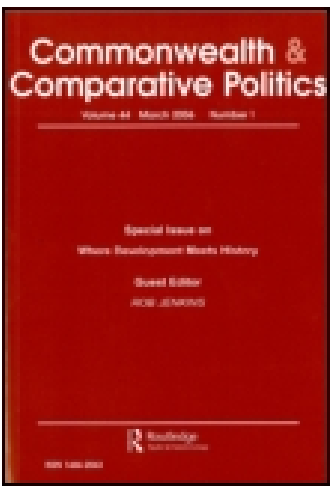

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British Informal Empire: The Case of China[1]

by

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With the discrediting in certain quarters of formal empire building by the classic strategy of territorial conquest and annexation, Great Britain sought during the heyday of free trade (1830s to 1870) to gain preferential treatment for her nationals by the application of various combinations of tactics such as gunboat diplomacy, political coercion, internal interference, economic constraints, and unfair competitive advantage. The systematic application of these techniques is a phenomenon which has spawned a considerable nomenclature: expansionism, dominion, paramountcy, sphere of influence, semi-colonialism, hypo-colony,[2] informal empire, free-trade imperialism. Though each term has its particular points of reference and connotations, they all clearly refer to the same general phenomenon. It is my intention here to analyse the significance and validity only of 'informal empire' and its close relative 'free-trade imperialism' which have most recently exercised historians, and the relation of China to Great Britain under these rubrics.

China is an appropriate subject of analysis. It is one of the three areas (along with Latin America and the Middle East) regularly described as falling within Great Britain's informal empire of trade and investment, and a cursory glance at the Western-imposed unequal treaty system does indeed seem to suggest this. Yet serious analysis of China and informal empire has scarcely begun.[3]

In addition I believe that a fresh look at the whole concept of informal empire is desirable. Many studies of the subject are deficient, it seems to me, in that they are too narrowly addressed to British attitudes, motivation, and initiatives, and are inadequately concerned with the realities in the overseas areas supposed to have been brought under British informal sway.[4] More case studies such as the present one are needed. My findings with respect to China, along with such other case studies as already exist, suggest that the claims hitherto made for the concept are extravagant.

Judging from the literature on the subject, successful informal empire arises primarily from economic considerations.[5] British merchants and investors developed interests in an independent country overseas. The economic interests either became so important to the home economy or the merchants and investors themselves wielded so much political influence, that the British government intervened to protect and expand

existing interests. It is generally held that an essential element in such intervention, and thus in the definition of informal empire, was the application of non-market constraints, such as 'prestige, cajolery, threat, the dangled loan reinforced occasionally with blockade, bombardment or expedition'.[6] Another element essential, in my view, to the definition of successful informal empire is effective subordination of the overseas country to the metropolitan country. Subordination has been asserted as an important criterion of an imperialistic relation between two countries.[7] That is, the overseas government is compelled to bend to the will of the metropolitan government to the disadvantage of the former; the disadvantage might take the form of depressed trade profits, ruination of a cottage industry, retarded industrialisation, or the like. Lastly, employment of the techniques enumerated above must yield positive economic benefits for the subjects (or, at any rate, for certain classes of subjects) of the metropolis.

Ideally, the home country by these means gains the putative advantages of formal imperial control with none of its burdens. Its merchants enjoy some combination of such economic benefits as high profitability, expanding markets for home exports, a variety of raw materials in ample quantity to pay for those exports, a market for capital, control of sources of supply, and control of quality of return goods. The home government avoids the burdens of formal colonial government, namely, administrative expense, military security, public works, etc. The development of such British informal empire is said to have been particularly active during the golden age of free trade from the 1830s to 1870, and hence it is sometimes termed in oxymoronic fashion 'free-trade imperialism'. Of course the ideal situation may well not obtain, attempted economic subordination may not be effective, and the expected economic benefits for certain metropolitan subjects may in fact go unrealised. In that case one could easily argue that the attempted informal empire was an economic flop. Or, on the grounds that the ineluctable economic dimension of informal empire was so unremarkable, one could argue that no informal empire ever came into existence in the first place. To my mind, however, the distinction between the two arguments is one without great practical significance.

We may now examine the historical record using the working definition developed above. Conditions in Great Britain were conducive to the formation of an informal rather than a formal empire.[8] One such condition was the development of anti-mercantilist free philosophy and policies begun in the wake of Britain's loss of the thirteen American colonies and culminating in the 1830s and 1840s. Another was the growing feeling among many Englishmen that the remaining colonies were destined to become separate and autonomous. By the 1850s anti-imperialist sentiment had reached a stage when a vocal minority of Englishmen urged that the Empire should be dismembered. A cost-conscious government withdrew overseas military garrisons while self-rule movements grew in colonies with large white populations. All these conditions provided an impetus towards the extension of informal sway by 'free-trade imperialism'.

Trends delimiting formal empire, however, were balanced by

counter-trends which broadened or deepened imperial sway. One was the growth of institutional controls such as the establishment in 1812 of the Colonial Office. Another was the growth of official British activity in the East, particularly India, where from 1784 the London government assumed ever greater responsibilities at the expense of the East India Company. A third counter-trend was a vocal anti-separatist movement initiated by returned colonists and supported by recent emigrants, who maintained strong ties with the motherland, as well as by the working and middle classes in Britain. These counter-trends became the dominant trends after 1870 when the emergence of Prussia changed the European balance of power and eventually provoked a new and frenzied scramble for overseas possessions.

As for Great Britain and China in particular, judging from the trends and counter-trends in British empire, formal and informal, we would certainly expect that the British government would not harbour territorial designs on China and would not give encouragement to Britishers on the spot who in whatever capacity independently pressed such designs. At the same time, however, we would expect the British government energetically, even militarily, to uphold and advance the principles of free trade, since it was precisely by free trade that Great Britain maintained its worldwide economic supremacy. And indeed we do find that it was partly in attempts to eliminate Chinese monopoly and exclusivism that Great Britain fought the opium wars (1839–42, 1858–60) and to eliminate disorder that she intervened in the Taiping civil war in the 1860s. At the same time, however, in 1842 Great Britain did acquire some Chinese territory—Hong Kong, to which Kowloon was joined in 1860—a crown colony established largely to serve trade by circumventing some of the Chinese government's anti-mercantile restrictions: though it is also true that this was the fulfilment of a goal which was developed not during the free trade era itself, but had been firmly established fully a half-century before and periodically reaffirmed.[9]

