

# Teacher Overview Objectives: Political, Economic, Cultural, and Geographic Impacts of European Colonization

1

Analyze the political, economic, cultural, and geographic impacts of Spanish colonization on the Aztec and Inca societies.

2

Describe the social, political, and economic impact of the Atlantic slave trade on Africa.

1

## How was power gained, consolidated, maintained, and distributed in the Spanish colonies?

Objective: Analyze the political, economic, cultural, and geographic impacts of Spanish colonization.

At the beginning of this unit, we discussed how the **pursuit of wealth** was one motive for the growth of the Age of Exploration. Read the excerpts below to *identify the ways in which European colonists and explorers benefited financially from the Age of Exploration*.



... It all began in Española [Hispaniola] with sugar, which was already a profitable plantation crop in the Canaries and Portugal's Atlantic islands in the fifteenth century. Columbus himself had shipped sugar from Madeira to Genoa in 1478, and the mother of his first wife owned a sugar estate on that island. He brought sugar cane with him to Española in 1493, and the cane grew well in American soil. But the growth of the sugar industry was painfully slow until Charles V intervened, ordering that sugar masters and mill technicians be recruited from the Canaries, and authorizing loans to build sugar mills on Española. There were thirty-four mills on the island by the late 1530s and sugar was one of the two staples of the island's economy (the other being cattle ranching) until the latter part of the sixteenth century....

Source: Alfred W. Crosby Jr., *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492*, Greenwood Publishing (adapted) from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, June 2013.

**According to Alfred W. Crosby, what was one effect of Spanish colonization on the island of Española?**

# 1. Religion: *Catholicism*

**Purpose for Reading:** As you look at the images and read the text, identify how **Catholicism** was used to gain, consolidate, and maintain power in the Spanish colonies.

## Common Procedures used by Friars in Converting Areas in Spanish America

- Idols, temples, and other material evidences of paganism destroyed
- Temporary churches built
- Permanent churches and monasteries built
- Christian buildings often constructed on sites of destroyed native temples in order to symbolize and emphasize the substitution of one religion by the other
- Indians supplied construction labor without receiving payment
- In a converted community, services and fiestas were regularly held in the church building

Source: Based on information from Charles Gibson, *Spain in America*, Harper Torchbooks from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, August 2010.

## A 1737 engraving showing a Spanish priest preaching to the Indians in Mexico



sidro Félix de Espinosa. "Engraving of Father Margil." *El Peregrino Septentrional Atlante: Ineado en la Exempariissima Vida del Venerable Padre F. Antonio Margil de Jesús, 1737*

. . . The other major economic function of the Church was as a provider of education, health care and poor relief to the general population. A great part of its income and manpower was employed in these activities. Religious orders such as the Jesuits and the Dominicans would use profits from their haciendas to finance their schools, seminaries and colleges. A large number of orders, male and female, worked on this basis, running educational and training establishments which were fee-paying for the wealthy but free for the poor. Others operated hospitals, hospices for the mentally ill and the dying, poor houses, orphanages, shelters for homeless girls, and suchlike. The Church therefore played an important economic role as a circulator of capital, as a profit-making concern in some areas of the economy, and as a supplier of social services. . . .

Source: Edwin Williamson, *The Penguin History of Latin America*, Penguin Books from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, August 2010.

**1. According to document above, how did Catholicism in the Spanish colony help the Spanish to gain, consolidate and maintain power?**

**2. What impact did the introduction of Catholicism have on the lives of indigenous people?**

## 2. Government: *Absolutism*

**Purpose for Reading:** As you look at the images and read the text, identify how the Spanish used Absolutism to to gain, consolidate, maintain, and distribute power in their colonies.

### Governing the Spanish Empire in the Western Hemisphere

Life in colonial New Spain [Spanish colonies] was complex — the dominant institutions and cultural patterns were Spanish in origin, but they were modified in their New World setting. Society was not static; evolution marked the political and religious systems; and change was a feature of the economic, social, and intellectual life. These adaptations generally mirrored developments in Europe, the source of basic decisions and control. During its three centuries as a colony, New Spain was kept subservient to the mother country in a number of ways, beginning with an enforced loyalty to the crown. . . .

