Examiner's commentary

The research question is concise and clearly worded, allowing plenty of scope for analysis. The methodology is outlined in the introduction, and it is interesting that the candidate was inspired by a newspaper article that then led them to carry out some in-depth research using a good range of academic sources. A statement that ultimately becomes the conclusion appears as a thesis statement in the introduction, a strategy that has worked well. The essay is well-referenced with correct citations used throughout. This is very important as it meets the academic honesty requirements of the Extended Essay. The use of terminology is also very good with Japanese terms explained in the text, which makes it clear and accessible to the examiner. There is also some careful evaluation that demonstrates a critical approach to the sources.

Extended Essay in **History** (Group 3, Individuals and Societies)

Title:

Significance of Internal Factors in the Fall of the Tokugawa Shōgunate

Research question:

To what extent was the fall of the Tokugawa Shōgunate a result of internal factors?

Word Count: 3904

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1. Introduction

The Meiji Restoration in Japan in 1868 meant the restoration of power to the emperor, and thus the fall of the Tokugawa Shōgunate which had governed for over 200 years. This essay aims to investigate the following question: *to what extent was the fall of the Tokugawa Shōgunate a result of internal factors?*, taking into consideration events that occurred throughout the Edo era: the period of the Tokugawa Shōgunate, which was between the early 17th century and mid-19th century (History.com Editors, 2009).

The causes of the decline of the Tokugawa Shōgunate has continuously fascinated historians, with arguments arising for various sides. Additionally, the effects of the Meiji Restoration are still present in Japan today. As such, this matter is worth investigating due to its great potential of providing valuable knowledge regarding Japan's modern history and how the events contributed to its becoming of the nation today.

This essay will discuss internal factors and a main external factor; the information and evidence provided will be analyzed to explain their significance to the collapse of the Tokugawa Shōgunate. To a certain extent, the fall of the Shōgunate was brought by internal factors: the dissatisfaction towards the regime, the Tempō Crisis, and the forces of Satsuma and Chōshū, as they provided the appropriate conditions to incite change in the regime, however, it was an external factor: the end of Japan's isolationism, that was the deciding factor in eventually causing the fall of the Shōgunate.

1.1 The Tokugawa Shōgunate and Its Policies

To explore the collapse of the Tokugawa Shōgunate, the nature of the government and some of its policies should be understood. The Tokugawa Shōgunate, governing during Japan's Edo period (1603-1868), was a feudal military dictatorship, known as *bakufu*. While the emperor of the country still reigned, real political power lay with the shōgun, the head of the *bakufu*. The emperor, rather, served as a figurehead and religious leader of the country. Under the shōgun were the *daimyō*, feudal landlords, and under them were the samurai, military followers or soldiers that answered to their respective daimyōs (SCMP Reporter, 1998). The shōgun and daimyōs covered most of the land in the country; peasants were tied down to their respective daimyōs' land (known as *han*) by the feudal caste system, and surplus produce was handed over to their feudal lords (Nagahara, 1962, p.68). In a society with Confucian ideals that emphasized productivity, peasants (or farmers) were still above merchants and artisans (known as *chōnin*) in the social hierarchy, as they produced the food that all other classes depended on (Szczepankski, n.d.).

A prominent policy of the Tokugawa Shōgunate was that of 'alternate attendance', or *sankin-kōtai (Edo, the Shogun's, n.d.)*. This required daimyōs to leave their families in Edo, the capital and residence of the shōgun, while they themselves alternated residence between Edo and their own domains (*Edo, the Shogun's*, n.d.). Essentially a hostage system, this guaranteed the loyalty of the daimyōs and their samurais, and also exhausted the finances of the daimyōs who had to maintain two residences (Tipton, 2008, p.2).

