BOX 2.4

Styles of colonialism in Africa

The European powers had different ideas about colonialism and the way their African colonies should be ruled. The general philosophy was to establish and maintain a level of order, if necessary with swift military imposition, and to do this as cheaply as possible, while at the same time generating as much funding as possible from taxes and exports to support the metropolitan power.

British policy was to adopt a pragmatic and decentralised approach to governing its African colonies. The strategy of 'Indirect Rule', introduced by Lord Frederick Lugard into Northern Nigeria, 'became the accepted ideal of British colonial administration' (Fage, 1995: 394). Britain feared the problems which might follow the possible demise of indigenous cultures, and so maintained traditional institutions and African rulers, wherever possible working through these leaders who were delegated the difficult task of keeping order over the mass of the people. If necessary, military forces were used to defeat ruling emirs without destroying their administrations. Although the sort of strong indigenous institutions that existed in Northern Nigeria were not necessarily replicated elsewhere in Africa, the policy of Indirect Rule was nevertheless widely introduced – for example in 1925 in the former German colony of Tanganyika, which came under British control following the First World War. Subsequently, in the 1930s, Indirect Rule was also introduced into Nyasaland (Malawi) and Northern Rhodesia (Zambia), and then into Basutoland (Lesotho), Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Swaziland. As Iliffe comments,

> The policy's conservative thrust was strong. In Sudan, for example, the Egyptian and Sudanese elites initially employed for their anti-Mahdist sympathies were abandoned after 1924 when an army mutiny revealed the first glimpses of Sudanese nationalism. Instead the British adopted 'Indirect Rule' and rehabilitated 'tribal chiefs' in a policy described by the governor as 'making the Sudan safe for autocracy'.
>
> (Iliffe, 1995: 201)

Although Indirect Rule was not adopted in Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe) and Kenya, where the white settlers felt it restricted labour supply and made the local chiefs too powerful, other colonial powers sometimes used similar policies in administering their territories.

The French approach to managing its colonial territories was very different from the British. 'Whereas British colonialism was designed to create Africans with British characteristics, French policy was designed to create black Frenchmen' (Binns, 1994a: 9). The French regarded their colonies as part of France, 'Overseas France', with the aim of assimilating the colonies and their people into France and the French way of life. In fact, the process of assimilation was a driving force in the French colonial design. But to acquire full French citizenship was a lengthy procedure, requiring 'education in French schools, performing military service and a minimum of civilian French employment, and agreeing to be monogamous and to foreswear traditional or Islamic law and custom' (Fage, 1995: 411). By 1939, only 80,000 of the 15 million Africans in French West Africa had actually gained full citizenship. The vast majority of those inhabitants of the colonies that did not achieve this distinction could only be 'associated' with France. White settlement was common in Francophone colonies, particularly in the countries bordering the Mediterranean (notably, Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia), but there were also quite sizeable white minorities in Dakar (Senegal) and in the plantation areas of Cameroon, Guinea, Ivory Coast and Madagascar.

The French established a centralised, bureaucratic, authoritarian and hierarchical state and there was little attempt to work through traditional institutions or leaders as in the British territories. Early French administration in West Africa was preoccupied more with military than with commercial motivation. In 1904, France's eight West African colonies were amalgamated into a single federation with its capital in Dakar (Senegal), where the Governor-General was based, taking his directives from the Colonial Ministry in Paris, and himself disseminating policy through a hierarchy of governors in each colony, and down to their provincial commissioners and *commandants de cercle*, the officers in charge of each district.

Belgium controlled the vast territory known initially as the Congo Independent State from the establishment of its boundaries after the Treaty of

BOX 2.4 (continued)

Berlin in 1885, and later from 1908 it became the Belgian Congo (now Democratic Republic of Congo, formerly Zaire). Congo was initially a personal possession of King Leopold, who seized the territory when others in his country were apparently showing little interest in colonisation. Leopold ruled in a dictatorial manner and decreed that all land in Congo apart from villages and surrounding cultivated areas belonged to him as Head of State. There were strict controls on what produce Africans could buy and sell, and inhabitants were heavily taxed. Leopold established several concessionary trading companies with exclusive trading rights over defined areas and he took a 50 per cent stake in each. The so-called 'Congo System', which heavily exploited both people and resources, 'attracted much contemporary criticism and opprobrium, largely because of the way in which the private companies, backed by the official "army" of the state, brutally abused and exploited Africans' (Griffiths, 1995: 53). This criticism, much of it directed at the King himself, eventually led to the renaming of the colony as 'Belgian Congo' from 1908, when it formally became a colony of Belgium. However, the exploitative Congo System persisted and there was considerable international surprise when at the Treaty of Versailles in 1919, Belgium was given the trust territory of Ruanda-Urundi (now Rwanda and Burundi) under League of Nations mandate.

Portugal was the other major colonial power in Africa, and as early as 1482 had established fortified trading posts on the west coast from Senegal to the Gold Coast. Despite its long-standing contacts with Africa, Portugal was less successful than Britain and France in gaining territory during the competitive 'scramble'. By the early twentieth century, Portugal controlled the small West African territory of Portuguese Guinea (now Guinea-Bissau), and the two much larger colonies of Angola and Mozambique. Like the French, Portugal adopted a policy of assimilation, with all territories being regarded as part of the Portuguese Union. Substantial numbers of white settlers moved to the Portuguese colonies, as in the French territories. According to Rodney, the Portuguese colonial regime had an appalling record of slavery-like practice in its African colonies.

