

# **THE MISSING LINK: CENTRAL EUROPEAN FAMILY PATTERN AND THE RECONSIDERATION OF P. LASLETT'S HYPOTHESES**

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In 1959, on his sabbatical to the United States, Peter Laslett discovered most unusual census type listings for the Nottinghamshire village of Clayworth, followed subsequently by his finding of comparable nominative listing for the community of Cogenhoe. In 1960, almost at the same time as Laslett's initial inquiry, Jozef Matuszewski, the Polish historian published an extensive and excellent-quality listing of inhabitants from the 1766 town of Szubin and its adjacent villages in the western part of historical Kingdom of Poland. The implications of what seemed to be the historians search for materials suitable for investigation into various aspects of the social history were, however, quite different in these two examples.

For Laslett the finding of the Clayworth and Cogenhoe listings was his specific 'road to Damascus' that turned his attention from the history of political thought toward the investigation of historical social structures. It has led him to the establishment of the new history of the coresident group in early modern England as the second important research programme of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, in addition to its original attempts to recover the history of English population. It was within this programme that the development of an ingenious classification scheme for comparing family forms through time and across cultures have been developed and then applied to the quantitative analysis of dozens of English communities. Most of all, however, Laslett's initial insights have subsequently encouraged him and his colleagues to put forward several influential hypotheses regarding the course of family development in preindustrial Europe and to propose a broad framework for encompassing the geography of family forms on the continent.

Unfortunately enough, in Poland the course of events after the publication of the first 'list of souls' took different direction. Although after 1960 the importance of studying the lists of parishioners for understanding demographic past has been recognized as Polish historical demography was reaching maturity, the history of household structure as an autonomous research topic has remained largely unrecognized. It was only during the 1990s that Polish scholars took advantage of examining the lists of inhabitants on a larger scale and tried to link their empirical work to the European debates. In consequence, during the most formative decades of 1970s and 1980s when the framework for the analysis of geography of family forms and household formation rules in Europe was being set up, and when all the hottest debates were taking place, the picture of Central European family forms in the international academic literature was influenced predominantly by the foreign discourse. It will be argued here that during the last three decades the topic of family forms in Central Europe – and this

applies specifically to historical Polish territories - have suffered both from neglect and from the perils of over-generalization.

**So, what would we know** if all we knew about Central European family structures was that we had read in the books and articles written in English-language literature?

First, we would learn that the European continent contained within its area the greatest possible extremes in household composition. This observation has inevitably led to the researchers' longstanding preoccupation with establishing borderlines and distinguishing between the area of the allegedly „unique” European pattern, and other zones. John Hajnal has been the most influential in developing the viewpoint according to which preindustrial Europe should have been seen as containing two sharply contrasted family systems. Starting from Hajnal's hypothesis, Peter Laslett tentatively divided Europe into four broad geographical zones, each with its particular family system. He retained Hajnal's view that Western Europe was „unique” in its emphasis on the nuclear family household, but divided the rest of the continent into three areas, each having more complex families than in the West. This model came to substitute – or rather elaborate, the previously accepted one of two regions with the symbolic demarcation line running roughly from St. Petersburg to Trieste.

Since Hajnal's and Laslett's pathbreaking studies the research field has witnessed the genres of revisionists and has undergone challenges and transformations. Although Hajnal's original intuitive insights generally continue to be acknowledged by researchers, Laslett's attempts to delineate the geography of family forms in Europe on the basis of inter-cultural and transhistorical comparisons of household lists have met more severe criticism over the years<sup>1</sup>. As, following the publication of the 1972 and 1983 Cambridge seminal volumes the amount of data collected has multiplied, some scholars found themselves increasingly compelled to reject the very attempt of branding major areas of Europe as having a particular type of household system. Some researchers turned into developmental approach to changing family structures and family and individual life-cycles. The others focused on the investigation of localized economic, cultural and institutional settings in which particular family forms have been embodied. Recently, the studies linking broadly defined household systems with wider questions of well-being of families and individuals have also began to flourish. Much of the newest approach to household and family behaviors now operates within Eurasian comparative setting, shifting attention away from the search for patterns and

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<sup>1</sup> The justice should be given to Laslett, who in several papers tried to respond to his critics, and finally withdrawn some of his hypotheses. See, e.g. Laslett, 1999.

regularities within Europe to inter-continental comparisons. This approach, stimulating as it was, has led to the deterioration of further interests in investigating and discussing Central and Eastern European family systems<sup>2</sup>.

This withdrawal from original attempts to regionalize family forms in historic Europe left some crucial aspects of the understanding of European family systems out of sight. First, in all the older debates the place of Central Europe was rather ambiguous, as it has been portrayed as being somewhere between the extremes of the western and eastern types. But these continent-wide typologies were never concerned overmuch with describing precisely where the „west” ended and where the „east” began. It is also clear that Laslett’s generalizations about Central European family structures – as expressed in his article from 1983, must be considered as highly speculative<sup>3</sup>. It is worth reporting here that in all his published articles and chapters as well working papers known to me, Laslett made use of only one household listing from historic Poland — the largest political entity in Central European region well until 1790s. It should be kept in mind, however, that by 1983 there were at least four extensive and good-quality household lists **published** in the Polish historical demographic literature that could be easily analyzed with the use of his classification scheme. More surprisingly, Laslett referred to the nominative list of parishioners from Lesnica, the list of souls which after scrutinized investigation I decided to exclude from my own dataset as unreliable for the analysis of family structure. Leaving apart my criticism, however, the figures from Lesnica as reported by Laslett seemed to speak in bold about the predominant family pattern, as according to the listing from 1720 only 5% of all households in the parish were of complex structure, while nuclear ones made up more than 92% of the whole sample. Both figures were hardly ever attained by 64 English settlements investigated by Laslett in ‘Statistical Studies of Historical Social Structure’. Although in his writings from the late 1970s Laslett recognized the resemblance of the Polish and English patterns (Laslett 1978, p. 90-91) and hypothesized the existence of the large ‘intermediary area’ that would have

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<sup>2</sup> Few, but valuable exceptions are: Cerman, 2001; Dennison, 2003; Plakans, 2001; Polla, 2003. Apart from empirical findings, much of Plakans’ writings contain a number of stimulating, but yet not realized research postulates for a fruitful approach to the history of the family in Central and Eastern Europe (e.g. Plakans, 2002). English economic historians have recently re-discovered the importance of studying central and eastern European peasant societies for understanding of the boundaries of “modern economic culture” in historic Europe; see e.g. Ogilvie, 2000, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Laslett did not make use of any sources from historic Poland — the largest political entity in the region until 1790s (Laslett, 1983, p. 526–529). However, by 1983 there were at least four extensive and of good quality household lists **published** in the Polish historical demographic literature that could be easily analyzed with the use of Laslett’s classification scheme. See: Borowski, 1976; Kumor, 1975; Matuszewski, 1960; Szczypiorski, 1963. No use of them has also been reported in the only Polish contribution to the 1983 volume (see Kochanowicz, 1983).

included Poland (1977, p. 16), nevertheless he continued to insist that ‘the peculiarity of English settlements [was] the paucity of multiple households’ (Laslett, 1978, p. 90). In 1983, speaking broadly about the relationship between family systems and socioeconomic change, he stated explicitly that “For us the point of importance is that the Japanese, the Russians, or even the Italians and the Poles, in so far as they have adopted industrialism as a way of life, may not be in the same position in respect to industrial culture as the west Europeans themselves. The evidence we have surveyed would seem to imply that neo-local tendencies were never part and parcel of the historical social structure of these societies as they have been for the west Europeans” (Laslett 1983, p. 559).

