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Recognising Choice

**A Study of the Changing Politics
of the Common Agricultural
Policy through an Analysis of the
MacSharry Reform Debate in
Ireland and the Netherlands**

Hilkka Vihinen



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Hilkka Vihinen

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“Whatever is given
can always be re-imagined, however four-square,
... it happens to be.”

Seamus Heaney

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Helsinki, September 2001

Hilkka Vihinen

Recognising Choice

A Study of the Changing Politics of the Common Agricultural Policy through an Analysis of the MacSharry Reform Debate in Ireland and the Netherlands

Hilkka Vihinen

Abstract. The politics of the European Union Common Agricultural Policy is investigated on the basis of the concept of politics as action, through an assessment of the construction of the political dimension in agricultural policy. This approach maintains that the politics of a policy reveals itself in the way choices are recognised, the way alternatives are articulated and what kinds of arguments are used. Shifts in emphasis in the CAP are examined, and the work also aims at contributing to an understanding of European integration and the role that the common policy for agriculture has in this.

The work includes a case study on the public debate in two member states, Ireland and the Netherlands, concerning the MacSharry reform, decided upon in 1992. An analysis of the actors, themes and argumentation shows what interpretations and emphases were possible and how these were reflected in the different constructions of agriculture and of the European reality.

The work concludes by envisaging a change in paradigm from an income policy for farmers towards a contract between society and agriculture. This would entail an increase in the number of relevant actors, and a shift in power among the existing ones. In addition, a broadening of politicised themes is discussed.

Index words: politics of agricultural policy, EU, Common Agricultural Policy, MacSharry reform, European integration

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1. Introduction

It is hard to write on the European Union without having to touch upon the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). For decades, this has been in monetary terms the largest and most developed common policy sector in the EU¹. Its creation was a prominent political achievement in its time, and since other fields of common policy were slow to progress, it soon carved a reputation for itself as the flagship of European integration.

Set in motion in 1968, the CAP has nevertheless not turned out to be the success it was originally designed to be. Although it has achieved some of its objectives, it has also been subject to strong criticism. Most critical observers call into question why such a policy was required at all, and why it still exists, given all the modernisation that has taken place in agriculture and in society. Others blame it for causing inequality among farmers and between regions, and in general for its inefficiency, costs, fraud and lack of transparency.

On the one hand, the CAP has been of considerable symbolic value as the herald of an integrated Europe, of a community with a shared heritage and common interests. But on the other hand, it has from the outset been at the heart of almost all EU disputes, both internal and external.

Although the contribution of agriculture is by no means very significant any longer in the terms of employment or incomes in the European Union, agricultural production still has direct and concrete effects on the landscape, the environment and public health, and consequently it continues to be an object of public interest and state intervention. Moreover, even the ordinary person in the street who may be rather inactive in day-to-day politics will tend to have strong personal opinions when it comes to agricultural policy. Examination of the CAP is not only a matter of its measures as such (price regimes, direct income aid, quotas etc.), but it is also significant for European politics in general, since it gives concrete form to the relation between the European Union and its citizens.

The European Union has grown up around the Common Agricultural Policy and changed during the decades. It started as an economic community of six countries centred on the principle of free movement of persons, services and capital, and it is at present a political union formed by 15 member states with a further 12 countries negotiating over accession. This political union exercises close cooperation in many policy areas, such as economic and monetary integration policy, which is soon to lead to a single currency, foreign and

¹ The coming into force of the Maastricht Treaty on 1 November 1993 marked the start of a new era concerning the names given to European institutions. To avoid too much confusion when discussing times both before and after Maastricht, the designation "European Union" or "EU" will be used throughout, even when referring to the pre-Maastricht period. Only in direct quotations will "EC" be used if this was the original form.

security policy, environmental policy, transport policy, energy policy, enterprise policy and research and development policy. At the same time its institutions have been strengthened. Consequently, the general setting for the CAP has transformed fundamentally. Also, the CAP itself was transformed under Agenda 2000, published in 1997, when rural development policy was established as its second pillar.

1.1. Topic of this research

Changes in the global economy, technological transformation and the political restructuring of Europe can hardly have left agriculture intact. In fact, agriculture is the arena in which these changes have been translated into a common policy. From this perspective, the general objective of this research is to analyse the Common Agricultural Policy by focussing on the structure of discourse concerning it over this period of change. More precisely, we will examine how the EU Common Agricultural Policy was politicised in connection with its major reform in 1992, the MacSharry reform. The reform debate is used here as an example of talking “in terms of agricultural politics”. The intention is not to explain how certain decisions were made, but to investigate the political deliberations embedded in agricultural policy.

In the terms of political science, this is a study of the politics of a policy, taking the CAP as an example. Moreover, the debate on the MacSharry reform serves as a specification of it, constituted in a certain political constellation and for a limited, although undefined period of time. “Policy” is understood here as a specific form of politics, as will be explained in detail in Chapter 2.5.

As for agricultural policy, the changes in the intellectual horizon of the CAP will be an object of special interest here. How has the parlance of agricultural policy changed? What is the relationship of this change to the general context of the European Union on the one hand, and to changes in food production on the other? Is the European way of thinking about agriculture changing qualitatively, and what are the possible obstacles to change?

In the first place, this thesis will deal with the sensitivity of the Common Agricultural Policy, its openness and ability to transform itself. It will underline the almost self-evident fact, we often ignore in our haste, that both the choice of problems in the society and their solutions are man-made. Hence it is essential to scrutinise the frameworks of political questions as well as the criteria for the answers and the manner of their formulation. According to the approach to politics adopted here, the politics of a policy will be revealed in the way the choice is recognised, how the alternatives are articulated and in what kinds of arguments are used.

As it is obvious that times of change bring the basic principles closer to the surface of the debate, the inquiry is focussed on the main, recent reform of the

CAP, namely the MacSharry reform, finally decided upon in 1992. Public debates in two EU member states, Ireland and the Netherlands, during the preparation phase for this reform are analysed thoroughly. The gradual opening of this political arena is described, accompanied by the change in the mutual order of agricultural policy issues, with new actor structures and new arguments. It is important to notice, however, that this examination does not aim at explaining the impact of that debate on the CAP.

In the second place, this study aims at obtaining a better insight into the politics of the CAP, which can allow evaluation of the broader process of European integration. Is there a common perception of European Union agriculture? Whose domain is it, or more generally, who commands the rural space in European policy making? What does the geopolitics of the EU look like from inside the Common Agricultural Policy? The answers to these questions can inform us about the nature of European integration, and especially about communication between the member states in the decision-making process.

1.2. Outline of the research

The thesis consists of nine chapters. Chapter 2 provides the theoretical setting for the work. The relevant schools of thought in agricultural economics and political science will first be reviewed with respect to interpreting the political dimension of agricultural policy. After that, the theoretical framework of politics as an action will be presented to give direction to the investigation. The case study, its selection and delimitation and the methods applied will be presented in Chapter 3.

Chapter 4 examines the CAP as a policy by reviewing the development of political issues in it since the late 1950's. Special attention is paid to the objectives of the policy and to their evolution in subsequent reforms. Before the analysis of the case study, Chapter 5 introduces the reader to the case countries, Ireland and the Netherlands, especially to their political settings and agriculture.

Chapters 6-8 provide a detailed analysis of the public debate in the two countries during the preparation phase of the MacSharry reform, from December 1990 until July 1992. Chapter 6 consists of an analysis of the actor structure: who were the participants in the debate and what was their mutual order, and Chapter 7 of the thematic analysis, that is: what is being discussed, which themes are important and which ones are dismissed. Chapter 8 analyses the argument structure: how the actors tried to convince and persuade their audiences.

Chapter 9 offers a concluding interpretation of the political dimension of the CAP and of its politics as a part of European integration as a whole. The final conclusion draws general themes from the findings and from the present situation which may be relevant to the future development of the CAP. Are there any qualitative novelties, new ways of thinking about the role and connections of

agriculture vis-à-vis territory, rurality, European geopolitics, the relationship of human beings to nature, global food production or trade? Could the politicisation of production technology, for example, challenge the traditional income policy – based politics? The concluding discussion aims at placing the Common Agricultural Politics in the general context of European political integration and new challenges facing food production.

2. Theory: Politics of a policy

2.1. Introduction

This thesis is an inquiry into the political dimension of the Common Agricultural Policy, into its politics. For this purpose, the concept of politics as an action will be introduced as a theoretical approach which will be applied to the empirical analysis.

Before that, we will first briefly review the mainstream approaches to interpreting the politics of agricultural policy in agricultural economics and political science. Judging from the variety of policy combinations and theories of agricultural economics that are currently flourishing, there is apparently more than one way of conceiving of agriculture as a part of the economy or of society. Similarly, there is little unanimity about the values and goals connected with agriculture. This is basically what agricultural politics is about: what is the role, meaning, position and function of agriculture in modern societies, and what are the most suitable policy measures for achieving the preferred state of affairs. The review below does not intend to be an exhaustive account of all approaches, but hopes to give a general idea of how the political dimension in agricultural policy has conventionally been understood.

2.2. Agricultural politics in agricultural economics

Agricultural economics is applied economics concerned with 'how farmers behave and whether their behaviour is good for them or for anybody else, qualitatively speaking' (McCloskey 1994, 113-114). Contemporary agricultural economics can be divided into two major schools of thought: radical (Marxist) economics and neo-classical economics.² There are different perspectives on policy formation within neo-classical economics, which illustrate the extremes in the understanding of politics in agricultural policy: the social welfare maximisation perspective (also called the rational choice theory) and the (new) political economy perspective. The former is currently the dominant mode for research purposes.

2.2.1. Social welfare maximisation perspective

Neo-classical economics is basically a resource allocation theory. It stresses profit or utility maximisation and emphasises the role of price mechanisms in

² For an overview of the perspectives on agricultural policy formation provided by agricultural economics, see van der Zee 1997, 7-119.

bringing about resource adjustment, given changing consumption or production conditions. Moreover, neo-classicism operates with concepts of optimality in which delicate marginal adjustments are involved. Neo-classical economics entails three basic assumptions: that agents behave rationally (rational choice), that individuals' preferences are stable and that interaction tends towards an equilibrium. Although the notion of equilibrium is central to the neo-classical theory, many corrections have been made to the "classical" theory in order to cope with real-world phenomena: market failures, externalities, indivisibilities, group wants, non-marketable benefits and costs or monopolistic costs, just to mention a few.

The need for state intervention in agriculture has widely been connected with the obstacles to resource mobility, which keep the sector chronically out of equilibrium both internally and with the rest of the economy (Brandow 1977, 237). In the farm problem view, introduced by Theodor Schultz (1945) and widely accepted by agricultural economists, the structural characteristics of the production and consumption of agricultural commodities³ cause the economic development of the agricultural sector to differ from that of the rest of the economy.

The welfare maximisation⁴ perspective broadens the farm problem view by including externality issues in order to explain and correct market failures⁵. Imperfect competition is an important argument for government interference, but this view also notes the absence of certain markets, which also calls for government intervention. In this perspective, the role of government is to correct market failures and to redistribute incomes. The government is perceived primarily as a managing and complementing agent, a kind of benevolent dictator. As welfare economics starts out from the premise that the government knows what is best for society from the social welfare point of view and chooses policy instruments accordingly, this model does not require information on the functioning of the political process or problematization of it.

³ Characterised by fixed and price inelastic production, production processes dependent on biological processes and the weather, inelastic demand, a time lag between the production decision and the decision to market the agricultural produce, which causes the market to behave cyclically (known as the cobweb theorem), and the tendency of agricultural supply to grow faster than the demand for food, resulting in a decline in farm income.

⁴ The welfare maximisation perspective originates from the work of Pigou (1932), which focusses on the reasons why the market fails to allocate and distribute resources and suggests government interference in the private economy in a policy-specific manner. For a review on the social welfare maximisation approach to agricultural policies, see Gardner (1987).

⁵ Market failures occur if competition is not perfect, if there is not a full set of markets, and/or if economic agents do not have perfect information. Public goods and externality explanations are especially used to describe imperfect competition situations in agriculture. See Atkinson and Stiglitz (1980).

The social welfare maximisation approach has been widely used to study agricultural policy. Its strength lies essentially in explaining the functioning and particularities of agricultural markets. As for explaining politics, it regards agricultural policy as a deliberate, purposeful response to market failures by a benevolent government, which has superior information as compared with other agents (van der Zee 1997, 3, 17). Following the general premises of neo-classical economics in general, benefit maximisation and the concept of equilibrium have been the key concepts in the resulting research.

Agricultural policy studies following the welfare maximisation perspective usually limit the type and number of agents to three large aggregates: producers, consumers and the government. The government is understood to be a rational economic agent which complements the actions of the others. Policy formulation is in turn assumed to be the responsibility of the government.

In the welfare maximisation perspective, political considerations are customarily taken as given from outside and kept as a separate, non-formal subject of analysis. Political decision-taking is not in focus, since the decisions are expected to be taken rationally, as the appropriate arguments for attaining policy aims are given. In this situation the political action is that of a tending physician. Maximising social welfare is the given target, and policy is a means for achieving it.

As for understanding politics, it can be concluded that the welfare maximisation perspective has provided arguments for agricultural policy, but its own understanding of politics is unproblematic: it takes the aims as given, expecting that someone knows what is best for society and that well-defined goals must exist somewhere. Under these premises, politics is only an instrument for reaching given goals.

2.2.2 Political economy approach

The (new) political economy perspective⁶ is essentially a reaction to the social welfare maximisation tradition. It rejects the idea of an omniscient, benevolent government and calls into question the assumption of correcting market imperfections in a perfect and costless manner (van der Zee 1997, 23).

According to this approach, policy is formulated in a political environment with more than one agent and there may be opposing or conflicting interests within the government. Government consists of a number of legislative and executive bodies with goals of their own. In contrast to the social welfare maximisation approach, the political economy school emphasises the rational and self-interested behaviour of agents, especially politicians, voters, interest

⁶ Known also as the “public choice theory”.

organisations and bureaucrats. Hence, political economy analyses focus on the allocation and distribution of public resources in the political market and emphasise that policy formation is the result of self-interest motivated behaviour.⁷

Mueller (1989, 1) defines political economy as “the economic study of nonmarket decision making, or simply the application of economics to political science”. In this perspective, political decisions can be explained by resorting to the rational self-interest of the many participating individuals. This is a major difference relative to the single actor model in the welfare maximisation approach.

In political economy studies, individuals are assumed to be well aware of their (fixed sets of) preferences and to maximise their utility subject to certain constraints. For example, politicians try to maximise their political support, lobbies the benefit of their members and voters their individual welfare. These agents try to maximise egoistic utility, although subject to constraints. Moreover, this approach takes into account the fact that organisations which are originally formed in order to promote the interests of their individual members will also develop interests of their own, related to but not always identical to those of the members. Similarly, government agencies have their organisational interests, such those of the civil servants who are keen on promotion.

The idea of preferences is central. They are assumed to be fixed exogenously and to be stable. This means, however, that not much attention is paid to the source of these preferences, or to the extent to which they may be modified in the light of reflection and argument (Weale 1992, 63). Interaction between actors is assumed to tend towards equilibrium, and collective entities (such as firms, parties, or bureaucracies) are treated as unitary agents for the purpose of analysis. Political decision-makers are modelled as actors with only a single maximising course of action open to them (Dunleavy 1991, 1-10).

In political economy studies on agricultural policy, government behaviour is the explicit object of analysis. In particular, the focus is on the determinants of agricultural policy. Why do agricultural policies in industrialised market economies take the form of farm support, and why are policy instruments usually indirect and non-transparent by nature (van der Zee 1997, 264)?

This approach sees agricultural policy as a result of the way in which the preferences of rational political actors are combined in the political process. Such analyses of political formation view the political process as a matter of

⁷ Political economy started with the work of Downs (1957) on voter and politician behaviour, and was followed by the theories of Buchanan and Tullock (1962) on supply and demand in government policies, the theory of bureaucracy (Niskanen 1971), Olson’s work on pressure groups (1965, 1982), the theory of rent-seeking (Tullock 1967, Krueger 1974) and Directly Unproductive Profit-seeking activities (Bhagwati 1980, 1982), and Stigler’s (1971) and Peltzman’s (1976) theory of regulation. For an overview of the development of the political economy field, see Swinnen and van der Zee (1993), and van der Zee (1997, 23-43).

market exchange, in which policies are the supply of political goods. Models (of voting, interest groups or bureaucracies) are used to describe, explain and predict agricultural policy. Similarly, policy issues are compared in terms of their costs and benefits.

In the political economy tradition, politics is explained in economic terms (Ware 1979, 5). Political action is reduced to rational interest-motivated action, i.e. the social is reduced to the individual. Moreover, the activity of a group is expected to be the sum of the individual members' rational interests. Politics thus resembles a game among rational agents, a game that can be formalised and preferably modelled.

When the assumptions of perfect information, exogenously fixed preferences, unitary supply-side actors and decision-makers with single maximising courses of action are translated into political contexts, some real-world difficulties arise. Dunleavy (1991, 249), for example, questions a number of requirements of the political economy tradition: "People may not have determinant preferences on most political issues; may not rank political preferences (for example, because there is no common numeraire like money in economic markets); may operate with intransitive preference orderings, may be easily satiated and hence only satisfice in their political 'consumption' and may behave altruistically in important respects."

In the tradition of neo-classical economics, the main problem in agricultural policy research has to do with the methodology. There is no flexible, all-inclusive and testable model to explain agricultural policy developments empirically at all levels (van der Zee 1997). For a model to be manageable, it can never map all the important aspects of reality⁸. Even with a good policy model one has to be humble, since model outputs are not "hard" scientific facts but rather tools for working towards a better understanding. In policy studies, models are just evidence to be used in an argument together with other data and information (Majone 1989, 11). Evidence refers here to "... information selected from the available stock and introduced at a specific point in the argument in order to persuade a particular audience of the truth or falsity of a statement" (ibid., 10). This is, of course, more or less the practice in all social sciences. The particular problems with agricultural policy research have to do with the attempt to formalise at the cost of empirical correspondence and with ruling out those arguments that do not fit into the model (McCloskey 1990, 1129).

The literature on economic research into agricultural policy pays attention to the fact that empiricism has been neglected. According to Silvis (1994), assumptions about the characteristics of people, things and their interrelationships do not agree sufficiently well with reality. Another frequently mentioned problem

⁸ On problems with respect to explaining and predicting aggregate phenomena, see Brandes (1989).

is the exclusive exaltation of sophisticated (econometric) methods – in particular the use of regression analysis – while ignoring data and more problem-oriented subjects (Paarlberg 1963, Bonnen 1989, Pasour 1993). In the words of McCloskey (1990, 1126): “Regression analysis seems to have a tighter hold on the empirical imagination in agricultural economics than it has in other applied fields ... ”

The main problem from the political point of view is whether the political setting can, after all, be seen as an extension of the economic market. Politics comprises choices about issues that are often remote from people’s everyday experiences. Moreover, political choices are made in collective processes that are radically different from economic markets, where individual actors are expected to make rational decisions.⁹

For example, if we dwell somewhat on the maximising principle, a profound problem arises. On the one hand, in the presence of uncertainty, incomplete information, complexities and ambiguity, it is questionable whether we can base any explanations on the premise of maximising behaviour. On the other hand, any pattern of individual behaviour can, if one wants, be classified as utility maximisation.¹⁰ Some ambitious attempts have been made to remove the restrictions that methodological individualism has imposed on the political economy approach, e.g. by including factors such as justice, solidarity or ideologies in benefit functions (Thijssen 1986).

Michel Petit (1985) is one of the public choice researchers who are inclined to emphasise political processes more than the motives of individual actors. He views agricultural policy as an outcome of dynamic processes, driven by conflicts of interest, which are regulated through political institutions. For him, political debate and negotiations are important elements. In the long run, economic forces change the interests at stake and affect their relative weight, but even when broadened in this way, the analysis leaves the political process unstructured and isolated from the interplay of social and ideological factors, which often go far beyond the agricultural sphere as a productive sector.

Moyer and Josling (1990) modified Petit’s model of a dynamic process of agricultural policy-making, ending up with an approach combining elements of rational choice, public choice and organisational and behavioural models. Their aim was to make political bargaining visible. Jaap Frouws (1991), a political sociologist himself, criticised Moyer and Josling for arriving at an extensive model which brings more and more factors and actors to the description of the policy process, but leaves the weightings and interrelations of the numerous inputs unclear. According to Frouws (1991, 270-272), the crucial problems with this approach are its failure to include the role of the state as a source of

⁹ On these restrictive premises in public choice theories, see Dunleavy (1991, 4).

¹⁰ On attempts to abandon the utility maximisation principle, see Brandes (1989), Kornai (1971) and Day (1984).

economic, political and ideological power, and its inability to see the actions of the different agents as a reproduction of the social structure – of social practices that determine the dynamics of power relations and maintain power structures.

For the time being we can conclude that the neo-classical agricultural economics approaches view agricultural politics as an instrument intended for superior purposes, namely, for benefit maximisation or self-interest. This instrumentalist view of the role of politics¹¹ is characteristically couched in means-end terms. It also reveals a highly policy-oriented view of politics in which there are certain “values” and “criteria” which politics as an activity ought to be oriented to serve. These criteria are used to justify the claims of politics, and the problem that arises is one of balance. In addition, the social welfare maximisation perspective takes the state as the only proper policy agent, whereas the political economy approach explicitly dissociates itself from this view. The instrumentalist view of politics understands it as the fabrication of an artefact and not as an activity in its own right (Palonen 2001, 130).

2.2.3. Marxist agricultural economics

Although the Marxist approach has not been widely used in the study of agricultural economics in the developed western countries, it did gain a foothold in France, especially from the 1960's onwards. Like the political economy approach, it was a reaction to the shortcomings of neo-classical economics, and particularly to its productivist interpretation of agriculture.

At the core of the positive neo-classical theory of economy lies the idea that economic growth is possible because of an increase in productivity, which in turn is a result of both technical progress and mobility of the factors of production. In this view, industrialisation transforms agriculture in a similar manner to other sectors of the economy. According to Petit (1982, 330), French agricultural economists became disillusioned with economic growth as the only goal of the policy; and with its negative consequences.

The Marxist agricultural economists have argued firstly that farm structures did not adjust and lead to the incomes in agriculture that factor mobility and technical progress should have implied according to the productivist doctrine of neo-classical economics: Secondly, the development towards industrialised production and contractual arrangements did not proceed other than in the pork and poultry production sectors. Thirdly, because the agricultural economics version of neo-classical economics presented factor mobility as a necessity, as an economic force which cannot be opposed, and advised policy makers to

¹¹ The terms proposed by Kari Palonen (1999, 20-21) for classifying views on politics are used here: politics as an instrument, as a necessity and as a freedom.

facilitate this transformation, Marxists also blamed the productivist approach for the negative consequences of these policies. Incomes in agriculture remained lower than in other sectors, farmers were losing their countervailing power vis-à-vis agribusinesses as their cooperatives were advised to grow larger and specialise, so that power had to be transferred to technocrats (Petit 1982, 331). If attention is paid to economic growth only, argued the Marxists, too many questions regarding the ultimate objectives of society were left aside. From their point of view, the price paid for economic growth was not acceptable.

Marxist agricultural economics starts with the family farm, attempting to understand its functioning both as a production unit and as a consumption unit. From this point of view, the behaviour of a farmer is no less rational than that of any other economic agent. It also tries to cover analytically all the diversity of farmers' situations, aspirations and objectives. In so doing, its main interest, according to Petit (1982, 333), is the global interpretation of all the changes affecting agriculture. As its basis lies in dialectical materialism, it is prone to emphasise conflicts among the social classes and among different groups of farmers. Here the Marxist approach draws attention to the fact omitted in the mainstream agricultural economics, which concentrates on price and income problems, structural policies, the role of technical progress, agricultural trade etc., that these issues always have a social conflict dimension. On the other hand, the neglecting of resource allocation problems is a severe shortcoming of the Marxist approach itself.

The most important contribution of the Marxist approach has to do with its epistemological criticism of the emphasis on quantitative methods in mainstream agricultural economics. According to Petit (1982, 336), these methods reflect "...an economic theory of partial phenomena, i.e. an a-systemic, a-historical and a-political view of economic phenomena". The Marxist approach is more inclined to study an agricultural problem in its larger historical, social, economic and political setting.

To conclude, on the basis of what can be said about the French school of Marxist agricultural economics, politics in this approach has to do with structural power, in particular that between conflicting classes. Class analysis is the basis from which to understand politics. But even here politics is understood instrumentally, as the organised power of one class for oppressing another.

2.3. Agricultural politics in political science

Although the work of political scientists on agricultural policy has been, according to one political economist (Posner 1974, 341), "almost entirely devoid of theory", it is still worth reviewing. This review is not meant to be exhaustive, but is intended, as above, to give an idea of how the politics of agricultural policy has been dealt with, now in political science.

Three traditions can be seen as relevant to the present research: pluralism, corporatism and policy network analysis. One factor that all these approaches have in common is that they emphasise relations between government and interest groups. Furthermore, they are not necessarily mutually exclusive but illuminate different characteristics of agricultural policy.

2.3.1. Pluralism

According to a textbook definition (Heywood 1997, 76), pluralism – also widely referred to as empirical democratic theory (Held 1997, 199) – is a theory of political power. As a theory of society and politics¹² it starts by acknowledging the existence of multiple groups in society and maintains that the “group” is the central unit of the social order. This is in a way a reaction against institutionalism in political science.

For the pluralists, groups are a structural source of stability and the central expression of democracy. To a certain degree, pluralism shares with economics the notion of politics as a self-interested realm¹³. In the words of Held (1997, 201), pluralists “tended to take for granted the view that, just as economics is concerned with individuals maximising their personal interests, politics is concerned with sets of individuals maximising their common interests”. The essential aspect here is that competition and participation take place among groups, not among individuals.

In general, pluralism offers the image of a complex political process with multiple participants and uncertain outcomes (Jordan 1990, 295-296). Power is understood to be fragmented and decentralised in existing Western systems, and pressure is exerted on the state not only by groups but also by parties, the electorate and the bureaucracy. Some pluralists assume the state itself to be neutral, essentially just reflecting the forces within society, but most consider government agencies to act as pressure groups themselves alongside non-governmental groups.¹⁴

¹² The theory of pluralism has evolved from the early works of Robert Dahl (1961), David Truman (1951), H. Eckstein (1960) and C.E. Lindblom (1965). The discussion here concerns the mainstream of pluralism, i.e. interest-group pluralism. To be precise, pluralism is not only an account of social groups, as some writers focus on it as a moral or epistemological theory. See McLennan (1995) for an account of the variety of kinds of pluralism that exist.

¹³ This understanding of politics has been criticised, particularly by democratic theorists who argue that political participation transforms self-interest into a concern with the public good (Barber 1984). Thus politics proper transcends groups. This view on politics differs somewhat from the mainstream, instrumentalist pluralism. There are remnants here of a certain pseudo-Aristotelian tone in its orientation to a given “good life”, which Palonen (1999, 20-22) would call a functionalistic or necessitarian view on politics.

¹⁴ Early pluralist studies in particular have been criticised for their uncritical, assumedly “empirical” approach to existing Western democracies and for their assumption of a neutral state.

The main function of an interest group, according to pluralism, is to aggregate the interests of its members and represent them to the policy-makers. Pluralists thus believe in the existence of a certain consensus within which political groups operate, and to which groups that do not accept these rules will not be granted access.

Pluralism also implies that certain checks exist to ensure that power is not concentrated in the hands of just a few groups. One interest group is expected to be matched by an alternative counter-group. If no such counter-group can organise itself, a potential group will still exist, the interests of which will have to be taken into consideration by the government (Smith 1990b). For the pluralist, there is no single elite which makes decisions and benefits from them all.

The method adopted by pluralists is to analyse who exercises power by looking at the process of decision-making: who was involved and who prevailed. In practice, pluralist-oriented researchers have mainly focussed on case studies.

Agricultural policy has offered a good example for the empirical observation of interest group behaviour. A pluralist study of agricultural policy focuses on various interest groups, such as the farmers' organisation or the food industry and environmental groups, and emphasises the lobbying capabilities of these groups, their resources and the ideas and views that they contribute to the policy-making process, and would most probably also include the response of the government as an important indicative factor (Winter 1996, 16).

In a classical pluralist study of agricultural policy, Self and Storing (1962) argued that there was widespread agreement on agricultural policy in Great Britain, as a result of which the political process had become apolitical. In pluralist terms this was a sign of apparent consensus. Wilson (1977, 45), in turn, used agricultural policy as an example of "Whitehall pluralism", where the close relationship of the farmers' union to the Ministry of Agriculture had not destroyed pluralist decision-making, because of the countervailing power in the discussion of agricultural policy which exists in the Cabinet and in cabinet committees. Hence it was argued that a system of plurality of interests prevents clientelist relationships from leading to a monopoly in a certain policy area.

The main shortcoming often referred to in pluralism is the overemphasis on the role of groups in the political process. Pluralism implies that the existence of numerous interest groups guarantees that power is widely dispersed among these groups – though not necessarily equally. Institutional and ideological factors can profoundly affect the availability and exercise of power, however (Smith 1993, 25).

Thanks to the criticism that has been put forward, new perspectives have developed in pluralism, which now acknowledge that government-interest relations are often institutionalised and that certain groups are excluded. Policy communities and issue networks have been added as crucial concepts (Smith 1990b, 311-315). Policy communities imply that certain interest groups may

have structured relationships with departments while certain other groups and issues can be excluded from the policy arena. However, even in the case of a closed policy community, as in agricultural policy, the achievements of farmers' unions are considered incomplete and unpredictable (Jordan and Richardson 1987, 111-112). In the course of time, policy communities have been associated not only with pluralist studies, but also with corporatist positions.

Neopluralism, in turn, starts with the assumption that business is privileged. Hence, certain groups may have particular advantages as a result of their economic power, which allows political influence to be expressed through structural relationships rather than observable activity. In a market system, business takes many decisions instead of the government. In addition, business is assumed to exercise an unequal influence on which issues reach the political agenda and on what alternatives are seriously considered (Smith 1990b, 315-319).

2.3.2. Corporatism

Although neopluralism introduced the issue of structural power to pluralism, its importance is far greater in another political science approach, corporatism¹⁵. Like pluralism, corporatism is concerned with explaining the distribution of power in western democracies. In contrast to pluralism, however, it emphasises formalised relations between a limited number of closed and hierarchically structured interest groups and the state. Pivotal to corporatism is “the direct link with regulation; whereby representative groups assume some responsibility for the self-regulation and disciplining of their own constituency in return for the privileges afforded by their relatively close relationship with government” (Cox et al. 1986, 475-476).

To cite Lijphart (1999, 171), “[t]he typical interest group system of majoritarian democracy is a competitive and uncoordinated pluralism of independent groups, in contrast with the coordinated and compromise-oriented system of corporatism that is typical of the consensus model”. In exchange for influence on the content of politics, interest groups commit themselves to the decisions made and often play an active role in the implementation of these decisions. In this sense, corporatism also emphasises the significance of interest groups mediating between the state and their own group members.

Corporatism – often with such prefixes as “neo”, “liberal”, “democratic” or “societal” to distinguish it from neo-fascist ideas of the corporate state – became a much used approach in political science from the late 1970's onwards. It was applied especially to comparative studies of western (European) states and economies, trying to explain why corporatist economies were believed to have

¹⁵ For an overview of corporatism, see Williamson (1989).

performed in superior ways (e.g. Katzenstein 1985, Lijphart and Crepaz 1991, Paloheimo 1984, Pekkarinen et al. 1992).

Actually, a controversy prevails over the theoretical status of corporatism. Some claim that it does not constitute a distinctive entity, but is rather an extended method of (corporate) pluralism¹⁶ (e.g. Jordan 1984, 152), whereas for others (esp. Schmitter 1974, 1979, 1981, 1985) it offers a new theoretical paradigm for government-interest group studies. Ultimately, the difference has to do with the extent to which organised groups are incorporated within the policy arena (Winter 1996, 22). In practice this difference is perhaps less categorical, since some researchers are inclined to see corporatist and pluralist arrangements as taking place side by side, or forming mixed combinations. Cawson and Saunders (1983) argue that corporatist arrangements develop over issues concerned with production and that pluralist politics dominate over consumption issues.

Despite general criticism of its theoretical grounds and empirical applicability (e.g. Almond 1983, Wilson 1983, Jordan 1984, Therborn 1992), the (neo)corporatist approach is still used, although it is now frequently given a more modest content, such as managing national economies in an integrated way (Siaroff 1999), or using it as a “middle-range theory” (see Grant 1985, Winter 1984, Frouws 1993).

Corporatism studies on agricultural policy have served as examples of sectorized corporatism (Bolin et al. 1984, Micheletti 1987, Anderson 1987, Keeler 1987, 1996, Frouws 1993), aiming at showing that there a close interest group – department relation prevails in agricultural policy, a specific system of interest articulation and policy formation, which differs from other government policies.

Policy formation has been seen as a result of an institutionalised relationship between the Ministry of Agriculture and the core of agricultural interests: national farmers’ associations, organisations of agricultural cooperatives and the agricultural trade and food industry associations. In some cases a party ideologically close to agrarian interests has been included, as has been especially common in the Nordic agricultural policy model (see Helander 1981, Bolin et al. 1984, Just 1994). This core group has been seen as able to make decisions without much reference to non-farm groups. The shared set of beliefs and exclusion of other interests have relatively efficiently closed agricultural policy circles off from outsiders (Smith 1988, 1990a; Frouws 1993, 255).

¹⁶The same ideas have been discussed under labels such as “subgovernment”, “iron triangle” and “segmented pluralism”, all of which refer to the regularised incorporation of organised interest into the public policy process.

2.3.3. Policy network approach

In a similar vein as neo-corporatism focusses on sectoral forms of corporatism, the policy network approach segregates policy analysis into policy sectors. Policy network analysis claims greater accuracy in the tracing of government – interest group relations than has been possible with the pluralist or corporatist approaches. The network tradition ignores traditional policy making arenas such as parliaments and political parties, arguing that these are of only limited importance in sectoral policy-making (Richardson and Jordan 1979, 74). Instead, resource interdependence is seen as the key feature of sectoral policy-making.

Benson (1982, 148) defines a policy network as “... a cluster or complex of organizations connected to each other by resource dependencies and distinguished from other clusters or complexes by breaks in the structure of resource dependence.” According to this definition, the policy network concept offers tools for describing, characterising and typologizing relations and interactions between the state and societal interests.

A policy network emerges when political actors exchange resources regularly. The general train of thought in the policy network tradition emphasises the character of the modern state. Public affairs have become increasingly complex, organised actors dominate policy-making and the modern state itself is dependent on resources which only specific, organised interest groups can generate in a policy field or sector.¹⁷

Common concerns in the policy network approach are who is involved in public policy-making, how the core actors exclude other interests, and why policy processes and outcomes within many policy areas have remained stable for a relatively long time. In general, the function of policy networks is understood to be restricted to specific policy fields or sectors, such as agriculture (Daugbjerg 1996, 23-24).

Some writers also distinguish between two main types of network: stable “policy communities” at one extreme, and more unstructured “issue networks” (Rhodes 1986, 22-23; Marsh and Rhodes 1992, 249-251, Smith 1993). A policy community is seen as a special type of stable network which exists if there are effective shared “community” views on the problem (Jordan 1990, 327). As those involved in policy-making (ministers, key civil servants, leaders and officers of key interest groups) tend to prefer stability, certainty and predictability, they try to divide complex situations and broad policy issues into manageable sub-issues. Policy-making thus becomes specialized and left to a limited number of participants who deal with the technical details. Issue networks, in turn, are less integrated than policy communities. They comprise similar kinds of policy

¹⁷ For a review of the policy network approach, see Daugbjerg 1996, 22-40.

actors, but there are numerous participants which are interdependent only to limited degree (Rhodes 1988, 78).

Jordan and Maloney (1995, 19) argue that “the politics of the policy community is the politics of the particular – a means to resolve the detail (and sometimes the substance) of politicised issues”. This view implies that modern policy processes are developing towards increasing fragmentation and specialisation, towards policy making in sub-sectoral policy communities.

Those within the policy network tradition who are more inclined to think in pluralist terms describe contemporary policy-making as taking place through sub-sectoral policy communities. Others, however, view sectoral networks as more important. As for agriculture, a dispute among network researchers has arisen on whether British agricultural politics is characterised by sub-sectoral policy communities (Jordan 1981, Jordan and Maloney 1995) and issue networks (Jordan and Schubert 1992), or by sectoral policy-making (Smith 1992, Cavanagh, Marsh and Smith 1995).

Winter (1996, 26-27) argues for the interpretation that policy communities are more likely around production issues if there is a limited and relatively stable group of participants, if economic and/or professional interests dominate, and if there is a shared sense of purpose and community, a consensus on a set of priorities and an agreed need for public expenditure. Furthermore, participants in a policy community have a shared understanding of the problems and priorities. Issue networks comprise a large number of participants who may have many interests in addition to the particular issue of food and agriculture. The members of an issue network do not have strong shared beliefs, stability or a shared culture. According to Winter, issue networks may form especially around consumption issues.

The need to analyse the characteristics of networks empirically has led to formal network studies employing sophisticated statistical methods and quantified data for mapping actors' positions in a network. Pappi and Henning (1999), for example, developed an index of resource flows between actors and the distribution of equilibrium control in EU agricultural policy decisions. They showed that the national ministers of agriculture depend very much on the support and expertise of their national farmers' lobby, while the Commission relies more on contacts with other political actors within the system, and less with the demand side of politics, whether interest groups or the European electorate as a whole (*ibid.*, 279).

Carsten Daugbjerg (1996) uses network analysis in an investigation into public policy in agriculture. He aims at showing that network structures influence policy choices, maintaining that the role of policy networks cannot be neglected if one seeks to understand the choice of nitrate policies in Denmark and Sweden or the outcomes of agricultural policy reforms in the European Community and Sweden. He concludes that radical policy choices are possible in a centralised

state which does not have a cohesive agricultural policy network and where farmers' structural power has declined with time, whereas in fragmented polities with a cohesive policy network (the EU), agricultural policy reforms are less fundamental. In his opinion, policy network structures make a difference, but sectoral policy choices cannot be seen in isolation from the macro-context in which they are embedded (*ibid.*, 269). The latter should actually be a commonplace in all serious policy analysis.

As a research approach, policy networks can be seen first as a way of understanding new governance, which constitutes a significant form of coordination in modern societies. Secondly, it is possible to study the conditions for the development of policy networks and differences in the structures and processes involved, and thirdly, it is possible to study the consequences of policy networks (Kenis 1999, 181). The main contribution of policy networks to the analysis of agricultural policy has been to function as a tool for more precise description and empirical categorisation. As an approach, policy networks still lack the wider macro-theory that the older approaches of pluralism and corporatism offer.

2.4. Conclusion: Politics as a means

Approaching agricultural policy from different angles enriches our understanding and enables a more complete picture to be formed. Economics approaches to agricultural policy aim at formalising the policy options, but either take political considerations as given (social welfare maximisation perspective), or explain them on the basis of interests (political economy). Public choice approaches cause economics and political science to overlap by combining interest maximisation with institutions and power. The corporatism, pluralism and network analysis approaches lay the explanatory emphasis on actors, their institutionalised relationships and the political culture, or more precisely, on the interdependence of agricultural policy actors.

Consequently, it has become evident on numerous occasions that interest groups are crucial actors in agricultural policy. They have close relations with decision-makers and with the agricultural administration, whether the nature of the relationship is corporatist or pluralist. Likewise, policy networks can be identified, as well as the significant role of experts, which has not been discussed here but which can be studied under such concepts as "epistemic communities" (on this concept, see Haas 1992) and "advocacy coalitions" (Sabatier and Jenkins 1993).

What mainstream economics and political science approaches to agricultural policy have in common, however, is an instrumentalist view of politics. Aims and objectives are left to be determined above or outside of politics, whereas politics is considered a means for reaching these aims. When politics is a means

for fulfilling the formal decision of a benevolent government, as in the social welfare maximisation approach, politics becomes restricted to a sort of calculation of means and side effects. These approaches do not pose the question of the political significance of a policy.

In the political economy, pluralism and corporatism approaches, politics is looked for and explained in the terms of interests, which are based on assumed preferences, although in fact the formation of preferences may often be a crucial question in politics. As Keith Michael Baker (1990, 6) puts it, “‘interest’ is a symbolic and political construction, not simply a pre-existing social reality”. Starting with interests as “givens” either leads us to clichéd explanations about the formation of agricultural policy, or else, in some cases, makes it difficult for us to match the supposed interests with the actual political choices made.

Agricultural policy studies have to a large extent been examinations of decision-making where the principles of rational choice have been applied to public policy-making. The underlying notion of rationality has been that of “maximising something”, i.e. choosing the best means to a given end (Majone 1989, 12-13). As discussed above, this approach suffers from its origin in the sphere of private economic transactions, which assumes a unitary decision-maker, an individual who wishes to be consistent. In politics, several actors may be rational and consistent and still hold divergent views, which underlines the importance of negotiation and persuasion. Majone points out this feature, and also the lack of distinction between policies and decisions in single choice situations. Important policy decisions are more than attempts to do as well as possible in the situation immediately in front of the policy-maker – it is perhaps more appropriate to talk about them as policy judgements. Moreover, there is the exclusive preoccupation with outcomes, and in turn, the lack of concern for the processes whereby the outcomes are produced, since social processes are seldom of merely instrumental value. Finally, decisions in politics must always be justified, and there is no unique way of constructing an argument (Majone 1989, 15-18). The continuous process of debate does not fit well into a rational choice model for explaining agricultural policy.

Finally, agricultural policy studies have all along the line explained policy outcomes in terms of the characteristics of structures or agencies. As mentioned above, there is no reason to disagree with these general findings. My argument here is, however, that we would receive a different picture of both current and potential agricultural policies if we were to change the perspective and scrutinise the formation of the content of this policy. Paying more attention to the content, to the construction of policy problems, to the profiles of actors and to the role of argument and persuasion in agricultural policy may help to stimulate a broader, better informed, more open and more diversified debate on agricultural politics.

In fact, contemporary political science theories offer alternative tools for investigating agricultural politics from the inside and reflecting the interpretations

and experience of those who are active in agricultural policy. It is possible to raise the content of the policy to the fore and concentrate on the way of thinking and reasoning which lies behind its construction. It is important in this approach to explicate how people perceive agriculture and how they translate their perceptions into political actions. For this purpose, we have to change our view of politics from an instrumental one towards acting in a situation. By taking a different starting point, we can emphasise certain aspects of politics which are not usually given much consideration.

2.5. Politics as action

A common feature of all the approaches presented above, in both economics and political science, is that agricultural policy is dealt with as a kind of closed system, a sector or arena in which there are a limited number of actors and a limited number of issues are at stake. This also conforms with the understanding of politics that presents the political system as a more or less stable order of polity, which is changed in regulated forms by means of policy. This paradigm gives a clear vision of both what is political and what is central, typical and visible in politics (Palonen 1993a). In thinking of politics as a sector, borders become essential, since only generally accepted institutions and their deeds are included in politics.

The nature of what is political has been much debated in contemporary political philosophy. Without going into the details of that discussion¹⁸, an important point for the present purposes is that this revision of the concept of politics has opened up new possibilities to conceive what is political in a certain phenomenon. This means that it is possible to go beyond the limitations imposed by concentrating on the constellation of agricultural policy-making.

As the aim of this work is to analyse the politics of agricultural policy, one option would be to use the notion of political culture. Ever since the initial work of Gabriel Almond (1956), it has served as a “conceptual umbrella”, covering perceptions, beliefs and values concerning everything political¹⁹. For the purpose of this study, political culture is too broad to function as an analytical device.

In the course of time, political culture has been adjusted to formulations which allow for more linguistic approaches. Keith Michael Baker (1990), for example, sees politics as making claims. It is “... the activity through which individuals and groups in any society articulate, negotiate, implement, and enforce the competing claims they make upon one another and upon the whole” (ibid., 4). For Baker, a political culture comprises “the set of discourses or

¹⁸ For a review of the debate, see O’Sullivan (1997).

¹⁹ For an overview of the concept of political culture, see Lane 1992.

symbolic practices by which these claims are made” (ibid., 4). Baker’s notion of political culture could be used for studying the Common Agricultural Policy, but the concept of politics as action is even better suited for the explicit study of the construction of agricultural policy, since it focusses the investigation directly on the political, without collecting diverse phenomena under the term political culture.

In order to challenge the traditional, functionalist or instrumentalist approaches to politics as a sector or an arena, we shall employ in the following the definition of politics as acting in a situation. Thus, instead of taking a spatial view of agricultural policy as politics, as in the approaches discussed above, it is possible to suggest a situational view. The idea of politics as action can be found in the thinking of the political philosopher Hannah Arendt (1958/60), for example. According to Arendt the core of politics lies in allowing and maintaining plurality and diversity, and in presenting different and contesting ideas and opinions in public, both in speech and in action. In this respect, politics is a unique phenomenon which cannot be reduced to other activities or to the qualities of political actors.

In this approach, politics is understood in terms of the possible. It is seen as an aspect or quality instead of as a limited sphere. Another essential aspect is the shift of attention from the “results” of politics to “acting politically”. Thus, a central element in this approach is the existence of possibility and freedom of choice as the basic characteristics of politics. Contingency, the correlate of freedom and choice, the *Spielraum* for action, is its constitutive criterion (Palonen 1999, 24). One characteristic of political action is the possibility for doing otherwise: the ability to see alternatives and the capability for expressing this possibility of choice. Politics is connected with situations which require a choice and decision, and conversely, in situations where there is room for alternatives and choice, there one will also find politics. The contingent character of politics-as-activity expresses the possibility, the occasion or opportunity to do something: it opens a horizon for action without specifying how to act in connection with this horizon (Palonen 2001a).

Contestability is another essential characteristic of a political situation. According to Melvin Richter (2001, 137), the assumption that only consensus on a single set of views could produce social order and effective political decision is highly questionable. In this view, conflict, not consensus is decisive for regimes that are both free and democratic: Richter distinguishes different levels of contestability of political concepts (ibid, 138-140). First, it is possible to conceptualise a phenomenon in contested forms: we may agree, for example, that something called globalisation is taking place, but there may be differing ideas about its nature, its present effects and future consequences. Secondly, a concept may be relatively undisputed (e.g. the family farm in the European model of agriculture), but the questions concern its range of application. Thirdly,

the same concept can be understood differently, so that equality means for one person the same treatment for everyone before the law, while another person will hold that everyone should have about the same amount of resources. Fourthly, acting upon a concept that is valued in the political system may entail consequences that conflict with another highly ranked concept, so that we have a disagreement about the relative priority of the two principles. In agricultural policy, for example, the objective of protecting the environment has grown in importance, which increases the cost of production, but at the same time the objective of producing cheap food for consumers has high priority. Fifthly, disagreement about the meaning of political concepts may arise among adherents of different and irreconcilable ideologies. Ideology as such refers to an understanding that politics must be conducted from the standpoint of a coherent, comprehensive set of beliefs which must outweigh every other consideration.

In addition to contingency, or *Spielraum*, and contestability, it is characteristic of politics that something is actually rendered controversial. In politics there is nothing absolutely “given”, no policy without conceivable alternatives (Palonen 1983, 19). On the contrary, it is essential in this approach to question the “givens”, to scrutinise the ways in which questions are framed and the criteria for answers, for it is in these choices that political acts emerge.

The characteristics introduced above are ones that are essential for politics as a phenomenon. The list would not be complete without observing that in politics the results bear a paradoxical relation to the intentions of the participants. The unanticipated consequences of actions are constitutive of politics (Palonen 2001a).

In understanding politics-as-action, action should not be understood in a narrow sense, as only a physical act, for example. In fact, most political actions (also) exist in textual form, e.g. as treaties, agreements, laws, regulations, pamphlets, speeches or public arguments. A political “text” may thus be spoken or written or, in some cases, take the form of a picture. I will return to the methodology of using texts for “reading the political” in more detail in Chapter 3.3.

The main value of the politics-as-action -approach is that it may open up new prospects for understanding agricultural policy from the inside, from the experience and uniqueness of acting politically. It aims at exploring the traces or imprints of politics, and it implies both pointing at the political as it appears in agricultural policy, and showing the issues that have been, or could potentially be, presented from another point of view, i.e. chosen and evaluated differently.

Texts are signs that offer an opportunity to explicate the actions the participants in a policy process carry out: which alternatives they express, how these are formulated and reasoned, and which choices have been made. On the other hand, the interpretations which contain political choices are not always directly recognisable in political texts. In order to reveal the political aspect, we must examine the different horizons of politics that actors have, e.g. what kinds of

issues and criteria they connect with agricultural policy, and what strategies they use for legitimating their ideas. Critical readers must not allow the text to convince them, but they do have to ask questions. Crucial questions are: who is talking about politics, what are they saying, how, when, where, to whom and for what purpose?

In addition to applying a situational view to politics, the theoretical framework is based on an elaboration of the concepts of policy and politics. Some historians and political scientists have dealt with the theoretical problems encountered in the concepts of politics. Heidenheimer (1986) argues that the broad concept of policy developed in English has connotations that allow its employment in a sense in which it is more ambiguously complementary to politics, and offer a greater perspective on the capacity of policy to serve as a reigning word and key concept than does the German *Politik* or French *politique*. Policy is a keyword that has a non-institutional, purely intentional meaning. Since its dictionary meaning refers to a course of action adopted and pursued by a government, party ruler or statesman, Heidenheimer underlines that its meaning is related to will and intention.

Karl Rohe (1994, 64, 67, 80) used the English polit- vocabulary to show how the German *Politik* embraces several distinguishable meanings: "Policy and politics are part of every *Politik* and may be identified as distinguishable dimensions of political action... One could say that *Politik* constitutes the realisation of *Politik* in the sense of policy, with the help of *Politik* in the sense of politics, on the basis of *Politik* in the sense of polity... Concepts like administration, planning, public affairs are primarily related to the concept of policy. But when political thinking involves concepts like power, authority, conflict, and participation one would seem to be dealing with a stronger politics-orientation." It will be argued here that agricultural policy is a specific form of politics.

In order to show this, we shall discuss an empirical case of the politics of the Common Agricultural Policy in terms proposed by the Finnish political scientist Kari Palonen, who has also conceptualised politics-as-activity by means of the English polit- vocabulary (1983, 1993a, 2001a, 2001b). In this conceptual horizon, Palonen refers by policy to the regulating aspect of politics, politicking alludes to the performative aspect, polity implies a metaphorical space with specific possibilities and limits, while politicisation marks an opening up of something as political, as "playable". Furthermore, policy-politicking and polity-politicisation form two conceptual pairs. Politics is understood in terms of spatial metaphors of a sphere, a sector or a field that has been occupied by the borders and regulations of the policy-polity space, while in the activity concept politics is constituted by the "verbal" figures of politicisation and politicking (Palonen 2001a, 2001b).

Policy and politicking thus form a pair. According to Palonen (2001a), “a policy refers to a direction of activities, to a line, project, plan, programme or doctrine”. Policy thus has a teleological connotation, where teleology implies that a phenomenon is due to the purpose or design that it is serving. In addition, it has a normative character, so that it serves as a criterion for the selection of what should be realised amongst possible futures. Thus it implies a criterion of judgement which regulates the inclusion or exclusion of activities, types and degrees of coordination etc.

Politicking, in turn, serves as a single verb for “acting politically”. It includes such operations as tactics and strategy, and is always aimed at a certain public. It is action in a performative sense: it refers to opposing others and acting cunningly and cleverly. Using the metaphor of playing, politicking takes place within certain games already recognised as political. One case in point is the way in which the Agriculture Committee of the European Parliament wields power by refusing to take its final position. This is done when the Commission shows no willingness to compromise on proposals of importance to the Committee. The Council cannot decide until Parliament has voted, so the Commission has no other choice but to negotiate informally with the Agricultural Committee. If this leads to a common position between the Commission and Parliament, confirmed in the plenary session, then the Council has to vote unanimously against the proposal in order to defeat it. With clever tactics, the European Parliament can wield power in cases where no formal co-decision procedure has been established. Politicking presupposes improvisation and taking advantage of the details of the ongoing situation. It is not only about what should be done, but also how to do it.

Polity and politicisation form another pair in Palonen’s (2001a) conceptualisation of politics. If polity has traditionally referred to a metaphorical space that separates the political sphere from other spheres, it can be considered in terms of activity as a temporalised space that has been politicised and commonly accepted as political, and that separates such activity from that which is not accepted as political. Polity can thus be viewed as a *Spielraum* of activity, which results from previous politicisations and is established to the extent that it at least tacitly hinders new politicisations. Here polity should be understood as any specific regime of power shares, instead of a single “political system”. Polity refers to a complex in which power shares are divided into legitimate and illegitimate ones: certain power shares have gained privileged positions, while others have faded away and appear as anachronistic, and attempts to create new ones are viewed with suspicion. According to Palonen (ibid.), the “core” *Spielraum* of a polity serves as a paradigm for politicking. Yet, the historical and temporal character of a polity means that the “core” *Spielraum* of the legitimate polity is constantly being undermined due to the shifting significance of the sources of power in the situation. The invention of new topics on the

agenda, new dimensions of human agency or new practices of politicking are prone to destabilise the polity, not only within its margins, but also in the interpretation of what is essential and decisive in it.

Politicisation does not mean here an increased interest in “political affairs” among certain persons, but “the naming of something as political, rendering something political, interpreting something politically or turning something political” (Palonen 1999, 29). Politicisation thus has to do with rendering topics controversial and thus politically significant. By doing so, it is possible to create new subject matters for politicking beyond the conventional policy sphere. Politicising does not change the matter at hand as such, it is basically a qualitative operation. It can be an invention, a construction of chances with respect to which no chances were previously seen or admitted to have existed (Palonen 2001a). This kind of invention requires the construction of a new perspective that renders things to appear different. But according to Palonen (ibid.), politicisation can in another perspective mean detecting the political potential of some existing changes, shifts or processes. In this kind of disruptive moments of politicisation claims that “order” cannot be upheld without something, or that the “laws of nature” cannot be violated, have been politicised in the sense of being rendered obsolete by creating the “impossible” without catastrophes. This kind of politicisation is based on analysing the results or effects of long-term changes, which render some alleged “necessities” or “impossibilities” obsolete and use these changes in order to declare a new space for action. In an established polity, politicisation either introduces new items which alter the relationship between the existing ones or discards existing items. A more radical politicisation takes place when the introduction of a new dimension puts the existing items into a new perspective. Finally, an important dimension in politicisation has to do with time. Politicisation increases the *Spiel(zeit)raum* available in the future, but it also presupposes a redescription of an *Umschreibung* (ibid.) of the past.

The principal task in the present work will be to show the quality, strength and nature of politics in the CAP by focussing on the debate concerning agricultural policy formation in a given situation (the MacSharry reform). On the one hand, this implies an effort to make the domain of the political in agricultural policy visible and to reveal its inherent controversies and possibilities of choice – to show locations and moments of politicisation and politicking. On the other hand, the task is to outline the limits and restrictions of politics, points at which potential issues, actors and arguments are absent. Furthermore, this approach endeavours to pay attention to the origin of the dominant way of thinking in agricultural policy: what is considered important and what is not, what is perceived as a strong argument, where the “centre” is and what there is at the margin.

The political dimension receives its meaning and significance only in relation to the general setting. As a consequence, when assessing the political in

agricultural policy, the spatial, temporal and organisational contexts – which are often neglected in mainstream studies – are important. These will be discussed in Chapter 5.

In the following, the reform debates will be reconstructed and analysed in a setting which takes into account the characteristics of agricultural policy actors and their interrelationships. However, this study differs from the corporatist or network approaches, for example, in that actors and their characteristics are not used as the final explanation for the agricultural policy. We will concentrate especially on the consequences of this actor structure, i.e. in what ways agricultural policy gains expression. In this perspective, politics is to be found in the nature of the action. Politics is not seen as a puzzle for which, given clear goals and sufficient information, correct solutions always exist and can be found by calculation (Majone 1989, 20). In politics as action, attention is directed towards the exercise of political skills, such as good timing and attention to details, and towards the capacity to move the limits of the possible creatively.

In summary, the framework of this study on the politics of a policy states that a “policy” is a form of politics that is

- 1) constituted by combining several acts or measures into a coherent line, project or programme,
- 2) a form of politicking that is regulated and controlled by teleological and normative criteria that are in a problematic relation to each other,
- 3) based on a continuity that is broken by challenges to change (revision, correction, abandonment etc.)
- 4) related to a polity that is based on a specific *Spielraum* of politicisations with implicit exclusions of other forms of politicisation
- 5) united by a name
- 6) inessential, i.e. there are no *a priori* reasons why a policy should be a better form of politicking than no policy.

The Common Agricultural Policy offers a good example of such a policy, and the debate on the MacSharry proposals is a specification of this, constituted in a certain political constellation.

3. Focus and methodology: Reading the political

3.1. Introduction

Different research approaches to the politics of agricultural policy were discussed in Chapter 2, and the perspective of politics as action was introduced to complement the other approaches. It was shown that different approaches illuminate agricultural policy from different points of view, but no account is ever able to exhaust the phenomenon completely. Moreover, it was argued that as to explaining the political, the conventional approaches concentrate more on the actors and actor structures. Nevertheless, it goes without saying that all information that is gained with by applying different relevant approaches and methods is valuable. When choosing a method, the subject and the framing of the problem to be investigated should be decisive. The method must be able to analyse those features which the researcher wants to investigate.

This research starts out with the assumption that “European agriculture” does not refer to a single, given reality, but something that is being constantly constructed and reconstructed by different groups of users. These constructions are nowhere better available than in public debate. This is why texts (broadly understood) will be the main object of our analysis.

Concentration on textual material quite naturally also implies a methodologically qualitative, and to be more precise, also a linguistic orientation. The political, politicisation and politicking in agricultural policy will be explored using the tools of qualitative methods, especially the reconstruction of discursive fields, content analysis or argumentation theory – depending on the focus of the analysis.

