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Harvesting European Unity: Unraveling the Evolution of the Stichting voor de Landbouw's Ideas on European Cooperation and Integration (1948-1952)

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Harvesting European Unity

Unraveling the Evolution of the Stichting voor de Landbouw's Ideas on
European Cooperation and Integration (1948-1952)



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Acronyms

- BLEU - Belgian-Luxembourg Economic Union
- CAP - Common Agricultural Policy
- ECA - Economic Cooperation Administration
- IFAP - International Federation of Agricultural Producers
- OEEC - Organization for European Economic Cooperation
- US – United States (of America)

Chapter 1: introduction

The agricultural sector in the Netherlands is one of the largest and one of the most efficient exporters of food in the world. To reach this level of productivity, more than half of the country is used for agriculture (Reiley, 2022). After the Second World War, the Netherlands initiated an effort to enhance food production and achieve high levels of productivity, aimed at preventing the recurrence of food scarcity. The substantive growth of the sector continued during the 1960s, partially attributable to the establishment of the European agricultural policy (Bieleman J. , 2009, p. 30).

Where this high level of productivity can be seen as a good thing, the size of the country and large challenges like the fight against global warming and the impact of nitrogen deposition on the Dutch natural areas as the consequence of large-scale farmers cause a national debate about the future and the shape of the Dutch agricultural sector. Where some politicians call for change and downscaling of the sector, farmers point to a too strict national implementation of European rules (Visser, 2022). This debate has caused large protests against the policy and made several farmers migrated to other European countries to continue their farming activities (Schaart, 2021).

In the first ten years after World War II, Dutch agricultural organizations were not very active on the international political stage (Robinson, 1961, p. 70). The two most important issues in the context of European integration in this period, a potential Benelux Economic Union, and a European organization of agricultural markets, were often pushed forward by the then Minister of Agriculture, Sicco Mansholt. Mansholt often consulted the agricultural organizations about these subjects, which gave him support and a mandate to represent their ideas and needs (Robinson, 1961, p. 70). This does not mean that all the organized agricultural organizations were not interested in international affairs. The Stichting voor den Landbouw (Egberink, 1997, p. 9), a federation of several Dutch agricultural organizations and interest groups, that later transformed in a public statutory body that was responsible for the implementation of agricultural policy in the Netherlands (Robinson, 1961, pp. 55-56), became more and more active on the international field. This is for example visible in their role in the establishment of the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP). However, these actions were mostly in support of the policies of the Minister of Agriculture (Robinson, 1961, p. 71).

The Dutch farmers had good opportunities to compete on the world market, because the high prices were very favorable for the farmers (Karel, 2010, p. 6). The economic situation after World War II and the challenges where the agricultural sector was confronted with, like the balance of payment deficit and the denial of Belgium to allow unrestricted access to its markets, caused the agricultural sector to support liberalization of trade in Europe, with the idea that the farmers would benefit from the access to open markets (Mommens, 1995, p. 118). This does not mean that the Dutch were very supportive towards large-scale European integration. As Karel argued and Mommens confirms, the Dutch agricultural sector was heavily regulated before and during the War. After the War, these protective measures were mostly reinforced by minister for agriculture Sicco Mansholt to protect the Dutch market and create the optimal conditions for the sector to gain in productivity and efficiency (Knudsen, 2009, p. 92). The Dutch European policy was mostly economically pragmatic and almost opportunistic at that time.

The first impact of international integration was felt with the 1947 Agricultural Protocol between the Benelux Partners. The process towards cooperation between the Benelux countries and the implications for the Dutch agriculture will be discussed later in this thesis, it is however important to mention that the implementation of the 1947 Agricultural Protocol had negative implications for the Dutch agricultural sector (Robinson, 1961, p. 73). This is because it was used to protect Belgian agricultural products. This was more or less a continuation of the practice of Belgium and Luxembourg in the years before the Protocol. The Dutch government attempted continually to alter the provisions of the Protocol, with support of the Dutch organized agriculture, because they were against the power given to an importing country to determine the minimum price in a unilateral way (Robinson, 1961, p. 73). Besides this, signals were incoming that the Netherlands would face increasing problems in export markets (Mommens, 1995, p. 119).

A discussion about the extent of European cooperation and integration is present in Dutch politics after the War and continued throughout the second half of the twentieth century. As Dutch scholar Caroline de Gruyter explains: the Dutch have always felt apprehensive about Europe (de Gruyter, 2013). While the Netherlands is one of the original member states of the later European Coal and Steel Community, it was not as focused on European integration in the years after the War as countries like France and Germany. Besides being involved in the talks about European cooperation, the Dutch government was working

hard to establish a transatlantic community based around trade after the war. The Dutch were in desperate need of fresh domestic revenue sources after losing the flow from their colonies. However, they were frightened by the idea in the Schuman Plan for a union that would be overseen by a supranational organization rather than by individual countries (de Gruyter, 2013). This gives a good insight in the European paradox for the Netherlands in this period; they were very interested in cooperation with other countries to get access to foreign markets but did not want to give up too much sovereignty to a supranational organization.

When examining the current position of the Netherlands and its agricultural sector within the European Union, the ability to access global markets through European integration and the subsidies provided to the sector have been crucial for the success and growth of Dutch farmers. This is all connected to the Common Agricultural Policy, a large scale set of policies that is altogether focused to raise the income of farmers and secure the production of food in the European Union (Baldwin & Wyplosz, 2020, p. 206). The Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) primarily favored larger farms, leading to the emergence of significant surpluses in wheat, beef, and butter, commonly referred to as the ‘wheat, beef, and butter mountains’ (Baldwin & Wyplosz, 2020, pp. 211,215). On top of that, considering the increasing intensity of the debate surrounding the environmental impact of agriculture, the CAP is controversial.

Before the Common Agricultural Policy was designed and implemented, the Dutch agricultural sector received help from the other side of the ocean in the form of the Marshall Plan. The content, context of and the run-up towards the Plan will be explained in the next chapter. In short, the Marshall Plan was a never-before-seen program to rebuild Western Europe with economic assistance after the devastating impact of the Second World War (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 9) This plan was launched in 1947 and between 1948 and 1952, the Netherlands received more than a billion dollars in gifts and loans to rebuild the economy (van der Hoeven, 1997, pp. 77-79). For the agricultural sector, the earlier mentioned Stichting voor de Landbouw was closely connected to the preparations, the negotiations and implementation of this Plan. The unique character and the influence of the Stichting will all be explained in the second chapter.

The Marshall Plan was about more than only monetary help. In return for the economic support, the American expected the European countries to cooperate and to integrate on a more institutional level (Segers, 2020, p. 60). The designers of the Plan were

convinced that the integration of Western Europe played a pivotal role in achieving a strategically and economically stronger continent (Garrett, 2018).

At this point, some developments come together in the first years after the War. A Dutch agricultural sector that is capable to compete on the world market, but a Dutch economy that is struggling with economic post-War problems. The Netherlands favored liberalization of the European market but was not supportive towards large scale European integration with a supranational organization. The examples of early stages of integration in the form of the Benelux are not encouraging for the country. A large-scale economic help program is in the works in the form of the Marshall Plan, but this Plan also calls for further European cooperation and integration.

In the middle of these developments, the Stichting voor den Landbouw is positioning itself towards the future in the European context. More European integration would open the export market for Dutch farmers but could also cause worse domestic conditions for the agricultural sector. The sector reached pre-war levels in case of production in 1948, but still needed to improve its productivity and efficiency.

By zooming in on the ideas of the Stichting voor den Landbouw about European cooperation and integration in the years after World War II, this thesis will bring these large post-war developments together and try to paint the picture of the challenges and the possibilities of that influential period for the European project. The significance and role of an organization such as the Stichting at a European level may be small. Nevertheless, the Dutch agricultural sector's position in the Netherlands after the war was pivotal in its provision of food and employment to its citizens and its prompt enhancement of productivity and efficiency. The choices that the sector was facing therefore had a great impact on the country. The composition of the Stichting is important here: it was a representation of the breadth of the Dutch political and social spectrum. The evolution of the sector's perspective regarding European cooperation and integration may offer a compelling insight in the Dutch process towards the European Coal and Steel Community and the later European organizations and institutions. The period that is researched is limited. It starts in 1948, when the level of agricultural production reached pre-war levels and when the Marshall Plan was firstly rolled out and ends in 1952, when the Marshall Plan was phased out.

