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THE GOVERNMENT IN HISTORY – 19th Century

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Government in the Industrial Age

Overview Full-fledged industrialization began with developments in Britain at the end of the 18th century. Other Western societies joined in by the early 19th century. Japan and Russia entered the process at the end of the 19th century. Then after World War II the Pacific Rim and then China, India and other players launched their own industrializations. By the early 21st century, well over half the world's population was involved in industrial or rapidly industrializing societies. While economic and technological changes held center stage, industrialization, and preparing for industrialization, also involved a variety of shifts in the nature of role of government. Before dealing with more specific regional developments through the 19th and then 20th centuries, some points about the contrasts and continuities between the industrial and the preindustrial state can be ventured.

Government as cause For quite a while, historians paid great attention to the role of the state in causing industrialization in the first place, particularly in Britain. This approach has declined with the realization that other governments, as in China, were at least as well organized – but no industrialization initially resulted. The British advantage rested on colonial holdings and scientific culture more than the state. However, the British government in the 18th century did expand canals and roads, while ordering industrial supplies for the growing navy. It established a central bank and set up a much more formal patent office. Tariffs on foreign manufactured goods encouraged British factories, particularly in cotton textiles. Government role in later industrializations expanded still further, for example normally in establishing or at least promoting a new railroad system. (Thus while the British government had facilitated railway land acquisition, the French and German governments built the rail network directly.) Japanese and Russian industrializations depended even more heavily on the state, for example in setting up factories directly in key industries. The same pattern applied to Pacific Rim industrializations. Governments do not explain the timing of industrialization alone, but their involvement was critical particularly in “latecomer” cases – of course including China at the end of the 20th century.

New functions Government functions and personnel expanded everywhere, to help prepare for industrialization and then to respond to some of its results. (Only Britain and Norway briefly shrunk their governments in the 19th century, in response to liberal beliefs in more free enterprise; but these were anomalous cases and lasted a few decades at most.) Law codes had to change to accommodate new issues, including more complicated property and corporate law. In addition to the expanded public works function – as in helping to set up railways – governments fairly quickly added factory inspections, toward minimal safety standards and some protection of child and female labor; these were initially cursory, but they expanded with time. Responsibility for public health increased, with new programs for sewage disposal and, later in the century, centers to assist with infant care. Organization of commercial fairs and industrial expositions became a standard feature, beginning with Britain's Crystal Palace exhibit in 1851. Formal patent offices were established more widely – very quickly, for example, in the new United States. Though the function was not entirely new, professional policing became a responsibility – in some cases, as in Britain, for the first time in any formal sense (the famous British force was organized in the 1820s by

prime minister Robert Peel – hence, bobbies). Perhaps most important, though there were a few limited precedents, governments assumed responsibility for education, setting up school requirements, standards for teacher training, and so on – as Japan did with its ambitious Education Act of 1872. Beginning with Germany in the 1880s, governments haltingly organized new welfare systems, with protections for accident and illness, old age and unemployment; here too, innovations started small but expanded over time. On another front, many governments began to expand their capacity to require military service, and military spending rose rapidly in many industrial states. Obviously in all these categories specific programs depended on time and place, but the overall pattern was clear. And this meant not only larger governments, but more contact between the state and ordinary people on a variety of fronts – even in such basic matters as a requirement to acquire a marriage license.

Facilities and personnel These changes interacted with new industrial technologies, initially particularly the railroad and the telegraph, which permitted more rapid communication and movement around a large territory. To this soon would be added typewriters and other duplicating devices, vital to a larger bureaucracy. Personnel expanded everywhere and in most cases, as in the West after the 1850s, this was accompanied by civil service reforms which introduced merit examinations rather than heredity or personal connections (as China had already done in the past). Corruption and favoritism remained problems, but professionalism was enhanced overall, and bureaucracies no longer depended on aristocratic birth. Though with some earlier precedents, tertiary training for future bureaucrats also expanded – including a larger array of military training schools but also new programs in public health, statistics, agricultural research, modern languages and so on; another responsibility for the state.

Form of government Here, no single “industrial” model prevailed, but there were innovations. One scholar has argued that, with more people living in cities, better educated, and with wider contacts with the state, government either had to allow greater popular voice – that is, approach some kind of democracy – OR establish new forms of authoritarianism (sometimes with a façade of popular participation). This may seem to be an overgeneralization, but it is worth attention. Certainly government forms changed quickly in many industrial or industrializing societies. Though this became clearer in the 20th century than in the 19th, monarchies had difficulty adjusting to the demands of industrial society – sometimes because they staked too much on protecting the landed aristocracy, as in prerevolutionary Russia. With few exceptions, republics, rather than monarchies, became the order of the day as industrialization gained ground. World War I would also reveal the unprecedented organizational capacity of the industrial state, in organizing the economy, requisitioning labor, issuing propaganda, and policing against dissent. This would feed directly into new kinds of authoritarianism in the 20th and 21st centuries. Disputes about the form of government became an important issue in many parts of the world, in part in the effort to adjust to the needs of an industrial society.

Nation state Another clear political trend coterminous with the advance of industrialization was a preference for the nation state, rather than subnational units or multinational empires. Sometimes the trend connected directly with industrialization. Thus German national unity in the 19th century was prepared by a tariff union, in turn motivated in part by a desire to advance industrial opportunities. In many other cases, the nation state seemed logical in part because of the industrial success of European nation states. Connections should not be pressed too far: industrialization was not the main cause of the spread of nation states, and many nation states proved to be too small to provide appropriate markets – hence, particularly after World War II, the growing efforts to link nation states in larger tariff unions.

