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Research and Writing: Chapter 14

In looking at how history might have unfolded if the Pacific and Atlantic oceans had been swapped, we can definitely presume that things would have turned out very differently! Many people hold to the opinion that the European discovery of the Americas, although lucrative, was horribly unjust and damaging to the native people who inhabited the regions.

Because the European goals in exploration were religiously biased, their voyages were dictated by the desire to make connections in support of crusades and make converts. This turned out to be a destructive combination with their desire to acquire resources: most of the Europeans took both resources and conversions by force. This led to a disastrous impact on the native people of the Americas, including groups like the Aztecs in Mexico.

The goal of the Chinese naval exploration was multifaceted, but primarily political in focus (Morillo 441). Therefore, if roles were reversed, they would not have had so much to do with the suppression of native peoples and seizing of resources – the Chinese had plenty for themselves and did not seem overly concerned with the religious identity of their conquered.

Additionally, the state of both regions' natural resources largely impacted their explorative goals (Morillo 447). Europe was not rich in resources by any means, but China was abundantly overflowing with silver, gold, spices, and more. For Europe to discover the Mexican region, it was like stumbling upon buried treasure: and they were desperate to acquire it. On the

flip side, if the Chinese had discovered this, they would not have been in such a state of wanting. Alternatively, I believe their goals would have looked more like establishing a connection with the Aztecs where they traded precious metals and other rarities, solidifying their network connection by establishing a trade post; however, I believe that their primary concern would have lied with establishing empirical dominance of some kind.

Works Cited

Morillo, Stephen. *Frameworks of World History: Networks, Hierarchies, Culture*. Vol. 1, Oxford University Press, 2014.