From New Netherland to New York: European Geopolitics and the transformation of social and political space in colonial New York City

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FROM NEW NETHERLAND TO NEW YORK: EUROPEAN GEOPOLITICS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SPACE IN COLONIAL NEW YORK CITY

A Thesis Presented

by

JOHN ALLEN LEGRID

Submitted to the Graduate School of the University of Massachusetts Amherst in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

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FROM NEW NETHERLAND TO NEW YORK: EUROPEAN GEOPOLITICS AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SPACE IN COLONIAL NEW YORK CITY

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ABSTRACT

FROM NEW NETHERLAND TO NEW YORK: THE TRANSFORMATION OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SPACE IN COLONIAL NEW YORK CITY

SEPTEMBER 2010

JOHN ALLEN LEGRID, B.S., B.A., UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS
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The purpose of this thesis is to demonstrate the ways in which the core-periphery relationships of English and Dutch colonial ventures in North America were impacted by local events in New Amsterdam-New York, a Dutch colony that was lost to the English following the Second Anglo-Dutch War in 1664. Increased peripheralization of New Amsterdam-New York negated centralizing efforts of the Dutch and effectively ended the potential for Dutch geopolitical power in North America. While the Atlantic World has traditionally been understood as a framework for understanding international phenomenon and global processes, this thesis suggests that it was impacted by multiple geopolitical scales simultaneously. Placing New Amsterdam-New York’s colonial history in a framework of evolving core-periphery relationships and highlighting the central role of local social, political, and spatial processes provides a foundation for understanding the outbreak of ethnic hostilities in the late 1680s. I argue that the increasing importance of the local is demonstrated by the attention given to social, political, and spatial ordinances that sought not to control “the English” or “the Dutch”, but to control the actions and actors of individual streets, wards, and districts.
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CHAPTER 1

PUTTING NEW AMSTERDAM-NEW YORK IN ITS PLACE: EARLY MODERN EUROPE, ATLANTIC GEOPOLITICS, AND COLONIAL GEOGRAPHIES OF NORTH AMERICA

Introduction

The territory that would ultimately become New York City was claimed by an explorer with English roots, settled by the Dutch, and captured by the English less than fifty years later. The Dutch settlement, known as New Amsterdam, would ultimately become the geopolitical center of Dutch New Netherland. Stretching from the Connecticut River west, Dutch New Netherland was claimed and settled in competition with the English, who settled the region from the Connecticut River east (see Figure 1.1). As the English increasingly expanded their New England, Dutch New Netherland in general – and Long Island in particular – came under attack. The purpose of this thesis is to place the local developments of New Amsterdam-New York within a comparative framework that considers both regional (such as the Dutch placement of New Amsterdam at the center of its New World colonial projects) and international (such as the Atlantic World of Early Modern Europe, embodying both imperial expansions and colonial projects) processes.
The period from 1626 to 1691 is illustrative for several reasons: first, it involved the first efforts at coordinated settlement in the New World by the Dutch government, acting through the West India Company; second, it shows the imperial-colonial response to spatial interaction and sociopolitical transition in the New World among European actors; and third, it demonstrates the importance of geopolitical connections between European governments and their colonies, specifically those in the northern part of North America on the Hudson and Connecticut Rivers.

Daniel H. Nexon has described this period in European history as one of transition from the “dynastic sovereign” to the “territorial sovereign” (Nexon, 2009, p. 38). Moving from sovereign dynasties to presumably sovereign territories was not simply a
matter of delineating territory, but carried a number of social and political implications with it as well. Further, the period can be characterized within Europe as a “legitimation crisis – involving deadly struggles over religion and authority – that, in turn, actors resolved by developing new norms and practices of international politics” (Nexon, 2009, p. 37-38). Not limited to religious disputes, the very political and social structure of continental Europe was changing during this period.

The relationship between newly sovereign territories became the subject of politics and space. This thesis suggests not simply that this tumultuous period in European history involved social, political, and territorial contestations, but that colonialism brought these conflicts to the New World. Specifically, intra-colonial tensions and conflicts provided the justification for European interventions. While initially advantageous for colonists for commercial support and inclusion in existing European trade networks, an unstable Europe and an increasingly independent New World system of trade and political relations rendered European involvement less needed. Beginning with the official Dutch arrival in the New World, this thesis explores the ways in which increasingly contested boundaries between the English and Dutch were reflected in the social, political, and spatial development of New Amsterdam, the center of Dutch New World efforts.

Absolutist Europe, the Thirty Years’ War, and the (re)structuring of European space

Before understanding the transfer of European ideals to the New World, a brief account of European developments during this period is necessary. It is during this Early Modern period of European history that feudalism was ending, giving way to the rise of
the territorial nation-state. Within this transition, the period from 1650 to 1720 has been termed the Age of Absolutism (Merriman, 2004). It was not until the eighteenth century that “‘imagined national communities,’ defined by ethnic bonds and cultural and linguistic traditions” would develop (Merriman, 2004, p. 29). In colonial New Amsterdam-New York, early vestiges of ethnic identity and cultural separation had appeared by the late seventeenth century. The Atlantic World not only provided the conduit for these transfers, but the evolving spaces of the New World ultimately brought into question the degree to which European identities were helpful or valid. In this light, ethnicity became a way in which “Europeans” (though by this time many had never set foot in Europe) could clarify their identities. Not surprisingly, such identities became increasingly tied to neighborhoods and spaces of colonial cities, as ethnic separation became increasingly visible.

While ultimately providing the impetus for a world system embodied by notions of territorial sovereignty, it is difficult to capture the essence of the Thirty Years’ War. Its impact on nation-state formation, colonialism, and imperial projects is even more complex. While it is necessary to provide a brief overview of the conflict, I also bear in mind that my treatment of this period, its various actors, and its impact on Europe and the larger Western world is far from satisfactory and intended to provide a starting point for understanding colonial processes in the New World. The Thirty Years’ War began with the religious wars of the sixteenth century: in 1572 the Huguenots (French Protestants) rebelled against Catholic domination, and by 1618 religious wars had broken out among the German states. This officially began what would become known as the Thirty Years’ War, which lasted from 1618 until 1648.
The end of these conflicts was symbolized by the signing of the Peace of Westphalia, through which the sovereign nation-state became the official territorial “system” of Europe (Merriman, 2004; Murphy, 1996). The spatial component of the Thirty Years’ War was embodied not only in the “factionalism” of the Holy Roman Empire, signified by its status as “a loose confederation of approximately 1,000 German autonomous or semi-autonomous states” but by the geographic reality that some of “the largest states included territories that were not contiguous” (Merriman, 2004, p. 156). Cartographic representations could not alone provide “legitimacy” to created (or re-constituted) territories: the binding of territory and political control had begun.

Questions of sovereignty and territory were placed at the center of governmental politics and the English and Dutch colonies in the New World provided a new forum for territorial disputes with European geopolitical roots. The end of the Thirty Years War and the subsequent Peace of Westphalia provided turning points in the development and understanding of the sovereign state system. As noted by Alexander B. Murphy, “the spatial organization of society in west-central Europe after the Peace of Westphalia fostered a world view in which discrete, quasi-independent territorial units were seen as the principal building blocks for social and political life” (Murphy, 1996, p. 82; emphasis added). It is hardly surprising that these building blocks would ultimately be transferred not only to the spaces of the New World, but to the politics of legitimating colonial projects.

The Thirty Years’ War began as a struggle between dynastic powers and the political and territorial codifications that highlighted its end. Thus, “what had begun as a religious war became a dynastic struggle between two Catholic states, France and...
Habsburg Austria...[and had resulted in] Alliances [such as that between] the Dutch Republic and Sweden” (Merriman, 2004, p. 168). By 1648, the Peace of Westphalia signaled the symbolic end to the conflicts; not surprisingly, “Its framers believed that they could restore international stability and diplomatic process in a Europe torn by anarchy by eliminating religious divisions as a cause of conflict” (Merriman, 2004, p. 169). While the official label of “religious conflict” may have been removed, conflicts between imperial powers with expansionist tendencies were far from over. Even more importantly, such conflicts could now occur under the guise of imperial-colonial projects, occurred beyond the official boundaries of continental Europe.

Given the expansion of Early Modern Europe and the rise of colonialism, it is not surprising that “Europe’s” conflicts were not at all contained to continental Europe. Dutch independence from the Spanish came in 1648. Beyond achieving independence for the Dutch, the seventeenth century also saw the rise of the English and Dutch as formidable international powers, specifically with regard to seafaring capabilities and international trade interests. Their success came from

“the relative unity of the two states, and the location of both rising powers on the Atlantic. Aided by governments quick to realize the benefits to their states of an expansion of international trade, the Dutch Netherlands and England mobilized the resources of their middle classes” (Merriman, 2004, p. 223).

As Spain’s position gradually weakened in comparison to other powers, “English ships began to nip at its imperial interests in the Americas” and “Dutch ships fought the proud Spanish galleons in the West Indies” (Merriman, 2004, p. 218). These conflicts were not simply about territorial sovereignty and religious conflicts in Europe. John Merriman (2004) has noted that “England and the Dutch Republic were anomalies in the
seventeenth century”; they were the only “seafaring, trading nations [that] maintained representative governments” (p. 222). As such, it was the larger and more powerful states that “became the dominant centers of power in the region” and “were able to bring the resources and peoples of their territories under their effective control” (Murphy, 1996, p. 93). While the spaces of continental Europe became codified, the spaces of the New World were symbolically empty and open for settlement.

The Atlantic World, Anglo-Dutch conflict, and New World colonies

The Atlantic World has been used as a metaphor for complex interactive processes that acted as both a barrier and conduit (Mathy, 2004), as well as a medium of international exchange (Gabaccia, 2004). Given increasingly mobility and travel capabilities during the Early Modern period, it is not surprising that “the birth of an Atlantic world…involved a gigantic international migration of people, certainly without precedent in the Old World and undertaken nowhere else in the field of European expansion” (Thornton, 2001, p. 19). As the Dutch influence grew in opposition to the Habsburgs, their ability to control the wealth and production of Europe increased greatly, giving them the chance to control half of Europe’s foreign trade (Burrows & Wallace, 1999). Holland’s break with Spain required Dutch actors to find a way into the developing Atlantic world in which colonial ventures provided a forum for national development and international ascendency. This trade was not only dependent on New World colonies, but ultimately placed Dutch efforts directly in the way of English efforts to do the same. As shown below, the end of the English Civil War (in 1651) resulted not only in the Navigation Acts (1651) but also the first official conflict of the English and
Dutch in the New World (refer to the Hartford Treaty, below), in this case on Long Island.

Conflicts in Stuart England ultimately led to the English Civil War, lasting from 1642 to 1651. While the Dutch rose in relative power to their English neighbors during this time, their power was not to last. The decline of the Dutch Republic’s power is perhaps not that surprising, especially considering the “greater economic resources and population of France and England, its chief rivals” (Merriman, 2004, p. 258). Further, by the middle of the seventeenth century “England [had] emerged…as the world’s dominant commercial power” (Merriman, 2004, p. 258). While this reality was likely quite visible in continental Europe, what view of such European rivalries did New World colonists – and European “representatives” – have?

The English Civil War (lasting from 1642 to 1651) was a series of political conflicts, primarily between factions known as the Parliamentarians and Royalists. Considered “a victory for parliamentary rule”, English politics in the 1650s “entered a new, aggressive period in support of English manufacture and commerce” (Merriman 2004, p. 242). The Navigation Acts, first issued in 1651 at the end of the English Civil War, sought “To undermine Dutch commercial competition…[by] requiring that all goods brought to England be transported either in English ships or in those belonging to the country of their origin” (Merriman, 2004, p. 242). This direct attack on Dutch shipping not only sought to undermine Dutch efforts at controlling shipping channels directly off Europe’s shores, but was also a question of who could ship goods to and from the colonies of North America and elsewhere.
The primary result of the Navigation Acts was a series of wars with the Netherlands. Known broadly as the Anglo-Dutch Wars, the First lasted from 1652-1654; the Second lasted from 1665-1667; and the Third lasted from 1672-1674. The first war corresponds broadly to the period of transition from village to town (largely in response to English and Native threats to the village of New Amsterdam); the second war corresponds to the period following the loss of New Amsterdam (and New Netherland) to the English; and the third war corresponds to the brief return of New York (now named New Orange) to Dutch rule.

The Navigation Acts were issued by the English in 1651 (and issued again in 1660, lasting officially until 1673) and dictated that British goods must be carried on British ships. While designed primarily to ensure commercial growth for English trade, the Navigation Acts had their roots in the geopolitical situation of Early Modern Europe. More specifically, these Acts were a direct attack on Dutch interests, and their official dates (1651 to 1673) correspond precisely to the competitive imperialism of the English and Dutch in colonial North America. The geopolitical importance of New Amsterdam-New York is clear: “When the English acquired New Amsterdam in 1664 they obtained a small but vital urban community of enormous strategic and commercial potential” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 8).

Dutch power again rose in the latter part of the century, due partly to a weakened Spanish Empire and the threat this would have had on the Dutch. After the 1672 invasion by Louis XIV of the Dutch Republic (and supported secretly by Charles II of England), Dutch forces retained their position and ultimately defeated the English and French (Merriman, 2004). The year 1672 also saw William of Orange take advantage of his
newly gained advantageous position to be named stadholder, politically equivalent to a modern governorship. While historians such as John Merriman have suggested that the dynastic rivalries “broadened to a global scale” during the seventeenth century (Merriman, 2004, p. 417), it is clear that such rivalries existed long before and were in no way confined to continental Europe.

Colonial geographies and New Amsterdam-New York

The rise of Dutch dominance occurred in opposition to English development and set the stage for an imperial struggle between European powers in the New World, while the transition from absolutism provided a legal and legislative source for political and social unrest that would follow (Anderson, 1979). Given this context, the changing colonial geography of New York City was not simply a matter of trade routes, commercial competition, or competitive imperialism in geostrategic spaces. Rather, I suggest that this period and place represent a much larger shift in geopolitical relations, occurring through the simple but powerful guise of “colonialism”. By placing these developments within a larger framework of European-New World interaction, contested identities (ultimately bringing “ethnicity” to the New World), and the colonial spaces that were created out of such processes, the history of Dutch New Amsterdam provides a sociopolitical and spatial backdrop to its more recognized period as English New York.

Using the Atlantic World as a framework provides a way to understand how colonial processes had profound legal repercussions that extended beyond the confines of “official” colonial territory or the boundaries of continental Europe. Central to this is not only analysis of social and political actors in both European and New World spaces
(especially in the case of colonial “Directors” who traveled back and forth as politically needed) but also the central placement of local developments (such as the local focal point of the fort – Fort Amsterdam – shown in the diagram below). The geographical space of the New World was not vacant, but nor was it “developed” on European criteria. Further, the social fabric of the colonists was not transplanted from Europe but an object of contestation; the political framework(s) of colonial development was not uniformly applied but recreated under the will of political actors seeking personal and professional gain. And the geography of the New World was not simply the Old World writ new, but the Old World re-created within the contested geopolitical system of Early Modern Europe.

Figure 1.2: Location of Fort Amsterdam. This diagram indicates the central focus of the fort, placed at the mouth of the Hudson River. This placement not only afforded local residents of New Amsterdam direct protection from invasion (by water), but protected the bouweries further up the river. © JAL 2010
The social and political “revolutions” that were ultimately recognized as occurring “in the Atlantic World” (Klooster, 2009) have traditionally been assigned a mid-eighteenth century position, suggesting that early colonial settlement occurred with little or no conflict. Not only did this “age of revolutions” start long before the eighteenth century, but the Atlantic development that occurred within European colonialism would not have been possible without the short-term goals (Thornton, 2001) of European imperialism that focused on economic benefits. This geopolitical framework offers a way to interpret the social and territorial changes during the seventeenth century: religious, governmental, and international changes and re-formations created an unstable political situation as power became a central object of contestation (Nexon, 2009) as new interactions between power and capital (Tilly, 1992) developed out of colonial ventures.