In New Spain itself the viceroy [governor] was the ranking officer and agent of royal absolutism. As a personal representative of the king he was armed with considerable authority and enjoyed high honors and deference [respect]. He received a handsome salary (twenty thousand pesos in the seventeenth century, triple that amount in the eighteenth), lived in a splendid palace surrounded by liveried [uniformed] servants, and maintained a court like a petty European monarch. During the colonial era there were sixty-one viceroys.

Most of them belonged to the titled nobility or at least were of high birth; eleven were from the Church hierarchy [church leaders], and only three holders of this exalted [high] office were criollos [Creoles], two of them being sons of viceroys. The viceroy

functioned as chief executive, captain-general of military forces, governor, supervisor of the royal treasury (real hacienda), and president of the audiencia (administrative court) of Mexico. He enforced royal laws and decrees, issued ordinances dealing with local matters, nominated minor colonial officials, distributed land and titles, promoted colonization and settlement, and protected the Indians. He was vice-patron of most religious endeavors, and his ecclesiastical [church] powers included the right to determine boundaries of bishoprics [districts] and to nominate some Church officers. . . .

Source: Robert Ryal Miller, *Mexico: A History*, University of Oklahoma Press 5

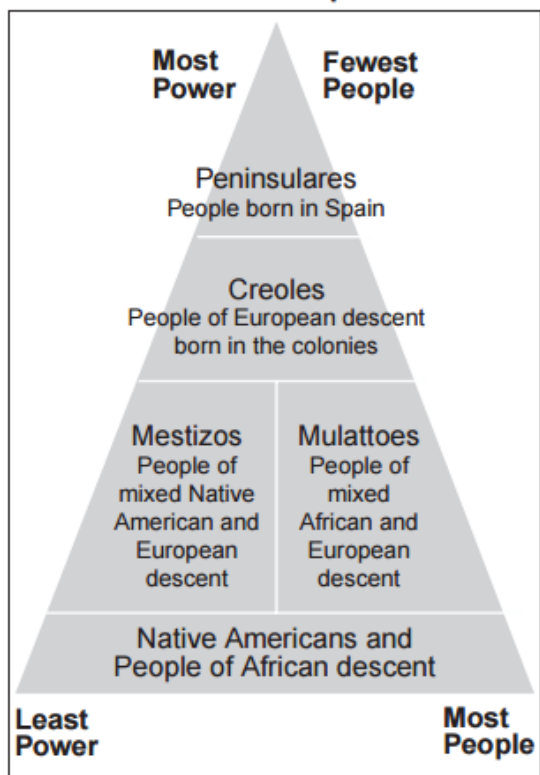
**3. According to document above, how did the Spanish use absolutism to to gain, consolidate, maintain and/or distribute power?**

**4. What relationship did the rulers of the Spanish colony have with the Spanish monarchy?**

### **3. Hierarchy: *Peninsulares, Creoles, Mestizos, Africans & Indigenous***

**Purpose for Reading:** As you look at the images and read the text, identify how **the Spanish hierarchy** was used to gain, consolidate, maintain, and distribute power in the Spanish colonies.

## Social Structure of the Spanish Colonies



Source: Goldberg and DuPré,  
*Brief Review in Global History and Geography*,  
 Prentice Hall, 2002 (adapted)

... Growing sugar cane became a large business. At first, Native Americans were forced to work on sugar plantations, large estates run by an owner or overseer. They were treated cruelly, and many died. The Spanish then brought slaves from Africa to do the work.

A new social structure developed. People born in Spain made up the highest social class. Those of European descent born in the colonies were next. People of mixed European and Indian or African descent were in the middle. Native Americans and people of African descent were in the lowest classes....

Source: Guide to the Essentials of World History, Prentice Hall from the NYS Global History and Geography Regents Exam, June 2013.



**Bartolomé de Las Casas**

Source: Keen and Haynes, *A History of Latin America*,  
 Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

... Las Casas interrupted work on the book [A History of the Indies] only to send to the Council of the Indies in Madrid three long letters (in 1531, 1534, and 1535), in which he accused persons and institutions of the sin of oppressing the Indian, particularly through the encomienda system. After various adventures in Central America, where his ideas on the treatment of the natives invariably [regularly] brought him into conflict with the Spanish authorities, Las Casas wrote *De único modo* (1537; “Concerning the Only Way of Drawing All Peoples to the True Religion”), in which he set forth the doctrine of peaceful evangelization of the Indian. Together with the Dominicans, he then employed this new type of evangelization in a “land of war” (a territory of still-unconquered Indians) — Tuzutlan, near the Golfo Dulce (Sweet Gulf) in present day Costa Rica. Encouraged by the favourable outcome of this experiment, Las Casas set out for Spain late in 1539, arriving there in 1540....

