

## **THE ROLE OF A CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATION IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE DOMESTIC ORGANIC MARKET IN TURKEY**

**A. Alper AKYÜZ\***

**A. Yonca DEMİR\*\***

### **Abstract**

In this paper, we report of a case from Turkey where a civil society organization took an active role in development of a functioning domestic market for organic agriculture and organic products by not only influencing laws, regulations and their implementation, but also establishing and administering marketplaces solely for organic products. Although the country's climate and biodiversity is suitable for organic agriculture, the domestic market remained underdeveloped; the organic sector was directed mainly towards exports. By establishing the first marketplace solely for certified organic products in 2006, a non-governmental organization became the locomotive of the domestic sector. The process that led to the 100% Ecological Marketplaces exhibits a contingent characteristic where particularly social and symbolic capital were mobilized by the NGO to facilitate embedded relationships of trust among a multiplicity of actors, together with a framing of positive 'ecological living' discourse and therefore contributing to the 'organic' movement.

**Keywords:** Organic Agriculture, Civil Society Organizations, Consumers, Stakeholders, Domestic Markets.

## **TÜRKİYE ORGANİK ÜRÜNLER İÇ PAZARININ GELİŞİMİNDE SİVİL TOPLUMUN ROLÜ**

### **Öz**

Bu makalede, Türkiye'den bir sivil toplum kuruluşunun (STK) organik tarım ve organik ürünlere yönelik işleyen bir iç pazar oluşturmak için ilgili yasalar, ikincil düzenlemeler ve bunların uygulanmasını etkilemekle sınırlı kalmayıp bizzat bu ürünlerle sınırlı pazaryerlerinin kurulması ve yönetilmesini de üstlendiği aktif rolü bir vaka olarak inceliyoruz. Ülkenin iklimi ve biyolojik çeşitliliği organik tarıma uygun olmasına karşın iç pazar yeterince gelişmemiştir ve organik ürünler sektörü ihracata odaklanmıştır. 2006 yılından itibaren ise sadece organik sertifikalı ürünlerin yer alabildiği ilk pazaryerini kurarak bir STK iç pazara yönelik sektörün lokomotif rolünü üstlendi. Kendi verdikleri adla %100 Ekolojik Pazarlara evrilen süreç, bu STK'nın çok sayıda aktör arasında yerleşik güven ilişkilerinin oluşmasını kolaylaştırarak özellikle sosyal ve sembolik sermayeyi mobilize ettiği ve bunu 'ekolojik yaşam' söylemiyle çerçeveleyerek 'organik' hareketinin oluşmasına katkı verdiği olumsal bir özellik taşımaktadır.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Organik Tarım, Sivil Toplum Kuruluşları, Tüketiciler, Paydaşlar, İç Pazar.

\* Assistant Professor, İstanbul Bilgi University, Center for Civil Society Studies, [alper.akyuz@bilgi.edu.tr](mailto:alper.akyuz@bilgi.edu.tr)

\*\* Assistant Professor, İstanbul Bilgi University, Department of Business Administration, [ydemir@bilgi.edu.tr](mailto:ydemir@bilgi.edu.tr)  
*Araştırma Makalesi* - Gönderim Tarihi: 15.01.2016 - Kabul Tarihi: 27.02.2016.

### 1. Introduction and Development of Organic Agriculture in Turkey

Certified organic farming in Turkey started with the production of dried fruits for a German company in 1986 (Rapunzel, 2012) and grew steadily since then. When the EU imposed conditions on the countries exporting organic products in 1992 (Aktar & Ananias 2005), Turkey had to develop her own regulations for organic production in 1994 and 1995 (Kenanoğlu & Karahan 2002, 301). The Turkish Parliament passed the organic farming law in December 2004, (TR, 2004). Table 1 summarizes the organic production quantities published by the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock.

**Table 1: Organic agriculture data for Turkey including conversion land and excluding meadows, pastures and forest area.**

Year	Number of products	Number of farmers	Land used for organic agriculture (ha)	Production quantity (tons)
2002	150	12,428	89,827	310,125
2003	179	14,798	113,621	323,981
2004	174	12,806	209,573	378,803
2005	205	14,401	203,811	421,934
2006	203	14,256	192,789	458,095
2007	201	16,276	174,283	568,128
2008	247	14,926	166,883	530,225
2009	212	35,565	501,641	983,715
2010	216	42,097	510,033	1,343,737
2011	225	42,460	614,618	1,659,543
2012	204	54,635	702,909	1,750,127
2013	213	60,797	769,014	1,620,387

**Source:** <http://www.tarim.gov.tr/sgb/Belgeler/SagMenuVeriler/BUGEM.pdf>. Accessed 8 December 2014.

As can be seen in Table 1, organic agriculture and production in Turkey is developing. However, throughout the process, production has been reported to be vastly made for export, (Demiryürek et al., 2008, 264; Mutlu, 2007, 11; Güler, 2006, 240, Babadoğan & Koç, 2004) and the domestic market remained underdeveloped. Several researchers studying the development of organic agriculture in Turkey listed reasons for the current state of the domestic market and suggested policy modifications (Özbilge, 2007, 219-220; Demiryürek, 2004, 69-70; Kenanoğlu & Karahan, 2002, 315). The importance of a lively domestic market is further underlined in (Lehner, 2009, 49) in order to decrease the risk of export dependency inherent in the organic sector. All of these works emphasize the support and the sponsorship of the ministry in all stages. The collaboration of the private sector with the ministry has been suggested in (Sayın et al., 2005, 870) to financially invest with the goal of developing the domestic organic market. (Lehner, 2009, 50) argues

that universities and other “knowledge creating and distributing actors” should be given a bigger role in the development of the organic sector.

