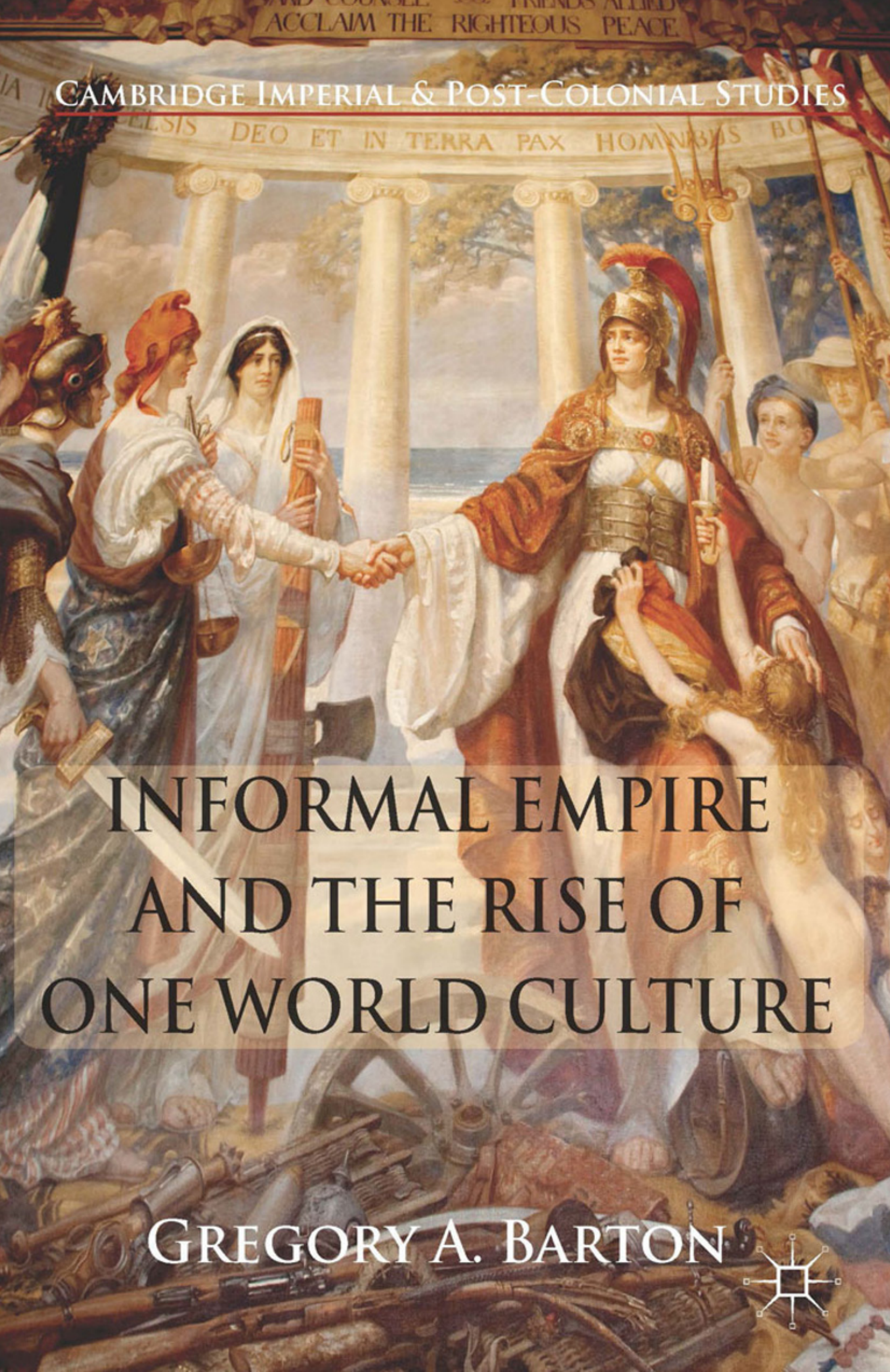
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Informal Empire and the Rise of One World Culture

Gregory A. Barton

Professor of History, School of Humanities and Communication Arts, University of Western Sydney

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For Timothy Mark Neal,
With love

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Abbreviations

ALC	Africa Lakes Company
BBTC	Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation
BMEO	British Middle East Office, Cairo
EIC	East India Company
FO	Foreign Office, London
FRUS	*Foreign Relations of the United Sates*
GUAS	Glasgow University Archive Services, Glasgow
IMC	Imperial Maritime Customs, Shanghai
IOR	India Office Records, The National Archives, Kew, London
LBJ	Lyndon B. Johnson Library, Austin, TX
MESC	Middle East Supply Centre, Cairo
RFD	Royal Forest Department, Siam
TNA	The National Archives, Kew, London
UGC	University of Glasgow Collection, GUAS

1

Models of Global Transformation

> Thus in the beginning all the world was America.
>
> John Locke (1690/1960: 319)

There is a gap in our explanation of how and why the world is configured as it is. Why, for instance, do the elite of India justify their role in society through technical prowess? Why is China's eastern seaboard a cliff of high-rises? Why did the sheikhs of the United Arab Emirates feel compelled to build 7-star hotels and a palm-shaped island staffed by Indians and managed by Britons, Australians and Germans? Why is there a mixed economy of capitalism and socialism in almost every part of the world? Why, except for a Western and Marxist bureaucracy in China, is parliamentary government the dominant ideal almost everywhere? Why have Western images colonized the mental landscape of nearly the entire global population? Why are the beaches of California an image stamped on the minds of the poorest jute-producing villages in Bangladesh? Why is the imagination of the world dreaming dreams of progress and development, dreams that were born in the Enlightenment and elaborated now in science-fiction fantasies that take the movie viewers in Manila and Johannesburg to the stars? Why is environmentalism more popular than even democracy? Why is the earth warming? Why do so many care?

It is because there is one world culture and this one world culture is Western. The rise of Europe in the Modern Age, the growth of the Industrial Revolution and the expanse of the imperial powers, all played an ineluctable role in creating a single world encomium, a process of regional interconnectivity called 'globalism'. But a key concept that explains how the modern world came to its present configuration has been persistently missing. It is missing because it has proven to be an almost impossibly difficult concept to define and, worse yet, to apply. But its importance cannot be overstated. It is a conception that actually describes the mechanism of control that has led to a single world culture. This missing concept is 'informal empire'.

'Informal empire' explains the broad reach of European culture and the transformation of societies, many of which (though not all) came briefly under formal imperial rule. The term, as defined by this author, refers to an imperial elite playing a formative role in the creation, maintenance or co-opting of another elite. It broadens the classic definition by the imperial historians Ronald E. Robinson and John Gallagher to better explain how elites have Westernized the world. While many historians of social and cultural history, particularly postcolonialists, have focused on the agency and even revolutionary potential of non-elites, this work projects a different course. The populations of the non-European world have expressed their agency and radically altered the economic structure of their culture through consumer choice and labour participation at the expense of traditional products and occupations. These choices and proclivities, far more than strategic and revolutionary actions, have helped form the modern world. Non-European elites, often in symbiotic relationships with European elites, most particularly British and American, have provided the framework and opportunity for this agency.

This approach may disappoint those who seek an ideological teleology of revolution as the 'way out' of a largely capitalist global system, and it may disappoint as well those who imagine an 'empire strikes back' response to Western power structures. But we must not conflate revolutionary hope with observation. Informal empire, I argue here, is a key mechanism of control that explains much of the configuration of the modern world as it is today – including globalism. While I will touch briefly on the subject of resistance in the final chapter, a separate book could be written that explores patterns of cultural and political formation that resulted from fighting back against imperial elites and the varied forms of hybridism that arose as a result. This volume, however, traces the broad and undeniable outline of Westernization through elite formations around the globe. Globalism is a fait accompli. Yet the literature on globalism has failed to explain adequately the mechanism of historical change behind the symbiosis of world cultures in the modern era. This work on informal empire corrects this problem.

The present book is an attempt to give a historiographical survey of the idea of 'informal empire', and to place before the reader a theoretical framework to guide further investigation. It does not and cannot in a single volume prove the precise boundaries of informal empire in all parts of the world at a given time. Nor can this volume give a who's who of the elite groups who run the world. Speech codes and professional punishment disallow such a frank discussion, not only in the United States, Europe and Australasia, but in most of the world where each region harbours its own untouchable ruling class.[1] This book can, however, trace the broad outlines of elite formation from the Industrial Revolution to the present and by doing so begin to focus on the methods by which our elites gain and hold power. It can also answer one of the most important and far-reaching questions faced by historians: Why is the world Western?

The first chapter lays out models of global transformation that have attempted to understand the rise of Europe and the modernization of much of the world. The second chapter explores the idea of informal empire and how legal minds, philosophers, historians and government officials, among others, have deployed this concept using a wide array of terms. The third chapter focuses on what I call here the 'Palmerstonian project' to loosely describe the British approach to trade and global transformation in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. After this comes a region-by-region analysis of Africa, the Americas, Asia and the Middle East that attempts to give a brief big-picture account of how the elites of these key regions have interacted with British elites, and then also to engage with the historiographical tradition that has dealt with the questions of informal empire in that region.

These chapters are vital to present in broad outline a new framework to understand how the world Westernized under what I call the 'imperial network'. In Chapter 8, 'The United States and the Imperial Web', I examine the transfer of power from a network of imperial elites focused in Britain, to a network of imperial elites focused in the United States. In the final chapter, 'Resistance', I chronicle a brief outline of a counter-tradition that opposes the basic principles of informal empire and the globalization of those select strands of Western consumerism that threaten not only distinct indigenous cultures around the world, but many of the core values of the Western tradition itself. While another book could be written entirely on the transfer of power to America, and how the United States has exercised its power in the last few generations, I only sketch out a brief outline of this. My intent is to explain, better than other models of world history, how the mechanism of control through elite formation has worked and why the world is Western, focusing first on Britain, which launched the most far-reaching changes in the modern era, and then on the United States, which inherited – and often seized – the imperial levers. Clearly much more work is needed to ask other vital questions that run parallel to this discussion, such as: Who is our elite? How did they gain power? Shall we continue with them in power? An understanding of informal empire as the mechanism of power that globalized the world through a process of elite formation and co-option is an important first step in answering these questions.

Although many books and articles treat with singular aspects of informal empire – and many articles partially examine the concept through the lens of a particular region – there is not a single book written on the topic. The result has been a gunshot-scattering of academic fragments. This overview is not meant to lay out new archival evidence for or against informal empire, nor to present informal empire in a good or bad light. Rather, it is to define and then to examine two exemplars that have played a prominent role in the globalization of the world Britain and the United States. The goal is to offer a useful model for world historians to frame their analysis of change, particularly in the last 200 years of the modern era. It will hopefully throw light on the mechanisms of power that sweep aside all national boundaries, leaving no traditional culture untouched, and is the proximate cause for pervasive Westernization and global change.

Informal empire is a process that involved courage, hope and massive exertion of creative power and force. It also changed the world forever, raising the standard of living of most of the global population and reorganizing every aspect of society – including and most importantly, the basic ideas by which humans understand the world. It has also pushed many cultures over the cliff, including destroying what many would consider the most noble aspects of Western culture itself. It is not the place for a historian to pronounce a simplistic judgement on this process.

This investigation runs parallel to the investigation of Western-oriented elites. As democrats we have difficulties thinking about elites. The term conjures up images of privilege, the use and abuse of force, of inherited wealth or of an alien class of rulers whose claim to power is based on violence, privilege or subterfuge. Democratic citizens, when they think of elites at all, are encouraged to think of a Jeffersonian hierarchy based on virtue and knowledge or of professional attainment. Anyone can start a business and get rich. Anyone can run for office, or become the prime minister of the United Kingdom, or the president of the United States. We hold these assumptions because of the classical liberal ideas of the self-made person, and because capitalism and democracy have become in our minds almost symbiotic twins. To support one is to support the other. We also hold these pacific assumptions about our elites because we have absorbed the ideology of the professional ideal, an ideal that has permeated our educational system, our institutions and the structures of capitalism itself. For the most part those who govern the modern world justify their power through this professional ethos. They are specialized, and they have worked hard for their specialized knowledge and therefore they are experts. They have earned their upper-class status and they hold greater influence over the course of society, including politics, in accordance with their knowledge. They justly deserved the wealth that they have accumulated. Even candidates for the highest office, such as that of prime minister and president, campaign on their 'qualifications' to hold power.

While sociology in the early twentieth century offered bold and incisive analysis of elite formation, the association of elite studies with the politics of the far right, most particularly fascism, has warned scholars off the topic and left a significant vacuum. Elaborate euphemisms, or vague abstractions, harmless to elites on both the right and the left of the political spectrum have replaced hard-headed analysis of the ruling class. Elites, however, though they can be imagined as structures (such as corporations or the top 1 per cent or the bourgeoisie), are in fact, people. There are in the world landed elites still and political dynasties, certainly also inherited wealth and even monarchies, chiefdoms and religious castes. Elites have common characteristics that can be identified through ethnicity, religion, cultural affiliations and nationality.

Many theories of elite formation have been suggested in the modern period: Joseph Arthur Comte de Gobineau's racially unmixed Aryan aristocracy that created and sustained culture; Alexis de Tocqueville's 'intermediary corporations' that allowed the masses to express their ideas and power to a ruling elite of wealth and privilege in a democracy; Jean-Jacques Rousseau's 'social contract' that allowed the masses to express the 'general will', often through a strongman; and Napoleon Bonaparte's bureaucratic elite, trained in the lycées, that sought to stamp not only France but the conquered European territories with Enlightenment categories of law.[2]

Theorists of collective psychology have argued for a symbiotic relationship between the crowd and its leaders. This usually consisted of a critique of the liberal parties and of unfettered democracy, starting with the debate between the Girondins and the Jacobins in the French Revolution, through to the debates between landed and business elites in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Theorists of elite formation have attempted to explain the inevitability, effect and interdependence of the pivotal groups in society, although with little agreement on who constituted this elite. In France, Hippolyte Taine (1828–93) saw a confluence of race, place and environment that allowed an elite 'creative milieu' to create culture. As with the Italian School of elite theorists who followed, he understood human nature to be savage, with strains of violence, lust and folly predominating. The French Revolution merely substituted a highly centralist absolutism from one man (the monarch) to a group of men (an assembly). Liberty and individualism suffered under both systems, while empty and romantic phrases replaced hard-headed scientific knowledge of the world. Precisely because nineteenth-century France suffered under democratic elites, innovation and the search for truth were stifled and society unsettled. For Taine, literary production captured the best of human efforts and formed an aristocratic cultural elite of talent – determined by factors outside the individual's control – that defined an era. Opponents described him as a theorist not of genius and innovation, which exhibit the will to burst through constraints and define an individual vision, but of fatalism and mediocrity, depicting elites as passive to their environment.[3]

Scholars of the Italian School, a few decades after Taine's death in 1893, gained greatest prominence as theorists of elites, particularly Vilfredo Pareto (1848–1923), Gaetano Mosca (1858–1941) and Robert Michels (1876–1936). They posited the idea that democratic leaders – no different from authoritarian leaders – manipulated the majority by methods of crowd control. These elected leaders cynically tapped into widely held instincts and myths to control the majority and covered their brutal power with a deceptive republican gauze. In the 1920s and 1930s, fascist movements combined the arguments of the Italian School with anti-Semitism to great effect.

Vilfredo Pareto created a founding document of sociology in his classic *The Rise and Fall of the Elites* (1901). He argued that elites (*aristocrazia*) always governed human societies. Elites gained status by demonstrating strength, energy and creativity: 'Hence – the history of man is the history of the continuous replacement of certain elites: as one ascends, another declines.' 'Foxes' speculated on new ventures, risked money for gain and were found heavily represented in the financial classes who put profit first, and covered their deeds with a hypocritical humanitarian sentiment. 'Lions' were conservative elements – the rentier class rather than the speculator class – that wished to preserve the status quo. For Pareto, Napoleon III represented the fraternity class of adventurers and financial speculators under an upstart liberal monarch. After the ruin of such a class of elites, and the government they ran, conservative consolidation would occur. Pareto never spoke of informal empire, but his analyses of foxes and lions are strangely apt as a description of the more speculative free trade characteristics of informal empire that lapses at times into formal empire, or the conservative consolidators. One could easily apply his circulation of lions and foxes in European societies to British and American empires, formal and informal.

Pareto also placed a great emphasis on the religious impulse that manifests itself under the guise of a secular form – socialism and reform movements of all sorts. A small group of people in literature, art, science and mysticism create new symbols that the ruling elite, or a challenging elite, will use in times of crises to rally the support of the mass population. Elites rise to power through various mechanisms. Pareto argued that when social selection is allowed to function then a hierarchy of talent rises to the top, reflected in the 'social physiology' of the society. All the progress of the human race is traceable to this simple fact: talent rises to the top when unimpeded. Thomas Jefferson dreamed of the same 'aristocracy of talent'. While these key groups or people may not hold formal power in times of stability, their influence expands during times of change or stress. Since humans are guided by sentiment, not reason, such symbol makers become the true moulders of society.[4]

Elite theory returned to prominence again during the Cold War when theorists pitted the merits of 'democratic elites' that were open to new talent and worked in a balance of institutional power, against the monolithic authoritarian elites under the Communist Party in the Soviet Bloc. James Burnham argued in *The Managerial Revolution* (1941) and *The Machiavellians: Defenders of Freedom* (1943) that scientifically trained elites were necessary to protect freedom from the passion and gullibility of the masses. What is the difference between the elites and the masses? To Burnham, it is the ability of the educated elites to act scientifically, analyzing all the myths of the common man, 'Gods . . . ghosts . . . abstracted moral imperatives . . . ideals . . . utopias.'[5] Very much in the line of the Italian School, Burnham argued that successful elites do not tell the truth but use the instincts and prejudices of the democratic mass to shape society for broad utilitarian means.

Joseph Schumpeter attempted to openly discuss elites in a democratic society but without the delegitimizing negativity that characterized the Italian School and Burnham. Schumpeter understood that a weak point of democracy was that the masses little involve themselves in political decision-making. Instead of avoiding the topic of elitism, he argued that democrats should cut their losses and openly admit the fact that a very small group of individuals wielded power in society. By discarding useful political lies democratic elites can seek validation through alliance with the masses. Because society has rival elite factions, all vying for power, the majority can then be empowered when it chooses to side with one elite faction or another. While this still leaves an active elite and a passive mass, it is still compatible with the democratic process because the masses have a choice of rival elite suitors.[6]

The most common non-professional strata of our elite are entrepreneurs. But while entrepreneurs and those who inherit great wealth sometimes do not hold a licence, they usually hire professional 'experts' to manage their wealth. As Harold Perkin pointed out, we have for the most part an elite of professionals in which 'left' and 'right' divide roughly by source of income: those who, on the left, derive their living from government sources or non-profit organizations, such as teachers and bureaucrats; and those who, on the right, make their living directly from the market, like business executives and managers of corporations, bankers and financiers. Then there is a wide spectrum of those who are often in between and work for semi-private but highly regulated for-profit industries: lawyers, doctors and insurance agents, to name a few. The modern world is run by global elites who are professionals and whose ruling ideology, although apparently bifurcated into separate camps, has a single epicene root – the justification of power through merit. Talent and hard work theoretically justify a licence (not always formally recognized) for specialized labour that forces up income at a higher rate than the market would otherwise yield. Even the market itself is created by a rule of law designed by professionals. Neither the libertarian nor the socialist is comfortable discussing this process, and for good reason: they are both two wings of the same bird of prey. While those on the left and right of the political spectrum exchange barbs, neither intends to upset the professional foundation that supports them both. Neither elections nor regime change usually affect the income-gathering activities of the professional elite.

Almost all areas of the world fashion their educational systems to produce and protect an elite that justifies the privileged status and the exercise of power with a distinctly Western version of the professional ethos.[7] Exceptions may be some areas of sub-Saharan Africa, indigenous reservations in the Americas and Australasia and remote tribal groups in Central and South Asia. Additionally race, ethnicity, gender, wealth, corruption, kinship and privilege certainly affect who receives the training for professional status. In this regard the professional elite cannot by any means be taken at face value or understood on its own idealized and self-serving terms. As Perkin has demonstrated, the lion's share of the national income stream is diverted into the controlling hands of professionals and professionals use their wealth and knowledge as experts to exert power to shape society. They do so in such a way that the word 'elite' properly describes their status and role in society.

This aversion to identifying elites has led to difficulties in understanding the mechanism of control behind globalization. This in turn has made the discussion of informal empire fall under the radar because, as argued in this book, informal empire is about the influence and formation of elites. Elites are people who create all organizational structures and institutions. Elites sustain these structures. Structures tell us about the people who constitute our elite. But structures are not people and therefore structures are not elites. Structures can no more create elites than structures can create people. Corporations, NGOs, governments, are not elites. They are structures created by people. This investigation into informal empire aims to survey literature that will enable the reader to better understand the configuration of the modern world by understanding how elites in certain locations, primarily Britain and then the United States, have influenced the formation of elites and the structures that they have built, in a globalized world.

Westernization is distinct from the whole of Western culture. It refers to the export not of the whole of European culture, but of select strands. The Western conception of law, democratic capitalism, industrialization, professionalization, state-sponsored bureaucracy, socialism, free trade, consumerism, environmentalism, even what we mean by the 'modern', have transformed most parts of the world. Clearly non-European culture of all descriptions still abound in the world, as do pockets of ancient religious societies and hunter-gatherer societies. Examples of hybrid cultures also abound, from Christian and African religious practices, to the Mestizo culture of Latin America. But globalization has been concurrent with the abolition of cultures around the world and (this is often overlooked) globalization has also abolished many strands of traditional European culture. Thus the rapid changes that have transformed European society in the Modern Age and, along with it, much of the world, are not entirely captured by the term 'Western'. While 'Westernization' still describes globalization, the term cannot adequately describe the historical process in Europe itself and detracts from the long and varied history of resistance to the industrial, political and philosophical changes that swept over Europe in the last 500 years.

Max Weber's term 'rationalization' is useful because this descriptive term encompasses these broad-based changes inside and outside of Europe. Weber's term for reordering the world encompasses the dominant Western philosophical ideas, particularly Enlightenment ideals, but also industrialization, professionalization and the reordering of the world, both at home and abroad. Jurgen Habermas depicted Weber as describing not only secularization but 'new structures of society' that include 'the capitalist enterprise and the bureaucratic state apparatus', precisely those influences that lie behind and describe structures of globalization. Habermas argued that Weber 'understood this process as the institutionalization of purposive-rational economic and administrative action'. Crucially for this study on informal empire, this meant that 'traditional forms of life ... were dissolved.'[8]

Historiography of informal empire

A Cambridge economic historian, Charles R. Fay, made the first explicit use of the term 'informal empire' in passing and without definition or elaboration. He introduced the term to describe economic power outside of formal empire.[9] A number of historians, discussed below, cautiously approached the concept of informal empire after the First World War until it finally burst onto the scene with open discussion in the years following the Second World War, inspired by the clear dominance in world affairs of the United States – ostensibly a non-imperial power. This informal power of the United States particularly affected historians of British history and encouraged many imperial historians to view Britain's imperial power and influence on the world in a new light.

One of Australia's most distinguished historians, Keith Hancock, approached informal empire in his now classic history, *Australia* (1930).[10] By looking at the contradictions and tensions between Australian nationalism and imperial identity he framed the development of Australia's history as part of broader geographic, economic and political forces. In doing so he implicitly established the importance of the periphery of the empire in the study of British imperialism. In other works he included in his discussion of formal empire the 'invisible empire' of trade and commerce and defined the interdependence between metropole and periphery as a matter of degree that required a cooperative arrangement on both sides.[11]

Others followed this exploration. Vincent T. Harlow, Beit Professor of Commonwealth History at Oxford University, uncovered the links between trade and power by investigating how the British shifted from a territorial empire in the Americas to pursuing instead an empire of trade in the East. In *The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763–1793* (1952), he explored the intention of the imperial elites not only to hold territory when necessary, but also to influence national elites outside the boundaries of formal empire. Both Hancock and Harlow were a mere stone's throw away from the powerful idea of informal empire.[12]

Gallagher and Robinson launched the contemporary debate on the idea of informal empire in historical circles. In their seminal article, the 'Imperialism of Free Trade' published in the journal *Economic History Review* (1953), they asserted that historical scholarship had remained in a nineteenth-century mould and ignored British expansion outside the formal empire. Imperialism overflowed the boundaries that cartographers had marked red on the map to outline the British Empire. We can no longer judge the depth and breadth of British expansion by formal empire alone, they argued. To do so is to examine the mere tip of the iceberg.[13] They asserted that historians wrongly divided nineteenth-century Britain into periods of imperial and anti-imperial expansion, 'according to the extension or contraction of the formal empire and the degree of belief in the value of British rule overseas'. Gallagher and Robinson opposed the widely accepted schematic propagated by John A. Hobson, Vladimir I. Lenin and Parker Thomas Moon, discussed below, who saw a new climatic imperial stage in the 1880s – what was later called 'New Imperialism' – and fuelled by capitalism, politics and, for Hobson, a gang of Jewish financiers, all of which sparked the 'Scramble for Africa'. This Hobsonian view of a late-Victorian high imperialism created, they believed, a false division in British imperial history.

Gallagher and Robinson launched a debate on informal empire that has not ended. They elicited, however, the strongest agreement from scholars when they demolished the notion of 'mid-Victorian indifference' and 'late-Victorian enthusiasm' for the expansion of the empire. They underlined the fact that between 1841 and 1851 Britain expanded into New Zealand, the Gold Coast, Labuan, Natal, the Punjab, Sind and Hong Kong. This is, they showed, hardly a record of quiescence. Then after 1861 and until the 1880s Britain added to her empire Berar, Oudh, Lower Burma, Kowloon, Sierra Leone, Lagos, Basutuland, Griqualand, the Transvaal and new settler colonies in Queensland and British Columbia. All this before 'high imperialism'.[14]

The authors argued that British people, capital, manufacturing, language, ideas and constitutional forms of government radiated out from Britain between 1812 and 1914. With 70 per cent of the emigrants from Britain settling outside the empire and half the investment funds and two-thirds of British trade flowing outside the empire, historians needed a new concept to capture the full extent of British influence. The 'inter-relation of its [informal empire's] economic and political arms, how political action aided the growth of commercial supremacy, and how this supremacy in turn strengthened political influence' are the key to understanding Victorian supremacy overseas. Thus continuity in aim through the expansion of commerce and influence characterized the expansion of British power in the nineteenth century.

Trade achieved this aim. Britain required no force against steady trading partners on the Continent – for instance, with France after the Napoleonic Wars or with the United States after independence.[15] Informal empire, they concluded, had actually been preferred to formal empire, even in the late-Victorian age. The British undertook the 'Scramble for Africa' only for strategic reasons, and because informal power could not be maintained in Africa when subjected to such intense international pressure.[16] Britain resorted to force, and then to formal empire, only as the last reluctant step. They gently opened, or kicked open, as the case may be, the door of trade. The British informal empire, already in place in the United States, expanded over much of Latin America, the Levant and China.

In 1961, Robinson and Gallagher refined their ideas on informal empire in *Africa and the Victorians*. They insisted that the traditional explanations for the Scramble misread the historical evidence. The Scramble for Africa followed a period of informal influence in the region and no economic determinism made the Scramble inevitable, nor did the presence of monopolistic capitalism primarily represented by the 'taproot' of banks and other financial institutions cause this extension of formal empire over most of Africa. Rather, a single imperial strategy maintained power through informal and formal empire, depending on the circumstances. In the partition of Africa, the risk of national uprisings in Egypt and the Boer republics led the diplomatic 'official mind' (that is the officials at the British Foreign Office) to plan the seizure of massive tracts of land in the African interior to safeguard the route to India. This happened because, and only because, informal empire began to fray and break apart in the face of competition from other European powers.

A year later, Robinson and Gallagher published a shorter account that analyzed its European and African dynamics.[17] They focused on French politics, the revival of Islam in northern Africa and German attempts at creating an entente with France or an alliance with Britain. They argued that Muslim revolutions and rebellions inspired by a revivalist Islam confronted a modernizing Europe and forced the British and French to intervene in Tunisia, Western Sudan, northern Nigeria and the Sudan. Robinson and Gallagher reinforced their initial thesis that crises in Egypt and South Africa compelled the British into making strategic annexations. This led the French and sometimes the Germans to use diplomacy to carve up the continent of Africa throughout the 1880s and 1890s. Most importantly, collaboration in the periphery itself, with indigenous elites – not solely economic and social changes within Europe – drove European expansion in Africa.

In a subsequent work Robinson chose the word ‘collaboration’ to reveal a coordinated working relationship based on mutual interests or benefits. He intended no negative implications.[18] He assumed that imperial governments preferred collaboration. It offered empire ‘on the cheap’ against expensive gunboats, large standing armies and constant war. Local intermediaries saved money. In this context Robinson made it clear that Europe did not dominate a supplicant world but influenced through the ‘political reflex’ of both European and indigenous collaborators.

This proposition influenced the historiography of imperialism by emphasizing an ‘excentric’ rather than a Eurocentric explanation of empire. Imperialism became not merely about white people seizing power, but about partnership and symbiosis that lay in the interests of both European and non-European elites. Imperialism became, in this light, a joint programme that extended the reach of Europe through not just raw power or trade, but also invitation and acquiescence. Imperialism in this view resembles – if not a love match – at least a marriage of convenience.

Another contribution to imperial historiography by Robinson came in the article co-authored with Wm. Roger Louis, ‘The Imperialism of Decolonization’ (1994). Borrowing upon the language of the ‘Imperialism of Free Trade’, Robinson and Louis asserted that: ‘It should be a commonplace . . . that the post-war Empire was more than British and less than an imperium.’[19] The article then argued that after 1948 American money, political support and military aid propped up Britain’s post-Second World War empire. They suggested that:

> At the metropolitan and international levels, British imperial power was substantially an Anglo-American revival. Neither side cared to publish the fact, the one to avoid the taint of imperialism, the other to keep the prestige of Empire untarnished.[20]

Louis presented informal empire as the most substantive and sophisticated explanation for the expansion of European power and influence in the world and a much better explanation than rigid Marxist dogma. He defined informal empire as a 'unified theory' of imperialism that must be considered a 'historiographical revolution'.[21] Robinson and Gallahger's contribution lay in the fact that by exploring the term 'informal empire' they revealed imperialism as a symbiosis, a dance between partners, rather than a one-sided European imposition on the world. Louis adds that these insights 'can be applied to various regions and different areas'.[22]

Defining 'informal empire'

Europe globalized the world largely through the process of imperialism, formal and informal. The argument for using the term 'informal empire' as a model for world history is strong: massive investment in a foreign economy; large numbers of settlers or guest workers who run major sections of an economy or produce critical amounts of labour; outside interventions, whether military, diplomatic or economic; relations between elites that determine the economic, cultural and political direction of a country; new identities among elite groups that link them to the imperial power. All these factors justify the term 'informal empire'. But scholars have defined informal empire more in passing than by any direct treatment of the subject.

How does informal empire relate to other allied terms? Is informal empire also imperialism? Is it colonialism? Frank Ninkovich defines imperialism as 'an important aspect of a nation's life . . . under the effective control of an outside power' and this also includes 'the workings of private social forces without overt political control'.[23] 'Economic imperialism' is a term very close – and often identical – to the concept of informal empire. B. R. Tomlinson defines economic imperialism as 'the use of power to determine relations between actors who are bound together mainly by political or economic institutions that have been imposed from the outside, and who lack a common, internally generated sense of moral or cultural solidarity'. This results in local people making economic choices 'away from their perceived self-interest in a process of informal imperialism'. But this definition misses influence outside of economic power, and wrongly assumes that the exercise of power must flow in a single direction without the benefit or agency of other actors.[24] Another scholar, Edmund S. K. Fung, defined informal empire as 'imperialism without the desire to assume the responsibilities – administrative, financial, and military – of direct formal rule'.[25] This definition presents few problems but, as with all negative definitions, tells us little about the mechanism of informal empire itself or about imperialism in general.

Is informal empire colonialism? Common usage defines a colony as a people transplanted from their home country to a new region and remaining subject to the authority of the parent state. This definition does not offer a clear connection to informal empire because a colony almost always involves formal structure of empire and formal ties between the colonists and the mother country. There can be a 'colony' of artists or businessmen in a foreign city but here the term is used differently and not as colonialism. Therefore while informal empire may be a form of imperialism it cannot be considered formal colonialism. Imperialism, however, is defined by common usage as: 'The policy, practice, or advocacy of seeking, or acquiescing in, the extension of the control, dominion, or empire of a national, as by the acquirement of new, [especially] distant, territory or dependencies.' Since informal empire addresses issues of control and domination by one nation over another, then informal empire is clearly imperialism, albeit of a special type – informal empire is informal imperialism. The onus returns to the scholar who insists that 'informal' means of control are real and can be identified.[26]

Robert J. McMahon writes that: 'The intimacies of empire – from position to race mixing to domestic service to discourses of domination and subordination – can be just as pervasive and revealing in informal as in formal zones of control.'[27] Cultural and communication history illustrate this. Dwayne R. Winseck and Robert M. Pike suggest that informal empire is a key player in globalization and that 'the link between communication, financial crises, and imperialism' needs far more research.[28]

Identity has also been suggested as a marker of informal empire – where collaborating elites view themselves as mediators between their own indigenous culture and the great imperial powers.[29] Arguing that the United States had a global empire during the Cold War, John Lewis Gaddis implies that an empire can be spotted as:

> a single state [that] shapes the behavior of others, whether directly or indirectly, partially or completely, by means that can range from the outright use of force through intimidation, dependency, inducement and even inspiration . . . [A nation] need not send out ships, seize territories, and hoist flags to construct an empire.[30]

Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have suggested that immigration to the West is a factor in an 'empire' without territorial borders.[31]

The weakest point about the term 'informal empire' is its vagary. If there are no formal structures of empire, then how can informal empire be identified? Also, if the term is so closely allied to influence, why not restrict the dialogue to the factor of influence alone? Adding to the difficulties, informal empire is also a 'touch-and-go thing', coalescing into an identifiable picture only when a mosaic of factors simultaneously exist.[32] Andrew Thompson argues that sovereignty can be exerted over aspects of a state – economic, military, diplomatic, for example – and that it can be diminished by degrees. It can be lost, recovered and lost again, and measured by degree rather than absolute categories.[33] Others have attempted to avoid some of the complexities of the term 'empire' by speaking of 'informal imperialism'. P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins traced the 'structural power' behind the flow of capital that established the perimeters and patterns of international exchange and posited gentlemanly capitalists as important enablers of informal imperialism.[34] John Darwin, who also uses the term 'informal imperialism', argues that informal imperialism 'relied upon the links created by trade, investment or diplomacy, often supplanted by unequal treaties and periodic armed intervention, to draw new regions into the world-system of an imperial power'.[35] However this exchange of the word 'empire' for 'imperialism' does not change the conceptual use of either phrase. The same problems and challenges of definition remain.

The difficulty of the term does not however obscure the term's utility, or the reality that it describes. Attempts have been made to define the term with more precision. Among most scholars familiar with the subject the consensus rests on the word 'informal' rather than 'empire'. Most historians agree that informal empire involves empire without formality, without prescribed or fixed rules, ceremonies or overt displays of power on a regular basis. 'Informal' is usually defined simply as 'without the usual forms'. But in this case what are the 'usual' forms that are bypassed? Clearly the form of an empire. Informal empire means the substance of empire without the form of empire.[36] Informal empire almost always refers to relations between nations, including trade, investment, immigration, government and private aid, and cultural exchanges – not always all of these but almost always one or more. As Thompson has pointed out, the 'devil of informal empire . . . lies less in the detail than the definition'.[37]

Within these parameters I suggest the following definition of informal empire:

> Informal empire is a relationship in which a national or regional imperial elite intentionally or unintentionally exercises a dominant influence over the elite formation, identities and conditions of exchange of the subjected elite in another nation or region with none of the formal structures of empire.

This definition steers clear of setting the perimeters too wide. Neither trade alone, nor cultural exchange, nor immigration or other relations between a more powerful and weaker nation necessarily mean informal empire, at least not in the sense that scholars use the term. Rich and poor, powerful and weak, are polarities that can exist side by side without dominance by one partner. It also includes examples where imperial elites did not form but co-opted subjected elites. Yet the above definition is narrow enough to focus on the real issues that historians investigate within informal empire – a dominant influence that permanently alters the substantial characteristics of a subjected nation. It also addresses the need to discuss elites – usually the missing factor in our analysis of the formation of the modern world – and the role played by elites in the extension of power outside the structures of formal empire.[38]

Discussing the nature of elites involves many conceptual problems. It involves the definition of power and the problem of location. What is power? Where is the elite, that is, where does it reside? Who does it exclude? Weber defines power as a relationship where one exerts one's will regardless of resistance and can simply expect that any order given will be obeyed.[39] Elites occupy, in this scenario, 'the strategic command posts of society', in the words of C. Wright Mills.[40] While these are helpful suggestions, Perkin asks the most penetrating question regarding elites. 'The difficulty', he writes, 'is not merely that there is far more theorizing about elites than hard factual research: everyone knows that societies are run by the few, but how few, which few, how selected, how cohesive, how powerful, how permanent, how and when replaced?' He rejects the simplistic Marxist answer that the owners of the 'means of production' are the elite, because this simply does not fit the evidence. Perkin pointed out that in Britain elites were not dominated by the capitalist class or the working class. He writes that 'contrary to popular opinion large capitalists and their sons have never been a majority in Conservative governments, nor for that matter in the Liberal, still less in Labour governments'.[41] The elites in Britain and the United States have been and continue to be pluralistic, and overlapping with a centre that is hard to pin down. But they are, for the most part, professionals.[42]

This new global elite is a professional world society that divides between left and right. This divide reflects the source of income. Those who make their living on the market tend to veer to the right in political allegiances, and those who make their living in the service of the government or non-profits tend to veer towards the left. This ideological conflict has been for the most part peaceful, with rules of engagement that do not destroy the democratic capitalist system that supports it or the professional constructs that provide income. It is a relatively gentle seesaw conflict that defines a great deal of the political conflict in the modern democratic West. Those outside of this professional divide between left and right tend to be branded as extremist.

Perkin has offered the single most likely – and nuanced – identification of Western elites than theorists who point to impersonal corporations or to the owners of production. Admittedly his analysis is not precise. Entrepreneurs, he states, become professional by their specialized behaviour and then hire professionals to take over the management of the businesses they create. Managers often have no licences at all, although a Master of Business Administration operates informally as the same thing, for instance, as a PhD in the academy. Usually managers gain expertise that operates as a professional base of knowledge. And the professionals who manage corporations do have enormous power, although it is the professional elites who run the corporations, not the legal fiction of the corporation itself that holds the power. In the final analysis, Perkin's understanding of professional society is highly explanatory. It is a model that works well with the evidence that is available, and it leaves us with a broad and identifiable elite: albeit an elite that is fragmented, dichotomous, broken into competing groups and divided between bureaucracy and industry.

What then are the institutional and organizational markers of the elite? For the investigation of informal empire there are some rather obvious places to look for concentrations of elite power. These are the Foreign Office in Britain, the State Department in the United States, owners of businesses, 'gentlemanly capitalists' in the nineteenth century and, for both countries, media owners, editors and writers who craft and promote so much of the cultural values of society and who heavily influence politicians seeking re-election. The search for the elites behind informal empire would also include an aristocratic class that overlapped with these professional affiliations: the Colonial Office, the civil service, the military, the Church and a motley crew of public intellectuals, men of letters, entrepreneurs, company directors, artists and 'reformers'. This description, although hugely varied, does not constitute the working class or even most of the middle class, but for the most part, as Perkin argues, the professional class that overlaps with capitalists and with inherited wealth and status. It is possible (although difficult) to identify the elite even though they are spread throughout a variety of government, non-profit and private business concerns.

Elizabeth Noelle-Neumann, a German sociologist, has made a convincing case that the most powerful segment of the elite in the twentieth century comprised the owners of the mass media. Her work has a direct bearing on questions of imperialism.[43] Her thesis proposed that humans are powerfully motivated by the fear of isolation and that public opinion, and by implication identity, is gauged by individuals through subtle human interaction, an interaction that is overwhelmed by mass media. The vast majority of people in a given society will express support for those elites that individuals believe will successfully dominate society. Mass media determines for most individuals those clues and signals of dominance. Noelle-Neumann also discussed a turning point where counter-narrative, or a mixed message by media elites, allow for a wider divergence of viewpoints. This has significant ramifications for the rise of a vernacular press over and against an imperial-dominated media and would do much to explain the suddenness not only of decolonization but the transfer of allegiance from British to American elites after the Second World War. The influence of media elites is therefore essential to the investigation of informal empire, particularly as it relates to the collaboration, symbiosis and identity of global elites.

Historians of cultural imperialism often come closest to tracing the frontiers and delineating the transformative extent of informal empire. As the lead power for over half a century in the imperial network, the United States in particular pursues open markets for intellectual property rights that preserve not only profit, but also the priceless propaganda that provides the ideological discipline with a framework of acceptable discourse. American power is extended with Hollywood movies, popular music, open financial transactions and agriculture, arguably the most transformative of interactions. The strong push for the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT, 1947) and North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA, 1994), as well as free trade around the world go far in guaranteeing a worldwide dominance for these transformative cultural productions. The media elite in the United States by default becomes the media elite for the entire imperial network, and most of the globe. Frederic Jameson, a scholar of cultural studies, points out that 'the triumph of Hollywood film . . . is not merely an economic triumph, it is a formal and also a political one'. We see from this the 'pronounced death of the various '60s and '70s filmic experiments all over the world and the universal hegemony of the classic Hollywood form'.[44]

Jameson describes culture as a pervasive imperial force and comes closest to the concept of an imperial web – as laid out in this book. He argues that North American television shows surpass even formal empire in its transformative effects. 'A great Indian filmmaker', he remarked, 'once describes the ways in which the gestures and the allure of the walking of his teenage son were modified by watching American television: one supposes that his ideas and values were also modified.'[45] This small example illustrates to Jameson how the prestige of American mass culture has no serious competitors or resistance outside of religious fundamentalism. This cultural imperialism is 'perilous for most forms of domestic cultural production'.[46] Domestic film and music are then either reduced to such a trickle that they have little effect, or transform themselves to compete and thus join the international 'dominant narrative' that become part of the globalized and Western cultural norm.[47]

This has resulted in the change of national cultures, daily life and, of course, tradition,

> which extend to the way people live in their bodies and use language, as well as the way they treat each other and nature. Once destroyed, those fabrics can never be recreated . . . the violence of American cultural imperialism and the penetration of Hollywood film and television lie in imperialism's destruction of those traditions.[48]

Interestingly this American power of the media elite is not limited to money. The Japanese attempt to enter Hollywood through Sony's purchase of Columbia Pictures and the subsequent failure to penetrate the American elite shows that money and technology are not at the core of this elite but, rather, other forms of inclusion and exclusion.

Communication and empire have been understudied in this regard. Winseck and Pike convincingly argue that communication networks, like capital, have not been coterminous with only formal imperialism. Global communication on infrastructure flowed, like trade, both inside and outside the British Empire. Along the lines suggested by Robinson and Gallagher, formal empire often followed where informal empire (and mass media) failed to establish the stability of trade and investment required by the metropole. The telegraph, radio and news agencies involved capitalist, professional and governmental elites that did much to channel and sometimes challenge the power of national elites in Britain and the United States. Their work builds on earlier concepts of cultural imperialism that gained prominence in the 1970s.[49] This shows that if informal empire involved the formation of identity by elites in the subjected region, then the role of media in fashioning identity and the range of acceptable discourse cannot be ignored.

While empire bifurcated between two mechanisms – formal or informal – both mechanisms reveal a primarily British or American elite moulding the elites of the subjected region. Often the difference between the formation of formal or informal empire rested less in the conscious intention of the imperial power than in the shifting configuration of political and economic conditions – local as well as global – that either promoted, necessitated or discouraged imperial structures from developing. As with formal empire, informal empire may at times arise without a grand master plan or sustained intentionality. It often does share many of the traits and structures of formal empire and can operate not unlike a shadow cabinet in parliament. Extraterritorial laws, select use of force, treaties, immigration, cultural exchange and the formation of Western identity lie behind the power relationship of an imperial elite over a subjected elite and share the characteristics of an imperial relationship.

The imperial network

A number of scholars have conceived of imperial power as confined to nation-states or spread across an impossible-to-define web or as an 'Anglosphere'. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri discuss a web of influences located primarily in transnational structures such as international corporations. Their model, however, confuses elites with legal fictions, in this case corporations and non-governmental organizations and other structures.[50] But elites are people. They are groups that have identities and relationships. Elites cannot by definition be confused with the end products of human labour. Niall Ferguson, by contrast, takes a page from nineteenth-century theorists and conceives of an imperial elite with a distinct racial component, primarily Anglo-Saxon. Ferguson's model works to the extent that it identifies a transnational elite, but fails because a variety of ethnic groups were involved in the expansion of Europe, and also because different racial elites have integrated into the Western system and joined the imperial project of expanding Western power – Japan and Singapore are two examples.[51] But Hardt, Negri and Ferguson tend to ignore the role of elites altogether, particularly non-Anglo elites. Transnational elites are impossible to deny. Confining elite power strictly to within a single national border rightly opens the concept of informal empire to attack by pointing out the numerous exceptions to the rule.

The geographer David Harvey argued that power is not contained by territorial barriers but, in what he terms 'capitalist imperialism', it cuts across 'continuous space' through trade, capital, movement of people, technology and cultural practices.[52] Winseck and Pike summarize his position:

> Capitalist imperialism strives to make the flow of capital, commodities and information across the different spaces of the global system – local, national, and global – as seamless as possible. These processes, in turn, required the modernization of nation-states and the rationalization of the political and legal underpinnings of the world system. And unlike the emphasis on the coercive power of nation-states in territorial imperialism, the harmonization of 'capitalist space' relates to the 'soft power' of consent and the emulation of 'models of development'. A further difference is that under territorial imperialism, power is exercised by [a] single state, whereas 'the collective accumulation of power is the . . . basis for hegemony within the global system more generally'.[53]

This Palmerstonian approach, discussed in the third chapter, has been left unexplored by historians. Perhaps imperial historians have experienced difficulty in utilizing the idea of informal empire as an explanatory tool because a number of key points for a successful model have not yet been established. Besides the need for a definition of informal empire that highlights elite formation, which I have laid out above, two things remain to be settled: a model of identifiable stages for informal empire; and the terminus condition of informal empire when a region has not dropped out of a relationship with imperial elites but is no longer in the process of development, that is, when it has fully integrated into the Western network of imperial elites. This new model should enable historians of informal empire to identify the degree to which a region is integrated into informal empire.

The proximate cause for the different stages of informal empire are primarily due to the variegated response by local elites to imperial power and leads to the logical conclusion that a region may stall at any single step, move backwards or forwards, drop out altogether or complete the process. Accordingly the informal empire model that I offer below shares some similarities with Walt Rostow's modernization theory as a description of identifiable and by no means inevitable stages of Western integration. I differ, however, by the fact that I lay down a clear mechanism of power that transforms and integrates the subjected region through elite formation. My definition for the informal empire model is as follows:

1 Initial fear of domination, or an invitation to an imperial power for protection or trade.
2 Collaboration, with or without the application of force, and the establishment of new conditions of exchange.
3 Governmental adaptations towards a Western model initiated by elites empowered by the new conditions of exchange.
4 Consolidation of elite power through new-found economic and governmental power.
5 Graduation of elites out of informal empire and into an imperial network of elites.

The imperial network is a transformed elite, in most of the rationalized and Western world. Regional elites may resist any one of these stages or advance through these stages until they amalgamate with the imperial network and become integral to the imperial process. This definition and model leads logically to a 'test' for informal empire that will enable historians to judge better which regions of the world are part of the imperial network, which are part of an informal empire, and which have successfully resisted the process of informal empire altogether.

As we examine the intersection of regions and historiography in the chapters that follow, we will ask whether British and American informal empires acted to spearhead a network of imperial elites across national boundaries and whether or not these efforts succeeded in sustaining an 'imperial network'. Understanding the nature of this elite formation as an imperial network will help the historian navigate the complex process of informal empire. If imperial elites are conceived of as a net of interconnecting relations with definable identities, then a more accurate understanding of the 'metropole' and the 'periphery' emerges. It will be seen that Britain held a large informal empire in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries only because it emerged at the centre of this imperial network. Just as the Industrial Revolution was centred in Britain but included pockets of activity in North-West Europe and the

Eastern Seaboard of the United States, so, too, did Britain emerge as an imperial power within the expanding web of European imperial elites. When American power materially displaced British power, the United States moved towards the centre of the imperial net and spearheaded the project of informal empire even further by integrating elite groups in other regions of the world that it picked up from Britain and other powers. Informal empire, conceptualized within the parameters of elite formation – with identifiable stages of progression that lead towards an imperial network – is a definition that will enable us to place historians of specialized and regional studies on the topic in a more useful framework.

The imperial network and the Dominions

There is a rich scholarly tradition that explores informal empire within the formal structure of empire, particularly within the British white settler colonies of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Many of these scholars have asserted that informal empire ensued when Britain conceded self-government to the Dominions. One historian of economic history dubbed the obvious connection between London and white settlers 'branch-plant imperialism', by which he meant an imperialism that resulted from the mother country extending into the new territory.[54] Reinforcing this interpretation Robert Kubicek argued that British financial institutions built the Canadian West without an extensive class of Eastern Seaboard and local collaborators.[55] Even historians who dispute the dominating influence of gentlemanly capitalists still see a middle class with undeniable connections of culture, ethnicity and identity.[56] The debate about the degree of influence weaves in and out of discussions on the Dominions – often from a radical perspective akin to Marxist dependency theories.[57]

This book takes a different tack. Many scholars describe not informal empire as defined above but rather activities within the core of the imperial network. This means that I must take issue with Robinson and Gallagher and Tony Hopkins, reluctantly, because this study clearly owes much to them. The tale of influence and exploitation explored by dominion scholars is often a republican narrative that reveals jostling between elites firmly in power: elites who are more than wedded to the British and American power structure; who are in fact a seamless extension of the core imperial elite. The evidence will show that no informal empire existed in the Dominions.

The reason why is simple: settler colonies have always been extensions of the elite at the imperial centre, in this case of Britain. From the founding of the settler colonies the imperial network created and integrated regional elites into every level of financial, diplomatic, military, racial and cultural exchange. After Britain conceded Dominion status the elites of Australia, New Zealand and Canada were already fully integrated with elites in Britain, the United States and the international imperial network. At no time did the Dominions stand outside of the rationalized and Western world of the imperial progenitors. The Dominions adjusted seamlessly to American power as the United States shifted to the centre of the web, described elsewhere in this book. Founded in the formal empire as an extension of the mother country, a bulwark of the imperial network, the Dominions by definition could never pass through a stage of informal empire.

The central question asked in this book is, ‘Why is the world Western?’ While informal empire helps answer this question for most of the world, the concept is simply not needed as an analytical tool to explain why Australia, New Zealand and Canada are Western, any more than informal empire would help explain why Wales is Western. The term ‘informal empire’ is employed in this book to describe a phenomenon that cries out for explanation: How and why did we move from a world of regional cultures to a single global emporium dominated by Western ideas, at almost every conceivable level of society. We know why European countries are Western, but why are non-European countries or countries such as those found in Latin America, with a racial mix of African, European, Indian and Asian, Western?

Transnationalism

There are other world-spanning models of history but almost all of them lack a realistic treatment of elites, as will be shown later in this book. For instance, this investigation overlaps with ‘transnational history’. Like transnational history, the study of informal empire allows the historian to trace the circulation of people, ideas, materials and culture outside of national borders. Also like transnational history, informal empire does not assume that national borders are metaphysical barriers that divide historical processes into discrete units of analyses – this is a strength shared with world, comparative and globalization history. The difference between informal empire and transnational history is teleological and lies in the purpose and direction of the inquiry. Ian Tyrrell has pointed out, correctly, that transnational history rejects any links to modernization theory, as well as any suggestion that the world has moved towards a single homogenous culture. Transnational history does so because it rejects nationalism as a sacred myth and rejects any hint of European centrality in modern world history. It wishes to explain and endorse multiculturalism without creating a layered hierarchy of active agents and passive participants.[58]

While Tyrrell correctly traces how transnational history has attempted to contextualize national histories in the crosscurrents of influence, he also downplays the difference between how transnational history is practiced in the last few decades and the philosophy of its founder, the American journalist Randolph Bourne. But the similarities between Bourne and transnationalism are striking and explain why transnationalism fails as an adequate tool of historical analyses.

Historians often use transnationalism exactly as Bourne had intended. Bourne attempted to strip the United States of a history of settlers who founded a cultural and political order that can be called 'American'. Anglo-Saxons, he believed, were parochial, inward-looking and prejudiced against the immigrants who flooded into the country after the 1880s. Writing in his seminal essay, 'Trans-National America', Bourne objected to the melting-pot ideal where Italians, Greeks, Jews and others would adopt the culture and values of the founding settlers. Rather, he valued multiculturalism and a national culture looking outwards – not inwards towards a unified Anglo-Saxon essence. Politically this agenda has remained central to the task of transnationalism as it is has evolved from the 1970s to the present.[59]

If the world could be properly understood as a bundle of cultures, tied together by the cords of material and cultural exchange, then transnationalism would serve as a valid tool of analysis. If historians did not pursue the proximate causes behind events and developments and if the drivers of change did not have characteristics that can be identified and named, indeed, traced into coherent patterns, then transnationalism would have a useful function. Most importantly, if these patterns of change did not take on a shape that suggests movement toward a globalized and single world culture, and if all proximate causes could be distributed on a per capita basis among the world population, or distributed in a geographically balanced manner, then, again, perhaps transnationalism would be a useful tool. Transnational history could merely describe the circulation of material and culture and as Bourne and his disciples hoped, lay out an anti-narrative where no one region or people or set of ideas or actions acted as a catalyst for change. We could have an egalitarian Ouija board of unpredictable movement. We could rejoice in a world history with no plot, no direction and little to explain except the circulation of particular individuals, families, commodities or practices. While such a history would leave itself open to the charge of being trite and banal, it would at least leave us with a history free of the controversies that arise when traditional historians explore the history of dominance, global change, national turmoil and elite transformation of regions into a global culture.

If only we were so lucky. We could under those circumstances almost dispense with historians altogether and employ chroniclers in the tradition of the imperial court of China. Court historians could record calamities, invasions, battles and the sighting of comets with unusually long tails. History is more interesting, however, because we have questions that must be answered. None of these equalizing approaches of transnationalism explain how the world contains not a bundle of cultures where differences are nourished, appreciated and demarcated, but increasingly a world where difference is diminished and where almost no region can be identified that does not share in a single globalized culture. A culture that – unfortunately for transnational historians – can be identified and traced, largely, back to Europe. One could no more explain the history of a global world culture without Europeans than explain the history of Zionism without Jews. In both cases, there were actors of every race and culture. But in both cases there were drivers of change, which can be identified. In this case the expansion of Europe through informal empire, led by Britain and then the United States, Westernized the entire globe.

