Self-strengthening and other political responses to the expansion of European economic and political power

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Governments throughout world history have formulated a variety of coercive, material, and ideological tools to facilitate their rule over their subjects. At the same time they have typically labored to defend themselves against those beyond their spheres of control when not themselves seeking to expand at the expense of their neighbors. The lines between neighbor or enemy on one side and subject on the other have often been uneven and shifting. Polities have risen and fallen according to their abilities to establish their strengths over competitors, real and potential, near and far. These general phenomena take on specific forms in different eras as the nineteenth century makes clear.

Europe's century creates a Western world

The nineteenth century was an era of European industrialization and empire-building. British military power dominated the seas and established formal empire over territories in Asia and Africa, with an even larger informal empire of economic dominance and political influence across the world. Other European powers followed the British to claim formal colonies and spheres of influence in Africa and Asia, in the decades after they had begun to aspire to some of Britain's economic achievements. The Americas had been colonized in earlier centuries, and by 1820 independent countries had been established across much of North and South America. For the United States, the nineteenth century was economically a period of continental expansion, population immigration, and capital imports. As the US economy grew to become the world's largest at the turn of the twentieth century, its government also took American political power into other world regions, subjecting the previously independent Hawai'ian kingdom to its authority and taking the Philippines from the Spanish.

The United States joined European powers to form a contradictory compound of political pressures and political promise to countries in other world regions. Political leaders in Asia and Africa variously succumbed to different kinds of foreign political authority or negotiated understandings with Western political and economic interests, as they scrambled to emulate the practices deemed responsible for European and American wealth and power. Late nineteenth-century international trade between the industrializing West and most other world regions was typically based on an exchange of industrial goods for raw materials and agricultural products. Those few countries where political and economic leaders were both able and desiring to emulate European economic technologies and political practices sometimes withstood the pressures of nineteenth-century colonial expansion. But in general the late nineteenth-century globalization powered by increasing flows of goods, people, and capital created convergence toward modern industrial societies for just a few countries in Western Europe and some of their former white settler colonies. For many others, late nineteenth-century globalization reinforced and extended differences among rich and poor societies and between powerful and weak countries.

The European agenda of state building affected other parts of the world in two obvious ways. First, the traits of nineteenth-century European states supplied many of the norms for what people elsewhere came to recognize as modern states. White settler societies most clearly met those norms, while political elites throughout the world became influenced by European ideologies and institutions by the late nineteenth century, without necessarily succeeding in changing their governments. Second, European states competed with each other for political power and economic influence in other world regions. Much of the world's nineteenth-century political history can be conceived in terms of the uneven spread of the model of European national states within Europe and among former white settler colonies, coupled with the expansion of European political force and economic demands into other world regions. Political failures occurred among those countries unable or unwilling to incorporate best practices developed in the West. Some analysts have emphasized the constraints imposed on countries by Western political and economic power, so that it is less the failures of non-Western states to respond to new models offered by Western power and wealth than it is the success of Western states to impose their power over people in other world regions and subordinate their economies to the needs and desires of Western

capitalism.[1] Whether variations in political responses to Western power and wealth owed more to the limitations of non-Western political leaders or the capacities of Western powers to assert their political and economic interests in other countries, it is clear that Europe's successful state makers and capitalist entrepreneurs were joined by their American counterparts to form the world's elite at the turn of the twentieth century.

This simple sketch of the expansion of Western power across the nineteenth-century world captures some broad outlines of a European political and economic expansion joined by the Americans at the end of the nineteenth century. But it also leaves out key features of Europe's competitive division among rival states of unequal political strength with economies that embraced industrialization with varying degrees of success. The normative cases of national state making are Western European, especially the British and French cases. Moving eastward across Europe we see the late nineteenth-century integration of the German and Italian states, the weakened Polish state, fragile Austro-Hungarian Habsburg Empire and the vast Russian Empire, third largest in population after Qing China and the British Empire. The Germans, Italians, and Portuguese followed the British and French in the late nineteenth-century scramble for colonies in Africa and spheres of influence as well as colonies in Asia. The Austrian (1804–1867) and Austro-Hungarian (1867–1918) empires, along with the Russian Empire, were nineteenth-century neighbors of the Ottoman Empire which had previously controlled territories spanning Europe and Asia; together these empires formed a zone of political competition that included other European countries to the west and the Central Asian region to the east. In this Eurasian region, the examples of Western European wealth and power elicited various attempts to strengthen regimes well aware that their political success depended on the growth of state capacities, and sometimes recognizing that developing industrial capacities made both the state stronger and society more prosperous. The varied political experiences of countries in this Eurasian region generally fell between the extremes of formal colonization, as occurred in much of Africa and Asia, and the maintenance of formal

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1 Models of historical change based on European and American experiences formed the bases of different versions of modernization theory beginning in the 1960s, e.g. W. W. Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge University Press, 1960). The most influential account of modern historical changes being driven by European capitalist expansion defining the positions and possibilities of others written within the past four decades, is Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, 4 vols. (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011), first published in 1974.

independence from Western powers, as was the case for China, Japan, Korea, and Thailand.

In the case of German-speaking areas, the path to unification came under Prussian leadership following its triumph over an Austrian-led movement in 1866. An economic foundation had been laid beginning with reductions of commercial tolls in 1833; like their continental European neighbors to the West, German entrepreneurs borrowed industrial technologies initiated by the British in the early nineteenth century. The creation of a rail network from the late 1830s to the 1870s helped pave the way for the development of large-scale enterprises between 1870 and 1914 in coal mining, steelmaking, chemicals, and heavy engineering.[2] The development of new technologies between 1870 and the eve of the First World War has been called the "second industrial revolution." Germany was at the forefront of these changes, innovating with large-scale enterprises dominating new markets supported by banks that fostered business mergers and the expansion of the economy. The economic changes supported German political ambitions in the competition for colonial possessions, an extension of the competition among European powers in their own world region.

After the Austrians lost their 1866 war with Prussia, the Habsburg ruling house united with the kingdom of Hungary to form the Austro-Hungarian Empire that lasted until the end of the First World War in 1918, when its territories were separated into the smaller polities of Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and Yugoslavia with their varying mixes of nationalities, only some of which lasted through the twentieth century. The Austro-Hungarian Empire exemplified the political weaknesses some analysts see in empires more generally, because it offered a poor fit between a royal dynastic regime and the demands of multiple nationalist agendas within its borders.[3] Despite the absence of a strong central state or an especially effective administration in any of the Austro-Hungarian Empire's parts, there were economic changes on a modest scale that were akin to those taking place in other parts of Europe. There was a transition from craft to factory industry, especially in Czech lands, and the movement of skilled labor from Czech and Austrian lands to Hungary, where modern banking with Austrian capital helped make possible late nineteenth-century developments

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2 Richard Tilly, "German industrialization," in Mikuláš Teich and Roy Porter, eds., *The Industrial Revolution in National Context: Europe and the USA* (Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 95–125.
3 Herbert Matis, "Austria: industrialization in a multinational setting," in Teich and Porter, eds., *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 226–246.

of iron and steel.[4] The Austro-Hungarian Empire was on the margins of the political and economic developments that transformed more fully Western European countries and expanded their political power overseas. Its political energies were largely absorbed, however, in competition not with Western European countries but with the Ottoman Empire, from which it took over territory.

