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Rethinking Empire in the Wake of Soviet Collapse

Mark R. Beissinger

How does the collapse of the Soviet Union alter or confirm existing theories about empires? Perhaps the most important element of the Soviet collapse for theories of empires was the very fact that the Soviet Union was labeled an empire in the first place. After all, the Soviet Union was founded, as Terry Martin has put it, as "the world's first postimperial state,"[1] to the European imperial system. Moreover, according to the formal, legal underpinnings of the contemporary state system, empires are not supposed to exist anymore. They are part of history, supposedly eliminated during the first six decades of the twentieth century and universally replaced by "empire's nemesis"[2]—the modern nation-state, a form of polity whose most conspicuous characteristics are its claims to represent a distinct and legitimate political community, its claim to the exclusive right to rule over a bounded territory, and the recognition of these claims by other polities making the same claims. As Dominic Lieven has observed, "In the second half of the twentieth century the notion of 'empire' disappeared from the contemporary political debate and became the property of historians."[3] By the 1970s and early 1980s little scholarly interest in general was exhibited toward empires and imperialism, with most of the attention arising out of Marxist scholarship and directed toward the study of "dependency" and "neo-imperialism"—the postimperial legacies of a then extinct European imperialism.

This consignment of empires to history seemed based on good reason. Only a few formal remnants of the overseas empires that once encom-

passed the globe still remained (most of these, islands constituting global strategic outposts for European or American power), and as one study of these territories concluded, for most "the trend has been, with the approval of the local population, towards greater integration than to a severing of ties,"[4] so that what once was regarded as colony became a legitimate part of the controlling state. Moreover, unlike the situation fifty or a hundred years ago, no political entity today describes itself as an empire or claims to be pursuing imperial ends. Indeed, for many the very idea that there are contemporary empires seems on the surface absurd. Rather, the principles of territorial sovereignty and of *uti possidetis* (literally, "as you now possess"—the norm once applied to wartime conquests, but now reserved for postcolonial boundaries) encourage acceptance of existing state configurations.

The collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of Soviet control over Eastern Europe challenged these assumptions at their very core, which is why they are potentially such fertile ground for a serious rethinking of empires. The Soviet collapse not only was accompanied by an explosion of nationalism and anti-imperial mobilization; it also gave rise to an explosion of scholarly literature on empires, as the fundamental issues of empire—what empires are, how they emerge, why they collapse, and what follows after them—have once again come to the fore. The vast majority of scholars have approached these issues transhistorically—by which I mean that they assert the fundamental similarity between the Soviet Union and traditional empires, treating the Soviet Union as "the last empire" and the analytical equivalent of the ancient Roman or Hittite Empires, or, at the very least, the British, Tsarist, Ottoman, and Habsburg variants.[5] The problem with this kind of transhistorical thinking is not that one cannot find parallels across the centuries and millennia and across these political units at a high level of abstraction. Empires have cores and peripheries. But then again, so do contemporary states. Empires exercise sovereign control over peoples who consider themselves distinct political societies. But again, this is true of many modern multinational states as well. Empires have been likened to a rimless wheel in which peripheries interact on all significant issues mainly with the center.[6] Yet, were capital flows, communication systems, movements of people, or systems of governmental regulation to be mapped in most modern states, one would likely find much the same spoke-like pattern. Thomas Barfield has suggested that there is good reason that many of the characteristics we commonly associate with empires can be applied as well to most large, modern-day multinational states. As he notes, these similarities should not be surprising because "empires were the templates for large states."

> Historically, empires were the crucibles in which the possibility of large states was realized. Indeed, it is difficult to find examples of large states in areas that were not first united by an empire. . . . It was the experience of empire that changed the political and social environment and created the capacity to rule large areas and populations in the states that followed. . . . Thus large states were most common in areas where empires broke up and the imperial pieces became large states.[7]

Transhistorical theorizing about empires commits what William Sewell has aptly called the fallacy of "experimental time." It fractures history and assumes that one can discover generalizations by comparing instances commonly placed under the same label across different societies widely separated by time, despite the very different assumptions and meanings that agents hold about these phenomena and despite the fact that these phenomena are not entirely unrelated—that is, the example of earlier instances exercises a direct causal influence on subsequent manifestations across time.[8] The meaning of empire shifted enormously over the nineteenth century, shifted still further when applied to the Soviet Union, and may be shifting yet again when applied to systems of authority within the context of a globalizing, unipolar world.[9] Moreover, what we label as empires are not the independent observations that transhistorical interpretations pretend they are, but are rather interdependent phenomena across time in which rulers have learned from previous successes and failures concerning how to institutionalize control over multicultural populations. Soviet leaders, for instance, learned considerable lessons from the collapse of prior multinational empires, and these lessons altered fundamentally the ways in which they (and other rulers) established control over their own population and populations beyond their borders.

In what follows, I examine the ways in which contemporary empires differ from empires of the past. I show that the boundaries between multinational states and multinational empires and between regional or global hegemons and informal empires are more fluid and contested than most theories of empire admit, that claims to nationhood and national self-assertion are central to the process by which contemporary states become empires, and that the structure of nonconsensual control that theories of empire have traditionally emphasized is not a given but rather emerges through interaction between political practice and oppositional politics. I illustrate this with the examples of the Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia, drawing as well on other cases. Like its predecessor state, contemporary Russia remains variably subject to labeling as empire in both its internal and external relationships. These claims have fluctuated over

time, and in some respects Russia has been moving away from widespread recognition as empire in recent years. But contention over whether post-Soviet Russia is an empire remains central to the politics of the Eurasian region, and may in fact never fully disappear.

The transhistorical approach to the study of empires leaves us with the false comfort that the Soviet Union was the "last empire," somehow unique among contemporary states in this quality, and that despite the sudden recognition of the Soviet Union *qua* empire, empires are now—finally and truly—an extinct political breed.[10] I argue quite the contrary. Rather than "the last empire," the Soviet Union should be understood instead as one of the first of a new form of empire whose crucial contributions were its denial of its imperial quality and its use of the very cornerstones of the modern nation-state system—the norms of state sovereignty and national self-determination—as instruments of nonconsensual control over culturally distinct populations, thereby blurring the line between state and empire. In this sense, there is no such thing as "the last empire." Rather, some states in the world today, like the Soviet Union, remain vulnerable to widespread labeling as empire. When ultimately denuded as "imperial," such states are subject to disintegration, reconfiguration, or retrenchment, so that the politics of empire remains central to the ways in which aspects of our contemporary state system are challenged, maintained, and transformed.

Empire as Claim and as Outcome

Because the key concepts that emerge from transhistorical analysis of empire remain highly abstract,[11] some scholars have argued that the term "empire" adds nothing to our conceptual vocabulary and should be exorcized from political analysis.[12] This is one possible approach to dealing with the problems associated with a concept that has been stretched to cover an excessive variety of objects and whose meaning has undergone fundamental shifts.

At the same time, the root issue raised by most theories of empire—that of nonconsensual control over culturally distinct populations—is real and abiding. Despite formal decolonization, the issue has hardly disappeared from our world. Rather, in a certain subset of cases, empires have seemingly reemerged, despite formal decolonization. The Soviet Union and a number of other contemporary states (for example, post-Soviet Russia, the United States, Ethiopia, China, India, Indonesia, Great Britain, Spain, France, Turkey, and Iran) have been variably labeled (and

in some cases, widely labeled) as empires by minorities inhabiting them, by populations abroad resisting their control, or by large portions of the international community. This act of labeling is itself a critically important political phenomenon, as empires in the contemporary world are widely understood to be illegitimate, representing violations of the norms of self-determination and state sovereignty that lie at the basis of the contemporary state system.

Rather than argue that the Soviet Union is mislabeled as an empire and that the term is entirely irrelevant for analysis of its collapse or for political analysis more generally, I argue instead that the Soviet experience begs us to contemplate how those polities we call empires have transformed over time. Such examination reveals how the exercise of nonconsensual control over culturally distinct populations within or beyond a state's borders has altered the increasingly porous boundaries between multinational states and multinational empires and between global or regional hegemons and informal empires, the fundamental identity processes underlying modern conceptions of empire, and the ways in which accusations of empire become a potent category for nationalist resistance against certain states but not others.

In today's world large multinational states and global or regional hegemons are not intrinsically empires in the same way in which ancient empires, European overseas colonial empires, or European overland empires of the nineteenth or early twentieth centuries are usually contemplated. Indeed, most states described as empires today are postimperial in that they emerged in the wake of the collapse of empires, do not claim to be empires, and do not claim to be heirs of previous empires (though some forces within these societies often view them in this fashion). In the nineteenth century it was frequently quipped that Britain had an empire but that Russia was an empire, illustrating the difference between overseas and overland empires. As Ronald Suny has rightfully argued, however, the Soviet Union did not begin as an empire; rather, it became one.[13] Rather than being or having empires in some intrinsic sense, contemporary states are subject to a politics of becoming empires, and it is to that politics which most theories of empire have typically failed to devote attention. If we are to have a concept of empire that is relevant to contemporary phenomena like the Soviet Union, we need to shift away from essentialist conceptions of what empires are to an understanding in which the label of empire itself lies at the center of contention.

This shift from a purely structural and transhistorical understanding of empire to one which places claims-making and identity at the core of what empire is parallels trends within the study of nationhood, in which

nation is no longer taken as a timeless community or substantive reality, but rather, in Rogers Brubaker's words, as "institutionalized form, practical category, and contingent event."[14] Indeed, the parallels between the study of nationalism and the study of imperialism run much deeper than is usually recognized. Much as nations constitute claims to self-determination and sovereignty, empires in the contemporary world are widely understood to represent violations of the norms of self-determination and state sovereignty that lie at the basis of the contemporary nation-state system. Moreover, in today's world use of the term "empire" to describe a state's relationship with a culturally distinct population or with another state is usually a statement that advocates and anticipates that this relationship should and will fall apart, much as the term "nation" implies a certain stance and anticipation of outcome.

But such a shift in perspective also raises questions about whether empire, like nation, is better thought of, as Brubaker puts it, as a "category of practice" rather than a "category of analysis."[15] My answer is that we cannot entirely dispense with thinking about empire (like nation) as a category of analysis. If we were interested in empire only as a claim, there would be no sense in considering empire as anything more than a category of practice. Yet, we are interested in empire not merely as claim, but also as outcome (that is, as a situation in which such claims grow widespread, "stick" with regularity, gain hegemonic use, or become a potent frame for large numbers of people). That the Soviet Union today is routinely labeled as an empire throughout much of the world (even by many Russians)—something that was not true prior to the late 1980s—is a social fact, not merely a category of practice. Like nation or class,[16] empire in today's world is a conceptual variable that emerges out of political and social practice and whose widespread presence or seeming absence merits social scientific explanation. Moreover, contention over the existence of empire (like nation) lies implicit within the use of the concept itself. We lack—at least in English—words like "empirehood" and "empire-ness"— the equivalent of "nationhood" and "nationness" (meaning "the quality of being regarded as a nation") that would allow us speak about empire as a variable attribute rather than as a timeless, reified thing.[17] Much as Brubaker recognized that "To argue against the realist and substantialist way of thinking about nations is not to dispute the reality of nationhood,"[18] understanding empires as claims rather than as things does not undermine the factualness of empire as a political outcome or of "empire-ness" as a variable quality of states. Rather, it begs from us explanations of why certain states are or are not labeled as empires and of how contemporary empires come into being—the latter, of course, being one

of the classic questions which theories of empire have traditionally addressed, but for which they are ill-equipped to tackle in a world in which the label of empire is itself at the center of contention.