The Hong Kong issue once settled, British merchants in China, as in other parts of the world, did not particularly favour further annexation of territory; they usually contented themselves with pressing for liberalisation of their preferential treaty rights and increasing the number of partially extra-territorialised Chinese coastal and riverine ports where foreigners enjoyed both exclusive residence in self-governed areas specially set aside for them and the benefits of consular jurisdiction.[10] The archive of the largest foreign firm in the China trade, for example, admittedly yields many aggressive statements, but such expressions were uttered more out of frustration than out of any conviction of the efficacy of force. Indeed, analysis shows that this firm had *no* fixed policy advocating continuous military pressure.[11]

The farthest the British merchants went was to urge the creation of Shanghai as a free port in 1862. Even this plan, however, was rebuffed by both the British minister and the Foreign Office, for, however attractive the plan might have appeared to laissez-faire minded government leaders, its execution would have required the consent of an unwilling Chinese government, and diplomats realised that the application of sufficient

pressure to secure its consent would so alienate the Chinese as to harm, not help, long-range British commercial interests. The Foreign Office had consistently to rein in the ambitious treaty port merchants in order to promote long-range interests.[12]

Nor was there much motive in other quarters for outright territorial acquisition. British missionaries in China, as in other areas of the world, particularly Africa, wanted greater scope for their activities, but hardly colonies. Missionary demands did not exceed the unrestricted right of residence in the interior, and even that was rejected by British officials on grounds that it would be productive of more mischief than benefit.[13] Far from succumbing to missionary political influence, British officials considered the cause of Christianity would be furthered if it did *not* have British government support; nor did the British government endeavour to further its own influence in China by a policy of supporting the missionary.[14]

Piracy in China waters, as elsewhere, constituted a real handicap to British trade, but its suppression was a joint Sino-British undertaking which neither required nor led to the possession of territory.[15] As for turbulent frontiers, Great Britain was fairly unconcerned about those of China, which were generally far away from British centres of commercial activity. There was turbulence to be sure within China from widespread rebellion which occasionally spilled over into Shanghai and other treaty ports; this was a factor in the British merchant demand for creating a free port—free of Taiping-Ch'ing rivalries as well as of customs regulations. It was also the motive for the many suggestions—most of them rebuffed by the diplomats, it should be observed—that British land and naval forces intervene on behalf of the Ch'ing government.[16]

There were no particular strategic reasons for empire building or exercising imperial sway in China. Nor were there yet any acute international rivalries in the Far East itself. Generally speaking, there were four major foreign powers in China during Britain's free trade period. France was a close diplomatic ally of Great Britain in Chinese affairs, and, even despite their traditional rivalry in Europe, the two were able to cooperate in the 1858–60 campaigns. The United States was another ally of Great Britain in the application of its China policy, particularly during the 1860s, and was still too weak a power seriously to threaten British interests even had it so desired. The fourth major power was Russia, whose expansion into northeastern Asia was not regarded as any great threat to British interests. China was thus not an important arena for playing out international rivalries in the period under consideration. That is not to say no rivalries existed, for they are manifest in foreign competition to gain control both of the foreign-dominated Chinese Imperial Maritime Customs Service and of the various joint Sino-foreign military programmes. The point is that, at the diplomatic level in Peking and in the foreign ministries at home, these rivalries were strictly subordinated to the larger goal of cooperation for unified Western pressure on the Chinese government to fulfil the terms of the treaties which would be to the benefit of all the powers. Indeed British diplomats were well aware that it would be best if the British made no threatening moves in

China lest European rivalries be incited, to the detriment of all.[17] In sum, we may assert that beyond the annexation of Hong Kong and Kowloon, Great Britain had no intention of acquiring new territory. The spectre of another India with its multifarious problems and liabilities was ever before the eyes of British policy-making officials.[18]

But in terms of the existence of an informal imperial sway, in contrast to formal empire, it appears at least on the surface that a strong case can be made. Great Britain did exercise significant influence on the Chinese government through the unequal treaty system—the principal result of the clash between British anti-imperialism and free trade on the one hand and Chinese exclusivism on the other.[19] This system, once established by the opium wars (minor engagements in terms of total British military power), was largely self-perpetuating. The British were able to wrest without expenditure of blood or treasure concession after concession from the Chinese government for the benefit of British commercial interests operating from an ever increasing number of extra-territorialised treaty ports.

Enumeration of the instances where Great Britain exercised influence over the Ch'ing government makes a long and impressive list. Politically, British pressure was an important factor inducing the Chinese to establish the Tsungli-yamen in 1861.[20] This was a relatively modern-style foreign office which provided Western diplomats with a more responsive vehicle for pressing their demands on China, which, particularly in the case of Great Britain, were designed to expand economic opportunity for their nationals. The strategy worked well and British diplomats did secure many advantages for British traders: permission to trade on the Yangtze River earlier than provided for by treaty; legalisation of British participation in the coasting trade even though unprovided for in the treaties; permission to engage in the seaborne bean trade out of the northern treaty ports, contrary to the express provision of the treaty-based regulations governing trade; exemption from the war tax (*likin*) on duty-prepaid foreign goods being transported inland; permission to trade in strategic goods despite Ch'ing officials' justified fear that such goods would end up in Taiping hands; and permission for British steamers to tow salt barges along the Yangtze despite the provisions of the trade regulations. These are just a few of the many concessions which the Tsungli-yamen granted under British pressure.[21]

British economic opportunity in China was further enhanced by British control of another Western-style institution—the Imperial Maritime Customs Service. Established in Shanghai in 1854 by joint action of the Chinese intendant of circuit (*taotai*) and the consuls of Great Britain, France, and the United States, the foreign-directed Customs Service soon proved valuable to the Chinese and foreign governments alike by its reliable collection of revenue and regularisation of Shanghai's customs' affairs. It is important to realise that the Customs Service administered a tariff of duties fixed by treaty which prevented the Chinese from establishing any protective tariffs. Great Britain considered the Customs Service so valuable an instrument of her policies in China, particularly after gravitation of its leadership into British hands, that the

Anglo-Chinese Treaty of Tientsin (1858) stipulated that its practices be extended to all the treaty ports. Thereafter British diplomats successfully endeavoured to strengthen and expand the authority of this British-dominated agency, a task doubtless made easier by the Customs Service's being an arm of the Tsungli-yamen—itself sensitive to British pressure.[22]