This results in the following research question:

Did the ideas of the Stichting voor de Landbouw regarding the importance of European cooperation and integration change in the years 1948 to 1952?

The sub question for this thesis is:

If the ideas changed, what impacted this change?

These questions will be answered through a qualitative content analysis of four volumes of the magazine of the Stichting. This research question might be very detailed, but it is based on the intersection of the above-mentioned large developments after World War II. The answer to this question is intended to help to understand this period and its challenges in the context of European integration and will add to the existing literature about post-war Europe.

The structure of the thesis is organized in the following manner: The next chapter explains the context that is necessary to put the research in the correct perspective. This is done by explaining the status of the Dutch agricultural sector after World War II, by discussing the Marshall Plan, by explaining the role and the structure of the Stichting voor de Landbouw and by further elaborating on European integration and the progress that was made in the Benelux up to 1948. The third chapter explains the details of the methodology, the magazines that are analyzed and the research design. The next chapter contains a long summary of all the magazines from the five volumes, followed by a more extensive analysis. The final chapter will give the answer to the research question in a conclusion, followed by a short discussion about the potential for further research.

Chapter 2: the context

2.1 The Dutch agricultural sector

As this thesis focuses on the agricultural sector in the Netherlands, it is important to further elaborate on the status of this sector. With an export of € 94.5 billion worth of agricultural goods and products in 2019, the Dutch agriculture sector is a successful part of the Dutch economy (Ministry of Agriculture, Nature and Food, 2020). Nonetheless, throughout the time span of 1950 to 2015, the Dutch GDP's share of agriculture fell from 15% to 1.5% (CBS, 2017). This demonstrates that the Dutch economy has diversified and expanded over that period. Despite the passage of time, the agricultural sector still has a high level of productivity and innovation, which is the result of a longer process. The Dutch government made guaranteeing food availability a primary issue in the 1950s. In the 1960s and 1970s, efforts to increase horticultural and agricultural productivity intensified. As a result, agricultural productivity and output increased greatly (CBS, 2017).

This thesis examines the period after World War II. Erwin Karel writes in his paper about the modernization of the Dutch agriculture system how this War was not a break between the two periods before and after the war. Karel defines three interventions of the Dutch government in the agricultural sector. The first time was during the Agrarian Depression, which took place at the end of the 1890s. This was the start of specific education for farmers, which aimed to improve productivity. The second one was in the 1910s, when World War I forced the government to interfere in the farmers' production plans. The third time was during the crisis years of the 1930s, when the government had to save several small farmers from bankruptcy. This was the start of regulations in the Dutch agricultural sector (Karel, 2010, p. 5). While this can be explained as a good thing for farmers, because it guaranteed most of them a minimum income (Bieleman, 2010, pp. 167-168), the regulation in the sector caused unrest and dissatisfaction under Dutch farmers (de Ru, 1979, pp. 84-91). As Karel explains, this regulation of the agricultural sector was an exception on the general Dutch economic policy, where a more 'laissez faire approach' was usual (Karel, 2010, p. 6). The Stichting voor de Landbouw, the organization that is the center of this thesis, exemplified this distinctive significance of the agricultural sector in the Netherlands by exerting its influence on agricultural policy after World War II.

2.2 Stichting voor de Landbouw

From the beginning of the 20th century, farmers and farm workers in the Netherlands were organized in national organizations. Before this, regional and local initiatives existed in some forms (Robinson, 1961, p. 53). After the Second World War, a new step was taken in this process. The Stichting voor de Landbouw (or Federation of Agriculture) was established in 1945 as a federation of six farmers' and farm workers' organizations (Robinson, 1961, p. 55). This was not the first cooperation of the organizations, but the Stichting was the closest form of collaboration yet. The interesting part is that these organizations and the constituency of these organizations followed the pillars in the Dutch society around the time. These pillars represented distinct social, religious, and political groups that were organized along specific ideologies or beliefs and played a significant role in shaping societal structures and interactions (Koops, 2021). About two thirds of all Dutch farmers and more than fifty percent of the Dutch farm workers were organized in one of three farmers' organizations or farm workers' unions, either a non-confessional, a catholic or a protestant version (Robinson, 1961, pp. 53-55). This shows how diverse the different organizations were and how remarkable it is these organizations worked together so intensely. The federation later transformed into the Landbouwschap, an example of a so-called productschap or a public industrial organization (Robinson, 1961, p. 57).

The concept of establishing a productschap (a sectoral public law organization) specifically for agriculture had been previously discussed. The discussion about such an organization began in the 1930s, when the government implemented the initial regulations in the agricultural sector to address the effects of the crisis (Karel, 2010). Agricultural organizations expressed the desire to not only participate in the negotiations and discussions that led to these measures, but also to take responsibility for their implementation and execution. Preparations for the creation of a statutory body of this nature were outlined in two draft bills, but for various reasons, it did not materialize. The establishment of the Stichting was also discussed during the War, to 'establish a permanent means of contact to look after the economic, social, and technical affairs of agriculture and horticulture' (Robinson, 1961, p. 55). Because the German occupier forbid any free agricultural organizations, the establishment had to be postponed until the end of the War in 1945. In the aftermath of the War, the preparations for a public organization for agriculture were again started, culminating in the founding of the Stichting voor de Landbouw (Robinson, 1961, p. 57).

The Stichting voor de Landbouw was not only formed by six national agricultural organizations, but also by eleven provincial organizations and several local organizations. It consisted of an Executive Board, which met every week, and a Governing Board, which met every month. These boards were filled by several representatives from the different agricultural organizations. The Stichting had also special committees for several different branches in agriculture, like vegetable and fruit growing and forestry (Rip, 1952, pp. 53-56). In 1947, the Boards' size and the number of committees were expanded, which can be interpreted as an indication of the organization's professionalization and the effective collaboration among various stakeholders within the Stichting (Rip, 1952, p. 56). In the basis, the Stichting voor de Landbouw had three aims (Robinson, 1961, p. 56):

1. To defend the interests of farmers and farm workers in the economic and social field, both on national and international level;
2. To advise the Government, whether asked for advice or on its own initiative;
3. To prepare for the establishment of a public organization for agriculture.

The Stichting was given significant attention from politicians and the Dutch government as well. Since its inception, the Dutch Minister of Agriculture, Mansholt, engaged in regular consultations with the Stichting to address pressing agricultural issues (Rip, 1952, p. 55).

2.3 The economic situation in the Netherlands after World War II

When the smoke of the Second World War cleared, the devastating impact on the Netherlands and its economic sector came clear. Compared with the West European allies, it was hit relatively hard (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 35) (Ellwood, 1992, pp. 37-38). Ten percent of the houses was destroyed, and parts of the population were malnourished. The industrial installations were, if not destroyed, mostly plundered by the Germans. Parts of the factories of Shell, Philips and the Hoogovens were taken and brought to Germany (Messing, 1981, p. 43). In 1945, the industrial production of the Netherlands was at 30% of the level before the War. In the agricultural sector, the production was at less than 50% of the pre-war level. Parts of the farmland were still under water, the livestock had been severely reduced, and the farming equipment was also plundered by the Germans. In total, the damage of the war was estimated at 25 billion gulden (Messing, 1981, p. 43).

The challenge for the Netherlands to rebuild the country was big therefore. The Dutch government applied rigorous measures to clear the way for reconstruction. An example of these measures is the choice of Minister of Finance Liefstinck to clear the economy of assets that were obtained in the War with illicit trade by invalidating all paper money (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 37). An important factor for economic recovery is the push to raise the productivity of the different sectors that produce products that can be exported. More productivity also pushes employment, which is an important factor as well (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 39).