Using texts as a source in political analysis is nothing new or special. On the contrary, it is rather difficult to say anything about politics without referring to written documents. A more specific linguistic turn has taken place in social sciences, however, a linguistic orientation that emerged in the context of the wider post-positivist interpretative tradition, which refuses to transpose the search for causality or the uncovering of general laws which is typical for the natural sciences. Instead, it aims at elucidating the meaning of certain social processes and at tracing conceptual connections (Hajer 1993, 38).

Linguistics-oriented analysis has already been applied to studies related to agricultural policy. Maarten Hajer (1993), for example, used discourse analysis to analyse environmental policy, and growing numbers of researchers have used linguistic approaches to try to show how rurality is constructed in the EU or in national policies (e.g. Halfacree 1993, 1995; Jones 1995; Frouws 1998; Richardson 2000).

Studying texts is essentially about what is said or written. Analytically, it means trying to make sense of the regularities and variations in what is being

said or written and to understand the effect of the specific way in which it is done (Hajer 1993, 39). There are various research methods which could be used in order to achieve this objective, and the ones chosen here will be presented later in this chapter. Before that, the empirical cases will be introduced. A textual analysis, just like any other study, has to be carefully limited and focussed in order to be successful as an item of empirical research.

3.2. Delimitation of the research

3.2.1. Case countries

In principle, studying the politics of the Common Agricultural Policy would require analysing everything that has been said or done under this label ever since the first ideas for such a policy were launched in Europe. No single study could comprise this without getting lost in the multitude of discussions. Therefore, a case study has been chosen as a means of delimiting the empirical analysis.

Two major perspectives are possible. On the one hand, one may concentrate on the Brussels end, i.e. on the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the Commission, or more specifically on the functioning of the directorate-general VI, or on the other hand, one may focus on the CAP in the EU member states.

Basically, the actual choice depends on what one wants to stress. In this case, as the aim is to analyse the construction of agricultural politics in the public domain, the latter alternative reaches the core of the problem better than the former. Focusing on policy formation inside DG VI would increase our knowledge of the way of thinking and reasoning among the EU bureaucratic staff, for example, and of their formal and informal connections and their views on European Union agriculture, but it would allow us to say little about how the CAP is perceived beyond those professional circles. The “Brussels end” will have a voice in our material in the form of the reform proposals, i.e. the official policy documents.

Unfortunately, the member states perspective still leaves the researcher with too large a material, to say nothing about the number of languages one should master in order to be able to study all the national debates. It was therefore necessary to restrict the material further. Material from two countries was considered suitable to analyse discussions in different national contexts and to reach a practical level of valid empirical data. One has to be careful, however, when making broad generalisations about the whole EU on the basis of two countries.

The Netherlands and Ireland were chosen as case countries on the following grounds. The Netherlands represents a founding member of the EU, located in its geographical heart, and has consistently acted in the forefront of the CAP.

There were also practical reasons. The first years of this research were carried out in the Netherlands, which meant that expertise and working contacts with the Dutch agricultural circles were easily available.

The fact that Ireland had a special relation to its own Commissioner MacSharry, and the Netherlands opposed the reform almost until the final stage, gave reason to expect different arguments to be expressed. In addition, Ireland is a small EU country in terms of population, whereas the Netherlands is considered “the largest of the small member states”. Furthermore, Ireland has a geographically somewhat peripheral location in the EU, which was assumed to give a different view on EU politics. The main features of agriculture and politics in the Netherlands and Ireland will be presented in more detail in Chapter 5. The two countries have one important feature in common, namely they are both exporting agricultural products to a large extent. This characteristic brings them closer in spite of the other differences, and adds to the relevance of the case study.

Consequently, this research will make use of two national debates as examples of the political thinking connected with the CAP. This formulation includes an important methodological choice, which distances it from traditional comparative studies based on the assumption of direct comparability of the chosen cases. A preference is shown here for the more constructivist approach which sees problems as being always named and understood in a specific context. From this point of view, a fruitful comparison has to focus on the different ways of naming a problem: on the contours of the discourse, the rhetorics chosen and the differences in the logic of argumentation. In this approach, interpretations depend on the context.

3.2.2. The MacSharry reform debate

Even after these delimitations, the empirical material would be too large for a single piece of research aimed at a detailed analysis. The political dimension of the CAP is in essence traceable in any text concerning it, from the Treaty of Rome to the description of recent policy instruments and policy objectives.

As one inevitably has to be content with only a part of the whole CAP, it is reasonable to look for an aspect which could be expected to be particularly sensitive to the political dimension. Revolution, one may argue, could be experienced as an ultimate moment of political choice offering politics as an action in its immediacy. In the absence, or at least improbability, of a revolution within the CAP, reforms offer excellent material for such an analysis. Reforms open up the debate, at least in principle, to fundamental re-evaluation and change. Major reforms can be seen as an arena for explicating the “political programme” of the CAP. Consequently reform texts as such are of interest for studying the political dimension, and also for studying why the debates that these proposals brought about raise the politics of the policy to the surface.

The 1992 reform of the CAP, often referred to as the MacSharry reform, was chosen as the case for the present purpose. The MacSharry reform is a fairly recent one, so that the debate still makes sense for today's reader. It is also considered to be the most profound reform of the CAP so far. Furthermore, it is old enough and can be perceived as a more or less completed project, which enables us to assess the persistence of the emphases that it has given to the politics of the CAP. The present profile of the CAP will be discussed in the conclusions in Chapter 9.

The history of the CAP and the MacSharry reform will be discussed in detail in Chapter 4. It would be useful to mention certain basic facts here, however. The case study concentrates on the public debate during the preparatory phase of the reform, from December 1990, when the first version leaked out, until the final decision in June 1992. The preparatory stage is useful for the examination, since it created an intellectual space for reconsidering the policy. This reconsideration took place in a structured manner, however, because it was based on a proposed plan. The debate was thus time and space-specific, which allows for an interpretation in relation to a certain context. This is especially important for the reliability of the conclusions. If the debate had been chosen at a random, without connecting it to a well-recognisable context, it would be more difficult to judge the significance of the different arguments.

In order to reveal the political aspect of agricultural policy – that is, to put it simply, how choices are made, we have to examine the horizons of the politics pursued by the different actors. The main questions thus are as follows: what issues and criteria were connected with agricultural policy, and what arguments were used for legitimisation of the ideas? Moreover, it is also important to show what issues and arguments the agricultural policy actors chose to omit.

3.2.3. Text corpus

As this work aims to reconstruct the CAP debate at large, a comprehensive body of material was required. In order to include all possible actors and their expressions and arguments, the text corpus was collected from the public debate, understood in a broad sense. The text corpus includes debate on the MacSharry reform in major national newspapers and magazines in both countries from December 1990 until June 1992. In the Dutch case, a couple of articles from November 1990 are included, since the debate on the possible reform started earlier there than in Ireland. The public debate includes both news articles, articles by experts and articles expressing opinions. Furthermore, the different versions of the MacSharry reform naturally form part of the text corpus, the part which gave a stimulus and direction to the debate.

The material thus consists of texts that were produced during the preparation of the reform proposals. These texts were brought about without the involvement

of the researcher, and in this sense they are more authentic than interviews, for example. Selected interviews with key actors are used as supplementary material, however, predominantly in order to define more closely the findings made in the text corpus.

The whole text corpus comprises 1046 articles, of them 488 are Dutch (300 classified as news, 157 as opinions and 31 as articles by experts) and 558 Irish (300 news articles, 231 opinions, and 27 articles by experts). The fact that there are exactly 300 news articles from each country is a sheer coincidence (see Appendix 1). In addition to the public debate material, 11 interviews were held with selected key actors in the two countries, including politicians, farm organisation leaders, high civil servants and academics (a list of persons interviewed is given in Appendix 2), 6 connected with Ireland and 5 with the Netherlands. There were 2 major farming organisations to interview in the Irish case, compared with one in the Netherlands. The interviews are used as secondary material, the primary material being the public debate texts.

The material is representative, since all articles on the reform published in the main newspapers and periodicals were collected. Interpretation of the debate would not necessarily have required such a coverage, but the larger material helps to construct the specific context of the debate. This assistance was needed, because the researcher is neither Dutch, nor Irish, and thus did not have any of the pre-understanding for analysing the debate that a native would have had. Being an outsider was not necessarily a disadvantage, however, since the researcher had less personal passions with respect to either of the countries studied. The only additional requirement was a sufficient knowledge of the context.

The material was collected from the press cutting archives of the leading farmers' unions in the two countries. The Dutch Landbouwschap and the Irish Farmers' Association (IFA) both follow the discussion on agriculture in their respective countries and collect all articles from leading national and regional newspapers and periodicals, editing the daily collections for the use of their personnel. From these archives, all articles which mentioned the word "reform" during the time studied were collected. Regional newspapers were so numerous, especially in the Netherlands, and primarily repeated the same news as the national newspapers, that they were excluded.

Radio and TV debates are not included. There were few of these relative to the debate in newspapers and periodicals, and they would hardly have contributed anything significantly new to the material. Transcripts of radio interviews were available in the press cuttings, for example, but as spoken language differs from written debate, it would have required different interpretation methods from those used for the rest of the material. The benefit of including radio and TV debates would have been smaller than the extra treatment that these spoken "texts" would have required. The transcripts of the radio interviews were read

through initially, but for the reasons listed above, they were not used in the analysis.

The above-mentioned delimitations were a practical necessity, although it goes without saying that they inevitably narrowed down the empirical basis of the work. It would no doubt have been interesting to carry out similar, detailed case studies of all the EU member states, but since the public debate analysed in the chosen countries covers the overall discussion relatively well, and since the countries are not too similar, some general conclusions on the nature of CAP politics and its changes can also be made.

The starting point here was that agricultural policy was a matter of interest for a wide range of people. In the terms of the political economy tradition, there were many interest groups which would have found that the CAP concerned them, and these groups clearly had different points of view. Not all those interested, however, were necessarily organised into groups. In the pluralist tradition, they could be understood as “potential” groups. The analysis thus focusses on the public perception of the CAP, since the media offer an arena for the public at large and not only for professional circles concerned with agricultural policy. In democracies like the Netherlands and Ireland all possible ideas are in principle allowed to be expressed in public, and even opinions which are not organised enough to participate in the CAP formation as such can (and do) appear in newspapers and periodicals. In turn, public debate also affects the understanding that people have of the CAP.

Furthermore, the choice of studying public perceptions of the CAP is linked with the purpose of this work. Since the aim is to investigate which themes and arguments are conceivable when discussing the CAP, a broad arena is needed. For politicians, in particular, the nature of the political arena makes a difference. In as far as they can affect what is printed in public, publicity is for things which can stand up to the light of day. This specific arena is suitable for politics that can be indulged in by anyone (Palonen 1993b, 161). By contrast, there is the form known as “cabinet” politics which is for an exclusive political arena: for insiders only.

As discussed in Chapter 2, agricultural policy-making has been seen as an exclusive business among corporatist or otherwise closely networking actors. If the aim here were to explain how certain decisions were made, it would require concentrating on the more or less closed circles. More attention has in fact been paid to such “cabinet” politics in mainstream research than to the question of how agricultural policy appears in front of the eyes of the general public.

The argument pursued here is that agricultural policy is very much in the interests of the public at large and is not only a matter for farmers, a few politicians and the administrative bodies who implement the policy. By definition, everyone who eats is affected by agricultural policy. Similarly, we are involved in agricultural policy when we pay taxes. Agricultural policy also has a significant

impact on the landscape, as about half of the land area on the earth is used for agriculture. Agriculture is also an important issue in our exchange with other regions of the world. Moreover, agriculture can be seen as the interface at which mankind is in contact with nature, a dimension that has become more relevant as the manipulation of living organisms has reached the gene level. Understood in these terms, agricultural policy is everyone's business. The closed "inner circle" is not excluded from the present investigation, of Course, as it is part of the public at large. As a matter of fact, many professional agricultural policy actors also participated in the public debate.

In addition, agricultural policy in the public domain carries one important quality connected with the Arendtian notion of politics as action. It requires an audience. Arendt compares politics with the performing arts, as both need a publicly organised space for their "work" (Arendt 1968, 154). Even though there is no denying that cabinet policy has a strategic meaning for the CAP within the EU, public debate on the CAP is important as an arena for showing its disputability and controversiality. An intimate and closed circle easily has unpoliticising effects (Palonen 1993b, 167). The public debate serves here as a display of the possible range of CAP politics. Whether the debate appears to be restricted in one way or another (issues, arguments or agents missing) remains to be shown in the case studies.

3.3. Research method

3.3.1. Language and politics

From the point of view of this work, politics takes place in texts. But to be able to deal with the political in texts, one has to go beyond the natural attitude towards language and communication according to which there is a reality and then there is communication about reality. Or, apply this to the present situation, first there is European Union agriculture and a common policy for it, and then there is communication about this agriculture and its policy. This assumption is based ultimately on the arrogant assumption that the truth is known and that it only has to be communicated to others.

In politics, decisions have to be justified, and arguments are used for this purpose. It is therefore essential to accept that there is no unique way of constructing an argument. Data and evidence can be selected from the available information in a wide variety of ways, and similarly, there are several alternative methods of analysis and ways of ordering values (Majone 1989, 19). To show the choices made and arguments used, texts need to be analysed in order to study their political dimension.

In this case, even if we collected all possible statistics describing European Union agriculture in all the member states, we would not receive "the truth and

nothing but the truth". In order to give a description that can be followed, we need to simplify and reduce complexity. We would have to make many choices, since there is no way of covering European agriculture totally. We would have to make a choice concerning what we regard as "a farm" and what not, or who would be classified as "a farmer". Are part-time farmers included, and if they are, on what criteria? What is the "countryside", and what is a "village"? Would we just count livestock units, or would we classify them according to how the cattle are kept? Likewise, the way in which we chose to categorise different groups would affect our understanding of the characteristics that we were studying. Furthermore, many features are not comparable, especially if they include culturally differentiated meanings and values. Consider, for example, the formal position of farmers' wives in the context of farms as enterprises in different countries, or the category of "family farms".

It is important to note that there is nothing intrinsically condemnable in selecting a particular combination of data, facts and values. Without this choice it would not be possible to communicate at all about complex issues. Nevertheless, the choices we make not only construct social reality, they are also of political significance. They reveal what is thinkable, and what we regard as important. The CAP debate reveals "actors' constructions" (Mormont 1990), for example, which are based on representations concerning, in this case, the dimensions and characteristics of EU agriculture. What we are likely to find important depends on our context, on our ideas of what is desirable, and so on.

At the same time, our choices indicate that the pattern of perceiving EU agriculture or the CAP is not inevitable. It is man-made, subject to change, and also constantly subject to revision and criticism. As a consequence, it is always possible to see things anew, to describe them in new ways, and to communicate these innovations to others. It is, basically, these choices that the politics is about.

As for using political debate for studying the political, Norman Fairclough (1992, 211) points out that "... language is widely misperceived as transparent, so that the social and ideological 'work' that language does in producing, reproducing or transforming social structures, relations and identities is routinely 'overlooked'". He suggests a view of text as a choice, as a selection of options from systems constituting meaning potentials. As Fairclough (*ibid.*, 212) goes on to explain, this view of text can be extended to the identification of "absences" as well as presences.

The viewing of texts as a result of more or less deliberate choices and the analysing of what is absent or omitted can offer tools for reading the political aspects of texts. Kari Palonen (1993a, 15) has called this kind of reading as demapping: "It does not destroy the maps presented, it rather directs attention to the principles used in drawing them, or else the research may use already existing maps but read them differently."

The task of reading the political in this empirical analysis of the MacSharry debate in Ireland and the Netherlands is divided into three parts, focussing on the actor structure (Chapter 6), the thematic structure (Chapter 7) and the argument structure (Chapter 8). Each of these phases uses slightly different methods and approaches in order to optimise the achievement of the main objectives of this research. The main methodological points concerning the empirical inquiry will be presented briefly in the following, with the attention being paid to the concept of new rhetoric, which has been applied to the analysis of the argument structure.

3.3.2. Actors and themes

Themes

Chapters 6 and 7 focus on the actor structure and thematic structure of the MacSharry debate. This dual analysis shows first who appear as subjects in the public debate concerning the CAP and what are the main themes dealt with in that debate. Secondly, an examination of the actor structures and thematic structures is used to point out more precisely which actors and themes are being considered more relevant or important than others, and thirdly, showing the actual structures help us to deliberate upon which actors (or actor groups) or themes that would in principle be possible do not appear in that debate.

A number of concepts from discourse analysis are employed to organise this level of analysis. Discourse analysis is specifically used to outline the debate in such a manner that the political aspects of agricultural policy become more visible.

For this purpose, an application is made of concepts from the later work of Michel Foucault. In his later books, Foucault analysed the social discourses on social disciplinisation and punishment and on sexuality (Foucault 1981, 1991). In this phase he went beyond the strict analysis of discourse (archaeology) and instead began to pay more attention to the conditions, limitations and institutionalisation within discursive formations (genealogy) (Dreyfus and Rabinow 1983, 104).

In Foucaultian discourse analysis, discursive practices appear in accepted concepts, legitimised subjects, taken-for-granted objects and preferred strategies, which yield justified truth claims (*ibid.*, xxiv). When studying discursive formations, we describe relations between statements (Foucault 1972, 31-39). We are dealing with a discursive formation if certain types of statements, concepts or thematic choices appear regularly. Thematisation not only aims at showing that certain issues exist or recur, but also attaches importance to the distinction between issues and themes. It is crucial how issues are interconnected and what sort of lines of reasoning they follow. An issue must have regular

connections and logical functions of this kind in order to form a distinct theme, either alone or together with other related issues. A certain theme may occur in different fields of discourse, and in different analyses and conceptual systems²⁰.

The broadened definition of discursive field proposed by Magali Sarfatti Larson (1990) is employed here according to which a Foucaultian discursive field goes beyond the institutions within which “codes” are elaborated, learnt and applied, in conjunction with legitimating discourses²¹. “*At some point, we must include fields that only have a thematic ideological unity, that are unified only because all their parts, all their actors, all their speakers, are concerned with the same thing and almost always with conflicting points of view.*” (Larson 1990, 35).

Basically, what is at stake in the approach applied here is the notion that phenomena which are discussed are not necessarily to be described in a natural way with precisely the concepts and categories through which they appear in the discussion. Moreover, this notion turns our attention to the patterns with which certain ways of conceptualising and categorising are connected with certain practises and contexts. The aim here is to show how the reform debate was conceptualised and politicised in two EU member states and what kinds of politicking strategies were employed.

It is common to assume that public deliberation and public policy are primarily questions of defining goals and finding the means to achieve them. In fact, the crucial aspect in both of them is to define the norms which determine when certain conditions are to be considered policy problems. “What’s the problem?” is a good question. It draws attention to the timing and context in which certain issues become politicised. Agricultural policy issues are neither given nor constant, but are themselves a function of the policy-making processes that they are supposed to guide. The construction of policy problems can be studied with different approaches,²² among which thematic reading will be adopted here.

Actors

Hannah Arendt (1958/1998, viii-ix) argues that the fundamental condition of politics is that “it goes on among plural human beings, each of whom can act and start something new”, and continues (ibid., 7): “While all aspects of the

²⁰ For example, it is possible to discuss the GATT trade talks without any connection to the MacSharry-reform, and “justice” appears as a theme as well in literature and film.

²¹ Although Foucault himself studied and referred to actual institutional settings (the asylum, the hospital, the gaol, the school, the army, the courtroom, the factory, the social welfare agency, the publishing industry, the art gallery, the museum and so on).

²² For example agenda setting (see e.g. Kronsell 1997), or taking problems apart in the way done by women studies (see e.g. Bacchi 1999).

human condition are somehow related to the human condition of plurality²³, this plurality is specifically *the* condition ... of all political life". Her notion of politics as an action also requires that "... the political realm rises directly out of acting together, the 'sharing of words and deeds'" (ibid., 198). This is why the analysis of the politics of agricultural policy has to investigate the range and nature of actors in the debate.

Connecting actors with thematic reading, Larson (1990, 35) sees discursive fields as battlefields where experts of different kinds are fighting for pre-eminence, but where other, non-expert forces also intervene. Publicity is also a means of drawing attention to the arguments one wants to put forward. The public image of agricultural policy has often been connected with the dominance of the farm lobby and ministry of agriculture officials, which has created an impenetrable jungle of jargon for outsiders (see Bolin et al. 1984). The aim here is to determine systematically and explicitly who were actually the actors in the agricultural policy discourse on the MacSharry reform in Ireland and in the Netherlands. Actors are either those who performed as active subjects, or were named by others as actors in the course of the debate.

A helpful metaphor here is that of a casting for a play: there are various actors on the scene of the Common Agricultural Policy performing in certain roles that differ in importance and represent various reference groups. Furthermore, the actors may perform in different connections and in different arenas. The analysis presents the main division of actors in our two case countries: into those who had main roles and those who were less prominent, and those who were not present themselves but were referred to. In addition, we will also pay attention here to those who neither had any say in the debate, nor were mentioned by others. The public at large, in its turn, forms the audience, which responds to the moves made by the other actors but does not itself take the initiative.

It is useful to distinguish two main types of actor, and also certain subgroups. First, there are two kinds of human actor: those who consider themselves competent in this specific discourse (those who write about the subject), and those who are regarded as competent by others (by other actors or by the media). Essentially, actors are only powerful in so far as they are constituted as authorities vis-à-vis other actors through discourse. The two groups partly overlap, however, as the latter group includes those who are recognised in the discursive field but seldom perform in the discussion themselves. Those affected by the policy, for example, are usually represented as interest groups (farmers, farm wives, animals, consumers, taxpayers, agri-business etc.). Furthermore, there

²³ That is, "the fact that men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world" (Arendt 1958/1998, 7). Arendt's idea of *plurality* in politics should not be confused to the idea of *pluralism* discussed in Chapter 2.3.1.

are actors who often perform but do not have their own say in the discourse (e.g. "Brussels" or the EU Parliament).

Secondly, since we are concerned here with supranational policy, various countries, both member states and other, non-EU countries, appear as relevant actors. On the basis of this analysis it is possible to illustrate different ideas regarding the EU, the significances of different countries and the influence of the international environment in general. The analysis at this level will be focussed especially on questions of what lies at the centre, where the periphery is, and how the rest of the world is arranged around these two. Furthermore, it will seek to reveal the demarcation lines which arise as a result of CAP controversies.

The actor structure will be investigated by means of content analysis, a research technique that is frequently used in the social sciences that seeks to understand the data as symbolic phenomena rather than a collection of physical events.²⁴ The most common form of data representation in content analysis is in terms of frequencies.

Absolute frequencies will be used in the chapter on actors in the following way. Each actor mentioned in the debate will be picked out only once per text irrespective of how many times the name was repeated, and the number of texts in which each actor has appeared will be recorded. One should be cautious regarding comparisons between the two countries, however, as the debates are incommensurable for this purpose, e.g. on account of the different languages, journalistic styles and national platforms available for the discussion. The frequencies give an idea of the emphases existing inside the national debates, but international comparisons are possible only at the level of individual topics of emphasis. One might conclude, for example, that the Prime Minister is a more prominent figure in the Irish discussion than in the Dutch debate. The *Taoiseach* (Haughey, and later Reynolds) ranks high among the Irish actors, but the *Premier* (Lubbers) was not regarded as an authority by the other Dutch actors even though he occasionally said something about the topic. The national debates can be discussed together only in relative terms, but not in absolute figures.

Commissioner MacSharry has not been treated here in the manner of the other actors, because his name was mentioned in virtually every text, being part and parcel of the reform proposal. Only occasionally, mainly in texts classified here as "expert" opinions, was the reform discussed as a Commission proposal. Interviews given by Ray MacSharry have nevertheless been included in the text corpus used for the actor structure analysis.

²⁴ Content analysis has been used especially in communication studies. On the basis of content analysis, see Berelson and Lazarsfeld 1948, Berelson 1952, Krippendorff 1980.

3.3.3. Arguments

The argumentation structures of the MacSharry reform debate will be analysed in Chapter 8. This analysis will concentrate especially on texts carrying arguments relevant to the scope and content of the reform and will be structured in terms of the main themes in the debate. It will thus deepen the thematic analysis by showing the ways of politicising/depoliticising and politicking used in the debate.

In essence, analysis of the argument structure means the examination of practices used for persuasion and legitimisation. It is an attempt to reconstruct the argumentative strategies built into the discussion on the CAP and to disclose the persuasive elements implicit in them.

It will be shown that the arguments used in the reform debate very often draw their strength from economic reasoning. As McCloskey (1994, 82) has stated: “Economists specialise in knowing about costs and benefits. But someone – maybe even an economist – might want to learn about the speech by which people construct their stories of the cost and benefit.”

The following discussion will first outline rhetoric as an approach and discuss the role of argument in defining realities and constructing policy choices. It will then turn to the rhetorical approach to be used in this work, that known as *new rhetoric*, and finally it will discuss the three analytical sub-fields of new rhetoric which are relevant here: adaptation of the speaker to the audience, the premises or starting points used in argumentation and the associative and dissociative techniques of argumentation.

Rhetoric as an approach

The word “rhetoric” has traditionally had two definitions, Platonic “rhetoric”, which refers to mere flattery and cosmetics, or “eloquence”, and Aristotelian “rhetoric”, which includes all the available means of uncoerced persuasion (McCloskey 1994, xiii). It is the Aristotelian version that will be considered here. Rhetoric is speech that has designs on the reader (*ibid.*, xiv). In other words, the message is commonly altered in response to the demands of the communication situation: the presence and character of the audience and speaker relative to each other, the language spoken in common, the style of the customarily used medium, the history of earlier similar talk and the practical purpose to be achieved by means of the communication (*ibid.*, 35).

Although there is no need to fight the ultimate battles of positivism here, the current revived interest in rhetoric can be seen as a reaction to positivism. Historically, the origins of modern rhetoric have been dated to the seventeenth century writings of Francis Bacon (Summa 1989, 90) whose ideas on the imperfection of human perception foreshadowed the growing interest in psychological and cognitive processes during the subsequent centuries. Like the other early proponents of rationalism in the seventeenth century – Descartes,

Hobbes and Spinoza – Bacon nevertheless had a paradoxically low opinion of the power of reasoning in human affairs. The distinction between form and substance advocated by the Cartesian school has by and large been inherited as a part of scientific positivism (see McCloskey 1994), but if positivism was a reaction to German idealism, the latter has made a comeback from the 1960's onwards in a slightly different form, as pragmatism or rhetoric, finding its reality in social discourse (ibid., 11).

Basically, we use language to organise our image of the world. Knowledge without human speech is merely an ideal type in the mind of God, whereas real knowledge entails communication (ibid., 33-34). The people studied here who discussed EU agriculture were giving it meaning and interpreting the events, trying to make their perception sound coherent and significant. The political aspect reveals itself in the choice of what is important, in argumentative strategies and in the vocabularies used for handling issues that are deemed important.

The *new rhetoric*²⁵ approach is in principle suitable for studying all the methods of proof used by human beings, except perhaps for those of formal logic and mathematics. Many of the objects studied by the social sciences do not fall into the realm of strict logic. Especially in the domain of politics, demonstrative proofs are seldom available for either those who take the political decisions or those engaged in the academic study of the field of politics. Rather, we find ourselves dealing with “reasonable decisions”, “reasonable choices” or “reasonable hypotheses”, with deliberation and controversy. Politicians, for their part, deal with the credible, the plausible or the probable (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 1).

The new rhetoric perspective

The different approaches in the rhetorical tradition offer a variety of conceptual apparatuses for text analysis²⁶. One thing that all these approaches have in common is that they are interested in rhetorics as a way of communicating through the use of symbols, as is typical of human beings. The new rhetoric is not a study of stylistic manipulations, as is often understood by the term rhetoric, but rather a theory of practical reasoning, an analysis of informal reasoning as distinct from an analysis of the forms and rules of formal deduction and induction. For the new rhetoric, all human reasoning – concerning facts, values, opinions, decisions or beliefs – proceeds rhetorically, so that rhetorical persuasion is not a deceitful or superficial way of influencing others by means of words but an ordinary technique for thinking and interaction.

²⁵ The term “new rhetoric” is used in distinction to old Greek classical rhetoric.

²⁶ In addition to Perelman, leading theorists in new rhetoric are Kenneth Burke (see e.g. 1950/1969, 1966) and Stephen Toulmin (see e.g. 1958).

We will present below one possible set of tools for studying argumentation, the new rhetoric approach of Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca, which will be employed here for analysing the argument structure. The new rhetoric is essentially a theory of argumentation, which, unlike demonstration, presupposes a meeting of minds. Rhetorical analysis connects meaning with its argumentative context. Argumentation is always addressed by a person, called the rhetorician – whether by speech or by writing – to an audience of listeners or readers (Perelman 1979, 10-11). The presence of a real or hypothetical audience always has an influence on the text, even though it does not have to be implicitly expressed, and may even go unrecognised for the author. Rhetorical techniques are a grammar of communication, so that although it is not necessary to know the grammatical rules by heart, it is impossible to produce understandable speech without following these rules at least to some extent.

Essential to this approach is the notion that argumentation aims at finding a common understanding in a situation of reasonable contraries: “two different decisions, on the same subject, can both be reasonable and be expressions of a coherent and philosophically justified point of view” (Perelman 1979, 115). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969, 1) write: “The very nature of deliberation and argumentation is opposed to necessity and self-evidence, since no one deliberates where the solution is necessary or argues against what is self-evident.” Consequently, argumentation presupposes contingency in an action situation. In this way the Perelmanian model of argumentation will be helpful for detecting political aspects for the purposes of this study. It is weaker, however, when it comes to explicating thematisation, because it takes the theses upon which argumentation take place as given – without asking what is their origin, how they were chosen or what is their meaning (Palonen 1995, 15). This is why this approach was not used in the thematic analysis.

The approach of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca is concerned with the structure of argumentation from the point of view of its persuasive efficiency. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca seek to discover the basic methods that are used in contingent arguments addressed to audiences of any sort. In most of his texts, Perelman underlines the persuasive function of argumentation, so that there is a certain consensus orientation in his concept of politics.

Kari Palonen (1995, 14-15) has also drawn attention to how the limiting of argumentation to the maximisation of adherence detracts from the interpretative power of the analysis. Palonen continues that Perelman actually also uses the verb “*provoquer*” when defining the aim of argumentation (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 5 and Perelman 1977, 23)²⁷, which broadens the scope

²⁷ In the English translations, it has been translated either “to induce” (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 4) or “to elicit” (1982, 9).

of the analysis towards acting in a situation. In *The Realm of Rhetoric* Perelman (1982, 12) writes: “We should note in this regard that argumentation does not aim solely at gaining a purely intellectual adherence. Argumentation very often aims at inciting action, or at least at creating a disposition to act”, and continues (ibid., 13): “... when we are dealing with theses presented in an argumentative discourse, these theses aim at times at bringing about a purely intellectual result – a disposition to admit their truth – and at other times at provoking an immediate or eventual action.” This connects argumentation with action, which keeps the situation in motion (Palonen 1995, 14). The present work focusses in particular on the kind of argumentation which aims at changing the recipient’s understanding of the given situation, or at preserving the status quo.

The new rhetoric approach also has obvious connections with discourse analysis, although it also differs in principle from it and from other post-structural approaches. The main difference relative to a strict Foucaultian discourse analysis²⁸ is that the latter speaks of *being at the mercy of language*, whereas the new rhetoric approach studies *influencing by means of language* (Summa 1989, 70).

To apply this to the analysis of the MacSharry reform debate, we can start with the notion that there are numerous ways of perceiving the topic of the debate (changing the CAP) and the situation (in EU agriculture) and that these produce different understandings. Moreover, the mutually competing perceptions of the problem lead to different recommendations for a solution and prepare for different, mutually exclusive ways of proceeding. This work aims firstly at showing that these processes really took place in the debate, and secondly at revealing what kinds of argumentative strategies were used. It will be similarly important to find out whether there were potential perceptions and lines of argument that were not uttered. This will provide a parallel inquiry to the chapters on themes and actors.

The major elements in the new rhetoric of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca can be summarised as follows (Perelman 1982, x-xi). In the first place, argumentation proceeds informally. Secondly, arguments are always addressed to audiences for the purpose of inducing or increasing their adherence to the theses presented. Thirdly, to gain any degree of success, the arguments have to proceed from premises that are acceptable to the audiences. Arguing always includes procedures by which ideas and values can be given a special presence (in the French sense of being *made present*) in the minds of those addressed. Thus, the major objects of examination in this analysis are the relationship between the speaker and audience and the arguments in relation to propositions

²⁸ The kind of discourse analysis applied in this study is not Foucaultian in a strict sense even though it was inspired by Foucault’s terms.

that they concern, i.e. how the actual argumentation is built up. The term rhetorical analysis will be taken below as referring to a study of texts that concentrates on the way the rhetorician – speaker or writer – addresses a particular audience in a given situation, and on the way that rhetorician supports the theses or propositions with arguments or proof. We will now discuss these analytical subfields in more detail.

Rhetorician / Audience

The limits for a *framework of argumentation* are determined through the distinctions made relative to other types of intersubjective process – e.g. using force, logical syllogising or pure intellectual meditation. The relationship between the speaker (or writer) and a real or hypothetical audience is essential. The nature of the audience to which arguments can be successfully presented will determine to a great extent both the direction the arguments will take and the character and significance that will be attributed to them (ibid., 30). Different types of audience construction will direct the argumentation towards different schemes. In other words, when entering into argumentation, the rhetorician weighs up the situation, chooses the appropriate words and style, and determines the goals according to the nature of the audience. The most important distinction is that between a universal and a particular audience.

By an audience, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca refer to a set of individuals whom the rhetorician wishes to influence by his arguments. They do not necessarily have to be a real or physically present group of listeners or readers, of course, and it is possible for the speaker to address a vast audience in its entirety or only to a small fraction of the listeners. A universal audience represents the “highest” aim of the rhetorician, to find arguments that could convince all rational adult human beings, “the whole of mankind, or at least, of all normal, adult persons” (ibid., 30).

A particular audience can be any limited group of listeners (or readers) whatever, i.e. any specific subgroup of the universal audience. It may refer to a concrete group of people at a particular moment or place, or to an abstract, specific target group for the argumentation, defined according to some definable principle. The particular audience that is addressed is not necessarily the group of people physically present at the moment when the argumentation takes place. A case in point is a politician making a speech in Parliament. The particular audience is in effect the potential body of electors and not the listeners who are physically present (Foss et al. 1985, 108). The status of an audience varies with the concepts that one has of it (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 34): the universal audience for one person may be no more than a particular audience for another.

In any event, if we compare the two kinds of audience, the rhetorician can become better acquainted with the composition and structure of a particular audience – i.e. with the social background and position of the recipients of the rhetoric – and thus find reasons that the audience will understand and be sympathetic towards, and simultaneously also the ones that are best left unstated in this case. Self-deliberation and argumentation presented to a single hearer are extreme examples of particular audiences.

Perelman (1982, 18) makes one more important distinction between a universal and a particular audience, namely that discourse addressed to a specific audience aims to persuade, while discourse addressed to the universal audience aims to convince. In general, Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca maintain that the mere fact that a speaker engages in argumentation is a sign of the existence of differing views on the subject under discussion and of the great importance the speaker attaches to gaining the audience's consent.

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969, 19-26; Perelman 1982, 9-20) stress that the more homogenous the structure of the audience, the easier it is for the rhetorician to approach it. When the audience is composed of people of the same profession (e.g. cereal growers) or of one faith (Catholic Ireland), it is safe to assume that they will accept the validity of arguments based on certain types of proof and on certain authorities (law, political realities, Christian morality). The closer a rhetorician moves to addressing a universal audience (e.g. the international press), the harder it is to ensure that the various arguments do not appear to be in conflict with each other and that none of the starting points used will alienate particular subgroups of listeners.

Premises / Arguments

According to Perelman, it is essential and characteristic for the starting points and techniques of argumentation to be determined in accordance with the audience. These variable conditions alter the possibilities for argumentation. The *starting points*, or premises of argumentation refer to implicit agreements between the speaker and the audience; agreements which exist prior to the argumentation and are separate from it. In addition, they refer to the ways in which these agreements are made use of in argumentation (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 65-183).

“In fact, the aim of argumentation is not, like demonstration, to prove the truth of the conclusion from premises, but to transfer to the conclusion the *adherence* accorded to the premises.” (Perelman 1982, 21). These implicit agreements determine what can be taken as real and what are the principles that have to be followed if one wants to present convincing arguments. Perelman maintains that the actual choice of premises and their formulation, together with the adjustments involved, will rarely be without argumentative value: these

things provide a preparation for argument which not only establishes the elements but constitutes the first step in their utilisation for persuasive purposes. These premises also serve as a conscious or unconscious basis for deciding what arguments can be used or what style should be chosen.

Among the points of agreement from which the speaker draws the premises for a discourse, it is important to distinguish those which bear upon *reality* (i.e. facts, truths and presumptions) from those which bear on *preferable* (i.e. values, hierarchies and the *loci* of the preferable) (Perelman 1982, 23). Perelman thus contrasts opinions which are thought to express a known or presumed fact to those which express a preference, or which indicate what is preferable (ibid., 26).

It is typical for Perelman's epistemological attitude that facts are for him always contractual. In argumentation, it is not possible to classify this or that concrete datum as a fact, in any time or spatial context. On the contrary, the notion of "fact" is something that could be a point of agreement for a universal audience. Facts are thus the notions which are withdrawn, at least for the time being, from the argumentation. They could, however, be called into question later, and one of the parties to the debate may refuse to accept a particular affirmation by the opposite side as a fact (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 67).

Although "facts" and "truth" refer to objective elements that are supposedly accepted by a universal audience, i.e. they are common to all, it is important to notice that the status of fact and truth in argumentation is not guaranteed indefinitely unless we accept an unerring authority, and these can be disproved in a debate. The most effective way of doing this is to show that the fact or truth is incompatible with other facts and truths that have been established with greater certainty. In other words, facts and truth are potentially questionable in argumentation (Perelman 1982, 23-24).

Presumptions are also often used as bases upon which to build reasonable convictions. They refer to what normally happens and what can be reasonably counted upon. We are accustomed to think that what happens is normal, but one can still question, for example, whether a certain presumption is applicable to a certain set of circumstances. The immediate effect of a presumption is that it imposes the burden of proof upon the person who attempts to question its applicability (Ibid., 25).

Premises concerning the preferable are based on the values, the value hierarchies and the *loci* that are important and precious for the audience. Sufficiently vague or abstract "universal" values, such as the true, the good or the just are useful in argumentation, because they allow us to present specific values, upon which groups reach agreement, as more determined aspects of these universal values (ibid., 27). Moreover, universal values can, in principle, unite the seemingly contradictory interests of a heterogeneous audience. Specific

values relating to concrete and unique entities, however, are usually more effective than universal ones after first being accepted – they draw on the personal and intimate experiences of each listener.

Perelman underlines the importance of telling apart abstract values – such as beauty or justice – from concrete values, such as the Church. Concrete value is a characteristic of a specific being, object, group or institution. It emphasises uniqueness, whereas abstract values refer to rules that are valid for everyone and for all occasions, such as justice, truthfulness, love or humanity, or the utilitarian principle of Bentham, which defines the good by what is most useful to the greatest number of people. Perelman argues that reasoning based on concrete values seems typical for conservative societies, while abstract values serve more easily as a basis for critiques of society, and can be used as justifications for change. (Perelman 1982, 27-28).

Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969) underline that it is often more important for the rhetorician to be aware of the hierarchical order of the values respected by his audience than of the numerous separate values in themselves. For example, knowing that the audience is in favour of both protecting their own market and free enterprise does not help one to determine which value will be preferred over the other if they appear to collide in a certain situation. Concrete values are understood as hierarchical in that human values are superior to those attached to things, while in the realm of abstract values what is just can be taken as superior to what is useful. Heterogeneous hierarchies relate values qualitatively, while homogeneous hierarchies are quantitative, giving preference to the greatest quantity of a positive value or the smallest quantity of a negative value (Perelman 1982, 29).

Finally, the broadest perspective on values can be described through the concept of loci of the preferable. This is analogous to presumptions and refers to the very general premises that serve as foundations for values and their hierarchies, to the typical forms of presenting an argument that the audience is already familiar with and approves. The general loci of quantity assert that what is good for the greatest number of people is preferable to what profits only a few. In a similar vein, what is durable is preferable to what is fragile. Correspondingly, the general locus of quality implies giving preference to something that is unique, rare and/or irreplaceable and favours the elite over the masses, and values what is difficult to attain or what must be done at the very moment. (Ibid., 29-31).

There seems to be an implicit tendency in agricultural policy to draw on quantitative justifications when the grounds for policy suggestions are to be stated. Ordinarily suggestions concerning specific activities and the appropriations needed to finance them are presented as the results of calculation, which is an effective structure of argumentation as such, since numbers are often taken as incontrovertible without asking what were the premises for the calculation. A

familiar locus, such as emphasis on the irreplaceability of an individual or unique case (e.g. Ireland as an exceptionally agriculturally-oriented country) can lend plausibility to even quite strange arguments.

Argumentation techniques: associative and dissociative strategies

The starting points of argumentation and the actual argumentative techniques should be distinguished from the structures conditioning the argumentative situation. Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (1969, 190) present different *techniques of argumentation*, and analyse their persuasive efficiency and their occurrence in different argumentative contexts. According to them, all argumentation can be characterized by processes of association and dissociation.

By processes of association they understand schemes which bring separate elements together and allow us to establish a unity among them, which aims either at organising them or at evaluating them, positively or negatively, relative to each other. Processes of dissociation are techniques of separation which have the purpose of distinguishing elements which are regarded as forming a whole, or at least a unified group, within a certain system of thought. Dissociation modifies such a system by modifying certain concepts which make up its essential parts. (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 190).

The liaisons of concepts and attitudes can be created by verbal techniques which are distinguishable from one another. The major types of these techniques are quasi-logical arguments, arguments that are based on claims concerning the structure of reality, and arguments which establish this structure.

Quasi-logical arguments claim to be rational because they resemble the patterns of formal reasoning. They get their strength from claiming similarity to logical, mathematical, formal thinking. However, a quasi-logical argument differs from formal deduction in that it always presupposes adherence to nonformal theses which alone allow the application of the argument. The difference between these arguments and formal demonstration is that only an effort of reduction or specification of a nonformal character makes it possible for these arguments to appear demonstrative – this is why they are called quasi-logical. (Ibid., 193-260).

Quasi-logical arguments present the situation in a way that sets aside or marginalises competing interpretations and individual evaluation criteria. Examples of quasi-logical argumentation include the presenting of “analogous” situations, which minimises the inherent difference between two real-life situations, or the use of statistics and the calculation of probabilities when predicting future events (Perelman 1982, 53-80).

Arguments that are based on the structure of reality depend on liaisons which are believed to exist and generally accepted between elements of reality. Belief in the existence of such objective structures can be associated with a variety of

realities, including relations of causality or essences of which certain phenomena are merely manifestations. A crucial element in this is the existence of agreements which are not questioned and which the speaker uses to develop the argumentation (Perelman 1982, 50-51).

Arguments based on the structure of reality make use of this structure to establish a solidarity between accepted judgements and others which it is intended to promote. This liaison can be formed by relations of succession, which unite a phenomenon with its consequences or causes, and also arguments which apply to the co-existence relations that unite a person with his or her actions, a group with the individuals who form it, and, in general, an essence with its manifestations (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 261-263). In practice, the causes of human acts are often complex and interwoven, and their consequences may be unforeseen and far-reaching. Similarly, it is scarcely possible to exhaust all the conceivable causes of a given event. A pragmatic argument refers to causal chains demonstrated between elements, where value transfers between the elements can be carried out by proceeding from cause to effect or from effect to cause (*ibid.*, 266).

Moreover, arguments which establish the structure of reality are those which, starting from a known specific case, allow the establishment of a precedent, an earlier happening, model, or a general rule, so that they enable reasoning by model or example. This permits either the consideration of a particular case or reasoning by analogy. The use of models in argumentation relies on the particular case approach, while there are various types of argument by analogy that serve sometimes to structure an unknown reality and sometimes to take a stance with regard to it. Reasoning by analogy is based on establishing and exploiting a resemblance between two relationships which originally belong to different spheres. Metaphors are the most powerful form of this reasoning (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 350-410; Perelman 1982, 106-125).

When using metaphors, we look for coherence with previous experiences. Metaphors combine reason (categorisation, entailment, inference) with imagination (seeing one thing in terms of another) to form an imaginative rationality. They create meaning and new realities in our lives, but by making events seem consistent they always hide the aspects of the situation that do not fit into the metaphor in question. There is no way of expressing something completely by paraphrasing it, because some of the meaning of the original experience is always lost or altered in the translation.

Dissociative argumentation is fundamental to every deliberation which, seeking to resolve a difficulty raised by general thought, is required to dissociate the elements of reality from each other and bring about a new organisation of the data. By dissociating the real from the apparent among elements described in the same way, we can move in the direction of elaborating a philosophical reality which is opposed to the reality of common sense. Perelman refers to

pairs created in this way as “philosophical pairs”, as opposed to “antithetical pairs” such as good and evil or “classificatory pairs” such as animal/vegetable or north/south (Perelman 1982, 52).

Essentially, dissociative argumentation is a technique involving separating things, people or events that seem to be naturally linked or that are linked by the opponent and showing the audience that, in reality, there is no equivalence between them. The act of dissociation is typically performed by separating the two terms of some classical philosophical pair, by arguing that appearances do not represent the deeper reality, for example, or that a theory does not work in practice, that an accidental occurrence does not reveal the true essence of the situation, that a particular case is not indicative of the rule, that something abstract is less important than something concrete, or that something relative must be subordinated to something absolute. In each case the first term in the pair, and its counterpart in the argumentative context, will have to be shown to be illusory or erroneous while the second is said to denote a deeper truth or underlying coherence (Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca 1969, 411-459; Perelman 1982, 126-137).

By dissociative argumentation, the rhetorician can claim that his opponent or audience has grasped only the immediately perceptible impression and missed the fundamental meaning behind it, or that the apparent simplicity of an unjustified interpretation has misled some people to disregard the various problems connected with its application to reality, or that there are several very basic differences between the two incidents that have mistakenly been connected.

4. CAP: The chain of reforms

4.1. Introduction

This chapter will provide a concise review of the origins, objectives, principles and development of the European Union Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), starting with a short discussion of its fundamentals. As this overview is meant as a historical background to the MacSharry reform debates of the 1990's, attention is primarily paid to the evolution of the policy. In this respect, the main logic applying to what has been regarded as problematic, how the problems have been approached and what policy measures have been chosen can be considered the most important aspects.

In order not to become engulfed in detail, only the main features of the evolution of this policy will be presented. Thus the aim is not to present an exhaustive report²⁹. Instead, the CAP policy changes are placed in the larger context of the history of European integration. The Common Agricultural Policy never developed in a vacuum, for there were political issues that were larger than agriculture alone which determined its original setting. Similarly, the further European integration has extended and deepened, the more important it has been to view the CAP as a part of a much larger project, in connection with the evolution of other EU objectives and policies.

The chapter concludes with another essential feature of the MacSharry reform debate context, namely, the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations. Officially, the reform had nothing to do with these trade talks, but they did in effect bring to an end the isolation of agriculture and agricultural policy within international politics. The final section introduces the reader to the main content of the MacSharry reform, as a background to the analysis of the debate.

4.2. Origins and objectives of the CAP

Agriculture has proved to be a perpetual problem in the context of European integration. When Belgium and Luxembourg formed an Economic Union (BLEU) in 1922, it turned out to be generally successful apart from the agricultural aspect (Tracy 1989, 243). Farmers in Luxembourg needed special treatment on account of both the unfavourable natural conditions and the inefficient farm structure. Moreover, agriculture had been protected much more in Luxembourg than in Belgium, a difference which was reflected in price levels (*ibid.*, 243-244).

²⁹For an overview of the CAP, see e.g. Fennell (1987), Ritson and Harvey (1997).

After the Second World War, a wider union, that of the Benelux countries, incorporated the Netherlands into the emerging European integration movement. The new customs union came into force in 1948 without any transitional period, but again different arrangements had to be made for agriculture. In this case both Belgium and Luxembourg had difficulties in adapting to a harmonised agricultural policy with the Netherlands, and trade in the agricultural sphere continued to be subject to various restrictions (*ibid.*, 245).

In the 1950's, when the establishment of a common European market was being considered, experiences with the integrating of agriculture had so far been discouraging. Even though the agricultural sector was subject to heavy government intervention in all potential member states, several proposals were made at that time regarding how the countries of Europe could organise their common agricultural markets, including the "Green Pool" discussions³⁰. Two main issues caused differences of opinion: whether the member countries should give preference to each others' exports or not, and whether the proposed agricultural organisation should be independent or attached to the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC, established in 1948). In addition, the Netherlands in particular was in favour of supranational control, whereas most of the other countries could accept only an inter-governmental authority with modest powers (*ibid.*, 246-247).

The European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), which came into being in 1952, combined France, the German Federal Republic, Italy and the Benelux countries into an economic and political integration. Preparations for a general common market and action in the field of atomic energy were started among the ECSC in the mid-1950's. After some setbacks these discussions ended up in the so-called Spaak Report, which formed the basis on which the treaty to establish the European Economic Community was built. The Treaty was signed by the Six in Rome in March 1957, and entered into force in the beginning of 1958. (Tracy 1989, 250; Fennell 1987, 5). In the following, it is good to keep in mind that although the creation of the Community was deeply rooted in the strategic military situation in Europe after the Second World War, the Community was basically an economic organisation. Economic cooperation and mutual control over resources were expected to prevent political and military conflicts in Europe and to boost economic growth in member states.

The inclusion of agriculture in the common market had already been confirmed in the Spaak Report, but the way in which this would be organised was left

³⁰ "The Green Pool" proposals were made by the Council of Europe (established in 1949 by ten founding members: Belgium, Denmark, France, Britain, Ireland, Italy, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Norway and Sweden), which involved a committee of ministers of national governments and an assembly of members of national parliaments (Urwin 1991, 35). For an overview of these proposals, see Tracy (1989, 246-248).

open. The report argued that specialisation in agriculture could bring significant benefits, and that it was necessary in order to balance trade advantages between the member countries (Tracy 1989, 251). The simple removal of quotas and tariffs would not have established a common market in the case of agriculture, however. As agriculture was already subject to detailed government intervention in all member states, a common policy for agriculture was needed.

As for the logic behind including agriculture in the common market, different interpretations have been given. Rosemary Fennell (1987, 5) refers first to the continued role of the agricultural sector as a major employer in the Europe of the 1950's, to the great need to improve incomes in the sector, and to the already existing government intervention in agriculture. Dennis Swann (1990, 205-206) is inclined to stress the trade-off between Federal Germany and France, arguing that it was in the interests of West Germany to gain free access to the French industrial market and in the interests of France to make substantial inroads into the West German agricultural market (see also Heringa 1994, 28). A common policy was needed, Swann continues (1990, 205-206), because if agricultural policy had remained in the hands of the member states, it would have undermined the common policies pursued in other sectors. If national price levels had differed, countries with low levels would have enjoyed a competitive advantage in the sense that low food prices permit low industrial wages.

The provisions applying directly to agriculture are found in Articles 38 to 47 of the 248 articles contained in the Treaty of Rome, these ten articles forming a framework around which the actual common policy was to be erected later. However, as Fennell (1987, 7) has aptly pointed out, the Treaty of Rome as a whole is relevant to agriculture, and not only the ten Articles that relate to it directly.

The treaty confirms the inclusion of agriculture in the common market, and the creation of a Common Agricultural Policy among the member states. By a common agricultural market it means "the products of the soil, of stock farming and of fisheries and products of first-stage processing directly related to these products" (Article 38). It also states that tariffs on agricultural trade were to be removed over a transitional period of twelve to fifteen years and common external tariffs instituted. Moreover, by the end of the transitional period, a common organisation of markets was to be created. The treaty did not specify the nature of this organisation, but it listed the objectives of the common policy in the much-quoted Article 39.1 as follows:

- to increase agricultural productivity by promoting technical progress and by ensuring the rational development of agricultural production and the optimal utilisation of the factors of production, in particular labour;

- to ensure a fair standard of living for the agricultural community, in particular by increasing the individual earnings of persons engaged in agriculture;
- to stabilise markets;
- to assure the availability of supplies;
- to ensure that supplies reach consumers at reasonable prices.

Art. 39.2 of the treaty then required that when elaborating the CAP, attention should be paid to the social structures of agriculture and to the disparities between agricultural regions. It also pointed out that the necessary adjustments to agriculture had to be made by degrees, and that agricultural sector in the member states was closely connected with the economy as a whole. These arguments were evidently designed to place agriculture in its wider socio-economic context.

What stands out in these aims is that they leave a great deal of room for interpretation. This is often the case in similar statements of agricultural policy objectives in national legislation as well. Folmer et al. (1995, 12) suggest that this was a way to secure approval of the treaty in national parliaments. The description of the wide variety of policy instruments in Articles 42 and 43 is also expressed vaguely and in general terms, and Tracy (1989, 251) notes that these provisions would suggest a preference for structural measures rather than overall price support, but that this has not been the case in subsequent practice. Even so, clear emphasis was given to the role of the market (supply, stabilisation, consumer prices) and to the importance of productivity and “rational development of agricultural production”. The dimension concerned with farmers’ incomes is well established on the list, and consumers are promised that they will get their food “at reasonable prices”.

Articles 44-46 concerned procedures during the transition period and were relatively precise. Article 43, which outlined the concrete steps involved in establishing the CAP, indicated that the Commission³¹ should convene a conference to compare their existing policies and to make appropriate proposals for adoption by the Council of Ministers³². The Commission began its work under the leadership of the first Commissioner for Agriculture, the former

³¹ The Commission may be regarded as the executive of the Community. The Commissioners are appointed by the member states, but are expected to work independently. They are supported by Directorates-General (DGs), which employ together thousands of officials. Directorate General VI was founded as the directorate for Agriculture.

³² The Council of Ministers is the highest decision making body of the Community. The so-called General Council consists of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of all member states. In addition, almost all other ministers of the member states meet regularly, for example as the Agricultural Council, to discuss matters and take decisions in their respective fields of competence.

Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Sicco Mansholt, and called a conference of the member states in Stresa in July 1958.

Although the Stresa Conference took place in an enthusiastic spirit, basic differences remained and the final resolution only outlined general principles and aspects that the delegates regarded as important (Tracy 1989, 252). The resolution viewed the common agriculture basically in terms of production, trade and markets, and it was envisaged that the problems and shortcomings of disadvantaged regions and the family farm structure could be overcome by raising productivity (CEC 1958, ref. Fennell 1987, 10-11). The spirit of the times is obvious in the point made regarding rural issues: "The retraining of the agricultural labour force and the industrialisation of the rural regions under the greatest pressure would allow for a gradual settlement of the problems posed for marginal farms which were economically incapable of being made viable" (CEC 1958, ref. Fennell 1987, 11).

On the basis of the Stresa resolution, the Commission continued its work towards concrete policy proposals. A balance had to be found between net exporting countries such as France and the Netherlands and net importing countries with a heavily protected agricultural sector, particularly Germany. The Commission made its detailed operational proposals in June 1960, and after intensive discussions in both the Parliament and the Council, they were decided upon in December 1960 (Tracy 1989, 253).

The core of the system – although modified and adjusted several times during these years – is still the market and price policy. The most important policy instruments are measures directed at the organisation of markets for various products. In addition, there are structural measures. Until the early 1970's, there was hardly any common structural policy on agriculture, but instead it was virtually a matter of coordinating national structural policies (Folmer et al. 1995, 24).

The emphasis that the Commission gave to the CAP in its proposals was clearly on the technical and economic aspects of agricultural production, while it was more reserved in its handling of the social and structural dimensions of the new common policy. Numerous pages were devoted to structural problems in agriculture, but only a few concrete proposals were made, and these were relatively lacking in detail. The Commission made no practical suggestions on social policy, but only listed some social policy aims within agriculture. With a little good will, we can pick out from these general objectives the first documented ideas of rural thinking in the framework of the CAP: to improve rural housing and the social and cultural infrastructure of rural areas (Fennell 1987, 12). The main role of rural areas is understood to be that of acting as a pool of resources which provides agricultural products and excess labour for the use of other economic sectors. In the early CAP texts, in which price and market policy form the hard core, rural areas do not have any value of their own.

4.3. Principles of the CAP

By 1 July 1968, the Community had established a single market for practically all³³ agricultural products. This did not occur without difficulties, however. The major controversies concerned controlling imports from third countries, future Community price levels and financing of the future common market organisation (Tracy 1989, 252-266). For the most important agricultural products, the Community introduced market intervention coupled with a protective device which insulated the domestic market from the world market. Because of the structure of agriculture in the founding members of the Community, price support was directed towards cereals, beef and dairy products. This “bias” for northern products was to cause problems later, as the Community enlarged towards the south in the 1980’s. Finance for the common policy was organised through the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF, also known under its French initials, FEOGA), which had been established in 1962.

By the end of the transitional period, the Community had managed to make three significant moves in agricultural policy: it had dissolved the national systems of support and replaced them with Community support systems (Swann 1990, 213), it had done away protection between member states, and it had matched the common support system with a system of common prices. Creating a common policy was all but easy. During the long negotiations in “marathon” sessions of the Council, the need to arrive at unanimity in the face of clashing national interests tended increasingly to produce compromise solutions (Tracy 1989, 274). The experiences of constructing a common policy for agriculture showed that the reality was far from the supranational idea(s) of the founders of the Community. According to Sicco Mansholt (interviewed 30.8.1992), the early years of the CAP were characterized by eventual compromises resulting from tough negotiations. In the same interview, however, he stated that the position of the Commission had been stronger then than at the beginning of the 1990’s.

