk, from which the improbably aged thatcher John Wynde (at 106 years old) fell in 1543.[63] Slate and tile protected the houses of the wealthy, like gentleman Thomas Lynne of Bassingbourn, Cambridgeshire. He employed tiler Thomas Manfeld to repair his roof in 1544.[64] Leadwork, however, was almost exclusive to ecclesiastical structures in the work-task data. The minister of Westhoughton, Lancashire, employed plumbers to 'lay lead upon the roof' of the chancel around 1634, while glazier John Dye cut 'new sheet lead … which came from London' for the parish church of Stanhoe, Norfolk, around Lammas 1683.[65] Leadworkers like these straddled the line between site-based building and workshop-based metalwork. Examples can be found of plumbers buying and selling lead

[61] TNA, KB9/523/94; NRO, DN/DEP/53/58A, *Jane Tooly v. Mariam Lidster*.
[62] SHC, D/D/Cd/36, *Webb v. Rowswell, Virum, and Feminam*. [63] TNA, KB9/556/126.
[64] TNA, KB9/562/52.
[65] CALS, EDC/5/1664, 69; NRO, C/S3/55, Info of Robert Turffe, Info of John Dey.

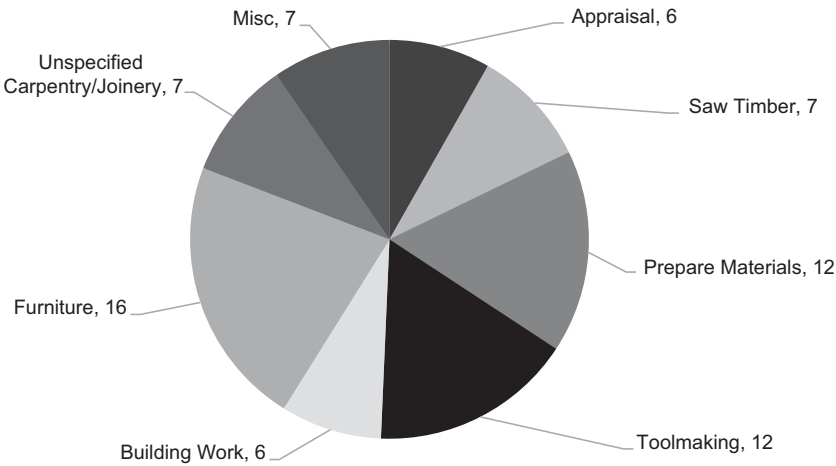

Figure 7.3 Types of woodwork task.

in their shops, as well as soldering and casting it.[66] The latter represents one of the few types of metalwork demonstrably associated with construction in the dataset. While smithing was essential to urban building projects, the work-task results for rural metalworking reflect a prioritisation of agrarian needs, with horseshoeing and the mending of agricultural tools at the fore.[67] As explored below, many builders resided in towns, so they may have had their tools mended or furnished closer to home.

Like metalwork or building, woodwork was a highly specialised category of labour. Yet as Figure 7.3 shows, tasks were not confined to construction proper. Carpenters were the most common type of woodworker and building craftsman in the database, but only 57 per cent of their craftwork tasks were directly linked to building work. The other 43 per cent entailed tasks such as sawing timber and preparing wood for future projects, making and mending tools for themselves or others, and crafting interior furnishings. All of these activities overlapped with other woodworking trades, those of sawyers, ploughwrights, and joiners. While this was a traditional source of conflict among civic craft guilds, adaptability seems to have been essential in the countryside. Carpenter Roger Francken, for instance, worked alongside sawyer Thomas Lacye 'about

[66] DHC, Chanter 866, Gard de Winkleigh (1634); NAS, QSR/1/36, 46–7(1664).
[67] Woodward, *Men at Work*, pp. 21–2. The production or mending of farm tools and housewares made up 35 per cent of metalwork tasks in the database, horseshoes 18 per cent, and leadwork 9 per cent.

Midsummertide' 1587 in 'squaring and sawing of timber' for Master John Sallmon of Barton Stacey, Hampshire.[68] The making of pews usually came under the purview of joiners like William Revell, who contracted to lengthen two seats 'in the south quire of the parish church of Ordsall, Nottinghamshire' in 1684.[69] Yet, carpenters were also employed to do the same in parishes around the country, suggesting necessity and availability could trump specialisation.[70] Tool making and mending was the woodworking activity least bound to a skilled trade. For instance, in September 1621, the weaver Edward Stephens cut hay staves for himself; husbandman Nicholas Holloway fashioned a log into a ladder in 1618; and yeoman Thomas Coulthurst 'made a plough' from parts of three ash trees he felled in 1636.[71]

Before any construction began, workers might appraise the structure and give estimates, gather necessary tools and materials, and occasionally demolish pre-existing fixtures. Not unlike building work today, these preparatory activities were an essential and time-consuming part of the process, making up around a quarter of the tasks in both the building and woodwork subcategories. Church court cases regarding the dilapidation of ecclesiastical property provide most of the work-task examples of appraisals. Diverse groups of builders would be summoned to give opinions and costings on repairs, as in July 1685, when the cleric of Bramerton, Norfolk, hosted a mason and bricklayer, two carpenters, two daubers, and a thatcher to 'view the dilapidations' of the chancel, 'parsonage buildings … dwelling house and barn'.[72] Estimates would follow, as when Thomas Allen the dauber reported back to the minister of Bolton, Cumberland, in January 1663 that no less than £8 would 'make good the plastering, raddling and daubing, and stone walls … needful to be done in and about the house and out housing' of the vicarage.[73] With an average age of 42, these appraisers were clearly consulted for their experience and expertise. Such consultations, however, were not limited to large-scale projects, as one example from Cheshire in 1612 typifies. On a Wednesday in July, labourer Raffe Nickson went to carpenter Raffe Aston's house in Over and 'asked him to make two bays of a back house for his father'. He requested the carpenter come to the house in Middlewich in a few days to discuss 'taking on the said work'. But when Aston arrived, Nickson Senior seemed to think better of the plan,

[68] HRO, 21M65/C3/9, *Sallmon v. Sallmon*.
[69] BI, CP.H.5153, *Sidney Wortley v. Henry Halfhead and Samuel Woodhouse*.
[70] For example, see DUIC, DDR/EJ/CCD/1/9, 71v–77r (1593); NRO, DN/DEP/53/58A, *Eliam Cooper v. Churchwardens of Hingham* (1680).
[71] WSHC, A1/110/1622H, 162; SHC, Q/SR/33, 126; LaA, QSB/1/181, 34–5.
[72] NRO, DN/DEP/51/55, 3–39. [73] CALS, EDC/5/1664, 50.

claiming, 'this is a busy time; I am not armed to build yet'.[74] Once all parties *were* armed to build, however, negotiations over the organisation of labour and materials could begin.

