
*British and French political institutions and
the patterning of decolonization*

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While the literature on twentieth-century decolonization occasionally ventures into comparison across empires (Emerson 1960; Smith 1978; von Albertini 1982; and Holland 1985), there is little quantitative research into the processes producing imperial collapse. This chapter presents an event history analysis of the precipitants of decolonization in the two major Western empires: the British and the French. It contrasts the way British and French political institutions shaped the pattern of imperial breakdown.

Elsewhere, I argue that metropolitan political institutions organized around expanded forms of citizenship promote decolonization (Strang 1990, 1991a, 1992). The rise of the nation-state produces a tension between the political theories and structures of the metropolis (where rights are expanded) and the colony (where they are not). New models of the state diffuse to the colonies and inform peripheral nation building. And metropolitan powers organized as nation-states can neither accommodate nor easily repress such nationalisms. They are unwilling to extend full membership to the colonized and find it unappetizing to crush movements constructed around Western models.

Expanded incorporation may be conceived in the terms Marshall (1964) made famous: legal, political, and social citizenship. Of the three, disparities in legal status are the least obviously pertinent to decolonization. Disputes between "natives" were often referred to indigenous law, but this mainly reflected the administrative weakness of the colonial state. It was the growing gulf between the political and social citizenship of Europeans and colonized peoples that produced distinctive tensions.

Broadened political rights within the metropolitan population sharply differentiated imperial center and colonial possession in a new way.

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In dynastic systems, all populations were subjects of the crown, and peripheral elites could rise to the imperial center. The political incorporation of the middle and working classes in the metropolis and the spread of theories of popular sovereignty helped stimulate political mobilization within colonial dependencies. With full incorporation into the metropolis blocked, colonized peoples sought sovereignty and full citizenship within their own communities.

The growth of social citizenship within the metropolis had a similar meaning and consequence. The notion of social citizenship provides a platform on which peripheral nationalists could build; national liberation was seen as replacing exploitative colonial arrangements with a national state dedicated to the social and economic needs of the people. And metropolitan politicians and populations were unwilling to enlarge the social definition of national welfare to include the colonized.¹

Previous work examines the effects of metropolitan institutions on decolonization across a broad range of settings. An event history analysis of twentieth-century decolonization (Strang 1990) shows that the rate of decolonization increases with the breadth of metropolitan suffrage. Qualitative examination of the major Western empires in both the first and second waves of decolonization (Strang 1992) finds that metropolises organized around expanded citizenship witnessed relatively rapid decolonization grounded in internal tensions, while metropolises organized around limited forms of incorporation faced slower decolonization grounded in external pressures.

This chapter takes a closer look at British and French decolonization. One limitation of a broadly comparative approach (i.e., the analysis of dependencies in many empires) is that political systems must be located along a few simple metrics. On a general level, French and British citizenship expanded at about the same time. If anything, the radical republican tradition of France suggests that it should have experienced more rapid decolonization than should Britain, which retained the symbols of dynastic empire in a constitutional monarchy. Yet Britain is generally seen as having weathered decolonization more quickly and easily than France (see Smith 1978). In particular, France fought wars to retain Indochina and Algeria while Britain negotiated Indian independence.

Examined more closely, the two political systems furnish a strong contrast. France provides the preeminent instance of a centralized bureaucracy insulated from society. In Birnbaum and Badie's words, "the French state has steadily expanded its control over civil society and constituted itself as an autonomous power, an immense and hermetic administrative machine capable of dominating all peripheral power centers" (1983, p. 105). Formally, the French state is a unitary republic whose departments are administrative conveniences, not constituent

elements. While theoretically the instrument of the popular will, the French state is better described as having constructed the French people (Weber 1976).

Great Britain has much less that one can describe as a "state," if by the term we mean an organization set apart from and directing civil society. Core British political traditions have to do with the autonomy and rights of the individual, seen as prior to and constitutive of the state. The core British political institution is Parliament, a representative assembly. In practice, British government is decentralized and open to influence from civil society.

