

Perspectives for farming families in Austria
in combination with the
International Social Survey Programme 2012 “Family and Gender Roles”

1. Scientific aspects

1.1 Significance of the topic: The two challenges for farmers today

At the beginning of the 21st century farm families in Austria and elsewhere in Europe are confronted with two major challenges: As a consequence of technological progress and structural economic changes the conditions for farming have changed drastically during the last decades. Under the new conditions small and medium-sized farmers maintaining traditional patterns of farming are barely able to earn a sufficient income (Groier 2004, Knöbl et al 1999, Hovorka 2001, Sandgruber 2002, Langtaler 2008). In order to survive, farmers are forced to develop new operational concepts or to shut down their business altogether. Depending on the potentials of their holding, they can choose among the options of large-scale, industrial farming, new forms of high quality production (e.g. organic food) or diversified activities (e.g. combining farming and agro-tourism), or part-time farming. Much more than other professions farming is not only an economic activity to earn money, but a way of living. Thus, the decision for substantial changes including the possibility of closing the farm-business does not only depend on economic considerations; it is a highly emotional matter involving the entire farming family (Price/Evans 2006, Calus/Van Huylenbroeck 2010).

At the same time, farmers are confronted with another problem, which is given less attention in the public discourse on agriculture, although it is of similar importance as the economic question: Agriculture is typically organized as a family business which is characterized by the union of workplace and place of living, working arrangements determined by the cycle of nature (that do not permit clearly defined leisure time hours and no longer vacations), the participation of various family members in the economic activities of the farm, and the transfer of the holding from one generation to the next (Hennon/Hildenbrandt 2005; Calus/Huylenbroeck 2010). This combination of work and family life is in strong antagonism with the contemporary ideals of partnership and family life (Knöbl et al 1999). The Austrian TV-series “Bauer sucht Frau” (“farmer in search of a wife”) reflects the acuteness of this problem. Thus, the second major challenge for farmers today is to find new strategies of reconciling the requirements of farm business with today’s standards of family life.

The goal of this research project is to investigate how farmers perceive and evaluate their work and life conditions, and which ideas and strategies they develop in order to maintain a good quality of life both in economic terms and in regard to their family relationships (cf. Hennon/Hildenbrand 2005). In many cases the problem of securing a sustainable economic basis and the question of creating satisfactory partnership relations and family arrangements are connected to each other. Thus, if we analyze the situation and the perspectives of family farms, we have to consider both the economic and the familial dimension, as well as the interactions between these two areas. The focus of this study, however, shall be directed more at the social than at the economic, technical and ecological aspects of farming, i.e. at the social identity of the farmers, the work arrangements and division of labor among the members of the farm household, and the relations between the farming couple, their children and the retired old farmers.

In addition, we want to connect our principal research issue, the situation of farming families, with the implementation of the questionnaire of the International Social Survey Programme (ISSP) 2012 on "Family and Gender Roles" in Austria. This will enable us to investigate to what extent the patterns of family life and family related attitudes of farmers diverge from or converge towards the respective patterns of the general Austrian population. At the same time, the participation of Austria in ISSP 2012 will allow us to carry out longitudinal comparisons with the previous ISSP-modules on "Family and Gender Roles" and to investigate changes in family-related attitudes and behavior since 1990.

1.2 Structural changes in agriculture and new options for farmers today

The development of farming in contemporary Europe is characterized by antithetic tendencies. Technological progress, neo-liberalism and the globalization of agricultural markets further the expansion of highly specialized, large-scale industrial farm production, which leads to a continuing reduction of the farming population. At the same time, there exist strong reasons and arguments why a certain amount of small and medium-size farm-holdings should be and will be maintained: Small farms are indispensable because of their multi-functionality. They do not only fulfill economic, but also ecologic and public functions (e.g. conservation of the landscape and of rural folk culture). Thus, they are a highly important factor for a sustainable development and for maintaining and unfolding the social potential of the countryside (Marsden 2003; Robinson 2008; Bryden 2011; Shucksmith/Rønningen 2011). In view of the postmodern concern for wellness, health and natural life-styles, the vitality of the countryside is not only an essential issue for the rural population, but also for the urban population (Little

2012). Taking all this together, small farming is many times considered as an embodiment of “good farming” (Sutherland/Darnhofer 2010).