The rates of craftwork tasks done 'for another', for those outside the household, were notably high: they stood at 79 per cent for building and 71 per cent for woodwork, well above the rates for craftwork as a whole at 54 per cent and an overall rate of 35 per cent amongst all tasks. Moreover, a relatively large amount of these 'for another' tasks were explicitly paid: while only 5 per cent of overall tasks and 10 per cent of craftwork tasks were explicitly paid, percentages rise to 16 per cent for building work and 27 per cent for woodwork. These findings speak to the waged nature of most construction labour, the very thing that has made it so useful to economic historians. Individuals and householders of course could make repairs or alterations to their own properties. Thomas Popeblant, for example, worked alongside two carpenters to repair his house in St Albans, Hertfordshire, in the autumn of 1609, while George Panier of Ilchester, Somerset, stopped up a hole in a wall of his family's dwelling in 1650.[75] Yet an analysis of building task employers suggests such do-it-yourself labour accounted for only 10 per cent of activity. A larger proportion, 16 per cent, were wealthy landowners like Master Marmaduke Theakston, who hired carpenter Anthony Candill to build a house in Hunton, Yorkshire, in 1693.[76] Parish churches were the biggest employers by far, at 40 per cent of building tasks, although these numbers are inflated somewhat due to the centrality of church fabric to dilapidation cases in the church courts. Nonetheless, setting such cases to the side still leaves a rich range of ecclesiastical construction projects, encompassing the setting up of altars, the repairing of belfries, the knocking down of interior walls, re-tiling of roofs, and the replacement of lead guttering.[77]

The remaining 25 per cent of employers largely represent ordinary people of middle-to-low status who likely contracted much of the construction work in the countryside.[78] Heather Swanson has argued that for most builders in preindustrial England, life must have been a 'constant round of repairing doors, windows, roofs, and pavements' which

[74] CALS, QJF/90/2, 63. [75] HALS, ASA8/8, 120–2; SHC, Q/SR/82, 207, 210.
[76] NYCRO, QSB/1694, 174–5.
[77] For example, see DUIC, DDR/EJ/CCD/1/2, 170v–171r (1570); TNA, KB/9/1071/unnumbered (1546); DHC, Chanter 868, *Bartoe v. Lambert* (1663); NRO, C/S3/55, Info of Robert Turffe, Info of John Dey (1683); C/S3/50, Exam of John Spurrell, Info of Richard Harmer (1672); SHC, Q/SR/77, 35 (1638).
[78] For this analysis of building-task employers, 9 per cent were unclear.

surviving financial records fail to capture.[79] Certainly, the depositional evidence speaks to this parade of everyday small jobs. Mason John Ewens spent September 1585 helping to 'heal or tile' the house of a tradesman named Potter in Basingstoke, Hampshire, also filling with mortar 'certain brakes and holes in the inside of the walls' of his shop. William Thurlbye was 'retained in service for the day' in July 1563 to build and mend a chimney in clay on the roof of fellow husbandman Robert Brown of New Sleaford, Lincolnshire. Carpenter John Smart busied himself 'upon a Saturday morning' in November 1631 setting up a wall plate in the house of his brother-in-law, husbandman Thomas Greene of Bratton, Wiltshire.[80] Smart sent Greene 'to the house of Christopher Butcher in Milborne for carpentry tools to do the same', while Greene's wife brought him a candle to see the work.

As this last example highlights, construction hinged upon specialised tools and materials and was often a group effort combining skilled and unskilled labour. Indeed, group work was more prevalent in construction than other types of industry in the dataset: while 26 per cent of overall and 28 per cent of craftwork tasks were done in groups, building work, groundworks, and woodwork show much higher rates at 41 per cent, 43 per cent and 36 per cent, respectively. These high rates of group work speak to the organisation of construction under building firms or teams. However, the dataset contains little evidence of the large contractors characteristic of late seventeenth- and eighteenth-century London, and the dense networks of accountants and surveyors, suppliers and carriers, teams of craftsmen and labourers (both directly employed and subcontracted) responsible for the great projects of St Paul's Cathedral or Westminster Abbey.[81] Group work rates and worker numbers were highest for church and gentry construction projects.[82] Even for larger builds like these, however, firm sizes coincide with Donald Woodward's findings for northern towns: 'most master craftsmen worked with only one or two permanent employees, taking on unskilled labour as required'.[83] Small family businesses and especially father–son teams were common, like the helliers John and George Hawkins, who worked 'on a house of Mr Aske's in Somerford Magna about healing the same with tiles' in Wiltshire in September 1670. Extra labour was not limited

[79] Swanson, *Building Craftsmen*, p. 31.
[80] HRO, 21M65/C3/9, *Exoll v. Smyth*; TNA, KB/9/607b/143; WSHC, A1/110/1632H, 176.
[81] Stephenson, *Contracts and Pay*, pp. 115–8.
[82] Out of 135 combined building and woodwork tasks done for churches or wealthy and landowners, 53 per cent were done in groups.
[83] Woodward, *Men at Work*, p. 25.

to men described as labourers either. The glazier John Dye hired butcher Robert Turfe off-and-on during the month of August 1683 to help cut the lead for the church in Stanhoe, Norfolk.[84]

Payment was often negotiated at the level of the firm or team. In a typical case, the churchwardens of Bradford, Yorkshire, paid three masons together the 'sum of £46 for repairing the mason work of the said church' in 1664.[85] One key factor in such remuneration was the responsibility for building materials, which could be supplied either by the contractor or the client. As in London and other urban communities, rural arrangements varied widely depending on the size and complexity of the project.[86] While clients were more likely to contribute materials when the job was large, and contractors when it was small, this was no fixed rule. The church of Southrepps, Norfolk, hired a plumber to mend the chancel in May 1672, purchasing '8 hundred one quarter and 4 pounds of lead', which was sent 'in a cart to the house of … John Spurrell in Aylsham' to be worked. Yet plumbers Daniel Hole Senior and Junior were paid for both workmanship and materials in 1634 when they received £10 'for their labour and charge thereabout' in the 'soldering, casting, and laying lead upon the church' of Winkleigh, Devon.[87] Such sourcing and provision of materials was typical for relatively small jobs, as when carpenter Henry Wilson of Norton in Yorkshire was paid £5 6s 8d to 'find timber' and provide 'timber workmanship' for a new bell frame in St Denys of York in 1593.[88] However, small employers could also foot the supplies. One day in 1673, Richard Stronge of Downton, Wiltshire, stopped the bricklayer Sylvester Fry in the street 'to be speak him to do some mason work for him at his house his materials being all ready and Fry did promise to come to the said Stronge to do the same'.[89]

One similarity between rural and urban construction is that craftsmen often contributed their own tools to the job. Less can be said with confidence about labourers and other unskilled workers, but the fact that most depositional evidence places building tools in the hands of established tradesmen is suggestive. Many builders stored tools and materials near or at their current place of work, rather than their homes. Carpenter

[84] WSHC, D1/42/61, *Aske v. Butcher*; NRO, C/S3/55, Info of Robert Turffe, Info of John Dey.
[85] BI, CP.H.4952, *Thomas Ledger and Gervase Dickson and others v. William Pickles*.
[86] Woodward, *Men at Work*, pp. 44–51; Stephenson, *Contracts and Pay*.
[87] NRO, C/S3/50, Exam of John Spurrell, Info of Richard Harmer; DHC, Chanter 866, Gard de Winkleigh.
[88] BI, CP.G.2792, *Churchwardens of York v. William Barton and Edward Eardley*.
[89] WSHC, D1/42/61, *Stronge v. Fanston*.

Table 7.2 *Crafts and construction: spatial dynamics*

	Tasks in own household	% of tasks in own household	% of tasks occurring in rural parishes	% of actors' parishes of residence that are rural parishes	Location vs residence
Buildings	16	9.9	65.3	46.7	+18.6
Clothes and shoes	57	50.4	44.1	48.1	−4.1
Groundworks	3	5.0	64.4	62.7	+1.7
Metalwork	38	58.5	51.2	49.3	+1.9
Mill maintenance	2	13.3	51.7	47.1	+4.7
Mining/quarrying	0	0.0	60.0	64.3	−4.3
Other maintenance/ manufacturing	7	26.9	65.9	53.1	+12.8
Textile production	82	50.0	65.5	61.5	+4.0
Woodwork	6	10.0	65.3	54.8	+10.4
Total	211	30.2	59.3	54.0	+5.4
Overall database	1,301	16.4	60.6	63.5	+1.8

Notes: The 'own household' category here is based on the own household/outside the household distinction made in the database for all tasks where a location can be discerned, and as explained in Section 1.2.3. It includes shops or workshops as part of 'own household'.

