

# Do the benefits of france's involvement in italy

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Between 1494 and 1515, three Kings of France, Charles VIII, Louis XII and Francis I, all tried and in the end failed to gain any real amount of territory in Italy. Therefore, due to an overall defeat in the battle with Italy - the benefits cannot appear to outweigh the disadvantages.

From 1499 there were political benefits for Louis XII, by claiming Naples and Milan he won the support of the Pope and the Swiss forces, which would help in his territorial campaigns. Another political success for Louis was an alliance made with the Spanish Ferdinand of Aragon in 1501, by the Treaty of Granada which discussed the division of Naples between them both. This seemed a beneficial allegiance to begin with because two countries fighting together to take Naples would obviously be better than one.

France's membership in the League of Cambrai against the Venetians was also a political benefit because it meant that all members of the League would not fight Louis and therefore he was safe to do as he pleased in the meantime. With France's territorial successes by 1510 Louis and France's status abroad rose with the reflection of his military power and influence. Francis I also had some political success in 1515, which was his alliance with the Venetians against Emperor Maximilian, the Pope, Ferdinand, Milan, Florence and the Swiss, which resulted in a victory and recovery of Milan.

However, these political successes were countered by great political disadvantages, which started in 1494 with Charles VIII. His success in the south caused a coalition directed against France: Milan, Venice, Emperor Maximilian, Pope Alexander VI and Spain's Ferdinand of Aragon who all leagued together against him - forcing his retreat to the north. Louis also had

political disadvantage befall upon him because although conquering Milan in 1499 was a great success territorially, politically it was quite a failure because it alienated the Milanese and they were quite rebellious all throughout France's control.

The Treaty of Granada between Louis and Ferdinand of Aragon was also a disaster because after Naples was taken they quarrelled over it and only after 3 years of arguing was a truce signed in 1504. The League of Cambrai against the Venetians soon disbanded after a jealousy of French success grew and The Holy League was created by the Pope to drive the French out of Italy. Politically the wars were like a child's playground with " friends" lost and gained and alliances made and broken.

Economically, the wars for the three kings were no great burden. Taxes from the French population paid for the wars and the economical value of territory gained at the time also ensured that money was not a problem.

However, France's economy was ultimately at a standstill for the 21 years of wars with Italy. After all the costs of war were paid there was no money left over to give France, as a country, any improvement. It meant that even when France was territorially advantaged - having conquered both Naples and Milan at the same time as in 1501 for example, the economical value of the countries was just being used to pay for more wars. It was a cycle of money in and money out with no gain, but then no real loss.

Territorially the wars were quite beneficial at times starting with Charles VIII's initial invasion in 1494 when he took Florence and won Naples in 1495. Louis XII took Milan in 1499 and then retook Naples in 1501. After a  
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disbandment of the League of Cambrai and the creation of the Holy League, France was attacked, but they won in a Pyrrhic victory. Attempts were made by Louis to retake Milan in 1513 and finally Francis I managed to gain control of Milan completely at the end of 1515.

This loss and gain of territories although seemingly beneficial at the time were clearly not that much of a benefit at all. Charles VIII may have managed to gain Naples in 1495 but the success caused great political problems as mentioned before, and he was eventually driven out of Italy. The Spaniards then proceeded to take Naples off of him.

The quarrelling over the division of Naples between Ferdinand of Aragon and Louis XII eventually resulted in a territorial loss for France as Spain took most of control of Naples and the South whereas Louis controlled the North with Milan. After the Pyrrhic victory against the Holy League, the losses were so great that Louis and his remaining troops were forced to return back to France. When France returned to Italy in 1513 there was a terrible defeat at Trecate, which caused the English and Swiss to invade France in the hope of gaining territory while France was weak and whilst Louis was not in his country.

Louis XII eventually made peace but he could have ended up with less territory than he started with, a risk that should not have been taken. Overall, territorially there were no gains but great military losses and therefore not beneficial at all.

In conclusion, with Milan being the only territory gained by the end 1515 after over 20 years of wars; political pressures having gone to extremities <https://assignbuster.com/do-the-benefits-of-frances-involvement-in-italy/>

and great casualties it is clear that France's involvement in Italy was not beneficial. The disadvantages definitely outweighed their few successes.