

# Colonization

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**Colonization** (or **colonisation**) is a process by which a central system of power dominates the surrounding land and its components. Colonization refers strictly to migration, for example, to settler colonies in America or Australia, trading posts, and plantations, while colonialism refers to the existing indigenous peoples of styled "new territories". Colonization was linked to the spread of tens of millions from Western European states all over the world. In many settled colonies, Western European settlers eventually formed a large majority of the population after killing or driving away indigenous peoples. Examples include the Americas, Australia and New Zealand. These colonies were occasionally called 'neo-Europe'. In other places, Western European settlers formed minority groups, which often used more advanced weaponry to dominate the people initially living in their places of settlement.<sup>[1]</sup>

When Britain started to settle in Australia, New Zealand and various other smaller islands, they often regarded the landmasses as *terra nullius*, meaning 'empty land' in Latin.<sup>[2]</sup> Due to the absence of European farming techniques, the land was deemed unaltered by man and therefore treated as uninhabited, despite the presence of indigenous populations. In the 19th century, laws and ideas such as Mexico's general Colonization Law and the United States' Manifest destiny encouraged further colonization of the Americas, already started in the 15th century.

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## Lexicology

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The term *colonization* is derived from the Latin words **colere** ("to cultivate, to till"<sup>[3]</sup>), **colonia** ("a landed estate", "a farm"), **colonus** ("a tiller of the soil", "a farmer")<sup>[4]</sup>, then by extension "to inhabit".<sup>[5]</sup> Someone who engages in colonization, i.e. the agent noun, is referred to as a *colonizer*, while the person who gets colonized, i.e. the object of the agent noun or absolute, is referred to as a *colonizee*,<sup>[6]</sup> *colonisee* or the *colonised*.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Historical colonizations

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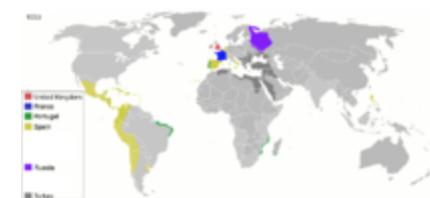
## Classical period

In ancient times, maritime nations such as the city-states of Greece and Phoenicia often established colonies to farm what they believed was uninhabited land. Land suitable for farming was often occupied by migratory 'barbarian tribes' who lived by hunting and gathering. To ancient Greeks and Phoenicians, these lands were regarded as simply vacant. However, this did not mean that conflict did not exist between the colonizers and local/native peoples. Greeks and Phoenicians also established colonies with the intent of regulating and expanding trade throughout the Mediterranean and Middle East.

Another period of colonization in ancient times was during the Roman Empire. The Roman Empire conquered large parts of Western Europe, North Africa and West Asia. In North Africa and West Asia, the Romans often conquered what they regarded as 'civilized' peoples. As they moved north into Europe, they mostly encountered rural peoples/tribes with very little in the way of cities. In these areas, waves of Roman colonization often followed the conquest of the areas. Many of the current cities throughout Europe began as Roman colonies, such as Cologne, Germany, originally called *Colonia Claudia Ara Agrippinensium* by the Romans, and the British capital city of London, which the Romans founded as *Londinium*.

## Middle Ages

The decline and collapse of the Roman Empire saw (and was partly caused by) the large-scale movement of people in Eastern Europe and Asia. This is largely seen as beginning with nomadic horsemen from Asia (specifically the Huns) moving into the richer pasture land to the west, thus forcing the local people there to move further west and so on until eventually the Goths were forced to cross into the Roman Empire, resulting in continuous war with Rome which played a major role in the fall of the Roman Empire. During this period there were the large-scale movements of peoples establishing new colonies all over western Europe. The events of this time saw the development of many of the modern day nations of Europe like the Franks in France and Germany and the Anglo-Saxons in England.



World empires and colonies 1550



World empires and colonies 1800

In West Asia, during Sassanid Empire, some Persians established colonies in Yemen and Oman. The Arabs also established colonies in Northern Africa, Mesopotamia, and the Levant, and remain the dominant majority to this day.<sup>[8][9][10][11][12]</sup>

The Vikings of Scandinavia also carried out a large-scale colonization. The Vikings are best known as raiders, setting out from their original homelands in Denmark, southern Norway and southern Sweden, to pillage the coastlines of northern Europe. In time, the Vikings began trading, and established colonies. The Vikings discovered Iceland and established colonies before moving onto Greenland, where they briefly held some colonies. The Vikings launched an unsuccessful attempt at colonizing an area they called Vinland, which is probably at a site now known as L'Anse aux Meadows, Newfoundland and Labrador, on the eastern coastline of Canada.