Meanwhile, however, Mitterauer and Kaser have elegantly refashioned Laslett’s and Hajnal’s reasoning and argued for an **important transitional cultural zone** between West and East European family patterns (**MAP**). According to them it was so called *Hufenverfassung* system, which used the impartible *Hufe* (the *manus* or hide) as the principal form of peasant holding that had formed the foundation for unique European household formation pattern in Western, Central but only in some parts of Eastern Europe<sup>4</sup>. As both Mitterauer and Kaser maintain, the *Hufenverfassung* system has been spread over part of Eastern Europe (the Baltic, east Prussia, Pomerania, Brandenburg, Silesia, Bohemia-Moravia, upper Hungary, parts of west Hungary, lower Austria, Styria, and Slovenia) due to German colonization movement of the Middle Ages and divided not only two marriage and household formation patterns, but also different systems of kinship and inheritance<sup>5</sup>.

Highly tentative but with far reaching consequences, again, the concept of „Hajnal-Mitterauer’s line” has not yet been tested sufficiently with data from the territories its authors were concerned with. Partial support in reconsideration of family forms and family behaviors in Central Europe has been recently yielded thanks to highly valuable contributions from M. Cerman and other people related with Austrian-Czech research project. However, as these scholars referred mainly to confined geographical space of Bohemia and Austria, they were simply not in a position to thoroughly check the existence of supposed transitional zone that crossed much of the historical Polish territories.

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<sup>4</sup> According to them, the system implied one married couple per farmstead as a basic rule, no marriage previous to succession of property, frequent handing over of farmsteads through remarriage of a widow, retirement (*Ausgedinge*) as a form of maintenance of the parents and, above all, domestic service as a flexible form of labour supplementation according to the individual needs of the farmstead (Kaser, 2000, p. 67-74).

<sup>5</sup> According to German nationalist view of peasants societies from 1930s, a *Hufenverfassung* pattern was specific to German and other „Germanic” rural societies and was distinguished from their Slavic and western European counterparts (Ipsen, 1933).

The major implication of what I have presented so far is that the only way to locate precisely the „transitional zone” between the „unique” European and other family patterns (if such really exists) is through the detailed (spatial) analysis of family forms on the vast territories of historical Poland. The European family history seems to be in urgent need to do so as in international literature family forms in Central Europe continue to be included by induction in well-established generalizations about Eastern Europe or even Asian societies. Burguiere, for example, stated in 1986 that: *“From Serbia in the south to Courland or estonie in the north, passing through Poland and Russia, one encounters certain common features: a household size which is much larger than in the West, and a strong propensity for multiple households. These are two characteristics which carry to the extreme the trends already visible in Central Europe”* (v.2, p. 38). M. Hartman, an American historian, in her highly interpretive book ‘Household and the making of history’, published recently by Cambridge University Press, devotes no space to the analysis of neither Central nor Eastern European household forms, but anyhow finds herself convinced to argue that northwest European household formation pattern existed in just one small region of the world (Hartmann, p. 82). This is exactly due to the unwarranted assumptions of these kind that the mistification of Central European household behaviors continues to flourish, thus providing yet another unproven piece of evidence for historical stereotypes.

In this contribution my aim is that of making a preliminary but anyhow decisive step towards reassessing stereotypes regarding peasant residential patterns in Central Europe, particularly on western and central parts of what was the historical Polish territories. In what follows my intention will be to make you acquainted with my research on Central European family patterns as it had evolved from my original PhD research, through first attempts to set up broader comparative perspective, and finally to my current Marie Curie project. However, it must be stated with regards to the latter that only general, and still preliminary findings will be presented today. The size and the character of the sample and its highly variable geographical distribution may well serve to analyze a wide array of very complex issues which all deserve much more attention that can be given in this introductory presentation. My communication with Richard makes me optimistic in planning more detailed presentation for you for the middle of May.

**My interests in the history of household** structure date back to 2001, when I was about to write my PhD dissertation about Upper Silesian parish of Bujakow.

Originally designed as a classic family reconstitution study, incidentally it turned out to be the micro-exemplary test of existing hypotheses regarding family forms in Europe after my discovery of sequential listings of households in the parish. For several reasons, the parish of Bujakow created an excellent context for such an endeavour. First, Bujakow „communion books” from between 1766 and 1803 allowed for systematic structural and dynamic investigation into household and inheritance patterns, while the parish registers available for more extended period made it possible to reveal detailed information on marriage ages. Second: not only did the parish lie exactly within the area of supposed transitional zone, but the whole Upper Silesian region has been considered as retaining its demographically borderland character through 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries. The parish’ institutional setting created another variable of interest in studying marriage and household behaviors, as it was situated within the system of manorial control with compulsory labour typical for many other serfdom societies in Central Europe. What I have learned from studying this borderland community, can be summarized briefly as follows (and anybody wishing to know more details about this research is invited to look into the forthcoming first issue of the History of the Family Quarterly, where the extensive piece is gonna be published very soon).

Although Bujakow communion books made it impossible to analyze the proportions of married in the population as they did not designate the ages of household members, the investigation into ages at which marriages have been contracted in the parish brought out the results interesting enough. (**TABLE 1**) An average age at first marriage for males was slightly above 26 years and remained nearly constant between 1765 and 1859. The corresponding estimates for women show a modest decline in mean age at marriage from 23 years in 18<sup>th</sup> century to 22 years in the first six decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. An examination of decennial means not only confirmed the slight but consequent decrease in female age at first marriages during the first decades of the nineteenth century, but also pointed out it have occurred essentially during the period that must had witnessed immediate consequences of the abolition of peasants’ hereditary subjection (1801-1840). Slightly different tendencies took place among males in Bujakow. While the mean values of their marriage age show only a very slight variation through all decades from 1765 to 1859 (1765-1770; 1851-59 as exceptions), the distribution of their marriages by the age at the time of the wedding reveals a significant compositional shift from younger to older age group occurring during the first part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (you may consider looking at **FIG 1a** and **1b**). Additionally, there is also an indication that a slight increase in marriage ages in Bujakow, as well as in other Upper Silesian communities during 1850s, may represent a transitional pattern toward more delayed

marriages common to many Central European populations at the turn of the nineteenth century.

The data on marriage from Bujakow stands for a generally representative pattern not only for much of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Upper Silesia (although not for its westward Lower part) but also for the parts of western and northwestern Kingdom of Poland (then Polish territories under different sovereignties). It is worth keeping in mind that when describing the systems of early marriage, Hajnal (1982, p. 452) referred to the pattern where „mean ages at first marriage are under about 26 for men and under 21 for women. Although marriage ages in Bujakow departed slightly the pattern discerned in neighbouring areas of Bohemia – where female marriage ages were slightly higher at least during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, they were not decidedly different from the Northwestern pattern. This interpretation meets recently made claims to portray marriage patterns in the past rather as „a repertoire of adaptable systems” and to replace a dichotomous view of Western and Eastern marriage behaviors.

However, it has been pointed out repeatedly that marriage in preindustrial societies should be viewed as strictly intertwined with patterns of household organization and composition, and with broader issue of household formation rules. The main lesson to be drawn from investigation into Bujakow community seems very telling in this regard as well.

