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THE TRAJECTORY OF THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY AND ITS IMPACT ON PORTUGUESE AGRICULTURE FOLLOWING ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN UNION

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ABSTRACT

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) has featured as a priority on the European Economic Community (EEC), now the European Union (EU), agenda ever since its founding by the Treaty of Rome in 1957. At that time, the CAP, in addition to fulfilling an economic function, also took on a significant social role: guaranteeing social and territorial cohesion and a decent standard of living to farmers alongside the supply of foodstuffs at generally accessible prices. This current article not only describes the CAP trajectory within the scope of building the EU but also seeks to analyse its impacts particularly on the rural sector of Portugal across the socioeconomic and social cohesion dimensions. The methodological procedures adopted involve analysis of primary and secondary sources of information. The research techniques applied above all incorporate documental analysis and undertaking semi-structured interviews with privileged actors and through means of contacts with key actors. The general results point to the CAP, over the course of its trajectory, having undergone a series of transformation that, in summary form, divide up into two phases: one focused on the productive side and on productivity through to the 1980s; the other, subsequent to this period, prioritising rural development with commitments targeting the challenges stemming from climate change, population ageing and the abandoning of disadvantaged rural regions, among others. As regards the impacts of CAP on the Portuguese rural sector, while unable to reverse the trend towards abandoning the countryside and the ageing of the rural population (49% of farmers are aged 65 or over, the eldest in the EU with its overall average of 29.5%), the policy has rendered the modernisation of agriculture viable through investments in frameworks, agricultural training and education, among other aspects. In general terms, the adhesion of Portugal to the EU was positive for the sector that would have suffered far deeper without the support received in the meanwhile.

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INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has constituted a priority on the European political and economic agenda ever since the first talks over drafting the Treaty of Rome, signed in 1957. At this stage, recollections of years of food shortages in the post-war period and insecurity over food supplies transformed the rural sector into a central component in the negotiations leading up to the founding of the European Economic Community (EEC). The very first phase of setting up the EEC involved defining the general outline of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) given that

the participant states agreed on the need to eliminate national market intervention mechanisms and transpose them to the EEC level. Hence, agricultural products were able to free circulate among the signatories while simultaneously maintaining public intervention in the cattle and poultry breeding sectors (Schrader, *et al.*, 1994). Correspondingly, Article 39 of the Treaty of Rome specified that the CAP

Should strive to obtain the following shared objectives

- Boosting agricultural productivity through means of raising investments in agricultural technology and the rational usage of the factors of production;
- Ensuring a fair standard of living for farmers through the means of providing appropriate levels of earnings;

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- Stabilising agricultural market prices;
- Guaranteeing the security of supplies and
- Ensuring the availability of agricultural products to consumers at accessible prices (EC, 2017).

We would highlight that, since its original launch, CAP has been successively restructured even while retaining its core essence and goals, thus, to stabilise the supply of foodstuffs in member states and protect farmers (Zobbe, 2001). Thus, the CAP gained its role as a leading mechanism in the integration policy and with a corresponding major impact on the overall EEC budget. Even while generating only a small and declining proportion of total European GDP (1.2% on average), agriculture has always received a substantial percentage of the budget. To convey an understanding of its weighting in the annual European Union (EU) budget, even after the funds allocated have shrunk drastically over the last three decades, in the 1970s and 1980s, CAP expenditure accounted for in excess of 70% of the annual budget. This currently stands at 40% of the EU budget distributed across two pillars: the first providing support for agricultural production and the second for rural development (EC, 2013; Carvalho, 2016)¹. Therefore, the CAP, beyond its economic dimension, also assumes a relevant social role as planned for since its first implementation and taking the form of a partnership between European society and its farmers. This consists of strengthening economic, social and territorial cohesion through reducing the regional disparities of member states and thus involving investing in the development of lesser advantaged regions through bringing about stability in the earnings of farmers. Consequently, the "earnings support payments" system stimulates respect for environmental standards, food security and animal health and wellbeing. The rural and territorial development policy seeks to foster social cohesion in less advantaged rural areas in order to respond to the economic, social and environmental issues of the 21st century (EC, 2017; Moyano-Estrada and Ortega, 2015).

Some half a century on from its existence, the CAP is nevertheless facing new challenges, specifically: cooperating for the production of food viable for a world population experiencing sharp growth; dealing with climate change and guaranteeing the sustainable management of natural resources; and while still also maintaining its social commitment centred around the protection of the rural environment in the EU and boosting the rural economy (EC, 2017; Shucksmith, *et al.*, 1994). In relation to Portugal, on its accession to the EEC, in 1986, the country had to adopt the CAP and thus embarked upon a process of major economic and social transformations in its rural sector. Among the main subsequent changes were the implementation of the pricing policy for agricultural markets alongside access to structural funds for supporting the modernisation of production and commercialisation processes in the agricultural sector (Cordovil, *et al.*, 2004). At the time of membership, Portuguese agriculture was facing a range of deep structural challenges. There were only precarious infrastructures, low levels of productivity and income – below those of other member states –, limited levels of investment and, additionally, a landholding structure with small scale properties most prevalent incurring production costs above those in effect in the EEC (Vareta, 2014; Rolim, 2017).

However, these weaknesses did gain recognition in its Adhesion Treaty that provided Portugal with a two-stage integration process. Initially, the country was able to benefit from the financial incentives provided by PEDAP – the Specific Program for the Development of Portuguese Agriculture with the objective of modernising the sector even while not yet subject to the rules in effect for prices and markets. Only in the second phases did the sector have to cope with opening up to the European Common Market (EC, 2014; Noronha, 2016). When taking a more superficial perspective, we may affirm that the country may have benefitted from the agriculture policy structural measures put into practice under the auspices of the CAP. In fact, this did happen and the impacts for Portuguese farmers were significant. They began competing from a position of equality in the established common market even while the prices of Portuguese products were well above those prevailing in the EEC and in addition to weaker physical and technological infrastructures than those in effect in the other member states (Noronha, 2016; Marques, 2004). Within this framework, the impacts were intense and reverberated across various levels as it did not prove possible to revert the downward trend that was leading to the abandoning of thousands of smallholdings, the emptying out of the countryside and leaving only an ageing and poorly educated rural population.

