

“Businesswomen” – Matriarchs in Mid-19th Century Yekaterinburg, Russia as Reflected in Demographic Data* **

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The nineteenth century introduced significant changes in the socio-economic and cultural development of Russia including the position of Russian women, especially among the business-oriented city dwellers. Their widows and unmarried daughters retained a privileged status for the rest of their lives, however, to run the business, they had to pay the guild fee – a significant amount to the city budget annually. The basis for the widows', their children's and household members' well-being was their financial and business expertise. Their active participation in the city's economic and social life manifested a preliminary meritocracy principle, in contrast to the life-long privileges of other social groups. Unlike their late husbands – widowed business matriarchs could not count on the support of their spouses in either business, housekeeping or family matters. Yet there were examples of successful businesses run by women. While the history of women's entrepreneurship in Moscow and St Petersburg has received coverage, the fate of these matriarchs in Ural region has not yet attracted scholars' attention. This pilot study focuses on the demographic characteristics of the Yekaterinburg businesswomen-matriarchs. Since the group is not big, and the potential for comparative study is limited, the authors rather focus on how the demographic data can be used in reconstructing the first businesswomen's life courses. They use data from the nineteenth century *Revizskie Skazki* for Yekaterinburg, the latest of which, 1858, has been transcribed into the electronic resource Ural Population Project (URAPP). The article presents arguments supporting the hypotheses that *kuptsy* (businesspeople) were the first to develop new demographic behaviour (nuclear family pattern). Most Yekaterinburg *kupets* girls married after reaching 20 years old; only 8 % of *kupets* females aged 40–49 remained maidens. Husbands

* The research funding from the Ministry of Science and Higher Education of the Russian Federation (Ural Federal University Program of Development within the “Priority-2030” Program) is gratefully acknowledged.

** Citation: Glavatskaya, E., Borovik, Ju. (2024). “Businesswomen” – Matriarchs in Mid-19th Century Yekaterinburg, Russia as Reflected in Demographic Data. In *Quaestio Rossica*. Vol. 12, № 3. P. 852–866. DOI 10.15826/qr.2024.3.912.

Цитирование: Glavatskaya E., Borovik Ju. “Businesswomen” – Matriarchs in Mid-19th Century Yekaterinburg, Russia as Reflected in Demographic Data // *Quaestio Rossica*. 2024. Vol. 12, № 3. P. 852–866. DOI 10.15826/qr.2024.3.912.

were on average 6 years older than their spouses, which increased the likelihood of early widowhood. The number of widows increased steadily, and by the age of 40 almost every second *kupets* woman was a widow and at age 50 more than 75 %. There were three main life trajectories for the widows depending on the age at widowhood, and the age and gender of their children. The authors focus on the life courses of those who did not remarry. The share of *kupets* families headed by women in 1858 Yekaterinburg was 16 %. Some of them joined the business while still married; others took over responsibility after their spouses' passing. Some business matriarchs kept their power over large families that included adult married sons. This could be due to financial circumstances, family arrangements, and the personal characteristics of domineering mothers. The research also reveals cases when three *kupets* widows composed a common households and ran successful business for decades.

Keywords: history of entrepreneurship, socio-economic development of Russia in the 19th century, urban family, historical demography, merchant class, matriarchs, tax census, Ural Population Project, URAPP

