



Tropentag, October 6-8, 2009, Hamburg

“Biophysical and Socio-economic Frame Conditions
for the Sustainable Management
of Natural Resources”

The Impact of Desertification on Welfare Positions of Farmers: The Case of Konya-Karapınar / Turkey

FATIME GUNES

Anadolu University, Sociology, Turkey

Abstract

Desertification is defined as “land degradation in arid, semiarid and dry subhumid areas resulting from various factors, including climatic and human activities” (UNCDD, 1995). “Degradation implies reduction of resource potential by one or a combination of processes acting on the land. These processes include water erosion, wind erosion and sedimentation by those agents, long-term reduction in the amount or diversity of natural vegetation, where relevant, and salinisation and sodication” (UNEP, 1992). In addition to these processes, there are many causes of desertification. For examples, these are over-cultivation poor soils, over-grazing by animals on fragile rangelands, excessive cutting of fuelwood in dry lands and inappropriate irrigation practices that results salination of agricultural land.

Although experts define and search the causes and indicators of desertification, it is important to reach how desertification affects on farmers from a sociological view of point. The main purpose of this paper is to discuss and evaluate how desertification affects on the living standard and welfare positions of farmers in Konya-Karapınar/Turkey. In this presentation, it will be shown the socioeconomic features of the families and their welfare position in terms of their saving, depth, and livelihood. Moreover, it will discuss how they evaluate their welfare situation. It is seen that in addition to structural condition, desertification have an enormous impact on the impoverishment of farmers. This paper depends on the research that was conducted in Konya Turkey in 2007. The data was collected from 150 women and 150 men who are farmers. Both qualitative and quantitative research methods were applied in this research. The research form that is applied in this research process consists of structured, semi-structured and open-ended questions.

Keywords: Desertification, impoverishment, socio-economic dimension, Turkey, welfare position of farmers