

SOCIAL STRUCTURE IN EUROPE

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Chapter 1: Ancient Greece and Rome

Overview Classical Greece and Rome both emphasized the importance of the landed aristocracy, in a pattern not totally dissimilar to that of classical China though with less emphasis on the importance of bureaucratic position and service. As in China as well, the social structure allowed some possibilities for mobility – there was no effort to implement even a flexible caste structure – though there was no equivalent to China’s formal upper-class education and examination system. Merchants ranked somewhat higher on the social prestige scale than in China, though there was considerable reliance on foreigners. On the other hand the Mediterranean was marked by much more extensive slavery than was the case in the other two classical societies.

Aristocracy The term aristocracy comes from a Greek word meaning “rule of the best”, and many classical political philosophers, including Aristotle, urged the importance of having a superior class of people with the wisdom and resources to rule well. Many Greek city states, and also republican Rome with its Senate, emphasized governance by a largely hereditary aristocracy (though in the later republic some wealthy nonaristocrats also were selected for the Senate). However, the basic position of the aristocracy in the Mediterranean societies rested on extensive agricultural estates. Many Greek city states, and then republican Rome, experienced a period of intense struggle between the aristocracy and a substantial free peasantry, as the former expanded their estates often with a focus on more commercial agricultural products such as grapes and olives that required substantial investment. In both cases the aristocracy essentially won out, reducing the range of independent farming. During the Roman Empire the role of the aristocracy persisted, even as the powers of the Senate were steadily reduced; elements of the aristocracy increasingly indulged in elaborate consumer pleasures, at the expense of some of the moral qualities that the class had previously emphasized. Here was one of a number of historical cases where a privileged aristocracy rose on the basis of military leadership as well as land ownership, evolving toward greater emphasis on political role and then distinctive lifestyle.

Patricians and plebeians in Rome In Rome (both republic and empire), the hereditary aristocracy were called patricians. Many patricians had extensive clientage relationships with ordinary people (plebeians), who provided a number of services in return for support: this mutual relationship was one of the unifying features in Roman society. Many plebeian families managed to acquire considerable wealth, often through trade, while some patricians fell into poverty. However, the hereditary distinction between the two groups long persisted, at one point even involving prohibitions on intermarriage. Only by the time of the later republic did the difference between the two groups (at the upper end of the wealth scale) decline somewhat.

Slavery The prominence of slavery in Greece and Rome was a particularly distinctive feature of the social structure. Many slaves were seized as prisoners of war (particularly during Rome’s expansion, when many Greeks among others were taken) – including many women and children. (In the Greek city state of Sparta, conquered locals were held as *helots*, who were at least near-slaves and constituted the majority of the agricultural labor force.) The conquests of the later Roman republic and empire brought many slaves from northern Europe and North Africa. The status was hereditary, and Roman law devoted great attention to specifying the status of slaves as property and the lack of significant legal rights (plus the authority of owners to inflict punishments). Slaves were bought and sold in markets in Rome and elsewhere. More slaves worked in agriculture than in any other sectors, particularly as the aristocratic

estates expanded. Slaves who were violent or disobedient or were otherwise regarded as dangerous were sent to work in the mines, where conditions were exceptionally bleak. Athenian silver mining, for example, was based on slave labor. However, slaves might provide a variety of other functions. Educated slaves, including many Greeks, often served as tutors. Others ran shops or performed additional forms of service. A few slaves were able to advance their education, sometimes with encouragement by their owners: Epictetus, for example, born a slave in Greece around 50 CE, became a prominent Stoic philosopher. The variety of slave occupations (as well as the variety of ethnic groups serving as slaves) complicates any generalizations. In at least a few cases, impoverished Romans sought to sell their children as slaves, believing that they would gain more assured support in that condition. Overall, by the time of the early Roman empire, up to a third of the population was held as slaves, though percentages are estimates at best. Though a few slave revolts marked Roman history, they were in fact rare. Reliance on slaves helps explain the aggressive foreign policy of many Greek city states and also Rome, eager to seize additional prisoners and reliant on this labor force to expand production. By the same token, use of slaves may help explain the relative lack of technological innovation in manufacturing and agriculture, compared for example to classical China.

Freed slaves For a variety of reasons, including gratitude for service, a number of owners freed slaves (sometimes at death). Further, thanks to the variety of occupations available for some slaves, it was also not uncommon to purchase freedom. The taint of former slavery persisted, however, at least for several generations, though over time a few descendants of slaves managed considerable economic and social success.