Edmond Wallingham of Foulsham, Norfolk, for instance, worked for John Browne of Terrington on 21 November 1618, leaving in Browne's barn that Saturday night 'certain tools which he did use about his trade, viz three wimbles, a Flemish former or chisel, and a handsaw'. These were all stolen over the weekend, the thief selling them on to another carpenter of Tilney.[90] Similarly, Robert Kensey, a carpenter from the market town of Prescot in Lancashire, came to his work some 3 miles distant in Burtonwood on Monday 12 June 1637, having left 'his work tools' in the barn of Henry Lanchisheires 'on Saturday night before by and with Lanchisheires consent and leave'.[91] Examples like these speak to the spatial dynamics that made rural construction work peculiar: its location outside and sometimes far from the household, and the interplay between town and country.

Table 7.2 summarises the geographic and spatial features of construction tasks in the dataset, as compared to other craftwork. The locational distribution of work done in and around the actor's own household

[90] NRO, C/S3/21, Exam of John Dawlton.
[91] LaA, QSB/1/186, 47. For another example of tool use, see DHC, Chanter 875, 68v–84r.

compared with that done outside the household is particularly striking, if unsurprising. While over 50 per cent of workshop-based tasks like textile production or metalwork took place in their own household, a large majority of building, groundworks, and woodwork did not, reinforcing qualitative trends already discussed. Masonry, carpentry, and groundworks mostly took place on-site and away from home. Those tradesmen who did have shops, such as plumbers, glaziers, or joiners, split their time between home and the job site.[92] Thus, we see the plumber John Spurrell working on lead in his house in Aylsham and moving it in stages to the church building-site in Southrepps throughout the summer of 1672.

Building workers like Spurrell often travelled outside their parish of residence to work. This is demonstrated by comparing the resident parishes of workers with the parishes where tasks took place. Indeed, building workers did around 50 per cent of their work 'out of parish', far more than the average for craftwork of 17 per cent or the overall sample of 29 per cent.[93] These tendencies were especially pronounced in property appraisal. Only two of the six experts brought in to view the decayed properties of Master Tuckfield of Morchard Bishop, Devon, and value repairs, for example, were from that parish.[94] This speaks to the finite supply of building tradesmen in the countryside and the consequent demand for their labour. It was a supply which varied by trade. Carpenters, for example, were somewhat less likely to travel out of parish than other builders, likely because they were more numerous and better distributed throughout the countryside.

While much construction work entailed travel, the distances involved in such cases were usually manageable in a day. Analysing those building tasks done outside the worker's parish of residence returns a maximum distance of 45 miles, when the carpenter Robert Colman of Norwich travelled to 'judge and estimate' what the repairs of Walsoken church, Norfolk, might cost the parishioners in 1682.[95] But setting aside the few outliers like these, the average distance travelled when workers left their own parish was 5 miles from home to work.[96] Perhaps more interesting

[92] See also Woodward, *Men at Work*, pp. 118–9.

[93] These calculations exclude data from church court depositions. The time-lag between work task and testimony in these courts means the worker's given residence might not reflect residence at time of activity. However, the church court data does show broadly the same trends.

[94] DHC, Chanter 866, *Tuckfield v. Beare* (1637).

[95] NRO, DN/DEP/51/55, 72–83.

[96] Church court cases excluded. Only one task was allowed per person so as not to inflate distances due to workers carrying out multiple tasks. The resulting dataset included 50 tasks. Maximum distance 45 miles, minimum 1. The two distances over 20 miles were removed as outliers, resulting in an average distance of 5 miles. Mode and median were both 3 miles. See also the analysis of distances in Section 3.3.

was where builders like Robert Colman called home. Table 7.2 also compares the parish sizes where craftwork tasks occurred, with the resident parish size of the craftworkers who did those tasks. Groundworks were majority rural and so were the people doing this work. Metalworking tasks were 49 per cent urban, as were 51 per cent of their practitioners. Yet, discrepancies were far greater for the buildings and woodwork subcategories. While 65 per cent of both building and woodwork tasks took place in rural parishes, for respectively 47 and 55 per cent of those tasks the workers hailed from market towns or large towns. These results bolster Donald Woodward's findings of 'substantial movement of building workers between towns, and between town and country' in northern England.[97] Indeed, a further breakdown of 'out of parish' building tasks suggests that labour flowed from town to country more than in any other direction.[98] In this way towns played an outsized role in rural construction networks, relative to other types of craftwork. It was this feature, alongside its general mobility, high degree of waged group work, and specialisation, which set the industry apart. But if construction was male-centred, urban-skewed, and the domain of apprenticed trades, textile and clothing production was the opposite, as the next sections explore.

7.3 Textile Production

Textile manufacturing's position as early modern England's largest and most influential industry emerges strongly from the work-task data. When commerce and transport tasks are factored in, as much as 7 per cent of the overall sample relates to the industry or the cloths it produced, while production activities themselves make up 27 per cent of the craftwork category.[99] The related industry of clothing/apparel production accounts for another 20 per cent of craftwork, and an additional 4 per cent of the total sample. This section and the next examine the work experiences within these two dynamic industries during a period of growth and change. This first analyses the production of cloth, reviewing the materials used and products created in manufacture, the stages to production, the gender division and organisation of labour, and regional

[97] Woodward, *Men at Work*, p. 164.

[98] Building 'out of parish' tasks totalled 64. Rural to rural (30 per cent); rural to town (8 per cent); town to town (17 per cent); town to rural (45 per cent). For the 73 'in parish' building tasks, 55 per cent were rural, 45 per cent were urban.

[99] Textile production (254); buy/sell textiles and wool (317) and transport of textile materials (93). The total of buy/sell tasks for textiles and wool combined differs from that in Table 8.2 as the latter uses a female multiplier to calculate the gender division of labour.

and spatial differences in the industry. The following section covers the making of clothing from textiles and leather, examining the variety of products made, the gendered nature of their manufacture, the balance between production for the household and the commercial market, and the distinctions between making and mending.

Textile production as captured in the dataset was predominantly concerned with woollen cloth: about 85 per cent of the textile raw materials mentioned in tasks relate to woollen cloth production, indicative of its national dominance as an export industry during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[100] Linen production was less in evidence, and only in particular regions, as is discussed below.[101] It is interesting, however, to compare production-side references to raw materials and industry, with product-side references to finished cloths in the task data. The latter shows a more even split between linen and woollen products than found in the raw materials. Out of 152 mentions of cloth in the dataset, 27 per cent were woollen, 24 per cent were linen, 2 per cent were mixed, with the remaining 47 per cent unspecified.[102] Yet the greater prevalence of linen here speaks more to its importance as an imported and traded good, than as a product of local manufacture. Almost all the craftwork production references to 'linen cloth', for example, relate to its bleaching or whitening, rather than its weaving.

The database does, however, capture a few direct references to linen weaving in early modern England. In 1652, John Wood of Stockport in Cheshire spent the month of August weaving linen cloth, while in 1694 John Clarkson of Thirsk in Yorkshire testified that some 'raw linen web 20 yards long' was of 'his own working having his own name also marked in it'.[103] Both of these men styled themselves 'linen-websters', as did a further eight male workers in the dataset. Women were unlikely to be given such occupational descriptors, but their involvement in linen weaving and processing is suggested nonetheless by a witness from Melling, Lancashire, in 1637, who stated that Ellen Bottle:

[100] References to textile production raw materials were tallied from tasks in the textile production and buy/sell subcategories, and the transport category, yielding 416 references, or 172 when integral tasks are excluded due to the overrepresentation of wool and fleeces. The proportions of the latter 172 were wool (57 per cent), skins/fleeces (7 per cent), woollen yarn (6 per cent), unspecified yarn (but likely to be woollen) (15 per cent), flaxen yarn/thread (4 per cent), and flax/hemp (11 per cent).