The common rule that imperial structures mirror metropolitan institutions holds true for both France and Britain. French colonial administration was centralized and bureaucratic, with little attention paid to local diversity. The British constructed a differentiated and decentralized empire, with self-governing institutions in the settler Dominions and indirect rule in most of Africa.

Similarly, the way the British and the French made sense of the imperial activity was linked to each society's political traditions. The logic of French empire was assimilation, the drive culturally to Gallicize the colonized and politically to enlarge France. This aim fit the bureaucratic and centralized structure of the French state, which was capable of elaborating to rule a larger territory and population. And the French concept of a nation defined by will rather than ancestry could be extended to Asians and Africans in a way that the ancient rights of Englishmen could not.

By contrast, Britain's empire was legitimated as the white man's burden, schooling non-Western peoples in British traditions. It aspired to the construction of autonomous replicas of the United Kingdom, where family resemblance and common ties would sustain political associations. These aims fit with Britain's liberal tradition of individual rights as well as its conservative tradition of a political community grounded in common descent and culture. And the cultivation of local autonomy limited the administrative strain of empire.

Contrasts in imperial aims suggest two hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: Political incorporation into the metropolis should be attained more rapidly by French colonies than by British colonies.

Hypothesis 2: Political independence should be attained more rapidly by British colonies than by French colonies.

British and French political institutions should also mediate the impact of internal and external factors differently. The localized structure of the British empire should expand the impact of dependency characteristics on decolonization. In particular, British political traditions should

enhance the role of colonial assemblies and metropolitan settlers. In British eyes, the former could legitimately claim national authority, while the latter could claim the rights of Englishmen.

The same governmental traditions should diminish the impact of external factors on decolonization. The absence of a unified institutional structure reduced opportunities for imitation and cooperation among British dependencies. And Britain's stated aim to govern until the individual dependency was "ready" to stand on its own should reduce the impact of contextual effects (such as the global delegitimation of imperialism after 1960).

The French empire should display the opposite tendency. France's administrative centralization promoted uniformity of outcomes across its dependencies. In seeking systemic solutions to political demands, the French were driven to grant the same rights and opportunities to all dependencies, even those where demands were less strongly voiced. For example, all sub-Saharan colonies had the same institutional roles in the abortive French Union and French Community. Given this uniformity, French decolonization should exhibit reduced sensitivity to variations across dependencies in scale, indigenous political traditions, and economic development.

In contrast, French decolonization should be strongly affected by the larger imperial and world systemic context. By seeking administrative standardization, the French facilitated imitation and cooperation within the French empire. And by aiming at a coherent response to colonial pressures, the French increased the role that systemic conditions might play in decolonization. In short:

Hypothesis 3: British decolonization should be more strongly affected by colonial characteristics than should French decolonization.

Hypothesis 4: French decolonization should be more strongly affected by the imperial and global context than should British decolonization.

FUNDAMENTAL DEFINITIONS

The study of decolonization requires explicit a conceptual scheme distinguishing colonial dependencies, outlying metropolitan territories, and sovereign states. The scheme employed in this chapter is elaborated at length elsewhere (Strang 1991b) and is briefly summarized here.

Dependency is defined as a formal relationship of ownership or subordination tying one polity to another. It includes both "crown colony" rule, where the imperial power directly administers a territory as its possession, and various forms of partial sovereignty such as the protectorate. "Decolonization" is defined as the acquisition of recognized

sovereignty within the Western state system. Recognition by the imperial power is the operational criterion, unless metropolitan recognition has no meaning or is widely opposed within the international community. In the analysis of the twentieth-century empires of Britain and France, Algeria is the one case to which the latter restriction was applied. It was coded as a French dependency from 1879 to 1962, despite France's internal definition of Algeria as an integral part of the metropolitan state (a political definition which did not change the legal, political, or welfare status of the mass of the Algerian population).

