The International City Hypothesis: An Approach to the Recent History of U.S. Cities

Carl Abbott
Portland State University, d3ca@pdx.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu/usp_fac

Part of the Urban Studies and Planning Commons

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Citation Details

This Post-Print is brought to you for free and open access. It has been accepted for inclusion in Urban Studies and Planning Faculty Publications and Presentations by an authorized administrator of PDXScholar. Please contact us if we can make this document more accessible: pdxscholar@pdx.edu.
The International City Hypothesis:
An Approach to the Recent History of U. S. Cities

Carl Abbott
School of Urban Studies and Planning
Portland State University
Portland, Oregon, USA

Prepublication version of article in *Journal of Urban History*, 24 (Nov. 1997)
The International City Hypothesis:
An Approach to the Recent History of U. S. Cities

The last decades of the twentieth century have brought a new variation to American urban boosterism.

For more than 50 years, a benchmark for competitive success among American cities has been "big league" standing. Ambitious civic elites measure their ability to play in the metaphorical big leagues by their ability to attract major league sports teams. In the 1950s and 1960s, second-level cities on the fringes of the industrial belt such as Baltimore, Milwaukee and Minneapolis competed with booming sunbelt cities for peripatetic and expansion franchises in major league baseball, National Football League teams, and the somewhat junior National Basketball Association. Big league status, of course, reflects the size of metropolitan markets and relative standing within the national system of cities.¹

In the 1970s and particularly the 1980s, however, ambitious urban leaders also began to measure their cities against the ill-defined but even broader standard of the "world-class" or "world" city.² City after city advertises itself as a new international leader. Mayors have joined the jet set in search of special access to overseas markets and board rooms. Cartographic boosters have revived "metro-centric" map projections that place their city at the center of the world. Ports have become "Worldports," development officials battle for direct air service to Seoul and Paris. The trade magazine for city managers and public works directors proclaims a new era of international competition and cosmopolitan cities.³

The new rhetoric reflects some very real changes from the parochial nation of the 1950s, when a foreign tourist or business traveler was a rare event in the majority of
American cities. The sources of change have been both institutional and technological, ranging from trade policy to a generation of American imperialism to the democratization of air travel. The relative value of imports and exports shot upward from 7 percent of gross national product in 1965 to a plateau of 16 percent in the late 1980s. Direct foreign investment as a proportion of the value of fixed capital has climbed steadily since the oil crisis of the mid-1970s. Documented immigration in the early 1990s accounted for 37 percent of American population growth, compared with 10 percent before the immigration reform legislation of 1965. During the first year of the Eisenhower administration, there was one foreign tourist each year for every 654 Americans. By the end of the Reagan years, there was one foreign tourist for every twenty Americans.⁴

These broad trends have had real and often startling results in one city after another. Immigration has revitalized the ethnic communities of New York and Chicago, transformed Miami and Los Angeles, and created new immigrant neighborhoods from Washington to San Jose. Orlando and Honolulu annually play host to hundreds of thousands of overseas visitors. More than 40,000 residents of Greenville-Spartanburg work for European corporations. Seattle and its suburbs have signed more than thirty sister-city agreements with foreign cities and towns.⁵ Dozens of cities and towns have protested national security policy by declaring nuclear free zones, divesting holdings in firms doing business in South Africa, or challenging immigration policy.⁶

It is easier to sketch the globalization of American society and economic activity in broad outline than to describe in detail its effects on urban growth, urban systems, and urban life. As more and more Americans are directly involved with international flows of goods, people, money, and information, social scientists have struggled to adapt and update concepts and explanatory models that were originally developed for closed national or
subnational economies. They have also begun to accumulate a narrow and unsystematic base of empirical data about local engagement with global systems. Both of these enterprises could benefit from greater involvement by urban historians. History offers a sceptical check on the "journalistic fallacy"—the tendency to believe that something must be new or different if we have just noticed it. Its concern with the effects of individual decisions and decision-makers offers a potential for correcting or corroborating sweeping theories. Its attention to the detail of specific cases can help to build the necessary base of information. This essay is an attempt to encourage urban historians to participate in these efforts.

The first section summarizss and evaluates theoretical frameworks for understanding the internationalization of urban America. It reviews competing models that sociologists, geographers, and urban planners have developed for understanding the transnational sources of urban growth. With an eye to the historical dimension, I suggest several reasons to utilize a looser and more inclusive concept of "international city" in addition to the tighter and narrower category of "world city." The section concludes with a tentative typology of international cities that can be used in both case studies and comparative analysis. The second section offers preliminary ideas about the patterns, processes, and policies involved in the internationalization of American cities. I discuss problems in measuring the extent of a city's international engagement and propose possible indicators. I then suggest some typical sequences or pathways of international development and raise a series of questions about the ways in which local policy has responded to the networking of the world economy.

