Expansion

Erik Gartzke
POLI 142, Lecture 4a
July 13, 2015
Westward Expansion

- “spark” of the American revolution
- “Glue” that binds new nation together
- “Salve” for inconsistencies in U.S. constitution
- Huge territory -- sparsely populated.
  - British had shown way to most effective exploitation of new territory
  - United States follows model (Lewis & Clark)
- The problem of money... and banks
Civil War: Causes

• Not (primarily) about slavery
• Incompatible interests: Trade
  • North: Finished goods
  • South: Raw Materials (cotton, tobacco)
• Slavery is a symbol of incompatible interests
• Worked out a deal on slavery in constitution
• Deal fell apart when South could no longer pretend that it was going to win peacefully
• Presaged by the closing of Western frontier
• Each side has key advantages (Lee strategy)
Civil War: Consequences

• Resolved a basic tension in the United States over whether the U.S. would be a merchant country, or a resource/commodity exporter
• Shaped dominance of the North over the South
• Seared the minds of two generations of citizens
  • Rise of the state: Social welfare programs
  • Antipathy toward war: anti-imperialism
• Anticipated World War I battlefield conditions
Reconstruction

- After the Civil War, the North controlled the integration of the West into the United States
- North controlled U.S. foreign policy for 40 years
- Where to go next after American frontier?
Empire

• Growing power --> growing ambitions --> growing territory --> growing power.

• The debate over empire

  • What is Empire?

  • Def: The physical control of territory not normally thought of as part of the nation.

  • West?

  • U.S. foreign policy is consistent (expand)
Empire II

• U.S. foreign policy is consistent (expand)
  • What changes is HOW expansion occurs.
  • Transition period of annexation of foreign (Western) territory
    • Spain/Mexico (Texas, California, Arizona)
    • Great Britain (Canada, Yukon, Northwest)
Empire III

• Expansion becomes more commercial (trade, money)

• Less physical
  • Distance
  • Cost
  • Economy
World War I

• The First World War is the beginning of the end for the old world order
  • But not the beginning for the new world order
• Versailles mostly patches up and resurrects the existing system (for the winning side)
  • Does not address decline of UK, France
  • Leads to increasing instability in Cent. Europe
  • U.S. not yet engaged -- “free riding” on UK
• Interwar system cannot contain tensions of the decline of existing great powers.