

## Agriculture and Agricultural Policies in Spain (1939 – 1959)

Daniel Lanero Táboas; Lourenzo Fernández–Prieto; Alba Díaz Geada (University of Santiago de Compostela) & David Soto Fernández (University Pablo de Olavide, Seville)

### Introduction

Over the last three decades, historians studying the Franco dictatorship (1939-1975) have divided it chronologically into two main periods: post-war or *early Francoism* covers the two decades immediately after the Spanish Civil War, from 1939 to 1959; and *late Francoism* from 1960 to 1975, which is often defined around the concept of *desarrollismo* or developmentalism. Though a functional convention, this time division stems from the historical interpretation of the dictatorship that was offered by the regime itself. It has also been used to describe the evolution of agricultural policy and of agriculture as an economic sector and a sphere of Spanish rural society during Francoism.

Spanish agrarian historiography has digressed very little from the somewhat standard historiographic interpretation of the dictatorship. The explosion of agrarian-related research that took place in the late 1970s and 1980s greatly contributed to consolidating the division of Francoism into two chronological periods. More importantly, it established an historical interpretation of the dictatorship that disregarded the political-ideological continuities of the forty-year regime. Instead, there was an emphasis on the great economic, social and cultural contrasts between the very long post-war period and the final fifteen years of the regime, which were marked by accelerated development and modernisation. Such a division could suggest to some that two types of Francoism existed, and that ultimately the transition to democracy was the result of structural socio-economic changes within the regime itself. In other words, the political elites most in tune with Western capitalist democracies decided to reform the anachronic authoritarian system.

However, this simplified explanation of the process was not actually handed down to us as an historiographic relic of Francoism, with the quiet vocation of historically legitimising the dictatorship. Rather, it sprang from within the political opposition and bears a strong anti-fascist mark that still defines the historiographic discourse of this period. The common ground between the image that the dictatorship sought to project, even into the future, and the classic anti-Francoist interpretation of that dictatorship is the perception that Spain in the second half of the twentieth century was an economically backward country in need of modernisation. Agriculture and rural society informed that diagnosis.

Though still hegemonic, this interpretation has begun to be questioned in the last ten or fifteen years; due more to the contributions of specific studies than to an updated understanding of Francoism that would go beyond seeing it as a continuous historical reality with a set of unifying vectors. Critical revision of some of the most established

historiographical discourse on post-Civil War economic autarky, along with a proliferation of recent studies on the final fifteen years of the dictatorship have added nuance to this period and contributed to a growing renovation of research perspectives.

The insights presented here fit within this 'new' historiographic approach. Our hope is to facilitate dialogue with other participants in this conference session. We will identify the main Francoist policies that were implemented in the rural sphere and briefly address the 'state of the question' regarding which periods and themes have been most examined in the agrarian historiography of Francoism. Then, we will propose some new lines for research and suggest fresh research perspectives for aspects already studied.

This paper is organised into three chronological sections. First, we will comment on the 1940s, which are considered the years of agrarian fascism, though with a distinctly Spanish flavour. This period has received the most attention and has generated the largest body of research within the agrarian historiography of Francoism. We will then examine the changes that occurred in agricultural policies during the 1950s and move on to discuss some issues relevant to the evolution of Spanish agriculture from 1960 on, a period much less frequented in Spanish agrarian research.<sup>1</sup>

### ***Agrarian fascism and rural Spain after the Spanish Civil War (1939-1951)***

In the last few years, historians (i.e. Cabo; Fernández-Prieto; Pan-Montojo, 2010 and 2013) have identified some characteristic features of what they define as *agrarian fascism* in the European rural context of the 1930-40s. These include a ruralist discourse and ideology; subordination of the agricultural sector to an industrialising economic programme; defence of the interests of landowners as a social group; technical reform in agriculture; intervention in the agricultural economy with a tendency to autarky; corporative, institutional structuring of agriculture and the rural population; the strong role of the State in the design and implementation of agricultural policies and the dominance of agronomists in policy-making (Lanero, 2011b: 13 - 26). All these elements were present in the political programme designed by the Franco dictatorship for rural Spain during the 1940s. Over the last few decades, all have been topics of greater or lesser interest in Agrarian History and Social History related to the rural world in Spain.

---

<sup>1</sup> The fact that this proposed temporal classification does not coincide with the two main periods already mentioned (early and late Francoism) does not imply that our proposed categorization is original. The division of the historical evolution of Francoism into three periods (1940 – 1950, 1951 – 1959 and 1960 – 1975), follows the main political economy stages of the regime. These derive from Spanish Economic History, which considers the 1950s as a hinge (see García Delgado:1989) or period of transition from the autarkic political economy of the 1940s and the economic liberalization and planning guidelines of the 1960s and 70s. We feel that this periodization explains fairly well the evolution of agricultural policies, although it has also standardized it along a certain line of interpretation.

In this section, we will describe what seem to be the defining features of the Spanish rural context of the 1940s. In accord with the objectives of this session, we will prioritise explaining and critiquing agricultural policies, leaving aside other relevant topics such as the cultural nature of the construction, functionality and evolution of agrarianist rhetoric in the Franco regime (Sevilla Guzmán, 1979: 139 - 143; Alares, 2011: 127 - 147).

### 1.1 Agricultural policies

Historical evaluation and explanation of the autarky programme in agricultural policy, which the Franco regime implemented during the Spanish Civil War and maintained until the early 1950s, has undoubtedly been the centrepiece of Spanish agrarian historiography on those years. Most of the literature has adopted and popularised the theses established in the pioneering interpretative paradigm of Barciela in the early 1980s (Barciela, 1981; 1986; 1988).