The Netherlands made significant progress in their reconstruction efforts, as evidenced by the near attainment of pre-war levels of industrial production by 1947. However, beneath these positive statistics a larger problem was looming. The country's economic recovery and rebuilding required the import of foreign goods, which in turn required foreign currencies. Meanwhile, the level of exports remained low. This resulted in a balance of payments deficit, largely due to a shortage of US dollars, as a significant portion of the imported goods came from countries that utilized the dollar (van Ark, de Haan, & de Jong, 1996, p. 302). Furthermore, the Netherlands had lost an important source of dollar income since the War. The country still had a colony in Asia before the war, the Dutch East Indies. The goods imported by the Netherlands from this colony were sold on the world market, thereby contributing to a stable balance of payments. This changed significantly after the War. The

colony declared itself independent from the Netherlands, which resulted in the Indonesian National Revolution and a lingering military conflict (Frisart, 2022) (Drooglever, 1997). The level of imports from the colony initially recovered well, but the contribution of the Dutch East Indies to the Dutch national income dropped considerably. Shortly, the Dutch East Indies were no longer 'the dollar earner' because the colony no longer covered the foreign exchange needs of the Netherlands (Griffiths, *The Stranglehold of Bilateralism*, 1990, p. 10).

Another important factor in the potential recovery of the Dutch economy after the War was the access to the German market (Griffiths, *The Stranglehold of Bilateralism*, 1990, p. 10). Before the War, the country was the largest supplier for the Netherlands and the second largest export market. A lot of material and goods that were necessary for the rebuilding of the Dutch economy could have been imported from West-Germany, and the foreign currency necessary for this could be obtained by the export of dairy and horticultural goods to the country. Griffiths also mentions how there was even more potential in the relationship between the Netherlands and West-Germany after the War. Firstly, a significant portion of Germany, preferably without Germans, could be considered for recovery as a part of a 'Greater Holland.' Alternatively, if that option is not feasible, efforts could be made to support German recovery under international supervision and control (Griffiths, *The Stranglehold of Bilateralism*, 1990, p. 10). However, it became clear after the War that the access to the West-German market was restricted by the allied partners to the basic minimum, which immediately took away any hopes that this would close the gap in the Dutch economy with agricultural export to West-Germany (Griffiths, *The Stranglehold of Bilateralism*, 1990, p. 11) (Ellwood, 1992, p. 35).

The economic problems in the Netherlands reached a climax in the spring of 1947, following a harsh winter that required additional imports, primarily of coal (Griffiths, *Het jaar 1947*, 1997, p. 6). This resulted in a balance of payments deficit, which forced the government to implement budget cuts and reduce imports. The decreased import levels led to a reduction of investment, resulting in stalled economic recovery in the Netherlands (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 41). Similar economic challenges were faced by other Western European countries in the aftermath of the War. However, it is important to accurately depict the situation. Western Europe was not completely devastated during the War, and countries were not unable to export any products or lacked import demand to rebuild their industries (Griffiths, *Het jaar 1947*, 1997, p. 7). Milward presents a contrasting view of post-War Europe, suggesting that

by 1947, the region was steadily recuperating (Milward, 1984, pp. 7-19). The biggest problem for Western European economies was the mentioned balance of payments deficit, which was according to Milward the result of the expanding gap between increasing imports and exports in nations such as the Netherlands and Britain, as well as the failure to maintain the progress in narrowing this gap in countries like France (Milward, 1984, pp. 464-465). In this crisis, *'the sustained high level of capital investments in Western Europe [was] expressed in a marked increase in capital goods imports from the United States in 1947'* (Milward, 1984, p. 465). Griffiths states that the deficit is only partially caused by increased demand for imported goods and mostly due to rising prices of these goods compared to the export prices as well by the declining income from foreign investments and services (Griffiths, *Het jaar 1947*, 1997, p. 7).

The deficit of Western Europe was addressed in 1946 through the assistance of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency, along with support from various public and private organizations, as well as through several loans (Griffiths, *Het jaar 1947*, 1997, p. 8) (Ellwood, 1992, pp. 63-65). However, it was evident by that year that this strategy would not be feasible to repeat in the following year. The financing of the deficit could become a concern from 1947 without a comprehensive large-scale program or structural aid. Additionally, since Europe was an important market for the United States, the financial situation in Europe also posed challenges for the US (Griffiths, *Het jaar 1947*, 1997, p. 8).

2.4 The Marshall Plan

American foreign policy has often been understood through doctrines. An example is the Monroe Doctrine from 1823, where the United States demanded from European Countries to respect the Western Hemisphere as the United States' sphere of interest (National Archives, n.d.). Another example is the Truman Doctrine from 1947. This doctrine is significant in the light of the Marshall Plan, as it establishes the fundamental framework upon which the plan is built (McGlinchey, 2009, pp. 1-2).

The Marshall Plan was however inherently different in the set-up and in the execution compared to these Doctrines. In a later part of this chapter is explained what the American political strategy behind the Marshall Plan was, but the set-up was organized through negotiations and cooperation between different European countries and the United States.

The idea of the Marshall Plan was presented by Secretary of State George Marshall at a speech at Harvard University in June of 1947. This idea was the result of the worries by American diplomats about the current economic state of Europe and the threats of communism for the continent (Hogan, 1987, pp. 57-58). The theory behind the Marshall Plan was partially based on the earlier mentioned Truman Doctrine (Allen, 1948, p. 6). This doctrine stated that America would support democracies under threat from external or internal authoritarian forces (McGlinchey, 2009, pp. 1-2).

Marshall gathered a small group of American diplomats to come up with a plan to rebuild Europe after the devastation of World War II. The presented idea at the speech was not the full Marshall Plan itself; the Plan was the result of negotiations between 16 European countries, including the Netherlands, and the negotiations between those countries and the United States (Tarnoff, 2018). As Marshall said in the speech 'the initiative must come from Europe' (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 51).

The Marshall Plan was structured as a four-year aid program, running from 1948 to 1952, and aimed at providing assistance to Western European countries devastated by World War II. The program was administered by the Economic Cooperation Administration (ECA), which was established by the U.S. Congress in 1948 specifically to manage the implementation of the Marshall Plan. The ECA worked together with national governments and the Organization for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC), which was also a new

organization (Berk van den & Bloemendal, Het Marshallplan, 2022). This OEEC was later reformed in the OECD (Bainbridge, 2000, p. 112). The Plan was based on the principle of providing aid to countries on the condition that they engage in economic reforms, such as currency stabilization and trade liberalization, to help rebuild their economies. The program provided a total of \$12.6 billion in aid to 16 countries, including France, Germany, Italy, and the United Kingdom, and helped to spur economic growth in the region (Schain, 2001, pp. 2,3,5).

A delegation from the Netherlands took part in the negotiations for the Marshall Plan, and they became a member of the later-established OEEC. This does not mean they agreed with all the other countries. As Ernst van der Beugel, the secretary of the Dutch delegation during the negotiations in Paris with the 16 different European countries (the Conference for European Economic Cooperation) said later: *there was, as I believe, never so much messing up, so much lying and so much whining at an international convention as then, because it was about life, about the future of those countries* (Berk van den & Bloemendal, 2022). This was mostly due to the exorbitantly high demands that countries made. At the end, The United States demanded besides European cooperation, two different specific requirements in exchange for the aid: a boost for German industry, as this would benefit Europe as a whole, and the removal of trade barriers (van der Hoeven, 1997, pp. 56-62).

2.5 European integration

European integration thus became a major goal of the post-War U.S. foreign policy. Roy Price defines integration not as unification, but he states that ‘integration is understood to mean a dynamic process of joint efforts to deal with joint problems’ (Beugel van der, 1966). The United States saw the rise of the Soviets as one of those problems. European integration was therefore not only promoted for European purposes, but the Americans could benefit it as well in a political way (Lundestad, 1998).

Most European countries were divided about the idea of European integration. During the earlier mentioned OEEC conference with the 16 European countries in Paris, there were already discussions about the creation of a customs union and the removal of tariffs and trade barriers (Beugel van der, 1966, p. 71). Milward states that the participants of the conference gained a broader understanding of the shared nature of economic challenges in Europe and even formed a sense of connection with each other. They also developed a feeling of unity against their respective national governments during times when these governments failed to demonstrate the same level of understanding (Milward, 1984, p. 66).

As Milward suggests, European countries lacked inherent motivation to pursue further integration on a larger scale. France did not want the German economy and industry to get as big as before the war again. The French argument was that this would make Germany a rival on French costs. Great Britain joined France in this. However, as explained earlier, the Netherlands could benefit from a larger German economy. This was also the case for other countries like Belgium and Italy (Hogan, 1987, p. 63) (Knapp, 1981, p. 41). The United States also agreed that a larger German economy would be essential for a better European economy in general. The United States was not that eager to take an active role in this European debate. But as they found out, it was politically necessary to ensure the role of Germany in their vision of Europe (Stern, 1997, p. 2).