Global informal empire

Various typologies for informal empire have been put forward. John Darwin has asserted a Western and an Eastern model: in Argentina Britain relied on trade, diplomacy and the infusion of money to gain hegemony, while in the East British power relied more fully on the application of force – gunboat diplomacy – to prize open the door of trade and establish the rules of exchange. Yet despite the difference of approach to such places as Argentina, Egypt and China, Darwin perceives a remarkable pliancy to attain the same end. He writes that: 'The hallmark of British imperialism was its extraordinary versatility in method, outlook and object.'[60]

Others have disagreed with the chronology of informal empire, particularly in Argentina. Did Britain have an informal empire in the nineteenth century, when the territory newly independent from Spain and with immigrants from all over Europe traded with Britain? Many historians have argued yes, as did Peter Winn, a historian of Latin America, dubbing it 'that elusive empire of trade'. Others have agreed, like Cain and Hopkins, that the British had an informal empire in Latin America but not in the early and mid 1900s as Winn suggests. The battle lines are drawn between a mid-Victorian informal empire based on British capital and trade and a late-Victorian informal empire based on investment, trade and powerful cultural influence that lasted well into the 1920s.[61]

Informal empire, however, is neither East nor West, but global. Built on exchange, people, capital and material and culture goods, it sometimes involved force and sometimes voluntary collaboration, as we shall see in this book. The central question of this book cuts to the transforming power relations that lie behind questions of typology. Regardless of where one draws the boundaries on a map or postulates an Eastern and Western approach to informal empire or a differing chronology, the question still abides and guides this investigation: Why is the world Western? An analysis of the relationships between elites around the world cuts through questions of amorphous definition and attempts to reveal how elites in imperial regions have formed, co-opted or collaborated with elites around the globe.

The point of a comparative work on informal empire is to discover strategies of management and patterns of control common to the British and American informal empires. There have been informal empires with Japan, Russia and others that are not dealt with here, but this book lays the foundation for further comparison. Sighting similarities and differences will enable historians and others to identify informal empire. The idea of informal empire is now widely accepted: how it works – the mechanics – are hotly debated. Problems abound in such a study as this, not least among them the fact that specialized studies rarely lead to 'grand theories of imperialism', that hold true most of the time in most places.[62]

The idea of informal empire is vital to our understanding of the world. We are compelled to return to imperialism as a concept because the world is Western, and because those parts of the world that are not Western are quickly losing distinctions and joining the monolithic one world culture. We look to informal empire because it offers an explanation, if properly defined, of a mechanism of power that lies behind this transformation.

Britain inherited much of the global trade networks – and the client elites that came with them – from the retrenchment of the Portuguese, Dutch, Spanish and French empires. Britain's lead in the Industrial Revolution provided an opportunity to tie far-flung local elites into a global economy and to expand British power far beyond its formal empire. The inheritance by the United States of these formal and informal trade relationships and America's subsequent expansion offers a key historical explanation for the rapid growth of American power in the twentieth century. What follows is a big-picture look at a subject that can best be described as a lion in the shadows – power that is hidden.

2

The Idea of Informal Empire

The idea of informal empire is largely about the rationalization of the world and the responses that rationalization has produced. As this chapter illustrates, scholars, politicians, public intellectuals and others have handled with dexterity the idea of informal empire while never using the term or, in many cases, while utilizing a variety of terms or phrases to describe the same concept. It seemed inevitably bound up with the process of the European concept of the rule of law, the development of science, Enlightenment ideals and industrial and professional modernization. Applying these revolutions to human society outside of Europe, and establishing elite formations that reflected these developments, were integral to the process of building an imperial network.

Theories of imperialism

A classic treatment on empire, *Imperialism: A Study* (1902) by John A. Hobson, contains many of the key ideas that later scholars discuss concerning informal empire.[1] While Hobson did not elaborate a theory of informal empire or of financial imperialism outside of formal empire, many scholars have taken his critique of aggressive state-sponsored imperialism and applied it broadly to other areas of the world. Hobson believed that money lay at the heart of imperialism. Imperialism represented a mosaic of forces – the mission to civilize, promote good government, spread Christianity, exterminate slavery, elevate the lower races. Nevertheless the desire for financial gain motivated the business class to venture outside national boundaries in search of a higher rate of return than could be found at home. At the centre of this investment class lay hidden a ganglion of commercial tentacles. These were the:

> parasites upon patriotism . . . men of a single and peculiar race, who have behind them many centuries of financial experience, they are in a unique position to manipulate the policy of nations . . . Does any one seriously suppose that a great war could be undertaken by any European state, or a state loan subscribed, if the house of Rothschild and its connections set their face against it?[2]

Jews were, to Hobson, the sinister taproot of later imperialism, pulling the financial strings. While Hobson focused his analyses on formal empire, he also sketched the perimeters of informal empire in China before the 1870s. 'So long', he writes of this earlier period, 'as England held a virtual monopoly of the world's markets for certain important classes of manufactured goods, imperialism was unnecessary.'[3]

His influence on the theory of imperialism can hardly be overstated. From his critique flows the classic left-of-centre intellectual tradition from Lenin in the early part of the twentieth century to 'dependency theory' in the 1960s and 1970s. His attack on the financial governors behind formal imperialism unintentionally laid the foundation for others to use his analysis of financial manipulation. This later Hobsonian tradition unearths secret power in the hands of specialists, banks, capitalists, governments, NGOs and international corporations and institutions like the World Bank, where elites exert a determining influence on many underdeveloped or poorer nations to serve the greed and power of the capitalist. Hobson's anti-Semitic reasoning also influenced fascism, and his influence endures. Arguments on informal empire still turn largely on questions of finance and the importance of trade between the imperial country and its trading partner.[4]

Lenin owed much of his thinking on imperialism to Hobson. In 1917 he published *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* and argued that capitalist development led inevitably to the 'final stage' of imperialism. Although clearly critical of imperialism, Lenin, like Hobson, posited a Eurocentric hierarchy with European capitalism forming an advanced capitalist stage against the backdrop of a distinctly backward culture in the non-Western world. The capitalist, although thriving on competition, had moved into a monopolistic final stage, in which is witnessed a 'fusion of banking capital with industrial capital and the creator, on the bases of this financial capital, of a financial oligarchy'. Now that the 'territorial division of the whole earth [is] completed by the greatest capitalist powers', they were at war against themselves. Warring national monopolies that had 'sprung from the banks' supported a 'financial oligarchy' that in turn supported a 'usurer state' that lived off its investments. The argument appeared credible to many when the work was published shortly after the First World War.[5]

Unlike Hobson, Lenin's critique focused on regions outside of formal empire.[6] But like Hobson, Lenin opened the door for other thinkers to explore the concept of informal empire. For if the final stage of capitalism produced imperialism, with national elites living off the interest of their investments, it hardly mattered if a formal military occupation with the whole panoply of ceremony and colonial administration secured their investments, or if collaborating elites in the non-Western world dutifully safeguarded European investments out of self-interest.

Joseph Schumpeter countered with the *Sociology of Imperialism* (1919), arguing that imperialism antedated capitalism. Human impulse drove imperialism, an atavistic phenomenon that sought conquest for the joy of conquest. Imperialism survived from an earlier age as a relic that 'stems from the living conditions, not of the present, but of the past'. Capitalists sought profit through commerce, and war disturbed commerce and thus, in the long run, profit. Capitalism therefore is by nature opposed to war. The United States, where capitalism had penetrated most deeply, 'is least burdened with pre-capitalist elements, survivals, reminiscences, and power factors'. Therefore this country and any country with a strong capitalist bourgeoisie had strong pacifist tendencies.[7]

Schumpeter marshalled a battery of examples to back his case. The United States approved an arms limitation treaty, the first in the world, in 1817. The United States declined to take all of Mexico during the Mexican–American War of 1846–48. Even with the Mexican financial elite interested in annexation, the United States left Mexico independent. Even now, Schumpeter wrote, the United States actively discussed letting go of its hold on the Philippines and generously restrains from grabbing at any time defenceless Canada. While some classes stand to make money during war, the gains do not outweigh the losses. 'It may be stated as being beyond controversy that where free trade prevails no class has an interest in forcible expansion as such.' How did he explain the fact that capitalist societies – France, England, Germany, Russia and then the United States – were the main protagonists during the First World War? Because 'the dead always rule the living'. Old structures were embedded in essentially pacifist capitalist economies.[8]

In 1926, a political science professor at Columbia University published what became a classic work in the field, *Imperialism and World Politics*.[9] Parker Thomas Moon contributed a clearer understanding of the dynamics of imperialism and the specific groups that lobbied for empire. Moon understood that men – interested minorities – lobby their governments for imperial expansion and succeed in convincing governments to force the majority population to pay the expenses and supply the soldiers for this. Not the whole 'capitalist class' but select exporters and importers are the main influence: bankers, mass media, military and governmental personnel, the nobility and missionaries. Of the exporters, cotton and steel manufactures lobbied most effectively, but also the purveyors of wagons, trucks, automobiles, paper, brass, tobacco and alcohol. Of importers, 'the British merchants who import tea from India, the Belgians who import rubber and palm nuts from Congo, the Frenchmen who import wines from Algeria are vital factors', along with petroleum, cocoa, iron and coal importers. There were also interested groups pushing infrastructure like roads and ports, plantations, warehouses, railways, 'expensive public works', ships, telegraph operations and all forms of transport.

Like Hobson, Moon articulated a thinly veiled anti-Semitic analysis. All these exporters and importers were backed by and channelled through the banks 'the most influential of all' that underwrite the whole process. Financiers at the Deutsche Bank controlled German expansion in the Middle East while the Rothschilds enabled the British to purchase the Suez Canal. The Rothschilds 'utilized their political influence to bring about the conquest of Egypt' while the Bourse financiers in Paris backed the French conquest of Tunis and American National City Bank financiers lay behind the United States' role in the Caribbean. These banks and the other interests directly influenced their respective governments. They did so through campaign contributions. But also through an elite social network that provided economic opportunities to the families of leading men – even Bismarck, William II and Nicholas II – who seemed to be immune from bare-knuckled democratic forces, were nevertheless subject to the pressure of elite families. Mass-circulation newspapers provided propaganda for the march towards empire and in turn were owned by the monopolistic financiers.

In the 1930s other voices joined Schumpeter to argue that economics alone did not explain imperialism. William Langer, a Harvard historian (and later an intelligence director for the United States Research and Analysis Branch during the Second World War) wrote 'A Critique of Imperialism' in *Foreign Affairs* (1935). In this widely read article, Langer took issue with the thesis that surplus capital and goods accumulated in the metropole and could then be invested or sold in colonies for a higher rate of return. Where he agrees with Schumpeter is that multiple feelings and aims are behind imperialism – that no group of governors can explain the engine of imperialism. He conceded to Hobson that a monopolistic press owned by a few can – for economic reasons – inspire a gullible public to support overseas adventure, such as Lord Northcliffe's instructions to his newspaper chain to promote 'talking points' on imperialism to excite reader interest. But, he argued, Schumpeter insightfully intuited the atavistic nature of imperialism as a leftover from an earlier age and not necessary to capitalism and democracy. It represented a more primeval wanderlust that led men to conquer and exploit. Langer restricted his definition of imperialism to territorial expansion. Any other definition, he believed, was nebulous and a 'bloodless abstraction'.[10]

Most of the authors discussed above concentrated on economics or the atavistic motivation behind imperialism. But political motivation has also been offered as an explanation of empire. Eugene Staley in *War and the Private Investor* (1935) investigated cases of conflict between nations after 1880 to determine the role that private capital played in creating friction. He drew heavily from secondary sources and looked at some of the more prominent examples cited by writers who argue that economic causes, primarily prominent investors, incited their government to expand political and military power over a region to protect investments. Staley looked at episodes in Samoa, Iran, Haiti and other cases in Latin America where diplomacy served the needs of capitalists. He dealt only with direct cases that were a proximate cause of government intervention. He excluded consideration of loans, by either governments or private investors to another country, or the issue of bondholders, and argued that investors and international bankers were not the leading voices for the expansion of empire due to the fact that international bankers understood that large navies and gunboat diplomacy were expensive and tended to create even more extensive wars with all the disruption to trade that followed. The 'navy men and nationalistic parties, aided by propaganda from armor plate makers' voiced the most support for overseas intervention. Investments may have led the flag, he concluded, but they did not require it.[11]

This work is interesting also for what it does not say. Staley took on with his thesis, writers like Hobson and Lenin to argue that – a few cases aside – capitalists did not force governments into imperial expansion; rather, governments led the way for political purposes. Russia in the Far East is one example. A net importer of capital, mostly from France, Tsarist Russia sprawled over Siberia, tussled with Japan over territory in Korea and Manchuria and pushed downward towards Constantinople. If Staley had written this in 1985 instead of 1935, he might have added that private investments did not spur the expansion of Soviet power. He makes a case that governments induced bankers and other investors to sink money into regions to give pretext for involvement and expansion of power: 'Private investments seeking purely business advantage have rarely of themselves brought great powers into serious political clashes.' But what about informal empire? The question remains unasked although Staley's conclusion seems to demand it. If governments use private investments to give pretext for involvement, is not that expansion? What of expansion without the overt structure of empire?[12]

Models for world history

Intellectuals and scholars of every description have tried their hand at painting tangible contours of power and influence outside of formal empire and at explaining, in particular, the mechanisms of power behind global transformation. Many of these models of world history drew heavily from imperial theorists. The idea of informal empire in particular – well before Robinson and Gallagher – runs parallel to historical and political schematics that seek to explain and even predict as inevitable the Westernization of the globe.

Before the Second World War many of the models for world history emphasized civilizations as discrete entities. Race often played an implicit role in these civilizational models of world history. Herbert Spencer's theory is an example of this. Often dismissed as a social Darwinist – although most of his books were published before Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* – he offered the vision of a civilization moving towards a utopian state that grew like a biological entity to maturity. Rather than dying, however, it could 'end in completeness'.[13] The German philosopher Oswald Spengler shared with Spencer the conception that civilizations evolved like an organism but countered with a darker vision that all civilizations experienced decline and extinction. Western civilization had already moved into its final stage of decay. A leading English historian before and immediately after the Second World War, Arnold Toynbee saw history as a series of civilizational units, with a spiritual core that exhibits the essential characteristics of each. These civilizations may survive indefinitely or may decline and collapse, depending on how agile they proved in the handling of their particular challenges. In contemporary times Samuel Huntington argued a similar position as Toynbee and dramatized recent historical events as a global clash of civilizations.[14]

Modernization theory also runs parallel with the idea of informal empire. It grew against the background of an expansive Western presence that after the Second World War is given the language of social science by Walt Rostow and later David McClelland, among others. Modernization theory is rooted in Enlightenment optimism. It assumes, as with Nicolas de Condorcet, that humans can change society for the better and progress towards perfection. It also assumes, as with Thomas Malthus, that humans can change society for the worse. Modernization theory is also rooted in the idea that society, as suggested by Spencer, progresses through distinct phases of growth and operates as an organism, from birth to maturity.[15]

The idea of progress became an ideology of progress in the late eighteenth century and afterwards. It manifested itself in the grand vista of civilization marching through history from triumph to triumph. Both the Tories and the Liberals enshrined the classical liberal ideas advocated by Adam Smith in the Victorian era, including the Victorian proponents of laissez-faire, Richard Cobden and John Bright. While many disagreed with the imperial policy of the Foreign Office, few of the leading lights, outside of Thomas Carlyle, disagreed with the basic assumptions of the idea of progress or of classical liberalism. Lord Palmerston, frequently at odds with Cobden, led Britain's foreign policy through the heyday of British power, as Foreign Minister and then prime minister, and advocated – no less than Cobden – the transformative effect of free trade on all trading partners. He saw the need for backward nations to 'grow up' and join the family of nations adhering to the rule of law. Force, he believed, could open up markets and give a much needed 'dressing down' to recalcitrant elites hidebound by tradition and corruption. The evangelical impulse to improve (and save) the world added divine sanction to the idea of progress, and it is from this soil that modernization theory, secularized and expressed in the academic prose of social science, grew and prospered after the Second World War.

Presidents Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson found Rostow's formulation of modernization theory helpful in the planning of foreign policy. As a security advisor in the Johnson administration Rostow highlighted development aid to the undeveloped nations of the world to expand the opportunities for trade, and to fight Soviet expansion. If Western nations played a positive role in helping the non-European peoples of the world raise their standard of living, he argued, then trade would expand to the benefit of all parties involved and communist expansion would be contained. Africa, Asia, the Middle East and Latin America would remain free nations of the Western world and this sociocultural evolution would lead naturally to democratic capitalism and peace. During the 1950s and 1960s this theory held great sway in the American State Department. It seemed to dovetail with the promises made to elites in India and Africa during the Second World War that the United States would support their bid for independence and offer aid. Further, and most importantly, it gave ideological justification for the process of decolonization that the United States encouraged. It assumed without any need for apology that Western countries had progressed further than non-Western countries, and that social progress in the Third World needed to be directed, advised and even funded to spur on the natural processes of development in time to counteract communist advances. Rostow posited five stages of natural growth: a society marked by traditional culture and economics; a society ready for 'take off'; a society entering a stage of measureable advancement; and, finally, a society characterized by mass consumption. Rostow did not predict that these stages would all necessarily happen in a uniform way, but like David Ricardo's theory of comparative advantage, he understood that certain segments of society would advance first, with others following in train.[16]

Development theory arose as a response to modernization theory. The sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein argued that the wealth of the core Western countries depended on the poverty of those on the periphery. Low wages, cheap commodities and unstructured labour markets enabled the metropole – those at the centre of the developed world – to trade at an unfair advantage and to profit at the expense of the rest of the world. Dependency theorists argued that the manner in which the periphery is integrated into the Western economic system is inherently exploitive. The Western economies never developed in a world where stronger countries dominated and exploited them, and so the periphery now struggled at a distinct disadvantage. Thus a free market approach is inadequate for poor nations to develop along the lines touted by modernization theory. It is by cutting the ties of exploitation and open trade, not by integration, that the periphery will have greater wealth and greater agency. Wealthy nations maintain the dependency of these regions through trade, banking, media domination, education, cultural influences, emigration, in fact a whole range of informal arrangements. When a country attempts to break out of this iron vice, then sanctions and military force are used to keep them in line. The more Marxist theorists suggest revolution as the breakout solution to the dilemma.[17]

But dependency theory can be divided into two streams: a southern branch that evolved first, and then a derivative northern branch. Each had a different take on the issue of revolution. Theories advocated by, for example, Wallerstein and economic historian and sociologist Andre Gunder Frank characterize the northern branch while the southern branch is characterized by the non-Marxist approach of the Argentinean economist Raúl Prebisch. Prebisch, considered to be the founder of dependency theory, offered not a revolution but an adjustment in trading preferences as the solution to unequal wealth between the modernized core and the periphery. He launched his theory in 1950 with a paper titled 'The Economic Development of Latin America and its Principal Problems'. In this he argued that the developed nations have a flexibility that commodity producers do not have. Technology in the West can improve and save on costs; unions protect the interests of the worker and keep manufactured goods priced higher; and commercial institutions provide services that also collect profit from international trade. All this contrasts with commodity economies on the periphery that face lower prices when extractive technology raises production and then force higher rates of commodity production merely to keep profits steady. Later, in his position as Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), he advocated policies of preferential trade as the obvious corrective.[18]

In practice the laissez-faire optimism inherent in modernization theory has proven far more attractive to the 'periphery' than the revolutionary prescriptions of the northern branch of dependency theory. Elites in Bangladesh, Taiwan, Singapore, Argentina and Nigeria, among other places, did not appear inclined towards creating a society that would mimic the now defunct Soviet Union. Nor did the model of the world inherent in dependency theory fit the 'facts on the ground'. The world did not remain divided between a clearly developed and clearly undeveloped region. The Asian Tigers, for instance, were low on natural resources, yet they developed successful economies and a high degree of per capita wealth. They are examples of the 'undeveloped' world that did not in fact have a commodity-based economy. Australia and the Middle East also have never fit the theory. Both regions had a strong dependence on commodities, such as wool, wheat and minerals in Australia and oil in the Middle East. But Australia was never undeveloped in the twentieth century and the Middle East has flourished on a commodity economy, with no sign of the disabilities predicted by the dependency theorists.[19] Further, most countries at the 'core' and the 'periphery' have always had a mix of manufacturing and commodities. Thus few countries really operated on a simplistic model of exporting commodities and importing manufactured goods. Add to this the further complexity that this model did not account for the new service economy developed in the last 30 years. Modernization theory with its optimism that trade can and does lead to development, has in practice been followed by most regions of the world and, most spectacularly, by Communist China.[20]

During the Cold War a number of historians offered models for understanding world history that have proved particularly influential. Two of them were Canadians who worked in American universities and specialized in the history of the Balkans, a part of the world that demanded a vivid understanding of international influence. L. S. Stavrianos, like other dependency theorists, offered historical analysis of class and power difference in the hope that his historical publications would change the world into a more egalitarian society. His co-patriot, however, William H. McNeill, emphasized an ecumene of trade, people, technology and ecological factors, to focus on those meeting points where civilizations interacted. Another historian, Immanuel Wallerstein, focused his studies on the South Atlantic and Indian Ocean systems. He based his assumptions on dependency theory and advocated a Marxist narrative that saw the influence of Europe, through capitalism, emanating in waves around the globe, exploiting the periphery for resources to build up wealth and power at home.

Not all historians who drew from dependency theory agreed. Two such Marxist historians opposed Wallerstein's Eurocentric view. Frank and Janet Abu-Lughod both argued that globalization first occurred before the modern era, in the ancient and in the Islamic world, respectively. Far more convincing than Frank and Abu-Lughod, however, is the work of Fernand Braudel, who studied how natural phenomena such as seas and deserts provided a constant frame for interaction over time across an extensive region.[21] His student, Kirti N. Chaudhuri, followed with a history of the Indian Ocean system, as did Marshall G. S. Hodgson in *The Venture of Islam* (1974). In this, his magnum opus, Hodgson posed the gunpowder empires in Eurasia as the centre of a global world order. Another historian, Philip D. Curtin, attempted to understand the modern world by investigating a vast range of interaction within a broad geographical region, in this case the Atlantic Ocean system.

In a similar vein C. A. Bayly argued in *The Birth of the Modern World* (2004) that a series of events and movements around the world – often in tandem with European developments – explain globalized economic and cultural networks.[22] More recently John Darwin, in *After Tamerlane* (2008), argued for Central Asia as a main pivot in world history and a 'centre' that is far from Europe. Others, such as Kenneth Pomeranz, have argued that Western Europe and Asia had many resemblances before

1400 and 1800 and that the 'Great Divergence' is a recent and temporary phenomenon. In opposition to this Peer Vries has argued that scholars such as Pomeranz exaggerate the similarities between China and Western Europe and that little solid evidence of similarities between the two regions have been offered. A criticism of Pomeranz, as well as of Frank, is that they have not engaged in archival sources for a broad range of developments – political, military, cultural and institutional – and so these claims cannot be taken seriously.[23]

These works raise very provocative questions. Did the kinds of contacts over long distances that happened outside of European empires create global structures that launched globalization? Obviously regional systems of trade and culture, before Columbus, simply could not have been global. Globalization by definition could not have happen before this period. The empires discussed by Frank and Abu-Lughod tied together peoples under alien elites but they did not create institutionalized networks, neither did the trading system of the Indian Ocean before 1450.

In Europe something quite different happened. While Europeans also had emperors and the rule of an alien elite over diverse peoples, Western Europe evolved a new kind of nationalist state, with monarchs reinforcing linguistic, ethnic and cultural fusion, quite a different system from large land-based empires. France, England, Spain and later on the Prussian state, launched global and permanent interconnections. Portugal began this unique process followed by Spain, the Netherlands, England and France. When Vasco da Gama rounded the Horn of Africa, he tied together longstanding regional networks with each other and with Western Europe. By 1557 the Portuguese alone had a network of trading posts that spanned Latin America, Africa, the Indian subcontinent, South East Asia and the Far East. The advantages of global arbitrage with the movement of currency, plants, animals, manufacturing, people and ideas changed both the colonizers and the colonized on a scale never matched by regional networks that predate European empires. This modernity of economics, culture and nature transformed almost the whole of humanity.[24]

Some scholars assign the rise of Europe to luck. The arguments by Robert Marks and Jared Diamond are two examples of this kind of historical explanation.[25] Marks, more credibly, argued that Asia had the misfortune to stay constrained by its 'old biological regime'. It remained an agricultural empire, dependent on the use of the sun for energy. Britain, however, had the fortune to deforest its landscape and then tap into coal, then oil. With the connections between European states, Europe then used the sun-power regime derived from fossil fuels for technological and military purposes. It gave the Europeans a massive advantage. The less fortunate Asia, once 'dominating the world economy', found itself to be in the caboose of the train of progress, with European society as the engine. Diamond, less creatively, saw Europeans in the possession of fortuitous technology and biological agents, in this case, guns, steel and germs.

While the assertion that Asia dominated the world economy into the eighteenth century is highly questionable, there are other problems with this line of thinking. Disregarding the obvious fact that timber is also a resource that depends on solar energy and that China experienced deforestation and timber shortages well before the modern era and that, like Britain, it had large deposits of coal and, further, that Britain still had access to timber overseas and at home (Britain did not simply 'run out' of timber), there yet remain many other problems with this model. Marks admitted that Europe since the Industrial Revolution headed the train of progress. He still, however, denies that Europe played a central role in globalization. Why? Because for every action that Europeans carried out on the world scene Europeans never lacked a partner. Thus every action became an 'interaction' and therefore a modern world led by European powers and Japan should not suggest that the West deserves 'credit' for the modern world, nor should the West claim any innate cultural or racial superiority.

Marks at least has interesting ideas. But he fails to see the banality of his argument or understand the historiography of world history. Banal, because he merely arbitrarily redefines the meaning of 'action' or allied terms like 'leading' or 'agent' or even 'cause' to equate with isolation or vacuum. No scholar has argued that Europeans lacked partners or that actions took place without other people or without a human effect. Those who advocate the rise of Europe as a central agent of modernity never claimed that Europeans lacked interaction. Quite the opposite – there is a voluminous historical tradition that discusses symbiosis and interaction by historians who understand the central role played by the rise of Europe in shaping the modern world, as this work will show.

But the popular anthropologist-cum-historian, Jared Diamond, has put forward the weakest line of argument against the rise of Europe as an explanation for globalization. His book, *Guns, Germs and Steel* (1997) is barely worth comment in a serious work of historical scholarship but his views, however simplistic, have been much trumpeted by journalists. The problem with Diamond's argument is that many others besides Europeans had guns, steel and germs in the Afro-Euro-Asian landmass, and thus these explanations, not unique to Europeans, cannot explain the unique role played by Europeans in the modern world. Africans, Europeans and Asians all had germs that would equally devastate the Americas. More so, the Africans had germs and pathogens that devastated Europeans and Asians. But Africans did not all equally discover, colonize and trade with the Americas. Nor did Asians. Nor did American Indians discover, colonize and trade outside their boundaries, even in Australia where no known deadly pathogens to American Indians existed. But Diamond's argument adds absurdity to absurdity. The 'gunpowder' empires of Islam, for instance, had guns. Afonso de Albuquerque and his fleet blasted their way into Goa against a rain of cannon fire and musket shot from the established forts. The Chinese also had guns. Africans had iron, Europeans and Chinese both had iron and then steel. Where then is the 'luck' of the Europeans? Even if good fortune can be observed, and clearly chance plays a role in history, luck simply does not rise to the level of satisfying historical explanation. Both Marks and Diamond posit a vast conjuncture of forces that led to a string of good fortune for Europeans and bad fortune for the rest of the world. But fortuitous events over an extended period of time lose explanatory power and insist that the student of history believes that a coin, flipped hundreds of times, can consistently turn up heads and not tails.

The debate on the role of Europe continues. In the introduction to the 'World History' section of the *American Historical Association's Guide to Historical Literature* (1995), Kevin Reilly and Lynda Shaffer sound a relevant warning to the attempt to make world history comfortable to all political interests.[26] In the rush to decentre Europe all stories are told without discrimination. This in turn increases the danger of 'current expertise' becoming incoherent, similar to the UNESCO *History of Mankind* (1963/1978) – decidedly high on description and low on convincing causal interconnections.[27] The problem that historians face with the question of the 'rise of Europe' is largely ideological. Given the reluctance to discuss the nature of elites and their interaction in a democratic world, and in response to the political requirement by elites to build multiracial democracies and keep the movement of people and capital fluid, explanation of how the modern world came to be configured is severely hampered. Simplistic, often reductively materialistic explanations such as those offered by Marks and Diamond, as well as modernization theory and dependency theory, replace historical investigation that takes elites, culture and other human factors into serious, open and critical consideration.

Globalization and informal empire

Globalization is the story of creating structures of change that operate and impact society and nature in every part of the world. Without doubt the 'Crown capitalism' of the national states of Western Europe that began and sustained globalization had partners and created hybrid societies. They engaged in symbiotic power relations, were invited in, repelled, resisted, embraced and in turn changed by the world that they globalized. One, however, is still left with Europe at the centre of these globalizing structures. To 'decentre' Britain from the story of industrialization or Spain from the history of Latin America or Germany from the history of science can only be sustained by vandalizing the past. Thus the 'decentering' of Europe from the process of creating a world history of the Modern Age contains a number of challenges that scholars have by no means solved because the task is not a historical one. It is one dictated by political alliances and the interests of a Western elite determined to keep the movement of people and capital fluid and to suppress all attempts at dissent.

Globalization can mean many different things: economic exchange, the exportation and adaptation of technology, capital, knowledge, religion and culture. It can also mean the exchange of biological entities, indeed entire biological systems; plants, animals, peoples, microbes and the growing exploitation and commoditization of nature and, not to be forgotten, the development and exportation of ideas and management systems for the protection of nature. Anthony Giddens defines globalization as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa'.[28] Key to this understanding is the increased exchange that led to the integration of human culture in each part of the world.

Many scholars argue that globalization has been a part of human history well before the agricultural age. At a simplistic level this is undeniable because humans moved out of Africa and into Europe, the Middle East, the Indian subcontinent, Asia and the Americas from a single ancestral home. In the thirteenth century Mongolia had contact with the peoples and cultures of Western Europe, China, India and Persia. But its horsemen rose like a storm and swept across Eurasia only to quickly disappear, leaving behind smoking cities and little trace of permanent structure. The *Pax Mongolia* allowed some Christian missionaries and trade but it created very little. After its brief reign of terror, sparse evidence of the occupation remained. In the *Pax Islamica*, the cultural zone shaped by Arab conquerors, the elites also allowed and even encouraged contact, as the travels of the Moroccan Ibn Battuta show. He travelled as an honoured scholar to Mali and throughout the Middle East and into India. No centralizing Vatican, however, pulled the Islamic region into an integrated whole as with Christendom during the Middle Ages. The Ottoman Empire, moving closer to a globalized model, ruled as an alien elite over much of the Middle East, flowering in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and holding on until the early twentieth century. Islamic theology certainly encouraged trade, and Islamic traders ringed the Indian Ocean system, moving goods from the lucrative markets in India to Europe, as a Eurasian middleman. But permanent structures – a scaffolding of global institutional exchange – did not arise.[29]

Globalization is not the chronological recounting of civilizations and cultures. Rather, it is about the structures built around global contact.[30] From 1450 onwards regional trading circuits were tied together into world-spanning structures that intensified in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[31] European 'Crown capitalism' launched this massive change. It explored almost all the cultures in the world and placed them in contact with Europe, and through Europe with each other, forming the institutional structures – both governmental and private – that made the new patterns of exchange permanent and ongoing. This is unique; nothing like this had ever happened before in the history of the world. These new nationalist states in Europe proceeded to interfere with and participate in power struggles overseas. Migrants flowed outward, not as refugees but as permanent settlers taking the culture of their homeland with them. Races intermingled and new ethnic groups and new hybrid cultures arose. The scale and the permanence of these changes are unprecedented.[32]

Confusion arises when contact is equated with globalization. Globalization refers to the regularity and stability of contact and the resultant institutionalization – even if in an informal way, as through trade – of some kind of exchange.[33] Globalization can also mean a way of thinking that takes these contacts into account – Rousseau imagining the perfection of human nature in American Indians; Methodist missionaries in Chiengmai preaching the Gospel; diplomats in Argentina urging open trade policies; or environmental activists condemning deforestation in Bangladesh – all these are examples of the mental landscape that has been altered through permanent structures of change, the globalization not only of the world but of humanity. Thus globalization can and does mean economic exchange but also cultural and spiritual fertilization.

It has been a process of creative production, destruction and interdependency that affects every mode of human life and thought, everywhere. Globalization arose in the framework of informal empire. Informal empire extended the reach of Britain and the United States by forming partnerships that produced hybrid societies, what I have argued elsewhere is an imperial synthesis.[34]

Neocolonialism and postcolonialism

Other terms have spun off dependency theory. Some academic theorists, often from a Marxist perspective, use ‘neocolonialism’ (when not used as a political slogan or a term of abuse) to describe those territories once under former imperial control that are still subjected to economic or political control by a former colonial power. It rests on the observation that a nominally independent country is still in a relationship that is *similar* to its former relationship as a colony. Kwame Nkrumah who led Ghana into independence from the British and became its first president in 1957 promoted the term in his book, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (1965). In it he argued that capital from the developed countries is used ‘for the exploitation rather than for the development of the less developed parts of the world’. The passing of time, however, sapped this perspective of its ability to persuade or describe international relations. It became increasingly hard to believe, for instance, that India’s massive reserves of poverty or the civil disorders in Africa today were due to a continuing relationship with Britain, France or Portugal that is similar to its former relationship to the same colonial power.[35]

’Postcolonialism’ evolved out of both dependency theory and postmodernism. While largely an approach employed by literary critics, it has also been used by some historians to analyze evidence from the past, usually texts. It is close to and often indistinguishable from a neocolonial perspective. Edward Said wrote the master narrative of this latter genre in his 1978 book, *Orientalism*. He argued that the West constructed and imposed an image of an exotic ‘other’ on non-Western cultures in order to justify colonial rule. Other scholars, drawing inspiration from Said, suggest that postcolonial writing is a critique by indigenous peoples who find their own voice and literature and ‘write back’ to create their own worldview. It has also inspired a particular historical approach called ‘subaltern studies’, where the history of peoples outside of the hegemonic powers, usually focused on India, are written from the perspective of the weaker, junior partners – hence the term 'subaltern' that in military parlance indicates a junior officer.[36]

The weakness of dependency theory and the allied terms that it has produced has been its lack of appeal outside the rarified protective world of academia, with practitioners who do not represent the goals and thinking of non-Western peoples or the elites who rule them. Few are interested in 'talking back'. Vastly greater numbers are interested in better infrastructure, rising standards of living and consumer goods, including the cultural productions of Hollywood. All of these consumer elements overlay a bundle of Enlightenment-era assumptions about equality, democratic representation and the rationalization of culture against the values of tradition. Although rock music, fashion and Hollywood exude little philosophical content on the surface, they operate as a Trojan Horse, smuggling in and subtly enforcing cultural mores and unexamined assumptions. In contrast dependency theory and its allied modes of thought have had little practical application. Africa, long after decolonization, has remained immersed in poverty, even in those areas that have rejected close ties with the West. Former 'undeveloped' nations like China now engage in the same activities as the former imperial powers in Africa. The expanding Western identity of elites in India, parts of the Middle East, Asia and Latin America show no signs of serious cultural resistance to the West and when they do, the resistance is in the form of 'right-wing' religious parties in the Middle East and India, such as the Bharatiya Janata Party (India People's Party) and the Taliban, all of them anathema to the Marxist-oriented assumptions of dependency theorists.

The strength of dependency theory and its allied terms lie in the fact that it gave scholars some tools to explain a 'mechanism of power' behind the Westernization process that has unquestionably occurred. The optimism behind modernization theory is an optimism tied to laissez-faire and its transformative effect. But dependency theory, far more than modernization theory, attempted to explain the 'how' of transformation and did not satisfy itself, as did modernization theory, with descriptive prose about the stages of transformation observed in societies. Both modernization theory and dependency theory, the offspring of sociology and political science departments, are an ahistorical form of analysis designed not merely to understand the transformation of the Modern Age but to influence the course of events.

A new model is needed to describe the changing configuration of world elites – a model without the prescriptive laissez-faire optimism of modernization theory or its counterpart, the prescriptive pessimism and violence of dependency theory. A global analysis of elite formation is needed for world history, free of the teleological intent of political terms and one better suited to a historical work. An understanding of informal empire provides a functional model to comprehend the mechanism of control by imperial powers, and to answer the questions of how and why the world rationalized into a single global culture.

3

The Palmerstonian Project

Informal empire has been anything but a dark vision. A powerful, exuberant impulse animated the idea of informal empire that is evangelical in tone, missionary in zeal and ineluctably optimistic. It springs from Enlightenment ideas of progress and development, joined by an even more robust stream of personal and national self-interest. The phrase 'Jesus Christ is free trade and free trade is Jesus Christ,' uttered by a Manchester businessman-cum-governor of Hong Kong, at once encompasses the heterogeneous complexity found in the term 'informal empire'.[1] The formation of new elites abroad and the subjugation of subordinate elites flitted in and out of the discussion of informal empire but was always overshadowed by the high ideal of Christian progress, free trade and mutual benefit.

The ideological origins of informal empire are rooted deep in the Western conception of law, although the particularly British and American idea of informal empire found explicit expression in the nineteenth century.[2] John Locke, Thomas Hobbes and other English Enlightenment figures argued for a conception of natural law based on characteristics of human nature that were created by God and discernable by reason. Thus philosophers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries assigned human nature a variety of roles. From a solitary to a social temperament (solitary to Hobbes and Rousseau, social to Hugo Grotius and Locke), all agreed that individuals engaged in a vital symbiosis with society and all understood this symbiosis as a social contract.[3] Locke justified land ownership as a moral purchase that arose from intensity of use. This understanding laid the colonial foundation for the expropriation of territories from hunter-gatherers in North America and elsewhere. Labour, not a vague principle of first possession, gave title. Settlers who engaged in intensive agriculture had every moral and, thus, legal basis for claiming land in New England. Many of the nineteenth-century figures discussed below were moulded by these Enlightenment ideals: their confidence bolstered by the unparalleled success of industry and by the respectable yet boisterous energy of the middle class. They saw England, Ireland, Scotland and America as a moral landscape where labour, virtue and manliness, blessed by providence, assigned an unquestionable claim to property. This law of nature applied equally to Europeans and to those in need of improvement: particularly the Indians in North America, the Irish, the Scots in the Highlands and – thanks to invigorating winds of free trade on open seas – the peoples inhabiting most of the accessible regions of the world.

These ideas still define democratic capitalism today. They are based on monogenism, which assumes that humans have a single origin. Racial groupings represent only recent and cosmetic differentiation. In this Edenic scenario, equality implied capability. All humans can, and indeed must, progress towards greater virtue and wealth: they must, like the British and Americans, strive towards a higher complexity of social arrangements. 'Thus in the beginning all the world was America,' Locke wrote. All once slept in a primitive Eden, before the dawn of self-reflection, the rule of law and the advent of specialized labour.[4] The entire world – once a rude wilderness – could now be a reflection of England overseas, constructed from foundation to rafters of the same raw material: universal human nature. It is this belief in monogenism that drives the optimism, the arrogance and the moral certainty behind the idea of informal empire and global development.

Grotius has special significance for informal empire. He persuaded jurists that European law applied far beyond the shores of Europe, and justified overseas expansion and trade as a basic human right. In *Mare Liberum*, published in 1609, he argued that natural principles of justice applied to the sea lanes of the world.[5] The seas, he said, were international territory. Nations are justified using force to break up unlawful monopolies. States cannot deny the freedom of the seas nor 'debar foreigners from having access to their subjects and trading with them'.[6] Since God placed humans in every part of the globe with different resources, he intended humans to trade in order to survive. Thus the right to trade begets additional rights:

- The right to 'share in those things' nature had given to humans as resources.
- The right of access to 'the coast or shore'.

- The right to construct buildings on the coast.
- The right to own 'the ground upon which said building is'.[7]

The argument by Grotius is similar in many ways to that made by Locke on hunter-gatherer societies. Neither passing through territory nor sea lanes constitutes ownership or the right to exclude. No permission is required, and force is justified for travelling on the sea in any part of the world, for occupying shores, constructing buildings, owning the property that those buildings rest upon and interacting with subjects of the local government. No ancient right of occupation excluded the right to exercise these natural laws, not even if a people have occupied ground 'for a thousand years'. Once the right to settle, trade and own property is realized, the original inhabitant 'loses its rights' to exclude. Thus the 'useless usurpation' of the Portuguese in Asia or Africa should not debar the Dutch or anyone else from trade and settlement. 'Arise, O nation unconquered on the sea, and fight boldly, not only for your own liberty, but for that of the human race.' A blueprint for expansion had been announced and would soon become the modus operandi (with modifications and elaboration) of the new imperial powers, including – unfortunately for the Dutch – those powers who would in a hundred years' time sweep the Dutch themselves from the seas and despoil them of a large and profitable empire.[8]

Sea-trading nations like the Dutch, French and English eventually adopted Grotius's claim for the right to trade and settle. However at the time that the Dutch East India Company published Grotius's *Mare Liberum*, the European world quarrelled over who had exclusive access to the newly discovered territories. In the Age of Discovery the Spanish and Portuguese followed the lead of the Republic of Genoa and Venice in parts of the Mediterranean by enforcing a 'mare clausum' (closed sea) with exclusive rights of portage and trade over large swathes of the Pacific and Atlantic. For a short time even the English Court opposed the Dutch view. The Dutch regularly intruded into Scottish waters harvesting cod. With royal approval, an English lawyer, John Selden, wrote a rejoinder to Grotius. In *Mare Clausum*, written in 1618 (but published only in 1635), he objected to open sea lanes off English and Scottish waters. Forcing these sea lanes open, he argued, smacked of the Roman Empire and a tyrannous Caesar who enforced open sea lanes to advance trade. Nations had the right, like land owners, to protect waters off their shores from foreign intrusion. They had the right to trade or not to trade, as their monarch saw fit.

This position soon shifted. The English were already launching major trading companies overseas.[9] As English trade penetrated down the coast of Africa, into India, Latin America and the Caribbean, merchants felt the same need as the Dutch to break up monopolies that excluded them. British elites gradually realized in the late eighteenth century and afterwards that an open sea, free trade economics and participatory political systems set the stage for a new collaborating class of overseas businessmen, bureaucrats and professionals in traditional societies hungry for increased power and wealth. This rising collaboratist class in the last 200 years demanded Western technology, science, education and culture that led to the integration of vast regions of the world into the web of European influence.[10]

Adam Smith only added theory to practice by the time he published *The Wealth of Nations* in 1776. He argued for a market over and against a mercantilist system, and for the ethical imperative of free trade. In the nineteenth century British Members of Parliament, jurists and government officials joined a broad array of merchants and writers who advocated open sea lanes and claimed the right to buy and sell over most of the world. Enlightenment ideals only added to the weight of opinion, most particularly among radical advocates of republican government.

Immanuel Kant, like Grotius, agreed that universal natural law governed humans and historical development. Echoing Smith he contended that as individual men 'and even whole nations' pursue their own selfish purpose they unwittingly fulfil a greater design.[11] Johannes Kepler and Isaac Newton had already shown that scientific laws govern the universe. Metaphysical laws self-evidently corresponded. To Kant, human destiny grew in an organic and Aristotelian fashion, unfolding its ultimate design that lay embedded in history.[12] There is a right to expect hospitality and 'resort' and a right to the 'common possession of the surface of the earth, to no part of which anyone had originally more right than another'. These rights defined by Kant reflected Locke on the rights of settlers to claim land held by hunter-gathers and reflected, as well, Grotius on the right to open sea lanes, property ownership, settlement and trade.[13]

While pressure on recalcitrant nations is to be preferred over harsh action, Kant clearly did not focus as much on the evils of force as on the next stage of evolution: perpetual peace under a universal one world government.[14] Like other Enlightenment figures, he pointed to nature as the compass for human moral and societal organization long before the development of biological science. This insistence on nature – while profoundly misunderstanding nature – gave Europeans dogmatic certainty while depriving them of sympathy for those societies that did not fit the imaginary mould of universal human coherence. Most believed, as elites primarily do today, that those areas of the world less technologically developed than Europe could and would conform in time to universal laws. They would progress. For Kant the administration of universal law in a civil society was 'compelled by nature'. Only a small step remained between the optimism of Smith and Kant to the frustration that followed in the mid- and late-Victorian period when the application of cannon and cavalry seemed essential to prod historical development along its ordained path.[15]

Legally, no English jurist answered Selden until a judge in the British High Court of Admiralty, Lord Stowell, overturned in 1817 Selden's insistence on closed sea lanes. Stowell ruled that no nation, not even a semi-barbarous one, escaped the rule of international law. It followed that blockades, when effective, were entirely lawful. Therefore judges in a prize court were justified distributing money gained from the sale of belligerent ships captured lawfully at sea, even if the ship proved a neutral vessel. A prize court equalled, he ruled, an international court of law from which no nation could exempt itself. Prize courts were 'the seat of judicial authority'. In a truly stunning assertion of the universality of Western (and British) law, he stated that 'the law itself has no locality'. The United States adopted this interpretation, as did most European powers, adding legal force to Enlightenment ideas. Western law, to the extent that it was enforceable, became universal.[16]

The Victorian liberal statesman, Richard Cobden, joyously promoted the idea when he offered by way of example a British Constantinople, independent but in every respect like an Anglo-Saxon nation, equipped with parliament, rule of law and free trade. It could be, he exulted, 'outrivaling New York' with a million free citizens that draw the trade of Eastern Europe, Russia and the Levant into its orbit. It could in the future boast thousands of miles of gleaming railway track that replace armed slaves carrying a satrap on a litter. A new enlightened and civilized people could arise. These once rude and slippered Turks might then begin their busy day reading the morning papers, drinking Indian tea or Brazilian coffee. Proper schedules would regulate ferries across the Sea of Marmara and steamers would arrive and depart with Scottish efficiency. Round the shores of the Black Sea or on the banks of the Danube or on the 1000 Greek isles, the rich dark soil, cultivated by the hand and power of new New Englanders, or hardy Islamic Kentuckians, would spring to life. 'Let us', Cobden said, 'picture the Carolinians, the Virginians, and the Georgians transplanted to the coasts of Asia Minor, and behold its hundreds of cities bursting the tomb of ages.' This stream of informal empire, transforming every shore it touched, would then encircle the world in an intoxicating sea of free trade, making even the 'Sick Man of Europe' or China or Africa or the largely untouched lands under the Southern Cross, into a new effervescent America.

Did British officials understand that free trade constituted an informal empire, even if they did not use the term? If so, who considered influence through trade to be an empire, and who promoted the idea? In order to answer these questions we must not only examine the commitment to free trade that British officials evinced, but also try to understand whether British officials equated free trade with power in a substantive and tangible sense. It is important for scholars not to take the word 'free' out of the context of trade. Britain in the eighteenth century administered a Janus-faced policy of inward laissez-faire and outwards force. A market economy and certain constitutional guarantees like the rule of law, absolute respect for private property and an open elite were available to increasing numbers of Britain citizens while the projection of imperial force outside Britain expanded trade and influence. This dual policy has been suggested by scholars like John Brewer to be one of the key factors in British success: liberties at home provided maximum incentive for the accumulation of wealth while the application of force abroad built the empire and expanded markets to British citizens and new social groups overseas.[17]

In the middle of the nineteenth century the subject of influence exogenous to formal empire moved beyond arcane legal and philosophical discussions and captured the imagination of historians and, to a certain extent, the general public. An example of this is the Irish Member of Parliament Henry Brooke Parnell, who served in the Whig administrations of Lord Grey and Lord Melbourne. A liberal member of the Whig Party that pushed for reform, he reflected deeply on the connection between wealth and national power. While not an inspiring speaker, his book *On Financial Reform* (1830) gained a large reading audience and later influenced the policies of two prime ministers, Sir Robert Peel and William E. Gladstone. Parnell argued against formal colonies, and suggested that they wasted capital and that trade flowed just as easily if, for instance, Canada declared independence. He pointed to the immense trade enjoyed by Britain with the United States as prime evidence.[18] A correct view of the colonies would sweep aside much inefficiency:

> The prevailing opinion, that large profits are obtained through the monopoly, [of colonial trade] has always confused the question . . . it would also have appeared [with a correct view] that the possession

> of Colonies affords no advantages which could not be obtained by commercial intercourse with independent States.[19]

This last point is crucial to the issue of informal empire because Parnell drew attention to the support of a strong national economy with trade alone. He carefully asked two questions in this regard: 'Whether our commerce with them [the colonies] is more beneficial than with independent countries?' and 'Whether the capital employed in them is more beneficially employed than if employed in the United Kingdom?'[20]

Parnell gave counterintuitive answers to his questions. Regarding the first question, Parnell answered that the trade with the United States, a former colony, proved that trade with an independent country is just as beneficial as a colony, 'when capital is free'. It is impossible to argue that capital can get a higher return in the absence of free choice. Here Parnell echoed Smith's view that individuals make the best decisions when free to employ capital in their self-interest. Regarding the second question, Parnell compared the benefits of capital employed in colonies overseas with capital employed in the United Kingdom. When employed in colonies, such as the West Indies, 'it feeds and clothes slaves; it pays British agents, clerks, and managers; it employs ships and sailors'.[21] But when employed in the United Kingdom, 'it pays wages to English workmen, instead of buying clothes and food for slaves' while still employing 'agents, clerks, and managers . . . ships and sailors'.[22] Therefore because the money circulates in the United Kingdom instead of abroad, and since the money does not support a landed class of planters who live and spend their money 'like incomes . . . from rent' instead of income derived and spent with industry, the colonies drain capital from its most productive use at home. Parnell explicitly cites John Stuart Mill's *Principles of Political Economy* (1848) to show that if the colonies were independent nations, trade would still carry on at the same levels, only without added loss.[23]

In the Victorian era many saw a close connection between national power and overseas influence. Thomas Carlyle expressed an expansive mission in most of his writing, but particularly in *Chartism* (1839) and *Occasional Discourse on the Nigger Question* (1849/revd edn 1853). He saw the need for an emigration service that advocated migration abroad, with London the Anglo-Saxon home for an empire and extra-empire trade that girdled the world. Only part of this world of influence would be found in the formal empire. Carlyle saw the lion's share of political influence channelled through settlers streaming into Latin America, North America, Africa and Asia. London would be the very heart of this wide racial web: 'What a future: wide as the world, if we have the heart and heroism for it.' These sentiments were not unusual, and Carlyle did not dream alone of empire well outside the boundaries of formal governmental structures.[24]

Prominent apologists of free trade claimed that trade had the felicitous effect of exerting good moral influence on Britain's new trading partners. Thus Christianity often followed in the wake of trade. Lord Henry Temple Palmerston, Foreign Secretary and then prime minister in the heyday of the mid-Victorian period, felt that 'commerce is the best pioneer of civilization . . . [free trade joined] civilization with one hand, and peace with the other', making men 'happier, wiser, better'. Most importantly, he felt that free trade challenged the traditional elites of backward nations and allowed a new virtuous elite to take over the reigns of these societies. When the merchant class gained more money from trade they also gained more power, slowly replacing the hidebound landed class. Trade led therefore not only to the spread of civilization, but also to the values that made the English so successful and so . . . more like themselves. As Secretary of State George Canning remarked in 1824, supremely confident of the benefits of trade, 'South America is free and if we do not mismanage our affairs sadly, she is English.'[25]

Britain's domestic fight over free trade prefigures a larger fight over free trade that would soon take on global proportions, and represents a paradigm shift that would transform the ruling elite of every non-Western trading partner. The battle for free trade brought many of these ideas – that linked trade with power and an empire of influence – out into the broad light. Richard Cobden and John Bright led the fight in Parliament and the press and gave an early clue to the kind of social change that Palmerston later sought to impose on foreign countries. Free trade would reduce the power of the traditional landed elite and replace the landlords with a new class of merchants and manufacturers. Cobden made clear that free traders intended to 'cut [mercantilism] by the roots . . . the sole object of the League is to put an end to and extinguish once and forever, the principle of maintaining taxes for the benefit of a particular class'. Cutting down the old ruling class 'comprises a great moral principle, and inveighs the greatest moral world's revolution that was ever yet accomplished for mankind'. These utopian dreamers fought for the remaking of society first at home in Britain and then in the rest of the world.[26]

Cobden's sentiments in the struggle against the Corn Laws certainly do not express all the political ideas held by Palmerston or those who wanted to save the status quo in Britain. But later, although Palmerston and Cobden were often at odds, the former would come to express similar ideas about the power – and the intent – of free trade. Cobden envisioned a radically different and better world once the principles of political economy were adopted, and his views are worth quoting at length because they express what most of Victorian Britain came to believe about free trade:

> Free trade involved [a] principle that . . . will act on the moral world as the principle of gravitation in the universe, – drawing men together, thrusting aside the antagonism of race, and creed, and language, and uniting us in the bonds of eternal peace. I have looked even farther. I have speculated and probably dreamt, in the dim future – ay, a thousand years hence – I have speculated on what the effect of the triumph of this principle may be. I believe that the effect will be to change the face of the world, so as to introduce a system of government, entirely distinct from that which now prevails. I believe that the desire and the motive for large and mighty empires, for gigantic armies and great navies – for those materials which are used for the destruction of life and the desolation of the rewards of labour will die away. I believe that such things will cease to be necessary, or to be used, when man becomes one family and freely exchanges the fruits of his labour with his brother man.[27]

Not all parliamentarians or foreign secretaries were so optimistic. Palmerston usually butted heads with Cobden and his ideological partner, Bright. But that most shared these sentiments partially, and some fully, explains the fervour with which Palmerston and other British leaders in the mid and late nineteenth century forced recalcitrant countries to trade. And central to the paradigm of informal empire is the fact that such trade creates new elites and a new form of government. Free trade philosophy protected more that just trade: it promoted the better organization of society and guaranteed a better future for the government of mankind.

Many of the landowning Tories provided a corps of resistance to this vision in general, and to the abolition of the Corn Laws in particular. But the supporters of the Corn Laws faced certain defeat when Robert Peel, the leader of the Tories, stared down the opposition in his own party and voted with the Whigs on 16 February 1846 for the repeal of the laws. Illustrating how deeply free trade had penetrated into the national psyche, Peel framed the debate in the language of progress, to 'advance or recede'. He emphasized the profit that Britain stood to gain from free trade because 'iron and coal, the sinews of manufacture, give us advantages over every other rival in the great competition of industry'. The bill to rescind the Corn Laws was passed in 1846, and Peel paid for the bill with his political career – his own party deserted him on an Irish Coercion Bill and he resigned as prime minister. Although many diehard Tories remained, the sentiment in favour of free trade became entrenched in British society and did not substantially wane until the Depression in the 1930s when Europe and the United States adopted protectionist measures.[28]

The inhabitants of the Foreign Office also held a general belief in liberalism, with its connection between free trade and liberty, particularly the most influential figures like Palmerston and Lord Salisbury.[29] While Palmerston dragged his feet on reform, he also played masterfully to the middle-class electorate. The entrepreneurial ideal largely replaced the aristocratic ideal even while aristocrats still governed. Bernard Porter discusses this transformation in *Britain, Europe, and the World 1850–1982* (1983):

> The aristocrats who conducted Britain's diplomacy were in any case by no means entirely out of sympathy with the prevailing current. Their 'bourgeoisification' in the nineteenth century may not have been complete, but it had gone some way to neutralize old prejudices. The Tory Party, for example, with its Derbys and Salisburys – all of the bluest blood – was won over quite early to free trade; and the third Viscount Palmerston was sent to school in Edinburgh under a pupil of Adam Smith to steep himself in political economy before he was let loose on affairs of state.[30]

It would be a mistake to think that free trade sentiment necessarily meant anti-imperialism. As Martin Lynn points out, few in the Palmerstonian years were 'little Englanders' and believed in the abandonment of the colonies altogether. Colonial Secretary William Huskisson expressed a common sentiment in 1828 when he quipped, 'England cannot afford to be little.' The social benefits of empire for all concerned were too great to be abandoned. Empire allowed the dissemination of Christianity, the abolition of the slave trade and the establishment of the rule of law whereby the hand of the market could work its transforming magic. All parties – radicals, Whigs and Tories – saw intervention in colonial affairs and in areas outside the colonies as necessary. But when, where and how to intervene proved contentious points between the factions. The why of intervention raised less of a problem. Britain interfered to promote the balance of power, to keep any one country from a position of threatening British security, and to promote free trade and liberal principles of free government. An open door policy around the world that allowed free access to British goods proved the hinge and the rationale upon which foreign policy operated.[31]

The British could pursue a policy of open markets because it provided the appearance of moral equity and because the British so dominated world trade through a substantial lead in industrialization that free trade always paid. If a country agreed to open its doors to trade without preference, this sounded at once fair to all parties. But the British were well aware that free trade meant that the lion's share of economic activity and opportunity would fall to British merchants and that the interdependence so created would give Britain unprecedented influence – indeed trade meant as much or more than treaties in terms of influence. It was this self-interest rather than idealism that explained the British motivation to push for an 'open door' policy. The longevity of free trade sentiment, once established in Britain, is impressive. For the next few decades Britain expanded manufacturing and other economic interests such as banking and insurance, remaining largely unchallenged as the supreme supplier of machines and finished products, particularly textiles, to the British Empire and much of the rest of the world.[32]

But did this constitute empire? No precise answer to this question is possible. A. J. Marcham lays out the question of intentionality: it is easy to find examples of British intervention overseas that coincided with financial and commercial interests; the question is whether Britain intervened primarily to promote these interests. Economic motives, explicit in business records, are rarely emphasized in official papers. Nevertheless a policy of preserving free opportunities for trade may involve a degree of political intervention varying according to circumstances and locale.[33]

While a precise admission regarding intentionality may not be possible, we do know that the British government helped direct the influence of the mammoth British economy, particularly through its foreign policy. The real question then becomes, where in the structure of foreign policy does one find an instigator for the expansion of business? To a certain extent this has been answered by looking at the inclination of Parliament and the public to expand markets abroad. But how did this public and legislative pressure work? Did foreign secretaries respond to such pressure? On the surface, the hierarchy of foreign policy-making in the British government looked quite conventional: the monarch, the prime minister, the Cabinet, the Secretary of State, Parliament, then the people. Real policy-making often followed a different chain of command and looked more like the Secretary of State or the prime minister: the popular press, the monarch and, lastly, Parliament.

