



ECAY5004: Work, Welfare and Poverty

Theme 4: Changes in Working Practice (Part Three) The Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions

Learning Recap

What did we cover in the previous session?



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A Brief History of Work

The Agricultural and Industrial Revolutions

- We may all be familiar with the term Industrial Revolution but that major change in working practice would not have been possible without the Agricultural Revolution.

What do you know of the Agricultural revolution?



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The Agricultural Revolution

- The agricultural revolution is the name that we give to the growth in agricultural inventions and efficient practices that began to occur in the 18th century
- Prior to this much of the work had been done by hand, seed was broadcast by hand or planted by hand and crops were harvested by hand

(Based on Thompson, 1976)



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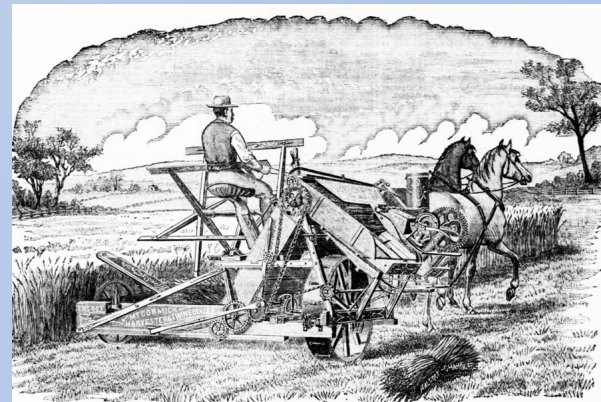
The Agricultural Revolution

- These labour intensive and slow methods were replaced with inventions such as;

The seed drill



The horse drawn harvester



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The Agricultural Revolution

- One person could now do the work that many had done previously many agricultural labourers did not have work
- The problem was made worse with the development of enclosure
- This was the process by which large landowners took over and 'enclosed' the open field systems and common land that had existed previously
- Thus there were large numbers of people who were no longer needed to farm the land
- This large unemployed workforce either need to fall back onto the Poor Law or try to find work elsewhere

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The Lead up to the Industrial Revolution

- This large, unemployed workforce encouraged other inventors and entrepreneurs to develop new ways of working
- Even before the Industrial Revolution of the late 18th and the 19th century, entrepreneurs were taking advantage of a number of factors such as;
 - The growth in wealth caused by colonisation and the refinement of banking and commerce
 - The growth of national and international markets supported by faster shipping
 - The creation and invention of new products, and
 - The development of new technologies

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The Industrial Revolution

- Key features of the Industrial Revolution included the creation of the factory system
- This took workers in industry such as textiles who had been weaving in their own cottages and employed them in massive factories
- This minimised costs and maximised output and therefore profit
- The early factories were often power by water-power but the invention of the steam engine meant that factory became both more efficient and more dangerous places to work

