

**SZENT ISTVÁN UNIVERSITY
GÖDÖLLŐ**

**THE FUNCTIONAL CHANGE OF HOUSEHOLD'S
ECONOMIC ROLE**

PH.D. THESIS

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1. INTRODUCTION

Household economics is a relative new field of science in the Hungarian economic thinking. It is proven by the fact that its own university department still does not exist. As dealing with a „new” discipline we can face several new problems and at the same time the opportunity for getting scientific information is getting wider. Several professions considered dealing with certain problematic fields and aspects of the households to be their tasks, but there is not a uniform and integrated approach.

Nowadays more and more scientists think in an interdisciplinary way widening their specific profession and gaining new scientific knowledge. Recognizing the coherences related to the households does not mean the simple compilation and additive linkage of theories partially connected to the institution of households (e.g. economic views degrading the households to be consumers and producers), but rather the creation of multidimensional and interdisciplinary knowledge.

In my thesis I have detailed a social and economic participant, its forms and structural coherences that we can meet in our everyday lives. This system of relationships, this institution is the household, which is also the social and economic condition of our lives. Households are the biggest homogenous sector of every society and national economy, either taking into consideration their role in the consumption or in the supply of workforce or in the savings or their share in the national wealth.

Today’s economic (globalization, liberalism, problems of growth) and social processes (overpopulation, migration, social polarization) are changing rather to become imbalanced. It is not only the social environment that is changing, but also the national environment, and unfortunately towards the negative. The overheated economy and the society looking for its place generate the need for the creation of a progressive view on the economy and the society. These processes make it obvious that it is necessary to have a sustainable complex (economic – social – ecological) system, in which households play an important role. As you can see later, households automatically balance towards sustainability. Moreover, the substantive philosophy of economics in the archaic societies, being „oicocentric”, i.e. household-oriented, thought that it was sinful to consume more than the needs, to increase properties unjustifiedly. They also thought the same about the commercial procedures, like trade. Of course, today we cannot aim an economy based on avarice, but it is important to evaluate the households according to their real place and role.

The word oiconomia can be originated from the Greek word „oikos”, whose meaning was the Greek households in the archaic age. „Oikos” is not only a place of living, but also a farming form meeting the family’s and the wider community’s (slaves, relatives) material needs. The fundamental interpretation of „oiconomy” meant such operation of the households whose aim was to increase the value of the households for all the members in long terms. Economics today means the “crematistics” (called by ARISTOTHELES as the “art of earning money”), which was created in close connection with trading and which does not know bounds. The basic theory of the oiconomia is sufficiency, while the principle of crematistics is the short-term monetary exchange value, i.e. maximizing the profit.

The rediscovery of the original ideal of “oiconomia” i.e. „oikos”, based on reciprocity and redistribution needs the radical reformation of the dominant, profit-oriented economic structures and philosophies. I would like to prove that the household activities and

performances, which are often devaluated, are the organic parts of the modern societies and national economies, and the inevitable processes of the everyday life. Looking at the theoretical basis and the findings of the research work we feel to reevaluate and review the former axiomes of such disciplines.

It is obvious that in practice such micro- and macro economic theory is not justified which says that households take part in the activities of the national economy and the society only with their incomes and consumption. I hope that this work can contribute to the development of the domestic theories of economics, since with it we can get closer to the understanding of the “everyday” economy.

1.1. THE TOPICALITY AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE TOPIC

In Hungary few works of economic science have examined the households in a way covering several scientific fields, while the science of households is experiencing its renaissance in North-America and Western - Europe. The overheated economic processes and the related unexplainable macroeconomic phenomena have made the thinkers of the developed world to place the economic philosophy and ethics on substantive and mulridisciplinary basis.

As looking at the history of economics it can be easily seen that the household, as an economic formation is the survivor of the evolution processes in the history: unlike the frequent changes in the structure and the coordination of the farming, households as institutions have kept their original form. We can say that only the related views have been modified. Of course the development of the sciene and technics has touched this sphere also. Though its instruments and functions have changed, but not its aims: its major role is still to provide the subsistence of its members. And a fundamental institution which is relatively stable during social-economic changes (compared to the market processes) and it can provide the subsistence under heavy circumstances, it absolutely deserves the scientific interests.

What is specific in the activity of agricultural households? Why is it necessary to examine them deeply and separately from socio-economic point of view? Their farming behaviour is influenced by unusual factors, but it cannot be considered unique. So for example the close connection between the private and the busienss sector (partly territorial) is not characteristics to only the agricultural activities, but other business activities also (e.g. craftsmen, intellectual free workers). The fluctuation of the work because of the weather and seasons can be found in other economic sectors also, e.g. in the construction industry. In some cases the state measures aiming at the stabilization of the incomes have influence on households of other economic sectors and social classes (e.g. the income and loan guarantees of the public services sphere) to larger extent than the ones in the agriculture. Unlike the other business activities and sectors, in the case of agricultural households, the investment and planning periods of generations play important role – because of the significant accumulated capital. And it is influenced by the family-household relations.

In connection with the “rediscovery” of the households, as economic participants capable for different production, I consider important to mention that these performances have come to the frontline more in the rural areas and the Third World countries than in the centers of urbanized agglomerations of the industrialized countries, where households have (should have) more intensive and extended relationship with the market than with the home. The extended household activities in the developing countries must not make us feel the „rustic”

or the „domesticated” idyll. Because of the structural changes in the Hungarian agriculture and the social polarization of the rural areas, the households are increasingly becoming the center of the national scientific and professional interest. Since the most important role of the household, as the living-community of persons, is to meet the needs at a sufficient level. In the case of rural households, agricultural production has always played an important role in providing the subsistence.

In the recommendations for solution, action plans and strategic programs you must not recline only on the traditional instruments of the social market economy (quite misunderstood in Hungary), propagating the competitive market, but thoughts and solutions in the developed world’s scientific science referring to the complexity of well-being should be integrated also. The problems of farming, employment, society, environment and territorial development should be dealt with in complexity and from a substantive approach (so taking into account the households’ characteristics).

Sustainable agriculture and the concept of sustainable economic growth favoured by the alternative economic trends – similarly to the systems in the archaic societies, operating in a self-balancing way, avoiding the overconsumption – can be built primarily on households, since in the case of rural areas, agricultural production is in close connection with the other functions of the households (consumption, production, nursing and nurturing performances etc.).

1.2. THE ANTECEDENTS OF THE WORK

In the past decade, it was the Gödöllő University of Agricultural Sciences, Department of Agricultural Economics where theoretical and practical research was done on household economics. At the university, with the leadership of Flórisné dr. Sípos Ida and Dr. Guth László a research work started in the middle of the 80s, which dealt with the examination of the farming of households doing agricultural production, their social-economic effects, the adoption and development of planning methods, collaborating with the Giessen Justus Liebig University. As a result of this several PhD. dissertations, university and college booklets and other publications have been born. In summer of 2000 I could join the work of this intellectual shop with the help of my supervisor Dr. Guth László.

