

How Did Agricultural Patterns Change in Serbia After the Fall of Yugoslavia?



Mikica Sibinović
*University of
Belgrade*

Mikica Sibinović is an assistant professor at Belgrade University in the Faculty of Geography, Department of Human Geography. His professional interests are in economic geography with special focus on agricultural development.

Target Audience: High School

Activity: Students explore how political systems influence economic activity by comparing 1991 and 2012 agricultural patterns around the Serbian capital of Belgrade.

Time: 1 class period

C3 Framework Standards

- D2.Geo.1.9-12. Use geospatial and related technologies to create maps to display and explain the spatial patterns of cultural and environmental characteristics.
- D2.Geo.5.9-12. Evaluate how political and economic decisions throughout time have influenced cultural and environmental characteristics of various places and regions.
- D2.Geo.8.9-12. Evaluate the impact of economic activities and political decisions on spatial patterns within and among urban, suburban, and rural regions.

Notes

Background Information: The economic and political geography of East-Central Europe changed dramatically in the late 20th century. The Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, for example, collapsed after years of civil war. Prior to the war, Yugoslavia's government controlled every aspect of the economy. The government prioritized industrial development and treated agricultural development as an economic activity of secondary importance. Unlike other socialistic countries, Yugoslavia used a "self-managing workers" economic model. In this model, groups of industrial workers formed cooperative companies coordinated by the Communist Party of Yugoslavia and divided profits based on individual investment. However, individuals, not cooperatives, owned and managed agricultural land. This system of traditional agriculture entailed a mix of raising livestock and the production of grains, fruits, vegetables, and fodder crops.

Following independence, countries like The Republic of Serbia emerged with decentralized political structures and market-oriented economies. The transition led to new, market-driven patterns of agricultural production. In other words, from 1991 to 2011, Serbia's system of agriculture evolved from subsistence to commercial. The most intensive changes occurred around large urban centers, where the pressures of urbanization and rural-urban land use had the greatest effect. Geographers have studied changes in agriculture around Belgrade, Serbia's capital. Based on an analysis of numerous factors such as the type and number of livestock, the type and amount of crops cultivated, and the diversity of agricultural production, five basic types of agriculture emerge:

1. *Traditional Crop-Livestock.* Mixed production of cereals, forage crops and vegetable crops, with particularly large agricultural potential, characteristic for the whole of Serbia. This type indicates a lack of a specialized agriculture. Traditionally, it represented a high percentage of production of wheat, corn, potatoes, beans, clover and breeding pigs, sheep, and goats.
2. *Traditional Fruit-Livestock.* Low livestock productivity in conjunction with subsistence production of fruit. Fruit growing is of secondary importance and is rarely traded.
3. *Specialized Crop.* Characterized by extensive farms, sugar beet and sunflower production dominates, traditionally high production of wheat, corn and barley. Closely linked to the bread making and the agro-processing industry (production of raw materials for industrial processing—such as barley for the production of beer).
4. *Commercial.* Characterized by high productivity and market orientation of fruit and vegetables. Concentrated close to urban areas—the primary market—because of perishable goods and the costs of transportation.
5. *Intensive Livestock.* Characterized by animal husbandry and the production of hay and the significant use of machinery. Deployed near regional centers and roads that facilitate the movement of labor.

Lesson Plan

Set up the Map Analysis: The Republic of Serbia is divided into 29 administrative regions or districts. Each district is comprised of cities, municipalities and settlements. The administrative region of Belgrade is comprised of 17 municipalities with a total of 166 smaller settlement areas. The map displays the predominant agricultural land use for each settlement. The map clearly indicates changes in Serbian agriculture due, primarily, to an increase in capital investments in production and an increase the purchasing power of the Belgrade market. Specific examples of changes from 1991 to 2012 include:

