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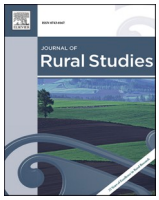

From home to farm: Household and labour brokerage practices in Turkey's commercial agriculture

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ABSTRACT

This article advances understandings of labour exploitation at the lower end of commercialized agricultural markets, focusing on the experiences of seasonal migrant farmworkers in Turkey. Bringing feminist social reproduction into dialogue with labour regime and critical agrarian scholarship, we examine how household and labour brokerage practices sustain an informalised and fragmented labour regime that straddles production and social reproduction, comprising those activities, relations and resources necessary to sustain life. The analysis draws on qualitative data collected across two major agricultural producing provinces in Turkey between 2017 and 2023. Our findings demonstrate that migrant farm work relies on a continuum of exploitation extending across the farm and the home. Central to this process is the mobilisation of farmworkers' own material resources to survive in makeshift camps, alongside the devaluation and appropriation of women's and girls' unpaid and underpaid labour. Labour brokers govern this continuum by mediating recruitment, retention, and remuneration through the performance of patriarchal family relations, the distribution of advance payments, and gatekeeping access to essential services and resources such as water, food, and healthcare. By internalizing the costs of social reproduction within farmworker households, this regime sustains otherwise untenable labour arrangements, with depleting consequences for farmworkers themselves. By foregrounding the social reproduction dynamics underpinning agrarian labour regimes, the article contributes to rural studies debates on neoliberal agricultural restructuring, migrant farm work, and the gendered organization of work, offering insights relevant to commercial farming contexts in the global South.

1. Introduction[1]

Migrant farmworkers play a crucial role in commercial agriculture, particularly in industrialized and export sectors, such as cotton and horticulture. Several studies have documented the exploitative conditions facing seasonal migrant farmworkers and the different forms that farm work arrangements take across the world. Studies have examined how state policies produce conditions of disposability (Rye and Andrzejewska, 2010; Scott, 2013; Keegan, 2024), the way disciplinary mechanisms extend beyond the labour process (Basok et al., 2014), and variations in systems of labour control (Wells, 1996). Research also highlights the material and personal costs that these regimes impose on workers, as well as their families and communities of origin (Mitchell, 1996; Binford, 2013; Withers, 2024). While this scholarship has examined various forms of labour control and exploitation, feminist researchers have increasingly emphasized how these regimes depend on gendered divisions of labour and the systematic devaluation of social reproduction (Rigo, 2023), defined as the practices necessary to sustain life under capitalism (Mezzadri et al., 2025). Recognizing the heterogeneity of migrant farm work and subcontracting arrangements within commercial agriculture, research has also examined how gangmaster labour and brokerage practices affect recruitment and exploitation (Brass, 2004; Strauss, 2013; Salvia, 2020; Perrotta and Raeymaekers, 2023).

At the same time, scholars have explored the ways migrant farmworkers contest and negotiate exploitative conditions. This includes

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[1] This article was written before the fall of al-Assad's regime on 8 December 2024, and the ceasefire declared by the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) on 1 March 2025. We acknowledge the evolving circumstances currently faced by research participants and note that the findings presented here capture a specific historical moment.

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analyses of farmworkers' agency and collective organization (Papadopoulos et al., 2018; Addison, 2023), as well as negotiations of debt and gender roles within households (Sajadian, 2024). While much of this research is rooted in the global North (but see Sajadian, 2024), seasonal migrant farm work is pervasive in the global South as well. Across diverse contexts and manifestations, migrant farm work exemplifies contemporary capitalism's reliance on flexible, invisibilized, and disposable labour in the context of increasingly globalized and industrialized agricultural production.

Turkey provides a significant case for examining these processes. As a major agricultural producer, it ranks fourth globally for vegetable and fruit production, seventh for cotton and ninth in overall agricultural output (TURKSTAT, 2024). The value of agricultural and food outputs reached 68.5 billion USD in 2024, and accounts for 16 percent of total exports, a substantial increase from 4 billion USD in 2001 and 17.7 billion in 2019 (ITC, 2025). This expansion has intensified reliance on seasonal migrant farmwork, with displaced Syrian refugees and Turkish citizens from disenfranchised ethnic groups comprising a large share of the workforce. Scholars examining Turkey's migrant farm work have documented how labour exploitation extends beyond the workplace, with poverty and livelihood pressures generating vulnerabilities that facilitate exploitation among a highly segmented labour force comprising refugees from Syria and internally displaced migrants (Kavak, 2016). Neoliberal agrarian restructuring and shifting global market demands have given rise to "rural ghettos" (Pelek, 2022), with tented settlements becoming permanent features of rural landscapes, in contrast with the regime of flexible accumulation they sustain. Research on Turkey, though not focused specifically on migrant farm work, has examined the gendered dimensions of agrarian neoliberalization. These transformations have brought about shifts in women's participation in large-scale industrial agriculture, with effects for both unpaid family labour and waged labour, amid crises of social reproduction and ongoing negotiations of gender roles and identities (Eren Benlisoy, 2023).

Against this background, this article uses social reproduction as a lens to advance understandings of labour exploitation at the lower end of commercialized agricultural markets, focusing on migrant farm work in Turkey. We move beyond the farm itself, to analyse how this labour regime is sustained by household and labour brokerage practices that straddle production and social reproduction. Particular attention is paid to the gender dimensions of these processes, as they intersect with class, race, ethnicity and citizenship status. We ask, how do household and labour brokerage practices sustain the organization of migrant farm work within Turkey's commercial agriculture? With what consequences and for whom? To address these questions, we draw on qualitative data from several years of collaborative research into agricultural labour and migration patterns in Turkey, including interviews and observations with seasonal migrant farmworkers, labour brokers and landowners, conducted across multiple sites in major agricultural producing provinces, Adana and Şanlıurfa, between 2017 and 2023.

We argue that the everyday activities and relations that sustain life, such as the work necessary to raise children, and maintain households and communities (Bakker, 2007; Bhattacharya, 2017), contribute to capital accumulation and are simultaneously undermined. Central to this process is housewifisation (Mies, 1982), enacted through patriarchal relations and material transfers of value from the home to the farm. We demonstrate that housewifisation is not only social but also material, as households mobilize their own resources and possessions to survive in makeshift camps without adequate compensation, and with women and girls disproportionately bearing the costs.