However difficult and sometimes even dramatic the first years of establishing the CAP had been, they succeeded in laying the foundation for its functioning. Illustrative of the character of this process is that the often repeated three principles of the CAP – market unity, Community preference and financial solidarity – originated in a 1960 Resolution of the Council which arose out of its discussion on the Commission proposals (COM(60)105). Later they found their way into some of the early Community legislation on agriculture, and have thereafter been repeated constantly (Fennell 1987, 13; Tracy 1989, 257).

³³ Wine and tobacco were the main exceptions, common regulation for them was not adopted until April 1970 (Tracy 1989, 266).

Despite their somewhat vague origin, these principles give an idea of the logic of the CAP. Market unity means that there is a single market for all CAP products, so that they can circulate freely, with a common organisation for each product applying the same rules in each member state. On the internal market, trade may not be hindered by customs duties or other protective measures. Community preference implies that products from inside the EU are given priority over competing products from non-member countries. In practice, this is achieved by Community Regulations, which counter price variations on imports and exports at the external frontiers of the Community by imposing levies on imports and refunds on exports in cases where Community prices differ from world market prices. The third principle, common financial responsibility, signifies both that the operation of the CAP is financed jointly by the EU and that likewise, the income generated by the policy contributes to the Community's own resources as part of the Community budget. (Folmer et al. 1995, 13; Fennell 1987, 13).

Market unity functions through the "Common Market Organisations" (CMOs), an expression used for all the basic regulations on agricultural products, without distinguishing between the methods available under the Article 40.2 of the Treaty. CMOs exist for nearly all the important agricultural products. The schemes are not the same for all products, and regulations have often been subject to change over the years. As a separate commodity regime was established for each product category, with its own legislation and set of measures, the system is diverse and complex. All in all, there are over twenty market organisations, the details of which nevertheless lie beyond the scope of this work³⁴.

A further complication was created in 1969, when monetary compensatory amounts (MCAs) were created. The 1960's, when the CAP was established, was a period of relative currency stability, with fixed exchange rates operating throughout western Europe. As Tracy (1989, 268) points out, the whole system of common prices had been based on the assumption of exchange rate stability. A system of "green rates" to convert common prices to national currencies had been set up, in which these green rates equalled the market rates of exchange (Fennell 1987, 80).

When a country devalued or revalued its currency, the subsequent differences between the national prices allowed for speculation and facilitated exports from a country with a devalued currency and permitted a country with a revalued currency to pay less for its imports. This happened for the first time when France devalued the franc by 11.11% in 1969, but decided not to change its green rate (Tracy 1989, 268). In order to prevent such "unfair" intra-Community

³⁴Detailed descriptions of the market organisation schemes can be found in Harris et al. (1983), OECD (1987) and Fennell (1987).

trade, French agricultural exports became subject to an export tax – and the first compensatory amounts were introduced, albeit on the understanding that they would be only temporary. The breakdown of the gold standard and floating of national currencies against the dollar in the early 1970's threatened to destroy the whole system of common prices, and in order to avoid distortions of intra-Community trade, a system of monetary compensatory amounts (MCAs) was introduced to protect the intervention mechanism (Fennell 1987, 81). In practice, MCAs were levied or granted on a generalised and continuing basis on trade between member states and on trade with third countries from 1971 until the completion of the Single European Market by the end of 1992.³⁵ The system allowed CAP support prices to diverge significantly between member states, and, as van der Zee (1997, 135-136) has remarked, actually implied a partial “renationalisation” of the CAP.

What is important is that by virtue of these arrangements the Community had made two crucial choices (Fennell 1987, 95): it had chosen a managed market for agriculture instead of a free market (as for other sectors), and it had concentrated most of its efforts on the development of the market and price policies. The heavy reliance on the functioning of the market was theoretically based on the idea of comparative advantage, for since the price for agricultural products is (in principle) the same inside the Community, the geographical location of production will shift over a period of time so that different regions will produce the particular products for which they have a comparative advantage vis-à-vis other areas. Movement of the factors of production and the movement of production itself were expected to take care of this. In reality, the market approach to integration proved to have certain shortcomings and resulted in further intervention. The problems and attempts to solve them will be described below.

4.4. Previous CAP reforms

4.4.1. The Mansholt Plan

Hardly had the common policy been completed and a single market achieved for practically all agricultural products, when a reform was called for. The Common Agricultural Policy agreed on so far had basically³⁶ been a price and market

³⁵ For a detailed description of the successive changes in the MCA system, see e.g. Fennell (1987, 80-94); Silvis and Mookhoek (1994); Ritson and Swinbank (1997).

³⁶ To be precise, the first structural policy programme was established under Regulation 17/64/EEC, already in 1964. It included grants for investment costs pertaining to the production and marketing of agricultural products, ranging from land reparcelling and irrigation to the setting up of marketing structures.

policy, despite the fact that the Treaty of Rome (1957, Article 39 paragraph 2, line a) states that account shall be taken of "... the particular nature of agricultural activity, which results from the social nature of agriculture and from structural and natural disparities between the various agricultural regions". Moreover, the treaty laid down the objective of fostering technical progress in agriculture, and one-third of the resources of the EAGGF resources were meant to be used for structural policy purposes (Official Journal 30, 1962). In practice, structural policy was restricted to the mutual harmonisation of national structural policies. However, by 1968, the Community was encountering growing surplus and disposal problems in the case of many commodities. From the Commission's point of view, it would have been possible to go on with the common price and market policy only if the on-going structural change in agriculture had taken place much faster (van der Stelt-Scheele 1994, 102).

In December 1968 the Commission published its "Memorandum on the Reform of Agriculture", which became generally known as the "Mansholt Plan". This was intended to set a major reform of agriculture in motion. Commissioner Mansholt warned that market support policies alone could not solve the fundamental difficulties of agriculture, and included in his plan a suggestion for a common structural policy aimed at a dramatic decline in the use of agricultural inputs during the period 1970-1980. It envisaged a 50% decrease in agricultural labour and the removal of 7% of the cultivated area from production (van der Stelt-Scheele 1994, 102). The idea was that this accelerated structural change would create "modern production units" using selective investment aids to form farms with 80-120 hectares of cropland, 40-60 cows, or similarly high targets in other lines of production (Tracy 1989, 267). In addition to these modern units with an optimal combination of factors of production, the proposed policy instruments comprised the cessation of farming by elderly farmers, vocational training for farmers, afforestation, and a pricing policy which would serve better to guide production in line with demand (van der Stelt-Scheele 1994, 102-103; Tracy 1989, 267).

The general logic of the Mansholt Plan was the following. Agricultural output had risen faster than demand. At the same time, incomes in agriculture were lagging behind those in other sectors. It was envisaged that agricultural structures had to be modernised in order to improve competitiveness and bring farm incomes more in line with other sectors of the economy. Agriculture was perceived solely as a sector of the economy which needed modernisation. Active Community intervention was needed to speed up the restructuring of the EU agricultural sector. The aim was to help about five million people (Tracy 1989, 267) to leave agriculture during the 1970's, either through early retirement schemes or by means of retraining. Similarly, the land thus released would be directed either to new amalgamated farms or to afforestation. Modernisation thus came to mean the release of resources from both agriculture and rural areas,

and implied that the remaining agricultural units would become more efficient in economic terms.

Moreover, it is worth underlining here that the novelty of the structural policy relative to other CAP measures lay in its focus on the factors of production rather than on agricultural production itself. Rather than thinking in terms of different products (dairy products, beef, pork, wheat, wine etc.), their prices and the amounts produced, the policy suggested by Commissioner Mansholt was constructed on the concepts of labour, land and capital.

The Mansholt Plan encountered strong resistance and never materialised in the form in which it had originally been proposed. A diluted version was nevertheless approved by the Council in 1972 (van der Stelt-Scheele 1994, 103), and three “socio-structural” directives³⁷ were introduced, concerning the modernisation of farms (Dir 159/72/EEC), encouragement to cease agricultural activity and reallocate utilised agricultural land for structural improvement (Dir 160/72/EEC), and provisions for socio-economic guidance for by persons engaged in agriculture and for their acquisition of new occupational skills (guidance services and retraining schemes) (Dir 161/72/EEC). These measures were horizontal, and could be applied throughout the EU. Their purpose was to create farms which could provide comparable incomes to those earned in other sectors. Moreover, the first structural measures under the CAP were linked in an interesting manner with the introduction of a new method of price determination, which took “viable” modernised farms as a basis for price increases (Tracy 1989, 267).

4.4.2. Modest reforms

The Mansholt Plan was followed by several more modest plans for reform. The Improvement Memorandum (Commission 1973) was a cautious paper which did not even dare to call itself a reform, a word that was to remain politically incorrect for the next ten years (Tracy 1989, 303). All the Improvement Memorandum did was to introduce an “objective” method of price setting, as mentioned above in connection with the socio-structural measures. In actual fact, this became a historical document because of its passing reference to the contribution which the CAP could make to the protection of the environment. The Community’s first environmental action programme had been adopted earlier the same year (Fennell 1987a).

³⁷ Contrary to Regulations, which are directly enforceable laws, applicable and binding in the member states, Directives must be implemented by supplementary national legislation and give the member states considerable flexibility in application, although the implementing legislation has to be approved by the Commission (Roney 1994, 49). Note that the common organisation of markets was legislated through Regulations.

A fourth socio-structural measure, known as the “Mountain and hill farming and farming in less favoured areas” (LFA) -Directive, 75/268/EEC, was introduced in the mid-1970’s to complement the horizontal structural measures. This aimed at supporting farming in mountain areas, helping farming in small areas with natural physical handicaps, maintaining a minimum level of population and conserving the countryside in certain other less-favoured areas that were predominantly dependent on agricultural activity.

Contrary to the former measures, this directive was regional and sectoral. Its aim was to put a brake on the agricultural and rural exodus which was threatening the maintenance of viable communities in these areas and the survival of the natural environment. This was the first time an explicitly territorial approach had been used in agricultural structural policy, and thereby introduced the whole concept of discrimination between regions, since the common *market policy* had been fundamentally the same for all regions. Moreover, the LFA Directive also launched direct income support as part of the arsenal of CAP measures, making it possible to pay annual subsidies in the form of “compensatory allowances” (usually based on the amount of livestock per farm).

In 1975 the Commission published a review of the CAP referred to as the Stocktaking (Commission 1975), but this document never led to any appreciable changes in policy (Fennell 1987a). In the meantime, the Community had enlarged itself, gaining three new member states, Denmark, Ireland and the United Kingdom, in 1973. Greece submitted its application for full membership in 1975, followed by Portugal and Spain in 1977 (Urwin 1990, 38). In anticipation of the expected enlargement to the south, the Community raised new issues on the CAP agenda. The first of this group of documents, Mediterranean Agricultural Problems (Commission 1977), addressed the CAP’s bias toward “northern” products, the problem of growing regional income disparities and future problems concerned with applications for membership from Mediterranean countries. As a result, a “Mediterranean package” was adopted, which consisted of a series of measures acting in favour of these areas (Tracy 1989, 328). In effect, this was a regional approach to agricultural structures which aimed at integrating agricultural development activities into the rural economy. It was not long before almost all member states had obtained EAGGF aid for regional schemes of some kind (Tracy 1989, 329). The regional aspect of the CAP still remained rather sporadic, however, “... with little prior analysis of the economic requirements of the region and little or no consultation at the regional level” (ibid.).

A qualitatively new approach emerged during the late 1970’s and the early 1980’s in the form of “Integrated Development Programmes” (IDPs, Fennell 1987, 207). A limited number of regions (the Outer Hebrides in Scotland, Lozère in France and less-favoured areas of Belgium) were brought under integrated regional programmes, the objectives and priorities of which were defined alongside the operational means needed to achieve them. Although the

programmes were still centred on agriculture, the multi-sectoral organisational approach was a novelty which went beyond the agricultural sector and coordinated interventions between all three Structural Funds³⁸ (the European Regional Development Fund ERDF, the European Social Fund ESF, and the EAGGF Guidance Section). This approach was later extended to the Mediterranean regions of Greece, the South of France and South-Central Italy under the Integrated Mediterranean Programmes (Regulation 2088/85). This package enabled multi-annual projects to develop and modernise the socio-economic structure of these areas in order to aid their integration into the broader European economy and to improve their competitive status in the new situation brought about by the enlargement towards the south.

4.4.3. Attempts to cut overproduction

Market imbalance and support costs had already become a problem during the 1970's, and the situation became even more acute when the British complained about the large proportion of the Community budget taken up by the CAP (Tracy 1989, 306). The Commission paid special attention to open-ended price guarantees as a cause of market imbalances, and its "Reflections on the Common Agricultural Policy" (Commission 1980) reviewed the criticism levelled against the policy, even discussing the problem of income disparities between rich and poor farmers (Fennell 1987a, 62). As a concrete remedy, it put forward the concept of producer co-responsibility, which had in fact already been in use in the sugar sector for many years and had recently been introduced for milk, but not as a general or permanent principle of the policy (*ibid.*). Co-responsibility implies that if production exceeds a certain level (a "guarantee threshold"), a levy or support price cut will apply. The following year yet another memorandum was issued by the Commission, called "Guidelines for European Agriculture" (Commission 1981), which made hardly any concrete proposals but warned about a fundamental change in the rural sector as a whole.

The Commission's contemplations of agricultural surplus problems yielded some results in subsequent years, however, and its proposals for "guarantee thresholds" for a number of products were introduced in 1982/83 (Tracy 1989, 306). The need to control agricultural expenditure had become more urgent by

³⁸The establishment of the European Social Fund (ESF) was included already in the Treaty of Rome (Article 3i, more in detail Articles 123-128). Its aim was to improve possibilities for employment and the standard of living of workers. Agreement on the establishment of the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) was reached in the Paris Summit of 1972 (Urwin 1991, 14), and established in 1974 (Alvarez and Navarrete 1990, 104). The aim of the ERDF was to channel Community resources to the development of backwards regions. As Alvarez and Navarrete (*ibid.*) point out, by the creation of the Regional Fund the Community implicitly admitted that market forces alone were not able to resolve regional imbalances.

this time because of the accession of Greece in 1981 and the approaching moment when the Spanish and Portuguese³⁹ were to join the Community. These enlargements implied an inevitable growth in the CAP budget. The Commission therefore came up with yet another new report, "Adjustment of the Common Agricultural Policy" (Commission 1983), which advocated the introduction of a restrictive price policy, and foresaw price cuts. Concrete measures for cutting production were difficult for the Ministers of Agriculture to accept, however (Tracy 1989, 306-309), and in this sense the introduction of a quota system in the dairy sector in 1984, in connection with a number of price cuts, was a major achievement in the fight against growth in the CAP budget (for more details, see Petit et al. 1987).

The new measures introduced to deal with CAP problems were still isolated ones and implied no fundamental changes, and it was only in 1985 that the Commission produced a new overall review of the CAP, a discussion document entitled "Perspectives for the Common Agricultural Policy"⁴⁰ (Commission 1985). This tried "... to identify the principal fields in which political choices are required." (Commission 1985, 1). The Commission saw these choices as existing in connection with two broader issues: prices and markets, and the position of agriculture in society.

As before, prices and markets received more attention than agriculture in society. But as Rosemary Fennell (1987a, 64) has underlined, the attitude that the Commission adopted towards rural areas had changed. Agricultural policy makers had so far welcomed out-migration from the countryside, and had concentrated on increasing the income of those who remained in agriculture, whereas they now felt the need to emphasize the role of agricultural employment as an essential element in the maintenance of the social fabric of rural areas.

This document was by no means a revolutionary one, however, and it made only a limited contribution to solving the price and market policy problems. The Commission still clearly preferred price adjustments to supply management measures, and new issues such as agriculture and the environment, regional development and direct income aids were similarly subordinated to price and market policy and considered only in the context of those adjustments rather than as independent issues. The main aim was still to maintain farm support at the existing level, but this had become more difficult. New arguments were sought for in both rural and environmental issues. As Fennell (1987a, 77) concludes, one feature of the CAP had been "... the tradition of discussing the policy in economic terms to the virtual exclusion of all other considerations" – possibly partly because it was based on productivist principles which were discussed in connection with the Marxian criticism of neo-classical agricultural economics referred to above (section 2.2.3).

³⁹ Took place in 1986.

⁴⁰ Also known as the "Green Paper".

Meanwhile, European integration was proceeding elsewhere in more general terms, so that it could not fail to impinge upon agriculture. The Single European Act, signed in 1985, which came into force in July 1987 and made the first post-signature amendments to the Treaty of Rome, was significant for the CAP, since it assigned top priority to completion of the internal market by 1992. Its main aim, however, was to give impetus to concrete progress towards European unity and a single, unified market. It facilitated decision-making in the Council of Ministers by allowing qualified majority voting in a number of situations, and strengthened the powers of the European Parliament.

Both regional policy and protection of the environment were finally given an official status by incorporating them into the Single European Act (Urwin 1991, 191; Roney 1994, 23-24), and environmental considerations were incorporated into many other policies, testifying to the increased political value attributed to the environment (Lieverink 1995, 10-13).

As for regional policy, the act contained a general admonition which led in February 1988 to a doubling of the resources available to the Structural Funds between 1987 and 1993 (Marks 1992, 191). A part of the strengthening of the common regional policy consisted of the incorporation of the concept of "economic and social cohesion" into the constitutional provisions for the Community (Nugent 1989, 45). The more official explanation for the concerns over regional disparities has been that they should be tackled because they hamper further integration, but as Gary Marks (1992, 205-206) has argued, the underlying motivation has been the Community's need to gain the loyalty of individual citizens, who expect the policy to express basic moral commitments to justice and equality.

Despite the gradual steps taken to strengthen the institutional structure of the Community and the new dimensions added to the CAP discussion itself – such as the environment and the partial decoupling of agricultural support from production in the form of direct income aid – expenditure on agricultural market support remained an immediate and crucial issue in the Community. At the 1984 Fontainebleau summit, the European Council increased the VAT (value added tax) contributions of the member states to the Community budget to 1.4% (Urwin 1991, 188). Although the Agricultural Council froze the prices for most commodities during the years 1986-1988, expenditure continued to rise (Tracy 1989, 308), partly because of the declining value of the dollar, which automatically increased the cost of export subsidies (Urwin 1991, 189). Since the Community had to rely on its "own resources"⁴¹, and could not borrow to

⁴¹ According to a decision taken in 1970, the funding of the Community's budget was changed from a system of national contributions to "own resources", which at that time consisted of customs duties, agricultural levies, and a proportion of Value Added Tax (VAT) up to a 1 percent ceiling – further increased to 1.4% in 1984. In 1988, a fourth "own resource" was added. It consists of the application of a rate to a base which represents the sum of Member States' Gross National Product at market prices (see more in detail Nugent 1989, 259-261).

cover its increasing deficit, for example, an overall package deal was prepared, known as the Delors I package.

This package deal was an agreement on how to combine reform of the Structural Funds⁴² and the new budgetary resources (see footnote 41) with a revised “financial guideline” for agriculture (Tracy 1989, 308-309). The package was decided upon at the February 1988 Brussels Summit, and imposed a budgetary guideline on EAGGF (Guarantee) expenditure. The rate of increase in the guideline from 1988 to 1992 was limited to 74% of the annual rate of growth in the Community gross national product (Fearne 1997, 50). For the CAP, the package included, the introduction of additional stabilisers, which brought with them a system of maximum guaranteed quantities (MGQs) for a number of products. The system varied somewhat from sector to sector, but primarily it meant that if actual production exceeded the MGQ, support prices for the following year were to be automatically reduced in proportion to the overshoot (*ibid.*). This mechanism was to ensure that any further increases in production would not cause additional support expenditure (Tracy 1989, 309).

In addition to these “automatic” stabilisers, the package included structural measures aimed at curbing the growth in agricultural produce and compensating farmers for the loss of income, including provisions for setting aside arable land, extensification, conversion to non-surplus products or other activities relevant to rural society, and early retirement. According to van der Zee (1997, 141), the Delors I package was significant in the sense that it came to mean a hardening of the soft budget constraint which had applied to the CAP up to that time.

By the end of the decade a spirit of deepening integration prevailed in the Community, and in 1991 the European Council decided to establish a Cohesion Fund to assist less-developed member states to achieve the convergence criteria required for economic and monetary union (EMU) (Roney 1994, 57). In the Delors II package, which determined the financing framework for the years 1993-1999, this decision was put into effect. By using the Cohesion Fund and Structural Funds together to support less-developed regions in matters such as agriculture and environmental protection.

4.5. The MacSharry reform: Context and content

A number of measures were thus taken by the EU during the 1980's to curb rising agricultural production, but they had fallen short of the mark.

⁴²The Brussels Summit also reformed the Structural Funds. In the future, the Structural Funds (EAGGF Guidance Section, ESF and ERDF) were to share and to concentrate development efforts on five objectives in strategic multi-annual programmes; simultaneously their financial resources were doubled over a five-year period (van der Zee 1997, 150).

Simultaneously, the CAP measures were also coming under increasing external pressure from trading partners, largely within the context of the Uruguay Round of GATT trade negotiations, although officially the MacSharry reform had no connection whatsoever with the GATT negotiations.

4.5.1. Context: the GATT Uruguay Round

The “General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade” (GATT) was originally a part of a post-war plan for creating three key institutions – one to oversee commercial relations, one to provide a framework for monetary relations, and one to mobilise resources for reconstruction and development. The last two resulted in the establishment of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD, better known as the World Bank) at Bretton Woods in 1947. The planned International Trade Organisation (ITO) was still-born, as the agreement for establishing it was never ratified (Greenaway 1991, 365-366).

The enabling treaty which had been prepared to clear the way for the ITO in fact became a set of GATT rules governing world trade, a 38-article treaty signed by 23 countries in Geneva in 1947 that came into effect in 1948. By 1994 the number of signatory states was 114, accounting for about 90% of the world’s trade (CAP Working Notes 1995, 7). The primary objective of the GATT has been to provide a framework for the orderly conduct of trade and a process within which systematic liberalisation of trade can take place. This process is expected to contribute to economic growth, development and human well-being. The main means of achieving the objective have been the reduction of tariff barriers, quantitative restrictions and subsidies on trade. The GATT serves its Contracting Parties (CPs) as a forum for Multilateral Trade Negotiations (MTN “rounds”) which periodically bring the CPs together to agree on a package of trade measures (Greenaway 1991, 366-367; Harvey 1997, 377-378).

The history of the GATT can be characterised in terms of three phases (Harvey 1997, 377-378). During the first phase (1947-1955, including four rounds of negotiations), it was decided which commodities and sectors should be included in-trade liberalisation, and agreed that the means for doing this should be freezing and binding of existing tariff levels. During the second phase (1959-79, including three major rounds) tariff cuts were achieved on a request/offer basis and through agreement on formulae and codes governing the use and level of trade impediments. The third phase was the Uruguay Round, which opened in Punta del Este, Uruguay, on 20th September 1986 and ended with the official signing of the Final Act in Marrakesh, Morocco, on April 15th, 1994.

The Uruguay Round forms a phase of its own in the history of the GATT because the negotiations included the largest and most complex list of issues ever addressed so far. It began with fifteen negotiation areas, fourteen of which

concerned various aspects of trade in goods and the remaining one the provision of services – whereas until then the GATT rounds had covered primarily tariffs (CAP Working Notes 1995, 13). Agriculture had in effect been left out of the 1947 agreement, so that the Uruguay Round was also intended to end the special status of agricultural trade within the GATT.

The fact that the GATT countries had been reluctant to impose any firm discipline on trade in agricultural products has been attributed to a fear that the rigours of international competition would cause unacceptable social and economic disruption for a declining sector (OECD 1995, 10). In any case, the sector was given a number of general or country-specific derogations or exemptions as a result. The most important exemption was that the use of export subsidies and quantitative import restrictions (quotas) was permitted in situations where domestic production was also subject to quantitative restrictions (*ibid.*). Moreover, GATT had also proved unable to enforce the existing rules on farm policies. Mechanisms such as variable import levies, which clearly violated the principle of bound tariffs, had not been successfully challenged up to the time of the launching of the Uruguay Round (Harvey 1997, 379; OECD 1995, 10). In general, GATT principles had suffered an erosion, and there was a real danger of multilateralism being completely replaced by either unilateralism (based on the three major trading blocs), or greater bilateralism (Greenaway 1991, 371).

By 1986 the situation had become unbearable. The special treatment accorded to agriculture was not in line with the liberalisation of trade in other sectors. World prices for agricultural products were declining and the costs of protecting and supporting domestic production were growing in the developed countries. Tensions were arising around agricultural trade, while agricultural exporters in particular were calling more vociferously than ever for more discipline in farming trade policies. Without such an agreement, the whole GATT package would be rejected by the US and the countries led by the Cairns Group⁴³.

At the same time, the OECD was developing tools for analysing and quantifying the links between domestic agricultural policies and trade (OECD 1987). Producer and Consumer Subsidy Equivalents were used during the Uruguay Round to measure the transfers generated by agricultural policies. The most significant aspect of the new approach to agricultural trade was the reinterpretation of what was a domestic trade issue (and thus a sovereign matter), and what was an international one. This approach created a link between domestic support and trade distortions. Since the launching of the Uruguay Round, all direct and indirect subsidies have come under scrutiny as to their possible distorting effects on trade.

⁴³ Cairns Group consists of 14 small and medium sized developed and developing agricultural exporters: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Fiji, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Philippines, Thailand and Uruguay. The group is named after the location of their first conference.

David Harvey (1997, 380) draws attention to the significance of embedding agricultural negotiations in a wider, multilateral package of world trade issues. The fact that a number of countries declared that agreements in other negotiating areas were contingent on an agreement on agriculture, increased interest in farm policies beyond the sphere of the farming (and finance) ministers. This has been seen as a sign of increasing pressure on special interests within agriculture. In addition, the negotiating of many issues on one list increased the scope for bargained solutions in which countries losing out on one front could offset this with gains on other fronts. It also had the effect that highlighting the lines of battle between industry and agriculture within many of the developed countries or groupings such as the EU.

The main traders involved in the agricultural negotiations lay far apart in terms of their initial positions. The United States, backed by the Cairns Group, required the elimination of all agricultural policy measures by the year 2000. This “zero option” position had three major targets:

- 1) an end to all domestic production aid within 10 years (the proposal in 1990 had been a 75% cut in domestic support);
- 2) an end to all export subsidies within 5 years (the proposal in 1990 had been a 90% reduction in export subsidies);
- 3) an end to all protection measures at the border within 10 years (CAP Working Notes 1995, 15).

The EU, followed by Japan and the Nordic countries, rejected the US position out of hand, and the EU put forward more cautious proposal involving a modest, phased reduction in support for agriculture. “Rebalancing” was its key demand throughout the negotiations, implying that it would grant access concessions on cereals only in return for a reciprocal concession allowing it to replace the zero tariff on non-cereal animal feeds to which it had been bound in an earlier round. The problem was that imports of non-cereal animal feeds had displaced EU-grown cereal supplies in EU livestock production (OECD 1995, 12, 63). The United States and its supporters were ready to accept only decoupled support, i.e. support which distorts neither production nor trade, and declared that agreements in other negotiating areas were contingent on an agreement over agriculture.

The round was envisaged to end in a formal signing in Brussels in early December 1990. According to Greenaway (1991, 374-376), there were several reasons why things did not work out that way. As mentioned, the scale of the issues was enormous, and there were powerful intersectoral linkages. Offers of concessions in one area were held up because of lack of progress in other, linked issues. Moreover, the combining of issues made monitoring of the overall outcomes very complex, and the number of old and new issues also encouraged

cross-coalitional activity. Among the many things that went wrong with the negotiations, one effect undoubtedly arose from the fact that the EU was preoccupied to a large extent with its single market programme.

Even reaching an agreement on a mid-term package, in Geneva in April 1989, proved to be extremely difficult. Under the heading of short term measures, it was agreed to freeze current domestic and export support and protection levels. The negotiation partners were able to agree on the long-term principle of providing for substantial progressive cuts in agricultural support and protection, although there were notable differences of opinion in matters of detail. A foundation was nevertheless laid for the three main elements – import access, export subsidies and domestic support – which later formed the three pillars of the Agreement on Agriculture, and the idea of proceeding separately on the three fronts gained ground at this stage. But even so, the EU was among those who continued to pursue the idea of a single discipline based on a measure of domestic support (OECD 1995, 12-13). This was the situation in the Uruguay Round at the time when the MacSharry reform proposals were being prepared.

The Brussels talks collapsed in December 1990, at a meeting which was supposed to bring the round to a close. The incorporation of disciplines on export subsidies proved to be the most difficult issue, since the EU in particular was reluctant to accept specific limitations. This was one major reason for the failure in Brussels (OECD 1995, 13). It took five more years before the Final Agreement was concluded, and discipline in each of the three main elements mentioned above was achieved only in 1991. Arthur Dunkel, then Secretary-General of the GATT, put forward a Draft Final Act in December 1991, and negotiations proceeded on the basis of his proposals, which covered all the main elements, although the suggested reductions were no more than modest ones. The EU nevertheless found them too high and required that utilisation of the various CAP instruments needed to be protected from challenge within the GATT once agreement had been reached on the three fronts. Finally, it was only after protracted bilateral discussions between the US and the EC in November 1992 that an agreement was reached, known as the Blair House Accord. (OECD 1995, 13-14; CAP Working Notes 1995, 16-17).

Agriculture became disciplined in four fronts. First, all border restrictions must be converted into tariffs, and these tariffs have to be reduced by 36% over a six-year period beginning in 1995. In addition, a minimum of 5% of the domestic market was to be opened to foreign competition by the end of this period. Secondly, subsidised exports were to be cut by 36% in value and 21% in volume relative to the average for the period 1986-1990. Thirdly, the overall value of agricultural support was to be reduced by 20% relative to the period 1986-1990. This measure did not include “decoupled payments”, however, i.e. payments which do not influence farmers’ production decisions. To assist acceptance of the agreement, a “Peace Clause” was included to protect certain

(“green box”) policies from challenge under GATT and to exempt other “blue box” policies from all but countervailing duties, as long as support did not exceed 1992 levels. The fourth element covered sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) measures, but was technically a separate matter from the Agreement on Agriculture. (Harvey 1997, 384-385; OECD 1995, 15-19). In addition, the Uruguay Round Agreement on Agriculture (URAA) includes a specific commitment to a multilateral review of progress, beginning in 1999 (*ibid.*, 390).

According to Harvey (1997, 384), the most important fact was that the signatories accepted two principles: that agriculture is no longer a special case within the GATT, and that domestic farm policies are subject to international governance through the GATT and to binding international commitments itemised in country schedules, especially on border measures.

4.5.2. Content: the MacSharry reform

Within the EU itself, measures were needed in order to cope with the problem of growing over-supply and the increasing cost of the CAP. A restrictive pricing policy was tried first, followed by output control through quota regimes, co-responsibility levies and other adjustments to the support mechanisms. A series of measures aimed at stabilising output were approved in the late 1980's, when the European Council fixed a ceiling for agricultural expenditure up to the end of 1992 and measures were adopted to ensure that this was not exceeded. As van der Zee (1997, 141) has remarked, the growth in the policy measures in operation under the CAP had increased by the end of the 1980's both in its intransparency and the budgetary costs involved.

The first rumours of a radical reform of DGVI leaked out in December 1990, and the Commission submitted a communication to the Council on “The Development and Future of the CAP” at the beginning of February 1991 (CEC 1991a).

In their analysis of the problems faced by the CAP, the early reform proposals (*ibid.*) emphasised two factors: that the volume of agricultural production was growing faster than consumption, and that the distribution of CAP benefits amongst farmers was unequal, because income support was built on price guarantees. “The effect of this is that 80% of the support provided by FEOGA is devoted to 20% of farms which account also for the greater part of the land used in agriculture” (*ibid.*, 2). Arguments connected with the environment and rural development also played an important role in the suggestions.

The original proposals extended to all the major sectors of agriculture in the EU, it was the proposals for the arable sector that lay at the core of the reform. The basic elements were to reduce levels of price support in the cereals and beef sectors, bringing them closer to world market levels, and to compensate farmers for their loss of revenue through a system of (direct income) acreage payments

based on historical average yields and a base area per region. In the early versions of the reform, the intention was to “modulate” the compensation so that it would have favoured small and medium-scale producers through headage and hectareage limits on compensation. The reform originally covered measures affecting milk production as well, but the suggested substantial (and again modulated) reductions in milk quotas were fairly soon forgotten. The first reflection paper also referred to a reform of the sugar and tobacco sectors “in the immediate future” (ibid., 14). The market measures were to be accompanied by a series of forestry reforms, an early retirement scheme for farmers over 55 years old, and various agri-environmental measures.

No member state welcomed the proposals in full, but no one argued for the status quo, either. The Commission made several proposals before final agreement was reached in May 1992. The final version (European Community 1992) watered down the concept of modulation and concentrated mainly on the cereals sector. Support prices for cereals and beef were cut, but less than had initially been suggested. Price support for oilseeds was abolished, and payments per hectare were cut. It was decided to reduce the price for cereals by 29% over a period of three years. Compensation for these price cuts by means of direct area and livestock payments was linked to supply control measures, in that cereal and oilseed growers were required to take 15% of their land out of production to qualify for the compensation. Furthermore, compensation was based on past average yields, which was frozen, thereby breaking the link between farm support and the increasing amounts which it incites farmers to produce. Instead of modulation, which had been furiously attacked by the lobby of larger farmers, small-scale farms were exempted from setting land aside. At the same time, the role of intervention support was greatly reduced, which affected the beef sector in particular.

Livestock was less affected by the reform than cereals, but here again, intervention prices were reduced by 15% in three steps. Compensation payments for beef and mutton were limited to a fixed number of animals based on historical herd sizes and limited by quotas. Livestock payments were also linked to a maximum stocking density limit to promote extensification. Only modest changes were agreed on in the dairy sector, involving a reduction in general EU quotas and a 3% reduction in the intervention price for butter by 1994/5. The price of skimmed milk powder remained unchanged. There were many other major products that were not included in the reform, notably sugar, fruit and vegetables, wine, olive oil, pork and poultry.

There was a lot of debate during the reform negotiations as to how radical the reform was, whether it would solve the problems of the CAP and what was in the end new about it. It is clear that the final result was less radical than the initial proposals, and many of the new elements brought into the discussion were also diluted eventually. The MacSharry reform did establish direct income

subsidies as a policy measure, however, and it also strengthened the status of environmental and rural issues on the agenda, although the concrete policy measures connected with these issues remained vague and left the member states room for manoeuvring as to how far to implement them.

Having said this, it is important to continue with the fact that the reform left the core of the “old” CAP, commodity regimes and price guarantees, almost intact. This core has lost little of its force, but the cost of the policy has been shifted further from the consumers to the taxpayers. It must also be noted that the fundamental principles of the CAP – price unity, community preference and financial solidarity – were not questioned.

Furthermore, the reform altered the image of the CAP to some extent, by making its policy instruments more transparent. This was especially clear in the case of arable farming, since the reform made the long-standing support for cereals visible, whereas it had previously taken the form of trade restrictions and intervention buying (Winter 2000, 50). According to Lowe et al. (1999, 15), increasing transparency has opened up the debate on the CAP and brought additional policy actors into play beyond the traditional agricultural community. Other observers (e.g. Cox et al. 1985, 1988; Clark et al. 1977; Winter 2000) conclude cynically that what happened with the new issues was that the traditional agricultural community adopted a new, more persuasive way to articulate its interests rather than opening the agricultural policy debate up to outsiders. The changes that have taken place in EU agriculture since the MacSharry reform lie beyond the scope of the present investigation.

4.6. Conclusions

European economic integration inherited an isolated and protected agricultural sector from the founding member states and established a common market and price policy in accordance with the same logic. Policy measures broadened gradually from products to production factors, and from the goal of increased productivity to that of production control and supervised reductions. The change was a cautious one, however, being mainly directed towards countering the negative effects of the price support policy. Similarly, the new issues (environment, regional and rural problems) did not appear on the EU agenda out of the blue, but first emerged as marginal notes in discussion papers and gradually gained more status as arguments. In the case of environmental and regional issues, they gained independent significance in EU policies outside the CAP, as the Structural Funds were strengthened and the EU gradually developed its common environmental policy. Rural policy is still more or less “subsidiary” to the common policy for agriculture.

The CAP was originally essentially an income policy for the farmers, as reflected in particular in the strong position of market and price policy within it.

A common organisation of markets is legislated for through a set of regulations which are directly enforceable laws. The strong position of market and price policy is reinforced by including the Guarantee Section of the EAGGF in the compulsory expenditure of the EU Budget, which is the domain of the Commission and the Council, leaving the EU Parliament with little influence or control over the CAP (Fennell 1987, 69-72).

It is essential to note, as De Benedictis et al. have aptly remarked, that during the history of the CAP up to the 1990's, the reason for reform was not the outcome of a desire to modify the goals of the policy of intervention but rather the necessity to reduce the negative effects of the CAP itself (De Benedictis, De Filippis and Savatici 1990, 177).

The history of the CAP objectives and reforms also shows how the EU as an economic community grew and took on a new shape around the original common policy for agriculture. When assessing the changes that have been made to the CAP, it is indeed essential to bear in mind that the whole community, of which the CAP is only a part, has fundamentally changed in nature in the course of the decades. We will return to this point more in detail in the conclusions in Chapter 9. In a similar vein, the GATT Uruguay Round took agricultural policy into a new era in the sense that domestic policies came under the scrutiny of international trade policy and were connected more closely with trade and policy in other sectors of the economy.

5. The national case studies: Similarities and differences

5.1. Introduction

This chapter provides background information for the presentation and analysis of the case studies and discusses the main structures and features of policy-making and agriculture in the two countries, the Netherlands and Ireland. As it is meant to reconstruct the context for the case debates, agriculture in the two countries will be presented in the light of figures applying to the early 1990's. The purpose of this chapter is not only to present the information needed in order to give meaning to the analysis of the national debates but also to create a picture of the complex framework in which the Common Agricultural Policy has to exist, be formulated and implemented, and exercise its impact.

5.2. The Netherlands

5.2.1. Dutch politics

The Netherlands is located on the North Sea, around the Rhine/Meuse estuary⁴⁴. It has an area of about 42,000 square kilometres, and is inhabited by a population of 15 million. With an average of more than 400 people per square kilometre, it is one of the world's most densely populated countries (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 1; Roney 1994, 250). This population density means that it is one of the few countries in the EU where rural depopulation is not a notable problem. Instead, land and space are scarce resources, a fact reflected in the price of land, which in turn has consequences for agriculture.

The Netherlands is a constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system. The Dutch Parliament, officially called the States-General, comprises two chambers, the First Chamber, with 75 members elected indirectly by representatives of the provinces, being subsidiary in importance to the directly elected Second Chamber, the real political arena, with 150 members (The Netherlands in Brief 1997, 14-15). With the introduction of universal (male) suffrage in 1917, proportional representation replaced the former geographical representation in elections, and since then the whole country has been treated as a single electoral district (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 86-87). The members of legislative bodies at four levels are chosen by election: municipal councils, provincial legislatures, the Second Chamber of Parliament and the European Parliament (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 80).

⁴⁴ The Kingdom of the Netherlands actually also comprises two other parts: the Netherlands Antilles and Aruba in the Caribbean. The present discussion is restricted to the Netherlands in Western Europe.

The Prime Minister is appointed by the monarch, who also appoints the other members of the Council of Ministers on the Prime Minister's recommendation. The monarch and the ministers constitute the government, although as the monarch is inviolable under the constitution, it is the ministers that are responsible for her actions and are alone accountable to Parliament (The Netherlands in Brief 1997, 15). The ministers together form the Cabinet, which is the main executive body. Governments may also appoint state secretaries, or junior ministers, who are politically accountable for their portfolios.

The political system in the Netherlands is such that most governments are coalitions. The electoral system based on proportional representation enables even small parties to win seats in Parliament, so that in the early 1990's there were nine parties with one or more seats (*ibid.*, 16). As no party could form a majority government alone, the Lubbers III government consisted of the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the Labour Party (PvdA) (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 119), with both the Prime Minister, Ruud Lubbers, a catholic, and the Minister of Agriculture, Piet Bukman, a protestant, representing the Christian Democrats.

This *Christelijk Democratische Appel* (CDA, Christian Democratic Alliance), which is usually located towards the centre of the Dutch left-right continuum, consists of three confessional groups, the Catholic group, *de Katholieke Volkspartij*, and two protestant groups, *de Anti-Revolutionaire Partij* and *de Christelijk-Historisch Unie*, which merged to form one party in 1980 (*ibid.*, 50-53). According to Gallup polls, most farmers vote for Christian Democrat candidates or for the VVD (Hoetjes 1990). After the election of 1989 the Christian Democrats formed the largest party in the Second Chamber of Parliament.

De Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA, the Labour Party), a social democratic party, gained the second largest number of votes in the 1989 election (The Netherlands in Brief 1997, 16), followed in third place by *Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie* (VVD, the People's Party for Freedom and Democracy), a conservative-liberal party, sometimes interpreted as "more conservative than liberal" (Righart 1992, 58), and in any case the most conservative of the current major Dutch parties (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 56). The fourth major party is *Democraten '66* (D66, Democrats 66), often regarded as a progressive-liberal or "liberal protest party" (Righart 1992, 52). *Groen Links* (the Green Left) was formed in 1989 by the merger of two leftist Christian Democrat parties and two Labour parties, including the former Communists. It provides strong support for environmental and Leftist social policies (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 60-61).

Dutch policy-making is centralised in territorial terms relative to that in many other West European countries, the provinces being intermediate between the local and national authorities lacking any significant impact on policy-making, while the municipalities are dependent on centrally controlled funds (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 158-163). On the other hand, the Netherlands is said

to be functionally decentralised into largely autonomous policy sectors, each composed of interest groups, advisory boards, a government department and specialised parliamentary committees (ibid., 164-186). The incorporation of interest groups into the decision-making process strengthens this functional decentralisation and subsequent sectorisation of policy-making and reinforces departmental fragmentation, another phenomenon typical of the Dutch political culture. The ministries retain a great deal of autonomy (van den Bos 1991, 67).

One remarkable feature of Dutch political culture until recently has been the segmentation of society into four subcultures, known as *zuilen*, pillars, – namely the Catholic, Protestant, Socialist and Liberal pillars (on pillarisation, see Lijphart 1968). These groups not only provided the constituencies for the major political parties, but acted as tightly organised social groups or subcultures that structured nearly all aspects of social life in the Netherlands (Andeweg and Irwin 1993, 27). In practice, this led to a social “apartheid”, in which movement between the pillars was rare. The need to maintain a delicate balance between the interests of the different groupings has, according to Andeweg and Irwin, led to non-decision-making in issues where yes/no decisions are inescapable. Different means have been employed to avoid difficult decisions: postponing the decision, defusing the political dispute by the use of technical arguments (depoliticisation), or shifting responsibility away from the government. According to Arendt Lijphart (1975), the elites of the different pillars governed the country through a “politics of accommodation” in which social heterogeneity at the mass level was compensated for by cooperation rather than competition – between the elites at the top. Although this pillarisation has been fading away since the 1960’s for many reasons, Andeweg and Irwin (1993, 49) argue that the accommodationist practices still prevail.⁴⁵

According to Frouws (1993, 53-74), pillarisation has been typical of the Dutch neo-corporatist “agricultural model”. Agriculture is organised in conformity with three confessional (*levensbeschouwelijke*) trends: the Catholic, Protestant and non-confessional groupings, a division based on socio-cultural differences in identity rather than politico-economic confrontation. The devotion to one’s own group typical to pillarisation and obedience to the elite facilitate cooperation at the top. The various farmers’ organisations form a special interest group, *het Landbouwschap*, which also exercised public authority in certain agricultural policy issues. The depoliticising dimension of pillarisation can be recognised in the inclination of the agricultural elite to emphasise a technical approach to

⁴⁵There has been a lively discussion on the role of consensus and the transformation of pillarisation in Dutch politics. Van Schendelen (1978), for example, has a different explanation for pillarisation from that of Lijphart and places more emphasis on the goal of political control. Van Praag (1993) argues that a lot of the characteristics of the pillarised political structures still remain in the Netherlands, but the passive masses do not exist any longer. For this debate, see Becker (1993).

agricultural policy rather than an ideological one. What Andeweg and Irwin (1993, 179) say about policy-making in the Netherlands in general also holds true for agriculture: it has a distinctly technocratic flavour. In order not to offend any of the minorities, decisions are often based on technical rather than ideological motives. Similarly, civil servants must be specialised in a particular policy area rather than in more general managerial skills (ibid.). I shall return in more detail to the transformation of the Dutch “green front”, as the inner circles of the country’s agricultural policy have been called, in Chapter 7, on themes.

5.2.2. Dutch agriculture

An essential characteristic of Dutch agriculture is its intensity. Despite the small area of the Netherlands, it is one of the largest exporters of agricultural produce in the world. In the early 1990’s, about 65% (2,010,000 ha) of its land area was being used for agriculture, 35% as grassland, 25.6% as arable land and 3.3% for horticulture (Facts and Figures 1992, 9). Because of this intensity of production, farm size in hectares is not a good measure of the extent of Dutch agriculture, not least because non-land-using industrial systems have expanded, especially in meat production. If we exclude horticultural holdings, which may be tiny in terms of area but substantial in economic terms, the average size of a Dutch agricultural enterprise in 1991 was 19.1 hectares (OECD 1994, 227).

General natural conditions in the Netherlands are particularly suitable for dairy farming. The terrain is flat, the soils are deep, there are ample water supplies and the climate is temperate (Ibid., 173). Agriculture is regionally differentiated, however, with the north and west of the country consisting mainly of flat, low-lying areas, often reclaimed from water bodies, with mainly clay soils, while the east and south are in part hillier and drier, and the soil type is mainly sand. Most of the arable farms are located in the new polders, as the areas reclaimed from the water are called, and also in the extreme north-east of the country.

The main arable crops are wheat, sugar beet and potatoes. Horticultural holdings, particularly glasshouses, are generally concentrated near urban areas in the “*Randstad*” region in the west of the country. This is the most regionally concentrated major sub-sector of Dutch agriculture. By contrast, intensive animal production has developed mainly on sandy soils in the central, eastern and southern regions, whereas dairy farming is the least geographically concentrated of the major industries, being spread widely over the centre of the country. Silage maize growing for animal feed has also expanded substantially in the dairy farming areas. (Pictorial Atlas of the Netherlands 1977; OECD 1994, 178, 190; Facts and Figures 1992, 21).

There were 125,000 farms and horticultural holdings in the Netherlands in 1990, 98,200 of which were full-time businesses (LEI 1991, 231). According to

Eurostat statistics, this was one of the three EU countries where less than 25% of the farmers had any other gainful activity in 1995, along with Belgium and Luxembourg (ref. in Peltola 2000, 67). A total of 290,000 Dutch people were regularly employed in agriculture in the early 1990's, accounting for 4.6% of the total working population and 4.5% of its GDP (OECD 1994, 169).

Intensive livestock production entails keeping the animals in stalls and buying fodder from outside the farm, a procedure which has created a severe environmental problem in the form of urine and manure surpluses, as also experienced on many dairy farms. The damage to the environment takes the form of both groundwater pollution (from urine) and soil acidification (by manure). As different lines of production are concentrated in different parts of the country, however, the situation varies regionally. In eastern Brabant, for example, the surplus of animal waste in 1991 represented two-thirds of the farmers' needs (Agra Europe, 13 December 1991). There have been attempts to develop pig production into closed systems, isolating these enterprises from the environment as much as possible, while another solution has been to install manure banks and to process the manure for export, although this has not been economically sustainable on a larger scale. It now seems that reducing the numbers of cattle (and, unavoidably, the numbers of farms) may be the only option from the point of view of the government, whereas the farmers' union would prefer to solve the problem without closing any farms (NRC Webpagina's, 11.9.1999).

Livestock production, dominated by dairy products, is the largest element contributing to the gross value of production, followed in importance by horticulture and arable crops (OECD 1994, 170). The food, drink and tobacco industry accounted for more than a quarter of the country's total industrial turnover in 1991, making it one of the most important industrial sectors in the country, and at the same time provided 16% of all industrial employment (Facts and Figures 1992, 50).

A market-oriented approach to trade in general is a well-known feature of the Netherlands – and agriculture is no exception. Dutch agriculture and its food industry are highly export-oriented, so that 90% of the veal produced in the country in 1989-91 was exported, 75% of the cut flowers and cheese, 70% of the eggs and lamb and 60% of the pork and poultry meat (OECD 1994, 171). Agricultural products accounted for 17.5% of the total value of merchandise exports in 1990, and 12.7% of that of merchandise imports (OECD 1993, 349). The close relation between exports and imports of agricultural products reflects the fact that intensive meat and dairy production within a small area of land is possible only because of imported fodder, mainly maize. The port of Rotterdam has been the largest in the world for more than 30 years (The Netherlands in Brief 1997, 33), and most of the fodder imported into Europe enters by this route. In addition, many other basic materials for the food, drink and tobacco

industry are imported into the Netherlands, processed there, and re-exported. Dutch products command a leading position in the world market for many products: flower bulbs, cut flowers, veal, live pigs and eggs in the shell – and the country's exports of cut flowers account for approximately 70% of world trade in that product (OECD 1994, 170).

Dutch agriculture benefits from a favourable location relative to transport corridors and densely populated areas with a high demand for foodstuffs. The size and density of the surrounding population provides the sector with a large, steady market for its produce, and economies of scale have been pursued in large-scale processing and marketing in the livestock product industries and in the arable root-crop industries, in horticulture, in the auctioning of produce and in sales promotion. (Ibid., 173). The EU as a whole is a significant market for the Dutch: in the beginning of the 1990's about 75% of the agricultural produce and foodstuffs exported were sold on this internal market; the largest single customer being Germany (Facts and Figures 1992, 47).

In addition to the more physical and territorial characteristics of Dutch agriculture, another remarkable dimension is the thoroughness of its organisation. Dutch farmers are linked both horizontally and vertically to a broader institutional structure, comprising commodity boards (*produktschappen*), industry boards (*bedrijfschappen*) and farmers' unions (organised under the *Landbouwschap*). The commodity boards are vested with public authority, especially concerning quality control and the implementation of EU market measures in all segments of the production chain – producers, wholesalers, processors and retailers – and also coordinate industrial interests in a vertical direction. There are seven product groups: arable crops; poultry and eggs; livestock and meat; dairy products; margarine, fats and oils; fruit and vegetables; and ornamental plants. Membership of one or more commodity boards and of the *Landbouwschap* is compulsory, but the members are free to decide on the form and structure of these organisations. The industry boards provide a form of horizontal regulation, as they have powers to issue orders with respect to all those involved in the same trade or activity, e.g. retailers of vegetables. The *Landbouwschap* is responsible for the promotion of the whole agricultural sector (OECD 1994, 176; Frouws and van Tatenhove 1993, 222).

This organisation around the sector and its subsectors, which include the whole chain from the farmers to the input industries and processing industry, can be seen as a part of the Dutch agricultural model (Frouws 1993, 59-60) and its neo-corporatist system. Agricultural pressure groups no longer view policy-making from outside, but are incorporated into the process and defend the outcomes before their members (Irwin and Andeweg 1993, 164). It may be difficult for outsiders to understand that the government bears no responsibility for the regulations issued by such boards, which regulate their particular sectors of the economy (ibid., 167). This system functioned for a long time among the

well-organised agricultural interests and the ministry responsible for the sector in a manner isolated entirely from the rest of society, deciding its own affairs and following the Calvinist principle of “sovereignty within own circles” (*soevereniteit in eigen kring*⁴⁶). It is environmental problems that have now broken down this isolation in practice (Frouws 1993, 217-218).

The dominant form of industrial organisation in the processing and marketing of agricultural products and foodstuffs is the cooperative, as in many other countries, but it is only in the case of starch potatoes that one cooperative exercises control over the entire market for a single product (OECD 1994, 176).

When discussing the success of Dutch farming, reference is often made to the “golden triangle” of well-organised cooperation between research, extension and education (Heijman et al. 1991, 60). To a large extent, deliberate government policies are responsible for establishing and encouraging this system, which enables the quick application of new technical knowledge. The system is institutionalised through interlocking memberships among the commodity boards, farmers’ unions and agribusiness companies and the boards that direct the work of the extension services and research stations (OECD 1994, 177). This “triangle” makes its own contribution to the building of “inner circles”, which for a long time ensured that agricultural issues were discussed and decided exclusively by those who were “directly involved” (on the Dutch agricultural model, see Frouws 1993).

5.3. Ireland

5.3.1. Irish politics

Éire, the Republic of Ireland, is located on the island of Ireland, in the extreme north-west of Europe. Its shores are washed by the Irish Sea in the east and the Atlantic Ocean in the west. Six counties in the north of the island form Northern Ireland, which is a part of the United Kingdom. The Republic of Ireland has an area of 70,000 square kilometres and 3.6 million inhabitants (Facts about Ireland 1995, 3, 9). Its first official language is Irish, English is the second – an order is affirmed in the constitution (*ibid.*, 11).

Ireland is a parliamentary democracy in which the national parliament (*Oireachtas*⁴⁷) consists of the President and two Houses, the House of Representatives (*Dáil Éireann*) and the Senate (*Seanad Éireann*) (*ibid.*, 37). The President is elected by direct vote of the people for a term of seven years. The

⁴⁶This doctrine was established by the founder of the *Anti-Revolutionaire Partij*, Abraham Kuyper, and has been very influential in Christian Democrat politics.

⁴⁷Some Irish political institutions are commonly called by their Irish names. This practice is also followed here.

office was held by Mary Robinson at the time of the case study. The President is the Head of the State only, without executive functions, and normally acts on the advice and authority of the government, although with the additional duty of acting as guardian of the constitution (Facts about Ireland 1995, 37: Ireland in Brief, 25).

Legislative power is vested in Parliament, where both houses may examine and criticise government policy, but the government is responsible only to the *Dáil* (Facts about Ireland 1995, 38). The *Dáil Éireann* has at present 166 members, who are called *Teachtaí Dála* (TDs), while the *Seanad Éireann* has 60 members, eleven nominated by the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister), forty-three elected from five vocational panels, the Cultural and Educational Panel, Agricultural Panel, Labour Panel, Industrial and Commercial Panel and Administrative Panel, and the remaining 6 elected by citizens who have received a degree from one of two universities, the National University of Ireland and the University of Dublin. The powers of the *Seanad* are in general less than those of the *Dáil*, as although it may initiate or amend legislation, the *Dáil* has the power to reject any such amendments or proposed legislation (Facts about Ireland 1995, 38-39, 42; Ireland in Brief, 26).

Executive power is in the hands of the government, led by the *Taoiseach* (Prime Minister), who is appointed by the President after nomination by the *Dáil*. The *Taoiseach*, *Tánaiste* (Deputy Prime Minister) and Minister for Finance must be members of the *Dáil*, but there may not be more than two Ministers who are members of the *Seanad*. The government acts as a collective authority responsible to the *Dáil*. In addition to the ministers, who head the various Departments of State, there may be ministers of state, who are not members of the government but assist specific ministers in their work (Facts about Ireland 1995, 40).

The electoral system in Ireland is one of proportional representation by means of a single transferable vote (PR-STV) in multi-member constituencies. Both Irish and British citizens over the age of 18 years and ordinarily resident in the given constituency may vote in *Dáil* elections. Single-party *Fianna Fáil* governments were most common in the past, but coalition governments have become the norm over the last 20 years. After the 1989 elections, there were seven parties represented in the *Dáil* (Ireland Constitution and Government 1995, 6).

The party map of Ireland is somewhat peculiar, since the two largest parties have both arisen out of disagreements in the independence movement on nationalist issues concerning Commonwealth or republic status, the extent of the state, and constitutional symbols and forms (Chubb 1993, 91). England had dominated Ireland politically for centuries until an Anglo-Irish Treaty was signed in December 1921, as a result of which 26 counties gained independence in the form of the Irish Free State. A civil war (1922-3) followed between the

new government and those who opposed the treaty, and the two major parties perpetuated the split: *Cumann na nGaedheal* (later *Fine Gael*), which supported the treaty, and *Fianna Fáil*, which opposed it (ibid., 92). Although the country severed its last constitutional links with Britain in 1948, when Ireland officially became a republic, party politics continued to hinge on attitudes and approaches towards Britain and the partition issue. Competition among the parties has not taken place along the ideological dimension of left-right, but rather on a primarily nationalist dimension. The absence of a large communist, socialist or even social democratic party distinguishes Irish politics from that of the rest of Western Europe.

Fianna Fáil (“The Soldiers of Destiny”) has consistently been the largest party in the *Dáil* since 1932, attracting the support of four to five out of every ten members of the electorate (Chubb 1993, 95). Given such a strong position, it has, according to Basil Chubb (ibid., 96), become accustomed to seeing itself as more than a party, something of a national movement. For decades it commanded a dominant position within the party system and provided the basis for stable (majority or minority) single-party government. This position was in practice strengthened by its no-coalition stance, which became a “core value” especially for the loyal traditionalists in the party (ibid., 95-98; Mair 1989, 138-139). It has been described as the most traditionalist Irish party: Catholic, nationalistic and populist, but gradually having to change its image from nationalist republican purity towards a party concerned with managing a successful capitalist economy (O’Leary and Peterson 1990, 135). *Fianna Fáil* gained support in its earliest days mainly from the rural areas and from among the small farmers, along with the members of the urban working class who had recently moved to the towns, and also middle-class people with a small-farmer background. Since the forties it has been a “catch-all” party, managing in 1989, for example, to achieve more support than the other parties not only among all classes, – except for the large-scale farmers, but in all regions and in both urban and rural areas (Chubb 1993, 99). In the European Parliament, *Fianna Fáil* is a part of the European Democratic Alliance, in an uneasy combination with the French Gaullists. Except for a common commitment to the CAP, the two main components of this group have only few natural points of agreement and identity, but they have been reluctant to link up with more established Centre-Right groupings (Nugent 1989, 128).