In the beginning of the investigation, when applied to one randomly selected listing from the parish, the Hammel-Laslett classification scheme revealed the striking prevalence of the nuclear family units in the parish (**TAB. 2**). An apparently different pattern appeared, however, after computation of all the rest censuses for three parochial villages (**TAB 3**), as significant diversity in structural patterns of family constellations through time has been uncovered. At different points in time, the proportion of complex households could have taken the values such dissimilar as 11% (Bujakow in 1768) and 50% (Klein Paniow in 1793), and no the less divergency appeared among households of simple structure. Additionally, the analysis of variance revealed that the heterogeneity of family patterns within villages was much smaller than the variation between them.

As the changes in household composition failed to be an artifact created by deficiencies in the records keeping, they became an early warning indication against the dominant family forms too eagerly established for the whole parish. They encouraged more developmental thinking about evolving domestic groups, and at the same time pointed to the role of different localized institutional or socio-demographic factors. However, it should not

make us losing sight of the more general framework within which family patterns in the whole parish evolved.

First, in the majority of listings for every village the proportion of nuclear households only rarely fell below the certain level of 65 percent of all households in a particular year and it never fell below 60% when aggregate data for the parish are considered. Second, all villages shared a common pattern in that solitary households almost did not exist there, while contribution from the non family households was hardly significant at the same time. When the morphology of complex households in the parish is concerned, it appeared that in all villages extended households were usually twice more numerous than multiple. In all villages the proportion of households with coresiding married brothers was negligible<sup>6</sup>. The analysis revealed also the prevalence of patrilocal residential tendencies, a small size of the coresiding kin group which consisted mainly of two coresided relatives.

By following the sample of 100 families from one census to another I discerned more than 300 transitions between different family constellations. I also established that the most typical ones were these in which households moved progressively either from a nuclear phase to coresidence with a widowed parent, to coresidence of parents with married children (5b) or eventually toward the coresidence of heir's family with retired parents. The reverse process – that is the transition from complexity toward simplicity appeared with similar frequency. Starting with Laslett's structural definition of the stem family, I estimated that 65% of all complex households in the parish in one of the listings and 24% of all households registered appeared as possible stem family forms.

In the next step I traced the residential groups through all censuses and reconstructed 136 transmissions of headship in the parish (**TAB 4**). It was, then, pretty clear that in majority of cases the family holdings were transmitted from father to the son (60%), However, there was also a non-negligible number of cases when the management of the property was handed over to sons in law, and even the cases when the succession occurred through the widow's remarriage - both features hardly fitting the image of kinship systems among eastern and southeastern European Slavs. Leaving aside many other issues, it is worth saying that the analysis of transmission practices confirmed the existence of the stem family in the parish. It appeared as puzzling, however, that at least two different stem family life cycle patterns were at work in Bujakow. According to the first scenario, one son remained in the parents' household, but others had to leave or stayed as unmarried servants. The marriage

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<sup>6</sup> The maximum frequency of the *frereche* in the total number of households in one enumeration did not exceed 2%.

of the son-heir did not necessarily mean the retirement of the old household head. The actual transmission of authority took place either only after the death of the male household head, or some time before it happened. In the second scenario, the mode of transmission was more ambiguous. It implied that one of the sons – usually one of the younger - married and took over the farm only on the death or the retirement of his father. In this case, the coresidence of two family units before the transmission was much more illusive. In fact in some cases young generation married, entered the parental home for a short while, then left it, but came back much later to take it over upon the death of the previous household head.

There was also relatively extended labour market in Bujakow. In the subsequent graph (**GRAPH 1**), the proportions of servants in the population as well as the proportions of households with servants in all censuses are plotted for each village separately. Servants in peasants' households constituted 13% of the total Bujakow population on average, though in some censuses their number reached even 19%. Concerning the whole parish, one can find servants in every third household on average. However, in Klein Paniow they could have been found sometimes in more than half of all domestic units. There is no doubt, that service was usually not a life-long condition in Bujakow, but a phase in life-cycle. Most servants recorded in one census would have been in a different position later. Some might have had the opportunity to become the household heads through inheritance or in-marrying; some finally established their own families, but having no access to the land they became the lodgers; the other have disappeared from the parish after few years, what suggests possible emigration.

**The Bujakow study posed** an obvious question about the representativeness of its findings. It was during the next stage of my investigation that I have made the first attempt to explore that problem. In the paper already published in 2005 in the Historical Social Research my intention was to push my research beyond the boundaries imposed on it by the certain limitations of the Bujakow dataset, and through this to test the widespread assumptions about supposedly family-centred principles of household organization among Slavic populations. In this research, the findings from Bujakow have put into comparative perspective with household characteristics of two peasant communities embodied within similar institutional background, but located somewhat 230 kilometers northwest, but still within a claimed transitional zone.

A glance at the household typology from the two communities as uncovered from the their 'lists of souls' brought out no surprise (**TAB 5**). The figures for both localities revealed

structural patterns very similar to those from Upper Silesian study. Even the range of variation between two parishes resembled that witnessed by the villages from the parish of Bujakow. Again, the first observation is the prevalence of nuclear family units. It is followed by the recognition that the coresidence of laterally related CFU's was by far a non-significant pattern in both parishes (5 out of 115 households in Piatek; 2 out of 79 households in Bedkow). Last but not least, when related to the age of the household head, family structure in both villages revealed a developmental nature of extended and multiple phases during the life cycle.

Both in Bedkow and Piatek, the percentage of households with servants was high relative to what is known about the English sample, and reached 38% in the first parish, and 25% in the second. Far more vivid (**FIG 2a and 2b**) was the children's gradual departure from parental households after the age of 9. In both communities, it was female offspring that experienced the most abrupt form of that process: there were no more than 7% of girls over the age of 19 present in parental households, when compared to the number of daughters aged 5 to 9. However imperfect that measure may be, these results bring about a proof of behaviours certainly not very far from Northwest European experience<sup>7</sup>.

In order to measure more directly how far residence patterns were based on familial principles in both parishes, welfare functions as performed by family households with regards to elderly has been explored through the analysis of the position of elderly within households and of the type of residential arrangements they lived in. The most striking finding in this regard (**Fig 3**) came from the parish of Piatek where - if consider males and females together, almost half of those over 54 spent their lives co-residing in households to which heads they were not related through kinship.

Finally, I followed the procedures introduced by Richard Wall and allocated all individuals listed in the communities according to whether they were or were not the members of a core family group, defined so as to include unmarried children resident with at least one parent, married couples and lone parents. All the persons who were not members of the families were classified according to whether they lived with relatives, with non-relatives only or alone. Contrary to the previous exercise, in this case the relatives have been identified not by their relationship to the household head but by their relationship with any household member in the absence of closer family ties.

There is no space here to present you all the diagrams for both villages and for both sexes. (**FIG 4**) I focus here on the pattern discerned for female population in Piatek, since it

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<sup>7</sup> These measures are based on synthetic cohorts and do not control for any effects of mortality.

represents the most vivid indication of the lack of strong family ties in this community. Its most distinctive features were: a) the very well marked gradual departure of children from parental home - almost completed before attaining the age of 25; b) the occurrence of residence with non-relatives during almost all stages of the individual life cycle, but with a striking prevalence during late teenage years and early adulthood, and then again after the completion of the reproductive activity; c) living with relatives in the absence of other close family ties spread over different stages of the life cycle but restricted to the tiny minority of women in particular age groups. One may also report that women were very unlikely to be in the position of being a wife before the age of 25 in Piatek.

