

Revisiting The Impact of WWII on Japan's Political and Economic Transformation

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Abstract- World War II (1939–1945) was a turning point in modern Japanese history, profoundly shaping its political and economic trajectory. Defeated in 1945 and devastated by atomic bombings in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan entered a period of occupation under U.S. forces led by General Douglas MacArthur. This occupation dismantled Japan's imperialist ambitions and initiated a dramatic transformation in its political, social, and economic structures. This research looks at how Japan changed from an imperial monarchy to a democracy and how its economy modernized, leading to its explosive growth. This study uses a qualitative methodology and secondary sources, including scholarly journals, papers, and historical records, to divide the effects of Japan's post-war transition into two broad categories: political and economic. Politically, the 1947 Constitution, often called the "Pacifist Constitution," introduced democratic governance, renounced war, and ensured civil liberties. Feudal systems were abolished, land reforms were implemented, further modernizing society. Economically, Japan's transformation was driven by institutional reforms, American assistance, and state-directed industrial policies, fostering rapid industrialization and technological advancement. Adopting a mixed economic model, blending capitalist practices with strategic state intervention, catalyzed Japan's rise as a global economic powerhouse. Japan's post-WWII trajectory from devastation to a leading economic and political force underscores its resilience and adaptability, leaving an enduring imprint on its contemporary identity and role on the global stage.

Keywords: World War II (WWII), Japan, Political Transformation, Economic Transformation, Post-War Japan.

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1. Introduction

One of the most profound transformations in Japanese history is the impact of the Second World War on its politics and economy. The emperor-led imperialist government dominated Japan before World War II with a strong military and an assertive foreign policy. After defeating the war, the US-led occupation introduced a series of changes in Japanese history, which included drafting a new constitution, political reforms following democratization, land reforms, dismantling wartime industries, etc. The new economic policy supported by America focused on long-term stability and prosperity; as a result, it helped revive the devastated industrial base by implementing new economic policies. WWII transformed Japan into a highly industrialized, modern, and democratic society (Allinson, 2004). Right after 15 years of its devastating war, Japan stood from the ashes as a comeback as an economic miracle, thus becoming the second largest economy in the world, right next to the United States (U.S.). Moreover, there remains a significant gap in understanding the nuanced connections between the aftermath and the long-term effect on the country's economic and political system. However, these two are interconnected, though several researchers gave explanations individually. Besides, there is a lack of knowledge regarding how specific U.S. policies and border geopolitical context influence Japan's trajectory. Several questions regarding post-war recovery remained unexplored (Gao, 2007). Aside from that, Japanese banks, corporations, and governments were not thoroughly examined during the period of economic recovery. This study aims to demonstrate how WWII unexpectedly changed Japan's political and economic systems, filling in the gaps. Its adoption of a democratic system of government, institutional reforms to rebuild its economy, and strategic alliances will all be covered in this study. The study will provide a more holistic view of Japan's postwar history by contextualizing how it emerged as a global economic power and shaped its contemporary identity (Curtis, 1999).

1.1 Research Questions

The research questions of this study are as follows:

- i. How did the defeat in WWII lead to significant political and economic reforms in Japan?
- ii. How were Japan's political and economic transformations interconnected, and how did one influence the other?

1.2 Objectives of this Study

The objectives of this study are mentioned in the below:

- i. To analyze the impact of WWII on Japanese politics and economics.
- ii. To explore the historical inter-relationship between Japan's economic recovery and political reforms.

2. Literature Review

2.1 A Historical Overview of Pre-War Japan

The pre-war period in Japan, which spanned the late 19th and early 20th centuries, marked a dramatic shift. Rapid modernization, imperial expansion, and the emergence of militarism defined this era, culminating in Japan's entry into World War II. (Nakamura & Kaminski, 1981). The Meiji Restoration in 1868 marked the beginning of Japan's fast modernization, as it adopted Western technology, institutions, and military techniques. This revolution catapulted Japan to the world arena, resulting in victory in the Sino-Japanese War (1894-1895) and the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905). However, the military's expanding power and pursuit of imperial ambitions resulted in harsh foreign policy, including the invasion of Manchuria in 1931 and the full-scale invasion of China in 1937 (Creswell, 2014). The combination of local and international forces, such as economic insecurity, political radicalism, and the emergence of ultranationalist ideologies, influenced Japan's determination to pursue military expansion (Diez Laso, 2022). The attack on Pearl Harbor in 1941 brought the U.S. into the war, leading to catastrophic combat that eventually led to Japan's defeat and capitulation in 1945. Below is an elaborate overview of pre-war Japan, divided into key phases:

