

# Colonialism

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*See colony and colonization for examples of colonialism which do not refer to Western colonialism.*

**Colonialism** is the extension of a nation's sovereignty over territory beyond its borders by the establishment of either settler or exploitation colonies in which indigenous populations are directly ruled, displaced, or exterminated. Colonizing nations generally dominate the resources, labor, and markets of the colonial territory, and may also impose socio-cultural, religious, and linguistic structures on the indigenous population (see also cultural imperialism). It is essentially a system of direct political, economic, and cultural intervention and hegemony by a powerful country in a weaker one. Though the word *colonialism* is often used interchangeably with *imperialism*, the latter is sometimes used more broadly as it covers control exercised informally (via influence) as well as formal military control or economic leverage.

The term colonialism may also be used to refer to an ideology or a set of beliefs used to legitimize or promote this system. Colonialism was often based on the ethnocentric belief that the morals and values of the colonizer were superior to those of the colonized; some observers link such beliefs to racism and pseudo-scientific theories dating from the 18th to the 19th centuries. In the western world, this led to a form of proto-social Darwinism that placed white people at the top of the animal kingdom, "naturally" in charge of dominating non-European aboriginal populations.

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## Types of colonies

Several types of colonies may be distinguished, reflecting different colonial objectives. **Settler colonies** refer to a variety of ancient and more recent examples whereby ethnically distinct groups settle in areas other than their original settlement that are either adjacent or across land or sea. From about 750 BC the Greeks began 250 years of expansion, settling colonies in all directions. Other examples range from large empire like the Roman Empire, the Arab Empire, the Mongol Empire, the Ottoman Empire or small movements like ancient Scots moving from Hibernia to Caledonia and Magyars into Pannonia (modern-day Hungary). Turkic peoples spread across most of Central Asia into Europe and the Middle East between the 6th and 11th centuries. Recent research suggests that Madagascar was uninhabited until Malay seafarers from Indonesia arrived during the 5th and 6th centuries A.D. Subsequent migrations from both the Pacific and Africa further consolidated this original mixture, and Malagasy people emerged.<sup>[1]</sup>

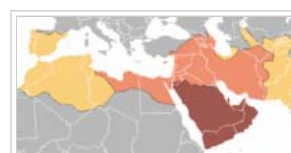
Before the expansion of the Bantu languages and their speakers, the southern half of Africa is believed to have been populated by Pygmies and Khoisan speaking people, today occupying the arid regions around the Kalahari and the forest of Central Africa. By about 1000 AD Bantu migration had reached modern day Zimbabwe and South Africa. The Banu Hilal and Banu Ma'qil were a collection of Arab Bedouin tribes from the Arabian peninsula who migrated westwards via Egypt between the 11th and 13th centuries. Their migration strongly contributed to the arabization and islamization of the western Maghreb, which was until then dominated by Berber tribes. Ostsiedlung was the medieval eastward migration and settlement of Germans. The 13th century was the time of the great Mongol and Turkic migrations across Eurasia. Between the 11th and 18th centuries, the Vietnamese expanded southward in a process known as nam tiến (southward expansion).<sup>[2]</sup>

More recent examples of internal colonialism are the movement of ethnic Chinese into Tibet and Eastern Turkestan<sup>[3]</sup>, ethnic Javanese into Western New Guinea and Kalimantan<sup>[4]</sup> (see Transmigration program), Brazilians into Amazonia<sup>[5]</sup>, Israelis into the West Bank and Gaza, ethnic Arabs into Iraqi Kurdistan, and ethnic Russians into Siberia and Central Asia.<sup>[6]</sup> The local populations or tribes, such as the aboriginal people in Canada, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Japan<sup>[7]</sup>, Siberia and the United States, were usually far overwhelmed numerically by the settlers.

Scholars now believe that, among the various contributing factors, epidemic disease was the overwhelming cause of the population decline of the American natives.<sup>[8][9]</sup> Forcible population transfers, usually to areas of poorer-quality land or resources, often led to the permanent detriment of indigenous peoples. Whilst commonplace in the past, in today's language colonialism and colonization are seen as state-sponsored illegal immigration that was criminal in nature and intent, achieved essentially with the use of violence and



The Pith helmet (in this case, of the Second French Empire) is an iconic representation of colonialism.



The expansion of the Arab Empire under the Umayyads.



The Mongol Empire and its successor Khanates.



Conquests of the Ottoman Empire.

terror.

In some cases, for example the Vandals, Huguenots, Boers, Matabeles and Sioux, the colonizers were fleeing more powerful enemies, as part of a chain reaction of colonization.