[101] A contrast to the dominance of hemp and flax spinning, rather than wool spinning, found in criminal cases of eighteenth-century northern England: Styles, *Dress of the People*, p. 139.

[102] References to cloths derive from the textile production and buy/sell subcategories, and the transport category, with integral tasks included.

[103] CALS, QJF/80/3, 30; NYCRO, QSB/1695, 169–70.

did buy for her mother Jane Bottle some two pounds of hemp of one Richard Ratcliffe his wife and did borrow almost a pound of flax of Edmund Martin his wife, and this examinant's mother, with … [Ellen] did spin the said hemp and flax and afterwards did warp the same yarn with one Edmund Martin [webster].[104]

Alongside the Bottles, one spinster from Crediton, Devon, confessed to working 'a breadth of Rosterne' (a type of linen cloth) in 1610.[105] Yet there is more evidence of women's involvement in earlier stages of linen-making, during the processing of flax or hemp.

According to Gervase Markham's guide to good housewifery, the first steps in processing, after pulling or harvesting the flax or hemp crop, were to let it stand or ripen, before submerging the stalks in water for several days.[106] Once removed from the water, dried, and sorted, the stalks would be 'pilled', 'riven', or broken to remove the rind from the fibres. In December 1661, Laurence Farlton of Newton in Cambridgeshire and his wife came under suspicion of theft because they did not follow this order of tasks. They were accused of 'pilling large hemp' in their house at a late time of night, and before taking the necessary step of having their 'hemp watered'. While households might process their own crop in this way, the labour could also be subcontracted. Around Hallowmas 1630, Alice Fendicke, an old woman of Hillington, Norfolk, was hired by esquire Richard Hovell to rive 'ten sheaves of hemp', earning 'so much for every stone riving'. After the stalks were sufficiently broken came the final steps before spinning, collectively described as 'dressing'. These included beating or scraping the fibres with a 'swingle' to soften them, before 'heckling' or combing them in preparation for spinning. Elizabeth Walley, a husbandman's wife, was 'swingling to … [flax] at her barnside in Leftwich' in Cheshire in November 1682.[107] The locations of these tasks highlight the regional nature of English linen and hemp production, as discussed in Section 3.1. Nearly all references to flax materials and linen weaving derive from the northern counties of Lancashire, Cheshire, and Yorkshire, while hemp cultivation is attested in Cambridgeshire and Norfolk. The one direct mention of cotton wool comes from Manchester in 1627, when linen-weaver John Shawe pawned four or five pounds of the stuff to Ellen Gorton for 12d.[108]

While the English woollen and linen industries differed in scale and regional spread, they shared a similar gender division of labour.

[104] LaA, QSB/1/190, 47. [105] DHC, QS/4/Box 16, Easter, Exam of Christian Slee.
[106] Markham, *English Housewife*, pp. 155–61.
[107] CUL, EDR/E10/110, 3; NRO, C/S3/28, Exam of Margarett Wilson, Exam of Elizabeth Leake, Info of Robert Tye; CALS, QJF/110/4, 90.
[108] LaA, QSB/1/27, 78. This case and Manchester textile manufacture are discussed in Section 3.1.

Table 7.3 *Gender division of labour and location of textile production*

	Tasks	% by F adj.	% of tasks in rural settlement	% of tasks in urban settlement
Process flax/hemp	10	52.6	100.0	0.0
Gather wool	48	51.6	80.4	19.6
Clean wool	14	82.3	64.3	35.7
Card/comb	10	79.5	80.0	20.0
Spin	57	99.3	66.7	33.3
Wind yarn	8	60.8	37.5	62.5
Organise	21	50.9	81.0	19.0
Transport	5	100.0	40.0	60.0
Dyeing	18	56.4	55.6	44.4
Weave	42	25.9	54.8	45.2
Finish textiles	15	15.6	46.7	53.3
Other	6	72.1	16.7	83.3
Total	254	68.9	65.5	34.5

Notes: adj. = adjusted (x2.59). The task totals used for the first, third, and fourth columns are unadjusted.

As Table 7.3 shows, women dominated or were heavily involved in most preparatory stages of production while men controlled the weaving, fulling, dyeing, and shearing or dressing of cloth. Proportionally, the male-dominated finishing tasks account for 21 per cent of the adjusted total, with the remaining 79 per cent devoted to preparation and organisation. This generally corresponds to the time and labour distribution recorded in early modern records. A report from Yorkshire in 1588, for example, estimated that manufacturing a Kersey (a type of woollen cloth) required 60 people with 77 per cent devoted to the preparations of sorting, carding, and spinning. Producing 86 pounds of broadcloth required a similar number of workers, with around a 70:30 split between preparatory and other processes.[109] The intensive labour required to prepare wool for weaving, and women's dominance of these processes, explains the high proportion of women's work in textile production. The work-task data allows the organisation of production, and the gendered roles within it, to be examined in some detail.

Wool for cloth production was either imported or harvested from indigenous flocks during the shearing season. Even the labouring poor who did not own sheep collected stray wool as a supplementary source of

[109] Muldrew, '"Th'ancient distaff"', p. 504.

income, as when three widows and one married woman of Sibsey, Lincolnshire, spent a Tuesday in May 1652 'in the fen gathering wool'.[110] As well as collecting and weighing of wool, women were the primary workers behind its cleaning and sorting.[111] When Christine Cooper of Whitchurch, Hampshire, received a batch bought by her clothier husband at 'shear time' in 1580, she 'culled out about 7 todds of very coarse and feeble tarry tegs … scouring and dressing 6 or 7 pounds of wool in each todd'. Likewise, Joyce Berry of Brinkworth, Wiltshire, washed the wool pulled off a dubiously sourced sheepskin in 1642, before laying it out to dry in the garden.[112] The next step was carding or combing the wool to prepare it for spinning. Only three tasks in the dataset describe combing, the technique necessary to make yarn for worsted or the lighter, fashionable 'new draperies'.[113] All were done by men like Henry Smith and Thomas Billington, who worked together in the 'combing trade' in a 'workhouse' or workshop in Kettlestone, Norfolk, in 1679.[114] In contrast, nearly all carding tasks were done by women, such as Agnes Adams of Farleigh Hungerford, Somerset, who overheard a defamatory exchange while 'sat carding wool at the door of Matthew Roberts' in 1532.[115]

Spinning wool into yarn was the last major stage of preparation and was done almost exclusively by women. Craig Muldrew has demonstrated the amount of labour needed to produce enough yarn for the early modern industry's needs, and indeed spinning accounts for the largest number of textile production tasks in the dataset, 37 per cent of the adjusted total.[116] Alongside carding, it provided an important source of income for women and their families. At least 37 per cent of women's spinning and carding tasks in the sample were done 'for another' outside the worker's household, or for an employer.[117] Often explicitly waged,