The Ottoman state's late nineteenth-century losses of territory came despite decades of reform efforts to strengthen the government, including in Egypt and Syria. The Tanzimat (Reorganization) reforms between 1839 and 1876 comprised broad efforts ranging from state military and administrative functions to economic and religious activities in society. The state built arsenals and textile factories, encouraged mining and agriculture, and began railroad construction in 1866. These efforts took place amidst increasing European competition over some of its territories.[5] The nineteenth-century loss of much of its southeastern European territories to the Austro-Hungarian Empire was the joint product of its relative military weakness and the émigré elites in Western Europe absorbing the influence of nationalist sensibilities for their native lands. The beginning of limited initial industrialization in Romania and Slovenia in the 1860s, Serbia in the 1880s, and other parts of southeastern Europe in the 1890s was too little and too late to make any positive political difference to the Ottoman regime.[6] Compounding Ottoman political challenges coming from European powers were the limits to state reform created by domestic opposition. Not all the Ottoman Empire's educated elites agreed with the agenda of drawing upon European political and economic practices. Some religious visions of social reform made pastoral and tribal societies into components of new and larger political and social systems. These bottom-up initiatives to change society asserted the central importance of a religious conception of society distinct from the European-inspired vision of a constitutional regime.[7] Ottoman society lacked the economic elites typical of Western societies with constitutional regimes, but did have a religious elite

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4 Milan Myška, "The Industrial Revolution: Bohemia, Moravia and Silesia," in Teich and Porter, eds., *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 247–264; Ivan Berend, "Hungary: a semi-successful peripheral industrialization," in Teich and Porter, eds., *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 265–289.
5 Carter Vaughn Findley, "The Tanzimat," in Reşat Kasaba, ed., *The Cambridge History of Turkey,* Vol. 4: *Turkey in the Modern World* (Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp. 11–37.
6 Ljuben Berov, "The industrial revolution and the countries of southeastern Europe in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries," in Teich and Porter, eds., *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 290–328.
7 Findley, "The Tanzimat."

representing a different repertoire of ideological and institutional strategies for organizing state and society.

Equally ambitious in spatial terms to Ottoman efforts at political reform were imperial projects in Russia which, like the Ottoman Empire, was an empire with territory on either side of a European–Asian geographical divide. The emulation of Western European political and economic practices in Russia went back to the early eighteenth century with Peter the Great's attraction to the West, especially France's monarchy. In the mid-nineteenth century, Russian leaders took German examples of freeing the serfs as an inspiration for legal emancipation of their serfs in 1861, but the act had few positive social and economic consequences. Additional reforms to create local assemblies (zemstvo) to organize both taxation and the provision of some local public services were also made in 1864, but these did not last. The state's preference to retain decision-making power at the center subsequently reasserted itself, but was not seriously challenged until 1905 when a constitutional monarchy was established after Russia's humiliating defeat by Japan.[8] However limited the strengths and structural transformation of the late nineteenth-century Russian state may have been, it was able to assert some measure of control over its vast territories that was greater than proved possible for either Ottoman or Habsburg rulers. On the economic front, a conscious political decision to pursue industrialization was made under the leadership of Sergei Witte, first in charge of Russia's railways between 1889 and 1891 and then as Minister of Finance beginning in 1892 for the next eleven years. He led the government in supporting the formation of industrial enterprises in Moscow and St Petersburg through attracting foreign capital and technological expertise. The French invested in engineering projects, the Germans in chemical and electrical industries, while the British capital and expertise went into oil extraction. Technology transfers more generally included telephones from Bell and Ericsson, Singer sewing machines, International Harvester farm machinery, and Siemens for telegraph equipment.[9]

By the end of the nineteenth century, pockets of industry had emerged across much of Europe, sometimes with strong state support, as was the case in Germany and Russia, and in other cases through the efforts of domestic

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8 Geoffrey A. Hosking, *The Russian Constitutional Experiment: Government and Duma, 1907–1914* (Cambridge University Press, 1973); James Cracraft, *The Petrine Revolution in Russian Culture* (Cambridge, M A: Harvard University Press, 2004); Terence Emmons and Wayne S. Vucinich, eds., *The Zemstvo in Russia: An Experiment in Local Self-Government* (Cambridge University Press, 1982).

9 Roger Munting, "The Industrial Revolution in Russia," in Teich and Porter, eds., *Industrial Revolution*, pp. 329–349.

and foreign entrepreneurs in varying proportions. West European states developed their administrative capacities and began to expand representative institutions, extending the opportunities for expressing political voice from a very tiny minority of elites to growing numbers of people. Throughout Europe and the Ottoman Empire, the examples of West European power and wealth inspired efforts towards political reform and economic development, because emulation of what were seen as most advanced practices seemed desirable, and at times even necessary, to enable states to compete politically and their economies to generate the wealth they needed to tap in order to succeed. But economic change rarely produced the social base for supporting the kinds of states that political leaders sought to create. Limited industrial change confirmed the importance of large agricultural sectors which were integrated into a larger, more global, economy within which their likely success at emulating Western European economic transformations was even less likely than their creation of strong states able to compete in a political order dominated by Western Europe and the United States.

Leaving Eurasia for the Americas, we find the country most successful in the world at becoming strong and rich, as well as many instances of countries where the development of both administrative capacities by the state and economic wealth by entrepreneurs didn't make much headway until the closing decades of the nineteenth century. The United States, like the Austro-Hungarian, Ottoman, and Russian empires, became a very large polity. Unlike any of them it had abundant natural resources, plenty of fertile but undeveloped land, and a very small population. Moreover, it had a political ideology and institutions derived from specifically British practices as well as West European ones more generally. Thus, the United States had the opportunities, models, and motivations to achieve wealth and power from its establishment in 1776. Even more than Britain it had high-wage labor, a condition that distinguished both from most of the continent of Europe and helps make understandable how and why Britain and then the United States wanted to and were able to develop capital-intensive forms of industrial production that economized on high-wage labor. In the United States, textile industrialization initially occurred in the early nineteenth-century Northeast, as the South was an agricultural economy exporting cotton produced by African slaves and their descendants to Britain.

