

CHAPTER 1

The World in 1900

On April 14, 1900, the president of France, Emile Loubet, and the leaders of the French government rode through the Paris streets in golden carriages to the gala opening of the *Exposition Universelle Internationale*, a world's fair designed to celebrate both modern technology and European power. Led by soldiers on horseback and saluted by cannon fire, they rode to Festival Hall, where they were greeted by thousands of people. Loubet called the fair a “work of harmony, peace, and progress,”¹ and he offered the hope that the twentieth century would see an increase in human happiness and well-being. Alexander Millerand, the minister of commerce, emphasized how science and industry had transformed everyday life: “Machinery has become the queen of the world.” Telephones and railways had conquered distance, just as medical research had been victorious over diseases. “We have seen the forces of nature serve and adapt themselves to our hands,” he said.² Millerand's optimism was boundless, and he hoped for a glorious future of good health and prosperity. For the next six months, the fair preached its message of progress to forty-seven million visitors.

The hallmark of the fair was its lighting. In the cellars of the Palace of Electricity, ninety-two boilers turned water into steam; engines then transformed the steam into motion, driving dynamos that produced electric current. The Eiffel Tower, a new bridge over the Seine, and the fair's exhibition halls were all illuminated by

¹*The Nineteen Hundred: Paris Exposition Illustrated*, Vol. 10, #5 (1900), p. 9.

²*Ibid.*

electric lights. On the fairgrounds, electricity powered a moving sidewalk, an electric train, and a gigantic Ferris wheel. Visitors could see the spectacular results of industrialization firsthand as they toured the fair's exhibits.

At the fair, European machinery overshadowed the exhibition spaces allotted to colonized peoples. Despite the fair's attempt to describe other cultures authentically, the pavilions in which Africans pounded nuts and Asians danced, carved, and performed were built with mass-produced metal and glass, plaster and cement. Mud huts, mosques, and temples were illuminated by electric lights. First-aid stations, post offices, and telephone booths for fair visitors were only a few steps away from these newly constructed images of the exotic. Asian and African cultures were represented as foreign, primitive, and natural, in sharp contrast to the conveniences of the industrialized world that surrounded them. Europeans saw themselves as being modern because of their new science and technology. Modernity meant machinery and electricity; their absence signaled inferiority and dependence. The fair sent the message that Europeans were different from the colonized peoples of Asia and Africa.

The male organizers of the fair also emphasized the differences between men and women. The official medal of the exhibition showed a man with a torch in his hand resting on the back of a woman, the representation of France. The man's light illuminated the fairgrounds, while the woman provided support for him.



During the Paris Exhibition of 1900, strings of electric lights illuminated the Eiffel Tower and spotlights swept the sky, drawing visitors to the site. Evening crowds could tour the exhibits as if it were daylight.

Award certificates idealized women as mothers and exalted men for their physical strength and skill. Most of the fair's featured artists, architects, and designers were male, as were the judges. The fair also trivialized women's social and cultural contributions: A small Palace of Women was filled with recent fashions and a restaurant. In contrast, male military might was celebrated in pavilions stretched along the Seine and sports fields in the Bois de Vincennes.

The Paris fair took the side of social and cultural conservatism. Much of the architecture echoed historical European styles; virtually no "modern" art was displayed. The featured painters and sculptors presented familiar, sentimental images of an idealized social order: Men were strong and heroic; women were beautiful and passive.

The Paris World's Fair offers a good starting point for this history of global society. The exposition displayed the world of 1900 as its rulers understood it and presented it to their citizens. The fair's European organizers planned it around nation-states and around those industries and activities in which Europeans excelled. Countries sponsored shows of their best contributions to science, fine arts, civil engineering, military weapons, mining, and machinery. In 1900 modernity was measured in Western European terms.

The most striking qualities of the world in 1900 were evident at the Paris Exposition. Technological change on a global scale had been the hallmark of the nineteenth century, when industrialization had transformed parts of Europe, Russia, Japan, and North America. In those countries an economic revolution had taken place. When fossil fuels such as coal and oil replaced animals and humans as sources of power, it made possible a vast expansion of production. Large factories replaced many small-scale workshops. Wages rose, drawing migrants into rapidly expanding cities to fill new jobs. A wealth of increasingly cheaper consumer goods increased standards of living for ordinary workers. Opportunities changed for both women and men as technology transformed the nature of work in offices, plants, and homes.

Technological change also had powerful and unintended environmental impacts. Steam engines and motorcars triggered dramatic increases in energy consumption. An abundance of coal, oil, and natural gas provided cheap power, and humans began to use more and more energy. The smoke from burning coal and oil poisoned the air, and paper mills consumed forests and polluted rivers with toxic discharges. As invention liberated people from earlier constraints on production and movement, it also degraded the environment. An awareness of the environmental consequences of energy choices became a theme of growing importance in twentieth-century global history.

In the twentieth century, the boundaries of the nation-state became increasingly irrelevant to social movements and social processes. Borders do not stop the flow of ideas and peoples. Commodities are produced internationally and move easily among continents. Today the air we breathe and the water we drink bear traces of distant places. In the modern world, no individual can remain isolated from the impact of policies and actions undertaken by strangers on other continents.

This book interweaves the central themes of technology, environment, and gender with an analysis of the political and economic history of the twentieth century. Our story begins with a look at the world in the late nineteenth century to establish a baseline against which changes can be measured. Although this book moves chronologically, a strict time line is sometimes abandoned to set a particular theme in context. Every chapter moves among regions and states to show the widespread and often different impacts of historical events. The history of the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries demands a global treatment.

Nation-States and Their Resources

Only countries that were independent in 1900 (a total of fifty-five) received an invitation to the fair, but colonial territories were also represented. The fair mirrored world politics. The most powerful European nations—Britain, France, and Germany—dominated the fairgrounds, just as they did international relationships.

But Japan provided the real surprise. Along with its anticipated exhibits of flow-ers and tea ceremonies, the Japanese displayed steel, engines, and military hardware. The first Asian country to industrialize, Japan shocked the Europeans with its manufacturing skills. Some of them recognized the Japanese commercial domination of Asia for the first time and worried about Japan's potential strength. A new player had joined the international lineup of economic and military powerhouses.

Modern states emerged out of warfare. States built centralized bureaucracies, taxed land and incomes, and developed strong armies in order to fight one another and to make sure their inhabitants remained loyal. In North Africa and Asia, modern state forms multiplied in the area between Egypt and Japan in response to European expansion. To remain independent, kingdoms such as Egypt, Ethiopia, Persia, and Thailand studied European institutions, bought arms, and established schools, attempting to graft new methods of governance onto older sets of institutions. State-making was a global process, although its precise contours varied in relation to local resources and circumstances.

States and Colonies

By 1900, most of Africa and large parts of Asia and the South Pacific had fallen under the control of more powerful states. Britain, Russia, China, France, the Netherlands, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottomans controlled vast multiethnic, multilingual empires, each uniting several territories under one ruler; other European powers had smaller, less diverse sets of colonial possessions. Joining in the rush for empire, in 1898 the United States had acquired the Philippines and Puerto Rico through victory in the Spanish-American War. Empires, whether composed of contiguous territories or scattered around the globe, dominated the map of the world in 1900, as Map 1.1 shows. European political and social theories justified imperial rule as a force for human progress and civilization. Empires, Europeans believed, benefited both the ruler and the ruled, who would be



MAP 1.1 Independent States of Latin America, c. 1890.

The date at which each territory became an independent country is listed on the map. Direct European control was limited to British, French, and Dutch Guiana, British Honduras, and most islands of the Caribbean.

uplifted by the religion, technology, and education exported by the imperial power. Independence was not viewed as a legitimate political goal for non-European populations.

In 1900, only one part of the world had thrown off rule by foreign kings and emperors. Combining armed revolution with a philosophy of democracy and natural rights, after 1776 the peoples of the lands south of Canada quickly established their liberty from European control. Soon after the British armies were driven out by the thirteen colonies, a revolt by slaves and freedmen ended French power in Haiti. In the years between 1810 and 1826, virtually all of Latin America fought successfully for independence from Spain and Portugal. Popular movements led by powerful colonial-born whites, or Creoles, overthrew Spanish armies and substituted constitutional regimes for dynastic control by European monarchs. In the following decades, new rulers worked to build national identities within the boundaries that resulted from the anticolonial wars and local conflicts within Central and South America.

