

# GOVERNMENT – Forms and Functions

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## PART I : Forms of Government

**Formation of States: Overview** The establishment of formal governments, as opposed to more loosely-organized leadership groups, was part of the development of more complex societies, or civilizations, beginning in Mesopotamia around 3500 BCE. While “stateless” societies continued, even in some agricultural regions like parts of West Africa, most agricultural areas ultimately generated, or were conquered by, states, leaving nomadic and some hunting and gathering areas that main exceptions to the pattern of rise and consolidation of formal governments. During the Agricultural Age – after governments formed in the first place – there were important debates and divisions over political forms, for example in classical Greece and Rome. On the whole, however, key issues revolved around degrees of centralization or decentralization, with governments mainly in the hands of emperors, monarchs, or princes, and particularly by the postclassical period about relationships between states and religious organizations. The early modern period and particularly the long 19<sup>th</sup> century introduced much more complex disputes about state forms, with the initial series of modern revolutions, the rise of many republics, and the advent of modern nationalism. The contemporary period has seen a more systematic decline of effective monarchies and also multinational empires, though without full agreement on what state forms should replace these traditional versions.

**Early States** Many early governments took shape initially in small regions, often in the form of city states; this seems to have been the pattern in the Indus valley, and would later crop up in mountainous Greece. Monarchies were even more common (even in some of the city states), with kings often claiming authority from the gods or asserting they were gods themselves, while overseeing a small bureaucracy and military force. This was the pattern in Mesopotamia, in the Egypt of the pharaohs, and in early China. Links with the priesthood, and sometimes control over appointment of priests, was crucial for legitimacy. Elements of this legacy would persist in many regions, for example the Chinese imperial claim to be “sons of heaven” or the later idea of divine right monarchy in Europe.

**Innovations in the Classical Period** Both China and Persia considerably strengthened the monarchical state in the classical period. Classical China was long decentralized, with many internal wars and invasions. The resultant disarray encouraged later dynasties to centralize authority more firmly, creating a somewhat larger bureaucracy in the process. The rise of Confucianism, with its emphasis on the importance of political stability, enhanced this trend, and was actively promoted by the Han dynasty. The shorter-lived Persian empire also emphasized a strong central state. Constraints were obvious: it took many weeks, for example, for imperial emissaries to reach the outer regions of the Chinese empire. But a tradition of relatively strong government, under the emperor, was well established. Classical India, in contrast, maintained more decentralized politics. When empires formed they were more loosely organized, involving lots of bargaining with local authorities. And at times, city states and principedoms prevailed entirely. Classical Greece, also, never set up a centralized system. City states were diversely ruled: some fell under monarchs or tyrants; many were ruled by aristocratic councils; some, at in Athens, developed democracies. The Roman republic mixed the predominant aristocratic council, with some officials who were democratically elected. The formation of the Roman empire involved more centralization, though not to Chinese levels: many parts of the empire had their own local governments, even monarchies, linked to Roman authority; Roman law, however, was developed to apply to all citizens, and of course the Roman army served to maintain internal order as well as to promote territorial expansion.

**The Postclassical Period** This period featured the development of formal states in additional regions – for example, Japan and northwestern Europe. Partly because of this expansion, partly because of the collapse of some of the great classical empires – and particularly Western Rome – the emphasis on centralized, imperial states on the whole declined in this period. Strong state traditions were revived in China, under the Sui and then Tang dynasties. The Byzantine Empire, heir to Rome in parts of the Balkans and present-day Turkey, also had a strong imperial structure with a substantial bureaucracy. The Arab Caliphate, in contrast though covering a vast territory in the Middle East, North Africa and Spain, was more loosely organized, with considerable local autonomy. Lack of centralization predominated even more clearly in other regions. Both Europe and Japan, though aware of strong state traditions from Rome or China, developed separate, warring states constrained to some extent through feudal ties of

loyalty to regional lords. Russia established a monarchy, but again with relatively limited central powers. Large kingdoms arose in West Africa – notably, Ghana and then Mali – but they involved careful negotiation with local aristocracies. The rise or spread of major religions was an important political factor. In Western Europe, as the Roman Empire declined, the Catholic church developed a substantial institutional structure officially separate from the ensuing feudal states. Here and elsewhere, religion might compete with political leaders for loyalty, and also commanded substantial revenues – limiting opportunities for state taxation. In the Byzantine Empire and then Russia, the state exercised more control over the Orthodox Church. Similarly Islam, seeking pious rulers who would defend the faith, could support the state – though many rulers in the Arab Caliphate paid little attention to religious issues. Chinese authorities came to view Buddhism with great concern, because it was not focused on political loyalty despite some adjustments to Chinese culture, and ultimately the Tang dynasty reduced state tolerance for Buddhism. In feudal Japan, however, Buddhism provided a more effective separate belief system.

