

Empires: Expansion, Rule, and Resistance — *Overview*

- ◆ - Compare how empires acquired territory, governed diverse peoples, and met resistance
- ◆ - Treat empire as a heuristic category: scale, hierarchy, diversity, asymmetric power
- ◆ - Key terms: empire, imperialism, colony, metropole, periphery, hegemony
- ◆ - Organizing triad: drivers of expansion, modes of rule, forms of resistance
- ◆ - Range: Rome and Han to Ottoman, Mughal, British, Russian, Japanese
- ◆ - Debates: modernization or extraction; decline or transformation



Defining Empire: Concepts, Typologies, and Periodization

EMPIRE

Rules many peoples under one asymmetry of power.

TRIBUTARY vs. TERRITORIAL



LAND vs. MARITIME



POLITICAL / CULTURAL / ECONOMIC



NATION-STATE

Claims one political community.



EXPANSION



RULE



RESISTANCE



Empires rule difference; nation-states claim one political community.



Typologies: political, cultural, economic; tributary vs. territorial; land vs. maritime.



Periodize comparatively, not Eurocentrically: classical, medieval, early modern, modern overlap.



Flexible definition beats checklist: scale, hierarchy, diversity, asymmetric power.



Shared reference points: Rome, Han, Mongol, Ottoman, Mughal, British, Russian.

Drivers of Expansion: Trade, Faith, and Security

- Economic motives: trade routes, bullion, chartered companies, raw materials and markets
- Ideological and religious motives: civilizing missions, crusade and jihad, imperial nationalism
- Strategic and security logic: buffer zones, naval chokepoints, rivalry with other powers
- Competition among European states as an engine of expansion: prestige and arms-race budgets
- Debate: economic, geopolitical, or ideological factors best explain each case



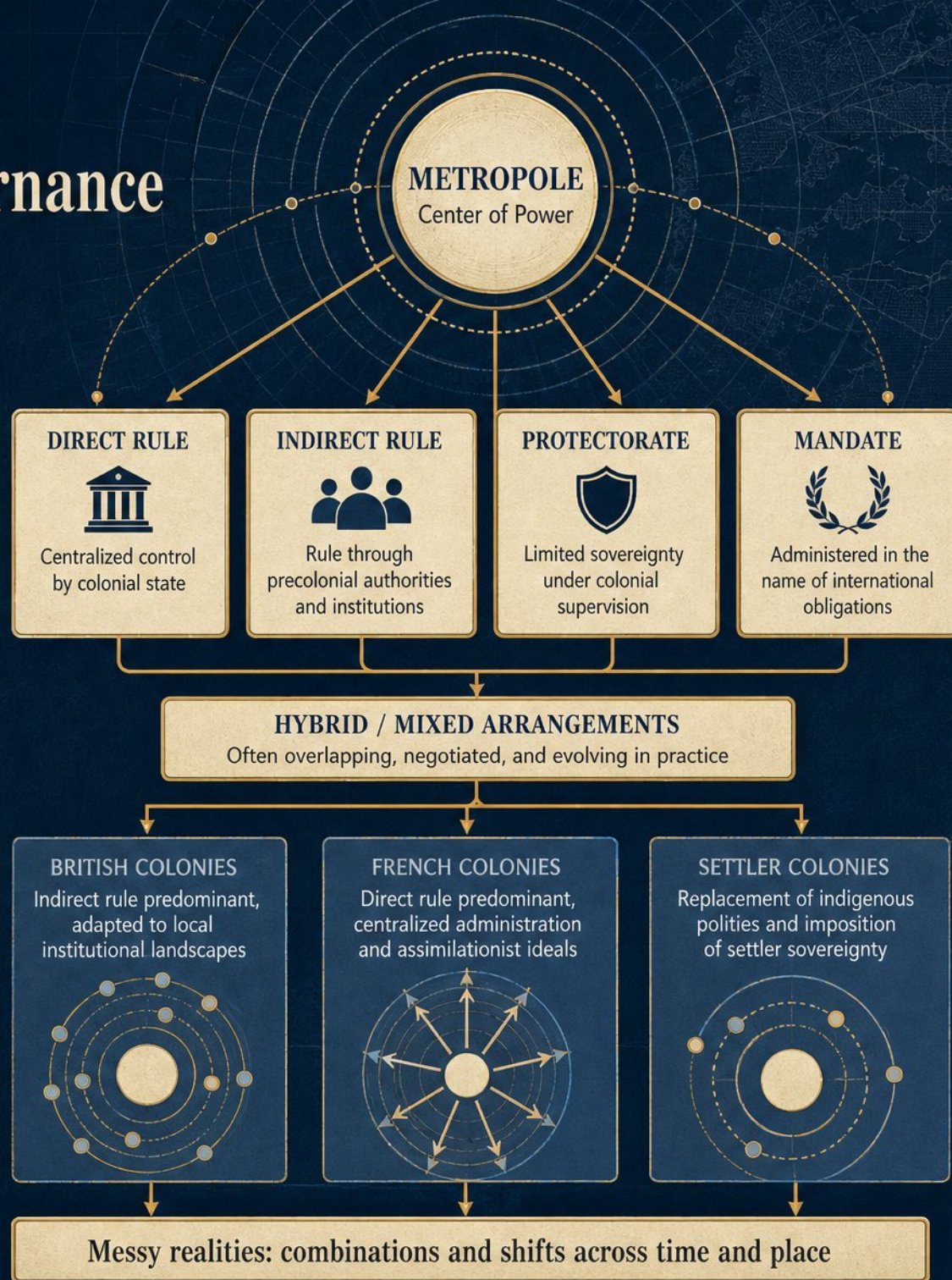
Means of Expansion: Technology, Logistics, and Violence