Intervention in agricultural economics involved control of the production, distribution and commercialisation of agricultural inputs and products. This political path was chosen by the dictatorship in hopes of guaranteeing the economic and political sovereignty of the country within the convulsive international context. It was also a product of the specific historical period often referred to as the 'golden age of fascisms' and was greatly influenced by the example offered by Mussolini's *Battle for Wheat*. Much of the relevant research highlights the direct influence of the Italian fascist agricultural model on the Franco regime throughout the 1940s.<sup>2</sup>

The effects of agricultural autarky in Spain are also well-documented and analysed, especially in the area of grains and the evolution of the wheat sub-sector (Barciela, 1981; Naredo, 1981; Pujol, 1985); though much attention has also been given to olive production (Tió, 1982; Gutiérrez, 1983: 153 - 174; Christiansen, 2002: 221 - 246; Zambrana, 1999).<sup>3</sup> State intervention in the wheat market led to a decrease in the surface cultivated for that crop, reduced wheat production and the emergence of a vast black market offering extensive capital accumulation benefits to the large-scale agricultural landowners who had sufficient infrastructure (storage, transportation...) and the necessary political contacts to avoid State control and penalization mechanisms. This group, generally equated with the *latifundistas*, provided significant social support for the dictatorship. In contrast, State intervention in the cultivation and

---

<sup>2</sup> Without denying its influence, which is obvious, historiography has done little in the way of comparative studies with other historical examples of political regimes in the prolific family of interwar fascism, from Nazi Germany to Vichy France and Portugal's Estado Novo, just to mention a few of the most well-known regimes. Moreover, the analysis of the political economy of early Francoism has still not connected autarky and the strong current of economic protectionism that arose after the 1929 crisis, which also impacted liberal democracies.

<sup>3</sup> There has been comparatively little interest in the evolution of other crops and productive subsectors during and after the 1940s. Such is the case with production of wine, and of fruits and vegetables from the Mediterranean coast of Spain and the Levant (López Ortiz, 1992 and 1996).

commercialisation of cereals may have had very negative effects on small-scale owners and tenants in central Spain. Low official prices discouraged wheat production and re-directed most peasant family farms towards other, more lucrative crops that were not intervened by the State.

Agricultural autarky has generally been linked to the Francoist response to two issues. The first concerned social aspects of land ownership, which were addressed by an agricultural counter-revolution that destroyed the pre-Civil War reforms of the Second Republic. The second had to do with the post-Civil War agricultural labour force, which was subjected to very low salary levels and political repression of the powerful agricultural associationism of the 1930s (Ortega López, 2007: 531 - 553).

This normative interpretation has been re-visited and even questioned in recent years. Local and regional research (Christiansen, 1999: 225 - 245; Del Arco Blanco, 2007; Rodríguez Barreira, 2008) has given greater attention to the economic opportunities of the black market for small-scale owners, tenants and local industries. Local social history studies have clarified the strong link between black market participation and the sociology of Francoist political elites and social support in the rural sphere. They do much to explain the workings of the State intervention system on the ground, providing a micro-scale analysis that was absent in earlier, foundational studies in this area, which logically focused on more general explanations of autarky and the black market. A current and complementary line of fruitful research looks at the participation of subaltern classes in the black market structure as a survival mechanism.

The most recent critical study, however, comes from the field of Economic History. Christiansen (2012:73 – 116; 251 - 260) follows Simpson (1997: 324 - 326) in arguing that stagnating wheat production was not caused by the official policy of low purchase price, since the existence of a stable black market during the 1940s provided sufficient stimulus for most producers. Christiansen instead examines the impact of two key factors: the lack of labour animals (mules) due to the military needs of the Civil War and the impossibility of accessing chemical fertilisers due to dysfunctional international commerce in the World War II era and weak national chemical industries that were incapable of even minimally satisfying internal demand (Buesa, 1984: 223 - 249; Gallego, 1986: 171 - 229).

Curiously, this interpretation gives no detailed attention to how the crisis in livestock created by the Civil War affected the entire agricultural sector during the two decades that followed. From the onset of the conflict, the usual herd restocking rates, particularly for cows, were seriously undercut by the food demand of the Rebel army (Fernández Prieto, 1988: 233 - 246). After the war, the main issue was the lack of mineral fertilisers and the limitations of traditional organic fertilising practices throughout the northern third of the country. Agricultural historiography on Francoism has not yet incorporated an environmental analysis perspective and has hardly addressed the physical limitations affecting agricultural activity (González de Molina, 2001: 42 - 94).

The land colonisation policy constitutes another sphere of agricultural intervention that has captured the attention of historians writing on early Francoism. Here again, interpretation of this policy has remained stable in the literature since the 1980s and 1990s (Barciela 1990; Barciela and López Ortiz, 2000; Ortega Cantero, 1979; Mangas Navas, 1990).

The colonisation projects of the 1940s were partly inspired by technical proposals for agricultural reform from several currents (regenerationists, Social Catholics and Falangists) in the first third of the twentieth century. These recipes usually insisted on increasing irrigation while seeking solutions for the problems of social access to land and agricultural unemployment, but never questioned respect for private property. The recent memory of the republican agricultural reform project and collective experiments in some regions during the Civil War obviously influenced colonisation and related propaganda during the Franco regime.

The colonisation policy of the 1940s was also heavily influenced by fascist Italy's *Bonifica Integrale*, though direct intervention by the Spanish State was supposedly less notorious than in Italy. Historiographic unanimity exists regarding the failure of the policy to achieve its Francoist objectives. Modification of agricultural structures was minimal and the project involved less than two thousand colonist families between 1939 and 1949. Failure of the policy was mainly due to a lack of economic resources and the fact that the Franco regime initially entrusted implementation of the plan to private initiative, giving no attention to an economic rationale for land owners (Cabana and Díaz Geada, 2010).

