The Expropriation of Olive Orchards at the path of Development: A Discussion on Contemporary Land Dispossession in Turkey

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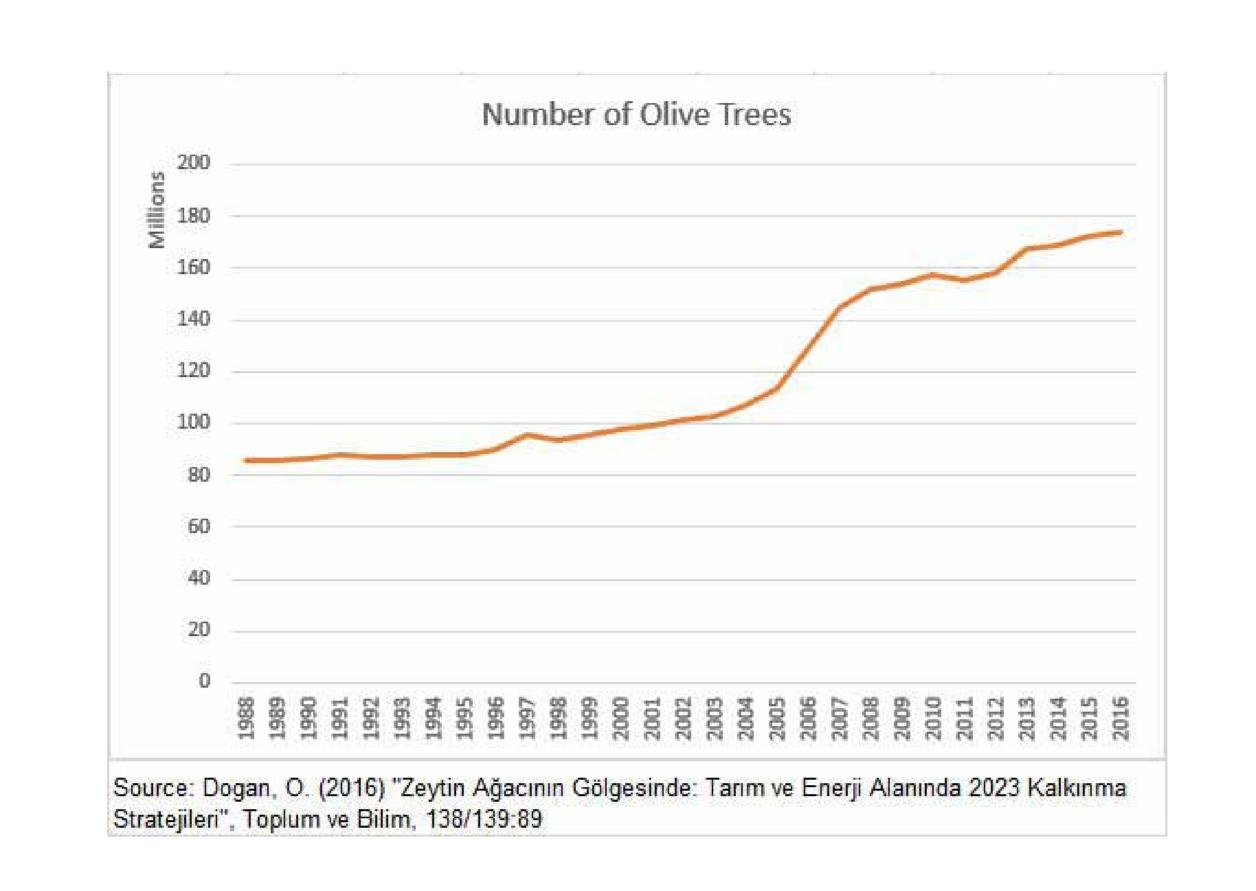