- ▶ Steamships, river navigation, railways, and telegraph linked coasts to interiors
- ▶ Quinine prophylaxis and new firearms transformed tropical conquest
- ▶ Technology rarely caused imperialism alone — it shaped timing, location, speed
- ▶ Breech-loading rifles and machine guns gave small forces crushing superiority
- ▶ Case examples: steamboats on the Irrawaddy; railways as instruments of control



Modes of Rule: Direct, Indirect, and Hybrid Governance

- Ideal types: direct rule, indirect rule, protectorates, mandates, settler colonialism
- British indirect rule ruled through precolonial authorities and "customary" institutions
- French direct rule: centralized blueprint, assimilationist ideals, chiefs as subordinate agents
- Empirical finding: French colonization dismantled 7 of 10 precolonial polities, twice the British rate
- Precolonial centralization mattered: British devolved power where centralized institutions existed
- Legal pluralism: colonial courts and customary law codified difference as governance



- Census, maps, and ethnography made colonized peoples legible — and fixed fluid identities
- Taxation was the fiscal backbone, reshaping labor, land use, and daily life
- Police, courts, and prisons criminalized resistance and hardened colonial categories
- Mission schools spread imperial ideology — and produced later anti-colonial leaders
- Indirect rule preserved custom; direct rule rebuilt it along metropolitan lines