Conclusion Industrial implications for government were most significant in the area of functional change and organizational capacity. Overall, industrialization or the effort to industrialize provided a loose framework, within which a variety of specific developments took shape within individual countries. There were, however, some common trends and needs, within which more detailed political developments would take shape over the past 250 years.

Study questions

1. What kinds of new functions does industrialization require of the state?
2. What was the role of the state in initiating industrial revolutions?
3. What are the connections between the advance of industrialization and the decline of monarchy?

Further reading

Peter N. Stearns, *The Industrial Turn in World History* (Routledge, 2017)

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Western Europe and the Settler Societies

Long 19th century Many world historians use the idea of a “long” 19th century as part of their overall periodization: the notion is that key characteristics (including initial industrialization) began to take shape in the second half of the 18th century, setting in motion trends that would persist into the early 20th. These trends would include the new surge of Western imperialism, which was already taking shape with increasing British control of India. The long 19th century would also be defined in part by the revolutions that burst forth in the final quarter of the 18th century and would unleash a new, sometimes violent, debate about the nature of government that would also run through the ensuing decades; French decisions about government form would not really coalesce until the 1870s and 1880s, for example, after the initial ferment of the revolution of 1789.

Geography The core of “the West” continued to center in Western and Central Europe. However, many political movements – including liberalism – and government innovations were also shared by the British-dominated settler societies of the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These societies faced frontier conditions different from those of Western Europe, and the extension of government to new areas, and the role of government in dealing, usually harshly, with indigenous people further differentiated the settler societies. But many trends were shared, particularly in terms of the form of government organization with the rise of parliamentary regimes and the expansion of the vote.

Age of revolution The “age of Atlantic revolution”, from 1776 to the final major risings in 1848, had a variety of implications for government. The risings sought new restrictions on government interference in a variety of areas, emphasizing a new program of human rights. Governments should no longer restrict speech, assembly, religious freedom or the press. In the French Revolution, emphasis also highlighted the elimination of aristocratic legal privilege: government service should be “open to talents”. Monarchies should either be eliminated or restricted by new legislative bodies, with significant authority; these in turn should derive from a wider suffrage, though still usually defined in terms of property qualifications (and definitely entirely male). These were huge changes, though many were incompletely achieved. In the process some government functions also expanded. Again in France the revolutionary government mandated the metric system, another major government shift though responsibility for weights and measures was not entirely new. Legal codes were reconsidered, to limit the crimes subject to capital punishment. Government responsibility for schools increased, though not yet to the point of universal requirements. The French government set up a variety of new technical schools, to improve bureaucratic recruitment and spur the economy.

Consolidation European revolutions in 1830 and 1848 largely maintained the basic goals, often objecting to interference with the freedom of the press or undue religious influence. The revolutionary mood spread into central Europe. After 1848, and the formal defeat or eclipse of the revolutionary thrust, attention turned to consolidating previous gains, often with new compromises among liberals and conservatives. Most governments now supported religious freedom, including freedom for Jews. They granted considerable press freedom, though police interference continued and many governments, even in liberal Britain or the United States, extended censorship over sexual content in the name of essentially Christian moral values. The importance of parliaments was confirmed – though in France not until the 1870s. In unified Germany parliamentary powers were limited by the power of the emperor to appoint chief ministers. At this point however attention largely turned away from the form of government, around which there was now considerable agreement, toward growing social and military issues.

Democracy Democratic voting rights expanded gradually, though for a brief moment the radical phase of the French revolution established universal manhood suffrage. In Britain three separate reforms, from 1832 to the 1880s, gradually established nearly universal manhood suffrage. Several northern states in the United States opened to universal suffrage from the 1820s onward, and then the end of slavery

extended democratic rights (in principle) nationwide. French suffrage was assured from 1848 onward, and the German compromise included wide suffrage but with a three-class voting system that provided greater power to the propertied group. Italy did not move to democracy until after World War I. By the later 19th century, the big new voting issue involved women, as feminist agitation increased widely. New Zealand was the first nation to move, in 1893, though several American western states innovated even earlier. Women's suffrage was still an open issue by 1914, though trends were becoming clear, particularly in countries with a Protestant background.

Religion The religious function of Western governments declined considerably, as the commitment to greater religious freedom suggested, but there were complexities. The United States established separation of church and state early on, though government policies, as in the schools, favored a loosely Protestant ethical approach. Change came harder in Europe. The French Revolution worked to reduce the power of the Catholic Church, seizing many church lands and at one point trying to enforce oaths of loyalty from priests. Later regimes however increased the Church role, particularly in primary education, until a firmly secular system was established in the 1880s. Further quarrels in the 1890s led to more definitive separation and a commitment to the French Republic as a secular state. British conflicts over the role of the Church of England, particularly in schools, extended beyond the 19th century. Germany sought to reduce the role of the Catholic Church (in a religiously divided nation) in the 1880s, and the Italian state frequently conflicted with the papacy as papal territories were stripped away with national unification. Again the trend was clear, but not surprisingly, given the importance of religious functions in the past, the change was difficult and contested.

Nationalism The French revolution heralded the new phenomenon of popular nationalism, symbolized by the creation of the world's first national anthem. The idea was that now that the state belonged to the people, rather than a monarch, the people owed it active national loyalty. Nationalism spread widely in Europe and the United States, and soon beyond, helping to motivate Italian and German unifications. Nationalism gave established nations a new source of political loyalty, and it was frequently played up in the schools. But nationalism could also constrain the state, particularly supporting foreign policy ventures in the name of national honor. Popular nationalism, trumpeted by the mass press, pushed states into some imperialist ventures that might otherwise not have been undertaken by the later 19th century.

