The Sociology of Empires, Colonies, and Postcolonialism

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Keywords

Abstract

Sociologists are adding specific disciplinary accents to the burgeoning literature in colonial, imperial, and postcolonial studies. They have been especially keen to add explanatory accounts to the historical literature on empires. Starting in the 1950s, sociologists pioneered the study of colonies as historical formations. Against traditional anthropological approaches, sociologists insisted on studying colonizer and colonized in their dynamic interactions, asking how both groups were being transformed. Like contemporary postcolonial scholars, sociologists began asking in the 1950s how metropoles were being remade by overseas colonialism and colonial immigration. Echoing discussions in the 1950s among sociologists working in the colonies, current discussions of postcolonial sociology question the applicability of Western social scientific concepts and theories to the global South and ask how sociology itself has been shaped by empire. Current sociological research on empires focuses on six sets of causal mechanisms: (1) capitalism; (2) geopolitics, war, and violence; (3) cultural representations and subjectivity; (4) resistance and collaboration by the colonized; (5) institutional dimensions of empires and colonies; and (6) conflict and compromise among colonizers at the heart of colonial states.

INTRODUCTION

For the past four millennia, world history has been largely "an imperial history, a history of empires" (Darwin 2008a, p. 491). Nation-states are a more recent invention. France, for example, became a mere nation-state only in 1962 "when it gave up the last vital element of its imperial structure, Algeria" (Cooper 2005, p. 156). Ostensibly non-imperial nation-states like the United States have been informal empires, as many have argued (e.g. Mann 1986–2012, Vol. 4).

A recent bibliography covering just the British Empire runs to more than 1,000 pages (Porter 2002). Rather than trying to survey this vast ocean of scholarship, the present review focuses on the discipline of sociology. It is possible, as McLennan (2013) suggests, that sociology has something special to add to the study of empires. At the very least, colonialism and empires have something to offer sociology, as suggested by Keller a century ago (Keller 1906). Sociologists cannot avoid empire, even those focused on the immediate present and the territorially domestic. For historical and transnational sociologists, empires and colonies are omnipresent, although they may fade in and out of vision depending on intellectual fashion.

Sociology came late to the study of empire only because it was relatively late to emerge as an academic discipline (Goudsblom & Heilbron 2004). But since Auguste Comte (1851 [1929], pp. 128–34) and Alexis de Tocqueville (2001), sociologists have made important contributions to these discussions. Between a third and half of the academic sociologists working in Britain, France, and their colonies during the 1950s were involved in some form of colonial research (Steinmetz 2013a).[1] Sociologists played a central role in the research on development and underdevelopment that emerged in the wake of decolonization. Sociologists were among the first to carry out comparative historical research on colonies (Balandier 1955, de Dampierre 1967, Hermassi 1972, Wallerstein 1959). The most recent chapter in this story is the emergence of a historical sociology of colonialism and empire (Steinmetz 2013b) and a self-described postcolonial sociology (Magubane 2013, Reuter & Villa 2009, Steinmetz 2006).

In countries like France and Britain, sociologists' amnesia about their discipline's engagement in the colonial empires set in almost immediately at the end of the colonial era, as public opinion and common sense turned against colonialism and empire. If colonialism and empire were mentioned at all in sociological textbooks and encyclopedias in this period, they were usually collapsed into economic imperialism. Current sociological research on empires, colonies, and postcolonialism is therefore emerging without much awareness of sociology's own theoretical and empirical work in this area. This article is therefore an exercise in anamnesia as well as a guide to future research on the subject.

Before proceeding, I need to define a few terms. The study of empires is distributed across many academic disciplines, and it dates back to the Roman Empire, from which our own imperial vocabulary is largely derived. The moment we set foot in this conceptual terrain, we are already at the heart of a set of fierce debates that began in the ancient world.

DEFINITIONS

Empire

Empire is the overarching concept in all discussions of imperialism and colonialism. The noun imperium originally signified the legitimate power of princes and officials to command and punish their subjects (Weber 1921–1922 [1978], pp. 650, 839). The idea of imperium was then "extended by analogy to mean Rome's right to command obedience from the peoples it had subjected" (Lieven 2000, p. 8). During the medieval period, empire successively took on three main meanings in Western Europe:

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[1]For the criteria and historical sources used here for determining membership in the sociology field, see Steinmetz (2009a).

the German idea of *Reich* in the Holy Roman Empire, the Carolingian sense of empire under Charlemagne, and the so-called universal empire of Latin Christendom (Lieven 2000, pp. 13–17). In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the term empire began to be used to refer to large territorial political organizations forged by conquest and to the overseas possessions of a single state (Pagden 2003). France and Britain both referred to their overseas colonial domains as their empires.

In sociology, however, the word empire was used after the 1960s mainly by specialists in ancient or non-Western societies such as Breuer (1987), Eisenstadt (1963), Giddens (1987), Göçek (1987), and Mann (1986–2012). Only a few referred to modern polities as empires (e.g., Nederveen Pieterse 1990).

As defined here, empires are expansive, militarized, and multiethnic political organizations that significantly limit the sovereignty of the peoples and polities they conquer. As Suny (2001, p. 25) writes, an empire is "a particular form of domination or control between two units set apart in a hierarchical, inequitable relationship, . . . in which a metropole dominates a periphery to the disadvantage of the periphery." We can disregard in the current context all definitions of empire that sap it of its core political meaning. At the borders of the empire concept are the ideas of hegemony, great powers, and international influence (for a comparison of hegemonies and empires, see Go 2011, ch. 3).

Imperialism

The word imperialism was first used to denounce Napoleon's military despotism and was then applied to Napoleon III, to other nineteenth-century rulers, and to the entire British Empire (Knox 1998, Spann 1923). In contrast to the word empire, whose connotations were still largely positive in the nineteenth century, imperialism always suggested illegitimacy and hubris. Disregarding metaphorical uses of imperialism we can identify two main analytical definitions that

emerged between 1900 and 1920. Hobson (1902 [1965]) defined imperialism as finance capital's aggressive quest for overseas markets and investments during periods of underconsumption. Schumpeter (1919 [1951], p. 6) countered with a definition of imperialism as the "objectless disposition on the part of a state to unlimited forcible expansion."

My own definition retains the original political resonance of the word imperialism and refuses to equate it with colonialism or capitalism. Imperialism is a strategy of political control over foreign lands that does not necessarily involve conquest, occupation, and durable rule by outside invaders. In this respect, imperialism is "a more comprehensive concept" than colonialism because empires may treat colonies "not just as ends in themselves" but also as pawns in larger "global power games" (Osterhammel 2005, pp. 21–22; Aron 1959 [2006]).

Colony, Colonialism, and Colonization

Colonialism is based on the Latin verb *colere* (to inhabit, till, and cultivate). The words colony and colonization are thus clearly linked to Roman expansion and the figure of the Roman *coloni* (Weber 1891 [2010]). Because of these agrarian origins, colony is often used to designate "a territory occupied by emigrants from a 'mother' country" without any additional suggestion of conquest and foreign rule (Gonzalez Casanova 1965, p. 28). Colonization refers then to migration followed by settlement and transformation of the landscape. But this cluster of meanings does not correspond to the modern understanding of colonial rule or colonialism.

