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Small Farmers in Four Southeast European Countries. A Qualitative Analysis of Life Strategies in Twenty-Five Agricultural Households

Abstract. This paper brings an extended Bourdieusian theoretical framework to the analysis of the life strategies of small farmers in four SEE societies (Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia). Practices and strategies of farming households are situated in two partially overlapping fields, the formal economy and the informal economy. The paper is based on a qualitative analysis of twenty-five interviewed households. It covers the structural conditions of the households' participation in both fields of 'play', an analysis of household capital (economic-agricultural, social and cultural) and an interpretation of practice (i.e. the strategy dimension). The framework is extended to include an exploration of the households' reflexivity and agency. The findings suggest that various structural limitations impede the households from developing successful practices in the formal field (unless the households have exceptional levels of agency), and that the most common life strategy is food self-provisioning, along with reliance on practices in the informal field enabled by social capital.

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Introduction

In this paper we analyse the life strategies of twenty-five small farming households in four countries of Southeastern Europe (SEE): Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia. The research forms part of the larger cooperative project, 'Life-Strategies and Survival Strategies of Households and Individuals in SEE Societies in the Times of Crisis'.

The paper focuses on the life strategies of small farming households, defined here as a vulnerable social group, considering their low capital (economic-agricultural) and questionable ability to deal with economic crisis. Even during the transition in the 1990s from socialism to capitalism, poverty was a very serious problem for rural areas in Eastern Europe.¹

In the four SEE countries studied, all former Yugoslav states during socialism, in addition to large collective farms, there was also a great number of small farmers, who improved their financial situation through small-scale agricultural production.² Furthermore, a large portion of the population in rural areas owned small plots of land and produced food for their own needs. They were, and remain, 'so much a part of the social landscape that they seem unworthy of particular comment or analysis', a population without a voice, a 'silent majority' of rural areas.³

The importance of subsistence and semi-subsistence small farms increased during the period of transition in all former socialist countries, functioning as a 'social buffer' for a large segment of the population as many lost their jobs in failed or failing socialist industrial giants.⁴ Small-scale farming became the most readily available poverty alleviation strategy for many.⁵

However, it is questionable how successful this poverty alleviation strategy can be. Already faced with large structural problems—such as fragmented and small holdings, poor infrastructure in rural areas, the increasing influence of market globalisation and the trend of moving towards a postindustrial society in Europe—small farmers in the societies studied also had to deal with the difficulties of 'the transition from the socialist central planning systems towards a democratic society and a market economy'.⁶ For many farmers, such structural conditions resulted in farms that 'yield very low incomes and hardly

¹ Martin Petrick / Peter Weingarten, eds, *The Role of Agriculture in Central and Eastern European Rural Development. Engine of Change or Social Buffer?*, Halle 2004; Eric Mathijs / Nivelin Noev, *Subsistence Farming in Central and Eastern Europe*, *Eastern European Economics* 42, no. 6 (November-December 2004), 72-89, DOI: 10.2307/4380403. All internet references were accessed on 12 September 2016.

² Frank Oražem, *Agriculture under Socialism*, *Slovene Studies* 11, no. 1-2 (1989), 215-222, DOI: 10.7152/ssj.v11i1.3784.

³ Nigel Swain, *Small-Scale Farming in the Post-Socialist Rural Transition*, *Eastern European Countryside* 5 (1999), 27-42, http://www.home.umk.pl/~eec/wp-content/uploads/1999_3_Swain.pdf.

⁴ Swain, *Small-Scale Farming in the Post-Socialist Rural Transition*; Sophia Davidova et al., *Semi-Subsistence Farming. Value and Directions of Development*, European Parliament, Brussels 2013, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/495861/IP-OL-AGRI_ET\(2013\)495861_EN.pdf](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/RegData/etudes/etudes/join/2013/495861/IP-OL-AGRI_ET(2013)495861_EN.pdf).

⁵ Petrick / Weingarten, eds, *The Role of Agriculture in Central and Eastern European Rural Development*; Davidova et al., *Semi-Subsistence Farming*.

⁶ *Network of Independent Agricultural Experts in the CEE Candidate Countries. The Future of Rural Areas in the CEE Candidate Countries*, Halle 2004, 1.

provide a sustainable livelihood',⁷ and it can be presumed that the impact of the economic crisis of the late 2000s and early 2010s made the situation even more difficult.

Theoretical Framework

In Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia, there is a dearth of sociological studies on small agricultural households; agricultural households remain a 'silent population'. There is a lack of studies particularly on small-scale farming as a survival strategy for households, especially in postsocialist countries.⁸ However, unlike other studies, this paper bases its analysis of small farmers' strategies on the conceptual tools of the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. The Bourdieusian theoretical framework, which is highly influential in a wide spectrum of analyses of everyday human practices and their cultural-class variations, has so far not found a significant application in the analysis of the life of agricultural households, with only a few exceptions.⁹ Furthermore, to the best of our knowledge, no studies focus on small agricultural household strategies from a Bourdieusian perspective.

Thus, relying on Bourdieu's set of empirical-theoretical concepts, we began by analysing the structural characteristics of social fields and household capitals (social, cultural and economic-agricultural), which on their own represent a form of structural limitation. When dealing with structural limitations and relying on the capitals they have access to, social actors, in this case households, produce practices that are focused on overcoming the former and increasing the latter. When such practices would assume features such as permanence and stability and integrate some form of temporal range (short-term or long-term), the interpretation included the concept of a strategy, which enabled us to further the analysis of the household's practices.

⁷ Petrick / Weingarten, eds, *The Role of Agriculture in Central and Eastern European Rural Development*, 3.

⁸ Thanasis Kizos et al., *Survival Strategies of Farm Households and Multifunctional Farms in Greece*, *The Geographical Journal* 177, no. 4 (December 2011), 335-346, DOI: 10.1111/j.1475-4959.2011.00403.x; Henk Meert et al., *Farm Household Survival Strategies and Diversification on Marginal Farms*, *Journal of Rural Studies* 21 (2005), 81-97, DOI: 10.1016/j.jrurstud.2004.08.007; Carmen Hubbard et al., *Semi-Subsistence Farming in Romania and Bulgaria. A Survival Strategy?*, *EuroChoices* 13, no. 1 (April 2014), 46-51, DOI: 10.1111/1746-692X.12052.

