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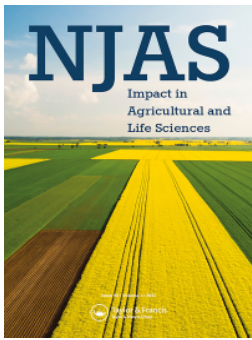
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A CAP on ambitions: Power, fragmentation, and the struggle for transformative policy in the post-2022 common agricultural policy debates

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, academics and practitioners have questioned whether the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is the best instrument to deal with social and environmental transformations. Stakeholders have faced stagnating policy debates and have seen ambitious plans being watered down. In this article, we analyse the post-2022 CAP policy debates regarding policy configurations and content. It provides insights into the key policy topics discussed during the debates, stakeholder interactions, and patterns of inclusion and exclusion. The results show that the agri-food policy community did not change its status quo despite efforts to include new actors and meanings. Four patterns of exclusion stand out: (1) fixed rules of interaction, (2) disqualification of actors and meanings, (3) ideational deadlock, and (4) restrictive language. Hence, the post-2022 CAP debates did not differ much from previous debates, blocking systemic changes.

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1. Introduction

The agri-food system¹ stands at a crossroads, driven by the urgent need for transformation in response to climate change (IPCC, 2019), biodiversity loss (IPBES, 2019), and pollution (Commission, 2024), the so-called triple planetary crisis. Moreover, food systems are intertwined with pressing social challenges, including rural depopulation and the growing prevalence of non-

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¹The agri-food system includes all economic and civil society actors involved in food production, from initial agricultural activities to consumer participation. It encompasses the full chain of activities: from early stages of production, processing, and manufacturing to distribution, trade, food environments, and consumption, all the way to waste recycling. Agriculture includes all aspects of plant cultivation, animal farming, specialized crops, and horticulture.

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communicable diseases such as diabetes and obesity (DiCesare, 2019; FAO, IFAD et al., 2023; Lindgren et al., 2018). These challenges exert immense pressure on food systems, which are vital to European societies and economies (Commission, 2020). Agriculture and food production must transform to balance ecological sustainability, economic viability, and social equity while preserving food's cultural significance (Ruben et al., 2021). This transformation requires realigning policies to integrate these aspects into existing practices for a more sustainable and equitable food system (Béné, 2022).

Such transformation efforts emphasise sustainability,² competitiveness, profitability, and fairness (Galli et al., 2020; Vincent & Feola, 2020). Achieving these goals requires cooperation and trust among all stakeholders, including farmers, rural communities, policymakers, and civil society (Commission, 2024). However, despite the growing consensus on these principles, the pathways to sustainability remain highly contested. Divergent policy frames, competing visions for sustainability, and entrenched power relations reveal enduring tensions in prioritising environmental, social, and economic goals (Daugbjerg & Feindt, 2017; El Bilali, 2019). The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) is crucial in steering this transformation in the European Union. As the EU's primary tool for shaping agricultural systems, the CAP significantly influences farming practices, resource allocation, and the agri-food system as a whole (Commission, 2024).

The CAP emerged from a 20th-century productivist paradigm, prioritising maximising yields and maintaining rural stability (Potter & Tilzey, 2005; Vivero-Pol, 2017). It is rooted in agricultural exceptionalism, meaning farming warrants special policy treatment to secure food production and rural livelihoods (Daugbjerg & Feindt, 2017; Skogstad, 1998). Over time, growing calls for sustainability have challenged this productivist focus, introducing debates over environmental protection, social equity, economic stability, and public health (El Bilali, 2019; Fiala et al., 2024). These shifts suggest a move towards post-exceptionalism (Daugbjerg & Feindt, 2017), where multiple values and paradigms coexist (Ruben et al., 2021; Wojtynia, van Dijk et al. 2021). However, despite incremental reforms such as the introduction of agri-environmental measures in 1999 and the "greening" of the CAP in 2014, critics argue that these changes represent only "shallow post-exceptionalism", with limited transformation of the CAP's foundational framework (Greer, 2017).

²For this research, sustainability is defined in the triple sense of the term: environmental sustainability refers to maintaining ecological balance and conserving resources, while economic sustainability focuses on ensuring long-term viability and profitability for agricultural systems. Social sustainability involves promoting equity, fair labour practices, and access to healthy food, while fostering community well-being. Together, these dimensions form an integrated framework that supports the long-term resilience and fairness of agricultural systems.

During the 2021 CAP reform, and in the context of greening initiatives, such as the European Green Deal (EGD) and the Farm-to-Fork Strategy (F2F), stakeholders and policymakers tried again to realign the CAP with contemporary social and environmental values (Commission, 2020). In this paper, we explore whether the CAP reform of 2021 has been successful. Some scholars highlight that the 2021 reform has exposed critical gaps between its stated ambitions and policy outcomes (Feindt, Feindt, Grohmann and Häger, 2022), causing significant delays in transformative change (Erjavec & Erjavec, 2015). Others argue that CAP was merely delayed by prolonged negotiations over the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) and the disruptive impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, shifting attention away from the CAP policy discussions (Fiala et al., 2024).

Previous research about CAP reforms illustrated that resistance to systemic policy changes is partially caused by entrenched configurations or “social-cognitive” networks. These refer to stable patterns of interaction among actors shaped by shared norms, interpretations, and goals (Termeer & Werkman, 2011; Van Dongen, Laat, & Maas, 1996). Within policy discussions, these configurations compete for dominance, each advocating its agenda for the future of agri-food systems. Emerging and evolving through sensemaking processes, configurations are formed as actors negotiate shared meanings and policy objectives (Dervin, 2015; Weick, 1995). In the context of the CAP, this dynamic interplay among competing configurations fundamentally shapes policy outcomes and influences which visions steer the agri-food sector.

In this study, we analyse the actor configurations that shaped the post-2022 CAP debates and examine how these groups contributed to systemic lock-ins that may have limited policy evolution. By combining post-exceptionalism, configuration theory, and sensemaking, the analysis reveals how social and environmental contexts influence policy change. Based on this theoretical framework, the study results uncover the structural dynamics that drive or obstruct sustainable transformations in the agri-food sector (Galli et al., 2020; Raposo et al., 2022). The main research question is “How do actor configurations in the post-2022 CAP debates shape systemic lock-ins and influence the trajectory of sustainable transformations in the agri-food sector, and how do these configurations, through narratives and interactions, create barriers or opportunities for policy evolution?”

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. Exceptionalism and shallow post-exceptionalism

The concept of exceptionalism, which was first introduced by Grant (1995) and further developed by Skogstad (1998), provides an essential lens for

understanding policy reform challenges in the agri-food sector. It frames agriculture as fundamentally distinct from other sectors, emphasising unique risks and societal functions, which are assumed to justify state intervention and financial support. This perspective explains why liberal market reforms often face resistance in agriculture (Daugbjerg & Feindt, 2022).

Exceptionalism is based on three key assumptions:

- (1) Food security as a public good: Food security is considered vital to national interests, falling under the “*neo-mercantilist*” or “*productivist*” paradigms (Potter & Tilzey, 2005; Wilson, 2001).
- (2) Unique risks in food production: Agricultural production faces inherent risks, such as pest threats and unpredictable weather, contributing to economic vulnerability and income disparity compared to other sectors (Grant, 1995; Skogstad, 1998).
- (3) The farm income problem: As economies grow and incomes increase, farm incomes stay behind due to the inelastic demand for agricultural products (Offutt & Lecture, 2000).

