

The cause of the industrial revolution sociology essay

[History](#), [Revolution](#)



Britain is the first country to experience the industrial revolution. And the industrial revolution is an important part of economic history, it is considered to have been one of the greatest turning points in any historical account of British development as a nation.

Taking a panoramic view of causes about industry revolution, Clapham (1910) stated that ' Even if ... the history of " the" industry revolution is a " thrice squeezed orange", there remains an astonishing amount of juice in it'. In 1700, most of British still lived in traditional lifestyles - they lived in countryside and worked at home, all types of goods were made by hand. While the next 150 years, this situation was changed completely by a wave of new ideas and inventions. Using steam-powered machines led to a massive increase in the number of factories. Then, people began flocked into the cities to work. As the demand for transport the materials and goods from factories and markets, canals and railway were built (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002). In addition, population growth and increased investment are another important cause. By 1850, British confidently called their country " the work shop of the world" (BBC, 2010). And as the industrial revolution' effects spread, it subsequently spreading throughout Europe, America, even the world.

2. Definition

Revolution is, essentially, turning things upside down or a complete change; Industrial means using machines to product more commodities. Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002

3. Analysis the Cause of Industrial Revolution:

3. 1 Capital accumulation

3. 1. 1 First of all, some evidence shows that the role of capital is very important, “ the provision of capital is generally recognized to be one of the main problems of countries undergoing the process of industrialization” (Pollard, 1964). Secondly, in eighteenth century Britain, a main source of capital of industry was re-invested profit (Hartwell, 1971), as soon as industrial investment was seen to be profitable, “ family and group savings of small producers who ploughed back their profits into industry.”(Hill, 1967). Other sources were banks and merchants (Hartwell, 1971). In 1750, London had 20 banks. By 1800, the city had 70 (Hartwell, 1971).

3. 1. 2 At its heart was s series of improvements in coal and transport (Mokyr, 1998).

Coal provided the fuel for industry and transport (Mokyr, 1998). Firstly, for centuries, people in Britain had made do with wood, it is a cheap and easy way to acquire fuel (Hooker, 1996), while, as soon as British began to industrialize their country, more and more fuel was needed. Secondly, coal could burn better and more efficiently than wood (Mokyr, 1998). Thirdly, England sits on a mass of coal (Hooker, 1996)

In terms of transport, a new canal and railway network was built. It is widely accepted that the growth of the Industrial Revolution was depended on the

ability of transport, which may transform raw materials and goods over long distances (Mokyr, 1998).

Primarily, Britain has many rivers and ports which could be propitious to carry freights (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002). Furthermore, at that time, waterway was a cheap and effective mean of hauling heavy freights, such as coal and iron (Haberman, 1948). Therefore, 1, 500 kilometers of canal had been constructed until 1825 (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002).

After Richard Trevithick built the first steam locomotive in 1804 (Haberman, 1948), several other locomotives were built during the next 20 years. By 1870 in Britain, there were 24, 000 kilometers of railway had been laid (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002).

3. 2Innovations

3. 2. 1 Productivity growth

During that time, more productive or better-organized equipment were made (Crombie, 1963), such as John Kay's "flying shuttle" which effectively doubled a weaver's production of cloth (Haberman, 1948), and Samuel Crompton's "Crompton's mule" in 1779, which one combined both the spinning jenny and the water frame and produced large amounts of fine, strong yarn (Haberman, 1948). While, combining the effects among so many inventions of different fields, Iron pudding, cotton spinning and the steam engine were the main inventions promote the economic (Hartwell, 1971). These inventions impacted on "the output of key sectors of the economy

after 1780” (Hartwell, 1971). For example, when James Watt perfected steam engine in 1776, in effect, he had created a new source of power (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002).

3. 2. 2 New sources of power.

Water power: Principally, in 1764, Richard Arkwright created a machine to produce yarn faster than before, however, it was too large to be operated by hand. He decided to employ the power of a water wheel, and his machine became known as “ the water frame” (Haberman, 1948). Afterwards, water power gradually took place of human, animal and wind power (Hartwell, 1971).

Steam power played a vital role of industry (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002). This power could be adapted to almost any machinery. Particularly it drove the power looms of the textile industries and the locomotives of the trains (Hartwell, 1971).

