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Meeting Again at Tahirova: German Expertise in Turkish Agriculture in the 20th Century

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Rural modernisation was at the core of postwar development programmes, not least in the Mediterranean. The notion of ‘modernisation’ inherited a number of assumptions about the nexus between economic and social development from experiences in Western and Central European ‘internal colonisation’ projects. The Turkish case reveals how such concepts travelled alongside exiled scholars in the Nazi period. However, they were also renegotiated at the local and regional levels, in particular after the Second World War. Kemalist conceptions of a ‘modern’ countryside came into conflict with international policies. This article analyses these expert encounters through the prism of the German model farm of Tahirova. Zooming in on a particular breeding project of the Tahirova sheep, it seeks to untie the rationales of different actors and the ways in which they shaped Turkey’s role in postwar Europe, deeply influenced by cryptocolonial representations of the Mediterranean as Europe’s agricultural (and demographic) reservoir.

It is not easy to find tangible traces of German rural development activities in Turkey during the twentieth century. One of the few is the Tahirova breed of sheep. Of medium height, this breed can resist the cold winter climate of Turkish Thrace but is also particularly well suited for milk production; being fed on silage fodder has a positive effect on their productivity and makes these sheep particularly suitable for artificial breeding. Especially in Turkey’s Southern Marmara region, near the Aegean Sea, and in East Thrace, the Tahirova is still popular among shepherds and animal breeders.¹ However, Tahirova sheep are not ‘yerli’, the word that Turkish peasants use to refer to ‘indigenous’ animals. Only 25 per cent of the Tahirova genetic pool comes from the Turkish Kıvrıkcık sheep, with the other 75 per cent deriving from the East Frisian milk sheep.

Engineering a breed that would correspond to the needs of Turkish peasants was never a purely technical endeavour, as it presupposed an understanding of what these particular needs were. Recent historiography has shown sufficiently how processes of genetic alteration or environmental transformation were entangled with political discourses of socio-economic change and the agendas of colonial development in the twentieth century. Herds of sheep, as Rebecca Woods has analysed, could serve as ‘subtle levers of power, able to take hold of land, to sustain occupation over time and across economic circumstances and to forge and maintain connections between the imperial centre and colonial peripheries’.² Not only did European colonisers attempt to substitute local breeds in different regions of the world with new breeds from Europe, but European breeds often generated

¹ See <http://tahirovakoyunu.blogspot.com/2013/09/tahirova-koyunu-genel-bilgiler.html> (last visited 9 Aug. 2021).

² Rebecca Woods, *The Herds Shot Round the World: Native Breeds and the British Empire, 1800–1900* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 11; John Ryan Fischer, *Cattle Colonialism: An Environmental History of the Conquest of California and Hawai’i* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017).

environmental change due to their different grazing patterns, which in turn had a profound impact upon the lives of local nomadic communities.³ The genetic pool created through these projects also became a site of negotiating notions of heredity and ‘indigenous’ breeds versus ‘advanced’ newcomers: the application of such new technologies made it necessary to define the genetic repertoire of breeds to be ‘naturalised’ as the ‘right stock for a certain soil’.⁴

This article will use the ambitious projects that aimed to improve agriculture through scientific methods and the heuristics thereof to challenge the notion of expertise in the context of Turkish–German cooperation as well as to relate it to debates on informal empires in which processes of knowledge dissemination played a crucial role from the interwar years to the 1970s. I believe that describing Turkish–German relations from this perspective can substantially improve our understanding of the multilayered history of modernisation. The concept of modernisation that was employed throughout the earlier post-Second World War decades made a significant impact on policy makers in a context of competing ideologies. As a ‘roadmap towards Western civilisation’, it needs to be understood primarily as a bundle of practices revolving not only around development programmes and knowledge dissemination processes but which also included a multitude of assumptions about the ‘targeted’ populations at a time of economic uncertainty, a perspective which historians such as Frederick Cooper have brought to wider attention.⁵ Furthermore, a multitude of actors from different countries were involved, each with their own aims. The path to ‘modernity’ – defined here as a regime of rational resource allocation that is supported by a grid of social institutions – was thus the result of the actions of numerous transnational networks of knowledge.⁶ It is noteworthy that both the interwar Kemalist policies as well as international experts, especially in the period after the Second World War, contributed to the emergence of the post-war understanding of modernity and modernisation, albeit with slightly different emphases.

Seeing such modernisation policies as being the result of heterogeneous networks and practices opens up new geographical and chronological perspectives. All too often, twentieth-century development policies are viewed primarily from a transatlantic perspective, which frequently turns them into a mere subchapter of the Cold War.⁷ Although the geopolitics of the 1950s has led scholars to believe that West Germany was primarily pursuing the same interests as the United States, it is important to understand the West German engagement in Turkey within a longer-term context in order to allow for a more dialogic perspective. Tahirova, a post-Second World War West German-run model farm in Turkey’s Marmara region, will provide an opportunity to reflect not only on West German experts’ involvement in implementing new agricultural technologies but also on attempts to integrate new rationales of ‘modern rural life’ into peasant lifestyles.

Over the course of the twentieth century, Turkish agriculture and Turkey’s rural population came into the focus of attention for a variety of actors: First, as a national problem in which the supposedly passive rural masses of the Ottoman era had to be transformed into a new pillar of national political culture in the early republican years who together would ultimately reforge the cultural and social fabric of Turkish society after a dramatic period of violence that had reached its climax with the

³ Egon Glesinger, ‘The Mediterranean Project’, *Scientific American*, 203, 1 (1960), 88–90.

⁴ Tiago Saraiva, *Fascist Pigs: Technoscientific Organisms and the History of Fascism* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2016), 185; Gabriel N. Rosenberg, ‘No Scrubs: Livestock Breeding, Eugenics, and the State in the Early Twentieth-Century United States’, *Journal of American History*, 107, 2 (2020), 362–87.

⁵ Frederick Cooper, ‘Writing the History of Development’, *Journal of Modern European History*, 8, 1 (2010), 5–23; Frederick Cooper, ‘Development, Modernization, and the Social Sciences in the Era of Decolonization: The Examples of British and French Africa’, *Revue d’Histoire des Sciences Humaines*, 10, 1 (2004), 9–38; Frederick Cooper, ‘Modernizing Bureaucrats, Backward Africans, and the Development Concept’, in Frederick Cooper and Randall Packard, eds., *International Development and the Social Sciences* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1997), 64–92.

⁶ Lorenzini recently provided a more balanced account; Sara Lorenzini, *Global Development: A Cold War History* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019).

⁷ Gülüzar Gürbey, *Die Türkei–Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland unter Konrad Adenauer (1949–1963)* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1990).

Armenian genocide and the Greek–Turkish population exchange. Second, as part of a potential agricultural reserve that was necessary for European reconstruction in the late 1940s and 1950s, when Turkey was seen as a possible provider of cereals, cash crops, fruit and vegetables, and livestock for European markets. Third, from the 1960s onwards, as a reservoir of much-needed labour, but also a demographic threat in times of neo-Malthusian anxiety. Together, all these dimensions combined to set the stage for Turkish–German cooperation in the field of rural development.

Since agricultural development was an important element of development policy, historians have articulated doubts about the commonly drawn distinction between a ‘high-modernist’ overhaul of infrastructure through massive investment and a more community-based ‘low-modernist’ mindset, which dominated the field of rural development and was based on more ‘democratic’ New Deal traditions.⁸ The ambitions of these projects to transform rural communities, agricultural outlooks and, as their history shows, breeding projects, even though often local in their scope, can be the key to understanding expectations of future socio-economic development. They are thus commonly placed by historians at the centre of the ‘green revolution’ – the massive rise in agricultural productivity that occurred in many parts of the non-Western world through the use of fertilisers as well as hybrid or modified crops, the mechanisation of many aspects of what has become known as ‘agribusiness’, and the introduction of new techniques of livestock breeding.⁹

Rather than adding yet another case study to the well-entrenched narrative of post-war transformation and rural development, this paper seeks to shed light on the tight coalition of actors that prepared the ground for the emergence of new development policies. These networks not only influenced economic and political power relations but also the environmental regimes in some parts of Turkey.¹⁰ The transnational production of notions of rural modernity by experts is in sharp contrast with nation-centred narratives in which rural modernity emerges as the result of the construction of a unitary national identity.¹¹ This paper aims to describe a context in which not only the involvement of foreigners was characteristic but also in which rationales that were essentially transnational in character were invoked to justify the implementation of new policies.

After outlining some examples of the close cooperation between Turkey’s early republican government and international experts, especially in the field of rural development, I will turn my attention to an academic network of Turkish and German agricultural scientists. I will analyse discourses and practices that addressed the key economic challenges in Turkish agriculture as well as the social fabric of modern farming in Turkey, coming together in the history of Tahirova as a specific site of encounter, culminating in the sheep breeding projects. Tahirova, however, also developed its own dynamics and spatial agency as a site of knowledge transfer.

Translations and Networks in Turkish Agriculture

In many ways, the genesis of the Tahirova sheep is representative of actions that grew out of older networks, even though the political context thereof had meanwhile changed quite

⁸ Daniel Immerwahr, *Thinking Small: The United States and the Lure of Community Development* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015), 40–65.