Daniel H. Nexon, a professor of government and foreign service, has described the Early Modern period in European history as one in which religious conflict, the transition from dynasties to empires, and an internationalizing world system greatly impacting the power structures in Early Modern Europe (Nexon, 2009). The end of the Thirty Years’ War in Europe was signaled by the signing of the Peace of Westphalia, in which the conflicts of seventeenth century Europe were “solved” through the imposition of a territorial standard throughout the continent. As such, North American colonialism grew out of this transitioning society and provided a new space for its conflicts and contestations.

While continental Europe enjoyed the calm of the end of the Thirty Years’ War, its colonies became centers of geopolitical negotiation and conflict. Historian J.L. Price has noted that “The new state which emerged from the Revolt of the Netherlands [against
Spanish rule] appears at first glance to be a somewhat haphazard collection of territories thrown together by the accidents of rebellion and war” (Price, 1998, p. 1). However haphazard this territorial “collection” might have seemed, it soon became a formidable enemy to the English. At the same time, I argue that this enemy could not – by the new Westphalian rules of territorial sovereignty – be easily opposed on European territory. Instead, the spaces of colonial North America offered new spaces for imperial geopolitics to play out. Even more importantly, the outcome of this geopolitical competition had repercussions in continental Europe. The duality of “imperial-colonial projects” meant that a powerful imperial power (or one trying to prove its potential) must be a successful colonizer. As such, “the actual extent and boundaries of the new [Dutch] state seem more obviously the result of geo-strategic forces than of historical inevitability” (Price, 1998, p. 1). An imperial power that could not hold its ground in the New World could not be a threat to the hegemony of the English or any other power in continental Europe.

By itself, the emergence of a new state in Europe was not problematic, though “the fact of the emergence of a totally new state in Europe was unusual, the speed with which the Republic was able to achieve the status of a major power was even more out of the ordinary” (Price, 1998, p. 17). Further, its political and spatial structure provided another anomaly: “it was a republic in an age of increasing absolutism; it was held together by a minimal state and radically decentralised at a time when growing state power has been seen as the norm…and [attempted] to pursue peaceful trade in an era of vicious great power rivalries” (Price, 1998, p. 18). While legitimized as a state within continental Europe, the rules of the Early Modern geopolitical game were quite different across the Atlantic.
And yet, this should not be taken to suggest that the Dutch were not peaceful bystanders in the New World or Europe: “The peaceful image of the Dutch also needs to be modified in the light of their aggressive support of their economic interests and, in particular, by the violence which was an inevitable part of their colonial expansion in this period” (Price, 1998, p. 19). While not conforming to the political structure of the English and other absolutist governments, the Dutch were not without powerful political structures: “The republic character of the Dutch political system, and its radical decentralisation…were counteracted by the power and authority of the princes of Orange” (Price, 1998, p. 21). While early Dutch ambivalence towards its colonies in North America is indicative of its decentralized power structures, its resurgence of power and takeover of New York (named New Orange) illustrates the ways in which power was not limited to European conflicts, but directly applied to the geopolitically advantageous colony of New Netherland (focusing on its center, New Amsterdam) in the seventeenth century illustrates these processes at a local scale.

In his prologue to the first volume (“Atlantic America”) of “The Shaping of America”, D.W. Meinig (1986) sets out to explore “the creation of a vast Atlantic circuit, a new human network of points and passages binding together four continents, three races, and a great diversity of regional parts” (p. 3). He notes that he is not interested in understanding “…the ways in which political, economic, and social institutions operated to initiate, sustain, and become themselves transformed by such transoceanic enterprise” (p. 3).

Building on the theoretical understandings of American geography proposed by Meinig, my purpose is to not only show that such social, political, and spatial linkages
existed (as Meinig and others have already shown), but that they were intricately bound up in the spaces and politics of Early Modern Europe as it transferred peoples and ideas across the waters of the Atlantic. Focusing on the “colonial geographies” of this period offers several important opportunities: first, it provides the opportunity to ground imperial processes in Europe with various colonial outcomes in the New World. While focused primarily on colonial New York City, I argue that the politics of creating, maintaining, and defending this colonial city offers an ideal geographic space for such an understanding. Returning to Meinig, he suggests that

“the America created out of this northwest sector of Europe was necessarily more invention than extension. There was important continuity in the commercial emphasis, and many of the financial systems were adaptations of Italian precedents, but there was no indigenous system for the colonization and administration of conquered lands” (Meinig, 1986, p. 51).

Core-periphery relationships demonstrate the ways in which hierarchical positions create situations of dependency and independency as literal and figurative space is negotiated. The period from 1626 to 1664 was one of increasing geopolitical importance, in which New Amsterdam held a core geopolitical position; following the 1664 transfer to English rule, New Amsterdam-New York was peripheral to the English system. Its importance increased again in the 1680s as the English New World empire began to recognize the geopolitical importance (and sociopolitical instability) of the former Dutch territory. Core-periphery relationships such as this illustrate the geopolitics of settlement and expansion, such as the reconciling of Native American conceptualizations of space (Cronon, 2003; Richter, 2001) with the evolving system of territorial space in continental Europe.
The colonial geographies of New Amsterdam-New York were not unique to colonial North America, and nor were they unique to colonial New York City. However, the various social, political, and spatial forces at work are perhaps most evident in colonies like New Amsterdam-New York, in which direct connections between European and New World geopolitical processes can be seen:

“The life of New Amsterdam’s inhabitants was also circumscribed by the uncertainties of imperial politics. Though powerless to control the outcome of remote struggles between England and the Netherlands, the town’s residents were very much a part of the ongoing Anglo-Dutch rivalry for the prizes of the Atlantic empire” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 9).

While the potential for local actors and actions to create massive imperial changes may have been minimal, the actors of New Amsterdam-New York were not as passive as this quote suggests. In this light, the impact of the local provides an illustrative context for understanding how the Anglo-Dutch relationship was portrayed, developed, and evolved throughout the seventeenth century.

**Social, political, and spatial transfers: the variability of colonial-imperial projects**

The Dutch and English were both active participants in the Atlantic World of the seventeenth century. While still geopolitically important to New World military defense – especially from Native Americans – the transfer of New Amsterdam from Dutch to English rule moved the colonial city from the center of Dutch interests in the New World to the periphery of English colonialism. Still considered strategically important as a symbol of European imperialism in the New World, the colonial space became the contested terrain of a final Dutch effort at regaining the city in 1673.
Though ultimately a failure, this brief recapture by Dutch forces provided the impetus for more direct English involvement in the colonial city. While peripheral to English colonial space in the New World, a rebellious Dutch-dominated population in the 1680s and the imposition of English spatial models by Governor Dongan brought the space of colonial New York to the center of New England geopolitics. Responding to urban unrest and rebellious behavior by the Dutchman Jacob Leisler, the 1690s saw a renewed interest in the colonial city as an important but contested space of English imperialism. Solving colonial problems was no longer a matter for European governments to solve, but required the direct imposition of European social, political, and spatial formations in colonial cities.

As Dutch geopolitical dominance gave way to English ascendance, New Amsterdam-New York struggled to retain its geostrategic position within the New World. As the agricultural focus of the early colonial space shifted with inclusion into the Atlantic World of trade and commerce, New Amsterdam worked to ensure its continued geopolitical importance. The diagram below (Figure 1.2) illustrates the initial conditions of imperial dominance; as shown by the size of shapes and lines (larger/thicker indicates a stronger connection), Dutch dominance existed during this early period, but neither English nor Dutch power in the New World can be considered dominant.
Moving the realm of colonial politics from European governments to local New World governments (presumably acting on the wishes of their European counterparts) did not occur as the result of unruly colonists or resource conflicts, but had their roots in larger processes of religious, imperial, and international change (Nexon, 2009). These conflicts occurred not only in European space, but in the developing New World space as well, as the geopolitics of the “Old” world became points of contestation in the “New”. The spaces of New World colonialism were not passive recipients of “imperial” knowledge transferred to “colonial” recipients, but the creative points of place creation involved in the creation of new homelands. In this light, the designation of a colonial “success” or “failure” must acknowledge the complexities of any political, social, or
spatial transfer, its ideological and real foundations, and the diversity of individual and group interests in both Europe and the Americas.

Figure 1.4: Map of New Netherland, 1614-1664. Source: “Atlas of American History”, Second Revised Edition, 1984. This map shows the relationship between New Amsterdam (located in the center of the oval) and a tentative division (indicated by the rectangle) of Long island between the Dutch (west side) and English (east side).

Given the conflicts of Early Modern Europe, was colonial conflict inevitable?

Perceptions of colonial space as “vacant” certainly created the possibility of intra-
colonial conflict, as did a belief that the geopolitical processes of Europeans did not have Native corollaries. Greene’s (1969) model of colonial interaction argues that not only did the “emergence of recognizable and reasonably permanent colonial elites with great political influence” facilitate the development of politically legitimate forms of local colonial government (Greene, 1969). Given this reality, this thesis contends that separating local events from the international (Atlantic World) context has erroneously produced assumptions that local actors were isolated, and that their actions (or reactions) were insignificant within the larger colonial system of Early Modern Europe.

As mentioned previously, the interaction of various scales is central to understanding the diversity of processes, developments, and contestations of the colonial world. For example, James E. McWilliams has noted that attempts to create [local] communities, independent [international] connections with England often formed the basis of “improvisational strategies through which towns and individuals worked to establish the economic basis for [their regional] stability” (McWilliams, 2006, p. 123). While David Hackett Fischer has argued persuasively for the importance of European “source regions” in understanding North American colonial development (Fischer, 1989), contestation over territories occurred not only as a product of the “construction of geographical knowledge” (Scott, H.V., 2003, p. 166), but as a realization that “European perceptions of colonized territories” (Scott, H.V., 2003, p. 167) occurred within a mercantile capitalist framework that provided the basis for “an expanding land-based society” (Johnston, 1982, p. 24). The overriding “competition for empire” played out during the eighteenth century in the “North America region, [where] imperial rivalries [as well as] and geographic perceptions influenced the history of the Atlantic world” (Mapp,
2006, p. 713-714), though none of these processes were at all limited to the Atlantic World, as we now define it.

**Expanding public space through private initiative: the Dutch and English compared**

Creating a politically functional and spatially controlled colonial system of governance required more than the political imposition of European rule or the presence of “European” actors in New World spaces. From a political standpoint, “decreasing peripheral segmentation” by attempting to “encourage connections between peripheries” resulted in “composite polities” (Nexon, 2009, p. 108) and increasing intra-colonial connections. In some cases, the power and independence achieved through the geopolitics of colonial development required the creation of New World identities in opposition to those of continental Europeans.

Settlement “legitimacy” was not simply achieved through governmental claims. The very real possibility of colonial ventures failing led to the imposition of the Dutch patroon system, carried out by the privatized West India Company. Within the Atlantic World, a hierarchy of center-periphery relationships was intricately linked and in some ways modeled after the geopolitics of continental Europe. Not only were these processes linked across the waters of the Atlantic, but they were given new spatial definitions through changing geopolitical relationships. Further, the context of European colonialism in the New World was not simply a matter of economic plunder and spatial invasion: diverse processes of adaptation (Breen, 2001), political and spatial alliance and conquest (Benjamin, 2001), and religious evangelization (Gutiérrez, 2001; Frey & Wood, 2001) occurred. Further, the transfer of identity was far from simple and by no means
spatially or temporally static: the presence of “divided loyalties meant that these
[conflicts] often had the overtones of civil wars, whose main protagonists were
previously voiceless popular classes” (Klooster, 2009, p. 2), ultimately allowing for the
designation of ethnic spaces by the end of the first century of colonization in colonial
North America.

Methodology

The ideal of colonial settlement and New World prosperity may have been an
unattainable ideal, but it was nonetheless the vision that guided the crown’s allocation of
colonies along the Atlantic seaboards”, providing an explanation for why “dissenters
wound up in New England, and royal favorites and friends in the ‘Mediterranean lands’
to the south”, under the impression that Chesapeake conditions were more promising
spaces for “vast wealth and profit” (Earle, 1992, p. 59). The multi-dimensional
geographies of the period were often contested by those involved: for example, “imperial
vision and indigenous geographies” were frequently at odds, resulting in “complex
negotiations over power and profit” as disparate groups with alternative pasts and
differing visions of the future (Scott, H.V., 2003, p. 177).

Colonial space and its relationship to broad designations of European territory
provides a tentative link between local space and international land grants, but fails to
address the impact of local actors and actions. As described by William Cronon,
“Whereas the earliest deeds tended to describe land in terms of its topography and
use…later deeds described land in terms of lots held by adjacent owners” (Cronon, 2003,
p. 74). Not only were such delineations exempt from Native systems of land distribution
and use, but such systems relied on the implementation of European spatial ideals. Combined with social and political notions of “appropriate” use of space, these systems were not only contested within continental Europe’s expanding Westphalian system, but were transferred to the volatile spaces of the New World. Despite the multiplicity of actors and actions in colonial North America, these processes are frequently reduced to the simple category of “colonial”.

George Steinmetz has argued that “colonialism as a monolithic study” erroneously simplifies “an extremely capacious category” (Steinmetz, 2007, p. 1). In the case of colonial New Amsterdam-New York, this variability is seen as an indicator of precursory social conditions that allowed for sociopolitical and spatial conflict. Removing nationalism from its formerly revered category as “one of Europe’s most magnificent gifts to the rest of the world” (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 4), a “rejection of ancestral ways which are seen as obstacles to progress” and the “rejection of the alien intruder and dominator” allowed for divisions within supposedly monolithic European notions of colonist and colony, as well as the possibility for contestation as identities diverge.

This thesis utilizes the research of historians and geographers in order to bring together political, social, and spatial developments in New Amsterdam-New York. Geographers such as D. W. Meinig have noted that “geography and history are not only analogous, but complementary and interdependent, bound together by the very nature of things” (Meinig, 1986, p. xv). While focused on the geography of early America, Meinig provides a complimentary analysis of the places, leaving analysis of the people and political forces to historians. It is in the combining of spatial interactions and the social
and political processes of colonial actors are just one of several ways this thesis makes a significant contribution to historical and geographical studies of early America.

Not surprisingly, the study of Early America must be understood as more than a study of people, politics, social processes, or geographic settlement and expansion. Rather, it is a study of interaction, grounded in the existing and created spaces of the New World. Using comparative geopolitical analysis, this thesis focuses on the period from 1626 until 1691, and the territory that would ultimately become known as New York City. The Dutch beginnings of the colonial city are given little more than a cursory glance. Further, the transfer of power from the Dutch to the English is viewed as a New World phenomenon, rather than a geopolitical change with roots in the Second Anglo-Dutch War.