> One peculiar characteristic of Portuguese colonialism was the provision of forced labour, not only for its own citizens, but also for capitalists outside the boundaries of Portuguese colonies. Angolans and Mozambicans were exported to the South African mines to work for subsistence, while the capitalists in South Africa paid the Portuguese government a certain sum for each labourer supplied.
>
> (Rodney, 1972: 167)

The world wars and the intervening depression severely disrupted colonial economies, with investment from Europe being limited and commodity prices falling steadily. Much of the capital sustaining growth in this inter-war period was American, or, in Asia, from the overseas Chinese community. Thus, in the Dutch East Indies, 80 per cent of all domestic trade was controlled by Nanyang Chinese, whereas the largest rubber plantation was owned by a US tyre company. The declining profitability of commodity exports helped cause a shift in the nature of government investment during this period, with increasing amounts of capital being invested in infrastructure – roads, utilities or railways.

During the economic recession of the 1920s, official metropolitan and colonial ties grew closer. Thus, by 1930 some 44 per cent of British trade was with the empire. This was reinforced by demographic changes,

with increasing numbers migrating away from the European recession to the perceived opportunities of the colonies, often encouraged enthusiastically by their governments. Although most British migrants went to the settler colonies, such as Canada or Australia, most Dutch and French migrants moved to already heavily populated colonies and were forced into a variety of urban occupations rather than farming as in earlier decades. Many unqualified migrants took up relatively low paid work in retail or office locations.

The effect of this growing European presence was complex. For the small, educated indigenous group, it made personal advancement even more difficult, sending many off to Europe for further education and to sharpen their political and organisational skills. The huge peasant population, however, suffering dreadfully from the recession, were not organised enough to threaten more than the local representatives of the

system. But the growing urban indigenous population posed more of a problem – not an overtly political problem in the late colonial period, rather one associated more with social issues.

The inter-war years

For the majority of European colonists, the inter-war years seemed like 'a golden age', despite the economic vicissitudes. Even those with more modest incomes had status and privilege relative to the indigenous population, which compensated somewhat. This was the era from which most contemporary images of colonialism are drawn in the media, particularly in the cinema, for example *Out of Africa*. The luxurious way of life was facilitated by the shift in the balance of administrative power from the metropolitan centre to the colonies, certainly in the British Empire, so that salaries, privileges and jobs overseas remained secure and rewarding, despite the economic situation at home. This shift in power also enabled the administrators to more or less ignore trusteeship as far as indigenous populations were concerned, favouring the colonial settlers in numerous ways.

Urban planning became a distorted version of European concepts, so the garden city movement in Africa and Asia was largely used to segregate European and indigenous populations further by swathes of greenery, particularly recreational areas such as golf courses and racecourses. Despite the health risks, burgeoning indigenous populations were often crammed into crumbling 'old quarters'. In 1911 in Delhi, on the eve of the emergence of the new imperial capital, the old Mughal city of Shahjahanabad contained almost a quarter of a million people in its 2.5 square miles (King, 1976).

The Second World War destroyed the myth of European invincibility, particularly in Asia as a result of Japanese victories, although ironically the eventual success of the European allies owed not a little to the colonial or imperial forces that served under the metropolitan flag and to the resources that the colonies continued to supply. Indeed, it has been estimated that some 200,000 Africans fought alongside the British and the French during the war, and, as Fage comments,

> Since the direct or indirect result of their endeavours had been to free lands like Ethiopia, Burma, India and even France from foreign rule . . . these men . . . were naturally inclined to ask why this benefit should be withheld from them. All these people, the

ex-soldiers especially, looked for a better life now that the war was over.

> (Fage, 1995: 476)

Post-war decolonisation and independence

In the post-war period the movement towards decolonisation gathered momentum. There were several reasons why this occurred.

First, France and Britain were exhausted after the Second World War, their economies were weak and they were dependent on the USA for financial support. Two new superpowers had emerged, the USA and former USSR, both of them committed to the end of overt colonialism. In fact, decolonisation was strongly encouraged by the USA, partly because it wished to extend its own sphere of economic influence through a kind of informal imperialism, which might be more appropriately termed either 'global capitalism' or 'neo-colonialism'. With regard to the former USSR, Kwame Nkrumah, the first leader of independent Ghana (formerly Gold Coast), apparently commented, 'Had it not been for Russia, the African liberation movement would have suffered the most brutal persecution' (Nkrumah, quoted in Iliffe, 1995: 246).

A second motivation for decolonisation came from the Africans and Indians who had received a Western education, and who used their skills of oratory and writing to campaign and mobilise the masses. The Indian Congress Movement, founded as early as 1885, was led by such men, who initially campaigned for more respect and greater elected representation from the British rulers. From 1917, however, the party waged a battle of varied tactics, including periods of intense nationalist agitation, with Gandhi playing a pre-eminent role. The Congress was able steadily to raise the financial and moral price which the British would have to pay if they wished to remain in power. In 1947 India won its independence and Congress helped to form the interim government, in power until 1951, when Jawaharlal Nehru as Prime Minister also assumed the Congress presidency. The independence of India had a very significant impact on nationalist movements in other colonies across the world.