⁹ Nick Cullather, *The Hungry World: America’s Cold War Battle against Poverty in Asia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Deborah Fitzgerald, ‘Exporting American Agriculture: The Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico, 1943–53’, *Social Studies of Science*, 16, 3 (1986), 457–483; Harwood, *Europe’s Green Revolution*; Juri Auderset and Peter Moser, *Die Agrarfrage in der Industriegesellschaft* (Wien: Böhlau, 2018); Fitzgerald, ‘Exporting American Agriculture’.

¹⁰ Todd Gordon and Jeffrey Webber, *Blood of Extraction: Canadian Imperialism in Latin America* (Winnipeg: Fernwood, 2016).

¹¹ Sinan Yıldırım, *Politics and the Peasantry in Turkey: Social History, Culture and Modernization* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2017). On the American involvement in Turkish development: Begüm Adalet, *Hotels and Highways: The Construction of Modernization Theory in Cold War Turkey* (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2018) or Ali Erken, *America and the Making of Modern Turkey: Science, Culture and Political Alliances* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018).

dramatically. As such, West German efforts to integrate academic networks into the country's post-war development policies¹² can be understood as both a continuation of already established personal contacts¹³ and a new informal imperialism that emerged from the context of Cold War geopolitics but also had their own history. German colonialism itself endured for too short a period to establish genuine colonial development policies – unlike French or, in particular, British colonialism.¹⁴ The limited field of West German technical assistance was primarily organised by academic networks and private initiatives. Some of these initiatives, however, were subsumed under the German state's expansionist ambitions in the interwar period before ultimately somehow enduring to form part of the country's post-war international development programmes, where they were appropriated under the auspices of new alliances and paradigms.

From its earliest days, the Turkish republic of the 1920s and 1930s – and, in some respects, the late Ottoman Empire – relied heavily on foreign experts, who were hired by the state to kickstart a process of social and economic transformation.¹⁵ Invited either by President Mustafa Kemal (after the 1934 introduction of family names, Atatürk) or by one of his ministers, scholars and civil servants from the United States, Switzerland, Belgium and Germany travelled to Turkey to advise government officials on economic policy, the collection of statistics and census data, and the implementation of public education and health services. With the overall goal of integrating all parts of the reshaped national territory and redefining its population after the traumatic events of the First World War, the Armenian genocide and the population exchanges,¹⁶ Atatürk's government hoped that expertise would help to unite the population behind a national project of 'modernisation' and development, with both terms quickly becoming central elements of a new political rhetoric. Defining the 'backward', rural parts of Anatolia as the nation's cultural cradle – thereby taking the place of Turkey's cosmopolitan cities in this role – was a strategic adaptation of the national narrative that was designed to incorporate rural Anatolia into the 'modernisation' effort.¹⁷

Historiography in recent decades has asked the question of how processes of translating concepts of modernity might be understood beyond an interpretative framework that understands expert knowledge as disseminating from informed academic agents to passive and ignorant target audiences. Scholars such as Aydın and Worringer have shown that appeals for modernisation in late Ottoman and early republican Turkey often had a very anti-Western component to them by attempting to define idiosyncratic paths towards modernity rather than rely on concepts of Westernisation or

¹² Quinn Slobodian, *Foreign Front: Third World Politics in Sixties West Germany* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012).

¹³ Kiran Klaus Patel, 'The Green Heart of Governance: Rural Europe during the Interwar Years in a Global Perspective', in Liesbeth Van De Grief and Amalia Ribí Forclaz, eds., *Governing the Rural in Interwar Europe* (London: Routledge, 2018), 1–23; Jonathan Harwood, *Europe's Green Revolution and Others Since: The Rise and Fall of Peasant-Friendly Plant Breeding* (New York: Routledge, 2012); Corinna Unger, 'Agrarwissenschaftliche Expertise und ländliche Modernisierungsstrategien in der internationalen Entwicklungspolitik, 1920er bis 1980er Jahre', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 41, 4 (2015), 552–79.

¹⁴ Joseph M. Hodge, *Triumph of the Expert: Agrarian Doctrines of Development and Legacies of British Colonialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007), Frederick C. Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014); Monica M. Beusekom, *Negotiating Development: African Farmers and Colonial Experts at the Office du Niger, 1920–1960* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

¹⁵ An overview thereof can be found in Zafer Toprak, *Darwin'den Dersim'e Cumhuriyet ve Antropoloji* (İstanbul: Doğan Kitap, 2012), 531–3. For an early example of Turkish–German engagement, the Prussian military mission to Constantinople comes to mind. See, among many others, Gregor Schölgén, *Imperialismus und Gleichgewicht. Deutschland, England und die orientalische Frage. 1871–1914* (Munich: Oldenburg, 1984).

¹⁶ On the history of census taking in Turkey as well as on attempts to conduct anthropological surveys: Murat Ergin, *Is the Turk a White Man? Race and Modernity in the Making of Turkish Identity* (Leiden: Brill, 2017). Ferhunde Özbay, *Dünden Bugüne Aile, Kent ve Nüfus* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2015), 290–2. See also a series of articles on issues of 'demographic engineering' in *European Journal of Turkish Studies*, 7 (2008) and 12 (2011).

¹⁷ Asım Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada bir Köy var uzakta. Erken Cumhuriyet Döneminde Köycü Söylem* (İstanbul: İletişim, 2006), 21–3.

Europeanisation. Nevertheless, they still used very similar categories to define counter-concepts to a Western modernity, especially that of the rural–urban divide.¹⁸ This argument builds on critical approaches to the idea of conceptual translation itself,¹⁹ showing that Western traditions as well as Turkish discourses and claims of modernity all depend on how the categories of modernity are defined.²⁰

Examining knowledge transfers and conceptual translations can offer a wide range of insights if viewed from the perspective of the long-term, transnational entanglement of and engagement between the ‘academic middle classes’. The involvement of German agricultural scientists in the establishment of the institutions of the early Turkish republic is relatively well known. Against the backdrop of the reform of Turkish universities in the 1920s, the role of German scholars was pivotal, as the Kemalist government chose them as the single most prominent group of foreign experts in charge of building up the new institutions.²¹ German scholars and universities were heavily involved in the foundation of Yüksek Ziraat Okulu (YZO), an agricultural school in Ankara, in the 1920s.²² Whether a genuine transfer of knowledge occurred within the realm of this institutional cooperation, however, has been questioned and would certainly merit further scrutiny.²³ Much clearer, however, were the personal relationships that developed as a result of this collaboration, since many German agricultural scientists remained in Turkey and taught at the YZO in the 1930s and beyond.

One of the most interesting personalities to link the agricultural sciences in Turkey and Germany was Friedrich Christiansen-Weniger, who came to Turkey as part of an official mission led by the Prussian privy councillor Gustav Oldenburg in 1927.²⁴ Christiansen-Weniger’s research aimed to improve the quality of Turkish wheat crops and to empower the country’s new institutions in the field of scientific cultivation. Soon after arriving in Turkey, Christiansen-Weniger began clashing with Oldenburg, his superior. In contrast, he enjoyed good relations with his Turkish colleagues, who helped to have him hired for various government jobs. Christiansen-Weniger’s fascination with the president of the Turkish republic, Mustafa Kemal, as well as his loyalty to the prime minister, İsmet Paşa [later İnönü], afforded him a rather stable position in the country. Furthermore, his enduring friendships with various Turkish scientists – especially Vamik Tayşı and Osman Tosun, the latter of whom had studied agrology in Munich – over the course of the following decades made him a trusted partner of the Turkish authorities.²⁵ In 1938, after his contract came to an end and despite having a conflicted attitude towards the national-socialist government, Christiansen-Weniger returned to Germany. Two years later, he was appointed to help improve agricultural structures in the eastern

¹⁸ Renée Worringer, *Ottomans Imagining Japan: East, Middle East, and Non-Western Modernity at the Turn of the Twentieth Century* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014); Cemil Aydın, *The Politics of Anti-Westernism in Asia: Visions of World Order in Pan-Islamic and Pan-Asian Thought* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Cemil Aydın, ‘A Global Anti-Western Moment? The Russo–Japanese War, Decolonization, and Asian Modernity’, in Sebastian Conrad and Dominic Sachsenmeier, eds., *Competing Visions of World Order: Global Moments and Movements (1880s–1930s)* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 213–36.

¹⁹ On a conceptual level, see Homi K Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1994).

²⁰ Ussama Makdisi, ‘Ottoman Orientalism’, *The American Historical Review*, 107, 3 (2002), 768–96.

²¹ Ayşe Öncü, ‘Academics: The West in the Discourse of University Reform’, in Metin Heper, Ayşe Öncü and Heinz Kramer, eds., *Turkey and the West: Changing Political and Cultural Identities* (London: I.B. Tauris, 1993), 142–76.

²² Sabine Mangold-Will, *Begrenzte Freundschaft. Deutschland und die Türkei 1918–1933* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2013), 391–413.

²³ Mangold-Will, *Begrenzte Freundschaft*, 396–7.