Research for this thesis involved the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data was used in a limited capacity and consisted primarily of census information. This information was particularly valuable in understanding population dynamics such as changing ethnicity. However, it should be noted that modern ethnic definitions were not in use (or available), and therefore ethnic groups must be understood in historic rather than modern terms. Qualitative data was employed to understand existing historic, geographic, and other research on colonial New York City, Early Modern Europe, and key actors and sociopolitical processes. I relied heavily on secondary data, though some secondary data is in fact primary data that has been collected (such as E.B. O’Callaghan’s (1868) collection of laws and ordinances of New Netherland) or original documents translated from Dutch, mostly from C.T. Gehring (1994).
In addition to primary source documents such as court records, maps played a key role in understanding the representation and perceptions of New Amsterdam and New Netherland. These sources are complimented by diagrams produced by the author. While cartographic analysis, especially of those maps occurring directly after the English takeover of the colony, would have provided an additional level of detail to my analysis, this was avoided except in limited descriptions of maps and diagrams. Central to my analysis is the ways in which the geopolitics of Early Modern Europe impacted the development and interaction of European powers in the New World. Emphasis is also uniquely placed on local developments, as opposed to a more international focus of most geopolitical studies.

The social, political, and spatial processes that characterized individual and group immigration from Europe and settled in America provides a second departure point. Of central interest is the question of identities – political, social, and spatial – as they travel through “colonialism” to places deemed “new”, such as the European New World. Adopting the trio of replication/modification/innovation (Herget and Ortseifen, 1986), I explore the ways in which the politics, society, and space of the “Old” World were selectively transferred and (re)created in the “New” World. This process is seen not simply as indicative of individual and collective choices regarding colonial transfers, but as an illustration of complex imperial-colonial processes and their ultimate spatial manifestations.

The impact of Early Modern Europe politics on the colonial governments has been documented, while the spatial development of the colonies has received much less attention. Urban planner John W. Reps has noted that the bastide model of France may
have been used as a basis for settlements located in “frontier outposts or to dominate actual or potentially hostile territory” (Reps, 1965, p. 2). Colonial spatial arrangements were born out of complex processes involving economic and religious dissatisfaction in which a full break with previous practices was not deemed necessary, but modifications to existing models were made (Reps, 1965). As economic conditions improved, larger lots and a more dispersed settlement pattern developed. Relating this evolutionary spatial process to the reality of colonial conflict (Bonomi, 1971), an important caveat is that despite the abundance of land in colonial settlements (Innes, 1978), inequalities were inevitable (Main, 1977). While conflict may have been inevitable, the ultimate result of those conflicts must be understood both spatially and politically.

In explaining political and spatial developments, William Cronon (quoting Timothy Dwight) notes that “…travelers [often] seize on a single person, or a solitary fact, and make them the representatives of a whole community and a general custom”, thus creating “the problem of generalizing from a local description to a regional landscape” (Cronon, 2003, p. 6). In this thesis, similar difficulties with source materials are faced. For example, ample evidence of the English period of rule exists in the form of various official documents, though this is no doubt focused on the positive efforts of the English government (and its colonial administrators). Further problems arise with regard to primary sources such as maps and other cartographic data: while explorations almost always resulted in maps of the region, few of these focused on the city of New Amsterdam-New York itself. And, those that did were often produced for a government or ruler who no doubt had narrow visions of what they wanted to “see”.

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A focus on the contested geopolitics of a single colony inevitably raises a simple but provocative question: to what degree did local decisions reflect (or react to) larger continental decisions with roots in the imperial-colonial processes of Early Modern Europe? Most importantly, to what extent can local actor and actions, acting upon seemingly “local” needs and interests, be representative of the “Atlantic World” as modern scholarship has defined it?

**Private beginnings: the Dutch patroon system**

Dutch colonial ventures relied on the privatization of risk. This involved the “patroon” system, in which individuals relied on relatively little governmental support. While providing a safe way for European governments to benefit from New World explorations, the patroon system of this period “introduced, on the virgin soil of what is now the United States, the feudal system of mediaeval Europe” and “proved a potent factor in forwarding the development not only of the immediate surroundings of Manhattan Island” but other locations as well (Stokes, 1928, p. 110). Under both the Dutch and English, “patroons were tenants of the Dutch West India Company, under a special charter granting manorial and other privileges” (Eno, 1925, p. 429-430). Such individuals were granted status through a system reserved *solely* for the West India Company, “a commercial monopoly backed by the power of the Dutch government” in which “the States General [granted] it judicial, legislative, and executive powers” as well as providing substantial financial support (Eno, 1925, p. 431). In this way, the patroon system provided a link between social, political, and spatial development of the colonial city. Further, it provided a direct line of political and spatial control between the Dutch (and English) government and colonists in the New World. The result was that Dutch
efforts at New World settlement were privatized from the beginning, with minimal governmental involvement. On the other hand, the English took a direct role in planning and protecting their colonial ventures. As noted by David Drakakis-Smith (1987), colonial ventures involving a private company seek to trade goods and ensure monetary profit, while those with more direct governmental involvement seek to create and maintain spheres of influence. Despite the eventual development of English and Dutch spheres of influence, New Amsterdam’s early history was agricultural. The local reality of an agricultural village and its transformation to an English city within fifty years of its official settlement can be anything but insignificant.

Perhaps most significantly, this thesis links the histories of colonial America with the geographies of imperial-colonial projects in Early Modern Europe. It is the understanding of these spaces, their interaction across scales, and the impact of existing and developing geopolitical relationships that creates a more unified understanding of how differences in the English and Dutch systems of governance affected their methods of colonial rule. Contrasting the privatized Dutch patroon system with the more “public” and direct system of English rule explains the delay in English competitive imperialism until after the end of the English Civil War, as well as the profound impact (both intended and unintended) of the Navigation Acts. And finally, these historic events are given life by grounding them in the local spaces of New Amsterdam-New York, as imperial geopolitics was impacted not only by European politics, but local colonists.
CHAPTER 2

THE MYTH OF EMPTY SPACE: INTRA-COLONIAL CONFLICT, “KIEFT’S WAR”,
AND THE VILLAGE OF NEW AMSTERDAM

Introduction

As noted in the previous chapter, the myth of “empty space” provided the foundation for social, political, and spatial actions towards the territories of colonial New Amsterdam. Across the Atlantic, the transition from absolutist rule to the nation-state system, and its central placement of the ideal of territorial sovereignty, sought to link the legitimacies of governing structures with specific spaces. This chapter explores the period from 1626 to 1656, and argues that the English and Dutch governments took an increasingly active role in their North American colonies as a result of geopolitical competition within continental Europe. As the colonies of North America became increasingly important to the finances of European governments, their geopolitical ambitions crossed the Atlantic. To begin, the colonial village of New Amsterdam provides an illustration of the ways in which territorial “commitments” (Rink, 1986) were established through the patroon system (Nissenson, 1937). While Dutch efforts in New Netherland were focused primarily on New Amsterdam, the movement of English colonists onto Long Island threatened not only the Dutch presence in New Amsterdam but their control of the entire Hudson River region.

The processes by which “natural” or “initial” environments, including the presence of complex Native communities, networks, and geopolitical processes shaped European settlement and development is a complex issue. As William Cronon has noted,
“Environment may initially shape the range of choices available…but then culture reshapes environment in responding to those choices. The re-shaped environment presents a new set of possibilities for cultural reproduction, thus setting up a new cycle of mutual determination” (Cronon, 2003, p. 13).

For example, “In colonial New England, two sets of human communities…confronted each other, one Indian and one European. They rapidly came to inhabit a single world, but in the process the landscape…was transformed” (Cronon, 2003, p. 15). Understanding colonial North America inevitably means extending our search beyond the boundaries of New Amsterdam-New York: “The tumultuous religious, political, social, and economic developments that characterized the Reformation we at their greatest intensity in Northwest Europe” during the sixteenth and seventeenth century (Meinig, 1986, p. 50). By the middle of the seventeenth century, “the Dutch became the primary maritime power of the Atlantic and superimposed their own patterns upon earlier ones. Emphasizing commerce much more than colonization, they became the principal agents of contact and diffusions around the Atlantic circuit”, extending their reach far beyond the waters of the North Atlantic (Meinig, 1986, p. 62).
As the diagram above illustrates, early development in New Amsterdam by the Dutch government through the West India Company sought to capitalize on notions of a non-Dutch (or in some cases, non-European) “other”. These were not simply efforts to create a more controlled colonial space, but attempted to protect commercial and agricultural interests of the home country. The West India Company utilized the self-
protecting patroon system to assure its commercial vitality and economic prosperity in the New World. Modeling this period through interactive means suggests a complex reality of contested negotiation as sociopolitical and spatial processes was re-created on the terms of individuals and groups. This system provided the justified means through which Native subjugation could occur.

The arrival of Director Willem Kieft in began what has been termed by scholars as “Kieft’s War” (Burrows & Wallace, 1999). While portrayed as the result of conflicting European-Native policies regarding the use and distribution of territory, this interpretation ignores local actors and concerns and focuses attention on the “Native” threat to “New World colonies” at a much larger scale. Instead, Early Modern Europe and its colonial ventures must be seen as a diverse and developing collective of imperial ambitions in which Native threats formed just one (though extremely important) part. Colonial projects ultimately provided an additional space for geopolitical contestations that extended beyond the frequently turbulent boundaries of continental Europe (Klooster, 2005). Most importantly, this period illustrates the ways in which colonial policy became increasingly embedded in the geopolitics of European imperial competition, as New Amsterdam’s strategic potential was realized by both the Dutch and English governments in Europe. For the Dutch government, response came in the form of holding the West India Company responsible for the protection of its colonists (though the Dutch government was also petitioned to assist in such military endeavors), while the English focused their attention on the populating of Long Island.
European spaces, Native places, and idealized Dutch beginnings

The 1621 charter to the Dutch West India Company gave the company “exclusive privileges of trade [and] the right to plant colonies, to make alliances with natives, and to build forts to protect its property” (Stokes, 1928, p. 7). New Amsterdam’s “executive” status occurred through the local efforts of individuals like Minuit, who “attempted to start a settlement at Nut Island and began the first real settlement of Manhattan” (Stokes, 1928, p. 10). At the same time, the commercial focus of the West India Company ensured that the value of colonial space would be seen primarily in terms of its trading potential, as indicated by the creation of trading posts along the Hudson (shown below in Figure 2.1).

Figure 2.2: Map showing Fort Nassau (renamed Fort Orange) near present-day Albany. © JAL 2010
In 1625 Kryn Fredericksz, an engineer and surveyor, accompanied the second director of the colony, Willem Verhulst, with “particular instructions” including orders for “the construction of a fortification, as well as houses, in such suitable places as might be discovered by the council in New Netherland” (Stokes, 1928, p. 12). This ideal was entertained with apparently little progress until the 1626 arrival of Peter Minuit, who remained Director General until 1633. On September 23, 1626, Minuit announced that the fort would “house all of the people within its enclosure, instead of in houses, outside, ‘so as to garrison it and be secure from sudden attack’” (Stokes, 1928, p. 13). Despite such intentions, a “poor sodden earthwork fort was constructed…[and] in less than two years’ time ‘the ramparts crumbled away like sand’” (Stokes, 1928, p. 13). Local efforts at protecting New Netherland, and most importantly the entrance to the Hudson River found at New Amsterdam, allowed the colonial village of New Amsterdam to slowly gain in geopolitical importance. The ambitions of local directors and colonists were matched by the needs of the Dutch government to ensure their focused efforts would not go to waste.

Local efforts at developing the space of New Amsterdam can be contrasted with more regional efforts at ensuring Dutch colonists were protected from the evils of this “empty” land. An account of the “first” European-Indian meeting illustrates the idealism involved in early settlement: “…they and the whites lived for a long time contentedly together, although these asked from time to time more land of them; and proceeding higher up the Mahicanittuk (Hudson river), they believed they would soon want all their country, and which at this time was already the case” (Graymont, 1985, p. 13). Likewise,
the 1626 purchase of Manhattan Island suggests both peaceful coexistence and “rightful” expansion: “our people are good in heart and live in peace” and have “purchased the Island Manhattes from the Indians”, an appropriate legal transaction given the vast efforts at improvement undertaken by early colonists: “They had all their grain sowed by the middle of May, and reaped by the middle of August (Graymont, 1985, p. 17). Despite the colony’s peripheral status at this point, spatial expansion was seen as being central to its success and vitality.

The world that trade created: commercialized colonialism and the Atlantic World

What caused the Dutch to settle on the land claimed (according to some) by an Englishman? While not simply the result of staking out small territories in the vast “New” World geopolitics offers a useful explanation of the interconnectivity between Atlantic colonialism and local developments, traditionally explained in terms of commerce. Thomas J. Condon (1968) has suggested that “while the Dutch had ignored North America before the turn of the seventeenth century, there was a great deal of activity directed there in the first decade of that century” (Condon, 1968, p. 9). Aside from commercial potential (which originally led the Dutch to the fishing grounds of Newfoundland), what interest could the Dutch have in a place explored by an Englishmen? Geopolitical considerations repeatedly appear at the center of such attempts at explanation: for example, “The mastery of Spain in the New World grated on all European nations but on none more intimately than the Netherlands. Spain was not only a commercial rival to the Netherlands but a hated political enemy” (Condon, 1968, p. 41).
Philosophical interpretations, on the other hand, suggested the New World would be a “model that would lead decadent Europe into a better future”, though the realities of “pioneer life” suggested “a land of savagery where barbarous Indians tortured and murdered” (Billington, 1981, p. 1). Despite such hostilities, the potential to civilize this newfound land led to the creation of the “Noble Savage” designation as “the spirit of romanticism…swept Europe in the eighteenth century” (Billington, 1981, p. 1). Fusing commercial potential and in some cases religious motivation, the foundation for a violent culture dedicated to removing the “savage barbarians [that were] barring the advance of God’s chosen people” (Billington, 1981, p. 5) had begun.

Returning to local developments in New Amsterdam, in 1628 Direct Minuit (mentioned previously) decided to build a new fort to protect the two hundred and seventy individuals living in the colony. The building of the fort was deemed a peaceful project to protect against foreign invasion; colonists “remained as yet without the fort, in no fear’ of the Indians, who lived peaceably in their midst” (Stokes, 1928, p. 13). A 1630 reference notes that “the Dutch ‘have settled in New England upon Hudson’s river’” (Stokes, 1928, p. 93). Beginning in the 1630s, the creation of “small bases” or “strongholds” encouraged the further settlement of New Netherland, specifically for Dutch settlers (Enthoven, 2005, p. 156). Finally, these spatial developments occurred within a settlement system increasingly defined by the region’s rivers and geopolitical potential, in which the military garrison took on an increasingly political meaning.
Privatizing colonial risk: the Dutch patroon system

Despite the status of the Dutch Provinces within continental Europe as a “maverick state”, “the Dutch founded other Netherlands at many different places in the Western Hemisphere” and created a complex relationship between center (the United Provinces) and colonial peripheries (Klooster, 2002, p. 171). Of central importance to this imperial expansion was the trust placed in the West India Company, who was “employed” by the Dutch government to engage in colonial ventures such as that at New Amsterdam. Not surprisingly,

“The WIC [West India Company] mirrored the state that had spawned it. In contrast to the surrounding European countries, all of them monarchies, which succeeded in strengthening their positions by concentrating their instruments of power and eliminating local rights and privileges, the Union of Utrecht, the constitutive charter of the Dutch Republic, obliged the provinces that joined to maintain the privileges and liberties of all the signatories” (Klooster, 2005, p. 58).