Since the 1980s, a *market-liberal* paradigm has challenged these assumptions, advocating for reduced state intervention and more competitive European agricultural markets (Potter & Tilzey, 2005). This shift, influenced by international trade negotiations like the Uruguay Round, argues for market-driven productivity rather than state-supported agriculture (Daugbjerg & Feindt, 2017). As a result, in the 1990s, the *multifunctional* paradigm emerged, recognising agri-foods broader societal role, including ecological and socio-cultural benefits (E.A.S.A.C., 2015; Nishi, Subramanian, and Gupta, 2022). This paradigm contends that agriculture provides public goods, such as landscape preservation and biodiversity, which markets cannot adequately provide or value (Moyer & Josling, 2002).

Daugbjerg and Feindt (2017) coined post-exceptionalism to describe the partial shifts in agri-food policy, illustrating how some policy areas are evolving while others remain rooted in older paradigms. Post-exceptionalism reflects the persistent tension between competing paradigms and the challenges of achieving systemic transformation in agri-food policy (Daugbjerg & Feindt, 2022; Daugbjerg & Swinbank, 2008). Despite the increased inclusion of sustainability concerns, some policy aspects remain entrenched in the ideas of productivism, such as direct income support, export subsidies, and price guarantees.

Greer (2017) criticises the 2013 CAP reform as a “shallow” shift, noting that while new actors were introduced and some program change has materialized, this did not result in significant changes to the ideational framework of the CAP. Greer’s analysis underscores the limits of policy change under the enduring influence of exceptionalism. Since the 2013 reforms, new promises such as the Green Deal, Farm to Fork, and a more influential European Parliament have

emerged (Commission, 2020). The introduction of a co-decision mechanism increased the democratic legitimacy of the CAP reform process (Coderoni, 2023; Swinnen, 2015). However, despite the inclusion of green parties and calls for more substantial environmental goals, these reforms often prioritise continuity rather than transformative change (Erjavec & Erjavec, 2009, 2015).

The tension between the dominant agricultural paradigms – neo-mercantilism, market-liberalism, and multifunctionality – continues to shape the CAP. Although these paradigms coexist, they often result in “hybrid forms” that superficially incorporate sustainability goals while maintaining alignment with established political and institutional systems (Erjavec & Erjavec, 2009; Greer, 2017). Post-exceptionalism provides a sound theoretical framework for understanding the persistence of exceptionalist tendencies within the CAP while offering insights into the potential for systemic transformation. It provides a lens to examine competing visions in the post-2022 CAP debates and how different actor configurations have interacted within the reform process.

2.2. Configurations

Configurations refer to networks of actors, institutions, and ideas that serve as the structures through which post-exceptionalism is both negotiated and operationalised. These networks provide a structural context for understanding how views are contested, reshaped, or reinforced through the interaction of various stakeholders (Van Dongen, Laat, Maas, 1996). These interactions help map how different actors, such as policymakers, farmers, and NGOs, align with, resist, or adapt to evolving agricultural paradigms, thus influencing the trajectory of post-exceptionalist shifts. Configuration analysis highlights the power dynamics, inclusion and exclusion patterns, and the degree to which stakeholders influence outcomes (Mills & Weatherbee, 2006; Termeer & Werkman, 2011). These dynamics shape the pace and direction of post-exceptionalist shifts, affecting the extent to which new ideas and actors challenge existing norms. Through configuration analysis, we explore how the distribution of power and knowledge within these networks shapes policy outcomes and how configurations may either facilitate or impede policy shifts.

2.3. Sensemaking

Sensemaking refers to the psychosocial process through which actors interpret their environment, construct meaning, and act based on their perceptions (Weick, 1995). In policy systems, sensemaking shapes interactions within configurations by establishing shared understandings, rules, and norms. It can drive either continuity or transformation, depending on whether collective interpretations reinforce or challenge established norms (Dervin, 2015; Helms Mills et al., 2010). In the context of CAP reform, sensemaking helps

explain why specific configurations resist change while others adapt. Rigid interpretations of policy can contribute to stagnation, but when actors challenge entrenched norms, new configurations may emerge, leading to policy innovation. This process is crucial for understanding how the CAP reforms evolve and whether they can drive deeper systemic change.

2.4. Inclusion and exclusion

Dominant configurations that exclude alternative ideas tend to stall policy development, while configurations that promote multiple inclusion facilitate the exchange of ideas, paving the way for potential transformation.

3. Methods

The study employs a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative structural topic modelling (STM) with in-depth qualitative analysis. We analysed the post-2022 CAP debates by gathering and analysing information about (1) the topics that were discussed during the debates, (2) the configurations that were involved, (3) the relationships between the configurations, (4) and finally, the mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion.

3.1. Primary sources

3.1.1. Documents

Our analyses are based on a primary corpus of 280 documents and six in-depth interviews based on targeted keyword searches across relevant databases and policy repositories. We defined inclusion criteria to ensure a comprehensive dataset, focusing on documents directly applicable to the post-2022 CAP revision, covering key actors' perspectives, arguments, and interactions. We included papers published between 1 July 2018, and 27 June 2021, to capture the entire policy negotiation period, including official sources (e.g. meeting minutes, press releases, public consultation responses) from national governments, EU institutions, environmental organisations, and farming representatives. News articles from Euractiv were included for significant CAP-related developments. Only publicly accessible documents in English were used for transparency and comparability, acknowledging potential language bias.

Data sources include (see Appendix A for an extensive description of the textual data):

- (1) Meeting minutes of the Agricultural and Fisheries Council of Ministers.
- (2) Minutes of the European Parliament's AGRI Committee.
- (3) European Commission press releases on the CAP.

- (4) Opinion papers from national governments, environmental organisations, and other stakeholders in response to public consultations.
- (5) News articles covering CAP developments.
- (6) Six interviews with representatives from an international farmer's interest group and an international environmental organisation that participated in the debates, an executive institution, and officials from the European Parliament AGRI Committee, DG AGRI, and the Dutch agricultural ministry representation at the EU.

The dataset comprises various sources reflecting diverse negotiation venues and configurations shaping the CAP debate. We chose not to differentiate between venues such as the European Commission, the European Parliament, or the Council of Ministers to focus on the broader patterns of topics, discourse, and interaction across the policy landscape rather than the procedural distinctions of each institution. Given the interconnected nature of EU policymaking, configurations often transcend institutional boundaries, making it more insightful to examine the shared narratives and actor alignments that influence CAP debates. This approach enables a more holistic understanding of the debates.

3.1.2. Interviews

The interviews were purposively selected (Lawrence Neuman, 2014) to capture a broad range of stakeholder perspectives and focus on sensemaking (McEwan, 2020). The aim was not to achieve numerical representation but to deepen understanding of the actors' value orientations and their perspectives on CAP configurations, themes, and mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion, thereby enriching the document analysis. A diverse group of stakeholders was involved, as detailed in Table 1. The interviews, conducted in 2022, each lasted around 60 minutes. Respondents were anonymised using chronological identifiers, and

Table 1. Respondents and their organisational affiliations.

Identifier	Respondent
I1	Representative international farmers' interest group at the EU level
I2	Representative international environmental organization at the EU level
I3	Representative executive institution responsible for implementing the CAP at the national level
I4	An official from the European Parliament AGRI Committee
I5	An official from Commission's DG AGRI
I6	Official from the Dutch ³ agricultural ministry permanent representation at the EU

³We included a respondent from a founding EU member state to capture perspectives on long-term paradigm shifts within the CAP, as these countries have historically played a crucial role in shaping its development. The Netherlands, in particular, holds historical significance as one of the driving forces behind the CAP through figures such as Sicco Mansholt, who advocated for transformative agricultural reforms. However, while this perspective offers valuable insights, future research could complement this approach by incorporating voices from a broader range of member states, especially those with differing agricultural paradigms and policy experiences.

their responses were transcribed. The interview analysis followed open coding techniques based on Saldaña (2016). This process involved identifying recurring themes and patterns in the main debates. Thematic coding helped uncover how the respondents value orientations aligned with or diverged from the positions reflected in the documents, providing a richer interpretation of the configurations and helping to triangulate the findings from the document analysis. Through this method, the interviews allowed for a deeper understanding of the interactions between configurations and their influence on the CAP revision process.