After reading the national and foreign publications and the findings and methodology of the major research works, I had the opportunity to join the empirical and theoretical research of the department even in the first year of my PhD course. In the past years I have done my own research and educational work with the help of my supervisor in the following fields:

- The relationship between the village households and the agricultural production;
- Special economic decisions due to family cycles in the households with family farms, the structural changes of households doing agricultural production due to family cycles;
- The factors influencing the competitiveness of the households with family farms;
- Household-economic examinations among the private and the family farms, especially on the role of households in the population-keeping ability of rural areas;
- The changes in the function of the households and the quality of life in the small settlements;
- The role of institute households in the economy and in the society;

- The socio-economic analysis of behaviour patterns reacting on the agricultural restructuring in the households with family farms;
- The critical analysis of evaluation methods of household production, the place of household production in the GDP;
- The economic coherences between the food consumption of Hungarian households and their income conditions, the differences in incomes and consumption among the Hungarian population;
- The classification of households with family farms into theoretical household types on the basis of the level of self-sufficiency;
- The economic importance of self-sufficiency in the households with family farms. The evaluation of the economic role of self-sufficiency in the symbiosis of households and family farms;
- The allocation of resources in the households with family farms;
- The role of rural households in the sustainable rural economic structure;
- The sectoral coherences between the land use and the forms of farming in Hungary;
- The opportunities for the application of household-planning methods in the Hungarian family farms;

The investigations connected to the fields mentioned above and the synthetization of the literature have contributed to the fact that in my dissertation I can point at the significance and the characteristics of the household economics, and also to the fact that I can present the symbiotic relations between the households and family farms through the results of an empirical investigation of a specific sample.

Investigations done in the framework of the Institute of Agricultural and Regional Economics served partly a better teaching of the discipline at the university, on the other hand it has raised the attention of external institutes. In the past years the OKTK (Országos Kiemelésű Társadalomtudományi Kutatások) and the R and D fund of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development provided supports for the empirical research. In addition I have taken part in several projects on wider fields, which aimed at the discovery of household economics as a related topic.

In my PhD. course I had the opportunity to join the teaching and the creation of the teaching material of “household economics” and other subjects (e.g. „Basic studies on agricultural and regional economics”, „The economics of national economic sectors”).

At the national and foreign conferences beside the widening of my professional knowledge I have gained valuable experiences and I have built up an extended system of relations which highly contribute to my aim: to follow the international trends of household and the related science and to update my professional knowledge. That was the reason for my application into one of the most prestigious organization of this science in Western-Europe, into the German Society of Household-economics (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Hauswirtschaft) and for my contact with the Institute of Household Science of Justus Liebig University (Giessen).

On the basis of my knowledge gained during my PhD. studied I felt the need for a making a comprehensive work, which examines the agricultural households in not a unilateral, but a complex and interdisciplinary way, comparing it to the whole social-economic structure.

1.3. OBJECTIVES

The aim of my research was to present to the professional public the need for the multidisciplinary examination of the households, as objects with extended internal and external system of nexus on the basis of the interpreted findings. The examination of economic role and its functional change in the households was also justified by the fact that there is an increasing need for summarizing works, which approach the problem-raising of the scientific field from different point of views. I have tried to investigate the economic role of the households in a multidisciplinary way, using the information and methods of sociology, history, economics, economic anthropology and the system theories.

Concerning the compilation of the dissertation at the beginning of my work I have determined the following aims in a logical sense:

- *To review, to systematize analitically and to evaluate the major national and foreign literature and research findings available.*

In the processing of the literature I strived to widen the scope of my research. To have a clear and logical structure I have dealt with the general household research separately from the agricultural households.

- *To make a heuristic summary for the basis of the theory of household-economics.*

Within the evaluation, to make it more understandable, I put into separate chapters the system of coherences of household economic theories. I did not deal with the definition of the concept of family, because it is rather a sociological cathegory. So I considered families as parts of households. With this I would have liked to create a synthesis of information that can contribute to other household economic researches and to the further development of teaching materials.

- *To make a complex presentation on an empirical research method on household economics.*

I thought it was my task to analyze all the details of the methodology of the empirical qualitative research and to present the complex and integrated application of the different procedures.

- *To analyze the views on households of different ages.*

To present the economic and social role of households I considered important to present analitically the evolution of household economic approaches from the ancient times until today. So I tried to present the differences between the substantive and formal interpretation of the economy and the reasons for the “rediscovery” of the oico-centered approach.

- *To present the behaviour patterns determined by household economic factors of Hungarian family farms through an empirical-social scientific research.*

In my dissertation I have presented the findings of an empirical research on household economics and the characteristics of family farms and their evolution in Hungary. The symbiotic field between the household, as substantive and the family farm, as a formal organization is also mentioned in my dissertation. My task was to present the household/group-specific behaviour patterns, which makes it possible to give a feedback on the behaviours in concrete decision-making situations.

In my thesis I tried to transfer information through a dual logic. On one hand to pass revealing-analyzing knowledge, on the other hand to present the opportunities for application of the theories through a specific social science investigation and its methodology. In my dissertation I examine the basic participants of the society and economy – the households - through the ‘New Household Economics’ guidelines founded by Economic Nobel-prize winner BECKER and in the sense of „Giessen School” founded by SCHWEITZER, and I tried to determine their real roles and significance through an extended system of concepts and by socio-economic methods.

2. MATERIAL AND METHOD

The aim of my investigation was to augment the national scientific approaches on households with new, interdisciplinary thoughts and findings. In this framework at first I examine the households, as social basic units and their roles in the society and science through the history. After that, through an empirical socio-economic research, I present the special function of households in a typical farming form of rural areas, which is family farm.

2.1. THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF HOUSEHOLD-ECONOMIC VIEWS

The historical study of household-related approaches was carried out with the help of one of the creative second researches, the knowledge-management. I have analyzed the information from the second research analitically, partly combined with heuristic methods. To review the social forms of different periods and to compare the different cultures and development processes of different ages I have applied a qualitative social science method: the comparative historical analysis. In that analysis I have applied as a guideline the different scientific approaches of households and their level of integration in the social-economic system. Comparative historical analysis is a social scientific method, which is suitable to compare the messages form the social products and it can be considered the main source of secondary information. Deterministic logic and cause-and-effect are characteristic to my diacronic investigations. It means that I try to explore what factors and how these factors had influenced the role of households within the economy and the society.

The research was idiographic, since I had tried to discover the background of the cause-and-effect relationships from many points of view. On the other hand, the conclusions were nomothetic because I had strived to state laws from the discovered specialities. I tried to look for the new information in several works. Corroboration made it possible for me to control the new historical coherences. I did not have opportunity to create an ideal for the households primarily because of the moral and functional differences in the historical ages.