Beyond the household, these transfers of value are sustained by labour brokerage practices that operate in and through social reproduction. Brokers govern recruitment, retention, and remuneration (the "3Rs," Dedeoğlu, 2022), while exercising control through the performance of patriarchal family relations, the distribution of advances necessary for farmworkers to meet subsistence needs, and gatekeeping access to essential services and resources. We thus conceptualize brokerage as a mechanism that connects farmworkers' capacities for social reproduction to processes of agrarian capitalist accumulation. We conclude that neoliberal restructuring and the intensifying commercialization of Turkish agriculture have produced itinerant, informalised, and fragmented labour arrangements, in which the costs of social reproduction are internalized within farmworkers' households, with life-threatening consequences for farmworkers themselves, particularly women and girls. By mediating employment, debt, and access to resources necessary for social reproduction, brokerage practices play a critical role in feeding capital accumulation and sustaining an otherwise untenable labour regime.

In foregrounding farmworkers' experiences beyond the farm, this article contributes to burgeoning literature bridging labour regimes and social reproduction studies in agrarian settings (Baglioni et al., 2022; Rushemuka and Côte, 2024), particularly in the case of migrant farm work, arguably the most insecure and precarious segment of agrarian labour markets. Moving beyond documenting the "female component" of migrant farm work (Rigo, 2023, 2), we bring to light the multiple ways in which social reproduction contributes to accumulation and is constitutive of the labour process. By situating our findings within the broader neoliberalization of agriculture and farmworkers' diverse experiences of displacement, we provide novel empirical evidence for a more nuanced understanding of labour exploitation in migrant farm work, with relevance for agrarian settings in the global South.

This article is structured as follows. In the next section, we set the stage for our empirical analysis bringing feminist literature on social reproduction and labour regimes into conversation with feminist agrarian scholarship, with particular attention to the role of households and labour brokers in processes of agrarian transformation through social reproduction. Section 3 provides contextual information on migrant farm work in Turkey. In Section 4, we describe our research methods and data. Section 5 presents our findings on how housewifisation channels both social and material contributions from households into agricultural production, how these processes are experienced along gendered lines, and how labour brokerage sustains this fragmented, informalised, and precarious regime by mediating recruitment, retention, and remuneration through social reproduction. Section 6 concludes by reflecting on the centrality of social reproduction in sustaining capitalist accumulation and its implications for labour politics in the global South.

2. Social reproduction and labour regimes in agrarian settings

Feminist scholarship has significantly expanded understandings of labour processes along the "continuum between work and life" (Mezzadri et al., 2021, 10). In its early formulations, it has brought to light the crucial role of patriarchal norms in enabling capitalist value extraction and accumulation, notably through the "housewifisation" of women's labour (Mies, 1982), and the social construction of "farm wives" (Whitemore, 1991). Although social reproduction approaches have traditionally focused on industrial settings, and North-South migration in the service sector, studies adopting this lens are increasingly considering agrarian settings in the global South (Mezzadri et al., 2024). This turn coincides with renewed interest in labour regimes and social reproduction within agrarian studies (e.g., Rushemuka and Côte, 2024), and calls to pluralize social reproduction approaches among feminist political economy scholars (Mezzadri et al., 2025).

Labour regimes scholarship has sought to re-centre analyses of global capitalism around labour rather than capitalist firms, defining these regimes as "the combination of social relations and institutions that bind capital and labour in a form of antagonistic relative stability in particular times and places" (Baglioni et al., 2022, 2). This focus carries significant analytical and political implications, attuned to the multiple, often hidden ways in which value is extracted and social difference is reproduced in specific contexts.

This perspective highlights both the structural features of labour regimes and the lived experiences of all working people, recognizing the social embeddedness of labour control and exploitation beyond productivist or economistic accounts. Despite common concerns, the ways in which social reproduction shapes the architecture and experience of labouring remain underexplored in much labour regimes literature (Baglioni and Mezzadri, 2020), particularly in agrarian contexts and within migrant farm work arrangements beyond the global North (for an exception, see Sajadian, 2024). Integrating these more fully entails examining how the living conditions and social profiles of the workforce interact with industrial (agricultural) work, how labour is experienced by workers, including their daily and often unorganised struggles for social reproduction and survival, and its bodily effects (Baglioni and Mezzadri, 2020). More broadly, it requires paying attention to how social reproduction is constitutive of labour regimes, shaping labour relations, processes, and outcomes (Baglioni and Mezzadri, 2020).

Critical agrarian studies have long engaged with these issues, though not always in dialogue with these bodies of scholarship. In what follows, we highlight key areas for cross-fertilization, particularly concerning the centrality of social reproduction to understanding processes of accumulation and class formation in the context of migrant farm work. We situate households as important sites in mediating labour-capital relations and where the contradictions of capitalist accumulation are experienced and negotiated by farmworkers along gender (and generational) lines. We also examine the role of labour brokers in processes of commercialization and flexibilization of agriculture, focusing on how labour subcontracting facilitates the offloading of costs of social reproduction onto farmworkers and the depleting consequences this entails.

2.1. Households and livelihoods

The household is one of the earliest units of analysis taken up by feminist scholars engaging with agrarian contexts (Boserup, 1980; Agarwal, 1986), highlighting both their internal power relations and links to wider economic processes and political structures (Razavi, 2009). Feminist political economy, in particular, has shown that households are not just a private matter but part and parcel of regimes of accumulation (Prügl, 2020; Mies, 1982). A foundational intervention to understanding this overlap came from Mies's concept of "housewifisation," which describes the capitalist process of naturalizing and devaluing women's labour by normatively defining them as housewives, even when they are directly engaged in production for global markets.

In this vein, agrarian scholars of gender challenged women's invisibility in farming contexts by interrogating the social construction of the "farm wife" and exposing false separations between home and work (Whatmore, 1991). More recent feminist scholarship on agrarian labour regimes has further connected labour processes to gendered household relations, showing that the exploitation of women at the workplace is structurally linked to their disciplining as reproducers and carers within the home (Baglioni, 2022). Building on this trajectory, Dieng (2025) pluralized the concept of housewifisation by arguing that agricultural commercialization and land grabbing give rise to novel forms of the process. She shows how strategic alliances between patriarchy and racial capitalism shape the mobilization and control of labour through paternalistic management practices, thereby facilitating the production of export crops at costs that fall below those required for the social reproduction of the labour force.

In addition, critical agrarian studies underscore the centrality of households and care work to processes of agrarian change. Studies have examined the impacts of capitalist penetration on subsistence production, livelihoods, and associated intrahousehold relations (Bernstein, 1986; Bernstein and Byres, 2001; O'Laughlin, 2002), linking households to processes of class differentiation in the countryside (Shah and Harris-White, 2011), and to translocal practices of social reproduction (Burawoy, 1976; Kelly, 2009). They also demonstrate how "invisible economies of care," distributed across spatially and temporally divided households, are crucial to the exploitation of migrant labour (Shah and Lerche, 2020). These contributions denote a shift within agrarian studies towards questions of social reproduction and survival, amid extreme constraints on livelihoods (Bernstein, 2007; Ossome and Naidu, 2021).

