

Industrialization: Government's Role

It is our purpose to select from the various institutions prevailing among enlightened nations such as are best suited to our present conditions, and adapt them in gradual reforms and improvements of our policy and customs so as to be upon an equality with them.

—Emperor Meiji, letter to President Ulysses Grant, 1871

Essential Question: What economic strategies did different states and empires adopt, and what were the causes and effects of those strategies?

As Western domination and technology spread, they met with varying degrees of acceptance in different nations. Each country experienced competing pressures between preservation of traditional values and modernization. Egypt and some other countries early adopted policies that encouraged the use of industrialized innovations, such as the steam engine, to boost textile productivity. Others, such as China, had weakened central governments under European ascendancy that were unable to promote industrialization effectively.

The Ottoman Empire The Ottoman Empire, although bordering Europe, had not adopted Western technology or Enlightenment ideas. Moreover, rampant corruption led to rapid decline, and ethnic nationalism among the empire's diverse population led to widespread unrest. The empire earned the nickname "the sick man of Europe." Europeans, particularly Russians, saw opportunities to expand their own empires at the expense of the weakening Ottomans. Though they feared the results of a power vacuum from a total collapse of the Ottoman Empire, they dismantled it after World War I. A smaller nation-state, the Republic of Turkey, and several independent countries replaced the former empire.

China China suffered two great humiliations at the hands of Europeans in the 19th century: the Opium War and the split into "spheres of influence." In the 20th century, China shook off foreign domination and briefly became a republic. However, its traumatic 19th century left a central government too weak to promote industrialization effectively for decades. (See Topic 6.5.)

Japan In Japan, in contrast, the central government grew stronger in its struggle to maintain independence and territorial integrity in the face of Western



challenges. As the quote at the beginning of this chapter from Emperor Meiji's letter to President Grant indicates, Japan actively sought Western innovations that it felt would help make it the equal of Western countries.

Ottoman Industrialization

Suffering from problems of overexpansion and failure to modernize, the Ottoman Empire underwent palace coups, declining trade, and weakening leadership in the 1800s. The empire no longer covered the grand areas of Suleiman the Magnificent, who had taken his army to the gates of Vienna in 1529.

The Rise of Muhammad Ali One part of the Ottoman Empire where the sultan ruled in name but had little power was Egypt. In fact, the **Mamluks**, former Turkish slaves who formed a military class, had ruled there for some 600 years. In 1801, the sultan sent an Ottoman army to retake Egypt. In the conflict with the Mamluks, an Albanian Ottoman officer, **Muhammad Ali**, rose to prominence, and local leaders selected him to be the new governor of Egypt. The sultan lacked the power to do anything but agree.

Because of his power, Ali was able to act somewhat independently of the sultan. He joined the sultan's military campaigns when it benefited him, and also undertook several campaigns without the sultan's permission, including in the Sudan and Syria. He also began his own reforms in Egypt. He began by making over the country's military on a European model. He also established schools, sent military officers to be educated in France, and started an official newspaper—the first in the Islamic world.



Source: Wikimedia Commons.

Jean-François Portaels, portrait of Muhammad Ali, 1847

As part of his reform of the Egyptian economy, Ali taxed the peasants at such a high rate that they were forced to give up their lands to the state. The government could then control the valuable cotton production and make money on the export of cotton and other agricultural products. Secularizing religious lands put more agricultural produce in the hands of the government, resulting in large profits during the period of the Napoleonic wars (1799–1815), when prices for wheat were high in Europe.

Muhammad Ali also pushed Egypt to industrialize. He had textile factories built to compete with those of the French and British. In Cairo, he had factories built to produce armaments. In Alexandria, he set up facilities to build ships so that Egypt could have its own navy. The city of Cairo had dozens of small shops turning out locks, bolts of cloth, and other parts for uniforms and weaponry. Ali is called the first great modern ruler of Egypt partly because of his vision of state-sponsored industrialization.

