2   Contested sovereignty: the social construction of colonial imperialism

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The constitutive interplay between state and sovereignty enters into fundamental debates on the nature of the international system. From a realist or liberal perspective, the state is an independent actor in exchange, competition, and conflict with other states.[1] States emerge as organized powers that demand recognition and are constrained only by a web of voluntary compacts. From this perspective, a theoretical focus on sovereignty is misleading when it directs attention toward a derivative realm of understandings and interpretations, and away from the relations of power and interest that generate behavior.

In institutional and poststructuralist accounts, by contrast, the state is seen as embedded within a larger cultural framework.[2] Sovereignty is viewed here as a social status that enables states as participants within a community of mutual recognition. From this perspective, a focus on the state misleads when it treats political actors as natural or exogenous, while directing attention away from the larger community and culture that construct states with specific capacities and warrants.

International legal theory parallels the opposition between realist and institutional accounts in debates over whether international recognition is declaratory or constitutive of statehood. A declaratory theory holds that states exist independent of recognition and that recognition signals that other states have become aware of a new state; a constitutive theory holds that states have no standing in the absence of recognition, which can be said to construct them as international persons. Metaphysics aside, it is clear that recognition is a self-referential act in which states decide what states are. Consider W.E. Hall's effort at a balanced view, for example:

For though no state has a right to withhold recognition when it has been earned, states must be allowed to judge for themselves whether a community claiming to be recognized does really possess all the necessary marks, and especially whether it is likely to live. Thus although the right to be treated as a state is independent of recognition, recognition is the necessary evidence that the right has been acquired.[3]

It should be noted that the idea of an international order founded on or revealed by recognition is crucial only within the Westphalian conception. Recognition was not a developed institution even in international orders with multiple polities like ancient Greece, while interstate orders like that constructed by imperial China rested not on recognized co-action under international law but on bilateral relations of fealty and patronage.

The process by which state and sovereignty define each other would be virtually impenetrable in a world flawlessly aligned with the Westphalian ideal. Centralized political structures would partition the globe and its human population. Such states would formally recognize each other with unambiguous reference to neutral textbook criteria: a clearly delimited territory, population, and a stable and independent government. The mutually constitutive interplay between understandings and structures would be hard to observe, because cultural codes like recognition and obvious concentrations of power would everywhere coincide, reinforce, and legitimate each other.

Opportunities for analysis expand in messier contexts, where understandings of appropriate form (what should a state look like?) and relations (how should states behave toward each other?) are contested. Analytical opportunities are further expanded where state identities and aims are not obviously shared, so each state's legitimacy is not bound up in that of the others. It is in such situations that the social construction of recognition is most palpable, and where it has the most easily discerned impact on behavior.

Perhaps most strikingly, the political and cultural relations that underpin recognition come to the surface where revolutionary states challenge not only the international but the domestic order. Revolutionary France was invaded rather than recognized by the monarchies of Europe, who rushed to restore their Bourbon cousins to the throne; in turn the Convention issued a call for a universal republic. The scene was replayed more than a century later, when the Russian revolution

denounced the bourgeois state and its diplomacy while fending off British and French intervention.

The political and cultural sources of recognition also can be seen where colonial peoples aim at independence. In a world of Western empires (from the sixteenth to the mid-twentieth century) diplomatic recognition of colonial independence was resisted. Metropolitan centers were naturally unwilling to accept their rebellious subjects as sovereign nations, and even competing powers did not want to imperil the principle of imperial legitimacy. Thus, Britain's celebrated recognition of the Latin American states (prompted by the threat of a Franco-Spanish dual monarchy) took place almost two decades after independence had been declared, and a decade after it had been won in most of the continent.

By contrast, states since 1945 have been quick for the most part to recognize national independence. Decolonization, spurred by prevailing conceptions of social justice and popular sovereignty, insists upon recognition even where technical criteria like a stable government are lacking. Conversely, recognition is withheld where stable governments appear but global legitimacy is lacking. For example, while Zairian decolonization was immediately recognized, Southern Rhodesia's declaration of independence as a settler-controlled state was not.

This chapter will examine tensions between the state and sovereignty in a third context: that of the imperial expansion of Europe into Asia and Africa. Imperial relations arose outside a shared moral and political discourse, and outside a structure of mutual recognition. This moral vacuum permitted an opposition between state and sovereignty to develop in direct conflict with conventional international practice within Western international society.

One product of this encounter was the generation of international practices at odds with the notion of a society of formally equal sovereign states. Europeans resuscitated pre-Westphalian forms of divided sovereignty like the protectorate, and compromised the internal authority of nominally sovereign states like China. Western powers received tribute as suzerain states in Asia and Africa, and paid it as well. Settler colonies like the British Dominions developed complex mixtures of formal dependence, internal self-government, and international personality.

But inconsistencies between the forms of imperialism and the model of Westphalian state society are less crucial than the fundamental redivision of political authority that colonial imperialism produces. Colonial imperialism involves conflict over who owns or controls what. Standard explanations of this very real conflict typically point to various realistic principles: simple power differentials, economic or political drives within the imperial power, patterns of collaboration between Westerners and non-Westerners, and rivalries between powers within an anarchic state system.

These often-compelling accounts obscure the social construction of international relations. They attend little to how or why polities are recognized or delegitimated. And standard arguments ignore the distinctive absence of a larger framework of political meanings and a community of identities organized around those meanings.

This chapter explores the social construction of Western understandings of non-Western states, and the way these understandings empowered imperial efforts. I argue that much more than the simple lack of affirmative recognition was involved. Instead, non-Western sovereignty was actively delegitimated within the community of Western states and societies. This delegitimation of non-Western polities was crucial in structuring conventional routes toward colonial domination, and in structuring models of resistance or adaptation that sometimes led toward recognition of non-Western polities as sovereign states.

I build on prior work comparing the life chances of non-Western states before and after formal colonialism. Strang notes the great frequency with which non-European polities outside Western state society are colonized and dependent possessions are exchanged between Western empires.[4] By comparison, post-colonial states and non-Western states that were recognized as sovereign are seldom recolonized, merged, or dissolved. I argue that these differentials in life chances cannot be usefully understood through balance-of-power arguments, and require an institutional analysis of the cultural framework of the state system.[5]

The present focus on the colonial moment permits a more vivid picture to emerge. This chapter reviews conventional arguments about the sources of imperial expansion, and explores the explanatory usefulness of close attention to political meanings and identities. Some of the modalities of the collective delegitimation of non-Western polities are traced. The generation of a vocabulary and logic of sovereignty is analyzed, as are its effects on patterns of imperial activity and the opportunities for non-Western response.

