2 CONTEXTUALIZING THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Colonialism, Anticolonial Struggles, and Decolonization

In this chapter we reconstruct and examine the historical relations that underpinned the emergence and consolidation of the post-1945 development project. We show that this project can only be adequately understood when examined in relation to the project of *colonialism*. European colonization of the non-European world significantly transformed social, political, cultural, economic, and ecological relations. It entailed the devaluing of other ways of knowing and being as it violently instituted Eurocentric conceptions of modernity and modernization. The disruptions and dislocations that were extended through the project of *colonialism* included genocidal violence, enslavement, the forced displacement of populations, the introduction of reservations, plantation monocultures, and ecological despoliation. Colonizers justified violence and exploitation inherent in this project claiming civilizational hierarchy, underpinned by racist ideas.[1] The colonial project rested on claims to moral authority and to advanced knowledge (epistemic superiority), alongside unremitting violence. This violence of colonialism was absent in the official and formal framing of the post-1945 development project.

The absenting of colonial violence from the formulation of the post-1945 development project was a deeply problematic abstraction: communities in former colonies, but also among the former colonizers, have been acutely aware of this abstraction and its legacies and implications. In 2020 this came once more into the limelight in the context of the Black Lives Matter movement and campaigns over monuments, museums, and exhibitions. Questions of race and the legacies of the project of *colonialism* are thus still central in struggles and contestations over relations of development today.[2]

COLONIALISM

Our appeal to history begins with a critical account of colonialism and the explicit and implicit justifications upon which it rested. Eurocentric racist premises served as a central justification of colonization, underpinning the idea that Europeans were more advanced technologically, morally, and ethically.[3] This assumption not only disregarded advanced scientific knowledge of other civilizations[4] but importantly rested on a "normative inversion" about claims to morality and ethical predispositions.[5] Thus, while colonialism often entailed barbaric acts of genocidal violence and enslavement, the colonizers justified such acts by framing the colonized as "barbarians" and uncivilized. This *inversion* was a key political strategy of the colonial project, and it has continued to shape institutional thinking and practices through the four projects we

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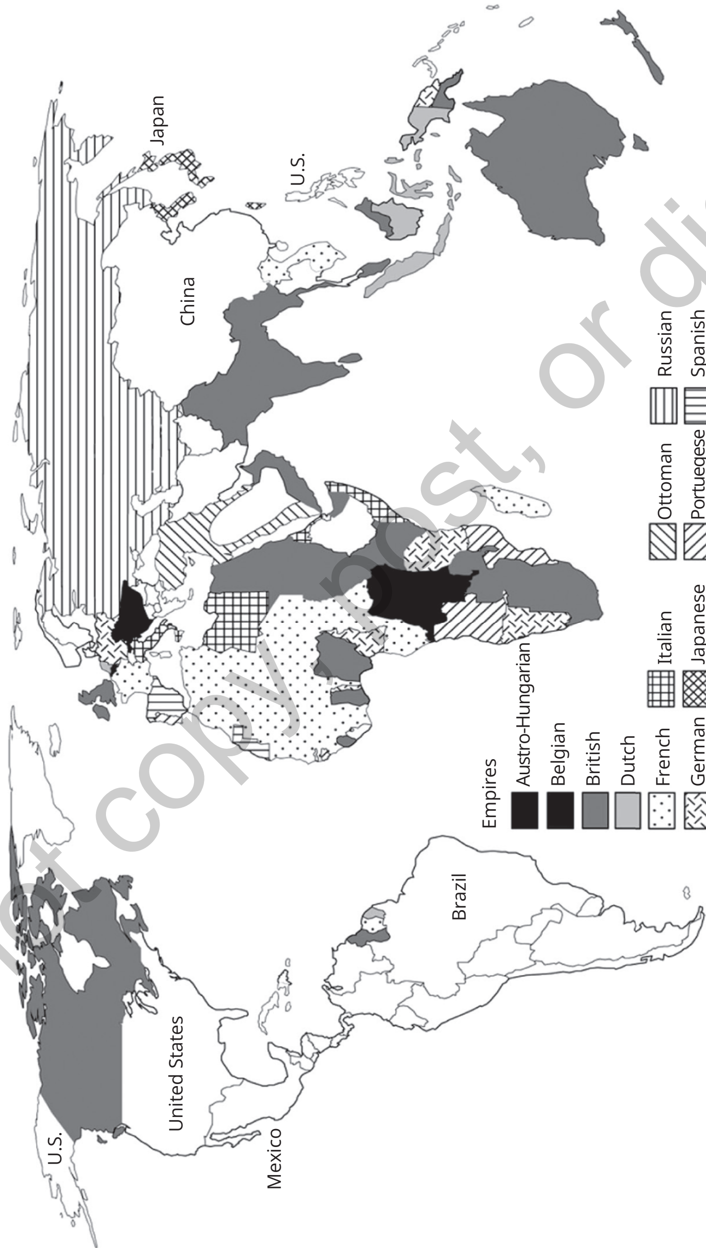
reconstruct. (*Colonialism* is defined and explained in the "What Is Colonialism?" box, and the European colonial empires are depicted in Figure 2.1.)

FIGURE 2.1 ■ European Colonial Empires at the Turn of the Twentieth Century



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WHAT IS COLONIALISM?

Colonialism is the subjugation by physical and psychological force of one culture or race by another—a colonizing power—through military and economic conquest of territory and stereotyping the subordinated culture. It includes the era of European expansion (from the fifteenth century to the twentieth century) and extends to Japanese colonialism in the twentieth century and, most recently, Chinese occupation of Tibet and Israeli occupation of Palestinian territory. Colonialism was justified through the devaluing of other cultures and ways of being and rested on racist ideology and tropes of "backwardness" of the colonized. It took two forms: settler colonies, often genocidal against Indigenous people (such as the Spanish destruction of the Aztec and Inca civilizations in the Americas); and colonies of rule, where colonial administrators reorganized existing cultures by imposing new inequalities to facilitate their exploitation. Examples of the latter were the British creating local landlords, *zamindars*, to rule parts of India; confiscating personal and common land for cash cropping; depriving women of their customary resources; and elevating ethnoracial differences, such as privileging certain castes or tribes in the exercise of colonial rule. Implications are, first, the cultural genocide or marginalization of Indigenous people; second, the introduction of new tensions around class, gender, race, and caste that shape postcolonial societies; third, the extraction of labor, cultural treasures, and resources to enrich the colonial power, its private interests, and public museums; and fourth, responses by colonial subjects, ranging from internalization of inferiority to practices of resistances—from everyday forms to sporadic uprisings to mass political mobilization.

