Integrated peasant economy in early modern Slovenia : the institutional framewok and the concept

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Integrated peasant economy in early modern Slovenia

The institutional framework and the concept

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Zusammenfassung

Integrierte Bauernökonomie im frühneuzeitlichen Slowenien: der Rahmen und das Konzept

Der Aufsatz befasst sich mit dem Konzept der integrierten Bauernökonomie, welches auf der Basis des alpinen und voralpinen Wirtschaftssystem Sloweniens entwickelt worden ist, und zwar als Alternative zu anderen Konzepten wie etwa jenem der Pluriaktivität. Deshalb sollen zuerst der institutionelle und ökonomische Rahmen im frühneuzeitlichen Westen von Slowenien, ausgezeichnet durch Alpen, Voralpen und Hochtäler, umrissen werden. Dieser Teil befasst sich mit der Organisation der politischen und wirtschaftlichen Machtverhältnisse, mit der Wirtschaftsstruktur im ländlichen Raum (Eigentumsformen und ihr Einfluss auf die Struktur und auf das Produktionsystem sowie die Entwicklung von Pluriaktivität) und mit der Einfluss, welche der politische und institutionelle Kontext auf die Landwirtschaft ausübte (österreichische Machthaber, Gutsherren und ihre Haltung gegenüber nichtagrarischen Erwerbsquellen ihrer Bauern). Ein weiterer Teil befasst sich mit diversen nichtlandwirtschaftlichen Tätigkeiten der slowenischen Bauern und vergleicht diese mit der Situation in den italienischen Alpen und in Westeuropa. Der Schluss des Aufsatzes diskutiert schliesslich die Integration der nichtagrarischen Erwerbsquellen ins Wirtschaftssystem, konfrontiert sie mit bestehenden Interpretationen und schlägt schliesslich das neue Konzept einer integrierten Bauernökonomie vor.

Introduction

A striking characteristic of the Alpine and Pre-Alpine area of what is today's Western Slovenia is the peculiar structure of the early modern peasant economy, which combined agricultural with non-agricultural sources of income. In this particular aspect, it is not unlike other Alpine areas, though in the case presented here farmers show a broader variety of additional activities. In the first part of this contribution, we present the fundamental features of the political and institutional organisation and of the power relations structuring the territory (State, feudal lords, rural communities). Then the paper discusses the rural economic structure, paying particular attention to the forms of property (and possession), their influence on the economic structure and productive system, and the relationship between the economy and the development of pluriactivity forms. This leads on to an analysis of the role of the regional feudal context in defining the rural economy in Western Slovenia. At the end, based on a comparison with other Alpine and European areas, the paper sketches a first definition of the concept of «integrated rural economy», to replace pluriactivity and other terms in use.

Political and institutional organisation and power relations in the Slovenian Alpine area

The area analysed is an Alpine, Prealpine and Karstic territory, which at the time was part of the Habsburg Austrian hereditary lands within the County of Gorizia *(Gorica/Görz)* and the Duchy of Carniola *(Kranjska/Krain)*.[1] In terms of its institutional structure, it is worth pointing out, first, that the «State» was represented by the Austrian archduke, who ruled the Habsburg hereditary lands. Our area belonged to the group of regions called Inner Austria *(Innerösterreich)*, which for some decades (16th and 17th century) had its own archduke and remained united until the Theresian reforms in the mid-18th century. The Inner Austrian lands had their own Government *(Innerösterreichische Regierung)* and a Chamber *(Innerösterreichische Hofkammer)* in the city of Graz; the latter managed the assets and finances of the Habsburg archdukes. The connection between these lands (Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, Gorizia, and Trieste) may be described as some kind of 'federation of regions'. Earlier on, they were linked together by the fact of being subject to the same sovereign, though independent from each other.

Thus, we may speak of a «personal union», which in the long run developed into a «real union», brought about by the long-lasting common dependence[2] rather than by strong central political institutions, since the latter did not develop until the eighteenth century. The single lands/regions were administered each by their own Provincial Estates *(Landesstände)* – i. e., estate-parliaments: the only representatives sitting on these were from the nobility and the clergy, or at least the actual power was theirs. These institutions developed through the early modern period but did not really manage to overpower the sovereign archduke. Nevertheless, they expressed, defended, and implemented the interests of the landed nobility (as a whole or as a sum of particular interests) much more than the general interests of the land and its population they represented, or even of the archduke. One of their main economic competences was the distribution and collection of taxes; and examples of bad administration and financial debts to the Chamber were quite common.

At the regional level, a representative, known under various titles, *(Vizedom, Hauptman)* stood in for the 'State' (or the archduke); he was supposed to head the regional administration, but his power was weakened by the Provincial estates and by the simple fact that he was a nobleman, too. Other institutions representing the central government existed, among which we may mention the offices that managed the State's (archduke's) tolls and the State's forests. Both were relatively weak in terms of personnel as well as effectiveness in the local contexts. The towns and boroughs in this area were rather small in the early modern era (1000 to 5000 inhabitants) and their political power as well as administrative role were quite limited, especially in the countryside. Their ability and effective influence on the rural economy was therefore negligible for the purposes of this paper. The village communities had a certain degree of autonomy and self-government that could vary from village to village, from one group of villages to the other, from manor to manor, as well as in time. The degree of autonomy was neither very extensive nor negligible, and included the administrative, economic and judicial spheres in variable combinations, although it has not been the object of systematic or extensive micro-research yet.[3] The rural communities and population were characterized by a rather high degree of peasant resistance and promoted a large number of peasant rebellions of different extent, from local to trans-regional ones. What needs to be stressed here is that the rural communities were not involved in political or administrative institutions at a higher or regional level, their role being limited to the sphere internal to single feudal manors (except in the case

