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## **GIOVANNI ARRIGHI: A Global Perspective**

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## Inhaltsverzeichnis

- 4      AMY AUSTIN-HOLMES, STEFAN SCHMALZ  
From Africa to Asia: The Intellectual Trajectory of Giovanni Arrighi
- 14     SAMIR AMIN  
A Tribute to Giovanni Arrighi
- 25     FORTUNATA PISELLI  
Reflections on Calabria: A Critique of the Concept of  
'Primitive Accumulation'
- 44     ÇAGLAR KEYDER, ZAFER YENAL  
Agrarian Transformation, Labour Supplies, and Proletarianization  
Processes in Turkey: A Historical Overview
- 72     THOMAS EHRLICH REIFER  
Global Inequalities, Alternative Regionalisms and the Future  
of Socialism
- 95     WALDEN BELLO  
China and the Global Economy: The Persistence of Export-Led  
Growth
- 113    Rezension
- 116    Editors of the Special Issue and Authors
- 119    Impressum

**ÇAĞLAR KEYDER, ZAFER YENAL**  
**Agrarian Transformation, Labour Supplies,**  
**and Proletarianization Processes in Turkey:**  
**A Historical Overview**

**1. Introduction**

One of Giovanni Arrighi's concerns, from the start of his academic work, was the relationship between agrarian transformation and labour supplies in capitalist employment. In his writings on Africa, as well as on Calabria, his work straddles the process of change in the countryside, taking into account land ownership and relations of production, and migration from agriculture to other sectors where peasants become employed as wage earners (Arrighi/Saul 1968; Arrighi/Piselli 1987; Arrighi 1970; Arrighi et al. 2010). Migrants arrive into capitalist relations of production with their past and present entanglements. Often, they maintain a relationship with their place of origin and this relationship becomes an integral element in their mode of survival. Whether they can draw on the economic benefits of the countryside as continuing owners of land or as recipients of transfers from family, or whether they can go back to the village during slack times in the year or when there is a downturn in the capitalist sector, or when they are too old or infirm to work, are determining factors in their level of welfare and have an obvious impact on their disposition toward urban life, labour movements, and their attitude toward state transfers in the form of social welfare.

What we would like to do in this paper is to employ the framework set out in the referenced works by Arrighi in order to sketch the contours of agrarian transformation and labour supplies in Turkey's experience of expanding and deepening capitalism. We will focus on two themes that will highlight the specificity of the experience: one, the regional patterns

of agrarian transformation which brought about a staggered geographical process of de-ruralization; the second, the transition from national development to neo-liberal globalization, a process which not only changed the 'demand' side by transforming the conditions of employment in the mostly urban capitalist economy, but also created new problems and opportunities in the countryside and transformed the conditions within which the decisions on migration and household labour use were made.

In the following, we argue that semi-proletarianization rather than full proletarianization was the norm in Turkey in the post-war period. Both in the developmentalist era and its aftermath during globalization, agrarian transformations have brought about the formation of semi-proletarianized households with significant ties to the rural areas. The nature of the commodity markets (particularly land) in urban areas and the predominance of informal work relations contributed to this outcome. In recent years an exceptional case has emerged, in the form of the experience of the dispossessed and deruralized Kurdish population. This situation was due mainly to state coercion and extra-economic factors but, at this stage in the development of capitalism, full severance of rural ties does not translate into successful proletarianization in the sense of employment income sufficient for reproduction. The chances for the Kurdish population to be able to rely fully on wage income are thus virtually non-existent.

## **2. Historical development of regional differentiation**

Anatolia was one part of the Ottoman Empire which had not been deeply integrated into world markets. When compared with the fertile areas of the Balkans, the share of market-oriented production in agriculture was meager. The yield of the land was not high and most producers operated within the technological constraints of traditional family farming. Small ownership was the rule, although there were some landlords who controlled larger amounts of land that were cultivated on the basis of sharecropping. Estate agriculture was almost non-existent until late in the nineteenth century. One exception to these defining features was the coastal strip along the Aegean sea, which had been part of the coast-island economy for a long time and which was first used for the production of crops such as

raisins, figs and tobacco for export markets in the second half of the nineteenth century<sup>1</sup>. Most of the coastal region was lacking in labour supplies at the time, a situation that was rectified through the migration of mostly Greek farmers from the islands and mainland Greece, as well as from the interior of Anatolia. Toward the end of the century, the region also received a Muslim population who was forced out of their ancestral homes in the Balkans as a result of Russian expansion.

The population of the Aegean coastal region that was involved in commercial farming increased steadily during the decades leading to the demise of the Empire at the end of World War One. A similar development could also be seen in Çukurova (Cilicia), which came later to market-oriented agriculture. This region was also undersupplied in terms of labour. It received migration from eastern and interior Anatolia as more land was reclaimed and production intensified. Thus, these two Anatolian regions, the Aegean and Cilicia, which were the most advanced in terms of commercial agriculture, were subject to net inflows of population; there was no labour surplus that they could create.