3.2. Analysis

To extract the topics discussed during debates and distinguish between different configurations, the study employed Structural Topic Modeling (STM) using R's STM package (Arora et al., 2013; Roberts et al., 2018). STM is particularly suited for this study because it allows for the identification of latent themes across large text datasets (See [Appendix B](#) for complete code-book). One researcher conducted the analysis, and the initial output and interpretation were discussed and refined collaboratively with the other authors to ensure the appropriateness and consistency of the coding. Before the actual analysis, the dataset had to be prepared. This involves tokenising the text by splitting it into individual words, removing stop words to eliminate irrelevant frequently used words like "the" or "and" and applying stemming techniques to reduce words to their root forms. Metadata, such as document source, date, and actor type, is retained as covariates in the later analysis stages to contextualise the results better.

3.2.1. Identifying configurations

The configurations were identified through topic clustering, open coding, and actor identification. Topic clustering refers to identifying words that frequently co-occur or appear in close proximity in the texts. Multiple models with varying numbers of topics were run in the STM application to determine the configuration that best balances coherence and exclusivity. Coherence ensures that the topics make logical sense, while exclusivity ensures that the topics remain distinct. The final model produced six primary clusters of topics, expressing the initial substantive content of the configurations (see section 4.2).

The configurations were further elaborated by qualitative coding of five key documents most strongly aligned with the identified six topics. These documents were extracted based on gamma values from the STM model (Arora et al., 2013), indicating the degree of correspondence between a document and a specific topic (See [Appendix C](#) for a complete overview of these 30 documents). We used open coding techniques as outlined by Saldaña (2016). To ensure reliability, one researcher developed codes and refined them through group discussions with colleagues to validate interpretations. Insights from interviews were used to verify

further and contextualise the configurations. At the same time, metadata covariates were analysed to understand how the content of the configurations varied across different contexts and to identify which actors were part of the identified configurations.

3.2.2. Identifying themes

The thirty key documents were also analysed to identify the themes of the discussions. Using the same open coding techniques as described above (Saldaña, 2016) the documents were examined to capture themes that cut across the different configurations. Five key themes were identified (see section 4.1). The discovery process was inductive, allowing themes to emerge naturally from the data. The results were verified and enriched by data from the interviews. The themes were subdivided into distinct standpoints (Table 2). These ranged from the status quo in the centre, representing exceptionalist viewpoints, to more conservative stances on the left and progressive positions on the right. The table illustrates these themes and their standpoints.

3.2.3. Identifying patterns of interactions

The strength of interactions, as depicted in Figure 1, was inferred from qualitative and quantitative indicators extracted from the primary corpus of 280 documents. High-frequency interactions were identified through recurring references to collaboration or shared positions in key CAP discussions. By analysing meeting minutes, we tracked actor involvement and participation in decision-making, noting the frequency of mentions, speaking time discussions. This was quantified by counting the number of times an actor participated in key debates or initiatives. Additionally, we used network analysis techniques to quantify ties, mapping co-occurrence in initiatives and collaboration on policy goals based on document co-signatures and joint project involvement (Termeer & Werkman, 2011). In addition to the document analysis, the interviews provided qualitative insights into actor relationships. Respondents were asked questions such as, “which group dominates the debate?” and “To which actor groups do you, or the organisation you represent, speak most or least frequently?” Responses were converted into tables to visualise interaction patterns, revealing dominant configurations and marginalised voices within the CAP debate. These tables are available upon request.

3.2.4. Identifying patterns of inclusion and exclusion

After identifying themes, configurations, and interactions, we tabulated our findings to provide a complete description of the configurations while referring to their standpoints regarding the different themes in the discussions (see Tables 3 and 4). The configurations were grounded in the document analysis, differentiated by their standpoints on the five key themes, actor composition, and

relationships. For example, some configurations prioritised market liberalisation and competitiveness, while others emphasised public goods or sustainability.

Combining the three empirical results and the reinterpretation resulted in abductive inferences about patterns of inclusion and exclusion during the CAP discussions. For instance, the interactions and dominant themes could indicate exclusion by ideological deadlock. The interactions tell us about the institution’s exclusion of actors from the status quo. These interactions help identify conflicts and alignments among configurations, revealing their role in reinforcing systemic lock-ins. The themes examined show how inclusion and exclusion patterns, shared language, contentious issues, and actor disqualification shaped interactions and power dynamics in CAP debates, obstructing transformative change.

4. Results

4.1. Key themes in the post-2022 CAP debates

Five key themes were identified: discussions about the (i) funding of the CAP, (ii) the nature of the businesses (size and scale of companies), (iii) the future of the system, (iv) the type of governance, and (v) the CAP’s economic rationality, as depicted in Table 2.

- (i) Under the influence of the F2F and Green Deal, the CAP’s focus was meant to be expanded beyond income, production, and existent

Table 2. The scale of key themes in the post-2022 CAP debate (based on our analysis) positions the current situation at the centre, with opposing perspectives on either side.

(i) Funding				
1. Direct price support	2. Subsidy-based with additional support mechanisms	3. Subsidies without strict requirements	4. An increase in funds addressed to eco-schemes	5. Funding exclusively for green farming initiatives
(ii) Nature of agricultural businesses				
1. Large-scale industrialized farms	2. Highly technological advances	3. Status quo	4. Production methods with lower negative social/environmental impact	5. Extensive, sustainable farming
(iii) Future of EU agriculture				
1. Risk	2. Alarming but manageable	3. The situation remains as it is	4. Opens possibilities for new steps	5. Opportunity for development
(iv) Approach to agri-food governance				
1. Top-down and uniform: clear guidelines and prescribed rules by the EU	2. Subsidiarity: clear guidelines by the EU and member states’ implementation	3. Multi-stakeholder approach	4. Local lead	5. Bottom-up and flexible: space for innovation and case-to-case knowledge
(v) Focus				
1. Economy	2. Economic with elements of other focal points	3. Balance of focal points	4. Environmental with elements of other focal points	5. Environment

nature and environmental policies. Still, many funding disputes arose, delaying decision-making. Particularly about eco-schemes, with Parliament favouring 30% and Member States 20%. NGOs advocated even for higher allocations, while farmers split between large producers opposing eco-requirements (I3, D34) and smaller farms supporting innovation (I6). Though measures like environmental ring-fencing and conditionality aimed to align CAP with sustainability goals, stakeholders argued these failed to address environmental challenges: *"The reforms only 'superficially' aligned with sustainability without shifting focus to ecosystem resilience"* (D45).