This paper presents part of the research conducted on Turkey’s first organic marketplace. The earlier parts displayed the growth and seasonality trends in the marketplace, gave a comparison with the conventional fresh produce market, (Demir, 2013a) and described the importance of taking the whole supply chain into account (Demir, 2013b). The contribution of the current paper lies in analyzing the efforts of a civil society organization, Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living (Buğday), to build up a domestic market by mobilizing supply and meeting demand within the country and organizing a space for trade, exchange and interaction among relevant stakeholders.

The development of the domestic market in Turkey bears some similarities to the initial stages of the development of Germany’s organic market, in the sense that activists played a significant role (Rottner, 2007, 220). The difference is in the behavior of mainstream retailers. In countries with developed organic markets, the majority of organic food sales are through mainstream retailers (Sahota, 2007, 4 and 11), such as those in Germany which quickly recognized the business opportunity resulting in market expansion. However, those in Turkey only provide a negligible percentage of shelf space for organic produce if any at all; one self-claimed “organic-friendly” supermarket chain allocates less than 7‰ to organic products in its biggest store (80 m<sup>2</sup> for fresh organic produce and packaged organic foods out of a total of 12,000 m<sup>2</sup>)<sup>1</sup>. Indeed, analyzing the organic farming movement in Turkey, (Sayın et al., 2005, 870) suggested an active role for the private sector and collaboration with the government to increase the domestic market potential and improve the marketing facilities of the organic sector. Another sales channel for organic produce which also includes opportunities for social relations among actors have been specialized farmers’ markets and marketplaces. Marketplaces where only certified organic products are sold can be found in several countries such as Peru, Slovenia and Italy. These markets of different sizes are mostly the result of the work of one or more civil society organizations and a municipality (Antep, 2006). The recent appearance of farmers’ markets in Prague resulting in a new direction in the shopping behavior of Prague’s citizens (Spilková et al., 2012, 183-184) is also relevant to our work, however these farmers’ markets remain small (30-50 stalls compared to around 250 in İstanbul’s organic marketplaces) and offerings are not limited to organic products. The role of public institutions and civil society for promoting alternative food networks (Renting & Wiskerke, 2010, 1909), has three axes: (i) short food chains with new relations between civil society and the food chain, (ii) public sector as buyer and consumer of food, (iii) municipalities and city-regions as food policy makers. Indeed, Turkey’s first organic marketplace is an example of a short food chain with a direct and indispensable role of civil society represented by Buğday in the actual development of the domestic organic sector. We hope that the next two axes will follow: the public sector and the municipalities will assume more active roles in promoting organic food networks in the near future.

---

<sup>1</sup> Author’s own observation.

## 2. Material and Methods

Research reported in this article is compiled from several sources of information. First data source is sales and participation data gathered at the marketplace by Buğday. We use data from the period between the launch of the first organic market in June 2006 and December 2009, the timing of the second marketplace, an event that would drastically change the demand pattern at the first one. Secondly, unstructured interviews with farmers, middlemen and consumers have been conducted. Thirdly, in-depth interviews have been conducted with the marketplace coordinator (2 hours 11 minutes), the current NGO chair (1 hour 47 minutes) and the director of the NGO in 2006 (48 minutes), which is the time of the establishment of the first 100% Ecological Marketplace. Fourthly, participant observation of one of us at the marketplace (7 years) and at committee meetings (3 months at the consumers' committee and 8 months at the committee for organic domestic market development) is also utilized to understand the workings of the 100% Ecological Marketplace and the relationship between farmers, middlemen and Buğday. Finally, unstructured interviews with officials of the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock and two certification agencies have been conducted to understand the data collection procedures, available data and its lack thereof. Interpretation of these data through theoretical concepts about social dimensions of markets (Biggart & Delbridge, 2004, 43-46) have been used to build an understanding about the role Buğday played in domestic market development for organic products. Theory for market cases of socially and economically embedded phenomena is lacking, requiring an inductive analysis of such qualitative data (McKague et al., 2015, 1069), which constitutes the reason we have adopted a similar approach.

## 3. Developing the Domestic Organic Sector in Turkey

Buğday is a not-for-profit and non-governmental organization (NGO) working in several areas related to ecological living. Started as a movement in the 1990s with a health food restaurant and institutionalized into an association in 2002, Buğday's activities include promoting production, marketing and consumption of organic produce; preserving local heirloom seeds; bringing together urban and rural people via eco-agritourism and voluntary exchange and recovering lost tales of nomadic tribes in Turkey. Buğday utilized international networks such as IFOAM to learn about organic agriculture practices as well as about solutions to common problems in other countries and shared information with producers and consumers in Turkey. Increasing the interaction between farmers/producers and consumers had always been on Buğday's agenda as the marketplace coordinator commented:

“We wanted to bring together the consumer and the producer, the best person to describe organic farming is the farmer.”

In the following we categorize the activities of Buğday that led to the launch of the first organic marketplace.

### 3.1. Expanding the production base

Throughout its existence, Buğday team was contacted and invited by farmers located in

different regions of Turkey to give insight for a farming practice that is “in peace with nature”. Farmers had varying economic, social and political motivations, but Buğday established a supporting relationship with them to convert to organic agriculture using knowledge accumulated throughout the years.

### **3.2. Efforts to expand the consumption potential**

Among Buğday’s projects, two food box (Çıralı and ESAS) and a community supported agriculture project (GARDEN), targeted urban citizens in the period between 2002 and 2005 (Buğday, 2015). These projects, despite their limited scopes, contributed to the building up of an infrastructure and to the mobilization of consumers for community supported agriculture.