## Modern "Colonial Era" colonialism

"Colonialism" in this context refers mostly to Western European countries' colonization of lands mainly in the Americas, Africa, Asia and Oceania; The main European countries active in this form of colonization included Spain, Portugal, France, the Kingdom of England (later Great Britain), the Netherlands, and the Kingdom of Prussia (now Germany), and, beginning in the 18th century, the United States. Most of these countries had a period of almost complete power in world trade at some stage in the period from roughly 1500 to 1900. Beginning in the late 19th century, Imperial Japan also engaged in settler colonization, most notably in Hokkaido and Korea.

Some reports characterize Chinese activities in Tibet as colonization.<sup>[13][14]</sup>

While many European colonization schemes focused on shorter-term exploitation of economic opportunities (Newfoundland, for example, or Siberia) or addressed specific goals (Massachusetts or New South Wales), a tradition developed of careful long-term social and economic planning for both parties, but more on the colonizing countries themselves, based on elaborate theory-building (note

# **Modern colonization**

Colonization may be used as a method of absorbing and assimilating foreign people into the culture of the imperial country, and thus destroying any remnant of the cultures that might threaten the imperial territory over the long term by inspiring reform.



World empires and colonies 1936

# Russia

During the Russian Empire, a policy of Russification was followed, in order to impose the Russian language and culture on conquered people in territory adjacent to Russia itself. In this way, the Russian Empire aimed to gradually, and permanently, expand its territory by erasing foreign cultures. Foreign languages within its territory were banned, as were foreign religions.

The Soviet regime in the 1920s tried to win the trust of non-Russians by promoting their ethnic cultures and establishing for them many of the characteristic institutional forms of the nation-state.<sup>[16]</sup> The early Soviet regime was hostile to even voluntary assimilation, and tried to derussify assimilated non-Russians.<sup>[17]</sup> Parents and students not interested in the promotion of their national languages were labeled as displaying "abnormal attitudes". The authorities concluded that minorities unaware of their ethnicities had to be subjected to Belarusization, Yiddishization, Polonization etc.<sup>[18]</sup>

By the early 1930s this extreme multiculturalist policy proved unworkable and the Soviet regime introduced a limited russification<sup>[19]</sup> for practical reasons; voluntary assimilation, which was often a popular demand,<sup>[20]</sup> was allowed. The list of nationalities was reduced from 172 in 1927 to 98 in 1939<sup>[21]</sup> by revoking support for small nations in order to merge them into bigger ones. For example, Abkhazia was merged into Georgia and thousands of ethnic Georgians were sent to Abkhazia.<sup>[22]</sup> The Abkhaz alphabet was changed to a Georgian base, Abkhazian schools were closed and replaced with Georgian schools, the Abkhaz language was banned.<sup>[23]</sup> The ruling elite was purged of ethnic Abkhaz and by 1952 over 80% of the 228 top party and government officials and enterprise managers in Abkhazia were ethnic Georgians (there remained 34 Abkhaz, 7 Russians and 3 Armenians in these positions).<sup>[24]</sup>

Russians were now presented as the most advanced and least chauvinist people of the Soviet Union.<sup>[19]</sup>

Ethnic Russians were sent to colonize captured territory such as Latvia and Estonia, while local languages, religions and customs were banned or suppressed. Population transfer in the Soviet Union was also used both as a military strategy to extinguish opposition to Soviet expansion, and as a continuation of the Russification policy of assimilating, or failing that, eliminating ethnic minorities through exile to a distant territory such as Siberia.

## **Jewish oblast**

In 1934, the Soviet government established the Jewish Autonomous Oblast in the Soviet Far East to create a homeland for the Jewish people. Another motive was to strengthen Soviet presence along the vulnerable eastern border. The region was often infiltrated by the Chinese; in 1927, Chiang-Kai-Shek had ended cooperation with the Chinese Communist Party, which further increased the threat. Fascist Japan also seemed willing and ready to detach the Far Eastern provinces from the USSR.<sup>[25]</sup> To make settlement of the inhospitable and undeveloped region more enticing, the Soviet government allowed private ownership of land. This led to many non-Jews to settle in the oblast to get a free farm.<sup>[26]</sup>



Sign on the JAO  
government headquarters.