- (ii) The debate extended to the preferred nature of agrifood businesses. One side of this debate promotes market liberalisation and scaling up to enhance Europe's competitiveness, which resonates with some stakeholders. Others emphasised the "rural way of life", arguing that agriculture provides societal values beyond production, such as food security, environmental stewardship, and cultural heritage. As expressed in D65, *"Farmers are stewards of the countryside, and subsidization should reflect their role in maintaining rural landscapes"*. This perspective illustrates how traditional farming groups have adapted to sustainability without significantly altering their practices.
- (iii) The future of agriculture emerged as another key topic, with perspectives ranging from pessimistic to optimistic. Some viewed social and environmental challenges such as climate change, biodiversity loss, migration, and urbanisation as existential threats, while others saw them as opportunities for innovation. For instance, D18 highlighted, *"Climate pressures force us to rethink farming, creating space for agroecological practices that ensure resilience"*.
- (iv) Discussions about style and type of governance also reflected divergent priorities. Top-down governance advocates supported strict regulatory frameworks to achieve CAP and EGD goals, while bottom-up proponents emphasised the value of farmers' localised knowledge. Multi-stakeholder approaches were frequently proposed, blending these perspectives and advocating collaboration across governance levels (I6). As noted in D78, *"Regional governance allows for nuanced, context-specific solutions while maintaining alignment with broader EU strategies"*.
- (v) Finally, the discussions were sometimes taken to the more abstract level, polarising between economy versus environment, reflecting the tension between exceptionalist and post-exceptionalist worldviews. Under exceptionalism, economic priorities and income and production-supported policies have long dominated, reinforcing the CAP's historical role as a protector of agricultural interests. However, the growing emphasis on sustainability, as championed by the F2F and EGD, signals

a shift towards post-exceptionalism by incorporating broader environmental, social, and cultural values into policy discussions.

4.2. Configurations

Six core configurations were identified: Compromising, Greening, National interest, Continuity, Innovation, and Minimising. Table 3 outlines each configuration’s point of view and its matching stakeholders. Below, we describe how each configuration aligns with the themes discussed in Section 4.1. Table 4 summarises the cross-tabulation between themes and configurations.

4.2.1. Compromising

The compromising configuration seeks to balance sustainability goals, economic resilience, and administrative efficiency through inclusive and adaptable governance. This approach supports both traditional farming

Table 3. An overview of configurations in the post-2022 CAP policy debate.

Configuration:	Summary:	Actors involved:
Compromising	Agri-food policy should remain central in EU policymaking, balancing flexibility for diverse stakeholder interests with clear EU guidance on key priorities to ensure cohesive and effective implementation.	European Commission, European Parliament
Greening	Environmental progress thrives through small-scale, extensive farming. EU policies should encourage this approach while allowing farmers the flexibility to adapt to local conditions and challenges.	Environmental NGOs, Commissioners for Climate-related topics, animal welfare groups, Green MEPs
National interest	Agri-food policy should be more flexible, maintaining its central role in EU policy while ensuring consistent implementation across all member states.	Council of Ministers, national governments
Continuity	Many farmers depend on the subsidies provided under the CAP, and their business will disappear if EU support will be more environmentally focused; farmers fulfil essential functions for the environment and society, and they should not be hindered.	Conservative politicians (national and EU), large-scale farmers, agri-food industry
Innovation	The changing EU agricultural landscape presents an opportunity. If more funds are allocated to research and development, productivity will rise, input will decrease, and the agri-food sector will benefit overall.	Economic research institutes, large-scale farmers
Minimizing	The CAP’s administrative burden on both implementers and farmers should be minimized, as numerous additional provisions over the years have made its execution increasingly difficult.	Middle-sized farmers, farmers representation organizations, implementing organizations

practices and innovative, technologically advanced agriculture. While there is a push for promoting *“sustainable and technologically advanced farming”* (D43), there is also an emphasis on ensuring inclusive support for farms of all sizes (D163), highlighting the need for a flexible support system.

The future of EU agriculture remains contentious, driven by competing priorities between environmental sustainability and economic viability. On the one hand, there is a call for an *“innovative and sustainable framework”* (D1), which would push for significant transformations. On the other hand, there is a focus on *“strategic priorities”* that emphasise maintaining the sector’s long-term stability (D163), revealing ongoing debates over the balance between ecological goals and economic resilience. The configuration’s focus is on integrating climate and sustainability objectives to *“tackle climate change”* and align with the Sustainable Development Goals (D42). However, this vision is tempered by a pragmatic approach, which favours consensus-building and seeks to avoid drastic changes (D163). This dual focus reflects a delicate balance between transformative ambitions and the political realities of achieving broad agreement.

4.2.2. Greening

The greening configuration is deeply intertwined with agricultural practices, decentralised governance structures, future directions, and normative values. Funding remains a key issue, with discussions on redirecting subsidies from land-based payments to those supporting agricultural employment. As one document highlights, *“the basic payment system must evolve towards payments based on agricultural employment and no longer be based on the number of hectares cultivated”* (D91). This financial shift reflects a broader nature of agricultural businesses, emphasising support for sustainable farming practices, such as agroecology and ecological diversification, which is increasingly seen as *“essential for future resilience”* (I2).

The future of EU agriculture is at a crossroads, with visions of sustainability and job preservation shaping long-term goals. The greening configuration calls for reorienting the CAP to meet environmental and climate challenges, noting that *“the instruments are not adapted”* (D91). This reflects a focus on greening the agri-food sector, with measures like carbon taxes and rewards for sustainable practices to ensure that agriculture aligns with the EGD’s ambitions (D48). Regarding agri-food governance, the transition to more results-driven policies signals a move towards more decentralised, locally adapted governance models. With this, greening aims to *“ensure that the CAP contributes ambitiously to the European Green Deal”* (D30), pushing for a future where the CAP supports both farmers and the environment.

4.2.3. National interest

The national interest configuration reflects the balancing act between national and EU-level priorities, with different perspectives emerging across member states. Their common ground is a shared concern with the financial aspects of the reform, particularly the proposed cuts to the CAP budget, which they argue could undermine the policy's ability to support farming across the EU. As one document notes, there is a strong demand for "*appropriate financial support [...] commensurate with the requirements imposed on farmers and the public goods they deliver*" (D125). The configuration also highlights the diverse needs of agricultural businesses, advocating for policies that support small and young farmers while encouraging innovation in farming practices (I1).

The national interest group stresses the importance of flexibility in how funds are allocated, supporting the ability of member states to "*taylor-make their programs*" while still aligning with EU-wide objectives (D125). While many welcome the CAP's green ambitions, including eco-schemes, they caution against too much regulatory complexity. Instead, they argue for a balance that incentivises sustainability without excessive constraints, ensuring the policy remains relevant and practical across Europe. The configuration emphasises maintaining a European framework while allowing for national adaptations (D126).

4.2.4. Continuity

The continuity configuration aligns with conservative perspectives, emphasising the need to maintain the CAP. This viewpoint highlights agricultural stability, particularly considering crises like COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine. One respondent noted, "*Drastic reform could lead to significant disruptions*" (I6). Conservative politicians, large-scale farmers, and the agri-food industry argue that radical changes could destabilise the farming sector and harm rural livelihoods. They advocate for top-down governance to ensure that EU support remains strong and consistent while shielding farmers from excessive environmental pressures (D16).

The CAP is a cornerstone of European cooperation and security for this configuration. One respondent stated, "*Without the CAP, European agriculture could collapse under external pressures*" (I5). This reflects a belief that the CAP protects agriculture from destabilising external shocks and preserves rural stability. The reform's focus is on safeguarding the long-term security of European agriculture. By maintaining a solid framework, the CAP ensures resilience against economic and geopolitical uncertainties.

4.2.5. Innovation

The innovation configuration presents a complex landscape shaped by financial, regulatory, and normative debates, strongly emphasising innovation. On funding, CAP's financial measures reflect competing priorities, with significant investments in restructuring and market promotion (D6).

Regarding the nature of agricultural businesses, this configuration supports diverse farming practices, such as organic and digital agriculture, aiming to modernise and increase efficiency. One document notes that *“further deployment of innovation in agriculture [...] fostering research and investments in digital agriculture”* is key to transforming the sector (D147), highlighting a clear focus on technological innovation to boost productivity and sustainability.