Limitations on the power of what Gallagher and Robinson called the 'official mind' diluted the appearance of intentionality. Significant limitations reduced the power of the Secretary of State to affect foreign policy. For example, the size of the Foreign Office establishment limited the power of the Secretary of State: by 1841 there were only 1 chief clerk, 6 senior clerks, 10 clerks, 7 junior clerks and 8 others sorting through over 30,000 incoming dispatches in 1849. This meant that the foreign secretaries laboured long hours reading and writing. Palmerston, who found that such excessive labour gave him greater control over foreign policy, defended the workload to the queen as a republican counterbalance to the 'governments of the continent', who without representative assemblies, allowed their bureaucrats to hold greater authority, while in England 'ministers who are at the head of the several departments of the state' must defend themselves before Parliament and, to do this, conduct the details of the department themselves without deferring to a large staff.[34]

Other limitations existed and acted as restraints on Lord Castlereagh, Canning, Palmerston, Salisbury and others. The Cabinet and even outside events often limited influence. Lord Grey wrote that in the critical days before the First World War there were 'almost continuous Cabinets' and 'little for me to do: circumstances and events were compelling decision'. Not just the Foreign Secretary read the incoming posts. All Cabinet members were entitled to look at foreign dispatches.[35]

The prime minister also limited influence. While few prime ministers chose to act as foreign minister, Salisbury excepted, they wanted to be informed and generally see all outgoing dispatches. Conflict arose when the Foreign Minister did not keep the prime minister informed, as when Palmerston acted without notifying Lord Russell or the queen on the advice he gave abroad. Russell reprimanded him repeatedly on this issue: 'It is surely right that a person speaking in the name of her Majesty's Government should in important affairs submit his dispatches to the Queen and her Government.' The queen herself, as she gained experience, wanted to be informed and asked that the Foreign Secretary listen to her views.[36]

In addition to these factors the navy, the army and the financial resources of the nation constrained the options of the Foreign Secretary. Perhaps because officials felt these limitations so keenly, and relied so heavily on the navy, Britain remained committed to naval supremacy from the wars with Napoleon until 1914. A strong sentiment to support the fleet existed not only among those who supported empire, but also among those who supported free trade such as William Cobbett, who understood that the navy protected Britain from invasion and that with a powerful navy Britain could keep a smaller army and thus keep taxes low. This free trader felt 'disdain [for] all connections with a continent where we can never have power without the ruin of this island' and supported spending money for supremacy on the sea where 'our fleet will be our bulwark'.[37] The press also, in this case the *Edinburgh Review*, often expressed alarm at the loss of naval strength because:

> England cannot, consistently with her own safety and independence, endure the existence of a maritime coalition against her; or, in other words, the combination of the naval forces of two or more great maritime powers constitute a danger to this country.[38]

But if Britain's navy, although overextended, gave foreign secretaries more options, the size of the army limited them. Britain depended on the might of its navy at sea for its security, not the efficacy of its army on land, and the prospect of another war on the Continent after 1815 motivated political leaders to avoid entanglements in Europe that would involve British troops. Palmerston felt the weakness of their military and along with Lord Russell made plans for a new militia. In an 1848 memorandum Russell wrote that 'Britain had 55,000 regular troops in the British Islands only' and needed a significant expansion. But his plans for major expansion were never realized. Britain began 1829 with 64,000 regular soldiers, and ended 1850 with 65,000 regular soldiers while the empire, formal and informal, had ballooned in size. Fears of political developments in France, with the *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte in 1851 and then the Crimean War in 1853–56 and the Indian Mutiny of 1857, all increased anxiety about the army. The queen often expressed alarm on this score. The success of the Prussian army in uniting the German states terrified the British, not because they were in opposition to Prussian aims, but because such successes showed the type of awesome military efficiency developing on the Continent.[39]

Despite these limitations, the Foreign Office continued to use its considerable power to open markets and force recalcitrant elites to trade. Britain relied on this trade for her livelihood, and most of her trade was channelled outside of Continental Europe where intervention sometimes seemed a necessary evil. On the Continent, liberalism, although it had its adherents, had never been fully embraced by any government and so Britain looked outwards to the world. In 1860 Britain originated 25 per cent of all the trade in the world, and 60 per cent of this trade flowed outside Europe. With the livelihood of her economy so dependent on international commerce Britain did not place such an importance as other European countries on prestige. Instead Britain pursued fair and free trade, opening markets not just to herself but to all, a veneer of justice that the British found irresistible. If the 'cash nexus' as Carlyle called it, chained British policy, this same nexus allowed Britain to pursue open markets draped in the virtue of humanitarian concern. When a country opened up its markets to Britain, it opened them up to the world. When Britain used its influence to open up a country to free trade, it helped that country modernize, step into the future and join a mature body of nations that sought mutual benefits. Force had sometimes to be used. Mid-Victorians made a strong case that policing the world to ensure a global market altruistically benefited more than Britain alone. It helped and of course it changed other elites.[40]

Moreover Britain kept a policy of isolationism towards Europe precisely to avoid a costly war on the Continent that would drain men away from productive economic work, force higher taxes, increase the power of Continental-style bureaucrats and transform Britain socially and politically into a mirror image of the Continent. Isolationism kept Britain un-entangled (except for very particular and temporary occasions) and allowed her to remain both liberal at home and international in scope.

Under what conditions did Britain go to war to secure markets? Britain went to war outside of Europe when a particular market justified the expense in Africa, China, Latin America or elsewhere. If interventions occurred in Europe, they were – outside the Crimean War – in weaker states such as Spain, Greece or Naples to push for constitutional rule. And while new markets were important, Britain intervened most to maintain old markets. Britain intervened when it had an economic stake in a region such as China, and the elites of that region either would not or could not maintain order or conditions of free trade.

The high noon of British power ran parallel to the pervasive influence of Lord Palmerston. Palmerston, first as Foreign Secretary (in and out of office) and then as prime minister, exerted a great deal of influence on the British approach to informal empire between 1830 and 1865. He reflected the prevailing idea in the mid-Victorian period that Britain stood 'at the head of moral, social, and political civilization' with the task to 'lead the way and direct the march of other nations'. Few doubted during this period that Britain had the role of 'world bettering', as Palmerston put it. Under his leadership Latin America, China and the Middle East were scenes of mounting British influence. A breathtaking roll call of elite transformation occurred in this period when trade with the rapidly industrializing economy of Britain reshaped domestic markets.[41]

Palmerston showed little hesitancy to interfere, and interfere in such a way that makes the term 'informal empire' seem applicable. In defending interference, in this case in Portugal, Palmerston argued that:

> If by 'interference' is meant intermeddling, and intermeddling in every way, and to every extent, short of actual military force; then I must affirm, that there is nothing in such interference, which the law of nations may not in certain cases permit.

Whatever his view of the law of nations, Palmerston often promoted armed intervention to open up markets and create new alliances: 'These half-civilized governments', he explained, 'such as those of China, Portugal, Spanish America, require a dressing every eight to ten years to keep them in order.'[42]

Palmerston laid down a flexible doctrine that enabled Britain to support regimes friendly to British influence and to oppose others. In the turmoil on the Continent over Italian independence, Palmerston opposed the censures of the king of Sardinia and the annexations that laid the foundation for Italian unity put forward by other European powers. John Russell, the Secretary of State under Palmerston, stated in a dispatch to the European powers that:

> when a people from good reasons take up arms against an oppressor, it is but an act of justice and generosity to assist brave men in the defence of their liberties . . . Her Majesty's Government will turn their eyes . . . to the gratifying prospect of a people building up the edifice of their liberties, and consolidating the work of their independence . . .[43]

This proved a handy doctrine for it gave the British government leeway to support any movement of self-determination in its own interests, while allowing Britain to withhold support from any government or movement that did not suit her interests. To aid or oppose revolution gave Britain one tool among many to shape the political landscape of the world outside of its own formal empire. Palmerston's diplomacy during the Belgian affair – where he succeeded in harnessing the major powers of Europe to keep the French out of Belgium – laid down his basic operating assumptions that would appear again and again throughout the following decades:

1 The British fleet is of incalculable value for diplomacy.
2 British interest is allied to strong, independent, commercially healthy states under the sway of no superpower outside of Britain.
3 Never avoid a necessary war.

If we consider British interventions in Latin America, the Middle East, the Far East and Africa, they will illustrate how Palmerston, and even his more peace-loving successors like Gladstone and Salisbury, utilized these three principles and interfered when necessary to enforce open markets.

In 1810 Britain signed a peace treaty with Brazil that gave preferential treatment to British interests. After this Britain often intervened in Latin America between the 1830s and 1860s to remove obstacles to trade, investment and finance.[44] When the Spanish colonies rebelled against Spain, Britain slowly recognized the new independent republics by signing trade treaties. This amounted to holding out the carrot of recognition if the republics met Britain on the grounds of open trade and thus opened up their economies to British penetration. Britain also played an instrumental role in the creation of Uruguay as a buffer zone between Brazil and Argentina to guarantee open river systems for British trade in the region. Other intrusions to keep trade open frequently occurred up the River Plate and as far as Mexico. In 1848–49 Britain threatened naval action off the coast of Brazil to stop the trade in slaves and threatened Peru in 1857 to ensure her compliance with British bondholders, and then again against Chile in 1863, among other actions.[45]

In the Levant, the British signed a treaty with the modernizing Muhammad Ali (1805–48) in 1838. This treaty demolished Ali's state monopolies and as a consequence forced the Egyptian government to take loans. With the treaty came the 'capitulations' that included the right of foreigners to be exempt from Egyptian courts and gave them the right to be tried by their own European peers. After this foreigners flooded into Egypt to trade. In 1838 a free trade treaty with Turkey, the 'Convention of Balta Liman', gave control of customs and tariffs to European powers, eliminated state monopolies and forced the Ottoman government also to take out foreign loans to survive. Foreign traders had no internal customs duty.

The British intervened decisively in the Levant during the mid and late nineteenth century. Britain intervened to protect Turkey from

Muhammad Ali, ruler of Egypt, in 1839 and in that same year also annexed Aden. In 1850 Palmerston established a British version of 'Civis Romanus sum' in the Don Pacifico affair, claiming that British citizens anywhere in the world had the right to be tried only by the British. Palmerston also intervened to protect Turkey against Russia in 1853–56, fighting the Crimean War in order to keep the Ottoman Empire independent and open to British commerce. The British established the Ottoman Bank in London in 1856 and, after 1863, renamed it the Imperial Ottoman Bank, which issued the Ottoman currency. When Prime Minister Benjamin Disraeli purchased the Egyptian Khedive's share in the Suez Canal in 1869, this effectively gave control of that strategic waterway to Britain. When Egypt went bankrupt in 1876 (the Ottoman government went bankrupt in 1875), Britain and other European powers took control of the finances of the Egyptian government to oversee the repayment of debt to bondholders. When this proved insufficient, Britain occupied Egypt militarily in 1882.

Between 1840 and1860 the British campaigned against the slave trade in Africa. This in turn increased trade and missions, particularly in Niger, Dahomey, Abyssinia and Zanzibar. Palmerston called the slave trade a 'foul and detestable crime' that conferred on its opponents the mantle of absolute virtue. Slave treaties, he said, 'are indirectly treaties for the encouragement of commerce'. Private expeditions were supported by the government into Niger in 1841 and 1857, Dahomey in 1850 and Lagos in 1851 (which the British annexed in 1861), in addition to numerous military interventions against the slave trade. All this did not mean that Britain wanted formal colonies in the region. Palmerston turned down opportunities for new formal colonies – in Abyssinia in the 1840s and in Egypt in 1859. Palmerston said of Abyssinia: 'All we want is trade and land is not necessary for trade; we can carry on commerce very well on ground belonging to other people.'[46] Only when other European powers, particularly Germany, threatened this commerce with formal annexations did Britain join a scramble for formal colonies in sub-Saharan Africa.[47]

Despite this busy schedule, the British also found time to intervene in the Far East. The Opium War of 1839–42 gained for Britain the port of Hong Kong. The Treaty of Nanking in 1842 gained five 'treaty ports' with special trading concessions and extra-territoriality for foreigners. French and British intervention occurred in 1847, 1856 and 1860. In 1863 Robert Hart, an Englishman, governed the Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs and used its revenues to repay loans from Western banks. Soon afterwards the British took over the local salt administration.

Palmerston, as well as his immediate successors, played a key role in these global interventions. The question of informal empire hinges on such interventions because the economic penetrations that occurred profited a rising class of merchants relative to traditional aristocratic and bureaucratic elites.

Palmerston's aggressive overseas campaigns irked many in Britain who thought that he took his turns too fast and risked too much to achieve his aims. European diplomats particularly disliked him. After an electoral defeat and a brief period of Tory rule, Palmerston regained office in 1859. The election gave him several more years in office and the power to hold onto and even expand British influence in Latin America, the Middle East and the Far East. But even for a superpower, achievement has its limits. And on many important issues, the United States defined those limits and kindled a rivalry that climaxed in the next century.[48] Other concerns both military and economic also loomed. The Crimean War had gone badly. Britain battled in the least desirable scenario: armed conflict on land against a vastly larger army. Only after initial failure and much time did the British manage to pull off a victory at the Siege of Sevastopol and then sign a peace treaty. The public wanted more war and more victory, but Palmerston felt obliged to contradict his image as a protector of British (and Turkish) interests by the man in the street, for he knew that British interests ultimately demanded peace. War against other European powers on land would prove disastrous, and the American Civil War in 1861–65 had illustrated how completely resources could be depleted and how devastating the effect of such prolonged war could be between two determined European peoples.[49]

The loss of constitutional government abroad, even more than the loss of British prestige and influence, frightened Palmerston. By constitutional government he meant a political structure that would preserve all elements of society in a balanced structure: aristocratic landowners, merchants, the growing industrial working class and poor labourers of all descriptions. The triumph of any one class led to extremism, destruction and loss of liberty. The triumph of the middle and the lower classes (as he saw it) in France had led to the tyranny of Robespierre and then of Napoleon. The absence of a large landed elite in the United States led to a dangerous, expansionist and volatile republic. Palmerston's foreign policy provided a palette on which to paint a picture of elite formation with the perfect balance.

But on the Continent, Palmerston feared a greater threat: absolutism would triumph from Siberia to Gibraltar if Britain could not keep her economic and military strength and maintain a balance of power. The absolutist governments of Prussia, Russia and Australia far outweighed the staying power of France, which stood alone and weak. The United States held ambitions in the Americas but in its isolation cared little for Europe. So the maintenance and projection of British trade and military strength around the world alone guaranteed constitutionalism and liberty. Informal empire, a term not in use by Palmerston, guaranteed the trade arrangements and revenues that kept Britain supreme in the marketplace and on the high seas. Anything less, he believed, could mean the extinction of freedom for the entire world.

But as the Industrial Revolution continued to evolve in European countries, Britain saw her relative – if not her absolute – economic power slipping. Palmerston saw that 'The Rivalship of European manufacturers is fast excluding our productions from the markets of Europe and we must unremittingly endeavor to find in other parts of the world new vents for the produce of our industry.' Interestingly he goes on to mention both the Middle East and the Far East as potential partners in commerce, areas where he initiated many interventions.[50]

Britain considered free trade as a benefit to both parties and a refusal to trade as an anachronistic refusal to deal justly with other nations in a responsible community. But Britain also had other motives. Palmerston understood well that when a corrupt, medieval society traded with the West the trade itself deeply changed that society. Above all, Palmerston understood that trade undermined landowning elites and placed in its stead a merchant elite, an elite that became an internal source of change and modernization. Modernization meant not just technology but democracy and if not universal suffrage, at least the representation of a growing urban middle class. And it meant missionaries, the rule of law and the egalitarian values that Christianity brought with it.[51] One leading missionary to the Far East, only a few years before Palmerston's tenure in office as Foreign Secretary, stated the case decisively in describing the transformation that he hoped to see in China:

> The science, learning, and genius of the West have unfolded their attainments and excellencies . . . charged with the strongest declarations of amity and good-will; commerce has applied its enterprise and perseverance to the task, and has disclosed the advantages of its honorable pursuit; but all have failed to form those relations, and secure that intercommunication, and the recognition of the reciprocity of interest, which bind civilized nations to each other. China still proclaims her proud and unapproachable supremacy, and

> disdainfully rejects all pretension in any other nation to be considered as her equal. This feeling of contemptible vanity Christianity alone will, in all probability, be able to destroy.[52]

Popular writers reinforced the projection of British power overseas, and took heart not only in the military prowess of the British Navy but in the outflow of people and culture. Charles Wentworth Dilke, like Carlyle, outlined the characteristics of an informal empire that penetrated far beyond the reach of cannon balls fired from naval vessels. After the publication of his most influential book, *Greater Britain: A Record of Travel in English-Speaking-Countries during 1866 and 1867* (1869), Dilke went on to become a skilled parliamentarian and member of Gladstone's Cabinet. Until a spectacular divorce case in 1885 ruined his public influence, many regarded him as the natural heir to the Liberal Party and a future prime minister. Dilke wrote *Greater Britain* while still in his early twenties. It instantly became a classic imperial text, reflecting racial optimism and his certainty of Anglo-Saxon ascendency.

He exulted that Britain had planted 'England across the sea' and moulded the migrant offshoots of Spain, Germany and elsewhere into images of his homeland. By 'Greater Britain' Dilke meant an England in Latin America and the United States in addition to the formal empire.[53] He 'followed England round the world' in 1866–67, travelling alone by sail and steamship. He looked for England abroad by sighting two key markers: blood and culture. He found this in the white dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Cape, and following the colonial trail to India, in the adoption of ideas and patterns of living far removed from the settlements. Culture, he enthused, crystallized around a certain pattern and created Englishmen round the globe: 'If . . . mixture with other peoples had modified the blood, I saw, too, that in essentials the race was always one.' While he forecast that the world would be overrun by Anglo-Saxon peoples – due to a high birth rate and financial success – he saw a broad empire of global culture, a mosaic of 'Englands across the sea', made up of all kinds of nationalities. The whole world, he predicted, would be English. The United States, Britain's finest son, will complete the task that England had started. For 'Through America England is speaking to the world.' Together the influence of Britain and the United States offered the possibility of 'planting free institutions among the dark-skinned peoples of the world' and thus forever enshrining liberty as a world heritage.

How did Dilke vary from a typical mid-Victorian imperialist? He differed considerably because he strongly advocated the informal spread of culture and English dominion through informal means – chiefly trade. While he never went so far as to advocate letting go of India, he nonetheless showed great scepticism regarding the value of holding the colonies. First, the white dominions of Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Cape only cost British taxpayers money. As with the shining example of the United States, Britain could gain all the advantages of trade without the responsibility of defending the Dominions with independence. Canada 'draws from us some three millions annually for her defence' and yet 'makes no contribution toward the cost'. Yet Canada would never help Britain in a European war. Only prestige holds the colonies to the mother country. But to be the 'mother of free nations' with a strong navy is every bit as good as the prestige of holding vast tracts of land. The only real advantages that the colonies gave were cultural and intellectual stimulation and breadth of experience. A confederation of the English-speaking countries of the world would allow independence but keep the ties of culture, trade and race intact. He dreamed a prophetic dream of the Commonwealth and, without using the term, a mystical informal empire that would weave disparate cultures and the loose ends of humanity into a unified world culture.[54]

Among traders, politicians and diplomats, reference to the expanding influence of British and then American power are common before the latter part of the nineteenth century. Historians elaborated concepts of informal empire.[55] An early historical treatment of influence and empire is touched upon in John Robert Seeley's *The Expansion of England*, first published in 1883. Seeley, the first modern historian at Oxford and the first theorist of the history of the British Empire focused on formal empire but often approached the topic of national influence outside of the formal bounds of empire. Like Dilke he questioned the value of non-white colonies. India festered like a wound and should be excised quickly. Unlike Dilke he believed that the soul and purpose of the British Empire lay in its white settler colonies in Australia, Canada, New Zealand and South Africa.[56] But Seeley clearly saw that imperial power took many forms. For instance war provided new opportunities for trade. Trade and investment in turn provided new opportunities for war and the expansion of empire.[57] He disagreed with the critics of the aristocracy who inferred that feudal aristocracy – with its military traditions – preferred war and that commercial classes, on the other hand, preferred peace. Not so. How did Britain conquer India? First by trading with her and then by expanding territory to secure the conditions necessary to continue trade. War led to trade that then led to the promotion of humane principles of good government. In fact the more commercial Britain became in the Early Modern period, the more warlike she also became. He wrote:

> Commerce in itself may favour peace, but when commerce is artificially shut out by a degree of government from some promising territory, then commerce just as naturally favours war. We know this by our own recent experience with China.

He did not stop in his analysis with the British Empire. Like Dilke he proposed a new kind of empire for the United States and yet never defined the term for this new form of imperialism. The Anglo-Saxon giant in the West would not have a formal empire, yet it would nonetheless be 'the dominating state of the world'.[58] As with so many Victorians the idea of informal empire seemed firmly in place, and yet was never named.

Americans also saw the expansion of Anglo-Saxon influence. Josiah Strong, a congregational minister from Cincinnati, Ohio, wrote *Our Country* at the request of the American Home Missionary Society published in 1885. Influenced by the evangelical vision of Lyman Beecher, founder of the American Temperance Society, he advocated in the United States what Dilke had advocated in Britain.[59] The book sold 175,000 copies by 1916, with chapters reprinted in newspapers, magazines and pamphlets throughout the English-speaking world.[60] Strong saw that present trends in the 1880s favoured North Europeans – particularly Anglo-Saxons – as the future masters of the world, expanding influence through investment and immigration. He also predicted that the world would become English in a cultural sense. He understood that non-whites, 'in order to compete with the Anglo-Saxon . . . will probably be forced to adopt his methods and instruments, his civilization and his religion'.[61] While Christianity held the loyalty of Anglo-Saxons, in non-white nations 'a widespread intellectual revolt' was taking place against 'traditional beliefs'. He quoted the historian James Anthony Froude that, 'Among the Mohammedans, Jews, Buddhists, [and] Brahmins', God was preparing Anglo-Saxon civilization for 'the die with which to stamp the nations' and that creeds were yearly losing their hold.[62]

Higher civilization, military valour, wealth and increasing numbers would accomplish this, but also the necessity of speaking English as a world language. The English language galloped round the world inside a Trojan Horse. Embedded in the language were the values of the English people, their ideas and aspirations, making the writings of the English heritage available to the world, until the language of Shakespeare became the language of the world. But what nation would hold the sceptre of power and rule over this empire of influence? Britain's empire surpassed anything the world had ever seen in the past, but Strong felt that the star of empire had moved west to the United States. It is evident 'that the United States is to be the home of this race, [Anglo-Saxon], the principal seat of his power, the great center of his influence'.[63]

We see in the Palmerston era, and in the project of informal empire that has continued to this day, the desire of elites of one nation to alter the formation of elites in other countries through the conditions of exchange. We also see – in fits, starts and even reversals – discernable intentionality of purpose. Although such intentionality does not prove that Britain and then later the United States succeeded in its purpose of constructing a durable informal empire in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it fulfils a critical step in that direction.

Comparisons between a mammoth Victorian British informal empire and an even larger twentieth-century American informal empire have topical urgency – especially when informal empire projects a form of enlightened globalism under the rubric of democratic and libertarian principles. But tempting as it may be to deploy the concept of informal empire to understand current foreign policy decisions by Washington and London, much more work needs to be done on the topic to turn a rather intangible 'touch-and-go thing' into a better understood historical phenomenon. The argument for informal empire is strong: massive investment in a foreign economy; large numbers of settlers or guest workers who run major sections of an economy or produce critical amounts of labour; outside interventions, whether military, diplomatic or economic; relations between elites that determine the economic, cultural and political direction of a country; new identities among elite groups that link them to the imperial power. All these factors may justify the term 'informal empire' and certainly call for specialized studies that can tie together the many histories of the British and American empires for a more useful comparison.

4

Informal Empire and Africa

The lines between formal and informal empire in nineteenth-century Africa were abstract, even wistful. While maps were often inaccurate and overlapping zones of influence impossible to trace, trade nonetheless radiated from the coasts deep into the interior and played a decisive role in the transformation and modernization of Africa. When Europeans first began to trade on the coastal cities, and as penetration moved steadily inland up the shallow rivers and over the trails of high plateaus and rainforests of the interior, African elites traded with outsiders and new economic structures arose. The quest for guns and other Western commodities by African elites stimulated slave-trading, while European farming methods and the introduction of new crops like corn and wheat and of new livestock-grazing practices, notably for cattle and sheep, changed eating habits and the very landscape of the continent. Missionaries like David Livingstone (1813–73) and the many thousands who followed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries propagated Christianity, further promoting economic change. As Africans began to eat European food so they also exported these foods through port cities, particularly south to the Cape Colony – a growing economic powerhouse. Hunting for export spurred a change in traditional society. Africans sold elephant tusks that Europeans made into billiard balls and ivory piano keys. Honey, furs, gold, diamonds, leather hides and wild rubber, all enticed white expansion north and east from the white settlement in the Cape. This in turn led to increased African migration for jobs and economic opportunities.

As early as the eighteenth century Britain held a dominant role in the coastal regions of West Africa. The British maintained trading stations between Senegambia and the Niger Delta, with a presence in the Gold Coast that went back to the seventeenth century. While Britain sought trade and influence, it also sought to end the slave trade. Lord Palmerston signed a series of treaties with African rulers to suppress the slave trade on moral grounds and, significantly, to open up and safeguard legitimate trade. Because British traders succeeded in obtaining the products that they needed for markets at home and abroad, the extension of formal colonies in Africa would have been redundant. British political leaders much preferred informal influence to formal control. While the French began expanding in West Africa in the 1870s, it was not until the 1880s that the European powers, in competition with each other, launched the 'Scramble for Africa', in which they carved up into formal colonies almost the whole of black Africa. Lord Salisbury quipped that when he 'left the Foreign Office in 1880, nobody thought about Africa. When I returned to it in 1885, the nations in Europe were almost quarrelling with each other as to the various portions of Africa which they could obtain.' Quite unlike Latin America, informal control in Africa preceded formal control.[1]

British influence radiated out from the city of Lagos in Nigeria, with navy cruisers patrolling the vast coast of West Africa. With Palmerston in the Foreign Office in 1830, the British brokered treaties in both East and West Africa to suppress the slave trade. Palmerston gave instructions for the Royal Navy to seize all slaving vessels, and to send marines to the coast when necessary to disrupt the infrastructure of slave-selling markets on shore. Naval forces attacked Bonny in 1836, sailed up and cleared away slave markets on the Gallinas River in 1840, and blockaded Dahomey in the 1850s. Stopping this 'foul and detestable crime', would prove a moral blessing, Palmerston thundered in Parliament, and guaranteed that 'the greatest commercial benefit would accrue, not to England only, but to every civilized nation'.[2] Africans, weaned off the easy profits of slavery, would learn to engage in moral and civilizing economic activities to the benefit of all trading partners. These commercial benefits included a wide array of commodities. The production of palm oil, one of the most important of these commodities, increased from just a few thousand tons a year in the 1820s to in excess of 30,000 tons by the early 1850s.

The African elites that collaborated with the British went far beyond merely signing away rights to trade slaves. They also contracted for the free movement of goods and agreed to strict enforcement by the Royal Navy. They sold their loyalty as well, with chiefs drawing stipends to replace the lost income from slaving. Although the British had not yet brought most of the West African coast under formal colonial rule, they subscribed many of the elites onto a British payroll. Backed by naval forces that supported consuls collecting debts and enforcing the terms of the treaties, the Foreign Office had substantial authority over local elites.

Private initiatives supplemented government activity, and were often patronized by the Foreign Office. British explorers and traders penetrated Niger in 1841 and 1857, Dahomey in 1850 and Lagos in 1851, followed in 1861 by annexation. The British did not necessarily seek formal colonies in West Africa. We know this because Palmerston pointedly refused to take up offers for new colonies, such as Abyssinia (Ethiopia) in the 1840s and Egypt in 1859.

The West Coast of Africa presented a different set of challenges in halting the slave trade than did the East Coast. The Portuguese transported slaves from West Africa and sold them largely to Brazil. In East Africa the Arab Sultan of Muscat (today Oman) launched his trading operations from Zanzibar. Oman still managed to bring in slaves from the interior of Africa to labour on date plantations. Mombasa, Lamu, Pemba and Kilwa, port cities on the East African coast, shipped out 3000 slaves each year. Arab traders went far into Africa, penetrating to the shores of Lake Nyasa and Malawi, exporting slaves, sugar, cloves and ivory.

The British signed a Treaty of Commerce and Navigation in 1792 with the Sultan of Oman. While the authority to intervene and stop the slave trade in East Africa served as the main motivation for the treaty, the arrangement gave leverage to the British to influence the Sultan. Ideas of informal empire inspired a broad spectrum – from officials to missionaries and entrepreneurs. Napoleon had dreamed of taking Oman to cut off India, and this made the region all the more important. India needed a market for its own products, and the East Coast of Africa appeared inviting. But fighting slavery was not a profitable venture, and the British, although gaining influence through trade treaties, paid dearly for its moral stance by the loss of potential allies who stood much to gain from the slave trade. Regardless of its economic impact, stamping out slavery in East Africa required a forceful British presence.

The British were not alone in vying for influence in East Africa. The United States played a colourful role in the foundation of the Zanzibar Empire. Oman signed its first trade treaty with the United States before any other power. The reason for this can only be guessed at. The United States had the slave-holding tradition of the Southern states, and Zanzibar had the largest and last stronghold of slave-trading operating in the world with the ambition of pushing trade routes reaching deep into upper Nigeria and the Great Lakes region. What slaves the Arabs snatched they funnelled through the city of Zanzibar on the Island of Zanzibar, and from there into the Middle East and into Muslim hands throughout Asia. The Sultan signed this treaty in 1833, hoping that trade with the United States would finance the expansion of his empire.

In 1840 Sultan Sayyid Sa'id schemed to capture Mozambique from Portugal, which lay well south of his already established coastland empire. He also sought enhanced diplomatic relations with the United States. He imagined that if he could sell Omani and Zanzibar goods – cloves and ivory, among other items – to the United States, he could use the money to purchase firearms and expand his slave trade. This would successfully circumnavigate the embargo on the arms trade in East Africa by Britain and France.

Accordingly, in 1840, the Sultan's ambassador, Ahmad ibn Na'aman, sailed an 80-foot ship into New York harbour. While it leaked water and its sails hung in rags, this only added to the exotic allure of the visitor. Journalists flocked to the vessel to describe the scene. The ambassador, colourfully dressed in black with a bright scarlet turban, fired the imagination of the press. He flourished his credentials and then, red crescent flag flying, opened his ship as a shop and sold off a load of cloves, coffee, Persian carpets and ivory tusks. With the money he bought 300 rifles and three tons of gunpowder. He sailed home in a ship overhauled by the US government and a gift of four revolvers from President Martin Van Buren.[3]

British informal power in the region can reasonably be dated from the 1830s when the British entered the Persian Gulf and imposed a naval rule of law. Seeing this, Sa'id chose to cooperate. Importing thousands of Indians from the British Raj, Sa'id and his successors utilized their talents for banking, their contacts for international trade and their governmental experience gained serving the British in India. Sa'id also imported Arabs as mercenaries. Under this royal army the bureaucracy lorded over the local Arab elite and, on the coastlands, a mixed Arab–African elite ruled over Africans. The British held the greatest power in the region, after the Sultan's family, then Indians, Arab mercenaries and businessmen, mixed-race Arabs and Africans and, at the bottom, Africans.[4]

This hierarchical arrangement did not go unnoticed by the Arabs. They had once considered themselves the masters of the territories that the Sultan, with his new Indian helpmates, now ruled under patronage of the British. This caused uprisings, first in Muscat and then in Zanzibar itself. The British responded by backing on various occasions the most pliant and capable rulers and intervening with loans, material support and, at times, warships. British policy in the region inculcated trade and repressed traditional forms of government that seemed anti-commercial. Policy-makers allied themselves with leaders who provided

British power and trade without formal empire. This informal empire kept other European powers, and also the Americans, effectively out of East Africa.[5]

While the British suppression of slavery laid the foundation for informal empire in East Africa, utilitarian principles alone do not explain the impulse. The suppression of slavery outraged many of Britain's natural allies in Africa. When Commodore Leopold Heath, Commander of the East Indies Station in 1868, searched 400 dhows and released hundreds of captive slaves, he also caused widespread resentment in Zanzibar. Arab chiefs on the coast and on the Isle of Cloves furiously protested. A hefty subsidy proved necessary to pacify the Sultan in Zanzibar for this British outrage, including a wholly subsidized steamship with regular mail deliveries to the island. Finally, Prime Minister William Gladstone initiated an agreement with Zanzibar that would gradually purge the kingdom of slavery. He hoped that Indians flowing into the region from India, and who were still British subjects, would extend British influence over the whole of East Africa the way white settlers extended control over Australia and the Cape. The British threatened an embargo against the Sultan until he agreed. Moral outrage fuelled informal empire, in this case sustained by immigration, racial diversity and capitalism.[6]

Before the explorations of David Livingstone, Central East Africa around Lake Malawi was terra incognita to the Europeans. No gold rushes opened the Lakes country and sent swarms of prospectors inland. Although the territory boasted attractive rolling hills on the southern shore suitable for crops of all sorts – and a potential agricultural class due to the densest population in sub-Saharan Africa – European powers simply did not find the area strategically necessary.[7] All this changed when Livingstone discovered Lake Ngami, Lake Malawi (often called Lake Nyasa) and what came to be called the Victoria Falls in 1855.

Livingstone crossed the interior of Africa from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean, and captured the imagination of the public with descriptions of the landscape, the life and manners of African tribes and, most importantly, of Portuguese ambitions in the area and the degrading influence of the African and Arab trade slavers. Sparse on easily exploitable natural resources, the Lakes country thrived on an Indian Ocean trade that exported ivory and slaves through, for the most part, Arab traders. Arab traders then sold the slaves to the Middle East, Brazil and the plantations on the French colony of Réunion and Bourbon. The efficiency of selling off black porters who carried ivory to the coast particularly outraged Victorian morality. British exploration and missions likewise alarmed the Portuguese and added to the tensions between the European powers over Africa. Robert Morier, British Ambassador to Portugal, wrote to the Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, that the rhetoric of the Cortes legislators along with their 'newspaper writers, the only people in this country who still retain the power of exertion', had wildly fired up Portuguese counterclaims in the region.[8]

Over the course of the nineteenth century Africa remained sidelined as a major trading partner as the importance of India, China, Latin America, Europe and the United States increased. But paradoxically Africa loomed even larger as a romantic incubator of heroic visions for missionaries, explorers and scientists. It also kindled commercial hopes as a potential market. The abolitionist, Thomas Fowell Buxton's hugely influential speeches and his book *The African Slave Trade* (1839), persuaded many that the British did not need a new formal empire in Africa, but that free trade and free labour would turn Africans from slavery to useful labourers on the land. They could grow raw materials and sell to Britain, and buy in return British manufactures. They loomed as a potential market of millions of customers.[9] Buxton wrote that:

> Let missionaries and schoolmasters, the plough and the spade, go together, and agriculture will flourish; the avenues to legitimate commerce will be opened; confidence between man and man will be inspired; whilst civilization will advance as the natural effect, and Christianity operate as the proximate cause of this happy change.[10]

Livingstone, a spectator in the massive crowd when Buxton gave the send-off speech to the Nigerian mission, made the opening up of Africa to commerce and Christianity his lifetime's work.

Livingstone made a series of journeys to the African Great Lakes region from 1859 to 1867. The ideal Arcadian existence of some of the tribes (particularly the Ngonde) inspired him, as well as the horror of the slave trade that disrupted the region and degraded African society with guns.[11] The Yao expanded their invasions from northern Mozambique and drove out, slaughtered and enslaved Africans on Manganja land on the highlands on the south shore of Lake Malawi, while the Ngoni expanded into East and Central Africa. Arab strongmen invaded areas and imported guns and Islam while exporting slaves. Livingstone saw that the only hope of ending the slave trade in this region would be to substitute another economic export in its place. Seeing small cotton crops grown in the Shire Highlands south of Lake Malawi, he had great hopes that the region could export cotton to England. This would end the dependence on slaves while helping England renounce dependence on cotton grown by slaves in the United States. Commerce and Christianity would integrate the region into the world, he believed, and introduce civilization and light where he saw only darkness and slavery and human misery.[12]

Livingstone took his dream of uniting Christianity and commerce together as ‘pioneers of civilization’ to Africa back home.[13] He became an instant sensation. The enthusiasm over his mission inspired the launch of a series of new missionary thrusts: in the Shire Highlands in the southern part of Malawi Lake, in the Congo and in Tanganyika. These missions failed, primarily because of the failure of maintaining the necessary steamboats. Of those successful enterprises that Livingstone inspired, the African Lakes Company in particular stands alone. This company also faced daunting difficulties of transportation and communication, but it lasted for well over a century and impacted the rationalization of the interior of eastern Africa in significant ways.

When Livingstone died, four men met together after the funeral on 18 April 1874 to plan the next phase of development for Central East Africa. They agreed to agitate for the launching of a memorial mission called ‘Livingstonia’, the first incarnation of the Livingstonia mission later to become the African Lakes Company (ALC).[14] Henry Stanley had first suggested an invasion of Africa with steamers, missionaries and traders, to vastly extend the reach of the British Empire, turning it into a ‘nearer India’ along the line of the old East India Company. The founders of the Livingstonia mission proposed an interesting twist on this idea: the new company would be a distinctly Scottish endeavour, a Scottish empire in practice under the umbrella of British authority. James Stewart, one of the founding partners, raised money primarily from Scotland to finance the venture. He hoped that it would merge Christianity and commerce, reform and modernize the interior of Africa and tie in the region to the global economy, in particular to Glasgow.[15]

Various events had already brought the interior of Africa to the attention of the British. Salisbury noted that:

> the recent discoveries of the English traveler Livingstone were followed by organized attempts on the part of English religious and commercial bodies to open up and civilize the districts surrounding and adjoining the Lake.[16]

The Suez Canal, opened in 1869, cut out the long trip around the Cape of Africa, and brought closer not only Asia and the Indian subcontinent but also the East Coast of Africa. In 1872 the British India Steam Navigation Company established a regular route to Aden and Zanzibar.[17] Cecil Rhodes, among others, envisioned a Cape-Town-to-Cairo British Empire, painting the interior red – little caring about the swamps on the coasts. The search for untapped minerals, the market for ivory, the stirring of other imperial powers in Africa, particularly Germany and the determination by the British government to stamp out the slave trade wherever they found it gave grist to the mill of mass-circulation newspapers to focus the attention of the British public on the region.[18]

The differences between the Livingstonia mission and the East India Company stand out as starkly as the similarities however. The ALC provided the first mechanized transportation links to the outside world with steamers to traverse hundreds of miles over Lake Malawi. Unlike the East India Company, they pursued a missionary ideal that intended to foster commerce by providing a settlement to educate, offer medical services, church services and practical mechanical skills such as carpentry and farming. Scottish Protestant businessmen launched the Livingstonia mission to Christianize and civilize the region around all of what is now Malawi, and portions of Tanzania, Mozambique and Zambia.

Much like the East India Company, however, the ALC built their empire of trade and influence through chiefs and local strongmen. The Africans in this region frequently quarrelled and broke up into small villages and tribes – large political units did not exist.[19] The ALC established, tentatively and fitfully, the force of law through these structures until Britain formally absorbed the territory into its colonial empire. In less than half a century the ALC governed, informally and indirectly, Nyasa (also known as Lake Malawi) – particularly the Shire Highlands – and much of what is now Malawi, hastening the process of Western rationalization and the integration of this region into the world economy.

The British were not the only ones with an eye on this region. The Portuguese had a vague interest in it, although they did not formally lay a claim. Their control of territories to the south and east enabled them to impose a tax on imports. Sometimes they waived the tax or reduced it. Despite these annoyances, after a few years the officials of the Livingstonia mission realized that they needed to employ a more intensive commercial approach. The company reorganized from the Livingstonia to the African Lakes Company. The articles of association laid out an ambitious programme of civilizing Africa.

If informal empire had an original constitution it would resemble the articles of association for the ALC. No company quite compares with its breadth, scope and ambition. The articles assert that the company would explore and then 'Navigate the rivers and lakes of Central Africa' that connect to the Indian Ocean, which in turn would 'develop the trade and resources of the country', encouraging 'legitimate trade' rather than slavery.[20] It would undertake the 'building, purchasing, chartering, and hiring' of sailing vessels, usually under the British flag;[21] constructing 'Houses, Mills, Manufactories, Machinery Plant Wharves, Stages Warehouses, Sheds, Stores',[22] to purchase, occupy and possess land; it would act as 'Merchants . . . in articles of every description found' brought into Africa and out of Africa.[23] It would manufacture for domestic consumption items as needed.[24] The new economy would require development. Therefore in addition to transportation, roads and trading stations, the company would introduce and cultivate 'Trees, Grains, Shrubs, and Plants',[25] and the importing and exporting of domestic animals[26] and 'Agreements with Government Authorities, Native Chiefs',[27] and the defence 'from hostile attack' of the company's operations.[28] Finally it would 'establish agencies for the purposes of the Company in Africa'.[29]

As Hugh William MacMillan – whose dissertation is the only history of the ALC in this early period – has pointed out, the economic depression in Britain in the 1870s spurred on a prototype of Keynesian-like thinking, where investors hoped that new spending in imperial development projects would expand markets and demand.[30] In this case the expectation to sell textiles and build railways as well as steamships would benefit Glasgow in particular and offer a return on investment. Similar arguments would later be used for development programmes in the formal British Empire when J. H. Thomas, Lord Privy Seal, introduced the Colonial Development Fund Bill in Parliament in 1929 in the hope that as colonies developed 'much useful work could be done for the people in this country'.[31]

The ALC development programme contained equal measures of altruism and realpolitik. William Ewing, after representing the company's interests at the Berlin Conference, suggested to the directors that:

> The managers in Africa should be asked to secure titles of possession for the Company's land and property in Africa, and cession of rights of sovereignty over as many of the native chiefs as possible with a view to handing over the said sovereign rights to the British Crown.[32]

The directors readily agreed to this. They were one of a number of chartered companies that extended British interest and power without burdening the government with the expense of defence and administration.[33]

The operation succeeded. The company engaged in the trade of ivory profitably, and secured from the Admiralty contracts to supply His Majesty's gunboats on Lake Nyasa and the Zambezi River, governmental mail and transport services, including mail to North-Eastern Rhodesia on Lake Mweru. But most importantly there had been 'material progress . . . towards the development of the natural resources', with settlement by Europeans, coffee plantations, a telegraphic service (with funding from Cecil Rhodes) and the prosperous missions.[34] The company 'held the ground against the encroachment of the Portuguese', and fought wars against Arab slave-traders – all functions of war, diplomacy and economic development normally fulfilled by government.[35] This pioneering work of commerce and Christianity had the most satisfying result of all to the directors of the ALC when the British government formally took over the administration of Nyasaland and the first imperial Commissioner and Consul General, Harry Hamilton Johnston, took charge. The informal empire of the ALC then evolved into indirect rule under the auspices of the British Protectorate of Nyasaland. While treaties and agreements fell into the hands of the new commissioner, the ALC continued to support missions and commerce and general development, adding to previous efforts from the late 1870s to the early 1890s: mining for gold and other minerals; building railways, waterways, bridges, roads, reservoirs; laying down cable for a telegraph service; and providing general infrastructure support for the company.[36]

The missionaries and the ACL were fiercely anti-Portuguese and pro-British. This only further spurred on the Portuguese to make claims to the territory, and thus played a role in the Scramble for Africa, with the Scottish missionaries and the ALC goading the government (and a reluctant Salisbury) to take action. An attempt at an Anglo-Portuguese 'Congo Treaty' in 1884 fell by the wayside when the Chancellor of Germany, Otto von Bismarck, intervened and called the Berlin Conference for 1884.[37] The territorial issues were finally settled with the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty of 11 June 1891, establishing the Nyasaland Districts Protectorate, renamed the British Central Africa Protectorate in 1893. At this point the informal empire of the ALC came to an end and operated within the full protection of British rule.

The 'Scramble for Africa'

In 1961, the fruits of over a decade's work appeared in the co-authored book, *Africa and the Victorians* by Robinson and Gallagher. The book represented the summation of the thoughts of Robinson and Gallagher on the expansion of the British Empire during the late-Victorian period. By studying the Scramble for Africa, they focused on the most debated and important subject in late-nineteenth-century imperial history. Both authors thought that the book provided a case study for their initial article on informal empire.

The authors stated that *Africa and the Victorians* disproved the Marxist–Leninist vision of the Scramble for Africa. The accumulation of goods and capital in Europe did not, in their view, result in Germany, France and Britain jockeying to gain an outlet for goods in Africa.[38] Already Robinson and Gallagher had departed from their initial interpretation that Britain's expanding economy fuelled informal and formal imperialism in every region of the globe. They sought, in this book, to explain why the Scramble for Africa occurred with little economic motive. They advocated an 'official mind' in political and diplomatic circles that made decisions on Africa far removed from economic concerns, and that 'gave much less weight to economic interests and much more to strategic factors in Africa'.[39] Crisis drew Gladstone into his bondage of Egypt, and that in turn pulled the British into South Africa, West Africa and East Africa:

> From start to finish the partition of tropical Africa was driven by the persistent crisis in Egypt. When the British entered Egypt on their own, the Scramble began; as long as they stayed in Cairo, it continued until there was no more Africa to divide.[40]

Robinson and Gallagher brilliantly drew together different archival strands to portray a picture where forces outside of their control compelled the British to rush deeper into Africa. They began by working to dispel the notion that economics played a primary role in the push for partition. First, their notion of the 'official mind' argued that government officials, including permanent undersecretaries and the shifting balance of Cabinets, tried not to blend politics with economics. The ruling aristocracy of Britain supposedly maintained an indifference or even had a revulsion of economics. The niggardliness of this metropolitan view compounded economic events throughout North and tropical Africa; had they wanted economic spoils, there would have been little to fight for. While the early Victorians had sought to develop Egypt economically, the failures of Khedive Isma'il Pasha – culminating in his bankruptcy – effectively ended the penetration of British capital and economic interests into the region.[41] Palm oil provided some economic basis for small outposts on the Niger Delta, but these oil ruffians from

Liverpool had little lobbying influence in London, and the amounts of return were paltry compared to serious industrial concerns. Neither the Conservatives under Disraeli – despite his rhetoric – nor the Liberals under Gladstone sought to create a new imperial policy in the Mediterranean or sub-Saharan Africa.

So how did Egypt suck in Britain? Until the early 1880s Britain played a secondary role to the dominant French, whose interests lay in Egypt since the days of Napoleon. The British worried less about the loan payments from the Khedival regime than the safety of the Suez Canal, the main artery of shipping into the Indian Ocean and to the jewel in the crown of Britain's empire, India. Ahmed 'Urabi, a colonel in the Egyptian army, led a proto-nationalist movement that culminated in riots in Alexandria, where a number of Europeans lost their lives and property. With fear of losing Egypt to hardened anti-British nationalists, the British reluctantly, and with French support, bombarded Egypt and sent a mission to control the country. Once the British entered Egypt, Germany, led by Bismarck, and Belgium, led by King Leopold, clamoured for colonies because they feared British domination. Belgium greedily wanted colonies while Bismarck wanted to strike a blow at British ambitions in the region. Thus began the 'Scramble for Africa'.

A year after the publication of their book, Robinson and Gallagher published a shorter account of the Scramble that analyzed its European and African dynamics.[42] This new distillation of *Africa and the Victorians* focused on French politics, the revival of Islam in Northern Africa and German attempts at creating an entente with the French or an alliance with Britain. They claimed that Muslim revolutions and rebellions, inspired by a revivalist Islam against a modernizing Europe, forced the British and French to intervene in Tunisia, Western Sudan, northern Nigeria and the Sudan. Making matters worse, Muslim elites confronted resistance from their own subjects if they collaborated with Christians. In addition to showing how Islam forced French generals into Western Sudan, Robinson and Gallagher reinforced their initial thesis that two crises – one in Egypt and to a lesser extent another in South Africa – compelled the British into making strategic annexations. This led the French and sometimes the Germans to carve up the continent of Africa throughout the 1880s and 1890s. The dynamics of European expansion in Africa, they concluded, lay in the periphery itself and not within economic or social changes within Europe or Britain.

The most lasting theoretical contribution that Robinson made to the historiography of the British Empire is a concept first developed in *Africa and the Victorians*: collaboration. Unlike the negative usage of the word 'collaborate', which often implicitly means 'complicit', Robinson chose the word to mean nothing more than a coordinated working relationship based on mutual interests or benefits.[43] Corresponding to their theory of mid-nineteenth-century imperialism, Robinson assumed that imperial governments wanted empire 'on the cheap'. Gunboats cost money, militaries and administrators cost more. So cheap and effective local intermediaries – collaborators – were necessary. Based on the assumption that Europeans required collaborators, Robinson argued that Europe did not dominate over a supplicant world. Elites in Europe and elsewhere constructed relationships that we call imperialism as a 'political reflex'. This made his theory of imperialism 'excentric' instead of Eurocentric.

Robinson's last contribution to imperial historiography came in the article co-authored with Wm. Roger Louis, 'The Imperialism of Decolonization' (1994). Borrowing from the language of Gallagher and Robinson's 'Imperialism of Free Trade' (1953), they asserted that: 'It should be a commonplace . . . that the post-war Empire was more than British and less than an imperium.'[44] The article argued that American money, political support and military aid propped up Britain's post-Second World War empire. They suggested that:

> At the metropolitan and international levels, British imperial power was substantially an Anglo-American revival. Neither side cared to publish the fact, the one to avoid the taint of imperialism, the other to keep the prestige of Empire untarnished.[45]

While Americans disliked colonialism, they liked communism even less. They only pushed Britain out of its imperial position if it seemed necessary to stave off encroaching communism, such as that in the nationalist decolonization of Africa in the late 1950s.

After its publication, regional scholars quickly weighed into the debate about *Africa and the Victorians*. Colin Newbury voiced disquiet about sections of the book that dealt with West Africa. He questioned the assertion that trade did not lead the British into West Africa. Even without an economic reading, Newbury suggested that a crisis in Egypt cannot explain why Britain remained in the Niger Delta – the economic heart of West Africa – before the Scramble, and why it maintained such a strong grip on it afterwards.[46] While South Africa straddled a strategic route to India, West Africa most definitely did not. He also pointed out that the British feared tariff barriers arising throughout Africa. This is why they pushed Sir George Goldie, governor of the Royal

Niger Company, to buy out French companies, and eventually gave him a charter that offered ostensible free trade but, in reality, a de facto monopoly of palm oil on the lower Niger.[47]

West Africa also drew the attention of John Hargreaves in his book, *Prelude to the Partition* (1963). He investigated the back-and-forth diplomatic and economic relations over West Africa that led to the drawing up of boundaries in the 1880s. The book implicitly critiques Gallagher and Robinson by suggesting that the French actively began taking territory in 1881, after the Sierra Leone boundary commission. By framing the partition in the larger diplomatic–economic relations between Britain and France, and by showing how the French entered West Africa before 1882, Hargreaves undermined much of the empirical basis of *Africa and the Victorians*.[48]

The leading German criticism of *Africa and the Victorians* came from Hans-Ulrich Wehler in *Bismarck und der Imperialsmus* (1969), an economic and political history examining Bismarck's imperial policies.[49] According to Louis, summing up Wehler, Bismarck focused on colonies in the 1880s

> to support Germany's foreign trade in pragmatic style; he tried to unite the German people by picking up the theme of colonial enthusiasm and Anglophobism; and he attempted to defend the traditional social structures of the Prussian state by diverting abroad the forces of social imperialism . . . So far as Bismarck is concerned, African nationalism is a causal factor in European imperialism.[50]

Historians also turned their focus on the Belgian Congo, one of the most important regions of Africa and an important part of the Scramble. Jean Stengers proved to be the most trenchant critic of Gallagher and Robinson's views on African nationalism as a factor for the annexation of Belgium. He wrote a number of articles and chapters that argued that the Belgian Congo is such an anomaly that it cannot be theorized.[51] The weak king of a small European country held the vast territory of the Congo and expressed little interest in the region before the 1880s. While French armies or British bondholders felt some pressure from African nationalism, the Belgian king did not.

Peter J. Cain and Antony G. Hopkins are the most recent historians to re-examine seriously the British partition of Africa. In *British Imperialism: 1688–2000* (2002, 2nd edn) they offer their own interpretation of the partition based on the thesis of gentlemanly capitalism. They assumed that the major strategic decisions for imperial annexation and control stemmed from a group of aristocrats and bankers in London who pulled the political and financial strings to British expansion. Cain and Hopkins agree with Gallagher and Robinson on a number of levels. They believe that Victorian imperialism projected a basic continuity of policies. And they do not deny that the British cared about strategic considerations, especially regarding the Cape. But instead of putting strategy before economics, Cain and Hopkins put economics ahead of strategy. They strongly disagreed with the concept that proto-nationalism explains the Scramble for Africa:

> To claim that imperialism was the result of crises on the periphery is to report the symptoms, not to diagnose the cause; to attribute British intervention to the actions of European rivals is to assign to others impulses which might properly be looked for at home.[52]

Cain and Hopkins try to revive the basic argument that *Africa and the Victorians* combated: that large, long-term domestic economic forces explain the Scramble for Africa. Reviving earlier arguments about the shape of Africa after the partition, Cain and Hopkins show how Britain retained the lion's share of the most valuable regions of Africa: South Africa, Nigeria and Egypt. From here they suggest that the British annexed Boer territory for primarily economic reasons.[53] The Cape needed railway fees from the Witwatersrand gold mines in the Transvaal. With access to the Indian Ocean through Mozambique, the Transvaal had economic independence and it could begin to draw other European powers into South Africa. In effect, the British fought the Second Boer War to protect economic supremacy in South Africa, a necessary prerequisite for strategic control of the Cape.