At first *Cumann na nGaedheal* (from 1933 *Fine Gael*, “The People of the Gael”) was the party of the treaty, of law and order, and in support of Commonwealth status. In those days it attracted the business world, shopkeepers and professional people, and the more wealthy farmers (Chubb 1993, 100). Like *Fianna Fáil*, *Fine Gael* changed its image towards that of a “catch-all” party, consistently gaining the second highest vote in elections, and performing well all over the country, even though its support is more class-based than that of *Fianna Fáil* (ibid., 101). Even though its core constituency is still a right-wing

one, it has moved cautiously towards the welfare state and pursued social democratic policies, especially in coalition governments with the Labour Party. There was a period in the 1970's and up to the mid-1980's which marked an attempt to make the party less conservative, but this was clearly incompatible with the views of some of its members and ran into difficulties (ibid., 97). In the European Parliament, *Fine Gael* is a member of the Christian Democrat group called the European People's Party (Nugent 1989, 127).

The Labour Party was established before independence by trade-union leaders as an alliance of trade unionism and socialism, but the prolonged dominance of national and constitutional issues after the civil war left it without any basis for mass support. In effect, partition of the island into the mainly rural Catholic republic and the more industrialised, protestant Northern Ireland (Ulster) divided the potential constituency of the Labour Party and marginalised any left-wing opposition to conservative parties in both parts (Boylan et al. 1988, 153). Ideologically, the Labour Party can be considered a mildly left-wing party (Chubb 1992, 33), and in contrast to the two larger parties, its support is clearly class-based and focussed on urban areas only. What is more remarkable, both *Fianna Fáil* and *Fine Gael* used to attract more working class votes than the Labour Party until the early 1990's (Chubb 1992, 101).

In addition to the above three parties, which have dominated Irish politics since the late twenties, there were two other parties of some significance in the early 1990's: the Workers' Party (since 1992 the Democratic Left) and the Progressive Democrats. The Workers' Party has its origins both in republican trends and radical leftist elements, but abandoned extreme tactics in the early 1970's in favour of a socialism of the Euro-communist kind (Chubb 1992, 93-94). Later, it moved further towards the political centre.

The Progressive Democrats were formed in 1985 by leading *Fianna Fáil* dissidents, who were later joined by leading *Fine Gael* dissidents (Facts about Ireland 1995, 44; Mair 1989, 137). It advocates a liberal position in terms of social policy and traditional morality, but is simultaneously markedly conservative in economic terms and has drawn support from among the middle class, the traditional heartland of *Fine Gael* (Mair 1989, 137). The Progressive Democrats were expected to become rapidly re-absorbed by the *Fianna Fáil* (Mair 1989, 132), but this has not been the case, although at the turn of the millennium the party was in government with *Fianna Fáil*.

By the late 1980's it had become evident that *Fianna Fáil's* position was less dominant than it had been. It seemed as if there was a more conventional Western European pattern of ideological and class politics developing in Ireland. The year 1987 marked a watershed in Irish party politics, for several reasons. The *Dáil Éireann* had been enlarged in 1981 to 166 seats instead of the former 148, accompanied by changes in constituency boundaries (O'Leary and Peterson 1990, 129), and this meant that it was more difficult for any party or coalition to

win an overall majority. Also, the ideological compatibility that had made it possible for *Fine Gael* and Labour to promote electoral alliances since the 1973 election had begun to bear fruit among the electorate, which became aware of the possibility of an alternative to *Fianna Fáil* (Mair 1989, 136-137). It had been possible in the 1970's for Labour and *Fine Gael* to find common ground in the development of a moderate social-democratic philosophy (Mair 1989, 138), but in the 1980's the small Worker's Party challenged the Labour Party to fight for working class votes, and the new Progressive Democrats attracted right-wing votes away from the *Fine Gael*. The ideological compatibility suffered, and by 1987 it again looked as if there were no alternatives to *Fianna Fáil*. When *Fianna Fáil* failed to gain a majority in the 1989 elections, the successive defeats induced its leaders to abandon the half-century-old policy of going it alone and to enter into a coalition with the Progressive Democrats (Chubb 1992, 98). This was the party political situation in Ireland during the period studied here.

The Irish political system has frequently been described as a Catholic, morally conservative, clientelist, egalitarian and agrarian social order, a form of parish-pump politics in which parochialism is reflected in a powerful localism on the part of rural voters and in a tendency for rank-and-file members in particular to raise matters of local interest in order to gain publicity in their home territories (Carty 1981; O'Leary and Peterson 1990; Chubb 1992). Localism in Irish politics, according to Lee (1989, 547), is partly due to the fact that Ireland has almost no serious local self-government: "It is less the intensity of localism that is peculiar to Ireland than the mechanisms devised to elevate the local to the national. The prominence of the local at national level is the reverse side of the coin of administrative centralisation." Decisions concerning policing, education, health and conservation, which often come under local control elsewhere, have crucial implications for local welfare, but in Ireland they are decided at the national level.

Irish local government was originally designed on an Anglo-Saxon, decentralised pattern, but has been modified several times and is nowadays overlain by different elements, either of home manufacture or imported from non-English sources (Roche 1982, 9-11). At present, local government is a genuine government in the sense that it is based on locally elected representative authority, but it is heavily dominated by the central authorities. The British concept of local government was that of legislative dominance and independence between authorities, in contrast to the French pattern of a centrally commanded hierarchy of authorities and executive dominance combined with legislative subordination (*ibid.*).

The democratic element in local government still exists at the county level in Ireland, but it has been severely weakened by a number of arrangements. Local bodies are little more than the agents or outposts of the central government in

many matters (Roche 1982, 293-294; Chubb 1992, 272), and local government is to a large extent administration, concerned with the provision of services that are decided upon elsewhere. This may in a sense give it executive strength, however (Roche 1982, 11). The formal position of local government is weaker in Ireland than in the Netherlands, for following the tradition of British common law, local government does not have a constitutional status in Ireland as it does in most European countries, and this is one of the few countries which has not signed the European Charter of Local Self-Government adopted in 1985, which provides that local authorities should have general competence (Chubb 1992, 267). As in most countries which have developed welfare policies, the pattern of increasing financial dependence on central government has undermined the autonomy of local government, which is often responsible for implementing these policies at the local level. Moreover, the local authorities' room for manoeuvre in determining expenditure is limited, since the centre has virtually taken over local taxation (Chubb 1992, 274).

Local government is primarily county council government, which means that the unit of government is fairly large by comparison with the situation in other European countries, as there are an average of 31,000 people per county council (Chubb 1992, 271). In addition to the 29 county councils, there are 5 county borough corporations, 5 borough corporations, 49 urban district councils and 26 boards of town commissioners, which together form the instruments of local government (Facts about Ireland 1995, 51). Traditionally, Irish local government did not include any regional level, but 9 regional authorities were established as statutory bodies in 1994 to contribute to the implementation of EU Structural and Cohesion Fund programmes. According to Chubb (1992, 263), "... the creation of regional bodies owes nothing to a democratic desire to devolve political power or increase popular participation: on the contrary, they exist for bureaucratic convenience".

Debate on reforming local government has been going on in Ireland for decades (Roche 1982, 299-309; Facts about Ireland 1995, 51), but the difficulties of carrying through significant reforms are extensive. In order to improve efficiency, functions have been concentrated in fewer authorities, but these modifications have been accompanied by bureaucratisation in the form of increasing central government control, the creation of a single local government service and the institution of a manager system (Chubb 1992, 272).

In spite of the fairly weak formal structures, regional policy is a more important issue in Ireland than in the Netherlands, since there is a growing concentration of the population in the capital region. Large rural areas in the north and east are suffering from depopulation, which is an issue in national politics as well as being a target of many EU policies implemented in Ireland in connection with economic and social cohesion or as part of rural development programmes such as Leader.

Irish central government has been characterized by a high degree of departmental autonomy (Chubb 1992, 312), in addition to which the highly autonomous departments have not been interested in systematically developing any coordinating institutions or procedures for long-term strategic policy evaluation or formation, at least not formally (*ibid.*, 316). However, one should not underestimate the importance of informal networks of communication in a relatively small country which is ethnically and religiously fairly homogeneous (Breen et al. 1990, 163).

A certain analogy can be found between the levels of decision-making, proceeding from local and national to supranational. Most politicians, according to Chubb (1992, 315), are inclined to see the EU as “over there”, their view being that of the periphery, and Community’s ideals and spirit are not embedded in the Irish political culture. In general, a certain “national bias” can be found at the EU level as well.

(Neo-)corporatist arrangements have never developed to such a level of political significance in Ireland as they have in the Netherlands. Both trade union and employer federations have suffered from the inability to sustain a strategy which transcends sectionalist interests (Breen et al. 1990, 180). Furthermore, successful neo-corporatist arrangements require a space created for political exchange. In corporatist systems, such as in Sweden, the trade union movement has gained access to political power via the social democrat party, which has dominated government. In the Dutch case, a number of parties have exercised command over a major part of the electorate not accessible to competing parties, but there has been a commitment to negotiating over political differences. In Ireland, the space for exchange has remained limited, since party politics have been based on political ideologies which deny the importance of the class conflict. (*Ibid.*, 167-168).

To the extent that corporatist arrangements have taken place, farmers have been involved formally, or informally. They did not participate in national wage agreements in the 1970’s, but they did wield influence through their direct relationship with the Department of Agriculture (*ibid.*, 204). Farmers are normally represented by two major organisations, the Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers’ Association (ICMSA) and the Irish (formerly National) Farmers’ Association (IFA). While the ICMSA promotes the interests of dairy farmers, the IFA is a much larger body which represents farmers regardless of the commodity they produce (Breen et al. 1990, 202-203). Even though it has been impossible to merge the two organisations, they have managed between them to safeguard the interests of their members much better than has the Irish trade union. The IFA is regarded by many as the country’s most effective pressure group (Boylan et al. 1988, 202; Chubb 1992, 113).

As in the Netherlands, the cooperative movement is a dominant force in agriculture. Eight out of every ten farmers were members of at least one

cooperative in the early 1990's. Cooperatives are particularly important for the marketing of dairy and livestock products, although Irish agricultural cooperatives have confronted similar difficulties to cooperatives in general, and major changes in their organisational and operational structures have taken place in order to compete with other companies. Some cooperatives have created Public Limited Companies under their control to generate additional funds. The ICOS (Irish Co-operative Organisation Society) is the leading body promoting the cooperative movement in the country. (Ireland Agriculture and Food, 27).

5.3.2. Irish agriculture

Irish agriculture is extensive by compared with that in the Netherlands, and is even more dominated by livestock production. Where the total area devoted to agriculture in 1989 was 5.7 million hectares, about 3 million hectares of this was pasture land, almost 1 million hectares rough grazing (Ireland Agriculture and Food, 2), 1.2 million hectares under hay (including silage), and only half a million hectares used for the cultivation of crops and fruit (*ibid.*). While there is great variation in farm size, the average size in terms of land area, according to the 1991 Census of Agriculture, was 26 hectares (Matthews 1995). Forests cover 8% of the land area (Facts about Ireland 1995, 95).

A mild climate coupled with a well-distributed rainfall favours the growth of grass in particular, and the fertile soil ensures a long grazing season (*ibid.*, 3, 94). There are regional differences in both farm size and production. In the east and south-east with good fertile soils and the least rainfall, crops such as wheat, barley, potatoes and sugar beet are produced (Ireland Agriculture and Food, 2, 17). Larger farms dominate in the south and east, whereas the proportion of smaller farms, mostly engaged in cattle rearing and milk production or in sheep production on the mountains, is greater in the west and north-west (Matthews 1995). The south and south-west are the main milk producing areas of the country, and sheep farming is also important in the hilly and mountainous regions of the east and south (Ireland Agriculture and Food, 3). Pig production is primarily located in the southern and north-eastern regions (*ibid.*, 16), and is increasingly becoming concentrated in a reduced number of units. Specialisation is also significant in the poultry industry (*ibid.*, 17).

According to the 1991 Census of Agriculture, there were 170,000 farms of more than 1 hectare in size (Matthews 1995), and agriculture accounted for 15.0% of total civilian employment in 1990 (OECD 1993, 352), and contributed about 10% of the Gross Domestic Product in 1989 (Ireland Agriculture and Food, 4). Agriculture and the food industry combined accounted for 14% of GDP and about 18% of total employment in the same year (OECD 1994, 84).

These figures reveal the significance of agriculture for the structure of the Irish economy, and particularly for employment. Hannan and Breen (1987)

estimated that 25% of farmers in 1987 were part-time, but it is likely that these figures conceal a significant amount of under-employment. When farms were classified on the basis of their labour requirements⁴⁸, only 37% were regarded as full-time ones, whereas at the same time 42% of the farmers depended on agriculture for their main source of income (OECD 1994, 87). In addition, there were still about 20,000 assisting relatives (not spouses) engaged in agriculture in 1986 (*ibid.*, 89). This represents to a great extent the absence of work opportunities outside farming rather than a conscious decision to opt for farming (*ibid.*, 90). The country became industrialised fairly late, and it is still the case that the public sector accounts for about one third of all non-agricultural employment (*ibid.*, 84). Emigration has been a dominant feature of Irish society since the Great Famine in the 1840's, albeit with some interruptions.

As in the Netherlands, livestock production makes the largest contribution to the gross output from agriculture, as livestock and livestock products together accounted for 89% of the total output in 1993, and their importance has grown steadily (Matthews 1995). Cattle dominate livestock production, and milk accounted for some three-eighths of total output in 1991 (OECD 1994, 85-86). Crops, consisting of cereals, potatoes and sugar beet, but with cereals (wheat, barley and oats) the most important, made up about one-eighth of the total agricultural output in 1991 (*ibid.*). – The food processing and drinks sectors represented 25% of all employment in manufacturing industry in 1989 (Ireland Agriculture and Food, 4), and food and agriculture accounted for one-seventh of the national income in the early 1990's and one-sixth of all jobs (OECD 1994, 121).

Again similar to the Netherlands, Irish agriculture is highly export-oriented. Food and drink products represented about one quarter of total Irish exports in 1990 (Ireland Agriculture and Food, 4), and more than 80% of the dairy and beef output was exported (Matthews 1995). The principal export market for Irish agricultural products was the United Kingdom, which accounted for 32% of the total in 1990 (Annual Report 1991, 11). There has been a marked change in the destinations of exports after Ireland became a member of the EU, however, in that it has become more closely integrated into the international economy and has begun to disengage itself from its earlier heavy reliance on Britain. As the UK market share fell, amounts exported to other EU countries increased and the role of non-EU markets grew substantially (Matthews 1995).

Here a difference can be observed relative to Dutch agricultural exports, which go mainly to other EU countries. The Netherlands is geographically more favourably located in the surroundings of large population centres. Likewise, transportation always gives rise to extra costs, and Ireland's relative distance

⁴⁸ A full-time farm is one that requires more than 0.75 Standard Labour Units to operate.

from its main markets leads to another peculiarity of its agricultural exports, the use of intervention as an outlet for agricultural produce (NESC 1989, 96-97). Intervention in sales requires no marketing, but the prices are lower than the general EU market level. As Matthews (1995) has pointed out, an important consequence of sales to markets outside the EU – which is only possible with export subsidies – is that Ireland is particularly vulnerable to changes in agricultural support arrangements. As was discussed in Chapter 4.5.1, the Uruguay Round of GATT negotiations targeted these subsidies, in particular.

Seasonality of production is an often-mentioned characteristic of Irish agriculture. Especially from the point of view of the food processing sector, this seasonality has been regarded as a weakness of the agricultural sector (NESC 1989, 97). Actually, seasonality is intertwined with other elements in Irish agriculture. It is at least partly a deliberate strategy, which has more sides to it. As Boyle (1992, 157-162) argues, the competitive advantage that Irish agriculture enjoys is based on relatively low feed and overhead costs, which in turn stem from the grass-based production system. Ireland is strong in (low cost) commodity production, because the abundant factor it possesses is grass growth, which is by nature highly seasonal. According to Boyle (*ibid.*), Ireland has preferred this low cost strategy to product differentiation.

Breen et al. (1990, 192-195) refer to the impact of state policy in shaping Irish agriculture towards utilisation of this comparative advantage. Between the late 1930's and the mid-1960's extensive "ranching" operations were encouraged in order to increase export earnings from the cattle trade, but this trend was directly responsible for a decline in the farm population, as the structure of Irish farm holdings did not suit an extensive cattle industry in many respects. Furthermore, the major policy instrument by which agriculture was directed was already price support before EU membership, and the effect became even stronger after access to EU guaranteed prices, which were especially favourable to dairy products and beef. When the support was coupled to prices, those who produced most also gained the most support. The two policy choices thus contributed to a polarisation in Irish agriculture. Membership of the EU gave it a boost, but the fruits were spread unevenly. The increased output achieved in the 1970's was the work of a minority of farms, about 25-30% (NESC 1989, 97), and according to Breen et al. (1990, 199), variation in incomes in the early 1990's was greater in the farming sector than in the non-farming sector.

The food processing industry is a major factor in the Irish economy, so that employment in the food processing and drink sectors represented 25% of all those employed in manufacturing industry in the early 1990's, (Ireland Agriculture and Food, 4). Food processing and trading companies are significant economic actors in the country, and as in other EU countries, the food industry is becoming more and more centralised. There were 39 plants licensed to process milk in 1990, but over 50% of the milk was produced by 6 large cooperatives (*ibid.*, 9).

A cooperative central marketing organisation *An Bord Bainne* (the Irish Dairy Board), best known for its branded sales under the “Kerrygold” label, is responsible for most of the export business, and its counterpart in the beef processing industry is CBF, the Irish Livestock and Meat Promotion Board (ibid., 13). Irish agriculture and its food industry are organised, but not as thoroughly as in the Netherlands. Agricultural research and training are combined under TEAGASC – the Agricultural and Food Development Authority, which has statutory responsibility for providing advisory, training, research and development services for agriculture and the food industries (ibid., 26).

5.4. Conclusions

The main features of Dutch and Irish national politics and agriculture have been described above. As for the political scene in the two countries, the main differences have to do with the remnants of pillarisation in Dutch politics, which are still recognisable in a certain sector orientation and in a tendency to turn controversial issues into technical questions. The historical but still influential basis of party politics in Ireland differs from the more ordinary Western European structure of the left-right continuum in the Netherlands. In both countries the Christian religion still has a greater hold on both party politics and agricultural interests than in the Nordic countries, for example. In the Netherlands, the CDA still has to respect the confessional element among its supporters, and especially in the so-called Bible Belt in the centre of the country, orthodox Calvinism has still some hold over farmers, although this is diminishing. In Ireland, the Catholic Church is declining in importance, but it is certainly not insignificant, particularly in the countryside.

Regional problems are more closely connected with rural issues in Ireland than in the Netherlands, where the main bone of contention is the use of scarce land resources for the needs of housing, traffic, recreation and agriculture. The polity to which agricultural policy is related in the two countries differs somewhat, particularly as regards politicisations. Rural and regional aspects are a part of Irish agricultural policy, whereas it is the environmental issue that is politicised in the Dutch polity for agriculture. In both polities the producer/product dimension is more thoroughly politicised than the consumer/commodity aspect of agriculture.

Agriculture in both countries is export-oriented, and in both cases livestock production is a major source of agricultural income. Dutch production is more intensive, however, whereas Ireland has more extensive livestock production. Consequently, Dutch agriculture also causes more environmental problems. The Dutch sell most of their agricultural produce to the EU market, while Ireland is more dependent on third-country markets and sells large quantities of produce via intervention. Furthermore, a significant proportion of the Dutch agricultural produce is not dependent on the CAP market and price policy, or at least not

directly so, and only pork and poultry are indirectly affected by the CMO of beef as a subsidiary product, whereas the wealthy markets in seeds and many horticultural products lie completely outside the CAP regime. Irish agriculture is much more dependent on the CAP.

The above description of politics and agriculture in the two case countries also serves the purpose of displaying a fraction of the complexity of the CAP framework to the reader. It has to do not only with the difficulty of finding agreement on what is a problem and what ought to be done, but also confronts the policy in the implementation phase. Sicco Mansholt said in an interview (30.8.1992) that the problem for the EU lies not in the power of Brussels bureaucracy, which he considered modest, but in the complexity of the CAP, which implies that it is in effect impossible to control the common policy implemented in the member states at the union level.

6. Actor structure

6.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses how the political aspect of the CAP discursive field is reflected in the actor structure. The analysis focuses on which politicians, civil servants, lobbyists, experts, farmers etc. and organisations, parties, institutions etc. had most to say in the debate, and equally importantly, examines who were mentioned as subjects acting in it. In that they were referred to in these quarters, they may be recognised as important even if they did not necessarily participate in the debate themselves. In addition, the analysis aims at showing which potential actors are missing. The actor structure investigates whose business the Common Agricultural Policy was in the two countries.

In order to organise the debate, I have first divided it into two sub-fields: the national scene and the EU scene. On the national scene, the actor has been active in predominantly a national context, representing domestic interests and contributing to the discussion mainly from the domestic point of view. The division is only a tentative one, however, and is not clear-cut in all cases (as a person acting predominantly on the national scene may sometimes have performed on the EU scene as well, expressing ideas relevant to the whole Community), but it is enough for the present purposes. The role of a minister of agriculture, for example, is analysed on the domestic scene because he was clearly working for domestic interests even though he also performed regularly on the EU scene as well. Likewise, members of the European Parliament (MEPs) are discussed in the context of the EU scene even though they also talked about the effects of the reform on their own country's agriculture, for example. The third and final part of the actor analysis consists of an examination of the geography of the debate: which countries, international groupings or regional units were mentioned in it, where the centre of the Common Agricultural Policy lies and what constitutes the periphery.

As discussed in section 3.3.2, each actor mentioned in the debate has been picked out, but each actor is listed only once for each piece of text, even though the names are often repeated several times. I chose to ignore the number of occurrences in a text for two reasons. First, I do not consider it a reliable sign of the importance of an actor. Writers have different styles of writing, which affect how often they repeat names, and in this case, the two parts of the debate took place in different languages, which may also affect the frequency of mentioning names. Similarly I was not interested in how important one writer regarded each actor as being, but rather the analysis was focussed on the overall picture. Secondly, since the text corpus is large, one recorded mention of each actor per text is enough to show who and what are regarded as most essential subjects in

the debate. The main data will therefore concern the numbers of texts in which the various actors were mentioned.

6.2. Actors in the Dutch debate

6.2.1. The domestic scene

The analysis proceeds here in the following order: 1) state organs, 2) farm organisations, 3) parties and their representatives, 4) research organisations and other experts, 5) other interest groups involved and 6) the shop-floor level: farmers.

State organs

Since Commissioner MacSharry was not included, the Minister of Agriculture, Piet Bukman (193⁴⁹),⁵⁰ was the most prominent actor in the Dutch debate. He was mentioned in 193 articles, interviewed 6 times⁵¹, and had one article published in his name⁵². His importance in the reform debate gives reason to take a closer look at him. Son of a market gardener, Mr Piet Bukman, M.Sc., is a member of

⁴⁹ The numbers in brackets refer to the frequency of mentions in the material. In order to make the references shorter, the texts contained in the material are referred to by codes, i.e. combinations of letters and numbers. The texts are classified into opinions (O), news (N) and expert articles (E). Some codes may be of the form O-022a, where the small "a" distinguishes between two texts accidentally assigned the same code. There is a list at the end of the book showing which article each code refers to. In order to differentiate between the Dutch texts and the Irish ones, the latter are printed in italics, in cases of possible misinterpretation.

⁵⁰ N-003, O-010, O-012, N-007, O-017, O-020, O-022, O-027, N-010, N-011, N-012, O-035, N-018, N-020, N-021, N-022, N-023, N-027, N-031, N-032, N-033, N-035, N-036, O-043, N-040, N-043, N-044, E-004, N-045, N-046, E-006, O-048, O-049, O-050, N-053, O-051, N-055, N-056, E-007, E-009a, O-057, N-060, N-061, N-063, N-070, O-065, O-067, O-068, N-072, O-072, O-073, N-077, N-078, N-076a, N-078a, N-086, N-086a, N-088, N-089, N-090, N-091, O-074, N-092, O-075, N-095, N-097, N-098, N-099, N-102, E-010, E-011, E-012, N-107, N-109, O-079, O-080, E-015, E-016, N-120, N-121, N-122, N-123, E-017, N-125, N-126, N-127, E-018, N-128, N-130, N-131, N-133, N-134, N-135, O-086, O-087, N-136, O-090, N-140, N-141, O-091, N-148, N-150, N-151, E-025, O-096, N-155, N-161, N-163, O-101, O-102, N-173, O-103, N-174, N-178, N-179, N-186, O-106, N-188, N-189, N-190, N-192, N-193, N-196, N-197, N-198, N-199, N-200, N-201, N-202, N-203, N-205, N-210, N-211, N-214, N-215, O-113, N-216, N-217, N-218, N-219, N-220, O-116, O-117, O-119, N-226, O-120, N-230, N-231, N-233, N-234, O-121, N-235, N-236, O-122, N-237, O-122, N-237, O-123, O-124, O-125, N-240, N-242, O-126, N-243, N-244, N-245, N-246, N-247, O-129, N-249, N-252, N-253, O-136, N-256, N-258, O-141, N-264, N-265, O-142, O-143, N-267, N-268, O-144, N-270, N-271, N-272, N-273, N-274, N-275, N-276, N-277, N-279, N-286, N-287, N-289.

⁵¹ O-011, O-016, O-021, O-025, O-084, O-114.

⁵² O-147.

the Christian Democrat party, CDA. He had been working for the protestant farmers' organisation NCBTB (*Nederlandse Christelijke Boeren- en Tuindersbond*) first as its first secretary and later as its President, until 1980, when he left agricultural circles and became fully engaged in national politics. In the "rooms-rote" coalition government of the Christian Democrats (CDA) and the Labour Party (PvdA) with Ruud Lubbers as Prime Minister, he received the post of Secretary of State for Finance (*Staatssecretaris van Economische Zaken*) in 1989. When his fellow party member Gerrit Braks had to resign after a fishery scandal in September 1990, Piet Bukman was nominated as Minister of Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries.

Piet Bukman's role as minister was to represent the government in the debate. Interestingly, he had to do this almost alone, because the other ministers' opinions were not considered as legitimate as his and the government as such was not regarded as an important actor in the discussion. It was mentioned only occasionally (3)⁵³. Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers (13)⁵⁴, the Minister for Finance Wim Kok (5)⁵⁵ and the Minister for the Environment Alders(1)⁵⁶ were the other ministers mentioned. It was symptomatic of the Dutch debate that the rest of the government did not always seem to back up the Minister of Agriculture. The other ministers, and especially Premier Lubbers, approached the reform proposals more often from the context of the GATT trade talks. Farm leaders even questioned the authority of Mr Lubbers to talk about agricultural policy at all, and thus belittled his role as a competent practitioner.⁵⁷

The reform proposals were naturally also discussed in the Dutch parliament, mostly in the Second Chamber (9 mentions)⁵⁸ rather than the First Chamber (2 mentions)⁵⁹. However, one cannot say that parliament was a primary platform for the debate, as the Ministry of Agriculture was mentioned almost as many times (5)⁶⁰, and its top civil servant, Gerrit Meester, was interviewed once⁶¹. The Queen was also mentioned once⁶².

⁵³ N-053, O-067, N-088.

⁵⁴ N-009, N-042, N-053, O-082, N-157, N-161, N-163, N-165, N-167, O-101, N-169, O-132, N-258.

⁵⁵ O-063, N-263, N-265, N-266, N-271.

⁵⁶ O-080, E-025.

⁵⁷ N-042.

⁵⁸ O-064, N-090, E-020, N-198, O-136, O-143, N-271, N-271, N-293; 9 times.

⁵⁹ N-257, O-138.

⁶⁰ N-094, E-019, N-278, N-292, N-293.

⁶¹ E-012.

⁶² O-084.

Farm organisations

The second most frequent actor in the Dutch debate was the *Landbouwschap* (Board of Agriculture) (68)⁶³, the co-ordinating organisation for the national farmers' unions (the Catholic KNBTB, the liberal KNLC and the protestant NCBTB) and the agricultural representatives of the trade unions (FNV and CNV). The *Landbouwschap* was the official representative of Dutch agriculture at the time of this debate, and was invested with public authority. The farmers' organisation part of the *Landbouwschap* (the CLO's, *Centrale Landbouworganisaties*) was mentioned only a few times (4)⁶⁴.

Presumably because the *Landbouwschap* is not a single farmers' organisation like the IFA and ICMSA in Ireland, it was represented by more than one leader. Even though its President, Jef Mares, was mentioned more often than the other farm leaders (32⁶⁵; one interview⁶⁶), he was also acting at the same time as President of the Catholic KNBTB. Correspondingly, other national or regional farm leaders could equally well perform partly on behalf of the *Landbouwschap* and partly in support of farming in the Netherlands as a whole.⁶⁷

In addition, the *Landbouwschap* was represented by its leading functionaries.⁶⁸ One revealing fact about the division of labour inside the *Landbouwschap* is

⁶³ N-003, O-010, O-011, O-012, O-017, E-001, O-027, O-037; N-016; N-017, O-039, O-042, N-037, O-044, N-043; E-005, O-058, N-060, N-077, N-078, N-079; N-078a, N-080a, N-084, N-091, O-074, O-076, N-104, N-109, O-084, N-133, N-140, O-091, E-025, N-158, N-159, N-160, O-099, O-100, O-110, N-209, O-111, N-211, N-225, N-226, N-228, N-229, O-120, N-231, N-232, N-233, O-122, N-237, O-124, N-240, N-254, N-255, O-142, O-143, N-274, N-286, N-287, N-291, O-150, N-292, N-293.

⁶⁴ O-058, N-135, N-157, N-168.

⁶⁵ N-043, N-044, N-049; E-009a, O-061, N-067, N-078, O-063, O-064, O-066, O-067, O-075, N-078, N-078a, N-084, N-108, O-091, N-158, N-159, N-161, O-107, N-198, O-110, N-231, N-233, O-122, N-237, N-251, N-286, N-288, N-291, O-150.

⁶⁶ N-254.

⁶⁷ These included Marius Varekamp (President of the KNLC) (11 times, O-010, N-042, N-043, N-044, O-060, N-108, N-159, O-107, O-115, N-226, N-237), Gerard Doornbos (President of the protestant NCBTB) (10 times, N-108, N-159, N-160, O-101, N-226, N-228, O-120, N-237, N-240, N-251), Pe Miedema (chairman of the department for cattle, chairman of the commission for foreign affairs at the *Landbouwschap*, and chairman of the Frisian CBTB) (7 times, O-043, N-133, N-135, O-090, N-159, N-228, N-237), Jans Leeuwma (chairman of the department of arable farming at the *Landbouwschap*) (5 times, E-009a, N-104, E-025, N-228, N-293), P. Bloklind (chairman of the department of dairy and cattle breeding) (once, N-104), Aike Maarsingh (chairman of the department of arable farming at the *Landbouwschap*, chairman of the CBTB *Veenkolonien*) (6 times, O-043, N-042, O-075; O-090, O-101, N-233), H.J. Slijkhuis (*Overijsselsche Landbouw Maatschappij*) (2, N-076a, O-101), H. Schaap, of the same organisation (once, N-060), Huib van der Maas (*Zuidelijke Landbouwmaatschappij*) (once, O-099) and Mr Lanting (*Groninger Maatschappij van Landbouw*) (2 times, N-164, O-101).

⁶⁸ Cees de Bondt (assistant secretary general) (once, O-014), Chris Floris (foreign affairs expert) (twice, O-011, N-101), and J.H. Egberink (acting secretary general of the *Landbouwschap*) (once, O-079).

that when it finally decided to accept the MacSharry reform proposals in May 1992, it was Pe Miedema, chairman of the foreign affairs committee, who wrote an article about it, and not Mares⁶⁹. Finally, the young farmers' organisation NAJK (*Het Nederlands Agrarische Jongeren Kontakt*) and its chairman Arian Kamp⁷⁰ were mentioned a couple of times. Furthermore, Dutch farming interests were represented nationally by means of agricultural products, in the *Produktschappen* (6)⁷¹.

The impressive list shows that the Dutch agricultural world was highly organised and that the representatives of different organisations, both national and regional, were visible on the domestic scene. It also implies that the farm organisation body, the *Landbouwschap*, had connections with more than one leading person in this debate. The people in the Dutch farm organisation seemed to be both ready and able to participate in the public debate in fairly large numbers. Horizontal representation of its interests via the *Landbouwschap* was more important than vertical representation via the *Productschaps*.

Political parties

Four political parties were regularly connected with the debate: the Christian Democrats CDA, the Social Democrat party PvdA, the Liberal-Conservative party VVD, and, somewhat less, the Green party *Groen Links*. The CDA, PvdA and VVD are among the largest parties in the Netherlands. The CDA and PvdA were in the Cabinet, while the VVD and Groen Links were part of the parliamentary opposition.

All the main parties had a spokesman on agricultural policy who took a stand on the reform proposals. This division of labour inside the parties seems to have been rather strict, because the same names appeared frequently. The only exception was the CDA, which, according to the Gallup polls, gained most support among the farmers, together with the VVD (Hoetjes 1990), and also paid most attention to the farming community. The Christian Democrat spokesman in the Second Chamber, Jan van Noord (1972, one interview⁷³), was not the only

⁶⁹ O-127.

⁷⁰ O-066, O-101.

⁷¹ E-001, N-077, O-075, N-076a, O-077, E-014; The beef sector was represented in the debate by Rob Tazelaar (once, O-077), dairy products by the chairman, F. Beekman (once, N-084), and later by the new chairman, Schelhaas (twice, O-011, N-274), and poultry and eggs by Tazelaar (1, N-198). The chairmen of the *Produktschappen* for beef, Tazelaar (E-013), and for dairy products, Schelhaas (E-014), were also interviewed.

⁷² O-022, N-041, O-064, O-066, O-067, N-093, N-108, E-018, O-090, O-091, O-110, N-211, N-231, O-126, O-136, O-138, O-143, O-146, N-286.

⁷³ O-106.

CDA actor in the debate, however.⁷⁴ On the other hand, the party was usually represented by a spokesman, and was only mentioned 6 times without any connection with a specific person⁷⁵.

The politician Jan van Zijl (15⁷⁶, one interview⁷⁷) was the PvdA agricultural policy spokesman in parliament, and only two other names were mentioned: Servaes Huys (3)⁷⁸ and Ad Melkert (1)⁷⁹. The party appeared without a spokesman 7 times⁸⁰.

The VVD spokesman on agricultural policy in the Second Chamber, Piet Blauw, was the most visible actor (21)⁸¹ among all the parliamentary politicians, and his role as chairman of the standing committee for agricultural policy gave his words a certain extra emphasis. David Luteijn (4)⁸², another prominent VVD politician in the debate, was actually not only a member of the First Chamber and a former President of the KNLC, but also chairman of the administrative council of one of the largest agricultural cooperatives in the country, *Cebeco Handelsraad*. The VVD as a party was mentioned in 6 articles⁸³.

The Green party, Groen Links, was mentioned in 4 articles⁸⁴, but no individual politician acted as its spokesman on agricultural affairs. On the EU level the MEP Herman Verbeek wrote actively on the subject, as did Tim Verhoef (a Dutch staff member of the Green Group in the European Parliament), but they were clearly acting in an EU context and not in that of national agriculture, and they will thus be discussed in the next chapter. Of the rest of the Dutch parties, only the fundamentalist Calvinist RPF (*Reformatorische Politieke Federatie*) was mentioned in one article⁸⁵.

A couple of politicians who had retired from the day-to-day politics were still active in the discussion. By far the most important on both the national and

⁷⁴ In addition to van Noord, the CDA members in the First Chamber (Senate), Boorsma (1, O-050), P. Coenemans (twice, N-257, O-138) and Jos van Gennip, a director of the scientific institute of the CDA and responsible for writing party programmes (1, N-259), expressed their opinions. Moreover, the CDA politicians Biesheuvel (1, O-090), Latijnhouwers, as well the chairman of NCB Brabant (2, O-090, N-237), Hakvoort (1, O-090) and René van Linden (1, N-271) were mentioned.

⁷⁵ N-085, N-122, O-093, O-106, O-128, O-143.

⁷⁶ O-022, O-027, N-041, O-049, O-060, O-063, N-071, N-108, N-198, O-110, N-210, N-211, N-231, O-143, O-146.

⁷⁷ O-028.

⁷⁸ O-060, O-146, N-286.

⁷⁹ N-270.

⁸⁰ N-064, O-073, N-100, N-122, E-018, E-020, O-143.

⁸¹ O-043, N-041, E-009a, O-064, O-066, O-067, O-072, N-085, N-102, N-107, N-108, E-017, O-110, N-211, O-120, N-231, O-126, O-136, N-286, N-287, N-289.

⁸² N-050, N-051, O-092, O-110.

⁸³ N-086a, N-090, N-102, N-257, O-143, N-287.

⁸⁴ N-105, N-122, O-128, N-257.

⁸⁵ N-257.

international scene was the first EU Commissioner for Agriculture (1958-1972), the former Minister of Agriculture and the éminence grise of Dutch and European agriculture, Sicco Mansholt. The text corpus contains two articles⁸⁶ written by him, he was interviewed once⁸⁷, and 12 articles carry references to him⁸⁸. The former Farm Minister Gerrit Braks (9)⁸⁹ was still regarded as a competent actor as well. Furthermore, two former Ministers for the Environment, P. Winsemius and E.H.T.M. Nijpels, took part in the reform debate (3)⁹⁰.

Research organisations and experts

Apart from politicians and the farming lobby, several research institutes and numerous experts were regarded as legitimate practitioners in the field of agricultural policy. The most important research institute which was expected to provide scientific calculations on the effects of the reform proposals on Dutch agriculture was the LEI (*Landbouw Economisch Instituut*; Institute for Agricultural Economics) (31)⁹¹. In addition, the CPB (Centraal Planbureau) was mentioned in 6 articles⁹², and a third research institute, SOW-VU (*Stichting Onderzoek Wereldvoedselvoorziening at the Amsterdam Free University*) featured in 4 articles⁹³. The researcher Max Merbis was the SOW-VU agricultural policy expert. Two foreign research institutes were mentioned: the Belgian LEI (1)⁹⁴ and the Irish Teagasc (1)⁹⁵.

In addition to research institutes, there were a number of experts from universities and other organisations, some of whom participated in the discussion several times and made contributions that added greater depth to the debate. Among the most visible experts on the national platform was Prof. Jan de Veer, former Director of the research institute LEI and Emeritus Professor of Agricultural Economics at the University of Amsterdam. He was interviewed once⁹⁶ and mentioned in 9 articles⁹⁷. Another prominent expert was Jerry de

⁸⁶ E-007, O-059.

⁸⁷ O-010.

⁸⁸ O-014, E-001, N-057, O-060, O-077, O-089, N-145, E-025, O-096, O-097, O-101, O-110.

⁸⁹ O-010, O-016, O-049, O-050, O-080, O-084, O-132, N-259, O-138.

⁹⁰ O-077, O-097, E-025.

⁹¹ O-018, E-001, N-077, N-080a, O-076, N-103, N-104, O-080, E-015, N-112, N-113, N-114, N-115, N-116, N-117, N-118, N-119, O-081, E-017, O-095, E-025, N-154, O-101, N-180, N-182, O-107, N-194, N-197, O-120, N-240, N-254. The director of the LEI, Prof. L.C. Zachariasse (E-011) and two researchers, F.H. Bethe (E-015) and the Head of the Agricultural Department, Jan Blom (N-112), were interviewed.

⁹² N-054, N-180, N-182, O-107, N-197, O-150.

⁹³ N-180, N-181, N-182, O-107.

⁹⁴ N-183.

⁹⁵ N-106.

⁹⁶ O-047.

⁹⁷ O-015, N-181, O-097, O-110, O-114, O-126, O-132, O-138, E-031.

Hoogh, Emeritus Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Agricultural University in Wageningen. He wrote one article⁹⁸, was interviewed once⁹⁹ and was referred to in 7 articles^{100,101}. Most contributors from universities were agricultural economists. Practitioners from other related departments were not interested in participating in the debate, or else they were not considered competent actors – except for one rural sociologist from Wageningen, Dirk Roep¹⁰².

Besides university people, there were experts who were more closely connected with interest organisations or companies. Gert van Dijk, Professor of Cooperative Studies at the Wageningen Agricultural University and director of the NCR, the national umbrella organisation for agricultural cooperatives, was interviewed once¹⁰³ and mentioned in 5 articles¹⁰⁴. An expert at the cooperative bank Rabobank, J.J.G. Geurts, also wrote an article¹⁰⁵. Two environmental experts can be mentioned, Wouter van Dieren, director of the Institute for Environmental and Systems Analysis (*Instituut voor Milieu- en Systeemanalyse*) wrote an article¹⁰⁶, and R. van der Berg, researcher at a state institute for the environment (RIVM, *Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieuhygiene*) was interviewed¹⁰⁷. In addition, the nature and environment organisation “*Stichting Natuur en Milieu*” was mentioned in one article¹⁰⁸. In another article, four experts were mentioned¹⁰⁹. Thus, a few environmentalists participated in the debate, but their voice was rather weak by comparison with the contributions of the farm organisation representatives, for example.

⁹⁸ E-006.

⁹⁹ O-020.

¹⁰⁰ E-009a, E-025, O-101, O-115, O-132, N-145, N-257.

¹⁰¹ Furthermore, Professor Cees Veerman (5, N-145, O-101 O-110, O-114, O-126), former chairman of the National Cooperative Council (NCR, *Nationale Cooperatieve Raad voor Land- en Tuinbouw*) and former director of the LEI, was a professor in Agrarian Economics and Sociology at the Catholic University of Brabant and at the Erasmus University, Rotterdam. A specialist in arable farming, P.C. Struik (4, E-009, E-009a, E-025, E-031), and Professor Rudy Rabbinge (3, E-023, E-025, O-097) of the Department of Theoretical Production Ecology represented the Wageningen Agricultural University. Arie Oskam and Arie Kuyvenhoven of the Department of Agricultural Economics at the same university together wrote one article (E-009).

¹⁰² E-002.

¹⁰³ O-039.

¹⁰⁴ O-114, O-115, O-126, N-259, E-031.

¹⁰⁵ E-003.

¹⁰⁶ O-077.

¹⁰⁷ N-221.

¹⁰⁸ O-052.

¹⁰⁹ O-078: Manus van Brakel (*Vereniging Milieudedefensie*), A.J.A. Bijl (*docent economie aan de Hogeschool van Den Bosch*), F.D. Loon (*NMB-Postbank*), Coen van Beuningen (*humanistische medefinancieringsorganisatie Hivos*).

Other interest groups involved

The voice of the agro-industry and other businesses connected with agriculture was also heard. The major co-operatives were the most visible,¹¹⁰ whereas organised consumer viewpoints were less prominent. Only two articles made reference to the Dutch *Consumentenbond*¹¹¹ in the national part of the debate.

Farmers

The most visible among the farm spokesmen was a Frisian farmer, Klaas Dijkstra (8)¹¹², also known as a member of the “*groep-Emmeloord*”, a farmers’ action group based in the Frisian village of Emmeloord. He had some previous experience of acting in a farmers’ movement, and quickly became a spokesman for the Northern Dutch farmers who demonstrated in front of a hotel where the European Farm Ministers were holding a meeting with Commissioner Ray MacSharry in autumn 1991. This incident was the only one which brought farmers into the debate as subjects, allowing them to occupy the leading role for a couple of hours¹¹³.

In general, farmers were not subjects in the debate, nor even objects, since the discussion was about agriculture, not about farmers. Only a couple of times did the discussion touch upon reality at the farm level, when arable farming and the northern provinces of Friesland, Groningen, Drenthe and Veenkolonien where it mainly takes place in the Netherlands were discussed¹¹⁴. In two articles farmers representing different lines of production were interviewed about their opinions of the reform proposals¹¹⁵. Farming women were mentioned in two articles¹¹⁶, and animals were noted in one article¹¹⁷.

¹¹⁰ *Cebeco-Handelsraad* was mentioned twice by others (O-077, 101), a member of its directie, H. de Boon, wrote an article (E-008), and one of its directors, J.H. Peltjes, was interviewed (O-039). Avebe (E-020), Cavo Latuco (O-101), the cooperative marketing organisation for poultry (*Cooperatief Afzetorgaan voor Slachtpluimvee*) (O-101), the dairy cooperative Campina-Melkunie (N-084) and Rabobank (N-260) were all mentioned once. Suiker Unie was mentioned in one article (N-260) and the Union for Dairy Products, FNZ (*Koninklijke Nederlandse Zuivelbond*) in three articles (N-076a, O-077, O-092). The Organisation for the Food and Agrarian Industry VAI (*Verenigde Voedsel en Agrarische Industrie*) was mentioned in two texts (N-093, O-141), and there was even one text written by its representative, Chris de Koning (O-141).

¹¹¹ N-079, N-078a.

¹¹² O-060, O-067, N-132, N-133, N-134, N-135, N-140, N-157.

¹¹³ E-023, N-131, N-130, N-132, N-133, N-134, N-135, O-086, N-140.

¹¹⁴ N-103, E-010, N-113, N-113, E-018, E-020, N-142, E-023.

¹¹⁵ E-021, O-124.

¹¹⁶ O-057, O-104.

¹¹⁷ O-057.

Table 6.1 Actors on the Dutch national scene.

LEVEL	ACTORS	FREQUENCY
State organs	The Queen	1
	The Government	3
	Prime Minister	13
	<i>Minister of Agriculture</i>	193
	Minister of Finance	5
	Minister of the Environment	1
	First Chamber (Parl.)	2
	Second Chamber (Parl.)	9
	Ministry of Agriculture	5
Farm organisations	<i>Landbouwschap</i>	68
	- Chairman Jef Mares	32
	Marius Varekamp (KNLC)	11
	Gerard Doornbos (NCBTB)	10
	Produktschappen	6
Political parties	CDA	6
	- Jan van Noord	19
	PvdA	7
	- Jan van Zijl	15
	- Servaes Huys	3
	VVD	6
	- <i>Piet Blauw</i>	21
	- David Luteijn	4
Groen Links	4	
Research institutes and experts	<i>LEI</i>	31
	CPB	6
	SOW-VU	4
	Prof. Jan de Veer	9
	Prof. Jerry de Hoogh	7
	Prof. Cees Veerman	5
	Prof. Gert van Dijk (NCR)	5
Other interest groups involved	Agro-industrial co-ops:	
	- Cebeco-Handelsraad	2
	- Avebe	1
	- Cavo Latuco	1
	- poultry marketing co-op	1
	- Campina-Melkunie	1
	Rabobank	1
	Suiker Unie	1
	FNZ	3
	VAI	2
	Consumentenbond	2
Farmers	Klaas Dijkstra	8

6.2.2. The EU scene

Another part of the debate dealt primarily with Community policy. Here the actors can be grouped as follows: 1) EU organs, 2) members of the Commission, 3) members of the European Parliament, 4) politicians from different member and non-member countries, 5) national civil servants, 6) farm organisations, and 7) CAP experts.

On this level the writers could either choose to stress a deliberate actor or not. By this I mean that there exists a choice between talking about the Commission, the Council of Ministers, or of the European Parliament, which all refer to existing concrete institutions, or talking somewhat ambiguously about “the EC” or “Brussels”, which are indeterminate concepts. “The EC” is too vast and unclear, for it embraces all European Union institutions, the national governments and the whole geographical area of the Community. As will be shown in the next chapter, on geographical connotations, the “EC” often referred at that time to the whole of Europe, which further increased its ambiguity. It is often used as a counterpart to the US, as a comparable actor in international politics. “Brussels” can easily take on a slightly pejorative connotation, referring to a faceless bureaucracy factually responsible to no one. Both expressions were nevertheless used.

EU organs

Among the EU decision-making bodies, the Commission (38)¹¹⁸ was by far the most important actor in the Dutch debate, while the European Parliament (13)¹¹⁹ and the Council of Farm Ministers (13)¹²⁰ were mentioned equally frequently. The European Council (1)¹²¹, i.e. the Council of Ministers, composed of the heads of state or government of the member states, was not an important actor. “Brussels” was commonly mentioned as an actor (20)¹²², as was “the EC” (15)¹²³.

¹¹⁸N-004, N-007, N-013, N-017, N-018, O-040, N-028, N-034, E-044, O-046, N-048, O-051, N-058, O-056, N-073, N-074, N-076, N-079, N-080, N-083, N-084, N-086a, N-096, N-106, E-013, O-079, N-120, N-125, N-126, E-019, E-022, N-195, N-208, N-261, N-262, N-267, N-292.

¹¹⁹N-052, N-143, N-166, N-175, O-109, N-206, N-207, N-207, O-112, N-293, O-123, N-239, N-241.

¹²⁰N-016, N-048, N-125, N-126, N-130, N-132, N-133, N-134, N-141, O-091, N-150, N-169, N-199.

¹²¹O-079.

¹²²O-016, N-018, N-051, N-058, O-057, O-065, O-070, N-077a, N-105, O-081, O-084, O-086, O-087, E-021, O-102, O-106, N-195, O-122, O-128, O-135.

¹²³N-014, O-037, N-017, N-018, O-042, E-009, O-083, E-019, O-087, O-092, E-024, O-096, N-194, E-028, E-030.

Commissioners

The Commission thus received the highest frequency of mentions among the EC actors. But when one takes a closer look at what was understood by the Commission, it becomes obvious that only a few names were mentioned. Two members were considered to be clearly more important than the rest of the Commission¹²⁴: the President, Jacques Delors (35)¹²⁵, and the Dutch Commissioner, Frans Andriessen (34)¹²⁶, plus two interviews¹²⁷. The attention paid to Jacques Delors as an actor can partly be explained by the fact that he was generally regarded as a strong leader. His importance in this particular debate was partly indirect, however, being related to the connection seen between the CAP reform and the GATT trade negotiations. Delors was occasionally seen as being behind the reform proposals, but his role was more prominent in the GATT connection.

The significant role adopted by Frans Andriessen in the discussion can be explained by three factors. First, he was the Dutch nation's "own" commissioner, and as such came to be considered a prominent figure in the debate. Secondly, he was the Commissioner for External Trade, one of the most powerful positions in the Commission, a status that was further enhanced by the fact that he was responsible for the GATT negotiations. Thirdly, he was regarded as a prominent figure in the CAP because he had been the Commissioner for Agriculture before Ray MacSharry. Since he had tried to solve the overproduction problem by means of stabilizers during his own term of office, he was still seen as being both involved in the debate and a competent actor in this field.¹²⁸

Since the reform proposals were marketed by Commissioner MacSharry as having an environmental aspect, the Italian Commissioner for the Environment, Ripa di Meana (3),¹²⁹ was indirectly invited to perform as a competent actor in

¹²⁴Note that the Commissioner for Agriculture, Ray MacSharry, is not included in this analysis. He would naturally have been the most important Commission actor in matters concerning the reform proposals.

¹²⁵O-011, N-006, N-007, N-008, O-019, N-009, N-010, O-032, N-012, O-040, O-041, N-046, E-005, O-082, N-167, O-108, N-192, N-196, N-202, O-109, O-112, O-116, N-238, N-242, N-247, O-132, N-256, N-261, N-265, N-266, N-268, O-144, N-270, N-271, N-277.

¹²⁶N-008, O-019, O-024, O-027, O-032, N-012, N-015, O-034, O-035, O-038, N-019, N-020, N-024, O-040, N-028, N-035, N-036, N-037, E-005, E-006, O-055, O-057, O-073, N-082, N-090, N-091, N-092, N-101, N-082, O-096, N-155, N-170, O-132, N-288.

¹²⁷O-023, O-053.

¹²⁸In addition to Commissioner Andriessen, his cabinet chief, Hans Wijnmalen, was also an actor (1, O-055, plus two interviews, O-038, O-123). When Andriessen had completed his term as a commissioner, he was succeeded by Hans van den Broek (Commissioner for Foreign Affairs). van den Broek did not have time to assume such a prominent role in this debate, however (2 times, O-082, O-123).

¹²⁹N-033, N-037, N-082.

the discussion. The anticipated effect of the reform proposals on the EU budget made the opinions of three other Commissioners relevant to the discussion,¹³⁰ the Dane Henning Christophersen in monetary affairs (4)¹³¹, the German Peter Schmidhuber in budgetary matters (2)¹³² and Christiane Scrivener in questions of taxation (1).¹³³

Members of the European Parliament

Only three political groupings in the European Parliament were mentioned in this debate: the largest group, the Socialists, were mentioned most often (7)¹³⁴, followed by the Christian-Democrats (3)¹³⁵ and the Greens (3)¹³⁶. On the level of individual MEPs, representation was centralised, and all the MEPs mentioned were Dutch. The socialist MEP Eisso Woltjer (13)¹³⁷, plus one interview¹³⁸ was most conspicuous.¹³⁹

Politicians from other EU and non-EU countries

Farm Ministers from various member states were the most prominent politicians who were active in the debate, but they were not all equally significant. One preliminary observation is that the larger the country, the more important its representative. The Dutch followed most carefully what the German Minister, Ignaz Kiechle (35)¹⁴⁰, plus one interview¹⁴¹) had to say, and the second most

¹³⁰In addition, only the Vice-President of the Commission, Martin Bangemann (2, N-026, N-091), from Germany and the British Commissioner, Sir Leon Brittan (4, O-032, N-012, N-014, O-040) were mentioned.

¹³¹O-019, N-081, N-081, N-090.

¹³²N-090, N-238.

¹³³O-035.

¹³⁴O-022, N-062, N-064, N-156, N-166, N-207, N-223.

¹³⁵N-166, N-207, N-223.

¹³⁶N-166, O-109, O-140.

¹³⁷O-022, O-060, N-077, N-091, N-092, N-101, N-156, N-166, O-101, N-184, N-192, O-110, N-210.

¹³⁸O-049.

¹³⁹The Christian Democrat MEP Jan Sonneveld (7, O-090, E-025, N-091, N-166, N-184, N-192, O-110) also wrote one article himself (O-083) and was interviewed once (O-093). The Green MEP Herman Verbeek (4, N-092, N-101, N-166, N-168) was regarded as a slightly less important actor by others, but wrote 3 articles (O-057, O-118, O-153, and was interviewed once (O-128). The Greens used newspapers more often than the other EP groups for presenting their point of view. In addition to Mr Verbeek, a Dutch agricultural policy adviser on the Greens' staff, Tim Verhoef, wrote 2 articles (O-109, O-140).

¹⁴⁰N-018, N-020, N-026, N-062, N-077, N-077a, N-086, N-086a, N-087, N-089, N-091, N-124, N-128, N-132, N-134, N-136, E-020, N-148, O-101, N-173, N-179, N-188, N-197, N-199, N-202, N-205, N-211, N-215, N-220, O-116, N-230, O-126, N-249, N-253, N-275.

¹⁴¹O-039.

attention was paid to the French Minister, Louis Mermaz (29)¹⁴², followed by the British Minister, John Gummer (23)¹⁴³, plus two interviews¹⁴⁴). The next most important actor, however, was neither Minister Romero from Spain (one interview¹⁴⁵), nor one of the Italian Farm Ministers, although these are the major southern countries, but rather Arlindo Cunha, the Portuguese Minister of Agriculture, who outnumbered them with references in 21 articles¹⁴⁶. It would nevertheless be a mistake to name him as one of the CAP heavyweights in his own right, as the attention paid to him is explained by his position as chairman of the Council of Ministers meetings during the critical period from January to the end of June 1992 when the final negotiations over the reform were taking place.

Thus, the preliminary criterion that ministers were regarded as more competent when they represented larger member states has to be modified. It seems that ministers from adjacent large countries were regarded as the most important, and in this case they also happen to be Germany and France, which are traditionally seen as forming a poweraxis in the EC. In the reality, the picture can easily become somewhat more confused, because the political arena is always open to isolated incidents. The significance of the Italian representative(s), for example, grew disproportionately during the final moments of the debate, when they made a scene out of milk quotas, so that two of their ministers, Giovanni Goria¹⁴⁷ and Giovanni Fontana¹⁴⁸ were mentioned in a total of 14 articles, all in May 1992, – whereas no Italian minister of agriculture had been visible in the Dutch debate previously.¹⁴⁹

Although the CAP is primarily an arena for agricultural politicians, it attracts other prominent political actors from time to time. The German Federal Chancellor, Helmut Kohl, was mentioned once in connection with the Dutch

¹⁴²N-018, N-020, N-029, N-032, N-077a, N-085, N-086a, N-089, N-091, N-097, N-131, N-132, N-136, N-146, N-147, N-148, N-152, N-156, N-169, N-179, N-188, N-197, N-204, N-249, N-253, N-269, N-273, N-281, N-285.

¹⁴³N-029, O-051, N-071, N-085, N-086, N-086a, N-087, N-088, N-089, N-090, N-097, N-128, N-132, N-146, N-150, N-171, N-196, N-245, N-264, N-272, N-286, N-289, O-152.

¹⁴⁴O-039, O-048.

¹⁴⁵O-039.

¹⁴⁶N-132, N-175, N-178, N-186, N-188, N-189, N-192, N-197, N-199, N-200, N-212, N-215, N-216, N-217, N-220, O-114, N-230, N-231, N-236, N-240, N-244.

¹⁴⁷N-244, N-249, N-252, N-253, N-261, N-262, N-267, N-272.

¹⁴⁸N-285, N-286, N-289, N-290, N-291, O-148.