Functions The two great expansions of the functions of the Western state in the 19th century involved mass and secondary education and social insurance. Efforts to extend state schooling at the primary level dotted the first half of the century; in the United States, these centered on states and localities (mainly in the north), but national governments took the lead in Europe. Germany already had the framework of a system. France sketched a growth in public schools in 1833, but fleshed out a fully national system, and compulsory attendance requirement, only in the 1880s. State support for secondary schools and universities grew as well; in the United States the federal government established public universities in every state in the nation. Social insurance emerged from the 1880s onward, in response to industrialization and new pressures from rising socialist movements. These were not the only developments, however. New legislation limited hours of work for women and children, and ultimately men, followed by some factory inspection efforts. Later in the century governments moved to agree on national time zones to facilitate transportation. Beginning with city governments, the state began to take responsibility for establishing and maintaining parks. The list was considerable, and growing.

War and collaboration After the revolutionary and Napoleonic wars, the major states of Europe moved to promote greater European peace, beginning with the fairly statesmanlike Treaty of Vienna in 1815. This did not prevent later conflicts, particularly around the national unifications, but in fact European war became far less common than had been the case in the early modern period. However, this was replaced in part by the new round of imperialist expansion in Africa, Southeast Asia and Pacific Oceania, which was supported as well by more government military spending and larger standing armies (on the continent). At the same time European governments took the lead in a variety of new international collaborations (often including the United States). New agreements provided postal coordination, allowing international mailing for the first time; the international time zone agreement; international patent protection; coordination of weather statistics; congresses aimed at limiting the spread of epidemic disease – here too the list was considerable and growing, arguably modifying (though not balancing) the spread of nationalism in defining government policy.

Study questions

1. What were the main government changes that resulted from the various revolutions?
2. How and why did democratic voting systems spread?
3. What were the main changes in government function during the long 19th century?

Further reading

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Latin America

Independence Most Latin American nations gained independence from Spain in the second decade of the 19th century. Independence wars were led by Creoles, who in turn were inspired by the revolutionary ideals and examples of France and the United States as well as their own grievances at being shut out of government posts during the later 18th century. For its part Spain was distracted by the Napoleonic invasions and unable to respond forcibly. Brazilian independence took a more convoluted path but began to take shape soon afterward. Most Caribbean countries remained colonies, but Haiti strikingly rebelled both against French control and slavery, winning independence and emancipation around 1800.

Goals Most independence leaders, like Simon Bolivar, hoped not only for independence but for a liberal, constitutional and parliamentary state that would guarantee the basic freedoms, including religion. A few of the new nations briefly considered monarchy but all became republics. There was no appetite for democracy – Latin American liberals lacked confidence in the masses – but they did support voting with property qualifications.

New nations problems Political reality complicated the intentions of the founders. New Latin American states encountered several problems that would prove characteristic of many new nations. First, few leaders had political experience – here, colonial exclusion proved costly. Disagreements broke out over boundaries. Bolivar, for example, had hoped for a large state extending from Colombia into the Andes, but he soon had to accept fragmentation; the same disappointment occurred in central America. Economies were hard hit, for with independence British industrial goods began to flood the market, displacing domestic manufacturing. Bitter disputes also occurred over specific issues. Liberal leaders intended to restrict the power of the Church, for example in education, but they were confronted by a conservative coalition of Church authorities, landlords and military leaders. The result was a series of policy disagreements and frequent instability.

Forms of government Through the 19th century and beyond, many Latin American countries experienced frequent changes of regime. Periodically, authoritarian leaders, or *caudillos*, seized the reins, sometimes with popular support, sometimes backed by the conservative coalition; *caudillismo* was a recurrent pattern in a number of countries, including Mexico. At the same time, periods of liberal leadership were important as well, which meant that issues such as church-state relations tended to fluctuate. Few states attempted major social or economic reforms, leaving landlord power largely unchecked.

Functions Given resource constraints and political instability, Latin American governments did not venture the kind of functional expansion that occurred in Western Europe. However, there were some important developments, particularly in the second half of the 19th century. A number of governments expanded public works commitments, most obviously in railroad development. Several took a lead in encouraging greater industrialization, though the assignment was difficult given continued Western pressure to exploit natural resources and the need to borrow capital from Western banks. However some societies, such as Argentina, made some progress. A number of government initiatives centered on efforts to reform certain aspects of popular culture – often through legal changes. Thus in Mexico, courts of law began to impose

stricter penalties for infanticide, in contrast to earlier courts that often recognized how frequently women fell victim to sexual violence. Around 1900, several societies began to attempt a new crackdown on prostitution, in part in reaction to global concerns about Latin American involvement in what was called the “white slave trade”. Though somewhat quietly, major changes occurred in education – despite frequent tensions between liberals and the Church. Mexico City for example set up compulsory primary schools for both boys and girls after 1842, and by the end of the century almost a third of all Mexicans were literate, and almost as many women and men – quite a high figure compared to most nonindustrial societies.

Foreign policy Though independent, Latin American governments faced continued pressure from Western Europe, particularly in matters of trade and finance. Interference from the United States, particularly in Mexico and Central America, increased. On the other hand, relations among the Latin American nations themselves were largely peaceful, with the major exception of a war between Paraguay and its neighbors between 1864 and 1870. This aside, Latin American militaries tended to concentrate on internal politics, where they sometimes had an outsize role. War or preparations for war did not figure strongly in government functions – another contrast with a number of other regions during the long 19th century.