Table 1: Key Phases of Pre-War Japan

The Meiji Restoration (1868-1912)	Taisho Period (1912-26)	Showa Period Pre-War Years (1926-41)
<p>The Meiji Restoration of 1868 was a watershed moment in Japanese history, bringing a centralized government, political reforms, and economic modernization. The government abolished the feudal system and established a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system, including Western-style legal and administrative institutions. Economic modernization was a key pillar, including investments in industrialization and land tax reforms. The Meiji government also implemented military reforms, creating a conscripted army and navy modeled after Western countries. Cultural transformations occurred, with traditional rituals reinterpreted and combined with Western ideas, and Shintoism pushed as a national unifier. This time laid the groundwork for Japan's prominence as a global power.</p>	<p>During the Taisho era (1912-1926), Japan experienced a surge in democracy, a vibrant cultural scene, and a consolidation of regional control. The growth of party politics, universal male suffrage, and the expansion of political rights distinguished the era. Japan's economic fortunes were uneven, with the postwar slump, economic inequality, and social unrest sparking labor movements and calls for reform. Urbanization, consumer culture, modernist trends, and popular culture defined the era. Japan's foreign policy was strengthened with victories in the First Sino-Japanese War and the Russo-Japanese War, which resulted in the acquisition of Taiwan, Korea, and parts of China. During the Taisho era, ultranationalist factions gained power and influenced Japan's future foreign policy.</p>	<p>The Showa era (1926-1989) saw fast economic and political changes in Japan, including fierce militarism and imperial expansion under Emperor Hirohito. The Great Depression of the 1930s resulted in massive unemployment, social instability, and the emergence of ultranationalist ideas, consolidating Japan's dominance while undermining democratic institutions. Japan's invasion of Manchuria in 1931, followed by the Second Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945), strengthened its imperial ambitions. The Japanese government used the concept of kokutai, or national essence, to legitimize its violent behavior. The country's isolation on the world stage was demonstrated by its withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933 and the signing of the Tripartite Pact in 1940. The 1941 attack on Pearl Harbor prompted the United States to enter the war, which eventually resulted in Japan's defeat and capitulation in 1945.</p>

Source: Created by Author based on Hamilton, 2015

2.2 The Impact of WWII on Japan

Japan faced numerous obstacles following WWII, including infrastructure destruction and food shortages. Despite this, it saw a stunning economic rebound. Government-led measures, such as industrial policies, education investment, and U.S. foreign aid through the Marshall Plan, boosted economic growth (Brinton, 2023). However, the Japanese people's perseverance and work ethic eventually fueled the country's recovery. After World War II, Japan witnessed a tremendous metamorphosis, transitioning from a militaristic and insular society to pacifism and openness to Western influences. This was vital for reintegration into the global community and restoring its reputation (Ito & Hoshi, 2020). Despite its deeply

established cultural beliefs, Japan incorporated Western features, combining Eastern and Western traditions. This cultural revolution profoundly impacted Japan's identity, culture, economy, and international relations. Japan underwent a profound transformation following World War II, moving from a militaristic and closed-off society to one that was pacifist and receptive to Western influences. This was vital for reintegration into the global community and restoring its reputation (Kuznets, 1988). Despite its deeply established cultural beliefs, Japan incorporated Western features, combining Eastern and Western traditions. The nuclear attacks of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II had disastrous implications for Japan (Kingston, 2013).

The initial impact was devastating, with tens of thousands of people killed instantaneously and many others suffering from radiation sickness and other serious illnesses. The bombs' long-term impacts are still felt today, with survivors and their descendants having a higher risk of cancer, birth deformities, and other health issues (Otsu, 2009). Beyond the human toll, the bombs had a substantial environmental impact, poisoning the air, land, and water. The damaged areas were uninhabitable for years, causing many people to relocate and reconstruct their lives. Next to WWII, Japan adopted a new constitution representing a considerable break from its past. The Allied forces heavily influenced the constitution and established democratic ideals like free speech, assembly, and religion. It also rejected using armed force and established a parliamentary form of government. These reforms laid the groundwork for a modern, democratic Japan, and the country has continuously adhered to these values over the decades following (Liu, 2022, p. 01024).

2.3 Post-War Japan: Reconstruction and Economic Miracle

Japan's spectacular economic recovery following World War II resulted from meticulous planning and strategic implementation (Alam, 2016). Despite considerable problems such as inflation, resource scarcity, and infrastructural destruction, Japan pursued fast industrialization. Japan restructured its economy by focusing on high-value-added industries such as electronics and autos, establishing itself as a global economic powerhouse (Yokoi, 2004). The country's highly qualified workforce, advanced technology, and strong export-oriented economy continue to fuel its economic prosperity. Japan actively pursued diplomatic connections with various countries to revitalize its economy and position itself as a prominent participant worldwide. Building relationships with the United States and other major nations was critical in promoting trade and investment prospects between Japan and its international partners (Krpec & Hodulak, 2019).

