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“By 1958 (Causes of World War III), [C Wright.] Mills seemed much more concerned with the rise of militarism among the elites than with the hypothesis that many elites were military men. According to Mills, the rise of the military state serves the interests of the elite of industrial societies.

For the politician the projection of military power serves as a cover for their lack of vision and innovative leadership. For corporate elites the preparations for war and the projection of military power underwrites their research and development as well as provides a guarantee of stable profits through corporate subsidies. This militarism is inculcated in the population through school room and pulpit patriotism, through manipulation and control of the news, through the cultivation of opinion leaders and unofficial ideology.”

– Frank Elwell, “C. Wright Mills on the Power Elite” (2013) ¹

Interstellar Politics: “Rhetoric is the art of ruling the minds of men” – Plato. One useful definition of politics is ‘the process by which we decide the allocation of resources, who gets what, when and where.’² From this process flows all things commonly identified with politics, for example, political power (the authority to decide or the ability to disproportionately influence the debate over resources), ideology (the philosophy upon which the decision to allocate resources might be based), rhetoric (now a derogatory term, but once an important and respected part of Western Civilization and classical learning), popular voting (the novel idea that the people paying the taxes and producing resources should at least have the illusion that they have a say in the allocation of those resources) and of course, conflict and war.

Civilizations live and die on resources. The Late Bronze Age Collapse, Greek Dark Ages, the collapse of Mississippian culture and of Mayan culture, the fall of the Akkadian and Khmer Empires, are all attributable in large part to failure of resources and competition from in-fighting and outside invaders fighting over dwindling resources.

What would make interstellar politics particularly different are the dichotomy of the limited resources of each world, each a unique island in the vast emptiness, and on the other hand, the potentially unlimited resources and expansion and living space available in Galactic Space, if we can just get there. Some have suggested, indeed, that once cultures reach galactic space, there will be no need for war over resources, or living spaces, as it would be easier to go out and get your own resources and living spaces than to war with another and take it from them by force. War would, theoretically, become obsolete and prohibitively expensive; that was the hopeful theme of the New Wave science-fiction movement of the 1960s.

Yet – curiously – most of the interstellar science-fiction trope from the late 1960s onward – in television, movies, and computer games (visual media) features almost endless interstellar warfare fought against the backdrop of great philosophical debates, moral issues, and even reforms. Because without literary content, it would be just senseless warfare and adventure.

- ✓ “While these are agonizing, career-defining decisions for lawmakers, they are also at heart based on cold political calculus. And that must not be lost in the conversation. Most politicians respond more to political incentives than principles. That’s the single most important insight to understanding how Washington really works.” – James Hohmann, “The Daily 202,” The Washington Post, August 9, 2016.³

“Humans relate to nature through production of goods as well as the reproduction of the species. It is through the production process that humans transform nature (the ‘inorganic body’) into products for human use. The reproduction process both assures the continuation of society as well as regulates the amount of resources required from the natural environment. These processes are therefore central in understanding how humans relate to the environment, that is, in understanding human ecology.

‘The first premise of all human existence and, therefore, of all history,’ Foster cites Marx and Engels, ‘is that men must be in a position to live in order to be able to ‘make history.’ But life involves before everything else eating and drinking, housing, clothing, and various other things. The first historical act is thus the production of the means to satisfy these needs, the production of material life itself. And indeed this is an historical act, a fundamental condition of all history, which today, as thousands of years ago, must daily and hourly be fulfilled merely in order to sustain human life... the production of life, both of one’s own in labour and of fresh life in procreation... appears as a twofold relation: on the one hand as a natural, on the other hand as a social relation (116).’”

– Frank Elwell, Macro Social Theory (2009), Kindle Edition, p. 81, quoting John Belamy Foster

Life, Taxes, Death, and Taxes: Professor Elwell’s summary succinctly links human production and reproduction as two prongs of nature and social relationships: Taxation & Census in GGDM. Activation of the Taxation Power allows a player to collect resources from *all* eligible colonies on the turn of the activation. Activation of the Census Power allows the position’s native and naturalized populations to ‘grow’ on *all* eligible colonies on the turn of the activation. Actually, taxation and population growth occur constantly/continuously, thus activation of the Taxation and Census Powers in the game only represent the act of ‘looking’ to realize and quantify the production of resources and the growth of populations. The Taxation and Census Powers may each only be activated once per turn, but both could be activated in the same Regular Turn (Census Power processes before Taxation ... if you are feeling greedy).