A key takeaway is that the reproduction of labour power relies heavily on non-commodified forms of work, historically undertaken by women and children, reflecting broader conflicts between capital and labour over who bears the real costs of production (O'Laughlin, 2021). These conflicts take place beyond the workplace across and within communities and households, mediated through "patriarchal bargains" in which women negotiate concrete constraints with varying possibilities for resistance (Kandiyoti, 1988). Global capitalism thus intersects with local structures of patriarchal constraint and cultural norms, which, while varying across contexts, reflect a "monotonous similarity" in the assignment of primary responsibility for unpaid care work to women (Kabeer, 2016).

When households experience resource outflows that exceed inflows, their capacities for social reproduction are depleted, with harmful consequences for those primarily responsible for this work, including deteriorating health and wellbeing (Rai et al., 2014; Fernandez, 2018). The effects worsen in contexts where migrant farm work intersects with conflict-induced displacement, which narrows livelihood options and deepens dependence on credit (Sajadian, 2024). As Sajadian shows, these dynamics result in intensifying work burdens disproportionately shouldered by women and girls, dynamically negotiated across the home and the farm, over whose labour is valued and how it is distributed.

In our analysis, we treat households and intrahousehold negotiations as integral to sustaining capital accumulation under significant informalization and fragmentation of labour in Turkey's commercial agriculture. Negotiations over social reproduction, such as the allocation of care, are inseparable from the labour regime, forming part of a broader outsourcing of social reproduction that both sustains and undermines farmworkers' survival and underpins the reproduction of contemporary agrarian capitalism.

2.2. The ambivalent role of labour brokers

Since the 1980s, the shift to export-oriented agriculture and integration into global commodity chains has multiplied outsourcing and subcontracting arrangements as strategies to reduce costs and increase profits for firms. These arrangements also involve the subcontracting of labour through brokers, reflecting a broader reliance on informalised and flexible labour across industries (Barrientos, 2013; Mezzadri, 2017). Several critical agrarian studies have examined labour subcontracting and brokerage as integral to contemporary agrarian capitalism (Salvia, 2020; Perrotta and Raeymaekers, 2023; James, 2011).

Building on a longstanding tradition of anthropological and sociological studies of brokerage practices (e.g., Lindquist, 2015), brokers can be viewed as actors who "connect disparate social worlds" and who "bridge gaps between populations, usually disadvantaged, and power-holders" (Koster and van Leynseele, 2018, 803). In this sense, they occupy an in-between position, exercising their own agency amid multiple constraints and opportunities.

In the context of migrant farm work, brokers become key actors linking production and social reproduction, while enabling the offloading of costs of social reproduction of labour onto workers and their families. Brokerage allows to create social distance among groups of workers and externalize functions otherwise expected of the state and employers, such as gatekeeping access to essential services and resources, including housing, healthcare, and welfare (Lindquist et al., 2012; Perrotta and Raeymaekers, 2023). At the same time, brokers themselves occupy an ambivalent position, relied upon by workers for the fulfilment of their survival needs, and often emerging from the same farmworker population they discipline and control (Salvia, 2020). Importantly, brokers cannot fully resolve the conflicts or inequalities between farmworkers and employers; rather, they derive their power

precisely from straddling this divide (Perrotta and Raeymaekers, 2023).

While some scholars conceptualize brokers as intermediaries within relations of production and social reproduction (Perrotta and Raeymaekers, 2023), less attention has been given to the gendered dimensions of brokerage practices. Focusing on the experiences of Syrian refugee farmworkers in Lebanon, Sajadian (2024), examined the gendered distribution of debt negotiated by brokers and farmworkers within farmworker camps (called *shawish* in Lebanon). Life in the camps, she argues, is structured around feminized systems of debt, affecting divisions of labour within the household across realms of production and social reproduction. Building on this insight, we extend the analysis beyond debt to consider other aspects of migrant farm work, including access to food, water, healthcare, and shelter. In doing so, we view brokerage as a mechanism that connects farmworkers' capacities for social reproduction to processes of agrarian capitalist accumulation, while foregrounding the gendered power relations that structure how brokerage is experienced and negotiated.

3. Context

Although the exact number of seasonal migrant farmworkers in Turkey remains unknown, TURKSTAT estimated 5.4 million workers engaged in agricultural production in 2014, with 485,000 of them working for a wage on a seasonal basis (GNAT-TBMM, 2015). Other sources estimate the number of seasonal migrant farmworkers to be much higher, between 1 and 1.5 million (GNAT-TBMM, 2015; Support to Life, 2016). In what follows, we briefly discuss the processes of neoliberal transformation and forced displacement underlying this labour regime, and how we understand the social position of seasonal migrant farmworkers.

Agricultural labour in Turkey historically relied on locally hired landless farmers and unpaid family work (Keyder and Yenal, 2011). Following the Second World War and the United States-funded Marshall Plan, Turkish agriculture underwent substantial restructuring and commercialization, supported by increasing mechanization and the gradual introduction of land consolidation programs, which positioned Turkey within a global agricultural division of labour (Adalet, 2022; Pamuk, 2022; Aydin, 2010). This process accelerated over successive economic crises and market-oriented reforms from the 1980s to the early 2000s, which reduced protective frameworks for rural communities (Gülçubuk and Aluftekin, 2011) contributing to the emergence of seasonal migrant farm work as a livelihood strategy (İslamoğlu et al., 2008).

When the conflict between Turkish security forces and the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) escalated in the 1990s, it resulted in the displacement of predominantly Kurdish people from southeastern and eastern regions. Many villages were evacuated, leading to an unprecedented wave of migration to various parts of the country (Yıldırım, 2015). This forced displacement, coupled with neoliberal agrarian policies, channelled this populations into seasonal agricultural employment, forming a central labour force in commercial farming. Amid high urban unemployment, families increasingly engaged in seasonal migrant farm work in northern, southern and western regions, traveling across the country for six to eight months every year (Özbek, 2007; Keyder and Yenal, 2011; Pelek, 2019). Many studies documented the regional and racialized hierarchies underlying this labour practice, with Kurdish farmworkers earning the lowest wages and enduring harsh living and working conditions (Özbek, 2007; Çınar, 2014; Yıldırım, 2015; Duruiz, 2019).