**When it comes** to my current Marie Curie project, the main idea behind it was pretty straightforward: to collect as many individual household level data as possible for parishes located on the both sides of the supposed transitional zone. My intention was to let the historical Polish sources speak for themselves and to clear the way for a more accurate picture of family forms in Central Europe. I was also pretty convinced that any attempt to understand the macro-structural demographic changes on Polish territories in the past times requires recognition and understanding of prevailing family systems. The fact that not only English, but also Austrian, Spanish and Italian demographic and family historians have already pursued that goal effectively, was by far an additional incentive for pushing my research even further.

So much for my intentions. Despite the scepticism of some of my Polish colleagues who either dismissed the chance to collect a representative sample of parishes, or doubted the ability to compute them without the labour input of an extended research team, I might say I have been quite successful in developing my database.

Tables **6, 7 and 8** provide you with basic information about this dataset. As you can see, this is quite extensive collection of data. For the time being, it contains entries for 14,482 households from 88 parishes. In many respects this is a very homogeneous dataset: 18% of the sample comes from the classic Libri Status Animarum (the lists of parishioners created by priests for the purpose of church registration). The next three quarters of the sample represent the records of the so called Civil-Military Commissions erected in 1789 throughout Poland with the intention to prepare lists of inhabitants from hundreds of localities for tax purposes. For both LSA and CMC records, written instructions have been in force stipulating the rules of drawing the listings. In fact, both type of source materials resembled each other pretty

closely. For the fifth of all households the data has been taken from different types of tax records. The majority of listings included are from the period between 1766-1799; one is from 1747, another two have been prepared during the second half of 17<sup>th</sup> century, two other come from the beginning of the nineteenth century. The latest one is from 1819. All censuses precede the abolition of serfdom.

All records have been computed by myself either from original archives or their printed editions, into the MS Access database<sup>8</sup>. The data for one third of all parishes stored in this collection has been previously analyzed by different scholars in Poland, but to a very different extent. The reason I decided to compute this data anew was either that the classification scheme applied by these scholars was untransferable into Laslett's typology, or it came from my doubts about the precision in classifying the families. To my knowledge, this is the second largest collection of household data for preindustrial times in Europe after Viennese database for the history of the family. As you can see in table 7 (**TAB 7**) the sample is much larger than the one that P. Laslett used in 1970s for the exploration of the English family pattern [numbers in brackets refer to the data used for this presentation].

(**TAB 8**). All listings used in this research registered households – that is groups of people as residential units, in clearly marked, separate blocks with designated heads. Such residential units comprised not only the core family of the head, so to speak the conjugal family unit, but also his immediate and more distant relatives, as well as coresident servants and 'inmates or lodgers'. Following P. Laslett's criteria and typology, it is assumed here that the immediate head's family, his more distant kin as well as coresident servants formed a common household, while non-related coresident lodgers are excluded from this category. For the time being, in all cross-tabulations, information on the structure of the household are given only for the core families.

To belong to this collection a listing has to include (or at least claim to include) every inhabitant of the settlement named, or to give precise information on who is excluded from the enumeration. Such a listing should have passed a test of its internal logic and consistency, what refers mostly to comprehensibility in describing relations between individuals within one residential unit. On such a basis, a few dozens of listings have not been considered as reliable enough, and were excluded from the computation. Except for the minority of entries, all members of the residential groups in the current sample have had their relation to the head given in the census, mainly in terms of kinship ties, sometimes, however, in combination with

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<sup>8</sup> The database has been programmed by Waldemar Pasięka. At this stage of the research database management has been carried out jointly by Waldemar Pasięka and Dariusz Biskup.

the description of one's economic position in the household. Some listings have been obviously more precise in this regard than others, when for example they stipulated precisely the surnames of all persons inhabiting one premise, including servants and lodgers.

Unlike the Cambridge dataset, in every eight out of ten parishes from the Polish sample information is given on the ages of all household members. Obviously, this information can be biased in a certain way, and I am in the middle of checking it with all available tools. Nevertheless, even if as a consequence of this exercise the sample's size would become somewhat reduced, we will still be in an advantageous position to reach statistically significant findings. All the more, there are at least 40 additional listings of a very high quality still awaiting computerization.

The greatest disadvantage of the sample is the lack of information on social position of more than 50% of all household heads. I believe, however, that 7,000 households with designated social category of the household head constitute a sample promising enough to explore the relationships between family forms and economic indicators.

The map – which is on the following page (**MAP**), gives you a geographical distribution of the parishes (numbers in brackets refer to the parishes awaiting computerization). In total, the data for **76** parishes became the basis for this presentation, with the overall number of **11,192** households, and with the population of more than **63,000** of people. The parishes form a long belt spread from the territories of Silesia, and western fringes of the historical Kingdom of Poland. This belt runs through the borderland area of the eastern Upper Silesia and western Little Poland, crossing Kaser's supposed "transitional cultural zone" and then stretching eastward into the present day Ukraine and Bielarussia. Additional parishes give northern- and northeastern extension to such marked territories. This geographical extension is the best that could be achieved at this stage of the project. The damages caused to many of the Polish archives during the second world war as well as the dislocation of much of their resources due to the changes in political boundaries after 1945, constrain my optimism about achieving better geographical distribution of the sample. This notwithstanding, it seems that thanks to the acquisition of new parish data the sample's enlargement to more than 130 parishes will be possible very soon. A regional division has been advanced mainly on the administrative or geographical bases. However, a secondary knowledge of agricultural and institutional characteristics of the regions makes it reasonable to assume that they have differed in agricultural, ecological, and to some extent institutional conditions.

With the help of this dataset, we can take the first step toward clarifying the misbeliefs related to Central European family forms and household behaviors. This holds true even if the data to be presented here are mainly raw, with an explanatory framework reduced to a minimum. What I will present here will mainly be the regional data. Neither the attempt to go into the analysis of variance, nor to put this dataset into comparison, is made here.

### ***The large household – peasants' greatest wealth***

Not unusually, the assumption that a large family had been a great blessing for Eastern European serfs, has been extrapolated on family characteristics of Slavic populations in general. In table 9 (**TAB 9**), three different ratios of an average size of the peasants' household are presented for all regions. In two following steps, first – the category of coresiding lodgers and then that of the coresident kin, are excluded from equations. Part of these figures would probably require a partial adjustment because of the possible children's underregistration. However, the values of the second ratio, which is the equivalent of the most popular measure of the household size in English, may suggest a rather moderate household size across the sample. Most of all, this data does not sustain the assumption that grand families, which have actually existed in such places as Russian community of Mishino, were the main characteristic for the regions and localities under investigation.

### ***Slavic propensity for multiple households***

With family sizes having already been estimated, we are prepared to explore the patterns of household composition among the communities under investigation. In table 10 (**TAB 10**) the distribution of different household structures in the sample is presented with the Hammel-Laslett classificatory system, slightly modified here. These first results appear outstandingly different from the conventional assessment of (more) east European family patterns. The evidence proves an overwhelming domination of nuclear households, with the proportion of complex units slightly lower than in parishes previously analyzed by myself. To the best of my knowledge, the proportion of 77% of all households exhibiting a simple structure is quite high for 18<sup>th</sup> century rural conditions in Central and Eastern Europe. Again, we see that only 166 out of more than 11 thousands of households (1% of all households) appear as having family compositions akin to joint family systems. It will not come as a surprise, then, that living in extended or multiple households was a life cycle experience for only a quarter of

total population from the sample, while the remaining three quarters lived in households of the simple structure at least at the time of the census taking.