Thus, the objective of this article involves analysing the trajectory of the CAP and the socioeconomic impacts on the Portuguese rural sector following its 1986 membership of the EEC. This not only includes a brief overview of the trajectory of CAP within the scope of the development of the EU but also specifically seeks to consider its impacts on Portuguese agriculture across the socioeconomic and social cohesion dimensions. This furthermore also analyses the main changes that have taken place to CAP, its evolution in terms of the transformations to its guidelines and the subsequent reforms in terms of both the EU and Portugal. The methodological procedures applied incorporates analysis of primary and secondary information sources dealing with key phases in the CAP trajectory and its effects on Portuguese agriculture. The research techniques applied above all made recourse to documental analysis and holding semi-structured interviews. In turn, the empirical research stem from the interviews undertaken with privileged informants with the objective of contributing towards defining the object and field of analysis before aggregating the knowledge produced. This article divides into two sections in addition to this introduction. The first approaches the CAP, its origins and development before the second presents the CAP and the transformations leveraged in agriculture in Portugal before then closing with some final considerations.

The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), its origins and trajectory

The consolidation of the European Union (EU) and its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) stretches back across the very trajectory of Europe far back into the 20th century and a period of worldwide conflicts. The years after World War Two, hit by hunger and poverty, subjected masses of people to a harsh reality that would persist in the memories of survivors and future generations. These factors ensured that agriculture represented a priority right from the outset of designing a European Community as a fundamental component to its process of socioeconomic integration.

¹ The EU divides the budgetary resources between these two pillars and distributes them across four axes: agricultural and forestry competitiveness, the environment and managing rural areas, diversification of rural economies and quality of life in rural areas and rural development initiatives (EC, 2017).

The post-World War Two governments of Europe, in addition to striving to guarantee their food security, worked to ensure the stability of their economies and the security of their citizens. In this sense, they began acting to protect their societies, consolidating that generally termed as the welfare state, which became a dominant feature on the European political agenda. The guiding idea was that a common and integrated agricultural market would return positive effects on the quality of life of rural producers and consumers in general. Furthermore, the agricultural sector had featured on the EEC agenda right from the beginning of negotiations in the belief that the economic and political strength of the common market would result in the consolidation of a modern and integrated agricultural sector (Carvalho, 2015 and 2016). Hence, the recognition of the social and economic importance of agriculture served the objective of not only minimising the impact of price fluctuations but also sought to provide a better quality of life to farmers through raising their level of earnings.

These convictions stemmed from the assumptions that the instabilities and uncertainties of the market were greater in agriculture than in other sectors of the economy and that the adjustments held direct consequences for economic recovery and growth in general. Other key expected consequences from this integration derived from gaining privileged access to partner markets for exporting surpluses and community protection against products arriving from third party countries (Zobbe, 2001). In this context, the CAP emerged within the framework of a broad reaching project of socioeconomic integration implemented by the founding members of the EEC and establishing a very successful common policy². We would further highlight that, at the time of setting up the EEC, Keynesian policies were undergoing implementation and designed in accordance with the perception that the state had the duty to provide for the basic needs of its citizens (Shucksmith, *et al.*, 1994). Correspondingly, the state was the main guarantor of the income of workers and farmers through means of adopting anticyclical policies and striving to attain full employment.

Agricultural policies consequently incorporated the public goal of fostering social wellbeing in diverse European countries (Schrader, *et al.*, 1994; Carvalho, 2015). Hence, the European political leadership strove to identify the means of ensuring the earnings of farmers became less susceptible to variations in market conditions and converged with those of urban workers (Shucksmith, *et al.*, 1994; Sorensen, 2008). Furthermore, the modernisation of agriculture met the challenge of food security at a period of time of decolonisation when European countries were no longer in receipt of colonial raw materials and foodstuffs. For all these motives, there was the need to replace traditional sources of food with other, more secure alternatives with the corresponding option to enhance productivity through the modernisation of production, empowerment and support for farmers (Carvalho, 2015 and 2016; Rolim 2017).

² In order to ensure the achievement of the objectives set out, some principles and implementation mechanisms, established in 1962, were transversally expanded to cover all of the CAP – the unity of the market, community preference and financial solidarity – which, in order to establish the single market, then had to ensure the free circulation of agricultural products and set prices on the community scale, which took place through handing down institutional prices, common rules for competition and the elimination of barriers to community trade (Cordovil *et al.*, 2004).

Therefore, the planning of CAP did not only span economic dimensions but also held a relevant social function. In addition to guaranteeing food security, there was the objective of maintaining social stability through retaining a major contingent of the population in the countryside³. The justification for this stemmed from the consideration of rural desertification as a social problem. This encapsulated how migration, the ageing of the rural population and low population densities would bear grave social consequences both for the countryside and for urban environments. Correspondingly, the continued presence of a significant proportion of farmers became a matter of priority (Moravcsik, 2000). In summary, the CAP leveraged three essential objectives: in social terms to the extent this sought to bring about parity in agrarian and non-agrarian earnings; in economic terms through raising the level of production and stabilising markets; and finally in the political field through perceiving agriculture as a factor in community integration (Moyano-Estrada and Ortega, 2015). The great merit of the CAP, according to Marques (2004), was enabling the unification of the agricultural policies of the different countries through the means of constructing a common pricing policy resulting in high and stable prices. This strategy also aligned with a broad range of interests: on the one hand, the policy above all benefitted the better capitalised and more efficient producers; on the other hand, this avoided penalising the less efficient producers through exposing them to market forces and instead guaranteeing a market for their products at high prices. The legitimacy of this pricing guarantee policy to society emerged out of not only the economic character of the ongoing modernisation – within the scope of guaranteeing food security and ending external dependence – but above all out of the social dimension of preserving a large number of “non-efficient” family farm holdings (Nascimento, 2005; Silva, 2000).

