PENNSTATE

Office: 814-863-8039
Fax: 814-865-3746
Email: yzb108@psu.edu

Yetkin Borlu
Post-Doctoral Research Associate and Lecturer
Department of Agricultural Economics, Sociology, and
Education

The Pennsylvania State University
208A Armsby Building
University Park, PA 16802-5600

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Dr. Conner Bailey, Search Committee Chair,
Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology
202 Comer Hall
Auburn University, AL 38849-5406

Dear Professor Bailey and Search Committee:

I am writing to apply to the position of Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology in the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology at Auburn University. I completed my dissertation work under the supervision of Dr. Leland Glenna and Dr. Anouk Patel-Campillo in the Rural Sociology Program at the Pennsylvania State University in May, 2014. I have experience in qualitative, quantitative, and spatial research methods. And I have broad knowledge in social theory and sociology of international development, with a specialization in rural development. I maintain that, given the opportunity, my skills in research and teaching would be a strong contribution to AERS at Auburn.

My dissertation research focuses on the socioeconomic transformation of farmers in Turkey from a state-regulated system to a system, underlain by neoliberal globalization. In this new model, farmers have to negotiate with intermediary merchants and private firms, instead of state and state-supported institutions. Over the last decade, maize production has geographically and quantitatively expanded, concurrent with the expansion of operations in transnational agri-food corporations that use maize as the main input. Accordingly, the lens I use to document the transition is the commodity chain analysis of industrial maize in Turkey and the related social processes, extending from production to consumption. I examine how farmers decide to shift to maize production, how private industry and state regulation influence farmers' decisions, and how this shift manifests itself in the change of production patterns, farmer typology, and labor.

To address the questions in my dissertation, I rely on my training in multiple qualitative and quantitative research methods. First, I use secondary sources in qualitative policy analysis. Second, I apply spatial statistics to analyze the geographical distribution and concentration of maize production in Turkey in the first decade of the 21st century. Third, longitudinal statistical models enable me to assess the change of maize production over a decade, and factors influencing this change. And finally, I conduct a case study analysis of the fieldwork done between September and November 2012. The qualitative analysis of in-depth interviews -besides supporting previous findings- provides crucial information about the social processes between production and consumption. This field research was funded by departmental travel support and awards from two sources: the Office of International Programs in the Faculty of Agriculture at Penn State ($1,000) and the Rural Sociological Society Dissertation Award ($1,500).

My skills in the statistical analysis of survey and spatial data were central in an article published in *Rural Sociology*, which I co-authored. The research was part of a project to study the socioeconomic impacts of the increasing natural gas extraction activity in the Marcellus Shale region on Pennsylvanian rural communities. A paper on the industrial maize commodity chain in Turkey, based on the qualitative findings in my dissertation, is forthcoming in *Rural Sociology*. An earlier version of this paper received the Student Paper Award at the 2014 Rural Sociological Society Annual Meeting.

In June 2014, I began a post-doctoral position at Penn State. My current research involves conducting in-depth interviews with apple and grape growers in the Eastern and Western U.S. to understand farmers' labor and technology needs in a USDA-funded project, where Dr. Glenna is one of the primary investigators. During Fall 2014 and Spring 2015, I am responsible of designing mail-surveys, and of analyzing the quantitative survey data. Another project where I am working with Dr. Glenna is on food security in Northern Ghana and the role of sweet potato production as an alternative crop. In this project I am analyzing the spatially embedded survey data through multilevel statistical models.

Besides the research experience during my Ph.D. training, I had teaching experience through teaching assistantship in several on-campus and online classes, which you can see in my teaching statement. These classes varied from introductory level sociology and international agriculture to advanced writing-intensive classes in environmental sociology and social stratification in all of which I had the opportunity to teach as a guest lecturer. Therefore, the diversity in my teaching experience complements my diverse research experience. In Fall 2014, I am a co-instructor of the course "Development Issues in the Global Context" where I teach a block of six weeks, introducing students to topics and approaches in global development.

In the coming years, I plan to focus on the implications of debt dependence for small-scale producers in emerging and developing countries. I believe that the AERS Department at Auburn is an ideal home for this project and further research collaboration with its faculty of diverse methods and research interests. I also believe that my diverse teaching experience would meet the required high standards of teaching. I would be pleased to meet with you for an interview at your convenience. For further information, I am submitting my CV, research and teaching statements, and an advising transcript. I appreciate your consideration of my application and look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Yetkin Borlu