A cooperative of producers encouraging farmers to practice organic agriculture has been formed in Çıralı, a mediterranean village near Antalya. The farmers of the cooperative were producing a limited selection of favorite fruits and vegetables such as tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, oranges, lemons and avocado. The first food box project trial during May-June 2002 aimed to support the organic farming initiatives in Çıralı and brought boxes full of organic fruits and vegetables to consumers in the city. In the second food box project (ESAS), weekly lists of available products were sent to customers at specific days and the customers sent their requests back to the project’s communication person, a Buğday volunteer. Products are stored in the warehouse of the project coordinator and shipments were made with his vehicle. Available organic products were limited to honey, jam, molasses, grains, beans, olives, olive oil and a very limited selection of fresh produce. The food box project lasted only six months and did not turn out to be financially sustainable. Although consumers were very enthusiastic about receiving organic foods, the project coordinator, a middleman himself, couldn’t get sufficient economic benefit to continue the project. The profit margin was simply too low. Recognizing the potential, Buğday formulated a community supported agriculture project called “GARDEN” which lasted for two years. In 2005, 100 supporters of the project received woven baskets filled with fresh produce for 20 weeks from land donated to Buğday where organic agriculture principles are applied. In 2006, the number of supporters increased to 135. Throughout the project, supporters visited and worked in their GARDEN.

### **3.3. Raising awareness of organic farming and organic products using media**

Buğday used a diverse array of communication channels and methods to disseminate information and to build knowledge and awareness as well as to bring together interested individuals and parties. These channels included a well-known ecological magazine, a weekly e-bulletin, an internet portal, a weekly radio program, trainings and educational activities at its rural office and ecological research and education center and media campaigns. By supporting production of documentaries and participating in television programs, Buğday reached the general public.

### **3.4. Bringing together actors of organic agriculture**

Buğday office and founder Victor Ananias’ home have always been a venue of informal

meetings for people from different backgrounds including students, cooks, scientists, journalists and activists. The first official meeting of the actors of the organic sector took place in 1999. Buğday organized the Bafa Congress on “A Healthy Market of Organic Products for Turkey”. Representatives from the ministry and control/certification agencies, exporters, activists, farmers, consumers and entrepreneurs interested in producing, trading and consuming organic products came together to discuss and outline the future of the sector. This congress has been the start of expanding organic agriculture beyond “a few good men” (Anil et al., 2004, 7), motivated many individuals and accelerated the organic movement (Ananias, 2006, 12). A long list of decisions about all the phases that a product goes through from agriculture to its marketing and sales, informally agreed upon at the congress formed the basis of future lobbying.

### **3.5. Legislative efforts**

Buğday lobbied successfully in order to promote organic agriculture as well as providing consultancy to the Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock for drafting of the organic farming law which the Turkish Parliament passed in December 2004. Due to the lobbying efforts of Buğday, organic products have been granted exemption from the wholesale food market law, therefore reducing costs and ensuring traceability of the products. The marketplace coordinator of Buğday recounts how this opinion emerged from early meetings with farmers and activists:

“It’s been mentioned on several occasions that organic products should be exempt from the (conventional) wholesale market law. Primarily for two reasons: to prevent contamination and to keep costs down. If your product enters the wholesale market you have to pay certain tax. If the products were not exempt from the wholesale market, none of this (100% ecological marketplace) could have happened.”

During the interviews, the NGO chair narrated how with a very timely intervention of Victor Ananias (Buğday’s founder) to the law, organic farmers are kept exempt from the wholesale food tax:

“Just as the law was being written, the commission was asked whether they had anything to add, Victor was in the commission (ready with computer and printer) and he answered that organic produce should not enter the conventional wholesale food market. This was a very timely intervention, nobody objected.”

First 100% Ecological Marketplace started in 2006, followed by several organic marketplaces (some of which have been started and coordinated by other associations and municipalities) and the number of 100% ecological marketplaces coordinated by Buğday has reached 10 as of December 2012.

## **4. Turkey’s First Organic Marketplace**

During the time between December 2004 and June 2006, Buğday intensified its work

with municipalities and sponsors. Two organic producer/retailer companies stepped in as sponsors and a local government (Şişli municipality) provided one of its market-squares as venue. Buğday marketplace coordinator recounts the occasion:

“A protocol is signed with the municipality and with [two sponsors]. You should remember that at that time the only organic products on supermarket shelves were [sponsor company 1] organic cow milk and [sponsor company 2] organic baby food.”

After the contract is signed Buğday accelerated its efforts in order to register producers to the first 100% ecological marketplace. Buğday coordinator of marketplaces narrates:

“In four months we toured all over Turkey, gone through all central Anatolia and the black sea up to the south east; we described the project to the farmers.”

The rules for participation in the marketplace were collectively written down and Turkey’s first organic marketplace has been launched in June 2006. Producers and consumers started meeting every Saturday at the market. All products traded in the organic market are required to be certified as “organic” by one of the control and certification organizations.

The “100% ecological marketplace” term is used by Buğday as a brand name to distinguish these marketplaces from others, conventional or organic, not controlled by Buğday. The second stable ecological marketplace supervised by Buğday opened in December 2009 on the Anatolian side of Istanbul and has sustained until today.

Since June 2006, producers and consumers have been meeting every Saturday at the marketplace. Consumers reported gladness because of availability of organic products:

“It was incredible. For the first time in my life I was able to cook 100% organic foods, with organic ingredients only. I was so happy, so thrilled.” [consumer]

Producers also expressed pleasure in having the chance of trading directly to the consumers:

“For me it is important to see the consumer of my fruits and vegetables, I feel responsible.” [producer]

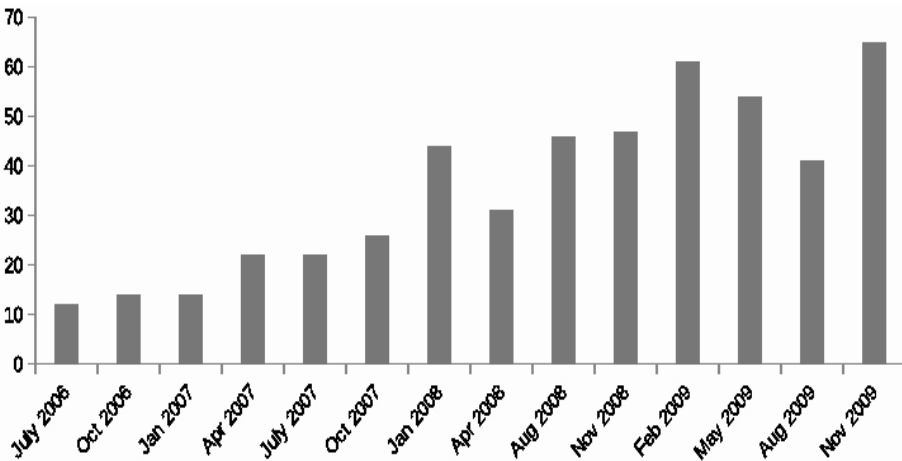
The owner of one prominent health-food store owner specializing in organic products expressed their view:

“At first we were reluctant, we thought the marketplace would steal our customers away. But in a very short time we recognized that not only we made good business at the marketplace, our sales at the store increased as well.”