While concerns over regional integration and geopolitical power would become increasingly important, early efforts were clearly focused on the protection of local commercial interests. While international by definition, colonial settlements were dependent on local actors and processes for their international legitimation. Utilizing the funds of private individuals, the granting of patroonships not only sought to ensure the commercial potential for the small colony, but dictated that the port at Manhattan was to be the center of a potentially regional system. It was expected that “trading ships were to unload at New Amsterdam or pay certain duties there for the benefit of the company” (Stokes, 1928, p. 16). These patroonships provided the initial spatial structure of the colony and indicate the importance of this system to early spatial settlement and development in the colony.
Though purportedly “observed [by the political directors of the West India Company] that the heavy capitalization of the company demanded that its policy be formulated along vigorous political lines rather than narrow commercial ones” (Condon, 1968, p. 64), there can be little doubt that politics and commerce were closely related. Further, territorial expectations and imperial-colonial ventures linked political legitimation to space. While “the emphasis of the [West India] company [was initially] on exploration and experimentation” (Condon, 1968, p. 62), what created the impetus to colonize? And more importantly, what factors – in Europe and in America – led to the decision to move from a commercial settlement to one aimed at habitation and geopolitical power? The answers lie not simply in the need to protect New World trade from Native attack, but in the evolving structure of imperial-colonial relations and territorialization in continental Europe.

The slow beginnings of settlement and sociopolitical development of New Amsterdam (and in general, New Netherland) can be seen in the attitude of early colonists: “Its first immigrants did not see themselves in the role of laying the foundation of a permanent community in the wilderness. Rather, they were seeing to improve their lot in the world”; further, “Their tie of loyalty to the Netherlands was an extremely tenuous one since many of them were not even Dutch but French, or Walloon, or English” (Condon, 1968, p. 105).

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Europe, and especially in England, “saw a simultaneous revolution in the survey, the map, and real property” in which “this period…saw significant changes in land tenure, with the intensified erosion of common rights, and a shift towards a commodified market in land” as well as the “agrarian
warfare” of the Elizabethan period (Blomley, 2003, p. 126). Simply put, “the redefinition of property...was vehemently and often violently opposed” (Blomley, 2003, p. 127). It is not surprising that such oppositions included disputes over spatial expansion as well as sociopolitical efforts at creating a non-European – or at least non-Dutch – identity. As the next section demonstrates, the politics of managing non-Dutch spaces extended beyond the comfortable confines of European governments and into the contentious realm of New World geopolitics.

The arrival of Governor Kieft in 1638 brought renewed efforts at spatial settlement and expansion in the village of New Amsterdam. Two ordinances passed in 1640 highlight the concern with trespassing and the extent of local political and social power available to Directors. As the hostilities of the Anglo-Dutch Wars (and associated rivalries) created an increasingly unstable political system in continental Europe, transfer of political power to colonists in the New World provided a tentative fix. Further, giving power to local and regional individuals sought to ensure the success of colonial ventures (and associated goods and profits) regardless of the conflicts within Europe.

Benjamin Schmidt (2009) has described the Dutch experience in the Atlantic World one of “frustration and failure” (p. 165) and suggested that “There was no such thing as a Dutch Atlantic” (p. 163; my italics). Schmidt suggests that Dutch history and its relation to the larger space embedded in “Atlantic” history is best understood as containing three periods: an initial period denoted by the revolt of the Netherlands against Spain and continued hostilities within Europe; a second period beginning with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 and continuing through the Anglo-Dutch Wars; and a third period beginning in the early eighteenth century in which European power was further
reshuffled (Schmidt, 2009). Schmidt’s temporal divisions not only suggest the power of local developments on the Dutch government, but indicate the profound degree to which colonial success (or failure) was seen as indicative of imperial power within continental Europe. This power was dependent not only on the ability to defend a colonial settlement from outside attack, but on the uncontested reproduction of social and political values within that space. In this way, it was important from an early point to define who was Dutch (given rather ambivalent ethnic categories and developing “national” identifications) and transfer these identities to the New World.

The geopolitics of Native American society required a coherent vision of a non-European “other”, though these divisions were in no way limited to the Dutch creation and development of New Amsterdam. For example, the Pequot War, fought in the mid-1630s between Massachusetts Bay colonists (and their allies) and the Pequot tribe, offers an illustration of this process. It has been cited as a “case study through which the use of cultural and postcolonial theories renders a complex narrative of violence, politics, and colonial conquest more transparent”, as “the body [became] a primary site of cultural control” (Cremer, 2008, p. 296). The increasingly “problematic” behavior of Natives in both English and Dutch territory created the opportunity for intra-colonial cooperation among Europeans.

However, this intra-colonial cooperation was relatively short-lived, as Native policy was only one of many parts of colonial projects. As such, it did not offer a substantial foundation for cooperation; these opportunities stemmed primarily from the “comparison, surveillance, and control of Indian colonists [as a] rhetorical and literal tool of colonial domination” (Cremer, 2008, p. 297). The “image of contested manhood”
became the vehicle by which “Pequot bodies continued to be treated [as] hostile [after their defeat in the war and thus] were physically removed from New England, which, in the minds of the conquerors, secured the cultural hegemony of the Englishmen in their households” (Cremer, 2008, p. 299). As this suggests, the need to create identities in direct opposition to those of Natives was a local and regional initiative. While European governments may have sought to ensure colonists’ safety by passing ordinances about European-Native interaction, this was a relatively inadequate way of dealing with a much more complex issue of New World identity.

Ensuring regional defensibility was not simply a matter of ensuring Dutch space was protected from Native and foreign attack, but geopolitically sought to ensure New Amsterdam’s placement within a developing regional urban hierarchy. Further, though “identity-building may result through development of urban social movements”, it also includes “spatial changes [that] have been connected with migrant groups’ politics of representation” or the processes by which “migrants…have gained power by constructing a spatial identity through the commodification of space” (Noussia & Lyons, 2009, p. 602). Such processes of “spatial colonisation may be only temporary or periodic”, especially in instances in which groups take over those “selected public spaces [that act as] a locus in which group identity and urban social fragmentation (and integration) are expressed” (Noussia & Lyons, 2009, p. 602). The social and political upheavals of Westphalian Europe, the contested nature of European colonialism in the New World, and a seemingly ambivalent relationship between European governments and their New World “representatives” provided the foundation for conflict.
Meeting abroad: the English and Dutch on Long Island and beyond

While international and local processes worked together to create a “colonial” experience, they were also creating disconnect between local processes and international expectations. Political and spatial developments required the creation of institutions within the spatial confines of the colony, and the right of Indian land ownership and its relationship to English and Dutch trade was one area of contention. According to some, “inasmuch as the inhabitants of those countries are freemen, and neither his Britannic Majesty’s, nor your High Mightinesses’ subjects, they are free to trade with whomsoever they please” (Graymont, 1985, p. 30). Conflict over whether English or Dutch forces had the power to acquire land in the New World was a legalistic version of “first come, first serve”, in which “the right his Majesty’s subjects have in that country, is justified by first discover, occupation and the possession which they have taken thereof…[as] the true and legitimate proprietors thereof” (Graymont, 1985, p. 31-32). Simply put, the “legitimate proprietors” of Dutch colonialism were the patroons; little thought was given to their relationship within one another (though their wealthy status meant many knew each other prior to their journey to New Amsterdam) or the sharing of power among reproduced political structures.

Individuals chosen for patroonships ultimately held considerable power within colonial New Amsterdam, as representatives in both politics and space of the European colonial intent in the New World. It is also significant that this form of colonization included a distinctly modern form of privatization: rather than allow a large company such as the West India Company to risk major financial losses, the patroon system allowed individuals to “invest” in colonial ventures and “negotiate with the natives…for
a tract of land upon which he was obligated to settle 50 colonists within four years at his own expense” (Gehring, 1994, p. 10). As outlined in the introduction, the patroon system sought to privatize colonial risks, but also resulted in a less active Dutch government.

The arrival of Petrus Stuyvesant in 1647 marked the arrival of the last Dutch director-general. At the same time, Stuyvesant’s term (lasting from 1647 until 1664) saw the placement and transformation of New Amsterdam’s position within a widening Atlantic system that extended beyond traditional confines of colonial space. Soon after his arrival plans were made for “a naval expedition against the Spaniards within the limits of the West India Company’s charter” (Stokes, 1928, p. 25). Despite clearly “international” ambitions, the local spaces of New Amsterdam were still central to the perception of colonial success or failure. The physical state of the colonial village was said to “inspire contempt in the English, French, and Swedish neighbours, as well as among the Indians” (Stokes, 1928, p. 25). A board of surveyors was appointed soon after, in order to “prevent a continuance of irregularities in the building and erecting of houses, such as extending lots far beyond their boundaries, setting up nuisances on highways and streets, and neglecting to build on granted lots” (Stokes, 1928, p. 26). In this light, it is clear that “to have a property in [New Netherland was] to have a right to some use or benefit of land. Such a right is necessarily relational, being held against others”, and thus contains “social and political…effects, origins, and ethical implications” (Blomley, 2003, p. 121).

Further, such rights and privileges must be acknowledged by others, just as the status of a boundary or border does not exist without social acknowledgement; in this case, “property is not a static, pre-given entity, but depends on a continual, active
‘doing’…[which has been termed] ‘persuasion’ – that is, communicative claims to others” (Blomley, 2003, p. 122). During the early years of New Amsterdam’s settlement and expansion, this meant garnering support for political and spatial processes from European governments; beyond New Amsterdam, this required further codification of colonial spaces and hierarchical relationships. For the region of New Netherland, governmental policy and the actions of local space holders clearly focused on making the colony central to regional development. While “space matters to violence, being ‘more than a passive template for the inscription of violence or an object to be manipulated to create political representations’” (Blomley, 2003, p. 123), space also mattered to the legitimacy of colonial governments and colonists within continental Europe. As the diagram below indicates, effective control can be contrasted with the initial land grant to the Dutch (left) and the area of settlement expansion (right) by the mid-1650s.
Figure 2.3: Area of “effective Dutch control”. Based largely on private landholdings and relatively limited extension of political control beyond the confines of the colony. Clearly, the focus of colonial policies and private settlements was shared between the Hudson River and New Amsterdam, with Fort Amsterdam indicated by a red star. © JAL 2010
The politics of “private” space: Kieft’s War and the boundaries of New Amsterdam

As noted previously, New Amsterdam-New York’s development was dependent on the Dutch West India Company, but the West India Company’s attention was in no way focused on North America. “The history of the West India Company is not primarily a history of its North American colony, New Netherland”; in contrast to other companies (such as the Virginia Company and the Bermuda Company) that “aimed at the successful and profitable development of fairly specific geographical areas in the New World…the West India Company had half the world for its oyster” (Condon, 1968, p. vii). Despite the clear commercial power of the patroon system, its possibilities extended far beyond monetary gain, carrying with it “substantial rights and privileges…[and] unlimited right to all ‘fruits, flora, minerals, rivers, and springs’” (Rink, 1986, p. 99).

Colonial rule depended not only on the political support of European powers, but the creation of a sociopolitical system within the colony that acknowledged such rule. In the early years of the colony this involved the passing of laws and ordinances outlining expectations of colonists, as well as the increasing importance (and necessity) of the fort as the symbolic and real center of the colony. While colonial space was initially organized around local efforts at ensuring agricultural production (through the granting of patroonships) and mercantilist success (through the control of trade and the assurance that New Amsterdam would profit from its functional “center” of regional trade), these efforts required the work of new colonial actors.

Throughout this period, the use of maps to aid in these endeavors involved “an inconspicuous yet nonetheless vigorous struggle” involving “a rivalry on terms somewhat
different from others theretofore conducted in America” and based on “the intensifying friction between the Dutch and English at their various points of colonial contact” (Schmidt, 1997, p. 549). The use of maps is not simply about staking a claim to lands in hopes of European recognition, but they “provided the means to construct, no less than project, an image of power and possession abroad. No mere semblance of empire, maps furnished monarchs and merchants the very materials out of which distant empires could be fashioned” (Schmidt, 1997, p. 551). Cartographic power sought to achieve social and political legitimacy through the adoption of spatial codification methods, though power was not limited to Europeans in the New World but also adopted by Native Groups.

The relationship between Dutch and English imperialist tendencies within continental Europe was limited by geographic proximity and the influence of other imperial powers, such as the Spanish and French. In the New World, however, Dutch power was created in direct opposition to English interests, and thus provides an indicator of imperial geopolitics within the created space of the colonial New World. On April 11, 1650, a report issued by the States General and of the United Dutch Provinces entitled a “Provisional Order respecting the Government, Preservation, and Peopling of New Netherland”; this report sought to alleviate the growing grievances among colonial administrators and European powers, as well as local disputes regarding the new government (Stokes, 1928, p. 33). These local disputes occurred within a regional system of competitive imperialism, specifically in regards to the territory of Long Island.

An increasingly contentious relationship between the Dutch and English in the New World, coupled with Native threats, resulted in efforts by 1650 to negotiate what would become known as the Hartford Treaty. This treaty would define the boundary
between English and Dutch territories, most significantly for Long Island. During September 1650, Stuyvesant went to Hartford and “began negotiations with the commissioners of the United Colonies of New England for the settlement of existing differences” (Stokes, 1928, p. 34). It is significant that Stuyvesant was “not to grant land to anybody unless the grantee made proper acknowledgement of the authority of the Dutch West India Company” (Stokes, 1928, p. 34). The spaces of the New World could no longer survive without the methods of territorial delineation developing in Europe during this time.

Imperial disorganization, regional organization, and the creation of a Dutch urban system

While conflict was clearly a part of colonial geopolitics, cooperation was not impossible. For example, the early seventeenth century saw “the possibility of a commercial alliance with the English and French joint-stock companies to further the war with Spain in the New World…” (Rink, 1986, p. 72; emphasis added). Though the hopes of such a cooperative group were soon dashed, unstable geopolitical relations clearly extended beyond the bounds of continental Europe. Further, the threat of the English joining forces with the French “may have influenced the [Dutch West India] Company’s decision to colonize New Netherland”; further, “Prompted by their own definition of legal ownership…the decision to settle Walloon refugees in New Netherland was made with amazing speed, especially in light of the delays that had plagued the efforts of early colonists to settle in New Netherland” (Rink, 1986, p. 73).

As the social, political, and spatial development of New Amsterdam took shape, the spaces of the colonial city began to mirror these processes: “The physical state of
Manhattan’s interface with world was also the physical seat of New Amsterdam’s incorporated city, the place where Manhattan residents focused their political attention” (Maika, 2005, p. 93). Understanding the Dutch Atlantic involves placing Dutch interests alongside those of the English, specifically as regional development and local expansionist initiatives in New Amsterdam brought English and Dutch settlers into contact on Long Island. Central to this thesis is the argument that Dutch reactions to English threats in New Amsterdam, and indeed their very categorization as threats, indicates that New Amsterdam was viewed as central to both powers’ New World policies. As the next chapter demonstrates, these processes of spatial interaction and sociopolitical reaction suggested a need within the New World to develop a system of regional organization. As the section on Atlantic imperialism demonstrated, the increasingly interconnected nature of the Atlantic World provided New Amsterdam with the opportunity for trade specialization. While this ensured Dutch New Netherland would become regionally important, it also placed the Dutch colony in direct conflict with English interests in the area of New Amsterdam, which sought to ensure the Dutch posed no great threat to English interests in North America.

From the Hartford Treaty to the Navigation Acts: Conflict across the Atlantic

In 1651, the British Commonwealth Parliament issued the Navigation Acts. This direct attack on Dutch supremacy at sea brought European geopolitics to the forefront of colonial development as colonial mercantilist efforts became embedded in the geopolitical processes of European imperialism. The importance of the Navigation Acts is twofold: first, it was a direct attempt by the English to restrict colonial trade to English merchants; and second, they sought to limit Dutch expansion in the New World by
keeping mercantilist profits from being traded within and beyond the confines of Dutch New Netherland. In this way, the Navigation Acts were not simply an attempt to control capitalist profit in colonial ventures, but sought to ensure English geopolitical dominance in both Europe and the New World.