One region that was different than the two described were the coastal lands of the Black Sea, which also was introduced to export agriculture during the nineteenth century. Especially after the 1880s, the cultivation of tobacco and hazelnuts began to dominate the region, but available land was scarce. Furthermore, there was a tradition of outmigration. Seasonal labour in Istanbul, especially construction workers, had traditionally originated in the Black Sea region. This situation did not change through the final decades of the Empire. During the latter part of the nineteenth century, most of the interior and the Eastern highlands of Anatolia had varying experiences. In these regions, the commodification of agriculture was a much slower process; there were not many roads, and transportation mostly depended on oxen and donkeys. Small farm surpluses were sold in local markets that could be reached by most villagers only in the dry season and after a long march. The population of the interior did not increase in any significant manner, and there was a steady stream of outmigration during the final decades of the century by Greeks and Armenians.

The degree of commercialization and the living standards of the villagers and the nomads of the Eastern highlands remained at a level which was comparable to that at the time of the Ottoman conquest. There

were a number of demographic changes that did occur, due to persistent attempts by Ottoman authorities to sedentarize the nomadic tribes, mostly of Kurdish origin. Some of this newly settled population remained in the mountainous plateaus, engaging in extensive animal husbandry; others were located in the plains in and near Cilicia with the tribal authority structure remaining intact (Eberhard 1953a, 1953b; Yalman 1971). There would be no de-ruralization of this population until late in the twentieth century.

On the eve of the Great War, Anatolia appears as a land about to enter a period of rapid transformation, both in terms of the acceleration of agrarian change – commodification, intensification of production and regional division of labour – and a related shaping of population dynamics to accommodate the labour demand in the regions of expanding production. All these trends, however, came to an abrupt end with the War. War-related deaths may have claimed up to twenty percent of the Muslim population. In addition, there were the massacres and deportation of the Armenians and the exchange (with Greece) of the Christian Orthodox population. Of these non-Muslim *millet*s of more than three million before the War, only a few hundred thousand remained in 1924, and almost none in agriculture (cf. McCarthy 1983). Furthermore, Christians had been overrepresented among commercial and especially export-oriented small producers – with Greeks along the Aegean and the Black Sea coasts and Armenians in Cilicia and in the valleys of eastern Anatolia. This meant that the immediate period of reconstruction was one where there was a population deficit, generally in the countryside and specifically in commercial agriculture. It took until the end of World War Two for there to be a surplus population in the countryside to provide for the labour needs of urban industry.

### **3. Three patterns of wage labour formation**

When out-migration or deruralization started after the 1950s, it was, of course, geographically uneven, but basically followed the contours described for the earlier period. There was a relatively small amount of migration from the most developed commercialized regions of western Anatolia and the Mediterranean coastal strip. Migration from the Black Sea continued and increased during the first decades of the post-War era,

but slowed down afterwards. Deruralization of the interior displayed the reverse trajectory: slow at first but steadily accelerating after 1950 and into the 1980s. The eastern and southeastern regions were integrated very gradually into the national economy of labour supplies. Out-migration from these regions was not substantial until the 1980s and became a flood in the 1990s, due to the military campaigns of the Turkish army against Kurdish guerillas.

To generalize from these regional patterns, we suggest that there have been three distinct patterns of proletarianization in the Turkish case:

- (1) Semi-proletarianization by informal means: a pattern that prevailed until the late 1980s and was characterized by gradual urbanization, and in which the links with the village were maintained for a long time – perhaps until the children who were born in the city came of age. During this long period links with the village permitted transfers of savings, first toward those trying to establish themselves in the city, then as remittances back toward the elders in the village. Most of these migrants were in a position to occupy land in some part of the expanding urban area and thus benefit from the spatial expansion of the city by earning property income. Property income became the biggest factor in facilitating this relatively painless phase of proletarianization. Even during economic downturns, the immigrant population could rely on not having to pay rent; besides, going back to the village or at least sending the children back during hard times always remained an option. Since informal housing arrangements contributed heavily to the economic and political incorporation of the newcomers into the city and a considerable part of the labour market was constituted of informal work relations, this pattern of wage labour formation may be termed ‘semi-proletarianization by informal means’.
- (2) Part-lifetime proletarianization under globalization: this second pattern is distinguished from the first in that there is no deruralization but rather part-lifetime proletarianization, particularly in the thoroughly commercialized coastal regions, as has been the case over the last two decades. In other words, primary residences remain in the countryside, but there are frequent, seasonal or longer excursions into wage employment. Parallel to the internationalization and deregulation trends in Turkish agriculture, the price, product, and production structures in

rural areas have 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, especially in the coastal tourism areas, and has become subject to competing uses. As a result, non-agricultural incomes have become increasingly important for rural households.

- (3) Dispossession by force: The third pattern is the more recent migration and forced displacement of, in particular, the Kurdish population after the 1980s. Having been forced out of their villages either directly by the military or indirectly because there was no security, they have no land or village or household economy to go back to. Because the urban economy has changed, again under the impact of deeper commodification and global demand, Kurdish migrants end up living in rental housing in remote and poor neighbourhoods of the cities they settle in. Thus, their entire reproduction depends on money income; however, there are no jobs, particularly in cities in the East and the Southeast. For their survival in the city they largely rely on meager public transfers such as social assistance, and sporadic wage employment, often in agriculture in other regions. These are fully deruralized but nonetheless only partly proletarianized workers who cannot find capitalists to exploit them. This is why this pattern of proletarianization could be described as dispossession and reluctant semi-proletarianization instigated by force.

In the following we will look at each of these different processes of wage labour formation in detail.