¹⁴⁹Among the representatives of the smaller countries, the Belgian Minister of Agriculture, Paul De Keersmaecker, was mentioned in 3 articles (N-029, N-087, N-090) and his successor, Bourgeois in 7 articles (N-213, N-220, O-114, O-130, N-272, N-275, N-276). The Danish minister Toernaas was mentioned only once (N-245), and the Irish minister Michael O'Kennedy appeared in one article (N-101) and was interviewed once (O-039). The ministers of agriculture of Luxembourg and Greece were not mentioned in the Dutch text corpus.

debate¹⁵⁰, and the Minister for Finance, Jürgen Möllemann, in 3 articles¹⁵¹. The French President, François Mitterrand, was mentioned in 3 articles¹⁵², and two Prime Ministers, Rocard¹⁵³ and Edith Cresson¹⁵⁴, were also mentioned. In addition, the Gaullist politician Jacques Chirac, ex-president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and the extreme -right-wing leader Jean-Marie Le Pen were mentioned in one article¹⁵⁵. The British Prime Minister John Major was involved in the discussion in 3 articles¹⁵⁶, and even his predecessor, Margaret Thatcher, was mentioned in 2 articles¹⁵⁷. Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, was also implicated in the Italian milk quota interlude^{158, 159}.

The world of agricultural policy is not restricted to EU-politicians, however, not even when EU policy is being discussed. The GATT negotiations, for example, influenced the actors present in this field to the extent that Arthur Dunkel (22)¹⁶⁰, President of the GATT, was prominent. As was the US GATT team: the Minister of Agriculture, Ed Madigan (6)¹⁶¹, the leading GATT negotiator, Carla Hills (4)¹⁶², the Minister for Foreign Affairs, James Baker (2)¹⁶³, and President George Bush (3)¹⁶⁴. The GATT connection even brought the Australian Minister of Agriculture, Neil Blewitt, into the Dutch debate on one occasion¹⁶⁵.

Furthermore, there were a few Dutch national politicians visible on this scene. As shown above, Sicco Mansholt was a prominent figure when the reform proposals were being discussed in the national context, and he also

¹⁵⁰O-051.

¹⁵¹N-124, N-197, O-116.

¹⁵²O-041, O-051, O-082.

¹⁵³N-010, N-011.

¹⁵⁴O-082.

¹⁵⁵N-138.

¹⁵⁶N-101, N-187, N-251.

¹⁵⁷N-238, O-139.

¹⁵⁸N-245, N-249, N-261, N-262, N-264, O-148.

¹⁵⁹Of the representatives of the smaller member states, Prime Minister Dehaene (N-213) and the Minister of Trade and EC Affairs, Urbain (2, N-213, N-216) of the neighbouring country of Belgium were mentioned, but not as prominent actors. The same can be said of the Irish Prime Minister, Charles Haughey (N-101). The Portuguese Prime Minister, Cavaco Silva (2, O-116, N-262), and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Joao de Deus Pinheiro (2, N-170, N-242) were recognised because their country occupied the presidency at the time. Again, the actions and opinions of the Greek, Luxembourgian, Spanish and Danish politicians never crossed the publicity threshold in the Dutch debate.

¹⁶⁰O-024, O-096, O-101, N-169, N-170, N-174, N-176, N-178, N-184, O-106, N-192, N-195, O-109, O-113, O-115, O-116, O-132, N-256, N-261, N-265, N-266, E-030.

¹⁶¹N-077, N-091, N-165, N-169, N-170, N-195.

¹⁶²N-091, N-092, N-170, N-195.

¹⁶³N-169, N-170.

¹⁶⁴N-167, N-169, O-116.

¹⁶⁵N-077.

commanded considerable authority on the broader EU scene, being mentioned in 15 articles¹⁶⁶ and interviewed once¹⁶⁷. The Prime Minister, Ruud Lubbers, was mentioned in 7 articles¹⁶⁸, and the Minister of Finance, Wim Kok, once¹⁶⁹. Two secretaries of state, Yvonne van Rooy (8)¹⁷⁰ for foreign trade, and P. Dankert (6)¹⁷¹ for EU affairs, were similarly involved in the discussion.¹⁷²

National civil servants

Although a significant proportion of the negotiations took place among high officials from the EU member states, these were seldom directly visible as actors in the debate, in spite of the fact that their contribution was crucial for progress in the Council of Farm Ministers meetings. Evert Pierhagen (5)¹⁷³, Secretary (*directeur-generaal*) at the Ministry of Agriculture, represented his country in the negotiations a couple of times, when the minister, Piet Bukman, was in the chair. On the other hand, there were two high officials from the Department of International Affairs at the Dutch Ministry for Agriculture (*Internationale Agrarische Aangelegenheden en Marktordeningsvraagstukken van het Ministerie LNV*), Gerrit Meester and Werner Buck, who had a more visible and independent role in the discussion, so that in the end it transpired that the ministry was able to agree with the MacSharry proposals before its minister, Piet Bukman, was prepared to do so. This meant that at a certain moment Mr Meester and Mr Buck intervened in the discussion to explain their point of view.¹⁷⁴

¹⁶⁶O-033, O-073, N-080; N-101, O-085, O-095, N-155, O-112, N-235, O-130, O-145, E-027, E-031, O-149, O-154.

¹⁶⁷O-132.

¹⁶⁸N-010, N-035, N-040, N-179, N-272, N-287, O-148.

¹⁶⁹N-247.

¹⁷⁰N-045, N-161, N-167, N-169, N-197, N-203, N-205, O-116.

¹⁷¹N-010, N-091, O-082, O-123, N-242, N-270.

¹⁷²Among the party spokesmen we find the same names as in the national debate: Piet Blauw of the VVD (E-016) and Jan van Zijl of the PvdA (E-018) were both interviewed once and Jan van Noord of the CDA twice (E-017, O-115), while the VVD Senator David Luteijn wrote an article (O-177). The former Minister for Agriculture, Gerrit Braks (CDA), was interviewed once (O-041).

¹⁷³Mr Pierhagen was mentioned in 5 articles: N-010, N-086, N-088, N-097, O-092.

¹⁷⁴Gerrit Meester wrote one article with a couple of officials from his department (Maarten Mookhoek and Petra Berkhout) (E-026); was interviewed once (O-143) and was mentioned in 6 articles (N-215, O-113, N-219, N-220, O-114, O-142). Werner Buck was mentioned in 4 articles (O-113, N-219, N-220, O-114). In addition, there was one ex-top official from the Ministry of Agriculture who was active in the discussion: Aart de Zeeuw. He was a former secretary at the Ministry for Agriculture and the chairman of the Agricultural Committee in the GATT negotiations. He was interviewed once (O-133) and mentioned in 4 articles (N-057, O-040, E-030, O-077).

Farm organisations

Several farm organisations were regarded as competent actors in the debate, as could be expected. According to Fennell (1987, 55-57), the COPA (*Comité des Organisations Professionnelles Agricoles*) was the most influential among these, but it was also more in contact with the Commission. In particular, the national producers' organisations were more important than COPA in terms of lobbying power as far as the Council is concerned. COPA was mentioned in 30 articles in the present material¹⁷⁵, and was frequently represented by its German chairman, Constantin Freiherr Heeremann¹⁷⁶. The Dutch farm leader, the NCBTB chairman Gerard Doornbos (10¹⁷⁷, plus one interview¹⁷⁸) was Vice-President of the COPA during the negotiations, and he often participated in the Dutch discussion in that role. The COGECA (*Comité Général de la Co-opération Agricole*) was mentioned in only one article¹⁷⁹.

Of the foreign farm organisations, the French and British ones appeared most often in connection with the Dutch debate.¹⁸⁰ In addition, two Dutch farmers, Huib Rijk and Henk Besten, representing a critical farmers' group (*Kritisch Landbouw Raad*) wrote one article together¹⁸¹. The President of the KNLC, Marius Varekamp, wrote one article¹⁸² that has to be classified as a EU scene contribution, since he was presenting the reasons why the *Landbouwschap* finally altered its position with respect to the reform proposals.

¹⁷⁵O-029, O-031, N-044, N-047, N-056, N-059, N-077, N-078, N-078a, O-074, E-011, O-092, N-144, N-145, N-160, N-161, N-162, N-163, O-101, N-172, N-174, N-176, N-177, N-187, N-197, N-210, O-113, N-222, O-118, N-257.

¹⁷⁶Mentioned in 6 articles: N-161, N-174, N-176, N-187, N-197, N-222, and interviewed once: O-039.

¹⁷⁷N-043, N-044, E-005, N-059, O-074, N-161, N-163, N-176, N-177, N-190.

¹⁷⁸O-031, O-129.

¹⁷⁹N-174.

¹⁸⁰The French FNSEA (*Federation Nationale Des Syndicats D'Exploitants Agricoles*) (5, N-091, N-251, N-269, N-281, N-285) was mentioned most often, and its chairman, Raymond Lacombe, was interviewed twice (O-039, N-077a). Two other French farm bodies appeared in the debate: the organisation for young farmers, CNJA (2, N-269, N-077a), and *Coordination Rurale* (3, N-269, N-281, N-077a). The British were represented by the NFU (National Farmers Union) (3, (N-091, N-129, N-187), and the Portuguese (N-251) and German (N-157 a) farmer organisations, together with the association for environmentally critical farmers in EC (*Europese Boeren Vereniging* EBV, O-094), were mentioned in one article each. The Belgian farm leader, Jan Hinnekens, was mentioned in one article (N-047).

¹⁸¹O-104.

¹⁸²O-119.

Table 6.2. Actors on the Dutch EU scene.

LEVEL	ACTOR	FREQUENCY
EU organs	<i>Commission</i>	38
	European Parliament	13
	Council of Farm Ministers	13
	European Council	1
	Brussels	20
	The EC	15
Commissioners	<i>Jacques Delors</i> (President)	35
	Frans Andriessen (External Trade)	34
	Henning Christophersen (Monetary Affairs)	4
	Carlo Ripa di Meana (Environment)	3
	Peter Schmidhuber (Budget)	2
	Christiane Scrivener (Taxation)	1
	Martin Bangemann (Vice-President)	2
	Leon Brittan (Trade)	4
Members of the European Parliament	<i>Socialist group</i>	7
	- <i>Eisso Woltjer</i>	13
	Christian Democrat group	3
	- Jan Sonneveld	7
	Greens	3
	- Herman Verbeek	4
Politicians from EU and non-EU countries	Ministers of Agriculture	
	- <i>Ignaz Kiechle</i> (Ger.)	35
	- Louis Mermaz (Fra.)	29
	- John Gummer (UK)	23
	- Arlindo Cunha (Port.)	21
	Arthur Dunkel (GATT)	22
	Sicco Mansholt	15
National civil servants	Evert Pierhagen (directeur-generaa, LNV)	5
	Gerrit Meester (Dept of International Affairs)	6
	Aart de Zeeuw (Agricultural Committee, GATT)	4
Farm organisations	<i>COPA</i>	30
	FNSEA (Fra.)	5
	CNJA (Fra.)	2
	Coordination Rurale (Fra.)	3
	NFU (UK)	3

CAP experts

Finally, a number of experts were active in the debate.¹⁸³ Those regarded as competent actors in the CAP discursive field were in most of the cases the same ones who participated in the national discussion about the effects of the CAP. The overwhelming majority of them were agricultural economists.

6.2.3. Geography

Two member states were mentioned noticeably more often than the others in the Dutch debate: France and Germany. Contrary to the frequency of mentions of the respective ministers of agriculture, France as a country was mentioned more often (75)¹⁸⁴ than Germany (68)¹⁸⁵. On the other hand, Germany was discussed in greater detail, and its different regions were better known and taken into account. The former DDR (11)¹⁸⁶, Bavaria (3)¹⁸⁷, Schleswig-Holstein (1)¹⁸⁸ and Nordrhein-Westphalen (1)¹⁸⁹ were mentioned separately, whereas Bretagne (2)¹⁹⁰

¹⁸³Cees Folmer of the CPB and Max Merbis of SOW-VU together wrote one article (E-028), as did Arie Oskam and J.J. Stolwijk of the Agricultural University (E-029), and Arie Oskam was interviewed once (O-104). Professor Jan de Veer wrote two articles (E-019, E-027) and was interviewed once (O-107), and Professor Cees Veerman wrote an article (E-027), and was interviewed once (E-027). He was also one of the co-authors in an article (E-022), together with Professor Jerry de Hoogh, Hans August Lükcer and Sicco Mansholt. Professor Gert van Dijk wrote two articles (E-024, E-027), and was interviewed once (O-071), and Paul Struik of the Agricultural University wrote one article (O-145). Two foreign experts participated in the debate: Brian Gardner, director of a scientific institute for studying the CAP, who was interviewed twice (O-048, N-195), and the Irish Professor of Agricultural Economics Seamus Sheehy was interviewed once (N-137).

¹⁸⁴O-014, O-022, N-011, O-032, N-013, N-015, N-018, N-029, E-004, N-045, N-048, N-050, N-051, O-048, N-056, N-066, N-077, N-079, N-077a, N-080a, N-086a, N-091, O-074, N-096, N-106, E-012, E-013, N-114, N-115, N-116, N-119, O-081, O-082, E-018, N-131, N-134, O-086, O-087, E-020, N-138, N-139, O-092, N-147, N-148, N-150, N-152, O-096, N-154, O-098, N-165, O-101, O-103, N-174, N-180, N-192, N-199, N-200, N-203, O-112, N-212, N-214, N-244, N-249, O-134, N-256, N-263, N-267, N-273, N-275, N-276, E-029, N-281, N-285, N-286, N-290.

¹⁸⁵O-014, O-032, N-015, O-033, O-036, N-018, O-041, O-042, N-029, N-033, N-043, O-046, O-047, N-048, E-005, N-050, O-051, N-056, O-056, O-062, N-079, N-077a, N-080a, N-086a, N-089, O-074, N-094, N-097, E-012, N-113, N-114, N-116, N-124, E-019, O-086, O-087, E-020, O-090, N-146, N-148, N-150, N-151, O-096, N-154, N-157a, O-101, O-103, N-174, N-197, N-199, N-200, N-205, O-112, N-212, N-215, O-113, N-218, N-227, N-234, N-249, O-134, N-256, N-263, N-265, N-267, N-275, E-029, E-031.

¹⁸⁶O-046, O-047, O-056, O-062, N-077a, E-019, E-020, O-090, N-256, N-265, N-275.

¹⁸⁷O-014, N-015, N-154.

¹⁸⁸N-154.

¹⁸⁹E-029.

¹⁹⁰E-013, E-029.

was the only province denoted by name in France. Otherwise there was simply talk of northern or central France (2)¹⁹¹.

The countries ranking next in the debate were the United Kingdom (56)¹⁹² and Denmark (51)¹⁹³. These were referred to evenly throughout the discussion, but in less detail than Germany. Only south-east England was mentioned once¹⁹⁴. The above four countries – Germany, France, the United Kingdom and Denmark – formed the core of the EU as far as the Dutch debate was concerned. It is interesting that these comprised three large member states and one minor one, Denmark. The inclusion of the latter may be partly explained by its location close to the Netherlands, and by the belief that the Danes shared the same interests as the Dutch themselves. In addition, Denmark is also an important agricultural producer in the EU, of course, especially with respect to livestock.

The fifth most commonly mentioned member state was Italy (45)¹⁹⁵, but its position was confused by the milk quota dispute in May 1992. Without this incident, which gained a lot of negative attention in the Netherlands, the country would not have ranked so high in the Dutch debate. Italy's performance in this case was something unfamiliar and disturbing for the Dutch, thus making the emotional distance even greater than the geographical distance.

For a close neighbour partly sharing the same language, Belgium (36)¹⁹⁶ ranked fairly low. Its geographical position was not enough to bring it into the inner circle of Dutch EU geography. In fact, Ireland (30)¹⁹⁷ was mentioned almost as many times. This can be explained by the extra interest paid to the homeland of Commissioner MacSharry, and one may presume that Ireland would otherwise have been somewhat more marginal in the debate.

¹⁹¹N-066, E-020.

¹⁹²O-014, O-019, O-021, O-025, O-027, O-033, N-018, N-029, N-038, N-043, E-004, N-045, O-046, O-051, N-056, N-061, N-064, N-066, N-085, N-090, N-097, N-106, E-012, N-113, N-114, N-116, O-081, N-134, O-087, E-020, N-146, N-154, N-171, N-180, N-197, N-199, N-201, N-205, O-112, N-212, N-214, O-114, O-116, N-230, O-123, N-238, N-244, O-134, N-252, N-263, N-268, E-027, N-287, N-289, N-290, O-152.

¹⁹³O-019, O-021, O-025, O-027, O-033, N-018, N-029, N-038, N-043, E-004, N-045, O-048, N-056, N-061, N-085, N-097, N-106, E-012, E-013, N-113, N-114, N-119, N-201, N-205, O-112, N-212, N-214, N-215, N-217, N-218, O-114, E-027, N-285, N-287, N-289, N-290, O-148.

¹⁹⁴E-020.

¹⁹⁵O-019, O-033, N-043, E-004, N-050, O-063, N-097, E-012, N-119, E-020, N-154, O-098, O-101, N-174, N-197, N-200, N-211, N-212, N-214, N-215, N-243, N-244, N-245, N-249, O-134, N-252, N-254, O-136, N-261, N-262, N-263, N-266, N-267, N-268, N-272, N-273, N-274, N-276, N-285, N-286, N-288, N-289, N-291, O-148, O-152.

¹⁹⁶O-019, O-033, N-029, N-033, N-043, N-056, N-097, N-106, E-012, N-119, N-174, N-197, N-199, N-200, N-201, N-205, N-212, N-213, N-214, O-113, N-216, N-217, N-218, O-114, N-230, O-123, N-244, N-252, N-263, N-275, E-027, E-029, N-285, N-287, N-289, N-290.

¹⁹⁷O-014, O-019, O-021, N-013, N-015, O-033, O-036, N-029, N-039, N-043, N-051, N-056, O-065, N-097, N-101, N-106, E-012, N-119, O-081, N-180, N-212, N-224, O-116, N-238, N-253, N-263, N-273, E-027, O-148, N-292.

Table 6.3. EU countries involved in the Dutch debate.

COUNTRY	FREQUENCY
France	75
Germany	68
United Kingdom	56
Denmark	51
Italy	45
Belgium	36
Ireland	30
Spain	24
Portugal	23
Greece	13
Luxembourg	12

Spain (24)¹⁹⁸ and Portugal (23)¹⁹⁹ seemed to be equally important in the Dutch debate. This picture is misleading, however, as Portugal must have attracted more attention than normal because of its chairmanship of the EU at the time. One may expect it normally to be more peripheral than Spain, which should gain more attention simply because of its size.

Greece and Luxembourg lay on the ultimate periphery of the Dutch debate, though for different reasons. Luxembourg (12)²⁰⁰ because of its size, and Greece (13)²⁰¹ because of its location, and possibly also because of its language. No Greek was mentioned by name in the public debate, which also implies that the country is not very well known in the Netherlands.

The above analysis indicates that there is a northern core in the EU as far as the Dutch are concerned, comprising Germany, France, Great Britain and Denmark. The periphery consists of more southerly countries, most probably also including Ireland. Belgium is located somewhere in between, whereas Luxembourg is not taken very seriously in the political geography of the CAP.

We can also analyse the centre-periphery construction from a slightly different point of view. Namely, there are places in the texts at which the speakers or writers tried to explain the structure of the EU and the balance of power within it by grouping the member states into categories. The most important line of demarcation for the Dutch evidently ran between the south and the north. People

¹⁹⁸O-014, O-022, O-033, N-029, E-004, O-063, N-097, E-012, N-114, N-116, N-119, O-081, E-020, N-154, O-101, N-211, N-238, N-244, N-245, N-246, N-254, O-136, N-263, N-292.

¹⁹⁹O-033, N-029, E-004, O-063, N-097, E-012, N-114, N-119, E-020, O-101, N-178, N-200, N-202, N-212, N-213, N-218, N-238, N-261, N-263, N-272, N-276, N-282, N-284.

²⁰⁰N-005, O-019, O-033, N-029, N-043, E-004, N-106, N-119, N-212, N-214, N-244, N-265.

²⁰¹N-029, E-004, N-097, N-119, O-101, N-211, N-238, N-244, N-245, N-254, O-136, N-263.

spoke of “Southern Europe”(2)²⁰², “the southern member states” (3)²⁰³, “the Mediterranean countries” (2)²⁰⁴, or “the three most southerly countries” (1)²⁰⁵, although sometimes this group was defined slightly differently, as “the poorest member states” (1)²⁰⁶, which then excluded Italy but included Ireland. Thus Ireland’s position was ambiguous. It was easily lumped together with the poorer Mediterranean countries, although its geographical location is much further north. Furthermore, considering Ireland in the CAP context, it contributes to the surplus of northern “problem products” (dairy and beef) rather than to “southern products” (fruit, vegetables, wine and olive oil). Ireland does, however, share an interest in Structural Fund resources together with the southern member states, but it seems that this aspect is overemphasised in the Dutch consciousness, biasing the local picture of Ireland as a member state.

It seems to be more important to define “the other” or “them” in cases of this kind, whereas the group referred to as “us” is usually taken for granted. In fact, there were only a couple references to the “northern member states” (2)²⁰⁷. This means in practice that it is common to speak about the “southern member states” without making it clear whether the remaining countries all belong to the “northern member states”. Of all the possible divisions, that into south and north was the most common (11)²⁰⁸. The west-east dimension inside the EU was mentioned in only a couple of articles (2)²⁰⁹, and there was one interesting reference to “small countries” in the EU sense – not to Luxembourg or Ireland as one might think, but to the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark²¹⁰.

Moreover, there was another important line of demarcation: the east-west division between the EU and non-EU countries in central and southern Europe. Eastern Europe (17)²¹¹ was mentioned far more often than Western Europe (2)²¹², and with a general undertone of inferiority or a lower level of development than the West, but this was seldom expressed explicitly. In only one article was the pejorative term “Eastern Block”²¹³ mentioned, referring to communism and the totalitarian system. Of the Eastern European countries, Poland(3)²¹⁴, Ukraine

²⁰²O-087, O-090.

²⁰³O-112, N-212, O-149.

²⁰⁴N-186, O-134.

²⁰⁵N-043.

²⁰⁶N-266.

²⁰⁷N-085, N-244.

²⁰⁸E-004, E-005, O-055, O-056, E-012, N-136, E-021, N-242, N-243, N-256, N-287.

²⁰⁹E-019, E-031.

²¹⁰N-218.

²¹¹O-036, E-005, E-009, N-114, O-081, O-083, N-132, N-134, O-087, O-090, N-139, O-091, N-143, O-093, N-147, O-115, O-132.

²¹²O-085, O-091.

²¹³N-134.

²¹⁴O-077, O-082, E-020.

(3)²¹⁵, Hungary (2)²¹⁶, Czechoslovakia (1)²¹⁷ and Romania (1)²¹⁸ were mentioned by name.

The rest of Eastern Europe – Russia and other former Soviet republics, Bulgaria and Yugoslavia – was not considered relevant, and the same was true of the Nordic countries. EFTA as a group was mentioned twice²¹⁹, and Austria²²⁰ and Switzerland once each²²¹.

Overwhelmingly the most important actor outside the EU was the USA (44)²²², its role in CAP politics no doubt being underlined by the ongoing GATT negotiations. The same could also be said of Australia (3)²²³, New Zealand (2)²²⁴, Argentina(1)²²⁵, Thailand (2)²²⁶ and about Cairns group (2)²²⁷. Japan (5)²²⁸ was the second most frequently mentioned individual non-EU country. Countries which were less industrialised and located far away from the EU were either referred to vaguely (Southern Asia²²⁹) or totally neglected. Only three other Latin-American countries in addition to Argentina were mentioned, for example (Cuba, Nicaragua and Brazil²³⁰), and the continent as a whole was mentioned in only one article²³¹. Among the African countries, Kenya and Tanzania²³², and in Middle East, Saudi Arabia²³³ were mentioned, each once. These areas were lumped together under the terms “developing countries” (3)²³⁴ or “the Third World” (1)²³⁵.

²¹⁵O-081, O-115, E-031.

²¹⁶O-082, E-020.

²¹⁷E-020.

²¹⁸O-153.

²¹⁹O-090, E-030.

²²⁰O-118.

²²¹O-118.

²²²O-015, N-005, O-020, O-028, N-024, O-042, N-033, E-005, N-060, O-060, N-080, N-076a, N-086a, E-013, E-014, O-080, N-132, O-087, O-092, O-093, N-147, N-152, E-023, E-024, O-096, O-098, N-169, N-173, O-104, N-184, N-192, N-194, O-113, N-216, O-116, O-129, O-132, O-133, O-134, N-252, O-137, O-140, E-028, E-030.

²²³N-005, E-023, O-116.

²²⁴O-087, E-031.

²²⁵E-031.

²²⁶O-113, E-028.

²²⁷O-015, O-096.

²²⁸O-018, E-009, E-013, O-146, E-030.

²²⁹E-014.

²³⁰O-092, Brazil also in E-028.

²³¹N-024.

²³²both in O-092.

²³³O-116.

²³⁴E-009, E-002, E-023.

²³⁵N-112.

Last but not least, I would like to draw attention to an interesting phenomenon, the reduction of “Europe” to “the EU”. There were as many as 28 articles²³⁶ in which Europe was used as a synonym for “the EU”. This may have been connected with the tendency towards outlining the world in GATT terms, where only the USA and the EU were seen as competent partners, the rest of the world being expected to follow the decisions of these major powers, it does cause an identity problem for the other European countries, leaving them in a “no man’s land”, as it were. This could be interpreted as harmless nonchalance, but it may equally well be a deliberate way of mitigating the political importance of the European countries which are not members of the EU.

6.3. Actors in the Irish debate

6.3.1. The domestic scene

We will discuss the actors on the national scene in the same order as in the Dutch debate: 1) state organs, 2) farm organisations, 3) parties and their representatives, 4) research organisations and experts, 5) other interest groups involved, and last, 6) farmers.

State organs

As in the Netherlands, the Minister of Agriculture occupied an important role in the Irish debate. During the period studied here, there were actually three Ministers of Agriculture, succeeding each other in the following order: Michael O’Kennedy, Michael Woods and Joe Walsh, all *Fianna Fáil* politicians. O’Kennedy and Woods were both ministers in Charles Haughey’s government, in which Joe Walsh was Minister of State for Food. In Albert Reynold’s cabinet Joe Walsh held the post of Minister of Agriculture. Michael O’Kennedy’s term as a minister was the longest of the three, and consequently he was referred to most often (101)²³⁷, and interviewed once²³⁸, whereas Michael Woods was

²³⁶O-014, N-017, N-019, N-046, N-063, O-073, E-011, O-077, O-083, N-141, O-095, E-023, O-096, N-157a, O-100, N-176, N-178, N-187, O-109, N-210, O-116, O-117, O-121, N-248, O-134, N-252, N-257, O-145.

²³⁷N-002, N-004, N-020, N-022, N-024, N-026, N-027, N-028, N-037, N-038, N-039, N-040, N-041, N-042, N-043, O-010, N-044, N-051, N-053, N-055, O-015, N-059, N-061, O-017, O-016a, O-019, N-064, O-021, N-065, N-066, N-067, O-025, N-069, N-071, O-037, N-085, N-086, N-087, N-088, N-098, N-090, N-092, O-041, O-042, N-096, N-097, N-100, O-053, N-102, N-109, O-069, N-118, O-093, O-094, N-131, O-097, N-146, O-103, O-108, O-109, N-152, O-113, N-154, O-115, O-117, N-156, O-121, N-163, N-164, N-165, N-166, N-167, O-128, N-168, N-170, N-172, N-173, N-174, O-130, N-175, N-176, O-136, N-183, N-184, N-185, N-186, N-189, N-200, O-161, N-209, N-210, N-211, N-213, N-215, O-167, N-216, N-230, O-179, N-231, N-236, O-231.

²³⁸O-056.

mentioned in 16 articles²³⁹. Joe Walsh was mentioned as Minister of Agriculture in 28 articles²⁴⁰ and interviewed once²⁴¹.

The Irish Prime Minister, the *Taoiseach*, seemed to inspire more respect as an actor in the agricultural policy field than his Dutch colleague, and he participated actively in the discussion and was regarded as an influential Irish politician in the CAP context, sometimes even more important than the Minister of Agriculture. Charles Haughey was mentioned as *Taoiseach* in 58 articles²⁴² and his successor Albert Reynolds in 4 articles²⁴³. Unlike the situation in the Dutch debate, the *Taoiseach* pursued the same lines of thought as his Minister of Agriculture throughout the discussion. Actually, the whole government seemed to share the same opinion regarding the proposals.²⁴⁴

The government (30)²⁴⁵ was also considered a competent actor, whereas the President, who has only a ceremonial role in the Irish Republic, similarly lay outside this debate, being mentioned in only one article²⁴⁶. The *Dáil* (Parliament)

²³⁹N-238, N-239, N-240, N-242, N-244, N-247, N-248, N-249, N-250, N-251, N-253, N-256, N-258, O-197, N-262, O-231.

²⁴⁰N-263, N-265, O-204, N-274, N-279, N-280, N-282, N-283, N-284, N-287, O-210, N-288, N-289, N-290, N-291, O-215, O-216, O-218, N-293, O-218, N-295, O-219, O-223, N-298, O-228, E-026, N-301, O-231.

²⁴¹O-199.

²⁴²N-012, N-017, O-020, N-023, N-040, O-012, N-051, N-055, N-058, N-068, N-076, N-077, N-080, N-082, N-088, O-048, O-058, N-118, N-125, O-092, N-130, O-096, N-131, N-132, E-012, N-134, N-136, N-140, N-141, N-145, N-147, O-108, O-109, N-151, N-152, N-154, N-157, N-164, N-166, N-185, N-186, N-189, N-147, O-151, O-152, N-192, N-193, N-195, O-160, N-207, N-219, N-228, N-236, N-240, O-195, O-204, N-274.

²⁴³N-291, N-292, N-295, O-231.

²⁴⁴Among the other ministers, Joe Walsh had already been active in the discussion as Minister of State for Food (N-051, N-055, N-100, N-101, N-124, O-101, N-235, N-236). The Minister of Finance in Haughey's cabinet, Albert Reynolds, was mentioned in 6 articles (O-015, O-068, O-092, N-132, O-108, N-186), and the Minister of Horticulture, Seamus Kirk (N-203), and the Minister of Horticulture and Rural Development, Liam Hyland (N-302), were both mentioned once. The Minister of State for Agriculture and Food, John Brown, was mentioned in one article (N-281), Des O'Malley, the Minister of Industry and Commerce, appeared in four articles (N-001, N-065, N-084, N-092). Likewise, the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Gerry Collins (O-092, O-231), and the Minister of EU Affairs, Maire Geoghegan Quinn (N-140, O-231), were both mentioned in two articles. The Energy Minister, Bobby Molloy (O-209), the Minister of State at the Department of Marine, Michael J. Noonan (N-200), and the Minister of State for Trade and Marketing, Mary O'Rourke (O-223), were mentioned in one article each. This list of names indicates that a relatively large number of ministers or junior ministers found the CAP reform debate important enough to participate in even though it was not directly connected with their own field of politics.

²⁴⁵N-023, O-017, O-031, O-057, O-061, O-066, N-121, O-090, E-011, O-096, E-012, O-097, N-142, N-146, N-148, O-105, O-108, N-175, N-188, N-192, N-196, O-155, O-177, O-180, N-236, E-022, O-210, E-024, O-214, O-227.

²⁴⁶O-018.

was mentioned in seven articles²⁴⁷, the *Cathaoirleach* (Speaker) in one²⁴⁸, and the Senate in one²⁴⁹. The *Oireachtas*, the Joint Committee on Secondary Legislation in the EU (2)²⁵⁰, had a minor role in the debate, too.²⁵¹

Farm organisations

There are two major farm organisations in Ireland, the IFA (Irish Farmers' Association) and the ICMSA (Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association), of which the former is the larger. In addition, there is a young farmers' organisation called *Macra na Feirme*, and a new organisation for small farmers', the UFA (United Farmers' Association).

The IFA was most prominent of all the farm bodies in this debate (152)²⁵², and its President, Ian Gillis (113)²⁵³, who wrote one article himself²⁵⁴ was a

²⁴⁷O-058, O-105, O-115, O-117, N-196, O-170, O-194.

²⁴⁸O-025.

²⁴⁹O-184.

²⁵⁰N-177, N-202.

²⁵¹A few high civil servants were considered competent actors: Michael Dowling, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture (4, O-004, O-037, O-165, N-222), his assistant, Bart Bradey (N-227), and the chief economist of the Department of Agriculture, Tom Arnolds (N-186). The Department of Agriculture and Food was mentioned in two articles (O-079, E-023).

²⁵²N-011, N-012, N-015, N-016, N-017, N-020, N-022, N-023, N-024, N-026, N-027, N-028, N-029, N-030, N-031, N-032, N-033, O-008, O-009, O-010, N-044, N-047, N-048, N-049, N-051, N-052, N-058, N-059, O-016a, O-018, O-024, N-068, N-074, N-076, O-033, N-083, N-084, N-086, N-091, O-024, N-068, N-074, N-076, O-033, N-083, N-084, N-086, N-091, O-042, O-045, O-047, O-048, O-049, N-099, O-053, O-056, N-104, N-105, N-106, N-107, N-108, O-063, O-064, O-065, O-071, N-113, O-073, O-074, O-075, O-077, O-079, O-080, O-083, O-084, N-118, N-122, N-122, N-125, N-127, N-129, N-130, O-093, N-131, E-012, N-138, N-140, N-142, O-100, N-145, N-147, O-103, O-104, O-112, O-113, O-122, N-159, N-160, N-161, N-163, N-165, N-167, N-168, O-129, N-173, O-130, N-175, N-176, N-177, O-136, N-180, N-186, N-189, O-143, O-147, N-198, O-154, N-200, O-157, N-158, N-210, N-211, O-164, N-214, N-216, O-171, N-219, N-226, N-229, O-179, N-231, N-234, N-237, N-238, N-242, N-244, N-245, N-246, N-253, O-193, O-197, O-200, N-265, O-202, N-273, O-203, N-276, E-022, N-277, N-280, N-281, N-283, N-284, O-208, O-209, O-210, O-212, N-288, N-289, N-290, N-291, O-215, N-292, O-216, O-218, O-219, O-222, N-298, O-228, N-229, N-300, N-301.

²⁵³N-004, N-011, N-012, N-015, N-017, N-029, N-030, N-031, N-032, N-033, O-010, N-048, N-049, N-051, N-059, O-016a, O-017, N-062, O-020, N-065, N-066, O-024, N-068, N-073, N-076, O-033, N-083, N-084, N-086, N-088, N-090, N-091, O-045, O-047, N-104, N-105, N-106, N-107, N-108, O-063, O-064, O-065, N-113, O-073, O-074, O-075, O-078, O-080, N-122, N-125, N-127, N-128, N-129, O-093, E-012, N-135, N-138, N-140, N-142, O-100, N-146, N-147, O-103, N-148, O-104, N-152, O-113, O-122, N-159, N-160, N-161, N-163, N-165, N-166, N-167, N-168, N-176, N-186, N-189, O-143, O-144, N-198, N-200, N-210, N-211, N-214, N-216, N-219, N-226, N-229, N-231, O-180, N-234, N-237, N-238, N-242, N-253, O-200, N-256, N-273, N-280, N-283, N-284, O-208, O-209, O-210, N-288, N-289, N-290, N-291, O-215, N-292, N-293.

²⁵⁴O-077.

clearer leader for his organisation than Jef Mares for the *Landbouwschap*, and was the most prominent actor inside his organisation.²⁵⁵ The ICMSA was mentioned in 67 articles²⁵⁶. As in the case of the IFA, the President of the ICMSA, Tom O'Dwyer (52²⁵⁷, and interviewed once²⁵⁸) was the most prominent figure in the debate.²⁵⁹

The two other farm organisations, the UFA and *Macra na Feirme*, were not mere curiosities in the debate, but they cannot be compared in significance with the IFA and ICMSA. The then recently established farm body for small farmers, UFA (18)²⁶⁰, was almost without exception connected with the utterances of its President, Sean Scanlon (12)²⁶¹, and in addition to him, was represented only by

²⁵⁵Deputy President John Donnelly was mentioned in only three articles (N-017, N-091, N-246), and Deputy President Tom Parlon in one (N-250), whereas Dan Joe O'Donovan, vice-president of the IFA's Munster region was mentioned in 5 articles (N-047, N-048, N-049, O-157, N-246). The only female IFA representative mentioned in the debate had a traditionally female role: Rosemarie Smith (3, O-018, N-178, N-180) was chairman of the National Family Farm Committee. Four other IFA committee chairmen appeared as actors, representing the interests of IFA grain growers (Grain Committee chairman Henry Britton, N-046, O-222), livestock rearing (Livestock Committee chairmen Ger Smith, N-244 and Richard Booth, O-219), dairy producers (National Dairy Committee chairman Michael Slattery, O-228), and rural development (National Rural Development Committee, an interview O-149). A couple of local representatives were also mentioned (Donal Howard, chairman of the Duhallow Regional IFA Executive (O-052), and Phil Lynch, a leading IFA man in Callan (O-083). From the IFA headquarters, General Secretary Michael Berkery (N-168) and the chief economist, Con Lucey (3, N-015, O-053, E-020), were mentioned. Finally, Tom Clinton, former IFA President, was both interviewed once (O-048) and mentioned in one article (O-049).

²⁵⁶N-012, N-020, N-021, N-041, O-012, O-013, N-051, N-065, N-074, N-076, N-077, O-033, N-079, N-081, N-086, O-049, O-062, O-064, O-073, O-080, N-121, N-127, N-128, N-130, O-093, O-094, N-131, N-139, N-142, O-100, N-144, O-103, O-104, N-156, O-122, N-165, N-166, N-167, O-129, N-175, N-176, O-136, N-186, N-189, O-147, O-169, O-179, N-231, O-182, N-234, O-183, N-283, N-250, N-273, N-281, N-283, O-206, N-285, N-288, N-290, N-291, O-215, N-292, O-216, O-228, N-300, O-230.

²⁵⁷N-012, N-021, N-041, O-012, O-013, N-051, N-065, N-076, N-077, O-033, N-079, N-081, N-086, N-103, O-073, O-082, O-083, N-118, N-121, O-089, O-093, O-094, O-100, N-142, N-144, N-146, O-103, N-148, O-104, N-156, N-166, N-167, N-176, N-186, N-189, O-169, N-231, O-182, N-234, O-183, N-238, N-250, N-281, N-283, O-206, N-285, N-288, N-290, N-291, O-215, N-292, O-228.

²⁵⁸O-131.

²⁵⁹Further leading ICMSA figures in the debate were Deputy President Con Scully (3, N-042, N-142, N-144) and General Secretary Donal Murphy (4, O-085, N-121, N-127, N-128). The Livestock and Family Farm Committees were represented by their chairmen (Livestock Committee chairman Nicholas Ryan 3 times, N-029, N-030, N-056 and Family Farm Committee chairman Dan McCarthy four times, O-047, N-113, O-150, O-230). The ICMSA economist Ciaran Dolan was mentioned in three articles. In addition, a couple of members of the administrative committee were mentioned (Donal Gynes and Maurice O'Riordan (N-144).

²⁶⁰N-018, N-064, N-073, N-074, N-076, O-042, O-043, N-099, N-107, O-064, O-080, O-093, O-094, N-173, N-175, N-176, N-186, N-158.

²⁶¹N-018, N-019, N-074, N-076, O-042, O-043, O-080, N-159, N-160, N-173, N-175, N-176.

Tim McCraith (1)²⁶² and the National Chairman, Bertie Wall (1)²⁶³. The organisation for young farmers, *Macra na Feirme* (16)²⁶⁴ was represented by its President, first Laurence Fallon (3)²⁶⁵ and later Matt O’Keeffe (8)²⁶⁶.

The role of the farming organisations and their leaders as important national actors seemed not to be called into question in the Irish debate. There were several explicit references to their position as leaders in agricultural policy (18)²⁶⁷, and virtually in everything connected with it. It was also common to connect the interests of farmers and agri-business (3)²⁶⁸. The ICOS (Irish Cooperative Organisation Society) (26)²⁶⁹ was thus often listed together with the above-mentioned farmers’ organisations, being represented by its President, William Nagle (10)²⁷⁰, or by the Director General, John Tyrell (3)²⁷¹.

Political parties

The two largest parties, *Fianna Fáil* (15)²⁷², then in the Cabinet, and *Fine Gael* (17)²⁷³, had the most to say in the debate. Both belong to the political centre, and their catch-all nature makes both appeal to the total electorate. As a consequence, they are currently difficult to distinguish ideologically (Lee 1989, 545-546). Small farmers have traditionally been the *Fianna Fáil* heartland, while *Fine Gael* retained a distinct middle-class appeal for a long time, complemented by its relative electoral weight among the larger farmers (Mair 1987, 39-42).

²⁶²N-074.

²⁶³O-085.

²⁶⁴N-020, N-041, N-051, N-118, N-165, N-186, N-189, O-147, N-224, O-179, N-231, N-234, N-273, N-284, O-207, O-215.

²⁶⁵N-041, N-077, N-173.

²⁶⁶O-113, N-176, O-162, N-216, N-223, N-231, O-205, O-215.

²⁶⁷Farm leaders (N-040, N-063, O-019, O-032, N-096, N-097, N-185); the farming lobby (N-064); the Irish farm lobby (N-270); farm organisations (N-179, O-202); farmer organisations (O-027); farmers’ organisations (N-220); farming organisations (O-031, O-071); the Irish farming associations O-217; the farm bodies (O-128); the farming community (O-081).

²⁶⁸All Irish farm organisations and agri-business interests (N-184); Irish farming and agri-business interests (N-184); the agri-industry (O-140).

²⁶⁹N-020, N-041, O-011, N-051, O-027, N-086, O-046, O-071, N-118, O-087, N-142, O-113, N-165, N-189, O-147, N-205, N-212, N-228, O-179, N-231, N-232, N-233, N-234, N-251, N-273, N-291.

²⁷⁰N-017, O-011, O-044, N-142, O-113, N-165, N-176, N-231, N-251, N-291.

²⁷¹O-011, N-081, N-205.

²⁷²O-002, O-020, O-023, O-027, N-083, O-097, N-145, O-104, N-151, O-130, N-181, O-151, N-192, O-176, O-231.

²⁷³N-062, N-063, N-023, O-025, N-070, N-080, O-097, N-145, N-156, O-126, N-164, O-130, O 151, N-195, O-194, N-256, O-195.

Fianna Fáil was overwhelmingly represented by either one of its ministers (see above) or one of its MEPs (see below), only few other names being mentioned in the debate²⁷⁴.

The *Fine Gael* party leader, John Bruton, participated in the debate (13)²⁷⁵, but the most important figure representing this party was the Agricultural Spokesman, Austin Deasy (27)²⁷⁶, himself a former Minister of Agriculture. Another frequently mentioned name was the Senator and former Munster MEP, Professor Tom Raftery (14)²⁷⁷. Quite a number of other *Fine Gael* politicians were mentioned in the debate²⁷⁸.

With regard to the smaller parties, the Progressive Democrats (2)²⁷⁹ were represented by their Spokesman on Agriculture, Senator John Dardis (6)²⁸⁰, in addition to whom only one other PD politician was mentioned, Senator Martin Cullen (1)²⁸¹. The Social Democratic Labour Party (3)²⁸² had no single outstanding figure in the reform debate, being represented by the party leader, Dick Spring (3)²⁸³, and his two deputies, Ruairi Quinn (1)²⁸⁴ and Peadar Clohessy (2)²⁸⁵. Liam Kavanagh (4)²⁸⁶ and Senator Pat Upton (3)²⁸⁷ were also actors on the national scene, and Michael Ferris was mentioned once²⁸⁸. The Irish democratic left, the Workers' Party (1)²⁸⁹, was represented either by the party leader, MEP Proinsias De Rossa (4)²⁹⁰, or by the Spokesman for Agriculture,

²⁷⁴Councillor Ollie Wilkinson (O-076); Senator Rory Keily (N-150); Senator Hugh Brune (N-150); Deputy TD (*Teachta Dala* = MP) Noel Tavern (O-130, N-204).

²⁷⁵O-012, N-080, O-093, O-094, O-119, N-156, O-126, N-174, O-151, O-152, N-192, N-193, O-160.

²⁷⁶N-033, N-044, O-012, O-017, N-062, N-063, O-022, O-023, O-025, N-077, N-100, N-101, O-093, O-104, O-111, O-113, O-117, O-120, N-156, N-174, N-236, O-194, N-256, O-195, O-204, O-214, O-223.

²⁷⁷O-014, N-068, O-038, N-087, O-053, O-054, O-057, O-063, O-072, N-150, N-189, N-193, N-224, O-193.

²⁷⁸Alan Dukes (N-155, O-126, O-154); Avril Doyle (N-087); Councillor Gary O'Halloran (O-076); Councillor Pat Coffey (O-076); Councillor Gerard Murphy (O-214); Senator Charles McDondald (N-150); Senator Mary Jackman (N-150); Deputy Bill Cotter (O-188); Paul Connaughton (O-223).

²⁷⁹O-130, O-176.

²⁸⁰O-037, N-087, O-094, O-138, N-224, O-184.

²⁸¹N-150.

²⁸²N-156, N-164, O-130.

²⁸³N-152, O-117, N-156.

²⁸⁴N-147.

²⁸⁵N-101, N-236.

²⁸⁶N-100, O-094, N-236, N-274.

²⁸⁷N-087, N-150, O-184.

²⁸⁸O-223.

²⁸⁹O-130.

²⁹⁰N-147, O-168, N-236, O-223.

Joe Sherlock (4)²⁹¹. Two independent politicians, Tom Foxe²⁹² and Brendan Lyan²⁹³, were both mentioned once in the debate.

Research organisations and experts

Research institutions and experts performed as competent actors in the debate, as in the Netherlands. In general, agricultural economists dominated the scientific discussion, and almost without an exception they were men. The farm advisory body *Teagasc* (the National Agricultural and Food Research and Advisory Agency) was mentioned most often (24)²⁴⁶, its findings being interpreted for the general public by its Chairman, the former IFA President Joe Rea (9)²⁹⁵. Several *Teagasc* experts appeared in the debate, not only from the headquarters in Dublin but also from outside the capital²⁹⁶.

In addition to the *Teagasc*, there were two other research institutions which contributed to the discussion: the ESRI (Economic and Social Research Institute) (2)²⁹⁷ and the NESC (National Economic and Social Council) (4)²⁹⁸. The ESRI was represented by the economist John Fitzgerald and by Deirdre O'Connor (1)²⁹⁹. The Agricultural Science Association (ASA), and especially its President, Larry O'Loughlin, participated regularly (5)³⁰⁰, and the Agricultural Economics Society of Ireland was mentioned in one article³⁰¹.

Seamus Sheehy, Professor of Agricultural Economics at University College, Dublin, had a prominent status (9)³⁰² among university experts,³⁰³ and a couple

²⁹¹N-100, O-112, O-117, N-156.

²⁹²N-100.

²⁹³N-150.

²⁹⁴O-008, O-009, O-010, O-015, O-036, O-130, E-015, O-135, O-138, N-179, N-180, N-181, N-182, N-183, N-186, N-198, N-200, N-208, O-170, O-218, O-226, N-299, N-300, O-229.

²⁹⁵O-007, O-008, O-009, O-010, O-036, O-064, O-095, O-166, N-223.

²⁹⁶W. Fingleton, J. Heavey, A. Leavy and M. Roche (O-229); Director Pierce Ryan (N-183); Michael Calvin (E-004); Tony Leavy (N-205); Matt Barlow (E-018); Tom Thomas (N-254, N-255, O-196); Dick Power (N-259).

²⁹⁷E-009, E-012.

²⁹⁸E-022, E-023, E-024, N-294.

²⁹⁹O-130.

³⁰⁰O-052, N-159, O-138, O-160, O-161 (together with the new President, Fachna O'Driscoll).

³⁰¹N-230.

³⁰²N-044, O-089, E-010, O-164, O-165, O-171, O-174, E-026, N-300.

³⁰³A number of scientists at different universities were mentioned: Alan Matthews, Associate Professor of Economics at Trinity College (E-014), Professor Donal Dineen, Head of Business Studies at the University of Limerick (O-085), agricultural law expert Brian Carroll from the University College, Cork (E-007), Dr Gerry Boyle of St Patrick's College, Maynooth (E-017), and Anne Byrne of University College, Gallway, Social Sciences Research Centre (O-185). Diarmuid O Cearbhaill, a lecturer in economics at University College, Dublin, contributed an article (E 001).

of private consultants were mentioned in addition to university and institute researchers.³⁰⁴ Finally, writers sometimes referred in general to “economists” (1)³⁰⁵, “agricultural economists” (1)³⁰⁶ or “independent economists” (1)³⁰⁷ in a way which underlines the role of such people as competent actors in this debate, and in the field of agricultural policy as a whole.

Other interest groups involved

The role of agribusiness, especially of cooperatives, as competent actors in the field of agricultural policy also became clear in the Irish debate. These were referred to in general as “the co-ops” (1)³⁰⁸, “dairy co-ops” (2)³⁰⁹ or “farmer-owned co-ops” (1)³¹⁰, or else specifically by name.³¹¹³¹². Businesses connected with farming, from butchers (1)³¹³ to contractors (1)³¹⁴ and accountants (1)³¹⁵ were all considered when assessing the consequences of the reform for Irish agriculture.

Ireland had its own profile of groups involved in the debate. The Green Movement, for example, was not a prominent actor (1)³¹⁶, and organic farmers were mentioned in only one article³¹⁷. On the other hand, the clergy were better

³⁰⁴Dr Brendan Kearney, an agribusiness consultant (5, E-013, O-171, O-174, E-017, N-300), and the food analyst Joe Gill (O-177).

³⁰⁵O-221.

³⁰⁶O-222.

³⁰⁷N-300.

³⁰⁸O-042.

³⁰⁹O-138, N-197.

³¹⁰N-179.

³¹¹*An Bord Bainne* (O-138, with Nowl Cawley, chief executive O-101), CBF (the Irish cooperative meat marketing board) (2, O-138, its chief, Paddy Moore in N-205), Waterford Foods (N-205, O-231, also Stephen O'Connor), Golden Vale (4, N-205, N-212, also its chief executive, Jim O'Mahony, N-278, O-231), Dairygold (N-205, also its chairman, Denis Cronin O-176), the Kerry Group (5, N-205, O-177, with its managing director, Denis Brosnan O-022, O-106, and Dick O'Sullivan, general manager O-004) and Avonmore (3, N-205, with Gerry Hoey O-022, and Pat O'Neill n-231) were included. Grain traders (O-138) and the Irish Grain and Feed Association (IGFA) (N-255, with its Feed Committee chairman Finbar Healy O-191) were involved in the discussion, and the beef industry (O-218, O-221), beef processors (N-197) and the Irish Meat Processors' Association (IMPA) (N-086, with its chairman, Dan Browne N-244) expressed their interests. The Irish food industry (N-004) was represented by *An Bord Glas* (the Food Board) (O-138).

³¹²O-138.

³¹³Noel O'Connor, President of the Irish Butchers' Association O-059.

³¹⁴interview with contractor Alan McCartney O-190.

³¹⁵Philip Farrey O-155.

³¹⁶mentioned in one article O-027.

³¹⁷written by Paula McCann (Irish Organic Farmers & Growers Association) O-061.

represented (3)³¹⁸, and the labour organisation SIPTU (Services Industrial Professional Technical Union) (3)³¹⁹ also participated in the debate. In addition to nation-wide organisations such as the Council for the European Movement (1)³²⁰ and the Irish Countrywomen's Association (1)³²¹, a small number of local actors were also taken into account (3)³²¹.

Farmers

At the shop floor level, farm women (2)³²³, families and spouses (1)³²⁴, the Farm Family Women organisation(1)³²⁵, and other women and children in the countryside (1)³²⁶ were mentioned, but only occasionally. In addition, quite a number of farmers were interviewed or otherwise mentioned (9)³²⁷. In this sense, the Irish debate allowed more space for the human dimension and for considering the effects of the reform proposals than did the Dutch debate.

Finally, an effort was made in some articles to show who were the people most affected by the reform. Once they were "government, consumers, farmers, retailers and politicians"³²⁸, another time "Irish farmers"³²⁹ or "Irish consumers"³³⁰, and elsewhere "rural Ireland"³³¹ or "great urban cities"³³².

³¹⁸Father Harry Bohan O-004, O-174; Bishop John Magee O-193.

³¹⁹N-228, N-229 with Bill Attley, joint general president, N-264 with Jimmy Somers, assistant national executive officer.

³²⁰O-154.

³²¹N-109.

³²²Dan Barry, member of Kerry County Council (O-004); Munster Programme Director Pat Gleeson (N-208); Cork County chairman John Cal McCarthy (N-208).

³²³O-018, O-185.

³²⁴O-050.

³²⁵N-140.

³²⁶N-178.

³²⁷O-114, O-146, O-156, N-208, N-259, O-231, O-143, O-145, O-146.

³²⁸O-175.

³²⁹N-222.

³³⁰O-182.

³³¹O-193.

³³²O-193.

Table 6.4. Actors on the Irish national scene.

LEVEL	ACTOR	FREQUENCY
State organs	The President	1
	The government	30
	Prime Minister	62 ³³³
	<i>Minister of Agriculture</i>	145 ³³⁴
	Minister of State for Food	8
	Minister of Finance	4
	Minister of Industry and Commerce	4
	Minister of Foreign Affairs	2
	Minister of EC Affairs	2
	The Dáil (Parl.)	7
Ministry of Agriculture	2	
Farm organisations	<i>IFA</i>	152
	- <i>Ian Gillis</i>	113
	ICMSA	67
	- Tom O'Dwyer	52
	UFA	18
	Macra na Feirme	16
	ICOS	26
Political parties	Fianna Fáil	15
	Fine Gael	17
	- John Bruton (Pres.)	13
	- <i>Austin Deasy</i>	27
	- Tom Raftery	14
	Progressive Democrats	2
	- John Dardis	6
	Labour	3
	- Liam Kavanagh	4
	Workers' Party	1
- Proinsias De Rossa (Pres.)	4	
- Joe Sherlock	4	
Research institutes and experts	<i>Teagasc</i>	24
	ESRI	2
	NESC	4
	Prof. Seamus Sheehy	9
Other interest groups involved	Agro-industrial co-ops	4
	- An Bord Bainne	2
	- CBF	2
	- Waterford Foods	2
	- Golden Vale	4
	- Dairygold	2
	- Kerry Group	5
Farmers	Farmers interviewed	9

³³³Haughey and Reynolds together.

³³⁴O'Kennedy, Woods and Walsh together.

6.3.2. The EU scene

In order to analyse this part of the debate, the same division will be followed as with the Dutch debate: 1) EU organs, 2) members of the Commission, 3) MEPs and groups in the European Parliament, 4) politicians from other member and non-member countries, 5) national civil servants, 6) farm organisations, and finally, 7) CAP experts.

EU organs

EU institutions were referred to in the Irish debate as follows: the Commission (30)³³⁵, the Council of Farm Ministers (21)³³⁶, the European Council (2)³³⁷ and the European Parliament (18)³³⁸. Among the less concrete references to the EU as an actor, “Brussels” was mentioned in 12 articles³³⁹ and “the EC” similarly in 12 articles³⁴⁰. In addition, there was one reference both to “politicians in Brussels”³⁴¹ and, somewhat pejoratively, to “Fortress Europe”³⁴².

For the Irish, the administrative machine of the EU was an actor, too. In some of the texts neutral words were used, such as “senior EC officials” (3)³⁴³, “the Commission officials” (1)³⁴⁴, “senior officials in Brussels” (1)³⁴⁵, “EC officials” (3)³⁴⁶, or “the EC authorities” (1)³⁴⁷, but elsewhere there was a clearly negative connotation: “European Commission Bureaucrats” (1)³⁴⁸, “bureaucrats in Brussels” (1)³⁴⁹, “the EC machine” (1)³⁵⁰, or “Eurocrats” (1)³⁵¹.

³³⁵N-007, N-019, N-025, N-026, N-027, N-028, E-002, N-043, N-050, N-052, N-053, N-054, N-058, N-060, N-062, O-029, E-005, O-050, O-084, N-143, O-104, N-149, N-158, O-125, N-172, N-177, O-180, N-270, E-024, E-025.

³³⁶N-020, N-036, N-050, O-015, N-060, N-073, O-050, O-084, O-121, N-261, N-262, O-201, N-269, O-202, N-276, O-213, N-288, O-215, N-296, O-225, O-226.

³³⁷O-104, O-128.

³³⁸O-040, N-094, N-093, O-051, O-058, O-060, N-114, N-184, N-220, N-221, N-243, N-252, N-266, N-267, N-268, N-270, O-202, O-206.

³³⁹N-027, N-042, O-014, O-015, E-012, O-105, O-118, O-125, O-159, N-148, O-208, N-269.

³⁴⁰O-001, O-002, O-031, N-142, N-169, N-171, N-188, N-197, E-019, E-023, O-213, N-294.

³⁴¹O-218.

³⁴²O-192.

³⁴³N-050, N-057, N-206.

³⁴⁴O-048.

³⁴⁵O-189.

³⁴⁶N-270, O-219, N-190.

³⁴⁷O-129.

³⁴⁸O-097.

³⁴⁹O-190.

³⁵⁰O-141.

³⁵¹O-225.

Commissioners

As in the Dutch debate, the Commission ranked highest among the EU actors, but here only a few members within the Commission performed as actors in the discussion. Excluding Ray MacSharry, the most commonly mentioned was the Dutch Commissioner for External Trade, Frans Andriessen (20)³⁵². Together with the Commission President, Jacques Delors (17)³⁵³, he was considered by far the most important member involved in the reform debate.³⁵⁴

Although only a few Commissioners took part in the Irish debate, a number of people working for the Commission, i.e. for DG VI, were mentioned by name. The Director-General of the Agriculture Section, Guy Legras (7)³⁵⁵, was the most prominent among these EU officials, and officials from Commissioner Ray MacSharry's cabinet also appeared in the debate.³⁵⁶

Members of the European Parliament

With regard to the European Parliament, only the Greens (2)³⁵⁷ and the Socialist group (2)³⁵⁸ were mentioned in the debate. The members of the European Parliament were mentioned collectively in 3 articles³⁵⁹, and Irish MEPs played an important role in the debate. *Fianna Fáil* or government MEPs were referred to as a group (6)³⁶⁰. The leading Irish figure, and especially among the *Fianna Fáil* MEPs, was Paddy Lane, a former IFA President (36)³⁶¹, in addition to

³⁵²O-005, N-031, N-052, N-058, O-029, N-088, O-064, O-086, N-126, O-094, N-131, O-097, N-141, N-143, N-155, N-158, O-126, N-169, N-171, O-231.