However, perspectives regarding the future of EU agriculture diverge. On the one hand, farmers in this configuration stress the importance of *“maintaining EU quality products”* (D52). In contrast, others emphasise adopting *“digital solutions to enhance competitiveness and sustainability”* (D142), underscoring a shift towards technology-driven agriculture. In terms of agri-food governance, there are debates on integrating the sector within *“a clear legal framework”* to promote innovation (I3). Finally, the focus of CAP remains contested. While some view it as an instrument for maintaining *“competitiveness at an international level”* (D52), others argue for a stronger emphasis on environmental and social sustainability, with innovation playing a pivotal role in balancing these objectives.

4.2.6. *Minimizing*

The minimising configuration calls for a reduction in the CAP’s administrative burden, advocating for more straightforward policies that are easier to implement. Middle-sized farmers, farmers’ representation organisations, and implementing agencies support this stance, arguing that the complexity of the post-2022 CAP, including additional provisions like greening, could undermine farmers’ ability to meet food production demands (D53). They stress the importance of *“clear, measurable policy goals and efficient use of funding”* (D71). This configuration calls for a streamlined implementation process to maintain fairness and effectiveness across member states (I6, D155).

Table 4. Configurations and their viewpoints on the post-2022 CAP debate. The table illustrates the different configurations and their perspectives on key issues within the post-2022 CAP debate. The colour gradient corresponds to the scale in Table 3.

		Themes				
		Funding	Nature	Future	Approach	Focus
Configuration	Compromising	4	3	2	2	3
	Greening	5	5	3	3	5
	National interest	3	2	3	2	2
	Continuity	3	3	2	1	2
	Innovation	3	2	5	3	2
	Minimizing	2	3	2	1	2

4.3. Patterns of interaction

The analysis above offers a snapshot of the evolving dynamics within the post-2022 CAP debates. The configurations identified serve as tools for understanding the complex relationships between competing actors, ideas, interests, and institutions. When these configurations interact and clash, they spark conflicts that shape agri-food policy development. The following section delves into these interactions in greater detail.

All six configurations influenced the post-2022 CAP debates. Figure 1 especially shows the intense and frequent interactions between the *compromising*, *national interest*, and *continuity* configurations, highlighting their established collaboration patterns. One respondent noted the regular meetings with the stakeholders from these configurations, underscoring the routine nature of these connections (I1). These stakeholder groups, including farmers’ organisations, national Ministries of Agriculture, and EU institutions, dominate CAP policy discussions. While these actors have historically played a dominant role in shaping CAP policy (Termeer & Werkman, 2011), they were not an alliance in the more traditional sense, as their points of view and interests were often not fully aligned.

The term “Iron Triangle” (Lizzi, 2022; Sheingate, 2024) has been used in literature to describe this dominant, closed, but not always cohesive network, sustained by mutually reinforcing reciprocal relations. However, in the post-2022 debates, this network has fragmented into the three aforementioned configurations, reflecting shifting priorities and allegiances within the agri-food sector. The compromising configuration seeks to mediate between

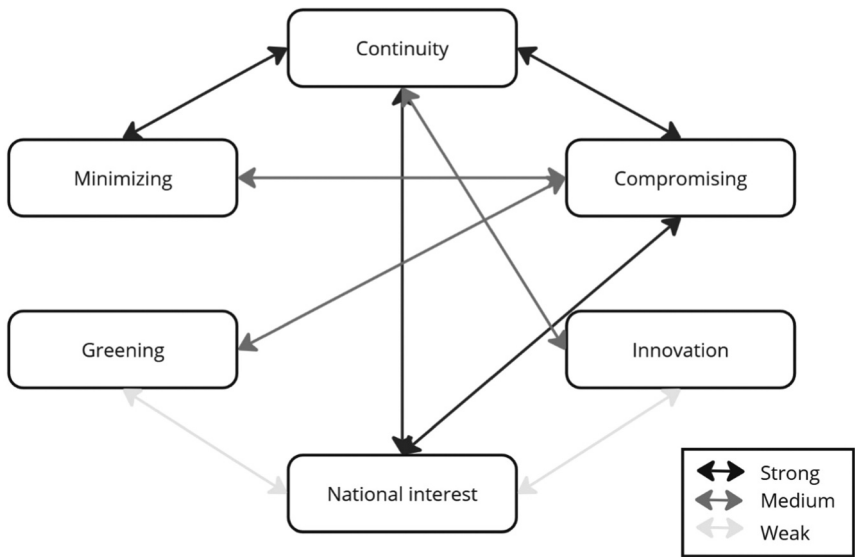


Figure 1. Configurations and interactions.

competing interests, the national interest configuration focuses on safeguarding domestic agricultural agendas, and the continuity configuration champions the status quo, especially for large-scale farming. This fragmentation signals growing tensions among the traditional powerholders, as these once-unified groups now pursue diverging objectives, highlighting different themes.

The divisions within the farming sector itself further highlight this fragmentation. Large-scale farmers, aligned with the continuity configuration, advocate for stability and resist reforms threatening their position. In contrast, middle-scale, traditional farmers, represented by the minimising configuration, prioritise preserving their livelihoods but struggle to gain considerable influence in policy discussions. Meanwhile, the innovation configuration, comprising the agri-food industry, pushes for modernisation through technological advancements and a focus on market competitiveness.

4.4. Mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion

While combining and reinterpreting our finding of themes, configuration, and interactions, we found four patterns of exclusion: (1) fixed rules of interaction, (2) disqualification of actors and meanings, (3) ideational deadlock, and (4) the use of technical and restrictive language.

First, we found that fixed rules of interaction dominated the discussion themes. Even though the “Iron Triangle” was fractured and internal disagreements weakened their collective influence, the enduring dominance of these insider groups continued to shape CAP policy. Equally important, however, are the even less frequent interactions between other configurations with each other. The innovation and minimising configurations interacted frequently with the three dominant configurations but rarely engaged with each other or with the greening configuration. This means that most interactions were mainly between the dominant three configurations or directed at them.

Second, the fixed rules of interactions resulted in the disqualification of actors and meanings. While environmental groups and regional authorities gained access to the CAP debates, their impact remained “*advisory and non-binding*” (I2). In contrast, traditional lobbying groups, including COPA-COGECA, continued to use their established access to policymakers. COPA-COGECA, for example, participated actively in debates while Commissioners and MEPs engaged discreetly with their lobbying representatives on mutual interests (D145). Both EU institutional respondents reported frequent visits from established lobby groups (I4, I5), and interest groups reported consistently reaching out to policymakers. These sustained interaction patterns and their access to key decision-making platforms highlight their continued dominance in policy debates and policy outcomes.

Three, the dominant interaction patterns also resulted in ideational deadlocks, which meant that new themes or ideas formulated in the format of, for instance, a policy motion were disregarded. Even though new actors tried to gain access and insert new ideas, they were mainly disregarded. The greening configuration, for instance, was involved in discussing policies, but once ideas were put on the table, they were sidelined. For example, a respondent from the European Parliament pointed out that many motions for environmental measures were proposed, and only a few were accepted (I4). The concentration of influence created “lock-in” effects, where the exclusionary dynamics marginalise alternative perspectives, hindering the inclusion of new ideas and reform proposals.

Four, and finally, our analysis reveals that the use of technical language and jargon, such as the shift from “cross-compliance” to “conditionality”, functions as a restrictive barrier for outsider groups. These linguistic choices appear to privilege insiders familiar with the terminology while marginalising less experienced actors. As a result, these groups face challenges in fully engaging with the policy process and influencing the agenda, highlighting a structural dynamic that reinforces the dominance of established perspectives.