Some interesting features are uncovered through the regionalization of prevalent household structures (**TAB 11**). First, the general tendency to households' simplicity is corroborated throughout all regions but the one easternmost. Two parishes from the north stand apart from the whole sample in having the smallest percentage of complex households and in containing a significant proportion of solitary households at the same time. Although Silesian communities (region 8) reveal the lowest proportions of nuclear family structures within the westernmost vertical belt of parishes, moving eastward from them does not mark any significant change in family forms in a direction suggested by Kaser and Mitterauer. An extensive sample from the seventh region unmasks again a high level of simplicity in family forms and only a moderate proportion of complex households. The only one parish from the sixth region brings another surprise. Although it disclosed much lower proportions of simple families, its level of family complexity was nothing unusual among the communities of Bujakow, previously discussed. Moreover, the 6% frequency of solitary households in this parish was by no means a typical feature among all 76 parishes yet collected. Any conclusion from this single case may seem premature, and we have to wait till the results of the investigation into parishes from the vicinity of Lublin will be available. Only then will we be able to state clearly whether the patterns observed were in a way typical of other easternmost communities. For the time being, however, it can be stated here that the supposed transitional zone is rather too illusive a concept to be applied successfully to the understanding of the geographical distribution of household forms in more eastern regions of Europe. Further research should bring more clarification into this subject.

### *The concentration of kin group within household*

Meanwhile, you are advised to have a look at other two crosstabulations, which are merely two very crude attempts to discern the role of kin within but not beyond households in the sample under investigation (first **TAB 12**). The presence of the relatives other than the head's immediate family in the household, although claimed as a rather poor indicator of the actual operation of kinship system and more complex relationships between kin groups in a given society, may still be valuable in approaching main features of the prevailing family systems. From table 12 you can learn that in all but two regions, the kin coresident in the households formed only a tiny minority of the total population. The first exception to this general pattern appears to be, again, the only one parish from the easternmost region where up to one-fifth of

the population lived in the relatives' households. This case points very clearly that the percentage figures for nuclear and complex families may well be too crude measures and may obscure significant differences between family systems, as it happened in this case. Another place where relatively high proportion of coresident kin occurred was the region 8. However, its figures were closer to the rest of the sample than to the eastern exceptional case. It must also be stated that estimations for that region will be significantly lower when population underregistration in two of its parishes is taken into consideration.

In the next table (**TAB 13**), the number of co-resident people other than the conjugal family unit per 100 households is provided. When the most aggregate figures are considered, there were only 38 coresident relatives for every hundred households in the sample on average, the ratio that does not departure preindustrial standards of Western Europe very much. The composition of the kin group did not differ very much between regions, as in all of them but one these were parents who predominated within coresident relatives, with siblings playing much less pronounced but still visible role in the family. The importance of these both groups may be somewhat underestimated in this tabulation, as they could actually made up a large part of unidentified kin living in the households. A sizeable number of coresident parents may indicate the significance of the pattern in which heir continued to live in the parents' house even after succession to headship. On the other hand, coresidence of the head's family with siblings must have been a rather short-term, life cycle phenomenon as might be suggested by the negligible numbers of coresiding nephews and niecies. The most striking feature is, however, a totally inconspicuous sub-group of grandchildren in the sample (380 cases in the whole sample), as well as non-existence of coresidence with grandparents. The rarity of living with grandchildren and and the very infrequent inclusion of sons- and daughters-in-law into households, suggest the pattern in which elderly could lived with their heir's wife and children only after giving up the headship of their own households. This may be an indication of rather weakened seniority principle within the domestic groups. Except for the one easternmost parish, the most divergent again, the residential patterns cnot be taken as an indication of the strong kin-based principles of social organization.

#### ***The unique northwest- European experience of life cycle service***

The last issue to be highlighted here is the extent to which the communities under study shared a typically northwest-European experience of live-cycle service. The topic's significance for understanding family formation rules, marriage behaviors, patterns of socialization and intergenerational relations has been stressed in the literature many times.

Here, I will restrict myself to the most general patterns discerned from the data, leaving for later the more thorough description of the population of interest. In table 14 (**TAB 14**) some of its basic characteristics are summarized.

Apart from the exceptional sixth region, generally high proportions of servants in the population are observed, not very different from the English summary figures for the period between 1574 and 1821. When the whole sample is considered, servants can be found in more than quarter of all households on average, but in some other regions this proportion became closer to or even higher than the third of all residential units. In most regions except the easternmost one, there was usually one servant for every two households. Much larger proportions of servants were not unusual, what is revealed by the data for region 3 and 4.

Structural similarities to the English institution of service does not necessary mean that we are dealing exactly with the same phenomena. At this point you might be eager to know more about specific work patterns of the Central European servants, the nature of their labour relationships, and far more about the servants' socio-demographic profile. Although there is no space here for dealing with these issues, one crucial thing becomes apparent after the analysis of the next **figure** – which is a clear life cycle pattern in the age distribution of servants. 68% of male servants and more than 80% of the female servant population was between 10 and 25 years old at the time when the censuses have been taken. The age specific nature of service in the sample under investigation did not necesarrily imply the universal character of the service experience across the young population. As our data reveals, the condition of being a servant was a part of a life cycle experience for almost every third male aged 10-25, but only for less than a quarter of all females form the same age group.

### ***Conclusion***

I am inclined to think that the data analysis presented you so far, sketchy as it was, will become of some help in setting up the more accurate framework for discussing Central European household behaviours. Their picture has been drawn here in a very broad and crude way, and more eleborate investigation into family behaviours of almost fifteen thousands of households from that part of the continent becomes my future research agenda. This research shall be designed along different ways in order to highlighten different aspects of the sample's characteristics. Still, there is much to achieve from different levels of the aggregate analysis. For example, the relation of the within-region variability to the between-region variability in respect of a long list of characteristics is already under way, and I expect to be able to tackle the issue of the uniformity of trends and tendencies in household patterns across the Polish

sample very soon. On the other hand, a more careful look at the level of the parish is required in order to discern peculiarities in the kin coresidence patterns, and the scholars such as Richard Wall made us already well equipped with the tools appropriate to do so. As the sex and gender differences were fundamental organising features of life and society in past time, recognising these differences with regards to the area under study shall become the natural stage of this project. It will concern gender differences in leaving home patterns, kin coresidence, position within the household as well as living arrangements in the old age.

The new data awaiting computerization, especially that for the eastern part of the area, should for the first time allow us to trace the actual existence of transitional zone between different family systems in Central Europe. All I can say at the present moment, is that my preliminary glance at these historical materials makes their exploration promising to a highest degree.

Last, but not least, a thorough comparison of the Polish dataset with household structures from other parts of the continent remains to be done. Only then, a truly successful replacement of the dichotomous east-west distinction with more comprehensive narratives about the history of the European family will be possible to achieve.

But if the northwestern Europe did not stand alone in its propensity towards simple family forms, the incidence of the life cycle service, and relatively weakened kin component of social organization – as the figures I presented may suggest, then we are about to face another scientific puzzles. If, the household tendencies on the majority of the historical Poland at the end of 18<sup>th</sup> century did not departure significantly the supposed Western pattern, then it would probably be mistaken to treat these Central European societies as functionally less prepared to the challenges of the industrialization and the industrial modes of living to come. Unlike the complex family systems which have been often considered as more resistant to reduction of marital fertility, the Central European societies should have also been more closer to their western counterparts with regards to changes in reproduction during the demographic transition. However, the delayed nature of the industrialization and demographic transition processes on these territories are well-established facts. It seems therefore, that Central Europe may likely become a burial ground for many of the theories concerning family and demographic change in the past times.

