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Legacies of empire?

Centeno · Enriquez

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24	Abstract	Using methods and themes from Charles Tilly's work, this paper presents a number of propositions related to empire-to-state transformation. We argue that variations in national state development from imperial metropole origins can be explained, at least in part, by variations in imperial administration, finance, development, identity, and inequality. Capacity is a critical determinant of the results of state transformation, while decisions about finance and investment are both economic and political. Identity and inequality are inextricably linked to empire, and our exploration of these concepts demonstrates that they are the outcomes of variable processes linked to concrete, if inadvertent, lines of imperial decisions.		
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Legacies of empire?

Miguel Angel Centeno · Elaine Enriquez

Abstract Using methods and themes from Charles Tilly's work, this paper presents a number of propositions related to empire-to-state transformation. We argue that variations in national state development from imperial metropole origins can be explained, at least in part, by variations in imperial administration, finance, development, identity, and inequality. Capacity is a critical determinant of the results of state transformation, while decisions about finance and investment are both economic and political. Identity and inequality are inextricably linked to empire, and our exploration of these concepts demonstrates that they are the outcomes of variable processes linked to concrete, if inadvertent, lines of imperial decisions.

Charles Tilly's sociological appetite was omnivorous: his interests spanned such broad topics as inequality, history, the sociology of knowledge, bureaucracy, macro-structural transformation, and violence. When asked to contribute to this collection, we challenged ourselves to pay tribute by producing a Tillyan perspective on a topic unexplored or, at least, under-explored by him. This seemingly impossible challenge found its answer in a surprising topic given Tilly's interests: empire. Consider the Tillyan possibilities. Is there a more durable form of inequality than that born of empire? Have any other political entities faced as significant a form or socially mobilized opposition?

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Q1

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Although fascinated by the relation between city and state, Tilly rarely brings empire   27
into his discussion.[1] This article suggests ways in which Tilly might have approached   28
the sociological phenomenon of empire, using his characteristic forms of inquiry[2] and   29
interests to suggest links between imperial phenomena and national state outcomes.   30
We appeal to a broad set of historical references that were a Tillyan specialty,   31
producing a series of possible causal mechanisms that might have intrigued him.   32
Sadly, if at all successful, the article can only make us wistfully imagine yet another   33
wonderful book lost because of the death of our friend and mentor.   34

General definitions   35

We begin, as Tilly liked to begin, by defining the phenomenon in question. Tilly's   36
general definition of states as "... coercion-wielding organizations that are distinct from   37
households and kinship groups and exercise clear priority in some respects over all   38
other organizations within substantial territories" (1992, pp. 1–2) simply differentiated   39
governments from other authoritative institutions. His definition, by admission,   40
includes city-states, empires, and theocracies, but it was in fact the national state[3] in   41
which he was most interested. Tilly's generality of definition but specificity of   42
application allows us to exploit and extend his work to empires. Our strategy is to   43
focus on how the mechanisms of empire may have led to the institutional foundation   44
of states. Tilly sought to understand and develop a discourse around state   45
transformation,[4] and it is in that spirit that we press his ideas further, asking whether   46
the institutions of bureaucracy, finance, development, inequality, and identity can be   47
used to explain the path of conversion of imperial metropoles into modern states.   48

Any comparative analysis of empires must confront the simple question, what   49
counts as one? Empires are characterized by size, diversity, inequality, and conquest.[5]   50

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[1] There is one piece that explicitly addresses empire: Tilly's introduction to Barkey and von Hagen (1997).
Like many of Tilly's articles, there are enough questions and suggestions for empirical research there to
exhaust a graduate program for a decade.

[2] On the use of history in sociological inquiry, see Tilly (2007). On the utility and possibility of detecting
and studying mechanisms, see McAdam et al. (2008).

[3] Nation-states are, according to Tilly (1992), a rare subset of national states. A primary characteristic of
nation-states is the shared linguistic, religious, and symbolic identity among the inhabitants, which is not
necessary, and even rare, among national states. As Tilly himself does, we use the term "state" as short
hand for "national state" from this point on.

[4] See especially Tilly (1994b). We begin to see the cost of generality of definition here. Tilly engaged in a
career-long "dialectic" regarding the historical development of modern macrosocial political structures,
and when he talks about state transformation here he implies both national state development as well as
the transformation of political authority throughout the history of governance.

[5] See, for example, Reynolds (2006). Obviously, empires vary on any number of axes. Primary
classifications begin with historical era (ancient or modern), method of expansion (by land or by sea),
region (East Asian, European, Middle Eastern, etc), and duration. Other classifications include "mission"
of the empire (land acquisition, prosletyzing , etc), relationship to the periphery (settler, non-settler), and
metropolis polity (aristocracy, dictatorship, etc.). A major variable is size, which can be measured any
number of ways, including by land mass, population, and economy. Finally, empires may be classified by
territorial continuity with major distinctions between continental empires such as the Russian or Chinese,
and transoceanic ones such as the British and Spanish. With this in mind, this article focuses on a broadly
inclusive form of empire, specifying distinctions only as the relate to significant consequences in national
state outcomes.