What can we take from Gallagher and Robinson's thesis about the Scramble for Africa? Their specific argument that European diplomatic blunders and African proto-nationalism caused the partition of Africa cannot seriously be maintained. What should be remembered is that they argued, especially in their first essay, that the partition did not represent a 'New' imperialism. In this particular argument they find agreement with the most recent assessment of Cain and Hopkins. It is also important to remember that long before other scholars, they gave agency to the periphery as a force in the expansion of Europe. While one can overplay these African forces, no history of informal empire in Africa, either during the partition or decolonization, can fail to assess equally African and European causes and agents.

Martin Lynn argues strenuously against the idea of informal empire in West Africa. Gallagher and Robinson had included the region in a wide-ranging list of areas that came under British informal control, putting West Africa in alongside Latin America, the Middle East and China.[54] Against this case, however, is the argument that intervention happened occasionally with no sustained presence. That until the Scramble for Africa, Britain in the 1880s simply did not carry on any extensive trade or play any decisive role. Lynn examines the period 1830–70. He argues against Gallagher and Robinson's description that: 'a suzerainty over much of West Africa [reaching] out from the port of Lagos . . . [was] backed up by the African squadron', where British power 'was supreme along vast stretches of the coast whenever it suited British interests'.[55] But Lynn's argument concedes much of what Gallagher and Robinson advocated: he admits that the area had 'growing British economic interests' where the government did not want to expand formal colonial holdings but wanted influence. Writing on the period after Palmerston entered the Foreign Office in 1830, Lynn conceded that 'it is difficult to see here the "laissez-faire" approach that D. C. M. Platt and others have identified as characterizing British policy in this period'. The British brokered power on the coasts, largely for putting down the slave trade. Lynn quotes Palmerston's statement that the British did more than suppress that 'foul and detestable crime', since they also guaranteed that 'the greatest commercial benefit would accrue, not to England only, but to every civilized nation'.[56]

Indirect rule

The British imported the concept of indirect rule from India to Africa. Indirect rule is similar in concept to informal empire but quite different in practice. Governors of formal empire used the technique as a management tool that co-opted but kept in place indigenous elites. Often the practice overlapped with quasi-formal empire, such as with the Indian principalities, or engaged in practices outside of the formal empire that crossed into the informal empire proper, as described below with the Afghans. Indirect rule is pertinent to this exploration since it shares many of the characteristics of informal empire and can operate both inside and outside of formal empire.

The East India Company and then the India Office administered India directly through a governor general and then a viceroy who answered directly to the Crown. Indian princes kept limited autonomy in their states and were advised through a Residence, while the

Crown administered currency, defence, foreign policy and other aspects of state rule. If this patchwork of formal empire were not complicated enough, British India ran its own sub-imperial project of empire in regions adjoining the subcontinent, as well as imperial projects, both formal and informal, in the Middle East, Indian Ocean Islands and parts of the East Coast of Africa. An understudied aspect of the Indian empire is the halfway house of indirect rule – halfway because it can conceptually be placed between formal empire and informal empire. While some scholars have discussed indirect rule in relation to the princely states, it is indirect rule outside of the Indian empire in north-west India that provides perhaps the first operating model of an informal empire by British India.

All the modern European empires employed informal empire as a method of rule when it suited them. The Spanish often ruled their frontiers indirectly using native leadership in the Americas and the Philippines. The Dutch ran Java with indigenous legal structures, giving them control over a mass population of Asians with a minimum of personnel and reduced cost. Indirect rule hindered assimilation, miscegenation and racial resentment, allowing the bulk of the population to look up to their own elite for most of their needs.[57] The British ruled India using both direct and indirect rule. They ruled directly through the East India Company and after 1858 through the Crown while ruling indirectly 600 Indian princes in the nineteenth century through treaties and advisors-in-residence. The imperial resident often pressured the prince into carrying out development projects for roads, education, urban reform and fiscal transparency even though the princes managed their own legal and administration systems.[58]

Indirect rule in India shaded into informal empire in Baluchistan.[59] Absorbed into the Indian empire in 1887, Baluchistan lay just outside the western boundary of the Indian empire and covered parts of what is now south-east Iran and western Pakistan. The dry, mountainous and desert conditions supported nomadic Baloch tribes who had emigrated from Persia in the twelfth century. The Khan of Kalat loosely ruled over tribal chiefs, or sirdars, and claimed sovereignty over most of the region. In 1854 British relations officially began. After the conquest of the Sind, General John Jacob, on the direction of Lord Dalhousie, the Governor General of India, signed a defensive treaty with Nasir Khan II that allowed British advisors-in-residence. It bound the Khan and his heirs ‘in all cases to act in subordinate co-operation’ with the British and to abjure treaties with other powers. The treaty also gave Britain the right to station troops. In return Nasir Khan agreed to keep order and protect merchants, for which services he would accept 5000 pounds each year as a stipend.[60] Three years later, in 1857, the year of the Indian Rebellion, the Indian government appointed a political agent to reside with and advise the Khan. This lasted until 1876 when a new treaty reaffirmed the 1854 treaty and allowed, in addition, the quartering of troops. Both treaties kept the boundary line of the North-West Frontier where the Sikhs had left it.

However tribal raids and instability led to an internal debate among Indian officials. Should they adjust the boundaries with forward military stations for defence and then rule indirectly through the traditional khan, as was done with the Indian princes, or should they maintain a hands-off policy for the Kalat state, guarding the line of demarcation at the border of the Sind where the Sikhs had left it? Events decided the matter. The growing disorder in Baluchistan led to the cancellation of diplomatic relations in 1874. Two years later, in 1876, Viceroy Lord Lytton concluded a new treaty that appointed a governor general over the region and called for the founding of the city of Quetta as a government post with the installation of railways, roads, telegraphs and the rule of law. This effectively ended an informal empire and moved decidedly closer towards formal empire.

In this environment Robert Groves Sandeman arrived as agent in 1877 to serve under the new governor general of Baluchistan. Sandeman won no great military victories, despite the fact that he faced constant trouble on the North-West Frontier and distinguished himself as a soldier in the Indian Rebellion. Rather, he argued for and systematized (more by practice than by theory) a humane imperialism that effectively brought first Baluchistan and then what is now northern Pakistan under British control. Informal empire and indirect rule overlapped in this expansive, arid and mountainous terrain. The effective indirect rule of Baluchistan and the informal control of the Waziri and Pathan tribes that abutted the mountain ranges of southern Afghanistan are generally accredited to Sandeman.

Sandeman argued that because Russia 'advanced towards our Empire' any hesitancy to meet this advance would be regarded by the tribes in this region as timidity. There would be less danger advancing influence beyond rather than hiding behind the frontier line.[61] Yet, in both Afghanistan and Baluchistan, he argued that it would be best to avoid annexation because of the difficulty in holding down such riotous and rebellious tribes in an impossibly mountainous region. Rather, the British should place them 'under a political protectorate . . . managing them by British officers, with the least possible interference in the affairs of the local chiefs or people'.[62] This influence beyond the formal borders of the Indian empire would guarantee safety for all concerned, including traders, and 'all the southern passes leading out of the Punjab and Sind'.[63] But due to 'our disinterestedness' to date, with the expense of two unnecessary wars, it has 'cost us a sum of about fifty million in money . . . and much blood was shed'.[64] Millions would not be required. Indirect rule could be had for 'a few thousand pounds . . . [to] cover the entire cost'.[65] Sandeman wrote:

> There can be no reasonable doubt therefore that the establishment of the present Ruler in Afghanistan was due in a great measure to us. We pay besides 12 lakhs a year, and have supplied him with the best rifles from England. It was due by all accounts to these very rifles that . . . decided the fate of the country. Besides all this the moral support which the Amir derives from the fact of our continued and active friendship must be of immense value to him.[66]

The British, with the support of money and technical and military assistance, and with education, could settle questions regarding the succession of chieftains. Settling disputes, and suggesting useful policies for effective rule, would keep an unruly area from 'becoming involved in disputes with Russia which might be fomented into a *casus belli*'.[67]

Sandeman described his policy, not with the term 'indirect rule' or 'informal empire', but as 'conciliatory intervention' or, again, as a 'community of interests'.[68] Unlike the Governor General of Nigeria, Frederick Lugard (1858–1945) who stressed differences of race and culture, Sandeman felt that while 'difference of race has existed, we have found human nature the same and amendable to like influence'.[69] Thus the British could 'knit the frontier tribes into our Imperial system in time of peace and make their interests ours' even though the region lay well outside the formal boundary lines of the Indian empire.[70] This imperial rule by 'the pacification of border tribes' only encouraged humanizing influence, he felt, and did so more effectively – and less expensively – than by military force.[71] His work appears as a forerunner in many ways to that of Lugard in Nigeria, who served as Governor General of the Colony and Protectorate of Nigeria between 1913 and 1918.[72]

The African Lakes Company evolved into informal empire that utilized indirect rule, and then matured into formal empire with the arrival of the imperial commissioner, Harry Hamilton Johnston. With hindsight it looks very much like the world's first development programme outside of formal empire and, indeed, the forerunner of development programmes within the British Empire that were to emerge in the 1940s. It follows the construction of a Weberian model of Western rationalization from the ground up, prefiguring the ambitious development programmes launched by the United States and Britain after the Second World War. The ALC also served as the first staging ground for a more developed form of indirect rule in Nigeria.

Many historians and political scientists consistently associate indirect rule with a litany of evils. The list of negatives correspond to the negative qualities often associated with informal empire: it is empire on the cheap; it minimalized dissent by gaining collaborators who in turn delayed resistance to imperial repression; it extracted trade while changing the nature of the traditional local economy. In Africa indirect rule has a peculiar odium: it sidelined educated Africans who favoured development and modernity, and instead opted to hand power over to tribal chiefs – and where no tribal chiefs existed, for instance in south-east Nigeria, the doctrines of indirect rule created tribal structures out of thin air.[73] The entire project, in the words of political scientist and journalist Peter Beinart, required 'keeping traditional African political systems in place' and then 'sprinkle a few British administrators on top'.[74] Beinart particularly regretted how the 'appeal of such rhetoric' behind an evil thing like indirect rule sounded superficially like a good thing – modern multiculturalism. However Beinart assured readers that the similarity between indirect rule and multiculturalism could not be sustained since ultimately indirect rule meant 'the opposite of imperialist', a bad thing.[75]

This unconvincing dismissal of indirect rule is not supported by the evidence and belies the complexity of motivations held by imperial officials. Anthony I. Nwabughuogu, Professor of History at Abia State University in Nigeria, thoroughly dissects the rhetoric behind indirect rule and analyzes the vigorous opposition of the Colonial Office to it, all of which tells a substantially different story to that of a quest for cheap power without responsibility. Nwabughuogu argues convincingly that the proponents of the political doctrine of informal rule held sincere views – to the extreme – in his opinion, of a religious belief. Imperial officials did not pursue indirect rule to lower costs, nor to manage the shortage of European labour, nor even to fend off indigenous opposition. Rather, they advocated indirect rule to better develop Africa.

Nwabughuogu traces how popular writers in England like the African explorer Mary Kingsley, the journalist Edmund D. Morel and imperial historian John A. Hobson strenuously argued that Africans deserved more than standard colonial practice and better than the top-down hierarchal rule that went along with it. In *Travels in West Africa* (1897) and *West African Studies* (1899) Kingsley argued that it was a crime worse than murder to destroy the cultural inheritance of other people.[76] Indirect rule had the benefit of adjusting to peculiar circumstances, including peculiar racial characteristics, which is fairer than the imperial status quo because it preserves diverse and worthwhile cultures from destruction. Morel published *Affairs of West Africa* in 1902. He championed basic human rights for Africans in the Congo and in Britain's empire by also promoting indirect rule. Indirect rule would offer basic protections from abusive imperial officials. Hobson, often considered the leading critic of imperialism before the First World War, agreed. The social and political individuality of other races must be respected, and the history of each people understood to guide policy in order to develop, protect and educate properly.[77]

The Oxford historian Margery Perham also caught the public's attention at home to support indirect rule as a method that protected native rights, preserved culture from the 'barbarizing' impact of capitalism and European exploitation.[78] Indirect rule produced a synthesis between African and European culture and thus allowed Africans to bridge over from traditional society to modern development and democracy. As the biographer of Lord Lugard and herself a historian of Africa, Perham defined indirect rule as 'a system by which the tutelary power recognizes existing African societies and assists them to adapt themselves to the functions of local government'.[79] She objected to the criticism that indirect rule crystallized feudalism, and insisted that a humane and effective European elite preserved a diverse culture by working through African traditional structures.

As High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Northern Nigeria (1899–1906), Frederick Lugard instituted and popularized indirect rule. In 1912 he became governor of the two protectorates in Nigeria and from 1914 to 1919 Governor General of Nigeria, which replaced the two protectorates and formed a single political entity. Because the Treasury did not fund the Colonial Office and the colonies were expected to pay for themselves, Lugard favoured collaboration through indirect rule, in this case ruling through traditional tribal chiefs to save money, dampen resistance and transform society slowly by engaging local culture.[80]

He also promoted the policy of indirect rule to prepare the African people for self-government: to bring them slowly into the orbit of education and experience, and some day to have parliamentary power. In his book *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (1926), Lugard argued for the need to employ the traditional and more loyal and natural aristocrats of indigenous people. He felt that sharing the responsibility of governing would prepare Africans for self-rule and enable social reform to advance with the least resistance. This policy contrasts sharply with that of assimilation practiced by the French in sub-Saharan Africa.[81]

Indirect rule must be placed in the humanitarian tradition of imperial interference, backed by powerful idealism and altruism. The champions of indirect rule had, as Nwabughuogu argued, a big impact on the reading public precisely because they projected a sincere belief in the beneficial effects of the system. The list of negatives so often associated with indirect rule rely too heavily on the assumption that imperial powers consciously attempted to deny opportunity to the rising educated classes and implemented indirect rule primarily to hold power with a minimum of expense. The evidence, and the idealism of both the British and later the Americans, does not sustain this claim.[82]

There are many other areas where indirect rule shaded into informal empire, for instance the Persian Gulf states after the Second World War and the Belgian presence in the Congo under a United Nations Mandate and later under a United Nations Trust. Indirect rule had been used by the British dealing with native chiefs in Kenya and Uganda, while the French used it in Algeria, the Germans in Tanganyika and the Dutch with the Dutch East India Company in what is now Indonesia.[83]

Separating the mandate system from indirect rule is difficult.[84] The system of mandates under the League of Nations and trusteeship under the United Nations made 'the line between foreign assistance with the administration of a peoples' territory and colonial rule . . . difficult to draw'.[85] The main purpose remained development and cultural integrity. American president Woodrow Wilson and South African prime minister General Jan C. Smuts originated the mandates proposals for the League of Nations. Smuts meant the concept of self-determination to apply to the territories once held by the Ottoman Empire, Russia and Austria. US president Franklin D. Roosevelt and British prime minister Winston Churchill intended in the Atlantic Charter of 1941 that peoples could choose their own government after the war, meaning, in Roosevelt's eyes, to be in the British Empire or independent.[86] Article 22 (para. 2) of the Covenant of the League of Nations clearly laid down the idea that distinct peoples would move towards self-governance when their situation advanced to that point, which closely related to Lugard's support of indirect rule to offer experience governing at the local level for eventual (if far-off) self-rule.[87] As the anthropologist and linguist Werner Eiselen explained, 'The duty of the native [was] not to become a black European, but to become a better native, with ideals and culture of its own.'[88]

Indirect rule emphasized cultural distinctiveness. It is impossible to separate entirely the ideas behind self-determination, the mandate system, indirect rule and segregation. All draw on the notion that people congregate into traditional forms of cultural and ethnic patterns, and that these patterns are disrupted only at the expense and well-being of the group in question. Only with the greatest of difficulty did Perham distance indirect rule from the segregationist policy of South Africa. Indirect rule has often overlapped with informal empire. Like informal empire it is also an ongoing phenomenon of postwar empire, and can be seen in contemporary arrangements in Iraq after handing back self-governance to the Iraqis while keeping ultimate power and control in the hands of the United States.[89]

Conclusion

Britain played a formative role in co-opting and transforming elites in Africa. This included working with traditional elites, and thus changing their characteristics forever, raising groups into favour and suppressing others. Trade played a leading role but so, too, did the suppression of slavery as did missionaries, investment and settlement. Tracing the contours of this informal empire on a map however is a less than fruitful enterprise. As Salisbury quipped to the French ambassador regarding negotiations over Africa in 1889 and 1890, saying that he found himself

> drawing lines upon maps where no human foot has ever trod. We have been giving away mountains and rivers and lakes to each other, but we have only been hindered by the small impediment that we never know exactly where those mountains and rivers and lakes were.[90]

The story of empire in Africa is the story of both formal and informal empire. Informal predominated over most of black Africa south of the Sahara, until the Scramble for Africa in the 1890s. The European powers carved up almost the whole of the continent into formal empires – British, French, German, Portuguese, Belgium and Italian. If in the Americas formal empire led to informal empire, in Africa informal empire led to formal colonies and protectorates that lasted into the 1960s and 1970s. Then with independence informal empire returned, with British, American and French influence, sometimes Cuban as in

Angola, predominating until the end of the Cold War. From the latter part of the twentieth century until the present, American influence, challenged by China, defines the region.

Any travel today through Africa will reveal profound Westernization, as well as organized and unorganized resistance to this process. Luxury goods abound for the very rich and new infrastructures, financed and built by outsiders, continue to challenge a rapidly disappearing local culture. American music and Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets abound in villages and cities, often, as in Botswana, with a flourishing tourist and safari business and mining supporting government revenue. At the same time chaotic armies compete in the Congo and make commerce and diplomacy difficult. Humanitarian aid – food, medicine and personnel – along with military supplies, keep the competing factions looking outwards to Europe and the United States. Today, more European experts work in black Africa, outside of South Africa, than under formal imperialism. Foreign aid bankrolls African elites, who live in luxury suburbs outside of Lagos and other major cities, and who fly around the world on buying sprees for luxury items. In Africa, more than any part of the world, it is foreign aid and the work of the United Nations and NGOs that harness the shifting elites of African nations, with trade an important but secondary adjunct to this process. While formal empire is a thing of the past in Africa, the same cannot be said of informal empire. Increasingly Africa is folding into a Westernized one world culture.

5

Informal Empire and the Americas

While Britain battled much of the world for an informal empire it engaged in a remarkably explicit competition with the United States, particularly over Central and South America. Intensifying after the War of 1812 the Americans in particular felt the competition keenly. It did not end until the United States established undisputed hegemony over the elites of the former colonies of Britain and most other European former colonies, including Britain's mammoth informal empire. Two components defined this competition between 1812 and 1860: competition for land and competition for business. In the first case the United States elite harboured unfounded fears of British designs for more land in North and Central America.[1] The British stoked American fears by successfully dominating commercial interaction in South America. Great Britain consciously went after and attained supremacy over the lion's share of Latin America's trade by guiding the formation and loyalty of national elites, attaining a dominance in Latin America that did not end until well into the twentieth century.[2]

Gallagher and Robinson in 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' (1953) argued that for the purpose of free trade, the British sphere of influence included large swathes of Latin America, the Levant and China.[3] Robinson defined informal empire as:

> Coercion or diplomacy extended for purposes of imposing free trading conditions on a weaker society against its will; foreign loans, diplomatic and military support to weak states in return for economic concessions or political alliance; direct intervention or influence from the export–import sector in the domestic politics of weak states on behalf of foreign trading and strategic interests; and lastly, the case of foreign bankers and merchants annexing sectors of the domestic economy of a weak state.[4]

Prominent historians have argued for and against the idea of British informal empire in Latin America. D. C. M. Platt, Oliver MacDonagh and Andrew Thompson all questioned whether Britain forged an informal empire in Latin America, particularly in Argentina. Their objections centre on the fact that Latin America often gained monetarily and culturally from its relationship with Britain, and thus 'imperialism' (used in a derogatory sense) does not describe the relationship. Antony G. Hopkins, Wm. Roger Louis and John Darwin explore how the term successfully described forms of collaboration between elites in the dominant country and the region in question. The fact that the 'public mind' of both prominent British and American officials took seriously the competition for excentric empire in the region suggests that scholars of informal empire need to take seriously the conscious competition between these two powers.[5]

Examining in this chapter how historians have debated the idea of informal empire necessitates – to follow the argument and this historiographical trail – ranging at times outside of Latin America. Latin America has always drawn a proportionately large amount of attention from historians who debate the idea of informal empire, especially experts on Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Peru, Mexico and Uruguay. This is because Latin America's relationship with Britain has been marked by a heavy exchange of capital and commerce. In 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', Gallagher and Robinson show how Victorian statesmen and businessmen integrated South America's economy into the British economy, swapping – to oversimplify – cows and corn for capital. The British also built railways and bought bonds in Latin America, transforming finance and transportation. Gallagher and Robinson state that:

> By 1913, in Latin America as a whole, informal imperialism had become so important for the British economy that £999,000,000, over a quarter of the total investment abroad, was invested in that region.[6]

The thesis of Gallagher and Robinson provoked a strong response. In the same year that the *Journal of Economic History* published 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' another historian, H. S. Ferns, challenged the idea of informal empire in 'Britain's Informal Empire in Argentina, 1806–1914' in the journal *Past and Present* (1953).[7] In this study of British policy in Latin America Ferns also used the term 'informal empire' to describe the *estanciero*'s (rancher's) desire for capital, which in turn led Latin American elites to acquiesce to British terms of trade. Then seven years later Ferns published a book that attempted to undercut the notion of an informal empire in Latin America. Ferns noted that the British 'never had the power to oblige Argentina to pay a debt, to pay a dividend, or to export or import any commodity whatsoever'.[8] To describe Britain's relationship with Latin America as constituting an 'informal empire' downplayed Britain's diminishing power; the relationship, he concluded, relied more on reciprocity than control.

However, among all the critics of informal empire, few historians did more damage to the idea than the historian Platt. In a series of books and articles, Platt took Gallagher and Robinson to task for misunderstanding the relationship between Argentina and Britain. There existed a wide separation between the interests of the Foreign Office and business elites, he noted in *Finance, Trade, and Politics in British Foreign Policy* (1968). Agreeing with Ferns, Platt found that the Foreign Office rarely entered into disputes on behalf of bondholders in Britain when they found themselves at the losing end in South America.[9] He severely questioned how much economic influence British business elites actually had throughout the region during the early- and mid-Victorian period.[10] Furthermore, no

> blue-print could have existed for expansion into regions of informal empire because capital and effort were better employed elsewhere, and because little expectation as yet existed of substantial profits...

To take the exuberant expansionist statements of nineteenth-century politicians such as Canning and Palmerston – intended only for electioneering or made merely as a quip in answer to a question – and then to build on the basis of these statements a grand scheme of British formal policy inferred too much from far too little evidence.[11]

One of Platt's key points against informal empire in the mid-Victorian period suggests that British exports impacted Latin America, the Levant and China less than previously supposed. In both Latin America and the Ottoman Empire indigenous workshop production kept British textiles at bay, substantially limiting their impact. In Mexico in the 1840s, for instance, mills produced 54 million yards of manta (grey domestic cloth) in contrast to only 30.8 million yards of cotton piece-goods imported from Britain during 1861–65. In the Ottoman Empire, famous for its textile production, indigenous manufacture also held its own. In Bursa in the 1840s, factories produced 18,000 pieces of silk and cotton goods and only employed 13,500 lbs of British cotton yarn. In Aleppo in the 1830s, a traditional centre of textile production, Britain exported only 62,350 pounds sterling worth of goods when Aleppo produced a total of 250,000 pounds sterling worth of goods.[12]

Unfortunately, the evidence that Platt presents undermines his own case. He compares the volume of cloth produced by Mexico with cloth exported to Mexico from Britain, from entirely different decades – cloth produced by Mexico in the 1840s compared to cloth imported into Mexico from Britain in the early 1860s. Additionally, Mexicans imported 60 per cent of the cloth consumed in the domestic market and this fact rather argues the case for – not against – the importance of British exports to Mexico. This critique holds for the Ottoman Empire, where in Bursa the indigenous production used a great deal of British cotton yarn to produce piece goods. Aleppo historically produced a high volume of textiles, but the British in the 1830s broke into the market to such an extent that this region (now northern Iraq) imported a quarter of their textiles from Britain.

Platt gives as another example from the nineteenth century, the city of Diyarbakir in the Asiatic region of Turkey. This city produced silk and cotton goods valued at 86,000 pounds sterling. Britain in 1863 imported 75,000 pounds sterling of cotton goods and yarn. Platt concludes that the domestic market produced more than the British imported, thus invalidating the claim that Britain held an informal empire in the region.

While the market for indigenous cotton goods in Diyarbakir proved larger than the market for imported cotton goods, the figures nonetheless argue for a powerful and pervasive presence of British goods. Platt assumed that by definition informal empire required a dominant, exploitive and even monolithic presence. However, informal empire as a concept does not rely on the absence of a vibrant domestic market. Platt does not look at the formation of elites, or at how trade with Britain impacted the rationalization of the society under question.

Platt attacks the idea of informal empire from another angle in his article ‘British Portfolio Investment Overseas before 1870: Some Doubts’, in the *Economic History Review* (1980). Here he opposes the conventional wisdom that the overseas investments by Britain played a pivotal role in the industrialization of Europe and many parts of the world. He argues to the contrary that: ‘Britain was *not* a great exporter of capital before 1870.’ Platt gleans statements from *The Times*, *The Economist*, *Investor’s Monthly Manual*, *Banker’s Magazine*, *Fenn on the Funds* and *Fortune’s Epitome* and other primary source publications that gave out investment advice in the Victorian period. He rightly points out that these financial organs of the press cautioned against over-exuberance in foreign investments, particularly against the notorious government securities abroad, such as that issued by the Spanish government. Platt also carefully looks at the estimates of money that flowed abroad in this period and makes revisions. But while his revisions display an impressive amount of original research, his conclusions do not follow. He writes:

> It is not inconceivable that a comparable exercise [in revision] might end in the reduction of the usual estimates for British portfolio investment overseas in 1913 (about £3.7 billion) by as much as a third, to a total of about £2.5 billion.[13]

But this conclusion does nothing to substantially undermine the idea that financial investments from Britain played a role in the expansion of Britain's informal empire. The strengths of Platt's arguments point to the errors of exaggeration but do not in fact undermine the concept of informal empire in the mid-Victorian period.

Platt makes however a number of valid points. Like Hobson he distinguished between two types of investments in the mid- to late-Victorian period: 'moveable trade', which is easily suspended and easily moved; and 'immovable investments', which fund large public utilities, railways, port facilities and other industrial infrastructure. This infrastructure is difficult to move or impossible to re-establish elsewhere in times of instability. In immovable investments the metropole asserted far more control and maintained a constant pressure on local elites to conform to the needs of the dominant power. Here Platt agrees that he can see the outlines of informal empire solidify.[14] To Platt, informal empire as a term makes sense when applied

> to the relationship which subsequently developed between primary producers and industrial nations, in and after the later decades of the nineteenth century. To some degree they applied even earlier in circumstances where producers, without benefit of a large home market, were dependent on a single foreign outlet for their staple product, and where that foreign outlet, in turn, was at liberty to buy from an alternative supplier.[15]

Platt points out a phenomenon that greatly disturbed Lord Salisbury in the latter part of the nineteenth century:

> The whole concept of what was a 'legitimate' function for the Foreign Office and the Diplomatic Service had had to be altered and

> transformed under the competitive conditions and active foreign diplomacy of the 'eighties. Officials were compelled to see themselves in an entirely new relationship to British traders and financiers, a relationship which they would have rejected out of hand earlier in the century.[16]

This relationship required the British government increasingly to utilize the diplomatic apparatus for the interests of businesses and stockholders.

Oliver MacDonagh also countered the Gallagher and Robinson thesis in an article in the *Economic History Review* titled 'The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade' (1962). MacDonagh granted that mid-Victorian Britain aggressively pursued imperial power no less than in the late-Victorian period, but argued against the way that Gallagher and Robinson linked free trade with imperialism. Richard Cobden, the main representative of the Manchester School, fiercely preached both free trade and anti-imperial doctrines. He represented a broad section of the middle class that practiced a sincere evangelical faith, looked down on an idle aristocracy, eschewed empire and held free trade in high regard. Thus the most ardent and visible proponents of free trade passionately opposed imperialism and demanded lower military expenditure, the wholesale scuttling of the empire, the end of slavery around the world and, above all, peace. Since those who supported free trade the most also rejected empire, they did not seek imperialism of any description, formal or informal. Finally, MacDonagh argued, the term 'informal empire' is simply too vague to have utility.[17]

MacDonagh correctly pointed out the vagaries of the term 'informal empire' at the time when he published his article. It is one of the reasons why a new definition has been offered here. But he underestimates the support for empire among the advocates of free trade. Cobden never advocated relinquishing India, nor did Richard Bright, the other leading figure of the Manchester School. Both strongly supported the Royal Navy and took great pride in the influence of Britain overseas. If Platt is correct to accuse Gallagher and Robinson of scavenging statements culled from letters, dispatches and parliamentary speeches to inflate a governmental blueprint for informal empire in the mid-Victorian period, MacDonagh does the same for the Manchester School by assuming that a few anti-imperial statements represent a broad swathe of British public opinion. The difficult job of the historian is to judge the depth of support for and against empire, and then to apply rigorous standards of analysis to determine if the characteristics for informal empire fit the definition of informal empire for any particular region at a particular time.

Andrew Thompson also concluded that Britain did not possess an informal empire, at least not in Argentina.[18] He defined formal empire as 'control through annexation and constitutional subordination', and informal empire as 'not fitting into the narrower and more traditional definition of empire . . . to lie uncomfortably on its fringes, manifesting some, if not all, of the characteristics we had come to associate with an imperial relationship'. He then dismisses the idea of informal empire because the relationship between Britain and Argentina did not show 'any commercial imbalance', nor did it compromise Argentina's 'autonomy'. The presence of the British in the economy of Argentina 'was due to the acquiescence of the politically powerful landed elite rather than their own manipulation'. Finally, he concluded, Britain did not possess an informal empire in Argentina because Britain did not 'benefit disproportionately'.[19]

Thompson offers a critique that would hold equally true against any political system. Which elites operate wholly without coercion, and wholly for the benefit of those they rule? No form of government has yet to achieve an egalitarian society or form external relations entirely on altruistic grounds. But to Thompson imperialism was all that Lenin meant it to be: the exploitation and robbery of the periphery by the metropole with a clear winner and a clear loser. He does not explore how imperialism involved mutual benefit, collaborating elites and voluntary association. He failed to see how informal empire might at times be free of coercion. Thus the voluntary association of elites in Argentina with Britain does not in any way undermine the argument that Britain had an informal empire in the region.[20]

Other scholars have taken a nuanced and less decisive stance. David McLean in *War, Diplomacy and Informal Empire: Britain and the Republics of La Plata 1836–1853* (1995), examined the instances of gunboat diplomacy on the River Plata in the 1830s and 1840s. He argues that, 'In truth, Britain's intervention had but a tenuous relationship with economic matters and grew more directly from the political problems which arose from the conflict between Uruguay and Argentine states.'[21] Similarly Alan Knight in an essay titled 'Britain and Latin America' published in the *Oxford History of the British Empire* (1999), accepts many of the central tenets of informal empire and collaboration, but critiques the idea that Britain had any kind of informal empire. He suggests that, 'It is here that "dependency" proves useful.'[22]

Malcolm Deas makes a decisive and convincing case against a British informal empire in Columbia before the First World War. While Great Britain was the dominant trading partner, mostly in textiles, the Columbian upper classes, he argues, exhibited an 'eclectic Creole culture', not only with British but also with other European influences as well. He abhors the use of the term 'informal empire' when applied as a 'form of the culture of complaint and lament'. He pointed out that the Columbian traders held most of the trade with Britain and few merchant houses had influence. Investments were low and debt, although large and inviting some foreign intervention, only riled nationalistic responses. Hinting about the coming informal empire of the United States, he writes that, 'A better case might be made for more recent decades, but then the imperial power would not be Great Britain.'[23]

Cain and Hopkins in *British Imperialism: 1688–2000* (2002, 2nd edn) revived the idea of informal empire and grounded it firmly in their understanding of finance capitalism. Britain as the dominant power dictated the 'rules of the game', and determined how and to whom money circulated. The problem with Platt's methods, they suggest, was that they read the Foreign Office archives too seriously and studied only durable imports and exports, failing to look at invisibles. Because Britain dominated the finance sector of South America in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries it attained a remarkable financial supremacy – most South American financial policies oriented towards London capital and markets. They concluded that, 'If Gallagher and Robinson overestimated the extent of Britain's informal empire in the mid-Victorian period, Platt has underestimated its size during the Edwardian period.'[24]

Cain and Hopkins agreed with some of the criticism levelled at informal empire. One can, they quipped, buy the train ticket but hop off before the final stop. While they agreed with Thompson that simplistic Marxist and dependency theorists err when they assert that imperialism always involved force, exploitation and control, they disagreed with Thompson that informal empire cannot exist where both parties profit. Cain and Hopkins countered that influence does not mean consistent control in a prohibitive or prescriptive way from the metropole. Rather, the 'excentric' theory of empire-building that Robinson promoted 'emphasized the role of the periphery' in just this manner.[25] The fact that the Argentines benefited from their relationship with Britain, and the fact that the collaborating elites chose to integrate their interests with the world and most particularly with the British economy, offers no contradiction to the idea of informal empire as Gallagher and

Robinson worked it out. It indeed contradicts dependency theory but that, Hopkins observed, is a different theory altogether.[26] Instead power, Hopkins argues, has 'an enabling dimension: the ability to persuade others to do what they could not do unaided'. It also influences powerfully through example.[27]

This fits well with how Susan Strange defines power. Strange, an international political economist, traced how power flows through structure and organizational relationship – credit, production, security and knowledge – usually involving beliefs and ideas. More rarely does power flow through 'bargains made between states', even though this latter and intermittent form of power garners the lion's share of attention from historians.[28] For this reason scholars too often conclude that one party defines the options and sets the parameters in imperialism. Strange argues that four key structures of power determine relations between states: society, production, finance and knowledge. This includes 'modes of interpreting the world', or as Hopkins put it, the 'rules of the game'. He concluded that 'the pattern of Argentina's development in the nineteenth century is incomprehensible unless this fact is kept centrally in mind'.[29]

This view is reinforced by recent scholarship on informal empire. Matthew Brown identifies three stages in the recent historiographical debate over the term. He observes that the term had fallen into disuse until recently, when cultural historians emphasized the role of imperialism outside of the formal structures of the Foreign Office and traditional archival evidence.[30] Building on Hopkins, he offered a working definition for informal empire that would 'rest upon a three-dimensional framework that posits commerce, capital and culture' in such a way that the sovereignty of the nations in question are curtailed. He attempted not so much to challenge Gallagher and Robinson, as to bring the concept of informal empire as they defined it up to date in its usage and broad application.[31]

It is clear that Britain did define the options and set the parameters of power with Argentina in the nineteenth century – up until 1914. Foreigners, most of them British, owned half of Argentina's assets outside of land. That did not change until the First World War consumed a large portion of British overseas capital. The Great War drained away the reservoir of power built up in Argentina since Palmerston, left the Argentine economy exhausted as a consequence and Britain without any recognizable informal empire in the region.[32] Hopkins saw no informal empire in Argentina before 1870. But an identifiable informal empire did exist from the 1880s right up until 1914, he concluded, with British power in the region growing even as Britain's global power declined.[33] Britain had power. It had an informal empire. And as Gallagher and Robinson indicated, the voluntary association between elites supported this informal empire.

The battle for informal empire

In the nineteenth century Americans feared Britain's presence in Canada, with thousands of British pouring into the Canadian Midwest to farm; they feared the British claim to the Oregon Territory and British interests in California. The Americans also held high on the list of concerns British expansion into Central America – from the Yucatan to Cuba. The Americans based these fears on the statements of English parliamentarians and on a lingering mistrust from the revolution of 1776 and the War of 1812–15. Britain did in fact consider proposals for the colonization of California as recompense for the debt owed to British bondholders in Mexico. But Britain possessed no master plan to expand further into formal colonies in the Americas. While Britain did resist American expansion, cautiously, it gave up resisting American expansion by the 1850s, convinced that harmony with the United States kept Britain from wasting resources on a growing colossus and that Anglo-Saxon America extended, not limited, British racial and cultural influence.[34]

Competition in the commercial arena keenly occupied the business and political elites. American presidents Jefferson, Monroe, Tyler and Polk boldly promoted American supremacy in the commercial arena before the Civil War of 1861–65. This included more than Latin America; it included Asia and Europe as well. Historians neglect American's global interest in commercial supremacy before the Civil War perhaps because the United States did not succeed in its competition in this period with Britain. But the United States made a trial run for global commercial supremacy before 1860 that foreshadowed a more successful effort after the Civil War that did not come to fruition until the twentieth century. Therefore America's elite closely watched Britain's expansion of influence and a number of issues spurred the United States government into counter-moves against the British.

Many developments around the world alarmed Americans. The British constantly added coaling stations, army and naval bases and new warehouse facilities and treaties, that gave the British a clear commercial advantage. Like most Europeans, Americans built castles in the air about future wealth that depended on the successful penetration of the markets of the Far East, the Indian subcontinent and Africa. However, the Opium Wars, the establishment of Singapore, the colonization of Australia and New Zealand, these actions portended a powerful and overbearing British presence in the Pacific and pushed American dreams of trade, wealth and dominance into a distant mirage.[35]

For this reason British informal empire in the United States did not go unnoticed.[36] Many congressmen, presidents and newspaper editorials gave evidence of a widespread conviction that Britain's imperial design included ruling the world. Britain accomplished this devious plan by controlling key points in its formal empire that then gave her a commercial advantage elsewhere over vast regions. Britain pursued with great energy a 'grand design' to 'check, to influence, to control all nations', congressman Francis Baylies argued in 1826. Secretary of State James Buchanan saw Britain's progress as a 'uniform policy'. Britain intended to 'seize upon every valuable commercial point throughout the world whenever circumstances have placed this in her power'.[37] Henry Clay, Speaker of the House and Secretary of State, warned the United States about Britain's imperial design throughout the decades of the 1820s to the 1840s.

Alongside the glitter of future markets American politicians hitched the necessity of maintaining the corner on the market that the Americans already possessed: raw cotton. Southerners saw the cotton industry of the south as the bedrock upon which the American economy rested. Britain bought most of this cotton, and it fed the great mills in England's industrial midlands and north. But Britain's push for the abolition of slavery around the world struck at the root of this industry. Clay, worried that Great Britain desired to turn Americans into 'commercial slaves', crafted language that struggled towards a description of informal empire. He worried that the United States risked becoming a 'sort of independent colonies of England' and quoted a British official who claimed that Britain could, without 'the care of governing, or the expense of defending' the United States still reap the benefit of commerce and control.[38] Clay and many others particularly feared that the British targeted Texas. Britain sought to turn Texas into a dependency 'because she would not have to bear the expense of her government and would not be responsible for her acts; at the same time she would obtain all the advantages which she could expect from her in a colonial state'.[39]

Clay made his case in the classic terms of informal empire: nations not only compete for trade, but protect trade with consuls, diplomacy, embargoes, navies, fortifications and armies of officials waging war by commercial regulations. He quoted extensively from a British author, who boasted that:

> It is now above forty years since the United States of America were definitely separated from us, and since, their situation has afforded a proof that the benefit of mercantile intercourse may be retained, and in all its extent, without the care of governing, or the expense of defining, these once regretted provinces.[40]

This informal control Clay identified as a subtle form of colonialism, for 'it is in vain to disguise it', he said, 'we are a sort of independent colonies of England'. Quoting Lord Goderich, he identified free trade with imperialism:

> It was idle for us to endeavor to persuade other nations to join with us in adopting the principles of what was called 'free trade'. Other nations knew, as well as the noble lord opposite, and those who acted with him, what we meant by 'free trade', was nothing more nor less than, by means of the great advantages we enjoyed, to get a monopoly of all their markets for our manufactures, and to prevent them, one and all, from ever becoming manufacturing nations.

Free trade, Clay concluded, 'is a mere revival of the British colonial system' and a part of 'our colonial vassalage'.[41]

Clay warned the American Congress that importing clothes and other goods from Britain placed the Republic in danger, no less danger than importing bread. Prosperity purchased power and empire, and Britain grew prosperous through trade, which in turn fuelled British expansion and aggression. For this reason Britain attempted to control the trading opportunities of the young Republic and keep the United States dependent on the textiles of Manchester. Britain 'sickens at your prosperity' and saw in American growth, with her 'sails spread on every ocean', the foundation of American naval superiority. Trade begot tribute and tribute begot empire. Once Asia, due to millions of her population and cheap labour, made Europe contribute to her despotic power. Then the baton of power passed to Great Britain who, with the aid of artificial labour and machinery, now collects the wealth of the world into her coffers. Frighteningly, Britain amassed so much wealth that her power, based on trade, towered over the United States, 'eleven to one'.[42]

Clay saw Britain as the natural enemy of the United States. The War of 1812 occurred over trade. It happened solely because 'Great Britain arrogated to herself the pretension of regulating our foreign trade.' Trade initiated war and foreign commerce initiated foreign wars. Competition for this trade created 'constant collisions'. The United States and Britain would compete for empire in the Americas and in the world at large until one or the other triumphed. Destiny held in store for them 'war after war with Great Britain' until one or the other triumphed. He took pride in the colossal status of America's enemy, for 'Gallant Great Britain' had defeated the great Napoleon and now competed with the United States 'man to man, gun to gun, ship to ship, fleet to fleet, and army to army'. The 'contest for superiority' in war, trade, empire and the 'arts of civil life' led to certain victory for the United States, he assured his colleagues in congress.[43]

Only the 'American System' blocked Britain's bid for trade supremacy – not only a system of tariffs, but the projection of American power in a multitude of ways. Trade fuelled American power the way it fuelled British power. Those who already made great fortunes in the United States, 'the nabobs of the land', made them in foreign commerce and they needed now to search the world for empire and trade. The United States already produced more than they could sell to Europe and growth required – Clay made clear in speeches on many occasions – looking to the new South American republics.[44]

The nobility of the American people as a race of North-West Europeans and Protestants with a high birth rate destined them to build an American empire. 'We are the natural head of the American family', Clay boasted, and wield the right to intervene anywhere in the Americas where 'there exists . . . a state of misrule and disorder,' where foreign powers threatened American interests. In Florida, he predicted that 'we *shall* want it [Florida]' or rephrased, 'we want no body else to have it'. In the case of Texas, the character of the people in this territory decided its destiny. 'In our hands it will be peopled by freemen' and those born to freemen, carrying 'our language, our laws, and our liberties', establishing Protestant churches and living a civil life of liberty. In the hands of Spain, it devolved into 'the habitation of despotism and slaves', subject to the 'vile dominion' of the Inquisition and the rule of superstition. Americans did not need to fear competition with Spanish America because the character of the Americans guaranteed the 'lead in the prosecution of commerce and manufactures'. Americans will 'occupy the same position as the people of New England to the rest of the United States' through discipline, work ethic and creativity. The beginning of this paramountcy of the South required the recognition of the South American Republics so that higher levels of trade between

North and South can begin promptly, cutting out the British share and shifting the wealth, and the power that it brings, to the United States. As head of the Americas, the United States spoke as an elder brother, inspiring the southern peoples to adopt 'our principles, [and] copy our institutions', even to the point that they used the language and sentiments of the founding fathers. War, when necessary, kindled empire as well as diplomacy and trade. War gained more than honour, it gained commerce.[45]

Before President Monroe or George Canning in Britain recognized the Latin American republics, Clay made public his support for their struggle. He bristled at the caution of American diplomacy, complaining that: 'If Lord Castlereaugh says we may recognize, we do; if not, we do not.' How long would the United States submit to the authority of Europe in diplomacy, he asked. His 'American System' not only protected the American economy but also broke European 'commercial and political fetters'.[46] He thundered his disapproval of American subservience to Britain:

> Sir, is the time never to arrive when we may manage our own affairs without the fear of insulting his Britannic Majesty? Is the rod of British power to be forever suspended over our heads? . . . The whole navy of the haughty mistress of the seas is made to thunder in our ears. Whether we assert our rights by sea, or attempt their maintenance by land – whithersoever we turn ourselves, this phantom incessantly pursues us. Already has it had too much influence on the councils of the nation.[47]

Henry Clay succeeded in speaking for a virulent anti-British faction that pushed America to fight British colonialism and against informal empire in particular, a battle that for most of the nineteenth century the United States decisively lost. The failure of a reciprocity agreement with Britain highlights this issue. European powers – and their colonies – hobbled merchants in the United States with import duties levied on American ships and merchandise. They did this in direct response to the discriminating duties against European ships and goods that Congress passed between 1789 and 1815. To lift these counter-measures against American goods and open up markets for the growing American economy, Congress passed the Reciprocity Act of 1815, which gave the president the power to lift duties on vessels and goods of any nation if that nation also agreed to lift its duties.[48]

President James Madison wanted the Reciprocity Act to dismantle colonialism and saw it in that light. If the president could bargain with powers on a one-to-one basis, then he could selectively lift tariffs on those countries that agreed to open up their markets and the markets of their colonies to the United States. The idea of using the Reciprocity Act to sweep away British dominance lived a long life, well into the mid nineteenth century. Dreams of American penetration into the huge civilizations of the Indian subcontinent and Far East animated discussion and fired the imagination of government officials, businessmen and opinion makers in the press.[49]

When the former Secretary of the Treasury Albert Gallatin tried to negotiate an empire-busting treaty that allowed American ships and goods entry into British-controlled ports around the world, he secured only a paltry return: reciprocity between Britain and the United States only, for those goods produced in these two countries only, access to a very few select ports and most-favoured-nation treatment. John Quincy Adams renewed the fight however under President Monroe as Secretary of State. Adams saw colonialism as 'an outrage upon the first principles of civil Society'. Without reciprocity Britain held a monopoly over trade in the Americas. The imperial powers maintained 'a commercial conspiracy against the United States', he fumed. During Monroe's administration, and then his own as president, Adams pressed for open ports.[50]

The Americans could not corral the British bull into the pen of reciprocity, however. Lord Castlereagh, British Foreign Secretary, refused to consider seriously the American proposals because they inevitably led to 'the subordination of the British colonial system'. In this regard British President of the Board of Trade William Huskisson made a similar point: 'The practical result of Compliance on our part would be that whilst we retained the Sovereignty of the Colonies with all its burthens, the Monopoly of supplying them with Articles of the first necessity would be wholly transferred to the United States.' Neither the United States nor Britain doubted the implications of the Reciprocity Act. In the balance hung economic supremacy.[51]

American imperialists and business leaders found common cause in beating Britain out of commercial supremacy. In the 1820s and 1830s the United States enacted tariffs to break the stalemate, protect American manufacturers and lay the foundation for hegemony abroad. Accordingly Clay attempted to inaugurate the 'American System' that would break the United States out of Britain's informal empire and launched the United States as the next commercial power of the world. He argued that as it presently stood, the United States exported raw goods to Britain and bought most of its manufactured goods from her. This kept the United States in a dependent position with Britain. But it also kept the United States from buying raw goods and selling manufactured goods to Latin America and other parts of the globe. This in effect meant that the United States could not dream imperial dreams of a commercial empire or remake Latin America in its own image. Failure to do so denied an informal empire to the United States and led inevitably to the recolonization of the United States by Britain. For the United States to break out of Britain's informal empire it must beat Britain at its own game and build up its own large informal empire of commerce overseas. While never using the term 'informal empire', economic supremacy clearly carried political and cultural supremacy with it and the possibility of an Americanized world, particularly an Americanized South America.[52]

As Clay laid out the mechanics of informal empire he built a model of imperialism resembling that of John Hobson. He envisioned a knot of British financiers behind the more visible commercial transactions, controlling, exploiting and profiting. Clay also claimed that British businessmen dumped finished goods onto the American market in a sustained manner, purposely to drive all competition out of business. Then when the British cleared the field of American manufacturers, they moved in to supply the market on a regular basis – able to lower prices at any moment in the face of competition. This meant that the United States became dependent on the British in several ways. First, for the manufactured goods. Second, for the export of raw materials. Then, finally, in order to maintain cash liquidity for the export of raw goods, Americans began imbibing the preferred loans from British financiers, completing the dependence and subjection of the American economy and ruling class to the British. Once the United States was so addicted to British markets and cash, the British government could bully and coerce it into taking positions – including trade conditions – that secured the frontiers of British dominance. A fortress economy, tariffs that broke the British waves of aggression and allowed the calm waters to protect and nourish America's own indigenous industrialization, these counter-moves, Clay suggested, protected American interests.[53]

Americans fully understood the conception of a 'quasi-colonial' relationship between Britain and vast regions of the world. As early as 1824 Chargé d'Affaires John M. Forbes wrote to then Secretary of State John Quincy Adams from Buenos Aires that, 'England derives from this Country and Chile all the advantages of colonial dependence without the responsibility or expense of Civil or Military administration.' Chargé d'Affaires in Brazil William Hunter insisted that, 'for the purpose of making these the quasi colonies of Great Britain without the expense of their maintenance as such, and without the communication of those benefits which, as ancient colonies connected with their mother country, they were entitled to and had ever enjoyed', Britain refused to budge on this issue until after the American Civil War.[54]

In addition to a continuing unsuccessful effort to dismantle British imperial trade preferences, the United States worked on the next best thing – pressure on foreign governments outside the British formal empire to grant to the United States equal trade status with Britain. In other words, the United States wanted a piece of Britain's informal empire, especially in Latin America.

Americans dreamed bold dreams. The famous phrase by Canning that if the British do not manage their affairs, Latin America 'will be English', equally applies to many American officials. Clay and other Americans laid out a similar all-encompassing plan for dominance, far beyond the concept of commercial hegemony. Clay envisioned a Latin America influenced by Anglo-Americans in much the same way 'as the people of New England do to the rest of the United States'.[55]

Written in the 1830s when the seaboard elite – children of the Puritans – cast the whole of American society, even waves of newer immigrants, into its crystalline mould, Clay envisioned a plan even more daring and ambitious than the plan laid out by Canning. Given the fact that Latin America, particularly south of Mexico, lay a long way from the American border, and given the fact that merchants travelled and traded with most of Latin America on board sailing ships, this meant nothing less than a powerful overseas empire with an influence on the direction and content of Latin America that outdid the British influence in India. Informal empire as Clay projected it held the political reigns of authority lightly but did not fail to match the transforming power of formal empire anywhere else in the world.[56]

American industrialization gave American merchants the key to gaining commercial dominance in Latin America and beating the British at their own game. The daydream of the American system included the adventure of a Latin American informal empire. Americans could export manufactured goods south and import raw materials – they wanted the exact relationship that existed between the Americas and Britain. But even if the United States gained less than this complete reversal of roles in Latin America, even if the United States merely gained a prominent place in the trade of Latin America, then the new nations south of the border, independent at last from Spain, would at least not be clones of Britain but still develop in a manner that partially reflected the culture of the United States. The Spanish nations in this way would avoid replicating exactly British civilization and manners and avoid integration by commercial domination into Britain's informal empire.[57]

The battle for informal empire in Latin America did not mean that either the United States or Britain possessed an informal empire in Latin America before 1860 but, rather, that both nations attempted informal imperialism in this era – the British more successfully so than the Americans. Between 1812 and 1860 Britain's steady involvement formed the perimeters of the state, economy and eventually much of the elite of the region. Already in the eighteenth century illicit trade by South Americans with Britain, in defiance of Spanish colonial monopolies, surpassed trade with the mother country. This whetted the appetite of British merchants and gave British officials an interest in formalizing and expanding a commercial exchange between the Spanish colonies and Britain. The Napoleonic Wars of 1803–15 provided the first opportunity to effect this change. When the Crown of Spain allied itself with Napoleon, it towed its American colonies along with it into the war and thus technically provided the British with an additional incentive and a legal excuse to strip away the colonies of Spain and integrate these regions deeper into the British economy – an economy exploding in manufacturing capabilities and in search of new outlets for a wide array of goods, with textiles in the lead.

In this context the British in June 1806 sent in 1500 men and seized, under the command of Colonel William Beresford, Buenos Aires and Montevideo. Unable to hold the cities against a Spanish Royalist counterattack, Beresford surrendered, but a second expedition of 10,000 soldiers under Lieutenant-General John Whitelocke landed outside Montevideo and made another attack on Buenos Aires. After a ceasefire the expedition withdrew. Although military forces aborted the mission, the merchants in the City of London honoured the naval commander Sir Home Popham for undertaking the scheme. The brief occupation opened the floodgates for a temporary rush of British goods into Montevideo to the satisfaction of consumers and merchants in the city. The entire episode raises interesting issues. Even though the home government did not authorize the invasion, clearly the River Plate basin interested Britain to such a degree that it prioritized an attempt on the Spanish colonies in this region.[58]

A number of issues piqued British interest in the region. Illicit trade already existed between the former Spanish colonies and Britain. The region gave British officials every reason to hope for another success story, mimicking that of North America as a neo-Europe, to use a modern phrase. The Plate region encompassed modern-day Argentina and Uruguay and attracted European settlers with its temperate conditions free from the tropical diseases that affected immigrants in India, Africa and Brazil. Albeit the Spanish and Italians largely peopled the region in which other Europeans lived as well. The settlers practiced Catholicism – another drawback – but the combination of a temperate region peopled with Christian Europeans eager to trade with Britain and showing a remarkable interest in all things English made the region a tempting target for informal empire.

In the eighteenth century many in Britain believed that the peoples of Latin America wanted to break free from the Spanish colonial yoke and trade openly with an industrializing England.[59] The brief experience of Montevideo as an open port to the world made clear not only to the Montevideo citizens but also to British merchants that an opening of this region to free trade meant that the lion's share of trade fell to England and opened up a society ready to emulate British culture – a region that replaced Britain's lost formal empire of the United States with all the advantages of empire and none of the cost. Lord Castlereagh understood this well and knew that by excluding rivals from holding formal empire in the region Britain corralled the territory into her own sphere of influence. The policy should therefore create and support 'an amicable and local government, with which those commercial relations may freely subsist which it is alone our interest to aim at, and which the people of South America must equally desire'.[60] He knew that the proper balance of an overwhelming naval presence and careful diplomacy would accomplish the goal.

Uruguay owes its existence to British ambition for informal empire. It would become what US Envoy to Argentina John Forbes called 'a colony in disguise'.[61] When the Cisplatine War of 1825–28 broke out between Argentina and Brazil over the territory to the east of the Rio de la Plata, the Oriental Banda, the British saw the opportunities for extensive trade and influence wither away. In addition the elites at Montevideo used the occasion of war to request that Britain formally admit their territory into the British Empire. They wanted the stability, trade and prestige that came with colonization. They wanted to be, in a word, British.[62]

Canning's response holds the key to understanding the utility of informal empire to the British in the nineteenth century. He declined the request and chose instead to press for an agreement between Brazil and Argentina that created a buffer state open to British trade and immigration. The responsibility of formal empire avoided, Britain could enjoy the benefits, including an outlet for manufactured products, loans and immigrants. The British had access to the best port in the region for navel supplies as well as for trade, an outlet for the entire river basin region.[63]

Other countries in addition to Britain and the United States made moves to sway governments in the region. France gained most of the benefits through the 1830s that Foreign Secretary Palmerston worked hard in later years to accrue for Britain. French immigrants poured into the region and outnumbered British immigrants. France sent representatives to forge intimate diplomatic and military ties, focusing on Montevideo. They insisted on a special economic relationship that placed more expensive French products over the lower-priced British products. Palmerston pushed back and cautioned that:

> Interference on the Part of French agents and commanders must tend to produce corresponding interference in the opposite Direction by the agents and forces of other Countries and thus to bring on a collision between France and other European powers.[64]

Taming the French threat in the Plate region proved the easy part. The 'American System' offered a bigger fight over British hegemony. Juan Manuel de Rosas and his backers on the Pampas struggled against British informal empire in Argentina and Uruguay, just as earlier patriots had fought against Spanish supremacy. Britain could never fulfil her ambition in the 1840s of making Latin America English because of Creole resistance and deep resentment at European hegemony.