Despite cursory attempts at commercial cooperation, in this case largely against the French, the Navigation Acts did little to quell the growing geopolitical conflicts over English and Dutch shipping opportunities, or the English use of French loans to pay for attacks against the Dutch (Haley, 1988, p. 103). The importance of commercial ventures and shipping for the survival of colonial efforts and their continued ability to support European powers cannot be overstated. The Navigation Acts represent a distinctly European attempt to quell Dutch colonial efforts in the New World. Similar to the Anglo-Dutch Wars of the seventeenth century, the Acts arose out of the contested geopolitical system of Early Modern Europe, and influenced events in the Old and New World alike. As the next section demonstrates, these events illustrate the ways in which imperial disorganization in Europe created the possibility for geopolitical contestation within colonial North America. These events provided further impetus for the organization of regional institutions and cooperation among New World actors, as they were increasingly unable to rely on European governments for economic and political support.

While the first quarter century of Dutch efforts in New Amsterdam was coming to a close, Dutch dominance of New World trade was far from certain. Increases in immigration from Holland increased as travel prices fell, helped by “the assurance of a more progressive government and greater privileges for the commonality, resulting from
the recent remonstrances to Holland, no doubt had its effect in an increased immigration” (Middleton, 2010; Stokes, 1928, p. 35). By this time it had become clear that European interests were unable to coexist with those of Native Americans; however, control of land acquisition still rested largely in the hands of European powers.

The lack of clarity regarding colonists’ political power was closely linked to its uncertainty as a legitimate, self-supporting territory. How much help from Europe was required for colonial “success”? The “banner year of New Amsterdam” was the status given to the 1653 grant of a municipal government (Stokes, 1928, p. 38) by the United Dutch Provinces. While limited self-government was granted to the colony, an increasingly volatile situation in continental Europe as well as the uncertainty of New World resulted in an increased focus on further fortifications to Fort Amsterdam. What remained particularly unclear, however, was the place of the Dutch colony within the New World. Clarifying this issue was not a matter of spatial expansion in the New World, but required the deliberate extension of Old World spatial politics, understood largely in terms of “geopolitics”, to the New World. Ultimately, this allowed for New World actors to compete with Old World geopolitical systems, rather than within them.
CHAPTER 3

SHIFTING CENTERS, CONTESTED PERIPHERIES, AND IMPERIAL COMPETITION IN COLONIAL SPACE: THE TRANSITION FROM A DUTCH VILLAGE TO AN ENGLISH TOWN, 1654-1676

Introduction

The period from 1654 to 1676 involved more than a transition from Dutch to English rule. During this period, New Amsterdam’s importance increased within regional systems of trade and commerce, making it a geopolitically valuable asset to competing imperial powers. Not surprisingly, the Dutch focus on developing New Amsterdam was recognized by the English, who not surprisingly chose it as the focus of their territorial expansion in the New World. Within Europe, the English king Charles II sought to not only “preserve and improve a good intelligence and correspondence” with New England’s southern neighbors, but sought to “end ‘unneighbourly and unbrotherly contentions’ concerning boundaries” (Schwarz, 1979, p. 5). Such intentions suggest realization that colonial projects in the New World had political power that extended beyond New World boundaries. In many cases, this power extended back across the Atlantic to the European governments of the Dutch and English.

The interactive nature of imperial-colonial ventures analyzed in this chapter suggests that the changing power structures of Europe did not just create political contestations within continental Europe but were highly influential in deciding the fate of New World colonists as well. The relationship between imperial and colonial developments suggests that the fragmented nature of colonial development policies
(Comaroff, 1998) and the spatial relationships between centers and peripheries (Cooper & Stoler, 1997; Onuf, 2002) was central to identity formation (Elliott, 1987) within colonial North America. Though these processes occurred at different scales and often redefined power relations, local developments held the power to transcend scales and territorial boundaries. The diagram below (Figure 3.1) illustrates the ways in which English-Dutch interactions had begun to create spheres of influence, overlapping (and thus providing the foundation for possible conflict) on Long Island.

Figure 3.1: Diagram showing respective Dutch and English spheres of influence, as well as their overlapping imperial ambitions on Long Island. © JAL 2010
The instability of Early Modern Europe: Anglo-Dutch Wars and the Navigation Acts

The Anglo-Dutch wars of the seventeenth century have been traced to “the increasing or even predominant influence of the mercantile bourgeoisie…[and] The pursuit of mercantilist policies to develop and expand overseas trade” (Jones, J.R., 1996, p. 4). This clearly suggests a link between Early Modern Europe and its colonial endeavors; at the same time, “the wars that resulted, and which are seen as the reason why England replaced the Dutch Republic as the predominant commercial power, are taken as read, as merely the mechanics of an inevitable and scientific process of historical change” (Jones, J.R., 1996, p. 5). Such interpretations highlight the interconnectivity of the British and Dutch during the Early Modern period of Europe and the central place of seafaring and trade in such conflicts.

Commercial trade during this period largely depended on access and control of the sea, and the drive to accumulate capital led to intra-continental wars among European powers attempting to get ahead of one another. While such interpretations rest on valid assumptions regarding power, wealth, and international trade, they fail to place these competitive processes in a larger geopolitical framework. Most importantly, they ignore the individuals living in Europe’s overseas colonies, suggesting that colonists were passive recipients to the social, political, and spatial changes of continental Europe.

Therefore, understanding the impact of the three Anglo-Dutch wars must not be limited to the physical boundaries of continental Europe, nor to the paths of Early Modern explorers and mercantilists. Instead, I suggest that the Anglo-Dutch wars were one of many geopolitical responses to imperial competition that extended far beyond the battlefields of Europe or the colonies of the Americas. Beginning with the English Civil
War in 1642, the political factions of the English and the state’s role as an imperial power became debatable. The official end of this conflict in 1651 was followed by the imposition of the Navigation Acts (requiring all English merchandise to be shipped on English ships), which hoped to impede Dutch commercial development and ultimately led to the Anglo-Dutch Wars.

**Exporting conflict: the European origins of the Hartford Treaty**

As mentioned previously, the Hartford Treaty was begun in 1650 and sought to provide an agreed upon territorial solution to the boundary between English and Dutch territories, specifically with regards to Long Island. While ultimately rendered unnecessary with the transfer of Dutch New Netherland in 1664 by the English, this treaty was central to imperial competition within the New World. Not only did it put colonists with different ethnic backgrounds in close proximity to one another, but it represented a political solution to a territorial conflict carried out within the local spaces of New Amsterdam by its political representatives. At the same time, it paved the way for intra-colonial conflicts as the expansion of European powers within the New World became politically charged, territorially contested, and ultimately a result of numerous geopolitical forces.

The year 1650 brought renewed efforts by Kieft to not only organize and reinforce the colony’s defenses, but to clarify New Amsterdam’s political and spatial position within New Netherland. The Hartford Treaty resolved a longstanding territorial dispute, this treaty also created the possibility of a zone of conflict on Long Island as English and Dutch forces sought to reinforce and develop their portions of the island.
The regional hierarchy that New Amsterdam’s politicians slowly developed sought to not only ensure that Long Island remain in Dutch control, but realized that Dutch loss of Long Island could mean the end of New Netherland’s sovereignty.

On 7 June 1660, the provincial officials appointed Jacques Cortelyou, surveyor-general of New Netherland, “to survey and make a map of the lots within the city” (Stokes, 1928, p. 81). Receipt of the plan was acknowledged on December 24, with a note by the Directors that “We have been pleased to receive the map of the City of New Amsterdam: we noticed, that according to our opinion too great spaces are as yet without buildings” (Stokes, 1928, p. 81). A further note was made regarding the existence of large gardens, no doubt resulting from the agricultural heritage of the town, that in some cases “the houses apparently are surrounded by excessively large plots and gardens; perhaps with the intention of cutting streets through them, when the population increases, although if standing closer together, a defence might be easier” (Stokes, 1928, p. 81).

Further difficulties in 1660 can be noted, including Stuyvesant informing the council on November 13, 1659 of a “troublesome time” and “the danger of an invasion by New Englanders” (Stokes, 1928, p. 82).

**The geopolitics of imperial transfer: from a Dutch core to an English periphery**

The English reached Long Island around August 15-25, 1664, and Stuyvesant wrote to the Directors in Amsterdam on August 22 to September 1 to notify them. The “loss of the country was certain” through the acknowledgement that “the arrival of the English fleet” almost certainly meant “that Long Island was lost” and “New Amsterdam was summoned to surrender” (Stokes, 1928, p. 112). By this point, English and Dutch
interests were not simply about quantifying their colonial possessions or debating qualitative differences in colonial spaces: rather, the politics of imperial-colonial relationships was predicated on an evolving and unstable geopolitical system in continental Europe that had been transferred to the people and spaces of the New World. The disputes of the Old World were no less important than before, but the spaces of the New World had become an imperial battleground.

The final years of New Netherland’s existence embody the struggles of colonial governments, European imperialism, and the myth of an empty space ready for European colonization. As noted by Oliver A. Rink, the period is characterized by a number of developments. First, increased immigration and the “firm if autocratic hand of Pieter Stuyvesant” had resulted in the creation of local political institutions with some degree of independence from Europe; second, the Dutch in the New World had shown their military power through the expulsion of the Swedish settlement (known as New Sweden) on the Delaware River; third, the boundary between English and Dutch claims had been solved through the passing of the Hartford Treaty, presumably reducing the threat of conflict on Long Island; and fourth, Indian wars had again threatened to wipe out the Dutch and English settlements in the region (Rink, 1986, p. 214). While each of these successes suggested increased opportunities for the Dutch in the New World, by 1664 these illusions had disappeared with the effectual transfer of the colony from the Dutch to the English. This transfer was rooted not in the conflicts of the New World, but the politics of the Old and the spoils of the Second Anglo-Dutch War.

The relationship between Europe and the New World until this point has been portrayed as one of occasional intervention and a profound degree of ambivalence.
Events of the late 1650s illustrate a profound shift in this imperial attitude, as continental Europe began to take a more active role in the social, political, and spatial development of its colonies. The difficulties faced by the municipal government acting on its own were increasingly illustrated through the difficulties of controlling colonists and the space(s) they inhabited.

European powers began to slowly realize the geographical potential of organizing colonial events to suit their interests. Politically, colonists in the New World were no longer willing to wait for ordinances to be passed in the colonies and approved by European powers; it seems likely that an increasing sense of independence was viewed as a way of ensuring that European powers did not interfere in the work of colonial officials. Colonial identities throughout this period were increasingly focused not on the region of New Netherland, but on the spatial characteristics of the town of New Amsterdam.

Ensuring an orderly town was at the forefront of political efforts, such as a proclamation that “everybody’ was required to ‘keep the streets clean before his house or lot’” and the beginning of another detailed survey of the colony and in some places “altered the streets, lots, and fences considerably” (Stokes, 1928, p. 62). Further, “the Directors of the Company at Amsterdam drew up a new plan of financial administration” (Stokes, 1928, p. 62-63), clearly recognizing the potential power of local development. At this point in the colony’s development, it is clear that not only were geopolitical concerns within the colonies providing the impetus for local decisions regarding the future of the region. The slow decline of Dutch power within Europe not only provided the English within Europe with an increased opportunity at geopolitical dominance, but no doubt suggested to New World actors that their livelihoods could no longer depend on European support.
Old centers and new peripheries: incorporating the local

Early in 1659, word reached New Netherland of war preparations in New England, and a March 13th meeting of the Dutch provincial and city authorities “led to a plan for the defence of the city” (Stokes, 1928, p. 40). Of critical importance during this period was the need for peace among English residents of Long Island (Stokes, 1928, p. 42). Not surprisingly, English delegates announced that “they would form a union on Long Island among each other” (Stokes, 1928, p. 42) resulting in the creation of “a land dag, or general assembly, consisting of ten Dutchmen and nine Englishmen” (Stokes, 1928, p. 43). The events of this period in New Amsterdam’s history demonstrate the ways in which imperial borders were expanded both literally and figuratively: the Treaty of Hartford (begun in 1650) had still not been agreed upon, but it was clear that peaceful coexistence among Dutch and English colonists in the New World was unlikely. These disputes were not resolved by the early 1660s and local politics increasingly focused on the spatial protection of the colonial town. By 1664, the Second Anglo-Dutch War had come to a close in Europe and the territory of New Netherland had been transferred to English control.

The year 1664 raises a number of social, political, and spatial questions. Simply put, what effect did the end of the Second Anglo-Dutch War and transfer of New Amsterdam (and New Netherland) have on the residents of the colonial city? Further, how do the events of a single city illustrate the evolving colonial geographies of imperial transfer? Despite desires of peace and harmony within the New World, European powers were growing increasingly wary of one another in the New World. In the middle of these
European disputes was a new generation of American colonists, holding far less “European” identity than those before them.

So, did everything change in 1664? The Anglo-Dutch Wars of the seventeenth century as well as the Navigation Acts of the 1650s created an increasingly contentious situation in the New World. The Second Anglo-Dutch War not only increased tension between the Dutch and English in the New World, but included the transfer of New Netherland territory from the Dutch to the English. Not surprisingly, English conceptualizations of their newly conquered colonial city sought to show the self-sufficiency of the city’s space and highlight the orderly nature of this geopolitically strategic space.

**Beyond European geopolitics: the sociopolitical transition of local space**

Historical accounts of the Dutch loss of New Amsterdam (and New Netherland) to the English appear limited by the boundaries of the lost colony, failing to consider the geopolitical context in which such events occurred. Further, they often fail to consider the impact of local political or spatial decisions, as well as the identity of colonists as they struggled to retain livelihoods with less and less support from whatever European government claimed the territory they lived on. Thomas J. Condon (quoting John R. Broadhead) notes that attributing such losses to the “inhibiting, indeed the pernicious, influence of the West India Company” erroneously suggests that Dutch interests might have been saved by less a less privatized colonial system. Instead, Condon suggests that “the roots of a distinctively Dutch society were never firmly established in New Netherland” (Condon, 1968, p. 119) and thus the English takeover was not against a
simple “Dutch” population. In contrast, the English worked to create a series of urban settlements along the eastern coast of North America, but the social, political, and spatial organization was kept uniform and decidedly “English”. As a result, the surrender by the West India Company (and therefore the Dutch government) of its New Amsterdam and New Netherland holdings was not particularly damaging: “the surrender meant merely the loss of one – and by no means the most significant – of its many far-flung enterprises in the New World” (Condon, 1968, p. 174). For the English, the capture of New Netherland not only affirmed its New World power, but ensured imperial support for colonial ventures within continental Europe.