Two key characteristics of empires seem to be their multiethnic composition and their clear asymmetries of power. An empire "is a large, composite, multiethnic or multinational political unit, usually created by conquest, and divided between a dominant centre and subordinate, sometimes far distant, peripheries" (Tilly 2002, 30).[6]

We recognize that such distinctions as "empires" and "states" are artificial, imposed upon what is clear only in hindsight, and that the distinction may have not made much sense to anyone even as late as the nineteenth century. Even the etymological roots of the word "empire" make it difficult to differentiate it from "state": the Latin *imperium* refers to authority, command, and domination and we have not been able to locate any significant difference in usage for many centuries of historical and political analysis.[7] We might best say that all European states began as empires, but not all empires became nation-states.[8] One could argue that the great divergences between Europe and the rest of the globe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was precisely the transition to a system of competing nation-states born out of the failure of a unitary empire.[9]

Other than size (a technologically and historically variable measure), what distinguishes empires from other forms of state is domination by one ethnic or unified cultural group (Spanish over Mexica, Romans over Celts, and Persians over Greeks). Following Lieven (1995, p. 608), one could say that the management of multiethnicity is the major task of empire. Note, however, that the distinction between conqueror and conquered is subject to historical change and can be a matter of perception. The distinction between "metropole" or parent-state and "periphery" or colony was often an amorphous one; at times some empires emphasized it, at others the distinction withered as expansion and absorption made differentiation nominal.[10] After 212 AD, for example, all freemen living under Roman rule became citizens. Did the elimination of the distinction make the Roman Empire less imperial?[11] More recently, for a Basque, Spain is still more empire than "state," much less a nation. The British Isles may be seen as the paradigm case of nation-state, but also as an English empire dominating Scots, Welsh, and Irish.[12] The domination of Catholic Bavarians and Rhinelanders by the Protestant Prussians is at

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[6] For a good discussion of the definition of empire with an emphasis on control, see Doyle (1986, pp. 30–47).

[7] More specifically, it was associated with the power of the state to make war, providing a nice parallel to the classic Weberian notion of a state. See Richardson (1998).

[8] See Howard (1991, pp. 33–35). Such a view may not be popular. Certainly in the United States, the notion that "manifest destiny" was an imperial project is not fashionable in many circles. In many of the former European colonies, any implication of a past as something other than victim fails to resonate. A fascinating and very Tillyesque project would analyze why some very successful empires did not consolidate into states (e.g., from the Venetian Empire to an Adriatic Republic).

[9] See Elliott (1992). Indeed, a long-standing research question of Tilly's was why such structures as empires failed to become the dominant form of political organization in Europe (Tilly 1992, p. 32).

[10] In some cases, the "empire" was a much better representation of the "state" than was the "nation." See comments by DeGaulle in Cooper (2005, p. 153).

[11] See Miles (1990). Interestingly, the granting of citizenship may have been a way of increasing the reach of taxation.

[12] Tilly (1992, p. 3) argued that though Britain is often identified as an example of a nation-state, it was, in fact, due to the varied and strongly self-identifying ethnicities within its territory, a national state.

the very heart of contemporary German history.[13] In any case, for many inhabitants of   82
empires, the "ethnicity" of the ruling elite was never as salient to imperial identity as   83
membership in a much smaller group with a familial lineage (the aristocratic empires) or   84
where the identity of the ethnicity in question kept changing (as in the Chinese case).   85

Thus, the best general definition of empire might simply be the political domination   86
of a variety of groups and territories, where distinctions are made between privileged   87
ruling people and a mass who owes allegiance to the ruling elite, but who may not   88
expect reciprocity. It would still be difficult to distinguish consistently between such   89
an entity and many non-democratic states.[14] The transition from empire to   90
contemporary state is perhaps best characterized by Colley et al. (2005, p. 203) as   91
the successful effort to devise ways of cementing together a wide diversity of peoples   92
over a territorial expanse. This distinction also draws attention to a possibly critical   93
characteristic of successful empire: continued expansion. One may well tease out the   94
implication that empires develop the "positive" characteristic of bureaucracy and fiscal   95
generation while they expand, but the rot develops when this expansion ends. From   96
this perspective, states are the core residue left after imperial expansion has ended and   97
the corresponding imperial collapse has finished.[15]   98

States, then, may be seen as the result of imperial expansion and maintenance.   99
The focus here is on the way in which the metropole, as proxy for the ruling elite,   100
developed systems of extraction, development, and identity in response to the needs   101
of imperial survival. We argue that the resulting institutions have direct correlates in   102
modern states. However the consolidation of national identity and the expansion of   103
citizenship were not consciously designed and pursued,[16] but instead were products   104
of long strings of decisions and institutional development. Thus, empires were   105
"fetal" states, historical gestations of the modern state system.   106

Abernethy (2000) points out that a great deal of attention has been devoted to   107   **Q2**
studying the political consequences of empires on the states arising from colonies,   108
and here we counter by focusing on their effect on the metropole. This follows   109
recent historiographical calls (notably Hopkins (1999)) to reintegrate imperial and   110
national history and to end the intellectual segregation between analysis of political   111
and economic developments at home and those in the colonies. In many cases the   112
distinction made between imperial and domestic politics is a false one. Can one   113
understand nineteenth-century British parliamentary politics without reference to the   114
Irish question? The collapse of the French 4th Republic without knowing about   115

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[13] The geography of domination was reversed after 1989. Germany may be the clearest case of an empire creating a state. Prussia's success in first defeating alternative imperial centers, then co-opting the nationalist sentiment, and, following 1871, imposing itself as *prima inter pares*, led to the creation of contemporary Germany whose borders would not have appeared at all "natural" or inevitable in 1815.

[14] Similar concerns would prevent using the amount of violence required for rule as an indication of imperialness. Further, the definition does not explicitly exclude such entities as the European Union, Commonwealth of Independent States, or even, arguably, some transnational entities such as the International Monetary Fund.

[15] Thus, the stability of entities such as contemporary Russia may simply come down to whether one can be certain that the process of imperial shrinkage has stopped.