³⁵³N-031, O-029, N-085, N-086, N-088, O-084, N-126, N-132, N-136, N-158, N-171, O-183, N-240, N-277, N-281, N-297, O-231.

³⁵⁴Furthermore, four other commissioners were mentioned: Sir Leon Brittan (3, N-031, N-126, N-158), Henning Christophersen (2, N-031, N-158), Carlo Ripa di Meana (2, N-058, O-029) and Peter Schmidhuber (N-158).

³⁵⁵N-071, N-072, N-073, N-076, O-032, N-078, N-126.

³⁵⁶Colm Larkin, "chef de cabinet" (2, N-120, O-31), Deputy Head of Cabinet Paddy Hennessy (2, O-225, O-231), members of the cabinet Mary Minch, Bobby McDonagh, Herman Versteilen and Eileen Magnier (O-231), and members of staff Teresa Rehan and Jacinta Dolan (O-231) were mentioned. MacSharry's officials (N-010) were thus competent actors for the Irish, possibly because many of them were themselves Irish and thus more accessible to that country's journalists.

³⁵⁷N-189, N-270.

³⁵⁸N-189, N-270.

³⁵⁹N-093, N-095, O-211.

³⁶⁰N-140, O-104, O-113, N-154, N-168, N-184.

³⁶¹N-006, N-046, N-047, N-048, N-049, O-027, O-030, O-039, N-083, N-084, N-091, O-051, O-053, O-057, O-070, N-114, N-115, O-077, N-116, N-138, N-145, N-168, O-129, O-133, O-140, O-164, O-171, O-174, N-225, N-267, N-270, N-273, O-203, N-275, N-276, O-231.

writing one article himself³⁶² and being interviewed once³⁶³). The Independent MEP and former IFA and ICOS President in the 1960's and 1970's, T.J. Maher, was second-most frequently mentioned in the debate (14³⁶⁴, interviewed twice³⁶⁵), while the *Fine Gael* representative Joe McCartin was mentioned in 10 articles³⁶⁶, as was *Fianna Fáil* MEP Mark Killilea³⁶⁷ (also interviewed once³⁶⁸)³⁶⁹.

Politicians from other EU and non-EU countries

Again as in the Dutch debate, ministers of agriculture were the most important actors among the foreign politicians. The British Minister John Gummer (25)³⁷⁰ was more important for the Irish than the French one, Louis Mermaz (9)³⁷¹, or the German Kiechle (5)³⁷², while the Italian Minister, Giovanni Goria, appeared in only 3 articles³⁷³, which indicates that it was easier for the Irish to swallow the Italian milk confusion than it was for the Dutch. The two Ministers who chaired the Farm Council meetings during the preparation of the reform, Piet Bukman from the Netherlands and Arlindo Cunha from Portugal, had different levels of performance in the eyes of the Irish public, for where Bukman was mentioned in 7 articles³⁷⁴, Cunha's name was to be found in only 2³⁷⁵. In addition, only the Spanish (1)³⁷⁶ and the Danish (1)³⁷⁷ ministers were mentioned.

³⁶²O-040.

³⁶³O-064.

³⁶⁴O-066, N-115, O-097, O-110, N-153, O-116, O-154, N-243, N-268, N-269, N-273, N-275, N-276, O-212.

³⁶⁵O-071, N-110.

³⁶⁶O-060, N-115, N-116, N-117, O-103, O-110, O-116, N-268, N-275, N-276.

³⁶⁷O-022, N-070, N-099, N-114, N-138, N-145, O-103, N-268, N-270, O-231.

³⁶⁸O-058.

³⁶⁹There was an impressive list of *Fianna Fáil* MEPs mentioned in the debate. In addition to Lane and Killilea, Neil Blaney (2, N-007, O-153), Paddy Lalor (4, N-048, N-091, N-138, N-184), Jim Fitzsimons (N-091), Gene Fitzgerald (4, N-091, O-053, O-057, N-138) and Neal Andrews (N-138) appeared in the debate. In addition to Joe McCartin, the *Fine Gael* was represented by MEPs John Gushanan (also the Christian Democrat spokesman on Regional Policy in the EP, 9, N-0016, N-117, O-107, O-178, N-268, N-275, N-276, O-215, O-231) and Paddy Cooney (N-177). The Progressive Democrat MEP Pat Cox was mentioned in two articles (O-097, O-231), Labour MEP Barry Desmond in one article (O-231), and New Agenda MEP Des Geraghty in one article (N-267).

³⁷⁰N-038, N-039, N-045, N-061, N-065, N-069, N-071, O-034, O-035, N-089, N-090, N-092, N-141, N-168, N-170, O-147, N-211, O-172, N-247, N-251, N-253, N-292, O-218, N-269.

³⁷¹N-090, N-163, N-166, N-226, N-274, N-297, N-298, O-231.

³⁷²O-056, N-211, N-226, N-253, N-273.

³⁷³N-166, N-296, N-297.

³⁷⁴N-013, N-039, N-141, N-211, N-215, N-218, N-242.

³⁷⁵N-247, N-249.

³⁷⁶N-274.

³⁷⁷N-039.

Besides ministers of agriculture, a few other politicians were mentioned. Partly because of the chairmanship of the Netherlands, Dutch politicians gained attention. Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers (4)³⁷⁸, the former Minister of Agriculture, Gerrit Braks (1)³⁷⁹ and even Sicco Mansholt (3)³⁸⁰, were active on the Irish discursive field for the CAP. Otherwise it seems that it was easier for politicians from the larger member states to be recognised as competent actors.³⁸¹

As in the Netherlands, the GATT trade talks gave an extra flavour to the CAP debate and brought in other authorised actors. Arthur Dunkel was the most important GATT figure (8)³⁸², and the USA as a counterpart to the EC was represented most often by its chief negotiator, Carla Hills (7)³⁸³, or by the Minister of Agriculture, either Clayton Yeutter (5)³⁸⁴ or Ed Madigan (5)³⁸⁵. President Bush (2)³⁸⁶ and his Secretary of State, James Baker (1)³⁸⁷, were also mentioned occasionally, as was the US Congress (2)³⁸⁸. The other politicians from outside the EU all came from English-speaking, industrialised countries: Canada (2)³⁸⁹, Australia (3)³⁹⁰ or the USA (1)³⁹¹.

National civil servants

National civil servants were not prominent at all. Only Tom Arnold, chief economist at the Department of Agriculture and Food, was mentioned (1)³⁹². He had more to say about how the planned reform would affect Irish agriculture than about its performance on an EU scale.

³⁷⁸N-133, N-134, N-171, N-183.

³⁷⁹O-056.

³⁸⁰N-009, E-005, O-126.

³⁸¹The rest of the list contains Margaret Thatcher (2, O-072, N-132), John Major (N-132, N-171), Trade Minister Peter Lilley (N-002) and Chancellor Norman Lamont (N-169) of the UK, Francois Mitterand (N-125) and Minister Naille (O-056) in France, Helmut Kohl in Germany (N-169), and Giulio Andreotti in Italy (N-169). It is certainly a sign of the special situation of Ireland that the Northern Ireland Agricultural Minister, Jeremy Hanley (O-167), comes at the bottom of the list.

³⁸²N-005, N-010, N-057, N-089, N-248, N-253, N-258, O-202.

³⁸³E-001, O-048, N-111, N-158, N-159, N-171, O-166.

³⁸⁴E-001, N-004, N-005, N-064, N-207.

³⁸⁵N-206, N-207, O-166, N-253, O-231.

³⁸⁶N-111, N-159.

³⁸⁷N-267.

³⁸⁸N-277, O-173.

³⁸⁹Prime Minister Brian Mulroney: N-157, N-171.

³⁹⁰The Ambassador in Dublin, Terence Bary McCarthy: O-148; Trade Minister Neal Blewett: N-204, N-206.

³⁹¹Idaho State Senator John Peavey, and Mark Ritchie, Executive Director of the Institute for Agriculture and Trade Policy, Minneapolis: O-173.

³⁹²N-067.

Farm organisations

Farm organisations in other EU countries were authorised actors in the Irish discussion, too. As could have been expected, the Irish lent an ear most often to farm representatives in Britain. The NFU (National Farmers Union) was mentioned in 4 articles³⁹³ and the Ulster Farmers' Union, represented by its President, John Warden, was mentioned in one³⁹⁴. French farmers (1)³⁹⁵ and the "French grain lobby" (1)³⁹⁶ were powerful actors in the context of the CAP, together with the FNSEA (*Federation National Des Syndicats D'Exploitants Agricoles*) (2)³⁹⁷, and Rural Co-Ordination (1)^{398, 399}

The umbrella organisation for the EU farm bodies, COPA (4)⁴⁰⁰, was not very important in the Irish debate. The world farmers' organisation IFAP (International Federation of Agricultural Producers) was mentioned in two articles⁴⁰¹. Other pressure groups were not prominent in the discussion, except for the European consumer organisation BEUC (*Bureau Européen des Unions de Consommateurs*) (4)⁴⁰². The BEUC was easily accessible for the Irish media through its spokesman, Jim Murray, who happened to be a former Director of Consumer Affairs in Ireland.

CAP experts

Among the experts who were performing as competent actors on the EU scene we find the same names as were already mentioned on the national scene: Prof. Seamus Sheehy (2, plus one article of his own and one interview)⁴⁰³, Associate Prof. Alan Matthews⁴⁰⁴, Con Lucey of the IFA⁴⁰⁵, Deirdre O'Connor of the

³⁹³Together with the President, Sir Simon Gourley N-045, O-012, N-034; with the leader, David Naish N-176.

³⁹⁴N-068.

³⁹⁵N-158.

³⁹⁶N-270.

³⁹⁷O-110, N-176.

³⁹⁸N-297.

³⁹⁹Hans Kjeldsen, President of the Danish Farmers' Union (3, O-037, O-074, O-075) and the Danish Agricultural Council (N-176), an umbrella body for the farm organisations, represented Danish interests in the Irish debate. Farmers' organisation in four other member states, Portugal, Belgium, Spain and the Netherlands, were mentioned in the same article (N-176). Jef Mares, chairman of the Dutch Board of Agriculture, *Landbouwschap*, was mentioned in another article. German farm bodies were referred to in two articles.

⁴⁰⁰N-016, N-028, N-122, N-167.

⁴⁰¹O-073, O-074.

⁴⁰²O-083a, O-168, N-217, O-219.

⁴⁰³Participated with one article (E-002), was interviewed once (E-006) and was referred to in two articles (E-008, O-167).

⁴⁰⁴Wrote two articles (E-005, E-012) and was interviewed once E-021.

⁴⁰⁵Interviewed once (E-022).

NESC⁴⁰⁶, and the agribusiness and economic consultant Brendan Kearney⁴⁰⁷. In addition, a couple of foreign experts were mentioned: an agricultural policy expert from the World Bank, Csaba Csaki (1)⁴⁰⁸, and David Howorth, a Brussels-based public affairs consultant (1)⁴⁰⁹, together with the Australian Bureau for Agricultural and Resource Research (1)⁴¹⁰.

Finally, there were a few farmers and other citizens active in this part of the debate. A dairy farmer, Oliver MacDonell, wrote columns about the reform proposals to the *Farming Independent* (5)⁴¹¹, and others, including one MP, Roger Garland (1)⁴¹², wrote "Letters to the Editor" (4)⁴¹³. Lay people were clearly in a minority, however, when the CAP was being discussed at the EU level.

6.3.3. Geography

The neighbouring United Kingdom (57)⁴¹⁴ was the most important EU member state for the Irish. It is significant, though, that Britain was discussed as a totality, without any mention about regional differences within the country. Northern Ireland was mentioned separately in three articles⁴¹⁵.

The second most commonly mentioned EU country was the Netherlands (51)⁴¹⁶. Part of this interest was probably a result of its chairmanship of the EU for half a year. Since Portugal had the same status and was still mentioned less often, however, the Netherlands could also have ranked quite high without this important formal role in the negotiations.

⁴⁰⁶Wrote an article (E-011).

⁴⁰⁷Wrote two articles (E-019, E-025) and was interviewed once (E-016).

⁴⁰⁸O-167.

⁴⁰⁹O-232.

⁴¹⁰E-021.

⁴¹¹O-035, O-127, O-139, O-142, O-170.

⁴¹²O-132.

⁴¹³Eamon McCullough (O-026); Mervyn Sunderland, farmer (O-140); Dominick J. Murray, Co. Sligo, Agricultural Minister advisor (O-187); Jow Barry, Co. Meath (O-201).

⁴¹⁴N-002, N-025, N-026, N-027, N-028, E-002, N-032, N-034, N-035, O-012, N-053, O-020, N-065, O-022, N-066, N-069, N-090, O-070, O-084, N-119, N-129, N-130, N-132, N-133, O-099, O-122, N-163, N-164, N-165, N-166, N-168, N-169, O-136, O-154, O-159, N-209, N-210, N-239, N-247, O-193, N-256, O-196, N-260, O-198, N-265, O-202, N-271, N-277, N-282, N-289, N-292, O-218, O-220, N-269, O-225, N-298, O-231.

⁴¹⁵O-024, O-037, O-167.

⁴¹⁶N-002, O-003, O-005, N-013, N-026, N-027, N-028, N-053, N-057, N-061, N-065, N-066, N-071, N-090, O-061, O-064, O-069, O-070, O-078, O-083, N-120, O-088, N-126, N-129, N-130, N-133, N-134, N-139, O-099, O-122, O-123, N-163, N-164, N-165, N-166, N-168, O-130, O-137, O-159, N-209, N-210, N-239, N-256, O-202, N-271, N-277, O-220, N-269, N-298, O-231.

Table 6.5 Actors on the Irish EU scene.

LEVEL	ACTOR	FREQUENCY
EU organs	<i>Commission</i>	30
	European Parliament	18
	Council of Farm Ministers	21
	European Council	2
	Brussels	12
	The EC	12
Commissioners	Jacques Delors	17
	<i>Frans Andriessen</i> (External Trade)	20
	Leon Brittan (Trade)	3
	Henning Christophersen (Monetary Affairs)	2
	Carlo Ripa di Meana (Environment)	2
	Peter Schmidhuber (Budget)	1
	(Guy Legras, Director-General DG VI)	7
Members of the European Parliament	Socialist group	2
	Greens	2
	<i>Paddy Lane</i> (FF)	36
	T.J. Maher (Ind.)	14
	Joe Mc Cartin (FG)	10
	Mark Killilea (FF)	10
	John Gushanan (FG)	9
Politicians from EU and non-EU countries	Ministers of Agriculture	
	- <i>John Gummer</i> (UK)	25
	- Louis Mermaz (Fra.)	9
	- Piet Bukman (NL)	7
	- Ignaz Kiechle (Ger.)	5
	- Arlindo Cunha (Port.)	2
	Arthur Dunkel (GATT)	8
Carla Hills (USA)	7	
National civil servants	Tom Arnold (Chief Economist, Ministry of Agriculture)	1
Farm organisations	COPA	4
	NFU (UK)	4
	FNSEA (Fra.)	2

Germany (43)⁴¹⁷ was the third most prominent country for the Irish. East Germany (3)⁴¹⁸ and Bavaria (1)⁴¹⁹ were dealt with apart from the rest of the country. Slightly surprisingly, Denmark (37)⁴²⁰ was mentioned more often than France (35)⁴²¹, though the difference was not great. Evidently shared interests in the British food market made Denmark seem closer to the Irish, whereas France was not given a leading role in the CAP in the Irish debate.

Again, somewhat unexpected but partly attributable to the chairmanship, Portugal ranks next (23)⁴²², before Italy (21)⁴²³ or Spain (13)⁴²⁴. Actually, Greece (17)⁴²⁵ again outnumbers both Spain and Belgium (9)⁴²⁶. As in the Dutch debate, Luxembourg was not taken seriously as a member state, and was mentioned in only one article⁴²⁷.

One can conclude that the Irish see the emphasis in the CAP as lying in the north: in the UK, the Netherlands, Germany, Denmark and France, but there is no clear distinction relative to the south as in the Dutch debate. "The Southern countries" as a group was mentioned in only one piece of text⁴²⁸, as was "Northern Europe" meaning the northern member states⁴²⁹. Similarly, "the rich and the poor in the EC" were referred to in one article⁴³⁰.

⁴¹⁷*E-002, N-033, O-008, N-050, O-015, N-057, O-020, O-029, N-069, N-090, N-092, O-056, O-072, O-078, N-131, N-137, O-099, O-125, N-163, N-169, N-170, N-171, O-130, O-136, O-154, O-159, N-109, N-224, N-226, N-240, O-188, O-189, N-253, O-193, N-256, O-196, N-265, O-202, N-273, N-290, O-220, O-224, O-231.*

⁴¹⁸*N-092, O-078, O-188.*

⁴¹⁹*N-209.*

⁴²⁰*N-002, N-026, N-027, N-028, E-002, N-032, N-034, N-035, N-053, N-057, N-061, N-069, N-071, N-090, O-046, O-061, O-069, O-073, O-084, N-130, O-099, N-163, N-166, O-136, N-209, N-210, N-248, N-249, N-256, O-202, N-271, N-277, N-286, O-220, N-296, O-299, O-231.*

⁴²¹*N-002, O-008, N-061, O-029, N-090, N-092, O-056, O-078, N-119, N-132, N-137, O-099, O-122, N-163, N-169, N-170, N-171, O-130, O-136, O-137, N-192, N-193, O-159, N-209, O-166, N-226, N-240, O-193, N-256, O-196, N-290, O-224, O-225, N-298, O-231.*

⁴²²*O-008, N-065, N-066, N-069, N-090, O-056, O-099, N-166, N-170, O-131, N-209, N-248, N-253, O-195, O-197, N-262, N-263, N-271, N-277, N-282, N-284, N-286, N-289.*

⁴²³*N-035, N-039, O-008, N-061, N-069, N-090, O-078, N-137, O-122, O-124, O-127, N-170, O-137, O-159, N-260, N-265, O-202, N-296, N-297, N-298, O-231.*

⁴²⁴*O-008, N-065, N-069, N-090, O-056, N-132, N-166, O-127, N-170, O-131, N-209, O-195, N-286.*

⁴²⁵*O-008, N-065, N-066, N-069, N-090, O-056, N-137, O-099, N-166, O-127, N-170, O-131, N-176, O-137 (actually Cypros), N-202, N-209, O-195.*

⁴²⁶*O-008, N-090, N-168, O-137, N-260, N-265, O-202, N-271, N-290.*

⁴²⁷*N-090.*

⁴²⁸*N-065.*

⁴²⁹*O-123.*

⁴³⁰*O-181.*

Table 6.6. EU countries in the Irish debate.

COUNTRY	FREQUENCY
United Kingdom	57
The Netherlands	51
Germany	43
France	37
Denmark	35
Portugal	23
Italy	21
Greece	17
Spain	13
Belgium	9
Luxembourg	1

An important demarcation line for the Irish is that dividing the West and the East, and this runs through Germany. The former DDR belongs to “the East”, and that is where everything that is evil comes from, as seen from the Irish perspective. The EFTA countries were discussed in a positive way (1)⁴³¹, and “Western Europe” (1)⁴³² had a sympathetic connotation, whereas Eastern Europe (16)⁴³³ was felt to be a threat.⁴³⁴

The USA was the most prominent factor in the agricultural world outside Europe, and actually outnumbered all the individual EU countries in mentions in the Irish debate, appearing in 85 articles⁴³⁵. As in the Dutch debate, this was partly due to the GATT negotiations, but these would hardly have been sufficient to explain the high frequency, which probably has something to do with Ireland’s

⁴³¹All except for Iceland are mentioned by name (N-172).

⁴³²N-223.

⁴³³N-071, O-086, N-123, O-122, O-133, N-176, N-195, N-199, N-215, N-220, N-221, O-181, N-242, N-243, O-208, O-210.

⁴³⁴“Eastern Europe” meant the USSR (5, O-040, or “the Soviet Union”, N-204, “Russia”, O-166, “the former Soviet Union”, O-202, or the “Soviet Republics”, N-199), including Poland (O-078, N-122, N-243), Hungary (O-167, N-243), Czechoslovakia (N-243) and/or the Ukraine (N-199).

⁴³⁵N-001, E-001, N-002, O-001, N-025, O-006, N-029, O-008, E-003, N-049, N-050, N-057, N-063, O-020, O-021, O-022, N-068, O-027, O-028, O-029, O-034, O-040, O-065, N-111, O-082, O-083, O-086, E-010, N-131, N-134, O-100, O-102, O-109, N-153, O-119, O-120, N-155, O-122, N-157, N-155, O-122, N-157, N-158, N-159, O-124, O-125, O-126, N-172, O-130, E-014, N-178, O-144, N-194, N-195, O-153, N-204, O-159, N-206, O-166, O-167, O-172, O-173, N-220, E-017, O-178, N-235, E-019, N-237, N-240, O-192, N-251, N-253, O-193, O-196, O-197, N-266, N-267, N-269, N-270, O-202, N-277, O-213, O-217, O-220, O-231.

close political and economic connections over the Atlantic. Besides, other industrialised English-speaking countries also ranked high in the Irish debate.⁴³⁶ The world trade talks brought the Cairns group (3)⁴³⁷ and the group of seven (G7) (3)⁴³⁸ into the agricultural policy field as actors. World trade actors such as Japan (3)⁴³⁹, Argentina (3)⁴⁴⁰, Brazil (1)⁴⁴¹ and China (1)⁴⁴² were also mentioned, but the rest of the world was less significant.⁴⁴³

Again as in the Dutch debate, Europe was often used as an equivalent to the European Union (27)⁴⁴⁴, but Ireland itself was evidently perceived as something apart from “Europe”. Europe – and thus often the EU – was connected with the mainland of Europe. If Ireland was to be included, it was explicitly mentioned⁴⁴⁵. Geographically, the distinction is a clear one, of course: the mainland is the mainland and an island is an island. But, strangely enough, another island, Britain, was not normally excluded from “Europe”⁴⁴⁶. Furthermore, the CAP discussion is seldom about geography. Instead, this mode of expression refers to a significant dimension in the Irish political identity, which maintains and stresses the distance between Ireland and the rest of the EU.

6.4. Conclusions

On the Dutch national scene, the Minister of Agriculture alone represented the government, both as an active actor giving interviews and speeches and as the government actor. The other ministers were either not interested, or as in the case of Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, not welcomed by the other actors. The *Landbouwschap* was the second most important actor in the Dutch debate, but

⁴³⁶New Zealand (8, O-040, O-065, O-082, O-086, O-123, N-172, O-167, E-019), Australia (7, O-065, O-086, N-172, N-204, O-159, N-206, E-019) and Canada (6, N-169, N-172, O-136, N-206, O-166, O-218).

⁴³⁷N-001, N-131, N-155.

⁴³⁸N-126, N-130, N-171.

⁴³⁹N-172, O-166, O-218.

⁴⁴⁰N-172, E-019, O-224.

⁴⁴¹O-202.

⁴⁴²O-014.

⁴⁴³The Third World countries performed as a group (3, N-001, O-065, O-132). The Middle East (2, N-050, O-159) and North Africa (2, O-124, N-243) appeared as potential market areas. Only a few countries were mentioned: India (O-014), Iraq (O-122) and Ethiopia (O-124) once each, and Iran twice (O-125, O-202).

⁴⁴⁴O-014, O-016a, O-032, N-100, O-054, O-058, O-081, N-118, N-125, O-100, O-117, O-118, N-181, N-182, O-141, N-198, N-158, O-172, N-237, O-189, O-193, N-260, O-201, O-205, O-210, O-213, O-215, O-218.

⁴⁴⁵“Ireland included” (O-016a); “European and Irish farmers” (O-032); “farmers in Ireland or in Europe” N-118; “in Europe and in the Republic” (O-100); “Irish and European farming” (N-181); “rural Ireland and rural Europe” (N-182).

⁴⁴⁶One such example was found: “in the European countries and in Britain” (O-227).

interestingly, its representation was not embodied so clearly in the person of Jef Mares as was the situation with its Irish counterpart. Consequently, there were many debaters in the Dutch farm lobby. This gives the idea of a slightly low profile for the farm lobby, or else it could be interpreted as a matter of style in Dutch politics. One reason could be that the *Landbouwschap* was not purely an interest organisation, but also had statutory functions. Moreover, only a few politicians, both in the government and in the parliament, participated or were referred to in the debate. This may be a sign of a highly developed division of labour, but equally well of a certain indifference with regard to agriculture. There were a lot of experts active in the debate by comparison with the Irish situation, but few of them were from circles outside agriculture. Finally, the traditional agri-business was fairly well represented by the active debaters.

On the EU scene, the role of the Commission was important, but there were major differences between commissioners. Economic and fiscal interests were understood as being prominent in the CAP. The large Member States were regarded as important actors in the debate, and the farmers' umbrella organisation, COPA, was often mentioned, although this should not be taken as a direct sign of its significance on the EU scene. Furthermore, a couple of national civil servants were active in the discussion, giving the image of agricultural policy as a specialist field.

On the Irish national scene, in addition to the leading role of the Minister of Agriculture, as in the Netherlands, the Prime Minister and other ministers were also active. The government was more often an actor than in the Netherlands, and the Minister of Agriculture also performed as a part of the government, and not alone as in the Netherlands. Moreover, the *Taoiseach* was an actor in the Irish debate, whereas the Dutch Prime Minister was almost absent, and a large number of other politicians emerged as agricultural policy actors. These differences relative to the Netherlands may be partially explained by the differences in the division of the two countries into electoral districts. Politicians in Ireland are connected with specific regions, whereas the Netherlands forms one constituency in national elections. Furthermore, the farm lobby seemed to have a strong leadership, and in general the farmers' organisations clearly performed in public in the manner of a traditional pressure group, whereas the public performance of the *Landbouwschap* in the Netherlands was somewhat vague. Finally, traditional agri-business and its interests were represented in the debate, but environmental interests were not. Farmers performed as actors slightly more often than in the Dutch debate, and were also regarded as actors in their own right to a greater extent.

MEPs were active on the Irish EU scene, and were also regarded as actors by others. The Ministry of Agriculture was represented by the Minister, and the role of civil servants was an invisible one. The large northern member states performed as important actors in the debate, whereas the COPA was not particularly important.

If we compare the actor structures of the two countries, the farmers' organisations in Ireland had a more traditional pressure group profile in the debate than the Dutch *Landbouwschap*, and their leaders, Alan Gillis of the IFA and Tom O'Dwyer of the ICMSA, represented their members in a sovereign way. The *Landbouwschap* maintained a lower profile, and had more spokesmen in addition to the leader, Jef Mares. In my interview (30.11.1995), the then IFA President, Alan Gillis (later a *Fine Gael* MEP), stated that he was in Brussels at least as often as the Minister of Agriculture, and found that the farming lobby's influence, both direct and via the COPA, was more important than anything achieved by the Minister in the Council of EU Farm Ministers. Tom O'Dwyer's influence was more restricted to Ireland, since the ICMSA is not a member of the COPA, and he was not particularly active outside the British Isles (interview with T. O'Dwyer 9.7.1995). Moreover, the number of Irish politicians for whom agricultural policy was relevant was larger than in the Netherlands, where it had more the image of sector politics, with only a few specialists. In addition, the government context in which agricultural policy was dealt with was different, in that Ireland had a Minister of Agriculture and Food and a Minister of Horticulture, while the Netherlands had a Minister for Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries.

The farming lobby was active on both the national and the EU scene in both countries, and the need to promote national interests in connection with the EU reinforced the symbiotic relations between national officials and groups (on the same phenomenon, see McLaughlin, Jordan and Maloney 1993). It emerged from my interviews in both countries that relations between the Ministry of Agriculture and the farming organisations were regarded as important on both sides, although the partners did not necessarily agree on all issues.

If one looks at who were regarded as the most important actors by the others, it was the Minister of Agriculture in both countries, with the farm lobby as the second most important. The scene was dominated by male actors in both national debates, and if there were women involved, they represented special female interests or the family in general. Moreover, economists dominated among the experts. There were only occasionally groups involved that did not represent either the farmers or agri-business. The consumers' point of view was poorly represented in the debate, both by the debaters and by actors recognised by others.

The frequent references to "Brussels" gave the impression that it was not clear who was the actor in the case of the EU itself, just as it was unclear in the debate what the different EU organs actually do. This can be seen as a sign of a more general unawareness of EU politics in the member states. The political groupings in the European Parliament, for example, were not regarded as important in the debate in the same way as their counterparts in the National Parliaments. In addition, when "Brussels" was the actor in the CAP debate, it was depicted as an entity, with a will of its own. "Brussels" was the actor more

often than “Den Haag” or “Dublin”, implying that it is easier to find a concrete actor on the national scene.

The political geography of the actor structure showed that the Dutch pictured themselves at the centre of the EU, surrounded by the power axis of Germany and France. They perceived a clear division between the northern and southern member states, implying some distrust of “the south”. Moreover, the Dutch had a neutral or slightly positive attitude towards Eastern Europe, which did not include Russia, however. The Irish, on the other hand, were inclined to stress their distance from “Europe”. For them the division inside the EU was not important, for the main line of demarcation ran along the old iron curtain, the Eastern European countries being felt to pose a threat to Irish agriculture. The USA was also an important actor in the Irish debate.

“Europe” was frequently reduced to the EU in both national debates, implicitly underestimating those European countries that were not members. This seemingly innocent practice also modified the geographical term for the continent “Europe” into a political term “EU”. In general, the knowledge of other member states was rather poor, allowing interpretations which were strictly speaking incorrect, or just lumping together countries which actually had little in common. When the Dutch listed the EU countries, they most often omitted Luxembourg and Greece, whereas Luxembourg and Belgium were most often forgotten in the Irish debate. Finally, when the CAP was discussed, countries outside the EU or in other parts of the world were seldom included in the context, even though the CAP has a significant influence on the global situation regarding agriculture and food.

7. Thematic structure

7.1. Introduction

The focus in this chapter will be on the thematic structure of the MacSharry reform debates in Ireland and the Netherlands. For this purpose, the issues are grouped into themes in the Foucaultian sense as described above (section 3.3.2). We will first discuss separately the main Dutch themes and the main Irish themes, and then identify the themes common to both national debates. The chapter will conclude with an interpretation of the thematic outline of the debate from the point of view of politicisation and politicking.

The different versions of the Commission reform proposals prepared by the Commissioner for Agriculture, Ray MacSharry (CEC 1991 a,b,c; CEC 1992), form the background to this debate. At the core of the reform were the proposals for the arable sector⁴⁴⁷. As discussed in section 4.5.2, the basic aims were to reduce levels of price support in the cereals sector, bringing them closer to world market levels, and to compensate farmers for their loss of revenue through a system of acreage payments. At the beginning, the Commission proposed that the compensation should be modulated so that small farmers would be compensated in full but only partial compensation would be paid beyond a certain farm size. In addition, compensation would be linked to a set-aside scheme⁴⁴⁸. Other products were barely touched on by the proposals, but the plan included a number of “accompanying measures”: schemes for encouraging environment-friendly farming, a new subsidy scheme for the afforestation of agricultural land and a proposal for renewing the Community-financed early retirement scheme for farmers.

7.2. Specific Dutch themes

The main themes in the Dutch debate were the EU budget, economic rationality and the relationship between agriculture, the environment and nature. In the Dutch case, economics referred mainly to the EU budget or to economic rationality in general, and not so often to the national economy. For the Dutch, the MacSharry proposals were, above all, a matter of reforming the CAP in order to *cut agricultural policy* costs in the EU⁴⁴⁹. The Dutch discussion approached the reform proposals largely in macro-economic terms, in relation

⁴⁴⁷ Outlined in more detail in CEC 1991c, 10-15.

⁴⁴⁸ The final agreement (CEC 1992) contained most of these features, but the concept of modulation was watered down during the negotiations.

⁴⁴⁹ Documents O-014, N-015, N-019, O-041, O-046, O-056, N-068, N-090, N-094, N-129, N-180, N-182, N-185, N-188, O-107, N-256, N-257.

to the EU budget. The Community had moved from deficiency to surplus in the case of most of its agricultural products, and the policy measures tended to stimulate output at a rate beyond the market's absorption capacity. This had led to rapidly increasing expenditure on agriculture despite the measures introduced from 1984 onwards: milk quotas, stabilizers (the introduction of maximum guaranteed quantities), co-responsibility levies, and structural measures to promote afforestation and diversify agriculture etc.

As a consequence, a desired effect on the budget was the major criterion on which to judge the reform. Even though most Dutch opinions were opposed to Commissioner MacSharry's proposals almost throughout the preparation and negotiations, agreement usually prevailed over the need in principle to cut EU agricultural costs⁴⁵⁰. In this sense, a new proposal was necessary⁴⁵¹ and cutting the EU budget was an unquestionable objective⁴⁵². Actually, the need to reform the CAP was the only subject on which the Dutch debaters could agree with Commissioner MacSharry.

As the months went by and the plans crystallised, it became clear that, rather than reducing expenditure, the reform was likely to increase EU budget spending. Price support in the cereals sector was to be significantly reduced, but the proposals promised compensations through a system of acreage payments. Cereals sector prices would be brought closer to world market prices, which would certainly reduce the need for export refunds, but huge sums would have to be paid in compensation from the EU budget.

At this stage the Dutch focussed their budget rationality on the guideline principle. A special European Council meeting in Brussels in 1988 agreed on measures for a significant reduction in expenditure on the CAP and drew up an "agricultural budgetary guideline" that enabled agricultural expenditure to increase at a rate not exceeding 74% of the rate of growth of the Community GNP (CEC 1988, 16). Since all hope of cutting the EU budget was apparently lost, there was a shift in the Dutch debate towards defending the guideline⁴⁵³. The negative view of the Dutch was not surprising. As execution of the plan was assumed to increase CAP expenditure, Dutch costs would also increase. Also, as the cereals sector is not important in the Netherlands, only a small amount of the compensation was likely to end up in Dutch agriculture.

Parallel with the EU budget theme, and partly connected with it, a group of other issues formed a second Dutch theme: that of *economic rationality*. Commissioner MacSharry proposed the introduction of direct income subsidies as a new policy measure in the CAP, and the Dutch debate was obliged to

⁴⁵⁰N-040, N-058, N-080, N-081, N-082, N-238, O-133.

⁴⁵¹O-074.

⁴⁵²N-227.

⁴⁵³N-258, N-263, N-264, N-265, N-266, N-267, N-268, N-270, N-271, N-275, E-026, N-277.

consider whether market orientation, which treats agriculture “like any other sector of the economy”⁴⁵⁴, would be the proper way to approach agriculture, and whether there were specific characteristics in the nature of agricultural production which called for state intervention. Income subsidies were confronted with production subsidies, and pricing policy was contrasted with production control. The issue was often ironically put in the form of a rhetorical question: whether agriculture is an economic activity or a form of entertainment, “*sociale bezigheid*”, to which the hard rules of economics are not applicable⁴⁵⁵. The Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Piet Bukman, warned: “*Je mag de sector niet degraderen tot een soort bezighedsclub*” (You must not reduce the sector to a sort of pleasure activity club)⁴⁵⁶. Another issue under this theme concerned economic efficiency and competitiveness, and contrasted small farms with large enterprises⁴⁵⁷. A common undertone was the argument that it would be irrational to punish the larger (Dutch) farms for their efficiency in order to keep the countryside viable (elsewhere) in Europe. The Dutch were thus mostly applying their “own” rather limited definition of efficiency, although some debaters questioned this as neglecting external costs (associated with the environment, biodiversity and the developing countries)⁴⁵⁸.

The need to discuss the CAP only in terms of the budget or economic rationality made it difficult for the Dutch to take the reform proposals seriously. According to many actors, the proposals contained elements which were considered contradictory to “normal” conditions: “*Dit staat dwars op alles wat normaal is*”, as Bukman once pointed out⁴⁵⁹. Agricultural policy was being turned upside down: “*plan om de landbouwpolitiek op zijn kop te zetten*”⁴⁶⁰. Both the Landbouwschap, and Bukman as Minister of Agriculture were convinced that Commissioner MacSharry’s proposals would have no chance of gaining acceptance in the Council of Ministers. The Dutch “no nonsense” attitude, which emphasised economic arguments, was part of a negotiation strategy aimed

⁴⁵⁴This is, of course, an example of the way in which rhetoric is used: many other “pure” sectors of the economy are equally well protected or subsidised, not necessarily in such a direct and obvious way as agriculture, but through standardisation, tariffs or import restrictions – e.g. the textile industry, shipbuilding and the car and electronics industries in the case of the EU.

⁴⁵⁵N-003, N-008, O-035, N-034, E-004, O-047, O-063, N-109, E-014, N-121, N-122, N-123, E-017, N-145, E-022, N-157, O-102, O-103, N-181, O-110, O-117, N-230, O-121, O-124, O-126, N-248, E-026, E-031.

⁴⁵⁶“*Alles kan*”. 100 dagen Bukman als minister van Landbouw, Boerderij, 2.1.1991. (O-016).

⁴⁵⁷O-011, O-012, N-008, O-025, O-032, N-014, O-036, O-037, O-042, N-033, N-061, N-076a, N-078, E-002, E-012, N-171, O-129, O-147.

⁴⁵⁸O-026, O-042, N-057, N-168, O-109 and J. Nijssen in De Volkskrant 23.2.1991 “*Zure regen maakt nu ook schaaap tot bedreigde diersoort*”.

⁴⁵⁹Piet Bukman in “*Breed front tegen plan MacSharry*”, Oogst, 18.1.1991. (O-027).

⁴⁶⁰“*Landbouw-commissaris doet nieuw reorganisatie-voorstellen aan Europese Commissie MacSharry wil zuivel en granen hard aanpakken*”, De Volkskrant, 12.1.1991. (N-009).

at defending the prevailing pricing policy, which was beneficial to the Netherlands. The position of this attitude in the Dutch debate was so strong that it may also be interpreted as referring back to more fundamental values⁴⁶¹.

The third theme was *the relationship between agriculture, the environment and nature*. A separation of agriculture from “nature” was seriously suggested in the Netherlands as a solution to problems in both agricultural policy and the environment⁴⁶², an idea that was completely absent from the Irish debate. It would be no exaggeration to say that the environmental issue had found its way onto the Dutch agricultural policy agenda by this point, although this does not as such say anything about how profound its effect may have been on traditional politics. An analysis of Dutch political party programmes shows that the environmental issue was attached to the old agenda as such, and that it was dealt with in a fragmented and rather superficial way (Vihinen 1994). A proper politicisation of the environmental issue would have require a horizon shift in thinking about agriculture.

However, according to Jaap Frouws and Jan van Tatenhove (1993), the environmental issues has already had an impact on Dutch agricultural policy decision-taking. The development of agro-environmental policy-making led into a reorientation in Dutch agricultural policy at the end of the 1980’s. The issue of environment finally broke the isolation and consensus of the agricultural elite and brought the Ministries of Agriculture and the Environment closer to each other. At the same time, however, it threatens to alienate the Ministry of Agriculture from its constituency.

The debate analysed here suggests that obviously the Dutch do not oppose stricter environmental norms or more ecological agriculture as such. Pressure from the market is, however, preferred. The Dutch trust that farmers react more correctly to market changes than to the propositions and orders of state authorities or environmental activists. The farming lobby seems to prefer self-regulation by farmers’ organisations, and as Frouws and van Tatenhove maintain, the “environmentalist invasion” has not involved any change in agriculture’s economic interests or in its technocratic character. High priority is still given to competitiveness and export capacity. (Ibid., 229.)

The environment issue was more frequent in the Dutch⁴⁶³ than in the Irish debate⁴⁶⁴. The “Agri-Environmental Action Programme” included in the Accompanying Measures (CEC 1991c, 2) should, in fact, have provoked

⁴⁶¹On micro and macro-economic values in Dutch agricultural policy, see Nooij’s articles on the typology of agricultural policies (Nooij 1969; 1993).

⁴⁶²Documents N-282, N-283, O-151; inspired especially by “*Grond voor keuzen*” 1992.

⁴⁶³Dutch documents O-010, O-026, E-003, O-042, O-047, O-052, N-057, O-054, O-058, N-105, O-078, O-079, O-094, E-025, N-168, O-104, N-221, O-126, N-259, O-140, E-029, O-147.

⁴⁶⁴Irish documents N-058, O-055, O-102, O-200, O-201.

discussion in both countries alike. According to the Commission, the old policy had encouraged intensive farming systems and given rise to environmental concerns. The “Agri-Environmental Action Programme” was “to give recognition to the dual role of farmers as producers and as stewards of the countryside, and to encourage farming practices which are less intensive and more in tune with environmental constraints” and “should also make a positive contribution to rebalancing markets” (ibid.). The debate shows that the Dutch were clearly more prepared to seize upon this issue than the Irish. The Irish debate was characterized by a belief that environmental problems did not concern them, since their agriculture was not “intensive” – according to their own definitions⁴⁶⁵.

The thematic choices discussed above form the backbone of the Dutch MacSharry debate, and other observers have arrived at similar conclusions regarding Dutch agricultural policy. Dirk Strijker (1993), for example, taking up the same elements, notes that “the position of the Netherlands in the debate on EC policy is determined by the belief that agriculture is primarily an economic activity ... More generally, the Netherlands is in favour of a strong budgetary discipline within the EC.” (ibid., 143). He suggests an explanation that individual farmers have not been able to dictate the policy agenda because the exporting sub-sectors and agricultural industries have dominated the discussion, and sees the environmental issue as still in the state of emerging, although he expects it to have “the greatest impact on Dutch agriculture” (ibid., 146). Frouws and van Tatenhove (1993, 227) also refer to the “productivistic orientation” of the Dutch agribusiness.

7.3. Specific Irish themes

The Irish adopted a different tone from the economic emphasis and generalising tendency of the Dutch debate, which enabled the Dutch to talk on behalf of the whole Community. The Irish debate was more clearly oriented towards Ireland, and first and foremost expressed concern about the consequences for Irish agriculture, the countryside and the national economy. Ireland was seen as lying apart from the rest of the Community – as an island. But the Irish went even further in internalising the EU problem. They saw the reform proposals either as an attack directed especially at Ireland, or else they felt that they in particular were being blamed for the agricultural overproduction affecting the EU. Furthermore, the reform was transformed from an EU policy issue into an internal Irish affair, with human dimensions gaining more attention than in the Dutch debate.

⁴⁶⁵The environmental issue was discussed in the Irish debate only in documents *N-058*, *O-055*, *O-102*, *O-200*.

The Irish deduced right from the beginning that the idea of reforming the CAP had to be connected with the need to introduce more *justice* into the common policy. When news about the content of the proposals first leaked out, the Irish welcomed the reform as a device to ensure a more equitable division of EU money and as a promise to redirect the Brussels cash-flow from the large-scale operators to smaller ones. Their “own” Commissioner, MacSharry, was to be the Robin Hood who took money from the rich and gave it to the poor. When more details became available, this idea lost much of its credibility. The Irish went on considering the proposals in terms of justice, fairness and cohesion, however, claiming that their vital national interests were at stake⁴⁶⁶. One consequence of this was that compensation⁴⁶⁷ was a more important issue than the budgetary implications⁴⁶⁸.

One could say that the Irish were suffering from a “small country syndrome”, that fact that, because of their lack of physical power (in terms of military capacity, size of population or economic influence), small countries are inclined to insist on their “rights” and integrity in international politics. Reference was made to the letter of the law to the extent that “*Realpolitik*” would no longer allow it.⁴⁶⁹ The Irish stuck firm to the letter of the EU “constitution”, the Treaty of Rome, and refused to recognise any other dimensions which might determine the decisions taken in the EU. They referred to the fundamental guarantees given to Ireland on EU entry, “adequate parallelism” in EU jargon. This meant that Irish farmers could expect to progress to higher Community prices as industries and the business sector lost their protection against competition from other member states. For them “these terms of entry offer strong moral grounds for any Irish Government to demand protection for Irish farmers”⁴⁷⁰. Commissioner MacSharry himself once had to remind his countrymen of this fact: “It is important for commentators in Ireland to realise that it will not be an easy task to obtain a substantial increase in cohesion related expenditure. It will not be enough to repeat, mantra-like, the articles of the treaty on cohesion as if they were a code for access to a European cash machine...”⁴⁷¹.

Partly in connection with the justice theme, the second theme represented *Irish agriculture as an exception* among the EU countries. Frequent references were made to how important agriculture was for the national economy and how

⁴⁶⁶N-003, N-004, N-005, N-007, O-003, O-006, N-014, N-025, N-036, N-054, N-073, O-230; N-033, O-007, O-009, O-012, N-055, E-006, O-012, N-202.

⁴⁶⁷N-072, O-032, N-077, O-072, N-146, N-149, N-163, O-133, N-210, N-211, N-245, N-282.

⁴⁶⁸N-001, N-038, O-040, O-154, O-168, O-198.

⁴⁶⁹Ben Tonra (1997) refers to the same phenomenon when comparing the Irish, Danish and Dutch strategies in the EU.

⁴⁷⁰“*EC farm promise*”, Cork Examiner, 26.6.1991; a leading article, O-090.

⁴⁷¹“*Opt out clause danger foreseen by MacSharry*”, Irish Times 30.11.1991.

the Irish case should be treated as an exception in the CAP⁴⁷². In this debate agriculture was synonymous with the whole national economy. Ireland, as an exceptionally agricultural country, was also able to broaden the issue to cover rurality as a whole, whereas issues concerning the countryside or rural areas were absent from the Dutch debate⁴⁷³. In the Irish case, agriculture could not be separated from its rural context⁴⁷⁴.

The social implications for rural Ireland formed a distinct theme. The Irish were especially concerned whether the reform might worsen social problems and increase unemployment in the countryside. It is indicative that one dramatic vision involved the breaking up of rural families⁴⁷⁵. The reform proposals were seen as a threat to (small) family farms⁴⁷⁶, and “marginalities” such as disadvantaged areas and farming women were also mentioned as potential victims⁴⁷⁷. The human dimensions were emphasised as Irish agriculture faced the implications of the reform message: the outcry was that thousands of farmers would have no other option than to leave the land⁴⁷⁸, which has often implied migration away from Ireland as well. High levels of net emigration had prevailed there for over a century, with the exception of a brief turn around in the 1970’s, and emigration had been a difficult social problem at times⁴⁷⁹.

Overproduction, *the dependence of Ireland on the CAP and the intervention system* became personal problems for the Irish⁴⁸⁰. The Irish Minister of Food, Joe Walsh, once admitted that a third of the produce bought by the EU and placed in intervention in 1991 was from Ireland⁴⁸¹. The level of dependence on intervention was regarded as frightening. The phenomenon of overproduction was by no means caused by the Irish alone, but the fact that much of their produce went to intervention and not onto the market was used by MacSharry and others as an argument in favour of the reform. The farming lobby defended

⁴⁷² O-008, O-046, O-049, O-092, O-118, N-177, O-156, N-202.

⁴⁷³ With two exceptions, in which “the countryside” was used with a pejorative flavour, claiming that the MacSharry proposals were of no use for anything else but “keeping the countryside alive” (Dutch documents N-051, N-061).

⁴⁷⁴ N-009, O-004, N-023, N-040, N-109, N-110, O-085, O-100, O-107, O-135, O-144, O-149, O-150, O-152, O-161, O-162, N-212, O-180, O-190, O-191, O-193, N-285.

⁴⁷⁵ O-013, O-050, O-106, E-015, N-213, O-180, O-224.

⁴⁷⁶ N-018, N-103, O-206.

⁴⁷⁷ O-143, O-185.

⁴⁷⁸ O-114.

⁴⁷⁹ On the scale, type and impact of Irish emigration, see Breen et al. (1990, 148-152) and Lee (1989, 373-386). Lee argues that no other society has “found itself obliged to rationalise so remorselessly the subversion of the national and family ideals inherent in the emigration “solution” to the problem of social structure” (ibid., 375).

⁴⁸⁰ N-063, O-030, O-051, O-086, N-119, O-087, N-12, O-101, N-148, O-129, N-191, N-197, N-205, O-213, O-218, O-226.

⁴⁸¹ N-124.

the Irish position fiercely: “I won’t stand by and let anyone put Irish farmers in the dock for things they’re simply not guilty of.”⁴⁸² Those who opposed major reforms in Ireland, asserted instead that the Euro-intervention “mountains” were caused by leaks in import controls⁴⁸³ and were not a sign of structural overproduction. On the contrary, it was argued that excess production in the EU was necessary in order to feed Russia and other Eastern European areas⁴⁸⁴.

The Irish intertwined the reform proposals with their *domestic affairs* to an extent where outsiders were hardly needed or recognised as competent participants in the debate. This was partly due to the fact that Commissioner MacSharry was an *Irishman*. The main theme was the person of Ray MacSharry rather than the contents of the proposals, for they had, after all, been made in the first place by an Irishman. Consequently, the public discussion considered his achievements from the point of view of MacSharry as an Irish politician, a *Fianna Fáil* member and a potential prime minister after Charles Haughey⁴⁸⁵. Negative evaluations of MacSharry’s performance led to demands for terminating his appointment as a commissioner⁴⁸⁶, suggestions that he should be assigned to another post in the Commission⁴⁸⁷, or other criticisms⁴⁸⁸. But the path of communication also worked in reverse: criticised by Irishmen, MacSharry himself followed the Irish discussion closely and participated in it by expressing criticism of the people and their comments and alternatives. He gave a number of interviews for domestic newspapers in which he tried to convince his fellow countrymen of the advantageousness of his reform plan for Ireland in particular⁴⁸⁹.

The domestic affair theme was enriched further by the fact that, although discussions on the reform plan easily turned into a bitter wrangling at home, the crucial decisions were being taken in Brussels. Whatever *Fianna Fáil* politicians said about the reform proposals, it was interpreted as an effort at showing loyalty to Ray MacSharry. The political opposition led by the *Fine Gael* used the MacSharry plan to attack the *Fianna Fáil* government⁴⁹⁰, and it was also repeatedly connected with the new three-year national development programme (PESD, Programme for Economic and Social Development)⁴⁹¹. When the Irish found themselves divided with regard to the proposals, the lack of a national

⁴⁸²IFA leader Ian Gillis in “*CAP reform for ESRI study call*”, Farm Exam, 18.4.1991. (O-063).

⁴⁸³O-063, O-078, O-087, N-243.

⁴⁸⁴N-215, O-170.

⁴⁸⁵O-029, N-088, N-181, N-194, N-196, O-225, N-231.

⁴⁸⁶O-076.

⁴⁸⁷N-062.

⁴⁸⁸N-046, O-017, O-021, O-028, O-059.

⁴⁸⁹N-096, N-097, N-108, N-116, N-118, N-158, N-232, N-233, N-241, O-202, O-208, N-287.

⁴⁹⁰N-047, N-048, N-049, O-023, O-025, N-076, N-079, O-035, N-083, N-084, N-099, O-077, N-131, N-136, N-145, N-151, N-168, N-175, N-189, O-147.

⁴⁹¹N-012, N-020, N-021, N-042, N-185, N-186.

strategy was considered a severe drawback. Probably because of the country's historical experiences, the division was looked on as a threat: "It has always been too easy to divide the people of this country"⁴⁹². Pleas for a united national front were also frequent⁴⁹³.

7.4. Themes held in common

Discourse analysis is interested not only in elements contained in separate arenas in a debate but also in shared elements. We will therefore turn our attention now to the themes which could be found in both countries. Even though certain themes were noted in both debates, they were not necessarily approached in similar ways. The negotiation process was followed carefully in both countries, for example, but the Dutch and Irish stressed different characteristics. The content of the reform plan and potential influences were also documented in both countries, but the emphases differed significantly. Furthermore, the fact that the Commission had launched reform proposals inspired ideas about the desirability of the CAP and about the most acceptable direction of development for agriculture in the EU. The reform thus provoked discussion about the fundamentals of the Common Agricultural Policy, by again on different lines in the two countries. The discussion was more harmonious in the case of connecting the CAP reform with the GATT world trade talks, however, and both debates included comments about the general nature of EU policy and its implications for the country as a whole.

As already mentioned, the *progress of the reform proposals in the EU decision-making institutions* was followed closely in both countries. Apart from mere descriptions of the course of events⁴⁹⁴, the Dutch were more inclined than the Irish to emphasise difficulties in the negotiations and disagreement on the reform inside the EU⁴⁹⁵. Disagreement was mentioned at times in Ireland, but not underlined so as to form an independent topic. The Irish news and

⁴⁹²"EC to back plan for disadvantaged areas", Irish Times, 3.12.1991.

⁴⁹³N-043, O-016, O-019, O-037, O-054, O-066, O-079, O-096, O-138, N-184, N-200, N-158, O-164, O-169.

⁴⁹⁴Dutch documents N-004, N-006, N-012, N-016, N-017, N-020, N-023, N-028, N-030, N-031, N-036, N-037, N-038, N-045, N-052, N-072, N-073, N-074, N-076, N-079, N-079a, N-081, N-082, N-085, N-086, N-087, N-088, N-090, N-099, N-125, N-126, N-127, N-128, N-143, N-147, N-148, N-150, N-166, N-174, N-178, N-179, N-186, N-188, N-189, N-191, N-197, N-199, N-206, N-207, N-214, N-217, N-223, N-236, N-239, N-242, N-243, N-244, N-246, N-249, N-285, N-286, N-287, N-290.

⁴⁹⁵Dutch documents N-017, N-018, N-020, N-022, N-030, N-031, N-032, N-086, N-087, N-088, N-090, N-091, N-095, N-096, N-097, N-098, N-126, N-136, N-178, N-179, N-186, N-188, N-197, N-198, N-200, N-201, N-202, N-203, N-205, N-214.

interpretations regarding the negotiation process were usually optimistic⁴⁹⁶, and it was only in January-March 1992, that even they had to confess that the EU ministers of agriculture had reached deadlock in the negotiations, causing repeated setbacks⁴⁹⁷. The Dutch⁴⁹⁸ also devoted more time and space than the Irish to speculation on how much support or opposition there was for the proposals⁴⁹⁹.

Other themes, not surprisingly, were the *content* of the different versions of the proposals and the *anticipated effects* on national agriculture (and the countryside in Ireland; see section 7.3 above). The main interest of the Dutch was focussed first on the content⁵⁰⁰, but gradually more profound analyses also emerged of the background and expected effects of the proposed changes in the CAP⁵⁰¹. These were followed by a couple of more scientific economic analyses⁵⁰². Later, the theme was enriched by several surveys of possible consequences⁵⁰³. After repeated demands for independent surveys⁵⁰⁴, studies produced by different institutions were published and discussed in Ireland⁵⁰⁵, and the predicted consequences were also discussed in general terms, but not as frequently as in the Netherlands⁵⁰⁶.

There were also differences in which products were regarded as most seriously affected by the reform proposals or otherwise essential to them. The Dutch were most concerned about milk⁵⁰⁷, and feelings were further raised by the Italian milk quota incident⁵⁰⁸ at a moment when general agreement on the reform had

⁴⁹⁶Irish documents *N-004, N-008, N-026, N-027, N-028, N-031, N-035, N-039, N-052, N-053, N-054, N-058, N-060, N-061, N-065, N-069, N-093, N-094, N-095, N-133, N-134, N-136, N-143, N-146, O-103, N-163, N-164, N-209, N-211, N-220, N-239, N-240, N-242, N-250, N-252, N-262, N-263, N-266, N-268, N-269, N-271, N-273, N-275, N-276, N-283, N-284, O-212, N-288, N-289, N-290, N-291, N-293, N-298.*

⁴⁹⁷*N-251, N-253, N-261, N-265.*

⁴⁹⁸Dutch documents *O-019, O-021, O-025, O-028, O-033, N-028, N-029, N-033, N-092, N-146, N-147, N-150, N-151, N-152, N-155, N-173, N-199, O-110, N-212, N-213, N-216, N-217, N-218, N-219, O-114, N-230, N-235, N-242, N-261.*

⁴⁹⁹Irish documents *N-061, N-120, N-126, O-089, N-165, N-166, N-170, N-209, N-226.*

⁵⁰⁰*N-007, N-009, N-014, N-067, O-067, N-071, N-072, N-074, O-070, N-075, N-076, N-077, O-089.*

⁵⁰¹*E-005, O-056, O-069, O-071, N-080, N-080a, N-084, N-103, E-010, E-015, N-112, O-088.*

⁵⁰²*O-015, E-028.*

⁵⁰³Discussed in Dutch documents *N-054, O-076, N-104, N-112, N-113, N-114, N-115, N-116, N-117, N-118, N-119, O-081, N-154, N-164, N-180, N-182, N-183 (concerning Belgium), N-185, N-240, N-247.*

⁵⁰⁴*O-036, O-063.*

⁵⁰⁵*N-081, E-009, E-011, N-228, E-023, E-024.*

⁵⁰⁶Irish documents *N-071, O-167, N-231, N-235, O-220, N-299, N-300.*

⁵⁰⁷*N-009, N-069, N-071, N-084, O-076, N-103, E-010, N-104, N-186, N-243, N-244, N-245, N-261, N-262, N-267, N-272, N-273, N-276.*

⁵⁰⁸There was a wrangle over Italian milk quotas which had delayed the adoption of the reform package. The Italians claimed the original quotas had been set too low due to a statistical error, but some member states, with the Netherlands the loudest among them, argued that an increase would amount to rewarding the Italians for breaking the rules.

almost been reached⁵⁰⁹. The main new policy instruments proposed by Commissioner MacSharry were directed towards crop husbandry, especially grain, and attention was paid to this, too, even though arable farming is a relatively unimportant activity in the Netherlands⁵¹⁰. The reform proposals were also discussed in connection with intensive cattle breeding, even though the anticipated effects were mainly indirect ones, occurring via the lower prices of the grain used as fodder⁵¹¹. On the other hand, it was the consequences for crop husbandry that were brought up most often in the Irish debate. The Irish were particularly worried about the value of their “green gold”, i.e. their grassland⁵¹², but the consequences for grain⁵¹³ were noted, too. Given that the main products of Irish agriculture are dairy products and beef, the effects on milk⁵¹⁴ and beef⁵¹⁵ were frequently discussed.

