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Western Civilization – Colonization of the World

1492 - 1914

Changes In the Size of Areas Dependent on the West

Part I Text

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Part I

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Introduction

Studies on the European, American, Russian and Turkish modern expansion, as well as on the problem of colonialism and imperialism, should be based on the knowledge about territorial changes of colonial empires on individual continents from the late 15th to the 20th century. We should know who, when, where and by how much increased or decreased its possessions. My paper provides answers, but is also an invitation to further efforts, because it still requires some work.

The work presented here consists of this text (Part I), tables with collected data (Part II) and Excel spreadsheet. In the text, I describe the methodology of estimation and provide a summary of the colonization process using the results of my fact finding work concerning the areas conquered by colonial states (Part I). Next I present summary tables of territorial changes in the period 1492-1914, a list of sources used and printouts of source data (PartII). The spreadsheet features a model used for calculations, summary tables, nine separate tabs with source data, and a list of sources used.

Total area of colonies 1800 - 1914. Fieldhouse, Hoffman, Fisher approach

Having data on colonial expansion broken into empires, continents, and different time points, various conclusions can be drawn.

An example is the lively discussion of how Europe reached the position of the world hegemon, when this process began, at what rate it followed, what role was played by the Industrial Revolution. Traditionally, we see Europe's march towards leadership as a centuries-old process that began in the late Middle Ages or on the threshold of early modernity. However, revisionist historians (e.g. R. Bin Wong, J. Blaut, F. Fernandes-Armesto, AG Frank, J. Goldstone, J. Hobson, E. Mielants, K. Pomeranz,) argue that the domination and supremacy of Europe dates back only to the 19th century and the Industrial Revolution. Both groups see differently the history of science and technology and economic history. They see other causes of the European economic success, they assess differently the contribution of Europe and Asia in building modern science and technology

There are various arguments used in this debate, i.a. fact of fast progressing colonial expansion of Europe since the Great Discoveries era. The growing colonial possessions synthetically shows the process of growing Europe's domination over the rest of the world. One of the arguments for the long march to domination (classical school) and not a sudden, late leap (revisionists) was the passage in the book by D.K. Fieldhouse, which reads: "the proportion of the world's land surface actually occupied by Europeans, whether still under direct European control as colonies or as one-time colonies, was 35 per cent in 1800, 67 per cent in 1878 and 84.4 per cent in 1914 "[Fieldhouse, p. 3]. Fieldhouse's numbers were repeated many times by various authors, as they can lead to significant conclusion that part of Europe that was leading the field in colonial expansion in the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Spain, Portugal, France, the Netherlands, England) and whose European core territories covered no more than 1.3% of the world's land area, managed to dominate 35% of the Earth, and that before

the Industrial Revolution began. Whereas, according to revisionists, only the Industrial Revolution accelerated Europe. Thus, in the three centuries before the industrial age, the West European empires is claimed to increase their holdings 27 times. An admirable achievement and a serious argument for the long march to domination. But the number needs to be checked because Fieldhouse has not provided a calculation that led him to the 35%.

American economic historian Philip T. Hoffman carried out that verification in his latest book "Why has Europe conquered the world?" [Hoffman 2015, pp. 2-4]. His results for 1800 are in the range of 49.1 - 69.5 million square kilometers, or 36-51% of all lands, so slightly more than Fieldhouse's (35%). For 1914, he obtained a result very similar to Fieldhouse's, between 83% and 84.4%. Hoffman also provided a map for 1914, much clearer than in Fieldhouse's book [Fieldhouse, p. 490]. Hoffman's map, like Fieldhouse's, is of the asynchronous type, i.e. it shows all non-European territories that in 1914 had shorter or longer episode of colonial subordination.

Detailed calculations Hoffman offers to send to anyone interested (his mail address pth@hss.caltech.edu).

