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Department of English**

**The British Family between Tension and
Stability**

**A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English as a
Partial Fulfillment for the Master Degree in Literature and
Civilization**

Presented by:

Miss HAROUAT Salima

Supervised by:

Mr. KAMECHE Mohammed

The Jury Members:

Dr. Abdelkader BENSFAFA

Chair- person

Mr. Mohammed KAMECHE

Supervisor

Mrs. Farida DRICI

Examiner

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Dedication

The completion of this work would not have been possible without the assistance of several persons:

First and foremost, I would like to express sincere gratitude to my dear and beloved parents for their support and prayers,

To my dear and sweetest baby 'Mohamed Amir'; may Allah protect him!

Special thanks to my two amazing brothers and two sisters who have never failed to encourage me in all of my endeavors.

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Abstract

This dissertation aims at showing some changes in the nature of family policy, and what a family means for parents, children and the huge society as well. The only thing that unites every person in Britain is the need of parents to take more responsibility for their children. The traditional lone man breadwinner family is falling and the rise of lone parent families and other new types of family present several new challenges for government policy on welfare, work-life balance and in many other places. This extended essay also seeks to investigate a set of changes and developments in the British family today, the significant reasons that have contributed to these changes, the effect of such changes on community and the roles that government has played in order to solve some family problems and save their kids from countless dilemmas which are likely to lead them to delinquency, violence, committing crimes or falling prey to terrorists.

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List of Abbreviations and Acronyms

| | |
|-----------------|---------------------------------------|
| B.F: | British Family |
| C.P: | Civil Partnership |
| D.R.A: | Divorce Reform Act |
| F.B.G: | Face Book Generation |
| O.N.S: | Office for National Statistics |
| U.K: | United Kingdom |
| W.F.T.C: | Working Family Tax Credit |
| W.T.C: | Working Tax Credit |

General Introduction

General Introduction

In addition to being the basic unit and the most important pillar of any given society. The family is the first social community in the life of any person, and a complex social formation; it is from this that an individual originates, learns and understands at least the basics of education, the values of culture, and acquires the experience of social behavior. In the family, people take their first steps, face the first joy and sorrow; then leave the family and face the big world. As with a lot of things in life, to understand where people are going, they need to know where they have come from.

Marriage is a long-standing social institution, ingrained in human ritual. It is generally understood as the union and commitment between two persons in an interpersonal relationship that is recognized by an official institution. The purpose of marriage changes from time to time and from place to place. Today, marriage is only for making a commitment to the person he or she loves.

In this dissertation, the researcher attempts to present the development and changes of the family in Britain and look about the relationships between family members. In addition to this tries to focus deeply on the compositional changes of the family. In this extended essay, the British Family is presented through the radical changes in households' composition. Britain becomes one of the most known countries that have experienced very important changes in the pattern of family formation because several families have become less stable and more diverse. Furthermore, the roles of parents within the family have also changed which have led to reopen the sociological norms. Therefore, the present research seeks to answer the following questions:

- What are the most reasons that lead to the decline of the traditional family and the emergence of new forms of family structure?.
- What are the effects of tension in the British family?.

In order to try to answer the previous questions the researcher presented the following hypotheses:

- The most important reason of the decline of the traditional British family is the rise of divorce, changes in marital roles and the disconnection between parents and their children.

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- Technology, poverty and poor health are the major impacts of tension in the British family.

This work is divided into two chapters. The first one aims to show the fall of the nuclear traditional family, the changing nature of the British family, the emergence of new forms of family composition and also the notion of the British family structure. In addition, it seeks to deal with both family and society in the late half of the twentieth century and the main reasons that lead to the decline of the British family. As well, it deals with the relationship between people and marriage in society and what the reasons that lead to the decline are.

As far as the second chapter is concerned, it is devoted to explore the impacts of tension in the British family that is to say what are the contributing reasons to family tension and the most changes of both family life and family structure are. Besides it attempts to shed light on how the government should make a balance between job and protection.

The aim of this study is to reveal the most significant changes that the British families have experienced through the modern period and the most prominent effects that have contributed to this change.

Chapter One

**The Fall of the Traditional Family and
the Emergence of New Forms of Family
Structure**

1.Chapter One:The Fall of the Traditional Family and the Emergence of New Forms of Family Structure

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Chapter One: The Fall of the Traditional Family and the Emergence of New Forms of Family Structure

1.1 Introduction:

Families are considered as the bedrock of any given society. Husbands, wives and children provide an intimate connection; it is usually characterized by trust, respect and commitment. In the past, fathers and mothers were living together with their children in happy families. However, nowadays, a lot of families are living separately, that is to say, that they contain a number of non-traditional structures such as: step-families, step-child, single parents, couples and civil partnership.

In Britain, in the last 60 years, the structure of the traditional family has no longer existed and it has shifted significantly.

This chapter seeks to outline the changing nature of the British family and the rise of new forms of family composition. The researcher will try to examine the most important reasons and changes that have resulted in the fall of the traditional family. She will move to explore the several differences in family patterns and the rise of new forms of family composition. She will also attempt to tackle the structure of British family and the relationship between marriage and family. In the end, she will embark on dealing with the decline of marriage and what the public think about.

1.2 Reasons of the Decline of the Oldish Family:

Life is all about constructing a family and leading life as it is¹. Life is not always easy and beautiful² but behind it there has been an old or traditional family which is considered as a single unit and that contains just one father, one mother and one or more of their real or adopted children³. The traditional family was born before the industrial revolution, it predominated in England in the thirteenth century⁴. It originally occurred in the upper class families that eventually filtered down to the middle classes and finally became popular amongst most classes in the twentieth century.

