

Agrarian Change under Globalization: Markets and Insecurity in Turkish Agriculture

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This paper argues that deepening commodification in Turkish agriculture has changed the lives of farmers in significant ways. Global circuits have swept away the accustomed networks of information, production and marketing which had been largely established and maintained by comprehensive governmental support policies. New institutions have come into the picture establishing the links between small producers and larger markets. With state policy strengthening the domination of the market, prices and demand patterns fluctuate widely leaving small producers vulnerable to market forces and raising the level of risk and insecurity. This situation brings about a rapid de-ruralization of the population in most regions of the country. In the fertile coastal strip of the southern and western provinces, however, commercial opportunities introduced by global circuits have led to a thriving market in products, land, and labour. Farming of vegetables and fruits for domestic and European markets dominate agricultural production. Seasonal employment, in tourism and in labour-intensive crops, supplement household incomes, permitting the rural population to remain in the countryside.

Keywords: globalization, state policy, greenhouses, tourism, seasonal employment, land markets, Turkey

INTRODUCTION

The impact of globalization on agriculture has been to finally subordinate farmers, their resources and all flows of trade and credit to the workings of the market. It was, of course, necessary to first institute the market in each country and establish the links with global networks. For this to happen, most of the protective mechanisms that had hitherto been deployed and underwritten by states had to be dismantled. The nature of these processes varied along the axes of wealth and power: poorer countries made the transition more abruptly, while in richer countries, especially the United States, the EU member states and Japan, agricultural subsidies continued as part of the national regulation of the economy. In countries such as Turkey, which were constrained by their finances and could not resist the pressure of international agencies, policy conversion to the ways of the market was swift: legislative reform quickly succeeded in repealing the piecemeal regulatory framework that had come into being over a long period of national development. In successive waves of liberalization, price support schemes diminished, subsidies were repealed, government guarantee of co-operative credit

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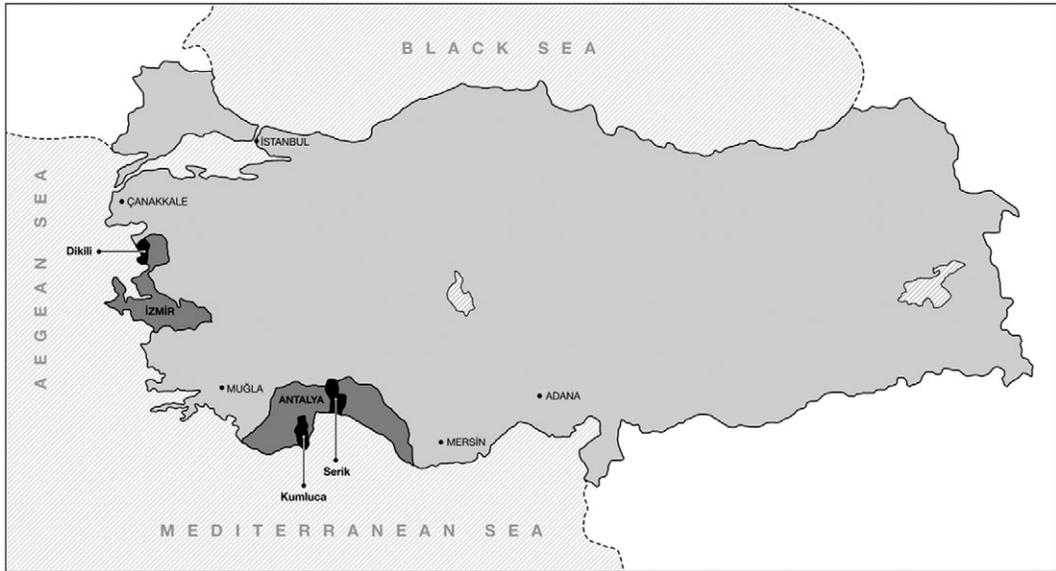
arrangements reneged on, and agricultural producers were left to confront the market relying on their own resources.

The transition from national developmentalist regulation (and protection) to market ascendancy coincided with the final disappearance of the remaining segments of mostly self-sufficient peasantry as well. In Turkey, de-peasantization has been an ongoing process, although with high variance among geographical regions. The market-reliant petty commodity producers were initially concentrated in the coastal areas of the country and around larger cities; as commercial integration progressed, especially during the boom years after the Second World War, the grain farmers of the interior regions also positioned themselves in accordance with market signals and state policies modifying them. Smallholders who could not compete tended to migrate to the cities: after 1985, the population in the countryside began to shrink in absolute terms. The reduction of village populations, along with the decommissioning of marginal lands, helped consolidate 'accumulating petty commodity production' in the countryside (Llambi 1989).

Most of the traditional peasantry that remained after the effects on agrarian structures of the 1950–75 boom were played out, could be found in the poorer regions of eastern and southeastern Anatolia. They were predominantly Kurdish, relatively subsistence-oriented and socially and culturally insular. A large portion of this peasant population was pushed out of their rural habitats by the war that raged in the area during the 1990s, with the result that large areas of former agricultural land were abandoned and the former peasants rapidly became an urban underclass, whether in eastern or western cities of the country (Sönmez 2008). A process that would have unfolded anyway (because the mountainous region cannot be made competitive in agricultural commodity production) had been accelerated due to the war and the accompanying absence of security. Thus was the last vestige of the agrarian question solved in the case of Turkey – by force, as it has often happened in history (cf. Bernstein 2006). The result of this final push towards de-peasantization of the rural population was that market regulation came to dominate the entirety of the rural population.

With the Turkish state willing to withdraw its erstwhile political project from play and institute a realm dominated by the market, domestic and foreign nodes have connected into extended networks and globalization has brought about a transnationalization of commodity chains in agriculture. All farmers have to submit to transnational circuits but, as might be imagined, the less stable their production base, the greater the autonomy they have to yield to market signals. For the grain, pulses and sugar beet farmers of the Anatolian interior, there is not much decision-making on the basis of ever-volatile prices and changing profitability. These crops are not labour-intensive and the sunk costs of the prevalent technology make it harder to switch. The farmers of the interior have already built stable family structures consonant with the labour requirement of their farms: population is relatively stable and there is not much excess labour capacity to employ in household income-earning strategies. Such is not the case, however, with the comparatively agile households of the coastal regions, especially in Mediterranean and Aegean villages, where expanding opportunities provided by commercial agriculture and tourism labour demand from nearby towns allow for and require a permanent state of alertness. Villages in the coastal regions often gain in population and households seem to be in constant search for mostly labour-intensive new crops, new employment opportunities and commercial networks to tap into. Even the principal resource of their livelihood, the land, is potentially alienable and open to negotiation. Of course, the inevitable outcome of this willingness to play the market is greater uncertainty. The life of a farmer under globalization has indeed become a form of gambling, in which, unmoored from the 'protection' of the national

Figure 1 Map of Turkey showing areas of research



developmentalist state, he is now a reluctant ‘master of his own fate’, in a casino mostly run by giant agri-business, finance and tourism corporations.

The transformation of the Turkish countryside has been an uneven process, mostly because markets have penetrated into different regions in a staggered manner. The Mediterranean and the Aegean littoral, along with parts of the Black Sea coastal strip, integrated into markets relatively early, with peasants transforming into petty commodity producers. Peasants of the interior also became surplus-producing grain farmers after the technological gains of the 1960s. The eastern and southeastern villages, however, largely remained in the peasant mode until recently, when most of them lost their viability as socio-economic units. Subsistence-oriented villages that cannot find a competitive niche in commodity markets tend to lose population to migration; they become residential locations for the older generation, supplementing incomes with remittances, pensions and other transfers. This is the case of thousands of villages in the interior and eastern Anatolia. The villages we are describing in this article comprise households that are predominantly diversified petty commodity producers who benefit from relatively fertile lands, but more importantly from early integration into markets, proximity to urban centres and the prevalence of labour-intensive crops. The availability of various opportunities for crop switching, of activities that are located in the interface of rural and urban spaces (such as small trade and transportation), and the ready accessibility of employment in town and city centres while continuing to be active in the village, make these villages into vibrant communities. They often have growing and younger populations who are open to experimenting with new crops, inputs and technologies – a capacity for adaptation that has gained a new importance as globalization has widened the spectrum of opportunities. Most of these villages are in agronomically and geographically privileged regions in the Mediterranean and Aegean littoral (see Figure 1). Here, one finds market adaptation, diversified production and various sources of income in the household: income may derive from agriculture and non-agricultural activities, transfers and rent, from

sporadic or seasonal employment within and outside the village.¹ Self-employment still provides a good chunk of the household income; yet this income must be supplemented, usually with the wages of temporary employment in part-lifetime migration.

Our description is mostly based on fieldwork,² the product of several visits to fewer than a dozen villages over five years. We feel that this account depicts the salient dimensions of agrarian change under intense commodification not only of products but also of inputs; it is meant to capture trends that will be prevalent in most villages that survive as viable entities in the global market. Below, we first discuss the changing parameters of farming and trade in the last several decades parallel to the liberalization and internationalization of agri-food production and commerce, focusing on the case of greenhouse production in southern Turkey. Then, we deal with some of the emerging strategies – such as product diversification, contract farming and certification – that farmers are compelled to adopt in order to be able to cope with increasingly unreliable market conditions. Lastly, we analyse the impact of commodification of land and the greater availability of wage employment on household and village structures.

