

FROM CAPITAL OF THE NEW-WORLD TO NEW WORLD-CAPITAL: PRE-1930s GLOBALISM IN NEW YORK CITY

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ABSTRACT: *Much of the global cities literature suggests that the world economy experienced an epochal shift in the early 1970s which made cities more economically important than nation-states, capital flows more important than fixed investments, and commodity distribution more important than income redistribution. If these are the defining characteristics of the global city then New York has been 'global' for much longer than the last 25 years. New York has related more with the world economy than with its regional economy since the onset of Anglo-Dutch settlement in the 17th century. This article unravels the global nature of New York during the period between the construction of the Erie Canal and the Great Depression. Given this evidence of 'global city-ness' long before the 'global city' is supposed to have emerged, I suggest that we need to be more careful about characterising the 'global city' as a qualitatively new phenomenon. Income polarization, finance capital hegemony, and hyper-flows of immigration— all characteristics of the contemporary global city— were key aspects of New York City's evolution well before social scientists 'discovered' globalization.*

INTRODUCTION

Much of the world cities literature is predicated on the view that the world economy experienced an epochal shift in the early 1970s which made cities more economically important than nation-states, capital flows more important than fixed investments, and commodity distribution more important than income redistribution¹. One conspicuous by-product of this restructuring has been the formation of 'world cities', within which a disproportionate share of the world's business is transacted, culture produced, and political decisions made. Yet if we adopt this caricature as axiomatic then we must surely do so with a blind eye toward urban history and with a lack of nuance regarding the component parts of globalization. There are, I argue, several discernable strands of globalism in major urban centers long before the alleged era of globalization ever began². As Richard Walker (1996)

has suggested then, it might be more useful to speak of 'rounds' of globalization than to speak of an ontologically separable 'era of globalization'. Local studies are valuable at understanding the nature of each round.

The intent of this essay is to examine one segment of New York City's historical geography— post-Erie Canal construction to the Great Depression—in order to question the notion that the contemporary world city is simply a product of post-1960s urbanization. Political, economic, and cultural activity in New York during the 19th and early 20th century was remarkably similar to the very traits which are said to define the contemporary global city. Finance capitalists were often more powerful than state managers; immigration, information, and capital flowed disproportionately through the city; and cultural products were affected by many outside influences. Yet there are relevant differences that are important to detect in order to learn more about the process of globalization in general and the formation

of global cities in particular. Peter Marcuse (1996: 198) has summarized the practical importance of task:

"What is new about what we witness today? This is, it seems to me, an important and under-debated question. If the patterns are the same as in the nineteenth century, the causes are likely to be the same, and the solutions the same. The problem then lies with the economic and social relationships that run deeply through the years. If, on the other hand, the patterns are substantially new then new solutions necessarily need to be discovered. Since the answer, of course, is that the patterns are partially new, partially old, a greater attention to which particular aspects are new will help steer the strategies that may be addressed towards their improvement."

This paper takes one step toward separating old and new by examining strands of globalism in New York City decades before the era of globalization is said to have begun.

EARLY GLOBALISMS IN NEW YORK CITY

Immigration and finance capital flows are two oft-cited characteristics of the contemporary global city. Less frequently mentioned is the role of war in shaping a city's interaction with the world economy but since it has been a vastly important element in shaping New York's global linkages, it will be used (along with immigration and finance capital) as the focus of this narrative. These elements are used to segment the larger time period being examined into several sub-eras of global activity. Although the chosen historical book-ends of this examination are the construction of the Erie Canal and the Great Depression, these events (and the sub-eras identified later) should be seen more as heuristic devices that help to organize the discussion than as a putative beginning and ending to New York's global linkages. To the contrary, a central component of my thesis is that such linkages are very difficult to confine to a particular time period, whether it be the last 25 years or the era chosen for this essay.

