

Kothari, U. (ed.) (2005) *A Radical History of Development Studies: Individuals, Institutions and Ideologies*. Cape Town: David Phillip; London and New York: Zed Books.

An interesting set of specially commissioned chapters that consider the nature and development of development studies.

Simon, D. (ed.) (2005) *Fifty Key Thinkers on Development*, London and New York: Routledge.

A useful source which brings together short essays on those who are deemed to have had a noticeable impact on studies of development.

Websites

www.un.org/millenniumgoals/

A useful site, which provided access to salient documents like the Millennium Development Goals Report 2007.

www.undp.org

Site of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) giving direct access to the United Nations Human Development Reports.

www.dfid.gov.uk

The website of the Department for International Development (DFID) of the UK Government. Provides details of, and access to, DFID publications.

www.eldis.org

Described as the gateway to development information, providing access by subject area and country, plus news, etc.

Discussion topics

- Examine the argument that development should be about reducing 'unfreedoms' rather than promoting economic development.
- Elaborate the view that measures of relative development must include non-economic variables.
- Assess the current applicability of the assertion that the 'Third World' exists whatever we choose to call it.
- To what extent is it helpful to think in terms of poor countries rather than developing nations?



Understanding colonialism

This chapter examines the development and demise of colonialism and its impact on developing countries. After considering definitions of colonialism and imperialism, the issue of post-colonialism is critically reviewed. With reference to case study material, three phases of colonialism are then discussed; mercantile colonialism, industrial colonialism and late colonialism. This is followed by an examination of the process of decolonisation and a consideration of some of the most significant legacies of colonialism.

This chapter:

- Examines different perceptions of colonialism and imperialism;
- Reviews the debate about post-colonialism and the effects of colonisation on local people;
- Considers the key features of the three phases of colonialism;
- Examines the increasing pressure for independence and the process of decolonisation;
- Assesses some of the beneficial and detrimental aspects of colonialism;
- Evaluates the concepts of a New International Division of Labour and a New International Economic Order.

Introduction: colonialism and imperialism

The literature on colonialism is as plentiful, and at times as opaque, as the literature on development.

There is an unfortunate tendency to equate colonialism with the expansion of capitalism in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, implying that it primarily comprises an economic process (Key idea, Colonialism and imperialism). Clearly, there is an essential, and at times overwhelming, economic impetus to colonialism, but to construct a framework of analysis based on such a simple equation would be unhelpful. Colonialism is essentially a political process, and the establishment of colonies long pre-dates the genesis and subsequent globalisation of European capitalism. Right through this period, colonies were acquired for motives other than the economic imperative for material resources, labour or markets. As in Roman times, otherwise barren or unpromising territory was annexed for strategic reasons: to protect the periphery of pre-existing colonies, to control important military routes or simply to prevent the expansion of rival European powers. Although some of these lands eventually proved to have some economic value, the original motivation was often quite different.

Much of the development literature conceptualises the global expansion of capitalism as imperialism rather than colonialism, although even here there is a debate about when this process began. For some neo-Marxists, imperialism begins with the division of Africa at the Treaty of Berlin in 1885, reinforced by the assertion that the term *imperialism* was first coined in

the nineteenth century by Napoleon III. Most, however, believe that imperialism began in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries with the rise to prominence of the European nation state, although the commercial underpinning to the feudal system had also stimulated some colonialism before this period (Blaut, 1993).

At some point in the eighteenth or nineteenth century, depending on whom you read, development itself becomes an identifiable process in its own right, underpinning and fusing with imperialism and the expansion of capitalism (Dixon and Heffernan, 1991). Throughout this period, colonies continued to be founded for a variety of complex motives and in many different forms. The particular nature of colonialism

varied not only with the motives, but also with contemporary political economies and cultures of both the metropolitan power and colonised territory (Box 2.1). Indeed, in recent years there has been a tendency to define colonialism as much by the means it employed as by the impetus behind it. Thus 'colonialism is often defined as a system of government which seeks to defend an unequal system of commodity exchange' (Corbridge, 1993a: 177), whereas Said (1979, 1993) maintains that colonialism existed in order to impose the superiority of the European way of life on that of the Oriental, a colonisation of minds and bodies as much as of space and economies and 'much harder to transcend or throw off' (Corbridge, 1993a: 178).

Key idea

Colonialism and imperialism

Colonialism and imperialism are not interchangeable ideas, although they overlap considerably. Anthony King (1976: 324), in the index of his seminal text on colonial urbanisation, states simply, 'see colonialism' under the entry for imperialism. Consequently, his definition of colonialism is only partial: 'the establishment and maintenance for an extended time, of rule over an alien people that is separate and subordinate to the ruling power'. The concept of one state establishing political control over another is a recurring theme in definitions of colonialism, for example, 'the policy or practice of acquiring political control over another country, occupying it with settlers, and exploiting it economically' (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1999: 282).

Blauner (quoted in Wolpe, 1975: 231) is more comprehensive than King in his approach, defining colonialism as, 'the establishment of domination of a geographically extended political unit, most often inhabited by people of a different race and culture, where this domination is political and economic and the colony exists subordinated to and dependent on the mother country'. However, once again the specific mode of domination and exploitation is left unidentified and, as with so many analyses of colonialism, the focus is on internal processes at the expense of outward linkages.

A useful working definition of imperialism is, 'a policy of extending a country's power and influence

through colonization, use of military force, or other means' (*Concise Oxford Dictionary*, 1999: 711). But there are some serious inconsistencies in the various uses of the term 'imperialism'. One of the most obvious is that the term is employed in two distinct ways: 'a technical sense – to define the latest stage in the evolution of capitalism – and a colloquial sense – to describe the relationships between metropolitan countries and underdeveloped countries' (Bell, 1980: 49). These need not be incompatible, although difficulties of reconciliation between the two approaches have certainly led to contradictions in the chronology of imperialism. Marxist (Leninist) analysts believe that this monopoly stage of capitalism only began around the start of the twentieth century, at least that is what Bell (1980) argues. Barratt-Brown (1974), on the other hand, has extended consideration of imperialism to roughly the last 400 years.

Barratt-Brown's chronology is preferable, largely because it permits a broader definition of imperialism to be used, referring to 'both formal colonies and privileged positions in markets, protected sources of materials and extended opportunities for profitable employment of labour' (Barratt-Brown, 1974: 22). This permits us to examine the way in which the expansion of imperialism affected, and was affected by, the parallel colonisation process in the Americas, Asia and Africa from the early sixteenth century to the decolonisation phases of the 1950s and 1960s.

BOX 2.1

Politics, society and trade in pre-colonial sub-Saharan Africa

Before the arrival of European traders from the sixteenth century onwards, there were many substantial and sophisticated communities throughout Asia, Africa and Latin America. Although we must recognise the achievements of these societies, given the distorted picture communicated by early European trader-colonists (Blaut, 1993), we must not romanticise 'traditional' societies. Many such societies were not repositories of simple communism and were probably rather unpleasant places for most of their inhabitants, with a substantial slave trade in which indigenous chiefs willingly participated. Slavery was widespread before the contact with Europeans. As Hopkins observes in West Africa, 'Slaves were employed as domestic servants, they acted as carriers, they maintained oases and cut rock salt from the desert, they laboured to build towns, construct roads and clear paths, they were drafted as front line troops, and they were common in all types of agricultural work' (Hopkins, 1973: 24). Change was sometimes for the better. In sub-Saharan Africa, the 'traditional' indigenous crops, sorghum and millet, were nutritionally inferior to the manioc (cassava) and maize introduced from the Americas by European traders. According to Iliffe, 'In moist savanna regions maize produces nearly twice as many calories per hectare as millet and 50 per cent more than sorghum. Cassava produces 150 per cent more calories than maize and is less vulnerable to drought' (Iliffe, 1995: 138).

Organisationally, most societies in the immediate pre-European period were (semi) subsistent, but this did not preclude trade or the emergence of large, powerful states. At various times in pre-colonial West Africa a series of empires and kingdoms existed, for example, Ghana, Mali, Songhai in the savanna-sahel region, and Ashanti, Oyo and Benin in the forest

region. Much of the power and wealth of these states was based on a flourishing north-south trade in commodities such as gold, ivory and kola nuts from the forest region, salt from the Sahara, and manufactured goods from Europe and north Africa. Busy trade routes developed across the Sahara, linking the north African coast and Europe with sub-Saharan Africa. Certain West African towns grew rapidly as a result of this profitable commerce, most notably Djenné (now in Mali), founded in the ninth century, Gao (Mali), and Kano (Nigeria), all dating from the late tenth century, and Zaria (Nigeria) and Timbuctu (Mali) founded in the eleventh century. Timbuctu became an important religious and educational centre with the first university in West Africa, while Kano, now in northern Nigeria, had some 75,000 inhabitants by the sixteenth century (Binns, 1994a).