THE CHANGING LANDSCAPE OF AGRICULTURE POLICY

One of the striking features of the current agricultural scene in Turkey, particularly in those regions closely integrated with global markets, is a growing feeling of insecurity and indeterminacy on the part of the farmers about the prospects of their production and marketing decisions. ‘Gambling’ is a word frequently used to describe their anxiety and uncertainty regarding the rapidly changing market conditions that may have serious adverse effects on their lives. Individual growers are unable to foresee the outcome and the consequences of their actions. Farmers across the world have for a long time been exposed to risks inherent in commodity markets.³ The present period, characterized additionally by the spread of an aggressive financialization, has intensified this vulnerability.⁴ Evoking McMichael’s formulation, the current ‘agrarian question’ is, to a great extent, bound up with ‘the relentless assault on small farming by a new balance of forces, including financial relations incorporating agriculture into

¹ The preceding discussion of village types is based on research conducted by Bahattin Akşit and Çağlar Keyder in the early 1980s (see Keyder 1983; Akşit 1985).

² This study is based on fieldwork we conducted in the summer of 2003 in eleven villages in three districts in the Aegean and Mediterranean coasts of Turkey. These districts were Dikili in Izmir province and Kumluca and Serik in Antalya province. We also conducted follow-up visits to these villages in the summer of 2008. During the research we particularly selected villages characterized by different demographic and economic performances, changing crop cultivation patterns and varying off-farm income possibilities (such as tourism, construction work, artisanal production etc.) in order to gain insight into a broad range of rural trajectories.

³ Cronon (1991) elegantly discusses the formation of a global futures market in grain trading, focusing on the case of Chicago in the nineteenth century. Turning grain into a commodity with standard grades, the new organizational and institutional changes (i.e. the introduction of the grain elevator, the formation of a grading system and the creation of a privately regulated central market) made global financial speculation possible in grain trading. We also know that similar market structures that paved the way for financial speculation in the trading of other agricultural commodities such as cotton, tobacco, coffee and sugar came into existence in the course of the twentieth century (Daviron 2002).

⁴ For many observers, the expansion of finance after the 1970s with novel and highly sophisticated systems of global financial coordination has meant that the world economy has come under the tightening grip of financial flows (Arrighi 1994; Harvey 2005). This financialization led to a decoupling between production and finance, which contributed to the emergence of highly speculative investment markets in many important economic sectors from housing to technology (Janszen 2008; MacKenzie 2008). In the words of Susan Strange, who coined the phrase ‘casino capitalism’ to describe the uncertainty and volatility inherent in the global financial system, ‘the common consequence was to have made involuntary gamblers of us all’ (Strange 1998, 4; cf. Comaroff and Comaroff 2000).

global industrial-retailing circuits, intellectual property rights protocols displacing peasant knowledge through seed monopolies and globally-managed circuits of food displacing small farmers' (McMichael 2006, 407). This situation owes much to the fact that the protective walls erected by governments during the heyday of the national developmentalist era, which were supposed to insulate the farmers from the whims of commodity and currency markets, are now demolished to a great extent, particularly in poorer countries.⁵

The incorporation of agriculture into the global circuits of trade and finance has a long history in Turkey, dating at least to the second half of the nineteenth century. Turkish farmers were introduced to such markets combining financial and commodity networks during the nineteenth century. Merchants' advance funding of farmers against the future delivery of the output (*à livrer*) afforded an enhanced bargaining position to the purchasers of crops and left farmers vulnerable to changing market conditions (Tökin 1934; Keyder 1981). The novelty of the present period in terms of prompting the gambling trope lies in the radical transformation of Turkish agriculture after the 1980s. Parallel to the neoliberal restructuring of the economy under the auspices of the IMF and the World Bank, various structural reforms and measures were introduced with the aim of reducing public spending and liberalizing food markets (Yenal and Yenil 1993). The pace of this process has been slow. As discussed in this *Journal* by Aydın (2010), however, deregulation gained considerable momentum in the last several years with the enactment of an economic reform package aiming to further liberalize the farming sector.

Support price policies, subsidies for agricultural inputs, commodity boards (responsible for the procurement of agricultural produce with established minimum prices and their storage and handling) and a protectionist trade regime used to be the main pillars of the agricultural scene in Turkey, as in most countries around the world. Commodity boards and/or other public agencies were also expected to develop quality standards for food and agricultural products and ensure that the growers and producers complied with them. Under these conditions, roughly from the 1950s to the 1980s, farmers enjoyed considerable security and managed to remain relatively immune to fluctuations in the market. However, the last three decades have been characterized by a secular trend towards deregulation in the agri-food sector. There have been reversals in policy and brief periods of expansion in agricultural supports (such as in 1991–3 and 1997–8), mostly due to frequent elections in the 1990s (Oyan 2002, 60–1), but the period since the 1980s has been characterized by the gradual dismantling of the earlier regulatory regime. The processes that contributed most significantly to this outcome were agreements signed with the IMF and the World Bank for debt rescheduling, which carried the conditionality for overall liberalization of the economy and commitments to the requirements of World Trade Organization membership and the TRIPs treaty (Tahsin 2001; Arı 2006). The latest stage of the deregulation process in the agri-food sector came with the Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP) as part of the World Bank's agricultural reform program in 2001 (Çakmak 2004, 12). The main objectives of the ARIP agreement were the withdrawal of price and input subsidies and in their stead the introduction of direct income supports, the elimination of subsidized agricultural credit,⁶ privatization of state economic enterprises in

⁵ The discrepancy between peripheral countries that have been subjected to structural adjustment and forced to forego their regulation on and support of agricultural producers and the developed countries that brazenly continue to indulge in their subsidies has been noted.

⁶ Since the 1930s, the Turkish Agricultural Bank (TC Ziraat Bankası) and agricultural credit co-operatives have been the main public financial institutions that extended agricultural credits and loans with very low interest rates to the growers. The financial backing of these institutions by the state was radically reduced particularly after 2001 and this has led to significant credit problems for the farmers.

agricultural industry and the restructuring of sales co-operatives. The implementation of this project (albeit with a few setbacks in the 2000s) had the impact of shifting power and responsibility in marketing and quality management of agricultural products from public bodies to private institutions.

We should emphasize that while we are describing a strong structural trend towards market ascendancy in the agri-food sector, it would be wrong to claim that the state has completely withdrawn from the field. There remain many mixed and complex forms of state presence and intervention still in effect. The introduction of direct (decoupled) income transfers, input subsidies granted particularly to the growers of certified vegetables and fruits, deficiency and compensatory payments are among the prominent examples of continued state presence in the agri-food sector.⁷ Nonetheless, the state no longer has the capacity or the willingness to be in full command of agricultural matters; it increasingly is in a position to complement market mechanisms. The case of the transformation of agricultural sales co-operatives under ARIP reforms illustrates this verdict. In 1980, there were thirty-three unions of agricultural sales co-operatives overseeing and coordinating the activities of 703 co-operatives with more than 400,000 members. These unions were state-controlled and financed procurement bodies responsible for the supply and marketing of agricultural products in both domestic and export markets. The state had encouraged the establishment of these sales co-operatives since 1935, with the aim of regulating agricultural markets, supporting producers by providing them with price and input subsidies and easy credits and solving their storage problems. Although support levels began to decline gradually, parallel to the implementation of structural adjustment policies in the 1980s, sixteen unions with 400 sales co-operatives and around 725,000 registered members still enjoyed moderate amounts of governmental support at the end of the 1990s (Kazgan 2003, 379–80, 398).

The changes that were ushered in, especially through ARIP, had two main objectives: to make the co-operatives autonomous in management and financially independent. Accordingly, a new law introduced in 2000 mandated governments to stop the financial support given to the agricultural co-operatives thus obliging these organizations to surrender to the logic of the market. Furthermore, the co-operatives were banned from engaging in manufacturing food items for the consumer market; they would confine their production activity to primary processing of agricultural goods but were also encouraged to privatize their processing plants. Meanwhile, the same law provided for the extension of the government's political oversight by establishing a re-structuring board, the majority of whose members were appointed by the state (Oyan 2001, 35–6). In other words, while the co-operatives were left to their own devices in financial matters, the state would still oversee their operation in day-to-day matters. As a result, co-operatives have suffered financially and have been significantly curtailed in regulating production and marketing conditions for the most important

⁷ Direct income support is the per hectare payments at a flat rate to farmers cultivating up to 50 hectares. (This system was widely criticized mainly for favouring the big landholders and not taking into account the land registration problems in the country: see Güven 2009, 179.) Deficiency payments comprise the second largest share (after direct income support) in agricultural subsidies in the 2000s. They are implemented mainly for oilseeds, cotton, olive oil and corn. The difference between the target price and the market price is set as the deficiency premium to be paid to growers. It is intended as a policy tool to stimulate production of crops in which Turkey is not self-sufficient. Compensatory payments, on the other hand, are intended to ease the farmers' transition out of tobacco and hazelnuts to alternative crops. Animal husbandry subsidies, rural development supports, product insurance payments and environmental subsidies have been other components of state support policies during the 2000s. The official line is that all these policy instruments, which do not interfere with market mechanisms, are adopted in line with EU's Common Agricultural Policy and World Trade Organisation's Agreement on Agriculture (TKB 2006).

products of Turkish agriculture, such as cotton, tobacco, grapes, figs, sunflowers, hazelnuts and olives (Yıldırım 2007).

