PARTICIPATING IN SUSTAINABILITY

AN INTERSECTIONAL ECOFEMINIST DISCOURSE ANALYSIS IN RURAL TURKEY

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Participating in Sustainability: An Intersectional Ecofeminist Discourse Analysis in Rural Turkey

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ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to conduct a discourse analysis of the term “sustainability” from an intersectional ecofeminist perspective, as well as to engage in an ethnographic study conducted within a sustainability project in rural Turkey. The central question of this research is how the interpretative repertoires of my research participants reflect contemporary embodied experiences of sustainability. In the context of this thesis, the term interpretative repertoire refers to particular stylistic and grammatical expressions in my research setting that provide significant means by which to understand my research participants’ values and ways of seeing the world. Analyzing two selected interpretative repertoires from my research participants’ conversations, namely *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* (“distributing blue beads”) and *özveri* (“self-sacrifice”), my analysis will demonstrate how these specific repertoires problematize the patriarchal and capitalist underpinnings of sustainability efforts in a contemporary Turkish context. Focusing upon crisis points when my research participants struggled to solidify their power and to establish meaning, I demonstrate how these interpretative repertoires work towards constructing gendered and classed relations in rural communities. Drawing upon theoretical discourse analysis as well as my ethnographic data, I argue that for sustainability to become truly “sustainable” it needs to be sensitive towards, and able to work with, participants’ gender and class differences. I suggest constructing counter-narratives to *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* as a means to oppose patriarchal dominations over both women and nature, as well as a democratization of the *özveri* interpretative repertoire to eliminate injustice and discrimination, transforming it into a double-sided request that participants in sustainability projects of all classes and genders can make and deploy to hold both themselves and each other accountable.

Keywords: Class, Development, Ecofeminism, Gender, Interpretative Repertoire, Intersectionality, Sustainability, Turkey

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INTRODUCTION

> ***Sustainability is, at its very heart, a political construct rather than a technical or scientifically objective notion. The policy goal of sustainability can be usefully understood as what might be termed an "over-arching societal value." In this sense, it is more akin to notions like "freedom," "justice" or "democracy" than to a specific policy commitment.***
>
> ***(Agyeman & Evans 1995, p. 36)***

This study constitutes a discourse analysis of sustainability as well as an ethnographic study of the embodied experiences of my research participants during their participation in a sustainability project situated in rural areas of Turkey. As the title suggests, first of all I approach sustainability as a concept that takes form not only in the theorizations of middle-class intellectuals mostly from the West, but also through the participation of those who are involved in sustainability projects in their villages. Whilst I pay attention to what is said—in the form of conversations with my research participants—I also pay purposeful attention to that which is not said (and not done) through physical labor. Secondly, the latter part of the title brings into focus the entanglements that emerge from shifting and changing power mechanisms. These mechanisms are rooted in larger discourses such as gender and class, and they fit within a still larger capitalist and patriarchal framework. However, these discourses are not fixed categories. Therefore, I approach them intersectionally in order to do justice to their complex dynamics.

Sustainability is not an innocent topic divorced from other politicized terminologies that place various levels of importance on social justice. Instead, sustainability is a story that companies, organizations, and governments tell to the public to brand their goods, and to garner support for their projects. However, some sustainability ambitions lack transparency and focus with regard to issues such as gender equality, religious freedom, and class equality. Whilst some sustainability projects might simply reinforce the status quo, others can have a much higher emancipatory potential.

My fascination with the richness and diversity of the meanings of sustainability provided the impetus to my research towards the end of the first year of my master's program in gender studies at Utrecht University. During this first year I had been introduced to the works of many feminist scholars, some of which had a particular impact on my thinking, such as Kimberlé Crenshaw, Rosi Braidotti, Judith Butler, bell hooks, Genevieve Lloyd, Audrey Lorde, and Donna Haraway. The obvious diversity in their contributions to feminist scholarship is undeniable, and the collective effect of engaging with

