

**Archdeacon, Thomas J. *New York City, 1664-1710: Conquest and Change*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1976. Pp. 169. \$9.75**

David R. Farrell

Number 2-77, October 1977

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019576ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019576ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Farrell, D. R. (1977). Review of [Archdeacon, Thomas J. *New York City, 1664-1710: Conquest and Change*. New York: Cornell University Press, 1976. Pp. 169. \$9.75]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, (2-77), 123-125. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019576ar>

Yet, despite these problems, the book is far from being a dead loss: in fact, about a third of the essays are well worth reading. Kenneth Newton's discussion of community politics and decision-making contains an excellent critical review of previous research as well as a useful consideration of questions that still need to be answered. Oliver Williams provides a lucid description of urbanism as a type of human ecology, and the editor, Ken Young, contributes a fascinating essay which applies recent research in national and international integration to the problems of unifying metropolitan areas.

This book was originally published in England primarily for an English readership. Thus much space is devoted to considering the applicability of North American research to the British context, an exercise that produces some interesting comparative analysis. For the most part, however, the essays are a celebration of the English political scientist's discovery of statistics and of his confidence (despite Banfield's reservations) that a whole batch of general scientific propositions are about to spew out of the computers. Unless the reader shares such optimism, he will find in Young's book a pretentiousness that is often both naive and superficial. There is little success here in making a science out of the study of urban politics.

W. T. Wooley  
 Department of History  
 University of Victoria

\* \* \*

Archdeacon, Thomas J. New York City, 1664-1710: Conquest and Change.  
 New York: Cornell University Press, 1976. Pp. 169. \$9.75.

For a half century following the English capture of Dutch New York in 1664, the city underwent a steady ethnic transformation. Within two decades the steady influx of English newcomers and their French Huguenot allies would dominate the Dutch economic, political

institutions. The resulting ethnic tension, which erupted in Leislar's Rebellion in 1689, was far more than a mere contest for supremacy between English and Dutch elites; their struggle would involve an entire society in a type of mass, democratic-oriented style of politics.

It is Archdeacon's contention that colonial historians, in utilizing some of the most challenging quantitative and analytical tools currently available, have effectively dissected early American society into its various familial, communal and leadership components. But in so doing they have tended to follow the most accessible sources by concentrating on the resource-rich New England towns. It is time, he argues, to balance these small community studies with the concepts used to analyze the Nineteenth Century where ethnicity, class divisions, and economic inequality formed the basis for an intense political partisanship. In order to do this, it is necessary to move out of the homogeneous world of the small New England town and look at the more diversified society of the larger cities in the middle colonies. Although more difficult to work with, the necessary tax rolls, assessment records, voters lists, customhouse receipts and the like do exist for these larger communities. By using these sources, Archdeacon has portrayed a highly partisan society grouped along ethnic lines.

Archdeacon concludes that ethnic politics in Seventeenth Century New York reflects a highly "modern" style of political conflict usually overlooked by historians of the social consensus school. While this is quite true, he also recognizes that Massachusetts, Virginia and Maryland were going through similar stresses of "colonial maturation" at the same time. The degree of ethnic conflict was more intense in New York, but the author probably overstates the city's uniqueness. New York's political divisions were just as transitory as those of its neighbors and they were largely resolved by 1710.

But Archdeacon's basic point is well made. The continuity of American political behavior can be understood only if the same concepts

and tools are applied consistently. He demonstrates that ethnicity, class divisions, and growing economic inequality were just as influential on Seventeenth Century politics as they would be in the Nineteenth Century; and he clearly shows that it is no longer necessary to remain tied to the small isolated community in order to study colonial society.

David R. Farrell  
Department of History  
University of Guelph

\* \* \*

Barton, Josef J. Peasants and Strangers: Italians, Rumanians, and Slovaks in an American City, 1890-1950. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1976. \$12.00.

Josef Barton's Peasants and Strangers is an examination of turn of the century migration by three European ethnic groups to one American city, Cleveland. The volume can be seen as separated into two distinct but closely related sections. In the first third of his volume Barton discusses Italian, Slovak and Rumanian migrants in the context of rural Europe; the remainder of the book explores their settlement and two generations of adjustment and integration in urban America.

Barton's discussion of the European background to migration is the stronger section of the book. The author joins the growing chorus of recent immigration historians who challenge the traditional thesis that turn of the century immigration was largely composed of the victims of wholesale dispossession of land or traditional rights. These uprooted peasants, who Oscar Handlin has argued were the basis for mass emigration to America, were, according to Barton, "not so much candidates for emigration as recruits for militant agricultural unions." Barton's migrants came from areas where modernization had begun, where