Further momentum was given to the decolonisation process by the signing of the Atlantic Charter during the Second World War, the tone and sentiments of which were taken up later in the UN Charter. Indeed, the UN set timetables for independence in Libya (1951)

and Somalia (1960), and also decreed the federation of Italy's former colony, Eritrea, with Ethiopia, while the former USSR supported full independence for Eritrea.

Finally, the increasing mobility of European and US capital also facilitated the decolonisation process, since with the incorporation of the colonies into the global capitalist economy, Western companies could continue to move capital and other resources into and out of these territories irrespective of whether or not they actually governed them. It was suggested that independent governments would continue to permit such transactions, not least because their governing elites would require access to outside capital and technology.

Not all the metropolitan powers responded to the call for decolonisation and to the call of the colonial peoples for independence. Britain found it easier than most to withdraw because of its less formal and more decentralised administrative systems, although there were one or two places such as Southern Rhodesia where settler resistance saw the colonial sun set rather more slowly than elsewhere. Indeed, Southern Rhodesia did not become independent Zimbabwe until 1980, over 20 years after Ghana had been the first British colony in Africa to be given self-rule after the Second World War (1957), following the earlier granting of independence to South Africa (1910) and Egypt (1922). In Kenya, the Mau Mau uprising took place during the 1950s, in which predominantly dispossessed Kikuyu protested over the alienation of land for European settler farms. The raiding of settler farms and indiscriminate killings proved to be a threat to stability and British troops were needed to restore control. This eventually led to the colonial government putting pressure on the white settlers to accept a movement towards independence in 1963, when Jomo Kenyatta, who had been detained during the uprising, was elected the first president.

For France and the Netherlands, however, decolonisation was an altogether more complex and bloody affair, with settlers resentful of being abandoned and unwilling to return to a war-ravaged Europe putting up fierce resistance. Brutal decolonisation wars resulted in Algeria, the East Indies and Indo-China. In North Africa, both Morocco and Tunisia gained independence from France in 1956, whereas in Algeria young militants started a guerrilla war in 1954. In the next eight years, over half a million French troops virtually defeated the *Front de Libération Nationale* within Algeria, but it was kept alive in neighbouring Morocco and Tunisia. President de Gaulle was forced to agree to

Algerian independence in 1962, and there followed an exodus of some 85 per cent of the European settlers. Portugal abandoned its African colonies abruptly in 1975 following the *coup d'état* in Portugal in 1974. Colonial administrators were withdrawn quickly with very little time to hand over the trappings of power and bureaucracy to the local people. Portuguese businessmen, industrial managers and technicians also departed. Portugal had been struggling against liberation wars in both Angola and Mozambique, and after the departure of the colonial power both countries disintegrated into many years of civil war, which at various times was fuelled by the intervention of other countries.

Eventually, however, independence came to all except a few small territories, though their development paths were strongly affected, not only by the neo-colonial forces that quickly moved into the political and economic vacuum, but also by the considerable legacies that colonisation had bequeathed to these nascent states.

Legacies of colonialism

Politically, the national units that emerged between the 1940s and 1970s essentially comprised the territorial divisions of the colonial era and often had limited correlation with environmental geographies, pre-colonial structures or with contemporary cultural and ethnic patterns. As Clapham (1985: 20) has remarked, 'There is still no more striking, even shocking, reminder of the impact of colonialism in Africa than to cross an entirely artificial frontier and witness the instant change of language . . . that results'. Moving from Zambia (English) to Angola (Portuguese) illustrates this comment very vividly.

The Malay world of Southeast Asia was divided between three countries, Malaysia, Indonesia and the Philippines, in accordance with the territorial spread of the British, Dutch and Spanish-American empires. Even non-Malay areas were incorporated into these territories if they had been part of the colonial territory. Thus Indonesia has held on to Melanesian Irian Jaya, despite the cultural and ethnic contradictions, and is attempting to flood the area with Javanese migrants as part of its accumulation process.

There is a lively and ongoing debate among historians, political scientists and others as to whether colonialism was beneficial or detrimental to the economies and societies of those countries that were

colonised. In the early twenty-first century, it is a fact that many African countries and former colonies are worse off now than they were at independence in the 1960s. Some historians would argue that colonialism was too varied and, in some instances, too brief to judge whether it has left a beneficial or detrimental legacy. Certainly, the local textures of colonialism were immensely complex, but as a component of a broader, changing global process, there were immense overall repercussions.

Two much-quoted and contrasting viewpoints are provided by Bauer (1976) and Rodney (1972). Bauer in his influential book *Dissent on Development* asserts:

It is untrue to say that colonial status is incompatible with material progress, and that its removal is a necessary condition of economic development. Some of the richest countries were colonies in their earlier history, notably the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand; and these countries were already prosperous while they were still colonies. Nor has colonial status precluded the material advance, from extremely primitive conditions, of the African and Asian territories which became colonies in the nineteenth century. Many of these territories made rapid economic progress between the second half of the nineteenth century, when they became colonies, and the middle of the twentieth century, when most of them became independent.

