# Western Imperialism in Africa and Asia

Western countries such as Europeans forcefully extended their nations’ territory mainly for economic gain. Back at their home, they were facing stiff completion especially from America and other well-established states. For instance, European imperialism in Africa resulted into the colonialization of African political economies. Some western countries such as France, Germany, Europe and Italy had to move a step further to establish railway lines in their colonies through which they would ferry raw material, goods, and mineral back to their home country.

Although western countries termed African and Asians as inferior due to their superiority and power, their main purpose of colonizing these regions was the economic advantages that they would gain from the resources available. Also, it can be argued that influence from neighboring countries forced the western countries to move east. However, according to Duiker & Spielvogel, (2006), the European economic and political hegemony depended on the development of the colonial system. Duiker & Spielvogel continue to write that the French economy survived mainly by textile industry and now that there was cheap cotton in their African colonies, their business was flourishing.

Many of the colonizers entered Africa and Asia as missionaries and some as traders. As a result, they had no intentions of engaging in political dominance. According to Sheldon, 2009, the pope authorities went to Africa as missionaries but at the end of their mission, they were already settling and making African and Asians laborers in their newly developed industries and farms. It’s also evidenced that the western colonizers gave their colonies machines to work with and thus helping them to harvest even more, but what should be understood is that they were marketing their products with an intention of later selling them to their colonies. Although the missionaries were corrupting what these two continents believed in, it is evident that they were doing the mission thing just to get to know the natives better.

According to Grenville, 2010, the colonial relationship between the western countries and these two continents (Africa and Asia) was of course for the purpose of developing markets for their finished product in Africa and Asia, and to buy raw materials cheaply. For instance, France had a ready market for its textiles in its colonies and German had a ready market for its steel in its colonies. As Grenville continuous to write, African markets continued to support the Western industrial growth as African and Asians became dependent customers of the western textile, foodstuffs, agricultural implements and iron pots. According to Sheldon, 2009, the major purpose of the western colonial system, regardless of the type of rule, was seeking to exploited and harness the resources of land and people for the advantage of the metropole. Profits gained from the unequal and often brutal enforce economies relation between the west and the two continents were taken by the west while Asian and African markets were created to consume Western manufactured products.

In the 19th century and early 20th century, Europeans traded manufactured goods for gold, palm oil, ivory and other wealthy products in their colonies. During this period, Belgium also sponsored expeditions to develop commercial activities in their colonies in Africa, especially Congo. Further, during the same period, the French established trading cities on the Indian coast and pushed for more economic in Asia. Although Indians was under ‘company’ rule governed by Mughal emperor, governmental affairs and initiated social and trade reforms were influenced by the British. The British influenced the operation of the Indian government and remained in India to keep control of its valuable material for industry and trade, such as poppies for opium and cotton (Grenville, 2010). Later in the early 20th century, the British built factories in India and constructed irrigation, telegraph system, and railways just to keep their trade activities on track.

Lastly, it’s sensible to say that the western countries colonized Africa and Asia for their rich minerals, raw materials, and cheap labor, and political dominance. In most cases, the western focused on gaining profits from cheap labor and raw material. Establishment of railroads and expansion of factories, especially in India is a clear indication that the British were in Asia to gain profit and wealth to take back to their home countries (Duiker & Spielvogel, 2006).

Conclusively, countries such as France, Germany, and Italy spent a fortune in Africa and Asia. Although most western countries saw this as a waste of money, with some complaining bitterly about the experience of the colonial enterprise, most of their industries were enriched by the colonial ties between the west and Africa and Asia. For instance, French industries depended on the cheap materials, labor and a market for their finished products, while British benefited with the same from Asia.

## References:

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