Essentially, these societies were structured on two levels. At the local level was a patriarchal agrarian community, where land was allocated and used on a more or less equitable basis and in which the redistribution of surplus took place on a social rather than a market basis. Reciprocity and obligation brought status. At the elite level, status was inherited or was enhanced by wealth accumulated by raids, confiscation or conquest outside the community. Trade in valuable items such as gold or salt was dominated by a small group of elites. Pre-European, pre-capitalist societies were therefore ravaged by constant wars, fought on behalf of the elites in order to control the production or trade of valuable items or to control people. Before the arrival of European capitalism, life was not comfortable for most Africans. Unfortunately, it did not change for the better with the arrival of the market economy and the ensuing revaluation of commodities.

Perceptions of the non-European world

This myriad of possibilities does not mean to say that some common ground cannot be discerned or that broad phases of colonial development cannot be identified. Indeed, in order to make some sense of the

colonial discourse, we need a framework within which we can address it, identify its principal processes and set out the legacies that persist within current society, in both developed and developing countries. Preston (1996: 140) has identified several dimensions to what he terms 'the process of absorption and reconstruction of other peoples' (Figure 2.1). However, he does not

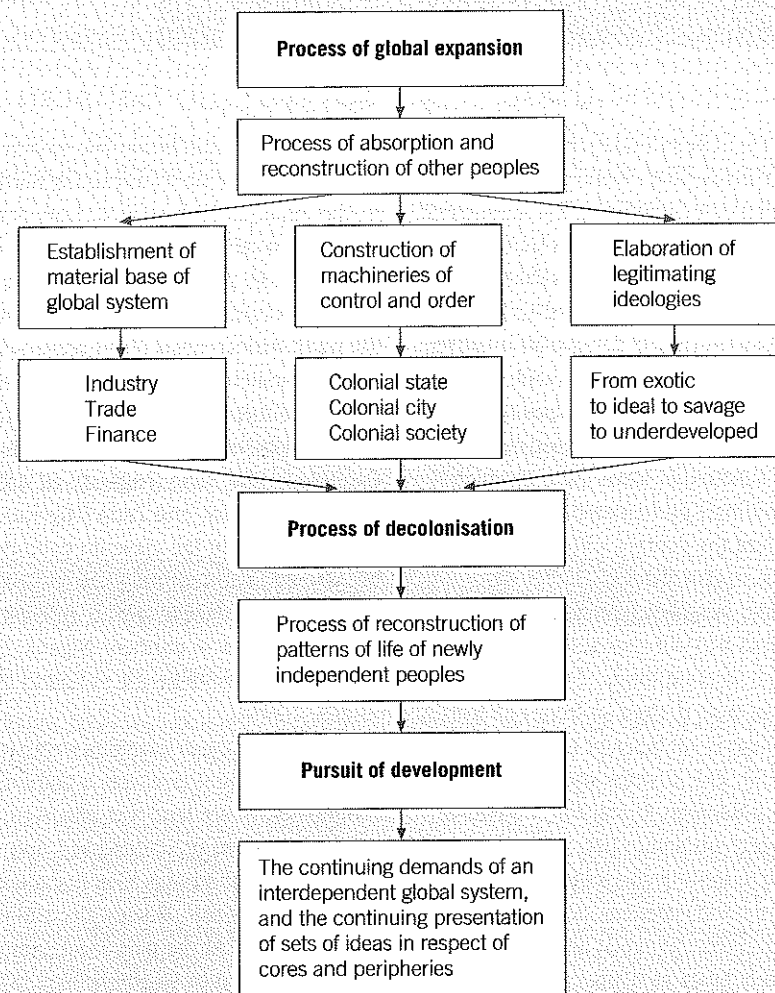


Figure 2.1 Principal processes of colonialism
Source: Adapted from Preston (1996)

elaborate on the links between parallel processes and suggests a rather simplistic sequence of ways in which Europeans represented the non-European world: first as exotic cultural equals, then as representatives of innocence and noble savagery during the Age of Enlightenment, subsequently as the uncivilised savages of the nineteenth century who had to be controlled, then improved and eventually guided to independence. Although this sequence is not untrue, it suggests a set of ideologies that were uniform over space and through time. The reality was, of course, very different, particularly over the long period from the early sixteenth to the early nineteenth century. The Enlightenment, as we noted in Chapter 1, is a period in which the concept of

development and the role of the 'enlightened' within this was crystallised. The romantic notion of the noble savage was applied rather sparingly during this period and was very much influenced by the nature of the non-European society encountered. Even Cook on the same journey around the Pacific could both admire the Polynesians and despise Australian Aborigines according to a particular set of British values.

'Waves' of colonialism

The chronological sequence suggested by Preston, despite its oversimplicity, presents an approach that has been used by many other analysts of colonialism,

especially by world system advocates such as Wallerstein (1979). Taylor (1985), in particular, has set out very clearly a sequence of waves or phases in which imperialism and colonialism combine to produce a series of long and short waves or cycles of development. The long waves coincide with major economic systems: feudalism, mercantilism and industrial capitalism. The shorter waves, often termed Kondratieff waves after their founder, are said to fit into the long waves in roughly 50-year cycles. All the waves are characterised by phases of growth and stagnation; during the stagnation phases economic restructuring occurs in order to re-establish economic strength. Such restructuring can involve one or more of a variety of actions, from the development of new technologies, through social change to new sources of raw materials or cheap labour. It is alleged that the acquisition of colonies formed part of this restructuring process by giving access to materials, food and labour. The long waves of mercantilism and industrial colonialism can be seen, therefore, to coincide with the rise and fall of major cycles of colonialism (Figure 2.2).

Despite its rigidity, the chronological sequences of world system theory do present a useful framework from which to examine phases of colonial-imperial development and within which the legitimating ideologies, material base and machineries of control and order may be examined. However, as many writers have noted (Kabbani, 1986; Said, 1993), the narratives from which we draw our material to interpret or read colonialism are themselves subject to deeply embedded prejudices that have found expression in both development thinking and development practice, albeit varying through time (Key idea, Post-colonialism). In similar fashion, we need to be cognisant of the fact that the power exercised within colonialism is not homogeneous; it is often diffuse, fragmented, local and, above all, highly personalised.

In this account, *colonialism* is used to refer to the period from the beginning of the sixteenth century onwards in which economic and political motivations fused together to give spatial expression to the accelerating globalisation of capitalism. The phases of

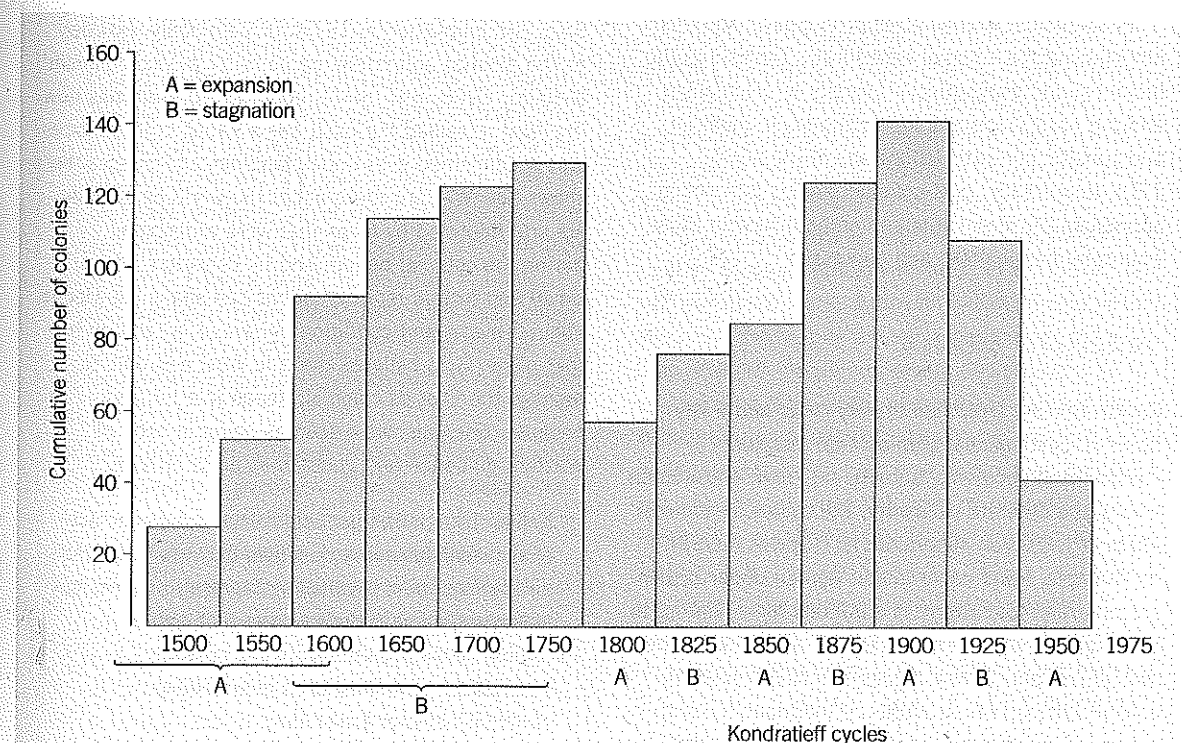


Figure 2.2 Long and short waves of colonialism
Source: Adapted from *Political Geography*, Taylor, P., Pearson Education Ltd © 1985