As territories to the west and south became parts of the United States in the first half of the nineteenth century, the implementation and extension of Alexander Hamilton's vision of federalism helped to create the political and economic infrastructure for growth. Opposed to Hamilton's federalist vision

was Thomas Jefferson, who advocated a bucolic vision of agrarian-based freedom of individuals who exercised their political voice within their states which in turn were less subject to federal rules than the kind of government Hamilton favored. Regarding economic policies, Hamilton formulated the plans for a national Bank of the United States with branches across the country; he proposed tariffs to allow new industries to develop that would have been otherwise unable to compete initially with European imports. These policies not only created a class of businessmen supportive of the national government but also provided inspiration for the German-American economist Friedrich List, whose *Das Nationale System der Politischen Ökonomie* (1841) was translated into English as *The National System of Political Economy*. In this work List supported a version of Hamilton's infant industry protectionist argument as a qualification of absolutely free international trade. List's efforts to promote German economic development supported a logic of political unification that reflects one key strand among the mutual influences of nineteenth-century American and European government policies toward the economy.

The Hamilton–Jefferson debates over the kind of economy desirable for the United States were a prelude to the political disagreements that emerged between the North and South regarding slavery on the eve of the American Civil War. The survival of the republic as a single polity allowed a reorganization and spatial integration of the domestic economy, taking advantage of a growing railroad network and new technologies of production, transport, storage, communication, and power generation. The Midwest became the site for the country's second industrial revolution, producing iron and steel. The labor force here and in other parts of the country was expanded by migration from the post-Civil War South as well as by European immigration. By the end of the nineteenth century, Americans were world leaders in creating new business forms and promoting technological innovations. They joined West European states in exercising their economic strength and political power in other world regions. These conditions largely distinguished the United States from "the other West" in Latin America.[10]

In Latin America, the colonial empires of the British, French, Spanish, and Portuguese were largely dismantled in the half century following the American Revolution of 1776 as the result of successful military challenges to colonial rule. In the American case, the ideology and institutions of a

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10 This term for Latin America comes from Marcello Carmagnani, *The Other West: Latin America from Invasion to Globalization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011).

federal republic were established that drew inspiration from the political principles and practices of the British. Latin American republics were also independent and constitutional. But their governments were saddled with large debts from their wars of independence and their inability to collect taxes as previous colonial regimes had done. In contrast to the US situation, Latin American countries faced strong regional forces with a weak executive typically facing a legislative branch balancing the competing interests of landowners, urban professionals, and businessmen; such governments did not create economic institutions like those put forth in Hamilton's proposals for the United States. But differences in government policies toward the economy were hardly the only distinctions between the US and Latin American countries that contribute to explaining the different economic trajectories of nineteenth-century Latin America and the United States before the late nineteenth century, when Latin American governments began to develop some of the infrastructure needed to have a stronger state and an industrializing economy.[11] Toward the end of the century, larger countries, such as Brazil, developed a banking and financial sector that made it more possible for the countries to borrow funds to build railroads and for foreigners to invest in new industrial enterprises.[12] They also faced challenges repaying their loans with threats of default as well as demands such loans be honored, as a naval blockade of Venezuela in 1901–1902 by the United States, Germany, England, and Italy made visible to all.[13] Latin American experiences with foreign loans to build railroads as well as foreign investment into industrial enterprises, especially Mexico under Porfirio Díaz, parallels in several ways late nineteenth-century developments elsewhere, including within Europe itself, most visibly in Russia.[14]

The uneven expansion of European wealth and power across the Americas, Europe, and the Middle East suggests ways in which the simple picture of "Europe's century" producing Western hegemony on a global

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11 Kenneth Sokoloff and Stanley Engerman, "History lessons: institutions, factor endowments, and paths of development in the New World," *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 14 (2000), 217–232.

12 Carmagnani, *The Other West*, pp. 85–191; William Summerhill, "Railroads in imperial Brazil, 1854–89," in John H. Coatsworth and Alan M. Taylor, eds., *Latin America and the World Economy Since 1800* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), pp. 383–406.

13 Carmagnani, *The Other West*, p. 197.

14 William Summerhill, "The development of infrastructure," and Stephen Haber, "The political economy of industrialization," in Victor Bulmer-Thomas, John H. Coatsworth, and Roberto Cortés Conde, eds., *The Cambridge Economic History of Latin America*, Vol. 2: *The Long Twentieth Century* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 293–326 and pp. 537–584 respectively.

scale by the late nineteenth century should instead be one of more detailed contrasts and variations among the economic and political fortunes of countries in Europe, the Americas, and the Middle East. Only certain European countries would become involved in the scramble for Africa. Only a few European countries and the United States established colonies in Southeast Asia and also debated how their influence should be exercised in China. Others among them slipped into positions of political and economic subordination, resembling what we can also see happening in much of Africa and parts of Asia. For many European countries, their Western neighbors were objects of emulation as well as subjects of competition; the same held true to a lesser and variable extent through the Middle East. In the Americas, the United States became the world's largest early twentieth-century economy by following and innovating upon Western European practices, while Latin American countries were somewhat like much of Central and Eastern Europe in terms of their lack of wealth and power relative to the United States and Western Europe.

When we turn to Africa, there are clear contrasts between African and European environmental conditions and economic possibilities. Gareth Austin has stressed the poor quality of land and the prevalence of tse-tse fly-borne sleeping sickness, which limited the areas that could use draft animals, as reasons agriculture could not be as productive as was possible in other world regions. Abundant land and poor soil quality led African cultivators to abandon their fields after very few cultivation cycles in favor of forest lands yet to be cleared and cultivated. Agricultural production also lacked much in the way of capital inputs, and labor used per unit of land was also low – it was more rational to spread available labor over more land since land was readily available, but of a quality limiting the added value of additional labor effort. The growth of craft production was constrained by the competition between growing food and growing or gathering the materials needed for craft production; the trade-offs between growing food and cotton, for instance, left Africans unable to spare enough land and labor for cotton and thus for a cotton craft industry. When cheaper machine-spun yarn became available as an import, so too did cotton cloth, which limited the economic opportunities for Africans to expand cotton textile production, which was a labor-intensive kind of work.[15]

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15 Gareth Austin, "Resources, techniques and strategies south of the Sahara: revising the factor endowments perspective on African economic development, 1500–2000," *Economic History Review* 61:3 (2008), 587–624.