By the 1930s, a massive propaganda campaign developed to induce more Jewish settlers to move there. In one instance, a government-produced Yiddish film called *Seekers of Happiness* told the story of a Jewish family that fled the Great Depression in the United States to make a new life for itself in Birobidzhan. Some 1,200 non-Soviet Jews chose to settle in Birobidzhan.<sup>[27]</sup> The Jewish population peaked in 1948 at around 30,000, about one-quarter of the region's population. By 2010,

according to data provided by the Russian Census Bureau, there were only 1,628 people of Jewish descent remaining in the JAO (1% of the total population), while ethnic Russians made up 92.7% of the JAO population.<sup>[28]</sup> The JAO is Russia's only autonomous oblast<sup>[29]</sup> and, aside of Israel, the world's only Jewish territory with an official status.<sup>[30]</sup>

## China

## Indonesia

The transmigration program is an initiative of the Indonesian government to move landless people from densely populated areas of Java, but also to a lesser extent from Bali and Madura, to less populous areas of the country including Papua, Kalimantan, Sumatra, and Sulawesi.<sup>[31]</sup>

## Papua New Guinea

In 1884 Britain declared a protective order over South East New Guinea, establishing an official colony in 1888. Germany however, annexed parts of the North. This annexation separated the entire region into the South, known as "British New Guinea" and North, known as "Paupa".<sup>[32]</sup>

## Philippines

Due to marginalisation produced by continuous Resettlement Policy, by 1969, political tensions and open hostilities developed between the Government of the Philippines and Moro Muslim rebel groups in Mindanao.<sup>[33]</sup>

## Myanmar

## Expatriate colonies

Mass migrations such as Chinese emigration or the British diaspora or German diaspora have resulted in colonies abroad. In some cases, expatriate niches set up permanently in target countries masked under the spread of "religion and culture". The intentions behind the movement and settling of expatriates and in many cases (especially when not gathered into a niche *per se*) expatriates do not necessarily seek to "expand their native civilization", but rather to integrate into the population of the new civilization for economic purposes. It must be recognized that expatriates are different from exiles and often there is very little if no relationship between them. Exiles are more often than not diasporic or displaced communities or persons who have fled their native territory or homeland to somewhere else and are usually in this position due to the results of war or other major political upheavals and sometimes this includes the influence of colonization.

## Subject peoples

Many human colonists came to colonies for slaves to their colonizing countries, so the legal power to leave or remain may not be the issue so much as the actual presence of the people in the new country. This left the indigenous natives of their lands "slaves" in their own countries.

The Canadian Indian residential school system was identified by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Canada) as colonization through depriving the youth of First Nations in Canada of their languages and cultures.<sup>[34]</sup>

During the mid 20th century, there was the most dramatic and devastating attempt at colonization, and that was pursued with Nazism.<sup>[35]</sup> Hitler and Heinrich Himmler and their supporters schemed for a mass migration of Germans to Eastern Europe, where some of the Germans were to become colonists, having control over the native people.<sup>[35]</sup> These indigenous people were planned to be reduced to slaves or wholly annihilated.<sup>[35]</sup>

Many advanced nations currently have large numbers of guest workers/temporary work visa holders who are brought in to do seasonal work such as harvesting or to do low-paid manual labor. Guest workers or contractors have a lower status than workers with visas, because guest workers can be removed at any time for any reason.

## Endo-colonization

Colonization may be a domestic strategy when there is a widespread security threat within a nation and weapons are turned inward, as noted by Paul Virilio:

Obsession with security results in the *endo-colonization* of society: endo-colonization is the use of increasingly powerful and ubiquitous technologies of security turned *inward*, to attempt to secure the fast and messy circulations of our globalizing, networked society...it is the increasing domination of public life with stories of dangerous otherness and suspicion...<sup>[36]</sup>

Some instances of the burden of endo-colonization have been noted:

The acute difficulties of the Latin American and southern European military-bureaucratic dictatorships in the seventies and early eighties and the Soviet Union in the late eighties can in large part be attributed to the economic, political and social contradictions induced by endo-colonizing militarism.<sup>[37]</sup>

## See also

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- Cocacolonization
- Colonialism
- Coloniality of gender
- Colonisation (biology)
- Colonization of Antarctica
- Human settlement
- Ocean colonization
- Pre-Columbian trans-oceanic contact
- Space colonization

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