In the early years of the Edo Period, Japan adopted a policy of seclusion, known as *sakoku*. With the intention of banning foreign influence, the Shōgunate prohibited travel in and out of Japan, banned Portuguese ships, and limited foreign trade to a port in Nagasaki, only trading with Holland and China (*Foreign Envoys*, n.d.). The Shōgunate maintained relations with Korea and the Ryūkyū islands (southwest of the main Japanese islands), however, besides this, foreign contact was limited to Nagasaki (Dolan, 1992, p.30).

2. Dissatisfaction Towards the Regime

Changes in the Tokugawa economy brought shifts in the social class, leading to the weakening of the Tokugawa government brought by the decline in support from its samurai and merchant class (Norman, 2000, p. 24-25). Rice constituted the basis of the Tokugawa economy; taxes and revenue of the lords and samurai were both made up of rice (Honjo, 1931, p.21). However, the period also saw an increased use of money and, therefore, commercial development (Honjo, 1932, p.32). Wide use of gold and silver coins became prevalent during the early years of Tokugawa, and its spread into rural areas occurred in the early 18th century (Honjo, 1932, p.34). It was apparent that the agrarian economy was giving way to a growing currency economy (Honjo, 1932, p.32). The *sankin-kōtai* system also contributed to this change, as daimyōs were required to spend money to travel to Edo on transportation and guards (Honjo, 1932, p.34). As a result, Edo became a "major consumption center" (Flath, 2014, p.26). Similarly, the system required samurais to accompany their lords to Edo, and since it was the center of the economy and inhabited by the wealthy, samurais had to spend more money to accommodate the higher living standards. However, as samurai stipends were fixed, this increased expenditure rendered their revenue inadequate (Honjo, 1927, p.41). Additionally, due to economic differences in *han*, samurais from different *han* often received differing stipends, and consequently, the growing requirement for the use of money was the most detrimental towards the lower class samurai (Tipton, 2017). As a result, many, including these samurai and the Shōgunate, when facing difficulties, resorted to requisitioning or loaning money from the merchants, who had benefited from the growing commercialization. However, once samurai

borrowed from them, it was difficult to repay their debts; the samurai often became increasingly involved in debt and had to negotiate for repayments over a long period of time (Honjo, 1932, p.37). Many chōnin extended their influence to agricultural regions and also became landowners. Eventually, the chōnin rose in social class to a point where they were above both the farmers and the samurai (Honjo, 1932, p.38). This widespread growth of commercial activity and use of currency had led to the significant increase of the chōnin's influence (Honjo, 1934, p.19).

Both the samurai and the peasant (farmer) class suffered greatly from this, and some, dissatisfied with their growing hardships, even adopted the traditions of chōnin life. Samurais abandoned their previous values of honor and prioritized material gains, developing a habit of not doing anything that didn't bring material profit. Some farmers, under the burden of heavy taxes, settled down in towns and became merchants (Honjo, 1932, p.42). In addition, since feudal lords were involved in the money economy for consumption while their income came from land, they depended on peasant production, and when the feudal lords were running low on money, the peasants would be further exploited (Sheldon, 1958, p.169). Peasants who were unable to become merchants made up majority of the peasant population; they had no legal rights, no wealth, and no power, and often lost land and were forced to become tenants (Tipton, 2017). Social unrest grew as peasants became increasingly dissatisfied with their poor living standards and the consequences of the shifting class relations and commercialization, and this was reflected through the peasant uprisings. Protests doubled between 1600 and 1750, and doubled again in the early nineteenth century (Tipton, 2017). Although this did undermine the Shōgunate due to its inability to regulate the growing crisis, it is believed that the samurai class made a greater contribution to the fall of the Shōgunate (Honjo, 1932). Due to the growing poverty, tensions