Early studies of both the colonisation policy and intervention in agricultural economics sought to elaborate broad and systematic interpretations. In recent years, local studies have analysed the specific colonisation programmes applied in various regions of Spain (Cardesín, 1987: 243 - 280; Bretón, 2000; Alares, 2007; Ruiz, Pulido and Caballero, 2000). Other, more culturally oriented studies look at the relationship between colonisation and ruralist discourse (Alares, 2010) or the symbolic significance of urbanism and architecture in colonised towns, which sought to recreate the rural ideal of society. These lack any significant attention to the development, consequences and local repercussions of colonisation policies for 'small' areas versus large areas (Ortega Cantero, 1979: 172 - 184; Lanero, 2011a: 521 - 534), which enjoyed relatively better results according to historians (Barciela, López, Melgarejo y Miranda, 2001: 104 - 105; 214).

Surprisingly, the forestry policies of the Franco dictatorship have received much less attention (Rico, 1995; Iriarte, 2010: 109 - 142) even though regime projects enjoyed a significant level of success in this area. They were built around intensive exploitation of forestry resources for autarkic economic ends. Autochthonous production of cellulose paste became a priority strategic objective in industrialisation plans. The reforestation policy disregarded property rights and the deep-rooted peasant logic of exploiting forests in rural communities, leading to notable episodes of conflict (Rico, 2000: 117 - 140; Cabana, 2006: 267 - 288; Freire, 2011).

Finally, livestock farming policies were overlooked by the Franco regime after the Civil War. Spain's livestock farming entered a serious crisis from which it did not begin to recover until the end of the 1950s (Bernárdez, 1999: 371 - 388; Martínez López, 2000: 197 - 223; Domínguez Martín, 2001: 39 - 52). The serious effects of the Civil War on livestock herds were aggravated by stagnation in urbanisation, decreasing standards of living and low consumption during the 1940s. Also, the State emphasis on wheat overrode the cultivation of other fodder cereals. Dependence on imported cattle feed was a structural reality during the entire dictatorship period (Clar, 2005: 513 - 544). The reforestation policy also crippled the regional livestock specialisation tendencies that had been present prior to the Civil War.

## **1.2. Agricultural technical experts, rural society and official trade unionism**

This leads us to address the situation faced by the corps of technical experts and the institutional framework for innovation in the years following the Spanish Civil War. Most of the agricultural experts who were active during the Second Republic (1931-36) survived the Francoist political purges (Pan-Montojo, 2009: 232 - 246). However, after the conflict, research centres experienced massive organisational upheaval, budgetary constraints and a lack of human and material means. Also, the extreme gap between scientific research and popular access to any innovation springing from it separated 'the experts' from rural society (Cabo and Bernárdez, 1996: 119 - 139; Fernández Prieto, 2007: 217 - 231). Nonetheless, technical experts and especially the agronomic engineers who controlled the Ministry of Agriculture played a key role in directing agricultural policies throughout the dictatorship (Pan-Montojo, 2011: 243 - 265).

This picture of rural Spain in the 1940s should also include an examination of the associational status of agricultural workers and the rural population (Collarte, 2006; Gómez Herráez, 2008: 119 - 155; Lanero, 2011a). The Franco regime outlawed the existing, ideologically varied agricultural trade unions that had proliferated in rural Spain between 1890 and the Second Republic. After the Civil War, only the Catholic organisations camouflaged as official cooperatives survived, and with difficulties. Leaders and members of class trade unions were persecuted and trade union property was reallocated to the emerging State-sponsored vertical trade unionism that was built on corporative doctrine and the theoretical tenets of single party national syndicalism (FET and JONS).

The mission of the new agricultural trade union was to incorporate the entire rural population in order to exercise social control and politically demobilise the peasantry. Its competencies involved the functioning of the State intervention system, the hiring of agricultural workers and management of social subsidies. However, their role in implementing agricultural policy was always subordinate to the executive capacity of the Ministry of Agriculture and particularly the agricultural engineers.

Spanish farmers never felt represented by the official trade union, which did not respond to their needs and at times led to confrontation, especially over fiscal matters. This lack of mutual identification deepened the disconnect between agronomic innovation and rural civil society. In the early 1950s, innovation began to revive and

was simply imposed on rural society, with no room for negotiated implementation of anything but official agricultural policies.

## **2. The 1950s: a decade of change in Francoist agricultural policies**

Spanish agrarian historiography insists that important changes took place in the agricultural policies of the Franco regime in the early 1950s. This is partially attributable to the slow demise and disappearance of the agricultural economic intervention policy. Much of the credit for forcing a change is also generally assigned to Rafael Cavestany, head of the Ministry of Agriculture from 1951-1957. Cavestany was an agronomic engineer and Falangist agricultural businessman who launched what some would consider a comprehensive agricultural modernisation programme for Spain. The essence of it was captured in his well-known maxim of “fewer farmers and better agriculture”.<sup>4</sup>

The novelty of the 1950s can only be understood by looking at the interplay of several factors. First, structural changes came about in the sector as the regime acknowledged that agricultural autarky was unviable. This was accompanied by changes in the international political panorama and its relations with the Franco government in the early part of the decade. Finally, a new legislative and institutional framework emerged for developing and implementing a different agricultural policy.

Rural-urban migration in the 1950s led to an increase in agricultural workers' salaries and a decrease in the economic threshold for affordable purchase of agricultural machinery to reduce salary costs (Simpson, 1997: 334 – 336). Mechanisation of harvesting and threshing by medium- and large-scale farmers led to a reduction in costs that compensated the significant decrease in the real price of wheat (40% between 1953 and 1967) that took place after the liberalisation of production and agricultural markets.

In the livestock subsector, tendencies toward change can be seen in the 1950s with the end of rationing, the decrease in the price of wheat and the increase in real salaries; all of which translated into increasing meat demand and production during the second half of the decade. Pork, poultry and egg production rose significantly thanks to the importation of genetically improved animals along with corn and soy feed within the framework of international agreements with the USA (Simpson, 1997: 339 – 345; Domínguez Martín, 2001: 39 – 52). Though lacking momentum and direction during these years, the regime recovered programmes for improvement and specialisation in the livestock subsector, cows in particular (Lanero, 2011a: 479 - 490). These changes were consolidated during the modernisation of the agricultural sector in the 1960s and 1970s.