Building the Infrastructure to Receive Globalism: 1825 to 1860

Although revealingly dubbed 'the seat of empire' by George Washington immediately following the Revolutionary War, New York's economic hegemony in the American urban system was not firmly established until the completion of the Erie Canal in 1825 which gave the city the smoothest access (other than New Orleans) to the growing interior of the United States (Mooney, 1998). The canal also brought an influx of poor Irish immigrants who helped with the construction and flocked to the expanding port employment that was being produced in the city's wharves. The construction of the canal and the subsequent expansion of the city's port facilities were underwritten by the growing financial establishment in New York which had already forged direct linkages with the city's stock market. New York banks later funded the construction of the railroads, facilitated commerce from the port, and encouraged speculation of other sorts. Above all, they established the city as a global node of finance capital by the mid-19th century (Lemon, 1996). The growth of this sector was a necessity for the new nation as British banks had begun to remove their influence from North America and to focus more on South America (especially Argentina) and India. This is not to say however, that British capital per se was pulled out of New York, but only to say that it was now American (specifically New York) banks with London offices, which were now facilitating the distribution of bonds and issuing the loans. From 1826 to 1848, for example, the New York investment bank of *Prime, Ward, and King* distributed American securities (mainly for infrastructure like canals and rail) to British speculators. *Prime* relied heavily upon their links with the London firm, *Baring Brothers* (Sylla, 1995).

The business of shifting wealth around was highly unstable. Lack of central government control ultimately created a more volatile financial system in the United States than in Britain. In addition, after certain bond issuers (mainly American states) repudiated their loans during the forties, European investors became squeamish about investing in America (Corey, 1930). New York's economy was unstable as the U.S. financial system matured.

National depressions in the 1830s and 40s were particularly hard felt in New York partially because it did not have a balanced economy of manufacturing (as was the case in Philadelphia) to counterbalance the impact of devaluation (Lemon, 1996).

By 1857, New York was already considered the "Queen of the Western World" (Still, 1956: 128), yet its image was often rejected by Americans outside of the city. Many Americans considered it the most 'un-American' of places. During the late 1840s and 50s, New York's international links were deepened by Irish and German immigrations but also by English, French, Welsh, Scottish, Scandinavian, and Latin American ones as well (Rosenwaik, 1972)³. An ethnic division of labor developed shortly thereafter, with Germans constituting a disproportionate number of bakers and cabinet-makers; the English enjoying the fruits of the growing financial sector; and the Irish more evenly distributed along the bottom of the hierarchy as unskilled laborers, construction workers, and household servants.

Prior to 1850, the Irish were the most numerous immigrant group in New York. Of the 134,656 New Yorkers who were born outside of the United States in 1845, more than 96,000 were from Ireland (Rosenwaik, 1972: 40). German immigrants composed another 24,000, while the French and other Europeans numbered about 7,000 (1972: 40). The Irish provide one of the more interesting examples of immigrant identity politics in New York during the time. It was common for the Irish to use their new-found freedom to influence the British into freeing Eire from its hold by pressuring American legislators (Still, 1956). Despite their new found freedom however, it would be many years before the Irish would experience prosperity in any real sense. For many years after their influx, the Irish experienced conditions which were sometimes only nominally better than those from which they had fled.

Germans were also eager to hold onto relics from their past, not the least of which was their language. Living mostly in a small enclave to the east of the Bowery called Kleindeutschland, the German language was spoken as often as English. Karl Theodor Griesinger, a German author, was struck by the insularity of the early German ghetto in the Lower East Side of New York:

"Life in Kleindeutschland is almost the same as in the Old Country. Bakers, butchers, druggists—all Germans. Theirs is not a single business which is not run by Germans. Not only the shoemakers, tailors, barbers, physicians, grocers, and innkeepers are German, but the pastors and priests as well. There is even a German lending library where one can get all kinds of German books. The resident of Kleindeutschland need not know English in order to make a living..." (Still, 1980: 162)

This pattern of 'Old-World' culture in the 'New-World' metropolis was actually more common than not in mid-century New York. "From the beginning", Bookbinder (1989: 19) asserts, "the pattern was clear":

"Beleaguered and fearful in a New World, newcomers sought the comfort of the familiar. Clustered in enclaves where they clung to the language and customs of their homeland, they were perceived by the broader society as 'strange', 'dangerous', 'undesirable'."

Sometimes, the cultural artifacts to which the immigrants clung, served to create acrimony with other groups in the city. Protestants and Catholics from Ireland, for example, clashed on several occasions, largely because of tensions borne outside of the United States (Bookbinder, 1989).

