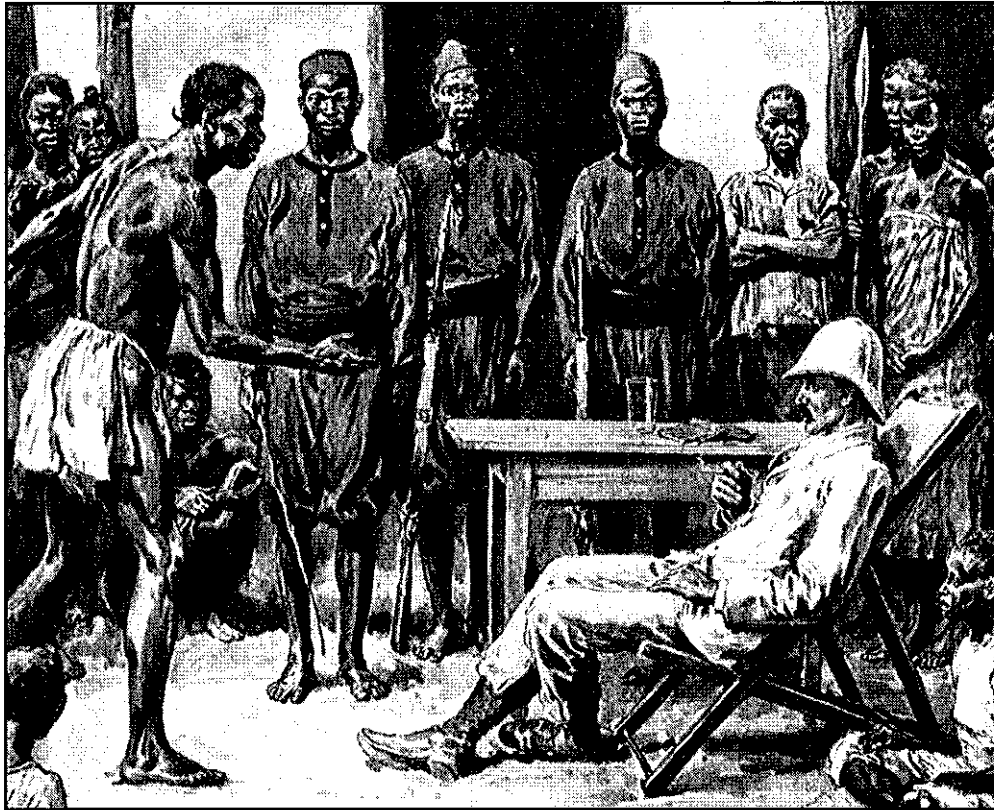


What Was the Driving Force Behind European Imperialism in Africa?

EV



Overview: For the 300 years between 1500 and 1800, European nations traded for slaves, gold, and ivory along the west coast of Africa, but they did not go deeply into the continent. In the 1800s this changed as European explorers pushed their way into the interiors of western and central Africa. By the 1880s Africa was under full assault as European nations competed with one another for control of the continent. This Mini-Q takes a look at this quest for colonies and asks what was the primary driving force behind it.

The Documents:

