

Review Handout: Empires

Empires

-overview of empires and their actions throughout history:

- Post-classical (600-1450)
 - Example of Empires/States
 - Umayyad and Abbasid Caliphates (Persia), Byzantine Empire (Europe), Mongol Empire (Eurasia), Feudalisms (Japan and Europe), Sui, Tang, Song, Yuan, and Ming Dynasties (China), Aztec (Mesoamerica), Inca (South America), Ghana, Mali, and Songhai (Africa)
 - General Overview
 - The formation of empires during this period had a lot of continuities as well as innovations and diversity in various regions.
 - For Afro-Eurasia, some states tried to preserve or revive previous empire structures.
 - Smaller, less centralized states began to develop as well.
 - Islam emerged as a new state/empire structure with caliphates
 - Pastoral groups in Eurasia built large empires as well, such as the Mongols.
 - Powerful states developed in Mesoamerica and the Andes region also.
 - Common features of Post-Classical Empires
 - Two types of empires during this time:
 - Reconstituted
 - These were governments/empires that attempted to restore features of previous empires or states.
 - Byzantine Empire and Chinese Dynasties
 - These empires combined traditional sources of power and legitimizing their rule with new ways that were unique to their region.
 - Many still used things like patriarchy and religion to justify their rule.
 - They also implemented new forms of taxation and tributary systems to control their societies too. China for example, adopted Neo-Confucianism, which mixed in Buddhist ideas.
 - Also have new forms of government that emerged as well
 - Islamic caliphates emerged
 - Mongol Empire came about during this time
 - City-states developed in areas like East Africa and Italy
 - Feudalism was common in Europe and Japan
 - Remember, feudalism has serfdom as a labor structure and is based around land/the lord-vassal relationship

- Many states combined local and foreign traditions
 - Chinese traditions influenced Japan during this time for example.
 - Persian beliefs influenced the Islamic caliphates for example.
 - The Americas had similar developments to Afro-Eurasia
 - State systems expanded through city-states that flourished in the Maya region
 - Imperial empires formed in the case of the Aztec and Inca
 - Contacts and conflicts continued between empires and continued to lead to technological and cultural transfers
 - Examples:
 - Tang and the Abbasid Caliphate
 - Mongol Empire with various transfers of goods
 - Crusades
 - Chinese maritime activities with Zheng He
- Early Modern (1450-1750)
 - Empires
 - Ottoman Empire (Middle East), Mughal Empire (India), Safavid Empire (Middle East), Qing Dynasty (China), Russian Empire, British Empire, French Empire, Dutch Republic, Spanish Empire, and Portuguese Empire, Tokugawa Shogunate, Latin American Revolutions, Haitian Revolution, American Revolution, Mexican Revolution
 - General Overview
 - Empires continued to expand and conquer people around the world during this time period.
 - Many empires had difficulty trying to deal with culturally, ethnically, and religiously diverse people in their empires and the mass amount of territory they began to control.
 - Europeans began to get involved in the existing trade networks across the world, such as the Indian Ocean Sea Lanes.
 - In areas like the Indian Ocean, European empires mostly focused around trade posts and enclaves on the coast.
 - Europeans also went into the Americas.
 - They focused on much quicker takeovers here.
 - Europeans created a new Atlantic exchange network that included the transatlantic trade and transpacific exchange network.
 - Many empires began to have more efficient tax systems that placed increased strains on peasants, which led to rebellions.
 - Rulers still used public displays of art and architecture to show off their power.
 - African states began to deal with European encroachment with slavery.
 - Some grew, but others declined due to this

- Common features of empires during this period:
 - Rulers in empire used a variety of methods to legitimize and consolidate their power:
 - Many continued to use religion, art, and monumental architecture to legitimize their rule.
 - Louis XIV and Versailles, divine right of kings, Confucianism and mandate of heaven in China, Promotion of Islam, etc.
 - States treated different ethnic and religious groups in ways that took advantage of their economic contributions while limiting their ability to challenge the state.
 - For example, the Spanish actions toward mestizo, mulatto, and creole groups in the Americas.
 - Many areas recruited and used bureaucratic elites
 - This led to the creation of military professionals like the Janissary corps in the Ottoman Empire
 - This was a way to centralize control over populations and get more resources
 - Many rulers used tribute collections and things like tax farming to get as much revenue as possible to continue to expand.
 - Many states continued to expand and now relied on items like gunpowder and armed trade to establish large empires
 - Europeans with the maritime empires
 - Land empires like the gunpowder, Manchu, and Russian
 - Many states continued to compete with each other
 - Many fought over trade routes, had local rivalries, or dealt with uprisings
 - Piracy
 - Thirty Years War
 - Ottomans vs. Safavids
 - Peasant revolts

- Modern Era (1750-1900)
 - Empires
 - Meiji Restoration (Japan), British Raj (India), Unifications of Germany and Italy, Napoleon's Empire, Tokugawa Shogunate continues,
 - General Overview
 - States began to industrialize during this period or attempt to industrialize.
 - Europeans used industrialization to expand their existing colonies and establish new ones overseas.
 - As many areas began to build modern nations, it led to warfare and diplomacy between different groups.
 - This occurred mostly in Europe
 - The United States and Japan got involved in expanding overseas as well.
 - The growth of new empires challenged the power of existing land based empires in Eurasia like the Chinese Qing Dynasty and Ottoman Empire.
 - New ideas about nationalism, race, gender, class, and culture were used to justify expansion as well as anti-imperial resistance
 - Enlightenment ideas for resistance
 - Social Darwinism for expansion
 - Empire Examples and Common Features
 - Industrial Powers (United States, Japan after Meiji Restoration, European nations)
 - These powers established transoceanic empires
 - States with existing colonies strengthened their control
 - Britain in India for example
 - Empires were established across Asia, the Pacific, and Africa (Europe only in Africa)
 - Spain and Portugal declined in influence compared to the previous period.
 - Some Europeans established settler colonies, like the French in Algeria
 - Some states practiced economic imperialism like the European powers in China
 - Imperialism by these powers influenced the formation of new states and the contraction of existing states:
 - United States and Meiji Japan formed
 - United States and Russia copied European actions and expanded their land borders
 - Anti-imperial resistance occurred and new states were created
 - Balkan countries out of the Ottomans
 - Zulu Kingdom
 - Racial ideologies like Social Darwinism were used to justify imperialism
 - Existing Empires
 - Qing China
 - Ottomans
 - Both dealt with expansion into their territories, especially in the 1800s

- States also dealt with revolutions, see the handout on revolutions for this
- Contemporary (1900-present):
 - Political Developments
 - Fascist Italy, Nazi Germany, People's Republic of China, United States becomes a global power, Soviet Union, Decolonization, U.N., Welfare States, Russian Revolution
 - Big Picture Ideas:
 - Global conflict was common
 - Revolutions
 - Decolonization
 - Communist States
 - Totalitarian Dictatorships
 - Genocides
 - Global organizations