²⁴ Gustav Oldenburg, *Sechs Monate Aufbauarbeit in der Türkei. Bericht der deutschen landwirtschaftlichen Sachverständigen-Delegation* (Langensalza: Beyer, 1928); Fritz Christiansen-Weniger, ‘Deutsche Sachverständige im Dienst der türkischen Regierung 1923–1944’, *Zeitschrift für Kulturaustausch*, 12, 2–3 (1962), 217–18; and Friedrich Christiansen-Weniger, *Jahrgang 1897. Bürger in vier deutschen Staaten* (Eckernförde: self-published, 1981), 65–7; briefly analysed in: Mehmet Okur, ‘Millî mücadele ve cumhuriyetin ilk yıllarında millî ve modern bir eğitim sistemi oluşturma çabaları’, *Atatürk Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Dergisi*, 5, 1 (2005), 199–217.

²⁵ Christiansen-Weniger, *Jahrgang 1897*, 104–5.

regions of the Reich as part of the Nazi regime's Generalplan Ost,²⁶ under the auspices of which supposedly apolitical ambitions to develop and breed new species and varieties could be realised on 'empty' land.²⁷ As director of the prestigious Agricultural Research Institute in Puławy in occupied Poland, he was responsible for attempts to define and create and breed suitable varieties that would help to establish and reinforce the German occupiers' economic dominance in Eastern Europe.

The history of this early cooperation in the field of agrarian science needs to be analysed more systematically in its temporal proximity to another transnational moment in the history of expertise in Turkey. After Adolf Hitler seized power in Germany in 1933, the Turkish government was able to attract a number of German scholars to work for Turkish state institutions, mostly as part of 'modernisation' (or '*çağdaşlaşma*') projects. With particular regard to the agricultural sciences, it has been argued that the activities of these 'experts in exile' should be understood as a continuation of prior traditions of academic collaboration between the two countries, earlier initiatives with which these new projects were indeed closely intertwined.²⁸ In the eyes of all the German experts under consideration, none saw ideological questions as relevant for cooperating on technical grounds in agricultural questions, understood as apolitical and purely economic. Their networks spanned ideological cleavages and proved to be more important in the long run.

One such network had developed around Şevket Raşit Hatipoğlu, a future Turkish minister of agriculture. Hatipoğlu first came to Germany in 1927 to study at the Forschungsstelle Wirtschaftspolitik (Berlin Institute of Economic Policy), whose newly appointed director at the time, Fritz Baade, was an expert in agricultural development policy in the context of Prussian internal colonisation and had been working on enhancing the cooperative structures of Prussian smallholders.²⁹ Hatipoğlu had a keen interest in working with Baade and his students, especially with the junior researcher Hans Wilbrandt, an expert in agricultural cooperatives. Hatipoğlu returned to Turkey in 1932, becoming a member of the teaching staff at the YZO. He would become an important player in Turkish agricultural policy over the following decades, culminating in his appointment as minister of agriculture from 1942 to 1946. His position in the Turkish civil service and political sphere made it easier for him to recommend to the Turkish government his former colleagues from Germany, many of whom were left-leaning and victims of Hitler's so-called Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service. In 1934, Wilbrandt became the first of these German experts to work for the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture, one year before Fritz Baade and others arrived in Turkey.

Making the Village a Site of Science

The early republican governments, and above all President Mustafa Kemal Atatürk himself, boasted a strong agenda for transforming rural Turkey and incorporating the rural population into the political landscape of the republic.³⁰ This entailed not only intensified education initiatives targeted at rural inhabitants,³¹ but it also led to attempts to achieve a new science-based 'legibility' of the country's rural population by improving practices of population counting and registration that the Ottoman

²⁶ Ibid., 119–21.

²⁷ Saraiva, *Fascist Pigs*; Willi Oberkrome, *Ordnung und Autarkie. Die Geschichte der deutschen Landbauforschung, Agrarökonomie und ländlichen Sozialwissenschaft im Spiegel von Forschungsdienst und DFG (1920–1970)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2009).

²⁸ Reiner Möckelmann, *Wartesaal Ankara. Ernst Reuter – Exil und Rückkehr nach Berlin* (Berlin: Berliner Wissenschaftsverlag, 2013), 192–4.

²⁹ Michael Ruck, 'Baade, Fritz (1893–1974)', in V.A. Thomas Lane et al., eds., *Biographical Dictionary of European Labor Leaders*, vol. 1 (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1995), 38–9.

³⁰ Karaömerlioğlu, *Orada bir Köy var uzakta*; Yıldırım, *Politics and the Peasantry*; Türkân Çetin, 'Cumhuriyet Döneminde Köycülük Politikaları: Köye Doğru Hareketi', in Metin Celâl, ed., *75 yılda Köylerden Şehirlere* (İstanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 213–30.

³¹ Benjamin Fortna, *Learning to Read in the Late Ottoman Empire and the Early Turkish Republic* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

governments had left in a rather rudimentary state.³² These practices, as described in a number of case studies, were not received neutrally by local communities, instead often triggering contestation and social unrest.³³

Exiled German scholars in Turkey intervened at this precise moment as new scientific approaches towards the Anatolian village were being developed, with the Kemalist government attracting many of these German exiles with its modernisation programme. The jobs for which they were hired targeted Turkish agriculture and agricultural communities to varying degrees and were related to the establishment of agricultural cooperatives, the promotion of product standardisation, or the spread of credit and banking institutions.³⁴ Hans Wilbrandt's first and foremost task was to study the financial circumstances and income of 'Central Anatolian agricultural businesses'.³⁵ Wilbrandt conducted research among sixty-three peasant households in Ankara Province, an area which was at the centre of experts' attention in the 1930s and 1940s.³⁶ With a team of fifteen agricultural science students, he conducted interviews intended to gauge the formal and informal aspects of peasant economies in an attempt to shed light on rural living conditions. Wilbrandt saw his role as an external, non-Turkish expert as vital to the success of such a survey, since he expected peasant communities to be more willing to speak openly to him and his interpreters than to government representatives or other Turkish nationals.³⁷ Villagers, in his view, would be reluctant to answer questions about their living conditions and might try to misrepresent their actual incomes and living standards out of suspicion that an attempt to impose higher taxes could lie behind official registration efforts.³⁸

Without being aware of it, Wilbrandt was part of the republican government's efforts to promote village studies. The general aim of the government to create a corpus of new knowledge about rural populations, which was not atypical of processes of nation-building in the early twentieth century,³⁹

³² Mehmet Hacısalihoğlu, 'Borders, Maps, and Censuses: The Politicization of Geography and Statistics in the Multi-Ethnic Ottoman Empire', in Jörn Leonhard and Ulrike v. Hirschhausen, eds., *Comparing Empires: Encounters and Transfers in the Long Nineteenth Century* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 2011), 171–210; Özbay, *Dünden Bugüne Aile*, 290–2; Fuat Dündar, *Modern Türkiye'nin Şifresi. İttihat ve Terakki'nin Etnisite Mühendisliği (1913–1918)* (Istanbul: İletişim, 2008); Halil İnalçık and Şevket Pamuk, eds., *Osmanlı devletinde bilgi ve istatistik* (Ankara: T.C. Başbakanlık Devlet İstatistik Enstitüsü, 2000).

³³ Murat Metinsoy, 'Everyday Resistance and Selective Adaptation to the Hat Reform in Early Republican Turkey', *International Journal of Turcologica*, 8, 16 (2013), 7–48; Murat Metinsoy, 'Fragile Hegemony, Flexible Authoritarianism, and Governing From Below: Politicians' Reports in Early Republican Turkey', *International Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 43, 4 (2011), 699–713; Hale Yılmaz, 'Learning to Read (Again): The Social Experiences of Turkey's 1928 Alphabet Reform', *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 43, 4 (2011), 677–97.

³⁴ Hans Wilbrandt Papers, 9 V – Raporlar 83–115, Rapor 83 'Landwirtschaftliche Verkaufs- und Kreditorganisation' (Agricultural Selling and Credit Organisation), 24 June 1935; Rapor 89 'Bericht über die Ausbildung von 15. Dipl. Landwirten' (Report on the Education of 15 Farmers), 10 Aug. 1936. Rapor 91 'Die wichtigsten Zukunftsaufgaben in der Organisation des Agrarabsetzes und des Agrarkredits' (The Most Important Future Tasks for Organizing Agrarian Commodities and Credits), 20 Dec. 1938. Rapor 93 'Der Landwirtschaftliche Genossenschaftsaufbau in Türkei' (Agrarian Cooperativism in Turkey) 1939, UGL.

³⁵ Hans Wilbrandt Papers, 9 V – Raporlar 83–115, Rapor 89 'Der Mittelanatolische Bauernbetrieb in Zahlen' (Central Anatolian Agricultural Businesses in Numbers) 1936, UGL.

³⁶ Especially in what is widely recognised as the first academic village monograph; see Sadri Aran, *Evedik Köyü. Bir Köy Monografisi* (Ankara: Yüksek Ziraat Enstitüsü, 1938). See also Niyazi Berkes, *Bazı Ankara Köyleri üzerinde bir araştırma* (Ankara: Uzluk Basımevi, 1942); and İbrahim Yasa, *Hasanoğlan Köyü'nün İctimai –İktisadi Yapısı* (Ankara: Doğuş Maatbası, 1955).

