

## THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA



Scramble for Africa, a phrase widely used to refer to the period from the late 19th to the early 20th century in which European imperial powers claimed control of most African territory.

It is also used to describe the actions undertaken by those countries, with the goals of expanding strategic territorial claims and securing access to valuable natural resources.

### **The impact of Transatlantic slave on Africa**



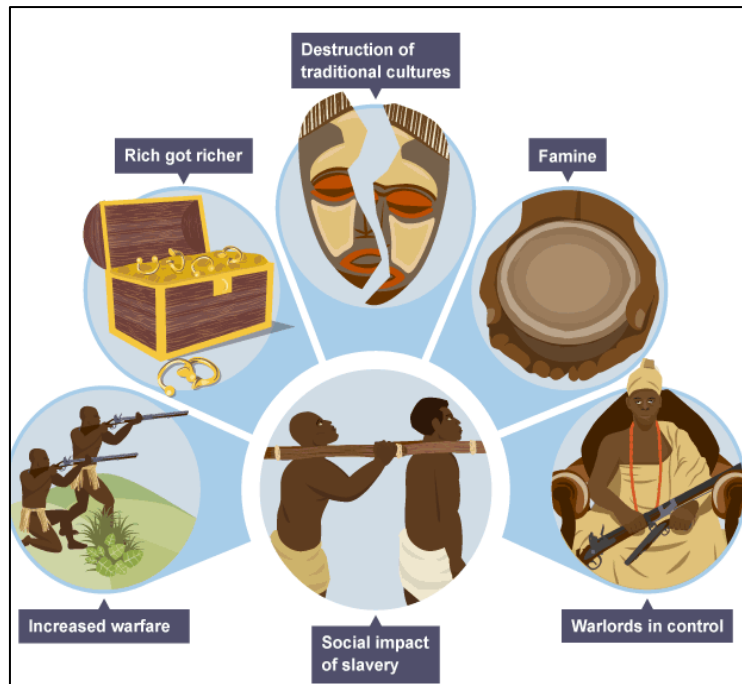
Transatlantic slave trade, segment of the global slave trade that transported between 10 million and 12 million enslaved Africans across the Atlantic Ocean to the Americas.

The Transatlantic Slave Trade took place from about the 1500s to the 1800s.

Millions of Africans were forcibly taken from their homelands and sold as slaves to work on plantations in the Americas.

This trade had serious and long-lasting effects on Africa.

## Increase in wars and violence:



African rulers fought wars to capture slaves to sell to Europeans.

### **Weakened African states:**

Strong kingdoms collapsed because of conflict and population loss.

### **Corruption among leaders:**

Some leaders became involved in the slave trade for personal gain.

### **Loss of independence:**

Political instability made Africa easier to colonise later.

## **How the growth of industrialisation in Europe paved the way for Africa**

### **Need for Raw Materials & Resources:**

The growing industrial economies of Europe required massive amounts of raw materials:

such as palm oil for machinery, cotton for textiles, and rubber—which Africa could supply, fueling the expansion of colonial control.

### **Search for New Markets:**

To sustain high levels of production:

European nations sought new markets to sell their finished goods, viewing Africa as a potential consumer base.

### **Technological Superiority and Conquest:**

Industrialization produced superior technologies, including steamboats for navigating African rivers, improved weaponry (like machine guns, which made it possible for Europeans to penetrate, conquer, and control the African interior.

### Capital Investment:

Capitalists and governments sought investment opportunities for their accumulated wealth, leading to the construction of infrastructure (railways, ports) designed to extract resources for European use.

### Africa before European colonisation



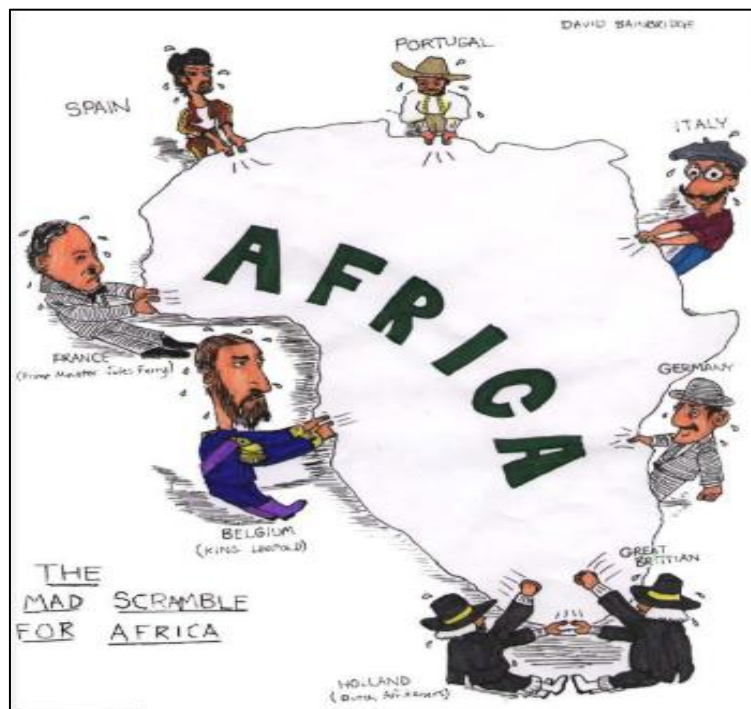
Most pre-colonial African people lived relatively small clan or family units. There were a small number of African Empires where energetic rulers had united numerous clans into significant and powerful political units (Empires).