Thus, empire today is not a transhistorical form of polity. Rather, empire is better understood as a claim and an outcome, and "empire-ness" as the degree to which a polity gains recognition as empire. Empire today is a claim specific to a particular historical era—an era of nationalism. And it is primarily a subversive vocabulary that seeks to challenge the power of the large multinational state from within on the basis of its violation of norms of self-determination, or the power of the global or regional hegemon from without by invoking norms of state sovereignty. This claim has power in part because of the ways in which the international community goes about recognizing claims to self-determination and sovereignty; in international law, the right to independent statehood is largely restricted to collectivities under colonial, alien, or racial subjugation, whereas sovereignty is primarily contemplated in formal, legalistic terms rather than as empirical control. As an outcome, empire is a situation in which claims to being subject to imperial control grow widespread, gather weight, and become increasingly hegemonic.[19] Although this resonance and recognition of empire as a claim, like claims to nationhood, vary considerably over time and space, there are also cases in which relatively stable outcomes are evident—in which a polity (like the Soviet Union) comes to be routinely referred to as empire, without much reflection concerning how this label came about. Such stable outcomes occur only in the aftermath of successful anti-imperial mobilization and major contraction of state power. But the widespread presence of the discourse is itself a sign that such a contraction is likely imminent.

The Rise of Nationalism and the Structuration of Modern Empires

Any analysis of empires must address what, in most scholarly analyses, is seen as the central feature of all empires: imperial structure. The specifics of scholarly definitions of empire may differ. But at the center of almost all definitions is a claim about empire as a structured relationship of domination. This is true of the classical Marxist literature on the subject as it is of more recent non-Marxist scholarly contributions.[20] Michael Doyle has developed what is probably the most widely cited definition of empire. As Doyle puts it, empire "is a system of interaction between two political entities, one of which, the dominant metropole, exerts political control over

the internal and external policy—the effective sovereignty—of the other, the subordinate periphery." For Doyle, an empire is a relationship in which the sovereignty of one political society is "controlled either formally or informally by a foreign state." In Doyle's analysis, the major issue in defining empire is its relational dimension—and in particular, the question of the identifying the effective control by one political society over another. As Doyle says, his definition implies that "to explain the existence of empire, or a particular empire, one must first demonstrate the existence of control; second, explain why one party expands and establishes such control; and third, explain why the other party submits or fails to resist effectively."[21]

Like most theorists of empire, Doyle focuses excessively on demonstrating the existence and nature of control and insufficiently on the issues of the illegitimate and nonconsensual character of control and the nature of the political societies being controlled. Both omissions are closely bound up with the politics of claims-making that underlies imperial structure. Doyle concentrates on the issue of "effective control" of a subordinated society largely because, drawing on Dahl's understanding of power, he assumes a behavioral approach to empire, thereby allowing him to analyze both formal and informal empires by examining actual control over policy outcomes, irrespective of whether such control is recognized by those subject to it. And though he acknowledges that resistance is one of two key signs by which to judge the presence or absence of "effective control," Doyle does not capture the sense of illegitimate and nonconsensual rule that the contemporary usage of empire most clearly implies. Here, I blame the transhistorical approach assumed by Doyle and most theorists of empire, for throughout most of history empire did not imply illegitimate or nonconsensual rule, though it does so today unambiguously.

Perhaps as serious a problem in Doyle's definition is the fact that center and periphery as political societies are taken as ontologically prior—that is, they are assumed to exist as centers of primary allegiance prior to the establishment of the controlled relationship. This becomes particularly problematic when the political societies that are controlled are assumed to be national in character; this was, of course, the case for the Soviet Union—and has been the case for most empires since the early twentieth century. The failure to address the nature and emergence of the political societies constituting empire is a serious lacuna within most theories of empire when we contemplate that, prior to the last two hundred years, most people throughout the globe thought of themselves in religious, local, class, tribal, and clan terms, not as members of national communi-

ties. For ancient empires this is perhaps not a significant analytical problem, for religious, local, class, tribal, and clan communities in most instances existed prior to the establishment of imperial control, though imperial control often played a significant role in reconfiguring these allegiances. Most ancient empires consisted of control by one elite over another elite, with the primary goal being the establishment of an effective and accepted center of authority over narrower territorial, kinship, tribal, and city-state affiliations.

But when theories of empire are applied to the last two centuries, it is usually assumed that the political societies that are dominated are not religious communities, localities, classes, tribes, or clans, but rather nations or nationalities.[22] Indeed, today we are unlikely to regard a polity that consists of a multitude of religious communities, localities, classes, tribes, or clans as an empire at all—even if such a polity were large, repressive, and created on the basis of conquest.[23] Rather, such a state is likely to be viewed as simply a culturally plural state. This difference between the nature of the political communities said to constitute imperial peripheries in modern and ancient empires is critical, for nationhood is not an inherent quality of human consciousness, but a phenomenon constructed by states and national movements—in fact, movements that frequently define themselves in opposition to empire. Moreover, often a widespread sense of nationness within populations emerges only in or after the process of imperial collapse itself.[24] When addressing the phenomenon of modern empires, most theories of empire leave unaddressed the issue of where national political societies come from, and in many cases, in primordialist fashion, simply assume their longstanding status prior to the establishment of imperial control.

A closer inspection shows that our modern conception of empire is itself a product of the rise of nationalism. The term "empire" (*imperium*) in ancient Rome originally referred to the legal power to issue laws—close in many respects to our modern notion of sovereignty. The concept entered European political discourse to refer to any supreme and extensive political dominion,[25] which, in the premodern world, contrasted with more diffuse or contractual systems of authority. In this sense *imperium* did not necessarily imply sharp differentiation between core and periphery or an illegitimate rule, though it did imply a sovereign power over multiple and diffuse political societies, and it was the sovereign dimension of power rather than its exploitative or dominating role that was empire's most conspicuous feature in the premodern world. When Henry VIII proclaimed England an "empire" in the 1530s, his main intention was to assert his sovereignty vis-à-vis the pope and to declare that he would

not tolerate interference in the affairs of his realm from Rome.[26] As one inquiry into the changing usage of the term concluded:

> If an imaginary reporter had approached some politically-minded men of letters in the late 1830s or early 1840s [in England] with the request to define the terms *Empire* and *imperialism,* clear answers would not have been readily obtained. Some might have come forward with the startling reply that Empire was just another name for the British Isles or, perhaps, a more fanciful name for England.[27]

As late as 1885 Edward A. Freeman, a British historian whose life spanned most of the nineteenth century, observed that "It is only in quite late times within my own memory, that the word 'empire' has come into common use as a set term for something beyond the kingdom."[28]

It is ironic that a term that was essentially a signifier for sovereignty through the early nineteenth century had become, by the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a signifier for the violation of sovereignty. Yet, this transformation provides the vital clue concerning the identity politics and the politics of claims-making embedded within empire's contemporary usage. Concern about the consequences of empire in the eighteenth century revolved largely around the implications of unit size for individual liberty, with English and French political philosophers (such as Montesquieu, Rousseau, and Burke) arguing, based on their interpretation of the Roman experience, that large and extensive states were more likely to suppress individual freedoms. Still, the essence of their critiques was an attack on the institutions of absolute monarchy, not an attack on colonialism. A discourse of national self-determination was not introduced into the meaning of empire until the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Several factors converged to bring about this massive transformation in meaning: (1) the growth of ethnically based nationalist movements oriented against European overland empires, particularly in Ireland, the Balkans, and East Central Europe, and the politicization of the issue of self-determination within Europe itself; (2) the "high" imperialism of the 1870s and 1880s, when European empires carved up Africa and expanded their presence in Asia in a rush for colonies, with a number of new participants (such as Germany and Belgium) entering the fray, creating a truly global system of European empires that left few corners of the world unclaimed; and (3) the growth of anti-imperial sentiment within the core cultural groups of European empires, fueled in particular by the Boer and Spanish-American wars, and politicized specifically by socialist oppositions within Europe. Within the overland empires of East

Central Europe and the Balkans, as ideas of democracy and nationhood spread eastward, nationalist entrepreneurs contrasted the self-determination of the nation with alien rule by the Habsburg, Ottoman, or Romanov Empires.

Thus, even before the creation of the first systematic theories of empire, a subtle transformation had already occurred in the nature and meaning of the term. Would-be nations were coming to constitute the basic units over which empires ruled, empires had come to signify the violation of sovereignty rather than sovereignty, and national self-determination had become the main mode by which empire was to be transcended. The rise of the word "imperialism" as a term of abuse in the late nineteenth century and the appearance of the first theories of imperialism in the early twentieth century further transformed the meaning of empire by mobilizing anti-imperial sentiment within imperial metropoles, connecting war and exploitation with mechanics of European industrial capitalism, and providing indigenous elites within European colonies with a powerful rationale for claiming national status for their territories. With the end of World War I, the principle of national self-determination was applied as the basis for postwar settlement in those overland European empires that had lost the war; meanwhile, African and Asian possessions of the German and Ottoman Empires were transformed temporarily into French and British colonial mandates for, as the League of Nations Covenant put it, "peoples not yet able to stand by themselves under the strenuous conditions of the modern world."[29] It was here that would-be nations were confirmed as the fundamental structures constituting empires, and empire was transformed into an unambiguous pejorative signaling the violation of sovereignty rather than sovereignty. As Koebner and Schmidt note, this meaning of the term became prevalent in the twentieth century, enabling "peoples in distant regions of the earth, living without any traditions in common, to feel united in fighting a joint enemy."[30]

In short, since at least the end of World War I, contemporary empires have been assumed to be based on nonconsensual rule and to consist of would-be or dominated nations, whose legitimate claims to self-determination and sovereignty have been violated. In this sense, imperial structure is not a given; rather, the very notions of center and periphery as applied to modern empires are in significant part the product of the rise of nationalism. And as most scholars of nationalism would recognize, nations are not simply matters of objective inequalities, flows of resources, patterns of interaction, or facts of military conquest. They are claims to a certain status. Indeed, in the case of the decolonization of European over-

seas empires, little more than the struggle against imperialism formed the basis for the claim to nationhood.[31] What is so obviously missing in most discussions of imperial structure is the issue of the emergence of a separate and dominated *national* political community. Doyle, for example, argues at one point that "imperial government is a sovereignty that lacks a community"[32]—a statement that parallels closely Gellner's definition of nationalism as "a political principle, which holds that the political and national unit should be congruent."[33] Yet, Doyle fails to address the issue of where a sense of community comes from. Structural theories of empire beg the question of how actual practices of control and the resistance to control (that is, state policies such as segregation, integration, discrimination, extermination, autonomization, and assimilation, as well as opposition practices of identity construction and mobilization) play themselves out in the emergence of a sense of dominated national political community or, conversely, in a sense of legitimate civic authority.

