

Source: [\[KBHistoryMasterIndex\]](#)

1 | Kennedy, Chapter1

Situations with Europe, pre 1500

1500, the date chosen ... to mark the divide between modern and pre-modern times.

See [\[KBhHIST201EuropeOnTheBrink\]](#)

The Early Global Players

Although it was not evident to see Europe's boom in the 1500 in, well, the 1500, there were definitely great centres of the world at the time.

Before investigating the causes of European rise, it is necessary to examine the strengths and the weaknesses of the other contenders.

Ming China

ADVANCED in tech. ADVANCED in structure. SUPERIOR in culture: Ming China was extremely technologically advanced and culturally strong. It was the biggest state + economy in Asia.

See [\[KBhHIST201MingChina1500\]](#)

The Ottomans

When China was failing, the Ottomans grow w/ Islam — Ottomans were the largest muslim nation in Europe + a serious threat to Christendom.

See [\[KBhHIST201Ottomans1500\]](#)

The Europeans' Rise

#disorganized

Guiding question: so, how did scattered Europeans become the number 1 world player from feudal tribes?

- Europe is politically fragmented, but Mr. Kennedy thinks this is *mucho bueno*
 - Causes
 - Geographical — no big plains but lots of rivers
 - Harsher climate makes difficult central control
 - Effects
 - Hard to be fully unified, and hence hard to be assimilated
 - Diversity encouraged inter-dependence and trade (which, #why is this a good thing necessarily?)
 - Trade included *bulk* items primarily and not luxury-focused trade of the east
 - Easy access to sea encouraged shipbuilding
 - Quick, common day trade encouraged building on an economy — credit, banks, common currency

- Need for long-range fishing encourages the building of bigger ships, and that's good because #why?
- Advantages of political fragmentation
 - Economic development could not have been suppressed #why
 - No central authority made trading and merchants less stigmatized (although they are, like in strict Confucianism (see [KBHIST201ChinasDecline1500](#)) China's Governmental Decline in the 1500s), disliked)
 -

Why Kennedy is Frustrating

Kennedy's arguments is very frustrating.

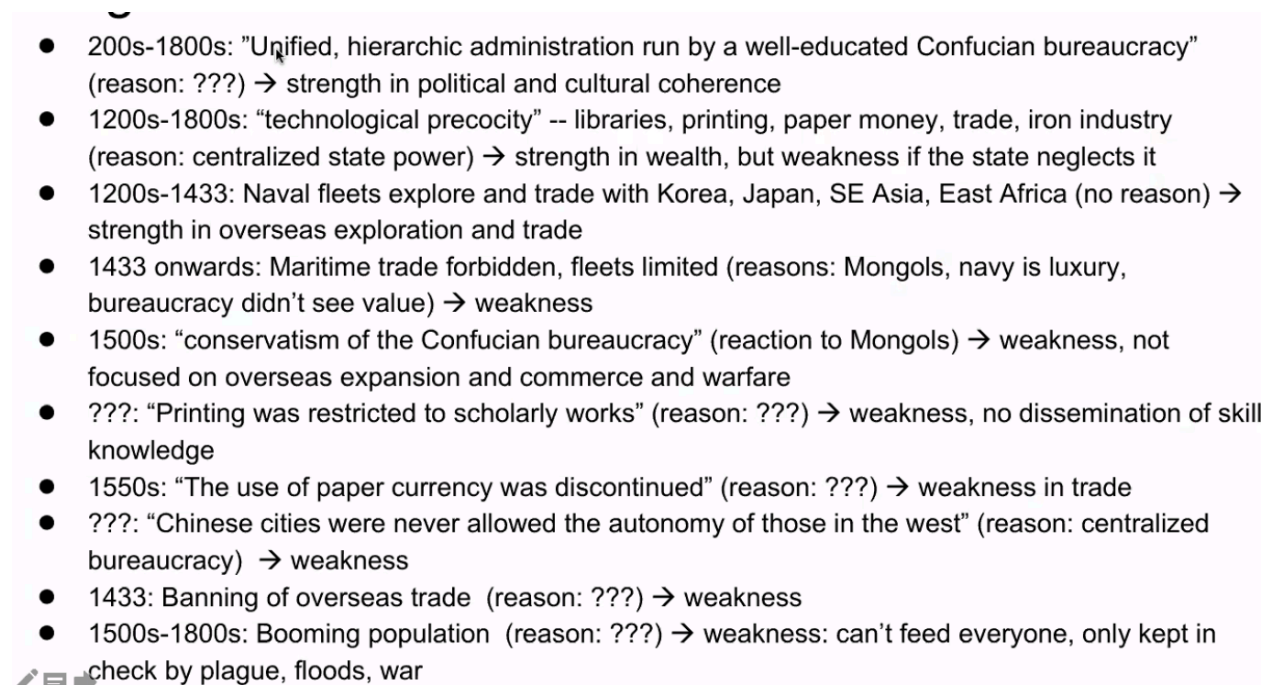
- 
- 200s-1800s: "Unified, hierarchic administration run by a well-educated Confucian bureaucracy" (reason: ???) → strength in political and cultural coherence
 - 1200s-1800s: "technological precocity" -- libraries, printing, paper money, trade, iron industry (reason: centralized state power) → strength in wealth, but weakness if the state neglects it
 - 1200s-1433: Naval fleets explore and trade with Korea, Japan, SE Asia, East Africa (no reason) → strength in overseas exploration and trade
 - 1433 onwards: Maritime trade forbidden, fleets limited (reasons: Mongols, navy is luxury, bureaucracy didn't see value) → weakness
 - 1500s: "conservatism of the Confucian bureaucracy" (reaction to Mongols) → weakness, not focused on overseas expansion and commerce and warfare
 - ???: "Printing was restricted to scholarly works" (reason: ???) → weakness, no dissemination of skill knowledge
 - 1550s: "The use of paper currency was discontinued" (reason: ???) → weakness in trade
 - ???: "Chinese cities were never allowed the autonomy of those in the west" (reason: centralized bureaucracy) → weakness
 - 1433: Banning of overseas trade (reason: ???) → weakness
 - 1500s-1800s: Booming population (reason: ???) → weakness: can't feed everyone, only kept in check by plague, floods, war

Figure 1: Screen Shot 2020-08-31 at 9.30.01 AM.png

His arguments are not very well supported. For instance, his argument that orthodox Confucianism stopped trade (and ???, then) decline for China.

Missing was pieces of evidence could have caused tremendous difficulty.

"I don't need arguments to support his claims, I just need to claim harder" — Kennedy

- "These people failed because they cared about their own people" — Both Empires
- "These people failed because they used a strategy that have worked for them and is working" — Ming w.r.t. Confucianism
- "These people failed because they are too good and managing an empire" — Ottomans w.r.t. to the Romanitus