The positive results of the CAP, in terms of the increases in production and productivity, provided convincing motives for governments to continue defending its maintenance down through the subsequent decades. In general terms, the European cities were the greatest beneficiaries in gaining access to sufficient food supplies at accessible prices. Currently, in the majority of EU members, the average household expenditure on food corresponds to approximately 11% of total expenditure – thus, half of that spent in 1962 (EC, 2014). These aspects resulted in the idea of the “exceptionalism” of agriculture becoming generalised in conjunction with the idealised image among the urban population that out in the country people engaged in hard labour, subject to pressures and that high levels of physical effort were required to adjust to the instabilities caused by fluctuations in markets and the weather. Furthermore, such workers became perceived as the “guardians of the landscape”, living in harmony with nature and perpetuating a way of life cherished and appreciated by urban citizens (Grant, 2009; Carvalho, 2016). This conception that agriculture was a special sector and correspondingly needed differentiated treatment to that provided to other economic sectors remained in the

³ The EU interventions, under the auspices of the CAP, sought to achieve a socioeconomic balance between boosting the earnings of European farmers, sustaining farmers and their farms that would not otherwise be viable for production due to either their areas containing natural restrictions and limitations or because there was a greater risk of abandoning the land; fostering rural and environmental development and stabilising European food markets (Cantore, Kennan, and Page, 2011).

rhetoric deployed by governments seeking to maintain the CAP as a core community policy in terms of political and financial mobilisation (Greer, 2013). The CAP continues to be a policy that enables small farm holders to stay in production, avoiding urban flight and able to eradicate the spectre of hunger and food shortages. This discourse, with its appeal to the cultural heritage of agriculture and the need to protect family farms, served to legitimise agricultural integration (Carvalho, 2015 and 2016; EC, 2014). If, on the one hand, there were explicit concerns over supporting the preservation of agricultural structures evaluated as “less efficient” and uncompetitive in terms of market based criteria; on the other hand, ever since its launch, the CAP has also ended up boosting and providing greater benefits to larger scale farm operations. However, there still remained the goal of protecting smaller farm holdings and hence the funding applied to redistributive policies able to safeguard the most fragile links in the agricultural chain of production. Nevertheless, the problem remains that the greatest benefits continue to flow to the larger scale producers (Nascimento, 2005; Rolim, 2017). These favourable results in terms of production and productivity, however, were already displaying the first signs of imbalance, both in productive and budgetary terms, towards the end of the 1960s. The rise in production inevitably encountered limitations and requiring measures to curb the rising levels of surplus production. To this end, three control mechanisms underwent implementation: establishing reference purchase prices to avoid falls in prices; raising the restrictions on imports through means of import customs duties; and selling off surpluses in external markets through establishing export incentive mechanisms (Seixas, 2013).

In parallel, within the context of international trade, through the means of the CAP, the EEC obtained a leading position but while also confronting deep criticism for its protection of the common market and despite having supported the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), ratified in 1947 (currently the WTO – World Trade Organisation), which then identified the agricultural sector as a special case and consequently not subject to the same treatment applied to other sectors on the multilateral agenda. While these agreements underwent ratification in the 1950s and 1960s, the EU was defending these aspects even under strong pressure from some countries (Carvalho, 2015). Nevertheless, the EU represents the largest world import market and the second largest exporter of foodstuffs worldwide (EC, 2013; Carvalho, 2016). The pressure for changes to the CAP, both internal and external, only arose in the 1980s when the first substantial change took place: the operational stimulus model no longer concentrated on supporting prices and began to converge with a direct support regime to support agricultural earnings (Cordovil, *et al.*, 2004). With these alterations, the emphasis of the common policy fell upon defending rural income support policies as a defensive reaction to the fall in agricultural product prices (Greer, 2013). The CAP’s structural transformations, furthermore, proceeded throughout the 1990s through incorporating issues related to rural and territorial development. In environmental terms, the consequences of industrialising agriculture had led to soil erosion and the pollution of hydric resources with less productive areas getting abandoned in the meanwhile. Furthermore, the reform of CAP coincided with the Earth Summit held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 that was to launch the principles of sustainable development. Therefore, the European commitments assumed in international conferences, in the rounds of WTO

negotiations, in conjunction with the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the Soviet Union, drove the transformation of the CAP (Cordovil, *et al.*, 2004). In addition to these internal and external influences on the new commitments incorporated into the CAP, according to Marsden (1995), there were also new social and economic functions attributed to rural areas. Hence, the rural environment, in addition to its productive agricultural functions, gained new attributes as an environment able to host the development of multiple activities – among which stand out its role in the consumption of tangible and intangible goods and services. Within this framework, a deeper understanding of the rural universe requires analysis of the production and consumption relations on the local and global scales and including the rural dimension within this scope. Within this framework of CAP transformation, the reform of 2000, symbolically denominated “Agenda 2000”, strengthened and deepened the objectives first set out in the 1992 reform, specifically competitiveness and the multi-functionality and sustainability of agriculture anchored around two pillars: the first oriented towards market policies and income levels; the second targeting rural and territorial development measures so as to contribute towards planning and structuring rural environments while protecting both nature and producers in difficulty in vulnerable regions (EC, 2017). While on the one hand the successive reforms strengthened the orientation of European agriculture towards international market rules; on the other hand, the direct payments held the objective of protecting the less competitive rural producers and those most exposed to the prevailing climatic and market conditions (Garzon, 2013; Carvalho, 2015).