### **3.1 Semi-proletarianization by informal means**

#### ***National developmentalism, agrarian change and migration***

Out-migration, especially from the villages of the interior, started with the new era of development after the Second World War. This was a period when petty commodity production was consolidated in the countryside, not only with the gradual establishment of a national market, but also because there was an attempt by the government to distribute land to land-deficient households. Although the land reform legislation (namely, The Law to Provide Land to the Farmer, 1945) was enacted in a diluted form, it clearly recognised that new lands which were to be opened up would go

primarily to peasants who held little or no land. Thus, by 1963, the number of owner-occupied holdings had increased by one-third, from 2.3 million in 1950 to 3.1 million. This widely dispersed pattern of ownership made the emergence of landlessness and consequent deruralization highly difficult and contributed to the consolidation of small holdings between 1945 and 1960 (Keyder 1983).

The bringing into production of the extra land slowed down the potential exodus from the countryside of the more than one million men who had been de-mobilized after the end of the War. Nonetheless, the expanding use of tractors and other agricultural implements, as well as the even more rapid introduction of trucks for transporting people and crops, brought about a situation of surplus labour (İçduygu/Sirkeci 1999). Commentators trying to understand the new migration were convinced that 'push' factors were prevalent and that tractors made people redundant. It must, however, be remembered that household incomes now derived from many sources, including urban wage earnings and remittances. Village households had become multi-sited and spatially extensive over the surface of the now-integrating national market, reaching from the village to the city (predominantly Istanbul or Ankara). Migrants thought of themselves as temporary workers in the city; hence, they remained within the household in terms of income pooling and budget planning. In fact, the net flow of funds was often initially in the direction of the cities, in the attempt to set up the migrant who would in the future repay the debt handsomely.

Crucial to the process was, of course, the 'pull' factor of an expanding labour market in the cities. Here we can pursue the argument with the example of Istanbul. After 1960, when its population was still around two million, Istanbul became the predominant location of a new generation of private manufacturing enterprises, encouraged through financial incentives and protected from world competition. Labour demand made migration practical and shanty towns to accommodate the migrants began to develop. The growth of the city led to a huge construction activity, which often provided the starter employment for new immigrants. Even if the number of individuals who actually moved remained small, permanent or temporary migration became an option that households could realistically include in their income-earning strategies.<sup>2</sup> At the same time, the physical possibility of movement increased, both for people and goods. The road

network received a good deal of public investment. In imitation of the American model, with its emphasis on the automobile rather than railways, the ruling party after 1950 made the rapid social integration of the Anatolian countryside one of its major objectives.

By 1973, under the sway of developmentalist policies, 44 percent of all private manufacturing establishments in Turkey employing more than 10 workers were located in Istanbul, accounting for 51 percent of total employment in the private industrial sector (Özmucur 1976). This growth was accompanied by a much larger number of labour-intensive, small-scale manufacturing and commercial enterprises in and around the city core. Hence, there was an undeniable 'pull' attracting those peasants in search of employment and higher incomes (Danielson/Keleş 1980; Karpas 1976). There was a reasonable chance of finding work, in construction, manufacturing, or in the rapidly growing informal service sector: indeed, by 1980, the city's population had reached 5 million. This was a classic example of relatively successful developmentalism: modernization was supposed to happen in the cities, and policies were deliberately or implicitly biased in favor of urban growth.

There were, of course, problems in absorbing this level of migration into the urban social and economic structure, translating to an annual 4–5 % urban growth rate. During the period of developmentalist optimism, there were models built on the assumption that peasants migrating to the cities would find urban employment and would thus add to the average productivity in the economy. The most famous of such analyses was the Lewis model (Lewis 1954), suggesting that the rural population could leave the countryside without any negative effect on agricultural output, but would contribute positively to non-agricultural output in the city. The 1970s, however, also witnessed an official disillusionment with the prospects of urban employment for former peasants. The 'modern' formal sector could not possibly generate employment at the desired rate; hence, a large informal sector emerged. In what came to be regarded as a decisive departure from the optimism of modernization theory, an ILO report written by the anthropologist Keith Hart (1974) introduced the term 'informal sector' into social science scholarship. The term was quickly taken up by researchers who were, of course, aware that the vast majority of the immigrants went through a stage in their urban life when they were in the

informal economy, semi-employed, preserving their links with the village, and dependent on the kindness of kin and community.

From the perspective of modernization, the informal represented a failure; this is why there had to be an assumption that the informal would be transformed into the formal in due time. In fact, however, the experience of Turkish peasants was as good an outcome as could be desired. Had there been complete deruralization, and no allowance for informality, those without proper wage employment in the big cities would have suffered greatly, especially since social welfare did not exist, even in rudimentary form.<sup>3</sup> As it was, most migrants remained in that state of in-betweenness, between the village and the city, the formal and the informal, the extended network of kin with reciprocal obligations and the nuclear family of more modern vintage, thus making 'semi-proletarianization by informal means' a permanent feature of ever-growing urban populations.

The process of modernization was not envisaged as a solely economic phenomenon. Incorporation through the labour market was embedded in the political sphere, both because employment was often found through patronage, and more importantly because networks leading to jobs were often promoted through their success in mobilizing political contacts. Most political discussions within the immigrant communities revolved around local issues, and the organization of the new population exhibited specific features, especially in the form of a shared place of origin, which supplied the cohesive principle. In fact, the dynamics of incorporation depended heavily on the ease with which immigrants could access land and housing. The acquisition of a house was the definition of residence and locality. It provided the potential for the mobilization of networks, which were substantially locally based, and permitted the utilization of patronage mechanisms through a politics conducted primarily at the local level. Thus, directly in the case of politics, and indirectly in the case of economic integration, the spatial dimension had to be brought into the narrative of modernization.