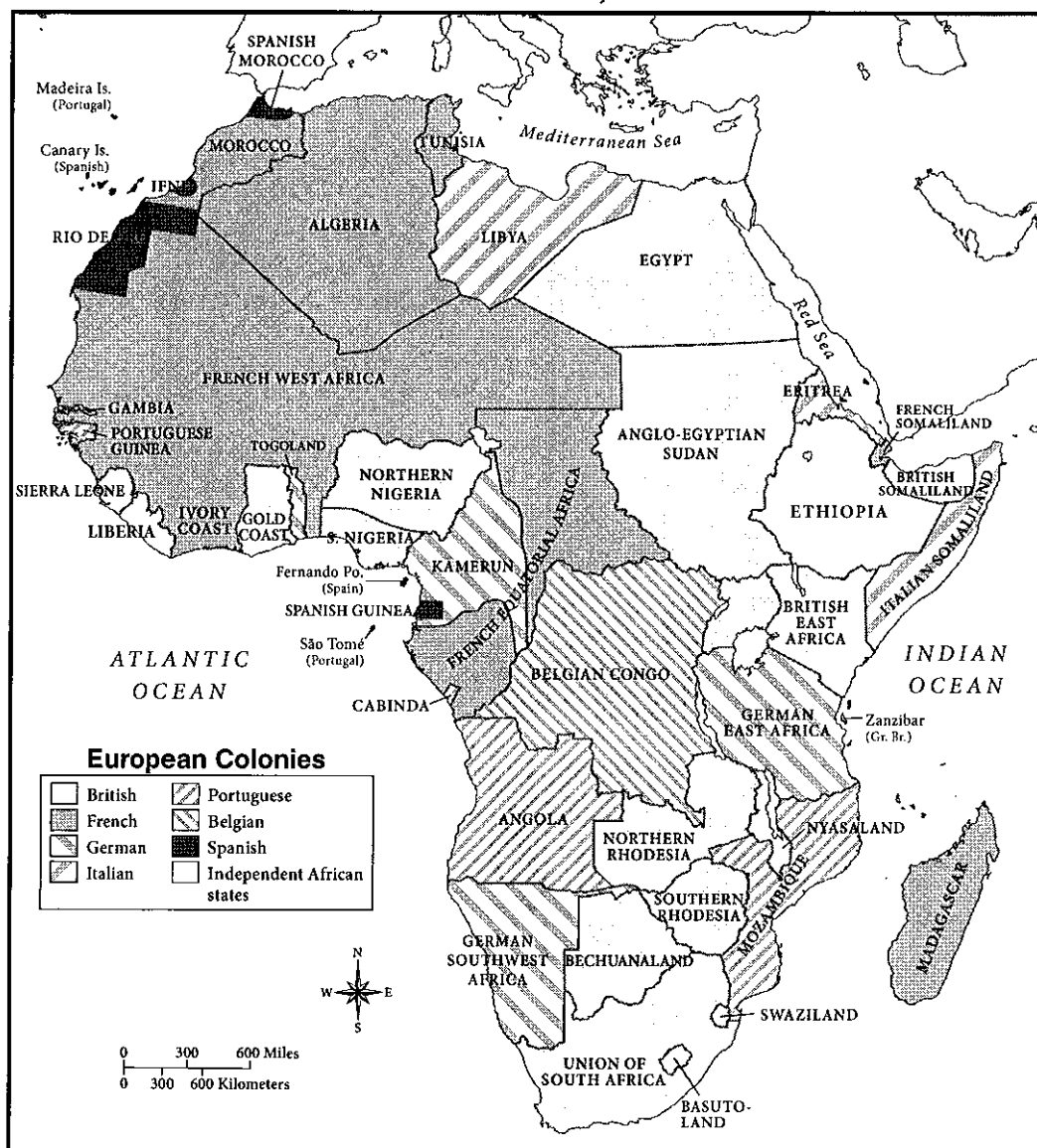
- Document A: Partition of Africa (map)
- Document B: National Pride
- Document C: Technology and Imperialism (chart)
- Document D: African Colonies and Their Exports (chart)
- Document E: Imports and Exports (graph)
- Document F: Rudyard Kipling (poem)

A Mini Document Based Question (Mini-Q)

Document A

Source: Map created from various sources.

Partition of Africa, 1884-85



EV

Document Analysis

1. How many European countries held African colonies by 1914?
2. Which two European countries were the biggest winners in the race to seize African colonies?
3. Britain had a dream of building a railroad from the Mediterranean Sea to South Africa (i.e. from Cairo to Cape Town). Which country was in the strongest position to block this from happening?
4. By 1885, what were the only two African countries to remain independent?
5. How could this document be used to explain a driving force behind European imperialism in Africa?

Document B

Source: John Ruskin, lecture at Oxford University, February 8, 1870.

Note: John Ruskin (1819-1900) was a well regarded English intellectual, author, and speaker whose interests ranged from art critic to social reformer. This talk at Oxford University was delivered to a standing room only crowd. A short excerpt follows.