Legacies Classical Mediterranean social structure largely persisted in the Byzantine Empire, with distinctions between the “privileged” (*honestiores*) and the humble, along with considerable slavery, though (as in Rome) there was a significant intermediate business class as well. A variety of family relationships and intermarriage helped sustain the privileges of the upper class, often including some links to the imperial family. In the western Mediterranean, however, the collapse of the Roman empire largely eliminated the characteristic social structure. Outright slavery declined (though it persisted more strongly in medieval Western Europe than is sometimes realized), and the aristocracy was reconstituted. Here, the classical heritage rested more strongly in the philosophical support for aristocracy as the rule of the best, and in the legal traditions involved with slavery, some of which would be revived later on with the rise of Atlantic slavery.

Study questions

1. What were the most distinctive features of classical Mediterranean social structure?
2. What forms of social mobility were available for a few?
3. What were the functions and impacts of slavery?

Further reading

Moses Finley, *Ancient Slavery and Modern Ideology* (expanded ed., B.D. Shaw ed., Markus Wiener, 1988)

David Small, *Ancient Greece: social structure and evolution* (Cambridge University Press, 2019)

Henry Boren, *Roman Society* (Cengage Learning, 1991)

Chapter 2: Western Europe in Feudalism and Beyond

Impact of Christianity The Christianization of Western Europe was one of the central developments in the region from the later Roman Empire onward. With few exceptions, it did not have a major impact on social structure. The belief in the spiritual equality of all was not translated into social action, though it may have contributed to periodic popular protest against inequality: for example, in the social unrest of the later 14th century, spurred by the impact of bubonic plague, some peasants protested against the privileges of aristocrats with the argument that in God’s original creation there were no social superiors. Church officials were regarded as a distinct social group (like the aristocracy), but in fact they often mirrored the larger social structure: many top leaders in the Church’s own hierarchy were drawn from the aristocracy (a favorite recourse for younger sons who could not inherit the family estate), though in

principle religious orders of monks and nuns established internal equality around vows of poverty. Christianity may have had its biggest effect in reducing levels of slavery (passed on from the Roman Empire, though also a tradition in some Germanic tribes). Slave populations undoubtedly declined (replaced by serfdom), though Christian merchants (as in Venice) became active in trading slaves (including Europeans) to other societies – a foretaste of the heavy involvement of Europeans in the Atlantic slave trade from the 16th century onward. To be sure, considerable slavery persisted within Europe, particularly through the use of nonChristians seized in border wars in east-central Europe; some monasteries even utilized slaves. Still, slavery became a less prominent feature of the overall social structure than was true in the Middle East or the Byzantine Empire.

Aristocracy and feudalism Landed aristocrats constituted the top tier of the social hierarchy. They formed initially, after the fall of the Roman empire, on the basis of military prowess, but this led – either directly or through royal grants – to control over large estates. Military capacity continued to be crucial, which meant an emphasis on prowess but also the resources to afford horse and some kind of armor, in a period when cavalry constituted a key component of military action. Aristocratic position became hereditary, often with transmission exclusively to eldest son. The class was further bound together with the hierarchical ties associated with feudalism: in return for protection, lesser lords, or vassals, pledged loyalty and military service to a greater lord (who might in turn be vassal to another superior; the crisscrossing of feudal ties could be quite complex). Later in the postclassical period, by the 11th and 12th centuries, monarchs became somewhat more important in countries like France and England, but feudal linkages and aristocratic power persisted, often including maintenance of independent military force. Size of the aristocracy is difficult to calculate; it was larger in regions with frequent military action—like Spain during the Christian “reconquest”, where it could range up to 10% of the total population. In more settled areas, like France and England, the class constituted about 1-2% of the total. Despite the importance of heredity, entry to the aristocracy was not entirely closed to newcomers, including men who distinguished themselves in battle and gained knighthood on that basis.