African economic and environmental conditions were by themselves reason enough to make the expansion of wealth difficult to achieve through increased production. Wealth and power were both conventionally connected to control over scarce labor supplies, typically involving slave labor for production or sale, slaves having been captured through war and other forms of violence. When European states engaged in their scramble to divide up Africa into their colonies, Western capitalists were identifying the mineral wealth to be tapped and agricultural commodities to be produced for Western industrial use and consumption. But even where Africans proved able to create export agriculture in response to the new economic opportunities offered by an expanding Western capitalism, their governments were unable to conceive, let alone mount, programs of political state building that made plausible the linked pursuits of wealth and power to create polities and economies similar to those in Western Europe and the United States.

Southeast Asia shared with Africa some similar nineteenth-century economic and political conditions. Like Africa, Southeast Asia was land rich and labor poor. Politically, Southeast Asia also experienced the late nineteenth-century European territorial empires after an early modern era in which Europeans engaged mainly in trade, most prominently in slaves from Africa and spices from Southeast Asia. The economic parallels meant that nineteenth-century Southeast Asian changes in economic production, like those in Africa, centered on export agriculture rather than industry; the new mobilizations of labor in labor-poor Southeast Asia were achieved through immigration from both South Asia and China, often as indentured labor. Foreign entrepreneurs exerted strong influence or even control over key sites of production and exchange.[16]

Politically, almost all of the region fell under colonial rule by the British, Dutch, and French. The spread of British power from India into Burma and the spread of French power from Vietnam into Laos and Cambodia created pressure on the Siamese from both the west and east. The survival of a Siamese government as an independent regime depended crucially on the agreement of the British and French in the 1880s that they had reached a competitive balance in Southeast Asia, a part of which was a stable and independent Siam separating their colonial territories. While still politically independent in formal terms, the country was far closer to being a "semi-colonial" state with an economy laboring under more foreign restrictions.

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16 M. C. Ricklefs, Bruce Lockhart, Albert Lau, Portia Reyes, and Maitrii Aung-Thwin, *A New History of Southeast Asia* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), pp. 165–237.

The opportunities for domestic political actors in Siam, let alone for the domestic elites in its colonized neighbors, to formulate state-building projects that included emulating Western industrialization, were therefore almost as limited as those in Africa.

For Siam specifically, domestic limitations on government rule also constrained the state's ability to focus more fully on British and French threats. King Mongkut (Rama IV) was politically weak when he ascended to the throne in 1851. Government ministries were under the control of powerful families whose patron–client networks formed vertically structured factions that made it difficult for the king to initiate reforms without challenging the power bases of different groups. His successor, the boy-king Chulalongkorn, and Regent Suriyawong began to initiate judicial and financial reforms in 1873 aimed at expanding his power to rule (Fig. 14.1).

While inspired by European practices, they were promoted in terms of Buddhist morality more easily understood by the population at large. Much like the generation of reformers active in China in the 1870s who distinguished between a Chinese core and Western techniques, the Siamese king did not see at that time any conceptual contradictions between Western-derived reforms serving a Buddhist political morality.[17] His subsequent decision to pursue reforms more explicitly designed to create a European-like government succeeded in increasing his control over provinces which had formerly been vassal or tributary states. This push for institutional change in the late 1880s followed a Thai prince's return from the London celebration of Queen Victoria's fifty years on the British throne with proposals for governmental reform modeled on European practices. These included the formation of a cabinet composed of twelve ministries, seven based on old ministries (interior, finance, agriculture, foreign affairs, war, palace, capital area administration) and new ministries for education, justice, public works, and the army.[18] Efforts to create new government institutions didn't lead to major capacity building results adequate for the government to halt the loss of its territory to the colonial regimes controlling its neighbors; by 1910 the government had lost to the British and French virtually half the territory over which their predecessors in the 1850s had claimed some direct or indirect authority. Not unlike the Ottoman state's plight, the Thai monarchy struggled to transform itself in order to survive,

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17 David K. Wyatt, *Thailand: A Short History* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1984), pp. 181–198.
18 Ibid. pp. 199–214.

HIS MAJESTY THE KING OF SIAM.

Figure 14.1 Portrait of Chulalongkorn, King of Siam (b.1853–1910), 1893
(Chicago History Museum/Getty Images)

even if on a diminished scale amidst the geopolitical pressures exerted by European powers.

The nineteenth-century possibilities in South Asia for native political and economic leaders to mount strategies to create wealth and power based on emulating Western practices were doubly limited, one reason for this being obvious, a second far less so. First, the eighteenth-century expansion of East India Company control over trade and the enabling of British economic interests through political manipulation of the conditions under which trade took place, set in motion British involvement in India not merely as merchants but subsequently as formal colonial administrators after 1858 with continued hopes of benefiting politically and economically from India through revenues and profits. The colonial state, not surprisingly, did little to promote the kinds of industrialization that some Europeans, especially the Germans and Russians, pursued, since these European governments supported domestic political and economic interests who would benefit from such changes. The British did attempt to address water control issues and India, like Latin America and other parts of Asia, did get foreign capital and technology to build railroads, but there wasn't much positive and certainly no transformative stimulus to the economy from these efforts. The lack of structural change can be further explained by a second and less obvious cause. The private economy afforded domestic entrepreneurs opportunities to make profits through production and exchange and in those cases where industrial production proved profitable, jute and cotton being the main examples, these kinds of industry developed. New forms of production emerged, where profits could be made in sufficient amounts that native capitalists did not aspire to mount larger programs of economic development, especially since there was no government to organize such efforts. Across South and Southeast Asia, only the Thai monarchy was a government able to contemplate a plan of political reform that acknowledged the need to change political institutions in order to survive in a Western dominated world. Thai efforts, moreover, had no major economic agenda. Nowhere in South and Southeast Asia were there co-ordinated state efforts to pursue both wealth and power.

The construction of strong states and industrial economies were two major transformations of the nineteenth century that spread Western power over much of the world. Within Europe and beyond, governments made efforts to emulate the ideological and institutional innovations that took root in Western Europe and the United States. In Africa, the Middle East, and much of Asia, the interests and abilities of governments to respond

to these Western changes were limited by the roles that Western political and economic actors played in their regions. Nor did they possess the economic institutions and environmental conditions that enabled the kinds of economic transformations underway in Western Europe and the United States. To find politically self-conscious efforts to build up political and military power and transform economies through industrialization to create both wealth and power, we have to turn to East Asia.