The point is that the structure that we ascribe to modern empires cannot be separated from the practices engaged in by authority that fail to produce a sense of legitimate rule and the politics of national identity that generates successful resistance. Most theories of empire do not recognize the claims and identity processes embedded within empire, since they do not problematize how the sense of structural differentiation they posit comes about. But recognizing this assumption moves us still further: if nonconsensual control and claims to nationhood are central to what makes an empire (at least since the early twentieth century), then it is not difficult to imagine that rulers might eventually recognize this as well and adjust, presenting control as consensual when it is not and problematizing the boundary between states and empires. In fact, the Soviet state played a pivotal role in the history of empires precisely in fuzzing the boundary between state and empire and in pioneering forms of nonconsensual control by which culturally distinct populations within a state and beyond the borders of a state could be ruled.

Self-Determination, Sovereignty, and Nonconsensual Control

Various factors explain why the fluid boundary between states and empires was not a central concern of scholarly inquiry into empire until recently. For one thing, the demise of European overseas empires did not raise the issue boldly. European overseas empires rested on a much clearer dualism between citizen and subject than was true of overland empires, though recent scholarship has realized that the divide between

core and periphery was never as crisp and impermeable in European overseas empires as was typically described in most theories of imperialism. As recent studies have argued, the colonies of early modern Europe are better understood not as integrated with and highly controlled from an imperial core, but rather as "reflections or logical extensions of the states to which they were symbolically attached," with colonies often possessing a great deal of autonomy and independent authority.[34] Moreover, as Frederick Cooper and Ann Stoler tell us, "The otherness of colonized persons was neither inherent nor stable," that "difference had to be defined and maintained," and that European overseas empires "were imagined in relation to contiguous as well as noncontiguous territory," so that "'nation-building' and 'empire-building' were mutually constitutive projects."[35]

The fluid boundary between multinational state and multinational empire was also not raised starkly by the collapse of European overland empires (Tsarist, Habsburg, and Ottoman) at the end of World War I. Again, this was not because core and periphery were precisely delineated in these empires. They were not. Many scholars have noted that prior to the nineteenth century it would have been difficult even to identify clear cores and peripheries in most overland empires, at least in any ethnic or national sense. The Ottoman Empire, for instance, was never dominated by a Turkish ethnie; many of its leading personnel were recruited from among the Greeks and Slavs of the Balkans. The Habsburg and Russian Empires were aristocratic empires. Both incorporated aristocratic elites from disparate cultures (in the case of the Habsburgs, an actual "Dual Monarchy" with Hungary). Neither empire defined itself in ethnic terms, but rather territorially, seeking to foster loyalty to the imperial enterprise irrespective of the cultural and religious backgrounds of its subjects.

The failure to problematize the fluid boundary between multinational state and multinational empire in these cases was due primarily to the fact that these entities were empires precisely because they claimed to be empires. They saw nothing wrong with the imperial label, understood it in the older sense as a claim to sovereign control, sought to build legitimacy around the figures of their emperors, and saw the greatness of their imperial enterprises as the primary foundation for political loyalty. Alex Motyl has argued that whether a polity calls itself an empire is irrelevant; rather, "state" and "empire" are conceptual entities that we as scholars create, and what matters instead are the criteria by which we choose to call them—that is, the imperialism of the scholar.[36] But Motyl's reasoning is faulty, for in this instance Type II errors (failing to reject a false null hypothesis) are much more likely than Type I errors (rejecting a true null

hypothesis). It is much easier to develop criteria (such as size, power, or cultural makeup) that would enable us to decide that a polity does not qualify to be an empire despite its rulers' claims to be one than it is to develop criteria that would allow us to reject a polity's claim not to be an empire, particularly in a postimperial world of states in which the label of empire is associated with illegitimacy and the expectation that the polity will disintegrate. Precisely because we no longer live in a world of naked force but in a world of mass politics in which legitimation and image matter tremendously, it makes an enormous difference how polities present themselves to their populations and to the world. Today, no state that cares about its legitimacy would dare label itself an empire, and this fact tells much about how the nature of control—as Doyle noted, the central issue of empire—has transformed. Today, in a world of mass politics, domination can certainly continue to exist, but it can no longer understand itself or project itself as domination.[37]

It was precisely their inability to adjust to the new conditions created by the rise of mass politics that proved the undoing of the Habsburg, Tsarist, and Ottoman Empires. These three self-styled empires took radically different approaches to their national problems in the face of relatively similar pressures of modernization and international competition. Yet, none could be preserved in the face of rising demands for mass inclusion from the intelligentsia, mobilization for national self-determination among a number of minorities, and the obsolescence of imperial formulas for mass legitimation. State-building and modernization imperatives, imposed in part because of rivalries with other European empires, necessitated simultaneously the education of subject populations and attempts to foster their greater integration—a contradictory mix that led toward heightened cultural awareness (and, often, cultural grievance) among newly created national intelligentsias. Most important, in all three empires old formulas for legitimating imperial rule held declining sway within populations in a world whose vocabulary was increasingly national, mass-based, and rooted in notions of popular sovereignty.

In the Soviet case, however, we are dealing with a fundamentally different phenomenon from self-avowed European empires. As Dominic Lieven has observed, "A Russianist by definition comes to the study of empire from a strange angle."[38] This strange angle is forced on us because of the ways in which Bolshevik leaders (in contrast to previous empires, and indeed, in direct response to their collapse) consciously utilized the principles of national self-determination and state sovereignty as modes of structuring nonconsensual control, thereby obfuscating the boundaries between coercion and consent, empire and state. Terry Martin has aptly

pointed to how the failed examples of the Habsburg, Tsarist, and Ottoman Empires strongly affected the way in which the Bolsheviks fashioned their nationality policies.

> Lenin and Stalin understood very well the danger of being labeled an empire in the age of nationalism. In fact, here lies the real connection between the Soviet Union's national constitution and the collapse of the Habsburg and Ottoman empires. The nationalities crisis and final collapse of the Habsburg empire made an enormous impression on Lenin and Stalin, who viewed it as an object lesson in the danger of being perceived by their population as an empire. As a result, the Soviet Union became the first multiethnic state in world history to define itself as an anti-imperial state. They were not indifferent to the word "empire." They rejected it explicitly.[39]

Instead, after having established control over much of the territory of the Tsarist Empire by force, Bolshevik leaders constructed a specifically state form of ethnofederalism based on principles of sovereignty and self-determination. The Bolsheviks, of course, originally had rejected a federal solution to the Russian Empire's "nationality question." But nation-state forms crept into Marxism-Leninism as a way of disarming non-Russian nationalism after numerous nationalist movements during the Civil War had attempted to construct their own national states—which, in most cases, were overrun by the Red Army. Thus, the Soviet state, in sharp distinction from all European powers at the time and even the United States, would not have formal colonies and would not constitute itself as an openly imperial enterprise, but would rather project itself as a post-imperial form of power, a civic state that aimed to transcend national oppression in the name of class solidarity. What Martin calls the Soviet "Affirmative Action Empire" specifically attacked "Great Russian chauvinism" and instead sought to disarm nationalism by granting diminished forms of nationhood—national territories, cultural autonomy, and indigenous leaderships—to minority populations. The rationale was that by granting elements of self-determination, formal sovereignty, and cultural autonomy, the Soviet state could avoid the sense of grievance that had fueled the collapse of the Habsburg, Tsarist, and Ottoman Empires, and as socialism gained hold and class relationships were transformed, the basis for national discord would dissolve. The republics constituting the new Soviet state were legally sovereign entities that mimicked nation-state form, even though in substance they were thickly controlled from Moscow. According to the Soviet constitution, the USSR was a voluntary

federation, with union republics supposedly retaining the right to secede—a legal fiction that eventually came back to haunt Soviet leaders.

In this respect, the Soviet Union's internal organization represented a radically different form of politics from nineteenth-century European empires. It cloaked nonconsensual control in the language of self-determination and utilized norms of self-determination and sovereignty to blur the line between domination and consent. The Soviet Union was in this respect a direct response to the new world of mass politics that had undermined the Habsburg, Tsarist, and Ottoman Empires—a world in which form and appearance had come to matter equally in shaping public perceptions as substance. Despite the widespread practice of violence and coercion against society in the Stalinist era, the extent to which Soviet control over its non-Russian territories was nonconsensual varied over space and time. Although revolts against Stalinist rule did take place (particularly during and after World War II in the Northern Caucasus and among groups incorporated as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact), the Soviet state also at times enjoyed significant support among segments of its minority populations—injecting further uncertainty concerning whether the Soviet state rested on domination or consent, was empire or state. By the late 1950s and early 1960s, even most Balts had reconciled themselves to Soviet rule and its seeming immutability. On the eve of perestroika it was widely argued that Soviet institutions had achieved a degree of broad-based legitimacy within the Soviet population and that persuasive methods of rule had replaced state-sponsored intimidation. Indeed, this was one of the assumptions underlying the introduction of glasnost in the first place. But whatever legitimacy the Soviet regime had accumulated dissipated under the influence of glasnost, its revelations of Stalinist crimes, and the tide of anti-imperial nationalism that it precipitated, so that opposition movements from all groups, Russians included, eventually came to claim victimization at the hands of a Soviet "empire."

The international dimension of Soviet control also differed sharply from previous empires in the use of nominally independent nation-state units that Moscow covertly penetrated and monitored as a means for holding sway over territories and populations beyond Soviet state borders. Traditional overseas and overland empires had distinct practices for controlling political units that they did not intend to incorporate. Suzerainty originated in feudal law to describe the mutual obligations between lord and vassal and, with the rise of the modern state, came to refer to a limited sovereignty exercised by a dominant state over a dependent state. The notion of protectorate, which developed out of Roman imperial practice and is still used today in international law to recognize the legitimacy of

remaining overseas colonial possessions, similarly denotes an ill-defined sovereignty of one state over another, especially in the area of defense and foreign relations. Protectorates imply a paternalistic and potentially temporary authority exercised in the interest of a population, whereas suzerainty implies a much more personalistic and patrimonial relationship of obligation between rulers. Even though scholars of imperialism refer to these as practices of "informal empire" (generally because they involved the exercise of control outside an empire's formal boundaries), in most cases suzerainty and protectorate were formal, legal, and overt relationships. Both practices were intimately associated with imperialism and colonialism and therefore inappropriate for the exercise of large-scale control in a postimperial world in which form and appearance mattered.