The European nation states as well as the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) of the EU have implemented two types of political strategies to improve the situation of farmers: On the one hand, they compensate the price erosion of agricultural products through production-related subsidies and direct payments. This kind of policy measures has been frequently called into question; it was criticized that subsidies create a situation of dependency and that the payment systems many times favor large-scale farm-production. Therefore, in recent years the centralistic strategy of product payments to farmers has been more and more complemented by programs and projects that try to stimulate a multi-sectorial, endogenous rural development and at the same time to enhance the social solidarity and cohesion at the local/regional level (Shucksmith 2010; Shucksmith/Rønningen 2011).). In 2005 the OECD has adopted this perspective as its New Rural Paradigm (OECD 2005).

Let us now specify these developments for the case of Austria. The number of agricultural holdings in Austria has decreased from around 430.000 in 1951 to 240.000 in 1995 (the year of EU-membership) and 187.000 in 2007. In the same period, the percentage of persons working in the primary sector has diminished from around 32% in 1951 to 8% in 1995 and 5% in 2010 (Grüner Bericht 2011). In spite of this massive decline, the proportion of the farming population in Austria is still higher than in most other Central and North-West-European countries, where only 2-3% of the economically active population work in the primary sector, but lower than in Southern and Eastern Europe.¹ Although the reduction of farm-holdings has led to an increase in the average size of farms, the proportion of small farm-holdings in Austria continues to be higher than in most other Central and North-West-European countries (in Southern and Eastern Europe, however, small farm-holdings are still much more prevalent; c.f. Eurostat Statistics 18/2011). The size and structure of the agricultural sector in Austria, thus, can be partly explained by the European north-south gradient of economic modernization; this structure is also related to the mountainous location of Austria which makes large-scale farming and the concentration of farm-land more difficult. As in other countries, part-time farming has continuously increased during the last decades and amounts currently to over 60% of all farms. More than half of these farms are managed by women, while their husbands are working outside the agriculture².

¹ EU Agriculture: Statistical and economic information - 2011.

(http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/statistics/agricultural/2011/pdf/c5-1-351_en.pdf, 29.01.2012)

² EU Agricultural Economics Brief: Women in the EU agriculture: Hard work, low profile, European Commission Brief Nr. 7, 2012 (http://ec.europa.eu/agriculture/agrista/economic-briefs/07_en.pdf, 29.01.2012).

In the 1970s, when it became evident that farmers in disadvantaged locations are not able any more to achieve a sufficient income on the basis of agricultural market prices, both the Austrian national government and the provincial governments started to give direct payments and bonus-grants to farmers (Hovorka 2001: 41f). In the following decades, these subsidies were continuously augmented. When Austria became member of the EU in 1995, the national system of subsidies was adjusted to the regulations of the CAP and complemented by its compensatory allowances. According to the CAP-criteria almost 80% of the agricultural land in Austria was classified as disadvantaged regions. Adding up the national payments and payments by the European Union, Austrian farmers received around € 1,6 bill. annually in the last years, which corresponds to an average of around € 9.000 per holding. However, as can be seen from the transparency data-base of the EU, these subsidies are distributed very unevenly: A small number of establishments receive payments of more than 50.000 € (some more than 100.000 €), while the large bulk of small farmers gets very little (<http://oesv1.orf.at/stories/287622>; 21-05-2012; see also: Haller 2008).

In the late 1970s the scope of agricultural policy was expanded: The system of payment of grants to individual farmers was complemented by measures for the promotion of regional development. In 1978 the Austrian Regional Planning Committee (ÖROK) started to formulate and implement measures to improve the infra-structure of the rural areas (Krammer 1978; Knöbl et al 1999). One year later, in 1979, the Austrian Federal Institute for Less Favoured and Mountainous Regions was founded. The working principles of both these institutions combine scientific research and the implementation and evaluation of measures and programs for farmers and farming-regions. In this period, one focus of attention was directed at the regions bordering the Iron Curtain which had cut off large parts of the Eastern regions of Austria from their neighborhood regions. In this time also a new consciousness for environmental problems emerged both among politicians and the general population (Lauber 2001). The former belief in the unlimited intensification of agricultural productivity by means of technological progress was called into question (Hildenbrand 1992). The increasing health awareness and environmental consciousness (stimulated, among others, by the reports of the Club of Rome) created a demand for the extensivation of agriculture and for the promotion of organic farming (Hassink/van Dijk 2006). Compared to other countries, a relatively high percentage (over 15%) of farm-land in Austria is used for organic production today (Grüner Bericht 2011, Eurostat-Statistics). Although there exist no comparable statistical data, one can assume that in comparison with other countries Austria also has a high proportion of farms which combine traditional agriculture and tourism or gastronomy.