XIX век знаменовался значительными изменениями в социально-экономическом и культурном развитии России. Он также характеризовался изменением положения русской женщины, особенно в городах. Это в первую очередь касалось представительниц экономически активных сословий, прежде всего купчих. История женского предпринимательства в столичных городах и ряде центральных губерний империи получила освещение, судьбы женщин-предпринимателей на Урале пока не привлекли внимание историков. Небольшой размер этой социальной группы ограничивает возможности демографического анализа, поэтому данное исследование сфокусировано на информационном потенциале демографических источников для реконструкции жизненных траекторий купеческих вдов – «матриархов», возглавивших семьи и бизнес. Основой источниковой базы работы являются данные ревизий и переписей, в том числе ревизских сказок 1858 г., первичные материалы которых были транскрибированы в электронный ресурс «Население Урала (конец XIX – начало XX в.)». В результате проведенного анализа было установлено, что предписания закона и экономическое благополучие в условиях города создавали почву для изменения демографического поведения: большинство купеческих семей состояли из родителей и детей, и их средний размер не превышал 4,4 чел. Таким образом, нуклеарность была характерна не только для столичного купечества, но и для бизнес-семей в провинциальных городах. Средний возраст вступления в брак для девушек из купеческих семей составлял 20 лет. Мужья были старше своих избранниц в среднем на шесть лет, что увеличивало вероятность раннего вдовства. Из достигших 40 лет каждая четвертая купчиха уже была вдовой, а в возрастной группе 40–49 лет – каждая вторая. Нами были прослежены жизненные траектории тех из них, кто не вышли замуж повторно и возглавили семью и бизнес. Доля купеческих семей Екатеринбурга, возглавлявшихся женщинами в 1858 г., составляла 16 %, и в них проживало 11 % всего купеческого населения города. Некоторые купчихи приобщились

к бизнесу, еще будучи замужем, другие за неимением взрослых сыновей взяли на себя ответственность после смерти супругов. Были ситуации, при которых вдовствующие купчихи продолжали возглавлять большие семьи, включавшие и женатых сыновей. Это могло быть связано с финансовыми обстоятельствами, внутрисемейными договоренностями и личностными характеристиками властных матерей. Был также выявлен случай, когда вдовы приняли решение жить вместе и заниматься бизнесом. Результаты исследования показывают многих из представительниц купеческого сословия деятельными, успешными и стремившимися к лидерству.

Ключевые слова: история предпринимательства, социально-экономическое развитие России в XIX в., городская семья, историческая демография, купечество, матриархат, ревизские сказки, регистр населения Урала

The nineteenth century was marked by significant changes in the socio-economic and cultural development in Russia. While most population was rural and still lived in patriarchal families, the urban population started to experience noted demographic changes. One such change was the decreasing family size [Гончаров; Миронов; Троицкая; Стрекалов, Стрекалова]. The wealthy *kuptsy*¹ – *merchants* – were the first to develop new demographic behavior [Avdeev, Ulianova, Troitskaya]. This *soslovie* – social group² – was characterized by social and physical mobility, openness to modernization, and especially the distinct status of women in the household and family. The *kupets* represented a privileged, economically and socially active group, which had to confirm their status annually with successful business activity and paying city taxes. When inheriting the capital after their deceased parents and husbands, *kupets* women often became household heads, running the business and ruling the families [Ulianova, p. 10–15, 49–54]. Some widows remarried and changed their surnames and became difficult to identify in the tax censuses. Others became matriarchs and ran the business.

While the history of women's entrepreneurship in capital cities and central provinces of the empire has attracted scholarly attention, we pioneer studying the fate of women entrepreneurs in the Urals. There are at least two reasons for this situation: the first one is that the group of the entrepreneurs was not big enough for a comparative demographic study. Even in the biggest Ural city Yekaterinburg, their population was 30 times smaller than in Moscow. The second is the lack of sources. The local archive neither preserved claims to become a *kupets* nor the annual lists of *kupets*, which have become the bases for the research on Moscow business families. There are no contemporary diaries letting us reconstruct the social portrait and life courses of the first

¹ *Kupets* (noun, singular) usually translated as merchant. In the mid-nineteenth-century *kupets* meant a free person who was a member of the professional trade guild of a certain city, had capital from trade and business activities and paid 3–5 % from their announced capital to the city's budget.

² *Soslovie* in Russian, usually translated as 'estate'.

Ural businesswomen. Instead, we focus on how the demographic data can be used to reconstruct the first businesswomen's life courses.

We use the concept 'businesswomen' as a synonym for Russian *kupchikha* – which was the official word of the time to name female members of a *kupets* family. It did not necessarily mean that the woman was personally involved in her husband's or father's business, but rather that she belonged to the household that lived on the incomes from their business and enjoyed a particular social status.