In contemporary usage, colonialism means the conquest of a foreign people followed by the creation of an organization controlled by members of the conquering polity and suited to rule over the conquered territory's indigenous population. Colonialism is thus a narrower concept than imperialism. Colonialism always involves the arrogation of sovereignty by a conquering power, whose rule is presented as permanent, or as being limited only by a distant or vaguely

defined end point. Of course, sovereignty is not an either/or condition but a gradational one, as the history of colonialism amply demonstrates, with its varying degrees of indirectness and informality and its insistent euphemization of foreign rule. The actual life span of a colony is less important to the definition of colonialism than the rulers' understanding of the time frame. Most colonies delegate some aspects of everyday ruling to indigenous agents, which moderates the foreign sovereignty criterion to some degree.

The second characteristic of colonialism is that the conquered population is configured as inferior to their occupiers in legal, administrative, social, cultural, and/or biological terms (Burawoy 1974, p. 526). Chatterjee (1993) calls this the rule of difference. All colonial states divide their subjects into different tribal or racial groups in an effort to enhance control, but at the same time the colonized are subsumed by the colonial state under a single, overarching category. As Suny (2001, p. 32) writes, "At the base of European self-understandings lay the underlying problem of constructing and reproducing the categories of the colonized and the colonizer, keeping them distinct, one inferior to the other."

Some colonies have shown greater flexibility with regard to the rule of difference, but this rule was generally more rigid during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries than in previous centuries. The Spanish *encomienda* system in the Americas carried "the obligation to convert the people on it" (Cooper 2004, p. 264), which narrowed the cultural distance between colonizer and colonized. Colonialism in early modern French America was oriented toward the possibility of full assimilation of Native Americans, with their conversion to "Catholicism and French civility" (Belmessous 2013, p. 13). Japanese colonialism was oriented toward pan-Asianism, which undercut the severity of the colonial rule of difference (Duara 2003, p. 99–122; Chae 2013; Park 2005). All modern Western colonies crafted and policed the rule of difference "continuously and vigilantly" (Stoler & Cooper 1997, p. 5), however, which pre-

vented most colonized subjects from attaining legal rights and status equal to their rulers. Even the supposedly assimilationist French Empire placed limits on genuine assimilation. In a historical study of the training of Algerian teachers in French Algeria inspired by Bourdieu's sociology of education, Colonna (1975, pp. 168–69) showed that the colonial power placed a specific limit on the path to acculturation, one that defined the quality of scholarly excellence as being neither too close to the culture of origin nor too close to the culture of the West.

The State in the Context of Empires

The last third of the twentieth century saw a kind of conceptual transubstantiation in the social sciences whereby polities that historically had been called empires were recategorized as states. This happened as the great colonial empires were disappearing and nation-states were becoming the default unit of organization for the international system.

States need to be integrated at several points into the study of empires. First, most empires have a state at their center (Schmitt 1941 [1991], p. 67). An empire can be pictured as a solar system in which the colonized peripheries circulate around the metropolitan core, with gravitational pull holding them in their orbits and binding them to one another.[2] The planets in this imperial solar system also all possess states of their own. These peripheral states take two distinct forms. The first is the colonial state, an administrative apparatus for governing a colony that sometimes enjoys considerable autonomy from its metropole (Blackburn 1988, pp. 79–85; Han 2006; Laidlaw 2005; Steinmetz 2007). The second is the indirectly ruled native state.

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[2] The hub and spokes model of empire, in which colonies are imaged as equidistant from the hub, is in this respect less apt (Motyl 2001) than the solar system model. The hub and spokes model is also rigid and static, whereas in a solar system the gravitational pull of rotating planets may dynamically affect other planets' orbits and tides. In an empire construed as a solar system, the different planets all have their "own life, their own summers and winters," rather than being fully determined by the central sun (Naumann 1915 [1964], p. 664).

Colonizers usually rely on some version of indirect rule (Fields 1985, Gowda 2013). The indirectness here refers to the fact that the native state is ruled by the colonizing power partly by proxy through indigenous elites. States figure as the historical origins and end points of empires, with nation-states acquiring and losing empires or empires devolving into mere states.

States often do similar things as empires (or empire-states; see Burbank & Cooper 2010, Kumar 2013, Steinmetz 2005). This is partly because states and empires are subject to similar external constraints, including pressures from geopolitics and resource dependency. The key difference between empires and modern nation-states (or nationalizing states; Brubaker 1995) concerns the treatment of territorial natives. Soon after annexing a new territory, an expanding nation-state typically begins to dismantle legal, administrative, and citizenship differences between the conquerors and the conquered. Empires preserve and reinforce such differences; modern colonial empires make these differences as rigid and asymmetrical as possible. The main exceptions to the universalizing thrust of the nation-state were located at Europe's peripheries (Bartlett 1993) and in the so-called internal colony, discussed below.

Postcolonialism and Postimperialism

Postcolonialism is an investigation into the ways colonialism continues to shape former colonies and metropoles and a new set of approaches to understanding historical colonialism. Postcolonialism is not so much a periodizing term as a stance of "theoretical resistance to the mystifying amnesia of the colonial aftermath" (Gandhi 1998, p. 4). Postcolonial studies is an unusual field in that it traces its lineage not just to academic theorists but also to writers of fiction and poetry. Indeed, several sociologists of colonialism (Georges Balandier, Michel Leiris, Orlando Patterson, and Leopold von Wiese) first published colonial novels and then switched to a more social scientific style. Two forerunners of postcolonial theory, Albert Memmi and Édouard Glissant, continued to write fiction while practicing social science. Postcolonial studies is one of the rare scientific domains in which the social sciences have continued to interact with the humanities even during the twenty-first century.[3]

Postimperial theory understands itself as coming into existence in a historical dusk period in which an empire's decline has not yet been accompanied by a lessening of its cultural power. Indeed, imperial ideologies assume exaggerated forms in these transitional moments. Postimperial theory suggests that the imperiality of US culture is becoming more visible in the waning days of the American Empire. Hell & Steinmetz (2014) tease out the imperial subtext of the postmodern urbanism celebrated in *Learning from Las Vegas* (Venturi et al. 1972) and trace the evolution of Las Vegas's self-presentation from the self-confident parody of the Roman and European empires in the 1940s–1960s period to today's hulking display of a fortified military empire in decline.

IMPERIAL STRATEGIES AND CONFIGURATIONS OF EMPIRE

Empires usually combine different strategies of domination, resulting in hybrid political formations (Steinmetz 2005). We can distinguish four basic imperial strategies: (1) premodern land-based empire; (2) modern territorial empire; (3) colonialism; and (4) informal, nonterritorial imperialism. The eighteenth-century Austrian Empire is an example of a combined strategy: The Austrian Netherlands were treated in an imperialist manner as a pawn in games of territorial barter, whereas Hungary was occupied and governed like a colony.

Historians study transitions from one imperial configuration to another and

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[3] This comment is not intended to downplay the differences between postcolonial theory in the humanities and the social sciences, however, as Leela Gandhi pointed out in comments at a panel on Steinmetz (2013b) at the annual meeting of the Social Science History Association in Chicago, November 2013. See Reuter & Villa (2010).

rearrangements in the relative importance of different strategies within a given political constellation. An example of predominantly colonial strategies evolving into more imperialist approaches is the nineteenth-century British shift to an "imperialism of free trade" (Gallagher & Robinson 1953). The 1880s then saw a movement back to formal colonialism by Britain and other European powers.