5. Discussion

The post-2022 CAP reform represents a critical moment in EU agricultural policy, positioned at the crossroads of entrenched historical priorities and growing demands for transformation (Commission, 2024). While the CAP has historically featured an exceptional focus (Grant, 1995), the influence of the F2F and the EGD has prompted a shift towards integrating environmental and social objectives into the policy framework. This intersection underscores the post-2022 reform’s dual challenge: balancing traditional agricultural objectives with the urgent need for systemic change. This study applied post-exceptionalism, configuration, and sensemaking frameworks to interpret the dynamics shaping the post-2022 CAP reform. Post-exceptionalism offers a lens to explore the gradual shift from production-oriented agricultural policies towards multifunctional objectives, including environmental and social concerns (Daugbjerg & Feindt, 2017; Greer, 2017). Configuration and sensemaking analysis provides insight into the actor networks and institutional structures that influence policy outcomes (Termeer & Werkman, 2011).

The findings highlight the continued dominance of at least parts of the entrenched productivist paradigm and actor configurations, consisting of agricultural interest groups, national ministries, and EU institutions, shaping the CAP debates (Lizzi, 2022; Termeer & Werkman, 2011). Despite the growing influence of new actors, such as greening and innovation groups, these configurations, deeply rooted in prioritising economic growth and

productivity, maintain the power of large-scale farmers and the agrifood industry (de la Rosa, 2010). This entrenched power dynamic creates significant barriers to policy shifts. Furthermore, the persistence of path dependency, where long-standing policy interactions and interests continue to shape decision-making, compounds the difficulty of achieving deeper transformation, especially when sustainability reforms often remain superficial (Rac et al., 2020).

The post-2022 CAP reform embodies the tension between competing paradigms, aiming to balance economic growth with ecological concerns. While the inclusion of environmental goals marks incremental progress, the limited structural support for these goals highlights the ongoing challenge of achieving a genuine paradigm shift. Greer's notion of "shallow" post-exceptionalism captures this dynamic, where environmental objectives remain secondary to economic priorities (Greer, 2017). This tension is still evident in the 2022 debates over funding allocation, with the greening configurations advocating for higher allocations to eco-schemes than those proposed by national ministers or the European Commission. These divisions mirror the larger ideological struggle between productivist and exceptionalist views, and multifunctional perspectives advocating for more sustainable farming practices. While the CAP is slowly progressing towards sustainability, the continued dominance of production-focused paradigms and the superficial nature of many reforms underscore the difficulty of achieving deeper, transformative change (Rac et al., 2020; Riedy, 2020).

Additionally, ideational deadlocks between competing visions of agriculture, e.g. those focused on large-scale productivity versus ecological resilience, contribute to the stagnation of key policy decisions. These deadlocks reveal the persistence of economic resilience as the dominant force, with sustainability measures failing to challenge the foundational structures of the CAP. This is exacerbated by exclusionary mechanisms, where technical jargon and complex language marginalise outsider groups, particularly environmental NGOs and small-scale farmers, thus maintaining the status quo (Niederle, 2018). The dominance of insiders and the control over policy discourse reflect the concept of closed networks (Termeer & Werkman, 2011), where decision-making remains concentrated among a select group, preventing broader participation and hindering the adoption of alternative sustainability models. Furthermore, multilevel governance, although not explicitly discussed in this study, introduces additional structural challenges, as the interplay of local, national, and EU-level priorities complicates the alignment of policies, limiting the capacity for a cohesive, transformative shift (Coderoni, 2023; El Bilali, 2019). The Strategic Dialogue on the Future of EU Agriculture (2024) underscores this challenge, recognising the need for collaboration while highlighting the deep structural barriers that hinder meaningful change.

Our study identifies signs of fragmentation within the historically dominant “Iron Triangle” of agricultural interest groups, national ministries, and EU institutions, aligning with the analysis of Termeer and Werkman of closed agricultural policy networks (2011). The increasing presence of greening and innovation groups in the post-2022 CAP debate represents a shift towards inclusion of ecological and technological perspectives, reflecting the broader goals of EGD and F2F (Commission, 2024; Fiala et al., 2024; Mowlds, 2020). Greening and innovation groups’ limited access to decision-making hinders however substantial reform (Skogstad, 1998). Additionally, these groups tend to engage with the traditional, more dominant actors from the more dominant configurations, rather than forming independent coalitions.

To navigate systemic barriers and achieve coherence between economic and environmental goals, future CAP reforms should focus on inclusivity and leveraging emerging coalitions. First, simplifying technical language and making policy processes more accessible could open decision-making spaces to marginalised groups, aligning with calls of broadening participation (Coderoni, 2023; Termeer & Werkman, 2011). This would ensure that environmental and innovation groups have a stronger voice in shaping reforms. Second, promoting strategic coalitions between new and established actors can help align economic and ecological objectives, providing leverage to challenge traditional power structures. These cross-sector partnerships, which integrate ecological and technological priorities, would enable sustainable policy frameworks to develop, advance systemic change, and promote deeper transformation within the CAP.

6. Conclusions

The post-2022 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) debates were shaped by a complex interplay of six dominant actor configurations: compromising, greening, national interest, continuity, innovation, and minimising. These configurations were crucial in determining the policy debates, particularly in the areas of CAP funding, the scale of agricultural businesses, governance approaches, and the balance between economic and environmental priorities. Despite including new social and environmental values, the CAP remains largely dominated by shallow post-exceptionalism, primarily focusing on maintaining existing structures rather than embracing a fundamental shift towards sustainability.

Exclusionary mechanisms within the dominant configurations – such as entrenched power structures, fixed rules of interaction, and the use of technical jargon – effectively limited the inclusion of new ideas and actors, thus hindering meaningful reform. Ideational deadlocks, such as the debates between small- and large-scale farming and the trade-off between economic and environmental goals, further reinforced the status quo. These challenges underscore the difficulty of achieving transformative change in the CAP, as

the lack of inclusive decision-making processes prevents new voices from challenging traditional power structures.

Our findings underscored the importance of promoting inclusiveness in policy debates, particularly in complex sectors like agriculture. Policymakers can create space for new ideas and innovative solutions by addressing exclusionary mechanisms and actively promoting broader participation. A more inclusive CAP would better reflect the evolving needs of agriculture, the environment, social sustainability, and public health, supporting a shift beyond the current dominance of productivist priorities and enabling more profound, systemic change.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Overview of documents analyzed in this study

Actor:	Type:	Period:	Doc no.:	Retrieved from:	Search string:
Council of Ministers	Agriculture and Fisheries Council meetings	11–12 December 2017–25 June 2021	31	Consilium website (accessed June 2022)	"council" AND "Common Agricultural Policy"
European Commission	Press releases + official news statements	7 July 2017–27 June 2021	12	EU Commission website (accessed May 2022)	"Common Agricultural Policy"
Various actors in response to the Commission	Public consultation for the CAP NSP regulation (national strategic plans)	10 November 2020–02 February 2021	70	EU Commission website (accessed May 2022)	N.A.
Various actors in response to the Commission	Public consultation for the CAP	2 February 2017–2 May 2017	23	EU Commission website (accessed April 2022)	N.A.
European Parliament AGRI Committee	Meeting minutes	21 November 2018–20 June 2021	17	European Parliament website (accessed May 2022)	"Meeting Minutes" AND "agri" AND "Common Agricultural Policy" OR "CAP"
Euractiv	News covering the CAP	01 January 2017–25 June 2021	127	Euractiv (accessed June 2022)	"Common agricultural policy"
Total:			280		