Since early and almost compulsory marriage was the main life trajectory for Russian women in the mid-nineteenth century, we will analyze the female *kupets* population of Yekaterinburg through the prism of family and household structure. We will address several research questions: what was their age at marriage, what kind of families did they live in, what was their religious affiliation, and what strategies were developed after losing their husbands. Our special interest is the life trajectories of the business matriarchs – the *kupets* women registered as household heads.

We use the household concept as a synonym for Russian *domokhozyaistvo*, which was the main tax unit in nineteenth-century Russia. They had varying structures from nuclear family households to extended and multiple families households, with sizes varying from one to several dozens.

Sources

The study is based mainly on the nineteenth-century census data both aggregated and nominative. In order to reconstruct mid- nineteenth-century Yekaterinburg's socioeconomic landscape, we used a nationwide survey run by the state in 1860. Christian Mosel headed the team of officers collecting detailed information on Perm province [Мозель]. In addition, we used the 1887 city census aggregates, information from the regional newspapers and documents from the State Archive of Sverdlovsk Region [ГАСО].

The demographic part of the study is based on the 1858 *Revizskie Skazki* (hereinafter *RS*) – *Revizia* lists³ for Yekaterinburg city. These tax revisions contain information about selected population groups on the household level, updated regularly for taxation purposes. All *RS* were nominative, listing the first name, patronymic and family name for the head of the household, age, and social standing/status (*soslovie* – "estate") denoted as *meschane* – office clerks, individual craftsmen, and workers, *tsekhovye meschane* – guild artisans and *kuptsy* – merchants. Occasionally religious affiliation was indicated. For the rest of the family, only the first name was listed, together with the relation to the head of the household, age, and marital status. New family members and data about the deceased would be registered at each revision as well as updates about those who were not present with the reason for their absence (exile, conscription, moving to the husband's family in case of marriage, etc.). In this way, the revisions combined the

³ Also referred to as Poll-tax Registers (per capita revisions).

de-facto and the *de-jure* enumeration principles. The age information was updated according to the number of years since the previous revision might be inaccurate if a mistake was made at an earlier stage. We used alternative sources, when possible, to check the age information accuracy finding that in most cases, the age was accurate, and differences did not exceed one or two years. Unfortunately, the RS only included people with a particular social status, while information on cohabitants with a different social status was not always included. That limited our ability to reconstruct the whole household's composition.

The collection of the 1858 RS lists for Yekaterinburg city were found in the State Archive of Sverdlovsk Region and transcribed into the Ural Population Database – URAPP. The 1858 RS lists contained information on 131 *kupets* households with 566 persons (290 males and 276 females), representing the city's business elite and composing about 3% of its population. To reconstruct the life courses of the matriarchs, we used Yekaterinburg parish books records on weddings, deaths, and births and the 1832 and 1850 tax revisions manually, which have not been transcribed into the database yet.

Yekaterinburg's Social-economic and Religious Landscape

Yekaterinburg was founded in 1723 as a metallurgical plant. By the mid-nineteenth century, it had become the industrial center of the vast Perm province (almost 310 000 sq km) and its biggest city with a population of about 20,000.

It had the second biggest *kupets* population in Perm province after Shadrinsk – a grain market and grain-based alcohol production center. Yekaterinburg *kuptsy* were primarily engaged in fat-making, soap-making, candle-making production, large-scale transit trade and gold mining, which had been booming since the early nineteenth century. *Kupets* people were the only social group that did not inherit their status but obtained it due to their successful business activity. To become a *kupets* and get a certificate, a Russian citizen⁴ had to declare a capital sum and pay a certain percentage of it (4% in the mid-nineteenth century) to the state. If a *kupets* failed to pay the required amount or did not declare his capital for the next year before December 31 along with the required documents, his status (together with all his family members) automatically changed to that of a *meshchanin* – an ordinary city dweller until the next December, when the procedure was repeated. *Kupets* privileges, besides the right to trade and be elected to the city assemblies, were exemption from military service and corporal punishment. After a certain period of successful business, a top or first guild *kupets* could obtain the status of an honorable citizen, which would make him and his family closer to the nobility class, whose privileges were inherited.