The process of immigration became institutionalized into the local state in 1855 with the remodeling of Castle Garden in lower Manhattan as an immigrant processing center (Bookbinder, 1989). Castle Garden was until 1890, the gateway to America—about eight million Germans and Irish were processed there over its short tenure (Bookbinder, 1989). This ended years of immigrants being greeted by 'runners' who promised the vulnerable newcomers housing, transport, and food. Usually, the runners did little more than run with the money that they had pilfered from the new immigrants, so the city (and later the federal government) stepped in to regulate immigration.

By the middle of the 19th century, New York had surpassed Mexico City as the largest city in the Western Hemisphere (Rosenwaik, 1972: 33). New York's economy industrialized hastily at this time thanks to several deals which linked the city via rail to the interior of the US before either Baltimore or Philadelphia. The city's financiers were largely responsible for funding the massive growth of the American rail system, so it is little surprise that New York benefited first (Corey, 1930). *Winslow, Lanier, and Company* began selling American railroad bonds

in Europe in 1849, while *J.P. Morgan and Company* continued to do so until the late 1800s (Sylla, 1995). British officials grew more concerned about the increased manufacturing competition that New York bankers were facilitating. The city's port was poised to become central to the nation's economy and given the rise of the United States, the world's economy as well.

Technological innovations like the steam-powered ship, which shaved four days off the average trans-Atlantic voyage, made New York's link to the world economy even more secure (Lemon, 1996). Links with Canada were tenuous at this time, because their grain export economy was threatened by New York merchants and agriculturists who sought (and successfully won) to break the Canadian monopoly on grain export to Britain. The New York merchants ultimately won this economic battle—an astonishing feat given that Canada was still within the British Empire at the time. Imports grew as well during this period; US customs officials collected enough money in the New York harbor in the late 19th century to fund the entire US government (Lemon, 1996).

With the proliferation of telegraph wire in the 1850s, New York's already cosmopolitan press was empowered to offer more complete coverage of events in other parts of the country and by 1860 in Europe as well. In this respect, the New York press has always been different. While newspapers in Philadelphia, Boston, and Baltimore were more pre-occupied with local issues, Greeley's *Tribune*, Raymond's *Times*, and Bennett's *Herald*, regularly covered national and international news events. International luminaries like Karl Marx had regular columns in the New York press from mid-century onward. The New York press established itself early on as America's international information filter—the verbal articulation of globalism in the mid-1800s.

Developing the Capacity to Facilitate Global Flows: 1860-1895

As the 1860s began, it became clear that the United States were not so united. At first, New Yorkers were generally supportive of the conflict, confident like most northerners that the skirmish would be over very soon. The city's financial community was also supportive, raising \$150 million

during the first three months of fighting and eventually lending even more to the union (Markoe, 1995). New York bankers have always managed to situate themselves favorably for post-war periods (Corey, 1930). Yet this patriotic federalism would soon be counterbalanced by a contingent of New York businessmen and workers who saw no virtue in the war. Given the economic connection that New York's garment industry had forged with the southern states, many were actually opposed to the conflict. Mayor Fernando Wood even proposed in 1861 that New York secede from the union as a 'free city' so as not to support the abolition of slavery (Still, 1956). Yet after it became clear that the confederacy was serious (and seriously threatening New York business interests), these 'rebel spirits' were quickly dissolved by unionist patriotism. Union flags checkered the landscape and people celebrated the participation of New Yorkers in the war. Foreign correspondents flocked to New York—neither the capital of the US nor a zone of combat in the war—to report on America's first major civil conflict (Still, 1956).

Soon, however, the war would divide the city in important ways, not the least of which was to create a war-made elite alongside its growing mass of abjectly poor immigrants. Basic inflation, along with a poor grain harvest in Europe during the early 1860s, helped to elevate a cohort of New York's aristocracy to new levels (Lemon, 1996). Shipbuilding and further fortifications to the local landscape also served as a boon to the New York elite during the war (Markoe, 1995). As such, elite New Yorkers were not only able to offset the disappearance of southern cotton, but were actually able to accumulate more wealth and thus become more powerful in the world economy by shifting their focus (Lemon, 1996). New York's growing immigrant poor community did not fare so well. Immigrants by mid-century accounted for the majority of tuberculosis and cancer deaths (Bookbinder, 1989). Infant mortality rates were also alarmingly high amongst the immigrant poor, constituting almost two-thirds of the entire number of deaths city-wide for all groups (Bookbinder, 1989).

