London between 1500 and 1750 will be the time period to be considered in the following work. The changes in Geography, technology, economy and politics will be topic of discussion.

London´s geographical and physical fabric evolved significantly in the given time span, the effects in said aspects paved the way for long term development of London´s cultural and demographic structure. First of all, in a city, change is accelerated when a city´s population is growing, a simple multiplier effect. Since London´s population experienced a nearly exponential growth in the stated period of time, it was more prone to development of any kind. In fact, by 1650, London´s Population was only succeeded by Paris[[1]](#footnote-1). “In 1700, with its growth-rate greater than that of the population as a whole(..) London has more than all the other English towns put together”[[2]](#footnote-2). Demographical change goes hand in hand with geographical development, as a London with its growing population has to develop infrastructure, commercial factors and of course housing. Unexpected events drastically impact such development, considering the implied multiplier effect, those drastic events become larger in scale. The great fire in 1665[[3]](#footnote-3) is an example of such unexpected event, having significant impact on London, especially in aspects of geography but also development in general. The major impact, the fire had can be simplified to the minimalistic change of utilising a non-flammable construction material, brick, stone and tile instead of wood[[4]](#footnote-4), but also allowing durability and stylistic improvement. Such an improvement could be the adoption of neoclassical architecture instead of Gothic/Romanic. As above stated, the development of infrastructure is essential when experiencing a drastic population explosion, hence a huge expansion of urban areas can be observed. Expressed in a simple manner, this means rapidly transforming field land, expanding London to the other side of the river Thames to the south, but of course as well to the north (Middlesex). Westminster Bridge[[5]](#footnote-5), the second bridge across the river, was being finished constructed in the middle of the 18th century and enabled Londoners easier access to storing or less vital city components, and enabled prosperity of districts formed on the other side of the Thames, such as Borough or Southwark. Besides London localities, the road system saw major improvements, assisting the postal services. “In 1663 the first Turnpike trust was created(…)”[[6]](#footnote-6), paving the way for a better and lasting[[7]](#footnote-7) travel by land.

Italy´s architecture[[8]](#footnote-8) included an aspect that transformed London´s geography long lasting. The implementation of city squares started with Covent Garden.[[9]](#footnote-9) This architectural aspect has not been seen before in London and are a major part of neoclassical London. Richer city departments of course could easier implement new features, hence the reason why the western district´s accumulation of such. They were the wealthiest areas and hence allowed more sophisticated architectural construction.

The “New churches in London and Westminster”[[10]](#footnote-10) act, passed in 1710 catalysed the rapidly rising amount of churches and chapels in the city. A minor reason, that was intended to support Londoners during and after the period of reconstruction after the great fire was the fact that the rising amount of churches increased religious beliefs.

Besides architectural and geographical development, technological development greatly impacted London during the time span of 1500 to 1750. In 1662, the introduction of the sewage system[[11]](#footnote-11) allowed the invention of the modern toilet as we know it. Another important invention was the refrigeration process[[12]](#footnote-12). This has had an impact on the food industry, in aspects of international trade of food products, which for the first time could be transported over long distances and brought London the exquisite tastes of exotic food products from around the world.

Exquisite tastes relate to the convenience Londoners could experience in that time period. Enjoyable life becomes a key objective over time, as technological and economic development pursues. A population though, can only experience everyday convenience, when the environment they live in is reflecting such an attitude. This was achieved by the restatement of monarchy and the increased power of parliament that allowed monarchy in the first place. Democratic elections of representatives allowed London´s population to reflect their thoughts. These were changes that affected London very much lasting. Unlike the civil war, started by Charles the first,[[13]](#footnote-13) had a rather negligible effect on London, due to the relatively stable economic state and the business men taking over control of London in that period. Cromwell did nothing good to London, his reign forbid theatres and dancing and made London the opposite of, what to fancy.

Life became even more enjoyable after the reincarnation as a king of Charles the second, who was an advocate of an enjoyable life[[14]](#footnote-14). The allowance of theatres, even though their nature changed for good and lasting in terms of plays, but also design, allowing people to dance again and to enjoy themselves. Enjoyment should be controlled, which was not really the case, which led to the creation of so called “clergymen”. A partly immoral, lazy and impulsive population was the result[[15]](#footnote-15). Luckily that instance did not last long, as a third of the population was exterminated in the big plague[[16]](#footnote-16), just five years after the restoration of the damages the great fire caused. Significant changes in population and geography were the result.

Trade of food products were not the main reason for economic development, though significant. The expansion of St. Catherine’s Dock[[17]](#footnote-17) and ports in general were probably bigger of an impact. This accompanies the ship-building activity, that played a major role in the period around 1660.[[18]](#footnote-18) The expansion of a port, results in more available space to fit ships and store goods, hence more trade and from that economic growth but more importantly development can be derived. London´s stake of England´s overall economic is distinct and was. London can be considered to be the richest and most powerful city in the world in the given time period. Trade with other continents as a result of great connection to sea-routes resulted in manufacturing goods being the main income source in forms of exports.

From trade to financials, London´s way of handling loans and funds was way-paving the future. Financially, “London was seen as the centre of a moneyed interest that many regarded as disruptive.”[[19]](#footnote-19)

London´s economy was based on two pillars, farming and manufacturing. The colonial expansion of the great British empire lead to the subordinate colonies taking over the manufacturing process, an example could be the production of textiles[[20]](#footnote-20) such as wool, making London in itself less dependent on that and allowing it citizens to focus on more skilled labour.

This set the population of Britain free to higher intellectual labour, which in result initiated the industrial revolution around the 1760´s.

The aspect of food can be closely tied with the impact it has on the health of humans.

Health improvement are always significant and beneficial to a city´s population. Such a benefit can be observed and derived from the construction of London´s first artificial river, a project initiated by James the first. The concept was to provide London with fresher drinking water as water was not save at all to drink. A population living of hydration based on distilled or fermented products such as beer, is good from an aspect of recreational purposes, but not so much from a health perception. Another health-related aspect that changed in London during the given time period, is how hospitals were perceived. Hospitals were not the place to go when you were sick, they would be more likely to worsen the situation. In 1575, Ambroise Pare was an innovator in surgery and how it should be done in aspects of treating wounds and amputations. Also, in 1628, William Harvey was responsible for ground-breaking discoveries such as of the bacterium or that blood circulates inside a human body.

These were technological changes that bettered health factors, but technological development didn’t stop there, besides the above stated, timepieces experienced great improvement, significantly altering navigation by sea. [[21]](#footnote-21)

The bottom line is, that London changed. Technological advancements altered everyday experiences and the life of Londoners in many aspects, such as their health, which can be considered as one of the most important developments in the time between 1500 and 1750. Besides a few missteps, such as a fire, a plague, a temporary immoral population and some bad leaders, the long-term impacts can be considered as beneficial and constructive. Geographic and economic development changed the face of London and the population living within and around.

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1. P.114 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. P.114 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. P.137 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. P.137 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. P.116 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. P. 153 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. P. 173 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. P.100 ff Hollis,L [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. P.117 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
10. [↑](#footnote-ref-10)
11. P.120 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-11)
12. Hertz, A [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. P.126 ff Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. Hertz, A [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. P.145 ff Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. P. 138 & 143 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. Hertz, A [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. P.158 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. P.155 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. P.161 Black, J [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
21. Hertz, A [↑](#footnote-ref-21)