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The Incomes and Expenditures of Agrarian Family Enterprises in Interwar Hungary*

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Hungarian statistics in the era of the Dualism and the Interwar period did not go below the settlement level and did not provide any information on the number of livestock and the income from them. Therefore, we do not have exact data on the main problem of the period – whether the large estates or the smallholding showed better yield/ha values, and on the minimum viable size of small farms. Although the movement of ethnographic writers has depicted a dark overview of many settlements, in most cases these do not provide quantifiable data. The surveys organised by the OMGE or the agricultural schools provided statistically relevant quantitative data on certain layers of the peasantry, but the poorest, daily wage-earners remained under-represented in the studies. Therefore, sources that record the incomes and expenditures of these strata in detail (which is the focus of agricultural economists), together with their living conditions (which is the focus of the village researchers' movement), is particularly valuable. At the University of Debrecen, under the supervision of Rezső Milleker, professor of geography, dozens of theses were written on this topic - though not all of them were conducted according to the professors' pre-written guidance. In this paper, we try to shed light on the distribution of income and expenditure of the smallholder-peasant class, which was also hit by the recession of the Great Depression, by analysing one of the best, but unpublished work. Beside revenue sources, strategies of survival, techniques of tax-evasion, the profits compared to loan interests are also discussed.

Keywords: smallholders, farm profitability, tax, loans, peasant account books, Interwar Hungary, demographic conditions

Introduction

The events of 1848 can be considered milestones in the development of the Hungarian economy and Hungarian society. Though the war of independence had failed, but dramatic transformations in the legal environment and social relations could no longer be hindered. In the Dualist Era after the Compromise of 1867, the process of modernization accelerated. The transformations also affected

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the circumstances of those living off agriculture. Serfdom had been abolished, which was a progressive development, but at the same time, the tenants lost most of their leased lands and resources shared with the landlord (common pastures, forests), which fell into the hands of old landlords according to the new laws. The implementation of land redemption in 1848 allowed peasants to become the owners only of their urbarial plots. As a result of this, the multitude of peasants, including those who had not necessarily been poor before, were threatened by impoverishment. Meanwhile, despite general modernization, those who made their living in agriculture continued to live according to the traditional way of life, in some cases even until the mid-twentieth century. As sociologist and former Hungarian Minister of Interior Erdei Ferenc put it, "the peasant social forms remained intact even when the overall structure of society was built on a different principle."[1] According to Erdei, peasants did not adapt to the new market economy in Hungary, because "a peasant farm is not at all a business enterprise designed with commercial rationality, but rather a traditional household farm that operates within traditional frameworks and produces goods. Ultimately, it is incapable of providing surplus for the producer to be sold at the market."[2] This was generally true, though there were exceptions. In the second part of the discussion below, I offer examples of farmers who took the challenges of the new era into account and tried to adapt to a modern (marked-oriented) economy.

On the eve of World War I, most people in Hungary still worked in agriculture. According to István Szabó, based on the data from the 1910 census (recalculated to the postwar area of Hungary), 56 percent were engaged in small-scale farming, including landless agrarian wage laborers and peasants who owned plots of land.[3] Due to the polarized estate structure, i.e. the dominance of large estates, the majority of Hungarian society had hardly any land. This threatened the self-subsistence of agrarian families, which had to face the challenge caused by further estate fragmentation.[4] These difficulties had accumulated over the decades, and social tensions had intensified. The agrarian movements at the turn of the century, emigration to the United States, and the very limited land reform after World War I were (unsuccessful) responses to these challenges.

1 Erdei, *A magyar paraszttársadalom*, 34–35.

2 Ibid., 55.

3 Szabó, *Jobbágyok, parasztok,* 364.

4 At the time of the land tenure reform in 1767, two-thirds of the peasantry were landholders with an average landholding of 0.41 units *(sessio)*, but by the time of the peasant emancipation in 1848, only one-third remained, and the average plot size had decreased to less than 0.35. Glósz, "Zsellérek és töredéktelkes jobbágyok," 176.

The land issue was not resolved between in the interwar period, leaving many questions unanswered. The censuses done by the state and the data gathered in 1941 clearly illustrate the situation of the impoverished who made their living off agriculture. The proportion of those living off agriculture decreased slowly during the interwar period. In 1920, it constituted 55.7 percent of the population. It was still 50 percent in 1940,[5] but in absolute terms, the number people working in agriculture had increased.[6] In 1930, Hungary's population density was 93.4 people per km,[2] making it the eighth most densely populated country in the world at the time.[7]

According to the censuses, in 1920, 1,212,000 people[8] in Hungary lived off agricultural wage labor (meaning that they did not own their own land), and two decades later, their number was still nearly one million (979,000). Considering the general decrease in the number of those living off agriculture, their number as a proportion of the agrarian population did not decrease significantly. Including family members and dependents, this group accounted for nearly two million people. Those with a few hectares of land (a maximum of five hectares, which was the minimum necessary for self-subsistence) were not in a much better position either, and they accounted for nearly one million people.

Another sharp dividing line was drawn between those who owned some amount of land but not enough to subsist on, thus compelling them to search for extra income. In the second half of the twentieth century, historians tried to determine how much land was needed for a family to subsist (this in fact was a key question with political consequences after 1945, when land reforms were initiated to provide plots of a minimum size but still adequate to ensure self-subsistence. Based on Péter Gunst's work,[9] Gábor Gyáni concluded that a family estate capable of self-sufficiency typically ranged from a minimum of five to ten cadastral acres, depending on the region, crops, and the role of husbandry, and could extend to a maximum of ten to 20 cadastral acres.[10] In censuses, however, tracking and defining this thin line between self-subsistence and wage labor is difficult. In the census of 1920, for example, those with ten or fewer cadastral acres were all classified as agricultural laborers, while by 1930,

5 Gunst, "A mezőgazdaság fejlődésének megrekedése," 286.
6 Tóth T., *A magyar mezőgazdaság struktúrája az 1930-as években,* 19.
7 Gunst, "A mezőgazdaság fejlődésének megrekedése," 286.
8 Gyáni, "Magyarország társadalomtörténete a Horthy-korban," 321.
9 Gunst, *A paraszti társadalom Magyarországon a két világháború között,* 17–18.
10 Gyáni, "Magyarország társadalomtörténete a Horthy-korban," 307.

they were referred to as smallholders (likely indicating that they could sustain themselves off their land).[11]

The work organization of the self-sufficient peasant families fundamentally differed from "wage labor-based capitalist enterprises,"[12] as the former's primary goal was simply to ensure a livelihood. According to Chayanov's theory of labor-consumption balance,[13] the value of the work done by the "self-employed" in self-subsisting peasant economies cannot be expressed in monetary terms, as the results of their productive labor do not enter the market. The peasants only undertook more work when their economic conditions worsened, thus increasing their "self-exploitation" to make a living.[14]

If we look at the macroeconomic environment, during the interwar period, agriculture accounted for about 40 percent of the national income in Hungary.[15] At the same time, the difficulties following World War I are well illustrated by the fact that the domestic market consumed only 50–60 percent of agricultural production.[16] The rest had to be marketed to foreign countries, which were adopting protectionist tariff policies after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian common market. In the early 1920s, the agricultural sector ran a debt of 1.3 billion Golden Crowns, which could be estimated at 15 percent of the capital stock. This debt was eliminated with the introduction of the *pengő*, but in the following years, it reemerged because "the market adaptability of Hungarian agriculture was minimal."[17] The interest rates on loans available to the agricultural sector were around 10 percent, but since "here, the profitability of agriculture only reaches five percent of the invested capital in very exceptional cases, under such circumstances, taking out loans for agriculture can only be unprofitable."[18] The structure of production had hardly changed, as evidenced by the fact that in Hungary, the average yield of wheat had stagnated around 13.8 quintals per

11 Ibid., 306.

12 Pozsgai, "Paraszti háztartás és munkaszervezet," 344.

13 Chayanov, *On the Theory of Non-Capitalist Economic Systems,* 5. Regarding the historical backdrop against which this theory emerged and receptiveness to it in Russia, see Kövér, "A. V. Csajanov orosz gyökerei," 89–92.

14 Pozsgai, "Paraszti háztartás és munkaszervezet," 346–47.

15 Wheat contributed to the agrarian income by 11.3 percent in 1931–1932, while the most significant sector was livestock slaughtering, at 17.5 percent. Matolcsy and Varga, *Magyarország nemzeti jövedelme*, 65 and 71; Gunst, "A mezőgazdaság fejlődésének megrekedése," 379.

16 Tóth T., *A Magyar mezőgazdaság struktúrája az 1930-as években,* 32.

17 Ibid., 47.

18 Bernát, "A mezőgazdasági termelés jövedelmezőségéhez," 373.

hectare even at the outbreak of World War II, while in Germany, there was a 55 percent increase over the course of these two decades.[19]

Engagement with the "agricultural issue" among experts as well as engagement with marketing problems affecting agriculture began in 1927, when Lajos Juhos[20] emphasized in a presentation at the beginning of the year that there was a need for statistical data to formulate future development plans. From December 12, 1927, the National Hungarian Economic Association (Országos Mezőgazdasági Egyesület, OMGE) organized "Farmers' Days," when several issues affecting the agricultural sector, generally referred to as the "agricultural crisis,"[21] were identified. The decision was made to involve, alongside the Hungarian Royal Central Statistical Office (Központi Statisztikai Hivatal, KSH), the National Hungarian Economic Association and the National Agricultural Business Institute in the collection of agricultural-related data.[22] Simultaneously, the examination of peasant farming began along several paths.