Key idea



Post-colonialism

In the last two decades there has been much debate across the humanities and social sciences about the nature of colonialism and the perceptions of both the colonisers and those who have been colonised. Much of the debate has surrounded what are referred to as 'post-colonial' perspectives or 'post-colonialism', which is concerned with the effects of the process of colonisation on cultures and societies. These terms are confusing, since in one sense they refer to the post-colonial period, which was 'after' the period of decolonisation and the winning of independence, but in another sense, since the 1980s, they have been more widely used to refer to the political, linguistic and cultural experience of societies that were former European colonies (Ashcroft *et al.*, 1998). Writers on post-colonialism, who adopt a broadly anti-colonial standpoint, critique the popular discourses relating to the period of European colonialism, which they argue are 'unconsciously ethnocentric, rooted in European cultures and reflective of a dominant Western worldview' (McEwan, 2002: 127).

Post-colonial studies attempt to dissect the many attributes of the colonial experience, '(revealing) the historical and geographical diversity of colonialism and the need to ground such critiques in material and specific contexts' (Blunt and Wills, 2000: 170). Importantly, post-colonial studies attempt to appreciate the viewpoints and empathise with those who were marginalised and oppressed.

'Subaltern' studies

Gayatri Spivak, an Indian literary critic and a key figure in post-colonial studies, refers to such marginalised people as 'subalterns', 'men and women among the illiterate peasantry, the tribals, the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat' (Spivak, 1993), for example, lower caste Indian women under British colonial rule. 'Subaltern' is a military term relating to lower ranking officers in the British army, below the rank of captain. Spivak argues that histories of the colonial period, and accounts of the modern world, are usually written by the powerful, invariably men, and the voices of the 'subalterns' are rarely heard. Spivak has played a key role in gathering together a group of Indian historians to form the 'Subaltern

Studies collective' who aim to write critical histories of South Asia, 'which followed the traditions neither of imperialist histories of conquest, nor of nationalist histories that charted a singular and linear development of nationalist consciousness.

Subaltern histories have focused on the lives, agency and resistance of those people who had been silenced and erased from both imperialist and nationalist accounts of the past' (Blunt and Wills, 2000: 190). As Ranajit Guha, another member of the Subaltern Studies collective comments, 'The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism – colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism . . . sharing the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation was exclusively or predominantly an elite achievement' (Guha, 1982: 1).

Edward Said: East and West

A particularly important book, *Orientalism* by Edward Said, first published in 1978, is 'commonly regarded as the catalyst and reference point for postcolonialism' (Gandhi, 1998: 64). Said's book, which examines how the West imagined the East, has a strong cultural focus and is concerned with understandings and images. He shows how Western ideas about the world as a whole are still informed by ideas that were widespread during the colonial period, and he considers how visual and textual representations can shape knowledge about a place, and condition behaviour in relation to that place. Said believes that the West was able to manage the East as colonial, dependent territory because 'orientals' were seen as being in need of Western guidance and guardianship. As he says,

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations which include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with that domination.

(Said, 1993: 8)

Said is concerned with the views of both the coloniser and the colonised, and how dichotomies developed

Key idea (continued)



and were perpetuated, for example, if the East was static then the West was dynamic; if the East was savage, the West was civilised; if the East was despotic, the West was enlightened.

Homi Bhabha: hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence

Another writer, Homi Bhabha (1994), is concerned with the place of colonised people in these discourses. His work is complex, but in essence he deals with three concepts: hybridity, mimicry and ambivalence.

- ▶ Hybridity is concerned with the fact that Europeans who took their culture with them to the colonies had their beliefs, values and practices affected by the culture of the indigenous people they encountered and vice versa. The end product of the cultural encounter, Bhabha suggests, is neither a fixed and pure European identity, nor a pre-existing Asian, African or Latin American identity.
- ▶ Linked to hybridity is the practice of mimicry, where the British and the Indians, Africans and others, adopted aspects of each other's cultures. For example, the colonial encounter between the Indians and the English led to influential Indians emulating the British upper classes with their European clothing, Christianity, private education and sports such as cricket and polo, while Britons acquired a desire to eat Indian food, to build extravagant Indian-style homes, such as Brighton's Royal Pavilion (Plate 2.1), and terms such as bungalow and jodhpur became part of the English vocabulary.
- ▶ Ambivalence is reflected in the way that colonial discourse was grounded in an innate assumption of European control and superiority, while at the same time resting on somewhat insecure foundations and anxiety. In relation to individual colonisers there was disgust about the savagery and backwardness of those being colonised, while at the same time a desire to be more like the colonised and to have sex with them (Bhabha, 1994).

As Blunt and Wills suggest,

Rather than represent the colonized subject as simply either complicit or opposed to the colonizer, Bhabha suggests the coexistence of complicity and resistance. The hegemonic authority of colonial power is made uncertain and unstable because the ambivalent relationships between colonizers and colonized are complex and contradictory.

(Blunt and Wills, 2000: 187)

Post-colonial geographies

During the 1990s, much interest developed in so-called 'post-colonial geographies'. As Livingstone has suggested, 'Geography was the science of imperialism par excellence' . . . [because] exploration, topographic and social survey, cartographic representation, and regional inventory . . . were entirely suited to the colonial project' (Livingstone, 1993: 160, 170). From its foundation in 1830, the Royal Geographical Society played an important role in shedding light on the 'dark continent' by supporting and reporting on major expeditions to Africa (Plate 2.2). As Binns comments, '[this] fascination with distant and different peoples and environments, together with a burning desire to expand the British Empire and develop world trade (often under the guise of eradicating slavery and spreading the gospel), were the driving forces behind many expeditions' (Binns, 1995a: 310). A strong justification for enhancing the position of geographical education in schools in the late nineteenth century was to educate young people about the Empire. As a leading geographer of the time, Halford Mackinder, wrote, 'We should aim at educating the citizens of the many parts of the British Empire to sympathize with one another and to understand Imperial problems by teaching geography visually, not only from the point of view of the Homeland, but also of the Empire' (Mackinder, 1911–12: 86, quoted in Binns, 1995a). In 1906, the journal *The Geographical Teacher*, aimed at informing school teachers about new developments in geography, contained a fascinating, yet somewhat arrogant and jingoistic, report on recent impressions of northern Nigeria by Louis La Chard,

Key idea (continued)



Plate 2.1 Brighton Royal Pavilion
Source: Corbis/Tibor Bogner.

Perhaps in no part of our world-wide Empire has that indefatigable energy and cheerful indifference to depressing circumstances, so characteristic of the Anglo-Saxon race, been better displayed than in the various colonies and protectorates which form our West African possessions. In the very face of disease and death the white pioneer has marched forward and has built, almost in defiance of nature herself, a firm and comparatively healthy basis for the construction of the western cornerstone of our Empire in the Dark Continent.

(La Chard, 1906: 191, quoted in Binns, 1995a)

More recently there has been a call for 'critical, contextual histories of geography that examine the culture of imperialism' (Driver, 1992). Meanwhile, there is also concern from geographers and others that perspectives and writing about the colonial experience have been strongly gendered, 'embodied

in exclusively masculine terms of virility and bravery' (Blunt and Wills, 2000: 196), with little attention given to the voices of women. Those women who did travel overseas encountered what today might be regarded as sexist and patronising advice in early travel books about the importance of the appearance and behaviour of the traveller herself (Blunt, 1994). As Driver suggests, 'contemporary writings on geography were infused with assumptions about gender, as well as empire' (Driver, 1992: 28).

Post-colonialism has undoubtedly been an important and thought-provoking perspective on the colonial experience, not least because 'It demonstrates how the production of Western knowledge forms is inseparable from the exercise of Western power. It also attempts to loosen the power of Western knowledge and reassert the value of alternative experiences and ways of knowing'

Key idea (continued)



TENTS

FOR THE COLONIES.