---

<sup>4</sup> The decisive nature of the figure of Rafael Cavestany y Anduaga in changing the direction of agricultural policy has become almost mythical in Spanish agrarian historiography. Recently, Christiansen (2012: 103 - 104) has proposed that there were significant continuities in regards to the gradual economic liberalization of the Ministry of Agriculture policies set by two leaders, Cavestany and Falangist agronomist Carlos Rein Segura (1945- 1951).

The international panorama had been especially difficult for the Franco regime in 1945-46, immediately following World War II. As a result, Spain was excluded from the Marshall Plan. However, its relations with the USA and European allies gradually improved as the Cold War intensified. The survival of Francoism beyond the demise of other fascisms can be explained in large measure by the international tolerance and recognition it experienced.<sup>5</sup>

This new context inspired the formulation of a legislative solution that would allow US financial aid to be channelled to Spain.<sup>6</sup> In the mid-1950s, a US economic mission visited Spain to evaluate possible applications for aid, from which the agricultural sector would benefit significantly. Cavestany took advantage of North American resources and ideas; in 1955 he travelled to the US to get first-hand knowledge of the US cooperative extension system. In September of the same year the ministerial order was given to launch the Spanish *Servicio de Extensión Agraria*, or SEA, based on the US model.

Land consolidation and agricultural colonisation constituted the main agricultural policies of the 1950s. These two measures to reform agricultural structures were complementary under a modernisation logic directed at increasing land and labour productivity and the economic efficiency of farms. The implementation of both was inextricably intertwined with the creation the SEA, a key modernising instrument in Spanish agriculture from 1955 to 1975. We will discuss the SEA in greater detail further on.

Though its propaganda potential was never overlooked, the colonisation policy was significantly revised from its antecedent 'social dimension' emphasis in the 1940s, which shifted to extensive irrigation. Colonising action of the regime in the 1950s involved technical transformation (conversion to irrigated lands) and was applied by the National Colonisation Institute (INC). The Institute focused on areas declared by law as irrigatable: those with the greatest possibility of successful transformation within the logic of the modernising model.<sup>7</sup> The legislative framework for this policy of extensive agricultural restructuring was the *Law on Colonisation and Distribution of Property in Irrigatable Areas (1949)*, inspired by the model implemented in the western USA.

---

<sup>5</sup> International recognition began in the mid-1950s, after the signing of Cooperation Agreements with the USA (1953), membership in the UN (1955) and increasing cooperation between the Franco regime and various international economic agencies and organisms such as the FAO (after 1951), the OECD (1960), the World Bank and the IMF. Their recommendations in matters of agricultural policy were carefully noted by the Spanish government.

<sup>6</sup> The McCarran Amendment to US Public Law 480 provided the means to solve this problem.

<sup>7</sup> Upon becoming head of the Ministry of Agriculture, Rafael Cavestany set as his ambitious objective the conversion of 50 000 ha. of dry-land annually into irrigated land. Though this objective was not met, between 1951 and 1960 a total of 200 000 ha. were colonized and irrigated (Barciela, López, Melgarejo and Miranda, 2001).

The most frequent procedure for guaranteeing that colonising objectives were met was State expropriation and purchase of 'excess' or marginal lands that owners did not reserve for themselves within the established 'Irrigatable Areas' (Barciela and López Ortiz, 2003: 55 - 93). This sort of initiative was in no way intended to undermine the interests of large-scale landowners, who were capitalised by two means: the INC subsidised the conversion of their dry lands to irrigated fields and compensated land owners for the expropriation of lowest quality lands. The Francoist colonising legislation maintained scrupulous respect for private property, applying numerous limitations to expropriation and exemplary procedures for economic compensation.

The objective of the colonisation policy between 1950 and the end of the dictatorship was to make the interests of large-scale land owners compatible with more efficient cultivation of the best agricultural lands. Western Andalusia had the greatest concentration of large properties in Spain, and thus became the most irrigated surface nationally. In this phase, the irrigation and colonisation policies were also closely linked to integral regional development, as demonstrated in the well-known Badajoz and Jaen Plans. Irrigation and colonisation would contribute agriculturally to regional industrialisation.

Like the colonisation policy, land consolidation initiatives were mainly technical in their intent and respectful of private property. They sought to end the problems caused by extraordinarily fragmented small-scale land ownership and establish adequate structures and dimensions for mechanised farming. This involved decreasing the number of plots per farm, opening new roads, etc. Though land consolidation efforts were present from the outset in Francoist economic and social land reform programmes, the regime had no adequate legal tool to implement it until 1949-1952.<sup>8</sup> Land consolidation did not really take off until the 1960s and had its moment of greatest impact in the 1970s (Cabana and Díaz Geada, 2010).

Implementation of the political programme for agricultural modernisation in the 1950s cannot be understood apart from the role of the *Servicio de Extensión Agraria*. The SEA began its work tentatively in areas where land was being consolidated or colonised, and agencies soon began to operate all across the country<sup>9</sup>. It was organised at a county level and designed to be accessible to the agricultural population; so SEA agents actually lived in rural communities. Agents included university graduates, agricultural engineers and technical experts, teachers, agricultural foremen and even prominent farmers. Over time, the SEA became a haven for mid-level technical experts and later included rural sociologists.

---

<sup>8</sup> Towards the end of 1952 the experimental version of the Law of Land Consolidation (*Ley de Concentración Parcelaria*) was made public. It was confirmed in July of 1955.

<sup>9</sup> In 1957 the SEA had a total of 44 county agencies, 85 in 1959, 135 in 1961, 364 in 1965, in 1967 it reached 500, 615 in 1969 and in 1971, at its climax, the total was 755. County agencies were dependent at that point on the 50 provincial agencies, which in turn depended on 11 regional centres. Ultimately, these were directed by the Central Service and the Central Training School, located in Madrid (Sánchez de Puerta, 1996: 396, 421).