At the end of 1927, the OMGE Economic Section was asked to organize data collection. The representative research resulted in a dataset collected from 392 agricultural enterprises, the aggregated results of which were published under the title "The Crisis of Our Agriculture" in 1929 and then reissued in 1930.[23] In the 1930s, data collection[24] continued, although due to the Great Economic Crisis, the findings were not published for some years.[25] I do not provide a detailed overview of the information published by the OMGE regarding the operation of peasant farms. As a single example, let me note that in 1932, the national economic income per cadastral acre on the Hungarian Great Plain for small farms was 85.85 *pengő*. After deducting labor costs and

19 Tóth T., *A Magyar mezőgazdaság struktúrája az 1930-as években,* 33.

20 Lajos Juhos (1879–1940) was an agricultural vocational educator in Debrecen, Mosonmagyaróvár, and Keszthely. He introduced the German Laurer system of agricultural smallholder bookkeeping in Hungary. Between 1935 and1937, he was the director of the Economic Academy in Debrecen-Pallag. Mudrák, "Egyetemi és kari vezetői névsorok," 554.

21 For the text of the resolution formulated by the participants in the conference, see OMGE, *Mezőgazdaságunk válsága számokban,* 8–9.

22 Sipos, "A termelői és fogyasztói árak vizsgálata Magyarországon," 10.

23 Tóth T., *A Magyar mezőgazdaság struktúrája az 1930-as években,* 18.

24 From the collected data, several derived figures were also calculated, such as total raw yield, net income, and efficiency. Five decades later, Tibor Tóth sought deeper connections through factor analysis from the data. Tóth T., *A dunántúli kisüzemek termelése és gazdálkodása az 1930-as években,* 52 and 55–137.

25 Contemporaries also used these raw data for scientific research. There was generally a positive correlation between livestock, capital, labor costs, and profitability based on various aspects. Éber, "A földárak és földhaszonbérek alakulása tíz év alatt," 799–804.

public charges, a net yield of 9.11 *pengő* per cadastral acre remained, based on the data from the enterprises examined.[26]

In 1929, the Keszthely Economic Academy was established. The Department of Business Studies of this academy also collected data on "small enterprises." Of the 126 farms they examined, 60 percent were unprofitable during the crisis years 1931–1932. They could not even cover their operating costs.[27] At the Debrecen Economic Academy, Lajos Kesztyűs Sarkadi (1890–1957) prepared detailed statistics concerning the economic results of 100 mainly landowners from the Trans-Tisza region. In in 1931, data from 15 farms (with a size of 50–200 cadastral acres) were processed, while in 1932, data from eight farms were analyzed. In 1931, the focus was on farms with sizes between 50 and 100 cadastral acres, where the rounded net income of 40 *pengő*s corresponded to an interest rate of 3.13 percent. Compared to a bank interest rate of five percent, the interest loss was 1.87 percent. In 1932, typically half of the estates between 100 and 200 cadastral acres ended the year with a net loss based on their operational costs.[28] He also noted regarding the farming of smallholders that their average yield of cereals was about two quintals per hectare lower compared to those with 100-200 acres, because they lacked expertise and their soil preparation was weaker. The small landowners were usually mentioned only from a statistical perspective (instead of offering solutions to help them raise yields), which simply meant that those with one or two cadastral acres had very low average yields which negatively impacted the averages of those with less than 100 cadastral acres. [29]

As a result of the emerging economic crisis, the market positions of agriculture deteriorated. If we consider the price index in 1929 as 100, by 1933, it had decreased to 62.[30] In the case of wheat, which was the most important cereal crop, the price index fell from 100 units in 1913 to 77 in 1932, and by 1934, it had dropped to 41 units.[31] By 1932, 49 percent of farms and 36 percent of land was indebted, with a debt service consuming 60 percent of revenue.[32]

26 *Mezőgazdaságunk üzemi eredményei 1933. évben,* 67.
27 Juhos, "Dunántúli kisgazdaságok jövedelmi helyzete," 289.
28 Sarkadi Kesztyűs, "A vagyonleltár értékelése," 225.
29 Sarkadi Kesztyűs, *A magyar mezőgazdasági politika feladatai*, 10.
30 Tóth T., *A magyar mezőgazdaság struktúrája az 1930-as években, 33.*
31 Ibid., 37.
32 Ibid., 47.

In 1931, for properties up to five cadastral acres, the value of debt per acre was 45 *pengő*.[33] Thus, the costs of servicing consumed 88 percent of the profits.[34]

Ultimately, in the interwar period, the standard of living of the agrarian population stagnated compared to 1913, while during the years of the economic crisis, it declined.[35]

Research Objectives, Sources, and the Framework of the Investigation

The aim of this study is to illustrate, based on the examples of small farms on the outskirts of Törökszentmiklós during the crisis years of the 1930s, how the economies of smallholder families developed, with particular attention to their financial situation. Relevant sources are scarce, as the census data from the Dualist era did no go below settlement-level to inquire into the financial circumstances of families.[36] The aforementioned István Szabó was referring to the decades preceding World War I when he wrote that "based on written sources, it is easier to follow and understand the economic management of a serf from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries than, for example, that of a peasant landowner from the 1860s–80s."[37] We can consider his findings valid for the poor peasant layer in interwar Hungary too, as research focusing on the circumstances of the history of the peasants has hardly dealt with quantitative data at a finer resolution than the settlement level.[38] The peasant way of living usually did not include a detailed family "account book" over the course of a year, and statistical data were still not available below settlement level (however, the categorization of land size became more sophisticated).

In the country of "three million beggars" (as interwar Hungary has been called), beside the official statistics and abovementioned institutions and associations, the so-called village research movement also tried to portray the everyday lives of the common people in their numerous publications, but the active members of this movement did so in a qualitative rather than a quantitative way. The ethnographer Edit Fél attempted to use such sources to illustrate the everyday life of an extended family consisting of 14 people in Marcelháza (now in Slovakia),

33 Ibid., 49.

34 Ibid.

35 Gunst, "A mezőgazdaság fejlődésének megrekedése," 391.

36 István Szabó summarized the obstacles to historical research on peasant life. Szabó, *Jobbágyok, parasztok,* 351–61. Source of the quote, ibid., 359.

37 Ibid., 358.

38 Ibid.

but incomes were not expressed in strictly financial terms.[39] None of the village researchers relied on detailed income data or expenditures in their published works when mentioning the problems of village life.

Alongside the well-known works of Géza Féja, Zoltán Szabó, and Imre Kovács, a special yet largely unevaluated series of investigations was initiated by Professor Rezső Milleker (1887–1945),[40] the founder of the Geography Institute at the University of Debrecen.[41] He encouraged his students "to go into the field" (usually to their birthplaces) to record the circumstances of "typical" families, including financial data and material aspects. For the students' benefit, a questionnaire was even created, yet despite this, the essays written by the students to complete their degrees had very heterogeneous structures.[42] Several of them did not provide any numerical data at all, while others focused on ethnographic or physical and geographical descriptions or merely presented descriptions of the circumstances and lifestyle of a single family. Among the remaining essays, the one that most closely followed Milleker's written instructions was the work titled "The Types of Economic Farms of Pusztaszakállas" by Károly Molnár, who completed his university studies in 1933.[43] After graduation, Molnár taught for a few years (1936–1939) in his native village at the local boys' school.[44] In 1937, a printed version of his speech titled "The Good Student and the Good Pupil" was published in the local school bulletin.

Pusztaszakállas lies on the outskirts of Törökszentmiklós. In 1930, the town had an area of 53,000 cadastral acres, including several outlying inhabited areas (so-called "tanyák" or farmsteads),[45] including Pusztaszakállas. The population of Törökszentmiklós in 1930 was 28,503, 12,371 of whom lived on the outskirts,

39 The result of Edit Fél's research was first published in Érsekújvár in 1944. Her data collection included quantifications of annual consumption, but wherever possible, she combined human and animal consumption; for example, in a large family, 50 to 60 quintals of potatoes were consumed. No monetary values were assigned to these items. Fél, "Egy kisalföldi nagycsalád társadalom-gazdasági vázlata."

40 Bagdi, "Statisztikai módszerekkel mért fejlettség és szociográfiai valóság," 199–227.

41 Süli-Zakar, *Milleker Rezső professzor élete és debreceni munkássága*, 2–4.

42 Some papers have also been published in print, and even Mihály Kerék referred to the thesis work of Károly Szalánczi published in 1932. Kerék, "A mezőgazdasági munkás anyagi helyzete," 24.

43 According to the university records, Károly Molnár attended from the first semester of the 1929/30 academic year until the end of the 1932/33 academic year. Hallgatói anyakönyvek.

44 Deák, *Polgári iskolai író-tanárok élete és munkái*, 318. As a history and geography teacher, he taught German, history, agriculture, and practical farming to his students. *A Törökszentmiklósi,* 1937, 6–7, *A Törökszentmiklósi*, 1939, 12.