Peasants and the manorial system Throughout most of Western Europe, rural peasants formed the bulk of the population – up to 90% -- and most of these, in turn, were serfs. Some free peasants operated their own land, and of course some slavery persisted. However, in the chaotic conditions of postclassical Europe, serfdom provided the bulk of rural labor, a system in between slave and free. (Serfdom formed part of the manorial system, which coexisted with feudalism but was in fact separate, rooted more in economic hierarchy in contrast to the political/military hierarchy within feudalism.) Under manorialism, serfs were obligated to pay rent (either in kind or in money) for use of their land, and also were required to do labor service on land the manorial lord controlled outright. On the other hand, in principle serfs could not be evicted so long as they fulfilled their obligations; the land they worked directly essentially belonged both to them and to their noble landlord. In principle serfs were not free to leave the estate, though tradition held that if they escaped (usually to a city) and maintained freedom for a year and a day, their obligations ended.

Urban population As in many agricultural societies, urban dwellers fit uneasily into the social hierarchy. Even the wealthy were socially inferior to the aristocracy, and had tax obligations to the government from which aristocrats, as the legally privileged order, were usually exempt. However, European cities often gained considerable independence from aristocratic control, and some merchants acquired great wealth. Within cities, the wealthier merchants clearly sat atop the hierarchy; some were organized into powerful merchant guilds. Right below them were skilled artisans, who had their own guilds, with considerable economic and political authority within the city. (As in many urban settings, artisans had their own internal hierarchy: young apprentices at the bottom; then trained journeymen; on top artisan masters, who actually owned the shops though working alongside their journeymen and apprentices. The result was a mobility ladder within each craft.) Though many urban positions were largely inherited (artisan masters often passed their operation onto their sons, after the latter were appropriately trained), opportunities for mobility did exist, even for rural newcomers, and there were some rags to riches stories. On the other hand cities also included a number of propertyless workers, dependent on occasional wage labor and including beggars and prostitutes; some of these migrated seasonally between city and countryside.

Change over time From the 12th century onward, the European social system began to gain complexity. Cities grew, making the urban component more important in society overall. Opportunities for agricultural

sales correspondingly increased, and the opportunity to earn money, along with other factors, loosened the manorial system in some regions – often in favor of paying some rent rather than maintaining a full set of manorial obligations. (Regional differences also opened, between areas like England, eastern Germany, south Spain and Italy dominated by large estates and tenancy or wage labor, and areas like France where peasants gained greater independence.) Gradually expanding central governments created small bureaucracies, recruited mainly from the urban business classes; some of these, in turn, might be ennobled, creating a “nobility of the robe” alongside the older “nobility of the sword” – with concomitant jockeying for prestige and power within the aristocracy. In response to stronger monarchies, aristocrats in many regions insisted on the formation of parliaments, to provide some check on royal power (particularly, taxation power). These feudal parliaments, which spread widely in Europe, both reflected and long confirmed the hierarchical social structure. They were normally based on separate and equal representation for three “estates” – clergy, aristocracy, and a third estate effectively dominated by wealthier urban business groups. (In some parts of central Europe, a fourth estate provided some representation to wealthier peasants.) Finally, aristocrats themselves in many regions took on a more elaborate lifestyle, often associated with royal courts. More generally, the basic social structure – a hereditary but not entirely closed aristocracy at top; a somewhat inferior but separate urban hierarchy; the peasant majority including some outright serfs; a lowest group of propertyless workers, both urban and rural – would persist into the later 18th century, when it would be more fully challenged by more dramatic economic changes and more revolutionary social ideas.

Study questions

1. What were the differences between feudal and manorial hierarchies?
2. How did urban populations fit into the overall social structure?
3. How did early parliaments both reflect and confirm the class structure?

Further reading

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Jean-Pierre Poly and Eric Bounazel, *The Feudal Transformation, 900-1200* (Holmes and Meier, 1991)

Chapter 3: The Modern Framework: Ideas and Economies

Overview Economic, ideological and political changes in various parts of the world began to shift social structure away from many of the fundamental features that had defined agricultural societies, from the early modern period on to the 20th century. Shifts occurred at different specific times, depending on region, and there were many holdovers from the more traditional patterns. Furthermore, substantial inequality persisted almost everywhere, even when the component social groups had changed – only occasionally did major war or revolution cut into the position of a wealthy upper class. However, modern or industrial social structure differed in many ways from its agricultural predecessor, and social mobility on the whole increased as well.