Source: “Bartolomé de Las Casas,” The History Channel website

**5. According to document above, how did the Spanish use a social hierarchy to gain, consolidate, maintain and/or distribute power?**

**6. What factor determined how high someone was on the Spanish colony's social hierarchy?**

**7. How were people on the lowest rank of the social hierarchy treated?**

## 4. Military: *Horses and Guns*

**Purpose for Reading:** As you look at the images and read the text, identify how **military might** was used to gain, consolidate, and/or maintain power in the Spanish colonies.

From that time onward the Indians began to seek ways to throw the Christians out of their lands. They took up arms, but their weapons were very weak and of little service in offense and still less in defense. (Because of this, the wars of the Indians against each other are little more than games played by children.) And the Christians, with their horses and swords and pikes began to carry out massacres and strange cruelties against them. They attacked the towns and spared neither the children nor the aged nor pregnant women nor women in childbed, not only stabbing them and dismembering them but cutting them to pieces as if dealing with sheep in the slaughter house. They laid bets as to who, with one stroke of the sword, could split a man in two or could cut off his head or spill out his entrails with a single stroke of the pike. They took infants from their mothers' breasts, snatching them by the legs and pitching them headfirst against the crags or snatched them by the arms and threw them into the rivers, roaring with laughter and saying as the babies fell into the water, "Boil there, you offspring of the devil!"

Source: Bartolome de las Casas, a young priest who participated in the conquest of Cuba and transcribed Columbus' journal

**8. According to document above, how did their military might help the Spanish to gain, consolidate, and/or maintain power?**

**9.. Describe the ways the Spanish used their military to conquer the Americas.**



## 5. Slavery and Gold: *Encomienda*

**Purpose for Reading:** As you look at the images and read the text, identify how the Spanish used the **encomienda system** to gain, consolidate, maintain, and distribute power in their colonies.



Source:

<http://es.wikipedia.org/wiki/Encomienda#/media/File:Kingsborough.jpg>

Códice Kingsborough: un encomendero abusa de un indio. Copia del italiano Agostino Aglio 1825-1826, para Lord Kingsborough.

The *encomienda* system was created by the Spanish to control and regulate [...] Indian labor and behavior during the colonization of the Americas. Under the *encomienda* system, conquistadors and other leaders (*encomenderos*) received grants of a number of Indians, from whom they could exact “tribute” in the form of gold or labor. The *encomenderos* were supposed to protect and Christianize the Indians granted to them, but they most often used the system to effectively enslave the Indians and take their lands.

Source: <http://www.gilderlehrman.org/history-by-era/imperial-rivalries/timeline-terms/encomienda-system-established>

**10. According to document above, how did the Spanish use the *encomienda* system to gain, consolidate, and/or maintain power?**