Since the transformation of agriculture from subsistence economy to capitalist forms of production also farming cooperatives play an important role in the Austrian agricultural system

(Knöbl et.al. 1999), Cooperatives provide farmers with credits for technical investments and tools needed for agricultural production (machines, fertilizer etc.). At the same time, they assume the processing and area-wide sale of agricultural goods such as milk products (Kaser et al 2003, Brazda/Werner 2004).

While the Austrian farming cooperatives as well as the regulations of CAP have a tendency to favor large-scale farm business and the standardization of agricultural production (Haller 2008), more and more medium-sized and smaller farmers in Austria today pin their hopes on innovative and individualized forms of production and sale. Farmers markets in towns as well as pick-up direct-sale from the farm are becoming increasingly popular. Another type of strategies is directed at the formation of regional initiatives aiming at a diversified economic development and the development of new regional identities that focus on the specific agricultural, cultural and touristic potential of the individual region (Wiesinger 2007; Wiesinger et.al. 2008). These programs involve the promotion of regional brands (e.g. "wine-region", "apple-land", "thermal region"), communitarian marketing strategies for regional products, and the development of green tourism. Some farming establishments have been able to create new sources of income by means of offering daycare facilities for children, care for the elderly and rehabilitation of drug-addicts (Ressler 2000; Wiesinger 2000).

In the last decade also the European Union has started to promote and to support regional projects that try to induce economic and social innovations in rural areas by means of encouraging the formation of local networks and collective learning cultures. At the same time these regional initiatives form national and cross-national (EU) networks. In addition, the local initiatives are cross-linked with relevant research institutes in order to combine the practical "tacit" knowledge of the local activists and the codified scientific knowledge (Lee et.al. 2005; Dargan/Shucksmith 2008). Austrian project teams and research institutes participate in a number of such EU-projects. The most important in terms of its scope and size is the LEADER-programme (idem). Actually, more than 80 Austrian micro-regions are members. Another important programme in terms of cross-national research and project evaluation is "Eurolan - Strengthening the Multifunctional Use of European Land: Strategies against Marginalization" (Brouwer et.al. 2008).

In spite of these innovative strategies, the situation of farmers in Europe remains critical. Many small farms are run by elder couples who are afraid that their holding will have to be shut down if none of the children is willing to take over. The critical situation is reflected also in empirical studies on the self-image of farmers and the self-evaluation of their life-conditions: Many farmers complain about the fact that farm-work requires daily presence, about the lack of leisure-time, low income in relation to the expenditure of human labor, lack of recognition of their work in the public, and bad perspectives for farmers in general (Knöbl

et al 1999). It has been also observed that the difficult situation of farming leads to increased incidence of stress, depression and even suicide among farmers (Price/Evans 2009)

1.3 Farming families between tradition and post-modernity

The social structures, attitudes and value-systems of traditional farming families in Central Europe are well documented in the scientific literature (Shorter 1977, Rosenbaum 1982, Segalen 1986, Sieder 1987, Mitterauer 1992 and 1995, Fliege 1998, Flandrin 2009). The interests of the single household members were subordinated to the economic necessities of the farm (Fliege 1998). The traditional farming family had a hierarchical and patriarchal structure. The division of tasks between the farmer and his wife was based on the criteria of physical strength, work-place (house versus fields,) and importance of the task. Normally, work on the fields and in the wood, work with draft animals and transport, as well as construction and repair-works were assigned to men. Women had to feed and take care of all the animals, they were in charge of the garden and the processing of farm-products (e.g. weaving), and they had to take care of the family household (cooking etc.) and the children (Brandth 2002, Rosenbaum 1982, Mitterauer 1992; Sandgruber 2002). For the choice of husband or spouse dowry and professional experience were more important than romantic love (Rosenbaum 1982). Children were trained for work through their participation in the economic activities of the farm from a very early age. The private and the public spheres, as well as work and leisure were much less distinguished and separated from each other than they are today. The rhythm of work and life was determined by the cycle of the seasons, weather conditions and the daily needs of the animals (Sandgruber 2002: 289).

Since the times of the abolition of the "Ganzes Haus", when farm servants were not needed any more and the household was reduced to the nuclear family, the concept of the farming family began to merge with the ideal of the bourgeois concept of the family. Today, also farmers expect that their marriage should be based on romantic love (Shorter 1977; Rosenbaum 1982; Luhmann 1994).