³⁷ Hans Wilbrandt Papers, 9 V – Raporlar 83–115, Rapor 89 'Der Mittelanatolische Bauernbetrieb in Zahlen' (Central Anatolian Agricultural Businesses in Numbers) 1936, Introduction, I–II, UGL.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, II; On rural resistance to national surveys and censuses, see İpek K Yosmaoğlu: 'Counting Bodies, Shaping Souls: The 1903 Census and National Identity in Macedonia', *International Journal for Middle Eastern Studies*, 38, 1 (2006), 55–77. Alp Yücel Kaya, 'L'économie politique des tanzimat. La réforme fiscal et la résistance antifiscale dans la région de Bayındır (Izmir) au milieu du XIXe siècle', in Mohammad Afifi et al., eds., *Sociétés rurales ottomans. Cahier des Annales islamologiques* (Cairo: Institut Français d'archéologie orientale, 2005), 271–95.

³⁹ Raluca Muşat, 'Lessons for Modern Living: Planned Rural Communities in Interwar Romania, Turkey, and Italy', *Journal for Modern European History*, 13, 4 (2015), 534–48.

was backed by a strong desire to learn about the village as a site of culture. New institutions, such as the so-called people's houses (local centres promoting a relatively uniform Turkish culture) and the village institutes, were meant to foster a collective rural consciousness, especially by organising low-key ethnographic surveys that were ideally to be led by village teachers during their vacations.⁴⁰ The first village studies were produced in the early 1930s, but these still lacked a reliable methodological basis and were of a largely idiosyncratic character. During the 1930s and 1940s, these ethnographic approaches towards the Turkish village evolved into a new form of research known as village monographs (*köy monografileri*), which combined a sociological and statistical approach with new survey- and interview-based research methods.⁴¹ Statistically informed cultural studies of individual situations in remote Anatolia were meant to contribute towards producing a broader typology of the rural population, thereby advancing the management of the increasingly diverse population and shifting socio-economic dynamics, such as the introduction of cash crops and corresponding new forms of capital investment and machinery. Both the quest for a genuinely Turkish village culture as well as the attempts to define indigenous breeds fit for a specifically Turkish agricultural modernity have to be read on the backdrop of a massive influence of racist and eugenicist ideas on Turkish academia in the early years of the republic.⁴²

A particular trigger and leitmotiv for village sociology (*köy sosyolojisi*) in the 1940s and 1950s was a rising concern about the increasingly impoverished peasant population, who had borne the brunt of the economic effects of the war, rapid population growth, and the resultant increase in migration of the rural poor to urban areas.⁴³ The will to dissuade poor and landless peasant farmers from migration, ensure sufficient socio-economic stability such that rural inhabitants would remain in their villages, and provide them with the opportunity to earn a small but adequate income was only partially compatible, if at all, with the republican effort to educate the rural population through public schooling projects.⁴⁴

As most of this scholarship concerned with village life was published from the 1940s onwards,⁴⁵ the data collection methodology used by Wilbrandt in the mid-1930s foreshadowed elements of subsequent approaches by Turkish scholars, who employed a set of statistical and survey methods at the core of their research. Wilbrandt's methods also long preceded the methods of surveying the individual behaviour of Turkish villagers that were developed by scholars from Europe and the United States in the 1950s.⁴⁶ His studies remain among the few accounts of rural pauperisation in the early republican period. Wilbrandt observed that the living expenses of almost all the farmers whom he studied

⁴⁰ The initial text that invited ordinary villagers to start surveying their villages was published in Ankara's people's houses journal *Ülkü*; 'Köy Anketi', *Ülkü*, 1, 6 (1933), 362–4, see: Arzu Öztürkmen, 'The Role of People's Houses in the Making of National Culture in Turkey', in: *New Perspectives on Turkey*, Jg. 11, 1994, 159–81; Alexandros Lamprou, *Nation-Building in Modern Turkey. The 'People's Houses', the State and the Citizen* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2015); Asım Karaömerlioğlu, 'The Village Institutes Experience in Turkey', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, 25, 1 (1998), 47–73.

⁴¹ İbrahim Yasa, *Hasanoğlan Köyü*; Behice Sadık Boran, *Toplumsal Yapı Araştırmaları. İki Köy Çeşidinin Mukayeseli Tetkiki* (Ankara: Türk Tarih Kurumu Basımevi, 1945); Berkes, *Bazı Ankara Köyleri*.

⁴² Toprak, *Darwin'den Dersim'e*; Gabriel N. Rosenberg has found similar correlations within a broader agricultural context in relation to the United States: Rosenberg, *No Scrubs*.

⁴³ Particularly in the case of Yasa's Hasanoğlan study, which inquired into the question of peasant mobility. See also two highly politicised accounts by a major exponent and opponent of Turkish village studies respectively: Niyazi Berkes, 'Sociology in Turkey', *American Journal of Sociology*, 42, 2 (1936), 238–46 and Hilmi Ziya Ülken, 'La sociologie rurale en Turquie', *Actes du XIV congrès international de sociologie*, 30.8.–3.9.1950, Vol. II (Rome, 1950).

⁴⁴ Kemal H. Karpat, 'Social Effects of Farm Mechanization in Turkish Villages', *Social Research*, 27, 1 (1960), 83–103 and Kemal Karpat, *The Gecekondu: Rural Migration and Urbanization* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1976).

⁴⁵ Şevket Pamuk, 'War, State Economic Policies and Resistance by Agricultural Producers in Turkey, 1939–1945', in Farhad Kazemi and John Waterbury, eds., *Peasants and Politics in the Modern Middle East* (Miami: Florida International University Press, 1991), 125–42.

⁴⁶ Daniel Lerner, *The Passing of Traditional Society: Modernizing the Middle East* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1958); Frederick Frey, 'Surveying Peasant Attitudes in Turkey', *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 27, 3 (1963), 335–55; Paul Sterling, 'The Social Structure of Turkish Peasant Communities', PhD thesis, Oxford University, 1951. Begüm Adalet,

exceeded their income by 20 to 40 per cent, with villagers having to sell some of their assets (usually livestock) to make up for their losses. As a result, he was struck by the low standard of living in villages where farms were often operating at such significant losses.

The attempt to expose the Turkish village as an object of scientific study and test alternative methodologies that went beyond often simplistic statistical methods continued to unite a wide range of political actors. In this quest, German scholarship had a strong impact from the very beginning;⁴⁷ however, its most direct results only became visible in the aftermath of the Second World War, an event which led Turkey to reconsider its agricultural policies.

A Network for Defining Rural Modernisation

Exiled German agricultural scientists continued their work in Turkey during and after the Second World War.⁴⁸ While all of these scholars eventually faced restrictions in their working conditions and freedom of movement, especially after Turkey joined forces with the Allies in February 1945, they remained on relatively good terms with Turkish officials.⁴⁹ Wilbrandt's former mentor, Fritz Baade, did not leave the country immediately after the war, doing so only in 1946 after being offered a role overseeing the Marshall Plan in Washington, where he made wide use of his Turkish networks and continued to focus on Turkish issues in his research.⁵⁰

Baade was perhaps the most prominent of the German agricultural scientists in exile in Turkey, and his activities in the early post-war period were intimately related to a new form of development policy based on Keynesian models of consumer-oriented economics, according to which generating agricultural income for the Mediterranean farmers would have a direct effect on West German market share in the region. West Germany was, in Baade's opinion, ill-equipped for such a strategy as a result of its considerable lack of experience in colonial governance.⁵¹ Baade's perspective, which placed not only agricultural production but also consumption by rural communities at the centre of its focus, was crucial in his appointment as director of the Kiel Institute for World Economics in 1948, where Wilbrandt joined him in 1952.⁵²

Baade never fully intended to close the Turkish chapter of his career after the war. For him, Turkey continued to serve as a testing ground to gain new insights and test hypotheses on which he had previously worked at the Forschungsstelle Wirtschaftspolitik in Berlin. In his position as one of West Germany's leading economists, Baade did not forgo any opportunity to argue that West Germany should provide technical assistance to countries that were still largely dependent on agriculture. Baade claimed that a new, more mechanised form of agriculture also required expert knowledge for overseeing the implementation of new techniques.

'Questions of Modernization: Coding Speech, Regulating Attitude in Survey Research', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 57, 4 (2015), 912–41.

⁴⁷ If only for the fact that many of the later doyens of Turkish village sociology were disciples of one of Wilbrandt's fellow German exiled scholars, Gerhard Kessler, who worked as a professor of political science at Istanbul University. The most detailed information available on his activities in Turkey is to be found in his personal papers as well as in 'Die sozialpolitischen Probleme der Türkei' (Issues of Turkey's welfare policy), undated manuscript [between 1936 and 1940], Bestand NI Kessler, G., Nr. 211, Geheimes Staatsarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz, Hauptabteilung XX.A.