Early modern trade Most of the world was still defined by some version of agricultural social structure by the later 18th century, but there had been some important shifts. The expansion of commerce and manufacturing in places like China and Western Europe, plus the increasing production of foods and raw materials for export in other centers, adjusted the standard social order. The importance of the business sector grew, without yet displacing the landed aristocracy or (in China) the Confucian bureaucracy. Urban social groups, though still a minority, began to expand. More and more rural producers began to participate in market sales, which would alter the characteristics of the peasantry. In several places, including Western Europe, the expansion of domestic manufacturing added another new element to rural life. Again in Western Europe, several social groups began participating in new forms of consumerism, for example buying more fashionable clothing – leading to conservative complaints that it was becoming more difficult to identify a person’s social place by what they wore. On the other hand, export production also increased pressure on coerced labor. Slave systems expanded in the Americas, based on the new Atlantic trade from Africa. In parts of Latin America but also in Russia and Poland, serf labor became

more intense on large agricultural estates. This was a period of considerable but varied shifts in social and economic structure.

The Americas European conquests and settlements in the Americas overturned indigenous social structures in many ways, largely eliminating for example the Aztec and Inca aristocracies. New racial hierarchies were introduced, not only through imported African slaves and a concomitant development of racism. In Latin America, society increasingly divided between Europeans and natives of European origin (creoles); a majority population of mestizos, or people of mixed blood; and indigenous and slave groups. At the same time, no formal aristocracy developed – an explicit policy on the part of Spain and Portugal. A landowner class emerged in Latin America, among Dutch settlers in New York, and in the southern colonies of British North America; but it was not officially titled or privileged in law over other colonists of European origin. In British North America, furthermore, White rural populations featured independent farmers and their workers instead of a more traditional peasantry.

New ideologies The 18th-century Enlightenment in Western Europe (and to some extent the Americas) produced new and increasingly intense social ideas. Privileged aristocrats were criticized, contrasted with the hard-working, productive majority. Equality under the law became an increasingly popular rallying cry. In fact, in Western Europe, many aristocrats tried to close ranks in the 18th century, seeking to protect position against upstart middle-class elements, and this spurred growing demands for more open access to government posts. New ideas also created the beginnings of the abolitionist movement, aimed at eradicating the slave trade and slavery – another manifestation of a growing belief in a common humanity as opposed to divisions in status and law. Ideas of this sort blossomed quickly in the French revolution of 1789, which immediately eliminated the old Three-Estate system in parliament in favor of a single chamber and removed aristocratic titles and legal privileges. Government careers were now, in principle, “open to talent” rather than noble birth. New ideas and pressure also led to the British decision, in 1807, to end the Atlantic slave trade and to the abolition of slavery in a number of northern states in the new United States and also in several newly-independent Latin American countries such as Mexico.

Industrialization The industrial revolution began in Britain in the later 18th century, and fairly quickly spread to other parts of Western Europe and to the United States. Factory cities and some other urban centers began to grow very rapidly. The older social order did not immediately disappear: the industrial impact on social structure was a matter of decades, not years. But there was no question about the direction of change. By 1850 in Britain, for example, half the population was living in cities, for the first time in human history, and a similar transformation reached the United States and Germany around the end of the century.

The old social classes: aristocracies All of the old social groups declined, at least as a percentage of the population and in most cases in prestige and power as well. Aristocracies had a hard time with the combination of a rising big business class and legal equality. Furthermore, governments increasingly adopted civil service reforms that recruited on the basis of an examination system, weakening aristocratic privilege from another direction. Individual aristocrats might fare well, even becoming industrialists in their own right. As Japan began to industrialize in the later 19th century, a new upper class emerged that combined some former samurai (feudalism had been abolished) and new business types. But the aristocratic class as a whole suffered, and would be further undercut by 20th-century revolutions in Russia and China.

Other traditional groups A strong peasantry might persist, adjusting to greater involvement with the market and even new educational requirements, but its relative position inevitably declined and ultimately other “peasant” characteristics yielded as well. Most industrial societies still gave the rural sector disproportionate political voice, and some nostalgic prestige, but there was no question that considerable decline occurred, creating clear resentments. Artisans suffered as well: skills remained important but old guild institutions were abolished everywhere, and distinctions from the rest of the working class blurred. Finally, during the later 19th and early 20th century virtually all societies (pressed by the West) decided to abolish formal slavery and serfdom, seen as incompatible with the kind of mobility required for industrialization. Considerable slavery continued to exist on the margins, including sex slavery, but its importance as well as its legality was clearly reduced.