Extending momentarily beyond the temporal constraint scope of this work, by the 1960s the 'four legs' or action lines of the SEA were clearly operative: farm work; youth; family and home; cooperativism and community development. The priority in farming was incorporation of new technology and management training through targeted seminars. For youth, the main focus was on the creation of the Agricultural Extension Learning Groups (Planteles de Extensión Agraria) for training and group projects. On the home and family front, in 1960 the SEA incorporated female experts to teach rural women about 'Home Economics' (a name that speaks for itself), rather than 'agricultural extension'. Community work involved collaborative neighbourhood projects such as roads, laundry washing facilities and water canalization (Díaz Geada; Lanero; Fernández– Prieto and Cabana, 2012).

There were other social objectives apart from these, but the practical emphasis remained on training and technology transfer. Extension agents resorted to three primary methods for reaching farmers: direct contact with individuals (visiting farms, office consultations, telephone, mail, practical demonstrations); group meetings (information sessions, conferences, demonstrations, courses, trips), which were a priority until the 1970s; and mass diffusion through publications, radio broadcasts and publicity campaigns (Gómez Benito, 1996: 211-212).

In our opinion, agricultural extension was a primary instrument for implementing throughout post-war Western Europe a new agricultural modernisation paradigm from the USA. For example, the political realities and agricultural sectors in the Netherlands and the Iberian Peninsula exhibited very different features in the early 1950s, yet one same modernising theory ran through their agricultural policies and the discourse behind them (Díaz Geada; Lanero; Fernández–Prieto and Cabana, 2012). In the liberated democracies of Western Europe the new modernising paradigm was channelled through the 1947 Marshall Plan and especially the Technical Assistance Programme managed by the US Technical Assistance and Productivity Mission (UST&P)<sup>10</sup>. With a chronological lag of almost a decade and the gradual incorporation of the Franco regime into the international political and economic arena, Spain underwent similar processes but through different channels<sup>11</sup>.

---

<sup>10</sup> In the specific sphere of agricultural extension, the Marshall Plan included sending US extension experts to Europe (through the *Agency for International Development*) in order to offer guidance in US agricultural extension principles for the Consultative Services of the various European countries involved. Consulting was also carried out by the UN through the *Food and Agriculture Organization* (FAO), which tended to hire experts from or trained in the USA.

<sup>11</sup> The Spanish agricultural extension service (Servicio de Extensión Agraria) was launched with the assistance of US extension experts, who trained the first of such agents in Spain. Some experts had the opportunity to attend training courses in the US. Lastly, some also joined the International Extension Seminar which from 1952 on was offered at the International Agricultural Center of Wageningen thanks to the agreement between the Dutch Ministry of Agriculture, FAO, OECD and other agencies (Sánchez de Puerta, 1996: 392-393).

Agricultural technical experts began to enjoy their moment of splendour in the 1950s. Agricultural engineers were entrusted with bringing innovation to rural Spain and implementing the modernising tenets of the Green Revolution. However, this logic of progress and total trust in the efficiency of the new technological package was imposed on a countryside that was increasingly disarticulated by rural exodus and deprived of mechanisms for adapting to technological innovation.

### **The end of traditional agriculture and the modernisation of the sector (1960 – 1975)**

We shall complete this review of the evolution of Spanish agriculture in the two decades following the Civil War with a few brief comments on the period after 1959 (Naredo; 1996 [1977]; Abad and Naredo, 1997: 249 - 316).

Generally, the Spanish agricultural sector experienced the same changes that affected Western European democracies: significant rural exodus and transfer of the active population from agriculture to industry and services<sup>12</sup>; massive adoption of exogenous new technologies such as mechanization and genetic improvements, with a constant tendency to reinforce the importance of capital over land and labour; substitution of solar energy by massive, indiscriminate use of fossil fuels; reduction in the number of farms and consolidation of the largest, best capitalised family farms; and the appearance of powerful national and international agro-industries (Lanero and Freire, 2011: 9 – 24).<sup>13</sup> In other words, Spanish agriculture rapidly modernised at significant social and environmental cost, under the logic of the Green Revolution.

Spanish agricultural historiography has yet to complete a thorough examination of this accelerated modernisation process, the bases of which were established in the legislative, political and institutional climate of the 1950s. With the advent of extensive irrigation, new crops were planted at the expense of more traditional dry land crops such as grains, especially wheat. Significant growth in new crops occurred from 1955-59 and 1965-69 (Simpson, 1997: 345), including alfalfa (77%), maize (63%), sugar beet (50%) and various fruits such as oranges (73%), peaches (111%), apricots (72%), pears (90%) and apples (74%), along with new varieties of fresh and garden vegetables. Part of the arable surface was also reallocated to the cultivation of sunflowers, animal feed or forage grains.

---

<sup>12</sup> One of the most important mid- to long-term effects of rural exodus in the 1950 – 1970 period was the aging of the rural population. Spanish rural families experienced decreasing income from agricultural activity and increased dependence on State pensions and subsidies.

<sup>13</sup> In Spain agro-industrial groups were both actors in the agricultural modernization process as well as the main beneficiaries of certain public policies. At the very least, from the 1960s on State agricultural policies were gradually subordinated to the needs of the agro-industrial sector, generally involving large multinational companies. The Franco regime carried out extensive investment in communications and electricity infrastructures for rural areas. At a micro level there were loans for farmers in order to introduce new crops or build intensive livestock farming installations.

However, the official protection policies for the purchase of wheat, oil and wine at guaranteed prices were perpetuated, prolonging the lack of competitiveness in these agricultural subsectors (Pan-Montojo, 2003: 313 – 314). Overcoming the inertia of subsidised agriculture constituted a key challenge for integrating the Spanish agricultural sector into the European Common Agricultural Policy (Sumpsi, 1986: 447 - 471).

The rise in per capita income of the Spanish population was reflected in an improved diet. The increasing importance of tourism also directly influenced the relative weight of different crops and outputs in Spanish agriculture. This was evident in the demand and consumption of meat, eggs, milk and dairy products (Garrabou and Cussó, 2007: 69 – 100).