(Bauer, 1976: 148)

In his important and thought-provoking text *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, Walter Rodney (1972) takes a very different view from Bauer on the merits and problems of colonialism:

The colonisation of Africa lasted for just over seventy years in most parts of the continent. This is an extremely short period within the context of universal historical development. Yet, it was precisely in those years that in other parts of the world the rate of change was greater than ever before . . . The decisiveness of the short period of colonialism and its negative consequences for Africa spring mainly from the fact that Africa lost power. Power is the ultimate determinant in human society, being basic to the relations within any group and between groups. It implies the ability to defend one's interests and if necessary to impose one's will by any means available.

(Rodney, 1972: 224)

Bauer and Rodney, among many others, provide what might seem to be credible, or at least seriously debatable perspectives. The debate will undoubtedly go on, but some of the legacies of the colonial era will be considered to inform and illuminate the different perspectives in the debate.

Demographic effects of colonialism

The demographic legacy of colonialism was considerable. During the late colonial period the rate of indigenous population growth began to accelerate, partly due to transfers of medical technology, improvements in health care and hygiene and wider food security. Not that they were provided on either a widespread or enthusiastic basis by the colonial authorities, but improvements did occur and fertility did rise to the extent that the newly independent nations inherited an accelerating population growth.

Most colonial powers adopted a top-down hierarchical model for health care provision in their colonies, with an emphasis on curative rather than preventative medicine. In this model, patients were referred to successively higher levels which, in theory at least, possess greater skills and technical resources. In practice, the highest level in the hierarchy, the specialist and/or teaching hospital, was invariably located in large urban centres and in some cases only in the capital cities.

Such a health care system inevitably led to greater expenditure and better provision in the cities, while the poorer and remoter rural areas had (if any) only basic provision. Indeed, much rural health care was, and still is, provided by missionary bodies and non-governmental organisations (Phillips, 1990). Many people in both rural areas and cities depended on traditional medicine, which was (and indeed still is) widely available and usually less expensive than Western medicine.

In the 1970s, Ghana, for example, had one teaching hospital in Accra, the capital city, eight regional hospitals and 32 district hospitals. Although only 18 per cent of the population was concentrated in towns larger than 20,000 persons, over 66 per cent of the country's doctors were based in such towns. Furthermore, in terms of expenditure on health, a specialist teaching hospital benefiting only 1 per cent of the population received 40 per cent of the national health budget, whereas primary health care, serving some 90 per cent of the population, was allocated only 15 per cent of total health spending. Such inequalities were also found in India, where large cities and port towns were given priority, 'Local populations were cut off from modern medicine, but ironically, indigenous systems were often discouraged and certainly neglected' (Phillips, 1990: 114).

Former colonies have had to come to terms with these 'alien' medical systems since independence, but in reality relatively few countries have had either the foresight or the funding to restructure health care delivery completely. A much-quoted exception to this is Tanzania, where under the country's first president, Julius Nyerere, there was a stated commitment to redressing the inherited colonial imbalance of health expenditure and provision, and extending the provision of health care to rural areas through trained community health workers, as in the Chinese 'barefoot doctor' model (see Chapter 5). Much research was done by the colonial powers into the causes of ill health in tropical regions, for example, the incidence and prevention of diseases transmitted by mosquitoes and tsetse flies. Medical research stations were established, such as the British Medical Research Council's hospital at Fajara in The Gambia, while other research stations were concerned with improving the health of livestock.

Colonial governments also introduced emergency programmes when epidemics occurred. For example, when the plague came to Bombay in 1896, the health authorities began to disinfect houses to kill the plague-carrying fleas that infested rats in the city.

A further demographic effect of colonialism was the mixing of populations that occurred as a result of labour movements, whether forced, contracted or voluntary. Add to this the multiple ethnic groups that were already in the artificial colonial states which became independent territories, and the consequence has been an ethnic melting pot that has simmered and bubbled almost everywhere during the post-colonial period, at best considerably hampering the development process, at worst resulting in appalling acts of expulsion or genocide, such as the expulsion by President Idi Amin of 80,000 Asians from Uganda from 1972.

Education

Some would argue that, along with health, the provision of formal education systems was another benefit gained from the colonial experience. In many colonies a respectable group of educated indigenous people developed, who spoke the colonial language and absorbed themselves in the alien culture. As Gould comments,

The respectful, educated professional or civil servant of the British colonies, as personified by E.M. Forster's Dr Aziz in *A Passage to India*, or a figure of fun like Joyce Cary's *Mister Johnson* in Nigeria, aspired to the colonial cultural values, and provided an implicit model for others.

(Gould, 1993: 13)

In Francophone countries, there were similar groups of educated indigenes, for example, Léopold Senghor (who became the first president of Senegal) and Aimé Césaire of Martinique. They published poetry and essays in the 1930s which celebrated 'négritude' (blackness), in which they reaffirmed African culture by writing in impressively fluent French. Césaire's poetic account *Return to my Native Land* tells of a journey back to Martinique after years of schooling in France, in which he presents a critique of colonial rule whilst also giving beautiful images of blackness and the survival of African traditions. Both Senghor and Césaire showed equally close attachments to African tradition and to metropolitan French culture.

As part of the administrative machinery of colonialism, the colonisers required a small, educated local workforce. As Rodney comments,

In practice, it was not necessary to educate the masses because only a minority of the . . . population entered the colonial economy in such a way that their performance could be enhanced by education. Indeed, the French concentrated on selecting a small minority, who would be thoroughly subjected to French cultural imperialism.