Visualizing democratic regimes in which individual rights and liberties were guaranteed, the leaders of the new American states designed legislatures, judiciaries, and elections, through which voters would control national policy. Liberals, who wanted free trade, religious freedom, and parliamentary rule, dominated in the early governments. But visualizing republics of virtue was easier than establishing them in countries where the army, the Catholic Church, and the wealthy proved unwilling to cede power to democratically elected officials. In much of Latin America, military strongmen, called caudillos, took control of regional or national governments, paying little attention to the rule of law. States in Latin America combined the democratic ideologies of the American and French revolutions with the hierarchical and conservative traditions of Spain and Portugal in an unstable mix that continued to erupt into political conflict throughout the twentieth century (Map 1.1). Differences of political ideology, of ethnic background and language, of social class, and of regional origin undermined the unity of these states. Although Indians had citizenship rights in Latin America, they did not participate fully in their national communities because minority populations were effectively excluded from political and economic power.

The development of the Mexican state illustrates the continuing inequalities within that society. Although a majority of the Mexican population was *mestizo* (mixed European, Indian, and African), a substantial minority clung to an Indian identity, expressed through dress, language, and community of residence. At the same time, a small group of families of European descent monopolized the country's wealth and power. Not only did those elite families hold a large share of the land, they also dominated the government, the Catholic Church, and the military. The mass of the Mexican population remained illiterate and poor, living in isolated communities or working as peasant-laborers on large estates or in the towns. European descent was prestigious, whereas an Indian identity signaled backwardness.

In 1900, the dictatorial ruler of Mexico, Porfirio Díaz, looked to Europe for inspiration as well as for investment capital. Díaz portrayed himself in his speeches

as a modern, reforming leader, while using strongmen to keep the country quiet and rigging elections to keep himself in power. Several of his key advisers were nicknamed the *científicos* because of their interest in using science to modernize the economy. Under Díaz, foreign investors were enticed into building railroads and textile factories and expanding export agriculture and mining. The state worked to improve infrastructures, at least in the cities. It drained swamps, constructed sewer systems, and founded hospitals. It boasted of lowering death rates and improving education.

Despite the high prestige of European technology and culture, many Mexicans still took pride in the nation's Indian past. As liberal historians wrote the history of the new Mexican nation, they recognized the contributions of pre-colonial Indian cultures. For the Paris Exhibition of 1889, the state had built a replica of an Aztec temple, with statues of Aztec gods and heroes decorating the facade. Early designs for the pavilion at the 1900 fair also included references to Mexico's pre-Hispanic past. As Mexicans began to define a modern Mexican identity, they included Indian themes and examples. By the time of the Mexican Revolution of 1910, artists as well as politicians had integrated an Indian heritage into the image of the nation. Nevertheless, the indigenous population continued to be exploited and denigrated.

The Mexican fusion of a self-confident modernity with emphasis on a pre-Hispanic heritage distinguished it sharply from neighboring states in Central America, where Indian populations were smaller and more repressed. Not only did Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica lack modernizing governments and industrial sectors, but their economies depended almost exclusively on agriculture, both for subsistence and for export. Moreover, migrants from the West Indies and from China, imported to work on plantations, complicated the ethnic landscape. Unlike Mexico, states in Central America fell into a quasi-colonial relationship with the United States. An expansion of United States power in that region, which began in the late nineteenth century, rested on both U.S. ownership of profitable banana companies and its purchase of a concession to build a canal across the Panamanian Isthmus. When the new state of Panama became independent in 1903, U.S. influence was confirmed by its ownership of a ten-mile-wide strip of land on which the canal would be built. This enclave economy gave the United States a base in Central America, which would last through most of the twentieth century.

Transforming states into nations is a slow process. In classic nationalist theory, "nations" rest upon a pre-existing culture and common language; they are historically created communities of people who identify with one another, and who therefore have the right to a government all their own. Nations, in effect, are made up of people who consider themselves part of a nation. Today we recognize that in many, if not most, areas such ties do not arise naturally from past history but are created by state institutions, such as schools and armies, and by print culture. Individuals are taught to imagine themselves as part of a wider community, whose boundaries are said to be the nation. Nationalism is the feeling of loyalty to and belonging within a nation, which has arisen historically under

different sorts of conditions. By the late nineteenth century, nationalist sentiments had arisen all over the world; however, they had been most effectively channeled and strongly expressed in the nation-states of Europe.

In Europe, during the second half of the nineteenth century, two new nations were created through the combination of successful military action and diplomacy backed up with nationalist ideologies: The monarchy of Piedmont Sardinia consolidated territory on the Italian peninsula to form the Kingdom of Italy, and in Central Europe, the Prussian state engineered the federation of multiple city-states, duchies, and kingdoms into the powerful German Empire. It took much longer to transform individuals into self-identified Italians and into Germans than it did to create new structures of government.

When new states are created, two problems emerge: boundaries and minorities. How should the territories ruled by “the people” be demarcated on the ground? In a world in which individuals spoke different languages and accepted various ethnic, caste, and tribal identities, what constituted “a nation”? This second question at first seemed the simpler. Some people assumed that with education and economic development, minorities would merge into the majority, and their distinctiveness would disappear. Others saw minorities as outsiders who threatened the nation and therefore had to be treated differently. The minority problem, of course, was related to the boundary problem. Should land be the defining characteristic of a nation, or should it be shaped around particular inhabitants? What should be done if the potential members of different “nations” live intermixed with one another, as they did, and do today, in much of Latin America, Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States? What should be done about “nations” whose members are scattered among multiple countries? The settlement of Germans in Eastern Europe and Russia, of South Asians in Africa and the Caribbean, and of Chinese throughout Southeast Asia fueled conflict throughout the twentieth century, and minority populations continue to be resented in many societies today. Nation-states promised homogeneity, but empires bred differences. The promise of national self-government could not be kept when states were not willing to rearrange their boundaries or to cede territory to accommodate the wishes of minorities. One of the major problems of the twentieth century, easily visible in 1900, was the tension between the claims of nationalism and the claims of ethnicity and culture.

By 1900, nationalism had successfully defeated the claims of empire in the Americas and in some parts of Europe, and it was gaining recruits in colonies around the world. In the United States, political rhetoric linked nationalism and democracy, making these two ideologies available for use against the empires of the world. To champion nationalism at home but imperialism abroad was an inconsistent position, and ultimately Europe and the United States found it an indefensible one. Within multiethnic Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman state, nationalists had moved beyond loyalty to their dynastic rulers, and by 1900 they were seeking independence for their particular group or territory. Ethnic nationalism energized many Serbs, Armenians, Hungarians, and Lebanese. Active nationalist organizations operated in Ireland, Egypt, and in India. The contest

of strength between nationalism and imperialism lasted for most of the twentieth century, producing murderous conflicts. By 1900, it was well launched.

Population and Natural Resources

The wealth of nations can be measured in several ways—production, population, land, and natural resources, for example. Because comparable economic statistics for much of the world are not available before recent decades, it is impossible to compare the relative wealth of nations in 1900 with any precision. Yet estimates of the gross domestic product, the total value of the goods and services produced by a state, in the early twentieth century easily identify a few economic giants: Britain, France, Germany, the United States, China, and Russia. If population is taken into account and per capita wealth is measured, European countries, along with the United States, Australia, and Argentina, led the pack in 1900. In Asia, large populations meant low average incomes, but even there production was rising faster than the size of the population. In the early twentieth century, needed resources were growing faster than the world population. Certainly many people were poor and many went hungry, but widespread economic development meant that on average the amount of the world's goods potentially available to each person was rising. The problem of distribution of goods was as important as the level of production.

Population is an essential resource for a society. As workers, soldiers, taxpayers, and parents, people provide the goods and services that are needed to keep states strong. Demographers estimate that there were about 1.6 billion people living on the earth in 1900, about a third the number there are in the world today. Well over half of them resided in Asia. During the nineteenth century, Africa's share of the world's population decreased, while that of the Americas and Europe increased sharply. The industrializing regions managed to reproduce their populations more successfully than those whose economies were based primarily on agriculture and trade.

These rising numbers represented a growth in human capital. At this time, the industrialized states began to invest much more heavily in their populations, in the belief that healthy, educated citizens made states strong. Where states provided clean water supplies and efficient sewage disposal, people lived longer. Cities such as Paris, London, and Philadelphia had hospitals, public baths, and medical clinics for the poor. City governments inspected housing, immunized children, and quarantined the sick so that by 1900 the major cities in North America and Western Europe had higher birth rates than death rates.