Rosas's government in Argentina could not have come to power at a worse time. The Industrial Revolution in Britain sputtered along unevenly, overproduction caused prices for textiles and other manufactured goods to fluctuate wildly and rapid urbanization and limited social services created massive social unrest among the growing working class. A cowboy revolution that saw Rosas and his supporters sweeping the liberal, pro-free market merchant elite out of Buenos Aires and a powerful pro-Rosas faction in Montevideo supporting the same agenda – with defaulted loans, tariffs to keep out imported goods and trade practically disappearing – shattered British influence.

In response, proponents of informal empire found their voice in the 1840s. Palmerston argued that if countries refused to join the family of responsible nations and trade accordingly, then a government like Britain's should not only exercise the right but also the responsibility to open up recalcitrant markets.[65] James Murray in 1841 authored a

Foreign Office study on the Plate region that laid out a clear programme for informal empire. He saw the Plate region as 'capable of consuming the greater part of what Great Britain even with its multiplying power of Steam can produce'. It became incumbent upon Britain to take proactive steps to bring the region to heel. Laying out a clear formula for informal empire, he wrote that:

> Self-preservation, as it regards Great Britain, can scarcely be said to consist in only maintaining Political power, in the simple acceptance of the term, inasmuch as the Commercial interests of Great Britain are so mixed up with her Political strength, that it becomes necessary to support the one in order to maintain the other.[66]

The gunboat diplomacy that ensued illustrates exactly this point. When in March 1838 the French blockaded Buenos Aires they claimed that their nationals had suffered from mistreatment. Their citizens numbered 10,000 in Buenos Aires and 2000 in Montevideo. By beginning hostilities against Rosas, France also began the end of their influence. Blocked by French warships from trading with Europe, a significant section of the Europhile business elites on the coast and in the city closed up shop and moved to Montevideo. There they openly supported those against Rosas. A combination of factors then broke their influence for good. Rosas marshalled his strength in the countryside. Then, threatened again by Palmerston, the French gave up the attempt and once more left the field open to British influence.

Lord Aberdeen threw his support behind the Europhile elites in Montevideo that still resisted Rosas. In September 1945, working in tandem with France, British naval vessels swept into the harbour and blockaded Buenos Aires, and then proceeded up the Paraná River. Because Rosas forbade navigation rights on the Paraná River to other powers, in 1846 the British made a point of sailing upriver to El Quebracho. In tow behind the naval vessels appeared a British fleet of merchant ships that put to at the port city of Asunción. Unloading their goods onto the docks they set up shop and quickly sold out of their manufactured goods. This dramatic scene clearly illustrates the purpose of informal empire – to allow elites from the imperial region to interact and profit with elites from another region.

Rosas relented and agreed to a treaty for the open navigation of the Paraná and granted full independence to Uruguay, effectively opening the port of Montevideo in 1849 to British imports. In spite of the pains Britain took to satisfy the needs of its allies in Montevideo, the ruling class in Uruguay still wished to gain status as a British colony and, barring that, as a protectorate. They upped the ante with more trade concessions if Britain would establish a permanent imperial role in the region. The offer put Palmerston off, calling it 'an embarrassing responsibility'.[67] Disappointing his Uruguay allies, Palmerston settled his differences with Rosas and signed an agreement – to the dismay of his allies in the region who wished for nothing less than to join the British Empire.

Britain profoundly affected the formation of elites in Latin America, particularly in Argentina. Britain forestalled the formation of a multitude of small states in the region and kept Argentina unified, which in turn kept trade flowing through the central metropole of Buenos Aires and then to Britain. Uruguay owes its status as an independent state to Britain, who kept the territory from being absorbed into a Brazilian empire and as a buffer for Argentina. Before 1860 Britain's free trade agreement with Argentina resulted in the survival of Argentina as a unified state, with a republican form of government, liberal free trade policy and stable neighbours.

The first president of the United Provinces of La Plata, Bernardino Rivadavia, and George Canning, the British Foreign Secretary, created the parameters of a free trade relationship.[68] Britain's powerhouse industrial economy sold manufactured goods and invested capital with a healthy return. It then imported raw foodstuffs from Argentina. This relationship gave Britain the trade that it desired while committing 'the public authorities of Buenos Aires rather than the British government . . . [to] act as protectors of this trade'.[69] Financiers after 1860 poured money into the Argentine economy and built an infrastructure of rail and ports that helped channel trade to British markets while providing a solid return. This mutual collaboration proved just as essential to the foundation of informal empire in Argentina as collaboration proved essential to the foundation of formal empire in Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Britain also mediated the relationship of Argentina with other powers, both in the region, as with Brazil, and internationally, as with the United States. After 1870 British capital flooded in, which in turn led to a surge in the construction of infrastructure that further integrated Argentina into a global economy. Britain also wielded a powerful cultural influence that went beyond the political and economic structure of the country and included leisure activities like sports, music, movies and habits of consumption. The limited coercion that Britain employed in Argentina and Uruguay does not undermine but rather underlines a relationship that fits the model of informal empire.[70]

The ambition to build a British informal empire in Latin America stumbled, but continued. In the 1850s and 1860s the paramount foreign power shifted temporarily to Brazil, which could provide money, mercenaries, agents and ready diplomatic assistance to Uruguay. As Peter Winn stated:

> England's initial attempt at informal empire in Uruguay demonstrated that Britain could not compel co-operation when local collaborators proved too weak or uncommitted to assure it. The Uruguayan fulfillment of Canning's boast waited until the international transformation of the Plata nations during the succeeding decades.[71]

Conclusion

Britain competed vigorously with the United States for influence over the world, particularly in the Americas. It succeeded in establishing an informal empire over many parts of the Americas. Hopkins has chosen to call this influence on the United States up to the Civil War an 'honorary dominion'. He saw little difference between the degree of self-determination in Canada and the United States, where 'The British exercised structural power, that is the ability to set the parameters within which decisions were made, and it was this power that placed limits on independence.'[72] Whether or nor the United States and other parts of the Americas, like Argentina, can be 'regarded as an essential part of the British Empire' is not settled among historians.[73] Yet the competition between Britain and the United States for precisely such an informal empire highlights the interesting observation that competition between powers in this case led to a merger of interests between elite clusters and an imperial network that led to the dominance, first of Britain and then of the United States.

Interestingly neither the United States nor Great Britain achieved their goals for dominance in this period between 1812 and 1860. Nor does the competition for informal empire between the two giant nations 'prove' that informal empire is a term that describes a verifiable reality. But the fact remains that leading figures in the United States and Britain held a concept of colonialism without formal control and competed vigorously to assert national power over the elites of Latin America and other parts of the world.

If Britain played a vital role in the rationalization of the Americas by the formation of elites, those same elites – led by the United States in the twentieth century – moved to the centre of this web and integrated British elites in the same manner, as will be discussed later. In this case, competition in the nineteenth century led to an amalgamation of interests and elite formation that acted in concert and radically continued the rationalization of the globe in the twentieth century.

6

Informal Empire and Asia

Asia in the last 200 years has become more than modern. For the purposes of this chapter, Asia refers to the Indian subcontinent, South East Asia and the Far East. It is largely rationalized on Western lines, with only pockets of any substantial cultural differentiation. These pockets tend to be local rather than national, such as tribal groups in Afghanistan, rural villages in India or Bhutan or remote areas of Laos where mass media has not yet infiltrated. Thailand is typical of many areas of Asia, including rural China. Rationalization is quickly eroding indigenous cultural practice. Yet many differences with a global Western culture still remain. These differences drive tourism – cheap labour, temples, monks in yellow robes, food that while heavily influenced by global trade over the last 400 years still provides distinct sensations. Yet, as discussed in Chapter 1 of this book, Asia has rationalized most of its economy, politics and media, and is ruled over by a professional and business elite that promises to finish the transformation within another generation. Imperialism, both formal and informal, explains this transformation in the last 200 years.[1]

Asia provides an interesting number of case studies that reveal how informal empire worked. One, in Baluchistan, illustrated indirect rule that shaded into informal empire. Another, in Siam, operated as a buffer state for the British, particularly for the Indian empire. It illustrated how indigenous elites, in this case the Bangkok monarchy, used a British informal empire to create a modern nation-state that extended the power of Bangkok elites associated with the Chakri monarchy over the Shan princes in the north, where large reserves of valuable teak grew. In China, the transforming power of capital and highly placed key Western individuals accelerated the process of Western rationalization and an elite formation dependent on Western ideas and models.

Together these individual examples illustrate how one elite can form the contours of another subordinate elite in a variety of ways. These examples do not and cannot cover all of Asia, but they do lay out patterns of imperialism and rationalization that go a long way towards explaining the Westernization of Asia and the role that Britain and the imperial network played in this transformation.

A few scholars have tackled the question of informal empire in Asia. Shigeru Akita argues that informal empire is essential to understand globalization, and particularly Asian history.[2] While Gallagher and Robinson focused their attention on the role of trade, Cain and Hopkins focused on finance and the service economy and both, Akita says, are needed to understand the power and shape of the British informal empire. Akita broadens the base of informal empire to include an indirect influence through a third country. Thus Britain had a profound effect on Japan and governed an international order that allowed Japan then to exert influence over China. Adding up the balance sheet of influence to include British, American and European influence on China, the final sum must include a Japan shaped by British and American power and, to extend the logic, American and European power influenced by Britain. Thus relational power overlaps, overflows and mixes with structural power.[3]

Huw Bowen describes an 'international British elite or trans-oceanic imperial elite' that arched from the 'Anglosphere' to Bengal. Its influence worked by the ' "Anglicization" of overseas high society.' Britain, he claims, was the first country in the world to exert influence 'in all parts of the globe'. While Bowen largely agrees with Cain and Hopkins that gentlemanly capitalists were at the centre of the web of imperial power, they were only backseat drivers giving directions. The 'real drivers were those operating at or beyond different frontiers who acted in their own interest, or who managed resources, made decisions and undertook actions on behalf of those who remained at home'. Bowen adds that in the late eighteenth century Britain began to think of empire as a generalized term that described a holistic entity beyond the Indian empire or the American colonies. The British conceived of their empire as global, a great wheel of opportunity for Britons and for the rest of the world to place themselves 'within a much greater whole'. Thus arose a global empire of financial paper that launched 'international gentrification'.[4]

Kaoru Sugihara traces the globalizing effect of intra-Asian trade from the end of the nineteenth century to the Second World War. This trade ricocheted from India to Japan to China and to Britain and the world, transforming Asia. 'Indian raw cotton, cotton yarn exports to China from British India and Japan, the protection of cotton piece goods in China based on imported yarns' Westernized patterns of consumption. Sugihara traced an interlocking web of influence, creating an industrialization-based trade that included manufacturing and finance, under the umbrella of a global 'Pax Britannica'.[5]

Sugihara also follows the money trail to China from London, and from London to Japan and then again to China. British banks floated 40 per cent of the Japanese war loans in 1904–05 during the Russo-Japanese War. Between 1900 and 1913 Japan absorbed 20 per cent of all London loans to foreign governments. This 'complementarity' of economic relationships hastened Westernization in Asia. As Japan exported more, tariffs rose in China, spurring nationalism and hastening Chinese modernization, a process also heavily dependent on British capital. Even the rise of Chinese nationalism in the 1930s occurred because of stable currency regimes and trade policies that took advantage of the 'financial influence or the "structural power" of Great Britain'.[6]

South East Asia and the buffer state of Siam

British India projected a significant informal empire not only in the North-West and throughout the Indian Ocean, as James Onley shows, but also in the East, maintaining 'the eastern shield' as Foreign Secretary Lord Rosebery termed it. In the late nineteenth century, Siam, a nominally independent kingdom, remained at the edge of the south-eastern flank of the Indian empire and the western edge of French Indochina. In the 1880s and 1890s, British Foreign Office officials were trying to create a 'buffer state' in Siam that would keep the French in Indochina from bordering directly on India.[7] The Foreign Office and the India Office wanted to keep Siam nominally independent so that the British – who dominated Siam's finance, trade and shipping – could maintain an informal empire without the burdens and costs of running Siam directly or of waging war with France.[8]

Historians studying Britain's relationship with Siam have vigorously debated whether Siam formed part of Britain's 'informal empire'.[9] Britain's informal empire in Siam is usually dated to King Mongkut's signing of the Bowring Treaty in 1855 that gave British subjects extraterritorial privileges in parts of the Kingdom of Siam. In the interpretation put forward in the *Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* (1997), Nicholas Tarling writes:

> King Mongkut in a famous metaphor said that the choice facing Siam was whether 'to swim upriver and make friends with the crocodile [the French] or to swim out to the sea and hang on to the whale

> [the British]'. It is clear that he and his royal successors down to 1932 opted for the whale; with the result that Siam in some degree became a part of Britain's informal empire, in which British interests, particularly economic, predominated without the exercise of formal sovereignty.[10]

Other historians reject the notion that Britain maintained an informal empire in Siam. Ian Brown suggests that informal empire is characterized by 'a deliberate attempt on the part of a metropolitan power to determine the economic policies of another state . . . "Informal influence" has a palpable form – direct action taken by European consuls, merchants, residents, seconded officials.'[11] Brown concluded that this definition of informal empire does not describe the mechanisms by which the British advised the Ministry of Finance during the reign of King Chulalongkorn, the son and successor of King Mongkut.

This chapter demonstrates that the dominance of British merchants, the British direction of the Royal Forest Department in Siam and Britain's northern consular and international courts were mechanisms of control tantamount to informal empire. British consuls, merchants and advisors *did* take direct action to secure the teak leases in northern Siam and to establish a forestry department responsive to British interests. These actions allowed British firms to dominate the teak industry, create British consular courts, give British officials representation in the international court in Chiengmai and enable the Foreign Office to influence Royal Forest Department policies and negotiations. Although the Bangkok monarchy and ministries had their own internal policies towards northern Siam, these consistently required British capital and power to succeed during the 1870s to 1890s, the critical period when Chulalongkorn and his government integrated the diffuse vassalage Kingdom of Siam into a centralized nation-state centred in Bangkok.

Informal empire functioned through networks of collaboration. The Foreign Office used British timber merchants to help control a sensitive region bordering on British Burma and French Indochina. British timber merchants sought to protect profits by keeping out French and other foreign competitors. King Chulalongkorn and his coterie of ministers used British pressure in northern Siam to increase Bangkok's control over the region. Chulalongkorn used Western ideas of governance and economics to assert his own power while maintaining Siam's formal independence.[12] But despite modernization, Chulalongkorn, his ministers and the northern chiefs feared that Britain or France might annex northern Siam. This fear of annexation is one of the main reasons why

Chulalongkorn initially allowed British trading firms to dominate teak leases in the 1890s and early 1900s. Britain's domination of teak leases in northern Siam also helped Bangkok to gain more control over the north, a process akin to internal colonization.[13] Economic factors, such as the large capital reserves held by the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation (BBTC) and the Borneo Company, help explain the dominance of British trading firms in Siam, but these economic factors must be viewed in light of the Foreign Office's purposeful strategic and political actions to install British businesses combined with Chulalongkorn's fear of annexation.[14]

The British domination of Siamese teak leases in the 1890s and 1900s, and the influence of the Government of India and the Foreign Office in the creation and running of the Royal Forest Department are little understood mechanisms of Britain's influence in Siam. This is also part of the larger history of how state forestry spread throughout the entire world in the late nineteenth century. The state management of forests became an important governmental programme throughout the world in the nineteenth century, particularly in the British Empire.[15]

Investors founded the BBTC in Bombay in 1863 as a joint-stock company with British and Indian capital. Two Scotsmen, William Wallace and his brother Andrew, initially managed from Bombay and London.[16] The BBTC cut and exported teak from Burma and sold it to the timber markets in India and Britain. Many of the collateral resources – elephants, leases, timber-processing plants and men – came from William's own holdings, giving him an immense control on the direction of the BBTC throughout its early decades. The Wallace brothers, as they were known, also acted as the primary stockholders, financiers and agents for a number of important mercantile firms in South East Asia. This included rice production, timber extraction and marketing and, later on, oil extraction and refining.[17] The BBTC moved much of its operations north from British Lower Burma into the independent Kingdom of Burma during the 1870s and 1880s, eventually gaining a monopoly over the kingdom's teak leases.[18] The BBTC entered into the Siamese teak market in the late 1880s. The largest teak merchant in Burma and Siam by the mid 1890s, the BBTC defended its position until the middle of the twentieth century.

The BBTC dominated the timber trade in South East Asia from the late nineteenth to the mid twentieth centuries for three main reasons. First, the Wallace brothers cultivated connections with leading British officials.[19] Second, the BBTC, like its British competitor, the Borneo Company, employed a decentralized business structure that allowed for men 'on the spot' to make decisions about investments, leases and business strategies.[20] These social and political connections between the BBTC and the Foreign Office, the Government of India and the India Office, combined with a management style that allowed creativity and local flexibility, enabled the BBTC to lobby the British Foreign Office effectively and to expand their business operations throughout the period examined. Third, the BBTC had a larger pool of capital and more modern production capabilities than did its competitors, especially native competition in Burma and Siam. By buying out existing leases and investing heavily in elephants, timber mills and shipping, the BBTC could outcompete all but the largest of British firms.

The concept of 'gentlemanly capitalism' is helpful to understanding the success of the BBTC during the 1890s. Cain and Hopkins argue that during the mid nineteenth and through the mid twentieth centuries, aristocrats, parliamentary leaders, financiers and bankers from south-east England, primarily London, dominated British foreign and imperial policies.[21] Instead of seeing industrialists and the search for foreign markets as the driving force and catalyst for imperial acquisitions, Cain and Hopkins suggest that men associated with London finance – like the Wallace brothers – directed imperial policies. Using this thesis, Andrew Webster argues that British imperial policy in South East Asia must be understood through the financial imperatives of gentlemanly capitalism. Webster's book, *Gentlemen Capitalists* (1998), shows how gentlemen capitalists created an informal empire in Siam during the late nineteenth century, but it does not show the specific mechanisms by which the British came to dominate the teak industry in Siam.[22]

The Wallace brothers used their status as gentlemen to lobby the British government tenaciously. A glance at the private correspondence of the Wallace brothers in the nineteenth century reveals a voluminous letter-writing campaign to secretaries and undersecretaries at the India Office and the Foreign Office. These letters conveyed confidential information about French activities, offered analyses of Siamese politics and discussed how British business and foreign policy should proceed. These lobbying efforts went beyond letter-writing. The BBTC entertained leading Foreign Office, Government of India and India Office diplomats in Rangoon and Bangkok with tours, parties and the exhibition of famous company elephants.[23] In turn, Foreign Office, Government of India and India Office officials worked closely with the BBTC because of their personal relationships.

The Wallace brothers used these connections to good effect. They tried, and often succeeded, in lobbying the Government of India to overturn decisions damaging the teak trade in the 1850s to 1880s. When William Wallace failed to convince Government of India officials to adopt a less stringent teak permit system in Lower Burma during the early 1860s, he decided to expand operations into the significantly less regulated teak market of the independent Kingdom of Burma.[24] Throughout the 1870s and early 1880s, the BBTC built up a monopoly of teak concessions in the Kingdom of Burma while continuing to run operations in British Lower Burma. In 1885 the king of Burma, Thibaw Min, levied a large fine on the BBTC for overharvesting its allotment of teak, underpaying its employees and bribing local officials. This occurred at a tense period of Anglo-Burmese relations in the summer–autumn of 1885 after the British discovered a secret Burmese–French agreement to supply French arms through Indochina in return for Burmese concessions, including teak leases.[25] After intense lobbying by the Rangoon and London Chambers of Commerce, the Government of India and India Office rejected the Burmese ruling against the BBTC and demanded that Thibaw allow a British arbiter to reconsider the ruling, reappoint a British resident in Mandalay (recalled in 1879), give increased commercial concessions to British businesses and cede foreign policy control to Britain or else face military intervention.[26] When Thibaw balked at these extensive demands, the British invaded Mandalay in November 1885. Official and journalistic accounts from the time (which the BBTC discounted vociferously) portrayed the BBTC as one of the war's instigators. A recent historical analysis by Webster confirms that the BBTC's intelligence and lobbying pressure did indeed help convince Randolph Churchill, Secretary of State for India, to approve the invasion of Burma during the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885, which in turn led to the complete annexation of Burma.[27]

The Wallace brothers next turned their attention to Siam. The BBTC quickly entered the Siamese teak market in the late 1880s and early 1890s with the help of Britain's political and economic influence in the region. At that time the Kingdom of Siam loosely controlled the 'Shan States' of northern Siam and in the last decades of the nineteenth century strained to integrate them fully into the central administration in Bangkok.[28] Bangkok's relationship with Chiengmai and the other northern Shan States had changed very little over the first two quarters of the nineteenth century. The northern states functioned as *prathetsarat*, or 'tributary kingdoms', of the king of Siam.[29] For most of the nineteenth century, northern chiefs exercised a powerful sovereignty over their subjects and the resources of their domain, which included the rich teak forests. The extraterritorial privileges extending to the British from the Bowring Treaty of 1855 did not apply to the northern vassal states.

In the 1860s to 1880s the British Foreign Office and Government of India pushed for changes in their relations with northern Siam vis-à-vis Bangkok.[30] In 1866 T. G. Knox, the British Consul in Bangkok, responded to a complaint by R. C. Burn, a British businessman from Moulmein, about the murder of his Burmese staff by the Chief of Chiengmai by demanding that the British be allowed to create a Vice Consul in Chiengmai.[31] This did not happen, but it laid the ground for later interventions. British officials continued trying to change the political relationship between Britain, Bangkok and Chiengmai when in 1871 the Government of India sent the Burmese Superintendent of Police, Captain Thomas Lowndes, to report on allegations of violence by the Siamese against British Burmese subjects.[32] Lowndes' report raised questions about the balance of power between Bangkok and Chiengmai, and he eventually came to the conclusion that it would be best to deal with Chiengmai through Bangkok. Lowndes' trip resulted in a highly publicized consular court trial that described the harrowing and bloody deaths of Burmese British subjects in Chiengmai. This court trial opened up a series of other consular trials in which large damages were awarded to British plaintiffs. In 1873 the young king Chulalongkorn had to assert himself and directly negotiate with British officials when Somdej Chaophraya Borommahasrisuriyawong (Chuang Bunnag), the conservative former regent to Chulalongkorn and Minister of War and the Southern Provinces, refused to implement Siamese suzerainty in Chiengmai by enforcing the punitive decisions of the British consular courts.[33] The result of Chulalongkorn's contact, the court hearings and the political discussions eventually led to the signing of a treaty between the Government of India and Siam in 1874 that extended British extraterritorial jurisdiction to northern Siam. The treaty made Bangkok responsible for enforcing and resolving British legal conflicts that occurred in northern Siam. The treaty also assigned a Siamese judge-commissioner from Bangkok to Chiengmai. This strengthened the power of Bangkok over the northern chiefs.[34]

British Foreign Office pressure led to the next major integration of northern Siam into the Bangkok-centred Siamese state: the Chiengmai Treaty of 1883.[35] Even after the signing of the 1874 treaty, legal issues still arose on a frequent basis in northern Siam. British subjects who worked in the teak industry continued to complain to British officials that northern chiefs still broke promises over leases and were unable and unwilling to stop thefts and violence in the region.[36] While

Chulalongkorn hoped to keep the status quo of the 1874 treaty, the British pushed centralization even further by creating a vice consular office in Chiengmai, which opened in 1884.[37] The 1883 Chiengmai Treaty opened the legal door for the entry of large British teak-trading firms into Siam.

The first large British teak-trading firm that entered into Siam, the Borneo Company Ltd, had close ties to the king because the company had recommended and supplied Anna Leonowens, who became his favoured tutor, made famous in the highly fictionalized movie, *The King and I* (1956).[38] From 1883 until the mid 1890s, the Borneo Company remained the largest British teak firm in Siam until the BBTC overtook it. Yet even with the entry of British firms into the market, Burmese, Siamese and Chinese contractors held most of the leases with northern chiefs in the late 1880s and early 1890s. During the 1890s British firms won a growing share of the teak market at the expense of native firms, becoming the leading holder of leases by the mid 1890s.[39] The Borneo Company and the BBTC expanded rapidly because they entered the Siam teak market with unparalleled finance, extraterritorial privileges and the support of the Foreign Office and the Government of India.[40]

Siamese teak coming into the Indian and London markets in the early 1880s caught the attention of Alexander Wallace, who then funded an expedition to explore the timber prospects of Siam. Wallace sent out J. A. Bryce in 1884 to scout the commercial opportunities for gaining access to the teak forests in Siam.[41] Bryce arrived in Bangkok with a letter of introduction from the Foreign Secretary, Lord Granville.[42] He spent four months touring northern Siam, then a largely unmapped country, and drew up a timber working plan for the whole of north Siam, indicating where the principal teak forests lay, where to place future sawmills and strategies for delivering teak logs to ports.[43] The BBTC entered the Siam market in the late 1880s. In 1886, the BBTC started assessing the quantity of teak in the Siamese market.[44] A Bangkok branch of the BBTC opened in 1887, with a sawmill opening in 1889.[45] The BBTC thought of Siam in terms of geopolitics as well as economics. Alexander Wallace wanted Bryce to tie up this vast potential market, where much of the teak reserves of the world grew, ‘before our neighbours [the French] have got a firm footing in the trade’.[46]

These developments did not escape the notice of the Bangkok monarchy. Nor did the fact go unnoticed that men working for the BBTC quickly became army officers during the Third Anglo-Burmese War of 1885, commanding British troops for the advance on Mandalay. Conveniently, after hostilities ended, these same army officers reverted to their role as employees of the BBTC. Thus the Siamese eyed the new Bangkok information office opened by the Wallace brothers on the west side of the Chao Phraya River in 1889 with great suspicion. As the company put it, 'The tale was spread that it [the BBTC] had caused the overthrow of [King] Theebaw and had brought the British power in its wake into neighbouring Burma.' The company protested such rumours, however, and assured the Siamese that they merely wanted to enter legitimately into the teak trade.[47] To the Siamese, an ominous cloud hung over the BBTC for years to come because of the Corporation's instigation of the Third Anglo-Burmese War.

At the outbreak of the 1893 French Crisis with Siam, the Wallace brothers reminded the Foreign Secretary, Lord Rosebery, that British imports and exports of Siam teak were 'greatly larger than any other nation's'.[48] The Wallace brothers emphasized the danger of rioting that would occur if the British Navy let the French bring warships into Bangkok harbour: 'Your Lordship is aware what difficulties Oriental Governments, owing to defective organisation, find in coping rapidly with popular disturbances.'[49] The Foreign Office quickly reciprocated with their assurance to the Wallace brothers that, 'a British man-of-war is at present stationed in the Bangkok River for the protection of the lives and property of British subjects'.[50] After the French threatened to blockade Bangkok, the BBTC, the Borneo Company and the associated chambers of commerce from throughout the United Kingdom appealed to the Foreign Office to support British business interests – which, as a memorial from the associated chambers of commerce noted, formed 'about 90 per cent of the trade in that country'.[51]

The French crisis of 1893 and France's annexation of Laos served as a turning point in Foreign Office–Siamese relations in northern Siam. Wary of another French expansion into northern Siam, the Foreign Office actively sought to check the advance of France while bolstering the Siamese monarchy's ability to protect British business and strategic interests. For example, the Foreign Office's pressure in Nan to establish a foothold for the BBTC reveals how the Foreign Office encouraged business interests to promote larger geostrategic aims. French and British interests tussled over Nan in northern Siam.[52] Siam conceded parts of eastern Nan to the French in 1893 as a result of France's territorial claims. The Foreign Office wanted to stop France from taking more of Nan's teak territory. The Foreign Office believed that if the Chief of Nan or the Siamese Commissioner let British merchants work the timber concessions then this stymied all French attempts to make territorial claims. The Foreign Office aggressively worked with the Siamese Commissioner and with the Chief of Nan in the mid 1890s to gain concessions for the BBTC in the teak forests of Nan. In a letter written late in 1895, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Siam, Maurice de Bunsen, told the prime minister and acting Foreign Secretary, Lord Salisbury, about how the Foreign Office officials in Siam wanted to protect Siamese sovereignty with British capital:

> Mr Black, in his General Report enclosed in my dispatch . . . mentions the efforts which are being made by the Bombay–Burmah Trading Corporation [BBTC] to establish a footing in the Province of Nan.
>
> Mr N. H. Johnson, Manager of the Corporation in Siam, has often conferred with me on this subject, and in July last I called the special attention of Prince Damrong, Minister of the Interior, to the importance of allowing British capital to be employed in the province [of Nan] if it was to be preserved to the Siamese Crown.
>
> . . . I have addressed to Prince Damrong a letter . . . urging him to combat the growing influence of France in the province by introducing a powerful English company as a counterpoise.[53]

In a number of letters to the Siamese Minister of the Interior, Prince Damrong, de Bunsen advocated for the interests of British timber merchants. At the same time British consular agents in Nan tried to convince the Chief of Nan to encourage British timber interests.[54] This lobbying had an effect on the Siamese Commissioner in Nan, who told British consular officials in 1897 that 'every precaution would be taken to prevent the introduction into Nan of the French element'.[55] Yet the Commissioner, while warding off the French, warned that the Chief feared that the introduction of the BBTC in the 1890s would eventually lead to the annexation of the region by Britain; he held this fear due to the popular belief that the BBTC caused the British conquest of Burma in 1885. Despite this fear, the French threat loomed large and if the Siamese repulsed British power they could lose Nan to France. The BBTC eventually got the lease in Nan.[56]

In 1895 Prince Damrong invited Herbert Slade, a British forester working in Burma, to come to Siam to help start and direct the Royal Forest Department (RFD). The department used its powers to claim the forests of northern chiefs as the property of the Siamese government in Bangkok, and it determined who could lease forests and how many and what trees a leaseholder could cut. Historians explaining the origins of the RFD have ascribed a number of motivations to its creation. Some imply that the Bangkok monarchy created the RFD as one of many diplomatic manoeuvres to avoid imperial subjugation while expanding its power.[57] Others see the creation of the forestry department as part of the British domination of Siam.[58] But the scholars making these arguments have never used sufficient archival evidence either to prove or disprove whether British timber merchants and the Foreign Office directly helped create the RFD or directed its policies after its inception.[59] The Government of India, the Foreign Office, the BBTC and the Siamese government in Bangkok actively worked together to create a forestry department that responded to British interests and at the same time centralized power and money in Bangkok. The RFD was not just an instrument of the Siamese government after its creation. A British forester on loan from India directed the RFD for about thirty years and imported highly trained British foresters. These British foresters, despite their limited ability to instigate a rigorous scientific programme, worked closely with the India Office, the Foreign Office and large British trading firms to ensure the long-term dominance of British interests in northern Siam.

The founding of Siam's RFD should be seen as an extension of the forestry conservation laws and management programmes that began in British India and Burma in the 1840s to 1860s. During this period, the East India Company and the Government of India established a state conservancy in the teak forests of Lower Burma by declaring many of the forests to be state property. After establishing a conservation regime in Lower Burma, British foresters in India and Burma started to focus on the long-term effects of deforestation in the independent kingdoms of Burma and Siam.[60] Although the idea of creating a state forestry department in Siam appealed to professional foresters in India, the complex legal and political situation in Siam precluded such a programme. The Foreign Office Consular General in Bangkok, Earnest Satow, concluded in 1886 that the Siamese held a dim view of a British system of forestry conservation.[61] The attempt to send a British forester to set up a forest conservancy in the contested Trans-Salween region in the early 1890s led the Siamese commissioner in Chiengmai to warn the British Burmese government against sending foresters into Siamese territory.[62]

The scramble for concessions during the 1890s led to increased deforestation in Siam. Fear of continued French and British annexation in northern Siam still worried Chulalongkorn and he began contemplating the creation of a forestry department. A letter written by him to the Chief of Chiengmai in 1894 laid out his reasoning for the creation of the RFD. In the letter, Chulalongkorn remonstrated with the Chief of Chiengmai for the disrepair of his forests. Chulalongkorn explained how the pace of destruction of the forests in northern Siam would lead to the collapse of the timber trade in ten years' time. This in turn would exhaust the revenues of the Chief of Chiengmai, which would then hurt the Bangkok monarchy. With Chiengmai in disarray, the British or the French could find a pretence to step in and fill the power vacuum:

> The English will throw in our teeth the reason that it is because we do not know how to rule our own state . . . It was because the Burmese did not administer their state satisfactorily that the events [i.e. conquest] came about in Burma.[63]

Prince Damrong inquired of the Foreign Office Consulate in Bangkok about the possibility of bringing over a British forester from the Government of India to manage the forests of Siam half a year later in December.[64] At that time, the Foreign Office knew about the king's desire to use forestry as a means to centralize his state.[65]

The British Foreign Office and timber merchants were willing to help Chulalongkorn centralize his state because it suited their strategic and economic interests. The proposal by the king to create a forestry department agreed with Britain's attempt to create a legal framework to control the northern areas of Siam near the Burmese and French borders. The Foreign Office also wanted the Siamese government to create a forestry department to rationalize the teak industry for the sake of British businesses. Continued complaints about the lawlessness and irregularity of the teak trade in northern Siam by the BBTC and the Borneo Company caused the Foreign Office to send J. S. Black, the British Vice Consular for northern Siam, to report on problems in his region in 1894.[66] Black trekked throughout the northern Siamese countryside and met with Siamese and British government officials, timber merchants, subjects from Burma and India, court officials and chiefs. At the conclusion of this journey he wrote and published a report on the timber trade in northern Siam.[67] This report became the basis for Foreign Office policy towards the teak forests of northern Siam in the last half of the 1890s.

In 1895 the Siamese government decided to create a forestry department headed by a British forester from Burma, Herbert Slade.[68] Siam gave a significant concession to the British Foreign Office and British timber merchants when they chose a British forester from India to run the new forestry department. The Foreign Office never formally told the Siamese to choose a British forester, but Black's initial proposal when he suggested that the new forest department be modelled on the Indian Forest Service pointed in that direction. In a letter from de Bunsen to

Lord Salisbury, de Bunsen described the benefits of having a British forester in place to protect British interests:

> in doing so [choosing a Briton to manage the department], I have observed that the preservation of the Siamese teak forests is a British Interest, the control of which should not be allowed to pass into foreign hands as it is likely to do so if Siam is obliged to resort to Germany for the assistance which she would prefer to receive from an English officer.[69]

In a report to the Siam government in August 1896, Slade suggested that Siam establish the RFD following the legal and bureaucratic structure of the Indian Forest Service. The department headquarters would be located in Chiengmai, close to the teak forests. To protect the teak forests against wanton felling, Slade believed that the forestry department needed to remove authority from the northern chiefs and put them under the centralized control of the government.[70] Once this centralization occurred the forests would become state property, owned not by chiefs in the north, but by the central government and monarch and managed ostensibly for the public good.[71] A slice of the royalties would fund these northern chiefs to buy their loyalty. British-trained foresters would then run the department while young Siamese men were trained at the Indian forestry ranger school at Dehra Dun to take charge of the RFD at some undefined point in the future.

Foreign Office consular officials warmly approved the plan by Slade and the Siamese government to set up a state forestry department. The Foreign Office believed that Slade would help to maintain the British monopoly of teak leases in northern Siam. A Foreign Office report in November 1896 painted a positive picture about the plan: 'He [Slade] is not likely to encourage proposals tending in the long run to destroy the practical monopoly of the teak export trade which is now enjoyed by the leading British firms in Bangkok.'[72] The BBTC and the Borneo Company also supported the creation of a forestry department headed by a British forester.[73] The desire to conserve the teak forests provided the lesser, though still powerful, reason for the support of the Foreign Office.[74] Administrators in the British Empire during the late nineteenth century widely supported the conservation of resources through the creation of forestry departments.[75]

British firms continued to dominate the teak trade after 1901. British foresters William Tottenham (1901–04) and then W. F. Lloyd (1904–25) served as the Chief Conservators until the mid 1920s. The

British Foreign Office reflected happily on the British monopoly over the teak during the first decade of the twentieth century. In 1905, Ralph Paget, the Foreign Office Chargé d'Affaires in Siam, assured Lord Lansdowne, the Foreign Secretary, that Britain dominated the teak trade in Siam:

> As it is scarcely worth while to take into consideration the small forests owned by the East Asiatic Company [out of Denmark], it may practically be said that the whole of the teak trade in [the] north of Siam is now controlled by British Companies.[76]

British firms signed new 30-year leases on teak forests in 1909.[77] Until the Second World War and the rise of Thai nationalization in the late 1940s and 1950s, the only serious rival to the BBTC was the Borneo Company, another British firm.[78] It was no accident that the BBTC and other British firms came to dominate the teak trade for much of the twentieth century; it was part of a conscious attempt by the Foreign Office to use British companies headed by well-known gentlemen capitalists to dominate the teak trade and keep France away from the borders of Burma and India.

It is clear that the Foreign Office and the India Office wanted to keep Siam nominally independent so that the British – who dominated Siam's finance, trade and shipping – could maintain an informal empire without the burdens and costs of running Siam directly, or of waging war with France.[79] The example of Siam shows that throughout the early part of the twentieth century, the British special relationship with Siam enabled Bangkok elites, particularly those surrounding the monarchy, to extend control over the vast territories of the north, and integrate a loose, traditional feudal relationship with local aristocrats and petty princes into a unified modern state. In effect, the British expanded and sustained the elites of Siam throughout this period. Forestry policy and the teak trade played a central part in this formation of elites in Siam.

The Far East

Intercourse with the West in the Early Modern period left China with its elite structure and values little affected. Chinese merchants profited from the import of opium and the export of tea and other goods, including the export of silver. But China limited trade to a few ports like Macau and Canton and forced trade to flow in traditional channels. The Hong merchant class overseen by a Chinese bureaucracy strictly controlled trade with the outside world. European trade missions to the imperial court were treated with contempt, and the court allowed them to visit the emperor only while kowtowing, that is, prostrating themselves full length on the floor. The emperor and the elite who protected him received European delegations only as suppliants and tributary missionaries. The Chinese elite stood aloof from the world – until a series of interventions by the British kicked open the door of trade.

British influence waxed in China as the imperial government in Peking weakened. It offers an interesting parallel to British influence 200 years earlier when the East India Company gained power in India at the expense of the decaying Mughal Empire. As Calcutta and Bombay attracted trade through the export of commodities and the import of finished textiles, so, too, did the port cities on China's eastern seaboard. Hong Kong and Shanghai competed for trade, with Hong Kong receiving most of the foreign capital up through the 1880s, losing to Shanghai, and then not regaining its supremacy until the 1950s. But both Hong Kong and Shanghai had a British oligarchy ruling the diplomatic and business spheres, backed by the ever present Royal Navy. Shanghai in particular rose to prominence, straddling the great inland Chinese empire and the outside world, spurring China on the path towards industrialization with importation and the dispersal of foreign funds.

The British challenged Chinese insularity when the Crown replaced the functions of the East India Company (EIC). The turn against the EIC began with Lord Napier. He insisted on an equal relationship between the two countries and as Superintendent of Trade in Canton, he broke with protocol and wrote directly to the emperor's viceroy requesting an audience. This the viceroy rejected, with contempt, referring to Napier as a 'dog barbarian' and insisting that he never contact a representative of the emperor again, but rather make all his addresses through the despised Hong merchants. Napier wrote to the Duke of Wellington:

> What advantage or what point did we ever gain by negotiating or humbling ourselves before these people, or rather before their Government? The records show nothing but subsequent humiliation and disgrace. What advantage or what point, again have we ever lost that was just and reasonable, by acting with promptitude and vigour?[80]

While Napier died of a fever a few months after his conflict with the viceroy, he lived long enough to suggest that the British use

Hong Kong Island for its magnificent harbour for English settlements as an alternative to the foreign ghetto in Canton. Wellington lacked the desire to provoke an immediate change with the Chinese government but Palmerston, as Foreign Secretary in a subsequent ministry under Lord Melbourne, took up the challenge. Palmerston wanted China to 'grow up' and join other nations in responsible diplomatic and trade relationships.

A crisis arose that gave Palmerston the chance to redress the balance. The government of China attempted to collect tribute from the foreign merchants and also to seize a very lucrative cargo of opium from British merchants. The British superintendent stationed in Canton, Captain Charles Elliot, felt that the outrages had reached a limit. He called in a squadron of British naval vessels into the port and demanded redress for the seized cargo and better treatment for Western prisoners. The Chinese government responded by seizing and trying a rowdy group of British sailors for a charge of murder. Twenty-nine naval junks then surrounded the British squadron. Captain Elliot instantly sank the Chinese fleet and then captured key ports on the coast.

From the settlement of this conflict the British gained five treaty ports from the Chinese government. At this point as well the Crown took over the functions of the East India Company, directly representing the British expatriates, government to government. This conflict, the Opium War of 1839–42, gained for the British the Treaty of Nanking in 1842, which formalized the new-won privileges. The challenge to the Chinese, begun by Napier and advanced by Palmerston, forced China onto the road of modernization. The burst in trade between the two countries also forced a change in the prestige and wealth of the merchant class with a subsequently energized middle class that would soon insist on the reformation and rationalization of Chinese society.

Palmerston had more reasons to fight China than a point of honour. China had 350 million inhabitants whom he wanted to bring into the empire of trade. One of Palmerston's biographers, Jasper Ridley, quotes him in a letter to Lord Auckland in 1841, explaining Britain's stake in the conflict:

> The Rivalship of European manufactures is fast excluding our productions from the markets of Europe, and we must unremittingly endeavour to find in other parts of the world new vents for the produce of our industry. The world is large enough and the wants of the human race ample enough to afford a demand for all we can manufacture; but it is the business of the Government to open and

> to secure the roads for the market. Will the navigation of the Indus turn out to be as great a help as was expected for our commerce? If it does, and if we succeed in our China expedition, Abyssinia, Arabia, the countries on the Indus and the new markets of China, will at no distant period give a most important extension to the range of our foreign commerce.

Trade depended on trading partners and Palmerston had no intention of letting small wars stand in the way.[81]

The British consuls in China enforced the treaties that opened up China as a market. They coordinated the responses of a variety of foreign powers to a local crisis, holding a recalcitrant imperial government responsible for fulfilling the legal framework that made international trade possible. Alexander Michie, an early biographer of Rutherford Alcock, consul at Shanghai and later ambassador in Peking, argued that Western influence did not only begin with military action. Rather, the military action led to a change in personnel around the imperial throne. This in turn shifted elite structure, not only with trade and merchants but also Chinese officials. The first Opium War led to the appointment of two imperial commissioners who, in the words of Alcock, were the

> first high officers who since commencement of the war had dared to tell the naked truth to his imperial master. Their joint memorial to the throne, on which the imperial instructions for signing the treaty were based, was remarkable for its clearness, simplicity and outspokenness, contrasting in these respects strongly with the customary tone of flattery, evasion, and bombast.[82]

Placing a date on informal empire is almost impossible, but 1854 is a good candidate for identifying the beginning of British informal empire in China. When rebels hindered the collection of revenues from imports for the imperial government, three consuls – of Great Britain, France and the United States – appointed, at the request of the Chinese government, a representative to run the Shanghai Imperial Maritime Customs (IMC). The importance of the IMC can hardly be overstated, for it became a major source of revenue to the government and involved policing, imports and exports, diplomacy and considerable domestic political power. When the French and Americans did not replace their appointments, the British alone ran the Shanghai IMC.

An Englishman, Horatio Nelson Lay, became the first inspector-general of the IMC. But if a single Westerner can personify informal empire in China it is Sir Robert Hart (1835–1911) who served in China for 54 years. Appointed Vice Consul at Ningpo, he gained fluency in Chinese and Chinese etiquette. Given the complexity and shifting interpretation of the port city arrangement with Western powers his sensitivity to Chinese culture aided the British diplomatic mission well, but it also enabled him to help key Chinese officials navigate the complexity and strain of Western requirements. This proved particularly useful when in 1858 Hart represented both French and British commissioners in Canton.

Due to the success of his British administration of the IMC customs, new offices were opened up and down the coast of China. The increased income and the advice of foreign personnel and expertise enabled China to begin the process of modernization. Hart 'built lighthouses, made harbour and waterways improvements, and initiated a statistical service, the collection of medical and scientific data, and participation in international exhibitions'. The IMC post office under his guidance soon became the national post office. Hart's administration of the IMC radically increased trade, and increased revenue. While jump-starting the process of Chinese modernization his work also significantly began to elevate the role of the once despised merchant elite and to open a market for Western knowledge that led to the rise of professional classes modelled on European standards – medicine, law, accounting and university professors.[83]

Hart gained the trust of the imperial court, particularly of Prince Gong, responsible for Siam foreign relations. Hart persuaded the court to found Tongwenguan, which became Peking University, and to fund a modern navy, itself modelled on Charles Gordon's Ever Victorious Army. He allied himself with elements of the Chinese elite who sought to merge modernization and development with Confucian values and to restore what they imagined as the lost power and prestige of China.[84] While he supported the Manchu elite, the modernization that he guided in his long years of service eventually led to a nationalist revolution in China that swept away the old imperial elite and restructured China as a modern national state in the Western mould.[85]

Railways as well as finance proved critical in building informal empire in China. The British encouraged French and German firms to work together to build a network throughout the whole of China that would keep each area open to the other powers, indeed to traders around the world. In Niels P. Peterson's words:

> In the first place, railways would induce economic modernization, facilitating trade and enabling the interior provinces to exploit their mineral resources and to bring to market their agricultural produce.

> The Chinese would earn more and spend at least part of that on imported European goods and appliances. British diplomats and merchants worked on the assumption that 'every mile of railways adds to the trade of China and to the general good' . . . opening up to the world market and setting free market forces is seen as both the means and the ends of a modernization effort described in terms of the progress of civilization.[86]

The Boxer Rebellion of 1899–1901 had knocked some of the expansionist air out of the lungs of France and Germany, and after the Russo-Japanese War of 1904–05 they were more than willing to work closely with the British. The development of China took the place of international rivalry with railways and finance leading the transformation.[87] This railway policy in Asia – and other parts of the world – created a network of cooperation that would, in Cain and Hopkins' words, 'reshape the world in its own image'.[88]

The First World War further reduced the competitors in the field of informal empire. Britain, the United States and Japan inherited the trade outlets and contacts left by the retreating European powers of Russia, France and Germany. This imperial network climaxed in the 1920s with British personnel controlling over a third of the manufacturing production. Thousands of foreigners – mostly British but also Japanese, European and American – operated private enterprises and served as government bureaucrats. The salt administration, customs, postal services and numerous other agencies funded the central and provincial governments and were effectively under foreign, particularly British, control. The Maoist Revolution of 1949 only intensified this Weberian rationalization by the nationalists.

Asia continued to Westernize before and after the Second World War. While leaseholds in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries gave Germans, Russians, the British and French the rights to administrate their own territory, this did not necessarily change the domestic structure of the elite. These leaseholds were, as John Darwin suggests, bridgeheads of influence into the mainland.[89] But there is little scholarship on how Western trade altered the composition of the Chinese elite in the nineteenth century. Certainly a growing and Westernizing merchant elite, based on European trade, accelerated the decline of the Manchu dynasty by increasing wealth that could compete with the wealth of the landed class. We do know that trade impelled a nationalistic response that was not only anti-European but may also have undermined the absolutism of the imperial court. After the Boxer Uprising, when Britain and the united international forces burned down the Winter Palace and forced the imperial court into submission, trade then spilled outside the forced channels of tradition and impelled a flood of imports and exports that changed the structure of society at every level. The 1920s to 1930s saw rapid Westernization and the expansive growth of new urban areas.

Peter Lowe buttresses this interpretation in *Britain in the Far East* (1981). European powers, particularly Britain, forced China to end its isolation and join the family of nations in an international code of conduct evolved in modern Europe.[90] After 1860 the imperial court followed Britain in opening up the country to trade and began the long process of modernization and Westernization. This is a view adopted by many historians from the People's Republic of China despite the fact that, according to Lowe, it is a view that has been associated with imperial apologists.[91]

Jurgen Osterhammel interprets the decline of British cotton exports to China in the 1930s as the weakening of informal empire. He prefers to focus on 'local British presence, its institutional context and its effects on indigenous society and economy'. Through this lens he finds that Britain never had 'fully articulated colonial power' on the mainland, and that British rule was 'confined to fluid, comparatively modern urban environments' and only in Hong Kong did the British come into contact with the 'settled world of the Chinese peasant'.[92]

Yet Osterhammel presents an analysis that goes far to support the idea of informal empire. He cites Hao Yen-P'ing's *The Commercial Revolution in Nineteenth-Century China* (1986b), which describes the rise of Chinese compradors who brought the two worlds of Western and Eastern trade together and jump-started a rising middle class on the eastern coast of China. Interestingly it is precisely this new elite formation that led the way to a transformed China as an economic – and solidly Westernized, – superpower.[93] Osterhammel admits this when he states that 'younger businessmen, professionals and members of a new intelligentsia . . . absorbed western ideas and attitudes and took a keen interest in political events'.[94] Given that these Chinese elites moved from the colonial enclaves to the governing class of the whole of China, even under Marxist rule (the Cultural Revolution being perhaps an exception), this only makes a stronger case for a transformative and permanent informal empire that launched Westernization in the Far East.

Ultimately Osterhammel's analysis of informal empire lacks utility. He confined informal empire to a 'historical situation of some stability and permanence in which overt foreign rule is avoided', and where partnership is unequal and enforced.[95] But the problem with this definition is that it does not allow for important questions. Is China Westernized, like Japan? If so, how did it become Westernized? If informal empire proved so limited, so temporary, why is China run by a Marxist government (while adapted to the ideas of Mao), a Western political system, with Western professionalized elites, science, technology, commerce and cultural ideas? And how does contact with the Chinese peasant make all the difference? Presumably because we have orientalist ideas of a 'real' China represented by those who work on the land?

Ultimately the whole edifice constructed by Osterhammel leaves the big questions unanswered. The rise of Chinese cotton manufacturers represents the development of Lord Grey's vision for China, as well as Palmerston's – a rationalized, capitalistic entrance into the free market and the joining in with, instead of holding back from, an integrated world economy. In 1905 Grey articulated a comprehensive approach to the development of China that would spread modernization from the small societies built around the port cities to extend deep into the interior. Railways did much to accomplish this and wedged open a Chinese economy that had beforehand never been receptive to trade. The fact that China began competing with the British on their own terms is not a sign of throwing off the Western mantle, as Osterhammel believes but, rather, of adapting to and integrating with the West, as Lowe suggests.[96]

Conclusion: change in the air

Britain played the most transforming role in Asia up to the Second World War and this often riled up the United States. Some formal colonial moves were met by American countermoves. In response to the acquisition of New Zealand by Britain in 1841 the United States crystallized its determination to take Hawaii. Edward Everett, American Ambassador to Great Britain, argued that after the British acquisition of New Zealand the British would soon go after Hawaii.[97] Captain Matthew Perry, before he sailed into Tokyo in 1853 and forced open trade with Japan and the United States, had requested permission to colonize Okinawa, Formosa and other islands in the Pacific. The enormous amount of trade potential in Asia, and the desire to establish trading beachheads before the British and French did so agitated the desire of American elites to expand into the Pacific. Perry saw Britain as a 'gigantic power' in the region.[98] In 1898 America's war with Spain and the acquisition of the Philippines opened a chapter of formal empire in American history, and sailing the 'Great White Fleet' into Sydney Harbour in 1908 projected this power to Britain. The British understood well the implications.

While British power in Asia often annoyed the American elite, this same elite chose to steer a middle course – up to the Spanish–American War – between aggressive empire-building and restraint. While some American statesmen held the vision of a United States absorbing all of North America, from Central America to the Caribbean to Canada, as well as many of the islands of Japan and Formosa (now Taiwan), others saw only a contiguous empire, a land push west to the Pacific and eschewing islands in the Caribbean or the Pacific. Except for Hawaii, the United States government for most of the nineteenth century pursued a moderate vision of expansion, based on the natural contours of racial settlements in the western lands. To go further and take all of North America, particularly Cuba, Mexico, Japan and Formosa, would be to ingest non-whites who would not share the culture and ideals of Americans, and thus while broadening the American empire would weaken the structure as a whole.

Imperialism also contradicted American ideals. Americans fiercely objected to the logic of imperial expansion in the same way that abolitionists objected to slavery in the South and race mixing in the North. This same racial consciousness saved the United States from assuming an imperial burden to rival the European powers.[99] In China, unlike the rest of the world, American and British diplomats were not at loggerheads. In fact Americans sought special protection in China by relying on the British presence.[100] Informal empire in Asia, and working as adjunct to British interests, served American ambitions until the 1930s.

Britain and later the United States struggled against the formation of large regional trading blocs that precluded their participation in trade. It has been suggested that the German bloc in Europe, and the Japanese bloc in Asia, increased trade frictions and increased the chances of war in the 1930s. In this sense the Second World War can be seen as an attempt by the Anglosphere to break open these trade blocs. Patrick Hearden makes a convincing case that the United States descended into war 'based much more upon economic considerations and ideological commitments than on either moral aspirations or military apprehensions'. American elites discounted the idea that National Socialist Germany posed a threat to the Western hemisphere and instead 'were primarily concerned about the menace that a triumphant Germany would present to the free enterprise system of the United States'. Hitler 'and his Axis partners' could 'partition the planet into exclusive spheres of influence'. The British shared this fear.[101]

Akita and Naoto Kagotani however oppose this view. They see a far more cooperative complementarity between powers, including fascist Japan and European imperial powers. They do not see a scramble for markets or intense competition between blocs but, rather, an informal empire that make a series of adjustments between an increasingly rationalized Japanese economy and the rationalized economies of the imperial powers, all of whom were, until 1937, they argue, fairly open.[102]

As Japan developed it bought heavily from British India, Australia, Malaya and Dutch Indonesia. In return Japan exported manufactured goods that cut into the sale of British imports in these same territories. Japan and Britain made adjustments in trade to reduce friction, in part because British colonies needed to sell to Japan to service loans to London. British India sold cotton bales to Japan and with the money from this purchased Japanese manufactured goods.[103] The 'final demand linkage effect' meant that no trading partner could afford to extricate themselves from the web of trade with restrictions or boycotts.

Japan shared with Britain a dependency on foreign trade. The British commercial counsellor, Sir George B. Sansom, could write that 'Japan's position is not unlike that of Great Britain . . . She must purchase abroad the raw materials of industry and with her profits buy such finished goods as she requires.'[104] As Japan developed it needed less heavy equipment from Britain, and less money as well. As it joined the imperial web it meant adjustments and some friction, but it also meant a basic interest in keeping trade relatively open to all parties. 'A kind of complementarity of economic interests . . . emerged between the British Empire and Japan rather than between Great Britain and Japan,' Akita and Kagotani argued.[105] Informal empire in Asia was diffuse in nature and, as discussed in this book, involved a network of imperial relationships.