The war not only widened the disparity between rich and poor, it also divided the city's working class residents, many of whom were foreign-born Irish. Racist demagogues like Wood goaded the Irish by convincing many that they (the Irish) were

being drafted more frequently than the city's blacks and that this would ultimately give the latter group the inside track to fill suddenly vacant 'Irish jobs'. The Draft Riot of 1863, in which angry Irish working class residents terrorized and killed eleven black residents was the unfortunate result of this intra-working class animosity. These conflicts did not change much in complexion during the war because few new immigrants were arriving to alter the factional lines.

The city's investment banking community ballooned during the war as the Union was badly in need of capital to fund their war efforts. Links with Germany became stronger during this period thanks to an elite cohort of German-born Jewish financiers in the city. In 1862, for example *J.W. Seligman* sold \$200 million in war bonds to Germany (Sylla, 1995) after British and French investors had made their allegiance to the Confederacy very clear (Corey, 1930). *Seligman* paved the way for other German-Jewish firms, including *M. Goldman, Kuhn, Loeb and Company*, and *Lehman Brothers*, to enter the sector after the war (Sylla, 1995). So called 'Yankee Banks'—those originating in New England—also became prominent after the war in the field of international investment. Foremost among this latter group was *J.P. Morgan and Company* which had a long history of links with London (Corey, 1930). After the war, the city's large investment bankers continued to facilitate the production of the American railroad system by selling bonds to European investors (even the French and British who had deserted the Union only a few years earlier). Once again, even a clear betrayal of the Union could not dissuade New York's bankers from re-establishing links with Paris and London after the war.

Upon war's end, the stream of German and Irish immigrants continued as before but with many 'native' Americans choosing to live in the newly developing suburbs, post-war New York was more 'un-American' than ever (Rosenwaike, 1972). Supplementing the Germans and the Irish were Jews from Central and Eastern Europe, and southern Italians. Notable migrations of Greeks, Poles, Hungarians, Romanians, and Bohemians also helped to diversify the ethnic mosaic in New York City. By 1870, over 82% of the population had at least one parent who was foreign-born (Rosenwaike, 1972: 71).

In 1875, the percentage of New York's population over age twenty who were immigrants had reached 68% (Rosenwaike, 1972: 71). After 1880, this stream of immigration accelerated and changed complexion. During the 1880s, New York's foreign-born population leapt by an estimated 294,000 (Rosenwaike, 1972: 68). Although Germans and Irish continued to arrive en masse, Russia and Italy became increasingly popular source populations for New York's growth. Many of the Russians were also Jewish (Rosenwaike, 1972). They were joined by several hundred thousand other Jews from Central and Eastern Europe who were fleeing the Polish Famine in 1869 and the Odessa Pogrom in 1871. After the assassination of Czar II in Russia and the ensuing anti-Semitic May Laws in 1881, this immigration accelerated. The two-pronged push factor of economic deprivation and religious persecution made severing ties with the 'homeland' much easier for Eastern European Jews than it was for other groups. Conversely though, the new 'Hebrews' were not always welcomed by the established Jewish community in the city. In fact, established Jews (South Americans, but also Germans) were often the most openly disdainful of Eastern European Jews (Still, 1956). In part this division can be chalked up to class politics—the established Jews had achieved tremendous wealth while the newcomers came with little. Additionally, the newly-arrived Jews had a way of life that was fundamentally different from that of the older denizens. The established community had a predominately reformist orientation while the newly-arrived Eastern Europeans were more orthodox in their religious practices.

New immigrants were rigidly hierarchalized and segregated upon arrival. The Irish were often treated with the most contempt. Irish death rates continued to exceed those of their German counterparts into the 1890s (Rosenwaike, 1972). Living conditions for the city's African-Americans were also brutal. While experiencing a numerical low-point in the 1860s, the black community in New York increased steadily during the 1870s and 1880s but explosively in the 1890s. While numbering only 19,663 in 1890, by 1900 the city's black population had grown to 60,666, many of whom eventually settled in Brooklyn (Rosenwaike, 1972: 76). Blacks

were shuffled into and out of neighborhoods throughout the city including Five Points, Greenwich Village, and the West Side. Whereas other immigrant groups became assimilated with the American mainstream over time, Africans struggled much longer to be accommodated in any real sense.