The 2003 reform adopted a “decoupling” approach with the majority of payments going directly to production as a signal that the global market rules would be followed. The goal here was to strengthen the rural development policy, including the reduction in direct payments and boosting expenditure on rural development. This saw the ending of intervention purchases of various products, establishing quantitative limits for some and maximum prices for others (Carvalho, 2016). Despite the CAP having become increasingly subject to market variations, in keeping with the commitments assumed within the WTO and the bilateral agreements reached by the EU, there were steadily rising pressures for changes to its internal structure (Josling, *et al.*, 2010; Ortega and Moyano-Estrada, 2017). These changes in the direction of the CAP held major consequences for the budget expenditure of the EU given its significant falls: from 70% in 1985 to 40% in 2009. Direct aid to producers fell back from 40% in 2004 to 25% in 2009. The direct “decoupled” payments dropped from 77% in 2004 to 15% in 2008 all the while the indirect “decoupled” payments surged from 3% to 68% and payments for rural development advanced from 15% to 18% over the same period (Cantore, Kennan and Page, 2011). Export incentives also fell sharply, from €10 billion in the 1990s to €160 million in 2011 (EC, 2013).

Subsequently, the 2006 produced CAP, which remained in effect from 2007 to 2013, experienced few alterations in relation to the prior version. The themes continued bound up with the rural and territorial development policies focused on three distinct areas: competitiveness, the environment and quality of life and rural diversification (EC, 2017). In 2013, the fifth reform of the CAP took place and spanning the 2014-2020 period. The post-2013 CAP objectives, and still in effect, do not contain any major variations in relation to their predecessors.

In economic terms, these prioritise food security, improvements to competitiveness and the more equitable division of the value generated by the agro-industry chain of value. As regards the environment, the priority lay with the utilisation of natural resources more sustainably and combatting climate change. The territorial measures also focused more closely on guaranteeing the economic and social dynamics of the more vulnerable rural regions with additional support for earnings in those regions facing natural difficulties (Massot, 2017; Ortega and Moyano-Estrada, 2017). Additionally, in relation to the CAP 2014-2020, the major guidelines for the period essentially interrelate with the conversion of support and subsidies into a multi-functional system. This reform made a deeper division between support for production in favour of the generic support for earnings that began in 2003. This phase prioritised the consolidation of the two CAP pillars, hence, combining financing for direct support and market based measures for rural development⁴.

The statement below makes it clear how

Under the auspices of the CAP, there are today two major instruments: one with a set of support policies for the earnings of farmers, thus, that do not involve support for production but rather for the sustainability of meaningful farmer income levels and that enable them to continue on their lands so as to guarantee a more balanced settlement pattern along with some territorial solidarity, etcetera (E1). This correspondingly reiterates how the main modifications introduced to the CAP in 2013 targeted its general orientation: the sectorial priorities (focused on the productive dimension, with direct support to farmers and market management actions through to the 1980s), took on a territorial dimension after the 1990s, striving to manage rural territories with wider reaching commitments focused on dealing with the challenges of the global market, climate change, the ageing population and the desertification of disadvantaged rural regions, among others. In summary, the most significant features of the CAP began to integrate the objectives of rural development into the cohesion policy⁵ set the objective of reducing the inequalities existing among the diverse EU territories.

The CAP and the transformation of agriculture in Portugal

With the adhesion of Portugal to the EEC in 1986, its rural sector fell under the auspices of the CAP. Henceforth, Portuguese agriculture was to experience major changes in both economic and social terms. In order to describe the impact of the CAP on Portuguese agriculture, we initially set out a brief description of the situation and positioning of the sector in the preceding period and about the changes that took place following membership of the EEC. Subsequently, we set out our analysis of the impacts in terms of the social function based on data sourced from the four Agricultural Censuses, reports by the INE – the Portuguese Institute of Statistics and interviews.

⁴ We would highlight that the most significant features of the CAP began to integrate the objectives of rural development into the cohesion policy with the objective of reducing territorial inequalities. The quantity of resources attributed to this policy for the 2014-2020 period totals 376 billion euros – thus bordering on the amount of funding allocated to the CAP over this same period (Moyano-Estrada and Ortega, 2015).

⁵ Social cohesion interlinks the level of access by the population to a certain quality of basic collective services to the profiles leading to greater social inclusion and the effectiveness of public policies reflected in increasing quality of life and the reduction of disparities (Rolim, 2017).

General aspects of the situation in the Portuguese rural sector before and after EEC membership

In order to grasp the situation in the Portuguese rural sector, we need to take into account the period prior to the 25 April 1974 revolution. Up to that time, during five decades of dictatorship, the country's agriculture sector had stagnated, was extremely dependent on natural processes and dependent on the exterior and correspondingly unable to meet national food production requirements (Marques, 2004). Furthermore, the estate based structure was characterised by duality and asymmetry in terms of the scale of properties and ownership of the land, a situation that remained partially in place even after the fall of the dictatorship (according to data in table 1). The difficult situation facing Portuguese agriculture reflects in the structural indicators for the pre-adhesion period. According to Vareta (2014), the landholdings and patterns of cultivation were fragmented; farmers had low levels of education, with high rates of ageing; the technologies were manual and animal labour intensive; and there was a lack of investment targeting either infrastructures or research. On the other hand, in the EEC, the prices were stable, institutionally established and maintained by means of protection against imports; variable taxation rates encouraged production and led to self-sufficiency and the production of surpluses. This contrasting situation generated pessimism about the capacity of Portugal to compete with other member states (Silva, 2000).

Faced with this pessimistic perspective on the capacity of Portuguese agriculture to compete on a level playing field with its EEC partners at the time of adhesion, the transitory program provided for a gradual period of adaptation. In 1978, the Commission established measures for application, including raising the size of landholdings, increasing investment levels and better professional training for farmers, among other measures (Vareta, 2014). This report detailed how the Portuguese and Community agricultural sectors were in cycles of development with different scales. To provide an example, agricultural prices in Portugal were between 20% and 40% higher than those prevailing in the EEC (Silva, 2000). The 1985 signed Adhesion Treaty agreed to a ten-year period of transition taking into consideration the adjustments necessary to align with the CAP.