Since 2011, Syrian refugees fleeing the war have become another critical component of this labour force, drawn into agriculture under conditions of legal and economic precariousness (Kavak, 2016). According to recent estimates, over 3.6 million Syrian people reside in Turkey (UNHCR, 2023). Under the Turkish legislation, they are not formally recognized as refugees but as "temporary subjects." Many refugees remain registered in southeastern provinces near the border with Syria, which served as their first point of entry into the country, as bureaucratic hurdles make changing registration location difficult. This legal status does not provide a clear path to citizenship nor adequate access to essential services and protection, creating a permanent state of insecurity and uncertainty for refugees (Biner and Biner, 2021; Gopal and Lupo, 2025). With changing requirements and under the constant threat of deportation, this status limits livelihood opportunities, and conditions refugees' incorporation into informal labour (Ceritoğlu et al., 2017; Wagner and Del Carpio, 2015), often at lower wage levels than Turkish citizens (Kaymaz and Kadkoy, 2016; Dedeoğlu, 2018). Women and children under eighteen years of age comprise 46 and 47 percent of the refugee population respectively (GDMM, 2023), and are particularly vulnerable to exploitation in the agricultural sector, which, as the next sections demonstrate, relies on the unpaid and underpaid contributions of women and children to function.

Contrary to migrant farm work arrangements in much of the global North, where labour is organized around temporary migration schemes and the recruitment of individual workers, in the Turkish context, migrant farm work is highly informalised and organized around households, often comprising numerous members extending beyond the nuclear family, with male and female members engaging in work in teams and living together in camps controlled by labour brokers (Development Workshop, 2018; Support to Life, 2016). Women and girls engage in a substantial share of tasks both in the field and in the home (Support to Life, 2016). Migrant farmworkers typically follow the harvest of various crops over the course of the seasons, engaging in itinerant work and, at times, staying in specific locations for prolonged periods depending on demand and other personal circumstances.

Migrant farm work is characterized by significant regulatory gaps, as Turkish Labour Law No. 4857 does not extend protection to agricultural farmworkers employed in enterprises with fewer than 50 workers and job durations shorter than 30 days, leaving many migrant farmworkers without legal protection. Although initiatives by the Turkish government attempted to address these exclusions, such as the Project on Improvement of Work and Social Life of the Seasonal Agricultural Workers (METİP from the Turkish acronym), which introduced measures to improve living, transportation, shelter, health care, education, and security conditions in designated farmworker settlements, these remain ad-hoc interventions that do not address gaps in the legislation, falling short of providing comprehensive protection to all farmworkers (Support to Life, 2016).

Further, this labour regime is organized through a system of labour contracting that reproduces exploitative conditions for farmworkers, with brokers mediating the demand and supply of labour, and organizing farmworkers' working and living conditions (Mura, 2016). Although the law mandates registration under the Turkish Employment Agency (İŞKUR), the specific requirements for labour contracting are inadequately defined and seldom enforced. Licenses can be obtained by meeting basic conditions and are valid for three years, but lax requirements, inadequate monitoring, inspection and sanctions result in most brokers operating without registration or with expired licenses (Development Workshop, 2018). This enables brokers to maintain labour control through multiple informalised arrangements around housing and wages, by managing camps of single-family makeshift homes made of tarp and/or bricks with limited access to basic services (Pelek, 2022), and by binding farmworkers into prolonged cycles of debt and advance payments (Zuntz et al., 2022). This system does not exist outside state oversight but rather operates within a framework that normalizes labour informalization through legal exclusions and inadequate enforcement.

In the Turkish public discourse, the term "seasonal agricultural worker" (*mevsimlik tarım işçileri*) is commonly used to describe people who engage in itinerant farm work across the country. As Duruiz (2019) notes, this term is used to frame this labour practice in strictly economic terms, whereby labour's abundance in southern regions fills labour demands across the country according to the seasonality of the harvest of

various agricultural products, but obscures the political drivers of this labour practice, specifically conflict and forced displacement. Building on this, we approach migrant farm work as a racialized and gendered labour regime. It is racialized because it relies on hierarchies of ethno-racial difference, most prominently affecting Kurdish people, who make up the majority of workers, but also Arab and Romani people (among other groups), intersecting with religion and citizenship status (Duruiz, 2023; Pelek, 2019; Kavak, 2016). It is gendered in the way it mobilizes gender norms and divisions of labour across realms of production and social reproduction, from the home to the farm. We use the term "migrant farmworker" broadly to encompass the diverse experiences of both disenfranchised Turkish citizens and refugees from Syria, who engage in itinerant farm work across the country and live in either temporary or more permanent settlements.

4. Methodology

This article examines how household and labour brokerage practices sustain the organization of migrant farm work within Turkey's commercial agriculture, and the consequences of these processes for farmworkers. It draws on five years of collaboration and exchange drawing on the authors' respective experiences. These include several years of collaborative research into agricultural labour and migration patterns across the country (Saniye), and one doctoral project on social reproduction, survival and labour in the Southeast (Luisa).

The data primarily consists of individual and group interviews with 89 seasonal migrant farmworkers, labour brokers, landowners, and civil society representatives, conducted across multiple field sites in Adana (South Turkey, near the northeastern shores of the Mediterranean) and Şanlıurfa (Southeast Turkey, near the Euphrates River and bordering Syria) between 2017 and 2023. We selected these provinces to capture the lived experiences of both Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees in key agricultural export regions. Adana has long been a major centre of agricultural production (Adalet, 2022; Pelek, 2019), making it a critical site for understanding seasonal migrant farmwork. By contrast, Şanlıurfa is a primary sending province of migrant farmworkers nationwide (Turhan et al., 2015; Duruiz, 2019), and has become increasingly important through regional development planning, as a hub for cotton, as well as wheat and corn production (Harris, 2008). Including research participants in both sites thus provided insights into local labour regimes, while also enabling reflections on research participants' experiences as itinerant farmworkers across the country.

Collaborative research on agricultural labour and migration patterns was conducted by Saniye with the Development Workshop Cooperative (*Kalkınma Atölyesi*), a non-profit organization based in Turkey that specializes in developing and implementing programs in social development, education, and children and youth, in the provinces of Adana and Şanlıurfa between 2017 and 2018. Research sites were identified through a prior mapping of seasonal agricultural settlements, disaggregated by nationality, in Yüreğir, Seyhan, Karataş, and Yumurtalık (Adana), and Eyyübiye and Harran (Şanlıurfa). For the purpose of this article, we draw on interviews conducted across sites with 35 farmworkers, of whom one-third women and approximately half from Syria.

The doctoral research conducted by Luisa examined how practices of social reproduction sustain survival and informalised labour, with a particular focus on cotton production, drawing on approximately three months of in-depth interviews and observations in Şanlıurfa between 2021 and 2023. These took place over repeated visits across nearly all districts of the province (specifically, Akçakale, Bozova, Eyyübiye, Haliliye, Harran, Hilvan, Siverek, Suruç, and Viranşehir), including 54 farmworkers of whom the majority women and one fourth from Syria, 25 landowners and four labour brokers.