Social scientists interested in world urbanization and economic change have developed two broad models for understanding the transnational urban systems found at the
end of the twentieth century. The more fully developed approach can be termed the "world city" model. It emphasizes hierarchical relationships among cities and argues that a very limited set of hegemonic cities now dominate economic decision-making on a global scale. An alternative "international city" model stresses the variety of roles and functions that cities can play within complex networks of global exchange. In the great social science divide between advocates of "structure" and advocates of "agency," the world city model is essentially structuralist; it presents world cities as the logical outgrowth of worldwide economic change. The international city model is much more open to the possibility that human actions and public policies may have differential effects.

The roots of the "world city" terminology have been traced to the end of the eighteenth century, when J. F. Goethe described Rome and Paris as weltstadte. Both German and English writers used the term in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to capture the expanding scale and international reach of the economic and imperial capitals of industrial Europe. London, for example, was "the centre of the world" to a commentator in 1862, the "world's metropolis" in the 1880s, and "the city of the world" in 1841 and 1912. Americans in the mid-century decades argued that the future "world-city" would be located not on the Thames but somewhere near St. Louis. Oswald Spengler offered his special negative twist in The Decline of the West, presenting world cities as grand but rotten centers of cosmopolitan culture that portend the collapse of civilization.

In Great Britain, the term developed in tandem with the idea of the conurbation. In Cities in Evolution (1915), British city planner Patrick Geddes used conurbation to signify the growing horizontal or spatial scale of urbanization and world-city to capture the dominant role of national capitals (Paris, Berlin) and industrial centers (Dusseldorf, Chicago) within networks of trade and communication. Fifty years later, geographer Peter Hall
worked within the Geddes framework, utilizing the two concepts of size and intensity to pick his examples in *The World Cities* (1966). In Hall's book as in Geddes's, world cities were essentially the climax product of the single economic system of European industrial capitalism and its offspring in Japan and North America.9

As is often the case, the term and its variants of "global city" and "world-class city" have moved quickly from scholarly hypothesis to catchword, dropped into titles in the same way that "sunbelt" was used in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Most commonly, however, the Geddes-Hall terminology has been appropriated for a hierarchical model of the world economy that posits a single imposed system of metropolitan control from core to periphery. This view was clearly stated by John Friedmann, whose concern was to explain "the contemporary system of global capital accumulation and its spatial articulation through a system of 'world cities'."10 World cities are characterized by concentrations of international banks, multinational corporate headquarters, and supporting experts. Decisions are made about the allocation and use of capital on a world scale and transmitted through hierarchically organized institutions and communication networks housed in smaller and secondary cities. World city "command posts," writes H. V. Savitch, radiate "a web of electronic conduits and air corridors across the globe." The greater the availability of telecommunications, argue theorists such as David Harvey and Manuel Castells, the greater the concentration of control functions and the consequent power of world cities.11

Saskia Sassen's *Global Cities* (1991) is the most detailed presentation of the world city argument to date. She describes New York, London, and Tokyo as a sort of three-headed capital of the world economy, "centers of finance . . . [and] for global servicing and management." To simplify the argument, Tokyo exports capital, London processes it, and New York makes investment decisions. Sassen's work is also representative in its attention
to the internal consequences of world city status. She treats the inequities of dual labor markets for elite workers and support workers, the costs of office core expansion, and the assimilation of immigrants as phenomena exaggerated by the intensity of change within world cities.\textsuperscript{12}

The world city model assumes that peripheral cities have limited "free will." Their roles are imposed by the political and economic power of the dominant world city or cities, exercised through the structures of international finance and multinational corporations. Secondary cities are interpreted in terms of their function within a nested hierarchy. Joe Feagin and Michael Peter Smith thus talk about world cities, regional-international cities, and regional-national cities. Nigel Thrift talks about global centers, zonal centers, and regional centers. John Friedmann talks about primary and secondary cities.\textsuperscript{13} Within this scheme of analysis, peripheral or subordinate cities are credited with little opportunity for independent initiatives or lateral connections to their peers in other countries.\textsuperscript{14}

In one sense, the world city model is an effort to globalize central place theory. Global cities like New York, to use the title of Robert Beauregards's edited collection, stand "atop the urban hierarchy."\textsuperscript{15} They share all of the functions and activities of less important cities and they simultaneously house specialized activities that are found nowhere else. The bankers of the City of London and the art dealers of New York both offer services so specialized that they require the entire world as a market.