It is significant that New Amsterdam was now a peripheral colonial city within New England. The “transfer” of power from the Dutch to the English in 1664 involved the Articles of Capitulation, designed to be “the essence of moderation, conciliation, and even compassion. There would be no punitive expulsion of Dutch settlers, no expropriation of Dutch property (including slaves), no assaults on Dutch culture” (Burrows & Wallace, 1999, p. 77). Unsettled boundaries with Massachusetts and Connecticut became increasingly worrisome; in September 1664 Stuyvesant attempted to come to an agreement with “the United Colonies with respect to the intercolonial boundaries”, though it ended “unsatisfactorily” (Stokes, 1928, p. 98). Preparations were made “against aggression and attack, as well as to carry on the warfare with the hostile Indians” (Stokes, 1928, p. 98). Not surprisingly, “the closing year of the Dutch regime” was a year of “grave anxiety, of Indian massacres, of rebellion, of invasion and conquest” (Stokes, 1928, p. 100). Perhaps European interests were not as far from the minds of colonists as it is sometimes suggested.
The transition from Dutch to English rule in New Amsterdam was no doubt one of profound impact. Colonists were no longer under the rule of the Dutch or West India Company, but had gained provincial status as a colony and in technically possessed status as English citizens as well. These efforts began the political and spatial transformation of the colonial city, and the renaming of the colony to New York, after the Duke of York. Despite a seemingly smooth transition from Dutch to English power and the relief at the “gentle, wise, and intelligent” gentlemen sent to control the Dutch (Burrows & Wallace, 1999, p. 78), the existence of collaborators (p. 78) and dissidents (p. 80) no doubt pitted New World interests against one another in the already contested space of the colony. Despite this, the proactive approach taken by English and Dutch citizens alike demonstrated the dividing lines of colonial identity along ethnicity, with “‘some praising the forbearance’ shown by the provincial government, [with] others declaring ‘the non-resistance and non-opposition by force and violence to be cowardice, scandal and insult’ for the Dutch nation” (Stokes, 1928, p. 103).

In March 1664, King Charles II granted “a part of Maine, all of Long Island, Martha’s Vineyard, Nantucket, ‘and all the land from the west side of Connecticutte River to the East side of De la Ware Bay’” to his brother, James, the Duke of York (Stokes, 1928, p. 108). The text of this is particularly indicative of the comprehensive nature of imperial control envisioned:

“…power and Authority of Government, and Command in or over the Inhabitants of the said Territories or Islands tyme and att all tymes hereafter for ever for their severall defence and safety encounter expulse repell and resist by force of Armes as well by Sea as by land and all wayes and meanes whatsoever all such Person and Persons as without the special Lycence of our said deare Brother and his heires or Assignes shall attempt to inhabite within several
Precincts and Lymitts of our said Territories and Islands” (Stokes, 1928, p. 108-109).

The joint articles of surrender were completed by the English and Dutch at Stuyvesant’s farmhouse, and the town formally surrendered to Nicholls on August 29-September 8, as the city was formally named New York (Stokes, 1928, p. 113). With this transfer, Richard Nicolls became the first English governor of the colonial city, with citizens required to take an oath of allegiance to the English Crown. The oath included the expectation of being: “a true subject to the king of Great Britain’ [and] to be obedient to the king, to the Duke of York, and to such governors and officers as were appointed by such authority” (Stokes, 1928, p. 113). Objections to the oath resulted in Nicolls leaving, though “two days later a general meeting was again assembled and the matter was settled amicably” (Stokes, 1928, p. 113). Figure 3.2 (below) shows the 1664 claim by the Duke of York.

Nicolls’ successor, Francis Lovelace, was forced to encourage spatial (re)development of the colonial city closer line with British interests in the New World. It is not insignificant that problems in Europe prevented the British government from playing a central role in this process, and Lovelace therefore sought to “let local interests and circumstances guide his negotiations with neighboring colonies”, though of course
“he always tried to anticipate the wishes and commands of his superiors in England” (Schwarz, 1979, p. 18). Concerns with negotiations between separate colonies sought to not only preserve the sovereignty of individual European actors in the New World, but in the case of independent spaces like colonial Rhode Island, ensure that no part of the colony fell under any “forraighne Power” (Schwarz, 1979, p. 19). In this way, English actors in territory that still held Dutch identity and a significant Dutch population was placed in the middle of geopolitical struggles originating in continental Europe. At the local scale, colonists were increasingly forced to define themselves socially, politically, and ultimately spatially along European lines. Identity was clearly becoming increasingly important, and increasingly contested.

Figure 3.3: English control in the late 1660s. Centered on the Massachusetts Bay Colony and diminishing in influence towards the former New Netherland territory. This reduced influence resulted not only in the loss of New Amsterdam’s core status, but allowed dissent within the former Dutch colony to grow in opposition to the English Crown. © JAL 2010
The spring of 1665 witnessed the continuation of colonial unrest, as “The Dutch had never become reconciled to the loss of New Netherland, and their controversy with England developed into open war” (Stokes, 1928, p. 162). The need to categorize the inhabitants of New York was clear: Nicolls “was given a list of the inhabitants assessed for the purpose” of paying for the quartering of soldiers, which “may be considered the earliest known street directory of New York”, containing 254 names (Stokes, 1928, p. 162), though significantly the location of inhabitants was deemed more important than other identifying information. The confiscation of Dutch property, specifically the estate of the Dutch West India Company, “may be looked upon as war measures” (Stokes, 1928, p. 163); despite the looming hostilities, a treaty signed at Breda in 1667 allowed New York to avoid direct attack. In this way, “this agreement [allowed] each of the contestants [to keep] the territory held when the treaty was made, whether it had been seized before or during the war”; further, “This gave New Netherland to England and certain possessions in the East were handed over to the Dutch” (Stokes, 1928, p. 163). News of the European agreement reached Nicolls on January 1, 1668, after which “He took advantage of the cessation of hostilities to reward certain of his English followers” with land grants of islands (Stokes, 1928, p. 163). Nicolls chose to be relieved of his duties as governor after this; Colonel Francis Lovelace was sent in his place, though he kept most of Nicolls’ governmental institutions.

In opposition to Dutch conceptions of imperialism and colonial control, “implicit in British colonization were two new ‘principles of policy’”: “the primacy of commerce” and “the distribution of authority between the metropolis and the colonies through an implicit process of negotiation that left colonials with not just the ‘image’ but the
‘substance’ of the British constitution” (Greene, 2002, p. 276). It comes as little surprise that for English as well as Dutch settlers, this authoritatively shift set the stage for profound political and spatial conflict. In this way,

“the centrifugal forces of imperial construction had repeatedly prevented metropolitan states from bringing the many transatlantic polities established in and across the Atlantic under [adequate] levels of supervision…[as] the fragmented and loose character of these polities did not conform to metropolitan visions of imperial organization” (Greene, 2002, p. 267).

The spatial reorganization of New Amsterdam (and New Netherland in general) was thus begun: “English institutions were established as rapidly as possible, and English names were given to the divisions of the territory of the province” with Albania (New Jersey) referring to the land between the Hudson and Delaware Rivers and Long Island, Staten Island, and modern Westchester County organized into a shire named “Yorkshire” (Stokes, 1928, p. 160). The Dutch system of government was “far from democratic, yet the English system was even less so; for in place of a board of magistrates which had the right to nominate its own successors, we find a magistracy appointed by the provincial governor” (Stokes, 1928, p. 160). The incorporation of “New Harlem and all the people living upon Mahattan Island” was envisioned “as one Body Politique & Corporate” (Stokes, 1928, p. 161). The politics of the colonial transfer had been completed and the transitioning of colonial spaces had begun. Not only was New Amsterdam no longer a capitol city, but its status had been reduced to that of any other colonial English town.

Two descriptions from around 1670 highlight the intrinsic value placed on urban form and its distinctly “English” character:

“…the Town is compact and oval, with very fair Streets and several good Houses; the rest are built much after the manner of Holland, to the number of about four hundred Houses, which in those parts are held considerable: Upon one side of the
Town is James-Fort capable to lodge three hundred Souldiers and Officers; it hath four Bastions, forty Pieces of Cannon mounted; the Walls of Stone, lin’d with a thick Rampart of Earth; well accommodated with a Spring of fresh Water, always furnish’d with Arms and Ammunition, against Accidents” (Stokes, 1928, p. 165).

A second description reads: “New York is built most of Brick and Stone, and covered with red and black Tile, and the land being high, this gives at a distance a pleasing Aspect to the spectators. The Inhabitants consist most of English and Dutch, and have a considerable Trade with the Indians, … here anyone may furnish himself with land, and live rent-free, yea, with such a quantity of Land, that he may weary himself with walking over his fields of Corn, and all sorts of Gain; and let his stock of Cattel amount to some hundreds, he needs not fear their want of pasture in the Summer, or Fodder in the Winter, the Woods affording sufficient supply. For the Summer-season, where you have grass as high as a man’s knees, nay, as high as his waste, interlaced with Peavines, and other weeds that Cattel much delight in, as much as a man can press through; and these woods also every mile or half-mile are furnished with fresh ponds, brooks or rivers, where all sorts of Cattel, during the heat of the day, do quench their thirst and cool themselves; these brooks and rivers being inwironed of each side with several sorts of trees and Grape-vines, the Vines, Arbor-like, interchanging places and crossing these rivers, does shade and shelter them from the scorching beams of Sols fiery influence” (Stokes, 1928, p. 165).

The turning of geopolitical tables: English New York becomes Dutch New Orange

On August 6, 1673 the Dutch attacked New York and briefly regained their former colonial city. New York was renamed New Orange and Fort James became Fort Willem Hendrick, both given in honor of the Prince of Orange. “The necessity of putting the town in a proper state of defence was apparent, and new fortifications of earth and sod were begun”; other changes included the removal of “houses and orchards lying close under the walls of the fort” with “the owners indemnified for their loss of property” and “the city gate was ordered closed at sundown” (Stokes, 1928, p. 168); finally, “people were forbidden to come upon the fortifications during the night, or to leave the city except by the gates” (Stokes, 1928, p. 168-169).
Andros quickly moved to reinstate English practices: “The Duke’s Laws were again confirmed. Governor Andros re-established the government of New York City upon the English model by appointing a mayor, alderman, and sheriff, and the citizens were required to take an oath of allegiance to the new government” (Stokes, 1928, p. 169). Improvements implemented by Andros included the construction of a “fair or market for the sale of cattle, grain, and other produce of the country” and the construction of a dock in front of City Hall. This indicates a renewed focus on local protection and the identity of citizens based not on a region (formerly New Netherland) but on the local space of New Orange (formerly New Amsterdam). As the return to Dutch control indicates, the colonial city increasingly became the focus of both Dutch and English attention. Not only was the city space strategically located, but its continued growth and development was seen as indicative of the imperial power of whichever European government was “officially” in control.

An ordinance of September 11, 1673 sought to warn against “strangers” and provided a reminder of the contentious relationship between the Dutch and English within colonial New Amsterdam-New York:

“Whereas it is found that many Strangers are daily passing in and out of this City of New Orange without giving an account of themselves or their business...at this conjuncture of time ought no wise to be tolerated or allowed in a well governed city...[therefore] all Strangers who have not taken the Oath of allegiance or obtained any license from Us, shall depart, within 24 hours are the publication hereof, from this City and its jurisdiction” (O’Callaghan, 1868, p. 472)

Colonial ventures were about more than “settlement” or “expansion”, but involved a multiplicity of social, political, and spatial processes. In the case of New Amsterdam’s transition to New York, the role of the colonist must be given a central
place: the “transition” of spaces was not simply a matter of political processes but of
social and political formations occurring in colonial space. Given the distinctly spatial
element of transition, difficulties arose through the “improper conveyance of real
property” as property in some Dutch villages had been “sold four or five times ‘without
being duly recorded’” (Stokes, 1928, p. 101). Clearly, a stronger governmental system
was required. Documents from the period suggest not only did Dutch forces take an
active interest in regaining social, political, and spatial control of the colony, but that
such efforts indicate a profound belief in the centrality of New Amsterdam to Dutch
interests, regardless of official political changes that negated New Amsterdam’s existence
and placed New York in a peripheral position within New England.

Despite Dutch efforts at retaining a non-English identity, their efforts would
ultimately prove futile. Colve’s Charter, passed in 1674, involved the renewal of a grant
to the Duke of York. While a treaty signed at Westminster made these changes obsolete,
political events such as this attempted to reaffirm the relationship between European and
New World actors. The terms of the treaty included: “New Orange was returned to Great
Britain, and on November 10, 1674, Sir Edmund Andros, whom the Duke of York had
commissioned governor of New York, received the surrender of the town” (Stokes, 1928,
p. 169); again, “The citizens were absolved from their oath of allegiance to the States
General and their rights in property were confirmed” (Stokes, 1928, p. 169). Andros
quickly moved to reinstate English practices: “The Duke’s Laws were again confirmed.
Governor Andros re-established the government of New York City upon the English
model by appointing a mayor, alderman, and sheriff, and the citizens were required to
take an oath of allegiance to the new government” (Stokes, 1928, p. 169). Improvements
implemented by Andros included the construction of a “fair or market for the sale of cattle, grain, and other produce of the country” and the construction of a dock in front of City Hall.

Figure 3.4: The organization of English space on the former Dutch village. Base map source: Ville de Manathe ou Nouvelle-Yorc. New York Public Library, Digital Library.

The imperial transition from Dutch to English space allowed for not only the peripheralization of space, but the opportunity for English failures to be blamed on Dutch colonists. A declaration regarding the actions of the Dutch against the English noted that these events “had shown that ‘all wars and troubles caused’ to the Dutch by their ‘neighbours of the English nation’ were ‘based upon the desire’ of plundering New Amsterdam and obtaining booty” (Stokes, 1928, p. 104). In this way, the dedication of New Amsterdam to the continued protection of its own inhabitants as well as Dutch
settlers elsewhere in New Netherland, was indicative; “They dreamed that it [New Netherland] might even be a refuge for the people of the Netherlands, if the mother country were ‘visited by cruel wars, civil or with outside nations’” (Stokes, 1928, p. 105).

Despite these wishes colonial governments were unable to raise the needed money for fortifications: “nor could the inhabitants of the city be burdened with more taxes than were already being imposed” (Stokes, 1928, p. 105). Such threats resulted in the signing of numerous private contracts for the improvement of the city, with the city court addressing Stuyvesant on “the imminent dangers of the province” and the need to convene an Assembly to pass “whatever measures were deemed to be expedient ‘for the prosperity, quiet and peace’ of the country”, with approval coming on March 18 and issuing a writ on April 1 for surrounding towns to send delegates to New Amsterdam (Stokes, 1928, p. 107). In this way, the continued centrality of the colonial city was extended into a regional effort at protecting the “nation” against foreign influence or invasion. The new “regional order”, centered increasingly on an “English New World” instead of individual colonial cities, is illustrated in the map below, in which English versus non-English space.

Finally, questions of European rule within New World colonies populated by individuals with few ties to continental Europe provided the impetus for popular revolt and local leadership. The future of colonial rule within the New World was no longer a matter of European politics and the formation of spatial ideals on American soil; rather, New World geopolitical actors were on relatively even footing with their European counterparts: center-periphery relationships within Europe were mirrored by center-periphery relationships within the colonies of North America, both explained through
geopolitical analyses. Finally, identity in the colonial city had become not simply a matter of European country of origin but was now tied to the spaces of New York through ethnic identifications that provided a way to divide and understand city space.
CHAPTER 4

A REBELLIOUS DUTCH PERIPHERY: GROUNDING ENGLISH IDENTITY
THROUGH THE CODIFICATION AND ETHNICIZATION OF SPACE

Introduction

As the previous chapter demonstrated, the events of 1664 were about far more than the transfer of colonial power from Dutch to English authorities. As such, the period from 1676 to 1691 was about more than the social, political, and spatial development of an English city on the “ruins” of a former Dutch village. This chapter likewise focuses on the politics of “creating” a colonial city on the English model, a process that occurred socially, politically, and spatially in direct contradiction of existing Dutch systems.