**Early Modern Empires** After 1450, imperial governments became more common once again. Many relied on the use of guns for conquest and for enforcement of loyalty – the period is often characterized as the age of “gunpowder empires.” Chinese imperial structures revived once again after the relatively brief period of Mongol rule, and would extend, with characteristic ups and downs, into the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Middle East was divided between two new empires, both developed by external conquest, the Ottomans (who also controlled the Balkans and part of North Africa) and the Safavids. A Mughal empire arose in India, also through conquest. In Russia a major empire also developed – the ruler claimed the title of tsar, or Caesar, claiming to be heir to the Roman and Byzantine traditions. The Russian government grew steadily, though its powers were less extensive than its claims; Peter the Great, in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century, particularly worked to improve the bureaucracy. In Japan a new Tokugawa state unified the country and modified feudalism, and also promoted Confucian culture, though it did not establish a great empire. Much of Western Europe was divided among increasingly effective, often warring monarchies – notably Spain, France, and Britain, and central authority began to modify feudalism and rival the effectiveness of some of the Asian traditions. Some regions, however, remained more loosely structured, including parts of Europe and much of southeast Asia. Europe established new overseas empires in the Americas, dismantling the previous political structures of central America and the Andes in the process. American colonial governments tended to be loosely organized, with substantial powers left for landlords and, in Latin America, for the church, but there were some efforts to improve state operations in the later 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**New Challenges** A variety of challenges to traditional political forms, and particularly the trends of monarchy and empire, emerged in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. In Western Europe, Protestantism destroyed religious unity, and while some Protestant states were monarchies the religion could also encourage new interests in greater religious freedom and possibly even greater political participation. This was a huge factor in the English civil wars, that pitted different religious groups and different degrees of support for the principle of monarchy against each other. The disarray was ultimately resolved by a compromise in 1688, that provided some clear legal rights separate from the state, including limited religious tolerance, and also greater powers for parliament. A similar system arose in the Netherlands. Along with this ferment came a set of new political theorists who argued against traditional monarchy, claiming that power emanated from the people, who deserved some kind of representation. Attacks on traditional politics, including religious support for monarchies, continued in the 18<sup>th</sup>-century Enlightenment, particularly in France. And in the Americas settlers of European origins – called criollos in Latin America – began chafe against European colonial rule.

**The Age of Atlantic Revolution** Major revolutions occurred in what became in the United States, in 1776, and in France in 1789. Other revolutions occurred in various parts of Europe periodically through 1848, and national independence revolts drove Spanish rule out of most of Latin America between 1810 and 1820. The revolutions had diverse specific results. But they promoted the importance of parliamentary power and some kind of constitutional protection for rights. In the Americas, they also resulted in republics, though the notion of establishing new monarchies was discussed. European monarchies, as a result, became increasingly on the defensive, either trying to enforce more rigid conservatism or crafting some compromises with liberal groups that wanted some representation (though not, usually, outright democracy) and parliamentary rights. The Atlantic Revolutions also powerfully promoted the idea of nationalism. The French and American revolutions both had strong nationalist elements. And of course national independence from colonial rule was the central theme of the Latin American risings. Nationalism organized much revolutionary sentiment in Italy and Germany, ultimately (after 1848) resulting in new, unified national governments.

**Global Impact** The political effects of the Atlantic revolutions on other parts of the world were initially limited. Russian tsars successfully beat back reform attempts. In Asia and Africa expanding European imperialism, not the newer kinds of political change, was the dominant theme. The Chinese government, though not conquered outright, became increasingly ineffective. India and southeast Asia, as well as Africa, were European-ruled. Political change did come to Japan, in response to Western pressure. A new Meiji, or reform, regime abolished feudalism in 1868 and began to set up a more modern state, though with great deference to the emperor; this ultimately included a constitution and parliament. Through negotiations with Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand also established effectively independent regimes, with parliaments and, increasingly, democratic voting rights. On the whole, however, it was the force of nationalism that most clearly gained global attention, on the heels of the Atlantic Revolutions. Nationalist agitation against multi-national empires – in Russia, Austria-Hungary, and the Ottoman realm, became increasingly pressing. A number of Balkan states won independence from the Ottomans from the 1820s onward, and of course both the Ottoman and the Austro-Hungarian empires would collapse after World War I in favor of mostly small, independent nation states (or, in much of the Middle East, new European colonial mandates). The new Japanese government also vigorously supported nationalism, while established countries like Germany and the United States also pushed nationalism as a new source of political loyalty. And nationalism began to spread, even before World War I, to many colonial regions, like India, the Arab world, and Africa.

