

15th Century: Stabilization

The Spanish consolidated power with the marriage of Isabella I of Castile and Ferdinand II of Aragon in 1469. Their dual monarchy made Spain the best-administered kingdom in Europe. Meanwhile, Italian city-states largely held their peace with one another, allowing them to control the Mediterranean.

Italy + Spain ++ France + England –

16th Century: Colonization

Martin Luther posted the Ninety-Five Theses in Wittenberg in 1517, generating the Protestant Reformation. But this religious divide did not just shape religion: it also partitioned the New World. The Spanish Catholics dominated early colonial efforts in Central and South America while the Protestant English attempted to control North America.

**Germany + Italy + Spain + England –
Americas –**

17th century: Reformation & Inquisition

The Inquisition began as early as 12th century France; by the 17th century, it primarily occupied Spain and Italy. Through colonization, the Inquisition also spread to the Americas. Scholars now see the 17th century's Inquisition as a backlash against the Protestant Reformation begun in Germany.

Germany + Italy – Spain – France – Americas –

18th Century: Revolution

The Seven Years' War (1754-1763) is sometimes called the first world war by historians. In this war, France, Austria, and Spain fought against Britain and Prussia; the latter alliance won. Italy declined to fight although allied with France and Spain. The Seven Years' War foreshadowed the French Revolution (1789-1799) and the rise of the British Empire (1783-1914).

Germany – Italy + Spain – France – England +

19th Century: Industrialization

Industrialization transformed society by moving nations from an agriculturally-based economy to manufacturing.

England and the Americas began industrializing first, followed by France and Germany. Industrialization affected the world balance of power, for early industrialized countries gained an advantage of those who adapted later.

**Germany + Italy – Spain – France +
England ++ Americas +**

20th Century: Globalization

World Wars decimated Europe in the 20th century. France, England, and the Americas won World War I (1914-1918) against Germany. These nations also won World War II (1939-1945) against Germany and Italy. Although France and England were victorious, these wars set the stage for the United States to dominate the world economically, militarily, and culturally.

**Germany – – Italy – England –
Americas +**