⁴⁸ Pamuk, *War, State Economic Policies and Resistance*; and Şevket Pamuk, 'İkinci Dünya Savaşı Yıllarında iâşe politikası ve köylülük', in Metin Celâl, ed., *75 yılda Köylerden Şehirlere* (Istanbul: Tarih Vakfı Yurt Yayınları, 1998), 57–66.

⁴⁹ Letters to his friends; N 1234 Fritz Baade Papers, Folder 67, German Federal Archives (BArch).

⁵⁰ Baade wrote an article on 'Progress and Poverty in Turkish Agriculture' in 1947; N 1234 Fritz Baade Papers, Folder 67, BArch.

⁵¹ Fritz Baade's opening lecture at the 1955 Frankfurt trade fair, 'Deutschlands Interesse an der ausländischen Landwirtschaft' (Germany's interest in foreign agriculture), and his letter to the German foreign minister, Heinrich von Brentano, 15 Mar. 1956, B52–400, Nr. 12, Politisches Archiv des Auswärtigen Amtes (PA AA). Note on an internal discussion and memoranda, 8 Apr. 1953; *ibid.*

⁵² Gunnar Take, "'One of the Bright Spots in German Economics": Die Förderung des Kieler Instituts für Weltwirtschaft durch die Rockefeller Foundation, 1925–1950', *Jahrbuch für Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 59, 1 (2018), 251–328; Ruck, 'Baade'.

This also influenced the international visions for Turkish agriculture: in the late 1950s and 1960s, hopes shifted away from cereals production – which had the difficult task of competing with the cheaply priced US market – onto milk and meat production as the most promising agricultural path for Turkey. In a report on Turkish agriculture and its prospects, the West German Embassy in Ankara reached the conclusion that animal husbandry could offer an opportunity for Turkish agriculture to find a niche for itself within the European economy. Dr Schwarck from the embassy saw ‘in the development of a well-performing livestock breeding programme the main chance for Turkish agriculture’.⁵³ It is noteworthy that Baade and his colleagues quickly gained considerable influence within the West German Foreign Office – which was at the time still responsible for all issues pertaining to international development – in relation to the issuing of guidelines covering early post-war technical assistance abroad and the drawing up of a new West German international development policy.⁵⁴ This policy, they argued, should not only be based on the latest economic principles by addressing development primarily as a question of agricultural policy, but it should also ensure the professionalisation of development expertise.⁵⁵ Technical assistance, Baade contended, was a new and open field on which West Germany could place fresh emphasis without necessarily engaging in large-scale financial transfer or support schemes. Over the following years, the core successes of Baade and his networks were the foundation of a new West German Ministry of Economic Cooperation, the establishment of an Institute for the Economic Affairs of Developing Countries (both in 1961), and the creation of a number of ‘Chairs for Foreign Agriculture’ at West German universities (TU Berlin in 1955, Göttingen in 1961, etc.), which were envisaged as continuing in the respective traditions of colonial studies and vocational training centres. Given his rich professional experience in Turkey and the United States as well as his achievements in agro-economic and agricultural research, he was particularly interested in and capable of linking domestic agricultural dynamics to the global economic context.

Following up on these ideas, the Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation hired regional agricultural advisors at the West German embassies in Ankara and New Delhi in 1956. Friedrich Christiansen-Weniger was asked to come to Ankara in this capacity in order to develop a regional strategy for the Middle East. Although Christiansen-Weniger accepted this post and thus returned to Turkey,⁵⁶ his terms and baseline assumptions facing West German agricultural scientists in the country had changed considerably in the intervening years.

Moreover, the Turkish side of this network had a distinctively generational character. In the aftermath of the Second World War, the majority of Turkish agriculturalists had begun looking towards the United States, with strong support for Turkish agriculture through the Marshall Plan and attractive exchange opportunities with US universities. Nevertheless, groups of scholars for whom German connections were more important endured. An official from the West German Embassy explained that this tension among Turkish scholars resulted from the argument that Turkey’s ‘collaboration with America during the war and in its aftermath had obviously deceived the Turkish side’. With Turkey’s agricultural problems unsolved, ‘West Germany, whose agrarian structure is much closer to that of Turkey than to that of America, represents a model of progress for Turkey. In grateful recollection of our past efforts in Turkey, Turkish scholars are aiming to intensify this relationship.’⁵⁷ West German officials nostalgically recalled the founding of the YZO, which they referred to as

⁵³ Dr Schwarck’s report on Turkish agriculture in 1964, 1 July 1965, 9 B 65, UGL.

⁵⁴ Slobodian, *Foreign Front*; Hubertus Büschel, *Hilfe zur Selbsthilfe – Deutsche Entwicklungsarbeit in Afrika 1960–1975* (Frankfurt: Campus, 2014). Heide-Irene Schmidt, ‘Pushed to the Front: German Foreign Assistance Policy, 1958–1971’, *Contemporary European History* 12, 4 (2003), 473–507.

⁵⁵ ‘Deutschlands Interesse an der ausländischen Landwirtschaft’ (Germany’s interest in foreign agriculture) and his letter to the German foreign minister, Heinrich von Brentano, 15 Mar. 1956, B52–400, Nr. 12.

⁵⁶ Christiansen-Weniger, *Jahrgang 1897*, 189–91.

⁵⁷ Letter from Neumann to the Foreign Office, 30 Jan. 1964; B 213, No. 6693, PA AA; also see Circular Memorandum from the West German Embassy in Ankara to the West German Foreign Office in Bonn, 2 Sept. 1971; B 213, No. 6706, BArch.

'our faculty', and welcomed the renewed initiatives for their country to take the place of the United States in the West's collaboration with Turkey.⁵⁸

Two of the most prominent Turkish agriculturalists involved in the collaboration with West Germany were Vamık Tayşi and Celal Tarıman. Tayşi had previously worked for and alongside Christiansen-Weniger, with whom he had since remained in contact.⁵⁹ Tarıman had completed part of his studies in Berlin, at a time when Baade and Wilbrandt were yet to leave for Turkey. Both supported the idea of giving their West German partners the leading role in agricultural collaborations,⁶⁰ which not only seemed advantageous for Turkish agriculture but also beneficial for their own careers, especially in a politically tumultuous period in Turkey that included a financial crisis in the late 1950s, the 1960 coup d'état and the transition to a planned economy in 1962. Furthermore, their scientific activities challenged the US emphasis on large-scale mechanisation and the formation of a new agribusiness sector, which had been pursued by the government of Adnan Menderes during the 1950s in close adherence to the tenets of the Marshall Plan. This scientific opposition gained Tayşi an invitation to the University of Gießen in 1960 to take up a six-year guest professorship, which became the basis for a partnership between Gießen and İzmir's Ege University in the field of agricultural science.⁶¹ Two years later, Tarıman and Wilbrandt followed this example and initiated a very similar partnership between the universities of Göttingen and Ankara.

Building a Country on the Model of a Village? The Foundation of Tahirova

If seen only from a West German perspective, the above-mentioned German agricultural experts represented no more – but also no less – than a new political class of scientific agents who were becoming more and more involved in the construction of the West German international development policy. Turkey revealed itself to be a particularly enticing field of interest for these new development experts.

Shortly after his inauguration in 1953, President Dwight Eisenhower and his US administration in Washington started to refocus the policies of his predecessor, Harry Truman, reconsidering in particular large-scale subsidies to foreign governments if these were not connected to a direct strategic interest. Plans to reduce aid to the erstwhile cornerstones of the Truman Doctrine, Turkey and Greece, also meant cutting back programmes that were designed to improve agricultural structures in both countries.⁶² By the end of the 1950s, the Eisenhower government was especially keen to encourage the West German government and its institutions to take over responsibility for some of the development projects in which the United States was engaged.⁶³ This ultimately led to West Germany taking on a greater share of Turkish debt and playing an important role in the newly established Turkey Consortium led by the Organisation for European Economic Co-operation (OEEC) and the

⁵⁸ Telegram from Ankara, 8 June 1966; 213, No. 6695, BArch; Schmidt, *Pushed to the Front*.

⁵⁹ Christiansen-Weniger, *Jahrgang 1897*, 114.

⁶⁰ Letter from Ehmann to the Foreign Office, 10 Oct. 1964; B 213, No. 6693, BArch.

⁶¹ Hakkı Bilgehan et al., eds., *Kuruluşundan günümüze Ege Üniversitesi (1955–2005). Birinci Cilt* (İzmir: Ege Üniversitesi Basımevi, 2005), 328.

⁶² George S. Harris, 'Turkish–American Relations since the Truman Doctrine', in Mustafa Aydın and Çağrı Erhan, eds., *Turkish–American Relations: Past, Present and Future* (London: Routledge, 2003), 66–88; Erden Eren Erdem, 'Türkiye–ABD İlişkilerinin Zirve Noktası: Celâl Bayar', in ABD Ziyareti, *Türkiye'nin 1950'li yılları*, ed. Mete Kaan Kaynar (İstanbul: İletişim, 2015), 135–50; Nicholas Danforth, 'Malleable Modernity: Rethinking the Role of Ideology in American Policy, Aid Programs, and Propaganda in Fifties' Turkey', *Diplomatic History*, 39, 3 (2015), 477–503.