### ***Gecekondu, informality and the spatial dynamics of working class formation***

In Turkey, as in most developing countries, rapid urbanization translated to a sprawling growth of shanty towns. Throughout the developmentalist era, migrants took over land and constructed housing on the periphery of existing cities (Tekeli et al. 1976). At first, it was empty spaces within the inhabited city which were filled with illegal squatter (*gecekondu*) housing. More recently, the natural space for expansion became the immediate perimeter of the settled area – land that was primarily public, i.e., de facto ownerless. The urban space and urban ecology of Istanbul were transformed through the expansion of the settled area of the city as ‘illegal’ settlement occurred in places where the least resistance was encountered (Öncü 1988). Public authorities contributed to the chaotic development of the city and to the emergence of the legal-illegal division because they did not proactively adopt a policy of privatizing the land.

Although migrants were implicitly permitted to appropriate the land, the property regime remained ambivalent and full ownership was only rarely ratified. Hence, it was safer to organise land appropriation and informal housing construction as collective affairs – an informal partnership organized by entrepreneurs who received the returns either in terms of monetary reward or political allegiance (Erder 1996). Thus, the entire illegal process of land occupation and allocation, indeed of construction, contributed to the strengthening of networks. Most migration was chain migration, and initial networks depended on a shared reference to a common universe – usually place of origin (Erder 1999). This ‘moral economy of housing’ (cf. Buğra 1998) served as an ersatz institution facilitating both the economic and the social dimensions of incorporating rural immigrants into the urban fabric. It provided the potential for the mobilization of networks which were substantially locality-based and permitted the utilization of patronage mechanisms, for material and intangible rewards alike, through a politics conducted primarily at the local level.

The need for collective action continued after settlement: one form which took centre stage during the process of formalization was the campaign for collective goods, especially municipal services (Castells 1977). In addition, the neighbourhood also served to provide an environment for the perpetuation of a residence-based informal economy. Work could be

exchanged among neighbours, trust deployed for purposes of employment and exchange contracts, and, perhaps most importantly, there was an information exchange intended to promote links with the formal economy (White 1994). This accumulation of social capital within the residential space was the principal resource for the survival of the new immigrants.

*Gecekondü* settlement and the process of ownership of a house also offered immediate economic returns. Most immigrants managed to acquire a degree of ownership of a house after ‘illegally’ appropriating land and informally building a dwelling. Although migrants were implicitly permitted to appropriate the land, the property regime remained ambivalent until the 1980s, when titles were given to the owners of illegal housing as a result of a great political bargain (Keyder 1999). This was a substantial boon because, as the geographical limits of the city expanded, urban centrality came to be redefined; in other words, as long as the city continued to grow, the earlier buildings would be worth more. This increasing value of the property, accruing more to the earlier migrants who were more likely to have a formal status, was arguably the most important reason why the working class remained appeased during the economic liberalization and declining labour incomes of the early 1980s (Boratav 1995).

More generally, residential dynamics served to substitute and compensate for the lack of more formal mechanisms of social security. In the first world, in cases when the wage relation failed or when it would no longer be operative, as in times of illness or old age, the state was expected to step in to underwrite subsistence by means of a well-developed welfare regime. Such formal and institutionalized mechanisms of social policy were lacking in the case of Turkey. The extent of decommodification was limited, confined to free public education and rudimentary health care. Social insurance mechanisms were weak, and served retired state employees or those who had been fortunate enough to be formally employed. The new migrants who were most likely to suffer poverty and were most vulnerable to risks and who were likely not to have formal employment, were not covered under any scheme of social insurance or formal social assistance. In the absence of formal mechanisms, the welfare regime relied on kinship and neighbourhood reciprocity, working through social networks (Buğra/Keyder 2006). These networks functioned best in the concrete space of residential proximity. Rootedness in place, which could only be accorded to

families who owned their own housing, and were therefore not temporary, was an essential component of belonging. Thus, housing and residence, and belonging in a neighbourhood were also certificates of mutuality and cooperation.

The two mechanisms of social integration, employment and housing, naturally intersected and complemented each other. Incorporation through the labour market was embedded in the political sphere, both because employment was often the product of patronage, and, more importantly, because networks leading to jobs were often improved through their success in mobilizing political contacts. Thus, the migrant world was interpenetrated by patronage and clientelistic networks within which market mechanisms were embedded. These networks were primarily located in neighbourhoods which were also the units of organization of clientelism (Güneş-Ayata 1991). Urban politics was the natural arena in which immigrants engaged; they elected and supported politicians who could credibly promise local returns. Thus, migrants became citizens through their allegiance to the space of residence (Holston 1999), and not through participation in industrial action or working class politics.