The synthesis of knowledge based on secondary inforamtion done by me cannot be considered a typical historical research, since I did not analyze original works (certificaions, original studies, registers of those times, etc.), but the views, scientific approaches and thoughts based on those times' literature. The comparison and presentation in time of thoughts connected to households seems unnecessary without the presentation of social-economic conditions and intellectual trends, since there is an obvious mutual relationship between the parts (households and the related views) and the whole (social and economic system of a given period). I present the sematic flow of thoughts that I have applied in the investigation of historical continuity on the households researches on Figure 1.

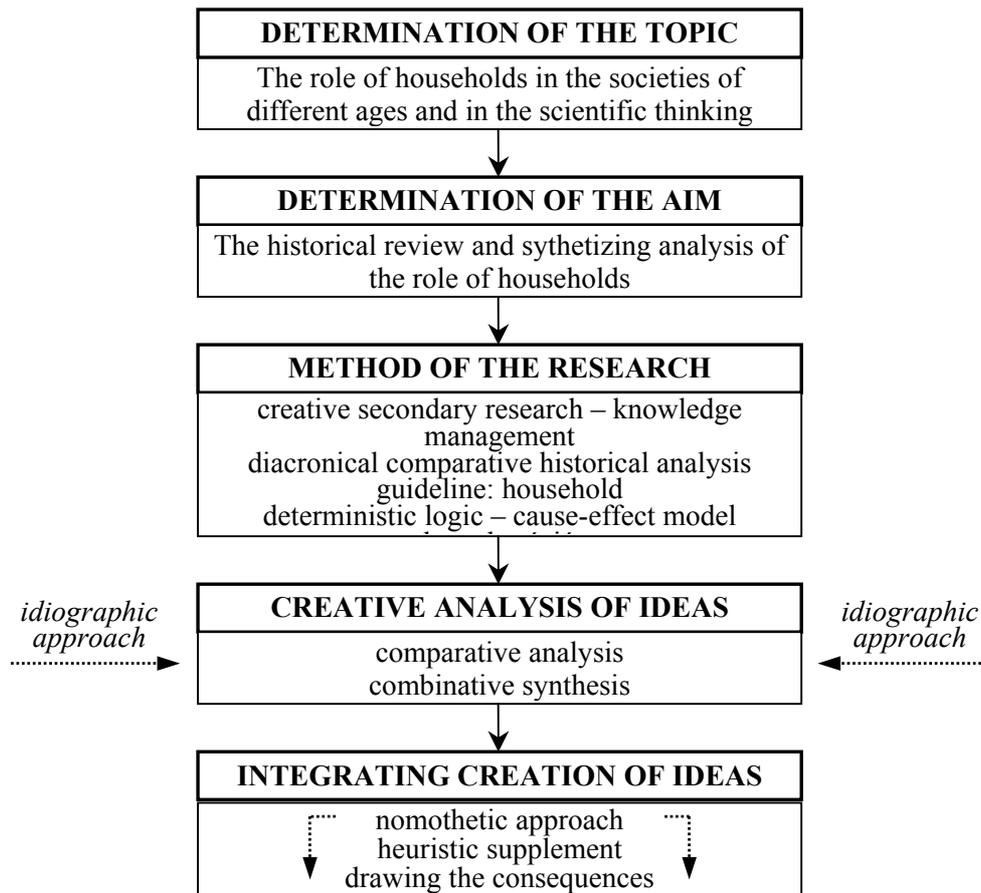


Figure 1: The sematic model of historical comparative analysis of household approaches

2.2. SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPIRICAL EXAMINATION OF HOUSEHOLDS OF FAMILY FARMS

A major cornerstone of my doctoral studies was an empirical research that I organized in 2001-2002 with the help of my supervisor. I had the opportunity to try the theoretical knowledge out in practice and to deepen the analitical ability. In the research I primarily investigated the household economic structure of family farms and their behaviour reacting agricultural restructuring.

Before the research in early 2002 there was a long preparation period. The process and the elements of the socio-economic research can be seen on Figure 2.

Since every action is determined by individual experiences, characteristics, social links and subjective perceptions, such method is necessary which is open to perceive individual problems. Since the behaviours and motivums are only rarely shown directly, they can be investigated hard in a direct survey. So as a tool of my survey I have chosen one of the technics of qualitative social science, the in-depth interview. It makes the guided questions possible and it guarantees the comparativeness of the interviews. Since such an empirical research like this (it is difficult to carry out because the shortage of material and intellectual resources) provides opportunity to gain information which is not closely connected to the topic. So I thought it would be necessary to compile a questionnaire that makes it possible to carry out secondary analysis also. Eventually in the survey I combined the quantitative,

standardized method of questionnaires (often used in social scientific researches) and the qualitative research techniques. According to this *combination method*, there is a special interaction between the asker and the responder in the qualitative interviews. In the interviews beside quantitative collection of data there is a conversation, whose body is made up of the orienting, open questions of the questionnaire. The asker makes notes on the answers, and he/she makes own comments on the conditions of the household and the farming. The advantage of this method is that the asker is personally present at the interview (this is not a requirement in the case of quantitative surveys, since they can be sent by post). The advantage of the personal presence is the high rate of responds and it is the only situation where you can make in-depth interviews too.