The preparation of a policy reform for EU agriculture naturally encouraged meditation and *visions about what this agriculture should be like* and what would be a *proper policy* for dealing with it. Thus the idea of a reform as such and various visions of EU agriculture in the future constituted a central theme in the Dutch texts. This approach is noteworthy in two ways. First, the visions or alternatives often radically questioned the old policy and went deep into the very fundamentals of the CAP, and secondly, the Dutch did not restrict their interests or ideas to their own agriculture, but used the opportunity to speak “for the whole of the EU”. The Dutch visions implied qualitative changes in addition to new policy suggestions, whereas the Irish contributions were more often content with technical or quantitative changes to the old policy. This theme revealed another characteristic of the Dutch way of discussing the CAP. A sharp disagreement prevails in the Netherlands between those responsible for day-to-day agricultural policy-making, and external experts on agricultural policy. There were two examples of the work of external experts: the manifesto published by the large working group for “Sustainable co-existence of agriculture, nature and the environment” (*Duurzaam samengaan van landbouw, natuur en milieu*)⁵¹⁶, and Professor Jan de Veer’s report to the EU (the “De Veer Plan”)⁵¹⁷. The experts tried to break down the inertia in political thinking about agriculture, nature and the environment and seek a new kind of state intervention.

⁵⁰⁹N-274, N-285, N-286, N-289, N-291, O-148.

⁵¹⁰E-010, N-104, N-120, N-121, N-142, O-092, E-025, N-153, N-164, N-215, O-113, N-229, N-134, N-249, N-279.

⁵¹¹E-013, N-112, N-153, O-143.

⁵¹²E-002, O-007, O-016, E-006, N-139.

⁵¹³E-004, N-046, O-120, N-255, O-196, O-222.

⁵¹⁴N-015, O-011, N-056, O-016, E-022, N-269 (Italian).

⁵¹⁵O-140, N-191, E-018, N-243, N-244, O-210.

⁵¹⁶O-002, O-003.

⁵¹⁷N-001, N-181, O-107.

In addition to these broad visions of agriculture⁵¹⁸, the Dutch debate frequently touched upon the choice between market orientation and state intervention as a basis for the CAP⁵¹⁹. Supply management was also discussed⁵²⁰. Numerous policy measures were suggested as solutions to current problems: enlargement of farm units⁵²¹; diversification of farm sizes, products and activities⁵²², and evaluation of the possibilities for ecological or extensive farming⁵²³. Solitary voices remained to suggest that production costs should be cut by sharing goods, or that Dutch arable farming should produce the fodder used in cattle breeding⁵²⁴. Agrification⁵²⁵ and two-price schemes were mentioned only once each⁵²⁶.

The most fundamental alternatives in the Irish debate were market orientation and supply management⁵²⁷. Reduced government involvement was not raised as a topic, however. It is indicative of the atmosphere in the Irish reform debate that a return to the contemporary price policy was suggested as an alternative to Commissioner MacSharry's proposals⁵²⁸. Organic or extensive farming were considered, but not necessarily in a positive light⁵²⁹. The Irish seemed to prefer small steps rather than revolutionary visions. Corporate farming⁵³⁰, agritourism⁵³¹, and agrification⁵³² were noted as serious alternatives. As in the Netherlands, diversification towards more value-added products was thought to have a potential in the future⁵³³, and enlargement of farm size was mentioned as a traditional remedy for the low income problem in agriculture, but some more original voices proposed a Basic Income Scheme for all citizens⁵³⁴, a ban on the sowing of winter crops⁵³⁵, or a tax on nitrogen⁵³⁶.

⁵¹⁸E-008, E-023, O-047, N-284, O-153.

⁵¹⁹N-027, E-003, E-017, O-102, O-106, O-112, O-113, O-115, O-077, O-117, O-138, O-146, E-026, E-027, E-028, O-147, O-154, N-215.

⁵²⁰O-020, E-006, E-007, O-093, N-144, N-145, E-022.

⁵²¹E-001, E-009, E-009a.

⁵²²E-002, O-042, O-108, E-008, E-009a, E-024, N-260.

⁵²³O-026, E-009a, O-054, E-025, O-097, N-181, O-109.

⁵²⁴E-009a.

⁵²⁵N-141.

⁵²⁶O-092.

⁵²⁷O-026, E-012, O-119, E-014, N-177, O-187.

⁵²⁸N-105, O-087.

⁵²⁹O-061, O-068, N-154, O-142, O-146.

⁵³⁰O-083, O-088.

⁵³¹O-069, N-137.

⁵³²O-116.

⁵³³O-068, O-137, O-155.

⁵³⁴O-132.

⁵³⁵O-134.

⁵³⁶O-201.

Policy measures suggested in the reform proposals were not widely discussed in either of the countries, with the exception of the aid per hectare to compensate for the reduction in the prices of arable crops⁵³⁷. Detailed measures as solutions never formed a major theme. The set-aside scheme was not a very popular topic in the debate, and was mentioned only a couple of times in each country in this text corpus⁵³⁸. In addition, the Irish proposals included forestry⁵³⁹ and early retirement schemes⁵⁴⁰.

As expected, the round of *GATT* (General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade) multilateral trade negotiations launched in 1986 was a prominent theme. Once MacSharry had announced a new plan to reform the CAP (CEC 1991a,b), newspaper articles claimed that these were budget-driven, internal reforms separate from the *GATT* negotiations. Even though the EU would rather have kept the two matters apart, speculations about their interconnection continuously followed the reform debate⁵⁴¹. Officially, the EU was claiming that the reform proposals were necessary because of internal Community businesses and nothing else. Politicians were keen on emphasizing that the *GATT* negotiations (and the Americans as the main partner in them) must not be allowed to determine the course which the CAP would take, and free trade as a general principle was also discussed in the Netherlands⁵⁴². The annual negotiations on farm prices for the forthcoming year were also regularly connected with the reform proposals⁵⁴³.

Finally, one more common, although slightly more fragmented theme can be found, consisting of remarks about the nature of *the CAP as EU policy and politics*. There was speculation in both countries about the rotation of the EU Presidency; about its efficiency under the management of different countries and how the change would affect the balance of power in meetings⁵⁴⁴. The Council and its committees and working parties are presided over by a

⁵³⁷Dutch documents N-204, N-249, E-027, N-279, O-150.

⁵³⁸Dutch documents O-135, O-151; Irish documents O-139, N-254.

⁵³⁹Irish documents O-116, N-188, O-209.

⁵⁴⁰Irish documents N-190, O-227.

⁵⁴¹Dutch documents N-008, O-029, O-030, N-015, N-024, N-032, N-035, N-036, N-038, N-045, N-048, N-053, N-053a, O-053, N-055, O-055, N-070, O-068, O-073, N-077, O-074, N-091, O-079, O-090, N-152, O-096, N-155, N-165, N-167, N-169, N-174, N-184, N-190, N-195, N-204, N-213, O-133, O-135, N-252, N-253, E-030;

Irish documents N-001, E-001, O-001, N-004, N-010, N-011, O-005, N-020, N-029, N-037, O-011, O-012, N-057, N-089, N-111, O-037, E-008, O-074, O-075, N-115, N-134, N-155, N-157, N-159, N-160, O-126, N-167, N-169, N-171, E-016, N-204, N-207, N-222, O-178, O-183, E-019, N-237, N-240, N-251, N-267, N-270, O-213.

⁵⁴²O-018, N-024, O-072, O-073, O-078, O-134.

⁵⁴³Dutch documents N-046, N-048, N-049, O-049, N-175, N-176, N-208, N-209, O-111, N-210, N-211, N-241; Irish documents N-075, N-078, O-033, N-085, N-086, N-087, N-090, N-091, N-092, O-041, N-102, N-114, O-081, O-084, N-260, N-267, N-270, O-212.

⁵⁴⁴Dutch documents N-005, N-070, O-065, O-073, N-170, O-152; Irish documents N-120, N-277, N-283.

representative of the presidency who holds office for six months, the post rotating among the member states in alphabetical order. During the span of the MacSharry reform negotiations there were three presidencies: Luxembourg, the Netherlands and Portugal, and the final decision was taken just before Portugal handed the command over to the United Kingdom. The Irish considered that the Portuguese presidency offered a friendlier atmosphere for long-term compensation for price cuts than would have prevailed under either the British or the Dutch, whose more commercially oriented agriculture favoured only temporary compensation for farmers⁵⁴⁵. The Dutch regarded the Luxembourg presidency as an advantage for Commissioner MacSharry⁵⁴⁶, but when their “own” Minister, Piet Bukman, took over the chair, reactions were not entirely positive. The situation was a delicate one from their point of view, because the presidency requires impartiality and should always contribute to gaining a result, but it was also considered an influential post in the EU⁵⁴⁷. Bukman was shocked how openly Portugal supported the reform, while the British presidency was considered to approach agriculture “*nuchter en zakelijk*” (in a businesslike manner), i.e. in accordance with the Dutch style⁵⁴⁸.

Another common feature was the particular interest in the comings and goings of the two countries’ “own” commissioners⁵⁴⁹, Ray MacSharry and the Dutch External Trade Commissioner Frans Andriessen. Their “own” commissioner was often mistaken for a representative of the country. If he failed to perform according to these expectations, he was easily blamed for scoring an own goal. The roles of a country’s “own” commissioner and of a minister in the negotiations were often (over)emphasized. There were also expressions of discontent with the CAP, the EU and with the way in which politics were conducted in the EU⁵⁵⁰. The Dutch were worried about their diminishing influence in the EU⁵⁵¹, whereas the Irish criticism was more general: that EU policy was insecure, contradictory or ill-managed. The relationship to EU policy was also often felt to be problematic, so that one Dutch observer even saw the CAP as a threat to the EU⁵⁵² and the Irish were almost painfully aware of their dependence on decisions taken in Brussels⁵⁵³.

⁵⁴⁵Irish documents *N-277, N-283*.

⁵⁴⁶Dutch document *N-005*.

⁵⁴⁷Dutch documents *N-070, O-065*.

⁵⁴⁸Dutch documents *N-178* and *O-152*.

⁵⁴⁹Dutch documents *O-023, O-024, O-032, N-019, N-024, N-028, N-036, N-037, O-053*; the Irish case was discussed in section 7.3 above.

⁵⁵⁰Dutch documents *N-010, N-034, N-037, N-065, N-102, O-082, O-105, O-109, N-220, O-118, O-137, O-149*; Irish documents *N-022, O-052, O-083, O-141, N-187, N-201, N-246, O-082*.

⁵⁵¹*O-085, O-123*.

⁵⁵²*O-051*.

⁵⁵³*O-015, O-128, O-131*.

7.5. Conclusion

It became obvious in the course of the above presentation of the thematic outlines of the MacSharry discourse in the two countries that the approaches adopted to the proposals were partly different. For the Dutch, the reform was a matter of following economic rationality, the problem being presented in the terms of the budget, whereas the Irish dealt with the problem in terms of justice and tried to falsify the diagnosis that overproduction was a structural phenomenon in the Common Agricultural Policy.

Rough contours of the MacSharry reform discourse start to emerge on the basis of this analysis. Two features in the debates are crucial. In addition to some of the themes discussed deviating in the two national debates, they were also approached differently. It can be concluded that there are actually two discursive fields which are partly overlapping. The results are summarised in Figure 1 below.

In order to interpret the findings more generally, one has to shift from the thematic discourse analysis level to the level of politics as action. First, as

DUTCH	COMMON	IRISH
- EU budget		
- economic rationality	- GATT	- Irish agriculture as an exception
	- negotiations in the EU: *disagreement *optimism	- justice and cohesion
	- content and effect of the reform * milk * cereals	
	*intensive *grass cattle breeding *beef	- social implications for rural Ireland
- relationship between agriculture, the environment and nature		- domestic affair
	- the CAP as EU politics: * speculation * own commissioner	- dependence of Ireland on the CAP and intervention
	*diminishing *general influence in EU criticism	
	- visions of the CAP: *fundamental *qualitative and qualitative changes changes	

Figure 1. Discursive fields based on the thematic reading.

concerns the ways of politicking, the Dutch used as their discursive strategy an interpretation of agricultural policy as a solely economic matter, emphasising efficiency (although the content of the term is not clear) and the budget. In this way they tried to maintain the existing principles for dividing support in EU agriculture, even though this division was biased in favour of those who produce most – which is not necessarily logical in an oversupply situation. They chose to speak of “efficient” and “inefficient” farms, while the Irish preferred to discuss “larger” and “smaller” farms. This is a question of conceptualising the discourse differently.

The main politicking strategy used by the Irish was the construction of “us” and “them”. “Us” referred to the EU member states taken together, while “they” were the Eastern Europe countries. All the evil – in this case illegal imports which caused an oversupply on the EU market – came from them.⁵⁵⁴ Polarised models of this kind are often used in political discussion to sustain existing attitudes or to generate new negative attitudes⁵⁵⁵. Another element in the Irish politicking strategy was its introverted character, in that they managed in the course of the debate to change an EU-wide proposal into an Irish topic.

Few of the issues discussed brought anything radically new to EU politics. The need to hold down agricultural policy expenditure had been persistently on the EU agenda, and the issue of justice had been kept alive while striving for cohesion. A couple of issues are worth mentioning, however, since they did not arise from the original text of the reform proposals but were more in the nature of by-products of the debate. These are the themes which concerned the EU as a political institution and its relationship with the US. Officially, efforts were made to discourage connecting the MacSharry reform with the GATT negotiations, but it seemed to be unavoidable. It was an unlucky confrontation, because the idea of the reform being something forced on the EU from outside naturally made it less attractive and less likely to be successfully implemented. The expressions of suspicion about the EU as a political institution were certainly unintended outcomes of launching the CAP reform.

I would like to argue, however, that questions of power, democracy and sovereignty are discussed and studied too little in connection with the Common Agricultural Policy, as it is more common to elaborate upon them in the general framework of the EU, or to study the relationship between the EU and a particular member state. On the other hand, the social dimension of a farm as a production and reproduction unit, for example, was hardly touched upon at all, nor were the different production techniques thoroughly politicised, since the environmental issue was mainly centred on arable farming or nitrogen emissions, whereas animal welfare, for example, was not an issue at all.

⁵⁵⁴For the Dutch this demarcation line ran inside the EU, between the northern and southern member states.

⁵⁵⁵See e.g. van Dijk (1993, 263).

Finally, the politicisation of the environmental question deserves special attention. One has to assess the importance of a new environmental discourse challenging the traditional productivist discourse in agriculture in this debate.

As was shown above, the environmental question was an issue in the Netherlands, whereas in Ireland it was seen as less relevant. The Irish seemed to be convinced that it was not their problem, and argued that Ireland had the “most environmentally friendly agriculture in EC.”⁵⁵⁶ Even in the Netherlands, however, there are still reasons to doubt how fundamental the impact of the environmental issue has been. The traditional productivist discourse may be crumbling, but it is a fragmented and uneven process, and environmental aspects have so far been attached to an old agenda in which economic interests still have priority. One problem is thus that environmental concerns have not yet been placed in line with other aims.

The environmental issue in general seems to be strong in the argumentation, and terms such as “sustainability” or “environmentally friendly production” have been adopted quickly into the agricultural policy discourse. They have become popular even though hardly anyone can explain precisely what they mean in practice, or else they are given numerous different meanings depending on the context. These terms are politically powerful in the discourse, however, which points to another problem with the new environmental question that is challenging the old discourse, namely, that its power lies very much in the fact that the terms which are used can be interpreted in various ways. This is actually nothing new in political discourse, where consistency is often difficult to find, but it does complicate efforts at creating a new policy and massing enough unanimity behind it, especially in the EU context.

Finally, one has to be cautious when judging the importance of the MacSharry reform with respect to the environmental issue. After all, there was not enough political will for a radical change. Many of the measures which might have shifted production practices in a more environmentally friendly direction remained incomplete. It is allowed, for example, to grow non-food plants in a set-aside field without any restrictions on the use of fertilisers and pesticides. Furthermore, there is no guarantee that the farmer will not try to produce more with the rest of his area when a part of it has to be set aside. In the cattle sector, upper limits were placed on the number of livestock units per hectare, but they do not apply to pigs and poultry. Moreover, member states are required to establish environmentally friendly agriculture through programmes that specify areas, objectives, measures and forms of assistance. This leads to different interpretations, and it is unlikely to result in EU-wide criteria for environmentally friendly production. More steps are needed before this goal is likely to be reached.

⁵⁵⁶“*Brussels pincer movement on prices and output*” by Prof. Seamus Sheehy, Farming Independent, 22.1.1991. (E-002).

8. Argument structure

8.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the reform debate from the point of view of argumentation structures. The rhetorical approach was outlined in section 3.3.3, and the role of argument in defining realities and constructing policy choices was then discussed. Rhetorical analysis as presented by Chaïm Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca will be used in the following to analyse the Dutch and Irish reform debates with regard to adaptation of the speaker to the audience; the premises or starting points of argumentation and the rhetorical techniques employed.

The intention is not to list all cases in which dissociative argumentation was used in the debate, for example, but to explicate how the argumentation tools were used for politicising, depoliticising or politicking the CAP. In addition to the aspects presented above, of interest are also the use and invention of terms, formulations, distinctions and classifications.

In order to analyse the rhetoric of the debate in depth, however, the material has to be reorganised. It is not possible, or even sensible, to analyse all the material available, but rather it is best to devote attention only to those texts which are rich in argumentation and which are as direct products of the CAP actors as possible. As a consequence, news articles will not be included at this level of analysis. Since this work does not focus on press strategies, news items are not good sources of argumentation structures, as they would place too much emphasis on the attitude of the newspaper in question, or on the style of a certain reporter or editor.

In the political reading of the reform debate, statements of reasons can be expected to prove more interesting than stances or positions. Similarly, symptomatic interpretations of power relations and interests are rather uninteresting as such. A demonstration that the farmers' organisations lobbied on behalf of the interests of their members would hardly deserve hundreds of pages of explication, but rather the rhetorical analysis should focus on the way in which such interests are presented as "givens" and thus unproblematic. Explicating argumentation structures strips these interest policies of their quasi-natural finality, asking how the interests are presented and reflecting and assessing the rhetorical means used and the other by-products of striving for this aim. This is a way of distancing oneself from interpreting the politics of agricultural policy primarily in instrumental terms, as was discussed in Chapter 2 in connection with the political economics and political science approaches.

The argumentation analysis will thus set out to restructure the text corpus into arguments about definitions of the problem, the environment and the rural issue. These topics overlap with the themes discussed in Chapter 7, but they are now reorganised under fewer headings in order to highlight the rhetoric of the

debate. As an example of non-politicisation, arguments concerned with production methods will be analysed as well.

8.2. Definitions of the problem

As noted in section 4.5.2, the Commission quoted surplus production as the main reason for the reform (CEC 1991a, 1). Earlier measures had not been able to remove this problem permanently, it was argued, so that “the Community’s agricultural policy cannot avoid a succession of increasingly serious crises unless its mechanisms are fundamentally reviewed so as to adapt them to a situation different from that of the sixties” (ibid., 9).

8.2.1. The Dutch debate

As discussed in Chapter 7, the Dutch took the general definition of the problem as set out by the Commission, the cost of overproduction, as the starting point for the debate, discussing it under the themes of the EU budget and economic rationality. Consequently, overproduction was placed in an economic setting. The Dutch rhetoricians agreed that it was impossible to avoid the unavoidable, the need to cut overproduction, but they did argue that the inevitable could be dealt with in various ways. Actually, most of them disagreed with the Commission on what would be the best way of reaching the goal.

Sicco Mansholt, who was among the most influential debaters in the Netherlands, claimed that the proposed price reductions would not cut production (O-010, interview with S.M. 30.8.1992) and employed dissociative argumentation to maintain that “Brussels” had interpreted the reality wrongly by seeing a connection between producer prices and the amounts produced. He referred to former experiences with the use of a price policy and to statistics showing that neither production nor consumption react to changes in the prices of agricultural products. According to his reasoning, the nature of agricultural production is such that only the taking of fields out of production permanently can reduce the amount produced and put an end to costly overproduction.

Mansholt similarly did not support the idea of direct income subsidies (ibid.) at the beginning, and recounted how his party companion, Dr. A. Vondeling and other agricultural experts had wanted to replace price support with income support as early as 1955. Mansholt said he could not find any justifiable way of dividing income subsidies among farmers at that time, and nor could he today. He argued that it was impossible to liken farmers, who as land owners were often millionaires, with unmarried mothers living on social assistance. Here he was drawing on the premise of the universal value of justice, with the conviction that his audience would share the same idea of justice and identify with his disapproval of direct income subsidies in the form proposed by the Commission.

The suggested direct income subsidy was an important topic in the debate. The farming lobby in particular rejected the idea in both countries, because it would be much more visible than price support and both the consumers and the treasury would more easily want to reduce it. Economic theory was not often quoted in this connection, because this theory regards price support as the measure that causes the most market disturbance. A completely free market would have been the best solution according to the theory of agricultural economics, and direct income support the 'second best'. This argument was put forward in Holland in the early days of the debate (O-015), but the agricultural economists also showed a lot of understanding for the farmers' opposition to Commissioner MacSharry's proposals.

Mansholt (O-010) also took the opportunity to teach the younger politicians the art of politicking in GATT negotiations, blaming the European Commission for allowing the Americans to dictate the rules of the game. The USA wanted to subordinate agricultural policy to trade policy, whereas according to Mansholt, "healthy" agricultural policy should give the direction to trade policy. He dismissed out of hand the idea of freer trade in agriculture, as had been the European stance during the previous GATT rounds: "*Wij hebben dat toen geweigerd. De Europese Commissie had nu ook gewoon nee moeten zeggen.*" (We denied it then. The European Commission should have just said no this time as well.) According to him, free trade in agriculture would lead to a crisis, as view which entailed taking the writings in economics textbooks as facts, and thus withdrew this notion from the argumentation. He also reprimanded the EU negotiators even more strongly for accepting the US demand to abolish the variable import levies (O-010). "*Dat is fout. Over de hoogte van de variabele heffingen kun je onderhandelen, over het principe niet.*" (That is a mistake. You can negotiate about the amounts of the variable levies, but not about the principle.)

In setting trade against agriculture, Mansholt (O-010) was implying in his argumentation that the concrete value embodied in agriculture is higher than that of trade. In this premise he was questioning one of the "givens" in agricultural policy, namely that the interests of the farmers, the food industry and trade somehow naturally coincide. He argued that the farm leaders and public administrators have an eye for the interests of the large cooperatives rather than for the interests of the farmers. The lower the producer price, the more there is to export and gain turnover from, and the better the competitiveness of these companies is in the world market. He asked himself whether it was really in the interests of the farmers to produce goods at such a low price, and answered that it was not. This remark is consciously provocative, since Mansholt was well aware of the close relationship that the farmers and their lobby had with the food industry and trade in general in the Netherlands (as discussed in section 5.2.2), and of the great narrative of success attributable to Dutch agriculture. In this connection, he also raised the question of the impact of subsidised exports

from the EU on the developing world. This remark goes beyond the conventional frame of reference in which the CAP was discussed.

Mansholt presented the above arguments to two different audiences. When arguing against price policy as a means of cutting production and against direct income subsidies in the form in which they were presented in the reform proposals, he was trying to convince the universal audience, so that all rational human beings should be able to follow the argumentation, whereas his arguments concerning the conflicting interests of trade and agriculture were addressed to the particular audience of Dutch farmers.

Another Dutch debater, Prof. Jerry de Hoogh (O-020, interview with J. de H. 31.10.1995), similarly did not question the need for reform caused by the overproduction problem, but he also stressed the peculiarities of supply and demand in the case of agricultural products. Lower prices hardly increase consumption at all, nor do they reduce the supply to any appreciable extent. This argument dissociates agricultural markets from the conventional understanding of neoclassical economics about the functioning of markets (the same argument that he also put forward in E-022, written together with S. Mansholt, H.A. Lückner, and C.P. Veerman). His explanation for the problems in agriculture is overcapacity in the form of land (interview 31.10.1995). Consequently, de Hoogh preferred production control as a means of alleviating overproduction.

de Hoogh (O-020, E-006) rejected the far-reaching ideas of the early proposals to change the logic of support in the CAP in order to favour small farms and extensive production, arguing that the prices in the common market should correspond to the situation of those who produce efficiently and cheaply – an understanding widely held in the Netherlands. However, he defended direct income subsidies as a means of encouraging environmentally friendly investments, and to of protecting rural areas which are in danger of depopulation.

de Hoogh's starting point of the special nature of the market in agricultural products also led him to reject the liberalisation of trade in agricultural products. He condemned the use of export subsidies and the dumping of one's own surplus on the world market. It is equally important, he argued, to see that free trade on a world scale is a sheer illusion, and that the liberalisation of trade is also someone's deliberate policy and not a natural law which would result in growth in the world economy and thus bring welfare to all alike. Here he distanced himself from the premises of his own discipline (agricultural economics) and from his own country as an agricultural exporter.

Instead, he created himself a specific space in the agricultural policy arena by stating that he was an independent scientist (O-020) whose task was not to speak for his country but rather to defend those who had a weak voice in international politics. He was basing these arguments on the universal value of justice, and more precisely on the Christian values of the unity and responsibility

of the Creation.⁵⁵⁷ In my interview, he also blamed the scientific view of economics for being too reductionist, especially with respect to values, for there are no facts without values and morality attached to them. Consequently, his arguments are not directed at particular audiences composed of his academic colleagues or even at Dutch agriculture, but at a wider, universal audience of (responsible) human beings.

The Minister of Agriculture, Piet Bukman was also in favour of cutting overproduction in order to remain within the EU budget guideline, but he could not accept the idea of direct income subsidies as a policy measure, since it would have been aimed at the producer instead of the product (O-016) and would, in his view, have represented a form of social policy which should not be allowed to become the heart of agricultural policy. Essentially, Bukman was defending the “old” price and market policy system against the policy detached from prices and production, proposed by Commissioner MacSharry. Bukman was in favour of using the old means of price policy, and would have accepted even larger reductions in prices if needed. In political terms, he was against changing the rules of the game, because the new rules would not be beneficial to the kind of agriculture he had in mind. This argumentation was supported by the farmers’ organisations, which claimed that small farms that were in trouble should come within the sphere of social policy, while agricultural policy should be designed for efficient farms (e.g. E-014).

Bukman defended the existing price policy by saying that giving 80% of the support to 20% of the purposeful farmers (*doelmatige boeren*) may perhaps not conform to the concept of a social policy, but it does comply with the concept that agriculture produces in an appropriate manner for the market. According to this argument, price support was not support in the same sense as direct income payments were. Again use was being made of the dissociative technique of argumentation: Bukman was claiming that Commissioner MacSharry was trying to introduce into the CAP elements which were in contradiction with its “real” logic.

Bukman grounded his argumentation in the idea of a farmer primarily as an entrepreneur, and agriculture as an enterprise. Hence the farmer is above all active in economic terms. He argues that the only correct way of affecting the farmer’s income is via the price of the product, because it is the only way of orienting agriculture further towards the market. This argument is based on the premise that the market is something genuine, something that has the power of resolving the situation in a neutral manner. From the viewpoint of argumentative structure, we are dealing here with an associative argumentation in the form of

⁵⁵⁷Christian convictions are not rare among Dutch agricultural academics. Prof. de Hoogh is a Calvinist.

an analogy: ‘the market’ is a commonplace, *topos*, a locational metaphor so frequently used in economics that one hardly notices its rhetorical origin.

Bukman and others who followed the same line of reasoning did not mention in this connection the various existing measures for manipulating the markets for agricultural products, i.e. the EU price regime, nor the potential for shortcomings in the ability of the market to channel information or benefits and disadvantages. In addition, not all member states and their agricultural systems were in the same position with respect to benefiting from the internal EU market as the Netherlands as became evident in the Irish debate. The way in which Piet Bukman used the market argument was both a matter of influencing the manner in which the benefits of the CAP were divided up and a matter of defending the principle of price policy as the main CAP instrument.

Bukman’s reasoning was widely used in the debate both in the Netherlands and in Ireland, the farmers’ organisation spokesmen being especially apt to use it frequently. This belief in the functioning of the market raised another crucial argument in the debate: that it was unjust and foolish to punish “efficient” producers and to reward “those who have done it badly” (*degenen die het slecht hebben gedaan*) (O-016) by giving up support through the price regime. Arguments of this kind conveyed a strange idea of efficiency, however, and this was sharply attacked by Commissioner MacSharry (O-056), who noted that competitiveness cannot be measured by the amount of money drawn from the EU farm budget (“... *concurrentievermogen mag niet worden afgemeten aan de mate waarin iemand erin slaagt geld uit het landbouwbudget te halen*”).

Efficiency is a powerful and frequently used argument in agricultural policy. It leans on formal rationality, which measures the output in relation to the inputs and resources used (Weber 1922, 58-59). In itself, efficiency is a morally empty principle which is based on the idea of “more is better”, and it always requires material quantification. Also, malicious deeds can be enacted equally efficiently. Efficiency covers only a thin layer of the meanings and values that people attach to agriculture, but it is favoured as an argument.

When efficiency, or productivity when concerned with farms, is used as an argument, the conditions under which it is achieved are seldom discussed. If some inputs, e.g. energy, are not priced according to their environmental and social costs, our understanding of the efficiency of agriculture also becomes biased. The focussing of the discussion on productivity prevented recognition of both the negative and positive externalities that could be reflected only in a full cost account of a production system. The externalities caused by agricultural policy were kept apart from the market/efficiency discussion in the reform debate and were touched on separately. The way in which the Dutch used efficiency as an argument implied that their idea of efficiency was what took place in their country, which they were willing to use as a measure for the rest of the EU’s agricultural sector as well. In this way the Dutch implicitly had

recourse to the associative argument strategy, suggesting that European agriculture is essentially like Dutch agriculture, or on its way to become so.

Piet Bukman directed this argument at a particular audience of farmers, with the aim of strengthening the idea of a farm as an enterprise and persuading the farmers to behave accordingly. He referred to pork producers and market gardeners as examples of flexible market behaviour, and stated that this should also be the direction in other sectors of production.

The contradiction between thinking in terms of markets and in terms of intervention was also underlined by Prof. Gert van Dijk (E-024), who said that an intervention policy that concentrated on exporting bulk products could not take into account the complicated nature of food markets. The more farmers became dependent on intervention, the less their activities could react to the modern developments in the food trade led by the huge supermarket chains. These were relevant arguments in the Netherlands, where a significant proportion of the agricultural exports and the resulting income was derived from products which did not belong to the supported core of the common policy. In this sense they were clearly in a different position from the Irish, whose agriculture was primarily based on dairy products and beef, which are heavily supported by the CAP price and intervention mechanisms.

Bukman held on more grimly than any other EU minister of agriculture to the opinion that compensation in the form of direct income payments was not welcome and that it ought in any case to be only temporary. This opinion was widely shared in the Netherlands at the beginning, but by summer 1991 many debaters had changed their mind. For example, Jan van Zijl, a PvdA member of parliament, could accept direct income subsidies on condition that the farmers achieved a certain performance level: in this way the compensation would not carry the image of social aid but be purely an economic measure (E-018). According to van Zijl, social aid could be regarded as another acceptable form of help, but it could be given only to the poorest regions. This was the means by which such an extraneous element could be included in the traditional agricultural policy reasoning.

8.2.2. The Irish debate

It was noted in the discussion on themes in Chapter 7 that the Irish first welcomed the reform as a means of giving more support to their “small and extensive” farms and then noticed that the Irish farms were not, after all, particularly small or their operation always so extensive by EU standards, so that they changed their strategy to questioning the existence of structural overproduction. It was also a question of who had caused the overproduction and who, in the name of justice, should have been punished for of it.

While the Dutch interpreted the reform proposals as contrasting efficient farms with inefficient ones (e.g. O-014), the Irish were more inclined at the beginning to see the same proposals in the terms of large and small farms (e.g. O-001, O-003, O-112), or of intensive continental factory farms against extensive Irish “family” farms. Fairly soon, however, an article by Professor Seamus Sheehy appeared (E-002) which showed that Ireland will not gain from the reform under the conditions proposed but lose out: “... there is no joy whatsoever in this package for small and medium sized farmers who are not in cereal production, as is the case for most Irish farmers” (ibid.).

At this point a discussion started over who was guilty of overproducing. A position widely held by the farming lobby and individuals close to it was that it was a result of “the East dumping its products on the West” (O-035), reflecting a situation in which “the EC’s system of import control is the primary, underlying cause of most of these difficulties” (O-063, O-077, O-087, O-122, O-156, O-170, O-178, O-179). The IFA President, Alan Gillis (O-078), blamed the “flood” of live cattle imports into the Community across the East German border from Poland as being directly responsible for forcing significant quantities of Irish beef into intervention “at heavy cost to the EC budget”. This was again an argument based on a dissociative technique, showing that the truth had been misinterpreted by the Commission.

Other voices, especially the UFA, the small farmers’ association, argued that it was only the commercial sector that was responsible for overproduction (O-040, O-120). They also complained that it was wrong to punish the small producers with supply controls, since the amounts they produced had no effect on an EU scale. This argument was clearly directed nationally.

The same argument was also used, however, to protect the whole of Irish agricultural production against agriculture in the rest of the EU. The ICOS President, Billie Nagle (O-044), who represented the cooperative interests of the food processing industry, claimed that while Ireland was producing less than half of its “natural milk capacity”, other member states were exceeding theirs with the aid of intensive feeding of cattle with cereals and cereal substitutes. Furthermore, he argued that the reform proposal should have to take full account of “the fact that agricultural production in Ireland was frozen at a much lower percentage than in any other member states”. Another version of this definition of the problem was the one put forward by the *Fianna Fáil* MEP Mark Killilea (O-058), for instance, who stated that “the small producers are not responsible for the problem; it is the factory farmers across Europe who have to be brought to a halt”. The Minister of Agriculture, Michael O’Kennedy, also explained that the problems originated “in mainland Europe and further afield” (O-117), but admitted as well that Ireland should have reduced its dependence on intervention and export funds long before that.

Intervention was a thorny subject for the Irish, but gradually louder and louder voices claimed that “the milking of the sacred cow of intervention cannot continue” (O-086), and that the Irish themselves should take responsibility for market disposal (O-101, O-199). It also led some debaters to question the whole logic of agricultural policy: “In the CAP dictionary, terms such as intervention, aids to private storage (APS), export refunds and import relief give the impression of a market but the reality is they are terms for transferring billions of taxpayers’ money as subsidies” (O-187). Commissioner MacSharry used this argument against his fellow countrymen, claiming that something was wrong if the returns available from intervention were higher than from the market. Furthermore, he provoked the Irish by asking (O-202): “Why do we always hear about intervention? Can we not go out and exploit the markets that are there?”

During the MacSharry reform debate, stocks from Ireland accounted for one third of all EU intervention stores of butter and a half of all Irish beef production went either to intervention or to markets outside the EU which were only viable through EU export subsidies (O-086). The tone of the debate changed during the summer of 1991, however, from denial of the structural surplus problem into arguments for the special treatment of Irish agriculture (O-118, O-123).

The Irish strategy was based on a strong dissociative argumentation technique which underlined the unique nature of Irish agriculture by comparison with the rest of the EU (O-176, O-179, E-022). The facts presented to back this claim were that the Irish economy as a whole was more dependent on agriculture and agricultural exports than that of any other member state, and that Irish production (especially of livestock) was more extensive than agriculture elsewhere in the EU. Furthermore, the demand for exceptional treatment was based on the effect that reducing grain prices would have on the comparative value of grassland, and in this way on the profitability of Irish agriculture (E-014, O-140).

As mentioned in the previous chapter on themes, the claim for exceptions in the reform became intertwined with the idea of Ireland’s right to special protection in the EU, on the basis of social and economic cohesion⁵⁵⁸. This argument may seem to be a rather harmless tactic of trying to stand out from the rest of the EU countries in order to gain something extra, but it is an indication of a much larger phenomenon which reminds us of the fact that the EU was never established based on a *tabula rasa*. “Brussels never seemed to be able to convince itself that Ireland had a case for additional help, on the grounds that we entered as a severely under-capitalised country – something which was due to historical factors we were never able to control” (O-181).

⁵⁵⁸The argument was based on Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome, which cites for priority those states where agriculture constitutes a sector closely linked with the economy as a whole.

The claims for justice in the form of additional help arose from earlier stages in European history – in this case from the time when Ireland was under British rule. This is an argument which it is easy to foresee the former socialist countries using when entering the EU, and is a healthy reminder of the complicated history of our continent, which is tightly interwoven into the fabric of every effort at integrating these economies. There is a lot of potential for such arguments in the Central and Eastern European countries, especially when it is a matter of reversing the progressive division of Europe into rich and poor groupings.

Commissioner MacSharry, for his part, advocated strongly the idea of a more just division of CAP support, although in the end much of this dimension was diluted in the reform. The idea was based on the locus of quantity: what is good for the greatest number is preferable.

There was significant antipathy in both countries towards direct income aid as compensation for the price cuts. As one Dutch debater expressed it (O-015), direct income aid is in conflict with entrepreneurship and gives the image of poverty relief (*bedeling*). “Handouts would be even more false than intervention has been and they would be paying people to do less than they are capable of doing”, as an Irish debater put it (O-156). It threatened to “destroy not just the economic, but the social and spiritual values of our people” (O-119), and it was “insulting to farmers who are being penalised for their efficiency” (O-201). The argument was that it was morally wrong to pay for something other than producing, since the farmer’s dignity was based on his ability to produce food as an entrepreneur. This attitude has hardly altered very much, although direct payments are now everyday practice in the CAP. It implies difficulties and extra effort every time that new measures such as the French CTE-system⁵⁵⁹ are introduced into the farming community.

The arguments used in the Irish debate were mainly directed from the farming community to the Commissioner or to the Minister for Agriculture and Food, and vice versa. One point worth noting by comparison with the Dutch debate was that the ideas expressed concentrated on Ireland’s point of view and less on European agriculture as a whole. The Irish debaters took it as given that Ireland would be doomed to isolation due to its location on the margin of the Union. This attitude is one obstacle that will have to be overcome if the EU is to aim seriously at common policies and common politics.

⁵⁵⁹CTE stands for *Contrat Territorial d’Exploitation*, a type of voluntary farming contract designed to bring a series of aid schemes together into a single package under the triple objective of maintaining and improving the economic, social and environmental contribution of farming to rural areas. It was introduced in 1999 as a means of promoting and funding agricultural multifunctionality (Contribution of France 1999, 8-10).

8.3. Rural issue

The Commission states in its Reflections paper (CEC 1991a, 9-10) that rural development is one of the objectives of the reform: “Sufficient numbers of farmers must be kept on the land. There is no other way to preserve the natural environment, traditional landscape and a modern agriculture based on the family farm as favoured by the society generally. This requires an active rural development policy and this policy will not be created without farmers.”

8.3.1. Dutch debate

From the Dutch point of view, the Commission carried the CAP to excess by seeing agriculture not as an economic sector, but as an integrated part of the countryside (E-004). Rural policy was an adverse element in the CAP, and will eventually cause it to come apart at the seams (*daarmee uit zijn voegen barst*, E-004). The Dutch were inclined to see here the interests of the southern member states, or of the electorate of Jacques Delors (E-005). In this respect, the tactics of the Dutch were to fight against including a dimension in the CAP which would not contribute to their idea of agriculture.

The task for the Dutch concerning the rural issue was to show that rural problems should be taken care of by means other than agricultural policy (E-011). This began with sneering comments about Ray MacSharry as the hero of the small farmer. The Dutch could not take his suggestions seriously, because it was not rational to punish modern, remunerative farms (O-036, O-039). Later, as these proposals did not disappear from the agenda, they were studied more seriously. One of the most prominent Dutch debaters, Sicco Mansholt (E-007), for example, was in favour of supporting areas that were in danger of depopulation, but he had doubts about whether the proposed means were the right ones for achieving this target.

The rural issue was not debated much in the Netherlands, but the undertone was that one should take care of rural development by other means (E-020). Agriculture should not be turned into an open air museum in the name of rural development, it was argued (O-103). The analogy used here is designed to make the association of agriculture with rural development seem old-fashioned and reactionist.

There were some debaters, however, who welcomed the proposed change in policy. This position was based on a more general criticism of the growth in farm size, the rationale of which was also questioned (O-042). This argument puts forward the idea that farming means more to the farmer than growth, so that some might even prefer being a *boer* (peasant farmer) rather than an *ondernemer* (entrepreneur). Likewise, some farmers expressed their support for the idea of maintaining rural vitality with CAP measures (O-104). Some months

before the final decision, most Dutchmen had accepted the idea of reducing cereal prices and compensating farmers with direct income aid. At this stage it was possible even for a liberal politician such as Piet Blauw (VVD member of the parliament) to defend direct income aid with a rural argument: “*Het cultuurlandschap wordt gewaardeerd door de burger*” (the citizens respect the cultural landscape) (O-126) in his attempt to persuade his particular audience of farmers to accept a shift from price policy to rural measures.

The president of the farmers’ organisation, Jef Mares (interviewed 1.11.1995), stated that integration of rural policy into the CAP was now unavoidable, not least because it was being promoted by France. Gerrit Meester, a senior civil servant at the Ministry for Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries (interviewed 6.11.1995), was doubtful about the rural dimension of the CAP, and maintained that the CAP was not originally designed to take care of rural problems, which should actually have their own policy, preferably a national one, since in his view it was hardly an EU responsibility. Professor Jerry de Hoogh put forward the same argument (interview 31.10.1995), as did the CDA MEP, Jan Sonneveld (interviewed 30.11.1995), who pointed out that this was also the idea of subsidiarity. According to him, the CAP had to be a market policy, and the additional aid for rural areas should come almost totally from the national budget.

Sicco Mansholt (interviewed 30.8.1992) saw the growing importance of rural issues in the CAP, and was himself in favour of reducing producer prices to the world market level, combined with direct, hectare-based income aid as a reward for maintaining the rural landscape and social structure. In his view, the most important thing would have been to simplify the common policy.

8.3.2. The Irish debate

As discussed in Chapter 7, the rural issue figured more prominently in the Irish debate. In fact, it is possible to distinguish two main ways in which it was used by the Irish in their argumentation. The first one was to give more weight to agriculture by identifying it with rural values. Agrarian traditions were anchored in the nation’s history and identity, and rural life was seen as qualitatively better than urban life (O-004). Moreover, the “traditional attachment to the land” (O-098) was seen as an important factor affecting the behaviour of farmers. The countryside and agriculture were presented as one concrete value, a premise on which it was possible to establish arguments to defend the status quo. The understanding of the countryside as agriculture also included the idea of family farms as the basis for rural communities (O-100, O-135). As Lowe et al. (1999, 21) have shown, the Irish interpretation of the rural issue uses rhetoric which stresses that people come first in the countryside: – the land must first and foremost be occupied and used for production purposes. Inefficient use of land

was an indefensible idea, it was argued (*O-150*): "... we must ensure our basic asset, land, was utilised to give that best possible result in terms of economic activity and employment ...".

This was done by arguing that the suggested redistribution of funds in order to keep the optimum number of farmers on the land was a way of "maintaining the fabric of rural society" (*O-003*), and that "farming is the only way by which rural economies can be preserved" (*O-004*). It was also a way of defending aid for intensive farmers, because they "are the backbone of jobs in the farm services sector through buying manure, animal doses and technical advice" (*O-021*). The rural argument was also used against the Commission, by claiming that "it was hypocritical of the EC Commission to express an interest in rural development while, at the same time, cutting a lifeline to tens of thousands of farmers who could have no source of income other than from milk production" (*O-033*). When the decision was taken on the reform, the Irish were able to welcome the greater recognition afforded to the dual role of the farmers in producing food and managing the countryside (*E-025*), since the emphasis laid on these things by the EU was to a large extent in tune with the mainstream thinking in Ireland.

A modern way of expressing agriculture-based rural development was promoted by Michael O'Kennedy (*O-069*), for example: "There will be some reduction in the number of farmers who are dependent exclusively on agriculture. However, to supplement their income we have launched the Rural Development Programme to make income from other sources a major component for that sector. A main element of that is the agritourism programme." He could see the possibility of a trade-off between agricultural support and rural development: "Vastly increased funds are needed for rural development programmes if the damage caused by limiting agricultural production is to be rectified ..." (*O-162*).

The other way of using the rural argument was by distancing oneself from agriculture and interpreting the rural issue without starting out from agriculture as the nucleus of the countryside. This was done by showing the significance of other occupations for the vitality of rural areas, occupations which were "providing lasting jobs in the local economy and doing so without EC handouts" (*O-060*, for a similar kind of reasoning, see also *O-190*). Some debaters were prepared to argue that the "future survival is the creation of indigenous employment opportunities not based on agriculture" (*O-085*), or in diversifying incomes in multiple ways (*O-185*). It was also argued that farm households themselves are not totally dependent on income from farming, but often have several sources (*E-019*). This is another way of presenting a more colourful picture of the countryside than the conventional image of farming gives. It was no longer especially radical in Ireland to suggest that "the only means by which we can hope to halt or reverse rural decline is by having more off-farm income and to a lesser extent alternative farm enterprises" (*O-193*).

In the interviews, ICMSA President Tom O'Dwyer (and his advisor Maurice Fitzpatrick, interviewed 9.7.1995) represented the "countryside as agriculture" view, complaining that the reform did not, after all, pay enough attention to rural problems –and that it should have addressed the viability of family farms. He did not believe that would be possible to solve the problems with a separate rural policy, although the CAP alone was not capable of developing the countryside, either. Mr. MacSharry (interview 6.7.1995) was convinced that agricultural production could not be divorced from rural areas, and that their problems had to be tackled within the CAP. John Cushnahan, a *Fine Gael* MEP (interviewed 8.7.1995), was not inclined to see a separate rural policy as possible at the EU level, because it would probably take money away from the CAP, but he argued that the CAP had also been a regional policy at one time. He saw that EU investments in rural policy had been very modest up to that time. For Alan Gillis, the President of the IFA, later a *Fine Gael* MEP (interviewed 30.11.1995), rural issues were included in the CAP. According to him, the difference between US agricultural policy and the CAP lay precisely in the emphasis that Europeans placed on the rural people, whereas the US "just organises the market, and forgets the people".

Michael Dowling, Secretary of State at the Department of Agriculture (interviewed 7.7.1995), saw rural decline as a political problem. In his view the EU already had a kind of rural policy that encouraged other sources of income to some extent, but agriculture was still the most important element in the rural economy. Professor Alan Matthews (interviewed 10.7.1995) saw that the EU was involved in a movement to bring about a real rural policy, both in its new formulations of the CAP and in the policies of the Structural Funds. He argued that people were prepared to provide agricultural support because they thought that it actually had something to do with the rural regions, and asked: "Why not make it explicit?"

8.4. The environment

The Commission, in its Reflections paper (CEC 1991a, 2), had set out a framework for taking the environmental aspect into account in the proposed reform, by stating that "a system which links support to agriculture to amounts produced stimulates production growth and thus encourages intensification of production techniques. This development, if unchecked, leads to negative results. Where intensive production takes place nature is abused, water is polluted and the land impoverished. Where land is no longer cultivated because production is less dependent on surface area, abandonment and wilderness occur."

8.4.1. Dutch debate

The environmental consideration in the reform proposals was taken seriously by the Dutch, largely because the environmental problems entailed in agriculture had already been recognised as a national problem in the Netherlands. The agricultural pollution that had been experienced had detracted from the image of agricultural products among consumers, and thus threatened the market for Dutch produce. Before the Commission's proposals leaked to the public, there was a national suggestion that land should be freed from agriculture and turned back to nature, and also that premiums should be given to farmers who reverted to sustainable farming (*De Werkgroep De Zeeuw* / Albrecht, e.g. O-001, O-002, O-003).

The most common reaction to the environmental problem in the debate was that it should be organised via the market: that the environmental component should be emphatically included in the model of a farm as an economic enterprise (e.g. E-008). Two essential features of Dutch agricultural policy thinking are embodied here: first, no matter what you confront, take it pragmatically; and second, deal with it through the market. As Jan Sonneveld, a CDA member of the European Parliament, put it (interview with J.S. 30.11.1995): "I hate too much, say, discussions on principles. Let's go practical. There is enough to do."

The farmer organisations were well aware of the environmental problem, which in the Dutch case boiled down to the question of how to manage the manure supply (interview with Jef Mares, President of the *Landbouwschap*, and Henk Letschert, its head of international affairs, 1.11.1995). From the farming organisation's point of view, a technical solution for processing the manure was preferable (*ibid.*), although financial incentives were also welcome (E-009a). The more uncompromising opponents within the farming community (E-011, O-079) labelled both the environmental and the rural elements in the reform proposals as inappropriate (*oneigenlijke kwesties*) and maintained that actions other than agricultural policy measures should have been taken. In their view, arguments of this kind did not fit into the concept of agricultural policy.

The MacSharry reform nevertheless proposed the extensification of production – reducing the amounts of fertilisers and pesticides. For the people of the Netherlands, this was like "cursing in church" (*vloeken in de kerk*) (Piet Blauw, VVD member of parliament, E-009a), but there were also debaters (O-080) who saw the farmer's interests as coinciding with extensification, and even with price cuts: given lower cereal prices, it is rational to use less inputs, which is good both for the environment and for the farmer's pocket. The proposed compensation would cover the drop in income. In fact, not very much compensation would be needed, because the saving in inputs would be beneficial to the farmer. The only thing that was needed was to convince the farmers.

The premise in the Dutch debate was, as before, an efficiently producing enterprise, which should grow rather than shrink in economic terms. When land is a scarce resource, as in the Netherlands, low-input agriculture and reasonable incomes for farmers were difficult to combine: this was the line of the reasoning (E-009a). The cereal growers in particular, being the most direct targets of the MacSharry proposals, criticised the combination of environmental measures and price reductions (*ibid.*), and farmers in general were afraid that environmental measures would affect them harder than producers elsewhere in the EU, because Dutch productivity was to a large extent simply a result of using more fertilisers and pesticides. The counter-argument was, however, that the farming community had to realise that the Dutch level of production entailed a cost disadvantage relative to other regions on account of its environmental problems (*ibid.*).

The debate on environmental problems in agriculture is a case in point regarding the difficulty of integrating externalities into an agricultural policy that has been established around a pricing and market policy. The “polluter pays” principle is difficult to implement in agriculture, as producer prices are given. On the other hand, there had not been enough public money available to compensate for the loss of income if producers adopted more extensive techniques (E-019). It seemed to be difficult to treat environmental goods and services as agricultural commodities, since it was actually production methods that were at stake in this issue. These will be analysed as a non-politicised issue below.

The environmental lobby argued that it was to the short-term advantage of agriculture to pollute the environment (O-078). Their advice was that both production and consumption should take place under conditions dictated by the environment. This order of values showed in practice that the interests of trade were being taken into account when agreeing on global rules for the environment, but that the environment was not a decisive element in trade negotiations such as the Uruguay Round. The Greens (O-109) argued that an unpolluted environment simply included qualitative advantages of a kind which could never be translated into money, so that this could be used as an argument in a debate loaded with economic pre-understanding.

Hardly anyone in the Dutch debate tried to deny the environmental problem in agriculture. The arguments were mostly directed at a farming audience, trying to persuade them to change their behaviour accordingly. The most commonly used tactic was to show that there had been a change in consumer expectations which had modified the product market in favour of “clean products” (e.g. O-054): *“Dat duidt erop, dat schone producten kennelijk de sleutel zijn tot de markt van morgen.”*

There were also those among the farmers who welcomed Commissioner MacSharry’s proposals on the environmental issue as a sign of a new vision for agriculture (O-104). They took nature and environment as the starting point for agricultural policy and suggested that organic agriculture should be promoted

throughout the EU. This approach neglected one of the unquestioned givens of EU agriculture, namely that it should be able to compete with other regions on the world market. An interesting feature of the arguments put forward on the environmental issue was whether it could be included in conventional thinking with regard to the role and nature of agriculture, and whether it questioned the logic of the CAP agenda. Especially in the case of the Netherlands, this required a delicate approach, in most of the cases one which framed the question as a market/demand issue.

8.4.2. The Irish debate

If the Dutch saw rural problems as not concerning them very much, then it was the environmental issue that was somewhat remote for the Irish debate. The most frequent attitude was that the problems lay elsewhere, in the countries practising “intensive” production, whereas Irish agriculture was seen as the “most environmentally friendly agriculture in the EC” (*E-002, O-193, E-022a*). Some debaters argued that it was necessary to take environmental problems seriously, because “the Green factor is definitely becoming an issue” in EU politics (*O-027*), and that it was an important argument for Ray MacSharry in his efforts at convincing “his fellow bureaucrats” (*O-102*). The reasoning was the following: intensive production methods had caused environmental problems (*E-005*), but the grass-based mode of production favoured in Ireland was extensive in character (*O-044*).

The debate was based on the assumption that farmers were generally seen as “the guardians of the countryside” (an idea also promoted by Commissioner MacSharry when referring to EU agriculture, *O-067*). There was some worry that the reform proposals would give rise “to a ‘them and us’ syndrome with regard to countryside – with ‘farmers’ supposedly as the threat and ‘environmentalists’ as the protectors” (*O-055*), something brought in from outside and intrinsically alien to Ireland. The idea of Irish agriculture drew on the traditional small-scale, pastoral nature of farming, and was promoted as a marketing image with the notion of “Green Ireland” (Lowe et al. 1999, 21).

A case in point as far as the Irish environmental argumentation was concerned was the comment by Alan Gillis, President of the IFA, (*O-200*) that farmers have a more vital interest than anybody else in the protection of the environment, and that the reductions in farm support proposed by the Commission would slash farm incomes and prevent farmers from taking care of the land. According to him, the food industry was bound up with the ideal of a clean, wholesome environment. The proposed regulatory measures were portrayed in this dissociative argumentation as threatening the rural environment – contrary to the original intention.

Not everyone was so convinced about the environmentally friendly character of Irish agriculture, however. Ewe payments in particular were mentioned as liable to cause over-grazing and environmental damage, especially in mountainous areas (*O-132*, interview with Ray MacSharry 6.7.1995, interview with Alan Matthews 10.7.1995). Those who were in general critical of the CAP, also saw it as responsible for environmental pollution, in the form of runoff of fertilisers, fungicides, insecticides, slurry and dairy and silage effluent (*O-154*).

In general, the Irish arguments on the environmental issue were fairly superficial, the broad ideology being that the countryside was best protected by safeguarding the position of the family farmers (Lowe et al. 1999, 20-21). Among the Irish, this argument could be directed as to convince the universal audience, for no other voices were strong enough to challenge this “fact” in the debate.

8.5. A latent issue: Farm production methods

The reform proposals introduced the issues of rural development and the environment into the official debate, adding new dimensions to the argument about agriculture, but they occasionally touched upon another question in addition to this, farm production methods. This issue had not yet been properly politicised in the debate, but it gained a lot of public attention later, mainly as a consequence of food security crises. As seen above in the overview of former CAP reforms (Chapter 4), new issues may be carried along in between the lines, in a latent form, for quite some time before they become properly politicised on the CAP agenda. Consequently, we should take a brief look here at how the issue of farm production methods was non-politicised in the debate, and what moves were made towards widening the political agenda.

8.5.1. The Dutch debate

In the case of environmental problems caused by agricultural production, the way of not making an issue out of production methods was to limit the question to a technical one which could be solved by refining the existing production methods and not by changing them for something else. This was the logic of the Dutch when they spoke in favour of processing surplus manure industrially (interview with Jef Mares).

The anti-environmental image was a real problem for the Dutch agriculture, though (*E-003*), and as it was especially damaging to the important markets in Germany, it was taken seriously. It was pointed out that consumers were becoming more critical as to the negative externalities caused by agricultural production methods (*E-019*), and that the crumbling image of agriculture was reflected in the numbers of students entering the agricultural university, so that demands

were made for more “green” education in agriculture (O-026). Young people did not seem to believe in the chosen path of agricultural technology, which helped to solve one problem but often simultaneously created new ones (ibid.). A growing need was perceived for knowledge about promoting human, animal and environmental-friendly agriculture, but the university was not in a position to meet this demand.

Some interesting openings towards the politics of production techniques were made in the Netherlands, most naturally by interpreting these as changes in consumer thinking. This again can be regarded as a pragmatic reaction to a potentially controversial issue. In an article on new thinking in the agricultural world, H. de Boon (*lid van de algemene directie van Cebeco-Handelsraad*; E-008) argued that social priorities were undergoing change, and that new ideas were emerging on the place and role of man. He was inclined to see an oriental influence in these ideas about man, morality and the environment, which in turn affected both consumer behaviour and the politics of agriculture. He expected health concerns, food security and the ecologically responsible use of raw materials and production methods to gain more emphasis in agriculture as well, and addressed his argument to the farmers and the food industry, with a message that no matter what one’s personal opinion of this may be, the future market will be of that kind.

Professor Gert van Dijk, President of the Council for Co-operatives (NCR), who represented the marketing point of view in the debate, had concluded that it was in the interests of Dutch agriculture and horticulture to shift the debate on agricultural policy to a larger framework which included both trade, competition and environmental policy (E-024). This was one of the few explicit suggestions for repoliticising agricultural policy.