grew among the samurai- especially those within the lower strata. While this and oppression of the peasants fuelled the need for change in the regime, the local nature of the peasant protests did not quite stir a popular revolution against the Shōgunate (Tipton, 2017), however, most historians agree on the significance of samurai dissatisfaction on change in the nineteenth century (Howland, 2001, p.372). Marxist historians in particular, emphasize the severe poverty and oppression and its further foment of dissatisfaction, and believe that it underlaid the eventual Tokugawa decline. An example of this interpretation would be the work of Marxist Canadian diplomat and historian, E. H. Norman, who emphasizes the role of the dissatisfied samurai and peasant class in the weakening of the Tokugawa regime in his book, *Japan's Emergence as a Modern State (60th Anniversary Edition)* (Norman, 2000, p. 24-25). Born and raised in Japan and eventually pursuing graduate studies in Japanese history, Norman proves to be qualified and highly knowledgeable in the topic, confirming the book's credibility. The book was originally published in 1940, therefore, it has the benefit of hindsight, however, there most likely has been additional research conducted after its publication, meaning it may contain less information than a more recent source; certain pieces of information, such as statistics regarding the Tokugawa economy (Hauser, 1983, p.573), may not have been available to Norman.

Samurais' morales decreased significantly, while their criticism for the Tokugawa regime escalated (Tipton, 2017); they felt a strong need for change in society (Honjo, 1932). Feeling unjustly cut off from respect and positions of power, they voiced their desires for reform (Howland, 2001, p.373). For the Tokugawa government to thrive, the loyalty of its warriors was crucial, however, due to their deteriorating economic situations and therefore trust towards the Shōgunate, the government was undermined significantly (Yamamura, 1971, p.403).

2.1 The Tempō Crisis

The government was further undermined in its failure to respond to the Tempō crisis appropriately; this failure is often seen as a background factor to the collapse of the Shōgunate in 1868. This period of crisis involved natural disasters, famine, and rebellion. Crop failures had been prevalent since 1824, however, severe famine only occurred (in Northern Japan) in 1833 due to exceptionally cold weather, eventually spreading into a nationwide famine in 1836. Civilians grew desperate, resorting to eating leaves, weeds, or straw raincoats. The country saw a spike in rural protests from its desperate citizens, which, at this point, involved tens of thousands of peasants as opposed to a few villages. Despite the government opening relief stations, the starved peasants flocked to cities searching for menial work, often resorting to violence and attacking rice warehouses out of desperation and frustration (Tipton, 2017). These accounts of hardship were derived from a book written by Australian Professor of Japanese Studies Elise K. Tipton, published in 2017. Tipton, being a professional in Japanese Studies, would prove to be a reliable source, however, due to the secondary nature of the book and the fact that its publication was almost two centuries after the initial event, detailed descriptions of the situation at the time might be inaccurate. Additionally, Tipton's reference list shows use of other secondary sources such as books and journals, as opposed to primary sources, which may indicate inaccuracies (Tipton, 2017). Despite this, it does possess the benefit of hindsight, which proves helpful in accounting the effects of said event, which is a crucial element to this investigation. Furthermore, due to its recent publication, Tipton most likely had a significant amount of relevant research to refer to, resulting in her book potentially being very rich in updated information.

The growing chaos was highlighted in 1837, when former Osaka police official Ōshio Heihachirō turned against the Shōgunate, demanding change (Tipton, 2017). Seeing the people's suffering, he encouraged the peasants to revolt and kill "the heartless officials and luxury-living merchants who profited while the poor starved" (Tipton, 2017), attracting followers with his revolutionary ideas. However, the revolt failed and was quelled in a matter of days. Regardless, his rebellion made a great impression on not only the people, but also the government, drawing the government's attention to the crises at hand and contributing to reforms enacted in the 1840s. Uprisings continued, demonstrating the growing hardships of the country (Tipton, 2017).