New elements The principal components of industrial social structure – all primarily urban – were now a growing middle class and the even larger urban working classes. “Middle class” could include some older merchant and professional groups and shopkeepers, but it was increasingly dominated by factory owners and new professions such as engineering. Older professions, like medicine and law, had to retool through more demanding education and licensing. From the later 19th century onward, a white collar or lower-middle-class group became increasingly important, filling the ranks of sales clerks, bank tellers, secretaries and so on – often including a substantial female component. Many white collar workers eagerly sought to maintain distinctions from the urban working class. By the later 20th century, in the most advanced industrial societies, urban working classes stabilized or declined, now limited by increasing automation. Levels of education became increasingly important in shaping position in the social hierarchy. “Industrial” social structure was a shifting phenomenon, but it clearly differed massively from its agricultural predecessor.

Conclusion The fundamental social changes of the past two-three centuries provide some guidelines for examining the social evolution of specific regions during this period of major adjustment. Specifics, however, varied greatly, as did timing. Communist revolutions for example produced different versions of modern social structure from those of the capitalist West – though the differences should not be exaggerated. Older social categories did not roll over and die. Rural sectors even today, as in India and parts of Africa, maintain many older patterns. Basic legal changes were often less transformational than intended: the abolition of slavery was conditioned by continued racial prejudice; the 1947 ending of the caste system in India hardly destroyed the significance of caste. Many older groups fought social change with considerable success: the East German aristocracy, for example, successfully maintained itself until the collapse of Nazism. Small shopkeepers sometimes used political clout to hang on despite new competition. A preliminary roadmap of the basic contours of industrial society cannot replace more specific treatments of modern social change.

Study questions

1. What were the main new challenges to aristocracy?
2. What were the bases of the principal industrial social classes?
3. Were new ideas or new economic forms most important in undermining traditional social structures?

Further reading

Peter N. Stearns, *The Industrial Revolution in World History* (4th ed., Routledge, 2021)

Seymour Drescher, *A History of Slavery and Antislavery* (Cambridge University Press, 2009)

Juergen Kocka, *White Collar Workers in America: and social-political history in international perspective* (Sage, 1980)

Chapter 4: Western Europe and The United States: from the late 18th century onward

Overview Social structure in both Western Europe and the United States was deeply affected, from the late 18th century onward, by the twin forces of new political ideas and policies and fairly fairly rapid industrialization and urbanization. Social patterns were, admittedly, not identical. The United States did not have an aristocracy to contend with, but it was strongly marked by slavery and its legacy, plus rapid immigration. As a result race and ethnicity long factored into American social structure, and thinking about social structure, than social class did; social class and class consciousness were much more explicit factors in Europe. The United States also developed an intense belief in the possibility of social mobility, from the early 19th century onward. Americans were far more likely to believe in the ease of social mobility than Europeans were, even though the actual rates, in two industrial societies, were very similar. Western Europe itself exhibited important variety. Most notably, some regions, like France and Western Germany, featured peasant landholding while others, like England, eastern Germany, southern Italy and Spain, highlighted large estates and agricultural laborers. Still, overall trends were widely shared, and on the whole social structures in Western society grew more similar during the 20th century.

Upper classes Europe's landed aristocracy declined gradually but inexorably. The French Revolution effectively ended legal privileges in several areas, though some use of aristocratic titles persisted for several decades. The class lost any particularly distinctive political role. Change was more gradual in Britain and Germany, where large estates continued to pump out agricultural goods and the class continued to use political influence. However, higher taxes on estates reduced aristocratic economic position in Britain in the 20th century; honorific titles persisted, but increasingly rewarded various kinds of achievement, not birth. Defeat in World War II and communist takeover of eastern Germany ended the aristocracy in central Europe. The big news was the rise of a new upper middle class, based on business success in industry, railroads and banking and wielding disproportionate, if informal, political power. Business fortunes in the United States created a number of durable dynasties, particularly in the so-called Gilded Age of the later 19th century. After World War II the upper middle class itself was partially transformed; a new generation of skilled corporate managers, usually highly educated, gained growing importance. New industries, like information technology, catapulted a host of new men into great wealth and political influence. Economic inequality actually increased at the top of the wealth scale, particularly in the United States, but the new upper class was never a closed group.