Southern Italians, fleeing economic deprivation, arrived in the 1870s and 1880s. They settled to the west of the growing Eastern European Jewish community on the Lower East Side. Geographical divisions within Italian enclaves mirrored provincial distinctions in Italy. The Genoese for example lived in the Five Points area while the Sicilians colonized Elizabeth Street between Houston and 14th Street (Rosenwaik, 1972). Yet, while cultural familiarity may have influenced the decisions of the newly-arrived Italians, their residential choices were often severely restricted by racial and economic discrimination elsewhere in the city. For many Italians, America was seen only as a temporary way to make money—the ‘birds of passage’ phenomenon (Bookbinder, 1989). Many never learned English because they intended and ultimately did return to Italy after several years of work. Hungarians, Greeks and Slavs also seemed to maintain a closer connection with their native land in this respect (Groneman and Reimers, 1995).

German immigrants experienced somewhat better conditions upon arrival than other immigrant groups but ironically many (Germans) chose to settle elsewhere. The crude death rate for Germans (22.1 per 1000 in 1890) was slightly less than the city-wide average (26.5 per 1000 in 1890), so this community was able to expand without further immigration (Rosenwaik, 1972: 80-1). Germans were also less spatially concentrated than other immigrants groups in the city. Williamsburg and Bushwick in Brooklyn were the only two major enclaves by the 1890s. This dispersion from the dense, disease-ridden tenement life was important at keeping their death rates low.

At the opposite end of the class spectrum, the New York aristocracy went through cultural identity crisis during the late 1800s thanks to European influences of various sorts. Perhaps the biggest reason for this vulnerability was the overwhelming *cultural* influence of capital accumulation in the city—an influence that was even more pronounced in New York than in other parts of

America (Still, 1956). The insatiable desire to accumulate preoccupied New York’s disproportionately-nouveaux rich from investing in an urban culture (e.g. arts, theatre, education) in the same way that wealthy Bostonians or Philadelphians had. New York’s elite, somewhat insecurely, strove to anchor their aristocracy in the ‘Old World’. Genealogical studies were popular. John D. Rockefeller ‘discovered’ that he was a descendant of Henry I of France, Calvin Coolidge found his roots in Charlemagne, and J.P. Morgan in David I of Scotland (Corey, 1930).

Overall, it is said that during the late decades of the 19th century that New York was actually ‘in between’ Europe and America, viewed by residents of the former as being the gateway to the latter, and by residents of the latter as the gateway to the former (Still, 1956). Its ties with London were particularly conspicuous. The American impression that New York was a ‘little Europe’ was also bolstered by the proliferation of ethnic enclaves. New York was considered by the 1880s to be the third largest German speaking city in the world and had more Irish residents than Dublin (Longstreet, 1980).

Exporting America through New York: 1895-1930

New York’s international influence was heightened in the 1890s with the emergence of America as an imperial power, the continued growth of the city’s finance community, further immigration, and the physical expansion of the city. New York was exporting wealth, culture, and influence more so than ever before. The 1890s also mark the rise of New York’s political-financial elite as an independent force in the international community. As in the past, war hastened this coronation considerably. When rebellion broke out in Cuba in 1895, New York’s military-financial complex was poised to assume a central role. Cuban revolutionaries immediately traveled to New York—by this time America’s finance and media capital—to raise money for the war (Markoe, 1995). New York newspaper editors, William Randolph Hearst and Joseph Pulitzer, gave full coverage to the war by sending reporters directly to Cuba. This coverage would prove to be a crucial progenitor of America’s entry into the war. When the *USS Maine* was sunk in 1898, the New York press

seized the moment to fan the flames of anti-Spanish discontent in America (Markoe, 1995). The ship had been sent to defend American interests in Cuba and was reportedly—although not conclusively—sunk by the Spanish. Hearst offered a \$50,000 reward for the arrest of the culprit and published highly inflammatory articles about the war, which united the American people against the Spanish. President McKinley would eventually buckle to this pressure and declare war on the Spanish. New York financiers were now in the advantageous position of being able to bankroll this war, unlike in the past when they were more dependent upon English and French investors for such matters (Corey, 1930). In addition, new markets in the Caribbean and East Asia—with the takeover of the Philippines—were opened, thus broadening the need for credit that only New York and San Francisco bankers could extend. New York's finance community began to assert an increasingly direct role in American foreign policy. McKinley's successors, Roosevelt and Taft, made New York banks more central to the international political economy through 'dollar diplomacy' in Central America, the Caribbean, and Asia.

