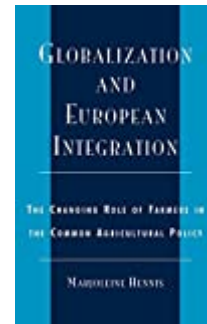




Marjoleine Hennis. *Globalization and European Integration: The Changing Role of Farmers in the Common Agricultural Policy.* Oxford: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2005. x + 223 pp. \$76.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-7425-1889-6.



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Global Markets–Local Interests

European agricultural policy is arguably one of the most contentious aspects of European integration. It has been a cornerstone of European integration from the beginning, but its successes are snarled with high costs, international disputes, and food scandals. Agriculture is also the area of European integration that has caught public attention like no other, be it in form of “butter mountains,” “mad cow disease,” or the protests of radical farmers. How does globalization affect the nature of European integration in regards to agriculture? Marjoleine Hennis analyzes the changes in agricultural structure and the transformation of the relations among the state, institutions, and producers. More specifically, she looks at how farmers responded and fared in these changes.

The latter question is especially intriguing in light of the history of farmers as an interest group and their unique relationship with the state. Peasant radicalism, strong interest organizations, and effective lobbying have secured the positions of farmers in industrial society despite the declining role of agriculture in the economy. From the beginning of industrialization, most national governments have tried to cushion the transforma-

tion. They appeased farmers with guaranteed prices and financial support, while at the same time remaining wary of the relative political power of the group. This trend started more than one hundred years ago and it has continuously affected national politics throughout the twentieth century. Even with the beginning of European integration after the Second World War, a time that saw striking changes in regards to industrialization and rural exodus, national governments continued to play an important role in easing the transition and making their farmers a happy constituency. Has the recent trend in globalization led to a dramatic change?

Hennis’s study offers valuable answers to these questions. She traces the changes brought on by globalization back to the mid-1970s. Large-scale production increasingly used standardized production methods and the agro-industry grew more and more powerful compared to farmers. These developments resulted in differentiation among the farming population. The “two-track” system developed, in which large farmers would operate on the world market and use industrial production methods, while smaller producers diminished in

numbers. Small farmers did not, however, disappear. Instead, they were able to focus on regional markets, engage in alternative farming methods, such as organic farming, and secured incomes and viability through environmental and social grants. Other changes include increased part-time farming, shrinking agricultural employment, specialization, and greater productivity. The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has enhanced the restructuring process. By the last decade of the twentieth century, however, the changes were called into question because of high costs, serious overproduction, and, last but not least, environmental damage.

After identifying these general trends, Hennis looks closer at three national cases: the Netherlands, France, and Germany. The strength of the study lies in Hennis's ability to compare the three different models of agricultural structures, interest organizations, and national policies. Her overall conclusion is that the general transformation has affected all three countries. Interest intermediation between the state and the farmers has changed and the corporatist model has collapsed, but surprisingly, interest representation has not shifted from the national to the European level. In other words, national distinctions, national farmers' organizations, and national agricultural politics continue to dominate and influence European decision-making. Farmers prefer it that way, too. Where traditional interest groups seemed inadequate to represent the changing clientele, alternative interest or-

ganizations have picked up their voice. In this way, actors continue to see their national representatives as a guarantor for the fulfillment of their demands.

Hennis ends with an optimistic outlook for European agricultural policy. She believes that with the collapse of the corporatist model at the national level and the dismantling of state-controlled support for agriculture, the budgetary problems of the CAP will disappear or diminish. Agrarian politics, in her view, will become increasingly less controversial and agricultural support will become part of European social policy. Ultimately, Hennis concludes, this development will help remove skepticism and fears about EU enlargement. This assessment comes somewhat as a surprise to the reader, given the significant agricultural areas in the latest group of expansion states. Post-Cold War EU enlargement is only mentioned a few times in the book. Although Hennis's research is up-to-date on recent changes in the CAP, she does not consider the question of enlargement any further.

Overall, Hennis's book contributes greatly to a better understanding of the challenges for European agriculture brought on by globalization and the specific responses of the actors on the national and European level. The book is clearly structured, well researched and readable. It includes recent data as well as historical perspectives. It provides valuable insight into a crucial aspect of European agriculture that too often is left to the experts, even though, as Hennis's book confirms, it impacts all of us.

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