The model also has conceptual links to dependency theory as applied to developing nations, understanding primate cities and new industrial centers in such countries as recipients of orders from London, Tokyo, Paris, and New York.\textsuperscript{16} Anthony King, for example has studied the ways in which colonial cities were "instrumental in creating the space in which today's capitalist world-economy operates" by introducing western values,
capitalist business organization, and industrialized systems of production. The idea of world cities thus identifies and describes a mechanism or channel for hierarchical control by adapting mercantile models of urban growth to a world scale.

Much of the analysis of world cities has been a present-oriented response to the geographical restructuring the world economy in the 1970s and 1980s. Scholars who emphasize the newness of world cities are trying to understand the multi-focused world economy that has replaced the unitary Atlantic economy of earlier generations. Most obviously, East Asian cities have emerged as rival centers of economic decision-making, forcing the recognition of Tokyo's global economic reach. It is surely no accident that much of the renewed interest in world cities has arisen in California and Australia. More broadly, the global changes have involved the so-called "new international division of labor" under which multinational corporations have shifted production functions out of Europe and Anglo-America but retained their headquarters in the old core, allowing a handful of established cities to specialize in finance and business services. Changes in the technologies of information exchange and the institutional organization of banking have assisted that specialization. The result is presumably a system in which the dispersal of production has supported global industrialization but in which control continues to be concentrated in a short list of key cities scattered across the globe.

Historians may recognize that the idea of hegemonic world cities is not as new as some of its advocates might believe. The model draws on the work of scholars like Ferdinand Braudel and Jan De Vries. It finds a detailed expression in the World-System theory of Immanuel Wallerstein, who describes the evolution of European capitalism since the sixteenth century in terms of shifting relationships between a dominant "metropolis" or economic core and a periphery that is subordinated through political control and unequal
economic exchanges. Historians and historical sociologists such as Janet Abu-Lughod and Christopher Chase-Dunn use the world-system model to examine changes over time in the leadership of the global hierarchy of cities. Thinking in large and structural terms, they tend to see the twentieth century as expanding the scale of the world-economy but not necessarily changing its character.

Like the world city model, the alternative international city model starts from an interest in the role of cities in articulating the global operation of markets. More specifically, however, it finds that interurban competition sorts out a much more complex system of commercial centers and specialized cities on a world scale. Such cities pursue their international roles and interact within networks that may cross-link hierarchically organized regions and directly connect middle-sized cities without the intervention of the world capitals. The contrasting characteristics of the two models are summarized in Table 1.

The international city model lies squarely in the tradition of ecological sociology. Indeed, an early version was sketched sixty-five years ago by sociologist Roderick McKenzie. Teaching in Seattle and thinking about the economic emergence of Japan and the Orient, McKenzie noted the simultaneous growth of new urban "centers of gravity" and the prominence of "routes, rather than rims"--that is, the increasing complexity of multi-lateral exchanges across national or regional borders. He also commented on the way in which "the annihilation of space by modern means of communication has given to individual cities or chains of cities specialized roles as collectors and distributors of different kinds of information," citing commodities futures markets in Winnipeg and New Orleans.

Where the world city model focuses on control activities, the international city model also makes room for what we can call "exchange activities." Exchange activities involve
interactions among equals in which two-way flows are driven by mutual advantage in the classic model of specialization and trade. Examples are trade in tangible commodities, migration, tourism, and exchanges of information for business purposes, formal education, or personal development through family, ethnic, religious, or political ties. The network model accepts the importance of urban hierarchy and the preponderant role of global cities like New York in international finance, trade, and immigration, but it also recognizes the role of lateral connections. It expects that different cities may define and develop specialized and independent roles or niches within the international economy, as with Geneva, Brussels, or Miami. International cities, of course, can be far more numerous than the handful of undeniably hegemonic world cities. They can, as well, be relatively unimportant outside their local setting, as with a gateway to a small nation such as Auckland.

Many social scientists who explain the emergence of international cities share with world city theorists a belief in the momentous effects of new communication technologies and institutional changes in rules of finance and trade. One obvious factor encouraging the growth of international roles has been the ways in which the nearly instant transfer of large masses of information is changing the competitive context of cities and by allowing new processes for performing financial, corporate, or educational functions. Other writers point to the internationalization of personally consumed services such as tourism and education and the growing importance of information industries that provide custom-tailored products. Still others point to changes in the rules of world trade, such as the European Community and the possible creation of a North American free trade area.