**Reform Currents** A number of governments experimented with limited reforms in the later 19<sup>th</sup> century, hoping to preserve older monarchies or imperial structures but with some recognition of newer demands. The Russian tsar sponsored a reform period after 1861, that offered new powers to local governments, though no real political change at the center; then in response to a revolution in 1905, a parliament (Duma) was granted, though quickly stripped of real power. The Ottoman regime experimented with constitutions and new legal protections between 1839 and 1876 (the Tanzimat period), before collapsing back into full authoritarianism. The Persian shah also granted concessions, including a constitution and parliament in 1906. Latin American governments characteristically oscillated between conservative rule, supporting church, landlords and army, and more liberal periods, with considerable political instability the obvious result. In much of the world, in other words, new political forces, not only nationalism but also liberal or democratic ideas about representation, were gaining ground. The result, early in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was a new series of revolutions against traditional monarchical or authoritarian rule. Mexico replaced an autocrat with a one-party system, in the revolution of 1910. Revolution in China the following year chased the last emperor. Russia's inadequate response after 1905, coupled with the huge pressures of World War I, fostered the great revolution of 1917 and the advent of communism.

**Trends in the Contemporary Period** Political developments during the past century have featured the fairly steady retreat both of monarchies, as political forms, and of multinational empires. Revolutions, independence movements and in some cases top-down reforms (as in Turkey under Kemal Ataturk) have substantially remade the global political landscape. Few countries, today, have the same form of government they had in 1918. But the decline of traditional political forms did not yield agreement on what should replace them. New forms of authoritarian rule, including that extreme variant called totalitarianism, but also democracy vied for loyalties. The result was, first, oscillating trends, in which particular forms of government would seem to gain popularity but then fall back; and second, considerable and ongoing regional division and dispute. The theme of change, however, has wide applicability. It figures into one of the most important developments of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the process of decolonization and creation of new nations, and also the recurrent outcropping of revolutions -- beyond the great risings of the early part of the century, including Cuba, Vietnam, the Iranian revolution of 1979, aspects of the Arab spring, and others. Only a few countries – Thailand, Saudi Arabia, Jordan – retained or developed monarchy as a significant political factor.

**Totalitarianism** One of the key political changes after World War I was the emergence of new political movements that attacked liberal, parliamentary regimes in favor of the power of the state and its single leader; the vision was also often associated with military goals. One source of this new approach was the War itself, which had seen massive expansions of state power, from labor allocation to mass propaganda, for military purposes. New technologies – the radio and improved poster printing techniques, which could enhance government propaganda; faster communications for bureaucracies and police, even through the humble mimeograph machine – also contributed. Italy saw the first such movement. The nation extended the vote after World War I, but could not establish political stability; there were also many fears of a communist revolution. In this context Benito Mussolini pushed the new fascist movement, taking over the government in 1923 and rapidly eliminating most rival political movements. By the late 1920s, the Soviet Union under Stalin also developed a totalitarian state, controlling even

more facets of the economy, dominating culture through positive propaganda and extensive censorship, creating fear through the operations of the secret police, and of course eliminating opposition. Periodic purges even attacked other communist leaders themselves, as possible rivals. Finally, the emergence of Nazism in Germany created another fascist state that controlled the media, guided much of the economy toward building a new war machine, and pulverized opposition while also increasingly attacking Jews, Gypsies and other hated minorities. Fascist or communist features spread elsewhere; China's regime under Mao, from the late 1940s, replicated many Stalinist features; Spain, Argentina and other countries copied some aspects of fascism. Historians know now that totalitarian control was never absolute; many groups had to be conciliated by the state – businessmen by the Nazis, workers by the Soviet government. And full blown totalitarianism began to decline after World War II, despite surviving remnants. Fascism was discredited by the war itself. Stalinism loosened under successors even in the 1950s; Mao's regime would moderate after his death.