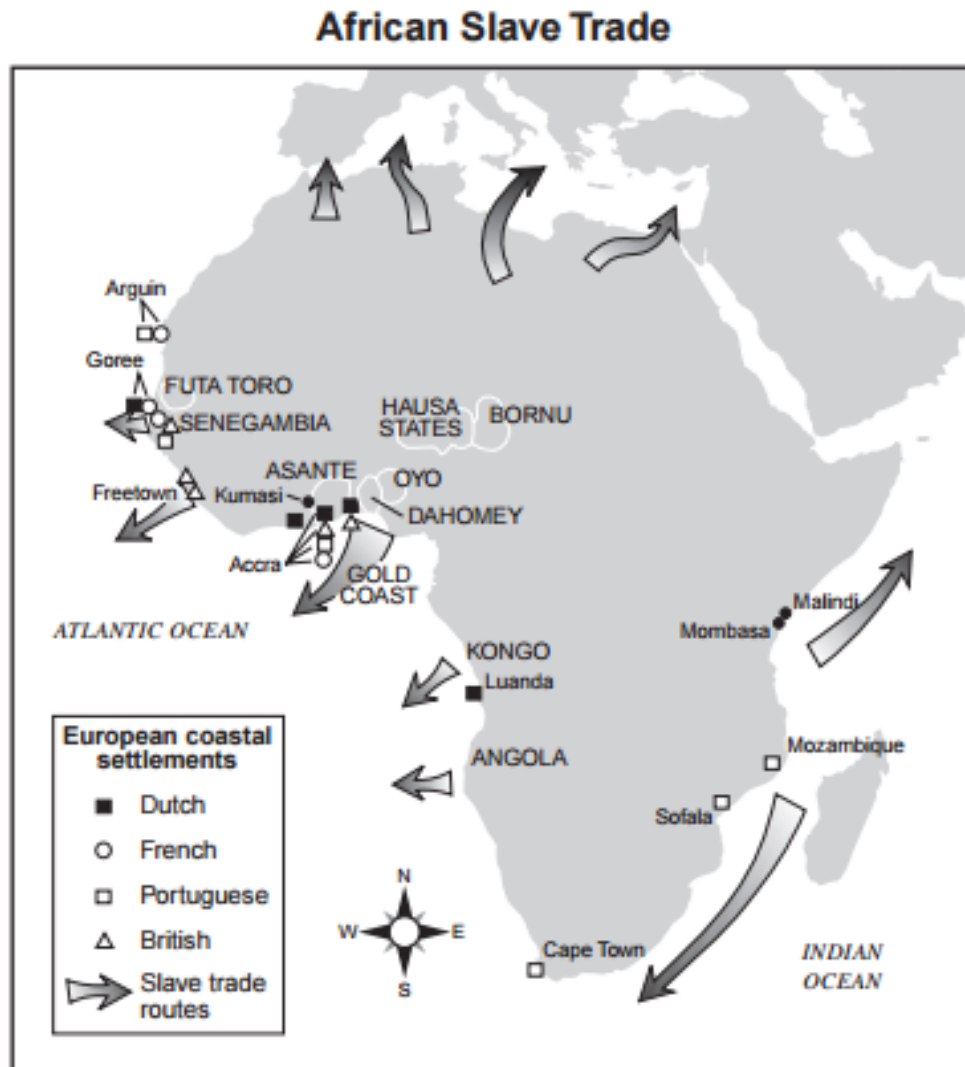
**11. How were the indigenous people treated in the encomienda?**

**12. Describe the financial benefits of the encomienda for the Spanish.**

## 2

# How did the Atlantic slave trade impact African societies?

Objective: Describe the social, political, and economic impact of the Atlantic slave trade on Africa.



Source: Ellis and Esler, *World History: Connections to Today*, Prentice Hall, (adapted)

According to the map above, in what region were most European coastal settlements concentrated?

Why might the European coastal settlements be concentrated in this region?

The Transatlantic Slave Trade had a huge impact on Europe and the Americas, bringing great wealth to the traders and their countries. It had an enormous impact on Africa, and the available population figures show that there was a slowdown in the rate of population growth in Africa, and Africa's share of world population declined during the period of the Transatlantic Slave Trade. It is, however, even more difficult to get accurate figures for the population of different parts of Africa in this period than it is to get accurate figures for the numbers of Africans who were enslaved. It is clear that some Africans were made wealthy by the trade, for example the kingdom of Bambara in West Africa, formed in around 1712, derived much of its wealth in the later 18th century from raiding and trading in captives. Sometimes this demand for captives could cause problems, as for example when the kingdom of Benin began expanding its territory to gather more captives, which later led to its decline due to resistance by its own people and economic problems caused by the unequal balance of wealth.

The psychological impact on individual societies and family groups must have been very significant – people living in inland areas subject to slave raiding were afraid, distrustful, and worried about what would happen if they were captured. Olaudah Equiano refers to the custom of children in villages no longer being allowed out to play and roam, but instead having to be guarded while their parents were out at work in the fields. He also explains that captives on the slave ships, not knowing where they were being taken, were frightened by rumours that they were being taken away to be eaten by their captors.

Source: The British Museum, "The wealth of Africa: The Slave Trade Teachers' Notes."  
[https://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/TheSlaveTrade\\_Teachers\\_Notes.pdf](https://www.britishmuseum.org/pdf/TheSlaveTrade_Teachers_Notes.pdf)

**13. Who benefited from the transatlantic slave trade?**

**14. What impact did the transatlantic slave trade have on the population of Africa?**

**15. What impact did the transatlantic slave trade have on the wealth of kingdoms like the kingdom of Bambara?**

**16. What impact did the transatlantic slave trade have on economic equality in Africa?**