### **3.2 Part-lifetime proletarianization under globalization**

The post-war boom came to an end with global economic crises during the 1970s. In core countries a new period of ‘disorganized capitalism’ started when the principal intention of capitalists seemed to be to cut costs by economizing on employment and wages. Globalization of production, in the form of outsourcing to the newly industrializing countries those parts of the production process that did not require particular skills, was a process which started at this time and quickly accelerated. Its domestic counterpart was the casualization of labor, the trend toward the employment of part-timers, at-home workers, short-term contract workers, and the decisive turn away from life-long career paths. The impact of the crisis on peripheral and newly industrializing countries was more direct. Here, formal work was often associated with public enterprise and state-directed import-substitution. The crises of the 1970s delivered these countries onto the hospital beds of banks and the IMF, forcing governments to give up the dream of a ‘modern’ social class of workers. The employment structure became much more fluid and the category of formal more elusive.

With the new economic division of labor and the spread of industrialization worldwide, there began a global surge in wage employment. Peasants were moving to urban areas in the hope of finding stable employment. Most of the new employment available in the urban areas was ‘part-time’, ‘casual’, and ‘incidental’. Stated differently, part-lifetime proletarian households that “derive their income from a combination of wages (whether in cash or kind), subsistence production, petty market operations, rents and transfer payments (including gifts)” prevailed across the world. Hence, we could not talk about ‘full-lifetime proletarianization’; instead “the rise in part-lifetime wage labor and households has come to govern, increasingly and worldwide, the organization of labor and production processes” (Tabak 1996: 87).

In Turkey, parallel with world-wide trends, the structure of work and employment relations changed considerably after the 1980s. Even though the Turkish economy experienced respectable rates of growth, particularly after the 1990s, the share of wage income in the value added of major economic sectors did not exhibit any sustained improvement (Boratav et al. 2000). In fact, the informal economy grew even bigger, reaching fifty percent of employment in manufacturing (and higher in services) (Öniş 2000). The share of the unionized and organized labour in the overall economy decreased and employment relations became more ‘flexible’. As a result of these developments, cities are now much less welcoming to newcomers, who can only hope for precarious, informal, and low-paying employment. This process was complemented by neo-liberal transformations in agriculture.

### *Agrarian change under globalization<sup>4</sup>*

During the national developmentalist era, Turkish agriculture was regulated by support price policies, subsidies for agricultural inputs, commodity boards and a protectionist trade regime, as in most countries around the world. Under these conditions, roughly from the 1950s to the 1980s, farmers enjoyed considerable security and managed to remain relatively immune to the vagaries of the market. Following the neo-liberal restructuring of the economy under the auspices of the IMF and the World Bank after the 1980s, various structural reforms and measures were introduced with the aim of reducing public spending and liberalizing food

markets (Yenal/Yenal 1993). Although the pace of this process was slow until the 2000s, deregulation has gained considerable momentum in the last decade with the enactment of an economic reform package, supported by IMF and World Bank, with strong terms for further liberalization of the farming sector (Aydın 2010). As a result, agricultural support policies for many commodities were largely discontinued, subsidies for agricultural inputs and credits were generally removed, most of the state agricultural enterprises were privatized and the trade regime in agriculture was liberalized to a significant degree.

Additionally, 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 their vulnerability to market signals. For the grain, pulses, and sugar beet farmers of the Anatolian interior there is not much decision making as regards ever-volatile prices and fluctuating profitability. Their crops are not labour intensive and the sunk costs of the prevalent technology make it harder to switch. These farmers have already built stable family structures consonant with the labour requirement of their farms: the 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 employment opportunities provided by tourism and intensive contact with towns allow for, and require, a permanent state of alertness. Village households in the coastal regions seem to be on constant lookout for mostly labour-intensive new crops, new employment opportunities, and commercial networks to tap into.

In the last several decades there have been radical changes in the structure of land, labour, credit, input and output markets which have led to a growing sense of uncertainty and ambivalence in the countryside, particularly in coastal regions. Alongside transformations in markets and technology, the relatively stable parameters of rural life, predominantly circumscribed by unwavering conditions of land, labour and capital resources within a conservative village society, are also in the process of profound change. Inputs are increasingly being commodified: relaxation of import controls has led to swift commercialization and internationalization of

input markets such as seeds, fertilizers, chemicals and pesticides. 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 greater.<sup>5</sup>

On the output side, it has been a global trend that big retailers and food manufacturing firms are heavily engaged in organizing flexible procurement networks that stretch across the world. This had significant repercussions for agro-food markets in Turkey as well. 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 (Özkaya 2008). Due to increasing competition, farmers have increasingly resorted to various credit mechanisms in order to protect themselves against fluctuations in markets. This financialization, the insertion of credit and debt into all transactions, further deepens market dependency, adding ever more risk to production conditions, particularly for farmers with fewer land and capital resources.

A potentially more disruptive commodification is the growing impact of the market on the land itself which undermines local economies and shakes the very foundations of the village community. Agriculture is no longer considered the only possible use of land, especially because of the recent increase in demand from the tourism sector. Summer housing complexes, predominantly for the use of urban middle classes, or tourism facilities for both local and international tourists, claim larger portions of the previously cultivated land. Many villagers are now deprived of access to the commons for animal husbandry, firewood, and other household needs: they either have to give up animal husbandry or switch to more intensive methods with commercial feed, leaving them to face the uncertainties of the market.