Colonial imperialism

Colonial imperialism is understood here as the expansion of formal empires of foreign domination. The strongest instances involve the annexation of a non-Western state as the colonial possession of a Western polity. Comprehensive controls also arise through protectorate relations, where a non-Western ruler retains internal authority but surrenders direction over foreign affairs and full "international personality" to a protecting power.[6]

The chapter thus focuses mainly on colonial imperialism in the strictest sense, where internal and/or external authority was formally assumed by a Western power. It should be emphasized that for non-Western states in the late nineteenth century, the alternative to formal imperialism was not autonomy accompanied by full participation in international relations. Western states dictated unequal treaties to formally independent non-Western states; divided their territory into exclusive spheres of influence and commercial development; and administered their public finances through international directorates. In today's world these kinds of controls would be seen as assaults on national sovereignty. This chapter seeks not to ignore these arrangements, but to ask why colonial imperialism was sometimes complete and sometimes partial.

The historical backdrop for the period under study is the passing of the first age of Western colonial expansion. Between 1783 and 1830, Britain's continental colonies, Haiti, Spain's Latin American provinces, and Brazil all became independent states recognized as sovereign by European powers. Only Britain and the Netherlands retained substantial colonial possessions: the British in India, the Caribbean, and Canada, and the Netherlands in Indonesia.

Most European expansion of the mid-Victorian period was colonial but not imperial, or imperial but not colonial. Settler colonies were founded in Australia and New Zealand, and expanded in the Canadian west and South Africa. China and Japan were coercively opened to the Western world economy. The British Raj and Dutch paramountcy in Batavia were expanded and intensified. But relatively few new "colonies of foreign domination" were launched.

Western political expansion took on a different character in the last two decades of the nineteenth century. After centuries of trade conducted by small coastal stations, the continent of Africa was partitioned. Egypt, Tunisia, and Morocco were brought under European

protectorates. Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, and Belgium all laid claim to sub-Saharan territories many times larger than themselves. In Asia, the British annexed Burma and brought the Malay peninsula under protectorate relations; the French occupied Indochina; and the Japanese took Korea. The Pacific came under the control of Britain, France, Germany, and the United States. Non-Western polities that retained independence (but were generally subjected to pervasive European influence) included the Chinese and Ottoman empires, Afghanistan, Ethiopia, Japan, Persia, and Siam.

Even when we combine the formation of settler colonies, trading enclaves, and colonies of foreign domination, the shift in the rate of colonization is obvious. In the hundred years between 1780 and 1880, new colonies were formed at the rate of five a decade.[7] Between 1880 and 1910, new colonies were formed at four times this rate, or twenty per decade. The pace of colonial formation slowed after 1910, as the number of candidates for colonial imperialism declined.

Implicit in the notion that imperialism exhausted itself is the assumption that Europe's former colonies were not at risk of recolonization. The United States did assume control over the public finance of several Caribbean states in the early twentieth century in a fashion reminiscent of the first stage of Western colonialism in Egypt and Morocco. But these controls did not develop into full-scale protectorates. South American states remained independent, though European countries intermittently used force to protect investments and nationals. The only African polity to entirely avoid colonialism was Liberia, formed under the auspices of the American Colonization Society in 1822 to permit freed slaves to return to Africa. Liberia was quickly recognized by Britain and France, and, after the Civil War, by the United States, her "sponsor" during the age of imperialism.

Classic accounts of colonial imperialism

Theoretical accounts of colonial imperialism generally seek to explain the burst of European political expansion in Africa and Asia in the late nineteenth century. To contemporaries, this explosion was most logically traced to the dynamics of an industrialized, capitalist Europe. Industrialized economies needed sources of raw materials and markets for their products; declining investment opportunities at home led to capital export. Underlying these arguments was a notion of the instability of monopoly capitalism.[8] In this view, governments acted as

the agents of big business and big finance, securing markets and investment opportunities with military muscle. John Hobson argued, "If, contemplating the enormous expenditure on armaments, the ruinous wars, the diplomatic audacity of knavery by which modern Governments seek to extend their territorial powers, we put the plain, practical question, *Cui bono?* the first and most obvious answer is, The investor."[9]

This interpretation does not square readily with the fact that Europe traded with and invested in her formal colonies very little, and least of all with colonies acquired after 1875.[10] Most European capital was directed to Europe and the former settler colonies of North and South America, not to Europe's formal empire. This was true both before and after formal colonialism. In 1914, for example, only 12 percent of British foreign investment went to her non-settler empire. Twenty percent went to Latin America. If we exclude India and the Dominions, Britain invested more in non-colonized Asian countries than in her empire. Other Western empires provided even less outlet for investment. Only 5 percent of French foreign investment went to her colonies.

Two lines of argument seek to make economic sense of a history of colonial expansion that was marginal to the main currents of trade and investment. One describes colonialism as a response to the collapse of informal collaboration.[11] Either an expanding Western presence sparked nationalist movements against foreign interests, or traditional polities collapsed in the face of pressures imposed by contact with the West. Formal colonialism is understood here as a second-best solution to be employed when the cheaper tactic of informal influence erodes.

Robinson and Gallagher's analysis of the British occupation of Egypt is paradigmatic.[12] They find its proximate cause not in increasing Western investment, but in the challenge posed by Colonel Arabi's rebellion against a traditional autocracy dependent on the West. Further, Robinson and Gallagher argue that Britain's aim was not so much to preserve trading or investment opportunities in Egypt as to secure the Suez Canal, its lifeline to India. The breakdown of informal collaboration and a larger geo-economic analysis counted for more in the British official mind than the appeals of British traders or financiers.

The notion that formal imperialism was induced by the collapse of informal imperialism does not fit the evidence much better than the Hobson-Lenin formulation does. Non-Western polities that were never colonized were not typically stable or receptive to the West. The Boxer Rebellion was a proto-nationalist revolt against the failing Chinese state and the foreigners, very much in the vein of the Arabist rebellion in Egypt. The Manchus resisted Western intrusion on all fronts. And to the extent that the Chinese empire was too weak to resist, it was hardly able to provide an economic environment facilitating Western trade and investment. Yet China was propped up by the European powers, which came to control treaty ports and dictate tariffs but never substantially penetrated inland markets.

Even more notably, the Latin American states that European trade and investment penetrated so fully were hardly stable and pliable. Nineteenth-century South and Central American countries (with the notable exception of Chile) witnessed endemic rebellion and seizures of authority. Where Latin American states gained effective powers, they practiced many of the same policies that led to colonization in the East. Latin American states defaulted on debt obligations to Western interests, set tariffs to stop foreign imports from flooding their markets, and organized public monopolies to raise prices on exports.

Consider the case of Peru, described effectively by Mathew and by Gootenberg.[13] Like Burma and China, Peru organized a restrictive state monopoly that drove up the price of its chief export. (The export was guano, or bird droppings, the main fertilizer used by British farmers in the nineteenth century.) Peruvian tariffs on textiles and hardware goods, Britain's major exports, ranged from 30 to 90 percent. Peru defaulted twice on major British loans during the first half of the nineteenth century. Rather than imposing the political structures displayed in Asia and Africa, however, the British foreign ministry turned a deaf ear to the cries of the guano lobby and the bondholders.