[Will the] youths of England, make your country again a royal throne of kings; ... for all the world a source of light, a center of peace?... (T)his is what [England] must either do or perish: she must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; – seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists ... that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and by sea.

Source: Freidrich Fabri, *Does Germany Need Colonies?* 1879.

Note: Freidrich Fabri (1824-1891) has been called the “father of the German colonial movement.” Fabri was impressed by the colonial achievements of the English and wanted Germany to do something of the same. His book was quite well received.

But should not the German nation who is fundamentally so very capable, so seaworthy, so industrially and commercially minded ... successfully pave the way for this new course? ... It would be wise if we Germans would learn about colonial skills from our Anglo-Saxon [British] cousins and would begin—in a friendly competition—to strive after them. When the German Reich centuries ago was at the peak of the states in Europe, it was the Number One trade and sea power. Should the New German Reich wish to prove and maintain its newly won position of power for a long time, it will have to take up the same culture-mission and delay no longer to acknowledge its colonial task anew.

Document Analysis

1. What does Ruskin say England must do to again be “a source of light, a center of peace”?
2. What does he say should be the colonists’ “first aim”?
3. According to Fabri, what were Germany’s strengths when it was “at the peak of the states in Europe”?
4. Why does Fabri believe that Germany needs to “strive after” colonies?
5. What is the driving force behind European imperialism in Africa, according to these two sources?

Document C

Source: Information drawn from various sources.

Note: The Industrial Revolution led to many discoveries and inventions that helped Europeans to take over Africa.

Technology and Imperialism

EV

Technological Development (Date Invented)	Use and Significance
Steam engine (1787) first used in boats; (1804) first used in locomotives	A more constant and forceful source of power than sails on ships or horse-drawn carriages. Faster form of transportation
Method of getting quinine from cinchona tree bark (1820)	Treatment for the disease malaria
Electric telegraph (1837)	Communication over long distances
Bessemer process (1855)	Quicker and cheaper method of manufacturing steel, which was lighter and more durable than iron; used in producing rails, bridges, and tall buildings
Maxim gun (1884)	First machine gun
Repeating rifle (late 1800s)	A faster-loading gun that was able to fire multiple shots more accurately than older muskets

Document Analysis

1. During which century was most of the technology in this chart invented?
2. Which technological advancement cured a tropical disease? Which of the technological developments gave European armies an advantage over African armies?
3. Which of the inventions do you think would have been the most important for spreading European influence in Africa?
4. How could this document be used to explain the primary cause of European imperialism in Africa?
5. Was technology a better driving force behind European imperialism in Africa than national competition? Explain.

Document D

Source: Information drawn from various sources.

Selected African Colonies and Their Exports

African Colony (European Colonizer)	Resources Exported	Industrial or Economic Use
Angola (Portugal)	cotton palm oil and palm-kernel oil coffee and sugar	fabrics soap and candles; some food products food processing
Congo Free State (King Leopold of Belgium)	rubber palm oil and palm-kernel oil ivory	waterproof clothes, tires, electrical insulation soap and candles; some food products handles, piano keys, billiard balls
French West Africa (France)	gum palm oil and palm-kernel oil cotton peanuts, bananas, coffee, cocoa	cosmetics, drugs, food products soap and candles; some food products fabrics food processing
Rhodesia (Great Britain)	copper zinc lead coal	coins, metal alloys, electrical wiring metal alloys, rust protection metal alloys, ammunition fuel
South Africa (Great Britain)	gold diamonds	banking, national currencies, jewelry jewelry, industrial cutting tools
Tanganyika (Germany)	sisal coffee rubber cotton	rope and twine food processing waterproof clothes, tires, electrical insulation fabrics