⁶³ West Germany's Foreign Office issued the Migeod Report in 1965, which provided details about West German aid to Turkey and agricultural conditions in the country, in preparation for a visit by the Bavarian minister of agriculture from 24 Nov. to 7 Dec. 1964; B 58 III B 2, Nr. 523, PA AA.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in the late 1950s and early 1960s.⁶⁴

West Germany thus accepted responsibility for some prestige projects that had been funded by the United States or had received substantial US support. This was the case for the Erzurum-based Atatürk University,⁶⁵ which was modelled on the so-called land grant colleges from the nineteenth century that US agriculturalists had actively promoted in their attempts to foster agricultural development.⁶⁶ Atatürk University, which was at the time the only university in Eastern Anatolia, was meant to play a key role in promoting scientific methods to Anatolian farmers.

West German diplomats, however, were unenthusiastic about this project, which they viewed begrudgingly as little more than an obligation to follow in the footsteps of the United States. Their understanding of knowledge dissemination was different to that of their US counterparts, with the German tradition of training aspiring farmers through model farming and demonstration having been particularly strong from the nineteenth century onwards, especially in the context of internal colonisation projects.⁶⁷ Promoting cooperative structures was an important element of a Prussian tradition of rural development. West German officials were also keen to emphasise their country's long tradition of support for Turkish rural and agricultural development,⁶⁸ favouring projects that they believed would be more visible and have greater potential to connect scientific discourses with their practical applications. Following respective state visits by the Turkish prime minister, Adnan Menderes, to West Germany in 1953 and by the West German chancellor, Konrad Adenauer, to Turkey in the following year – the latter of which included a visit to the renowned Hasanöğlan village institute – the Turkish and West German authorities agreed on a project to construct a large-scale model farm called Tahirova, close to the city of Gönen on the Sea of Marmara.

This presented an opportunity for German experts to reacquaint themselves with their former contacts in Turkey, with students and staff from the Gießen–Izmir and Göttingen–Ankara academic partnerships taking part from an early stage in activities at Tahirova.⁶⁹ But this also represented a chance to revive a West German semi-colonial view of Turkish agriculture,⁷⁰ a perspective which Christiansen-Weniger summarised a few years later:

In times when colonialism seems to be out of fashion . . . the Federal Republic of Germany has successfully brought to life a farming enterprise in a foreign country that is a cooperative enterprise for the greater good of both nations based on the Turkish-German friendship.⁷¹

⁶⁴ Walter F. Stettner, 'The OECD Consortium for Turkey', *OECD Observer*, 15 (1963), 3–7; John White, *Pledged to Development: A Study of International Consortia and the Strategy of Aid* (London: ODI, 1967); Amit Das Gupta, 'Development by Consortia: International Donors and the Development of India, Pakistan, Indonesia and Turkey in the 1960s', *Comparativ*, 19, 4 (2009), 96–111.

⁶⁵ Report by J.K. Hinrichsen and E. Böckenhoff, 1 July 1970; B 213 Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung, Bd. 6685 1970–1972, BArch. Richard Garlitz, 'Land-Grant Education in Turkey: Atatürk University and American Technical Assistance, 1954–1968', in Cangül Örnek and Çağdaş Üngör, eds., *Turkey in the Cold War: Ideology and Culture* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 177–97.

⁶⁶ Fitzgerald, 'Exporting American Agriculture', 475–7.

⁶⁷ Elizabeth B. Jones, 'The Rural "Social Ladder": Internal Colonization, Germanization and Civilizing Missions in the German Empire', *Geschichte und Gesellschaft*, 40, 4 (2014), 457–92; Georges Grantham, 'The Shifting Locus of Agricultural Innovation in Nineteenth-Century Europe: The Case of Agricultural Experiment Stations', in *Technique, Spirit, and Form in the Making of the Modern Economies: Essays in Honor of William N. Parker* (New York: JAI Press, 1984), 191–214.

⁶⁸ Letter from Ballerstedt of the Foreign Office to department 1A1, 22 Sept. 1971, B 213, No. 6695, BArch; also letter from the West German Embassy in Ankara, listing projects potentially requiring West German technical assistance, 20 Dec. 1958; B 26–206, No. 57, PA AA.

⁶⁹ 'Note on the collaboration...', 25 Nov. 1967; 9 B 32, GAL.

⁷⁰ Heinrich Hartmann, 'Europäische Ernährungsräume. Türkische Landwirtschaft und neue Expertenkulturen in der Nachkriegsordnung Europas, Themenheft: Verhandlung des Westens. Wissenseliten und Binnendifferenzen in Westeuropa nach 1945', *Comparativ*, 3 (2015), 57–74.

⁷¹ Report on the Tahirova development project by the Turkish Embassy in Bonn to the West German Foreign Office, 31 Oct. 1963; B 58 III B 2, Nr. 524, PA AA.

However, such projects were also based on the new pan-European rationale of the early post-war period, which aimed to make resources available across borders and to open up markets, especially agricultural markets that would guarantee a new European food security regime. According to this strategy, Turkey would grow into a cornerstone for the provision of basic food stuffs for industrialised Northern Europe.⁷²

Tahirova's mission was defined as teaching modern farming techniques as well as bookkeeping and business management skills. Furthermore, it would investigate and ultimately promote the most appropriate structural changes that Turkish farmers could make to their businesses in order to adapt to the needs of a new European market. The Turkish government granted 1000 hectares to the new farm, 600 of which were arable but with rather humid and heavy soil, while it was also guaranteed an exemption from all taxes and import duties. Tahirova was administered by both the Turkish Ministry of Agriculture and a new German-Turkish Foundation for Model Farms, which itself was overseen by a board of scholars and politicians, among them Fritz Baade, Hans Wilbrandt and Friedrich Christiansen-Weniger, the latter of whom was still working for the West German Embassy in Ankara.

As Tahirova became operational in 1957, the dissemination of knowledge was the clear guiding principle, with a programme addressing not only the residents of the twenty-three villages in the model farm's direct vicinity but also a seminar programme aimed both at local farmers and at a professional audience with an academic or administrative background.⁷³ However, the question of which knowledge should be disseminated was less clearly defined and was subject to continuous negotiation and change in response to shifting economic conditions.

The food scarcities in Europe and elsewhere in the immediate post-war period had fuelled visions of Turkey as the continent's new breadbasket, building on the success of new wheat varieties in arid zones, as evidenced during the Mexican green revolution.⁷⁴ Baade promoted the type of training in new crops, techniques, and mechanisation for which he had already argued in his post-war classic, *Bread for All of Europe (Brot für ganz Europa)*.⁷⁵ At Tahirova, however, the soil was too heavy and too wet for wheat, resulting in bad harvests. In the 1960s, local farmers converted to rice growing – an understandable decision in the eyes of West German experts but an area in which they had no expertise whatsoever and learned more from the locals than vice versa.⁷⁶ Furthermore, these experts were at best ambivalent about the push for enhanced mechanisation and large-scale cereals cultivation. With a steadily growing population in the 1950s and an alarming annual population growth rate of 3 per cent by 1960,⁷⁷ labour scarcity was not the concern. On the contrary, making agriculture more labour intensive would only lead to additional migratory effects due to increasingly unemployed or underemployed peasant populations.⁷⁸ A second strategy aimed at promoting fruit cultivation,

⁷² Fritz Georg v. Graevenitz, 'From Kaleidoscope to Architecture: Interdependence and Integration in Wheat Policies, 1927–1957', in Kiran Klaus Patel, ed., *Fertile Ground for Europe? The History of European Integration and the Common Agricultural Policy since 1945* (Baden-Baden: Nomos, 2009), 27–46; Guido Thiemeyer, 'The Failure of the Green Pool and the Success of CAP: Long-Term Structures in European Agricultural Integration in the 1950s and 1960s', in Patel, ed., *Fertile Ground for Europe?*, 47–61.

⁷³ Tahirova, three vol. report, 27 Feb. 1965, Hans Wilbrandt papers; 9 B 55, UGL. 'Bemerkungen zu den über den Betrieb hinausreichenden Zukunftsaufgaben Tahirovas', 14 Oct. 1972, 9 B 04, UGL; 'Tahirova im Spiegel einiger Zahlen. Zusammengestellt für Aufsichtsrats- und Vorstandssitzung', Oct. 1972; 9 B 04, UGL.

⁷⁴ Deborah Fitzgerald, 'Exporting American Agriculture: The Rockefeller Foundation in Mexico, 1943–53', *Social Studies of Science*, 16, 3 (1986), 457–83.

⁷⁵ Fritz Baade, *Brot für ganz Europa: Grundlagen und Entwicklungsmöglichkeiten der europäischen Landwirtschaft* (Hamburg: Paul Parey 1952).

⁷⁶ Ruthenberg's note to the Ministry of Agriculture of 30 Sept. 1966, Hans Wilbrandt Papers, Library, 9 B 32, UGL.

⁷⁷ Heinrich Hartmann, 'A Twofold Discovery of Population: Assessing the Turkish Population by its "Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices", 1962–1980', in Heinrich Hartmann and Corinna Unger, eds., *A World of Populations: Transnational Perspectives on Demography in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Berghahn, 2014), 178–200.