45 In 1926, there were six state rural elementary schools operating with six classrooms and nine teachers. Botka, *Adatok Szolnok megye történetéből.* 767.

accounting for 43.4 percent of the town's population.[46] According to Molnár, around 1930, Pusztaszakállas[47] had a population of only 250 and covered a total area of 3,000 cadastral acres, but half of this was marshlands and swamps along the Tisza River, while the other half consisted of fertile black soil where only potatoes did not thrive.[48] In the early 1930s, the settlement consisted of 42 houses (plus a school and a community center) in which 52 families lived.[49] The area of the settlement given in cadastral acres was distributed among only 19 landowner families who owned 17 acres, 3.5 acres, 5 acres, 20 acres, 4 acres, 2 acres, 14 acres, 8 acres, 1.5 acres, 4 acres, 2 acres, 13 acres, 30 acres, 6 acres, 1 acres, 5 acres, 1.5 acres, 23 acres, and 180 acres.[50] Nine families made a living off fishing, and one person lived in the village as a retired gendarme. A blacksmith, two masons, and three cobblers also lived there, but they too could not make a living solely from their work, so, during the harvest season, they had to take on agricultural wage work.

Land consolidation was not executed in the area. There were no vineyards or orchards at all, and the 750 cadastral acres of pasture was private property and not communal land. In terms of landownership, there was one estate exceeding 500 cadastral acres in Pusztaszakállas, while an additional four individuals owned between 100 and 500 cadastral acres, four individuals had between 50 and 100 cadastral acres, 35 individuals owned between ten and 50 cadastral acres, and 21 individuals had land holdings of less than ten cadastral acres.[51]

In Törökszentmiklós as a whole, five-sixths of the land was in the hands of large landowners, while "medium and small landowners[52] made up a significant portion of the population, but it was rare to find a farmer with 100 acres. The number of veterans' new plots was five, with 20 acres of land per person."[53] The leadership of Törökszentmiklós consisted of a "representative body made

46 *Az 1930. évi népszámlálás,* 416–17.

47 According to the official census of 1930, 640 people lived in Pusztaszakállas. *Az 1930. évi népszámlálás,* 416–17.

48 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 2.

49 On average, five individuals made up a family.

50 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 4.

51 MNL JNSZML IV.407. Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Vármegye alispánjának iratai. 14530/1939. tanyai iratok. Adatgyűjtő-ív [é.n.] (1930?) 4.

52 The redistribution of land was completed in 1929. The number of people who acquired plots was 2,000. However, during the Great Economic Crisis, 700 beneficiaries of the land reform lost their lands because of indebtedness, and their arrears had be collected from the remainder community of beneficiaries. Szakál, "Törökszentmiklós története 1932-től 1938-ig," 9.

53 Ibid., 7.

up of 20 large landowners, as well as affluent middle and small landowners and wealthy intellectuals."[54] It is also important to note that Törökszentmiklós had a debt of 1.1 million *pengő* in the mid-1930s, which significantly affected both sides of the budget.[55] In order to balance the municipality's budget, a 21 percent municipal surtax[56] and a three percent emergency surtax were imposed in 1932, and by 1933, the rate of the municipal surtax had risen to 49 percent.[57]

According to Zsolt Szilágyi's calculations, Törökszentmiklós was considered a "market sub-center" in the interwar period, as it remained in the "shadow" of Szolnok. In practice, this meant that the town was unable to attract residents from other settlements beyond its own population.[58] Lajos Tímár defined the settlement as a "rural market town."[59]

Family Types in Pusztaszakállas

1932, the year in which Molnár pursued his research year, represented the economic low point of the ten years between 1929 and 1938.[60] In his unpublished thesis, Molnár identified six different family types in Pusztaszakállas, but he did not clarify the criteria he used to select the families presented, thus depriving future generations of the opportunity to determine through further research whether the selected six families represent the local society correctly. It seems that the size of the family, the amount of land they owned (even if only a small

54 Ibid., 14.

55 The annual revenue of Törökszentmiklós was around 700,000 *pengő*. This debt was incurred due to the implementation of various construction projects, thus loans had to be taken for the district court (320,000 P), the boys' civil school (340,000 P), the public slaughterhouse (140,000 P), and the establishment of the water supply system and the organization of the market (416,000 P). The annual interest exceeded 100,000 *pengő* (15 percent of the yearly budget). MNL JNSZML IV.407. Jász-Nagykun-Szolnok Vármegye alispánjának iratai. 14530/1939. tanyai iratok Kivonat Törökszentmiklós község képviselő testületének 1930. évi december hó 19. napján tartott rendes közgyűlés jegyzőkönyvéből. 4–5; Kivonat Szajol község képviselőtestületének 1930. október 18-án megtartott közgyűlésén készült jegyzőkönyvből, 1–2.

56 This means an additional 21 percent, considering the state taxes levied to the city as 100 percent, and this surtax was collected and used by the municipal government directly.

57 The municipal surtax rate kept increasing in the following years, finally reaching 63 percent in 1937. Szakál, "Törökszentmiklós története 1932-től 1938-ig," 7.

58 Several towns near Törökszentmiklós attracted the people of the town to their markets. Szilágyi, *Ismeretlen Alföld,* 151.

59 The basis for the qualification was that in Törökszentmiklós, the proportion of earners working in public service and self-employed individuals in the field of commerce and credit was 9.4 percent altogether. Timár, "A szociológia és geográfia pörlekedésének egy lezártalan fejezete," 91–92.

60 Éber, "A földárak és földhaszonbérek alakulása tíz év alatt," 298.

amount), their ages, and their farming practices all played a significant role in his classifications.

The families from Pusztaszakállas included by Molnár in his discussion owned a certain amount of land. The average size of the lands owned by the 19 families was 17.9 cadastral acres. If one excludes the landowner with the 'extreme' 180 cadastral acres (none of the six different types presented could have owned this much land), the average size decreases to 8.9 cadastral acres. Based on Molnár's descriptions, we do not need to consider anyone with a landholding larger than ten cadastral acres (when they owned more land than this, farmers tended to employ agricultural labor, at least during the agricultural "high season," but there is no indication of this in the descriptions). This leaves us with only twelve small landowners, whose average property size was merely 3.6 cadastral acres. The six families under discussion constituted 50 percent of them and thus represent this subgroup.

Demographers evaluate the "developmental cycle" of a family as a process of continuous change, since along with advancing age, births, deaths, and migrations also modify the structure of the family.[61] A key factor in Chayanov's theory regarding peasant economies is the number and composition of the members of a household. He calculated that in the case of marriages, a child reaching adulthood was born every three years, resulting in increasingly deteriorating living conditions during the first 14 years. From the age of 15, the firstborn child could be considered an asset as someone who could be part of the household workforce. Thus, the ratio of dependents began to decrease.[62] Molnár very was probably not familiar with this theory, but he did take age into consideration, as he introduced, for example, "young married couples" who were just starting their careers, as well as couples over 70 years of age.

If children who had reached adulthood married but remained on the same property as their father, then multiple generations lived together. It was possible to increase the amount and intensity of labor without employing servants, while young people, on the other hand, did not immediately have to face the full burden of independent life.[63] If we consider the long-term changes in household structure, there was a national trend indicating that in the nineteenth century, household sizes increased, followed by a rapid decline starting in the early

61 For more details, see Faragó, "Nemek, nemzedék, rokonság," 467.

62 A firstborn child was regarded as suitable for work once he had turned 15. Thus, the number of dependents began to decrease. Pozsgai, "Paraszti háztartás és munkaszervezet," 348.

63 Heilig, "Háztartások és gazdaságok," 214.

twentieth century.[64] Molnár's research also confirms Faragó's general statistical observation that large families were also disappearing in Pusztaszakállas.

A Large Family with a Small Estate (Type I)

Molnár did not provide any supporting points or other references regarding the family he referred to as Type I, nor did he clarify the basis for its classification. Based on the narrative description, it seems that (using Laslett's typology) the *two-generation extended family* was the decisive factor here. The 54-year-old farmer had seven children, three of whom were already married when the data was collected. Among them, his 28-year-old son lived with his wife in the same household as his father. Their house had a thatched roof and two rooms and a kitchen, but Molnár was unable to provide the exact floor area of the house. One of the rooms was 6 × 4.5 × 3 meters in size. Five people slept in this room. During the summer, the farmer and his two younger sons slept in the barn. With regards to the buildings used for farm work, there was a stable, a pigsty, a barn, and a beehive. According to Molnár, however, the farmer did not understand beekeeping.[65]

The family had six cadastral acres of land and one cadastral acre of meadow. The most complex "budget" was provided in this case, so I have organized the data in tables. Molnár paid attention in his essay to high taxes in the case of each family type examined. In the case of the first type, however, even the taxes levied under different titles were given in detail (Table 3).

The family had 46 fruit trees (which bore apples, plums, and walnuts), and they consumed the fruit themselves. Their meals were not regular. They ate what they could produce, typically potatoes. One of their winter dinners, for example, consisted of bread and onions, which they salted or dipped in vinegar. They didn't engage much with culture. Their "library" consisted of a psalm-book and a calendar, while the source of information (even concerning public affairs) was not newspapers, but rather their neighbor.[66]

64 Faragó, "Nemek, nemzedék, rokonság," 466–69.

65 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 6.