Self-strengthening in East Asia

It is in East Asia that we see conscious efforts to respond to Western threats with attempts to incorporate some foreign political practices into domestic government policies and introduce foreign economic practices into society more generally, and it is this world region that produced some of the most rapid economic growth and strong states a century later. This region also shared a much earlier history that included some common political concepts from classical Chinese texts to which the Chinese, Japanese, and Koreans appealed in related ways in the nineteenth century. The Chinese referred to political reform policies in several ways including "self-strengthening," and the Japanese called their efforts a "restoration." For most subsequent assessments of this period, it is the differences in Chinese "self-strengthening" (*ziqiang* 自强) and Japanese "restoration" (*isshin* 维新) that are highlighted. Contrasting the nineteenth-century East Asian responses to the expansion of Western power with late nineteenth-century government policies in other world regions allows us to see some of the common elements of East Asian efforts as well as reasons for some of their differences from each other. It also adds regional and domestic dimensions of observation that complement and complicate those framed principally in terms of Western colonialism and imperialism, as well as those conceived in terms of global market integration.[19]

The characterization in the People's Republic of China of nineteenth-century China as semi-feudal and semi-colonial identifies domestic and foreign causes for the society's failure to develop capitalism. The domestic causes fit within a Marxist explanation of the European transition from feudalism to capitalism, and allow historians to identify certain social and political traits considered obstacles to progressive changes. The foreign causes explain externally imposed conditions that condemned the Chinese economy to a subservient role in an

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19 Michael D. Bordo, Alan M. Taylor, and Jeffrey G. Williamson, eds., *Globalization in Historical Perspective* (University of Chicago Press, 2003).

increasingly global economy. The particular plight of the country could be accounted for because the country was neither fully feudal nor fully colonized. But the half-way points from feudalism and toward colonialism in fact lie along two separate axes. One concerns the organization of domestic authority and the second concerns a state's relationships to outside powers. Certainly the two can influence each other, but to map those connections more clearly we need first to consider the foreign and domestically inspired state activities separately.

Beginning in the 1860s, the Qing dynasty state developed political institutions to manage its affairs with Westerners and new organizations to import foreign technologies. Initially styled as "self-strengthening" (*ziqiang*) and as the "foreign affairs movement" (*yangwu yundong* 洋务运东), the central government established an office devoted to foreign affairs, a translation bureau, and, with the participation of foreigners, a new bureaucracy to tax foreign trade. These central state efforts to deal with Westerners diplomatically and commercially were complemented by the labors of Chinese provincial officials who spearheaded the construction of arsenals, shipyards, and factories (Fig. 14.2).

An initial concern with those industries directly contributing to the state's military capacities in the 1860s and early 1870s was expanded to include light industry consumer goods like textiles.[20] By the 1880s, the state aimed to achieve two related aims: (1) to create the capacities to defend the country against foreign political demands and to negotiate with foreign governments effectively; (2) to develop new forms of production deemed basic to the wealth-producing abilities of European countries. The government wanted to produce the practical equipment of European wealth and power such as Western firearms and industrial machinery; they recognized the need to learn new kinds of scientific knowledge and to train people to manage the use of new technologies. Officials in the 1870s and 1880s believed that they could learn the technologies of Western wealth and power without having to accept broader cultural changes or deeper political reforms. They were followed by a generation of reformers in the 1890s with a broader exposure to Western political ideologies and institutions who embraced parliamentary institutions.[21]

The subsequent failures of Chinese reform efforts are typically seen to be both political and economic. In political terms, the Qing state failed to develop

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20 Ting-yee Kuo and Kwang-Ching Liu, "Self-strengthening: the pursuit of Western technology," in John K. Fairbank, ed., *The Cambridge History of China,* Vol. 10: *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, Part 1* (Cambridge University Press, 1978), pp. 491–542.

21 Hao Chang, *Liang Ch'i-ch'ao and the Intellectual Transition in China, 1890–1907* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978); Joseph Levenson, *Confucian China and its Modern Fate: A Trilogy* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1968).
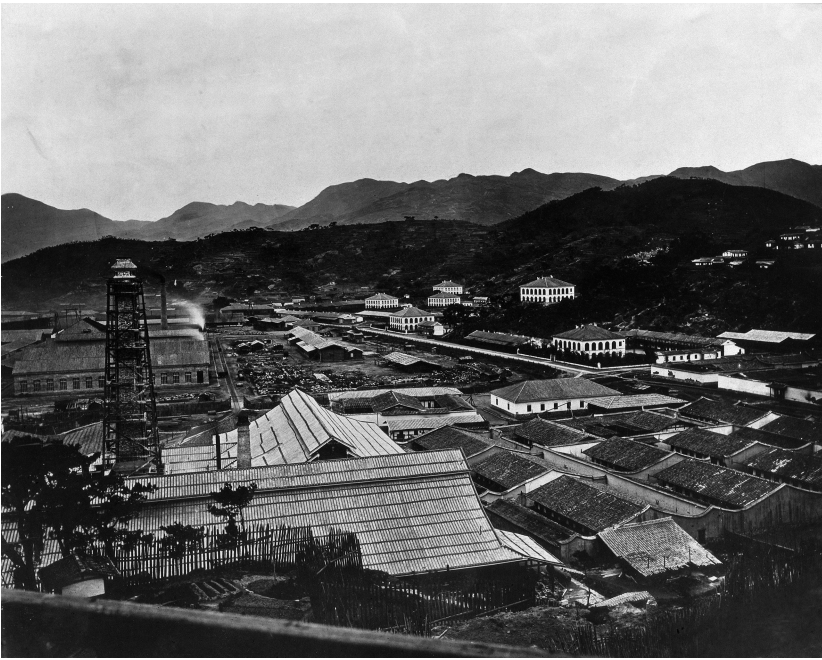
Figure 14.2 Fuzhou Arsenal, China, 1864–1872
(SSPL/Getty Images)

parliamentary institutions despite the clamor for them made by leading refor-
mers of the 1890s. In economic terms, the state's efforts to create new industries
did not jump-start broader processes of economic change. By highlighting
outcomes that did not occur, however, such interpretations can miss the efforts
that late Qing officials bent upon creating a stronger state and more prosperous
society actually made, or prevent one from making an informed assessment of
their achievements. In contrast, Yue Meng and Benjamin Elman have each
studied late Qing official promotion of Western technologies, especially in ship
building and military armaments production, documenting the great successes
that contemporaries within and beyond China observed; the projection back-
ward of failure from a later point in time was influenced first by the Chinese
defeat in the Sino–Japanese War (1894–1895) and then by the contrasting paths
of economic change in China and Japan.[22]

22 Yue Meng, "Hybrid science versus modernity: the practice of the Jiangnan Arsenal,
1864–1897," *EASTM* 16 (1999), 13–52; Benjamin Elman, *On Their Own Terms: Science in
China, 1550–1900* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005), pp. 353–395.

