

merchants the nobility were still the nobility and the poor the poor making the extent of change to the structure of British society very small.

Marker's comment

Key issues are explored and analysed. There is a clear attempt to include a range of aspects and detailed knowledge is deployed to support and substantiate arguments. There is good discussion of the changes affecting all classes and particularly the changing position of the merchant class and the role of women. There is some confusion about the focus and whether the answer is dealing with why elements changed or how far aspects changed (the focus should be on 'how far'). Nevertheless, the overall judgement is sufficiently well supported in the body of the work.

Low Level 4

4	17–20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key issues relevant to the question are explored by an analysis of the relationships between key features of the period, although treatment of issues may be uneven. • Sufficient knowledge is deployed to demonstrate understanding of the demands and conceptual focus of the question and to meet most of its demands. • Valid criteria by which the question can be judged are established and applied in the process of coming to a judgement. Although some of the evaluations may be only partly substantiated, the overall judgement is supported. • The answer is generally well organised. The argument is logical and is communicated with clarity, although in a few places it may lack coherence and precision.
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Exemplar script D

There are a number of ways in which British society changed from 1650 to 1850. There was significant change in the merchant class as well as the role of gentry but less of a change in the nobility, role of women and impact of agricultural development on society. Overall, there was some change though largely the known social structures were not disrupted.

The merchant class gained significant influence in this period. By 1688 there were 64,000 merchants – and increase of 30,000 merchants since 1580. This was aided by the growth in urbanisation as towns that grew became involved in trade and ports such as Bristol and Liverpool became international centres of trade. This, as well as improved trading conditions which led to a consumer boom in London, led to the growing influence of the merchant class in society as more people relied on them to produce and sell goods. The Navigation Acts of 1651 and 1660 also restricted foreign imports and trade, favouring English vessels. This meant owners of large, international trading companies became as rich as the nobility. This shows a change in society as many merchants could now buy their way into the gentry and earn knighthoods for commercial success and public service as opposed to hereditary titles as it previously had been exclusively to. This shows a movement away from control by the aristocracy and the beginnings of the mixing of some social classes.

There was also some change to people's lives amongst the aristocracy, though less so amongst the nobility. The nobility's influence remained largely unchanged. Preceding 1650, the nobility commanded the highest status below the monarch, owning much land, titles and property. Despite some decline in the lives of the nobility due to inflation and increased spending, by 1685 many still lived comfortable lives. The influence of the gentry, however, increased greatly. After a dramatic increase in number before 1650 (300% increase between the early Tudor period and 1650) the gentry began to take more of a role in politics. This was, in places, to such an extent, that some could control the politics of an entire county.

Key figures also began to emerge from the gentry such as Cromwell, Pym and Wentworth, who would play a key role in changing people's lives in this period through religious and social changes. Most MPs during the republican rule were also from the gentry and these MPs had more influence since the House of Lords had been abolished in 1649. This shows the extent of which the lives of the gentry changed, some argue, due to the decline in the lives and influence of the aristocracy.

Improvement in agricultural techniques also had some impact on people's lives in rural areas. The introduction of specialised farming led to an increase in the number of wage-dependent agricultural labourers with an estimated 1 million labourers employed in this way by 1685. This, along with capital investment led to 53.6% of land in the South Midlands being owned by the higher gentry and nobility. This, as a result, shows how the development of new techniques contributed to the wealth of the aristocracy, whilst reducing the profits considerably of small landowners. National markets, which were developed as a result of more efficient farming techniques also had this effect as the prices of basic commodities went up, reducing the standard of living of lower classes in rural areas. However, despite some changes to people's lives due to agricultural development, the existing social structures remained largely intact. The structure was, however, accentuated.

The changes in the lives of women is another important factor. Up until the start of the civil war, women had a strictly domestic role. They were poorly educated and some even saw women as a threat to the good functioning of society. However, republican rule and the Stuart restoration saw some changes in the roles of women. Puritanism advocated education for women by promoting the idea that women should teach religious ideas to their children at home. This led to some improvements in women's education. There were also some legal changes such as the Adultery Act of 1650 under which both men and women could be sentenced to death for committing adultery. Also, after 1650, the Quakers were tolerated and held separate meetings for women and allowed women to speak in mixed meetings. Despite this only 4 of the 15 schools the Quakers set up in this period were willing to teach women. Also, general opinion remained largely unchanged, most still seeing women's role as in the home. To some extent the legal changes made were used against women such as the Adultery Act which was unfairly enforced. This shows the limited change to women's lives between 1650 and 1685.

In conclusion, there were some changes to people's lives between 1650 and 1685 but the main social structures remained intact. The merchants and nobility gained influence in this period as towns and cities grew and many became more intune with the politics of the time. However, the nobility remained wealthy, owning much land and property and the role of women saw little overall change as some people still saw them as a threat to society, limiting the education available to them. This demonstrates how there was some change to people's lives but overall, the existing social structure remained the same between 1650 and 1685.

Marker's comment

A good range of aspects included with some effective deployment of specific detail, notably agriculture, to support and substantiate arguments. The answer retains a secure focus on assessment of the extent of change and the measures used to judge change reveal a secure grasp of period and context. The overall judgement is well supported and the criteria for judgement are made clear.

High Level 4