

Nationalism and War

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nationalist movements has been a crucial factor in reshaping the structure of the state system over the past two hundred years.

9 Is nationalism the cause or consequence of the end of empire?

Wesley Hiers and Andreas Wimmer

This chapter addresses the question of whether and to what degree nationalism was the cause or the consequence of imperial collapse. We go about this task in four steps. The first three steps use quantitative data that cover most of the world since 1816. In the first step, we simply analyze the temporal relationship between the transition from empire to nation-state and the foundation of nationalist organizations. We find that in the overwhelming majority, the latter precedes the former. We then proceed to a more fine-grained analysis and ask whether these nationalist organizations were perhaps inspired by imperial retreat from other parts of the empire, such that a partial imperial breakdown would further fuel the flames of nationalism elsewhere. No such effect emerges, however. In the third step, we determine whether nationalist mobilization is a cause for the individual transitions from empire to nation-state observed in the history of today's countries and find this to be the case, even if we take a host of other factors into account (including the weakening of empire through wars).

In the fourth and most important step, we go beyond these coarse quantitative analyses and shift to empires as units of analysis, asking to what degree nationalism caused imperial collapse. Discussing the demise of the Ottoman, Habsburg, French, British, Portuguese and Soviet empires, we assess the varying degrees to which nationalist movements contributed to each imperial collapse and the extent to which each transition was due to other, unrelated factors, including the voluntary retreat of empire or the breakdown of empire due to defeat in international wars. We find that in all cases of imperial collapse nationalist movements played an important, and sometimes, crucial role (for the opposing view, see Beitz 1991; Burbank and Cooper 2010; Flint 1983; Sked 2001; Solnick 1998). There is little evidence – with a handful of exceptions such as the Central Asian republics and some African countries – for the idea that imperial breakdown produces nationalist movements or nation-states without a previous agitation for them. We conclude that the rise and global proliferation of

Nationalism and the shift from empire to nation-state: some quantitative evidence

We first evaluate the temporal order of the relationship between nationalism and the dissolution of empires. If nationalism was indeed a significant cause of imperial breakdown, it should emerge beforehand. If imperial breakdown produces nationalist movements, the reverse should hold, at least if we follow traditional Humean notions of causality. While certainly crude, such an analysis can take advantage of a global data set that stretches over long periods of time. The following graph is based on the data set assembled for Wimmer and Feinstein (2010). The data set takes today's countries as units of observation and traces developments in these units back in time to 1816. Thus, the data set has “Bosnia” or “Ivory Coast” as units, though Bosnia and Ivory Coast did not exist as independent states in 1816. This data set contains two variables that are of interest for the present purpose.

The first variable indicates the year of the foundation of the first national organization, defined as a formal institution (rather than a loosely organized movement or the following of a political leader) that claims to represent the population (or a segment thereof) of a territory. In other words, it represents the first year in which the nation of one of today's countries was “imagined” by a significant group of people, to use Anderson's (1991) well-known formulation. This variable is obviously less than ideal for investigating the relationship between nationalism and nation-state formation because it contains no information on the relative political power of nationalists – their organizational strength, internal unity, or external alliance partners – or on the diffusion of nationalist frames of meaning and political demands among the population at large – the degree to which such frames and demands have been adopted and taken for granted by peasants, merchants, townspeople, army officers, clergymen, and so forth (see Hroch 2000 [1969]). On the other hand, information on the year of the foundation of a national organization can be traced very precisely and for all territories of the world. Investigating whether the shift to national modes of imagining community – independent of its political power and degree of diffusion – precedes or follows imperial breakdown represents a first step that we then will complement with a more refined analysis of the shift in the balance of power between nationalists and the old regime that opens the path toward independent nation-statehood.

The second variable of interest is the year of the transition from empire to nation-state. More precisely, we coded the year of adoption of a constitution that stipulated a nationally defined group of equal citizens as the sovereign in the name of which the state should be ruled – in contrast to rule in the name of God, dynastic succession, and the like. This second variable thus conforms to the point in time when an empire had lost control over a territory and national sovereignty was achieved. Given that the following analysis focuses on territories that were once controlled by empires, we are less concerned with the more gradual transitions to nation-statehood such as in the case of Britain or Sweden, which obviously do not conform as well to an event-year coding. In the overwhelming majority of former imperial domains, the transition to nation-statehood took the form of a political rupture – such as a declaration of independence, or the assembly of a constitutional convention – that can be located clearly in the flow of calendar time. Note also that the units of observation in this analysis are territories, not polities, and that we code the mode of political control (imperial, nation-state, etc.) for each of them separately. The British Empire (a polity) is thus composed of territories ruled as a nation-state (Britain) and as imperial dependencies (eg. Ghana).¹

Figure 9.1 relates these two moments in history to each other. It is based on data for 135 of today's countries that were ever part of an empire, thus excluding countries such as Switzerland, Japan, Afghanistan, or Thailand. It also does not contain information on small states such as the island states in the Caribbean (eg. Saint Lucia) or Pacific (Samoa). On the x axis, we plot the years before or after the transition out of empire has been made. The year 0 on this axis thus refers to different points in chronological time: 1991 for Bosnia, but 1832 for Belgium. On the y axis the percentage of territories that had already developed a national organization is shown. The results are straightforward: the overwhelming majority of territories developed nationalism before the dissolution of empire and their transition to national sovereignty. The exceptions are Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Panama, Bolivia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Albania. In relation to the Central American republics, this is because the national movements that did indeed exist before the dissolution of the Central American Republic were largely informal and consisted of the followers of various *caudillos*, rather than well-defined organizations with formal membership and leadership structures. The same goes for the former Ottoman domains in Europe.

¹ For more detail on data and definitions, see the online appendix to Wimmer and Min 2006.

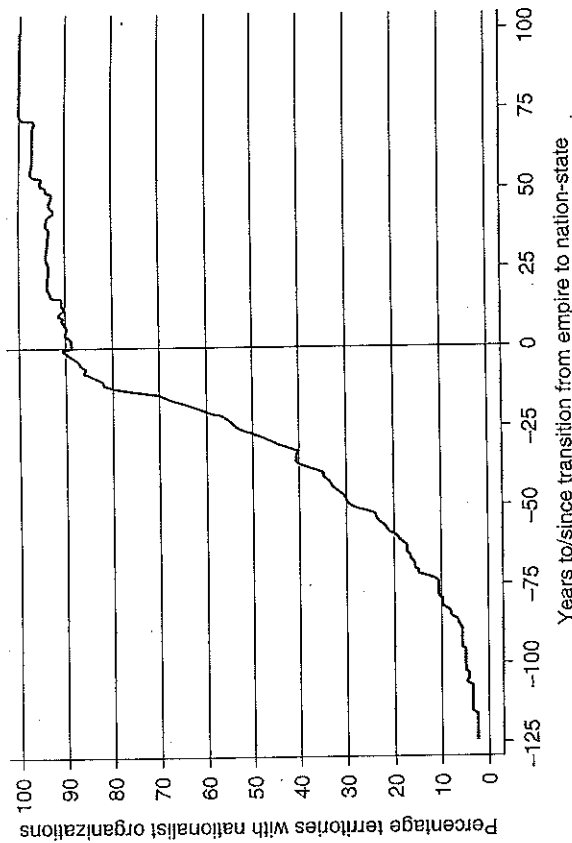


Figure 9.1 Timing of nationalism and the transition to the nation-state for 135 of today's countries, 1816–2005

Is it possible, however, that these national organizations did not appear independently of one other, but rather emerged in response to the success of nationalism in one part of the empire (where “success” means the end of imperial rule and the establishment of an independent nation-state), which then inspired provincial elites elsewhere in the empire to adopt the national template themselves? In this diffusionist version of the empire-to-nationalism argument, imperial breakdown in one part of the empire produces nationalism in other parts of the empire. Rather than a cause of imperial breakdown, nationalism is at least in part its consequence. We evaluate this argument with slightly more advanced statistical techniques.

In Table 9.1, the foundation of a national organization is the dichotomous dependent variable (0 if none was founded in a particular territory during a particular year, 1 if the first organization was indeed founded). We use logistic regression, i.e. we evaluate whether increasing the values of independent variables makes the foundation of a national organization more likely. The analysis includes a series of key variables that may account for the emergence of organized nationalism. While a full account of the rise of nationalism is beyond the scope and focus of this chapter, we need to take these other political forces into account when assessing the role of partial imperial breakdowns. These other variables are indeed

Table 9.1 *Explaining the foundation of national organizations, 1816–2005 (logit analysis)*

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4
% of territories in empire that are already nation-states	-0.01 (0.012)			
Total no. of territories in empire that are already nation-states		-0.05 (0.036)		
No. of nation-states created in the empire during past 5 years			-0.04 (0.087)	
No. of nation-states created in the empire during past 10 years				-0.16 (0.090)
No. of nationalist wars of liberation in the empire in previous year	0.52** (0.132)	0.54** (0.128)	0.51** (0.132)	0.58** (0.124)
Size of the largest ethnic group in country (1996)	1.00* (0.416)	1.01* (0.411)	0.99* (0.412)	1.02* (0.407)
% of adult population that is literate	0.02** (0.005)	0.02** (0.005)	0.02** (0.005)	0.02** (0.005)
No. of national organizations founded among neighbors in past 5 years	0.50** (0.181)	0.47* (0.182)	0.50** (0.181)	0.46** (0.179)
Time controls (natural cubic splines) and size of the territory	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Number of observations	12,004	12,004	12,004	12,004
Number of territories	124	124	124	124

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

significantly associated with the emergence of nationalism, as Table 9.1 shows: the size of the largest ethnic group in the country (which according to Anthony Smith [1986] should make it easier to transform existing ethnic memories into modern nationalist doctrines), literacy rates (which relate to Anderson's [1991] theory of nationalism as a product of the rise of literacy in vernacular languages), and regional diffusion effects (nationalism in one territory inspiring nationalism in neighboring territories). We also add three control variables: two for the passing of chronological time and one for the geographic size of a territory.

The imperial-collapse-causes-nationalism argument is evaluated with four different variables: In Model 1, we measure the percentage of imperial territories that have already transitioned to the nation-state. In Model 2, it is the absolute number of such territories. In Models 3 and 4, we evaluate the effects of the number of nation-state creations within an

imperial domain over the past five or ten years respectively, thus moving to a more dynamic analysis. Nevertheless, however we code partial imperial collapse, there is no statistically significant association with the likelihood of the foundation of a national organization in a territory. We conclude that there is no evidence for a partial-imperial-breakdown argument, at least not on the level of these coarse statistical analyses.

We do find, however, that the number of nationalist wars of liberation fought in the empire significantly affects the likelihood that a national organization is founded. It seems that independent of the outcome – whether these wars of liberation succeed in establishing new nation-states – they inspire nationalists in other parts of the empire. This, however, represents a diffusion of nationalism effect, not a partial imperial breakdown effect. The same goes for the number of nationalisms founded in neighboring territories, which also significantly affects the likelihood of nationalism's emergence in a given territory. Nationalism thus spreads among neighbors and also within empires that experience wars of national liberation widely publicized and followed in the entire imperial domain.