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MISSION SCHOOL
PRIMER

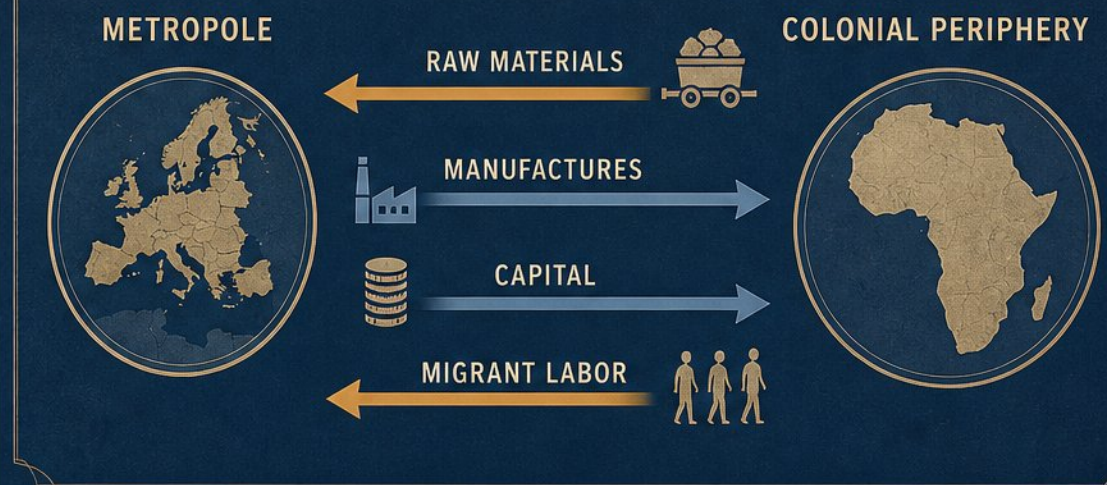


A B C D E
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Extraction and the Imperial Economy

- **Extractive institutions:** taxation, forced labor, land alienation, compulsory cultivation
- **Metropole-periphery flows:** raw materials out, manufactures and capital in
- **French Africa:** monopsonies and coercion cut African gains from trade over 60%
- **Labor taxes** often rivaled or exceeded official colonial budgets
- **Debates:** Hobson and Lenin on finance capital; dependency theory; newer quantitative work

METROPOLE-PERIPHERY EXCHANGE



FRENCH AFRICA: African Gains from Trade — REDUCED BY OVER 60% —

POTENTIAL GAINS
FROM TRADE

ACTUAL GAINS
RETAINED
BY AFRICA

LOSSES FROM TRADE
OVER 60%



Culture, Knowledge, and Imperial Ideology

- Language policy, mission schools, museums, and exhibitions projected empire as progress
- Social Darwinism and the "civilizing mission" justified conquest as duty
- Settler colonialism reshaped land, demography, and whole societies
- Infrastructure built with conscripted labor, financed by taxing the colonized
- Cultural institutions became sites of contestation over memory and restitution

EXPANSION

Extending Power and Influence



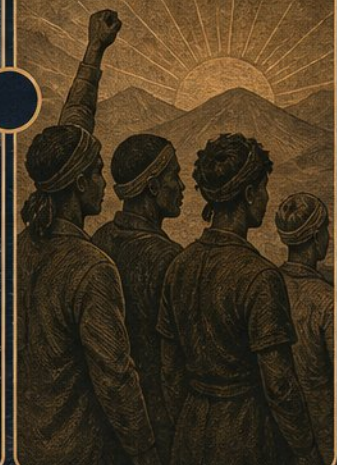
RULE

Administering, Classifying, and Civilizing



RESISTANCE

Challenging, Remembering, and Reclaiming



Resistance and Rebellion: A Typology

- Resistance ranged from everyday evasion and petitions to revolts and guerrilla warfare.
- Religious belief, spirit mediums, and millenarian ideologies mobilized movements across regions.
- Leadership varied: peasant insurgencies, elite-led movements, and mass nationalist parties.
- Comparative cases (India, Indonesia; Shona-Ndebele, Maji Maji, Mau Mau) share land, tax, and labor grievances.
- Empires labeled resistance as criminal disturbance or primal violence — shaping suppression and memory.



TO ANTI-COLONIAL NATIONALISM →



RELIGIOUS BELIEF, SPIRIT MEDIUMS,
AND MILLENARIAN IDEOLOGIES
MOBILIZED MOVEMENTS ACROSS REGIONS.