Fitted with VERANDAH, BATHROOM, &c.
As used by most eminent Travellers, and supplied to H.M. Government for East, West, Central, and South Africa, &c.
SPECIAL TENTS FOR EXPLORERS & MOUNTAINEERING



COMPLETE EQUIPMENT.
CAMP FURNITURE WITH LATEST IMPROVEMENTS.
AIR AND WATERTIGHT TRUNKS.
UNIFORMS AND CLOTHING OF ALL KINDS.

Plate 2.2 Tents for the colonies.
Source: Allen (1979).

(McEwan, 2002: 130). The works of Bhabha, Said and Spivak are not always easy to follow, and some would criticise their lack of clarity and their need to explain their ideas with empirical evidence. Meanwhile, Marxists would argue that post-colonialism

has too strong a focus on culture at the expense of class, while others would even question the appropriateness of the term 'post-colonial' when the world continues to experience other forms of colonialism.

colonialism identified in Figure 2.3 were common to most parts of the non-European world, but the chronology, rationale and reactions involved varied enormously. In Clapham's (1985: 13) words, there were 'the Americas, both rich and easy to control; Asia, rich but difficult to control; and Africa, for the most part poor

and so scarcely worth controlling'. Latin America and sub-Saharan Africa therefore experienced more intensive plundering activities than either Asia or North America, but during very different historical periods (Figure 2.4). Indeed, most of both North and South America passed through these phases into independence,

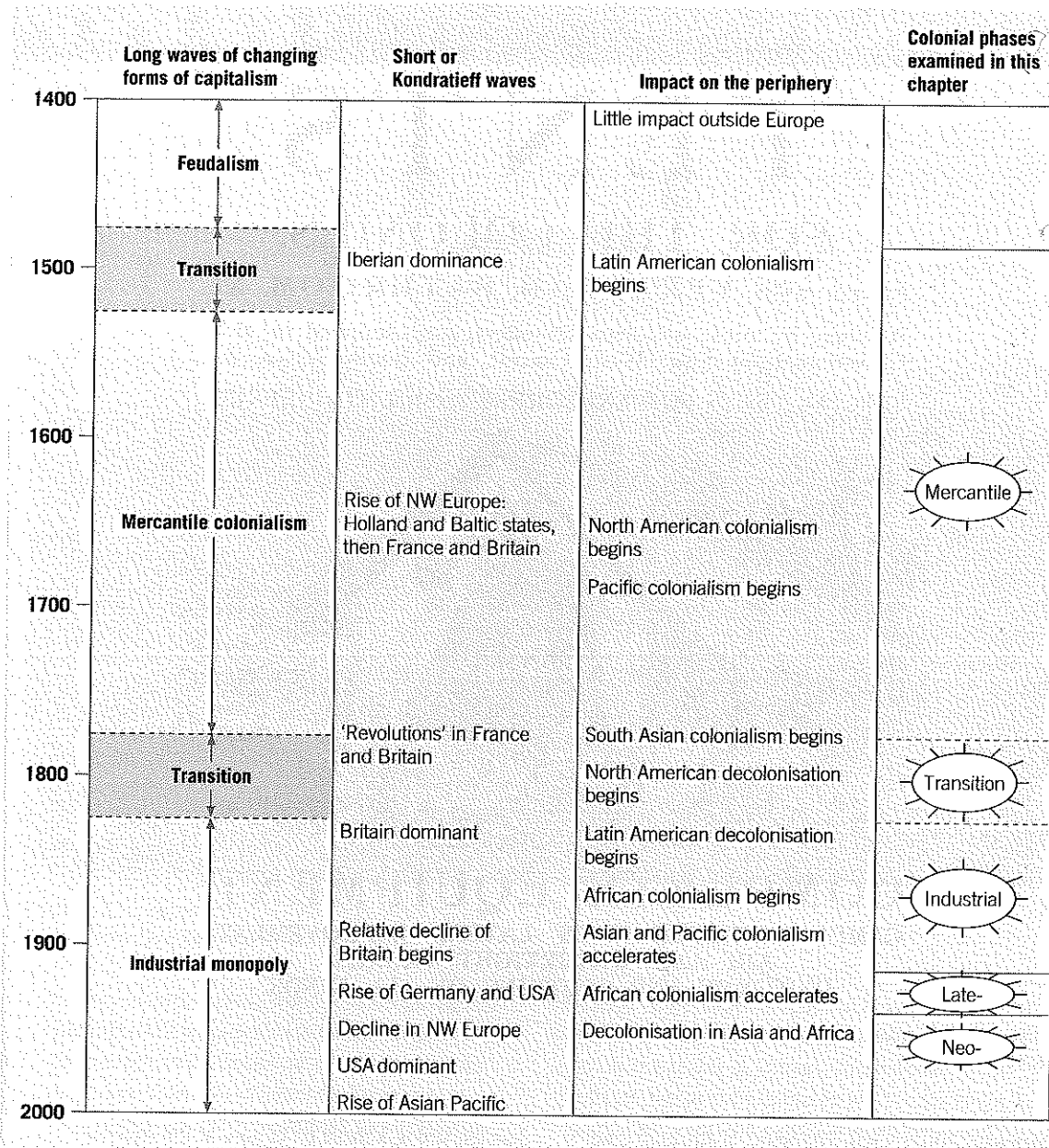


Figure 2.3 Phases of colonialism and imperialism
Source: Adapted from *Political Geography*, Taylor, P., Pearson Education Ltd © 1985, and Bernstein (1992a)

and in the case of South America into neo-colonialism, before the intensive phase of the colonial project began in Asia or Africa. In most of sub-Saharan Africa, formal colonies were a relatively short-lived political process, lasting only around 80 years from the 1880s to the 1960s, although exploitation was present before and after this period. The phases identified here are therefore indicative rather than definitive of the major changes that occurred in the expansion of colonial capital.

Phases of colonialism

Mercantile colonialism

The predominant features of this first phase of colonialism were commerce and trade, although in the earliest stages of contact in Latin America it was plunder and conquest which motivated the conquistadors. Within North America and the Caribbean, trade and commerce were underpinned by production

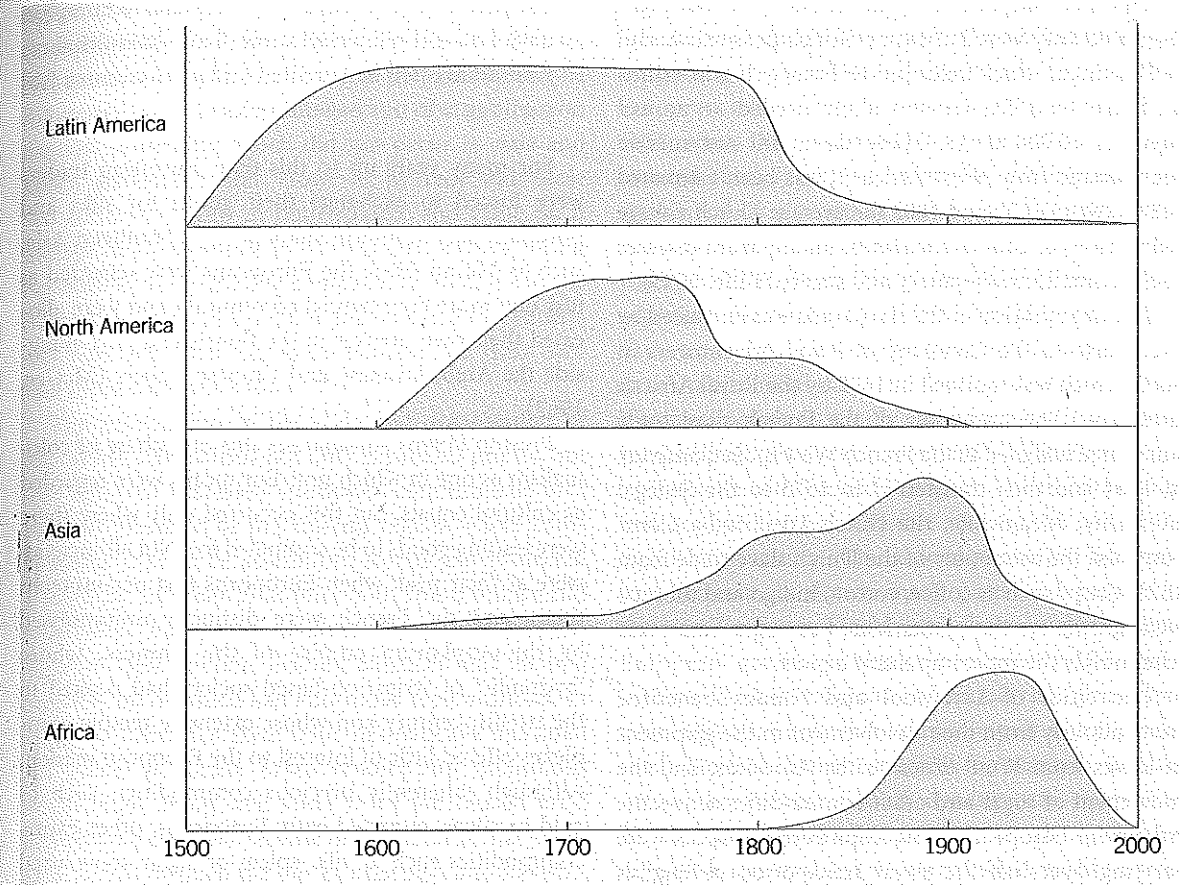


Figure 2.4 Regional colonialism: a chronology of the rise and fall in the numbers of colonies
Source: Adapted from Lowder (1986)

within the plantation system using slave labour (see Chapter 3).