In the third step of analysis, we seek to answer the question of whether nationalism was indeed a force that propelled the transition from empire to nation-state on individual territories. Can we show that nationalism was responsible for a successful breakaway from empire? Or was it the case that although it preceded imperial retreat, as shown above, nationalism was largely irrelevant for the process of nation-state formation itself? Some of our preceding work (Wimmer and Feinstein 2010) answered this question as part of a global analysis of all transitions to nation-statehood. Here, we limit our purview again to territories that had ever been under imperial rule, and we offer some more fine-grained analysis of the role of nationalism in this process. In the following statistical analysis, the dependent variable is whether a territory shifted from empire to nation-state in a given year. We test three possible causal effects of nationalism on the transition from empire to nation-state, one direct and two indirect.

The direct effect is two-pronged, encompassing both the emergence and the increasing strength of nationalism. In order to test for a direct effect, we can evaluate whether the temporal sequence uncovered in Figure 9.1 is causally relevant when assessed within the framework of a multivariate analysis that also takes other factors into account: does the emergence and increasing strength of nationalism still explain nation-state formation? The first part of this conjecture refers to a simple temporal sequence. If a territory already saw the formation of national organizations (expressed by a simple, dichotomous variable of whether or not this was the case), nation-state formation should be more likely to follow. A slightly more demanding, second part of this analysis

hypothesizes that the likelihood of transitioning out of empire depends on the strength of nationalism. As discussed above, we do not have reliable and traceable data on the political appeal and power of nationalist movements. Collecting such data for the entire world would represent a formidable task. For the time being, we assume that nationalists who had more time to mobilize the population and organize followers should be politically more powerful – assuming a monotonic increase in the strength of nationalism over time. We measure the duration/strength of nationalist mobilization with a simple year count since the establishment of the first national organization, which should increase the likelihood of a transition to the nation-state. Since we also include a “dummy” variable (coded 0 or 1) relating to the presence or absence of national organizations, this year count variable is independent of and in addition to the effect that the mere presence or absence of nationalism has on the likelihood of nation-state creation. It is also independent of the mere passage of chronological time, which is again captured by adding time control variables to the model.

These two variables (emergence and duration) together relate to a direct effect of nationalism on the transition from empire to nation-state. We can also envision two indirect effects: the consequences of nationalism and nation-state formation taking place in *other* parts of the empire and therefore not directly linked to the nationalist struggle on a specific territory. The first of these indirect effects refers to the role of war in the transition from empire to nation-state. Are nationalist wars of liberation in other parts of the empire, which as we saw above inspired the creation of nationalist organizations across an imperial domain, also a relevant factor that helps explain when a territory manages to break away from imperial rule and become a sovereign nation-state? Do such wars fought by other nationalists absorb the military and political energy of the imperial center enough to make it easier to escape imperial rule and successfully declare national sovereignty? Or do we find evidence supporting the realist view that the transition to nation-statehood is a consequence of imperial breakdown in the wake of great power wars that are unrelated to nationalism? We evaluate these two hypotheses with two count variables, one relating to ongoing nationalist wars of liberation fought in other parts of the empire and the other to all non-nationalist wars in the imperial domain.

The second indirect effect occurs when nation-states are created in other parts of the empire. This weakens the center by making the imperial project appear less feasible and by reducing the relative power of the empire as a whole, such that nationalists can more easily get rid of what they portray as the imperial yoke. We try to capture this second indirect role of nationalism

in the creation of nation-states by measuring the number of previous nation-state formations within the same imperial domain over the past five years (other time windows produce very similar results).

As in the previous analysis, we include other control variables that according to our previous research also affect the likelihood of nation-state creation. For the present context, these additional factors are less theoretically interesting; we include them for control purposes only. First, a weak international standing of the imperial center, measured by its share of global military and economic power, will make a transition from empire to nation-state more likely. Second, the previous creation of nation-states in the neighborhood (but outside of the imperial domain) will spur nation-state creation on a territory, for a variety of possible reasons. Finally, wars fought on a territory itself, whether related to the nationalist project or not, will again weaken the grip of the imperial center and make transitioning into nation-statehood easier.² Table 9.2 presents the results.

Table 9.2 shows that the likelihood of nation-state creation depends not only on the existence of national organizations on a territory (as already suggested by Figure 9.1), but also on the duration of nationalist mobilization, which we interpret as a rough proxy for the strength of nationalist mobilizations. Besides this direct and unequivocal effect of nationalism on the transition from empire to nation-state, Table 9.2 also shows that the two indirect effects discussed above are at work: nationalist wars of independence fought in other parts of the empire increase the probability of nation-state creation, and the more territories that have broken away from the empire to form sovereign nation-states, the more likely it is that remaining territories are undergoing this transition as well. Nationalist mobilization in other parts of the empire, whether in the form of an ongoing war of “national liberation” or in the form of a successful project of nation-state creation, thus indirectly enhances the prospects of further nation-state creation.

There is thus considerable evidence for the causal role of nationalism in bringing about the nation-state, both directly and indirectly. The results reported in Table 9.2, however, also support a “great power war” argument of nation-state creation: non-nationalist wars fought in the empire also significantly increase the chances of nation-state creation. As additional analysis shows, these results are mostly (but not exclusively) brought about by World War I and the collapse of the Ottoman

² Previous research (Wimmer and Feinstein 2010) has shown that none of the well-known modernization arguments are supported by quantitative analysis: neither industrialization (proxied by railroad length), nor mass literacy in vernacular languages (proxied by adult literacy rates), nor the shift from indirect to direct rule (proxied by government expenditures per capita) affect the likelihood of nation-state creation in significant ways.

Table 9.2 *The transition from empire to nation-state, 1816–2005*
(logit analysis)

Existence of a national organization on the territory	1.06** (0.355)
Years since the foundation of first national organization in the territory	0.01* (0.003)
No. of nation-states created in last 5 years within empire	0.12** (0.035)
No. of nationalist wars of independence fought on other territories of the empire	0.25** (0.068)
No. of non-nationalist wars fought on other territories of the empire	0.30** (0.077)
No. of nation-states created in past 5 years in the neighborhood	0.54** (0.130)
Center's share of global military and economic power	-3.28* (1.506)
No. of wars fought on the territory	0.47* (0.189)
Time controls (cubic splines) and Continental dummies	Yes
Number of observations	15,469
Number of territories	127

Notes: Robust standard errors in parentheses. ** $p < 0.01$, * $p < 0.05$

and Habsburg empires. We thus conclude that while important, great power wars are neither the sole nor the most important drivers of the process of nation-state formation. Nationalist movements, wars of liberation, and the weakening of empire through preceding nationalist breakaways play a crucial role in the transition from empire to nation-state.

Nationalism and imperial collapse: assessing the historical evidence

The preceding analysis helps to rule out that nationalism is the consequence of imperial breakdown. If this were true, nationalism would historically develop *after* such breakdown or it would at least be the consequence of imperial retreat in other parts of the empire. We further demonstrated that the duration of nationalist mobilization and agitation helps to explain the successful breakaway from empire, and that the weakening of empire by previous nation-state formations or nationalist wars of liberation in other parts of the empire further promote the creation of nation-states.

However, it may still be that nationalism is only a minor force in the collapse of the overall imperial structure. Nationalism might profit, as shown above, from the weakening of empire brought about by other political forces, such as the great power wars lost by empires or the nationalist wars of liberation fought elsewhere in the empire. But does nationalism play a role in the final demise of empire itself? Or is this imperial breakdown entirely due either to military defeat in great power wars or to the abandonment of the imperial project by its center – not under the pressure of nationalist movements, but because of geopolitical reasons that made holding on to empire unattractive? To evaluate this argument, we now shift the analysis away from the question of what makes nation-state formation more likely on a particular territory and toward an assessment of the causes of imperial breakdown: how important have nationalist movements been for the collapse of empire? Obviously enough, the units of analysis for answering this question need to be empires, not their individual dependencies as in the previous analysis. Statistical tools are therefore less suited to answer this question, since the number of empires is too small to allow for meaningful quantitative analysis. In what follows, we therefore proceed through qualitative historical analysis and answer this question for each of the major empires separately. For the sake of space, we leave out the Spanish Empire as well as the smaller Dutch, Japanese, Italian, Belgian, and German colonial empires.

The Habsburg Empire

The role of nationalism in the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire during World War I has been sharply contested. As Mason observes, “[t]he nationality question stands at the center of the historical controversy over the causes of the downfall of the Habsburg Monarchy” (1997: 88). According to Himka, for several decades leading up to and including World War I, “the nationality problem dominated, transformed, and contributed to the destruction of the Empire,” an interpretation that has many adherents in the literature (Himka 1992: 80; see also Jaszi 1961; Kann 1977; Okey 2001; Stone 1966; Taylor 1965; Wank 1997a; Wank 1997b; Zeman 1961).

Other scholars, however, offer a mostly war-centric view of the empire's collapse. Sked (2001) argues that after some problems linked to ethnic nationalism in the middle decades of the nineteenth century, the empire recovered and was stable by the eve of World War I. Many nation-states emerged from the empire's collapse, but it was the war, not nationalism, that caused this collapse, according to Sked. Burbank

and Cooper agree and observe that “[t]he different ‘nations’ within the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1914 did not take war as an opportunity to separate themselves” (2010: 363–64). In general, even the most radical within the empire did not advocate independence: “Surprisingly few of even the most fervent nationalists ... favored a formal dissolution of their joint community into its ethnic components, until the course of World War I induced them to espouse such a policy” (Rusinow 1992: 254). This is a point illustrated by Roshwald’s (2001) discussion of the Czechs, who ultimately did play a key role in the Habsburg dissolution, but who did not display any overt nationalist agenda until 1917–18. Indeed, a coalition of the main Czech political parties rejected the Allies’ January 1917 call for Czech national liberation. It was only after the Russian tsar’s overthrow and US entry into the war in March/April of that year that the Czech party coalition shifted its position, first demanding self-government and then secession by 1918. Thus, in this geopolitical, “realist” interpretation, ethno-national identity’s role in bringing down the empire was limited to the latter part of the war, a war that itself contributed to the politicization of ethnicity (Roshwald 2001: 90).