The OEEC played an important part in the push towards European integration. This earlier mentioned organization was meant to oversee the Marshall Plan in Europe and to streamline European cooperation and integration on an institutional level. This was the quid pro quo that the US requested in exchange for the aid in the form of the Marshall Plan (Segers, 2020, p. 60). Besides that, the OEEC also facilitated other forms of cooperation among the economies of member states, like the European Payments Union (Bainbridge,

2000, p. 112). The OEEC acted as a forum for the countries to discuss the plans and ambitions in the context of Europe. This organization might be seen as a first step towards the Treaty of Rome, which laid the basis for the European Union (Barbezat, 1997, p. 35).

In 1949, the members of the OEEC were Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, and the UK. The US and Canada joined as associate members in 1950 (Bainbridge, 2000, p. 112). The newly formed Federal Republic of Germany also became a member in 1949. France wanted the OEEC to get more autonomous powers, but several other countries like the UK, the Netherlands and some Scandinavian countries were against this idea. The countries settled at necessity of voting unanimously out of fear for the dominance of a majority (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 69). The OEEC was not as successful as envisioned by the Americans. When the Netherlands signed the treaty that was the basis for the OEEC, the explanatory memorandum stated that the country was convinced that *'For the success of the European Recovery Program, a strong European cooperation is necessary in addition to the generous assistance provided by the United States'* (van Heerikhuizen, 1998). In practice, the OEEC was mostly used by the European countries as a place to discuss the distribution of the Marshall Dollars (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 70). The determination of the distribution for Marshall Aid, one of the core competences of the OEEC was taken over by the Americans after two years because of this (van der Hoeven, 1997, p. 70).

Another important organization in the context of international cooperation within the agricultural sector is the International Federation of Agricultural Producers (IFAP). This organization, established in 1946, represented farmers and agricultural organizations on a global level (Doekharan & van der Meulen, 2009, p. 669). The organizations had several goals. The first one was to serve as a network where leaders of agricultural organizations could meet to discuss the current events in the international context. IFAP also had the idea to represent the farmers of the world as a spokesperson. Finally, they wanted to promote and support independent national representative agricultural organizations (Doekharan & van der Meulen, 2009, p. 669).

The idea of European integration was not only discussed in the large Western-European context. The Netherlands was also in the process towards international cooperation and integration with Belgium and Luxembourg. At the earlier mentioned Conference for European Economic Cooperation in 1947, the three countries were represented by a joint

delegation (Bloemen, 1997, p. 201). This led to the narrative that the three countries stood up against the domination of France and Britain. This narrative sounds inspirational, but the role of the Benelux cannot be made this big according to M.J. Hogan (Hogan, 1987, pp. 63-66). Hogan explains that the Benelux countries, with some support of the Italians and Scandinavians, criticized France's intentions for using the American assistance for 'national stabilization schemes'. These plans provided, according to the Benelux countries, minimal benefits to countries relying on increased trade Germany, like the Netherlands, or those that already had made significant progress in recovery. They stated that the plans would allow France to control American aid and dominate the European market once recovery was accomplished. Instead of the French plan, the delegates from the Benelux countries sought to redirect American aid towards objectives that align better with their respective national interests. In the case of the Netherlands, this was a restoration of the prewar market in Germany (Hogan, 1987, p. 63).

According to Erik Bloemen, the Dutch used the Benelux mostly as a show of their willingness to integrate which is partially why the Netherlands received a relatively large share of the Marshall dollars (Bloemen, 1997, p. 202). When the Benelux treaties were signed during the War, the delegations were optimistic about an economic union between the countries. Bloemen states that it was believed that the economies of the Netherlands and the Belgian-Luxembourg economic union, which had previously been established by those two nations in 1921, were very complementary to one another (Bloemen, 1997, p. 202). Hermans nuances this idea. With the signing of the Convention of Oslo in 1930 and the Convention of Ouchy in 1932, the Netherlands and Belgium already committed to the establishment of a low tariff zone (Hermans, 2004, p. 30). While the Belgians were very much focused on the Netherlands from 1936, out of fear for the rising influence of Hitler's Germany, the Netherlands was much more focused on Britain. To improve the trade relations between the Benelux countries, a Permanent Economic Commission was installed, but the Netherlands was hesitant for further cooperation and integration out of fear to lose access to the German market if they became too closely tied to the Belgian-Luxembourg Economic Union (BLEU). While Belgium expressed interest in pursuing deeper levels of economic collaboration, including a customs union and even military cooperation, the Netherlands maintained a more isolationist stance (Hermans, 2004, pp. 30-32).

The Second World War was a watershed moment in this process. The Dutch lost access to the German market and the mentioned situation in the Dutch East Indies made the economic situation only worse. Belgium was able to provide in the Dutch demand for imported goods and provided huge credits to the Dutch to realize the import. Even though these credits were generous, they were not meant to be gifts, and because Dutch demand was so high, the Belgian generosity soon reached its limit (Bloemen, 1997, p. 202) (Robinson, 1961, p. 72). Before the War, the Netherlands paid for the imports from Belgium with shipping services and agricultural exports to Belgium. After the War, the Belgium were less willing to take over the surpluses from the Dutch agricultural sector. This balance of payments deficit was another obstacle for cooperation and integration in the context of the Benelux (Boekestijn, 1990, pp. 27-29). In summary, the economic incentives for cooperation became more significant after the War but the post-war scenario was complicated by the presence of a balance of payments deficit, which posed challenges to this cooperation.

2.5 Hypotheses

The existing literature indicates that European integration did not represent a utopian vision of all European nations coming together after the Second World War. This is evident at the Paris conference on the OEEC, where countries primarily pursued their individual national interests with the objective of securing as many Marshall dollars as possible. Although some countries recognized the benefits of economic collaboration, each country maintained its unique conditions. The debate surrounding the size of the German economy and its role in Europe caused divisions between the countries, as did the position of the OEEC. The balance of payments deficits experienced by various Western European countries compelled them to convene in Paris. The Netherlands encountered mixed results in its attempt to cooperate within the framework of the Benelux, particularly due to Belgium's protectionist policies for its domestic agricultural sector.

This thesis aims to investigate the specific ideas of the discussed Stichting voor de Landbouw about European cooperation and integration, to zoom in on this specific period that was impactful for the agricultural sector in the Netherlands. One key question is whether the insights gained from the research so far are also visible with potential changes in the Stichting's ideas about European cooperation and integration. By applying the knowledge and lessons obtained from this study to the Stichting's case, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

Hypothesis 1: The necessity of accessing the German market generated an extrinsic incentive for the Stichting voor de Landbouw to push for cooperation with other European countries.

Hypothesis 2: the Marshall Plan created an extrinsic incentive for the Stichting voor de Landbouw to push for cooperation with other European countries.

The next chapter explains what methodology is used to answer the research question and what choices are made in the research design.

Chapter 3: methodology and design

This chapter explains what methodology and what sources will be used to answer the research question of this paper. As mentioned earlier, this thesis examines if and how the ideas of the Stichting voor de Landbouw about European cooperation and integration changed between 1948-1952. The most complete way to answer this question is to analyze the minutes of the Board's meetings, the correspondence exchanged between the Stichting and the Minister of Agriculture, and internal memos of the Stichting. Nevertheless, an intensive search for these documents has revealed that they no longer exist in full or are not stored at a central archive. The annual reports of the Stichting lack sufficient information to provide a satisfactory response and some fragmented notes from the Ministry of Agriculture's archives are incomplete and unreliable for presenting a comprehensive narrative.

Between 1945 and 1954, the Stichting published a magazine that came out every two weeks, called *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*. The magazine stopped in this form in 1954, when the Stichting merged into the Landbouwschap. In this magazine, different topics related to agriculture, livestock farming and horticulture were discussed. It was a mouthpiece for the boards and the committees of the Stichting to communicate with their members and keep them up to date with the latest developments. Members had the possibility to write large background stories, reports from activities or opinion pieces. All with all, it gives a good view of the communicated standings of the Stichting voor de Landbouw in the context of the time and the different events. It can also be proven that the magazine is taken serious by the Dutch government. In the minutes of a debate at the Tweede Kamer, the Dutch parliament, Dutch Minister of Finance Liefstinck complains about a statement in the magazine: *'I cannot admire this mentality, although it is present in the 'Mededelingen van de Stichting van den Landbouw', which I highly value as well'* (Handelingen II, vel. 86, 1948-1949, p. 330).