Research participants were approached through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling (Noy, 2008), seeking a representative sample in terms of location, age, and nationality. Farmworkers ranged in age from 18 to 65 and the majority had limited formal schooling. The majority of research participants were married with households averaging eight members, often including extended family beyond the nuclear unit in line with patrilocal customs. Interviews revolved around working and living conditions, migration patterns, household divisions of labour, access to healthcare and education, relationships with labour brokers, and daily activities. All interviews were conducted in Turkish, Arabic, or Kurdish and transcribed and translated into English with the assistance of remunerated interpreters and research collaborators.

Our methodological approaches were guided by feminist constructivist principles that recognize knowledge as socially situated (Ackerly and True, 2019), resulting from subjective experiences and interactions between researchers and research participants. This perspective acknowledges that research is inevitably shaped by the researchers' own standpoint, while remaining attentive to power relations that shape whose voices are heard and what counts as knowledge. Given that this research was conducted with individuals navigating economic precariousness, and, in some cases, linguistic barriers and a lack of citizenship rights, we recognize that interactions were inevitably influenced by layers of power asymmetries. Our distinct positionalities as women (one from Turkey and one from Italy) conducting academic research marked us as outsiders within farmworkers' communities, while simultaneously facilitating access to women's stories and experiences. Differences in class background, educational attainment, and in one case nationality, required careful attention to power dynamics throughout the research process and taking safeguards, including by engaging in ongoing conversations with research participants, treating them as experts of their experiences and practicing an ethic of care.

To safeguard the voluntariness of participation while protecting the identities of research participants, informed consent was orally obtained and confirmed throughout the research process alongside ethical guidelines approved in our respective institutions. While recognizing our positionalities, we aim to centre the narratives of seasonal workers and emphasize the co-production of knowledge.

The data generated through these projects was analysed through an interpretivist approach, involving a close reading and re-reading of interview transcripts and notes to identify patterns, contradictory or competing accounts, and causal logics embedded in research participants' narratives (Fujii, 2017). NVivo software was used across multiple iterations and in ongoing conversations among the authors. Particular attention was paid to seasonal workers' experiences in accessing housing, provisioning, employment, health care, education, and citizenship rights, as well as social relations and gender dynamics in and beyond the household. This inductive coding guided the organization of our findings around the incorporation of households into this labour regime, the negotiations of women and girls in sustaining social reproduction, and the central role of labour brokerage in governing farmworkers' work-life continuum.

5. Findings

5.1. Household dynamics and value transfers

Housewifisation is a useful concept for examining how activities and relations necessary to sustain life contribute to capital accumulation (Mies, 1982). In this section, we argue that housewifisation manifests both in the performance of patriarchal relations and in value transfers between the home and the farm. This is not only a social but also a material process, whereby activities of social reproduction are systematically devalued, while household resources are appropriated to sustain a labour regime characterised by informalization, seasonal and fragmented farm work, and displacement. This regime, as this section demonstrates, has depleting and harmful consequences for farmworkers themselves, especially women and girls.

The organisation of farm work in Adana and Şanlıurfa is central to understanding labour and social reproduction dynamics. In Adana, the withdrawal of state support and declining cotton prices have pushed

small- and medium-scale farmers to shift into higher-value, labour-intensive citrus and greenhouse horticulture. These shifts have generated a geographically fragmented and sustained demand for itinerant farmworkers (Pelek, 2019), who predominantly engage in physically demanding and low-paid tasks. While citrus is harvested from September through March, pruning and greenhouse activities provide jobs almost year-round. Meanwhile, Şanlıurfa has emerged as a major cotton-producing province (and, to a lesser extent, a producer of wheat and maize), where larger, increasingly mechanised farms, supported by development policies and expanded irrigation infrastructure (Harris, 2008), concentrate labour demand in the planting and harvest periods (April-May and October-November, respectively). These developments have created only limited employment opportunities in Şanlıurfa, which remains an important sending region of migrant farmworkers. Migration, however, is not always circular, and experiences vary by class and citizenship status. For refugees from Syria, permanently living in a camp often reflects legal restrictions on mobility, as movement outside provinces of registration risks apprehension by the police and, in some instances, forced deportation. Some Turkish farmworkers also lack viable homes to return to, due to factors such as indebtedness or dispossession. For some farmworkers and their families, these arrangements can also represent a way to seek stability in their living conditions despite the scattered and itinerant nature of farm work.

The camps composed of single-family tents, brick shelters, or a combination of both (see Fig. 1) represent a critical setting of this labour regime. The camps vary in size and larger settlements include up to 50 families. Each family generally establishes two separate areas; one used as a kitchen and one for sleeping and resting, often arranged in tight rows along rivers or canal banks. Shelters rest on bare ground, exposing farmworkers to dust and animals such as rats, scorpions and snakes. Protecting belongings during heavy rains is challenging, and floods are common particularly during the autumn and winter. During the summer, extreme heat often reaches 47 Celsius degrees, compounding the physical and emotional toll of farm work.

Crucially, making life liveable in the camps requires farmworker households to bring and maintain all personal possessions in challenging conditions. This includes materials to protect shelters, clothing, bedding, kitchen utensils, and appliances such as refrigerators, fans, and televisions. In doing so, households directly subsidize production through the use of their own resources, allowing employers to externalize the costs of worker accommodation and basic living conditions. In this sense, farmworkers' households become sites where the contradictions of contemporary agrarian capitalism and related crises of social reproduction are experienced and negotiated on a daily basis.

Gendered divisions of labour manifest across production and social reproduction and along generational lines, with girls often assuming their mothers' caretaking roles while mothers engage in farm work. As one research participant explained: "When I go to work, I leave them in the care of the oldest who is only 8 years old. She is responsible for her two younger brothers" (female farmworker from Syria, October 2018). These arrangements reveal the "invisible economies of care" that sustain agricultural production (Shah and Lerche, 2020), as farmworkers struggle to meet the demands of farm work.

Living in the camps makes domestic tasks such as cooking, doing laundry, taking care of children, gathering wood for fuel, procuring water, and ensuring basic hygiene more arduous and time-consuming. As described by one research participant: "I wake up around 4:00 a.m. to prepare the meals we eat during the day working in the field (*tarla*) … We make our own bread almost every other day. I pack everything before everybody wakes up. Then, we go to the field to pick cotton. We need to preserve our food because keeping the food unspoiled is a challenge under the hot sun in Urfa. When we get back, I put the fire on to cook. It is almost 11 or 12 p.m. before I go to bed" (female farmworker from Turkey, July 2017). These work burdens disproportionately fall on women and girls, who barely manage social reproduction for themselves and their families, exemplifying processes of depletion through social reproduction amid the challenging conditions of camp life.