In Africa, and more especially Asia, the initial contact was structured much more around commodity exchange. In this early period, the impact of mercantile colonialism was determined by a variety of factors, including the type of European involvement, the nature of the commodities sought by the Europeans and the strength, culture and organisation of the non-European state.

The plantation system and slave labour

The plantation system and the massive demand for slave labour had a very significant impact on economy and society in Africa and the Americas from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The plantation system originated in the offshore islands of West Africa during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It was

from the Canary Islands that the Spanish took the system to the Caribbean, and from the Cape Verde Islands and the island of San Thomé in the Gulf of Guinea that the Portuguese introduced it into Brazil.

During the seventeenth century, intense competition between the Dutch, English and French in the Caribbean region, and the growing European popularity of sugar in Europe, led to a massive demand for labour to work the plantations, resulting in the development of the slave trade between West Africa and the Americas. A decree issued by Louis XIV of France in 1670 read, 'There is nothing which contributes more to the development of the colonies and the cultivation of their soil than the laborious toil of the Negroes'. Whereas before 1600, an estimated 900,000 slaves had been taken from West Africa to the Americas, in the seventeenth century this trade, initially led by the Dutch, increased to 2.75 million, and in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries rose further to a massive 7 million and 4 million, respectively (Oliver and Page, 1966).

The most important sugar producers in the eighteenth century were Jamaica, a British possession, and St Domingo, which belonged to France. It was estimated that by 1688, Jamaica alone needed an annual input of 10,000 slaves. Many slaves did not survive the crossing from West Africa. It has been estimated that between 1630 and 1803 the average Dutch voyage killed 14.8 per cent of the slaves, mainly from diseases such as smallpox, dysentery and scurvy (Iliffe, 1995).

The organisation of the slave trade was entrusted by the British to the Company of Royal Adventurers in 1663, which was replaced in 1672 by the Royal African Company. The monopoly of the French slave trade was at first assigned to the French West India Company in 1664 and then transferred in 1673 to the Senegal Company. Meanwhile, the Dutch West India Company had the monopoly of the Dutch slave trade from 1621. Crops such as coffee, cotton, indigo and tobacco were grown on the plantations, but sugar was overwhelmingly the most important export.

The cities of Liverpool and Nantes benefited tremendously from their involvement in the shipment of slaves from West Africa to the Americas, and the movement of sugar and other commodities across the Atlantic to Europe. By 1750, ships from Liverpool were carrying over half the slaves transported in English vessels and the Liverpool slavers had acquired a reputation for ruthless efficiency compared with their rivals in cities such as Bristol (Hopkins, 1973). There is much debate among historians concerning the total number of slaves transported from West Africa during the entire period of the Atlantic slave trade, but a figure somewhere between 8 million and 10.5 million seems appropriate, thus representing one of the greatest migrations of all time (Hopkins, 1973).

The intensification of trading links

The organisation of the non-European state varied enormously and European traders found themselves in contact with societies whose ways of life were in material, administrative and spiritual terms often far superior to their own. China, for example, thought little of the European goods brought in trade, and in 1793 Emperor Chen Lung condescendingly informed George III's emissary Earl Macartney that,

our celestial empire possesses all things in prolific abundance and lacks no product within its borders. There is therefore no need to import the manufactures of outside barbarians. . . . But as tea, silk

and porcelain . . . are absolute necessities to European nations, and yourselves, we have permitted . . . your wants [to] be supplied and your country [to] participate in our beneficence.

For many years up to this date, European traders were forced to exchange their goods for silks and porcelain only at intermediary ports in Southeast Asia, such as Macao. Here the Europeans were regarded as just one more commercial community and were allocated their own quarter in the flourishing port alongside the Arab, Javanese and Chinese traders (McGee, 1967).

Preston (1996) summarises this first phase of colonialism as one in which non-Europeans were regarded as cultural equals, but this occurred only where there were trading goods to be competed for. Not all societies were at their peak when Europeans first encountered them, and the French were distinctly unimpressed by the Angkorian empire of the Khmers, whose 'hydraulic' or irrigation-based society had peaked in the twelfth century and whose extensive temple complexes offered little of interest to the European market. Although inherently precious commodities, such as gold or silver, attracted early Europeans, other exotic commodities such as silk, spices or sugar soon lured many adventurers to particular parts of the world. Initially, trade with these 'distant others' was a high-risk enterprise into which vast sums were invested and from which huge profits were realised. To varying degrees, these trading adventurers were accompanied by other kinds of Europeans, such as missionaries, emissaries or even scientists, curious about the non-European world.

The mercantile phase of colonialism in Asia and Africa lasted for some considerable time without extensive European settlement and with no uniform sign of the dominant-subordinate relationship which was to come later. In Africa,

For centuries Europeans knew the coastline of Africa but not the interior. Climate, tropical diseases, Islam and resistant Africans deterred exploration. There was also a lack of interest, partly because trade at the coast was adequate and partly because there was little spirit of curiosity.

(Griffiths, 1995: 30)

But this was to change in the late eighteenth century. In the Americas, the situation was quite different, with intensification of trade in the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries accompanied by much more extensive settlement from Iberia, France and Britain. Moreover, in North America and the Caribbean, the colonisers were heavily involved in the production process, something which did not occur in Asia and Africa until much later. However, as trade with these two continents grew in both volume and value, so it became more organised in its structure, usually within the context of the trading company. In Asia, it was the Dutch that began this trend in the seventeenth century, and soon the other European nations had their own East India companies too.

The acceleration in the scale and organisation of mercantile colonialism not only expanded profits, but also involved increased European commitment to a physical presence in the trading region where commodities were to be assembled, stored and protected (Plate 2.3). In order to acquire both commodities and protection, Europeans involved themselves increasingly in local politics, making alliances and inciting conflicts, all of which had enormous repercussions. In much of Africa the slave trade dramatically increased the power of locally based traders and indigenous chiefs often living well away from the coastal area, intensifying conflicts because of the rewards that could be achieved through the sale of prisoners into slavery.

Although at this time the Europeans had only a relatively small physical presence in much of the non-European world outside the Americas, this varied

enormously. Re-victualling posts were, however, established across the globe as part of a vital network for supporting exploration and commerce. For example, European settlement in South Africa was initiated in 1652, when the powerful Dutch East India Company ordered that a supply station for passing ships be established by a group of Company employees in the sheltered harbour of what is now Cape Town. In that year, Jan van Riebeeck, the commander of the outpost, organised the setting up of facilities for growing fresh fruits and vegetables in the so-called 'Company gardens', while relations were developed with the local Khoikhoi people to supply cattle for meat in exchange for European products (Lester *et al.*, 2000; Plate 2.4).

But even with limited European settlement, change had occurred on an extensive scale by the end of the eighteenth century. The extended trading networks had increasingly drawn many parts and peoples of the non-European world into the capitalist system. European goods, particularly weaponry, European values and ideas, religious and secular, had penetrated most regions. Even where direct impact was still relatively limited, change occurred; for example, in Siam where the present Chakri dynasty was established in the mid eighteenth century through a series of reformist, modernising monarchs who sought to resist the Europeans by becoming more like them. For the great mass of peasants in Asia or Africa, however, life seemed to continue as it had for thousands of years,



Plate 2.3 Macao: remnants of Portuguese presence during the mercantile colonial period (photo: David Smith)



Plate 2.4 Cape Dutch style home in Graaff-Reinet, South Africa
(photo: Tony Binns)

but their activities, whether subsistence or market-oriented, had over the long mercantile colonial period been subtly linked to a fledgling world economy, the core of which lay in Europe.