Europeans transformed the Indian subcontinent, South East Asia and East Asia by connecting regional trading routes into a global system of exchange, thereby radically elevating the volume and variety of products and services exchanged. Formal and informal empire aided the process of Western rationalization. Imperial power forever changed elite structures in Asia, bringing into power merchant groups, collaborators, civil servants and intelligentsia who furthered the changes in society through a myriad of methods – including broad-based cultural changes in the expression of religion, politics, philosophy and consumer expectations. The means of control included the enforcement of extraterritorial privileges and the threat of economic and political sanctions, often coupled with the attempt to keep other would-be imperial powers at bay. For the term 'informal empire' to be applicable historians have to show that one nation's elite played a formative role in co-opting, or creating, and sustaining elites in the subordinated region. That this is certainly the case in Asia explains how and why this region of the world became a rationalized and integral part of a globalized and Western world culture.

7

Informal Empire and the Middle East

Fierce tribal loyalties, Islam and the extreme desiccation of the landscape convinced the British in the mid-Victorian era, as with the Persians and Romans before them, to turn down opportunities of an extensive formal empire in much of the Middle East and to prefer informal influence in the region. Yet the Middle East straddled the strategic and shortest route to India, and the Ottoman Empire – although considered the 'Sick Man of Europe' – managed, merely by holding together the disparate territories of North Africa, the Arabian Peninsula and Asia Minor, to block the expanse of Russia into the Mediterranean. The British much rather preferred to influence a pliable and weak Ottoman Empire than the expanding and much feared Russian Empire.[1]

Scholars are divided on the question of whether informal empire in the Middle East led to formal empire. David S. Landes agreed that the British had an informal empire. In *Bankers and Pashas* (1958), he maps out how investors and bankers used the power of the state to increase investment opportunities and keep debt repayment on schedule. He also discussed cultural imperialism – the Egyptian elites' yearning for Western status. Landes suspected that the power inequity between rulers and ruled created a global infatuation for all things European. With the capital infusion that created debt, and the servility that naturally followed, collaboration with Europe became intense.[2]

The most serious attempt to analyze Britain's relationship with the Ottoman Empire came from the work of the Australian historian of British diplomacy, Marian Kent. In her book *Moguls and Mandarins* (1993), Kent tests Gallagher and Robinson's ideas against the history of the Ottoman Empire. She notes a Victorian continuity throughout the early twentieth century, a desire to maintain an informal rather than a formal empire and a strategic desire to protect the passage to India. Additionally the Concert of Europe before the First World War curtailed the scope of British power in the Ottoman Empire. The idea that the British valued strategy over business interests to justify informal empire in the Middle East has been, she concludes, 'an argument without end'.[3]

Alexander Schölch produced an unusually insightful piece of scholarship on this topic in 'The "Men on the Spot" and the English Occupation of Egypt in 1882' (1976).[4] He asks if the decision to invade Egypt, taken by Gladstone in 1882, could possibly be 'only for the sake of the Canal, which is to say for India's sake, that Egypt was invaded?'[5] Schölch answers that the 'men on the spot' provided information back home to Britain that led to the invasion, and thus posits a European – and primarily British – elite in Egypt as the proximate cause of the invasion, thereby boldly contradicting Gallagher and Robinson.

Platt and D. K. Fieldhouse both argued that competition with European powers, particularly France, and the need to safeguard the route to India motivated the British invasion of Egypt. Platt and Fieldhouse also derided the notion that bondholders in competition with France had the authority over the Foreign Office to make such a move possible. But Schölch counters that the route to India was an afterthought and that French competition was 'non-existent after January 1882'. Internal developments in France, with the fall of Prime Minister Léon Gambetta, entirely swept this concern away. Rather, since 'the holders of more than half of the bonds of the Egyptian Funded Debt were to be found in England' the expatriate elite in Egypt had no choice but to attempt to move the British government to protect their assets.[6]

The traditional elites in Egypt also had much at stake in British involvement. Interaction with Britain had changed their formation and character. The following description by historian Afaf Lutfi al-Sayyid-Marsot gives an idea of the impact of the Palmerstonian project on Egypt that sought to change society through trade:

> Economic change had significant social and political consequences. Not only overseas connections but the numbers of resident 'foreigners' grew considerably from *c.*8,000–10,000 in 1838 to some 90,000 by 1881. This polyglot capitalist community embraced not only Armenians, Jews, Greeks, and others from the eastern Mediterranean, but British, French, and Italians, newcomers as well as old. Indigenous elites also thrived: surviving members of the traditional Turco-Circassian ruling class increasingly integrated into Egyptian society;

> landed proprietors, from highly placed members of the extended royal and official families down to local village notables; and administrators with Western educations absorbed into the enlarged state machine. Blurring distinctions between 'foreign' and 'indigenous', 'European' and 'Egyptian', these groups lived together in uneasy relationships, at once co-operative and intensely competitive, participants in a kaleidoscopic medley of economic ambition and social, ethnic, or occupational bonds.[7]

Given the dependence of this elite on the West, and particularly on Britain, Landes had reason to argue that Britain had such a hold on Egypt because of the latter's desire to be Western. This urge, which he seemed to consider pathetic, and the attempt to overcome the stigma of comparative barbarity explained the need to collaborate and, he argued, unlocks the secret of the Western power to transform and modernize the world.[8]

James Onley, the premier historian of the Gulf States, asserts that the term 'informal empire', while muddy, is a valid tool of analysis. It certainly has more utility than the opaque approach by Elizabeth Monroe who used a nicely turned phrase as the title of her book, *Britain's Moment in the Middle East* (1963), but gives the reader no clear conceptual term or definition to describe what exactly 'the moment' means and how it can be applied uniformly. Onley agrees with Robinson and Gallagher that strategy motivated informal empire, as evidenced by the 'Aden Protectorate, the Gulf sheikhdoms, the mandates of Iraq, Trans-Jordan, and Palestine, and the colonies of Malta, Cyprus, and Aden Settlement'.[9] He also agrees with Hopkins that profit lay behind informal empire in Turkey. But Onley has his own take on informal empire. He sees formal empire as British territory with full sovereignty. All else – 'protectorates, condominia, mandates, and protected states' – would 'fall within Britain's informal empire as they defined it'.[10] While British officials may not have used the term 'informal empire', the reports, letters and other official documents show that officials understood that the construction of education, governance, trade, postal offices, civil service and cultural influence would produce an outcome of what would later be called 'informal empire'.

Salisbury and informal empire

The earliest British interests in the Middle East as an area of serious foreign policy arose during the Napoleonic Wars of 1803–15. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt and the French threat to the route to India kindled increased interest in the region.[11] Onley asserts that this concern for strategy, not economics, first compelled Britain into diplomatic relations with the Gulf sheikhdoms of Bahrain and Trucial Oman between 1797 and 1819. He points out that Britain's original interest in the Gulf sheikhdoms developed out of a strategic concern for the protection of British shipping between Persia, Iraq, Muscat (Oman), and India. He adds that the political intervention of the 1820s continued 'a policy Britain maintained until 1971'.[12] As Monroe described it, 'The British desire and technique was to create friendly buffer states by means of influence, exercised through trade treaties, loans, friendly advice, and pressure by ambassadors or gunboats if necessary.'[13]

Roger Owen chronicled how trade with Europe transformed the region, and in the words of a reviewer, 'brought the area under the political, economic and cultural domination of the West'. Owen writes that urban areas, and even small villages, were thrust 'into market relations with the wider economy' and drew regional and local trading networks of elites into a world system. The crucial moments included the abolition of the Levant Company in 1825 that threw the trade of the Ottoman Empire open to the world.[14] The interventions to maintain informal empire in the Ottoman Empire were many. The Convention of Balta Liman in 1838 gave control of customs and tariffs to European powers, eliminated state monopolies and forced the Ottoman government to take out foreign loans to survive. Britain went on to purchase the Egyptian Khedive's share in the Suez Canal in 1869, and then militarily occupied Egypt in 1882. After the Crimean War of 1853–56 bond boosters held up the prospect of further Western reforms to European investors, including not just British but also French, German and Greek financiers. Anatolia 'began to appear in Western eyes as a new California' and heralded a rush of even more capital.[15]

If Lord Palmerston represented the nadir of a vigorous foreign policy that prized informal empire, Lord Salisbury (who like Palmerston had also served as the Foreign Minister and prime minister) represented an unsuccessful attempt to counter the doctrine. Salisbury, titled Lord Robert Cecil in the early 1860s, objected to the 'hectoring tone' that Palmerston took towards China. He despised subordinate officials who dragged the country into war on points of honour. But Salisbury saw that behind this disturbing tone of hectoring lay the ideals of the Manchester School that advocated free trade. 'The gambling and reckless spirit of trade', he wrote,

> which never cares to count up distant possibilities and lives only for the chances and profits of the morrow, has bred a school of politicians

> whose chief claim to attention is that they cast out as barbarous all the precautions on which our ancestors relied.[16]

He complained that advocates of free trade put money in the place of morality and the national interest. They cut off British interests and influence on the Continent, advocating that 'we ought to be as completely disconnected from the politics of Europe by the Channel as the Americans are by the Atlantic'.[17]

Salisbury blamed the middle classes for this dangerous development. The Reform Bill of 1832 brought into the political mainstream men concerned primarily with profit and comfort, and this led to a foreign policy of impotent braggadocio – threats without force. This class clamoured for empire 'when it is safe and cheap' and lacked all heroism. The Palmerstonian appeal to *Civis Romanus*, so popular with the democratic mob, he called cowardly and immoral.[18]

Circumstances led however to the expansion of empire 'safe and cheap' in the Middle East under Salisbury premiership. Rivalry between Austria and Russia in South-East Europe raised the spectre of a competing European power taking over Ottoman territory that in turn controlled the land route to India. If the Russians took Constantinople that then would enable the Russian fleet to have naval access to the Mediterranean. The Russian Navy could sally forth from the Black Sea, attack shipping and then retreat safely through the Dardanelles Strait, where mounted guns on land blocked pursuit. To carry out these threats the Russians did not need to hold Constantinople but merely force the Sultan and the Ottoman government into submission. Either way Britain would have its route to India threatened, and an important part of the world removed from British influence and all the advantages to trade that trade entailed.

Salisbury felt that he had no choice but to offer security to the Ottomans in return for influence. He wrote to the British ambassador in Constantinople, Henry Layard, in 1878 that, 'The time is passed for talking about "independence and integrity". It was something of a sham in 1856 – as events have proved. But it would be a pure mockery now.'[19] The Turks should recognize that they need protection and that protection must be given by a power interested not in its dissolution, as with Russia, but in its health and reform. He spoke frankly of wanting the Russian Empire out of the Middle East:

> We object to Russia under the mask either of Slav or Turk dominating on the various coasts, Persian, Arabian Syrian, Greek, where we

> now have friends, clients and interests. How that domination is to be met – whether by diminution or by counterpoise – is another question.[20]

The expense of taking over the Middle East in a formal empire gave pause. Far cheaper, he argued, to support the Ottomans as a puppet regime. Salisbury desired an inexpensive informal empire not for the trade that it brought, but for the security of the route to India. The inference for informal empire in the Middle East 'under the mask' could not be clearer. Salisbury's biographer (and daughter), Gwendolyn Cecil, interpreted this to mean that Britain wanted to give the Ottoman Empire 'a modicum of independence' and no more.[21] Salisbury sought an agreement between Britain and the Sultan for a new strategic arrangement with assurances of good behaviour towards Asiatic Christians and a promise to concede to Britain the 'occupation of Cyprus'. This would provide a base of operation in the hub of the Mediterranean wheel and project British force into Asia Minor, Syria and North Africa, all without holding territory that would alarm the French or be seen as empire-building at the expense of the Ottomans.

At the Congress of Berlin on 13 June 1878 and one month later with the Treaty of Berlin on 13 July 1878, the European signatories trimmed the extent and authority of the Ottomans. They authorized France to protect the Holy Places in Palestine, thus satisfying a major French ambition. Then Britain, soon after signing the treaty, announced her secret agreement with the Sultan to take possession of Cyprus. Salisbury remarked that, 'We shall set up a rickety sort of Turkish rule again south of the Balkans. But it is a mere respite. There is no vitality left in them.'[22]

Profit should not, he thought, be placed before empire. Many critics and friends of the British Empire assumed that the British built the empire for the sole purpose of profit, but 'They [the British] become subject to the charge of posing as crusaders with a covert eye to eventual profit', where in reality the opposite is true, 'they are really instinctive empire-builders with a particular capacity for altruistic and efficient acceptance of the responsibilities that result.' Accordingly, profit followed altruistic empire-building. He wrote to Layard, Ambassador to the Porte, that the key to good governance lay in placing European governors in the administration, as with India: 'Where you really want Europeans is in the governing posts – in the offices which have hitherto been made nests of corruption.'[23]

This philosophy – that efficient government followed European governors – he extended to informal empire and with it, advocated placing the Ottoman Empire more completely under British control. This he felt would be for the benefit of the Ottoman Empire: 'Good officers, well selected for a length of time, will create suitable traditions of administration which will gradually harden into intuitions, and, made this way, reformed intuitions will regenerate a people.'[24] The faith that Palmerston placed in free trade to reform and civilize the backward peoples of the world, Salisbury placed in the rule of law and in properly governed institutions. Both men optimistically believed that the world could and would be made in the image of England.

The same principle applied in Egypt, which nominally lay in the Ottoman sphere. Salisbury preferred that European ministers control the government outright. But the resistance of the Egyptians made such open control difficult and only raised opposition. Instead he proposed that, 'We shall be safer and more powerful as wirepullers than as ostensible rulers.' Some sort of 'Aide-Ministers' who advised the Cabinet members worked best. Thus the influence of Britain and France could be exerted modestly, yet effectively. Inspections made this possible. They acted as a power behind the throne, reporting on the progress or lack of progress made. 'Diplomatic notes – consular interviews, newspapers – bluebooks', all could serve the goal of effective control. He felt that Britain lost nothing with the loss of figurehead officials – they merely exchanged 'nominal authority for real inspectorship'.[25]

Salisbury proposed that the highest authorities in Egypt would be two officers, one French and one British, 'Controllers' with no obvious executive authority to draw attention. The French appointed Marquis de Bligniéres and Salisbury appointed an army major, Evelyn Baring, who had already served as Commissioner for the Public Debt Commission. This left in place the 'external of authority' to the Turkish elite in Egypt, who would then govern under British advice. This arrangement prevented any loss of Western influence because 'all actual pressure on the native authorities will pass through the Agent's hands'. Responsibility behind the scenes carried little risk since 'in the eyes of the world' direct responsibility for shortcomings would be blamed on the Egyptians.[26]

Interestingly the Sultan did not turn to the Russians, as Britain had feared. Influence came from another quarter. After the Franco-German War of 1870 German prestige rose in the eyes of the Turks, and after Britain took Cyprus in 1878 and Egypt in 1882 the Sultan had little trust in the British – Russia mauled her in the north and west and Britain in the south. To Germany then came the permission to construct a Balkan railway system that ran from Baghdad through Istanbul and into the rail network of Europe. German merchants overtook the French and

German financiers entered the banking interests of the Ottoman Empire with ease. The British acquiesced – it still feared Russia but saw the German interest in the Persian Gulf as a counterweight to the northern Bear. If the Ottoman railway had to be outside British hands, *The Times* commented, then the Germans were the first choice.[27]

British informal empire however changed to formal empire in much of the Middle East by the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1882 a nationalist uprising in Egypt, led by Ahmed Urabi, an Egyptian army general, threatened the rule of Tewfik Pasha, the Khedive of Egypt. British prime minister Gladstone had objected to the expansion of formal empire on moral grounds but in order to fend off a Whig revolt within the Liberal Party at home, he opted for military intervention. The British Controller-General at the time, Sir Auckland Colvin, noted that Urabi swept to power on a wave of national sentiment attributable in part to 'the growing emancipation of the Egyptian mind owing to its close contact with Europeans'. Egyptians also tired of a Turkish elite subservient to the dictates of the British and French.[28]

British traders, financiers, bondholders and journalists (who tended to be connected or even wholly the same as the former) penned articles in *The Times* and *Pall Mall Gazette* that raised the alarm of a collapse in Egyptian Bonds if payments were not made and, accordingly, taxes collected from the Egyptians. Articles warned of the prospect of anarchy that would follow Egyptian self-government, which in turn necessitated swift action. The Consul General in Cairo, Sir Edward Malet, wrote to Earl Granville, the Foreign Secretary, that 'an occupation of the country should precede its re-organization'.[29] Allegations of unfair imprisonment and torture by Egyptian forces abounded in these articles, constituting a steady beating of war drums only too familiar to modern ears. Between threats of financial collapse, corruption, torture and a threat to the Suez Canal, all faithfully reproduced by the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Gladstone's favourite newspaper, the tide of opinion in Britain gradually turned towards intervention. The 'men on the spot', 'British controllers, officials, and businessmen in the guise of journalists . . . feared primarily for finance, trade, investments, and their own position . . . together they engineered the "breakdown" of Egypt in order to make intervention an "unavoidable necessity".'[30]

In the Commons Gladstone asserted that British goals 'are well known to consist in the general maintenance of all established right in Egypt, whether they be those of the Sultan, those of the Khedive, those of the people of Egypt, or those of the foreign bondholders'.[31] Nowhere did Gladstone mention the Suez Canal in the context of British strategy.

On 11 July 1882 the British bombarded Alexandria. But this timid action, preferred by Gladstone, only fanned the flames of Egyptian nationalism. To tame the dissent, in August of the same year British forces landed in Egypt – ostensibly to protect the Canal. On 13 September they destroyed Urabi's army at Tel el-Kebir without the assistance either of the Ottoman Turks or the French. Gladstone's ministry then took formal control of Egypt.

Robinson and Gallagher made the British occupation of Egypt in 1882 the prominent case study for underscoring their idea that events in the colonies forced the metropolitan authorities to intervene in Egypt in order to protect imperial access to the Suez Canal. Challenging this position, Hopkins asserted that the threat to the Canal only emerged once Admiral Frederick Seymour bombarded Alexandria in July 1882.[32] Therefore, the intervention did not spring from danger posed to the Suez Canal, nor from a nationalist uprising, the spread of anarchy or French ambitions. Rather, the intervention posed as a defence of Britain's expanding investment in Egypt.[33] Thus for Hopkins economics, not strategic interests, served as the main explanatory principle in understanding the British occupation.[34]

The discovery of oil also changed the balance of interests in the Middle East. When the British Navy switched from coal to oil at the urging of then Lord Admiral Winston Churchill, Britain desired to control the territory that produced the oil. Additionally the growth of the automobile and the changing modern economy increasingly lent urgency to securing the supply of oil. George Reynolds, in the employ of the Englishman William D'Arcy and the Burmah Oil Company, discovered oil in Iran in 1908. The newly formed Anglo-Persian Oil Company, still largely owned by the Burmah Oil Company, found more reserves in 1927 in adjoining Iraq. Within a decade, in Bahrain, Kuwait and the desert kingdom of Saudi Arabia, thousands of oil wells pumped oil not only for the British Navy, but also for millions of automobiles around the world. Economics and strategy spurred on the British to play an increasingly important role in the Middle East.[35]

During the First World War British power multiplied in the region for a number of reasons. The Ottoman identification with Germany and the calculation that Germany and Austria would win the war led the Ottoman government to side against the British and the French. This in turn led to the development of a strategic ambition to undermine Ottoman rule. It also neatly coincided with the discovery of oil and the need for oil in the Western world. The conflict in addition coincided with rising Arab nationalism against the Turks. During the war the British funded rebellious Arabs. Britain used the newfound attachment to nationalism to good advantage, promising independence to the Arabs once the Ottoman Empire dissolved. But the promise did not outlive the war itself, and breaking the promise allowed much of the territory held under wartime conditions to convert to both formal and informal empire.

Just how much did British policy-makers, oilmen and bondholders want out of these regions before the First World War began? Before the war British diplomats and investors primarily focused on Persia, Egypt and, to a lesser extent, the Ottoman heart of modern Turkey. Modern-day Iraq, Israel, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait did not compel attention. Britain took great pains after 1907 to hold south-west Persia where the largest known oil fields existed. Then during the First World War British attention shifted towards Iraq in order to spur on Arab nationalism against Turkish influence. Finally, following the end of the war, the British military occupied the entire Middle East, much of Persia and parts of Central Asia.[36]

Two agreements in particular betrayed Arab ambitions for national independence. The secret Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916 between Britain and France divided much of the Middle East into spheres of influence, giving Britain a hugely increased formal holding – Transjordan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon and Iraq, while Arab kings and sheikhs held territory in the Saudi Peninsula. The 1917 Balfour Declaration promised a homeland to the Jews in Palestine in return for using their influence to pull the United States into the war. These betrayals of the Arab nationalists reaped a short-term gain for British imperialism while complicating and undermining British interests in the long run.

Between the two World Wars Britain substantially guided the formation of elites in the Middle East. Peter Sluglett wrote that between 1920 and 1930,

> Britain exerted effective control over Aden Colony, the Aden Protectorate, Bahrain, Cyprus, Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Palestine, Muscat and Oman, Qatar, Socotra, Somaliland, the Sudan, Transjordan, and the Trucial States, as well as having substantial influence over the ruler of the new Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and, in spite of strenuous efforts on Lord Curzon's part to negotiate a pro-British Treaty in 1919, rather less influence over the newly established and avowedly nationalist Pahlavi monarchy in Iran.[37]

Sluglett suggested a historiographical problem writing about British power in the Middle East. Besides the confusing and overlapping issue of formal and informal empire, relations between the British and the Middle Eastern elites flowed through different channels; the Colonial, Foreign and India Offices.[38] A dearth of big picture analyses of the region challenges scholars, 'with no major interpretive schools, apart perhaps from the apologists for and critics of empire. There are few "subaltern studies", few local histories, and with some notable exceptions, few major reinterpretations.'[39] Only informal empire, he concludes, properly explains Britain's role as a transforming power in the Middle East.

The US entry into the First World War, and the need to conciliate France, partially blunted Britain's ambitions for the post-Ottoman Middle East. But the terms of the British Mandate in Iraq and the unequal Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 still proved an effective instrument for Britain to control Iraq until the revolution of 1958. In much the same way the Protectorate and the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 enabled Britain to control Egypt until 1952. Sir John Shuckburgh, Secretary of the Political Department of the India Office, minuted in 1919:

> It is generally agreed withal we must not go through the official pantomime known as 'declaring a protectorate', but it is not clear that this disability need limit to any practical extent the control we are able to exert over Mesopotamian affairs.[40]

The British government had good reason to exert influence in the Middle East even while relinquishing formal colonies elsewhere. During the 1920s and 1930s the economies of the West grew heavily dependent on oil. The naval shift from coal to petroleum had been largely completed by 1930 and left the Royal Navy, as well as the Army and Royal Air Force, entirely dependent on imported fuel. The strategic 'route to India' required not only open sea lanes but a string of airbases in the Middle East that would supply the Indian empire in time of war or rebellion.

In the post-Ottoman areas a patchwork of legal arrangements with Britain covered a wide spectrum of elite collaboration and blurred the distinction between formal and informal empire. These arrangements involved merchants, clerks, a rising middle class, a press divided between loyalist opinion and nationalist dissent and a diverse range of minority groups that significantly benefited from the imperial presence. Despite the multiethnic and religious complexity of the region, by the time the Second World War broke out, as Glen Balfour-Paul has argued, the 'informal empire [in the Middle East] was still broadly in place'.[41] The occupation of Palestine protected the Suez Canal, Egyptian nationalist effervescence had cooled and the Shah of Iran appeared to block the Russian Bear, now communist, from marching south. But this also meant that Britain needed to expand collaboration with local elites to keep its influence alive. Banking, investment and technological exchange in the region kept the oil flowing.

After the Second World War

One National Security Aide in the Johnson administration summed up the British and American approach in the Middle East during the 1950s and 1960s as seeking 'rational' collaborators through development aid – with Gamal Abdel Nasser, president of Egypt, as a particular problem:

> Oversimplified, our chief political problem in the UAR [United Arab Republic] is that Nasser is a revolutionary – not the sort of rational calculator of priorities like a Dimirel, [Tunisian President Habib] Bourguiba, Ayb, or Gandhi whom we can work with. We have tried for five years to 'turn Nasser inward' – to help him begin to weigh in his development priorities against his revolutionary aims. Nasser may never become the rational being we might work with. But one of our hopes in the UAR is that a group of rational non-revolutionaries around him might become important enough to carry some weight . . .[42]

Collaborating elites in the region had their own agenda and played the USSR, the United Kingdom and the United States against each other. The freshly decolonized countries in the Middle East had no intention of becoming absorbed by any one of them, and national leaders used the competitive spirit of the Cold War to increase both economic and military support. Britain worked closely with the United States in an attempt to accomplish its strategic goals and still remain an important player in the region. National leaders in the Middle East often relied heavily on British weapons and technical assistance that in the eyes of American intelligence analysts kept the United Kingdom as an important factor in the containment of the Soviet Union during the 1950s and 1960s.[43]

While Churchill accused the Labour Party after the Second World War of scuttling the British Empire, Wm. Roger Louis points out that Labour in fact attempted to build a replacement for the loss of India and other areas with an informal empire of influence and prestige in the Middle East and Africa. One scholar, F. S. Northedge, described Foreign Office personnel as certain that:

> Britain's old position in the Middle East and other such areas of the world would sooner or later be restored to more or less what it always had been. Arabs, Iranians, and even Jews would get used to the idea that Britain, by reason of her long experience, was the natural agency to govern them, to define their various needs, including defence, and to guide them on their way to prosperity and security.[44]

Labour's Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin, while differing from his predecessor Anthony Eden on formal empire, had an imperialist and certainly cold warrior view of countering Soviet influence. He attempted to secure American aid behind the British projection of influence as a redefined imperial power – in this case a development agenda that masked the imperial impulse and appeared friendly to democratic aspirations. Permanent Undersecretary at the Foreign Office Moley Sargent urged that Britain must bring the United States over to support Britain, and the 'tricky' part would be to 'demonstrate to the American public that our challenge is based on upholding the liberal idea . . . and not upon selfish appreciations as to our position as a Great Power'.[45] The United States certainly pursued development in the region for the very reasons that Britain did – to counter Soviet expansion, gain secure access to oil and construct a network of influence that would draw the Middle East into its national orbit of power.[46]

The Foreign Office launched the British Middle East Office (BMEO) as the world's first postcolonial development programme, preceding the development efforts of the United Nations and the United States, including the Marshall Plan and the 'Point Four Program'. To date historians have little studied the trailblazing efforts of the BMEO, with the exception of Paul W. T. Kingston's book, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East, 1945–1958*.[47] Most scholars who study British imperial policy in the Middle East, such as Louis, Kingston and Wesley K. Wark, agree that Britain tried – and failed – to create an informal empire in the region through development programmes after the Second World War.[48]

One political scientist, Peter Bauer, argued that governments and private groups give development assistance to buy political influence. While many disagree with this assessment, the Head of the BMEO also served immediately after the Second World War as Chair of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Middle East. This dual role makes clear that the BMEO had a political and intelligence agenda added to that of development and diplomacy. Many of the functions of development held substantial military and intelligence potential in a Cold War setting, with reports from the BMEO often sent directly to the Foreign Secretary for analysis. That the origin of the world's first development programme arose from a military and intelligence office in the context of an imperial projection of power has profound historical implications for historians analyzing informal empire.[49]

Britain used a number of administrative instruments to govern the Middle East. The Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of 1930 and the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 gave the peoples of the Middle East after the First World War 'a modicum of independence', to use Salisbury's phrase from an earlier era.[50] But by the end of the Second World War Britain had brought much of the region under outright military occupation. It held Aden and Cyprus as Crown colonies. The British held Somaliland, Qatar and Kuwait under a British Protectorate and Transjordan and Palestine under a British Mandate. The Anglo-Egyptian Condominium, created in 1899, still administered the Sudan. The Second World War however had drained substantial resources from the British economy and public opinion, as well as the Treasury, increasingly balked at the idea of sacrificing domestic social programmes to retain vast colonial possessions in the face of mounting nationalist resistance. Giving up control over this strategically important region did not prove easy.

Development programmes held out the hope for maximizing influence while minimizing resistance. In 1945 the Foreign Office intended the BMEO to carry out this agenda.[51] The Foreign Office based the management model for the BMEO Development Division on the wartime Middle East Supply Centre (MESC). This wartime office dictated overall policy and direction of nominally independent wartime governments in the Middle East. Officials at the Ministry of War transferred key personnel and offices, including all the old contacts and files housed at the MESC headquarters in Cairo, directly to the BMEO without – at first – even a change of offices. The Foreign Office hoped to replace the MESC with a scaled-down version of its former self, offering a far friendlier face to the Americans and to anti-British nationalists in the region.[52] Foreign Office officials believed that they could forestall the loss of British influence in the region by putting Britain's imperial expertise – in the form of unemployed technicians and managers, many of them from India – to work. Development rather than imperialism provided the vehicle for power.[53]

This friendlier presentation of development masked the great game played out under the surface. As previously mentioned the Head of the

BMEO after the Second World War also served as Chair of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Middle East, and this dual role insinuated a political and intelligence agenda directly into the development and diplomacy initiatives of the BMEO. Many of the functions of development held substantial military and intelligence potential in the Cold War setting, with reports from the BMEO often being sent directly to the Foreign Secretary for analysis.[54] As early as 1946 BMEO Head Sir Arnold Overton claimed that the organization 'is of help to the military in a variety of unspectacular ways'. But since the Arabs suspected that the British intended to 'substitute economic domination for political and military domination' they would have to 'tread very warily' and work quietly 'behind the scenes'.[55]

Overton rightly suspected Arab unease. Until 1950 the Head of the BMEO furnished intelligence and security reports and the collection and collation of intelligence throughout its area of direct responsibility. After this date the BMEO political officer oversaw the covert propaganda committee that met under the director of the BMEO to 'review covert propaganda activities in the Middle East and make recommendations to the Foreign Office or Heads of Missions'.[56] This reveals a startling intersection of development, intelligence and power with the world's first development agency outside of formal empire.

The Foreign Office took active measures to launch a propaganda campaign for 'development and democracy' immediately after the war.[57] It envisioned a development programme that would raise the general standard of living. Officials understood however that a small budget required a small staff. Bevin had in mind the launch of a 'Middle Eastern New Deal'. In one of his first acts as Foreign Secretary he called and chaired a London conference of officials on the Middle East to assert Britain's strategic interests and define the role that development would play.[58] He understood that a small number of advisors did not equate with little influence.[59] Advisors maximized influence by focusing on a few key areas that resulted in legislative and bureaucratic structures and, of course, influence. Those advisors who focused on statistics acted first as a general consultant and identified the most critical needs for the host government and for the BMEO. For instance, Statistical Advisor to the BMEO John Murray advised Iraq in 1947 on a range of issues, from the need to balance the budget to setting up effective banking regulations and equitable tax structures. Other advisors then followed. In practice the agriculture and forestry advisors produced most of the development reports. These had the largest impact because they dealt with issues that affected the bulk of the population – land use, forestry conservation, afforestation, soil erosion, land settlement, land tenure and the development of parklands, among others.[60]

Bevin insisted that the BMEO focus its efforts on agriculture, of which forestry took a leading role.[61] Thus forestry fell under the general authority of the agricultural advisor, who in turn oversaw most of the land-use questions involved. The reports of the first agricultural advisor, Herbert Stewart, clearly bear this out.[62] In Egypt, where he began his work, he visited senior officials from the Minister of Agriculture that included the heads of the various departments and agricultural education, research and district development. The Egyptian Agriculture Minister allowed Stewart to visit each section where he then culled information on staff, projects and problems. Based on his experience in India he then made a series of suggestions for practical application and offered help in 'securing materials and information' and then in disseminating it. Egyptian officials in turn promised collaboration and agreed to turn to the BMEO for assistance and advice. Stewart also spent time at the livestock-breeding farms for the improvement of stock for 'work, meat, milk, wool, hides, skins, egg production . . . [and issues] relating to buffaloes, cattle, sheep, goats and poultry'. Since the forestry advisor served under the agricultural advisor, the reports often overlapped similar concerns.[63]

Publicity followed hard on the heels of these reports. The BMEO headquarters in Cairo and then later in Beirut shipped films, along with lecturers and slide presentations to schools and government agencies. Organizations such as the 'Society of the Friends of the Trees' gave regular press reports – a key element linking British administrative help to local support groups. British intelligence also ran radio stations and published newspapers throughout the region, giving development propaganda ready outlets as news items and 'pro development' articles placed without the appearance of British involvement. Foresters, farmers and engineers prepared lectures, slide shows and mobile exhibits for government officials, often teachers, to tour villages by jeep. With school children in attendance teachers then suggested essay assignments on conservation, agriculture and other development projects and donated printed material to their school officials. The BMEO easily persuaded governments to offer special commemoration stamps and to sponsor Arbour Day as a spring holiday for tree-planting.[64]

The push for British personnel went against a natural resistance on the part of the Arabs and Iranians to give up authority or to submit to further British direction. British advisors required tact and subtlety when attempting to place British personnel in key posts.[65] In the case of conservation they preferred that the top officials of a forest department train in a British institution such as the Imperial Forestry Institute at Oxford, while the rangers trained in India, Cyprus or Pakistan, countries where the British still maintained forestry schools with British instructors. They preferred that the forest guards, at the bottom of the structure and locally trained, at least speak good English. Faithful to their mission and to their superiors, each forest service would then provide dependable administration over a massive land area.

The British capitalized on a 'deep and widespread respect for Great Britain throughout the whole Region',[66] and hoped to place its own personnel in key positions to give them influence, gather intelligence and gain contracts. But fear that Middle Easterners would botch up the execution of development plans haunted the British as well and led them to push for the placement of British personnel to make sure that the job was done correctly. W. Russell-Edmunds, a Treasury official, expressed a view held by most at the BMEO when, in relation to a Village Loan Scheme, he remarked that the project was 'too valuable to us, as a means of bolstering up the Jordanian economy, for us to risk its collapse under a Jordanian'.[67] In 1962 the BMEO Head of the Development Division P. P. Howell mocked the Lebanese government for its 'unusually comic' attempt to run its own development proposals, who have 'now officially agreed to let us do the thinking for them'.[68]

The BMEO dreamed big dreams. While the hopes and motivations of the Foreign Office shifted over the next few decades – and the dreams of power faded in the 1950s, particularly after Suez – the dream of having a useful influence did not fade. The agriculturalists and most particularly the forestry advisors did not scale back their advice. Wark argues that Sir John Troutbeck, the second BMEO Chief, concentrated on political and intelligence issues, leaving the new Development Division within the BMEO to 'plod along in relative obscurity'.[69] While obscure perhaps, the advice and actions that followed on economic, governmental and environmental reform continued. On land use, small numbers did not deter bold plans, nor did a small number of advisors equal small influence. For instance, Herbert Mooney, a BMEO advisor, proposed well after the shift away from imperial dreams of informal empire and indeed well after the Suez Crisis, that forest services create 10-year plans over 50-year periods and set aside approximately 10 per cent of the country for environmental purposes, which in turn would play a leading role in the 'physical, economic and social aspects' of the country. Mooney envisioned a forest guard for every seven square miles of Middle Eastern territory: for every five or six guards, there would be a forest ranger trained by British instructors; and above the forest rangers would be either British administrators or local administrators with British advisors.

The dual role of the Head of the BMEO also serving as Chair of the Joint Intelligence Committee of the Middle East explains why the BMEO considered Iraq extremely important. It had large reserves of oil, but also lay adjacent to Iran to the east and Turkey to the north and stood in the direct path of a potential Soviet invasion. Forestry reports stressed strategic concerns: BMEO Forestry Advisor V. K. Maitland wrote the first report for Iraq in 1948 and he arrived with a clear list of forestry development ideas that would greatly extend Britain's reach over the territory. They gave much attention to aerial surveys, which saved time over ground surveys and thus saved money but also gave strategic advantages. Since advisors turned in copies of these forestry reports not only to the Foreign Office and the BMEO but also to the host government, they chose their words carefully and avoided direct reference to long-term foreign policy strategy. The Foreign Office wished to maintain a string of airbases linking the Middle East and Africa, and this objective aligned with environmental development goals. It also gave the host government a reason for extensive British intelligence knowledge of a terrain that both the Americans and the British foresaw as a future battleground with the Soviet Union.[70]

BMEO projects remained stable and often small throughout its tenure, up to 1981 when budget cuts in Margaret Thatcher's administration abolished the office. Although Wark and Kingston pointed out that nationalism forced the BMEO to scale back imperial ambitions in the Middle East, they miss an important point. The BMEO experts did not in any way scale back the advice that they gave or the ambitious schemes for environmental reform. If they did not achieve the imperial dream of power, they did advance broad changes in land use that greatly benefited most of the countries involved with the BMEO.

The influence of the BMEO never rivalled that of the MESC or approached the level of imperial power. London simply did not answer expectations with ready loans and hefty direct aid. British influence in the region declined to a handful of experts resisting the rising tide of nationalism – in vain after the Suez Crisis. The British vastly overestimated the degree to which Middle East governments would request and defer to British judgement and advice, even on seemingly neutral matters such as forestry. In this tense atmosphere Britain, the United States, the Soviet Union and Arab nationalists jockeyed for power, and this made the attempt to transplant an ambitious development programme directly from the imperial nursery a surprising scheme. That this bold conservation programme actually took root and at times succeeded is also surprising.

Summing up the influence of British development efforts is difficult. Certainly attitudes changed after Suez. The loss of optimism rather than the loss of will explains the change in attitude among British personnel. Before Suez, the Foreign Office required accountability, and the BMEO reports boasted accomplishments by all its advisors inside and even outside their 'vast parish'. But immediately after Suez the Foreign Office questioned the whole operation and requested country reports from ambassadors. These flooded into the Foreign Office answering the pertinent question, 'Is the BMEO useful?' Most of the ambassadors, although loading their answers with caveats, said 'No.' To the Foreign Office, and the ambassadors in the region, the successful environmental reforms that transformed land use in the Middle East did not count as success.

Numerous reasons caused the British failure in the Middle East. The push for British personnel went against a natural local resistance to give up authority. Collaborating elites in the region had their own agenda and often played the USSR, the United Kingdom and the United States against each other. The freshly decolonized countries in the region had no intention of becoming absorbed by any one of them, and national leaders used the competitive spirit of the Cold War to increase both economic and military support. Nationalism, surging through the territories held by the colonial powers, strongly affected the countries of the Middle East and posed severe challenges to the British and Americans (to say nothing of the French) in the region. The nationalist tide could not be entirely stayed by re-establishing the Shah of Iran after the reign of Prime Minister Mohammad Mosaddegh, nor by diplomatically isolating Nasser as a new Hitler. Nationalists expressed a certainty of British malfeasance that proved impossible to override with development aid alone. Many in the region shared Mosaddegh's attitude towards the British when he said, 'You do not know how crafty they are. You do not know how evil they are. You do not know how they sully everything they touch.'[71]

Britain did not succeed in establishing an informal empire in the region through development initiatives because they failed to recruit subordinate elites. They had based their hopes for influence in getting 'the right sort' placed close to the centres of power. That meant British personnel running the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in Abadan, and it also meant placing administrators in key posts within government ministries.[72] The influence of the BMEO never rivalled that of the wartime occupation or approached the level of imperial power. In marked contrast to Washington, London simply did not answer expectations with ready loans and hefty direct aid. British influence in the region evaporated down to a handful of experts resisting the receding tide of influence – in vain after the Suez Crisis in 1956.

The Suez Crisis marked the end of significant British influence in most of the Middle East. Without Washington's backing, Britain, France and Israel attempted to seize the Suez Canal back from Egypt on 29 October 1956 in response to President Nasser's wildly popular proclamation that Egypt intended to nationalize this strategic waterway, still owned by an Anglo-French corporation. The British had 80,000 troops garrisoned at Suez, and had military facilities around the region, particularly in Aden. In the first phase of a combined offensive by 300,000 allied forces, the Israeli army swept across the Sinai and halted just ten miles from the Canal on 2 November, destroying the Egyptian defenders. Just three days later, French and British airborne and amphibious forces, backed by overwhelming air support from an armada of six aircraft carriers, landed near Port Said and quickly occupied key choke points along the Canal. As his army collapsed, with some 3000 dead and over 30,000 captured, Nasser responded to the bombing attacks by sinking 40 ships under Egyptian control in the Canal, effectively closing it to shipping.

Condemnation by the United States, and the draft resolution of the United Nations Security Council denouncing the invasion, soon turned military victory into diplomatic defeat, making occupation of the Canal untenable. International diplomatic pressure, the threat of economic retaliation and a crisis in the foreign exchange reserves the week before the invasion led Harold Macmillan, the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, to inform Prime Minister Eden that the artificial exchange rate set for the pound sterling could not be held. Given American opposition to the Suez invasion, and in need of further cooperation with the United States as a key ally, the British called off the invasion, accepted a cease-fire in November and withdrew all their troops a month later. The British suffered a massive loss of prestige. The Suez Crisis did not strategically dissolve British power or economic clout. But the loss of prestige led to a hardening of the resolve of elites in the Middle East, indeed around the British Empire, to resist further British influence. This denouement demonstrates how relationships with subordinate elites provide the key to informal empire. When relationships between elites dissolve, so, too, does informal empire.

Whether voluntarily in Iran or involuntarily in Egypt, Washington forced London gradually to give way. The United States, in marked contrast to Britain, had ample resources to build alliances with emergent elites through economic and military aid. Despite this seeming rupture in informal empire, American policy after the Suez Crisis quickly took a form quite similar to the role once played by Britain. Across the Middle East the United States cultivated Arab autocrats, whether monarchs or military, as reliable subordinate elites and built an effective mechanism of control that would persist for another half-century.

The United States sought a leading role in world affairs, but not an entire knockout of British influence. Allies worked in a network with American elites coordinating at the centre of the imperial web. After humiliating the British during the Suez Crisis, the United States watched with approval as Britain rebuilt its influence in the Middle East in the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s as an important subaltern power. Britain resumed relations with Saudi Arabia, once again selling the country arms and expertise; intervened in Oman in 1957–58; sent troops to Jordon and Kuwait in 1958 and 1961 and from its base in Aden; and pushed against the Nasser-backed revolutionaries in Yemen. The partnership worked perfectly because the 'combination of coordinated US and UK military capability' represented 'a credible deterrent'.[73]

The United States, stepping in where Britain's role was waning, managed to turn many of the Middle East states into client states that depended completely on American financial and military aid. This achievement proved all the more remarkable in Jordan, given the American support for Israel after the seizure of Jerusalem and the West Bank in the Six Day War of 1967. Undersecretary of State, Nicholas Katzenbach told President Lyndon B. Johnson that King Hussein of Jordan 'is a desperate man with a diminishing number of choices', who relied utterly on the United States 'to provide him with the political and military support which he needed to meet his problems'. Even after the loss of East Jerusalem and the West Bank, the aid given by the United States still held Jordan as a client state free from Soviet influence by merely promising to 'reaffirm our intention to support . . . an equitable settlement with Israel'.[74]

Handing over the baton of power was always a problem of timing however – at times not fast enough, at other times too sudden. Labour prime minister Harold Wilson moved too fast for the American State Department when he announced his intention of scaling back the British military capability in the Middle East. Britain projected a military presence in Kuwait and East Africa – both vital for security and oil – and the plan to withdraw British forces by 1971 caught the Johnson administration by surprise. Wilson wrote to Johnson to assure him that Britain would still play a role on the world stage but that, 'Put Simply, this only amounts to saying that we have to come to terms with our role in the world.' Because Britain could no longer afford to extend its power over most of the globe, it had to harness its resources more carefully.[75]

In contrast to its generalized failure across the wider Middle East, Britain did hang on successfully in the Persian Gulf, drawing on its long history of informal empire over these small sheikhdoms to achieve the grand aims that failed elsewhere in the region. In 1820, after decades of episodic naval operations along this 'pirate coast', the British had signed a General Treaty with local sheikhs, seeking security for the East India Company's shipping and an end to the slave trade. Starting in the Palmerston era, the British consolidated their control over the Gulf, first under a Perpetual Treaty of Maritime Peace in 1853, enforced by the Royal Navy's Gulf Squadron, and later under a protectorate agreement of 1892. The long British presence suppressed piracy and maintained stability in an imperial backwater, where for several centuries its main export was natural pearls.[76] After the discovery of oil in Bahrain in 1931 two British firms, the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and its affiliate, the Iraq Petroleum Company, dominated drilling in the Gulf, developing the rich oil and gas resources that eventually brought extraordinary wealth to this arid, impoverished coast.[77] In 1952, following a century of such indirect rule, the British presided over confederation of the Gulf's sheikhdoms into the Trucial Council, the direct precursor of the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Two years later, after Iran's Mosaddegh government nationalized Anglo-Persian Oil and its massive Abadan refinery at the north end of the Gulf, the company reincorporated as British Petroleum (BP) and remained an active player among the sheikhdoms along the Gulf's oil-rich southern shores.[78]

In 1968 the British announced their withdrawal and three years later presided over independence for Bahrain, Qatar and the seven sheikhdoms of the Trucial Council, now called the United Arab Emirates. On independence in 1971, the British turned over their colonial constabulary, the Trucial Oman Scouts, which became the basis of the Union Defence Force (United Arab Emirates) and gave up the Royal Navy base at Bahrain, which was occupied by the US Navy.[79] For the next two decades, Britain trained many UAE officers at Sandhurst and remained a major source of defence support until the First Gulf War in 1991, which Washington fought to secure another of these oil-rich sheikhdoms, Kuwait. That conflict served as the final act in this long imperial transition, and thereafter the United States became the preeminent power in the Gulf, establishing the Fifth Fleet there in 1995 as a naval patrol force with headquarters in Bahrain.[80]

Conclusion

The Palmerstonian project of making the world safe for free trade meant creating relationships with the Turkish elite that ran the Ottoman Empire, and meant as well changing that elite through trade and investment. Informal empire in the Middle East, as in China, involved persuasion, diplomacy, trade, intellectual and cultural exchange, and force, judiciously applied. Only when the Ottoman Empire sided with the Germans during the First World War and could no longer hold its vast territories against the rising tide of Arab nationalism did Britain seek a varied patchwork of relationships in the Middle East, both formal and informal, to maintain its influence in the region. When during the Second World War Britain opted for outright military occupation, it attempted again to establish informal empire after the war without the trappings of formal imperialism. But the drain of economic and political power towards the United States changed the landscape of power. Britain's American ally both opposed formal colonialism and desired informal empire for itself. Britain's development initiatives were insufficient to lure national elites in the Middle East into a close relationship. While still maintaining influence in the region, Britain ceased to form and sustain elites except as adjunct to the United States, and as a faithful member – no longer the central power – of the imperial web.

London had sponsored the British Middle East Office to gain influence through development initiatives. The British attempted to use the appointment of their personnel in important government and private positions as a 'mechanism of control'. Informal empire failed in the Middle East because 'the right sort' of appointments were not made, and thus the British failed to form and sustain a new elite in this region after the Second World War. While the British succeeded in having a substantial role in the elite formation – and rationalization – of the Middle East, right up to and throughout the Second World War, they failed to sustain an informal empire in most of the Middle East after 1946, with some exceptions, such as the Gulf States, and instead gave way to the United States as the central influence in the region.

The first foreign aid programme outside of formal empire was that run by the British Middle East Office. The United Nations, the United

States and soon other European countries and the Soviet Union, followed suit. Within the context of the Cold War these competing aid programmes bid for the loyalty of existing elites, and successfully moulded new elite structures around the globe. Democratic projects of 'development' forwarded into the latter half of the twentieth century the Palmerstonian ideals that had been formulated in the nineteenth century.

The Foreign Office, despite its misgivings about the political influence of the BMEO showed no hesitation to use the agency as a paradigm for other regions. A wide array of development efforts followed that the Foreign Office modelled on the BMEO – particularly efforts defined by a mission to provide technical assistance ostensibly free of political influence.[81] The issue of how development aid provides support for informal empire – and a convenient cover for local elites who do not wish to display their collaboration with leading foreign powers – will remain an important question well into the future. Informal empire had a great impact on rationalizing the Middle East and on permanently changing the structure of its elite formation. The mosaic of elites in the region are now intricately linked to the imperial web with the United States that now holds the central position of influence.

8

The United States and the Imperial Web

The passing of the baton of power from Britain to the United States illustrates how the imperial network has functioned in the last 300 years. In the seventeenth century Britain joined an imperial web of European powers and established a burgeoning formal empire around the globe, with trade focused on the North American colonies. Britain then held an informal empire over sections, some would argue all, of the new United States after formally losing the 13 American colonies. Competing with the United States for informal empire in the Americas and then around the world, Britain took centre place in the imperial network during the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries until giving way to the United States in the Second World War. After 1945 elites in newly decolonized territories shifted many of their commercial ties to the United States – and this included a vast network of infrastructure, built by British formal and informal empire – once conceived, funded and maintained by the British. American elites raced at high speed down an imperial roadway built by their British and European competitors.

The British did not lose the battle for informal empire. Rather, they moved aside after 1945 to assist the United States in its new role of world superpower. It did so in order to better protect the network of global trade that it had played such a large role in forming. It did so as well to protect the democratic capitalist system that it largely created. Today Britain still lives within the global imperial world culture that it founded. It remains close to the centre of imperial power, serving as a partner with the United States and, indeed, with the entire mosaic of global elites who reside within the imperial web.

An observer can trace the contours of this imperial network of Westernized elites by tracing patterns of global interdependence. It has always been a club with an expanding membership, yet also a club with discrete members. No precise world map of this ever shifting imperial network has been created. The economic historian Joel Mokyr suggested a 'polka dot' map to follow the rise of the Industrial Revolution in Europe, with much of England and lower Scotland coloured pink and bits and pieces of pink spread over North-West Europe.[1] Perhaps his creative cartography provides the closest model to outline the contours of the imperial network. Such a map today would attempt to identify formations of Western elites that would include all of Europe, North America, Australasia and Japan, with sections of every region of the world, most particularly the advanced urban areas, in Latin America, Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Indeed, with some exceptions – arguably Russia, China and large swathes of Africa, Iran and isolated mountain regions – a satellite picture of electricity-use at night would reveal the broad outlines of this imperial network. Yet even this imperial network of elites would not capture the even broader influence of Westernization that certainly includes Russia and China.

The United States inherited the largest share of the trade relationships with the former colonial elites. But did Britain and the United States cooperate in building informal empire? Historians have long questioned whether the United States, not just Britain, has possessed an informal empire. Walter Lafeber, in *The New Empire* (1963), begins his exploration of American empire-building in the apparently quiet years before the 1890s. He showed that beneath the surface of official diplomacy, shapers of government policy formed a new attitude about the expansion of American power. Cyclic recessions rocked the economy, and the South had never recovered economically from the disastrous Civil War and the rapacious Reconstruction. Foreign markets and the age-old allure of the East captured the imagination of leading business and political figures. The desire for commerce with the western Pacific nations led to the establishment of an informal empire in Hawaii, the construction of the Panama Canal, the easing-out of Britain in Nicaragua and the entrance of American economic and political control in the region and, finally, outright annexation of the Philippines.

Lafeber's work is important because he made a strong case that the United States consciously sought an overseas empire – formal and informal. He placed this conscious expansion of power in the context of the Industrial Revolution and its effects on American foreign policy. He writes, 'This momentous transformation has never been adequately linked with the maturation of the United States into a world power, an event almost equal in significance to the Industrial Revolution.' He concludes that the United States did not suddenly turn expansionist in the

1890s, neither did America have empire thrust upon them, nor did it acquire it by absence of mind, or by a fit of democratic idealism. Rather, the United States sought the expansion of power out of a concern for expanding markets. By 'expansion', Lafeber meant 'American attempts to find trade and investment opportunities in areas where the United States did not want to exert formal political control.'[2]

The formal empire of the United States is easier to identify than its informal empire. The Panama Canal Zone, the Philippines, Hawaii, Eastern Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, the Virgin Isles, Cuba, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua and other periods of occupation in the Caribbean and Central America in the form of protectorates and customs receiverships – even China when the United States participated in the treaty system inaugurated by Britain – these are more easily traced as markers of expansion. The areas of informal empire are quite a different and controversial subject, fraught with the same difficulties of tracing British informal control.[3]

Not all scholars would agree that broad social forces caused or even shaped the extension of American empire. Rather, as advocated by William Appleman Williams in *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (1959), an American empire arose from a small elite who gathered first around President William McKinley, and continued through a succession of presidents from Theodore Roosevelt to Woodrow Wilson, Franklin D. Roosevelt, Harry S. Truman, Dwight Eisenhower, John F. Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson. This elite operated in secrecy and bypassed open consultations with Congress, leading the United States into the extension of national power abroad in the Spanish–American War, First and Second World Wars and the Korean (1950–53) and Vietnam (1956–75) Wars. This extension of power Williams characterized as arrogance based on an overestimation of American economic and military strength, and a 'messianic distortion of a sincere humanitarian desire to help other peoples'.[4] He admits however that more than elitism was involved in American empire-building. The depression of the 1870s convinced industrialists, farmers and workers that overproduction at home, and the lack of markets overseas, stifled growth. This desire for overseas markets married to the desire for reform and development combined to push the American government to seek the Americanization of the world; free markets and democracies aligned with Western interests.