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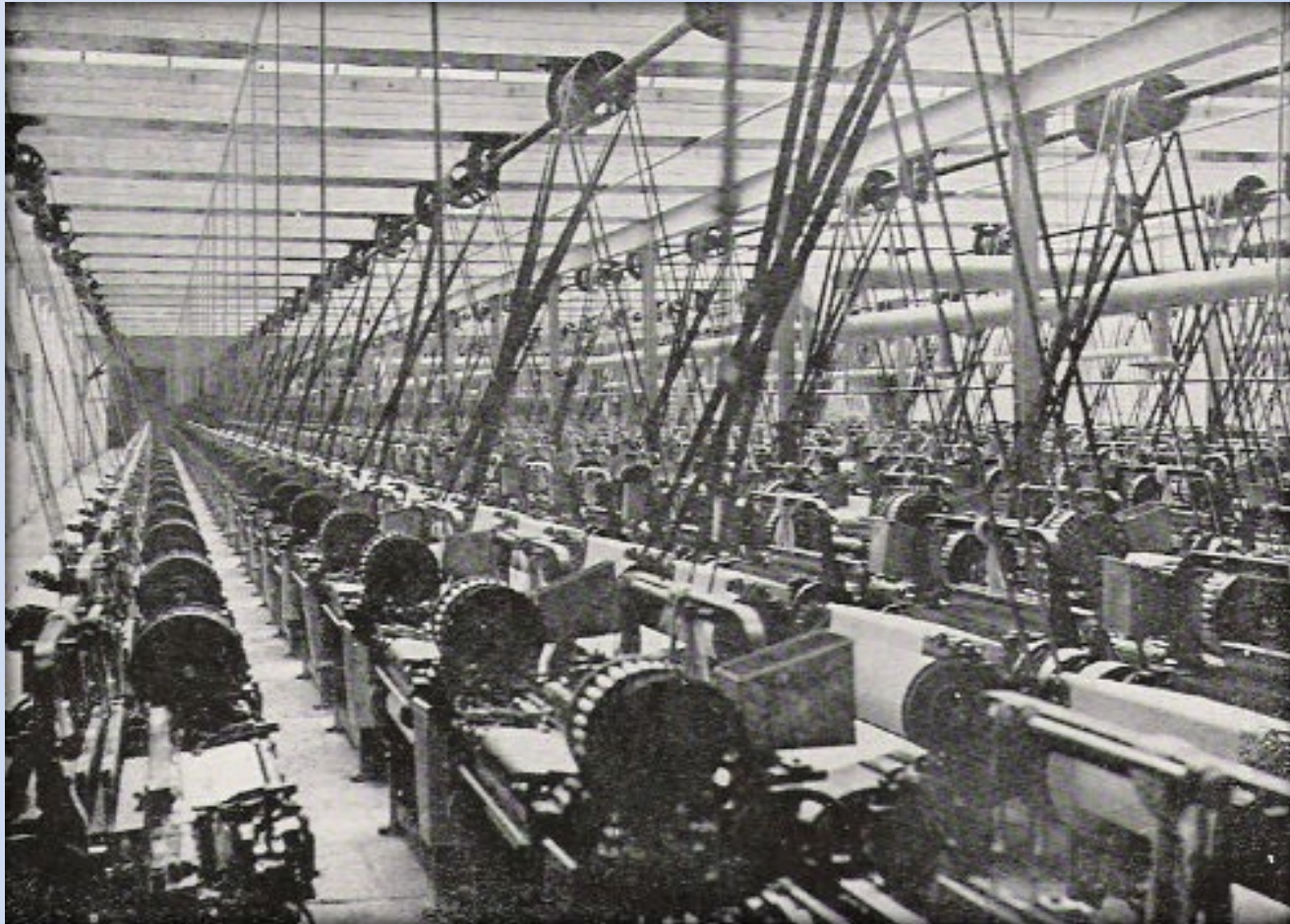
The Industrial Revolution

- The rise of the Factory system created a whole range of new, often menial and low paid work. For example do you know what these jobs involved;
 - A knocker upper? 
 - A sagger maker's bottom knocker? 
 - A [pure finder](#)? (Henry Mayhew (1851 *cited in* Maxwell, 1978)
 - A navvy? 



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The Industrial Revolution



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The Industrial Revolution

- The use of steam power increased the demand for coal and iron, both of which had been produced before but now needed to be produced on 'industrial' scales
- Conditions in the coal mines and iron foundries were usually worse than those in the factories
- In all of the new industries conditions were noisy, dangerous and de-humanising leading to theories such as anomie and reification that we looked at in Theme 3

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The Industrial Revolution



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Industrial Injuries

- The cotton factories were tightly packed with moving machinery, without guards.
- There were moving belts everywhere which could catch a woman's hair and scalp her.
- A worker who leant over to adjust a spindle risked losing a finger or a hand, or worse.
- Children were employed to clear faults, and accumulated dust, from underneath the machines.
- They often lost concentration, or fell asleep, with terrible results.
- The appalling clatter of a weaving or spinning shed led to occupational deafness

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Industrial Injuries

- The coal mines were liable to explosions and flooding
- For example the explosion at Senghenydd colliery near Caerphilly in 1913 killed 439 miners
- Other examples include match factories, where the women workers were exposed to phosphorous, they suffered from '[Phossy Jaw](#)'
- Workers in match factories developed unbearable abscesses in their mouths, leading to facial disfigurement and sometimes fatal brain damage. In addition, the gums developed an eerie greenish white 'glow' in the dark. (Issac, 2018)
- A parliamentary report of 1832 stated that injured workers were 'abandoned from the moment that an accident occurs; their wages are stopped, no medical attendance is provided, and whatever the extent of the injury, no compensation is afforded' (Sadler, 1832)

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The Industrial Revolution

- Parliament tried to address the worst excesses of bad practice and a large number of Acts were passed to try to make work safer, including;
 - Health and Morals of Apprentices Act 1802
 - Cotton Mills Act 1819
 - Factory Act 1831
 - Factory Act 1833
 - Chimney Sweeps Act 1840
 - Factory Act 1844
 - Factory Acts (Extension) Act 1867
 - Factory Act 1891

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