A problem with the magazines for this thesis lies in the lack of clarity regarding the authorship of articles and the extent to which they undergo editorial scrutiny or censorship. Although the example from the minutes of the Tweede Kamer shows the value attributed to a statement in the magazine, it is overly simplistic to say that a statement in the magazine reflects the exact viewpoint of the Stichting at that given moment. The Stichting might have

other ideas about a certain topic but consciously chooses not to publish them due to political considerations. Nevertheless, an analysis of the articles of the magazines over a period can give a good view of the message the Stichting intended for its members and other relevant actors. Because the volumes are relatively complete, this represents the most comprehensive approach to presenting a cohesive narrative on the Stichting's positions and ideas during this period. Because the magazine is published as 'Mededelingen van de Stichting' (announcements from the Stichting), the analysis treats the articles in the magazines like this, as an intended message for the world. Because the authors of the articles often not mentioned, the analysis refers to the Stichting as the author, except when it is specified in the article.

The set-up of the research is as following: the magazine of the Stichting voor de Landbouw, Mededelingen van de Stichting voor Landbouw, is analyzed to determine if and how the ideas of the Stichting about the importance of European integration changed between 1948 and 1952. The volumes of 1948, 1950, 1951 and 1952 can be found in the National Archives in The Hague and the volume of 1949 can be found in the archives at the International Institute of Social History in Amsterdam.

This research is qualitative in nature. The timeframe of 1948 to 1952 has been selected as it aligns with the period during which the Marshall Aid was provided to the Netherlands. The selection of this timeframe is also intended to ensure the feasibility of the research topic for an academic master thesis, as it allows for a realistic analysis.

A total of 129 individual magazines are examined, with each being read through twice. During the first reading, an overall understanding of the writing style, content, and context is obtained. The second reading involves a more detailed analysis of articles relevant to answering the research question. This is the case when an article talks about international cooperation or integration and about the Marshall Plan. These articles are briefly summarized with particular attention given to important details, and sometimes a quote from the article is included. Because the articles are written in Dutch, a quote is translated into English. When the articles in a magazine are not relevant for the answering of the research question, the magazine is not mentioned in the results.

Chapter 4: results

4.1 1948

At the beginning of 1948, it is visible that the Stichting is aware of the economic and political problems that are present or approaching the sector. Explanations of the difficulties in reaching a higher level of economic cooperation with the Benelux countries, the need for the access to the German market and the lack of foreign currencies are a good indication of this. The Stichting portrays international economic cooperation most of the time as a good thing, most of the time it however warns of the large differences that exist between countries. The next stage, integration, is almost never mentioned in this volume.

In several magazines of this volume, the Stichting explains how the Marshall Plan works and what the potential impact of the Plan can be for the agricultural sector and the Dutch economy. This is for example visible in the seventh magazine, in an article called '*The Stichting voor den Landbouw on international territory*'. Several goals of the international operations of the Stichting are mentioned: the restoration of the export to Germany, cooperation in the context of the Benelux, trade politics, development at international organizations and the Marshall Plan.¹ This is the first time in the year the magazine explains the structure of the international organizations where the Stichting is part of. The most important part of the article seems to be to explain the importance of the reopening of the German market. This is an example of an extrinsic motivation for European cooperation. The rest of the article again mentions the discussions with France and the Benelux-countries, and for the first time, a short explanation of the implications of the Marshall Plan. At this time, the Plan or the European Recovery Program as it was officially called, has not yet entered into force, but has been announced. The article states that the Plan has huge implications for Dutch agriculture, but that the actual plan needs to be studied.²

¹ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting van den Landbouw*, 1948, Vol. 3, The Hague, p. 81-83

² Ibid.

The Stichting gives a lot a space to articles about the Marshall Plan in the first part of this volume. Sometimes only to explain the technical parts, like in the tenth issue³ and the twelfth issue⁴. The lowering of the expectations is important for the Stichting. This is visible in an article in the eighth magazine. The official goals of the program are mentioned, but the article does not want to take a stand what the most important part of the program is. However, it states some conditions for the help: the necessity of the maximalization of the productivity and economic cooperation between Marshall-countries, which needs the removing of obstacles. The article hastens to say that the Program is not '*a silver fleet of money*', which refers to a Dutch saying, meaning a large sum of money.⁵ The lowering of the expectations for the sector is repeated in the eleventh magazine, in even stronger terms than earlier.⁶ It explains how the Marshall Plan replaces earlier financial constructions with the US. The difference is in the expectations towards and conditions (as earlier mentioned) for European countries. The article states that European integration is, according to the European organization, indeed necessary for the success of the Program. The article explains how the national governments are still in play and tries to downplay the role of the European organization. The article concludes with the notion that the Program is insufficient for the full demand for US dollars and US products.⁷ A sober life and sober economic choices are necessary to reach this goal. These articles show that the Stichting is downplaying the potential of the Marshall Plan.

The impact of the Marshall Plan for the Dutch agriculture is further explained in the ninth magazine. The Dutch farmer should not fear that the direction of the domestic agricultural market will be determined on a European level. The Stichting states that the Dutch agricultural sector should hold on to the earlier course that was chosen. The Marshall Plan can be of great assistance in this respect, because it can contribute to the export position of the Netherlands.⁸ When the Stichting explains the benefits and disadvantages of the Marshall Plan, this is again focused on the access to the German market. The fourteenth

³ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting van den Landbouw*, 1948, Vol. 3, The Hague, p. 107-108

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 184-185

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 93-94

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 141

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. p. 141-143

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107-108

magazine features a large article about the vision of European agriculture on the Marshall Plan. It is mostly about the importance of access to food and a high productivity.⁹

The twenty fourth magazine features a large article about the Marshall Plan and the agricultural sector. The article explains how the weekly stats about the value of the goods that are arriving in the Netherlands do not give a good view of the real impact of the Program. The conclusion is that the current course of business in the Netherlands could not exist without the support from the Marshall Plan, because of the dollar deficit.¹⁰

The negotiations for and the run-up towards a union with the Benelux-countries is present to a great extent in this volume. This is visible in the first number of this year, in an article about the economic cooperation between the countries in the sector of hard fruits. The article states that the Stichting supports more economic cooperation between Belgium and the Netherlands, but that the sectors are too different to succeed in this on the short term. The biggest problem is the difference in price for the products and the difference between the value of the Belgian Franc and the Dutch gulden¹¹. Interestingly, the Stichting does not explain how the balance of payments deficit blocks integration, as discussed in the second chapter of this thesis. Most of the time, the Stichting only states that the differences between the countries are large. This is visible in the twenty fifth magazine. In an article, the differences between the Benelux countries are underlined, but the goal of an economic union is still the same. The question ‘*to what extent will there be a real economic union?*’ is asked, without providing an answer.¹² The *three countries congress* is discussed in a short article in the twelfth magazine, with several resolutions about the future of cooperation between the Benelux countries. The importance of cooperation is endorsed, with the individual responsibility of the countries and its agricultural organizations mentioned immediately after this.¹³

In the fifteenth magazine, the future of the agriculture policy is discussed. It is explained what the implications for the Dutch agricultural sector are of the Benelux economic

⁹ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting van den Landbouw*, 1948, Vol. 3, The Hague, p. 192-194

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 339-320

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17-18

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 397-398

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 178

union, which will enter into force in 1950. Further European cooperation is not discussed.¹⁴ This discussion continues in the next magazine. The economic union with the Benelux countries comes to the table, further European cooperation is not discussed.¹⁵

The export market for the agriculture sector is an important factor for the Stichting. This is for example visible in the fifth magazine. The conclusion is that more countries need new revenue for the national economy, so more countries are trying to create products with a higher quality¹⁶. Later in the magazine, the conversation between France and the Benelux-countries is discussed. France wants to cooperate in the area of horticulture. The article is positive about the conversations, which mostly had a practical character. The necessity of cooperation between the countries is mentioned, but *'the possibility to cooperate is not discussed, it was assumed as possible.'* The article uses a wild brush approach about the actual cooperation and mentions several committees that should be formed to investigate cooperation further.¹⁷