Intensive livestock farming might be the subsector that best illustrates the growth and commercialisation associated with the industrial paradigm of the Green Revolution. This 'new' industry exhibited specialisation, vertical integration and spatial concentration of production (Domínguez Martín, 2001: 43 – 44). Between 1960 and 1975, poultry and then beef constituted the main categories of meat production growth.

There were costs associated with this model of livestock specialisation. Dependence on imported feed continued to grow in spite of the increase in domestic production, as did dependence on an exogenous genetic base for livestock reproduction. A magnificent example of the latter is the 'friesianization' of bovine breeds in Northern Spain. Additionally, a crisis in traditional extensive livestock farming of primarily autochthonous sheep and goat breeds deprived the sector of any possible competitive advantage, contributing to the deterioration of an important portion of the land that had no alternative usage (Abad and Naredo, 1997: 275).

In this section, we have outlined some main lines in the evolution of Spanish agriculture from 1960-75, in order to complete the picture of the overall evolution of agriculture during the thirty-five years of the Franco dictatorship. Toward the end of the Franco regime, several processes coincided to transform the rural context: the economic effects of the global energy crisis significantly diminished agricultural income; the need to adapt to the European agricultural context; and a significant level of social conflict and political mobilisation that led to a new form of democratic agricultural trade unionism, which rapidly became professionalised. It is the unfinished work of agrarian historiography to more thoroughly explain the social, cultural and economic changes that took place in Spanish rural contexts during those decades.

## **Conclusions**

We have here described the evolution of agriculture and agricultural policies in Spain during the thirty-five years of Francoism following the Spanish Civil War, with special attention to the 1940s and the 1950s. We think it is important to understand the international context of those years, which we have included in our discussion, in order to avoid analysing Francoist policies or the regime as isolated historical objects. With the demise of European fascisms, the Franco regime found itself in a very delicate

political moment at the end of World War II and into the early 1950s. Spain was excluded from the UN and most foreign ambassadors were withdrawn in 1946. International isolation impacted the agricultural sector by blocking imports of inorganic fertilisers, agricultural machinery and feed. Even so, Spanish agricultural policies were not far distant from international trends during most of the Franco period.

Spanish agriculture and rural society in the 1940s exhibited many features common to the 'classical fascisms', namely German National Socialism, Italian fascism and the more contemporary Portuguese *Estado Novo*. Proof of this can be found in the compulsory membership of the rural population in official corporations; the lead role given to agronomic and forest engineers in designing and implementing agricultural policies; the quest for national food autonomy through strict regulation of agricultural production and commerce, with wheat as the primary crop; and the focus on technical agricultural reform programmes through colonisation without altering land distribution or the ruralist discourse that portrayed the countryside as the source of eternal national and racial values.

The real task at hand, it seems, is to discern to what extent these elements expressed Spanish political culture and social dynamics of that time (economic nationalism, regenerationism, Social Catholicism or corporativism), or to what extent they were directly imported and copied from exogenous contemporary political examples. Agricultural historiography has often emphasized the strong influence of Italian fascist policies on Spanish agriculture in the 1940s. In the 1950s, Spanish policies and political elites shifted toward the international agricultural context. This change in the regime's position within international relations was decisive. North American cooperation programmes and participation in international debate forums such as the FAO and OECD offered the technical and political elites an opportunity to become familiar with the new agricultural paradigm of the Green Revolution and the logic behind modernisation theory. Along with a chronological lag of five to ten years, the Spanish socio-political context in which agricultural policy innovation took place deviated from that of the surrounding democratic welfare states. In a country with an authoritarian government, a demobilised civil society and no representative trade unions, the new modernising paradigm was simply imposed, with little opportunity for fine tuning or taking social consequences into account.

We could argue that the powerful modernising paradigm and economic, technical and cultural hegemony of the US after World War II overcame the political and socioeconomic singularities of every geographical region it touched. Perhaps the most obvious line of continuity between the years of agricultural fascism, the changes in agricultural policy in the 1950s and the accelerated modernisation of Spanish agriculture between 1960 and 1975 was the centrality of technical experts. The normative perspective on Francoism emphasizes the dominance of fascist or Falangist elites in early Francoism and their replacement by technocrats at the end of the 1950s. However, in the sphere of agricultural policy we find continuity in the role of the technical elites from the beginning to the end of the dictatorship. They were able to adapt to different political climates and reformulate their modernising discourse to fit

the circumstances. Modernisation was internalized, mythified and projected into the future by a dictatorship seeking to legitimise itself. Few concepts show this as clearly as 'developmentalism'.

## Bibliography

Abad, C.; Naredo, J.M. (1997): "Sobre la 'modernización' de la agricultura española (1940 – 1995): de la agricultura tradicional hacia la capitalización agraria y la dependencia asistencial", en Gómez, C.; González, J.J. (eds.): *Agricultura y Sociedad en la España contemporánea*, Madrid, CIS/MAPA, pp. 249 – 316.

Alares, G. (2007): *Colonos, peritos y mayores. Intervención estatal y transformación agraria en Valmuel y Puigmoreno (Teruel, 1951 – 1971)*, Teruel, Instituto de Estudios Turolenses

- (2010): "El vivero eterno de la esencia española. Colonización y discurso agrarista en la España de Franco", en Sabio, A. (ed.): *Colonos, territorio y Estado. Los pueblos del agua de Bardenas*, Zaragoza, Insitución Fernando el Católico, pp. 57 – 80.
- (2011): "Ruralismo, fascismo y regeneración. Italia y España en perspectiva comparada", *Ayer*, 83, pp. 127 – 147.

Barciela, C. (1981): *La agricultura cerealista en la España contemporánea, el mercado triguero y el Servicio Nacional del Trigo*, Madrid, Universidad Complutense de Madrid.