### ***Diversification of non-farm incomes and part-lifetime proletarianization***

Structural adjustment and market liberalization policies have played a fundamental role in intensifying the struggle for viable livelihoods, one result of which has been the re-orientation of rural dwellers toward income diversification outside of agriculture.<sup>6</sup> The gradual liberalization of agricultural markets and dwindling state support to agricultural producers have contributed to the 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, especially, of the tourism and construction sectors. Thus, migration to large cities by the younger members of rural households has largely been avoided. 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, but in the vicinity of their villages. In most of these cases, those with off-farm jobs continue to reside in the village.

The variety and availability of off-farm employment depend on the regional economy within which a village is located. The coastal regions have been increasingly dominated by the tourism sector. Although no figures are available for the direct or indirect generation of employment in tourism, the number of tourists that Turkey receives has been steadily increasing (more than 25 million in 2010), prompting the minister of tourism to declare that the tourism sector is responsible for 15% of all employment in Turkey. This figure translates to more than three million jobs, the majority of which would be seasonal. The typical pattern is for a large hotel or 'holiday village' to employ perhaps one quarter of its personnel year-round, and the rest during the tourism season from May to October. The front-desk personnel might be professionals and students on their summer break, while in the background the cleaning staff and the larger team in the kitchen and the garden would be drawn from villages near and far. It is particularly the younger villagers who seek wage employment in hotels and other tourist-oriented businesses. However, it is not uncommon to see young villagers from inland provinces 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 grown in population. Many villages near tourism centres now have 'Kurdish' neighbourhoods housing recent immigrants from the eastern regions of the country.

Households that have to rely on a supplementary source of income for their reproduction increasingly need some of their members to enter the labour market outside of their villages. However, this kind of off-

farm employment does not necessarily lead to more permanent deruralization. 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. In other regions of Turkey as well, where there is no tourism employment, parallel trends are observed. 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, for the majority of the village households, a substantial portion of the disposable income is derived from off-farm work. In his account, in line with 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. 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 hardships. In short, even though there is significant regional variation in the proliferation of off-farm income opportunities in the countryside (higher in the more market integrated and tourism-heavy regions of the coastal districts in the Mediterranean and the Aegean), 'the land based/free floating' labour force, a symptom of part life-time proletarianization, has become a permanent feature of rural Turkey.

### **3.3 Dispossession by force**

Once the effects on agrarian structures of the 1950-1975 boom were played out, most of the traditional peasantry that remained was located in the poorer regions of eastern and southeastern Anatolia – relatively subsistence-oriented and socially insular. It may be argued that, since the expulsion of the Armenian population during World War I, eastern Anatolia has remained poor and underdeveloped. For most of the Republican era, governments were content to support the relationship between Kurdish tribal leaders cum landlords and the dependent peasantry. The only concerted effort by

the state to transform the region along modernist lines was the planning and the implementation of the Southeast Anatolia Project (GAP). GAP is an integrated regional development project which was conceived in the 1980s. One of the most pronounced aims of GAP was to transform and modernize agricultural production in the region by improving irrigation and introducing new technology. Particularly after 1995 with the start of irrigation in the Harran Plain (with around 35 percent of cultivated land in the region), significant changes took place in the countryside (Kudat/Bayram 2000). Most of the landowners switched from cereals and pulses to cotton production. However, land concentration continued to be very high, and the share of the landless population remained the same. GAP has so far proven to be insufficient in initiating self-sustaining economic and social development that would transform the region in a fundamental manner.

The predominantly Kurdish population in the Eastern and South-Eastern provinces, especially in the highlands, which was market integrated to a much smaller degree than in the rest of Turkey, 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 and grazing land were abandoned and the former peasants rapidly became an urban underclass (Sönmez 2008). Thus was the last vestige of the agrarian question solved in the case of Turkey – by force, as has often happened throughout history (cf. Bernstein 2006). The result of this final push toward depeasantization was that market regulation came to dominate the entirety of the rural population.

The migrants of the last two decades (Kurdish or otherwise) who arrived in cities with diminished opportunities, are different from the previous waves: the geographical shift in the place of origin has been paralleled by a change in the motives behind the decision to migrate. Compared to previous flows, push factors are now paramount. While the earlier migrants were attracted by employment opportunities, possibilities of home ownership through appropriation of public land, and better access to education and health services, for the newcomers the decision to migrate is based on the absence of options in their place of origin.

The last two decades' devastation of what had already been the poorest regions of the country pushed Kurdish peasants toward the big cities. This devastation is primarily due to the ethnic/separatist war, but the earlier

failure of development projects to integrate these regions into the national economy must also be remembered. A substantial decrease in farming and animal husbandry due to the armed conflict, lack of security, significant reductions in governmental subsidies to agricultural production (particularly tobacco, meat and dairy products) and forced evacuation of the villages by the army in the first half of the 1990s, led to “a strong and sustained wave of rural to urban migration” (Yükseker 2009: 266). Hence, the migration of the last two decades has been predominantly from the affected regions and more likely to be instigated by forced displacement. More than one million peasants moved to neighbouring city centres (Van, Diyarbakır, Malatya), coastal areas (Antalya, Mersin and Adana) as well as metropolitan centres (Istanbul, Izmir and Ankara).