British influence extended beyond control of customs and leverage on the Tsungli-yamen to the Ch'ing government's armed forces. The most conspicuous example of this was the Ever Victorious Army, a force of Chinese rank and file raised by an American adventurer, officered by well-remunerated foreign mercenaries, and later commanded by a Britisher, Charles 'Chinese' Gordon, under whom it won its most notable successes. This Sino-foreign unit operated in the Shanghai area from 1861 to 1864 primarily to prevent Taiping rebels from ravaging that important treaty port and to provide a perimeter of safety around it. Gordon, granted special leave from the British Army to assume command of the Ever Victorious Army, played a significant role in the downfall of the Taipings, who were seen as the principal threat to the development of a profitable Anglo-Chinese trade.[23] British subjects were deeply involved in other military ventures in China as well. British Army cadres took charge of Chinese troop training programmes in Tientsin, Shanghai, Ningpo, Foochow, and Canton in the 1860s.[24] British technicians were employed by the newly established Chinese arsenals and shipyards to assist the Ch'ing government in modernising its military.[25] To all these activities British diplomats gave their full support not only because a militarily strengthened Chinese central government could maintain the social stability necessary to the profitable development of British commercial interests in China, but also, it must be assumed (even though it was not openly stated in the record until the 1870s and 1880s), because of the general leverage which such military involvement gave the British government over China's conduct of her own affairs.[26]

One last point should be mentioned in connection with British influence in China—British participation in the Chinese legal system. Foreign repugnance to the Chinese administration of justice resulted in the powers' insistence on consular jurisdiction, a principle incorporated into the treaty settlement following the first Opium War.[27] The British expanded the scope of this privilege at every opportunity. One imaginative twist was the creation of the Shanghai Mixed Court in 1864, the result of British diplomatic pressure. Although a Chinese magistrate nominally presided, foreign consular 'assessors' sat with him as co-judges and exercised much influence; Western, not Chinese, procedure was used. This Sino-foreign court handled cases between treaty-port Chinese, and cases in which Chinese were defendants and Westerners plaintiffs. The British were generally pleased with the results of this hybrid system of adjudication (which, of course, infringed on China's sovereign rights) and caused the system to be expanded in scope and into other treaty ports.[28]

In sum, it is clear that politically, administratively, militarily, and juridically, Great Britain exercised considerable influence in Chinese affairs. Since she was able to do this without the necessity of establishing

formal control through a colonial government, it would seem that China had become enmeshed in the web of Britain's *informal* empire.

But let us now turn our attention to the economic criterion, which scholars generally agree counts most in informal empire. Opinion has differed on the importance of the China trade. That British traders in the treaty ports considered it of utmost importance goes without saying.[29] Their arguments of the if-every-Chinaman-would-but-add-an-inch-to-his-nightshirt type so characteristic of the perennial over-optimism of the export trade, underpinned the unending demands of British merchants for the extension of trading privileges in China. Even Palmerston rhapsodised about the China trade, which would afford a market for 'the thousand rills of upland industry' in Great Britain.[30]

But scholars have taken a more sober view than either merchants or politicians. The author of a 1926 study of China's foreign trade was impressed with its general lack of profitability and small proportion.[31] More recent scholarship confirms these findings. C. G. F. Simkin asserts in his *Traditional Trade of Asia* that Western trade developed far too slowly after the opening of the treaty ports to justify its ruinous assaults on China's traditional trade and shipping.[32] And as for the optimism over vast markets for British manufactures, Mary Wright's scholarly study of China in the 1860s clearly shows that this was badly misplaced, for the Ch'ing state was utterly antipathetic to the development of foreign trade, as British observers were well aware.[33] Not only was the China trade unimpressive in size, it was not even very lucrative. This is suggested by the serious business losses sustained by British firms in the late sixties, and by the fact that the trade was from the mid-sixties handled more and more by Chinese compradors at the expense of British merchants.[34]

Another weakness of the trade was surely lack of diversity. The staples of the trade were tea and silk. Imports into Great Britain of both these products increased over the long run, but in the short run trade in both, particularly silk, was erratic. Thus the trade was quite risky for individual entrepreneurs.

A further consideration is that in an era when British capitalists were investing heavily abroad, little British capital migrated to China. Indeed, British investment in China and East Asia throughout the free trade era is conspicuous by its absence. Leland Hamilton Jenks' classic study shows that the nominal value of Britain's foreign wealth by 1875 was about £1·2 billion; about £500 million was invested in Europe (including Egypt), with the remainder distributed among the United States, India, South America, and the Dominions, in that order. Not until 1876, according to Jenks, did the British make a loan to the Chinese central government.[35]

One final point should be borne in mind. Though the Western powers indeed enjoyed a favoured position in China by virtue of their treaty status, the economic benefits to be derived therefrom were compromised by foreign competition. In a situation of pure competition wilful sub-ordination of one trading partner to another cannot exist. The unequal treaty system rendered the competition between Chinese and foreign merchants less than pure, but still the merchants of Western nations competed among themselves, and even merchants of a single Western

nation competed among themselves. Consequently the Chinese entrepreneur had ample opportunity to bargain with the foreigner for the most favourable terms.[36]

The figures on the accompanying table show in more detailed fashion the nature and importance of the China trade through 150 years, with closer scrutiny for the free-trade years. The difficulties and pitfalls confronting the researcher in British trade statistics are many. The figures presented here, for example, are culled from a variety of sources. Not all are mutually compatible; different sources often give different figures for the same year because of different adjustments (or nonadjustments) of raw data. I have done my own adjusting in many cases to try to make the figures as comparable as possible. Such problems are least troublesome for the late fifties and sixties.

Despite the problems inherent in the nature of the data, some generalisation seems possible. We can see, for example, that in absolute terms Great Britain's import and export trade with China grew between 1700 and 1870. Growth was erratic, however, especially in the export trade whose figures give ample evidence that frequent merchant disappointment was well justified. I think it is quite significant that total British imports and total British exports, as contrasted with the trade with China alone, grew very steadily during the entire period and, furthermore, grew at a faster rate than the China trade during the last third of the period. The high point of the China trade was in the early 1800s when British imports of Chinese produce occupied over 10 per cent of the entire import trade; a general decline thereafter can be detected. Similarly, the high point of the export trade (to the extent one dare speak of high points at all in that connection) also came in the early 1800s when exports to China accounted for about 4 per cent of all British exports. (The 4·1 per cent for 1870 is an unusual peak, not the start of a new period of growth.) The conclusion is that, whereas British overseas trade was constantly on the increase, China after the early 1800s occupied a declining position. Simply put, the fortune of British overseas trade lay elsewhere than China.