of uprisings, of course). With the acquisition of the county of Gorizia at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Habsburgs acquired large manors and ample forests that became part of the Inner-Austrian Court Chamber. In the sixteenth century, the Habsburg archdukes would grant, or assign, the manors in this area in the form of pledge *(Pfand)* to both old and new nobility, while in the first decades of the seventeenth century they would sell them. The pledges and sales of feudal estates led to a concentration of administrative, judicial, and economic power in the hands of few noble families, each having control over large portions of the countryside, irrespective of the location of the manors in the county of Gorizia or in the Duchy of Carniola.[4] The first two centuries of the modern era were therefore marked by a long process of temporary or permanent alienation of administrative, jurisdictional, and economic rights, and finally of the Chamber's estates themselves, to the benefit of local noble elites.

The rural economic structure

At the local level, the economic and administrative structure was marked by relatively large and compact manorial estates *(Herrschaft)* with extensive areas under the jurisdiction of manorial courts *(Landgericht)*. Large manors usually possessed judicial authority, which means that the holder of the manorial court would usually be the largest feudal lord in that area.[5] As mentioned before, the feudal manors were first bestowed temporarily on the nobleman in the form of a pledge; subsequently they were sold and became the property of lords, together with the pertinent feudal rights on the uncultivated land. Both the pledge (*Pfandkaufweis*), which could be hereditary or not, and the sale *(freier rechter Kauf)* could be revoked by the archduke *(widerruflicher Kauf)*. The peasantry could manage farms based on a life-long tenancy, which tended to be *de facto* hereditary, or based on the 'right of purchase' *(Kaufrecht)*, which legally entitled a farmer to inherit and sell the farm. The introduction of the *Kaufrecht* was supported by the Chamber, whose aim was, most likely, to increase its revenue, since the purchase right had to be bought by the peasants, but also to institutionalize what was happening in practice, since the peasants tended to manage the farms as if they were their own. Cases of peasant land property are to be considered exceptional.

The common lands, woodland, and alpine pastures mostly belonged to the manorial landlords as part of their feudal concessions, the rural communities having the right to exploit them. Cases of property or possession by individuals existed but were not widespread, and included noblemen, too.

The most important forests were the property of the archduke and his Chamber; their exploitation was regulated, and they were administered by 'public' forest officials *(Waldmeister)*. In several such *reserved* forests the local peasant communities were entitled to different and variable kinds of exploitation (e. g. for timber and pasture).

In the manors in this area we can find a high concentration of land and rights (*Zins*, vineyard taxes, tithes, dues for uncultivated and cleared land, judicial and fiscal competencies) and thus power in the hands of landlords, particularly in large manorial estates (Tolmin, Duino, Reifenberg, Vipava, Schwarzenegg). The share of tributes in kind ranged from one- to two thirds, with the exception of the mountainous manor of Tolmin, where it reached only one-fifth of the total value. The share of the land-rent ranged from one half to 80 per cent of the total rent. Therefore, the feudal rent was generally based on the land-rent, which was exacted mostly in kind, though also in money, given that approximately 15 to 20 per cent of the land-rent was received in money. The proportion of land rent paid as money was large since the lords tended to commute rents in kind into rents in money. In manors endowed with vast lands and therefore a higher number of subject peasant households, *corvée* labour held a significant portion in the total rent, ranging from one tenth to one fifth of its value; in other cases, the economic potential and importance of *corvée* labour was much lower. In all cases, the existence of *corvée* labour did not result in the affirmation of a demesne-based economy.[6]

When it comes to the rent in kind, wheat and oats prevailed over other kinds of grain in all manors. Conditions permitting, wine played a significant part; in some cases, sheep did, too, though to a lesser extent. All manors were entitled to the collection of the tithe, though not necessarily across the entire area. This income significantly contributed to the variegated structure of the land-rent. The preference for wheat, oat, wine, and money as constituents of the land-rent was realized through the traditional *Zins* and tithes, the selective tendency toward the intensification and expansion of the same cultures, and the commutation of tributes in kind into tributes in money. However, as confirmed by the wide selection of grain and other produce, mostly but not only as parts of the tithe, agriculture here was essentially polycultural, and in its composition was di-

rected by what the peasant population required for their subsistence. Another reason for the wide range of grain was the harsh natural conditions, typical of mountainous and Karstic areas.