Bankers like J.P. Morgan shifted their emphasis from simply facilitating the finance of international endeavors to directly paying for them. In 1899, Morgan refinanced and underwrote the entire \$110 million Mexican foreign debt (Corey, 1930). In 1900 and 1901, Morgan financed the Boer War for the British by lending London over \$220 million (Corey, 1930). Morgan also underwrote railroads, steel consortiums, telegraph companies, and other foreign wars. Senator Mark Hanna in 1901 quipped of Morgan, "...[there's] no telling where he'll stop. I wouldn't be surprised to hear he was getting up a syndicate to buy the British Empire. It isn't safe as long as he's over there" (Corey, 1930: 228). Although certainly the most powerful, Morgan was not the only New York-based banker exercising the power afforded by American political hegemony. *National City Bank*, for example, lent \$25 million to the Russian government and *Kuhn, Loeb, and Company* lent \$20 million to the German government in 1900, while smaller loans were made by smaller banks to Latin American countries and increasingly to European cities as well (Corey, 1930).

One of the more conspicuous collaborations between New York financiers and American military interests was the construction of the Panama Canal. Attempts by the French to build a canal across the isthmus of Panama were thwarted in the early 1890s by corruption within the French *Panama Canal Company*, of which New York-based *J.W. Seligman and Company* was a significant part. By the mid-1890s, an American investment consortium of *J.P. Morgan, J.W. Seligman, and Winslow, Lanier, and Company* (all New York-based investment houses), persuaded Washington to protect American interests by assisting with the completion of the French project under American control (Corey, 1930). They rooted their arguments in the Monroe Doctrine and pandered to the paranoia of letting the French—who had already tried to establish a foothold in Mexico during the Civil War—establish themselves in Central America. An 'agreement' was reached in which the United States would purchase a six-mile-wide swath through the Colombian province of Panama for \$10 million and pay a paltry \$250,000 in rent for an undetermined amount of time. After protests from Columbia that the US deal was unfair, Roosevelt sent in the American military to establish a puppet government that would be more acquiescent. The New York investment consortium was understandably delighted with this support because their behemoth speculation immediately turned into an irresistibly secure deal.

America had become a full-fledged imperialist thanks in no small part to the influence of New York's financial community. Conversely, New York's financial community became hegemonic thanks to American imperialism. New York eclipsed London as the center of the finance universe (Sylla, 1995) and given the foreign policy inexperience in Washington—cultivated by years of isolationism—J.P. Morgan and others were given the opportunity to impart their international experience on American foreign policy (Shefter, 1993). Prior to World War I, America had hit its industrial stride so the ability of Morgan and others to draw on a large domestic base of capital was further enhanced. New York was central in this growing industrial organism. Pre-war New York exported one-third of the nation's growing product base while importing twice that proportion (Drennan and Matson, 1995). Before America's

entry into the war, *J.P. Morgan* and others made enormous loans to the Allies and blocked German financial dealings in the United States (Markoc, 1995). After the war, New York bankers profited handsomely as the Allies paid their debts. The foreign-policy significance of New York financiers was formally organized into the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) in 1922. The CFR, which is composed of financiers, academics, journalists, and politicians, helped to articulate American foreign policy from the mid-1920s onward (Harrison, 1995). Interestingly, one-third of its members are still required to either work or live in the New York area.

New York also continued to experience various international migrations during the early 20th century which bolstered its status as 'world city'. Even accounting for deaths and return emigration, between 1900 and 1910 New York experienced a foreign-born influx of 919,000 people (Rosenwaike, 1972: 95). Between 1910 and 1920 the figure was approximately 510,000, and between 1920 and 1930, 681,000, despite immigration curbs instituted in 1924 (Rosenwaike, 1972: 96). By 1930, New York's immigrant pastiche had been virtually transmogrified from its appearance only two decades earlier. New Yorkers born in Russia/ Soviet Union (442,431)⁴ and Italy (440,250) now outnumbered those born in Germany (237,588) and Ireland/ Irish Free State (192,810).