After the launch of this marketplace, consumers observed a mobilization of the organic sector; other organic marketplaces have been established, the number of organic stores and internet groceries has increased, several restaurants started to offer organic menus, well-known chefs started to use and mention organic ingredients on TV programs and the ecological marketplace became much more crowded. Consumers also witnessed an expansion in the quantity and variety of products traded. Organic local pasta varieties entered the market. The variety of organic meat products, organic delicatessen, organic chicken and eggs and of organic dairy products increased. Besides these essential needs, products such as organic pickles and organic halvah have been welcome additions to the marketplace. Consumers also say that they witness a healthy competition among producers of packaged products and they feel the race between these producers when introducing a new product to the market.

Buğday employees report increases in the number of companies, the variety of marketing channels and the number of consumers. This mobilization can also be seen in the increase of the number of participating farmers, from 14 in October 2006 to 65 in November 2009 (Figure 1).



**Figure 1. Number of farmers supplying fresh produce (100% Ecological Marketplace), Demir (2013a, 8).**

The increased supply and availability of organic products boosted up demand which naturally caused a further increase in organic production. Sales quantities throughout the months following the launch of the marketplace are displayed in Figure 2 and show both a substantial average increase and seasonal influences in quantities. The observations of the NGO marketplace coordinator are:

“In the beginning, all activity at 100% ecological marketplace would finish at 10 AM: consumers used to come in the interval 5-6 AM! Now this has changed because there is a sufficient amount of produce. Now consumers come in during 9:30 in the morning and 12:00 noon mostly.”



This is confirmed by a consumer:

“I remember a time at the end of the first spring, April or May 2007, the winter vegetables were finished and summer vegetables had not appeared yet and a box of green beans arrived at the marketplace early in the morning and everybody quarreled with each other regarding who will buy one kg.”

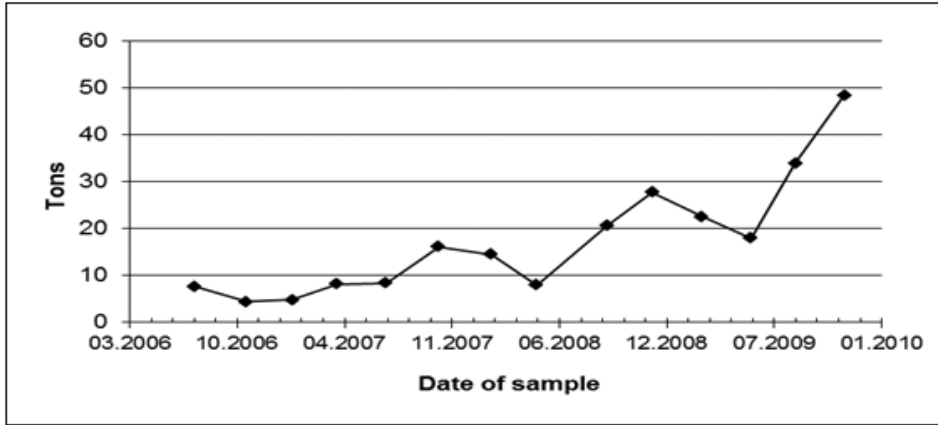


Figure 2. Sales (July 2006 - November 2009), Demir (2013a, 10).

The NGO chair summarized the growth of the sector during the interviews:

“The group of fans and frequenters of the organic market has grown, so has the number of marketplaces. New entrepreneurs entered the organic business. Production has increased as well. You can find avocado, you can find berries, you can find organic detergent. If you choose to consume organic then you can buy everything you need at the 100% ecological marketplace.”

Inspiring other actors such as municipalities, private companies and NGOs, Buğday is described as the only major grass-roots organization in the Turkish organic sector, (Lehner, 2009, 12). According to the marketplace coordinator, the president of the first NGO<sup>2</sup> in the field of organic farming confirmed the leading role of Buğday:

“According to him, if it weren’t for Buğday’s success in İstanbul, they would have never imagined to open a marketplace in İzmir. They wouldn’t be able to convince the municipalities, whereas now municipalities approach them.”

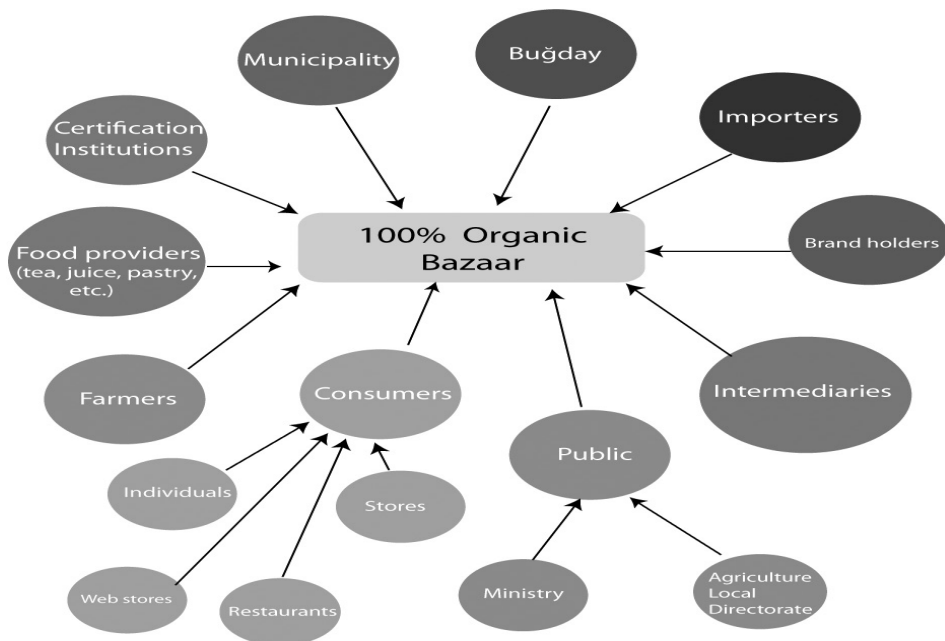
##### 5. Buğday’s Multiple Role in Marketplaces