During the last decades, with the general value change and as a consequence of various emancipation movements (feminism, anti-authoritarian youth movements, the sexual revolution), the bourgeois ideal of marriage as an indissoluble union and as a condition for having children was put into question and replaced by the postmodern idea of a "satisfying" partnership and family life, arranged according to the needs and preferences of the individual. The motto for marriage today is not any more „Till death do you part“, but „As long as love binds you together“ (Meyer 2002: 212). Divorce is not any more negatively evaluated and serial

monogamy is widespread. Thus, since the 1960s an increasing pluralization and individualization of family-forms has taken place (z. B.: Beck 1986, Höllinger 1992, Beck-Gernsheim 2000). For all the diversity of family forms and family norms today, Lenz (2006) ascertains three general tendencies: (1) a trend towards individualization and a striving for self-realization; (2) a leveling down of gender-differences and new attitudes towards sex; (3) the valorization of communication in partnership and parent-child relations.

Also farming families are influenced by this general value change to some extent. The post-modern ideals of partnership and family, however, conflict fundamentally with the traditional ideals and norms of family farming: The ideal of self-realization by means of having regular leisure time hours and vacation, is difficult to reconcile with the necessities of (traditional) farming; the contemporary norm that a marriage should be dissolved when the relationship is not satisfying any more conflicts with the economic interest of the farmer to secure the long-term continuity of the farm (divorce many times contributes to a destabilization of the farm business); the idea, that children should be free to choose their professional career conflicts with the traditional norm that the farm should be taken over by one of the children.

Farmers and their children today have to find out continuously to what extent they want to follow the traditional patterns of partnership and family norms, and to what extent they want to adopt the individualist, postmodern family patterns. It is evident that the traditional type of family farming (i.e. mixed farming) is less compatible with a shift towards postmodern family norms than some of the newer forms of farming (e.g. large-scale, industrial farming; part-time farming) (Kreil 1995). Thus, the search for new forms of partnership and familial life-styles may go together and reinforce each other. On the other hand, farmers holding traditional views of family life might be also inclined to maintain the traditional type of mixed farming.

1.4 Existing empirical studies on social aspects and problems of family farming

In the last decades, social-scientific research on agriculture and family farming had focused on the following topics, that are relevant also for our research project:

- a) Changing patterns of family farming and pluriactivity: One of the largest projects in this regard is „Rural Change in Europe”, carried out between 1987 and 1995 in 15 European countries including Austria. The aim of this research programme was to analyze the relationships between changing external conditions for farming (in specific regions), production adjustments (e.g. intensification, extensification, agrotourism, direct-sale), new work-arrangements (part-time farming, off-farm work), household structure (e.g. age of retirement), and income-situation. Results on this project for Austria have been published,

among others, in the research reports vol. 32 to 34 of the Austrian Federal Institute for Less Favoured and Mountainous Regions). With the increase of pluriactivity and off-farm work family farming loses much of its traditional character up to the point that it becomes questionable whether “family farming” is still an adequate term (Jervell 1999). On the other hand, the modernization of production methods and work arrangements can also have the goal to “save the family farm” and the traditional life-style connected with this farm (Hennon/Hildenbrand 2005). Specific attention has been given also given to the problem of farm succession (e.g. Jervell 1999, Mann 2007).

Groier has analyzed the experiences and the actual life-situation of farmers who have given up their farm business. In his research report, which is based on qualitative in-depth interviews, he also discusses the importance of training programs and interdisciplinary counseling services (i.e. services that comprise economic, technical, legal, social and psychotherapeutic counseling) for farming families in critical situations such as the transfer of the farm from one generation to the next, and during the process of a substantial restructuring of the farm business or the closure of the farm (Groier 2004).

- b) Change of values and life-orientations of farmers: Related to the previous topic – and sometimes investigated together with it – is the question of the change of values, life-orientations and life-style of the farmers (and other members of farming families). Knöbl et. al. (1999) have carried out a longitudinal study in Austria that indicate a deep-going change of value-orientations in the rural population: Among younger farmers and children of farmers the commitment to the traditional ethos of the farming family is losing in plausibility; members of the younger generation are more concerned with their individual needs and interests, and have higher expectations in regard to interpersonal relationships than the older generation of farmers. Although a considerable part of farmers today has been affected to a larger or smaller degree by the postmodern ideals of partnership and family, and in spite of the dynamization of family structures, the life-styles of farmers today still differ significantly from the life-styles of other groups of the population (idem). A Finnish survey carried out by Niska et.al. (2012) confirms that for many young farmers the continuation of family traditions and of their parents farm-business is not any more an important goal; however this study also found, that farmers do not abandon the traditional “peasant ethos” completely; rather they try to combine the esteem and respect for nature and the high valorization of autonomous work (as elements of the traditional peasant ethos) with modern entrepreneurial attitudes.
- c) Gender identity and gender roles in family farming: A central dimension in the contemporary scientific discourse on family farming, in particular among female scientists, concerns the question of gender identities and gender roles. In a literature review on this issue, B.