66 Ibid., 7.

Table 1. Annual incomes of a large family with small holdings in 1932 *pengő*

I. Growth	**Crop**	**Amount**	**Unit price (P)**	**Total (P)**
	wheat	15 quintals (q)	18	270
	barley	6 q	11	66
	cob of corn	15 q	7[67]	105
	straw	32 q	0,45	14,4
	crushed straw	20 q	0,5	10
	scene	29 q	6,5	188,5
	carrot	50 q	1	50
	potato	4 q	8	32
	Total			**735,9**

II. Vegetables	common bean	15 kg	0,3	4,5
	pea	5 kg	0,32	1,6
	ground sweet peppers	4 kg	3,1	12,4
	vegetable (cabbage)	10 kg	0,15	1,5
	cucumber	10 kg	0,2	3
	onion	104 kg	0,28	29,12
	garlic	2,5 kg	0,5	1,25
	poppy seeds	3 kg	0,8	2,4
	white cabbage	40 heads	0,01	0,4
	Total			**56,17**

III. Livestock	**Animal**	**Individuals**	**Unit price (P)**	**Total**
	pork	2	40	80
	goose	17	7	119
	chicken	48	1,8	76,8
	Total			**275,8**

IV. Wage	**Work-related**	**Subject**	**Unit price (P)**	**Total**
	harvest	9,8 q wheat	18	176,4
	harvest	0,85 q barley	11	9,35
	harvest	2 carts of straw	6	12
	Total			**197,75**

V. Casual work	**Work-related**	**Person**	**Occasion**	**Total**
	harvesting potatoes	3	12 days	36
	harvesting onions	3	5 days	12
	fish transportation	3	12 times	96
	Total			**144**

Source: Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái."

67 In 1932, the average price of corn was 11.49 *pengő* per quintal, and the price of an ear of corn had to be lower than that. Sipos, "A termelői és fogyasztói árak vizsgálata Magyarországon," 16.

The family could not make ends meet solely by cultivating their own land, so the head of the family, along with his two oldest sons, took on day labor jobs, which included assisting in the harvesting of onions and potatoes. In total, they earned 144 *pengő* from the harvest, receiving a daily income of one *pengő* for potato[68] picking, while for onion picking, they were paid only 80 fillér (one-hundredth of a *pengő*) per person for one day (Table 1). Based on the data, fish transportation was the most profitable, as it provided a daily allowance of three *pengő* per person. The published data, however, do not indicate what the weight of the fish that had to be carried was. During the harvest, members of the family also took on work for other farmers, but they were paid in kind,[69] receiving nearly ten quintals of grain and two carts of straw, which Molnár valued at a total of 197.5 *pengő*.[70] The value of the crops they produced themselves, from wheat to potatoes, amounted to a total of 735.9 *pengő*, while the garden vegetables represented only 56.17 *pengő*. The family gained significant income from the livestock, as they were able to sell geese, chickens, and pigs for a total value of 275.8 *pengő*[71] (Table 1). Geese were the most economically viable animals to raise, as they were able to find food in the wet habitats around them. (Half of the territory of Pusztaszakállas was wetland.) According to the figures provided by Molnár, the family's total income was 1409.62 *pengő* in the year under consideration, of which 29.8 percent was made in cash (419.8 P), while the rest was in kind.

The goods necessary for the family's livelihood could be valued at 713.75 *pengő*, although this was not all spent as cash because they consumed items that they

68 Molnár calculated the price of potatoes at 8 *pengő* per hundredweight. The numbers he provided may not have been entirely accurate. According to Sándor Sipos's data, the producer price of potatoes in 1932 was 5.28 *pengő* per quintal, while the consumer price was 17.6 *pengő*. On the other hand, Matolcsy provided the data for the "winter semester," thus giving the price of potatoes for 1931/1932, which he categorized according to five varieties. The most expensive variety was the "Korai rózsa" [Early Rose] at 9.33 *pengő* per quintal, while the cheapest was the Wohltmann at 4.85 *pengő* per quintal. Ultimately, the type, size, quality of the potatoes, and the timing of the sale may have influenced the prices, so we cannot verify Molnár's data. Sipos, "A termelői és fogyasztói árak vizsgálata Magyarországon," 12; Matolcsy and Varga, *Magyarország nemzeti jövedelme,* 25.

69 In a contemporary study, Kerék determined the wages of harvesters to be one-tenth or one-eleventh of the actual amount of grain harvested, which was supplemented only by flour and bacon as food. Kerék, "Adatok a magyar mezőgazdasági munkáscsaládok," 596.

70 In 1932, the producer price of wheat was 17.95 *pengő* per quintal, so it can be assumed that the family in question fared better than they would have if they had received their dues in cash, but the essay did not reveal how many days the two boys worked for the nearly ten quintals of wheat. Sipos, "A termelői és fogyasztói árak vizsgálata Magyarországon," 12.

71 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 10.

themselves produced (the data are therefore estimates). The amount spent on animal fodder was practically produced by them, but to reach the 300 bundles of corn stalks, it was necessary to purchase 100 bundles.

Table 2. Daily consumption of a large family with smallholdings and expenses necessary for the operation of a farm in 1932 (in *pengő*)

I. Consumption	**Product**	**Amount**	**Unit price**	**Total (P)**
	flour	1,050 kg	0.4	420
	meat	60 kg	1.3	78
	bacon	20 kg	1.8	36
	fat	25 kg	1.8	45
	sausage	5 kg	1.8	9
	white sausage	5 kg	1	5
	chicken	30 pieces	1.6	48
	fish	10 kg	0.8	8
	egg	100 units	0.08	8
	kitchen garden produce			56.17
	Total			**713.17**

II. Livestock	**Product**	**Amount**	**Unit price**	**Total**
	scene	29 q	6.5	188.5
	corn	15 q	7	105
	carrot	50 q	1	50
	miller's bran	3.45 q	13	44.85
	crushed straw	20 q	0.5	10
	corn stalk	300 bundles	0.06	18
	Total			**416.35**

III. Economic expenditures	**Value**
blacksmith work	25
bogging work	15
2 large ropes	8
1 chain of links	2
chimney sweeping	6
40 kg of slaked lime	4
pasture rent	46
40 kg of wheat for the herdsman	7.2
to the shepherd	3.5
Food for the shepherd for 15 days	15
vaccination	2
Total	**133.7**

Source: Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái."

Their animals were let out to the village's herd and pigsty, so the herdsman and the swineherd looking after them had to be paid (a total of 25.7 *pengő*) (Table 2). Several items appeared as expenses for which cash had to be paid, such as sugar, salt, coffee, etc. The salt (Table 3) was not only for meals but also for preserving meat and supplying the livestock's salt demands. A total of 300 *pengő* was paid for clothing and footwear. The total amount due for the entire year was 279.58 *pengő*. The largest item was the tax and loan arrears from the previous year, amounting to 116.56 *pengő* (41.7 percent), which indicates that tax payments had not been made even in the previous year, and it can be assumed that the figures increased year by year (at least considering the rate of the aforementioned surtax). The land and house tax amounted to 85.39 *pengő* in 1932 (30.5 percent), while the church tax and the value of public works were both reported as 24 *pengő* each. This last tax was imposed by the municipality of Törökszentmiklós to finance public works.[72]

Table 3. Family expenses of a large family with smallholdings in 1932 (in *pengő*)

At Grocer's	**Product**	**Quantity**	**Unit price**	**Amount**
	sugar	10 kg	1.4	14
	coffee	2 kg	7	14
	salt	63 kg	0.4	25.2
	pepper	1.5 kg	9	4.5
	acetic acid	10 liter	0.4	4
	lamp glass	4 pieces	0.25	1
	shoe polish	4 pieces	0.48	1.92
	comb	1 piece	0.7	0.7
	kerosene	26 liter	0.36	9.36
	matches	52 boxes	0.06	3.12
	Total			**77.8**

Clothes	**Product**	**Total**
	1 men clothing	32
	2 pairs men boot	54
	3 pairs women clothing	30
	5 pairs women shoes	75
	2 hats	12
	1 winter hat	7
	6 pair men underwear	36
	6 pair women underwear	12

72 In 1931, the government made it mandatory for municipalities to take care of the poor living in the settlement. For more details, see Gyáni, "Közmunka a Horthy-korban," 30–33.

Clothes	Product	Total
	4 pair silk stockings	12
	4 nightgowns	7.2
	6 ? scarf?	15
	12 textile handkerchiefs	6
	shoes repairs	2.5
	Total	**300.7**

Taxes	Type of taxes	Amount
	land and property tax	85.39
	disability tax	0.45
	income tax	19
	road tax	3.1
	local tax	2.1
	healthcare tax	4.98
	public work	24
	last year's arrears	116.56
	church tax	24
	Total	**279.58**

Source: Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái."

Despite the apparent abundance of data, the information available is probably not complete, making it impossible to determine the balance between revenue and expenses accurately. We can assume that the cash actually earned for daily labor and some marketable goods could be used to cover the expenses that had to be paid in cash (e.g. taxes). From the sale of sheep, there was an income of 144 *pengő*, and the sale of pigs, chickens, and geese generated 275.8 *pengő* income for the family, totaling 419.8 *pengő* (Table 1). On the expenditure side, the amount left at the spice shop was 77.8 *pengő*, and the total spent on clothing was 300.7 *pengő*, making a combined total of 377.7 *pengő*. Taxes had to be paid in cash, but their total amount (279.58 *pengő*) was much higher than the difference between revenues and expenditures, which was just over 40 *pengő*. This contradiction cannot be definitively resolved based on the available data. The list of agricultural goods produced cannot be considered complete either. The family kept a cow and its calf, but it doesn't seem likely that they were not able to consume any dairy products over the course of the entire year. The value of the chickens appears in our tables with two different amounts. Those sold were successfully sold at a price of 1.6 *pengő* each, while for personal consumption their value was determined to be 1.8 *pengő*. From a consumption perspective, the more than one ton of (reported) flour used annually for baking bread came to less than a half a kilogram of bread per person per day for the eight-member family. This is not much. A hundred eggs per

year (i.e. two eggs per family per week), the annual 20 kg of bacon rounded to 7 grams per day, and 8.5 grams of fat were allocated daily per person. Meanwhile, the men spent the summer harvesting and doing other physical work, which required a high daily calory intake. Finally, 63 kg of salt seems excessive for preserving 60 kg of meat. Indeed, it would have been too much for salting the meat, bacon, or the five kg of sausage in the pantry preserved for later consumption. No matter how modest the circumstances of the family were, these low values still seem contradictory or simply implausible.