Movement from dependency to sovereignty can take one of three forms. The dependency may become sovereign as a new independent state; it may be fully incorporated as an integral part of the nation's territory; or it may be integrated into some other state. The third possible form of decolonization is not of central interest here, since it is relatively unaffected by metropolitan policy. The first two are of interest and should be kept theoretically and analytically distinct.

This paper examines the period 1870 to 1987. The data examined here are taken from a larger project on Western imperialism from 1500 to the present. The basic sources for data on the creation, dissolution, and decolonization of British and French dependencies are Henige (1971) and Banks (1987). Research into secondary materials was used to supplement these sources.

Modeling framework

Event history analysis provides an appropriate methodology for the quantitative analysis of decolonization, which involves an event (movement from dependency to sovereignty) that may occur at any time. Within this framework, it is conventional to consider the process in terms of the *instantaneous transition rate* at which the event occurs. Event history methods include nonparametric analyses examining how the rate varies with time and parametric analyses that model the impact of measured covariates. Both forms of analysis are useful here. Nonparametric analyses explore differences in the larger temporal patterns of British and French decolonization. Parametric analyses gauge the differential impact of specific conditions on British and French decolonization.

NONPARAMETRIC ANALYSES

As argued, a primary distinction between British and French colonial traditions has to do with the disparate aims of association and assimilation. These alternative goals were to some degree realized in the actual pattern of imperial breakdown.

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Table 11.1. *Decolonization counts by empire, 1870-1987*

| | France | Great Britain |
|--|--------|---------------|
| Cases of metropolitan incorporation | 5 | 0 |
| Cases of nonmetropolitan incorporation | 1 | 2 |
| Cases of independence | 26 | 61 |
| Transition rate to independence | 0.0152 | 0.0142 |
| Dependencies remaining in 1987 | 10 | 5 |

Table 11.1 gives the number of decolonization events occurring within each empire during the 1870 to 1987 period. Great Britain, which boasted the largest Western overseas empire, saw 63 dependencies decolonize. All but two became new independent states. Newfoundland joined Canada; Weihaiwei (a treaty port leased to the British in 1898) was returned to China. No British colonies became integral parts of the United Kingdom. By contrast, 5 of the 32 French dependencies reaching sovereign status were incorporated into the metropolis. The dependencies involved were the remnants of France's eighteenth-century empire: Guadeloupe, Martinique, French Guinea, Reunion, and Sainte Pierre and Miquelon. These small, culturally Gallicized dependencies were made overseas departments, assuming legal, political, and administrative continuity with continental France. The first four were integrated in 1944, with Sainte Pierre and Miquelon following in 1976.²

France was clearly more ready to integrate her colonies into the metropolis than was Britain, which could have assimilated analogous colonies like Bermuda and Saint Croix. But the difference should not be exaggerated. Less than a sixth of all French colonies were integrated into the French nation. While French imperialism was initially legitimated in terms of the assimilation of overseas possessions, the great majority eventually became new independent states.

The transition rate to independence given in Table 11.1 indicates that French colonies became independent more rapidly than did British colonies. But this difference is small and statistically insignificant. It may also be misleading, since it does not control for compositional differences across the two empires. As a first approximation, however, it would appear that independence occurred at roughly the same rate in the British and French empires.

Similarity in the overall rate of decolonization may hide differences in the patterning of event times. To gauge such patterns, Figures 11.1 and 11.2 plot the integrated hazard of decolonization in the British and French empires. The transition rate equals the slope of the graph in