The decline of the Oldish Nuclear family has brought about changes in many spheres of life. Proponents of family decline say that the decline in marriage rates, rise

¹ Leulseged Worku, 'What is the real meaning of life', Ethiopia, 2016, ..[http://allafrica.com.\(15/04/2016\)](http://allafrica.com.(15/04/2016)).

² Robyn Norton, 'Life is not always easy, life is not always fair', 2018. [https://www.apnews.com.\(26/11/2018\)](https://www.apnews.com.(26/11/2018)).

³ Yolanda Williams, 'Traditional family', 2016. [https://study.com.\(15/02/2016\)](https://study.com.(15/02/2016)).

⁴ Kay Hymowitz, 'The Real Roots of the Nuclear Family', 2013. [https://ifstudies.org.\(23/12/2013\)](https://ifstudies.org.(23/12/2013)).

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in divorce rates, changes in marital roles, and changing family structure are hindering the function of family as an institution⁵. Traditional families held the real standards of friendship, honesty, morals and faithfulness. They attempted to raise a typical family⁶ by satisfying and understanding the needs of their children for love, affection and closeness⁷. The relationship between parents and their children is among the most important in people's life. Trust is a significant part of any relationship⁸; all parents want to trust their children but sometimes their children seem to make it so difficult to trust them. Moreover, parents always wanted their children to come to them any time and under any circumstances in order to call them for help. All these things are known as “**parental responsibility**”⁹.

However, nowadays, the concepts of families have totally changed, family members tend to stop listening to each other, neither parents nor children, and they become too busy and so stressed by the pressure of the world they live in. Sometimes, they listen to CD player, radio, watch television, and chat on their Personal Computer¹⁰. Furthermore, children from a nuclear family grow in a family where the father leaves for work in the morning. The children take the bus to school and the mother stays at home cooking and cleaning until the father and the children come back home in the afternoon. This is the real picture of the oldish family living in Britain¹¹.

Things have changed over the past 25 to 50 years, even the definition of the family has changed too but not for good as people think. Families have been different in the last decades; instead of getting married, a lot of couples are living together; some of them have eventually got married, whereas the other couples have broken up their cohabiting relations and few of them stay together as cohabitations for long. What is so common and remarkable recently is that females are more likely to give birth before they turn 25 years of age than they get married. According to some official statistics that illustrate how the life of British family has been transformed in a generation; several people are living alone; several kids are being raised by lone parents.

⁵ Katie M. Laplant, Family Decline Theory, 2016. [\(21/03/2016\)](https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com).

⁶ Lauren Keating, 'Typical Families no longer exist', 2014. [\(04/09/2014, 11:39\)](https://www.techtimes.com).

⁷ Ephen Ludwig, 'Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics', 2009. [\(2009\)](https://www.sciencedirect.com(2009))

⁸ Eric James, 'Love and Relationships', 2015. [\(17/04/2015\)](https://sevingjoy.com).

⁹ Rebeca Palmer, 'Parental Responsibility', 2019. [\(22/01/2019\)](http://www.thefamilylawco.uk).

¹⁰ www.parentguidenew.com.

¹¹ [www.bbc.co.uk\(01/06/2007\)](http://www.bbc.co.uk(01/06/2007)).

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The number of couples who have been married declines to the lowest level, so that many children are being raised by unmarried couples¹². In the 1960's, for example, about 95% of kids were born to couples who were married. Today, 40% are born to women who are either singles or living with non-married partner¹³. Richard Woolfson¹⁴ said: **“the nature family life has changed significantly in the last thirty years (...) the traditional nuclear family of two parents and two, four children have become a museum piece”**¹⁵.

These days, couples who do not get married are socially accepted than before; studies have shown that they develop more confidence in their own opinions¹⁶. Lots of psychologists have proved that kids will suffer a lot if they do not find the balance of two parents in their up-bringing. Duncan Smith¹⁷ from the other side states: **“It is not our jobs as politicians, to lecture but, the problem has been caused by successive United Kingdom Governments centering on the child and forgetting the parents [...] marriage is not just a piece of paper”**¹⁸.

The **Divorce Reform Act (DRA) 1969** makes it easier to dissolve a marriage; some of the critics of the government find that the tax system has also changed to the advantage of unmarried couples¹⁹. Sue Palmer²⁰ said: **“the more parents work, the more children stay at home, are not playing outside with friends ...”**²¹

In the past, divorce was very difficult and took long time; at that time, people got married and remained married. Nevertheless, now countless couples are cohabiting without getting married. Moreover, they get married before they have children; nonetheless today numerous children are born in unmarried families because numerous women want to have kids without being married²².

¹² [https://www.pewsocialtrends.org\(25/04/2018\)](https://www.pewsocialtrends.org(25/04/2018)).

¹³ <https://gillespieshields.com>.

¹⁴ A leading family expert and a child psychology.

¹⁵ Mori, Ipson. *Families in Britain*, London, 1998, p. 11.

¹⁶ The conversation.com (23/04/2017, 9:45 pm).

¹⁷ A farmer conservative leader and chairman of the center of social justice.

¹⁸ Mori, Ipson, .op.cit. ; p. 17.

¹⁹ Real Trends, September-2008.

²⁰ A child expert and author of « Toxic Childhood ».

²¹ Palmer, Sue. *Toxic Childhood*. Ed. London, 2002 , p. 71.

²² Social Policy Justice Group, « Fractured Families », Center of Social Justice, 2006 , p. 13.