⁴ According to Russian legislation (1807), a foreigner even if running a business in Russia could not become a *kupets*.

To prevent *kupets* attempts at protecting their male relatives from conscription, the law justified privileged status only for the close relatives and only on condition that they shared their accommodation. Thus, it was possible to get a *kupets* status for families composed of:

- Parents and their children living together with their sons, even if married and with children, and unmarried daughters⁵;
- Widows living together with their sons, even married and with children, and unmarried daughters;
- Brothers and their unmarried sisters.

Depending on the capital announced, they could belong to one of the three guilds: the first guild members' possessions exceeded 50 000 Rubles; the second guild members had a capital over 20 000 Rub.; and the third – over 8 000 Rub. Once they received a certain guild certificate, some could hide their real capital to lower their payments, however putting themselves at risk of fines and eventual imprisonment⁶. A *kupets* could change their guild membership, or join a certain guild in another city, including Moscow and St Petersburg due to a personal situation or commercial logistics.

As a booming center of metal production, Yekaterinburg had attracted the Old Believers, dissenters from the Russian Orthodox Church starting in the seventeenth century. Yekaterinburg owes them much of its rapid development and prosperity in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. When the state initiated a new wave of religious persecutions, some of the Old Believers joined *Edinoverie* – the united Church. They subordinated to the Orthodox (State) Church bishops in return for maintaining their seventeenth-century pre-reform liturgies and rituals. By the mid-nineteenth century, the city had twelve Russian Orthodox churches, two Edinoverie churches, and the Old Believers had two chapels for prayer. There was also a Lutheran church and a Catholic chapel founded by parishioners from European countries and local descendants of exiled prisoners during the Northern War or workers contracted by the state since the eighteenth century. Both the Lutheran and Catholic communities, developed into the city's established religious institutions by the mid-nineteenth century.

Yekaterinburg *Kupets*: Main Characteristics

According to the URAPP database, there were 131 certified *kupets* in Yekaterinburg 26 % of them stated that they were Old Believers or Edinoverie Church members; 22 % stated they were Orthodox (State) Church members, while 52 % of the 1858 RS lists did not have religious affiliation registered. We assume that many of them were members of the State Church and being the majority felt no need to specify it, since it was

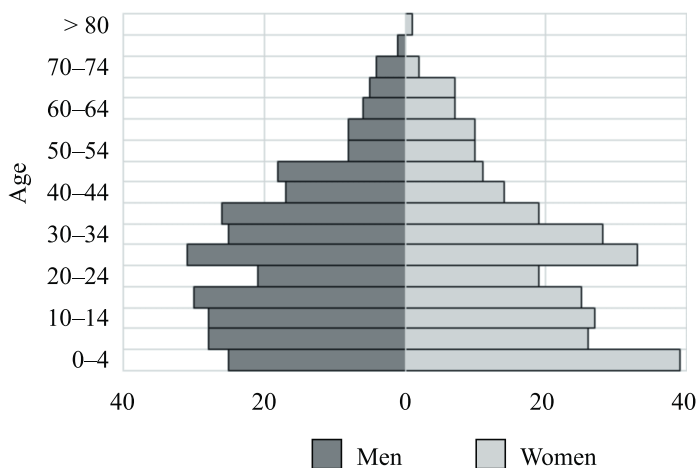
⁵ After getting married, women received their husband's social status.

⁶ Extensive analyses of the legislation in the early nineteenth century was made by E. Bannikova [Банникова].

not required information. However, some Old Believers may have decided not to manifest their religious affiliation for safety reasons. Eight *kupets* were Lutherans and two – Catholics.