SMALL FARMERS AT THE MERCY OF THE MARKET

Although the liberating effects of the market after a strict regime of protectionism by the government must not be ignored, the burden of such freedom and opportunity on small farmers can be crushing. Even in the case of those farmers who are in a position to benefit from expanding export markets and credit and commodity networks, the circumstances provoke anxiety and uncertainty, especially for the smaller players. This can best be seen in the rapidly growing sector of vegetable farming. The farming of fresh produce, vegetables and fruits, has become the most dynamic agricultural activity in the last two decades. Vegetables and fruits lead in exports: more than half of total agricultural exports was in fruits and vegetables between 1996 and 2004 (Yercan and Işıklı 2006). The annual value of fresh produce output amounts to a quarter of the total value of crop production. Turkey is currently among the top ten producers of tomatoes, cucumbers, eggplants and onions in the world. The European Union countries, as well as Russia and some Middle Eastern countries, are the main markets for vegetable and fruit exports (Çakmak 2004). Yet this success also signals a growing integration into global flows that producers have no control over. A closer look at the conditions in vegetable growing will help us illustrate the hardships and insecurities farmers face under the embrace of rapidly 'transnationalizing' markets.

The Antalya province in southern Turkey is the leading centre for fresh produce in Turkey, dominating the production of vegetables with approximately one-third of the total greenhouse area of the entire country. The majority of holdings are family farms with 3–5 *dönüms* (0.3–0.5 hectares) of land, mainly reserved for labour-intensive greenhouse production of vegetables such as tomatoes, green peppers, eggplants, cucumbers and courgettes (Karaçay 2002, 105). In 2003 and 2008, we visited four villages in Kumluca, which is one of the oldest and largest agricultural regions in the province. The villagers are mainly small- to medium-scale greenhouse vegetable farmers. There are a number of large trading firms, specialized in contracting greenhouse production and in marketing vegetables and fruits. These firms usually work with large supermarket chains in Turkey and abroad. As the principal suppliers of vegetable and fruits in Turkey, Antalya farmers are largely integrated with global input and output markets and are particularly sensitive to price fluctuations.

During our fieldwork, the favourite topic of conversation among farmers was their problems in adjusting rapidly enough to changing market conditions. While some talked about the abrupt price fluctuations, others mentioned the uncertainty in foreign markets. There were simply too many conflicting signs and different kinds of concerns that had to be taken into account. These included inconsistencies between current prices and future price projections, new regulations regarding production and quality controls in their chief market (the EU member states), rumours about the possible behaviour of the bigger buyers and rising prices of inputs. All these uncertainties about their immediate prospects add up to unrelenting anxiety.⁸ It was, therefore,

⁸ In order to avoid production failures due to pests and weather conditions in the initial stages of the growing process, to increase productivity and shorten the production time, the farmers in Antalya have in recent years shifted heavily to use seedlings. Accordingly, seedling production and trade in the region has increased substantially. In fact, some suggest that this is a general trend in all regions where greenhouse production takes place. (Tüzel 2003) These developments no doubt signify a greater dependence on the market for input procurement, since the new seedlings are usually accompanied by a specific set of input requirements. One may argue that the attempt to game the market paradoxically increases the susceptibility of the growers to market forces.

not surprising to see many of the growers talking about the merits of a 'planned economy' where they would be dictated what to produce and in what quantity. However, they did not seem ready to give up their chances of 'winning' either, at least in the short run. The casino yields are tempting (particularly in the absence of any other viable alternatives) despite the uncertainty and the elevated risk of failure.

The willingness to gamble at higher stakes has increased the price of the land in this district to one of the highest levels in Turkey. Even in those villages at high altitudes where the sloping land is not initially suitable for *sera* (greenhouse) production, land is being levelled and hothouses built, thus effectively raising the stakes. Marshland has been drained; inferior land has been recovered and brought under greenhouse cultivation in recent years. For example, in Serik, a district adjacent to Kumluca, land previously cultivated to grow cotton has been increasingly converted to greenhouse production. Particularly in higher altitudes, farmers had relied on cotton growing for many years, thanks to input subsidies and cheap credit obtained from AntBirlik, a prominent agricultural sales co-operative in cotton production. However, the major changes that AntBirlik has gone under, parallel to the general restructuring of sales co-operatives after 2000, have led to rising input prices and serious marketing problems. As a result, cotton production has declined and, in its place greenhouses are taking hold. This shift has not always been smooth, however. Greenhouse production necessitates a considerable outlay of start-up capital. Many of the villagers end up selling some of their land to raise money to meet the construction costs of hothouses and other initial expenses for irrigation infrastructure. This is particularly the case for those farmers who switch to greenhouse production after already having incurred debts during cotton production.

Indebtedness is not unique to the growers in Serik. Farmers everywhere seem to owe increasing amounts of money to different credit agencies, including commercial and public banks, credit co-operatives, usurers and *komisyoncu* (sales agents). Many of the growers in Kumluca, for example, have fallen into a vicious circle of borrowing in the past decade. They blame the increasing prices of inputs and fluctuations in output prices for their cash problems. In the absence of regular and steady income, farmers increasingly resort to credit markets to meet the costs of their inputs. They borrow from commercial banks that charge higher interest rates compared to the state-run Bank of Agriculture, which used to be the dedicated financial institution for agriculture. It is not surprising that there has been an increase in the number of commercial banks targeting the emerging credit market in rural areas with aggressive advertisement and marketing campaigns (*Radikal* 2007). *Komisyoncu*, the sales agent between the purchasing merchant and the grower, is another source of credit for the growers. In most cases, farmers receive advance payments from the *komisyoncu* to pay back after the future delivery of their products. When a grower applies to commercial banks for credit, he sometimes names his *komisyoncu* as surety.

One of the main reasons behind the increasing indebtedness of recent years is rising production costs. There have been substantial increases in the use of inputs purchased in the market as well as in prices, parallel to the gradual dismantling of input subsidies (Günaydin 2008). Privatization of input markets aggravates the situation. For example, price increases for seeds whose production and distribution are still controlled by public agencies (such as wheat, barley and fodder crops) have been much less severe compared to those varieties (such as corn, sunflowers and vegetables), which are controlled by private firms (Miran 2005, 34). In a study that analyses the impact of deregulation policies in the production and trade of seed and other agricultural inputs in four different countries (Bangladesh, India, Turkey and Zimbabwe), it was suggested that 'market entry has been most dramatic in Turkey' (Gisselquist et al. 2002, 247). Not only did the deregulation process begin in Turkey earlier than most countries in the early

1980s, but its intensity and scope have also been relatively larger. Relaxation of import controls has led to swift commercialization and internationalization in the seed sector. In the early 2000s, private seed companies were already dominant in the seed market (Açıköz et al. 2002, 160) and global giants such as Pioneer, Novartis, DuPont, Bayer and Cargill made significant inroads in many agricultural crops (Aksoy 2005, 244). Imports of greenhouse vegetable seeds, especially the preferred hybrid varieties, increased rapidly after the 1980s (Açıköz et al. 2002). In 2004, for example, around 80 per cent of hybrid vegetable seeds were imported from abroad (Özalp 2005, 19). In 2006, the government legislated a seed law empowering a private body, the Association of Seed Growers, as the regulator of the seed market, to register and certify varieties and to prohibit the marketing of unregistered seeds.⁹ The effect will be to keep out of the seed markets both public agencies and individual farmers who will not be able to compete in the market because they will not be able to navigate the costly certification process. Thus, the advantage enjoyed by transnational seed companies and the larger producers of domestic varieties, who were often tied in partnerships, has been enhanced. The use of new seeds and seedlings (the use of seedlings is especially common in tomato and melon growing) lead to higher production costs and a greater dependence on the market for input procurement since these are usually accompanied by a specific set of input requirements (Tüzel 2003). The attempt to play by the new rules deepens market dependency and leads to further vulnerability of growers.

Financialization, the insertion of mechanisms of borrowing and debt into all transactions, contributes to the deepening of market relations in the countryside, which adds ever more risk to production conditions, particularly for farmers with lesser land and capital resources. Credit markets have become highly commercialized in recent years. This is a radical change compared to previous periods when growers used to enjoy cheaper credit with easy payment conditions from public banks and state-sponsored credit co-operatives. The difficulty is aggravated for poorer farmers who do not have access to relatively cheaper and formal credit channels. The absence of cadastral assay and land registration in parts of Turkey and the problematic character of title deeds to serve as collateral complicate the matter even more. In short, the commercialization of credit markets introduces novel exclusion mechanisms with important implications for production relations in the countryside and makes financialization more burdensome.

Another factor that aggravates the destabilizing effects of the volatility of market conditions and financialization on rural livelihoods is the growing information asymmetry between producers and buyers. The ordinary growers' access to reliable information about changing market conditions is rather limited. Given the atomized nature of greenhouse vegetable production (there are no producer co-operatives or unions), farmers only have access to scattered information and may even hesitate to share it with their fellow growers to avoid further competition. In fact, under present regulations, most of the growers need to work with middlemen in order to be able to sell their produce in the local wholesale market (*sebze-meyve hali*) unless they have a direct connection and pre-established deal with the big retailers (Çimen 2001). Therefore, the growers complain that they have no say in the pricing of their produce once it enters through the gates of the wholesale market. Prices are determined by the deal made between the *komisyoncu* and the wholesaler. In other words, apart from the existing market conditions, the ordinary farmer almost exclusively relies on the bargaining skills, connections and knowledge of *komisyoncu* to get a good deal. Working

⁹ For the text of the legislation, see http://www.tarim.gov.tr/Files/Mevzuat/kanun_son/TKB_Kanunlar/TohumculukKanunu.pdf

directly with supermarket chains is not a good alternative either. Many growers complain about the capacity of the supermarkets to dictate and often manipulate the terms of the trade to their advantage. For example, it is not unusual to have supermarkets return the produce to the growers with the claim that it was unsellable. Some of the bigger producers in Antalya try to protect themselves by establishing more direct relations with foreign wholesalers. With their own storage, sorting and packaging facilities, a small number of producers have recently evolved into exporting firms (Karaçay 2002, 104), a trend that may give them a competitive advantage, and eventually lead to land concentration and likely reduction in the number of agricultural producers.