[110] LiA, LQS/A/1/13, 37. The 'gather wool' category in Table 7.3 relates to this type of activity, not sheep-shearing.
[111] On the processing of wool, see Markham, *English Housewife*, pp. 146–52
[112] HRO, 21M65/C3/8, *Weke v. More*; WSHC, A1/110/1642E, 174.
[113] On the distinctions between old and new draperies, see Muldrew, '"Th'ancient distaff"', pp. 502–3; Coleman, 'An innovation and its diffusion'.
[114] NRO, C/S3/53A, Info of William Smith; See Muldrew, '"Th'ancient distaff"', p. 503.
[115] SHC, D/D/Cd/2, Gylbarde et Adams.
[116] When carding and combing are included, this figure rises to 43 per cent of all textile production tasks. These calculations exclude integral tasks which, due to the overrepresentation of wool-gathering tasks, bring the spinning proportion down to 33 per cent.
[117] This is likely an underestimation as it is often unclear for whom spinning was being done.

arrangements could take many forms.[118] Annual servants might be expected to spin as part of their usual duties, but medium-term contracts were also made.[119] In 1649 Ann Bishop of Martock, Somerset, was hired to spin some wool in the house of Edith Ferrice of Long Sutton in Hampshire for one month and no longer 'for which she was to have a penny a day and meat and drink'. Spinster Elizabeth Cayton lodged in the house of Edward Robinson of Garstang in Lancashire for two weeks, 'spinning for wages' with his wife in November 1636.[120] The deposition of 20-year-old Joanna Pittman of Cullompton, Devon, grants particular insight into the flexibility of these arrangements. She 'did spin at the house of the said Joan Bennett and her husband of Kentisbeare by the week' in 1634, employed for

> five weeks to spinning and had 6d her wages, and then she went from them, and now for these six weeks last past she hath also by the week used to spin with them again for the like wages but may go from them at every week's end if she please.[121]

Although most women in these temporary employments were young and/or single, wives and widows accounted for 48 per cent of spinning and carding tasks.[122] Householders like these could also earn wages on a casual basis, contracted to spin a set amount of wool, sometimes with the help of other family members. In 1629 in North Molton, Devon, Grace Fisher, the parish clerk's wife, and her children spun 'some coloured wool … of one Tooker of Tiverton', receiving '1/2 a pound for waste upon every 10 pounds that … [they] did spin for him'. In addition to this contractual work, Grace 'and her household' used the 'twickings and waste' in combination with wool acquired elsewhere to spin 4¾ pounds of yarn, which was then sold to one John Thorne.[123] This example demonstrates how women and children might spin yarn for sale on the commercial market, at their own organisation outside clothier networks, and thus supplement household income. Alternatively, they might use the yarn for their own household or cottage industry. As we have seen at

[118] See Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 165–8 for a useful summary of these different arrangements.

[119] Examples of servants spinning: HRO, 21M65/C3/8, *Hewes v. Wayte* (1579); DHC, Chanter 866, *Flood v. Tucker* (1635); CALS, QJF/31/2, 66 (1602); QJF/100/4, 70 (1671). See also Mansell, *Female Servants*, pp. 189–93.

[120] SHC, Q/SR/82, 181–4; LaA, QSB/1/177, 32.

[121] DHC, Chanter 866, *Bennett v. Deymont*. This case and others like it are discussed in more detail in Mansell, *Female Servants*, pp. 157–9.

[122] Out of 62 spinning or carding tasks done by women, with 34 per cent done by never-married women (or those likely to be so) and 18 per cent done by women of unknown marital status. 'Likely never married' includes 'never-married' women, servants, and those at or below 25 years old.

[123] DHC, QS/4/Box 32, Epiphany, 24–5, 34.

the beginning of this chapter, the weaver Thomas Chapman's wife and sister spun yarn for the household's own production, while Joan Stephens, wife of a husbandman in East Harptree in Somerset, spun 15 pounds of wool 'to make clothes for herself and her children' in 1650.[124]

Once the yarn had been spun, it was typically women who ferried the product back to contractors, sold it at market, or took it to weavers to be made into cloth, with women performing 84 per cent of such tasks.[125] Their embeddedness in the industry made them savvy commercial operators and experts in quality control: well placed, as Gervase Markham put it, 'to bridle the falsehood of unconscionable workmen'.[126] When Mary Dawdon, a married woman from Masham in Yorkshire, 'did run eleven pounds of woollen yarn with one James Thompson … weaver' in the middle of August 1695, she was not pleased with the product she got back.

> [It] being fine wool she did expect to have again 8 yards of fine cloth, the list of the said run web being all white, but … Thompson did bring this informant a much coarser woollen web with a black list, being very certain that it was not her web, her own web only wanting 3 pounds for wool … [but this one] did want 5 pounds wool.[127]

Astute as they might be in judging the final product, women like Mary were largely uninvolved in the later stages of weaving and finishing cloth. In addition to the female linen weavers mentioned above, only two women were found directly involved in the weaving process. Agnes Fenton of Ridge in Hertfordshire spent 'a certain workenday after Whitsuntide … in the afternoon … working on a weaver's loom with her husband being a weaver' in a shop which they occupied in 1556.[128] In 1627, Margery Chamlett, a married woman of Rochdale, Lancashire, testified to making cloth out of some wool which she and her husband acquired.[129]

As with other industries explored in this chapter, apprenticeship appears to lie behind women's exclusion from weaving and other finishing tasks like fulling. Both show a high degree of specialisation in the dataset, with professed textilemakers (all being male) carrying out at least 50 per cent of tasks, or 71 per cent when workers without a given

[124] SHC, Q/SR/82, 195–7.
[125] Women performed 47 out of 56 (adjusted) tasks involved the buying, selling, or transport of yarn.
[126] Markham, *English Housewife*, p. 152. [127] NYCRO, QSB/1696, 123.
[128] HALS, ASA8/2/13, 20–3. [129] LaA, QSB/1/31, 53–4.

occupational descriptor are excluded.[130] Skilled artisans such as these could organise their labour, or be organised, in different ways. Some, like the Fentons or the Chapmans, operated small-scale cottage industries to which family members contributed. Walter Turpyn of Ipplepen in Devon spent a September day in 1613 with his son William 'weaving in their looms' in his shop and home while William's wife sat at the threshold, possibly spinning. On a Saturday in March 1637, Richard Bury likewise wove 'all day till sun setting … in his father's house' in Hopwood, Lancashire.[131] Within these family enterprises, it is difficult to discern if sons and other relatives served formal apprenticeships. Yet there is certainly evidence of weavers employing journeymen and other servants, some of whom may have been apprentices, in their workshops. Richard Brooke and John Hobson, for example, were fellow servants who spent 25 March 1696 'weaving in a chamber' of their master's house in Idle, Yorkshire.[132] Edward Lacey likewise was 'a journeyman weaver' working in the house of weaver Richard Fortune of Seend in Wiltshire in 1564. Established weavers might employ each other on a more casual basis as well: in the 1590s in Devon weaver and married man Richard Bickley was often hired as 'an ordinary workman to weave dozens and kerseys for one Robert Aileston of Crediton … weaver', with his wife fetching the required yarn from Aileston.[133]

As independent tradesmen, weavers provided bespoke services for their neighbours and the wider community.[134] But they might also be employed in larger enterprises and embedded in networks and fashions of international trade. Thomas Chapman, for example, purchased Spanish white wool from a clothier of Trowbridge named Robert Pinchin, with which he produced a lighter 'Spanish medley' cloth, no doubt to meet 'new market demands'.[135] Over the course of the period, clothiers like Pinchin increasingly brought the various stages of textile production under their management and control, a process often described as proto-industrialisation.[136] Under the putting-out system, clothiers might subcontract weavers to produce cloth *en masse*. Clothier John Smith of Haydon in Somerset, for instance, 'did employ one

[130] Out of 42 weaving tasks, 41 per cent were done by workers with no descriptor. For comparison, see Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, p. 169.
[131] DHC, Chanter 867, *Bully v. Turpyn*; LaA, QSB/1/183, 88, 90–1.
[132] WYAS, QS1/35/6, Deposition of John Whitehead and David Burke.
[133] WSHC, D1/42/6, 1–2v; DHC, QS/4/Box 5, Easter, 32–3, 45–6.
[134] On such provincial and bespoke trade, see Styles, *Dress of the People*, pp. 135–51, esp. 140.
[135] Quotes from Coleman, 'An innovation and its diffusion', p. 428
[136] See for example Zell, *Industrial Countryside*; Mann, *Cloth Industry*.