Such a powerful normative inversion, and the devaluing of other cultures, appears frequently in historical accounts. It is reflected in assumptions made by settlers about Indigenous people they encountered in the Americas and Australasia. Europeans perceived Native Americans and Aboriginal Australians as people who did not "work" the land they inhabited. Consequently, for European colonizers the native populations had no right of "property"—a European concept in which property is private and alienable. This was a powerful self-justification that disregarded centuries of Indigenous custodianship of nature and elaborate systems of law, diplomacy, and justice.[6] Their displacement from their ancestral lands is a bloody reminder of the combined military power and racism with which the European powers pursued colonization.

In precolonial Africa, communities relied on ancestral ecological knowledge and Earth-centered cosmologies to sustain themselves and their environment. These methods were at once conservative and adaptive because, over time, African communities changed their composition, scale, and location in a long process of settlement and migration through the lands south of the equator. European colonists in Africa, however, framed these as superstitious cultures, as static, and as only occupying, rather than improving, the land. Such perceptions denigrated and disregarded the complex

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social and political systems Africans had created in their exchanges with local ecology.[7] In these contexts, Europeans viewed themselves as bringing civilization to the nonwhite races. French historian Albert Sarraut, ignoring non-European inventions such as gunpowder, the compass, the abacus, moveable type printing, and the saddle, claimed,

> It should not be forgotten that we are centuries ahead of them, long centuries during which—slowly and painfully, through a lengthy effort of research, invention, meditation and intellectual progress aided by the very influence of our temperate climate—a magnificent heritage of science, experience, and moral superiority has taken shape, which makes us eminently entitled to protect and lead the races lagging behind us.[8]

The ensuing colonial exchange was captured in the postcolonial African saying, "When the white man came, he had the Bible and we had the land. When the white man left, we had the Bible and he had the land." Under colonialism, when non-Europeans lost control of their land, their spiritual life was compromised not least insofar as it was connected to their landscapes. It was difficult to sustain material and cultural integrity under these degrading extractive processes and conditions. At the same time, European colonization of nature converted land, water, cultivars, and food into economic categories, discounting their complex regenerative capacities and ecological interdependencies.

The systematic oppression of non-Europeans has remained largely unacknowledged, just as non-European scientific, ecological, and moral achievements, and their impact on European culture, were generally ignored or denied. At the same time it is important to note that *despite* the dominance and oppressive force of European colonialism, resilience and resistance were cultivated among the colonized, including through transnational networks.[9]

WHAT ARE SOME CHARACTERISTICS OF PRECOLONIAL CULTURES?

All precolonial cultures had their own ways of satisfying their material and spiritual needs. Cultures varied by the differentiation among their members or households according to their particular ecological endowments and social contact with other cultures. They ranged from small communities of subsistence producers, who lived off the land or the forest, to extensive kingdoms or states. Subsistence producers, organized by kin relations, usually subdivided social tasks between men, who hunted and cleared land for cultivation, and women, who cultivated and processed crops, harvested wild fruits and nuts, and performed household tasks. These cultures were highly skilled in resource management and production to satisfy their material needs. They generally did not produce a surplus beyond what

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was required for their immediate needs, and they organized cooperatively. By contrast, the Mogul empire in seventeenth-century India had a complex hierarchical organization, based on local chiefdoms in which the chief presided over the village community and ensured that surpluses (monetary taxes and produce) were delivered to a prosperous central court and "high culture." Village and urban artisans produced a range of metal goods, pottery, and crafts, including sophisticated muslins and silks. Caste distinctions, linked to previous invasions, corresponded to divisions of labor, such as trading, weaving, cultivating, ruling, and performing unskilled labor. Colonizers typically adapted such social and political hierarchies to their own ends, alienating Indigenous cultures from their natural ecologies and their political systems from their customary social functions, incubating tensions that have been inherited by postcolonial states. It is important to note that Indigenous communities across the world have been engaged in processes of retrieval of cultural practices, languages, and knowledges and in practices of resistance.

Sources: Bujra (1992); Coulthard (2014); Rowley (1974); Watson (2015).

The Colonial Division of Labor

From the sixteenth century, European colonists and traders traveled along African coasts to the New World and across the Indian Ocean and the China seas, seeking fur, precious metals, labor (including through enslavement), spices, tobacco, cacao, potatoes, sugar, and cotton. The principal European colonial powers—Spain, Portugal, Holland, France, and Britain—and their merchant companies exchanged manufactured goods such as cloth, guns, and implements for these products and for Africans taken into enslavement and transported to the Americas. In the process, they reorganized the world.

The basic pattern was to establish in the colonies specialized extraction of raw materials and production of primary goods that were unavailable in Europe. In turn, these products fueled European manufacturing as industrial inputs and foodstuffs for its industrial labor force. On a world scale, this unequal specialization between European economies and their colonies came to be termed the **colonial division of labor** (see Figure 2.2).

While the colonial division of labor stimulated European industrialization, it forced non-Europeans into primary commodity production. Specialization at each end of the exchange set in motion a transformation of social and environmental relationships, underpinned by a relocation of resources and energy from colony to metropolis: an unequal ecological exchange.[10] This captures the practice of indebted countries of the global South producing agricultural monocultures (with imported chemicals and fertilizers) for exports to the global North. Consequently, in parts of the global North it *appears* that the pressures on the natural environment have abated, when such abatement comes at the expense of ecological destruction in the global South.