When the Shōgunate did respond to the crisis, the results were unsatisfactory. Senior councillor Mizuno Tadakuni initiated the Tempō reforms in 1841, encouraging samurai to pursue learning and martial arts and ordering farmers to remain in their villages (Lu, 1997, p. 273). Prices of certain merchandise were also reduced; the *bakufu* was attempting to exert control over commercial activities, however, the economic power possessed by the merchants made this impossible (Lu, 1997, p. 273). Additionally, attempts to consolidate certain areas of land also failed, as a result of objection from Tokugawa retainers and peasants. Eventually, the *shinpan daimyō* of Kii (a relative of the Tokugawa family) put an end to the reforms (Lu, 1997, p.274). Unrest among the dissatisfied civilians spread and the incapability of the Shōgunate to alleviate issues became apparent. Due to the Shōgunate's failure, reform movements had already begun in other *han*; for example, in Satsuma, the administration attempted to develop *han* monopolies for profit (Lu, 1997, p.165). Chōshū also initiated their own independent reforms (Craig, 2000, p.54). This, along with the general failure of the Shōgunate, underscored the inherent weakness of the Shōgunate and the deterioration of the government system.

The period of time during the crisis also saw a rise in alliances between social classes. The gravity of the crisis at hand established a division among the samurai; the upper class sought to maintain their statuses, while the lower class, heavily impacted by the growing money economy, desired reform (Horie, 1952, p.27). As such, an alliance formed between the lower class samurai and the wealthy peasant class, both of which wanted reform. Eventually, this reformist allied force would play a crucial part in the Meiji Restoration, making up part of the militia that would overthrow the *bakufu* (Craig, 2000, p.53). As such, the results of the Tempō crisis and the ineffective reforms initiated by the government brought about a heavily dissatisfied and distressed population who sought change, which further provided the appropriate conditions for the eventual fall of the Tokugawa Shōgunate.

2.2 External Factor: End of Isolationism

Before considering the next internal factor, it is important to understand the main external factor in consideration: the end of Japanese isolationism (or *sakoku*). Prior to 1853, Japan responded to foreign visitors with hostility; the *bakufu*, in 1825, gave instructions to drive off all foreign ships at sight (Jansen, 1995, p.9). However, in 1853, Japan saw sudden exposure to the Western world, with attempts from foreign nations to open the country and end its isolation. On the 6th of June, Commodore of the United States Navy, Matthew C. Perry, arrived in Uraga Bay with four warships. He presented the shōgun with a letter and presents from the American President, delivering the American Government's request for diplomatic and trade relations with Japan. The Shōgunate promised to give a response the following year. Similarly, in July of 1853, Russian Admiral Putyatin arrived in Nagasaki with four warships, requesting delimitation of

Japanese and Russian territories in the Northern Seas; the Shōgunate, as with America's request, deferred any definite response (Honjo, 1934, p.16). The Japanese people had developed a negative opinion of foreigners, often depicting them as having large noses, demonic eyes, and being hairy ("Matthew Perry," 1853), thus, not long after, controversy and discontent ensued, with debates on Japan's opening to foreign relations. Some desired peace, while some felt the need for war (Honjo, 1934, p.17).

Commodore Perry's revisit to Japan in January of 1854 led to the establishment of the Treaty of Kanagawa, which secured the opening of certain Japanese ports to foreign relations. Similar treaties were then signed with other nations: with Britain in August and with Russia in December (Honjo, 1934, p.17). Treaties to open additional Japanese ports for America and give permission for Americans to reside (for trade) in Edo and Osaka was established in 1858, which were followed by similar treaties with Holland, Russia, Britain and France (Honjo, 1934, p.17).

With over two centuries of isolationism officially coming to an end, anti-foreign sentiment grew, and there became a division within the country of *jōi* ("expel the barbarians") and *kaikoku* ("open country") groups (Lu, 1997, p.274). This population division, however, is sometimes opposed by scholars, who believe it was rather a division between "traditional Confucian and modern Western conceptions of the world order" (Wakabayashi, 1986, p.5); *Jōi* assumed hierarchy between countries, while *kaikoku* assumed equality (Wakabayashi, 1986, p.5). Regardless, discontent towards the Shōgunate's actions of accepting the treaties was apparent, and this was only exacerbated by the fact that the Shōgunate had done so without Imperial sanction (official permission). Violence ensued, and murders and assassinations became commonplace. With the continuous growth of criticism against the Shōgunate and opposition to

foreign intercourse, the country was rampant with discontent and disturbance (Honjo, 1934, p.18). As such, the *bakufu*, facing this rapid decline in support and sudden spike in aggressive rebellion as a result of the sudden foreign interaction, saw itself deteriorate, and this popular dissent catalyzed one of the main forces of its eventual fall, which is discussed below.