Those Empires included the West African Empires like Ashanti, Old Oyo and Songhai; further south the Congo Empire and the Shona Empires of Mapungubwe and Great Zimbabwe were dominant.

The arrival of European traders after 1490 would significantly alter Africa as those traders became ambitious and turned to colonization.

Thus the Empires were all destroyed by the influence of European powers. Colonization of foreign territories required significant force to destroy the local political structures.

## The Berlin Conference of 1884



The European powers tried to avoid too much conflict between themselves (they did not want to fight each other and the colonized populations at the same time).

The new Scramble for Africa of the 1880's could have created massive conflict between the major European powers.

The Berlin Conference of 1884 was thus convened to help avoid an open war between the European colonial powers.

By the 1880's there was growing trade between Europe and Africa. There was also more competition between Britain, France, Germany and Belgium to control this trade.

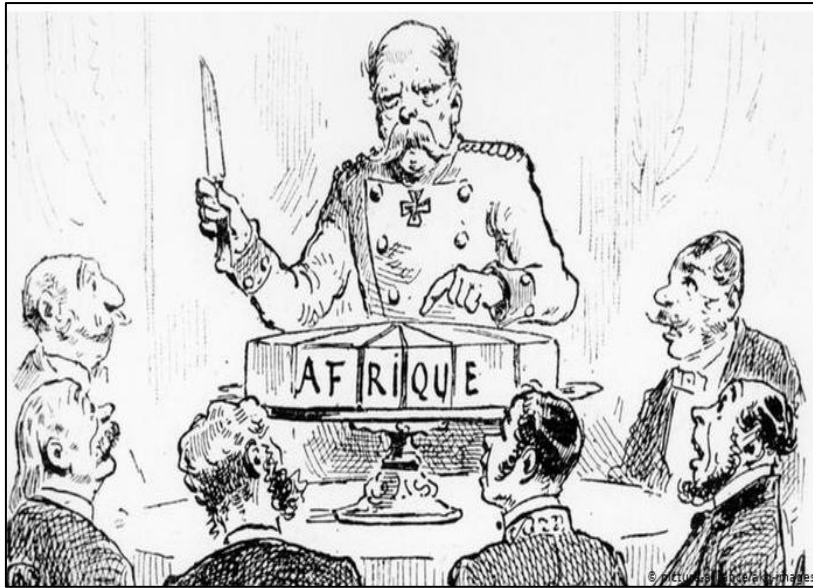
In order to control this trade, in some parts of Africa, European countries were:

- Building railway lines to link trading posts to inland areas
- Signing treaties with African chiefs to gain control over trade sending troops to protect their trading interests
- Starting to take over some areas of land.

Some European leaders began to think that the competition over Africa might lead to war between them.

To prevent this, Bismark, the leader of Germany, invited the European countries with interests in Africa to conference in Berlin in 1884.

The aim of the conference was to discuss ways of dividing up Africa peacefully.



Representatives from 15 countries attended the Berlin Conference but not a single African leader was invited to attend.

The countries represented at the time included

Austria-Hungary, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Great Britain, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Russia, Spain, Sweden-Norway (unified from 1814-1905), Turkey, and the United States of America

The leaders who were there decided that certain European countries could control parts of Africa.

The initial task of the conference was to agree that the Congo River and Niger River mouths and basins would be considered neutral and open to trade.

Despite its neutrality, part of the Kongo Basin became a personal Kingdom (private property) for Belgium's King Leopold II and under his rule, over half of the region's population died.

At the time of the conference, only the coastal areas of Africa were colonized by the European powers.

At the Berlin Conference the European colonial powers scrambled to gain control over the Interior of the Continent.

The conference lasted until February 26, 1885 – a three-month period where colonial powers haggled over geometric boundaries in the interior of the continent, disregarding the cultural and linguistic boundaries already established by the Native Indigenous African population.

What ultimately resulted was a confused mixture of geometric boundaries that divided Africa into fifty irregular countries.