[16] Tilly (1992) notes that "it is all too easy to treat the formation of states as a type of engineering..." (p. 25). "Struggle over the means of war produced state structures that no one had planned to create, or even particularly desired" (p. 117).

Algeria? Or American politics without including the struggles over western   116
expansion and slavery, isolationism, the Cold War, or the "War on Terror"?[17]   117

Propositions: the legacies of empire   118

The following propositions develop "Tillyesque" processes linking imperial   119
mechanisms of rule, finance, development, identity, and inequality with modern   120
state outcomes (see Fig. 1). For each process we outline a dichotomous variation   121
across empires that led to distinct structures during state transformation. The first   122
three propositions are developments of administration and bureaucracy as functions   123
of forms of periphery rule, finance method, and resource mobilization toward the   124
metropole. These propositions suggest that, as Tilly argued, the complex   125
development of contemporary state bureaucracies is in part the result of histories   126
of political domination, financial extraction, and resource allocation. The final two   127
propositions center around identity and inequality, each leading to varieties of   128
nationalism that exist today.   129

Imperial administration to national bureaucracy   130   **Q3**

P1:   *Empires require complex administrative structures to maintain hegemony over*   131
    distance, which lead to equally complex state bureaucratic structures (direct rule   132
    leads to complex bureaucracy). Alternatively, the administration of vast   133
    territories sometimes produced diffuse control that undermined the development   134
    of a state bureaucratic system (indirect rule leads to imperial disintegration).   135

Tilly (1992, p. 20, 103ff.) argued that the first paradox of conquest is the   136
administrative obligation to manage and sustain the land and people conquered.   137
Referencing Machiavelli, Tilly (1994b, p. 2) notes that whether choosing direct rule,   138
indirect rule, or annihilation, "... the prior existence of a coherent government in a   139
conquered city poses a political problem as well as a political opportunity" for the   140
new rulers. Consider the challenges of ruling expanding empires: they tend to be   141
larger than any other political agglomeration of similar technological capacity; there   142
are fewer "natural" or organic links tying the subject populations together than with   143
other political entities; and, as the very purpose of most empires is some form of   144
wealth extraction, they require an administrative apparatus capable of generating and   145
managing revenue. Thus, rather than a bureaucracy driving an expanding empire, we   146
suggest that imperial needs lead to the creation of bureaucracy.[18] Where local   147
governments are absent or destroyed, or where imperial expansion is accompanied   148
by an incorporation of peripheries into the metropole, we can expect a boost to   149
bureaucratic expansion caused by the new demands on the existing bureaucratic   150

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[17] An added scholarly benefit to exploring the link between empire and state-building is to vastly expand the number of cases for comparative analysis in the lines of work of Samuel Finer and Michael Mann.

[18] Of course, the organizational capacities of the Europeans, particularly as applied to violence, contributed to empire. The pattern of bureaucracy following empire appears practically universal, however. See Adas (1998).
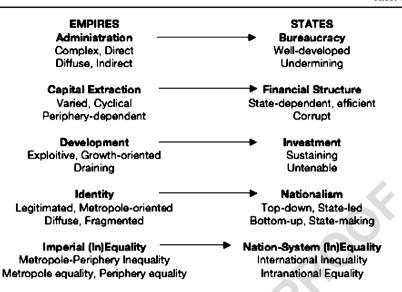
Fig. 1 Variations in processes of transformation between imperial and state structures

Q4

apparatus. In other words, the development of a flexible but metropole-centered 151
administrative system leads to complex but long-lasting state bureaucracy, whereas 152
wholesale use of indirect rule, for whatever reason, undermines the translation of 153
imperial administration and success into state development. 154

The most stable and long-lasting empires in history certainly witnessed this 155
process. In the Roman case, the expansion of territory, the diversification of the 156
people under its control and the consolidation of imperial authority helped bring 157
about a bureaucratization of rule in Rome. So political authority in the Late Republic 158
was more systematized than in its early counterparts, and in turn the Empire became 159
more bureaucratized as it grew, culminating in the "Dominate"[19] of the late third 160
century AD. In the empire's "second life" as Byzantium, Antonio (1979) and Kiser 161 Q5
and Kane (2007) argue that the expansion of bureaucratic authority increased. 162
Justinian's celebrated codification of the laws (529–534 AD) was very much a part 163
of his efforts to reconsolidate Roman authority throughout the Mediterranean. 164
China's oft-noted civil service tradition (Kiser and Cai 2003) can be dated back to 165
the Qin centralization. The challenges of uniting the warring kingdoms certainly 166
contributed to the creation of a meritocratic path to power. This was not the last time 167
that the needs of imperial conquest for efficiency and effectiveness would produce 168
administrative reform and the continual process of imperial maintenance kept the 169
bureaucracy in political center stage.[20] Even as ephemeral an entity as the Mongol 170
Empire of the thirteenth and fourteenth centures required the creation of an elaborate 171

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[19] After a period of domestic strife and foreign aggression the Dominate period saw a shift to a highly centralized and bureaucratic, if despotic, era of rule beginning in 284 AD. See, for example, Luttwak (1979).