Japan and the Meiji Restoration

Japan's transition to a modern, industrialized country took less than half a century to accomplish. No country made such a rapid change.

A Challenge to Isolation Between 1600 and 1854, Japan had very little contact with the rest of the world. However, the rising imperial powers in the world were not content to let Japan keep to itself. The great powers of Europe, such as Great Britain, the Netherlands, and Russia, all wanted to sell goods in Japan. Further, in the age of coal-powered ships, trading states wanted to be able to refuel in Japan as they sailed to and from China and other parts of East Asia.

Japan Confronts Foreigners In 1853, a naval squad led by **Commodore Matthew Perry** in 1853 sailed into Yedo and Tokyo Bay, asking for trade privileges. The next year, Perry returned with even more ships, demanding that the Japanese engage in trade with the United States. Faced with the power of the U.S. warships, the Japanese gave in to U.S. demands. Soon they yielded to similar demands by other foreign states.

The arrival of Perry, and the threat he posed, caused Japanese leaders to realize the danger they and their culture were in. They had seen how even a large, traditionally powerful country such as China had been humiliated by Westerners. They had watched as the British had gone to war to force the Chinese to accept opium imports. While some Japanese argued that the country could defend itself, many reformers feared it could not. They argued that the country should adopt enough Western technology and methods so it could protect its traditional culture. To accomplish this goal, they overthrew the shogun and restored power to the emperor in 1868, an event known as the **Meiji Restoration**.

Reforms by the Meiji State Japan systematically visited Europe and the United States and invited experts to Japan in order to study Western institutions. Then, Japan adopted reforms based on what it admired:



- It formally abolished feudalism in 1868 by the **Charter Oath**.
- It established a constitutional monarchy based on the Prussian model in which the emperor ruled through a subordinate political leader.
- It established equality before the law and abolished cruel punishments.
- It reorganized the military based on the Prussian army, building a new navy and instituting conscription.
- It created a new school system that expanded educational opportunities, particularly in technical fields.
- It built railroads and roads.
- It subsidized industrialization, particularly in the key industries of tea, silk, weaponry, shipbuilding, and a rice wine called sake.

The government financed all of these reforms with a high agricultural tax. The taxes proved a good investment because they stimulated rapid economic growth. The government's ability to collect increased taxes also provided revenue for the bureaucracy, now centered in Tokyo.

However, in replicating the methods of Western countries, the Japanese also replicated some of industrial society's problems. For example, accounts of abuse and exploitation of female Japanese mill workers are similar to the experiences that British female mill workers had recorded decades earlier. (Connect: Write a brief paragraph comparing Japan's industrialization with developments in the West. See Topic 5.3.)

China and Japan in the 19th Century





The Role of Private Investments While the relationship between industry and centralized government was key to modernization in Japan, private investment from overseas also became important. Once new industries were flourishing, they were sometimes sold to **zaibatsu**, powerful Japanese family business organizations like the conglomerates in the United States. The prospect of attracting investors encouraged innovation in technology. For example, a carpenter founded a company in 1906 called Toyoda Loom Works that made an **automatic loom**. The company prospered, modified its name, and grew into today's Toyota Motor Company.

Japan's Economic Transformation, 1872–1914			
Year	Coal Production (metric tons)	Steamships (total number)	Railroads (miles)
1872	----	----	18
1873	----	26	----
1875	600,000	----	----
1885	1,200,000	----	----
1887	----	----	640
1894	----	169	2,100
1895	5,000,000	----	----
1904	----	797	4,700
1913	21,300,000	1,514	----
1914	----	----	7,100

Source: Thayer Watkins, "Meiji Restoration/Revolution," sjsu.edu. Data not available for all categories for all years.

KEY TERMS BY THEME		
<p>GOVERNMENT: Ottoman Mamluks Muhammad Ali</p>	<p>ECONOMY: Japan Commodore Matthew Perry zaibatsu</p>	<p>TECHNOLOGY: Japan automatic loom</p> <p>GOVERNMENT: Japan Meiji Restoration Charter Oath</p>