Indeed, the idea of a growing network of international cities has generated substantial interest among European politicians and scholars. Both the rapid evolution of the European Community and massive investments in improved highways and rail lines have forced
European cities to look beyond national markets and functions. Continental competition will challenge previously secure positions within national urban systems and open new chances for specialization. Political responses have included a multitude of cooperative networks for sharing resources and information and a variety of explicitly international strategies designed to place cities as new gateways, information centers, and continental meeting points. Scholars have tried to classify types of international city and to inventory development strategies. Some have identified a network of international cities as the logical urban system for a post-Fordist economy characterized by small scale, flexible production, and advanced services.

Urban historians, however, may want to take a longer view. What we see in the late twentieth century United States looks very much like an updated version of interurban competition for commercial connections. The idea of a network of international cities extends the scope of the earlier studies from contests over commerce in goods to include rivalries over information and service industries. In one suggestive study that gives historical support to the idea of complex urban networks, sociologists Mark Abrahamson and Michael DuBick examined the ways in which United States cities in 1890 put together different combinations of local, regional, national, and international roles. They found that exclusive attention to a single dimension of financial-corporate dominance missed important alternative roles and functions such as sociocultural leadership and international contact.

Looking beyond the United States, the international city model is also compatible with the historically informed definition of network cities developed by Edward Fox, Lynn Lees and Paul Hohenberg. Writing about pre-industrial Europe, Lees and Hohenberg described contemporaneous systems of central places and network cities. Cities in the central place system were rooted in a close relationship with their agricultural environs,
expressed indigenous or provincial culture, and tied the locality to the state through a defined hierarchy of towns and cities. Network cities took their life from long-distance commerce and served as "centers, nodes, junctions, outposts, and relays" within complex sets of economic and social linkages that crossed political borders. A network city, of course, can also function as a central place for a region or nation, but its essential connections are outward to world markets and constituencies.\(^\text{31}\)

The international city model thus opens the door to a series of specific historical questions, for it assumes that cities can pursue and compete for a variety of economic functions.\(^\text{32}\) Like studies of internal urban rivalries, it allows a role for the contingencies of local policy and initiative. Historians might examine the content and results of urban efforts to promote international functions and presence. They might evaluate whether public and private members of urban growth coalitions have treated globalization as a problem or an opportunity. They might ask whether there are distinctive variations among internationally-oriented policy responses from city to city.

The openness to questions of history and policy is a substantial contrast with the the world city model, which gives little attention to the detailed processes of historical change as they operate at the scale of an individual city. Indeed, the historian of the United States finds little immediate help in the sweeping idea of hegemonic world cities, for New York is our only sure example and Los Angeles our only other probable candidate. With its focus on the very largest cities and on their interaction with peripheral and/or colonial cities, the model is an excellent tool for understanding multiple functions of cities like New York and Tokyo. However, it has little interest in supporting-cast cities within the economic core or in the process of evolution from semiperiphery to core.

In broad comparison, the two approaches fall on opposite sides of the modern/post-
modern metaphor. The world city model is hierarchical, structured, and inclusive, understanding all cities as parts of a unitary system. Its underlying interest is the distribution of power. The international city model emphasizes lateral connections and networks as well as hierarchies, the contingency of economic and political history, and the possibility of flexible adaptation. Its underlying interest is in the variety of activities, both important and mundane.

In judging the applicability of the two models, it is a reasonable hypothesis that the travel and communication revolutions of the past generation have helped to shift the United States and the wider world from a hierarchical to a networked pattern. The underlying principle of this hypothesis, drawn from the basic theory of economic development, is that expanding social and economic systems involve increased specialization. The suggestion that we are moving to a more complex model with network connections does not require that corporate and financial control be deconcentrated. New York, London, and Tokyo remain extraordinarily vital as world centers. However, such a hierarchy of global capitalism is more and more deeply embedded in multilateral exchanges involving urban specialization. Such lateral ties are particularly relevant for understanding the second-level cities that the world city model treats as passive intermediaries between the economic capitals and the centers of production.

The network model also recognizes the obvious variety among cities in advanced economies by making room for at least three types of international cities. Building on the standard typologies of cities within domestic economies, analysts have suggested a variety of ways to categorize international cities. Several of these typologies are summarized in Table 2 and grouped into the three general categories of production, gateway, and transactional cities. By recognizing the variety of roles among late twentieth-century cities, the categories
provide a way to organize detailed information about the evolution of international cities that is lacking in the unity world city model.\textsuperscript{33}

International \textbf{production cities} are manufacturing cities that directly serve world markets by exporting finished goods, production expertise, and branch plants. Obvious examples are nineteenth century Manchester and twentieth century Detroit. The international role of American production cities has increased since 1960 because of the rising importance of world trade for the United States and because the shift of production to other countries has necessitated coordination across borders. Their international management and information activities tend to be in direct support of their production sector.