Tea was the most important item in the China trade and merits detailed treatment. As the tea-drinking habit caught on in Great Britain, tea imports dramatically increased, as the statistics amply demonstrate. Tea, taxed at about 100 per cent of value during the Napoleonic war years, brought substantial revenue into the exchequer. With the growth of free trade policies by the 1840s, however, tea duties were steadily reduced: 2/2¼d per pound in 1840, 1/9d per pound in 1855, 1/5d in 1857, 1/– in 1863, a mere 6d per pound in 1865. The revenue, though declining, was still considerable because of the growing quantity of tea imports. Tax revenue from this source averaged over 20 per cent of total British customs revenue even during the free trade period. As a proportion of total British government revenue, tea also occupied a conspicuous place—nearly 10 per cent between 1850 and 1870.[37] In addition, tea contributed to the general economic prosperity of Great Britain by giving employment to such influential classes of people as shipbuilders, shippers, and importers.

Great Britain's Trade with China, 1700–1870

	British Imports			*British Exports*		
	Total Imports[a] (£)	*Imports from China*[b] (£)	*China's percentage of Total*	*Total Exports*[c] (£)	*Exports to China*[b] (£)	*China's percentage of Total*
1700	5,699,000	41,758	·73	3,645,000	1,571	·043
1725	6,718,000	—	—	4,701,000	4,372	·093
1750	7,113,000	—	—	6,682,000	21,438	·32
1775	13,108,000	953,975	7·5	8,145,000	99,114	1·2
1800	28,078,000	3,885,082	13·8	20,185,000	830,679	4·1
1810	39,050,000	4,076,534	10·4	25,579,000	1,036,606	4·1
1820	36,257,000	3,092,456	8·5	26,516,000	830,678	3·1
1830	54,122,000	3,262,395	6·0	36,874,000	586,704	1·6
1835	54,605,000	—	—	47,883,000	1,074,709	2·2
1840	75,964,000	—	—	58,193,000	524,198	·90
1845	93,389,000	—	—	72,305,000	2,394,827	3·3
1850	109,909,000	5,849,025	5·3	99,355,000	1,574,145	1·6
1855	126,428,000	8,746,590	6·9	127,932,000	902,259	·71
1856	146,816,000	9,421,648	6·4	148,691,000	2,286,734	1·5
1857	150,795,000	11,448,639	7·6	150,618,000	2,505,174	1·7
1858	145,752,000	7,073,509	4·9	151,506,000	2,966,452	2·0
1859	179,182,355	9,014,310	5·0	155,692,975	4,586,236	2·9
1860	210,530,873	9,323,764	4·4	164,521,351	5,451,557	3·3
1861	217,485,024	8,746,473	4·0	159,632,498	4,940,440	3·1
1862	225,716,976	11,854,685	5·3	166,168,134	3,231,336	1·9
1863	248,919,020	14,115,664	5·7	196,402,409	4,098,784	2·1
1864	274,952,172	15,549,119	5·7	212,588,239	4,988,402	2·3
1865	271,072,285	11,272,102	4·2	218,831,576	5,276,061	2·4
1870	303,257,493	9,762,896	3·2	244,080,577	9,934,124	4·1

Principal sources: British Parliamentary Papers; Werner Schlote, *British Overseas Trade from 1700 to the 1930s* (1938 English edition, Oxford, 1952); Morse, *Chronicles of the East India Company*; Earl Hampton Pritchard, *Anglo-Chinese Relations during the 17th and 18th Centuries* (1929; reprint edition, New York, 1970); B. R. Mitchell, *Abstract of British Historical Statistics* (Cambridge, 1962).

Great Britain's Trade with China 1700–1870

British Government Tea Revenue			*Relative Importance of Tea Revenue*			
Tea Imports from China (lbs)	*Value of China Tea Imports (£)*	*Tea Duty Revenue*[d] *(£)*	*Total British Customs Duty Revenue (£)*	*Tea's percentage of Total*	*Total British Government Revenue (£)*	*Tea's percentage of Total*
91,183	14,398	—	1,523,000	—	4,344,000	—
349,966	13,338	205,238	4,452,000[e]	4·6	5,960,000	3·4
2,324,912	483,983	524,049	5,091,000[e]	10·3	7,467,000	7·0
6,225,343	1,031,216	1,221,981	7,862,000[e]	15·1	11,112,000	10·1
15,165,368	1,510,000	1,152,262	17,379,000[e]	6·6	31,585,000	3·6
19,791,356	1,961,000	3,212,430	39,400,000[e]	8·2	69,200,000	4·6
30,147,994	3,015,000	3,128,499	26,500,000[f]	11·8	58,100,000	5·4
31,897,546	3,190,000	3,310,091	19,817,382[f]	4·3	54,811,325	6·0
42,052,047	4,433,000	3,832,432	20,522,894	18·7	50,494,732	7·6
22,576,405	2,802,000	2,460,828	23,341,813	10·5	51,693,510	4·8
50,714,657	5,106,000	4,832,666	21,560,555	22·4	57,700,000	8·4
77,430,400	5,051,000	7,400,000	22,019,784	33·6	57,431,797	12·9
81,560,207	5,118,752	5,201,243	21,788,771	23·9	65,704,491	7·9
84,795,802	5,123,080	7,418,678	24,206,844	30·6	69,386,840	10·7
60,295,610	4,310,205	4,522,171	22,956,371	19·7	52,483,651	8·6
73,359,599	5,036,293	5,281,892	24,155,852	21·9	46,793,395	11·3
71,916,833	5,528,660	5,178,012	25,065,066	20·7	41,065,315	12·4
85,295,130	6,601,894	5,268,538	23,165,764	22·7	45,885,161	11·5
92,145,365	6,499,540	5,348,510	23,657,513	22·6	49,230,430	10·9
109,756,857	8,759,763	5,384,219	23,993,546	22·4	48,489,522	11·1
129,439,921	10,051,803	4,483,039	23,588,932	19·0	46,743,316	9·6
115,102,527	8,606,705	4,193,553	22,498,211	18·6	44,245,927	9·5
112,782,845	9,326,536	3,023,616	21,799,972	13·9	59,406,597	5·1
125,593,898	8,787,894	2,584,867	20,436,863	12·6	60,399,720	4·3

Notes: [a] Includes figures for Great Britain and Ireland.
[b] Includes figures for Hong Kong from 1845; exluding bullion.
[c] Includes figures for Great Britain and Ireland; includes re-exports.
[d] Gross revenue before deduction of drawbacks for re-exports. Duty was divided between excise and customs from 1725 to 1818; duty was entirely excise from 1819 to 1833, entirely customs from 1834.
[e] Combined customs and excise duty revenue.
[f] Excise duty alone.