- ✓ Taxation and Census are very much linked in the world, in many nations one receives a tax benefit for having children. Benefits encourage certain linked behaviors or discourage bad results, such as children in poverty. Cold War Romania remains one of the most extreme examples of taxation used to drive explosive population growth.

Activation of the Census Power requires two Acts and no Scenes, while activation of the Taxation Power requires either three Acts, or two Acts and a Scene placed on the Capital.⁴ Additionally, activation of the Census Power likely will cause the loss of Proficiencies on the Public Space (see *And the Cradle Will Rock*, 3 Culture, p. 382, *infra*) as a new generation turns over, thus activation of the Census Power also has a wider effect on the Public Space. The Taxation Power is the second most expensive Power activation, and will usually be processed last in the sequence (see *Clockwork Universe*, *The Streams of Time*, p. 90, *supra*) *except* when the Culture Power is activated to Found a College (see *Foundation*, 1 Colleges, p. 457, *infra*). The ability to either use three Acts or two Acts and a Scene on the Capital Colony provides flexibility.

- ✓ “People should realize that sons no longer send money to their fathers. They are using it as they choose. The government has done well to tax young men.” – King Dinuzulu kaCetshwayo, from *Bhambatha: War Of The Heads* (documentary, 2009).

- **Tax Revolt or Revolting Taxes:** Taxation and Census Power Activations are not targeted to specific colonies or do not affect just a single colony (unless the position has only one colony). Activation of the Taxation and Census Powers, unlike many other Power Activations, is a global event that affects *all eligible* sovereign colonies of the position, even if they cannot grow or contribute (eligibility will be discussed in 2 & 4 Taxation & Census, *infra*). Each colony is checked during Taxation to see whether it obeys the Taxation Power activation (i.e. due to inactive Constructural Elements, see Power Off, 2 Constructural Elements, p. 193, *supra*), some colonies might not pay their taxes. Failure of the Taxation Power activation at any colony does not count as a Power Activation failure for Government Title Conflict Checks (see 3 Government Titles, pp. 613, 615, *infra*) *unless* all eligible sovereign colonies fail Taxation (this could be really bad if you only have one colony...). However, *the Census Power is immune to inactive Constructural Elements* and thus requires no checks at each colony (they will never fail to reproduce) but may result in loss of Proficiencies (*ut supra*). Population on Colony Ships do not grow during the Census Power activation.
- ✓ Although science-fiction trope has posited situations in which an entire species either refuses to or cannot reproduce (e.g., Children of Men (2006) or the Asgard in Stargate SG-1), there are no historical examples that I am aware of where it has actually happened, unlike the millions of instances of refusal to pay taxes or annual tribute:
 - “The passion between the sexes has appeared in every age to be so nearly the same that it may always be considered, in algebraic language, as a given quantity. The great law of necessity which prevents population from increasing in any country beyond the food which it can either produce or acquire, is a law so open to our view...that we cannot for a moment doubt it. The different modes which nature takes to prevent or repress a redundant population do not appear, indeed, to us so certain and regular, but though we cannot always predict the mode we may with certainty predict the fact.” – Thomas Malthus, An Essay on the Principle of Population (1798).
 - *A priori* vs. statistical entropy.

“There’s a building in the Cayman Islands that supposedly houses 12,000 U.S. corporations, which means it is either the largest building in the world or the biggest tax ripoff in the world, and I think we know which one it is.”

– Sen. Barack Obama, 2007

Tax Shelter: There is a history of considerable interplay between taxation, business, culture, and the direction of a civilization. Some of it is vaguely addressed in GGDM’s mechanics, but there is room for some variance. Mad Max director George Miller provides a possible example:

- ✓ “Then it changed. We kind of became flavour of the week or flavour of the month in the United States; Australian directors tended to become popular there to some degree, and the government saw that we’re a good way of advertising Australia. And so they started to introduce the tax legislation which brought in tax shelter, which brought in a whole lot of people who were skilled at financing but not skilled as film makers. So the industry took on a degree of cynicism, it matured in one sense but also got cynical.

And so we had a lot of bad films, tax shelter [films]. We reproduced the Canadian system, as much as we tried to avoid it, we reproduced that system. And then people got sick of seeing the historical films, or we ran out of subjects, started to move into more contemporary stories which just didn't [work as well], because our society isn't significantly different enough to American society to really make our stories stand out as contemporary stories. The budgets were so high by now with the tax legislation that you can't make indigenous films for sixty-eight million people, what we call 'parish pump,' more intimate local colloquial stories.