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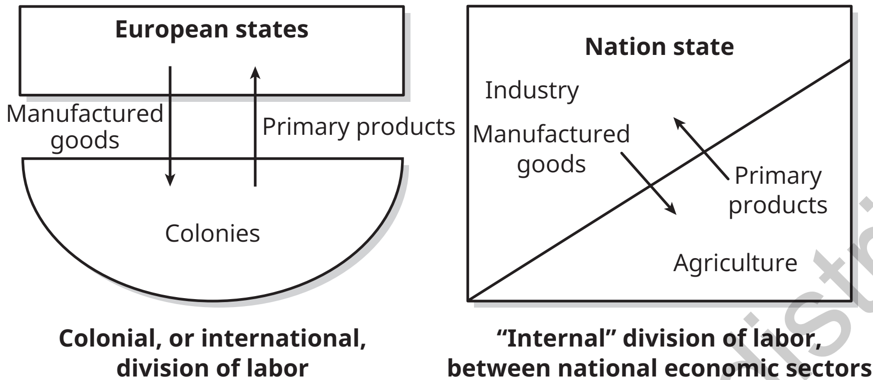
FIGURE 2.2 ■ Distinguishing Between an International and a National Division of Labor



Through the colonial division of labor, non-European cultures and ecologies were subjected to profound disorganization, as colonies were reorganized to serve primarily as supply zones of labor and resources. Local crafts and mixed farming systems were undermined, alienating land and forests for commercial exploitation and rupturing the ecological balance. Not only were non-European cultures forced to surrender their handicraft industries in this exchange, but also their agriculture was often reduced to a specialized **export monoculture**, where local farmers produced a single crop, such as peanuts or coffee, for export, or plantations (sugar, cotton, tea, rubber, bananas) were imposed on land expropriated from those who were consequently forced to become plantation laborers. Systems of export agriculture interrupted centuries-old patterns of diet and cultivation, creating the all-too-familiar commercial food economy, in which "what was grown became disconnected from what was eaten, and for the first time in history, money determined what people ate and even if they ate."[11]

Handicraft decline was often deliberate and widespread. Perhaps the best-known destruction of native crafts occurred through Britain's conquest of India. Until the nineteenth century, Indian cotton muslins and calicos were luxury imports into Europe (as were Chinese silks and satins). By that time, however, the East India Company (which ruled India for the British Crown until 1858) undermined this Indian craft and, in its own words, "succeeded in converting India from a manufacturing country into a country exporting raw produce."[12] The company had convinced the British government to use tariffs of 70 percent to 80 percent against Indian finished goods and to permit virtually free entry of raw cotton into England. In turn, British traders flooded India with cheap cloth manufactured in Manchester. Industrial technology (textile machinery and the steam engine) combined with political power to impose the colonial division of labor, as British-built railway systems moved Indian raw cotton to coastal ports for shipment to Liverpool and returned across India selling machine-made textiles—and undermining a time-honored craft.

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THE COLONIAL DIVISION OF LABOR AND UNEQUAL ECOLOGICAL EXCHANGE

The ecological dimension of the colonial division of labor reminds us that industrialism is premised on transforming nature from a regenerative system to mere "raw material." Prior to industrial society and colonialism, the majority of humans depended on their local ecosystem to supply their various needs via a multiplicity of locally produced materials, harvesting just what was necessary. Overharvesting resources wastes energy, reducing an ecosystem's capacity and thereby threatening the sustainability of the human community. The colonial division of labor depended on overharvesting.

For instance, the early Portuguese colonists, enslaving Indigenous labor, extracted luxury goods from the Amazon, such as cacao, rosewood, spices, caimans, and turtle eggs—all of which had high value-to-volume ratios in European markets. Wealthy Europeans prized turtle oil for perfume and lighting their lamps, but wasteful harvesting of turtle eggs for the oil severely depleted protein supplies and Amazonian aquatic environments on which populations depended for their material reproduction.

By the nineteenth century, European and North American extraction focused on industrial inputs such as rubber, further disrupting Amazonian habitats and ecology and exposing local industry to competition from commodities imported cheaply in the ample cargo space on the return leg of the rubber transport ships. As demand for rubber intensified later in the century, rubber plantations were established in Southeast Asia and Africa, by the British and the Americans, respectively, in turn transforming those ecologies by introducing monocultures and also impoverishing the Amazonian economy as feral rubber extraction declined.

What are the consequences of the developmentalist focus on trade merely in terms of exchange of commodities, ignoring the unjust human relations as well as the exchange with nature?

Sources: Bunker and Ciccantell (2005: 34–47); Sheller (2003: 81); E. Wolf (1982).

Social Reorganization under Colonialism

The colonial division of labor devastated producing communities and their craft- and agriculture-based systems. When the British first came to India in the mid-eighteenth century, Robert Clive described the textile city of Dacca as "extensive, populous, and rich as the city of London." By 1840, Sir Charles Trevelyan testified before a British parliamentary committee that the population of Dacca "has fallen from 150,000 to 30,000, and the jungle and malaria are fast encroaching upon the town . . . . Dacca, the Manchester of India, has fallen off from a very flourishing town to a very poor and small town."[13]

While native industries declined under colonial systems, local farming cultures lost their best lands to commercial agriculture supplying European consumers and

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industries. Plantations and other kinds of cash cropping proliferated across the colonial world, producing specialized tropical exports ranging from bananas to peanuts, depending on local agroecologies (see Table 2.1). Non-European societies were fundamentally transformed through the loss of resources and craft traditions, as colonial subjects were forced to labor in mines, fields, and plantations to produce exports sustaining distant European factories. Enslaved persons, peasants, and laborers in the colonies provisioned European industrial classes with cheap colonial products, such as sugar, tea, tropical oils, and cotton for clothing. The legacy of this relationship continues today. For example, in 2018 Mali (ranked 184 out of 189 on the UN **Human Development Index**) derived half of its export revenues from cotton, with 40 percent of its population depending on this crop for their livelihoods, but the country is in unequal competition with highly subsidized cotton producers in the United States, the European Union, and China.[14]