However, this great power war-centered view underestimates the role of ethnopolitics and nationalism in the empire’s demise for the following three reasons. First, the great power war-centered view of the empire’s demise indicates that World War I brought down the empire and sparked nationalism because the Allies strategically encouraged nationalist agitation. This argument obscures the degree to which, until World War I, the geopolitics of Europe acted as a stabilizer of the Habsburg Empire, including by suppressing the secessionist inclinations among its diverse populations. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was part of Europe’s precarious balance of power. It acted as a buffer between East and West, and unlike the leaders of the Ottoman Empire, the Habsburg monarchy was Christian. Thus, any secessionist move within the empire would have meant staring down the barrel of not one gun – that of the formidable Habsburg army – but, at a minimum, two (that of the Germans also). Nationalists in the Ottoman Balkans had the blessings and aid of major European powers when they sought independence from the Ottoman Empire, but no such powerful allies were available to nationalists within the Habsburgs’ domain. Rather than being the major geopolitical development of World War I that brought down a stable empire, therefore, it was geopolitics that for decades sustained an otherwise unstable empire (Bridge 1990; Kann 1977; Wank 1967). As will become clearer below, these ethno-national tensions were the main reason for the empire’s instability. In this context, then, nationalism was a relevant force well

before the war, but the nationalists were quite rationally non-secessionist. The Czech leader Thomas Masaryk explained his reformist, non-revolutionary approach just one year before the outbreak of the war that would prove him wrong: “[B]ecause I cannot indulge in dreams of its [the Habsburg Empire’s] collapse and know that whether good or bad, it will continue, I am most deeply concerned that we should make something of this Austria” (quoted in Wank 1997b: 46).

To be sure, the above affirms that geopolitics were indeed crucial to the demise of the Habsburg Empire: as of the second decade of the twentieth century, nationalists alone could not have brought down the empire. But World War I in no sense created the empire’s nationality problem – the second omission in the realist, great power war-centric school of thought. In fact, to treat World War I and the empire’s nationality problem as altogether distinct is to ignore the intimate connection between them. The stability of the empire was foundering on growing separatism among its Slavic population, which itself was being promoted by the irredentist nationalism of Serbia. As noted by Mason, “after 1900 the growth of the South Slav movement made the nationality problem a foreign-policy question, which was only resolved by war in 1914” (Mason 1997: 62).

The driving factor behind the empire’s decision to go to war with Serbia was that it “had failed to solve its internal problems,” at the center of which was the Southern Slav question (Mason 1997: 69; see also Beller 2006; Himka 1992; Kann 1977; Mann 1993; Chapter 21; Okey 2001; Rusinow 1992; Stone 1966; Taylor 1965; Wank 1967). The German ambassador to the empire understood this well. He described the Habsburg elites thus: “They see with astonishment and anguish the sudden swelling of the Slav wave and on all lips is fluttering the anxious question, what will happen to Austria?” (quoted in Jászi 1961: 427). The ambassador himself was not optimistic, as the empire’s internal structure did not seem fit to deliver what was required: “great wisdom and energy of the central government to maintain the centrifugal forces of the strongly developing Slav peoples ...” (quoted in Jászi 1961: 421–22). In this crucial respect, “the war was not an accident, of which the collapse of the Habsburg Empire was an unfortunate by-product; rather it was a symptom of the systemic crisis of the imperial structure” (Wank 1997c: 109).

Thus, while it was indeed World War I that caused the collapse of the Habsburg Empire, the empire’s ethno-national problems were central to the process leading to its demise. This is the second reason why an entirely geopolitical interpretation of the empire’s collapse is misleading. This point’s relevance becomes all the more clear in light of the third one, which concerns how the long-term ethnic structure of the empire

precluded a peaceful solution to the problems posed by the peripheral nationalism of the Slavic population. The Southern Slavs of the early twentieth century did not represent the Habsburg Empire's first major ethno-national problem; the Magyars of Hungary did. Out of war and conflict came the Compromise of 1867 (the *Ausgleich*), which accorded Hungary and thereby the Magyars considerable autonomy and prestige within the empire as a formally equal kingdom with its own parliament. Magyar nationalism had not reached beyond the nobility before 1844, but its reach became broader by the time of the Compromise, and it would become broader still (Jászi 1961; Sugar 1967). After the Compromise, "[t]he rulers of Hungary ... sought to create a nation-state on the Western European model – a state for the Magyar (Hungarian) nation" (Rusinow 1992: 255). These efforts included a full array of assimilation policies – Magyars were not quite 50 percent of the Hungarian population. Over time, "an ideology of independence" increasingly gained hold (Jászi 1961: 364). In the early years of the twentieth century, the head of Hungary's parliament, Count Tisza, could be found referring to the Austrian premier as a "distinguished foreigner," and the minister of public education (Count Apponyi) could be found approving a historical textbook "in which the Habsburg dynasty was portrayed as a foreign conqueror" (Jászi 1961: 364). The general relevance of such statements and policies came through during Hungary's constitutional crisis of 1905–06, which was sparked by the election of a coalition that denied the constitutionality of the 1867 compromise and demanded still greater autonomy within the empire and a more thoroughgoing adoption of Magyarization policies than what already prevailed in Hungary (Sugar 1981).

Thus, for at least the last half-century of the Habsburg Empire, a major portion of it was nationalizing within the imperial bosom. But the significance of Magyar nationalism goes well beyond this point. The power within the empire that the Magyars gained in 1867 by virtue of their own mobilization precluded this famously "multinational" empire from solving future ethno-national problems. Federation within the Austrian half of the empire was the most frequently considered reform to address such problems, but "[a]ny Habsburg federation needed Magyar cooperation and this was never fully given" because Magyars did not want to undermine their own privileged position within the empire (Sugar 1967: 112). It was a similar situation with the South Slavs in the lead-up to World War I. South Slav politics underwent a revolution in 1905, when Serb and Croat leaders throughout the monarchy allied to push for South Slav autonomy within the Habsburg realm (Beller 2006: 180). This autonomist push within the empire was bolstered as Serbia's power grew outside the imperial boundaries. After the Habsburg Empire was

caught "framing South Slav leaders" for treason "with forged documents" in the infamous trials of 1909–10, and after Serbia made territorial gains in the 1912–13 Balkan Wars, Habsburg concerns about Serbia's increasing attraction to the empire's South Slav population grew to the point of demanding action (Beller 2006: 182). Yet, the earlier way in which the Habsburgs dealt with Magyar separatism precluded an effective response to the growing South Slav problem. Rusinow succinctly summarizes the long-term ethno-national problems created by the original ethno-national solution: "The *Ausgleich* was an answer to the Magyar question that left other pieces of the Empire's national question (including even the German one) unanswered and in fact harder to resolve. Later attempts to extend this kind of solution to other nations or clusters of nations – as in the idea of 'Triatism' in place of Dualism to accommodate the South Slavs – foundered on Magyar opposition" (Rusinow 1992: 251; see also Beller 2006: 142–47). Even as the war looked increasingly hopeless for the Habsburg Empire, and therefore just as maximal unity was required for its survival, Hungary's leader, Tisza, took a tour of the South Slav lands and "banged the table to tell the regional politicians they would never get Triatism" – thereby adamantly confirming "the propaganda of the exiled Slavs and Romanians about the unreformability of the old empire" (Okey 2001: 392). In short, because of the power of Magyar nationalists, the Habsburg Empire did not have the option of peacefully managing the Slavic movement. Its powers of co-optation sapped by the earlier compromise with the Magyars, the empire instead rode its anxieties about this peripheral nationalism into a perilous war, and, as Kann so memorably put it, "committed suicide from fear of death" (Kann 1977: 519).

In sum, the Habsburg Empire pushed into a war that led to its collapse because of a growing ethno-national problem with the South Slavs. It was unable to solve this through a devolution of power, in part because of its earlier method of solving the Magyar question along ethno-national lines with the Compromise of 1867. The rise of peripheral nationalism, irresolvable due to the empire's ethnic structure, thus led the empire into a disastrous war that eventually produced its collapse.

The Ottoman Empire

Compared to the Habsburg Empire, nationalism played a smaller role in the Ottoman collapse. With the help of European powers, nationalist secession eroded the strength of the empire over time, in line with the

quantitative argument made above. This eventually contributed to the Ottoman Empire's loss of the war. Nationalism was also crucial for how specific territories – mostly the European ones – gained independence from the empire, again in line with the above analysis. But in the end, it was World War I, and not nationalism, that eviscerated the empire, in contrast to the Habsburg case.

While scholars debate the stability of the Habsburg Empire on the eve of World War I, there is considerable agreement about its counterpart: if the Ottoman Empire was a prize fighter, then it had been getting pummeled for fourteen rounds before meeting the Great War in the final round. The Ottoman Empire lost a large amount of its territory in the century before the war, much but not all of the loss due to nationalist secession. In North Africa, the Ottomans ceded large tracts to the British, French, and, after their 1911 war over modern-day Libya, to the Italians. Ottoman Europe also was lost to a string of secessionist and interstate wars. The Greeks gained independence after an eleven-year war of national liberation that ended in 1832. Serbians, Montenegrins, and Romanian nationalists engaged in a number of revolts both before and after this time, though successful nationalist secessions came only after the Russian victory in the Russo-Turkish War of 1877–78. This loss amounted to one-third of Ottoman territory at the time (Burbank and Cooper 2010: 358). In the years immediately preceding World War I, the Ottomans lost nearly all of their remaining European territories. In 1908, Bulgaria, which in 1878 had gained autonomy within the empire, declared independence and the Habsburg Empire and Greece, respectively, seized Bosnia-Herzegovina and Crete. Between 1910 and 1912, the Albanians waged successful wars for greater autonomy within the empire, and then became independent after the Ottoman Empire's former European provinces seized the Balkan lands in the 1912 Balkan War. In just a few short years, the empire lost close to 4 million subjects and was deprived of its long-time center of gravity (Findley 2010: 202; Lewis 1961: 351).

Whether these wars against the Ottoman Empire were autonomist, irredentist, or nationalist, most commentators agree that they would not have succeeded without the assistance of the great powers. Discussing the empire's European provinces, Haddad notes that nationalism, “combined with European aid, resulted in their separation from Istanbul,” and that “[i]t would have been impossible for all of the Balkans to have gained independence by World War I had it not been for European aid” (Haddad 1977: 12, 22; see also Breuille 1994; Reynolds 2011; Roshwald 2001). Nationalism's role in eroding the territorial base of the Ottoman Empire, then, was not a significant causal factor in and of itself.

Yet in the process of Ottoman imperial collapse and transition to a post-imperial order, nationalism's causal significance reached beyond the Balkans. We are *not* referring to Arab nationalism. After the loss of its European and North African territories, the Ottoman Empire's geographical scope was limited to Anatolia and the Arab lands that lay to the southeast. Though the Ottoman Empire did lose its Arab territories in World War I, this was not because of a nationalist uprising on the part of the local population (Haddad 1977). According to Roshwald, “the role played by Arab nationalist organizations in the defeat of the Ottoman empire” was “practically nil,” and he concludes that “the Arab provinces were lost in battle with the British rather than breaking away in rebellion” (Roshwald 2001: 111–13). Nor were Arab defections behind these British victories: “To the unhappy surprise of British commanders, most Arabs remained loyal to the Ottoman empire until the end of the war” (Burbank and Cooper 2010: 372). Significant Arab nationalism among the masses did not arise until after the British and French took control in the post-war period (Breuille 1994: 152).