MAP 1: “Transition cultural zone” between family systems in pre-industrial Europe (source Kaser 2000: 75).



TABLE 1: Mean age at first marriage, the parish of Bujakow, 1765-1859

THE GROUP OF	AT THE MARRIAGE WITH	1765-1800			1801-1859		
		Total cases	mean age at marriage	median	Total cases	mean age at marriage	median
bachelors	spinsters	291	26,5	26	994	26,3	26
	widows	28	29,5	28	85	29,9	28
	S and W altogether	319	26,8	26	1079	26,6	26
spinsters	bachelors	284	23,0	23	979	22,0	21
	widowers	66	28,1	26	133	26,2	25
	B and W altogether	350	23,9	24	1112	22,5	22

FIGURE 1a:

FIGURE 1b:

**TABLE 2:** Households by structure according to the Hammel-Laslett typology; the village of Bujakow, 1768

YEAR	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS	THE PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD TYPES:					
		Solitarities	No family	Nuclear	Extended	Multiple	Complex together
1768	54	1,9	–	87,0	7,4	3,7	11,1

**TABLE 3:** Households by structure according to the Hammel-Laslett typology; the three villages of the parish Bujakow, 1766–1803

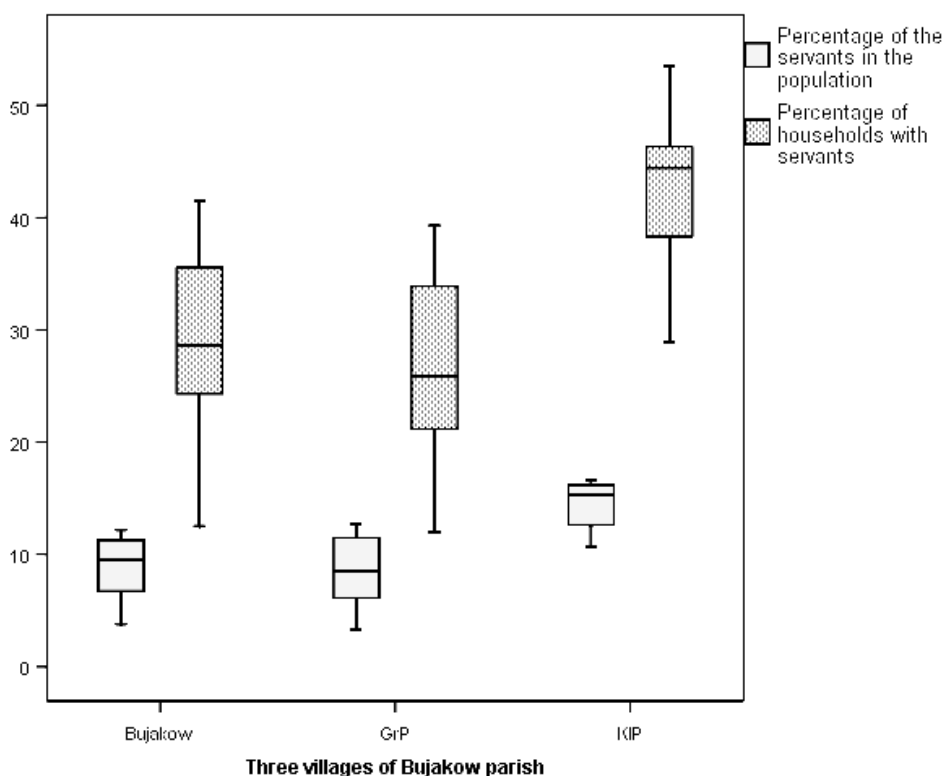
YEAR	BUJAKOW		KLEIN PANIOW		GROSS PANIOW	
	Nuclear	Complex together	Nuclear	Complex together	Nuclear	Complex together
1766	81,1	15,1	60,5	32,6	66,7	27,8
1767	81,1	13,2	57,8	35,6	65,4	28,8
1768	87,0	11,1	63,4	34,1	64,7	31,4
1769	84,0	12,0	64,3	33,3	72,5	25,5
1770	80,0	16,0	67,4	30,2	74,0	24,0
1785	85,7	9,5	69,6	26,1	88,0	12,0
1786	72,9	25,4	61,7	29,8	86,3	13,7
1792	68,9	27,9	54,9	43,1	59,3	40,7
1793	66,2	30,8	46,7	51,1	66,7	31,5
1794	76,2	20,6	64,0	34,0	76,4	21,8
1795	73,0	20,6	66,7	31,4	80,4	17,9
1796	75,0	21,7	53,2	46,8	76,8	23,2
1801	77,8	20,4	53,1	46,9	76,9	23,1
1802	74,6	20,6	-	-	-	-
1803	73,2	17,9	54,0	46,0	73,7	23,7

Complex together: combined proportions of extended and multiple households.

**TABLE 4:** Transmission of headship by the villages and the type of transmission; the parish of Bujakow, 1766–1803

TYPE OF SUCCESSOR		TOTAL	BUJAKÓW	GROSS PANIOW	KLEIN PANIOW
KIN	SON	82 (60,3)	30 (68,2)	25 (48,1)	27 (67,5)
	SON-IN-LAW	19 (14,0)	5 (11,4)	8 (15,4)	6 (15,0)
	OTHER RELATIVE	4 (2,9)	1 (2,3)	3 (5,7)	0
	WIDOW	4 (2,9)	2 (4,5)	0	2 (5,0)
	SECOND HUSBAND	16 (11,8)	3 (6,8)	11 (21,2)	2 (5,0)
	FATHER	4 (2,9%)	2 (4,5)	0	2 (5,0)
NON-KIN	From the same farm	0	0	0	0
	From another farm	7 (5,2)	1 (2,3)	5 (9,6)	1 (2,5)
	TOTAL	136 (100,0%)	44 (100,0)	52 (100,0)	40 (100,0)

**GRAPH 1:** the proportions of servants and the proportions of households with servants in the population; the three villages of the Bujakow parish, 1765-1803.