⁹ Andrew H. Raedeke et al., *Farmers, the Practice of Farming and the Future of Agroforestry. An Application of Bourdieu's Concepts of Field and Habitus*, *Rural Sociology* 68, no. 1 (2003), 64-86, DOI: 10.1111/j.1549-0831.2003.tb00129.x; Jane L. Glover, *Capital Usage in Adverse Situations. Applying Bourdieu's Theory of Capital to Family Farm Businesses*, *Journal of Family and Economic Issues* 31 (2010), 485-497, DOI: 10.1007/s10834-010-9225-0; Jane L. Glover, *Capital Usage in Family Farm Businesses*, *Journal of Family Business Management* 3, no. 2 (2013), 136-162, DOI: 10.1108/JFBM-01-2013-0001.

Because the strategies analysed in this paper are vital to survival and to the general life course of individuals in households, and because they are based on the overall experiences of household members, and on their acquired capital, built habitus and (self-)reflexivity, we refer to them as life strategies.

The second theoretical framework we rely on in this paper refers to the additional specification of the characteristics of the relevant fields in which the practices are realized. Specifically, the households as production units are situated in a context determined by a multiplicity of economic practices characteristic of the development of capitalism in postsocialist countries. According to Smith and Stenning, what we are dealing with are three types of economic practices: the economy of market practices, the economy of non-market practices, and alternative economic practices.¹⁰ Activities in the economy of market practices and activities in the economy of non-market practices are susceptible to various rules and are enabled by various types of capital, so that it becomes possible to speak of two different types of relational fields of activity,¹¹ the field of formal and the field of informal economy.

Studies have indicated that attempts to consistently implement market economy propositions do not always lead to desired outcomes, and that certain forms of informal institutions of reciprocity instead indicate a significantly higher level of endurance and adaptability.¹² In practice, we are dealing with economic activities and relations within the local community—forms of assistance in agricultural work (either labour or machinery), and the exchange of resources and services (leasing land which is then paid for in kind, through non-monetary exchange or exchange of goods, and so forth).¹³

These diverse economic practices should not be viewed as separate spheres of activity. On the contrary, they are intertwined so that there is constant exchange. This means that the economic practices in the market economy limit or enable certain economic activities in the non-market economy.¹⁴ For example, formal employment and personal networks built at work might enable an informal, non-market exchange of goods. Or personal contacts and friendships made outside financial relations might enable the provision of certain services

¹⁰ Adrian Smith / Alison Stenning, Beyond Household Economies. Articulations and Spaces of Economic Practice in Postsocialism, *Progress in Human Geography* 30, no. 2 (2006), 190-213, DOI: 10.1191/0309132506ph601oa.

¹¹ Pierre Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, Cambridge 1990.

¹² Enzo Mingione, Life Strategies and Social Economies in the Postfordist Age, *International Journal of Urban and Regional Research* 18, no. 1 (1994), 24-45, DOI: 10.1111/j.1468-2427.1994.tb00249.x.

¹³ Alena Ledeneva, *How Russia Really Works. The Informal Practices That Shaped Post-Soviet Politics and Business*, Ithaca/NY 2006.

¹⁴ Smith / Stenning, *Beyond Household Economies*, 208.

located in the formal sector, for example, getting a job, better medical treatment, and so forth.¹⁵

Finally, we extended the analytical framework to include the concept of agency, mostly understood in the context of the Bourdieusian theory of action.¹⁶ Contrary to the criticism levelled at Bourdieu's work as deterministic,¹⁷ a growing number of sociologists find elements for the interpretation of Bourdieusian basic concepts that lend them to analyses of agency and reflexivity.¹⁸ Bourdieu himself clearly recognised that in times of unstable social conditions and great social change, or in conditions in which the fields of activity have not stabilized, the gap between expectation and experience widens, and that therein lies the potential for transforming the habitus.¹⁹ In contexts such as this, an increase in the reflexivity of practices could come about, as could a more pronounced agency. In other words, individuals are able to accumulate and activate various forms of capital with the aim of changing their social position.²⁰ Finding oneself in several overlapping social fields can also enable increased reflexivity of activity due to viewing one's own position in a network of relations and rules of one field towards another.²¹ In these social circumstances, the activities of social actors can surpass the inherited habitus to produce a certain level of creativity and innovation; thus it could be said that habits generate actions, and actions modify and create new habits in various ways.²²

Methodology

This study draws on the methods and results of the 'Life-Strategies and Survival Strategies of Households and Individuals in Southeast European Societies in the Times of Crisis' project, an international SCOPES framework project. It

¹⁵ Alena Ledeneva, *Russia's Economy of Favours. Blat, Networking and Informal Exchange*, Cambridge 1998.

¹⁶ Pierre Bourdieu, *Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action*, Stanford 1998.

¹⁷ Richard Jenkins, *Pierre Bourdieu*, Second Edition, London / New York 2002.

¹⁸ Nick Crossley, *The Phenomenological Habitus and Its Construction*, *Theory and Society* 30 (2001), 81-120, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/658063>; Carmen Mills, *Reproduction and Transformation of Inequalities in Schooling. The Transformative Potential of the Theoretical Constructs of Bourdieu*, *British Journal of Sociology of Education* 29, no. 1 (2008), 79-89, DOI: 10.1080/01425690701737481; David Farrugia, *The Reflexive Subject. Towards a Theory of Reflexivity as Practical Intelligibility*, *Current Sociology* 61, no. 3 (2013), 283-300, DOI: 10.1177/0011392113478713; Wolfgang Lehmann, *Habitus Transformation and Hidden Injuries. Successful Working-Class University Students*, *Sociology of Education* 87, no. 1 (2013), 1-15, DOI: 10.1177/0038040713498777.

¹⁹ Pierre Bourdieu, *Pascalian Meditations*, Stanford 2000.

²⁰ Pierre Bourdieu / Loïc Wacquant, *An Invitation to Reflexive Sociology*, Chicago 1992.

²¹ Claire Laurier Decoteau, *The Reflexive Habitus. Critical Realist and Bourdieusian Social Action*, *European Journal of Social Theory* 19, no. 3 (2016), 1-19, DOI: 10.1177/1368431015590700.

²² Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, London 1962.

was designed as mixed methods research employing representative national surveys and fifty-five semi-structured interviews in four SEE states: Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia.

This paper presents the results of a qualitative study of life strategies of small farmers in four SEE countries. The analysis is based on twenty-five group interviews held in small farmer households, seven in Slovenia and six each in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina.²³ The basic unit of analysis was the household as a community of individuals with a supra-individual dynamic, a unit within which economic and non-economic practices are planned and performed, thus forming patterns of practices to which we can ascribe the character of a strategy.²⁴ Considering the assumed complexity of small farmers' strategies due to their participation in multiple economic fields,²⁵ in order to include these complexities, the qualitative method of the interview with an ethnographic dimension was selected.