Study questions

1. What are characteristic “new nations” problems, and what are their common political results?
2. How did the Latin American independence wars compare to revolutionary movements in Western Europe?
3. What were the main goals of Latin American liberals?
4. What were the main similarities and differences between Latin American governments and their European counterparts?

Further reading

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David Bushnell and Neil MacAuley, *The Emergence of Latin America in the Nineteenth Century* (2nd ed., University of Michigan Press, 1995)

Imperial Government in India

Imperialism and government The vast expansion of Western empires in the 19th century raised issues of governance that were somewhat different from those faced by countries like Spain in the early modern period. Most obviously, with partial exceptions for southern Africa and Algeria, the new holdings did not gain large European populations. And while there was considerable missionary effort (particularly in Africa), church officials did not assume the kind of administrative duties that their counterparts had done for Spain and Portugal earlier. Nor (except in Oceania) was there massive population decline due to disease. These facts meant that 19th-century administrations could be stretched thin – even more than had been the case in the early modern colonies. This in turn could limit the range of reforms that imperial officials would undertake, particularly given the risk of local opposition. Decisions about how to recruit and train locals to participate in government loomed larger than had been the case before – beginning with the question of how many might be considered suitable in the first place. At the same time, imperialist regimes in the 19th century were explicit about one claim: the natives in the areas under their control were not ready to govern themselves, if indeed they ever would be. The racist “white man’s burden” concept placed great emphasis on the West’s superior political capacity. All of these issues played out in the changing pattern of government in British India, where the Raj ultimately gained control over virtually the whole subcontinent – arguably the largest regime, geographically, in India’s history.

Before 1857 From an administrative standpoint, British rule in India was conducted through the British East India Company until 1857. The Company controlled a fair amount of territory directly, but also formed alliances with a host of local princes – a few of whom had regional governments of their own. The system excused the British from actually setting up a colonial government. However, from the end of the 18th century the British actually set governing policy, with the East India Company serving as agent. And

this led to a series of sweeping reforms. Most obviously the British established new rules for landed property. In one region they established a new set of landlords, with peasants as tenants obligated to substantial rent payments (from which the landlords in turn would meet tax obligations to the state). In two other regions the British claimed they confirmed individual land ownership for peasants (replacing earlier village controls) – but this system was complicated by the high tax rates established. Rural poverty measurably increased. Other reforms somewhat more gingerly took on several Indian family customs. The practice of *sati*, in which in some Hindu regions widows threw themselves on their dead husbands' funeral pyres, was banned – and a new group of Indian reformers, though wary of British rule, agreed with this change. Efforts were made to improve the property rights of widows, and there was discussion about trying to limit child marriage. Deeply-rooted customs like the caste system were not attacked, but the British did believe that they could use government to introduce a number of improvements in Indian society. Finally, it was in the 1850s that the government began to promote railway developments, to improve access to Indian raw materials and to facilitate the movement of troops.

After 1857: structure Government structure and policy changed considerably after 1857, when a massive Mutiny by Indian troops, both Hindu and Muslim, called British rule into question; the rising was put down only with great difficulty, though local princes and landlords remained largely loyal to the British. At this point (1858) the British took over government directly, ending the East India Company's role. Earlier arrangements with local princes were firmed up by more formal treaties, though their territories, collectively, covered about a third of the subcontinent. The army was reformed, to promote greater loyalty among the troops. In London, the British organized an India Office, appointing a governor general to oversee the colony, reporting directly to Parliament. About 1500 civil servants were sent out to various parts of the subcontinent. Vowing to improve relationships with Indian civilians, the administration began to recruit a cadre of Indians into the lower levels of civil service, even encouraging them to adopt partially Western dress. By the 1890s manners books began to be written to instruct this minority in how to interact socially with Westerners. Provincial councils were established, with Indian members, and the same was true for municipal administrations. A reform act in 1909 introduced elections for the Indian representatives, who previously had been appointed (the electorate, however, was a minority of upper-class Indians). However, Indians were carefully kept out of the higher administrative levels. A civil service examination system undoubtedly improved the caliber of top officials, but the exams were only administered in Britain and by 1890 only one Indian had managed to win through.

Policies The British pulled back from major reform efforts in the wake of the Mutiny. No further land reforms were undertaken, though several Governors-General did reduce taxation rates. Social reform was largely abandoned, as the British queen promised to respect Indian traditions. On the other hand many governors-general remained active in promoting public works, including facilitating telegraph communications and expanding irrigation systems. And key elements of the British law code were applied to India, including one measure outlawing homosexuality; Indian courts were reorganized along British lines, with English as the official language. Several British officials built public clock towers in Indian cities, to promote a "modern" sense of time (a move which prompted some local counterattacks). And there was some effort to promote education, though initiatives here were rather modest (compared for example to developments in Latin America).

Evaluation Not surprisingly, the effects of British rule remain widely debated. Some Indians did gain new government experience, even with elections. But the numbers were few, and British paternalistic control remained paramount. Reforms, even in the later period, can be variously interpreted. Many, as in the public works sectors, were designed to facilitate imports of British industrial goods and exports of cheaper Indian products. While later administrations paid some attention to the plight of peasants, major problems, including periods of famine, were not effectively addressed. And from another standpoint, British hesitancy post-Mutiny left a number of traditional practices untouched that arguably should have been addressed. Not surprisingly, British policies led to the growth of Indian nationalism. The Indian National Congress formed in 1885, though its efforts long focused more on seeking a greater role for Indians in the administrative apparatus, not only outright independence. But foundations were being laid for a more vigorous effort after World War I. Finally, British policies post-Mutiny included vigorous efforts to divide Hindus and Muslims; the provinces of Bengal was even divided on religious lines. Here too were seeds for the future.