Hoffman's map



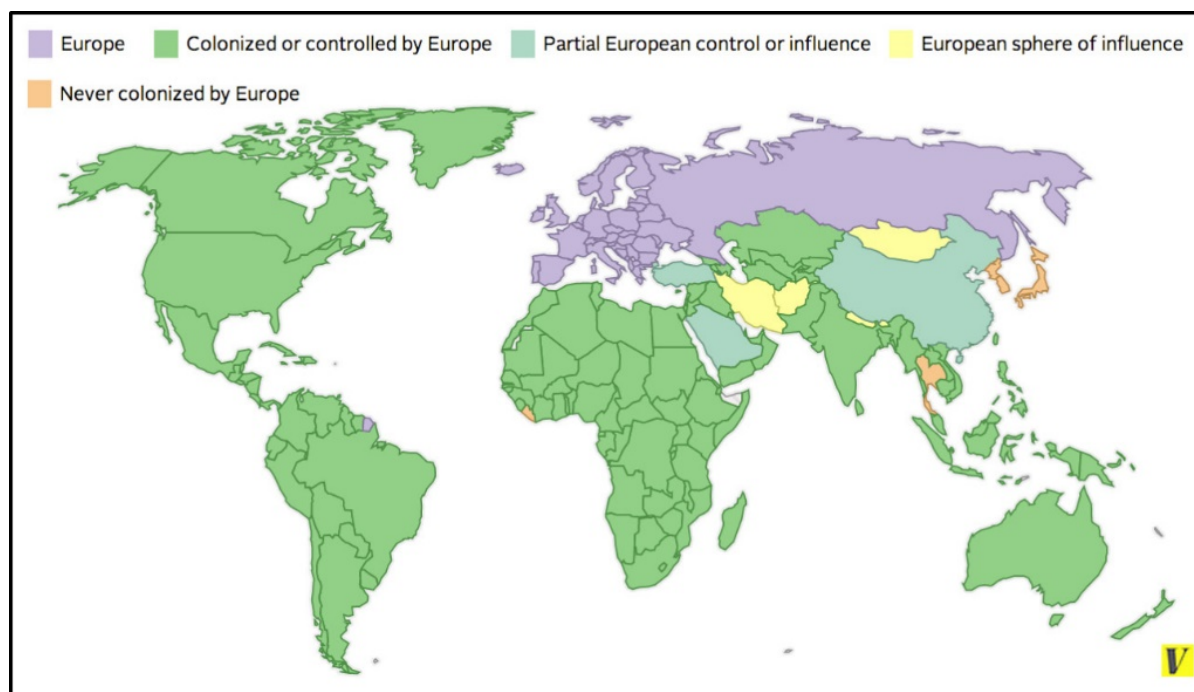
Map 1. "In dark gray: areas never under European control, 1914. In light gray: territory Europeans controlled or had conquered by 1914, including colonies that had gained independence. Adapted from Fieldhouse 1973, map 9."

Source: P.T. Hoffman, *Why Did Europe Conquer the World?*, Princeton University Press, 2015, p. 2. Reproduced by courtesy of Author

The Fieldhouse-Hoffman map is impressive, but another author, Max Fisher, has provided an even more dramatic picture of the extent of European colonization. In his opinion, areas that had never been subjected, even partially, to European control or influence were much smaller than Fieldhouse and Hoffman claim. According to Fisher, only Korea, Japan, Thailand and Liberia were such countries, and possibly Ethiopia. The difference between Hoffman and Fisher

stems from differences in how colonialism is defined. Fisher sees the subjugation of the country (for example, nineteenth-century China), where Fieldhouse and Hoffman do not judge it that way. [types and degrees of colonialism, cf. Abernathy, pp. 54-56; Fieldhouse, pp. 11-13; Ziltener]

Fisher's map



Map 2. Countries that were one way or another controlled by Europeans during the 15th-20th centuries. Max Fisher, Map: European colonialism conquered every country in the world but these five.

Source: Vox Media, Feb. 24, 2015. Reproduced by courtesy of Vox Media Publishing.
<https://www.vox.com/2014/6/24/5835320/map-in-the-whole-world-only-these-five-countries-escaped-european>

How to study changes of colonial areas 1492-1914

Both maps are interesting, but I am more interested in the pace at which Western European countries gained their position than in the sum of the areas colonized over four centuries. I want to count how the changes looked like, i.e. see and compare the colonial areas in subsequent historical moments. And look at this process in the long run, from 1492 to 1914.

To make this, I study nine time points: 1492, 1550, 1600, 1754, 1800, 1825, 1885, 1898, 1914. For each of these points, I present the size of non-European areas (broken down into continents), which were controlled by the European colonial empires of the time. For each of these points, I also show the historical core areas of the empires, i.e. the areas possessed before the expansion began. I present the data in an Excel spreadsheet and in this text.

In addition to the European empires, I included data on the territorial changes of the USA, Russia and the Ottoman Empire. The US is part of Western civilization, but the Russian and Turkish empires do not fall into this category. Turkey is not even part of Europe. As for Russia, part of its territory is in Europe, but it was and is an Eastern autocracy, and culturally, Western

values were and are alien to it. However, when analysing European expansion, the authors often take Russia into account as well. I did the same and besides, also counted the territorial changes of the Ottoman Empire, although some authors do not include it among the colonial states [Ziltener]. But when making summaries for each time point, both these countries need to be singled out because of the profound differences that separate them from Western civilization. Besides, I am mainly interested in the world expansion of Western civilization and not of Eastern autocracies.

The USA is a separate issue. If we want to look at the geographic expansion of the West, as the civilization, the US should be included. If we want to explore only Europe's overseas expansion, the US must share the fate of Russia and the Ottoman Empire and be excluded.

The above-mentioned reasons inclined me to present summaries of subsequent time points (1492, 1550, 1600, etc.) in several variants. In the spreadsheet, they are listed below the table for a given year. They are also included in the Tables (Part II).