(Rodney, 1972: 257)

The missionaries were also keen to promote reading and writing so that indigenous people could read the Bible. In Muslim areas, the Koranic schools played an important role before the establishment of the Western-style school system and continued alongside their newer counterpart. Like the colonial health systems, the education systems were generally centralised, hierarchical and bureaucratic (Watson, 1982). There was a strong emphasis on achieving academic excellence, and syllabuses and assessment methods were frequently transported with little, if any, modification from the metropolitan country to the colonies.

In terms of educational provision, universities, where they existed, were usually located in the large

cities, notably the capitals, and received a dispropor-tionately large amount of funding. In West Africa, for example, provision for higher education was very limited. In fact, in 1951 the whole of predominantly Muslim Northern Nigeria had only a single graduate – a Christian (Iliffe, 1995). Rodney reports that, 'In 1874, when Fourah Bay College (Freetown, Sierra Leone) sought and obtained affiliation with Durham University, *The Times* newspaper declared that Durham should next affiliate with the London Zoo' (Rodney, 1972: 141)

Meanwhile, rural education facilities were rudi-mentary and concentrated on very little more than 'the three Rs'. In some colonies the provision of secondary and higher education was negligible, as in the Belgian Congo, where although in the early 1950s a higher pro-portion of the population (one in 12) was attending primary school than almost anywhere else in tropical Africa, the provision of secondary education for the African population was virtually non-existent, with only one secondary school for every 870 primary schools. At the same time, the ratio of secondary schools to primary schools was 1:25 in French West Africa, and 1:70 in both Gold Coast (Ghana) and Nigeria.

Transport

In material terms, too, the legacies of colonialism have been substantial, particularly in the form of transport and communications links. The basic road and rail net-works of many contemporary states owe their origins to the colonial era. Unfortunately, most of these lines of communication reflect the economic needs of the colonial powers and do not necessarily coincide with the contemporary needs of independent states. In Southern Rhodesia (now Zimbabwe), for example, the principal road and rail links connected the main areas of European settlement and economic activity on the high veld, and exited through what was British South Africa.

Transport and communication links were, in a way, subordinate to the urbanisation process which, as we have seen, was either established for the first time or completely restructured during the colonial period to favour one or two major ports that functioned as crucial connecting points between the colonial and global economies. Many instances of exaggerated urban primacy in the contemporary world have their origins in the colonial economy (see also Chapter 9). Within these cities, too, there is often a considerable physical legacy of colonial triumphalism in architectural form, planning layout and infrastructure provision (Plates 2.4 and 2.6; King, 1990).

Administrative, legal and judicial systems

Colonial cities were points of administration, rather than production, and some would argue that the most useful legacy of colonialism is the administrative, legal and judicial systems that were established by the metropolitan powers. There is certainly some truth in this as far as orderly and efficient administration was concerned. But the elitism inherent within these systems still continues in their successors, particularly the use of European languages in the highest echelons of the state.

In Hong Kong, the colonial experience ended as recently as 1 July 1997. By the 1980s, Hong Kong's civil service had developed a relatively high degree of auton-omy and institutional integrity and had taken effective measures to prevent other groups and institutions from challenging its authority. In 1958, financial and budget-ary autonomy was granted to Hong Kong by the UK.

For most of the colonial era, the colonial govern-ment banned political parties and a mainly appointed legislature was kept weak and largely ineffective, being answerable only to the Governor. The bureaucracy in colonial Hong Kong managed to remain neutral in relation to business and political interests, and govern-ment positions were denied to party activists. However, certain colonial practices undermined morale in the civil service, for example, hiring expatriates to do jobs that could easily be done by local people.

Earlier in the colonial period many of Hong Kong's administrative officers had middle class origins and were recruited from Oxford and Cambridge. Although there was a move towards employing local staff from 1984, even as late as 1997 some 23 per cent of the top 1130 positions in the civil service directorate were held by expatriates (Burns, 1999). The fact that all govern-ment business was conducted in English rather than Chinese (Cantonese) also added to both inefficiency and criticism. Only in 1974 did the government adopt both English and Chinese as official languages, though publication of laws in both languages did not occur until 1989.

The common law legal system defined the relation-ship between state and society and between the state and its employees, and all civil servants held office 'at
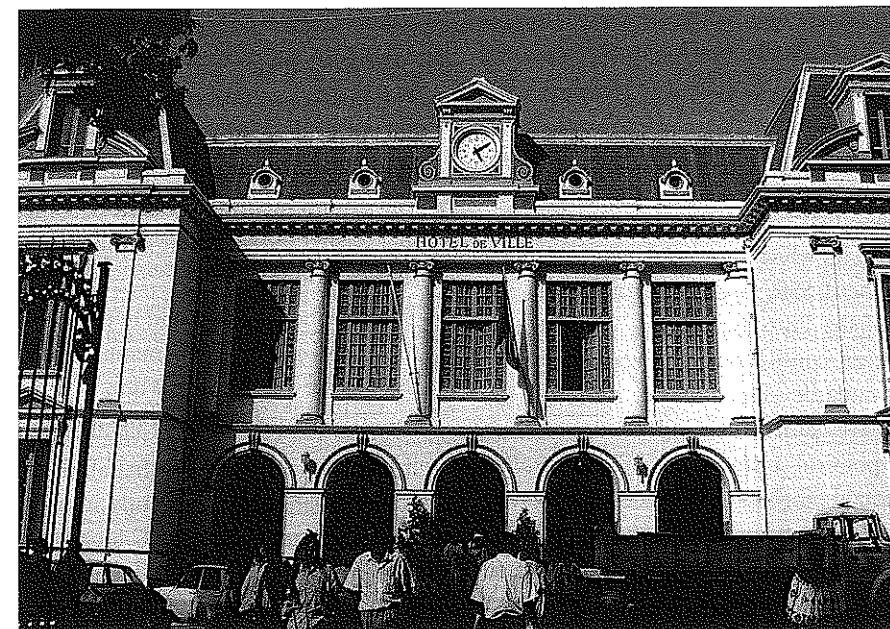