George Foweracres and Edward Foweracres, weavers, to weave his cloths' in May 1650, accusing them of embezzling his yarn when they delivered broadcloth to him. Clothworkers Richard Duland and Matthew Prince, however, were under more direct supervision 'in the house of Richard Folwell … of Beckington clothier … being there at work with others' in Somerset in 1668.[137] Clothiers also collected, cleaned, and weighed wool, before putting it out to spinners for processing.[138] Companions from Frome in Somerset, widow Mauld Drap and Alice Yeomans, a weaver's wife, were contracted to a veritable web of clothiers in 1618. Drap received '6 and 20 pounds of wool to spin into yarn of her Mr Henry Albyn', while Yeomans received '8 and 20 pounds of wool … from her Mr Jeffery Cogswell clothier'. But they both ran afoul of authority when Drap lent Yeomans some of Albyn's wool, so she could spin it up and settle a debt for 'her Mr Blackborowe a clothier' of Wells.[139]

Clothiers might also direct the dyeing and finishing of textiles, often with the help of specialists. In February 1699, clothier William Bond of Oakhill in Somerset 'brought some wool to George Downe … dyer … and did help dye the same and put it on the barrow'.[140] 'Dyeing in the wool' like this was a preparatory stage, but cloth could be dyed as a finishing process as well. Either way, it was technically an apprenticed trade. The limited depositional evidence shown in Table 7.3, however, suggests a more equitable gender division of labour prevailed in practice.[141] Spinster Jane Browne of Covenham in Lincolnshire, for example, was hired to spin wool and 'lit' or dye it green, blue, and white in July 1630. Rebecca Harris operated on a larger scale: 'two pieces of narrow cloth' were sent to her in Wakefield in Yorkshire in April 1674, 'one piece whereof … to be dyed red and the other to be dressed and pressed'.[142] 'Dressing' refers to the final stage of production, usually done by shearmen, when the nap of rough wool was raised and the cloth smoothed. Women were also involved or even took the lead in the separate process of bleaching or whitening linen.[143] On a Sunday morning in July 1566, spinster Grace Caype went 'to a pit to whiten some linen webs' in Keelby, Lincolnshire. Similarly, spinster Margaret Chawner was ordered by 'her Mistress Entersely' to water 'three pieces of linen cloth

[137] SHC, Q/SR/82, 114, Q/SR/111, 69.
[138] For an example of a clothier weighing wool, see HRO, 21M65/C3/11, 302–10.
[139] SHC, Q/SR/33, 122–3. [140] SHC, Q/SR/211, 11.
[141] As does Markham, *English Housewife*, pp. 147–9.
[142] LiA, LQS/A/1/3, 123; WYAS, QS1/13/4/2, 19, QS1/13/4/3, 1.
[143] Of the four linen bleaching or whitening tasks recorded, two were done by women.

bleaching in the said Entersley's yard' in Weaverham in Cheshire around May Day 1661.[144]

If women were sometimes involved in the dyeing process, they were excluded almost entirely from fulling, when heavy woollen cloth, 'scoured by fuller's earth, was thickened by the fuller or tucker, who steeped and battered it in a vat of urine'.[145] Such specialists operated water-powered mills to mash the cloth with wooden stocks, causing fibres to constrict into a thick fabric. Clothiers were the most substantial customers of fullers, although smaller, local operators must have been common as well. In a defamation suit from 1577, for example, husbandman Humphrey Vynycombe of Stoke Canon in Devon testified to the honesty of Lawrence Tucker, who had been 'tucker [fuller] of his cloths by the space of these 11 years last past'.[146] Michael Zell summarised the three main types of fullers as mill owners, miller leasers, and wage workers.[147] Another case of a family-run business provides an example of the former. John Hagley either leased or owned a fulling mill in Tiverton in Devon during the 1620s, operating it with his two sons John and Gilbert. Hugh Mortymer's experience of fulling work was probably the more common. In November 1629 he 'wrought with a tucker named John Shorte about 9 days and then not liking his wages departed from him … and came to South Molton' in Devon.[148]

Most of the work-task evidence of fulling comes from Devon and other counties of the south-west, with a few tasks from Yorkshire. These demonstrate the regional variations in cloth production that can sometimes be discerned in the dataset. Fulling was an essential step for the 'old draperies', where warp and weft were woven loosely and had to be thickened. Worsted and the similar 'new draperies' of the seventeenth century did not require fulling, as the cloth was 'given its strength by the weaver, and its smoothness by cloth finisher'.[149] Old draperies remained dominant for longer in the west of the country, while 'new draperies' flourished in East Anglia, the location of worsted's namesake (Worstead, Norfolk). Such regional cloth industries are reflected in the task data, with 74 per cent of textile production for the eastern region occurring in

[144] TNA, KB/9/1013a/44; CALS, QJF/90/1, 143–4.
[145] Ramsay, *English Woollen Industry*, p. 10. See Zell, *Industry in the Countryside*, pp. 179–82 for a good summary of fulling processes.
[146] DHC, Chanter 859, *Tucker v. Tyler*. Tucker was a West Country term for fuller. See 'Tuck' in English Dialect Dictionary Online [website].
[147] Zell, *Industry and the Countryside*, p. 180.
[148] DHC, QS/4/Box 32, Baptist, 60–2 and Epiphany, 33.
[149] Muldrew, '"Th'ancient distaff"', p. 502.

Norfolk or Lincolnshire.[150] On a broader scale, the dataset shows textile production was less ubiquitous in the east than in the south-west and north.[151] And at the more local level, there were clear spatial patterns to the stages of production, as Table 7.3 conveys. Spinning and other preparatory stages were overwhelmingly rural, 73 per cent of such tasks taking place outside of towns.[152] The specialised weaving, dyeing, and especially fulling tasks were more evenly split between town and country, with 47 per cent performed in the former, and especially market towns. Towns became even more central to production as cloth was turned into clothing.

7.4 Clothing Production

The making of clothing, footwear, and bedding encompassed a wide range of specialist crafts. These are shown in Table 7.4, largely organised according to the product made. In noticeable contrast to the textile industry's 65:35 per cent rural/urban split, 56 per cent of overall clothing production activities took place in towns. Moreover, 63 per cent of the buying, selling, and transport of finished clothing goods occurred in urban communities. Nonetheless, the location of clothing tasks did vary according to the item, and large towns, which have received the bulk of attention from historians, accounted for relatively few. Leather tanning and outer-clothing manufacture were noticeably more urban, while the mending of clothes, and the making of lace and stockings, were more likely to occur in the countryside.

Leathermaking and the tailoring of outerwear were male dominated as well as urban. Alongside feltmaking and shoemaking, they represent the only apparel tasks with little or no participation from women in the dataset. In common with other forms of craftwork where women were noticeably absent, men with specialist occupations dominated, completing 64 per cent of the work tasks, or 79 per cent when excluding workers without an occupational descriptor. Leather-making processes were spread across different trades. Skinners and fellmongers bought and prepared the skins, tanners processed them into leather, which curriers

[150] In contrast, tasks from Norfolk or Lincolnshire make up 56 per cent of the entire eastern sample.

