

# Business to international shores

Business



Production for Europe's needs: through conquest, the colonial powers wrested control over the region's economy from the native population. Hence, production that was geared towards the needs of the African peoples was transformed into production for the needs of the colonizing countries. Through sea-based trade established by the colonial powers, raw materials extracted from Africa, such as crude oil, diamonds, ivory and others, found their way to Europe. Human slaves also became part of the merchandise. Cash crops, needed by the industries in Europe, were later introduced and were successfully produced in many countries as can be seen in the cocoa production in Ghana, peanuts in Senegal and Gambia, tobacco in Malawi, coffee and tea in Kenya and cotton in Angola. However, economic production for self-sufficiency or food security was severely undermined so that historically, many African nations have been the poorest in the world. b. Political subdivisions: conquest and treaties subdivided Africa into separate colonies defined by specific political boundaries.

This did not necessarily conform to the territorial distinctions recognized by the native indigenous political systems that existed prior to colonization. Rashad (2008) stated as an example that in Nigeria, the politically-defined territory under colonial rule “ included the theocracies of Northern Nigeria, the Chiefdoms of the Yoruba, Edo, and Itskiri, in the South, and the Ibo and Ibibio, in the East”. Lumping diverse peoples with their own territories and political structures into one colonial territory and one political structure has led to tribal or ethnic conflicts that characterize many areas of Africa even today.

2. Positive Impacts Infrastructure: what seems to be genuinely positive in the experience of colonization is in the construction of early transportation facilities, water systems, electricity and other infrastructure. Although it may not have been extensive because it was primarily used to make economic production and trade more efficient (i. e. through sea ports and road construction) rather than for public utilization, it still has benefited not a few Africans. 3. Where colonialism worked and where it did not

Colonization worked in most countries in Africa if we define colonization as the process in which a more developed country controls a less developed country through actual occupation. Thousands of European settlers acquired portions of land and displaced the natives who occupied it or its periphery. Colonial governments were set up in these countries by the Dutch, British, English, Germans, Belgians and others. The economies were transformed to meet the needs of the colonizing countries as mentioned earlier.

Cultures were reshaped to reflect the way of life of the colonizers – their language, values and religion among others. However, not all colonization efforts worked in Africa. Ethiopia was able to wage a successful resistance to Italian conquests because of its higher level of political organization at the time of conquest that made the people more consolidated in thwarting the invading European power. Hence, it was able to maintain relative economic and political independence except for Eritrea, which used to be part of its territory and was the only area subjected to successful colonization.

Liberia is another exception. This country was where African slaves from the United States who were freed as a result of the abolition of slavery were

sent. They coexisted with the native inhabitants of the country and in time took political control over it. The United States government, however, did not adopt an active colonization policy over Liberia. It acquired the status of an independent nation in 1841.

#### List of References

Rashad, A. (2008). The Enduring Impact of Imperialism and Colonialism on Africa. Retrieved 8 April 8, 2008 from <http://www.davidsiar.org/1302/Rashad.htm>.