So a lot of that work then went into TV, so in a sense we reproduced what's happened in England. So now as we see it, we have a small population with a degree of maturity in the industry, with a lot of the advantages that come with that and a lot of the disadvantages, but a fairly high degree of cynicism unfortunately, which I think is the death of any industry. And with a lot of the talent going into television, so who knows where we're going to go. A lot of the Australian directors are tending to work in Hollywood, mainly because the budgets are bigger there, and they have a wider range of stories that they can tell." – George Miller as quoted by Anne Billson, "George Miller Talks about Mad Max, Heroes & Tina Turner: The 1985 Interview," previously unpublished interview published on Multiglom: The Anne Billson Blog, May 12, 2015.

The main difficulty in simulating this in GGDM is the macro-level at which civilization is played in the game. It may be that participants decide that RPs taken from the Treasury for various activations or funding represents tax shelters, tax variances, or tax concessions, participants need to decide what is being represented by one or the other option and why they are different.

"The problem with the census kerfuffle is that it, well, involves the census. The second problem is that it involves gerrymandering and complex calculations that most people inside political circles in Washington don't fully understand. You layer those two things, and it's a recipe for people's eyes glazing over. But, the inclusion of a citizenship question is the kind of thing that could be used to cement the GOP's already very strong advantage when it comes to the composition of the districts we use to elect our representatives. And that's a system the GOP has already gamed to great effect.

Given the GOP's existing advantages, some have wagered that the Democrats would never be able to win back the House until they can win power in key states and redraw some of the maps. Those suggestions proved wrong in 2018, but Democrats' hold on the House is and will be tenuous, at best, for the foreseeable future. What adding a citizenship question would potentially do for Republicans is twofold: 1) It could dissuade undocumented immigrants from responding (for fear of disclosing their status to the government), which would dilute their representation and transfer it to areas that are more likely to be Republican-leaning. And 2) It would give Republicans a potential game-changing tool to rejigger maps in the future. The GOP would very much like to draw maps according to citizen voting-age population, rather than total population, because that benefits more rural areas. That's questionable from a constitutional standpoint, but without a citizenship question to give it the data it would need, Republicans can't even really attempt it." – Aaron Blake, "The census is a sleeping giant of a potential Trump administration scandal," Washington Post, June 12, 2019

Krypton Kerfuffle: We are accustomed to think that what we see in the game information is absolutely true; e.g., when we look while playing a board game, and see the location and information on our own game pieces, locations, and properties.

And unless the game has decoys and mechanisms that allow players to hide movement or disguise the composition of their forces, we also assume that what we see of enemy or opposing game pieces on the board is also absolutely true, e.g., the white bishop is really there, in that space, projecting those lines of force both ways across the board and there is no chance that it might really be in one space to either side.

While it is likely that information reported to a position about its own civilization, ships and so forth is absolutely true (correct, factual, verifiable), Census and Taxation Power Activations provide special opportunities for provision of less-than-accurate information to players about their own position, e.g., political gain, gerrymandering, local puffery, corruption, avoiding or causing failure of Conflict Checks. Other possible opportunities for Interventions to provide not-quite-true information to position players about their own positions might be research results, ship locations, and even Ground Units (e.g., in 2014, Iraq was paying tens of thousands of non-existent soldiers, local commanders were able to create non-existent soldiers and pocket their pay).

- ✓ “In addition, pursuit was made more difficult, according to Soviet Air Force Captain Aleksandr Zuyev, who defected to the West in 1989, because ten days before Arctic gales had knocked out the key warning radar on the Kamchatka Peninsula. *Furthermore he stated that local officials responsible for repairing the radar lied to Moscow, falsely reporting that they had successfully fixed the radar.* Had this radar been operational, it would have enabled an intercept of the stray airliner roughly two hours earlier with plenty of time for proper identification as a civilian aircraft.” – from Wikipedia article, “Korean Airlines Flight 007,” citing to CBS 60 Minutes program interview which is available on YouTube (emphasis added).

The participants will need to decide as in-game policy whether or not internal position information is absolutely true at all times; in cases where the Concierge has Intervened to present incorrect information to the position players, even if they know it is obviously not correct, they cannot be certain of what is the actual truth or perhaps that what they thought was true previously might not have been (e.g., a sudden drop in population factors in a new Census without external explanation, or ships *en route* arriving at a different destination than expected).

