

Subsistence and semi-subsistence farming in Hungary. From modernisation to ecological and social sustainability

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Abstract: This paper is a first outcome of research project (2012-2014) on land use and farming structure of Hungarian agriculture. The starting point is five key questions in relevant literature: what are social/lifestyle (tradition, social safety, prestige, autonomy, resistance, hobby, recreation, value orientated activity, social care, class/strata-dependency) and economical (supplement income, alternative food, lack of resources, property conservation, pluri-activity, self-sufficiency) motives of subsistence and semi-subsistence farming? Are there major differences in small-scale and subsistence farming between old and new EU member states? What are relevant differences between urban and rural semi-subsistence farming ? What are major political/power relation issues about small-scale and subsistence farming and how are changes in politics shaped by farming and vica-versa ? What is conceptual frame of newly emerging/traditional forms of small-scale and subsistence farming?

The paper presents a case study based on empirical work in Eastern Hungary about land use of farmers and other actors in agricultural production. First part answers the question of this workshop “do the millions of subsistence and semi-subsistence farmers in Central and Eastern Europe fit into this discussion?” The second part portrays local historical context and differences of socialist agro-system to contemporary modernisation of agriculture. Third part demonstrates structural changes of land use and conceptualizes the development to privatized farming using concept of sustainability, resilience and resource use.

Keywords: Hungary, layers of farming, habitus, survival, social policy, social sustainability

Introduction

In this paper I make an attempt to develop a research agenda on subsistence and semi-subsistence farming in Hungary and, in a broader sense, inside the European Union. A number of case studies highlight the survival and prospect of rural and urban small-scale farming both in old and new EU member states. For example Davidova, Fredriksson and Baily (2009) present that subsistence farming is of utmost importance for rural poor in some new member states. They underline that subsistence farming should be considered as a primary survival strategy not only in the low but in the higher income countries in the period of economic recession inside EU. Brüntrup and Heidhues (2002) discuss that, as Davidova at al cite, subsistence farming help people to survive hard and risky conditions. Davidova, Gorton and Fredriksson (2010) argue that small and semi-subsistence farming have three roles in agriculture and rural development: “that as a buffer against poverty; as a basis for farm diversification, and as a provider of environmental and other non-trade benefits” “ (Davidova at al, 2010.p5)

Other researchers present the “alternative” potential of small agricultural production. Cox at al (2002) consider urban agriculture (small-scale by necessity) as a new way of producing (and con-

suming) food which can contrast with industrialized agriculture and conventional food cultures. In Van der Ploeg's (2010) view on re-emergence of peasant type farming small-scale self-provisioning production is a way of resistance against economic and political "empires". In turn, Goodman (2003) exhorts that it is a complex task to understand whether alternative food strategies can contribute truly to managing rural social and economic problems.

After focusing on variability of literature about small-scale forms of agricultural production we may conclude that the term is used in a variety of ways and it has variety of meanings. "Part-time farming", "small and small-scale farming", "auxiliary plot," "market garden", "subsistence and self-provisioning farming", "pluriactivity", "off farm work", "urban agriculture", "sustainable and alternative agricultural production and consumption", "slow and healthy food", production, consumption, environmentalist and protest movements, power and autonomy, risk management and survival, social and economic sustainability, en masse, a sort of works refer to term which attempts to signal the recent shift from the forms of industrialized and conventional agricultural production and consumption. To identify conceptual tools it is a necessary step to explore the nature and dynamics of "semi-subsistence farming" what I use as working definition.

In the first part of the paper I identify and discuss some theoretical difficulties in portraying a clear distinction between terms that have been used to label small-scale production and raising forms of "semi-subsistence farming". I suggest using the concept of "layers" and "meanings" as analytical tools. The second chapter introduces a previous study about social and economic components and the motives of (subsistence) farming. Third, I focus the layers of (semi-subsistence) farming to identify a research framework than I attempt to provide a perspective which integrates different contents of layers, and I argue for the need to examine the link between the terminological turn and distinct components of (subsistence) farming.