Rural classes Industrialization and urbanization steadily reduced the numbers and importance of rural groups, often to their considerable dismay. The United States long highlighted the role of landowning farmers, supplemented by agricultural laborers. After the end of slavery in the South, many African Americans continued to struggle as sharecroppers, though there was some independent land ownership. In parts of Western Europe peasant producers held on into the 20th century, though adapting by acquiring at least a primary education and producing more for market sales. In several regions, new peasant cooperatives facilitated peasant market agriculture. However, increasing involvement with market agriculture, growing interest in higher living standards, and acquisition of more expensive farm equipment gradually reduced any distinctively peasant qualities. Everywhere also, though most obviously in the United States, large agricultural businesses, amassing quantities of land and utilizing massive equipment and cheap, often immigrant labor, mounted growing competition with family farms. Rural social classes did retain disproportionate political clout, leading at various points to various kinds of government support and efforts to maintain agricultural prices.

Urban middle classes Western society already had a solid middle class before industrialization, based on merchant activity and the older professions such as law and medicine. During the 19th century this core was altered by the addition of various new kinds of businessmen and professionals (who in contrast to the business group depended on more advanced education). By the later 19th century a growing component of the middle classes was comprised of middle managers in corporate and government bureaucracies; the older middle-class ideal of independent entrepreneurship became increasingly complicated. The 19th-century middle class also developed something of a class ethic, based around ideals of hard work, education, mobility, and family cohesion. This was an ethic lovingly maintained in contrast both to older aristocratic ideals and the interests of the urban working classes, and it would survive into the 20th century.

Urban working classes The most obvious news was sheer growth. From the early 19th century into the 20th, this was the fastest growing social group in the Western world, based on the rise of industry and the extraordinary expansion of cities. The class was fed by in-migration from the countryside and often foreign immigration as well. This latter was particularly true in the United States, but even in Europe immigration from Ireland and southern and eastern Europe played a role in forming the new working class. The bulk of the factory labor force was semi-skilled, relying on skills obtained on the job. However, a highly skilled and even artisanal segment remained, for example in industries like construction that were not fully mechanized. Though guilds were outlawed everywhere in the West, artisans and skilled workers were the first to develop new kinds of trade unions, capitalizing on their skills and organizational traditions. Relationships with the newer working class groups, and the kinds of unions these ultimately developed, were long somewhat complicated, though something of a shared class consciousness did emerge particularly in Europe.

Lower middle classes A small, traditional lower middle class predated industrialization, including literate clerks who, though not paid well, were proud of their distinction from manual laborers, and also the ranks of small shopkeepers. However the size and nature of the lower middle classes changed greatly by the

later 19th century with the rise of corporate and government bureaucracies and the establishment of new institutions like department stores dependent on an army of salespeople. Divisions between older and new lower middle class groups were often marked, with shopkeepers harboring special resentments against big business competition that sometimes included new forms of anti-Semitism. The lower middle classes generally maintained pride in their distinction from the working classes. They shared patterns of dress and many mobility ideals with their wealthier middle-class counterparts. Employers also emphasized their distinctiveness, providing superior pension programs for example. Their consumption habits differed from those of the working class as well, and their birth rates and family values overlapped with those of the middle class. Many in the lower middle class, including large numbers of employed women, were subject to considerable emotional manipulation, urged for example to control their responses in order to curry favor with customers.

Later 20th century and beyond Growing prosperity in much of Western society after World War II promoted further social changes, and new welfare programs provided new levels of support for the lower classes, reducing class tensions. Many observers noted increasing convergence between European and American social patterns, though the American welfare network was far less robust than its European counterpart. Working-class class consciousness softened amid a higher standard of living, though (particularly in Europe) a sense of the distinction from the middle classes persisted. The size of the working class stabilized and then fell, thanks above all to growing automation. Many lower-skilled jobs were increasingly taken over by immigrants, on both sides of the Atlantic. Ethnic and racial divisions began to supersede more conventional class divisions. More and more jobs depended on considerable education, and university enrollments soared, feeding into an expanded professional middle class. Older industrial regions were increasingly bypassed in favor of new high-technology corridors, as in the coastal United States or southeastern Britain, creating a new set of tensions including, by the 21st century, new forms of populism.

Study questions

1. What were the key transformations in rural society as the West industrialized?
2. What were some of the major characteristics of the newer middle classes?
3. How did older and newer segments of the working classes interact?
4. What were the main differences and similarities between American and West European social structures in the 19th and 20th centuries?

Further reading

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