[20] For a fascinating comparison between the Roman and Chinese cases and the links between empire and bureaucracy, see Scheidel (2009), particularly the chapter by Rosenstein (2009). The essays in this book suggest that much of the divergent historical progress from the 5th century AD on in the regions covered by the two empires may be explained by their differing administrative structures.

bureaucratic-military apparatus (for example, a postal system). The construction of   172
what many now recognize as the prototypical modern state, Napoleonic France, may   173
have had much more to do with imperial needs than with the legacy of the   174
Enlightenment, the momentum of Revolution, or Bonaparte's preferences.[21]   175

Alternatively, the use of local authorities and loose centralization may hinder the   176
development of an autonomous bureaucracy in the metropole.[22] The very diffusion of   177
imperial decision making discourages the creation of autonomous bureaucratic agents   178
in the metropole as local authorities do not communicate with them but with the more   179
personalized representatives of the ruler. In the case of Spain, for example, the very   180
process of creating a vast imperial bureaucracy designed to impose central control and,   181
most importantly, assure that the crown received its "cut" of the wealth arguably led to   182
the diffusion of power and the creation of a bureaucratic dead-weight over political   183
decision making as well as economic development (Stein and Stein 2003; Elliott   184   **Q6**
2007). The Spanish imperial bureaucracy was also rife with corruption, which Quiroz   185
(2003) argues infested the metropole with the same fiscal disease. The fiscal capacity   186
of empires is also obviously linked to bureaucratic development. In the Ottoman   187
Empire, for example, relative decentralization and bureaucratic limitations severely   188
constrained the type and amount of taxes that Istanbul could collect.[23]   189

Imperial tribute to state finance   190

P2:   *Financing pressures require efficient capital-extraction systems, which lead to*   191
      well-developed state fiscal structures. In some cases, however, the very   192
      efficiency of tribute systems of financial extraction characteristic of empires   193
      results in the atrophy of equivalent state mechanisms.   194

Tilly's (1992) second paradox of conquest is that further conquest and expansion   195
requires financing. Furthermore, we argue that empires, even more than states,   196
cultivate wealth accumulation for the elite. They tend to arise through the pursuit of   197
revenues (or the strategic defense of those pursuits). Some empires have been at least   198
partly motivated by ideological or religious expansion, but even at the core of an   199
empire like the seventh and eighth century Caliphate, with its clear religious   200
motivation, there was the ever increasing lure of plunder. Again, in this instance, we   201
are less concerned with the effect on colonies and focus more on how the process of   202
empire making and keeping affects the "fiscal physiology" of the metropolitan state.   203

The logic here is fairly simple and an extension of Tilly's discussion of war and   204
states. Empires require armies and bureaucrats. At least for some period of time the   205
empire will not be self-sustaining and will require that the metropole produce   206
enough resources to meet immediate needs. Armed with the special mission of   207
imperial expansion, metropole governments can turn to their populations and   208

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[21] See, for example, Bell (2007).

[22] Tilly's discussion of the motivations and results of indirect and direct rule are extensive. See, for example Tilly (1992, 1994b, 2002).

[23] See Cosgel (2005). Empires could also function with both kinds of administration. The "second" British Empire after the Napoleonic wars featured a variety of models from a simple dependence on traditional leaders to the creation of autonomous professional civil services and the granting of considerable governmental autonomy to regions.

demand increased resources. Even when hoping for the empire to pay for itself, the 209
metropole will need to develop sophisticated mechanisms to assure that the flow of 210
imperial booty is appropriately guarded and spent. Whether in the metropole or in 211
the colony, these expanding territory and populations will add to tribute systems, 212
which will lead to an expansion of the state apparatus and particularly of its 213
professional fiscal arms. The archetypical case for this form of imperially generated 214
"extraction cycles" may be Hanoverian Britain. The historical link between the rise 215
of the "first" British Empire centered on North America and the increasing fiscal 216
capacity of that state as presented by O'Brien (1993) is very persuasive. 217

Under different historical or geographical conditions, however, an alternative path 218
may be taken: In these cases, empires provide so much money so quickly as to negate 219
the need to develop a functional fiscal apparatus. Instead of needing to call upon 220
domestic sacrifice, the metropole can use the tribute obtained to pay for any imperial 221
costs and may even use them to reduce the obligations of metropole subjects. The flow 222
of tribute becomes addictive and the "dog" of the metropole soon starts to be shaken 223
by the "tail" of empire. In an imperial version of the "resource curse" (Ross 1999) 224
obtaining easy lucre may lead to institutional underdevelopment. Similarly, the ease of 225
enrichment may lead to the corruption of the very apparatus that one seeks to build 226
and develop. Bureaucracies become inefficient (because they can afford to be), 227
domestic wealth generation is ignored, and imperial grandeur increasingly obscures a 228
hollowed state. The classic case here is post-Golden Age Spain. 229

What are the factors that may explain the taking of one path or another? Some of the 230
divergence may be explained by the starting conditions in the metropole. As in the case 231
of wars and state building, already having the kernel of an apparatus may make a 232
significant difference.[24] The legitimacy of the imperial mission with the relevant 233
domestic audience may be critical. Any effort to tax the colonizers may need to be 234
proceeded by their willingness to pay for the empire. Another cause of divergence could 235
simply be the military difficulties involved in conquest and subsequent maintenance of 236
control. An empire built on annual visits by gunboats would develop differently from 237
ones with permanently stationed legions. Finally, Tilly would no doubt urge us to 238
examine the impact of types and location of capital. Empires comprising vast territories 239
of agriculture with few urban centers of capital concentration, such as Russia, will rely 240
heavily on dispersed tribute-taking systems. Empires developing out of mercantile trade, 241
such as the Dutch, can rely most readily on direct taxation of goods. 242

Whether empires are profitable or not is another question altogether. Sometimes 243
the initial entrepreneurs do quite well, but the subsequent maintenance costs are too 244
high, and sometimes colonies only start paying after a while. 245

Imperial development and state investment 246

P3: *Exclusive access to markets and supplies found in colonies provides unique* 247
opportunities for the metropole, allowing faster development. Under some 248
circumstances, however, empires drain wealth away from the metropole through 249
the costs of maintenance and the opportunity costs of dominance investment. 250

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[24] See Centeno (2002) for further development of this idea.