Settler colonies may be contrasted with **dependencies**, where the colonizers did not arrive as part of a mass emigration, but rather as administrators over existing sizable native populations. Examples in this category include the Persian Empire, the British Raj, Egypt after the Twenty-sixth dynasty, the Dutch East Indies, and the Japanese colonial empire. In some cases large-scale colonial settlement was attempted in substantially pre-populated areas and the result was either an ethnically mixed population (such as the mestizos of the Americas), or racially divided, such as in French Algeria or Southern Rhodesia.

With **plantation** colonies such as Barbados, Saint-Domingue and Jamaica, the white colonizers imported black slaves who rapidly began to outnumber their owners, leading to minority rule, similar to a dependency. **Trading posts**, such as Hong Kong, Macau, Malacca, Deshima, Portuguese India and Singapore constitute a fifth category, where the primary purpose of the colony was to engage in trade rather than as a staging post for further colonization of the hinterland.

## History of colonialism

The historical phenomenon of colonisation is one that stretches around the globe and across time, including such disparate peoples as the Hittites, the Incas and the British, although the term *colonialism* is normally used with reference to discontinuous European overseas empires rather than contiguous land-based empires, European or otherwise.

Land-based empires are conventionally described by the term *imperialism*, such as Age of Imperialism which includes Colonialism as a sub-topic, but in the main refers to conquest and domination of nearby lesser geographic powers. Examples of land-based empires include the Mongol Empire, a large empire stretching from the Western Pacific to Eastern Europe, the Empire of Alexander the Great, the Umayyad Caliphate, the Persian Empire, the Roman Empire, the Byzantine Empire. The Ottoman Empire was created across Mediterranean, North Africa and into South-Eastern Europe and existed during the time of European colonization of the other parts of the world.

After the Portuguese *Reconquista* period when the Kingdom of Portugal fought against the Muslim domination of Iberia, in the 12th and 13th centuries, the Portuguese started to expand overseas. European colonialism began in 1415, with Portugal's conquest of the Muslim port of Ceuta, Northern Africa. In the following decades Portugal braved the coast of Africa establishing trading posts, ports and fortresses. Colonialism was led by Portuguese and Spanish exploration of the Americas, and the coasts of Africa, the Middle East, India, and East Asia. The latter half of the sixteenth century witnessed the expansion of the English colonial state throughout Ireland.<sup>[10]</sup> Despite some earlier attempts, it was not until the 17th century that Britain, France and the Netherlands successfully established overseas empires outside Europe, in direct competition with Spain and Portugal and with each other. In the 19th century the British Empire grew to become the largest empire yet seen (see list of largest empires).

The end of the 18th and early 19th century saw the first era of decolonization when most of the European colonies in the Americas gained their independence from their respective metropolises. Spain and Portugal were irreversibly weakened after the loss of their New World colonies, but Britain (after the union of England and Scotland), France and the Netherlands turned their attention to the Old World, particularly South Africa, India and South East Asia, where coastal enclaves had already been established. The German Empire (now Republic), created by most of Germany being united under Prussia (omitting Austria, and other ethnic-German areas) also sought colonies in German East Africa. Territories in other parts of the world were also added to the trans-oceanic, or extra-European, German colonial empire. Italy occupied Eritrea, Somalia and Libya. During the First and the Second Italo-Ethiopian War, Italy invaded Abyssinia, and in 1936 the Italian Empire was created.

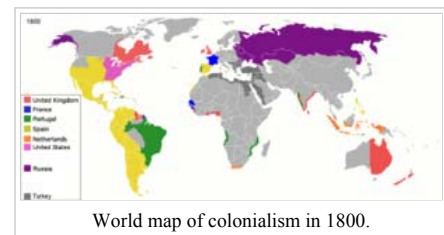
The industrialization of the 19th century led to what has been termed the era of New Imperialism, when the pace of colonization rapidly accelerated, the height of which was the Scramble for Africa. During the 20th Century, the overseas colonies of the losers of World War I were distributed amongst the victors as mandates, but it was not until the end of World War II that the second phase of decolonization began in earnest.

## Neocolonialism

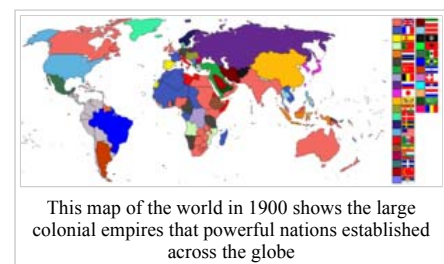
Although there are few modern colonies, the decolonization efforts of the 1960s-70s resulted in numerous former colonies which remain economically subordinate to foreign powers. Neocolonialism ascribes these relationships to an intentional policy.