The transition to industrial colonialism

The mercantile colonial period merged into the era of industrial colonialism in a highly differentiated transition period. In North America, the USA had decolonised itself with the declaration of independence in 1776 and was preparing to become an enthusiastic and powerful metropolitan power in its own right. In Latin America and the Caribbean, colonial production and trade were beginning to be challenged from within, if not by indigenous peoples. In Asia, the East India companies were going bankrupt, as their shift into commodity production, in order to ensure quantity and quality of supplies, had escalated their costs of administration and protection. In Europe itself, political revolutions and continental-scale war consumed state resources and attracted the individual adventurers who had underpinned much of the mercantile colonialism. But, above all, Europe offered new and lucrative profits for the reinvestment of accumulated merchant capital in its accelerating industrial transformation. Even so, the nineteenth century witnessed the establishment of colonial concessions related to

trade and commerce, in parallel with the broader changes wrought by state-structured colonialism. Thus, the trading islands of Penang (1786), Singapore (1819) and Hong Kong (1841) were acquired, respectively, by Francis Light, Thomas Stamford Raffles and Charles Elliot on behalf of the crown rather than their companies, as were the treaty ports in China (Guangzhou, Xiamen, Fuzhou, Ningbo and Shanghai) following the Treaty of Nanking signed by Britain and China in 1842.

But if mercantile colonialism had begun to fade, its impact was already fuelling the Industrial Revolution and the renewed burst of colonialism that began in the nineteenth century. The fortunes that had been made from plunder, from commodity trade and, particularly, from the triangular trade between West Africa, the Caribbean and Europe, were underpinning the accelerating industrial age. As Blaut (1993) argues, the point is not just that profits had been made, but that they were in the hands of a new breed of entrepreneur rather than the old elite. The mercantile colonial period not only created new money, but it was accompanied by a social and political revolution, the combination of which gave Britain and other European powers a strong platform from which to launch into a more spatially extended and economically intensive form of colonialism. In short, by the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, 'capitalism arose as a world-scale process: as a world system. Capitalism became concentrated

in Europe because colonialism gave Europeans the power both to develop their own society and to prevent development from occurring elsewhere' (Blaut, 1993: 206).

Industrial colonialism

Certain changes characterised the colonialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The first was related to the dynamics of capitalism itself. Although commerce and trade still made money for the merchants of Liverpool, Bristol and London, the manufacturers themselves were eager to find methods of expanding production, or at least stabilising costs and extending their profits. Two obvious ways were to seek expanded and/or cheaper sources of raw materials and to find new markets overseas. A further development was to expand the production of cheap food overseas, thus lowering the costs of labour production in Europe by keeping wages down. Although markets took a while to develop, all of these and more were made available in the restructured colonies of the nineteenth century. These colonies were established and organised by the state rather than the company, although business and the state worked together through their representatives to transform production, consumption and cultures. The key to this process was territorial acquisition.

Before 1870, annexation and occupation tended to follow resource exploitation, whereas after 1870 they tended to precede it.

Although the needs of capitalism may have been the driving force behind the industrial colonialism of the nineteenth century, the rationale for the colonial project itself was provided by a consolidation of the ideology of justifiable intervention and occupation of what had become either 'uncivilised savages' or traditional groups whose history was ignored and whose societies and activities were seen as either static or disintegrating (Box 2.2).

Science, reason and, above all, organisation for most nineteenth-century thinkers elevated Europeans to their 'superior' position and placed them above the brutality and poverty of the peoples in their occupied lands. For Porter (1995) there were 'master metaphors' provided by physics (stability, equilibrium) and biology (constituent parts functioning for the whole) that shaped the ideologies of both colonialism and development. These gave rise to a modernist theme, a universal process of change which is clear and predetermined (Porter, 1995). Sympathetic motives could therefore be written into this process underpinned by a parent-child metaphor (Manzo, 1995), often expressed vividly by the image of the 'mother country' and her fledgling colonies.

BOX 2.2

The scramble for Africa

Although colonialism expanded rapidly throughout the nineteenth century, the speed of Africa's partition was new. The 'scramble for Africa' usually refers to the 30-year period between 1884 and 1914 when most of Africa was partitioned among the European powers. The key event in this period was when Bismarck called the European powers to Berlin in 1884 to draw up rules to regulate the partition of Africa. The General Act of the Conference of Berlin was signed in February 1885, which was concerned with 'the development of trade and civilization in Africa; the free navigation of the Rivers Congo, Niger, etc; the suppression of the slave trade by sea and land; the occupation of territory on the African coasts' (Griffiths, 1995: 38). However, even before the Berlin Conference, some of the continent had already passed under the control of the

imperial powers, through various treaties with African leaders. One of the key factors motivating the conference was undoubtedly the speed of developments in South Africa, where diamonds were discovered in 1868 just across the Cape Colony's northern border in Griqualand West, and in the following year rich reserves were found in Kimberley. Britain annexed the tribal territory to prevent costly warfare generated by settler land-grabbing and security concerns on the Cape's borders. Then, in the year of the Berlin Conference, 1884, vast quantities of gold were discovered on the Witwatersrand, leading to the rapid expansion of mining activities and the mushrooming of the city of Johannesburg. European, and particularly British, investment in South African mining was massive, and between 1887 and 1898

BOX 2.2 (continued)

gold production increased in value from £80,000 to £16 million, representing one-quarter of the world total (Lester *et al.*, 2000).

We can summarise the processes, both within Africa and outside, which gave rise to the scramble for territory. Some of these processes were chronologically or spatially specific.

External processes

1. Between the first and second industrial revolutions (i.e. the shift from coal and iron to oil, electricity

and steel), Europe went through a deep recession. As rates of profit fell, European firms began to seek new material sources, new markets and new investment opportunities on an extensive scale, partly to forestall other European rivals.

2. The last quarter of the nineteenth century saw the newly united countries of Italy and Germany using colonialism to sidestep internal tensions. As Africa was at the time the largest uncolonised area, it became the focus of a national scramble for territory and prestige, with France seeking compensation for its defeat (1871)