Study questions

1. What were the main differences in governance conditions for colonies in the 19th century compared to the early modern period?
2. What were the main changes in British policy after the 1857 Mutiny?
3. Why, and on what basis, do most current evaluations emphasize the drawbacks and inadequacies of British policies in India?

Further reading

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Sashi Tharoor, *Inglorious Empire: what the British did to India* (Penguin, 2017)

Stanley Wolpert, *A New History of India* (8th ed., University of California Press, 2008)

Imperial regimes in Africa

Timing and geography The race for empire in subSaharan Africa accelerated after the 1860s, fueled by competition between Britain and France but with Germany now also a player, and Belgium participating as well. Successful wars and treaty arrangements gave Europeans control over virtually the whole subcontinent. Liberia, governed by former slaves from the United States, remained independent. The longstanding Ethiopian kingdom withstood a war with Italy in 1896, though the Italians would return in the 1930s. The new European holdings were still developing their governments by the late 19th century (except in older centers in South Africa and Angola). Virtually all the colonies were carved up without regard for African ethnic or religious divisions, a factor that would complicate administration of the colonies and, even more, the success of independent governments once decolonization began in the second half of the 20th century. Overall, the full imperial period would last only about a century. It did see the notion of formal government more widely introduced in the subcontinent, including some sense of the major functions involved and lower-level administrative experience for some Africans. But, in what was still a predominantly rural, agricultural society, many government initiatives were far too limited to have great impact on ordinary life.

Governing approaches British administration in most of the colonies was rather decentralized. For a time, some colonies were ruled by trading companies, rather than the government itself. Ultimately, each colony had a governor general appointed from London. But control of much of the territory devolved to a network of African chiefs, who wielded considerable power on condition of accepting colonial rule. In several colonies, such as Nigeria, the British also pitted ethnic groups against each other, favoring those who were particularly loyal (the Belgians did the same in some of their holdings, creating durable resentments that would burst out, for example, in the Rwandan genocide of the 1990s). The French approach was more centralized, though for a time new colonies were simply administered by the military. In the 1890s however the government began to rein in the military, establishing a federation of West African colonies with a single minister based in Dakar, reporting directly to Paris, with viceroys under him for each of the individual colonies. The French also created local units, or *cercles*, headed by a French official overseeing a number of villages, in principle with absolute authority. However, Africans served as village and canton leaders, responsible for collecting taxes and administering customary law, with the right to arm a small number of guards. Finally, as a few Africans completed higher education in France, they were regarded as “evolved” and granted French citizenship, even serving in government or military within France itself – another difference from the British approach which the French regarded as evidence of their superior approach to race.

Functions The main goals of most of the colonial governments involved maintaining stability, appropriate tax collection, and opportunities for Western businesses, ranging from mining to the processing of sugar cane; this latter goal could inspire some road and railway development. Some reforms were instituted, notably an effort to abolish slavery; however essentially compulsory labor continued in many colonies, most notoriously the Belgian Congo. Some measures introduced more Western-style family laws, usually designed to bolster the authority of husbands. But efforts to combat polygamy and, in the northeast,

female genital mutilation, were not pushed very vigorously, for fear of rousing opposition. British officials sometimes sought to punish Africans accused of cruelty to animals, ironically subjecting them to whipping. Colonial governments sponsored or encouraged some schools, though much of this was left to the initiative of missionaries. (Efforts were somewhat more extensive in South Africa, but aimed primarily at the White population.) By 1900 a sufficient number of Africans were educated in European languages to serve as lower-level officials in the colonial administrations, though opportunities were more limited than in India at the same time. After World War I, under more pressure to demonstrate responsible concern, educational efforts expanded. The British set up a commission to work on African education, and the French began to expand a primary school system, even sending out officials to recruit children against initial village opposition. Some public health measures were also introduced, if only to provide greater protection for the Europeans involved. Between the wars also, many colonial regimes began to face more varied opposition, including the emergence of some nationalist agitation (in South Africa, the African National Congress had actually been launched in 1912), which led to heightened police efforts and prison terms for some leaders – a pattern that would accelerate during the first years after World War II.

Study questions

1. How did the imperial approach to government in Africa compare to that in India? What were the implications of the differences for post-colonial governments?
2. How were the major colonial administrations organized? What were the major differences between the British and French approaches?
3. What were the principal limitations on government functions?

Further reading

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Russia

Outside the West, Latin America and the empires The big government question for countries outside the direct orbit of early industrialization, revolution, new independence or colonial status was: what had to be changed to counter growing Western power, in order to preserve some measure of freedom of action. (Or for some: how could major change be avoided, so that basic political and social traditions could be preserved.) Debates over reform measures and their limitations provide a common thread to political developments in Russia, the Middle East, China and Japan – though the specific patterns varied widely. Russia sought to avoid the reform debate in the first half of the 19th century, despite some internal pressure, but then turned to a mix of change and repression which, among other things, set the stage for the nation's participation in World War I and the ensuing revolution.

Overall The first half of the 19th century saw little fundamental change in Russian government, with a concerted effort to maintain conservative policies in the face of growing liberalism in Western Europe. Traditional attempts at military expansion continued, mainly at the expense of the Ottoman Empire; but Western nations increasingly sought to limit the gains. Loss in the Crimean War forced a major policy review, leading from 1861 to a two-decade reform period in which a number of changes were introduced, in structure and policy alike. Fundamental shifts were limited however, and the reform period came to a close in 1881, leading to a final period of renewed repression.