Despite its importance, however, it is worth remarking that the British did not control the supply of tea. It could control the purchase price to the extent that the British government controlled the tariff of duties and to the extent that it prevented the operation of Chinese monopolistic selling practices. But actual quantity could not be controlled and it fluctuated considerably. Nor could quality be controlled, which steadily deteriorated from the 1870s. From that time on, increasing demand for the leaf and for higher and more uniform quality proved better met by the development of Indian sources of supply than by trying to wring more favourable terms from the Chinese.[38]

The China trade, then, possessed a certain importance, but it was hardly the focal point in the total mosaic of British overseas trade. The plum was Europe—not China nor even the Empire. More than twice as many United Kingdom exports went to Europe than to any other continent; only a scant 10-20 per cent went to *all* of Asia, including profitable India, between 1805 and 1870. Similarly, of United Kingdom imports 35-40 per cent came from Europe between 1849 and 1870, a mere 20 per cent or so from all of Asia.[39]

British governmental actions reflect an increasing appreciation of China's low economic priority. The government might sanction limited application of force to protect British life and property and it might even sanction a very limited intervention in the Ch'ing-Taiping civil war to protect threatened interests and fancied prospects.[40] But with the conclusion of the 1858–60 campaigns the British simply declined ever again to fight in China for the extension of commerce.

Our analysis thus far shows that the non-economic criteria of informal empire seem to fit neatly the Anglo-Chinese relationship. But the economic criteria are not satisfied: on the whole Great Britain's economic benefits were unimpressive; they fell far below expectations and below benefits derived from trade with other countries quite outside the scope of any attempted informal empire. Further, Great Britain did not on the whole effectively subordinate China, however hard British merchants may have tried and however much the British government may have facilitated their efforts.

One can of course point to isolated examples of economic subordination in the Anglo-Chinese relation. Legislation of opium importation was forced on China in the 1858 treaty and, to the extent that this was advantageous to the British and disadvantageous to the Chinese, it may well be taken as effective subordination, or at any rate something beyond merely driving a good business deal within the context of pure competition. But the opium trade had been flourishing (even if illegally) long before the imposition of the unequal treaty system, and it flourished as much as a result of officials' venality and simple market demand as of the forces of 'free-trade imperialism'. Furthermore, however deplorable the opium trade appears to our late twentieth century perspective as a social and moral abomination, we should not discount the economic fact that opium paid a much higher rate of duty than other foreign imports and thus brought considerable revenue into the Chinese exchequer until 1917 when opium importation ceased.[41] To the extent that this revenue

was available for China's economic development, opium imports benefited China. And to the extent that China was benefited, she was that much less the disadvantaged trade partner. Thus the element of effective subordination of China to Great Britain is less pronounced, and accordingly the informal imperialist connection is likewise less pronounced.

Even assuming that opium was indeed economically more disadvantageous to China than other imports intended for individual consumption, nonetheless Anglo-Chinese trade in other respects tended to balance out the economic picture. Tea and silk immediately come to mind in this connection. As a result of market demand developed by the imperialist powers, both these native industries greatly expanded to the benefit of the Chinese economy until the 1920s and 1930s. Opium imports and tea and silk exports developed more or less side by side; the economic advantage to China of the latter was as much a product of imperialism as the disadvantage of the former. For this and the other reasons stated earlier, then, I maintain that *on the whole* British merchants or British 'free-trade imperialism' failed economically to effectively subordinate China to Great Britain or to British merchants.[42]

But let us return to the larger issues—the very notion of British informal empire and the evidence upon which it is based. In general the literature thus far produced provides no very solid confirmation of the informal empire thesis. Too many studies on the subject deal with the attitudes in England about empire and too few with the actual progress of events in the countries assumed to have formed Britain's informal empire. However valuable studies of British attitudes may be in their own right, I consider that informal empire must find its proof in concrete circumstances, not as a state of mind, and studies of British attitudes are perforce inapplicable. There are of course many studies of Britain's economic relations with non-colonial areas, but since they rarely address themselves directly to the concept of informal empire, they omit important elements such as the application of non-market constraints and effective economic subordination without which the concept loses its meaning.[43]

China is the only major independent country in Asia, and one of the very few in the entire industrially underdeveloped world, that might be said to have been enmeshed in Great Britain's web of informal empire. The British-imposed unequal treaty system, domination of the customs service, participation in military modernisation, establishment of mixed courts, and so on, might suggest an informal sway even in spite of the lacklustre economic benefits and ineffective economic subordination.

But even such arguments as these for British informal empire in China are compromised or at least take on new perspective when we consider that the influence and participation of foreigners in Chinese institutions is hardly a unique phenomenon. Far from the British having invented it following the Opium War, Sino-foreign administration is observable as early as the Northern Wei Dynasty (AD 386–556). Other striking examples occur under the Yuan Dynasty (1279–1368) and the Ch'ing Dynasty (1644–1912). In these three dynasties and others China was invaded by Central Asian peoples, who, scant in numbers compared with the huge sedentary Chinese population, could not monopolise the

government of China but only share in government with the Chinese themselves. During the early Ch'ing Dynasty the conquering Manchus, besides employing large numbers of Chinese, also employed Mongols and even Jesuits in government. In late Ch'ing times the scope of participation in public administration was broadened to include personnel from the maritime countries of the West, particularly Great Britain and the United States. Such joint Sino-foreign administration under alien dynasties—'synarchy'—is indeed a prominent and complex instituion running through Chinese history.[44] A recent study of the Chinese comprador supports the synarchic interpretation, for the comprador class was not created solely as a result of Western economic contacts with China, as has been generally assumed, but emerged from a purely native institution—the *ya-hang* or licensed broker.[45] A study of the role of Jardine, Matheson in China likewise lends support to the synarchic interpretation, for it concludes that the firm 'sought partnership with China's ruling strata' and did not seek to carry out designs which can be construed as economic imperialism.[46]

Should not the informal empire thesis, then, be modified in appreciation of the fact that China fitted into British informal empire no more than Britons fitted into the traditional Chinese synarchic pattern? To deny this, one would perhaps have to assert that China was equally within the informal sway of the Mongols and Jesuits—a notion palpably absurd. The point here is really that violence is done to history if we look at it only from the British perspective. It was not only a case of Great Britain's acting upon China; China herself had developed a sophisticated tradition which allowed for, even sought, 'barbarian' participation in her internal affairs. China too was an actor. A glance at the treaty system shows there was something indubitably British going on in China; but knowledge of the native tradition reveals that there was something Chinese going on too.