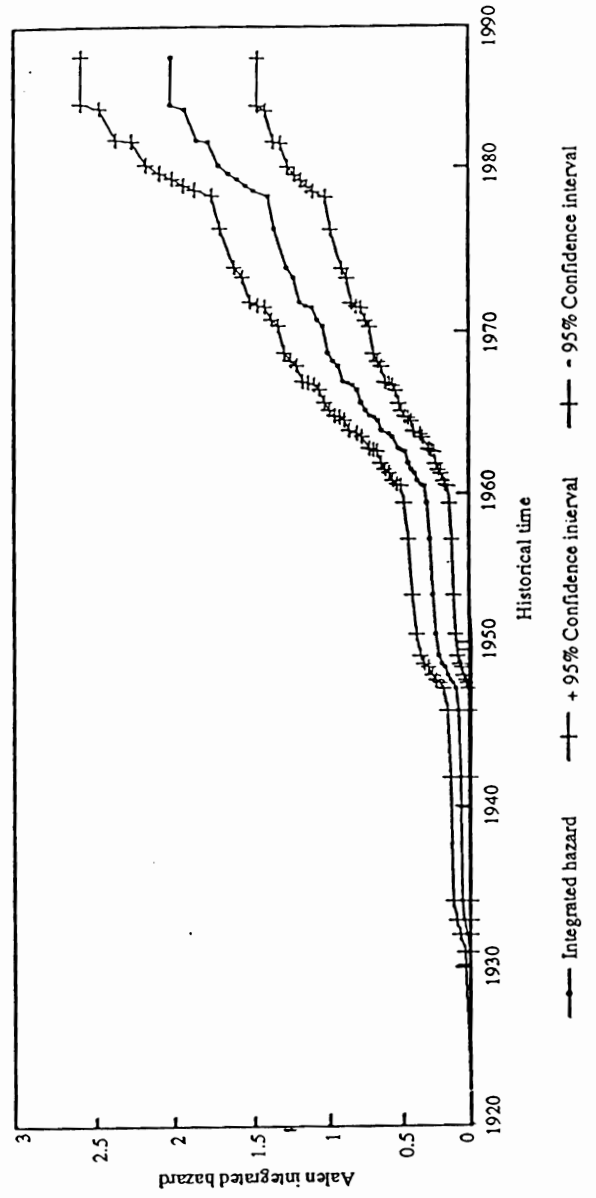


Figure 11.1. British decolonization

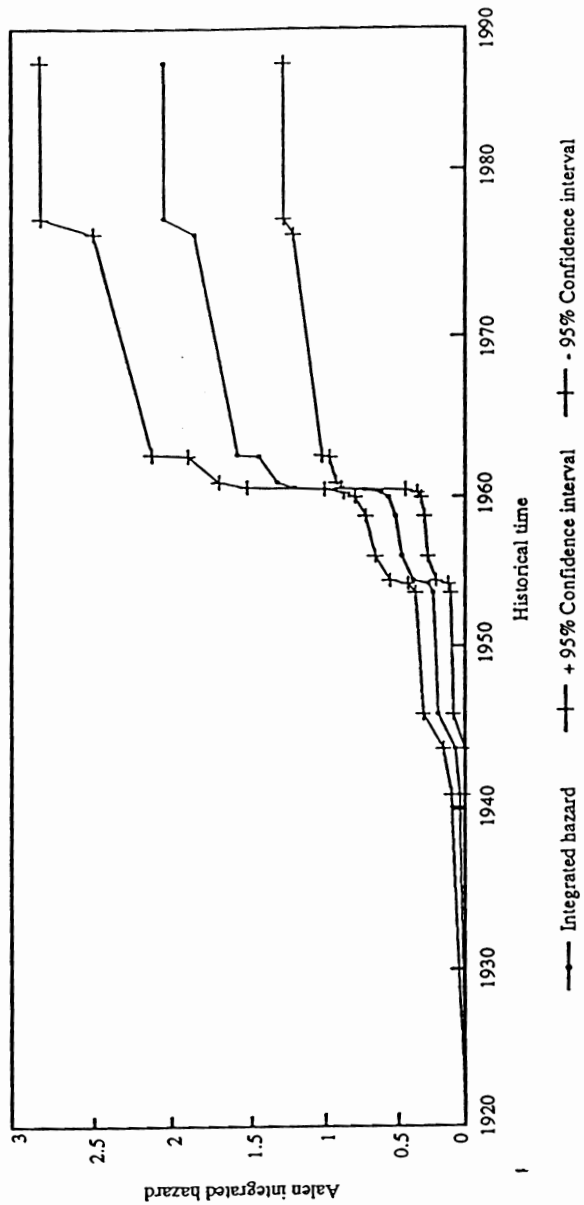


Figure 11.2. French decolonization

these figures. The historical sequences of decolonization are broadly similar across the two empires. No colonies became independent until after World War I. Both empires witnessed relatively slow decolonization between the world wars (the curves are quite flat) and rapid rates of decolonization after World War II. For both Britain and France, most decolonization occurred during the 1960s.