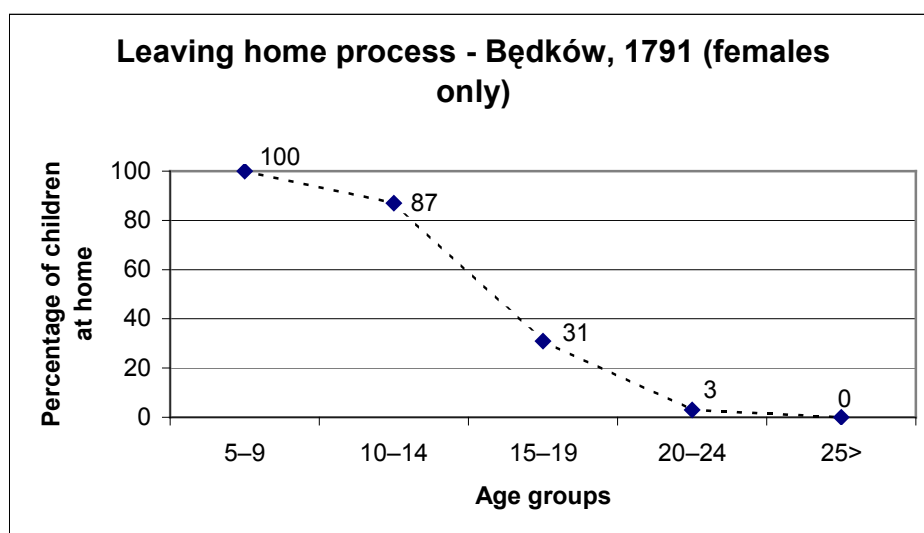


**TABLE 5:** Households by structure according to the Hammel-Laslett typology; the parishes of Będków and Piątek, 1791

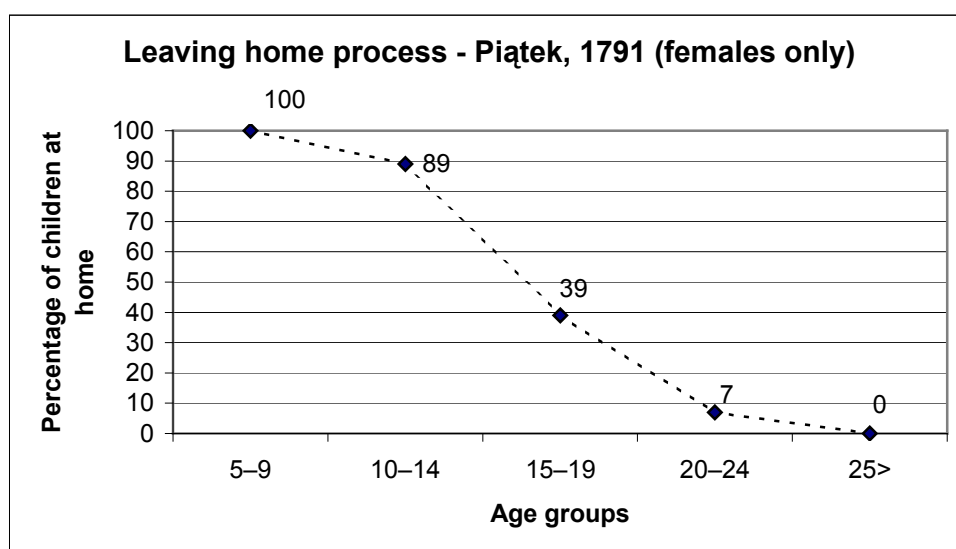
Parish	Population	Total households	Solitaires	No family	Nuclear	Extended	Multiple	Complex together
Będków	497	79	0	0	65,8	16,5	17,7	34,2
Piątek	809	115	0	0	68,7	22,6	8,7	31,3

Population and households include only the rural part of the parishes  
 Complex together: combined proportions of extended and multiple households

**FIGURE 2a and 2b:** the process of leaving home in the female population; the parishes of Będków and Piątek, 1791

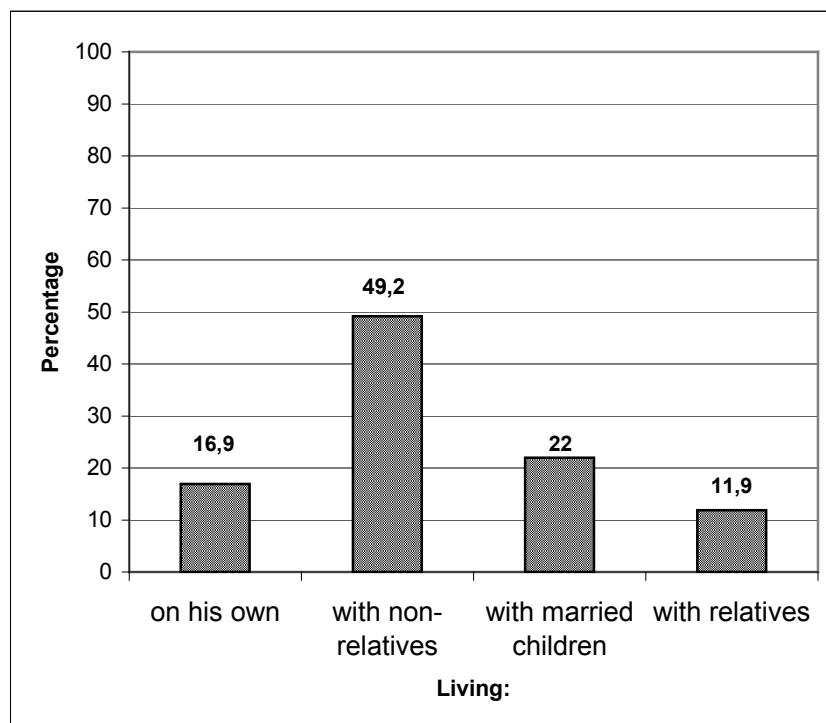


In total: 71 individuals



In total: 108 individuals

**FIGURE 3:** Living arrangements of the people above 54 - the parish of Piątek, 1791 (males and females together)



In total: 59 cases.

**FIGURE 4:** Relationships within households, the parish of Piątek, 1791 (female population)

In total: 445 individuals.

**TABLE 6:** Summary description of the Polish database (1)

ATTRIBUTE	NO.OF PARISHES	% OF THE TOTAL SAMPLE	NO.OF HOUSEHOLDS	% OF THE TOTAL SAMPLE
computed from printed sources	19	21	3126	21,5
computed from original archivals	69	79	11356	78,5
Libri Status Animarum	16	18	2655	18,3
Acts of the Civil-Military Commissions 1789-1792	64	73	8515	58,8
other type	8	9	3312	22,9
partially analyzed by other scholars	34	38,5	4248	29,3
written in Polish	78	88,6	11618	80,2
written in Latin	5	5,7	638	4,4
written in German	5	5,7	2226	15,4
TOTAL no. of households	14,482			
TOTAL parishes	88			
TOTAL settlements	552			
TOTAL population	77,331			

**TABLE 7:** The Cambridge English dataset and the Polish sample: a comparison

THE SAMPLE	TOT.PARISHES	TOT.HOUSEHOLDS	TOT.POPULATION
English sample (Laslett 1978)	64 (including 34 less reliable settlements)	8838	39,262
Polish sample	88 (76)	14,482 (11,192)	77,331 (63,971)

'The English sample' refers to the dataset used in P. Laslett, *The English evidence on household structure compared with the outcomes of microsimulation* (1978, p. 70-73).

Numbers in brackets refer to the data used for this presentation.

**TABLE 8:** Summary description of the Polish database (2)

INFORMATION CONTAINED	NO.OF PARISHES	% OF THE TOTAL NO.OF HOUSEHOLDS	NO.OF HOUS.	% OF THE TOT. HOUS.
ages for the most household members provided	78	88,6		
part of household members with ages	7	8%		
no ages	3	3,5		
head's social category			6899	47,6

**TABLE 9:** Peasants' household size by region and by the type of measure; 75 parishes from the Polish sample.

		RATIO 1 (ALL HOUSEFULS AND THEIR INHABITANTS; INSTITUTIONS AND NON-PEASANT HOUS.EXCLUDED)	RATIO 2 (ALL CORE FAMILIES + THEIR CORESIDENT KIN + THEIR SERVANTS; INMATES EXCLUDED)	RATIO 3 (ALL CORE FAMILIES + THEIR SERVANTS; CORESIDENT KIN AND INMATES EXCLUDED)
Region	No.of parishes	Mean of MHSs	Mean of MHSs	Mean of MHSs
REG 1	11	5,200	4,912	4,677
REG 2	9	6,348	5,556	5,317
REG 3	9	6,813	5,929	5,561
REG 4	26	6,453	5,461	5,253
REG 5	2	4,666	4,62	4,493
REG 6	1	4,612	4,6	4,236
REG 7	13	5,721	5,205	4,859
REG 8	4 (1 excl.)	5,06	4,644	4,163
TOTAL	75	5,727	5,146	4,836

Core families defined as parents and children.