their works intertextually was to fuel my desire to critically explore and research environmental policies, projects and performances that were anthropocentric, androcentric and heteronormative in their practices. For example, I have gained a sensitivity to think intersectionally about the interlocking nature of oppression(s) (Crenshaw 1991). I became particularly interested in criticizing stable formations of identity in order to bring into focus performative aspects of gender, class, and other axes of difference (Butler 1990). Moreover, I have endeavored to become increasingly reflexive about both my own positionality as a researcher, and the inevitable situatedness of my knowledge (Haraway 1988). Black feminist thought has taught me, as a queer feminist of color, the value of the "outsider within" standpoint as a way in which to understand and participate in social phenomena—both up-close and from afar. In this way, I am able to see patterns that I would be unlikely to even notice if I were to be fully immersed within those situations (Collins 1986; hooks 1984; Lorde 1984). Furthermore, Braidotti's (2013) contributions to the formulation of posthumanism have enabled me to see the problematic aspects of a restricted humanism that does not take into consideration all forms of life. I made sense of her argument through my previous study of the human-centeredness of Western philosophy—a philosophy that works with dualisms, such as nature-culture and femininity-masculinity, and that has placed men and women as oppositional symbols of reason and the absence thereof (Lloyd 1993).

Although writing a full summary of what I have learnt in my master's program lies beyond the scope of this study, it is necessary to emphasize how being part of a feminist community—one that is critical of human-centered and gender-blind perspectives—has inspired me to conduct my independent scholarly research on a project aimed at fostering sustainability. This thesis is my attempt to unite theory and activism in a caring and attentive way, contributing to a critical understanding of andropocentric perspectives on nature and gender equality so that society is brought a step closer to transforming both itself and its interactions with the environment.

Whilst performing internet-based research, I discovered the website of an ecological project in Turkey, my country of origin. It was called TaTuTa and is run by the Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living. TaTuTa is an abbreviation that translates to English as "Eco-Agro Tourism and Voluntary Knowledge and Skills Exchange on Organic Farms."[1] Its website explains that

[1] The information from the Buğday Association's English website reads: "Buğday's ecological movement works to support, create and promote fair and sustainable production-consumption patterns in Turkey and beyond. Buğday's mission is to create ecological living conscience and sensitivity in the society both on the individual basis and as a whole; to offer solutions to the problems arising due to the irreversible destruction of the ecological systems and to support living in harmony with nature. The main working areas of Buğday can be summarized as: Organic Agriculture (e.g. %100 Ecological Market Places); Ecological Living (e.g. Camtepe Ecological Center); Agro-Biodiversity (e.g. Seed Network); Eco-Agro Tourism (e.g. TaTuTa -Eco-Agro Tourism and Voluntary Exchange); Urban Agriculture (e.g.

TaTuTa builds a network that connects volunteers with (organic) host farms, and states that in doing so it aims to promote cultural and educational experiences and to create a sustainable global community.[2]

My understanding of sustainability is not exactly the same as that of the Buğday Association. Their discourse on sustainability centers on creating harmony with nature and producing viable consumption and production patterns, whilst I explicitly look for an emphasis on social issues. I advocate that for sustainability to be truly "sustainable," it needs to be sensitive towards—and to have a strategy to work with—the differences that stem from narratives of gender and class.[3] In other words, consumption and production patterns should not be considered viable if people and other species involved in these patterns do not benefit equally from the system. My perspective is built on the work of Julian Agyeman, Robert D. Bullard and Bob Evans (2002), who argue:

> Sustainability cannot be simply a "green" or "environmental" concern, important though "environmental" aspects of sustainability are. A truly sustainable society is one where wider questions of social needs and welfare, and economic opportunity, are integrally related to environmental limits imposed by supporting ecosystems (Agyeman, Bullard & Evans 2002, p. 78).

I had no way of knowing the social implications of the TaTuTa project's sustainability with regard to lived experience or indeed, how such projects can work to improve and impact upon social issues. Therefore, in the weeks following my discovery of TaTuTa's website, I conducted extensive online research. I explored TaTuTa's database and visited the personal homepage of each farm associated with the TaTuTa project. These pages described the location of each TaTuTa farm; shared background information about its hosts; listed farming and animal husbandry opportunities available; and included comments made by previous volunteers.

At times, there were stark contrasts between what the Buğday Association wrote about their TaTuTa hosts and what the hosts wrote about themselves. For example, the Buğday Association's website stated that TaTuTa hosts "are comprised of individuals who receive visitors into their homes

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Cumhuriyetköy Community Garden)." For further information, see: http://bugdayglobal.org/?reqp=1&reqr=nzcdYz9bqUShoP5vMKD= [Accessed 29 November 2016].

[2] ibid.

