

Introduction

AMERICA AND BREMEN

The group of merchants who are the subject of this work were based in the Free Hanseatic City of Bremen, an independent city-republic until 1867 that today is a part of Germany. In 1852, this group included 776 adult men in Bremen, in a population of eighty thousand.¹ Between the centers of their activities – Bremen, New York, and Baltimore – these Hanseats formed one transatlantic community. They remained linked to each other through trade, intermarriage, friendship, shared religious and political beliefs, and a reliance on the infrastructure of consulates and trade treaties that rested on Bremen's sovereignty. The boundaries that defined the group under consideration here crossed through cities, nations, and oceans. At the same time, Hanseats helped level boundaries between continents through their trade.

Within Bremen, inclusion in this group was defined by economic activity and legal status. Only holders of the Greater Privilege, the highest rank of citizenship in Bremen, were legally entitled to conduct long-distance trade there.² As a self-conscious elite, these merchants saw themselves in the tradition of the medieval Hanseatic League. Bremen was one of three cities appointed to represent the Hansa after its decline in the seventeenth century, hence its official designation as a state as the “Free Hanseatic City of Bremen.”³

To approach the antebellum period of American history through a foreign port, the German city of Bremen, opens a different gaze on the American past than could be gained from a vantage point on the shore. Without America, Bremen would

¹ Schwarzwälder, Herbert, *Geschichte der Freien Hansestadt Bremen*, 4 vols., Hamburg, 1987, is the standard general history of Bremen. See vol. 2, 217–18, for demographic data.

² The *Bürgerrecht* in *Großes Bremisches Bürgerrecht* appears best translated as *privilege*, rather than *citizenship*, because the concept of citizenship implies a single status of citizen. Both the *Großes Bürgerrecht* – allowing its holder to engage in foreign trade – and the *Kleines Bürgerrecht* – required for many other occupations – had to be bought. Marschalek, Peter, “Der Erwerb des bremischen Bürgerrechts und die Zuwanderung nach Bremen um die Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Bremisches Jahrbuch*, vol. 66 (1988), 295–305.

³ The others were Hamburg and Lübeck, whose merchants likewise could refer to themselves as Hanseats. As I am dealing exclusively with Bremish merchants, I use the term *Hanseat* synonymously with *Bremish merchant*, unless specifically noted. The Hanseatic League received international recognition as a state-like entity with the Peace of Westphalia, at a moment when its economic and political importance was all but gone.

have remained a provincial backwater. With America, it became a center of world trade. But what did Bremen do for America?

During the mid-third of the nineteenth century, when the United States was presumably busy finding its national identity, we find strong traces of both an earlier, Atlantic World and of a later, transnational world.⁴ The American economy depended on the exportation of cotton and other staples of slave labor and on the importation of immigrants, who provided manpower and capital for the market revolution and capitalist production. Without an armada of merchant vessels, and an army of merchants in the commercial centers, King Cotton would have been about as powerful as your average Polish country squire. These merchants and mariners, however, were largely foreigners.

Sven Beckert has found that in mid-1850s New York, 26 percent of the elite were foreign-born. By 1870, this share had risen to 44 percent.⁵ The political influence of this particular “foreign element” in America has long been ignored. We know the economic history of foreign trade and foreign traders. We also know the history of immigrants and of the ethnic politicians who spoke in their name. But we do not know the names of the foreign merchants and bankers who spoke for themselves when they advocated their commercial and political interests in club-rooms and legislative lobbies. We know the process by which immigrants discovered their “national” identity after they had come to the United States – for example, of Württembergers and Bavarians becoming “Germans” only in their adoptive country. But we know very little about the politics of the cosmopolitan elites whose trade interests linked them with peers on both sides of the Atlantic.⁶

Economically, Hanseats were essential for facilitating the commerce on which the growing nation depended. Politically, they served as conduits for ideas between the old and new worlds. Their engagement with political and cultural ideas across the Atlantic World shows the essentially transnational character of the central political debates of the time.

The related challenges of capitalist modernization and democracy were not limited to America. Hence, it is not surprising that here as elsewhere, elites responded to both processes in similar ways. The freedom of labor, the role of

⁴ See notes to the Prologue to this study for literature.

⁵ Beckert, Sven, *The Monied Metropolis. New York City and the Consolidation of the American Bourgeoisie, 1850–1896*, Cambridge, MA, 2001, 31, 147. The share of Germans was 6% in 1855 and 23% in 1870. Beckert included in his samples taxpayers assessed on real and personal wealth of \$10,000 or more in 1855 and of \$15,000 or more in 1870.

⁶ Archdeacon, Thomas, *Becoming American: An Ethnic History*, New York and London, 1983; Hidy, Ralph W., *The House of Baring in American Trade: English Merchant Bankers at Work, 1763–1861* (Harvard Studies in Business History, vol. 14), Cambridge, MA, 1949; Perkins, Edwin J., *Financing Anglo-American Trade: The House of Broun, 1800–1880*, Cambridge, MA, 1975; Porter, P. Glenn, and Harold C. Livesay, *Merchants and Manufacturers: Studies in the Changing Structure of Nineteenth-Century Marketing*, Baltimore, 1971; Echtemkamp, Jörg, “Emerging Ethnicity: The German Experience in Antebellum Baltimore,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 86, no. 1 (Spring 1991), 1–22; Trefousse, Hans L., *Carl Schurz: A Biography*, Knoxville, TN, 1982; Hoerder, Dirk, and Jörg Nagler, eds., *People in Transit: German Migrations in Comparative Perspective, 1820–1930*, Washington, DC, 1995; Kamphoefner, Walter D., and Wolfgang Helbich, eds., *German-American Immigration and Ethnicity in Comparative Perspective*, Madison, WI, 2004; Trommler, Frank, and Joseph McVeigh, eds., *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-Hundred-Year History*, Philadelphia, 1985.

religion in public life, and the rise of the working class as a political force occupied elites throughout the industrializing world.⁷

In developing their political ideas, and in building the institutions of the state of Bremen, Hanseats negotiated contradictory desires: to preserve a traditional politics of deference and to make Bremen's institutions efficient tools for facilitating world trade. The ideological and institutional framework they developed was capable of containing these contradictions and of realizing both these conflicting desires.