Conservative bulwark The government largely sought to maintain the status quo after the Napoleonic wars. A rising by liberal nobles was put down in 1825, and Polish nationalist agitation was suppressed. The practice of exiling or imprisoning political dissidents expanded. In 1849 Russia polished its conservative bona fides by intervening against a revolution in Hungary, on behalf of the Habsburg monarch. The tsar continued to maintain fundamental power, aided by his ministers; governorships

administered the various provinces. Control over top appointments in the Orthodox church continued. However, Russia's tradition of military expansion was increasingly complicated by British and French opposition, eager to avoid too much Russian intrusion into the Middle East. Gains against the Ottoman Empire were frequently modified in great power conferences. In 1854 the French and British intervened against the latest Russian move, winning a difficult regional war in the Crimea.

Reform era Loss in war convinced Russian leaders that changes were needed, if only to keep pace with the West. Serfdom was the key target, as reformers had long urged: and even tsarist ministers now agreed that a more flexible labor force was needed. The system was abolished in 1861, but with payment requirements that continued to antagonize the peasantry; the regime was committed to defending the aristocracy, even amid change. Other reforms affected the legal system: punishment were scaled back and an independent judiciary established on a Western model (however, this independence was subsequently curtailed). Abolition of serfdom required major innovations in local government, since the aristocracy no longer controlled the peasantry directly. Local and provincial councils (*zemstvos*) were elected, with a weighted class voting system that gave disproportionate power to the aristocracy and wealthier townsmen. The councils exercised considerable power over taxation, public works, schools and medical care in their areas, providing some real political experience to new categories of Russians. Overall, the government also began to encourage school expansion, which however proceeded slowly, and sponsored major projects such as railroad development, including the ambitious trans-Siberian railway. The economic minister began actively to promote industrialization, with considerable success.

After 1881 Most of the reforms were vigorously opposed by conservative factions, including the established bureaucracy which resented intrusions on its domains. Then in 1881 the anarchist assassination of the tsar brought the reform era to a halt. Police repression increased. The government pressed for replacement of regional languages with Russian, and tolerated violent attacks on groups such as the Jews. *Zemstvo* powers were curbed by the provision that any actions were subject to veto by the provincial, state-appointed governors. Support for industrialization continued, however, under the energetic Sergei Witte, who at one point served as prime minister. Russia's foreign policy woes continued, despite successful alliances with France and ultimately Britain plus some territorial acquisitions at China's expense. The Russians lost a war against rising Japan, in 1905, which led to a significant revolution. Briefly, the tsar had to agree to an elected parliament (Duma) with legislative powers; however, he retained the power to dismiss the body, and within a few years the autocratic system was in effect reestablished. Russian dependence on foreign policy success, to compensate for the loss to Japan, led it to support Serbia (a fellow Slavic nation) in its nationalist dispute with the Habsburg empire in 1914, which in turn brought Russia into World War I.

Evaluation Clearly, under pressure, the Russian system was capable of some significant initiatives. However, it sought to avoid major changes at the top, ultimately even restricting concessions to local government; and it aligned itself solidly with the unpopular aristocracy. Most historians believe that its balancing act was doomed even before 1914, particularly when it pulled back from the political changes briefly induced by the 1905 Revolution while also failing to address the ongoing concerns of the peasantry. Heavy reliance on the secret police kept the lid on for a time, but the government could not rise above the additional pressure generated by the hardships of the world war.

Study questions

1. Why was Russia incapable of introducing a parliamentary monarchy?
2. What were the principal changes achieved during the reform decades?
3. To what extent did the government cause its own revolutionary demise?

Further reading

Hans Rogger, *Russia in the Age of Modernisation and Revolution, 1881-1917* (Routledge, 1983)

Alexander Pulanov, *Russia in the Nineteenth Century: autocracy, reform and social change, 1814-1914* (University of North Carolina Press, 2005)

The Ottoman Empire

Overview Efforts by the Ottoman Empire in the 19th century deserve close comparison with patterns in Russia. Pressed by Russia as well as the West, the Ottomans actually began a long series of reform moves earlier than Russia did. And, as in Russia, some of the moves were significant. But the Ottomans were on the whole less successful in using the government to promote major change; most obviously, industrialization proved elusive. Like Russia, however, the Ottoman effort also came to a halt in favor of renewed autocracy, a move that began to fail even before the empire became involved in World War I. Here are two important cases, in sum, where government proved incapable of introducing the changes necessary to preserve the regime.

New challenges The first three decades of the 19th century brought a number of new crises, besides the increasingly unfavorable military balance with Russia. Serbian nationalists (inspired by French revolutionary principles) rebelled in 1804, and ultimately the Ottomans had to acknowledge an independent state. Greece rose up in 1820, and again won out with some support from the European powers. Egypt (already briefly conquered by the French in 1798) became increasingly independent, while the Wahabi Muslim kingdom (precursor of Saudi Arabia) seized territory to the south. The sultan still assumed his traditional powers, recurrently issuing edicts reminding his subjects of his compassion as a servant of God. But the traditional system was beginning to collapse amid the various pressures of new nationalism and religious diversity. In European circles, the fragile empire was increasingly referred to as the “sick man” of Europe.