European governments brought some of these technologies to the large cities of their empires. The British built a sewage system in Calcutta and huge reservoirs in Hong Kong, and the French made similar efforts in the capitals of Senegal and Morocco. Nevertheless, the vast expansion of public health and sanitation services brought by imperial governments went primarily to European settlers, who generally lived apart from local populations. In Kampala, Uganda, British officials used tax money to supply water, roads, and sewers to the urban areas they

controlled; the sections of the city that were administered by the chief of the Buganda people had neither services nor taxes. Since most Africans were too poor to pay the British city taxes or to build homes that met British building codes, income differences increased racial segregation. Death rates were also much higher in the Bugandan sections of the town, largely because of differences in sanitation.

Populations were becoming more densely settled in many regions. During the nineteenth century, the pace of urbanization accelerated in industrializing areas, where more jobs and higher wages could be found. Railroad systems centralized migration into the larger towns, and city-based bureaucracies grew as states consolidated. The urban proportion of different countries and continents varied widely, as shown in Figure 1.1. About two-thirds of Britain's residents lived in cities with more than five thousand people, but less than one-fifth of the Latin American, Australian, and Asian populations had moved into settlements of that size. Differences in levels of urbanization correlated well with differences in incomes because rural wage levels were usually lower than urban ones. Nevertheless, some of the world's largest cities were in Asia and the Middle East. In 1900, Peking and Calcutta had more than one million residents. Bombay, Constantinople, and Shanghai numbered more than seven hundred fifty thousand. Northern Africa had a belt of big cities stretching

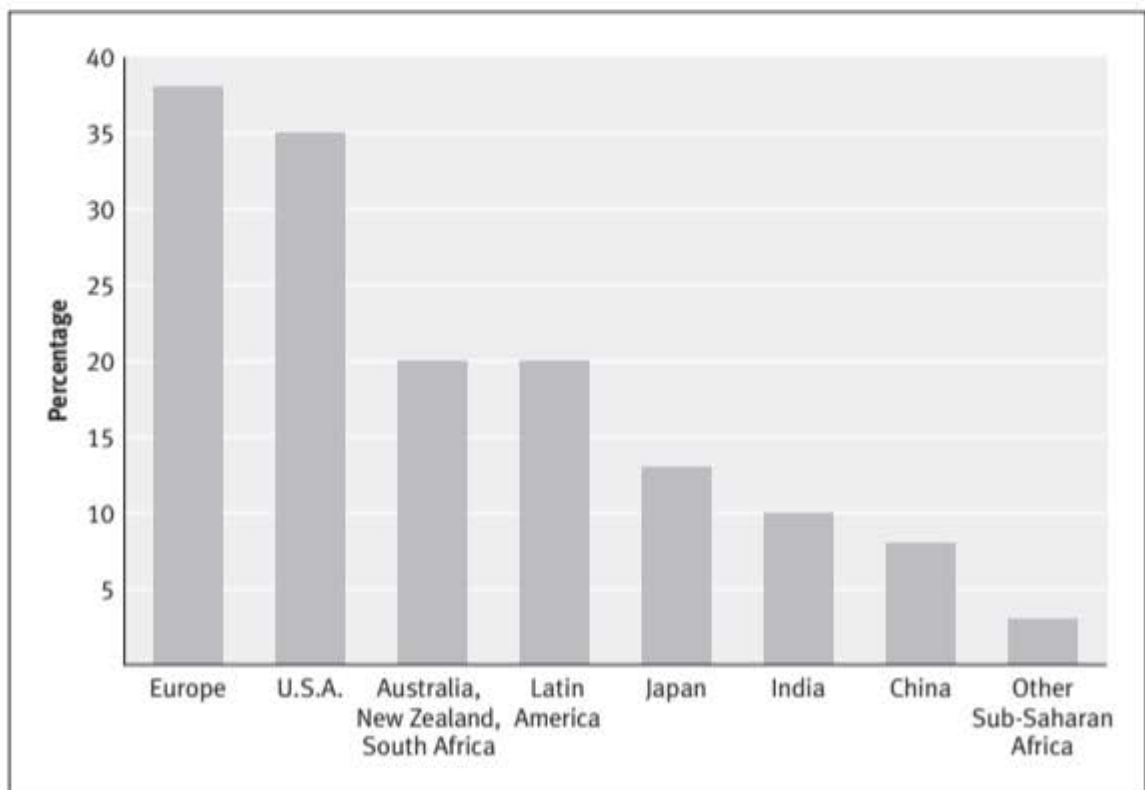


FIGURE 1.1 Percentage of total population living in settlements over five thousand people in 1900.

Although cities could be found on every continent, urbanization was much more extensive in Europe and North America than it was in India, China, or sub-Saharan Africa, where the vast majority of people lived in rural areas.

Source: Paul Bairoch, *De Jérico a México* (Paris: Gallimard, 1985), pp. 375, 522, 531, 542.

from Algiers to Cairo. Cities had been the centers of state power and control for centuries, and they continued to serve that function.

Luckily, no single country or region has a monopoly on all resources, but valuable commodities such as water, oil, and minerals are scarce in many areas. Differences in distribution help to explain differences in power. Most islands in the Pacific Ocean, for example, lack oil and mineral deposits, extremely important commodities for industrialization. The amount of good agricultural land varies widely among regions. Of the thirty-six billion acres of land on earth, no more than 10 percent is currently cultivated. Mountains, deserts, glaciers, snow, and rocks make most land unfit for agriculture. In places like Arizona, Egypt, and China, irrigation can make dry areas fertile, but water is scarce in the Middle East and in parts of Africa and South Asia. Without water, farmers' productivity is low. Although rural people on every continent have managed to feed themselves, the difficulty in many areas has been to generate a surplus beyond the needs of local farm workers. For complex societies to grow, food must be produced for city dwellers and for those who do not farm. In 1900, well-developed agriculture provided a strong basis for economies in industrializing areas, as well as rich countries, such as China. Moreover, if not enough food was produced, it could be imported using railways and steamships. Technologies were exported from one region to another. In 1900, land remained a source of wealth, but it no longer automatically constrained population size in parts of the world that were linked by trade and good transportation.

Production Around the Globe

The international economy was thriving at the turn of the century. On January 1, 1900, the *New York Times* announced that 1899 had been “a year of wonders.... Prosperity left scarcely any of our industries untouched and touched nothing it did not enrich.”³ The U.S. economy, it judged, was “the envy of the world.” Business forecasters in other capitals were similarly happy. Economic growth occurred in Canada, Australia, Europe, and much of Latin America as well. The Asian economies grew more slowly, but China, India, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaya, and Vietnam increased production, exporting more and more goods to Europe and North America, as well as regionally, and importing increasing amounts in return. Although sub-Saharan Africa was less deeply linked to international markets than most of Asia, Rhodesia, the Belgian Congo, Nigeria, Ghana, and Cape Colony had important export industries. Hopes for future economic development in Africa ran high. A widening circle of investment, production, distribution, and exchange linked the continents together ever more tightly.

At this time the core of the world's industrial enterprise was in Europe: in the north of Britain and France, in Belgium, in the Ruhr area of the German Empire,

³The *New York Times*, January 1, 1900, financial supplement, p. 2.

and in Berlin. Textile and metallurgical production had been transformed in these areas, starting in England in the later eighteenth century. A series of inventions—steam engines, spinning machines, mechanical looms, and new styles of smelting furnaces—led to mass production of cheap textiles, coal, and cast iron, which soon flooded world markets. Moreover, steam engines could power railways and steamships, pump deep mines, and run dozens of machines from a single source. Within a few decades, a cascade of new technologies transformed the steel, chemical, and electrical industries. The net effect on production was dubbed the Industrial Revolution.

Heavily urbanized industrial zones had grown up around coal mines and iron ore deposits throughout Western and Central Europe, their factories financed from capital cities and staffed by migrant workers. The products of these factories moved to other continents in ships and were traded for food and raw materials. Europe's stiffest competitor was the United States, whose coal and steel industries in the Midwest were booming and whose ships traded in the Pacific and in Latin America.

