

THE MARRIAGE CALENDAR: A STRUCTURED STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF NUPTIALITY SEASONALITY AMONG THE EVANGELICAL REFORMED POPULATION IN 19TH-CENTURY ZELÓW (CENTRAL POLAND)

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Background: Zelów is a multicultural settlement with an interesting and complicated history.

Objective: The aim of this study is to characterize 19th-century Zelów in terms of seasonality and changes in marriages over time, and to examine the socioeconomic and cultural factors that could have influenced the seasonality patterns.

Subjects and methods: The study analysed 1,946 marriage records from the Evangelical Reformed parish in Zelów (1821–1900). A generalized additive model with a zero-inflated Poisson distribution was applied to examine long-term trends in marriage frequency, seasonal patterns, the influence of occupational categories, the interactions of these factors.

Results: Nuptial frequency rose steadily until the mid-1800s and again after 1870, with a temporary drop around 1850 likely linked to the cholera epidemic. Marriages were most common early in the year and in November. The interaction between long-term trends and within-year seasonality showed that annual marriage patterns shifted over the century, with a major turning point around 1860. Before this date, the strongest peaks occurred in February and November, while the most pronounced decline consistently appeared in the weeks preceding Easter. Marriage patterns differed markedly by occupational group. Jobs were classified as seasonal (mainly agricultural) and non-seasonal (crafts and trades). While seasonal occupations initially dominated among grooms, they were gradually replaced by non-seasonal professions by mid-century, leading to an overall balance between the two groups by the late 1800s. Seasonal workers tended to marry in the first half of the year, whereas non-seasonal grooms were more common in the second half.

Conclusion: Overall, marriage seasonality in nineteenth-century Zelów reflected shifting socio-economic and cultural conditions within a community transitioning from a rural settlement to an increasingly industrialized environment.

Keywords: Seasonality; 19-th century; Marriages; GLM; Zero inflated Poisson.

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