"Layers" and "meanings"

Indeed, it is difficult to find agreement on the definition of the small-scale form of agricultural production. There is no single concept of this subject on which all or even most rural scientists agree or use. Many definitions and terms are developed, expounded and defended. The form, producing food in small units, has been changed over decades, varies by regions but resisted transforming pre-capitalist, capitalist and socialist structures. Early works of American rural sociology (Lowry 1969) intensively focused part-time and small scale farming, and off farm mobility. After the 50-ies scholars ascribed complex role of part-time farming which remained a constant subject of European rural sociology. For example Cavazzani and Fuller (1982) regarded part-time farming as permanent future of developed society. Buttel (1982) discussed the historic role in limiting centralization of capital and balancing rural social structure. Gasson (1986) described part-time farming as a survival strategy but as she pointed out the survival of farms doesn't necessarily mean survival of existing farmer family, and empirical studies show considerable changes among occupants of survived farms. Saraceno (1994) argued small farm system as extremely positive in modern and more complex function. From the fifties to nineties part-time farming was the dominating term that described small-scale food production in highly developed capitalism. The term of part-time farming expressed a labour oriented approach, those units were considered part-time farms where the farmer has a regular occupation other than farming.

In the socialist countries the involvement in spare-time agricultural activity was a common form of survival strategy (Symes 1992, Szelényi 1988, Kovách 1994/1). In Hungary for example 60 % of total households produced food for their own consumption and/or for the market. The term of extensive provisioning food production was auxiliary plot or small-scale farming (Szelényi 1988, Kovách 1989, 1994/2). An important note that most components and motives of small-scale farming have not disappeared with socialist regime (Kovách 2004/1, Davidova at al 2009).

Small-scale farming in the European literature has been associated with most diverse subjects as pluri-activity (Kinsella at al 2000) revitalization of agriculture (van der Ploeg 2000), sustainable rural development, multi-functionality (Dufour at al 2007, Knickel at al 2009, Wilson 2007), risk management, rural poverty. In defining the subject the time frame plays significant role: while small-scale agricultural activity resists capitalist and socialist structural transformations, the phenomena and its interpretation are linked with actual issues in scientific and public discourses. The shift from the term of part-time, small-scale farming to subsistence farming mirrors a definitional turn from quantitative structural and labour approaches to underlined importance of normative autonomy, resistance, food and life quality.

The current definitions of subsistence and semi-subsistence farming present terminological obscurity. According to Dower (2009)

“A subsistence farm is one that produces food mainly to feed the farm family, with very limited surplus (if any) for sale or for barter. A semi-subsistence farm is one which produces enough surplus, beyond the family’s own needs, to sell for regular income. In crude terms, governments tend to regard farms of less than 1 hectare as subsistence, 1 to 5 hectares as semi-subsistence”(Dower 2009, p1). As he argues subsistence “Small farms are social, environmental and economic assets significant as homes and sources of livelihood for millions of people, as maintainers of valuable landscape and ecosystems, and as contributors to food supplies and to local and national economies.” Dower 2009 p2).

According to EU law, as Fritsch at al cite (Fritsch at al 2010 p 16), “SFHs are defined as “agricultural holdings which produce primarily for their own consumption and also market a portion of their output” (European Commission Regulation 1698/2005, Article 34(1).

Davidova, Fredriksson and Baily (2009) note that definition is difficult due to lack of relevant data. They cite definition Barnett at al (1994) on subsistence farming: the farming activities form a livelihood strategy; the output is consumed directly; only a few purchased inputs enter the production process; and the proportion of output sold is low. They distinguish production and consumption point of view in the analysis of semi-subsistence farming and argue for using a production approach in their study on new member states’ small farming.