TABLE 2.1 ■ Selected Colonial Export Crops

Colony	Colonial Power	Export Crop
Australia	Britain	Wool, wheat
Brazil	Portugal	Sugar, coffee
Congo	Belgium	Rubber, ivory
Egypt	Britain	Cotton
Ghana	Britain	Cocoa
Haiti	France	Sugar
India	Britain	Cotton, opium, tea
Indochina	France	Rice, rubber
Indonesia	Holland	Rubber, tobacco
Côte d'Ivoire	France	Cocoa
Kenya	Britain	Coffee, tea, sisal
Malaya	Britain	Rubber, palm oil
Senegal	France	Peanuts
South Africa	Britain	Gold, diamonds

Colonial systems of rule focused on mobilizing labor from the colonized. For instance, a landed oligarchy (the hacendados) ruled South America before the nineteenth century in the name of the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies, using an institution called encomienda to create a form of native serfdom. Settler colonialism also

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spread to the Americas, Australasia, and southern Africa, where settlers used military force, legal constructs, and economic power to wrest land from the natives for commercial purposes, using enslaved, convict, and indentured labor.[15] As the industrial era matured, colonial rule (in Asia and Africa) grew in terms of organizational and administrative power. By the end of the nineteenth century, colonial administrations were financed by the colonized subaltern classes, with revenues collected through the use of military force, taxation (hut and poll taxes), and the loyalty of local princes and chiefs, tribes, and castes (note that the British presence, for example, never exceeded 0.5 percent of the Indian population).[16] Native rulers were also bribed with titles, land, or tax-farming privileges to recruit male peasants to the military and to force them into cash cropping to pay the taxes supporting the colonial state.

Male entry into cash cropping disrupted patriarchal gender divisions, creating new gender inequalities. Women's customary land-user rights were often displaced by new systems of private property, circumscribing food production, traditionally women's responsibility. For example, British colonialism in Kenya fragmented the Kikuyu culture as peasant land was confiscated and men were forced to migrate to work on European estates, reducing women's control over resources and lowering their status, wealth, and authority.[17]

In India, production of commercial crops such as cotton, jute, tea, peanuts, and sugar cane grew by 85 percent between the 1890s and the 1940s. In contrast, in that same period, local food crop production declined by 7 percent while the population grew by 40 percent, a shift that spread hunger, famine, and social unrest.[18] Using tax and irrigation policies to force farmers into export agriculture, Britain came to depend on India for almost 20 percent of its wheat consumption by 1900. Part of the reason that "Londoners were in fact eating India's bread" was the destruction of Indian food security by modern technologies, converting grain into a commodity. New telegraph systems transmitted prices set by London grain merchants, prying grain reserves from villages along railway networks for export to Britain. Thus, new global market technologies undermined the customary system of grain reserves organized at the village level as protection against drought and famine. For example, during the famine of 1899 to 1900, 143,000 peasants in Berar starved to death as the province exported tens of thousands of cotton bales in addition to 747,000 bushels of grain.[19] Starvation in the colonies was not simply due to conversion of resources into export commodities. British rule in India, for example, converted the "commons" into private property or state monopolies.

By the end of the 1870s, Britain had enclosed all Indian forests, previously communally managed. Ending communal access to grassland resources ruptured "the ancient ecological interdependence of pastoralists and farmers," and age-old practices of extensive crop rotation and long fallow, to replenish soils, declined with the expansion of cotton and other export monocrops.[20] Export monocultures displaced Indigenous irrigation systems with canals, which blocked natural drainage and thus

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exacerbated water salinity and pooled water in swamps, the perfect host environment for the dreaded malarial anopheline mosquito. A British engineer reported to the 1901 Irrigation Commission, "Canals may not protect against famines, but they may give an enormous return on your money."[21]

The colonial division of labor was organized to serve European capitalist societies (with food and raw materials) at the same time that it undermined non-European cultures and ecologies. As European industrial society matured, the rapidly increasing urban populations relied on ever-increasing imports of sugar, coffee, tea, cocoa, tobacco, and vegetable oils from the colonies, and the expanding factory system relied on ever-increasing inputs of raw materials such as cotton, timber, rubber, and jute, employing forced and enslaved labor.

As the trade in enslaved persons from Africa subsided, the Europeans created new schemes of forced, or indentured, labor. Indian and Chinese peasants and handicraftsmen, impoverished by colonial intervention or market competition from cheap textiles, were forced to move to sugar plantations in the Caribbean, Fiji, Mauritius, and Natal; to rubber plantations in Malaya and Sumatra; and to British East Africa to build the railways that intensified the two-way extraction of African resources and the introduction of cheap manufactured goods. In the third quarter of the nineteenth century alone, more than one million indentured Indians went overseas. Today, Indians still outnumber native Fijians; they also make up 50 percent of the Guyanese population and 40 percent of the residents of Trinidad. In the same period, 90,000 Chinese indentured laborers went to work in the Peruvian guano fields, and 200,000 went to California to work in the fruit industry, on the gold fields, and on the railways.[22] Displacement of groups and individuals from their societies and their dispersion to resolve labor shortages elsewhere in the colonial world have had a lasting global effect—notably in the African, Indian, and Chinese diasporas. This cultural mosaic undergirds modern expressions of race, ethnicity, and nationality. Either lack of awareness of this history and/or the continued prevalence of racism continues to generate ethnopolitical tensions that shape national politics across the world today and question the modern ideal of the secular state.

European exercise of power in the colonies revealed the hard edge of the modern state, premised on class structuring via racism, expressing the injustices and inequalities it engendered.[23] Such methods produced resistances among subject populations, whether laborers, peasants, soldiers, or civil servants. This resistance underpinned the politics of decolonization, dedicated to molding inchoate resistance to colonial abuses into coherent, nationalist movements striving for independence.

How Understanding the Colonial Project Unlocks a Development Puzzle

The colonial project was far-reaching and multidimensional in its effects. We focus here on rendering how the colonial project and the colonial division of labor helps us to come to grips with a development puzzle. Unless we account for structural inequalities created through colonialism and its enduring legacies, it is easy to take our unequal

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world at face value and view it as a natural continuum, accepting the narrative of the post-1945 development project that some states simply *are* "advanced," while others have to "catch up." Viewing world inequality as relational (unequally connected) rather than as sequential (catch-up) calls this conventional modern understanding of development into question. The conventional understanding is that individual societies experience or pursue development in sequence, on a "development ladder." If, however, industrial growth in Europe depended on agricultural monoculture in the non-European world, then development was more than simply a national process, even if represented as such. What we can conclude from the colonial project is that development historically depended on the unequal relationships of colonialism. This included an unequal and unjust division of labor and unequal ecological exchanges, both of which produced as a legacy the conditions of "underdevelopment" as well as the institutional conditions through which inequality would be sustained and reproduced in the colonial and postcolonial worlds.