Case Studies in Anti-Colonial Resistance

- Boudica and 1857: early and mid-imperial revolts and their remembered suppression
- Maji Maji, the Mahdist War, and the Boxer Uprising as late-imperial confrontations
- Shona-Ndebele, Maji Maji, Mau Mau: internal tensions and collaboration
- Adivasi uprisings (Santhal Hul 1855–56; Munda Ulgulan 1899–1900) theorized sovereignty and land
 - Historiography shifted from colonial dismissal to nationalist idealization to complex local agency

A CROSS-CASE WALL OF RESISTANCE MOMENTS

		SCALE	DURATION	OUTCOME
	Boudica	●-----●-----×		
	1857 Indian Rebellion	●-----●-----×		
	Maji Maji Uprising	●-----●-----×		
	The Mahdist War	●-----●-----×		
	The Boxer Uprising	●-----●-----×		
	Shona-Ndebele Resistance	●-----●-----×		
	Mau Mau Uprising	●-----●-----×		
	Santhal Hul 1855–56	●-----●-----×		
	Munda Ulgulan 1899–1900	●-----●-----×		

Paths to Independence: Decolonization in Global Perspective



TWENTIETH CENTURY ASIA & AFRICA

Decolonization
across Asia
and Africa



EXPANSION

Colonial rule
extends and
consolidates



RULE

Political control,
economic extraction,
and social order



RESISTANCE

Ideas, movements,
and struggles
demand freedom

NON-ALIGNED
MOVEMENT

BANDUNG
(1955)

PAN-AFRICANISM

AGE OF REVOLUTION AMERICAS

First wave of
independence in
the Americas



EXPANSION

Imperial reach
across the
Americas



RULE

Imperial authority,
mercantilism,
and control



RESISTANCE

Revolutions
and movements
for independence

- First wave: the Americas in the Age of Revolution, 1775–1825
- Asia and Africa followed in the twentieth century
- Routes varied: negotiated transfer, armed struggle, international pressure
- Recurring arc: moderate demands met with repression, then mass radicalization
- India combined mass politics with constitutionalism; Vietnam, Indonesia, Algeria, Kenya diverged
- Bandung (1955), Non-Aligned Movement, and Pan-Africanism forged transnational solidarity

Legacies: Borders, Institutions, and Unresolved Inequalities

- ◆ - Post-imperial borders, language, law, and economic inequality persist
- ◆ - Extractive institutions outlived independence, shaping rural-urban divides
- ◆ - Concepts to compare: settler colonialism, partition, neo-colonialism, collective imperialism
- ◆ - Museum, curriculum, and monument debates over colonial memory intensify
- ◆ - Restitution questions: who defines origin, what does return repair?



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BOTH

VISUAL PROPAGANDA

ATTEND TO STUDENT IDENTITY

- [illegible]

Assessment and Classroom Application

DOCUMENT-BASED QUESTION EXAMPLE

SOURCE A: COLONIAL STATUTE

*Extract from a Colonial Regulation
Issued by the Colonial Administration*

"All lands, resources, and people within the colony are subject to the authority of the Crown. The administration may make laws for order, industry, and civilization. Natives shall obey regulations and may not interfere with the peace and interests of the colony."

Purpose: To legitimize colonial control and establish legal authority.

VS.

SOURCE B: ANTI-COLONIAL TESTIMONY

*Testimony before a Local Council
Spoken by a Community Representative*

"Our lands were taken without consent. Our ways were called backward. We were taxed, our labor taken, and our voices silenced. We seek not to destroy, but to live with dignity, to govern ourselves, and to protect our future for our children."

Purpose: To resist domination and assert the right to self-determination.

ASSESSMENT RUBRIC STRANDS



COMPARISON

Identify similarities and differences in perspective, purpose, and audience.



SOURCE EVALUATION

Assess author, context, purpose, and potential bias or limitation.



EVIDENCE-BASED ARGUMENT

Construct a well-reasoned argument using evidence from both sources.



STUDENT POSITIONALITY PROMPT

How might my background, identity, and experiences shape the way I understand these sources and the histories they represent? What responsibilities do I have when engaging with these legacies today?



- Design tasks asking students to compare cases and weigh evidence



- Use document-based questions with colonial and anti-colonial sources



- Let students examine their own positionality on sensitive legacies



- Coordinate curriculum across grade levels around connected problems



- Classroom-ready repositories, source collections, and adaptable frameworks



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