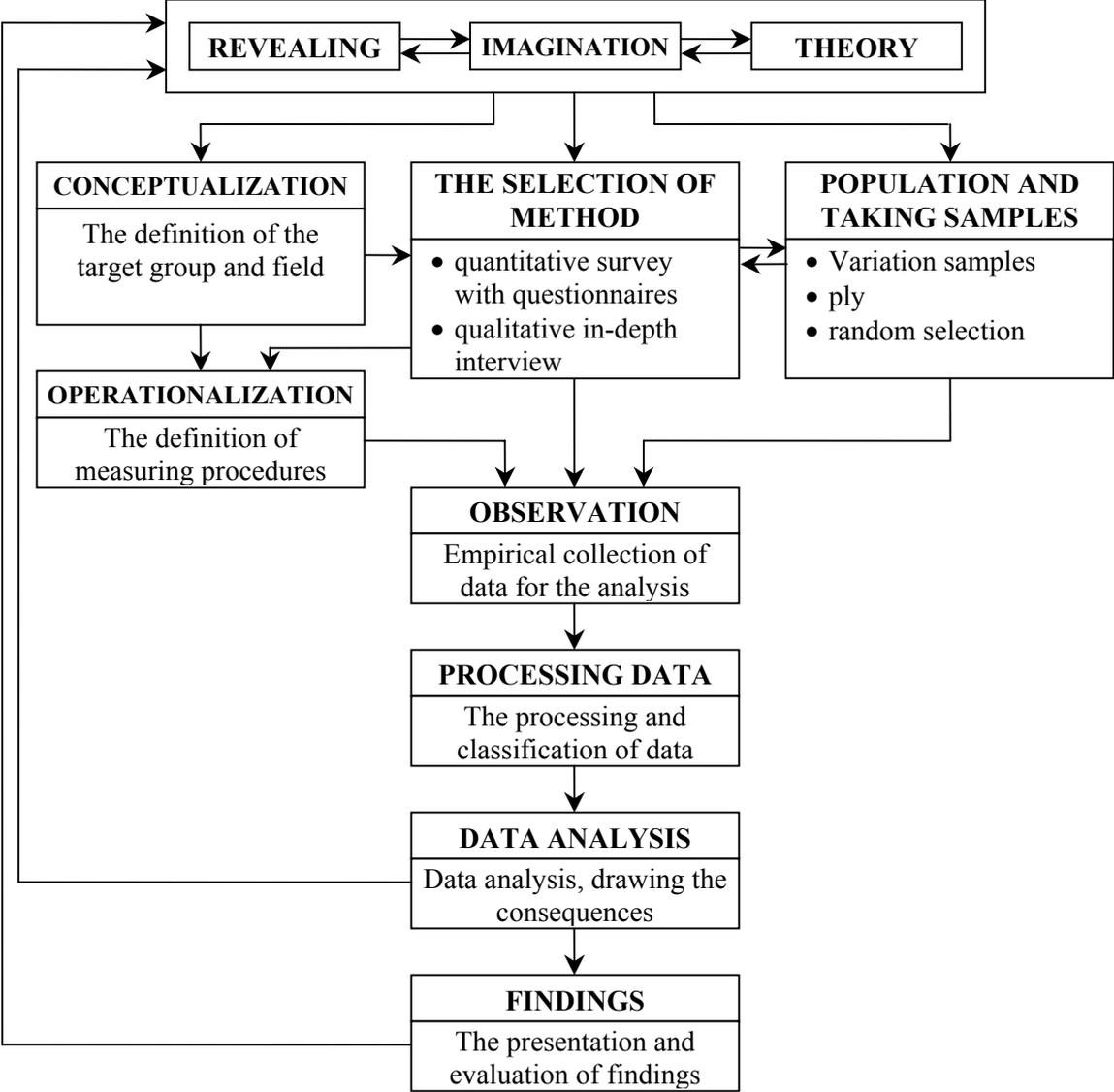


Figure 2: The empirical figure of the flow of socio-economic research carried out in 2002

At the selection of the method of taking samples it was an important aspect to determine a population from the people, which is representative enough. From this point of view the most suitable seemed to be the probability matrix; since every data collection on big crowds is done with probability selection. Hungary’s family farmers formed the *population*, which was the starting point in the sample-taking. In order to have quite a representative survey I considered necessary to determine a narrower frame for sample-taking. *The frame of the research, the*

examined population was the family farmers of Heves county, whose list of names was provided by the Agricultural Agency of Heves County (Heves Megyei Földművelésügyi Hivatal). In the selection of the families, doing agricultural production, we did not required them to meet the legal criteria. Partly because there are many forms of farming (a family can farm as an economic association if they meet the requirements for family farms), on the other hand because the registration of family farms was still underwork at the time of the survey. Since I had to choose a sample, which meets the theoretical criteria on family farms, there was a need for further *levels* in the examined population and also for *selection criteria*:

- Families questioned have at least 1.000 thousand HUF income form agricultural production;
- The share of income originated from agriculture is at least 50% of the total income;
- The leader of the family farm is not older than 65.

During plying I have reduced the examined population to those with over 1 million HUF income, being not a full-timer and full-timer private farmer, and full-time private entrepreneurs. The registration of family farms was underwork at that time (2001.11.–2002.03.), so it was not possibel to take them into the survey. Thus the population consisted of 2345 sample units. As a result of *random selection* – with the help of random number table – 200 *elements* (households doing agricultural production, mostly family farms according to the current legislation) could be investigated. Even the personal meetings did not provide perfect rate of responds: eventually 89 questionnaires seemed to be suitable for the evaluation. The selection rate was the following due to the sample-taking:

Equation 1: Selection rate in the empirical survey carried out in 2002:

$$\text{Selection rate} = \frac{\text{The number of elements in the samples}}{\text{The number of elements in the examined population}} = \frac{200}{2345} = 0,085$$

So I took into the survey 8,5% of the examined population, i.e. 200 units. But later this rate was reduced according to the factors mantioned above. Regarding the fact that the responds could not be totally sure because of objective reasons, I put a procedure based on professional sample method into the data collection. It means that since the elements of the sample were grouped according to residence, if the respond is not sure from the target person, the asker may choose another element form the list with similar characteristics. Beside the traditional quantitative data collection blocks, the open questionnaires were the guidelines of the integrated in-depth interviews, which were filled in individually or in groups, i.e. several households together.

3. THE MAIN STATEMENTS AND FINDINGS OF THE DISSERTATION

3.1. THE THEORETICAL BASICS OF HOUSEHOLD-ECONOMICS, THE REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In my opinion it was necessary and important to systematize the national and foreign knowledge that is considered new in Hungary. In the first part of the literatural review I have listed up and synthetized the corner points of household economics in an integrative way. In the second part through an interdisciplinary combinative synthesis and comparative analysis I have focused on the material of the past few decades which „re-explore” the households as fundamental social-economic formations and which examine the relationship between the households and the agricultural farming, especially focusing on the studies on agricultural households. I have found the mentioned scientific works as a result of a conscious search after having determined the relevant keywords.

3.2. THE EVOLUTION OF THEORIES ON HOUSEHOLD-ECONOMICS FROM ANCIENT TIMES TO DATE

In the first research introduced in the dissertation I have interpreted the households as the system of relevant concepts in a synthetizing way through a systematic historical analysis, focusing on the original, the antique meaning of the word. I have examined the role of households in the different historical ages and I have highlighted the important moments, which had played important parts not just in the economic and social systems, but in the evolution of the science. I have tried to find the special aspects of the formation and development of oico-centered approach. I have also tried to find those links which make it easier to understand the economic activities of our age and which show towards the development of sustainable economic systems.

With the help of comparative historical analysis I have interpeted the household in its original and antique (“oical”) meaning. I have introduced the role of households in the different historical ages and I have highlighted the important moments, which had played important parts not just in the economic and social systems, but in the evolution of the science. I have highlighted the differences between the substantive and formal interpretation of the economy and the causes for the curent “re-exploration” of the oico-centered approach. I have determined formally and compared the two fundamental economic phylosophies: the “oicos” and the “chrematistics”. At the same time I have introduced the substative meaning of our word “economics” based on “oicos” and its differnt forms up to now. As the result of my research I have made a summerizing figure (Figure 5), which displays this extremely complex evolution of dogmas abreast of the evolution of economic scientific thinking.

3.2.1. The creation and the role of households in the acient times

The household of the ancient men operated only if they recognized the tools for subsistence, and how to get them and use them. The household of homo sapiens cannot be interpreted without a hypothesis saying that a part of nature is the property of a given person (family). This is not limited only to the food, clothes and other equipments, but it referred to the real estate also (the fence around the altar of the family god, the common grave of the ancestors etc.). It seems obvious that private property, as one of the nost important and oldest institution of the economic activity of ancient men, was based on the religion. The characteristics of

households in ancient times: a) natural feature of farming; b) the value of products is based on their utility; c) the goods are shared according to the needs.

