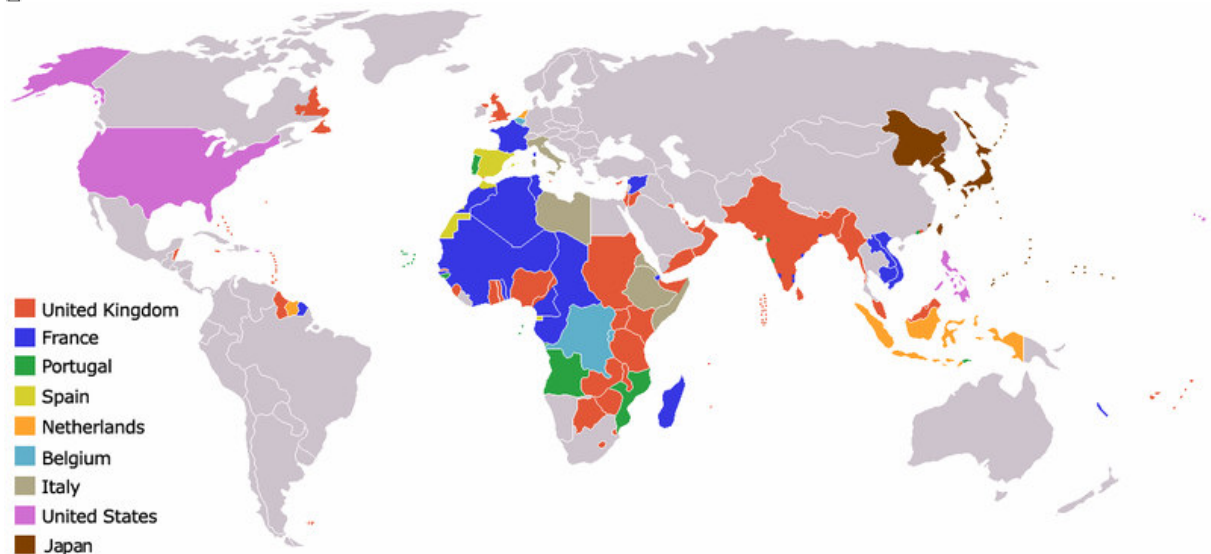


Colonialism



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

Colonialism is the extension of a nation's sovereignty over territory and people outside its own boundaries, often to facilitate economic domination over their resources, labour, and markets. The term also refers to a set of beliefs used to legitimize or promote this system, especially the belief that the mores of the colonizer are superior to those of the colonized.

Advocates of colonialism argue that colonial rule benefits the colonized by developing the economic and political infrastructure necessary for modernization and democracy. They point to such former colonies as the United States of America, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Hong Kong and Singapore as examples of post-colonial success. These nations do not, however, represent the normal course of colonialism in that they are either settler societies, or tradeport cities.

Colonialism is historically a natural phase in the development of nations. Most nation states have gone through a phase of expansion. The large-scale European colonialism of the nineteenth century was encouraged by the industrial revolution and inter-state rivalry. It was however in essence no different from the colonial expansion of the Roman and Islamic empires in the ancient world, Russia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and China during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Critics of the alleged abuses of economic and political advantages accruing to developed nations via globalised capitalism have referred to them as neo-colonialism, and see them as a continuation of the domination and exploitation of ex-colonial countries, merely utilizing different means.

Countries with the greatest number of colonies: United Kingdom, France, Portugal, Spain, Netherlands, Belgium, Italy, United States and Japan.