An alternative analysis of the new political requirements of economic expansion points to the threat posed by European competitors. The mid-Victorian era was marked by the almost complete economic and naval dominance of Great Britain in Asia, Africa, and South America. Britain had the largest and most advanced industrial economy, the lion's share of international trade, and the only navy and army able to project military power on a global basis. This unchallenged hegemony in the world economy permitted the construction of an open global trading regime.[14]

This regime disintegrated as England's industrial leadership was challenged by the United States, Germany, and France. Great Britain intensified political controls over client states in Malaysia to block the

feared entry of European rivals. Continental powers lacking a competitive edge in trade employed firepower to carve out a politically controlled place in the sun. Status rivalry magnified the economic advantages to be gained from many of these territories, and the diminishing arena of free trade made lands of little obvious commercial value seem prudent investments for the future.

Again, Gallagher and Robinson[15] provide a paradigmatic analysis of the workings of inter-European imperial rivalry. A French expedition to Fashoda aimed to drive the British from Cairo by seizing control of the Nile. The Egyptians' resentment of the British occupation of Egypt also helped spark French military expansion in West Africa. Other events precipitating the scramble for Africa include Leopold's adventure in the Congo and the entry of Germany into the colonial race. The general dynamic is one where expansion in the number of colonial rivals geometrically increased the opportunities for colonial rivalries.

Brunschwig and Fieldhouse argue that declining free trade cannot explain European imperialism since protectionist tariffs emerged after, rather than at, the high-water mark of colony formation.[16] I would add that intense competition over markets occurred in the non-colonized periphery as well as in colonized territories. China, Japan, and the Ottoman empire were the focus of major trading and investment rivalries, much more so than Africa or Southeast Asia. So were the economies of Central America and South America, where the United States and Germany contested what had been an exclusively British economic sphere. In South America, the disappearance of hegemony increased rather than eliminated the peripheral state's maneuvering room. In the Caribbean, the United States replaced Britain as the dominant commercial force without preemptive or competitive attempts at formal empire.

European powers did employ force against Latin American states. The British used armed coercion at least forty times in the Americas between 1820 and 1914.[17] In 1861, Mexico's default on bonds sold on European markets led France, Britain, and Spain to agree on intervention. A French expeditionary force drove the Mexican president to the Rio Grande and captured Mexico City. Napoleon III made the Hapsburg Archduke Maximilian the emperor of Mexico.

But in Latin America, European power was used in the service of limited political objectives. Force was used to protect nationals and their interests, but not to relocate final authority. British sailors seized customs houses and occupied port cities, but the colonial ministry did not annex territory or demand control over the foreign policy of national governments. And when Napoleon III withdrew his troops, Mexican leaders regained control and executed Maximilian.

Expanding production capacities and escalating national rivalries do appear as the great engines that drove the West's expanding contact with Asia, Africa, and South America. But the strength of these drives did not determine which areas would be constructed as formal colonies, which as spheres of influence, and which as sovereign states. I argue instead that an analysis of political forms generated in the course of expanding interaction must take cultural understandings seriously. The West's military and productive dominance made Western cultural understandings decisive, but power asymmetry did not determine what the outcome of expanded interaction would be.

The deconstruction of sovereignty

Collective delegitimation

As Westerners came into contact with non-Western peoples, they generally perceived them as organized into "states." Early explorers often anticipated not only *terra firma* but *terra nullius*, meaning land that was unclaimed and unoccupied. Elaborate routines existed for recording discoveries and establishing claims over virgin territory.[18] But the political communities that occupied these lands could seldom be ignored. The question Westerners asked themselves was not whether non-Western societies possessed states, but what kinds of recognized rights – what sort of sovereignty – they thought these states possessed.

In the traditions of Western international law, the answer was at best ambiguous. Classical international doctrine did regard the independence of any internally constituted political community as natural and legitimate.[19] But there was much speculation that various non-Western peoples were something less than human. Scholastic justifications for the Spanish conquest of the Indies understood Indians as sinners, pagans, animals, idiots, and natural slaves.[20]

Even those who argued against culturalist or racialist ideas hemmed in non-Western sovereignty with the rights of Europeans. Vitoria dismissed the idea that Indians were natural slaves but argued that Indian efforts to restrict the travel or proselytizing by Spain's "ambassadors" (the Conquistadors) provided grounds for just war and

conquest.[21] And colonial imperialism was generally legitimated by more powerful and less sympathetic authorities. Thus the Papal Donation of 1493 granted Ferdinand and Isabella outright sovereignty over land to the West inhabited by non-Christians.

By the early nineteenth century, a positivist analysis had supplanted notions of natural law. Here the rights and duties of international law were viewed not as inherent in the human condition but as concrete historical products. This shift in reasoning, part of a much larger recasting of Western thought, greatly narrowed concern over non-European sovereignty. From the 1830s to the 1920s, international lawyers spoke of a "family of nations" to which non-Western states might at some point be admitted. Non-Westerners were viewed as failing to comprehend the requirements of Western international law, and as constitutionally unable to appeal to it. For example, annexation of an Asian or African state could be legally contested by a rival European power, but not by the annexed state itself.

Gerrit Gong details the Western "standard of civilization" used to evaluate non-Western polities.[22] In its relations with Western nationals, a "civilized" state permitted freedom of trade, guaranteed the life and liberty of foreign nationals, and applied law in an egalitarian fashion. In its interstate relations, civilization implied acceptance of European international law, including the laws of war, and the maintenance of continuous diplomatic relations with other members of the system.

The European standard of civilization also involved internal practices. Asian and African social institutions (personal rights, family relations, social norms) were viewed as uncivilized. States had to possess some degree of administrative efficiency and rule by written law. Of course, European states had only recently attained some of these marks of civilization themselves (for example, most colonial powers had outlawed slavery only in the first half of the nineteenth century). The Western social standard was that of the nineteenth-century social and political reformer, not that of the unreconstructed capitalist or gentry.

As the notion of a standard of civilization suggests, the clash of cultures extended beyond the narrow purview of international law to broader social understandings. Nineteenth-century social thought was fundamentally racialist. When the new science of ethnography defined and ranked the races of man, the features of Orientals and Africans were altered to resemble those of apes.[23] "Childlike" Asians and Africans were seen as lacking the character and intelligence that had generated Western technology.[24] Darwin's analysis of natural selection was translated into a celebration of the inevitable ascendancy of Europeans over less "fit" peoples.

Images of racial superiority, barbaric customs, and supine monarchies resonated with the cultural understandings and social projects of all kinds of Western audiences. Imperial discourse appealed to social reformers as well as the anachronistic warrior class dissected by Joseph Schumpeter.[25] Critics of nineteenth-century industrialization had much less to say about the advisability of exporting these practices to Asia and Africa.[26] Karl Marx celebrated the battering down of Chinese walls with cheap textiles, seeing capital as the only force capable of overcoming a "vegetative" Oriental despotism.