With Hegel, we can understand the form in which contradictions can move toward a synthesis as a dialectical relation.⁸ With Marx, we can add an awareness that this relation depends on particular social and economic conditions.⁹ The form that allowed Hanseats to criticize and, at the same time, to realize modern, capitalist social relations, including a capitalist world market – and the form that allowed them simultaneously to deny and affirm the traditional, communal values of an early-modern hometown – was modern conservatism. Hanseats' intense trading ties to the Atlantic World, and their exposure to its political ideas, added a cosmopolitan dimension to this form, resulting in a peculiar brand of cosmopolitan conservatism.¹⁰

As participants in U.S. politics, Bremen's merchants contributed to the transatlantic scope of this brand of modernization. Although, at first sight, Hanseatic politics may appear as stubbornly local and particularistic, it was part of a transnational bourgeois alternative to liberalism and democracy, drawing its inspirations from Burke rather than Rousseau, preferring Adam Müller to Hegel, and having more in common with John C. Calhoun than with John Stuart Mill.¹¹

In engaging with Whigs, Democrats, and Republicans, these merchants reveal that elites on all shores of the Atlantic shared political idioms that made possible a recognition of shared interests and concerns. Socially, Hanseats partook in a global, Victorian culture, at the same time that they were rooted in local, German traditions and as they absorbed the aesthetic of romantic nationalism in both its American and German formulations. In all these ways, they resembled their American and German contemporaries, while forming a group self-consciously apart from both. Ultimately, if we give proper weight to the transnational influences on the United States during the antebellum era, we find that the country was not as markedly distinct from Europe as the difference in the form of government

⁷ See note 2.

⁸ Hegel, G. W. F., *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, Cambridge, 1991.

⁹ Marx, Karl, "Theses on Feuerbach," in *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker, New York and London 1978, 143–45.

¹⁰ Engelsing, Rolf, "England und die USA in der bremischen Sicht des 19. Jahrhunderts," in *Jahrbuch der Witttheit zu Bremen*, vol. 1, 1957, 33–65, here p. 47, cites Heinrich Smidt, son of Burgomaster Smidt, as saying that the commercial relations between Bremen and the United States were a step toward the fulfillment of the "as yet unrealized ideals of the cosmopolitans." On cosmopolitanism as an ideal of world peace through exchange, cf. Kant, Immanuel, *Zum ewigen Frieden* (1795), in *Akademieausgabe, Werke*, vol. 8; and Meinecke, Friedrich, *Weltbürgertum und Nationalstaat* (Hans Herzfeld, Carl Hinrichs and Walther Hofer, eds., Friedrich Meinecke, Werke, vol. 5), Munich 1962 (1911).

¹¹ Johann Smidt, Bremen's arch-conservative burgomaster, saw the cities "friendship" with the United States as a possible source of support for maintaining the city's independence. See Engelsing, "England und die USA," 46–7.

might suggest, and was tied into the international flow of people, ideas, and commodities as much as any European nation.¹²

In North America, especially in New York and Baltimore, Hanseats settled to facilitate trade with their hometown. After humble beginnings in the 1790s, there was a boom in the trade relations between Bremen and the United States until 1810. This first golden age of transatlantic trade was cut off by the Napoleonic Wars and the continental blockade.¹³ After peace had returned in 1815, Hanseats slowly but steadily rebuilt their connections to America. Hanseatic historians have identified 1831 as the takeoff point, after which Bremen became an ever more serious presence in the United States. By the time the Civil War began, Bremen's merchants were carrying an impressive share of the United States' export trade, and brought an ever-greater share of European immigrants to New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, and Galveston.¹⁴

In Baltimore and New York, Hanseats were part of a larger mercantile class that was characterized by a cosmopolitan composition. Hanseats were linked to other members of this class through joint membership in clubs, as neighbors in the same upscale parts of town, as fellow board members of banks, as business partners, and sometimes as spouses. Hanseats resembled that larger mercantile class in many of their business practices. The ethos of honor and credibility was common to all merchants, whether they were from Bremen, the United States, or other foreign countries.¹⁵ The way in which Hanseats organized their business partnerships was not exceptional either. A tight cooperation between different firms, often tied to each other by blood relations or intermarriage, was just as common among American or British merchants as it was for Hanseats; though the rapid expansion of the American business world probably resulted in a higher number of firms not tied into preexisting networks of old money and old names.¹⁶

In spite of these many similarities, Bremish merchants formed a distinct group within this broader class. Those qualities that set them apart were also factors

¹² For parallels to the English world of merchant capitalists, cf. Chapman, Stanley D., *The Rise of Merchant Banking*, London, 1984; idem, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain from the Industrial Revolution to World War I*, Cambridge, 1992.

¹³ Mustafa, Sam A., *Merchants and Migrations: Germans and Americans in Connection, 1776–1835* (Aldcroft, Derek H., ed., Modern Economic and Social History Series, unnumbered vol.), Aldershot, UK, 2001.

¹⁴ Armgort, Arno, *Bremen-Bremerhaven-New York. Geschichte der europäischen Auswanderung über die Bremischen Häfen (A history of European emigration through the ports of Bremen)*, Bremen, 1991, is a bilingual edition; Engelsing, Rolf, *Bremen als Auswandererhafen, 1683–1880* (Karl H. Schwebel, ed., Veröffentlichungen aus dem Staatsarchiv der Freien Hansestadt Bremen, Bd. 29), Bremen, 1961; Beutin, Ludwig, *Bremen und Amerika. Zur Geschichte der Weltwirtschaft und der Beziehungen Deutschlands zu den Vereinigten Staaten*, Bremen, 1953; Struve, Walter, *Germans & Texans: Commerce, Migration and Culture in the Days of the Lone Star Republic*, Austin, TX, 1996.

¹⁵ Ditz, Toby, "Shipwrecked; or, Masculinity Imperiled: Mercantile Representation of Failure and the Gendered Self in Eighteenth-Century Philadelphia," *Journal of American History* 81, no. 1 (June 1994), 51–80; Hancock, David, *Citizens of the World: London Merchants and the Integration of the British Atlantic Community, 1735–1785*, Cambridge and New York, 1995; Lee, Robert, ed., *Commerce and Culture: Nineteenth-Century Business Elites* (Modern Economic and Social History, unnumbered vol.), Farnham, UK, 2011.

¹⁶ Beckert, *Monied Metropolis*; idem, "Merchants and Manufacturers in the Antebellum North," in *Ruling America: A History of Wealth and Power in a Democracy*, ed. Gary Gerstle and Steve Fraser,

contributing to the extraordinary stability and success of their group. First, Hanseats maintained a conservative approach to business, eschewing “speculation” and putting the welfare of the family and the estate above a logic of pure profit maximization (Chapters 1 and 2). Second, dense ties of intermarriage, and the financial and ideological commitment they entailed, connected Hanseats in Bremen, Baltimore, and New York with each other, establishing in a transnational space a degree of mutual obligations comparable to those found among elites in “hometowns” like Bremen (Chapter 2). Third, the political ideology that Hanseats had constructed for themselves in Bremen gave them a shared worldview.

Their agreement on fundamental political values further bound the members of the network to each other. The content of this ideology, a selective embrace of liberalism paired with an insistence of maintaining social hierarchy and a politics of deference, placed them in a peculiar position on one side of an ideological divide. Running across the Atlantic and the countries that bordered it, it parted the proponents of a capitalist social order in two camps: radicals, who believed in democracy and the Enlightenment, and modern conservatives, who wished to uphold social distinctions and Christian morality (Chapters 3–5 and 9).