Considering that there are no studies on the strategies of farmers which as their main tools use the Bourdieusian system of analytical concepts, this study is primarily exploratory, and findings are interpreted with that goal in mind. However, even in an exploratory study, qualitative analysis enables in-depth understanding of experiences—that is, it can help reach the 'phenomenological basis for statistical thought'.²⁶ The respondents were given the time and freedom to explain their practices in detail (along with their origins), and by applying qualitative analysis techniques, we were able to position the strategies in a wider social context. This can lead to deep insights not only into the practices of the households' members but also into the meanings ascribed to them in the household—that is, into the understanding of the relationships and rules in social fields where these practices are located. In order better to understand the potential of understanding experience, it is worthwhile to cite a longer passage of Bourdieu's:

'It is to give oneself a generic and genetic comprehension of who these individuals are, based on a (theoretical or practical) grasp of the social conditions of which they are the product: this means a grasp of the circumstances of life and the social mechanisms that affect the entire category to which any individual belongs (high school students, skilled workers, magistrates, whatever) and a grasp of the conditions, inseparably psychological and social, associated with a given position and

²³ All interviews were conducted between February 2016 and May 2016 as semi-structured, group interviews by the authors. All interviews were fully recorded, transcribed, carefully anonymised, and stored in the project database. The interviewees are presented in this article through their pseudonyms and their country of residence.

²⁴ Claire Wallace, Household Strategies. Their Conceptual Relevance and Analytical Scope in Social Research, *Sociology* 36, no. 2 (2002), 275-292, DOI: 10.1177/0038038502036002003.

²⁵ Smith / Stenning, *Beyond Household Economies*.

²⁶ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 514.

trajectory in social space. Against the old distinction made by Wilhelm Dilthey, we must posit that understanding and explaining are one.²⁷

This kind of approach, in accordance with Bourdieusian efforts to bridge subjective and objective knowledge, is simultaneously aimed at understanding the subjectivist bases of objectivist categories and careful reflection on the macro-causes of noted and interpreted micro-experiences.²⁸

This in-depth approach to strategies requires research procedures that can adequately be carried out using the interview method,²⁹ in this case extended by ethnographic knowledge. Specifically, all interviews were carried out in the households of small farmers. Whenever possible, researchers prolonged their stay in order to tour the respondents' farms and to clarify their everyday practices. In addition, each individual interview was analyzed as a case study, so the entire study has attributes of a multiple case study design.³⁰ Because this paper's topic—small farmers' strategies—had received little scientific attention and, in particular, because small farmers in the four states studied are rarely the subject of sociological investigations per se, we hold that its significance is threefold. First, it explores a poorly investigated yet highly relevant topic. Second, its goal is the previously mentioned in-depth understanding both of objective conditions of life and of subjective experiences. Finally, because it is a theoretically driven endeavour, albeit during the analysis phase the theory was allowed only in the later stages, we believe that it offers opportunities for analytical generalization—connecting the respondents' experiences and the investigators' theoretical knowledge, a process in which 'investigators show how their study's findings are likely to inform a particular set of concepts, theoretical constructs, or hypothesized sequence of events'.³¹

The main criterion for selecting respondents was that the households could be considered small farms based on the value of their agrarian capital. The definition of a small farm and the criteria for the category are somewhat ambiguous. For example, at the level of the European Union (EU) it is recognised that the question of how to define a small farm 'has many answers, depending on the context in which it is posed'. The most frequently applied criteria include 'utilised agricultural area (UAA), the amount of labour input, the level of self-

²⁷ Pierre Bourdieu et al., *Weight of the World. Social Suffering in Contemporary Society*, Stanford 1999, 613.

²⁸ Michael Burawoy, *The Extended Case Method. Four Countries, Four Decades, Four Great Transformations, and One Theoretical Tradition*, Berkeley 2009.

²⁹ Alan Warde, *Household Work Strategies and Forms of Labour. Conceptual and Empirical Issues*, *Work, Employment and Society* 4, no. 4 (1990), 495-515, DOI: 10.1177/0950017090004004002.

³⁰ Robert K. Yin, *Case Study Research. Design and Methods*, Third Edition, Thousand Oaks/CA et al. 2003.

³¹ Robert K. Yin, *Qualitative Research from Start to Finish*, New York 2011, 100.

consumption and the economic size of the farm'.³² For this paper, we chose a combination of criteria, mostly based on the type and size of the agricultural capital, which produces the corresponding economic farm size falling into the broad (yet, even at its highest point, still fairly low) yearly economic output defined from 2,000 to 7,999 euros and corresponding to the category of small farms according to EU criteria. Other important criteria were that the farm's only workforce should be members of the household and, in the final instance, the existential condition of a struggling farming household, as in current political debate the notion of small farms goes 'hand in hand with ideas of disadvantage, risk of poverty, lack of opportunity, and the need for support'.³³ The search for respondents was undertaken through local farmers' organizations and/or governmental agricultural advisory agencies in local areas. Relatively little variation in economic-agricultural capital among the households was considered desirable. This was because the topic has so far remained unexplored in the SEE region, and the authors wanted to analyze the variation and the logic of the practices, experiences and strategies of small farmers. The table containing descriptive data on household structure, dominant type of agricultural capital and an estimate of its quantity for all interviewed households can be found in the appendix.

Results and Interpretation

Structural Conditions of Small Farmers' Households

From the analyses of the interviews, it was clear that the households of the interviewed small farmers in all four SEE countries share some highly similar structural conditions, but that there were significant differences as well, which is logical considering the differences in the general economic development of the studied countries. At the level of structural conditions that small farmers encounter in their participation ('game') in the field of formal economy, the most important structural field properties are the role of the state in agriculture and the characteristics of the agricultural products market. In all four countries, the members of the interviewed households viewed both as problematic for their households, as well as for the development of small and medium farms in general, but for different reasons.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, the state has been unable to establish a Ministry of Agriculture, without which it is impossible to design any development strategies in the agricultural sector (an EU requirement) or to access development funds.

³² EU Agricultural Economic Briefs. What Is a Small Farm?, Brief no. 2, July 2011, 1, https://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/sites/agriculture/files/rural-area-economics/briefs/pdf/02_en.pdf.

³³ EU Agricultural Economic Briefs. What Is a Small Farm?

The purchase network for agricultural products and the transfer of knowledge of technology and production trends is virtually non-existent. The market is unstable and unavailable, so despite the effort invested, farmers cannot make money from their products, which has succinctly been stated in an interview given by Hasim: 'It is not a problem for us to produce anything here in Bosnia. The only problem is the placement of goods. The market is our main problem.' In such a situation, many of the interviewed individuals point out that the structural conditions themselves practically boil down to survival: 'What can we do? We have to get by, survive. When there is no proper leadership in the state, no one you can trust' (Emir).