What then is left of our informal empire? Even granting for the sake of argument that China was a full-fledged member, it would be one of only very few examples. And because of this very paucity of examples, we must ask if the concept is viable at all. Even granting that the concept existed in the *minds* of Victorian officials and free traders themselves (an assertion by no means unchallenged) did it—and this I maintain is what counts—exist in fact? I suggest that it did not: on the basis of the evidence available, Great Britain did not develop an informal empire during her period of anti-imperialism and free trade. An isolated example or two is simply insufficient to prove the case. 'Empire', once established, implies some sort of *systematic* working out of relations with foreign lands whether formally or otherwise, some systematic process by which British subjects effectively subordinated independent countries by the systematic application of non-market constraints.[47] Lacking effective subordination and conspicuous benefits, 'informal empire' fails to be an apt term under which to subsume one country's trade relations with another; without system or some classificatory scheme, 'empire' formal or otherwise, ceases to possess semantic value; and when systematic subordination and benefits exist only in one or two instances, one cannot speak meaningfully of an empire.

It is not my purpose in this article to posit alternative constructs to either informal empire or synarchy to describe the relationship that existed between Great Britain and China. My purpose, rather, is simply to demonstrate that the informal empire concept does not seem to apply well to China. Of course, its inapplicability to China does not necessarily prove its inapplicability elsewhere, though such a possibility naturally suggests itself. In addition, my analysis of its invalidity is addressed to its economic dimension; in other dimensions, for example the strategic and missionary to which I have referred above, the informal empire concept may well provide us with a viable interpretative tool.

But as long as informal empire is linked with free trade and 'free-trade imperialism', one can hardly dissociate economic factors from it. Consequently, the economic criteria we have analysed above may be applied as important determinants of the existence of an informal empire. And for China the evidence suggests that such factors did not operate.

NOTES

1. Portions of this article are adapted from pp. 8–13 of my book *China and Great Britain: the Diplomacy of Commercial Relations, 1860–1864* and are reprinted by permission of the East Asian Research Center, Harvard University; copyright, 1974, by the President and Fellows of Harvard College.

2. Hypo-colony is a rather more specialised term than the others, having particular reference to China. It was coined in 1924 by Sun Yat-sen to denote China's victimisation by not one but many imperialist powers. Sun Yat-sen, *San Min Chu I, The Three Principles of the People* (Taipei, 1952), 77.

3. John K. Fairbank has suggested the qualitative value of informal empire as a tool for understanding modern China, even if difficult to quantify. See 'America and China: the Mid-nineteenth Century', in Ernest R. May and James C. Thompson, Jr (eds), *American-East Asian Relations: A Survey* (Cambridge Mass, 1972), 32. Edmund S. Wehrle in *Britain, China, and the Anti-missionary Riots 1891–1900* (Minneapolis, 1966) terms China the 'classic example' of British informal imperialism (p. 6), but analyses only its missionary dimension, and that for a period well beyond the free trade era. British historians such as D. C. M. Platt and Robinson and Gallagher devote a few pages to China in their articles on informal empire (see note 5).

4. D. C. M. Platt also makes this point in a recent article, asserting, for example, that 'scant attention is ever paid to the capacity of the "backward" nations to manufacture for themselves'. 'Further Objections to an "Imperialism of Free Trade", 1830–60', 26 *Economic History Review* (1973), 77–91, esp. 81. Platt's assertion could be broadened to include phenomena other than just manufacturing, such as commerce and shipping, and to include such non-economic areas as political tradition as well.

5. The term itself was coined (with no particular fanfare) in 1934 by C. R. Fay in *Imperial Economy and its Place in the Formation of Economic Doctrine, 1600–1932* (Oxford, 1934), 104, but it was two decades before scholars began to debate the concept. The seminal study on the subject is J. A. Gallagher and R. E. Robinson's 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', 6 *The Economic History Review* (1953), 1–13; and a recent exponent of the concept is Bernard Semmel, in *The Rise af Free Trade Imperialsim: Classical Political Economy, the Empire of Free Trade and Imperialism, 1750–1850* (Cambridge, 1970). Contrary to these writers, however, the concept is challenged by Oliver Macdonagh in 'The Anti-Imperialism of Free Trade', 14 *The Economic History Review* (1962), 489–501 and by D. C. M. Platt in two articles, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade: Some Reservations', 21 *The Economic History Review* (1968), 296–306, and 'Further Objections . . .'.

6. R. E. Robinson and J. A. Gallagher with Alice Denny, *Africa and the Victorians: the Official Mind of Imperialism* (London, 1961), 5. Some historians, however, deny

the essentiality of non-market constraints and distinguish an informal empire based on economic factors alone: that wherever subjects of the metropolitan country are able consistently to derive high profits from overseas territories by the skill of their enterprise or superiority of their techniques, an informal empire exists. For my part, I am sceptical of so loose a definition which does not seem to differ much from simply driving a good business deal.

7. W. M. Mathew argues thus in 'The Imperialism of Free Trade: Peru, 1820-70', 21 *The Economic History Reivew* (1968), 562–79, esp. 563.

8. For general accounts of the development of the British Empire and Commonwealth, see e.g., Paul Knaplund, *The British Empire 1815–1939* (New York, 1941); Alfred LeRoy Burt, *The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth from the American Revolution* (Boston, 1956) and Nicholas Mansergh, *The Commonwealth Experience* (London, 1969).

9. The first active expression of this British policy was the abortive Charles Cathcart mission dispatched to China in 1787, for documentation and description of which see Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Chronicles of the East India Company Trading to China, 1635–1834* (5 vols, Oxford, 1926–9), vol. II, ch. XLIII.

10. For a complete listing of the treaty ports, see G. C. Allen and Audrey G. Donnithorne, *Western Enterprise in Far Eastern Economic Development: China and Japan* (1954; reprinted New York, 1968), 265–7. Five treaty ports were opened to foreign trade in 1842, eight more were added in 1860, and dozens more in the ensuing half century. Foreign self-government was established in only the more important of them.