Organizations like IFAP are not as present in this volume as in later volumes. In the fourteenth magazine, the second congress of the IFAP is discussed. European cooperation is mentioned in this article, for the first time in the context of different structures. Three separate economic unions are mentioned: Benelux, France-Italy and the Scandinavian countries. This cooperation could be improved by the Marshall Plan, according to the statement. The article also underlines the importance and the role of national organizations.¹⁸ In the fifteenth and sixteenth magazine, the second congress of the IFAP is further discussed. The Dutch influence in the commission that is responsible for the execution of the Program is mentioned. European integration is not discussed.^{19 20}

¹⁴ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting van den Landbouw*, 1948, Vol. 3, The Hague, p. 257-261

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 309

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 51-56

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 59-60

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 192-194

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 215-216

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 251

4.2 1949

In this volume, several articles mention the Marshall Plan when discussing the potential of cooperation and the way how the Marshall Plan facilitates this cooperation. This is also the volume where the ending of the Marshall Plan is mentioned for the first time in a context that this created an urge for the European community. This happens for example in the fourth magazine, in a large article about Western European cooperation: *'Indeed, as the Marshall Plan has been operational for almost a year now, it becomes increasingly evident that the success of this plan, namely the revitalization of the Western European economy, is largely contingent upon the willingness of Western European countries to engage in close economic cooperation.'*²¹ The urgency to close the balance of payment deficit is also mentioned. The Stichting confirms the urgency of Western-European cooperation, but also warns that this road is long and difficult.²² This is mostly in the context of the need to close the balance of payments deficit. This question is repeated throughout several magazines in this volume, like the seventh magazine. This time it is in the context of the annual congress of the IFAP, where the question 'what to do when the Marshall help ends?' is asked.²³ The balance of payments deficit is also discussed in the fifteenth magazine, in the form of a speech of H.D. Louwes. The article states that the problem of the balance of payment deficit has two solutions: a higher level of production and a more sober life. At the end, Louwes discussed the Benelux and the economic union. He warns not to expect too much from this form of international cooperation, and points to the responsibility of the Dutch agriculture.²⁴ The importance of expansion of production and livestock in the light of the ending of the Marshall Plan in 1952 is also mentioned, for example in the eighth magazine.²⁵ The potential problem that production surpluses create are discussed in the twenty third article.²⁶

The idea of European economic integration is mentioned for the first time in the eleventh magazine of this year. Important to notice is the author of this article, specifically mentioned by the magazine: a press service that is connected to the American government. This Information Center is also responsible, together with the Dutch Ministry of Economic

²¹ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1949, Vol. 4, The Hague, p. 46

²² *Ibid.*, p. 45-46

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 142-143

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 237-238

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 133-134.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 376-377

Affairs, for a booklet from 1948 that could serve as a guide for the European Recovery Program (Stichting Economische Publicaties, 1948). Because the Stichting does not share its own ideas, but it does publish the article, it is difficult to determine the idea of the Stichting about European integration in 1949. However, the tone about the success of cooperation seems to change. The Stichting talks with more optimism about these possibilities for the sector and the potential. This optimism is also visible in the nineteenth magazine and the twenty second magazine. This nineteenth magazine features an article about the Benelux and agriculture. The Stichting praises the progress that is made in the level of cooperation. The article mentions some exemptions in the cooperation.²⁷ Overall, the article is optimistic about the future of the cooperation. Another article features the technical details about the state of the cooperation between the Benelux countries.²⁸ The twenty second magazine talks about the installation of the Foreign Committee of the Stichting. The level of cooperation in the Benelux is praised. Other forms of further cooperation with other European countries are suggested, but again the difficulties of this cooperation are explained.²⁹ This magazine also features a follow-up to an article in the last issue about the Marshall Plan and the agricultural sector, where the progress of cooperation in European context is discussed. Several reports from the OEEC are mentioned.³⁰

The OEEC is mentioned and discussed several times in this volume. In the twenty fifth magazine, the upcoming OEEC report on the state of European agriculture is explained. The Marshall Plan is mentioned, especially that the impact of the financial aid might be more visible on the long term. At the end, the article states that this report might be a big step forward towards European cooperation.³¹ The IFAP is also discussed several times. The thirteenth magazine features a, large article about an IFAP congress. The importance of international price stability is discussed.³² In the sixteenth magazine, a large article discusses the difficulties of international cooperation in the context of IFAP. Where the Dutch delegation pleaded for more economic cooperation, were the Scandinavians hesitant towards this idea.³³ In the same magazine, A short article mentions the standing of the Stichting about

²⁷ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1949, Vol. 4, The Hague, p. 303-304

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 305-307

²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 378-380

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 381-383

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 395-397

³² *Ibid.*, p. 208-209

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 253-254

the importance of the connection between the execution of the Marshall Plan and the IFAP.³⁴ The IFAP comes back in several short articles in the next magazine. One of them is about cooperation of farm workers within the context of IFAP.³⁵ Another one is a report from the third IFAP Congress in Paris.³⁶

While international cooperation is praised in several articles in this volume, the Stichting remains realistic about the differences between the different countries. This is for example visible in the twenty third magazine, which opens with a large article about agriculture and the European recovery. The article explains some of the partnerships and deliberative bodies that are in place in the European context. At the end, the question is asked how effective the cooperation will become, and if the same level of cooperation of the Benelux can be reached. A real answer is not given. The importance of cooperation is underlined, the article mentions the Marshall Plan again, but the differences between the countries make it difficult.³⁷

The Stichting also gives a lot of room to the discussion about the relationship with Germany and the importance of access to the German market. The second magazine features a short article about the contacts with German agricultural organizations that are resumed.³⁸ These contacts are also mentioned in the next magazine. This time, it is about the importance of maximizing trade with Western Germany.³⁹ The relationship with Germany is again mentioned in a large article is dedicated to the relationship between agriculture and Western Germany in the fifth magazine. Most of the article is about the importance of Germany as export market. The steps towards further market cooperation are discussed: Benelux and Western Germany, and later European and in some cases further.⁴⁰

³⁴ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1949, Vol. 4, The Hague, p. 256

³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 273-274

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 274-276

³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 365-367

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 34-35

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 65-66

4.3 1950

The second magazine of 1950 is a good example of the changing tone of the Stichting about cooperation in a European context. The discussion in the article is about the OECD and trade in Europe. The French delegation wanted to speed up the liberalization of European trade. According to the French, regional economic unions like the Benelux are a blockade in this process. The Stichting explains how they understand the French position and their fear for free trade. The Stichting does not agree with the statement about the Benelux. The Stichting is enthusiastic that the French delegation seems to give in more and more towards Western European economic cooperation. They are also very happy with the commitments from Germany and England in this context. At the end, the spending of dollars on agricultural products is shortly mentioned.⁴¹

The Stichting discusses the presence of an extrinsic motivation among European countries to engage in cooperation, driven by the perceived benefits of such collaboration, rather than an intrinsic motivation based on the conviction that cooperation is inherently beneficial for the collective welfare. Ironically, the Benelux is mentioned as an example where this intrinsic motivation is present: *'The cooperation between nations in general and between the countries of Western Europe lacks the spirit that brings it to life. European countries do want to collaborate, but they lack the conviction that this cooperation is inherently good. They are driven towards each other out of fear, primarily the fear of poverty. The cooperation between Belgium, the Netherlands, and Luxembourg does possess the right spirit.'*⁴² The article further elaborates about the progress that has been made between the countries in the level of cooperation. However, it also mentions that not all problems have been solved yet. Another article talks about a recent horticultural conference where positive discussions about further Western European cooperation were conducted. Again, this article mentioned that the path towards this level of cooperation is long.⁴³ The idea of cooperation is mentioned again in the fifteenth issue, where the position of the Netherlands as a solo player is marginalized. The question if a common Western European agricultural policy can be reached is asked. An answer to this question is not given, but the importance for the Dutch

⁴¹ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting van den Landbouw*, 1950, Vol. 5, The Hague, p.21-22

⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 77-79

⁴³ *Ibid.*

export is underlined.⁴⁴ The success of the high levels of export are praised in a bombastic article in the twenty first magazine.⁴⁵