**Authoritarianism** More important and pervasive, though shading off from totalitarianism, were various authoritarian regimes: one-party rule, single leader rule, rule by a military general. Most new regimes in east-central Europe shifted to authoritarianism in the years after 1918, in part to protect landlord interests against social agitation. Later, many new states in Asia and Africa, after decolonization, switched to authoritarianism. Japan developed an authoritarian state in response to political instability and the challenge of the economic depression of the 1930s. New states are frequently buffeted by social protests, quarrels of internal regional or ethnic minorities, and economic dislocation; and they often lack extensive leadership experience. This “new nations” factor helps explain the popularity of authoritarian solutions. The Arab spring risings of 2012 have also led to many reassertions of authoritarianism, most obviously in Egypt. China, since 1978, has essentially combined an authoritarian political structure, with one dominant (communist party), substantial censorship, and repression of political dissidents, with greater freedom for business activities. Russia, after the collapse of communism, experimented with more open democracy but then, under Vladimir Putin, drifted toward more authoritarian controls of the media and of opposition efforts; but a full totalitarian apparatus was not attempted, particularly in the economic sphere. Authoritarianism builds, after the collapse of more traditional regimes or of colonialism, where popular experience of democracy is limited and where political culture, as in China and Russia, places great emphasis on the importance of stability.

**Democracy** Political democracy has been the third major option, with fluctuating fortunes over time. Most of the Western world had extended the vote to all men and, increasingly, all women by the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in systems that allowed considerable political debate and opposition so that voters gained some real opportunity for choice. Democracy did not survive in interwar Germany or Italy, but it held on in France, Scandinavia, Britain, the United States, Canada, Australia/New Zealand. Success in World War II gave democracy new life: durable democratic regimes were established in Japan, Germany and Italy. A democratic system also flourished in India, almost uniquely durable among the nations emerging from decolonization. A new spurt began after the 1950s, partly because of the economic success of Western Europe, Japan and the United States. Southern Europe converted entirely to democracy. The system spread in Latin America by the 1970s, winning virtually every country by the 1990s. Democracy emerged, as a result of popular pressure, in Indonesia and the Philippines, and Turkey and South Korea increasingly evolved toward democracy. Disappointment with the excesses and cruelties of authoritarian leaders, hopes that democracy would encourage economic development, active promotion by successful democracies elsewhere – all these factors contributed. Then the fall of Russian communism in 1989 led to democracies in virtually all of east-central Europe (with a few exceptions), though not in central Asia. Finally, while authoritarian systems continued to survive in Africa, including a number of “presidents for life”, democratic regimes gained in about 30 countries; the dismantling of the racial apartheid system in South Africa, in the mid-90s, was a case in point.

**The Mixture** By the early 21st century most of the world was democratic. Africa remained divided. Democracy had yet to win most countries in the Middle East, though there were some moves to expand voting, even female voting, at least in local elections. China retained its interesting authoritarian option, and Russia moved in that direction as well. And there were concerns that suppression of opposition created more authoritarian systems in Venezuela, Hungary and elsewhere. Division and debate, sometimes including an active resentment of external human rights interference by some of the authoritarian states, continued to define world politics.

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### **Discussion**

1. What factors contributed to the development of the first states?
2. What led to the rise of monarchy? What challenges did it face and how did it adapt to them?
3. What were the main regional differences concerning forms of government in the Agricultural Age? Do these differences persist today?
4. Why and how did monarchy begin to decline in world history from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century onward?
5. Are there significant differences between totalitarianism and authoritarianism?
6. Compare the main forms of European fascism in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.
7. Why has democracy become more common in the modern periods of world history, compared to the political patterns of the Agricultural Age?
8. What was meant by the “end of history”? What role should democracy play in world history?

## **PART II : The Functions of Government**

**Overview** State functions clearly relate to the forms of government. But they warrant separate attention. Sometimes different regimes will actually push toward similar definitions of function: thus both modern democracies, communist systems, and many authoritarian regimes seek to extend government provision of education. Government functions reflect regional differences, both in the Agricultural Age and since the industrial revolution. But there have also been some common trends, particularly in the past two centuries.

**Core Functions: The Early States** Early governments focused strongly on military and judicial functions. Defense was crucial, though the establishment of formal military forces and the ambitions of some rulers could lead to expansionist efforts as well. Judicial functions were crucial as well. States had every interest in trying to curb private violence and vendettas, through recognized courts of law. There was also great interest in defining and policing property rights. One of the sources of formal government, in places like Mesopotamia, may have been the need to organize irrigation efforts, and property regulations could stem from this interest. Codes of law could result, as in the 18<sup>th</sup> century BCE Hammurabic code, the first such effort that has left a record. Finally, many early governments developed religious functions, both to help organize this vital function and to embrace an official religion in support of the state.