These cultural understandings made it easy to rally public opinion around an imperialist policy. Colonial adventure was used to whip imperialism crowds into a nationalist fervor. In soberer moments, imperialism could be understood in the West as Kipling's "White Man's Burden," a noble and self-denying trusteeship. Europe's civilizing influence was seen as drawing barbarous and savage humanity out of slavery, poverty, and ignorance. As A.P. Thornton notes, a colonial *realpolitik* of the mid-nineteenth century was transformed into the "moral" imperialism of the turn of the century.[27]

Arthur Stinchcombe defines a power's legitimacy as "the degree that, by virtue of the doctrines and norms by which it is justified, the power-holder can call upon sufficient other centers of power ... to make his power effective."[28] Here, Stinchcombe beautifully balances structural and cultural effects. Legitimacy is bound up in social relations, either to higher authorities or autonomous equals. But these relations are connected by cultural identity, by the doctrines and norms in which social arrangements are motivated and made meaningful.

It is precisely in Stinchcombe's sense that non-Western polities lacked legitimacy. A disjuncture in political universes meant that non-Western polities could not call on Western actors or opinion for support. They were not members of the Western community of recognition, supported by generalized third parties on the basis of common ethnic and religious identities, shared conceptions of collective purposes, or the needs of an "automatic" balance of power. Colonialism in Asia and Africa did not ramify back into Western national or international society to challenge the aims and nature of the imperialist.

Europe's former settler colonies in the Americas were viewed in a

fundamentally different light. In Turgot's maxim, colonies were like fruits that fell from the tree as they grew ripe. By 1820, efforts to regain political control over South America appeared a bankrupt policy. The Spanish and Portuguese creoles (and North American ones) shared in the moral, religious, and racial world of the Great Powers. They were also part of the Great Powers' political universe culturally and relationally, as colonies that Spain sought to recover until the 1840s, and as American republics standing alongside the United States. Policy in the Americas did reflect back into the social, cultural, and political worlds of Europe.

The practice of imperialism

Broad, collective delegitimation of non-Western sovereignty facilitated colonial imperialism in two different contexts. It provided a basis for the parlor statesmanship of the metropolitan official mind, and it opened up opportunities for the restless activity of the colonial man on the spot. Imperial historiography lays out both of these characters in loving detail.

What is most striking about accounts of central decisionmaking is the bland inattention paid to colonial subjects. Robinson and Gallagher's description of Lord Salisbury, the architect of British foreign policy during much of the age of imperial conquest, is characteristic:

> Indeed, to Salisbury the issues of partition were always to remain curiously abstract, and even academic. They were complicated, they gave great opportunities for the use of expertise, and the exercise of solitary long-term planning. Africa remained for him above all an intellectual problem, an elaborate game of bids and counter bids, of delimitations and compensations. With the consequences for Africa, the development of the new territories and the impact of conquest, he was not greatly concerned: for him the partition began and ended on the maps of the Foreign Office.[29]

The sort of unconcern that Salisbury exemplifies seems essential to the ability of Western powers to meet and agree upon guidelines for the acquisition of non-Western territory.

Colonial imperialism formed a parlor game for Western diplomats because it was disconnected from the web of understandings and arrangements within which the Western state was embedded. First, imperialism did not refer back to the identity or purposes of the Western polity, because non-Western states and peoples were seen as fundamentally different from their Western counterparts. One could be

a liberal domestically and an imperialist in Asia and Africa. (In fact, this was the position taken by many of the most ardent and self-consistent imperialists.) Second, Western statesmen not only held broadly similar views of the colonial situation, but they knew they shared these views. In 1885, an international conference in Berlin could cooperatively write down rules for the acquisition of African territory.

The visible status and marginal importance of much non-Western territory made it an ideal medium of exchange. To assuage French resentment over the British occupation of Egypt, for example, Bismarck suggested that France might take Tunis, Syria, Greece, or Morocco.[30] In 1912, Germany acceded to a French protectorate over Morocco in return for a slice of French Cameroon.[31]

But the real engine of colonial expansion was formed by the men whose livelihood depended on it: colonial officials, settlers, missionaries, and merchants.[32] These groups actively petitioned and propagandized for imperial projects. As Snyder emphasizes, men on the spot possessed near monopolies of information about African and Asian conditions.[33] The history of colonial imperialism is a history of men who misinformed their superiors and exceeded their instructions.

As a result, colonial expansion was a spatially bound process. While the initial motives for colonialism often appear random, it was this first step that was difficult. Given a colonial investment and the interests and actors it generated, frontier tensions and ensuing expansion were almost inevitable. For example, in 1858, the French temporarily occupied Cochin China to protect Catholic missions. Once there, motives and opportunities for acquiring all of Indochina were not hard to find.

Generalized cultural support was crucial for a process that was initiated in the periphery and that required ratification rather than resources from the center. And since the fate of non-Western polities had little meaning for European statesmen except as statusmarkers, metropolitan governments were not highly motivated to find ways of intelligently controlling men on the spot. Restraints were passive; few resources were committed to the colonial frontier, and imperialism was acceptable as long as it was cheap.

It should be noted that much imperial activity occurred on private initiative, with only formal state sponsorship. Twenty percent of new colonies founded in the nineteenth century were organized by chartered companies or private individuals.[34] Leopold laid claim to the Congo not as the head of the Belgian state, but as the organizer of the bogus *Agence Internationale du Congo*, a putative philanthropical

society. Even when the imperialist was an agent of the state, he was generally attuned to colonial conditions and needs rather than to national policy.

If the aim here was to develop a general analysis of imperialism, we would want to consider not only Western statesmen and colonials, but the non-Western peoples who resisted or allied themselves with Western forces. Much recent historiographic research recovers resistance to Western domination. And it is clear that Western rule depended fundamentally upon indigenous support.[35] To gain this support, colonial states reinforced (and sometimes reinvented) the power of traditional authorities. See, for example, David Laitin's discussion of the way British rule in Nigeria employed failing institutions of kingship.[36]

But the narrower aim of this chapter leads attention away from the sources of indigenous action. Imperial propaganda was directed at the colonial official and the metropolitan population, aiming to make the public resources of Western societies available for overseas adventure and administration. Imperial discourse did not explain colonialism to the ruled.