Another imperial pattern involves chartered companies. Such companies were created by investors for trade, exploration, and exploitation throughout the medieval and modern eras. The most interesting cases, such as the Dutch Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (VOC) and the British East India Company, are chartered companies charged with the political and repressive functions of government. The former company went bankrupt in 1800 and ceded power to the Dutch state, and the latter ceded power to the Crown in 1858 (Lardinois 2008). Between 1858 and the 1960s, most colonial states were administered by agents of European states, but some chartered companies were created in this period. Concession companies held political power in German New Guinea and the Marshall Islands from the 1880s until 1900. The Belgian state assumed full administrative power over the Congo only in 1908. The chartered Société Nouvelle des Sultanats du Haut-Oubangui exercised de facto control over the governor general in the French colony of Oubangui-Chari before World War I (de Dampierre 1967, pp. 494–505). Sovereignty over Southern Rhodesia passed from Cecil Rhodes's British South Africa Company to a semi-independent settler government in 1923. The last holdout was Portuguese Mozambique, where private concession companies controlled almost half of the territory until 1942. These are cases in which economic exploitation merges with political rule.

Premodern Territorial Empires

Ancient empires typically combined restless expansion and militarism with efforts to stabilize conquests, often by promising peace and prosperity in exchange for subjection and tribute (Mann 1986–2012, Vol. 1; Pagden 2003). One result of the endless waves of conquest and incorporation was that empires were often multi-civilizational and polytheistic, preserving cultural difference (Burbank & Cooper 2010; for a contrary view of ancient empires see Giddens 1987, p. 81). Weber (1891 [2010]) focuses on the decline and fall of the Roman Empire and compares modern and ancient empires. Sociologists Breuer (1987), Eberhard (1965), Eisenstadt (1963), Freyer (1948), Giddens (1987), and Goldstone & Haldon (2009) analyze ancient empires in a broadly Weberian vein. According to Mann (1986–2012, Vol. 1) traditional empires were higher-order concatenations of economic, cultural, military, and political sources of power.

Modern Continental Empires

Modern territorial empires are also oriented toward the conflicting imperatives of relentless expansion and stabilization of acquired lands. This pattern characterized the westward extension of the Chinese Empire (Perdue 2005), the eastward expansion of the Russian Empire (Lieven 2000), and the creation of the United States through the incursion of European empires into the continent from several different directions (Taylor 2001) and the conquest of indigenous Americans. The Nazi *Anschluss* of Austria and Sudetenland in 1938 marked the beginning of a new continental empire in Central Europe (Mazower 2008). Nazi sociologists such as Mühlmann (1944) contributed to plans to govern and selectively Germanize specific populations in the eastern occupied territories. Modern continental empires differ from nationalizing states in their emphasis on cultural difference rather than cultural uniformity.[4] Thus, ethnic Germans in Nazi-occupied

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[4]On evolving US state strategies of differentiating Native Americans from US citizens see most recently Fixico (2012), a study of the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA). The BIA could be fruitfully compared to European colonial offices and colonial states, whose main activity was also ruling over conquered

Eastern Europe were subjected to something like a colonial rule of difference (Lower 2005, pp. 162–79).

Colonial Empires

Colonial empires reveal fissiparous tendencies and corresponding variation in the native policies deployed in different times and places. Officials struggled continuously with one another in their efforts to dominate the administrative field of each colonial state and each metropolitan colonial office (Steinmetz 2008b, 2013c). Such divisions account for some of the intercolonial variation in policy. These divisions at the heart of colonial administrations explode any premise of a singular "official mind of imperialism" or a unified official mind inside any particular colony (Robinson & Gallagher 1961).

At the same time these internecine struggles were predicated on certain common values and assumptions, which included the shared recognition of the very existence of colonial states and empires. Shared recognition of empires as totalities was based on various practices: visits to outposts of the empires by monarchs and presidents; the training of civil servants bound for posts in different parts of a given empire in the same classes at the Parisian *École coloniale* or in the classes for colonial cadets at Oxford and Cambridge; colonial career paths that circumnavigated the globe; and imperial navies, whose travels limned the contours of empires. Colonial empires existed in the hearts and minds of the metropolitan populations despite their ignorance of the details of empires (Ward 2001). There is increasing evidence that the British Empire was situated at the very core of British self-understandings and traditional social structures and that loss of the Empire had a huge domestic impact. European colonial exhibitions typically presented miniaturized versions of

each country's colonial empire (Geppert 2010). For example, more than two million visitors to the 1896 Berlin Trade Exhibition walked through a landscape consisting of native villages from each German colony, staffed by indigenous people from those colonies (Steinmetz 1993). Similar exhibitions were held in Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and elsewhere. Colonial empires were also represented as integrated wholes in popular culture via novels, films, monuments, museums, toys, playing cards, and schoolroom curricula (Steinmetz & Hell 2006, Trepsdorf 2006).

Early Modern Versus Modern Colonialism

The distinction between early modern and modern colonialism corresponds to Europe's geopolitical pivot in the eighteenth century from the Western Hemisphere to Africa and Asia as the main focus of imperial attention, as well as the gradual shift away from colonial slavery to exploitation of African labor in Africa (Blackburn 1997). In British history, this caesura is known as the "imperial meridian" and as the transition from the first to the second Empire (Bayly 1989, Darwin 2008b). The distinction also captures a gradual move away from mercantile colonialism and chartered company rule and toward a convergence on the Spanish model of direct metropolitan state governance over colonies. At the same time, there was also a reduction in the large-scale resettlement of foreign nationals in colonies, characteristic of early modern Spanish colonialism (Elliott 2006). Most of the colonies founded after the mid-nineteenth century were located in regions deemed unsuitable for European habitation or had other barriers to settlement. Gann (1984, pp. 498, 502) points to two other types of colony that emerged in the modern era: the strategic colony acquired for its "real or assumed military and naval value," and colonies acquired largely as "a matter of prestige" such as the Japanese and to some extent the German and Italian colonial empires.

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indigenous populations. The role of local BIA agents was roughly the same as that of the British district commissioner, French *commandant du cercle*, or German *Bezirksamtmann* in the colonies.

Settler Colonies

In a settler colony, the indigenous population is replaced by or subordinated to settlers and is treated as unequal in legal and administrative terms. Wolfe (2006) argues that settler colonies are inherently "eliminationist": They seek to break down indigenous culture by seizing native land and by assimilation, expulsion, or the creation of remote reservations. Settlers often imagine the space they are colonizing as a *Raum ohne Volk* (land without people) and invoke some version of the *terra nullius* doctrine—the idea that lands (and by implication economic resources) that are not being effectively utilized by the indigenous population "could legitimately be expropriated and developed by a superior invading nation" (Lieven 2000, p. 4). More bluntly, settler colonies embrace the notion that "the European had a right which transcended the claim of the natives to occupy and exploit" their own resources (Frazier 1955, p. 84). Where there are no native inhabitants at all (whether due to expulsion or extermination), we should speak of settler colonization rather than colonialism.