## Causes of colonisation

<b>Africa was a place where Europe could see products</b>	<b>Factories in Europe were producing so much that the people in Europe could not buy all of it. Factory owners saw Africa as a place where they could sell the products from their factories. The colonies became a large new market for the manufactured goods.</b>
<b>Africa was a place where Europe could get raw materials</b>	<b>Many of the raw materials needed by the new factories did not grow in Europe. Europeans hoped to find them or grow them in Africa. The products they wanted were things like vegetable oils for soap, sisal for making rope, rubber, tea, coffee, cocoa, groundnuts, cotton and sugar.</b>
<b>Africa was a place where Europe could get mineral wealth</b>	<b>After the discovery of diamonds and gold in the Southern Africa, Europeans hoped to find valuable minerals in other parts of Africa as well.</b>
<b>Investors could make money in Africa</b>	<b>Business people in Europe thought that colonies were good places to invest money. They believed they would make more profits by investing in new developments in Africa rather than in Europe. Investment in an area often led to colonization.</b>
<b>Colonies could provide food and space</b>	<b>One of the results of the Industrial Revolution was a big increase in the population of Europe. There was not enough food or jobs for all of them. European governments wanted colonies so that they could grow more food supplies. They also wanted to encourage people from Europe to go and live in these colonies. This would help with the overcrowding and unemployment in Europe.</b>

At the time, European countries were proud of their growth and achievements. They competed for colonies, as a colonial empire was another way of showing their power. Sometimes they took over parts of Africa as colonies simply to prevent their rivals from doing so.

European countries wanted some areas because of their strategic importance. This means that their position made them very valuable. An example is Egypt, after the Suez Canal was built, because it made it easier to reach Africa and Asia from Europe.

Some colonies were established because of the actions of explorers and empire builders. An example is Cecil John Rhodes who wanted British control in Africa from the 'Cape to Cairo'.

Missionaries wanted to convert people to Christian religion. They thought that it would be easier to do this if there was law and order, so sometimes they encouraged their governments to take over an area.





**Britain** Nigeria, Ghana, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Sierra Leone, The Gambia, Sudan, Malawi, Botswana, British Somaliland, Egypt (shared with France)



**France** Senegal, Mali, Ivory Coast, Burkina Faso, Benin, Niger, Chad, Guinea, Algeria, Tunisia, Madagascar, Central African Republic, Republic of the Congo (Brazzaville), Djibouti, Morocco (shared with Spain)



**Germany** (before World War I) Tanzania, Namibia, Cameroon, Togo



**Belgium** Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Burundi



**Portugal** Angola, Mozambique, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, São Tomé and Príncipe



**Italy** Libya, Italian Somaliland, Eritrea, briefly Ethiopia (1936–1941)



**Spain** Equatorial Guinea, Western Sahara, parts of Morocco



Independent Nations Only Liberia and Ethiopia remained independent during this period

## Why European powers were able to colonise Africa so quickly

### **Rivalries between African leaders.**

African kings and chiefs were competing with each other to be the richest and most powerful within their tribes.

During these rivalries, European leaders would take advantage of the situation and persuaded some leaders to be on their side to fight against other leaders.

### **Natural disasters.**

In 1895, a serious drought reached many regions in Africa which was caused by a sudden decline in rainfall.

This led to death of livestock ; crops and people, and due to their physical and mental weakness, they were unable to fight against European powers.

**More powerful advanced weapons,** outdid the weapons that the African forces had. Africans were at a military disadvantage.

**An outbreak of new diseases** made an appearance during the late 1890's and the first one was a range of smallpox epidemics.

The indigenous African population had no immunity or resistance to these diseases and thus weakened the African population.

A large number of the African population thus died out, or became too weak to fight back.

## Results of colonialism

Things began to change dramatically in the relationship between Africans and European settlers towards the end of the 19th century.

The change was so great, that it can be regarded as a turning point in the history of Africa.

Even though Africa is independent today, the effects of colonialism are still observed

What they left behind is called the 'legacy' of colonialism.

Part of the legacy of colonialism is the borders in Africa.

## Economic results



### **Exploitation of resources:**

Africa's minerals, land, and labour were used to benefit Europe.

### **Poverty and inequality:**

Wealth created in Africa was taken to Europe, leaving Africa underdeveloped.

### **Cash-crop farming:**

Africans were forced to grow crops like cocoa, cotton, and coffee instead of food crops.

### **Dependence on Europe:**

African economies depended on Europe for manufactured goods

## Political results



Today there are 55 countries in Africa in 2026.

### **Loss of independence:**

African societies lost control over their own land and governments.

### **Artificial borders:**

Europeans drew borders without considering African ethnic groups, leading to conflicts.

### **Weak political systems:**

Colonial governments ruled by force, not democracy, which affected future governments.

### **Divide-and-rule:**

Europeans created divisions among African groups, causing long-term conflict.

## Social results



**Loss of land:**

Africans were forced off their land to make way for farms, mines, and settlements.

**Forced labour and taxes:**

Africans worked without fair pay and had to pay colonial taxes.

**Urbanisation:**

Many Africans moved to towns to work in mines and factories, breaking family life.

**Racial discrimination:**

Europeans believed they were superior, leading to racism and unfair treatment.

**Loss of African culture:**

Languages, traditions, and customs were discouraged or destroyed.

**Western education and religion:**

Christianity and European ways of life were introduced.

**Identity crises:**

Africans were made to feel inferior, damaging self-esteem and identity.

**Conclusion**

Colonialism had mostly negative results for Africa.

It caused loss of independence, economic exploitation, social inequality, and cultural damage.

Many problems Africa faces today, such as poverty and political instability, are linked to colonial rule.