

# Democracy and industrialization



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Democracy and Industrialization were both key factors in the development of western and non-western civilizations. These two forces of change were equally significant in their impacts on society. By exploring the distinctive characteristics of these two forces, it becomes very clear just how important each of them were to our world, both yesterday and today.

Furthermore, after dissecting important information from primary and visual sources, I will explain how they illustrate this impact of change on society.

DemocracyThe enforcement of democracy has been a significant issue in the organization of many societies over hundreds of years through out history. In order to understand the profound effects of democracy, one must first understand the meaning and history behind it. “ The word comes from two Greek words: demos, meaning “ the people”, and kratein, meaning “ to rule. ” These two words are joined together to form democracy, literally meaning to rule by the people” (Barr, E. , Rankin, T.

& Baird, J. 1999, History of Democracy). The Greeks were the creators of democracy. They formed this style of government because they desired to have a system that was a direct opposite form of government than a dictatorship. Because they were the creators of democracy, it is apparent that their form of government was the closest to a true democracy than any other society that has proceeded them thus far.

“ Their civilization was broken down into small city-states (never more than 10, 000 citizens), and all the men voted on all issues of government. There were no representatives in the Greek system of government. Instead, they

ruled themselves directly; each man was a life long member of the decision making body” (Barr, E. , Rankin, T.

& Baird, J. 1999, History of Democracy). This idea, that citizens should be involved in the decision making process of their own government, carried on to the Roman Empire as well, another non-western civilization. Its concepts survived and eventually even carried on to the western societies, such as England, France, and of course, The United States of America. According to the text, World Civilizations, the American Revolution was the foundation for which democracy was truly established in the United States, because it called for an end to “ the power of sovereign central government over the colonies” (Sherman, D.

& others, 2006, p. 112). By exploring two relevant visual sources in the World Civilizations text, it is more clearly understood how and when the decolonizations took place. Map 19-1 of the text illustrates the extent of European control during the late 18th century, prior to the wars of independence (Sherman, D. & others, 2006, p.

10). In contrast, map 19-2 shows the development of the new nation states that were established at the beginning of the 19th century (Sherman, D. & others, 2006, p. 111).

By comparing the difference between these two maps, it is clear to see how rapidly the European Colonial systems diminished during the passing of such a short period of time. After the break away from the rule of Great Britain, “ the new central government created in America by the Articles of Confederation was, in a negative sense at least, a democratic government”

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(Sherman, D. & others, 2006, p. 113). Our American form of democracy had several problems during its establishment, such as the fact that slaves and women were given no rights.

However, this was also true during the times of the great Greek democracy. The exceptional difference within the American form of democracy, however, is that it gave a way for future changes to be made by means of the Constitution. Unlike the Greek system, which continued its suppression of women and minorities, the American form of democracy has adapted to changes made through out the years, in order to truly stand by the claim that all men are created equal. In today's great American democracy, it no longer matters what racial or religious background a person is from, nor the color of their skin, nor their gender. Anyone willing and able may take part in our governmental system, whether it is by casting a ballot during a state-wide election, or even running for a political position, such as the Presidency of the United States.

Industrialization According to the Encyclopedia Britannica, Industrialization is defined as, “ the process of converting to a socioeconomic order in which industry is dominant” (www. britannica. com). The changes that took place in England during the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and 19th centuries provided a prototype for the early American Industrialization later on.

The onset of the Industrial Revolution was a major turning point in humankind's history, because almost every aspect of daily life and human society was eventually influenced in some way. According to the text, the exact reasoning behind why Industrialization occurred in England is a topic

that is still up for debate. However, the background of England at the time does offer some insight as to why an Industrial Revolution was inevitable. These reasons include England's transformation from a feudal society into a commercial one, as well as its "unique enthusiasm for science and engineering" (Sherman, D. & others, 2006, p.

95). An outstanding visual source is depicted in illustration 18-2 of our text, in which there is a scene painted of several welders pounding away at metal objects, while bridges are being built behind them and the streets are busy with middle class workers (Sherman, D. & others, 2006, p. 92).

This picture is an excellent depiction of the everyday lives of the working class citizens during those times. It's as if the Industrialization was brought back to life through this painting, so that we could get a glimpse into the past. Without this class of citizens, industrialization of England, or any other country, would not have been possible. Drawing from the sources from chapter seventeen of the text, *World Civilizations*, there were many social developments that were related to industrialization. Apparently, "In the wake of industrialization came great social changes" (Sherman, D.

& others, 2006, p. 81). Industrialization affected the middle and working classes the most.

Both classes grew significantly in numbers and they both climbed up on the social ladder. In addition, urban areas grew, which was where these two classes worked and lived. The middle class was able to enjoy a "rising standard of living, increased prestige, and growing political influence" (Sherman, D. & others, 2006, pp. 81-82).

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The working class, on the other hand, was affected in many negative ways by the industrialization. “ Clearly it was this class that bore the burdens of urban social problems: overcrowded slums, poor sanitation, insufficient social services, and a host of related problems (Sherman, D. others, 2006, pp. 82). In addition, the other classes, such as the peasants, the artisans, and the aristocracy, begin to diminish because those classes were associated with the older ways of production, such as the agricultural economy.

In addition to manpower, there needed to be tools and technological advances made in order for industrialization to take place in Europe as well as America. The steam engine, which was developed by James Watt, was probably the single most important technological advance that helped industrialization to thrive. After James Watt improved the design of the steam engine, this type of engine quickly was applied to other industries—to power railroad locomotives, ships, and later the first automobiles. ” (Backer, P. , date unknown, The Cause of the Industrial Revolution). So, although the causes of industrialization may be debatable, it is certain that the effects of it are still profoundly affecting societies all around the world, even till this day.

In conclusion, democracy and industrialization were both key factors in the development of western and non-western civilizations. These two forces of change were equally significant in their impacts on society. By exploring the distinctive characteristics of these two forces, it has been made very clear just how important each of them were to our world, both yesterday and today. Furthermore, after dissecting important information from primary and visual sources, I have illustrated this impact of change on society.

Both concepts were important to our world's past, and both will continue to play a significant role in our world's future societies. References Barr, E. , Rankin, T. Baird, J.

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