**Chinese and Persian Innovations** During the classical period, government activities grew, particularly toward a larger economic role, though military and cultural functions increased as well. Greater economic involvement would include, for several states, responsibility for issuing money. The greater centralization that developed in classical Persia and China included expansion of state functions. The Persian government undertook new responsibilities for infrastructure: it created an unprecedented road network, with inns spaced so that travelers could find shelter at the end of a day of travel. The government also introduced the first postal service. The Chinese government sponsored road building, but also the great canals and an initial version of the protective Great Wall, expanding infrastructure and public works activities still further. The government also supported some practical scientific research, aimed particularly at improving agriculture but also embracing astrological calculations. It sponsored grain storage to guard against famines in cities; and it standardized weights and measures. It also sought some general regulation of culture. One dynasty directly attacked Confucianism in favor of the harsher doctrine of Legalism. More characteristically, the Han dynasty supported Confucianism, while also promoting the Mandarin language for officials and the upper classes throughout the Middle Kingdom. Infrastructure also preoccupied the Roman Empire, along with the emphasis on military responsibilities and on defining codes of law and the court system; the government devoted great attention to the development of crucial ports, a road system aimed particularly at facilitating troop movement, and the construction of aqueducts for major cities. Triumphal arches and entertainment facilities – colosseums, baths – not only in Rome but in provincial centers also extended the government role. The government promoted an official religion, but was normally tolerant of other religious sects; periodic persecution of Jews and Christians, whose religions seemed to preclude appropriate recognition of political loyalty, was the exception here.

**The Postclassical Period** This period saw relatively few innovations in government functions. Indeed, more decentralized systems, such as Japanese or European feudalism, reduced central controls of military and infrastructure activities. Local lords, or individual cities, often had to undertake road building. Each major lord sponsored his own military force. The overarching question, in this period, involved the government's religious role. The Chinese government, reviving its concern for enforcing a suitable political culture, ultimately directly attacked Buddhism, closing many monasteries, though without eliminating the religion entirely. While the Catholic Church remained technically separate from the state in Western Europe, with its own body of law, Catholic leaders frequently, and usually successfully, called on the state to help persecute heretics or enforce religious laws in other respects; in the Crusades, first called by the pope at the end of the 11<sup>th</sup> century, the Church even asked political leaders to undertake the conquest of Jerusalem. Islamic belief that the state, and its rulers, should defend and enforce the faith was quite clear. Most Islamic governments were, however, fairly tolerant of other religions, often simply requiring a higher tax payment in return for peaceful coexistence; and Islamic law and courts developed somewhat independently of formal states.

**The Early Modern Centuries** More centralized states in this period revived attention to a variety of functions. The Chinese government continued to head the pack, with crucial decisions about trading expeditions, investments in the new Great Wall and other activities including regulation of trade with Europeans through the port of Macao.

Various gunpowder empires promoted infrastructure activities. The Safavid Empire, in Persia, pressed the population to convert to the Shia version of Islam, and also promoted Farsi as the official language – crucial steps in cultural regulation. Governments in Western Europe, headed by absolutist monarchies such as France or a bit later “enlightened despots” like Frederick the Great of Prussia, most clearly extended their functions, beginning to catch up to the traditionally better-organized Asian states. Economic regulation expanded, along with efforts to promote manufacturing and sponsor agricultural improvements. Promotion of science included sponsorship of national academies, and the French government even worked to standardize the French language. A number of governments also began to build larger prisons, claiming a greater role in law enforcement. While China had pioneered the introduction of a police force aimed at solving or preventing crimes, some European states now began to sponsor formal police activities. Most European governments still claimed responsibility for religious orthodoxy, often attacking Protestant or Catholic minorities, greater tolerance in some states began to modify this role somewhat. Finally, expansion of functions, both in Europe and in Asia, led to a variety of efforts to increase taxation.

**The Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Economic Roles** Industrialization depended on, but also encouraged, a variety of new government functions. Infrastructure efforts expanded steadily, both before and during the industrialization process. Thus the British government undertook new road and canal construction during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, while continuing to develop ports and fueling stations both for the navy and for private commerce. Early railroads required state sponsorship at least in the acquisition of rights of way through eminent domain, and often through direct investment and even early operation. Governments also, quite generally, began to sponsor industrial and commercial expositions, to stimulate demand and promote technological change. In general, countries that sought to emulate initial British industrialization needed governments to play a lead role, though private enterprise contributed as well. It was the Egyptian state, under Muhammed Ali in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century, that developed new training programs and sponsored model factories, though the effort ultimately faltered. The Japanese government, later in the century, set up many key factories directly, while organizing railroad development and other activities. Most early industrial governments also raised tariffs to try to protect infant industries.