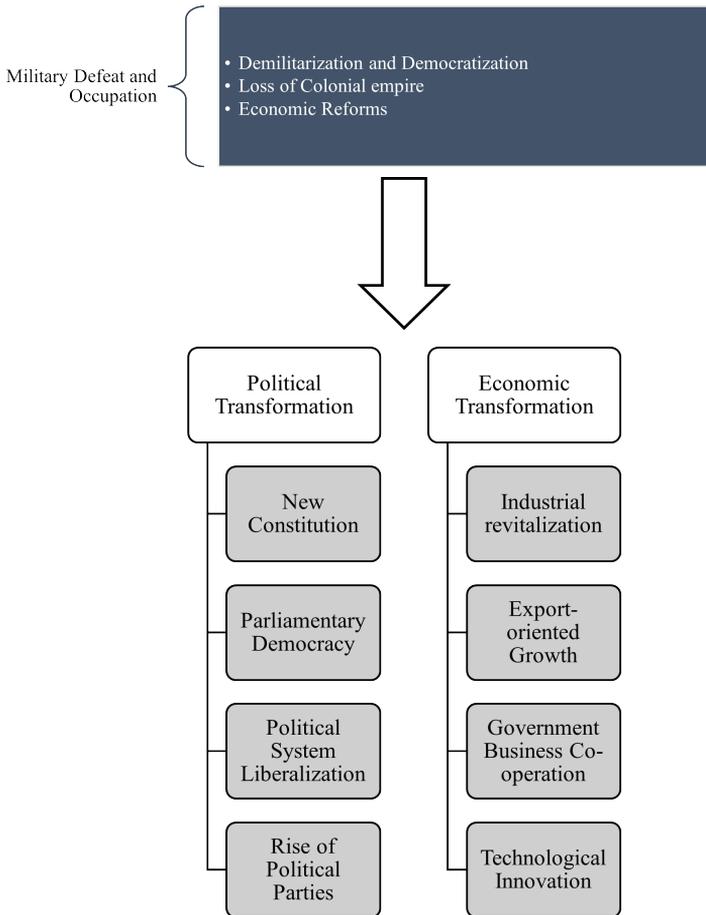
As a founding member of the United Nations, Japan has played an essential role in global diplomacy and has constantly participated in peacekeeping efforts. Furthermore, Japan has established significant ties with other Asian countries through organizations such as the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation. Beyond Asia, Japan has established significant partnerships with Europe and other regions worldwide (Smitka, 2024).

Japan's postwar demographic environment has posed serious challenges. Fueled by low birth rates and rising life expectancy, a rapidly aging population has pressured the country's social security systems. This demographic transition has raised worries about the viability of public services and their potential influence on the economy (Ehara, 2019). Furthermore, a continuous labor shortage, notably in industries such as healthcare and construction, has resulted in a growing reliance on foreign workers. As a result, Japan's long-term economic growth and geopolitical power have come into question. To address these concerns, the government has established various programs to encourage births and support family-friendly workplaces (Dogrul & Korkut, 2022).

3. Research Method

The study used qualitative research methodology, focusing on secondary sources, interpretivism, and pragmatism. The inductive approach allowed for the emergence of patterns and insights from the data rather than testing predefined hypotheses (Cresswell, 2014). Archival methods collected diverse data from academic articles, books, peer-reviewed journals, research papers, and credible websites (Gray, 2013). Critical analysis was employed to enhance the credibility and depth of the research. Document analysis and thematic analysis were used to interpret the collected data. The study aimed to achieve high academic rigor and meaningful contributions to the field. The careful blend of qualitative approaches, critical review, and methodical analysis ensured that the findings were believable, relevant, and applicable to the broader discourse about the research contention (Saunders et al., 2009).

3.1 Conceptual Framework



4. Findings and Discussions

4.1 Political Transformation

4.1.1 End of the Imperial System's Dominance

In modern Japan's history, the end of the domination of the imperial system marks one of the most transformative moments. A complex process executed the shift. It made a pacifist nation-state from a completely militaristic empire and, finally, a democratic society where both external and internal factors played a significant role. The transformation introduced a new socio-political framework and dismantled the entire imperial system that ruled the nations for centuries. Japan