3.2.2. The household according to Aristotheles and its historical effects

The concept of economy was created by the Greeks. The science of households – and also the history of household economics – is originated from antique Hellas. According to the Greek authors of that age people of that time lived in economic units called „oicos”. The word “oicos” covered an individual farming unit, which was able to provide the subsistence of a group and was led by the leader of the household (who could be only men). The people living together in an „oicos” belonged to a wider family, including relatives, and non-relatives (servants, maids). The „oicos” could include the ownership of a house or land, agricultural activities and shops. It was an economic system, providing the subsistence for the people who lived in it. It was more or less an articulated „original plant”. The „oicos” was a closed economic unit which could do both agricultural and crafts work. The word „ökonómia” (gazdaság, economics, Ökonomie, économie, economía) has been greatly changing since that time. In the modern period this concept is used for a science, which only concentrates on the monetarized economy and deals with the more and more perfect meeting of the material and unlimited needs of people. But the ancient European economics was based on households, which also included information on earning, but it did not primarily focus on it.

Money earning activities done outside the household and different from theirs are called “*crematistics*” (or *kapeliké, katalaxia*) by an ancient philosopher in Hellas. While these aim at the extention of business activities and getting richer with the money accumulated and know no bouns, activities inside the households aiming at the subsistence operate in a self-limiting way, since the accumulation of properties is not the role of households. Their aim is only subsistence and the creation of better and better life conditions, while the former aims the unlimited accumulation of capital goods.

Economics, according to Aristotheles, was part of the practical sciences with ethics and politics. It was he, who made it clear the system of these three fields. Thus the subject of economics was the household and its system. Ethics dealt with the activities of individuals, while politics focused on the polis-society, i.e. the state and its organizations. ARISTOTHELES thought that ethics-politics-economics were the part of such a “practical philosophy” which tries to find out how can a good life, happiness and the best and most fair community life be created for people (Figure 4). In his sense, politics should be committed to a way which is „good in the human sense”. It is the economics, whose task is to provide the subsistence of people: politics is the empire of freedom, economics is the empire of necessity. „Oikonomia” by Aristotheles is a household economics aiming at subsistence and meeting the needs.

	ECONOMICS	CREMATISTICS
Commutative fairness	price = cost	Taking interest
Distributive fairness	According to social situation	Independent from social situation

Figure 3: The theory of fairness according to Aristotheles

The role of Roman Times related to households in the evolution of science is that the institution of private property was defined in the clearest way in Roman Laws, putting it under the state right. It resulted that the property based on merely natural relations has become a social institution, which is an important factor of moral values in the society. It was how the varieties of relationships between people (household) and the economy, the economy and the property, and the property and the state.

Centuries after the ancient times did not removed the basic characteristics of the antique Greek thinking without marks: the Christian philosophy and theology in the medieval times partly integrated them. In this way, the household economics of Aristoteles had significant impact on the evolution of economic ethics up to the neolithic times.

3.2.3. Religious value orientations and their impacts on household economics

Aristoteles's household economics and the antique philosophy integrated into the Christian theology. The principles of medieval Catholic morals were mainly based on the views of AQUINÓI SZENT TAMÁS (1225-1274). He took over some of ARISTOTHELES's. A significant innovation of AQUINÓI was that he put all the arguments of Aristoteles into the theology. The ideas of early European economics were partly influenced by views of the ancient Greek philosophers, on the other hand the medieval Catholic theological stream, the scholastics. Though this was not an obvious process, since the medieval Europe was isolated from the impact of the antique culture for long. And unlike the polis's quasi democracy, hierarchical relations dominated in this period. According to this, antique household concept could not become traditional in a continuous way: it was modified according to the changed social structures. Households are the everyday schools and also the practical field of Christian life in the Christian ethics. They show the real Christian life, which means the preparation for the life after death according to the system of dogmas.

In the period of renaissance, in the 15th century, which is based on the antique traditions, after the „dark” medieval clerical world, humans „uomo universale” have become again the center of interest. With humans the family life and the household have come to the frontline. At the end of the medieval times a new process of social evolution started, which was: enlightenment. This period has brought the freedom from church and public powers, the „emancipation” of agricultural towns and the self-esteem of people based on mind and rationality. Nevertheless, I would like to call the attention on the fact that while the basic characteristics of enlightenment appeared in the economy of some European areas with great emphasis, on other areas farming continued in the same way.

The European reformation movements of the 16th century emerged differently in the countries because of the political influences. According to the approaches of those works, household farming was inevitable for nurturing, supplying activities and subsistence. The household (the husband supplying the food and the woman and their structural unit- the household), and the household in which woman is responsible for nurture and transformation, while the man does the money earning outside the household e.g. in agriculture – or food gaining had great significance. The complex feature of the household is reflected by the fact that on German speaking areas the word „family” was not used until the 18th century. The word „Hausstand” (household) with wider meaning was used.

Despite of the religious and political battles of the period, the everyday activities for subsistence were in the center of practical life. Before the industrial revolution, because of the must for providing the bread, the population in need and other events (e.g. epidemics), the most important economic branch was agriculture. It is shown by the agricultural literature

closely connected to household works. In the medieval times the households did not only provide the subsistence under increasingly hard circumstances and the life expected by church, but the basic unit of society of states and the hierarchical feudal system (e.g. work of serfs, basis for levying tax).

3.2.4. Industrialization and the civil growth – classics and their forerunners

The independence of economy from the church and state tethers, after the enlightenment, made it possible for the national economics to develop from the ancient European economics. The emphasis was not only on the justification of the economic activity any more. The general laws were investigated with the help of system of coherences. The economic thinking of that period was greatly influenced by the merkantilists and the kameralists, as the major state consultants. In other sense physiocrats can also be mentioned, who tried to explain the economic development with the laws of nature. Merkantilists and kameralists only slightly contributed to the evolution of household economic thoughts. In the center of their interest was the wealth of states and the balance of state budget. They thought it was not their task to describe the social relationships. They only strived to explain the phenomena on the surface and to extend the power of commercial capital. They recognized though that the material content of the economy is their value of utilization (so subsistence functions within the „oicos” have great importance), but they did not want to improve them but to gain money, which transfers the exchange in the processes for realization the utilization values. The well-being of their citizens was the prerequisite of their success, not the aim of their thinking. Despite of all this, merkantilists have created something long-lasting according to the economics of our age: they were the creators of scientific economics that is national economics in the modern life.

The activity of merkantilists can be considered a border, where the oicocentered approach was put in the back – and it stayed there for long, until now, and the ideas based on crematistics have spread. Political economics (or in other words market economy) was created in this period beside the traditional household economics (as the analog of crematistics). Due to this, two individual disciplines dealt with the two fundamental functional field of the households (directing a household and gaining a house) and their individual aims. With the creation of the system of disposition of market economy, the income earning activities of households stepped out of the shadow of original, dominant house-directing activities, where it was since the creation of the economic concepts i.e. the „oicos”.