Not least, the institutional framework encompassing agriculture as well as the land-property rights – whereby the landlords revenues and the peasants' dues were defined by the manorial land registers (Urbar), and could not be altered in any way– played an important role in the preservation of traditional agricultural practices and in the maintenance of the polycultural productive system in the fields. This was significantly combined with widespread sheep and cattle breeding. There were different types of farms, named *huba (Hube, mansus)*, *kajžarji* (*Keuschler*, *cossanie,* cottagers), *rut* (*Gereut,* mountain farms), *gostači* and *Untersassen* (smallholdings). Although, in principle, the different categories give an indication of the extent of the cultivated lands that belonged to the farms, in practice it was quite different because of the way the peasants regarded them as their own property and self-managed them. This is made clear by the fact that many of the *hube* were actually inhabited and exploited by more families than the manor acknowledged. In the Karst manors, the Chamber's surveyors noticed that many of the *hube* were «occupied by four, five or even more» peasants, while in the manor of Tolmin in the eighteenth century there was a case of a *hube* whose land was divided into 18 different peasant households (who of course had other land, too). The rural population tried to avoid the payment of dues on land transactions; therefore this subdivision was carried out in secret. But the division of farms could also be made openly, in the light of day, and in fact fractions of *hube* (half a *hube,* a quarter, a sixth etc.) prevailed over whole farms in the land registers. In addition to this, in early modern times we also notice the growth of smallholdings with little arable land, such as the cottagers (kajžarji, *Keuschler*) and the *Untersassen* (with virtually no land). Generally speaking, the size of farms was very small, few of them being larger than five hectares, except in the higher mountains, where farms *(rut)* actually took in large alpine meadows. In such a situation, given the meagre conditions that the Karstic land offered to agriculture, and given the scarcity of arable land in the Alpine area, it is possible to conclude that the majority of the peasant population could not make its living from agriculture alone.

The relationship between the economy and the development of pluriactivity

We have so far almost exclusively addressed aspects and questions related to the primary sector. In this section, we will try to look further, beyond agriculture. We have just mentioned how most small farms could not guarantee the achievement of the subsistence level. Although it is rather difficult to conduct detailed research on the self-sustainability of peasants, because of the nature of sources, such an interpretation is indeed supported not only by contemporary sources but also by historiographical literature. Let me give some examples. As early as 1552, the provincial estates of Carniola claimed that «in particular in Carniola and Karst the peasants could not remain on their farms without trade and packing». In 1634, the Tarvisio tollhouse tax collector (Carl Rechpacher – Rechbach), wrote that the «peasants and cottagers» are involved in transport «in order to find some subsistence and satisfy their overlord *(Obrigkeit)*». Along the whole border with the Republic of Venice, between the Julian Alps and the Adriatic Sea, the local peasants engaged in trafficking with cattle, partly home-grown and partly bought in Carniola. Peasants were reported to sell «the most diverse cloth»; the population of the mountain areas exchanged «linen, lard, grease, iron, nails, sickles and other similar goods» for wine in villages, located at the junction between highlands and lowlands.[7] Another commodity that involved peasant transporters (and smugglers) was sea-salt, which was carried from the Adriatic coast to inland destinations.[8] Smuggling was widespread, too. In some cases we notice that entire villages specialized in a particular industry, such as the production of sieves, wooden flatware, mattresses, and were involved in iron mining or production. In villages along main roads and in areas connecting highlands and lowlands was noticeable the concentration of «carriers that use packhorses».[9] According to the Slovenian economic historian Ferdo Gestrin, around the year 1600 «the involvement of the countryside in market economy and the dependence of a major part of the peasant population on it was such that the process of commercialization could not be stopped».[10] In brief, throughout the early-modern period, a significant part of the population of the Western Slovenian countryside continued to trade all goods existing on the local and neighbouring markets, carrying them on their shoulders, using donkeys, horses, and carts, establishing autonomous flows and entering middle-range ones, both legal and illegal (smuggling). Apart from transport and trade activities, they were also involved in different industrial activities.

The role of the political and institutional context in defining the peasant economy

Since the area we are studying is characterized by institutions and forms of economic and social relations of a feudal nature, we ought to underline that, though powerful, the landlords were quite limited when it came to defining the agricultural production on their lands. The land registers *(urbar)* were compiled by officers of the Chamber and the landlord in receipt of a feudal manor had to comply with them and could not change the agricultural produce that peasants were supposed to pay with. The landlord had to accept grains and other produce even if he was not overly interested in them. These limitations became less binding after the Chamber sold the manors in the first half of the seventeenth century, since there was no control any more by the Chamber. However, the archduke tried to save the peasants from excessive impoverishment, and more so until the manors were sold. On the other hand, considering that before and after the sale of the manors the political and institutional architecture of the Habsburg hereditary lands was based on provincial estates dominated by the nobility, the support of the nobility was necessary to the ruler. In practice, the landlords did alter the levies on several occasions, but the basic characteristics of the land-rent, characterized by a notable diversity of the incomes in kind (along with the important role of rents in money), did not change in the early modern period. It remained a characteristic well into the nineteenth century, when it became an obstacle to the modernization of agriculture.[11]

Another significant boundary that the landlords had, and which deeply influenced the rural economy, was the fact that the tenancies were legally or at least *de facto* hereditary. This means the peasants remained on their farms for generations and would not be sent away even if they failed to pay their dues. Moreover, the village communities were quite strong and active. In addition, in mountainous areas in particular the peasants were fully aware of their rights and willing to defend the forms and conditions inherited through customs and tradition.[12] The practice of taking legal action to try and affirm their rights against their lords was widely used by the rural population. The early modern Slovenian Habsburg lands were disturbed by a succession of local uprisings and peasant revolts affecting several provinces at a time. Irrespective of the immediate and contingent results of peasant movements, long-term latent rebelliousness and attention to the preservation of rights limited the freedom of action of manorial lords.