[3] I admit that in a different context—such as in a country that has a more diverse multi-ethnic population—race, ethnicity, and other power differentials could have been equally important to investigate. However, it happens that my personal and professional experiences of TaTuTa farms did speak mostly to the differences of gendered and classed practices. Therefore, I did not introduce more categories of difference to my study.

as guests, without regard for race, creed, language or gender."[4] Nevertheless, certain TaTuTa farms made it very clear on their homepages that they only accepted married couples or single men. Such incongruences do, from the outset, suggest that sustainability as a participatory experience is gendered and influenced by heteronormative attitudes. It was precisely the exploration of such hints towards these gender-based disparities that made it so worthwhile to conduct a study based upon my fieldwork experience on TaTuTa farms. Using these selected farms in rural Turkey as a backdrop, such a study would show exactly how ideas of sustainability function at the level of lived experience and in the daily lives of those who participate in them. Moreover, this study would demonstrate, in specific ways, how such daily experiences bring to life a certain kind of understanding of sustainability that exists alongside pre-conceived notions of gender and class.

On the four TaTuTa farms at which I volunteered between August 1 and December 1, 2016, my tasks included gardening, farming, food production, food processing, and animal care. However, this study does not focus on the seeds used, the animals cared for, or the farming methods utilized, but rather on the social aspects of TaTuTa experience that lay beneath the surface. This research revolves around this central question: How do the interpretative repertoires of the TaTuTa project's participants speak about contemporary embodied experiences of the concept of sustainability? Interpretative repertoire is a terminology that refers to "a limited number of terms that are used in a particular stylistic and grammatical way" (Potter & Wetherell 1988, p. 172). These terms are drawn from social interactions and they have the potential to provide flexible resources that yield intersectional explanations of how axes of difference such as gender and class are perceived. Interpretative repertoires are also ideologically charged, providing researchers with clues to the internal worlds in which research participants live. These worlds can be different to—and at times in conflict with—the external world because the former is morally embedded in what research participants accept as right or wrong. Therefore, my efforts are aimed at establishing an understanding towards, and demonstrating the complexities of, TaTuTa members' interpretative repertoires that, in turn, indirectly suggest how they make sense of gender and class—concepts that influence how sustainability is perceived and enacted. Therefore, I consider an interpretative repertoire methodology to be the best way forward towards uncovering the social significance and the social consequences of the discourses enacted on TaTuTa farms. Throughout this research, I will highlight the links between the interpretative repertoires my interlocutors use in their everyday lives and the macro level of sustainability politics.

In this study, my aim is not to formulate broadly generalized conclusions and importantly, as I have only lived and worked in a few selected TaTuTa farms in two regions of the country, I must

[4] Accessed from: http://www.tatuta.org/?p=2&lang=en [Accessed 10 March 2017].

concede that my exploratory research might not offer conclusive results. I cannot over-emphasize that the ethnographic data collected and its subsequent theorization does not attempt to represent all TaTuTa farms in Turkey. Nevertheless, I believe this research can contribute to ongoing debates within ecofeminism—especially its cultural and historical specificity. The validity of this research comes from the *fruitfulness* of the analysis, which includes (but is certainly not limited to) its ability to use ecofeminism's analytical frameworks as a way to problematize the patriarchal and capitalist underpinnings of sustainability efforts in a contemporary Turkish context (Potter & Wetherell 1987, p. 85). I trace the journey and significance of certain interpretative repertoires used by TaTuTa participants during naturally occurring social interactions. I do this especially through moments of crisis; occasions during which participants struggle to solidify their power and accordingly establish meaning (Fairclough 1992). Particular uses of interpretative repertoires help to gain an understanding of how exactly "gendered access to political, economic, and natural resources and decision making power" work on the TaTuTa farms at which I volunteered (Rocheleau 1995; Rocheleau et al. 1996).

As the following chapters will show, interpretative repertoires also draw links between the oppression of both women and nature by patriarchal institutions. They do so by offering a critique from "gaps in the structure" (Haraway 1992, p. 299). Through my analysis of the selected interpretative repertoires I aim to uncover the dominant naturalized understandings of reality that impact participatory experiences of sustainability, and make an attempt to establish an alternative understanding of the world. Acknowledging Haraway's "gaps in the structure," I do not base my study on pre-established notions such as "Turkish women," "working class," or "Muslim identity" because to do so would embed me in the very structures I wish to critique. Therefore, I position my study as occupying a space that lies in-between strictly divided categories (e.g., nature and culture) in order to contemplate and vocalize a more socially just world, thus making this research inevitably political. By unraveling the interpretative repertoires of TaTuTa participants, this study opens up key terms in daily discussions and reveals their potential to enable change. In this regard, this research claims political significance because it plays a humble role in challenging power relations in society (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 117).