According to the 1858 RS, most of Yekaterinburg *kupets* – 101 belonged to the third guild; 29 were members of the second guild, and one was registered as a first guild member [URAPP]. Two years later, according to the Mosel survey, the Yekaterinburg *kupets* population had increased and reached 157 persons⁷: 115 of them represented the third guild and could trade in Yekaterinburg and its region; 39 belonged to the second guild and conducted wholesale and retail trade in the domestic market; three belonged to the first guild and had a right to trade with foreign countries [Мозель, p. 727–731].

According to the 1858 RS, the Yekaterinburg *kupets* population had a typical age structure: children under 15 years old composed more than one third of the population (37,69 %); the average age of the male *kupets* was 27,0 and 25,9 among the female. There was a noted gender misbalance in the age group under 4 (fig. 1), which could be explained by the high infant and child mortality that affected boys more than the girls [Glavatskaya, Zabolotnykh et al.].



1. Yekaterinburg *kupets*: age-gender pyramid [URAPP]

Most Ekaterinburg *kupets* (56,5 %) lived in nuclear families composed of parents with their children. This is a somewhat higher proportion than in Moscow, where according to the 1858 RS 47,9 % of the *kupets* households were nuclear with an average size of 4–5 persons. The share of multiple or extended households together was 26 % in Yekaterinburg against 24,7 % – in Moscow (table).

⁷ It is worth noting that there were only 83 *kupets* in Perm – the province's capital.

Kupets families in Yekaterinburg and Moscow (1858)*

Type	Yekaterinburg		Moscow
	N (%)	Average size	%
Nuclear	74 (56,5)	3,6	53,3
Multiple (several couples)	20 (15,3)	9,8	20,1
Singles ⁸	19 (14,5)	1	18,5
Extended (couple & not married relatives)	14 (10,7)	5,1	4,6
Relatives not a couple	4 (3,1)	3,3	3,4
Total	131 (100)	4,3	3 875 (100)

* Source: For Yekaterinburg – [URAPP]; For Moscow – [Троицкая, с. 620].

Yekaterinburg *kupets* had the highest share of nuclear families compared with other city dwellers – *meshchane* (32 %) and *tsekhovye meshchane* (30 %) [Боровик, с. 210, 217]. That supports the hypothesis that *kupets* were the first to develop a new demographic behavior independently whether they lived in the capital or in the provincial city. It is worth noting that most of the Old Believers – 53 % lived in nuclear families as well. However, there were exceptions with big families which we will present later.

Female *Kupets* Life Courses

According to the URAPP data, most Yekaterinburg *kupets* females (67,4 %) were married, while maidens and widows made up almost equal shares of 16,6 and 15.4 % respectively. Yekaterinburg *kupets* women married rather young: over 64.3 % of those aged 17–19 in 1858 were already married. In the age group 30–39 only 10.6 % of *kupets* women were maidens but still had some prospects to get a husband, and in the age group 40–49 the share of those never married was only 8 %. In more than half of the cases (56 %) spouses had minimal age differences, but on average, husbands were 6.2 years older than their wives. Due to the age difference at marriage and low life expectancy, especially among men, the share of *kupets* widows steadily increased reaching 44 % in the age group older than 39 and 75 % among women aged over 49. The youngest *kupets* widows registered in 1858 RS were Elisaveta Nurova (24) and Leonida Zhokova (26). Elisaveta lost her husband Fotii (29) after five years of marriage soon after their daughter was born in 1851. Leonida became a widow with a little son after 6 years of marriage; her husband was 10 years older. The longest marriages among the Yekaterinburg *kupets*, altogether four cases in 1858 RS, lasted almost 30 years [URAPP].

⁸ Single persons living on their own. Among them five widows and a maiden (48 years old).

According to the late nineteenth – early twentieth century Yekaterinburg church books (weddings and deaths records), the average marriage among the *kupets* lasted less than 17 years [Вишневская, Боровик].