Variant 1

Summary, variant 1. An example

	millions of sq. km	
1898, all acquisitions + core areas	93.2129	68.7% of total world surface

It shows the colonial possessions of all empires in a given year, i.e. Western European, Russian, Ottomans' and the USA. In the case of the European empires, it also takes into account their historical core areas, i.e. areas they occupied before the expansion had started (For Russia, the Ottoman Empire, and the USA, I do not distinguish core areas from the rest of the area occupied). It also shows what percentage of the total world surface, dependent areas occupy. I took the year 1492 as the start date of the expansion, although Portugal began it earlier, i.e. in the first quarter of the 15th century. In short, variant 1 of the summary shows the scale of total colonial expansion of all empires together, in subsequent time points.

Variant 2

Summary, variant 2. An example

	millions of sq. km	
1898, all w/o Russia and Turkey	69.2589	51.1% of total world surface

Compared to variant 1, Russia and Turkey are not included. Thus, it shows the total scale and pace of expansion of the European empires and the USA, i.e. Western civilization.

Variant 3

Summary, variant 1. An example

	millions of sq. km	
1898, only West European acquis. w/o core areas (Russia, Ottoman Emp., USA excluded)	57.3031	42.2% of total world surface

Compared to variant 1, Russia, Turkey, the USA and core areas are excluded. So, this variant subtracts from variant 1 all areas of these three empires and historical centres of the European empires. Therefore, this variant shows the scale and pace of the overseas expansion only of Western European colonial empires. In my opinion, this is the optimal geographical indicator of the growing position of Western Europe vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Which does not mean it is the best general measure of the European might

Variant 4

Summary, variant. 4. An example

	millions of sq. km	
1898, only West European acquis. w/o core areas (Russia, Ott. Emp., USA, Canada , Australia excluded)	39.3625	29.0% of total world surface

Variant 4 is the same like Variant 3, except that Canada and Australia are excluded from British colonial possessions starting from 1885 time point. It shows the scale of Western European colonization, assuming that since around 1860 Canada and Australia were not colonies in the strict sense.

The reason for doing so is a big difference between the colonies with the indigenous peoples decimated (both Americas, Australia), where the main part of the local population were white descendants of pioneers (and/or mestizo) and the colonies where the native peoples survived the colonial invasion and constituted the majority of the local population. Colonies of the first type at the end of the 18th and 19th centuries either broke with their metropolises by winning independence (South and Central America, the USA) or gained such far-reaching autonomy (e.g. Australia, Canada) that they were incomparable with colonies of the second type, for example, with most African countries. Canada and Australia received the status of dominions in the second half of the nineteenth century with their own parliaments, their own internal policy, and the only limitation of sovereignty was the formal subordination to metropolis in foreign policy. It would be inappropriate to equal their political status (of considerable territories combined: 13.5 million km² in 1885 and almost 18 million km² in 1914) on a par with e.g. Congo or Mozambique. I don't want to settle that issue but only show how the colonized area would have been changed if we assume that from the second half of the 19th century both countries had the strictly colonial phase behind them.

I remind again that the purpose of my analysis is different from that of Fieldhouse and Hoffman. They wanted to show the percentage of the world surface that had in 1800 and 1914 a shorter or longer episode of colonial subordination. Whereas, I am interested in the string of changes in the size of colonial areas over the several centuries. To this end, I take a photo of the world in nine time points and compare the collected data to show how the colonial area was changing in that time. Both Hoffman's and mine perspectives complement each other in a way. Hoffman shows that only small area of the world (around 15%) had defended itself against colonial domination. As for me, I try to show that, until the end of the 19th century, despite its strength, Western Europe never dominated the area exceeding 32% of the globe. Only partition of Africa

in 1885-1914 increased this share to 42%, although hesitation whether Canada and Australia could be classified as colonies, may reduce this share to 30%.

Quick look summarizing the collected data

In absolute numbers and percentages, 1492-1914 colonization was, to put it briefly, as follows:

Western European colonial possessions outside Europe in 1492 amounted barely to 11.5 thousand km². They were confined to the Canary Islands, Cape Verde and the small, vulnerable Portuguese trade outposts in West Africa (around 700-900 km²). Three hundred years later, in 1800, the area colonized by Western Europe was 43 million km² (31.9% of the world's land area). And at the threshold of the First World War (1914) - 59 million km² (43.4% of the world's land area).

If we take both the Western European empires and the USA, in 1800 Western civilization controlled 34.8% of all lands in the world and in 1914 – 52.2%.

If it were considered that Canada and Australia were no longer de facto colonies since the mid-nineteenth century, the percentage of controlled areas would have to be reduced by about 10-13%.

In 1492 both eastern empires, Russia and the Ottoman Empire, controlled 3% of the land area, and at the beginning of the First World War (1914) - 18%.