By contrast, Soviet rulers perfected the use of the modern nation-state form for constructing a covert form of informal control (informal in the sense of being outside the state's formal boundaries), thereby again blurring the line between voluntary and involuntary rule. Analogous phenomena had occurred earlier; the Athenian Empire, for instance, had exercised control over a series of independent Greek city-states by manipulating them through threats and maintaining hegemony over their internal politics. But what distinguished the Soviet practice of informal empire in Eastern Europe from the Athenian Empire was the way in which it utilized modern norms of state sovereignty to solidify control beyond its borders. This was not an entirely unique Russian invention. The United States in 1903 had utilized similar methods for gaining control over the Panama Canal, engineering the secession of Panama from Colombia, and then utilizing the new Panamanian state to keep foreign powers out and to grant exclusive control over the canal.[40] But no polity ever was as effective or as systematic in doing this as the Soviet state.

The practice first emerged in Russia at the time of the Russian Civil War, when it was unclear whether to incorporate territories of the former Tsarist Empire directly into the Russian Soviet Socialist Republic or simply to bind them by international treaty and party controls to Moscow. Ukraine, Belorussia, and the Transcaucasus at first were treated by the early Soviet leaders as legally independent states bound only by treaty to Soviet Russia, though eventually these republics formed the basis for the USSR. As an alternative to integration, in the early 1920s the concept of "people's republics" was invented to deal with territories that had previously had a suzerainty relationship with the Tsarist Empire (Bukhara and Khiva) or where it was believed that formal independence might help ward off interventions by foreign powers when Bolshevik ability to back

up control with force was weak (such as against the Japanese in the Far East and the Chinese in Tuva and Mongolia). Here, the norms of state sovereignty were used to extend control further than Bolshevik resources would have otherwise permitted and to prevent outside powers or diaspora populations from interfering with Bolshevik influence. Eventually, the Far Eastern People's Republic was abolished and was directly incorporated into the Russian republic when the threat of Japanese occupation receded, whereas the Khivan and Bukharan people's republics were transformed in 1924 into the republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan. Mongolia and Tuva, however, remained formally independent during these years, though their affairs were tightly controlled from Moscow.[41]

Some East European Communists, upon coming to power, sought to integrate their states directly into the USSR as union republics. But for the most part integration was not the solution pursued after World War II. Instead, Stalin opted to create people's republics, which in theory were supposed to be a halfway stage between a bourgeois and a Soviet republic (though the goal of integration as a Soviet republic was never seriously pursued).[42] Again, the rationale for using sovereign state forms to extend power beyond one's borders was tactical, reflecting the inability to integrate the vast territories conquered after the war and the desire to exclude external powers and diasporas from interfering with Soviet control. This rationale is exemplified by the starkly different fates that befell the Baltic states and Poland: incorporation of the former directly into the USSR, but continuation of Poland as an independent state after World War II. Both Poland and the Baltics had been territories of the Tsarist Empire lost at the time of the Russian Revolution. Both were hotbeds of national resistance to Soviet control. Their different fates had more to do with the political contexts in which these regions came under Soviet domination. The Balts were initially incorporated as part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop lands in 1939–40, when Nazi complicity to incorporation meant that international restraints against incorporation were few, and the capabilities to exercise control were in place. Even so, the charade was choreographed to appear as voluntaristic acts of self-determination. Those portions of Poland that were occupied by the Soviets at the time were incorporated directly into Ukraine, Belorussia, and Lithuania. By contrast, control over those territories of Poland not incorporated into the USSR in 1939 took place during the early Cold War, when, as Adam Ulam noted, contrary to Western perceptions at the time, the Soviet Union was weak and overextended.[43] By utilizing norms of state sovereignty while penetrating and monitoring local governments, the Soviets created a buffer zone between the USSR and Western Europe, excluded the influ-

ence of external powers and diaspora populations from the region, and mobilized the power of numbers to demonstrate to the Soviet population the correctness of the socialist path by creating socialist state units akin to the USSR. This system of control enjoyed some degree of complicity by the Western powers, which at Yalta initially accepted Soviet control over Eastern Europe and which later, by the detente era, accepted it as a normal fact of geopolitics. But Soviet domination in Eastern Europe differed in quite significant ways from the forms of informal control used by European colonial powers. Soviet domination was instead a masked form of control—a system of states (and eventually, a formal alliance of states) which were recognized juridically by the international community of states as sovereign entities, but whose politics were controlled from abroad through multiple covert channels. In this sense, the Soviet system was an informal empire well adapted to a world of states; it is indeed now viewed by international relations experts as "the most striking modern example of an informal empire."[44]

In a context in which the line between states and empires has become blurred, empires are no longer simply about control. They are also about claims to nationhood and about the illegitimate and nonconsensual nature of control. But one of the crucial consequences of this is that, although hidden transcripts of resistance may well function beneath the surface of politics, overt resistance becomes the main criteria used by most observers to judge whether a relationship is "imperial." With respect to hegemonic structures in general, John Ikenberry and Charles Kupchan have observed that "the outcomes we would expect to see if coercion were at work may not differ substantially from those associated with socialization," making it "difficult to determine the extent to which a specific outcome follows from either the manipulation of material incentives or the alteration of substantive beliefs."[45] Effective control in this sense is not a sufficient indicator of empire if empire is understood as based in lack of consent. David Lake has elaborated on this problem further with respect to identifying an informal imperial relationship:

> The problem with recognizing any informal [imperial] relationship is that the exercise of residual rights of control is evident only in out-of-equilibrium behavior. In the case of an informal empire, for instance, when the limited rights of the client are understood by both parties, no resistance occurs, no overt coercion is necessary, and the local government complies with the wishes of the dominant state *as if* in an alliance. Only if the client tests its constraints or the patron's patience will the informal imperial controls become manifest.[46]

In the case of Eastern Europe, the frequent and extensive resistance offered by populations in East Germany, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia against Soviet domination made Soviet repression and nonconsensual control transparent, causing widespread identification of this situation as one of informal empire (despite significant pockets of support for Soviet control in East Europe—most notably, in Bulgaria). By contrast, internal recognition of the Soviet Union as an empire occurred relatively suddenly—in the course of weeks, months, or a few years, and only in interaction with the nationalist mobilization of other groups. On the eve of the collapse of the USSR, few observers treated the USSR internally as an empire. Rather, widespread recognition of the Soviet Union as an empire—both among its own citizens and abroad—came as part of a massive upsurge of nationalist contention within a short time that affected multiple groups and ultimately destroyed the Soviet state. Moreover, it was a process that was differential across these groups, with particular structural conditions—urbanization, assimilation, group size, and ethnofederal status—playing large roles in whether potential target audiences responded to anti-imperial frames.[47] Eventually, as the future of the Soviet state grew bleak, even nomenklatura elites jumped onto the anti-imperial bandwagon, seeing in it a path to the maintenance and consolidation of their power. In short, in the contemporary world resistance is central to the making of empires. Highly centralized control over a multinational population, even if it resembles the spoke-like rimless wheel that many see as a hallmark of empire, is unlikely to be recognized as empire unless it is accompanied by significant resistance.

How Contemporary States Become Empires

Let me summarize and elaborate on the argument up to this point. First, although nonconsensual control over culturally distinct populations within or beyond a state's borders has been the core idea of what empires are about since the term altered meaning in the nineteenth century, scholars have failed to devote sufficient attention to the nature of the entities being controlled and how the structure that scholars have traditionally identified as central to empire comes about. Empires in the contemporary world are not just relationships of control of one political society over another; they are, rather, *illegitimate* relationships of control specifically by one *national* political society over another. Thus, embedded within our contemporary understanding of empires are a politics of *national* identity and a politics of *claims-making* that were not part of the

politics of empire prior to the nineteenth century. This renders trans-
historical, structural arguments about empire problematic.

Second, in the contemporary world the difference between large multi-
national states and empires has grown fuzzy, in part because most large
multinational states are built on the templates of former empires, in
part because the nature of control over culturally distinct populations has
altered, with norms of state sovereignty and self-determination coming to
be harnessed by states toward purposes of control. Ian Clark has observed
that although much of the discourse of the post-Cold War order has "been
avowedly about self-determination, there comes a point where the 'soli-
darist' dimensions of an international society might also be regarded as
a veiled form of hegemony or empire." As Clark argues, the question that
needs to be addressed today "is the extent to which it is these very prin-
ciples of international legitimacy that define the nature of the contem-
porary imperial project. Imperial rule . . . may have lost its legitimacy, but
might legitimacy be the new form of imperial rule?"[48] The Soviet Union's
practice of using international norms of self-determination and sover-
eignty as ways of structuring control was in large part responsible for this
transformation.[49] Within a world in which sovereignty and self-determi-
nation are established norms, empire has become a part of the opposi-
tional politics used by those challenging the large multinational states or
hegemonic power beyond state borders.

Third, scholars need to pay greater attention to how specific state prac-
tices translate into a sense of dominated national community within those
states that come to be widely labeled as empires. In addition to coercion
and repression, specific state policies of inequality, segregation, discrimi-
nation, assimilation, or integration are likely to be implicated in the pro-
duction of an oppositional consciousness. By focusing on such policies,
scholars can engage the counterfactuals of empire. Was, for instance, post-
Franco Spain headed toward widespread accusations of representing
the Castillian Empire before it gave significant autonomy to Basques and
Catalans in 1978? Could the Soviet Union have avoided becoming an
empire if it had continued with the more open version of ethnofederal-
ism it practiced in the mid-1920s, if it had not incorporated the Balts in
1940, or if it had avoided the practice of ethnofederalism altogether? Ulti-
mately, the fundamental difference between a large multinational state
and a multinational empire is not the presence or absence of objective
structures of control or even policies of inequality and discrimination, but
rather whether politics and policies are accepted as "ours" or rejected as
"theirs." Practices of nonconsensual control and objective inequalities
play central roles in what makes grievance likely. But grievance is a col-
lective claim, not an objective condition.

Fourth, the central problem of analysis posed by empires in a post-imperial world is again not whether a state is an empire in some timeless or essential manner, but rather how the porous boundary between state and empire is traversed through a contentious politics of claims-making—that is, the process by which a multinational state comes to be recognized as an empire or an empire comes to be recognized as a state. How do we recognize empire not merely as a claim, but also as an outcome? There is some truth in the assertion that empires in today's world are merely another name for failed states, and an empire can be unambiguously recognized only after a multinational state has collapsed, particularly if we think of empire as a stable and irrevocable quality. But in cases like the Soviet Union or Ethiopia, a widespread recognition of empire emerged prior to state collapse and was part of the process that brought about state collapse, not merely a reflection of the outcome of state failure. The main indicator by which most people judge whether a polity is or is not an empire today is the extent to which resistance to control is widespread and successful, so that resistance to a large extent makes empires. Thus, any explanation of the structuration of contemporary empires must deal with the ways in which empires emerge out of a politics of resistance, whether this be in part as an expression of mass resistance against non-consensual rule or in part as the use of anti-imperial language by political entrepreneurs seeking to establish or to consolidate their power.