Our interviewees from Slovenia and Croatia, countries that are EU members (Slovenia, since 2004; Croatia, since 2013), criticized the state and the market for different reasons. All households interviewed in these countries pointed out that agricultural laws and regulations have brought them many difficulties. Many traditional farming activities have either been made more difficult or even forbidden (e.g. choosing and regulating types of crops, home production of brandy, drying meat and home slaughtering). Various taxes have been imposed, along with complex regulations and procedures. These regulations are in some cases so complex and vague that small farmers find it difficult to understand what precisely is being asked of them, what they are allowed to do and what they are not. In Slovenia, the purchasing network of farmers' products and the agricultural infrastructure (the dairy plants, slaughterhouses, agribusiness) is well developed. But in Croatia, this is not the case, so farmers can find themselves in a paradoxical situation — they cannot do something on their own (due to a prohibition or strict regulations), but there is no infrastructure which might make it possible for them to do so without great expense, which they, due to the low extent of economic capital, cannot cover. In addition, applications for state or EU funds are perceived as too complex and unrealistic for individual farms to apply. Furthermore, a few of the interviewees from Croatia perceived agricultural laws as only directly transferred from the level of the European Union. One interesting contextualisation of such difficulties in agriculture was offered by Toni:

'So, in most cases the state causes us difficulties. It's not all bad; there are some government incentives, but that is just pittance. [...] I mean, it's difficult for people. And then on top of that you impose rules on them as if they were living in Austria. I mean, Austria is a well-organized country, everything functions properly. Sure, you can impose such rules there. But you can't just transfer these rules onto Croatia, which just came out of a war twenty years ago, where the villages were ravaged, burnt, and so on. So you have to give the farmers some breathing space, let them have some things a little easier' (Toni, Croatia).

The small farmers interviewed in Serbia did not face difficulties with strict government regulations of agricultural activities, but they were bothered by the lack of government subsidies, purchase networks and agricultural infrastructure in the local environment and, consequently, the very low prices which they could achieve on the market. The interviewees from Serbia (as well as Bosnia-Herzegovina and, to a certain extent, Croatia) pointed out the problems resulting from poor infrastructure, for example, problems with unsuitable road quality (and, in some cases, a lack of roads) or inadequate waterworks.

In all of the countries researched, with the exception of Slovenia, respondents indicated how their difficulties are accompanied by a bad general image of agriculture and small farming, which contributes to youth leaving villages and rural areas becoming depopulated. Unlike the other three countries, in Slovenia there is no desire to leave the villages, which is probably the result of better infrastructure and connections between urban and rural areas (which, on the other hand, results in a heavy tax burden on the farmers), and the overall better economic and demographic conditions of villages.

Due to the unfavourable structural conditions of the game in the formal economic field, small farmers turn to local, informal economies. Here, the conditions differ significantly, and farmers' networks of friends and acquaintances enable them to find their way, for example, through small-scale sales, barter arrangements and mutual assistance in the form of agricultural work. However, structural difficulties exist here, too, primarily the depopulation of the villages and poverty (least expressed in Slovenian households), which make it difficult for people to sell their products or ask for financial assistance.

Capitals of Small Farmers' Households

Social capital is by self-report one of the most important components of small farmers' strategies. Social relations are regulated by strong informal structures, based on rules of sociality, reciprocity and equivalence. Almost all interviewees reported relatively elaborate social networks, with strong social capital as a major characteristic.

Thus, in addition to the economic-agricultural capital, which was the expected dominant capital of agricultural households, social capital has emerged as the main capital capable of making up for the lack of economic, and maybe even cultural, capital (contextually defined as knowledge relevant for leading agricultural businesses). Its strength is reflected in some ingenious solutions in various social circumstances. For example, in a household located in a hilly village in Serbia, which is almost completely isolated due to poor road infrastructure, an employed son-in-law represents the main connection between the small farming in the village and the product sales in the city. His colleagues in the city

present themselves as buyers able to procure high quality products through him. This kind of established sales network is the only means of household product placement (organized sales through the market have proven to be unprofitable). Another example, in this case of the scope of practices which can be achieved via social capital, is a Croatian household that was able to survive by selling or bartering its own products (cattle, dried meat and milk) in the informal field. This household also has regular practices of small, partially non-monetary borrowing and leasing, all within an informal economy of local settlements.

'Well, we do have lots of friends and all that. [...] If, for example, I can't buy food for my livestock, I can get some on credit from people I know; I can get oats on credit when I need to [...] I tell them I'll get them the money in ten days. "Write it down. When I sell a calf, when I sell some milk, when I sell a lamb, I'll pay you for it" and then [...]. You can't live without that. That's how I lease land. I pay for it with a lamb or a pig [...]' (Dušanka, Croatia).

Payment in kind and exchanging favours with friends, neighbours and acquaintances is a form of active social networking. The logic behind the exchange is to obtain what the household does not produce or what it does not have and which contributes to the quality of production and quality of living. The entire set of services, resources or final products can be involved. For example, a household might offer help in field work (tending the corn, digging potatoes, etc.) on the farm of a wealthier household, in return for the service of ploughing, which requires machinery they do not own. In all these cases, the interviewees indicate that these practices are normal and necessary, and that the solidarity which exists among people in the same or similar existential situation is expected:

'Most of the time, our friends and family come to help us. In most cases, they already know when to come and what the mission [sowing, harvesting or similar, N.K. et al.] is and they come by themselves. Sometimes we call them. [...] Of course we go and help them, when that time comes. That's how these things go here' (Slavoj, Slovenia).

Although dominant, social capital is not the only form of capital small farmers have access to or which defines their practices. A higher extent of cultural capital, combined with good planning capacity in the household, can produce significantly different outcomes in attempts to convert these two capitals, both cultural and social, into economic capital. For example, Toni's parents (both of whom have a high school education) entrusted the management of their farm to their son, a young man with a master's degree in agronomy, who used his specific knowledge and skills (high embodied cultural capital) to overcome the inherited non-profitable economy of the household and, we can freely say, transformed it into a specialised, stable and profitable holding with a stable perspective for further development.

In most cases, capital composition does not look like this, and contrary to the given example of overcoming the inherited economic difficulties through using knowledge, skills and long-term planning, practically all the researched households had a low level of cultural capital, which we could systematize in the following way:

- Education is limited to basic education (eight years of elementary school education) or vocational high schools (only in a few cases in the area of farming or farming machinery and mechanics);
- No additional education that would enable them to perform farming activities more efficiently;
- Planning, although evident with regards to traditional farming activities, is largely absent in areas of long-term improvement, modernization or specialization of farming activities.