DECOLONIZATION

Anticolonial resistance, though always present during colonialism across the Americas, Asia, and Africa, gained momentum and explicitly challenged the European colonial project. In the French sugar colony of Saint-Domingue, the late-eighteenth-century "Black Jacobin" revolt powerfully exposed its double standards. Turning the sovereignty rhetoric of the French Revolution successfully against French colonialism, the revolt of the enslaved from the sugar plantations became the first to achieve independence in the newly established nation of Haiti, sounding a massive warning to defenders of enslavement everywhere.[24]

Resistance to colonialism, while always present, gained increasing momentum across the next two centuries, from the early-nineteenth-century independence of the Latin American republics (from Spain and Portugal) to the dismantling of South African apartheid in the early 1990s. Although decolonization has continued into the present day (with the independence of East Timor in 2002 and the Kurds and Palestinians still struggling for a sovereign homeland), the worldwide decolonization movement peaked as European colonialism was successfully challenged in the mid-twentieth century, when World War II sapped the power of the French, Dutch, British, and Belgian states to withstand anticolonial struggles. The vehicle for decolonization became the *nation-state*, because committing to this offered the only pathway to formal political independence. Substantively, however, the sovereignty of independent states was somewhat compromised by the racial, cultural, and economic legacies of colonialism.

Anticolonial Struggle

Freedom included overcoming the social-psychological scars of colonialism. The racist legacy of colonialism penetrated the psyche of the colonist and the colonized

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and remains with us today. In 1957 at the height of African independence struggles, Tunisian philosopher Albert Memmi wrote *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, dedicating the American edition to the (colonized) American Negro. In this work (published in 1967), he claimed this:

> Racism . . . is the highest expression of the colonial system and one of the most significant features of the colonialist. Not only does it establish a fundamental discrimination between colonizer and colonized, a *sine qua non* of colonial life, but it also lays the foundation for the immutability of this life.[25]

In directly confronting this colonial system as described by Memmi, West Indian psychiatrist Frantz Fanon, writing from Algeria, responded with *The Wretched of the Earth*, a manifesto of liberation. It was a searing indictment of European colonialism and a call to people of the former colonies (the Third World) to transcend Eurocentric modernity and forge a new path for humanity. He wrote,

> It is a question of the Third World starting a new history of Man, a history which will have regard to the sometimes prodigious theses which Europe has put forward, but which will also not forget Europe's crimes, of which the most horrible was committed in the heart of man, and consisted of the pathological tearing apart of his functions and the crumbling away of his unity. . . . On the immense scale of humanity, there were racial hatreds, slavery, exploitation and above all the bloodless genocide which consisted in the setting aside of fifteen thousand millions of men. . . . Humanity is waiting for something other from us than such an imitation, which would be almost an obscene caricature.[26]

Decolonization was rooted in a liberatory upsurge, expressed in mass political movements of resistance. In Algeria (as in Palestine today), the independence movement incubated within and struck at the French occupation from the native quarter. Fanon provides detailed accounts of the violence directed against anticolonial struggle in Algeria, as well as the psychological hardships experienced by the native population (brilliantly portrayed in Gillo Pontecorvo's film, *Battle of Algiers*).

Other forms of resistance included militarized national liberation struggles (e.g., Portuguese African colonies, French Indochina) and widespread colonial labor unrest. British colonialism faced widespread labor strikes in its West Indian and African colonies in the 1930s, and this pattern continued over the next two decades in Africa as British and French colonial subjects protested conditions in cities, ports, mines, and on the railways.[27] In this context, development became configured by the colonizers as a pragmatic effort to preserve the colonies by improving material conditions. British Colonial Secretary MacDonald observed the following in 1940:

> If we are not now going to do something fairly good for the Colonial Empire, and something which helps them to get proper social services, we shall deserve to lose the colonies and it will only be a matter of time before we get what we deserve.[28]

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Anticolonial resistance brought forth eloquent international appeals to justice in the language of rights and freedom by the representatives of colonized peoples. A new world order was in the making. From 1945 to 1981, 105 new states joined the United Nations (UN) as the colonial empires crumbled, swelling UN ranks from 51 to 156 (now 193). The reclaiming of political sovereignty by millions of non-Europeans (more than half of humanity) ushered in the era of development.[29] The idealism of the development era was reflected in the proclamation of equality as a domestic and international goal, informed by the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948).

The UN declaration represented a new world paradigm of fundamental human rights of freedom, equality, life, liberty, and security to all, without distinction by race, color, sex, language, religion, political opinion, national or social origin, property, birth, or other status. The declaration also included citizenship rights—that is, citizens' rights to the **social contract**: everyone was "entitled to realization, through national effort, and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality."[30]

THE TENSIONS AND LESSONS OF THE INDIAN NATIONALIST REVOLT

Mahatma Gandhi's model of nonviolent resistance to British colonialism affirmed the virtue of the ideal-typical premodern solidarities of Indian village life. Rather than embrace the emerging world of nation-states, Gandhi argued, didactically, that Indians became a subject population not only because of colonial force but also through the seduction of modernity. Gandhi's approach flowed from his philosophy of transcendental (as opposed to scientific or historical) truth, guided by a social morality. Gandhi disdained the violent methods of the modern state and the institutional rationality of the industrial age, regarding machinery as the source of India's impoverishment, not only in destroying handicrafts but in compromising humanity.

Gandhi's method of resistance included wearing homespun cloth instead of machine-made goods, avoiding use of the English language, and mistrusting the European philosophy of self-interest. Gandhi viewed self-interest as undermining community-based ethics and advocated the decentralization of social power, appealing to grassroots notions of self-reliance, proclaiming the following:

> Independence must begin at the bottom. Thus, every village will be a republic or panchayat having full powers. It follows, therefore, that every village has to be self-sustained and capable of managing its affairs even to the extent of defending itself against the whole world.

