Class 9b: Colonialism

- First wave of colonialism (Americas)
- Second wave (Africa, East Asia, etc.)
- Dismantling colonial empires
- Impacts of colonialism
Colonialism definitions

• Colony: territory tied to a sovereign state
  – No foreign policy, military
  – Sometimes internal affairs, too

• Colonialism
  – A state imposes political, economic, cultural systems on another territory
  – May encourage settlement
Motives for colonialism

- Nationalism, economic, or cultural
- “God, gold, and glory”
  - Missionaries spreading Christianity
  - Resources for European economies
  - More colonies = more powerful state
First wave: 1492 to 1825

• Why were Europeans the colonizers in the 1400s?
First wave: 1492 to 1825

- Location, location, location
  - European trading cities oriented to the sea
  - West African trading cities oriented inland
  - East Africa, China and India farther away from Americas
  - Trade winds favored Europe
Portuguese colonialism

• Earliest explorers in Africa
• Policy of trade, not settlement
  – Gold as part of mercantilism
  – Diseases harmful to Europeans
• Developed slavery system in late 1400s
  – Laborers as commodities to be used up
  – Linking status and humanity with color
Spanish colonialism

- Different historical and political context
  - Coming out of *Reconquista*
  - More interested in settlement
- Different physical context
  - *Europeans* brought diseases
  - Settlers brought plants, animals
  - Slaves imported for plantations
Spanish colonialism

• Distinctive urban landscapes
• More mixing of cultures
• Treaty of Tordesillas with Portugal (1494)
  – Portugal got Africa and East Indies
  – Spain got the Americas (minus Brazil)
French colonialism

• More gradual approach to Americas
• Settlement/trade major motivations
  – Catholic/Protestant conflicts at home
  – Traded beaver; no gold or silver
• More equal interactions with Natives
  – Fewer settlers
  – Less penetration inland
English colonialism

• Still different political situation
  – Slower rise as maritime power
  – Colonial experience gained in Ireland
• Focus on settlement
• More hostile towards natives
First wave: Impacts at home

• Portugal and Spain
  – Colonies as resource-based economies
• France
  – Battles with England shifted to colonies
  – Less settlement, less impact
• Great Britain
  – Learned from others, rose to greatest prominence
First wave: independence

- Number of colonies began to decrease in 1776
- Led to French Revolution and European unrest
- Led to wars of revolution in Latin America (from 1801 in Haiti to 1825 in Bolivia)
- Abolition of slave trade, then slavery (from 1807/1833 in Britain to 1819/1863 in U.S.)
Second wave: 1885-1900

- Europe needed new markets
- Surplus population from demographic transition
- Increased nationalism
- Geographical expeditions to Africa promised resources, markets
Second wave: Africa

- 1885 Europe began carving up Africa
- Establishing trade, obtaining resources
- "Humanitarian" mission
- Increased political prestige
- Everyone else is doing it
Second wave: Africa

• Arbitrary straight lines on the map
  – Cultural groups divided
  – Minorities preferred as collaborators
• British adjusted their governance by place
• French tried to import French culture
Second wave: Middle East

- World War I: Ottoman Empire joined Germany
- Britain captured Iraq; received local support with promise for self-rule
- Ottoman territory carved into “mandates”
- Nationalist uprisings against British, French
- Independence in 1930s; military remained
Second wave: 1885-1900

• Impact of WWII
  – Germany, Italy, Japan lost colonial blocs
  – U.S. exchanged aid for trade access
  – Start of Cold War

• From 134 colonies in 1950 to 58 in 1961
Second wave: independence

- Generally peaceful transitions
  - Britain worked with nationalist leaders
  - France more neo-colonial; fought and lost in Vietnam and Algeria
  - Belgium simply left Zaire; fierce fighting

- From 1943-1990, 98 “new” states
Second wave: independence

• Two paths to development
• State ownership or protection (India)
  – Not favored by US, Europe
• Free market
  – Prone to corruption
  – Economic colonialism
Second wave: impacts

- Impact on former home countries
  - Economic benefits without administrative costs
  - Cold War fought through proxies
  - Increasing numbers of immigrants
Impacts of colonialism: first wave

- Decimation of native population (90%)
- Forced migration of slave populations
- Diffusion of language, religion
- Distinctive city plans, architecture
- Wealth to home countries
Second wave impacts: nation-building

- Creating new national identity
- Resentment of favored minorities
- Importance of leadership
- New (or restored) iconography
Second wave impacts: state-building

• High military spending
  – Est. 1/3 of African spending
  – Better since Cold War
• Tendency toward military rule
• African commitment to state borders
Second wave impacts: economics

- Strong ties to former colonial powers
  - Main trade partner
  - Migration field
  - Source for tourism
- Dependence on a single commodity
  - Resource-based national economy
Second wave impacts: economics

• Patterns of land ownership
  – Plantations concentrated ownership
  – White settlers had best land
• Nationalization vs. privatization
• Two internal economic systems
Second wave impacts: infrastructure

- Fragmented infrastructure
- Roads and rail oriented towards ports
- Lack of connection between countries
- Communications, too
Second wave impacts:
psychological

• Belief in Western superiority
• “Experts” trusted over locals
• From distrust to trust of government