was occupied by the United States (U.S.) allied powers right after the defeat of WWII (Shoichi, 2018). That is why the U.S. government significantly changed the Japanese economic and political framework, including dismantling its war-making capacities and reshaping its identity in the postwar global world. The entire transformation paid great notice to ideological, political, and structural changes to make a pacifist and democratic nation. The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 resulted in Japan's surrender on September 2, 1945. This effectively destroyed Japan's imperial ambitions and left the country under foreign occupation. Once a symbol of unity, the Emperor was damaged, prompting postwar changes that revolutionized Japan's political and social structures. Upon Japan's surrender, the Allied occupation, led by General Douglas MacArthur, sought to restore the country while preventing its revival as a military threat. The first crucial step was deconstructing the current political framework that fueled colonial militarism (Takada, 1999). The Postwar Constitution of Japan, written by occupying forces, was an essential political reform in Japan. It restricted the Emperor's powers and redefined his role in the state. Article 1 declared sovereignty to be with the people, overturning centuries of imperial rule. Japan became a constitutional monarchy, and the Emperor was reduced to a ceremonial function. The elected prime minister and the National Diet wielded executive power.

The military was abolished, and the Japanese Self-defense Forces were formed with limited constraints. Preserving the Emperor as a symbolic figure was motivated by practical concerns, political expediency, and the Japanese's reverence for the Emperor. Emperor Hirohito's role in World War II is critical to understanding the demise of the imperial order. Fearing unrest, American occupation officials arranged for his evacuation. On the other hand, Hirohito formally renounced his divine position in 1946, signaling Japan's definitive break with the imperial order and paving the way for a move to democracy and pacifism (Westra, 2021). His influence remained ceremonial, but constitutional revisions ensured that the family's role never included direct political or military authority. The development of democratic institutions, as well as the strengthening of the Diet, helped to drive this shift. As Japan rebuilt its economy, its political system transitioned away from imperial traditions, with political parties emerging, the Diet growing, and a dynamic civil society advocating peace and prosperity. (Wada, 2022).

4.1.2 Democratic Reforms and Constitutional Change

"While the Emperor could be deposed by fiat, the institution of the throne could not be legislated out of existence if the Japanese people still believed in it."

- Hugh Borton, "American Presurrender Planning for

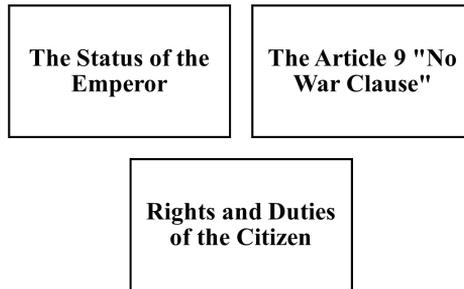
Postwar Japan."

"Not one constructive idea to help with the reorientation and reconstruction of Japan ever came from the Far Eastern Commission or its satellite, the Allied Council."

-Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences

The Potsdam Declaration, published in 1945 by Allied leaders Winston Churchill, Harry S. Truman, and Joseph Stalin, demanded Japan's unconditional surrender and defined the goals of the Allied occupation following the surrender. The proclamation aspired to create freedom of expression, religion, and thought, as well as respect for fundamental human rights, and to withdraw occupying forces from Japan once these goals were met. The Allies wanted to persuade Japan's new leaders to start democratic changes independently (Shoichi, 2018). However, by early 1946, MacArthur's staff and Japanese authorities disagreed over the draft of a new constitution. Prime Minister Shidehara Kijuro and his colleagues hesitated to replace the 1889 Meiji Constitution with a more liberal version. Matsumoto Joji, the chairperson of a blue-ribbon group of constitutional specialists, was appointed in late 1945 to propose amendments. The Matsumoto Commission made conservative suggestions, but MacArthur rejected them and directed his staff to create a new document (Milly, 2020). The new document, which called for a bicameral legislature, was adopted by the Privy Council, House of Peers, and House of Representatives and went into effect on May 3, 1947. The 1947 constitution was legally an amendment, not an abrogation, of the 1889 document. The MacArthur constitution, which Japanese liberals influenced, was drafted between late 1945 and 1946. The proposal did not seek to establish a presidential or federal system like that of the United States but instead followed the British model of parliamentary administration (Yamamura, 2022). After 1952, conservatives and nationalists wanted to alter the constitution to make it more "Japanese." Still, they were thwarted by the difficulties of amending it, which required agreement from two-thirds of the National Diet members before being presented to the people by referendum. Opposition parties, which had over one-third of Diet seats, were also proponents of the constitutional status quo. Even ruling LDP members, such as Nakasone Yasuhiro, played down the issue when serving as prime minister from 1982 to 1987 (Brinton, 2023).

Figure 1: Fundamental Changes of the 1947 Constitution



Source: (Shoichi, 2018)

4.1.3 Party Politics and Electoral System

During and before World War II, Japan's parliamentary electoral system followed the German model, with an elected Lower House and a peerage-based Upper House. The Emperor and the Meiji Genro appointed prime ministers, and all males over twenty-five were granted voting rights in 1925. However, the system underwent considerable changes, resulting in the establishment of "Taisho Democracy" in the 1930s (Iyoda, 2010).