Head couple's coresident kin defined as any kin other than their children.

The parish of Bujakow excluded from region 8 due to the children's underregistration

**TABLE 10:.**

HOUSEHOLD TYPE		NO.HOUSEHOLDS	% OF CLASS	% OF CATEGORY
1. Solitaries	1a Widowed	61	0,5	1,8
	1b Single of unknown marital status	140	1,3	
2. No family	2a Coresident siblings	24	0,2	0,4
	2b Coresident relatives of other kinds	15	0,1	
3. Nuclear	3a Married couples alone	1082	9,7	77,4
	3b Married couples with child(ren)	6992	62,5	
	3c Widowers with child(ren)	163	1,5	
	3d Widows with child(ren)	430	3,8	
4. Extended	4a Extended upwards	801	7,2	11,4
	4b Extended downwards	29	0,3	
	4c Extended laterally	215	1,9	
	4d Combinations of 4a-4c	229	2,0	
5. Multiple	5a Secondary units up	446	4,0	9,0
	5b Secondary units down	399	3,6	
	5c 'Widowed parent with at least two married children	5	0,0	
	5d Co-resident married siblings or cousins	30	0,3	
	5e Co-resident married siblings or cousins with parents or widowed parent	26	0,2	
	5f Two or more kin-linked conjugal couples of unknown kin relationship	105	0,9	
Total		11192	100	100

**TABLE 11:** Households by structure according to the Hammel-Laslett typology; the Polish dataset by regions, 76 parishes

REGION	NO.OF PARISHES	NO.OF HOUS.	SOLITARIES (%)	NO FAMILY (%)	NUCLEAR (%)	EXTENDED (%)	MULTIPLE (%)	COMPLEX TOGETHER (%)
REG 1	11	1568	0,8	0,4	82,1	9,1	7,6	16,7
REG 2	9	1316	1,4	0,1	77,9	11,6	9,1	20,7
REG 3	9	847	0,9	0,4	73,7	14,9	10,2	25,1
REG 4	26	2063	1,4	0,1	81,4	10	7	17
REG 5	2	545	6,4	0,9	84	8,1	0,6	8,7
REG 6	1	165	6,1	3	57,6	13,3	20	33,3
REG 7	13	2511	0,4	0,2	78,5	12,1	8,8	20,9
REG 8	5	2177	3,7	0,5	70,1	12,7	13	25,7

**TABLE 12:** Proportions of the coresident kin the population by regions; the Polish dataset, 76 parishes.

REGION	NO.OF PARISHES	NO.OF HOUS.	CORESIDENT KIN AS % OF TOT.POP.
REG 1	11	1568	6
REG 2	9	1316	5
REG 3	9	847	7
REG 4	26	2063	4
REG 5	2	545	3
REG 6	1	165	19
REG 7	13	2511	7
REG 8	5	2177	11
TOTAL	76	11192	7

**TABLE 13:** The number of co-resident kin other than the members of the conjugal family unit per 100 households; the Polish dataset, 76 parishes.

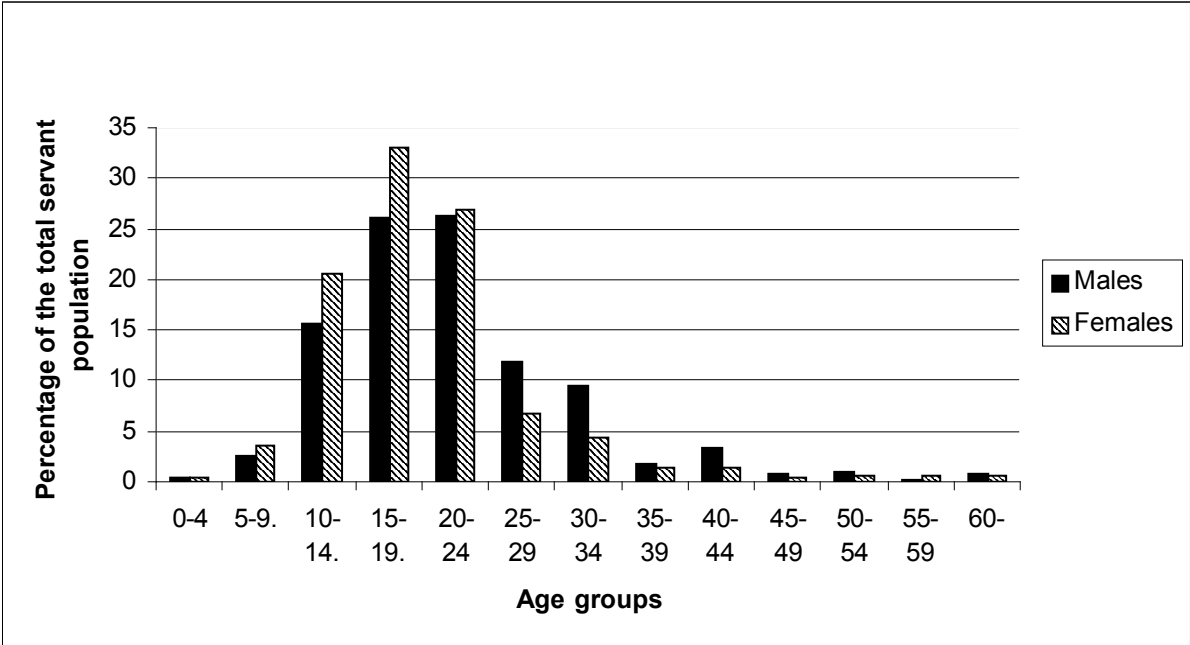
REGION	PARENTS	SIBLINGS	SONS/ DAUGHTERS- IN-LAW	NEPHEWS/ NIECES	GRAND- CHILDREN	GRAND- PARENTS	OTHER KIN	TOTAL	TOTAL HOUSEHOLDS
REG 1	13	7	4	0	3	0	3	30	1568
REG 2	17	3	5	0	2	0	4	31	1316
REG 3	15	11	4	1	6	0	9	46	847
REG 4	12	4	5	1	3	0	3	28	2063
REG 5	3	6	0	1	1	0	3	13	545
REG 6	1	25	27	2	27	0	8	88	165
REG 7	14	12	4	0	2	0	8	41	2511
REG 8	26	11	3	0	4	0	11	55	2177
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>11192</b>

**TABLE 14:** Summary data on the distribution of servants in the population; the Polish dataset, 74 parishes.

REGION	NO.OF PARISHES	NO.OF HOUS.	% SERVANTS IN THE POP.	% HOUS. WITH SERVANTS	SERVANTS / 100 HOUSEHOLDS
REG 1	11	1568	12	31,9	60
REG 2	9	1316	10	24,2	63
REG 3	9	847	18	34,6	126
REG 4	26	2063	15	32,6	102
REG 5	2	545	14	26,1	64
REG 6	1	165	1	3,6	4
REG 7	13	2511	9	15,7	54
REG 8	3	536	10	29,9	53
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>9551</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>72</b>

Two parishes from region 8 excluded as not registering servants.

**FIGURE 5:** The servant population by the age distribution; the Polish dataset, 73 parishes



In total: 3998 males, and 2543 females (6541 individuals)