While Gandhi's politics, anchored in a potentially reactionary Hindu religious imagery, galvanized rural India, Indian nationalism actually rose to power via the Indian National Congress and one of its progressive democratic socialist leaders,

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Jawaharlal Nehru. Nehru represented the formative national state, viewing the Gandhian philosophy as inappropriate to the modern world but recognizing its mobilizing power. Infusing the national movement with calls for land reform and agrarian modernization to complement industrial development, Nehru declared this:

> It can hardly be challenged that, in the context of the modern world, no country can be politically and economically independent, even within the framework of international interdependence, unless it is highly industrialized and has developed its power resources to the utmost.

Together, Gandhi and Nehru are revered as fathers of Indian independence and the Indian national state, respectively. Note that the struggle against empire was woven out of two strands: an *idealist* strand looking back and looking forward to a transcendental Hinduism anchored in village-level self-reliance, as well as a *realist* strand looking sideways and asserting that Indian civilization could be rescued, contained, and celebrated in the form of a modern state. (Hinduism today is expressed as a dominant right-wing ideology of Hindutva versus India's minority populations.)

Did Gandhi's and Nehru's opposing visions of development at the time of Indian independence foreshadow today's rising tension between sustainability and maximum economic growth?

Source: Chatterjee (2001: 86, 87, 91, 97, 144, 151).

DECOLONIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Decolonization gave development new meaning, linking it to the ideal of sovereignty, inclusive citizenship, and the pursuit of economic development for social justice. Already independent Latin American states adopted similar goals of state building via national education systems, national languages and currencies, and modern armies and voting citizens, though the franchise was not extended to Indigenous peoples in many contexts, as in the case of Peru. The ideology of development also informed the twentieth-century movements in Asia and Africa for decolonization, coinciding with the rise of the United States to global power and prosperity. Eager to reconstruct post–World War II Europe and to expand markets and the flow of raw materials, the United States led an international project, at the same time prefiguring development as a *national* enterprise to be repeated across a world of sovereign states, while strategically planning to ensure its own reliance on resources of the global South would not be undermined.

Despite relentless destruction of Native American cultures as the continent was claimed (*settler colonialism*), the revolt of the North American colonies against British colonialism in the late eighteenth century contributed to the United States' self-image as an "anticolonial" power. Once enslavement was abolished, the New South was

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incorporated into a national economic dynamic, articulating agricultural and industrial sectors. Figure 2.2 depicts the difference between the colonial and the national division between industry and agriculture.

The United States' model of development was premised on this national division of labor between industry and agriculture. Chicago traders, for instance, purchased midwestern farm products for processing, in turn selling machinery and goods to those farmers. This mutual prosperity of city and countryside is a *model*—that is, it *prescribes an ideal version*, even as foreign trade and investment continued. But it did industrialize agriculture as a series of specialized crops, requiring endless inputs of chemical fertilizers and hybrid seeds, with corrosive effects on soils and water cycles. The export of this developmental model of capital-intensive industrial farming has defined agricultural modernization, with global ecological consequences.[31] It is important to note that U.S. modernization and development continued to rely on raw materials procured through international trade, especially from the global South (postcolonial states). The foreign policy of the United States during that period reflected the preoccupation with securing access to these resources. To this end, its *internal* development concerns and policies were linked to *external* political-economic integration.[32]

POSTWAR DECOLONIZATION AND THE RISE OF THE THIRD WORLD

In the era of decolonization, the world came to be subdivided into three geopolitical segments. These subdivisions emerged after World War II (1939–1944) during the Cold War, dividing the capitalist Western (First World) from the Communist Soviet (Second World) blocs. The Third World included the postcolonial bloc of nations. Of course, there was considerable inequality across and within these subdivisions, as well as within their national units.

Ranged against the United States were the Soviet Union and contiguous Eastern European Communist states. This Second World was considered the alternative to First World capitalism. The Third World, the remaining half of humanity—most of whom were still food-growing rural dwellers but also workers on plantations as well as in some urban areas—was represented in economic language as impoverished and needing to catch up. Their conditions were not conventionally explained in terms of structural injustices of colonialism and its legacies.

Whereas the First World had 65 percent of world income with only 20 percent of the world's population, the Third World accounted for 67 percent of world population but only 18 percent of its income. Whereas some believe the gap in living standards between the First and Third Worlds registers differential rates of growth, others believe that much of it was a result of colonialism.[33] Still others are skeptical of distinguishing cultures via a uniform standard based on income levels, since non-Westernized cultures value non-cash-generating practices.

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Seizing the moment as leader of the First World, President Harry S. Truman included in a key speech on January 20, 1949, the following proclamation:

> We must embark on a bold new program for making the benefits of our scientific advances and industrial progress available for the improvement and growth of underdeveloped areas. The old imperialism—exploitation for foreign profit—has no place in our plans. What we envisage is a program of development based on the concepts of democratic fair dealing . . . . Only by helping the least fortunate of its members to help themselves can the human family achieve the decent, satisfying life that is the right of all people. Democracy alone can supply the vitalizing force.[34]

The following year, a Nigerian nationalist voiced the following sentiments at a Union of Democratic Control conference, "The Crisis in Africa," in London:

> Self-government will not necessarily lead to a paradise overnight . . . . But it will have ended the rule of one race over another, with all the humiliation and exploitation which that implies. It can also pave the way for the internal social revolution that is required within each country.[35]

The latter sentiments express a different set of concerns from Truman's. President Truman's paternalistic proclamation articulated a new paradigm for the postwar era: the division of humanity into developed and undeveloped regions. This division of the world projected a singular destiny for all nations. Mexican intellectual Gustavo Esteva commented,

> Underdevelopment began, then, on January 20, 1949. On that day, two billion people became underdeveloped. In a real sense, from that time on, they ceased being what they were, in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of others' reality: a mirror that defines their identity . . . simply in the terms of a homogenizing and narrow minority.[36]

In other words, the proclamation by President Truman divided the world between those who were modern and those who were not. *Development/modernity* became the discursive benchmark. Note how this directly leads to a *disarticulation* of the historical (colonial) underpinnings of pre-WWII world inequality and injustices, a problem we discussed earlier.

