



**Rural protest groups
and populist
political parties**

**edited by:
D. Strijker
G. Voerman
I.J. Terluin**

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MONTESQUIEU INSTITUTE

FROM SCIENCE TO SOCIETY



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Hendrik Koekoek, leader of the Dutch
Boerenpartij, addresses 'free farmers' in 1965,
commemorating the 1963 Hollandscheveld riots

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Preface

Projects have a beginning and an end. The start of this project lies in the summer of 2010, when Ida Terluin announced she would spend her sabbatical leave at the Faculty of Spatial Sciences of the University of Groningen (the Netherlands) and that she was willing to join forces to do ‘something’ associated with the 100th birthday of Hendrik Koekoek in 2012. Koekoek was the leader of a farmers’ protest group in the Netherlands and of the Farmers’ Party (Boerenpartij) in the period from the late 1940s until the early 1980s. The Farmers’ Party was a right-wing protest party with a populist style, mobilising small traditional farmers in the poorer parts of the Netherlands, but in the 1960s it was also able to attract protesting urban voters. The political dimension is not straightforward for agricultural economists, and therefore Gerrit Voerman, director of the Documentation Centre for Dutch Political Parties at the University of Groningen, was invited to add his expertise.

One of the reasons to remember Koekoek and his political ideas was that a few years earlier the 100th birthday of Sicco Mansholt was exuberantly celebrated, with symposia, exhibitions and a statue. In the context of agriculture in the Netherlands, Mansholt and Koekoek were antipodes, one being the icon of modernisation and state intervention in agriculture, and a strong supporter of European and international approaches, the other the voice of agricultural anti-modernism and anti-state intervention.

In addition to a book about Koekoek in Dutch and a meeting for the general public in Hollandscheveld – Koekoek’s birthplace – on 19 May 2012, we decided to organise an academic seminar on the relationships between rural protest groups and right-wing populist parties. The seminar was held in Groningen on 24-25 May 2012, with invited participants from seven countries. Its aim, even at that time, was to publish a book on the same theme.

Now, three years later, we have arrived at the end of the project. We would like to thank the authors of the chapters of this book for their efforts and their patience, the University of Groningen Language Centre for editing the English, and the secretariat of the Faculty of Spatial Sciences for their contribution throughout all phases of the project. Finally, a special word of thanks to Eliza van der Ploeg, a member of the secretariat, for her work on the layout of this volume.

Groningen, the Netherlands, March 2015

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