Utilizing theories of ethnicity (understood in its rather ambiguous seventeenth-century form) and space, I argue that through the imperial conflicts of Early Modern Europe, colonial ventures sought to use problematic and changing identities. Ideas of “national origin” did not exist in the forms they do today, so other methods of sociopolitical identification were required. One element of this involved the “Anglicization” of space, most simply through the creation of symbols of English power throughout colonial cities. However, social identity could not rely on the physical infrastructure of colonial cities. As such, ethnicity became a dominant form of colonial identification, allowing for the division into categories of “us” and “them”. As this chapter demonstrates, the political uncertainties of the later seventeenth century led not only to bloody conflict and the rebellion by Dutch inhabitants of New York, but to the further division of the colonial city along ethnic lines.
As noted previously, post-Westphalian Europe held the nation-state (in whatever early form) became increasingly focused on the ideal of territorial sovereignty. Not surprisingly, this ideal was transferred to the colonies of North America, and colonial space was divided into “discrete…territorial units” (Murphy, 1996, p. 82). That conflict(s) would arise out of this situation is hardly surprising. As noted by Jack P. Greene,

“…recurrent contests between governors and elected houses of assembly and ‘the growth of colonial self-government’…[with] an almost total consensus…that ‘the most conspicuous feature’ of ‘the political and institutional aspects…of the eighteenth century…was the rise of the colonial assembly with its growth to self-conscious activity and de facto independence of royal control” (Greene, 1969, p. 337).

While the creation of a [colonial] city required a “functional focus on commercial activities” organized by the creation of a “centre of government and administration, culture, social networking and economic enterprise” (Pacione, 2005, p. 667), political structures of New World governance were increasingly separated from their European counterparts.

Political liberties, spatial privileges, and the Dongan Charter of 1683

Beginning in the early 1680s, Governor Thomas Dongan began working on the reorganization of New York City politics. The political changes of the 1680s (led by Dongan) involved “the most extensive reorganization of the central and local government since 1665” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 181). These changes focused not only on the political system of an increasingly independent colonial city, but more significantly, focused on the ways in which local politics provided a model for regional developments. On 9 November 1683, work began on the document that would ultimately come to be known
“Dongan’s Charter”. It sought to spatially ground the “political and economic privileges” of colonists based on identity, including the division of the city into six wards (Ritchie, 1977, p. 182) to facilitate social and political control of an increasingly diverse population.

More specifically, the assembly “drew up a charter of liberties, provided for new customs duties, and claimed the taxing power for itself” (Stokes, 1928, p. 174). In the end, “These and other legislative bills were approved by the governor, and were put in operation provisionally until the Duke’s consent could be obtained” (Stokes, 1928, p. 174). Dongan was asked to “report upon the advantage of granting to the city of New York ‘immunities and priviledges beyond w’t other parts of my territoryes doe enjoy [sic]’” (Stokes, 1928, p. 174). Important additional requests included: “that the city might be divided into six wards”; that the freemen in each ward might annually elect their own officers”; and “that the city magistrates might appoint a treasurer to collect the public revenues and pay all debts”, among others (Stokes, 1928, p. 174). The distribution of wards in New York is shown in the diagram below.
Further requests in 1683 were also partially granted, though the power of the governor was retained in many cases; in addition, “the whole island had been ordered surveyed, and when this had been done, some lands in the woods, not yet disposed of, should be granted to the city” (Stokes, 1928, p. 175). Division of the city into six wards was agreed upon by the magistrates on December 8, 1683, including South, Dock, East, West, North, and Outward (shown in Figure 4.1, below), in which the last “took in the rest of the island including Harlem Village” (Stokes, 1928, p. 175). Dongan’s
administration “launched a wide-ranging program of reform and renewal” in 1684 (Ritchie, 1977, p. 183). As an administrator, Dongan sought to not only restructure the government of the colonial city, but fuse regional ambitions and territorial disputes into a more holistic system of colonial governance. Not only did the expansion of government seek to expand its presence in the colonial city, but to “continue some of the practices of his predecessors”, such as giving “favorites power and opportunities for wealth” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 185). Importantly, land grants also were form of income for the colonial government and “there was no doubt that the government [of Dongan] was English” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 1985).

The local dimension (re)considered: whose colonial space?

With the death of Charles II in February 1685 brought his brother, the Duke of York, to the throne in England, significantly making New York a royal province instead of a proprietary one, “and brought I directly under that committee of the King’s Council to which oversight of trade and royal provinces was entrusted” (Stokes, 1928, p. 175). Not limited to the “problematic” Dutch still inhabiting the English spaces, colonial space now sought to ensure Natives would cause no further problems either. At the same time, the realization of power among native groups not only placed them squarely on the geopolitical map of New World power relations, but in some cases “put pressure on both European nations [the French and the English] to acknowledge Indian sovereignty and treat Indians with respect” (Pulsipher, 2007, p. 612).

Native-European histories have rightly focused on the existence of a more complicated settlement situation: “the lines of conflict and competition were more
complicated”, as “invasion of America by European powers created a bewildering and volatile situation, involving many players in changing roles” (Calloway, 1999, p. 150). At the same time, the creation of a categorical distinction known as “Natives” allowed New World policies to orient themselves towards the simplistic and effectual elimination of any perceived threat. Writing of the “Abnaki confederacy of eastern Indians” later in the seventeenth century, it was noted that “they were the ‘most powerful, politick, warlike and numerous nation of Indians since the Narragansetts are broken, and influence and steer all others that inhabit the English Plantations or Colonies’” (Utley & Washburn, 1985, p. 60). Tellingly, this description alludes to not only the presence of “nations” and “confederations” – surely as a way of describing Native actions within European political frameworks – but that these individuals inhabited the English territories.

The existence of geopolitical factions within the New World by Native groups provides an illustration of the ways in which the European-Native dichotomy did not exist in reality. In some cases, “tribes split into factions over issues of peace, war, and alliance with competing European powers” as “Recurrent warfare produced repercussions on social and political structures” (Calloway, 1999, p. 157). The imperial competitions between the English and the Dutch involved not only the spatial occupation and supposed control of territory, but a distinctly sociopolitical element of interaction and attempted cooperation. The mid-seventeenth century saw a number of efforts at achieving cooperation through Dutch acceptance of English leadership as “natural” (Haley, 1988, p. 77). As a result, “What colonial status meant, and what the nature of the empire was, remained questions to which metropolitan and colonials had very different answers, and metropolitan authorities continued to exhibit profound unease over their inability to
impose metropolitan conceptions on the colonies” (Greene, 2002, p. 274). Within the spaces of the New World, these relationships remained largely political and often limited in their actual scope. However, the events of the mid-seventeenth century within continental Europe provides a helpful illustration of the ways in which colonial processes of settlement, expansion, and ultimately commercial extraction created complicated geopolitical relationships.

This period was not simply one of continued growth and development for the colonial city, and nor was it one of simple peace or conflict. Rather, it was one characterized by an increasing sense of interconnectedness and a realization of political and spatial power at both local and regional levels. Shifting identities brought contested ideas of the future, as some individuals realized the potential profitability – both politically and spatially – of encouraging dissatisfaction among dissident individuals. In this way, the “distinctive hallmark” of “baronial estates” (Kim, 1978, p. vii) contrasted sharply with the ethnicization of urban spaces in the colonial city. The idea of the melting pot (Goodfriend, 1992) was not one of mixing, and did not begin with massive nineteenth century immigrations. Rather, it began with a conscious effort by the English government to ensure prosperity through population. The colonial city is thus not simply one of imperial-colonial projects, but an urban form with distinct features (King, 1976, p. 14). These distinctive qualities sought to exemplify European expectations of settlement as the geopolitics of contested political transfers became central to the policies of colonial development.

The reality of the transition from Dutch to English rule was not simply a matter of new governance or a new name for the colonial space. European governments within
continental Europe required new ways of ensuring their New World counterparts were
upholding their interests; through efforts to ensure specific identities remained spatially
grounded, social change became not simply a matter of geopolitical instability but one of
identity formation (Ritchie, 1977). In this way, the origins of ethnicity, social
stratification, and contested notions of community (Goodfriend, 1992) become central to
understanding the colonial city’s contested position within New World geopolitics.

As shown by the two outlined areas, English residents were
located primarily (based on majority populations) in these
two areas. Remaining areas were predominantly /Dutch.

*Figure 4.2: Ethnicity in New York neighborhoods, 1703. For clarity, outlines and labels
have been added to show English versus Dutch majorities in the colonial city.*
Throughout the seventeenth century, the spaces of New Amsterdam-New York were caught in a geopolitical struggle with multiple and conflicting aims: for European governments, early colonial ventures were based on commercial potential and political actions corresponded to this focus; for the Dutch in the 1660s (and briefly in the 1670s) the focus was on maintaining (or regaining) control of a geopolitically strategic and vital space. Taken further, the conflicting notions of colonial space for the English and the Dutch can be simplified to one of public versus private property: while Dutch roots centered on the patroon system and the privatization of colonial risk, the English government sought direct involvement with colonists and the space they inhabited.

Local developments in New York City clearly influenced regional directions of development, as “Albany emulated her larger and more powerful rival”, New York City, while “Dongan forced an unwelcome change upon the smaller towns” as they became less independent and more indebted to larger settlements (Ritchie, 1977, p. 184-185). While the “Charter of Libertyes” has historically been associated with Governor Dongan, they “were persistently overlooked by Dongan”; further, this lead not only to the “further suppression of long-sought ideals, particularly among the English” but also “The reorganization of the city government and the creation of county government …more solidly in English form” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 185). As governors and governing bodies became increasingly “English” in form and function, it is not surprising that there was a “sense of anxiety among the Dutch as English institutions engulfed them” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 185).

In 1686, the Dongan Charter was officially received and approved by the English government. The charter “confirmed all rights and privileges that had been already
granted to the city and all property rights to individuals” (Stokes, 1928, p. 176). 1686 also saw renewed efforts at surveying the city; it was in this year that “the city surveyors were ordered to survey the vacant land within the city near the dock, from the weigh-house to the City Hall, and to lay it out in lots of eighty feet deep and about twenty-four broad, leaving space for a new street, which was to be called Dock Street” (Stokes, 1928, p. 177). Importantly, “The buildings on this street were to be made uniform” (Stokes, 1928, p. 177).

As the geographical shape of the King’s colonial provinces took shape, “Several of the English governors, in reporting the condition of the colony to the king, and pointed out the advantage which his interests would receive from uniting New York with other portions of his territory” (Stokes, 1928, p. 179). This advice was taken into consideration in 1688, when the King “annexed New York and East and West Jersey to New England, making Sir Edmund Andros, the former governor of New York, captain-general and governor-in-chief of the whole”, though “This union was destined to be of short duration, but the cause is to be found in England rather than in America” (Stokes, 1928, p. 179) and owing partly to the unpopularity of James’s government as he “antagonised almost every class in his kingdom” (Stokes, 1928, p. 179). The reality of such antagonizing behavior not only suggests that the link between Europe and America was being brought into question, but that the spaces of colonial North America were increasingly misunderstood by those with power in continental Europe.
Dividing space and questioning identity: ethnicity on historic grounds

While New Amsterdam had gained a central position in Dutch New Netherland, it was geographically peripheral to New England. While New Amsterdam’s commercial importance lied in its geographical location, its majority Dutch population (88% in 1664; Goodfriend, 1992, p. 62) threatened the ease of English governance. Rapid efforts at encouraging English immigration and emigration to New Amsterdam can be seen in population figures of just ten years later, in which the Dutch majority had dropped to 67% (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 62). At the same time, its location on the Hudson River made it geopolitically important to New World commerce. The table below (Figure 1.5; adapted from Goodfriend, 1992, p. 62) shows the ethnic distribution of New Amsterdam during this period.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>1664-5</th>
<th>1676-77</th>
<th>1695</th>
<th>1699</th>
<th>1703</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dutch</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>52%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>4.5%</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>29.5%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>36%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jews</td>
<td>0.5%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4.3: “Ethnic Composition of New York City’s White Adult Male Population, 1664-1703”. Adapted from Goodfriend, 1992. While focused on the English period of New Amsterdam-New York’s history, this chart illustrates the initial predominance of a Dutch population as well as the result of English efforts at populating the colony with English-born citizens. It should also be noted that the term “Dutch” in this chart includes “Germans and other miscellaneous nationalities” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 62).

William J. Foltz (1974) has provided four categories for distinguishing ethnicity from other divisions: biological, cultural, linguistic, and structural (Foltz, 1974, p. 103).
In this thesis I focus primarily on the structural category. Foltz notes that this category is defined as one in which

“Members of the group will organize their joint relations differently from the way other people do. They may evolve different social roles, and even where common roles exist pattern their relationships differently from the way others do” (Foltz, 1974, p. 103).

While this distinction is not particularly helpful for understanding the diversity of identities and associated spatial properties in Early America, Foltz provides a helpful addendum: “Without reference to a particular situation…it is impossible to say what level of identity will influence action, or indeed which particular identity trait will appear most relevant” (Foltz, 1974, p. 104). Perhaps not surprisingly, limited or selective contact with continental Europeans resulted in a fragmentary understanding (in historical perspective) between Europeans and New World colonists. Further, “ethnic confrontations [often] involve[d] such a wide spectrum of social attributes” in which individuals and groups “are particularly likely to call forth stereotypes of the other side, and to endow those stereotypes with great emotional intensity” (Foltz, 1974, p. 106). Under such conditions, it is not surprising that violence could (and did) break out in the streets of colonial New York City.

Joyce D. Goodfriend (1992) has argued that “the flow of [English] newcomers to New York colony was a relatively minor current”, resulting a perceived “attractiveness of other potential destinations” and “the instability of the political establishment in New York” (p. 40). Further, “the multiethnic structure predisposed non-English immigrants to choose New York City as their home” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 41), facilitating the growth of a non-English ethnic base. Goodfriend notes also that “the English, French, and
Jewish groups in late seventeenth-century New York City were primarily immigrant communities, while the Dutch population consisted largely of native colonials” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 42). This situation suggests that not only was ethnic identity a category that was used to understand the complex identities of New York City inhabitants during the seventeenth century, but that it was far more complex than a debate about English versus Dutch origins.

Regional emigration must also be considered during the transition from Dutch to English power. In places like Albany, “movement of people out of the Albany area was concentrated in the years of King William’s War, when the dangers of life on the northern frontier of New York colony prompted an exodus from the area” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 44). Within the spaces surrounding colonial New York City, population density provided a reason for emigration: “Dutch settlers in New York colony uprooted themselves from communities on western Long Island in response to mounting population pressure on the limited supply of land” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 45). Without defining “ethnicity” in its historic use, it has been noted that by the end of the seventeenth century,

“the substantial numerical dominance of the Dutch had clearly receded, as English and French immigrants entered the community, soon constituting sizable components of the city’s population. No longer token individual foreigners, these English and French newcomers coalesced into distinct ethnic groups with separate identities” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 61).

Despite a clear existence of ethnic identity, there is “no evidence that an institutionalized system of ethnic stratification existed” (Goodfriend, 1992, p. 68). The rise of ethnic conflict was not simply a matter of spatial conflict or urban unrest, but involves the possibility that “the definition of leadership roles and the weight attached to
various individuals’ attributes as political resources in the competition for those within each side” will change (Foltz, 1974, p. 107). For example, Colonel Henry Sloughter was approved by William on November 14, 1689 for the governorship of New York, but his delayed arrival to New York allowed Leisler to continue to control the colony. One of Sloughter’s subordinates arrived a year later in his place, and “demanded that Leisler admit his troops and stores; but as he could show no authority except his commission as a captain of a foot company, Leisler refused, and called out the militia” (Stokes, 1928, p. 181). By the time Sloughter officially arrived “civil war [was] already beginning” (Stokes, 1928, p. 181). Though Leisler and Milborne (Leisler’s son-in-law) were executed on May 16, 1691, this “execution…for the public peace” was too late, as “the formation of bitter political factions” had already occurred (Stokes, 1928, p. 181).