This document stipulated the organisation of markets, the harmonisation of prices and specific policies for the sector. The application of community regulations to Portuguese agricultural products would come about according to two transitional models, the classical and by stages in accordance with the greater or lesser vulnerability of products to any intensification in competition (Vareta, 2014). The classical transitory regime foresaw a period of seven years for those products with the greatest level of asymmetries to community prices and applied to the following products: olive oil, conserved fruits, tomatoes for industry, lamb and mutton, among others. The phased transitory regime set out a five year period that requires substantial changes by institutions and commercial practices in order to adopt the CAP mechanisms. This found that Portuguese prices were significantly above those prevailing in the EEC, especially those in effect for products such as cereals, fresh fruits, beef and pork, milk and wine. Furthermore, Portugal also received support under structural funding measures as well as under the auspices of pre-adhesion regimes, which followed the application of community structural policies (Carvalho, 2015 and 2016).

Table 1. Structural indicators for Portuguese agriculture – 1968, 1989, 1999 and 2009

Structural Agriculture Indicators	Year			
	1968	1989	1999	2009
Number (thousand holdings or agricultural producers)	811.7	550.9	382.2	278.1
Number of holdings (thousand) by size < 5 ha	631.6	450.4	299.3	208.4
20 to 100 ha	153.2	78.9	61.5	49.3
> 100 ha	22.2	16.3	15.6	14.4
Agricultural area cultivated and composition (million ha)	4.10	3.88	3.74	3.54
Arable lands	3.28	2.36	1.75	1.17
Permanent crops	0.60	0.78	0.71	0.69
Permanent pasture	0.22	0.74	1.28	1.68
Holding structure (thousand holdings)				
Self-owned holding	517.5	499.4	357.0	262.5
Leased holding	121.8	117.7	493	27.7
Others	172.3	53.0	38.5	20.9
Juridical structure (thousand holdings)	810.9	550.1	381.1	277.1
Individual producers	810.3	546.1	375.9	270.5
Companies	0.6	3.7	5.2	6.6
Individual producers by age (thousand)	811.6	546.1	375.9	270.5
Aged under 35	87.0	34.9	14.2	5.3
Aged between 35 and 65	551.5	354.3	217.9	132.0
Aged over 65	173.1	156.8	143.8	133.2
Individual producers by level of education (thousand)	811.6	546.1	375.9	270.5
Illiterate and primary education	799.9	524.9	357.8	246.8
High school	5.3	15.1	8.2	11.4
University	6.5	6.1	9.9	12.3

Source: INE, Agriculture Censuses of 1968, 1989, 1999 and 2009 – adapted from Marques (2014).

With the establishment of the European Union (EU) in 1992, through the rationalisation of the Maastricht Treaty, CAP underwent another reform process. Of the conditions initially established for Portuguese agriculture, throughout the transitory period, the process of integration ended up completed prior to the deadline set. The changes in CAP extended to a restructuring of its initial objectives within the framework of containing production levels (Vareta, 2014).

In this period, the EU was experiencing agricultural surpluses and needed to sell to countries with shortfalls in their own production, such as Portugal. This factor still further worsened the precarious situations of Portuguese agriculture that faced serious difficulties in competing and was dealing with the new trajectory brought about by the CAP. The new common policy supported income through means of direct support mechanisms to the detriment of the support for production under the previous policy. The impacts of these changes on the Portuguese rural sector were more expressive in relation to their other partners as Portugal needs policies able to develop both production and productivity but the measures adopted were designed to constrain production and contrary to the logic in effect at the time of adhesion (Silva, 2000; Marques, 2004). The reflections of these changes on the Portuguese economy were immense with the country now facing an open economy, falls in the prices of agricultural products and incentives for consumption. Given the lack of response capacity of national production, this drove an increase in imports, worsening the trade balance and negative impacts on public debt (Silva, 2000).

These effects on the Portuguese rural sector are described by interviewee 4 as follows

[...] what happened was positive as Portugal gained access to structural funds and otherwise there wouldn't have been the means to modernise agriculture. Indeed, there was a lot of investment, training of farmers; all of this got done with European funds. On the other hand, we had and have to compete with the other EU countries in an open market. [...]. In much of the country, we do not have efficient agriculture, in many areas, it's pure subsistence, therefore, this shock happened and thousands of farmers abandoned agriculture

over the course of these years and still now ongoing. Practically all those farmers that remain, [...], are the most efficient, those that were able to upgrade technologically, boost the diversification of their operations. Therefore, only they remained but this is the negative side, we might say, of the adhesion of Portugal to the EU (E4). The indicators presented in the following item on agriculture in Portugal corroborate the contents and discussion of this interviewee.

General indicators on Portuguese agriculture

The indicators applied for evaluating the impacts of CAP on the Portuguese rural sector are the following: the trend in the number of active farms, their size, the agricultural area under cultivation and its composition, the form of farm operation, the juridical structure of properties, the situation of farmers by age and level of education. However, prior to beginning with the presentation of these structural indicators, we here advance a brief summary, based on general INE data from 2014. In general terms, adhesion led to growth in agricultural societies that then contributed towards the competitiveness of the sector through means of adopting professionalised management processes and economies of scale. However, this internal growth does not prove as expressive when compared with data for the broader EU. The fragility of farm holdings, especially small scale ventures, reflects in the TVSP⁶ that, for Portugal, stands at 17,100 euros per farm against the 25,000 euro average for the EU. Furthermore, these farming operations are run by an aged population, the most elderly in the EU and with few qualifications. Only 5.5% completed higher education and 84.6% report exclusively practical training. Additionally, less than a fifth of farmers work full time on their farms. Simultaneously, there is a low proportion of young persons in the sector, in constant decline, which conveys the continued trend of abandoning agriculture (INE, 2014). In relation to the labour productivity of Portugal, this stood at 14,000

⁶ Total Production Value (TPV) or Total Value of Standardised Production (TVSP) of the farming operation corresponds to the sum of the different TPVs obtained by each activity, multiplying the TPV by the number of units (by area of employee) existing for this activity on the farm (INE, 2014).

euros/AUW⁷ in 2013, well below the European average of 31,000 euros/ AUW. Rural Portuguese producers work an average of 21.3 hours per week on their farms with less than a fifth working full time. This situation of pluri-activities in the rural sector also emerges in other contexts, as is the case with the French (Marsden, 1995) and Brazilian (Schneider, 2003) realities. These authors conclude that small producers are compelled to seek out new sources of income in addition to their farms due to the competitive environment, which prevents them surviving exclusively from the earnings gained from agricultural activities.