The chapters of this study are structured as follows: Chapter one focuses on methodology and methods. It explains how and why I use discourse analysis as my main methodology—specifically how and why I chose discursive psychology with particular focus on interpretative repertoires throughout. This approach is innovative because it is frequently employed in laboratory experiments and surveys in the field of psychology, but not in ethnographic fieldwork. Therefore, I have taken a calculated risk in the way that I have gathered my material—a risk I consider worth taking in order to consolidate the relevance of my research from the perspective of innovation. In addition, this chapter

has a section that discusses ethnography as my method and reflects on my experience of conducting participant observation. I further explain the analytical strategies of discursive psychology that I utilize in order to make use of my field notes and justify my intersectional approach, explaining why I decided to focus on gender and class in this research context, rather than on other axes of difference, such as race and ethnicity. I take into account the effects of my own presence on my investigation, both as a volunteer and a researcher, and as a native and an outsider. Finally, I lay out the theoretical framework of my study.

Having established the important elements of my methodology and methods in my opening chapter, chapter two focuses on the question of sustainability from an intersectional ecofeminist perspective. In this chapter, I present relevant theoretical background material on ecofeminism—material that is also relevant to the discussion on sustain
ability. The chapter then moves on to analyze contested meanings of sustainability from a specifically ecofeminist perspective. To do so, I discuss common terminologies employed, not only in ecofeminist-sensitive arguments on sustainability, but also in wider academic contexts. Examples include "weak and strong sustainability" (Haughton & Hunter 1994, p.19), and "sustainable development" (Rees 1995, p.343). I foreground the socio-economic issues and environmental concerns that make up the axes that cover different standpoints on sustainability discourses (Hopwood et al. 2005). I situate ecofeminism amongst these standpoints and justify its relevance as a conceptual framework with which to approach sustainability.

From chapter three onwards, I dive into my ethnographic data, using the selected interpretative repertoires for analysis. The interpretative repertoire focus for this chapter is *mavi boncuk*—literally translated as "blue bead." For example, a woman who is considered morally low and flirts with every man is said to distribute blue beads to everyone.[5] This is a disciplinary tool that emancipates men in their social behavior whilst attacking the honor of potentially any woman, especially those who are unmarried. I discuss the origins of this interpretative repertoire, how it is used, and the ways in which it functions in gendered power relations in rural communities. By doing so, I aim to demonstrate that there are limitations specific to women and their participation in environmental struggles for sustainability. I discuss how and why these limitations are detrimental, not only for women, but also for the environment, other species, and, curiously enough, for men themselves. Moreover, I situate my analysis of *mavi boncuk* in relation to the gender-based division of labor (Kandiyoti 1987; Kandiyoti 1988), and gender performativity (Butler 1990). I explicitly demonstrate that in rural areas of patricentric societies such as Turkey, gendered roles and performances prescribed for women

[5] I will explain this concept more thoroughly later on in chapter three.

contribute to the mechanism that associates them with nature and help justify the exploitation of both nature and women. Following this, I investigate how sustainability projects could work on constructing counter-narratives to *mavi boncuk* in order to challenge the patriarchal domination of both women and nature, as well as to fight prevalent injustice (Petrzelka & Marquart-Pyatt 2011).

Chapter four employs an *özveri* interpretative repertoire focus, which translates as "self-sacrifice." I show how *özveri* discourse is diffused into everyday practices that are both produced by, and productive of, gendered and classed relations. Building on existing ecofeminist studies that identify the problems associated with capitalist patriarchal systems for both women and nature, I argue how the regular use of the *özveri* interpretative repertoire can work to solidify unequal and unjust (economic) power relations whilst also having detrimental effects on the environment, especially in the context of ecotourism (Shiva 1988). According to my analysis, the *özveri* interpretative repertoire perpetuates the elite masculinity of the master by assigning a low rationality and primitive nature to the working classes (Plumwood 1993, p. 23). I argue that this ascription both naturalizes and feminizes the working classes and thus increases their vulnerability to exploitation without providing any of the conditions or training that might assist them in making sustainable decisions. Understanding this phenomenon in relation to the question of sustainability, I argue for the democratization of the *özveri* interpretative repertoire so that it might become a double-sided request that participants of all classes and genders involved in sustainability projects can ask of each other, thus holding both themselves and each other accountable without facing injustice and discrimination.

