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What were the motivations behind 19th century imperialism?

Objectives: Describe the motivations behind 19th century imperialism.

Imperialism is the **domination** by one country of the political, economic, and/or cultural life of another country or region. Countries or regions controlled by another country are called **colonies**.

The Roman Empire and the Mongol Empire were two of history's greatest early imperial powers. While imperialism has always existed, the **motives** or **causes** have changed over time.

Directions: Using the chart below, respond to the questions.

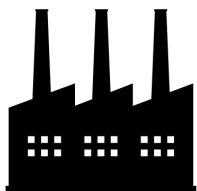
1500s-1700s (14th-18th century)	1800s (19th century)
Empires conquered other civilizations with the economic goals of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • finding precious metals like silver and gold • finding a direct sources of Asian spices that had become too expensive due to Muslim control of trade routes 	Industrialized nations conquered other nations with the economic goals of <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • securing raw materials needed to make goods • secure markets to sell the goods manufactured in industrial factories

1. How did the economic motives of imperialism change from the 14th-18th century to the 19th century?
2. What turning point in 18th century Europe shifted the economic motivations of imperialism?

What were the economic motivations for 19th century imperialism?

Directions: Examine each of the following documents about the reasons for 19th century imperialism, then answer the questions that accompany them.

Industrial Revolution and the Birth of Capitalism



The **Industrial Revolution** was the period in which the production of goods shifted from hand production methods to complex machines. During the Industrial Revolution, **capitalism**, an economic system with the goal of generating profit and wealth took root. Industrialized nations sought to increase their profit, wealth and power.

In order to continue industrializing and turning a profit, industrialized European nations needed many things, but two main needs were located outside of Europe. The first need was for **raw materials**. Raw materials are the basic material that is used to produce goods such as coal, cotton, iron, oil, rubber, or metals. Without these raw materials, factories cannot produce goods and cannot turn a profit. Many of these raw materials are not available in European nations. Industrialized nations began to look to other regions for the raw materials that were not available at home. The second need created by the Industrial Revolution was the need for reliable **markets**. A market is an area or arena where goods can be bought and sold. Many factory producers were producing a lot of goods, however, they were producing so many goods that there were more goods than people to buy them. Their markets were oversaturated. In this case, consumer demand slowed and this led to economic depressions. Industrialized European nations sought

other markets to absorb or buy the excess supply of their goods.

How might the Industrial Revolution and the birth of capitalism motivate countries to dominate other countries or regions?

What ideas motivated 19th century imperialism?

Nationalism



Nationalism is a strong feeling of pride in one's country. During the 19th century, this sense of pride often came from believing that one's nations far surpassed other nations in economic success and political might.

How might feelings of nationalism motivate countries to dominate other countries or regions.

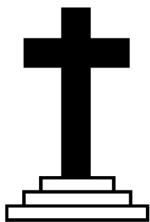
Social Darwinism and National Survival



Social Darwinism was a theory that was popular in European nations in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. This theory was based on the work of Charles Darwin (1809-1882), an English scientist who is best known for developing a theory of evolution to describe how species change over time. Social Darwinists applied this theory to societies and argued that people were engaged in a competition or "struggle for survival" where the weakest people and nations would be destroyed and dominated while the strong grew in power and influence. Herbert Spencer, one of the most vocal promoters of social darwinism, created pseudoscientific ideas [ideas that were thought to be based on the scientific method, but were later disproven] about inferiority based on skin color. People were classified into races and the domination of non-white people by white men was seen as a natural consequence of the superiority of white people. Social Darwinists argued that by bringing the benefits of European culture, Christianity and capitalism to inferior people that they were saving these people from themselves.

How might a belief in Social Darwinism and a desire for national survival motivate countries to dominate other countries or regions?

Christianity



Since 16th century European expansion into the Americas, Catholic **missionaries** believed that it was their moral duty to spread Christianity and convert the "heathens" who practiced other religions. Catholic and Protestant missionaries believed they were saving non-European people from a life of eternal damnation.

How might a belief in the need to spread Christianity motivate countries to dominate other countries or regions?

Writing Task: Using the secondary sources above, describe the economic and ideological motivations for 19th century imperialism.