[151] Textile production made up 18 per cent of all eastern craftwork tasks, in contrast to 31 and 30 per cent for the south-west and north, respectively. This calculation excludes integral tasks and coroners' reports, the latter being overrepresented in the eastern sample and complicating direct regional comparisons.

[152] This includes all categories of textile production in Table 7.4 apart from dyeing, weave, finish textiles, and other.

Table 7.4 *Gender division of labour and location of clothing and shoemaking*

	Tasks	% by F adj.	% of tasks in rural parish	% of tasks in urban parish
Accessories	15	87.7	20.0	80.0
Bedding	6	72.1	40.0	60.0
Felt	2	0.0	0.0	100.0
Stockings	16	100.0	53.3	46.7
Lace	6	100.0	66.7	33.3
Mending	8	88.6	85.7	14.3
Outer clothing	50	33.0	33.3	66.7
Shoes	15	0.0	60.0	40.0
Tanning	16	0.0	18.8	81.3
Underclothing	20	95.9	50.0	50.0
Other	4	72.1	0.0	100.0
Sewing, unspecified	6	100.0	33.3	66.7
Tailoring, unspecified	21	0.0	76.2	23.8
Total	185	64.4	44.1	55.9

Notes: adj. = adjusted (x2.59). The task totals used for the first, third, and fourth columns are unadjusted.

dressed and coloured: these divisions were reflected in the dataset, with skinners buying and selling, tanners working the hides, and fellmongers doing both. However, leatherworkers like glovers might process materials too. Indeed, 31 per cent of the tasks done by glovers in the database involved the buying of skins, as in May 1680, when James Ellery bought one for 2s 8d and 'put it into his tan pit'.[153] For the most part, however, shoemakers, saddlers, and other leatherworkers concentrated on the manufacture, mending, and selling of leather goods. Trade could be bespoke or ready-made. Shoemaker John Callway of St Columb, Cornwall, 'went to the fairs to sell shoes' in 1557, while Samuel Shenton went to the shop of cordwainer James West of Leigh upon Mendip in Somerset in 1619, to have him widen a pair of boots.[154] Such workshops and the tools they held could be a valuable resource for the community, beyond the direct services of the tradesman. For instance, on 30 August 1679, labourer John Nightingale of Greens Norton in Northamptonshire spent all of his Saturday in the shop of

[153] DHC, QS/4/Box 103–4, Midsummer, Info of James Ellery.
[154] DHC, Chanter 855, *Callway v. Plewige*; SHC, D/D/Cd/55, *Allen v. Ray*.

shoemaker Thomas Kerwood, buffing one pair of shoes and mending another for his wife.[155]

Tailors and shoemakers were both workshop-based artisans and traders, but in other respects they differed substantially. For one, tailors often laboured away from their household and shop. Tailors in the dataset only did 19 per cent of their craftwork tasks in their own household, as compared to 78 per cent for leatherworkers.[156] Shoemakers and other leatherworkers were less numerous and more likely to be based in market towns and cities. Tailors were more ubiquitous; many lived in the countryside but did much of their business, both craftwork and commerce, in towns.[157] But tailors also often worked in their customers' houses, wherever those might be. As Danae Tankard has pointed out, there was a certain hierarchy to the location of work: tailors would have travelled to the homes of wealthy patrons, while poorer customers, like husbandman's wife Joan Cowling of Washfield in Devon, might send 'shag and stuff … to one Edward Manley a tailor in Tiverton to be made into a coat for her child' in 1660.[158] Nevertheless, the depositions turn up examples of tailors working in the households of more humble clients as well. In a 1604 case discussed in the introductory chapter, Robert Lane of Wellow worked in nearby South Stoke, Somerset, and 'being a tailor by his occupation … diverse times wrought in the same parish at many men's houses'. John Read worked 'at one goodman Mann his house at Thorpland' in Norfolk one Saturday in February 1661, when 'he missed about a yard and three quarters of taffety ribbon … and about half a quarter of an ounce of silk' which he had left in a bag 'upon the hall table' the night before.[159]

While tailors specialised in the making of outer clothing like waistcoats, gowns, breeches, and suits, they did not monopolise its manufacture to the same extent as shoemakers or glovers did leather goods. Leatherworkers accounted for 63 per cent of leatherworking tasks, while tailors did 48 per cent of outerwear tasks. Married women in particular might follow the example of Mary Ivory, a gardener's wife from North Mimms in Hertfordshire, in making outer garments themselves. In 1681

[155] NAS, QSR/1/95, Info of William Leeke.
[156] For craftwork tasks done with a known location. Using categories explained in Section 1.2.3.
[157] Fifty-nine per cent of tasks where residence was known were done by rural tailors. Only 51 per cent of tailors' tasks were done in a rural parish, suggesting some movement into towns for work.
[158] Tankard, *Clothing in Seventeenth Century*, pp. 53–4. DHC, QS/4/Box 66, Michaelmas, 32.
[159] SHC, D/D/Cd/36, *Reade v. Hedges*; NRO, C/S3/44, Info of Samuel Mann.

she fashioned a 'piece of damask into a pair of sleeves for her own wearing', before lining 'her own riding hood' with the remainder of the fabric.[160] Yet it was in categories of clothing production other than leather and outerwear that women truly dominated. Overall, they accounted for at least 64 per cent of clothing production in the dataset, when adjusted figures are used. They were responsible for the making of all lace and stockings, nearly all underclothes, and the majority of clothing accessories and bedding. Women dominated these crafts, which did not require formal apprenticeships; but why these activities remained largely unapprenticed while others did not remains unclear. One possible interpretation might associate men with professional production for the market, and women with fashioning goods associated with the household and family. Certainly, there was a high degree of specialism and 'for another' work, at 61 per cent, among male apparel producers. Yet, while evidence of women producing for their own household is not hard to find, evidence of market-oriented activity also throws this simple dichotomy into question.[161]

In a typical case of household industry from 1693, Anne Brown testified that four shifts 'of her own spinning and making' and belonging to herself, her husband, and two children had been stolen from a hedge in her backyard in Sandhutton in Yorkshire.[162] Underclothing like this was the most common item made at home, but other needs might be met through the repurposing of second-hand goods. Sarah Marley of Liverpool bought two horse cloths from Sarah Digle in March 1666 for 18d, cutting up one of them to 'make her husband a frock'. Similarly, Annis Potter, the wife of a slipper-maker from Witchford in Cambridgeshire, used a child's blanket to 'sew part her petticoats' in 1655.[163] The previously mentioned damask sleeves of Mary Ivory illustrate the versatility of such second-hand items: Mary later gave or sold them 'to Thomas Chessam … for Sarah Chessam the daughter of James Chessam … of Essendon', and when one of the sleeves wore out, the other was 'made into a neckcloth' and passed on to Thomas Chessam's own daughter Mary.