Fifth, the past makes a difference. Actually, in the vast majority of cases of failed states over the last fifty years, the failed state was rarely if ever referred to as an empire, even if failure occurred within a multinational context.[50] Thus, not all large multinational states are subject to widespread charges of empire, even in the context of state failure. Rather, it is almost exclusively those large multinational states built out of the fragments of former imperial cores—a fact that points to the important role of history as both a frame and a resource for those challenging multinational states. Dominic Lieven has commented that India and Indonesia, like the Soviet Union, were also vast multiethnic countries, but have managed to survive because they do not bear "the historical stigma of empire" in the same way that the Soviet Union did.[51] Terry Martin has recently elaborated on this idea with respect to the Soviet Union, arguing that Lenin and Stalin were responding precisely to the danger posed by the historical stigma of empire when they fashioned Soviet ethnofederalism. As Martin notes, "India and Indonesia had the benefit of the doubt; they would have to prove to their subjects and the world that they were empires; the Soviet Union would have to prove the opposite."[52] Although it would be difficult to argue that Indonesian or Nigerian policies toward minorities were significantly less exploitative than those of the Soviet state,

in general discourses of empire in these cases have been muted. Why have these regimes, even though they are built on the templates of empires in place prior to European colonization, been successful in eluding the "historical stigma of empire" while the Soviet Union was not? The reason seems related to the difference between a postcolonial and a postimperial state. Occupation and reconfiguration by an outside power and the moral cleansing effect of gaining independence through struggle against European colonialism make it more difficult for accusations of empire to stick, irrespective of the objective nature of the policies pursued.[53]

Finally, recognition of a polity as an empire is likely to be more widespread not only in the wake of state collapse, but also when new regimes are attempting to extend or consolidate their control over a culturally distinct population or when states attempt to project their power abroad in new and intrusive ways.[54] Thus, America's war against Iraq beginning in 2003 evoked widespread accusations of American empire, as the United States moved to exert its power in new and unexpected ways within the world system. Actions that extend state power but do so in self-defense are less likely to gain the imperial label, which is why most acts of state expansion in the contemporary world are portrayed as acts of self-defense rather than territorial aggrandizement—a reflection of the power of international norms to shape the ways in which we understand events. By contrast, claims that a polity is an empire are likely to recede in periods of domestic and international stability or when a territory or group has been subject to longstanding control. The number of years in which a territory is controlled by a state often has a powerful effect on whether a population or the international community labels that state's rule as imperial.

A number of postimperial states built around former imperial cores (Austria, Germany, Sweden, Portugal, Belgium, and Japan, for example) now are rarely subject to accusations of empire. In these cases, defeat in war, revolution, foreign occupation, and/or radical downsizing decreased the prevalence of labeling as empire—at least as long as active mobilization by territorially concentrated minorities and attempts to project power abroad remained limited. By contrast, Russia, Ethiopia, China, Britain, France, Spain, Turkey, the United States, and Iran are all, to varying degrees, still subjected to labeling as empires—in large part because they were never subjected to extensive foreign occupation, still contain territorially concentrated minorities who, in significant numbers, reject the dominance of these states over them, and in some cases (such as the United States and France) are active in projecting their power abroad in violent and often controversial ways.[55]

Thus, the politics of becoming an empire in the contemporary world can be understood as a form of tipping game in which perceptions of a polity as an empire vary over time, depending on a series of factors: (1) the economic, social, cultural, and political policies of the state that structure nonconsensual control and foster a sense of national identity; (2) the degree of nationalist resistance to state efforts to project control; (3) the historical background of the state and whether a "stigma" of historical empire exists; (4) the bandwagon effects produced by state strength or weakness; (5) whether a state attempts to consolidate or extend control over populations (either within or outside the state) in new ways; and (6) whether an action is legitimated as self-defense. Indeed, several empire games are being played simultaneously: between states and nationalist oppositions to states (either internally or abroad) over support within subordinate populations; between states and nationalist oppositions to states over support within the international community (also an important community of "observers"); and between states and nationalist oppositions to states over support within politically dominant populations (the loss of legitimacy within dominant populations often being a critical element in the recognition of a relationship as "imperial" and in bringing about change in state control).

Post-Soviet Russia and the Politics of Empire

A case study of one postimperial state—post-Soviet Russia—illustrates some of the ways in which postimperial states can continue to be subject to widespread labeling as empire. Since its birth in 1991, post-Soviet Russia has remained variably subject to labeling as empire in both its internal and external relationships. These claims have varied over time and space and remain widespread within some contexts, though in many respects post-Soviet Russia has been gradually moving away from widespread recognition as empire, in spite of its bloody war in Chechnya. Contention over whether post-Soviet Russia is an empire has remained a central aspect of politics in the Eurasian region. The ebb and flow of such accusations illustrate how states negotiate the porous boundary between empire and multinational state and the factors that help give rise to contemporary empires.

Despite the collapse of the Soviet Union, the historical stigma of empire continues to hang over post-Soviet Russia, just as it did over the Soviet state. As Vladimir Putin noted shortly after becoming Russian president in March 2000, "In our experience, Russia is still perceived as a

remnant of the former Soviet Union." Putin contended that this view is wrong, as the new Russia "is not an empire," but rather "a self-confident power with a great future."[56] This statement, of course, was made only months after Putin had initiated the Second Chechen War, which produced a massive and devastating assault on the city of Grozny (the second in five years), tens of thousands of civilian deaths, and hundreds of thousands of refugees. Today, Russia remains subject to labeling as empire, both by observers abroad and within its own borders. As Charles King recently wrote in the pages of *Foreign Affairs*:

> Russia is still something close to an empire—an electoral one, perhaps, but a political system whose essential attributes are simply not those of a modern state. Central power, where it exists, is exercised through sub-alterns who function as effective tax- and ballot-farmers: they surrender up a portion of local revenue and deliver the votes for the center's designated candidates in national elections in exchange for the center's letting them run their own fiefdoms. Viceroys sent from the capital keep tabs on local potentates but generally leave them to their own devices. State monopolies or privileged private companies secure strategic resources and keep open the conduits that provide money to the metropole. The conscript military, weak and in crisis, is given the task of policing the restless frontier—fighting a hot war in Chechnya and patrolling the ceasefire lines of cold ones in the borderland emirates of Moldova, Georgia, and Tajikistan. Such arrangements do make for federalism of a sort, but in an older sense of the word. The concept comes, after all, from Rome's practice of accommodating threatening peoples by settling them inside the empire and paying them to be foederati, or self-governing border guards. It is federalism as an imperial survival strategy, not as a way of bringing government closer to the governed.[57]

Yet, despite King's suspicion that empire may be masquerading as federalism once again, and despite the brutality of the Chechen wars, charges of empire by some of Russia's minorities have grown less frequent in recent years, as Russian control over its non-Russian territories has stabilized, mobilization has diminished, and opportunities to contest state boundaries have dissipated.

Accusations of post-Soviet empire were widespread among non-Russian nationalist activists in the immediate aftermath of the Soviet collapse. Russia's minorities were among the last groups to mobilize within the tide of nationalism that brought about the collapse of the Soviet state. This lateness within the tide was shaped to a large extent by their position within

the ethnofederal system. Whereas nationalist movements among groups with union republics were strongly influenced by the anticolonial frame developed by Baltic nationalist movements, nationalist movements among minorities within the Russian Federation focused instead in the late 1980s on raising their status from autonomous to union republics, often seeing the USSR government as an ally in this struggle against the Russian republic.[58] The parade of sovereignties in the second half of 1990, in which federal subunit after federal subunit (including Russia) went about declaring sovereignty, exercised a strong effect on the non-Russian republics of Russia. But it was only in 1991, as the collapse of the Soviet Union became imminent, that nationalist movements within a few of Russia's non-Russian republics—most conspicuously, Chechnya and Tatarstan—began to agitate for full-scale independence, treating both Soviet and Russian republican rule as forms of Russian colonial power. Mobilization in Chechnya and Tatarstan against Russian imperialism reached its peak in the aftermath of the August 1991 coup, when the Soviet government collapsed, union republics declared their independence, and effective authority fell into the hands of Boris Yeltsin's government.

Inspired by these events, an anticolonial revolution was carried out in Chechnya in the fall of 1991 that brought General Dzhokhar Dudaev to power, leading to the declaration of Chechen independence from Moscow. Moscow refused to recognize this act, instead insisting that Chechnya remained an integral part of the Russian Federation. The failure of Russia's repeated attempts to overthrow the Dudaev regime and to reestablish control over Chechnya eventually led to the First Chechen War, from 1994 to 1996. As Yeltsin said in his address justifying what he referred to as the "police action" in Chechnya, Russian soldiers were merely "protecting the unity of Russia," an "indispensable condition for the existence of the Russian state."[59] However, the Russian involvement in Chechnya was widely viewed, both within Russia and outside, as an act of resurgent Russian imperialism (not to mention how most Chechens understood these events—as merely the continuation of a 150-year armed resistance to Russian imperial power).[60] These perceptions were compounded by the incompetence of the Russian military effort, which, despite its brutality, not only failed to extinguish Chechen resistance, but in the end also saw the city of Grozny recaptured by the insurgents.

By contrast, the Second Chechen War (1999–), which emerged in response to a series of terrorist acts carried out by Chechen Islamic radicals in Russia and the attempt by these groups to export Islamic revolution to neighboring Daghestan, has been more readily accepted by the international community and by Russia's own population. Rising global

fears of Islamic radicalism fostered a very different international climate. And though the Second Chechen War has been as brutal (perhaps more brutal) than the first, the more successful effort by the Russian military to marginalize Chechen rebels and the continuing spate of terrorist acts carried out by Chechen fighters within Russia have helped to undermine accusations of empire against Russia—at least within the international community and among Russia's other minorities. Devastated and exhausted by two successive wars, much of Chechen society itself has been forced by circumstances to accept Muscovite control begrudgingly. Putin has argued that the Chechens "are not a defeated people. They are a liberated people."[61] Russia's continued use of norms of self-determination and sovereignty as modes of control is well illustrated by the March 2003 referendum held in Chechnya, under severe conditions of war and widespread violations of human rights, over a new constitution for the territory that proclaimed Chechnya "an inalienable part of the territory of the Russian Federation." (Not surprisingly, the referendum won overwhelmingly.)[62]

With the collapse of the Soviet state, Tatarstan was similarly affected by a major wave of anticolonial mobilization in 1991. Public opinion polls in Tatarstan in fall 1991 showed that 86 percent of Tatars favored the complete independence of Tatarstan,[63] and a referendum held in March 1992 produced a 61 percent majority in favor of recognizing Tatarstan as "a sovereign state and a subject of international law." But in contrast to Chechnya, the issue was co-opted by the local nomenklatura, who utilized the opportunity to assert an ambiguous status for the republic within Russia that included far-reaching autonomy. Eventually, the influence of separatist nationalist movements waned. By the mid-1990s the secessionist sentiment that had once been significant in Tatarstan had dissipated, separatist movements had grown marginalized within the political process, and Tatarstan's membership within the Russian Federation had come to be accepted by the overwhelming majority of Tatars. The threat of the breakup of Russia (seemingly imminent in 1992–93, evoking a series of books and articles by Western experts on the subject)[64] now seems to have receded, as Russian boundaries have grown normalized and accepted by the vast majority of Russia's minorities.