Finally, economic capital, mostly limited, is exhausted in low-scale purchases, in production mostly for personal use and in small income used to purchase basic household products which the household is unable to produce. The income itself is almost as a rule a combination of several different sources, ranging from pensions and welfare to revenue acquired from selling excess products. The amount of economic capital is most often described by the interviewees by the colloquialism 'We make ends meet'. Only a few households in all the countries studied enjoy levels of economic capital enabling them to save money, invest in improvements in production or differentiation of consumption, in the form of purchasing cars or taking trips:

'We are able to save some money for a vacation and for a car [...] maybe even to buy some more land and extend our farm' (Ema, Slovenia).

A large majority of the interviewed households in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina did not own significant agricultural capital approximately twenty years ago, so agricultural activities were for them mostly a way of surviving (and of making progress) in the context of a very poor postwar and postsocialist economy in which a great many companies failed. Only in the case of Slovenia was this transition milder—here, all the households inherited the activities of their parents as the traditional strategy of survival and the family business and, even more interesting, an analysis of the households from Slovenia shows that none of the households took part in agricultural activities as a response to the crisis.

Strategy Analysis

Self-Provisioning and Economising

For most households, an indubitably basic element of their living strategy is self-provisioning, producing food to meet their own needs. Elaborate self-provisioning practices have been found in all four countries, and these represent the basis of existential safety and household survival. The households interviewed combine self-provisioning to a greater or lesser extent with the sale of their products in a formal or informal economic field whereby they obtain an income which they can use to buy products not on offer in the informal economy and to pay for services, utilities, and so forth. The majority of the households interviewed satisfy at least half of their food needs in this way (some households, almost all their food needs):

‘We don’t buy a lot of things. We have 2 hectares of land, a vineyard, forest, pigs, chickens. [...] Everything we eat or drink we produce ourselves. We buy only salt, sugar, margarine and similar things. And an occasional treat’ (Jožek, Slovenia).

Thanks to the self-provisioning strategy, even those households with the lowest income from product sales did not experience great food shortages when the crisis was at its peak.

In addition to self-provisioning, an active element meant to ensure self-sustainability, there were also practices of economising as a reactive element to adapt to ‘bad years’ or periods of crisis. Depending on the amount of money that they could ensure through selling their products, households reduced their spending, ranging from reducing their spending on clothes, cigarettes, cosmetics and unnecessary food (for example, sweets) to cancelling their internet connection, cable television or cell phones, all the way to delaying paying their utilities for a while. Thus, product reduction has a scope starting from the households which reduce only partially:

Ana: ‘No more clothes for us.’

Toma: ‘You buy a pair of shoes, and that’s all you get until they get worn out. And you take good care of them.’

Ana: ‘And also, we don’t buy as much food in the stores, not as much, as with other products, cheaper shampoos, cleaning agents and the other stuff’ (Toma and Ana, Serbia).

And to households which are in a constant state of radical reduction and are surviving on the margins:

‘Pay for the TV, pay for the electricity, pay for the water—where from if my income from the milk sales is what it is? Where am I going to get the money? And then they tell me they are going to turn off my electricity. [...] Turn it off. What are you waiting for? Turn my life off as well while you’re at it!’ (Miljenko, Croatia).

*Participation in the Field of Formal Economy
or Informal Economy*

As we have seen in the previous sections, the farmers interviewed are exposed to a variety of serious structural obstacles that make it difficult for them to successfully participate in the formal economy and sell their products on the market. Furthermore, in all but a few cases they have low levels of capitals, especially those that are of real 'value' in the field of formal economy, primarily economic-agricultural and specific cultural capital. This kind of structural situation hinders their participation in these fields, and if they try to do so, it leads to significant limitations, limitations that make it difficult for the household to succeed and build its life strategies on a foundation of formal activities. The exception in that regard is Slovenia, where the structural situation does not hinder participation in the field of formal economy (Slovenia has a well-developed network of buyers, specific infrastructure, state subsidies, etc.), but the purchasing prices result in low profitability of small-scale production for the households interviewed. In addition, most households have, through years of practice in the far more stable informal economic field, built complementary elements of the habitus, abilities to 'naturally improvise' and a specific 'feel for the game' with regards to informal practices:

'And sales, we can't go to the market; it's not worth it. And instead we take care of it ourselves. There are people in town that we know, and they buy a lamb, a pig. We have cheese for our regulars. The rest, we sometimes sell, tomatoes, raspberries. And we barter with our neighbours. We give them strawberries, and they give us tomatoes that come in early, and so on [...]. So, when you need to buy something big, and you need a few more dinars, and then you borrow it and after that you know that you have to give it back, you'll sell a lamb and pay it back' (Zorica, Serbia).

Contrary to that, the extension of practices in the formal field requires a great deal of effort for those who do not have the necessary capitals and 'feel for the game'. Thinking along with Bourdieu, we could say that the majority of options there deemed 'improbable practices [and] are therefore excluded, as unthinkable, by a kind of immediate submission to order that inclines agents to make a virtue of necessity.'³⁴

'You have a hundred various problems [the respondent speaks of problems as unidentified obstacles, ones he cannot fully describe and cannot anticipate, N.K. et al.] [...] limitations, so you cannot put your product on the market because you need a hundred certificates and fulfilled conditions which you cannot fulfil. [...] I cannot sell my milk, or my cheese' (Miljenko, Croatia).

Households with higher cultural capital reflected on their lack of knowledge and 'feel for the game', which hinders farmers with lower capitals in, for example,

³⁴ Bourdieu, *The Logic of Practice*, 54.

applying for subsidies and grants, a very important element of 'surviving' in the formal economy.

'Many are older households. I don't know how they will manage; they cannot fill in all those forms, applications, all the paperwork [...] all that is required, because you must know all that, they do not even have internet access' (Manda, Slovenia).

The only cases where participation in the formal economic field is the dominant element in a household's strategy are all the ones in which we find an uncommonly high level of agency and reflexive overview of their position and the rules within both fields, as well as certain specificities in the levels of capital which have functioned as the initial stake for the long-term development of strategy. These households will be studied in more detail at the end of the paper, and it is important to note that they primarily relied on the informal field before they succeeded in the formal field.