- (1986): "Los costes del franquismo en el sector agrario: la ruptura del proceso de transformaciones", in Garrabou, R. et al., (eds.): *Historia agraria de la España Contemporánea. 3. El fin de la agricultura tradicional (1900-1960)*, Crítica, Barcelona, 1986. pp. 383-454.
- (1988): "El mercado negro de productos agrarios en la posguerra", en Fontana, J. (ed.): *España bajo el franquismo*, Barcelona, Crítica.
- (1990): "La colonización agraria en España, 1939 – 1951", en Pérez, M.T.; Lemeunier, G. (eds.): *Agua y modo de producción*, Barcelona, Crítica, pp. 98 – 120.

Barciela, C.; López, I. (2000): "La política de colonización del franquismo: un complemento de la política de riegos", en Barciela, C.; Melgarejo, J. (eds.): *El agua en la historia de España*, Alicante, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, pp. 323 – 363.

Barciela, C.; López, M.I.; Melgarejo, J.; Miranda, J.A. (2001), *La España de Franco (1939 – 1975)*, Madrid, Síntesis.

Barciela, C.; López (2003): "El fracaso de la política agraria del primer franquismo, 1939 – 1959. Veinte años perdidos para la agricultura española", en Barciela, C. (ed.):

*Autarquía y mercado negro. El fracaso económico del primer franquismo, 1939 – 1959*, pp. 55 – 93.

Bernárdez, A. (1999): “A evolución do sector pecuario na Galicia contemporánea: especialización productiva e mercantilización na sociedade rural (1865 – 1996)”, *Semata*, 9, pp. 371 – 388.

Bernárdez, A.; Cabo, M. (1996): “Ciencia y dictadura: la investigación agronómica en Galicia durante el primer franquismo”, *Noticario de Historia Agraria*, 12, pp. 119 – 139.

Bretón, V. (1990): *Terra i Franquisme a Lleida*, Lleida, Pagès

Buesa, M. (1984): “Una nota sobre la construcción de maquinaria y la producción de fertilizantes en la política industrial española (1939 – 1963)”, *Agricultura y Sociedad*, 28, pp. 223 – 249.

Cabana, A. (2006): “Minar la paz social: retrato de la conflictividad social en Galicia durante el primer franquismo”, *Ayer*, 61, pp. 267 – 288.

Cabana, A.; Díaz – Geada, A. (2010): “Agricultures techniques and modernization in Franco’s Spain”, in *1<sup>st</sup> Rural History Conference*, Brighton, September 2010.

Cardesín (1987): “Política agraria y transformaciones en la agricultura gallega: la zona de colonización de Terra Chá (1954 – 1973)”, *Agricultura y Sociedad*, 44, pp. 243 – 280.

Cabo, M.; Fernández – Prieto, L.; Pan – Montojo, J.L. (2010): “Fascism and modernity in the European countryside: a reconsideration”, in *1<sup>st</sup> Rural History Conference*, Brighton, september 2010.

Cabo, M.; Fernández – Prieto, L.; Pan – Montojo, J.L. (2013): “Fascism and modernity in the European countryside: a global view”, in Cabo, M.; Fernández – Prieto, L.; Pan – Montojo, J.L. (eds.), *Agriculture in the age of Fascism. Authoritarian technocracy and rural modernization (1922 – 1945)*, London, Brepols, forthcoming.

Christiansen, Th. (1999): “Conflictos políticos y administrativos durante el primer franquismo. El caso de Cuenca”, *Noticario de Historia Agraria*, 18, pp. 225 – 245.

- (2002): “Intervención del Estado y mercado negro en el sector oleícola durante el primer Franquismo”, *Historia Agraria*, 27, pp. 221 – 248.
- (2012): *The reason why. The post civil - war agrarian crisis in Spain*, Zaragoza, Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza.

Clar, E. (2005): “Del cereal alimento al cereal pienso. Historia y balance de un intento de autosuficiencia ganadera: 1967-1972”, en *Historia Agraria*, 37, pp. 513-544.

Collarte, A. (2006): *Labregos no franquismo. Economía e Sociedade rural na Galiza interior. As "Hermandades Sindicales" en Ourense (1943 – 1978)*, Ourense, Difusora de Letras, Artes e Ideas.

Del Arco, M.A. (2007): *Hambre de siglos. Mundo rural y apoyos sociales al franquismo en Andalucía Oriental (1936 – 1951)*, Granada, Comares.

Díaz – Geadá, A.; Lanero, D.; Fernández – Prieto, L.; Cabana, A. (2012): "Agricultural Extension Programmes in Postwar Europe: A Comparative Study of Two Extreme Cases: Spain and the Netherlands (1946 – 1973)", *9th European Social Science History Conference*, Glasgow, April 2012.

Domínguez Martín, R. (2001): "La ganadería española del franquismo a la CEE: balance de un sector olvidado", *Historia Agraria*, 23, pp. 39 – 52.

Fernández – Prieto, L. (1988): "Agricultura, gandería e economía de guerra: novas orientacións da política agropecuaria para Galicia, 1936 – 1939", *Grial*, 100, pp. 233 – 246.

- (2007): *El apagón tecnológico del franquismo: estado e innovación en la agricultura española del siglo XX*, Valencia, Tirant lo Blanch.

Freire, A. (2011): *En defensa de lo suyo: propiedad forestal y conflictividad social durante el franquismo: los montes vecinales de Cerceda (A Coruña)*, Santiago de Compostela, Servizo de Publicacións e Intercambio científico da USC.

Gallego, D. (1986): "Las transformaciones técnicas de la agricultura española", in Garrabou, R. et al., (eds.): *Historia agraria de la España Contemporánea. 3. El fin de la agricultura tradicional (1900-1960)*, Crítica, Barcelona, 1986. pp. 171 – 229.

García, J.L. (ed.) (1989): *El primer franquismo. España durante la segunda guerra mundial*, Madrid, Siglo XXI.