Territorial changes of colonial empires 1492-1914: short description

While reading about the history of colonization, a look at the relevant maps might be helpful. The sources used to prepare this work contain several hundred of them, but I have found no world historical maps that show the history of colonization which I could recommend utterly.

I define Central America as the land area from the Panama-Colombia border to the Mexico-US border, and the entire Caribbean.

1492 - 1550

Between 1492 and 1550, in the sixty years since the beginning of the Age of Great Discoveries, the total area controlled by all colonial empires (including areas in Europe, Russia and the Ottoman Empire) has more than tripled, from just under 5 to almost 16 million square kilometers.

Spain increased its non-European possessions 886 times, from 7.5 thousand km² (Canary Islands) to 6.5 million km² (mainly: Central America 1.9 million km² and South America 4.4 million km²). It was the result of the swift American conquest.

Portugal increased its colonies 140 times, from 6.3 thousand km² (Cape Verde and the Azores) to 890 thousand km². In Brazil, it took over about 420 000 km², mainly in coastal areas, and the rest in Asia and Africa. The Portuguese priorities were then located in Asia, directed mainly to the Indian Ocean. The significant, albeit temporary, successes in intercepting the spice trade from the Muslims did not go yet hand in hand with the large increase in colonial possessions.

Portugal had several dozen trading posts and forts on the coast of eastern and western Africa, in India, in the Malay archipelago, in China and in Taiwan. These were commercial stations, repair and supply bases for ships and sometimes military forts with troops stationed there. They served important functions, but their total area was small. 76% of all Portuguese colonial territories (0.75 million km²) were in Brazil, Mozambique and Ceylon. Mozambique was an important base on the Portuguese Indian Fleet route, Ceylon was a spice supplier, and in Brazil the efforts had been made to build sugar cane plantations

The Ottoman Empire area recorded a 3.5-fold increase in the controlled area, from 1.4 to 4.9 million km².

1550 - 1754

Between 1550 and 1754 the total area controlled by all the colonial empires grew three and a half times, from 16 to almost 56 million km². It took two hundred years, however, not sixty years as before. Spain's overseas possessions doubled from 6.5 to 13.5 million km², mainly due to the growth of colonies in South and Central America (from 6.4 to 11.4 million km²). The South American Portuguese colonies in Brazil grew 16 times, from 0.42 to 6.6 million km². Together, Portugal and Spain controlled 88% of South and Central America.

Four new colonial states appeared: France, the Netherlands, the British kingdom and Denmark. The latter had controlled, for a time being, only Iceland (103 thousand km²). In 1754, these new colonial states had a total of 11.3 million km² of colonial possessions, more than half of which belonged to France (6.6 million km²) and its North American property (the so-called New France - 5.98 million km²). France was then the largest landowner in North America. The British had 3.3 million km², including Rupert's Land (area around Hudson Bay), which was then 1 million km² and was the subject of a dispute with France until 1713, when France recognized the sovereignty of the British crown over this area (the Peace of Utrecht). Spain in North America had 1.5 million km².

The possessions of Russia and the Ottomans increased nearly threefold (from 7.5 to 21 million km²), mainly due to the expansion of the territory of Russia 6.5 times, from 2.5 to 16.3 million km².

In Asia, Spain colonized the entire Philippines (300 thousand km²). It was formally proclaimed in a papal bull in 1579, although Spain had had there a decisive influence already earlier. The Philippines became the Spanish intermediary base in the Sino-European exchange. Spain imported silver from South America, which landed in China and other Asian countries in exchange for goods that Spanish galleons on the Manila-Acapulco route carried to Mexico. From there other Spanish flotillas were taking them to Europe.

On the other hand, Portugal lost Ceylon (65 000 km²) to the Netherlands in 1664, and by the middle of the 18th century almost all possessions in India. France also lost the competition for India. The British, operating through the British East India Company (EIC), became the main player there. Before 1770, they ruled India over an area of half a million km² (all of India is 3.29 million km²). EIC operation in India was not easy. The company had to fight against local opponents, including the Mughal empire, the kingdoms of Mysore and Marathas and to build a

complex network of defensive and offensive alliances, because India was a patchwork of many competing political entities, and gaining control over the entire subcontinent lasted until the mid-nineteenth century.

The Netherlands was the largest European colonial power in Asia in the second half of the 18th century. It controlled the area, formally amounting to 1.27 million km², including key spice-producing areas (Ceylon, Moluccas, Malaya) and sea routes, including the Strait of Malacca (recaptured from the Portuguese in 1641). It pursued an expansive trade policy, waged local wars, was a very significant player in Southeast Asia. Talking about area controlled by Dutch I use the phrase "formally" because its largest possession was New Guinea (800 000 km²), which was controlled by good mutual relations with the Tidore Sultanate, a country also strong and influential in the region, just like the Netherlands. In 1660 the Dutch recognized the sultan's sovereignty over New Guinea and good relations with him gave them a free hand in their activities on the island.