### U.S. foreign intervention

*Further information: Foreign policy of the United States and List of United States military history events*



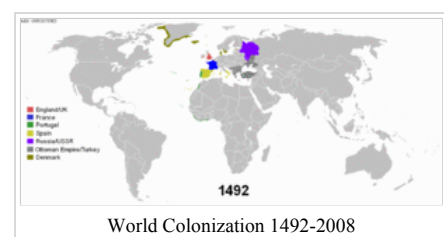
World map of colonialism in 1800.



This map of the world in 1900 shows the large colonial empires that powerful nations established across the globe



World map of colonialism at the end of the Second World War in 1945.



World Colonization 1492-2008

The U.S. has long been a colonizer; establishing the Panama Canal Zone and its intervention in Vietnam during World War II are just two examples. The United States intervened in various countries, by issuing an embargo against Cuba after the 1959 Cuban Revolution—which started on February 7, 1962—and supporting various covert operations (the 1961 Bay of Pigs Invasion; the Cuban Project, among other examples. Theorists of neo-colonialism are of the opinion that the US preferred supporting dictatorships in Third World countries rather than having democracies that always presented the risk of having the people choose being aligned with the Communist bloc rather than the so-called "Free World".

For example, in Chile (see *United States intervention in Chile*) the Central Intelligence Agency covertly spent three million dollars in an effort to influence the outcome of the 1964 Chilean presidential election;<sup>[11]</sup> supported the attempted October 1970 kidnapping of General Rene Schneider (head of the Chilean army), part of a plot to prevent the congressional confirmation of socialist Salvador Allende as president (in the event, Schneider was shot and killed; Allende's election was confirmed);<sup>[11]</sup> the U.S. welcomed, though probably did not bring about the Chilean coup of 1973, in which Allende was overthrown and Augusto Pinochet installed<sup>[12]</sup> and provided material support to the military regime after the coup, continuing payment to CIA contacts who were known to be involved in human rights abuses;<sup>[13]</sup> and even facilitated communications for Operation Condor,<sup>[14]</sup> a cooperative program among the intelligence agencies of several right-wing South American regimes to locate, observe and assassinate political opponents.

The proponents of the idea of neo-colonialism also cite the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada and the 1989 United States invasion of Panama, overthrowing Manuel Noriega, who was characterized by the U.S. government as a druglord. In Indonesia, Washington supported Suharto's authoritarian New Order.

This interference, in particular in South and Central American countries, is reminiscent of the 19th century Monroe doctrine and the Big stick diplomacy codified by U.S. president Theodore Roosevelt. Left-wing critics have spoken of an "American Empire", pushed in particular by the military-industrial complex, which President Dwight D. Eisenhower warned against in 1961. On the other hand, some Republicans have supported, without much success since World War I, isolationism. Defenders of U.S. policy have asserted that intervention was sometimes necessary to prevent Communist or Soviet-aligned governments from taking power during the Cold War.

Most of the actions described in this section constitute imperialism rather than colonialism, which usually involves one country settling in another country and calling it their own. U.S. imperialism has been called neocolonial because it is a new sort of colonialism: one that operates not by invading, conquering, and settling a foreign country with pilgrims, but by exercising economic control through international monetary institutions, via military threat, missionary interference, strategic investment, so-called "Free trade areas," and by supporting the violent overthrow of leftist governments (even those that have been democratically elected, as detailed above).

In the history of the United States, presidents have often used democracy as a justification for military intervention abroad,<sup>[16][17]</sup> although on a number of other occasions the U.S. overthrew democratically elected governments (See Operation Ajax, Operation PBSUCCESS, Covert U.S. Regime Change Actions). A number of studies have been devoted to the historical success rate of the U.S. in exporting democracy abroad. Most studies of American intervention have been pessimistic about the history of the United States exporting democracy.<sup>[18]</sup> Until recently, scholars have generally agreed with international relations professor Abraham Lowenthal that U.S. attempts to export democracy have been "negligible, often counterproductive, and only occasionally positive."<sup>[19][20]</sup>

Tures examines 228 cases of American intervention from 1973 to 2005, using Freedom House data. A plurality of interventions, 96, caused no change in the country's democracy. In 69 instances the country became less democratic after the intervention. In the remaining 63 cases, a country became more democratic.<sup>[21]</sup>

As of 2004, according to Fox News, the U.S. had more than 700 military bases in 130 different countries.<sup>[22]</sup>

### French foreign intervention

France wasn't inactive either: it supported dictatorships in the former colonies in Africa, leading to the expression *Françafrique*, coined by François-Xavier Verschave, a member of the anti-neocolonialist Survie NGO, which has criticized the way development aid was given to post-colonial countries, claiming it only supported neo-colonialism, interior corruption and arms-trade. The Third World debt, including odious debt, where the interest on the external debt exceeds the amount that the country produces, had been considered by some a method of oppression or control by first world countries; a form of debt bondage on the scale of nations.