It is possible, as O'Brien (2001) does, to trace the origins of the European empires founded after the fifteenth century, and especially the British and Dutch, to the pursuit of a maritime supremacy in order to support intercontinental commerce. According to A.G. Hopkins (1999, p. 205), "empires were transnational organizations created to mobilize the resources of the world.... [I]mperialism was a means of increasing the flow of resources ... by annexing rents." Commerce at this time was a form of metropole development and is the direct precursor to state investment. Here we argue that as empires expand they become mobilizers of capital for the sake of enrichment of the metropole, and that empires varied by their strategy and success in controlling and benefiting from commercial flows.

Empires could be differentiated by the strategies used to maximize these flows. Predatory empires essentially functioned as extraction mechanisms of wealth that already existed and could be easily exploited. Developmental empires sought to create opportunities for further growth through investment, often in the production of a specialized commodity. The Spanish Empire in America may serve as the best example of the first type designed as it was to extract and ensure the flow of wealth (usually in the form of bullion) from periphery to center. This form of empire did pay for a substantial amount of time (but long-term consequences were less benign, as per below). The British Empire was arguably more developmental creating new forms of wealth generation. Note, however, that as benign as that may sound, it involved the creation of a slave-sugar complex that was as exploitative as the most rapacious empire. The British were also not above simple predation, as their conquest of the goldfields of the Boer Witwatersrand made clear.

Wealth did not always contribute to imperial health. Crone (2006) notes that the challenges of preventing "the wealth and political opportunities in the conquered lands from undermining the social and political organization of the metropoles" (p. 108) were often insurmountable. Perhaps the most dramatic case of this was the Arab Empire, the astounding success of which eroded the social order that had given it birth; the Arabs found that "in winning the world they had lost everything they treasured about it" (p. 111). The Romans feared being softened by too much contact with the Greeks and the British feared contamination by "oriental despotism."[25] Even if empires did produce wealth, the institutional leakage could drain all advantage due to the metropoles. The Spanish Empire (particularly in its second and third centuries) was the prototypical example of this, as American bullion was more likely to end up in the Netherlands or in Italy than in Spain. Kamen (2005, p. 245) quotes a Spanish official, who lamented in 1688: "America instead of being our salvation has become our perdition, for no nation profits from it less than we." In any case, what may be most important are the "net" benefits of empire once the associated costs are taken into account. This imperial "profit and loss" estimation has been the subject of considerable debate.[26]

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[25] There is a long history of western, particularly British, political discussion of the difference between an "oriental" (Asian) tradition of despotic rule and the western tradition leading to nation-states. See Wittfogel (1957) for a classic treatment. The term is no longer in favor, due, in part, to the rejection of the term "oriental," to say nothing of the irony of the comparison.

[26] The most work has been done on the British Empire. See David and Huttenback (1986), and O'Brien (1998). See also the debate between Ferguson and others in *Historically Speaking*, 2003, 4(4).

Empires need also be wary of imperial over-stretch. The most successful rulers of empires followed the Roman Hadrian's example and sought to limit their rule explicitly to territory that would not cost more to defend and maintain than it could ever be expected to produce. The opposite example would be the Spanish Habsburg's eighty-year war to retain the Netherlands, which historians agree led to the financial and military hollowing out of the Spanish empire.

Identity to nationalism

P4: *Empires require some metropole identification by the periphery for legitimation. The process through which the colonials come to feel themselves members of the metropole determines the shape of state nationalism, whether as a single entity or multiple identities from core to periphery. In some cases, attempts to impose metropole identification can create an ethnic nationalist backlash, weakening imperial rule though strengthening future multinationalism. Alternatively, some empires had weak boundary mechanisms, which resulted in core-identity diffusion and weak nationalism.*

States are not simply about revenues and expenditures, but also about the creation of the belief systems collectively known as nationalism.[27] Here we should distinguish between what we may call "ethnic nationalism" in which a group seeks to establish its autonomous political identity and "state nationalism" in which a political organization seeks to create a common identity among those under its control (Townsend 1992, p. 104). Tilly (2002, p. 163) called these two forms of nationalism "bottom-up" and "top-down," referring to the direction of influence.[28] The key to understanding the imperial legacy to nationalism is the extent with which empires mitigated or exacerbated tensions between these two.

Perhaps the best example of a successful articulation of a "nation building" strategy in the service of state authority through an imperial project may be the Chinese case. In judging the importance of the imperial legacy for the Chinese state, one merely has to consider that the latter is a unique case in continuing a 2000-year control over a territory. While we think of the PRC as a state with a considerable degree of ethnic homogeneity (roughly 92 percent Han), the creation of that same ethnic identity and its ability to expand and maintain control over that territory were very much elite-directed, imperial projects. While the scholarship on the roots of Chinese identity is extensive and often acrimonious, there seems some consensus that the key turning point is the consolidation of Qin-Han Empire beginning in 221 BC. The resulting 2100 years of imperial history featured a simultaneous rejection of a Han chauvinism with an unmistakable "Chinese" culturalist project. Thus, the empire was able to absorb invaders and conquered and to be ruled by Mongols and Manchurians while still creating "a sense of common history with myths of origin

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[27] On the problem of anachronistic use of the term "nation" see Scales and Zimmer (2005).