The efforts to promote industrialization that Chinese officials made beyond their direct involvement in arsenals make clearer the ways in which self-strengthening efforts were understood to include both domestic and foreign policy goals built on past political and economic practices. The formation of Chambers of Commerce as part of the New Policies in the early twentieth century, for example, might look to a foreign observer as the recognition of an advocacy organ for merchants, but in fact the Chambers took on roles in processes of decision-making in which officials remained in charge. Principal among their functions was dealing with commercial disputes and managing tax matters. They were not expected to be an advocacy group, a fact much lamented in Chinese scholarship.[23] Officials more generally did not want to mobilize elites for them to voice their political demands but rather wanted to marshal elite support for political issues the state deemed important. For example, when anti-opium associations were initially formed by elites to exhort people to stop opium use, explicit limitations were set regarding what subject matter appeared in their pamphlets: "These publications should not interfere with politics or subjects outside of their province." By 1906, when government efforts at opium suppression peaked, these associations were extensions of government authority, as an edict granted them "full authority to enter any place for examination and placing at their disposal officers to enforce their demands for admittance or to make arrests where ordered by such committees."[24] Late Qing officials drew at least an implicit distinction between their mobilizing elite participation in a shared social project, such as suppressing the use of opium, and the aspirations of some vocal elites to have a more formal political voice.

From the point of view typical among officials, mobilizing elite participation in political projects served the purpose of officials and elites jointly pursuing in a co-ordinated manner a governance agenda that built upon a largely domestic set of concerns before the mid-nineteenth century. While self-strengthening certainly defined its primary objectives with respect to the political challenges posed by new foreign threats, the political logic of strengthening the abilities of the country to face outsiders complemented strengthening domestic governance. The relationship between the two is

23 Min Ma and Zhu Ying, 傳統與近代的二重變奏: 晚清蘇州商會個案研究 (*Chuantong yu jindai de erzhong bianzou: Wan Qing Suzhou shanghui ge'an yanjiu* [*Two Variations on Tradition and the Modern Era: Case Studies of the Late Qing Suzhou Chamber of Commerce*]) (Chengu: Bashu shushe, 1993).
24 R. Bin Wong, "Opium and Chinese State Making," in Timothy Brook and Bob Wakabayashi, eds., *Opium and Asian History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 189–211.

exemplified by the economic logic of promoting industry. From the vantage point of augmenting state military capacities, the industries promoted were all new factory-based forms of production requiring imported technologies. The same officials who began with such efforts also expanded their industrial projects to include factories producing consumer goods, most notably cotton textiles. By the early twentieth century, Chinese official understanding of "industry" (工业 gongye) included not only new kinds of factories organizing labor in new ways and utilizing technologies imported from abroad, but also subsidiary craft industries pursued by agrarian households.[25] The government sought to promote the spread of new industrial techniques through the formation of bureaus (局 ju) dedicated to collecting and disseminating information on the "industrial arts" (工艺 gongyi).[26] This understanding of industry, which linked the new industries of the self-strengthening movement to older forms of craft industrial production, motivated a spectrum of subsequent government efforts to promote industries across urban and rural settings.

When we turn to Japan and look at government promotion of industries beyond the modern factory industries initially sponsored by the government, we discover that Japanese officials also sought to foster small-scale, labor-intensive industries outside their large cities.[27] Both Chinese and Japanese governments recognized the importance of small-scale labor-intensive forms of industrial production. In China the early twentieth-century concept of "industry" included a wide span of technologies, from the capital-intensive technologies in many factories to the far more labor-intensive skilled craft technologies used both in smaller workshops and even in household settings.[28] The Japanese shift to urban industry in the first three decades of the twentieth century was characterized by a growing number of small-scale manufacturing units; this followed a period of improvements in labor-intensive craft technologies, including improvements in the production of raw silk exported to Europe.[29] Labor-intensive industrialization was a process distinguishing

25 直隶工艺志初编 (*Zhili gongyi zhi chubian* [*Initial Compilation of Industrial Arts in Zhili*]) (1904).

26 Jie Wang, 清末商部研究 (*Qingmo shangbu yaniu* [*Research on the Late Qing Ministry of Commerce*]) (Shanghai: Renmin chubanshe, 2008), pp. 217–221.

27 Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *The Technological Transformation of Japan: From the Seventeenth to the Twenty-first Century* (Cambridge University Press, 1994).

28 *Jiangsu sheng shiye shicha baogao shu* (.江苏省实业视察报告书 [*A Survey Report of Jiangsu Province Industries*]) (1919).

29 Masayuki Tanimoto, "From peasant economy to urban agglomeration: the transformation of 'labour-intensive industrialization' in modern Japan," in Gareth Austin and Kaoru Sugihara, eds., *Labour-Intensive Industrialization in Global History* (London:

Chinese and Japanese experiences from those in Europe and the United States; it was deliberately fostered by government policies begun during the late nineteenth-century self-strengthening era. The economic strategies fostered by self-strengthening sought to apply technological possibilities imported from the West in ways that enhanced small-scale, labor-intensive production practices widely present in East Asia but rare, if not absent, in much of late nineteenth-century Europe and the United States.

The similarities of Chinese and Japanese policies toward industrialization are infrequently recognized because scholars have believed that the government policies should have been different and that such differences are part of explaining why Japan began to industrialize and China did not. But the principal reason that the economic impacts of late nineteenth-century state policies appear so different in China and Japan results from the dramatic difference in the sizes of the countries and the basic fact that industrialization is a spatially specific process that spreads over time, when accompanied by the formation of capital and labor markets, to facilitate the movement of factors of production, and where disparities in resource endowments and labor skills do not impoverish the development possibilities of poorer areas. If we choose to compare a part of China more similar in size to Japan, such as the Jiangnan region surrounding Shanghai, early twentieth-century industrial changes appear more similar in the two cases.[30] If we want to consider China as a single unit we need to search for other larger units. Whether one looks at Europe as a whole or the United States, both spatial units more similar in size to China than any single European country, one can see the spatially specific locations of industries at the onset of industrialization and the subsequent spread to different regions over time. Had China not been rocked by the violence and disruption caused by warlords, a Japanese invasion, and a subsequent civil war, perhaps the country would also have seen some spread of industrialization at a more rapid rate than in fact took place. In this respect the country shared with the collapsing Ottoman Empire as well as the fragile polities in British India and Brazil nascent industries that lacked the social and political conditions within which their expansion could lead to broader economic developments. Chinese and Japanese policies of industrialization shared key features that could not produce the same results because the countries differed greatly in spatial and demographic size. The spatial extent

Routledge, 2013), pp. 144–175; Morris-Suzuki, *Technological Transformation of Japan*, pp. 37–43.
30 Debin Ma, "Economic growth in the Lower Yangzi region of China in 1911–1937: a quantitative and historical analysis," *Journal of Economic History* 68:2 (2008), 355–392.

of China meant that self-strengthening industrialization would necessarily take more time than in Japan – a requirement not met due to political disruptions and violence after 1900.