The 100% Ecological Marketplace will celebrate its 10<sup>th</sup> year anniversary in June 2016; Buğday continues to play several crucial roles at the marketplace.

<sup>2</sup> The first NGO in the field is Ecological Farming Organization (ETO) and it is based in İzmir.

### 5.1. Administration

Legally, municipalities are in charge of administering the neighborhood marketplaces in their territory. Since these local government bodies are not knowledgeable in organic farming regulations, they transfer the administration duty to Buğday using different protocols. Having been the leader of the sector for more than a decade, Buğday is in a good position to control the marketplace. Every week on the day of the marketplace, Buğday performs several technical tasks including setting prices, gathering data on supply and sales quantities and product varieties. All participants of the organic marketplace are aware of Buğday's pioneering and administrative role and have agreed to provide the necessary data on transportation and sales quantities, (Demir, 2013b, 182). Among the tactical tasks of Buğday is the determination of rules for participation at the marketplace; this is done in collaboration with the municipality. Buğday is also consulted by the ministry when changes in organic farming law are planned; the NGO in turn consults the participants of the organic marketplace regarding these planned changes and becomes their voice. Buğday keeps track of actual changes in the organic farming law and communicates them to the producers. Figure 3 displays the different stakeholders of the marketplace.



**Figure 3. Stakeholders of the 100% Ecological Marketplaces**

On a strategic level, Buğday manages the relationships between these stakeholders. This has not been without difficulties as Buğday marketplace coordinator comments:

“All of them were involved in this: the ministry, law, chambers, association of stallholders of neighborhood marketplaces. Unintentionally, we had created a stage for rivalry and conflict. We didn't know that we would be perceived as

rivals to supermarket chains and the stallholders at conventional neighborhood marketplaces. We also haven't recognized how the municipalities work, the old boys network. We had to witness and deal with all these."

Buğday at first tried to work with a single intermediary that would collect all the produce from farmers who themselves cannot come to the marketplace. But the NGO was flexible and helped to build and manage relationships in the supply chain (Cox, 2004, 351; Melnyk et al., 2009, 4631) as the marketplaces coordinator recounted:

"Intermediaries and producers found each other in the end."

## **5.2. Presence in communication channels**

Buğday has maintained a close relationship with media. News on 100% ecological marketplaces find places in newspapers and magazines and the marketplaces now constitute a self-preferred venue for TV reporters whenever alerting news about non-healthy practices in agriculture spread. TV programs recorded at the marketplace and at organic farms are shown in popular channels. To increase the chance of appearing in media Buğday has carefully chosen the venue for bringing together the organic farmer and the consumer:

"We asked ourselves what was needed for this to be popular. It should be a social responsibility project in a public space. The press should be able to enter it without being perceived as advertising a certain store or a brand." [marketplace coordinator]

Besides mailing a bulletin to members, the NGO maintains a website on organic marketplaces. Buğday also increases the awareness of terms such as "organic agriculture", "organic food" and "ecology" by encouraging its members in participating at marathons with social goals (Buğday, 2013; Buğday, 2014). The NGO view is expressed by marketplace coordinator as:

"What made the term "organic" popular in Turkey? What enabled the domestic market develop? The answer for both questions is the same: Buğday and the first 100% Ecological Market (Şişli), no need to be modest in this regard."

## **5.3. Data collection and record keeping**

Throughout our interviews with different stakeholders, we have encountered a further function of the NGO: Buğday performs a record keeping function for the organic sector by recording the history and the trade volumes. Since the launch of the market in 2006, Buğday has been collecting data on amounts of fresh produce transported to the market and also on actual sales; in this fashion an objective record of the market (in all the five marketplaces it oversees in İstanbul as well) has been kept. Looking at the data, one can observe the seasonality inherent in agricultural production and ups and downs in sales, and therefore try to understand the reasons behinds these fluctuations. Correlation

between an increase in sales and food scares or debates around GMO labelling can be found. Similarly, holidays are linked to a decrease in sales. Data is sufficiently detailed to be used for research. This is especially important because data on the domestic market is not available elsewhere (Demiryürek, 2011, 31; Özbilge, 2007, 218). Data on export quantities are reported at the ministries website obtained from the Aegean Export Union however data do not reflect the true export quantities<sup>3</sup> because classifying organic products as such is voluntary (Bilen et al., 2012, 35-36; Demiryürek, 2011, 32). These facts have been recently confirmed by ministry officials: V. Karaarslan (personal communication, March 16, 2015) and E. Süngü (personal communication, March 18, 2015). Buğday's experience with the availability of data is:

“In Turkey, data on domestic trade is non-existent. But we as Buğday gather the data when the 100% ecological marketplaces are concerned.” [marketplace coordinator]

There are efforts to improve data collection and harmonization in Turkey (Lehner, 2009, 11; Süngü, 2004). Data issues are not simple and straightforward; countries with developed organic markets are working on data collection and harmonization techniques (Padel et al., 2014; Zanolli, 2013) and discussing the ownership and dissemination strategies of market data (Schaack, 2014). NGO chair drew attention to this point during the interviews:

“There are ownership issues: we collect the data but who do the data belong to and whom can we give the data?”