For most of this Kurdish population pushed out of their habitats, there is no place to return to. The villages have either been razed to the ground (more than one-thousand villages have suffered this fate, according to official figures) or have ceased to exist as economic units. Thus, it is unlikely that these new immigrants can maintain links with the place of origin through property or kinship, which could generate an income supplement (in kind if not in monetary terms) for them. As most new migrants have ended up as tenants in the older and relatively distant shanty town neighbourhoods, they occupy a distinctly lower status in the social hierarchy. More importantly, ‘social capital’ available to new immigrants is also likely to be more limited in the absence of a more continuous pattern of chain migration.<sup>7</sup> If social integration depends on the existence of networks, the new migrants are not in a fortunate situation in terms of being able to tap existing links in order to generate networks to be used toward employment or housing (Işık/Pınarcıoğlu 2001).

Against this background, the failure of the informal welfare mechanisms of the previous period becomes more alarming. The new Kurdish migrants are most often casual workers hired through street-corner labour markets, or ‘self-employed’ as street vendors. In Istanbul most migrants engage in informal day-to-day jobs where wages are extremely low, while some of the luckier migrant families have become a cheap labour source for the small- and medium-scale garment industry (Yükseker 2009). They also often face the threat of cultural and political exclusion. There is indeed a danger that these newly deruralized immigrants will now calcify into a

permanent underclass, moving back and forth between unemployment, self-employment, and casual, informal work, always in need of outside assistance for survival.

#### 4. Conclusion

The principal factor that colours Turkey's experience in the formation of a working class has been the ownership structure of its agrarian economy. Starting after World War I with a shortage of labour, lack of land and wage employment were rare occurrences in the countryside. The Eastern provinces where tribal structures survived were an exception. Here, a form of sharecropping prevailed where peasants would pay some rent to the landlord, but more importantly, the social and political domination of the landlord class was hard to challenge. In the rest of Turkey the land ownership situation improved further in favour of owner-occupied small farms after the Second World War, when a land distribution scheme led to a massive reclamation, increasing the area under cultivation by one-third, and to a de facto land reform. The new balance of widespread ownership brought Turkey closer to the East Asian pattern mentioned in Arrighi et al. (2010) than the South African model that Giovanni Arrighi himself analysed in 1970. In East Asia agricultural producers were not dispossessed from the land; indeed, capitalist development was launched on the basis of a potential labour force that would maintain a close link to their village origins.

What is significant about this pattern is what Arrighi and his co-authors identified as a possibly more sustainable path of proletarianization, whereby the worker maintains a relationship with his village household and depends on this relationship for his own reproduction. This allows a more secure existence compared to the situation of full deruralization when the worker becomes fully dependent on his labour income for his own and his household's reproduction. In the latter case the only alternative to labour income is transfers – from relatives or from the state. In the case of part-time proletarianization however, reproduction may derive in part from farming income, even if this is unstable and uncertain. The levels of security and consequent welfare will be considerably different in the two cases. In the three temporally distinct trajectories we have described, only the Kurdish

can be described as one of dispossession, because for most of the population concerned the links with the agrarian background have been forcefully severed. In fact, most of the forced migrants of Kurdish origin depend exclusively on wage income and public transfers, and this is why Kurdish migration to the cities in the West and the East alike has led to a great deal of official and civil-society concern, search for social policies, and attempts to find ways to re-establish an agrarian background for the new migrants by providing incentives for a 'return' to the village.

The earlier migrants who were not dispossessed (those discussed above as the first pattern) certainly had to survive hardships and poor conditions and various forms of exclusion when they arrived in the city, but they always had the option of return and the reality of sharing the costs of reproduction with the household left behind. Furthermore, the household left behind also benefited: during good times, the flow of funds would be toward the village. When the migrants and their families returned during summer holiday or harvest time to their *memleket* (hometown), which, even after three decades or longer, is still the practice for a surprisingly large proportion of immigrants to the cities, consumer goods went in one direction and dried foodstuffs came back. An indirect benefit of this link was that the villages were thus introduced to different consumer goods and consumption standards, which created new demands and expectations, arguably leading to a different pattern of manufacturing growth – one where production had to cater to a more dispersed demand. Aside from implications for economic geography, this creation of demand contributed to the extension and intensification of the domestic market. It would not be wrong to claim that the rapid growth of the domestic market for the products of national industry became the key to Turkish economic growth.

As Arrighi, Aschoff and Scully (2010) argue, deruralization, along with dispossession from the land, may “become the source of major developmental handicaps for at least some and possibly many countries of the global South” (Arrighi et al. 2010: 436). These handicaps derive from the low wages that dispossession will lead to, and the implications of low wages for levels of poverty and the reproduction of the urban labour force. Of course, low wages also inhibit the development of a domestic market, and make it even more difficult for the state to compensate for the deficiency that low wages mean for the reproduction of the labour force. As they

conclude: “[T]he developmental success of China and other East Asian countries has been built on a tradition of accumulation *without* dispossession and of rural development and industrialization, which is radically different from the tradition of accumulation by dispossession that has shaped South Africa and the surrounding Africa of the Labor Reserves. Just as the Southern African tradition has ultimately narrowed domestic markets, raised reproduction costs, and lowered the quality of the labor force, so the East Asian tradition has simultaneously expanded domestic markets, lowered reproduction costs, and raised the quality of the labor force” (ibid.).

This is true for the Turkish case as well. The lower wages that would have resulted from dispossession would also have curtailed the national developmentalist trajectory that Turkey successfully pursued until the neo-liberal turn, and would likely have precluded the transition to global competitiveness during the last two decades.

