

Economic and political motives for european expansion into africa

[History](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Economic and Political Motives for European Expansion into Africa

Introduction There are reasons why European expansion into Africa during the 19th century emerged because each European nation had its motives. Nevertheless, the European powers expanded into Africa, with the exemption of Ethiopia and Liberia, in both political and economic motives. The political motive was derived from the impact of inter-European power struggles and competition for dominance. The economic reasons for colonization in Africa included the demand for markets, raw materials as well as commerce (Sitwell 184).

Body

Throughout the 19th century, there was an emergence of the industrial revolution in Europe that led to the demand for raw materials. Industrial revolution relies on money resources, natural resources, and human resources. Europe had the labor and, therefore, generated efficient funds for the European traders, which was essential for the funding of the industrial revolution. However, these nations did not have abundant raw materials and consequently, a demand for resources escalated in the region (Ross 231). The struggle for raw materials amplified in Europe forcing some European industrialists to urge their governments to settle Africa countries as a way to assure raw materials. The European powers hoarded ivory, palm oil, oil, rubber, cotton as well as gum. In addition to the demand for raw materials was the need for markets. The industrial revolution in Europe produced surplus goods than Europe's consumption making the industrialists pursue markets from all over the world. The increase in the rivalry for markets among the industries led some industrialists urging their governments to

undertake colonization of Africa as an initiative to keep the markets safe for their industrial products (Sitwell 187).

Lastly, Christianity, civilization, and commerce was another economic drive for European expansion into Africa. Missionaries during the 19th century believed that the development of commerce and trade in Africa was the basic aspect of restitution of civilization in Africa and the overall development of Africa. Missionaries persuaded their respective European governments to colonize Africa and thereby provide a supportive environment for the expansion of commerce. European powers used mineral exploitation, large-scale agricultural production, mixed economies as well as the supply of labor as modes of economic activity to generate revenue in colonial Africa (Reid 199).

The major political reason that led to European expansion in Africa was political rivalries between the countries. England and France loathed one another for a considerable length of time due to the infamous hundred year's war, and they both wanted to outdo each other in Africa. Nonetheless, the race for power was not limited to France and Britain. Therefore, other European nations wanted to benefit as well. Nationalism was popular among most western European nations as each nation wanted to be strongest. Nationalism is a strong identification with and pride in none's nation (Ross 231).

This resulted in competition between European powers leading to wars. This competition made most nations to acquire more territories to uphold the spirit of nationalism in order to be seen superior than other nations. The strategy was another political reason for colonization of Africa. Most

European countries were keen to maintain control of specific territories for strategic reasons. For instance, the British considered that South Africa offered a useful stop for ships on their way to India. Besides, the Suez Canal in Egypt significantly created a much shorter route between the United Kingdom and her colonies further east (Yellin 139).

Conclusion

The acquisition of many territories around the world, including Africa, was a major step in demonstrating the dominance of a European nation. Probably the most significant was economical as a depression had arisen in Europe. France, Belgium, Great Britain and Germany were losing money, and hence Africa seemed to be an alternative out of depression. The economic motives of colonialism into Africa included; desire for resources, trade, wealth and cheap labor.

Works Cited

Reid, Richard. Political power in Colonial Africa: Economic Society and Welfare, London: Oxford Press, 2012. Print.

Ross, Stewart. Political, and Economic motives for Africa Colonization, Austin, TX: Raintree Steck-Vaughn, 2010. Print.

Sitwell, Sean. The imposition of colonial rule in Africa, Toyin Faola, Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2002. Print.

Yellin, Emily. Reasons for the Scramble and Partition of Africa, Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2007. Print.