The very possibility of colonial settlement and the size of the settler population are determined by colonial officials, who sometimes ban settlement altogether. Even in colonies where settlers outnumber other colonizers, the settlers are not necessarily dominant politically (Elkins & Pedersen 2005, p. 5).

There is enormous variation in the long-term trajectory of settler colonies. Colonial rule and decolonization are usually more violent in settler than in non-settler colonies. Indigenous subjects may be isolated in hinterlands, a pattern that exacerbates their economic underdevelopment (Zureik 1979, p. 29). In Australia, New Zealand, Palestine, and the Americas, settlers gained independence from their metropolitan rulers and assumed power over the inherited state apparatuses. In sub-Saharan Africa, settler colonies ended through "settler collective exodus" (Veracini 2010, p. 106) and the political marginalization of whites.

Internal Colonialism

Some former settler colonies contain internal colonies—indigenous populations subjected to the states that surround them. The sociologist and Indian policy reformer Collier (1945, p. 265) analyzed US government treatment of Indians as "the longest 'colonial' record of the modern world." Gonzalez Casanova (1965, p. 27) describes the shift from Spaniards to "creoles" as the rulers of indigenous Mexicans as a movement from colonialism to internal colonialism. Hechter (1975) analyzes English incorporation of the Celtic fringe as internal colonialism. Adam (1971) describes South Africa after 1910 [when power was transferred to the white minority alone (Wolpe 1975, p. 231)] as internal colonialism. For Zureik (1979), Palestinians inside Israel are an internal colony, although as Adam & Moodley (2005, p. 1) note, there is an ambiguous point at which settlers themselves "become indigenous." Snipp (1986) introduces the concept of internal colonialism to the study of Native Americans. Oddly, scientific use of the concept of internal colonialism has been almost entirely limited to sociology.

The idea of internal colonialism seems to make a useful distinction only where the ancestors of current ruling elites arrived as colonial conquerors and where the internal colony is descended from the natives conquered by the original colonizers. But while autochthony is a defining feature of an internal colony, territorial concentration is not. Native Americans have been forced off their land and scattered throughout the United States for centuries, but their current reservations are still internal colonies.

Informal, Nonterritorial Empires

The type of empire that became dominant over the course of the twentieth century is informal and nonterritorial (Mann 1986–2012, Vol. 4). International control is exercised through military, economic, and other means, but there is no conquest or permanent seizure of political sovereignty and therefore no possibility of systematically enforcing a rule of

difference. Informal empire is more coercive than hegemony. An early example of informal imperialism is the pre-1918 *Mitteleuropa* project for German dominion over Central Europe (Naumann 1915 [1964]). Soon after World War I, sociologists began discussing a new, highly "elastic" form of American imperialism in Latin America that "leaves its victims with the appearance of political autonomy and is satisfied with a minimal amount of political violence" (Salz 1923, p. 569; see also Gerth & Mills 1953, p. 205). Schmitt (1941 [1991], 1950 [2003]) based his concept of an imperial "Greater Space" (*Großraum*) or *nomos* on the American Monroe Doctrine, which he understood as a system for imposing US interests on Western Hemispheric states without ruling them directly. Aron (1945, 1973) discussed the United States as an empire starting at the end of World War II. The dominion status of Canada, Australia, and other settler colonies represented a "half-way house between colonial and independent status" until the mid-twentieth century, when the Crown's power over the Commonwealth countries was radically reduced (McIntyre 1999, p. 194). Technologies of informal imperialism include manipulated market exchanges, extraterritoriality arrangements, black sites and extraordinary rendition, drone strikes, and unequal military alliances and status of forces agreements. US geopolitical primacy is grounded in a global grid of hundreds of semipermanent military bases and an ever-changing array of temporary military installations.

Decolonization, Imperial Decline, and the Afterlife of Empires

One of "our culture's standard literary forms," Tilly (1997, p. 1) writes, is "the dirge for a fallen empire." Empire builders have been obsessed with imperial decline since the fall of Rome. They have concocted countless explanations for the seemingly inevitable downfall and recipes for warding it off (Hell 2009). Until recently, however, social scientists have not paid as much attention to the unmaking of empires

as to their acquisition, growth, and governance (Howe 1993). Some analysts attribute the downfall of colonial empires to the Western education of a "minority of young men" (Aron 1957, pp. 11.04-12) who led nationalist independence movements. Others point to warfare, the post–World War II downturn in European economies, the Cold War and US and Soviet competition for African and Asian loyalties, empire's economic "overstretch" (Kennedy 1989, Schäffle 1887), and a growing opposition to empire in metropolitan publics and government circles.

World system theory (Wallerstein 1986) offers a systematic model of historical patterns of colonial conquest and decolonization and of the nineteenth-century shift from slavery-based colonial economies to the European core's exploitation of Africans and African resources within Africa. During nonhegemonic periods, the core splinters and each rival power claims particular chunks of the global periphery, with which they set up exclusive, protected relations of trade and resource extraction (Bergesen & Schoenberg 1980). When the core is hegemonized, the dominant power enforces free trade and eschews protectionism and colonialism; decolonization ensues. The empirical problem with this account is that important colonies like Algeria and India were annexed during the phase of noncolonial British hegemony. Furthermore, the United States actively supported European efforts to hold on to their colonies almost everywhere except in South Asia until decolonization was a foregone conclusion (Louis & Robinson 1993). The Portuguese empire remained intact until 1974, and settler colonies in Southern and Central Africa lasted even longer. Nonetheless, world system theory provides the most complete answer yet to the problem of explaining global waves of colonial activity.

Theories of the decline of land empires are more diffuse. Ancient authors followed Augustine's model of imperial wealth leading to luxury, decadence, and weakness (Demandt 1997, p. 225). Historians have offered hundreds of reasons for the decline of the Roman Empire.

The bulk of Eisenstadt's (1963) *The Political Systems of Empires* concerns the perpetuation of ancient empires, not their decline, but elsewhere, Eisenstadt (1967, pp. 2–4) suggests that different premodern empires declined due to the same cluster of determinants, including growth of bureaucratic and rentier classes, decline in commerce and areas under cultivation, and a breakdown of political alliances between rulers and traditional elites. Most current work on the end of empires is multicausal; as Tilly (1997, p. 5) remarks, "If empires have over four millennia been so…various, we are unlikely to derive from their histories any constants" other than trivial ones.

What about the afterlife of empires? As noted, this is a central preoccupation of postcolonial studies. This problem is also addressed, in very different ways, by neo-Marxist theories of dependency and neocolonialism. Hermassi (1978, p. 250) notes in this journal that "there is general agreement among theoreticians that the structural defects of peripheral economies and societies result from their positions and roles within the capitalist world system." More recently, Kohli (2004) and Mahoney (2010) find that colonial state structures and policies have a lasting impact on postcolonial economic growth. The aftereffects of colonial slavery continue to shape politics and inequalities in the Americas and Caribbean. If colonial massacres do not have an easily measurable impact on postcolonial economic performance, their legacies persist in less quantifiable ways. In Namibia and Botswana, for example, the Herero continue to struggle politically and psychologically with the aftereffects of a genocidal war that ended over a century ago (Durham 1993). In Samoa, some institutions introduced by the German colonizers, such as the Land and Titles Court, have been maintained in the postcolonial state (Steinmetz 2008b).

THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EMPIRE

This section is organized around causal mechanisms that have been proposed to explain various aspects of empires. These theoretical approaches cluster around six different causal mechanisms or sets of mechanisms: (1) capitalism; (2) geopolitics, war, and violence; (3) cultural representations and subjectivity; (4) resistance and collaboration by the colonized; (5) institutional dimensions of empires and colonies; and (6) conflict and compromise among colonial officials.

Marxist Theories of Empire

Marx was not centrally concerned with imperialism, but his work contains three relevant arguments. First, Marx (1867 [1976], p. 929) insisted that capitalism could not be adequately analyzed on a national scale given the "international character of the capitalist regime." Subsequent Marxists have followed Lenin (1917 [1939]) in using the word imperialism to describe capitalist globalization (Hardt & Negri 2000) or capitalism at its most advanced stage. Second, Marx actually praised imperialism as a modernizing force, a necessary evil. He criticized British colonialism in India but described its long-term impact as positive because it would unify the Indian state and revolutionize the country's moribund economic, social, and political structures (Marx 1969). Third, Marx adumbrated a theory of settler colonization. The fact that the "bulk of the soil" in a "free colony" like the United States is "still public property," because it has been expropriated en bloc from its indigenous owners, means that "every settler" could "turn part of it into his private property and his individual means of production," thereby resisting his own "(re)proletarianization" (Marx 1867 [1976], pp. 934, 938).

Marx's view of European colonialism as a necessary evil was rejected by most liberals and leftists (but see Warren 1980). For Hobson (1902 [1965]) and Luxemburg (1913 [2003]), imperialism's impact was as devastating for the colonies as it was for metropolitan democratic politics. Hilferding and Lenin equated imperialism with the transformation of competitive capitalism into monopolistic finance capital. Later Marxists reformulated these ideas

as the "development of underdevelopment," economic "dependency," "unequal development," and "unequal exchange" (Bortoluci & Jansen 2013, pp. 211–13). Rey's (1973) model of the articulation of modes of production argued that colonialism reconstitutes and preserves precapitalist modes of production, thereby lowering the cost of labor power (see also Alavi 1975, Wolpe 1980). Wallerstein (1986) developed world system theory partly to explain the failures of postcolonial African development. This theory describes the global periphery as being condemned to produce raw materials for processing by the core. Wallerstein also tried to explain the movement away from slavery in the nineteenth century and the repeated waves of colonialism and decolonization in world history (see above). For Hardt & Negri (2000, p. xii), empire is no longer centered on a conquest state but on a new global form of sovereignty "composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule."

Several imperial analysts have focused on Marx's theory of primitive accumulation. Luxemburg (1913 [2003], p. 350) argued that "each new colonial expansion is accompanied, as a matter of course, by a relentless battle of capital against the social and economic ties of the natives, who are also forcibly robbed of their means of production and labor power." For Lazreg (1976, p. 53), French colonialism in Algeria led to the "primitive accumulation" of land "to make a settlement colony out of an already populated area." Harvey (2003) argues that "accumulation by dispossession" is not simply a historical starting point for capitalism but a recurring process that often takes an imperialist form.

Geopolitics, Warfare, and Violence

A second set of approaches understands empires as bathed in blood. These ideas were orthodox among the first generation of central European sociologists. Gumplowicz argued that warfare is the "compelling" force in human history, and that the "racial struggle for domination" was "the pivot of all events in the historical pro-

cess" (Gumplowicz 1883, pp. 194, 218). The culmination of historical processes of "almost uninterrupted warfare" (Gumplowicz 1883, p. 176) was the creation of states and empires. Schäffle (1887, p. 148) agreed that states pursue expansion for the sake of "self-preservation." Ratzel (1923) grounded his analysis in a supposed general "natural" law, arguing that all *Völker* are driven to expand and conquer. This tendency is strengthened, not weakened, in modernity: "The more nations become conscious of global spatial relations, the more they engage in the struggle for space" (Ratzel 1923, p. 266). Michels explained Italy's turn toward colonialism in North Africa in terms of population pressure, national pride, and the natural "instinct for political expansion" in the "struggle for space" (Michels 1912, p. 470; 1932, pp. 708–10). Weber (1921–1922 [1978]) struck a balance between the opposing poles of the ongoing debate, as usual, and attributed imperialism to archaic status elements, geopolitical and military sources, and capitalism. Oppenheimer (1926, pp. 789–790) also combined the militaristic theory of the state with a Marxist account of imperialism as capitalism's quest for foreign markets and surplus profits from the "proletarians of foreign countries." Much later, Tilly (1990) followed the lead of Weber and Oppenheimer in combining the Gumplowiczian and Marxist causal mechanisms. Mann (1986–2012) added ideological power to this mix and divided Gumplowiczian power into two distinct forms, military and political.

Sociologists often minimize the role of violence in social life by scaling it down to the interpersonal or micro level or turning it into a dependent variable. The subfield of imperial studies wards off any temptation toward an ontological pacification of social life. According to King (1990) and von Trotha (1994), the military barracks is the original unit of the colonial state. Settler colonialism, many argue, engenders exterminationist dynamics. Violence is at the heart of Schmitt's (1941 [1991], 1950 [2003]) theory of the state, empires, *Großräume* (greater spaces), *nomos*, and land appropriations. Colonial wars, Schmitt argues,

fall under a completely different juridical and cultural framework than the regular, bracketed wars inside the amity lines or the *jus publicum Europaeum* of early modern international law (Schmitt 1950 [2003]). The geopolitical rule of difference unleashed massive violence against non-Europeans. Even the Hague and Geneva conventions were understood as not applying to imperial warfare. Colonial wars regularly relied on declarations of martial law, emergencies, and states of exception (Füredi 1994). The end of the European *nomos*, according to Schmitt (1962b [2007]), unleashed this same violence inside Europe. Modern imperial warfare pioneered the use of weapons and practices that were subsequently introduced into the metropoles (Graham 2011): machine guns, dum dum bullets, aerial bombing, special riot policing methods, and waterboarding. Imperial wars differ from bracketed wars in terms of the prevalence of indigenous, guerrilla, and irregular combatants; the escalation of violence; and the asymmetry of power (Schmitt 1962a). The distinction between warfare inside and outside the amity lines has largely disappeared since 1914.

Culture and Empire

Colonial and imperial studies have long focused on cultural representations and forms of subjectivity. The culture of colonizers has been analyzed as a result of relations with other colonizers and with the colonized and the colonial situation. Bartlett (1993, p. 313) concludes his study of medieval colonialism in Europe by observing that "the mental habits and institutions of European racism and colonialism were born in the medieval world: the conquerors of Mexico know the problem of the Mudejars." Seed (1995) analyzes the differences and reciprocal influences among Spanish, Portuguese, French, Dutch, and English imperial ideologies and their role in ceremonies of possession of colonies. Du Bois (1945 [1975]) sees modern racism as both product and determinant of colonialism.

Another body of research traces the impact on colonial rule of the colonizers' culture. His-

torians of Spanish and English colonialism in the Americas have argued that Catholicism and Protestantism provided the main cultural frame of reference for colonizers and the source of their visions of the Americas as a sacred space (Elliott 2006). Blackburn (1997, p. 22) notes that colonial planters in the Americas "liked to distinguish different African peoples, to whom real or imagined skills and temperaments were attributed," and the "mixed and mulatto populations were elaborately classified"; along with an overarching distinction between "good and bad natives," these ideas informed slave owners' practices. Streets (2004) reconstructs the images of Sikhs, Gurkhas, and Highlanders in British military thought and shows how they shaped imperial practice. Adams (2005) traces the effects of distinctive understandings of the family on the policies of Dutch colonial chartered companies.