Brandt distinguishes three levels of discourse: The first discourse focuses on the traditional farming family in which both the farmer and his wife are involved in the farm-activities, however on the basis of a “natural” division of work tasks and the patriarchal dominance of the male farmer. A second level of discourse analyses the trend towards a masculinization of farming in connection with the mechanization of agriculture. The predominance of masculine thinking in modern industrial agriculture has been considered as one factor for the tendency towards the inconsiderate exploitation of nature (Coldwell 2010). The third, and currently most influential discourse investigates the detraditionalisation of farming families and the trend towards a diversification of gender roles and gender identities in different types and settings of farming families (Brandt 2002; see also Oedl-Wieser 2004, Rossier 2005; Lang 2005, Harb 2006; Blekesaune/Bjorkhaug 2007; Palmisano 2009).

Also changes in the legislation and in the regulations of social security benefits have contributed to improve the social and economic situation of farmer’s wives (Karner/Kopetz 2004). According to a representative longitudinal survey carried out by the Austrian Institute for Family Research the proportion of farms owned and managed by women has strongly increased in Austria since 1976. Currently more than 40% of farms are run by women. In most of these cases the husband works in an off-farm job, while the spouse continues the farm business on a modest scale (Geserick et.al. 2008). In spite of a partial change of gender roles in farming families two central features remain unchanged: The traditional norm that child-care and family household tasks are the sole responsibility of women persists; thus, also the work-load of women remains on a high level, because they have to fulfill both their (newly gained) economic tasks and their traditional family and household duties (idem; Thünauer 2008).

1.5. Research design and research questions

1.5.1 Research methods

In our project, we want to investigate the life world of farming families in Austria from the subjective perspective of the individual actors. In our opinion, the best approach to this object is a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Our plan is to carry out the following empirical investigations: a standardized questionnaire fielded among a representative sample of the Austrian population and among an oversample of farmers; qualitative interviews with farmers and focus groups with experts on issues of rural life.

a) Implementation of the ISSP-2012 questionnaire "Family and Gender Roles" in Austria

We want to implement ISSP-2012 to a representative sample (approximately 1000 persons aged over 18 years) of the Austrian adult population as part of our project. This questionnaire deals with a number of issues that are of central importance for the sociological analysis of contemporary family life. In addition to basic data about partnership, family life and work situation of the respondents, the following topics are covered:

- Attitudes towards different forms of partnership, family forms and divorce.
- Attitudes towards children; arguments for/against having children; functions of children (e.g. are children responsible for old parents?)
- Attitudes towards maternity/paternity leave and towards different kinds of childcare-facilities (private, public, facilities offered by the employer).
- Gender ideologies and work arrangements of couples/parents: To what extent should the father/the mother stay at home in order to care for the children? To what extent should each of the parents work for pay? Do respondents believe that children suffer when their mother works full-time? Gender division of household tasks and power relationship between the couple/partners (decision making; income of both partners).
- Work-family conflicts: Does the respondent have the feeling that his/her paid work suffers because of the amount of his/her household burdens, or vice versa, that his/her family life suffers because of the requirements of his/her work?
- Care for the elderly and attitudes towards this issue: Does the respondent care of an old/sick family member? Should old people be cared for by family members, by public or by private organizations? Who should pay for caring?

The dataset for Austria will be merged into the international ISSP-dataset which will include data from almost 50 countries worldwide. Around 60% of the questions of the 2012 module have been asked already in the previous ISSP-modules on "Family and Gender Roles" (carried out in 1988, 1994 and 2002). Since Austria has participated in all these studies, the Austrian dataset can be used both for national and cross-national longitudinal analyses, and we will be able to continue our research in this area in the 1990s (e.g. Höllinger 1992, Höllinger/Haller 1994, Haller/Höllinger/Gomilschak 1999)

b) Questionnaire for farmers

Most of the items of the ISSP-2012 survey are relevant also for farmers. In order to carry out more detailed analyses of these questions for the farming population, a larger sample of

farmers is needed, since the representative ISSP-sample of 1000 respondents will include only around 2-3% active farmers. Thus, the ISSP questions will be asked also in the farmers questionnaire. In addition to these questions the questionnaire will address a number of more topics concerning more specifically the work and family life of farmers (the topics will be described in section 4.2 below).