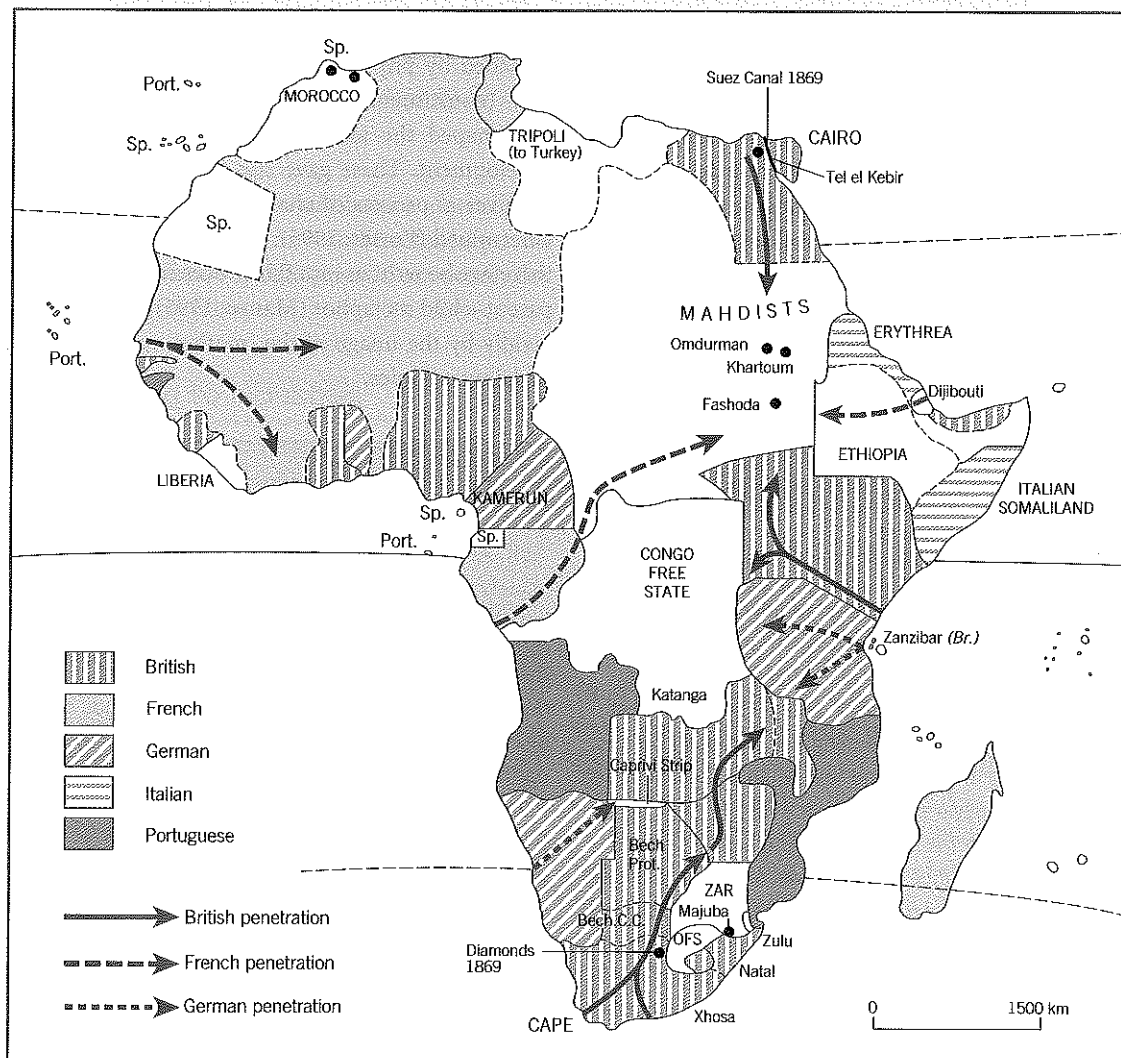


Figure 2.5 The scramble for Africa

Source: Adapted from *The African Inheritance*, Griffiths, I.L. Copyright (© 1995) Routledge. Reproduced by permission of Taylor & Francis Books UK.

BOX 2.2 (continued)

by Germany within Europe. In this process, governments were supported by a popular imperialism created and sustained by a jingoistic media boom in newspapers, journals and books.

3. These processes were facilitated by a technological revolution, particularly in transport, where steamships, railways and telegraphic links accelerated both decision making and physical advances into Africa. New armaments, such as machine-guns, facilitated this process by smaller and smaller European forces.
4. Once acquired, many colonies were also seen as healthy places for the surplus European population that technological advances in medicine and hygiene were beginning to produce. The Kenyan highlands, for example, had a pleasant climate and proved to be a particularly attractive place for white settlers (mainly British), accessing the area by the railway that was constructed from Mombasa on the coast, through Nairobi to Lake Victoria. The settlers eventually took some 18 per cent of the colony's best agricultural land. Further south in Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), white settlers 'seized one-sixth of its land during the 1890s, mostly on the central highveld and including almost the entire Ndebele Kingdom, together with most of its cattle' (Iliffe, 1995: 205). In North Africa, by 1914, Europeans (mainly French) owned 920,000 hectares of land in Tunisia, and had also settled in large numbers in Algeria and Morocco. There was also considerable expansion of white settlement

in South Africa during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Internal processes

1. The acceleration and intensification of European capitalism brought about a breakdown of existing relationships between traders and African societies, goading many of the African societies into reaction and providing excuses for further European invasion.
2. Sub-imperialism occurred when European settlement became extensive and decision making was wrested from the metropolitan centre by ambitious local individuals or groups, forcing retrospective recognition of highly personalised adventurism. Cecil Rhodes provided the most blatant example of such actions, a visionary entrepreneur who amassed great wealth from mining and business deals, and dreamed of a 10,000-km railway from the Cape to Cairo to be built, with imperial as well as commercial considerations, across territories coloured red on the map (Griffiths, 1995) (see Key thinker, Cecil Rhodes; Plate 2.5).
3. Some African groups facilitated and accelerated the colonial process by 'inviting' Europeans to 'collaborate' against other groups. Often, however, such invitations were manufactured. Taken individually, no single reason explains the sudden scramble for Africa, but the conjuncture of many factors in the 1870s and 1880s gave rise to a spiral of European ambition and nationalism that, once started, proved difficult to stop.

The drive for profit and prestige

We should be careful not to overemphasise the power of ideology and discourse within this process; colonialism had at its heart the economic drive for profit. Every Sir Alfred Milner had his Cecil Rhodes whispering or bellowing into his ear about the returns to investment that will follow annexation and control of yet another piece of territory occupied by traditional people not using it to its full potential. As the explorer David Livingstone wrote to Sir Roderick Murchison,

President of the Royal Geographical Society, in 1855, justifying the funding of future expeditions, 'The future of the African continent will be of great importance to England in the way of producing the raw materials of her manufactures as well as an extensive market for the articles of her industry' (quoted in Pachai, 1973: 30). To be sure, there was also prestige for the 'mother country', annexation would be one in the eye for other European rivals and would promote pastures new for grazing missionaries of the true church; but the underlying impetus was usually greed.

Key thinker

Cecil Rhodes (1853–1902)

Cecil Rhodes was born the son of a vicar in Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, England in 1853. He first visited South Africa in 1870, where his older brother, Herbert, had a cotton farm in Natal. In 1871 Rhodes left the colony to go west to Kimberley where diamonds had been discovered. He returned to study at Oxford in 1873, but his studies were repeatedly interrupted by frequent visits to South Africa. In 1880 he launched the De Beers Mining Company and by 1888 he had secured a monopoly of the Kimberley diamond production and had amassed an enormous personal fortune. In 1888 he tricked Lobengula, king of the Ndebele of Matabeleland into an agreement by which Rhodes secured important mining concessions in Matabeleland and Mashonaland. He exploited these concessions through his British South Africa Company, which was given a charter by the British Government in 1889, and soon established complete control of the territory.

From 1877 until his death in 1902 Rhodes represented the constituency of Barkly West in the Cape House of Assembly and was Prime Minister of the Cape Colony from 1890 until 1895. Rhodes has been accused of being racist, and during his time as Prime Minister he introduced legislation to push black people from their lands and to restrict the franchise to literate persons, thus reducing the African vote.

Rhodes played a key role in British imperial policies in southern Africa. He was deeply committed to the expansion of the British Empire and yearned for a railway from the Cape to Cairo constructed entirely on land belonging to Britain. In his will he said of the British, 'I contend that we are the finest race in the world and that the more of the world we inhabit the better it is for the human race'. Through close collaboration with agents of the British Government

in South Africa, his imperial ambitions and capital investment progressed simultaneously. By 1894, the British South Africa Company controlled an area of 1.1 million sq km between Lake Tanganyika in the north and the Limpopo River on South Africa's northern border. The following year, the name of this territory was changed from 'Zambesia' to 'Rhodesia', which later became Northern and Southern Rhodesia and after independence, respectively, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Rhodes died in the Cape in 1902 and was buried in the Matobo Hills in present-day Zimbabwe. He left over £6 million and at the time was one of the richest men in the world. His will provided for the establishment of the Rhodes Scholarships, to enable students from territories under British rule, formerly under British rule, or from Germany, to study at Oxford University. More than 80 scholarships are now awarded annually to both men and women from the former British colonies, the USA and Germany.



Plate 2.5 Cecil Rhodes
(photo: Alamy Images/Popperfoto)

Strengthening control over the colonies

Whatever their nature, ideologies need to be translated into action and for colonialism this was through the elaboration and enablement of, first, its material base, i.e. production, trade and finance; and, second, the establishment of the administrative machinery of

control and order. There is no necessary sequence in this process, annexation and the provision of administrative structures could follow economic interests, as in the Transvaal (South Africa), or could precede them, as in the French occupation of Indo-China. There was, however, clearly an expanded role for the state vis-à-vis the trading company in the administrative system.

In contrast to the mercantile period, the main medium of exploitation was not the trading concessions, although they continued to be squeezed out of 'independent' states, but rather the acquisition of land on which to organise the mechanics of production. The colonial state then established the infrastructure of legal, transport, administrative and police systems through which the pursuit of wealth and order could be controlled. It is no coincidence that Sir Harry Johnston (Box 2.3) in his address to the Royal Geographical Society in 1895, following a tour of duty as Commissioner in British Central Africa (now Malawi), attributed the transformation of Mlanje District to the fact that the natives 'above all, are trained to respect and to value settled and civilised government' (Crush, 1995a: 2).

But if the colonial state was an administrative state, it was usually a productive state too, since it was regarded as right and proper for the metropolitan state, metropolitan companies and metropolitan individuals to secure a profitable return on their investment. Ensuring such a return from colonising Africa was for some a daunting challenge. As Lord Lugard, Governor-General of Nigeria admitted,

Neither the Foreign Office nor the Colonial Office had any experience of Central African conditions and administration, when, at the close of the nineteenth century, the summons for effective occupation compelled this country to administer the hinterlands of the West African colonies, and to assume control of vast areas on the Nile, the Niger, the Zambezi, and the great lakes in the heart of Africa.