The pattern of British and French decolonization differs most in how concentrated it is over time. The rate of British decolonization held steady at a high level for about 20 years, from African independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s through Caribbean independence in the late 1970s. By comparison, half of all French decolonization through independence took place in a single burst. Note how the integrated hazard in Figure 11.2 is nearly vertical around 1960, indicating a very rapid transition rate. Thirteen French dependencies became independent during that one year alone.

PARAMETRIC ANALYSES

In addition to the kind of descriptive portraits of decolonization shown in Figures 11.1 and 11.2, event history methods permit regression-like analysis of conditions affecting the underlying stochastic process. There are too few events to support multivariate analyses of the process metropolitan incorporation – in fact, the process is utterly unidentified in the British case. But it is practical to ask what factors facilitated or slowed the attainment of sovereign independence by British and French colonies.

I assume the rate varies with exogenous characteristics but not with time per se:

$$r_{ik}(t) = \exp(B' X_i).$$

The assumption that the rate does not vary as a function of historic time may seem surprising, given Figures 11.1 and 11.2. But prior work on decolonization suggests that temporal variation in the covariates examined here are sufficient to capture the observed trend. The inclusion of explicit time dependencies (via a Gompertz or Cox formulation) has little effect on parameter coefficients and model fit (Strang 1999). Exploratory analyses of British and French colonies are consistent with this conclusion.

Independent variables

This chapter applies the models presented in Strang (1990), with one exception. Ironically, a direct focus on the effects of British and French

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metropolitan institutions is not easily approached by measuring features of each political system. Many institutional characteristics are time invariant and thus serve the same function as a binary variable for empire. The strategy employed here is to treat metropolitan political institutions as contextual variables whose effects are revealed through differences in causal factors at the dependency and system level.

Two dependency characteristics that should reflect British traditions of local autonomy are the presence of representative institutions and the scale of metropolitan settlement. "Representative institutions" is coded as a binary variable equaling one when a colonial legislature is elected on a broad suffrage (taken from Cook and Paxton 1979; and annual volumes of the *Statesman's Yearbook*). Metropolitan settlement forms two binary variables. "Settler minority" equals one when more than 5 percent but less than 50 percent of the dependency's population are Europeans or their descendants, while "settler majority" equals one when more than half of the dependency's population are settlers. Data were taken from Barrett (1982) and the *Statesman's Yearbook*.

Additional dependency characteristics include dependency population and foreign trade per capita. Both measures are logged to reduce skewness and are taken from the *Statesman's Yearbook*. In some analyses I also employ a measure of urbanization, for which data are only available in the post-World War II period.

Diffusion processes provide one important index of sensitivity to the larger global context. Diffusion is modeled by using the number of prior cases of decolonization occurring within some relevant category as covariates. (This strategy's motivation is discussed in Strang 1991c.) Empire (British or French) and geographic region (North Africa and the Middle East, sub-Saharan Africa, the Americas, Asia, or the Pacific) are examined as two channels of diffusion. The variable "regional diffusion" equals the amount of number of prior decolonization events occurring within the dependency's region, while "imperial diffusion" counts the number of prior events within the empire.

Two binary variables for historical period are examined. "U.S. hegemony" equals one from 1945 to 1967, the period when the United States was the unchallenged economic power (Wallerstein 1983). Theorists of the world economy have argued that the presence of a hegemonic power should loosen political bonds between core and periphery by decreasing the level of competition within the core (Chase-Dunn and Rubinson 1979). "UN declaration" equals one after the United Nation's 1960 "Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples." This declaration reflects the delegitimation of imperialism within global political discourse.

