

Fox, Katy. 2011. *Peasants into European Farmers? EU Integration in the Carpathian Mountains in Romania*. Zürich and Berlin: Lit Verlag. 360 pp. Pb.: €34.90. ISBN: 9783643801074.

The European Union enlargement and associated agricultural projects have opened a new field of research for rural and agricultural anthropology. New member states turned out to be the ideal context to explore how the EU's agricultural projects interact with local farming structures, and what their implications for rural livelihoods are on the margins of EU. However, it is obvious that examining farmers' adjustments and the perception of agricultural restructuring in Eastern and South-Eastern Europe have not been addressed in detail. That is why particular case studies, such as Katy Fox's *Peasants into European Farmers? EU Integration in the Carpathian Mountains in Romania*, offer important insight into the process of reshaping the livelihoods of farmers and semi-subsistence producers in a globalised world. Based on eighteen months of fieldwork in Southern Carpathian Mountains of Romania, Fox analyses how the EU's Common Agricultural Policy was deployed in the first year after Romania's membership in EU (2007) and discusses how this process influenced the life possibilities of Romanian villagers, in particular those who perceive themselves as semi-subsistence "peasants". The study reveals the new regulatory framework for agriculture and focuses on the way CAP managed to marginalise farming families, through their exclusion from the decision-making process. Hence, CAP clearly supported the intensification of production by favouring commercial farms. Drawing on the extremely well-written ethnography, Fox describes the different strategies of survival deployed by villagers who were not able to conform to the new CAP demands. Her emphasis is on the significant obstacles for peasants' participation in the agricultural projects.

The book begins with situation of the Romanian, otherwise highly polarised, agriculture in the global context and an introduction of the theoretical framework: the author advocates "pragmatist materialism" and relays on the analytical concepts of value, personhood and hope as tools to illustrate the processes of change in rural Romania. Through the adoption of Walter Benjamin's concept of "constellation", the first chapter provides a detailed historical background to Romanian peasantry. It also deals with Romania's complex and ambivalent relationship with its past and Europe, which influences the peasants' and the elite's narratives of "progress". Fox argues that the 'present constellation mobilised a utopian future of equalisation in the European "household"', thus in the second chapter she invites us to think critically about what EU projects and especially CAP imply. In particular, she exposes the gap between the imagined aspirations and the actual effects of the EU projects. Therefore, this chapter sheds light on the different, problematic aspects of CAP and among them Fox especially criticises the dominance of models of personhood that neoliberal projects enforce. The main goal of Romanian agricultural policy is to reduce subsistence holdings and turn them into commercial and specialised farms. That consequently calls small farmers to step out of the game in which they cannot compete. Thus, it is obvious that CAP produces special hierarchies, in Romania it was also obvious that CAP implementation institutions were still inefficient, placing the blame for the failures of agricultural reforms on the peasants, who were regarded as inadequate, immature and unwilling to change.

The following chapters introduce us to a variety of topics on everyday life of Romanian peasants that are based on the impressive ethnographic descriptions: among other things Fox examines women's work, their hope in uncertain times and process of (re) making households; the way people produce their (although limited) space for resistance to biosecurity, through the avoidance of EU regulation by continuing to keep, sell and slaughter animals in "traditional" ways; problems with implementing EU's Direct Payments policy; the transformation of the Romanian agri-food system and the implication of the branding processes as well as the failures of EU's certification schemes. The final chapters discuss resistance or "manoeuvres" evident in transhumance and cheese production. At the end, changes in fruit and alcohol production are presented, where Fox reflects on the perceptions of personhood and state in new social order. It was common that disappointed peasants pointed to the inadequacies of state; however, villagers' perception varied according to their own success in the new post-socialist world.

It is important to note that Fox moves away from "transitology" that dominated post-socialist studies in the West, however she does not remain blind to the fact that 'transition' is still alive as a native category that people use to express and conceptualise their "progress". After all, as she claims, political projects are not a list of administrative or technical rules but they tend to produce new social order and have an impact on the ways people imagine their future and themselves, even in the case when they feel quite alienated from them. Although she places small farmers/peasants in the centre of her research, the book gives quite a balanced overview of the different ways transformations are experienced by various actors (local elites, policy-makers, CEOs of private companies etc.), which is a truly important step that enables us to move away from uncritical glorification of the marginalised groups and gives broader perspective on the topic of agricultural changes in the Balkans, without losing its critical edge when analysing neoliberal projects. In addition, it is valuable that she highlights deeply asymmetrical power relations between "old" and "new" Europe, which are evident in EU policy regarding the agricultural development in the Balkans. This is an important issue that certainly needs further exploration and it would give even more strength to this well-researched and theoretically strong book. Fox's analysis of peasant's unsuccessful "integration" in the EU is therefore an extremely valuable contribution to an emergent field of study, and it would be of great interest to all the scholars and students interested in agricultural anthropology, family farming, developmental strategies, resistance and hope in rural societies.

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