As the latter example suggests, it is too simplistic to equate men's clothing work with commerce and women's with the household during this period. Much of women's apparel production was done for remuneration

[160] HALS, QSR/19, 95.
[161] Market-oriented clothing production was certainly the norm in seventeenth-century London: Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, p. 220; Gowing, *Ingenious Trade.*
[162] NYCRO, QSB/1694, 178.
[163] LaA, QSB/1/1666, April, Info of Edward Alcock; CUL, EDR/E10/1655, Info of Annis Gaul.

or the commercial market, particularly lacemaking and stocking knitting. Indeed, out of all female clothing production tasks, at least 48 per cent were performed for individuals outside the household. Moreover, as is explored in Section 8.1, women accounted for 58 per cent of selling clothing tasks (adjusted) in the dataset. It is difficult to know how many of these items were made by the sellers themselves or represented second-hand trade. But women like spinster Agnes Parsons were not uncommon; when she was accused of stealing bone lace from the market stand of Agnes and John Bowden in Taunton, and selling it on at the nearby stand of spinster Joan Gilford, she claimed to have 'made some of that kind' and bought the rest legitimately.[164] For Parsons, or seamstresses like Florence Band of Stockleigh Pomeroy, Devon, and Agnes Hope of St Albans in Hertfordshire, needlework may have been their primary occupation.[165] Single woman Catherine Padgot of Norwich claimed outright to earn 'her living by filling bobbins and sometimes by sewing' in 1693, while Margaret Roads similarly made 'her living by making of Bonelace' in the 1640s.[166] Roads was the wife of a 'wandering ballad-maker' and likely had an atypical lifestyle. For many married women or widows, sewing and knitting, like spinning, may have been supplemental work.[167] In 1631, labourer's wife Elizabeth Leake of Hillington in Norfolk hired Thomasine Tye, also married to a labourer, to knit a pair of stockings for her child. Cordwainer's wife Christian Slee of Crediton, Devon, bought a 'breadth of Rosterne' made by Thomasine Greene for 10d in October 1610.[168]Afterwards she 'made the same up to a falling band and sold the same to … Peter Joseph's wife for 12d'; Peter was later spotted wearing it. Widow Katherine Gyles of East Bradenham in Norfolk, meanwhile, had a standing arrangement with Thomas Armstrong around 1614, in which he 'put wool to her to spin … and she did use to knit his stockings'.[169]

If the gender division of the clothing industry did not spring principally from the commercial orientations of production, there were other telling distinctions. There was, for example, a clear gender divide between the mending of used clothes and the making of new ones. As we have already seen, women were more likely to repurpose used clothing and materials.

[164] SHC, Q/SR/29–31, 95–7.
[165] DHC, Chanter 859, 322r–324v (1577); HALS, ASA8/8, 5 (1595).
[166] NRO, DN/DEP/53/58A, *Ex Officio v. Georgina Rose*; HALS, QSR/7, 153–4. For similar examples, see Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, pp. 174–7.
[167] Shepard, *Accounting for Oneself*, pp. 176–7, 218–21.
[168] NRO, C/S3/28, Exam of Margarett Wilson, Exam of Elizabeth Leake, Info of Robert Tye; DHC, QS/4/Box 16, Easter, Exam of Christian Slee.
[169] NRO, C/S3/19, Info of Katherine Gyles, Exam of Thomas Armstrong.

They were also much more likely to mend damaged or worn apparel. Arrangements could be ad hoc or standing. Joan Elliot of Compton Chamberlayne in Wiltshire patched William Jeay's breeches when he came to her house wet and bedraggled 'about Christmas' in 1599, while William Jepton of Ecclesfield in Yorkshire employed Anne Whitley 'for three years … by times' in the 1680s to mend his stockings and 'do such odd things for him'.[170] Men were capable of mending clothing, but the two examples of this in the dataset are revealing. The labourer Hugh Trapp did not go to church one Sunday morning in 1630 but stayed home in Brockley, Somerset, 'to mend his clothes'. The tailor John Gibson of Kirby Hill in Yorkshire was hired by George Raper to do the same in 1693. Yet Gibson was apparently so destitute that 'he refused and bid … [Raper] get them mended where he would and at that time went into the country a begging and refused to work his trade'.[171] As with the well-known socio-economic separation between shoe menders (cobblers) and shoemakers, poverty and low status seem to have been the key factors, rather than gender alone.[172] In this way, a hierarchy of clothes, and not just materials, may have helped shape the gendered nature of clothing production: new and public trappings of wealth and rank (furnished by male tradesmen) were at the top, while old or intimate garments (furnished by women) were underneath.[173]

7.5 Conclusion

Judith Bennett argued that women's work largely remained 'low-status, low-paid, and low-skilled' during the early modern period.[174] The work-task evidence for rural textile and clothing industries, however, suggests some qualifiers are needed. Regarding pay, clothing production and spinning were major sources of income which, as Craig Muldrew has shown, could sometimes outstrip male earnings during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.[175] Nor was such work necessarily low-skilled. Spinning, knitting, sewing, and lacemaking all required training, in some cases extensive. In practice, the distinctions between tailors and seamstresses were not simply about the type of work done and form of training; they were also social and semantic. As Table 7.4 shows,

[170] WSHC, D1/42/18, 23b–28bv; WYAS, QS1/25/10, Deposition of Anne Whitley.
[171] SHC, Q/SR/62, 53–4; NYCRO, QSB/1695, 175.
[172] On the nominal socio-economic division between shoemakers and cobblers, see Hobsbawm and Scott, 'Political shoemakers', p. 101; Porter, 'Cobblers all', p. 45.
[173] For more on the gendered production of underclothing, see North, *Sweet and Clean?*, pp. 178–207.
[174] Bennett, *History Matters*, p. 62. [175] Muldrew, '"Th'ancient distaff"', pp. 520–2.

all tasks described simply as 'sewing' were done by women, while 'tailoring' tasks were only done by men. Yet, tailors did quite a lot of sewing, as when Thomas Williamson of Winwick in Lancashire went 'to one Robert Rigbie's house webster there to sew being a tailor by profession'.[176] Women were largely excluded from apprenticed trades in these industries as they were in others. But the result did not keep them from attaining the necessary skills to practice such crafts. Instead, it barred them from the prestige and access to business that came with these trades, which in turn further shaped gendered attitudes towards craftwork. While women increasingly entered formal apprenticeships in mantua making and tailoring in late-seventeenth-century London, and elsewhere during the eighteenth century, the work-task results suggest that rural tradesmen, and society in general, jealously guarded access throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[177]

Textile and clothing work thus epitomises the complex ways in which early modern craftwork was gendered and otherwise organised in the English countryside. While craft guilds did not control and regulate trade in market towns and villages, apprenticeship nonetheless played a major role in structuring rural industry. Although idiosyncrasies can be demonstrated, the apprenticeship system was the chief means of acquiring artisanal skill and recognition throughout the period. These trades remained the overwhelming preserve of men, despite a lack of legislation explicitly barring women from apprenticeship. However, such exclusion did not prevent women from acquiring advanced training and skills, and indeed numerical dominance, within the textile and clothing industries. Nor were women barred from industry solely on the basis of apprenticeship and specialisation; certain types of construction, like groundworks, were low skill yet male dominated. As we have seen elsewhere in this book, gender often intersected with status and other customary ideas in determining who did what work and why.

If groundworks and textile and clothing production are any indication, it is too simplistic to equate craftwork and construction with specialisation during this period. Nonetheless, for many categories of industry, specialised tradesmen performed the majority of work tasks. This was so for certain stages or segments of textile and clothing production, like weaving, fulling, shoemaking, and tailoring, but was particularly pronounced for woodwork, metalwork, and building. Yet, even in construction, artisans did not work alone or completely monopolise labour. They

[176] LaA, QSB/1/1667, October, Info of John Jenkinson, Exam of Thomas Williamson.
[177] On the rise of female apprenticeships see Snell, *Annals*, pp. 270–319; Gowing, *Ingenious Trade*, pp. 55–98.

worked alongside servants and labourers, but also, as some specific examples have shown, butchers, wool-combers, or husbandmen. Thus, specialisation alone, as communicated through occupational descriptors, tells only part of the story of craftwork in the English early modern economy. Moreover, it does not capture adequately women's contribution to industry, or the overall division of craftwork between self-employment/household production and the labour market. The work-task findings suggest that specialist craftsmen did much of their work 'for others', as one might expect. But a substantial amount of women's craftwork was directed outside the household as well.