

Free argumentative essay on european imperialism in africa

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European Imperialism in Africa

The process of invasion of African states by European colonizers initiated in the 19th century. The idea of was motivated and promoted by various factors including the quest of expanding territory and material gains. European colonizers identified African as a strategic region with various opportunities, which they could utilize in developing their economy. Various elements including the Africans factor contributed to the successful implementation of the process. Scholars have constantly associated the history of European imperialism in Africa with European choices and authority. However, it is indisputable that the actions and choices adopted by some African communities also contributed to the process of colonization. African communities reacted to the idea of colonization in various ways. This included staging both aggressive and passive resistances, collaborating with the foreigners and assisting the colonizers among others. The paper argues that Africans attempted to resist European control; however, their effort was unproductive because some African communities and leaders promoted the process of colonization by welcoming, assisting and adapting to colonial regimes in various ways.

Most scholars who have explored the nature of Africans resistance towards the colonial rule have confined their thoughts to the idea of Europeans/Africans clashes and the Africans struggle of remaining sovereign. It is imperative to note that African resistances assumed various dimensions including passive resistance often present through cultural, religious and political ideologies. However, most of these resistance strategies adopted by

the Africans were eventually unsuccessful due to factors such as complexities of relations among the African countries, poor fighting-back knowledge and skills, alliances and divisions. Initially, a numerous number of African communities are identifiable that resisted aggressively to the idea of colonization. A good example of such a country includes Ethiopia under Menelik II who organized his army to fight and successfully defeat the Italian Army. Ethiopia's culture and political structure provided a base for staging unified military reaction to the Italian invasion. This is motivated by the fact that Ethiopians believed in Menelik II and were confident in their ability of counteracting invasion following their kingdom's glorious history. In some other countries such as Algeria, the organization of the community into stable religions such as Islam unified Africans into resisting invasion especially in 1832 and 1842 against the French. Besides this effort, the European imperialism in African can hardly be challenged because Europeans were highly armed and skilled.

Other African leaders such as Samory Toure who established a strong Mandinka empire in West Africa that fought against colonial forces. Toure remains a prominent African leader in the history of colonization of the Africa following his pragmatic resistance against French aggression. Toure's strategies included manufacturing firearms for his army, relocating his kingdom and engaging the British and French in diplomatic deals. However, Europeans still were able to penetrate into West Africa as Toure lost focus channeling his effort in conquering African competitors. During this time, the British navigated towards northward through Gold Cost and Sierra Leone. The disorganization in the African leadership that made their resistance

models less successful is highlighted by the fact that African leaders such as Toure only remembered to stage retaliatory attacks following incidents of attacks from the European forces.

Resistance staged by Africans was also unproductive due to alliances and divisions among the Africa communities. For instance, in attempt of conquering Zimbabwe, the British rule utilized conflicts between Ndebele and their enemies in establishing a base from which they could control the region. The Ndebele confronted the European forces insistently killing a number of British solders; however, the colonizers eventually brought them down with their powerful force.

Following internal conflicts, the Africans communities presented weak resistances, as they were unable to work together in facing a common enemy. Interesting, some communities collaborated with the Europeans making the situation worse. In essence, enmity among African communities enhanced the establishment of alliances between Europeans and some Africans. For example, in the present day Namibia, the Nama chief by the name Witboou allied with Germany in attacking their neighbor Herero.

Strategies of this nature disadvantaged the Africans by reducing the efficiency of their resistance interventions. The overall effect of this alliance included a conquest of both the Herero and Nama. This resulted to an historical experience of mass extermination in the concentration camps

On the other hand, some African resistance towards the European imperialism assumed more subtle and focused on local issues of economic and political autonomy. For example, Africans often utilized local movements to resist colonial policies especially in British territories. An example of a

movement that highlights this trend includes the 1929 Igbo Women's War in Nigeria. A unique trait of this movement includes the fact that women essentially dominated its leadership. This movement highlighted effort of Igbo women to safeguard their political and economic interest. This was not essentially a movement against the European imperialism; however, it targeted protesting against particular policies that were perceived to trace their background from British-imposed African leaders. Struggles aimed at protection of the erosion of the African culture heightened tension between the Europeans and Africans. These struggles constantly motivated Africans to work hard in resisting the colonial authority. This scenario is highlighted by the activities of African leaders such as Ahmadou Bamba a prominent leader in Senegal who established the idea of Mouride Brotherhood in 1883. Bamba struggled to maintain a level of social-economic independence that he sought to realize by organizing Islam against the unjust forces of European authority. This presents a passive resistance in which the Africans objected the colonial rule in the disguise of protecting their culture and religion.

As earlier noted, some African communities welcomed or assisted Europeans by collaborating with them. This includes both total and partial collaboration where partial collaboration regards to instances where some African leaders worked with the colonial forces. Other aspect of partial collaboration refers to occasions where African communities embraced or adapted to some European policies while resisting others. The case of the Igbo women and Bamba leadership discussed above highlights this form of partial collaboration. The European model of divide and rule highlights how Africans

participated in the process of the colonization through offering essential assistance to the colonial masters. In countries such as Tanganyika and Kenya, the Europeans established administrative system that incorporated African leaders in the lower ranks. In this context, some Africans who mainly worked as colonial chiefs helped the colonial government in conquering and controlling Africans. Besides foreseeing actively the adoption of the colonial policies, such African leaders equipped the Europeans with essential information regarding the Africans way of life. With this knowledge, the Europeans could adopt affective strategies for managing resistances from Africans accordingly. Furthermore, some Africans adapted to colonization by assuming a lower position following the gospel popularized by some African leaders who were allies of colonial forces that encourages Africans to cooperate with the Europeans. In this consideration, it is apparent that Africans actions and choices assumed an influential position in the process of the colonization of the Africa.

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