11. Edward LeFevour: *Western Enterprise in Late Ch'ing China: a Selective Survey of Jardine, Matheson and Company's Operations, 1842–1895* (Cambridge Mass, 1968), 131.

12. For details of the free-port plan, see Hosea Ballou Morse, *The International Relations of the Chinese Empire* (3 vols, 1910, 1918; reprinted Taipei, nd), vol. II, 124–5. For an important study on relations between Whitehall and representatives of British merchant interests in China, see Nathan Pecovits, *Old China and the Foreign Office* (New York, 1948); his thesis is stated on pp. vii-viii.

13. Mary Wright, *The Last Stand of Chinese Conservatism: the T'ung-chih Restoration, 1862–1874* (1957; second edition, Stanford, 1962), 261–3.

14. Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christian Missions in China* (1929; reprinted New York, 1967), 473–4; Wehrle, *op. cit.*, 6.

15. For a detailed study of this subject, see Grace Estelle Fox, *British Admirals and Chinese Pirates, 1832–69* (London, 1940).

16. J. S. Gregory, *Great Britain and the Taipings* (New York, 1969), 114, 119. See also Dean, *op. cit.*, 134.

17. For one British envoy's concern on this point, see Frederick Bruce to Lord John Russell, 12 March 1862, PRO 30/22/49 (*Russell Papers*, Public Record Office, London) and Bruce to Russell, 2 October 1863, FO 450/10, 'Further Papers Relating to the Affairs of China', no 44. The situation changed markedly during the eighties when European rivalries started spilling over into China; our concern in this paper, however, is with the free-trade era up to 1870.

18. For one Foreign Secretary's concern on this point, for example, see Russell to Bruce, 26 April 1862, PRO 30/22/101 (*Russell Papers*). See also Robinson, Gallagher and Denny, *op. cit.*, 8.

19. Though not couched in terms of informal empire, an important work on the replacement of the Ch'ing Dynasty's tribute system by the Western-imposed treaty system is John K. Fairbank's *Trade and Diplomacy on the China Coast: the Opening of the Treaty Ports, 1842–1854* (2 vols, Cambridge Mass, 1953); see also his 'The Early Treaty System in the Chinese World Order', in John K. Fairbank (ed.), *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relations* (Cambridge Mass, 1968), 257–75.

20. For a thorough account of the establishment of this institution, see Masataka Banno, *China and the West, 1858–1861; the Origins of the Tsungli Yamen* (Cambridge Mass, 1964).

21. For details on these and other concessions, see Dean, *op. cit., passim;* they are recapitulated 140–1.

22. For the origin of the Customs Service, see Fairbank, *op. cit.*, vol. I, pt 5. For a detailed study of the institution's development and a biography of its head, Sir Robert

Hart (handsomely paid by the Chinese government), see Stanley Wright, *Hart and the Chinese Customs* (Belfast, 1950). For a Marxist view condemning the institution and Hart, see Ting Min-nan, *Ti-kuo chu-i ch'in-Hua shih* (History of Imperialist Aggression in China), (2 vols, Peking, 1962), vol I, 148–50, 159–63.

23. Western studies of the Ever Victorious Army have now come nearly full circle. Early enthusiasts pictured Gordon as the saviour of Chinese civilisation from the Taiping scourge. Later writers saw Gordon as but operating on the sidelines. The most recent scholarly evaluation by Richard Smith, 'Barbarian Officers of Imperial China: Ward, Gordon and the Taiping Rebellion' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of California Davis, 1972) shows that the combined contributions of the Ever Victorious Army, the Chinese Anhwei Army, and British and French aid were of key importance at a crucial juncture in the conflict. See pp. 183–8, 285–9. Chinese Marxist historians also stress the important role played by foreigners, and condemn the foreigners as capitalist oppressors of the Taipings whom these historians view as popular revolutionaries. See Ting Min-nan, *op. cit.*, vol. I, 131–51; also Hu Sheng, 'T'ai-p'ing t'ien-kuo yü tzu-pen-chu-i wai-kuo-ti kuan-hsi' (Taiping kingdom relations with the foreign capitalist nations), 1 *Hsueh-hsi* (Study) (1949), 20–23.

24. For some details, see Dean, *op. cit.*, 134, and Smith 'Barbarian Officers', 126–35.

25. For some details on foreigners at the Kiangnan arsenal, China's largest, see Thomas L. Kennedy, 'Industrial Metamorphosis in the Self-Strengthening Movement: Li Hung-chang and the Kiangnan Shipbuilding Program', 4 *Journal of the Institute of Chinese Studies of the Chinese University of Hong Kong* (1971), 222. See also Kenneth E. Folsom, *Friends, Guests, and Colleagues: the Mu-Fu System in the Late Ch'ing Period* (Berkeley, 1968), 156–7. For Tso Tsung-t'ang's use of foreigners see Gideon Chen, *Tso Tsung-t'ang: Pioneer Promoter of the Modern Dockyard and the Woollen Mill in China* (1938; reprinted New York, 1961), 30–32.

26. Foreign military aid was not an area monopolised by Great Britain; there was considerable competition with France, but this rivalry was not so keen as to produce any Anglo-French rupture at the diplomatic level.

27. The consular jurisdiction clause was first inserted into the Sino-American Treaty of Wanghia (1844) and was immediately acquired by Great Britain by virtue of its most-favoured-nation status; the other powers soon also acquired the same right.

28. The standard works on extraterritoriality and the mixed court are G. W. Keeton, *The Development of Extraterritoriality in China* (2 vols, London, 1928) and Anatol M. Kotenev, *Shanghai, Its Mixed Court and Council* (Shanghai, 1925).

29. Pelcovits, *op. cit.*, 2–4.

30. Quoted in Gregory, *op. cit.*, 164.

31. Charles F. Remer, *The Foreign Trade of China* (1926, reprinted Taipei, 1967), 231. An exception to this may be the Indian trade with China; in the early 1860s Indian opium exports to China provided about one-sixth of British revenue in India. See Gregory, *op. cit.*, 160.

32. C. G. F. Simkin, *The Traditional Trade of Asia* (London, 1968), 280, 283.

33. Mary Wright, *op. cit.*, 149, 151, 178, 182–3.

34. *Ibid.*, 179–80, 256. See also LeFevour, *op. cit.*, 50–1 and Yen-p'ing Hao, *The Comprador in Nineteenth Century China: Bridge between East and West* (Cambridge Mass, 1971), 110–2.