The picture is quite different on the buyers' side: the role played by retailing and wholesaling firms, market brokers and supermarket chains, all of which act as intermediaries between the direct producer and the consumer, has increased over the last decades (Forum 2001, 43). Among both intermediary firms and retailers, there has been an increasing tendency toward consolidation (Özkaya 2008). These developments parallel the global trend whereby international and national supermarket chains and bigger wholesalers increasingly dominate the market.¹⁰ These firms are organized and better equipped in terms of having access to relevant information networks. They are more flexible in their procurement and marketing strategies, since they have better access to international markets. (cf. Biles et al. 2007). Their projections about the current and future market conditions are more accurate than the individual growers' estimates. They are also much better equipped to deal with sudden changes in demand conditions. The direct producers, on the other hand, are much more vulnerable to such changes since they have neither monetary savings nor adequate storage facilities for their products.

FARMERS' STRATEGIES FOR COPING WITH THE MARKET

As noted above, apprehension in the countryside towards the radical change in the nature of commodity markets is part and parcel of the larger transformation in Turkish agriculture. The deregulation of the economy in general and the agricultural sector in particular, as well as the liberalization of the trade regime and the consequent internationalization of agri-food production and trade after the 1980s led to significant changes in the agricultural landscape with important repercussions for the livelihood strategies of individual growers. We will review some of these strategies that are frequently observed in the coastal regions of Turkey.

Product Diversification

Farmers engage in various strategies in order to better situate themselves in the global casino of agricultural markets. Even if their long-run position is structurally disadvantaged, in the short term there may be some winners and opportunities for accumulation and further differentiation. Diversification of agricultural crops is often forced upon the farmers who can no longer cultivate their traditional cash crops because state purchasing boards impose strict limits on

¹⁰ The growth and the proliferation of global buyer-driven networks in many agricultural commodities can be seen not only in giant agri-food corporations specialized in food processing, but also large supermarket chains that now dominate the greater portion of the global food market (Biles et al. 2007; cf. Gereffi 1994). Big retailers and food manufacturing firms, in a constant search for cheap, reliable and steady supplies of food products from fresh produce to grains, are heavily engaged in organizing flexible procurement networks that stretch across the world. Furthermore, while 'large supermarket buyers now dominate much of the trade, determining the specifications of supply on a pre-programmed basis to meet their requirements' they 'ultimately provide little surety of purchase and allow market conditions to govern prices' (Kritzinger et al. 2004, 17).

output, or have left the market to private parties who provide no guarantees to purchase all that the farmer has to offer. This is the case for tea and hazelnuts in the coastal villages of the Black Sea. In the southwest corner of the country, in a study of twelve villages in Muğla province, the authors ascribe the search for new crops especially to the enforced reduction in tobacco cultivation. Villagers have increased the planting of fruit orchards and the cultivation of vegetables in an attempt to make up for income lost in having to give up the state-purchased tobacco crop (Öztürk et al. 2008). Similarly, in Dikili in Izmir province, with the dramatic decline of state support for 'traditional' cash crops such as tobacco and cotton, the cultivation of these products has shrunk drastically.¹¹ Instead, many villagers have shifted to alternative products such as okra, lentils and olives.¹² Okra production has increased significantly to surpass other products in the region, even though its cultivation, particularly in the harvesting phase, is very labour intensive. Despite the drudgery, production has increased rapidly and there are now several okra purchasing centres run by local intermediaries in Dikili. These intermediaries commission local growers and sell to wholesale merchants in neighbouring cities. Most of the product is destined for processing plants and foreign markets (Çelebi 2008).

Product diversification has been a strong trend elsewhere in the Turkish countryside as well. For example, the number of greenhouse growers has been steadily increasing in the Mediterranean since the 1990s, even in those regions where off-season vegetable growing used to be negligible. Because of micro-climatic conditions, greenhouse production was heavily concentrated in coastal areas until recently. However, since the mid-1990s, some of the villagers in higher elevations have also begun to set up greenhouses for off-season vegetable farming. Some of the greenhouse producers are widening their product base and experimenting with more exotic types of vegetables such as Brussels sprouts, avocados and bananas, as well as various kinds of flowers, in addition to the more traditional off-season vegetables of tomatoes, green beans and aubergines.

Contract Farming

With the erosion of government regulation in the agri-food sector, buyers are getting to increasingly dominate the agricultural scene. Under these conditions, many farmers embrace contract farming as a way of reducing uncertainty.¹³ Since contract farming places farmers at a disadvantage (because the producer loses control over resources and production decisions and has to assume the unexpected production risks associated with nature – cf. Watts 1994), we can look briefly at the conditions under which individual growers surrender to the vertical integration strategies of agri-food corporations. Here we will return once more to the Dikili example, where there has been a substantial increase in contract farming. Tobacco, tomatoes and field crop seeds for sunflower and corn are the main crop varieties that have recently come

¹¹ Since tobacco cultivation requires relatively lower amounts of input and water use, some villagers, particularly landless families, continue to grow tobacco, albeit in small quantities. These people mainly lease (*icar*) the land not suitable for other production purposes and engage in tobacco farming probably because tobacco growing, a highly labour-intensive activity, lends itself relatively more readily to higher levels of self-exploitation of the family. This may be considered as a convenient survival strategy, particularly for poor landless families.

¹² The introduction of a new government support package in 2005 for olive growers with minimum 10 *dönüms* of land can be considered as one of the major causes behind the increase in olive production in recent years. This new support mechanism, with varying support prices for different olive varieties, was intended to encourage the planting of certified olive trees in Turkey (Referans 2007). However, many of the villagers criticize this support for favouring the growers with larger land holdings and financial resources. They argue that ordinary growers with immediate cash needs cannot wait for long enough for the maturing of young olive trees to bear fruits.

¹³ For a general overview of the expansion of contract farming arrangements in the last several decades, see Rehber (2004).

under contract.¹⁴ In tobacco production, there are many regional exporting firms such as Türkiye Tütünleri, Sunel Tütün and Özege Tütünleri, as well as some international tobacco processing companies such as Socotab that engage in contract farming. In the case of corn and sunflower, giant TNCs such as Monsanto and Syngenta are contracting local growers to produce different seed varieties. There is contract farming as well for tomatoes, partly grown for export markets.¹⁵ It is important to note here that it is usually the larger growers with more land that are preferred by the purchasers, although smaller producers also enter into such contractual arrangements. So far, however, the small-farmer pattern of agriculture where family labour is largely sufficient for operations seems to prevail in contract farming. Yet, there are also new enterprises (greenhouses, wineries, boutique olive oil operations, dairy farms), usually on new land outside of villages, which start life as small capitalist units. These are cases of investors from the city who set up well funded operations in the countryside, also creating employment for villagers – in the same manner as tourism establishments.

Our findings indicate that contracts in Turkey, as everywhere in the world, include terms and clauses that can be considered exacting for growers. For example, the contracts for tomato and seed growing clearly specify not only standards for the shape, quality and weight of the final product, but also the kind and the amount of inputs to be used in the production process. The contract gives the buyer full authority to inspect the production process on a continuing basis and the buyer reserves the right to withdraw from the deal unilaterally in case of non-compliance with production norms and standards. In short, the terms that the farmers have to comply with are precisely spelled out in the contracts to minimize uncertainty for the purchaser. Such precision is absent in the way the terms relating to the buyer's responsibilities and obligations are stated; stipulations regarding the pricing of the output seem to be vague and complicated, and the schedule for payment is not clear. For instance, the unit price of tomato is pegged to the average market price of dried tomatoes at the time of delivery, and the price of corn is determined through a complex calculation based on specific coefficients for specific varieties of seeds and the minimum price that is set by the government. Furthermore, it is stated clearly in all contracts that the buyer shall not pay any compensation to the grower for harvest failures due to natural or any other causes.

This power asymmetry in farming contracts does not seem to deter or discourage producers. In fact, farmers, even the smaller ones, seem to be willing and eager to enter into these contracts. This apparent paradox is resolved easily when we take into account prevailing conditions in the rural context. As we discussed above, the farmers' production decisions are no longer underwritten by state policy; and, in an uncertain environment, they come to resemble gambling bets. Despite the disadvantages, contract farming is still preferable for farmers since it is probably the only alternative that affords the possibility of reducing risk – in this case because there will be a purchaser at the end of the cycle. Echanove and Steffen (2005) draw a similar conclusion in their study where they analyse the popularity of contract farming among vegetable producers in Mexico. In their words: 'despite the disadvantages of contract farming for

¹⁴ The terms of the contracts vary depending on the type of the produce. For example, in the case of tobacco growing, firms generally do not provide the growers with the necessary inputs and specify only the amount of water and fertilizer. However, in the cases of growing tomatoes and sunflower and corn seeds, there are strict clauses in the contracts about the type and quantity of inputs to be used in the production process and it is generally the buyer firms who supply the growers with the necessary input and technology.