Fourth, Bremen was an independent state, with a foreign policy of its own. The network of consulates and trade treaties that rested on the city’s status formed the groundwork of Hanseats’ business enterprise. This consular network further tied merchants’ interests to the city, and through it, to each other. The state of Bremen was the agent through which Hanseats shaped the development of world trade by extending the infrastructure that intensified and regularized exchange relations across the ocean (Chapters 4–6 and 8).¹⁷

Understanding the state of Bremen as a political entity is important not only because it provided a source of coherence to Hanseats who were active in different parts of the world, by representing their shared interest and their common beliefs, but also because to acknowledge the deeply traditionalist nature of its political structure means to avoid the trap of characterizing Hanseats as liberals, by way of a short-circuited conclusion that assumes that liberalism, capitalism, and cosmopolitanism form a package deal under a label of *modernization*.

The apprehension Bremen’s mercantile elite felt in the face of growing public participation in politics was evident when Bremen’s burgomaster, Arnold

Cambridge, MA, 2005, 92–122; Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875*, London, 1975, 241. The latter lists examples of family- and clan-based businesses in both the industrial and mercantile sectors. See also note 37. The broader, emerging middle class took many cultural cues from the mercantile elite of the Atlantic World. Hence, it is not surprising to find that both groups shared many features. See, e.g., Davidoff, Leonore, and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850*. rev. ed., London and New York, 2002.

¹⁷ Following the definition of the term by Jürgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Petersson, Hanseats formed a network. Osterhammel and Petersson list as criteria for considering a social formation a network: 1) the “social interaction between more than two people”; 2) the “longevity” of these interactions; and 3) their reinforcement by institutions. The availability of “new information technology” lends to networks “the same stability [that characterizes] hierarchical organizations.” Osterhammel, Jürgen and Niels P. Petersson, *Globalization: A Short History*, Princeton, NJ, and Oxford, 2005, esp. pp. 21–7; quotes on pp. 22–3. Hanseats met these criteria. The specific, shared ideologies they held added a further dimension to their interactions and gave an additional source of stability to their network.

Duckwitz, witnessed the campaign for the Northern German Reichstag in 1867. This was the first election in the Hanseatic city since 1850 that was conducted under the rules of universal, equal, male suffrage. Duckwitz remarked disapprovingly that “this election business here is becoming American.”¹⁸

To emphasize the traditionalist content of Bremen’s system of government, but also to avoid confusion, this study uses the German original in referring to most Bremish institutions. The government of Bremen was commonly called the *Senat*. The body that represented the mercantile estate of the city, politically and economically, was known as the *Handelskammer*. For this institution, as well, this study employs the German original, because the correct translation – chamber of commerce – fails to convey the sense of a traditional estate carried by the German. Membership in this *Kammer* was mandatory for long-distance wholesale merchants, and its role in the city was that of an integral part of the constitutional system of governance and legislation. Any English translation would fail to convey this corporatist connotation. For that reason, Gothic script might even be in order.

Economically, socially, culturally, and politically, Hanseats had things in common that they did not share with their non-Hanseatic mercantile peers in Germany or the United States. At the same time, their engagement in trade, and their commitment to conservative religious and political values, gave them manifold occasions to cooperate with other groups in the United States and Germany.¹⁹

The distinctness of Hanseats within the larger, American mercantile class was not a function of ethnicity. Bremish merchants mingled with other elite Germans in German Societies, or in Baltimore’s Germania Club, just as they socialized with merchants of American and foreign backgrounds in chambers of commerce, merchants’ reading rooms, stock exchanges, and corporate boardrooms. Still, non-Hanseatic elite Germans whom Hanseats encountered in the United States had not much more in common with them than the shared written language. The same peculiarities that set Hanseats apart from American merchants also distinguished them from other German merchants.²⁰

Hanseats had even less in common with the mass of German immigrants than they had with elite Germans in the United States. While they were bringing increasing numbers of them to the country, Hanseats did not see themselves as part of the German immigrant community in America. As the common folk of German extraction discovered their shared ethnicity in the emigration,²¹ Bremen’s

¹⁸ Engelsing, “England und die USA,” 55.

¹⁹ Blumin, Stuart M., *The Emergence of the Middle Class: Social Experience in the American City, 1760–1900*, Cambridge and New York, 1989; Kocka, Jürgen and Allen Mitchell, eds., *Bourgeois Society in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, Oxford and Providence, RI, 1993.

²⁰ The spoken languages among many Hanseats seem to have been English and Lower German, while merchants from the Rhineland or Southern Germany would have spoken in different dialects of German. Although educated Germans would have been able to communicate in High German, modulations owed to the habits of speaking dialect, or, as in the case of Lower German, a different language altogether, can render smooth conversation among Germans of different regional backgrounds hard to achieve, even today. See Engelsing, Rolf, “Bremisches Unternehmertum. Sozialgeschichte 1780/1870,” in *Jahrbuch der Wittheit zu Bremen* 2 (1958), 7–112; idem, “England und die USA,” for the social distance between Bremen’s merchants and German hinterland elites.

²¹ See, e.g., Echternkamp, “Emerging Ethnicity.”

merchants behaved as the members of a privileged estate, not of a *Volk*. Political refugees from the liberal German middle class became ethnic politicians in the United States. Here, they could build the democratic polity they had striven in vain to create in Germany.²² Hanseats, by contrast, maintained an attitude toward the many that demanded deference toward one's social betters. As they did in Bremen, Hanseats in the United States related to the mass of Germans through charity, maintaining the same stance of "patronage and protection" that they assumed in the old country.²³

In reconstructing the world the Hanseats made, we can recover the quintessentially transnational character of the United States during a time in its history that on the surface appears as one of its most inward-looking periods. Consider Emanuel Leutze's monumental history painting, *Washington Crossing the Delaware* (1851). An icon of American national identity, the original of this work hung in Bremen's Art Museum (*Kunsthalle*), after it had been bought in 1863 with donations from Bremen's mercantile elite. Here, it served as a reminder of Bremen's cordial relations with the United States.²⁴

This affinity for the United States was not politically neutral, however. Hanseats discovered early on that they shared much more with Whigs than with Democrats. Regarded from a Hanseatic vantage point, Whigs show themselves as promoters of international exchange, not just builders of a national, industrial market society, and Democrats show themselves as economic isolationists, in spite of their desire to export the American Revolution. Where politicians from these parties engaged with Bremen merchants, they applied their basic convictions, founded in the fundamental conflicts of the Second Party System, to international politics. In doing so, they betrayed the indebtedness of these convictions to broader, transnational intellectual currents. The protracted struggle between Jeffersonians and Hamiltonians was not exceptional to the United States, it merely was the specifically American manifestation of a conflict common to all industrializing countries, pitting liberal against conservative bourgeois politics. Hanseats recognized themselves in this political landscape and took sides accordingly.