Descriptive statistics for all exogenous variables are given in Table

Table 11.2. *Descriptive statistics: colonial dependencies, 1870-1987*

| Variable | France | | Great Britain | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|-------|---------------|-------|
| | Mean | S.D. | Mean | S.D. |
| Dependency characteristics | | | | |
| Population | 6.07 | 2.13 | 5.40 | 2.03 |
| Trade | 2.65 | 3.03 | 4.30 | 1.61 |
| Settler minority | 0.18 | 0.38 | 0.15 | 0.36 |
| Settler majority | 0.10 | 0.30 | 0.08 | 0.28 |
| Representation | 0.29 | 0.45 | 0.33 | 0.47 |
| Systemic characteristics | | | | |
| U.S. hegemony | 0.56 | 0.49 | 0.54 | 0.47 |
| U.N. declaration | 0.25 | 0.43 | 0.42 | 0.49 |
| Diffusion variables | | | | |
| Empire | 9.52 | 10.29 | 16.52 | 15.80 |
| Region | 5.30 | 7.01 | 7.97 | 8.21 |

11.2. Variables are measured repeatedly over time, generally at intervals of 10 years or less, and are assumed constant between observations. Systemic and diffusion variables are measured continuously. I should note that there are substantial missing data for variables capturing dependency: population, trade, and metropolitan settlement. Twenty-three percent of British and 20 percent of French dependency years cannot be analyzed due to missing observations. This loss of data occurs mainly for the smaller and less economically developed dependencies, as well as for dependencies at earlier points in time. The ability of the study to make inferences about these kinds of dependencies and contexts is diminished as a result.

Results

Table 11.3 presents results from multivariate analyses of the transition from colonial dependency to sovereign state. The first equation examines the French empire in isolation, while the second examines the British. Estimates may be interpreted as multipliers of the rate for an infinitesimal change in the covariate, with positive coefficients indicating a faster rate of decolonization.

A first difference between the two equations is the substantially larger constant term in the analysis of British dependencies. This difference is

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Table 11.3. *Maximum likelihood estimates for transitions to independence, 1870-1987*

| | French dependencies | British dependencies |
|--------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| β_0 | -20.80** | -10.22** |
| Dependency effects | | |
| Population | 1.67** | 0.48** |
| Trade | -0.08 | -0.12 |
| Settler minority | -2.57* | -0.69 |
| Settler majority | -0.80 | 1.39** |
| Representation | 0.54 | 0.78** |
| Diffusion effects | | |
| Empire | 0.02 | -0.08 |
| Region | 0.16** | -0.007 |
| Systemic effects | | |
| U.S. hegemony | 2.57** | 1.53** |
| U.N. declaration | 3.42** | 1.47** |
| χ^2 | 153.4 | 185.7 |
| Observed events | 25 | 56 |

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$

statistically significant.³ Once compositional differences in dependency and systemic conditions are taken into account, it appears that independence came more rapidly to British colonies than to French colonies. Hypothesis 2 is thus supported.

Table 11.3 provides some evidence that British decolonization works through the acquisition of local autonomy and citizenship rights, while French decolonization does not. The rate of British decolonization is significantly higher where dependencies have representative political institutions and where metropolitan settlers form a majority of the population. French decolonization is unrelated to either of these factors. The difference in coefficients is not significant for either variable, primarily because the estimates for French colonies are quite unstable.

But Hypothesis 3 does not seem borne out in the large. More populous dependencies become independent faster in both empires, with French colonies showing a significantly larger impact of population size. French decolonization is slowed by the presence of a substantial settler

minority, while British decolonization is not.⁴ Dependency urbanization bears no relation to British or French decolonization (analyses not reported). Only dependency trade has a marginally stronger effect for British dependencies than for French dependencies.