Given this situation, it did not take long before “radicals” like Jacob Leisler sought to gain political power and support for their cause; eventually, “Trouble broke out at the fort between the officers of the regular troops and those of the militia, which had been called in to help keep the peace in the city” (Stokes, 1928, p. 180). Nicholson returned to England, leaving control of the city in the hands of Leisler and others, who “wrested control of the city from the city magistrates…[who were] forced to flee for safety to Albany” (Stokes, 1928, p. 180). Delegates met on June 26, 1689 and appointed Leisler “captain of the fort”, under which capacity he “repaired the fortifications with sods and palisades, made a water port to the westward of the fort, and put New York in a ‘full posture of defence’”, ultimately giving him “virtually supreme control” (Stokes, 1928, p. 180).
Creating Old World identities in New World space: on what grounds?

By the early 1690’s the distribution of power in colonial New York’s government had shifted, giving working-class colonists the power to influence their political destiny. Leading to class conflict and outright violence, the streets of colonial New York and the Hudson Region had become an urban battleground (Burrows & Wallace, 1999). Though the violence was contained to New York and New Jersey, these events were far from local or regional in scale. Suggesting the development of distinctly English rights as a form of “ethnic aggression”, historian John M. Murrin (1988) has suggested that three events stand out in the later history of New Amsterdam-New York: first, the transfer to English power in 1664, whereby the West India Company gave up its rights to the colonial city (traded for Surinam); second, the 1683 assembly organized by Colonel Dongan and termed the first “truly representative assembly” in the colony’s history; and third, the 1689 Leisler Rebellion, ultimately leading to the direct involvement by English officials as they sought to quell growing political instability in the colonial city. The events of the late 1680s and early 1690s not only brought the region and colony of New Amsterdam into focus in European geopolitics again, but raised questions about the long-term relationship between European and New World colonies and colonists.

At the same time, William III was “too completely engrossed in European affairs to settle the government of his transatlantic colonies” (Stokes, 1928, p. 180) but sent a letter to Francis Nicholson, the lieutenant-governor and commander-in-chief of New York “to continue their authority until he should send further directions” (Stokes, 1928, p. 181), though in Nicholson’s absence the letter was delivered instead to Leisler. Leisler organized the first popular vote for the city’s mayor during this time, with Peter De
Lanoy elected. Social dissonance regarding the role of the English government in
colonial North America and the role of Dutch colonists in English space highlighted the
central role of local identity as it varied between individuals but ultimately became
grounded in the spaces of the colony.

The Judiciary Act of 1691: dividing space and conquering the enemy?

While the continuation of a Catholic ruling family seems rather distant from the
social, political, and spatial concerns of the New World, these concerns returned to the
forefront of debate among New York City residents in the fall of 1688. William and
Mary had arrived in England “at the invitation of Englishmen displeased with King
James’s administration” and “News of the turmoil gradually filtered to the colonies”
(Ritchie, 1977, p. 198). Spatial distributions become increasingly interesting at this
point, as political scandals and legal disputes had scattered the ruling elite of Dongan’s
administration throughout the spaces of New England.

As spring evolved into summer, “Rumor piled upon rumor until hysteria gripped
New York…. [including] a Catholic threat to take New York [in which] The chief
officials of the government were charged with being papists”; further, attempts to flee the
city resulted in the departure of prominent city officials though “Their departure failed to
stop rumors of a French invasion aided by internal subversion or of an Indian rising led
by Andros, or of an attack by a French and Indian force led by Andros, or a conjunction
of Dongan and Andros sweeping down to rally the crypto-Catholics and seize New York
for King James” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 200). Such uncertainty provided an ideal platform of
Jacob Leisler and his supporters to take over and solidify their power over the colony city.

While “Albany had hewed its own path as the vitality of the central government” during the early years of the Leisler “administration” (Ritchie, 1977, pl. 205), such disputes were increasingly based on uncertainties between the various governing factions, divided between Leisler’s followers and his opponents. Further, “The sources of discontent that had accumulated under Dongan were brought to the boiling point by the rumors from England of war at home and abroad” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 211) and providing fuel to the fires that had already been started.

Finally, the disputes regarding Leisler’s power were not just political in nature but profoundly spatial: for example, “Albany expressed its particularism by denying Leisler’s legitimacy. In part, this was a move to gain independence from the city’s monopolies” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 217), which sought simply to make New York the center of the English imperial projects on the Hudson River. Opposition to individuals like Leisler was not only widespread (spatially) but clear (politically). As such, opposition to Leisler’s [New York] rule was not limited to the spaces of the colonial city but existed throughout former Dutch territory. By spring of 1690 opposition had spread to Schenectady as “three expeditions of Indians and soldiers [were sent] crashing into New England and New York” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 221). The spaces of colonial New York City were not simply the sites of such confrontations, but provided a spatial distribution to their resolution, as “Albany [was the] first to resolve its problems with Leisler” (Ritchie, 1977, p. 221). Leisler’s energies were not simply limited to assaults on New France but the expansion of
military interests beyond the confines of New York City and into regional initiatives
designed at expanding (and solidifying) for political and spatial reforms.

While “Regional differences also plagued Leisler [such as] Albany smoldering
over its loss of independence”, local issues were gaining increased centrality, such as the
reality that “Leisler’s enemies in the city…[had been] urged on by the news from
England that a governor had been appointed” and Leisler’s power would thus prove
illegitimate (Ritchie, 1977, p. 226). Further, such conflicts were in no way limited to the
spaces of the colonial city: “The next overt threat came from Long island [in which] The
opposition’s main campaign was not fought in New York, but in England [as] Both sides
knew that, ultimately, decisions made in mother country would decide their fate”
(Ritchie, 1977, p. 227). Despite the increasingly separated political systems of Europe
and the Americas, it is clear that even by the 1690s the colonial spaces of the New World
were clearly under European geopolitical control.
CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSION, AND DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Introduction

The period following 1477 was one in which European states began a slow change from a feudal past to a future based on “territorially centered relationships… in which the state was the centralized organizer of a ruling class” (Mann, 1986, p. 416). The question is therefore how this relatively new concept of territorial control was translated through the crossing of the Atlantic. The varieties of that transfer at various scales and its impact on the spatial development of colonial New Amsterdam-New York have been the subject of this thesis. Placing these developments in a local framework of competitive imperialism has not only highlighted the importance of the local scale in geopolitical analyses, but shown the profound impact that local political and social developments can have on imperialism and geopolitics.

It has been suggested that “the Englishmen who first settled on the North American shores identified the political density of the English nation with the spiritual destiny of the elect” (Fries, 1977, p. 6). Other authors have suggested that “The English settlements on eastern Long Island were the result of the confluence of interest continually in flux throughout the region…[though] the most common conduit for these interests was land” (Siminoff, 2004, p. 87). The settlement and expansion of “land interests” was not simply a matter of commercial gain or mercantilist opportunity, but central to the social and political expansion of colonial ideas in the Early Modern Atlantic World. Initial imperial ventures were decidedly “international” in scope, with local developments receiving little or no attention (if the colony was commercially successful).
English presence was well established by this period, while Dutch expansion was beginning.

The Second Anglo-Dutch War (in Europe) resulted in the transfer of New Netherland from Dutch to English control, moving New Amsterdam from a Dutch core to an English periphery.

By the late 17th century, New Amsterdam had been renamed New York by the English and was just one of several colonial cities under English control.
Geopolitical power and regional dominance: creating New Amsterdam

The diagrams above illustrate the evolution of space, both locally and regionally, of New Amsterdam-New York during the period from 1626 until 1691. The ordinances and laws passed during the early years of New Amsterdam’s government sought to solidify social and political relationships within a decidedly unstable and unpredictable system. Instead of a clear understanding of colonial relationships and a unified system of colonial governance, a hierarchical relationship was created: mercantilist needs within European colonial systems had to be balanced with agricultural requirements at the local level; spatial requirements regarding agriculture required a dispersed settlement pattern, while safety concerns resulted from the constant threat of “foreign” invasion; and finally, territorial separations within Europe were codified with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, transferring unclear spatial distinctions to the colonies of North America.

Jean Gottmann is quoted as saying that “civilized people…[have] always partitioned the space around them carefully, to set themselves apart from their neighbors” (Gottmann, 1973; quoted in Mach, 1993, p. 172). As a result, “territory is [often] culturally created and mythologized [becoming] part of the collective memory and identity of the community” of early settlements (Mach, 1993, p. 173). Social re-creation involves the deliberate process by which a particular group has “the right…to inhabit a given territory, but also in the demand that this right should be exclusive or, at least, that the group should have sovereignty over it” (Mach, 1993, p. 174). The creation of intra-colonial borders defined the spaces of the New World on European terms and provided the foundation for conflict.
Not only did the creation of these borders bring people in contact with one another, but varying degrees of loyalty to their European past created not only opportunities for intra-European engagement in new spaces, but the potential for conflict as well. “If borders appeared juridically to divide North American people, they also inscribed in notions of citizenship new and exclusivist meanings. They defined not only external sovereignty but also internal membership in the political communities of North America” (Adelman & Aron, 2001, p. 840). One outcome was “the extension of margins of settled land in the region under the colonial state” (Misra, 2005, p. 221). At the same time the desire for imperialist expansion, New Amsterdam was still envisioned as a compact settlement protected by a military fort.

The possibility for geopolitical empowerment of settler populations resulted in frequent demands of European-New World equality through “the extension to the colonies of the same rights to security of property and civic participation that appertained to the empowered, high-status, and independent property holders in the polities from which they came” (Greene, 2002, p. 271). The creation of a New Amsterdam or New Netherland identity depended not only on the clarification of its mercantilist-agricultural character, but also the social, political, and spatial designation of a non-Dutch “other” and a perception that colonial space must be controlled spatially and politically through its codification. Increasing contact with Native Americans resulted in increased attention to Fort Amsterdam’s physical condition, while increasing contact with the English on Long Island raised questions of intra-colonial spatial borders. While New Amsterdam became increasingly important to New Netherland it remained dependent on its spatial separation from New England.
Shifting centers and contested peripheries: the realities of contested imperial space

This period of transition illustrates the profound differences in New World politics as colonial space became embedded in continental European conflicts. Colonial governments took increased action to direct the development of their colonial spaces without the input of distant European governments. Despite this, spatial developments often appear divorced from their origins within a supposedly representative system of government as European actors realized their lack of spatial power in the New World. This expectation could no longer be dependent on the governmental support of European powers, but increasingly depended on the ability of New World actors to geopolitically further their interests. The shifting of center-periphery relationships (shown in the diagram below) during the mid-seventeenth century did not simply alter the geopolitical significance of New Amsterdam-New York, but put the identity of local individuals into question.
Grounding *local* identity and protecting *international* space: an English success?

Over the course of sixty years, the problems of dispersed settlement and infrequent attempts at creating a more organized colonial space were twofold resulted from an increasingly disorganized governing system that sought to control New World spaces on Old World models. It is not surprising that the urban unrest under Jacob Leisler and others brought renewed efforts at organizing and controlling colonial space. Further, the control of this space was not simply a matter of ensuring social unrest did not spread to other areas, but a way to ensure political and spatial success within the colonial city.
Placing colonial history within a simple European or even British/French/Dutch context ignores the nuances of histories and the regional variation within Europe at the time. Howard H. Peckham (1964) has suggested that the period of “colonial wars” lasted from 1689 to 1762. While he argues that placing New World wars within a larger European context is necessary, only cursory mention is made of the events following the end of the Thirty Years’ War, assuming that the conflicts of one-third of a century had ended with the codification of space and the creation of a system of forming nation states. Mention of a possible Old World connection to New World conflicts is made regarding the Glorious Revolution, suggesting that Governor Andros was overthrown and provided a direct link between religious conflict in Europe and individuals seeking freedom in the New. As this suggests, conflict in the Old World was not simply transferred to the New World, but modified as it crossed the waters of the Atlantic.

Imperial-colonial “projects” and the transfer of identity from Europe to America

Questions of how to ensure colonial prosperity or deal with encroaching colonial powers to the North were compared to continental European experiences between the English and the Dutch; and just as the political systems of Europe became embedded in the territorial ideal of post-Westphalian Europe, their transfer to the New World created the space for social, political, and spatial contestations. Advancing a substantial body of work on the histories and geographies of colonial America, I suggest that placing local developments at the center of this study has advanced histories of the region by focusing on individuals rather than “the English” or “the Dutch”. Colonial geographies are likewise strengthened by understanding the multiple scales at which “colonialism”
operated, and the diversity of social, political, and spatial interests behind imperial-colonial projects.

The geography of colonial interaction extended far beyond the initial land grants and acquisition of territories through active settlement. Rather, the geography of colonialism must consider the ways in which imperial-colonial processes (re)define space and provide the impetus for exploitation through various modes of justification. The negotiation of political authorities occurred within multiple scales: between European powers in continental Europe, between European powers in the New World, and between Old and New World actors across the waters of the Atlantic.

Directions for future research

This thesis has explored the beginning of New Amsterdam-New York from a new direction, albeit one that raises more questions than it answers. While demonstrating the ways in which colonial New Amsterdam occupied a central position in Dutch imperialism but a peripheral position in English imperialism, it has suggested a definitive link with continental Europe. At the same time, detailed exploration of the ways in which individuals or groups conceptualized this relationship has been impossible.

Future research must therefore focus on three primary areas: first, more detailed analysis of primary sources, including maps and writings. This should aim to not only discover the impact of various representations on colonial settlement processes, but the conflicting views of intra-colonial and intra-European actors. Second, New Amsterdam-New York must be placed within a wider body of critical literature exploring colonialism. While this thesis has offered a geopolitical model for understanding the evolution of a
colonial settlement, its applicability to other regions of colonial North America or more recent colonial projects is unknown. Third, a balance must be found between intra-colonial and imperial-colonial interactions.

The diversity of colonial identities, policies, expectations, and processes must provide a starting point for understanding colonial North America. Geography is particularly well poised to understand these variations, and has the potential to utilize theories such as the Atlantic World, spatial diffusion, and sociopolitical/spatial contestation in a particularly meaningful way. Further, colonial North America cannot be limited to an extension of Europe or a new beginning; rather, it is a continuation of Old World processes in new space. It demonstrates the ways in which local and regional processes interact and vary with time and space, and it acknowledges the role of the Early Modern European world in setting the stage for European colonialism. Most importantly, it provides a foundation for understanding the ways in which colonial-imperial ventures arose out of complex historical processes that were both limited and constrained by the spaces of the New World.

Understanding a place as complex and fascinating as New York City during its colonial period is no small task. As in any undertaking, countless limitations have been faced. Perhaps most significantly is the author’s lack of Dutch language skills, which could have provided a fresh and “geopolitical” reading of some of those documents for which I had to rely on secondary interpretations. Secondly, understanding the relationships between social, political, and spatial developments across the Atlantic Ocean during the seventeenth century may seem like a futile attempt at creating geopolitical connections. However, I firmly believe that early settlers were faced with
complex identities that required the retention of a firm ideological connection to continental Europe. These connections arose from the reality that no “American” identity existed during this early period: the “New English” selectively retained distinct parts of their “English” identity, and the same can be said of Dutch settlers.

Finally, I am acutely aware of treading into the territory of historians with far greater knowledge and understanding about this subject than myself. While this offered me a challenge, it is also a limitation. More detailed knowledge of individual actors and daily developments would have greatly strengthened arguments regarding day-to-day activities. Further, more time would have permitted me to explore the ways in which individuals on both sides of the Atlantic understood their changing European-American identities, and how these identities impacted the spaces they created.
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