A Couple without Land (Type II)

It is worth beginning with the summary assessment written by Molnár about an individual classified as Type II: "He does not care much about the past: he did not enjoy better times before, nor will he in the future." This individual, Molnár implies, lives only for today, and for him, the most important thing is spirits [meaning not holy water but brandy]. He had, at least according to Molnár, neither principles nor culture: "They are the most extreme people in the village and the most uncultured people."[73]

A 64-year-old fisherman lived with his wife in their own house, which measured $10 \times 3.5 \times 2$ meters and consisted of three rooms (a living room, a kitchen, and a pantry). The man used a fur coat as a blanket. He did not have an outbuilding for his livestock, so he kept his pig in his room, along with the trough. According to Molnár, the "hygiene was primitive," as they never bathed and practically never washed themselves and changed their underwear only once a month. Their income situation could be summarized with the simple principle that "[only] God knows what you will live off today and tomorrow,"[74] so they ate irregularly and ate whatever they happened to receive or find in the natural world around them. They had few work opportunities. In winter, for example, they sometimes patched socks and repaired shoes for others. Of the labor they performed over the course of the year, only the work they did during the harvest seasons could be quantified, as the man worked 252 hours alongside the threshing machine. However, the time spent on fishing could not be precisely determined. In light of the this, their cash income was low. The largest amount, 128 *pengő*, came from fishing, but half of the revenue from this had to be paid

73 They could only write down their names. Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 19 and 25.

74 Ibid., 19.

as a fishing fee. In a year, the man consumed food worth 108 *pengő*, but this can only be considered a theoretical, calculated value, as he received, exchanged, or "found" most of the products listed here. For food, over the course of the year,[75] he paid cash (1.8 *pengő*) for three kg of mutton. At the spice shop, he spent 11.92 *pengő* in a year, for example, 3.2 *pengő* for eight kg of salt, 0.27 *pengő* a lampshade, and 7.04 *pengő* for 22 liters of kerosene. He also paid 1.44 *pengő* for 24 boxes of matches. He carried a debt to the shop of a few *pengő* all year round. He only spent money on clothing when a given garment was completely worn out. He replaced his shoes every six to seven years, and even then, he only wore them in winter. Thus, over the course of the year, he spent only 10.5 *pengő* on a total of four pieces of clothing.[76]

His total income was 123.9 *pengő*, which he earned from the slaughter and sale of pigs (47.4 P), the sale of 15 chickens (7.5 *pengő*), patching (5 *pengő*), and fishing (64 *pengő*). In total, 116.76 *pengő* was spent over the year, including rye at 20.9 *pengő* (17.9 percent), tobacco at 8.84 *pengő* (7.6 percent), and *pálinka* (fruit brandy) at 72.8 *pengő* (62.4 percent), in addition to the items mentioned in the previous paragraph.[77]

According to the balance published by Molnár, there should have been some *pengő* left in the farmer's pocket, but this was not the case in practice, because if he earned any income from patching (which amounted to a total of 5 *pengő* per year), he immediately bought a larger quantity of fruit brandy. His tax liability amounted to 27.3 *pengő*, which he tried to manage by paying a third of his annual tax, but he never intended to pay the remaining two-thirds. He did this simply to avoid being harassed by the authorities.

If we want to determine the balance of the revenues and expenditures with scientific rigor, we also encounter contradictions. For example, Molnár did not specify how much the farmer earned from his 252 hours of work next to the threshing machine. We must also assume a lack of information regarding the pig slaughter, as the text mentions an animal weighting 110 kilograms. In the case of pigs, it is necessary to consider that slightly less than half of the live weight should be accounted for as meat. If the owner sold nine kg of bacon, ten kg of fat, and 15 kg of meat, then there must have been at least 30 kg of meat left, which he probably consumed himself with his wife. Thus, he ate not only what he claimed

75 He had 150 kg of corn throughout the year, but it can also be classified as laborer's wages, because the farmers allowed him to collect the smaller cobs that were not gathered after the corn was harvested.

76 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 23.

77 Ibid., 24.

to have found, exchanged, etc. We must assume that the use of eight kg of salt bought from the shop was necessary for the preservation of this amount of meat.

Molnár finally noted that "there are five or six such families with the difference that they are young and have one or two children."[78] The number of children and their ages were not considered decisive factors in determining this type based on this remark. In this context, while the activities of the landowner were listed, the size of the landholding was not mentioned, which is why I consider this couple a possible representative of the class of landless day laborers, even though they were no longer active in the labor market due to their age.

A Couple with a Small Landholding (Type III)

The third type was represented by a 76-year-old farmer regarding whom Molnár remarked that "there are seven families of this type in the village, with the exception that they have children who have already left home."[79] The presence and number of children were therefore not primary factors in the identification of this type. This farmer had five acres of farmland, but he rented them out to someone for half of the harvests, probably due to his age. (The average price of such a smallholding was 853 *pengő* in the 1930s.)[80]

The couple lived in a house that was 18 meters long and four meters wide with a ceiling four meters in height. It was built half of stone and half of adobe, with a tiled roof. Several of the surrounding farming buildings were also covered with tiles. Molnár referred to their bathing habits as "rural," which meant that they washed themselves in cold water every day, while on Sundays they used warm water.[81] In terms of their meals, Molnár highlighted caraway seed soup as a frequent item during the day and bread with bacon for dinner. Between 15 and 20 liters of wine were consumed annually, along with an additional five liters of brandy, while tobacco was consumed at a rate of one pack per day, valued at 0.11 *pengő* per package.

The farmer's 65-year-old wife cultivated some corn and also kept a vegetable garden measuring a square rod. Molnár was unable to determine the necessary work hours afterwards, but the couple worked on some land for 310 days of the year (but not all day).

78 Ibid., 25.

79 Ibid., 33.

80 Éber, "A földárak és földhaszonbérek alakulása tíz év alatt," 304.

81 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 26.

Since they did not have children,[82] they did not want to adopt a new lifestyle. In terms of their income, the goods obtained from the natural world around them played a significant role.

Table 4. The annual income in *pengő* in 1932 of a 76-year-old smallholder with five cadastral acres who was no longer actively working

Land leased for the half of the products			
Crop	**Amount**	**Unit price *(pengő)***	**Value *(pengő)***
wheat	8.1 q	15	121.5
barley	4.8 q	7	33.6
straw	30.0 q	1	30
Total			**185.1**

Land leased for the third of the products			
Crop	**Amount**	**Unit price *(pengő)***	**Value *(pengő)***
corn	8 q	4	32
pumpkin	24 q	0.5	12
Total			**44**

Source: Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái."

The couple kept poultry (20 hens and 3 roosters) and managed to sell some of the brood and the eggs they produced: 100 chicks for 50 *pengő*, 70 larger chickens for 74 *pengő*, and 100 eggs for 28 *pengő*, for a total of 152 *pengő*.[83] The vegetables grown in the garden were valued at 12.66 *pengő*, of which only the red onions were sold (two quintals for a total of nine *pengő*). The cash income was further increased by a calf which the farmer bought and sold on the same day, which generated a profit of 45 *pengő*.

During the year, items produced by and consumed within the household as internal consumption (flour, meat, bacon, fat, sausage, chicken, eggs) amounted to a total of 352.66 *pengő*, while at the grocery store, a total of 52.12 *pengő* was spent on spices, sugar, coffee, salt, pepper, kerosene, etc. Molnár reported a total of 72.2 *pengő* for clothing expenses, but noted in his list that certain items, such as suits, boots, and hats, were purchased only every two years.[84] The clothes were worn until they became unusable, so some pieces of clothing were six or seven years old. For the maintenance of the house, the farmer spent ten *pengő* in the year examined (three *pengő* for chimney sweeping, five *pengő* for plastering and whitewashing, and two *pengő* for 20 kg of lime)[85] (Table 5).

82 They had an adopted daughter, but it was not revealed how old she was, when they started raising her or until what age they did so. She had married by 1932 and lived in a separate household.

83 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 28.

84 Ibid., 30.

85 Ibid., 31.

The farmer's tax book was not available when Molnár visited the community, so the tax amount listed as 20.6 *pengő* was written into the "accounting records" from memory, but Molnár found the estimated amount to be low. The total cost of pig farming for the entire year was 83.68 *pengő* for two piglets (their purchase price was 20 *pengő*, and the rest was spent on feeding them, such as five quintals of barley for 33.6 *pengő*). Both animals were slaughtered, and their total value was determined to be 140 *pengő*, although it was not revealed how many kilograms they weighed.[86] For the poultry, a cost of 20 *pengő* was calculated for feeding, while the total value of the day-old chicks, larger chickens, and eggs that were sold was 152 *pengő*. For personal use, a value of 53 *pengő* was accounted for from the poultry yard. From the harvested fruit, the farmer was able to sell one and a half hundredweight of apples and plums, which brought in revenue of twelve *pengő*.