35. *The Migration of British Capital to 1875* (1927, reprinted, New York, 1963), 335 and appendix C. A detailed study by a student of late-Ch'ing Sino-British relations, though citing somewhat different figures for British capital in China, likewise makes the point that China was a poor market for capital prior to the Sino-Japanese war (1894–95). See E. V. G. Kiernan, *British Diplomacy in China, 1880 to 1885* (1939, reprinted New York, 1970), 269–73. There were a few loans for small amounts by private lenders to Chinese local officials in earlier decades; see Mary Wright, *op. cit.*, 182. The Ch'ing government was consistently averse to taking foreign loans; for an example of a rejected loan proposal, see Dean, *op. cit.*, 136–7.

36. For a study of the competition between British and American steamship companies, for example, and its benefits to Chinese commerce, see Kwang-ching Liu, *Anglo-American Steamship Rivalry in China, 1862–1874* (Cambridge Mass, 1962), 154–5. 'Cutthroat competition' among American merchant houses is asserted in

Stephen C. Lockwood, *Augustine Heard and Company 1858–1862: American Merchants in China* (Cambridge Mass, 1971), 118. The comprador himself often successfully rivalled foreign merchants for a share of market. See Yen-p'ing Hao, *op. cit.*, 117–20.

37. For illuminating statistics on British government revenue and the relative importance of customs duties, see Albert Imlah, *Economic Elements in the Pax Britannica: Studies in British Foreign Trade in the Nineteenth Century* (Cambridge Mass, 1958), 116–23, 159–62. For a detailed history of tea duties to 1813, see William Milburn, *Oriental Commerce* (2 vols, London, 1813), vol. II, 535–42. Tea duties are not the most accurate index of the development of free trade in British trade policy, for tea duties also reflect the development of direct vs. indirect taxation policies. Nonetheless, I analyse tea duties here because of tea's paramount importance in the trade and because tea statistics are less difficult of access than those of other items. Besides tea (and silk, too) Indian opium was of course important in the China trade and by about 1800 turned the whole Britain-India-China trade triangle into a profitable enterprise. But opium was far more important to the prosperity of India than directly to Great Britain and hence is omitted from the table.

38. Remer, *op. cit.*, 48–9.

39. Schlote, *op. cit.*, tables 18 and 19.

40. J. S. Gregory concludes in *Great Britain and the Taipings* that the British intervened in the Taiping Rebellion on the imperial side as a 'simple issue of commercial advantage' (p. 155). But intervention was on a very limited scale, partly indirect, and it never prevented the continual and on-schedule withdrawal of the British forces mobilised in China for the Second Opium War.

41. The tariff specified a duty of 30 taels per picul—a somewhat higher rate than the 5 per cent ad valorem duty charged on other foreign imports. More significant was the fact that whereas foreign imports paid only an additional 2½ per cent ad valorem transit duty from treaty port to point of inland destination, opium could be taxed freely by Chinese local governments and this indeed brought in a large revenue. See Morse, *International Relations of the Chinese Empire*, vol. I, 554–5 and Hosea Ballou Morse, *The Trade and Administration of the Chinese Empire* (3rd revised edition 1908; reprinted Taipei, 1966), 338–43.

42. There is considerable debate among China historians whether the century of Western impact under the unequal treaties on balance proved economically beneficial or harmful to China; whether, for example, the rapid development, in response to Western economic demand, of such traditional Chinese agricultural industries as tea and silk production proved in the long run advantageous or disadvantageous to China. Some scholars have found that in general the British (and foreign) economic presence was indeed of positive benefit to the Chinese, even if unappreciated or resented by them. While it would be a distracting digression to enter into the particulars of the arguments, and acknowledging that much research still remains to be done on the subject, my view is that the weight of evidence favours those who argue the Western impact was economically beneficial. For a recent overview of this revisionist trend, see Andrew J. Nathan, 'Imperialism's Effects on China', 4 *Bulletin of Concerned Asian Scholars*, (1972), 3–8. See also Dwight H. Perkins, 'The Chinese Economy in Historical Perspective: Report on a Conference', 28 *Social Science Research Council Items*, (March 1974), 9.

43. Latin America and the Middle East are usually considered to fall within Great Britain's informal sway, though very few case studies have been made on the subject to prove the point one way or the other. For Latin America, there is Mathew's 'The Imperialism of Free Trade' which concludes informal empire did not operate there. Another is H. S. Ferns, 'Britain's Informal Empire in Argentina, 1806–1914', 4 *Past and Present*, (1953), where he concludes that native elements formed viable economic systems 'in their own interests, in their own way and on their own terms', (p. 67)—hardly a case of subordinative informal empire at work. D. C. M. Platt, a critic of the informal empire thesis, finds particular difficulty reconciling it to the situation of Latin America. Platt, 'Imperialism of Free Trade', 298–301. A study not directly addressed to informal empire, but which nonetheless is very suggestive, is J. Fred Rippy, *British Investments in Latin America, 1822–1949; A Case Study in the Operations of Private Trade in Retarded Regions* (1959; reprinted Hamden Conn, 1966), which shows (pp. 7, 10) that British investment, even when accompanied by non-market constraints, was a losing proposition from the 1820s right down to recent times; the average rate of

return was particularly meagre during the free trade era. For the Middle East, Egypt immediately comes to mind as falling within Great Britain's informal empire until its outright annexation in 1882. The Ottoman Empire elsewhere, however, remained relatively free of British informal sway: the Foreign Office recognised the need for Ottoman stability because it was easier to negotiate with one power than with numerous separate states, and because a stable Ottoman Empire formed a better bulwark against feared Russian expansion. D. C. M. Platt finds that in the Balkans, for example, Great Britain did *not* promote independent governments as good investment risks or coerce weaker states into cooperation. Platt, 'Imperialism of Free Trade', 305.

44. John K. Fairbank, 'Synarchy under the Treaties', in John K. Fairbank (ed), *Chinese Thought and Institutions* (Chicago, 1957), 204–31. For a wide-ranging discussion of synarchy in Asia and its positive role in the modernisation process, see S. A. M. Adshead, *The Modernization of the Chinese Salt Administration, 1900–1920* (Cambridge Mass, 1907), ch. 8.

45. Yen-p'ing Hao, *op. cit.*, 2.

46. LeFevour, *op. cit.*, 132.

47. I realize of course that the growth of the Second British Empire was in itself an unsystematic process; the point here is that once empire *has* been established and recognised as such, it must exhibit elements of system.