Non-agrarian income sources from the landlords' and peasants' point of view

Let us quote Ferdo Gestrin again, who wrote: «With no recourse to non-agrarian activities, with only the income from farms, the peasants would not have been able to meet the increased feudal and State burdens. The feudal lords were well aware of this fact», so that in the sixteenth century and later on they opposed the attempts of towns to restrict peasant commerce as well as the continuous intentions of the Chamber to increase fiscal burdens. The statements made by the feudal lords in defence of peasant trade and transport activity «can be synthesized as follows: without commerce the peasants could not survive on their farms nor could we collect tributes from them and demand taxes». These were indeed self-interested arguments, but no objection was raised against them: «not even the archduke, or his provincial officers, the *Vizedomini* in Ljubljana, ever questioned them, despite knowing the situation well».[13] Undoubtedly, the manorial lord could only benefit from the merchant activity of the peasants, however small it might have been. The peasant, part of whose subsistence depended on extra-agricultural activities, managed higher monetary resources and his dependence on land produce was less exclusive. As a result, the recipient of peasant tributes had ampler possibilities to direct tributes into money payments and/or preferred produce without immediately and irreversibly breaching the basis of subsistence of his subjects. The second factor to be taken into account, not less interesting and certainly mirroring the first, is the fact that in the Karst highlands, like in the mountains and valleys of Tolmin, the mobilization of the rural population on the market was driven by the structure of tributes. The conditions coincide with those observed in most manors in Carniola where through the sixteenth century rents were becoming more and more monetary in nature, particularly so in the manors situated in areas crossed by or close to merchant routes. «Tributes in money were favoured by the feudal lord in many respects. They freed him from the collection, conservation, and sale of tributes in kind. The peasant benefited from them, too. They allowed him higher freedom of management of farms, but he had to enter the market».[14]

Interestingly, the peasants' illegal traffic, too, was not only tolerated but openly defended by the local manorial lords. In the Karst, for example, the noblemen not only claimed the right of first instance concerning illegal commerce and denied collaboration to archduke's toll officials and guards, but openly hindered them in their control of traffic crossing the countryside, as was claimed by those

in charge of the Chamber's tollhouses in the Gorizia area in 1567 and again in 1691.[15] In defiance of royal and archducal regulations, the very judicial bodies of the Karst manors (Reifenberg, Štanjel and Žablje[16]) would not allow the guards of the Gorizia customs office to enquire into and resist smuggling. Therefore, the widespread participation of the rural population in commerce could rely on the support on the manorial lords. Clearly, these interventions were neither disinterested nor a mere expression of antagonism between local authorities and officials in the service of the State, which did exist. When the manorial lords denied the customs officers armed support in the repression of contraband or in some instances hindered their operations, they acted in a very precise direction. The participation of the rural population in the market, whether legal or illegal, represented a means for the monetization of agricultural production *surplus,* activating resources of time and labour. The toll officials and guards had to cope with the hostility of noblemen because the peasants' integration of income sources increased the 'fiscal basis' at the disposal of the manorial lord. We must not forget that nearly half of the value of the annual incomes of some major manors in the area was in money. This fact further confirms and allows us to roughly quantify the phenomenon (Table 1). Although a part of the money incomes came from tolls and fees paid by people who were not subjects of the manors ('foreign' peasants, merchants, traders etc.), the amount of the tributes in money and the practice of conversion of natural tributes into money indicate a lord that directs his peasants toward the market and supports their efforts in non-agricultural activities.

Let us now turn to the extra-farm activities of the Western Slovenian rural population from the peasants' point of view. Their involvement in variegated merchant and transport activities was undoubtedly a widespread necessity: for the majority of peasants the accumulation of extra-agricultural income represented a compulsory choice to reach the level of subsistence and be able to collect the amount necessary for paying their feudal, provincial, ecclesiastical, and state tributes. But the fact that it was a necessity does not in itself inevitably mean that it was a passively accepted solution. The multiplication of family units beyond the level of subsistence provided by land resources indicates, in fact, that the rural population counted on and made us of the possibility of access to integrative and/or alternative activities, such as trafficking. In this respect the proximity of the towns and of the border with the Republic of Venice, as well as the existence of a consolidated network of long-distance commercial flows and local streams crossing the countryside, legally or illegally, repre-

Table 1: *Money income compared to total rent across manors in South-Western Slovenia (Julian Alps and Karst)*

Manor	Money income in the rent of manors	Total rent *(Gulden)*	Ratio between money rent and total rent (%)
Senožeče 1615	799,48	1427,97	
Schwarzenegg 1618	753,28	3146,96	
Socerb 1620	959,40	1436,95	
Duino 1637	3101,52	5899,05	
Reifenberg 1624	1057,00	4641,34	
Vipava 1624	1502,91	5683,61	
Tolmin 1633	6998,59	11'026,01	
Total	15'172,18	33'261,89	*45,6

* Percentage calculated on the basis of hypothetical sums in the table and therefore representing a rough estimate.

