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### CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL FAMILY STRUCTURE IN THE UK DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

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Omonov Laziz Boliquil og'li, Mirkhalikov Shokhrukh Mirkamol og'li, Boboqulov Sardorbek Bokhodir og'li (Author)

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### PEDAGOGICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING THE SUBJECT «EDUCATION»

Menlibaeva Azima Oralbaevna (Author)

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DOI

### MANFAATLAR TO'QNASHUVINI OLDINI OLISHNING FALSAFIY-ANALITIK TAHLILI

Soxibov Salohiddin Anvar o'g'li (Author)

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## CHANGES IN TRADITIONAL FAMILY STRUCTURE IN THE UK DURING THE 19TH CENTURY

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### Abstract

The 19th century in Britain exhibited significant social, economic, and cultural shifts that reshaped the family. The main agenda of this article is to gain insight into patriotic family structure during a period of revolution, and to look at such as regards its composition, gender roles, class distinctions, and the impact of industrialization and legislation. Founded on Victorian principles, the family was typically patriarchal and nuclear, with assertive guiding rules for each individual. The value of religion and morality was undoubtedly a stimulus to these patterns. Over time, the inculcation of industrialization and urbanization in the society contributed to a major alteration in the traditional familial system and slowly humans became more tolerant and accepting of certain behaviors. Through a historical literature review and synthesis of the most recent studies by notable academics, this article presents a broad perspective regarding the dynamics of family life in Britain during the 19th century, and through the process of doing so it also offers some clarifications necessary for readers to grasp the reasons for its surviving and changing.

### Keywords

Family structure, traditional 19th-century Britain, Victorian ideals, rebellion, gender identity, class difference, city, religion, good morals, legislation, family setup.

The family experienced a decrease in the number of family members during the industrial era. An instance can be given of multi-family generations living under the same roof, the kinship relations of which are likely to shift in terms of biology, a family bond that deteriorates due to indisposition, and so on. The Burstiness index is measured as the most explosive and volatile among the scenarios of the general populace. Rarely were there any relatives other than the



immediate family who lived at home even during the periods when they were part of my family. The necessity of having a large family was a factor of the rural economy which was preindustrial where the income was produced collectively by several generations of the family that were traditionally engaged in agriculture. Urban operators who were influenced by the industrial sector relied more on nuclear power. In general, families were of varied sizes, larger families grew steady among the above through the high wave of the first births of the century. Nevertheless, the family planning process gained popularity and later the economic constraints that caused the decrease in the number of births in the second half of the 20th century made the family smaller.

Victorian ideals strongly dictated gender roles within the family. Parental stereotyping was in a way such that the husband was the assumed responsible of financial stability that would have implication for family success and also a moral trustee of the family. He sat well in that place, which reflected. 19th century societal patriarchal order. Fathers often worked long hours in factories, offices, or as tradesmen, leaving little time for domestic engagement.

The mother's role centered around managing the household and raising the children. Domesticity was glamourized and female subjects were idealistically portrayed as possessing the virtues of piety, goodness and submissiveness. [M] This vision was articulated in Coventry Patmore's poem *The Angel in the House*, the script of which has been hailed as a best seller of Victorian women's way of life.<sup>2</sup> Middle class women, for instance, did not seek professional careers and they attempted to create a womanly good domestic space.

Children's roles within the family varied by class. In working-class homes children participated in the household economy from as early as they could remember, working in factories, mines, or as domestic workers. In contrast, middle- and upper-class children were more likely to be formally educated and enjoy leisure time, as a result of their parents' economic advantage.

The Industrial Revolution profoundly impacted family life in 19th-century Britain. Dispersed rural population into industrial towns disrupted the rural family system and its socially available support system. Urban living often resulted in cramped and unsanitary conditions, which posed challenges to maintaining the idealized family life promoted by Victorian values.

Economic demands also altered familial roles. Domestic-work is performed by women as well as children in the majority of workingclass families in the pursuit of the generation of income. This shift challenged the conventional dichotomy of division of labour between men and women (male and female chores) and led to the debates on child labour and women's place in the social world. The incremental

impact of legislation (e.g., the Factory Acts) eventually improved worker living standards but curtailed child labor, which, in turn altered family patterns generation over generation.

Familial formations and lived experiences were profoundly shaped by class stratification. Even of the working class just the fact of earning a living in this case, quite often would also lead to the entire family to put effort together. Extended family networks provided the main support in the form of mutual helping, i.e., during economic distress or, indeed, during disease.

In contrast, middle-class families aimed for the several aspirations of domesticity and respectability. The public/private spheres distinction – public for men, and private for women – was more acutely experienced in this class. Middle-class women were free to govern the organization of household domestic service, the creation of social gatherings, and the conduct of their children. The increasing concern about knowledge among boys and, as a result, social adaptation of girls, as a means of maintaining social position within the middle-class family results in the construction of the boy's and girl's school life.

Yes, upper-class families that lived a separate life, the one of the wealthy, the privileged, and observing the traditional aristocratic rules, maintained its own lifestyle. Aspects of inheritance, such as primogeniture, preserved family properties and intrinsic patrilineal lineages. May weddings among the most elite of society were richly prescribed as a means of increasing both economic standing and social influence. Religion played a significant role in shaping family life and values in 19th-century Britain. The Church of England and some denominations (methodism and Catholicism) gave very high status to the sanctity of marriage, the moral education of, and parental responsibility for, teaching religious views to children. Sunday schools became widespread, offering religious education to children, particularly those from working-class backgrounds. For instance, Victorian society also valued great importance to moral and respectability. Social reformers and writers, for example: Charles Dickens, repeatedly showed us the abyss between this utopian dream and the wretched everyday life of the working class. In other words, many of the functions that resemble *Oliver Twist* itself brought to the same light the problems of poor families, and as a result generated the same public discussion around social inequality and the need for change. Legislative changes in the 19th century significantly influenced family life. The Poor Law Amendment Act 1834 transformed the provision of welfare services by transferring responsibility from that to autonomous and nuclear models. While this policy aimed to reduce dependency on state support, it also exacerbated the hardships faced by the poorest families.

Marriage and divorce laws also evolved during this period. The 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act paved the way towards divorce, although it remained largely stigmatised and available only to the upper and middle classes. Women's standing in marriage improved steadily but decisively, along with the incorporation of new, more consequential legislation (the Married Women's Property Acts of 1870 and 1882), under which women could acquire property from earning and income.

In late 19th century, established family systems found themselves under new pressures. Urbanization, economic shifts and changing social sentiments all contributed to the diversification of the family. As the proportion of individuals focused on the self and personal achievement increases, and as widely available artificial contraception becomes a reality, family size decreases and the configurations of households become more diversified.

The reform of the education (e.g., Elementary Education Act of 1870) brought to light the extent of the State and, hence, the extent of the authority to guard the children of the State and, therefore, to delineate explicitly, the authority of the family over the children. In addition, feminist issues cast doubt on, and questioned, traditional gender roles, and in doing so prepared the way for more changes in the twentieth century.

Several developed, but nonetheless variable, ideological systems of the family form existed in 19th-century, Victorian values, industrial revolution, and class containment in Britain that constituted a rapidly evolving social fabric in England. Although, the nuclear family is a paradigm, it has also been shown to be changing as to its configuration with respect to social classes and geographical regions. This time of year also saw large changes regarding the roles of women and men, economic participation of women and men, and the expectations from society itself, paving the way to continued discussions regarding family and its place in society.

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