But Tatarstan's ambiguous relationship with the Russian Federation—as constituent republic or former colony—continues to color much of the politics of the region. Accusations of Russia as empire persist, proliferating at moments when Russia attempts to renegotiate elements of Tatarstan's autonomy, and occurring largely in response to Tatar fears that Moscow seeks to extinguish Tatarstani sovereignty and to assimilate Tatars

to the dominant Russian culture. The adoption of the two-headed eagle as the official symbol of the new Russian state, for instance, was widely portrayed by many Tatars (as well as members of Russia's other minorities) as a symbolic reaffirmation of the continuity of Russian imperial projects. (By contrast, Yeltsin and his advisors portrayed this as an attempt to associate the new Russian state with a pre-Soviet history of statehood.) In the late 1990s the introduction of new Russian passports, which omitted the nationality category previously utilized in Soviet passports, was seen by many within the Tatar elite as an attempt to undermine minority efforts to promote local cultures and the indigenization of local governments. More recently, anti-imperial discourse among Tatars mounted in connection with the emotion-laden disagreements over the categories to be used in the 2002 Russian census. (Many Tatars saw an attempt to divide and conquer in the Russian government's efforts to allow the choice of Tatar subethnic identities to be counted as one's ethnic group.) Anti-imperial discourse among Tatars also increased as a result of Russian opposition to the use of the Latin alphabet in Tatarstan.[65] As Rafael Khakimov, one of the chief advisors to the Tatarstan government, described Tatar fears of resuscitated empire, "There's an imperial spirit arising again in Moscow. It's very popular there right now to believe that empire is right, that we must put an end to the republics like Tatarstan."[66]

Post-Soviet Russia also suffers from a stigma of empire in its relations with other post-Soviet states.[67] Shortly after becoming prime minister in 1999, Vladimir Putin said that Russia is not nourishing "imperial plans" with regard to the CIS countries, though it intends to pursue its interests with regard to what it refers to euphemistically as its "near abroad."[68] But the boundary between "regional power" and "imperial power" has been a contested one. In the Baltic, for instance, Soviet-era settlers are frequently referred to as a potential fifth column for a renewed Russian imperialism. Russia's continuing denial that Soviet incorporation of the Baltic ever amounted to an occupation (due largely to fears that Russia could be held legally responsible for the consequences of Soviet rule) only has added to such suspicions. Russia's attempts to influence Georgian politics, its role in the Abkhaz rebellion, its continuing presence at its military base in Javekheti, and its threats to invade Georgia in pursuit of Chechen fighters have brought about recurrent accusations that Russia is continuing an "imperial policy" toward the Transcaucasus region. As one source notes, "The Georgian press is stuffed with anti-Russian publications, and 'imperialists' is the softest expression in them."[69] Belarusian nationalists have criticized the Belarusian-Russian Union as a plan to "recapture Belarus in order to plunder it and use our people's labor."

Aleksandr Lukashenka's efforts at reintegrating Belarus with Russia force Belarusians to choose "between living in a free and independent European state, and poverty on the outskirts of the Russian empire." Support for Lukashenka, they argue, "means to approve the restoration of the Russian empire."[70] In Ukraine, when Russia took an uncompromising position on Ukraine's $3.7 billion energy debt and demanded that Ukraine pay for it by turning over some of its enterprises in the fuel, metallurgical, and machine-building industries to Russia, accusations that Russia was harboring "imperial ambitions" grew widespread.[71] Similar accusations can be heard in Armenia in relation to Russia's increasing control over Armenian energy production and distribution as part of deals intended to cover Armenian energy debts. To Putin's chagrin, the creation of an economic community within the CIS consisting of Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan in 2003 brought about immediate accusations from nationalists in these states that Russia was seeking to restore the Soviet Union.[72]

The point is that not only has Russia has not overcome its "stigma of empire," either within Russia or in its relations with its former Communist domain, but also that accusations of empire rise and fall in connection with specific events, driven by the ways in which Russian policies and practices inspire opposition to themselves. So far, post-Soviet Russia has avoided empire as outcome. Indeed, the general trend seems to be toward gradually fewer accusations of empire, particularly as Russian politicians have committed to stable borders, Russia's attempts to manipulate its diaspora and open threats against its neighbors have diminished, Russian stateness has gradually consolidated, and national resistance to Russia's current territorial configuration has grown marginalized. Yet, the possibility that an imperial outcome could be part of post-Soviet Russia's future remains.

Pro-Imperial Discourses as Longing for Lost Order

As a concluding note on the evolving nature of empires, I turn to consider briefly a counter-discourse about empire that finds reflection in certain elite circles within both contemporary Russia and the United States—a positive discourse about empire as a way of reestablishing order in a disorderly world, a longing for control in a world out of control. Empire in this view represents a simpler world in which order reigned, powerful states could exercise their will with little constraint, and the civ-

ilizing missions of these states could be fulfilled. This too is a subversive discourse within today's context, particularly with respect to international norms of self-determination and state sovereignty, and exists primarily as a discourse among policy analysts or opposition politicians. Leaders in both Russia and the United States have refused to associate publicly with this view, which contradicts public transcripts of the exercise of power. That this discourse of empire as a longing for order appears within both the United States and Russia is itself intriguing. Russia and the United States were repeatedly subject to accusations of empire throughout the twentieth century and have repeatedly denied the imperial character of their policies. Yet, for quite different reasons a sense of uncontrolled disorder has been felt among both the winners and the losers of the now transcended Cold War international order.

In the Russian case, open calls for empire have emerged among those mourning the collapse of the Soviet order and the civilizational values for which it stood. In Russia this is specifically an opposition discourse, a nationalist critique of Russian foreign policy that began in the mid-1990s in the aftermath of the waves of nationalist mobilization that unraveled the USSR and of the violent disorder that followed.[73] Open proponents of a renewal of empire have called for more assertive efforts to defend the interests of Russians in the "near abroad" and to create a new state, centered on Russia, that would encompass the peoples of the former USSR and would reflect Russia's civilizational mission within Eurasia. Vladimir Bochkarev, the governor of Penza province, for example, has argued that Russia suffers from an inadequate geopolitical structure that does not correspond to its ambitions to be a great state. To defend Russia's strategic interests properly, "the creation of a new federation empire is a sort of super-task, the solution of which opens the way to the construction of a unique coalition of states, in which each will live in their national reality—not only the Chechens and Tatars and Armenians, but even the people of the Eurasian near and far abroad."[74] A book published in Moscow in 1996 entitled *Neizbezhnost' imperii* ("The Inevitability of Empire") aimed, according to its preface, to provide "a historical, political, and philosophical argument for Empire as the brightest and most progressive phenomenon in the development of world civilization, and especially in the development of Russia." As one author in the volume wrote, "The attempt to create 'national states' in place of Empire consigns the peoples living within them to a semi-feudal, Middle-Ages existence, deforms state structures, and kills ethnic communities through a false liberalism."[75] As another nationalist author has put it:

When they say that a Russian empire is bad and that Russia has ceased being an empire, this is said by our enemies, our opponents, who do not agree with our civilizational ideal, do not agree with our historical path, and in principle would like to see us turn into some kind of dependent, regional, small state-nation with the loss of our strategic and civilizational orientations and, as they say, messianism.[76]

This pro-imperial discourse within Russia largely remains confined to the nationalist opposition and runs boldly counter to the Russian government's announced policies of respecting post-Soviet boundaries and accepting the results of 1991. Post-Soviet Russia may seek to extend its sphere of influence across the post-Soviet states. But much like its Soviet predecessor, it cannot openly accept the label of empire. As Putin observed shortly after his election as president, "Whoever doesn't regret the collapse of the USSR has no heart, and whoever wants to restore the USSR has no head."[77]

By contrast, in the United States a pro-imperial discourse emerged in the wake of the 9/11 events and the Bush administration's attempts to extend American control to Afghanistan and Iraq. As Michael Ignatieff has noted, "If Americans have an empire, they have acquired it in a state of deep denial."[78] Yet, America's forceful assertion of power after the September 11 attacks brought about the first open references to the need for American empire since the late nineteenth century. Rather than an oppositional critique of foreign policy, as in Russia, in the United States a positive discourse of empire emerged almost entirely among foreign policy experts—as a justification for sustained American efforts to shape forcefully an increasingly disorderly world to its own liking. At the same time, some experts warned against the potentially disastrous consequences of imperial "over-extension." As one source summed up the rationale for American empire:

[O]rderly societies now refuse to impose their own institutions on disorderly ones. This anti-imperialist restraint is becoming harder to sustain, however, as the disorder in poor countries grows more threatening. Experience has shown that nonimperialist options—notably foreign aid and various nation-building efforts—are not altogether reliable. The logic of neoimperialism is too compelling for the Bush administration to resist.[79]

Indeed, some Bush administration advisors wear the imperial badge unabashedly; as neoconservative guru William Kristol put it, "We need to

err on the side of being strong, and if people want to say we're an imperial power, fine."[80] Similarly, for Max Boot the greatest danger for American foreign policy is "that we won't use all of our power for fear of the 'i' word—imperialism." Yet, the vast majority of Americans continue to feel uncomfortable speaking of the United States as an empire, and the Bush administration, in its public face, has been careful to steer away from any such language, consistently denying imperial intent. As Boot concludes, "Given the historical baggage that 'imperialism' carries, there's no need for the U.S. government to embrace the term. But it should definitely embrace the practice."[81]

In this respect, the transformations pioneered in part by the Soviet state in the nature of political control remain very much in force. Nonconsensual control for both post-Soviet Russia and the post-Cold War United States continues to be cloaked in the language of self-determination and sovereignty, blurring the line between domination and consent. And if the experience of the Soviet Union is any guide to contemporary politics of empire, widespread recognition of the imperial quality of contemporary Russia and America is likely to be associated with the degree of successful resistance offered in the deserts of Mesopotamia and the mountains of the Northern Caucasus.

