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WHAP Essay Spain and Ming

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During the 1550-1650, Spain and China both built economies based off of silver, the rise of the merchant class, and their regard of foreigners as inferiors, however, the silver weakened the Ming's economy, the Spanish government's direct support to the merchants, and the Spanish insults to foreigners because of their practice of mercantilism.

First, both the Spanish and the Ming relied on a silver based economy, however in the end, the Ming fell because of the silver and the Spanish empire grew and gained fortunes. To start, Spain assembled a fleet to colonize and mine silver from the Americas in which it shipped it to the the Philippines to specifically trade with the Chinese. This was done because the Spanish knew that the Ming merchants would only trade with silver and they were ready to exploit this flaw. Similarly, the Ming also assembled a fleet to further enhance their ability to transport silver from Manilla. Even though the Ming disliked sea trade, the draw and power of silver forced them to construct a fleet, thus showing their entire economy based off of silver. However, Spain had a variety of different economic trades to keep their economy going like corn and produce from the New World. This enabled Spain to have a much more varied economy and safety reserves in order to keep a buoyant economy. Spain was also the supplier of the silver. The Ming however had exhausted their precious metal's and were forced to resort to outsiders for silver. The sudden influx and bounty of silver from Spain eventually forced inflation to the Ming. However, Spain was not affected by this influx because they were the supplier and thus were not subjected to their dependencies on silver to keep their economy going. All in all, even though silver brought

great fortunes to both Spain and China, Spain prospered in the end by exploiting the Ming's dependency on silver.

Next, both the merchants in Spain and China rose to power, however the Ming attempted to place strict control their merchant class. When explorers like Pizarro and Cortes began exploring the Americas, stories of grand riches quickly came back to Spain inspiring farm boys to become conquistadors and merchants. Similarly, the increased globalization of trade inspired merchants in China to build fleets to bring silver to China from the Philippines. However, the Chinese government never sponsored and approved of such trade. They were against it because of their fear of introducing new ideas and foreign philosophies. Such attempts to suppress the merchants include Huang Liuhong attempt to eliminate silversmiths in order to stop trade. But, the fervor of greed amongst the merchants plowed through and were still able to establish a strong trade to the Philippines for silver. Unlike the Ming, the Spanish government was inspired by such wealth and endorsed explorers and merchants to conduct trade. Queen Isabel and King Ferdinand endorsed Columbus and many other merchants to sail and extort wealth under the name of Spain. Where as the Ming had not intention to expand China, thus they attempted to stop sea trade. The Spanish were able to expand their empire without submitting their own soldiers to this , rather relying on private sources like Columbus. These endorsements soon spread to other european countries which endorsed pirates to harass Spanish colonies. One such pirate was Sir Francis Drake who was endorsed by Britain and would terrorize and loot the colonies of the Spanish Empire. Similarly, the Ming were subject to such pirates and looting. They accused their looters as Japanese, however they may also have been Chinese themselves. However, this looting was not endorsed by a government unlike the pirates who harassed Spain. These pirates were

freelancers and were not part of any government. In conclusion, Spain's expansive efforts brought direct government support into merchants, and, the Ming lacked the desire to expand and thus avoided support for merchants. However, the power of silver and an increased globalized economy brought a rise in merchants in both Spain and China.

Finally, both the Spanish and the Ming had little regard for outsiders, however the Spanish's inconsideration came from their practice of mercantilism and the Ming came from their view of core Confucian beliefs. The Spanish practiced mercantilism through their extortion of the Aztecs and the Incas. Because they believed that they had to be a winner and a loser through active military ordeals, they inherited a belief that foreigners were just people to conquer and extort. Similarly, China saw foreigners as inferiors. For example, He Ao of Ming said Europeans were unruly and untrustworthy. However, this hostility came from Confucian philosophy. The Ming saw themselves as the big brother and the Europeans as little brother, thus they demanded respect which the Europeans lacked in. Similarly, the Spanish saw themselves as a more civilized culture because of their advancements in technology like maps and guns. They called the natives in the America's savages because of their lack of skill and technology like guns. The Spanish saw this and preyed on their weakness by demolishing their culture. However, the Ming believed that they had to teach little brother, thus even though they resented foreigners because of their lack of respect towards them. They did not try to slaughter or kill the Spanish and other Europeans. They even let the Jesuits such as Matteo Ricci to enter the forbidden city and advise the emperor. Similarly, the Spanish assimilated a small amount of natives to serve as translators in order to ensure proper navigation of the America's. One such navigator was Donna Maria who was a mistress of Hernandez Cortez and even gave birth to a child of his. In the end,

both Spain and China exhibited hostility towards foreigners, however much of Spanish perception came from their ruthless mentality and China came from their eastern philosophy Confucianism.