Plate 2.6 Grand French colonial architecture in Dakar, Senegal (photo: Tony Binns)

the pleasure of the Crown'. Elsewhere, former colonies have attempted to modernise their legal systems (e.g. Senegal and Madagascar), but in many countries present-day legal systems still bear a strong resemblance to those inherited from the former colonial power. Fairness was rarely a characteristic of colonial adminis-trative and legal systems, and here again some unfortun-ate legacies have persisted. Thus Singapore, like many other countries, retained and uses legislation on deten-tion without trial. In similar fashion, building regula-tions and standards retained from the colonial period have long prevented more effective housing policies being pursued within contemporary developing world cities.

Economic activities

What underpinned almost all these consequences of colonialism were its economic activities and here the direct legacy has also been substantial. The narrowing of production into one or two commodities persisted in the great majority of countries, even to the point of the same commodities being grown. This posed enorm-ous problems for those countries, the great majority of which watched commodity prices continue to fall and failed to diversify their economies. And the spatial concentrations of these activities continues to cause problems of regional inequality and imbalance, often reinforced by post-colonial urbanisation trends. As

Blaine Harden (1993) cynically sums up the African colonial experience,

> Africans were not asked whether they wanted to be guinea pigs. They were bullied into it. Europeans overwhelmed the continent in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, looking for loot. They carved it up into weirdly shaped money-making colonies, many of them landlocked, all of them administered from the top down. The colonies bore little or no relation to existing geographical or tribal boundaries. Total conquest took all of about twenty-five years. Then, after sixty years or so – the shortest introduction to so-called civilization that any so-called primitive people have ever had – the Europeans turned their authoritarian creation over to the Africans.
>
> (Harden, 1993: 16–17)

For some 25 years after the end of the Second World War the economies of the newly independent states of Asia and Africa remained virtually unchanged under the development strategies of neo-classical advisers such as Lewis or Rostow (see Chapter 3). These economies were still reliant on the export of a narrow range of primary commodities, possibly with some diversifica-tion into import substitution industries. For the most part, these economies were still controlled from the outside through the medium of tied aid or the activ-ities of transnational corporations (TNCs). Although

metropolitan powers continued to be linked in this way with their former colonies, new international players were equally dominant, particularly the USA.

Neo-colonialism

Some would argue that colonialism has given way to 'neo-colonialism', in which powerful states such as the USA, the former USSR, Japan and, collectively, the member states of the European Union, exercise economic and political control over the economies and societies of the underdeveloped world. Although the colonies might have gained their independence, their economic and political systems are still controlled from outside, notably through aid, trade and political relationships. It might be suggested, for example, that the Lomé Conventions linking the EU and some 60 African, Caribbean and Pacific states are a new form of colonialism, or 'neo-colonialism', in laying down guidelines for aid, trade and investment agreements. Similarly, since the 1980s the structural adjustment programmes of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund have imposed liberal economic policies and a wide range of conditions on the poor countries that have sought financial help (see Chapters 3 and 7).

New International Division of Labour (NIDL)

From the 1970s, there occurred a more sustained and substantial outflow of investment funds from Europe and North America as industrial profits began to decline in those areas. The various reasons for this are often related to the rising costs of labour and environmental protection. New financial systems, particularly artificial international currencies such as Eurodollars, and the windfall profits from the OPEC oil price rise facilitated the investment of money overseas in new manufacturing plants in the developing world. The usual term to describe this post-colonial phenomenon is the New International Division of Labour (NIDL), in which the low-cost labour-intensive parts of the manufacturing process are siphoned off to the developing world where costs are lower. A detailed critique of this fragmentation of the production process and the role played by TNCs can be found later in Chapter 4. However, at this point and as a link to Chapter 4, it might be useful to examine the concept of NIDL as it has become almost synonymous with the post-colonial period.

NIDL is perhaps the third international division of labour:

➤ The first comprised the production and extraction of primary commodities in the colonies and their manufacture in the metropolitan countries.

➤ The second involved the shift of some industry into the newly independent countries under import substitution policies.

➤ The third began to expand in the 1970s and involves the fragmentation of the manufacturing process and the shift of a large proportion of this to developing countries, largely through the medium of TNCs.

It is important to realise that all three international divisions of labour are currently in operation. In particular, large amounts of TNC investment continue to sustain primary resource production in countries such as Papua New Guinea, almost all of which is exported to advanced capitalist economies.