The definitional obscurity and chaos often tempt modern social sciences though only a few studies face this issue (for example the rural web van der Ploeg, Marsden 2008). To muddling through the definitional disorientation I suggest loaning the concept of ‘layers’ from political sciences and concept of “meanings” from post-modern approaches.

Inspiration on “layers” coming from Foucault who says that power exists at two, local and supra-local levels (Foucault, 2003) and power relations and conflicts should also be considered in their own context. Foucault’s interpretation of power has influenced Stewart Clegg (1989) who pointed out three distinct ‘circuits of power’ (Clegg, 1989). In Clegg’s model the first circuit is episodic power, the agency (micro-) level where actors create power by reproducing common structures of meaning. In theory, Clegg’s first circuit of power is equivalent to Giddens’ notion of creating power by reproducing structures. The first level of power already presupposes the existence of meso-level structures whose systems of meaning individuals are able to reproduce on the micro-level. On the meso-level, meanings are not only created, but also debated, and the third circuit of power that can be perceived as globalisation. Other political scientists argue that we must distinguish between ‘power over’ and ‘power to’. Based on Arendt and Foucault, Goehler distinguishes transitive (power over) and intransitive (power to) categories of power (Goehler, 2000). In the context of policy network analysis, Goverde & van Tatenhove (2000) suggest a three-layer model of power: power as a capacity; power as a relational phenomenon; and structural power. According to Goverde’s and Tatenhove’s concept (what we may accommodate in exploring different

terms of small-scale farming), power has several, not necessarily tightly connected layers, thus present-day power networks may not show a clear hierarchy or structure. Regarding the impact that government/governance change has on power, the two latter interpretations may prove useful, as they specifically emphasise that power today is a multi-layered and multi-dimensional concept. By adopting the layers concept as an analytic tool to studying semi-subsistence farming it is very important to examine the layers, their nature and dynamics, and to relate those to the contemporary shift of subsistent farming.

In the post-modern approach “meaning” is a relational term and represents that one social subject can be defined on differing ways. Following the post-modern concept the appropriate method of defining semi-subsistence farming is to explore its multiple cultural, economical, political, human, environmental meanings. In the next part of my paper I present the result of an earlier study on small-scale farming than a chapter describes conceptual layers and meanings linked to subsistence framing through empirical evidences.

An example of the layers and meanings of subsistence farming: farm structure and habitus in rural Hungary

In this chapter I focus the subsistence farming in rural Hungary, in the eighties. One of the remarkable aspects of studying an historical example is that this analysis of economic and social motives, attitudes and the farmers’ habitus help to clarify some of the layers and meanings of subsistence farming and present their complexity and interaction. The historical example is rural Hungary where after collectivization in the early eighties the revival of small-scale farming proved to be effective (Szelényi 1988, Kovách 1991). In the eighties two third of Hungarian households were active in part-time farming. Under the state control industry and agriculture proved unable to meet public needs in food, industrial products and services. The shortage and needs for extra income stimulated massive participation in the non-socialized sector, “the second economy”. But this is well-presented story in the literature and much has been written on the production, integration, market orientation and social consequences.

Two key findings emerge from my analysis of small-scale farming. Firstly, a variety of forms of small-scale farming existed that I categorised in three basic types, subsistence, self-provisioning (44%), traditional peasant type farms (38%), and farmer, entrepreneurial small-scale or subsistence type farming (18%) (Kovách 1988,1991).

Semi-subsistence farming

The place of production is the garden around the house, the courtyard: the goal is to produce as much as food for self-supply. Although they happen to sell overproduction, that doesn’t alter the way of farming. Production is of a traditional farming, though new methods and means are rapidly applied. The semi-subsistence farming activity is part of the household economic unit. The expenses of the household and of the farming are not separated, nor are their economic transaction or the work to be done in the household and on the farm. The semi-subsistence producing for self-supply can have connection to exchange of labour and of product with other farms, but market demands or the position on labour market of those in the household are not related to the function of semi-subsistence farming.