Did the United States, as some British scholars have asserted, act with hostility against British influence in the twentieth century? Max Beloff, in 'The Special Relationship' (1967), explores this charge. Beloff's title is somewhat misleading, for he considers the 'special relationship' to be 'a fact, but a fact of a rather peculiar kind; for myths are also facts'. He never explored in what way the relationship is a myth, nor the degree to which fact is embedded in the myth. He confirmed that the entry of the United States in the First and Second World Wars was due at least in part to Britain's influence on the United States, but also acknowledged that self-interest played a key role for the United States in each case. Beloff pointed out that 'Britain never responded to the growth in American power by the classical method of organizing a counter-coalition.' Rather, Britain responded by a series of tactical retreats, conceding to the United States large swathes of global influence and retreating reluctantly when conflict loomed. Britain only recognized the 'special relationship' if it existed, as a continual policy between prime ministers Balfour to Eden. A British concern was that no resources 'be tied up in actually opposing the United States, and second . . . that America's power should be brought to bear wherever possible in support of British interests'. Whether or not this policy has been profitable or equitable for Britain needs further investigation.[5]

Thomas J. McCormick, in *China Market* (1967), argued that America's 'power elite' consciously pursued a free trade imperialism to gain the 'economic fruits of expansion' without the burden of creating and maintaining a government structure or the political cost of confessing a policy of formal empire. The United States maintained an official 'anti-imperial stance that occurred before and after the fling at formal empire in 1898' that served as a camouflage for informal empire. The 'impulse for expansion' was channelled into the more affordable and ideologically acceptable enterprise of informal empire.[6] Opposing the idea of a constant and willful pursuit of American empire Ernest R. May, in *American Imperialism* (1968), argued that the imperialist impulse came to fruition in 1898 and ended in 1900.[7] He made a clear point that only formal empire is imperialism and that this imperialistic impulse came from a rare moment in American history when foreign policy elites guided American foreign policy with one voice. When they argued amongst themselves, the public did not and could not follow a clear course of action. May proscribed imperialism into this narrow channel because broader explanations seemed too sloppy and unempirical. That social Darwinism created an aggressive imperial stance that can be detected throughout American history, or that the appeal of colonial markets drew the United States into the Philippines and Cuba, or that the American consciousness went through a 'psychic crisis' that could be resolved only by striking out with violence, as Richard Hofstadter had argued, all appear to May as too undefined, imprecise and unproven.[8]

Political scientists in particular have built on the concept of informal empire to understand British and American hegemony. Tony Smith, in *The Patterns of Imperialism* (1981), showed that British and American power radiated from societies that were both liberal democracies, usually anti-imperialistic, capitalistic and yet still interested in 'world hegemony'. Britain and the United States achieved this power through alliances and commercial trade. When imperial intervention took place it took place because, for both powers, 'local crises of political instability in strategically significant regions of "The South" intersected with Great Power rivalry'.[9] The importance of *The Patterns of Imperialism* lies in the fact that Smith outlines the interest that Britain had and America still has in undergirding allied communities overseas that are self-governing and the methods of political control that are exacted through economic levers. Placing his emphasis on political rather than economic motives for informal empire, Smith discusses the crusade by the United States to contain the Soviet Union and its growing empire. Here the Cold War stood as the supreme example of politics over economics as motivation for influence.[10]

Africa, Latin America, Asia, the Middle East

In Africa the decade of the 1960s was particularly important for the wholesale transfer of power from Britain to the United States, a process largely completed by 1970. Ethiopia, never formally colonized, is a good example of this process. Edward Hamilton, a senior National Security Council Advisor to President Johnson, specialized in development aid in Africa and the subcontinent in particular. He pointed out on the occasion of the visit of Emperor Haile Selassie I that the United States since the 1950s had 'taken over from Great Britain' the role of primary 'big power friend'. Through a number of treaties that enhanced trade and security the government of Ethiopia came to rely heavily on the United States. These included grants, loans and the expertise of officials to keep alive economic development and agricultural reform. They also addressed security with elites around the emperor concerned about Muslim encirclement, and the Soviet presence in Somalia. Just as elites around the world also pitted colonial powers against each other to extract further concessions, so, too, did Africa's national leaders play off the United States against the Soviet Union for aid.[11]

The United States also solidified and built on its symbiotic relationship with Latin American elites after the Second World War. Too often political scientists and historians, when discussing the influence of the United States in Latin America, focus almost exclusively on military intervention or large corporate ownership. They often miss the equally important comprehensive development aid in Latin America that compares favourably with the development initiatives of the British in formal empire in the first six decades of the twentieth century. This included economic aid that would increase per capita income, distribute wealth and keep defence-spending low. It would also allow Latin American governments to focus domestic programmes on education, infrastructure and welfare. This did more than keep current elites in power. It encouraged the formation of new elite characteristics by increasing the agricultural productivity of the average farmer, breaking up large estates and giving land for small family farms, fighting illiteracy, building low-cost housing, maintaining stable prices and launching health measures to increase life expectancy. It also included regional, economic and diplomatic integration between states. In Brazil the attempt to 'change the political and economic orientation' of the government occurred under the mantle of reform.[12]

Thus the development of client states and informal empire in Latin American cannot be merely explained by a series of military interventions. Rather, military interventions went hand in hand with a broader process of development aid that radically altered society by integrating the economy at all levels with the imperial network.[13] This led policy-makers in Washington to consider development as 'a full time job calling for all-out mobilization, in each country'. Sounding quite Palmerstonian, the economist and political scientist Walt Rostow claimed that 'traditional products and traditional markets will not be enough', there must be 'new and competitive export industries' that then call into being new agricultural organization, infratrastructures and education. Development meant a changing economy and culture that undermined not only the traditional economy, but traditional elites as well.[14]

After the Second World War the United States also claimed the lion's share of trade in Asia. China had withdrawn again into a cultural shell – albeit a modified Marxist one – imposing a wholesale abolition of traditional Chinese culture during the Cultural Revolution that started in 1966. At the same time the United States poured development money into Asia with an expanding reach of mass media and an overwhelming military presence. The Korean and Vietnamese Wars drew the line of Chinese influence and defined an American and a communist sphere, both paradoxically profoundly Western. After US President Richard Nixon's trip to China in 1972 and the downfall of the Gang of Four in 1976, China once more opened its doors to outside trade and moved full throttle towards internal capitalist modernization. The Westernization of Chinese elites has gone much the same way as Japan's, and the formation of elite characteristics are now heavily influenced by trade with the United States and the world. This again raises the question of informal empire and whether or not China can be included, like modern Japan, in the imperial network itself. It also raises the question of whether China will put in place the last planks of a Western structure not only in China, but also in Africa and other areas where China has influence.[15]

Indonesia offers another example of this cooperation with the imperial network. After independence Sukarno ruled as president from 1945 to 1967. He moved his country closer to China and accepted significant development aid from the Soviet Union. After he was deposed by a military coup, a secret report issued for the National Security Council in 1967 boasted that the new leader Major General Suharto had been 'neutralizing gradually "Old Order" hold-outs in the police, marine corps, and parts of Central and East Java'. The British and American intelligence agencies worked closely with Suharto and other groups in Indonesia to effect this change. Suharto was praised for his sophistication in managing the transition because 'the thread of legitimacy was never broken'. In this way Sukarno 'was denied martyrdom' and he 'now lives in internal exile . . . a pathetic old man transformed in 18 months from the incarnation of the Indonesian State into a historical relic'. Informal empire meant regime change, but also elite change and the restructuring of society. Foreign aid, as Rostow made clear, worked closely with intelligence agencies to effect these radical changes in the leadership of societies.[16]

Military intervention and development aid did not operate alone. These efforts were backed up by a very active British and American intelligence initiative to change elite formations around the world. The overthrow of nationalist Mohammad Mosaddegh in Iran in 1953 is perhaps the best known example. On the very border of the Soviet Union and holding the largest known reserves of oil in the 1950s, British and American intelligence efforts to topple Mosaddegh fit the agenda of maintaining friendly elite structures in 'forward areas'. Secret reports admitted that foreign aid focused on the states of 'forward defense areas' of strategic importance, and that this aid would have to continue 'Indefinitely until major changes in world politics occur.'[17] Historians have traced a very active intelligence effort throughout the Middle East and around the world by British and American agencies, with operations both successful and unsuccessful, but that have gone a long way towards shaping the political and cultural landscape of the world.[18]

American foreign aid as elite transformation

The influence, economic centrality and military might of the United States after the Second World War extended far beyond the structures and ceremonies of its formal holdings. Any understanding of post-Second World War America demands an investigation into the nature and extent of this influence. Advocates of modernization theory provided ideological justification for this extension of power, much as John Locke had justified colonialism in the New World. In the late 1950s and well into the 1960s modernization theory greatly influenced the Eisenhower, Kennedy and Johnson administrations, launching an imperial web of development aid that resulted in widespread influence and the intensification of the global symbiosis of elite relationships. This aid continued to mould the elites of the world in a Western direction and to establish structures of exchange and interdependence that safeguarded against an expansive Soviet Union. Today aid by the United States and the other members of the imperial network continue to mould and influence global elites. Even in Westernized portions of the world like China and Russia where foreign aid does not penetrate, the influence through international structures such as the United Nations, World Trade Organization and a pervading cultural imperialism through mass media influence the behaviour of these elites.

The expansion of American power during the Second World War had earlier precedents. Woodrow Wilson's fourteen-point settlement after the First World War directly challenged the old monarchical and landed elites of Europe. Franklin Roosevelt carried out a modified version of Wilson's Fourteen Points and transferred the opposition to traditional elites in Europe and to colonialism in the world at large. This opposition to European colonialism by the United States however only entailed an opposition to formal, not informal, empire. While the United States competed peacefully with Britain before the Second World War, it had the financial and military clout during and after the war to bring Britain to heel to serve as adjunct in a new American informal empire. The Atlantic Conference of 1941 between Roosevelt and Churchill, held off the coast of Newfoundland, marked a dramatic turning point in the handing-over, or the wrenching from the hand of Britain, of the baton of power to the United States. Here Roosevelt stressed the need for the 'development of backward countries' to follow the defeat of 'fascist slavery' and to 'free people all over the world from a backward colonial policy'.[19] The Americans suspected that the British war strategy aimed at more than victory over the Axis but also aimed to keep the British Empire dominant in world affairs.

These fears were not without foundation. Operation Torch in North Africa in 1942, the first joint military wartime venture between the United States and Britain, left Britain dominant in the Middle East. Lord Mountbatten's South East Asia Command would do the same for the British in South East Asia. Roosevelt made every effort to counter the restoration of British imperial supremacy and to win over the loyalty of elites in Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

Roosevelt however had his own designs for American empire after the war. In return for the ageing fleet of destroyers that he authorized transferred to Britain, he gained the right to expand military bases in Britain and in a number of British holdings in Latin America and the Atlantic. He established bases on Greenland and Iceland and added substantially to the formal American empire in the Philippines and Pacific with numerous small islands for bases. Even with the advent of Philippine independence the United States would keep its military posts and a worldwide network of air and naval bases, with troops stationed to guard much of the non-communist world. As Christopher T. Sanders remarked, 'Although these bases were initially to be used by "The Four Policemen" [Britain, the United States, the USSR and China], it is clear that the United States was concerned not just to liberate Britain's colonial subjects, but to equal or replace her influence in the post-war world.'[20] One official of the State Department, Adolph Berlre, remarked that, 'The only possible effect of this war would be that the United States would emerge with an imperial power greater than the world had ever seen.' Another official remarked, 'We shall in effect be the heirs of empire and it is up to us to preserve its vital parts.'[21] After the war, when British prime minister Clement Attlee agreed to the independence of India and handed over Palestine to the United Nations and, later, after the Suez Crisis of 1956 when Prime Minister Wilson withdrew from Greece and Turkey, the British had set a psychological seal on the conscious decision to turn from formal empire. The American government saw this as the handing of the baton over to Washington, 'with all its burdens and all its glory to the United States'.[22]

The internal British dispute over the British role in Greece and the Middle East in 1946–47 hastened the transfer of power to the United States. British policy-makers had always in the past maintained an Eastern policy that kept lines of trade and communications open – a position that dated from Cromwell, William III, Pit the Younger, Palmerston and every Cabinet ever assembled to 1946.[23] Greece lay at the head of the Middle East position, with its influence over the Dardanelle Strait and a direct roadblock to Soviet ambitions in South-East Europe and the Middle East. After the expulsion of the Axis powers British troops stayed in Greece and lent support to the nationalists fighting the Greek People's Liberation Army. The nationalists offered no objection to Britain ruling Greece as an informal protectorate. In the words of Nigel Clive, an official at the British Embassy in Athens, the British gave the ambassador 'a range of powers and responsibilities more akin to those of a colonial governor than to the head of a normal diplomatic mission'.[24]

Attlee however buckled under pressure from a radical left wing in the Labour Party. Labour MP Richard Crossman keenly criticized the civil rights record of the Greek nationalists and personally felt far friendlier towards the Soviet Union. The *News Chronicle* and *The Times* embarrassed Atlee for his support of a right-wing regime.[25] Attlee wrote to Foreign Secretary Ernest Bevin that '*These* people' (Turks, Greeks and Afghans), should not receive large sums of money from the British.[26] He was 'conscious of the strategic importance of oil' but other considerations of strategy, such as communications, 'is very much overrated by our military advisors'. They should think instead of drawing 'the real line of the British Commonwealth . . . through Lagos and Kenya. The Middle East position is only an outpost position. I am beginning to doubt whether the Greek game is worth the candle.'[27] Neither Greece nor Turkey, nor Iraq or Iran could hold back a Soviet invasion and so he saw no point in propping them up. Shocked and dismayed at Attlee's volte-face, Bevin managed to wrestle him back into line with the traditional British position – one that did not betray the Western allies who resisted Soviet expansion, and one that did not betray the United States.

But money was required. So on 21 February 1947 Bevin asked the State Department to take over the British contribution of economic aid to Greece. In this context President Truman enunciated the Truman Doctrine in 1947. He went a step further than the Monroe Doctrine of 1823, not only by expanding the claim of American responsibility beyond Latin America, but expanding as well the mode of support – from defence to pro-active. He pledged military and development aid, in this case to Greece and Turkey, in order to keep them from falling to the advance of communism. His statement that, 'The policy of the United States to support free people who are resisting attempted subjugation by armed minorities or by outside pressures,' has been considered by many historians to mark the beginning of the Cold War.[28]

As the British ran out of funds to support Greece they redefined their role in the world. Britain voluntarily moved as adjunct to and unequal partner with the United States when it asked the United States government to take over the responsibility for the region. The request by Bevin to the American State Department occasioned for the United States the formulation of a more explicit doctrine to explain why and how the United States would extend its efforts around the globe to fight communism. Truman clearly equated the survival of Greece and Turkey in the American sphere as essential to the Middle East and elsewhere. 'Should we fail to aid Greece and Turkey in this fateful hour, the effect will be far-reaching to the West as to the East.'[29] The enunciation of the Truman Doctrine began an active and highly expansive programme of global foreign aid befitting the victor of the Second World War. While the United States in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries initiated military adventures in Latin America, China and elsewhere, including formal empire in the Caribbean and the Pacific, the Truman Doctrine marked a clearer line of advance. The initiation into the annual budget of substantial economic and military aid radically furthered American penetration of the world. Economic, diplomatic, cultural and intelligence initiatives strongly supported new formations of elites around the globe.

The Eisenhower Doctrine took the United States even closer to a defined stance of informal empire, moving from the four policemen to one policeman with allies. Again the Middle East occasioned the expression of new support for collaborating elites. In his 'Special Message to the Congress on the Situation in the Middle East' on 5 January 1957, Eisenhower proclaimed that a country could request American development or military aid, including 'assistance' if threatened by aggression. While still posed in defensive and passive terms, 'another country could request' clearly meant that the United States would intervene, if a 'request' fit American criteria. In Eisenhower's own words, the Eisenhower Doctrine

> would, first of all, authorize the United States to cooperate with and assist any nation or group of nations in the general area of the Middle East in the development of economic strength dedicated to the maintenance of national independence. It would, in the second place, authorize the Executive to undertake in the same region programs of military assistance and cooperation with any nation or group of nations, which desires such aid. It would, in the third place, authorize such assistance and cooperation to include the employment of

> the armed forces of the United States to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of such nations, requesting such aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism.[30]

The Eisenhower Doctrine marked not just a global lead in the fight against communism, but an aggressive stance of military interference, regime change and treaties with collaborative elites that would forever change the participating members. The Truman and Eisenhower doctrines also mark the movement of Britain and other European powers away from the centre of the imperial web of power, and the movement of the United States into the central role. The doctrines meant to replace the quickly decaying influence of Britain and then France in strategic parts of the world. They were meant also to stand in the gap before Soviet influences could intervene and to keep a steady hand on those elites who might be tempted to look outside the imperial web in the West.

As advisor to Eisenhower, and National Security Advisor to Kennedy and Johnson, Rostow, along with a battery of academic advisors who served as 'idea men' (in Johnson's phrase), enunciated a clear vision of Western development for every sphere outside the Soviet and Chinese blocs and laid out the justification and practice of American foreign aid. Rostow described the American aid programme in terms that leave little doubt about the transformative effect of an informal empire:

> We have set careful limits. Our capital aid is in the form of loans, not grants. We insist on economic performance by recipients; we do not make unconditional handouts. We supply American goods and services; we do not damage the U.S. balance of payments. And our mistakes – though we do sometimes make mistakes – are far outweighed by our successes. Let the man who doubts that walk through the golden grain fields of South Asia, or through the thriving new factories of Korea, or see – as I have just seen – the energy and the vision at work to build a new Central America.[31]

In documents remarkable for their frank admissions and only declassified in 2002, Rostow laid out the mechanics of elite change in client states. The job of 'strengthening underdeveloped nations' required, he noted, the right mix of 'economic, political, administrative and security development'. This all went far to undermine communist subversion or insurgency. But all these efforts had to be coordinated for 'political development' that should never be left out of the overall development programme. The 'CIA is also charged with conducting covert operations which contribute to this objective.'[32] A covert operation, defined in 1955 by the National Security Council, comprehends all activities by the US government 'not evident to unauthorized persons' and that would allow the US government to 'plausibly disclaim any responsibility for them'. These activities include:

> propaganda, political action; economic warfare; preventative direct action, including sabotage, anti-sabotage, demolition; escape and evasion and evacuation measures, subversion against hostile states or groups including assistance to underground resistance movements, guerillas and refugee liberation groups; support of indigenous and anti-communist elements in threatened countries of the free world; deception plans and operations.[33]

The Palmerstonian policy of supporting liberty overseas evolved into a full-scale American informal empire at almost every conceivable level.

Rostow believed that the elite had the duty to provide a flow of information downward to the masses of the population to inform and instruct. He also believed that there must be an upward flow of feedback from the masses to the elite through professional groups, like educators and scientists, and through labour unions and other groups to inform the elite through democratic mechanisms. We must not, he argued,

> allow our resolve to counter aggressive intentions against select nations or regimes to blind us to the hard evidence that the endangered parties have so neglected their own national welfare as to lose the regard, the respect, and the loyalty of large sectors of their national society.[34]

In such a case development aid and covert activity must work hand in hand to redistribute political power, engaging the mass base and removing those members of the 'privileged few' who do not cooperate. This involved providing intercommunication media, 'introducing key staff into private special interest groups, and piping such groups into the mass base-power center intercommunication systems' that through mass media influence would then help place 'key personnel' in the 'national policy making and public administrative system' to guide development and, 'where necessary, ousting incompetent or uncooperative incumbents'. Those collaborating with the United States, 'especially its AID and CIA components' in the host country, 'should be prepared to commit themselves to his task' of eliminating elite sectors that refuse to cooperate.[35]

Another security aide, Robert Sayre, observed that this 'internal security' feature of aid work led many in the CIA 'to believe that we get more security if our programs are channeled through civilian-police channels than through military channels'.[36] This was true for Latin America, Africa and Asia, but it also explains why so much covert aid to police went to apparently stable states like Thailand and apparently 'neutral' states like India. A more complete agenda of elite change could hardly be enunciated.

Whether informal empire is a precursor to formal empire is a question that has vexed other scholars besides Gallagher and Robinson. Niall Ferguson, in *Empire* (2002), agreed that informal empire often came before formal empire. He particularly argued that such has been and should be the case with the United States.[37] Ferguson sees no end of empire with decolonization. The United States has a far higher share of the world economy than Britain ever did, with 22 per cent in 1998 versus 8 per cent for Britain in 1913. The impressive string of American military bases around the world much resemble the coaling stations and army outposts of the British Empire in the Victorian period, and just as Britain shored up its trading posts, missions and military outposts with formal empire, so is the United States likely to do the same, graduating from informal to formal empire. Ferguson though does not define informal empire, other than to indicate that one 'cannot deny' the reality of American informal empire. It is self-evidently 'the empire of multinational corporations, of Hollywood movies and even of TV evangelists. Is this so very different from the early British empire of monopoly trading companies and missionaries?' While arguing for the need of America to take up the 'white man's burden', he fails to leave us any sense of what an informal empire is, how it is to be recognized, and what effect it has on the regions under its power – other than the fact that Hollywood movies may be watched and religious tracts distributed. He is on firmer ground when he compares American surgical military strikes, the replacement of 'rogue regimes' and the demand for free trade with the influence of Victorian Britain.[38]

Charles Maier, in *Among Empires* (2006), argued for an American 'empire of production' and an 'empire of consumption' when he discussed American power and influence after 1945. He distinguished between being an empire, where an integrated policy makes no distinction between the centre and the periphery, and being an empire, which usually describes overseas territories and the rule of one ethnic elite over another or at least one political entity over another. His use of the term 'empire' is so vague however that it is not clear if he intends to say that American manufacturers and financiers engage in imperial activities or not. His book illustrates the difficulties of tracing power without a clear mechanism of control.[39]

A similar dilemma arises with Bernard Porter in *Empire and Superempire* (2006). He concludes that Britain pursued a less aggressive imperial policy than the United States and that the United States, while adopting a fierce imperialistic stance, particularly with its most recent adventures in the Middle East, has done so without consistency. Like Maier however he failed to offer a clear definition of American empire, nor does he make a convincing case for or against informal empire.[40]

Hopkins, in a review of both authors in 2007, pointed out that Maier's book lacks a clear argument and takes no position on whether the United States possessed an empire. Maier wavered, defining empire as a 'territorially extensive structure of rule' that, while excluding empire for the United States, admitted (tantamount to informal empire) that empire could mean 'subordination [of others] in international affairs'.[41] Hopkins rightly pointed out that Maier's work would have benefited not only from a definition of the word 'empire' but by an exploration of American influence in the 'ex-colonial world', in Asia and Africa where European overseas empires have been based in the Modern Age.[42] But none of this is developed and these hints add little to the idea of informal empire. In the same review Hopkins noted that Porter argues that Britain pursued a less aggressive imperial policy than the United States. This 'aligns Porter with Ferguson to the extent that they both agree that the United States has been reluctant to accept its imperial legacy and its current imperial role'. While Ferguson sees the need for an American empire to govern regions that are 'failed states', Porter sees only racism and the abuse of power from an American empire. But since Porter encourages the use of the word 'imperialism' to be used 'in any way you like (so long as you make that usage clear)', he added very little to the idea of informal empire and took no stand on whether or not Britain and the United States possessed one. As Hopkins pointed out: 'the very general sense [of empire] may not be the most illuminating basis for making comparisons. The features shared by the two imperial powers may also be common to great states that are not thought of as being empires.'[43] Hopkins quite rightly cites the need for a better idea of informal empire:

> The central problem lies with the notion of informal empire, which historians have wrestled with – generally unsuccessfully – for over

> half a century. We cannot now do without, yet there are limits to what we can do with it. Deriving influence from power is not a straightforward procedure; measuring influence, when you have it, is equally tricky; inferring empire from influence involves a leap of faith and sometimes an unwitting sleight of hand.[44]

A number of non-historians have attempted to explain concepts that are similar to informal empire. Phillip Bobbitt, a political advisor to US President Bill Clinton, has written a book, *The Shield of Achilles* (2002), that attempts to explain the changing nature of states. A scholar of constitutional law at the University of Texas, Bobbit believed that the nation state is near the end of its existence. Rather than an identifiable unit that wages war to protect its own boundaries, we now have 'market states' that operate in a global system. Instead of offering their citizens security in the protection of boundaries, the market states offer opportunities for advancement in a global capitalist system. Bobbit believed that successful market states will utilize such organizations as NATO or the European Union as umbrella organizations to advance their cause.[45] In a similar vein a sociologist, Julian Go, stakes his comparison between the British and American empire on competition between 'global fields'. A field he sees as 'an arena of struggle in which actors compete for a variety of valued resources'.[46] These involve 'actor-positions' and 'subjective means' that produce 'rules of the game', and can include 'cultural and symbolic capital' as well as financial capital. Go argues that thinking in terms of field organizational theory synthesizes the variety of organizations and actors, from individuals to corporations, as well as cultural influences.[47]

The problem with both Bobbit's and Go's attempt to explore the projection of power outside of national structures lies again with vague definitions that do not include a traceable path of cause and effect. This of course makes nonsense of a historical understanding. Bobbit's 'market states' have such porous borders that it is unclear how these states have a mechanism of influence. Elites are not identified, even though Bobbitt clearly means to identify capital flows and markets as transnational. We are left with attempting to trace human action without human actors. Go's 'global fields' offer a new language in place of older terms, and offer no particularly new insights or methodological approach. It is not clear, for instance, how 'global fields' add to networks, circuits or spheres of influence. Go seems to be particularly concerned to push the discussion beyond dichotomies of metropolitan versus periphery. But it is unclear how a term as vague as 'global fields' does more than provide verbal space or room to discuss issues, which any number of terms could do. He states that:

> a fields approach emphasizes that *all* actors in the field are engaged in the struggle for various species of capital, all players are enabled and constrained by the specific configurations of the field and its cultural rules: or in classic field theory as articulated in studies of electromagnetism, *any* position in the field is 'susceptible' to a 'field effect'. This means, first, that the concept 'field', unlike 'world society' connotes struggle and conflict . . .[48]

The 'game' analysis by Go misses a number of crucial facts. First, the past that historians attempt to recover is not a game. Second, all 'players' do not want similar things, as field theory suggests. Third, his game analysis avoids the reality of elites and the identity and characteristics of elites, partaking of the same problem as Marxist analysis that anthropomorphizes 'capital' and 'class'. As has been stated before, elites are people. Only talking about people, whether mental states or actions, will uncover the human past. 'Global fields' appear to be a jargonistic term that misses real descriptive action or fails to identify any relevant proximate cause for past events. Go is at his strongest when he argues that imperial powers change and then dominate the normative pattern of interactions and the assumptions that elites take for granted. He fails however to identify convincingly characteristics of a shared British and American imperialism.

Conclusion

Elites in the imperial network govern the world through a vast informal empire that leaves few regions untouched and represent a class that can be identified not only by wealth, but by the institutions that they control in business, media and government. There is no conscious conspiracy but there are tendencies to work for self-interest. These elites can be identified by the markers of education, wealth and institutional affiliation. The movement of the United States to the centre of the imperial web also coincides with such an expansion of informal influence through trade and media that it may soon become almost impossible to define an area outside this sphere. With the collapse of the Soviet Union in the late 1980s the United States lost its only real competitor to world power. Today the philosophical underpinning and the practice of American foreign aid – and its allies – are firmly in place.

Western elites in the imperial web helped form and sustain elites elsewhere. In this fashion they engaged in symbiotic power relations as a central element of informal empire. Imperial elites were invited in, repelled, resisted, embraced and in turn changed by the world that they globalized. One can admit the process with neither celebration nor deprecation. One can give the process of interactions and partnership great weight or dismiss such partnership as unimportant. But still one is left with Europe and the United States at the centre of these globalizing structures, regardless of qualms that scholars have about agency and Eurocentrism. The fact remains that Britain and the United States, after 1800, spearheaded the changes that have led to a surprisingly and persistently Western world culture.

9

Resistance and the Imperial Network

To understand resistance to informal empire we must understand resistance to rationalization. Finding opposing strands to this rationalization is not difficult to do, as long as one does not expect consistency or agreement among the parties concerned. Resistance, if it has a common thread, often opposed the ideals of the Enlightenment and the sweeping changes that these ideals wreaked on traditional society. This is complicated by the fact that the English, Scottish and French thinkers of the Enlightenment do not offer a consistent, let alone always coherent, body of thought. Also many of the strongest critics of the Enlightenment have simultaneously been considered iconic figures of the very same movement, such as Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–78) with his anti-democratic idea of the 'general will' overriding popular vote. In the twentieth century many 'reactionary' forces pulled inspiration from the mass politics initiated by the egalitarian French Revolution and merged mass democracy with an atavistic militant and aristocratic tradition.

Johann Gottfried von Herder (1744–1803) exemplifies many of the ideas found in later movements of resistance to rationalization. A Lutheran pastor and literary critic, Herder laid the foundation stones of a number of disciplines, including anthropology, linguistics and comparative religion. He is also credited with encouraging extreme nationalism and even fascism. Herder attempted to correct Enlightenment rationalization by attacking many of the basic assumptions of the philosophes. He differed from Edmund Burke's (1729–97) conservative opposition to the French Revolution by eschewing the 'go slow' approach to change, and radically posited new assumptions about the importance of national and cultural differences.[1]

Building on the influence of Gotthold Lessing (1729–81), Herder mocked German writers who attempted to mimic the formal rules of French literature. But unlike Lessing and Johann Winckelmann (1717–68), who advocated a return to classical Greek models of beauty, Herder advocated something radically new – a deep romantic and sentimental attachment to a culture that arose in a particular soil, leading, in this case, to German aesthetics. He read and commented on the Icelandic Eddas, Thomas Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry* (1775) and James Macpherson's *Ossian* (1760/1761), believing, as many did at the time, that the latter represented authentic Gaelic ballads. He praised Shakespeare because the English bard exhibited authentic Teutonic elements, free from stifling Continental literary structures that only hid the true genius of the English. He praised the excellence of the Gothic long before it became popular to do so.

Myth, poetry, environment, culture, all gave peculiar worth not just to Germans but to every people on earth. An egalitarian? Yes, like Rousseau, but with a twist. He advocated equal worth – and separation – for every culture, constituting a global diversity undisturbed by colonialism or military force. The integrity of each separate national culture should remain undisturbed. National diversity within nation-states – as conceived in contemporary Western societies – would mean the very death of culture. Globalism therefore, through trade and immigration, would have been anathema to Herder because it would spell the end of authentic primitive culture. History did not consist of a series of advancing civilizations, but of the organic evolution of distinct and precious difference.[2] Geography, climate and competition for resources created peculiar people. All humans were one family, but all groups of this family were different. Herder did not lay out a racialist theory – few in his age did. Rather, he anticipated Herbert Spencer (1820–1903) and Charles Darwin (1809–82) in ways that reinforced and extended his influence long after he died. Like Spencer he saw that society expanded its sphere of action through social contract and that this in turn created a more complex society and raised the national or group intellectual achievement. Anticipating Darwin he approached the importance of the struggle for existence, as when he wrote:

> Among millions of creatures whatever could preserve itself abides, and still after the lapse of thousands of years remains in the great harmonious order. Wild animals and tame, carnivorous and graminivorous, insects, birds, fishes and man are adapted to each other.[3]

Science interested Herder but he contributed more to sentimentalist and romantic movements of his age – such as the *Sturm und Drang*.

He read Spinoza (1632–77) and approved of his pantheistic tendencies, although with the necessary caveats to make Spinoza's conception of deity arguably within the bounds of Christian theology. He advocated the immanence of God-in-Nature (not nature as God) that deeply accentuated the later romantic spiritual tradition.

Herder believed that nature profoundly affected humans, and legislators must create law that reflected the characteristics of a people and culture that in turn reflect their peculiar culture: law cannot be universally applied. Only tyranny resulted if attempted. Nations differed so completely that each country required its own unique legal systems, and no 'natural' or 'universal law' covered the diversity of human needs. God, he wrote, 'separated nationalities not only by woods and mountains, seas and deserts, rivers and climates, but more particularly by languages, inclinations and characters'. Thus a nation should not be judged barbaric or advanced – each nation and people are complete in themselves, even if savage. He much regretted the march of free trade that changed all that it touched. He would have abhorred Palmerstonian foreign policy and the trade that acted like an acid on cultural traditions. The remains, he wrote,

> of all genuine folk-thought is rolling into the abyss of oblivion with a last and accelerated impetus. For the last century we have been ashamed of everything that concerns the fatherland.

Tribes wishing to remain distinct, Jews wishing to return to their ancient homeland, poets catching and expressing the characteristic essence of their nations and people, ought to be preferred over 'Those that embrace the entire universe with love', who 'for the most part love nothing, but their own selves.'[4]

In tracing the influence of resistance to rationalization we see almost all the ideas developed by Herder applied both inside and outside Europe. This Herderian model helps us understand how discrete signs of resistance that appear unrelated, such as anti-colonialism, fascism and religious traditionalism, may often spring from similar assumptions and share a common conceptual framework. Marxism and state-sponsored bureaucracy only accentuate the rationalization launched by capitalistic free trade. In the history of Europe, resistance to rationalization therefore is found primarily on the right of the political spectrum. This is not monolithic, since the utopian projects of Robert Owen (1771–1858) or Charles Fourier (1772–1837), as well as the Christian Socialist tradition of Frederick Denison Maurice (1805–72), Charles Kingsley (1819–75) and John Ruskin (1819–1900), cannot be easily placed as 'left' or 'right'. Maurice, founder of the Working Men's College in London and an advocate of social reform, disagreed with German biblical criticism and lived his life as a profoundly devout Christian. Kingsley, also a founder of the Working Men's College, a socialist and admirer of Darwin, a fierce critic of John Henry Newman (1801–90) and the High Church Oxford Movement, held much in common with Spencer and espoused strongly racialist views. Ruskin, too, is complex. He largely gave away his inherited wealth and declared himself a Christian Socialist, and with his ideas of connecting art to nature did much to inspire the Arts and Crafts Movement. Yet Thomas Carlyle (1795–1881), whom many consider to be the founding English figure on the hard right, in turn deeply influenced Ruskin.

On the Continent, Ernst Haeckel (1834–1919) promoted a monism behind all physical and spiritual reality, and thus denied an inert or soul-less nature. Friedrich Nietzsche (1844–1900) argued for an evolutionary ethic that took the human body seriously, and that bent ethical purpose and meaning towards the next stage of human evolution, the Superman. Both Haeckel and Nietzsche, although drawing heavily on science, particularly Darwinism for their ideas, utterly resisted the positivistic notions of an objective understanding of nature and society and contributed, indirectly, towards romantic social movements that resisted rationalization.

Resistance to rationalization in the United States rose and then floundered even as the United States inherited the mantle of industrial growth and innovation from Britain. Utopians left behind a cluttered graveyard of ruined projects.[5] The Transcendentalist Movement, expressed in the essays of Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803–82) and Henry David Thoreau (1817–62), misread the Hindu doctrine of transmigration and argued that God, and Soul, permeated all aspects of nature, infusing a vague and ill-defined religious fervour into American romanticism. The Confederate Rebellion, while economically connected to the global economy, particularly the cotton mills of Manchester, represented the last holdout of feudalism and slavery in the Western world. The Conservation Movement in the United States, following the lead of the British Empire, expressed nostalgia for a pre-industrial America and in the late nineteenth century called for massive areas of land to be set aside to conserve resources and along with it, not only utilitarian ethics, but human spirituality as well. While mainstream Protestant clergy secularized and struggled to express unbelief in terms of belief to their more conservative congregations, religious dissent against mainstream

Protestantism – that had played such a founding role in the country's history – carved enclaves for itself against evolution, socialism, mass politics and mass media. Religious fundamentalism circled wagons and preached 'no!' to rationalization.

Resistance overseas also undermined Enlightenment optimism. The Indian Rebellion of 1857 began a shift in public opinion away from the blind optimism that the peoples of the world would transform into a mirror image of European society. The vicious hatred shown the British by the Sepoys, the mass murder of European women, children and elderly, spurred a militant response by the British Indian government and made a horrified Victorian public to realize that free trade and missions did not lead the world to inevitable Westernization as laid out by Liberal leaders. The ideas of Spencer that weaker societies compete with and are eliminated by stronger ones, and of Darwin that competition between groups leads not to equality but to extinction and progress, only aided and abetted individuals who were disenchanted with liberal optimism.

This resistance had taken softer and harder forms: softer in the push for conservation to protect 'the household of nature', an early concept of ecology as developed by foresters in the British Empire; but harder in the development of overt racial theories of superiority and of fascism. For instance, the racial theories of de Gobineau (1816–82) and Houston Chamberlain (1855–1927), both objected to the integration of racial groups in a rapidly industrializing and globalizing world. In the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries social Darwinism pervaded both the left and the right of the political spectrum, with feminists, imperialists and 'progressives' in the Tory, Liberal and Labour parties and in the United States the Democratic and Republican parties, hosting leading figures who openly called for social reform programmes that favoured the fittest through selective human breeding. Enlightenment assumptions of an equal humanity were widely questioned before the First World War, from human rights campaigners like W. E. B. Du Bois (1863–1963, who found for a while, inspiration from Mussolini and Hitler) to American progressives like Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919), Woodrow Wilson (1856–1924) and Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882–1945). While Enlightenment ideals predominated, a simple clear-cut dichotomy between Weberian rationalization and Herderian resistance cannot be posited as a simplistic conflict between left and right.

Even outside of Europe resistance to the Weberian model entails the politics of the left and the right, including anti-colonialism. In

India, for instance, Nehru (1889–1964) advanced socialist five-year plans for an independent India to jump-start industrial development, while Gandhi (1869–1948), assassinated by even more conservative Hindu fundamentalists, advocated independence from global capitalist trade by emphasizing native crafts and indigenous economic models based on an idealized village life. Yet many who espoused Marxist ideas still advocated cultural distinctiveness. This is seen in the writings of Léopold Sédar Senghor (1906–2001) and with the African Socialist Movement generally. Senghor adopted many Marxist concepts of rationalization while still asserting an independent African path based on African culture and, in particular, respect for African spiritual traditions. Senghor espoused the developmentalist ideas of the French economist François Perroux (1903–87) who, while advocating development in Africa that celebrated cultural distinctions still involved the Western conception of the rule of law, modern economic structures, a welfare state, labour protection and unionism, parliamentary government and the need for advanced technology and social arrangements, such as the protection and equal rights of women. Thus the anti-colonial stance of Senghor and of the African socialist movement still fit distinctly within the Weberian model of rationalization.[6]

Resistance in Europe and the United States bears interesting similarities with resistance outside of Europe. The Young England Movement of Disraeli idealized the feudal past and counterposed an ideal culture where the old governors of society, the landed elite, preserved heritage, philanthropy and the established Church in opposition to ruthless Benthamite reforms. The Oxford Movement, the Gothic Revival, all pointed to a past that offered an organic life and culture in harmony with human nature – particularly addressing the need for varied and interesting labour, and for spirituality. Carlyle, discussed above for his admiration of Anglo-Saxon influence around the world, nonetheless eschewed a 'cash nexus' society at home, and the immorality of materialism – either as practiced by the socialists or the captains of industry. As these movements show, scepticism of rationalization cut across the optimism of Cobden, Bright and the Liberal Party in Britain.

Both the Weberian and the Herderian model describe anti-colonial strands and the tension between these models helps us to understand a great deal about how informal empire has worked in the past, and how it has been resisted. Resistance to rationalization delayed but did not deny the optimism behind informal empire. It challenged and modified Palmerstonian optimism after 1857. The Weberian model of rationalization and Herderian resistance blended in the minds of leading thinkers and politicians around the world until after the Second World War when elites decisively shifted against all forms of European resistance on the right of the political spectrum. Triumphant Western powers, purged of internal contradictions and assumptions, competed in the steeplechase for global development outside the confines of formal empire. Increasingly that entailed an informal empire with the United States at the centre of the imperial web.

Predicting the future of the imperial network is not possible, nor is it the historian's business. But because elites are people, not structures, we must never lose sight of the fact that elites within the imperial network can be identified and resisted. That may include only regulation and taxation. It may also include identifying who is in power, who holds professional positions, who should be removed and who should be brought in. The regulation of currency speculation, and the use of death taxes to force changes in the composition of our elite in the same manner as that employed by the British government to forcibly reduce the old landed elite, these are all options that could change and even eliminate the imperial network.

Self-determination and the insistence that elites share the ethnicity and culture of the people they rule is the ultimate resistance. Our ruling elites depend upon the fact that media allows no open discussion of overrepresented and underrepresented groups at the Ivy League Schools, or discussion of the identity of those who own and control the mass media narrative. Clearly the elimination of speech codes that enforce this silence and a period of 'glasnost' to use a Soviet term, that allows the open debate of issues now banned by the elites of the imperial network, could offer major grounds for reformation. Immigration, religious and racial identity, the methods by which our elites gain and hold wealth, the identity of the unelected governors of our institutions, all offer topics within the Herderian model that has been proven to be a resilient opposition to the imperial network in the past and may prove to be so in the future.[7]

It is a truism that only cooperation allowed so few British to rule such a populous country as India. It must be admitted as well that so few Europeans could never have converted the rich and varied tapestry of world cultures into a single Western entity in so short a time by gunboat diplomacy alone or by merely proscribing the sovereignty of states. British elites needed cooperation from other elites. More than cooperation: the formation and sustenance of new elites cast in the Western mould required active collaboration. The imperial network, so monolithic in power, so pervasive in influence, still requires cooperation and collaboration. Disengagement will end this network. Protective trading blocs, cultural and religious resistance and an insistence on organic elites who share the ethnicity and culture of the people they rule, would decisively end it.

The dominant narrative of the imperial network is vital in creating and sustaining a rationalized Western world monoculture. But this narrative has been premised on assumptions about the innate equality and sameness of human nature. If human biodiversity proves less monolithic, if various peoples and cultures do not assimilate fully with Western rationalization then the imperial network is in danger of collapse – not just abroad, but in the sponsoring nations of Europe and the United States. Open immigration policies, egalitarian rhetoric, free trade and an assumption that nation-states can exist solely on shared ideas and professional values without significant corruption can and will collapse in multicultural societies if the Enlightenment ideals of homogenesis do not in fact describe reality. While optimism fuelled informal empire, optimism may also fuel a countermovement. Resistance, based on the Herderian model of cultural difference, is capable of bringing to an end informal empire as it has been constructed in the last few hundred years. Pessimism and decline increasingly define the world community that lives under the imperial elite.

Internal contradictions may lead to the demise of informal empire much as it led to the demise of its Enlightenment counterpart, communism. It could fall for many of the same reasons – false assumptions about the nature of humanity that premise the design and implementation of political and economic structures. Resistance may come from many quarters. Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism – all of which have fundamentalist strains capable of insisting on separation. It may also come from fascism, with the ruling theory of race and anti-Semitism, as well as ad hoc and non-systematic fascism that all still offer a challenge to this dominant narrative, especially in Latin America and potentially in Europe. Monarchy still hovers on the very edges, at the highest levels (Britain, Japan, Thailand and traditional chiefs in Africa) devoid of power yet always pregnant with the potential of future leadership. The track record of the Thai monarchy that wrestled power back from a military-imposed constitutional monarchy is a recent example. Theocracy is always possible, not only in the Islamic Middle East, but with fundamentalist monks in Myanmar and with Hinduism in India. Once a successful challenge to the dominant narrative is created, either through the rise of the Internet and a decentralized mass media or through new social formations that break the link between competing elite sectors, then the entire network can crumble. This may not happen any time soon but because the interconnected global elites are in close symbiosis with each other, once the fabric begins to fray, as in the Soviet Union, the entire structure may quickly unravel. The chances are quite small that the imperial network will go out with a whimper, as T. S. Eliot (1888–65) suggested of Western civilization. It is more likely to end with a bang.

On a personal note, the reader will notice that this exploration of elites has moved from the description of a positively portrayed Palmerstonian project to that of a Hobsonian nightmare. We have moved from a joyous exploration of the world that connected elites to a network of trade and cultural exchange – a process of discovery and wealth creation – to a concentration of power within the imperial network among financiers who are involved almost wholly in propaganda and wealth extraction. To the list of Hobsonian financiers this study points to a ganglia of media owners and political oligarchs who control dominant narratives and thus our political representatives who are ostensibly democratic. In the opinion of the author, building the imperial network was a far more honourable project than running the imperial network, with captive populations facing the complete destruction of their culture and having no say over governance. Palmerston and the mid Victorians were right: trade would change the world for the better. But Hobson was also correct. The imperial machine has been hijacked and no longer serves as a vehicle for global opportunity. Nor does it result in a professional elite of talent and merit but as a tool of oligarchical control. This is very much the case in core countries that sponsor the imperial network. The danger is not only a talentless elite, but an elite unable to identify the larger purposes of political direction, that is, the meaning of human society. As we race towards environmental disaster, global capitalism continues to drain indigenous societies of any cultural distinctiveness. It replaces all culture with meaningless consumerism that glorifies only the basest instincts of humans. Indeed we are saddled with a pathological mass media that is antithetical to the healthy instincts that produced civilization in the first place. We may be left with no society at all – only tyranny – our human inheritance drained of beauty and the earth a slag heap of calculated ugliness. This is a far cry from the civilizing mission – with all the optimism and virtues of a confident Victorian society – that characterized the Western world up to the Second World War.

In the meantime the elites of the imperial network are firmly in place. Except for those centres of resistance mentioned above the dominant narrative sustains the ideas that move the world today. The animating idea of progress – whether described as the adoption of democratic practice, a market economy, environmental protection or the unfolding of human rights in a distinctly Enlightenment mould, has not evaporated. If anything it has crystallized into a determined effort on the part of leading national elites to leave no trace of regional cultural resistance and no corner of the world untouched. The universal ideas of the dominant universal religions, particularly Christianity – secularized and rationalized – leave no excuse for sinners remaining outside of the 'imperial network'. All women have rights. Property is sacrosanct. Racism is wrong. Educated experts provide professional knowledge of the world – in science, medicine and social sciences – to guide and instruct. Democracy is not an option; it is a necessity of civilized nations. Almost all elites everywhere agree with the narrative. For now.

I have argued that informal empire is a relationship in which a national or regional imperial elite intentionally or unintentionally exercises a dominant influence over the elite formation, identity and conditions of exchange of the subjected elite. Often this means co-opting existing elites, as well as bringing new groups into power. Palmerstonian gunboats did not blast into every region on earth, nor did imperial powers consistently and pervasively use force to move individuals and their societies to adapt Western modes of culture. Clearly Robinson and Gallagher and Hopkins are correct in assuming that collaboration includes voluntary action. Indeed often when elites act in harmony imperial power is at its height and conflict is least apparent, with little perception that the imperial power limits the sovereignty of the subjected state. This is precisely what is meant when scholars identify a British or American world system.

An attempt has been made in this book to explain why the world is Western and to understand the elite formation that has led to a single global culture. This book is not an attempt to say that such a formation is good or bad but, rather, that a Western world has been constructed and can also be, if so chosen, deconstructed. There have been many attempts to understand the international nature of the imperial elite. Dependency theorists attempted to explain the relationship between weaker and stronger groups without identifying elites. It had the merit at least of attempting to find a mechanism of action and control, and to explain the 'how' of global transformation, although without examining the mosaic of people and groups who make up the elites of the imperial network. Modernization theory attempted to understand Western rationalization in a set of evolutionary stages – a clearly metaphysical creation. Cultures never grew into such a structure, nor did they advance in stages. Modernization theory had more prophetic prediction than historical observation and was unlikely to offer a blueprint for the future. It has been steeped in Enlightenment optimism, as dependency theory has been steeped in pessimism and the idea that power is always abusive and exploitive. More recent attempts to understand how the modern world came to be are riddled with legal fictions of elite corporations, NGOs or a nebulous empire, along the lines of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, or an Anglosphere without Anglos as with Niall Ferguson. But elites are people. Their relationships constitute the global elite. Talking about structures and not people is simply not talking about our elites. They get off, to use a banned term, 'scot-free'.

'Imperialism' has been used pejoratively after the Second World War, particularly during the Cold War. This investigation of informal empire does not assume a moral position. All human societies have elites. They all use violence to sustain their power. The issues revolving around informal empire ultimately lead to a question of rule. Every society has the opportunity to ask the same question: Who are our elite? How did this elite gain power? Shall we leave this elite in power? If elites in the United States, Britain and those regions of the world that are part of informal empire can offer a satisfactory answer to these questions, then the process of globalization and the foundation of American power – and the imperial network – will continue. If not, the prospect for enduring American hegemony may be limited, and may go the way of Britain's formal empire in the mid twentieth century.

Rudyard Kipling reminded his age on the Golden Jubilee of Queen Victoria's reign that, 'Lest we forget', empires – no matter how ferocious in appearance – go the way of Nineveh, where Iraq is today, leaving only traces in the sand. Oddly British and American elites have done little to protect industry, particularly manufacturing, due to the fact that media elites – not manufacturing elites – hold as much sway over the formation of opinion and politics at home as they do abroad. As the centre rots and the core is hollowed out, will the periphery still follow? Will the core regions of the Western world always lead in a network that is now global?

Understanding informal empire helps us answer the question: Why is the world Western? It explains how select strands of European culture formed or co-opted the elites of most of the world and transformed society along Western – and Weberian rational – lines. Britain and then the United States have led in the imperial web in the expansion of European rationalization around the globe. The result: a single dominant culture.

‘Rationalization’, ‘modernization’, ‘Westernization’, are all terms that can describe the single direction of the last 200 years (at least) of globalization. While these terms have nuanced differences that we use to emphasize discrete characteristics, they still describe a single phenomenon: the interaction and near homogenization of cultures by elites in an expanding imperial network.

Notes

1 Models of Global Transformation

1. Such restrictions are not only found in the heartland of the imperial network. Thailand, China and the Middle East have elites who tightly control freedom of speech.
2. Gobineau (1853/1915). Although Tocqueville worried that Gobineau's ideas were deterministic and discouragingly pessimistic, he agreed with the broad outlines of his ideas, introducing him into the French Foreign Service, and engaging him as his secretary. His correspondence with Gobineau can be found in Tocqueville (1959). Tocqueville proposed 'intermediary bodies' between the individual and the majority population, including the democratic state that – while not identified as the elite – necessarily must constitute a significant portion of that segment of society. See Tocqueville (1945), p. 191. Also see Krause (1999), p. 124.
3. Taine (1890).
4. Pareto (1901/1968), pp. 6–11.
5. As quoted in Nye (1977), p. 38.
6. Schumpeter (1942), p. 269.
7. Non-Western cultures had aspects of professionalization as well. But the structure of the 'professions' outside of Europe is modelled on Western educational systems, values and practices. See Perkin (1996), in particular the final two chapters, 'Japan: A Floating World', pp. 147–76, and 'Towards a Global Professional Society', pp. 177–201.
8. Habermas (1985), p. 2.
9. Fay (1934).
10. Hancock authored the mammoth *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs* (1937–42) and the highly readable *Argument of Empire* (1943).
11. Hancock, Vol. 2 (1937–42) and (1943). Also of importance are the chapters on the economic problems, in Miller (1974). Wm. Roger Louis lists Hancock and also Vincent T. Harlow and Margery Perham as influences on Robinson and Gallagher. Louis makes this suggestion in an unpublished article loaned to this author that owes its origin to a Chichele Lecture at All Souls College, Oxford, in May 2003 and in a keynote address to the Conference of Australasian Modern British Historians Association, Canberra, 7–9 July 2003. Also see Harlow (1952 and 1964), Perham (1937) and Louis (1999b), p. 30.
12. Harlow (1952 and 1964).
13. Gallagher and Robinson (1953).
14. Ibid., p. 2.
15. Ibid., p. 7.
16. The era of the Scramble has been called 'New Imperialism'. This era has bedevilled historians and led to a plethora of unsatisfactory explanations for the Partition of Africa. The 'steeplechase' for land in Africa occurred in

the 1880s before and after the 1884–85 Berlin Conference. Portugal called for the conference, and Bismarck organized and hosted it in Berlin. This conference regulated trade and colonization in Africa until 1914. To see how far Bismarck's earlier anti-colonial views had progressed by 1884, see Bismarck's Speech to the Budget Commission of the Reichstag (1884). By 1914 France, Germany, Britain, Spain, Italy, Portugal and Belgium controlled all parts of the continent outside of Ethiopia, Liberia, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic (Transvaal), both of these latter were Boer republics.

17. Robinson and Gallagher (1962).
18. Robinson (1976).
19. Louis and Robinson (1994), p. 494.
20. Ibid., p. 462.
21. Louis (1976a), p. 2.
22. Ibid., p. 37.
23. See Ninkovich (2001), p. 5. Another scholar, Klaus Schwabe, distinguishes between 'imperialist' and 'imperial' – claiming for the first the classical impulse to found an empire, and for the second the influence that accrues with superpower status. The American Wilsonian push for democracy and civil rights around the world falls into this latter definition. See also Schwabe (1986).
24. Tomlinson (1999), p. 71.
25. Fung, author of *The Diplomacy of Imperial Retreat* (1991).
26. See 'Imperialism', *Webster's Revised Unabridged Dictionary* (1998). For a discussion of how the terms 'colonialism' and 'imperialism' have been used, see Koebner and Schmidt (1964) and Armitage (2000).
27. McMahon (2001), pp. 891–2.
28. Winseck and Pike (2007), p. 340.
29. Barton (2009a).
30. Gaddis (1997), p. 27.
31. Hardt and Negri (2000).
32. I owe the suggestion that informal empire is a 'touch-and-go thing' to a private letter from Tony Smith, whose work will be discussed in more detail below. Also see David McLean's *War, Diplomacy and Informal Empire* (1995), in which the author examined the Argentine and Uruguayan nations to test the validity of the term 'informal empire'. He found that the term when applied in the 1840s to the River Plate countries cannot be justified. Another relevant book is a collection of essays edited by Alistair Hennessy and John King, *The Land that England Lost* (1992). The essays outline British influence on Argentina, culturally and economically.
33. Thompson (2008), p. 233.
34. See Cain and Hopkins (2002), pp. 205–40, and Cain and Hopkins (1999), pp. 202–10.
35. Darwin (1997), p. 614.
36. The first use of the term 'informal empire' in scholarly literature is by Fay (1940), p. 399.
37. Thompson (2008), p. 229.
38. This definition also addressed the need for a holistic approach to informal empire that goes beyond discussions of metropole and colony or of discrete

and separate analsyses of economics, state structure and high culture. See Jones (2008), p. 148.

39. Weber (1947), p. 152.
40. As quoted in Perkin (1996), p. 153. See also Mill (1848a), p. 123.
41. Perkin (1996), pp. 160–1.
42. Also see Darhendorf (1967), Guttsman (1962), Mills (1959), Roberts et al. (1977), Stanmworth and Giddens (1974) and Bottomore (1966).
43. Noelle-Neumann (1974 and 1993).
44. Ibid. (1993), p. 62.
45. Jameson (1998), p. 58.
46. Ibid., p. 59.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid., p. 63.
49. French and Latin American scholars were particularly strongly concerned with cultural imperialism and the influence of the American media. See White (2010).
50. They argue that a 'network power' of empire has replaced territory. This new form of empire is the standard form of American rule. See Hardt and Negri (2000), pp. 146 and 160. The argument unfortunately lacks historical rigour.
51. Ferguson (2003).
52. Harvey (2003), p. 37.
53. Winseck and Pike (2007), p. 8.
54. Naylor (2006). Naylor also asserted that when the close relationship between the political and economic elite of Canada and the commercial elite in Britain waned, the United States stepped into the same role.
55. Kubicek (1999).
56. See McAloon (2002).
57. See Fitzpatrick (1941). Fitzpatrick is deconstructed by Bolton (2010). Also see Dilley (2009), Smith (2008), Dilley (2010) and Attard (2013).
58. Tyrrell (2009). Also see Bayly et al. (2006). Regional history shares many of the characteristics of transnationalism. See Braudel (1949/1972).
59. Bourne (1916).
60. Darwin (2013), p. 388.
61. Winn (1976) and Hopkins (1994).
62. Turnbull (1999), pp. 399 and 401.

2 The Idea of Informal Empire

1. Hobson (1902).
2. Ibid., p. 57.
3. Ibid., p. 72.
4. The best analysis of the origins of Hobson's ideas, and the impact of his work, is the biography by Peter Cain, *Hobson and Imperialism* (2002).
5. Lenin (1917/1920). Etherington (1984) makes a convincing case that the classic theories of imperialism derived from Hobson and Lenin but when

applied as a test case to the Scramble for Africa, are a gross misreading of history. Rather, the idea of surplus capital seeking a market overseas primarily arose from American capitalist theorists and served as a guide, and warning, for future policy decisions. Thus the classic critique of imperialism on the left and applied to past empire appears to be borrowed from capitalist thinkers concerned about the future.

6. Stokes (1969).
7. Schumpeter (1919/1974), p. 65. Although Schumpeter probably never read Lenin's work on imperialism, he argued against the link between capitalism and imperialism as argued by Hobson and the Marxist historians Rudolph Hilferding (1877–1941) and Otto Bauer (1881–1938).
8. Schumpeter (1919/1974), pp. 75 and 98.
9. Moon (1928).
10. Langer (1935).
11. Staley (1935), p. 100.
12. Ibid., p. 360.
13. Spencer (1851), p. 65.
14. Spenglar (1926), Vol. 1, p. 106, and Toynbee (1934–61). Huntington first laid out his ideas about the essential characteristic of civilizations in 'The Clash of Civilizations?' (1993). Also see Huntington (1996).
15. Rostow (1948 and 1960), McClelland (1961), Spencer (1993). Spencer's autobiography (1904) lays out the evolution of ideas – and his answers to critics.
16. Rostow (1956 and 1960) and Ricardo (1817).
17. Both Wallerstein and Frank believed in revolution as the cure for the non-Western world.
18. Prebisch (1959, see also 1950).
19. Some scholars have asserted, unsuccessfully, that Australia was underdeveloped in the nineteenth century, see Fitzpatrick (1939 and 1941). Herman M. Schwarts struggles unconvincingly to tie debt levels to underdevelopment, with South Korea, Argentina and New Zealand as examples of dependency, and Australia escaping from this position after 1900. Historical developments offer their own critique of this position, with a powerful South Korean economy and high debt levels in countries that cannot be considered undeveloped, such as the United States. See Schwarts (1989).
20. Certain political elites still refer to dependency theory, at the present writing, in Cuba and Venezuela.
21. Braudel (1981–84 and 1972).
22. Bayly (2004).
23. Vries (2010).
24. Crosby (1986) and Barton (2002).
25. Diamond (1997) and Marks (2006).
26. Reilly and Shaffer (1995).
27. The United Nation's International Scientific Commission produced the *History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind* in six volumes, beginning in 1963. A revised edition, *History of the Scientific and Cultural Development of Mankind*, began in 1978. These monumental works, lacking a

central argument or focus, have rarely been cited and almost never used in classrooms.