As an example of an Egyptian and Moslem voice unimpressed by Western discourse, consider the beautiful irony of Jamal al-din al-Afghani:

> The English entered India and toyed with the minds of her princes and kings in a way that makes intelligent men both laugh and cry. They penetrated deeply into India's interior and seized her lands piece by piece. Whenever they became lords of the land they took liberties with its inhabitants, saying that the English are occupied only with commercial affairs. As for tending to administration and politics, that is not their business. However, what calls them to bear the burdens of administration and politics is pity for the kings and the princes who are incapable of governing their dominions. When the kings or princes are able to control their land, no Englishman will remain there, they said, because they have other important affairs that they have abandoned out of pure compassion.[37]

Reconstructing sovereignty

Given the power of imperialist discourse in the late nineteenth century, how did some non-Western areas avoid formal colonization? One way was to successfully defend territory by force. Before World War I, Ethiopia and Japan had defeated Western states on the battlefield.

Britain had proved unable to control Afghanistan after several major campaigns; Britain and Russia then aided in the construction of an expanded Afghani state that could stand as a buffer between them. Geographically isolated states like Nepal resisted colonialism by barring their gates to the few explorers and traders who ventured their way.

This chapter's focus on the cultural sources of sovereign recognition leads me to slight cases where sovereignty was preserved by force of arms. Before leaving them, however, it should be noted that even here Western recognition did not follow in a simple way from military success, nor did military action stand outside a cultural context. Ethiopia and Japan carefully observed Western rules of war in their struggles with European powers.[38] By following European conventions and standards, non-Western states lowered the chances that Western third parties might enter the conflict on the side of an "outraged civilization."

But rather than evaluate these combinations of factors, I will focus on cases where sovereignty was constructed in the face of unambiguous opportunities for colonial imperialism. Two main routes to Western recognition of non-Western sovereignty remain. One was the stalemate formed when a local balance of Western power surrounded a non-Western polity. The second involved a strategy of defensive Westernization by a non-Western polity.

Realpolitik *outside state society*

A local balance of power arose where two or more Western states possessed substantial interests in a territory. Direct competition between Western interests impeded formal colonialism. Formal control required unilateral occupation by a single Western power, a condominium held by two or more Western powers, or a partition of territory. These became increasingly difficult to accomplish as the number and scope of competing national interests grew.[39]

Balances based on major national interests of three or more Great Powers underlay the maintenance of sovereignty in the Ottoman and Chinese empires. Two-power balances based on peripheral competition emerged in Afghanistan, Persia, and Siam.[40] I focus here on the two major cases of the Ottoman and Chinese empires, which most fully reflect the working of a local balance. Siam is discussed in a later section.

Both the Ottoman and the Chinese empires were of great intrinsic

importance to Western powers. In the case of the Ottoman Empire, key aims included Russia's drive southward for a warm-water port and her pan-Slavic and pan-Orthodox ambitions, France's longstanding economic investments and military ties, Germany's railroad-building initiatives, and Britain's commercial and strategic interest in the Mediterranean. China was the focal point of Western concern in Asia, due to its territorial size and the scale of its market. All the Great Powers – Britain, France, Germany, Japan, Russia, and the United States – sought to trade and invest in China.

The geopolitical value that Western states assigned to the Ottoman and Chinese empires rendered their aims directly rather than diffusely competitive. In Africa and much of Asia, expansion by one power spurred colonization somewhere else by its rivals. However, the Ottoman and Chinese empires could not be abstractly balanced with compensating gains elsewhere. For any one of the powers to seize Constantinople or to enter into an exclusive relationship with China was a larger geopolitical gain than the other Great Powers could readily accept.

Even the division of the Ottoman or Manchu dominions into equal shares could potentially shake the global balance of power. Britain's aim was to keep Russia out of the Mediterranean, not to gain a slice of territory in the Near East. Balancing strategies led to Ottoman losses in Europe and spheres of influence in China, but not to wholesale imperial partition.

The diplomatic history of these states in the second half of the nineteenth century was one of Western powers blocking each other's land grabs.[41] In the Crimean War, France and Britain prevented Russia from organizing a protectorate over the Slavic and Orthodox peoples within the Ottoman Empire. Their victory led to the formal admission of the Ottomans to the European concert and a guarantee of Ottoman independence. The British fleet was ordered to Constantinople to prevent a Russian advance in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877 to 1878. The Great Powers rewrote the peace treaty that ended that conflict by eliminating the proposed construction of a huge Bulgarian state to be occupied by Russian troops.

Chinese diplomatic history reads the same way. After the Sino-Japanese War (1894–5), China ceded Japan the Liaotung Peninsula. A Far Eastern triplice manned by France, Germany, and Russia threatened Japan with war if she did not return the peninsula, which she did. In the wake of the Boxer uprising, Germany, Great Britain, and the United States successfully opposed Russian occupation of southern Manchuria. The later American Open Door Policy sought to arrest the complete collapse of China while perpetuating the de facto partition into spheres of interest that had arisen over the nineteenth century.

A heavily compromised sovereignty emerged out of these balances of foreign interest. Turkish public finances were run by the Ottoman Public Debt Administration, a body staffed largely by European officials. The *Sublime Porte* traded reform for European guarantees. For example, an unpopular edict providing for religious freedom for Christians was worked out by British, French, and Austrian ambassadors in 1856; its promulgation facilitated Ottoman entry into the Concert of Europe. In China, European states mandated low tariffs and set up militarily protected European settlements that possessed extensive extraterritorial jurisdiction. At the height of the treaty port system, European states even administered public functions like the postal service and some tax collection.

Support for the Ottomans and the Manchus was not based upon their modernizing efforts, nor upon their capacity to provide the political infrastructure for economic penetration. Western diplomatic support often did come at the price of promised institutional reforms. But the Ottomans and Manchus did not proactively open their societies and economies to the West. The "Sick Man of Europe" and the "Sick Man of Asia" were declining empires unable to construct national societies to face the Western challenge. Local balances of power were not formed on the basis of Ottoman or Manchu reforms, but on Western perceptions of the commercial and strategic value of Turkish and Chinese territory.

In fact, it was practically impossible for non-Western polities to engineer a local balance of power to embed themselves within a structure of defensive alliances pitting European rivals against each other. Many non-Western polities sought to play Western states off against each other. But in the absence of grounded Western interests (or grounded participation in the European family of nations), such efforts simply hastened preemptive annexation. For example, King Thibaw of Burma attempted in 1883 to enlist French support to balance British aggression. When Britain demanded that Burma accept a protectorate, the king replied that friendly relations with France, Italy, and other countries were being maintained. The British treated this communication as a *casus belli* and took Mandalay within two weeks.[42]

The inability of non-Western powers to embed themselves in a web

of alliances suggests the sense in which imperial *realpolitik* was neither a crude war of all against all, nor an elegant balance-of-power system. Imperialism is not properly conceived as the result of interaction between a set of formally disconnected actors. It is better thought of as interaction between a coalition of aligned states (the West's Great Powers) and an isolated state (the non-Western polity). Imperialism had rules, but these rules pertained to competitive and collaborative behavior within the coalition. The fact that the non-Western state could not penetrate the corridors of Western diplomacy disabled efforts to turn Western rivalry into a sophisticated balance of power.