Source: Panjek 2011 (as note 1), p. 310.

sented a kind of guarantee. The recourse to various forms of activity external to farms made it possible to exceed the limits set by environmental conditions and by the monopoly over land held by the nobility. New family units could thus develop also without access to enough land to grant subsistence based on self-consumption only. Given the characteristics of most of the territory, unsuitable for large-scale agriculture and quite limiting as far as specialization potential is concerned (wine and stock-farming partly excepted), the peasants' response to market demand was not so much in terms of choice and kinds of produce as in terms of major or minor opportunities to engage in extra-farming activities. The quest for monetary resources certainly was a response to tributary and fiscal demand; yet it also represented an element of a more complex, comprehensive economic strategy of the rural population in which one part of subsistence goods was provided by the farms and the other by a considerable variety of external activities. Since the phenomenon did not subside throughout the early modern era, it may be considered a structural component of the peasant economy in this area.[17]

Integrating diverse income sources

The integration of different incomes within the peasant economy is mentioned in the latest historical overview of Slovenian history, too, which provides perhaps the clearest description so far, including a first contextualisation hint of this phenomenon within the European frame.: «The specificity of the peasants in the Slovene area was more in the fact, that they – as carriers and cart drivers, but also as middlemen-traders and craftsmen – combined their work on the farms with non-agricultural economy. It is difficult to say what part of the peasants engaged in these activities, nevertheless there's no doubt about the fact that they were widespread. For this reason, many of them were peasants to a lesser extent compared to the average kind of European peasants».[18] As an initial check of the extent to which the peasant economy in Slovenia integrated different income sources, I drafted a scheme including the activities that drove up income, compared to the sole 'basic' agricultural production. The purpose of this scheme is also to enable a first comparison of the Slovenian situation with the wider Alpine and Western European reality. In order to do so, I summarised the activities distinguished by Gauro Coppola when discussing the «integrated» economy of the population in the (Italian) Alps[19], with those mentioned by Jan de Vries when presenting rural «industriousness» in (Western) Europe.[20] The activities are grouped by economic sector, and the resulting list is checked against historical evidence from (Western) Slovenia (Table 2).

From a first glance at Table 2 we can detect that most of the activities known and familiar at a Western European and Southern Alpine level were present in the Western Slovenian area, too. That is not to say that all of the mentioned activities were evenly spread across the western Slovene territory, since local peculiarities, specificities and also specializations existed. Besides, their presence, combination, and role could vary in time, at the local and regional levels, not least as a response to the wider economic trend or change. The single typologies should also be associated to different social strata within the rural population. Nevertheless, we can reasonably and confidently affirm that in the Western Slovenian area – a much smaller region compared to the Southern Alps and Western Europe – many different extra-agrarian activities, not to say most of them, were exercised that involved the peasant population at large. This means that their diversity, diffusion, and density were comparatively significant.

In economic history, there is a remarkable tradition of research focused on the theme of self-sustainability of the peasantry. Questioning the relation between

Table 2: *Economic activities providing peasants with additional income: Western Europe, the Southern Alps and (early modern) Western Slovenia compared*

Sector	Activity	Western Slovenia
Primary sector	– Agricultural specialization	Rare
	– Intensification of cultivation (no fallow, mixed-cropping, ...)	√
	– Wage day-labour in agriculture	√
	– Extension/intensification of breeding	√
	– Intensification of forest exploitation (through primary sector activities, but also secondary and tertiary)	√
	– Extension of cultivated land (reclamation of commons and woods)	√
Secondary sector	– Transformation of primary resources/products (e. g. wine, cheese, meat products; charcoal, lime)	√
	– Rural crafts	√
	– Domestic, putting-out system (proto-industry)	√
	– «Centred» industries (manufactures, mining, ...)	√
	– Migrant/mobile craftsmen (e. g. bricklayers, ...)	?
	– Wage labour in the industrial sector	√
Tertiary Sector	– Services in the field of long and medium distance trade	√
	– Transport of other people's products and goods on short to medium distance	√
	– Trafficking with own products and goods on short to medium distance	√
	– Peddling	√
	– Smuggling	√

Source: see text.

self-consumption and market by distinguishing three different interpretations, Maurice Aymard pointed out the recourse to the market to the minimum possible extent in Chayanov, the direct response of farms to market demands in Labrousse, and the impasse of growth as a consequence of the reaching of the maximum possible ratio between population and production as a result of technical inertia in Le Roy Ladurie.[21] Chayanov's peasant «family economy» model laid the groundwork for the most comprehensive economic-historical theories involving peasant non-agrarian activities, i. e. «proto-industry».[22] But none of these interpretations seems to fit well enough the peasant economy we are discussing. Compared to Chayanov, Labrousse and Le Roy Ladurie, the solution adopted by the peasant population in Western Slovenia appears to be different still: resorting to various forms of activity external to their farms. Regardless of the fact that it has been criticised and is perhaps even outdated, the concept of proto-industry is not suitable to describe the recourse to extra-agrarian income sources among the Slovenian peasants, as well, and for different reasons. First of all, as we have seen, we are not dealing with activities that belong to the industrial (secondary) sector alone. Moreover, we are not talking about activities filling the seasonal times of relative underemployment of work force in the traditional agricultural system. This might have been the case, too, of course; but mainly we have peasant households who engage in other activities not having enough land to make a living, and that makes quite a difference. Finally, we are not discussing a form of organisation of production that would have led the way to industrialization.