Others have followed Said's (1978, p. 117) suggestive claim that "colonies were created" "from travelers' tales," asking about the causal impact of precolonial representations on colonial conquest and governance. Burke (1972, pp. 193–94) demonstrates that French "Berber policy" in colonial Morocco was shaped by "romantic stereotypes about Algerian Kabyle society," which led to policies aimed at "preserving" Berber "from Arabization and Islamicization." Steinmetz (2002, 2007) shows that precolonial European ethnographic representations of the colonized provided the raw materials for all native policies in German colonies in Africa, Asia, and China, even if these tales were less uniform than Said suggested and their impact on policy was mediated by the colonial state field (see below). Goh (2007) shows something similar for the colonial states in British Malaya and the US Philippines. Wilson (2011, p. 1438) demonstrates that the differing English systems for administering Indians in Madras and Bengal were based on two different visions of Indians as, respectively, "essentially different from the British" and "fundamentally similar to the British," and these visions shaped differing systems of revenue extraction. Researchers have also examined

the ways missionary societies and their specific cultures contributed to colonial hegemony, fueled anticolonial nationalism (Comaroff & Comaroff 1991, Leenhardt 1902 [1976]), or contributed to the strength of democracy after independence (Woodberry 2012).

Even more attention has been paid to colonialism's cultural impact on the colonized. Since the 1930s, social scientists have argued that colonized peoples selectively appropriated and rejected different parts of the colonizing culture. Herskovits (1941, pp. 184–85) showed that the mixing of European and African traditions was a "fundamental...mechanism in the acculturative process undergone by New World Negroes," but he replaced the word "syncretism" with "reinterpretation," defined as "cultural borrowing" that permits "a people to retain the inner meanings of traditionally sanctioned modes of behavior while adopting new outer institutional forms" (Herskovits & Herskovits 1947 [1964], p. vi).

Mauss (1934 [1969], pp. 353–54), who taught all of the leading French colonial ethnologists and sociologists during the interwar period, agreed with Herskovits that "colonialism gives birth to new societies" and "here, as in the case of *métissage*, this opens up an immense field of observations." Mauss's students studied the varieties of cultural transformations resulting from colonialism. Leenhardt (1953, p. 213) interprets indigenous New Caledonian culture as syncretic and argued that colonial transculturation ran in both directions between Europeans and Melanesians. Maunier (1949, pp. 124, 535), author of *The Sociology of Colonies*, discusses the reciprocal imitation between the colonizer and the colonized, developing a theory of colonial *mixité* as entailing the "conversion of the conqueror by the conquered" and its opposite. Another student of Mauss, Devereux, opens his famous study of an individual Plains Indian by asking, "[W]hat phase of Indian culture comes into contact, and clashes, with what particular segment of American culture" and by analyzing the syndrome of "fictitious superiority over the Indian" among "frontier Whites" (Devereux 1951, pp. 8, 10). Bastide (1960) de-velops a dynamic "sociology of the interpenetration of civilisations," arguing that indigenous culture accepted some aspects of European culture and resisted others and that the study of "counter-acculturation" (Bastide 1948, p. 4) was the proper terrain of sociology in contrast to ethnology. Soustelle (1943, p. 117) compares the Lacandon Indians, a Mayan group that had remained relatively "untouched and uninfluenced by the Europeans," with the Mexican Otomi Indians, who "were not so much renouncing their old beliefs as incorporating them into a new," syncretic culture (Soustelle 1971, p. 137). Balandier & Mercier (1952, pp. 212, 131) explain that the Lebou people of Senegal "filtered and measured" the "outside influences" coming from other cultures, including the colonial state, playing "a game" of "conservation and innovation." Bourdieu's sociological career begins in the same late colonial cultural context studied by other mid-century colonial social scientists. Bourdieu is interested in understanding how the colonized respond to the colonial environment either by identification and adjustment to its demands or by resistance and refusal.[5] Parallel lines of discussion occurred among British colonial sociologists. For Worsley (1957), cargo cults represent symbolic rejections of colonialism. Mitchell (1956, p. 12) argues that Africans on the Rhodesian Copper Belt used European signifiers as attempts "to cross insurmountable barriers, as it were, in fantasy."

Psychoanalysis has sometimes been criticized as a colonial practice (Brickman 2003), but this is misleading. First, Freud's arguments about the "primitive" drives at the heart of modern civilization were anathema to colonial racists, as was his belief in universal psychic structures. Second, practicing analysts in

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[5] Mead (2013) develops a convincing argument for overall continuity in Bourdieu's theoretical problematic starting with his earliest Algerian work. Specifically, Bourdieu is concerned to develop a theory of habitus as generated through selective identification with (rather than passive imitation of) parts of the social environment and as conferring a deep practical social knowledge that allows agents to position themselves in social space and to respond to novel situations.

colonial settings were often highly critical of colonialism (e.g., Devereux 1951, Fanon 1952 [1967]). Third, as a powerful theory of affect and the embodiment of social structures, psychoanalysis is well suited for understanding the unconscious sources of the hyperbolic racism, sadism, and even "fascist temptation" (Memmi 1957 [1967], p. 62) associated with colonizers' activity. Steinmetz (2007) deploys Lacanian concepts to argue that colonizers formed imaginary identifications across the colonizer-colonized boundary and that these identifications sometimes shaped policy making. Psychoanalysis can shed light on the self-doubt and psychopathologies that plague colonizers and colonized (Fanon 1952 [1967], Mannoni 1950 [1956], Nandy 1983, Sachs 1937), and on the ambivalence and fragility of colonial domination per se (Bhabha 1994).

Influence of the Colonized on Colonial Rule: Resistance and Collaboration

A large literature, overlapping with that discussed in the preceding section, focuses on resistance, collaboration, and other practices of the colonized insofar as they shape and are shaped by empire. Sociologist Montagne (1936) contrasts the varying ability of different indigenous peoples to resist the onslaught of colonization. Balandier's (1955) *Sociologie actuelle de l'Afrique noire* traces the differing responses to colonialism by the Gabonese Fang and French Congolese Bakongo to a mix of internal and European-induced factors. The Fang had become unemployed conquerors lacking central leadership and were less able to resist French incursions. The Bakongo had been involved in the slave trade and were more rooted in their territory, hierarchically organized, and acquainted with other tribes and were better able to resist the French (Balandier 1955, pp. 354–55). de Dampierre (1967) analyzes the transformations that precolonial conquests and French colonialism brought to three Bandia kingdoms in what is now the Central African Republic. He shows that the

Nzakara tried to defend their traditions but ultimately saw their culture destroyed, whereas the culturally similar Vungara dynasties in central and eastern Zandeland succeeded in adapting to the modern colonial world (de Dampierre 1998). British sociologists followed Gluckman (1954) in examining "rituals of rebellion" and cultural appropriations from Europeans (Mitchell 1956). In his London School of Economics sociology dissertation, Patterson (1967) discusses Jamaican slaves' resistance and coping strategies, which included refusal to work, running away, satire, and suicide.