The 1947 Constitution changed the political system after World War II, including granting women the right to vote and allowing the Diet to choose the prime minister. The intense rivalry between several parties remained despite these developments, as the Liberal, Democratic, and Socialist parties united to form the Japan Socialist Party and the Liberal Democratic Party. The 1955 electoral framework, which remained in effect for 38 years, witnessed the ascendancy of the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). This party was formed by merging the Liberal and Democratic parties, resulting in a shift towards candidate-centered elections. However, this also fostered "pork-barrel politics" and decreased governmental accountability in Japan. Additionally, the 1955 system facilitated the emergence of the LDP as a "catchall" party, which catered to various political divisions and allowed multiple candidates to vie for election in each district. This dynamic prompted corruption scandals and further diminished accountability in the Japanese political landscape (Fujita & Tabuchi, 1997).

4.2 Economic Transformation

4.2.1 Economic Disruption After WWII

The entire world faced economic turmoil due to the Second World War. Japan underwent significant cultural and economic shifts. New industries had to be developed to address the disruption by investigating novel business and

technological models. As a result of the atomic bomb attack, Japan suffered financial and physical devastation. As a result, they had to rebuild many outdated structures and new strategies (Lockwood, 2015). Being a large, populated country with technological prowess, the U.S. benefitted most from this situation. It provided Japan with technological and business-building support, and in return, it gained economic success. Europe and Asia were heavily affected by the destruction and were left in ruins.

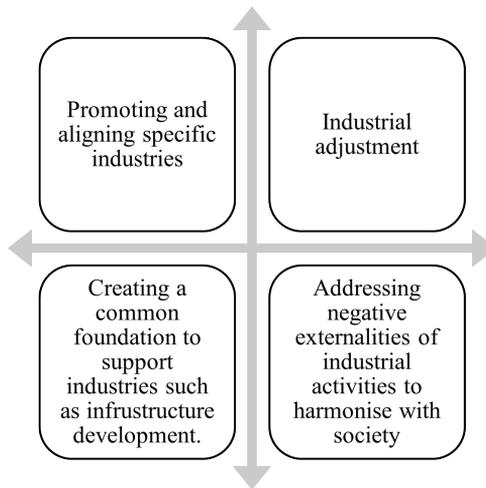
Starting from industrial capacity, the transportation system and housing faced widespread devastation (Esteban-Pretel & Sawada, 2014). However, America benefitted greatly because the only physical harm done to this nation was to Hawaii and a few military installations. The displacement caused by the refugee crisis was another fundamental problem. It is necessary to relocate millions of people, including civilians, refugees, and prisoners of war. This demographic shift worsened the neighboring country's economic condition (ACHINA). New labor market and welfare systems had to be created to reinvigorate those people. To aid the recovery of the Western economy, The U.S. implemented the Marshall Plan (1948-52) to stabilize the economy and rebuild the industries by providing \$13 billion. The U.S. also made sure to prevent the spread of communism in these countries. With its entire industrial base and military backing intact, the United States became a leader in international trade and finance following World War II. being devastated, Russia (then known as the Soviet Union) recovered as a growing economy and eventually established socialist economics. Currency instability, thus inflation, was another crisis in the postwar economy. To finance the war effort, excessive money printing had to be done (Otsu & Shibayama, 2022). Eventually, one currency needed to be the world's primary reserve currency to stabilize the global financial system, and that currency was the U.S. dollar. Significant turnover in labor marked the period after the turmoil of WWII, as many were killed, injured, or dislocated (Kohli, 1994). To deal with this labor shortage, women entered the workforce. Even though many women were fired from their jobs in the postwar era, their arrival had a long-lasting effect on gender roles. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank helped stabilize international trade to set the stage for the postwar boom. The economy was disrupted more, with a fraction of the U.S. and Soviet Union competing for capitalist and communist blocks (Kingston, 2013).

4.2.2 Industrial Policy and Economic Revitalization

The industrial policy promotes industrial operations for national economic development. The government may intervene in the market economy. Industrial policy changes according to a country's socioeconomic state, industry growth stage, and international environment. Japan's post-World War II industrial policies

were centered on rebuilding wrecked sectors and increasing export competitiveness (Ito & Hoshi, 2020). During the Cold War, Japan attempted to catch up with Western economic levels by absorbing and creating new industries from overseas. Advanced technology, machinery, and equipment were imported, and the government offered financial assistance to industrial enterprises. By the late 1960s, Japan had emerged as an industrialized country. However, economic conflict between the United States and Japan created pressure to liberalize trade and capital, necessitating additional measures to boost industrial competitiveness. The fast appreciation of the Japanese yen and the oil crises of the 1970s resulted in substantial changes in Japan's economic structure, including a shift to high-value-added manufacturing. As a result, advanced processing and assembly sectors, such as automobiles and electric vehicles, rose to prominence. Today's industrial strategy must respond to significant developments such as globalization, IoT development, and digitization. Japanese industrial policy has successfully adjusted to these developments, emphasizing the value of rapid responsiveness and diversity in industrial policy (Adelman, 2000).