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1.3 Different Family Structures and the Emergence of New Forms of Family Composition:

Family means much more than a relation by blood or marriage²³; it is the most important thing in a person's life. Household refers to someone who lives in loneliness or a group of people with the same address that shares their living arrangement. The fact is that the extended family²⁴ is available only for agricultural communities where intensive jobs are carried out; conversely, it is no longer needed, because the traditional family contains the basic roles of father, mother and kids and it is more able to move from one place to another than the extended family. Still, the nuclear family²⁵ is the most appropriate in urban places as the living conditions there are dissimilar from rural regions.

On the other hand, today, nuclear families make up only 36% of the British families. Besides, more women are employed than before; the legislation relating to divorce and abortion has influenced and affected the role of women in the family. The high number of divorce and marriage has shown a considerable increase in the number of single parent's families and cohabiting couples. In addition, the birth rate has been dropped too. This age has witnessed women who are focusing on their work and women who give birth for the first time delay until they reach the age of thirty.

In the past, families may have been inter-dependent. Possibly an economic unit, certainly a social one which gave a great support to its numbers. Yet, currently small families lacking free time and rising occasions appear to provide a sort of isolation between its members. The nuclear family has succeeded to some extent in occupying a certain type of love and respect in society but it is criticized in comparison to the extended family. In spite of the fact that the latter used to experience a kind of isolation; the mother, the father and their children used to live in a house which used to enjoy emotional atmosphere in the village while the family nowadays is

²³ <https://www.ukessays.com>.

²⁴ A family unit consisting of two parents (a father and a mother) and their children.

²⁵ A family consisting of parents and children, along with grandparents, aunts or cousins, ect...

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considered as a mobile unit centered in the town²⁶ and the environment in which it is linked to the most variable services concerning with learning and health.

It is very obvious that the differences of family reflect all kinds of distinctions in the whole society; this is prominent in the recent discussions about women's rights, male exploiting her, the significance of job, different opportunities, getting paid...without going into details of these controversies. What is more, is growing tension between parents and kids which eventually leads to a decline in the family. From time to time, these families are likely to end in divorce; it is quite possible to see divorce as a hygienic healthful sign of the desire of each person to obtain happiness²⁷.

Over the last fifty years, the structure of the **BF** has shifted significantly and it is clear that it will continue. These dissimilarities and changes have caused the collapse of marriage and the increase of cohabitation what have led to the appearance of new forms of family compositions. Families are no longer made up of married parents living with their kids. At present, a great number of families consist of a number of non-traditional structures this is mainly because the changes in marriage, divorce and relationship, which have contributed in making step-families one of the fastest developing family forms in Britain. In the present days, researchers argue that one in ten of all families²⁸ is of this type.

The number of single parent families has also gone up to 2.3 million making up 14% of all families²⁹. Consequently, more and more kids are growing up in lone parent and in step families. Further, a large number of couples today are living together. Additionally, a lot of people have regular partners in other household sex including students who get full time and persons who live with parents. In several cases, this is either due to working in different places or owing to the early relationship. **CP** is another type of family which gathers the same sex couples occupy 26.787 civil partnerships since the law that was introduced in December 2005³⁰. In 2016, there have been 12.7 million married or civil partner couple

²⁶ Bulterworth, Eric. Social Problems of Modern Britain. London, the2000, p. 74.

²⁷ Ibid, p. 75.

²⁸ Office for National Statistics « Civil Partnership »,London.2008.

²⁹ Mori, Ipson. Op.cit, p. 26.

³⁰ Office for National Statistics « Step families »,London,2005.

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families without dependent children are more famous than married or civil partner couple families with dependent kids at 7.9 million and 4.8 million families respectively. This is the major common type of family³¹.

1.4 Family Structure in UK:

In the domain of single parenthood in particular, lots of researches of sociology have been shaped by criticizing the discourses surrounding the presumed definitions of single parenthood as an indicator of family change and of patterns claims on welfare state. Numerous actions lead to the growth of the lone parenthood number and the growth of lone parenthood duration as well. The growth of only parent families has been one of the most striking changes in family form in Britain over the last 50 years. Lone parenthood has become a widespread family living arrangement in the western world. Not only the number of lone parent families has been growing, nonetheless their profiles have changed substantially.

Until the mid of 1990's, lone parenthood is mostly the outcome of two trajectories: dissolution of a union due to the death of one parent, and kid birth out of wedlock. These two trajectories shaped at least two lone parenthood patterns, which seem differently according to the nuclear social representations of family, filiation and parenthood³². Likewise, the recent rise in unmarried lone parenthood includes a growth in the breakdown of cohabiting relationships; a pattern which is related to a tendency now for single parents to be younger and to have younger children and smaller family sizes than in the past. In addition, early single parenthood appears to be the result of rising inequality of opportunity among young females. The medium duration for those with extra-marital births is three years, however for those who divorce is 45 years. In the recent days, those who become single parents have tended to stay single parents for longer, as well as many people become single parents. Lastly, Britain has had a comparatively proportion of kids living in single parents families, linked only in Europe by Denmark. In 1994, about one quarter of all families with dependent children under the age of sixteen in the United Kingdom is headed by a single parent, a proportion two to three times

³¹ <https://www.ons.gov.uk>.

³² <https://books.google.dz>.

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greater than Germany. About 15% of dependent children live in lone parent households in UK.