The Stichting uses several articles to promote their ideas about the importance of cooperation. IFAP is often mentioned in this context. In the fourth magazine several announcements for IFAP meetings in Paris are featured. One of them is about the removal of barriers towards liberalization of trade in Western-Europe. The position of the Stichting in this is not mentioned, only that they will attend the meeting.⁴⁶ The seventh magazine features an article about the current challenges for the agriculture. The Dutch chairman of the European committee of IFAP is quoted, he states that Western Europe should reach its unity, no matter how big the challenges are. A unified group can also discuss ‘the world politics’ with ‘the rest’. According to the Stichting, this is all very positive. This does not mean that a European market cannot be protected.⁴⁷ Another article in this magazine again talks about the conference on horticulture. The Stichting regrets the fact that unity has not been reached on several levels, but they also point to the large differences between the several markets.⁴⁸ The fourth general congress of the IFAP is discussed in the eleventh magazine. The Dutch problems for the export are discussed. The Stichting expresses its regret about the little progress on this field. The problem of surpluses cannot be solved by cutting in the production. The Stichting also warns for the danger of bilateral trade agreements and their blocking of ‘*the natural developments of international trade*’.⁴⁹ The Stichting acknowledges that the deficit in foreign currencies plays a role. The Stichting again calls for a further liberalization of international trade in Europe. It points to the Benelux as an example, but also agrees that the coordination of different agricultural policies of countries the hardest part is.⁵⁰

In the next magazine, another article is dedicated to the fourth general congress of the IFAP. The Stichting praises the IFAP for the efforts to push international cooperation, but also points to the little effect until now on the price stability. The problem of surpluses is downplayed again by the Stichting, stating that the products should just be sold at other places

⁴⁴ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1950, Vol. 5, The Hague p. 229-230

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 377

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 95

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 97.

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 183

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 183-185

in the world.⁵¹ A final article states that freedom in trade is the key to a flourishing economic market.⁵² The IFAP comes back in the next magazine with a big article about an IFAP congress in Sweden. The importance of international consultation is mentioned, but the difficulties because of the differences are also mentioned. The discussion about the surpluses is also mentioned.⁵³ Another article about the IFAP congress talks specifically about the committee for the European recovery program. The article mentions two parties: one that is arguing for world trade and one that is arguing for more protection for the domestic market. In between is a group that points to the necessity of European integration. This is the first time in a while that European integration is mentioned. The article states that the question about European integration is in a transitional phase.⁵⁴ The eighteenth issue opens with an article about the progress of the IFAP Marshall Committee and features a preview of the upcoming meeting. The article explains what the different subjects at the meeting will be. The Dutch Stikker Plan for European economic integration is mentioned, besides the Italian and French proposal in this context, legitimizing the idea of integration more and more.⁵⁵ The earlier mentioned IFAP meeting is discussed in the next magazine. The Dutch export interests are mentioned.⁵⁶

Another article in the twentieth issue again discusses the IFAP meeting. The Stichting regrets that not all governments pursue the goal of maximalization of production. The article also explains what the recommendations of the IFAP are for the OEEC. Besides technical information is there also an explanation about the plans for the economic integration of Europe. The Stichting does not take a standing about these plans.⁵⁷ The OEEC is also discussed in the tenth issue. This article is rather technical, but it does make an important point because the deadline of the ending Marshall Plan is mentioned: ‘*When the Marshall Plan comes to an end in 1952, Europe must have increased its production to such an extent that it can stand on its own feet.*’⁵⁸ The problem of the scarcity of US dollars is mentioned in this article as well.⁵⁹

⁵¹ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1950, Vol. 5, The Hague p. 194

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 197

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 209-210

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 210-211

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 297-298

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 312.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 334-337

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 167

⁵⁹ *Ibid.* p. 167-168

The difficulties as the result of the differences between the countries are mentioned less and less prominent throughout the year. An article in the twenty first magazine explains the Mansholt Plan for the first time. The Stichting states that the plan is important, but that they need more time to come up with a response. The article further explains some details of the Plan, like the necessity of a European overarching organization.⁶⁰ There is also a short article in this magazine about the progress of the cooperation in the Benelux, in which the Stichting states that the Benelux will become one agrarian export area, so the basis for the future agricultural policy of the Benelux can be found in the Dutch agricultural policy.⁶¹

⁶⁰ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1950, Vol. 5, The Hague p. 380-381

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 383

4.4 1951

In the 1951 volume, the Stichting dedicates significant space to extensive articles on European economic integration in its first seven publications. This starts in the first magazine in a large article about European economic integration. A list of different initiatives is given, including the Mansholt Plan and the Marshall. The Stichting states that for the import and export position of the Netherlands, it is important the economic borders will fade. The article explains how the Stichting defines integration and why economic integration is important. The tone of the article is almost optimistic about the chances.⁶² The next magazine opens again with a large article about economic integration and the difficulties this idea brings. The Stichting regrets the rise of bilateral agreements and points to the chances of international integration. This will cause shifts in production, but also destruction of capital, shifts of income and certain sectors can experience a decline in employment. This is the first time the Stichting explains this in detail.⁶³ The next magazine contains another article about economic integration as the opener. This article states what, according to the Stichting, the conditions should be for economic integration. For example, a West European authority is needed for the execution and a transitional period is necessary. The article explains that integration also requires sacrifices and that just the removal of trade barriers is not enough to speak of integration.⁶⁴

Another article of more than five pages in the fourth magazine features the foreign work of the Stichting. An interesting quote in this article shows how the ideas of the Stichting are changing: *'For the Netherlands, the major issue is to try to alleviate the unfounded fears of producers in numerous importing countries regarding the activities of exporting countries. [...] This work holds significant importance for European integration and should not be underestimated.'*⁶⁵ The article further elaborates on the steps that should be taken to reach West European integration, including renouncing parts of the sovereignty. The article is all in all positive about this process and the chances that it creates.⁶⁶

⁶² Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1951, Vol. 6, The Hague, p. 1-2

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 13-15.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 21-22

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 48-53

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

The next magazine again opens with a large article about economic integration. The article explains the differences between Western European countries, with the Dutch sector as one of the lowest in price. The article does not take a real subjective stand.⁶⁷ This discussion is continued in the sixth issue, a large article about economic integration is again the opener of the magazine. This article explains what the consequences of integration can be. Examples are more profitable products in some countries and less profitable products in other countries. The difference in effects per country is underlined again at the end of the article, stating that this will be resolved in a later stage.⁶⁸ The seventh magazine opens with a long article about economic integration and the Western European agriculture as well. The positive impact on the prices for consumers are mentioned, just as the lower dependence of other parts of the world. Surpluses as the result of higher production levels are mentioned as only temporary. The article also states that the process can have a negative impact on small farmers. This depends on the level and the speed of integration. At the end, the Stichting again states what opportunities integration brings for the Dutch sector.⁶⁹

It is evident that the Stichting has adopted a stance advocating for greater economic integration within the European framework. Interestingly, the Stichting expresses opposition to bilateral agreements, a departure from its position in 1948. However, when it fits the Stichting they are still positive towards bilateral agreements, like the one with Germany discussed in the fourth issue. Ironically, the article is almost surprised that the agreement receives critique.⁷⁰

The Stichting presents an overwhelmingly optimistic outlook, regarding issues of surpluses as temporary in nature. This is in stark contrast to their more reluctant attitude in 1948. Additionally, organizations such as IFAP and OEEC play a larger role in the Stichting's communication efforts. An example is the report of the fifth IFAP-conference in the ninth magazine. The Stichting regrets that only the Netherlands and France position itself as supportive towards the attempts to create one European agricultural market.⁷¹ This magazine also features an article about the third report of the OEEC. The Stichting gives a summary of

⁶⁷ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1951, Vol. 6, The Hague, p. 61-64

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 77-80

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 93-96

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 45-47

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 165-166

the progress of the European Recovery Program. The tone of the article is optimistic, because the goal that is set to be reached in 1952 is already almost fulfilled. The article praises the several plans that have been presented to integrate Western Europe. The impact of the Korea War is mentioned. Again, the Stichting states that a high level of productivity is in the interest of the full European community.⁷²