The implications of the second pattern we have identified, the emergence of part-lifetime workers who combine farming with wage employment but continue to live in the countryside, are mostly felt at the level of agrarian transformations. Contrary to the expectations of the orthodox left, Turkish petty commodity producers survived in family farms and accumulated land and technology. Part-time workers, who themselves are members of households that own their own farm, fit in with this pattern. Wages become a supplementary income to help maintain the household economy and to subsidize incomes from production. These workers do not leave the farm or the village, and thus do not become part of the urban working class; instead they see themselves primarily as small farmers. Because they are owners of their land, and thus full members of the village community, they do not see themselves as agricultural workers either. Again, the exception being the small Kurdish populations who have settled in villages and small towns in western Anatolia, near agricultural land where they used to be employed as seasonal workers before they were displaced from their own villages in the East. These Kurdish populations establish households but often cannot buy land and are thus perceived as permanent outsiders, different from the rest of the villagers in that they will remain as full-time workers without any other source of income. Their houses or neighbour-

hoods concretely display this status because they are on the outskirts of the village or the town.

Finally, we might offer a few words on the relationship between the modality of working class formation and the social policy of the state. For the Turkish case, at least, there is a clear correspondence between the initiation of formal social policy and the emergence of a dispossessed working class. For most of the history of Turkish capitalism social policy was implicit, as could be seen, for instance, in the official blind eye turned to the practice of informal housing in the cities. However, since the accumulation of deruralized and dispossessed Kurdish peasants in the poor neighbourhoods of large cities, governments have also felt the need to turn their attention to social assistance, and to universalize programmes such as health-care. In fact, it seems that there is a new orientation away from the belief that characterised the social thinking of the Turkish political class until the 1990s, namely that families and community would informally take care of lifetime risks, toward a recognition that a modern state must assume new types of responsibilities. It may even be argued that this is part of a global trend in response to the dispossession caused by neo-liberalism in diverse contexts (Seekings 2008). The formalization of social policy is an indication that the social structure has been moving in the direction of unmitigated capitalism, whereby the working class will, in fact depend much more on wage income for its reproduction, and that the social policy of the state will now have to address a world closer to pure capitalism, a world where there are workers ‘free’ of all economic ties except to capital.

- 1 For a background to this discussion about the development of regional differentiation in agricultural patterns and production relations in the Turkish countryside, see Keyder and Tabak (1991), the edited volume containing articles on the development of land structures and agrarian relations in the Ottoman Empire.
- 2 For an exemplary study on the migration movements and the urbanization process in Turkey in the period under consideration see Shorter and Tekçe (1974).
- 3 This is the message of the Arrighi, Aschoff and Scully (2010) reconsideration of the proletarianization process in Africa.
- 4 The discussion in this section of the article is largely based on Keyder and Yenal (2011).
- 5 In a study which analyzes 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).

- 6 Similar developments are observed in other peripheral contexts as well. As widely noted in the growing literature on de-agrarianization , 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. For many, this is a secular trend which points to the general process of de-linking of rural livelihoods from land and farming. For example, the increasing diversification of the activities and sources of income of peasant households in recent decades in Latin America 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).
- 7 For a study which examines the weakening of social ties and support networks within the newly migrant community of Kurds in urban areas in the recent decades, see Şen (2002).

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## **Abstracts**

Building on Giovanni Arrighi’s writings on Africa and southern Italy, this article describes the process of rural to urban migration and proletarianization in Turkey. During the developmentalist era agrarian transformations led to the formation of semi-proletarianized households in the cities, with significant ties to the countryside. The nature of housing in urban areas and the predominance of informal work relations contributed to this outcome. Under neo-liberal globalization a new type of proletarianization has emerged whereby workers do not abandon the countryside and instead find wage employment during part of the year. The recent experience of the Kurdish population, who were displaced from their villages in eastern Anatolia under military pressure, constitutes a third path toward proletarianization, where former villagers have been dispossessed and deruralized by force. These distinct paths imply different accommodations to capitalist employment, with different population dynamics and patterns of household reproduction.

Dieser Artikel beschreibt den Prozess von ländlicher zu urbaner Migration und Proletarisierung in der Türkei. Hierfür bezieht er sich auf Giovanni Arrighis Arbeiten zu Afrika und Süditalien. In der Ära des Entwicklungsstaates führte die ländliche Transformation zu einer Entstehung semiproletarisierter Haushalte in den Städten, die weiterhin signifikante Beziehungen zum ländlichen Raum aufwiesen. Die Wohnsituation im urbanen Raum und die Vorherrschaft informeller Arbeit trugen zu diesem Ergebnis bei. Mit der neoliberalen Globalisierung ist eine neue Art der Proletarisierung entstanden, bei der ArbeiterInnen den ländlichen Raum nicht verlassen und stattdessen während eines Teils des Jahres Lohnarbeit nachgehen. Die jüngsten Erfahrungen der kurdischen Bevölkerung, die von ihren Dörfern im östlichen Anatolien militärisch vertrieben wurde, stellen einen dritten Weg in Richtung Proletarisierung dar, bei der ehemalige DorfbewohnerInnen gewaltsam enteignet und deruralisiert wurden. Die einzelnen Wege implizieren unterschiedliche Anpassungsstrategien an Lohnarbeit, die jeweils mit divergierenden Bevölkerungsdynamiken und Reproduktionsformen des Haushalts einhergehen.

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