Meanwhile, the Russian and Japanese governments had begun to industrialize their economies, and Chinese and Indian entrepreneurs were building factories using European technology. The term *globalization* accurately describes the multi-centered world economy of the late nineteenth century. Integrated by the combination of free trade, imperialism, and industrialization, states and colonies around the world were tightly linked to one another. Economic exchanges reinforced political and cultural ones produced by mass migration and the export of religions, constitutions, and laws.

Economists describe the years 1900 to 1914 as “liberal capitalist,” to signal the commanding role of markets and the limited interference of governments in the economy. Economic outcomes resulted primarily from the uncoordinated decisions of individuals working to promote their own interests and to earn profits. Most governments had few functions: They provided law and order, national defense, and the regulation of trade, but few spent much money on social activities other than primary education. States set the rules of the economic game but interfered only in selected industries, such as railways and banks. Governments made their major contribution to economic growth through the regulation of international finance and trade. With the exception of Japan, governments regulated most industries only in rudimentary ways, and few businesses were state owned. Taxes were low and citizens' obligations small, although people protested the few burdens that did exist.

Under the protective umbrella of stable exchange rates, European investors sent money around the globe. Although most of their money went to other industrial or industrializing regions, significant amounts flowed into the railways, public utilities, plantations, and mines of Europe's colonies. Moreover, the barriers to trade were low. Although the United States, Russia, and much of South America levied protectionist taxes on foreign imports, Western Europe, China, and Japan imposed only moderate tariffs or were free traders. Commodities of every sort had easily set monetary values: steam engines and sugar, bicycles and

bananas. European factories needed cotton from the United States and Egypt, copper from the Belgian Congo and Canada, and tin and rubber from Malaya. European consumers demanded sugar from Cuba and Java, wheat from Russia and the United States, sheep from Australia, and cattle from Argentina. The gold standard and relatively low tariffs encouraged international trade.

The increased exploitation of land and natural resources had serious, unforeseen consequences. Industrialization on a large scale degraded local environments. The smoke from burning large amounts of coal polluted the air, and rivers suffered from the increased dumping of industrial wastes. Copper smelters released arsenic as a byproduct. Strip mining scarred hillsides, and upland areas were deforested, decreasing rainfall and intensifying erosion. In 1900, however, few worried about the long-term environmental effects of technological change.

Technology and Power

A state's power rested on its geographical position, population, land, and productivity, which were closely linked to its technological expertise. Differences in resources reinforced huge inequalities, which the globalized economy and communication system did little to mitigate in this period.

Global Communications

By 1900, the world was unified by communications technology and by the relentless desire of many Europeans to see the peoples of the earth and to write about them. Explorers hiked along the rivers of Africa and into the mountains of Tibet, "discovering" what for them were new places. European expeditions raced, as yet unsuccessfully, to reach the South Pole, while Americans and Scandinavians mapped Greenland, moving ever farther into the northern polar region. Everywhere distances had shrunk as governments or private corporations built railroads and canals. By 1914, the best and fastest steamers could speed from London to Calcutta via the Suez Canal in two weeks. The availability of cheap steel and the continued refinement of steam engines led to lighter, larger, and faster ships, which were cheaper to run. As the cost of transporting goods and people fell, circles of trade and movement widened. Telegraph and telephone lines multiplied to speed up the exchange of information over land.

To permit the speedy exchange of information by telegraph, hundreds of thousands of miles of thick copper cable had been laid under the world's oceans. Around 1900, messages could move from the London stock exchange to New York in under three minutes and to Bombay in about half an hour. The British government thought it so important that all its colonies and naval bases have secure cable connections with London that it arranged for an "all-red," or all-British, cable line circling the globe from one subject territory to another. Thus government messages



GLOBAL Technologies

Horseless Carriages

By 1900, horseless carriages were becoming familiar sights on city streets around the globe. Some were driven by steam and others by electrical batteries, but gasoline engines were increasingly popular because of their combination of light weight, responsive throttles, and range between refueling. Inventors had long played with the idea of deriving motive power from the controlled ignition of gunpowder or other explosive materials but practicable engine designs did not appear until the 1870s and 1880s when engineers, most notably Germany's Nikolaus August Otto and Gottlieb Daimler, developed ways to regulate the combustion of petroleum-based fuels with precision. Early fears of the clatter and speed of gasoline-driven autos soon gave way to fascination, not just among pioneer motorists but also among city planners eager to find a solution to

the problem of horse manure on city streets. World output of motor vehicles, about 9,500 units in 1900, climbed to over a million units in 1915 and two million in 1919.

Internal combustion engines, and the vehicles they powered, revolutionized transportation—and much more. Their ceaseless hunger for fuel helped make petroleum a critical global resource. Their manufacture demanded capital, abundant quantities of steel, glass, and rubber, and networks of roads and service stations. Automobiles thus came to drive economic growth, most dramatically the United States in the 1920s, Germany in the 1960s, and Japan in the 1970s. Automobiles thus gave rise to many of the world's largest corporations during the twentieth century and supplied livelihoods to millions of workers. They also catalyzed social change—affording their owners new mobility, new leisure pursuits, and even new sites for courtship. The changes came with substantial costs. Exhaust gases fouled the air, asphalt highways and parking lots scarred landscapes, and automobile accidents became a major cause of premature death in industrial societies.

could move from London to Johannesburg or Sydney without fear of blockage or snooping by the French or the Germans.

The combination of steel, steam engines, and the telegraph brought most of the world into easy intercommunication. Even if villagers in inland Borneo and Brazil remained relatively isolated, town dwellers in the South Pacific and South America were part of a network of services, commerce, and information flows that stretched from local to national to international centers. Governments' efforts to know about the people and the lands they administered had produced a deepening technology of knowledge, which was put into place around the globe.

Transportation and Migration

Faster means of travel and knowledge of a wider world encouraged migration at unprecedented levels and speeded up daily journeys. After development of the internal combustion engine, bus services among towns soon followed in North America and Europe. The wealthy took advantage of cars for trips between home and office or for outings into the countryside. Railways permitted commuting into central cities from suburbs.

Hundreds of steamships regularly crossed the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, facilitating east-west travel. Most of the major shipping companies were British-owned in 1900. German, French, and Japanese firms also operated particular routes. The Suez Canal shortened trips to Asia, and, after 1914, the Panama Canal did the same in the Americas. Railways linked major cities in Argentina and Brazil with coastal towns in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. In addition, several trans-continental lines joined the east and west coasts of Canada and the United States. In 1905 the trans-Siberian railway opened and was connected to railways across Europe. When Jules Verne, the French novelist, imagined a race around the world in the late nineteenth century, he calculated that it could be completed in only eighty days using railways, steamships, and elephants!

The paths around the globe provided by rail and ship lured not only the rich and the adventurous but also ordinary folk who were trying to find jobs or to avoid problems at home. In the century before the First World War, more than thirty million Europeans migrated to the United States. Russian and Polish Jews traveled west to Hamburg, Germany, then on to London and New York. French, Spanish, and Maltese settled along the North African coast in Algeria, while Portuguese, Dutch, and British moved into Angola and Cape Colony. Millions of Chinese moved into Southeast Asia via Singapore, into Peru via Macao, and into the United States and Canada, where they helped to build the transcontinental railroads. Over a million South Asians went to Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific islands as indentured laborers during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and millions more went to Burma and Malaya to work on European-owned plantations. Some were lured by prepaid tickets and golden promises; others were coerced by kinsmen or clever recruiters. Even the very poor could migrate. Although initially much of this Asian exodus was male, single women and families soon followed. By the late nineteenth century, young women were crossing the Atlantic and Indian oceans in large numbers. Long before the era of the airplane, both free and forced migration had created multicultural communities around the world.

In its long nineteenth-century phase of expansion, the world industrial economy depended on cheap labor. If local populations were either unwilling or insufficient, employers had the financial and technological resources to bring in workers from a long distance away, and workers had multiple incentives to move on their own. Hundreds of thousands of young people moved from villages into the towns to work as factory hands, laborers, or servants. Others moved to plantations, mines, railways, and dockyards. International and national labor markets



Henry Guttmann/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

A procession of sailing- and steamships passes through the Suez Canal around 1874. The vessels are watched by crowds of Egyptians, some of whom might well have helped to dig the one-hundred-mile-long canal that linked the Mediterranean and Red seas. The canal permitted a vast expansion of world trade and eased travel between Europe and Asia.

thrived as news about areas with a high demand for labor spread to regions where there was underemployment. Letters from New York to Ireland told of high wages and low trans-Atlantic fares; recruiters' advertisements in India offered free passage to Guyana or Mauritius for those willing to harvest sugar cane or to Southeast Asia for work on rubber and tobacco plantations. Employment in many industries became international, and many people moved from jobs on one continent to jobs on another.

