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 Brown, 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; Echternkamp, 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 Wittheit 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 Sofartsmuseets Studieserie, 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 Bremish 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 Schiffahrt 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*.