3.2.5. The “traditional” neoclassic theory of households

The deficit, due to the eclipse of the view which puts the house, as the place of living, into the center has become obvious with the industrialization and the dramatic change in the living conditions. It was shown e.g. in the problems of feeding, utilities, child nurturing and the high rate of childre mortality. The answer to these challenges was the institutialization of the science on households at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th. The frame of this was provided by the neoclassic economic stream, which can be considered the starting basis for the modern economic theory from several point of views. With the institutializational approach, they tried to find the answer to the problems due to the fast changes of the economic and social environment. In addition they tried to define an adequate definition of this elementary place of living. I think it is important to note that though the spread of institutionalism and neoclassical principles happened partly in the same period, the institutionalists did not want to supplement the neoclassical microeconomics, but to replace it.

Thanks to the neoclassical approach two individual, but supplementary disciplines were created, based on the two fundamental types of the economics (households and market economy), while economic thinking was concentrated almost merely on the market economic processes.

The industrialization processes of the world have directly influenced the households too. The industrialization has drawn out labour from the agricultural and the civil households, the households of workers have faced existential and housing problems. This was the period when the attention of social policy has moved towards the improvement of women's situation. The proposed the improvement of the conditions of women's training, and in its framework the housework studies were integrated into the curriculum of public education. Thus household studies were taught in the USA as „Home Economics”, in Germany as „Haushaltskunde”. While in most European countries people were satisfied with the fact that the household studies were taught in only one semester, in America this science was – in the framework of insitutionalism – developed to become a university level discipline at the end of the 19th century.

3.2.6. The „new” neoclassic household theory – the „New Home Economics”

The expressions like „New Home Economics”, „neue Haushaltsökonomik” (new household economics) or „Ökonomik der Familie” (family economics) indicated the new stream, which serves the more realistic approach of households, and which was developed in the frame of microeconomics. In the new household economic movement a system of definitions were set up which has fundamentally changed the theories on household economics. The new school starts from the social feature of humans on the analogy of Aristoteles' „zoon politicon”. It always investigates the household activity as integrated into the active and passive mutual interactions with the natural and social environment. Environment is said to be the place of resources. Thus the decisions on resources always take the environment into consideration. This approach makes it possible to extend the household ecologically, in which humans do not appear as the manipulator of the environment, but as a careful farmer.

The 'New Home Economics' wanted to investigate primarily the economics of everyday life. The representatives of the stream liked to use the expression „Discipline of Everyday Life” (the science of everyday life). The things connected to everyday life, the frequent activities and the related problems were in the center of interest. Therefore household management (home management) has become very important, which appears in a recursive way in the different historical approaches of households.

3.2.7. The evaluation of economic approaches of households, the possible roles of households in the postindustrial period

The development processes of social ownerships, started in the ancient times, resulted that the resources within the households, for production use have been isolated from the resources for subsistence. This differentiation was conscious, and it was based on the view which says that the household serves the consumption, and production is done with looking at the exchange conditions of goods. In the beginning, home economics has covered the household and the farming unit (like family farms nowadays). But later these basic functions have sharply differentiated from each other. In the development period, beside home economics – partly with its transformation – income-oriented farming has been created, and in its eventual level of development - the company- was created as the form having a looser link between the farm and the household.

According to general opinions, the creation, the development and the flourishing of companies is the result of the development of accountancy. In my opinion, this was the consequence of the differentiation processes of households mentioned above, in which homo sapiens sapiens differentiated the accounting of the private household and the farming activity (see e.g. PACIOLI's activity, who worked on the spreading of dual accountancy at the end of the 15th century, whose basic principle was to differentiate the private household and the economic activity of a trading household).

The most important finding of ARISTOTHELES from the point of view of our postmodern society was that he has proved: searching for money stepping out of the household-frame knows no bounds any more. The exorbitance of modern economic conditions, seeking after the economic growth in every way and the "unsaveability" of economics based on traditional principles make it impossible to accept the thoughts on lower level of subsistence; this is clearly the denial of Aristotheles' thoughts in the modern age.

If I compare the concepts of oiconomia and crematistics based on today's information, four major differences can be seen:

1. economics is for long terms, not for short ones;
2. economics interprets the costs and profits from the whole community's point of view, not just from the participants of the transaction;
3. economics concentrates on the concrete utility values and its limited accumulation, not on abstract exchange values and unlimited accumulation;
4. economics does not know the concept of „enough”, while crematistics favours gaining more and more goods.

In order to make it more perspicuous, I have presented the evolution processes of household approaches graphically on Figure 3.