\textbf{Gateway cities} were historically the entry points to European overseas settlement regions or colonies--both the commercial cities so central to the urban history of the United States and the colonial cities of nineteenth century European expansion. In these roles they were avenues of cultural as well as economic penetration. Within the United States they connected the northeastern industrial core with southern and western resource regions.\textsuperscript{34} In the twentieth century they have functioned as access points to resource regions and regional markets. The economy of the later twentieth century has added new types of exchanges to their historic flows of goods and immigrants.

International \textbf{transactional cities}, to use the terminology of Jean Gottmann, are the suppliers of professional expertise, financial services, and personal services to multi-national markets. This is the sector that has attracted the greatest attention of the "urban transformationists" who take the position that the 1970s ushered in a new world urban system. Transactional cities may specialize in economic information, political/organizational information, or cultural information.\textsuperscript{35}
The international city model for United States cities will remain a hypothesis until adequately tested. We need systematic quantitative data to analyze and compare international roles among second and third level cities as well as among the acknowledged world cities. We also need studies of individual cities that examine the processes by which international functions have grown, including the roles of public and private development strategies and policies.

Most rankings or measurements of the global connections of cities concentrate on the banking, finance, and corporate sectors that are central to the world city hypothesis. As late as early 1990s, writers were still utilizing the limited data on corporate sales and advanced services that R. B. Cohen generated in the mid-1970s. In fact, it is easy to propose a score of additional indicators (Table 3). Some reflect a city's general orientation, others particular types of international relationships. The list includes standard economic data like imports and exports and "softer" indicators, such as telephone listings, that may express community attitudes. Particularly difficult to measure are the "invisible earnings" of service industries, which are poorly and unsystematically reported. We have virtually no data on the interregional and international sales of services by metropolitan area to match data on shipments of tangible commodities. Because economists began to give serious attention to services only in the 1970s, the problem is particularly troublesome for historical studies.

Table 4 lists the leaders among large metropolitan areas cities in ten categories measured in the late 1980s or early 1990s. The lists are a heuristic device to introduce the idea of multiple international roles, not a precise measure of relative global importance. San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose appears on all ten lists; New York, Los Angeles and Chicago appear on nine; Boston on eight; Miami on seven; Washington and Houston on six;
Seattle and Dallas on four; Detroit, San Diego, Philadelphia, and New Orleans on three. In total, twenty-nine of the thirty-nine MSAs and CMSAs with 1990 populations over 1 million appear at least once. Both this wide overall spread and the frequent appearance of secondary cities such as Miami, Houston, Seattle, and Dallas are evidence in support of an international city model.

A special challenge is to supplement cross-sectional comparisons with measures of change over time. Using six categories, including some that were "eyeballed" from the secondary literature, I have found that that international roles among large southern and western cities increased most dramatically from the early 1960s to late 1980s in Los Angeles, Miami, Washington, Dallas, and Atlanta. In contrast, Denver, San Antonio, Nashville, Tampa, and a dozen other cities showed limited growth of international roles relative to national trends. Given the thinness of the data, these results are hypotheses rather than conclusions. They can, however, be a starting point for questions about the differential effects of regional location, economic base, position within the national urban hierarchy on the progress of internationalization.

It is also necessary to analyze specific cases within the broad patterns. Detailed studies of individual cities might include questions about typical pathways or sequences of international engagement, about the content and effect of local policy, and about the sources of local support and opposition to international strategies. Here too, we know more about the world cities of New York and Los Angeles than about increasinly internationalized cities like Washington or Atlanta. Indeed, New York's recovery from the verge of financial collapse in the 1970s and its economic vitality in the 1980s has been one of the chief exhibits on behalf of the world city argument. Several prominent studies have recognized New York's special importance by focusing on the ways in which that city has made space for the new functions
that it has received because of world economic changes. Scholars have similarly examined Los Angeles for the effects of global economic change on local geography, planning, and politics. In both cases, the growth of world city functions is presented as compatible with traditional growth coalition strategies that are oriented to the value of urban core real estate.

Few theoretically sophisticated and detailed case studies are available for other American cities. Sociologist Joe Feagin has written about the international connections of Houston and political scientist Richard Child Hill about Detroit. Continuing an interest in the changing character of the putative Sunbelt, I have supplemented quantitative comparisons with preliminary looks at a number of southern and western cities. Case studies with an explicit historical dimension tentatively suggest that the development of international cities has followed two distinct sequences or pathways.