A shift to compare more similarly sized economic units to assess the impact of similar policies over longer periods of time reminds us how different the political projects of China and Japan were in the late nineteenth century. Japan enjoyed economic policy-making options easier to achieve because of the difference in the size of the two countries, leading to a combination of import substitution and export promotion policies in later decades.[31] Policy differences after the late nineteenth-century self-strengthening episodes were linked to differences in the business organizations of the countries and to what became fundamentally different, and conflicting, political agendas. China's political agenda from the late nineteenth century forward was how to create a strong and prosperous country that could survive the twin dangers of foreign aggression and domestic disintegration. Japan's late nineteenth-century political agenda began with domestic overhaul that became the basis for an early twentieth-century agenda of colonial expansion and regional hegemony, culminating in Japan's 1937 invasion of China and the creation of a Pacific war.

To return to the mid-nineteenth-century situation in Japan, major changes in Japanese political institutions were set in motion after some provincial leaders lost confidence in the abilities of central government officials to sustain social order and curb the threat of rising Western demands upon the country. With claims of restoring authority to the emperor, who had not in fact played much more than a symbolic role for the previous several centuries, political leaders from some of the provinces led the Meiji Restoration (1868) to build new central government institutions and strengthen lines of authority from the capital over the provinces. This state-building process followed a year-and-a-half mission by Japanese diplomats through Europe and the United States to study foreign models of government. The template for many new political institutions came from Western practices.[32] The political reorganization of the Japanese government more

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31 Japanese textile firms exported their cotton cloth to China through powerful business groups (*zaibatsu*) that enjoyed close relations to the government; at the same time these same diversified business groups included firms that developed Japan's chemical dye industry when government tariffs made German dye imports more expensive. See William Mass and Hideaki Miyajima, "The organization of the developmental state: fostering private capabilities and the roots of the Japanese 'miracle,'" *Business and Economic History* 22:1 (1993), 151–168.

32 D. Eleanor Westney, *Imitation and Innovation: The Transfer of Western Organizational Patterns in Meiji Japan* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1987).

readily enabled an engagement with Western powers according to the latter's expectations of what national states looked like. The Meiji government's bureaucratically structured administration of prefectures under central control contrasted sharply with the previous Tokugawa regime, in which samurai lords enjoyed authority over their domains in ways that paralleled the shogun's authority over his much larger expanse of territory and population. No administrative reforms to the Qing state could have had quite the same impact of creating centralized state administration as did the Japanese reforms, since the principles and practice of centralized bureaucratic government had existed for centuries in China.

If we consider the fragmentation of the Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian empires and the Qing empire's ability to survive both widespread domestic rebellion and decades of demands by foreign powers, the significance of the Chinese tradition of civilian bureaucratic rule emerges as a major difference, not only with Japan's political structure, but also with the more common political conditions of large territorial empires. By the nineteenth century, China had had a political tradition of imperial rule for some two millennia; basic to Chinese conceptions of rule were an ideology and institutions of bureaucratic governance that more often than not were applied over a vast expanse of territory, with claims to control over large numbers of subjects through the same template of institutions and policies.[33] From roughly the tenth century forward, a civil service bureaucracy staffed by individuals selected for their success at examinations demanding years of study was expected to make decisions according to a growing body of administrative law. The Qing dynasty (1644–1911/12) in particular consolidated the role of provincial governors and created a vertically integrated bureaucratic system in which multiple lines of communication and authority extended from the center to each of more than thirteen hundred counties, with populations ranging from tens to hundreds of thousands of people.[34]

The challenges of conceptualizing bureaucratic rule over a vast agrarian society and developing the particular capacities deemed realistic and desirable were well beyond the historical experiences of Western observers. Even if the empire they began to understand through personal experience in the second half of the nineteenth century had not been rocked by widespread domestic rebellions, they would have been unlikely to recognize the

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33 Yuri Pines, *The Everlasting Empire: The Political Culture of Ancient China and Its Imperial Legacy* (Princeton University Press, 2012).
34 R. Kent Guy, *Qing Governors and Their Provinces: The Evolution of Territorial Administration in China, 1644–1796* (Seattle, WA: University of Washington Press, 2010).

problems and possibilities of ruling such a society. Nor, of course, would they in general have been greatly interested in doing so. Rather, Western economic and political interests in foreign countries largely desired that foreign governments supply them with familiar settings in which to conduct their affairs, and have the range of institutions and practices necessary for doing business according to Western norms and asserting their political agendas. How state efforts at reform were attempted in other world regions was far less important to Western observers than the presence or absence of institutional practices with which they were familiar.

For their parts, political leaders in East Asia in the second half of the nineteenth century undertook territorial expansion and consolidation projects mindful of Western concepts of sovereignty and international relations. Their state-building efforts were intended first to thwart potential encroachments of European countries in their region and then turned toward political competition within the region among themselves. Japanese leaders learned the European lexicon of diplomatic relations and principles of sovereignty in order to make claims over the Ryūkyū islands.

The path by which the Ryūkyū kingdom became Okinawa prefecture within Japan highlights one way in which a successful self-strengthening effort made possible through adaptation of European institutions and made desirable because of Western threats also changed political relations among governments in Asia. Entering the nineteenth century, the Ryūkyū government's political status and economic well-being were defined by a balancing act it maintained with respect to China and Japan, which became less stable once Western powers entered the area.[35] The example of Singapore being established by the British and its growing population, mainly of Chinese, falling under increasingly formal and broad British authority, alerted the Ryūkyū leaders that such a fate might befall them without some protection from the Japanese. Both the Japanese government and the Ryūkyū leaders therefore had reason to promote the proposition to Westerners that the Ryūkyūs were part of Japan.[36]

European norms of domestic rule influenced the rhetoric and actions of Japanese government leaders extending rule over Okinawa to the south and Hokkaido in the north. While the mix of domestic and foreign stimuli to assert rule of Qing empire peripheries differed from the Meiji case, the Qing

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35 Gregory Smits, *Visions of Ryukyu: Identity and Ideology in Early Modern Thought and Politics* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 1999).
36 Kazuyuki Tomiyama, *Ryūkyū ōkoku no gaikō to ōken* (*The Ryūkyū Kingdom's Foreign Relations and Royal Power*) (Tokyo: Yōshikawa Kōbunkan, 2004).

establishment of standard civilian bureaucratic offices to rule the militarily reclaimed territory becoming Xinjiang, literally "new border," also represented a state-building effort in China prompted in part by central government concerns of possible expansions of British and Russian political and military influence on the empire's northwestern frontiers.[37] Faced with political challenges on both its Inner Asian and maritime frontiers, the central government chose to undertake a major military campaign in 1877 followed by the extension of the regular civilian bureaucratic rule into the frontier region. The extension and strengthening of central government control over newly incorporated peripheries in both the Chinese and Japanese cases were forms of state making responding to a combination of Western norms and pressures. The local political competitors to the Qing authorities in Xinjiang and Meiji government in the Ryūkyūs were too weak to remain independent. In these separate cases both the Chinese and Japanese states asserted their abilities to expand and consolidate their respective territorial control.