“The growing social acceptance of a separation of sex marriage and parenthood has created a situation in which lone parenthood is increasingly coming to be seen as another stage in the family life cycle, rather than as an aberration from ‘normal’ family patterns, not just in the UK but throughout the western industrialized countries. Much more diverse patterns of family structure are developing with more complexities of family love, support, exchange, duty and obligation.”³³

It is more adequate conceptualization of such diversity and its definition, in terms of living experiences, perceptions of fairness and appropriate modes of behavior, and the related distribution of opportunity and meaningful participation of society. Changing composition of households and new patterns in the British family has been very remarkable in recent days; there is a huge growth in the proportion of one person households and in the proportion of single parent families³⁴. In our day, the British family has had a comparatively high proportion of child living in single parents families. In UK, in 1994 about one quarter of all families with dependent children was headed by single parent; and around 15% of dependent children³⁵ live with lone parent household³⁶.

In the former epoch, a lot of single parents families were conferred through divorce; there has been a dramatic increase in the proportion of lone father and mother households in UK in the two last decades, whereas, many children in single parent households have two parents alive, and may have regular relation with the parent out of the house. Single father, mother households are likely to share a number of characteristics; it is very evident that countless of single parent households are headed by females or women. Besides, the average age of kids is generally less than five years old. Similarly, children are used to living in a poor situation because lone mothers are always less likely to be employed than married homosexual couples in order to share

³³ Ford, R., Marsh, A, and Mckay, “Changes in Lone Parenthood, Department of Social Security, Research Report N°40, London, HMSO, 1995 .

³⁴ A parent without a partner living with their dependent children.

³⁵ Children either under 16 or -19 and undertaking a full time education.

³⁶[http /www.jrf.org.uk/foundation/f4.html](http://www.jrf.org.uk/foundation/f4.html).

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their lives. Although the debate is still opened about if parents are able to adopt kids, countless people in these days honestly live in couples as families nonetheless, the extent to which this is socially tolerated still in question³⁷.

1.5 The Decline of Marriage and the Rise of Cohabitation:

Marriage and cohabitation are considered as key structures in various societies. Different people define marriage in different ways, not even sociologists are able to agree on single meaning marriage is legally recognized social contract between two people, traditionally, based on a sexual relationship and implying a permanence of the union³⁸.

British government and community have benefitted the institution of marriage by giving responsibilities and by enforcing consequences for destroying marriage vows. A growth in the number of cohabitation and a decrease in marriages have both come in the wake of a huge increase in divorce in the last thirty years. Some persons argue that these trends are due to people being less prepared to make commitment or may be being more horrified than other people to destroy their promises. Marriage remains the most famous important form of parent-ship for both men and women; however it becomes less famous in Britain nowadays than it has been in the past. Most of people face a typical life course pattern of courtship leading to marriage and followed by the birth of kids; females give up paid employment during their years of caring their kids and the couple stays together till the end. Yet in the late of twentieth and the beginning of twenty first century, it is stated that now there are a good number of women who are still married but no marriage is on the escalation; cohabitation has been increasingly known, usually preceding or following marriage.

The rate of non-married women under sixty cohabiting almost doubled in less than 15 years, from 13% in 1986 to 25% in 1999³⁹. The age for marrying has changed; it is estimated that the average age of first marriage is twenty eight for females and thirty for males compared to twenty two and twenty four. Marriage declined nearly 10% in

³⁷ <http://www.curriculum.press.co.uk>.

³⁸ <http://opentextbc.ca>.

³⁹ Office for National Statistics.2000.

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Britain according to the report by ONS in 2005⁴⁰. Sociologists have sought to build an explanation about the rise of the number of divorce more than they have engaged with the other demographic changes so far addressed. Among the core development commonly cited as important are:

Change in the marital bases of person's life, leading to marital ties being based progressively on emotion and romantic love, rather than economic necessity. It is natural to be a little nervous before jumping in marriage⁴¹. In the early of 1970's marriage had been declined about 3 to 4% per annum. Yet, from 1971 to 1995 marriage fell by 90% for teenage women and 80% for women aged 20 to 24. Most people dream of meeting that special someone and enjoying an intimate and loving relationship that is fulfilling, meaningful and lasting⁴². Some statistics surveys show that the main reason which leads to an end of the first marriage after a period of only 12 years is the lack of sharing values. As well, sundry risk factor scans lead to a fail in marriage, escalation, invalidation, negative interpretation and withdrawal and avoidance are four dangerous causes which can build barriers for a marriage and lead to loneliness and isolation. Researchers show that couples who want a good marriage need to eliminate the risk factors from their marriage.

Usually, death is not the only cause that separates couples but negative behaviors can destroy this relationship. Lord Wilson⁴³ says: **Death has always enabled the surviving availability of divorce precipitates many more remarriages and in their wake come many more step families and relationships of the half-blood⁴⁴.**

Notwithstanding, divorce is clearly associated with the absence of access to resources whether material or cultural, and takes place in highly constrained environments. The most important reasons of separation or divorce rates occurring amongst people who marry at an early age, those who economically, physically and emotionally vulnerable⁴⁵. The majority of divorce chooses cohabitation as a new form of relationship. It appears that their previous experience affected them, those who have

⁴⁰ Office for National Statistics.2005.

⁴¹ <https://www.coursehero.com>.

⁴² <https://www.huffpost.com>.

⁴³ A British Judge.

⁴⁴ <https://www.telegraph.co.uk>.(19/02/2014).

⁴⁵ Boheim, R, and Ermish, J, "Analysis of the Dynamic of Lone Parent Families", Institute for Social and Economic Research Working paper, p. 98.

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been married previously tend to engage in long cohabitation than never married and their cohabitation is more likely to end in marriage. The growth of cohabitation suggests a change from previous patterns, when cohabiting couples increase dramatically too fast.