Figure 2: Categorization of Postwar Industrial Policy Objectives



Source: Created by Author Based on Wada, 2022

Following World War II, Japan focused on rebuilding fundamental industries such as steel and coal mining. Between the mid-1950s and the early 1970s, the nation streamlined its operations and enhanced global competitiveness in the textiles and light machinery sectors. Legislative measures like the Act on Temporary Measures for the Promotion of Machinery and the Modernization Support for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises were implemented. Japan adopted foreign technologies

and initiated the growth of new industries, including petrochemicals. Throughout the 1970s, the country transformed existing industries into knowledge-driven ones, incorporating innovative production techniques and encouraging industrial development. By the 1980s, sectors such as electronics began to flourish, boosting entrepreneurial activities (Johnston, 1951).

4.2.3 The Role of Government Policies and Corporate Strategies

The contribution of the Japanese government and its policies after WWII was pivotal to transforming the country from a war-torn state. Under the guidance of the US-led Allied occupation, the Japanese government initiated several policies to stabilize its democracy (Richardson & Patterson, 2001). Firstly, the government took steps to implement democratization and rebuild its governance. As a result, a new postwar constitution was introduced to replace the Meiji constitution of 1889. The primary characteristics to lessen inequality in rural areas and the agricultural sector are that the government enacted parliamentary democracy, renounced war, and guaranteed civil liberties, such as freedom of speech, assembly, and gender equality. put land reform laws into effect. The agricultural base was partly reshaped by land redistribution from landlords to tenants. , the govt encourages a multiparty democratic system in its politics. (Zhang & Zhang, 1998). For the first time in 1946, women were granted the right to vote and massive voter participation to ensure fairness in the electoral process. Secondly, the government prioritized postwar reconstruction and growth by implementing economic policies.

Before WWII, there was monopolistic control over the corporate arena; the system was known as industrial conglomerates (zaibatsu). This system has been abolished, and decentralization of the economy has allowed for more competitiveness. Besides, with the support of the Ministry of International Trade and Industry (MITI), the government adopted a state-led capitalistic model by prioritizing key sectors such as steel, automobiles, and electronics. Apart from that, the Japanese government invested extensively in infrastructure and transportation networks. The collaboration between public and private industries was ensured to develop technological expertise and modernize factors (Sowdagar, 2019). The Korean War (1950-53) was an economic boom for the Japanese economy as Japan became a critical supplier for U.S. military forces. Thirdly, the government launched social policies to promote equality and education. The government contributed significantly to labor reforms to ensure their work productivity and social stability by legalizing labor unions, setting minimum wages, and improving better working conditions. The education system of Japan was reshaped after WWII. A 6-3-3-4 system was introduced by emphasizing merit-based access (Here, 6 for six years of elementary, 3 for three years of junior high, 3 for three years of high school, and 4 for four years of university education).

The government also introduced healthcare and pension systems to ensure a safety net for the population (Lockwood, 2015).

However, the global framework established after World War II mostly left Multinational Corporations (MNCs) without regulation. Although the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD), International Monetary Fund (IMF), and International Trade Organization (ITO) were initially intended to function as a trio of institutions, the ITO never came into existence, which resulted in trade practices being governed by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The proposed ITO and the World Trade Organization (WTO) sought to encourage and grow trade and MNC investments, though neither aimed to go beyond this stimulation. The Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) negotiations took place from 1995 to 1998 to address aspects left unfinished due to the ITO's failure. The MAI was designed to provide a more predictable, systematic, and uniform framework of multilateral rules amidst the unpredictable surge of MNC activities. Ironically, the persistent impression of a lack of an investment regime reflects the powerful influence and long-standing investment norms that developed industrialized nations favor. The spread of global economic activities, propelled by multinational corporations (MNCs), is not a matter of fate but rather one of politics. Host nations have the right and duty to ensure that foreign firms play a role in fostering national progress. In less developed countries (LDCs), the operations of MNCs are especially intertwined with political issues, and the Group of 77 has put forth a plan to enhance equality in the social and economic landscape while promoting the interests of developing nations. By the time the New International Economic Order (NIEO) took form in 1974, MNCs had been recognized as significant obstacles to development. The "third world," or developing nations, should not be viewed as a homogeneous group, nor are OECD countries immune to the perception that MNCs might hinder national economic development and political sovereignty. Major capital-exporting nations defended the existing order. The Westphalian principle of legal independence was little solace for countries that either lacked genuine autonomy or attempted to resist MNC actions, only to discover that these powerful entities could obstruct local production from reaching the market (Crawford, 2014).