In the more straightforward sequence, a city builds an international presence directly on its domestic strength as producer, gateway, or information center. Houston and Detroit export not only petroleum products and automobiles but also on relevant production expertise--oil field equipment and drilling supplies in the one case, software and robotics for manufacturing processes in the other. Houston's numerous foreign banks directly serve its international petrochemical business. Dallas and Atlanta have capitalized on their roles as gateways to large segments of the American domestic market. Foreign businesses have found it convenient to utilize their hub airports, railroads, interstate highways, wholesaling systems, regional banks, and business services. In contrast, Washington's role as an international information center is constructed directly on its historic function as a national city. Five hundreds offices of international organizations parallel the thousands of trade associations and public interest groups that are the city's third largest industry; representatives of foreign corporations share office buildings with domestic lobbyists;
foreign travelers mingle with domestic tourists and convention goers.

The second pathway involves the identification and development of special niches in the world economy. Cities can capitalize on location, on changes in the legal or institutional environment for business, and on other special circumstances. The rise of maquiladora industries after changes in Mexican law in the 1960s and 1970s and devaluation of the peso in 1982 transformed El Paso/Juarez from a minor gateway city into a bi-national production center. As of 1988, 8000 El Paso residents worked in jobs directly tied to maquila industries and thousands of others in supporting services; across the border, 100,000 Mexicans worked in routine assembly operations.47

With limited and isolated commercial hinterlands, Miami and Honolulu first developed significant international connections at the mass market level of tourism and immigration. These foreign ties, including social and linguistic support systems for Latin American or Japanese businessmen, have helped to attract major transactional functions that the cities previously lacked. Miami in the early 1970s began to attract "Edge Act" banks (subsidiaries of U. S. banks that are authorized to engage in international lending and financing of foreign trade. After changes in state and federal banking laws in the late 1970s, Miami also added numerous agencies of Latin American banks. The same factors of location and local culture that have attracted bankers also make the city a good location for Latin American offices of U. S. businesses and for initial U. S. offices of Latin American companies.48

Case studies are also reminders that international development strategies predate the ubiquitous promotional efforts of the 1980s. Fifty years ago, a number of cities hoped to cushion economic demobilization after World War II by capturing a share of an expected postwar expansion in foreign commerce. Business leaders in the established port of New
Orleans marked the end of the war by establishing an International Trade Mart and other facilities to reassert the city's prominence in foreign commerce. San Francisco's postwar plans coupled slum clearance with creation of a free trade zone and World Trade Center to house foreign trade representatives. New meeting facilities would support the trade center and enhance the city's chance to secure the permanent seat of the United Nations and ancillary activities. Changes in transportation technologies also presented new challenges in the 1960s. Cities responded with varying effectiveness to the infrastructure needs of containerized cargo and jet airplanes.

When the cases reach the 1980s, an obvious question is whether all the junkets, advertising, and other promotional efforts of the 1980s had any effect on the relative importance of cities' international roles. It is possible that the frantic activity was a case of running to stay in place, analogous to the expansion of the domestic convention business. Structured comparisons of otherwise similar pairs such as Denver/Dallas and Portland/Seattle, however, indicate substantial differences in responses and results. While Portland carefully tended its regional hinterland of the Columbia Basin, for example, Seattle in the 1960s and early 1970s committed funds to port modernization and airport expansion aimed at long-distance business, mounted a world's fair with global theme of Century 21 and "the space age science, and pursued research industries with international markets. Since the 1980s, Portland's leadership has looked on in bemusement as Seattlites have tried to capitalize on their near-border location by promoting a bi-national partnership with Vancouver as the center for a redefined "Cascadia" that would tie the American Northwest and Canadian West into a regional powerhouse.
This essay has argued that we add little to our understanding of most United States cities by asking a yes/no question about world class status. The answer--almost surely negative--is likely to cut off rather than invites further investigation. There is, however, much to be learned from studying the variety of international city types and functions. Where world city theory is interested in the locus of economic control and the identity of the world's most important places, the international city hypothesis directs attention to the local impacts of structural economic change, the character and supporters of local initiatives, and the range of international connections that different cities have developed.