Chapter 1. Rethinking Empire

1. Terry Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire: Nations and Nationalism in the Soviet Union, 1923–1939* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001), 19.

2. Dominic Lieven, *Empire: The Russian Empire and Its Rivals* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), xvi. Throughout this chapter, I use the terms modern state and nation-state interchangeably, as all states today claim to represent "nations."

3. Lieven, *Empire*, 22. Even those non-historians who studied empires did so in an historical fashion. See S. N. Eisenstadt, *The Political Systems of Empires: The Rise and Fall of the Historical Bureaucratic Societies* (New York: Free Press, 1963); John Kautsky, *The Politics of Aristocratic Empires* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); Michael Doyle, *Empires* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1986).

4. John Connell and Robert Aldrich, "The Last Colonies: Failures of Decolonisation?" in Chris Dixon and Michael Hefferman, eds., *Colonialism and Development in the Contemporary World* (London: Mansell, 1991), 196–97.

5. See, for instance, Lieven, *Empire*; Karen Dawisha and Bruce Parrott, eds., *The End of Empire? The Transformation of the USSR in Comparative Perspective* (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1997); Richard L. Rudolph and David F. Good, eds., *Nationalism and Empire: The Habsburg Empire and the Soviet Union* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992); Karen Barkey and Mark von Hagen, eds., *After Empire: Multi-Ethnic Societies and Nation-Building: The Soviet Union and the Russian, Ottoman, and Habsburg Empires* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview, 1997); Alexander J. Motyl, *Imperial Ends: The Decay, Collapse, and Revival of Empires* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). A number of the essays in the Barkey and von Hagen volume question whether the USSR deserves to be treated as an analytical unit analogous to Tsarist, Ottoman, and Habsburg empires.

6. Alexander J. Motyl, *Revolutions, Nations, Empires: Conceptual Limits and Theoretical Possibilities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 121–22.

7. Thomas J. Barfield, "The Shadow Empires: Imperial State Formation along the Chinese-Nomad Frontier," in Susan E. Alcock, Terrence N. D'Altroy, Kathleen D. Morrison, and Carla M. Sinopoli, eds., *Empires: Perspectives from Archeology and History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 33.

8. See William H. Sewell Jr., "Three Temporalities: Toward an Eventful Sociology," in Terrence J. McDonald, ed., *The Historic Turn in the Human Sciences* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1996), 245–80. This latter issue, known as Galton's problem, is a much more serious problem within social science than simply the study of empires. See John H. Goldthorpe, "Current Issues in Comparative Macrosociology: A Debate on Methodological Issues," in Grete Brochmann et al., eds., *Comparative Social Research*, vol. 16 (Greenwich, CT: JAI Press, 1997), 9–12.

9. The most obvious example is empire's disembodiment from the state by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri to represent "the political subject that effectively regulates . . . global exchanges, the sovereign power that governs the world." Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press), xi.

10. Referring to the collapse of Soviet Union and Ethiopia, Miles Kahler, for instance, writes: "The last remaining multinational empires collapsed in the 1990s. . . . Although many contemporary multinational states oppress ethnic and linguistic minorities, none can be characterized as an empire." Miles Kahler, "Empires, Neo-Empires, and Political Change: The British and French Experience," in Dawisha and Parrott, *The End of Empire?*, 286.

11. This is a point made by both Charles Tilly and Eric Hobsbawm in Barkey and von Hagen, *After Empire*, 5, 13.

12. See David D. Laitin, "The National Uprisings in the Soviet Union," *World Politics* 44:1 (1991): 142–43.

13. Ronald Suny, "Ambiguous Categories: States, Empires, and Nations," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11:2 (1995): 185–96.

14. Rogers Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed: Nationhood and the National Question in the New Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 13–22.

15. Rogers Brubaker made this point at the conference at which this essay was first presented.

16. Class is another example of a category of practice that also can function as a category of analysis, particularly if we accept E. P. Thompson's point that class is a social and cultural formation, not an objective category unrelated to consciousness of the category itself.

17. In an earlier essay, I suggested the term "empire consciousness" as a way of describing this quality of being regarded as an empire, paralleling the notion of class consciousness. See Mark R. Beissinger, "Demise of an Empire-State: Identity, Legitimacy, and the Deconstruction of Soviet Politics," in M. Crawford Young, ed., *The Rising Tide of Cultural Pluralism* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1993), 93–115. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries one could find (though rarely) the word "imperialness" to refer to the imperial quality of a person or thing, though the word was also used as a humorous and mocking title.

18. Brubaker, *Nationalism Reframed*, 16.

19. I should note that empire as an outcome need not be confined to authoritarian states. Indeed, widely recognized, illegitimate control over multiple, culturally distinct populations within or beyond state boundaries has been characteristic of many democratic states, including the United States, France, and Britain. On the United States, see Francis Jennings, *The Creation of America: Through Revolution to Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); J. G. A. Pocock, "States, Republics, and Empires: The American Founding in Early Modern Perspective," in Terence Ball and J. G. A. Pocock, eds., *Conceptual Change and the Constitution* (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 55–77.

20. See, for instance, Johan Galtung, "A Structural Theory of Imperialism," *Journal of Peace Research* 8:2 (1971): 81–117; Andre Gunther Frank, *Capitalism and Underdevelopment in Latin America* (New York: Monthly Review, 1967); Theotonio dos Santos, "The Structure of Dependence," in K. T. Fann and Donald C. Hodges, eds., *Readings in U.S. Imperialism* (Boston: P. Sargent, 1971), 225–36. Stephen Howe observes that "a consensus definition would be that an empire is a large political body which rules over territories outside its original borders. It has a central power or core territory—whose inhabitants usually continue to form the dominant ethnic or national group in the entire system—and an extensive periphery of dominated areas." Stephen Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 14.

21. Doyle, *Empires*, 12, 30, 45–46.

22. As Bruce Parrott explains, "The advent of nationality as a key criterion of political differentiation and of nationalism as a potent instrument of political mobilization fundamentally altered the internal dynamics of empires. Partly in consequence, by the middle of the twentieth century the term was commonly used to denote a political structure in which one nation dominated others, often on the basis of an authoritar-

ian metropolitan state." Bruce Parrott, "Analyzing the Transformation of the Soviet Union in Comparative Perspective," in Dawisha and Parrott, *The End of Empire?*, 6.

23. The contemporary Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is one such example.

24. See, for instance, Aviel Roshwald, *Ethnic Nationalism and the Fall of Empires: Central Europe, the Middle East, and Russia, 1914–1923* (New York: Routledge, 2001).

25. See, for instance, the *Oxford English Dictionary* entries on "empire," which, for all definitions, contain no structural connotations whatsoever.

26. Howe, *Empire: A Very Short Introduction*, 13.

27. Richard Koebner and Helmut D. Schmidt, *Imperialism: The Story and Significance of a Political Word, 1840–1960* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964), xxv.

28. Quoted in Richard Koebner, *Empire* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1961), 295. J. G. A. Pocock notes that, to the American revolutionaries, the term "empire" was used to refer to any large political unit with complex structure and was used interchangeably with the words "confederacy" and "republic." Pocock, "States, Republics, and Empires," in Ball and Pocock, *Conceptual Change and the Constitution*, 67–69.

29. Mandate implied a temporary rule in anticipation of nationhood. Thus, the League's Covenant recognized that "certain communities formerly belonging to the Turkish Empire" had already "reached a stage of development where their existence as independent nations can be provisionally recognized subject to the rendering of administrative advice and assistance by a Mandatory until such time as they are able to stand alone." See http://www.yale.edu/lawweb/avalon/leagcov.htm.

30. Koebner and Schmidt, *Imperialism*, xiii and xxii. See also Hans Daalder, "Imperialism," in David Sills, ed., *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences,* vol. 7 (New York: Macmillan, 1968), 101–109.

31. Rupert Emerson, *From Empire to Nation: The Rise of Self-Assertion of Asian and African Peoples* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967).

32. Doyle, *Empires*, 36.

33. Ernest Gellner, *Nations and Nationalism* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1983), 1.

34. Jack P. Greene, "Transatlantic Colonization and the Redefinition of Empire in the Early Modern Era," in Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy, eds., *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500–1820* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 268.

35. Ann Laura Stoler and Frederick Cooper, "Between Metropole and Colony: Rethinking a Research Agenda," in Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, eds., *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Culture in a Bourgeois World* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997), 7, 22. See also John L. Comaroff, "Images of Empire, Contests of Conscience: Models of Colonial Domination in South Africa," *American Ethnologist* 16:4 (1989): 661–85.

36. Motyl, *Revolutions, Nations, Empires*, 117–18. The evidence Motyl provides is that for three years, from 1976 until 1979, when he was overthrown, Jean-Bedel Bokassa, the corrupt and demented military dictator of the Central African Republic, proclaimed his country the Central African Empire in an attempt to imitate his hero, Napoleon I. Motyl sees this as evidence that the way in which polities label themselves is irrelevant, since the Central African Empire's claim to be an empire was absurd. Yet, Bokassa's insanity can be interpreted to support precisely the contrary view: that no ruler who cares about legitimacy and the duration of rule would dare label his or her polity an empire in a postimperial world.

37. As Bourdieu noted, "The harder it is to exercise direct domination, and the more it is disapproved of, the more likely it is that gentle, disguised forms of domination will be seen as the only possible way of exercising domination and exploitation." Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 128.

38. Lieven, *Empire*, x.

39. Martin, *The Affirmative Action Empire*, 19.

40. Though not a central element of this essay, the United States also played a significant role in developing the practice of using emerging norms of sovereignty and self-determination to solidify nonconsensual control. Despite engaging in openly imperial activities throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the United States eventually repackaged its early revolutionary history as anticolonial in the twentieth century in response to the growth of anticolonial nationalism as a major political force in world affairs. Ultimately, as British historian Niall Ferguson has noted, America became "the empire that dare not speak its name." Quoted in the *New York Times*, April 30, 2003, A31.

41. In imitation of the Soviets, in the 1930s and 1940s Nazi Germany and the Japanese similarly created formally sovereign "puppet" states in Eastern Europe and China as ways of establishing control over territories under the cover of norms of state sovereignty.

42. Zbigniew Brzezinski, *The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 39.

43. Adam Ulam, *Expansion and Coexistence: Soviet Foreign Policy, 1917–1973* (New York: Praeger, 1974).

44. David A. Lake, "The Rise, Fall, and Future of the Russian Empire: A Theoretical Interpretation," in Dawisha and Parrott, *The End of Empire?*, 35. Actually, most examples of informal empires are not as hierarchical and centralized as was the Soviet sphere of influence in East Europe.

45. G. John Ikenberry and Charles A. Kupchan, "Socialization and Hegemonic Power," *International Organization* 44:3 (1990): 286.