Through this framing, First World power and privilege were inscribed within the new institutional structure of the postwar international economy. In the context of the Cold War between First and Second Worlds (for the hearts and resources of the ex-colonial world), development was simultaneously the restoration of a capitalist world market to sustain First World wealth, through access to strategic natural resources, and the opportunity for Third World countries to emulate First World civilization and living standards. Because development was both a blueprint for the world of nation-states

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and a strategy for world order, we call this enterprise the **development project**. The epithet *project* emphasizes the political content of development, as a global organizing principle. It also underlines the self-referential meaning of development, as defined by those with the means to make the dominant institutional rules.

The power of the new development paradigm arose in part from the way in which it was framed and presented as universal, "natural," and "scientific"— obliterating its colonial roots. By acknowledging the colonial roots of European and Western development, a just response would have seen a commitment to redressing the colonial division of labor, as well as working toward repairing the injustices through which it was realized. It would have also provided the opportunity to embark on alternative, more humane development projects as called for by Frantz Fanon and other anticolonial thinkers and activists. Instead, the presentation of the post-1945 development project in terms of an aura of inevitability once more devalued non-European cultures and discounted what the West learned and could have learned from the non-European world. Gilbert Rist observed of postcolonial states, "Their right to self-determination had been acquired in exchange for the right to self-definition,"[37] suggesting little choice but to choose the Western-centered future for the world. Of course, each state imparted its own particular style to this common agenda, drawing on regional cultures such as African socialism, Latin American bureaucratic authoritarianism, or Confucianism in East Asia. As we will see, these differences also comprised some (significant) resistance to the development project and its obliteration of colonialism and its legacies.

INGREDIENTS OF THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

The development project was a political and intellectual response to the condition of the world at the historic moment of decolonization. Here, development assumed a specific meaning. It imposed an essentially economic (reductionist) understanding of social change, universalizing an instrumental form of development across multiple cultures as a single market culture, driven by the nation-state and economic growth.

The Nation-State

The **nation-state** was to be the framework of the development project. Nation-states were territorially defined political systems based on the government–citizen relationship that emerged in nineteenth-century Europe. This political model (with its military shell) became the preemiment one, framing the politics of the decolonization movement, even where national boundaries made little sense. The UN Economic Commission for Africa, for example, argued in 1989 that the root causes of underdevelopment in Africa are "the colonial origins of African economies."[38] The following box illustrates the effects of these arbitrarily drawn boundaries.

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HOW WAS AFRICA DIVIDED UNDER COLONIALISM?

The colonial powers inflicted profound damage on Africa, driving frontiers straight through the ancestral territories of nations. For example, a line was drawn through Somalia, separating off part of the Somali people and placing them within Kenya. The same was done splitting the great Maasai nation between Kenya and Tanzania. Elsewhere, of course, we created the usual artificial states. Nigeria consists of four principal nations: the Hausa, Igbo, Yoruba, and Fulani peoples. It has already suffered a terrible war, which killed hundreds of thousands of people and which settled nothing. Sudan, Chad, Djibouti, Senegal, Mali, Burundi, and of course Rwanda, are among the many other states that are riven by conflict.

Source: Quoted from Goldsmith (1994: 57).

During the 1950s, certain leading African anticolonialists challenged the appropriateness of the nation-state form to postcolonial Africa. They knew that sophisticated systems of rule had evolved in Africa before colonialism. They advocated a pan-African federalism, whose territories would transcend the arbitrary borders drawn across Africa by colonialism.[39] However, decisions about postcolonial political arrangements were made in London and Paris where the colonial powers, looking to sustain spheres of influence, insisted on the nation-state as the only appropriate political outcome of decolonization. Indeed, a British Committee on Colonial Policy advised this to the prime minister in 1957:

> During the period when we can still exercise control in any territory, it is most important to take every step open to us to ensure, as far as we can, that British standards and methods of business and administration permeate the whole life of the territory.[40]

Economic Growth

The second ingredient of the development project was *economic growth*. A mandatory UN System of National Accounts institutionalized a universal quantifiable measure of national development. The UN Charter of 1945 proclaimed "a rising standard of living" as the global objective. This "material well-being" indicator is measured in the commercial output of goods and services within a country: capita gross national product (GNP), or the national average of per capita income. Although per capita income was not the sole measure of rising living standards (others included health, literacy, etc.), it has been the key criterion of measurable progress toward the "good society," popularized by U.S. presidential adviser Walt Rostow's idea of the advanced stage of "high mass consumption."[41]

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In the minds of Western economists, precommitted to the problematic assumptions of Modernization Theory, Third World underdevelopment required a jump-start to realize development. Cultural practices of wealth sharing and cooperative labor—dissipating individual wealth but sustaining the community—were perceived as *traditional* and an obstacle to making the "transition" to development. The solution was to consolidate a market system based on private property and wealth accumulation. A range of modern practices and institutions designed to sustain economic growth, such as banking and accounting systems, education, stock markets, and legal systems, and public infrastructure (transport, power sources), was required.

The use of the *economic growth* yardstick of development, however, is fraught with problems. Average indices such as per capita income obscure inequalities among social groups and classes. Aggregate indices such as rising consumption levels in and of themselves are not accurate records of improvement in quality of life. Air conditioner use is measured as increased consumption, but it also releases harmful hydrocarbons into the warming atmosphere. Economic criteria for development have normative assumptions that often marginalize other criteria for evaluating living standards relating to the quality of human interactions, physical and spiritual health, and so on.

The emphasis on converting human interactions into measurable (and taxable) cash relations discounts the social wealth of nonmonetary activities (nature's processes, cooperative labor, and people growing their own food, performing unpaid household labor, and doing community service).

The *other* implication of the dominant approach to development is that it once more disarticulated the fact that the new states were not starting on a level playing field but instead had to deal with the impoverishing effects of decades or centuries of colonial expropriation.