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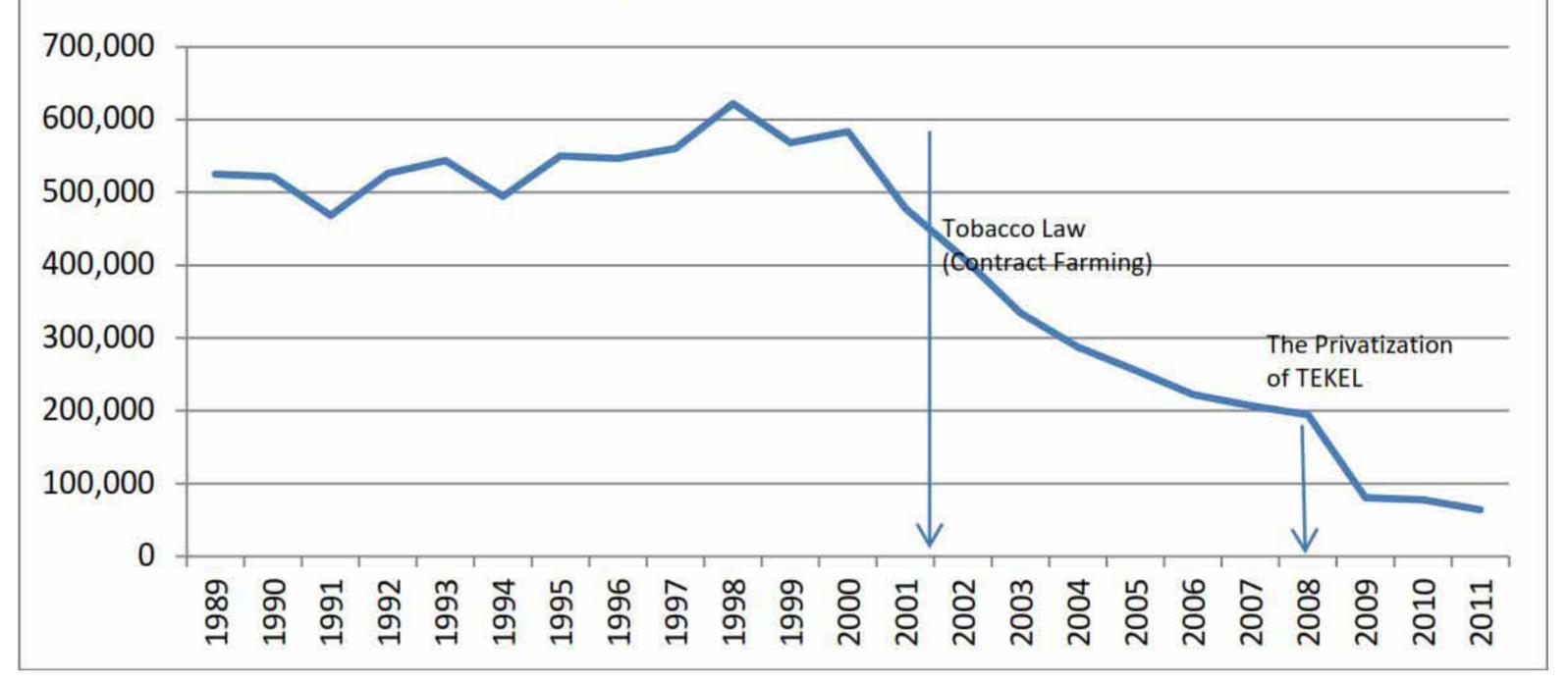
The Number of Tobacco Cultivators

This poster presents some segments on the recent developments about olive sector in Turkey. Olive, olive oil, olive trees and olive orchards have recently been carried at the heart of various discussions which make us enable to trace an aspect of agricultural transformation and land grabbing issues as the contested moments in the path of capitalist agricultural development. In this presentation, it is aimed to display some observations on the contemporary discussions on land grabbing and land property relation in Turkish agriculture from agrarian political economy perspective.

Olive trees have become the subjects of a double-edged movement in Turkish agriculture. One the one hand, there has been a rush to olive production since the beginnings of 2000s when the structural reforms adopted under the neoliberal transformation agricultural sector. The number of olive trees and the total area of olive groves in Turkey have increased radically. In addition to traditional olive production areas mostly located to Western coastal regions of the country, the new olive plantations were established in south and eastern regions and differently from mountainously extended traditional groves, the new plantations were neatly located around plains and lowlands. Those areas were used to be utilized to plant annual crops in general. Besides the geographical expansion of olive production, the new actors have entered into the olive sector. Therefore, the relations of production and property relations has become diversified.



The restructuring the olive sector and the efforts on remaking the olive oil market can be analyzed within a framework of the capital accumulation regime and agrarian change. This process bear social and ecological consequences, such as degradation of forests behalf of olive plantations, the change in land-use rights, increasing competition among olive producers from different regions, the monopolization in olive oil market... Analyzing these developments from critical political economy and political ecology perspective provides a broader understanding on the trajectory of agrarian change and its uneven consequences.



For a time, despite several confrontations with Kolin Group workers, the villagers' vigil was largely successful. But one night in early November, the bulldozers came back, this time accompanied by two busloads of private security guards and a "urgent expropriation" order from the government. Arguments broke out, and then scuffles. Four people were hauled off in handcuffs; others say they were beaten by the guards. Before the sun rose, 6,000 olive trees had been ripped out of the ground. (Jennifer Hattam, Sierra Club)

Besides the ongoing local discontents and struggles around olive trees and orchards, the legal framework that draws the contours of the conflict zones and casts the roles and responsibilities in the sector has changed according to the needs of capital accumulation and hegemonic struggles. While some support schemes and campaigns have been gradually put into practice with the strategy plans of agriculture sector to increase olive production, the legislative framework that sustain a preservation on olive orchards has been attempted to change in various ways to bring about the destruction of olive trees, and to facilitate and accelerate the capital expansion.