[28] Earlier he discussed "state-led" vs "state-making" nationalism in *Durable Inequality* (1999, p. 175ff). It is clear that the top-down model of nationalism is a homogenizing, agglomerating force originating with the political and cultural elites, while the bottom-up model is an individuating force, a form of state-making that creates political identity from popular cultural identity.

and descent; a distinctive written language ... and a core political elite" (Townsend 1992, p. 125). The differing administration of the "inner" and "outer" regions (roughly corresponding to Han penetration) allowed the imperial authorities to balance the need for a common form of cultural communication with recognition of some local autonomy. Only in the nineteenth century with the consolidation of a sense of "Han" nationality and the resulting conflict between the definition of the state and the nation did this multiethnic order begin to break down, according to Rawski (1995).

The case of the United States offers a parallel lesson. Unique among empires, it was able to transform imperial conquests into inherent parts of the nation and the state; to create what Renan ([1882] 1990) called the "moral consciousness" of nationalism out of violence. In part, this was thanks to the virtual elimination of the previous inhabitants (a similar process could be said to have happened in Australia). The naturalization of waves of immigrants allowed for the simultaneous creation of a myth of national inclusion in a territory acquired through genocide and exclusion.[29]

Most empires play out on a larger arena the balance of inclusion and exclusion,[30] which is at the heart of nation making.[31] In the most obvious process, parent states use the exclusion of the conquered to emphasize the inclusion of the home population. Empires serve to consolidate the sense of nation of the metropole by offering an identifiable (and conveniently defeated—and thus inferior—other). The construction of "Britishness" is so tightly linked with the imperial mission as to make distinction between the two almost impossible. The Victorian Diamond Jubilee (1897), the nationalist commemoration of victory (or tragic defeat as in the case of Gordon in Khartoum) certainly wove together an imperial identity.[32] Over and above any sense of national pride, the shared experience of facing the colonial enemy helped forge the sense of an imagined *imperial* community.

Similar to the relationship observed between conscription and war, the military needs of conquest (exclusion) may also provide opportunities for the bargaining necessary for inclusion in the conquering population; empires may be a road to democracy for those at the top of the imperial heap. The cases of the Athenian navy and the Roman legions may offer the best early examples of exchanging service in imperial militaries for greater political rights.[33] However, imperial wars—particularly ones meant to hold an empire together—may actually weaken state-nationalist legitimacy. The Algerian war almost split France in two while Portugal's attempts to stay in Africa sparked a revolution.

In other cases, empires begin to include the previously conquered within the imperial identity. Of course, creating more accessible identities may weaken any real

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[29] The place of African-Americans remained a political problem because they could be neither completely excluded nor included *de facto*. The already existing Mexican population was small enough as not to present much of a problem.

[30] For Tilly's discussion of inclusion and exclusion in citizenship and identity politics, see Tilly (1994a). Characteristically, and correctly, Tilly argues that nationality and citizenship are both relational social categories, which only have meaning in respect to others.

[31] For a summary of this discussion, see Scales and Zimmer (2005, pp. 22–23).

[32] Hobsbawm noted that empire "made good biological cement" (Pagden 2001, p. 137). On the creation of British identity see Colley (1994).

[33] See Kier and Krebs, eds., *In War's Wake*, forthcoming.

meaning that they have. A particular obstacle to multiethnic nationalism for overseas   366
empires is the post-Westphalian association of citizenship with territory and the fact   367
that the new imperial citizens may be asked to celebrate absurdly fictitious   368
antecedents.[34] Alternatively, the expansion of identity may increase its inherent   369
value. This can involve three processes: First, the commitment on the part of the   370
colonials to the new national identity increases its attraction ("If others want it, then   371
it must be good"). Second, the expansion in size of the national group gives the   372
identity greater impact or influence and thus increases appeal. Third, the process of   373
including new co-nationals possibly creates negotiating space to increase the relative   374
benefits of citizenship and a subsequent nationalist response.   375

One imperial strategy to deal with some of these dilemmas, which has not received   376
appropriate attention, is emigration from the core to the periphery. Empires as different   377
as the Roman, Chinese, Spanish, and British "exported" core membership to the   378
colonies through emigration. The British Empire witnessed a wide variety of   379
equilibriums between an ideology of political and economic liberalism and the   380
socially regressive practice of imperial domination, largely based on supra-national   381
racial identity as described by Gorman (2002). The British maintained a fairly open   382
version of inclusion in the white "settler" colonies of North America and Oceania.   383
This produced a fascinating combination of nationalist sentiment within the individual   384
peripheries combined with a form of imperial patriotism. Thus Canadians, Austrians,   385
and New Zealanders created their own national communities, but also participated in   386
wars far from their shores in the defense of the metropole.[35] Contrast this with much   387
more exclusive relationship practiced in most of Africa and India (but on both cases,   388
"natives" were also forced to die for "King and Country").   389

Whether out of an inherent weakness or from other structural obstacles to   390
choosing a dominant identity, some empires do not favor a single "nation."[36] This, in   391
turn, weakens the identification of the metropolitan population with its own   392
ethnicity. Rather than creating a universalistic imperial identity,[37] such a strategy   393
may create more of an imperial "mish-mash." The Islamic empire begun in the   394
seventh century faced this dilemma. While Islam (or at least acceptance of its   395
hegemony) united the various parts of the empire within the *ummah*, or community   396
of believers, the specifically "Arab" cultural component was diluted to the point   397
where the imperial center no longer had any geographical meaning. The absence of a   398
dominant ethnicity provided innumerable opportunities for dismemberment. Alter-   399

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[34] Most famously, in French colonial textbooks, where Africans were taught about "Our ancestors the Gauls." Achebe (1987) gives an illuminating description in his *Anthills of the Savannah*.