Another open claim for changing the basis of agricultural policy came from Prof. Cees Veerman (E-031), who argued that what was at stake was more than a question of criticism based on environmental concerns, and that a debate on the functional place of agriculture had become unavoidable. The landscape was also a matter of values connected with nature and culture, while agriculture was a bioethical issue. The profit that could be achieved on the market was not the right measure of the economic value of production. He argued that rationalisation in terms of scale would yield results only at the expense of great sacrifices in terms of the environment, the landscape and rural vitality in Europe. The EU was, in his opinion, faced with crucial decisions, and a profound reorganisation in agriculture could be foreseen in the future, when new issues would be included in the policy.

The Dutch preferred politicising the issue of production methods by channelling the “real scarcity” (*werkelijke schaarste*) of unpriced goods (environment and health) via the markets (E-022). Because of surplus production, international solidarity and environmental constraints, extensification and

integrated production were the right direction in which to proceed, but this implied that people would also have to be ready to pay more for higher-quality produce (ibid.).

The most severe criticism of conventional production methods was, not surprisingly, expressed by the debaters who were politically close to the Green movement (O-057, O-109). They also paid more attention to animal welfare, and also to the environment and the interests of farmers in developing countries.

Most proposals concerning the politicisation of production methods were thus made in connection with the environment, not questioning the animal welfare aspect, for example. In addition, these suggestions came mostly from academic circles, or from the marketing perspective. The arguments were addressed, first and foremost, at a particular audience of farmers, in order to persuade them to change their behaviour. The reactions to the suggested changes in production methods were often doubtful, however. For example, Prof. R. Rabbinge published research claiming that extensive production, which used less inputs, would be more competitive as such and would not require any support at all (E-025). His computer model suggested that it would be sensible to move almost all dairy production to the southern member states and to cease grain cultivation in the Netherlands as well. What would be left would be seed production, allowing considerably more land to be devoted to nature and recreation. The farming community blamed him for being too theoretical in his vision of the future.

Although the heavyweight politicians were cautious on the subject of production methods, there were some remarks about the Minister of Agriculture, Piet Bukman, being worried at the criticism of intensive cattle breeding, so that he seemed to be ready to take measures to save the reputation of the sector (O-102). He started to argue prudently in favour of “total quality insurance” which would cover the whole production chain, including the production method (O-147). His words were directed at the farmers, trying to convince them that “the adjusting and innovation capability of the agricultural sector has shown” (*“gezien het aanpassings- en innovatievermogen dat de agrarische sector in ons land ... heeft gelegd”*) that this is possible.

8.5.2. The Irish debate

Production methods were hardly touched upon in the Irish debate, mainly because they were approached via their environmental effects (O-202), and most debaters were of the opinion that the extensive agriculture practised in Ireland was particularly environmentally friendly (E-005, O-115). Those who identified themselves more closely with intensive farming argued that extensive forms did not constitute a serious alternative, because they could not “feed the world” (O-142), but they were also aware that intensive farming had caused damage to

the public image of agriculture. This environmental issue was seen to be less relevant in Ireland than it might have been on the continent.

Problems connected with production technology were understood to have arisen elsewhere, in the Netherlands, for example (*O-088*). Organic farming has a potential for politicising conventional production methods, but this was not touched upon very much during the reform debate. It was mentioned only occasionally, as a market niche promoted by the Minister for Finance (*O-068*), for example, or even as something that would deny the farmers "opportunities to use their drive and entrepreneurial skills" (*O-149*).

8.6. Conclusions

The Dutch and Irish reform debates had slightly different profiles. The Dutch debate was firmly based on market and trade interests. Agriculture was primarily interpreted as a sector of the economy, even though it differed from other sectors to a greater or lesser extent. This engagement in the market did not close the framework as tightly as one might presume, however, for different aspects were included in market-based agriculture, and agricultural policy thinking can be described as fairly open. The academic debaters in particular, being remarkably numerous and well-informed, ventured to question the prevailing structure of Dutch agriculture and followed a division of labour in the debate which implied that they most often challenged the farming community, while the farmers' organisations defended it. Politicians appeared in both roles, depending on the person and the situation.

The Dutch debate seldom based its premises on agrarian values, whereas these were frequently used in the Irish debate, which also broadened agriculture to cover the politics of rural areas as well. For the Irish, agriculture was essentially a part of society, and more a matter of people in their rhetoric than in the Dutch debate: the rural people, family farms, "our children", or simply Irishness. It should not be forgotten that efficiency and market values were also strong arguments in Ireland, but they were combined with agrarian values, which were not used in the Dutch argumentation.

Where the subject in the Dutch debate whose future was primarily at stake was most often the farm as an enterprise, in Ireland it was the farming family, and the most powerful role in the Irish debate was that played by the farm organisation. Agricultural academics were less numerous, and although some of them were prominent individuals in the debate, their role in general was more one of feeding in information for later use by farm leaders and politicians. The Irish politicians were fairly well-informed, and were also apparently in fairly frequent contact with the farming lobby, although this does not imply that they were always playing the same tune. Ex-commissioner Sicco Mansholt and Commissioner Ray MacSharry were prominent figures in the debate in their respective countries.

The way in which “morality” was used as an argument provides us with our final example of agricultural policy rhetorics. According to the discussion in section 3.3.3, the idea of what is moral and what is amoral is connected to premises concerning preferences: values, value hierarchies and their loci that are important and precious for the audience. In the Dutch debate, the participant who claimed that a permanent set-aside was “amoral” (O-135a), was basing his argument on efficiency as a value. Morality is frequently used to defend overproduction in agriculture. In an Irish example from this debate it was argued that “... the Community was lucky to have a supply of cereals in stock at a time when famine loomed in many parts of Africa” (O-212). This argument takes hunger as a question of the quantity of food, while it can just as well be seen as a distribution issue, or more generally, as a question of the biased structures of international trade.

The analysis showed that just as there were several alternative ways of interpreting the situation of EU agriculture, so there were no uniform answers to the problems. The debate in both countries kept the CAP in its old framework, but only with an effort. Environmental problems, rural issues and international trade disputes, once taken onto the CAP agenda, unavoidably questioned the logic of its price policy and its productivist idea of efficiency. Even though the final reform was a watered-down version of the original proposals, it undeniably brought elements onto the CAP agenda, which were based on a new understanding of the role of agriculture in the EU.

9. Conclusion: Recognising choice

9.1. Main findings

The aim here was to outline the principles of CAP politics through an empirical analysis of a recent reform debate, and to envisage potential future qualitative changes in EU agriculture. The focus has been on the moments of recognising choice as moments of political action which include contingency and unintended results.

An extensive account has been given in the foregoing chapters of the national debates that surrounded the MacSharry reform proposals in terms of an analysis structured by actors, themes and argumentation, focussing attention on situations and issues which included elements of choice. Broadly defined, the investigation explored the basic question of what kind of politics agricultural policy was at the time in question: what were the issues, who were the actors, who or what was the object of the policy, and what were the lines of thought that agricultural policy discussions could be based on. Our inquiry into these dimensions also revealed what was not an issue, who were not actors, who or what were not regarded as relevant objects of the policy, and which conceivable lines of reasoning were not used in the argumentation. One essential aspect of this approach is its dependence on context. These characteristics of agricultural policy can be assessed only in a certain space and at a certain moment of time, but conversely, they also reveal change in time and space.

The work started with a review of ways of interpreting political aspects when studying agricultural policy. Different approaches entail different conceptions of politics, which in turn are capable of problematicizing the object of study in different ways. Mainstream research has explained agricultural policy in terms of pursuing interests, as a means of achieving given goals, and the approaches discussed here have contributed to our understanding of the articulation and promotion of interests in agriculture, and of the corporatist linkages that exist inside agricultural policy. They have concentrated, however, on certain arenas for action and certain groupings which have been understood to have direct interests in public policies with regard to agriculture. In this sense, these approaches have been inclined to formalise the policy setting and have given it perhaps too static an image. The instrumentalist view on politics the approaches discussed represent is highly policy-oriented: politics is about dealing with a given problem and finding a functioning solution to it. These approaches are not strong in recognising the moments of choice in situations where the problem can be constructed in different ways and where there is no single “right” answer.

The benefit of understanding politics in instrumentalist terms is that it allows for clarification and simplification. The question I would like to raise in this study is that of how well the current discussion on agricultural policy can be

explained in the terms of interest politics. It seems that a lot of our present political action is channelled through other kinds of actors, such as non-governmental organisations or individuals interpreting their personal choices as political acts. A lot of political action based on ethics or morality, for example, does not easily translate into interest politics. Likewise, many contemporary political actors shun traditional interest group politics and find or create other channels to express their ideas. It could be argued that we would be better off taking a closer look at what people say in practice about agriculture and including the complexity, inconsistency and incalculability of concrete political action in the inquiry.

Methodologically, the investigation has been directed by the concept of politics as an action in a situation characterised by a plurality of actors, recognising controversy and operating with arguments. These characteristics were explicated in a large body of empirical material relating to the public debate on the CAP in Ireland and the Netherlands. The case study was placed in its context from two directions. First, the formation of the CAP was discussed in Chapter 4 as a part of European integration and its enlargement and deepening. The CAP had been established around the concept of common markets, and had started out as a policy for agricultural products, gradually coming to embrace measures focussed on production factors as well. Successive reforms and reform proposals served as critical junctures which brought to the surface new themes and arguments on agricultural policy, ending up – to a varying extent – with qualitatively new policy measures. One essential point to note is that the new themes were always politicised and the new arguments established gradually, appearing first as marginal notes in Commission documents and only later gaining status on the formal agenda. In this respect, the Commission was much more radical than the Council of Farm Ministers, where it may take years before even a watered-down version of the Commission's ideas can be agreed upon. Times, external pressures and exceptional moments – such as major enlargements or intensive periods of integration – have nevertheless changed, and these continue to shift the emphasis of the CAP.

The primary concern with price support is reflected in the strong position of market and price regimes. The total expenditure on the price support is covered by payments made from the Guarantee Section of the EAGGF, whereas the structural measures, financed from the Guidance Section, have always required a national contribution. Moreover, measures financed from the Guidance Section are less binding than the price regimes of the Guarantee Section, even when they are both legislated as regulations, which have recently become more common in structural policy, as well. Originally directives were used for Guidance Section measures. In addition, the budget share of the EAGGF is well protected, as it is labelled as compulsory expenditure, on which the European Parliament has had little say.

When the content of the CAP started to broaden beyond price and market regimes, the first structural measures were horizontal, i.e. they were the same for all. It was the special measures for less-favoured areas that launched the idea of regional policy measures in the CAP. When Greece, Portugal and Spain became members of the EU, the promotion of economic and social cohesion was stated as a prerequisite for integration and, consequently for economic growth in the union. The new dimension of cohesion also placed the CAP in a new framework. Its official status made new arguments sound relevant to the debate on the CAP as well, and as shown in the Irish debate, such arguments were also used in politicking. The changes in the CAP are constantly related to EU integration in general, and should always be taken into account when trying to explain the politics of this process.

The second contextualisation was carried out with respect to the case countries and to the GATT –negotiations that were going on at the time. The basic elements of the national settings consisted of political features and agriculture in the two countries. In addition, the countries differed in their history with respect to the EU and their location in it. The constitutional differences between a kingdom and a republic are of negligible importance, but divergences in party structure, in the culture of dealing with political issues or in the way in which local and regional topics are dealt with are more significant as far as their consequences for the discussion of agricultural policy are concerned. For a secularised observer it is a healthy reminder that arguments embedded in Christianity – or religion in general – may be relevant to the debate on agricultural policy. Both countries are engaged in exporting their agricultural produce, but on differing terms with respect to the CAP. The main problem for the Irish was their dependence on external markets and export subsidies from the CAP, whereas for the Dutch, who produced for the internal market, it was crucial to prevent the CAP rules from being changed in a way that would punish intensive production and reward aspects other than efficiency understood in a narrow sense. The discussion on the case countries was also aimed at giving a concrete idea of the complexity of the situation in which the common policy for agriculture should function and was supposed to have its intended effect.

The final element of the case study context dealt with the world trade negotiations known as the Uruguay Round. Officially the CAP reform had nothing to do with these GATT negotiations, but a connection certainly existed. One may interpret it either that the MacSharry reform was necessary in order to reach a deal on the new rules for world trade, or that GATT was used for politicking inside the CAP; that it enabled a reform to take place which would have been necessary anyway. Be it as it may, the Uruguay Round placed trade in agricultural products on the same line as trade in other commodities, and attracted attention to agricultural issues from quarters other than the ministers of agriculture. Besides, the Uruguay Round introduced both new concepts into

agricultural policy, namely various measures that had the effect of distorting trade, and a new political game to be played with “green boxes” (non trade-distorting policies) and “blue boxes” (payments linked to production-limiting programmes) and with the varying interpretations given to them.

The empirical analysis concerned first the actors in the reform debate. Detailed information was gathered on who participated in it and who were mentioned as subjects or objects of the Common Agricultural Policy. The outstanding common denominator among the actors was that they were men. The absence of the deeds and words of women has been taken for granted in matters of agricultural policy. The second most common feature in both countries was the emphasis on farmers or their representatives. Ministers of agriculture were crucial actors in both countries, but the rest of the government was very much more active in Ireland than in the Netherlands. Similarly, the *Taoiseach* was an important debater in Ireland, whereas the Dutch *Premier* was not regarded as a competent participant. The group of party politicians participating was larger in Ireland than in the Netherlands, whereas an impressive amount of academics contributed to the debate in the Netherlands. The Irish farmers’ organisations were very loud in the debate, and assumed a rather traditional pressure group role, whereas the Dutch *Landbouwschap* was less dominant and spoke with the voices of more individuals than the Irish IFA or ICMSA. The interests of the processing industry and trade were well articulated in the Netherlands, where the farmers appeared more often as objects of the policy than as active subjects.

The Dutch debate did not include rural people, whereas they were clearly more often mentioned in the Irish debate, but as objects only. Farming families and farmers’ wives existed in the Irish debate, whereas in the Dutch debate the farmer was implicitly a male entrepreneur. Farm animals were not included as objects of the policy, unless one counts carcasses. All in all, the actor structure hints at a preference for discussing agricultural policy in the traditional terms of income policy, which is predominantly the farmers’ business. There were only few references to taxpayers, consumers – let alone consumer groupings arising from differing tastes or from the politicising of production methods – , environmental organisations or animal welfare activists. It is interesting that women were so obviously absent, both as agricultural producers and as consumers, since it is they who most often buy the food consumed at home and are interested in diet and health. Differing tastes and the increased attention to agricultural production were discussed as themes, especially in the Netherlands, but the new actors attached to these themes were neither participating as subjects as yet, nor properly recognised as actors of full standing.

As for the EU level, “Brussels” as a political actor had hardly any other face than that of Ray MacSharry. Other actors, or even any division of labour (and power) among the EU institutions and bodies, remained unclear or uninteresting. The status of “Brussels”, however, was uncontested in the debate, although the

roles of the Commission and the European Parliament and their relationship to the Council of Farm Ministers were not explicated. If the EU wants to transform itself into a functioning democratic unit, it should pay more attention to giving flesh and blood to its political actors and those who take the decisions.

The geopolitics of the two national debates drew demarcation lines inside Europe. For the Dutch, the EU had a central European core in which the Netherlands is itself located, but the margins of EU geography were vague, so that smaller or more peripheral member states such as Luxembourg or Greece could easily be forgotten. Thus the division that explained European politics was that between the north and the south. For the Irish, however, Europe was divided into the West and the East, leaving Ireland itself with an "island-identity" that left it separate from "the continent" and the rest of the EU. The Irish placed themselves on the periphery.

The thematic analysis was concerned with the issues that were rendered political in the debate and appeared in thematic constructions. Both national debates were provoked by the same reform proposals from the Commission, but they led to differing definitions of the problem in the respective national contexts. The Dutch translated the problem into a purely economic matter, a problem for the EU budget and a question of efficiency. In addition, the Dutch interpreted the reform proposals in connection with the relationship between agriculture, the environment and nature. By contrast, the Irish debaters challenged the Commission's explanation for the surplus problem, arguing that the real problem was in fact illegal imports from Eastern Europe. Another central theme was the exceptional position of Irish agriculture and its right to receive special treatment, while the effect of the reform on Irish society as a whole, the countryside and the national economy was also an important theme. The issue of the environment was not rendered political in Ireland, but rather it was regarded by the Irish as a problem that could be conceived of only elsewhere in the EU. In addition to these different definitions of the problem, the Irish and Dutch also had similar themes in the debate, but they led to partly different emphases. Broadly speaking, the Dutch expressed their explicit ideas about the reform proposals less from the point of view of the Netherlands, whereas the Irish arguments concentrated on the Irish case, and seldom took sides with regard to EU agriculture as a whole. The Dutch were comfortable enough speaking on behalf of the whole of the EU.

As for the argument structure analysis, the national debates had slightly different profiles. Arguments based on the premise of the primacy of the market and trade figured prominently in the Dutch debates. "The market" was the master metaphor of the Dutch argumentation, although the economic rationality emphasis did not cause the Dutch agricultural policy to become totally closed. Rather, the Dutch stance was that it would be the best situation if all decisions were based on (narrowly interpreted) efficiency, but as this was not the case in reality, as other aspects were included in agricultural policy, then they took the

new dimensions pragmatically. The main Dutch arguments were formulated in order to defend the existing logic of the CAP, which was based on price and market regimes. They were in favour of dealing with other issues by means of separate policies – an argument which ignores the influence of a price and market policy on the environment or on rural development. The Dutch thus opposed changing the rules of the game. As premises, the values of the environment and of nature were more obvious for the Dutch than rural or agrarian values. Rural areas had a very weak identity inside the Netherlands, whereas the arguments of the food industry and of trade in general were well articulated, and strengthened by the premise of agriculture as an economic activity only.

The Irish arguments were largely based on the premise of justice. Their arguments concerned both the reason for production surpluses and the right of Ireland to receive special treatment, and exploited a wider range of premises than the Dutch arguments. Markets, entrepreneurship, economic efficiency and importance for the national economy were cornerstones in the argumentation, but they were often mixed with agrarian and rural values stressing a “green” Irish identity, a healthy rural family life, and the right of farmers to earn a decent living. The Irish argumentation had a more traditional agrarian surface, underneath which the line of thinking hardly differed from the Dutch one. This is not to say that the Irish rural arguments were sheer cosmetics for promoting agricultural interests, for the Irish reasoning on rural and regional problems and the options open for solving these was undeniably well developed and was seen in a broader context. The key Irish actors interviewed were nevertheless in favour of promoting rural development via the CAP. The Irish argumentation on environmental problems was fairly thin, as they had been lulled into the idea that this was not an Irish issue since their agricultural production was understood to be so extensive as to have very little impact on nature or wildlife.

Considered from the point of view of European integration, the idea of a Common Agricultural Policy in Europe does not seem to have proceeded much further than the establishment of a common market for agricultural products. When I posed a question to the key informants about what is common in the Common Agricultural Policy, most of them found the question odd, and merely referred to the common markets. Indeed, this has to a large extent been the case, as the politics of EU agriculture has turned into a series of disputes about price and support levels and about favouring northern products over southern ones. The national debates showed that knowledge of other EU countries is rather poor, and even completely false arguments could be expressed in public about agriculture in other member states. Furthermore, the Irish were inclined to see their country as deemed to isolation due to its location on the margin of the Union, and Irishmen are most probably not alone in this feeling. No matter how the union enlarges in the future, some member states will always be situated on

the margin. This attitude of being left outside “the core” needs to be overcome if the EU is to aim seriously at common policies and politics.

This analysis shows the debates in member states to be deeply embedded in national contexts, with different premises and perspectives that direct the argumentation and definitions of the problem. A common idea of European agriculture is only just emerging, as some elements for this kind of thinking are now traceable in the concept of multifunctional agriculture and in the European Model that the EU has promoted in the new round of WTO negotiations (see EuroChoices Spring 2001). One may argue that it will be only in connection with politicising agriculture on a broader basis than markets and price policy that a politically powerful idea of European agriculture can emerge. An agricultural policy that uses basically (micro)economic reasoning is a fairly narrow foundation for common politics, but there are signs that the horizon of the policy debate may be broadening. This idea will be pursued further in connection with the change in the CAP paradigm.

Before taking a historical and predictive overview of politics in the CAP, I would like to draw attention to one of the fundamentals of politics in the view of Hannah Arendt: the plurality of actors. The conventional way of interpreting the politics of agricultural policy has been based on the contrast between producer and consumer interests. As discussed in Chapter 2, it has been shown that producer interests have been better organised than consumer interests. This observation is no doubt correct, but on the basis of the debate analyses it is possible to draw attention to other oppositions that are embedded in agricultural policy and only partly politicised. Contradictions taken as given easily exclude other possible ways of outlining opposition. The reform proposals lent greater visibility to the different situations prevailing for small and large farms, extensive and intensive farming, different products, and specialised farms versus combined farming, and thus politicised the agricultural sector from the inside.

The contradiction between smaller and larger producers in Ireland was politicised by the establishment of the UFA, an organisation of small farms, while in the Dutch debate, the contradictions between the farmers and the processing industry (for example O-137) and farmers and the food trade (see O-089, O-124), and the farmers and their interest organisation (O-077) were raised as issues. The main question here was that of who ultimately benefited from low producer prices and intensive production, and the hereditary answer was that neither the farmers nor the consumers benefited but the traders. It was argued that very often the farmers actually supported similar kinds of solution to the consumers or taxpayers, e.g. as less intensive production and more attention to animal welfare, but the farmers’ organisations were loyal to the needs of the processing industry, often owned by the producers themselves. Furthermore, the recognition of these contradictions offered opportunities for politicking with different interests. This was only served to show that there was also much more

variety in interests, arguments and the framing of questions on the agricultural producer side than the discussion on agricultural policy normally recognises. In addition, the plurality and increasing number of relevant actors also implies that the perspectives of agricultural policy actors are becoming more and more incommensurable. This will increase the complexity of the policy.

9.2. A paradigm change?

If one takes a look at the politics of the CAP starting out from the MacSharry reform debate, one may anticipate that a paradigm change was gradually taking place. The CAP was created around a common market, administered with the help of price and market policies that were originally designed to suit the main (northern) products: milk, grain and beef. Simultaneously, the first policy measures with respect to the market were introduced, mainly directed towards improving processing and marketing structures. This choice was based on the income policy paradigm for agricultural policy, which meant in practice maintaining the level of incomes for farmers by guaranteeing the prices of the main products. Producers were interpreted as being the main actors, those for whom the policy should be designed. In an earlier study of Finnish agricultural policy in the structural change era (Vihinen 1990) I underlined the connection between the agricultural income policy paradigm and the construction of the welfare state and Keynesian economic policy, which emphasised the importance of demand for economic growth. There are exactly the same elements in the context of the early version of the CAP. The income policy emphasis led the prices to be set in such a way that it encouraged the growth of production in larger, more efficient farms. This development was stimulated by technical advances in production.

Surplus production had already become a problem for the CAP in the early 1970's, and the policy was also enlarged at that time to comprise the production factors: labour, land and capital. As the cost of the policy increased, it also became more important to accept consumers and taxpayers as potential actors. Similarly, farm workers and landowners were recognised, but none of these groups could displace the producers from their dominant position as the main actors for whom the policy was designed. In this phase, price and market regimes were complemented with socio-structural measures for investment aid, payments to outgoers and socio-economic guidance and training. The directive on less-favoured areas was the first measure which recognised the need for a regionally specified policy. Surplus production and the growing costs of the policy forced the EU to agree on production control, such as the milk quotas in 1984, and on agricultural budgetary guidelines in 1988.

The income policy paradigm of the CAP started to crumble in the early 1990's. The establishment of direct income payments alongside price support

policies in the MacSharry reform initiated a shift that continued in Agenda 2000. Both rural and environmental measures gained more status in these reforms, although the formulations given were by no means radical. In practice, the minimum standards for the agri-environmental measures of the MacSharry reform were set at low levels in the member states, and in some cases full support was paid to farmers for virtually no change in farming practices. Similarly, once taken onto the CAP agenda, rural development came to be interpreted in highly agricultural terms. Attempts to define rural policy more independently, as in the Cork Declaration of 1996, caused a political reaction from the farming community. One may conclude that, irrespective of successive reductions in producer prices, the price and market regime is still the core of the CAP, but it is being seriously challenged from a number of directions.

First, supported prices have come under heavy pressure under the global trade policy: support has to be decoupled from production, to avoid trade distortion. This pressure is encouraged by the prevailing liberal ideology, which sees the key to economic growth in increasing economic liberalisation. In the long run, it becomes difficult to protect agriculture from these requirements if it is defined as just one sector of the economy. Secondly, as the welfare state project has given way to the construction of a competitive information technology society, the claiming of a reasonable income for a certain group has lost its power as an argument. In order to be regarded as acceptable, support for agriculture has to be based on different arguments, and conditioned by applying it to concrete tasks, e.g. regarding the environment, rural areas, food safety and quality, animal welfare or the ethics of production.

Thirdly, a major challenge to the closed income policy paradigm has arisen from the consumers, and especially from differentiating consumer groups. On the one hand, EU legislation on agriculture has lagged behind public opinion, which has become more and more critical of the consequences of intensive modern farming for the environment, as became evident in the Dutch reform debate above, where the image of farming was so poor that it threatened the whole sector. On the other hand, consumers' demands for food have differentiated. The basic need for cheap food has been satisfied to the extent that other qualities are increasingly gaining weight in consumers' choices. Products are differentiated according to their origins, regions or production methods. Consumer choices are also a part of the identity of a people, and consequently, the quality constructed in the product during production, processing and marketing is crucial. The interest shown nowadays in the quality of food – understood in a broad sense – has rendered farming practices political, at the same time as the choices connected with consumption itself can potentially be seen as political acts.

Fourthly, and partly connected with what has just been said about citizens as consumers, various new political movements (as distinct from parties or interest groups) have questioned the way of speaking about agriculture and raised the

issues of nature and animal welfare, for example. Thinking of this kind politicises agriculture as a major interface between human beings and nature, and as representing our relation to biological processes in general. Issues concerned with sustainability, manipulation, ethics, morality and global development problems are translated into agricultural policy arguments.

Fifthly, agricultural policy has also become to a larger extent a matter of using land, landscape, territory and space. Production methods modify the landscape differently, and as the demand for recreation increases, the landscape and nature values of the countryside increase. Another related issue is the unpriced scarcity of space, which is becoming recognised as people concentrate more and more into the major cities, which often lack the uniqueness still to be found in some parts of the countryside. What agriculture as a mode of production does to the space, and what citizens actually want from the space are gradually being translated into policies such as the French CTE, and more generally the idea of multifunctional agriculture. The concept of multifunctionality implies that, beyond its primary function of supplying food and fibre, agricultural activity can shape the landscape, provide environmental benefits such as land conservation, allow the sustainable management of renewable natural resources and the preservation of biodiversity, and contribute to the socio-economic viability of rural areas (OECD 2001, 9).

These changes in the framework for the politics of the Common Agricultural Policy are presented in Figure 2, which should be read from top to bottom, including three phases, the last of which refers to the near future rather than to a current, well-established situation. There is no guarantee that the new elements in the CAP – rural development, environmental concerns, animal welfare etc. – will become part and parcel of the policy in the long run. The only thing that can be said with greater certainty is that the EU price levels for agricultural products will be moved closer to the world market level. Whether this will take place along with a major qualitative change in the politics of the CAP still remains to be seen. So far, farm leaders and ministers in particular have been largely opposed to such change, mainly out of a fear that the new emphasis would be promoted at the expense of support for agriculture. While this fear is partly reasonable, the change can equally well be seen as a challenge to agriculture, which has faced many changes in the course of time. Alternatively, the change can be taken pragmatically, as it has by some of the Dutch debaters: no matter what we think about these trends, if the demand goes that way, we will follow.

The qualitative change in the politics of the Common Agricultural Policy may be envisaged in the first place as having something to do with the policy being formulated more from the point of view of consumption issues. The consumer gives meanings to both food commodities and other benefits and services produced by agriculture (multifunctionality), and these meanings become the starting point for policy formulation. It is a question of what EU citizens are

ACTORS

OBJECTS

POLICY MEASURES

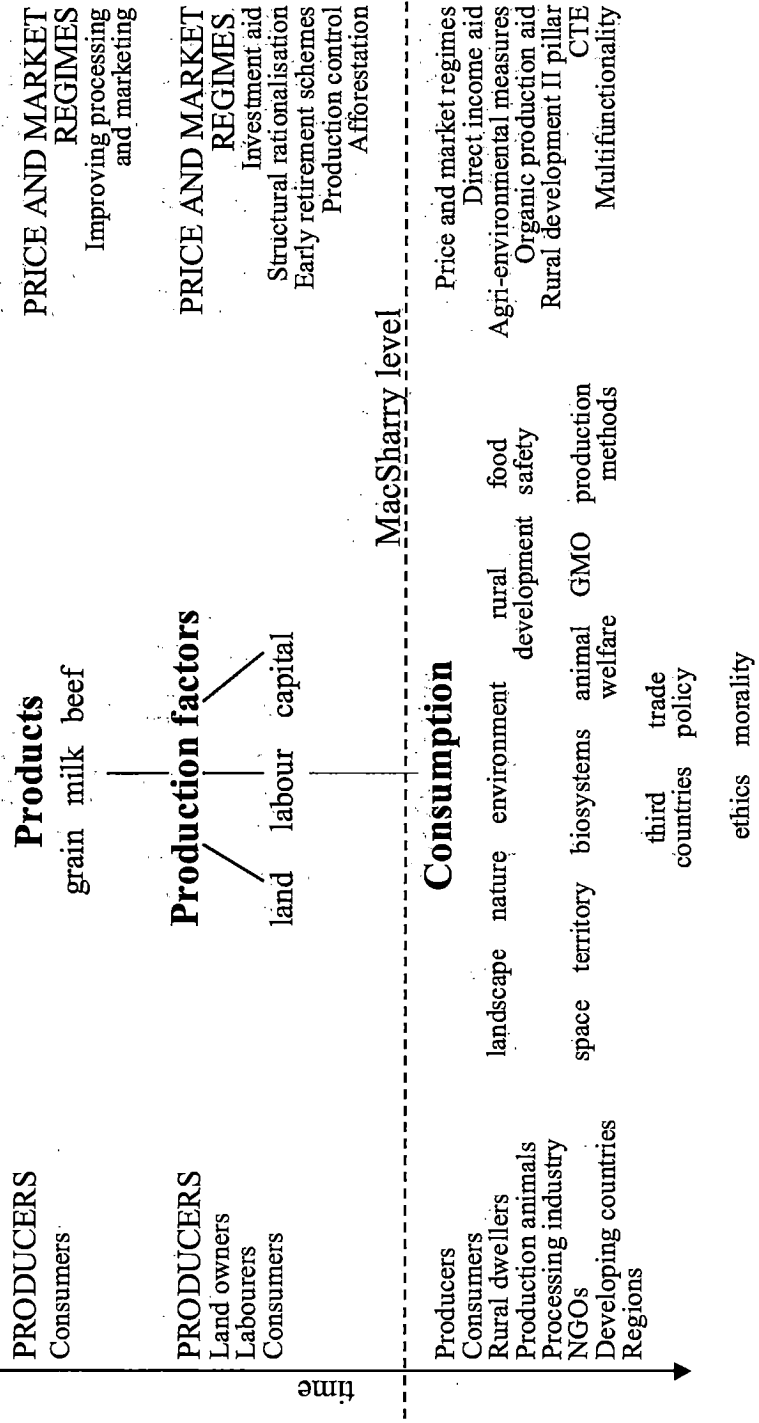


Figure 2. Evolution of the politics of the CAP.

ready to pay for. This is how, in the second place, the setting in which agricultural policy functions is changing towards a contract between society and agriculture.

The income policy paradigm would thus lose its position as the framework for the policy, and as a consequence, the goal of safeguarding a reasonable income level for the producers would have to be adjusted to incorporate other goals and means. If production techniques do not become politicised properly and transformed into policy measures, it is also possible that agriculture will become a producer of low-priced raw materials for a powerful processing industry, with very little concern for, or restrictions on, the ethics of production. In that case, the “multifunctional” services of agriculture could be produced by other means.

The global question at the moment concerning the conditions under which food is produced is that of biotechnology, especially genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and intellectual property rights such as patents, which can be used to restrict the use of naturally existing genetic material, both genes, organisms and species. One set of concerns has to do with the risks and uncertainties, and also the potential benefits, that are directly associated with the biological consequences of using products generated by such technologies. Another set relates to people’s doubts, fears and hopes concerning the social and economic context in which these biotechnologies are being introduced and used, and the consequences they may have for social and economic development. These issues will have profound social consequences, in particular with regard to people’s rights to feed themselves the prospects for developing countries as a whole. One open issue is that the benefits appear to be low or non-existing for poor farmers and poor consumers, at the same time as the major corporations investing in these technologies are defending themselves by emphasizing the potential of GMOs to feed the increasing population of the world. The debate on agricultural policy in general and the CAP in particular is thus coming to concern increasingly broader issues, ones connected with ethics and morality.

The change that is taking place is reflected not only in policy objects and measures, but in actors as well. The differentiation of consumer groups was discussed earlier. In addition, the traditional corporatist structure referred to in agricultural policy-making is losing ground along with the political modernisation, or “new governance” that is gaining ground in the EU. These concepts refer to the changing roles of the state, the markets and civil society, and to a development “from an initiating government to a withdrawal-of-the state” -logic paralleled by a shift “from regulation to communication strategies” (see van Tatenhove et al. 2000, 6). The new governance implies a weakening of the nation-state and a change in its role which both weakens it as a part of the corporatist agricultural policy triangle and increases the significance of other actors. As a whole, it means that actors will be transformed and new kinds of actors will appear in the agricultural policy arena and have to be taken into consideration. Non-

governmental organisations (NGOs), for example, have gained in importance at the same time as traditional political parties (on the national scene) and nation-states (on the international scene) have lost their status. In addition, the new governance refers to a change from “closed” policy-making to participative policy-making, from centralised to decentralised, and from command and control to contextual “steering”. These changes in policy arrangements are likely to bring more actors into the agricultural policy domain, and to change the nature of policy measures. Another thing is that as new governance is understood to diminish the importance of traditional political actors (such as political parties) and to channel more decisions via the market mechanism, it implies that instead of a political voice, citizens should be able to have impact on political issues by their market choice.

At the moment a new political debate is going on in the EU about a major shake-up in farm policy. The Farm Commissioner, Franz Fischler, has recently argued (Agra Europe, May 11, 2001) that the current allocation of CAP money “no longer corresponds with public concerns about the priority needs of the rural sector” (ibid.). He is advocating a wider definition of rural aid and more focus on cross-compliance⁵⁶⁰ as a condition for aid, arguing that intensive production methods are simply becoming less and less acceptable (ibid.). The most remarkable novelty in his speech, however, was his long-term vision, arguing that “EU agricultural policy will in future be defined in decreasingly sectoral but increasingly territorial terms... Government assistance will be granted only in return for clearly defined services on the part of farmers.”

Fischler’s argument when defining the CAP more in territorial terms has broader implications. It is evidently connected with the deepening and enlarging process of EU integration. When the Central and Eastern European countries become members of the EU, the CAP in its present form will simply not be possible – either to finance, or to implement and control. Giving the CAP a more territorial and even a regional content will make it easier to finance, since measures of this kind are normally co-financed, in distinction to price and market regimes, which are financed totally from the EU budget. Moreover, Fischler’s statement can be seen in connection with the widely held idea that European integration will lead to economic growth only under conditions of social and economic cohesion, that it cannot abide great regional disparities. The CAP will be in a crucial role for achieving cohesion.

In the gradual process of European integration, the Common Agricultural Policy has become surrounded by other common policies. Simultaneously, the structure and powers of the EU institutions have been strengthened. If the EU as

⁵⁶⁰Cross-compliance is used to refer to stricter environmental conditions being placed on farmers’ payments.

a project is to proceed, it is likely that the future of the CAP will have to be envisaged more in relation to other policy sectors and that it will have to be given more of a shape that will contribute to deepening integration and increasing cohesion. This development would lead to similar results to those deduced here from the internal trends in agriculture: it will become less of an income policy for farmers and more of a contract between agriculture and society.

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Appendix 1. A complete list of articles included in the text corpus

DUTCH ARTICLES

Expert articles

- E-001 Fries Landbouwblad/10.1.91 'Bang voor toekomst'door W.D.
- E-002 Agrarisch Dagblad/24.1.91 '**Kleine boeren willen blijven**'.
- E-003 Rabobank/1/91 door Ir. J.J.G. Geurts: '**Boeren in Nederland in de jaren negentig**'.
- E-004 Het Financieele Dagblad/7.2.1991 '**Landbouwhervorming EG zwaar beladen**'.
- E-005 Wageningen Universiteitsblad/15.2.1991 '**MacSharry trotseert grote boeren**' door Leo Klep.
- E-006 Agrarisch Dagblad/1.3.91 '**EG-commissaris MacSharry stelt verkeerde diagnose**' door Jerry de Hoogh.
- E-007 Agrarisch Dagblad/12.4.91 '**Plan MacSharry verdubbelt uitgaven landbouw**' door Siccó Mansholt.
- E-008 Ref. Dagblad/25.4.91 'Boer en tuinder moeten kiezen: of een "turbo"-boer of een "gat-in-de-markt"-boer **Het nieuwe denken in de agrarische wereld**' door ir. ing. H. de Boon.
- E-009 Oogst/24.5.91 '**Extensivering het beste akkerbouwbeleid voor Nederland?**'
- E-009a ESB/15.5.91 '**De toekomst van de Nederlandse akkerbouw**' door Arie Kuyvenhoven en Arie J. Oskam.
- E-010 Boerderij/30.7.91 '**LEI-directeur: "EG-voorstellen treffen vooral graan en zuivel"**'.
- E-011 ZLM Land-en tuinbouwblad/26.7.91 'KNLC commentaar **Het andere landbouwbeleid**' door Marius Varekamp, voorzitter KNLC.
- E-012 Boerderij/6.8.91 '**Topambtenaar: MacSharry mag grote boeren niet extra afromen**'.
- E-013 Boerderij/13.10.91 '**PVV-voorzitter R. Tazelaar: Kalvermesters zijn de klos**'.
- E-014 Boerderij/27.8.91 '**Steun voor niet-levensvatbare bedrijven onbegrijpelijk**'.
- E-015 Boerderij/27.8.91 '**In 2000: 20 % minder bedrijven LEI-onderzoeker: Er zal geen koude sanering plaatsvinden**'.
- E-016 Boerderij/10.9.91 '**VVD-Tweede-Kamerlid P. Blauw: Plannen ramp voor akkerbouw**'.
- E-017 Boerderij/18.9.91 '**CDA-kamerlid J. van Noord: geen toeslag voor bedrijf met toekomst**'.
- E-018 Boerderij/24.9.91 '**PvdA-Kamerlid J. van Zijl: EG zit met landbouwgrond in de maag**'.
- E-019 Staatscourant 186/25.9.91 '**De boer, hij ploetert voort**' door prof. dr. J. de Veer.

- E-020 Boerderij/1.10.91 “**MacSharry zit helemaal fout**” Ir. P. ter Veer (D66) wil geen compensatie voor lagere prijzen van graan, vlees en melk’.
- E-021 Boerderij/8.10.1991 ‘**Desnoods de brand in de overschotten** Boeren in beweging discussie over Brusselse hervormingsplannen’.
- E-022 NRC Handelsblad/15.10.91 ‘**Liberalisering doet boer en milieu de das om**’ door J. de Hoogh, Hans August Lücker, S. Mansholt en C.P. Veerman.
- E-023 Trouw/23.10.91 ‘**WRR-onderzoek: Revolutie mogelijk in landbouw Europa**’.
- E-024 Reformatorisch Dagblad/24.10.91 ‘Nederland pleit voor meer markt in plan MacSharry **Boer moet zich aanpassen aan wensen consument**’ door prof. dr. ir. G. van Dijk.
- E-025 Boerderij/25.10.91 ‘**Zuinig op de akker** Wetenschap ziet kans voor schonere teelt’.
- E-026 ESB/17.6.92 ‘**De hervorming van het EG-landbouwbeleid**’ door Maarten Mookhoek, Petra Berkhout en Gerrit Meester.
- E-027 ESB/17.6.92 ‘**EG-landbouwbeleid tussen vrije markt en vaste kosten**’ door Gert van Dijk, Jan de Veer en Cees P. Veerman.
- E-028 ESB/17.6.92 ‘**De Europese landbouw na MacSharry**’ door Cees Folmer en Max D. Merbis.
- E-029 ESB/17.6.92 ‘**De Nederlandse landbouw en het milieu**’ door Arie J. Oskam en Herman J.J. Stolwijk.
- E-030 ESB/17.6.92 ‘**Landbouw en de GATT**’ door A. de Zeeuw, oud-voorzitter van de landbouwonderhandelingsgroep van de Uruguay-ronde van de GATT.
- E-031 NRC Handelsblad/30.6.92 ‘Hoogleraar bepleit forsere wijziging EG-landbouwbeleid “**Vaste hectaretoeslag moet prijssteun boeren vervangen**”’.

News articles

- N-001 Boerderij/6.11.90 ‘**LEI-directeur: hectaretoeslag als boer zich houdt aan strenge milieuregels**’.
- N-002 Algemeen Dagblad/8.11.90 ‘**Kritiek op EG brast los**’ “Compromis over landbouwsubsidies onduidelijk”.
- N-003 Algemeen Dagblad/14.12.90 ‘**Idee voor inkomenssteun boeren valt slecht**’.
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- N-017 NRC Handelsblad/23.1.91 'EG zeer verdeeld over nieuw landbouwbeleid'.
- N-018 Agrarisch Dagblad/23.1.1991 'Ideen MacSharry maken geen kans'.
- N-019 Agrarisch Dagblad/23.1.91 'Andriessen: plannen MacSharry onbetaalbaar'.
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- N-032 Het Financieele Dagblad/5.2.91 'Aanval op hervorming EG-landbouw'.
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- N-034 Algemeen Dagblad/2.2.91 'Europese Commissie presenteert
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- N-038 NRC Handelsblad/1.2.91 'VS voorzien doorgraak in GATT Commissie EG
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- N-039 Agrarisch Dagblad/2.2.91 'MacSharry onder Ierse boeren niet populair'.
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- N-045 NRC Handelsblad/5.2.91 'EG-ministers willen landbouwhervorming
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- N-047 Agrarisch Dagblad/16.2.91 'Copa maakt eigen voorstellen voor ander beleid'.
- N-048 Agrarisch Dagblad/16.2.91 'MacSharry maant landbouwministers tot snel besluit'.
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- N-051 De Volkskrant/23.2.91 'Landbouwplan dient slechts om platteland bevolk te houden **Wijffels kritiseert EG-beleid**'.
- N-052 Agrarisch Dagblad/13.3.91 'MacSharry houdt voet bij stuk'.
- N-053 Agrarisch Dagblad/15.3.91 'MacSharry krijgt steun van top-ambtenaar'.
- N-053a Agrarisch Dagblad/4.4.91 'Verlagen steun brengt Gatt-akkoord dichterbij'.
- N-054 Agrarisch Dagblad 23.4.91 'Planbureau voorspelt forse inkomensdaling bij plan MacSharry'.
- N-055 Agrarisch Dagblad/2.5.91 'Bukman: ander EG-beleid als wisselgeld GATT-onderhandelingen'.
- N-056 Boerderij/14.5.91 'Copa komt met eigen plannen om EG-landbouwbeleid te hervormen'.
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- N-058 Agrarische Dagblad/1.6.91 'EG-plan: jaarlijks tot 5 % korten op landbouwwuitgaven'.
- N-059 Oogst/31.5.91 'Copa trekt een lijn tegen MacSharry'.
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- N-061 Oogst/21.6.91 'Bukman: landbouw moet efficiënt blijven'.
- N-062 Algemeen Dagblad/22.6.91 'Prijzen landbouw omlaag Commissaris MacSharry werkt deel voorraad weg'.
- N-063 Het Financieele Dagblad/24.6.91 'MacSharry wil erkenning voor 'natuur- en milieuboer'.
- N-064 Agrarisch Dagblad/22.6.91 'MacSharry bindt in'.
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- N-067 Algemeen Dagblad/27.6.91 'EG-plan dupeert boeren MacSharry wil forse verlaging landbouwprizen'.
- N-068 Agrarisch Dagblad/27.6.91 'MacSharry wil graanprijs met 35 % verlagen'.
- N-069 Agrarisch Dagblad/2.7.91 'Plan MacSharry nu zonder quotumkorting'.
- N-070 Agrarisch Dagblad/29.6.91 'Bukman Europa's man met de hamer'.
- N-071 Agrarisch Dagblad/3.7.91 'PvdA wijst zuivelplan van MacSharry af'.
- N-072 Algemeen Dagblad/9.7.91 'MacSharry's EG-landbouwhervormingsplan gereed'.
- N-073 Agrarisch Dagblad/8.7.91 'Plan MacSharry kost 5,8 miljard'.
- N-074 Agrarisch Dagblad/9.7.91 'MacSharry neigt naar extensivering'.
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- N-076 Boerderij/9.7.91 'Gevolgen hervormingsvoorstellen nauwelijks te overzien MacSharry hoopt deze week instemming te krijgen van voltallige Europese Commissie'.

- N-076a Agrarisch Dagblad/11.7.91 **'Plan MacSharry doorstaat toets der kritiek niet'**.
- N-077 De Volkskrant/11.7.91 **'VS en Australië reageren wel positief "MacSharry" op veel verzet'**.
- N-077a NRC Handelsblad/10.7.91 **'Duitsland en Frankrijk wijzen landbouwplan af'**.
- N-078 De Telegraaf/11.7.91 **'Besluit van EG dupeert kleine boeren'**.
- N-078a NRC Handelsblad/10.7.91 **'Consumentenbond positief, Landbouwschap afwijzend'**.
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- N-080 NRC - Handelsblad/10.7.91 **'Landbouwhervorming komt neer op minder meer Doorbraak in Commissie'**Nieuwsanalyse door Hans Buddingh'.
- N-080a Trouw/10.7.91 **'Nederlandse landbouw afwijzend'**.
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- N-082 De Volkskrant/10.7.91 **'Landbouwplan MacSharry bespaart EG zeven miljard'**.
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- N-085 De Telegraaf/16.7.91 **'Landbouwhervorming krijgt weinig steun'**.
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- N-087 De Volkskrant/16.7.91 **'Minister Bukman: "De boer is slimmer dan de overheid" Ministers van Landbouw hebben felle kritiek op plan MacSharry'**.
- N-088 Het Financieele Dagblad/16.7.91 **'EG-landbouwplan blijft staan Bukman hekelt "open-eindefinanciering"'**.
- N-089 Agrarisch Dagblad/16.7.91 **'EG-ministers kraken plannen MacSharry'**.
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- N-098 NRC Handelsblad/16.7.91 **'Veel kritiek op plannen voor Europese landbouw'**.
- N-099 Boerderij/23.7.91 **'MacSharry zegt soepele houding toe bij hervorming landbouwbeleid'**.
- N-100 Agrarisch Dagblad/19.7.91 **'PvdA: MacSharry gaat stap te ver'**.
- N-101 NRC Handelsblad/22.7.91 'Boerenjongen MacSharry verliest populariteit door hervormingsplannen **Selfmade man die het liefst hoog inzet'**.
- N-102 Agrarisch Dagblad/30.7.91 **'VVD - plan MacSharry ongrijpbaar'**.
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- N-105 Agrarisch Dagblad/31.7.91 **'Groenen maken alternatief voor plan MacSharry'**.
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- N-110 FEM/Sept. -91 **'MacSharry's uitdaging** Nieuwe kansen voor Nederlandse agro-industrie'.
- N-111 Agrarisch Dagblad/22.8.91 **'Kritiek op plannen van MacSharry'**.
- N-112 Oogst/30.8.91 'Plannen MacSharry van grote invloed op intensieve veehouderij **"Mengvoer kwart goedkoper"**'.
- N-113 Trouw/3.9.91 **'EG-landbouwplan kost boeren geld'**.
- N-114 Het Financieele Dagblad/3.9.91 **'Effecten MacSharry voor Nederlandse boer vallen mee'**.
- N-115 Agrarisch Dagblad/3.9.91 **'LEI: schade plan MacSharry beperkt'**.
- N-116 De Volkskrant/3.9.91 'Telers van fabrieksaardappelen hardst getroffen door plannen EG-commissaris **Boeren lijden weinig onder MacSharry'**.
- N-117 De Telegraaf/3.9.91 'Harde cijfers van Landbouw Economisch Instituut **Boeren moeten fors inleveren'**'.
- N-118 Algemeen Dagblad/3.9.91 **'Inkomen boeren is gedaald** Maar Nederland is gunstig af met plan-MacSharry'.
- N-119 Agrarisch Dagblad/6.9.91 **'Nederland relatief gunstig af met plan MacSharry'**.
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- N-123 De Telegraaf/11.9.91 **'Bukman hoopt op EG-akkoord over afbouw prijssteun boeren'**.
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- N-128 Trouw/25.9.91 **'Landbouwhervorming is noodzaak, daarover is EG-raad het eens'**.

- N-129 Agrarisch Dagblad/26.9.91 **'Britse boeren vinden plan MacSharry duur'**.
- N-130 De Telegraaf/1.10.91 **'Boze menigte dwingt met acties gesprek af Boeren gijzelen EG-landbouwministers'**.
- N-131 NRC Handelsblad/30.9.91 **'Boerenprotest in Europa tegen landbouwbeleid'**.
- N-132 De Volkskrant/1.10.91 **"Bende van Zes" dwingt weer een gesprek met landbouwminister Bukman over hervormingsplannen Boeren verstoren feestje EG-ministers in Beetsterzwaag'**.
- N-133 Trouw/1.10.91 **'Boeren zetten ministers vast'**.
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- N-135 Agrarisch Dagblad/1.10.91 **'Boeren blokkeren landbouwtop'**.
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- N-137 Boerderij/1.10.91 **'Geen profeet in eigen land'**.
- N-138 De Volkskrant/30.9.91 **'Parijzenaars juichen boeren toe'**.
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- N-140 Oogst/4.10.91 **'Bukman en MacSharry om tafel met actievoerders Veel publiciteit voor boerenprotest'**.
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- N-142 De Volkskrant/8.10.91 **'Sombere toekomst voorspeld voor akkerbouwers in Noorden'**.
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- N-152 Trouw/23.10.91 **"Liever geen GATT-akkoord" Franse landbouwminister ontkent dat EG concessies doet aan VS'**.
- N-153 Agrarisch Dagblad/6.11.91 **'Alternatieven voor akkerbouwers na plannen MacSharry'**.
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- N-158 Agrarisch Dagblad/23.11.91 **'Mares: protest landbouw stopt plan MacSharry niet'**.

- N-159 Agrarisch Dagblad/5.12.91 **'Landbouwschap stelt visie op hervorming landbouwbeleid bij'**.
- N-160 De Telegraaf/5.12.91 **'Landbouwschap wijzigt standpunt'**.
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- N-164 Agrarisch Dagblad/7.12.91 **'Plan MacSharry treft klei-akkerbouw zwaar'**.
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- N-171 Agrarisch Dagblad/7.1.92 **'Plan MacSharry benadeelt Groot-Britannie'**.
- N-172 Agrarisch Dagblad/11.1.92 **'Copa mag geen actie voeren in Brussel'**.
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- N-180 De Volkskrant/31.1.92 **'MacSharry kost EG jaarlijks 20 miljard'**.
- N-181 De Volkskrant/4.2.92 **'EG-rapport pleit voor vrije landbouwprijzen'**.
- N-182 Het Financieele Dagblad/31.1.92 **'Plan MacSharry nadelig voor boeren uit EG'**.
- N-183 Agrarisch Dagblad/6.2.92 **'Belgische veehouders dupe plan-MacSharry'**.
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- N-191 Agrarisch Dagblad/27.2.92 **'Akkoord over plan MacSharry onzeker'**.
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- N-193 Het Financieele Dagblad/28.2.92 **'MacSharry wil nu besluit over landbouwplan EG'**.

- N-194 Agrarisch Dagblad/28.2.92 '**LEI nuanceert kritiek op landbouwbeleid EG**'.
- N-195 Boerderij/3.3.92 '**De commissaris maant tot spoed MacSharry: ook zonder GATT toch hervorming**'.
- N-196 Agrarisch Dagblad/29.2.92 '**MacSharry bijt zich vast in eigen voorstellen**'.
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- N-198 Agrarisch Dagblad/5.3.92 '**Mares laakt uitstel landbouwhervorming**'.
- N-199 De Volkskrant/4.3.92 '**MacSharry krijgt steun Frankrijk en Duitsland**'.
- N-200 Algemeen Dagblad/4.3.92 '**EG-landbouwoverleg mislukt Voorstellen MacSharry van tafel geveegd**'.
- N-201 NRC Handelsblad/4.3.92 '**EG-discussie over het landbouwbeleid volledig vastgelopen**'.
- N-202 Trouw/4.3.92 '**Duister EG-beraad over landbouwhervormingen levert weer niets op**'.
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- O-198 Cork Examiner/14.2.92 ‘**CAP under fire**’.
- O-199 SBP/22.2.92 ‘**“Gang of three” to redress balance**’.
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- O-201 Irish Times/11.3.92 ‘**Reforming the CAP**’ by Joe Barry, Co Meath.
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- O-203 Cork Examiner/1.4.92 ‘**IFA reject claims**’.
- O-204 Cork Examiner/5.3.92 ‘**Government statement urged on CAP reforms**’.
- O-205 Irish Press/8.4.92 ‘**Warning on CAP deal**’.
- O-206 Cork Examiner/5.5.92 ‘**O’Dwyer says CAP has failed family farmers**’.
- O-207 Irish Press/5.5.92 ‘**Macra boss warns on CAP reform and calls for Yes vote next month**’.
- O-208 Cork Examiner/5.5.92 ‘**Reform of CAP vital, says Euro farm chief**’.
- O-209 Independent/6.5.92 ‘**Trees “threat to farming”**’.
- O-210 Independent/8.5.92 ‘**Beef sector “at stake” in CAP reform**’.
- O-211 Independent/13.5.92 ‘**Warning on CAP reform**’.
- O-212 Cork Examiner/13.5.92 ‘**Farm losses feared**’.
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- O-216 Cork Examiner/22.5.92 ‘**Farm deal welcome**’.
- O-217 Irish Independent/22.5.92 ‘**CAP reform**’.
- O-218 Irish Times/22.5.92 ‘**Extent of food price cuts hard to determine**’.
- O-218a Irish Times/22.5.92 ‘**“Cromwell” may yet prove a light in darkness**’
European Diary by Sean Flynn.
- O-219 Independent/22.5.92 ‘**Conflict over likely impact of price cuts on consumers**’.
- O-220 Independent/22.5.92 ‘**It’s hats off but “CAP” may not fit**’.
- O-221 FarmExam/28.5.92 ‘**CAP reform New CAP beef policy**’.
- O-222 FarmExam/28.5.92 ‘**Little change in grain incomes**’.
- O-223 Irish Times/28.5.92 ‘**CAP gains depend on marketing, says Walsh**’.
- O-224 FarmExam/28.5.92 ‘**Efficiency monster rolls on**’ by Business of Agriculture Brian O’Mahony.
- O-225 Farming Independent/9.6.92 ‘**MacSharry is vindicated by pushing home his package** Reforms will halt runaway surplus “train”’.
- O-226 Farming Independent/9.6.92 **Viewpoint** by Frank Mulrennan, agriculture editor.
- O-227 FarmExam/11.6.92 ‘**CAP Reform resurrects farmer retirement**’ Farmview.
- O-228 Irish Press/2.7.92 ‘**Farm leaders slam CAP reform plan**’.
- O-229 Cork Examiner/14.7.92 ‘**Teagasc CAP report is slammed by farm leaders**’.

Appendix 2. List of persons interviewed

IRELAND

Ray MacSharry, ex-Commissioner for Agriculture and Rural Development, Dublin 6.7.1995.

Michael Dowling, Secretary of the Department of Agriculture, Dublin 7.7.1995.

John Cushnahan, MEP (*Fine Gael*), Limerick 8.7.1995.

Tom O'Dwyer, President of the ICMSA (Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers' Association), and his advisor, Maurice Fitzpatrick, Dublin 9.7.1995.

Alan Matthews, Associate Professor in Economics, Trinity College, Dublin 10.7.1995.

Alan Gillis, ex-President of the IFA (Irish Farmers' Association), MEP (*Fine Gael*), Brussels 30.11.1995.

THE NETHERLANDS

Sicco Mansholt, ex-Commissioner, Wasperven 30.8.1992.

Jerry de Hoogh, emeritus Professor, Agricultural Economics, Wageningen Agricultural University, Wageningen 31.10.1995.

Jef Mares, President of the *Landbouwschap*, and his advisor, Henk Letschert, The Hague 1.11.1995.

Gerrit Meester, Senior Official, International Affairs, Ministry for Agriculture, Nature and Fisheries, The Hague 6.11.1995.

Jan Sonneveld, MEP (CDA), Brussels 30.11.1995.

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- No 87 Sipilä, I. & Pehkonen, A. (toim.). 1998. Karjanlannan ympäristöystävällinen ja kustannustehokas käyttö. MMM:n karjanlantatutkimusohjelman 1995-97 loppuraportti. 156 s.
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- No 90 Maatalouden ympäristöohjelma 1995-1999:n taloudellinen analyysi. Ympäristötukijärjestelmä ja tulevaisuus -tutkimuksen loppuraportti. 1999. 159 s.
Vehkasalo, V., Penttinen, J. & Aakkula, J. Maatalouden ympäristövaikutusten ohjaaminen ympäristötuen avulla. s. 7-41.
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Koikkalainen, K., Haataja, K. & Aakkula, J. Maatalouden ympäristötuen peustuen merkitys maatalojen taloudelle. s. 78-132.
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- No 92 Aakkula, J.J. 1999. Economic Value of Pro-Environmental Farming - A Critical and Decision-Making Oriented Application of the Contingent Valuation Method. 227 p.
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