Migration mixed the populations and cultures of the world. By the early twentieth century, many people crossed the oceans regularly, bringing with them large amounts of cultural baggage. Consider the case of Miguel Alfredo Martinez de Hoz. Born in Argentina, he spoke Spanish, a world language that linked him to the rest of Latin America and to Spain, but his mother was English, and he spoke that language too. The manager of several railways in Argentina, he regularly imported goods from England, and he traveled to London to represent Argentina at international expositions. Martinez lived in Buenos Aires, where the major buildings copied European models and where dozens of bookstores sold newspapers and books in several European languages and in Arabic.

It was not just the Argentinian elite that had international connections. In 1901, Oreste Sola, a textile worker's son, moved from Biella, Italy, to Buenos Aires. At first he lived with his godfather and other friends, remaining for some time within an Italian emigrant community. Through letters, he and his parents exchanged news and told of upcoming visits by kin and friends. Hundreds of thousands of Europeans chose to relocate to Argentina during the early twentieth century. By 1914, 30 percent of the Argentine population was foreign-born, making that country strikingly multicultural.

In 1900, movement from country to country was relatively unrestricted. The lack of tight border controls and a system of passports meant that most people who could pay could move freely. Nevertheless, a few states differentiated foreigners from citizens and limited the entry of some groups. The United States excluded Chinese laborers and regulated all immigration after 1891 to block people that the government considered undesirable. During the First World War, several European countries required aliens who wanted admission to present passports, and they kept that system in place after the end of the war. As international tensions exploded during the 1920s and 1930s, states shut down easy avenues of global exchange. Concern for boundaries and for ownership of resources replaced the more fluid nineteenth-century arrangements.

Colonialism and the British Empire

The main vehicle for European control of world resources in 1900 was, of course, empire. At the Paris fair, pavilions paraded the variety of territories owned by the major colonial powers. Russia built a Siberian Palace. The Netherlands displayed replicas of Sumatran houses and a Javanese temple, and filled them with dancers and crafts workers imported from the Dutch Indies. The French state constructed separate halls for its many colonies—Cambodia, Cochinchina, Tonkin, Annam, the Ivory Coast, Tunisia, French Congo, Madagascar, Senegal, Dahomey, Guinea, Algeria, New Caledonia, and its islands in the Caribbean. The colonial areas of the fair, which were among the fair's most popular attractions, demonstrated the extreme dependence of much of Asia and Africa upon its European rulers. Visitors came to gawk at exotically dressed “natives” who were confined within their pavilions like animals in a zoo. In Paris, colonies existed for the entertainment and profit of their European hosts.

Two sorts of empires coexisted in 1900. The territorial empires of Russia, China, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottomans had been built over centuries by the conquest of lands and peoples surrounding a core region. In these states, hereditary monarchs ruled autocratically over their subjects, whatever those subjects' ethnicity or religion might be. By 1920 each of these empires had been dismantled by the dual impacts of war and revolution. A second type of empire had emerged during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as the result of European conquest of land in the Americas, Asia, and Africa. In these sea-linked empires, Western and Central European countries—Britain, France, the

Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, and Portugal—exercised political authority over territories on other continents. Political relationships within these empires had a dual character, however. Although the colonial powers had organized representative institutions at home and held elections in which a range of political parties contested policies, they denied these same freedoms to most populations overseas. At home, residents were citizens; in the colonies, they were subjects. This double standard defined colonial relations in the twentieth century. Europeans invoked differences of race, culture, and education to justify the inequalities of the colonial condition, which were designed to maintain the prestige of the controlling power. Relationships within the British Empire illustrate the strategies and impacts of colonial rule.

By the end of the nineteenth century, the tiny British Isles ruled more than one-quarter of the earth's land and one-quarter of its population, the largest empire in history. As they traveled, captains, soldiers, scientists, merchants, and missionaries had regularly claimed territories for the British Crown. This expansion, which had begun in the Americas in the early seventeenth century, reached its peak in the early twentieth century when Queen Victoria claimed rule over approximately one hundred different colonies, ranging in size from barren piles of rock—for example, some of the Falkland Islands—to the vast expanses of India. Settler colonies that had large European populations, such as Australia and Canada, had by 1900 gained substantial powers of home rule. In contrast, colonies with primarily non-European populations were not considered capable of self-government. In dependencies such as Malaya, Nigeria, and Egypt, the British used techniques of indirect rule, permitting indigenous leaders limited powers and functions. In 1900, the British Empire stretched around the globe, linking multiple peoples to the rulers in London. A look at its strategies of administration, at its imperial ties to India and Africa, and then at its informal empire in Latin America will bring the problems of colonial governance in 1900 into clearer focus.

Running the Empire

In 1897, the British Empire celebrated the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's rule. Throughout the colonies, politicians unveiled statues of the elderly queen while bands played and soldiers marched. In a display of loyalty, the colonies sent impressive delegations to London. More than fifty thousand troops in splendid uniforms paraded through London streets, led by victorious generals and dozens of princesses, rajahs, chiefs, and potentates who had cast their lot with the empire. The admiring crowds showed that empire had an enthusiastic audience in Britain.

The attitudes of Victoria's subjects outside of Britain toward her and toward British administration are much more difficult to determine. The British Empire rested on formal claims of sovereignty that were unknown to many of its subjects and opposed by others. Imperial institutions generated solidarity and mutual interests, but it is important not to overemphasize the impact that the empire had on ordinary people in the colonies. Most citizens of the empire had probably never seen a British official. Pictures of the queen in post offices and statues of

her in city squares gave Victoria a symbolic presence in her colonies but did little to override cultural and linguistic differences.

The unity of the empire, such as it was, came from its rulers in London. In theory, the British Parliament made imperial policy, which was to be overseen by the secretaries of state for India and for the colonies. In practice, civil servants working within the India Office and the Colonial Office set the rules of the game, and these policies were then carried out overseas in some fashion by dozens of governors, viceroys, secretaries, and residents and their assistants. Since the central, quite conservative aims of British rule remained the same—the maintenance of British sovereignty, the strengthening of law and order, the collecting of taxes, and the securing of trade—British officialdom looked roughly the same wherever it appeared. Judges, generals, district officers, police chiefs, and customs inspectors had similar functions wherever they worked, although the specific rules and therefore the outcomes differed. Under these expatriate British, thousands of local employees worked as policemen, clerks, surveyors, soldiers, and tax collectors. The empire depended on the cooperation of those it governed for its operation. This group of men who chose to work for the British personified both the success and the failure of the empire. On one hand, they showed how the empire incorporated and trained colonial peoples. They functioned as a local elite who had bridged some of the divide between colonizer and colonized. On the other hand, the British considered indigenous peoples inferior and used the argument of racial difference to keep even the literate and wealthy at a social distance.

India, the Jewel in the Crown

If London operated as the core of the British Empire, India was its second center. Its size and wealth made Britain a major political and economic power in Asia, and its enormous population could be employed as soldiers and workers around the globe. The British were determined to maintain their Indian territories, warning away the Russians and Chinese from border areas and crushing any internal rebellions.

India was acquired in stages during the later eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by the East India Company, a group of traders given monopoly rights by the British king. Most of India came under British government rule in 1858. There was neither a constitution nor the machinery of representative government to secure the rights of the Indian population. Then, in 1876, Parliament named Queen Victoria Empress of India. Her appointed governor, the viceroy, managed India with the help of a British-led civil service and provincial legislative councils, whose members were for the most part appointed. Effective units of Indian self-government stopped at the village level. Indirect rule was confined to the states where Indian princes retained formal power, such as Hyderabad, Kashmir, and much of Rajastan, but in those areas the British government oversaw foreign policy and also appointed resident British councilors to give advice on internal

administration. Whether it was exercised directly or indirectly, British power was considerable.

The army maintained British rule in India. Thousands of young Indian men from the Punjab, Nepal, and the northwest frontier joined army regiments, where they were commanded by British officers and stationed around the country. After a major revolt by South Asian soldiers in 1857, large numbers of British troops also came to India in rotation as extra insurance of military loyalty there. By the late nineteenth century, India had a unified, apolitical, professional army paid for by Indians that was used by the British not only in colonial wars but in Europe during the world wars of the twentieth century.

