

# A Brief Overview of the Impact of Knowledge Innovation on the Rise of Modern Europe

## -- Taking the Enlightenment as an Example

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**Abstract.** The Enlightenment was a far-reaching anti-feudal and anti-church ideological liberation movement in modern Europe, and its ideological innovations had a great impact on institutional change, economic development and technological progress. In this paper, we will take the Enlightenment as an example, analyses the reasons for the rapid rise of modern Europe from the perspective of intellectual innovation, and consider its significance for the present development.

**Keywords:** Enlightenment; Intellectual Innovation; Modern Europe.

### 1. Intellectual Innovation and the Enlightenment

Ideological innovation, as a superstructural and ideological innovation based on the objective world and practice, reflects the requirements of the economic base, social contradictions and scientific progress. When the inherent ideological theories and ideologies tend to be outdated and the hindering effect on social development becomes more and more prominent, it is necessary to meet the requirements of the times and complete the transformation of people's thinking through ideological innovation. Because theory is the precursor of practice and ideas are the guide to action, the emergence of new ideas will provide the conditions for the rise of new classes, create a favourable environment for scientific and technological progress, and create a favourable atmosphere for social progress, which will have a profound and enormous effect on the rise of a nation.

As far as the Enlightenment is concerned, in the 17th century, the backwardness of the feudal system, the oppression of religious forces, the foolishness of obscurantism and the bondage of the hierarchical system seriously hindered the rise of the emerging bourgeoisie in Europe, while with the further development of natural science in Europe, the elimination of old forces and old ideas and the cultivation of rational consciousness in society as a whole became an inevitable requirement of the development of the times. If the shackles of people's ideology could not be broken and the public's thinking could not be brought into line with the requirements of the times, then the development and progress of the economy, society and science and technology would lack a powerful spiritual weapon and ideological guidance, and the rise of modern Europe would be difficult to achieve.

Thus, the wave of intellectual innovation set in motion by Enlightenment thinkers in terms of reason, nature and science was undoubtedly an important condition for the rise of modern Europe.

### 2. The Impact of Intellectual Innovation on the Rise of Modern Europe

#### 2.1 The Impact of Intellectual Innovation on the Economic Rise of Modern Europe

The role of intellectual innovation in guiding the economy. One of the main impacts of the Enlightenment on the European economy lies in its guiding role, with Adam Smith as the representative of the economists of the Enlightenment period, breaking the feudal economy and its related backward thinking, putting forward the ideas of free trade, free market and division of labour, etc., and pointing the vane of economic development to the capitalist economy, of which the rise of the British economy was largely influenced by the Enlightenment ideas, and it was precisely its The rise of the British economy was largely influenced by the ideas of the Enlightenment, and it was the

depth of its implementation of Enlightenment ideas that made it the 'Empire of the Sun'. It is clear from this that intellectual innovation was an important factor in the economic take-off.

Thought innovation provides a good environment for economic development. The innovation of ideas can effectively promote the people's thoughts to the requirements of economic development, so that the people through the conversion of ideas, adapt to the new mode of economic development and work, so as to provide a good social environment for economic development, especially in the stage of ideological innovation appeared a large number of professional talents, more to meet the rapid development of economic talent needs. During the Enlightenment, reason and equality were introduced, and as more and more people embraced the new ideas, the new bourgeoisie of business and industry were provided with a favourable business environment, thus demonstrating the multifaceted and far-reaching nature of the favourable environment brought about by ideological innovation.

## **2.2 The Impact of Intellectual Innovation on the Rise of Science and Technology in Modern Europe**

The rapid development of natural science was undoubtedly a major influence of the Enlightenment, which freed Europe from the fetters of religious theology on the minds of the people, unveiled the ugliness of obscurantism, liberated people's minds, made them dare to think and reveal the truth of objective laws, and formed an atmosphere in society that valued science, loved science and used science, together with a large number of This, together with a large number of scientists such as Newton, Copernicus and Descartes, gave a great impetus to the rise of science and technology in Europe. This was particularly typical of the Enlightenment period, when the emergence of natural science could soon be applied to industrial development, of which Newton's classical mechanics was a major representative, and was to some extent a necessary requirement of the British industrial economy. The great material wealth greatly promoted and inspired people to innovate ideas, technology and practical application. It is evident that intellectual innovation had a huge role to play in the rise of technology.