Several North American sociologists have also analyzed resistance by colonized people. Fields (1985, p. 99) traces the evolution of the Watchtower religion into "an ideology of anticolonial revolution" in British Central Africa. Bunker (1983, 1991) demonstrates that Gisu peasants in Uganda used the threat of withdrawal from coffee production in favor of subsistence farming in order to pressure colonial and postcolonial governments. Ramos (2006) studies aboriginal protest in Canada. Goh (2007) and Go (2008a) argue that colonized groups are sometimes able to shape and redirect colonial policies. Fenelon (1998) presents a typology of forms of Native American resistance ranging from conformity to rejection, with intermediate practices such as the nineteenth-century Ghost Dance (see also Hall & Fenelon 2009). A burgeoning literature traces the ways Native Americans and other colonized peoples empowered themselves by emulating Euro-American practices of violent conquest and slave trading (Gallay 2003, Hämäläinen 2008) and took advantage of the conflicts among competing colonial powers and the borderland spaces between empires (Adelman & Aron 1999, Hämäläinen & Truett 2011).

Nationalism has been causally connected to empires. The earliest forms of nationalism emerged in the administrative units of the American colonial states, where "creole functionaries" found their career movements barred laterally and vertically. Indian nationalism was also nurtured by "colonial administrative-market unification, after the Mutiny"

(Anderson 1983, p. 64). The popular and official nationalisms of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Europe arose in a context of competing land empires (Anderson 1983, ch. 6; Charle 2001). Nationalism in newly decolonized states was frequently a reconfiguration of indigenous culture in opposition to foreign rule (Busia 1956, p. 5; Hermassi 1972; Wyrtzen 2013). As Aminzade (2013) shows, however, nationalism was not the only form of political culture used to unify former colonies following independence.

The Cambridge School of historiography depicts Indian and African collaboration as an important source of the colonial conquest. Robinson & Gallagher (1961) argue that "imperialism was the product of pressures within overseas and not within Western societies" (Stokes 1969, p. 287). Robinson's (1986) so-called ex-centric approach to imperial history accounts for patterns of colonial rule and decolonization in terms of actors and interests in the periphery. This approach is now widely seen as being too mechanical and hostile to questions of ideology (Dubow 2009, p. 4), but it had a positive impact in focusing attention on the causal impact of colonized peripheries in shaping the course of empire.

The Subaltern School of historiography, founded by Guha (1997), emerged within the subfield of South Asian history and has intersected since then with postcolonial studies (Prakash 1992). This approach also emphasizes a colony-centric approach to empire, but it rejects the Cambridge School's emphasis on native elites, focusing instead on the subjectivity and action of non-elites. The politics of subaltern colonized people, according to these historians, partially eluded control by both the European colonizers and the native elites. Religion, community, ethnicity, kinship, and territoriality provided resources for assertions of difference and self-determination.

The Organization and Policies of the Colonial State as Causal Powers

A final set of approaches looks at the institutional framework and internal dynamics of colonial states or wider imperial structures as determinants of indigenous practices and the long-term trajectories of empires. In some respects, this turns the object treated as a dependent variable in the previous section into an independent variable. Mitchell (1988, p. xi) makes the general observation that "colonial subjects and their modes of resistance are formed within the organizational terrain of the colonial state." The most important aspect of this organizational state terrain was so-called native policy, that is, government programs oriented toward regulating indigenous life and subjectivity. All colonial rulers tried to divide colonized groups against one another by governing them through distinct legal and practical frameworks. Native policies evolved over time (Evans 1997) and often lurched from one extreme to the other (Steinmetz 2007).

A careful examination of modern colonial history reveals that the vaunted distinction between indirect and direct rule mapped only loosely onto actual governing practice. Indirect and direct rule mark two extreme poles in a multidimensional space of policies in which indirect approaches to colonial statecraft have always been dominant (even in the French empire). Full-scale assimilation for all but a handful of natives was precluded because the legitimacy of foreign sovereignty would be undercut if too many natives were recognized as equal to their conquerors. At the other extreme, governance exclusively by agents of the conquering power is usually impracticable, leading colonial governments to subcontract rule to indigenous actors.

Divide and conquer policies are underwritten by distinct programs of native policy directed at specific tribes or different groups within a given colony. Even while differentiating among indigenous groups, colonial states simultaneously lump all of the colonized into a single, overarching category. The tension between the splitting and lumping approaches threatens every colonial regime. As Van den Berghe (1970, pp. 89–90) argues, overly rigid "color bars" could create "a common interest in radical change" among all strata of the

colonized. Conversely, the proliferation of ethnic differences hindered colonial era development projects (Schuknecht 2010) and postcolonial development (Avineri 1972, Lange 2009) and sowed the seeds of interethnic conflicts (but see Barkey 1997, p. 103).

Autonomy from the metropole is another key dimension of colonial states, even if their autonomy is always partial. Autonomy is a prerequisite for even speaking of colonies as having states. At one extreme, colonies merely execute metropolitan directives. At the opposite extreme are some settler states with few restrictions on their autonomy (Blackburn 1988, p. 70; 1997, p. 9; Fernández-Armesto 1987, p. 182). In other colonies, the governor and local officials rule over settlers and natives alike and are independent enough to implement policies that meet with disapproval in metropolitan ministries and parliaments or contradict metropolitan economic interests. The autonomy theme also informs Eisenstadt's (1963) principal-agent account of traditional empires.

States that are direct descendants of colonies or empires often reproduce inherited administrative procedures, institutional structures, and political categories (Mathur 2010). Some postindependence states perpetuate the basic constitutional and organizational structure of the colonies from which they are descended (Go 2010).

Other structural features of colonial states include their size, level of bureaucratization, capacity to penetrate society, and number and definition of different departments. Some colonial states had just a handful of officials, especially before the 1940s, but by the 1950s many African colonies had thousands of civil servants. Twentieth-century colonial states became ever more bureaucratized (Evans 1997). Colonial state capacity was a function not necessarily of size but of the skillful and sometimes brutal use of resources, as demonstrated by the notorious German military campaign in East Africa during World War I.

Several historical sociologists of empire have drawn on neo-institutionalist theory and network methods. Indeed, social network analysis

first emerged in the work of colonial sociologists John Barnes and J. Clyde Mitchell (Scott 2004, p. 688). Adams (1996) argues that the network structure linking the metropolitan principals of chartered East India companies in Asia during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with their agents in the colonies shaped the degree to which the former could control the latter. Barkey (1994) draws on neo-institutionalism to show how the Ottoman empire-state managed its relations with bandits through deals and patronage. Elsewhere, Barkey (2008) draws on Motyl's (2001) hub-and-spoke model to explain the Ottoman Empire's ability to persist over centuries.

A different approach to empires and colonies is rooted in Bourdieusian field theory (Bourdieu 2013). If the metropolitan state is analyzed as a field or set of fields, as Bourdieu (1999, 2014) suggested, then overseas colonial states may also represent distinct field-like formations, characterized by particular forms of relative autonomy from the metropolitan state and from other fields in the colony, and by competition among colonial state agents for distinctive forms of symbolic capital (Bazenguissa-Ganga 1997, Steinmetz 2008b). Colony and metropole are linked by additional transnational fields, such as scientific or cultural ones (Steinmetz 2013a). Field theory can also be extended to make sense of intra-imperial relations (Go 2008b, Steinmetz 2013c).