Rather than in the Arab lands, it was in the core of the empire, Anatolia, where nationalism became a significant force in the period before imperial collapse. The wars in Europe and North Africa between 1910 and 1912 were crucial to this development. Before those wars, the Young Turks and the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP) fostered their images as defenders of Ottomanism (the multiethnic state), and “denied or downplayed their adherence to Turkish nationalism” (Üngör 2011: 30). Policies throughout the empire generally conformed to this rhetorical commitment to Ottoman, not Turkish, unity. But this belied the fact, recently revealed by research into party correspondence, that the CUP and Young Turks contained “a radical and activist Turkish-nationalist core” (Üngör 2011: 30). In fact, already by 1908, “the CUP's innermost councils were dominated by figures who were wedded to the narrow Turkish-nationalist agendas” and “Arabs were systematically excluded from positions of power in the CUP” (Roshwald 2001: 63–64). Thus, despite the state's rhetorical commitment to Ottomanism, there was among a large segment of the elite an ideological and organizational infrastructure for a nationalization of the core.

Following Ottoman failure in the wars of 1910–12, the CUP took over the administration of the empire in January 1913 and from that point forward Turkification migrated from the realm of ideas to that of policy (Findley 2010; Hanioglu 2010; Keyder 1997; Roshwald 2001; Shaw and Shaw 1977; Ülker 2005; Üngör 2011; Zürcher 2000). These Turkification policies were not empire-wide. In fact, in relation to the Arab lands, around 1913 the Young Turks broke with the

centralization policies that had characterized the Ottoman approach since the 1870s, which helps to explain why the Arab population did not defect from the Ottomans during World War I (Findley 2010; Roshwald 2001; Ülker 2005). But Anatolia was a different story. "By means of settlement and deportation policies, the Young Turks [between 1913 and 1918] sought to nationalize Anatolia as the base of a Turkish national core" (Ülker 2005: 616–17).

This nationalization of the core was directly linked to the secessionist and irredentist nationalisms of the Balkan territories. The First Balkan War led to catastrophic losses for the Ottomans, including territorial losses of 155,000 square kilometers (Findley 2010: 202). The loss of the predominantly Muslim Albania was a particularly strong blow, as it "convinced the Turks that it would be impossible to conciliate different national interests and attain a unified empire" (Shaw and Shaw 1977: 289). According to Ülker, "[a]bove all, the Albanian revolt acted as a catalyst in transforming the already existing Turkish consciousness of the Young Turks into the policies of nationalization" (Ülker 2005: 622).³ These losses also led to a flood of Muslim refugees into Istanbul. Together, these developments had a profound impact on Ottoman identity politics (Findley 2010). The Balkan losses produced a "breaking point in the thorny relationship between centralization [the old policy] and nationalization [the emergent one]," with the advantage going to "the nationalist project of Turkification" (Ülker 2005: 621–22). Moreover, it was not only that the Ottomans lost the Balkans, but also *how* they lost them that mattered. According to Roshwald, this process provided an "object lesson in the power of nationalism. Most of the regions lost in the conflict were populated by non-Turks whose own nationalist impulses had clearly undermined the Ottoman grip over those territories" (Roshwald 2001: 106–7). At the same time, throughout these wars it was the local Turkish-speaking population that was most supportive of the empire (Roshwald 2001).

Thus, secessionist and irredentist nationalism in Europe both eroded the empire and stimulated the rise of nationalism and the adoption of nationalization policies in the imperial core. This nationalization of the

³ In their revolts between 1910 and 1912, Albanians did not seek independence, but rather extensive autonomy within the empire. Even the most nationalist-minded of the Albanian rebels wanted the protective umbrella of the Ottoman Empire against the independent Balkan states. Albania declared independence only after it appeared that those Balkan states would defeat the Ottomans in the 1912 war. Consistent with Albanian fears, independence was upheld only because of the intervention of the great powers, particularly the Habsburg Empire, which wanted an independent Albania in order to ensure that Serbia would remain landlocked (Jelavich and Jelavich 1977: 222–34; see also Beller 2006: 183).

core clearly happened before the empire collapsed, but it did not make a significant contribution to its demise. Nevertheless, this development is relevant to this chapter's discussion for two reasons. The first has to do with its implications for a counterfactual posited by those who argue that nationalism was of negligible importance until *after* the empire fell: that if the Ottomans had been on the winning side, then the empire would have survived (Burbank and Cooper 2010; Reynolds 2011).⁴

Even if one assumes the correctness of this assessment, the alternative future it implies is woefully incomplete without an understanding of how the Ottoman Empire changed in the second decade of the twentieth century. The survival of the Ottoman Empire would have meant the survival of a very different kind of empire. Through its Turkification policies, the Ottoman Empire was becoming an altogether different kind of state: one that was both national and imperial. It was therefore becoming more like France and Britain in the early twentieth century (with the Arab lands in the role of France's and Britain's distant colonies) and less like the other major land empires of Eurasia (Russia and Austria-Hungary). The France analogy, in fact, could be pushed a bit further with the use of this counterfactual. The Ottoman Empire was transforming in the 1910s. Due to the war the empire failed, and with it the transformation process. If, however, the Ottoman Empire had prevailed in the war and therefore had been able to complete this transformation, and if we suppose that the name change of 1923 were adopted in 1918, then the year 1918 for "Turkey" would have been similar to that of 1789 for France: crossing this temporal line (i.e. before/after 1789 or 1918) within the core territory (France, Turkey) would have meant crossing from empire to nation-state, with the remainder of the state's territories becoming part of its imperial realm.

The second reason this pre-collapse nationalization of the core is relevant concerns the events after the empire fell. France, Britain, Russia, and Greece all scrambled for the Ottoman lands after the war. In so doing, however, they encountered stiff resistance and eventually a nationalist war for independence led by Atatürk. As the above discussion shows, the roots of that resistance rested firmly in the era before World War I, with the development of ideological nationalism and, eventually, policies of Turkic nationalization.

To summarize, in the process leading to imperial collapse, peripheral nationalism was not important in the Arab lands, but it did play a major role in the conflictive march of the European territories toward

⁴ For the same claim about the Habsburg Empire see Sked 2001.

independence, in line with the quantitative results discussed above. In this respect, nationalism was an enduring part of the process that ended with the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. A second type of nationalism, state-building nationalism, also became important near the end of this process. The nationalization of the core was not enough to save the Ottoman state, but it did lay the groundwork for successful resistance to European incursion in the aftermath of World War I and the empire's collapse, helping to ensure that a Turkish nation-state, rather than some alternative political form, would emerge where the imperial core once had been.

The French colonial empire

French decolonization played out across two continents and two decades and entailed two major wars of national liberation, in present-day Vietnam and Algeria, and a smaller one in Cameroon. There was also plenty of violent conflict in Morocco, Tunisia, and Madagascar. The worst among them was Madagascar, where a 1947 nationalist uprising was met by repression that produced an official death count of more than 85,000 (T. Smith 1982: 101; Thomas et al. 2008: 258). However, only in Algeria and Vietnam was the nationalist war a direct cause of independence. That represents a small proportion of the universe of French colonial cases, so if one treats these two cases as independent from the other ones, then there is ample support for the notion that the process of French decolonization was generally peaceful, French colonial officials were the main actors on the scene, and nationalist mobilization had at most a negligible role (eg. Betts 1991). But this interpretation misreads the decolonization process in three ways. First, nationalist insurgency in Vietnam and Algeria had effects well beyond these territories: on budding nationalists elsewhere (in line with the statistical analysis of the first section), and also on French colonial policy. Second, though not rising to the level of full-scale war, nationalist violence was significant in the process that led to the independence of Morocco and Tunisia as well. Third, even where decolonization was relatively peaceful, in West and Equatorial Africa, nationalist mobilization was considerably more important to the winning of independence and the eventual collapse of empire than is sometimes thought.

Morocco and Tunisia

Nationalist movements emerged in both Morocco and Tunisia well before independence, each with strong leaders who rallied the people (Betts 1991). Representing himself "as the symbol of nationalism"

beginning in the late 1940s, the sultan became the focal point of the Moroccan nationalist movement, which called on him to head a constitutional monarchy that represented the will of the Moroccan people (Betts 1991; Grimal 1978: 347). In Tunisia the movement coalesced around Habib Bourguiba, who issued the first independence manifesto in 1945. The French rejected it, but they did initiate a "co-sovereignty" arrangement that placed an equal number of Tunisians and French in the main parliamentary body, the Chief Counsel. Given that Tunisians comprised the vast majority of the population, this arrangement meant dramatically disproportionate power for the French. Protests, strikes, and other mobilizations followed. The French first tried repression, under resident general Jean de Hautecloque, but met still more resistance. By 1954 the French faced considerable "terrorism" in urban areas and a liberation army that started in rural areas but soon expanded its scope. Bourguiba began to appear quite moderate to colonial officials (Suliman 1987: 50–51). Thus, the French recalled de Hautecloque just two years after appointing him, recognized Tunisian independence, and made arrangements toward this end, including the release of Bourguiba from house arrest in France (Betts 1991; Grimal 1978; Suliman 1987).

A similar pattern of protests and riots, attempted repression (including the exile of the main nationalist leader), and finally capitulation occurred in Morocco. Already by January 1944 the Istiqlal Party was calling for national independence (Betts 1991: 99–100). As the movement gained strength, the French detained the sultan, Mohammed V (the name given to him by nationalists upon his return according to Suliman 1987: 45). After this detention, "a shadowy insurgency gradually took hold across Morocco;" its activities included "[a]ssassinations of notoriously pro-French notables ... [and] mounted attacks on army and police targets" (Thomas et al. 2008: 223). The first anniversary of Mohammed V's detention found the police reporting more than three hundred terrorist-related "incidents" in the cities of Casablanca and Rabat alone (Thomas et al. 2008: 223). This was August 1954. Just a few weeks earlier, the new premier of France, Pierre Mendès-France of the Radical Party, had issued the declaration that granted internal autonomy to Tunisia and promised talks concerning a transition to independence. Leaving Morocco out of this arrangement led to widespread discontent and riots during the first anniversary of the sultan's detention, and conflict and violence continued throughout the next year. The second anniversary of the detention again witnessed widespread rioting in urban areas and numerous killings (Thomas et al. 2008; see also Suliman 1987: 43–45). By this time most French leaders, including those in negotiations with the two main nationalist parties, wanted Morocco to join Tunisia on the

fast track to independence. But there were holdouts in the cabinet and nothing happened until they were dismissed. In the end, a relatively peaceful withdrawal was negotiated because Moroccan nationalists, like their Tunisian counterparts, were willing to maintain a privileged, post-independence relationship with France (Thomas et al. 2008). In a pattern that would be repeated in sub-Saharan Africa, the French preferred to work with the moderate nationalists rather than allow the growing power of their radical counterparts to become entrenched. Unlike in sub-Saharan Africa, matters had turned rather bloody before the French adopted this strategy.