From what has been stated earlier, one can say that not all cohabitation will lead dramatically to marriage; many cohabitation breaks up; other couples view it as an alternative to marriage, however all these are less important to build a long term stable family. Further, changing in law has made it very easy to be able to get a divorce; thus, one of the highest rates owned by Britain was rejected today⁴⁶.

1.6 Conclusion:

The fall of the traditional family is well documented in Britain. Nowadays, it is estimated that nuclear families make up only 36% of British families. The evolution of culture and society has brought changes in the family. More females are working than ever before and law relating to divorce and contraception certainly affect the nature of the role of women in the family. A large number of divorces and small rates of marriages have taken a considerable boost in the number of lone parent families and cohabiting couples. The changing natures of relationships have coupled with the rise of divorce that have also led to a great number of families with step relatives and kids who have a single parent in common.

The family unit has undoubtedly changed significantly over the last few decades. The traditional family unit containing a set of fathers, mothers and their children is today much rarer, with new structures such as single parent families and step relatives much as single parent families and step-relatives much more famous place.

⁴⁶ [http://iser.essex.ac.uk/pbs/wp98.8html\(25/02/2015\)](http://iser.essex.ac.uk/pbs/wp98.8html(25/02/2015)).

Chapter Two

The Effects of Tension in the British Family

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2.1 Introduction:

In this present age, new generations, families are more and more witnessing stress and tension than in the past generations. Children often grow up with different fathers and mothers in step cohabiting families. As a result, there is substantial evidence suggesting that kids are more likely to experience poverty, lack of welfare, poor health as well as eventually be involved in anti- social behavior.

Families will continue involving as many women have care, and seek more egalitarian relationships. Both males and females need to negotiate their roles within the family. The effect of new family composition and the dynamic change in families have had different impacts on kids, their parents and other development groups of the family.

In this chapter, the researcher tries to explore the most significant causes that have contributed directly to the changes in families, as well as changes in legislation, female's entry into the labor market and the development of science and technology. The researcher also seeks to spotlight on family stability, the health of kids and well-being, levels of poverty and the involvement of anti-social behavior.

2.2 Contributing Reasons to family Tension:

In recent days, more than a few researchers who are interested in studying the development of the British family have investigated the contributing factors which have led to changes in this phenomenon and have revealed that there is a number of reasons which are behind these changes such as social norms towards sex, changes in law, divorce and civil partnership in addition to advances in technology and science.

2.2.1 Tension in Political norms:

After the Reform Act 1969, the number of divorce has flown fast so that the divorce rate is getting higher and higher because today it has become easier than in the past decades. While some people think that marriage is less successful nowadays⁴⁷, others believe that it is usually a success and it depends on married

⁴⁷ Cabinet Office /the Strategy Unit, Families in Britain, 2008, p. 85.

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couples because it is the legal way to have legitimate children and a stable family. Changes in legislation have led to the rise of new types of families. For instance, the British legislation has allowed even lesbian parents to take their own biological kids; laws of adoption have also permitted gay couples to found families with children; whereas, in 2007, a new law was issued and made the adoption of kids illegal for gay couples⁴⁸. Despite this fact, there are very few gay families who have given birth to kids. Changes in legislation have also contributed in changes in the circumstances of women employment⁴⁹.

More rights which are very significant are given to women. There are important effects on the division of labor within families at work places. In addition, there are numerous key legal rights of married and cohabited people; this latter provide an important example for understanding family law. Some British people think that marriage provides more security than cohabitation. In spite of the fact that marriage offers more security, some researchers confirm that people argue that divorce or separation as well as cohabitation should be treated equally to marriage. Moreover, there are certain people who claim that these phenomena should be in a high level support for the same legal treatment for cohabiting and married couples. The law commission wants to see couples who have cohabited for at least two years, given the equal rights as married couples to the protection of their finances in the cases of break-up or death such as change⁵⁰.

About twenty years ago, innumerable British persons thought that those who liked kids were required to get married; but, in 2008, this view was to decline. Although the public no longer feel that there is no necessity for marrying, lots of people see marriage in a positive way especially when kids are involved. Some people believe that it is good for fathers and mothers to be married just because of their kids. Various people deem that divorce is not considered as a big problem if kids are up of 16 years⁵¹.

⁴⁸ <http://www.communitycare.co.uk> (Tuesday, April 1st, 2015).

⁴⁹ Mori, Ipson. Op.cit, p. 15.

⁵⁰ Darwen, Joe, Cohabitation and the Law, London, p. 41.

⁵¹ <http://www.new.bbc.co.uk> (Friday, March 20th, 2015; 18:00).

2.2.2 Tension in Social Norms:

The growth of the nuclear family has been replaced by a group of non-traditional family structure, for instance step families, and cohabiting parents. All these new types of family structure have become so common that seven out of ten persons believe that pre-national sex is not wrong at all⁵². Equally, few families contend that there is a small social difference between being married and living together, yet other people consider that living with a partner shows just as much commitment as getting married. These results may be linked to the wrong thinking and beliefs by the unmarried couples who live together as if married people have the same rights as married couples, while few couples get married and other ones see marriage as a draft paper⁵³.

As the attitudes towards marriage have evolved, some religious leaders have been forced to mention these transformations, as well as talk about the problem of sexual activity before getting married. Though strict religious beliefs about the sexual activity out of marriage are to be upheld, nevertheless, the number of population with strong religious thinking has been decreased and the definition of sex in both of religion and society has influenced the timing of marriage.

2.5 The Mass Employment of Women:

One of the crucial drives behind the change in the attitudes of society towards the roles within families has been the rise of women in labour markets. Recently, changes in society including improved educational access for females, change in legislation, and the shift in social attitudes towards the roles of gender, have all paved the way for women's mass entry into the labour market⁵⁴.