¹⁵ These are overwhelmingly catering to national tomato processing companies such as Tukaş and Burcu for the production of tomato paste. However, there is an increasing number of farmers who grow a variety of tomatoes, particularly for drying and intended for foreign markets, where there has been an increase in demand for dried tomatoes in the recent years.

growers and the disproportional risks borne by producers, they enter into contract farming labour agreements because they lack alternatives for financing, technical assistance and access to markets' (Echanove and Steffen 2005, 166).

Growing Emphasis on Product Quality

As another response to the increasing volatility in the product markets, we witness an emphasis on product quality in the production and marketing of agricultural produce. This is a rather novel phenomenon that gained wider importance parallel to the internationalization of the local agri-food systems on the one hand and increasing attempts by international agencies to regulate food markets on the other. As has been previously observed, the increasing emphasis on quality standards by the big buyers in a context where governments gradually retreat from their commanding positions in developing, maintaining and inspecting standards for food and food production, has resulted in the rising prominence of third-party auditing and certification systems¹⁶ (Hatanaka et al. 2006). Many of the supermarket chains in Europe require that their fresh vegetable and fruit suppliers have EUREP-GAP (Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group-Good Agricultural Practice) certification for their products, to ensure quality.¹⁷ Most growers have no option but to agree to the new production requirements in order to protect their trading positions and to gain access to newer markets. Growers who cannot meet quality standards for certification face the risk of encountering serious obstacles in marketing their produce. However, it is not easy, particularly for smaller farmers, to obtain clear information about the new standards. This is mainly because the current period can be considered as a transition period from the more traditional (and national) standards of qualification to the emergence of new means of international quality management with 'divergent or even contradictory changes' (Daviron 2002, 177).

The GAP certification system became known in Turkey in the 2000s. This was mainly due to the marketing problems encountered in European markets by Turkish exporters. As a result, the Ministry of Agriculture established a governmental body in 2004, and issued a decree to regulate and coordinate the activities of the firms active in the monitoring and certification of agricultural practices. The ministry even began to extend governmental support to the growers with appropriate certification in order to encourage the expansion of certified production mainly in fresh fruits and vegetables.¹⁸ In the mid-2000s, there were eight international

¹⁶ The third-party auditing and certification systems have evolved into an important regulatory mechanism for the global production and trade of agricultural commodities in the last several decades. Growing numbers of supermarket chains are adopting and implementing them with the aim of differentiating agri-food products in a consistent manner, ensuring quality standards and minimizing transaction costs (Hatanaka et al. 2005, 359).

¹⁷ The certification standard, the Euro-Retailer Produce Working Group – Good Agricultural Practice, was evolved into Global Partnership for Good Agricultural Practice (GLOBALGAP) in 2007. Originally established by a consortium of leading European supermarket chains, including Royal Ahold, Safeway, Tesco, Marks & Spencer and Sainsbury's, GLOBALCAP is now one of the leading certification standards in the world (Hatanaka and Busch 2008, 74). There are currently more than 100 independent and accredited certification bodies that are affiliated with GLOBALCAP in more than eighty countries.

¹⁸ Although governmental support in the form of cheap credits and input subsidies was initially given to vegetable and fruit growers with appropriate certifications of GAP, the scope of the support was later widened to producers in other sectors. There are currently twelve inspection and certification firms that are authorized by the Agriculture Ministry to extend GAP certificates to growers with appropriate growing practices. The ministry seeks to disseminate information about GAP certification among growers through agricultural engineers and consultants working in its provincial offices. However, official attempts to popularize GAP certification requirements seem to be largely ineffective. There is only a small number of growers who are knowledgeable about GAP certification methods. These are mostly farmers who have controlled production agreements with exporting firms. Controlled production agreements are different from contract farming. They do not include any buying and selling arrangements between

companies (such as EuroCert, Skal International and CMI Certification) providing audit, inspection and certification services in Turkey (Akkaya et al. 2006). According to some newspaper reports, in 2010 there are around 5,000 vegetable and fruit growers who have appropriate certification for their production, many of whom work with the leading supermarket chains (such as Migros and Macromarket) in the country.¹⁹

In one of the rare studies on the emergence of the certification practices in Turkey, Akkaya et al. (2006) summarize the main obstacles to the wider expansion of the system as follows: small farm size due to the fragmented structure of production; the lack of appropriate record keeping by the producers; and the absence of growers' associations. Our observations in Antalya generally support the conclusions of this study. In Antalya, we saw that many of the smaller growers had only a vague idea about the technical requirements and official procedures that they had to address for the certification of their products. Although almost all of the growers already had a high awareness of the rising importance of standardization and certification, they were at a loss when it came to applying the information to their own farming practice. It is usually the bigger growers with higher technical and material endowments who have access to new information about certification requirements and these are the ones who can respond to changing marketing conditions rather quickly. Not surprisingly, supermarkets usually settle large purchase agreements with the bigger growers with appropriate certifications for their products. Hence, while recent regulations and emerging incentives for certified production usually favour the bigger players in the field, they largely contribute to the general feeling of insecurity for the smaller growers in rural areas.

Another example of the growing emphasis on product quality is seen in the current attempts to introduce geographical indication as a new marketing tool for Aegean cotton. At a time when mass markets have declined and niche production seems to require increasing specification in terms of origin (traceability), quality, production process and inputs, product quality as well as certifiable consistency gain great importance. The proliferation of designations that is found in sophisticated markets such as that of coffee is no longer an exception. Cotton growing on the Aegean coast is an illustrative case in this regard.²⁰

The İzmir Mercantile Exchange Board (İzmir Ticaret Borsası), currently one of the major institutions coordinating the cotton trade in the Aegean region, has recently introduced the geographical indication registry system and acquired certification rights for the geographical indication of the cotton produced in the Aegean region.²¹ The main intention here is to acquire

the firm and the grower. The firm conducts routine controls with its inspectors over the growing practices of the farmers and will facilitate the process through which the growers obtain a GAP certificate for their produce.

¹⁹ For example, see *Radikal* (2010).

²⁰ Cotton growing has historically taken place in four main regions in Turkey: on the Aegean coast, in the Çukurova plain around Adana, in Antalya on the Mediterranean and in some provinces in the Southeast region. In the face of lower cotton prices in the global markets in the last decade, increasing input prices and declining government support to cotton producers, there has been a substantial decrease in cotton production in Antalya and Adana. However, some provinces in the Aegean and the south-east continue to produce substantial amount of cotton. While the success of cotton growing in the south-east is mainly attributed to low production costs, the strength of cotton production on the Aegean coast is usually explained with reference to its superior quality. In other words, Aegean cotton could survive under competitive pressures from national and international markets thanks to its high lint quality in length, fineness, maturity, strength and colour (Nizam 2009).

²¹ Geographical indication (GIs) is a new category of intellectual property rights that has been included in the TRIPs (Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights) agreement of the WTO (World Trade Organization). The protection provided by the TRIPs for GIs has been extended to products other than wine and spirits during the Doha Round negotiations since 2003. The European Union has particularly played an active role in this extension. The significance of GIs in world trade in agriculture and other spheres of economy is expected to increase parallel to the rising public interest in the source of products and the growth of niche markets segments such as 'fair trade', 'organic' and 'authentic' (Rangnekar 2004).

a market advantage by creating a brand name for Aegean cotton in international markets. Most of the important actors in cotton production and trading, such as producer co-operatives (TARİŞ, for example), private ginners, traders, spinners, textile manufacturers as well as civil society organizations and universities, have all given support to the initiative. It is evident that many of the economic agents in the supply chain of cotton hope that geographical indication would be a major asset for them to differentiate 'Aegean cotton' and to carve up a niche for it in global markets. We have here yet another attempt to acquire a bargaining position within the ongoing structural dislocations in the market that shatter the previously existing nation-bounded spheres of agricultural practice.

There are four interrelated points that the Aegean cotton growers' initiative brings to light. First, in the midst of a maelstrom of fluctuations and dislocations in cotton markets, we observe the emergence of a novel attempt to capture a higher proportion of the value added. The growers, merchants and manufacturers of cotton in the Aegean region seek to survive recent fluctuations in cotton markets by creating a secure niche for their products. Second, this new quest for a sheltered economic base is predominantly driven by regional interests rather than national priorities. Stated differently, the entrepreneurial vision present in the current attempts for economic security is not interested in the future of nationwide cotton production, but rather concerned with the deployment of regional resources for the advocacy and the promotion of regional interests. With the disappearance of nationwide commodity boards and procurement policies, there remains no incentive for these farmers to align with cotton producers in other parts of the country. This we suggest undermines further the viability of a nation-state centric approach to agricultural issues and policies. Third, the ongoing restructuring of the cotton supply chain in the Aegean region is characterized not only by the reshuffling of the authority positions of previously existing actors, but also by the emergence of new actors and institutions (i.e. certification bodies, NGOs, supervision, monitoring and inspection agencies, etc.), the majority of which are privately formed. Furthermore, coordination among different parties in this chain is achieved through private means and in the absence of a comprehensive governmental mandate. We witness a shift from public regulation to private regulation in the cotton markets. Fourth, reminiscent of the case of vegetable growers in Antalya, we see a concerted effort by cotton farmers to achieve a stronger leverage in international markets through standardization and certification. However, just as it was for vegetable growers in Antalya, cotton growers' pursuit of a relatively secure and risk-free economic environment is not immune to various kinds of uncertainty regarding the future trajectory of their collective efforts. Apart from the novelty of goods with geographical indication and the uncertainties about their success in a highly competitive world market, doubts surrounding the long-term possibility of an enduring collective action among different actors in the supply chain, who may have different and at times conflicting interests, lie at the centre of the uncertainty regarding current attempts (cf. Rangnekar 2004). In other words, the initial signs of co-operation and solidarity that can be observed now may easily give way to conflict among different parties in the near future.