My conclusion is drawn from the analyses I make in my previous chapters—based upon my ethnographic data. In my conclusion, I reiterate the personal accountability I accept for working with some interpretative repertoires rather than others. I point out that I have selected these discourses as a means by which to examine contemporary thinking in the rural communities in which I performed participant observation. I explain why, after conducting fieldwork and doing extensive research on the notion of sustainability from an intersectional ecofeminist perspective, I am convinced that the selected interpretative repertoires—namely *mavi boncuk* and *özveri*—matter if sustainability is to become truly "sustainable," in the sense that it is sensitive towards, and able to work with, differences that stem from participants' gender and class in a just manner. In doing so, I contribute to feminist studies by demonstrating—in the specific context of the selected farms in rural Turkey—how sustainability is a discourse that always concerns power relations. Because of this, such a focus on how sustainability is performed can be the starting point for a dynamic form of social transformation within currently patriarchal societies.

CHAPTER 1: METHODOLOGY & METHODS

> ***Every discourse, even a poetic or oracular sentence, carries with it a system of rules for producing analogous things and thus an outline of methodology.***
>
> ***(Derrida & Weber 1995, p. 200)***

In this chapter, I expose the methodology as well as the methods used in this research. The first part of the chapter discusses discourse analysis as a methodology. I explain the productive engagement between feminism and discursive psychology—the branch of discourse analysis with which I work. The second section delves into the reasons for, and consequences of, using ethnography as a method. I elaborate on how I make sense of participant observation and discuss the need to approach this research intersectionally. Further, I justify why I find value in focusing on gender and class as the axes of difference for this study. The next section of this chapter takes account of my own situatedness as a researcher and its impact on the knowledge I produce; the representations I make; the organization of my research material; and my descriptions of interactions in the field. In short, I take responsibility for the bond between the researcher and the ethnographic writing itself. I take issue with the dualities posed by my embeddedness, both as a volunteer and a researcher, and as a native and a stranger. Moreover, I situate Turkey in a social context that lies outside of the normative interpretations of the West, and thus justify why the application of ecofeminist theories in this landscape is not only valid, but also very much in need of further research. In the final section, I explore how my methodology and methods work well in the light of ecofeminism as the theoretical framework in which I operate. I mention in specific ways how ecofeminism informs my approach to my methodology and methods, and also demonstrate how I aim to contribute to ecofeminist research.

1.1 Discourse Analysis / Discursive Psychology / Interpretative Repertoire

As a starting point, this study adopts the definition of discourse as "a particular way of talking about and understanding the world or an aspect of the world" (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 1). To carry out critical research with discourse(s), I accept social constructivist assumptions about language and identity. They include a rejection of the concept of reality as an objective truth, instead acknowledging it as a product of discourse (Burr 2003, p. 3; Gergen 2005, p. 266); highlighting the historical and cultural specificity of discourses (Burr 2003, p. 3); emphasizing anti-essentialism when reviewing

social relations, identities and knowledge (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 16); and recognizing the role of social processes in knowledge production and ways of understanding the world (Burr 2003, p. 4; Gergen 2005, p. 268).

These characteristics of language and identity are widely represented in feminist studies. To start with, feminist epistemology theorizes the ways in which gender influences our conceptions of knowledge and how we perceive the knowing subject. In her much-quoted article, Donna Haraway (1988) states that knowers are situated and embodied, and that their emotions, attitudes, interests and values provide a background that cannot be divorced from the knowledge they seek and the results they obtain. In Sandra Harding's (1991) terms, this issue is about taking responsibility for one's situation and deliberating its impact on one's academic representations (see also Alcoff & Potter 1993). Other feminist theorists such as Judith Butler (1990) highlight the contextual and performative aspects of gender. This model of postmodernist thinking claims that reality is discursively constructed as gendered. Being informed by these numerous feminist insights, this study rejects a notion of discourse that is rooted in an absolute, unchanging, and all-encompassing reality, coming to terms with the plurality of situated knowledges as highlighted by feminists of color and queer feminists (Lorde 1984).

Inherently, conducting discourse analysis is about studying power. I use both Max Weber's and Michel Foucault's definitions of power, albeit with a distinctly feminist twist. Weber (1978) proposes that power is "the probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his own will despite resistance" (p. 53). Whereas Foucault extends his reach towards more abstract and symbolic perceptions of power in his writing about the structures and mechanisms of power (Foucault & Rabinow 1991). For Foucault, "the multiplicity of force relations [is] immanent in the sphere in which they operate and which constitute their own organization" (Foucault & Hurley 2008, p. 92). Hence, from a feminist point of view, I suggest that conceptions of power—practiced and formulated through discourse and other physical or verbal performances—are also shaped by gendered interactions.