Over the past 40 years, Britain has seen an almost continual growth in the proportion of women at work. The employment rate among women aged between 24 and 25 is up from 57% in 1975 to record high of 78% in 2017. This predominately reflects a rise in full-time employment from 29% in 1985 to 44% in 2017. These aggregate changes are highly the result of a big transformation in working patterns at particular points in the life cycle, with far more women in

⁵² Duncan's and Philips, Mc, "New Families", London, 2008 p. 18.

⁵³ James G and Park A, "Just a Piece of Paper", 2001, p. 20.

⁵⁴ Mori, Ipson. Op.cit, p. 17.

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employment over the course of their mid to late twentieth and early thirtieth century. This is in part because women these days are cohabiting and having kids both less frequently and later in life. Further, the share of females living with a partner or spouse by age 25 has declined from more than 80% in the 1940's to less than 60% for those who were born in 1970, even so the share of women born in 1975 who have given birth to at least one kid by age of 25 (31%) is around half that of women born in 1945 (60%). The increase in maternal employment has been largest among the partners of higher-earning men.

Forty years ago, mothers partnered with male in the bottom halves of man earnings distribution are equally likely to be in paid work themselves, with employment rates of around 60%. In this day and age, those figures are around 70% and 80% respectively. In other words, for every additional mother in work partnered with a higher earning man. In 2008, women's employment rate increased from 59% to 70%.⁵⁵ Regardless of women involvement in labor markets, they still carry the large burden of care and domestic responsibility within the family. Even though care is vital to the working family, the responsibilities of care can constitute a huge cost to the individual. Women face substantial penalties, in terms of pay and progression for taking time out of the labor market or reducing their hours of job to take care of their kids.

Countless females than ever are now able to combine between work and family. The current government has advocated the economic and social advantages of being a working female through the introduction of a number of initiatives designed to aid mothers back into the work force. These have included:

- *Extending paid maternity leave from 18 to 29 weeks.
- *Introducing a further optional 12 weeks, unpaid maternity leave.
- *Introducing paid paternity leave and additional paternity leave.
- *Introducing the right to request flexible working for carers and parents with kids less than 16 years.
- *The capacity to claim up to 80% of kids costs.

⁵⁵ Office for National Statistics «Working Lives», 2008, p. 13. www.statistics.gov.uk/cc//nugget.asp.

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*Increasing the provision of kids through the launch of a national kid-care strategy. Despite undertaking paid employment, quite a lot of women feel it is their role to be the primary carer for their children⁵⁶.

When seeking to combine employment and safeguard responsibility, kids are considered as an obstacle to enter into the labor market. Yet, there are several interdependencies that shape the choice and capacity of fathers and mothers to work. These contain employment practices, family friendly policies, partner support, the balance role within the household and the pressure⁵⁷ of society. Generally, women employment has caused family break up. Roy Wilkins⁵⁸ says: **the clock will not be turned back** (1957)⁵⁹.

2.6 The Impact of Technology:

Technology has played a vital part in reshaping the family by permitting families especially females to have a big control and flexibility over their lives and a capacity to plan for their futures. The technological advancement of household instruments has cut the time and effort needed to support a household. Additionally, the development of technology mainly computers have dropped flexibility in job opportunities. On one hand, today, a lot of parents are able to merge working at home with parental duties. On the other hand, children claim the quality of friendship among young people since it has declined through The **FBG** who spends much of their time in front of their phones and tablets screens. Too, they practice sports and play games out of their houses in order to breathe a fresh air⁶⁰.

2.7 The Impact of Changes on the Family:

No doubt, varied changes have exerted an impact on the British family. For example, tension in family, family and poverty, poor health and misery, government action on poverty, the balance of work and care in families. First, it is of paramount necessity to start with the impact of tension in family.

⁵⁶ Irson, Dolf. "Families that Work", London .2003,p.19

⁵⁷ See Jenkins.S 'Gender, Place and the Labour Market', London, (2004), 18.

⁵⁸ A prominent activist in the Civil Rights Movement in US.

⁵⁹ <https://www.blackpast.org>.

⁶⁰ Mori, Ipson. Op.cit, p. 19.

2.7.1 Tension in Family:

Generally speaking, the larger frequency of residual families is one of the consequences of the great marital tension or instability. The fall of the nuclear family has led to the increase of the stress and instability in modern families. The non-traditional families like step families and cohabiting fathers and mothers are more over hung to break down. Step families are improving rapidly. On the whole, most of kids stay with their mothers; four in five step families contain a natural mother and step- father⁶¹.

In addition, cohabiting fathers and mothers separate before their kids get five years and get another step father at eight years, then another one when he or she reaches the age of eleven. This means that the structure of a family can change many times however a kid is growing up. This instability has been combined to other issues such as: poverty, poor health and anti-social behavior.⁶² The second point deals with the effect of poverty on the family.

2.7.2 Family and Poverty:

Living in poverty means different things to different people. Poverty is not quite the same thing as having low income. People and families can have different fixed costs to contend with as well, such as kid-care, housing and costs associated with disability, besides different levels of caring or assets to draw upon⁶³. The income of a family makes a big impact upon the experiences of the people; there is not only a strong combination between lone parents and poverty but also cohabitation. About 30% of cohabiting respondents are suffering from poverty compared to 15% of married couples⁶⁴ living in a poor situation as well due to further issues for the future of kids for example low aspiration and education achievement, in addition to multiple disadvantages and poor living conditions. Among other things, the public is pessimistic about economy. About 17 % of people feel that the economic condition of the country will improve very fast; 39 % think their circumstances will get worst and just 14% feel that they will develop. For instance, two in five families

⁶¹ Tanya, Evans. "Fractured Families", op.cit, p. 17.