[35] The three suffered a total of 488,000 dead and wounded in World War I—a struggle that had little geographic salience for any of them. This is much higher than the totals for the US, which had 8 times the population. Perhaps no better example exists of this phenomenon than that of Jans Smuts, who began commanding Boer commandos against the British and ended serving in the (British) Imperial War Cabinets of both world wars.

[36] Or they shift in strategy depending on the situation. the Soviet Union initially celebrated its (supposed) non-ethnic identity, but then switched to a Russian chauvinism in the face of the *Wehrmacht*, and then slipped back to a more universalistic rhetoric in the 1950s.

[37] Surprisingly, some empires have come close to this. For many of the ethnic groups of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires (and especially those living in "mixed" areas or where they were a minority), imperial membership offered their best political protection.

natively, failures to treat the various parts of the empire equally or colonial   400
perceptions of the privileging of the metropolitan identity may lead to crises of faith 401
in imperial legitimacy. It may be that one of the most trying periods for empires is   402
when they are trying to balance the demands of two constituencies: central and   403
peripheral.[38] Attempts to impose a single identity then can produce proto-nationalist 404
sentiments in the various peripheries.   405

This challenge was a feature of what have been called "aristocratic empires"[39]   406
such as the Romanov and Habsburg empires. Consider Pipes's (1994, p. 216)   407
definition of the Russian Empire in 1917: "a fragile, artificial structure, held together 408
not buy organic bonds connecting rulers and ruled, but by mechanical links provided   409
by the bureaucracy, police, and army." The empire's vast population's collective   410
identity was primarily focused on the immediate village community and at best   411
defined by loyalty to the Tsar[40] as a father figure. The empire largely failed to create 412
any sense of political nationalism even among the Russian majority.[41]   413

Similarly, the Ottoman Empire, even as early as the fifteenth century, was linked by   414
the official adherence to Islam personified in the person of the Caliph and the loyalty to 415
the Ottoman ruling house.[42] The ethnic identity of the latter was diffuse and   416
amorphous thanks to the diversity of the imperial harem. There were few attempts to   417
consolidate sub-imperial ethnic identities to a broader whole. The late Ottoman Empire 418
was torn between the desire (especially among the relatively well to do non-Muslim   419
communities) for a multiethnic polity and both Islamic and Turkish particularism.   420

The Habsburg case was even more complicated. The empire was created as a   421
family business and possessed little coherence other than that created by the person   422
of the emperor/empress.[43] In the nineteenth century, the empire was torn between   423
attempts to negotiate with non-German elites (especially Polish and Hungarian)   424
resisting any efforts to Germanize. Simultaneously, some German speakers felt that   425
Berlin should be the true capital of the Deutschen Volk. The empire was literally torn   426
between calls for greater cosmopolitanism and greater ethnic chauvinism. The result   427
was a disaster where no single identity could unite or serve to distinguish the ruler,   428
but where each group also felt imposed upon.   429

Imperial inequality: cause or result?   430

P5:   *As a function of both resource extraction and identity, empires create*   431
      distinctions between metropole and periphery, thereby creating and exagger-   432

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[38] For how this played in Latin America, see Adelman (2006).

[39] These can be in turn differentiated between those where ethnically defined elite used the empire for their enrichment and those where the empire itself led to the creation of multiethnic imperial elite.

[40] Who was not even ethnically Russian, just as George V was not English.

[41] The original meaning of *rossijskij* denoted membership in the Russian Empire, but not necessarily ethnicity. During the last half of the nineteenth century, Russian and non-Russian groups began to assert their identities and claims often in reaction to each other, and the appeal of the universality of the empire become more fragile.

[42] See Imber (2004).

[43] This was a consistent pattern through the 400 years of great power status of the Habsburgs. Pagden (2001, p. 44) describes the empire of Charles V (Charles I of Spain) as more a "multinational corporation than a state."

ating inequality between the two. That very process may also reduce inequality 433
within the parent state. 434

Inequality is ultimately related to identity and its resultant nationalism. Tilly 435
(2003) made clear that all governing systems play a role in inequality.[44] Inequality 436
develops along lines of identity and boundaries, thus formation, reaction against, or 437
diffusion of identity over the course of imperial expansion and development have 438
long-lasting consequences.[45] In almost all empires a clear distinction is made 439
between those with a claim to membership in the dominant group and those who 440
have been "conquered" in one way or another. All classic empires, for example, 441
made this distinction between citizens of the *polis*, and even allied cities or regions 442
(much less barbarians under military control).[46] This can also be expressed through 443
an ethnic distinction (Han, non-Han) and most obviously after the fifteenth century, 444
through race. (Indeed, race may be a product of empire; the historical link between 445
contemporary Western racism and European empire building is very strong.) The 446
distinction may become formalized through the granting of "citizenship" to those 447
born in the metropole (at least those in the metropole belonging to the right gender 448
and race) and the creation of elaborate paths to citizenship for those in the periphery 449
potentially capable of becoming "civilized." On the one hand, attempts to create the 450
notion of a single "imperial family" (Anna 1998) usually fail in the face of differing 451
agendas and privileges. On the other hand, too much emphasis on a racialist unequal 452
differentiation, however, can fatally weaken imperial efforts. Thus, for example, the 453
Japanese emphasis on *kokutai* or their national uniqueness made it impossible for 454
them to construct the kind of pan Asian nationalism implicit in the Co-Prosperity 455
Sphere. 456

