

Chapter 17 Notes – The Diversity of American Colonial Societies, 1530 – 1770

Chapter Thesis: During the period of American colonization by the Europeans, the exchange of cultures, technology, and diseases affected both the New World and the Old World; but most importantly, the transformation of the Americas through the economic demands of Europe would put it on the world stage.

- I. *The Columbian Exchange:* The Columbian Exchange named after Columbus' voyage to the New World is defined as the transfer of people, plants, animals, and diseases between the Americas and back in Europe. The effects of this exchange included the deaths of many of the indigenous Native Americans through diseases which they had no immunity to and the quickening of the spread of European culture and technology in their colonies.
 - A. Demographic Changes: The spread of disease throughout the Americas caused by both the arrival of the Europeans and their introduction of the African slave trade resulted in not only vast amounts of Amerindians dying but also a reduction of their capacity to resist European influence.
 - Epidemics of the early days of colonial societies in America caused high death rates because of a lack of immunity
 - Smallpox, measles, diphtheria, typhus, influenza, and pulmonary plague were all diseases spread to the New World
 - Malaria affected both Americans and Europeans through the African slave trade
 - Spread of diseases and widespread death of Native Americans weakened their ability to resist the influence of the Europeans
 - B. Transfer of Plants and Animals: Beyond the negative spread of disease caused by the arrival of the Old World colonists, the Americas and Europe exchanged domestic crops and livestock with one another, which changed the dietary cultures of both regions.
 - Exchange of plants and animals affected the diets of both the New and Old Worlds
 - Wheat, grapes, and olives were introduced to the Americas by the Europeans as well as Asian and African staples such as rice, bananas, breadfruit, sugar, and coconuts
 - Potatoes, maize, and manioc from the Americas to the Old World changed agriculture and the dietary lifestyles of the Europeans
 - Introduction of domesticated livestock to the New World changed environments and the cultures and lifestyles of the Amerindians
- II. *Spanish America and Brazil:* The colonial establishments of the Spanish and Portuguese were largely based on their own customs, but native people such as the Aztec and the Inca defended their own rights in the new societies with colonial courts.

- Spanish Empire within America after 100 years of Columbus' voyage spanned from the islands of the Caribbean to the Rio de la Plata region of South America
- Spanish and Portuguese colonists created societies using their own original customs
- Native peoples played a role as well in the development of these societies, fighting for their rights amongst the new settlers despite the loss of life caused by disease
- African slave trade was concentrated within plantations of the Caribbean region and Brazil

A. State and Church: Both Spain and Portugal implemented colonial governments under their own governmental authority, but because of the long distance for communication, exercising absolute royal control was impossible. The Catholic Church within Brazil and Spanish America spread the conversion of Christianity as well as shaping the cultures of the native people, ultimately becoming the wealthiest establishment in the Americas by planting cities and controlling universities and plantations.

- Spanish tried and failed to exercise royal authority over their colonies established by conquistadors because of the distance problem
- Spanish officials of New Spain had expansive power
- The Portuguese government focused on Asia and Africa because early settlers failed to find natural or mineral wealth, and only eventually created a colonial government
- In Brazil and Spanish America, Christian belief and European language and culture was spread largely through the Catholic church
- Catholic clergy did attempt to protect the native people from Spanish abuse

B. Colonial Economies: In colonial economies within the Americas, there was a heavy dependence on both agricultural and mineral resources, which led to the use of African and Native American slave labor by the Europeans.

- Resources of sugar in Brazil and silver in Peru and Mexico were the main drivers of economic development in Latin America during the colonial age
- Mineral wealth caused the early development of European capitalism within the Americas through trade
- Silver held the greatest economic value for the Spanish and Portuguese, who exploited the minerals through mining
- Forced labor of the Amerindians called *encomienda*, which became a form of compulsory labor for European wealth
- Portuguese plantations began using Amerindians for slavery

C. Society in Colonial Latin America: In colonial Latin America, society was structured towards Amerindian inferiority, with European descent giving people a higher position in the colonial society.

III. *English and French Colonies in North America*: English and French settlers colonized North America similarly, using both diplomacy and violence in one way or another to find their desired natural wealth from indigenous empires.

- A. Early English Experiments: The English attempts to create American colonies in the sixteenth century proved to be unsuccessful, but their later efforts in the seventeenth century used financial capital and private investment and succeeded.
 - B. The South: The Virginia Company in 1606 made up of London investors decided to colonize Virginia, creating a British-appointed governor with representatives and many plantations with slaves.
 - C. New England: New England was colonized by two groups: the Pilgrims who came to break off from the Anglican Church and the Puritans who wanted to rid of the bishops and priesthood to restore or “purify” the Church of England.
 - D. The Middle Atlantic Region: The Middle Atlantic colonies established by the Dutch West India Company was critical for the economic development and diversity of the English Americas.
 - E. French America: Similarly to the settlement patterns of Spain and Portugal, the French used missionary work and religion among the Amerindian peoples and looked to exploit and extract natural resources.
- IV. *Colonial Expansion and Conflict*: Almost all of the European colonies in the late seventeenth century experienced significant economic expansion, which resulted in imperial conflicts with differing local interests.
- A. Imperial Reform in Spanish America and Brazil: In Spanish America and Brazil during post-Columbus Spanish power conflicts, economic expansion occurred and resulted in the Spanish and Portuguese monarchies trying to divert some of the church’s American wealth back to their countries.
 - B. Reform and Reorganization in British America: Charles II of England attempted to exert greater control of the colonies through a series of acts to limit colonial production that caused competition with English trade.