This questionnaire will be administered to a quota sample of 200 to 250 (male and female) farmers. For practical reasons, the survey area shall be restricted to 6 to 8 micro-regions or districts that are characterized by different patterns of farm production and basic conditions for farming. In order to get a better understanding of the situation of farming in the selected areas, statistical data on the structure of agriculture and the conditions of farming in these areas will be processed and analyzed

c) Qualitative interviews with farmers

A subsample of the respondents of the farmer's questionnaire (or of their family members) will be asked to give also a qualitative interview. We intend to split the qualitative sample into two parts: In around 20 families we want to conduct an interview with only one person, either the farmer or his wife. In another 10 families, we would like to perform interviews with members of two or even three generations living at the farm (this methodology has been applied, among others, by Hennon/Hildenbrand 2005). This methodological strategy will allow to compare the subjective perceptions, evaluations and perspectives of all three generations involved in life at the farm, and to get a more differentiated and objective view of the ways how these families live and work together, and how they cope with the conflicts and tensions emerging at the farm.

The interviews will cover similar topics as the farmer's questionnaire; thus the results of the two methods will complement each other: The questionnaire provides figures concerning the frequency of specific attitudes and behavior (and statistical correlations between different variables); the interviews allow for a deeper understanding of the motives and the psychodynamic process that shape the behavior and the social attitudes of farmers. The interviews will be analyzed by means of a combination of two approaches: the method of narrative inquiry (Narrationsanalyse) as proposed by Clandinin/Connelly (2004) and Kleemann et. al. (2009); and the method of qualitative analysis by means of thematic coding and construction of typologies (e.g. Mayring 2010, Kluge 1999).

d) Focus group with experts

The results of the above-mentioned parts of the empirical fieldwork will be discussed with professionals from institutions dealing with issues of agriculture and/or farming families; e.g.

the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture, agricultural colleges, NGOs for regional development, counseling services for farmers, and research institutes for farming. The feedback of the experts and their interpretations and evaluations of our results should contribute to a more objective, comprehensive and differentiated understanding of the findings that will be diffused by means of the final research report and contributions to scientific journals and conferences (i.e. the focus group serves for the expert validation of the results).

1.5.2 Research questions

In addition to the issues addressed in the ISSP-questionnaire the following four topics will be investigated in the farmers questionnaire and interviews with members of farming families

(1) Economic aspects

Here, three issues shall be dealt with:

Development of the economic situation of respondents farm: Which areas of farm production are practiced? Have changes taken place during the last generations, respectively in the period since the respondent has taken over? Are there plans or concerns in regard to the future development (close-down of specific types of production; new products and/or strategies for sale and marketing; activities to create additional income sources such as farm-tourism; part time farming; selling/leasing of land; complete close-down of the farm)? Who is involved in important decisions (farmer, his wife, others) and how do decision-making processes proceed (Farmar-Bowers 2010)?

Evaluation of the general development of agriculture and of agricultural politics: How do farmers perceive and evaluate the economic situation and development of their branch of production? Which are their opinions about the Austrian and the Common Agricultural Policy (subsidy-payment-regulations, taxation of farmers, regulations for production, etc.).

Attitudes towards rural cooperatives and cooperation networks: How do the respondents evaluate the "Landwirtschaftskammer" (professional association of farmers with obligatory membership); the large rural cooperatives in Austria (Raiffeisengenossenschaften) and (if existing) regional development programs in the area where they live? Are they involved in such programs or in other kinds of local/regional networks (such as sales-cooperatives or machine rental) and which are their attitudes towards such networks?

(2) Job-satisfaction and social Identity of the farmers

Work-motivation and job-satisfaction: How do the farmers perceive and evaluate their work in general as well as specific work activities, working hours, timing of the work, income situa-

tion? In which ways are the work-motivation and job-satisfaction of farmers related to specific conditions of their farm (location, size, impossibility/possibility to take holidays; etc.) and to general conditions for farming in Austria (agricultural politics, etc.).