Extracting taxes was the main function of British government in India. Collecting this money efficiently was a monumental job that brought the British into conflict with local practices throughout all the directly ruled areas. Claiming to have rights over all the land, the British levied heavy taxes on it, which then had to be assessed. The effort to establish private, individual ownership and tax responsibility undermined communal rights, markedly changing village societies. Even if the aims of British governance were conservative, its impact was not. Because India was an agricultural society, the attempt to itemize and tap land revenue brought civil servants into the heart of the Indian economy.

What did the British bring to India? Colonial officials saw India as a static, “oriental” society in which religion and tradition dictated behavior. This gave them multiple excuses for ignoring social problems, as well as Indian arguments for reform, on the ground that the government did not want to interfere with Indian customs. The result was the selective, limited importation of British institutions and resources. Western-style schools developed for the elite, who were taught English along with European political ideals. Lawyers produced new legal codes and administrative regulations. Christian missions operated hospitals, schools, and churches. In the larger cities, private companies provided telephones, telegraphs, and electricity, using European equipment. Parts of Calcutta had water mains connected to the houses and underground sewage disposal systems. Yet the impact of such changes in 1900 was limited. The mass of the population was illiterate in any language and too poor to use the courts. Whether Hindu or Muslim, they largely ignored the Christian missions in favor of their own temples and mosques. The new urban technologies of sanitation and communication benefited mostly Europeans and a handful of wealthy Indians.

Britain also provided investment capital. By 1900 about a tenth of British capital overseas went to India and Ceylon, most of it to provide a modern infrastructure—railways, docks, canals, and public utilities in the cities. By 1900, India had the most extensive railway network in Asia and more miles of track than either Britain or France. Improved communications, along with the imposition of free trade, integrated India into the international economy, sometimes in destructive ways. During the nineteenth century, the country shifted away from manufacturing to the production of raw materials. Cotton, tea, and jute were raised in large quantities for export. Its industrial sector, unprotected



Mary Evans Picture Library/The Image Works

A tea plantation in the hills of Bengal, India, in 1880. Female workers picked tea leaves and carried them back to sheds for sorting and curing while male European managers looked on. This scene was sketched for an illustrated London newspaper, *The Graphic*, which regularly reported on the British Empire.

by tariffs, remained small. In 1900, India was a country with limited urbanization, low per capita income and productivity, and high death and birth rates.

Africa

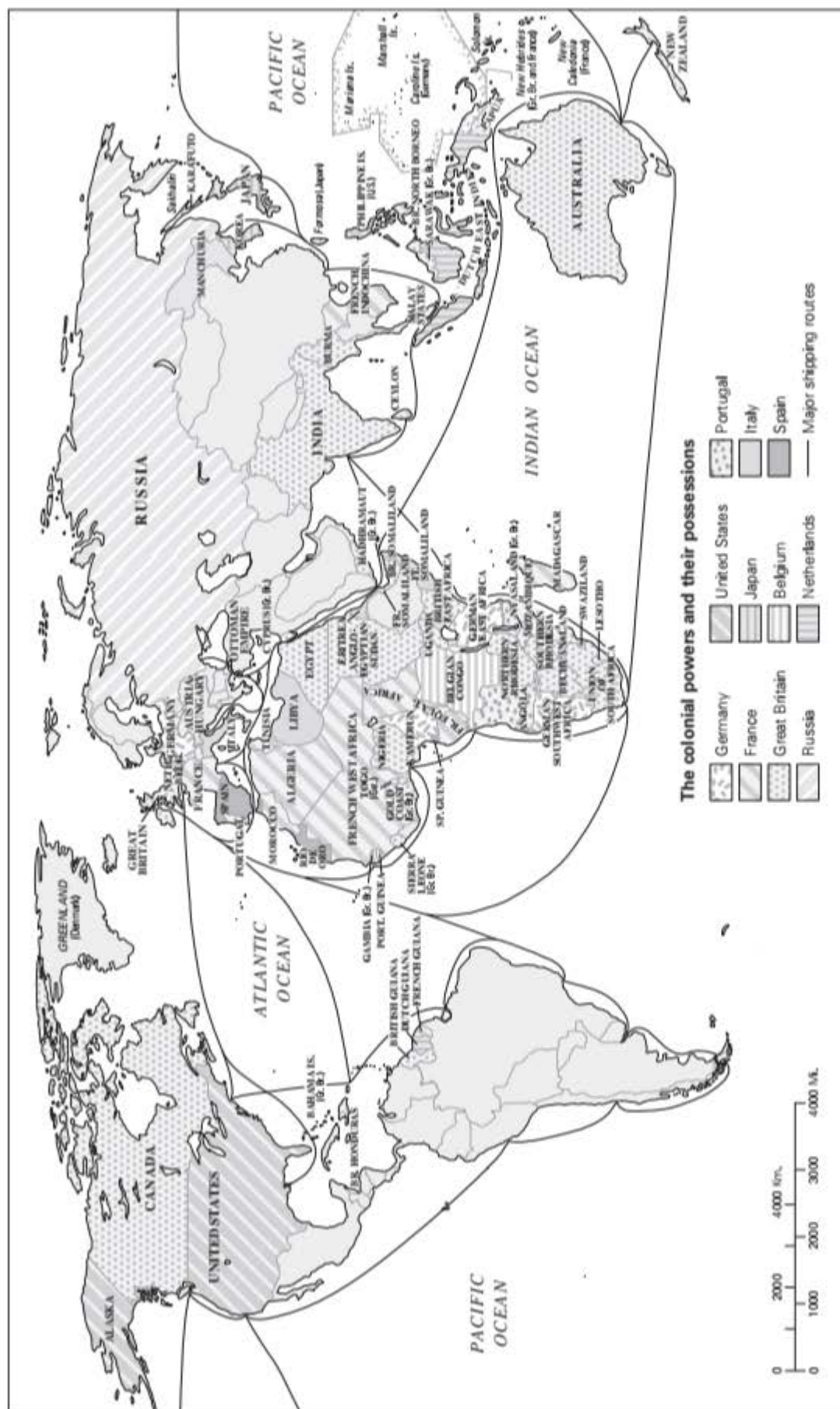
Europeans gradually encroached on African territories, moving inland from the coast during the nineteenth century as technological changes permitted easy entry and safe return. Adventurers claimed “discovery,” arranged concessions, and eventually got government support. Politicians justified their ill-gotten gains in multiple ways: They argued that the tropics required economic development, that populations needed to be civilized and their souls saved, and that trade needed to be safeguarded against European competitors. David Livingstone, the British explorer-missionary, used the slogan “Christianity, Commerce, and Civilization” to defend his activities. In addition, widely accepted anthropological theories convinced most Europeans that they were more intelligent and moral than

the peoples of Africa and Asia. Science justified their racism and legitimized European rule.

In the 1880s and 1890s a crass scramble for Africa accelerated, and quick annexation became the preferred technique of conquest. Machine guns and automatic rifles gave European troops decisive advantages in the short military campaigns and rebellions. The major European states met in Berlin in 1884 to carve up Africa into separate spheres of influence for Britain, France, Italy, and Germany. They also reaffirmed the abolition of the international slave trade, although slavery itself continued in several parts of Africa. The Congo Free State was made the private property of the Congo Company, owned by Léopold II of Belgium. Only Liberia, Ethiopia, and Libya remained independent in 1900, and Italy was to conquer Libya in 1912 and Ethiopia in 1936. The French expanded their territories in West Africa to include much of the land from Algeria south through what are now Chad, the Central African Republic, and the Republic of Congo. The British controlled most of the land from Cape Colony to Cairo in the east and south, as well as Nigeria, Gold Coast, and Sierra Leone in the west (see Map 1.2).

No matter what lines were drawn on maps or what divisions were made in European capitals, Europeans effectively administered very little of the land south of the Sahara in 1900. Although European governments worked to abolish the international slave trade, they had neither the power nor a strong inclination to abolish slavery within Africa, where slaves were used to produce commodity exports and to provide household service through the nineteenth century. Not only Africa's vast size and varied landscape, but its dozens of different political units ranging from well-organized kingdoms to stateless kinship groups made the continent difficult to conquer and impossible to occupy. How could a few thousand Europeans control the nomads of the desert, the hunting and gathering societies of the southwest, the herding societies of the east, or the thriving plantation economy of Zanzibar? The growth of international commerce in ground nuts, cocoa, ivory, and cloves brought resources to many rulers and to peasant producers. Europeans had to deal with hundreds of different languages, many subdivisions of authority, and migratory peoples whose political loyalties were fluid. African peoples, in fact, had some bargaining power in determining how they were ruled because European countries were not willing to pay for effective governance and control. Moreover, during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, African populations mounted major rebellions against European rule in Egypt, the Sudan, French West Africa, German Southwest Africa, Rhodesia, and parts of South Africa. Imposition of colonial rule in Africa came late and met regular challenges.