⁷⁸ 'Wirkungsmöglichkeiten und -grenzen des Demonstrations- und Beispielgutes', 8 Nov. 1960; 9 B 55, UGL.

especially strawberries, was equally unsuccessful, as Turkish farmers could not compete over the medium term with their large-scale European competitors as a result of the high production costs.⁷⁹

Making Turkish agriculture more compatible with European markets, the guiding vision of the participating West German experts, was much harder than they had initially thought. At its founding, hopes had been high that Tahirova would contribute to an increase in the export of West German crop varieties to Turkish farmers, only for them to realise by the 1960s that their Dutch competitors had been faster.⁸⁰

Added to its financial difficulties was the rather unstable management of Tahirova. Most of the operating managers did not stay long, either because they were overqualified or too inexperienced. A series of setbacks – including floods as well as a fatal accident that claimed the life of Tahirova's Turkish manager – diminished not only the farm's profits but also its impact and reputation. The West German managers were often recruited from the former community of large estate owners in pre-war Germany's eastern territories, many of whom had fled their homelands after the war in search of a new professional career as well as financial security.⁸¹ This meant that there was a clash of social backgrounds, not only between the Turkish and German staff but also among the West German managers themselves. Most importantly, these tensions led to a series of complaints and strikes after the hiring of a new director, Gert von Buddenbrock, in 1963 and the Taylorist pressure he placed on Tahirova's farmworkers.⁸²

In addition to his authoritarian style, von Buddenbrock was accused, along with his fellow board members, of unnecessarily increasing the number of West German academic experts employed by the project⁸³ and of being insensitive to its Turkish context. An internal report from the West German Embassy was clear on the gulf between the managerial style adopted by von Buddenbrock, who was originally from the village of Ołowo to the south of Gdansk in Poland, and the skills necessary for managing an economic cooperation project:

Let me add that, considering his background, M. v. Buddenbrock might be well equipped with the necessary experience to run a large estate in Germany and especially in West Prussia. However, these experiences do not necessarily apply to subtropical areas like Tahirova, and I think it is already questionable if he might be able to transfer his knowledge to the new circumstances.⁸⁴

Sheep as a Means of Disarming the Anatolian 'Population Bomb'

As a consequence of this series of disappointments, the board desperately searched for a solution, ultimately choosing to focus on an area of Tahirova's activities that had initially been rather negligible: animal husbandry, including cattle and sheep breeding. The number of sheep in Turkey was growing steadily, reaching 32,654,000 head in 1964. Merino sheep, in particular, had become a considerable commercial success after being introduced by German experts under the auspices of the YZO in Ankara in the 1930s in an early effort to improve the productivity of the country's sheep population. However, the export of West German breeds to Turkey did not come close to meeting West German expectations, since Dr Schwarck suspected that agricultural businesses in Switzerland, Austria, the United Kingdom and the Netherlands were exporting

⁷⁹ The so-called 'Fruit study' of 1960/61, UGL 9/7.

⁸⁰ Board meeting, 11–13 Dec. 1961, 9 B 114, UGL.

⁸¹ Baade had proposed sending dispossessed owners of large agricultural estates in Germany's former eastern territories to Turkey, since he believed that they were particularly well suited to running large-scale farming businesses, Letter to Russell H. Dorr, Chief of ECA mission to Turkey, 1 Dec. 1950, Record Group 469, ECA, Box 4, Folder Agriculture 1951, NARA Washington.

⁸² Report to the West German Embassy in Ankara, 14 Feb. 1964, Hans Wilbrandt Papers, Library, 9 B 68, UGL.

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

undeclared breeding sheep to Turkey. West German producers, meanwhile, only exported twenty-seven breeding sheep to Turkey in 1964. Furthermore, Merino sheep, high performers in the production of milk and meat, were sensitive to the endemic anthrax bacterium, which was widespread in the Middle East and Mediterranean regions and represented a major potential threat to European farms if it contaminated agricultural exports to Europe, as had occurred in nineteenth-century England.⁸⁵

The incentive for Tahirova's German managers to start their own breeding project was thus two-fold: on the one hand, the 'Merino plan' did not work out as devised, since a breed with greater disease resistance was seemingly necessary to confront the environmental challenges of the Anatolian plateau; on the other hand, West German officials saw the only prospect for gaining a bigger stake in the burgeoning Turkish livestock economy as lying in the development of a new sheep crossbreed in Turkey itself.

However, another far more structural reason for developing this new breed became more and more important: one which centred on the Tahirova sheep's climatic resistance, its ability to produce wool, milk and meat, and its suitability for intensive breeding. From the very beginning, as an expert on agricultural development in Turkey, Wilbrandt warned against placing too strong an emphasis on mechanisation, which had been the key focus of the Marshall Plan development projects. In his view, it would be disastrous to substitute Turkey's cheap and abundant workforce with machines, since capital was scarce.⁸⁶ Wilbrandt and Baade both dedicated themselves to the fight against a worldwide problem that had gained prominence in Cold War developmentalist discourse and was resonating due to escalating environmental risks: overpopulation and the related global contestation over resources.⁸⁷ As Wilbrandt described, 'as in almost all Mediterranean countries, villages in Turkey are overpopulated with an estimated third of the manpower of the local population unused'.⁸⁸ Countering the low productivity of Turkish agriculture also meant combating the rural 'population bomb' and resulting migration flows. As Alison Bashford has shown, this interpretation, widespread among agronomists in the mid-twentieth century, lent a political note to technocratic discourses on agricultural production, preceding the big wave of 'population bomb' anxiety in the late 1960s and 1970s.⁸⁹ Participation by West German international development agencies in such neo-Malthusian discourses on rural populations in other parts of the world had long been unthinkable, considering how such language evoked the eugenicist policies of the Nazi regime. Informal networks, such as those described in this article, played an active role in bringing these issues back onto the agenda of West German politics.⁹⁰ This involved debate not only on Turkish rural-urban migration but also on Turkish migration to West Germany, where Turkish migrants were increasingly perceived as a problem due to West Germany's declining economy in the 1970s after the 'Wirtschaftswunder' years of the early 1960s. Trying to keep Turkish peasants on their

⁸⁵ James F. Stark, 'Bacteriology in the Service of Sanitation: The Factory Environment and the Regulation of Industrial Anthrax in Late-Victorian Britain', *Social History of Medicine*, 25, 2 (2012), 343–61; Rosemary Wall, *Bacteria in Britain, 1880–1939* (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2013), 95–123; Susan D. Jones, *Death in a Small Package: A Short History of Anthrax* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 2010), 81–127.

⁸⁶ Report by Hans Wilbrandt, 8 Nov. 1960, Hans Wilbrandt papers; 9 B 55, UGL.

⁸⁷ Additional note by Hans Wilbrandt to the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Göttingen, 29 Mar. 1965; B 213, No. 6693, PA AA; letter from Kerckhoff to Sieverts, president of the West German Conference of University Rectors, 28 Feb. 1966, *Ibid.*; 'Hunger und Entwicklungshilfe', 1 May 1969, on the *Süddeutsche Rundfunk* (broadcast network for Southern Germany), Hans Wilbrandt Papers, 9 B 115, UGL; Fritz Baade and Renata Kartsaklis, *Probleme der Familienplanung in Entwicklungsländern. Unter besonderer Berücksichtigung der Länder Indien, Pakistan und der Türkei* (Hannover: Verlag für Literatur und Zeitgeschehen, 1970).

⁸⁸ 'Die Aufgabe der türkisch-deutschen Stiftung Tahirova', 17 Feb. 1961; 9 B 134, UGL.

⁸⁹ Alison Bashford, *Global Population: History, Geopolitics, and Life on Earth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2014).

⁹⁰ Heinrich Hartmann, "'In einem gewissen Sinne politisch belastet". Bevölkerungswissenschaft und Bevölkerungspolitik zwischen Entwicklungshilfe und bundesrepublikanischer Sozialpolitik (1960er und 1970er Jahre)', *Historische Zeitschrift*, 303, 1 (2016), 98–125.

own land now became a priority for the West German government, not only for its international development agenda but also for its domestic audience.