46. David A. Lake, "The Rise, Fall, and Future of the Russian Empire," in Dawisha and Parrott, *The End of Empire?*, 58–59.

47. Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State: A Tidal Approach to the Study of Nationalism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

48. Ian Clark, "Another 'Double Movement': The Great Transformation after the Cold War?" in Michael Cox, Tim Dunne, and Ken Booth, eds., *Empires, Systems, and States: Great Transformations in International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 250.

49. The other state bearing significant responsibility for this transformation is the United States, particularly in its unusual policy of colonialism in the name of self-determination in Panama, the Philippines, and elsewhere in the early twentieth century. But this subject lies beyond the scope of this essay.

50. Though its classifications have been disputed, the State Failure Project, set up at the request of Vice President Al Gore in 1994 and led by the CIA, along with a distinguished group of academics, identified 136 cases of state failure from 1955 through 2001, but only a handful of these (the USSR and Ethiopia, for example) were subject to charges of being empires. For the project's list of cases, see http://www.cidcm.umd.edu/inscr/stfail/.

51. Lieven, *Empire*, 330.

52. Terry Martin "The Soviet Union as Empire: Salvaging a Dubious Analytical Category," *Ab Imperio* 2 (2002): 103.

53. Of postcolonial states, Indonesia has been most frequently described as an empire, in significant part because its invasion of East Timor and the subsequent violent struggle that this engendered, which undermined much of the anticolonial aura surrounding the Indonesian state (though even here, Indonesia has largely avoided widespread recognition as empire, in contrast to the Soviet and post-Soviet Russian cases). Its archipelago structure also makes for greater structural clarity between center and periphery. See Nicholas D. Kristof, "Indonesia Struggles to Find New Reasons to Stay Intact," *New York Times*, May 24, 1998, A1; Slobodan Lekic, "50,000 Rally for Independence in Indonesia," *Boston Globe*, November 5, 1999, A29; Mark Landler, "In Indonesia, Rebel Leader Gains Forum for His Cause," *New York Times*, November 28, 1999, A7; Eric Margolis, "The Decline and Fall of the Javanese Empire," at http://www.foreigncorrespondent.com/archive/timor.html.

54. A good example of the latter are the charges leveled against the United States of engaging in "genetic imperialism" in 1995–1996 by patenting a blood cell line drawn from a remote Papua New Guinea tribe. See Charles J. Hanley, "Blood's Value Fades, as Does 'Genetic Colonialism' Charge," *Wisconsin State Journal*, September 22, 1996, 4A.

55. On post-Soviet Russia, see Mark R. Beissinger, "The Persisting Ambiguity of Empire," *Post-Soviet Affairs* 11:2 (1995): 149–84. On Ethiopia, see Ruth Iyob, *The Eritrean Struggle for Independence: Domination, Resistance, Nationalism, 1941–1993* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Edmond J. Keller, *Revolutionary Ethiopia: From Empire to People's Republic* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1988). Accusations that contemporary China is an empire are widespread among Tibetans, Uighurs, and Mongols. See Gardner Bovingdon, "The Not-So-Silent Majority: Uyghur Resistance to Han Rule in Xinjiang," *Modern China* 28:1 (2002): 39–78; Ross Terrill, *The New Chinese Empire* (New York: Basic Books, 2003). Until his arrest and sentence to death in 1999, Abdullah Ocalan, the leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party (PKK), frequently made reference, in the language of Marxism-Leninism, to "Turkish colonialism," and the 1995 program of the party said the end to "Turkish colonialism" in Kurdistan was the main task of the party. Among Basques, ETA also has described itself fighting against "Spanish imperialism," with a heavy emphasis on Marxist-Leninist categories of analysis. On accusations that the United States has become an empire in the wake of the Bush administration's unilateralism and willingness to wield force around the globe to shape an international order to its liking, despite the administration's denial of imperial intent, description of pre-emptive war as self-defense, and deployment of a discourse of liberation and sovereignty to describe its actions, see Michael Ignatieff, "The American Empire: The Burden," *New York Times Magazine*, January 5, 2003, 22–27, 50–54. On current Azerbaijani accusations against Iran as an empire, see "Ethnic Azeris Urged to Fight for Independence in Iran," *Turan News Agency*, May 30, 1998, in *FBIS Daily Report (Central Eurasia)*, June 1, 1998; Brenda Shafer, *Borders and Brethren: Iran and the Challenge of Azerbaijani Identity* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2002).

56. Interview with Putin in *Bratislava Narodna Obroda*, March 7, 2000, in *FBIS*, March 8, 2000.

57. Charles King, "Crisis in the Caucasus: A New Look at Russia's Chechen Impasse," *Foreign Affairs* 82:2 (2003): 138.

58. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State*, 263–267.

59. *Current Digest of Post-Soviet Press* 46:52 (1994): 7.

60. See Anatol Lieven, *Chechnya: Tombstone of Russian Power* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998). For more recent Chechen views, see the website of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Chechen Republic of Ichkeria, at http://www.chechnya-mfa.info/.

61. Quoted in *New York Times Magazine*, March 19, 2000, 65.

62. *Chechnya Weekly* 4:4 (Jamestown Foundation), February 13, 2003; *Chechnya Weekly* 4:10, March 27, 2003.

63. *Ekspress khronika*, November 12, 1991, 2.

64. See, for example, Douglas W. Blum, ed., *Russia's Future: Consolidation or Disintegration?* (Boulder. Colo.: Westview, 1994).

65. See, for instance, *RFE/RL Bashkir-Tatar Report*, October 9, 2002.

66. Susan B. Glasser, "In a Russian Republic, ABCs Are Test of Power," *Washington Post*, April 16, 2001, A1.

67. For several excellent studies recognizing how the "stigma of empire" continues to color relations between the post-Soviet states, see Rawi Abdelal, *National Purpose in the World Economy: Post-Soviet States in Comparative Perspective* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2001); Andrew Wilson, *The Ukrainians: Unexpected Nation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000); Catherine Wanner, *Burden of Dreams: History and Identity in Post-Soviet Ukraine* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998); Graham Smith et al., *Nation-Building in the Post-Soviet Borderlands: The Politics of National Identities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998).

68. *Interfax*, December 15, 1999, in *FBIS*, December 15, 1999.

69. *Izvestiia*, October 27, 1999, 1.

70. *Interfax*, March 22, 1998, in *FBIS*, March 22, 1998; *RFE/RL Newsline*, August 31, 1999.

71. *Kommersant-Daily*, March 9, 2000, 11.

72. *RFE/RL Newsline*, September 22, 2003.

73. How widespread this discourse is remains unclear, though a public opinion poll conducted in 1999 discovered that 32 percent of the population of Russia agreed with the statement that the historical mission of Russia is to unite nations into a union that must become the successor to the Russian Empire and the USSR. *Novye izvestiia*, November 1, 1999, 1.

74. *Rossiiskaia gazeta*, December 4, 1999, in *FBIS*, December 4, 1999, 2.

75. Andrei Savel'ev, "Priglashenie k razgovoru," and Andrei Kol'ev, "Imperiia—sud'ba Rossii," in A. N. Savel'ev, ed., *Neizbezhnost' imperii* (Moscow: Intellekt, 1996), 3 and 81.

76. Igor' Yadykin, "My—imperiia-osvoboditel'," *Krasnaia zvezda*, March 20, 1999.

77. Quoted in Alexander Zevelev, "Russia-Belarus Union: A Step in the Right Direction," *Russia Journal*, March 3, 2000.

78. Ignatieff, "The American Empire: The Burden," 22.

79. Sebastian Mallaby, "The Reluctant Imperialist," *Foreign Affairs* 81:2 (2002): 2. For other statements to this effect, see James Chace, "Imperial America and the Common Interest," *World Policy Journal* 19:1 (2002): 1–9; Andrew J. Bacevich, *American Empire: The Realities and Consequences of U.S. Diplomacy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002); Andrew J. Bacevich, ed., *The Imperial Tense: Prospects and Problems of the American Empire* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2003); Chalmers Johnson, *Blowback: The*

Costs and Consequences of American Empire (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2000); and the special issue of *National Interest* (spring 2003) devoted to America as an empire.

80. Quoted in *New York Times*, April 30, 2003, A31.

81. Max Boot, "American Imperialism? No Need to Run Away from Label," *USA Today*, May 6, 2003, A15.

Chapter 2. Culture Shift in a Postcommunist State

An earlier version of this essay, framed somewhat differently, was published as "Three Models of Integration and the Estonian/Russian Reality," *Journal of Baltic Studies* 34:2 (2003): 197–222. In addition to those acknowledged in that version, Rogers Brubaker and Robert Moser offered comments that help sharpen arguments for this revised version.

1. The most balanced account of the issue remains that of Paul Kolstoe, *Russians in the Former Soviet Republics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), in which he reports (290) that "many observers regard the new Russian diaspora as a threat to political stability in the former Soviet Union."

2. In this chapter, use of the term "Russian" refers to the non-Estonian population in Estonia. The term is interchangeable with "Russian-Estonians."

3. Here—as in much of my research—I focus on language and the medium of instruction in schooling as an indicator of culture. Since language repertoires influence social contacts, parental choices on schooling had long-term cultural implications. Whom their children would marry, and the cultural milieu that would be central to those children's future, would be heavily influenced by the choice of language medium for early education.

4. Not all titulars claimed fluency in their ancestral languages. In Tatarstan, 25% of the Tatars claimed no fluency in the Tatar language; in Estonia, the figure was the lowest in the union, at 0.8%. There was some trilingualism in the Soviet Union. In Tatarstan nearly 7% of the minority Bashkirs claimed fluency in Russian, Tatar, and Bashkir; in Bashkortostan, 23% of the Bashkirs and 16% of the Tatars claimed fluency in those three languages. However, these are special cases. For a discussion of the equilibrium and the data for these special cases, see David Laitin, "What Is a Language Community?" in *American Journal of Political Science* 44:1 (2000): 142–55.

5. The choices by Russians and titulars in regard to culture were best-guess calculations about coordinating with all members of their groups, because the success of any strategy was dependent on the strategies of others in a similar situation. Choice models are therefore most telling in times of disequilibrium, when calculation about others' likely behaviors is a crucial consideration in one's own choices. Thus, cultural strategy becomes manifest under conditions of rapid social and political change.

6. These were the trends as identified in my *Identity in Formation: The Russian-speaking Populations in the Near Abroad* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998). The fieldwork for that book was completed in 1994.

7. For this perspective, see Toivo U. Raun's distinguished *Estonia and the Estonians* (Stanford: Hoover Institution Press, 1987). For an Estonian scholar who rejects this primordialist approach to national culture, see Rein Taagepera, *Estonia: Return to Independence* (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 1993). For data that show a mild but stable Estonian/Russian polarization, see Geoffrey Evans, "Ethnic Schism and the Consoli-