Other data on the rural Portuguese reality corroborate the debate on the pluri-activities and the multi-functionality prevailing in agriculture. Around a quarter (23.5%) of Portuguese producers engage in other complementary activities, a situation with greatest incidence in those aged under 40 (59.3%), while there is only a residual number of elderly farmers seeking out other activities (4.2%). Generally, only a very few farmers live exclusively from agriculture (6.2%), with the majority complementing their incomes through pensions and retirement allowances (65.3%). Nevertheless, the overwhelming majority (95.1%) attempt to continue with their agricultural activities. The main motives indicated for the continuation in agriculture are the affective value (48.3%), supplementing household income (31.4%) and the absence of professional alternatives (9.9%) with economic viability referred to by 8.6% of farmers (INE, 2014). This large contingent of farmers with sources of incomes in addition to their agricultural activities and that seek to continue in the sector identifies at least two conditions: many work in the field due to an affective value, not supported by any specific economic logic; others, as Wanderley (1996) maintains, make recourse to work away from the farm and other complementary sources of income because their landholdings are unable to return enough income to maintain their household with only a precarious and unstable pricing mechanism as a strategy to ensure they remain in the field.

These dimensions serve to confirm the indicators set out in the sub-item below in relation to the effects of the CAP on the Portuguese agriculture sector. This sub-item, based on table 1, presents a summary of the databases selected from the agricultural censuses and takes the 1968 Census as its point of departure as a reference benchmark for Portuguese agriculture before and after joining the EEC.

Structural indicators for Portuguese agriculture

The first noteworthy detail stems from the reduction in the number of farms and agricultural landholdings. According to table 1, the period between 1968 and 1999 saw the number of agricultural holdings fall by around 50% (from over 800,000 in 1968 to less than 400,000 in 1999). Furthermore, the rate of abandoning the rural sector, in the post-adhesion period, continued to persist, dropping from 550,000 holdings in 1989 to 278,000 in 2009 (a reduction of approximately 50% over the two decades). The most recent INE studies (2014), the first publication made since the Agricultural Census of 2009, detail the structure of agricultural operations in Portugal. This study accounted for 264,400 holdings, down 40,800 on 2009, which corresponds to shrinkage of 13.4%.

Meanwhile, the abandoning of agricultural activities by a significant number of producers did not reflect in the Cultivated Agricultural Area (CAA)⁸, given that there were no significant alterations since 2009 and maintaining the 3.6 million hectares, around 39.5% of the territorial area of Portugal (INE, 2014). In relation to the number of holdings by size, we may also report that there was a restructuring of properties. Since 1968, two in every three holdings of less than 20 hectares have disappeared and, even while slowing in recent decades, this downturn remains a continuous and persistent process. In relation to the number of properties with over 100 hectares, the decline was less than in the other categories through to 2009. The INE 2014 study of the average scale of holdings portrays a rise from 12 hectares in 2009 to 13.8 hectares in 2013. This scale borders closely on the EU average that was 14.4 hectares in 2010. The proportion of holdings with less than two hectares of CAA was also similar (46.2% in Portugal and 48.0% in the EU). However, Portugal displays a larger CAA concentration in large estates and properties (of over 100 hectares), representing 57.9% of CAA (a rate 7.2% higher than the EU average). This highlights the 1,120 large scale farms and estates (with CAAs of over 500 hectares) therefore covering over one million hectares, practically a third of the total Portuguese CAA (INE, 2014).

The agricultural area under cultivation registered a fall from 4.1 million hectares in 1968 to 3.5 million hectares in 2009. The most expressive changes came about to the patterns of land usage. Areas under permanent pastureland replaced arable fields by a large proportion – expanding by eight times. Correspondingly, the areas under permanent pasture accounted for 0.22 million hectares in 1968 but rose to 1.7 million hectares in 2009. The figures also highlight how between 1989 and 2009 this expanding trend in permanent pastureland accelerated, up by well over half a million hectares (from around 755,000 to 1.68 million hectares) of CAA. According to Aveiro (2015), this increase in pasture derives from the implementation of the milk quota system that contributed towards price stability, the income of producers and the modernisation, restructuring and development of the respective productive structures since adhesion to the EEC and correspondingly adopting the CAP. As regards the structure of holdings, there was a constant decrease in the number of holdings leased or operated under other forms and with individual producers remaining the overwhelming majority, thus, the bulk of the legal holding structures. The total number of companies is rising in both absolute and relative terms but still remains a very low proportion. The structural indicators for the age of individual producers are particularly expressive. Divided by age into groups of young adult, adult and elderly farmers (under 35, between 35 and 65 and over 65), the latter group proves the largest. The agricultural labour force contains a relatively high and rising number of elderly producers. In relation to the young, as already mentioned, reflects a downwards trend. The transformations in relation to the level of education reflect a progressive fall in the number of individual producers with little or no education even while remaining a significant weighting in relative terms. This group of producers, around 800,000 (98.6%) in 1968, dropped to 570,000 (95.9%) in 1989, 360,000 (95.2%) in 1999 and falling to 270,000 (91.2%) in 2009.