Appendix B. full code for analysis

```
## install packages
install.packages(c("readtext", "stm", "LDAvis", "quanteda",
  "quanteda.textstats", "ggplot2", "stringr", "dplyr",
  "tidytext", "pdftools", "tm", "corpus", "stopwords",
  "RColorBrewer", "wordcloud"))
## load packages into library
library(readtext)
library(stm)
library(LDAvis)
library(quanteda)
library(quanteda.textstats)
library(ggplot2)
library(stringr)
library(dplyr)
library(tidytext)
library(pdftools)
library(tm)
require(readxl)
library(corpus)
library(RColorBrewer)
library(wordcloud)

## create list containing all files and contents
files <- list.files(pattern = "pdf$")
text <- lapply(files, pdf_text)
## create a vector of all PDF files
corp <- Corpus(URISource(files), readerControl = list(reader = readPDF))
## create document-term matrix 1
corp.tdm <- TermDocumentMatrix(corp,
  control =
  list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
  stopwords = TRUE,
  tolower = TRUE,
  stemming = FALSE,
  removeNumbers = TRUE,
  bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf))))
## find frequent words
ft <- findFreqTerms(corp.tdm, lowfreq = 10, highfreq = Inf)
## make ft into matrix
as.matrix(corp.tdm[ft,])
## find total counts of words
ft.tdm <- as.matrix(corp.tdm[ft,])
sort(apply(ft.tdm, 1, sum), decreasing = TRUE)
## define stop words
add_sw = c("feedback", "public", "consultation", "can",
"european", "union", "eu", "commission", "also", "s", "well",
"must", "use", "new", "higher", "global", "amendment", "may",
"agricultural", "policy", "regulation", "commission", "commissie",
"council", "plan", "presidency", "shall", "article", "strategic",
```

"member", "referred", "indicators", "data", "performance",
 "proposal", "interventions", "text", "system", "states", "paragraph",
 "enn", "plans", "technologies", "nn-", "proposed", "case", "will",
 "used", "date", "count", "article", "chain", "waters", "production",
 "ministers", "adopted", "agreement", "objectives", "van", "met",
 "councils", "chains", "accredited", "agency", "joint", "applications",
 "lessons", "definition", "drafting", "granted", "big", "gnss",
 "agriculture", "sca", "suggested", "mainly", "although", "especially",
 "com", "cod", "minister", "rev", "int", "emff", "tfeu",
 "increasingly", "version", "respondents", "office", "convention",
 "registration", "inform", "deadlines", "drawn", "submit",
 "haq", "departments", "non", "question", "respondents", "program",
 "programs", "programme", "gaec", "subsequent", "twitter", "retains",
 "define", "refers", "ways", "assessing", "doc", "found",
 "create", "long", "online", "etc", "might", "allowing", "mentioned",
 "called", "annex", "keep", "planned", "croatia", "eu", "estimate",
 "towards", "toward", "cap", "commission", "kingdom",
 "western", "morocco", "norway", "baltic", "plai", " cap",
 "farmers", "acquis", "africa", "tunisia", "ministerial",
 "asterisk", "greece", "spanish", "northern", "skagerrak",
 "mediterranean", "bioeast", "romanian", "staff", "later", "ndm",
 "spr", "cod", "today", "aegean", "finnish", "austrian",
 "discussions", "indication", "designation", "aromatised",
 "connection", "estimated", "deficiencies", "carrying", "determined",
 "interesting", "meaning", "governing", "notification", "remedial",
 "irregularities", "eri", "operation", "summary", "much", "medium",
 "intended", "south", "sai", "others", "poland", "highlighted",
 "relate", "spain", "portugal", "bulgaria", "wording", "oppose",
 "formally", "prüm", "resolutions", "presidencies", "page",
 "clarified", "meetings", "states", "clarify", "administrations",
 "considers", "asked", "balkans", "finland", "den", "pour", "von",
 "frequently", "adapting", "words", "par", "select", "mit", "swiss",
 "canadian", "french", "czech", "annexes", "eus", "eec", "tuesday",
 "shutterstock", "fortuna", "ngeu", "eea", "gerardo", "radosavljevic",
 "klöckner", "timmermans", "it", "copacogeca", "leyen", "tha", "tac",
 "post", "janusz", "foote", "agricu", "com", "eca", "natasha", "acts",
 "zoran", "julia", "euractivcom", "euractiv", "voorwaarden", "still",
 "however", "time", "parliament's", "mep", "parliament", "said",
 "eu's", "policies", "adopt", "year", "point", "set", "december",
 "germany", "add", "delegations", "ireland", "hogan", "september",
 "des", "acteurs")
 ## define stopwords to remove
 SW = c(add_sw, stopwords(kind = "en"), ft)
 SW2 = c(add_sw, stopwords(kind = "en"))
 ## create term_doc matrix excluding new stopwords
 corp.tdm2 <- TermDocumentMatrix(corp,
 control =
 list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
 stopwords = SW2,
 tolower = TRUE,

```

stemming = FALSE,
removeNumbers = TRUE,
bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf)))
## create doc-term matrix excluding new stopwords
corp.dtm <- DocumentTermMatrix(corp,
control =
list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
stopwords = SW2,
tolower = TRUE,
stemming = FALSE,
removeNumbers = TRUE,
bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf)))
## create stm 'out' object
out <- readCorpus(corp.tdm2, type = "Matrix")
## set up STM model with 6 topics
model1 <- stm(out$documents, out$vocab, K = 6, init.type = "Spectral")
visual <- toLDavis(model1, out$documents, reorder.topics = FALSE)
## set up STM model with 7 topics
model2 <- stm(out$documents, out$vocab, K = 7, init.type = "Spectral")
visual2 <- toLDavis(model2, out$documents, reorder.topics = FALSE)
## set up STM model with 5 topic
model3 <- stm(out$documents, out$vocab, K = 5, init.type = "Spectral")
plot(model3, type = "summary", n = 5, xlim = c(0, 0.6))
visual3 <- toLDavis(model3, out$documents, reorder.topics = FALSE)
## find representative texts
thoughts <- findThoughts(model1, texts = text, n = 5)
files[155]
plotQuote(thoughts1, width = 30, main = "Topic 1")
?findThoughts
## see overall frequent words
freq_corp <- sort(colSums(as.matrix(corp.dtm)), decreasing=TRUE)
head(freq_corp, 15)
tail(freq_corp, 15)
## word cloud
wordcloud(names(freq_corp), freq_corp, max.words = 75,
min.freq = 40, scale = c(4, .1), colors = brewer.pal(8, "Dark2"))
## find associations
findAssocs(corp.dtm, "sustainable", corlimit = 0.05)
## Topic 1
t1docs <- list.files(pattern = "pdf$")
t1txt <- lapply(t1docs, pdf_text)
t1corp <- Corpus(URISource(t1docs), readerControl = list(reader = readPDF))
t1.dtm <- DocumentTermMatrix(t1corp,
control =
list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
stopwords = SW2,
tolower = TRUE,
stemming = FALSE,
removeNumbers = TRUE,
bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf)))

```

```

### find frequent terms for topic 1
t1frq <- sort(colSums(as.matrix(t1.dtm)), decreasing=TRUE)
head(t1frq, 15)
otail(t1frq, 15)
### word cloud topic 1
wordcloud(names(t1frq), t1frq, max.words = 75,
min.freq = 40, scale =c(4, .1), colors = brewer.pal(8, "Dark2"))
### find associations topic 1
findAssocs(t1.dtm, "future", corlimit = 0.05)
## Topic 2
t2docs <- list.files(pattern = "pdf$")
t2txt <- lapply(t2docs, pdf_text)
t2corp <- Corpus(URISource(t2docs), readerControl = list(reader = readPDF))
t2.dtm <- DocumentTermMatrix(t2corp,
control =
list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
stopwords = SW2,
tolower = TRUE,
stemming = FALSE,
removeNumbers = TRUE,
bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf))))
### find frequent terms for topic 2
t2frq <- sort(colSums(as.matrix(t2.dtm)), decreasing=TRUE)
head(t2frq, 15)
### word cloud topic 2
wordcloud(names(t2frq), t2frq, max.words = 75,
min.freq = 40, scale =c(4, .1), colors = brewer.pal(8, "Dark2"))
### find associations topic 2
findAssocs(t1.dtm, "future", corlimit = 0.05)
## Topic 3
t3docs <- list.files(pattern = "pdf$")
t3txt <- lapply(t3docs, pdf_text)
t3corp <- Corpus(URISource(t3docs), readerControl = list(reader = readPDF))
t3.dtm <- DocumentTermMatrix(t3corp,
control =
list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
stopwords = SW2,
tolower = TRUE,
stemming = FALSE,
removeNumbers = TRUE,
bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf))))
### find frequent terms for topic 3
t3frq <- sort(colSums(as.matrix(t3.dtm)), decreasing=TRUE)
head(t3frq, 15)
### word cloud topic 3
wordcloud(names(t3frq), t3frq, max.words = 75,
min.freq = 40, scale =c(4, .1), colors = brewer.pal(8, "Dark2"))
### find associations topic 3
findAssocs(t3.dtm, "future", corlimit = 0.05)
## Topic 4