²² Nadel, Stanley, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845–80*, Urbana, IL, 1990; Wittke, Carl F., *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America*, Philadelphia, 1952; Levine, Bruce, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War*, Urbana, IL, 1992; Trefousse, Carl Schurz.

²³ Schulz, Andreas, *Vormundschaft und Protektion: Eliten und Bürger in Bremen, 1750–1880* (Gall, Lothar, ed., *Stadt und Bürgertum*, vol. 13), Munich, 2002 (Habilitationsschrift, Universität Frankfurt [Main], 2000).

²⁴ Andree, Rolf, and Ute Rickel-Immel, *The Hudson and the Rhine: Die amerikanische Malerkolonie in Düsseldorf im 19. Jahrhundert*, Kat. Ausst. [Exhibition Catalog], Düsseldorf, Kunstmuseum, 1976; Groseclose, Barbara S., *Emmanuel Leutze, 1816–1868: Freedom Is the Only King*, Exhibition Catalog, National Collection of Fine Art, Smithsonian Institution, 1976, Washington, DC, 1976; Howat, John K., "Washington Crossing the Delaware," *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 26, no. 7 (March 1968), 289–99; Hutton, Ann Hawkes, *Portrait of Patriotism: "Washington Crossing the Delaware"*, Philadelphia and New York, 1959. The latter offers insight into Leutze's political views based on primary documents. Although painted in Germany, and popular there as a comment on the aspirations of the revolution of 1848, Leutze's intent in his travels had been to perfect his art for his program of expressing the essence of America on the canvas. In that spirit, he had relied exclusively on American travelers who passed through Düsseldorf, where he was a student at the academy, to sit for the figures in the Washington painting.

Even in the 1860s, when the fight over slavery and free labor seemed to set apart the United States from European countries – which, after all, had abolished their colonial slave regimes and had never seen plantation slavery on their own soil – the terms of the debates between opponents and defenders of guilds in Germany, and between abolitionists and slaveholders in the United States, suggest a frame of reference of political ideas shared between actors in both countries (see Chapter 4).

In that decade, the conservative bourgeois currents in Germany and the United States that previously had supported capitalist modernization contained by a policy of social control and moral improvement were revising their vision of social development to include an embrace of free labor and contractual relations freed from the restraints of legislation limiting mobility and prescribing moral codes. German bourgeois conservatives condemned guilds on the same grounds that their American counterparts criticized slavery. Both labor systems appeared detrimental to the moral and material improvement of individuals by virtue of denying them the exercise of their right to “free labor,” that is their participation in an unrestrained labor market.²⁵

Realizing the competitive benefits in an industrial world market conferred on a national economy by free labor, bourgeois conservatives literally made a virtue of the necessity of wage labor by morally overdetermining contractual relations. Recent U.S. scholarship has demonstrated that ideas of free labor and contracts originated in conservative notions of social control and a good moral-political order. In the arguments of Amy Dru Stanley, Heather Cox Richardson, and Sven Beckert, the Civil War became a catalyst for this ideological transformation that entailed a departure from earlier, organicist ideals.²⁶

Linking the ideas inspiring German elites to a project of modernization similar to that pursued by their American counterparts, a transnational perspective offers a transformation of our understanding of this ideological shift as reflecting an experience shared across the Atlantic and giving rise to a discourse of free labor that was transnational in its extent.

Thanks to the work of Daniel Rodgers, in present U.S. historiography, transnationality almost has a default association with progressivism in its broadest sense.²⁷ From the point of view of postwar historiography in Germany and the United States, likewise, an “Atlantic orientation” is coterminous with democratic politics, and opposition to monarchical reaction in the nineteenth or to Fascism in the twentieth century.²⁸ In

²⁵ Ashworth, John, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, 2 vols., vol. 1: *Commerce and Compromise, 1820–1850*, Cambridge, 1995; Oberg, Jan, “Strange Sailors: Maritime Culture in Nineteenth-Century Bremen,” in *Bridging Troubled Waters: Conflict and Co-operation in the North Sea Region since 1550*, ed. David J. Starkey and Morten Hahn-Pedersen (7th North Sea History Conference, Dunkirk 2002) (Fiskeri- og Søfartsmuseets Studieris, vol.17), Esbjerg, Denmark, 2005, 113–33.

²⁶ Beckert, *Monied Metropolis*; Richardson, Heather Cox, *The Death of Reconstruction: Race, Labor, and Politics in the Post-Civil War North, 1865–1901*, Cambridge, MA, and London, 2001; Stanley, Amy Dru, *From Bondage to Contract: Wage Labor, Marriage, and the Market in the Age of Slave Emancipation*, New York, 1998.

²⁷ Rodgers, Daniel, *Atlantic Crossings: Social Politics in a Progressive Age*, Cambridge, MA, and London 1998.

²⁸ Dippel, Horst, *Die amerikanische Verfassung in Deutschland im 19. Jahrhundert. Das Dilemma von Politik und Staatsrecht*, Goldbach, Germany, 1994; Engelsing, Rolf, “England und die USA in der

Hanseats, however, we see the emergence of a transnational, modern conservatism that is the specific product of a German–American exchange. In the light of this exchange, Whigs begin to look like members of a Conservative International who joined forces with like-minded foreigners in a transnational struggle against the threat of democracy and mob rule and for an “improvement” of a fundamentally good social order.

Shared by Hanseats and Whigs, the politics of notables who strove to modernize society while shoring up morality and deference to dampen the disruptive effects of change was a transnational phenomenon. Processing German and American intellectual influences, Hanseats formed an important link within this transatlantic current of conservative modernizers who advocated international improvement. On this solid foundation of a fundamental agreement on politics and values, Whigs and Hanseats were able to find common ground even when their immediate interests conflicted. Thus Whigs’ advocacy of a high tariff and the enmity toward immigrants among some party members did little to alienate Hanseats from their American allies (see Chapter 5).

By knowing the people who mattered, Hanseats may have had a more enduring influence on American politics than ethnic politicians could ever have hoped for. In Baltimore and New York, Hanseats played leading roles in the local chambers of commerce, which, in turn, helped shape local and national politics. Chief Justice Roger B. Taney lived next door to Bremen consul Albert Schumacher in Baltimore’s upscale Mount Vernon neighborhood.²⁹ Abraham Lincoln’s only visit to a diplomat’s residence took place on the eve of his inauguration, when Rudolf Schleiden, Bremen’s minister-resident in Washington, hosted a small dinner party for the president-elect.³⁰ And Bremen’s leading newspaper, the *Weserzeitung*, served as the official organ for notifications by the U.S. federal government in Germany.³¹