2.3 Satsuma and Chōshū

As seen in the Tempō crisis, with the failure of the Shōgunate in enacting appropriate reforms in face of crises, some *han* initiated their own reforms; this included Satsuma and Chōshū, who were also gaining support for their vision for Japan (Lu, 1997, p.297). Both Satsuma and Chōshū were instrumental in the final overthrow of the *bakufu*.

With the opening of Japan, Chōshū responded with a degree of discontent, referring to foreigners as "barbarians" and "foreign pirates" (Craig, 2000, p.87). Meanwhile, at the time, the daimyō of the Satsuma *han*, Shimazu Mochihisa, considered one of the most progressive daimyōs of the time, embraced Western culture, especially technology, believing in its ability to fortify Japan (Hillsborough, 2014). This difference in ideals led to multiple occasions of violence; the two *han*s engaged in active conflict (Ravina, 2017, p.104). Despite this, in 1866, as a result of mediation by Sakamoto Ryōma of Tosa *han*, leaders of Satsuma (Saigō Takamori and Ōkubo Toshimichi) and Chōshū (Katsura Kogorō) were brought together, and both agreed on the need for change. Additionally, they made arrangements to aid each other in the case of an attack from a third party (Gordon, 2002, p.57). This marked the official, anti-shōgunal, Satsuma-Chōshū Alliance. Additionally, with their criticism towards the government as a result of both internal and external crises, they adopted the philosophy of *sonnō jōi*: "revere the

emperor and expel the barbarians", desiring to bring change into the current systems (Lu, 1997, p.274). In the perspective of some ultranationalist historians, this *sonnō jōi* philosophy was considered a crucial motivating factor in the Meiji Restoration (Harootunian, 1970, p.xxvi).

Prior to the aforementioned alliance, due to Chōshū's vocal defiance against the regime, the Shōgunate wanted a direct sign of submission from Chōshū, however, Chōshū's leaders refused any negotiation. To demonstrate its legitimacy, the Shōgunate demanded concessions from Chōshū, however, they were insubmissive. The Shōgunate could not force compliance unless the daimyōs were mobilized, however, due to Chōshū's anti-shogunal beliefs, the Shōgunate was not capable of doing so. Traditionally, shōgunal authority also guaranteed command over daimyōs, however, this authority was evidently undermined. As such, it was demonstrated that the Shōgunate, at this point, was becoming obsolete and was in the process of deterioration (Ravina, 2017, p.106). In his journal article, George M. Wilson writes that this also sparked a sense of fear among daimyōs, who feared that any potential action from the *bakufu* against Chōshū's might result in the rendering of the current system as anachronistic. During this time, Satsuma also reconsidered their position regarding the Shōgunate. As mentioned previously, Satsuma was not opposed to Western influence, however, Chōshū's demonstration of rebellion caused them to reconsider, and eventually, this led to the formation of the previously discussed Satsuma-Chōshū Alliance (Wilson, 1983, p.416). As some of this information deals with the internal affairs and atmosphere of the nation at the time, despite Wilson's official certification for teaching Japanese history ("George M. Wilson," 2014), his writing may prove to be slightly inaccurate, due to the fact that he was not present in the country at the time. However, his article is focused specifically on the motives behind the Meiji Restoration, indicating a high

level of detail in his writing, and for this investigation of causes of the decline of the Tokugawa regime and thus the birth of the Meiji Restoration, proves to be highly valuable. Wilson explores this through the use of mostly secondary sources, however, he has also employed information from both English and Japanese sources, indicating the source's balanced account of the topic (Wilson, 1983, p.407-427). This balance is also reinforced through his article's aim of focusing on the topic through the perspectives of various groups involved in the Restoration, including the *bakufu*, the foreigners, and those who opposed the Shōgunate (Wilson, 1983, p.111).