Nationalist insurgency was not the entire story behind Moroccan and Tunisian independence, but it was a crucial one. In line with the quantitative evidence offered above, what also mattered were the wars of liberation in other parts of the empire. The loss of Indochina and the outbreak of the Algerian War in 1954 both encouraged Moroccan and Tunisian nationalists and made compromise appealing to French leaders (Thomas et al. 2008: 216–17). In addition to these direct and indirect consequences of nationalist mobilization and confrontation, geopolitical forces played a significant role, foremost among them pressure from the US, which sought the “long-term stability and pro-western orientation of the Arab world in general, and North West Africa in particular” (Thomas et al. 2008: 217). That the US had this orientation and applied this pressure is indisputable. That it mattered very much is more difficult to discern. The US also pressured the French in Indochina – to *maintain* colonial rule – and, indeed, bankrolled their efforts to do so, but without effect. And the French listened to US concerns regarding how to handle the Suez issue only after the French joined Britain and Israel in their 1956 blunder. Nevertheless, it is probably fair to say that Morocco and Tunisia attained independence sooner than they might have, thanks to US pressure.

It is also true that France did not budge on Morocco and Tunisia until the configuration of political power changed at home. After France detained the main leaders of the nationalist movement in Morocco and Tunisia in 1952 and 1953, the Radical Party’s gaining of the premiership in June 1954 was followed less than six weeks later by a declaration of internal autonomy and independence talks for Tunisia (Thomas et al. 2008). However much nationalist insurgency and US pressure mattered in the process of decolonization, then, they seem to have been mediated by politics in the metropole (and we will soon see that these political developments in France also mattered for French Black Africa). Metropolitan politics, however, were quite directly influenced by nationalist insurgency in the colonies, particularly in Indochina (see Thomas et al.

2008), while it is very unlikely that US pressures had any effects on these domestic political developments. Moreover, the liberalizing effects of nationalist insurgency also could be reversed, as they were when the Radical Party-led coalition lost a no-confidence vote in February 1955 due at least in part to “a conservative reaction against [the coalition leader] Mendès-France’s willingness to enact colonial reform” (Thomas et al. 2008: 223). Despite this reaction, however, France followed through on its independence promises to Tunisia, and after more violence, did the same with Morocco.

West Africa

The French empire’s exit from West Africa was markedly more peaceful than elsewhere. From this peacefulness emerged the scholarly argument that the French withdrawal was long planned and almost entirely voluntary (see Chafer 2002). High Commissioner Messmer promoted exactly this idea in his farewell address before departing Dakar: “My departure is not a sad one, as it marks a new stage in the political development of Africa, preparations for which have been made for many long years, since the end of the Second World War” (quoted in Chafer 2002: 188). This impression of an orderly and managed process, one led by the French and in which nationalists played scarcely a role, is also found in narratives of British decolonization, as we will soon see. As for the French, this “vision of a successfully managed French decolonization in Black Africa, carefully prepared over many years,” is only part of the story (Chafer 2002: 188; see also Thomas et al. 2008: 153–54).

It is true that there were no serious political movements for independence in Black Africa in the 1940s (Holland 1985; Person 1982). But there was also no intention to grant it. Scholars have sometimes interpreted matters otherwise, conceiving the Brazzaville Conference of 1944 and then the French Union policy of 1946–58 as the initiation and execution of exactly the sort of plan implied by High Commissioner Messmer. While both leaned in a liberalizing direction, however, neither Brazzaville nor the French Union were meant to initiate an evolution toward independence (T. Smith 1982). Even though Brazzaville “has been erroneously viewed as the beginning of decolonization,” for “most of the participants ... the aim of the conference was, on the contrary, to consolidate the colonial system definitively by renovating it” (Person 1982: 144). If one wants to argue that the decolonization process started there, the intentions of French officials cannot reasonably be part of the argument. The Brazzaville Report flatly rejected independence as a goal: “The ends of the civilizing work accomplished by France in the colonies

exclude any idea of autonomy, all possibility of evolution outside the French bloc of the Empire: the eventual constitution, even in the future, of self-government in the colonies is denied" (quoted in T. Smith 1982: 89). Three years later, nationalist insurgents in Madagascar learned that the French meant these words when their uprising produced a violent response by the empire that killed tens of thousands. In mainland sub-Saharan Africa, however, the French rarely engaged in such violence (Cameroun was an exception), and thus they have had a more plausible case for their claim that independence was always the plan. In reality, however, the French hoped and endeavored almost to the very end to avoid independence in West Africa.

Events moved more slowly in West Africa than elsewhere in the empire after World War II. On the surface at least, nothing much seemed to happen until 1956–57. The West African political elite was integrated into the metropolitan patronage system by virtue of being representatives of the colonies in Paris (Holland 1985). In order to shore up the empire, the French held out the promise of equality for all peoples under French rule. Whether in education, the labor market, or politics, West Africans directed their activities toward redeeming this promise. In this context, "nationalism ... had only a very tenuous lodgment before 1950 ..." (Holland 1985: 155). Or rather what existed was a more assimilationist version of nationalism aimed at equality of treatment under French law (Chafar 2002). Moreover, beyond 1950 and throughout the remainder of the colonial period "the idea of Greater France and the universalist ideals of French republicanism" continued to shape West African political mobilization (Chafar 2002: 19). To a significant degree, nationalist demands that emerged in the 1950s – actually, the "moderate" kind, as we will see – were "refracted through a prior loyalty to the French metropole" (Holland 1985: 158).

Nevertheless, major changes came to French West Africa between 1946 and 1956 (Person 1982). Suffrage dramatically expanded. Guinea's electorate, for example, increased from 131,000 in 1946 to almost 1.4 million just eleven years later. By the end of 1956, universal suffrage was in place across French West Africa (Chafar 2002). At the same time, major sectors of society became increasingly active. Two major parties, the region-wide Rassemblement Démocratique Africain and the Senegal-specific Union Démocratique Sénégalaise, formed and became increasingly adept at bridging the gap between African elites and masses, as they reached their activities into "the farthest corners of the bush" (Person 1982: 156; see also Thomas et al. 2008: 163–68).

As a consequence of this political mobilization, nationalism emerged as a political movement in French West Africa between 1950 and 1956

(Chafar 2002). Of particular importance were the trade unions and the student/youth movements. The unions had been linked to the French *Confédération générale du travail*, but they broke away to form autonomous unions in the early 1950s (Chafar 2002). These emerging and transforming collective actors signalled a growing rift in French West Africa between moderate nationalists within the political party elite who took a more patient and conciliatory approach to independence, and radical nationalists among students, youth, and trade unionists who "espoused more anti-colonialist positions and pressed for faster progress towards decolonization" (Chafar 2002: 143).

Such was the scene in 1956 when "the political history of French-speaking Africa accelerated" (Person 1982: 161); the colonies arrived at independence just four years later. In 1956 the French National Assembly passed the *Loi Cadre*, an act that gave the president the power to reform relations with the colonies. The subsequent decrees granted universal suffrage to the people of French West (and Equatorial) Africa, and granted extensive powers to the elected territorial legislatures in the colonies. The most important of these powers was control over the local budget, which was hardly an unmitigated blessing as it pitted local African politicians against trade unions and civil service workers. Territorial legislatures that once were merely channels through which grievances were aired became the objects of these grievances (Chafar 2002). Still, the French imperial state retained control over major areas such as economic development, internal security, and foreign affairs.

This changed two years later, not long after De Gaulle took the helm in France. Under the new constitution, colonial territorial legislatures were to gain full internal autonomy and membership in a newly minted "French Community." Each colony was also to hold a referendum on whether to join the French Community or opt for independence. All but Guinea opted for the Community, and all but Niger did so with more than 94 percent support (in Niger it was 78 percent), though voter turnout varied from 37 to 97 percent and Holland describes the referenda as "not far from pure farce" because "the existing administrations were usually in a position to rig whatever result they desired" (Chafar 2002: 178–79; Holland 1985: 161). Perhaps it was De Gaulle's belief that these referenda were rigged that caused him to treat newly independent Guinea and its president, Sékou Touré, so harshly: Guinea "received exemplary punishment; cast into the outer darkness, it was denied credit and other facilities" and nearly collapsed (Person 1982: 167).

Whatever De Gaulle thought about Guinea's referendum, his response indicated the desire to hold on to the French Empire, albeit in a new form. But within two years, Guinea was the rule rather than the exception.

Guinea's declaration of independence had an effect on the rest of the region, again in line with the statistical results presented in Table 9.2, putting pressure on the moderate nationalists to choose independence now rather than later (Person 1982: 168). Meanwhile, and also conforming to the quantitative analysis offered above, the Algerian War "dragged on and on" against all expectations, which both "made association with France increasingly unbearable for the African nationalists" and apparently made France rethink its resistance to independence (Person 1982: 169). Then the domino effect took over. Cameroon, Mali, and Senegal went first. By November 1960, nearly "all the French-speaking states of Africa ... proclaimed their independence and ... entered the UN under the sponsorship of France" (Person 1982: 169).

Though the French did not intend the Loi Cadre of 1956 to be the first of a chain of events that ended in independence (it instead was an attempt to remake imperial rule on an indirect rather than direct basis [Chafer 2002]), this is what in fact happened. What forces drove the adoption of this and other policies between 1956 and 1960? First, politics in the metropole were important, though they were hardly divorced from what was happening in the colonies. As discussed above, there was a leftward shift in control of the French government in the mid 1950s. This brought with it a more conciliatory approach to nationalist demands in Morocco and Tunisia, as well as the initiation of plans for a new approach to West and Equatorial Africa. The really decisive political development for Africa was the emergence of the Fifth Republic under De Gaulle, and difficulties with the Algerian War were instrumental in bringing about this change in constitution and leadership. According to Darwin, the Fourth Republic "was overthrown as a direct consequence of the Algerian rebellion" (1988: 251; see also Thomas et al. 2008: 395). Thus, nationalism in one part of the empire helped create regime change in the metropole, which in turn accelerated developments toward independence in other parts of the empire.

As for nationalism's direct influence, French West Africa was not like Morocco, Tunisia, Algeria, and Indochina: nationalist mobilization in the region did not directly drive this process (Chafer 2002; Holland 1985; Person 1982; Smith 1982; Thomas et al. 2008). Yet nationalism certainly played a key role in two ways. First, nationalist insurgency beyond the West African Federation, including "French loss of Indochina in 1954, the Foreign Ministry's reluctant preparations to cede greater autonomy in Morocco and Tunisia, and the outbreak of the Algerian rebellion in November 1954" motivated reform in other colonies where such conflict-ridden situations had not yet but perhaps soon could emerge (Thomas et al. 2008: 171–72). In fact, though the

Loi Cadre was not adopted until 1956, French officials initiated consideration of plans for a new approach to sub-Saharan Africa in 1954, just as the empire was withdrawing in defeat from Indochina and insurgents in the Maghreb were turning ever more to violent tactics in their resistance to colonial rule. Wanting "to avoid major bloodshed in black Africa" (Kahler 1984: 197), French officials aimed to create there "an evolutionary situation ... that would make it possible to avert an explosion" (Person 1982: 161).