## Soviet Imperialism

The USSR, which had grafted onto the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic several countries that had had short-lived independence (Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, and the lands of Central Asia), never reconciled itself to having lost West Ukraine, West Belarus, Bessarabia, and the three Baltic states (territories which formerly belonged to the Russian Empire) in the course of 1919-21. Thus they aimed to annex these territories as well as to obtain a buffer zone from Finland in 1939-40 (see *Soviet-Finnish War*). After the Soviet invasion of Poland following the corresponding German invasion that marked the start of World War



1900 Campaign poster for the Republican Party. "The American flag has not been planted in foreign soil to acquire more territory but for humanity's sake.", president William McKinley, July 12, 1900. On the left hand, we see how the situation allegedly was in 1896, before Mc Kinley's victory during the elections: "Gone Democratic: A run on the bank, Spanish rule in Cuba". On the right hand, we see how the situation allegedly is in 1900, after four years of McKinley's rule: "Gone Republican: a run to the bank, American rule in Cuba" (the Spanish-American War took place in 1898). The USA is becoming, as other European powers, an imperialist power. As did France before with its universalist doctrine, it claims that it acts for "Humanity".



On August 15, 2008 President George W. Bush said: "Bullying and intimidation are not acceptable ways to conduct foreign policy in the 21st century."<sup>[15]</sup>

II in 1939, the Soviet Union annexed eastern parts (so-called "*Kresy*") of the Second Polish Republic (*see Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact*). In 1940 the Soviet Union invaded and annexed Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bessarabia and Bukovina (*see Occupation of Baltic states*).<sup>[23]</sup>

The Soviet Union emerged from World War II as one of the two major world powers, a position maintained for four decades through its hegemony in Eastern Europe. Claiming to be Leninist, the USSR proclaimed itself foremost enemy of imperialism, supporting armed, national independence or anti-Western movements in the Third World<sup>[24][25]</sup> while simultaneously dominating Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Marxists and Maoists to the left of Trotsky, such as Tony Cliff, claim the Soviet Union was imperialist. Maoists claim it occurred after Khrushchev's ascension in 1956; Cliff says it occurred under Stalin in the 1940s.<sup>[26]</sup>

During the Cold War, the term *Eastern Bloc* (or *Soviet Bloc*) was used to refer to the Soviet Union and countries it controlled in Central and Eastern Europe (Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland, Romania). In the aftermath of World War II, the Soviet Union used its military power to influence political life in all countries in which it came into occupation to ensure compliant people's republics that would subordinate their political structures, foreign policy, law, academia, military activity, and economics with the dictates of Soviet leadership while maintaining a semblance of independence (*see Puppet states of the Soviet Union after 1939*). Countries in Eastern Bloc were turned communists by the use of force and physical elimination of all political opposition to Soviet rule over them. Afterwards nations within the Eastern Bloc were held in the Soviet sphere of influence through military force.

Hungary was invaded by the Soviet Army in 1956 after it had overthrown its pro-Soviet government and replaced it with one that sought a more democratic communist path independent of Moscow;<sup>[27]</sup> when Polish communist leaders tried to elect Władysław Gomułka as First Secretary they were issued an ultimatum by Soviet military that occupied Poland ordering them to withdraw election of Gomułka for the First Secretary or be "crushed by Soviet tanks".<sup>[28]</sup> Czechoslovakia was invaded in 1968 after a period of liberalization known as the Prague Spring.<sup>[29]</sup> The latter invasion was codified in formal Soviet policy as the Brezhnev Doctrine.<sup>[30]</sup> In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan to ensure that a pro-Soviet regime would be in power in the country (*see Soviet war in Afghanistan*).<sup>[31]</sup>

## Post-colonialism

Post-colonialism (aka post-colonial theory) refers to a set of theories in philosophy and literature that grapple with the legacy of colonial rule. In this sense, postcolonial literature may be considered a branch of Postmodern literature concerned with the political and cultural independence of peoples formerly subjugated in colonial empires. Many practitioners take Edward Said's book *Orientalism* (1978) to be the theory's founding work (although French theorists such as Aimé Césaire and Frantz Fanon made similar claims decades before Said).

