

Education fundamentally preserves and transmits culture, contributing to societal progress alongside other institutions. Historically, Western universities reinforced social stratification, primarily serving aristocratic and gentry classes, often with religious, not economic, roles; the majority of graduates became clergymen. Lower-class education focused on basic literacy and obedience. Universities acted as talent selectors but weren't initially designed for modern economic selection processes or social justice. Vocational education was resisted, even after secularization, with a focus on pure knowledge persisting in British universities until the 20th century and in American land-grant colleges until after WWI. The post-WWII era witnessed a shift, with universities becoming deeply intertwined with the economy, acting as research organizations and training institutions. Highly educated individuals are now central resources, making accessible education and talent selection crucial. Schools and universities determine achievement based on occupational roles, influencing individual life chances. In essence, universities historically served elite status differentiation, gradually assimilating lower-class students. Their increasing role in technological and social change is a relatively recent development, positioning them as foundational to a new societal type.