**The Long 19<sup>th</sup> Century: Other Innovations** Led by British example (with city governments playing a key role), states began to take on new responsibilities for public health, both by building new sewage systems and clearing swamps, and by extending some regulations over housing and other conditions. Direct factory regulation was particularly important, in the interests of better safety and limitations of the work of children and women. Typically, initial regulations were both limited and ill-enforced. But by the later 19<sup>th</sup> century governments in most industrial countries had paid factory inspectors who had some real impact on working conditions. Growing responsibility for education was an even more important change. The Chinese imperial government had long sponsored schools and tests for bureaucrats, and governments in early modern Europe began to provide some technical training for engineers, foresters and a few other specialized professions. Most schooling, however, depended entirely on family and religious arrangements. It was the revolutionary era and then industrialization that convinced governments that provision of education was a core state function. The result was the development of new state systems of elementary education and for at least an elite, secondary and tertiary training as well. Clashes with religious authorities over educational roles on the whole began to limit the religious responsibilities of many states; this was a key bone of contention between conservatives and liberals in Latin America. Police activities burgeoned also: early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century both British and United States governments set up formal police forces, and efforts in other countries expanded as well. On the whole, clearly, the long 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a dramatic set of transformations of government roles, creating new contacts between the state and ordinary citizens beyond taxation, military recruitment, and courts of law. And when governments in other parts of the world began to respond to industrialization, they would quickly and formally move toward this redefinition of function as well. Thus the Meiji regime in Japan immediately undertook new public health measures and, in 1872, began to construct a national education system.

**The Contemporary Period** The growth of government functions on the whole continued in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, amid extensive and often bitter debates about specific political systems. Communist governments undertook the most ambitious expansion, seeking state regulation of the economy and introducing elaborate multi-year plans to guide the process; they also of course expanded police functions. Most new nations, emerging from decolonization, regardless of specific ideology, also sought to expand government roles in economic development. There were important common trends as well, often building on 19<sup>th</sup>-century precedent. The state’s role in education and public health grew globally, varying mainly by available resources. Communist governments quickly built more extensive school systems, and also introduced wider health care. Increased welfare commitments constituted the most general growth area for governments, though precedents had been established, in industrial countries, in the later 19<sup>th</sup>



century. Many states expanded protection for the unemployed and the elderly. The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw new debates about the extent of government functions and regulations. Surviving communist systems, as in China and Vietnam, reduced but did not eliminate direct government economic activities, providing greater scope for private enterprise. Many welfare states cut back a bit, if only because of the cost burdens. Specific patterns continued to show great variety: East Asian governments looked to families to support the elderly, while Western governments maintained more direct responsibility for some pension system. Governments in many parts of Asia mixed state-run universities with a variety of private ventures, whereas the higher education system in Europe and Russia fell more fully (though not completely) under state control. Along with variety, however, the trend for increasing the points of interaction between governments and ordinary people, in various facets of life from childrearing to health care to work rules, constituted an important basic theme in the world's political and social experience over the past century.

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**Suggested Reading:**

*Cultural Politics in Revolution: Teachers, Peasants, and Schools in Mexico, 1930-1940.* By Mary Kay Vaughan (University of Arizona Press, 1996).

*The Politics of Social Solidarity: Class Bases of the European Welfare State, 1875-1975.* By Peter Baldwin (Cambridge University Press, 1992).

*Punishment and Power in the Making of Modern Japan.* By Daniel V. Botsman (Princeton University Press, 2007).

**Discussion**

1. What were the main variations in government functions among different regional civilizations in the Agricultural Age? What caused some of the differences?
2. What were the most common religious or cultural roles of governments during the Agricultural Age? Was the Safavid approach to religion common or unusual?
3. What public administration innovations were developed by the Persian Empire?
4. What was the role of the state in economic and trade growth in Europe during the early modern period?
5. What were the main effects of the industrial revolution on government functions? Is there a major difference in functions, regardless of precise political system, between the “industrial state” and the “preindustrial state”?
6. Why and how have states undertaken new responsibilities in the area of public health?
7. What new roles has the state acquired in the contemporary period?