

Colonization and Immigration

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The Zapatista Revolt

On 1st January 1994, residents in Mexico woke up with expectations to celebrate the entry of Mexico to the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). However, they woke up to rebellion from Zapatista Army of National Liberation (EZLN) who declared war to the government demanding for peace, justice, democracy, liberty, independence, education, health, food, housing, land, and work. This research explores how the conditions of Mexico at that time reflects neo-colonialism for Mexicans and also highlights some of the reasons why Zapatistas responded to these external events.

Godelmann (2014) explains that EZLN, an indigenous armed organization in Mexico opened the eyes of the non-indigenous population and the Mexican government to understand the alarming situation of native people in Chiapas. Godelmann (2014) adds that the native conflict in Chiapas led to self-determination, recognition, domestic awareness of indigenous rights, as well as international awakening to the domestic issues.

The Zapatista National Liberation Army borrowed their name from Emiliano Zapatista who fought for 'Land and Liberty' during the Mexican Revolution from 1910 to 1917. James (1994) assert that Zapatista was an ecological event aimed at exploring the persons exploring the land and how they used these lands. According to Mize and Swords (2010), neo-colonialism is defined as the use of cultural, political, economic, as well as other pressures to influence or control other nations. In this case, Zapatista represents neo-colonialism in Mexico where they used 'Land and Liberty' to fight against Chiapas native people who were discriminated in government decision making as well as enjoying human services and rights like North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), healthcare, and education.

Harvey (2018) argues that the oppression was aggravated by events like the depiction of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which threatened the rights and interests of indigenous people. The Zapatista viewed this betrayal from the government, as it allowed big agrarian businesses in Canada and the U.S. to rent or buy their land. Neo-colonialism is evident, as the Zapatista fought against the use of their land by foreigners who would later wipe them away from the market.

The uprising of Zapatista was sparked by the historical abuse and marginalization of the natives in Chiapas, as well as the NAFTA implementation. Commission for Indigenous Development [CDI] (2012) explains that approximately 69% of natives in Mexico were in the agricultural sector. The Zapatista movement led to political participation of the natives, as well as the right to cultural, social, and economic development. NAFTA implementation led the government to align laws with those of the U.S. and Canada.

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The History of Colonialism

Colonialism can be explained as the process by which one power controls weaker people or area. Alfred (2009) explains that colonialism is due to one country subjugating another, conquering the residents, and exploiting the country while forcing their culture and language on the populations. Lehning (2013) explains that in 1914, the Europeans had colonized the majority of countries. In addition, Alfred (2009) notes that colonialism and imperialism are closely related. According to Butt (2013), imperialism can be defined as the ethos or the policy of applying power and controlling another country or people that underlies colonialism.

In antiquity, empires like Phoenicia, Ancient Egypt, Ancient Rome, and Ancient Greece led colonialism. Tsetskhladze and Hargrave (2011) explain that the antiquity colonialists extended across their borders into non-contiguous and surrounding regions from 1550 B.C. The antiquity colonialists increased their power by establishing colonies that depicted the residents' physical and resident resources of the populations they conquered. Lehning (2013) explains that the colonies in antiquity were post-iron age meaning they were not formed from large territories but rather from a mother city, the metropolis. This era is termed as classical antiquity during which the metropolis and the colonies maintained strong ties.

Some of the colonies that remained tied to metropolis include Alexander the Great, Rome, Carthage, and Phoenicians. However, the Greeks colonies during the Classical and Archaic eras were self-governing and like sovereign from their initiation. In contrast to the Greek colonies, which were formed to solve social unrest in their mother cities, colonies like HAN Chines, Carthaginian, Roman, and Hellenistic colonies formed to increase power and expand the empires. The end of the classical antiquity led to the Age of Discovery, which is termed as the modern colonialism.

Maddison (2015) explains that the Age of Discovery started at the beginning of the 15th century when Portugal searched for civilization and new trade routes and lasted until the 17th century. Butt (2013) adds that in 1415, the Portuguese conquered a region in North Africa, the Ceuta and empire that lasted until 1999. Further along, as expounded by Maddison (2015) the Age of Discovery is characterized as a period when the Europeans explored the world by sea searching for new trade routes, new goods, and trading partners. Others traveled by sea to just explore the world. During this period, the Portuguese discovered the first circumnavigation of the globe in 1519–1522; between 1492 and 1502, the trans-Atlantic voyages of Christopher Columbus; the Crown of Castile (Spain), 1498 the sea route to India; 1434 the coast of Africa; 1427, the Azores; and in 1419 the Atlantic archipelagos of Madeira.

Alfred (2009) explains that in 1492, Portuguese had conquered Spain, Cape Verde, and Maderia. Christopher Columbus kicked off the Spanish Empire in 1492 during his exploration. Further, Maddison (2015) explains that Portugal and Spain were locked in competition for new territories by taking over indigenous lands in Asia, Africa, India, and America. Other countries, which started to build their empires overseas, included Germany, France, Netherlands, and England where they started fighting Portugal and Spain for the lands they had earlier conquered. Irrespective of the growing European colonies, some countries had attained independence like the 1776 American Revolution and Haitian Revolution in 1781. Nonetheless, the Eastern Hemisphere nations persisted to attract European colonial powers.

At the beginning of the 1880s, the European nations put their focus on overcoming African lands. These nations raced one another to covet natural resources and forming colonies; they held an international period of decolonization that commenced in 1914 lasting until 1975. The British were commanding the seas and acted as a monopoly in accessing overseas nations,

which was promoted by their industrial position. However, the establishment of free trade, laissez-faire operations, and the abandonment of mercantilism reduced the level of attractiveness. This led Bentham to plead to France and Britain to free their dependencies; according to Turgot, colonies fell from trees like fruits; while Disraeli assumes colonies would remain independent, which he termed as “millstones around our neck” in 1852.

Another country opened to the West was China but was not subjected to colonial rule. The British swayed the colonialism in India alone, while Algeria was encroached by France in Indochina. Alfred (2009) explains that after the scramble for Africa started, the British had suggested their withdrawal from African holdings. Colonialism restraints were swayed during the new imperialist flood, which concluded with countries’ partitioning in the world. For example, the colonialist subdivided Africa into European dependencies. In other areas, new colonies were formed from the old ones through extension and consolidation, like in Southeast Asia, where the British, French, and Dutch extensively expanded their intensity and scope of their rule to Burma, Malaya, Indochina, and Indies. However, changing power relationships resulted in the subdivision of territories in the Boer War, in the Spanish–American War, and after World War following the transfer of Turkish and German holdings.

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