Defensive Westernization

The prime example of defensive Westernization is of course Japan.[43] Explicit imitation of Western political and administrative institutions[44] led to the abrogation of the restrictive treaties imposed by the West on Japanese juridical authority and tariffs in the Kimberly-Aoki Treaty of 1894. By this time, military buildup along Western lines had already permitted Japan to launch an independent imperial career in the Orient, one that identified Japan with the "civilized" West in opposition to the "barbaric practices" of China and Russia.[45] The Japanese case combines compliance with Western cultural models and development of military capacity sufficient to block Western attempts at annexation.

I thus examine an alternative instance of defensive Westernization. As in Japan, Siamese elites undertook a massive effort to reorganize an Asian state and society along Western lines.[46] But Siam did not develop a military capacity sufficient to give pause to Western powers. This makes it a strong test case for investigating whether a policy of defensive Westernization can construct recognized sovereignty.

Siam's "enlightened monarchs," Mongkut and Chulalongkorn, restructured social and political institutions in a Westernizing project. Functionally differentiated administrative units were introduced into a state that had been shaped to mirror Hindu cosmology.[47] Ministries of education, forests and mines, and foreign affairs were staffed by European and American advisers. A capstone agrarian bureaucracy[48] was reconstructed as an engine for development. Tax incentives were provided to expand the cultivation of rice, and irrigation projects were undertaken to increase productivity.

Defensive Westernization in Siam was not limited to techniques of rule. Social institutions like slavery and polygamy were abolished despite their central position in Thai society. King Mongkut instituted a reformed Buddhism that assimilated Western scientific knowledge and emphasized national service. Brahmanistic rituals and an understanding of the monarch as a living god were replaced by public works and an understanding of the monarch as the defender of the Buddhist church.

Siam acceded to the demands of predatory Westerners on the spot in enlightened fashion. Learning from the successes of gunboat diplomacy elsewhere, in 1855 King Mongkut met the East India Company's representative in person, offered him cigars, and proceeded to expound on the virtues of free trade! Mongkut signed the same treaty forced upon Burma and China, giving British consuls wide extraterritorial powers, banning export monopolies, and fixing tariff duties. But Siam did so without military conflict of the type that often served as the prelude to colonial expansion. Instead, it developed a burgeoning rice trade with Britain.

Siam sought to expand her diplomatic relations with the West. It signed treaties with eleven other Western powers that gave similar rights to those accorded the British. (None established an economic relationship of note with Siam until German commercial interests did so in the twentieth century.) Siamese rulers earned a well-founded reputation for diplomatic aplomb in the face of crisis. For example, in 1893 French ships forced an entrance to Bangkok as the result of a territorial dispute and threatened the capital. Siamese minister of foreign affairs, Prince Devawongse, greeted the French commander and congratulated him on his skill and daring.[49]

Despite an active strategy of Westernization, Siamese sovereignty was barely retained during the imperial period. Siam lost over half her territory to Britain and France, mostly in the form of lost tributary states like Cambodia and the Malay sheikdoms. Siam's foreign policy was to seek British support against French colonial ambitions. Despite good relations with Britain, only modest aid was forthcoming. For example, Siam appealed in 1891 for British assistance in the face of French claims to the Mekong basin. Lord Rosebery, the British foreign minister, adopted a posture of "cautious diplomatic reserve"[50] and counseled Siam to accede to French demands, which it did.

In 1896, Britain and France agreed that neither would encroach on Siamese sovereignty without the consent of the other. A year later, Britain signed a secret accord with Siam promising support in the event of foreign aggression. This agreement strengthened the hand of

Siam vis-à-vis continuing French territorial claims. After the signing of the Entente Cordiale in 1904, however, Anglo-French *rapprochement* led Siam to lose more land to both France and Britain.

While Siam lost much territory in the age of imperialism, she remained an independent state. By the turn of the century, the relevant Western powers (Britain and France) had begun to treat Siamese sovereignty as a viable solution to the tensions posed by their commercial and territorial ambitions. Siam was recognized as a buffer state not merely because it stood between Burma and Indochina, but because it had Westernized.

The stability of realpolitik *and defensive Westernization*

This review suggests how difficult it was for non-Western polities to avoid colonial imperialism. Neither the existence of a balance of Western interests nor an aggressive policy of defensive Westernization provided a decisive road to Western recognition. In the heyday of imperial expansion, Asian and African polities had few tools with which to respond to Western powers jointly pursuing imperial expansion. Even where non-Western states were well-situated or where they had constructed elaborate strategic responses, they had to overcome the momentum of the larger imperial juggernaut.

The Siamese case suggests the limits of a strategy of cultural isomorphism. Without British support Siam would probably have been annexed by France. And if France had not been in the picture, Siam would probably have become British along the lines of the Indian princely states. Siamese sovereignty was constructed from the juxtaposition of British amity and commercial interest, and French territorial aims.

Stalemates based on simple balances of interest were also fragile. The sovereignty of the Ottomans and Manchus was constantly renegotiated with a circle of predatory powers. Its maintenance depended on perceptions that the indigenous polity was sufficiently vigorous to be able to maintain its integrity despite constant rounds of new concessions. And it depended on Western powers not finding that the territory at issue was less important than their rivalries.

When the "Sick Men" of Europe and Asia were perceived to be dying, or when Great Power politics were substantially realigned, recognition based on a balance of interest counted for little. Thus, during World War I Britain and France agreed upon a plan for partitioning the Turkish Empire, and wrote a secret treaty giving Constantinople to Russia (as an inducement to remain in the war). The fact that the Ottoman empire had been formally inducted into the Concert of Europe more than a half century earlier[51] does not appear to have entered into their calculations.

In other areas, substantial balances of interest did, in fact, yield. A balance between a Great Power and a power of the second rank could break down through unilateral action by the stronger party. Unequal levels of interest could prompt the more concerned party to attempt annexation despite the risks. Or complex balances of interest could be resolved through negotiation and side payments. For example, France assumed a Tunisian protectorate precisely because Italy (the perennial non-Great Power) was gaining influence. Britain risked French enmity by unilaterally occupying Egypt in the same year.[52] And while a complex combination of European interests in Morocco blocked action until 1912, a French-Spanish partition was eventually accomplished.

In each of these situations, higher levels of Western interest, larger numbers of concerned powers, and greater symmetry of interest would have helped forestall colonization. But a policy of defensive Westernization on the part of the polity at risk might have made a qualitative difference. Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt were all weak traditional autocracies in substantial debt to Western investors. European states viewed the assumption of formal controls over these states as natural and necessary.

In the heyday of Western imperialism, it appears that neither a simple balance of interest nor defensive Westernization could produce a full measure of Western recognition. A cultural policy had to be buttressed with force: either military strength (as in Japan) or some balance of Western interests (as in Siam). For a temporary stalemate based on a balance of interests to become permanent, the non-Western polity had to imitate Western models in some substantial fashion. Only then did formal declarations of recognition become the positive policy and background assumption of relevant Western powers.