The latest international division of labour came about through a conjuncture of changes: reduced profitability in Europe, largely through increased production costs, cheap production costs in developing countries, encouragement given to urban-industrial growth in the developing world by international development agencies, facilitating developments in communications technology and the parallel increasing mobility and flexibility of financial services. The result was new levels of extraction of surplus value created by super-exploitation of poor country labour, which accrues few skills and with limited backward linkages into the local economy (see Chapter 3).

The problem with NIDL is that it overemphasises the inevitability of this exploitation and fails to credit peripheral social formations with any autonomy to manipulate foreign investment to maximise local advantage. The concept is also undermined in its global applicability by the fact that NIDL was initially very selective, with just six countries, usually identified as the four Asian tigers (Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan), together with Mexico and Brazil, receiving the majority of TNC investment, largely because TNCs rely on more than just cheap labour for efficient and profitable production.

It can be argued that the range of countries which are industrialising through the medium of foreign investment is widening. In particular, analysts point to the rapid rise of countries such as Malaysia, Thailand and Indonesia. But these countries receive much, if not most, of their investment from within the Asia-Pacific

region, notably from the four Asian tigers who used NIDL to retain surplus value and generate regional investment.

It is clear in this context that national governments have not been overwhelmed or displaced by Western TNCs, but act in concert with indigenous equivalents to promote joint interests overseas. What has emerged, therefore, is a regional division of labour (RDL) operating both within and in conflict with NIDL. Nascent RDLs exist in other areas of the developing world too, such as the Middle East or South Asia or even southern Africa, but the extended world recession of the 1980s and 1990s will have slowed their emergence considerably.

New International Economic Order (NIEO)

Often confused with NIDL, largely because it first surfaced at about the same time, was the New International Economic Order (NIEO). This concept mainly derived from the United Nations and was underpinned by a mounting concern with the failure of modernisation strategies (Chapter 3) to achieve much for most people in poor countries.

Mounting poverty, growing national debts and the pessimistic environmental predictions of the Club of Rome all resulted in the declaration by the UN in 1994 of its intention to establish an NIEO, although we must also be aware of the self-interest of Western nations threatened by recession, oil price hikes and inflation. The five principal areas of concern identified were

trade reform, monetary reforms, debt relief, technology transfer and regional cooperation.

In fact, very little was achieved for the lasting benefit of the developing nations, not least because of their growing diversity of interests (Chapter 1), and eventually the NIEO became suffused into the structural adjustment programmes of the New Right (Chapter 3). In effect, the NIEO became a justification for TNC investment in the developing world in the name of development, and as such was a factor in the internationalisation of the division of labour which paralleled it.

Conclusion

Colonialism has undoubtedly done much to shape the world in which we live today. The configuration and character of particular developing countries was in many cases determined by the European powers dividing territory and drawing boundaries at some distance from the colonies. In the post-independence phase, many former colonies have retained the language, education, legal and health systems of their colonial masters, whilst trading networks and communications links often bear strong similarity to those of the colonial period. The process, experience and legacies of colonialism remain highly controversial and hotly contested issues. The extent to which the European powers benefited from exploitation of their colonies, and whether particular African, Asian and Latin American countries would actually have been better off today without a colonial history, are just two elements of the ongoing debate.

Key points

➤ The particular nature of colonialism varied according to the motives and also with the political economies and cultures of both the metropolitan power and the colonised territory.

➤ Post-colonialism has provided an important perspective on the colonial experience in demonstrating how the production of Western knowledge is inseparable from the exercise of Western power.

➤ Commerce and trade dominated the first phase of colonialism – mercantile colonialism. Trading companies were heavily involved in both production and trade during this phase. The plantation system and slave labour were key features of this phase.

➤ The second phase of colonialism – industrial colonialism – involved the expansion of overseas markets for European manufactured goods and the overseas production of raw materials and food for European countries. Colonies were increasingly established and organised by the state rather than by trading companies, although business and state often worked together.

➤ During the phase of late colonialism, the two world wars and the intervening depression severely disrupted colonial economies, with a reduction in investment from Europe and falling commodity prices. The period was characterised by increasing European migration to the colonies and by a shift in the balance of administrative power from the metropolitan centres to the colonies. The post-Second World War period saw a move towards decolonisation and the granting of independence to colonial states.

➤ There is an ongoing debate about whether colonialism was on balance beneficial or detrimental to the economies and societies of those countries that were colonised.

Further reading

Blunt, A. and McEwan, C. (eds) (2002) *Postcolonial Geographies*. London: Continuum.
A valuable collection of papers which help to de-mystify the concept of post-colonialism.

Blunt, A. and Wills, J. (2000) *Dissident Geographies*. London: Prentice Hall.
This book contains some useful ideas on post-colonial studies.

Crush, J. (ed.) (1995) *The Power of Development*. London: Routledge.
A much-cited text which examines a variety of perspectives on the concept of 'development', written by some leading scholars in the field.

Duncan, J.S., Johnson, N.C. and Schein, R.H. (eds) (2004) *A Companion to Cultural Geography*. Oxford: Blackwell.
A very useful reference book on issues relating to cultural geography.

Griffiths, I.L. (1995) *The African Inheritance*. London: Routledge.
An excellent text on the colonisation and decolonisation of Africa.