The great difficulty and structural obstacles that the interviewed small farmers face when trying to make money in the formal economy have led most small farmers in all four countries (with the described specific situation in Slovenia) into a situation where relying on an informal economy (for sales, bartering, collaboration, etc.) is practically the most important component of their living strategy, along with the aforementioned self-provisioning.

Strategies Founded on Social Networks

Taking part in the field of informal economy is determined by social capital—diversification of the network of friends and acquaintances through which exchanges take place, along with sales, agreements or acquisition of information. This kind of exchange is perceived as beneficial for both parties. In a different sense, it is the only profitable exchange for most of the farmers interviewed. It is thus necessary, because small farmers sell their products (without the price increases caused by the rules of the formal market), and buyers get cheaper products of a specific quality.³⁵ Guided by the principle of reciprocity, social networking enables the direct, non-monetary exchange of goods and services between farmers. This eliminates additional expenses that the households would have had and, once again, circumvents the market through informal practices. For example, one household might exchange a certain type of product with another household for products that are of the same status but which it does not produce.

³⁵ Considering that we are dealing with small farmers, there is the belief that they did not go very far in applying modern technologies and producing food. Their products are thus characterised as healthy, authentically rural and non-industrial.

'It's, as you might say, something done in friendship, between pals. You gave me, for example, a crate of raspberries, and I gave you peppers' (Ivan, Serbia).

Similarly, a household might provide services (e.g. tilling the land) in exchange for certain products or plots of land to till,

'Her sister gave us the land. They have 2.5 hectares. They are not here. Now we use her land. We planted raspberries on that land. It can be extended; I can plant seeds and other crops: cabbage, potatoes' (Mesud, Bosnia-Herzegovina).

Alternatively, a household might exchange services (e.g. help picking sour cherries) in exchange for services (e.g. mechanical ploughing):

'Without the others [people from the village, N.K. et al.], you cannot survive here. You simply need help. Preparing animal feed, getting lumber, vine picking, field-work and all the rest. [...] Those are things you cannot do by yourself even if you have all the machinery' (Slavoj, Slovenia).

Relying on Non-Agricultural Income and Life in Extended Families

An analysis of the interviews has indicated that most households, despite the combination of self-provisioning and expense reduction in combination with production for sale and/or barter, still do not consider their position as safe or think their economic situation is satisfactory. Lack of funds, poor income from participating in either the formal or informal economy, insecurity in maintaining a sales network and differentiation of the needs of the younger members force most households to search out additional income outside of agriculture.

This additional income includes pensions, salaries and social welfare (i.e. receiving social support). Employment (younger members in most cases) is viewed as an important and desired element of a household's life strategy. It provides the economic capital the households lack the most (money), and in most cases the employed household member creates new social networks (e.g. work colleagues as potential buyers). Other than through seeking permanent employment, a portion of the interviewed farmers improve their situation by undertaking odd jobs in the informal economy and agricultural services, for which they sometimes receive money.

Social welfare and pensions in the households interviewed were most dominant in Slovenia, irrespective of the generally relatively low sums in question; they made an easier life in the household possible. However, these non-agricultural incomes do not represent a potential active strategy, since the households either do or do not have them, depending on the history of the household members and the rules of social policy of the native country. Instead, a strategy of some households is forming or remaining in extended families. Even though

the reflexive moment is not pronounced in this strategy, since the interviewees do not have a defined and developed plan of pros and cons that the strategy brings with it, the combination and synergy of additional household members' resources to sustain the social unit is noticeable in some households.

Increasing Work Intensity and Exit Strategies

Almost all the households interviewed increased their work intensity on the agricultural land as a response to the crisis, in an attempt to produce and sell as much as possible. Considering the lack of farm machinery, such a situation leads to chronic fatigue and potential psychological and physical difficulties.

'My spine, that's my biggest problem. But over time you slowly adjust, so one's increased segment of work means a corresponding greater effort and greater wear, as I like to put it [...] and because of the lack of any, I mean adequate, proper machinery you, recently, with the coming of the crisis, you use your own resources even more, so that without any addition physical involvement, it just wouldn't work' (Juraj, Croatia).

Under these conditions, many small agricultural households are considering exit strategies. But unlike developed Western economies, where the service sector or industry can absorb an influx of small farmers who have given up on agriculture,³⁶ in the countries studied this is not the case. Faced with a high existing unemployment rate during the crisis, small farmers, mostly without any qualifications, have very few possibilities for finding employment. Even though in some cases they consider quitting agricultural activities to emigrate, for most of the 'mature generation', this is no longer an option:

'For example, I am in that phase where I no longer have the fitness level to go to Germany. [...] If I were younger, I'd go' (Miljenko, Croatia).

Most place their hopes in the younger members of the household, who usually do not want to continue the agricultural activities.

'Our daughter has gone to Belgrade to look for some kind of work. If she can find something better in the city, it is much better in the city, a lot easier. There is more money to be made, the living is better and for her future it is better if she lives in the city' (Toma and Ana, Serbia).

³⁶ Peter C. Timmer, *The Agricultural Transformation*, in: Hollis Chenery / Thirukodikaval N. Srinivasan, eds, *Handbook of Development Economics*, vol. 1, Amsterdam 1988, 275-331.

*Strategies Which Are Characterised
by a High Level of Reflexivity and Agency*

Some of the households interviewed indicated a high level of agency in their life strategies. As we explained in the theoretical framework, agency, a concept related to overcoming structural limitations, is not understood as a 'regular' proactive activity.

Namely, it is important to point out that practically all the households had high levels of active survival strategies in order to service and provide a better status for the household. First and foremost, these include increased efforts in terms of agricultural labour, which increased even further during the crisis, and various described survival strategies—from selling in the informal economy to doing additional informal jobs and seeking employment.

To use Bourdieusian terms, agency is understood as overcoming the limitations of one's own capitals and habitus, and thus, in accordance with the wider interpretation of Bourdieu's theory of action, we define it as a reflexive and innovative action which stems from capitals and habitus while modifying them at the same time. Agency is based on actors, or in this case, households, through adopting a reflexive standpoint on one's own situation as a part of the process of (self-)reflection which is improved by a comparison of the position of the actor (the household) in overlapping fields, and thus the comparison of the rules (*doxa*) of the fields themselves.³⁷

When we analysed our respondents' reflexivity and ability to overcome structural limitations, two households in Croatia stood out: Zdenka's (dairy farmers) and Toni's (winemakers). Both households started with low agricultural capital, but from their products they were able to develop brands. In the years before the crisis hit hardest, they developed products with added value—high quality wines and ecologically produced cheese. Both households are specific, in that they have built their cultural capital and habitus in fields non-typical for small farmers. Toni's parents, in addition to occasional agricultural work for their own needs, primarily lived and worked in the city, so were able to finance their son's agricultural studies in Zagreb. When Toni's father lost his job in the city, the household turned to their inherited land and vineyards and slowly started making up for the lack of funds by selling wine in informal networks. During his time at university, Toni started to improve the functioning of the household with knowledge gained from his studies. After graduating, he reflexively evaluated the relevant fields in which he could 'play'—whether to look for work in the private or state sector or to take part in the formal or informal economy with his own agricultural activities. He decided to dedicate his career to improving the family business in the field of formal economy. He

³⁷ Crossley, *Phenomenological Habitus*, 95.

poured the high levels of cultural capital acquired during his studies into it: agricultural and administrative knowledge, specific know-how and an understanding of the rules of the field. By comparing himself to his colleagues and their households, he concluded that his household should emphasize the quality and image of the product.