Access to electricity is important, especially to refrigerate food and to run fans during the summer. Nevertheless, several research participants reported that it was not available or malfunctioning in their camps. Some research participants also described challenges in accessing potable water, which often came from tankers. In the words of one farmworker: "The water [in the camp] is dirty but we need to drink it anyway. We know it is not good for us but we have no choice. Sometimes, we stayed without water for two days. When there is water, it is not good" (female farmworker from Turkey, October 2022). This is emblematic of the experiences of other farmworkers who described instances of water scarcity and being forced to drink contaminated water. These deprivations are harmful and intensify women's and girls' responsibilities in maintaining their families' survival, as they must spend additional time and effort fetching water from other sources, find alternative cooking methods when electricity fails, and manage health

Fig. 1. Farmworkers' camp.
Source: Authors.

consequences from contaminated water and food.

This uneven distribution of work burdens is also acknowledged by male household members. For example, one research participant noted: "Women grind the most. Cooking, laundry, cleaning the house, in the evening the next day's lunch is prepared. The women are always busy until 11 or 12 am. And women … Oh my God, they say, it's good that God created the night so that we can rest (*Iyi ki diyor tanri geceyi yaratti, dinlenelim diye*)" (male farmworker from Turkey, October 2022). This recognition is important, though it does not lead to redistribution, reflecting the persistence and "monotonous similarity" of patriarchal norms that assign such work primarily to women (Kabeer, 2016).

Gendered stereotypes also influence the allocation of tasks within farms, with manual and more tedious tasks perceived as more appropriate for women, and supervisory roles as more appropriate for men. Several research participants, for example, frequently suggested that weeding and cotton picking were better suited to women and girls because they are "more diligent" and "more hardworking, because it's in their genetics" (female farmworker from Turkey, October 2022). Such beliefs echo the trope of women's "nimble fingers" (Elson and Pearson, 1981), reflecting a form of biological determinism that casts women's patience and endurance as natural, and thus justifies the cheapening of their labour.

Despite these contributions, patriarchal norms often exclude women farmworkers from accessing income and decision-making, further exacerbating depletion and constraining their choices. Payments are typically pooled among household members and male household heads control the ways in which earnings are spent. For example, one research participant described efforts to use the income from migrant farm work for household improvements in the following way: "I've been telling my brother to buy a dishwasher. We are three families in one household, all eating at the same time. My sister-in-law and I want to use the money from this work to buy one, but he doesn't want us to. If he doesn't allow it, we can't buy it" (female farmworker from Turkey, October 2022).

For farmworkers who permanently reside in the camps, the lean season is particularly challenging and depleting. In the words of one research participant: "The situation becomes even more difficult in the winter. However, we try to live despite all the circumstances. But look at our situation, are these good living conditions? In the winter, the roofs start leaking water, the weather is very cold, and the children get sick" (female farmworker from Syria, October 2022). As this research participant continued: "The work we do in the summer provides us income during the winter, and that's how it goes from season to season … The largest portion goes towards flour for bread, as well as oil and sugar, meaning basic food necessities. We cannot afford to buy many things, so we focus on essential items. We don't buy vegetables, fruits, and such. Life is extremely difficult" (female farmworker from Syria, October 2022). This account demonstrates the challenging trade-offs that households must negotiate during periods of seasonal unemployment and their depleting effects.

One research participant described her and her family's situation as compulsion (*mecbur*) to work: "I have to feed 9 people in my family … The choice we have is hunger or work. We choose to work. *Mecbur*, *mecbur*" (female farmworker from Syria, July 2017); emphasizing the material deprivations that affect farmworkers' conditions and the necessity to sustain survival.

Nevertheless, amid these constraints, women and girls make strategic choices to confront patriarchal norms and negotiate their positions. Following Kandiyoti (1988), these can be understood as "patriarchal bargains," which carry varying potential for resistance against oppression. Our observations and interviews demonstrate that such negotiations include decisions about engaging in jobs that offer autonomy or higher income, bargaining over marriage and childbearing, as well as claim-making and cultivating solidarities.

Contesting the devaluation of their labour, women often emphasized its indispensability for their family's survival. As one research participant reflected: "Let's imagine how a family could survive in this deserted area if there were no women. Who would cook, clean and care? I work as hard as a worker in the field. I have to prepare breakfast and pack lunch for the workers of my family before they leave for work. All day, I make bread, wash clothes and look after my babies and prepare dinner before my workers arrive in the evening. Tell me, who works harder, me or the workers in the field and how would we survive without all this?" (female farmworker from Turkey, July 2017). Statements that certain tasks are "normal" for women thus coexist with the explicit acknowledgements that these arrangements are unfair or exhausting, reflecting both pragmatism and critique.

Some women farmworkers viewed their jobs as meaningful and better than other options. As one research participant described: "Working in the fields is better [than a previous factory job], because I work for myself, there are no rules" (female farmworker from Turkey, October 2022). Framing farm work as something done "for oneself" and "with no rules" signals an attempt to carve out a sense of autonomy within a labour regime that frames farm work as a family obligation. In addition, some research participants viewed farm work as an opportunity for sociality in conservative settings, which defied patriarchal expectations and provided a space for friendship, humour, and romance. One research participant, for example, described her relations with coworkers in the following way: "We joke with each other all the time, about how we speak, how we eat, how we walk. We gossip … It's such a friendly environment that some people even manage to have a date" (female farmworker from Turkey, November 2021). These accounts demonstrate that women and girls cultivate forms of sociality through farm work against expectations of seclusion and obedience.

Negotiations also extend to marriage and childbearing. Some research participants expressed a desire to continue farm work and earn an income, which they leveraged to postpone or forego marriage and childbearing. Under patrilocal customs, marriage would require that a woman relocates to her husband's household, withdrawing her labour from her natal family. Because such a departure would represent a significant loss of labour and income, some women choose to continue working and remain in their natal family on terms more aligned with their personal preferences. One research participant, for example, described being content caring for her nephew and niece while having no desire for children of her own: "I cannot stop working in the fields … We have lots of expenses … After seeing my sister-in-law, I thought I would never want to get married or have kids … I love my little niece … and one of my nephews prefers to eat from my hands rather than his mother's. When I come back from work, he runs to me and doesn't stop asking, 'When will you be done with work? I miss you.'" (female farmworker from Turkey, October 2022).

Farmworkers cultivate solidarities within households and, to a certain extent, across work teams, forming networks of mutual support that help them endure challenging conditions in the camps. In the words of a research participant: "We love each other in the family, we support each other" (female farmworker from Turkey, October 2022). Given the itinerant and fragmented nature of farm work and the constraints of housewifisation, however, opportunities for collective organizing remain limited.

In sum, our analysis demonstrates how commercial agriculture draws extensively on labour and resources essential for social reproduction and survival through their housewifisation, with women and girls bearing disproportionate burdens. These arrangements involve a normative devaluation of feminized labour that extends from the home to the farm, reproducing patriarchal constraints and value transfers that farmworkers negotiate in their daily lives.

