

This thesis deals with the social group of domestic servants, concretely with the maids in Prague's households at the turn of the 20th century (until the twenties). The servants were the integral part of the households until the recent times. This social group appeared in various kinds of forms, in various kinds of roles and settings. To have the servants was the symbol for being a part of prestigious level of the society. The reasons for keeping the servants could, however, be also pragmatic for many not so rich households – there was a need of employment, resp. occupation for all the adult members of those families in the (family) trade or farming.

The second half of the 19th century is the time of big changes for this social group. The progressive industrialization and the modernization and the urbanization of the society lead to the falling of traditional form of the self-supporting family, further to the restriction of the working load for women and also to the lesser need of the family servants. The domestic servant demand started to be determined with the social status instead of the economic situation of the family. This demand defines the Maid and also her new duties. There was about one third of the Czech households and one half of the German ones in Prague keeping a housemaid around 1900. Set-up of the servants corresponded to the Central European "standard" of social composition of metropolitan families and households.

Social statute of this social group was rather low – with respect to their work, minimal education and no need of any qualification. The maid works partly for money, partly for board. This service was practiced mostly by single women and is called as a "transitive period" in their lives in order to get financial capital and marriage, which was considered as the resort and as the possibility of social advancement.