In fact, it is symptomatic that Slovenian historians, although broadly dealing with «additional» peasant activities and their works mostly dating back to the same time (the sixties to the eighties of the past century), never referred to the situation by using the term «proto-industry». At the most, the term «putting-out system» *(založništvo = Verlagssystem)* was used, if that was the case. In dealing with the different activities that may be included in the tertiary sector, Slovenian historiography tends to use the generic term «peasant trade» *(kmečka trgovina)*. However, as we have seen, the Slovenian peasant was not only active in various forms of trafficking and transport, but also reached for other types of activities. To refer to the complex of non-agricultural peasant activities, Slovenian historians have been so far using the term «complementary activities» *(dopolnilne dejavnosti)*. One of the fundamental questions regarding the economy of peasant households studied in classical scholarly works (such as those mentioned above) as well as by contemporary research, is its economic

and social objectives, so to speak. To put it simply: Did the pre-industrial or pre-modern European peasants strive for subsistence and survival alone? Or were they perhaps striving for accumulation, increasing consumption, and profit, too? And what was the role they played, and the influence they had on economic growth and development, if any?[23] Searching for the historical roots and an interpretation of the issues confronting Slovenia in its transition to – and acceptance of – the actual capitalist system, the anthropologist Vesna Godina recently applied Sahlins' concept of «domestic mode of production» (DMP)[24] to the traditional peasant economy in Slovenia.[25] In the DMP, «exchange represents a complementary, and not the basic activity», and in «our ancestors' economy the market was integrated in exactly the same way, as it is characteristic for the DMP: it served the acquisition of those goods necessary for life and which the peasants did not produce themselves». Godina goes on to argue that «the logic of agricultural activity» was «the greatest possible self-supply as first; and then in addition the production for the market», whose goal was to earn the money necessary to fulfil the peasant household's own needs for goods.[26] Although this is not the appropriate place to launch into a discussion of this and other stimulating theses of this historian, I would like to make at least a few points.

To begin with, we have not yet achieved sufficient research results (and interpretations) about the material culture and consumption standards of the Slovenian preindustrial peasant population. This is even more so if we consider that a similar reflection has been made on the same question while summing up recent research results on Central Europe, where richer evidence is available.[27] But the question of goods-consumption would take us far beyond the scope of our paper. Secondly, peasant society in preindustrial Slovenia was quite stratified and, most of all, at least since the sixteenth century there was a significant and growing part of the peasant households which did not possess enough land to make a living from. In fact, we may observe an increase in the foundation of agriculturally self-insufficient households, both as cottagers with little or no land as well as through the progressive fragmentation of larger units. And here we come to the central question of this paper: is it (economically) correct to speak of «additional» activities in such circumstances?

From «pluriactivity» to the «integrated peasant economy»

The question is all the more relevant because similar circumstances were not exclusive to preindustrial rural Slovenia. In many regions of Europe the holdings were not sufficient to provide the necessary means of subsistence to the peasant households. This is a well-known and widespread feature in many upland areas in particular, where the population engaged in different activities besides agriculture and animal husbandry in order to increase their income. The term often used to describe these situations, in the past as well as today, in Europe, is «pluriactivity».[28] Recent rural historiography highlights the remarkable degree of economic activity and initiative exercised by the early-modern and modern European peasant population, and defines it as «agency»[29] and «industriousness».[30] This means that the peasant households were not mere observers passively adapting to external conditions and pressures, but were active players in the wider sphere of production and consumption. By organizing work and relationships within the family, they helped shape the social and economic processes and changes in which they were involved, not only as producers but also as consumers. Considering the great range of activities undertaken by the Slovenian peasants, we may say that in this they also showed a remarkable degree of economic «agency» and even «industriousness». Although «industriousness» implies a growing tendency towards consumer goods, this does not necessarily mean that early-modern Slovenian or Alpine rural society was significantly oriented towards acquiring consumer goods or satisfying modern consumer needs; more simply, it means that the concept might be applied to such economies, too. What is noticeable, I think, in a wider rural economic landscape than Western Europe alone, where the concept of «industriousness» was conceived, is that 'households shifted from market contact (sale of goods to supplement household production) to market orientation (sale of goods and labor as the basis of the household economy)'.[31] This was true, for example, of an increasing portion of the Slovenian peasant population throughout the modern times.

The diversification of activities undertaken by Slovenian preindustrial peasants was not an occasional or casual bundle. There may have been, and there was indeed, casual labour and exploitation of opportunities. But within the system, non-agricultural sources of income were a component of a more complex and comprehensive economic strategy. Peasants counted on the possibility of access to other activities, and used it actively and systematically. Clearly, this possibility was one of the aspects taken into consideration in household planning: had it not

been so, we would not have come across so many agriculturally self-insufficient units. A variety of non-agricultural sources of revenue made it possible for the rural society to structurally overcome environmental, technological, and other possible constraints – and this bears out the interpretation that non-agricultural activities were not necessarily subordinate to agricultural ones. «Integrated peasant economy» is the concept being proposed here to define this system. It is an economy in which peasant populations and households made their living by combining agriculture and market oriented activities. Even agricultural activities may have been (at least partly) market oriented. The second characteristic is that agriculture was not necessarily its basis; nor were the market-oriented activities simply supplementary. This means that agricultural production aimed at self-consumption was not necessarily the basis of survival, and that market activities represented an essentially equal source of income. Of no lesser importance is the third character distinguishing the «integrated peasant economy», the fact that it integrated activities and livelihoods from all the three economic sectors together, the primary, secondary and tertiary. In other words, we are not simply dealing with peasants who consumed their own produce and additionally engaged in other 'trades' in winter months (although they fit the concept, too). We are, indeed, talking about peasant households who systematically used the plough (or shovel only), engaged in crafts and hit the roads, their income sources ranging from illegal trafficking to working as day labourers, by way of transport and industrial activities. In sum, something that is perhaps more of a consequence than a character, but nevertheless constitutes a distinctive characteristic of the «integrated peasant economy»: it enabled rural societies to overcome natural and technical limits, and to significantly raise the carrying-capacity of the environment they lived in, since it allowed sustaining a population beyond the level that would have been possible basing on (agricultural) land alone.