⁷ Annual Unit of Work (AUW) is a measurement unit equivalent to the labour of one person working full time, carried out per year and measured in hours (1 UTA = 225 working days with 8 hours per day) (INE, 2014).

⁸ The CAA contains all arable lands (clean and covered by grasslands and forest), permanently cultivated or under pasture and family gardens/orchards (INE, 2014).

Furthermore, those graduating from high school and university rose in absolute terms in the last two decades, which to a certain extent reflects improvements to the technical and professional capacities of producers. Between 1989 and 1999, the number of individual producers with university level qualifications rose by over 50% and moved from approximately 6,000 to 9,900. In 2009, there were already 12,300 producers with higher education qualifications. The investments in training and education made by the CAP may broadly account for these improvements to education levels. The following item provides a summary of the general profile of the impacts of CAP on Portuguese agriculture.

General features of the CAP's impacts on Portuguese agriculture

In the case of Portugal, while CAP has not been able to revert the tendency of population ageing (49% of farmers aged over 65, the most elderly in the EU with an average of 29.5%) and the low levels of education (49% of farmers completed primary school or are illiterate), the common policy did render the modernisation of agriculture viable with investments going into infrastructures and training, among other aspects. In general terms, the CAP's impacts on the Portuguese rural sector were positive given that without the support received in the meanwhile, these indicators would be still less favourable. In relation to the number of agricultural holdings, even with this CAP support, their numbers recorded a significant level of shrinkage. Over the most recent period, the trend towards rural desertification continued at an advanced pace, thus, 40,800 holdings went out of production between 2009 and 2013 with over 90% of these registering less than 20 hectares, and with only 140 properties of over 20 hectares taken out of farming (INE, 2014). The high level of abandoning small scale holdings in part stems from their high level of weighting and the ongoing process of modernisation associated with a tendency towards the concentration of property land ownership (Long, 2016). Furthermore, part of the rural-urban migration arises out of a negative vision of agriculture and with the perception that the sector is backward and unproductive in conjunction with the modernisation processes.

[...] rural labour is hard work. Today, not especially but, in the past, it was poorly perceived, agricultural labourers were those who needed "pitying", who didn't know how to do anything else, tending to the lands because they weren't capable of advancing and this still really exists in the mind sets of many people. While, thankfully, there are young people wanting to join the sector but that is the general attitude, it's [...] that kind of person who did not know how to do anything else and therefore that stereotype still remains a bit. (E2). According to the interviewee above, the cultural factors still act to perpetuate the negative aspects of rural activities. This contributes to the exiting of young persons who set off in search of better living conditions and employment in the urban centres and thereby contributing towards the ageing of rural settlements and the abandoning of farm holdings. In addition to the factors described above, interviewee 1 presents other motives for the disappearance of many farms: The farmers that have access to income support [...] total 170,000. [...] in Portugal, there are around 300,000 farmers [...] and almost 130,000, [...] are not able to access income support, [...], because there is a criteria that below half a hectare you cannot join this system. Sometimes, this happens because the farmer does not know or because this requires an online application.

Very often, the farmer does not know what online actually means! Of course, the institution is there to provide such a service but then they ask for papers, you have to state how much you earn, "not me, I don't want to"! So, there is a very long list leading to the main problem of abandoning, which runs across every level. (E1). In relation to the support for earnings, the INE 2014 statistics confirm the statement made above with 38.7% of producers not receiving any type of support from the CAP. Furthermore, as regards income support, 43% of farm holdings do not receive any subsidies. For 3.2% of farmers, such support holds great relevance to their own incomes and generating over 75% of their household income (INE, 2014).

In addition to these factors, the CAP has prioritised some products to the detriment of others that means that supports provided to markets becomes unequal at the EU level. According to Silva (2000), Portuguese farmers, on average, have received five times less support than that provided to some member states despite the income generated by production corresponding to an average third of their earnings. As already mentioned, following the initial advantages of Portugal's adhesion to the EEC and the changes that took place to the CAP in 1992, the position of agriculture experienced a relative decline and leaving the country more dependent on imports in addition to the imbalances existing in the distribution of agricultural funding between the countries in the north and south of the EU. However, CAP also returned positive inputs for Portuguese agriculture according to Pinto (2014) due to the investments made in infrastructures⁹, professional training, and improvements to the structures for the production, transformation and commercialisation of products. This author proposes some considerations as regards the effects of adhesion.

Were Portugal not to have joined the EU, the country would have had two options at that time: either maintain a closed and isolated economy and with a stagnating agricultural sector or, alternatively, if opening up the economy, the sector would have lacked the financial means to undertake the investments necessary and thus agriculture would have encountered difficulties in competing in the globalised market. However, the most commonly criticised component of the CAP relates to its pricing and market policies. This author points out that those making such criticisms are often those who defend globalised markets and normally correspondingly disapproving of the CAP for supporting the income levels of farmers. Interviewee 1 defends the subsidies paid out to Portuguese and European farmers with the following arguments: [...] very often, the persons furthest from agriculture criticise agriculture due to the subsidies. [...] in Portugal and in the EU, we have some of the most demanding legislation in the world in terms of what is allowed for the production of the foodstuffs that we consume. Socially, slave labour, child labour are unacceptable and that then requires minimally acceptable remuneration, social security system payments, etcetera. Environmentally, there is no region in the world with such an extensive list of products banned for usage in agriculture. [...] Well, there is no competitiveness in agriculture, [...], when compared with other regions in the world, where these requirements from the outset are not so very great [...]. Therefore, if we want to be efficient

⁹ Between 1994 and 2006, Portugal received around 38 billion euros from the EU. For further information about the investments made in Portugal, please see Noronha (2016).