That power relations constitute our world is a well-established position in poststructuralist feminism, and it is precisely this perspective that my study takes in the course of its discourse analysis. This account of feminism borrows from Foucault's analysis of disciplinary power and its ability to both regulate and surveil bodies and their movements, applying it to the gendered disciplining of women's bodies (Bartky 1990). Butler (1997) takes Foucault's insights a step further, pointing towards processes of subjection that act as regulatory towards the category of women, with the power to determine which bodies matter, and whose lives are liveable or grievable (p. 201). Hence, the potential of discourse analysis to study power relations in a disciplined and systematic manner, and to foreground its gendered mechanisms, is the primary justification for choosing this methodology. It is

important to emphasize that these very gendered mechanisms intersect with other axes of difference, such as class, race, and religion—all within various overlapping narratives of power. I pay attention to the markers of difference, status, insignificance, privileges and disadvantages that are implied by the discourses on TaTuTa farms. I actively listen for the cues that suggest any kind of objective pursued by discourse—whether to maintain privileges, or to disobey them. Lastly, I bear in mind how the TaTuTa project is institutionalized; with its own regulations, hierarchical structures, relative autonomies, regulations, surveillance, and distribution of power relations in the social sphere—an issue more thoroughly discussed in the section focusing on intersectionality section below.

Here it is worthwhile to briefly discuss why I borrow from the discursive psychology branch of discourse analysis (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 12). Unlike other approaches that view discourse as a relatively abstract system, discursive psychology approaches it "as language use in everyday text and talk" (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 118). Moreover, influenced by Wittgenstein's work—which treats psychological states not as deeper essences behind words, but rather as social activities—discursive psychology develops tools to study how language contributes to the constitution of experiences and subjective realities (Wittgenstein 1953; see also Potter & Wetherell 1987; Shotter 1993; Wetherell 1995). Because of these two reasons, I am convinced that discursive psychology captures well the notion that people, including the TaTuTa participants who make up my research participants, do not have fixed, unchanging inner essences. Their psychological realities, constituted through their situated language use or language use in everyday texts and talk are fluid (Potter & Wetherell 1988; Shotter 1993). Hence, discursive psychology implies that there is hope for social and political change towards a more gender-aware sustainability, which can come about with changes in everyday conversations and occurrences.

Equally important is the productive engagement that exists between discursive psychology and feminism—one that works very much to the advantage of this study. To begin with, both feminism (as perceived by many feminist scholars and activists) and discursive psychology have the tradition of maintaining critical perspectives on science; fighting against prejudice; and acknowledging the constructed nature of social categories, such as gender (Weatherall 2011). For this reason, discursive psychology and feminist research are perceived to enjoy a close conceptual proximity to each other in some circles (Burman & Parker 1993). Both fields of study value research conducted in an ethical manner, as well as remaining reflexive about issues of representation when analyzing research participants' worlds discursively (Weatherall, Gavey & Potts 2002). In addition, previous studies conducted within discursive psychology went a long way towards demonstrating how common sense descriptions shape and reproduce gendered inequality with regard to questions of sex, work, and motherhood (Weatherall & Priestley 2001). Therefore, it seems fair to say that discursive psychology

secures, for the feminist agenda of this study, a pragmatic approach to delineate the gendered power relations that lie at the core of social interactions in the field.

In line with discursive psychology, this study favors the use of the term interpretative repertoire instead of the broad label of discourse itself in order to emphasize the flexibility and dynamic nature of discourses that exist within everyday social interactions, as well as their power to enable social actions (Potter & Wetherell 1988, p. 3). Interpretative repertoires include verbal and written interactions, meanings, conversations, narratives, explanations, accounts and anecdotes (ibid., p. 7). Jonathan Potter and Margaret Wetherell define interpretative repertoire as "a limited number of terms that are used in a particular stylistic and grammatical way" (ibid., p. 172). As discussed in the introduction, this research pays particular attention to discourses on *mavi boncuk* and *özveri* in chapters three and four respectively. By doing so, I do not endeavor to discover if these interpretative repertoires are actually true or false descriptions of the world (ibid., p. 95). Instead, I am interested in how these interpretative repertoires are constructed as true for TaTuTa participants themselves; how they are internalized in social dialogues; and how these interpretative repertoires contribute to the creation of the sustainability project as a daily, lived, and gendered reality.