Social identity and self-image as farmer: To what extent does the respondent identify him/herself with the profession and way of life of a farmer? Are his/her individual life-goals compatible with a farmer's way of life? Which aspects of farm-work and farm-life are considered as pleasant, which are considered as unpleasant and irksome? How do respondents perceive and evaluate the social image of farmers in their local environment?

(3) Family and private life

The relationship between the farming couple: In which ways are economic tasks on the farm as well as household tasks divided between the farmer and his wife. Which are the expectations of each of the partners concerning the marital relationship and private life (e.g. common interests and leisure time activities, communication about intimate matters, modes of decision making and conflict-solving)?

Relationship between the young and the old (retired) farming couple: In a high number of cases (according to Geserick et. al. 2008 approx. 80%) the tradition that the old farming couple continues to live on the holding when the young farmer takes over is still practiced in Austria (partly the old and the young couple live in one household; in the majority of cases they live in separate households). With the increase of life-expectancy the overlap of the life-span of two generations has increased considerably. Thus it is an essential task for farmers today to establish good intergenerational relationships and to cope with the tensions and conflicts that typically emerge in this kind of family arrangement (power struggle between the old and the young farmers; hostilities between the old farmer's wife and her daughter in law; expectation that the farmer's wife should care for her old parents in law). In the interviews, respondents will be asked how they experience this situation and how they deal with it.

Parent-child relations and expectations concerning the children: Family farming is based on the custom that children participate in farm work from early childhood, and that one of the children continues the farm-business of his/her parents. These norms conflict with the modern ideals, that children should have no regular work obligations (except for attending school), and that they should be free to choose their profession according to their personal interest. In the interviews we will ask how respondents educate their children and how they deal with this conflict. Attention will be given also to the question of the education and professional training of children who intend to take over the farm of their parents.

(4) Respondents ideas and conceptions of a “good life on the farm”

Finally, in the interviews respondents will be asked about their ideas and conceptions of a good, valued life on the farm. To what extent they think these ideas can be realized under the present conditions for farming? In which areas do they need support in order to have a satisfactory life at their farm (financial support; counseling services, local networks, etc.).

1.6 Cooperations

In order to improve both the scientific quality and the practical relevance of our research, this project will be carried out in collaboration with the following institutions/persons:

- a) The International Social Survey Programme (ISSP): Under the direction of Prof. Max Haller the work group “International vergleichende Sozialforschung” (Cross-National Comparative Research) at the Department of Sociology at the University of Graz has participated in ISSP since its beginnings in 1985. During the last 25 years, ISSP has grown to one of the largest continuous cross-national social scientific research cooperatives, having presently around 30 European and 20 Non-European member countries. With the implementation of ISSP 2012 “Family and Gender Roles” as a part of this research project, the cooperation with this distinguished cross-national comparative research program will be continued.
- b) The counseling project “Zwei Systeme eine Welt. Zukunft für bäuerliche Familienbetriebe” (Two systems – one world. Perspectives for family farming). This NGO, which is supported by the Austrian Chamber of Agriculture and other public institutions, offers workshops for farmers in search of new perspectives for their family farm business. The goal of this project is to support the participating families to find perspectives which allow for a good life both in regard to the economic and the social and psychological dimension. Thus, the workshops offer economic and technological counseling as well as psychotherapeutic support (following the approach of systemic family therapy). Two of the founders of this project, Mag. Michael Blumenstein and Eduard Ulreich, have participated in the formulation of the proposal for the research project; they will also participate in the operationalization of the research instruments (questionnaire, interviews and focus groups).
- c) Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltpädagogik (Advanced Technical College for Agricultural and Environmental Education) in Vienna: The implementation of the farmers questionnaire and a part of the interviews with farmers will be carried out by students of this college under the supervision of Dipl. Ing. Liane Kaipel (professor at the college) and the project-

leader. A high proportion of these students are sons/daughters of farmers; as such, they have excellent conditions to achieve a good rapport with the interviewed farmers which is an important basis for good interviews (Bourdieu 2000).

d) Dr. Georg Wiesinger from the Austrian Bundesanstalt für Bergbauernfragen (Federal Institute for Less Favoured and Mountainous Areas): Dr. Wiesinger, one of the most distinguished Austrian scientists in the area of rural sociology, will participate in the conceptualization of the research design and the operationalization of the research instruments as a scientific consultant.