THE RUSH TO OLIVE

There has been a *levee en masse*-mobilization in Turkish agriculture to promote olive production. Turkish minister of agriculture in mid of 2000s announced the goal of turning Turkey into the world's second biggest olive producer, after Spain. According to this goal, various kinds of support schemes and campaigns have been gradually put into practice. The olivegrowing area has been extended and the number of olive trees has almost doubled. These have occurred concurrently with the gradual dissolution in agriculture. Turkish Agriculture experienced a vast turmoil with yet already demise of national developmentalist policies and the implementation of Structural Adjustment Programmes promoted by the World Bank and IMF after the twin crises in the beginning of the 2000s. The statistics showing the increase in the total area of olive groves and the number of olive trees are proudly highlighted by the government as a success story from agricultural development perspectiv In other respect, olive trees have become the subject of different political and ecological disputes via some mining projects and energy investments on the olive groves. Furthermore, expropriations of olive orchards and uproots and destructions of olive trees have occurred as a result of several factors such as increase in the level of urbanization, infrastructural investment projects, and practices of extractive industries. Evidently, these incidents have many ecological and social impacts like dispossession of villagers and farmers, displacement, ecological degradation, loss of biodiversity, soil degradation, steady decrease in rural population, and food insecurity. Hence, they have caused different local contestations against these contemporary neoliberal development practices.

YIRCA - THE OLIVE AND POWER PLANT

Yırca is a town in Soma and it borders with Manisa. Coal is extracted from many mines in Soma and these coals are brought to thermal power plants just near Yırca where electricity is produced. In April 2014, the Council of Minister adjudicated an urgent expropriation decision for about 400 decares of areas in Yirca. The objective of this decision was clearly described in the decree; it was made to engage the construction of the Kolin Group – Power Plant. Expropriated land that was once a tobacco land but now has become an olive grove and some part was privately owned and the rest, can be considered as a common land, was left to the usage of the village by the state. A mining disaster that took the lives of 301 mine workers in Soma on 14 May 2014 brought forward the country's fragile mix of social injustice, lack of occupational safety, and a fossil-fuel-dependent energy policy. The reports on the disaster asserted the fact that many of the workers who were the victims of corporate murder were the sons of the families who had made their living on tobacco cultivation. This figure shows an application of Borras and Franco's (2011) focus on land property relations and land use dimensions in land grabbing analysis for some cases of "olive grabbing" in Turkey.

Ayvalık - Balıkesir		The mean of transfer			
Land-use change	Food Production		Tourism - Summer housing		
Orientation of land-use	Own consumption - domestic change - export		Construction - Rent		
Component	Olive-Olive oil		Summer Houses		
Property Relation	Private	Market Exchange	Private		
Gemlik - Bursa		The mean of transfer			
Land-use change	Food Production		Housing		
Orientation of land-use	Own consumption and Domestic Exchange		Construction		
Component	Table Olives		Urban transformation - Housing Investments		
Property Relation	Private	Market Exchange and Expropriation	Private - Public Private Partnership (TOKI)		
Yırca - Manisa		The mean of transfer		The mean of transfer	
Land-use change	Cash Crop Production	e start oor datal data data in a soo data eeye soo	Food Production		Mining and Energy production
Orientation of land-use	Domestic exchange - Export		Domestic exchange		Domestic use
Component	Tobacco		Olive and Olive oil		Coal-fired Thermal Power Plant
Property Relation	Private and common	Change in land use or market exchange	Private	Urgent Expropriation - Market exchange	Public - Private
Aydın		The mean of transfer			
Land-use change	Food Production	e dan kecamatakan dalam keramatakan dalam d	Energy Use		
Orientation of land-use	Own consumption and Domestic Exchange		Domestic use		
Component	Olive and Fig		Geothermal Power Stations		
Property Relation	Private	Market exchange and Expropriation	Private		
Karaburun-İzmir		The mean of transfer		The mean of transfer	
Land-use change	Meadows, Vineyards and Idle areas		Food Production		Energy production
Orientation of land-use Subsistence, Domestic exchange			Subsistence, Domestic exchange, Export		Domestic use
Component	Goat, Grapes		Olive and Olive oil		Wind Turbines
Property Relation	State property or common	Land lease	Private	Urgent Expropriation - Land lease	Private

The purpose of the poster is to present some recent cases of disputes from olive regions in Turkey to discuss contemporary dispossession practices that shapes the land use and land property relations in Turkish agriculture. In the limited space, it will only be possible to give some informative passages to emphasize the paradoxical situation of olive in Turkey. In my dissertation, I aim to elaborate these discussions and provide an understanding on recent developments in olive sector of Turkey with referring to agrarian change, food regime analysis and global land grabbing literature.