Indirect rule through African leaders was the preferred solution to the challenges of colonial rule in most of the continent. The British used the fiction of the "protectorate" to reward collaboration and cooperation by the leaders of several African kingdoms, much of whose authority was left intact. Newly Christianized chiefs exercised power in the territory of Uganda through an advisory council. British interference was greatest in South Africa, where the discovery of gold and diamonds, combined with the temperate climate, drew thousands of settlers, and in Kenya, where European farmers took over highland areas. In



MAP 1.2 Colonial Empires in 1914.

Steamships and railways tied together the far-flung empires of Eurasia and the Americas. While the Spanish and Portuguese empires had shrunk during the nineteenth century, those of Britain, France, Germany, and Belgium had grown as a result of the division of Africa. Japan had acquired colonial territory in Korea.

1900, the British government assumed political control of Nigeria, hoping to strike it rich through investment and trade. Colonial officials gave local rulers in its northern regions a virtually free hand, discouraged Christian missionaries from interfering with the predominately Muslim population, and restrained the building of Western-style schools. Even in the more closely controlled southern part of the country, there was only one resident British political officer for every seventy thousand people as late as 1925. Under these conditions, much of the pre-colonial African social and political order survived intact.

The position of African political leaders and the survival of African control over land varied dramatically from colony to colony, however. The situation in several states of southern Africa offers a contrast to the situation in Nigeria. Cecil Rhodes, who rose to political power in Cape Colony on the basis of money earned from local diamond and gold mines, used his British South Africa Company to fight the Shona and Ndebele people in the area, taking their land in the process. The result was the creation in 1895 of Rhodesia, named in his honor, which was administered by British officials. Historians consider the states of the Cape region to be “settlement colonies” because of their large British and migrant Dutch, or Boer, populations. Nevertheless, the coastal towns, where Arab traders, Muslims from Southeast Asia, Indians, and former slaves lived, were culturally diverse. The British and Boer rulers coped with this ethnic diversity by insisting on racial privilege and moving toward rigid segregation of town populations. In 1902, the Cape Native Reserve Location Act marked out areas within Cape Town and Port Elizabeth as locations for African residence; the governments of Natal and Transvaal soon made similar provisions. Zulus, Xhosa, and other local peoples were legally excluded from migrating within the cities.

In 1900, the British defeated the Boers in a struggle to consolidate British control over South Africa, but they soon turned political control over to their former enemies, ignoring the issue of African political and social rights. After the Union of South Africa was formed from several Boer and British-run states in the area, not only Africans but Asians and people of mixed race were prohibited from serving in Parliament, and their limited rights to vote were gradually eliminated.

Conquest by the British set in motion two major processes that ultimately transformed African societies. First, Europeans and their animals brought in epidemic diseases, and the new colonial patterns of residence and migration permitted the diseases to spread. Rinderpest devastated African herds. Smallpox epidemics killed thousands of people. Mistaken disease-control policies allowed sleeping sickness to ravage parts of Uganda and to become endemic in eastern regions. African populations declined substantially in size from the time of conquest until the mid-1920s. Although European death rates were also high, greater access to quinine, vaccinations, and safe drinking water gave Europeans more protection against infectious diseases.

Demographic devastation was accompanied by ideological revolution. Dismissing the religion, education, and science of the sub-Saharan peoples as primitive, the colonialists brought in substitutes and in the process slowly undermined the civilizations of tropical Africa. Encouraged by European governments, mission

Christianity mounted large, successful campaigns of conversion in the later nineteenth century. Doctors introduced Western medicine and theories of disease. Mission schools brought literacy into formerly oral cultures, turning their pupils into an educated elite. The cultural break with the past, which came during the early twentieth century, was extreme.

What did the British bring to Africa? Arbitrarily grouping together collections of hostile neighbors and separate ethnic groups, administrators slowly imposed the machinery of a modern secular state and a capitalist economy. In the early twentieth century, colonies acquired civil services, police forces, armies, and Western-style judicial systems. English-language primary and secondary school systems were built, and modern hospitals and methods of disease control were introduced. As export crops were cultivated for sale in Europe, an infrastructure of banks, roads, railways, harbors, and telegraph lines grew in the largest towns to encourage economic development. The impact of French colonial rule was similar. The Suez Canal, built by a French engineer with Egyptian labor during the 1860s before being bought by the British government, served as the main passage from Europe to India and East Asia, linking northern Africa even more tightly into global networks of commerce and travel.

Informal Empire and Challenges to Colonial Rule

The export of capital and culture gave the British power far beyond the borders of their formal possessions. Some scholars use the term *informal empire* to identify countries such as Argentina that were not legally or politically controlled by another state but were heavily influenced by that state. Certainly, power comes in multiple forms and can be exercised in ways other than by political dominion. British bankers helped to shape financial policies in Latin America; British merchants and trade decisions changed East Asian economies. Informal empire was less a matter of direct government intervention than of negotiation between two unequal parties. Because of its navy, its capital investments, and its industrialized economy, Britain was the only superpower in the world from 1812 to the late nineteenth century, when Germany and the United States became economically and militarily competitive. When the British government spoke, other countries listened, even if they did not obey.

European countries dominated the international system of the later nineteenth century. Europe was the core of a world in which the Americas, Africa, and Asia then counted as the periphery. Nevertheless, certain places on that periphery exercised a great deal of independence. During the nineteenth century, the United States progressed from being a weak former colony to being a potential superpower and rival, staking out the Americas as its first sphere of influence. By the early twentieth century, the British Parliament and the Colonial Office had conceded political liberty with few strings attached to both Canada and Australia, and the same route was followed with New Zealand and the Union of South Africa. None of these so-called areas of white settlement hesitated to challenge British policies when they felt that their self-interest was at stake. Virtually all of Latin America was politically sovereign

and acted accordingly. As Japan industrialized, its economic, military, and political challenges to Europeans mounted. Moreover, even within the European empires, the methods of indirect rule and the limited resources of governments necessarily left much initiative in the hands of local elites and distant populations. European domination did not mean tight European control.

Educational institutions also spread the skills and types of knowledge that were needed to challenge colonial rulers. In Egypt, European-style technical schools, which began in the early nineteenth century, had produced several hundred graduates by 1900, most of whom worked as engineers. A handful of Africans managed to get technical training in Senegal and Sierra Leone before 1900. A more impressive effort took place in India, where several engineering colleges were founded during the nineteenth century, alongside many arts faculties. Raffles College in Singapore and scholarships to Cambridge permitted small numbers of Singaporeans to train in the professions. By the early twentieth century, European universities had opened their doors to a few children of the imperial elites. As a result, Western knowledge was exported from the European center to the periphery, where it passed into the minds and hands of people who adapted it for their own purposes.

By 1900, some educated Indians, Chinese, Indonesians, and Egyptians were demanding greater privileges for themselves and more power within the colonial structures. Through the press and through political institutions and organizations, local elites asked for more rights. For them, globalization brought widened contacts and awareness of other challengers of imperial authority. The new technologies of communication and of transport allowed these local elites to travel to London, Paris, or Berlin. As they learned more about their colonial rulers, they also learned about nationalism and representative government. Moreover, local populations sometimes rebelled or refused to pay their taxes, forcing colonial authorities to reexamine the terms on which colonial rule took place. By 1900, imperial rulers in Asia and North Africa had to contend with an articulate opposition to colonial regimes.

Struggles for Recognition

The Paris fair not only provided a setting for national governments to display their achievements, it also provided a forum for those with different political and social visions to meet and make their case before an international audience. During the six months of the fair, more than 130 groups came to Paris to discuss economic and political topics, as well as technological or practical ones. Socialists, feminists, and opponents of slavery used their right to free speech to rally support for their points of view.