While differences in sensitivity to dependency characteristics do not vary consistently across empires, differences in sensitivity to the larger global context are substantial and in the expected direction. Most important, the independence of French colonies exhibits strong signs of spatial diffusion, while British colonies are unaffected by the decolonization of other dependencies within the region. The difference between these coefficients is statistically significant.⁵

The best example of French regional diffusion is the rapid burst of decolonization occurring in 1960. All 13 French colonies attaining sovereignty in that year were African. While the colonies of French West and Equatorial Africa became independent in such quick succession that their independence might be supposed to have been centrally legislated, each colony voted its independence by plebiscite. These dependencies varied in levels of economic development and had very different kinds of economic ties to France in 1960 (Berg 1960). But the identical institutional position of the French African colonies made for rapid diffusion.

Both French and British decolonization are significantly accelerated by U.S. hegemony and the delegitimation of imperialism in global discourse (as signaled by the United Nations' 1960 declaration). The impact on French colonies is larger, though. The rate of decolonization in French dependencies is multiplied by 13 during the period of U.S. hegemony and by 30 after the United Nations' declaration; for Britain the comparable multipliers are 4.6 and 4.3.

More rapid French decolonization during the period of U.S. hegemony casts doubt on Tony Smith's (1978) analysis of the impact of international political alliances on decolonization. Smith argues that postwar Britain was willing to accept colonial independence because its status as a great power was maintained through a close relationship to the United States, while France clung to her empire as a symbol of former greatness. This notion seems undermined by the finding that French decolonization was accelerated more during the period of U.S. global dominance than was British decolonization. It is possible that British linkages to the United States helped hold the empire together, while France's desire to steer an independent course led to faster disintegration.

DISCUSSION

Analysis of British and French decolonization suggests some strong contrasts. French decolonization sometimes resulted in metropolitan

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incorporation, was concentrated in a short period of time, was relatively slow once dependency and systemic variables are taken into account, and was strongly linked to larger contextual factors. British decolonization never resulted in incorporation, occurred at a steady pace over three decades, was relatively rapid given dependency composition, and was strongly linked to local grants of autonomy.

These differences make sense in terms of the contextual effects of metropolitan institutions. The centralized French state sought to assimilate colonial dependencies and resisted colonial independence, while the decentralized British polity did the opposite. The French drive for colonial uniformity created the basis for explosions of independence, as each colony gained the same institutional opportunities at the same time. Britain's makeshift empire made common responses to global conditions and imitation of prior decolonization unlikely. Its traditions of self-government provided a more local route to independence.

While differences across the British and French empires are substantial, it should also be noted that they are far from overwhelming. The French goal of assimilation was seldom realized, and colonial demands generally led to independence in both French and British colonies. French decolonization was not unrelated to dependency characteristics, as it would be if Gallic administrative standardization was entirely successful. And the rate of decolonization in British colonies was significantly affected by global conditions like U.S. hegemony and the growing dominance of an anticolonial discourse.

I would suggest two factors that attenuate the distinctiveness of national decolonization patterns. The first is the one-sidedness of any Eurocentric explanation of imperial outcomes. It is well to recall that the motive force behind decolonization was fundamentally located in the action of indigenous populations, not metropolitan states. While I have emphasized the way metropolitan political models and institutions helped to shape colonial demands, indigenous peoples and elites were empowered by more than the ideas, opportunities, and concessions offered by imperial powers. They drew on their own political traditions and social organization, as well as on the successes of national independence movements elsewhere. For these reasons, French centralization was unable to stamp out local differences, and British decentralization was unable to isolate colonial experiences from each other.

It is also important to recall the fundamental similarity of British and French political institutions: their organization around expanded forms of metropolitan citizenship. In a political system grounded in popular sovereignty, assimilation requires a real sharing of political and economic power. For example, French incorporation of the *colonies anciens* involved not only the extension of France's legal code and administrative

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arrangements, but also the extension of French electoral and welfare rights. This was not problematic for a few small island territories; but to do the same for all French colonies was to extend full political and economic rights to a population larger than France itself.

As a result, French recipes for union fell far short of full political and social equality for the colonized (Marshall 1973). Under these conditions indigenous elites abandoned their early willingness to assimilate (von Albertini 1982), and the French state was forced to substitute local autonomy for full metropolitan participation. Confronted with the real meaning of assimilation into a polity grounded in citizenship, France was led to reinvent the British policy of association.