4.2.4 Export-Oriented Growth

Japan's remarkable economic resurgence after WWII was primarily driven by an export-orientated growth strategy. The Japanese government took several key strategies to stimulate economic growth by ensuring high-quality export goods (Smitka, 2024). At first, they identify the key sectors; after that, they actively promote those industries (steel, automobiles, and electronics). The government actively engaged in this process by taking protectionist measures to save the

domestic industry and providing subsidies and tax breaks. Besides, the government invests in human capital development to ensure a highly skilled workforce by providing education and training. Because skilled human resources are the prime need for technological innovation and industrial competitiveness. Several macroeconomic measures have been implemented to curb inflation. Interest rate control produced an atmosphere that was conducive to the expansion of Japanese companies. Because Japanese corporate culture prioritized long-term goals over immediate gains, they consistently prioritized staff training, research, and development. (Rosovsky, 1973). As they ensure a high-quality product without zero faults and comparatively lower prices, Japanese products gained worldwide popularity. Japan gradually reduced its tariffs and other trade barriers while actively seeking new export markets; thus, trade liberalization happened. Besides, the government strategically devalued the yen to make Japanese exports more competitive globally (Radimor, 2017). However, it is vital to emphasize that Japan's export-oriented economic model has encountered obstacles such as increased global competitiveness, rising labor costs, and a shrinking birth rate.

4.2.5 Technological Innovation

Technological development after WWII has been a remarkable journey to reshape the war-torn country. An unprecedented number of radical changes were observed in the technological history of postwar Japan. They renewed the machines within less than 10 years, and surprisingly, the factory layout had also been changed with the benefit of innovative technology. Japan needed to come back from its heavy war damage to recover its economy; as a result, it transferred a lot of technologies from other developed nations (Rosenbluth & Thies, 2010). As a first step, the steel industry was chosen to introduce rolling technology, and later, as a latecomer advantage, the LD oxygen furnace was also initiated. Some say that the entire industrial innovation process has been shifted from the developed country, which remains a debate. Because, starting from the layout design to the entire manufacturing process, the Japanese industry's efforts played a crucial role in making innovative tools (Milly, 2020). Technological skills, including soft technology and creativity, can be vital to the industry's competitiveness. Countries like Japan sometimes fail while transferring technology from abroad, but Japan successfully passed as it was in the proper condition and managed the operation with a skilled hand. After a few years of WWII, Japan stood as a global leader in technological innovation for its massive economic development and contribution, and it became the CEO of Sony (Smitka, 2024). A rapid pre-industrial society turns into a technological superpower with its time-worthy innovation. Japan took the ideas from the West but did not copy the entire system. It customized the process as a Japanese system, and this is another reason for its success and adaptability. Radio electronics, ballistic missiles, electronic computing, and the atomic bomb

are the four postwar strategic technological developments. Moreover, Japan took several initiatives to cope with the aftereffects of WWII. The Japanese government hired American consultants. Sent its talented individual abroad to achieve an engineering degree. These all are the secrets behind Japan's massive industrial boom. Between the 1950s and the 1970s, the country's economy grew by 10%, and for the first time, it observed double-digit growth (Otsubo, 2007), as mentioned in Table 2.

Table 2: Period of Rapid Growth

<i>Period</i>	<i>Average real growth rate</i>
1956-60	8.8
1961-65	9.2
1966-70	11.1
1971-75	4.5
1976-80	4.4
1981-85	3.3
1986-90	4.9

Source: (Iyoda, 2010)

4.3 Social and Cultural Impacts (Labor Dynamics and Gender Roles)

World War II's social and cultural effects are still evident in contemporary Japanese and global societies. Due to adverse effects, social roles have changed significantly. Examples of these changes include the civil rights movement and women's roles. Women accepted roles in agriculture, factories, and even military services by entering the workforce to revive the nation. This transition later worked as a catalyst for future feminist movements challenging traditional gender roles in Japan. The civil rights movement after the postwar was highly active, as there were racial inequalities, particularly in the case of African Americans. Europeans, Asians, and civilians, as well as survivors of the military camps, experienced massive displacement due to the Holocaust bombing (Igarashi, 2012).