Finally, a few words about the colonies in Africa. Five countries operated here. In order from the largest owners, these were: the Ottoman Empire - 1.7 million km², Portugal - 800 thousand km², the British kingdom - 400 thousand km², France - 300 thousand km² and Spain 160 thousand km². The Ottomans took over the northern regions of the Mediterranean Sea and the Portuguese the coasts of Angola and Mozambique.

1754 - 1800

Major changes took place over the next half century. In 1800, the total increase in the colonial area, compared to 1754, was 24%. All possessions of all empires were 69.7 million km², i.e. half of world surface (51.4%). The overseas possessions of the Western European empires covered an area of 43.3 million km², i.e. 31.9% of all lands. The most important changes concerned British possessions and the emergence of a new state - the United States of America.

In just fifty years, England's colonial holdings grew from 3.3 to 12.5 million square kilometers. The loss of the American colonies (900 000 km²) that declared independence and formed the United States (1776) was more than compensated for by possessions in the north, which increased from 2 to almost 6 million km². It happened as a result of taking over most of the French properties, the so-called New France (5.98 million km²), under the Treaty of Paris (1763), which sealed the victory of Great Britain over France and Spain in the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). The taken over northern French territories, which would later become Canada, were so far a collection of several smaller territories, subordinate to Great Britain (Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia, Labrador and Newfoundland, Manitoba - 1.34 million km² in total) and Rupert's Land with the surface equalled with the Hudson Bay watershed (land 3.9 million km²; land and water surface 4.6 million km²). Rupert's Land was a British colony from 1668, leased to the HBC (Hudson Bay Company). In addition, there was a disputed area of 1.7 million km² on the northwest coast of the North American continent. The British and the Spaniards, who were still in charge of Mexico, had claims to it.

France lost its possessions in North America, but a year before the Treaty of Paris (1763), which ceded the French lands to the British Crown, France and Spain concluded a secret agreement

under which French Louisiana (approx. 2.14 million km²) was transferred to Spain. After another 38 years, Louisiana returned to France as Napoleon wanted to rebuild the French colonial empire. However, other problems prompted him to offer Louisiana to the United States soon.

In 1800, Spain had 5.8 million km² in North America and made claims for the ownership of a strip of land on the west coast, stretching roughly from 44 to 61 parallel (Alaska border), of a total area of approx. 1.5 million km². The areas of New Spain (Viceroyalty of New Spain, or Virreinato de la Nueva España), reaching Oregon in the north, present-day Iowa, Missouri and Arkansas in the east and Florida and Gulf of Mexico in the south, were not questioned by anyone. But the remaining areas (these 1.5 million km²), north of the 44th parallel, were the subject of a dispute with Great Britain.

Spain and Portugal's possessions in Central and South America have not changed. The two empires together controlled 18.1 million km², i.e. 88% of their area. This was about to change radically soon.

In 1800, in Asia, the three largest empires in terms of area controlled were China (13.5 million km²), Russia (12.1 million km²) and the Ottoman Empire (2.6 million km²). The largest European colonies had the Netherlands (1.297 million km²) and Great Britain (720 thousand km²). The latter slightly expanded its Indian possessions, from half a million km² in 1754 to 667 000 km² in 1800.

In 1800, in Africa, colonial empires increased their possessions to 5.5 million km², i.e. up to 18.3% of the continent's area (in 1754 it was 3.4 million km², i.e. 11.2%). The Ottomans increased their colonies by almost one million km², to 2.7 million km² (subjugation of Eritrea and most of the territory of Sudan). Great Britain increased its African colonies threefold, from 400 000 to almost 1.2 million km² (subordination of Kenya and Somalia – 400 000 km², and South Africa also 400 000 km²) France twice - to 700 000 km². Portugal did not change the size of its possessions (800 thousand km²).

Australia and New Zealand became a new and immediately great colonial property of Great Britain at the end of the 18th century. In 1787, the continent began to be settled with the arrival of the First Fleet under the command of Captain Arthur Philip, who the following year as governor announced the founding of the New South Wales Colony. Its border was established at 135 degrees East longitude and between 10 and 43 degrees South latitude. It was an area of 3.7 million km², soon hailed with pride as Britain's greatest possession. In fact, the controlled area was a tiny fraction of the almost 4 million km², but European explorers, after arriving in new lands, often announced that they were taking possession of them all on behalf of the kingdom that sent them on the journey.

The new state on the historic scene was the United States of America. The first census in 1790 stated that the area of the new state is 2.3 million km². The USA will grow significantly soon.

1800 - 1825

In twenty-five years, from 1800 to 1825, the total area of the Western European colonies decreased by more than half, from 43 to 21.3 million km² (from 31.7% to 15.7% of all world's lands), mainly due to the loss by Spain and Portugal of all dependent territories in South, Central and North America. Together, both empires lost 25 million square kilometers. Taken together, their colonies shrank from 27 million to 2 million square kilometers. Both countries only retained their possessions in Africa and Asia. In Central America, Spain only retained Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, or 120 000 km², compared to two and a half million km² in 1800.