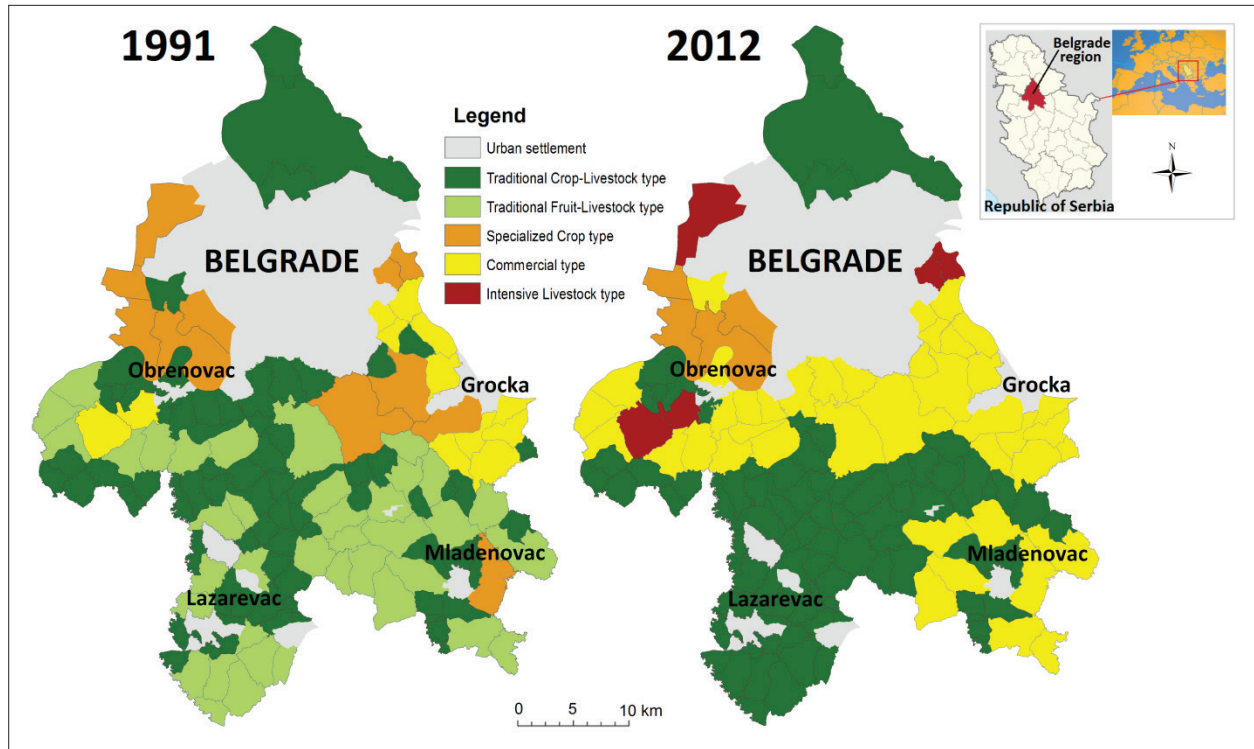
- commercial agriculture expanded in the areas south of Belgrade and in the periphery of Mladenovac
- traditional crop-livestock expanded throughout the southern Belgrade District
- areas of intensive livestock production appear in 2012 near the city of Belgrade and southwest of Obrenovac
- traditional fruit-livestock production disappeared from the Belgrade District
- specialized crop production continued southwest of the city of Belgrade but disappeared southeast of the city

Vocabulary: commercial agriculture, extensive agriculture, subsistence agriculture, command economy, market economy

Extension: Have students research the transformation of economic activity. This lesson provides an insight into the model of transformation of agriculture in Serbia, but a comparison of the degree of specialization of agriculture can also be made between different regions. How have political changes influenced agriculture in other Balkan countries? Latin America? After studying the transformation of agriculture by the method of comparative analysis, students will be able to apply the same method of research to different economic activities and in that way gain a better insight into the processes of political, economic, and social transition. In addition, the transformation of collectivist systems into market economies can be analyzed by studying the ownership structure of companies (a comparison of private and social).

Name: _____

How Did Agricultural Patterns Change in Serbia Change from 1991 to 2012?



The map above displays the dominate type of agriculture for each settlement area in the City of Belgrade District in the Republic of Serbia for the years 1991 and 2012.

1. Identify the two most dominant agricultural types in the City of Belgrade District in 1991.

2. Identify the two most dominant agricultural types in the City of Belgrade District in 2012.

3. Describe the types of agriculture located between Belgrade and Grocka in 1991. How did the pattern change in 2012?

4. Describe the change in tradition fruit-livestock production from 1991 to 2012.

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