In concluding this section on farmers' strategies facing an intensification of market integration and financialization of their relationships with forward and backward links in supply chains, we may reiterate the obvious observation that small farmers find themselves facing markets that structurally commit them to unequal and uncertain status. Farmers' various strategies, including raising the stakes by expanding production, diversification of products, compliance with quality standards, looking for product placement in niche markets, are an attempt to counteract the squeeze they are subjected to by vastly more resourceful sellers of inputs and buyers of outputs. However, farmers now live in a world where more than

marketable products are at stake: the resources that define the identity of independent production, the status of owning the means of production and relying predominantly on their own family labour, have now to be negotiated. Not only the product of their land and labour but also the land and the labour themselves become chips in play. Additionally, they have to confront the privatization of the village commons, which affects the conditions of deploying their resources and radically changes the parameters of their survival. In a sense, the spectrum of survival strategies has also expanded to include decision-making on the use of the land and the farmers' own labour as well. What this suggests, of course, is that a full commodification of available resources has occurred. The village no longer is the community of smallholding households, and village households can no longer confine their strategies to the commodities market; they will also have to bring into play their labour and land resources and the very possibility of their survival as independent farmers. We will attempt to describe this process in the next section.

COMMODIFICATION OF LAND AND LABOUR

Less visible than shifts in production is the growing impact of the market on land and labour in the countryside, shaking the very foundations of the village community. Alongside radical transformations in markets and technology during the last several decades, the relatively stable parameters of rural life, predominantly circumscribed by unwavering conditions of land, labour and capital resources within a conservative village community, are also in the process of profound change. This change reflects a more extensive and deeper commodification that has been facilitated by a strong wave of deregulation since the end of the 1990s. The 'village community' in Turkey is in increasing disarray, as the mechanisms contributing to the cohesiveness of rural households by providing some stability to land and labour arrangements succumb to the logic and compulsion of markets under neoliberal restructuring and globalization.

Land and the Reconfiguration of Rural Space

Focusing on the transformations in the British countryside (Marsden et al. 1993, 9 and 13) draw attention to new spatial patterns of production and consumption, and growing diversity in land use. They argue that mainly because of 'the increasing insinuation of non-farming interests into rural areas', the decline of corporatist policies in agriculture and the emergence of spatially extensive life styles, 'the primacy of agricultural production in the rural areas has recently diminished' (pp. 9, 13). We observe parallel tendencies in the Turkish countryside that seem to indicate that the reconfiguration of rural space emerges as a strong trend in recent decades.²² The internationalization of the agri-food sector and the growth of tourism have paved the way for the emergence of new forms of land use in the Turkish countryside (cf. Tanrıvermiş 2003). Land that was habitually cultivated by farming households, or used for traditional and extensive animal husbandry by the village community without consideration for its alternative uses, must now be seen as an asset whose opportunity cost has to be calculated. Agriculture is no longer considered the only possible use of land. Farmers must now *rationaly* justify the use they will put the natural resource to and compete for it against alternative users.

The case of Kocaoba is particularly illuminating in this respect. Kocaoba is an inland village in Dikili with a population of around 700 people. The village economy has depended on sheep

²² For a case study that examines the recent changes in land use patterns in a district in Antalya parallel to the growth of tourism and proliferation of non-farm employment opportunities, see Köstepen (2005).

farming and olives since at least the 1950s. Olive trees are situated mostly on the hilly parts of the village, on land that is the property of village households. Sheep husbandry, on the other hand, has traditionally been carried out on a vast area of grazing land, which is the subject of a long-standing and as yet unresolved dispute regarding ownership, with various parties including the Treasury, the local municipality and some of the villagers all making claims.²³ Following a June 2002 ruling in which the ownership of the land was granted to the local municipality, the municipality rented the land on a long term basis to an agribusiness corporation, Agrobay. Although some of the villagers who claim ownership rights on the land appealed the ruling, Agrobay did not hesitate to launch a plan for establishing a greenhouse complex in the area. The higher court, in the meantime, did not overturn the previous decision and the case was resolved in favour of the municipality.²⁴

Agrobay is a subsidiary of a national company, Bayburt Group, which primarily operates in construction and insurance. Three years ago, this company decided to invest in the agri-food sector and established the subsidiary firm, Agrobay, which constructed a greenhouse complex in Dikili to grow vegetables. The choice of location for establishing the greenhouse complex is not arbitrary. In a region that is otherwise not warm enough for off-season vegetable growing, the utilization of a nearby underground thermal water source decreases the cost of heating the greenhouses considerably. Agrobay began its operations on a 120-acre plot of land in 2002 and increased its production space to 400 acres in 2008. This greenhouse complex, which includes a packaging facility, is one of the largest of its kind. Agrobay mainly grows tomatoes and California-style bell peppers in different colours, for export markets including the United Kingdom, Switzerland and Romania and upscale supermarket chains such as Carrefour and Macro. Most of their inputs, including technology, seeds, fertilizers and chemicals, are imported. Since there is a conflict over the ownership of land between the municipality and the villagers, they do not use local labour and prefer to bring their workers from other towns.

This whole process seems to have considerably undermined the local economy. Since the villagers are now deprived of the land on which they previously grazed their sheep, many either had to give up sheep husbandry or switch to more intensive methods with commercial feed. The prospects for sheep farming are not promising, however, because the cost of commercial feed is much higher than shepherding and the state support for animal husbandry either through cheap credit or price support has been largely revoked since the 1980s. Olive production remains as the only option the villagers may rely on for their economic survival. Yet, since the majority are small owners, the olive revenue is barely sufficient to meet their

²³ The land dispute in Kocaoba is not unique. Land surveying and registration has not been fully completed in rural Turkey. In 2003, it was estimated that approximately a quarter of all parcels in rural areas were unregistered (Temel 2005, 39). Even in those parts of the countryside where this process has been completed, disputes over title deeds are common. The growing internationalization and commercialization of agriculture over the last two decades have created extra pressure on the land commodification process and legal disputes over rural land in various parts of Turkey have intensified. This includes forest land as well. According to some observers, 'clear definition of property rights in land is the major issue in rural areas' and 'the lack of appropriate cadastral work prevents agricultural land markets to work' (Çakmak and Kasnaoğlu 2002, 37). For a general overview of the land registration and cadastral problems in agricultural lands in Turkey, see İnan and Yomrahoğlu (2006).

²⁴ During our last visit to Kocaoba, we saw that there are now five firms (Agrobay, Türkeli, Fidaş, Vegevital and Agromar) specializing in greenhouse production of vegetables mainly for export markets including Russia, Germany and the Netherlands. For all of these firms, the availability of underground thermal water is the main attraction for coming to this region. They rely on a waged labour force of around 250 workers that they recruit from the neighbouring towns such as Bergama. Seasonal labour recruitment may be necessary for these firms to meet their increasing labour needs during summer months when greenhouse labour demand is at its highest. Some of these companies engage in contract farming with independent growers in the region for certain vegetable varieties as well.

immediate needs. As a result, many of the villagers, particularly the younger males, work on a temporary basis in the service sector in the district centre of Dikili to supplement the household income. Some can no longer be considered as farmers with any significant marketable surplus.²⁵

What is happening in Kocaoba is certainly not unique: it is an instance of the recent trend of agro-industrialization in Turkey, which has implied a significant increase in exports of fresh and processed vegetables and fruits to European markets. It is significant, however, because it shows that the internationalization of the agri-food sector, primarily with the liberalization of trade regulations, had an impact even on those rural inhabitants who are not directly linked to the global trade and/or production nexus. Given the fact that most of the rural producers living in Kocaoba were specialized either in olive production or sheep farming, they were not part of the globalizing networks of agri-food business.²⁶ However, a national company, which aspires to be a significant player in global fresh produce markets and has business relations with national and European retail chains, could, by taking over the village commons, cause a devastating impact on the livelihoods of the village inhabitants.

This case also illustrates the changing nature of the relationship between the state and rural producers. Both the central state and the municipality in Kocaoba encouraged and promoted the internationalization and the liberalization of the agri-food sector, not only through policy but also through legal change which would facilitate the development of an unfettered land market in rural areas. This is a tendency that is certainly not confined to Kocaoba village. We did, in fact, observe an increasing incidence of land disputes in the villages we visited. The trend was stronger in those villages where there is a larger supply of currently unused but potentially farmable land. There were several court cases regarding ownership disputes involving villagers, authorities representing state ownership in public lands, agri-food companies and firms operating in the tourism sector. Agri-food and tourism companies are eager to buy land in rural areas where they see lucrative investment opportunities, both in agriculture (especially in horticulture and greenhouse vegetable production) and tourism. The villagers attempt to protect their usufruct rights on the land. However, since land registration and cadastral records have not been completed in many villages, titles cannot be obtained easily. The problem becomes even more complicated when the state enters the picture, since there is currently a major public debate in Turkey about the government's legislative proposal to privatize public lands in rural areas, particularly those found within village boundaries. This undertaking would have significant implications on the village economy which has traditionally depended on communal access to public land for animal husbandry, firewood and other household needs.