McEwan, C. (2002) Postcolonialism, in Desai, V. and Potter, R.B. (eds), *The Companion to Development Studies*. London: Arnold, 127–31.
A particularly clear and concise introductory essay on post-colonialism.

McLeod, J. (2000) *Beginning Postcolonialism*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
A helpful text which explores the concept of post-colonialism.

Rodney, W. (1972) *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington, DC: Howard University Press.
A classic and thought-provoking text which examines how, in the views of the author, Africa suffered as a result of European colonisation.

Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books.
A seminal book which has played an influential role in understanding relationships between colonisers and colonised.

Sartre, J.P. (1964, 2001) *Colonialism and Neo-colonialism*. English translation (2001). London: Routledge.
An important text from a key French thinker on colonialism.

Williams, P. and Chrisman, L. (eds) (1993) *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*. London: Prentice Hall.
A collection of essays examining colonisation, colonial perceptions and post-colonialism.

Websites

http://www.zmag.org/zmag/articles/barsaid.htm
Speech by Edward Said on 'Culture and Imperialism', given at York University, Toronto, 10 February, 1993.
An interesting speech from a leading thinker and the author of the influential book, *Orientalism*, first published in 1978.

http://www.mkgandhi.org/
Useful wide-ranging website on Mahatma Gandhi, who played a key role in the drive for independence in India, which in turn had a significant impact on the wider decolonisation process.

DISCUSSION TOPICS

➤ Select a country that was colonised and examine what you believe are the positive and negative legacies of colonialism.

➤ Identify some of the key elements in writings on post-colonialism and suggest how these have enhanced understanding of the colonial experience.

➤ Examine the ideological and practical differences between the phases of mercantile, industrial and late colonialism.
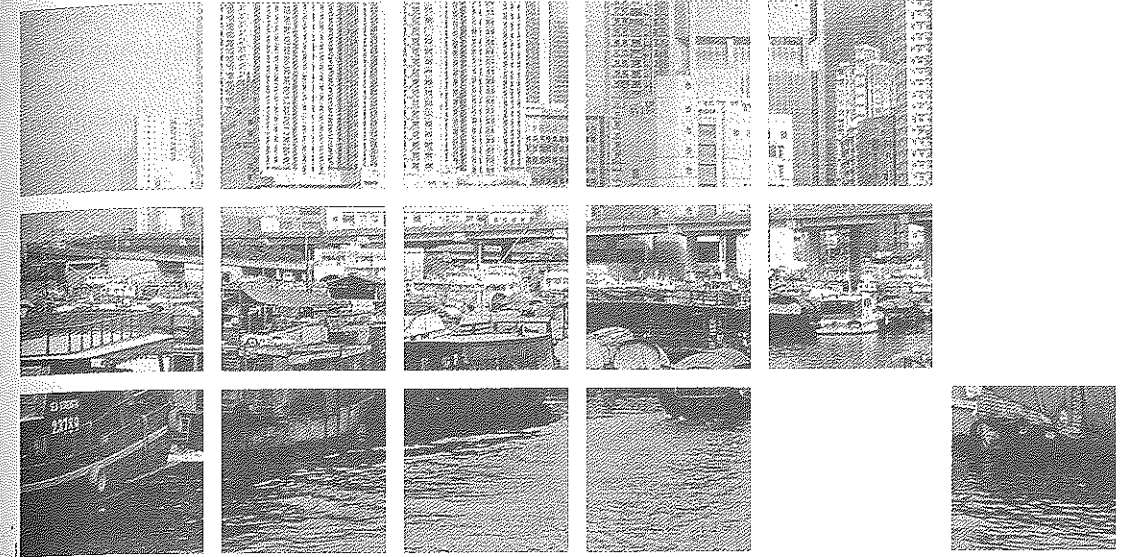
Theories and strategies of development

The aim of this chapter is to introduce readers to the main theories of development that have been advanced, and to give some idea as to how these have been put into practice. By the end of the chapter, therefore, readers should be aware of the most important characteristics of different theories and strategies of development. At the outset, the terms 'theory', 'strategy', 'ideology' and 'paradigm' are defined in respect of the field of development studies. Throughout, it is emphasised that thinking about development tends to be evolutionary rather than revolutionary, so that new ideas and approaches often come into existence without the eradication of older ones. This is, of course, because thinking about development is highly political and, therefore, highly contested. The account:

➤ Considers the nature and role of theories, strategies and ideologies in the field of development studies.

➤ Reviews classical and neo-classical approaches to development theory; these approaches being based on traditional economic theory. Such approaches represent 'top-down' development.

➤ Considers the findings of historical–empirical approaches to the understanding of

development – that is, learning from what has actually happened in the past in various regions.

➤ Overviews radical and Marxist-inspired theories, especially the dependency school.

➤ Stresses the diversity of alternative approaches to development, including an array of 'bottom-up' formulations.

➤ Links the conditions of modernity and postmodernity to development theory.

Introduction

Since the start of the twentieth century, a major feature of the interdisciplinary field of development studies has been a series of fundamental changes in thinking about the process of development and indeed what constitutes development itself. This search for new conceptualisations of development has been mirrored by changes in development practice in the field.

Thus, there has been much debate and controversy about development, with many changing views as to its definition, and the strategies by means of which, however defined, it may be pursued. Chapter 1 exemplified this in respect of the recent debates about the value