On the local and state levels, Hanseats’ influence followed the same pattern of gentlemanly lobbying. It depended on a mode of politics that we associate with a predemocratic era. But even in an age of popular suffrage, when the masses no longer deferred to their social betters in political matters, deals among men of standing did not cease to be important. In some jurisdictions, decision-making

bremischen Sicht des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Jahrbuch der Wittheit zu Bremen* 1 (1957), 33–65; Moltmann, Günter, *Atlantische Blockpolitik im 19. Jahrhundert. Die Vereinigten Staaten und der deutsche Liberalismus während der Revolution von 1848/49*, Düsseldorf, 1973; Mustafa, Sam A., *Merchants and Migrations: Germans and Americans in Connection, 1776–1835* (Aldcroft, Derek H., ed., Modern Economic and Social History Series, unnumbered vol.), Aldershot, UK, 2001; Nadel, Stanley, *Little Germany: Ethnicity, Religion, and Class in New York City, 1845–80*, Urbana, IL, 1990; Levine, Bruce, *The Spirit of 1848: German Immigrants, Labor Conflict, and the Coming of the Civil War*, Urbana, IL, 1992; Struve, Walter, *Germans & Texans: Commerce, Migration and Culture in the Days of the Lone Star Republic*, Austin, TX, 1996; Trefousse, Carl Schurz; Wittke, Carl F., *Refugees of Revolution: The German Forty-Eighters in America*, Philadelphia, 1952.

²⁹ Justice John A. Campbell, later Confederate States of America assistant secretary of war, in his concurring opinion to Taney’s majority opinion in the Dred Scott case, pointed specifically to Bremen in stressing the contrast between German Law that confers freedom to a person by virtue of his presence in a specific territory and the American legal situation. See *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, U.S. Supreme Court, Mr. Justice Campbell concurring, <http://www.tourolaw.edu/patch/Scott/Campbell.asp> (accessed October 1, 2005) (Touro College Law Center, Project P.A.T.C.H.).

³⁰ See Chapter 8.

³¹ Engelsing, “England und die USA,” 53.

power was delegated outright to notables. For example, New York gave a private club dominated by Hanseats, the German Society, some power over immigration policies.³²

Until the late 1850s, Hanseats never became ethnic politicians who rallied their compatriots to gain office. Even then, few chose that career path. Mostly, they remained notables who expected their voice to be weighed, not counted. This was the way of doing politics and business they were used to at home, and they were not ready to abandon their ways simply because they lived in a different country – especially because these traditions served them so well.

Elite politics, although relegated to the back of our historical consciousness by three decades of social and cultural history, was not dead in the nineteenth-century United States. In recent years, historians like John Ashworth, Sven Beckert, and Eugene Genovese have shown that antidemocratic sentiment in upper-class circles survived the challenges of Jacksonian Democracy and the Civil War surprisingly intact. If anything, decades of popular participation in politics strengthened conservatives' disdain for the aspirations of the masses. Unlike Genovese, who idealizes slaveholders as anticapitalist intellectuals, Beckert and Ashworth have shown that bourgeois Americans were capable of embracing capitalist development, while seeking to limit the subversion of the republic by democratic influence.³³

Hanseats listened to their conservative American counterparts and engaged their ideas in their American homes and in their old home, Bremen. As citizens of a republic, the reactionary politics of Old Regime, legitimist conservatism were distasteful to Hanseats. As notables who ruled Bremen in a constitutional framework designed to guarantee mercantile dominance, they were just as unwilling to embrace democracy. As global merchants whose capital depended on ever-accelerated circulation, they were eager to embrace technological advances and a legal order that removed just enough of the traditional fetters of privilege to create a free market for commodities and wage labor, while leaving in place their own privileges. In American conservatism, they found an ideology ideally suited to these specific interests. Thus political ideas flowed both ways across the Atlantic, and Hanseats served as an important conduit.

Hanseats were centrally involved in creating and maintaining the arteries and veins of the rise of American industrial capitalism. While the transnational exchange of ideas and the proliferation of institutions and practices are the stuff of transnational history, Hanseats remind us that transnationality had concrete sociological conditions. Hanseats' success as a group of merchants active on both shores of the Atlantic depended on an interplay of cultural, economic, and political factors that sustained their cosmopolitan-conservative outlook.

³² *Ibid.*, 45; Beckert, *Monied Metropolis*, 65; Wätjen, Hermann, *Aus der Frühzeit des Nordatlantikverkehrs. Studien zur Geschichte der deutschen Schifffahrt und deutschen Auswanderung nach den Vereinigten Staaten bis zum Ende des amerikanischen Bürgerkrieges*, Leipzig, 1932, 180–1.

³³ Sellers, Charles, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815–1846*, New York and Oxford, 1991; Ashworth, John, *"Agrarians" and "Aristocrats": Party Political Ideology in the United States, 1837–1846*, London and Atlantic Highlands, NJ, 1983; *idem*, *Slavery, Capitalism, and Politics in the Antebellum Republic*, 2 vols., vol. 1: *Commerce and Compromise, 1820–1850*; Genovese, Eugene, *The World the Slaveholders Made*, New York, 1969; Beckert, *Metropolis*.

TRANSNATIONAL SOCIAL HISTORY

The standard tools of social history may need some recalibration if they are to be applied to the task of grasping the essence of Hanseats as a group of historical actors. Today, most works of social history frame their accounts of nineteenth-century life in cultural terms. Social classes appear as entities that owe their emergence to shared beliefs and shared practices that spring from those beliefs at the same time as they serve to reinforce them. A group forms its identity, or class consciousness, in relation to others, as well as in interactions between the genders within one's own group. This approach is informed by a wish to avoid two pitfalls associated with an older, Marxist school of social history. This school presumably was guilty, first, of essentializing classes as groups primarily bounded by static economic factors and, second, of holding up such classes to the normative standard of a class consciousness that conformed to Marx's scheme. Rather than asking when and how a class that was a "class in itself" became a "class for itself," current social history wants to restore to historical actors an active part in the making of their social group.³⁴

This cultural approach has two major shortcomings. First, it tends to underemphasize the importance of economic activities and the concrete ways in which historical actors made their living. This is a particular problem for the study of elites: to lead a lifestyle that culturally signals distinction, one has to be able to afford it. Second, it is almost entirely local in scope, because it depends for its main categories on face-to-face contacts between members of different groups.

Recently, Andreas Schulz has added to our understanding of the world of Hanseats in his seminal work, *Vormundschaft und Protektion*.³⁵ His study is mainly driven by a relational view on class formation on the local level. Schulz explains the political and social behavior of different local groups as a function of the relations between these groups. Bremen's mercantile elite strove for hegemony over other social groups in the city of Bremen. For Schulz, merchants made their political and social identity through the resulting confrontation with the urban lower middle class, artisans, and the emerging proletariat in Bremen.