3. 3 Population increased

First of all, during the industrial revolution, the population increased rapidly in Britain. For instance, the population in England and Wales had grown from about 7. 7 million to 13. 2 million between 1791 and 1831 (Wrigley & Schofield, 1989). In addition, the Scottish population grew from around 2 million to 4 million between 1780s to the 1860s (Wrigley & Schofield, 1989). Secondly, it is widely accepted that increasing population may mean an increase of production. For example, Hartwell claimed that population

increase “ has undoubtedly been an important source of increasing output over history” (Hartwell, 1971). The reason was the population growth impacted on “ industrialization by increasing the demand for goods, industrialization spurred on population growth through the mechanization of agriculture” (Hartwell, 1971)

4. The Industrial Revolution Effects on the Social

4.1 The positive effect - The standard of living debate:

-The history of the change of living conditions during the industrial revolution has been very controversial, this topic that from the 1950s to the 1980s caused most heated debates among economic and social historians. On one hand, the pessimists argued that ordinary peoples' living standards lowed down; on the other hand, the optimists believed that living standards improved. However¹/₄⊖The debate about standard of living today is not in relation to whether the industrial revolution made peoples' living standard better off, but in relation to when (Nardinelli, n. d.).

-The optimists' views: Some of the evidence shows that they believed “ the living standards were rising by the 1810s or 1820s, or even earlier” (Nardinelli, n. d.). Lindert and Williamson (1983) analyzed that “ real wages grew slowly between 1781 and 1819”, on the contrary, it grew rapidly for all groups of workers after 1819, also “ for all blue-collar workers-a good stand-in for the working classes-the index number for real wages rose from 50 in 1819 to 100 in 1851” (Lindert & Williamson, 1983). That is, the real wages is increased twice between thirty years.

-The pessimists' views: By contrast, some of the evidence shows that other economists did not agree with Lindert's and Williamson's optimistic view. Firstly, In the Feinstein series which is depended on a different price index, real wages rose much more slowly than in the Lindert-Williamsons series. Secondly, the Lindert-Williamson sample may not including the worker " who have suffered sufficiently deteriorating real incomes to offset rising wage income" (Mokyr, 1999) In addition, there are much of the rise in real wages in the factory districts, in other words, this is a compensation for poor working and living conditions (Brown, 1990).

Conclusion: There is a problem about the definition of " standard of living", " Economic historians would like it to mean happiness" (Nardinelli, n. d.), however it is impossible to measure happiness or force them to equate the standard of living with monetary measures such as real wages. Another way of looking at standard of living, apart from measure increases in wages, is the examination of peoples' conditions in their everyday lives, such as how they spent their leisure time.

4. 2 Negative effect: Children as slaves

There are three reasons in relation to why factory owners employed children. Firstly, factory owners may pay less money to children than adults (Smelser, 1959). For example, A young child could only earn a few pence which would be enough to buy food (Hartwell, 1971). Furthermore, children could be controlled more easily than adults, even through violent beatings (Smelser,

1959). Another reason is child's small hand which is needed to reach among the parts of a machine (Tawney, 1938).

There are four ways show that children could have been considered as slaves in factories. Firstly, Children were not free and they were not protected by law, also the children could not control the wages which was usually disposed of their parents (Hartwell, 1971). Secondly, Children's work conditions were bad and demoralizing. For example, they were over- worked, even death (Tawney, 1938); also they were suffered much difficulties by the brutal supervision (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002); furthermore, they had little time to play, even no leisure(Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002). Thirdly, their wages were usually gain by their employment went to their parents " in return for minimum amounts of food, clothing and shelter" (Hartwell, 1971). Last, " The supply of children was determined by parents as investment decisions, decisions arrived at by balancing the gains and costs of rearing children" (Hartwell, 1971).

Children as slaves lead to a series of evil consequences on three grounds. Firstly, the employment of children was " morally offensive" (Hartwell, 1971). Both of the factory owners and plantation are wickedness (Tawney, 1938), the supervisors or overseers often treated children badly () Secondly, It is harmful to childrens' healthy and character (Tawney, 1938). Sometimes the children started work as young as four or five years old (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002). Thirdly, the factory employment of children effect family ties (Hartwell, 1971). Because of long hours working, the factory separated

family members, children had little time to get together with their parents (Hepplewhite & Campbell, 2002).

Conclusion:

Britain is the first country to experience the industrial revolution. The industrial revolution is considered to have been one of the greatest turning points in any historical account of British development as a nation. This report firstly analyse the causes why the industrial revolution happened in Britain. For capital accumulation, the money from re-invested profit, banks, merchants, which provide the physical capital to promote the industrial revolution; another cause is the innovations, which provide the technological motivation for industrial revolution, in instance, there were three important inventions: iron pudding, cotton spinning and the steam engine.

Furthermore, the increasing population also promoted the industrial revolution. Secondly, the industrial revolution brought a series of positive consequences to society, particularly the interesting debate in relation to standard of living, on the other hand, children as slaves is one of the negative effects by industrial revolution. This point is beat illustrated with the example of long hours work, bad work conditions, both of them were harmful for childrens' healthy and characters.