On the income side of the annual revenue, we find 222.76 *pengő* earned from cultivating the land (185.1 *pengő* from the farmer's own land, 34 *pengő* from a third of the corn, and 3.66 *pengő* from the vegetable garden). In cash, the actual revenue amounted to 370 *pengő*s (152 *pengő* from poultry sales; the price of the cow was 140 *pengő*, "trading" brought in 45 *pengő*, and the sale of onions, pumpkins, and fruits brought in a total of 33 *pengő*), which represented 62.4 percent of the total annual revenue.

On the expenditure side, 225.07 *pengő* were recorded, of which clothing accounted for 72.2 *pengő*, the total amount spent on purchased tobacco and wine was 46.15 *pengő*, and taxes were listed as 20.6 *pengő*[87] (Table 5).

Table 5. The balance of annual cash flow in 1932 in *pengő* for a 76-year-old smallholder with five cadastral acres who was no longer actively working

Income	**Value *(pengő)***	**Rate (percent)**
Animal husbandry	292	78.9
Crop production	33	8.9
Trade	45	12.2
Total	**370**	**100**

Expenses	**Value *(pengő)***	**Rate (percent)**
Clothing	72.2	32.1
Spices	56.12	24.9
Beverages, for amusement	46.15	20.5
Taxes	20.6	9.2
Animal purchase	20	8.9
Economic expenditures	10	4.4
Total	**225.07**	**100**

Source: Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái."

86 Ibid., 31.

87 Ibid., 32.

Considering the balance, 144.93 *pengő* constituted the "remainder." Behind the seemingly positive balance was the fact that the farmer was saving the money he had brought in by selling the cow because he wanted to buy a new one. Regarding the profit generated by "being the middleman" in the sale of the calf, Molnár noted that the farmer could not make such profits in an average year.

Older Members of Cohabiting Couples from two Generations ("Grandparents") (Type IV)

Molnár classified a small landowner with four cadastral acres and seven grown children as a member of the fourth type of family. This landowner lived with his wife, and according to "tradition," the youngest son and his wife lived with him in the same household.[88] Molnár provided no textual references that would allow for the identification of other classification criteria. The family members described as type IV lived in a house with a tiled roof measuring 14 × 8 × 3 meters, and they had several outbuildings on their property. We cannot determine the age of the farmer from Molnár's essay. He probably belonged to an older age group, as his sons were the ones who cultivated the fields.[89] He consumed 25 liters of wine at home each year, and he drank about four liters in the pub annually.

The value of the goods produced on their land amounted to a total of 314 *pengő*. Of the crops, wheat was produced in the largest quantity, 15 quintals valued at 17 *pengő* each, amounting to a total value of 225 *pengő* (71.7 percent), of which six quintals were sold (104 *pengő*). In comparison, the garden vegetables represented a low amount, with the total for vegetables such as green beans, dry beans, peas, cucumbers, red onions, and garlic amounting to 6.05 *pengő*, and this produce was used by the landowner in the household.

The landowner was only engaged in fishing on a piecework basis. According to Molnár, he devoted 864 hours a year to fishing, which Molnár valued at 140 *pengő*, calculating it based on 70 days at a rate of 2 *pengő* per day.[90] The family's total income was 586 *pengő*, of which 53.6 percent was the value of goods produced in kind, and 46.4 percent was the amount received in cash.

Food items produced and consumed within the household (wheat, corn, fish, potatoes, chicken, eggs and pork) amounted to a value of 297.65 *pengő*,

88 In the discussion of the next group, it did become clear that the younger couple had two children. Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 40.

89 Ibid., 35.

90 Ibid., 36.

of which wheat accounted for 119 *pengő* (40 percent). The landowner spent 27.27 *pengő* at the spice shop over the course of the year, for example, 4.2 *pengő* for sugar and twelve *pengő* for 30 kg of salt. In the list of expenses, Molnár noted that the farmer did not allocate much for clothing, which amounted to the purchase of only two new garments per year: a shirt worth 3.5 *pengő* and a winter coat worth 70 *pengő*.[91] Among the other costs, taxes were also highlighted, but only the church tax was specifically mentioned, valued at 8.2 *pengő*, while all other taxes amounted to a total of 80 *pengő*.[92] The landlord owed 150 *pengő* to the local savings cooperative, which required him to pay 18 *pengő* annually as "interest."

In the end, regarding the revenues received in cash, it was possible to report 272 *pengő* (144 *pengő* from fishing; 104 *pengő* from wheat; 24 *pengő* from poultry), while on the expenditure side, the final amount was similar, 276.44 *pengő*. Among the cash expenses, the two largest items were taxes, amounting to 95.7 *pengő* altogether (34.6 percent), and the aforementioned money spent on clothing, which totaled 73.5 *pengő* (26.6 percent)[93] (Table 6).

Table 6. The balance of household cash flow of the older members ("grandparents") of two-generation cohabiting couples in 1932

Revenues	**Value *(pengő)***	**Rate (percent)**
Income from fishing	144	52.9
Plant cultivation	104	38.3
Animal husbandry	24	8.8
Total	**272**	**100**

Expenses	**Value *(pengő)***	**Rate (percent)**
Clothing	73.5	29.8
Taxes	95.7	38.9
Spice shop	24.24	9.8
Buying a pig	23	9.3
Interest on debt	18	7.3
Radio fee	12	4.9
Total	**246.44**	**100**

Source: Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái."

91 Ibid., 37.

92 They also calculated the house insurance at 4.5 *pengő* and the chimney sweeping fee at a value of three *pengő*.

93 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 38.

Nuclear Families Formed by Young Married Couples (Type V)

Type V was represented by a 20-year-old farmer who had two daughters. The farmer was the son of a man described as belonging to the type IV family. Molnár referred to the young age of the farmer twice, so we may assume this was the main aspect of classification.[94] He lived with his family in a room measuring 5 × 4 × 2.5 meters, where there was a bed, a mess, and a sofa, but there was no room left for a chair. Molnár noted that their way of life was characterized by "satisfactory hygiene," as they bathed every day, and in the summer, they swam in the Tisza River. Molnár noted that "they change their underwear weekly."[95] In summer, they ate three times a day, in winter, twice, having some kind of cooked food at noon and bread with bacon in the evening for dinner. They rarely ate fruit. If they did so, it was watermelon that made its way to the table in the summer. The farmer consumed 22 liters of wine in the tavern over the course of the year, along with two liters of brandy. He smoked two packs (at a cost of 0.11 *pengő* per pack) of tobacco a week. Culture was absent from their lives because "they did not read books or newspapers."[96]

In terms of the annual number of hours spent working, the farmer spent 183 hours harvesting, 1200 hours fishing, and 370 hours pressing straw, totaling 1,753 hours of work.[97] Molnár specifically noted that from November to March, he engaged in fishing for 112 days and in straw threshing for 42 days, from which he earned 132.8 *pengő* and 25.2 *pengő*, respectively. For the work done during the harvest, payment was made in kind, amounting to 5.3 quintals of wheat (valued at 90.1 *pengő*), 0.24 quintals of barley (3.84 *pengő*), eight quintals of corn (112 *pengő*), and 1.5 quintals of potatoes (27 *pengő*), totaling 232.94 *pengő* in cash.[98] The quantity of cereals was not sufficient for the family, as the farmer had to ask his father-in-law for an additional 270 kilograms of wheat before the harvest. Molnár distinguished the "revenue from livestock" section, where he recorded 30 chickens valued at 60 *pengő*. Although two lines earlier he noted that some 80–90 chicks had hatched, he only recorded the value in cash for 30. (The

94 "This almost child-like person type is the most common in the village." Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 45.

95 Ibid., 40.

96 Ibid., 41.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

remainder were probably consumed by the household). The price was listed as 215 eggs (17.2 *pengő*), and an additional 300 eggs were used in the household.

The cash income from animal husbandry was 77.2 *pengő* (the total from selling 215 eggs and 30 chickens at a price of two *pengő* each). From the garden vegetables (from beans to lettuce), a total value of 23.03 *pengő* was produced, of which the largest item was one and a half quintals of potatoes, worth 12 *pengő*.[99] A value of 407.83 *pengő* (for food, such as flour, fat, eggs, bacon, etc.) was consumed (everything was produced on the farm, and he received only 12 kg of fish as a gift). The cost of the feed for the livestock was assessed at 68.88 *pengő*. In the case of the data provided by Molnár, I would like to point out that the difference between the value of the harvesting wage (232.94 *pengő*) received in kind and the value of items produced and consumed within the household (407.83 *pengő*) is represented by the vegetables produced in the garden worth 23.03 *pengő*, as well as the chicken and eggs consumed, which were worth 141.44 *pengő*.

In the end, there was a cash income of 248.4 *pengő* (77.2 *pengő* from poultry farming; 13.2 *pengő* from two carts of pumpkins; 132.8 *pengő* from fishing; and 25.2 *pengő* from straw pressing). On the expenditure side, a total of 239.2 *pengő* was spent on spices, clothing, tobacco (13.52 *pengő*), wine, brandy, and the purchase of a pig (Table 7). At the spice shop, 65.64 *pengő* was spent, the largest item of which was 30 liters of kerosene, valued at 10.86 *pengő*.[100] The clothing cost a total of 110 *pengő* in 1931.