A sub-type of semi-subsistence farming is the urban agriculture based on holiday and weekend plots, hobby gardens, vineyards and fenced gardens. Food supply is a basic goal of urban agriculture but the ratio of sold products can be higher than on the farm producing traditionally for self-supply. The household work and finance and those of the farming are separated from every point of view. Farming is not an everyday activity but most often carried out at weekends and holidays.

The peasant type small farm organised on the model of middle peasant mixed farm

This is a kind of farming organised for commodity production: similarly to old peasant farms some product it also secures self-supply. This is the modern version of the Chayanovian model. Depending on the constraint of self-supply and market demands, they produce several kind of food. Farming is not specialized. They calculate rationally the finances, for some products this calculation is fixed in traditions and in public opinion. In most cases the cost of work is not calculated. They separate sometimes the works and finances of household and of farming but the farm and the household remain one economic unit. The mixed structure of production, the combination of commodity and subsistence farming provide a strategic chance to survive economic and political changes. A precondition of this is to maintain the autonomy of farming. They are capable of reacting to market challenges because of the mixed structure of production.

The "entrepreneurial" subsistence farming

The separation of farm and household is absolute, farming is specialised and in most cases it is carried out distantly from the family home. The expenses and labour are calculated rationally. This farming correspond in every elements to classical enterprise with except that the farmer family engages a large amount of manual work and that farming doesn't grow out of subsistence level.

Secondly, in the attempt to examine mentalities, social norms which regulate economic behaviour play a role in shaping farmer strategies, the adaptation of Bourdieuan term "habitus" provides a basic analytical tool. Without the introduction and use of term "habitus" in Bourdieuan sense it would be a fruitless effort to understand that when integrated function of market didn't not work on optimal level, the market didn't constrain every small-scale farmers to apply the most rational, commodity production, yet small-scale producers' strategy correspond to objective goals. The general notion of habitus as applied to small production is: given the state and institutionally regulated and limited demand and supply of the market: the economic and social constrains and effects resulting in the small-scale production, the forms of capital disposable to farming households, the mental attitudes and habits of the society determined and structured by its concrete historic structures, whose typical adaptation to the objective circumstances and objective relations produces along with the objective relations the operating forms and objective strategies of small-scale production. I have found four kinds of habitus the in economic behaviour of Hungarian small-scale farmers.

The ethos of prestige, the economic behaviour not influenced by the market

Economic behaviour and farming is impacted by the values corresponding to the ethos transmitted, developed and implemented as a system of tradition. The key and permanent pattern of the ethos in most cases is an anachronistic consciousness of prestige. The primary motive of producing food in small unit is to keep prestige which can signify the acceptance of ability and social position, an intention to be identical and individual. The order of values has kept many traditional elements and occurs with the elements of response that are practiced, proved and transmitted by collective norms. As a rule of value oriented behaviour gives alternatives of a response. It is by no means still, or dogma-like, but has answers only to some economic and social shifts. The indirect economic strategy of small-scale production and social reproduction are regulated by the claim to maintain prestige and by an order basing of behaviour itself on the tradition. The goal of subsistence production, the manner of economic behaviour needed to achieve this goal and the order of production are fixed in traditions. The benefits of farming are not calculated rationally in advance, but given in the common experience. The rational calculation of the future is limited by the fact that the market constrains remain consciously hidden: the farming stimulated by traditions and prestige and not by expediency and efficiency as a main principle is the only factor which gives widest-scale concrete autonomy to small-scale production. We can consider this type

of economic behaviour as not impacted by the market, there is no direct link between farming strategy and market demands.