If they lost their husband rather soon into the marriage, the widow could stay on her own or with her parents-in-law. Some had a chance to remarry, especially if childless. Those who remarried changed their surnames, which made them invisible for further observation. According to the 1858 RS, five Yekaterinburg *kupets* widows (aged 38–64) lived on their own. They all possessed properties, which they could rent out.

If the marriage had lasted long enough, there was a chance that an adult son would take care of both the business and the aging widowed mother. According to the 1858 RS, there were eight such *kupets* families. The youngest “patriarch” was 24-year-old bachelor Vladimir Blokhin living together with his 49-year-old widowed mother Elizaveta Blokhina. Unfortunately, there is no nominative census data after 1858 where we can trace the future development of this household. However, thanks to the church records we know that Vladimir married and fathered five children, so his mother most likely enjoyed her life surrounded by grandchildren [ГАСО. Ф. 6. Оп. 9. Л. 884, 33об. –35]. Just like the 58-year-old Pelageia Blokhina, a widow who lived in a household headed by her 35-year-old son, daughter-in-law (28) and four grandchildren aged from one month to 9 years old [URAPP].

Most Yekaterinburg *kupets* widows became matriarchs taking care of both their late husband’s business and their family. They inherited the capital and guild status of the deceased husbands. According to the 1858 RS, 21 *kupets* families (16% of all *kupets* families of the city) were headed by matriarchs. These women either just kept their social status as *kupets* widows or managed to obtain their own *kupets* status, guild membership, and the right to run the business by paying fees annually. We cannot be sure that all 21 *kupets* widows got a certificate, however, we have information on successful matriarch business around the 1850s and three decades later⁹. Altogether, 64 persons (11% of Yekaterinburg’s *kupets* population) lived in families headed by women. Except the 49-year-old maiden Natalia Vasilyevna Blokhina, all the matriarchs were widows aged between 27 and 84.

Other *kupets* women ran businesses while being married, as was the case with Avdotia Gal’tsova. We traced her life course from her birth in 1800 until the mid-1860s. She helped her husband with hotel business and maintained it after his death in the 1850s. Avdotia signed a contract with the city Duma to run a hotel and a restaurant in the very city center; she also owned two workshops and rented out seven rooms. To confirm her business rights, she paid the annual guild fee and other taxes. According to the 1858 RS, she had four sons: 23, 15, 13 and 8 years old. Business

⁹ We express our gratitude to Vladimir Mikityuk, senior researcher at the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, who kindly shared unpublished information on some matriarchs.

was obviously going well since in the early 1860s, Avdotia established her second hotel called "Moskva" next to the first one named "Rim".

A combination of data from several tax revisions allows us to illustrate the Yekaterinburg business matriarchs' life courses. Nine of them did not have sons or they were too young for the commission of leadership. One of them was Marfa, born in 1824 to a priest's family. Before reaching the age of twenty, she married *kupets* Nifont Egorov, who was 9 years older. Marfa moved to her husband's family to live together with her parents-in-law (the father was a member of the second guild) and two sisters-in-law. After five years of marriage, Marfa gave birth to a daughter Taisia but three years later in 1854 her husband died only 40 years old, and she became a widow at the age of 30. Both her parents-in-law died one after another and her sisters-in-law got married. According to the 1858 RS, Marfa was a widow living with her 9-year-old daughter in the house that she had inherited. She managed to keep the business and second guild membership, probably due to her fiduciary's help who signed the 1858 RS list on her behalf [URAPP. DB № 637–638].

The family headed by Leonida born in 1825 represents a similar case. In 1848, she married *kupets* Antipa Zhukov, who was 10 years older, and the next year gave birth to their son Nikolai. The following year her husband died at only 36 years old, leaving a 26-year-old widow with an infant. According to the 1858 RS, Leonida did not remarry; she took care of the child and obviously of the business, since in 1858, she filed the RS list on her own where she was listed as a member of the second guild. In the early 1860s, Leonida traded in grain, hemp, and other goods, and had shares in gold mining [МИКИТЮК].