The independence of the Spanish and Portuguese American colonies was a consequence of many events initiated by the French invasion of Spain in 1808. The imprisonment of the Spanish king Ferdinand II met with resistance from the population and the formation of grassroots administrations in place of those liquidated by the French. They formed the national government, the so-called the Central Junta and the Cortes passed the first Spanish constitution of a liberal character. The American colonies followed in the footsteps of the metropolises and also created their own administrations, independent of the colonial ones. When Ferdinand II returned to the throne, he restored absolute rule and began persecuting those who, during his imprisonment, took rule into their own hands. But the political turmoil that continued in Spain over the next decades made it impossible to control the already strong spirit of freedom in the colonies. All efforts to return to the pre-war state, punitive expeditions, and attempts at political arrangements have failed. The colonies proclaimed independence one after another and were irretrievably lost.

Great Britain increased its colonial holdings between 1800 and 1825 from 12.5 million to 17.8 million km² (+ 42%). The largest increase in dependent areas was in North America (+3 million km²), India (+1.22 million km²) and Australia (+1.17 million km²).

The new areas of the British colonies in North America were the Northwest Territory and the Arctic Archipelago, the first penetrated for a long time, but only by groups of hunters and fur traders. As for Arctic Islands (almost half of the new territories, 1.4 million km²), it was inhabited by the Innuits and where the white people did not venture. The official inclusion of these areas into the colonial possessions of the British Crown was mainly to communicate to the United States that there was nothing to look for here.

In the case of India, it is not easy to estimate the historical pace and scale of India growing subservience to the British, due to the complex and changing political mosaic in the area. There were several dozen political entities there. Some were formal British colonies. Some were formally independent, but actually subordinate to the British. The character of connections and subordination was various and were changing with time passing. However, gradually, the power of the British grew, and with it the area dependent on them. To tell about the pace the British were gaining new parts of India with and its size, I rely on the authors who unscrambled this changing political jigsaw for the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. They are Tapan Raychaudhuri (in a book edited by him and Dharma Kumara) and Hermann Kulke and Dietmar Rothermund. In their opinion, the English controlled five hundred thousand square kilometers

in 1754, seven hundred thousand in 1800, and, slightly ahead of our considerations, in 1825 already 1.8 million square kilometers.

As for Australia, the enlargement of this British colony with a new strip of the continent took place in 1825. New territory lay between 129 and 135 east meridian and covered around 1.4 million square kilometers. Decision to increase the colonial surface had little to do with the actual settlement and development of the area. As in the case of Canada, it was mainly a signal to other countries that Britain was taking these lands under her control and it was better not to get in her way.

In 1803, France sold Louisiana (2.14 million km²) to the United States for 11 million USD and for debt cancellation in the amount of almost 4 million USD (15 million USD in 1803 is equivalent in purchasing power to about 362 million USD in 2021). With this transaction, she divested her last North American possession. Thanks to this purchase, the United States almost doubled its area to 4.63 million km². The purchased territory was not strictly defined and its northern border with Great Britain was agreed in 1818 and the western border with Mexico - a year later.

1825 - 1885

In 1885, just before the partition of Africa between the Western European colonial empires (the so-called Scramble for Africa), the total area of dependent areas was about 65 million km², (all acquisitions - core areas) which means that 48% of all lands in the world were under this or that empire's control. Sixty years earlier, in 1825, it was 37.4% (50.8 million km²).

In 1885, Africa bore the burden of colonialism on 17% of its territory, but in just a few years the Europeans were to tear virtually all of Africa, selling it to the public as a noble treaty to ban the slave trade. Having a colony was fashionable, profitable, raised the status of the state and made its citizens proud. So other Europeans fought to enter the club. The new colonial states were Germany, Italy and Belgium, which together had colonies with an area of 800 thousand square kilometers, of which 80% (650 000 km²) belonged to the German colonists considered to be extremely brutal.

In the years 1825-1885 overseas West European and American colonial possessions increased from 26.2 to 43.3 million km², or 65%, mainly due to the expansion of British colonies (+7.38 million km²), Danish (+2 million km²), French (+1.44 million km²), the creation of German, Italian and Belgian colonies (798 000 km² in total) and the next wave of appropriation of the Native Americans territories by the USA (+ 4.9 million km²).

The enlargement of the British colonies consisted of new territories in Asia (+3.89 million km², from 1.94 to 5.83 million km²), Australia (+2.8 million km²) and North America (945 thousand km²). In America, it was the obtaining the possession of British Columbia territory (1871) after twenty years of disputes and bargains with the USA. In the case of Australia, it was a simple statement of acquisition of the entire continent under British rule. But New Zealand (270 000 km²) was incorporated entirely into the British colonies only after crushing the armed resistance of the indigenous Maori people. Their rights to land and British citizenship, guaranteed by the Waitangi Treaty (1840), did not get respected and Maori took up arms. The war with the British

lasted 28 years, ended with the defeat of the Maori and the confiscation of their lands. The war for these lands continues to this day, although now in the courts and not on the battlefields.