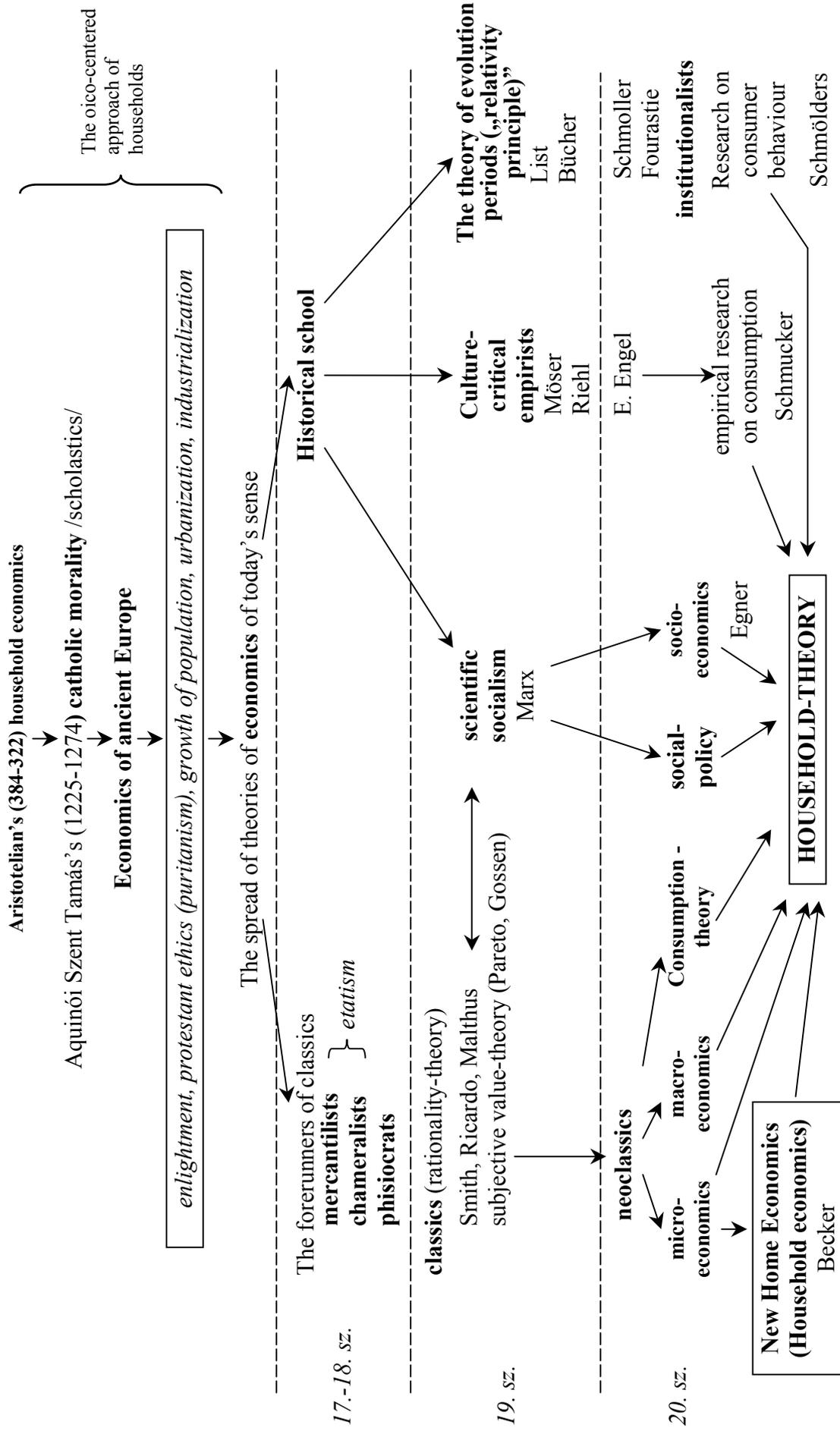


Figure 4: The evolution of the household-related economic thinking

3.3. THE BEHAVIOUR PATTERNS OF HOUSEHOLDS WITH FAMILY FARMS ACCORDING TO A SOCIO-ECONOMIC EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

3.3.1. The definition of the concept of family farms

The relevant laws urge the creation of such family farms which can cover the needs of the household and the family members with their own production and they are suitable for the creation of some capital too. Domestic regulations seem to be stricter and not well-conceived compared to the Western-European patterns, since they do not accept and support the part-time agricultural activity within the households. Although this situation is eased by the legislation on private farmers, but this legal situation cannot be considered ideal, since different legislation refers for the farmers with similar characteristics and structural background.

Though I am convinced that this category cannot be interpreted from only legal aspect, so I considered it necessary to make a theoretical approach concerning family farms. In the definitions I considered fundamental the definition of GASSON and ERRINGTON (1999). Six criteria can be defined from theoretical aspect and not as a functional definition:

- The ownership of the enterprise is combined with management in the hands of the farmer.
- The leaders are in blood relationship or in relationship based on marriage.
- The family members – including the leaders - provide capital for the enterprise.
- The family members – including the leaders – do agricultural production.
- The ownership and the management of the enterprise go from one generation to the other.
- The family lives on the farm.

3.3.1. The findings of the qualitative survey

The evaluated 89 families farmed on fields between 6 and 410 hectares, out of these 56 does agricultural production in full time. The income from agriculture in the farms examined varies between 1 and 38 million HUF. 36% of the farms deals with horticulture and grape/wine production, 40% deals with crop production, 16% with livestock management and 8% does other agricultural production. The leaders of the farms, at the time of the survey - were between 21 and 65 years of age, most of them are married. 29 out of the elder ones have successors, who will take over the leadership of the farm after the retirement of the leader. It is remarkable (reflecting the Hungarian social situation and the family functions of women) that 93% of the leaders were men on the farms examined.

On the basis of the survey three general development tendencies can be seen (Figure 6): professionalization, stabilization and retreating. These adaptation forms can be subdivided into further categories. There are two forms of professionalizing agricultural households: modernizers and innovators. The way of stabilization in the farms can be divided into two parts based on the adaptation patterns of families: those who see out and the accepters. Retreating from full-time agricultural production means giving up the production.

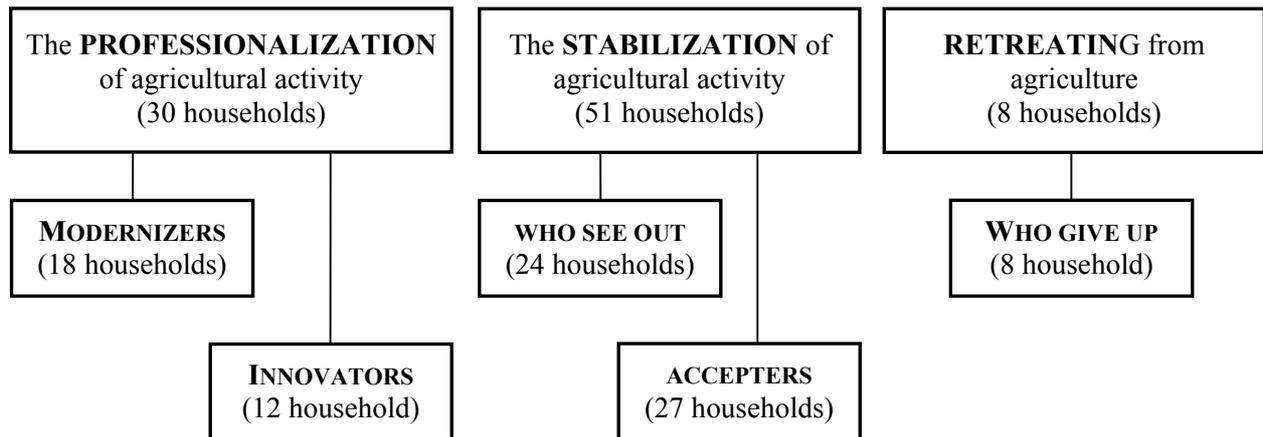


Figure 5: The categorization of the behaviours of the examined households

In the following part I describe the five categories on the basis of the research.

After having compared the different groups it has become clear that in the behaviour patterns the family factors – like family background, relationship with traditions and the attachment to agriculture – have similar significance as farming factors like the size of the land, the site and the structure of farming. At first we need to get to know the entrepreneur philosophy and the family’s plans to draw consequences on the development of the farming – as it is shown by the „innovatives”, especially compared to the „modernizers”. That is why knowing the patterns of family values and behaviour has great significance. The relative spread of the pluriactive earning activity can be explained with the emotional link of the family members to agriculture, since the existensia is provided through an activity outside the family farm and doing agricultural production plays a secondary role from farming point of view.