The ethos of security, economic behaviour influenced by the market

The ethos also effects decisively agricultural production, its key motive is not prestige, looking in most cases to the past, but the security of life and production. The aim to secure one's life and farming occurs in every epoch of agricultural production, so much so that in the literature there has been a major dispute on the degree to which economic behaviour of agricultural producers oriented to the seeking for security, and how much this impedes farming efficiency. The ethos of security for this habitus type signifies to maintain social status. The result is carefully preserved autonomy of the individual, always adjusted to the realities of the certain limits that the present sets. The strategy and behaviour, - using the previous analogy- influenced by the market demands. Farmers produce for the market demands but within traditional limits. They are able to change quantity and technology of farming according to the actual needs of the market but as keepers of traditions they stick to producing one or another sort of food, to which they are predestined by their traditional skill. Their farming controlled not so much by the market that their skills would need being brought up to date or their economic behaviour changed.

The ethos of mobility and well-being, an economic behaviour oriented to the market

The ethos comprises the common values of the middle classes: well-being and modest autonomy of the farm, security and commodity production, entrepreneurship and the principle of tradition, risk and basically secured standard of living, farming determined by a claim to efficiency. They do not know and control the whole process of production and marketing but farming is profitable. They control decisions on what and how to produce according to market demands, but at the same time their economic behaviour is influenced by their goals which are outside of economy.

The entrepreneurial ethos, the economic behaviour organised by market demands

Small-scale production is the chosen means of securing social status and well-being. The entrepreneurial ethos is associated with individualisation. Then highest value is the autonomy and well-being of the farmer family, farming is only a tool, which can be changed by the market demands.

The sketched portray of farming in Hungary aimed to take into account consideration of applying the concept of layers and meanings in studying semi-subsistence farming. In an attempt to understand the complexity of subsistence farming I could shortly present some of basic components from habitus to goals and farming practices that should be analytically studied. In the next part of my paper I attempt to list conceptual layers and meanings of semi-subsistence farming.

Sustainability, layers of commodity and subsistence farming

As Elzen and Barbier (2012) noted, sustainable agriculture holds varying meanings and they distinguished two visions on sustainability: the "green", "environmentalist" approach and "integral sustainability" which refers to the necessity of major changes and various (ecological, economic, social, work conditions, acceptance) dimensions of sustainability. The concept about layers of commodity and subsistence farming reflects the same integrated approach to farming and highlights that economic, environmental and societal dimensions are coordinated assumptions of system innovation. Sustainability in the concept on layers of farming presupposes a set of various (and complexly related) domains in which innovation are inevitable to achieve sustainable agriculture. The case of tenacious survival (sustainability) of subsistence and semi-subsistence farming in the new EU member states clearly demonstrates that farming on smaller holdings has wider societal, economical and habitual implications than agricultural relevance. From the above conceptualisation seven layers of farming may be identified as economic, societal, social policy, environmental, discursive, habitual and power relations.

In the next part of this chapter I present layers of farming through empirical evidences of Hungarian agriculture. This report is based on statistical data, a survey with 1000 farmers (2013-2014), 40 interviews and a case study in Hajdúnánás, a small (18000 inhabitants) town lies in the eastern part of Hungary. Hajdúnánás has been an agricultural town for centuries; however the food and other industries are also important at the present time.

The *economic layer* is being taken into account in the context of structural shifts that are affecting subsistence and commodity farming. Available evidence suggests that role of subsistence farming can not be understood separately from commodity farming, or without focusing shifts in entire agri-sector. The privatisation of land in the 90ies in Hungary then the rapid concentration of land use and agricultural production resulted in considerable changes (Kovách 1994, Kovács 2007) but the dual – commodity and subsistence - character of farming survived radical shifts in structure of agriculture. In 2005 the number of semi-subsistence and subsistence farmers was similar to commodity full and part-time family farmers (Figure1). From 2000 to 2010 the number of private farms fell by 40% (AMÖ 2010). 400 000 smaller family farms being excluded agricultural census or being out farming, but the proportion of subsistence and semi-subsistence farms was 60 % in even in 2010.