Edward Said analyzed the works of Balzac, Baudelaire and Lautréamont, exploring how they were both influenced by and helped to shape a societal fantasy of European racial superiority. Post-colonial fictional writers interact with the traditional colonial discourse, but modify or subvert it; for instance by retelling a familiar story from the perspective of an oppressed minor character in the story. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1998) gave its name to the Subaltern Studies.

In *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (1999), Spivak explored how major works of European metaphysics (e.g., Kant, Hegel) not only tend to exclude the subaltern from their discussions, but actively prevent non-Europeans from occupying positions as fully human subjects. Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) is famous for its explicit ethnocentrism, in considering the Western civilization as the most accomplished of all, while Kant also allowed some traces of racialism to enter his work.

## Impact of colonialism and colonisation

Debate about the perceived negative and positive aspects (spread of virulent diseases, unequal social relations, exploitation, enslavement, infrastructures, medical advances, new institutions, technological advancements etc.) of colonialism has occurred for centuries, amongst both colonizer and colonized, and continues to the present day.<sup>[32]</sup> The questions of miscegenation; the alleged ties between colonial enterprises, genocides — see the Herero Genocide — and the Holocaust; and the questions of the nature of imperialism, dependency theory and neocolonialism (in particular the Third World debt) continue to retain their actuality.

## See also

- Colony
- Colonization
- Colonies in antiquity
- Cold War
- Anticolonialism
- Settler colonialism
- Chartered companies
- Empire
- European colonization of the Americas
- Global Empire
- Hellenistic period
- Imperialism
- Protectorate
- Concession (territory)
- Colonial wars
- Postcolonialism
- German eastward expansion
- Plantations of Ireland
- Muslim conquests
- Mongol invasions
- Ottoman wars in Europe
- Turkic migration
- Transmigration program
- Sino-African relations
- Soviet Empire
- American Empire
- Arab Empire
- Austria-Hungary
- Belgian colonial empire
- British Empire
- Chinese Empire
- Danish colonial empire
- Dutch Empire
- French colonial empire
- German colonial empire
- Inca Empire
- Italian Empire
- Japanese Empire
- Mexican Empire
- Mongol Empire
- Mughal Empire
- Ottoman Empire
- Persian Empire
- Portuguese Empire
- Russian Empire
- Spanish Empire
- Swedish empire
- Timurid empire
- Historical migration



Stalin (in background to the right) looks on as Molotov signs the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, August 24, 1939.



"Robert Clive and his family with an Indian maid", painted by Joshua Reynolds, 1765.

## Notes

- ↑ Malagasy languages, Encyclopædia Britannica
- ↑ The Le Dynasty and Southward Expansion
- ↑ China given warning on Xinjiang
- ↑ Ethnic violence continues to rage in Central Kalimantan
- ↑ Scientists demand Brazil suspend Amazon colonization project
- ↑ Robert Greenall, Russians left behind in Central Asia, BBC News, 23 November 2005.
- ↑ Report on a New Policy for the Ainu: A Critique
- ↑ Smallpox: Eradicating the Scourge
- ↑ Silent Killers of the New World
- ↑ Ciaran Brady, *The Chief Governors* (Cambridge, 1994); Colm Lennon, *Sixteenth-Century Ireland: The Incomplete Conquest*(Dublin, 1994)
- ↑ <sup>a</sup> <sup>b</sup> CIA Reveals Covert Acts In Chile, CBS News, September 19, 2000. Accessed online November 26, 2006.
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- ↑ Penceny, Mark (1999). *Democracy at the Point of Bayonets*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press. ISBN 0-271-01883-6. p. 183
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- ↑ Memories of Soviet Repression Still Vivid in Baltics, Washington Post, 7 May 2005
- ↑ Soviet Union - Central and South America
- ↑ Profile: Mengistu Haile Mariam, BBC
- ↑ Soviet imperialism
- ↑ The 1956 Hungarian Revolution
- ↑ The Historical Setting: The Polish People's Republic
- ↑ Prague Spring
- ↑ The Soviet Invasion of Czechoslovakia and the crushing of the Prague Spring
- ↑ Afghanistan War, Columbia Encyclopedia
- ↑ Come Back, Colonialism, All is Forgiven

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## External links

- ↑ Liberal opposition to colonialism, imperialism and empire (pdf) - by professor Daniel Klein
- ↑ Colonialism entry in the *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* by Margaret Kohn
- ↑ *Globalization (and the metaphysics of control in a free market world)* - an online video on globalization, colonialism, and control.

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