The system we have so far observed in Western Slovenia is very much in line with the «overall characteristics of the early modern Alpine economy» that Gauro Coppola already defined as an «integrated economy».[32] His basic premise is that considering the character and conditions of agriculture, «at a macro level, related to the total number of the population», the Alpine area suffered from a «chronic alimentary deficit, especially of grain». Coppola suggests that if such a «system stands», «it means that the income integrations from other activities and sectors are of much greater importance than the cultivation of the fields alone». In the Alpine economy there is a «complex balance», in which the density of single activities could differentiate in space and time. «The organic

complementarity of the production sectors, the safeguard and the integration of the resources, the processes of substitution of the more fragile and weakened portions of the whole» have, as a result, «a system, that is able to grant proportionate processes of income formation» and make «adjustments to the changes in market conditions». In the economy of the Alpine and Subalpine area «the forms of integration acquire primary support functions, granting the solidity of the context».[33] Apart from the clear similarities with the Slovenian case, Coppola's reading emphasizes quite strongly the fact that the Alpine «integrated economy» maintained a higher level of population by striking a balance between many different income-sources. This balance was flexible enough not only to adjust to changes in market conditions, but also to wider changes in the ratio between population number and available (natural and market) sources of income. Activities could be adopted or abandoned, increased or decreased, and their relative importance in the peasant household's income structure could change in time (and space, of course). But in any case «the income integrations from other activities and sectors» did maintain their fundamental role. This internal dynamicity and flexibility of the system may well be added to the above-mentioned distinctive features and characteristics that define the «integrated peasant economy». On this basis, it is possible to draw up the following list of features, distinguishing and characterising the *integrated peasant economy:*

1. Peasants combine agriculture and market-oriented activities to make a living.
2. Market-oriented activities represent an equal source of income compared to subsistence agriculture.
3. The adopted activities and sources of income belong to the three economic sectors altogether (primary, secondary and tertiary).
4. The system is dynamic and flexible; it adapts to changes in the availability of income sources and the market conditions, in the population and in family structure.
5. The carrying capacity of the environment is increased beyond the level of population possible, based on agricultural land alone.

The concept of «integrated peasant economy» offers some advantages compared to the more commonly used term «pluriactivity». Pluriactivity is much more a descriptive term than a conceptual one; in and of itself it does not say much about who was «pluriactive», or how and why. Somehow it works better as a description of a collection of single economic acts and behaviours (though not explaining how they belong together) than a definition of an economic

system with its own features, its logic, and (not least) actors. I would suggest that «integrated peasant economy» may be a useful conceptualization of the often used, but rather descriptive terms, such as «complementary activities» *(dopolnilne dejavnosti)* or pluriactivity, and that it shows some comparative advantages, as well. At first, it implies the fact that the different activities the peasant population engaged in belonged to different economic sectors (primary, secondary, and tertiary). Secondly, it pinpoints that we are dealing with an economic system as a whole, and not with a bundle of casual acts and practices of the rural population, nor with a mere consequence of environmental constraint (such as mountain conditions), external pressure (landlords for example) or even a passive adaptation to demographic trends in the rural population. Not least, by offering a more solid economic basis and analytical tools, it may represent a more effective conceptual platform for a comparative approach to peasant economies in different parts of Europe. In fact, the features of a peasant economy in preindustrial Slovenia may be identified in other rural areas of the Alps and Europe, too, and consequently the concept of «integrated peasant economy» could be applicable to them as well. How was the integrated peasant economy capable of being environmentally and socially sustainable?[34] Did it result in wealth or poverty[35], and how did it affect economic growth and development?[36] These are some undoubtedly relevant, but different questions.

Notes

1 This paper develops and upgrades contents and considerations already published in A. Panjek, «Not demesne but money: lord and peasant economies in early modern western Slovenia», *Agricultural History Review*, 59, 2, 2011, pp. 293–311; and A. Panjek, «Integrirana ruralna ekonomija v zahodnem slovenskem prostoru v zgodnjem novem veku», in: D. Mihelič (ed.), *Vizija raziskav gospodarske in družbene zgodovine*, Ljubljana 2014, pp. 199–205. It is part of a research conducted within the project *Integrated peasant economy in Slovenia in a comparative perspective*, financed by the Research Agency of Slovenia ARRS.

2 S. Vilfan, *Pravna zgodovina Slovencev*, Ljubljana 1961; Id., «Pravni značaj deželnih stanov v deželah s slovenskim prebivalstvom (Notranji Avstriji)», *Zbornik znanstvenih razprav*, 48, 1988, pp. 207–219.

3 The most recent exeption is I. Beguš, *Autonomia ed encomia nelle Valli del Natisone nella Repubblica di Venezia*, Koper 2015 (in Slovenian, too).

4 The Coronini family held the large mountainous area of the upper Soča/Isonzo Valley (manor and district of Tolmin), the Thurn family held the manor of Duino/Devin (Tybein), the Petazzi the manors of Schwarzenegg (today Podgrad pri Vremah) and Socerb (St. Serff), and had territorial jurisdiction in Novigrad na Krasu; these bordering manors constituted a compact whole, similarly to the manors of Reifenberg/Rihemberk and Vipava (Wippach) of the Lanthieri and the manors of Senožeče (Senosetsch) and Prem of the Porzia family.