Early in the interview, Zdenka referred to a different type of capital than did most people, when she told the story of her father—unlike the mostly agricultural and unqualified workforce found in other local households, he had more cultural capital and status (symbolic capital): ‘My father was a respected village administrator and manager; he had a gentleman’s job.’ With a dynamic lifestyle, Zdenka, along with the primary habitus of the family, acquired her own capital through growing up in several urban settings (Zagreb, Belgrade and Poreč) and taking occasional trips to cities in Western Europe. Getting an education in a large urban environment (Zagreb) and working in a state-run company (the railway) with her husband, she shaped her habitus with practices and capital by participating in social fields marked by rules different from the ones found in villages. Such embodied capital probably helped Zdenka to plan and invest in systematically acquiring all the relevant information from the very start of her participation in agricultural production with her husband so that she could be more effective in the field of formal economy. Zdenka’s household decided very early to innovate, starting an ecological production of cheese and branding. They began to apply for subsidies and grant competitions; Zdenka and her husband had a long-term vision:

‘Healthy, thorough, long-term, aware that there is no money, you won’t get rich any time soon.’ As she herself says, by thinking about this situation—that is, through a reflexive analysis of herself and her situation in a formal economic field she concluded how they as farmers need some additional value: ‘We will not be competitive in the market, because we are small and conventional. We had to give and add value to something in order to be recognizable, so that someone would buy that product.’

One household in Serbia stands out as a special case of agency without any early acquisition of atypical cultural capital. Sasha, the main initiator in the household, a middle-aged man, comes from a primarily working-class family (unqualified and qualified workers in large industrial companies). Sasha worked in the city, with an unsteady and relatively poorly paid job, and at the same time had a very interested and creative approach to the small family farm, over time creating the habitus of a progressive small farmer. He developed his skills and know-how regarding agricultural production, his knowledge of the system of subsidies and grant applications and his overall understanding of the rules and structure (e.g. required capitals) in the field of formal economy, specifically selling milk. By analyzing his position and the possibilities in both

fields (work and agriculture), our respondent, after slowly transforming his habitus, made a reflexive decision to completely dedicate himself to his small farm. Following the rules of the field, he formed a medium-term vision, got a 'feel for the game', which in the formal field means careful entrepreneurial planning and strict organization in agriculture, and thus opted for slow growth, with no credit. His household slowly managed to buy machines and collect the money to build modern stables. Sasha's creativity in overcoming the inherited habitus and in accumulating capital, and his 'feel for the game' in the informal and formal agricultural fields resulted in him acquiring knowledge, through his own agency.

An analogous case is that of Mesud's household from Bosnia-Herzegovina. Mesud, a small raspberry farmer who also left an insecure and increasingly poorly paid position in the city, followed his 'feel for the game' and learned from the habitus of several successful raspberry farmers, dedicating himself to slowly developing his farm by using subsidies. In both cases (Sasha and Mesud), the households still lead a difficult life but show a strong trend and reflexive plans for medium-term growth. It is symptomatic that in both cases—and the situation was not much different in the cases of Zdenka and Toni—the habitus formed to some extent between the rural and urban, between involvement in paid jobs in the city and traditional familial agricultural activities without an entrepreneurial impulse and abilities in the countryside. We can assume that the participation in the 'urban habitus' for these respondents carried with it subtle and diverse knowledge and practices, enabling (or at least facilitating) careful and informed planning within the type of rationality suitable to the formal agricultural field in an increasingly modernized agricultural sector in all four mentioned countries. With an emphasis on process, planning and organization, abstract knowledge, improvements in and monitoring of the market and open competition, this is knowledge which, historically speaking, is typical first and foremost of the middle class, civil society and the bureaucratic principle of organization—that is, the modern production paradigm.

Conclusion

Thinking about the macro causes of micro experiences, we can clearly conclude that the different experiences of farmers indicate that the four countries are in different phases of their transition to a capitalist organization of the economy and legal framework. In Bosnia-Herzegovina, neither basic regulatory elements of the agricultural market nor the role of the state have been established. In Slovenia, the post-transition period had its onset a while ago (with EU membership in 2004), but small farmers, used to traditional household practices, still struggle to adapt. Small farmers find the solutions to their difficulties in the existence of

multiple economies in rural areas, primarily in the field of informal economy. Multiple fields carry with them various rules of the 'game', and various types of knowledge and capitals needed for the game, and small farmers are, as we have seen, found in two partly overlapping fields. The field of formal economy in agriculture in the countries studied has transformed greatly during the period of transition, and has thus either not stabilized (Bosnia-Herzegovina and, to a certain extent, Serbia) or is still marked by rules that are difficult to abide by, vague regulations and changes in the legal framework (Croatia and Slovenia). This is why we can say that the small farmers' habitus lacks balance—a habitus that is to a great extent determined by traditional agricultural practices—with the field of formal agriculture, which in the four countries studied is in different phases of modernization.

The liberalization of the market has brought hard competition to small farmers, in the form of low prices for consumer products (meat, milk, cheese, etc.), and formalized market rules³⁸, which have resulted in market-oriented sales being unprofitable due to poor sales and increased taxes of market participation.