Table 7. Annual cash flow of a young married couple (*pengő*).

Revenues	**Value *(pengő)***	**Rate (percent)**
Daily wage	158	63.6
Animal husbandry	77.2	31.1
Plant cultivation	13.2	5.3
Total	**248.4**	**100**

Expenses	**Value *(pengő)***	**Rate (percent)**
Clothing	110	45.9
Spice shop	65.64	27.4
Buying a pig	31	13
Other	32.72	13.7
Total	**239.36**	**100**

Source: Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái."

99 Ibid., 42.

100 Ibid., 43.

The apparent positive balance is overshadowed by the fact that the farmer owed money to the church (because of the church tax), the amount of which was not even specified. It can be suspected that this amount was higher than the difference between the expenditure and revenue sides of the balance sheet. Despite this, the biggest burden for him was the borrowed wheat he had requested from his father-in-law. As Molnár wrote, "he would want to work more, but job opportunities are quite scarce. … He is generally in a better position than the other poor people in the village, because he knows about fishing and earns quite a bit with it!"[101] But Molnár still included the following sobering observation: "They live on a tight budget and rely on parental support."[102]

Modern Nuclear Family, Produce Made for the Market (Type VI)

We do not know the age of the farmer described as type VI, only that he participated in World War I and that his son was 18 years old. Molnár stated that he "follows the modern trend," meaning his goal was to "produce as much as possible in a small space."[103] He began his gardening activities by renting a three-acre floodplain, which he intended to use to grow melons, while planting red onions along the roadside. In the end, it was the onions that brought him profit, which is why he turned to gardening. He was able to start his horticultural business in 1929 by renting eight cadastral acres, and by 1932, he was growing peppers, winter radishes, cabbage, vegetables, and spring onions in hotbeds, where he also implemented motorized irrigation. The family lived a dual life, with the father and son on the land rented on the banks of the Tisza River (in a building they themselves had constructed from clay with a thatched roof), while the female members of the family lived six kilometers away in the village. In Pusztaszakállas, they were essentially the only smallholder family making a profit from farming. According to Molnár, they managed their annual budget data related to horticulture almost perfectly, and this data indicate that they were able to achieve a profit of nearly 2,000 *pengő*[104] (Table 8).

101 Ibid., 45.

102 Ibid.

103 Ibid., 46.

104 The data were collected in January 1933.

Table 8. The budget of a vegetable producer in Pusztaszakállas in 1932 *(pengő)*

Expenses

Item	Unit price	Amount
8 cad. acres lease	68	544
irrigation machine		800
glass jars (hotbeds)		154
100 litters of gasoline	0.24	42
8 allocations	6	48
80 kg onion	0.5	40
seedlings		22
105 transportation	3	315
700 casual work	0.8	560
Total		**2,525**

Income

Item	Unit price	Amount
80 q onion	5.3	424
10 carts of cabbage	15	150
1 cart of radishes		80
1 cart of vegetables		35
85 carts of peppers	45	3,825
Total		**4,514**

Source: Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái."

Reviewing the cash flow of the family farm, Molnár noted the costs of transportation (which he estimates to be nearly 400 *pengő*) and found them high based on the farmer's account. The irrigation machine represented a greater financial burden, but it was noted that he had three years to pay back the 2,400 *pengő* expense; and it is likely that this amount had already been paid in the months preceding the data collection. The lease of the land (544 *pengő*) and the wages of the day laborers also represented significant costs. As a fee, the family paid 0.8 *pengő* per day. Molnár described this work an easy task that even young girls could handle.[105]

They made transportation cost-effective by purchasing two horses and transporting their goods to the train station by cart, from where the paprika was sent to Budapest. The vehicle used for transportation was impossible to modify, so they could not even measure how much a shipment weighed. Molnár put it at roughly ten quintals. The family's success in gardening inspired others in the village, so three people started growing red onions, even though among the vegetable products mentioned so far, onions were the most problematic (for example, harvesting them was considered slow).

The gardener involved in the investigation did not believe that he had to fulfil all his tax obligations, even though he had an annual profit of 2,000 *pengő*. He chose to declare his activity as arable farming instead of gardening to lower the tax rate.

105 Molnár, "Pusztaszakállas gazdaság-formái," 49.

Summary

How accurate were the data presented by Molnár in his essay? In the 1930s, sociologist Mihály Kerék also dealt with the living conditions of the Hungarian agrarian population. Based on the 96 families living in twelve predominantly lowland working communities he examined in 1932, he found that it was very difficult to make precise determinations concerning their financial situations. The debts were mostly kept track of by the housewives, who were ashamed to declare everything, especially the smaller debts, such as the claims from the grocers. Generally, in the case of occasional jobs as well as for the purchase or sale of smaller items (such as eggs), by the end of the year, they no longer remembered the exact quantities that had been spent.[106]

Molnár mentions numerous goods (and their monetary values), of which only the price of salt was the same for every family (0.4 *pengő* per kg). For certain agricultural produce, such as wheat, nearly identical values have been reported (15–18 *pengő* per quintal). However, there were a few crops or produce items for which the price differences were greater. Barley was valued at 11 *pengő* per quintal for the Type I family, 7 *pengő* per quintal for the Type III family, and 16 *pengő* per quintal for the Type V family. These values were likely determined based on the memories/assessments of the affected families, or there may have been other factors unknown to us. We cannot prove the reasons, but in the case of the mentioned figures, it seems that if someone received half or a third of the crop, its price appears to be low (the mentioned price of barley is 7 *pengő* per quintal), while the price of the crop received for labour during the harvest seems higher (16 *pengő* per quintal for barley). For the head of the Type V family, every crop was considered at a high price when he received his payment in kind for his harvesting work: the ear corn was charged at a price of 14 *pengő* per quintal, and the potatoes at 18 *pengő* per quintal (the latter, for example, should have cost between five and ten *pengő*). So there was a great discrepancy between nominal prices and real prices. The difference in the price of red onions is striking: the Type VI family, which produced for the market, received just over 0.05 *pengő* for each kilogram (this was the wholesale market price, as they were able to sell 80 quintals), while in the case of the Type I family, the more than one quintal produced for personal use was valued at 0.28 *pengő* per kg (estimated price).

106 Kerék, "Adatok a magyar mezőgazdasági munkáscsaládok," 593–94.

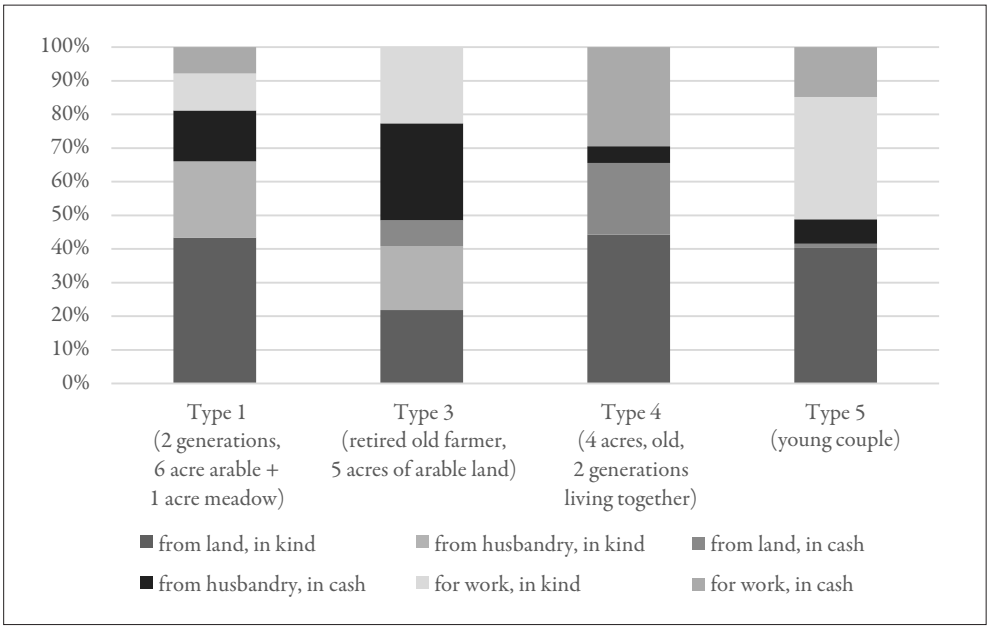

Figure 1. Incomes of different family types in Pusztaszakállas in 1932, as a percentage

In the case of Type I–V families, according to the data, a significant portion of the goods produced was consumed, essentially serving as an example of the independent peasant economy described by Chayanov. If the family's financial situation required it, they also took on day labor for wages or for a share of the harvest. In the case of the vegetable gardener presented as a Type VI family, there was no mention of the garden vegetables that might have been grown by the family within the area of the settlement, nor was there any mention of what animals they might have kept. For a farm or farmstead producing for the markets, the value of bacon or fat consumed is likely irrelevant. Accordingly, only the costs necessary for the production of vegetables sold at the market have been included on the expenditure side too. The revenue mentioned also included the income made from the sale of vegetables. It is also true that they did not calculate the depreciation of machines and equipment when they calculated profits.