⁶² Mori, Ipson. Families in Britain, p.22.

⁶³ Cabinet Office (2008). www.nationalschool.gov.uk/policyhub/news-item/families-risk08.asp.

⁶⁴ Cabinet Office. Families in Britain (2008), p. 72.

with an annual income of less than 15,000 £ have suffered a lot from cold houses due to high energy costs⁶⁵.

In the 1970's, there was a rise of permanent lifetime inequalities and short term income risk. In 1977 about less than 6% of the population had incomes less than half the national average. From 1961 till 1979, all income groups grow up, whereas, from 1979 to 1991 average incomes rose about 36% and the poorest people see static incomes. Some factors which contributed to income inequality growth between the late 1970's and the beginning of 1990's have been mentioned as follows:

*A growing gap between high and low pay, with increasing premiums for skills and qualifications.

*The number of jobless households rising faster than overall official unemployment rates, with more households containing only one adult and growing polarization between no earner and dual earner couples.

*The 1980's price linking of benefits meant a falling behind the rest of the population when overall incomes rose. The third point tackles the influence of poor health and misery on the family.

2.7.3 Poor Health and Misery:

Though money is part and parcel in this life but cannot always bring or buy happiness⁶⁶ however, it can certainly make the life of people easier. From the places people live, to the food they buy, and how they travel, money is always considered as an important factor. Many families think of the important for certain health outcomes. It seems that kids in two-parent households have a good health and educational outcomes, but children reared by a lone parent family are more likely to suffer from sickness than those brought up in two-parent households. For example, children of lone parents whether single or widowed are likely to have a problem of a mental health when compared to those who live with cohabiting couples⁶⁷. Married fathers and mothers are too blissful in their lives; about nine in ten of them are satisfied; this is maybe because they are likely to have higher

⁶⁵ Save Children (February, 2008).<http://www.savethechildren.org.uk/em/41-4165.html>.

⁶⁶ [https://upjourney.com.\(December19th,2018\)](https://upjourney.com.(December19th,2018)).

⁶⁷ The Comelote Foundation (2005).

incomes and they are able to live in some places with less deprivation⁶⁸. The following point seeks to shed some light on the impact of Government Action on poverty, and the balance of work and care in families.

2.7.4: Government Action on Poverty, the Balance of Work and Care in families:

The researcher will first start tackling the impact of Government Action on poverty. Then, she will move on to the other points respectively.

2.7.4.1 Government Action on Poverty:

In recent years, the amount of money spent by government in order to help families has increased significantly, nonetheless, it has also been dramatically re-targeted, which has the impact of shifting support from one kind of families to others. Until 1999, the three key families's benefits are:

*A Child Benefit which started in 1975.

*Family Credit for low income working families.

*Married Man's allowance and it becomes the married couples allowance in 1990⁶⁹.

This structure had a lot of problems such as the family credit that could lead to a « poverty trap» as families increasing their earnings through job could lose almost as much in benefits. It did, but, focused on benefits on those at work and it incentivized marriage rather than cohabitation. In 1999, these advantages are reorganized by the current government initially into a Working Families Tax Credit (WFTC) and a Children's Tax Credit. The Working Tax Credit (WTC) is no longer a family benefit as it is available to all those in work with a low income including lone people with no dependents; whereas couples and single fathers and mothers do get additional credit. This method has a very different set of problems and issues. By jumping from a system based on tax allowances to other one based on payments.

⁶⁸ Mori, Ipson. Op.cit, p. 24.

⁶⁹ If both parents worked the principal earner received an allowance enhanced by 50% widows and single parents with dependent children received the full joint allowance.

Parents are much more focusing on work rather than on their families and this helps them too much to try to get rid of misery; seven in ten lone parent and couple families have managed to move out of poverty a year after transition into work⁷⁰.

Now, it is high time to embark on dealing with the impact of Government Action on Balance of Work and Care in Families.

2.7.4.2 Government Action on Balance of Work and Care in Families:

The changes in the dynamics of family have a deep impact on fathers and mothers' requirements of the welfare state, kid-care and early years' provision, and conditions of employment. Britain has had a national scheme of government funded paid maternity leave for 30 years.

In 1994, it has been progressively expanded to increase female's participation and retention in markets so as to support working parents. About 95 % of workers offer at least one of the six main flexible working arrangements to workers, and in 2003 there was a rise about 88%. Take up of these arrangements is also on the development; nine in ten workers reported that these arrangements were being used by employees, up from eight in ten during 2003⁷¹. From april 2009, the right to demand flexible job was available to fathers and mothers with kids up to 16 years old. More than that, there was an increasingly high take-up of formal and informal child-care as more parents spending their time at work. Some families have used few forms of kid-care or early years provision in the last year⁷². The take-up of early years education is almost universal among four years olds, currently standing at 97%, and very high among three years old, at 90%⁷³. Even so, some barriers still exist as twelve and half hours of free child-care per week which are always not enough to enable parents to work out. Now, it is about time to look into the impact of change on children of the Non-traditional Family.

⁷⁰ Barnes, M. Lyon, N. Millar, Jane. Employment Transitions and the Changes in Economic Circumstances of Families with Children. (2008). London, p.55.

⁷¹ See Hooker, H., Neathy, F. Casebourn, J. Munro, M. 'Third Work Life Balance Survey. (2007).

