In terms of the average number of children in the family, we will not venture to generalize or count the statistical average, both due to incomplete genealogy (e.g. in older generations information is completely absent and computing an average would lead to complete distortion) and the fact that in this situation it would again be necessary to divide individual marriages into time periods. However, certain general trends are observable – there were usually at least four children in the family, but families with ten or more children were not exceptions. In addition, statements from respondents seem to point to the fact that infant mortality (before 1950) was relatively high; thus the average number of births for one woman was likely higher. Children were seen not only as a blessing and source of happiness, but also as an economic burden on the family. Our respondents often emphasized that the richest family in Voyvodovo “only” had two children, and often highlighted this correlation. Having only two children meant the easier accumulation of wealth. On the contrary, migration from Voyvodovo, which happened primarily for economic reasons (due to lack of land), often happened in the largest families: *“The P. family had fourteen children, and the father knew he wouldn’t be able to feed them all, so he gathered his things and set off toward the Turkish border* [i.e. the village of Belintsi]*.“*[[1]](#footnote-1) After “remigration” to the Czech Republic (then Czechoslovakia), the number of children in families gradually came to correspond with local trends.

Marriage was (especially in terms of the period before 1950) strongly universalized in the Voyvodovo Czech community; individuals who remained unmarried for their whole lives were in a strong minority in the community. In the case that a spouse was widowed, a second marriage often took place (this habit was to a certain degree forced by the need for labor on the farm or, mainly in the case of male widowers, the need to care for the children). Deaths at a relatively young age were not in any way exceptional and cases of widows at the age of twenty-eight with six children were not uncommon. Causes included regular epidemics of infectious diseases, wars, and the harsh life led by people carrying out heavy manual labor on farms and fields. One of our respondents commented on this in the following: *“Some cholera always came along, and then one of the partners passed away, and the other always married again. For example, when uncle Č. became a widower, he married granny E. Men and women both, they usually married again*”[[2]](#footnote-2).

As we have already stated, Voyvodovo Czechs made their living from agriculture. For this reason, both immovable property (the house, fields, pastures) and personal assets (agricultural tools, cattle) were of huge importance. This aspect is logically connected to the distinct role of inheritance. In the rules of inheritance, the bilateral character of kinship is also reflected – both sons and daughter inherited family property, while the youngest son always inherited the home and the farm: *“The youngest* [son] *got the land”[[3]](#footnote-3)*. Sons and daughters (after their marriage, i.e. when they left the family farm) inherited land and cattle. In addition to personal assets in the form of a dowry, daughters also received a portion of a field (which was always smaller than the son’s). The youngest son then stayed on the family farm and took over its management once the father was unable to manage it himself. The oldest man was usually the head of the farm until his death, and it was rare for old parents to go into “retirement”. The transfer of property to the youngest son was completed upon the death of the parents. Ultimogeniture in the form of inheriting the farm also meant that the youngest son had the obligation to take care of the aging parents and provide for them: *“The old parents always stayed with the youngest son*”[[4]](#footnote-4). This principle is applied in south Moravian villages to this day (old parents always live out their lives with the youngest son). If the parents did not have a son, the family farm was taken over by the daughter, i.e. her husband (this also sometimes happened in cases where the daughter was significantly younger than the youngest son, who became independent and left the family farm much earlier)

1. Female informant R. K., born 1924; Dolní Dunajovice, 15. 8. 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Female informant K. F., born 1934; Nový Přerov, 19. 1. 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Female informant R. K., born 1924; Dolní Dunajovice, 15. 8. 2006. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Female informant B. Č., born 1921; Mikulov, 19. 1. 2007. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)