Reforms The first moves, understandably, focused on modernizing the military. The old Janissary system of recruitment was abolished, in 1826, more modern forms of conscription introduced, while European advisors were brought in to help with training and restructuring. Then in 1839 the Tanzimat reform era began in earnest. The government reorganized the banking system. Support for traditional guilds gave way to promotion of new kinds of factories. New types of public works included building a telegraph network, and a new Ministry of Post was set up in 1840. The government established several new schools, including an unprecedented training program for female teachers. And an Academy of Sciences was set up, in 1861. On the other hand, only .2% of public funds were being devoted to education in 1860, which suggested no real functional redefinition had occurred. A great deal of effort went into the law code and judicial system. Many laws and punishments were revised, along more Western norms. While religious matters were still referred to traditional courts, a new secular network was set up alongside this, open to subjects of any religion. The goal was to reduce religious distinctions and establish a common citizenry. Finally a new constitution was issued in the 1870s, creating a representative parliament for the first time. (No major social reforms were attempted, in contrast to Russia; for example, the situation of women was left essentially unchanged. It is also important to note that the Ottomans, unlike the Russians, were saddled with massive debts, and frequently subject to manipulation by Western banks.)

Retreat Reform efforts came to a screeching halt in 1878, though a few changes (particularly in law) persisted and would contribute to the much more ambitious reforms introduced in Turkey after 1923. As in Russia a few years later, conservative resistance, in this case including a sense by some Muslims that the state was failing its religious duties, plus the difficulty of abandoning autocratic power, led to a decisive end of the reform era in 1878. The new parliament stopped meeting after two years. The regime turned to a policy of repression, highlights by recurrent and brutal attacks on ethnic minorities such as Bulgarians and Armenians. As the situation deteriorated – with further Balkan territory lost, and a major defeat by Russia – a group of Turkish nationalists (Young Turks), backed by elements in the military took charge in 1908. The sultan was reduced to a figurehead in what was essentially a constitutional monarchy, but the new regime itself became entangled in additional military conflicts and ultimately decided to take the gamble of entering World War I on the side of Germany. In the wake of further military defeat the empire formally came to an end in 1923, and the Middle East was further fragmented. Here was a major case in which, among other things, the forces of nationalism undermined one of the classic multinational empires.

Study questions

1. What were the major reforms? How do they compare to Russia's reform efforts?

2. Why did the reform era end?
3. What was the role of nationalisms in undoing the Ottoman state?

Further reading

Caroline Finkel, *Osman's Dream: the story of the Ottoman Empire, 1300-1923* (Basic Books, 2005)

Evgeny Finkel and Scott Gehlbach, *Reform and Rebellion in Weak States* (Cambridge University Press, 2020)

James Gelvin, *The Modern Middle East: a history* (2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 2008)

China

Collapse China in the 19th century, particularly from the 1830s onward, provided an example of governmental collapse, overwhelmed by a variety of crises and unable to introduce significant reforms. The pattern is unexpected, given China's history of effective government, though of course there had been intervals previously as in the transitions from one dynasty to another. The range of problems in the 19th century was in some ways unprecedented. But the nation was also victim of the failure of some of the systems that had long supported effective rule, notably in the increasing rigidity and corruption of the Confucian bureaucracy. The result was, first, the ultimate collapse of the long tradition of imperial rule, as revolution began in 1911; and, second, the memory of a "century of humiliation" that continues to affect Chinese policy today.

Problems In 1839, after the government declined a British request to open the country to trade – including trade in opium, which the British sought to import from South Asia – a small Western force defeated the Chinese military, the first of several setbacks against Western attacks. As trade increased, not only in opium but in cheaper Western factory goods, China's balance of trade, favorable for many centuries, turned to deficits. At one point, a treaty, imposed by force, even required that the Chinese government translate all state documents into English. At the same time, massive population growth was increasing rural poverty and land hunger, compounded by an unusual drought. Then in midcentury a massive, bloody rebellion took years to suppress, and then only with Western assistance.

Response At crucial points, the Chinese government was hampered by difficulties in imperial succession, as emperors-to-be had not yet reached adulthood. Confucian bureaucrats largely resisted major change, making China's efforts by far the feeblest of all the traditional states. The examination system, which had already deteriorated, was producing officials who looked to the past, their quality reduced also by frequent cheating.

Reforms In 1861, as a new emperor ascended the throne at the age of 5, a group of reformers did manage to gain control for a few years in what was called the Tongzhi Restoration. Diplomatic initiatives were concentrated into a single office for the first time. The army and navy modernized, with the importation of Western weapons and armaments factories. But these moves did not go very far, and they were predicated on the notion that they would suffice to preserve an otherwise unchanged Confucian regime. In the final decades of the century, Western nations and Russia seized large strips of territory, mainly in the form of long term leases; and China lost a humiliating war with Japan, ceding control over Korea. This led to a final reform effort in 1898, aiming at restructuring the bureaucracy, appointing new officials, and changing the education system. Bureaucratic opposition stalled further changes, and some reformers were executed. But a few reforms endured, and in 1905 the examination system was finally abolished, a huge move. Plans were underway to draft a constitution, and elections for provincial assemblies were held for the first time. In the meantime, however, a number of liberals, many educated abroad, pressed for more sweeping change. Then the death of the emperor and the succession of another minor, in 1908, set off a series of uprisings in 1911, affecting the majority of the provinces. Imperial rule was abolished in 1912, as China, now a republic, launched what would turn out to be over 30 years of struggle to determine the shape of a durable new regime.