Discussion

Much contemporary discussion of sovereignty revolves around the question: does it matter? This chapter argues that it does. I suggest that the imperial moment took place within and was carried forward by a collective delegitimation of the sovereignty of non-Western polities. Most palpably, this delegitimation permitted forms of naked *realpolitik*

in Western colonial imperialism that are at best muted in relations within a state society. The structural conditions most often pointed to as driving colonial imperialism appeared in South America as well as in Asia and Africa in the nineteenth century, but with fundamentally different political consequences.

Two routes to recognized sovereignty appear to have existed during the heyday of Western political expansion. A local balance of Western interests might produce a stalemate, making annexation difficult. Policies of defensive Westernization, where Western institutions were incorporated into the state and diplomatic relations assiduously cultivated, also increased survival chances. But neither a balance of interests nor defensive Westernization provided a secure road to stable independence or recognized sovereignty. Local conditions and strategies could not reverse – but only blunt – the larger imperial project of which non-Western polities and societies *in general* were the object.

Absence of recognition is too passive and narrow a way to describe Western perceptions of Asian and African polities in the late nineteenth century. To adopt Harold Garfinkel's imagery,[53] Western witnesses participated in a status degradation ceremony, where Asian and African polities were publicly denounced as outside and in opposition to a self-referentially valid progress. Colonial imperialism took the form of a social movement, complete with moralizing motives, pragmatic analyses, and more than a touch of crowd hysteria. It took the carnage of World War I to bring this project under scrutiny.

Recognition and the granting of international personality are not well viewed as a narrow, almost technical act by and about states. Technical criteria only appear sufficient where real conflicts over national and governmental legitimacy do not arise. Hostility toward the claims of Asian and African polities was not neutrally about state power in Burma or China any more than dynastic opposition to revolutionary Paris was neutrally about state power. And while the Great Powers were undoubtedly the critical sites where the imperial discourse crystallized and was acted upon, this discourse was deeply rooted in Western society. It is a measurement device to act as though clubs of mutual recognition are an achievement of diplomats.[54]

The way perceptions about sovereignty were informed by a much more general delegitimation of the Asian or African "other" suggests two ideas about sovereignty within contemporary international relations. First, today's global community of mutual recognition is not accurately seen as a narrow diplomatic achievement of its members.

Here, too, recognition depends more upon broad understandings of the cultural features that states share and that national societies share. In the early modern period these commonalities revolved around Christianity and dynastic authority; today they revolve around democracy, markets, and human rights. States are delegitimated within the West when they challenge core shared aims and institutions: France in 1789, when it challenged monarchy; the Soviet Union in 1917, when it challenged markets and property.

Second, sovereignty may be fundamental to the cultural framework of contemporary international society but at the same time contestable. Since recognition summarizes much broader assessments of cultural congruence and worth, the institution of sovereignty itself becomes vulnerable when the nation-state appears to be in conflict with more basic cultural projects. For example, when states violate human rights, questions are raised about whether state sovereignty is an appropriate vehicle for realizing the potential of the human individual. A common discursive field thus links the Westphalian state society as an ideal to contemporary efforts to limit the state and organize at an international rather than a domestic level.

Notes

[1] See, for example, Morgenthau, Hans 1978. *Politics Among Nations.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf; Waltz, Kenneth 1979. *Theory of International Politics.* Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley; Gilpin, Robert 1981. *War and Change in World Politics.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[2] See for example Meyer, John W. 1980. "The World Polity and the Authority of the Nation-State," in Bergeson, A. (ed.) *Studies of the Modern World-System.* New York: Academic Press; Ashley, Richard K. 1984. "The Poverty of Neo-Realism," *International Organization* 38: 225–85; Young, Oran R. 1986. "International Regimes: Toward a New Theory of Institutions," *World Politics* 39: 102–22.

[3] Hall, W.E. 1979. *A Treatise on International Law.* 8th ed. London: Clarendon Press, p. 103. On issues and practices related to international recognition, also see Lauterpacht, Hersch 1947. *Recognition in International Law.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press; Oppenheim, L. F. L. 1944. *International Law.* 6th ed. London: Longman; Crawford, James 1973. *The Creation of States in International Law.* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[4] Strang, David 1991. "Anomaly and Commonplace in European Political Expansion: Realist and Institutional Accounts," *International Organization* 45: 143–62.

[5] In a related vein, also see Strang, David 1990. "From Dependency to Sovereignty: An Event History Analysis of Decolonization," *American Socio-*

logical Review 55: 846–60 and 1991. "Global Patterns of Decolonization 1500–1987," International Studies Quarterly 35: 429–54 for an analysis of the construction of new states that emphasizes the way actors in colonial dependencies mobilized around Western models of the nation-state.

[6] For a description of forms of international status distinguishing "unrecognized," "dependent," and "sovereign" polities, and a description of data mapping movement across these statuses, see Strang, David 1991. "Anomaly and Commonplace" and "From Terra Incognita to Sovereign State: the Instability of Formal Dependency, 1415–1987," paper presented at the annual meetings of the American Political Science Association, Washington D.C.

[7] Strang, "From Terra Incognita to Sovereign State."

[8] Key accounts include Hobson, John A. 1902. Imperialism: A Study. New York: G. Allen & Unwin; Hilferding, Rudolf 1910. Finance Capital. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul; Lenin, Vladimir Ilich 1917. Imperialism, The Highest Stage of Capitalism. London: International Publishers. Differences between an "imperialism of trade" and an "imperialism of capital" are not critical for present purposes. Nor do we need to ask whether or not capital export was inevitable in a mature capitalist economy, the issue that most divided Hobson and Lenin.

[9] See Hobson, Imperialism, 55.

[10] Detailed accounts of colonial commerce, investment, and expenditure are presented in Clark, Graham 1936. The Balance Sheets of Imperialism. New York: Russell & Russell; Feis, H. 1965. Europe the World's Banker, 1870–1914. New York: Columbia University Press; Davis, Lance E. and Huttenback, Robert A. 1986. Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860–1912. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

[11] See especially Robinson, Ronald 1972. "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in Owen, R. and Sutcliffe, B. (eds.) Studies in the Theory of Imperialism. London: Longman.

[12] Robinson, Ronald and Gallagher, John (with Alice Denny) 1961. Africa and the Victorians. London: St. Martin's Press.

[13] Mathew, W.M. 1968. "The Imperialism of Free Trade: Peru, 1820–70," Economic History Review S21: 562–79; Gootenberg, Paul 1989. Between Silver and Guano. Princeton: Princeton University Press.

[14] Krasner, Stephen D. 1976. "State Power and the Structure of International Trade," World Politics 28: 317–43.