The results of decolonization

This chapter has emphasized the effects of metropolitan institutions on British and French decolonization, with an eye to both their distinctive effects and their underlying similarities. It may be useful to go a step further and consider the reverse process. How did massive decolonization affect British and French political institutions?

The loss of overseas empire fundamentally altered the political landscape in both countries. As the foci of huge empires, Britain and France were the global superpowers of their day. With massive decolonization, Britain and France were reduced to second-rate powers and forced to turn inward. This inward turn may have facilitated the further expansion of metropolitan political, social, and especially welfare rights.

The argument is straightforward at the level of available resources. In the aggregate, British and French colonies were run at a net loss, costing more to administer than they provided in additional tax revenue (Clarke 1936). Further, France and Britain had devoted considerable resources to maintaining a global military capability that not only defended the empire but projected power beyond it. This capability was unnecessary and impractical after decolonization. Imperial breakdown thus freed resources for domestic programs.

Work in international political economy suggests why welfare programs might be especially likely to capture social resources in postimperial societies. Katzenstein (1985) argues that high levels of openness to world markets produces determined attempts to limit class conflict, with large scale welfare systems as one by-product. Cameron (1978) argues that trade dependence heightens industrial concentration, which in turn facilitates centralized labor federations, corporatist bargaining, and high levels of welfare-related public expenditure. And Evans (1985) suggests that transnational capitalists press for a domestically passive state.

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conversely, the loss of empire (and opportunities for capital export) should permit a more active, interventionist state policy.

Decolonization brought the political economy of France and Britain closer to that of the Scandinavian, Alpine, or Benelux countries. Though colonial dependencies were seldom the critical targets of foreign trade and investment, the British and French empires represented politically controllable trading systems that could buffer the metropolis against world markets. The loss of empire may have increased the need and opportunity for capital and labor to make social peace at home. As a working hypothesis, I would thus suggest not only that the expansion of metropolitan citizenship promotes decolonization, but that decolonization promotes the further expansion of metropolitan citizenship.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has built on the traditional opposition of British association and French assimilation, stressing the way metropolitan institutions structure colonial opportunities. The contrast between British and French political institutions helps account for important differences in their decolonization experiences. British traditions of individual rights and administrative localism blocked colonial assimilation and made the loss of empire a steady, incremental process. French centralization permitted some assimilation and helped make decolonization an explosive affair more sensitive to the larger imperial, regional, and global context. Attention to differences in metropolitan political institutions complements an understanding of the commonalities in the British and French colonial experience.

NOTES

1. The politics of immigration provides useful insights here. Immigration from colony to metropolis was generally restricted. And British citizenship has recently been reorganized on a two-tier system to block immigration from existing and prior colonies. Resident aliens (who form a much smaller and better-off group than colonized populations) generally enjoy an intermediate form of citizenship including social but not ultimate political rights (Brubaker 1989; Soysal in press). Even this status may be fragile, however, given growing nativist opposition.
2. Sainte Pierre and Miquelon is one of the few dependencies to be recolonized after attaining sovereign status. In 1985, the population of Sainte Pierre and Miquelon voted to return to dependent status to avoid the burdensome taxes imposed on them as full participants in the French state. See Strang (1991b) for a discussion of the infrequency of this kind of event.
3. The significance of differences in coefficients across equations is determined through analyses simultaneously examining all dependencies in a model

including a full set of interactions by empire. Significant differences are those where the interaction term is statistically significant.

4. Settler minorities (e.g., in Algeria and Southern Rhodesia) fought decolonization to protect their privileged status within the colonial framework.
5. Diffusion within the empire seems unimportant in Table 11.3. This occurs because these analyses examine only one empire at a time, which means that intraimperial diffusion exhibits temporal but not cross-sectional variation. Analyses examining decolonization across multiple empires consistently show effects of intraimperial diffusion (Strang 1990, 1991a).

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