Study questions

1. Why did China fail to introduce significant reforms during the 19th century?

2. Was China's "century of humiliation" due more to government failures or to external pressures?

Further reading

Robert Bickers, *The Scramble for China: foreign devils in the Qing Empire, 1832-1914* (Penguin, 2011)

Michael Gasster, *China's Struggle to Modernize* (2nd ed., Alfred Knopf, 1988)

Japan

Special features Japan's response to the Western challenge, as it presented itself forcefully after 1853, was unusually successful, and government initiatives and internal reforms were at the heart of the response. The pattern may seem unexpected, particularly in its contrast to China. Japan, though more isolated, had the advantage of a past tradition of imitation (from China) that may have provided inspiration, including the realization that imitation did not have to mean loss of identity. The Tokugawa Shogunate, though not without problems by the early 19th century, was relatively stable, another contrast with China at that point. Further, Japanese contacts with Dutch traders expanded somewhat in the later 18th century, providing more knowledge of developments in European science. The Japanese government did not seek change, and it debated response for over a decade: but then it jumped in vigorously.

The spur In 1853 an American fleet landed in Tokyo Bay and demanded that the Japanese open their markets. This was followed by British and further American visits, and a few episodes of limited bombardment. The result was a fifteen year debate, and near civil war, between factions that hoped to maintain the status quo and those that argued that Japan must reform to deal more effectively with this new threat. The reformers won, and a new emperor in 1868, called Meiji, or the enlightened one, launched a period of rapid change that, fairly quickly, led to the early stages of Japanese industrialization. In essence, the government, aided by a some segments of the samurai class and a new group of entrepreneurs, took the lead in quietly revolutionizing Japanese society. (Note: the idea of government-guided "revolutions from above" most clearly applies to 20th-century cases, such as Turkey, but it may fit the Japanese experience as well.)

Form of government For starters, the Meiji government abolished feudalism and other legal inequalities. The shogunate ended and was replaced with direct imperial rule – after centuries in which the emperor had been a shadowy religious figurehead. A new charter urged the formation of "deliberative assemblies" to allow expression of public opinion, while in principle all positions now were open to talent ("the common people...shall be allowed to pursue his own calling"). A new council of state was established, along with a new system of local administration, and office holding was limited to four years. Many former officials, including nobles, were still utilized, but the government set up new prefectures to administer the nation's regions. Reform discussions continued into the 1870s, though there were also a number of popular protests that were put down with force; laws severely limited criticism of the government in the press and also popular gatherings (where police presence was required). An independent judiciary was established, and new regional assemblies established. Great debate occurred, at the ministerial level, as to which Western government model to follow. Initial partisans of the British or American models gradually lost ground, in favor of the more limited German approach to parliamentary democracy. Finally in 1889 a new constitution clearly established a mixed parliamentary and absolutist model. The emperor named the chief ministers, though the prime minister in fact had considerable authority. An imperial Diet included an elected house (with franchise limited by property qualifications, to about 1% of the total) and an upper house with a mixture of nobles and imperial appointees. Furthermore, control of the military was kept largely separate. Even with these limitations, however, political parties began to emerge, usually operating in a spirit of compromise.

Functions From the outset the new state paid great attention to taxation, with a number of administrative reforms. The needs of an expanding government (most particularly, the growing navy) required additional measures, and in 1889 the Japanese enacted an income tax – one of the first in the world not as a temporary wartime measure. This began to replace primary dependence on taxes on land and liquor. A host of legal changes were introduced. In family law, concubinage was outlawed. In 1872 the government decreed adoption of the Western clock – a huge change in popular habits that was quickly carried

through. Public health measures expanded, quickly resulting in population growth. In 1872 the government decreed compulsory primary education for both boys and girls. A centralized national system was sketched, with 250 regional districts. Full implementation was delayed by resource constraints and some popular resistance, plus a shortage of qualified teachers, but by the 1890s most children were in fact attending government schools; literacy increased rapidly. The government also set up a number of new secondary schools and universities, from which most of the expanding bureaucracy were recruited. Rigorous examinations (and some fees) were required for university entrance, but graduates could be assured of solid government jobs. Finally, the government moved actively to promote economic growth. It rapidly created a railroad network, and set up a number of model factories, particularly in armaments and heavy industry; Japanese industrialization proceeded with a mixture of state and private initiative. Along with all this, the military was expanded and modernized, and the size of the bureaucracy grew steadily. A real functional transformation occurred, in the space of just a few decades.

Nationalism and religion Complementing these rapid changes was a distinctive mix of nationalism, emperor worship, and religion. During the 1870s a number of European and American advisors were employed to help guide the new school system, but at the end of the decade the government shifted gears, emphasizing the importance of community and national loyalty in the schools. Western materials on civics and ethics were replaced. Even in the 1870s the government backed a new effort to promote the Shinto religion, and this initiative expanded steadily. Emperor worship became a key part of state dogma, and Japanese history was massaged to suggest that this emphasis dated back to the nation's origins. Promotion of a rather traditional family structure, with women enjoined to serve as "wise mothers", complemented this ideological approach. Obviously, the Japanese were creating a distinctive combination of an effective modern state with a special kind of nationalist ideology.

Foreign policy These various changes were accompanied by another innovation – an activist, aggressive foreign policy, imitating contemporary patterns in Western Europe. Successful wars against China and then Russia gave Japan the beginnings of an empire, particularly through control over the Korean peninsula; and further appetites were directed toward China.

Study questions

1. Why did Japanese authorities place such emphasis on emperor worship and Shintoism?
2. What kinds of compromise were reflected in the structure of the state, by 1890?
3. What were the main functional changes for the government?
4. Was this a "revolution from above", orchestrated by the Meiji state?

Further reading

Donald Keene, *Emperor of Japan: Meiji and his world, 1852-1912* (Columbia University Press, 2002)

W.J. Macpherson, *The Economic Development of Japan, 1868-1941* (Cambridge University Press, 1995)

Rotern Kowner, *The Impact of the Russo-Japanese War* (Taylor and Francis, 2009)