Asia. In 1876 the British proclaimed Queen Victoria Empress of India. It was the formal crowning of British rule over a territory of 3.3 million km², one third of which were independent, though vassalized countries. From 1824 to 1885, three successive British-Burmese wars deprived Burma (680 000 km²) of independence and included it in the colonial orbit of the Empire. Agreements with the Dutch and negotiations and fights with local rulers gave the British control over the southern part of the Malay Peninsula (146 000 km²). They also took control of northern Borneo (208 000 km²) and, together with the Germans, took western New Guinea from the Dutch, which they would divide among themselves. The British part was 118 000 km².

The USA increased its area from 4.63 to 9.6 million. km². The main components of growth were:

- annexation of Texas to the USA in 1848 (1 million km²). Earlier, Texas (part of Mexico) declared independence and was incorporated into the United States in 1846. Mexico did not accept this, war broke out which Mexico lost and was deprived not only of Texas, but
- in 1848, the province of Alta California was also taken from him (the so-called Mexican Cession, 1,37 million km²). The US paid Mexico 15 million USD as compensation (equivalent in purchasing power to about 518 million USD in 2021).
- In 1846 as a result of the treaty with Great Britain, the USA took possession of the Oregon Territory (0.7421 million km²).
- In 1854 the USA bought the territory of Gadsden (77 000 km²) from Mexico for 10 million USD (equivalent in purchasing power to about 325 USD million in 2021).
- In 1867, the USA bought Alaska (1.5307 million km²) from Russia for 7.2 million. USD (equivalent in purchasing power to about 133 million USD in 2021).

Except for the practically uninhabited Alaska, all transactions took place over the heads of the Native Americans who protested against the settlement of their lands, were fighting and dying in their defence, and after the defeat, they were forcibly deported and imprisoned on reservations.

The list of great colonial holders was increased by Denmark. Much earlier, from the beginning of the 17th century, it had strong ties with Iceland (103 000 km²), which it treated as a dependent territory, establishing, inter alia, monopoly on trade with the island. The centuries-long relationship with the colonies of settlers in Greenland (2,166 million km²) was the basis for the Danish government to establish a similar monopoly on trade in 1776. The first formal recognition of Denmark as ruler of Greenland and Iceland could be inferred from the Treaty of Kiel in 1814. However, until 1867 there was no event that could be considered a strong international recognition of Denmark as owner of Greenland. This year, the US government made an offer to Denmark to buy Greenland, thereby recognizing it as the owner of the island. The offer was rejected, but from this year on, the entire territory of the island can be considered a Danish colony. Previously, I attributed to Denmark only the actual areas inhabited on the south-western coasts, roughly 150 000 km². By the way, in the 17th century the Danes began

their colonial expansion in India, Africa and the Caribbean. Those colonial adventures ended in the nineteenth century with the sale of the owned territories to Great Britain (small estates on the Gulf of Guinea and the other near Calcutta, and the Nicobar archipelago in Bengal Gulf) and to the USA (archipelago in the Caribbean, now known as the US Virgin Islands).

The colonial possessions of Spain, Portugal and the Netherlands changed very little compared to 1825. Russia increased its territory from 19 to 21 million km², the Ottoman Empire shrank twice, from 5.9 to 2.9 million km². France almost doubled its colonial holdings to 3.17 million km², mainly due to the colonization of the coastal part of Algeria (about half a million km²) and Tunisia (160 000 km²).

1885 - 1898

One fundamental change took place in the colonization process between 1885 and 1898. Europe's colonial empires torn all of Africa apart. Their possessions on this continent grew by 22 million km², from 4.4 to 26.6 million km². Great Britain (+8.6 million km²) and France (+7.8 million km²) gained the most. Both countries obtained 71% of the entire African pool that was distributed.

The partition of Africa was decided at the Berlin conference (November 1884 - February 1885) and was caused by the desire to avoid war conflicts, because the commercial expansion of various European countries went deep into the continent, just as appetites for Africa's natural resources grew. "It has been agreed that European countries with bases on the coasts will also occupy deep-continent territories, with the size depending on their military capabilities. After 1885 the "race for Africa" began. Particular colonial states operated mostly through their pre-existing trade companies, to which appropriate expeditionary troops were assigned" [Wikipedia PL].

Germany gained a lot. Their African lands now amounted to almost two and a half million square kilometers (in 1885 – 356 000 km²). Belgium had nearly the same, but the entire Congo (2.3 million km²) got the status of private property of King Leopold II and only after his death was to become the property of the Belgian state.