Insight into the practices of small farmers shows a large gap between their diversity in the informal field and their uniformity, mostly in the form of difficulties they face, in the formal field. Furthermore, small farmers perceive the field of informal practices as familiar and personal because it enables and frequently facilitates most social and economic activities, while the field of formal practices mostly hinders the realization of these activities and is perceived as unknown and hostile. Even though it is almost impossible to speak of a complete neglect of formal elements in the practices of small farmers, they are there, the strategies involving the aforementioned activities and safety are placed in the field of the informal, and thus we can refer to it as a social buffer.³⁹

A gap between two large economic fields, and therefore between expectations and experience, in some cases can lead to a transformation of the habitus⁴⁰—that is, a reflexive overview of the situation and reflexive agency—and construct a multiply-layered habitus.⁴¹ In some cases, we have found precisely this type of transformation, and the analyses have indicated that it has been made possible by exposure to a habitus of a structurally different field—in our cases it was the field of formal economy in the urban setting. It seems that such a multiply-layered habitus has enabled higher degrees of creativity and agency, as farmers have enjoyed more success transforming to the position

³⁸ Diana Mincyte, Subsistence and Sustainability in Post-Industrial Europe. The Politics of Small-Scale Farming in Europeanising Lithuania, *Sociologia Ruralis* 51, no. 2 (April 2011), 101-118, DOI: 10.1111/j.1467-9523.2011.00530.x.

³⁹ Davidova et al., Semi-Subsistence Farming, 28.

⁴⁰ Bourdieu, Practical Reason. On the Theory of Action, 149.

⁴¹ Decoteau, Reflexive Habitus, 14.

of a (relatively) modern and efficient market-oriented subject, endowed with additional skills and cultural capital. Furthermore, knowing the rules of the informal field and the retention of skills acquired in it, enabled farmers either to initiate or to increase specialized agricultural production (agency), which led to greater success. However, even though the high level of agency, in the sense of high adaptability to the conditions and a certain level of innovativeness, had a decisive effect on overcoming the inherited positions of endangerment, the broader picture tells us that we must proceed cautiously and that we can assume that agency is generally insufficient to overcome exceptionally strong structural obstacles. Seen through the prism of capital, agency is significantly more influential when it is combined with the growth of economic or cultural capital, but not without them.

When we speak of strategies, we can conclude that they are short-term, due to financial hardships, and are focused on diversification. This other characteristic stems from the general experience of small farmers that one activity is not enough to survive, and that, instead, many have to be combined, which makes these activities difficult to categorize since they originate from various fields. The spectrum includes the diversification of production to satisfy the largest possible portion of dietary needs of the members and save the money otherwise necessary to buy them, followed by the substitution of insufficient or non-existent resources through non-monetary forms of barter and service exchange, as well as adding to the budget through sales in either the formal or informal economy. In addition, households often rely on stable financial sources such as pensions, salaries and even welfare. They form (and remain) in extended families to use the advantages that each household member can bring. Following the work of Pahl and Wallace, we can conclude that each household is unique in how it organizes its time and resources to complete tasks, but also that general characteristics of strategies⁴² can be noted, conditioned by the local geography, existing economic practices, material wealth, government measures and other structural characteristics of the societies studied.

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⁴² Raymond Edward Pahl / Claire Wallace, Household Work Strategies in Economic Recession, in: Nanke Redclift / Enzo Mingione, eds, *Beyond Employment*, Oxford 1985, 189-227.

Appendix

Table A1. Basic data on interviewed households.⁴³

| <i>Country</i> | <i>Names (Pseudonyms)</i> | <i>No. of household members</i> | <i>Type</i> | <i>The dominant form of agricultural capital</i> | <i>Quantitative display of the dominant forms of agricultural capital</i> |
|----------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| BiH | Boro and Luca | 2 | Agriculturist | Arable land and machinery | 4 hectares of land; 2 cows, machinery |
| BiH | Goran and Daliborka | 3 | Agriculturist | Arable land | 2 hectares of land; 1 cows |
| BiH | Zijad and Amela | 4 | Agriculturist, fruit grower | Arable land, orchard | 1 hectare of land |
| BiH | Mesud and Lela | 3 | Agriculturist, dairy farmer | Orchard and cattle - cows | 2.5 hectares of land; 5 cows |
| BiH | Halid | 4 | Agriculturist and day laborer | Arable land | 4 hectares of land; 1 horse |
| BiH | Drago | 3 | Agriculturist, cattle breeder, day laborer | Arable land | 4 hectares of land; 4 cows |
| Croatia | Dužanka and Slaven | 3 | Cattle breeder, dairy farmer | Cattle | 30-40 sheep; 3-4 pigs; 2 cows |
| Croatia | Miljenko and Ana | 5 | Dairy farmer | Cattle | 6 cows |
| Croatia | Juraj and Anica | 5 | Winemaker | Vineyard | 1.5 hectares of vineyard; 0.5 hectare olive trees |
| Croatia | Mile and Jana | 2 | Cattle breeder | Cattle | 7 cows |
| Croatia | Zdenka and Mišo | 2 | Dairy farmer | Cattle | 60-80 sheep; 7 cows; 1 hectare of land |
| Croatia | Tony and Martin | 6 | Winemaker | Vineyard | 2.5 hectares of vineyard |
| Serbia | Toma and Ana | 4 | Agriculturist | Arable land | 1 hectare of land; 2 pigs; 8 sheep |
| Serbia | Zorica and Goran | 6 | Agriculturist, cattle breeder | Arable land and cattle | 2 hectares of land; 3 goats; 5 sheep |
| Serbia | Sasha | 6 | Dairy farmer | Cattle | 7 cows; 2 hectares of land |
| Serbia | Ivan and Katarina | 4 | Agriculturist | Arable land | 2 hectares of land; 2 pigs; 50 rabbits |

⁴³ Data collected within the project 'Life-Strategies and Survival Strategies of Households and Individuals in SEE Societies in the Times of Crisis'.

| | | | | | |
|----------|------------------|---|------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| Serbia | Vesna | 3 | Agriculturist | Arable land | 1 hectare of land; 1 pig; 8 chickens |
| Serbia | Marija | 6 | Agriculturist | Arable land | 2 hectares of land; 3 pigs; 5 goats |
| Slovenia | Slavoj | 3 | Agriculturist, cattle breeder, winemaker | Arable land, vineyard and cattle | 20 hectares of land; 15 cows/bulls; 4 pigs |
| Slovenia | Jožek | 2 | Agriculturist | Arable land | 2 hectares of land; 2 pigs |
| Slovenia | Manda | 4 | Agriculturist, winemaker | Arable land and vineyard | 2.5 hectares of land; 1 hectare of vineyard |
| Slovenia | Jaka and Julija | 4 | Agriculturist, cattle breeder | Arable land | 12 hectares of land; 1 cows; 10 sheep |
| Slovenia | Cilka | 3 | Agriculturist | Arable land | 1 hectare of land; 10 chickens |
| Slovenia | Alfonz and Masha | 4 | Agriculturist | Arable land | 1 hectare of land |
| Slovenia | Ema | 5 | Agriculturist, cattle breeder | Arable land | 10 hectares of land; 3 cows; 2 pigs |