5.2. Labour brokers and 'patriarchal pacts'

As established earlier, the flexibilization of Turkish agriculture, combined with conflict-induced displacement of both Turkish citizens and Syrian refugees, created the conditions for the emergence and persistence of seasonal migrant farm work as a survival practice. Labour

brokers (*dayıbaşı*, *elci*, or *çavuş* depending on the region) play a crucial role within this informalised and fragmented labour regime, enabling value transfers from realms of social reproduction to production with implications not only for wages and contracts but also for farmworkers' survival and daily life. Brokers govern recruitment, retention, and remuneration (the "3Rs," Dedeoğlu, 2022), drawing on the performance of patriarchal family relations, the distribution of advances necessary for farmworkers to meet subsistence needs, and gatekeeping over access to essential services and resources such as water, food, transport and health services. These practices, we argue, connect farmworkers' capacities for social reproduction to processes of agrarian capitalist accumulation, sustaining an otherwise untenable labour regime. For each of the 3Rs, we foreground gendered power relations and their consequences for farmworkers themselves.

Labour brokers are typically men who emerge from farmworker ranks and manage teams of 30 to 150 farmworkers. Their legitimacy derives from having a farmworker background, experience in leadership, and ability to leverage extensive kinship and community relations, which often span tribal clan connections (*aşiret*) across the Turkish–Syrian border. This social embeddedness is crucial for understanding how brokerage depends upon relations of social reproduction and operates through the performance of patriarchal family relations, both real and metaphorical. While some farmworkers can trace direct kinship or biological relations with brokers, others are incorporated through family metaphors that legitimize brokers' authority. For instance, one broker described his position in the following way: "I see myself as a brother and they are my siblings, I never behave like a boss. Sometimes we make jokes together, eat, laugh and cry together" (male broker from Turkey, September 2021).

Given the fragmented and variable nature of farm work, scattered across geographically dispersed farms and subject to fluctuations in cropping patterns and seasonal labour demand, brokers constantly juggle competing imperatives. They need to maintain a sufficiently large pool of workers to meet landowners' demands, while preserving the flexibility to expand or contract teams at short notice.

Decisions about who works in the fields and how labour is organized are structured by patriarchal hierarchies and infused with paternalistic tropes (Baglioni, 2022; Dieng, 2025). As one research participant explained: "The broker decides how many from each family will work each day. They usually like to recruit young girls and boys as they are physically flexible and bend over easily in the field. They also like women workers but not middle-aged men" (female research participant from Syria, July 2017).

These dynamics are sustained through kinship and community ties, which brokers mobilize to secure and legitimize their authority vis-à-vis workers' families and the wider community, as well as to discipline farmworkers. As expressed by one broker: "They're like my daughters and sons, they trust me, their families trust me, and they let them come with me … If a boy and girl want to "talk" to each other, I don't let them" (male broker from Turkey, September 2021). This paternalistic framing casts the broker as both protector and moral guardian, extending his authority into workers' personal lives, where "talking" functions as a euphemism for behaviour viewed as promiscuous.

The performance of patriarchal family relations thus allows brokers to deepen labour control and exploitation. A landowner, for example, observed: "If you want to improve the situation for workers, you need to work with brokers … They know their [workers'] families, they know everything about them; they know about illnesses in the family, if they are lying about something, workers can't make up excuses with them" (male landowner, October 2022). Thus, brokers' knowledge of farmworkers' families and personal circumstances enables them to monitor behaviour and enforce compliance, creating forms of social leverage that extend beyond the workplace.

At the same time, this control is not one-sided. Rather, these social relations create a sense of obligation and belonging that farmworkers can use to hold brokers accountable, negotiate working conditions and secure due payments. In the words of one research participant: "People talk, and a broker should keep a good reputation" (male landowner from Turkey, September 2021). Moreover, these relations often endure over multiple years, as one broker explained, "If you treat [the farmworkers] better, they'll come and work with you next year, not for one year, after all, work is there every year" (male broker from Turkey, October 2022).

Remuneration practices further blur the boundaries between production and social reproduction, while intensifying labour control. These practices involve established norms between brokers and landowners, and between workers and brokers, that rarely involve the direct circulation of cash. While wages are theoretically determined by daily fees and farmworkers are entitled to day wages upon completion, farmworkers do not receive immediate payment. Instead, brokers provide advances to household heads at the beginning of the season and distribute wage cards (business card-like tokens bearing the broker's name and photo, as shown in Fig. 2) for each day worked. Brokers maintain detailed expense sheets for each family team, deducting costs for social reproduction, including services necessary for daily survival such as electricity, water, food, as well as brokerage fees averaging 10 percent of wages, and pay a lump sum at the end of the season based on accrued wage cards. Similarly, brokers receive advances from landowners and are paid in full only after the sale of agricultural produce.

These arrangements contribute to shifting financial risks from landowners to brokers and are crucial for both farmworkers' survival and labour control. In fact, through advances, brokers ensure that workers can meet subsistence needs and remain available for labour. As one broker explained: "We didn't get paid, but I squeezed the [landowner] before Eid, I got some money. I didn't leave anyone without pocket money on Eid. I gave everyone enough pocket money … I distributed money according to the number of people [in each family team]. We make payments in between, of course, we never leave anyone without pocket money" (male broker from Turkey, September 2021).

At the same time, advances exacerbate control and exploitation, transforming wage relations into relations of indebtedness. While farmworkers accumulate wage cards, they accrue debts with brokers to meet daily subsistence needs, often without the assurance of being paid if the landowner fails to compensate the broker or if they leave the employment relationship. As described by one research participant, these practices can expose farmworkers to debt bondage and injustice: "Don't believe when people tell you the workers get paid daily rates, such and such amounts. We get our money only twice a year, in January and August from our broker … he pays us [advances] occasionally because he wants to keep us in his team and we have to work for him … Tell me how I can leave and go look for other jobs while he holds all my and my family's money?" (male farmworker from Turkey, September 2017). These practices, illustrate brokers' ambivalent position. While

Fig. 2. A wage card.
Source: Authors.

they provide support essential for farmworkers' survival, they facilitate the extraction of surplus value through bonded labour. Similar to what Sajadian (2024) documents in Syrian refugee farmworkers' camps in Lebanon, debt is negotiated within the household with significant consequences for social reproduction. As our observations across multiple sites demonstrate, the accumulation of debt through advances, in particular, compels women farmworkers to continue working even when ill, pregnant or recovering from childbirth, effectively tying reproductive choices over pregnancy, childcare, and the delegation of younger siblings' care to girls, which affects schooling, to the requirements of capital accumulation, exacerbating depletion and negatively affecting farmworkers' life chances.