[15] Gallagher and Robinson, Africa and the Victorians.

[16] Brunschwig, Henri 1966. French Colonialism 1871–1914. London: Pall Mall Press; Fieldhouse, David K. 1973. Economics and Empire, 1830–1914. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

[17] Platt, D.C.M. 1968. Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy 1815–1914. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[18] Keller, Arthur S., Lissitzyn, Oliver J., and Mann, Frederick J. 1938. Creation of Rights of Sovereignty through Symbolic Acts 1400–1800. New York: Columbia University Press.

[19] Alexandrowicz, Charles Henry 1967. An Introduction to the History Law of Nations in the East Indies. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[20] Pagden, Anthony 1987. "Dispossessing the Barbarian: The Langua Spanish Thomism and the Debate over the Property Rights of the Ame Indians," in Pagden, A. (ed.) The Languages of Political Theory in Early-M Europe. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 79–98.

[21] Scholastic discussion of the basis of Spanish sovereignty in the Indie constrained and in fact motivated by more important debates about s eignty within Christendom. A main concern of Vitoria and his epigones w counter Lutheran doctrine that the monarch had to be in a state of grac Pagden, "Dispossessing the Barbarian").

[22] Gong, Gerrit W. 1984. The Standard of "Civilization" in International Sc Oxford: Clarendon Press.

[23] Gould, Stephen Jay 1981. The Mismeasure of Man. New York: Norton.

[24] Adas, Michael 1989. Machines as the Measure of Man. Ithaca: C University Press.

[25] Schumpeter, Joseph 1951. "The Sociology of Imperialism," in Schum J. (ed.) Imperialism and Social Classes. New York: Kelley.

[26] Imperialism was not universally applauded within the West. The " England" movement was animated in part by the distaste for imperialism by men like Richard Cobden. But the popular engine of the movement h do with tariff reform rather than political principle.

[27] Thornton, A.P. 1959. The Imperial Idea and its Enemies. New Yor Martin's Press.

[28] Stinchcombe, Arthur L. 1968, Constructing Social Theories. New Harcourt, Brace & World, p. 162.

[29] Gallagher and Robinson, Africa and the Victorians, 257.

[30] Fieldhouse, Economics and Empire, 255.

[31] In an earlier era, territory and population within Europe had bartered in a similar fashion. For accounting principles in the transf territory at the Congress of Vienna, see Gulick, Edward V. 1955. Eu Classical Balance of Power. Binghamton: Vail-Ballou Press.

[32] Imperialism provided excellent career prospects. For example Brunschwig's French Colonialism on rapid promotion in the French Col Service.

[33] Snyder, Jack 1991. Myths of Empire: Domestic Politics and Interna Ambition. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

[34] Strang, "From Terra Incognita to Sovereign State."

[35] Robinson, "Non-European Foundations."

[36] Laitin, David 1985. "Hegemony and Religious Conflict: British Im Control and Political Cleavages in Yorubaland," in Evans, P.B., Rueschem D., and Skocpol, T. (eds.) Bringing the State Back In. Cambridge: Camb University Press, pp. 285–316.

[37] Quoted in Hodgkin, Thomas 1972. "Some African and Third V

Theories of Imperialism," in Owen, R. and Sutcliffe, B. (eds.) *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*. London: Longman.

[38] Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization."*

[39] One index of the difficulties involved is the infrequency of formal partitions or condominiums, especially as the importance of the territory increases. The largest non-Western state to be formally partitioned was Morocco. The only successful Western condominium was in the New Hebrides.

[40] Balances of interest failed to ultimately preserve sovereignty in Tunisia, Morocco, and Egypt.

[41] See Langer, William L. 1931. *European Alliances and Alignments 1871–1890*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf; and 1935. *The Diplomacy of Imperialism*. New York, Alfred A. Knopf.

[42] Dhiravegin, Likhit 2518 BE. *Siam and Colonialism (1855–1909): An Analysis of Diplomatic Relations*. Bangkok: Thai Watana Panich, p. 53.

[43] On the general process of institutional isomorphism through coercive pressure, see the sensitive discussion in DiMaggio, Paul J. and Powell, Walter W. 1983. "The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields," *American Sociological Review* 48: 147–60.

[44] Westney, D. Eleanor 1987. *Imitation and Innovation: The Transfer of Western Organizational Patterns to Meiji Japan*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

[45] Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization."*

[46] Siam is an Indian term for Thailand, adopted during the imperial period and discarded in favor of *Muang Thai* or Thailand in the 1930s. I use "Siam" below to emphasize the nineteenth-century construction of the Thai state on Western terms.

[47] For excellent descriptions of the structure of the Hindu state, see Riggs, Fred W. 1966. *Thailand: The Modernization of a Bureaucratic Polity*. Honolulu: East-West Center Press; and also Clifford Geertz, 1980. *Negara: The Theatre State in Nineteenth-Century Bali*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. My discussion of Siam's response to the West is also based on Vella, Walter F. 1955. *The Impact of the West on Government in Thailand*. Berkeley: University of California Press; Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization"*; and Dhiravegin, *Siam and Colonialism*.

[48] The term is taken from Hall, John 1985. *Powers and Liberties: The Causes and Consequences of the Rise of the West*. London: Penguin.

[49] These sorts of responses to an expansionary West were really very unusual. The more typical case of Burma, Siam's neighbor, helps place Siamese strategy in perspective. Despite some efforts at fiscal and judicial reform, Burma in the nineteenth century remained a capstone empire riven by palace coups. Three Anglo-Burmese wars were sparked by border incidents, conflict between Burmese and British subordinates, and judicial fines levied by Burmese courts on British firms. Diplomatically, Burma was at odds with British India throughout the nineteenth century. In fact, disagreement about whether shoes could be worn at royal audiences cut direct contacts between Burma and Calcutta after 1875. Unsuccessful efforts to cultivate ties to other Western powers gave Calcutta the rationale (vis-à-vis metropolitan conservatism) it needed to annex Burma entirely.

[50] Riggs, *Thailand*.

[51] See Naff, Thomas 1984. "The Ottoman Empire and the European States System," in Bull, H. and Watson, A. (eds.) *The Expansion of International Society*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, pp. 143–70.

[52] Britain and France both possessed longstanding interests in Egypt and had combined to jointly regulate the country's finances in 1879. The reasons why Britain took Egypt more seriously than Anglo-French amity are the focus of much British imperial history. For contrasting views see Gallagher and Robinson, *Africa and the Victorians*, and Hopkins, A.G. 1986. "The Victorians and Africa: A Reconsideration of the Occupation of Egypt, 1882," *Journal of African History* 27: 363–91.

[53] Garfinkel, Harold 1956. "Conditions of successful degradation ceremonies," *American Journal of Sociology* 61: 420–4.

[54] As I do in Strang, "Anomaly and Commonplace."