Socialists

In September 1900, more than a thousand delegates from twenty countries came to the Socialist Congress, where they hotly debated questions of social policy and political tactics. In general, they advocated collective or governmental control of

the means of production of goods, and they called for economic cooperation instead of the competition of capitalism. Angered by the poverty that they saw around them, socialists argued that income had to be redistributed and social privileges ended. The question of whether violence should be used to capture control of nation-states divided socialists deeply. Many were inspired by the writings of the German socialist and theoretician Karl Marx, who called for the workers of the world to unite and to overthrow rule by aristocrats and the bourgeoisie, or middle classes.

By 1900, socialists had established large, active political parties in Germany, France, and Belgium; smaller parties existed in Britain, Italy, and several other European countries. But the audience for socialism had already spread to Russia, South Africa, and Australia. Fledgling socialist groups from North and South America sent delegates to the fair. The first Japanese socialist, although unable to afford the trip to Paris, sent a letter of support to the Congress's organizers.

Resolutions passed at the Paris meetings revealed socialists' concerns. Some focused on practical reforms to improve workers' lives: minimum wages and maximum labor hours, better housing and education. Other groups insisted on the need for radical measures—general strikes by all workers, for example—to encourage social revolution. In Russia, militants retained their commitment to Marxist doctrine and to the use of violence to overthrow governments. The Congress put most of its energy into debating future political strategies. Should socialists cooperate with nonsocialist parties and serve in governments with them? Most thought not, but by 1900 a growing number of socialists had rejected revolution in favor of reform and democracy, as it became clear that capitalism was neither collapsing nor impoverishing the mass of the population.

Women

Women's political activities operated through different channels from men's political activities because so few countries permitted females to vote or to serve in elected offices. At the turn of the century, only New Zealand and several states in Australia and the western United States had established female suffrage. In Europe, the issue of votes for women divided females and frightened conservative males. Many argued that women's proper public roles were maternal and did not require direct participation in electoral politics. When the International Council of Women (ICW), launched by U.S. suffrage activists in 1888, spread to European countries, it declined to take a position on women's voting rights to avoid alienating its members. Instead, in its early years, the ICW concentrated on the issues of peace and the legal rights of married women. Although it claimed to include "representatives of all churches, and all sections, races, and parties," ICW members were generally elite, white, Christian women who were relatively conservative in their politics. Led by a Scottish aristocrat, Ishbel Hamilton-Gordon, Lady Aberdeen, the ICW used international meetings to lobby for peace and to dramatize the broad appeal of social issues such as child welfare and opposition to prostitution. Women organized to defend maternal obligations could get a hearing for their claims as long as their practical politics were nonthreatening.

At the same time, many politically active women believed that the lack of equal political rights for women had to be combated directly. Feminist socialists, such as the Polish political organizer Rosa Luxemburg and the Russian Alexandra Kollontai, argued for universal suffrage. The strongest defenders of women's equality founded the Socialist Women's International in 1907, and worked through it to publicize women's contributions to the political struggles of the period.

The fair's Palace of Women dramatized some of the contradictions of late-nineteenth-century attitudes toward the place of women in society. The first floor housed a library of works by women on women's issues and a lecture hall for their meetings, while the basement held an exhibit showing a typical day for a Parisian woman—riding in the park, visiting, dressing for dinner, and an evening party. When the images of women in the colonial pavilions were added to the mix, the range of definitions of the female widened much further. In the Dahomey exhibit, women could be seen grinding grain and producing food. In the Japanese pavilion, they appeared as hostesses in kimonos. The fair made it clear that there was no single international condition of “the female,” despite the efforts of feminists to proclaim international sisterhood. In 1900, well-educated North American and European women dominated women's political organizations, and they brought with them a particular set of class interests and political concerns that fit people like themselves.

The interests of uneducated rural women had as yet few supporters. In most of the world, men maintained patriarchal control over their wives and daughters, with women's dependence being sanctioned by religion, custom, and law. In much of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East, parents married off their daughters as teenagers, sometimes to much older men who already had other wives or concubines. Daughters were valued less than sons and were less likely to be educated. Cultural practices such as foot binding in China and genital cutting or clitoridectomy in Africa accentuated female inferiority by limiting women's mobility and sexual pleasure. Even in Europe and North America, where in the nineteenth century changes in the laws had given women legal rights over their children and their own property, most women remained within domestic settings and had only limited education. Nevertheless, age brought respect and dependents to control. Mothers directed their daughters and daughters-in-law. Within the household, women's multiple functions as producers of goods and reproducers of labor could give them leverage and resources to command. Where women raised food and animals, they could market any surpluses, earning money for themselves and their families. The problems of rural households and villages bore little resemblance to the concerns advanced by feminists at the Paris fair.

Pan-Africanists and the Opposition to Colonialism

The support for colonialism at the Paris fair marginalized but did not silence opposing points of view. In the sociology hall, W. E. B. Dubois, the African American social scientist and crusader for racial justice, had organized part of

the “American Negro Exhibit,” which focused on material from African American schools in the American South. Dubois compiled an impressive array of books, patents, models, and photographs documenting the achievements of educated African Americans and their institutions, thus challenging the prevailing racist assumptions about Africans’ abilities.

After winning a gold medal for his work, Dubois traveled to London to attend the first Pan-African Congress for people of African descent and discuss the “present condition and outlook of the darker races of mankind.” The ending of slavery in Brazil in 1888 completed the emancipation of slaves in the Americas, continuing a process begun by the British for the West Indies in 1833. An assessment of the status of African migrant populations and their descendants was long overdue.



Delegates and speakers at the Pan-African Congress held in London during the summer of 1900. Representatives came from four African countries, the West Indies, Canada, the United States, and Britain. Bishop Turner of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, U.S.A., chaired the meeting, which brought together middle-class men and women of different races and religions.

Henry Sylvester Williams, a lawyer from Trinidad who had been trained in Canada and was practicing in London, had developed the idea of Pan-Africanism in 1899. His own global wanderings had convinced him of the need for African unity and for solidarity among migrant Africans. The London meeting brought together more than thirty professionals of African ancestry, who were joined by antislavery advocates, Quakers, and other supporters to exchange ideas about the future of Africa and its peoples.

Although the meeting did not openly challenge colonial rule, Williams's assertion of a Pan-African identity that would override the claims of empire and ethnicity was a revolutionary idea. In his later writings, Dubois used the idea of Pan-Africanism to support his calls for justice for "the black world" and an end to colonial rule both in Africa and in the Caribbean. By 1903, when Dubois published *The Souls of Black Folk*, he pointed to the creative equality of white and black populations to argue for racial justice and political freedom for African peoples. "The problem of the Twentieth Century is the problem of the color-line,"⁴ Dubois proclaimed. Even if an immediate end to colonial rule seemed far distant in 1900, some of the people who would become its active opponents had already moved into the public eye.

CONCLUSION

In his opening speech at the Paris World's Fair, the French minister of commerce stressed the unity of humankind: "All, sons of different races, citizens of diverse nationalities, belong to the same family." Alexander Millerand stressed fraternity, the brotherhood of all peoples. But what did fraternity mean in the context of 1900? Missing from his analysis were the other great principles of the French republic, liberty and equality, each of which was denied by the basic premises of empires. The spirit of the French revolution had bypassed the Paris exhibition. Nevertheless, visitors to the fair had challenged then dominant notions of class, gender, and race. Although their attacks were muted, they had made strong cases for social change.

The fair displayed a world that was profoundly divided between industrialized nation-states and their colonies. The relative power of each could be seen in the size and scope of the exhibits. When the organizers of the fair discussed the future, they could not even imagine a world in which colonized peoples would win their independence. In their predictions of the future, the United States and Japan loomed as rivals, but not Australia, Canada, China, South Africa, Brazil, or Korea.

The fair gave its visitors a false sense of security and global harmony. At the fair, the peoples of the world seemed easy to understand and to appreciate. Their wants seemed limited to consumer goods. Moreover, the fair's image of progress ignored the destructive potential of many technologies. Within recent European

⁴W. E. B. Dubois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1999), p. 5.

memory, conflicts had been confined to colonies, where the imbalance of weaponry generally guaranteed European victory. Visitors to the fair saw the benefits of relatively free trade, open migration, and international peace. These conditions were soon to disappear.

For Further Reading

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- C. A. Bayly, *The Birth of the Modern World, 1780–1914* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, Ltd., 2004). A thematic discussion of the changes in states, societies, and cultures under the pressure of globalization.
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