Conjunctural Causation in Imperial History

The above section presents causal mechanisms separately, but it should be read with the caveat that the best research on empires (or any other object of social analysis) avoids the temptation to reduce history or social science to single-factor explanations or general laws (Boutroux 1874, Durkheim 1888, Steinmetz 1998). Most current historical research in sociology on colonialism and empire is oriented toward contingent, conjunctural causal interpretations and models. The important precursors of this research have been overlooked in most recent

accounts. Hermassi (1972) focuses on the structure of the colonial elites in North Africa, as well as on the differing lengths of colonial occupation, the character of native policies, and the strength of the precolonial autochthonous state, in making sense of the nationalist movements in French North Africa. Patterson (1967, pp. 275–76) argues that Jamaica's greater record of slave revolts relative to other parts of the colonial New World was due to the high absenteeism of whites and the resulting laxness of control, as well as to the greater ratio of slaves to masters and the large number of "slaves who were born freemen," particularly to those from the "highly developed militaristic" Akan regimes. Other book-length imperial studies by historical sociologists that adhere to a methodology of contingent and conjunctural determination include Adams (2005), Ayala (1999), Barnes (1954), Bunker (1991), Colonna (1975), Decoteau (2013), de Dampierre (1967), Erikson (2014), Evans (1997), Fields (1985), Gilette & Sayad (1976), Go (2008a), Gosselin (2002), Lange (2009), Mahoney (2010), Mann (1986–2012), Masqueray (1983), Mawani (2009), Norton (2012), Park (2005), Reader (1961), Saada (2007 [2012]), Sayad et al. (1991), Steinmetz (2007), and Weber (1891 [2010]). Taken together, these studies provide a solid basis for the further development of the historical sociology of colonialism, empires, and postcolonialism.

ISSUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Sociological work on empires and colonialism is a vibrant subfield that interacts with many other disciplines and continues to generate new theoretical, empirical, and methodological insights and puzzles. Some of the emerging themes in this research domain that have not been discussed thus far include interactions among different European empires (Lindner 2011), imperial urbanism (Clarno 2013, Graham 2011, Hell & Steinmetz 2014, King 1990, Pula 2013, Wright 1991), gender and familial relations and ideologies in imperial settings (Charrad 2001, Saada 2007 [2012], Wang & Adams 2011),

postcolonial culture and literature (Ducournau 2012), imperial violence (Lazreg 2008), and new technologies of geopolitical domination (Bergesen 2013, Mann 2013, Scheppele 2013).

I conclude with a discussion of postcolonial theory, which originated in the humanities and has been gaining ground in sociology since the beginning of the 1990s. After an original reception that often assimilated postcolonialism into existing sociological endeavors such as the study of migration and multiculturalism, four distinct postcolonial approaches have proven to be especially relevant to sociology (see Bortoluci & Jansen 2013). I have already discussed the first two of these. The first asks how empires were shaped by European ethnography, racism, social ontologies, and other aspects of culture. The second plumbs the ambivalences of the colonizer-colonized relationship and the forms of colonial hybridity.

A third strand of postcolonial analysis (Chakrabarty 2000) criticizes Western knowledge as inadequate for the task of understanding (post)colonized non-Western cultures or even as hostile to the very existence of the non-West. In essence, this was the argument of German Romanticism starting with Herder (1784 [1985]) in the eighteenth century and continued by the *Kulturkreis* (cultural circles) school in Central European anthropology a century later (Mancini 1999). This critique of universal categories reached an apotheosis with interwar German neohistoricist sociologists (Steinmetz 2010), some of whom argued that all social scientific categories had to be unique to a single time and place (Freyer 1926). Postcolonial theory is in this respect a radicalized historicism, inspired by Nietzsche (via Foucault; see Said 1978) and Heidegger (see Chakrabarty 2000). Connell (2007) argues for a Southern sociology; Santos (2012) argues against what he calls epistemicide and in favor of an epistemology of the South. Chibber (2013) rejects this line of reasoning, countering that capitalism is indeed universalized and that it can be analyzed using the same concepts in the global South and the global North.

A final strand of postcolonial research is inspired by the insights of Hobson (1902 [1965]) and Luxemburg (1913 [2003] pp. 143–48, 646) concerning imperial "blowback" and Fanon's (1961 [2004], p. 58) claim that "Europe is literally the creation of the Third World." Sociologist de Dampierre (1968) argues for treating "the European, even metropolitan context, in counterpoint with the African context." This idea of a "contrapuntal" reading of the cultural relations between colony and metropole is at the heart of Said's (1993) foundational study of "post-colonial methodology," *Culture and Imperialism*. Colonialism, Hall (1996, p. 246) writes, "was never simply external to the societies of the imperial metropolis" but was "always deeply inscribed within them." Historians have shown how empires reconfigured domestic culture and politics. Postcolonial critics initially focused on metropolitan high culture (Gilroy 1993, Said 1993, Spivak 1988). Sociologists have long studied the reflux of colonial culture back into the metropoles. The 1950s saw a wave of sociological studies of transnational colonial immigrants in Britain (e.g., Banton 1955; Braithwaite 2001; Collins 1951, 1952; Ndem 1956; Silberman & Spice 1950) and an analysis of metropolitan race relations using colonial categories (Rex 1959, p. 124). May & Cohen (1974, pp. 112, 124) explore the "causal interconnection" between racism "in England and the contradictions inherent in the maintenance of the colonial order." Magubane (2004) argues that images of colonized male bodies "provided a stock set of images and metaphors" that were introduced into metropolitan debates about poverty and citizenship. Other sociologists have looked at the afterlives in colonialism as expressed in monuments, visual culture, language, collective memory, melancholia, and nostalgia (Gilroy 2005, Hall & Rose 2006, Steinmetz 2008a, Steinmetz & Hell 2006, Trepsdorf 2006).

Related to the third and fourth strands is a literature that develops a self-critique of sociology itself as a product of empire (Bhambra 2007, Kemple & Mawani 2009, Khalaf 1979, Wallerstein 1991). Alatas (2003), Berque (1962), Bourdieu (1976), and Stavenhagen (1971) call for a decolonization of the discipline (see also Connell 1997, Costas 2007, Gutiérrez Rodríguez et al. 2010, Magubane 2013, Reuter & Villa 2010, Seidman 2013, Steinmetz 2006). To avoid false generalizations, however, it is crucial to conduct more systematic and careful empirical research on the variety of ways sociologists have actually interacted with colonial governments and funding agencies (Steinmetz 2009a, 2013a). After all, empire had just as many opponents among the ranks of early professional sociologists, starting with Hobson (1902 [1965]), Du Bois (1915), and the Anti-Imperialist League, an organization described by Small (1916, p. 775) as a precursor of the American Sociological Society. Bourdieu's work on the relative autonomy of cultural fields, which is inspiring some of the most interesting research in sociology today, is a key resource for preventing postcolonial sociology from falling back into reflectionist or one-sidedly "short circuit" externalist approaches to the sociology of knowledge (Bourdieu et al. 1968 [1991], Camic & Gross 2001).

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

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