(Lugard, 1965: 607)

The production of export commodities

The spatial expression of economic exploitation was experienced for the most part in the rural areas in which the export commodities were produced. This varied substantially according to the nature of the commodity, local customs and the metropolitan power involved. In some areas agricultural restructuring occurred through the creation of large-scale plantations, whereas in others local producers were encouraged to amalgamate their holdings. Both processes resulted in widespread landlessness, creating labour pools for the new commercial holdings. Lonsdale and

Berman (1979) report how the Kenyan landscape was transformed by the colonisers:

In the 1880s the inland areas of Kenya comprised a web of subsistence economies which exploited complementary ecological niches suited either to predominantly pastoral or predominantly agricultural forms of production. Between cattlemen and cultivators there was a symbiotic exchange of commodities and intermittent adjustment of populations... Three decades later the economic and political structures of the region had been subject to profound transformation, under the sway of a state apparatus linking them to the capitalist world economy. Maasailand was now the core of the White Highlands.

(Lonsdale and Berman, 1979: 494–5)

Others were shifted into agricultural or mining industries by new taxes that often forced farmers to migrate into wage labour to meet these demands, often ruining prosperous and well-organised indigenous systems. In many parts of Africa, poll taxes and hut taxes were introduced and, 'tax evasion was brutally discouraged and could lead to harsh punishment and forced labour' (Binns, 1994a: 10). Where local labour proved to be 'inadequate' for commercial agriculture, workers were often imported from elsewhere in the country (as in Vietnam, where the French shifted workers from north to south), or from overseas (as in Malaya where the British brought in workers from India). However, labour also moved 'voluntarily', recruited through family or kinship systems (e.g. from south China to the Malayan tin mines).

The new agricultural systems often meant that, over large areas, the range of crops produced was narrowed to those commodities required by metropolitan industries, such as cocoa, coffee, cotton, groundnuts, palm oil, rubber, sisal, sugar and tea. Colonies thus became associated with the production of one or two items, being forced to import whatever else was needed; 'Economically, colonialism programmed [African] countries to consume what they do not produce and to produce what they do not consume' (Binns, 1994a: 5). Needless to say, metropolitan firms were in control of both directions of trade. Although some of these commodities were new introductions to the colonies, such as rubber or coffee in various Southeast Asian countries, more traditional crops continued to play an important role, for example, coconuts and groundnuts. Local food crops too became an important export crop.

BOX 2.3

The nineteenth-century logic of colonialism

The discourse of colonialism which first justified and then ratified colonial intervention is well expressed by Jonathan Crush (1995b) in his edited book *Power of Development*, where he caricatures the transformation of Mlanje District in British Central Africa (now Malawi) through the eyes of Sir Harry Johnston, its Commissioner (Crush, 1995a: 1–2). Johnston's first description is of Mlanje in 1895 before colonialism extends its benign hand to that unfortunate land:

In the Mlanje District there was practically chaos . . . the few European planters were menaced in their lives and property, and the only mission station had to be abandoned . . . throughout all this country there was absolutely no security for life and property for natives, and not over-much for the Europeans . . . Everything had got to be commenced.

This picture of scorned opportunities was blamed on disinterested local tribes and evil-minded slave traders and was contrasted by Sir Harry Johnston with the scene after just three years of British rule as a placid paradise where:

The natives who pass along are clothed in white calico . . . A bell is ringing to call the children to the mission school. A planter gallops past on horseback . . . long rows of native carriers pass in Indian file,

carrying loads of European goods. You will see a post office, a court of justice, and possibly a prison, the occupants of which, however, will be out mending roads under the superintendence of some very businesslike policeman of their own colour . . . The most interesting feature in the neighbourhood of these settlements at the present time is the coffee plantation, which, to a great extent, is the cause and support of our prosperity.

(Crush, 1995a: 1–2).

The influential colonial statesman Lord Frederick Lugard had an interesting perspective on the objectives of colonialism. He asserted that there was a need to fulfil what he called a 'Dual Mandate' delivering mutual benefits for coloniser and colonised. In his book of the same title he argued:

Let it be admitted at the outset that European brains, capital and energy have not been, and never will be, expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy; that Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her own industrial classes, and of the native races in their progress to a higher plane; that the benefit can be made reciprocal, and that it is the aim and desire of civilized administration to fulfil this dual mandate.

(Lugard, 1965: 617)

Siamese rice, for example, was exported to many other Asian countries, largely through British firms, where it helped lower the cost of labour reproduction, particularly in the cities (Dixon, 1998).

Expanding markets

As a result of the drastic economic, social and demographic changes of industrial colonialism, the last quarter of the nineteenth century also witnessed the acceleration of market potential for Western manufactured products. Indeed, in Pacific Asia it was the purchasing power of the Chinese and Japanese markets that was as important as access to their products in encouraging the Western powers in their almost frantic attempts to gain trading concessions. In the colonies

themselves, the initial markets for Western goods were confined to wealthy expatriate and indigenous elites. But the quality and price of these goods and the demonstration effect of purchases by the wealthy soon resulted in imported commodities dominating the expenditure pattern of all social groups, even those in rural subsistence, thus further destroying the indigenous artisan economy and increasing dependency on the West.

Particularly poignant in these circumstances was the re-export of cheap food to the growing markets among the urban and rural poor. Their diet of flour, sugar and tea often had colonial origins, but was processed (and value-added) in Europe, thus facilitating a double exploitation of the colonial poor: first, through their labour in growing the crops, and then through their subsequent purchase of it at exorbitant prices.

Critical reflection

Why was manufacturing industry discouraged in the colonies?

In many areas in the colonies where indigenous manufacturing posed a real threat to imported manufactured goods from Europe, local industries were quickly suppressed, as in the Indian textile towns (Blaut, 1993). The corollary of this situation is that manufacturing was relatively limited during the industrial colonial phase. Any manufacturing that existed was largely concerned with the preliminary processing of primary products, such as rice milling or tin smelting. Most of the more sophisticated processing, and the creation of profits, occurred within the booming industrial areas of the metropolitan country. This is the era during which the big dockside manufacturing plants for tobacco and sugar proliferated in Liverpool, Glasgow and London.

With reference to specific examples, consider the nature of manufacturing industry today in former colonies. To what extent is this still dominated by the preliminary processing of primary products which was a feature of the industrial colonialism phase?

It would not be correct to assume that colonial cities were simply points of control and administration. Although few were centres of production, commercial activity, ranging from the manufacture of small consumer goods to the retailing of imported products, was very extensive. Much of this activity was in the hands of non-Europeans. This is not the same as saying that they were the prerogative of local entrepreneurs, because almost all of the colonial powers in East Africa and in Pacific Asia, other than the Japanese, made a point of encouraging or permitting immigrant groups, usually Chinese or Indian, to infiltrate and monopolise local commerce. In this way, a convenient demographic, cultural and economic buffer was placed between the colonised and the colonialists. Discontent on the part of indigenous populations with the cost of living was therefore often directed against those who were immediately available, rather than those who were ultimately responsible.

The period from 1850 to 1920 saw a massive restructuring of urban systems (Drakakis-Smith, 1991). Colonial production may have been based in the countryside, but colonial political and economic control was firmly centred on the city. Usually just one or two centres were selected for development, giving rise to the urban primacy which still characterises many developing countries today (see Chapters 3 and 9). In some cases completely new cities were built, such as Kaduna in Northern Nigeria, which served as the colonial administrative capital of the region. Within these cities, despite the numerical dominance of the indigenous populations, most of the land space was given over to European activities. Spacious residential and working areas were paralleled by extensive military cantonments, all physically separated from the usually cramped, crowded indigenous city by railway lines, parks or gardens. Little face-to-face contact took place between the colonisers and the colonised, except within a dominant-subordinate relationship. It was a situation that seemed as though it would go on for ever, but the First World War intervened and widespread changes ensued. Within a generation, the political world order of 1914 was totally undermined and the sun began to set rapidly over the colonial empires.

Late colonialism

A fundamental change occurred in the ethos of colonialism after 1920. Put simply, the 'heroic' age of creating empires gave way to a more prosaic phase of imperial governance. The key to this change was the concept of 'trusteeship', which had permeated the formation of the League of Nations and which elevated to a high priority the well-being and development of colonial peoples. In practice, this did not necessarily mean indigenous colonial peoples. Indeed, prevailing anthropological theory conveniently explained that such progress was impossible for 'backward' and 'traditional' societies which did not hold in proper esteem social values such as democracy or the business ethic. Not until after 1945 did metropolitan governments seriously consider fairer representation for indigenous interests, but this was too little, too late.

Styles of colonial rule varied (Box 2.4), but between the wars colonial government was dominated by bureaucrats, both in metropolitan capitals and overseas, striving on behalf of the colonies, with little appreciation either of indigenous aspirations or of the changing world economy in which they were situated.