Five matriarchs headed extended families that included adult married sons. One of them was a 58-year-old Alexandra Mikhailovna, born in 1800, married aged 21 to *kupets* Andrei Petrov. In this marriage, which lasted about 16 years, she mothered at least three sons and two daughters, before she lost her husband Andrei and became the widowed head of a *kupets* family in 1838. Her firstborn son Ivan must have been around 16 years old. Alexandra inherited her late husband's business and became a co-owner of a lard and candle factory; traded in imported wine and had a fruit shop¹⁰. Alexandra did not remarry and raised her five children on her own. One of the daughters and a son died in 1851, both were between 13 and 28 years old. Alexandra managed to arrange her other daughter's marriage, who left the family between 1851 and 1858. The widow also arranged both her sons' marriages: the younger one – Mikhail established a separate household, became a *kupets* and fathered a daughter. According to the 1858 RS, a 58-year-old widow Alexandra, still registered as head of the household, which included her firstborn 36-year-old son Ivan, married to a 22-year-old Natalia [URAPP. DB № 133–140]. We can assume that at the time of Alexandra's widowhood, the 16-year-old Ivan was not ready for leadership. Years later, Alexandra either did not trust her adult and already married

¹⁰ Information based on Vladimir Mikityuk's archival studies, not published.

son's competence or did not want to transfer leadership to him, likely due to the fear that she would have to reckon with the opinion of her daughter-in-law Natalia, who would become head of the entire female part of the family.

Similar reasons likely motivated the 67-year-old Marfa Ivanovna Skornyakova who was head of the biggest *kupets* family in Yekaterinburg, which included eleven members in 1858 [URAPP. DB № 470–481]. Marfa was born in 1790–91 to a family of Old Believers. She married Nazar Skorniakov – a member of the third guild and mothered at least seven children, including the twins Mikhei and Mastrodeia. When the twins were around seven years old, Marfa became a widow. Around that time, her older son Larion, aged about 24, married peasant girl Irina and soon fathered two daughters. At the age of 56, Marfa lost two sons – Pavel and Iosif. According to the 1850 RS, she was a 60-year-old, widowed matriarch living with her five adult children. Her daughter-in-law Irina and granddaughters Anna (7) and Nastasia (4) were not listed as family members in Marfa's 1850 RS list. That could be due to their parents' religious affiliation. The Old Believers did not have priests; therefore, their partnership was not officially recognized. Not being a lawful wife, Irina and her daughters could not get the status of *kupets* family members or be listed in the RS among the *kupets*. At around 1853, Marfa arranged her daughter Anna's marriage. According to the 1858 RS, Marfa headed a *kupets* family, composed of a married son Larion (36), his wife Irina, and their 5 children; son Kiprian (35) and twins Mastrodeia (25) and Mikhei (25). Larion and Irina had obviously managed to legitimize their marriage in-between the Revizions¹¹. We may assume that the family did not have enough capital to provide Kiprian and Mikhei with their own business and *kupets* status. Without that, their freedom from their mother as head of the family would have come along with military service obligations. We can also assume that all the three brothers were used to living under their mother's rule and preferred to preserve the *status quo*.

An interesting household consisting of non-blood relatives living together presented the case of Fedosia born around 1797. She married the prominent Old Believer *kupets* Nikon Kalashnikov and gave birth to a son Ivan in 1822. Fifteen years later being 40 years old she lost her husband but managed not only to keep her status as a member of the second guild but also to erect a new house made of stone. There was enough capital to let her son Ivan establish a household of his own. Since 1844 he did not appear in his mother's RS. At that time, the household headed by Fedosia included her late husband's younger brother Kozma, his wife Alexandra and a 12-year-old foundling that Fedosia took care of. After Kozma died, the two widows – sisters-in-law – stayed together and later the third widow – Alexandra's daughter-in-law Anna, whose husband had died in 1857, joined them. According to the 1858 RS, 61-year-old Fedosia was head of the household, consisting of three widows – sisters-in-law and a daughter-in-law. The foundling, who then must have been over 20 years old, was not listed

¹¹ We analyzed the Old Believer marriage patterns in a separate paper [Glavatskaya, Borovik].

in her Revision list. He did not have a *kupets* status and could have been conscripted. The widows ran the inherited business successfully: according to the city property lists, Fedosia owned two shops at the central shopping center – Gostiny Dvor and got income from trade and rental premises. Her daughter-in-law Anna owned a mansion in the city center, she traded in flour and semolina. The third widow Alexandra also ran a business [ТАСО. Ф. 8. Оп. 1. Д. 1881. Л. 116; URAPP. DB № 191–192; Боровик, с. 160, 175].