The Shōgunate was further weakened in their following actions and the respective responses from Chōshū. As a result of Chōshū's defiance, during the summer of 1866, the Shōgunate took to "punishing" Chōshū with a large army. However, this proved catastrophic, as it instead turned into Chōshū's invasion of neighboring *han*. Chōshū only progressed, continuously invading additional domains. In August, with the death of Shōgun Iemochi, the Shōgunate called for a ceasefire. This only demonstrated the weakness of the Shōgunate and its inability to solve pressing issues; they had effectively been defeated by a single *han*. Additionally, defenders of the shogunal authority had been discredited (Ravina, 2017, p.106). Evidently, the Shōgunate had reached the nadir of its power as a result of its failure to deal with such resistance, and was on the brink of collapse.

3. Revival of Imperial Power

As a result of this crisis, Tokugawa Yoshinobu, the next Shōgun, initiated the most radical (as considered in the period) reform effort; he sought the complete reorganization of the Shōgunate, and proposed the return of political power to the Emperor- essentially the revival of

imperial power ("Bloodless Surrender," n.d.). At this point, both Chōshū and Satsuma also adopted urgent measures, deciding not to wait any longer for the dissolvement of the *bakufu* (Ravina, 2017, p.106).

Both clans intensified attempts to overthrow the Shōgunate and thus revive Imperial power, secretly acquiring the permission of the Imperial court to overthrow the regime through force. In January 3rd, 1868, allied forces of Chōshū, Satsuma, and other anti-*bakufu* movements initiated an attack on the Imperial court in Kyoto. Immediately, an Imperial court meeting proceeded, announcing the revival of Imperial rule, and therefore the stripping of power and land from the Tokugawas (Kshetry, 2008, p.109). This information was derived from a book published in 2008 by author Gopal Kshetry. Stated explicitly in the book, one of its purposes is to serve as a source of information (about the history of foreigners in Japan) for general readers, which leads to a general discussion of a number of significant events, causing the accounts themselves to lack meticulous detail (Kshetry, 2008, p.9). However, due to its quite recent publication, it possesses the benefit of hindsight, which proves useful in the discussion of the significance of foreign influence, as Kshetry is able to discuss the direct impacts of certain events.

This attack from the combined forces of Satsuma, Chōshū, and other forces marked the beginning of what was known as the Boshin War. In March of 1868, Satsuma, Chōshū, and other forces (known as the self-proclaimed Imperial Army) approached Edo, and former Tokugawa military officer, Katsu Kaishū, met with military staff of the Imperial Army, Saigō Takamori, and arranged the bloodless surrender of Edo Castle. However, this decision resulted in a number of dissatisfied former shōgunal retainers, who then formed the Shōgitai (the “League to

Demonstrate Righteousness"), and made efforts to prevent any further movement of Imperial forces, however, this attempt was quelled within ten hours ("Bloodless Surrender," n.d.). On that same day, with the Tokugawas' loss of authority, emperor Mutsuhito declared his restoration of power, officially marking the end of the Tokugawa Shōgunate (E. Meiji, speech, January 3, 1868).