Although a definitive social history of Bremen, Schulz's work cannot claim to be a complete account of the history of the city's mercantile elite during the nineteenth century. He acknowledges that young men and women from the Hanseatic elite went abroad on business, yet these actors drop off his analytical map at the point of their departure. Arguably, however, Hanseats' ties with their peers abroad were at least as important as their relations with other, local social groups in shaping their worldview. Moreover, Hanseats related to New York artisans and merchants, London bankers, Southern planters, and Indian princes just as much as they did to Bremish shopkeepers and stevedores. To understand Bremish history, we have to

³⁴ Bushman, Richard, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities*, New York, 1992; Grier, Katherine C., *Culture and Comfort: Parlor Making and Middle-Class Identity, 1850–1930*, Washington, DC, 1997; Nelson, Elizabeth White, *Market Sentiments: Middle-Class Market Culture in Nineteenth-Century America*, Washington, DC, 2004; Rosenbaum, Julia B., and Sven Beckert, eds., *The American Bourgeoisie: Distinction and Identity in the Nineteenth Century* (Palgrave Studies in Cultural and Intellectual History, unnumbered vol.), New York, 2010.

³⁵ Schulz, *Vormundschaft und Protektion*. The title translates as "paternalism and protection."

follow its mercantile elite as it journeys from Bremen for American shores. Through their eyes, we will likewise gain a clearer perspective on American history.

Any translocal social category, such as that of a “national bourgeoisie” or even an “American middle class,” is difficult to theorize in a work of social history that rests on a local case study. Sven Beckert, in his *The Monied Metropolis*, offers a solution to this problem.³⁶ He tells the story of the “consolidation of the American bourgeoisie” by declaring his findings on New York to be universally applicable. The plausible basis for this claim is New York’s dominance over all lesser communities, as *the* center of culture, fashion, manufacturing, and finance in the United States.

In the political realm, Beckert argues that the nation-state formed a common frame of reference for local elites. It is to that nation-state that they turned to implement policies that benefited them as a class. Thus New York’s elites exerted political influence to move state governments and the federal government not to pay for public works or relief for the unemployed, to discourage strikes, to uphold the sanctity of contracts, and to maintain monetary and foreign trade policies beneficial to their business interests. These policies bound them to their lesser counterparts in the provinces, who shared these political goals and economic interests. The sensibilities acquired by the middle class on the local level guided their approach to national policies. It was the same defense of their business interests, often mixed with a moral vision for the masses, that manifested itself in the program of national middle-class politics. Class as an economic category thus becomes a foundation for explaining the dissemination of middle-class values and politics, without reducing the latter to a mere reflex to economic structure.

What baffles the Hanseatic historian who reads Beckert’s work is the conspicuous absence of Bremish merchants from this account. Beckert found that in 1855, 6 percent of New York’s elite were German-born, a share that rose to 23 percent by 1870.³⁷ One Hanseat – Gustav F. Schwab – makes a few token appearances, but Beckert does not point out Schwab’s specific background. If New York’s local elite had a disproportionate impact on the making of an American bourgeoisie, Hanseatic influence among that group suggests a role of Bremen merchants in shaping America that goes far beyond their small number.

Beckert is no doubt correct in characterizing the story of New York’s elite in the decades following the Civil War as that of the homogenization of a ruling class formerly divided into merchants and manufacturers who did not mingle. Likewise, his interpretation that the nation-state, national politics, and national economic interdependence played central roles in effecting that homogenization is convincing. For the 1850s and even the 1860s, however, he misses a major part of the story by excluding transnational connections from his account. Where, if not from the Hanseatic cities, did Mayor Fernando Wood get the idea to break New York City away from the Union to make it into an independent city-republic?³⁸ To understand the history of the United States, we have to follow the traces that link it to foreign shores.

³⁶ Beckert, *Metropolis*.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 31, 147.

³⁸ Anbinder, Tyler G., “Fernando Wood and New York City’s Secession from the Union: A Political Reappraisal,” *New York History* 68 (January, 1987), 67–92, explains the secession plan as a response to a long history of attempts by New York State politicians to gain control over crucial municipal

While politics and economic interest drove local elites to make themselves into national bourgeoisies, contemporaries and historians alike have perceived the nineteenth century as the heyday of a Western and bourgeois culture of virtually global reach. Learning, political rights, and technology were supposed to liberate all of mankind from the narrowness of an earlier age. World exhibitions celebrated progress as a universal phenomenon. Revolutionaries and nationalists hailed their counterparts in foreign countries as participants in the same worldwide struggle. Literature and music – classical and modern – helped shape a shared sense of aesthetics across national boundaries and language barriers, and galvanized a sense of national identity in different countries. Thus a local elite can be conceived with as much justification as part of a national bourgeoisie as it can be considered as part of a class-specific, Victorian culture that had an international, if not global, character. Hanseats, like many of their contemporaries, partook of this culture.³⁹

If culture was an essential ingredient in the making of classes and was an essentially global phenomenon then any social history would have to look beyond national boundaries to explain the beliefs and actions of its subjects. Moreover, Victorian culture was consumer culture, in which the tastes of consumers were inextricably intertwined with the commodities that entered the household and the clothes that marked the respectable. Belgian bonnets, German linens, and Steinway pianos from New York were not just signifiers of the lifestyle of a better sort, but they were also materializations of value and objects set in motion by capital in search of valorization. As such, they were the artifacts of global capital circulation and capitalist production that were visible to a larger public, but that required for their availability infinitely larger amounts of capital invested in raw materials, ships, and factories; put in circulation as credit or transferred as bills of exchange; and transformed by wage labor into commodities. The objects of consumer culture are the tip of the iceberg of the world market. Thus to take culture seriously as a decisive element in the making of social groups would mean to take equally seriously its global dimensions, including those of political economy.

COMMUNITY, SOCIETY, AND COMMERCE

To do full justice to Hanseats, we have to turn to theorists who derived their concepts from a world that preceded a liberal market society. The German sociologist Ferdinand Tönnies was just such a theorist. We find that his work expresses the same notion of an organic unity of different moments of social life that was held by the Hanseats.⁴⁰

The tenacity of Hanseats' attitudes and way of life rested on the intertwining of the principles that governed their economic, domestic, and political existence. For Ferdinand Tönnies, the essence of *community* (*Gemeinschaft*) – as opposed to *society* (*Gesellschaft*) – was the organic unity of all spheres of life. Work, authority, and love were not relegated to separate spheres, each with a different set of rules, but formed

institutions. Still, if Wood contemplated in earnest the founding of a new city-republic, he would not have found many modern examples besides the Hanseatic cities.

³⁹ Cf. Hobsbawm, Eric, *The Age of Capital, 1848–1875*, London, 1975, 230–48, 277–302, 317.

