

Difference Between New and Old Imperialism

The difference between New and Old Imperialism is that old imperialism is based on military conquest, whereas new imperialism is based on new forms of conquest- instituting protectorates, giving concessions, creating spheres of influence, etc.

Key Difference Between New and Old Imperialism

Old Imperialism

Time: 1450-1650 CE

Motives were God, Glory and Gold:

- Gold means the wealth of the newly discovered countries, comprising precious gold and exquisite commodities
- Secondly, glory refers to a European king's delight in seizing new territory
- Finally, God refers to the aims of the European powers and missionaries to convert heathens to Christ

Missionary activities by Roman Catholics

Focus areas were coastal Africa, coastal Asia and Latin America

Use of primitive technologies- expedition vessels, compasses, writing materials, canons, muskets, etc.

More focused on crony capitalism/mercantilism.

Centralized control and command system- ruled large geographical areas.

New Imperialism

Time: 1870-1914 CE

- Metals, vegetable oils, colours, cotton, hemp and other inexpensive resources of the colonies were the main focus
- The colonies functioned as wholesale marketplaces for manufactured commodities
- The period witnessed large-scale military installations and supplies
- Also, the colonies acted as extended territory to transfer additional population

Protestants joined humanitarian activities

Focus shifted to the scramble for Africa, South and South-East Asia

The technological advances of the post-industrial revolution facilitated trade and efficient administration.

Started bringing social and education reforms to the colonies

More decentralized and indirect rule

Ended due to the repercussions of the Napoleonic wars, nationalist movements in colonies, and the rising cost of maintaining the colonies.

Ramifications of World War I resulted in the end.

What is New Imperialism?

New Imperialism defines conquest and colonial rule. This era witnessed unprecedented territorial acquisition. New Imperialism favored direct military conquests, the establishment of colonies and protectorates, and the consolidation of large empires.

New powers like Germany, the USA, Italy, Japan, Belgium, and Russia came in. Britain was the dominant colonial power in New Imperialism. Moreover, imperial powers used economic and technological instruments to make colonies economically dependent as raw material providers and consumers.

What is Old Imperialism?

In the era of Old Imperialism, except for Spain in the Americas and Portugal in Brazil, European powers did not frequently acquire land through military conquests. They preferred instead to establish a network of trading ports. Spain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Britain, and France led the chariot of old imperialism.

The demise of Feudalism in Europe led to the rise of mercantilism or crony capitalism. Based on the principles of distant trade, the European powers cooperated with the local rulers instead of acquiring territories in the third world. They established trading ports, and the era of old imperialism witnessed flourishing international trade.