It is important to stress here why I delve into these interpretative repertoires for my feminist project and how they fit into a research master's thesis in gender studies. My introduction to interpretative repertoires came from a study that explored racial discrimination through discourse (Potter & Wetherell 1988). What helped this study to make a convincing argument for the presence of racism against the Maori in New Zealand was its ability to coin interpretative repertoires. Working with interpretative repertoires enabled Potter and Wetherell (1988) to gain specificity when discussing the inconsistencies, basic assumptions, and inner workings of discourses that were used in creating knowledge and establishing truth (p. 179). As a result, the conclusion of this study was interesting, politically useful, and encouraging for future studies (such as my own) that do not necessarily study oppression exclusively based on racial differences, but rather on the intersectional entanglements of gender and class. By analyzing interpretative repertoires in my feminist research project, I seek to gain specificity when I work across differences. In doing so I underline my thesis' commitment, albeit in a humble way, to assist in social change. In this way my writing on the inner workings of the selected interpretative repertoires becomes a subtle form of activism, aiming to emancipate those who are marginalized, othered, and oppressed by these discourses.

Hence, this study attempts to answer its research question by choosing a sample set of texts from everyday conversations on the TaTuTa farms where ethnographic research was conducted. These texts are naturally occurring material, and they are coded based on identified themes (Potter & Wetherell 1987, p. 167). Because my fieldwork resulted in approximately five hundred pages of field

notes, it was counterproductive, let alone impossible, to analyze each and every word. Therefore, a crisis point technique was used to identify instances in which conflicts arose during social interactions (Fairclough 1992). As mentioned in Norman Fairclough's (2012) work, participants' repetition of a statement, hesitation, silence, or a sudden change in style are indicative of crisis points (p. 13). Chapter three and four show how *mavi boncuk* and *özveri* serve as interpretative repertoires that are used in crisis points; how their exploration has an explanatory potential; and how their study has the ability to provide a novel way to understand power-laden and gendered sustainability projects.

1.2 Ethnography / Participant Observation

Ethnography was a suitable method with which to answer my research question in this exploratory study. This method was used to acquire data for this research through my participation in the activities of each TaTuTa farm where I worked as a volunteer from August to December, 2016. These activities included working in the vineyards, helping with lambing, and collecting eggs from the farms' chickens. I remained conscious of the fact that, despite working together and living under the same roof with TaTuTa participants for a brief period, unequal power dynamics were always present in our engagements—importantly, not necessarily always favoring either me or them. For example, I observed that because I worked on the TaTuTa farms for free, and the owners fed and hosted me, at times they behaved as though they had a degree of control over me. I justify this observation by noting the discrepancy between the hours of work listed on each farm's website and the actual hours of work that were demanded of me. This power dynamic positioned me very much as the vulnerable party. However, my TaTuTa hosts were also vulnerable in so much that they had opened their home to a stranger from outside their community, exposing any potential shortcomings to a researcher from a Western institution. I have no doubt that, had I stayed longer on each farm, I could have developed a closer relationship with, and better understanding of, my research participants. Nevertheless, in the limited time that we had together, I became part of their daily lives. I have chosen not to reveal their names to respect their privacy.

Living with my research participants did not make me an "insider." Whilst we were sharing time and space, we were not always participating in the same reality. For this reason, we did not always share the same worries, pleasures, or wishes. Moreover, participating in TaTuTa activities made me think that, rather than participant observation, I was instead engaged in "the observation of participation" (Tedlock 1992, p. 69). As Barbara Tedlock (1992) notes, feminist ethnographic fieldwork critiques the division between "an emotionally engaged participant" and "a cooly dispassionate observer of the lives of others" (p. 70). This approach to ethnography rejects the idea of

an unbridgeable opposition between self and other; researcher and research participant (Jules-Rosette 1975, p. 8). Following in the footsteps of previous feminist researchers, I have focused firmly on the observation of participation. This approach offered a comparative advantage, as I did not necessarily have to choose between focusing on the self or the other in my ethnographic writing. Instead, I concentrated on "the character and process of the ethnographic dialogue" (Tedlock 1992, p. 70). In these dialogues, I was an equal participant (Dwyer 1982; Johnson 1984; Lavie 1990). In the ethnographic dialogue, as Alan Bryman (2006) suggests in his characterization of participant observation, I contextualized my research "as part of the wider social processes in which it takes place" (p. 3). Interpretative repertoires that came from our ethnographic dialogues were indeed referenced to these wider social processes.