⁷² Kazimirski, A. Smith, R. Butt, S. Ireland, E. and Lloyd, E. 'Childcare and Early years Survey (2007).

⁷³ Lavallo, Families and Parenting Institute. London (2008).

2.7.5 The Impact of Change on Children of the Non-traditional Family:

Youth living without their real fathers are more likely to face problems specially the psychological ones; they are likely to begin to smoke at a very early age, drink alcohol and take drugs. Adding to that, they may be exposed to the exclusion from school because of too many absences at the age of sixteen. Subsequently, they are probable to suffer from joblessness, homelessness, cohabitation, having children without marriage, so they are more likely to lead a life of misery and stress. Not only are children going to suffer but parents as well and perhaps they are going to suffer more than their kids. For example, single mothers are suffering a lot from emotional and psychological problems. Hence, they list a high number of suicide and death as a reason of drinking and unsafe sex⁷⁴.

2.8 Government Restrictions towards Families:

Actually, a family is a personal sphere, and some members of the public may feel stronger and powerful. The individuals, not the government, that are assumed to shoulder the duty and the role of raising children. The public are not always aware of the role of government, nevertheless they often see services as being provided by their employers or child-care providers. Conversely, there is an increasing consensus that government has a role in ensuring fairness amongst all groups in the community, particularly those that are most vulnerable.

The shift towards the non-traditional family forms can lead to poor outcomes for families regarding health, well-being and poverty. Accordingly, the question that should be asked here is: should the government interfere in families and in case it should; what are the best ways to help them? The Labor Government grasped position in May 1997 promising a policy change towards a large range of areas. One of ten commitments in 1997; (The Promise of Manifesto), ‘we will help build strong families and strong communities’. In October 1998, the Home Office published a discussion document (Supporting Families) which proposed two main types of policy intervention. Firstly, there was a measure that aimed to provide direct support for families in sorts of measures to reduce the rate of poverty within twenty years and the latter contained measures such as the national child-care strategy,

⁷⁴ National Survey of Sexual Attitude and Life Style .[\(http://sexualattitudeandlifestyle.ac.uk\)](http://sexualattitudeandlifestyle.ac.uk).(22/04/2015,00:30).

which were very new in Britain; no previous British government had made such a promise.

Other important new policies include solutions and measures to back up and encourage single parents into paid employment with a base set for employment levels, otherwise, benefits for the poorest children (those in families receiving Income Support) have been growing basically⁷⁵. The responses to these types of proposals illustrate some of the difficulties inveterate in the development of an explicit family policy in post modern society. Thence, there are very different views about government intervention in family matters, mostly measures intended to strengthen their marriage which has been controversial because they seem to suggest that other family types as single parents, step families, are less acceptable and less deserving of support. Other solutions, such as the stress on reducing unemployment and swelling levels of employment for all parents, comprising lone fathers and mothers, have also been criticised for failing to recognize value the contribution made by women's unpaid care work within the family.

2.9 Conclusion:

Traditionally, marriage used to have a special status in British government and community. Marriage developed as a way to provide stability for families and for all society. Marriage is considered as a declaration of commitment which has public as well as private results. It is an institution that permits benefits not only to the couples but to society as a whole. This trust builds encouragements to make sacrifices for the best of the family. British government and society have supported the institution of marriage by giving it certain privileges and responsibilities, and by enforcing consequences for breaking marriage vows. By the emergence of new family formations and households, children are more likely to face all types of insufficiency of health condition, well-being, education and respect, which eventually lead them to commit crimes and criminal behaviors.

⁷⁵ <http://www.homeoffice-gov-uk>.

General Conclusion

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The British family has undergone numerous changes throughout history because of many factors: political, social, economic, educational, cultural, science and technology. In the very past, the British family was extended which means that it used to consist of grandparents, parents, children, grandchildren and so forth. Women used to stay at home doing the housework, rearing their children and serving their husbands, making dresses, embroidering etc ...whereas men used to be bread-winners. However, nowadays, the British family is no more extended since it has become nuclear namely it includes the parents and children only. If the old British family used to be numerous, the new one has turned to be small or even very small as it contains the parents and two children in the maximum; maybe one boy and one girl or two boys or two girls.

This extended essay comprises two chapters. The first chapter has sought to demonstrate that the nuclear family in Britain has been decreased and there is no specific definition of a « typical » family. It also includes an explanation of new family structures, the two types of family: the extended and the nuclear families and the roles of family members that have been changed. As for the second chapter, it has tried to discuss several issues about the most important factors that have contributed to the change in the British family; for example, women's liberation and their entry to the labor market, changes in legislation, social attitudes, customs and the advance of science and technology. In addition, it has dealt with the impacts of instability in families and how it has affected its members. Last but not least, it has also attempted to discuss the role of government and its relationship with families; for instance, when this latter should intervene and give help to them in order to lead good living conditions. People have been suffering a lot due to these changes especially women and their children.

As many males and females share their roles within the same home; it would be good to start pushing family policy towards a more egalitarian support of parenthood. Women were working outside homes however fathers were being close to their children; each one benefited from the other one; chiefly those brave old women who were very energetic in breaking open the slammer walls of the family in the place. Particularly, noisy on the topic of male leaving female would be up in arms at any suggestion that move to a more egalitarian society, this is mainly because the fundamental belief that underpinned family policy back to the 1940's was that men

General Conclusion

could not be trusted. It is a belief that is not only present in the British policy to this day, but one which continues to be impertinently expounded by British politicians and furthered by policy makers. In the end, this persuasion which has created a welfare system that sees mothers as carers than workers continues its stranglehold on the community.

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