Apart from the social transformation, cultural impacts also outweigh significantly. By reflecting on themes like heroism, trauma, and morality, the post-war period inspired a wave of literature, arts, and films (e.g., Anne Frank's Diary). To shape public opinion, wartime propaganda became a powerful tool, so the government invested heavily in firms, broadcasts, and posters. However, post-war media also shifted in rebuilding society to reflect optimism, concentrating on peace and progress. As globalization accelerated after the postwar period, American pop culture, such as jazz and Hollywood films, gained popularity. Across cultures, it especially influenced the European and Asian continents (AULIAWAN &

SANTOSO, 2023).

From a global perspective, WWII catalyzed the United Nations (UN) in 1945 to ensure international law and human rights and operate peacekeeping missions. This war enraged the decolonization of powerful colonies like Britain and France, leading to interdependence movements across Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) reflected lessons from the war's atrocities. Moreover, the post-war period created cultural and political tensions due to the ideological divide between capitalism and communism, which reshaped international relations (Nagata & Patel, 2021).

5. Learnings for Bangladesh

Japan's transformation after World War II is a compelling example of how essential political stability and human capital development are for economic growth. Their focus on democracy and peace fostered a reliable and secure setting, drawing in local and international investments. This stability, along with considerable investments in education and skills training, enabled businesses to strategize for the long haul, invest in infrastructure and innovation, and, in turn, drive economic success (Alam, 2022, p. 136-140). In its quest to mirror this achievement, Bangladesh should prioritize strengthening its political stability and invest in human capital development (Alam, 2022). By nurturing a peaceful and democratic society based on the rule of law and offering its citizens quality education and vocational training, Bangladesh can attract essential investments, harness its human potential, and set the stage for economic success (Alam & Akon, 2023).

6. Ethical Concern

While conducting this research, the author adhered to all research ethics principles. The researcher asked all the participants if they wanted to participate or not. Furthermore, all names and information will be presented anonymously for the participants' safety. Finally, the author has strictly maintained her data analysis and management honesty. No falsified or fabricated information is presented here. The author's unwavering attention to ethical behavior boosts the study's trustworthiness and reliability, demonstrating a commitment to undertaking socially responsible and ethically sound research.

7. Conclusion

By examining the profound shifts of WWII, this study explored the historical impact on the Japanese economy and politics and their inter-complexities. The research helped to understand how the effect of WWII helped Japan to alter its centuries-old feudalistic government and establishment of democratic governance. New economic policies were also introduced with the emergence of pacifism, neglecting militarism (Cao, 2023).

The results reveal that the period following the war was a crucial turning point for Japan. Politically, Japan experienced a momentous change due to the Allied Occupation, primarily influenced by the United States. The constitution, which was implemented in 1947, dismantled the imperialist framework and brought about democratic changes, such as universal voting rights and civil freedoms. Economically, Japan transitioned from focusing on wartime production to establishing a market-driven economy, supported by U.S. financial aid and strategic industrial policies that led to a swift recovery. The nation's post-war economic surge was fueled by advancements in technology, robust industrial expansion, and the establishment of an economy centered on exports.

Additionally, Japan embraced a pacifist approach to foreign relations, altering its role on the global stage (Ehara, 2019). This research provides a deeper insight into how World War II influenced Japan's path throughout the 20th century. The thesis underscores the interrelationship between these transformations from political and economic aspects. It highlights the significance of the U.S. occupation in advocating for democratic reforms and stimulating economic revival. Furthermore, it reveals the internal and external elements that impacted Japan's evolution, such as the determination of its citizens and the strategic choices made in the early post-war era (Otsu & Shibayama, 2022).

Ultimately, World War II changed Japan's political environment and established the groundwork for its economic growth, transforming it into one of the most significant global economies in the subsequent decades. The war's aftermath represents a complex and layered legacy, shaping Japan's political stability, economic power, and international presence (Ikeo, 2014).

7.1 Limitations of This Study

Though this study provides valuable insights into Japan's political and economic transformation after the post-war period, several limitations should be acknowledged. This study is based on secondary data. Collecting primary sources may add credibility and validity to this research work. Besides, the research focuses on the immediate years after WWII to explain the economic and political trajectory. So, this study does not fully capture the long-term evolution of these two interconnected systems, such as the Cold War and the oil crisis in 1973. However, another limitation might be that this study examines the national-level changes, policies, and strategies. The rural level of development and post-war recovery could differ significantly from those of urban elites. Lastly, while the study addresses Japan's economic recovery, it did not properly delve into the social cost of industrialization and the complexities of economic inequality.

7.2 Recommendations and Future Scopes of This Study

This study leaves a future scope by using data from primary sources to prepare a more reliable paper. Moreover, future research can focus on comparative analysis with countries like Germany, which underwent similar experiences. Another recommendation for research might be how postwar period economic policies and industrial strategies later influenced Japan's 1990s asset bubble price and lost decades.

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