

Has canada become post industrial society essay sample

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Has Canada become post industrial society?

The importance of industries in economies around the world has been the subject of many studies. For centuries, major economies have relied on specific industries to boost and maintain their wealth. In the late 20th century, we've seen a shift of some major industrialized economies away from producing goods toward producing services, this is what we refer to as post-industrialism.

A post industrial society is one which has experienced structural changes to its economy: shift to services, decline of traditional industries and the rise of an information economy. "The information age has arrived" wrote Jeremy Rifkin in his 1995 book, *The End of Work* (p. 15). He also suggested that the future will bring more technologies that will annihilate the need for any workers (Rifkin, 1995). Daniel Bell (1973) describes a post industrial society as one in which majority of the workers is not involved in manual labor and knowledge workers have become the major drivers of the economy. In an industrial society, on the other hand, growth was driven by the use of technology; factories were built enabling mass production. Majority of the workers were involved in the production of tangible goods.

Industrialization and resulting urbanization transformed Canada, albeit they occurred later here than other countries, such as Britain and the United States. Many factories were established to manufacture the increased demand for goods, for instance, iron and steel factories were created to produce agricultural equipment (Francis, Smith & Jones, 2004). Many textile and shoe factories were also created to produce the growing demand for clothes and shoes. This new economy in Canada divided the society into

three classes: upper class (factory owners), middle class (managers in the factory) and lower class (laborers in the factory) (Francis et al., 2004). There is no doubt that industrialization boosted Canada's economy but at the same time, it created horrible working and living conditions for the workers.

Dr. Mark Rosenberg (1992) argues that Canada's transition from industrial to post industrial society has been happening since World War 2. He claims that between the periods of 1970 - 1989, there is a considerable decline in the percentage of the labour force employed in the manufacturing sector and a substantial growth of " those employed in community, business and personal services" (Rosenberg, 1992, p. 273). Although, Rosenberg claims that Canada has now become a post-industrial society, he argues that deindustrialization instead of new technologies played a more significant role in making the shift to a post-industrial society. Other studies suggest that Canada is particularly close to the developmental stage of a post-industrial society, but not quite there yet. Maclarkey claims that " in terms of employment provided and production levels maintained, Canada remains a modern industrial society in which basic manufacturing continues to make a major contribution to the overall economy" (as cited in Benedict, 2003).

Statistics presented by Macionis and Gerber in Socioloy (2002), that 74% of Canada's labour force is involved in the tertiary sector - a sector which involves services rather than goods. They also claim that as a high-income country, Canada now creates most of the jobs in the services sector.

It appears that Canada, in terms of employment structure and demands of population can be described as a post-industrial society. However, my view is that, it still requires a large-scale reform of the industrial relations system as

well as a long-range industrialization policy to ensure a sustainable economy that will last over a long period of time.

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