As discussed in the previous section, patriarchal norms often exclude women from accessing pooled family income and deciding how the money from farm work is spent. In the words of one research participant: "I work with my four daughters and two sons. Our broker tells my husband everyday how many people he needs from our family to the field and then he pays our wages to him" (female farmworker from Turkey, September 2018). The labour of women and girls thus becomes part of negotiations between male household heads and brokers. Our interviews and observations suggest that such mechanisms persist even when men do not participate in farm work, creating "patriarchal pacts" that reproduce and extend gendered hierarchies from the home to the field.

Beyond remuneration and the provision of advances, brokers perform essential social reproduction functions for farmworkers, including finding suitable areas for the camps, and gatekeeping access to essential resources and services such as food and water, for example, by arranging visits of mobile sellers or renting generators. Further, brokers attend to workers in case of health emergencies, by providing transportation to hospitals, and serve as primary interlocutors for all issues relating to working conditions and daily life. These arrangements distinguish this labour regime from other forms of commercial farming and underscore the role of brokerage practices in sustaining labour arrangements that would otherwise be untenable. Taken together, they highlight the heterogeneity of farming and subcontracting arrangements in neoliberal, globalized agriculture, where varying configurations among brokers, employers, workers and state agencies determine the distribution of costs and responsibilities of social reproduction.

Most workers lack visibility into the specific agreements brokers negotiate with landowners, while camp isolation contributes to keeping them confined and tied to particular brokers and locations. This isolation makes leaving difficult, as workers often lack the transportation means to return home or travel independently to access food, medicines, or other services. One research participant, for instance, described this situation as follows: "The broker took us here. We are almost 10 families from the same village in Syria. We are so far from the city and not allowed to go to the villages. We cannot move out of this area as the only person with a car is the broker. This place is too far from everywhere; when we get sick and call an ambulance it does not come here. Once we called it many times, but it did not appear at all" (female farmworker from Syria, September 2017).

Labor brokerage practices and the nature of farm work have depleting consequences. A large majority of research participants reported health problems arising from farm work, including skin conditions, respiratory issues, physical pain, fatigue, heat stroke, and short- and long-term impacts of pesticide exposure. Women face additional risks linked to biological reproduction, including pregnancy, childbirth, and postpartum care, exacerbated by the physically demanding conditions of both farm and domestic work. One research participant, for example, described the experience of a household member who gave birth while living in a camp: "We were working in Adana and living in a tent. The trip to the hospital was extremely long, it took between 1 and 2 h and we didn't have a car. We asked the broker for a ride to and back from the hospital … After my sister-in-law came back from the hospital with the baby, it was hard in the tent, it was hot. The baby got a high fever. We had to return to the hospital, and they told us the baby would not survive … She [the sister-in-law] stayed in the hospital for 6 days but [eventually] was alright … She is now at home taking care of the little girl" (female farmworker from Turkey, October 2022). These experiences illustrate how spatial isolation and living conditions in the camps expose farmworkers to health crises, forcing dependence on brokers with potentially life-threatening consequences.

Thus, brokers govern a continuum of production and social reproduction, spanning recruitment through the performance of patriarchal family relations, remuneration through the distribution of advance payments necessary for meeting subsistence needs, and retention through spatial isolation and gatekeeping access to essential resources and services. These practices contribute to the internalization of the costs of social reproduction within farmworkers' households, with depleting and harmful consequences, sustaining an otherwise untenable labour regime.

6. Concluding discussion

This article has focused on household and labour brokerage practices affecting the working conditions and lives of migrant farmworkers at the lower end of Turkey's commercial agricultural markets through the lens of social reproduction. By moving beyond the farm, we have shown how this labour regime is structured through the devaluation and incorporation of social reproduction resources and activities into agricultural production; processes that unfold along gendered, racialized, and citizenship-based lines. Thus, the everyday activities and relations necessary to sustain life are constitutive of agrarian capitalist accumulation and are simultaneously undermined in the process.

Our analysis makes three main contributions to the literature. First, we highlight the mutual constitution between this labour regime and the reproduction of gendered power relations. Similar to other industrial settings across contexts, we found that women and girls shoulder a double (or triple) burden of work, highlighting a continuum of exploitation and surplus value extraction across overlapping realms of production and social reproduction. In addition, we demonstrate that housewifisation operates as a material process, as households mobilize their own possessions and resources to make seasonal migration and life in the camps possible. These material contributions constitute ongoing transfers of value from the home to the farm, and are integral to the profitability of neoliberal commercial agriculture. The case of Turkey reveals key features of how exploitation operates at the lower end of commercial agricultural markets. It relies on both value transfers and patriarchal norms that reflect a "monotonous similarity" in the assignment of primary responsibility for social reproduction to women (Kabeer, 2016), while also showing variation in how this regime functions. In this context, conflict-induced displacement, affecting Syrian refugees as well as Kurdish and other marginalized Turkish citizens, intersects with informalised labour arrangements that adapt to shifting cropping patterns, price fluctuations, and variable demand in international markets.

Lastly, we conceptualize labour brokerage as a mechanism that connects farmworkers' capacities for social reproduction to agrarian capitalist accumulation, foregrounding its gendered contours. Brokers govern the "3Rs" of recruitment, remuneration, and retention (Dedeoğlu, 2023) through social reproduction, specifically through the performance of patriarchal family relations, the distribution of advances necessary for meeting subsistence needs, and gatekeeping access to essential resources and services. We argue that these practices help sustain an otherwise untenable labour regime by internalizing the costs of social reproduction within farmworkers' households; costs that are disproportionately borne by women and girls, often with serious consequences for their health and life chances.

Our findings resonate with Ossome and Naidu's (2021, 1) reflections on the broader significance of social reproduction under contemporary neoliberal capitalism in agrarian settings of the global South, where

"every productive activity is a mere act of survival," and where the majority of people labour informally. While they argue these processes are increasingly disarticulated from capitalist accumulation, we contend that the survival of human life represents a critical source for accumulation, particularly at the lower end of commercialized agricultural markets. Our study shows how labour struggles intersect with struggles over healthcare, housing, and other conditions of household survival and social reproduction. Recognizing these interactions is essential for labour politics in a context where wage relations are insufficient to account for farmworkers' experiences of exploitation. Our findings indicate that labour conflicts are often diffused through disputes over advances and indebtedness, precarious housing, inadequate access to healthcare, and patriarchal norms. Future research should further examine these interactions taking social reproduction as not only critical for production but also to the possibilities for resistance.

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CRediT authorship contribution statement

Luisa Lupo: Conceptualization, Data curation, Methodology, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing. **Saniye Dedeoğlu:** Conceptualization, Data curation, Methodology, Writing – original draft.

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Data availability

The data that has been used is confidential.

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