1898 - 1914

Colonial possessions of Western European countries changed only slightly between 1898 and 1914, from 57.3 to 58.9 million. km², i.e. by 2.8%. Italy noted a large increase in territories by annexing previously Ottoman colonies in Libya (850 000 km²), after the winning campaign against Ottomans in 1912. This almost doubled the territories dependent on Italy.

Russia basically ended its conquests reaching an area of 22.8 million. km². The Ottoman Empire, on the other hand, was on the verge of collapse. In 1914, it covered 1.98 million km² (1898 – 2.95 million km²), but five years later it shrank to barely 190 000 km². Even Anatolia, the historic nucleus of an empire, was largely occupied by French, British and Italian troops.

The already small Spanish overseas colonies decreased from 720 thousand km² in 1898 to 310 thousand km² in 1914. The apogee of colonial rule when the kingdom of Spain was 17 million km² passed with the loss of American territories in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Now, as a result of losing the war with the USA (1898), Cuba, the Philippines, Puerto Rico and Guam were lost.

General description of sources and problems with estimation

The data sources are listed below and in the Sources tab of the spreadsheet. They made it possible to carry out estimation of the territorial changes of colonies over several centuries. I treat the input data on colonial territories presented in the worksheet as a working set of varying accuracy, depending on the empire analyzed. The least accurate estimates concern Russia, because I did not find detailed data, but only maps, and I did not treat Russia as a priority. It should also be remembered that the concept of a colonized area is not a clear cut but vague and blurry. Depending on the features ascribed to colonies, researchers often distinguish between colonies, subordinate areas, etc. [e.g. Ziltener et al.] A classic example is the presence of the British in India, the Russians in Siberia and other parts of Asia, or the conquest of the American Wild West. In this text, I have given an example of the different assessments of the scale of colonialism by Fieldhouse, Hoffman and Fisher. Therefore, in the case of many areas it is not possible to accurately measure the colonized area. Sometimes the boundaries of colonial possessions were not clearly defined, which was marked by the authors of historical atlases. In many cases, I estimated the area using historical maps together with Google Maps and Google Earth applications. Undoubtedly, further work is needed to detail the presented data and possibly add or change the time points of the analysis. I will be grateful for any suggestions and critical information.

Sources include books, journal articles, and materials published on the Internet, especially Wikipedia. Almost all data used here have at least two sources. I have divided the Internet sources into materials by continents so that they could be easier find and use.

North America

Thanks to the work of US Bureau of the Census, data on the changing territory of the US since its inception are readily available. There is also a Wikipedia article with a detailed table of US territorial acquisitions since 1783. Estimation of the changing territory of the British colonies that eventually became Canada is no so easy. For example, there are various data on the size of a large British colony, Rupert's Land. Nor is it clear the changing status and size of the disputed territory on the Pacific Northwest. The disputed areas during the US-Mexico conflict are also a bit difficult to quantify.

Greenland is a separate problem. Denmark had more or less close ties with its settlers from the 17th century onwards. In the Treaty of Kiel of 1814, ending the Napoleonic wars in Scandinavia, Greenland remained in the possession of Denmark. So one could consider this as international recognition and count the entire area of Greenland from then on as a Danish colony. However, up to 1825 I included to Denmark only that part of Greenland that was actually inhabited, i.e. about 150 000 km². Only the USA's offer to buy Greenland made to Denmark in 1867 I have considered as a strong international confirmation of the Danish right to the island, and from 1885 time point I put the entire area as a Danish property on the list.

South America

I did not find exact figures about the changing colonial territory of Spain and Portugal in the 16th-19th centuries. Different authors assess the status of the southern part of the continent differently. Some do not include this area as the Spanish colonies on their maps, others did. Me as well. The area of the Spanish colonies is not pictured on the maps uniformly neither. As for Brazil, some authors include it entirely as the Portuguese possession since XVII century. Me as well but others exclude some virgin areas of the Amazon.

Australia

Problems alike are with Australia. Formal declarations of taking over of its subsequent parts under British rule did not have much to do with the actual settlement, development and knowledge of the continent. It was more supposed to deter potential competitors to Australian soil, such as the French. However, I accept the British titles to these possessions, especially since competitors did not appear and the British colonists actively explored the continent, both by land and sea.

Asia

I have not found exact estimations of the territories of the Ottoman Empire broken down by continents. Of course, these data might be somewhere. The same issue applies to Russia. Another problem concerns the colonization of India. Some authors believe that by the end of the 18th century all of India was already under British rule, others believe that this happened only with the seizure of power on the Indian peninsula directly by the British Parliament (1858) or even later. I considered the date of 1858 to be right, although there were still many formally independent Indian political entities. The colonial status of Asian states varied. Sometimes it was not a formal seizure of power, but the freedom to act in agreement with the local ruler (e.g. the Dutch in New Guinea in agreement with the Tidore sultanate). Some also see China's weakening and dependence in the nineteenth century as a some sort of subjugation of it.

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