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## The role of the renaissance and the protestant reformation

How accurate would it be to claim that European voyages of exploration and the establishment of European overseas empires never would have happened without the renaissance and the protestant reformation?

It's accurate to claim that the exploration conducted by the Europeans wouldn't happen without the Renaissance and the Protestant Reformation. I am going to explain down below why I think so.

Renaissance: was a cultural movement and rebirth of European literature and art that spanned throughout the 14th-16th century. It was the ending of the middle ages and the beginning of the modern era. The Renaissance began in Italy then spread throughout Europe over the next century. The Italians were making trades with the Arabs in the Middle East which mean more wealth for the Italians. They mostly invested their money improving their art society which meant more quality paintings and sculptures were produced. It was in this time the Italian scholars become interested in the rest of the world and this was the beginning of the European Voyages of Exploration. Later Scholars all around Europe become interested in studying the rest of the world so the wealthy people would send ships and explorers to discover new land, knowledge, treasure and so on then the explorers would bring back all their findings that they can carry so that the scholars would study them.

The protestant reformation: Christian reform movement led by Martin Luther. In the 16th century, the Roman Catholic Church was dominating western Europe. It was politically powerful, and it was lead by a pope in Rome. It had many enemies so when the reformation offered an opportunity to weaken the Popes power, many of them thought if we weaken the pope's power, we could improve increase our own powers in relation to the Roman church and other rulers. Popes currently were more like kings than spiritual leaders. They commanded armies, waged wars and made political alliances. The Church was also corrupted, and many attempts had been made to reform the church but none of them successful challenged the churches action until Martin Luther. Luther was a monk and he started the Reformation when he posted his 95 theses on the door of a church in Wittenberg, Germany. It contained a list of 95 things Luther thought the church was doing wrong.

The church initially ignored Luther but after his ideas quickly spread throughout Europe, they asked him to recant his writings and he refused so he was expelled from the church. The church created an entire council just deal with the problems Luther created. His writings got too many people and they started to realize that he was right. The people started to realize that the problem was the action taken by a handful of corrupt and powerful people. The people just wanted a church he wasn't controlled by a pope who wasn't engaging wars.

### Argument 1: wealth

During the Renaissance, many states of Europe started their exploration of the world with a series of sea voyages. The explorers had different motives for taking apart in these expeditions but most of them did it because of Renaissance ideals such as wealth, curiosity and religious

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beliefs. The voyages of the European exploration had a huge impact on the European Economic System. European explorers would travel to Asia to import spices which at the time was very valuable for trading or just selling. So, the Europeans would take the spices back home and sell it for a higher price to the people (inflation). Let's say they buy 10kr/kg and they would sell it for 30 or 40kr/kg in the market. They also imported other products such as coffee, beans, bananas and so on. This means that the country's wealth was no longer just dependent on its gold and silver. This idea opened a door for capitalism in many countries. People liked the idea of not working for the government and liked running companies by themselves. This also created social classes in many countries in Europe. People (merchants) would invest in the overseas venture and required new wealth. European leaders like Spain's King Ferdinand and Portuguese prince know as Henry the navigator financed explorers who wanted to travel across seas. The exploration also opened a new way for slave trading. The Europeans increased their amount of colonization in the new world especially now that they have discovered the Americas. They wanted to build new cities, so they needed people who would conduct free labor, so they bought imported slaves from Africa.

## **Argument 2: religious faith**

Europeans believed that Christianity should be the universal religion so some of the explorers would join the expeditions just to spread their beliefs to the people they would come across along their journey. They believed that when they met new people or entered new society, those people should be introduced to Christianity. Religion was an important motive for the explorers especially catholic rules, they were so committed to spreading their religion to the new world that would hire people just to join the expedition and spread the religion. The people who were hired by the Catholic rulers were mostly priests. After Luther exposed the Roman Catholic Church so some of the people would travel to different parts of the world just to find a new religion. These people were seeking a place where there was no ruler who was forcing them to believe in something. When these explorers met the natives, they would force them to believe in Christianity. Just like the Crusades tried to use violence against Muslims to make them Christians. These priests were very keen to convert infidels to Christianity, often disregarding the people's human right until they converted to Christianity. Christianity seems to have been used to excuse invaders actions upon the indigenous people, as they believed to be doing it in the name of God.

Religion and wealth were some of the motives that started the European Voyages of Exploration. The other motives were an expansion of land, new knowledge, and curiosity. The Renaissance introduced new opportunities to people and some of the people took these opportunities and made themselves very wealthy. SO, the Renaissance provided new ways to make money and the protestant reformation made people understand the power of religion and the consequences it has if you spread the message of religion in the wrong way. So the European Voyages of Exploration wouldn't happen without the rebirth of literature, art, technology, science and the reformation of the Catholic church.