The NGO occasionally publishes this information at the website<sup>4</sup> of its “100% ecological marketplace project”. In this fashion, Buğday keeps a record of the history of the ecological marketplaces and registers the amount of organic produce traded via the organic marketplaces. One of the consumers we interviewed is a professor of economics and pointed to us Buğday's data as a reliable source for estimating the size of the domestic market:

“Use Buğday's data, theirs is the most reliable. You can estimate the amount of domestic trade by extrapolation.”

NGO chair warns us:

“Data on organic trade is recorded in the certification system but the part that occurs at the organic marketplace is only recorded because we do so. We record the sales at the marketplace but it has no legal meaning, we do keep the records

<sup>3</sup> The disclaimer at the website of Republic of Turkey Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Livestock reads “Source is the Aegean Exporter's Union. Data is based only on those products that the export firms declared as “organic” and do not reflect all the organic exports that materialized.” URL: <http://www.tarim.gov.tr/Konular/Bitkisel-Uretim/Organik-Tarim/Istatistikler>

<sup>4</sup> <http://ekolojikpazar.org/>

in the association's archives, to understand and observe the marketplace and also for control purposes."

Buğday marketplace coordinator argues that one role of civil society is to lay the foundations of a model for data collection and control combining all the marketplaces:

"It should be a web-based system; at each marketplace the municipality should use their own passwords to enter the date, producer, product, quantity and price. All the marketplaces will be connected so that one can easily obtain information regarding how much in total a certain producer has sold on a product basis. For example, we will be able to see how much parsley [a certain producer] has sold throughout a year. This could be used for checking with the data provided by the certification agencies to see whether he has planted that much parsley. We could also obtain revenue information since prices are entered as well. In addition, we keep the sales quantities and inventory levels of intermediaries. How much has s/he sold at each marketplace? We do the same job for intermediaries what the certification agencies do for producers."

This view is also supported by research; (Lehner, 2009, 49) suggests that the ministry should decide on general organic bazaar standards using the knowledge accumulated by Buğday.

The marketplace coordinator adds:

"We can give the data to scientists to use for research."

#### **5.4. Auditing function and sustaining the trust of consumers**

As expressed above Buğday uses the data gathered at the organic market primarily for control purposes. Any amount sold by a farmer above the production capacity or any product sold by a farmer that is not on his/her list of organic certified products are signals of potential fraud; these are communicated to the certification agency to be further investigated, (Demir, 2013b, 182). With respect to the auditing function, the NGO chair commented that:

"Each farmer has to inform the certification agency about the quantity brought and sold at the organic market but some attempt to provide incorrect information or none at all. We prevent this type of behavior by cross-checking the data we gather at the marketplace with the certification agencies."

Buğday also organizes additional random checks and controls for the products sold in 100% Ecological Marketplaces and pays farm visits to organic farmers. As a result of these independent checks, a few producers have been banned from the 100% Ecological Marketplaces. To sustain consumer trust, Buğday publicly reports the results of the

inspections conducted, at its website and through e-bulletins in a monthly basis. The NGO shares these results directly with the consumers at the NGO stalls in the ecological marketplaces. At these stalls, the NGO keeps a file for each producer containing all organic certificates and documents for consumers to review. Consumers frequently come to Buğday's stall to ask questions regarding products and voice their suspicions. Finding well-informed and rational answers to questions such as "can organic strawberry be produced in December?" refreshes the trust of consumers. As one consumer expressed in one of the interviews:

"The presence of Buğday at this marketplace is very reassuring. It is an independent entity that keeps an eye on the producers and intermediaries. If Buğday were not here, I wouldn't be either."

Building of these concrete mechanisms of transparency by Buğday has contributed to the material embedding to develop trust for 100% Ecological Marketplaces which act in a low-trust sector of organic food.

## **6. Social Impact of the 100% Ecological Marketplaces**

Besides providing a very much needed sales channel to organic farmers, Istanbul's 100% ecological marketplaces and particularly the cafe areas within them provide a space for dynamic interaction among consumers, producers, retailers and other stakeholders. They use these spaces to interact, exchange ideas, meet old friends and form new friendships and collaborations on a weekly basis. Consumer influences and direct contacts with fellow producers which have been reported elsewhere to motivate farmers and lead to social learning, innovation and entrepreneurship (Hunt, 2006; Hinrichs et al., 2004) are also observed to take place in Istanbul's 100% ecological marketplaces as well. In the case of the first 100% ecological marketplace, some consumers reported partnerships with farmers whereas some farmers reported new business ventures to produce much desired products by consumers. 100% Ecological Marketplaces have provided a space for activities like workshops on raising awareness on ecology related issues (such as book stands on ecology and environment, commemoration of special days and anniversaries), for building practical skills (such as home production of natural non-toxic cleaning materials, manufacturing wooden toys, baking bread, etc.), and for Buğday's activities as well. The exchange of ideas and problems is an example of information sharing that is necessary for the success of a supply chain in modern times (Simchi-Levi et al., 2003, 91-117) and has long been an important feature of traditional bazaars (Geertz, 1978). These exchanges have led to the development of mutual respect and a feeling of responsibility by regular interactions, mutual familiarity about living standards and styles of each other as well as farmers influencing farmers about new techniques of production and marketing such as direct sales from production site or internet. Given the multiplicity of stakeholders (Figure 3) and complexity of sorts of relationships (covering a range from power relations to transaction/market and trust relations between different stakeholders), the historical process and space provided by Buğday has also contributed to a social embedding of actors in a newly developed market.

Therefore, establishment of the 100% ecological marketplace(s) has provided a regular physical and intellectual space of interaction between different stakeholders and among those stakeholders themselves. Coupled with the framing of Buğday's ecological living discourse (Snow and Benford, 1988), this space has contributed to the formation and consolidation of an 'organic' movement in Turkey.