The specific comparisons and examples in the foregoing discussion are an open invitation to further research on these multiple international dimensions of urban growth. Compared with specialists on European or even Canadian cities, American urbanists have just begun to explore a promising list of questions. Several needs stand out. One is the further development of comparative and time series data. Another is case studies of economic development strategies that cover the entire postwar period and that look for opposition and conflict as well as support for internationalization. A third need is for analysis that further defines the common sequences and linkages among different international roles and further refines a useful typology of international cities. As we pursue this agenda, American urban specialists will be taking an important step in building a comparative history that recognizes the variety of our urban experience.
Table 1
World City and International City Models

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>World City:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Application limited to &quot;most important&quot; cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Precise/predictive re leading sectors, dual cities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus on single dimension of financial and corporate information/control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hierarchical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible with central place theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible with structural history and historical sociology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>International City:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wide potential application at different levels of urban hierarchy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Broad/descriptive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open to wide range of economic specializations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible with network theory of urban growth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compatible with urban policy history and political science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2

#### City Type or Specialization

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rodriguez/Feagin</th>
<th>manufacturing</th>
<th>finance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kresl</td>
<td>bridge city</td>
<td>point of access city</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lavergne/Mollet</td>
<td>economic</td>
<td>specific</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>international</td>
<td>international</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>flow/industrial</td>
<td>service center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barlow/Slack</td>
<td>transport</td>
<td>specialized</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PRODUCTION** | **GATEWAY** | **TRANSACTIONAL**

**Sources:**

Table 3
Measures of International Connections

Production Cities:

City -> Foreign:
- Percent of foreign sales by leading industries
- Percent of foreign sales by locally headquartered corporations
- Headquarters of major multinationals
- Supply of technical expertise to foreign producers

Foreign -> City:
- Percent of jobs controlled from abroad
- Receipt of technical expertise

Gateway Cities:

City -> Foreign:
- Value of exports
  - International trade centers
  - Use of foreign languages in promotional literature

Foreign -> City:
- Value of imports
  - Percent of population foreign born
  - Number of immigrants designating as U.S. destination
  - Professional trade offices/consulates

Two-way:
- Direct flights to destinations outside North America
- International trade fairs

Transactional Cities:

City -> Foreign:
- Percent of residents holding passports
  - Sister city affiliations
  - Professional and business service sales abroad

Foreign -> City:
- Number of foreign tourists
Offices of foreign banks
Direct foreign investment

Two-way:  
Global activity of local banks (percent of deposits from overseas)
Headquarters of transnational service companies
Offices of IGOs and INGOs
International conventions and events

General:

City -> Foreign:  Adoption of municipal foreign policy
Number of foreign language immersion schools
Balance of global/national/regional names for businesses/organizations

Foreign -> City:  Schools intended for foreign nationals
Number of phone listings linked to specific foreign nation (e.g., Korean Chamber of Commerce)
Table 4
Leading International Cities on Selected Indicators
(metropolitan areas of 1,000,000+ residents 1990)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Baltimore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Norfolk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Miami</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Houston</td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>San Diego</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Foreign Tourists (1989)</th>
<th>Sister City Affiliation (1991)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Orlando</td>
<td>Seattle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Diego</td>
<td>Phoenix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City</td>
<td>City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>Denver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rochester</td>
<td>Washington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cleveland</td>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milwaukee</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>Houston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minneapolis-St. Paul</td>
<td>Miami</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>New Orleans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dallas</td>
<td>Atlanta</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>San Francisco</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>Dallas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charlotte</td>
<td>Detroit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detroit</td>
<td>Boston</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Washington</td>
<td>St. Louis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>Los Angeles (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>M'polis-St. Paul (tie)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Houston (tie)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Foreign Banks:
"Top Numbers Update 1989," American Banker

Waterborne Trade:

Foreign Born:
U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census of Population and Housing: Summary Social, Economic and Housing Characteristics United States, Table 1.
New Immigrants:
Foreign Tourists:
Sister Cities:
Manufacturing Exports:
Consular Offices:
   U. S. Department of State, Foreign Consular Offices in the United States (Washington, 1992)
Foreign Deposits:
   Business Week (April 27, 1992): 98-100
Multinational Corporations:
   Forbes Magazine, 152 (July 19, 1993): 182-86
NOTES

1. Charles C. Euchner, Playing the Field: Why Sports Teams Move and Cities Fight to Keep Them (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). In 1993 there were two CMSAs with six major league teams (New York and Los Angeles); two with four teams (Chicago and San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose); and twelve with one team in each of the three major leagues (Seattle, Denver, Dallas, Houston, Miami, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Atlanta, Boston, Philadelphia, Cleveland, Detroit, and the newly defined Washington-Baltimore CMSA).

2. "World class" is of course another term closely associated with competitive sports.