Like other American cities, New York struggled to absorb the influx of newcomers. Xenophobia and racism were rife (Bookbinder, 1989). After World War I, the 'red scare' inspired an immigration policy that tightly constricted the flow of Asians, Italians, and Jews to the city (and the country for that matter), while at the same time serving to open up immigration flows from the largely-British Caribbean. Almost 150,000 blacks from the Caribbean came to the city between 1900 and 1930 (Groneman and Reimers, 1995: 585). From 1917 onwards, Puerto Ricans were considered American citizens and thus began to constitute an ever larger proportion of the city's population base. After the 1924 restrictions, manufacturers in search of cheap labor began to court poor Puerto Ricans and American blacks into coming to the city for low-wage jobs.

Culturally, New York became more secure with its cosmopolitan identity. With New York's ethnic composition shifting around, the definition of 'cosmopolitan' was necessarily broadened. Its literary, artistic, and intellectual products were now ripe for export rather than simply serving as mirrors to the world's cultural influences. The city began to rediscover the work of its forgotten literary offspring like Walt Whitman and Herman Melville who had died in the 1890s. The Harlem Renaissance too was an emblem of this cultural independence. This movement of the 1920s finally signaled some cultural recognition for the city's African-American population. In particular, Harlem became the Mecca for Jazz—a cultural expression of America's increasingly independent sense of identity. It seemed as if New York had finally blossomed culturally. However, New York's extant ambivalence toward its own cosmopolitanism continued to manifest in popular culture. While many of New York's artistic achievements embraced diversity, others simply supported a xenophobic status quo (Bookbinder, 1989). Regardless though, New York's cultural products were becoming more known to the rest of the world.

So too did New York's physical growth influence the world. New York was the archetypal city for the machine age. Its built environment was appropriately altered during this time to meet the needs of the changing political economy. Its construction was unequaled in scale, worldwide—a testament to the world political power of America and New York as much as it was a testament to the productivity of labor. Bridges linking Manhattan with Brooklyn, Queens, and the Bronx were completed as were tunnels linking the city to New Jersey. Subterranean commuter and intra-city rail was expanded and the city's two train stations [Pennsylvania Station in 1910; Grand Central Terminal in 1913] served as architectural monuments to New York's ascendancy.

Undoubtedly, though, the 'biggest' influence that New York had on urban geographies elsewhere in the world, was the skyscraper. The race for the sky as it were, culminated in the late 1920s and early 1930s with the construction of the Empire State Building. Its construction (completed in 1931) provides a fitting vignette with which to end this

narrative. Opening during the nadir of the Great Depression, the Empire State Building struggled to find tenants to fill its cavernous interior. For many years, not unlike the hyper-cephalic local economy out of which it grew, it sat almost empty—literally detached from the human productivity to which its walls owe their origin. Only later would its façade be complemented by economic productivity within. As the culmination to New York's rise to world-city status, it is an intriguing metaphor for the historically premature nature of this rise. Just as New York struggled to find a visceral culture to complement its cosmopolitan façade in the first several centuries of existence, so too did the Empire State Building struggle to live up to the onerous expectations of its mighty façade. But with time, the empty crucible of New York's impressively international existence was successfully filled with an independent ethos, not unlike the eventual ability of its most famous building to attract tenants and ultimately become one of the most prestigious addresses in the world. New York City, although always international in one way or another, had reached a point of cultural and economic maturity by the late 1930s, progressing in space and in time from receiver to facilitator, and finally to producer for the world's political economy.

CONCLUSION

A closer look at one irrefutably-global city over a specific period of time allows us to make some preliminary assertions about globalization in general, and how, in particular it has been experienced and molded by the local urban geography. This narrative has shown how certain aspects of the global cities literature are, at best too general, and at worst ahistorical. New York's political economy, after the early 1800s looked, sounded, and behaved in remarkable conformance to the putative 'global city'. Yet the case presented here also reveals several local articulations of 19th/early 20th century globalism that do *not* conform completely with the contemporary global cities narrative and could therefore be seen as place- or time-specific. Examining these differences might shed some light on how New York's many

globalisms are unique, thus setting the proper context for comparison with other cities.