The families presented differed not only according to Laslett's typology but also according to the sources of income, despite the similarity in field size. Two families earned wages as the main source of income, but there were also differences between them, whether in-kind or cash revenues dominated. In two other types of families (one multi-generational, the other with an elderly head of household), the work outside the farm played a subordinate role. Here, income

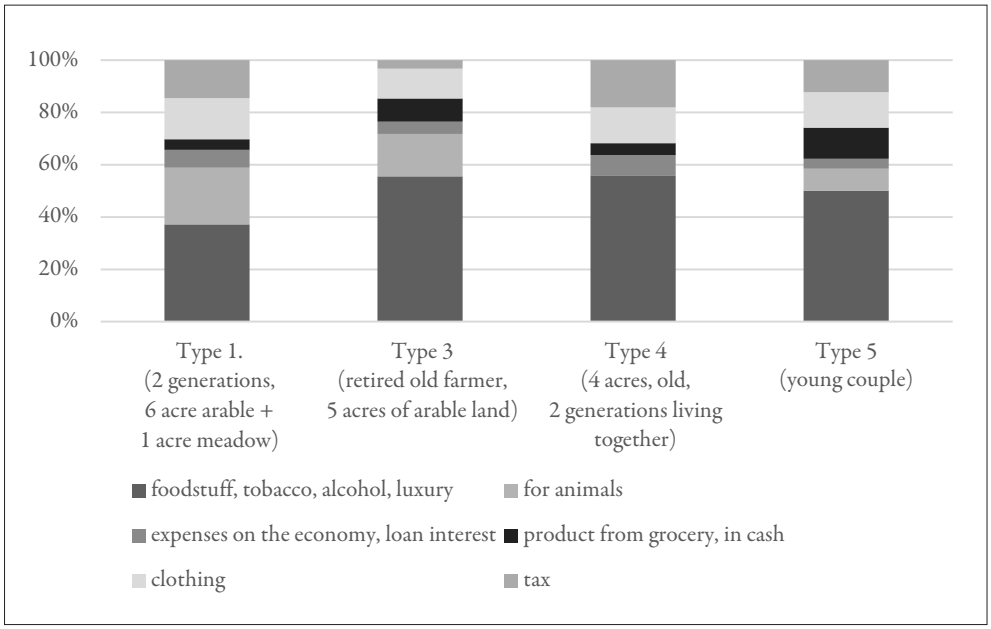

Figure 2. Expenses of different family types in Pusztaszakállas in 1932, as a percentage (in kind and in cash expenditures merged)

from livestock or revenues from public goods (fishing) accounted for 30 percent of total income, indicating a major deficit in Hungarian statistics (the general lack of livestock censuses at the settlement level before 1930). The share of income from arable land (whether cash or in-kind) varied between 20 and 60 percent.

The expenditure side (both monetary expenditure and consumption in kind) showed less diversity. Despite the obvious tax evasion (and the significant tax arrears), taxes fluctuated between twelve and 20 percent of expenditures (and income), clothing accounted for a stable ten to 15 percent, while expenditure in grocery shops remained below ten percent, as did economic investments (building maintenance, livestock or land purchase). Self-catering accounted for half of expenditures. This, together with livestock, reached 60 percent for all four families (with complete data sets). Cash income (i.e. the value of products sold) did not exceed 33 percent of the income, and cash expenditure (items bought in addition to consumption produced by the peasant economy) accounted for 38 percent of expenditures. In general, the cash needs of self-sustaining farms not producing for the markets were higher than the annual cash income actually available, often due to rolling tax arrears or loan repayments.

The description of demographic aspects and characteristics in Molnár's unpublished thesis, which proved significant factors in defining different types

of families, has somewhat taken a back seat (unlike in the writings by other villager researchers). The descriptions of the financial circumstances of the families, although not discussed with the depth of public economics (finance-accounting), sought to avoid omitting even a single item (income, expenses, consumption goods produced within the framework of self-sufficiency, and even gifts), assigning a monetary value to each of them. If we look at his work through the lens of economics, then in comparison, the economist-statistician Mátyás Matolcsy considered the same factors as Molnár when determining Hungary's national income in the 1930s, with one exception: Matolcsy tried to express the value of household work as well, ultimately calculating a total of 350 million workdays nationwide per year.[107]

The families introduced lived in modest, simple circumstances. Even the expenses of the sixth family presented did not reflect the high annual profit of 2,000 *pengő*. It is likely that the families presented by Molnár were in a better situation than the 96 families of the lowland working-class community examined by Kerék. The families presented by Kerék had an average of one or two cadastral acres of smallholdings, but Kerék considered the declining presence of pig farming as a sign of material "deterioration," as only about one-fifth of the households were involved in raising pigs.[108] In Pusztaszakállas, however, every family was engaged in pig farming.

Molnár dealt with taxes in the case of each family, whether as their highest expense to cover in cash or an amount they owed in arrears. Among the taxes, the church tax was a matter of customary law (there was no written law regarding it), but the local population accepted it. In Törökszentmiklós, the church and the local leadership agreed that the local apparatus would collect this tax for a five percent commission, but this amount was left in the hands of the church as a donation.[109]

In the interwar period, taxes had to be paid based on numerous bases. There were about nine types of state direct taxes (such as the land tax and the house tax), which, on country average, could have accounted for approximately 60 percent of the total tax burden, while local taxes and surtaxes made up the remaining

107 In the case of dependent married women, half a day was considered daily, for employed married women, at most a quarter of a day, while for household employees, a full day was taken into account. Household work accounted for 5.49 percent of the national income. Among modern economic indicators, GDP is similar to Károly Molnár's method of calculation, as it does not take into account household work. Matolcsy and Varga, *Magyarország nemzeti jövedelme,* 52–53 and 64.

108 Kerék, "Adatok a magyar mezőgazdasági munkáscsaládok," 609.

109 Szakál, "Törökszentmiklós története 1932-től 1938-ig," 17.

40 percent.[110] According to calculations done at the end of the 1930s, out of the annual direct tax burden of 513 million *pengő*, approximately 192.5 million *pengő* (37.5 percent) was allocated to agriculture, which amounted to roughly twelve *pengő* per cadastral acre.[111] However, local conditions could have significantly altered this value. The payable taxes increased further if a municipality raised the burden with an additional surtax in order to increase its revenues for the sake of budgetary balance. We previously mentioned that Törökszentmiklós had a debt of more than a year's revenue in the 1930s (debt was over one million *pengő*), so it is no coincidence that supplementary taxes began to rise as well.

Table 9. The theoretical tax burden of smallholders with five cadastral acres in the 1930s *(pengő)*

	Type of tax	**Above five cadastral acres**
	Average landowner net income (gold crown/landowner acre)	13.5
	Total net income of all categories (gold crown)	67.5
	Total net income (*pengő*)	78.3
1	Land tax (20 percent)	15.66
2	Householder tax (14 percent)	10
3	Income tax (1–1,2 percent)	0
4	Wealth tax (1‰)	0
5	Extra allowance	0
6	Disability support tax	0.51
7	Public sick leave and childcare allowance supplementary tax	4.11
8	Road tax (10 percent)	2.57
9	Public work redemption	3.7
10	Agricultural Chamber fee	1.03
11	Water regulation fee	2
12	County supplementary tax (32 percent)	8.21
13	Municipal supplementary tax (75 percent)	19.25
14	Dog tax	2
15	Mix tax	6.06
16	Church tax (10 percent)	2.57
	Total	**77.67**
	Land tax reimbursement	-15.66
	Net tax burden	62.01
	A gross tax per cadastal acre (*pengő*)	15.53
	Net tax burden as a percentage of the net income of the cadastral acres (percent)	**79.2**

Source: My compilation of data provided by Béla Bojkó.[112]

110 Bojkó, *Magyar adórendszer és adópolitika,* 26–27.

111 Ibid., 27.

112 Ibid., 45.

Béla Bojkó calculated his data on the share of tax from total incomes for several estate sizes, but he noted that he considered minimum values. If we compare the theoretical values of smallholders who owned five hectares of land (Table 9) with the tax burdens of families classified in Type I by Molnár (Table 3), it can be stated that the actual tax burden was higher in Törökszentmiklós.[113] The land tax and house tax together amounted to 85 *pengő*, rounded off, while Bojkó's calculations only came to roughly 25 *pengő*. The church tax was also much higher than the theoretical value in the case of the family in Pusztaszakállas (2.5 *pengő* versus 24 *pengő*), which may have been due to the higher number of children. In the case of the family in Pusztaszakállas, the amount to be paid for the exemption from public work was also higher. (3.7 *pengő* versus 24 *pengő*). The income tax indicated by Molnár for the Type I family in Pusztaszakállas was 19 *pengő*, while Bojkó did not take such an item into account at all.

If the result of a "sampling" is that five out of six families had trouble paying their taxes and the sixth, although it was in a much more favorable situation than the others, intentionally reported an incorrect tax base for the sake of more favorable taxation, then this can hardly been seen as a coincidence. According to Lajos Juhos, the problem with agriculture in the interwar period was that a farmer received loans at an interest rate of around ten percent, while the maximum profit that could be made in agriculture was about five percent. The outcome was indebtedness.[114] The simplest method of compensating for this was tax evasion. If the farmer did not take out a loan, then an opportunity for modernization was missed, and the farm was self-sufficient at best. In the existing financial condition, it was not obvious for the average farmer that it was worth investing or even possible to invest in modernization.

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113 The Type I family owned six cadastral acres of land.

114 Juhos, "Dunántúli kisgazdaságok jövedelmi helyzete," 285.

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