“A famous actor [name] comes to the 100% ecological market; he does his own shopping, he doesn't send a maid to do this. He comes with his family, spends time at the marketplace, has breakfast and hangs out there. That's very interesting. (...) Various types of people come to the ecological marketplace, for example [a well-known journalist and radio broadcaster] comes and chats with farmers. The 100% ecological marketplace became a venue for farmer-journalist and farmer-scientist communications. (...) Buğday and the municipality were planning to launch, a new ecological marketplace in [a city in Anatolia]. In a discussion they told [Buğday's marketplace coordinator] that which is not visited by the scientists, intellectuals and the artists of a city is not a market.” [NGO chair]

## **7. Conclusions and Discussion**

As presented above, a major obstacle of domestic accessibility of organic products for ordinary consumers has been overcome with the establishment of 100% ecological marketplaces. The progression of related prior activities of Buğday suggests that the process leading to the establishment of the 100% ecological marketplaces by Buğday is contingent; it's an action that was not planned already from the very beginning, but was made possible as a consequence of former activities and accumulation of human, social and symbolic capital (Bourdieu, 1998) around the association. This contingency and gradual capital accumulation also led to robustness, which exceptionally allowed an NGO to act as the chain captain (Demir, 2013b, 182-183) and govern a marketplace of a significant size of transactions, with the consent and trust of both producers and consumers. This robustness also made it possible to sustain the marketplace despite many difficulties including financial problems and internal disputes within Buğday about the management of the marketplaces, particularly during the initial years. As a result, 100% ecological marketplaces of Buğday have provided farmers a sales channel and consumers a trusted access to organic products. The meeting of stakeholders at the marketplace facilitates collaborations, strategic alliances, innovations, information exchange and development of relationships, not only in its economic sense, but also for social, civic and political action. In this sense, 100% ecological marketplaces constitute a turning point for the domestic market of organic products and the formation of an organic movement, not only locally, but also spreading and extending towards the production sites.

Intentional market development efforts by NGOs are rare processes, though not exceptional, particularly for poverty reduction purposes in development literature. A recent study (McKague et al., 2015) investigating CARE's<sup>5</sup> efforts of intermediation among actors to build-up a dairy sector based on smallholders of cattle in Bangladesh

---

<sup>5</sup> A well-known international aid and development NGO.



suggested that social dimension could be essential to develop a functioning market in certain settings. This process has been contrary to the established view that economic transactions lead to social relations as a spillover effect (Bardy et al., 2013 and Eapen 2012 quoted in McKague 2015, 1086). Buğday's case, however, does not comply to either view. Throughout the steps leading to the first 100% ecological marketplace and the functioning of the market, Buğday has been following a facilitator role for a weaving process of establishing and strengthening economic and social aspects of relationships within the market and the marketplace, not prioritizing either aspect over the other. This is not a linear process that could be narrated simply as a progression of events, but rather it should be interpreted as the formation of a complex web of relationships through material and social embedding of multiple actors.

However, this effort needs to be supplemented by the government, the retail sector and universities to properly expand the domestic market as suggested in (Lehner, 2009, 50; Özbilge, 2007, 219-220; and Demiryürek, 2004, 69-70). The problem of lack of data on organic food sales in Turkey at large has to be solved to truly grasp the extent of development of the organic sector. As in (Padel et al.; 2014), we suggest that data from a number of different sources (certification agencies, Buğday, surveys, etc.) to be used in the computation of an estimate of the organic trade volume in Turkey. Data needs to be cross-checked to ensure validity. Finally, the diverse forms of power relations between stakeholders who have varying and possibly conflicting goals require further research.

## REFERENCES

- Aktar C. & Ananias V. (2005). 04/03 Yeni bir ulusal politika: Ekolojik tarım - 05/03 Ekolojik tarım Türkiye'nin hayat sigortası - 06/03 Genetik değiştirme işlemleri hayatı tehdit ediyor. URL <http://www.zaman.com.tr>. Accessed 1 May 2007.
- Ananias V. (2006). Buğday'ın pazardaki tarihi: Bodrum'dan Şişli-Feriköy'e, *Buğday*, 38:10-13.
- Anıl P., Ananias O. A., Ananias V. (1999). Türkiye'de sağlıklı ekolojik ürün pazarı için biraraya geldik, *Buğday*, 2: 6-10.
- Antep G.. (2006). Dünyada ekolojik pazarlar, *Buğday*, 38:18-19.
- Babadoğan G.. & Koç D. (2004). Organic Agriculture in Turkey 2004, Country Reports: Turkey. Organic-Europe FiBL, [http://www.organic-world.net/fileadmin/documents/country\\_information/ARCHIVE/igeme-2004-country-report-turkey.pdf](http://www.organic-world.net/fileadmin/documents/country_information/ARCHIVE/igeme-2004-country-report-turkey.pdf) Accessed 17 April 2015.
- Bardy R., Rubens A. & Jackson G. (2013). Contributing to changes of social order in emerging nations: The spillover effect of foreign direct investment. *Journal of International Management Studies*, 8: 47-58.
- Biggart, N.W. & Delbridge, R. (2004). Systems of exchange. *Academy of Management Review*, 29: 28-49.