⁴⁰ Tönnies, Ferdinand, *Community and Civil Society*, trans. José Harris and Margaret Hollis (Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought, unnumbered vol.), Cambridge, 2001 (1887).

aspects of the same substance, a life based on “reciprocal sentiments of affection and reverence” shaped in the family. Although Tönnies believed that the most stable community depended on its roots in a particular place, he granted that those “knowing one another like members of a craft or professional group, will feel themselves united everywhere,” not unlike “comrades in faith.” Bremen constituted such a particular place, and the merchants who had grown up there remained connected to it in manifold ways even when they went abroad. They continued to correspond with and visit each other across the ocean. Hence, even absent face-to-face interaction, Hanseats continued to “feel themselves united everywhere.”⁴¹

Past and present antimodernists and others who bemoan the loss of community and its “feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations” might find Hanseats to be kindred spirits whose lives represented the ideal of an organic whole.⁴² Inconveniently, however, Hanseats were also merchants, and their community was cosmopolitan in its geographical extent and prevalent ideology. Thus Wilhelm Kiesselbach, an organic intellectual of Bremen’s elite, gave voice to a corporatist vision of social order while promoting capitalist exchange relations (see Chapter 3). A moral economy based on reciprocity and exchange relations embedded in a Calvinist ethos supported by mutual social control characterized the *internal* life of the Hanseatic community, but less and less of its *external* interactions.

Modern political theory has interpreted commerce as an agent of the dissolution of traditional communities. Ferdinand Tönnies’s ideal-type of *Gemeinschaft* – a community characterized by the inseparable unity of kinship, economy, religion, and government under benevolent patriarchal authority – finds its highest embodiment in the objects of reverence that form the geographical and spiritual center of life in an urban community.⁴³ In Bremen, that center is the Roland, an eighteen-foot stone statue of a knight carrying a sword and a shield with the coat of arms of the city. Standing in the market square, the Roland statue is a symbol of commerce and of the power of the group that made Bremen a center of world trade. For Bremen’s merchants, the Roland statue was a spiritual center of their transnational community. In Bremen, commerce was not an agent of the dissolution of tradition. It was the central content, the very essence, of tradition. Hence, Hanseats could understand their economic and political activities as an outgrowth of tradition, no matter how much innovation they actually entailed.⁴⁴

Tönnies’s sociology finds an echo in current scholarship. In a narrative of modernization or globalization shared among scholars critical or supportive of liberal capitalism, our modern age is characterized by a supplantation of place by space.⁴⁵

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, esp. pp. 17–91, quotes on pp. 27, 29.

⁴² Marx and Engels, “Manifesto,” 475.

⁴³ Tönnies, *Community*.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*; Loose, Hans-Dieter, “Nutzbares Erbe oder belastende Relikte einer glorreichen Vergangenheit? Der hanseatische Umgang mit dem Londoner Stahlhof und dem Antwerpener Haus der Osterlinge in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts,” in *Ausklang und Nachklang der Hanse im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. Antjekathrin Graßmann (Hansischer Geschichtsverein, ed., Hansische Studien, vol. 12), Trier, Germany, 2001, 31–42. See also 140–1.

⁴⁵ Fremdling, Rainer, and Richard H. Tilly, eds., *Industrialisierung und Raum. Studien zur regionalen Differenzierung in Deutschland des 19. Jahrhunderts*, Stuttgart, 1979; Friedman, Thomas L., *The World Is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, New York, 2005.

People in traditional communities are emotionally and practically committed to a particular place. In modern societies, places are linked in manifold ways by exchange, communication, and governance. Commodity exchange reduces incommensurable objects to a common denominator and subjects local production to international market forces; every new medium, from print through television to the Internet, sacrifices local idiosyncrasies to idioms shared across a larger space. The individual as the citizen of a large territorial state can no longer know his peers in the way a small-town burgher could. Equality comes at the price of anonymity and the loss of particularity.

In these processes, geography is reduced to an abstract space, just as the particularity of places is leveled and eventually lost to the abstractions that tie them into these larger systems. The small town can be a home, but a shopping mall cannot. Although perhaps useful as a model, or as a critical tool, the dichotomy of space and place fails accurately to describe Bremen. Here, space and place were dialectically dependent on each other, with hometown traditions driving the elite to conquer an Atlantic space.⁴⁶

Hanseats were pioneers of changes in exchange and communication. The core of their mercantile interest was the extension of commodity exchange. As a consequence of their mercantile activities, they developed an interest in improving the means of communication, including steamships, railroads, and the telegraph – all of which accelerated the pace of information across the globe.⁴⁷ In exchange and communication, Hanseats were at the cutting edge of a movement that transformed the world into a leveled, uniform space from which frictions that hindered the circulation of commodities or capital were increasingly removed.

Even so, Hanseats' ability to engage in these activities was to a great extent dependent on the coherence lent to their international network of families and firms by the political support of and by the state of Bremen. The social and political order within that state continued to embody a wish to uphold the customs and traditions of the mercantile estate. This wish was alive and vigorous even in the 1860s, as Wilhelm Kiesselbach's works demonstrate.⁴⁸

Kiesselbach's ideal of a "social-economic state" may best be characterized as corporatist, or, rather, estatist. Unlike other conservative proponents of a corporatist, "organic" social order, however, Kiesselbach was not an enemy of capitalism by any means. This set him apart from both German reactionaries and the Southern conservative tradition in the United States.⁴⁹ At the same time, Kiesselbach shared with these latter contemporaries the view that the person is more than a bearer of

⁴⁶ Marx and Engels, "Manifesto," 473–500; Barber, Benjamin, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism Are Reshaping the World*, New York, 1995; Harvey, David, *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Inquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*, Cambridge, MA, and Oxford, 1990, esp. pp. 201–323.

⁴⁷ See also Chapter 5.

⁴⁸ See Chapter 3.

⁴⁹ Riehl, Wilhelm Heinrich, *Die bürgerliche Gesellschaft*, Stuttgart, 1861, e.g., pp. 174–5; Genovese, Eugene D., *The World the Slaveholders Made: Two Essays in Interpretation*, New York, 1969, esp. part II on George Fitzhugh, whose thought has a strong resemblance to both Riehl's and Kiesselbach's; idem, *The Slaveholders' Dilemma: Freedom and Progress in Southern Conservative Thought, 1820–1860*, Columbia, SC, 1992; Gentz, Friedrich von, *The French and American Revolutions Compared, 1820–1860*, Columbia, SC, 1992; Gentz, Friedrich von, *The French and American Revolutions Compared*, translated by John Quincy Adams (1800), in *Three Revolutions*, ed. Stefan T. Possony, Chicago, 1959.

abstract rights.⁵⁰ Overall, his views most closely resembled those one might find among Whigs in the United States.⁵¹ Within Germany, he remained a unique figure, reflecting the peculiar position of Hanseats in the society of the German states (see Chapter 3).

Unlike Kiesselbach and other theorists of organicism, Tönnies was aware that trade and industry, while evolving from within traditional community, carry with them the seeds of its dissolution, or its evolution into a liberal *Gesellschaft*. Throughout this study, we will therefore trace the elements of Hanseatic community life that represented such seeds of dissolution. Most importantly, global commerce came with an imperative of competitiveness, eventually forcing Hanseats to adapt their business practices, their values, and the social and political order of their hometown, thus undermining the foundations of community life. Although these seeds of dissolution were sown, they did not begin to reduce the Hanseats' ability to practice their accustomed ways of a cosmopolitan community engaged in transatlantic commerce until the 1860s. Until then, they were able to use their very rootedness in a stable network as a resource for furthering their political and social interests.