```

```

t4docs <- list.files(pattern = "pdf$")
t4txt <- lapply(t4docs, pdf_text)
t4corp <- Corpus(URISource(t4docs), readerControl = list(reader = readPDF))
t4.dtm <- DocumentTermMatrix(t4corp,
control =
list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
stopwords = SW2,
tolower = TRUE,
stemming = FALSE,
removeNumbers = TRUE,
bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf))))
### find frequent terms for topic 4
t4frq <- sort(colSums(as.matrix(t4.dtm)), decreasing=TRUE)
head(t4frq, 15)
### word cloud topic 4
wordcloud(names(t4frq), t4frq, max.words = 75,
min.freq = 40, scale = c(4, .1), colors = brewer.pal(8, "Dark2"))
### find associations topic 4
findAssocs(t4.dtm, "future", corlimit = 0.05)
## Topic 5
t5docs <- list.files(pattern = "pdf$")
t5txt <- lapply(t5docs, pdf_text)
t5corp <- Corpus(URISource(t5docs), readerControl = list(reader = readPDF))
t5.dtm <- DocumentTermMatrix(t5corp,
control =
list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
stopwords = SW2,
tolower = TRUE,
stemming = FALSE,
removeNumbers = TRUE,
bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf))))
### find frequent terms for topic 5
t5frq <- sort(colSums(as.matrix(t5.dtm)), decreasing=TRUE)
head(t5frq, 15)
### word cloud topic 5
wordcloud(names(t5frq), t5frq, max.words = 75,
min.freq = 40, scale = c(4, .1), colors = brewer.pal(8, "Dark2"))
### find associations topic 5
findAssocs(t5.dtm, "future", corlimit = 0.05)
## Topic 6
t6docs <- list.files(pattern = "pdf$")
t6txt <- lapply(t6docs, pdf_text)
t6corp <- Corpus(URISource(t6docs), readerControl = list(reader = readPDF))
t6.dtm <- DocumentTermMatrix(t6corp,
control =
list(removePunctuation = TRUE,
stopwords = SW2,
tolower = TRUE,
stemming = FALSE,
removeNumbers = TRUE,

```



```
bounds = list(global = c(3, Inf)))  
### find frequent terms for topic 6  
t6frq <- sort(colSums(as.matrix(t6.dtm)), decreasing=TRUE)  
head(t6frq, 15)  
### word cloud topic 6  
wordcloud(names(t6frq), t6frq, max.words = 75,  
min.freq = 40, scale = c(4, .1), colors = brewer.pal(8, "Dark2"))  
### find associations topic 6  
findAssocs(t6.dtm, "future", corlimit = 0.05)
```

Appendix C. Data output – key documents

Configuration:			Document:		Publication type:
1 - compromising	Index:	Actor:	Publication date:	Publication name:	
D163	EU Council	Commission	21 Oct 2020	Interinstitutional File: 2018/0217(COD)	Amendments to policy document
			29 May 2020	Amended proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL WORKING DOCUMENT on Rapporteur's proposal on the NextGenerationEU and Recovery	Internal communication
			23 Sept 2020	Instrument programme for Rural Development Committee on Agriculture and Rural Development	Amendments to policy document
D1	European Parliament	European Parliament	24 Oct 2018	DRAFT REPORT on the proposal for a regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 (COM(2018)0393–C8–0247/2018–2018/0217(COD))	Draft policy document
D42	Commission	Commission	1 June 2018	Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on the financing, management and monitoring of the common agricultural policy and repealing Regulation (EU) No 1306/2013 {SWD(2018) 301 final} - {SEC(2018) 305 final}	Internal communication

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Configuration:		Document:		
Index:	Actor:	Publication date:	Publication name:	
2 - greening				
D30	Media	17 Dec 2019	CAP needs drastic change, says Polish professor	Interview
D44	Commission	1 June 2018	European Commission – Press release EU budget: the Common Agricultural Policy beyond 2020	Official document
D48	Commission	18 Dec 2020	European Commission – Press release Commission publishes recommendations for Common Agricultural Policy national strategic plans	Press release
D62	Media	20 Dec 2020	Common_Agricultural_Policy _ National Strategic Plans	News article
D91	media	26 Nov 2019	French government institute welcomes idea of a CAP supporting farmers' jobs	News article
3 – national interest				
D119	Council	11–12 Dec 2017	AGRICULTURE Communication from the Commission on the future of food and farming	Meeting notes
D124	Council	17–18 Dec 2018	Ministers exchanged views on the Commission's communication on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP).	Meeting notes
D126	Council	18 June 2018	AGRICULTURE Post 2020 common agricultural policy (CAP) reform package	Meeting notes
D154	Council	19–20 Oct 2020	Post 2020 Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) reform package	Meeting notes
D125	Council	19 March 2018	OUTCOME OF THE COUNCIL MEETING 3776th Council meeting Agriculture and Fisheries	Press release

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Configuration:		Document:		
4 - continuity	Index: Actor:	Publication date:	Publication name:	
5 - innovation	D16 Media	4 Sept 2020	Agrifood Brief	News article
	D113 Council	24 Jul 2019	Ministers exchanged views on the Commission's communication.	Meeting notes
	D69 Media	16 June 2021	Decision to invite EU farmers association to informal CAP talks divides opinion	Press release
	D56 Media	17 Nov 2020	MEPs urge Commission to rev up work on transitional CAP	News article
	D145 EP	30 Sept 2019	Post-2020 CAP may start two years late	Media statement
	Index: Actor:	Publication date:	Publication name:	
	D164 Research institute (requested by EP)	Feb 2019	Study future of the CAP	Research paper
	D52 Commission	7 Dec 2021	COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT EVALUATION ON THE INFORMATION POLICY ON THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY	Internal document
	D142 EP AGRI committee	Dec 2018	Research for AGRI Committee - A comparative analysis of global agricultural policies: lessons for the future CAP	Internal document
	D6 EP AGRI committee	4 dec 2019	Evaluation of the CAP measures	Internal document
	D147 Commission	19 Nov 2020	Research for AGRI Committee - Impacts of the digital economy on the food chain and the CAP	Internal document

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Configuration:		Document:		
6 - minimizing	Index: Actor:	Publication date:	Publication name:	
D71	European Court of Auditors	July 2018	Opinion No 7/2018	Research paper
D2	EP	29 Oct 2018	DRAFT REPORT	Internal document
D148	Council	10 Oct 2018	Interinstitutional File: 2018/0216)	Internal document
D53	Commission	22 May 2020	COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT Analysis of links between CAP Reform and Green Deal	Internal document
D155	Council of Europe	2020	rep_2020_xxx.pdf	Report