[...], then we have to choose one of two options: either we pay more for our food, which we don't want to [...], or, alternatively, we pay more taxes so that the earnings of some may be supported so that we have lower prices for our foods. This is no simple matter but is nevertheless poorly viewed by urban society (E1). In general terms, this conveys how, on joining the EU, Portugal underwent major transformations – from a country with a stagnating agricultural sector, with a population displaying extremely low levels of qualification to gradually becoming a country displaying characteristics that better resemble the average member state.

Furthermore, engaging in other activities on a part time basis is increasingly a means to obtain earnings in addition to those of the farm holding. Various authors have approached this phenomenon (Hespanha, 1994; Carmo, 2010) that has become the majority case in many Portuguese regions. Hence, a significant proportion of rural families tend to maintain their holdings while members of the household take up employment in non-agricultural sectors. This situation also accounts for the intensification of the pendula movements between villages and urban centres (Carmo, 2010). Throughout this CAP trajectory, we would highlight that Portugal complied with its social function of preserving a large number of holdings and keeping farmers in the occupation who, without the supports received in the meanwhile, faced by freely competing markets, would otherwise have disappeared. In terms of the social cohesion of the territory, CAP supports were insufficient to reduce the regional disparities in desertification between the large and small land holders. Nevertheless, according to Carmo (2010), there is a direct relationship between the support for earnings and pluri-activities. Without such additional income, compensating for the losses of income at small establishments (and even for the large scale holdings), these owners would have gone under. Even had CAP allocated its resources to preserving the landscape, biodiversity (in conjunction with the rural and territorial development policies that target social cohesion, improvements to infrastructures and occupations in non-agricultural activities), this all serves to expand the range of opportunities for such pluri-activities.

Despite the sustained downwards trend in the number of small holdings in Portugal, we would here emphasise that were it not for the support provided by the CAP and other sources of non-farm income, the process of rural population desertification would be far more acute across the country. This does not however overlook how, and in accordance with Batista and Hespanhol (2016), Portugal has experienced strong spatial mobility between the countryside and the city, concentrating especially in coastal areas. The dislocation of these social groups holds relevance to the extent that these are settlements and communities that have already been sharply hit by desertification,¹⁰ with serious social and environmental consequences, for example the areas of land consumed by forest fires. In terms of improving the quality of life of the rural population, the investments in infrastructures in the early years after adhesion proved fundamental to Portugal converging with other member states. Overall, Rolim (2017) states that, when taking into account Portuguese GDP per capita, this stood at 65% of the European average in 1986 but

had advanced to 86% in 2010, representing considerable progress. The author states that, in terms of social cohesion, the results demonstrate that access to public goods, social inclusion and the effectiveness of CAP and its public policies have led to the country becoming more equalitarian even while the competitiveness dimension also corresponded with the trend towards the concentration of landholdings. While, on the one hand, the indicators convey difficulties in reversing the trend towards decline across various facets, on the other hand, they do not identify any significant worsening of the situation. Finally, Portuguese agriculture is becoming increasingly polarised between family based agriculture (with CAP incentives in defence of the environment, biodiversity and enhancing cultural activities in order to preserve rural regions and maintain social cohesion). However, this has also attributed a very significant proportion of resources to corporate agriculture (organised into global chains and intensely deploying technology) and therefore favouring the large landholding entities that already manage almost a third of the Portuguese CAA.

Final considerations

Along its trajectory, the CAP underwent various transformations. They impacted upon its functioning in accordance with a process of internal and external pressures, especially at the international level occurring since the 1980s with the rounds of negotiations under the WTO and the deepening of globalisation even while its original structural framework remained relatively unchanged. Given that the EU is the largest world importer and second largest exporter of agricultural products, any change or reform to this policy has effects not only in Portugal but across the diverse spheres of international trade and, consequently, shapes its relationships with a diverse range of markets due to its sheer relevance. Hence, the support provided to farmer incomes in Portugal and the other member states represents the same resources hindering the arrival of global agricultural exports into the EU. As these same resources sustain a significant proportion of the rural population, removing them would result in a worsening of the rural exodus, jeopardising standards of living and working and generating social tensions. Hence, the EU trend is to continue with support for farmer income as a means of protecting those working the fields while stabilising the supply of foodstuffs. Portugal was a late arrival in the EEC following a long period of dictatorship under which the economy remained closed. This meant that the rural sector did not accompany any of the modernisation processes ongoing in other countries. In 1986, when Portugal signed its adhesion protocol, the CAP had already experienced some transformations in its objective. Whereas previously, when almost the entirety of its resources went to production and productivity, step by step, these resources began to target support for income and decoupled from production. These alterations to the CAP brought about negative impacts to weakened agricultural sectors as was the case with the Portuguese rural sector. In a globalised economy, the Portuguese alternatives at the time of membership were only limited. Either Portugal opted for integration into the EEC or it would have to open up its economy with all the risks of the competition posed by global markets. From this point of view, the most coherent option was adhesion to the EEC and, although the country did experience negative impacts, in overall terms, we may conclude that the impacts were positive in the sense of the investment received in terms of the

¹⁰ In terms of regions, we may report a trend towards expanding populations in the coastal regions, the most urbanised (Lisbon and Oporto), due to an exodus from rural regions located inland. For further details on this coastalisation and about the depopulation of rural villages in Portugal, please see Noronha (2016) and Batista and Hespanhol (2016).

infrastructural improvements, the provision of education and training to farmers, among other aspects. In accordance with the indicators set out, the CAP was not able to stem the losses caused by agricultural modernisation processes with a sustained trend towards the closure of a large contingent of small scale holdings. In summary, in Portugal, there is currently a trend towards the polarisation of agriculture, split between family based holdings (with their roots in local markets), in receipt of CAP support, and corporate, industrial agriculture (organised into global chains). This trend towards polarisation between small and large farm holdings, small and large scales, between the local and the global, the family-run and the corporately managed, the rural and the non-rural is apparently tending towards deepening. However, this theme was not the subject of this article and hence we would recommend undertaking specific studies of these phenomena.

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