First, New York has *always* attracted—for multiple reasons, people from all over the world. The influx of cultures has given New York a cosmopolitanism unparalleled in the world, either in the period described above or in the contemporary one. Yet, less referred to has been the fact that New York's cosmopolitanism has always been paralleled by an equally pervasive sense of bigotry and intolerance. From its very foundation, New York's power establishment has discriminated, persecuted, and violated its newcomers. The presence of these parallel strands seems more pronounced here than in other 'world cities' whose ethnic diversity is younger.

A second idiographic aspect of New York's 19th/early 20th century globalism was the dissonance between economic and cultural development. The supreme international confidence of the city's financiers in the late 19th century contrasts sharply with the deep insecurity displayed by its culture producers. The diversity of New York seemed inferior to the panache of Paris' art scene, the sophistication of London's theater culture, the experience of Berlin's symphonies. New York writers, actors, architects, and artists looked to Europe for inspiration, while the city's financiers increasingly looked inward for their innovations. This would, however, change in the 1920s when New York re-discovered its own literary offspring like Melville and Whitman. The Harlem Renaissance, and particularly the influence of jazz music, was further testament to the somewhat-delayed cultural blossoming.

At a more nomothetic level, we can make some generalizations regarding what *is* new about contemporary global-citydom by comparing the globalism of the 19th/early 20th century in New York to the voluminous literature on late 20th century globalism in New York⁵. Above all, the most recent round of globalization is more spatially extensive. While the phrase 'global linkages' has almost always ignored great portions of the globe, it is fairly clear that the global reach for today's global actors—media, finance, culture—in New York (and elsewhere of course) has been significantly expanded through technology and deregulation. This has changed the relation that New York has to the world economy by

reducing its relative locational advantage vis-à-vis smaller urban centers which now have direct linkages to the world economy. As a corollary to this expanded notion of globalization, immigration patterns have become more expansive as well. Race, rather than just ethnicity, is now more a part of global people-flows than ever before, as western global centers like New York are forced to absorb the post-colonial fallout of the late 20th century.

We can also comfortably conclude that the role of the corporation in globalization has changed. While 19th century firms in New York certainly recruited foreign labor, traded with other continents, and influenced foreign policy, the modern corporation has changed the contours of globalization—quantitatively and qualitatively—because it is more able to locate outside the global city, while simultaneously reaping a cut of the profits flowing through such places. This has brought globalization—or at least global linkages—to places hitherto more locally-oriented. The novelty of New York's 19th century globalism has become diluted by the proliferation of late 20th century globalization in places like Miami, Sao Paulo, Frankfurt, even Columbus, Ohio, which although not 'world powers', do nonetheless house powerful world corporations.

Further research on other cities will be necessary to determine how broadly applicable these generalizations are, but at very least they demonstrate the need to historicize the global cities discourse more carefully. Although recent changes in the world economy are undeniable, the exact nature of these changes must be more carefully described, using real places during specific periods of time as evidence in order to avoid the conceptual sloppiness of the current global cities discourse. Given the important decisions currently being made by urban governments to deal with globalization, the need for geographers to properly historicize this literature is both practical and timely.

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NOTES

¹ Among world city theorists, John Friedman (1995) has been particularly wed to the post-1970s notion of the global economy as it pertains to world city formation. "As an interlocking system of production", he argues, "the global economy is a discovery of the 1970s (p. 21)". More often than not, though, this perspective on world cities is implied rather than explicitly drawn out as such. See Knox (1995) for an overview of this literature, and Knox and Taylor (1995) for a comprehensive edited collection on the subject.

² See Walker (1996) for an excellent account of this for San Francisco.

³ Rosenwaike's *Population History of New York City* is derived primarily from census data but he has painstakingly adjusted, corroborated, and refuted various aspects of these data through demographic methods, more localized databases, and the historical record. The book has been used extensively in this piece (rather than relying directly on census data) because Rosenwaike has already gone through the onerous task of adjusting this data (where adjustment was needed) to come up with a statistical portrait more nuanced than raw census data could offer.

⁴ These figures were derived from the 1930 US Census because raw figures would suffice to make this point.

⁵ Sassen's (1991) *The Global City*, Mollenkopf and Castells' (1991) *Dual City*, and Fainstein's (1994) *City Builders*, are several of the best pieces of work in this area. Although these books were not covered in this short essay, they form the foundation for assumptions that are being made about post-1973 globalization in New York City.