Although the Stichting acknowledges the significant challenges posed by disparities between countries and domestic markets, it places greater confidence in the power of dialogue and negotiations to address this situation. This is visible in the first article of the nineteenth magazine that talks about European agricultural negotiations in The Hague. The article rejects the idea that agricultural sector is one of the larger blockades for Western European economic cooperation, pointing to the willingness to cooperate and the feeling of responsibility.⁷³

⁷² Stichting voor den Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting van den Landbouw*, 1951, Vol. 6, The Hague, p. 194-195

⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 277

4.5 1952

The concluding volume for this analysis commences by acknowledging the necessity of a political federation as a subsequent phase in European integration. This notion is presented in a speech by Eisenhower, in which he connects the necessity for a political federation in Western Europe to form a block against the threat from communism. This is the first time this argument is mentioned in this magazine. Eisenhower praises the Schuman Plan and the progress in European cooperation.⁷⁴ The Stichting itself refrains from taking a stance on the matter. However, the eighth magazine opens with the question ‘*Towards a European Agricultural Community?*’.⁷⁵ The Marshall Plan is mentioned as the first step towards more international connections, with the current different plans (like Mansholt and Pflimlin) as the newest stage in the progress. The article talks about meetings to create a European Agricultural Community. The Stichting sees this Community as the only way to improve Europe’s economic position in the world. ‘*We even wonder which truly national agricultural community would not recognize the necessity of such international pooling of forces.*’⁷⁶ However, the Stichting still points to the technical and psychological barriers that must be conquered. The Stichting is realistic but hopeful.⁷⁷ In this article, the Stichting asserts that agricultural policy cannot solely rely on domestic protection measures. This shift in perspective aligns with the prevailing context but marks a significant departure from the post-war situation. The Stichting had experienced the adverse effects of Belgian domestic protection, which were also present in the Netherlands after the War.

Another noteworthy magazine is the twenty second issue, which discusses economic developments in the Netherlands. Two trends are discussed: the favorable development of more foreign trade and the improvement of the balance of payments and the less favorable development of the domestic production and the connected decline of employment. These developments are connected. The article also marks the final mention of the Marshall Plan is mentioned as a temporary measure that did not fix all problems. The negative impact of the Korea War is also mentioned. The conclusion is that several domestic and international measures will be necessary to make sure the economic situation can keep improving.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting van den Landbouw*, 1952, Vol. 7, The Hague, p. 28-29

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 113

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 114

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 113-115

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 321-324

The circle is completed with the concluding article expressing regret over Belgium's choices. The Stichting regrets the choices Belgium has made in the implementation of the Landbouwprotocol. According to the Stichting, Belgium goes against the spirit of the protocol. The Stichting has requested the Minister to protest these choices.⁷⁹

⁷⁹ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1952, Vol. 7, The Hague, p. 417

4.6 General analysis

In analyzing the evolving presence of the Marshall Plan over the years in the articles, its significance and impact have undergone changes. While early discussions in 1948 and early 1949 focused on the Plan's influence and its ability to foster cooperation among countries, subsequent volumes indicate a shift in emphasis. By the end of 1952, when the Plan was nearing its conclusion, it had become almost invisible in articles concerning cooperation and integration. This is literally visible in the number of times the Plan is mentioned in the table of contents at the end of each volume. The Stichting's perspective on the potential and timeline for cooperation and subsequent integration also evolved, transitioning from a reserved tone to a more optimistic one. The motivation for cooperation shifted from primarily extrinsic factors, such as access to export markets, to a more intrinsic motivation for integration, as exemplified by the quote from magazine nr. 8 in 1952: *'We even wonder which truly national agricultural community would not recognize the necessity of such international pooling of forces.'*⁸⁰

It is noteworthy that the global landscape underwent significant changes during this five-year period as well. Notably, organizations such as the OEEC and the IFAP as well as initiatives like the Schuman Plan, which ultimately resulted in the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community (Laursen, 1997, p. 149), the Stikker Plan aimed at promoting European Integration (Stikker, 1951, pp. 436, 438), and the Mansholt Plan, which proposed the creation of a single European agricultural market (Mommens, 1995, p. 118) were all influential forces propelling the trajectory towards cooperation and integration. Most of these plans and initiatives are also mentioned and explained in the magazine, except the Schuman Plan. The organizations also get a larger role and position in the magazine over the years, from discussing the role and the impact of the organizations to mentioning their meetings and activities.

⁸⁰ Stichting voor de Landbouw, *Mededelingen van de Stichting voor den Landbouw*, 1952, Vol. 7, The Hague, p. 114

Chapter 5: conclusion

The primary objective of this thesis is to establish a comprehensive connection among multiple significant topics within a well-defined chronological framework. Specifically, it encompasses the domains of European integration, the Dutch agricultural sector, the Marshall Plan, and the economic and political developments after the Second World War. By delving into the Stichting voor de Landbouw and its magazine, this study offers a valuable opportunity to investigate a particular organization operating within a limited timeframe within this broader context of European cooperation and integration.

There is a subtle distinction between analyzing the magazines and examining the internal communication of the Stichting voor de Landbouw. Additionally, it proves challenging to ascertain the extent to which the statements presented by the Stichting in their magazines align with their own ideas and convictions, as elaborated upon and nuanced in Chapter 3. Nonetheless, within the borders of this thesis, this represents the closest and most comprehensive perspective attainable. Taking this into consideration, the response to the research question is outlined as follows: the ideas of the Stichting voor de Landbouw regarding the importance of European cooperation and integration, as explained in the Stichting's magazines, underwent alterations during the period from 1948 to 1952. In 1948, the Stichting expressed skepticism regarding the potential of European cooperation and did not even discuss European integration seriously. However, by 1952, the Stichting's perspective had shifted significantly, as they became optimistic about the prospects offered by European integration.

These alterations can be attributed to multiple factors. Upon examining the 1948 and 1949 volumes, hypothesis 1, which suggests that the Stichting voor de Landbouw was extrinsically motivated by the need to access the German market and cooperate with other European countries, can be validated for the initial years. The significance of accessing the German market is emphasized as a crucial objective of European cooperation. However, in the subsequent years when cooperation and integration are discussed, the focus expands beyond Germany to encompass several Western European countries. Nonetheless, the importance of the German market is still evident through the positive remarks regarding the bilateral agreement with Germany found in the 1951 volume.

When examining hypothesis 2, which suggests that the Marshall Plan provided an extrinsic incentive for the Stichting voor de Landbouw to promote cooperation with other European countries, a difference can be observed across different volumes. In the initial two volumes, the Stichting is skeptical about the Marshall Plan, but states that European cooperation is necessary for the Plan to succeed. The short duration of the Plan motivates the Stichting to cooperate. This aspect is discussed within the context of the IFAP as well as in relation to Europe as a whole. However, it is important to note that the transformation of the Stichting's ideas as portrayed in their magazines cannot be solely attributed to the Marshall Plan. In the two final volumes under analysis, the Stichting's motivation seems to be more intrinsic. This is evident through their appreciation for the integration progress, their optimism about the possibilities, and the timeline towards integration. The Stichting is also increasingly placing less emphasis on the differences between the various European markets. Furthermore, this shift can also be linked to the changing global landscape during the analyzed years. Based on the magazine, the ending Marshall Plan creates a sense of urgency for the Stichting in the early years of the analysis to push for cooperation, but the Plan is not the only factor in the transformation of the ideas. Especially in the two final years of analysis, there is a decreasing emphasis on the Plan, with other European initiatives and international organizations assuming a more prominent role.

The evolution of the Stichting's ideas on European cooperation and integration, as evidenced in their magazines, transitions from an extrinsic motivation driven by the necessity of accessing the German market to a more intrinsic motivation based on the belief that cooperation, and even integration, offers the most effective solution to various European issues. The shift observed in the Stichting's ideas may also be apparent in other organizations or the Dutch society during this period. However, further extensive research is required to address this question adequately. This research should involve obtaining primary sources to address the problem outlined in Chapter 3. Additionally, further research could involve extending the analyzed time period. Particularly, incorporating the years 1945-1948 would provide a more comprehensive perspective. This period encompasses the lead-up to the implementation of the Marshall Plan and offers a deeper insight into the economic conditions of 1947. The latter is a topic of discussion among various scholars, as discussed in Chapter 2.

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