- Customer Service: So many things in our civilization are the opposite of what they are purported to be, the *opposite* of what they are labeled and represented as being. Modern customer support is plagued, *by design*, with know-nothingness and do-nothingness; rather, the agent’s task is to deflect and placate the upset customer and pass the buck up the corporate chain. This makes it easier and attractive to outsource to foreign or low-paid call centers.

Many customer service and government phone numbers are walls to avoid providing service. Some numbers have layers of menus and no way to talk to a person. Recordings, circular menus, recordings; *they don’t actually want to speak to you.* They assume you will eventually hang up. Modern ‘customer service’ is Talk to the Hand because we aren’t listening.

- ✓ Technical support is a joke.... they hire people who know nothing at all, put them in front of a computer and have them work through diagnostic tree menus. Most of them don’t listen to what you say, they are too busy trying to fit square pegs into round holes because they have no technical knowledge or broader understanding.

At a law firm that I worked for, they had an ‘origination fees award committee’ who reviewed new client acquisitions for assignment of origination fees to the attorney who brought

in the new business. In reality, the function of the committee was the opposite of their supposed purpose; they always had an excuse to not award origination fees, for example, they would claim that the new client called due to phonebook advertising by the firm or that they never received the forms. Their job was delay and obstruction, like good defense attorneys, except it was employed against their own producers in satellite offices. The system was not working as intended or was working exactly as intended, depending on your view.

There are opportunities where Concierge Intervention or creative storytelling by the participants may show that Colleges, Institutes, Corporations, and such, are not as claimed.

“I’ve been watching the recent libertarian conundrum – concerning the morality of using taxes to prevent a killer asteroid from wiping out humanity – with great fascination. For anyone not privy to the whole saga... Essentially, some (uber) libertarians have made it plain that they would rather die with their principles than see some thievin’ gub’mint send up a Bruce Willis-type into space to blow up any asteroid on the back of stolen tax money. ...

*Lest it be unclear, I am firmly in the camp that proclaims such positions as absurd. Further, it appears that many self-proclaimed libertarians count themselves in the same boat. I’d be worried if they didn’t; it would elevate a **cut-off your-nose-to-spite-your-face** mentality to an astronomical level, so to speak. Now, there have since been some more nuanced defences along the lines of: ‘I would contribute; I just don’t think you can force other people into contributing.’ However, from my perspective these positions still overlook the free-rider problem and ultimately equate to little more than a form of culpable homicide.”*

– Grant McDermott, “Mises’s action ‘axiom’ or false dichotomy?” grantmcdermott.com (blog), February 24, 2011 (emphasis in original)

Endnotes.

¹ Citation: Retrieved from faculty.rsu.edu. Dozens of macrosocial essays on various theorists written by Professor Elwell can be found here for free.

² Citation: “Someone once said that politics is the second-oldest profession. I’m beginning to think it bears resemblance to the first.” – Ronald Reagan.

³ Citation: James Hohmann seems to echo Walter Lippman; cf. “With exceptions so rare they are regarded as miracles of nature, successful democratic politicians are insecure and intimidated men. They advance politically only as they placate, appease, bribe, seduce, bamboozle, or otherwise manage to manipulate the demanding and threatening elements in their constituencies. The decisive consideration is not whether the proposition is good but whether it is popular – not whether it will work well and prove itself but whether the active talking constituents like it immediately. Politicians rationalize this servitude by saying that in a democracy public men are the servants of the people.” – Walter Lippmann, Essays in the Public Philosophy (1955).

- ✓ Monarchs, by engaging in 19th and 20th Century politics were reduced to being modern politicians, stripped of the last visages of their ancient majesty and mystique; engaging in politics also negates the concept of absolute authority, you don’t politic when you have arbitrary, unilateral, unaccountable authority. Emperor Napoleon III had to placate and compromise with religious and secular factions, and appeal to the masses in referendums, and it backfired on him. Modern monarchs are mostly titular only, many are either forbidden from engaging in politics or are of severely-limited constitutional power, leaving as their main means of influence their personal and media appeal to the populace, like, but less than, any modern politician – the modern royals have in most cases, no veto, no budget control, little or no power of appointment and no backroom access. They are living ghosts; retained for national-culture identity and spiritual connection.

⁴ Commentary: This choice is given to the position players, there are many cases where the Scene on the Capital Colony may be needed for other tasks, such as Construction, Culture or Commerce Power Activations.