## **2.3 The Impact of Intellectual Innovation on the Rise of Culture in Modern Europe**

The important role of intellectual innovation for culture is highly symbolic in the Enlightenment. The Enlightenment was not only an emancipatory movement on an intellectual level, but also an important milestone in the development of art and culture. The Enlightenment's promotion and veneration of reason, science, freedom and equality undoubtedly had a huge impact on culture and art, which originally served feudalism and religious theology, and the continued development of neoclassicism led to the rise of Europe in a number of cultural fields, including music, literature and architecture. Chardin's still life paintings, for example, focused on the everyday life of the citizens, reflecting the interests of the common people and using genre painting to show the good qualities of the common people, promoting democracy in modern European literature, which was of great significance to the rapid development of the modern bourgeoisie.

## **2.4 The Impact of Intellectual Innovation on the Rise of Modern European Politics**

Firstly, the Enlightenment used reason as a weapon of thought and directed its criticism at feudal dictatorship and religious theology, providing strong theoretical support and ideological preparation for the bourgeoisie to overthrow the feudal system, while the bourgeois political blueprint drawn up by Enlightenment thinkers laid the foundation for the establishment of a diverse, effective and far-reaching capitalist political system in modern Europe.

Secondly, another important aspect of the Enlightenment for political development was that it brought the concept of democracy and republicanism to the people. The Enlightenment fully liberated the human mind, with important ideas such as human rights, the social contract and the sovereignty of the people, which gradually made the people realise the importance of democracy and the inviolability of their own power.

Finally, the intellectual innovations brought about by the Enlightenment were not only important for the political revolutions of modern Europe, but also for Asia, Africa and Latin America, where they contributed greatly to the national independence movements of colonial and semi-colonial peoples, and for the Xinhai Revolution in China in the modern era.

In summary, intellectual innovation had a significant impact on the rise of modern Europe in the Enlightenment, focusing on the economic, technological, cultural and political aspects of the movement, and intellectual innovation permeates all areas of a country, often with a huge precursor effect.

### **3. The Relevance of Intellectual Innovation to Contemporary Times**

#### **3.1 Emphasis on Innovation of Ideas and Following the Requirements of the Times**

For the people personally, at the important historical point when China's modernization process is constantly advancing, the socialist modernization power is constantly being built, and the second century goal is gradually being achieved, it is more important to pay attention to the continuous innovation of their own thinking, learn new ideas and concepts, constantly arm their minds with science and knowledge, comply with the new requirements of the development of the times, and give full play to the pioneering role of ideology and theory to guide the practical application. At the same time, it is also important to create a good atmosphere for innovation in society, so that the public can follow the trend of the times and accept new ideas and theories more quickly, better and more steadily.

#### **3.2 Respect Objective Laws and Attach Importance to Practical Tests**

Ideological innovation is inseparable from the test of practice and cannot be divorced from the requirements of objective laws, just as the Enlightenment ideology was in line with the requirements of bourgeois development and the objective laws of social development in modern Europe, and therefore greatly contributed to the rise of Europe. The Chinese revolution was also influenced by the Enlightenment and the bourgeois revolution, but through the test of practice, history and the people chose Marxism, so that ideological innovation was never a matter of empty slogans and detachment from reality.

#### **3.3 Focusing on the Multiplicity of Ideological Innovation and Promoting Innovation in Multiple Fields**

The birth of scientific theories such as Newton's classical mechanics and Copernicus' heliocentric theory, for example, led to ideological changes in many fields such as economics, culture, science and politics, etc. Therefore, ideological innovation is often characterised by the fact that it affects the whole body. It is important to understand the multifaceted nature of ideological innovation, which is important for the formation of a scientific theoretical system, and to focus on the interdisciplinary intersection of multiple fields to promote the integration of ideas and the analysis of universal laws.

#### **3.4 Dare to be Sceptical and See Things from a Dialectical Perspective**

Long-established values and systems of thought often have great resistance to new ideas. For example, the haze of feudalism and religious theology that has long hung over Europe has deterred people from questioning their backwardness and irrationality, but as social reality changes, so do theories of thought, which require contemporary people to be skeptical and to develop dialectical thinking. Although the Enlightenment, to a certain extent, espoused classicism and preached restoration, it was to a certain extent designed to meet the needs of the bourgeois revolution and had great limitations of its time. Thus, intellectual renewal was also a process of scepticism and dialectic.

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