FRAMING THE DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Perhaps the most compelling aspect of the development project was a powerful perception by planners, governmental elites, and citizens alike that development was destiny. Both Cold War blocs understood development in these terms, even if their respective paths of development were different. Each bloc took its cue from key nineteenth-century thinkers. The West identified free-enterprise capitalism as the endpoint of development, based in Jeremy Bentham's utilitarian philosophy of the common good arising out of the pursuit of individual self-interest. Communist orthodoxy identified the abolition of private property and central planning as the goal of social development, deriving from Karl Marx's collectivist dictum: "From each according to their ability, and to each according to their needs."

Although the two political blocs subscribed to opposing representations of human destiny, they shared the same modernist paradigm. *National industrialization* would be the vehicle of development in each.

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National Industrialization: Ideal and Reality

National industrialization had two key assumptions. First, it assumed that development involved the displacement of agrarian civilization by an urban-industrial society. For national development policy, this meant a deliberate shrinking of the agricultural population as the manufacturing and service sectors grew. It also meant the transfer of resources such as food, raw materials, and redundant labor from the agrarian sector as peasant livelihoods would be overcome and agricultural productivity grew. Industrial growth would ideally feed back into and technicize agriculture. These two national economic sectors would therefore condition each other's development, as in the U.S. case discussed earlier in this chapter and illustrated in Figure 2.2.

Second, the idea of national industrialization assumed a *linear direction* for development—for example, catching up with the West. Soviet dictator Joseph Stalin articulated this doctrine in the 1930s, proclaiming, "We are fifty or a hundred years behind the advanced countries. We must make good this distance in ten years. Either we do it or they crush us."[42] Stalin's resolve came from the pressures of military (and therefore economic) survival in a hostile world. The Soviet Union industrialized in one generation, "squeezing" the peasantry to finance urban-industrial development with cheap food.

Across the Cold War divide, industrialization symbolized success. Leaders in each bloc pursued industrial development to legitimize their power; the reasoning was that as people consumed more goods and services, they would subscribe to the prevailing philosophy delivering the goods and would support their governments. *In this sense, development is not just a goal; it is a method of rule.*

ECONOMIC NATIONALISM

Decolonization involved a universal nationalist upsurge across the Third World, assuming different forms in different countries, depending on the configuration of social forces in each national political system. Third World governments strove to build national development states—whether centralized like South Korea, corporatist like Brazil, or decentralized and populist like Tanzania. The **development state** organizes national economic growth by mobilizing money and people. It uses individual and corporate taxes, along with other government revenues, such as export taxes and sales taxes, to finance public transport systems and state enterprises, such as steel works and energy exploration. And it forms coalitions to support its policies. Elites within the state often use their power to accumulate wealth and influence in the state—whether through selling rights to public resources to cronies or capturing foreign-aid distribution channels. As Sugata Bose remarked of the Indian state, "Instead of the state being used as an instrument of development, development became an instrument of the state's legitimacy."[43] Either way, the development state was a central pillar of the postwar development era.

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Import-Substitution Industrialization

Just as political nationalism was linked to consolidating sovereignty for Third World populations, so **economic nationalism** sought to reverse the colonial division of labor—as governments encouraged and protected domestic industrialization with tariffs and public subsidies, reducing dependence on primary exports ("resource bondage").

Economic nationalism was associated with Raul Prebisch, an adviser to the Argentine military government in the 1930s. During that decade's world depression, world trade declined and Latin American–landed interests lost political power, as shrinking primary export markets depleted their revenues. Prebisch proposed an industrial protection policy. Import controls reduced dependency on expensive imports of Western manufactured goods, shifting resources into domestic manufacturing.[44] This policy was adopted in the 1950s by the **UN Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA)**, under Prebisch's lead as executive secretary.

Import-substitution industrialization framed initial economic development strategies in the Third World as governments subsidized "infant industries." The goal was a cumulative process of domestic industrialization. For example, a domestic automotive industry would generate parts for manufacturing, road building, service stations, and so on, in addition to industries such as steel, rubber, aluminum, cement, and paint. In this way, a local industrial base would emerge. Import-substitution industrialization became the new economic orthodoxy in the postwar era.[45]

To secure an expanding industrial base, Third World governments constructed political coalitions among different social groups to support rapid industrialization—such as the Latin American **development alliance**.[46] Its social constituency included commercial farmers, public employees, urban industrialists, merchants, and workers dependent on industrialization, organized into associations and unions. Policymakers used price subsidies and public services such as health and education programs, cheap transport, and food subsidies to complement the earnings of urban dwellers, attract them to the cause of national industrialization, and realize the *social contract.*

CONCLUSION

The idea of development emerged during, and within the terms of, the era of the *colonial project.* A problematic conception of a global hierarchy, resting also on the normative inversion discussed in this chapter, informed the understanding of development as a European achievement, disarticulating its colonial dimension. Colonialism was a violent project that expropriated non-European societies by reconstructing their labor systems around specialized, ecologically degrading export production and by disrupting the social psychology of colonial subjects. However, the colonial project could never be comprehensive, and this was reflected in everyday, as well as more organized, anticolonial resistance and political struggle, locally and transnationally.[47]

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The political independence of the colonial world was countered by the institution of the *development project.* Third World states became independent, but they were collectively defined by Western political representatives and intellectuals as "underdeveloped." As we will see in the next chapter, the Third World constituted a new political force in world politics and worked collectively to redress the colonial division of labor.

The pursuit of rising living standards, via industrialization, inevitably promoted Westernization in political, economic, and cultural terms. Thus, the development project undercut Frantz Fanon's call for a non-European way, qualifying the sovereignty and diversity that often animated the movements for decolonization. It also undermined the pan-African insight into alternative political organization. These ideas and struggles over more just social and political relations could never be dissipated, though, and are reemerging, with increasing resonance even amid neoliberal development trajectories.

The next chapter examines the development project in action.

KEY TERMS

Colonial division of labor
Development alliance
development project
development state
Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA)
Economic nationalism
Export monoculture
Human Development Index
Import-substitution industrialization
Nation-state
Social contract

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