Yet, precisely because of the distinction between conquered and conqueror, 457
empires may also have the paradoxical effect of leveling distinctions within the 458
parent state and within colonized regions. Since Athens and Rome, the "people" 459
have been often made to feel that the empire was "theirs." In the metropole, the 460
notion of belonging to the imperial elite provides both perceived and real 461
opportunities for those on the bottom. First, they now belong to a "master race" 462
and can share that identification with those far higher on the domestic social 463
pyramid. Likewise, empires may also provide the potential for socio-economic 464
mobility through entrepreneurial activities or through bureaucratic postings.[47] In the 465
periphery, the arrival of imperial authority may lead to a flattening of distinctions in 466
the subjugated population as the local social and economic status quo disappears. We 467
see here that empires create and exaggerate inequality between core and periphery, 468

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[44] "All governments, democratic or otherwise, inevitably intervene in the production of inequality. The do so in three distinct ways: by protecting the advantages of their major supporters; by establishing their own systems of extraction and allocation of resources; and my redistributing resources among different segments of their subject populations" (pp. 37–38).

[45] On how categories of social relation, including national identity, play a role in durable inequality, see Tilly (1999).

[46] Beginning with Trajan, however, the Romans were arguably successful in creating an "imperial poeple." See Cooper (2005, p. 159). By the early third century, the distinction between citizen and non-citizen had largely disappeared with the empire (except, of course, for women and slaves).

[47] The character of Ronald Merrick in the Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet* is a perfect example of the type.

but within each segment of the empire social (if not fiscal and political) inequalities   469
may be, perhaps artificially, reduced.   470

Alternatively, imperial profits may lead to greater distinctions in the metropole   471
society. The use of peripheral sub-groups as imperial representatives may also   472
worsen inequality in the colonies. Empires may also provide support in a variety of   473
ways for the metropolitan elite or aristocracy providing it with an "artificial" lifeline   474
with which to maintain its status and wealth differentials.[48] For those well enough   475
connected, investment in imperial enterprises could create considerable legacies of   476
wealth.   477

Conclusion   478

The central challenges for empires (and the consensus on most likely reasons for   479
their fall) are the a) creation of an administrative system able to pass information and   480
money in one direction and commands and coercion in the other, and b) legitimation   481
of this rule either by a consistent delivery of services (peace, wealth, etc.) or the   482
creation of an imperial identity. Thought of this way, the rise and fall of empires   483
offers some critical lessons for states.   484

First, while the notion of overstretch is usually used to analyze (and criticize)   485
imperial pretensions, it is also useful when contemplating domestic action by any   486
state. What characterizes over-stretch is not necessarily a simple expansion of   487
bureaucracy, costs, or territory. Rather it is the mismatch of capacity with ambition.   488
Perhaps the fatal flaw in the Spanish and Russian empires was the issuance of   489
decrees and commands that the imperial administration had no power to enforce.   490
Such attempts raised hopes (among the potential "winners") that would inevitably be   491
dashed, while angering and frightening potential "losers" (who rather than being   492
relieved by the apparent ease of non-compliance noted the fragility of the imperial   493
regime).   494

Second, the generation of wealth, whether through taxation or more direct forms   495
of exploitation, is not simply an economic act, but a deeply political one. The   496
establishment of flows, their maintenance, and the subsequent expenditure may be   497
measured in imperial or national aggregates, but the asymmetries are perceived and   498
acted upon locally. That some classes and locales may benefit from empire (or from   499
state action) is obvious, as is the fact that others will lose (or feel that they have lost,   500
which is politically the same thing). Thus, for example, the conflict between the   501
imperial fiscal vision and that of the 13 Colonies led to the loss of a large part of the   502
"first" British Empire. The economic benefits of India later led to the expenditure of   503
arguably offsetting costs in securing them. In some case, apparent surpluses of   504
wealth end up weakening all parts of the regime, as in the case of the Spanish   505
Empire beginning in the seventeenth century.   506

Third, empires and states both manage boundaries involving inclusion and   507
exclusion. In a globalized world, states have to make the same decisions that dogged   508
empires: how to assign membership in the collective in a politically inclusive   509

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[48] Bright (1999, p. 210) calls empire "a gigantic system of out-door relief for the aristocracy of Great
Britain."

Q8

manner without "cheapening the currency." If some polities have much greater 510
power than others in determining global fates, is it not a contradiction of basic 511
democratic theory that only a small percentage of humankind can vote within them? 512
How is a system of states to manage the contradictions between territorially defined 513
nationalism and citizenship and global interactions and influence? 514

Where might Tilly have taken these ideas? We suspect that he would call for a 515
systematization and concretization of the ideas in the article.[49] One course of inquiry 516
could examine each of the propositions discussed above independently, surveying 517
particular bounded eras of history in which the process of bureaucratization or 518
national identity formation occurred. As we have done here, each process could be 519
explored through comparisons of cases that exemplified variation. This approach 520
would highlight the historical specificity of each process. Another course would 521
attempt the creation of a grand historical database with imperial and national 522
attributes and analyzing the relationship between them. This would be particularly 523
suited to testing the hypotheses developed from our conclusions. A third and more 524
challenging course of inquiry, one particularly favored by Tilly, would be to examine 525
the processes describe in this article not independently but in interaction. That is, to 526
ask whether and how each of the processes affected one another and what the 527
specific and systematic outcomes of particular interactions produced. Whichever 528
direction, we hope that in this homage to the man and his work we have provided a 529
sketch of an entire research agenda that awaits us. 530
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[49] Perhaps the clearest indication of his thinking on how to develop a research agenda, particularly on the topic of historical macroprocesses, is Tilly (1984).

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