Results

Being one of the main industrial centers in Perm province, Yekaterinburg had significant segments of business people among its citizens. In the mid-nineteenth century *kupets* composed more than 3 % of the city's population and played an important role in its industrial, social, and cultural development. The individual level data based on the 1858 RS lists transcribed into the URAPP dataset combined with other nineteenth-century census-like materials allows for demographic analyses of the *kupets* population and the reconstruction of the business matriarchs' life courses. The Yekaterinburg *kupets* population had a typical age structure with a noted gender misbalance in the age group 0–4 and a high (up to 30 %) share of children under 16 years old.

Our analysis shows that most *kupets* women married at a rather early age of around 20, while their husbands were on average 6.2 years older, and very few never married. Even if there were extended families and big households that included several couples and more than 10 members, the majority of *kupets* households (56,5 %) were nuclear families – composed of parents and children – 4.4 persons on average living together. The share of nuclear families among other *soslovie* was around 30 %, supporting the hypothesis that *kupets* pioneered new demographic behavior oriented towards a nuclear family pattern whether they lived in the national capital or in a provincial city.

Due to the age difference at marriage and high male mortality, the average *kupets* marriage lasted not more than 16.5 years. The number of widows increased steadily, and by the age 40, almost every second *kupets* woman was a widow and at the age 50, the number exceeded 75 %. There were three main life trajectories for the widows depending on the age at widowhood, age and gender of their children. The youngest ones and with no children could remarry and therefore change their surnames, which would prevent further observation. The transcription of 1852 RS and church records for the period between the Revisions however would likely help trace some of those who remarried in Yekaterinburg. They could also stay with in-laws or live on their own. Widows who had adult sons able to take over the leadership in the family and business, could stay with them. We found eight such cases in the 1858 RS. However, most *kupets* widows preferred to become matriarchs and take care of both the children and the business themselves. A condition for the well-being of matriarchs, their children and other family members was the ability of these businesswomen to understand the nuances of the

business. Their active participation in the economic and social life was a clear manifestation of the meritocracy principle, in contrast to representatives of nobility, whose status was lifelong and inherited. Unlike their late husbands, *kupets* – matriarchs could not count on the support of a spouse in business, housekeeping or family matters.

Families headed by women embraced 11 % of Yekaterinburg's *kupets* population in 1858. Family composition was changing over the years, but widows kept their leading status. Most such matriarchs were widows with young sons – infants or teenagers not ready to become head of the family, or did not have sons at all. One of the matriarchs lived with her sister-in-law and daughter-in-law. However, some matriarchs headed extended families that included adult married sons; they likely did not want to lose their leading position in the house and rely on their son's competence and daughter-in-law's mercy, who would become head of the entire female part of the family.

Six women registered as heads of families were living on their own according to the 1858 RS. Since we have no data on their residence and close relatives, we cannot be sure if a single widow or maiden, especially an Old Believer, indeed lived on her own and ran an independent household. Being literate, she could have organized a cloister in her house for co-religionists or home prayer services, which would have helped strengthen her status among the co-religionists. For example, *kupets* widow Evgenia Tupikova was known not only for arranging Christmas parties for children but also for running a cloister for the Old Believers in the early twentieth century. Field research among the Ural Old Believers in the 1980s proved that in many cases, single aging women's houses were used for prayer meetings. Therefore, personal biographies should be studied more closely especially in case of the Old Believers.

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The article was submitted on 01.04.2024