According to Albert and Kohler (2008) household (informal) food production has a large extent in new EU member states. Jehlicka and Smith pointed out that 38-50 per cent of population grow some per cent of their food. They noted that food related practises are not only survival strategy (economic necessity, legacy of socialist food shortage, tradition) of the poor segment of the population but higher, middle class and urban families are motivated to produce healthy food for their own consumption and run hobby farms. Jehlicka and Smith (2011) suggest that policy making should be enhanced by a more culturally informed approach and I agree with this statement. However I argue for much broader interpretation of “culture”.

Evidences from agro-census show that small-scale subsistence farming is extensively practised in Hungary. In 2010, 85% of private farms and agricultural companies used less than 5 hectares (Table 1). 567 000 farms, and 1, 1 million non-farmer families, altogether 40 per cent of Hungarian households produced food. The proportion of self-provisioning farming of private farms is 60 per cent. The agricultural statistics, similarly to Hungary, present intensive involvement in small-scale farming in the new EU countries. In the Czech Republic the rate of small land user holdings is 54, 8 % (in Hungary this is 53, 4 %). In Romania the small units give clear majority of farms (92.9 % - table 2) and small Polish farms also represent high proportion (table 3).

In the corn-farming case study area (Hajdúnánás), following land privatisation in 90ies, the concentration of land use and agricultural production, the distribution of farms and companies by land-size category (table 4) show less redundancy of small-scale units but it is over 40 per cent. Two thirds of private farms produce food for family consumption, half of them without any commodity production.

Table 1. Private farms, companies and land size categories in Hungary, 2010

private farms		
land size category hectare	number of farms %	agricultural area %
0,01– 0,15	29	0,5
0,16– 1,00	41,5	3,1
1,01– 5,00	16,1	8,3
5,01– 10,00	5,1	7,8
10,01– 25,00	4,5	15,3
10,01– 50,00	1,9	14,9
50,01–100,00	1,1	17,1
100,01–300,00	0,8	27,7
300,01–	0,1	5,2
total	100	100
private farms and companies		
land size category hectare	number of farms %	agricultural area %
0,01– 0,15	28,7	0,2
0,16– 1,00	41	1,7
1,01– 5,00	16	4,5
5,01– 10,00	5,1	4,2
10,01– 25,00	4,6	8,4
10,01– 50,00	2,1	8,4
50,01–100,00	1,2	10,1
100,01–300,00	1	19,4
300,01–	0,4	43,1
total	100	100

source: AMÖ 2010

Table 2. Agricultural holdings and land size categories (Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania)

land size category	Czech Republic 2012	Hungary 2012	Romania 2010
hectare	agricultural holdings %	agricultural holdings %	agricultural holdings %
0-4.9	54,8	53,4	92,9
5-9.9	11,4	16,7	1,6
10-49.	19,1	21,8	4,8
50-99.	5,1	3,8	0,2
100-499	5,8	3,7	0,4
500-	3,8	0,6	
total	100	100	100

sources: CSO Public Database, Single Area Payment Data HU, RCSO Public Database,

Table 3. Private farms and land size in Poland

land size category, hectare	private farms %
1,0-2,0	20,2
2,0-5,0	32,6
5,0-10,0	23,8
10,0-15,0	9,8
15,0-	13,6
total	100

source: Agriculture in 2012, Department Rolnictwa, 2013, PCSO

Table 4 Agricultural holdings and land size categories in Hajdúnánás, 2012

land size category	agricultural holdings
0-4,9 hectare	43,1
5-9,9	20,1
10-19,9	16,5
20-49,9	11,3
50-99,9	4,6
100-199,9	2,6
200-499,9	1,2
over 500	0,6
total	100