The Tahirova sheep was meant to be part of the solution in this effort. With characteristics that were not typical in the traditional pastoral economy, it was fit for large-scale husbandry without being threatened by Anatolia's prevailing climatic and environmental risks. Farming the Tahirova sheep thus seemed to offer an opportunity to stabilise a growing rural population that was more and more on the move. According to the Ministry of Agriculture in Bonn, substituting human labour with machines would not be desirable per se; in relation to Turkey specifically, any such move towards mechanisation was 'to be decided on the basis of an economically rational decision and of the psychological momentum'.⁹¹

The development of such a '*deus ex machina*' breed of sheep, however, was itself revealing of some of the misrepresentations that have often turned the dissemination of knowledge into what James Scott has termed a '*métis*' experience, in which local renegotiations are revealed to be more important than what experts had planned on paper.⁹² The size of the sheep population needed over the course of more than a decade to breed a new species was so large that it was necessary to host some of the animals at nearby farms under the care of local shepherds. The involvement of locals, however, represented a constant threat to the development of a local breed by turning the breeding process into a question of discipline and adherence to expert authority. As Wilbrandt pointed out during one of his site visits in the middle of the process in 1966:

if animals of different breeds and ages are raised together for financial reasons, it shall nonetheless be mandatory that they rest separately and are fed separately. This is easy to achieve and depends only on the shepherds' discipline. It seems, however, that [the shepherds] have become a little rude to their head shepherd and do only what they think is appropriate.⁹³

Local farmers who did not follow the advice of German experts were among the major challenges to the 'success' of the Tahirova model farm. As the new breed needed special care in feeding and milking, providing the local population with regular advice seemed to be crucial.⁹⁴ The German experts, once again, tried to encourage the farmers who participated in the experiment to form cooperatives in order to purchase the required machinery at lower prices and run it more profitably, advice which the farmers near Tahirova did not follow.⁹⁵ As the breeding population grew steadily, the management had to place ninety-six first-generation and fifty-one second-generation sheep in the care of local farmers. Resultant unplanned crossbreeding represented a constant threat to the enterprise.⁹⁶ However, the Tahirova managers also increased the genetic impurity of their sheep, as they soon began to sell first- and second-generation animals in the local area.

Starting in 1964, scientists at Tahirova took twelve years to develop the Tahirova sheep's gene pool and conclude its breeding programme. It was only Tahirova's last West German executive manager, Karl Thies, an agricultural scientist who was himself from Frisia, together with Reşit Sönmez, a professor of agriculture at Izmir's Ege University, who were able to finalise a breed and thus achieve temporary commercial success,⁹⁷ before a range of new varieties were subsequently created from the Tahirova gene pool.

⁹¹ Note on a chat on Tahirova of 6 Mar. 1964 in the Federal Ministry of Agriculture in Bonn, Ankara, 18 Mar. 1964; 9 B 68, UGL.

⁹² James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1998).

⁹³ Note on a site visit from 18 to 25 July 1966, 13 Nov. 1966; 9 B 32, UGL.

⁹⁴ Annual Report 1976, 9 B 04, UGL.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Annual Report 1972, 9 B 04, UGL.

⁹⁷ Annual Report 1976, 9 B 04, UGL.

Tahirova's West German academic advisors were aware of the difficulties of disseminating agricultural knowledge from the model farm outwards into the villages of Anatolia.⁹⁸ Wilbrandt had suggested very early on that Tahirova's managers should seek to co-opt local experts.⁹⁹ Triggered by the project's rather ambiguous results, Wilbrandt himself began to view the objective of disseminating agricultural knowledge through the teaching of skills in a more critical light. He asked Hartmut Albrecht, a German specialist in theoretical extension studies, to write an assessment of the potential of agricultural extension through model farming in general. Albrecht reached the unfavourable conclusion that 'the impact of model farming as a development tool is largely overestimated'.¹⁰⁰

Criticism of Tahirova did not cease, and Wilbrandt never succeeded in transforming Tahirova into a more accessible institution where 'progressive farmers could play a role as contact persons and key figures in knowledge dissemination at village level'.¹⁰¹ He continued to complain about how 'experts' and demonstrators had never been chosen for their practical experience or for their ability to work with local villagers. As such, a project which was intended to spread this scientific knowledge to neighbouring villages did not produce tangible results.¹⁰² Instead, Hans Wilbrandt concluded at the end of his tenure as director of Tahirova's scientific advisory board in 1976 that: 'Successful counselling between the expert and the villager presupposes that there is communication in both directions. We did not succeed, however, in cultivating such "mutual counselling"'.¹⁰³

Conclusion: Sheep and the Reshaping of Paradigms

When Tahirova was handed over to the Turkish authorities in 1976, the contribution of sheep farming to Turkish agriculture was 10 per cent of the total value of the sector and rising, while its overall contribution to Turkish national income was approximately 2.5 per cent.¹⁰⁴ Combining the genes of the Frisian sheep with those of the Kıvırcık had indeed led to a resistant species with a considerably higher yield of milk, wool and meat that was much better suited to the needs of intensive and, above all, sedentary farming. In their shifting assessments of the commercial outlook for Turkish agriculture in the European market, animal husbandry ultimately seemed to be the correct bet. This supposed success story, however, was more ambiguous. Creating the new Tahirova breed of sheep was thought to be key to giving Turkish peasants a new, reliable basis for their farming, but in reality this aim was revealed to be partly an illusion as a breed could not be fixed over time. In their attempt to develop a new breed that was adapted to the climatic conditions of Anatolia, the desire to design precisely the 'right stock for a soil' was reminiscent of the hidden colonial ambitions of supposedly apolitical scientists during Nazi rule.¹⁰⁵ However, increasing circulation and mobility of the animals – which only started with the placement of breeding sheep in neighbouring villages – challenged the notion of a natural Anatolian breeding design. In the years following the departure of the West German staff from Tahirova, Turkish scientists carried on the work that they had started with their West German counterparts, but they also altered the gene pool of the breed. On the island of Gökceada, Tahirova sheep were used to improve a local breed. At Türkgeldi, new productivity benchmarks were met through rebreeding Tahirova with Kıvırcık sheep.¹⁰⁶

⁹⁸ Note on Tahirova to Dr Sachs, Dr Schwarck, Dr v. Buddenbrock, 11 Mar. 1963, Hans Wilbrandt Papers, Library, 9 B 68, UGL.

⁹⁹ Statement concerning the Inquiries of the Ministry of Agriculture, Bonn, on the model farm of Tahirova, 26 June 1962; 9 B 114, UGL.

¹⁰⁰ Hartmut Albrecht, 'Die Bedeutung von Demonstrationsbetrieben als einer Form der landwirtschaftlichen Entwicklungshilfe. Wirkungsbedingungen und Problembereiche des Demonstrierens', *Zeitschrift für ausländische Landwirtschaft*, 3, 2 (1964), 97–120, 118.

¹⁰¹ 'Landwirtschaftliche Beratung in der Türkei' (Agricultural Counseling in Turkey), 9 Jan. 1976; 9 B 04, UGL.

¹⁰² Annual Report 1976, 9 B 04, UGL.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Saraiva, *Fascist Pigs*, 185–6.

¹⁰⁶ Annual Report 1972, 9 B 04, UGL.

Narratives of high modernist international dependencies, of technocrats compromising political processes, or of epistemic misunderstandings between ‘targeted’ communities and the ‘disseminators’ do not completely grasp the ‘Tahirova moment’.¹⁰⁷ The disillusion caused by the Tahirova project was widespread in the West German media, while in 1967 the newly appointed minister of international development, Hans Jürgen Wischnewski, openly questioned the sense behind the project and actively sought to ‘put an end to the experiment’.¹⁰⁸ In a period in which the West German government made increasingly active use of its involvement in Western international development politics as an instrument of foreign policy and remodelled its actions on the example set by the United States, small-scale and knowledge-based projects lost their appeal. West German actions were different from the manner in which the United Kingdom pursued a ‘disinterested’, informal empire in a globalised, post-colonial world.¹⁰⁹ Neither could West German involvement in Turkish development be reduced to being a proxy for new US interests.¹¹⁰ Instead, it is important to note that West German economic interests in Turkey followed in a strong tradition,¹¹¹ even though they were never articulated within the realm of an official programme. It is informal expert networks that reveal much of the impact that hidden colonialism in the Mediterranean had on conceptions of West German international development policy in the post-war era.

The German–Turkish networks thus had a complex road to success: whereas the results for Turkish agriculture remained fairly intangible – if there were any consequences at all – a new institutional momentum was stimulated in West German international development policy. Several West German universities opened departments of ‘foreign agriculture’, many with a particular emphasis on the Mediterranean region. The German experts who were active in Turkey succeeded in making agricultural development a cornerstone of West Germany’s development priorities for third world countries. From this perspective, renegotiating development policies through initiatives like Tahirova made the circular character of ‘modernisation’ as a traveling concept in the post-war period even more visible.

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¹⁰⁷ As in Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995); James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: ‘Development’, Depoliticization and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1990); Scott, *Seeing like a State*.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Die Ernüchterung ist da’, Interview with Hans Jürgen Wischnewski, *Der Spiegel*, 46, 6 Nov. 1967.

¹⁰⁹ Susan Pedersen, ‘Getting Out of Iraq – in 1932: The League of Nations and the Road to Normative Statehood’, *The American Historical Review*, 115, 4 (2010), 975–1000.

¹¹⁰ Gordon and Webber, *Blood of Extraction*.

¹¹¹ Peter Krüger, ‘Wirtschaftliche Mitteleuropapläne in Deutschland zwischen den Weltkriegen. Anmerkungen zu ihrer Bewertung’, in Richard G. Plaschka et al., eds., *Mitteleuropa-Konzeptionen in der ersten Hälfte des 20. Jahrhunderts* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1995), 283–303; Malte Fuhrmann, ‘Anatolia as a Site of German Colonial Desire and National Awakening’, *New Perspectives on Turkey*, 41 (2009), 117–49.

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