

Industrialization in the United States from the Civil War to World War One

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Introduction

American industrialization emerged as one of the most prominent factors, playing its role in the upbringing of the economic, political, and social aspects of development in America. Ranging between the timeline of the Civil War to World War I, industrialization enabled American society to move away from rural areas towards urban areas, adopting the city lifestyle and taking up professions in different industrial sectors. (Corbett et al., 2014) The principles of Social Darwinism held a sign during this time because competition started to rise quite drastically among the populous. A noticeable shift occurred for people, shifting further away from farming professions and towards taking up job roles in industries and factories to earn big. Even though this impact held an optimistic approach towards reforming the social, economic and political aspects of society, however, there were negative impacts as well.

Discussion

The effects of industrialization on America from an economic point of view were of excellent benefit to the leading industrialists in the market. These industrialists accumulated wealth during the industrialization phase, while other industrialists that started out employed the practice of imposing ruthless methods to promote their business and to acquire wealth in a short span of time through these practices. Although among these businessmen who were blindly chasing after wealth, with any means at their disposal, Andrew Carnegie held an opposing opinion and believed in returning the wealth to the community. During the industrialist phase, he followed the practice of spending as much money as he could on the community.

From a positive perspective, in the industrial phase, there were more job opportunities than ever in America. This allowed people to move from rural homes and settle down in big cities while getting employment options in industries and factories. The economy progressed rapidly, and this assisted in other aspects of political and social structures to grow along with the country's economy. Although with these positive impacts, society grew and flourished, industrialization also came bundled with its negative influences. Among the negative impacts that started surfacing, the first one included the long work hours that people had to clock in in order to earn a living for themselves. Secondly, women particularly had to put in more work hours to only get a little payout out of their jobs. This held a bad influence towards people's social life patterns, and in order to make a substantial living for

themselves, all members of a family needed to be employed, with the inclusion of child labour.

Due to extensive work hours and child labour, numerous protests soon after started breaking out in different cities, demanding a fair system to be implemented. A system that would ensure the elimination of child labour, a decent wage salary system, and revise the work hours employees needed to work. Illinois State took this matter to notice and imposed a law throughout the state which included a regular inspection of different workplaces. Under the new law, no child under the age of fourteen is allowed to work, working environments will be made healthy, and employees will only have to work a maximum of 8 hours a day. Furthermore, industrialization had a significant impact on people by reforming them according to the new prevailing conditions needed in order to survive.

As discussed earlier, the rise of industrialization brought different impacts, among which one of the most prominent ones was for the owners of factories and industries. They used this opportunity to amass wealth for themselves by any means at their disposal. However, at a deeper analysis of the other social classes, the impact varied accordingly. For instance, the middle class, in comparison to the wealthy owners, were the ones who prospered by living a lavish life, if not one of wealth. This middle class consisted of small-time industry owners, managers in a factory, and those who held significant posts. These families, belonging to the middle class, made their place in the progressing American economy. However, the underprivileged class was the one most affected by industrialization. Their dreams of living it big in cities soon shattered and crumbled underneath the extensive work hours that spanned well over 60 hours a week. The recorded wages that were given out to these workers was 20 cents for an hour without any benefits included in this.

However, the economy did gain a substantial boost during the industrial age, but a gradual decline soon took place as more and more fled from rural areas to urban areas. These people, with hopes of changing their lives for the better and gaining a better competitive job in the city, started to settle close to industrialized areas. The industry was soon overflowed with more workforce than job openings to substitute for it. This eventually gave birth to the problem of massive unemployment. This started a trend of slums within cities, where these unemployed people started to gather together in hopes of becoming refugees and attempting to survive. The growing unemployment also contributed to the decline in the economy, which was recorded at its peak in the years 1873, 1884, 1893, and 1907.

The impacts of industrialization and the Civil War had an effect on the farmers as well. There were a considerable number of advancements that assisted the farmers in increasing their productivity quite drastically, which can be interpreted as a good sign. However, the addition of intermediaries turned the tables on the producers. These middlemen, being empowered, acted as intermediary parties between the producers and consumers and took away a major portion of the sale for themselves. These middlemen included those who assisted the farmers in moving their goods, for instance, the owners of railways or people who offered storage places or gins. However, these farmers were able to gain an approach towards farfetched areas to supply their goods and to serve an even greater portion of the consumer base in America. Not only was this helpful, but their knowledge and expertise also

grew with time as new advancements brought about changes and reduced the effort it previously took to plant, nourish and care for the crops on their land.

Conclusion

On a conclusive note, it can be stated that industrialization in the United States had a significant role in remodelling the lives of people. (Chandler, 1977) Reforming different elements at different levels of society's social, economic, and political aspects. Industrialization came with positive and negative attributes for people. Industrialization in America brought changes to the market as well. New businesses started to open up, and a platform was presented for the inventors to exercise and display their craft fully. However, there was also a major inequality between the social classes, as the economy started tipping more in favour of the rich, aiding them in collecting more finances and expanding their grasp over the middle and lower classes. Unemployment grew steadily as well since the employees soon started to outgrow the market's expected job opportunities, leading towards a noticeable decline in the economy as well. The impacts of industrialization and the Civil War had their toll on the farmers, too, since intermediaries started to take away most of the profits for the services they provided. Industrialization from the perspective of social, economic and political aspects had helped them move over and adopt the city lifestyle while redefining their values and practices from a social and cultural perspective and pursuing their life goals.

References

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