N 886 source: Single Area Payment Data

The *societal* layer of farming may include complex social background of farmers, family origin, education, professional carrier and other various components of social inequality, lifestyle and norms, all what support economic survival. In the case study area the key analytical question is the *societal sustainability* of farming: as commodity farmers developed their activity, by using family network, social capital, trust-based social/economic networks, farming activity in the socialist era. The commodity production works through “integrations”, a trust and yearly contract based, technology, marketing and purchasing oriented cooperation. The bigger full-time farmers worked for socialist cooperatives and a state farm before and most of them were born in local families. The two originally off agricultural actor of the present big-scale farming are investors from non-agricultural sector of local economy: a wealthiest local industrial and a shops and confectionery owner tradesman who is key person of an important agricultural “integration”. The subsistence and semi-subsistence farming are used as a strategy for household survival of disad-

vantageous changes. This is the most important societal character of local subsistence farming. The needs for healthy, controlled, specific, traditional aliment or hobby gardening appeared amongst subsistence farming goals but for example pig-slaughtering which was a family fiesta and a popular way of supplying fresh meat, bacon and sausage, is very rarely performed currently

An earlier study found that farmers' habitus and ethos types (sketched above in this paper) survived the fall of socialist regime. This result draw attention to that studies on *habitual layer* of farming need to be restarted and introduced in scientific approaches about commodity and subsistence farming.

The *social policy layer* of subsistence farming has come to be recognised in last years. From mid-nineties the state run social land-use programmes and this helped some ten thousands poor families to outlive hard times. In case study town the state-managed social land use program remained inefficient, practically it was not introduced. The rising poverty and social problems urged city council to work out an anti-poverty programme to mitigate food shortage of indigent families. Limited financial supports were available and the local government offered and managed communal land property for subsistence farming. The self-government provided 2 hectares community land for the purposes of anti-poverty programme, 500 square meters per families, organised and paid prime movers (tilling, ploughing, harrowing), sowing, managerial services and consulting. 57 families in 2011, 73 in 2012 joined the truck farming (potato, vegetables). In 2012 programme managers increased family parcels size to 800 square meters for most successful families and they could grow 18-20 sacks of potato or fresh vegetables. 179 families obtained poultries (20 animals per families). The Agricultural Pilot Programme started in 2012. This is a horticulture programme on 20 hectares and 600 square meters plastic house, producing vegetable for communal catering and providing employment for 87 people from the poorest families.