4. NEW SCIENTIFIC FINDINGS

In connection with my research on the topic of „The functional changes of the economic roles of households” the following new scientific findings can be presented:

1. On the basis of the systematic and heuristic processing of the literature available I have established a system of coherences on household economics. Nowadays there is a great need for the new approaches in Hungary too, so I have systematized the domestic and foreign household economic information, and I have listed up the theoretical cornerstones of the household economics in an integrative way. With all this I have created a categorized synthesis of information, which can contribute to the theoretical basis of other household economic researches and to the development of teaching materials in the future.
2. I have developed an empirical qualitative social scientific research method which combines the different social-scientific procedures in a complex and integrated way. Since the behaviours and motives are only rarely shown directly, they can be investigated hard in a direct survey. Thus I combined the quantitative, standardized method of questionnaires with the qualitative research techniques.
3. With the help of comparative historical analysis I have interpreted the household in its original and antique (“oical”) meaning. I have introduced the role of households in the different historical ages and I have highlighted the important moments, which had played important parts not just in the economic and social systems, but in the evolution of the science. I have highlighted the differences between the substantive and formal interpretation of the economy and the causes for the current “re-exploration” of the oico-centered approach. As the result of my research I have made a summarizing figure, which displays this extremely complex evolution of dogmas abreast of the evolution of economic scientific thinking. I have determined formally and compared the two fundamental economic philosophies: the “oicos” and the “chrematistics”. At the same time I have introduced the substantive meaning of our word “economics” based on “oicos” and its different forms up to now. The return to the oico-centered approach, to the substantive meaning of the economy can form the spine of the new economic approach.
4. On the basis of historical approaches influenced by religious, social and economic processes, with morphological aspects I have made the classification of households. Based on it the followings can distinguished:
 - *traditional (fundamental) household*, which is according to rather the ancient economic approach;
 - *progressive materialist household*, whose living is influenced by the protestant ethics;
 - *modern household*, in which „homo oeconomicus consumens” live and its intellectual sphere is the growth-oriented economic philosophy;
 - *human (close to humans) household*, which is primarily the ideal of „New Home Economics” and in which family relationships and the non-blood interpersonal relations have greater significance, than in the quasi automatically subsistence processes, so it rather can be called family household.
5. I have stated the different forms of loss of functions in the households in the postindustrial societies according to the followings:
 - Narrowing of the structure of households
 - The break in the continuity of households
 - The disappearance of the autonomy of the households

- Breaking up the household hierarchy based on the powers
 - The loss of household activities and functions
6. Through an empirical social research I have created categories from family farms of a determined geographical area according to behaviour patterns influenced by household factors. In relation with this I have presented the information on the target groups, and the family farms, and I have shortly presented the domestic forms of symbiosis between the households (substantive organization) and family farms (formal organization). In the research, on the basis of the households' behaviour reacting the structural changes I have distinguished the following groups:
- Modernizers } professionalization
 - Innovators } professionalization
 - Those who see up } stabilization
 - Accepters } stabilization
 - Thos who give up } retreating

5. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On the basis of the findings of my doctoral thesis on the functional changes of the role of households the following statements can be made:

- I have taken the household as a primer organization of one or more people, where they do the activities for living together. The special structure of households, which is built up differently from the others', and its operational principles need to be dealt as individual institution. Their internal coherences must be examined.
- As the result of my research it can be stated that the situation, the formation and the historical evolution of households, as the fundamental unit of the society and economy, and the related theories are not investigated to a sufficient extent. But in Western-Europe and North-America household economics is determined by clear guidance. Different important schools are connected to the discipline, criticizing the existing economic-social systems with their ongoing activity and strong theoretical background. They also call the attention to the importance of scientific investigations on households. The scientific differences in the household-economic theories in the domestic and Western societies are the result of different social and economic development. Since Hungary is rather integrating into the different communities of Western countries, it is urgent to learn and adopt the foreign approaches and methods. We should establish the conditions of research and teaching of household economics, as individual scientific field in Hungary also, which could develop the domestic economic thinking and it could serve the next generations' new economic-social approaches (e.g. sustainability).
- The historical evolution of household-economics theories provides explanation to the reasons for the different approaches of households. It is also proves that there is close mutual link between the social systems based on religious and philosophical ideas and the household approaches. While households „survived” the political and economic battles of centuries, social systems and coordination mechanisms continuously changed. So what is so special in the structure and in the operation of households that made it possible? The answer to this question justifies the most clearly the empirical research of households, which should be paid more attention to, by the domestic academic sphere.
- In my opinion, households play a determinant role in the rural areas, but also in the whole structure of the agriculture. In my empirical research it has been proven that the family and household behaviour patterns highly influence the agricultural production. In the symbiosis between the family fam and the household –as a system – the ages and ways of life of the members of the household is as changing as the not-agricultural job opportunities in the surrounding area. The characteristics and special way of operation of the households and also the complicated relationship between the household and the agricultural farm should be taken into consideration in the rural development, too. Thus making it possible to create and plan complex programs. Examining the relations and characteristics of households and family farms I have come down to the fact that the multifunctional approach towards agriculture results in the need for the consideration of households more seriously. The role of household in the surviving ability, the flexibility and competitiveness of family farms should be investigated more seriously. The idea of agriculture integrating multesectoral and social political factors causes the necessity for isolating the social and production-related transfers.
- Households have several features which make their subsistence possible even under difficult economic conditions. The household work plays determinant role in the organization of the housheolds and also in the relevant researches. Thus there is further need for investigations that clearly determine the specialities of the works in the households, their relationship with the market activities and their significance in the performance of the national economy.

Production aiming at self-sufficiency (in some cases the subsistence) and the exchange of work between households result in a special formation of production, which cannot be described with the indicators for goods and services produced in the state and market. Present - GDP-oriented - measuring procedures for the economic performance and national wealth can only indicate the deals realized on the market. But the household performances exist within informal economy, so their measuring and logical determination is fundamental importance. I consider the measuring and definition of household performances important, because in the spreading alternative economic streams (focusing on sustainability) sooner or later the indicators will rather be based on the situation and relationships of households. The experiences of several former economic-sociological investigations show that the goods and services produced within the household play important role in the reproduction of wealth.

- In my investigations – based on primarily the different appearances of households of different historical situation – I have come to the consequence that they can become the basic units of the sustainable farming and production. Households – in the original economic interpretation – were substantive systems, i.e. their aim was primarily to meet the subsistence demands. Since the mentioned „oikos” versus „crematistic” antagonism has become the dominance of crematistics (catalaxia), it is necessary to draw the fundamental approach of economics to the frontline and to spread it. “Oiconomy” automatically moves towards the sustainable systems: it refers to long terms, not short terms; it interprets the costs and profits from the whole community point of view, not just from the actors of the transactions; it focuses on the specific value of usage and on its limited accumulation not on the exchange-value and unlimited accumulation.
- It is obvious that the improvement of the profitability of agricultural production can be expected from the strengthening and development of households. In my opinion, family-type household farming can be an alternative for the regions lagging behind – primarily in the micro-regions. And they may become more competitive in long terms. From this point of view it is not only the rational diversification of agriculture that has significance, but other opportunities and endowments due to the rural characteristics also (village-, eco-, health-tourism, maintaining the landscape, tasks for nature conservation etc.). So, with the application of this new method, we can get a more comprehensive picture of the farming of households and their role in the family farms.

Thanks to my research work a basis was created for a teaching material that can be applied in the future at the different levels of university education and scientific fields, and which efficiently supports the theoretical and practical education of students. The information included in my dissertation may serve as a starting point for the researches and analyses on household economics and the related fields.

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