


RESEARCH ARTICLE		<b>Colonial Policy in the Context of International Relations</b>
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<b>Abstract</b> The term "colonialism," derived from the root meaning "to seek prosperity," has evolved politically to describe the dominance of powerful states over weaker ones under the pretense of development and order. This article explores the historical emergence and development of colonial policies within the framework of international relations, emphasizing three main colonial eras and their global impact.		
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### 1. Definition and Historical Roots of Colonialism

In its original sense, "colonialism" implies a desire for civilization and development. Politically, it refers to the extension of influence and control by strong nations over weaker states, using the excuse of civilizational advancement to exploit their material and spiritual resources. Historically, colonialism can be traced back to Phoenician and Greek settlements around the Mediterranean, followed by Roman expansion.

### 2. The First Era of Colonialism

The first major wave of colonialism began with the conquest of Constantinople by Sultan Mehmed II in 1453 and the subsequent discovery of the Americas by Christopher Columbus in 1492. Sponsored by Queen Isabella of Spain, Columbus set sail westward with hopes of reaching India but instead discovered the Caribbean islands, Cuba, and Haiti, marking the beginning of European overseas empires. Later voyages by Amerigo Vespucci led to the naming of the new continent as "America."

### 3. The Second Era: 1763–1870

During this period, colonial expansion slowed as European powers focused inward on liberal nationalist movements and industrial revolutions. Nonetheless, the seeds of modern imperial competition were already taking root.

### 4. The Third Era: 1870–1918

Marked by aggressive expansionism, this phase involved the scramble for Africa and parts of Asia. European empires established new markets in their colonies and exported goods produced in industrial centers, tightening economic control.

### 5. Collapse of the Colonial System

The outbreak of World War II in 1939 signaled the decline of traditional colonial powers. Anti-colonial movements gained momentum, leading to independence for many territories in Asia and Africa. These new states joined the ranks of the so-called "Third World" in the bipolar world order of the Cold War era.

### 6. The Case of the United States

In 1782, thirteen American colonies declared independence from Britain. Over time, the U.S. expanded westward and emerged as a dominant commercial and military power. President James Monroe's 1823 doctrine emphasized non-intervention in European affairs and declared the Western Hemisphere off-limits to new colonial ventures. This doctrine laid the groundwork for U.S. hemispheric policy.

### 7. Dimensions of Colonialism

This paper briefly explores the political, cultural, and economic dimensions of colonialism. Politically, colonial powers established military bases and manipulated weak local rulers to secure raw materials and expand markets. Third World countries under colonial rule lacked autonomy in foreign policy and international relations.

### Conclusion

Colonialism, driven by both geopolitical ambitions and economic interests, has profoundly shaped global power dynamics. Its historical legacy continues to influence the political structures and international relations of many post-colonial states today.

\*Note: This summary is based on the Azerbaijani-language article by T. Davudi and formatted according to academic conventions used in Elsevier publications.\*

### Colonial Powers and Their Impact

During the colonial period, the major colonial powers included Spain, Portugal, Britain, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Italy, Russia, Japan, the United States, and Germany. Alongside traditional political colonization, there were other forms such as spheres of influence, condominium territories (jointly governed by multiple states), protectorates, and mandates. These entities often enjoyed special legal privileges. It should also be noted that during the 18th and 19th centuries, political colonization in the Islamic world disrupted the political development and progress of Muslim societies. By the end of the 18th century, colonial powers such as Russia, the Netherlands, and Britain had established dominance over much of Southeast Asia and the northern parts of the Indian subcontinent, thereby strengthening their economic and diplomatic control.

### Economic Colonialism

Economic colonialism refers to the interference of a foreign power in the economy of another country even while maintaining its political sovereignty, thereby keeping it under its sphere of influence. It served as a tool for weakening and subjugating colonial territories. Trade and commercial policies, based on stifling local industries, aimed to keep colonies dependent while promoting the industrial development of the colonial power. Products exported from colonies to the metropole faced heavy tariffs, whereas colonial powers exported their goods to colonies either duty-free or at very low cost.

In the colonial trade system, Europeans engaged in the slave trade along African coasts, transporting enslaved people to Europe. From the Americas, they imported sugar, corn, and tobacco, and from Europe exported textiles and utensils to India. In return, they imported spices and cotton from India. These unequal trade relations allowed European powers to amass enormous wealth.

This form of trade was accompanied by fierce competition among colonial powers and often led to negative consequences. European powers often justified their dominance as a means of bringing civilization and prosperity to local populations, unaware that they also introduced previously unknown diseases such as smallpox and measles to the indigenous populations of North, Central, and South America. These diseases caused widespread devastation, as the native populations had little to no immunity.

### **Cultural Colonialism**

Cultural colonialism refers to the imposition of one society's civilization, ideology, and cultural values upon another. In such cases, the colonized population is compelled to conform to the dominant culture. Naturally, in the face of such overwhelming pressure, resistance is rare. Colonial powers utilized cultural exchange as a mechanism of control. For example, in Africa—where Christianity often conflicted with indigenous belief systems—European powers relied heavily on religious missionaries. Churches formed missionary delegations often supported by local converts. In India and China, the presence of Christian missionaries was particularly strong.

Among colonial empires, France was especially active in educational and propagandistic efforts. The global colonial system often sought to divide local societies into fragmented classes. Indigenous populations were rarely granted citizenship or the right to participate in governance, including the judicial system. Legal status for locals was often limited to subsistence farming or menial labor. Wages were kept low, and living standards were poor. Many peasants were burdened with debt, losing their land and being forced to work as laborers for European colonists. In cities, traditional artisan trades were undermined by the colonial industrial system, leaving no room for sustainable skilled professions.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest regarding the publication of this article.

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