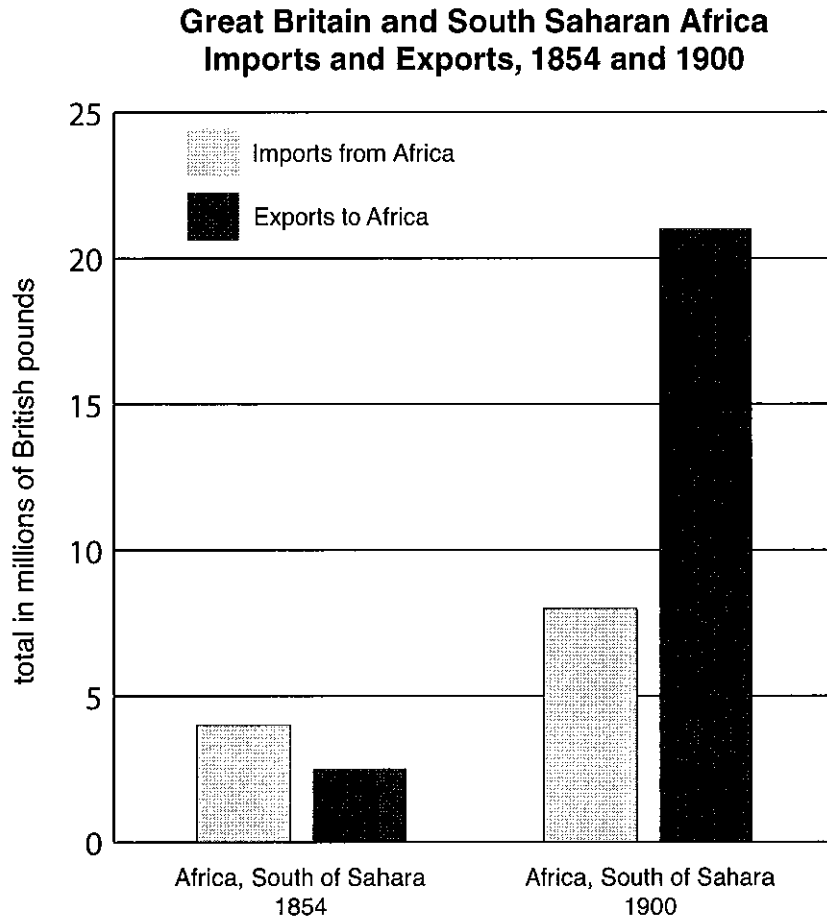
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Document Analysis

1. What European industries benefited from African resources?
2. If you owned a textile mill, which colony or colonies would you want your country to rule? Explain.
3. The Age of Imperialism fell right on the coattails of the Industrial Revolution. What is the connection between the two?
4. How could this document be used to explain a primary cause of European imperialism in Africa?

Document E

Source: Trevor Owen Lloyd, *The British Empire: 1558-1995*, 1996.



EV

Document Analysis

1. How much money did Great Britain make from exports to South Saharan Africa in 1854? In 1900?
2. Describe the difference between Great Britain's imports from and exports to Africa in 1854 and 1900. Which experienced a higher rate of growth?
3. According to this chart, how was Great Britain benefiting from its African colonies?
4. How could this document be used to explain an important cause of European imperialism in Africa?
5. Were economic factors more of driving force behind European imperialism than national pride? Than improved technology?

Document F

Source: Rudyard Kipling, "The White Man's Burden," 1899.

<p>Take up the White Man's burden— Send forth the best ye breed— Go bind your sons to exile To serve your captives' need; To wait in heavy harness, On fluttered folk and wild— Your new-caught, sullen peoples, Half-devil and half-child...</p>	<p>Take up the White Man's burden— The savage wars of peace— Fill full the mouth of Famine And bid the sickness cease; And when your goal is nearest The end for others sought, Watch sloth and heathen Folly Bring all your hopes to nought...</p>
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EV

Document Analysis

1. Who is Kipling talking to when he says, "Send forth the best ye breed"?
2. Who does Kipling mean when he refers to "Your new-caught, sullen peoples, / Half-devil and half-child"?
3. What does Kipling mean when he commands, "Fill full the mouth of Famine / And bid the sickness cease"?
4. What does the title "The White Man's Burden" mean?
5. How can this document be used to explain a primary cause of European imperialism in Africa?
6. Are cultural attitudes a more important driving force behind European imperialism in Africa than political, technological, or economic reasons? Explain.