6. Chadwick F. Alger, "The World Relations of Cities: Closing the Gap between Social Science

7. Gottmann, "What Are Cities Becoming the Centers Of?" 63.


14. Christopher Chase-Dunn, "The System of World Cities, A.D. 800-1975," in Michael Timberlake, ed., *Urbanization in the World Economy* (New York: Academic Press, 1985) 271, asserts that "exchanges among the largest cities of the core are dense both within and across national boundaries, while peripheral cities exchange mostly with core cities and very little with each other."

15. Beauregard, *Atop the Urban Hierarchy*. 


19. Perhaps the most detailed and comprehensive statement of global cities as new phenomena created by the rise of multinational corporations and advanced services is given by Sassen in The Global City. She emphasizes a structural change in the sectoral composition of the world economy as the cause of the emergence of world cities rather than spatial restructuring in itself.


York: Oxford University Press, 1989); Chase-Dunn, "System of World Cities." In contrast, Friedmann explicitly decoupled his world-city hypothesis from world-system theory.


25. Advocates of the world city/hegemony model, of course, argue that these same technical and economic changes are powerful centralizers of the global urban system.


27. Michael Parkinson, "The Rise of the Entrepreneurial European City: Strategic Responses to


33. Several social scientists have noted in passing that cities may fill a multitude of international roles. However, they are too focused on describing single general processes to go into detail. For example, Joe Feagin and Michael Peter Smith, "Cities and the New International Division of Labor: An Overview," in Smith and Feagin, The Capitalist City, 3-4, mention that "different cities occupy a variety of niches in the capitalist world economy" but do not try to develop a non-hierarchical typology. John Logan and Todd Swanstrom make a single brief reference to "so-called world cities" and to "other cities [that] take on different functions within the changing international division of labor, from regional headquarters cities to centers of low-wage manufacturing." See their "Urban Restructuring: A Critical View," in John R. Logan and Todd Swanstrom, eds., Beyond the City Limits Urban Policy and Economic Restructuring in Comparative Perspective (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1990), 8.


39. The lists have two conceptual problems. First, we have no way other than subjective
judgment to weight the relative importance of the categories. Second, use of rank position obscures the range and distribution of values for each indicator.


43. Some fragmentary literature is available from urban and economic geographers and from economists. However, the issue of economic internationalization at the metropolitan scale is most commonly treated in academic and professional business periodicals. Some of this literature is suspect for its extreme present-mindedness and its upbeat tone. Historians will find it a challenge to identify and access relevant archival materials--mayor's office records, port authority and development agency minutes and documents, chamber of commerce papers, and similar sources--as well as information about the activities and strategies of private firms.


47. The Mexican government encouraged the development of a "platform economy" by allowing private companies along the U.S. border to import components and inputs duty-free as long as 80 percent of the items were re-exported and 90 percent of their workers were Mexican. The idea was to persuade American corporations to locate assembly plants south of the border. Further


51. National policy in Canada since the 1980s has stressed free trade agreements with the United States and Mexico and the expansion of economic connections with Pacific Rim nations. Canadian cities have had to analyze and pursue opportunities within this national policy environment. In the same way that Miami markets itself as a safe and convenient location for firms wanting to do business in Latin America, Toronto presents itself as an attractive location for European and Asian firms seeking access to the United States. Vancouver has built on its position as Canada's Pacific port to court Chinese investment and to promote a role as a Pacific Rim financial center. Since Mayor Jean Drapeau committed his city to Expo '67 and the 1976 Olympics, Montreal has tried to replace a declining port with an expanding role as an international meeting place and transactional center. See Michael Y. Seelig and Alan F. J. Artibise, From Desolation to Hope: The Pacific Fraser Region in 2010 (Vancouver: School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, 1991); H. C. Davis and Michael A. Goldberg, Determination of the Comparative Advantages of Vancouver as an International City (Vancouver: Asia-Pacific Initiative, 1988); Thomas A. Hutton and H. Craig Davis, Vancouver as an Emerging Centre of the Pacific Rim Urban System (Vancouver: School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia, 1989); Warren Magnusson, "Regeneration and Quality of Life in Vancouver," in Dennis Judd and Michael Parkinson, eds., Leadership and Urban Regeneration (Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications, 1990), 171-87; Jacques LeVeillee and Robert K. Whelan, "Montreal: The Struggle to Become a 'World City'," in Judd and Parkinson, Leadership and Urban Regeneration, 152-69; M. V. Levine, "Urban Redevelopment in a Global Economy: The Cases of Montreal and Baltimore," in