5 S. Vilfan, «Zemljiška gospostva», in: *Gospodarska in družbena zgodovina Slovencev. Zgodovina agrarnih panog*, vol. 2, 1980, p. 200; A. Panjek, «Un contributo per la storia economica e sociale del Carso nel '500. Presentazione di una fonte», *Metodi e Ricerche*, ns, 16, 2, 1997, pp. 41–56. Smaller and scattered manors and estates were prevalent in number, for instance, in Carniola, F. Gestrin, *Slovenske dežele in zgodnji kapitalizem*, Ljubljana 1991, pp. 39, 72. In the western part of the county of Gorica/Gorizia, that is in Habsburg Friuli, the agrarian structure differed considerably, being much the same as in Venetian Friuli.

6 Panjek 2011 (as note 1).

7 A. Panjek, *Terra di confine. Agricolture e traffici tra le Alpi e l'Adriatico: la contea di Gorizia nel Seicento*, Gorizia 2002.

8 *Ibid.*, pp. 165–166; S. Vilfan, «K zgodovini kmečkega kupčevanja s soljo», *Kronika*, 10, 1962, pp. 129–144; F. Gestrin, *Trgovina slovenskega zaledja s primorskimi mesti od 13. do konca 16. stoletja*, Ljubljana 1965.

9 J. W. Valvasor, *Die Ehre des Hertzogthums Crain*, I, Laibach 1689, pp. 117–121.

10 Gestrin (as note 5), pp. 79–80, 252.

11 R. Sandgruber, «Die Agrarrevolution in Österreich. Ertragssteigerung und Kommerzialisierung der Landwirtschaftlichen Prodiktion im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert», in: A. Hoffmann (ed.), *Österreich-Ungarn als Agrarstaat. Wirtschaftliches Wachstum und Agrarverhältnisse in Österreich im 19. Jahrhundert*, Wien 1978, pp. 260–263.

12 F. Tremel, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, Wien 1969.

13 Gestrin (as note 5), pp. 250–251.

14 *Ibid.*, p. 245.

15 Panjek (as note 7).

16 The manorial lords of Reifenberg were Carlo and brothers Counts of Lanthieri, the lord of Žablje was Giovanni Count of Lanthieri, and the lord of Štanjel na Krasu was Count Cobenzl.

17 Panjek (as note 7), p. 171.

18 P. Štih, V. Simoniti, *Na stičišču svetov. Slovenska zgodovina od prazgodovinskih kultur do konca 18. stoletja*, Ljubljana 2009.

19 G. Coppola, «Equilibri economici e trasformazioni nell'area alpina in età moderna: scarsità di risorse ed economia integrata», in: G. Coppola, P. Schiera (eds.), *Lo spazio alpino: area di civiltà, regione cerniera*, Napoli/Pisa 1991, pp. 203–222.

20 *Ibid.*; J. De Vries, *The Industrious Revolution: Consumer Behavior and the Household Economy, 1650 to the Present*, New York 2008, pp. 71, 73–121, 169.

21 M. Aymard, «Autoconsommation et marchés: Chayanov, Labrousse ou Le Roy Ladurie?», *Annales E. S. C.*, 38, 4, 1983, pp. 1392–1393.

22 H. Medick, «The proto-industrial family economy», in: P. Kriedte, H. Medick, J. Schlumbohm, *Industrialization before Industrialization*, Cambridge 1981, pp. 41–44.

23 A recent overview in A. Schuurman, «Things by which one measures one's life. Wealth and poverty in European rural societies», in: J. Broad, A. Schuurman (eds.), *Wealth and Poverty in European Rural Societies from the Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Century*, Turnhout 2014, pp. 13–37.

24 M. Sahlins, *Stone Age Economics*, Chicago 1972.

25 V. Godina, *Zablode postsocializma*, Ljubljana 2014.

26 *Ibid.*, pp. 259, 264, 270–271.

27 Schuurman (as note 23).

28 Only two among the many possible examples of contemporary use of this term in actual rural studies in different parts of Europe: P. Hetland, «Pluriactivity as a strategy for employment in rural Norway», *Sociologia Ruralis*, 26, 1986, pp. 385–395 (doi: 10.1111/j.1467-9523.1986.tb00794.x); M. Blad, «Pluriactivity of farming families – old phenomenon in new times», *European Rural Development Network Studies – Rural Areas and Development*, 7, 2010, pp. 155–165.

29 G. P. Sreenivasan, *The Peasants of Ottobeuren, 1487–1726. A Rural Society in Early Modern Europe*. Cambridge 2004, pp. 1–8.

30 De Vries (as note 20).
31 *Ibid.*, p. 82.
32 Coppola (as note 19), pp. 203, 219.
33 *Ibid.*, pp. 213–214, 221–222.
34 A recent discussion on this topic in the area in A. Panjek, I. Beguš, «Matajur e Colovrat. Ordinamento e sostenibilità del pascolo: un confronto tra i versanti veneto e asburgico nelle Alpi Giulie in età moderna», *Histoire des Alpes – Storia delle Alpi – Geschichte der Alpen*, 19, 2014, pp. 25–55.
35 Broad/Schuurman (as note 23).
36 De Vries (as note 20); Godina (as note 25).