The recent development of a property market in the service of the tourism sector is another factor that has had a lasting impact on agricultural land in coastal areas. The growth of tourism has accelerated the commodification process in land. Summer house complexes predominantly for the use of urban middle classes, or tourism facilities (hotels, beaches, holiday resorts, golf courses etc.) claim larger portions of previously cultivated land. As a result, the whole coastal area stretching from the Mersin to the Çanakkale provinces, covering almost all of the Mediterranean and Aegean seaside towns and villages, has a common look: while those parts of the landscape that are closer to the sea are now occupied by various sorts of facilities catering

²⁵ A similar conclusion is reached by the survey in Muğla villages cited above (Öztürk et al. 2008).

²⁶ Olive oil enjoyed only a small and domestic market until recently. Foreign sales are still negligible; most exports are bulk, to be blended and labelled in Italy, although there are now some boutique operations with niche sales abroad.

to tourists and residential second homes occupied only during the summer, the more distant parts of the land are still used in agriculture. As summer people and tourists have arrived, however, there has been considerable decline in the production of crops and in animal husbandry.

The impact of the demand for summer houses has been especially significant in the reduction of grazing land.²⁷ There have been many conflicts in recent years between the villagers and the developers of summer houses over the ownership status of these pasture lands. In fact, disputes over the legal status and usufruct rights of pasture lands seem to have increased in recent years, parallel to the commercialization and commodification of land in the countryside. In 1998, new legislation on pasture lands was introduced to regulate the situation. However, since a considerable portion of the rural land is not properly registered, the new law on the regulation of pasture land could not put an end to ongoing property conflicts (Balabanlı et al. 2006).

In addition to those areas that have become tourism sites, a thriving land market has also developed in the surrounding areas that host tourism-related services and businesses (such as groceries, supermarkets, retail shops, gift stores, restaurants, car-rental agencies, cafés etc.). This has led to speculative investment in land that *might* develop as a tourism area. A case in point is Kadriye, an inland village in Serik, Antalya. Kadriye, which does not have direct access to sea, had almost entirely depended economically on agriculture for many decades. This situation changed rapidly after the early 1990s. With the aim of turning Kadriye's proximity to flourishing tourism centres such as Belek and Antalya into an economic asset, local entrepreneurs and administrators began projects to attract tourists, such as free bus tours between the town and neighbouring hotels on a regular basis. These attempts eventually paid off and Kadriye started attracting tourists to its increasing numbers of leather, textile and jewellery shops. Meanwhile, this process led to the establishment of a thriving real estate market attracting investors from Antalya, Istanbul, Urfa, Adana and so on. Not only the villagers themselves but also the non-local entrepreneurs constructed buildings with several floors, in which the first floor is reserved for shops and retail services catering to tourists. Since the bulk of the visitors are Russians who stay in hotels by the coast, the majority of the signs and advertisements on the streets are in Russian, English, German and French; it is difficult to find any Turkish-language signs in shop windows. As would be expected, the major consequence of these developments has been the declining importance of agriculture. Many households have abandoned commercial agriculture, although they continue to live in the 'village'. Real estate rentals and non-agricultural petty trade have largely taken the central place of farming in the local economy. Most of Kadriye's inhabitants are now either working in the tourism sector or living on the rental income they receive from their newly constructed apartment buildings.

This new demand for land does not, however, necessarily translate into an increase in the incomes of the villagers. While some of the villagers with land titles and savings are better off, others who have neither land nor money do not reap much benefit. Marked inequalities in initial conditions play an important role in the newly emerging differentiation patterns within the local economy. Moreover, the whole process of market integration produces uncertain employment prospects and unstable incomes. In recent years, for example, five-star hotels and holiday villages surrounding Kadriye began to introduce all-inclusive deals for their customers that involve a single rate for all daily consumption. This obviously led to a substantial decrease

²⁷ For a critical review of the growth of tourism after the 1980s in Turkey, particularly in the coastal areas, due to the generous government incentives for tourism-related investments and legislative changes that open the forests and agricultural land to commercial use, see Göymen (2000).

in the number of tourists who would otherwise go to Kadriye for lunch, leisure and shopping. During our visit, many of the shopkeepers and local business owners complained about the negative effects of such all-inclusive deals on their incomes. Some regretted that they had given up farming in the first place.

Labour and Non-farm Employment

It is clear that, parallel to the internationalization and deregulation trends in Turkish agriculture in the last several decades, the price, product and production structure in rural areas has become much more complex and responsive to multiple signals, mostly originating in world markets. Moreover, land, traditionally a stable and strong pillar of the village economy, has also undergone a process of commodification and become subject to competing uses. As a result, those who derive their income solely from agriculture are a decreasing proportion of the rural population; a growing share of the rural population is increasingly experiencing conditions similar to urban areas in terms of the diversity and complexity of income generating activities. In other words, non-agricultural incomes have become increasingly important for rural households. This general tendency of 'the decomposition of (notionally) "pure" classes of agrarian labour' (Bernstein 2004, 201) is in tandem with similar developments in many of the peripheral countries' rural economies (Reardon et al. 2001). As widely noted in the growing literature on de-agrarianization,²⁸ there has been a rapid and progressive diversification of rural livelihoods in the Global South over the last several decades (Rigg 2006). Consequently, there are now an increasing number of rural households in countries in South America, Africa and Asia whose incomes depend largely on off-farm activities.²⁹ For many, this is a secular trend which points to the general process of de-linking of rural livelihoods from land and farming (cf. Rigg 2006, 183). Bryceson (2002) argues that structural adjustment and market liberalization policies implemented in sub-Saharan Africa after the 1980s played a fundamental role in ushering in the current 'scramble' for viable livelihoods, one result of which has been the reorientation of rural dwellers toward non-agricultural income diversification. Parallel to the increasing uncertainty in returns from commercial agriculture and rising cash requirements for farming and social expenses, 'non-agricultural income sources have become rural households' staff of life' (p. 731).

In Turkey, as well, the gradual liberalization of agricultural markets and dwindling state support to agricultural producers in recent decades have resulted in a decline in agricultural revenues and led rural dwellers to search for complementary sources of income-generating activities. This process was to a large degree aided by the development of alternative sources of employment in the countryside thanks to the growth of tourism and construction sectors in particular. In almost all the villages in Dikili, Kumluca and Serik, especially the younger members of rural households seek wage employment outside farming. The extent to which household members look for outside employment is generally a function of the income level of the household. Younger members of poorer households with limited land availability are more eager to engage in temporary, seasonal or preferably permanent off-farm employment in the vicinity of their villages. In most of these cases, those with off-farm jobs continue to

²⁸ Bryceson (2002, 726) defines de-agrarianization as 'a long-term process of occupational adjustment, income-earning orientation, social identification and spatial relocation of rural dwellers away from strictly agricultural-based modes of livelihood'.

²⁹ The increasing diversification of the activities and sources of income of peasant households in recent decades in Latin America has prompted many researchers to use the concept of 'new rurality' to distinguish such novel forms of survival for the rural populations in the age of globalization (Kay 2006, 463).

reside in the village. For the majority, even though living in a big city is something they dream of, migrating to a city such as Istanbul or Izmir does not constitute a plausible alternative. The weakening power of the pull factor in the migration decision is evident, as the toughness of the job markets in bigger cities and the high cost of survival deter most potential migrants.

The variety and availability of off-farm employment depend on the regional economy within which a village is located. For example, in Dikili, in some villages such as Kabakum and Salihler where *yazlıkçı* tourism (i.e. tourism flows generated by the inhabitants of summer-houses) occupies a central role in the regional economy, working in the construction sector is the most important off-farm income opportunity for many rural dwellers. Additionally, some of the villagers engage in petty commerce catering predominantly to summer residents. Likewise, in Antalya's Serik district, particularly in villages closer to the coast, tourism is the most important sector in terms of employment opportunities available to the villagers. Again, it is particularly the younger villagers who seek wage employment in the hotels and other tourist-oriented businesses as waiters, cleaners, gardeners and so on. However, it is not uncommon to see young villagers coming from inland provinces situated far away from the coastal areas, now residing permanently in the coastal region and working in tourism establishments (cf. Aykaç 2007). In fact, this is the process by which urban centres and even villages in the coastal regions have gained in population. Many villages near tourism centres now have 'Kurdish' neighbourhoods housing recent immigrants from the eastern regions of the country.

The worsening income potential in agriculture is the main reason why villagers increasingly seek off-farm employment. An illuminating case in this respect is the Deliktaş and Demirtaş villagers' experiences in Dikili, particularly after the abrogation of the state monopoly and the liberalization of tobacco trade in the 1990s. Both Demirtaş and Deliktaş are villages whose economies depended largely on tobacco farming for decades. The end of state support for the production of tobacco and the liberalization of the tobacco market in the early 2000s drastically undermined the local economy. These villages lacked the conditions for successfully switching to other crops, mainly due to a shortage of irrigation water. Although there has been an increase in the number of deals with intermediaries who work for international tobacco firms, along with an expansion in contract farming agreements, these arrangements proved insufficient for tobacco farmers to make up their losses in the face of increasing input prices, decreasing state subsidies and falling output prices.³⁰ As a result, many of the villagers began reducing the acreage they allocated to tobacco farming and some families even had to sell part of their land and implements in order to meet their basic needs.³¹ Parallel to this, the number of villagers who now have to engage in wage employment either on a daily or temporary basis has increased substantially in the past years. There is now a regular bus service every morning from these villages to Dikili, carrying those who are in need of extra cash to a coffeehouse in the town. The coffee-house is a gathering place for the villagers who are willing to work in day jobs as porters, construction workers, farm workers or in other casual jobs.