- Bourdieu P. (1998). *Practical Reason: on the Theory of Action*, Stanford University Press, Stanford.
- Buğday (2013). Runtalya’da Adımlar Tohumlar İçin Atılacak, [http://www.bugday.org/portal/haber\\_detay.php?hid=6123](http://www.bugday.org/portal/haber_detay.php?hid=6123). Accessed 9 January 2015.
- Buğday (2014). Buğday Adım Adım Sporcuları Runtalya 2014’te Koruncuklu Çocuklar İçin Koştı [http://www.bugday.org/portal/haber\\_detay.php?hid=7000](http://www.bugday.org/portal/haber_detay.php?hid=7000). Accessed 9 January 2015.
- Buğday (2015). Buğday hareketinin dünü ve bugünü <https://www.bugday.org/portal/hakkimizda.php?pid=1> Accessed 15 May 2015.
- Cox A. (2004). The art of the possible: relationship management in power regimes and supply chains. *Supply Chain Management*, 9(5): 346–356.
- Demir A.Y. (2013a). Turkey’s first organic bazaar. *European Scientific Journal*, 9(8): 1–17.
- Demir A.Y. (2013b). Supply chain management practices in an alternative food network: the first organic marketplace of Turkey. *International Journal of Business and Social Science*, 4(9): 179–187.
- Demiryürek K. (2011). The concept of organic agriculture and current status of in the world and Turkey. *GOÜ Ziraat Fakültesi Dergisi* 28(1): 27–36.
- Demiryürek K (2004). Organic agriculture in the world and Turkey. *Journal of Agriculture Faculty HR. University*, 8(3/4):63–71.
- Demiryürek K., Stopes C. & Güzel A. (2008). Organic agriculture: the case of Turkey. *Outlook on Agriculture*, 37(4):261–267.
- Eapen A. (2012). Social structure and technology spillovers from foreign to domestic firms. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 43: 244–263.
- Geertz C. (1978). The marketplace economy: information and search in peasant marketing. *The American Economic Review*, 68 (2):28–32.
- Güler S. (2006). Organic Agriculture in Turkey. *J. of Fac. of Agric. OMU* 21(2): 238–242.
- Hinrichs C.C., Gillespie G.W. & Feenstra G.W. (2004). Social learning and innovation at retail farmers’ markets. *Rural Sociology*, 69(1):31–58.
- Hunt A. R. (2006). Consumer interactions and influences on farmers’ market vendors. *Renewable Agriculture and Food Systems*, 22(1):54–66.
- Karakoç U. & Baykan B.G. (2009). Türkiye’de organik tarım geliyor, Betam, Bahçeşehir University, Research Note 035
- Kenanoğlu Z. & Karahan Ö. (2002). Policy implementations for organic agriculture in Turkey. *British Food Journal*, 104 (3/4/5):300–318.

- Lehner M. (2009). Hindrances local organic farmers are facing in the Turkish organic agricultural sector – an attempt to identify barriers and suggest ways to eliminate them. Masters Thesis. Uppsala, Sweden URL: [http://stud.epsilon.slu.se/666/1/lehner\\_m\\_091201.pdf](http://stud.epsilon.slu.se/666/1/lehner_m_091201.pdf) Accessed 13 March 2015.
- McKague K., Zietsma C. & Oliver C. (2015). Building the Social Structure of a Market. *Organization Studies*, 36(8): 1063–1093.
- Melnyk S.A., Lummus R.R., Vokurka R.J., Burns L.J. & Sandor J. (2009). Mapping the future of supply chain management: a Delphi study. *International Journal of Production Research*, 47(16): 4629-4653.
- Mutlu, N. (2007). Consumer Attitude and Behaviour towards Organic Food: Cross-cultural study of Turkey and Germany. Masters Thesis – unpublished, Universität Hohenheim. URL: <http://orgprints.org/13727/1/MasterThesis-ConsumerStudy-TR-DE.pdf>. Accessed 13 March 2015.
- Özbilge Z. (2007). An analysis of organic agriculture in Turkey: the current situation and basic constraints. *Journal of Central European Agriculture*, 8(2):213–222
- Padel S., Gerrard C.L. & Vieweger A. (2014). The case studies of the Organic Data network. 2nd OrganicDataNetwork Workshop, Bari, Italy, 10-11 July.
- Rapunzel. (2012). Turkey Project. URL: <http://www.rapunzel.de/uk/turkeiprojekt.html>. Accessed 12 July 2012.
- Renting H. & Wiskerke H. (2010). New emerging roles for public institutions and civil society in the promotion of sustainable local agro-food systems. In the Proceedings of 9th European IFSA Symposium (edited by I. Darnhofer and M. Grötzer), Vienna, Austria.
- Rottner H. (2007). Organic and fair trade marketing in Germany. In *The Handbook of Organic and Fair Trade Food Marketing* (edited by S. Wright and D.McCrea). Blackwell Publishing, Oxford.
- Sahota A. (2007). The international market for organic and fair trade food and drink. In *The Handbook of Organic and Fair Trade Food Marketing* (edited by S. Wright and D.McCrea). Blackwell Publishing, Oxford
- Sayın C., Brumfield R.G., Mencet M.N. & Özkan B. (2005). The organic farming movement in Turkey. *HortTechnology*, 15(4): 864–871
- Schaack D. (2014). Publication and Dissemination Strategies. 2nd OrganicDataNetwork Workshop, Bari, Italy, 10-11 July.
- Simchi-Levi D., Kaminsky P. & Simchi-Levi E. (2003). *Designing & managing the supply chain: concepts, strategies & case studies*. McGraw-Hill, New York
- Snow D.A. & Benford R.D. (1988). Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization. *International social movement research*, 1(1): 197-217.

- Spilková J., Fendrychová, L. & Syrovátková M. (2012). Farmers' markets in Prague: a new challenge within the urban shoppingscape. *Agriculture and Human Values*, 39(2): 197--191 doi:10.1007/s10460-012-9395-5
- TR (2004). Organic Agriculture Law 5262. Official Gazette of the Republic of Turkey, Date: 03.12.2004 Number: 25659, Ankara. URL: <http://www.resmigazete.gov.tr/eskiler/2004/12/20041203.htm> Accessed 10 March 2015.
- Zanolì R (2013). Improving European Organic Market Information - The OrganicDataNetwork Project. In *The World of Organic Agriculture - Statistics and Emerging Trends 2013*. Research Institute of Organic Agriculture (FiBL) and International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movements (IFOAM), Frick and Bonn.