1.7 Strategies of dissemination

The results will be disseminated among two groups of persons:

a) The first group of recipients is the international community of scientists in the areas of rural sociology and rural studies. The first level of dissemination here is the participation and presentation of papers at international conferences (such as the congresses of the ESRS and the IRSA, or the ESA conferences). In order to get more familiar with the current state of research in this area and to establish contacts with potential cooperation partners for future research and publications we plan to participate in international conferences already during the fieldwork-stage of the project. Of course also the final results will be presented at international conferences. The second level of scientific dissemination will be done by means of publication of articles in relevant international journals (i.e. Rural Sociology, Journal for Rural Studies, Journal of Comparative Family Studies). Additionally, results will be published in German-language journals and/or edited volumes on rural issues. We will try to engage Dr. Wiesinger, one of the most experienced sociologists in the area of rural sociology in Austria, to participate in one of these publications.

b) The second group are experts from the field of rural politics, teachers and trainers from agricultural colleges and training institutions, staff of rural development projects (NGOs) and other professional groups involved in the development of agriculture and the rural space in Austria. A first step of dissemination in this regard will be done by means of a focus group with relevant Austrian experts talking place in the final stage of the project (see 1.5.1 d); a second step will be effectuated by means of the final research report which will be advertised among Austrian institutes and projects dealing with issues of farming and rural development. In order to facilitate the accessibility of this report, it will be advertised also via the Austrian Landwirtschaftskammer (Chamber of agriculture) and the Austrian Bundesanstalt für Bergbauernfragen.

1.8 Time schedule

Months	2013		2014				2015				2016	
	7-9	10-12	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	1-3	4-6
Analysis of theoretical and empirical literature on the topic of farming families	X	X										
Preparation of fieldwork, administration and archiving of the survey ISSP-2011 "family and gender roles" in Austria, N=1000 ¹	X	X										
Construction of farmer's questionnaire; pretest and preparations for fieldwork (sampling, interviewer training, etc.)		X	X									
Administration of farmer's questionnaire, N=200-250; production of the dataset				X	X							
Construction of interview guide, pretest and interviewer training for qualitative interviews			X	X								
Interview fieldwork: ca. 30 interviews with farmer and/or his wife; ca. 20 interviews with members of the older / younger generation;					X	X						
Interview transcription					X	X	X					
Analysis of cross-national ISSP-2011 dataset and production of a journal article					X	X						
Analysis of data on farming families (questionnaire + interviews) + preliminary research report							X	X	X			
Expert discussion of the results (workshop or focus groups)										X		
Production of the final research report + journal article(s)											X	X

Footnote 1: The ISSP questionnaire should be fielded as soon as possible in order to be included in the cross-national comparative dataset.

2. HUMAN RESSOURCES

Dr. Franz Höllinger (project leader): has many years of experience with cross-national comparative survey research; he has also experience with community planning studies which combine quantitative and qualitative methods. By means of carrying out this project he will continue his participation in the ISSP research cooperation and, at the same time, extend his research interests into the field or rural sociology. He will direct the fieldwork and take a leading role in the writing of the final research report and the journal-articles.

Dr. Sabine Haring (project co-worker): has carried out research projects on urban sociology, sociology of emotions and sociology of art. She has been involved in the conceptualization and formulation of the research proposal from the beginning. Her role in the project will be to participate in the elaboration of the detailed fieldwork plan, the operationalization of research instruments (questionnaire, interview-guide), training and supervision of the interviewers and the conceptualization of the research report. She will also make contributions to the publications (research report and journal-articles).

Mag. Bernd Promitzer (doctoral student): has participated in the literature review for the project proposal; together with the project leader he will be in charge of the planning and organization of the fieldwork; he will also participate in the quantitative and qualitative data analysis and the production of the final research report. The collected data also constitute the empirical basis for his Doctoral-thesis.

Two diploma-students: they will participate in the construction of the research instruments and in the fieldwork (application of questionnaires, interviewing). In their master-thesis, they will analyse parts of the results of the project.

3. SCIENTIFIC AND PRACTICAL IMPACT

The results of the project will be of interest and beneficial for

- the international community of scientists working in the areas of rural sociology, rural studies and sociology of the family;
- agricultural colleges and other education and training institutes in this field (e.g. Universität für Bodenkultur, Wien; Hochschule für Agrar- und Umweltökonomie, Wien);
- institutions that offer counselling services and advanced vocational training for farmers (e.g. Ländliches Fortbildungsinstitut, LFI);
- professional associations for farmers (Landwirtschaftskammer) and NGO's working in the area of rural development.

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