28. Anthony Giddens (1990, p. 64) has defined globalization as 'the intensification of worldwide social relations which link distant localities in such a way that local happenings are shaped by events occurring many miles away and vice versa'.
29. Campbell (1986), pp. 34–5.
30. This discussion of globalization, and most particularly what globalization is not, has benefited from Jurgen Osterhammel and Niels P. Peterson's *Globalization: A Short History* (2003).
31. Hopkins does this by emphasizing 'archaic globalization', 'proto globalization', 'modern globalization' and 'post-colonial globalization', hoping that by renaming the schematics, the 'stages' that suggest a Western seminal role are sidestepped. While these schematics are helpful, archaic and proto-globalization do not appear to this author to constitute globalization because permanent global structures of exchange were not created and maintained but, rather, regionally created and then only temporarily. See Hopkins (2002), pp. 3–4.
32. Marks, *The Origins of the Modern World* (2006), is by no means an environmental history, despite the reference to an 'ecological narrative' in the title. Neither ecology nor globalization is substantially explored.
33. Globalization has been a term that emerged in the 1990s to 'encompassing the multiplicity of supra-national forces that have imprinted themselves on the contemporary world' (Hopkins, 2002, p. 1).
34. Barton (2009b).
35. Nkrumah (1965), p. 3.
36. Prakash (1994), Morton (2007), pp. 96–7, and Nowell Smith and Hoare (1971), pp. xiii–xiv.

3 The Palmerstonian Project

1. Spoken without a hint of sarcasm, by John Bowring, as quoted in Hyam (1976), p. 58.
2. The phrase, 'Western conception of law', describes legal abstractions that transcend the status of persons. The Western conception of law is based on philosophical realism and can be summed up in the phrase, 'What is, is, regardless of what we think of it.' This arose out of the Greek philosophical tradition and can be clearly seen in the writings of Plato and Aristotle. It is also inherent in the Christian worldview and undergirds scientific theory by positing a consistent and knowable universe with discoverable physical laws. It assumes an independent ontological state unaffected by our subjective concepts. Thus it rejects the idea that our minds alter reality around us, or that magic intervenes between the subject of the self and reality. While a subjective strain also runs through the Western tradition of philosophy, from Gnosticism to Romanticism and Existentialism, this strain has not dominated judicial formulation nor has it displaced scientific enquiry or professional ethics. In spite of exceptions of practice, this Western conception of

law has been applied by elites throughout the world and bolsters the argument that the world has become primarily Western. See Blackburn (2005), p. 188, and Barton (2009a), pp. 281–90. For the global adoption of professional ethics modelled on Western ideals, see Perkin (1996), especially chapter 8, 'Towards a Global Professional Society', pp. 177–96.

3. Hobbes (1651/1973), Rousseau (1755/1973), Grotius (1625/1949) and Locke (1690/1970), p. 319.
4. Locke (1690/1970), p. 319.
5. The Dutch East India Company commissioned Grotius to justify the capture of a Portuguese carrack, the *Santa Catarina*, by a Dutch ship off the Strait of Malacca in 1602. The Spanish and Portuguese claimed at this time two-thirds of the surface of the globe, based on the Donation of Pope Alexander VI. Grotius' treatise, *Mare Liberum* (*The Free Sea* or *The Freedom of the Sea*), was published in 1609.
6. Grotius (1625/1949), p. 8.
7. Ibid., pp. 2, 6, 8, 28 and 30.
8. Ibid., pp. 39, 44, 49 and 73. *Mare Liberum* was a chapter of the larger work, *De Jure Belli ac Pacis* (*On the Laws of War and Peace*), and published earlier in 1625.
9. There were a number of short-lived joint-stock trading companies in the seventeenth century. The most successful were the: Muscovy Trading Company founded in 1555; East India Company founded in 1601; London Virginia Company founded in 1606; Royal African Company founded in 1660; and Hudson's Bay Company founded in 1670.
10. Darwin (2009) argues for a British 'empire project' that encompassed the settler empire, a commercial empire and 'greater India' that comes close to understanding globalization as a combination of formal and informal empire.
11. Kant (1914), p. 5.
12. Ibid., p. 5.
13. Ibid., p. 101.
14. Nature even designed war as part of her all-knowing plan to populate the world. See ibid., p. 109.
15. Ibid., p. 12.
16. See Hall (1813), pp. 279–88.
17. See Brewer (1988).
18. See Parnell (1830).
19. He proceeded to lay out three advantages that nations enjoyed by the possession of colonies and argued that Britain obtained none of these. Advantages are '1st in furnishing a military force; 2nd in supplying the parent state with a revenue; 3rd in affording commercial advantages.' But the British colonies were 'a great drain' on the military resources, especially during war. The 'Act of 18 Geo. III' mandates that all taxes levied on the colonies be spent on the colonies themselves, thus depriving Britain of revenue gain. Ibid., p. 251.
20. Ibid., p. 252.
21. Ibid., pp. 252–3.
22. Ibid., p. 252.
23. Ibid., p. 254. See also Mill (1848b).

24. Carlyle (1843/1975), p. 268, and 'Horoscope' (Carlyle, n.d.), Vol. 12, pp. 256–7.
25. Lord Palmerston, 16 February 1842, Hansard (Commons), quoted in Temperley (1906), p. 796.
26. Bright and Thorold Rogers (1880), pp. 36–9.
27. Ibid., p. 187.
28. Hansard (1846), 21 February, 3rd Series, Vol. 83, Cols 1041–2.
29. Palmerston was Foreign Secretary in 1830–34, 1835–41 and 1846–51, and then prime minister in 1855–58 and 1859–65. Salisbury was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs in 1878–80, and then prime minister in 1885, 1886–92 and 1895–02. Salisbury retained his position as Foreign Secretary when he became prime minister.
30. Porter (1983), pp. 14–15.
31. Huskisson (1831), p. 287, Lynn (1999), p. 105, Steele (1991) and Sullivan (1983).
32. Palmerston succeeded in passing a resolution in the Commons in 1852 in favour of the principle of free trade, Hansard, 3rd Series, Vol. 123, Col. 458, p. 701.
33. Marcham (1973), p. 47.
34. Palmerston to Queen Victoria, 25 February 1838 (Benson and Viscount Escher, 1908, Vol. 1, pp. 106–07). Near the end of the century this changed out of necessity with the telegraph. The number of despatches coming into the Foreign Office skyrocketed to a staggering 102,000 in 1898. This meant that the Foreign Secretary increasingly had to rely on officials. One should not therefore entirely conflate foreign policy with the policy of the secretaries of state.
35. Grey of Fallodon (1925), Vol. 2, p. 10.
36. John Russell to Palmerston, 1 October 1848 (Walpole, 1889, Vol. 2, p. 47).
37. William Cobbett, letter to Lord Castlereah, 30 March 1815 (*Cobbett's Political Register*, 1815, Vol. 27, pp. 402–3).
38. Reeve (1859).
39. Cabinet Memorandum, 10 January 1848 (Walpole, 1889, Vol. 2, pp. 21–2), Queen Victoria to Lord Panmure, 18 December 1857 (Benson and Viscount Esher, 1908, Vol. 2, p. 257) and Alcock (1867), pp. 3 and 25.
40. Woodruff (1966), p. 313.
41. Palmerston, quoted in Pemberton (1954), p. 141, and Canning, quoted in Lynn (1999), p. 102. See also the Commons Committee Report of 1837, which stated that: [To give the world] 'the opportunity of becoming partakers of that civilization, that innocent commerce, that knowledge and that faith with which it has pleased a gracious Providence to bless our own country' ('Report from the Select Committee on Aborigines (British Settlements)', *House of Commons Papers*, Reports from the Committees, No. 425, Vol. 7, 1837, p. 76). See also Barton (2012a).
42. Minute by Palmerston, 29 September 1850, on Foreign Office Memorandum of 26 September 1850 on Consular Establishments at Foochowfoo and Ningpo, The National Archives, Kew, London (TNA) Foreign Office (FO) 17/173, as quoted in Pemberton (1954), p. 34.
43. Pemberton (1954), p. 283.

44. Miller (1993), pp. 67 and 243–4, and Mayo (1981).
45. For an interesting survey of Latin American states and their economic relationship with other states, including differing views on informal empire, see Hopkins (1994). Abel and Lewis (1985), Platt (1980), Winn (1976) and Morin (1999). McLean published *War, Diplomacy and Informal Empire* (1995), and examined the Argentine and Uruguayan nations to test the validity of the term 'informal empire'. He found that the term when applied to the River Plate countries in the 1840s cannot be justified, that Britain intervened more for political than commercial reasons, and that the tension between the Foreign Office and British merchants in the region made cooperation for informal empire unlikely. His work is a helpful resource and his approach – the willingness to test the term's applicability to a time and region – very sensible. Another relevant book is a collection of essays edited by Alistair Hennessy and John King, *The Land that England Lost* (1992). The essays outline British influence on Argentina culturally and economically. The essays focus on very narrow topics such as the tango craze and whet the appetite for more information on informal empire in the region.
46. Minute by Palmerston, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 30 August 1847, on Walter Plowden, Consul at Mossawa, to FO, 28 August 1847, TNA/FO1/4; Lord Palmerston (Hansard, 1842). For a strong case study of the British effect of trade on a traditional African society see Anstey (1975).
47. Cooper (1994). Martin Lynn (1986) argues against a British informal empire in West Africa.
48. Brauer (1988).
49. While Britain possessed the finest fleet in the world, the advent of iron and steel threatened to render its older wooden sailing ships obsolete. France and the Northern States during the American Civil War were building ironclads. This concern in the 1860s was a forerunner of Britain's alarm in the 1900s regarding German manufacture of dreadnoughts, ships first designed in Britain but copied by the Germans.
50. Palmerston to George Eden, Earl of Auckland, Governor General of India, 22 January 1841, Broadlands Papers, quoted in Lynn (1999), p. 106.
51. For a discussion of some of the motivations for British expansion, see Davis and Huttenback (1982) and Fieldhouse (1973).
52. Ellis (1834), pp. xc–xci.
53. Dilke (1869). So dominant were the English, that when speaking of England, many Victorians and many that followed the Victorians meant Britain. See Langford (2000), pp. 11–15.
54. Dilke (1869), pp. 379–85.
55. See Bell (2007).
56. Seeley (1905).
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid., pp. 109–10 and 156.
59. Strong (1885), pp. 159–79.
60. See Herbst (1963), p. ix.
61. Strong (1885), p. 216.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid., p. 217.

4 Informal Empire and Africa

1. Quoted in Louis (1976a), p. 27.
2. Hansard (1842), Col. 1251.
3. Eilts (1962).
4. ‘The Navigation of the Persian Gulf’, *Bombay Records*, 24 (1855), p. 631. See also Sir Bartle Frere to Earl Granville, 26 August 1872, Memorandum on Indians at Masqat and Zanzibar, TNA/FO30/29/103.
5. Gavin (1959), 54ff. Also, Hansard (1847), 16 July, 3rd Series, Vol. 94, Col. 442ff. See also Gavin (1962), pp. 125–7.
6. Gavin (1862), p. 146, and Frere (1877). See Frere to Granville, 26 August 1872, TNA/FO30/29/103.
7. Livingstone (1865), p. 510. For an understanding of the population of this region, see Hance (1975), pp. 477–8. See also Northrup (1986).
8. As quoted in MacMillan (1970), p. 72. See Robert Morier, Minister at Lisbon, to Lord Salisbury, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 14 May 1878, TNA/FO541/22.
9. Buxton (1839), pp. 196 and 217.
10. Ibid., p. 511.
11. Livingstone (1874), Vol. 1, pp. 97–103.
12. Livingstone (1872).
13. Monk (1858), p. 21. Also see Livingstone’s letters to A. Tidman, 1853–56, in Schapera (1961), Vol. 1, pp. 256–7.
14. MacMillan (1970), p. 63.
15. Many Scots referred to themselves as Englishmen and identified with Britain and the Anglo-Saxon race, as did Livingstone. But this endeavour, perhaps because Scottish Church organizations supported it, saw itself differently. See Bartholomew (1885) and MacMillan (1970), p. 66. For Stanley’s famous account of meeting Livingstone, see Stanley (1872).
16. Lord Salisbury to Sir George Petre, Ambassador to Portugal, 25 June 1888 (C.5904/49), as quoted in Warhurst (1971), p. 21.
17. MacMillan (1970), p. 66, and Hemphill (1955).
18. See the Anglo-German Agreement of 1866 on ‘spheres of influence’ limiting the claim of the Sultan of Zanzibar in East Africa, while asserting the influence of Britain and Germany, in Hertslet (1909), pp. 615–21.
19. Lacerda e Almeida (1873), p. 61.
20. Memorandum and Articles of Association, The Livingstonia Central Africa Company, Ltd, Glasgow (1878), Article IIa, Glasgow University Archives Service (GUAS), University of Glasgow Collection (UGC) 193/1/1/1.
21. Ibid., Article II b.
22. Ibid., Article II c.
23. Ibid., Article II e.
24. Ibid., Article II f–g.
25. Ibid., Article II h.
26. Ibid., Article II i.
27. Ibid., Article II j.
28. Ibid., Article II k.
29. Ibid., Article II n.
30. MacMillan (1970), pp. 58–9.

31. Ibid., p. 59.
32. African Lakes Company, Minutes, 18 February 1885, GUAS, UGC193/1/8/2.
33. MacMillan (1970), p. 234, cites the British North Borneo Company (1881), the Royal Niger Company (1886), the Imperial British East Africa Company (1888) and the British South Africa Company (1889).
34. Report by the Directors to the First Annual General Meeting of Shareholders of the African Lakes Corporation, 1 December 1893, GUAS, UGC193/1/8/2.
35. Prospectus, The African Lakes Trading Corporation, 19 August 1893, GUAS, UGC193/1/8/2.
36. Memorandum of Association of the African Lakes Trading Corporation Ltd, GUAS, UGC193/1/8/2.
37. See the 'Congo Treaty' in Hertslet (1909), Vol. 2, pp. 713–14. These efforts followed an earlier treaty between Queen Victoria and the King of Mellella in the Congo River Basin, in an effort, by the British, to suppress the slave trade. See *British and Foreign State Papers* (1876–77), Vol. 68, pp. 670–2.
38. Over time historians have separated the arguments on imperialism of Marx, Lenin and Hobson from each other.
39. Robinson and Gallagher (1961), p. xxii.
40. Ibid., p. 473. I draw these two quotes from Hopkins (1986), p. 371.
41. To understand the British view of Egyptian inadequacies, see Cave (1876).
42. Robinson and Gallagher (1962), pp. 593–640.
43. Robinson (1976).
44. Louis and Robinson (1994), p. 501.
45. Ibid., p. 469.
46. Newbury (1962).
47. Ibid. (1971).
48. Hargreaves (1963). It must be kept in mind that France harnessed a much reduced imperial influence than Britain because of the loss of most of its colonial possessions after the Napoleonic Wars and because the Industrial Revolution began in Britain and other regions of North-West Europe. By the time France built up a new empire in Africa and South East Asia, the British were already largely established and the Americans seriously entering the field, leaving little room for global power, whether formal or informal, for France. The French historian, Alfred Fambaud, although himself a colonial booster, discusses this late imperial rise by France. See Snyder (1962), pp. 251–3.
49. Wehler (1969).
50. Louis (2006), p. 947.
51. See Stengers (1969 and 1972).
52. Cain and Hopkins (2002), p. 304.
53. Ibid., pp. 318–27.
54. Gallagher and Robinson (1953), p. 11.
55. Lynn (1986, p. 24), quoting Gallagher and Robinson.
56. Lynn (1986, p. 24), quoting Lord Palmerston as quoted in Hyam (1976), p. 43.
57. Fieldhouse (1966), pp. 147 and 295.
58. Fisher (1984).
59. Low (1973, pp. 8–14), lays out an interesting spectrum of power for indirect rule from the least interventionist, as with the sheikhs of the Persian Gulf, to

the Indian princely states, to Egypt under Cromer and then finally Uganda and Nigeria then Malaya and Zanzibar.

60. Aitchison (1865), Vol. 7, p. 77.
61. Robert Sandeman, 'Memorandum on the Rectification of the North-West Frontier of India (1879)', in Thornton (1921), pp. 333 and 335–7. Lord Lawrence, Viceroy from 1864 to 1869, maintained that the boundary line should be fixed in its present location, where the previous rule by Sikhs had left it, and discouraged a 'forward' position of outpost. See the Minute by the Viceroy and Governor General (Lord Lawrence), [on North-West Frontier Policy], Calcutta: Foreign Department, 8 February 1864, TNA/IOR/L/PS/18/A4. It is against this view that Sandeman argued. He was not alone in this position. See also Memorandum – Khelat Affairs – Sir W. Merewether and Major Sandeman, A. W. Moore, 26 April 1876, TNA/IOR/L/PS/18/A13; and Memorandum on the Rectification of the North-West Frontier of India, by Maj.-Gen. H. Green, 30 December 1878, TNA/IOR/L/PS/18/A23. Sandeman took a similar position on Afghanistan, which can only be described as informal empire. See Note by Sir Robert Sandeman, Agent to the Governor General in Beluchistan, on Our Future Policy in Afghanistan, Ireland, 20 July 1886, TNA/IOR/L/PS/18/A71, 3 pp.
62. Sandeman, 'Memorandum (1879)', in Thornton (1921), p. 338.
63. Ibid., p. 340.
64. Sandeman, 'Note on the North-West Frontier and our Policy in Afganistan (1887)', in ibid., p. 344; and Note by Sir Robert Sandeman, Agent to the Governor General in Beluchistan, on our Future Policy in Afghanistan, Ireland, 20 July 1886, TNA/IOR/L/PS/18/A71.
65. Thornton (1921), p. 341.
66. Sandeman, 'British Relations with the Waziri and other Frontier Tribes (1890)', in ibid., p. 356.
67. Sandeman, 'Note on the North-West Frontier', in ibid., pp. 346–7. The British were aware of and alarmed by communications between the Amir of Afghanistan and Russian officials. See the Russian correspondence with Kabul in Memorandum on the Correspondence between General von Kaufmann and the Ameers Shere Ali and Yakub Khan of Kabul, from March 1870 to February 1879, Col. O. T. Burne, 1 April 1880, TNA/IOR/L/PS/18/A38.
68. Thornton (1921), p. 358.
69. Ibid, p. 359.
70. Ibid.
71. Ibid., p. 360.
72. See Louis (1999a), p. 21.
73. Lugard (1904, p. 15), argued that placing chiefs over those without political structures raised them to a higher stage of civilized development.
74. Beinart (1998), p. 46.
75. Ibid.
76. Kingsley (1897 and 1899). For similar ideas applied to the Sudan and Niger, see Goldie (1898).
77. Hobson (1902), see especially part 2, chapter 5.
78. Nwabughuogu (1981), p. 88.
79. Perham (1937), p. 345.

80. See Louis (1966).
81. Lugard in 1906 circulated his views among colonial officials in a political memorandum, published later as *Revision of Instruction to Political Officers on Subjects Chiefly Political and Administrative* (1919). Also see, Lugard (1926). The differences between French and British policy were less distinct in practice than in theory.
82. Morel (1902). Mahmood Mamdani, in *Citizens and Subjects* (1996), blames indirect rule as practiced by the British for the suppression of human rights found in contemporary black Africa. This assumes Africans as passive and a blank slate, with Europeans creating racial and power categories *ex nehilo*. Oddly it also contradicts his own experience as a refugee fleeing the violence of Idi Amin and seeking protection in Britain. This protection came with a wide array of financial support, and then the concomitant employment preferences in both Britain and the United States. His arguments bring to mind the neocolonial and postcolonial scholars who trace the genealogy of contemporary African failure to an ever more distant, white-ruled past. The only identifiably constant in his historical and political rationalizations appear to be racism against his European benefactors.
83. Lugard (1926) and Perham (1956 and 1960).
84. A classic on the topic is Wright (1930). See also the Royal Institute of International Affairs (1937), especially chapters 8 and 12.
85. Matz (2005), p. 52 n. 14.
86. Smuts (1928), p. 23. See the Atlantic Charter (1941).
87. 'The best method of giving practical effect to this principle is that the tutelage of such peoples should be entrusted to advanced nations who by reason of their resources, their experiences or their geo-graphical position can best undertake this responsibility, and who are willing to accept it, and that this tutelage should be exercised by them as Mandatories on behalf of the League' (Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations, 1924; see Atlantic Charter, 1941).
88. As quoted in Beinart and Dubow (1995), p. 162; see also Perham (1934), p. 326.
89. See Seidman and Makgetla (1980) and *The Economist* (2004), p. 49.
90. Salisbury (1890).

5 Informal Empire and the Americas

1. For an interesting survey of Latin American states and their economic relationship with other states, including differing views on informal empire, see Hopkins (1994), Abel and Lewis (1985), Platt (1980), Winn (1976) and Morin (1999).
2. Some works that deal with competition between the United States and Britain are McKercher (1991 and 1999) and Orde (1996). The author is indebted to a number of archival suggestions found in Brauer (1988).
3. See Gallagher and Robinson (1953). Fay introduced the term 'informal empire' in *The Cambridge History of the British Empire* (1940), Vol. 2, p. 399.
4. Robinson (1984).

5. Platt (1973), p. 79, MacDonagh (1962), p. 489 n. 3, Thompson (1992) and Darwin (1997), p. 614. Also see McLean (1995). While presenting an excellent study, McLean makes the same mistake as Andrew Thompson, and utilizes a derogatory rather than a commonly used definition of imperialism to make his point. Another relevant book is a collection of essays edited by Hennessy and King (1992). The essays outline British influence on Argentina, culturally and economically. See also Robinson (1986), p. 274.
6. Gallagher and Robinson (1953), p. 11.
7. Ferns (1953).
8. Ibid. (1960), p. 488, as cited in Miller (1999), p. 441.
9. Platt (1968).
10. Ibid. (1972).
11. Ibid. (1973), p. 79.
12. In opposition to the idea of informal empire, see Ferns (1960) and Lynn (1986).
13. Platt (1980), pp. 1 and 16.
14. Hobson (1918), pp. 405–6.
15. Platt (1973), p. 86.
16. Ibid., p. 87.
17. MacDonagh (1962), pp. 489–501 and 489 n. 3.
18. Thompson (1992).
19. Ibid., pp. 423, 430, 434 and 435. Thompson repeats these assertions in 'Afterword: Informal Empire' (2008), p. 232. Colin M. Lewis (2008, p. 123), argues that popular support for British railways in Argentina indicates that Britain successfully addressed national sensitivities. He does not however decisively answer the question of whether Britain did or did not have an informal empire in Argentina.
20. 'To My Friend the Queen, Our Great Sovereign', 17 June 1892, found in Perham (1956), Vol. 1, pp. 320–1. See Newbury (2003).
21. McLean (1995), p. 202.
22. Knight (1999), p. 124. Knight reviews the issue of informal empire and Argentina in 'Rethinking British Informal Empire in Latin America (Especially Argentina)' (2008).
23. Deas (2008), pp. 173–6 and 186.
24. Cain and Hopkins (2002), p. 273.
25. Hopkins (1994), p. 473.
26. He disagrees that imperialism means 'the ability to get others to do what they would not otherwise do', as Robert A. Dahl has defined it (1961), p. 202.
27. Hopkins (1994), pp. 476–9.
28. Nye (1990) and Strange (1988).
29. Brown (1999), p. 531. See also Strange (1988) and Hopkins (1994), p. 479.
30. Brown (2008), p. 3.
31. Matthew Brown facilitated a conference on informal empire that also focused on Latin America: 'Informal Empire? Commerce and Culture Outside Britain's Formal Empire in the Long Nineteenth Century', 7th Bristol Institute for Research in the Humanities and Arts (BIRTHA) Conference, University of Bristol, 26–27 January 2007.
32. Taylor (1992).

33. Hopkins (1994). On collaboration see Robinson (1976); for dependency theory, see Frank (1978). Frank concludes that the Third World is underdeveloped due to unequal trade relations and the accumulation of capital in the imperial centres. A more nuanced form of this Marxist position is found in O'Brien (1985).
34. Snell (1980), Engelson (1939), Rodriguez (1964), pp. 282–94, Bourne (1961 and 1967) and Brauer (1988).
35. Dudden (1993), Stelle (1941) and Ahmat (1965).
36. A short informative discussion of aspects of British influence in the nineteenth century is found in Morris (1984). For a good analysis of how competing European empires extended influence in the Far East before the Victorian era, see Wills, Jr. (1993).
37. Report of the Baylies Committee, 15 May 1826, 19th Congress, 1st Session, House of Representatives Report No. 213, pp. 20–1, Vancouver Public Library, Vancouver; James Buchanan, US Secretary of State to Romulus M. Saunders, Minister to Spain, Washington, DC, 17 June 1848, No. 21, US Department of State, Diplomatic Instructions: Spain, Vol. 14; Lynn (1999), p. 105, Steele (1991) and Sullivan (1983).
38. Colton (1864), Vol. 5, pp. 221 and 290.
39. Brauer (1988), p. 24.
40. Colton (1864), Vol. 5, pp. 232 and 290.
41. Ibid., pp. 221, 450–1 and 477.
42. Ibid., pp. 9, 40–1, 266 and 267.
43. Ibid., pp. 228, 61, 94 and 476.
44. Ibid., pp. 286 and 220
45. Ibid., pp. 155, 19, 214, 216, 242–3, 146–6, 20.
46. Ibid., p. 243.
47. Ibid., p. 20.
48. United States, *Statutes at Large* (Boston, MA, 1846), Vol. 4, p. 824. Also see Osborne (1904).
49. For James Madison's part in the debate on trade conditions with Britain, see US Congress, 1st Congress, 1st Session, in Gales (Washington, DC, 1834–56), pp. 1 and 107ff. Also see J. Madison to T. Jefferson, 30 June 1789, in Boyd et al. (1950), p. 226, Bolohlavek (1994), McCoy (1974) and Yen-P'ing (1986a), pp. 12–23.
50. Mallory (1910), pp. 624–8; I owe these quotations to Brauer (1988), p. 27.
51. W. Huskisson, Minute, 17 February 1824, Huskisson Papers, British Library Add, Ms. 38,766; Huskisson, President of the Board of Trade, Minute of Representation to the American Minister on the Conduct of his Government on the Repeal of Discriminating Duties, London, 1 July 1823, Huskisson Papers, British Library Add, Ms. 38,766, as quoted in Brauer (1988), p. 28. For a discussion of some of the motivations for British expansion, see Davis and Huttenback (1982) and Fieldhouse (1973).
52. Clay (1832).
53. Ibid.
54. Quoted in Brauer (1988), p. 28.
55. Colton (1864), Vol. 5, pp. 241–6.
56. Ibid.

57. Ibid., p. 274.
58. Walton (1810), Vol. 1, p. 349.
59. W. Jacob, Plan for Occupying South America with Observations on the Character and View of its Inhabitants, 26 October 1804, TNA/Chatham Papers/30/8/345.
60. Memorandum for the Cabinet, Relative to South America, 1 May 1807, in *Memoirs and Correspondence of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marques of Londonderry*, ed. by C. W. Vane, Vol. 7, London, 1848–53, pp. 320–1.
61. John Forbes, US Chargé d'Affaires at Buenos Aires, to Henry Clay, Secretary of State, Buenos Aires, 21 June 1826, in *Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States Concerning the Independence of the Latin-American States*, ed. by W. R. Manning, New York, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 654.
62. For the request of the Montevideo elite to join the British Empire, see T. Hood, Consul at Montevideo, to George Canning, Foreign Secretary, London, 22 April 1824, TNA/FO51/1.
63. Canning asked Lord Ponsonby to mediate the dispute between Argentina and Brazil. Ponsonby laid out the case for informal empire to Canning in the following dispatch: Ponsonby, Minister to the United Provinces of La Plata, to George Canning, Foreign Secretary, Buenos Aires, 20 October 1826, TNA/FO6/13.
64. Cady (1929), pp. 22–91; Hood to Foreign Office, 1830–39, TNA/FO51/6–15; and Lord Palmerston, Foreign Secretary, Memorandum, 20 October 1838, Instructions for Lord Granville, Ambassador to France, TNA/FO51/14.
65. Palmerston to Lord Auckland, London, 22 January 1841, as quoted in Platt (1968), p. 85.
66. James Murray, Memorandum on British Trade, 31 December 1841, TNA/FO97/284.
67. Palmerston, Foreign Secretary, London, to John Henry Mandeville, Secretary to the Embassy at Constantinople, 7 July 1841, TNA/FO6/7–9.
68. They did so by signing the Anglo-Argentine Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation (1825). This agreement remained in force until 1933, when the Argentina government launched a national recovery programme. The Roca–Runciman Treaty with Britain protected Argentina's exports to Britain in return for the importation of certain British goods. This protected both the Argentine economy and British firms in Argentina.
69. Thompson (1992), p. 422.
70. Ibid., p. 424.
71. Miller (1993), pp. 67 and 243–4, Mayo (1981) and Winn (1976). Also see Temperley (1906), p. 796.
72. Hopkins (2011), p. 246.
73. As quoted in ibid., p. 244.

6 Informal Empire and Asia

1. Some of the material in this chapter first appeared in Barton and Bennett (2010).
2. Akita (2002a), p. 2.

3. Ibid., pp. 4–5.
4. Ibid., pp. 9, 19, 21 and 25.
5. Ibid., p. 7.
6. Ibid., p. 8.
7. Onley (2007), p. 37. The classic history of foreign policy during this period is Jesharaun (1977).
8. Webster (1998), pp. 155–62 and 229–45.
9. Key works on Siam include Brown (1978), Horowitz (2004), Sardesai (1977) and Rajchagool (1995).
10. Tarling (1997), Vol. 2, Pt 1, p. 292.
11. Brown (1978), p. 214.
12. One of the richest areas of inquiry into Thai history has been the examination of how the Kingdom of Siam warded off British and French imperialism by modernizing and centralizing its state in the late nineteenth century. Of special interest are books such as those by Wyatt (1969), Bunnag (1977), Brown (1988) and Winichakul (1997).
13. This is the argument of Iijima (2008).
14. Brown (1988), pp. 118–19.
15. Barton (2002), Drayton (2000), Dunlap (1999), Grove (1995) and Hodge (2007).
16. *Appendix to the Report of the Directors of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation*. There are two histories of the BBTC, both of which were written by amateur historians with connections to the BBTC. The best is Macaulay (1934). This book relies on the private archives of the BBTC, although it does not give citations. Also see Pointon (1964).
17. A full listing of their activities can be found in the only history of the Wallace brothers, Pointon (1974), pp. 4–5.
18. Webster (1998), pp. 209–22.
19. Pointon (1974), p. 22.
20. Metcalfe (2000).
21. Cain and Hopkins (2002).
22. Webster (1988), pp. 229–45.
23. For example, Lord Dufferin, one of the leading diplomats during the French–Siam crisis of 1893–94, had visited the BBTC's elephants in Burma in the 1880s. See Nisbet (1910), p. 24.
24. See 'Connell, Esq., for W. Wallace, Esq., to Officiating Conservator of Forests, British Burmah', 29 October 1863, in *A Selection of Despatches and their Enclosures* (1871), Vol. 1, p. 2. See also London Secret Correspondence of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, Guildhall Library, London, MS. 4062.2.
25. For the reference of a discussion of the economic and political pressures leading to Thibaw's decision, see Myint-U (2001), pp. 163–85.
26. See Tagliacozzo (2004), p. 374.
27. This is the interpretation of Webster (2000).
28. Brown (1988), Bunnag (1977) and Wyatt (1969).
29. Iijima (2008), p. 40.
30. Brailey (1973).
31. Falkus (1989), p. 136.
32. Brailey (1974), p. 443.

33. Ibid., p. 444.
34. Webster (1998), pp. 243–4.
35. See the correspondence related to the Chiengmai Treaty, Chiengmai Treaty 1882–1883, TNA/FO69/95.
36. Brailey (1974), p. 447.
37. Ibid., p. 450.
38. Longhurst (1956), pp. 49–52.
39. Ingram (1971), p. 108.
40. See Brown (1988), pp. 116–19.
41. Macaulay (1934), p. 14, and Brailey (1999), p. 516.
42. Bryce was already well connected. He was the brother of James Bryce, a prominent Liberal politician and writer (Brailey, 1999, p. 516). Bryce became the director of the London and County Bank on his later return to London. See Cassis (1994), p. 275.
43. London Secret Correspondence of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, Guildhall Library, London, MS. 4062.2, p. 19.
44. Teak Supplies and Prospects, 31 December 1886, Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, Secret Correspondence, Guildhall, London, MS. 4062.2. Also see Ingram (1971), p. 106.
45. Macaulay (1934), p. 51.
46. London Secret Correspondence of the Bombay Burmah Trading Corporation, Guildhall Library, London, MS. 4062.2, p. 19.
47. Ibid., p. 32.
48. NA, Messrs Wallace Brothers to the Earl of Rosebery, 19 June 1893, TNA/FO17/1178.
49. NA, Messrs Wallace Brothers to the Earl of Rosebery, 22 June 1893, TNA/FO17/1178.
50. NA, Foreign Office to Messrs Wallace Brothers, 27 June 1893, TNA/FO17/1178.
51. NA, Memorial from the Associated Chambers of Commerce, 1893, TNA/FO17/1186.
52. Saenluang Ratchasomphan, a high-ranking official of the king of Nan, composed a chronicle of Nan's history in 1894 that was published in Thai in 1918 and later translated into English. For the English translation, see *The Nan Chronicle* (1994).
53. NA, Mr de Bunsen to the Marquess of Salisbury, Bangkok, 27 December 1895, TNA/FO69/160. For a more internal discussion among Consular officials in Siam, also see NA, W. R. D. Beckett to T. H. Lyell, 1 November 1896, TNA/FO628/18/245.
54. NA, W. R. D. Beckett to Consular-General, 9 March 1897, TNA/FO628/18/247.
55. Ibid.
56. On the BBTC in Nan, see the chapter, 'Siam', in Macaulay (1934), pp. 51–78.
57. Ian Brown discusses the origins of the RFD from the perspective of the Bangkok monarchy and Siamese state. See Brown (1988), pp. 110–19, and (1992), pp. 1–3.
58. A number of scholars have argued that the Foreign Office wanted to control much of Siam. Two scholars, C. Rajchagool and Banasopit Mekvichai, see Britain's informal empire in Siam as a conscious attempt to exercise political domination. Both of these scholars offer incomplete pictures of

the mechanisms and strategies of British domination because their studies lack archival sources. See Rajchagool (1995) and Mekvichai (1988), p. 207.

59. For a historic analysis relating to the management of the RFD after 1896, see Sunthornswat, (1977).
60. 'Memorandum on the Proposals for the Reform of the Present System of Selecting and Girdling the Trees to be Felled in the Government Forests of British Burmah', by Dr D. Brandis, Calcutta, 28 January 1864, in *A Selection of Despatches* (1871).
61. Satow (2002), p. 162.
62. NA, Phya Khrai Kosa to C. E. W. Stringer Chiengmai, 10 June 1891, TNA/FO628/14/202.
63. The Foreign Office translated the letter between the king and the chief of Chiengmai. See NA, King of Bangkok to Chief of Chengmai, 9 April 1894, in W. R. D. Beckett to G. Grenville, 26 August 1897, TNA/FO628/18/247.
64. NA, Mr de Bunsen to the Earl of Kimberley, 7 December 1894, TNA/FO69/160.
65. For an explicit analysis of this, see NA, W. R. D. Beckett to G. Grenville, 26 August 1897, TNA/FO628/18/247.
66. NA, Mr J. S. Black's Journey in Siam – Consular Courts 1894–95, TNA/FO69/162.
67. Black (1895), p. 5.
68. NA, Mr de Bunsen to Lord Salisbury, 22 July 1895, TNA/FO69/159.
69. Ibid.
70. NA, W. R. D. Beckett to G. Grenville, 28 August 1897, TNA/FO628/14/20.
71. For a Foreign Office letter discussing the decline of the Chiengmai princes because of the loss of their teak leases in the late nineteenth century, see NA, Mr Archer to Lord Salisbury, 22 October 1900, TNA/FO69/209.
72. NA, Mr de Bunsen to Marquess of Salisbury, 24 November 1896, TNA/FO69/169.
73. Ibid.
74. For the expression of the Foreign Office's approval of conservation measures, see NA, Mr de Bunsen to Prince Damrong, 27 November 1896, TNA/FO69/169.
75. See Barton (2002).
76. NA, Mr Paget to Marquess of Lansdowne, 11 March 1905, TNA/FO422/59.
77. Falkus (1989), pp. 144–5.
78. For discussions relating to the end of Britain's dominance in Thailand's teak industry, see NA, Nationalisation of the Teak Industries in Siam, 1952, TNA/FO371/101185; and NA, Teak Concessions in Siam, 1953, TNA/FO371/106912.
79. Webster (1998), pp. 155–62 and 229–45.
80. On 2 February 1835, as quoted in Michie (1900), p. 39.
81. Ridley (1970), pp. 259–60. The British capture of Amoy, Chinhae, Chapu, Ningpo, Wusung and Shanghai gave the British fleet control of most of the east coast of China. The British also took Nanking by sailing up the Yangtze River.
82. Michie (1900), p. 76.
83. King (2004)

84. He wrote, in Chinese, a memorandum for the court titled 'A Bystander's View'.
85. The most exhaustive treatment of Hart and the IMC is Wright (1950), of which pp. 1–8 provide an excellent summary.
86. Osterhammel and Peterson (2003), p. 107, and Wright (1950).
87. Wright (1950), p. 105.
88. Ibid., pp. 108 and 112. Osterhammel (1999), p. 223, quoting Cain and Hopkins (2002), p. 46. See also Michie (1900), p. 40. The British dominated the steam-shipping trade as well as the railway. British investors controlled the Kaiping colliery (Tientsin) by 1900 and the Kailan Mining Administration by 1912, which produced 20 per cent of China's coal. The last gunboat intervention was in July 1930 against the Red Army advancing on Changsha, the capital of Hunan.
89. Darwin (1997), p. 629.
90. Lowe (1981).
91. Osterhammel (1999), p. 148. Also see Osterhammel (1986) and Feuerwerker (1976), p. 1.
92. Osterhammel (1999), p. 149.
93. Ibid., p. 163. See Yen-P'ing (1986b).
94. Osterhammel, (1999), p. 149.
95. Ibid., pp. 148–9.
96. Ibid., p. 162.
97. Referred to in Brauer (1988).
98. As quoted in ibid., pp. 30–1.
99. Fuller (1936), May (1979) and Van Alstyne (1934).
100. Hunt (1983).
101. Hearden (1987), pp. ix, x and 20.
102. Akita and Kagotani (2002), pp. 146–7.
103. Ibid., p. 153.
104. As quoted in ibid., p. 152.
105. Ibid., p. 162.

7 Informal Empire and the Middle East

1. Some of the material in this chapter first appeared in Barton (2010).
2. Landes (1958); Roger Owen's *The Middle East in the World Economy* (1982) is also helpful. Owen argued that trade with Europe transformed the Levant in the nineteenth century and that the needs of the population of the region, coupled with the arrival of merchants, funds and interference from Europe, brought the Middle East under the domination of Europe, particularly Britain. He makes good use of the British Foreign Office reports and a broad base of sources.
3. Kent (1993), p. 27.
4. Schölch (1976).
5. Ibid., p. 773.
6. Ibid., p. 776.
7. Al-Sayyid-Marsot (1999), p. 652.
8. Landes (1958), p. 324.

9. Onley (2009), p. 31.
10. Ibid.
11. J. B. Kelly (1968) argued that an earlier British interest in Persia had faded until French moves in the Levant threatened the route to India.
12. Onley (2007), p. 35.
13. Monroe (1963), p. 15.
14. Karpat (1982) and Owen (1981), p. 42.
15. Minoglou (2002), p. 130. The Greek financial entrepreneurs who played a key role in establishing financial instruments in the Ottoman Empire were themselves absorbed – and shut out – by larger interests, particularly French and British firms.
16. Cecil (1921–32), Vol. 1, p. 302.
17. Ibid.
18. Ibid., p. 313.
19. Ibid., Vol. 2, p. 266.
20. Ibid., p. 239.
21. Ibid.
22. Taylor (1954), p. 253.
23. Cecil (1921–32), Vol. 2, pp. 303–4.
24. Ibid.
25. Ibid., p. 355.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid. See the text of the *Bagdad Railway Convention 1903 in Great Britain* (1911), p. 37.
28. Robinson and Gallagher (1961), p. 88.
29. Malet to Granville, 26 and 28 December 1881, as quoted by Schölch (1976), p. 781.
30. Ibid., pp. 784–5.
31. As quoted in ibid., p. 778; also see Hansard (1882) 4 June, 3rd Series, Vol. 270, Col. 1147.
32. Hopkins (1986). This article was a precursor to his collaborative effort with Cain in the early 1990s that directly challenged the theories of imperialism proffered by Robinson and Gallagher.
33. Ibid., p. 385.
34. Ibid., p. 374.
35. On 12 May 1920, the United States demanded that the Foreign Secretary, Lord Curzon, acknowledge an open door policy of trade for oil in the Middle East. See *Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States, 1920* (1936), pp. 651–5.
36. It is not possible here to go into the exact details of Britain's entry into the First World War, the McMahon–Husayn Correspondence, the Skyes–Picot Agreement or the Balfour Declaration. For further details, see the *McMahon–Husayn Correspondence* (1939); the Sykes–Picot Agreement can be found in Woodward and Butler (1946), Vol. 4, p. 241.
37. Sluglett (1999), p. 419.
38. Ibid., p. 422.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid., p. 425.
41. Balfour-Paul (2001), p. 499.

42. Letter, Hal Saunders to Howard Wiggens, 20 May 1966, Lyndon B. Johnson (LBJ) Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 17, Visitors Folder; Monroe (1963), Robinson (1976) and Balfour-Paul (2001), p. 499. For Rostow's use of development for strategic purposes, see Millikan and Rostow (1999), p. 41, and Rostow (1964), also see Rostow, *View from the Seventh Floor* (1964), pp. 124–31. For how the Kennedy administration approached development, see Rostow (1985), Rusk (1962), p. 259, and Kennedy (1963).
43. For a discussion of Iran's relationship with the USA, the IMF, oil and the USSR (declassified in 2004), see National Intelligence Estimates, 'Prospects for Iran', Director of Central Intelligence, February 1961, pp. 4–8, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Box 6, Iran Folder. For Iran's economic prospects and the chances of a coup that might shift the balance of influence towards the Soviet Union, see National Intelligence Estimates, 'Short-Term Outlook for Iran', Director of Central Intelligence, pp. 1–3, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Box 6, Iran Folder. Iran understood the United States and the United Kingdom as aligned yet competing powers. For a discussion of the Shah's fear that Nasser was plotting to overthrow his regime, see National Intelligence Estimates, 'Iran', Director of Central Intelligence, 20 May 1962, p. 13, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Box 6, Iran Folder; and National Intelligence Estimates, 'The US and Communist Powers in the Middle East 1964–1967', Harold H. Saunders, pp. 9–12, Box 6, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Arab World Folder.
44. Northedge (1984), p. 11.
45. Saville (1993), pp. 25 and 31.
46. For an American discussion of Soviet designs on the Middle East (declassified in 2004), see National Intelligence Estimates, 'The Arab–Israeli Dispute: Current Phase', Director of Central Intelligence, 13 April 1967, pp. 7–8, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Box 6, Middle East Folder. For the security implications of US aid to Jordan, see National Intelligence Estimates, 'Jordan', Director of Central Intelligence, 13 August 1964, pp. 1–8, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Box 6, Jordan Folder. Britain's development initiatives benefited not only from the concern of the United States to contain Soviet expansion, but also from a similar fear of national leaders in the region that the Soviet Union intended to dominate the Middle East. Britain also benefited from rivalry between Arab leaders. See National Intelligence Estimates, 'The Role of Saudi Arabia', Director of Central Intelligence, 8 December 1966, p. 9, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Box 6, Saudi Arabia Folder. This report was declassified in 2004.
47. Kingston (1996), p. 51, also see Wark (1990).
48. Louis points out that Anthony Eden sought to preserve British power in the Middle East by creating a line of defence from the Mediterranean to the Himalayas. See Louis (2006), p. 646. As late as 1966 American intelligence reports suggest that Britain after Suez had a similar strategic position in the region, as adjunct to American power. For a discussion of how Iranian leaders continued to be suspicious of British imperial designs as late as the 1960s, see National Intelligence Estimates, 'Iraq', Director of Central Intelligence, p. 6, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Box 6, Iraq Folder.
49. See Bauer (1971), p. 112, Aldrich (1991), Wark (1990); and Herbert F. Mooney, 'Some Notes on Forestry in Jordan, June 30, 1954', BMEO, p. 1,

formerly the Plant Sciences Library, Oxford University. Kingston makes exactly this point throughout his book, *Britain and the Politics of Modernization in the Middle East* (1996).

50. Salisbury used the phrase, 'A modicum of independence,' to describe the essential control of a region with a facade of self-governance. See Cecil (1921–32), Vol. 2, p. 239. Sir John Shuckburgh used a similar phrase when immediately after the First World War he described the protectorates of the Middle East as an unnecessary 'pantomime'. See Sluglett (1976), p. 31.
51. For a good survey of the history of development see Arndt (1987), Cowen and Shenton (1996) and Latham (2003).
52. Kingston (1996), p. 4.
53. A number of scholars have pioneered the investigation of imperial careering and the intersection of science, technical expertise and imperialism. For the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Gascoigne (1998). For the mid-Victorian period, see Barton (2003). Also see Worboys (1979), Ashton and Stockwell (1996), Harrison (2005) and Hodge (2010).
54. Also see Wark (1990), p. 235.
55. Note on the British Middle East Office, Arnold Overton, Head of BMEO, 4 July 1946, TNA/FO371/6536.
56. Confidential, 17 February 1955, TNA/FO371/1052.
57. Cabinet Distribution from Cairo to Foreign Office, 15 August 1946, TNA/FO371/8052.
58. Anglo-American Relations, 18 June 1946, TNA/FO371/5332; Bevin: Report to the Cabinet, 17 September 1945, CP(45)/174, TNA/CAB129/2; and Middle East Policy, 28 August 1945, CP(45)/130, TNA/CAB129/1.
59. The Development Division within the BMEO had a steadily rising budget between 1947 and 1951 and this remained steady from 1952 to 1954. See The Work of Political Division, BMEO, 16 June 1955, TNA/FO371/1052/12.
60. Report on Statistical Advisor, William F. Crawford, Head of Development Division, BMEO, July 1947, TNA/FO371/6462. For an understanding of how British officials linked development with agriculture, see Hodge (2007).
61. Wark (1990), p. 233.
62. Previously Stewart served as the Agricultural Advisor to the Viceroy of India. He then joined the BMEO staff on 15 November 1946.
63. Sir Herbert Stewart, Agricultural Advisor, Development Division, BMEO, Agriculture in Tripolitania, Notes and Future Developments, 10 March 1947, TNA/FO371/1015/86.
64. Partner (1988), pp. 29–55, Carruthers (1955), pp. 195–212, and Shaw (1996). *Unasylva* (1960 and 1961).
65. For example, Ibrahim Kaibni, Director of the Jerusalem Office of the Transjordan, resisted the appointment of an agricultural assistant 'if he had to relinquish some of his authority', J. C. Eyre to Sir John S. Bennett, 2 April 1954, TNA/FO371/1052/14.
66. Orme Sargent: Minute on the Middle East Office, 1 July 1946, TNA/FO371/6417.
67. Confidential, 23 April 1954, TNA/FO371/1052/14.
68. P. P. Howell, Head of Middle East Development Division, Beirut, to Alan Dudley, Head of Information Policy Department, Foreign Office, London, 4 July 1962, TNA/FO371/2504/72/62.

69. Wark (1990), p. 283.
70. Maitland, Notes on a Tour in Iraq, 19th March–8th April 1948', BMEO, p. 1 (formerly the Plant Sciences Library, Oxford University), and Louis (1984).
71. Louis (2006), p. 733. For a discussion of nationalism and British policy, see Kedourie (1970), pp. 213–35. Albert Hourani provides a good analysis of nationalism during this period in *History of the Arab Peoples* (1991). Also see Khalidi (1991).
72. Louis (2006), p. 754.
73. Gen. Maxwell Taylor to Defense Secretary Robert McNamara, 6 March 1963, *Foreign Relations of the United States, 1961–1963* (*FRUS*), Washington, DC, 1995, Vol. 18, pp. 394–6. See also Petersen (2000), p. 323.
74. Non-Vietnam Files, January–February 1968, Katzenbach: Memorandum for the President, February 1968, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 16.
75. Non-Vietnam Files, January–February 1968, Prime Minister Harold Wilson to President Lyndon B. Johnson, Top Secret, 15 January 1968, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 16.
76. Onley (2007), pp. 2–5, 104–33 and 153–4.
77. Bamberg (1994), pp. 142–73.
78. Dorril (2000), pp. 595–6.
79. This agrees with James Onley's assertion that strategy, not economics, compelled Britain to develop diplomatic relations with the Persian Gulf sheikhdoms up until 1971. See Onley (2007), p. 35, and Palmer (1999), chapters 5 and 6.
80. O'Reilly (2008), p. 180.
81. The Council for Technical Education and Training for Overseas Countries, BMEO, TNA/FO957/243. This council was founded on the BMEO model. The Caribbean Development Division was also based 'on the analogy of the Middle East Development Division', see TNA/FO957/243.

8 The United States and the Imperial Web

1. Mokyr (1976).
2. Lafeber (1963), pp. vii–viii.
3. McMahon (2001).
4. Williams (1959), p. 8.
5. Beloff (1967), pp. 153 and 162.
6. McCormick (1967), pp. 7–8.
7. May (1968).
8. Hofstadter's peculiar take on American expansionism can be found in his book, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics* (1967), pp. 3–40.
9. Smith (1981).
10. In this process he sides with Fieldhouse. To deconstruct dependency theorists he shows the agency of the victim and the partnership between elites that make a simplistic Marxist critique along the lines of Hobson, Lenin and Gunder Frank untenable. A key difference between Smith and other scholars

on informal empire is the emphasis that they place on political rather than economic levers of control while perhaps underestimating the economic power of the metropole.

11. Non-Vietnam Files, January–February 1967, (4) Memo, 6–6d Edward Hamilton, 'Memorandum: Talking Points on HIM [His Imperial Majesty] Visit', 18 January 1967, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 15.
12. Executive Committee Meetings–JFK, Summary Record of NSC Executive Committee Meetings, Vol. 2, December 1962, LBJ Library, Bromley K. Smith Papers, Box 23.
13. Non-Vietnam Files, July–September 1968, Department of State for the Press, 15 August 1968, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 16.
14. Non-Vietnam Files, July–September 1968, Insert A, 15 August 1968, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 16.
15. 563rd National Security Council Meeting, 14 August 1966, Indonesia, LBJ Library, Bromley K. Smith Papers, Box 31.
16. Ibid.
17. In the 1960s that meant outside of South East Asia, Iran, Turkey, Greece, Taiwan and Korea. The total percentage of the military budget of these countries ranged from a high of 77 per cent in Turkey in 1956, to a low of 17 per cent in Iran in 1966. Foreign Aid, September, Secret, Appendix 1, Some Reflections on the Nature and Future of Military Assistance, n.d., LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 16.
18. The work of Stephen Dorril (2000) traces the active interventions by British intelligence after the Second World War.
19. Louis (1978), p. 212.
20. Sanders (2000), p. 4.
21. Ibid.
22. Ibid., p. 7.
23. Sfikas (1992), p. 90.
24. Ibid., p. 71.
25. Ibid.
26. Hugh Dalton, Chancellor of the Exchequer, No. 171, 29 November and 20 December 1946, TNA/FO800/475/Middle East/46/22.
27. Ibid.
28. Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine, Truman Library Public Papers, 12 March 1947. Also see Merrill (2006).
29. Special Message to the Congress on Greece and Turkey: The Truman Doctrine, Truman Library Public Papers, 12 March 1947.
30. *The Department of State Bulletin* (1957).
31. Foreign Aid [1 of 3]: For the President from Walt Rostow, 9 July 1968, p. 2, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 16.
32. Non-Vietnam Files, Rostow: Integrated Program of US Support to Nation Building/Attachment, October–December 1968, (6), 15 December 1968, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 16, pp. 1–2.

33. Change in Name, National Security Council Action Memorandum 302/2, 28 December 1955, LBJ Library, National Security Files, National Security Action Memorandums, Box 4, p. 2.
34. Non-Vietnam Files, Rostow: Integrated Program of US Support to Nation Building/Attachment, October–December 1968, (6), 15 December 1968, LBJ Library, National Security Files, Walt Rostow Files, Box 16, Attachment.
35. Ibid.
36. Latin American Aid, Robert M. Sayre, Memorandum for Mr Bundy, 19 October 1964, LBJ Library, National Security Files, National Security Action Memorandums, 1964, Box 4.
37. Ferguson (2002).
38. Ibid., p. 368.
39. Maier (2006).
40. Porter (2006).
41. Maier as quoted in Hopkins (2007), p. 397.
42. Ibid., p. 398.
43. Ibid., p. 400.
44. Ibid.
45. Bobbit (2002).
46. Go (2008), p. 206.
47. Ibid., p. 207.
48. Ibid., p. 208, emphasis in the original.

9 Resistance and the Imperial Network

1. Nietzsche rightly described Herder as an uncomfortable guest of the eighteenth century. See Nietzsche (1966), Vol. 1, p. 924.
2. The best anthology of Herder's work in English is Barnard (1956). F. M. Barnard has also written the best treatment of Herder's ideas on nation, culture, organicism and the *volk*. See Barnard, *Herder's Social and Political Thought* (1965). Helen Liebel-Weckoqicz (1986) argues convincingly that Herder's rejection of a rationalized nation-state was formed from his experience in the Baltics, particularly while living in Riga.
3. 'Johan Gottfried Von Herder', *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 11th edn, Cambridge, 1911, Vol. 13, p. 349.
4. Herder (1877–1913), Vol. 15, p. 323.
5. The community of New Harmony quickly grew and then wilted on the banks of the Wabash River in the Midwestern US. Other utopian ventures include Brook Farm in West Roxbury in Massachusetts, the Social Gospel Commonwealth Colony in Georgia and the Oneida and Koreshan communities, both founded in New York.
6. See LeMelle (1965) and Andrain (1964).
7. Political scientists and public intellectuals on both the left and right of the political spectrum have expressed concern about the closed and monopolistic nature of elites after the Second World War. This is a theme of Harold Perkin in *The Third Revolution* (1996). In relation to the declining intellectual talent in the Ivy League universities, with attendant issues of monopoly,

exclusion and religious prejudice, see Unz (2012). The *New York Times* (2012) in ‘Room for Debate’ repackaged this article at length to focus the discussion on Asian ethnicity. Unz’s original article argued that the Ivy League schools excluded talented applicants from white Christian backgrounds and thereby manipulated the composition of elite formation in the United States, substantially lowering the talent and intellectual ability of the governors of society.

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