Second, not just the avoidance of bloodshed was at stake. The French wanted to make sure that they maintained influence in the region after independence, if and when it might come. Gaston Defferre, the Socialist minister responsible for the Loi Cadre policy, "explained it in terms of winning African goodwill *before* constitutional demands emerged to polarize metropolitan-colony relationships" (Holland 1985: 160). Because of the emergence of a radical nationalist movement in West Africa, the French had sound reasons for anticipating the growth of polarization over time and attempting to prevent it. As this movement expanded and as its demands became more expansive, French officials came to see the importance of adopting policies that would enable moderate nationalists – mainly the leadership of African political parties – to hold on to power. In this respect, "the colonial power was forced onto the defensive by African nationalist movements and obliged to make concessions to them ... in an effort to defuse nationalist pressure" (Chafer 2002: 19). The final concession was to independence itself, and the French shrewdly made it in enough time to ensure the continued credibility and power of the moderate nationalists, and thus the continuing influence of the French in the post-colonial period. The radical nationalist movement in West Africa thus "played a key role in a victory – political independence – from which it was, ultimately, largely excluded" (Chafer 2002: 217).

The British colonial empire

There was significant violence during the waning years of the British Empire – attested to by the experience of the Kikuyu in Kenya and the Chinese in Malaya – but the picture of British decolonization is not complicated by wars of independence in the way that French decolonization is. It is therefore all the easier to underestimate the role of nationalism and conflict more generally in the process of British decolonization, and to see this process as one of voluntary retreat (Flint 1983). Darwin speaks of a "pervasive myth that in the British Empire, unlike the French, Belgian, Dutch, or Portuguese, the transfer of power

was effected over tea in an atmosphere of sweetness and light ..." (1999: 554). The propagation of this myth was in fact an explicit goal of colonial policy. In cabinet discussions regarding Indian independence after World War II, the participants were adamant that this must not be seen as something forced on the British, even though they expected that adherence to the status quo would lead to a serious revolt in which the loyalty of Indian troops, according to Prime Minister Attlee, would be "very doubtful" (quoted in Hyam 2006: 108). "To the world at large, the British would be seen as remaining in control of events. History would record a commitment to self-government that had been planned and fulfilled" (Louis 1998: 329; see also Hyam 2006: 108-09). Later, the Macmillan government (1957-63) continued to portray British withdrawal "as the result of a British initiative" (Heinlein 2002: 176).

But rarely was decolonization so voluntary and harmonious. The French learned this the hard way, from Indochina to Algeria, and then acted in Black Africa to avoid violence and secure an influential role in the post-colonial era - not by undercutting nationalism, but rather by making sure that moderate and cooperative nationalists came to power. What characterized France's decolonization process in Black Africa was a general feature of British decolonization, from Asia to Africa (Heinlein 2002; Louis 1998).

Though the British acceded to independence in some parts of the empire earlier than the French, and though the British also contemplated independence everywhere much sooner, the speed with which independence came to the British colonies far outpaced those expectations. "In 1945 the independence of India could be seen on the horizon, but no one would have guessed that within the next two decades the British Empire would be in a state of dissolution" (Louis 1998: 331). Heinlein observes that under the Attlee government of the late 1940s and early 1950s, independence was generally anticipated but not for at least thirty or forty years (2002; see also Hyam 2006). In 1954, London attempted to identify which colonies would become independent by 1974; only the Gold Coast, Nigeria, the (eventually failed) Central African Federation, a Malayan Federation, and a not-yet-formed West Indian Federation were contemplated (Thomas et al. 2008). In a late 1950s report to Prime Minister Macmillan, several colonies, including Kenya, Sierra Leone, Tanganyika, Uganda, Nyasaland (Malawi), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), were not expected to get even "internal self-government" within a decade, yet all gained independence within a few years. So, unlike the French, the British were thinking about independence in *some* of their colonies well in advance (and acceded to independence demands, without preceding violence, in several more in the late 1940s). But independence came in

nearly all the colonies well before the British anticipated. To explain this acceleration, one needs to take into account nationalist mobilization, which according to the statistical analysis presented in Table 9.2 should play a crucial role in the transition to nation-statehood and thus cumulatively in the demise of empire.

According to a number of historians, the experience of the transitions to independence of Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and Burma after World War II had a lasting effect on the British approach to colonial peoples' demands for autonomy and independence (Ashton 1998; Darwin 1988; Heinlein 2002; Louis 1998). In 1948 both Burma and Sri Lanka attained independence, but only Sri Lanka maintained close ties with Great Britain through membership in the Commonwealth. British officials foresaw this outcome in November 1947 and in a Memorandum for the African Governors' Conference called for "more Ceylons and fewer Burmas" (quoted in Louis 1998: 337). If Britain had worked with Burmese independence leader Aung Sang from the start, said Prime Minister Attlee, "Burma would have stayed in the Commonwealth" (quoted in Louis 1998: 338). By the early 1950s, "more Ceylons and fewer Burmas" had become a "motto" for the British (Ashton 1998: 448).

Since British colonial officials never had a master plan for the colonies, which were treated more or less on a case-by-case basis, one might question the reach of this motto. According to Heinlein, in case after case, British accession to decolonization and independence was driven by the desire to make sure that "the right kind of nationalists" came to power (Heinlein 2002: 106). British policy revealed a "habit of considering the goodwill of local nationalists as the best guarantee of its interests" (Heinlein 2002: 6). A 1952 Foreign Office study, "The Problem of Nationalism," argued that cultivating what it called "healthy nationalism" was the best way "to minimize loss to ourselves and to establish new and fruitful relationships at all stages" (quoted in Hyam 2006: 179).

This strategy was evident in Nigeria, where the colonial administration "went out of its way to cultivate a relationship with nationalist leaders like Azikiwe" while it also "single-mindedly sought to isolate and destroy the radical Zikist movement" (Furedi 1993: 99). The official in charge of propaganda said that this approach proceeded "from the assumption that the growth of nationalism in Nigeria is inevitable and natural and that our aim must be, not to dam the flood but to divert it into useful channels" (quoted in Furedi 1993: 99). Sir Charles Arden-Clarke, governor of the Gold Coast, drew on the same imagery to explain his support for Nkrumah, arguing that "you cannot slow down a flood - the best you can hope to do is to keep the torrent within its proper channel" (quoted in Hyam 2006: 182). A similar view was expressed by the Cabinet in the

mid 1950s when it considered the Gold Coast's request for independence: if they rejected this request, cabinet members agreed, "we may forfeit the great goodwill which now exists and drive the Gold Coast out of the Commonwealth" (quoted in Hyam 2006: 184). More Ceylons and fewer Burmas.

Indeed, Heinlein (2002) argues that the spread of nationalist mobilization throughout the empire explains the *acceleration* of the decolonization trend under the Conservative government in the 1950s. "Tories and socialists alike agreed that it was essential to retain the goodwill of Africans and Asians in order to safeguard British interests after independence" (Heinlein 2002: 105). A near constant of policy making was the desire to avoid "driving colonial nationalists into more radical positions" (Heinlein 2002: 105). In pursuit of this desire, the British adhered to "a long established doctrine in colonial policy" which held "[t]hat the risks of going too slow were probably greater than the risks of going too fast" (Ashton 2006: 46). This doctrine ran "like the proverbial scarlet thread through the history of [British] decolonization" (Hyam 2006: 120).

Sometimes this concern meant that no powerful mass nationalist movement emerged before officials started to plan for its emergence and significance. This is what happened, for example, in Sierra Leone and Uganda (Heinlein 2002). More often, nationalist politicians mobilized on the basis of political reforms, and thereby compelled colonial officials to devolve, then surrender, power much more quickly than anticipated, as was the case in Ghana after the 1946 constitutional reforms (Darwin 1988). In other cases nationalist mobilization posed a more immediate challenge and British officials perceived that the situation was teetering close to the edge: "The rapid accelerations that occurred in India between 1945 and 1947 and in East and Central Africa after 1959, sprang from the calculation that without prompt colonial withdrawal London faced dangerous crises of local control" (Darwin 1999: 545; see also Ashton 2006; Hyam 2006; McIntyre 1998). And in still other cases, the situation was somewhere between these extremes. In Malaya, for example, colonial officials predicted in 1946 that independence would not come for another thirty years. In 1953, the Colonial Office could at most foresee "a substantial measure of local autonomy" by about 1962 (quoted in Heinlein 2002: 109). But full-fledged independence came just four years later. In the meantime the two main political parties in Malaya, the UMNO and MCA, started organizing around and agitating for independence. The colonial secretary and most ministers agreed that this was the price to be paid to guarantee British influence into the future, and so Malaya became independent in 1957 (Hyam 2006).

None of this is to say that *only* nationalist mobilization, and its anticipation by British officials, mattered. Indeed, throughout the period nationalism interacted with geopolitical concerns in the shaping of decolonization (Darwin 1999; Heinlein 2002; Hyam 2006). This intimate connection between the two was perhaps never clearer than when the military Chiefs of Staff argued for a speedy withdrawal from India after World War II because "to remain might permanently antagonize the Indians, which would militate against long-term British strategic requirements, the need for bases and airfields and access to the industry and manpower of India during war" (Hyam 2006: 108). Not every colony was as strategically important as India, Ceylon, or Malaya, but in every colony the British desire to support "the right kind of nationalists" was part of a Cold War strategy to block the wrong kind: communists and other "extremists." Throughout it all, however, British officials were acutely aware of nationalists' power to remake the imperial order, and the British, therefore, worked to align, to the greatest extent possible, this reconstruction with their own interests.

The Portuguese Empire

If the British and French doubted the wisdom of their conciliatory approach to nationalism in Africa, the Portuguese experience with the end of empire provided affirmation. As all the other European powers were bending to what Macmillan famously called the "winds of change," the Portuguese doubled down. Imperial officials changed the description of their endeavors, as colonies became "overseas provinces" in the 1960s, but facts on the ground indicated that conquest and colonization continued to provide the accurate interpretive frame. In the case of Angola alone, 350,000 Portuguese settlers arrived *after* 1960. By 1974, one in four Portuguese adult males were in the armed forces (Holland 1985: 293). The empire needed a large army: Portugal's reluctance to relinquish the empire produced three wars of national liberation – in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau. Over the course of a decade these wars played a major part in bringing down the Portuguese regime at home, and then the empire.

The wars did not cause battle deaths comparable to those in Algeria, Vietnam, or Madagascar – they numbered in the thousands, not tens of thousands – but there is general agreement that these wars of liberation were crucial to the fall of the empire (Holland 1985; Pinto 2003; Thomas et al. 2008). The chain of events ran from the fighting of "three intractable African colonial wars simultaneously" to the fall of the regime in Portugal, and from there to rapid decolonization (Thomas et al. 2008: 395).