Garrabou, R.; Cussó, X. (2007): "La transición nutricional en la España contemporánea: las variaciones en el consumo de pan, patatas y legumbres (1850-2000)", en *Investigaciones de Historia Económica*, n.º 7, 2007, pp. 69-100.

Gómez, C. (1996): *Políticos, burócratas y expertos. Un estudio de la política agraria y la sociología rural en España (1936 – 1959)*, Madrid, Siglo XXI.

Gómez, J.M. (2008): "Las Hermandades Sindicales de Labradores y Ganaderos (1942 – 1977). Del análisis franquista a la historiografía actual", *Historia Agraria*, 44, pp. 119 – 155.

González de Molina, M. (2001): "Condicionamientos ambientales del crecimiento agrario español (siglos XIX y XX)", en Pujol, J. et al.: *El pozo de todos los males. Sobre el atraso en la agricultura española contemporánea*, Barcelona, Crítica, pp. 42 – 94.

Gutiérrez, C. (1983): “Una estimación del mercado negro de aceite de oliva en la postguerra española”, *Agricultura y Sociedad*, 29, 153 – 174.

Iriarte, I. (2010), “Repoblaciones, paisaje forestal y desarrollo industrial en el País Vasco atlántico (1940 – 1975)”, *Historia Agraria*, 51, pp. 109 – 142.

Lanero (2011a): *Historia dun ermo asociativo. Labregos, sindicatos verticais e políticas agrarias en Galicia baixo o franquismo*, Santa Comba (A Coruña), tresCtres

- (2011b) (ed.): *Fascismos y políticas agrarias: nuevos enfoques en un marco comparativo*, Ayer, 83, pp. 13 – 26.

Lanero, D.; Freire, D. (2011): “Modernizar” sin democratizar. Sobre la industrialización de la agricultura en las dictaduras ibéricas (1946-1975)”, en Lanero, D.; Freire, D. (coords.): *Agriculturas e innovación tecnológica en la Península Ibérica (1946 – 1975)*, Madrid, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Medio Rural y Marino, pp. 9 – 24.

López, M.I. (1992): *La agricultura murciana durante el franquismo, 1939 – 1975*, Murcia, Universidad de Murcia.

- (1996): “Los efectos de la autarquía en la agricultura murciana”, *Revista de Historia Económica*, 3.

Mangas, J.L. (1990): “La política de colonización agrícola del franquismo, 1936 – 1977”, en *Historia y evolución de la colonización agraria en España*, Vol. II, Madrid, MAP, MAPA, MOPU.

Martínez, A. (2000): “La ganadería gallega durante el primer franquismo: crónica de un tiempo perdido, 1936 – 1960”, *Historia Agraria*, 20, pp. 197 – 223.

Naredo, J.M. (1981): “La incidencia del ‘estraperlo’ en la economía de las grandes fincas del sur”, *Agricultura y Sociedad*, 19, pp. 81 – 128.

- (1996) [1977]: *La evolución de la agricultura en España (1940 – 1990)*, Granada, Universidad de Granada

Ortega, N. (1979): *Política agraria y dominación del espacio: orígenes, caracterización y resultados de la política de colonización planteada en la España posterior a la Guerra civil*, Madrid, Ayuso

Ortega, T.M. (2007): “Las miserias del fascismo rural: las relaciones laborales en la agricultura española, 1936 – 1948”, *Historia Agraria*, 43, pp. 531 – 554.

Pan-Montojo, J.L. (2003): “Las industrias vinícolas españolas: desarrollo y diversificación productiva entre el siglo XVIII y 1960”, en Barciela, C.; Di Vittorio, A. (eds.): *Las industrias agroalimentarias en Italia y España durante los siglos XIX y XX*, Alicante, Publicaciones de la Universidad de Alicante, pp. 313-334.

- (2009): “La depuración de los ingenieros del Ministerio de Agricultura, 1936 - 1942”, en Cuesta, J. (dir.): *La depuración de funcionarios bajo la dictadura franquista (1936 – 1975)*, Madrid, Fundación Largo Caballero, pp. 232 – 246.
- (2011): “Sindicalistas e ingenieros en los conflictos político-agrarios del primer franquismo”, en Lanero, D.; Freire, D. (coords.): *Agriculturas e innovación tecnológica en la Península Ibérica (1946 – 1975)*, Madrid, Ministerio de Medio Ambiente, Medio Rural y Marino, pp. 243 – 265.

Pujol, J. (1985): “Los precios de los cereales en Cataluña durante los años de la autarquía económica: mercado oficial y clandestino”, *Agricultura y Sociedad*, 35, pp. 235 – 254.

Rico, E. (1995): *Política forestal e repobocions en Galicia (1941 – 1971)*, Santiago, Servicio de Publicacións USC.

- (2000): “Política forestal y conflictividad social en el Noroeste de España durante el primer franquismo. 1939 – 1959”, *Historia Social*, 38, pp. 117 – 140.

Rodríguez, O. (2008): *Migas con miedo: prácticas de resistencia al primer franquismo: Almería, 1939 – 1953*, Almería, Universidad de Almería.

Ruiz, J.A.; Pulido, J.C.; Caballero, F.J. (2010): *La política de Colonización franquista en el término de Don Benito*, Ayuntamiento de Don Benito (Badajoz).

Sánchez de Puerta, F. (1996): *Extensión agraria y desarrollo rural*, Madrid, MAPA

Sevilla, E. (1979), *La evolución del campesinado en España: elementos para una sociología política del campesinado*, Barcelona, Península.

Simpson, J. (1997), *La agricultura española, (1765 – 1965): la larga siesta*, Madrid, Alianza

Tió, C. (1982), *La política de aceites comestibles en la España del siglo XX*, Madrid, MAPA

Zambrana, F. (2009): “La industria del aceite de oliva en Andalucía durante el primer franquismo (1939 – 1952)”, en Parejo, A.; Sánchez, A. (eds.): *Economía andaluza e historia industrial. Estudios en homenaje a Jordi Nadal*, Motril, Asukaria Mediterránea.