HISTORICAL ANTECEDENTS

In writing a social and economic history of an elite with ties to multiple distinct societies and polities, this study is indebted to a great many scholars whose works this author has consulted. Maritime history; business history; the histories of art, religion, and literature; diplomatic history; military history; and other fields too numerous to mention passed through the untrained hands of this author, as he realized the need to cast his nets widely if he was to have any chance of catching the elusive Hanseat in all his multifaceted glory. This study cannot pretend to weigh and appreciate adequately the debates and methodological concerns of all these fields of historical scholarship.

It is therefore in the hope that those whose efforts this study is built upon will excuse errors of judgment this author has committed in weighing their contributions, and that he offers his apologies for any such blunders, as well as his sincere gratitude for the wealth of historical expertise he was able to draw upon. Rather than overburden this introduction with a series of historiographical essays, the reader may turn directly to the subsequent chapters in finding mention of, and brief introductions to, those fields of scholarship that are pertinent to the matter at hand in each section of this study.

SECTIONS, CHAPTERS, AND SOURCES

In its first section, this study reconstructs the world Hanseats had made, as a transnational community of merchants. Chapters 1 through 3 highlight different aspects of this world: its economic, cultural, and political dimensions, respectively. In all three

⁵⁰ For the roots of this position in German Enlightenment and Romantic thought, see Harada, Tetsushi, *Politische Ökonomie des Idealismus und der Romantik. Korporatismus von Fichte, Müller und Hegel* (Volkswirtschaftliche Schriften, vol. 386), West Berlin, 1989. A shared ancestor of English, German, and American proponents of this view was Burke, Edmund, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, London, 1986 (1790).

⁵¹ See Ashworth, John, "Agrarians" and "Aristocrats"; Howe, Daniel Walker, *The Political Culture of the American Whigs*, Chicago and London, 1979.

spheres, Hanseats were guided by the same principles. A conservative spirit that emphasized prudence in business, Christian ethics in family life, and a hierarchical social order in politics permeated all aspects of Hanseats' social existence. In Hanseats' minds – and in practice – business, family, and the state were mutually dependent on each other: each relying on the other two for upholding the moral economy of the whole, and all contributing to the welfare of the estate. Although, following Tönnies, we might think of such a communal, moral economy as essentially rooted in a particular place, Hanseats managed to maintain a tightly knit network across the space of the Atlantic, uniting merchants in Bremen, Baltimore, and New York in the same community.

The second section explores Hanseatic engagement with a changing world. International competition and a wish to “improve” upon a fundamentally good, hierarchical social order combined in motivating Hanseats to transform social relations in Bremen (Chapter 4) and to cooperate with American Whigs in modernizing international shipping and communication (Chapter 5). Hanseats and Whigs hoped to preserve social hierarchy and firm Christian values in the face of the dangers of democracy and unfettered market relations. Ironically, the result of their efforts was to hasten along social processes that furthered both of the latter. Chapter 6 explores the tension in Hanseats' ideas and politics between, on the one hand, a cosmopolitan elitism, and, on the other hand, nationalism and racism. This chapter places them in the context of an Atlantic World dominated by the British Empire in which they encountered “others” in various exchanges on their journeys. When they did, status often trumped race and nationality.

The third and final section of this study examines the consequences for Hanseats of the dual processes of nation making and the transformation of Germany and America into industrial-capitalist societies. To compete successfully in a world market based on industrial production, Bremen's merchant elite was compelled to depart from its customary ways of doing business (Chapter 7). The rise of consolidated German and American nation-states in the wars of the 1860s diminished the Hanseats' ability to influence the political conditions under which they lived. This decline of Hanseatic political power culminated in the loss of Bremen's independence to the Prussian-led Northern German Union in 1867. In responding to the challenge of the rising nation-states, Bremen's merchants politically divided, further undermining their effectiveness in influencing the events of the day (Chapter 8). Once the nexus of business, family, and politics that had held together Hanseats as a transnational community had been destroyed, the family networks that had defined the Bremish elite throughout the first two-thirds of the nineteenth century began to fray. By 1900, this past transnational world was but a memory for the descendants of the mid-century merchants who had lived in it. Even as individuals who had grown up within this network went on to have impressive careers in business and politics, in both Germany and America, they had come to identify themselves with the emerging national bourgeoisie of their home country (Chapter 9).

This study draws on a wide range of sources, from the private and business correspondence of merchants to published records, such as parliamentary debates and printed recollections. The most important and extensive archival collection used in the writing of this study is the John Christopher Schwab Family Papers, held by

Yale University and previously untapped by historians. The interpretations brought forth in Chapters 2 and 6 rely especially heavily on this body of material that offers a richly textured impression of the mentality of one Hanseatic merchant, Gustav Friedrich Schwab (1822–88). Born in Stuttgart, the capital of the Kingdom of Württemberg, but socialized from an early age into the Hanseatic network, he rose by 1860 to become the best-known and most successful Hanseat in New York.⁵²

The son of a poet and minister, Gustav Benjamin Schwab, Gustav Friedrich Schwab had learned to express his views in writing, perhaps beyond the extent of what was usual in Bremish circles. His family ties to the larger world of the German educated bourgeoisie (*Bildungsbürgertum*) did not make him an exceptional case for a Hanseat, as all Bremish merchants shared the spirit of this world in their education. Rather, his background enabled Schwab to express more eloquently what others in Bremen's mercantile estate likewise believed. This role as a worthy representative for the Hanseatic city received recognition in 1861, when Schwab became the last consul of an independent Bremen in New York.⁵³

⁵² Vagts, Alfred, "Gustav Schwab 1822–1880. Ein deutschamerikanischer Unternehmer," in *1000 Jahre Bremer Kaufmann. Aufsätze zur Geschichte bremischen Kaufmannstums, des Bremer Handels und der Bremer Schifffahrt aus Anlaß des tausendjährigen Gedenkens der Marktgründung durch Bischof Adaldag 965* (Bremisches Jahrbuch, vol. 50), Bremen, 1965, 337–60.

⁵³ Heinrich Smidt to Rudolf Schleiden (in Washington, DC), Bremen November 6, 1861, manuscript copy, Staatsarchiv Bremen (hereafter referred to as StAHB) 2.B.13.b.3, *Hanseatica. Verhältnisse der Hansestädte mit den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika. Hanseatische diplomatische Agenten, Konsuln usw. bei den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika und Korrespondenz mit denselben*. In New York, 1815–1868, file no. 10, "Acta betr. die Resignation des Consuls Keutgen zu Newyork und Ernennung des Kaufmanns Gustav Schwab daselbst zu seinem Nachfolger, 1861 Mai 27.–Decbr. 18," 59.