A purely metropolitan explanation, focused on regime change in Portugal, misses the crucial first part of the sequence. As we have seen, the fall of the Fourth Republic in France was linked in part to French problems in Algeria. This causal dynamic was more transparent still in the Portuguese case. "Overseas issues in the form of apparently perpetual and unwinnable colonial conflicts of varying intensities in Africa ... did indeed bring about and essentially cause the overthrow of the regime" (Robinson 2003: 5; see also Chabal 1993). Pinio describes the colonial wars as "a specific and determining factor in the overthrow of the Portuguese dictatorship" (2003: 19). After noting that the collapse of the empire was "the inevitable consequence of the successful coup against the dictatorship of President Antonio Salazar," Holland clarifies that "[t]he coup itself, however, was the product of a progressive weakening of the Portuguese position in its African colonies after 1970" (1985: 292). Even MacQueen, who argues that the nationalist insurgencies were not becoming any more effective with time and therefore other factors must also have been at play in the demise of the empire, agrees that "the regime collapsed, in part, because of its perceived intransigence over negotiations with the guerrillas [in Angola, Mozambique, and Guinea-Bissau]" (1997: 71).

Though MacQueen is right that other factors were at work, a point to which we will return, it also is not difficult to see why the colonial wars would have a deleterious effect on the regime's fortunes in the metropole. By the early 1970s the Portuguese government was spending more than half of its budget on the colonial wars, "and military expenses were projected to increase even as investments at home in education and social services were squeezed to free the funds necessary for the war effort" (Miller 1975: 136). Indeed, the force responsible for the coup against Salazar's authoritarian regime, the Armed Forces Movement (MFA), acted "in the name of withdrawal from Africa" and chose "as their figurehead General António Spínola, a top Portuguese military officer who had captured the public imagination by openly going on record as saying that Portugal's African wars were unwinnable" (Miller 1975: 136). This judgment that wars were unwinnable was not simply an assessment calculated for other political ends (like joining the European Community – see below); it was shared well beyond Portuguese circles, including by an interdepartmental group that reported to the United States' National Security Council in 1969. This group predicted "continued stalemate: the rebels cannot oust the Portuguese and the Portuguese can contain but not eliminate the rebels" (quoted in Maxwell 1982: 345).

The fact that wars in the three colonies were not equally intractable, and the fact that the colonies were not of equal value, became clear in the

immediate aftermath of the coup. Despite making the wars a central part of the program justifying their overthrow of the Caetano regime, the new regime did not immediately establish a decolonization program but instead expressed the view that a political, not military, solution was the way forward in the colonies. This apparently had to do with coup coalition politics, as Spínola, the new president, agreed with the junior officers of the MFA about decolonization in Mozambique and Guinea-Bissau, but preferred a federal solution to Angola. In the case of Guinea-Bissau, which economically was of little value and where "the military situation was irretrievable," Spínola wanted a ceasefire and then independence. A similar situation existed in Mozambique, where FRELIMO "was firmly in control of much of the country and seemed likely to prove a malleable partner after power was transferred" (Holland 1985: 296). But Angola was more valuable, thanks to its wealth of oil, diamonds, coffee, and rare metals; it was "the only Overseas Province to have aided the metropole through its export surplus," and it had a much more factionalized nationalist insurgency compared to the other two cases (Holland 1985; Robinson 2003: 7). Similarly to Spínola's differentiation of the three cases, Spruyt states that in Mozambique the empire faced "protracted withdrawal," in Guinea-Bissau "imminent defeat," but that in Angola the maintenance of a "stalemate" was possible (2005: 196). Perhaps, then, there was a chance for Spínola's federal solution to Angola to work. In the end, however, he did not prevail, and in accordance with the wishes of the MFA and political parties the new regime adopted a constitutional law for complete decolonization a few months after the coup. Three decades after the fact, Spínola claimed he went along with it because he believed that if Lisbon did not act, then its armed forces in Africa would themselves have ceded power (MacQueen 1997).

Thus nationalist insurgency was a central component of the process that led to the collapse of the Portuguese Empire. The colonial wars sapped the legitimacy of the existing regime and stimulated a coup that in turn led to rapid decolonization. To be sure, this central role of nationalist insurgency in imperial collapse does not mean other factors were not in play. Portugal's efforts to join the European Economic Community (EEC) coincided with the colonial wars, and also motivated the coup that led to decolonization. At the same time, as Thomas et al. (2008) explain, the colonial wars, EEC membership, regime change, and decolonization were all interrelated: "Admission to the European Community, with all its attendant trade benefits, also rested squarely on an end to Portugal's colonial wars. It was the pull of EEC membership which made regime change in Lisbon appear imperative to influential constituencies of domestic opinion, from the educated middle class to business leaders

and the junior officers who orchestrated military opposition to Caetano's government" (Thomas et al. 2008: 396).

The Soviet Empire

Of the three major contiguous land empires that entered the First World War, only the Russian one survived, albeit in new form. More than seven decades after the Romanov Empire became the Soviet Empire, it collapsed, bringing an end to a long era of imperial rule. Somewhat ironically, this final exit from the imperial stage was made by an actor that for some time had been keeping the show going while at the same time decrying its content: for decades the Soviet Union combined imperial power with anti-imperialist rhetoric.

Is the realist-great-power-competition perspective at least correct with regard to this most recent episode of imperial collapse? Did interstate war or international interference bring about the end of the Soviet Union – irrespective of nationalist movements? As a great power itself, the Soviet Union was also practically immune from all but the most limited intervention by other great powers. As for war, the last one fought by the Soviets was the Afghan War, which concluded in 1988, just a few years before the Soviet demise. However, rather than itself being the cause of imperial collapse, the Afghan War was symptomatic of a more fundamental determinant, Soviet hyper-militarism, which as we soon will see was indirectly linked to the emergence of nationalist mobilization. Thus, neither war itself nor great power meddling can explain this imperial collapse.

At the same time, thousands of demonstrations across the empire, most framed in nationalist terms, preceded the fall of the Soviet imperial state. Yet a number of scholars contend that nationalism was strictly a consequence, not a cause, of the Soviet collapse (see Beissinger 2009). This is indisputable in the case of the Central Asian republics, where political elites merely “dressed up in nationalist garb” in the final days of the empire in an effort to maintain power after independence (Sunny 1993: 141). But in other parts of the empire more relevant to the story of its demise, the sequence was different. The imperial collapse that produced nationalism in the Central Asian republics was itself a product of nationalist mobilization in other parts of the empire.

Nationalist mobilization, to be sure, was not the first or most important mover in the causal sequence that ended with the fall of the Soviet Union. A wide range of analysts agrees that nationalist mobilization was itself an outcome of Gorbachev's reforms (Beissinger 2002, 2009; Brubaker 1994; Lapidus 1992; Sunny 1993; Zaslavsky 1992, 1997).

And these reforms in turn were a response to an enduring economic crisis, which itself was the result of the Soviet dedication to hyper-militarism. Thus, the causal chain runs from Cold War hyper-militarism to economic crisis to political and economic reforms, and from there to nationalist mobilization and imperial collapse. As Zaslavsky (1997) and Beissinger (2009) jointly emphasize, the Soviet Union's demise as an empire was distinct from its loss of superpower status and fall as a specifically communist regime. Certainly the superpower status and perhaps the communist character of the regime were doomed by the mutually reinforcing hyper-militarism and economic crisis. But it was nationalist mobilization that destroyed any chance of the state's surviving in the imperial form inherited from the Romanov era. It was nationalist mobilization that was responsible for “transforming the collapse of a regime into the disintegration of a state” (Brubaker 1994: 48). Economic and political reforms intended to solve the economic crisis of the imperial state instead opened the political space in which nationalist and then secessionist mobilization could emerge and expand. “From 1988 to 1991 ... [the Soviet] state exploded, largely under the pressure of its ethnic problems” (Beissinger 2002: 1). To view this explosion (or perhaps, rather, implosion) as the inevitable consequence of deep economic crisis is to ignore the many other cases where states, and even communist regimes, have been resilient in the face of similar crises (Beissinger 2009).

When launching perestroika and then glasnost, neither Gorbachev nor his fellow reformers foresaw that “the revolution from above would be hijacked by nationalist revolutions from below” (Sunny 1993: 132). These reforms “unleashed an unprecedented tide of protests and demonstrations across the entire territory of the USSR in which national grievances, fueled by economic unrest, occupied a central place” (Lapidus 1992: 45). Beissinger's (2002) careful research shows that characterizing these mobilizations as “nationalist” is amply justified. In the thousands of demonstrations analyzed by Beissinger, the three basic types of grievances were economic, democratic, and nationalist in character. But nationalist demands were the dominant ones, which becomes clear when one compares their frequency with that of demands for political liberalization (the second most important). Among the 6,663 demonstrations in Beissinger's sample, about one quarter made both nationalist and liberalizing demands, and 16 percent made liberalizing but not nationalist demands. Demonstrations in which nationalist demands stood alone were far more common: 42 percent of demonstrations made nationalist demands but not liberalizing ones. The difference is more dramatic when one shifts the focus from demonstrations to participants. One third of the demonstrators participated in actions that made both

nationalist and liberalizing demands, but just 6 percent participated in demonstrations where liberalizing but not nationalist demands were made. In contrast, nearly three out of every five (57 percent) demonstrators participated in actions that made nationalist but not liberalizing demands (Beissinger 2002: 75–79). Put another way, 90 percent of all participants took part in demonstrations that made nationalist demands, but only 39 percent were involved in demonstrations making liberalizing demands. Moreover, “[a] similar but even more pronounced difference occurred between mobilization over nationalist demands and mobilization over economic demands – in spite of the enormous decline in living standards that occurred during this period” (Beissinger 2009: 336).

In the midst of all these nationalist mobilizations, the local elites also became increasingly less reliable collaborators with the imperial state. The economic crisis and reforms intended to address it instead activated a latent structural weakness of the imperial system: the local elite owed their positions of power to the central imperial state, but also to their membership in a “titular nation” linked to each of the republics (Brubaker 1994; Szporluk 1997). “The Soviet Union was built on the principle of nominal national-territorial autonomy with ethnoterritorial units as its basic structural elements” (Zaslavsky 1997: 86). Prior to the crisis, a system of co-optation kept the lid on this ethno-national element. Leaders of the titular nationalities had power only by virtue of appointments made by the central state. Titular nationalities also received preferential treatment in other domains as well, including higher education. Thus, the ethnic structure of the empire was not a problem for imperial viability so long as the central state could continue to deliver the goods.