4. Conclusion

The significance of internal and external factors in the decline of the Tokugawa Shōgunate has been long debated. Upon investigation, it was revealed that some historians put significance specifically on certain events, such as the Tempō Crisis, or the consequential success of reforms carried out by *han* such as Satsuma. It is evident that the internal issues that played a role in weakening the government originated significantly earlier on than the main external factor. These internal issues, such as the shift in social class and the internal crises, thus, provided the appropriate conditions for a change in regime, as by the time of the Restoration, a desire for change was prevalent among people who had been devastatingly impacted by the actions of the *bakufu* and its policies, however, they simply were not able to incite popular revolution, as demonstrated through the peasant revolts. When the main external factor, namely, the end of Japan's isolation, emerged, it exacerbated criticism for the government, which consequently heightened people's preexisting desires for reform. Additionally, it catalyzed one of the major forces behind the Meiji Restoration: the Satsuma-Chōshū alliance. As such, to a certain extent, the fall of the Tokugawa Shōgunate was brought by internal factors, which provided the appropriate conditions for change, however, it was the external factors that effectively enabled that change to occur; it was the final deciding factor that caused the collapse of the Tokugawa *bakufu*.

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EE/RPPF

For use from May/November 2018

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Candidate personal code:

Extended essay - Reflections on planning and progress form

Candidate: *This form is to be completed by the candidate during the course and completion of their EE. This document records reflections on your planning and progress, and the nature of your discussions with your supervisor. You must undertake three formal reflection sessions with your supervisor: The first formal reflection session should focus on your initial ideas and how you plan to undertake your research; the interim reflection session is once a significant amount of your research has been completed, and the final session will be in the form of a viva voce once you have completed and handed in your EE. This document acts as a record in supporting the authenticity of your work. The three reflections combined must amount to no more than 500 words.*

The completion of this form is a mandatory requirement of the EE for first assessment May 2018. It must be submitted together with the completed EE for assessment under Criterion E.

Supervisor: *You must have three reflection sessions with each candidate, one early on in the process, an interim meeting and then the final viva voce. Other check-in sessions are permitted but do not need to be recorded on this sheet. After each reflection session candidates must record their reflections and as the supervisor you must sign and date this form.*

First reflection session

Candidate comments:

I chose to do History because I was especially interested in a specific part of the syllabus: Japanese Expansion. I'd always been intrigued by Japanese culture and history, and thought I could expand on a topic we'd learned in class. I decided to focus on causes of the fall of the Tokugawa Shogunate- a topic we'd touched on, but hadn't explored in depth. In my first few meetings, I wanted some guidance regarding my focus: whether the topic was too broad, or too narrow. My supervisor suggested I focus on a fixed set of causes (such as internal or economic). By doing so, I would be able to discuss in more depth as opposed to just explaining briefly. She introduced me to a South China Morning Post article discussing my topic, which I used as a starting point, and then used academic resources such as Jstor to search for sources. Eventually, I settled on internal causes, not only because of the abundance of resources (compared to the others), but also out of interest.

Date: June 21, 2018

Supervisor initials:

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Interim reflection

Candidate comments:

At this point, I have handed in my first draft. Originally, my argument was going to be that the fall of the Shogunate was mainly caused by external factors, however, through the research and the writing process, it shifted to become more complex: both external and internal factors were significant, however, internal factors provided the appropriate conditions for external factors to incite the Meiji Restoration. When using sources, I mainly focused on books and academic journals, due to their reliability, using databases such as JSTOR. Earlier in the year, I also had the opportunity to visit a museum, so I employed some information from the trip into my essay. During meetings with my supervisor, she suggested that my structure was fine, although I could expand on source analyses, and in some parts, I could make my connection of the evidence to the main argument more explicit.

Date: June 21, 2018

Supervisor initials

Final reflection - Viva voce

Candidate comments:

While my initial research was highly beneficial in clarifying and supporting my arguments, I realized some of it was redundant. For example, specific details about the Japanese citizens' hardships, while helpful in providing context, were not as relevant in the actual essay, as the essay was mostly concerned with how exactly such hardships led to discontent towards the Shogunate. In this way, I feel that my research process was flawed- I had conducted a lot of research prior to starting the essay itself. If I were to undertake such research again, I would research basic information first and then proceed to outline my arguments with specific examples and analyses, and then conduct deeper research if needed to avoid redundant information and save time.

Date: June 21, 2018

Supervisor initial