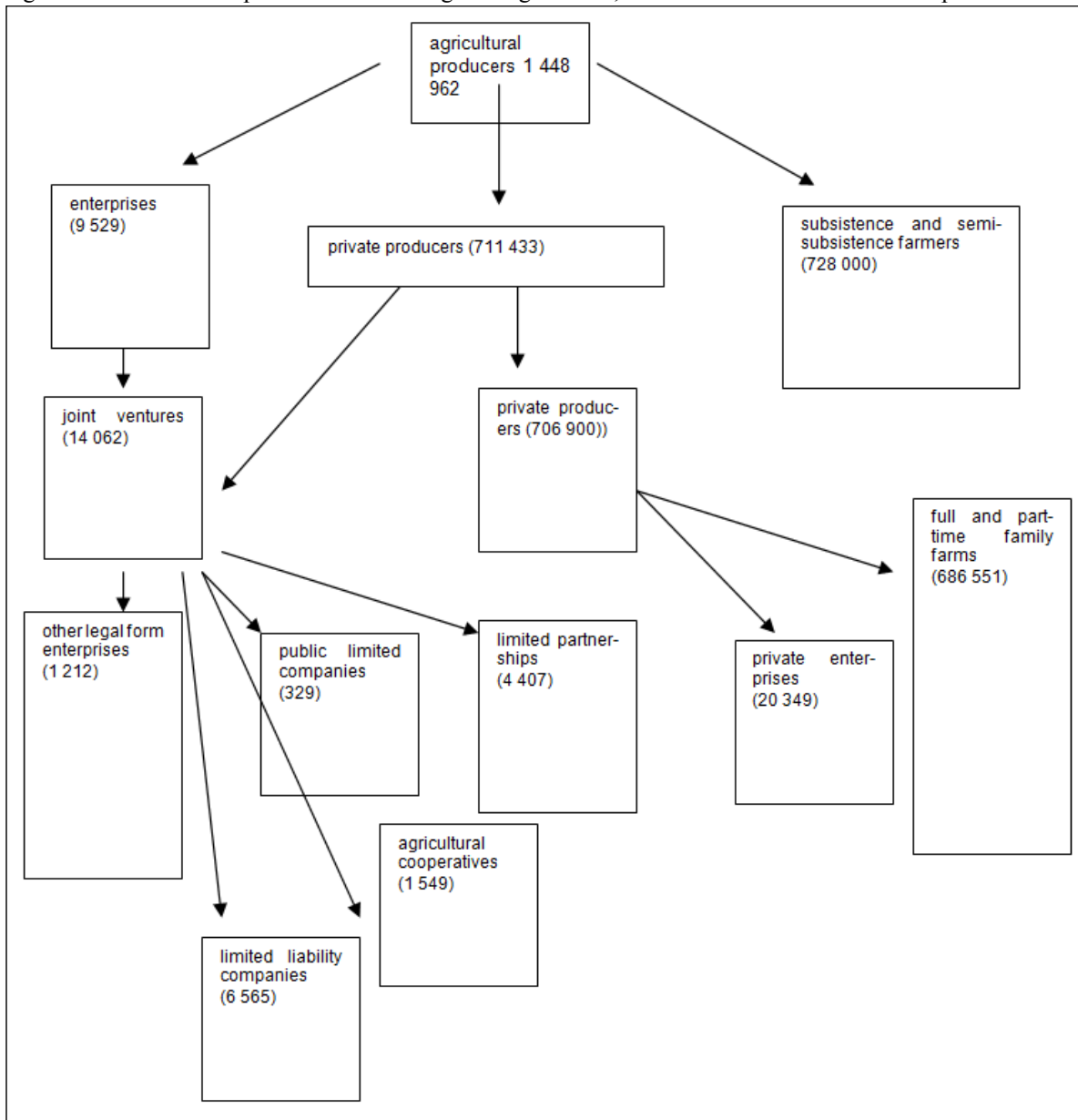
Henk de Haan (1993) pointed out the importance of images and public *discourses* on evaluation and political decisions about farming. The trendy alternative food networks, urban farming, sustainable food production, "political consumerism" (Seyfang 2006) are normative and discourse oriented terms. In Hungary the political discourses about rural questions focus commodity farming and disregard rural complexity. In Hajdúnánás for a long time the public discourse was about land privatisation and land property. Proclaiming land-use based local social policy and Nánás Ware (farmers' market) campaign for promoting local food changed local discourse. At first public opinion was pessimistic about new social land use programme saying that participants with inadequate knowledge are not tenacious and unable to work hardly. The mini plot "farmers" after the first programme year success were proud of their achievement and replying to negative prejudice. As interviewees said the derogatory evaluation inspired their persistency to work on subsistence mini-farms.

The cooperation and inter-relationship between the local economic elite and political leaders, the local oligarchy highly determined commodity and subsistence farming. From late nineties to 2010 a political coalition, supported by a mega holding (6000 hectares, privatised state farm), dominated local policy arena which paid less attention to social problems. A new *policy network* of family farmers replaced this coalition in local power and the new stakeholders started managing small-scale subsistence and social farming. Without understanding power relation layer an important component of farming would remain undiscovered.

In conclusion, Hungarian and other farming households and their farms in new EU member states are integrated into market, agricultural structures and policies in very varying ways but not only lifestyles, needs for safe food or survival of structural changes impact farming activity but long term habitus and (local) power relations are important research themes. The paper has considered layers of farming, as analytical tools, in the CEE countries and argued for extension of

investigational fields and dimensions which do not simplify research tasks but may give better understanding of subsistence (and commodity) farming and it may contribute to renewing farming studies inside entire European Union.

Figure 1. Private and corporate actors in Hungarian agriculture, 2005. Source: on the basis of Kapronczai 2007



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