These labour exchanges in nearby towns, bringing together employment seeking villagers and labour contractors, have proliferated. Households that have to rely on a complementary

³⁰ For a general overview of the recent transformations in tobacco agriculture in Turkey, see Örnek (2004).

³¹ Land sales are rather a recent phenomenon in Dikili. Not only in Deliktaş and Demirtaş but also in the neighbouring villages, we heard stories about families that ended up selling land to pay their debts. Most of the new landowners come from big cities such as Istanbul, Ankara and Izmir and buy the lands either for investment purposes or for recreation and non-commercial farming. However, since the share of the land sales is not significant relative to the total size of the available land, it is premature to talk about land concentration as an important trend in these regions.

source of income for their reproduction increasingly need some of their members to enter the labour market outside of their villages. It seems that even in those regions where self-exploitation in the Chayanovian sense was the accepted mode of coping with harder times, it is now common practice to resort to extra-village sources of employment, especially by the younger members of the rural household. The point we wish to emphasize is that this development does not translate into more permanent de-ruralization. Unlike earlier periods when villagers who faced economic difficulties migrated to larger cities, it is now more common that they continue to reside in the village and commute daily to work. Even in the case of more permanent non-agricultural employment, young people who work in small factories and workshops in the vicinity continue to live in the village. This is the case in Töngüçlü, a village in Serik, where many of the villagers were employed in a yarn factory close to the village.³²

Parallel trends are observed in other regions in Turkey as well. Based on fieldwork in a village in the Eastern Black Sea Region in 1990 where hazelnut production has traditionally been the principal activity, Sönmez (2001) argues that a substantial portion of the disposable income is derived from off-farm work for the majority of the village households. In his account, parallel to the increasing commodification of subsistence needs and the proliferation of novel items of consumption after electrification in the early 1980s, many households had to diversify their agricultural activities and sought employment in non-agricultural sectors (such as construction work, petty trading, service sector, public works, artisanship etc.) in order to meet their consumption needs. Aydın (2001) draws a similar conclusion about the increasing proliferation of non-farm sources of household income and diversification of agricultural activities in a cotton-growing village in the Aegean region and a wheat-growing village in Central Anatolia during the 1990s. In another study, based on fieldwork in fourteen villages in various regions of Anatolia, Ertürk (1998) examines rural transformation and employment patterns. According to the findings of this research, petty commodity producers have had to diversify their 'resource bases' and participate in 'the land based/free floating labour force' in order to deal with economic hardship. For example, in the Western Black Sea region, adult males in general either become temporary wage labourers or work in transportation and retail trading in order to supplement their agricultural incomes. Ertürk acknowledges that there is significant regional variation in the proliferation of off-farm income opportunities that have to do with levels of integration into commodity and labour markets and farming arrangements. She suggests, however, that increasingly after 1980, 'the land based/free floating' labour force has become a permanent feature of rural Turkey.

The ability to remain in the village while managing to diversify income sources through employment outside the village, contributes to the countrywide regional reallocation of populations that is taking place in Turkey. That village populations in the Mediterranean and Aegean littorals do not seem to decline is in part due to the influx of Kurdish immigrants from the countryside of eastern Anatolia who arrive seeking employment in the only area in Turkey where there are chances of finding employment while living in the countryside. This migration to villages that have traditionally been closed communities, often with extended kinship

³² The population dynamics we are describing here is reminiscent of Bryceson's (2000) discussion of emerging trends of 'rural-urban separations of work and home life' particularly for the poor (*ibid.*, 310). Bryceson notes that many people in Southern Africa who work in urban areas continue to reside in the countryside either by commuting on a daily basis or returning to their villages in the weekends. On the other hand, 'casual workers from some of the poorest neighbourhoods in Latin America's largest cities are bussed to large plantations and rural agri-business sites beyond city boundaries' (*ibid.*, 311). According to Bryceson, the coherence of rural communities is under significant threat from these regularized commuting patterns.

relations, is a new phenomenon. While it is cheaper and safer and more pleasant to live in villages as opposed to zones of exclusion in the outskirts of towns, there has been resentment against the presence of newcomers and competition in the labour market has at times given rise to overt racial clashes in the geography we have been describing. The immigrant population do not become land-based. They often settle on the edges of villages and because of the social discrimination, it is unlikely that they will own land other than a small garden adjacent to the house they will be renting. Without the insurance of land ownership they have to settle for worse conditions of employment and pay compared to the local villagers also in need of supplementary income.

What commodification of land does is to erode the basis of reproduction of the village community, and to liberate households to provide labour for capitalist undertaking outside of the family farm. The process of commodification of labour is thus also a process of 'primitive accumulation' in the sense that Byres (2005) has termed it. Labour that has no choice but to work in wage employment becomes ready to participate in the ordinary process of accumulation of capital. The villages we have discussed are noteworthy because the market in land corrodes their village reproduction, while they themselves turn into sites of ordinary capitalist relations, in part due to the inflow of displaced peasants from other regions of the country.

CONCLUSION

We argue in this article that the transformations that smallholders in Turkish agriculture have been experiencing are the result primarily of deepening commodification. Neoliberal globalization has swept away the accustomed networks of information, production and marketing in the Turkish countryside, which were largely established and maintained by comprehensive governmental support policies put in place during the national-developmental era of the postwar period. Commodification of inputs and outputs, and the integration of agriculture into the national economy, had been largely shaped through state policy during this era. The developmentalist state attempted and largely succeeded in maintaining growth in agriculture within the protective shell of subsidies and price support systems. A large proportion of rural activity, especially in the less-developed regions, was directed to subsistence; market-oriented production was, however, well entrenched in the interior and in the petty-commodity producing households of the coastal areas. Through support prices and various subsidies, state policy ensured a sufficient degree of stability for commodity producing farmers as they gradually adopted new technologies and novel crops. Despite transformation in the countryside with increasing mechanization, higher productivity and massive migration to the cities, the rural society centred on the village community remained relatively stable when land transactions were rare and employment opportunity in the countryside was scant. During the globalization era since the 1980s, however, deregulation has brought about a comparatively unmediated impact of world markets on inputs and output. State policy no longer insures against market risks; prices and demand patterns fluctuate widely, and small producers feel vulnerable to a greater extent.

In the regions we have described in this article, the cultivation of fresh produce is thriving; additionally, tourism and other non-agricultural activities are located in the countryside, or at least within easy reach of villagers. This has meant that new and more labour-intensive production technologies as well as various activities developing alongside agriculture create a local labour market which transforms villages into reservoirs of potential labour supply. Additionally, farmers also find their fields becoming a commodity, with demand for new types of land use establishing a market which existed previously only to a very limited degree.

Globalization has been remarkable in establishing the market to such an extent in the countryside. In urban economies, in manufactures and in services, output, land and labour markets have become more extensive and have, in line with expectations, become more attuned to global flows and signals; but the increase in the degree of commodification in the countryside must be characterized as a qualitative leap.

This shift from political control to the ascendancy of market forces dominated by oligopolistic trade and finance obviously presents new challenges for farmers. Such challenges do not only stem from unequal market position, the result of the unprecedented escalation in the bargaining power of the buyers. Farmers also have to cope with the changing institutional environment created by international governmental and non-governmental organizations. In this environment of intellectual property, quality standards and certification protocols, even greater self-exploitation may not be sufficient to resist the forces of de-ruralization. In short, under the heavy tide of deregulation and liberalization of agricultural markets, the farmers – like other workers under neoliberal globalization – increasingly find themselves in a situation where it gets more and more difficult to deal with the uncertain and insecure conditions of commodity production and trade.

The very same forces commonly associated with globalization, while taking a huge toll on agricultural communities, have also introduced new structures, making parts of the countryside open to diversified economic activity. Villages in some parts of the countryside have developed town-like characteristics in recent years, obscuring and obliterating most of our axiomatic assertions about the town/country divide. In the more market-integrated regions of the country, villages retain their population because of the availability of a wide spectrum of income-earning activities, ranging from petty commodity production in labour-intensive commercial agriculture to seasonal employment in tourism. In fact, these villages have also become a destination for migration, especially from the de-ruralizing eastern regions of the country. It would be difficult, on the basis of the evidence as it exists, to argue about the likely direction of development of the relations of production in these villages. While the incidence of wage labour has definitely increased, opportunities for diverse sources of income, including self-employment, seem to militate against full proletarianization. As the principal forms of production are heavily labour-intensive, family farms would seem to enjoy an advantage. We would be inclined to bet in favour of the resilience of petty commodity production, where the household income is supplemented by off-farm employment of various kinds.

All this indicates that the features that have long been treated as characteristic of the rural society, 'the core of the *differentia specifica* of peasantry' in Shanin's words (1971, 5), such as the locally bounded nature of economic and social life, the dominance of land cultivation as the main means of livelihood, easy access to relevant information networks, the preponderance of family-based vocational guidance and the prevalence of village-wide welfare arrangements, are increasingly being undermined. As village economies become dependent on the dynamics of national and global markets, information channels vital for production are more difficult to access for the majority; off-farm employment gains importance for family survival; the role of intermediaries (merchants, brokers, food corporations, *komisyoncusu*) increases and, consequently, uncertainty and insecurity rather than permanence and stability become the most defining characteristics of rural life.

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