In a shared scenario of competing for political influence in Korea, a different political outcome emerged that also was heavily colored by the rhetoric and sensibilities of Western political thought and logics. Considering the late nineteenth-century geopolitics of East Asia from the vantage point of Korea and in comparison to the situation of the Ryūkyūs, Korea found itself located between the two larger powers of China and Japan. But unlike the Ryūkyūs, which only attempted to build a bureaucratic state in the eighteenth century, Korea had a well-developed bureaucratic state with some five centuries of reasonably stable and continuous governance, based on political principles common to the Chinese tradition of statecraft. Aware of the expansion of European power into East Asia and the self-strengthening efforts made by the Chinese and Japanese, reform-minded Korean officials began to pursue some of the political changes undertaken in these two other East Asian countries. Chinese and Japanese competition for political influence led them to support different factions of Korean officials. No less a figure than Li Hongzhang attempted to mitigate growing Japanese political and economic influence in Korea by fostering treaties between Korea and Western nations as a diplomatic buffer between Korea and Japan.[38] His

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37 Kwang-Ching Liu and Richard Smith, "The military challenge: the north-west and the coast," in John K. Fairbank and Kwang-Ching Liu, eds., *The Cambridge History of China,* Vol. 11: *Late Ch'ing, 1800–1911, Part 2* (Cambridge University Press, 1980), pp. 202–273.

38 Li was a major government figure who played a leading role in forming armies that defeated the Taiping rebels, supported self-strengthening efforts at developing industry, and led Chinese negotiations for the treaties to end the Sino-French War in 1886, Sino-Japanese War in 1895, and the Eight Nation Alliance whose military forces entered

expectations that such treaties could be efficacious proved unfounded as European interests in the geopolitical competition of countries in Northeast Asia were limited when the issues did not directly concern the interests of their own people in the region.

Korean treaties with Western countries failed to protect Korea from Japanese power. Japanese political aspirations in East Asia, including its formation of colonies in Taiwan and Korea, also utilized principles and sentiments first expressed by Europeans in their colonial expansions. Western political principles and practices when adopted and adapted in East Asia therefore influenced domestic state building and regional political relations as well as the abilities and desires of East Asian states to engage Western governments. The Japanese were most able to create a state modeled on Western ones and apply Western principles for both domestic institution building and asserting their expansionary aims in East Asia more generally. The Koreans had the least opportunity to use Western principles or draw upon statecraft traditions shared with the Chinese because of their vulnerability to regional political competition and conflict. The Chinese were able both to develop political institutions and deploy political principles first formulated in Europe, but recognized the limitations of both Western political practices for governing their agrarian empire. Western-inspired changes could become parts of a larger program of activities intended to sustain social order and political control across an area as vast as Europe and with a population more than twice as large. Chinese self-strengthening efforts could therefore be neither as visible nor as successful as those in Japan, because the broader agendas of political challenges and opportunities in these two countries differed.

Compared with other large imperial polities, the Qing self-strengthening efforts appear at least somewhat effective. The Russian and Ottoman empires were both challenged by and inspired by Western European practices to strengthen their states and economies in many ways similar to the late nineteenth-century Chinese efforts at self-strengthening. Economic practices and political institutions differed in each empire, but each faced domestic challenges because of their large size that Western European countries, the models for building powerful states and wealthy economies, did not encounter. The challenges of ruling large amounts of territory were often met by central governments through delegating power to regional authorities, a practice related to empire building which co-opted local and regional political

Beijing in response to the Boxer Uprising directed against foreign missionaries. See Michael J. Seth, *A Concise History of Modern Korea: From the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2010), pp. 9–42.

leaders to accept positions according to an imperially defined political order. The Chinese went further than any other empire in developing the principles and practices of bureaucratic rule to govern the vast majority of its subjects, which reduced the likelihood of the kinds of regional initiatives that took place in the Ottoman Empire and avoided acknowledging the local authority of noble elites as was common in the Russian Empire. For the Chinese and Ottoman empires, Europeans were a source of both examples and threats. Each of these empires possessed cultural identities, economic organizations, and political structures that differed from those of Europeans. The Russian case alerts us to the self-strengthening aspirations affecting Eurasian empires more generally, and the limits of applicability to large polities of the political practices and economic principles that worked well for smaller countries. The United States offers a striking contrast to empires as a territorially large polity constructed as much from the bottom up as the top down. This was possible owing to the small and mobile population and common principles of governance, wary of concentrations of power, but dedicated to co-ordination across the country.

More generally, the nineteenth century was a century of empires and countries that had been former colonies. Many of those not subject to the imperial authority of the Qing, Ottoman, or Russian empires were Africans and Asians subject to a European colonial authority. Countries like Thailand that had neither an explicitly colonial past nor a colonial future were rare. In East Asia, Japan would build a twentieth-century empire of which Korea became a part. In the Americas, the colonial histories of most countries were completed by the early nineteenth century. As white settler societies, these former colonies differed from colonial societies in other world regions where Europeans were typically a tiny minority. They did not discover the demands and desires for self-strengthening as new and foreign in the manner experienced in East and Southeast Asia.

East Asian self-strengthening aspirations took on common features both because the pressures from the West were shared among them, even if unevenly, and because they had traditions of rule distinct from European traditions which made adoption of Western practices an explicit issue of utilizing what was foreign as well as what was new. But what makes East Asian experiences distinct is not their appeal to principles and practices originating among the successful regimes in the West. This was done as well by less powerful and poorer countries whether in the West or in other world regions, a global fact which makes self-strengthening one of several ways in which politically weaker and economically poorer countries

encountered and engaged examples of Western power and wealth. What the Chinese and Japanese did was integrate emulation of Western practices producing power and wealth with domestic political priorities and economic institutions in ways that proved durable well beyond the late nineteenth century, demonstrated by the post-Second World War Japanese recovery and growth, and more recently by China's conscious and aggressive pursuit of wealth and power. Nineteenth-century self-strengthening episodes in both China and Japan form chapters in the narratives leading to late twentieth-century episodes of East Asian power and wealth becoming consequential globally. Within a nineteenth-century global frame of reference, self-strengthening efforts as consciously conceived in East Asia were at one end of a global range of political responses to the wealth and power of certain Western countries that varied in their ambition and effectiveness. They are one of several global "ligaments" analyzed in this volume. In this case, these ligaments connected the "bones" of different political regimes and economic practices to form a global skeleton over the course of the nineteenth century.

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