With economic decline “it was no longer possible to protect the occupational interests of ethnic educated classes” (Zaslavsky 1997: 89). This emerging crack in the imperial structure, the result of a blow struck by the economic crisis, was actually made worse by the political reforms designed to address that crisis. The spring of 1988 brought a new stage of reform that focused on competitive elections and democratization. This led to the formation of various organizations in support of reform. An example is the People’s Front in Support of Perestroika, which emerged first in Estonia and then Latvia and Lithuania, “and then spread – in a Soviet version of the international demonstration effect – to Moldova and the Transcaucasus” (Lapidus 1992: 55). These were not originally nationalist groups, but they became nationalist in a short period of time. Local political elites, who now depended for their power on territorial elections rather than appointments from the center, promoted this change by acting in their own interests. Forced to appeal to local peoples rather than party leaders after the passing of perestroika

reforms, politicians shifted direction and started “viewing and presenting themselves as the defenders of republic interests against the center” (Lapidus 1992: 58).

Though Gorbachev and his allies did not anticipate the impact that reforms would have on the Soviet Union’s ethno-national structure, they soon recognized this effect. By the end of 1988, Gorbachev identified “nationality policy as ‘the most fundamental vital issue of society’” (Lapidus 1992: 46). This was at a time when nationalist mobilization was only beginning to take hold. Though the satellite states of Eastern Europe and the Baltic republics most famously turned against the Soviet state early on, nationalist – though not originally secessionist – mobilization emerged in Azerbaijan first, during the Karabagh Crisis (Beissinger 2002; Suny 1993). On and off since the 1960s, Armenian activists in both Armenia and Azerbaijan made attempts to incorporate Karabagh into Armenia, but the Soviet state refused. Then in mid-February 1988, “[s]uddenly, unpredictably ... the Karabagh Armenians, inspired by the rhetoric of *perestroika* and encouraged by regime attacks on old-style party rule, began a series of demonstrations in favor of union with Armenia” (Suny 1993: 133). Gorbachev’s efforts to placate the activists were clumsy and ineffective, and by the end of the month “hundreds of thousands were marching in Erevan in continuous demonstrations” (Suny 1993: 134). Then the Azerbaijanis countermobilized, leading the Soviet state to take over Karabagh for more than a year starting in July 1988. But disorder continued, and after a series of arrests of leaders in fall 1988 and then their release in spring 1989, by the end of the year “the nationalist movements had all but displaced the official power structure in the Transcaucasian republics,” including Azerbaijan (Suny 1993: 136).

Nationalist mobilization started in the Karabagh Crisis in winter 1988, but it was not based on an “anti-imperial secessionist frame” until nationalist mobilization emerged elsewhere, “developing first in the Baltic in the summer and fall of 1988 and then spreading in a massive way to Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Moldova, Ukraine, and even eventually to Russia itself” (Beissinger 2002: 160). Already by late 1988 and early 1989, the Baltic republics were declaring sovereignty. Roughly in line with the quantitative analysis presented above, this emboldened the nominally independent states of Eastern Europe, whose break from the Soviet system in turn rebounded on movements within the USSR proper (Beissinger 2009). That these nationalist mobilizations occurred in waves was key to their success: “the disintegration of the Soviet state could not have taken place without the effects of tidal influences of one nationalism on another”; if “these nationalist revolts [had] occurred in isolation from one another,” then the empire

would not have collapsed (Beissinger 2002: 36). This certainly was the self-understanding of nationalist activists.

Nationalists across the empire not only imitated one another, they encouraged this imitation in the hope that mobilization in other republics would increase the chance of success in their own. The first to make the secessionist move, Baltic nationalists held fast to the proposition that their own liberation depended on the liberation of other republics. As one such nationalist, Edgar Savisaar, put it, "there cannot be a sovereign Estonia if Lithuania, Latvia, and other republics are not sovereign" (quoted in Beissinger 2002: 161). Such activists might as well have said "Nationalists of the Communist World Unite!" In all, 3.9 million people participated in 210 demonstrations "in which members of one nationality expressed solidarity with the secessionist demands of another" between late 1988 and 1991 (Beissinger 2002: 161). This wavelike character of nationalist mobilizations further highlights the crucial causal role of nationalism in the Soviet imperial collapse.

Nationalist mobilization was not simply a last link in a chain of causes that brought down the Soviet Empire. The preceding links in the causal chain – hyper-militarism, economic crisis, reforms – were insufficient to create nationalist mobilization on the large scale that it occurred. As Beissinger argues, the first nationalist upsurges were indeed "strongly advantaged by pre-existing structural conditions" (2002: 38–39). But this was not true for later waves of mobilization; they built on earlier ones. In this respect, nationalist mobilization at time k in context x became a major cause of mobilization at time m in context y . "Institutional change evoked a tide of nationalism into being; but institutions were quickly outstripped by the dizzying pace of events" (Beissinger 2002: 95; for quantitative evidence of such contagion effects see Hale 2000). Again in line with the quantitative analysis offered above, then, nationalism in one part of the empire stimulated the emergence of nationalisms elsewhere.

It should be noted that as nationalist mobilizations emerged, spread, and ultimately produced the collapse of the empire, the Soviet imperial state was until the very end an unwilling participant in the rapidly unfolding drama. During the Karabagh Crisis, the Soviet state declared a state of emergency, arrested movement leaders, sent troops, and near the end tried to use the military "to restore authority to the discredited Azerbaijani Communist party" (Sunny 1993: 137). When demonstrators took to the streets in Tbilisi in April 1989 the military used force and killed more than a dozen people. And when Lithuania's legislature issued a declaration of independence in March 1990, the Soviet state attempted a military coup. "But the crackdown backfired," as "[h]undreds of

thousands" took to the streets in Lithuania, followed by "huge demonstrations" of solidarity in other parts of the empire (Zaslavsky 1997: 74). To be sure, the Soviet state was generally reluctant to use violence against demonstrators, what became known as the Tbilisi syndrome, after the event mentioned above (Beissinger 2002; Sunny 1993). Then again, the counterfactual that force would have worked and therefore that the Soviet imperial elite simply lacked the will to hold the empire together does not conform to the historical lessons learned from the final days of other empires, for instance, of Portuguese control over Angola and Mozambique, or French control over Algeria and Morocco, where violence was met with violence and the empire exited in the end.

Conclusion

The storylines of each imperial collapse entailed distinctive causal sequences, but consistent with the quantitative evidence earlier in this chapter, nationalist mobilization appeared on stage in every case. To be sure, the extent and precise nature of nationalism's causal role differed across these dramas. In increasing order of causal significance, the role of nationalist mobilization in imperial collapse was as follows:

- The Ottoman Empire: Nationalist breakaways led to the weakening of the empire, and this weakened empire then lost the war caused by inter-imperial rivalries, which in turn produced imperial collapse.
- The Habsburg Empire: The nature of the response to Hungarian nationalism made accommodating Slav nationalism impossible, which, combined with the pan-nationalist agitation of Serbia, produced the war that the empire lost for other reasons, which in turn produced imperial collapse.
- France and Britain: Nationalist wars of liberation in Indochina and Algeria, plus nationalist violence and rioting elsewhere (Morocco, Tunisia, Malaya, Kenya, Nyasaland), showed the imperial center that upholding its imperial domain was difficult, costly, and potentially injurious to longer-term economic and geopolitical interests. This prepared the ground for accepting the idea of independence in principle (in the French case) or accepting independence decades earlier than planned (in the British case). Combined with increasingly nationalist and rapidly radicalizing demands by a new generation of African leaders, this brought about the end of both colonial empires through a series of cascading declarations of independence.
- The Soviet Union: Great power economic and military competition led to economic crisis, which prompted political reforms that in turn

produced waves of contagious and mutually reinforcing national mobilizations that then brought the collapse of the empire.

- Portugal: Nationalist wars of liberation in most remaining colonies brought about regime change in the center and the collapse of empire.

Whereas the inferential statistical analysis in the first section of this chapter suggested a relationship between nationalist mobilization and nation-state creation in individual imperial dependencies (see Table 9.2), the historical analysis indicates that nationalism also played an important role in the collapse of the imperial center itself. This is clearest in the Portuguese and Soviet cases, and still quite evident with regard to the British and French empires. In the case of the Habsburg Empire, nationalist mobilization per se was less directly important than the ethnic structure of the empire and the way in which earlier solutions to national problems impeded later ones and thereby triggered a war in which the empire met defeat and collapsed. Only in the Ottoman case can one say that nationalism played merely a minor role in imperial collapse during World War I. It was limited to the previous weakening of the empire through a series of nationalist break-aways, aided by Western support, in the Balkans.

To be sure, geopolitical forces also played an important role both in explaining individual transitions from empire to nation-state and in bringing about imperial collapse. As we have seen in the quantitative section, great power wars unrelated to nationalist independence movements increased the likelihood of such transitions, while imperial strength in the global military and economic arena decreased it. And great power wars played an important role in the collapse of the Habsburg and the Ottoman empires, while geopolitical rivalry stands at the beginning of the causal chain leading to the demise of the Soviet Union, and also helps explain why French and British colonial offices eventually gave in to the idea of African independence. However, none of this amounts to an argument that these geopolitical forces created either nationalism or the cascades of nation-state creations that washed away one imperial domain after the other. Rather, one could conclude, geopolitics variously triggered, accelerated, or delayed a global transformation process whose emergence could not have been avoided and whose subsequent development could not have been suppressed: the rise of a new principle of political legitimacy – self-rule in the name of a nationally defined people – that was embraced by more and more politically ambitious leaders across the world and by ever larger segments of the population. Nationalism, in other words, represents a prime historical force that has reshaped the political outlook of the globe over the past two hundred years.

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10 Obliterating heterogeneity through peace Nationalisms, states and wars, in the Balkans

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Despite general recognition that not all nationalisms end up in violence and that wars can be waged without nationalist hysteria there is a tendency to assume that nationalism and warfare are deeply linked. Moreover many social analysts believe that the most important research task is to explain the causal relationship between the two. Hence some gauge the impact of warfare on the development of nationalist sentiments while others are concerned with the question "What types of nationalism are most likely to cause war?" (Van Evera 1994: 5). In this chapter I argue that nationalism and warfare have a very complex and unpredictable relationship that can neither be adequately captured, nor properly understood, by focusing on the narrow causal connection between the two. Rather than causing one another or being a key effect of each other's actions, both nationalism and war emerge, develop, and expand as the outcome of many *longue durée* processes. Hence, in order to explain the relationship between wars and nationalisms it is crucial to analyze the long-term organizational and ideological transformations that have shaped the world in the last two hundred years. In this context I argue that (coercive, bureaucratic and ideologized) periods of peace matter much more for the growth, expansion, and popular reception of nationalism than times of war. Nationalisms often witnessed in war contexts usually have not brought about these wars, nor have they been forged on the battlefields. Instead, both wars and nationalisms are multifaceted processes that emerge, develop, and are sustained by the continuous organizational and ideological scaffoldings created and enhanced in times of prolonged peace. Since the Balkan Peninsula is often perceived as the epitome of a region teeming with nationalism and warfare I use this case to assess the strength of my general argument.