Whilst I did not explicitly choose to focus on women (my research participants were all those involved with the TaTuTa farms on which I also lived and worked; both men and women), this does not make my research less feminist. In fact, the interpretative repertoires that male TaTuTa participants frequently used had significant influence on the lives of women and their relationship with their environment. These interpretative repertoires reveal a power-play that tensions participation in sustainability projects. To capture the variety of my participants' experiences, thoughts and feelings, I let them set the agenda during our conversations. As a result, there were more ethnographic field notes than I could intelligibly place in my study. Therefore, as James Clifford (2002) writes, I had to gather, select, and detach diverse experiences from their original temporal occasions, and—by focusing my writing on specific interpretative repertoires that were crucial to the meaning of these experiences—give them an enduring value (p. 231). Moreover, all conversations were conducted in Turkish and I translated the sections used for this study into English. It is likely that some nuances and layers of meaning were lost in this process.

Another aspect of the ethnographic process that I experienced as both (and equally) challenging and interesting concerned the interpretation of my engagements with the participants. It was not easy to decipher when they made a joke and when they spoke seriously. In some cases, what research participants held as absolute reality appeared incomprehensible to my own meaning making. However, when they made a joke, the reasoning of the joke was not too far off from the way they saw reality. Evidently, my struggle to make sense of their words was apparent, as was revealed when one of my research participants openly called me naive. However, rather than the naivety of an individual, what I experienced can be better understood in light of Stuart Hall's (1997) comments:

> Individuals may differ as to their social class, gendered, racial and ethnic characteristics, but they will not be able to make meaning until they have identified

with those positions which the discourse constructs, subjected themselves to its rules, and hence become the subjects of its power/knowledge (Hall 1997, p. 56).

Because I did not always identify with the way participants' discourses positioned them, I sometimes struggled to understand them. Nevertheless, I do not take this struggle as a weakness. Rather, I interpret it as an opportunity to identify areas in which there are competing discourses. In other words, it is likely that competing discourses reveal themselves through our conversations as moments in which we attempt to assign meaning to the same occurrence. Hence, having competing discourses made it challenging for us to understand each other.

1.3 Intersectionality

I use the term intersectionality to point to the notion that areas of domination and subordination (based on race, gender, and class) tend not to occur in isolation, but rather occur interactively and therefore produce compound effects (Crenshaw 1991; Moraga & Anzaldua 1981). Kimberlé Crenshaw, the feminist legal theorist through whom I was introduced to the concept of intersectional selfhood, develops a common area of research between critical race theory and feminism in order to advance a nuanced approach to the workings of studies examining narratives of privilege or discrimination against certain groups of people (Crenshaw 1993). My working definition of intersectionality for this thesis is that the concept essentially concerns the gaining of sensitivity and increasing one's willingness to recognize and address multiple intersecting inequalities. This definition is different from identity-based theories in important ways, not least because it resists the notion that the components that make up identity have an *a priori* relationship with one another (Hancock 2007). Overall, intersectionality may appear as an ambiguous and open-ended concept for some (Davis 2008). However, it is precisely this open-endedness that allows for new intersections to be recognized in new research projects and in ever-changing social environments that require a dynamic approach in order to detect inequalities.

Over the years, many feminist scholars have integrated the idea of intersectionality into their work, whilst others have questioned its applicability. For the purposes of this study, some of these publications are of major importance. Joan Acker (1999) proposes that the concept of class should not be examined as an abstract construct studied in isolation. Instead, she argues that it is already embedded within social processes that construct gender relations. My interpretation of her argument is that if we look closely into the gendered performances of our research participants within their discourses, we can also gain understanding of the workings of class. In addition, Susanna George (2001) draws

attention to the ways in which systems of discrimination could be tackled by understanding how categories such as colonization, history, race and class, along with gender, work as avenues of power. Perceiving the simultaneous workings of these categories—not only as weaknesses prone to discrimination, but also as a source of unique capabilities with which to perceive the world and to function within it—provides a vital contribution to feminist deployments of intersectionality.

As the list of differences that can be understood via intersectionality is endless, deciding upon, and examining concretely, the social categories that are rendered important in a given discourse is of particular significance. During the five months in which I volunteered and conducted research on TaTuTa farms, I experienced gender and class as the most predominant markers of difference. They characterized both how individuals were treated and how those individuals were permitted to treat others. However, by making this claim I do not mean to essentialize these axes of difference as if they meant the same thing for all TaTuTa members, or even suggest that these differences would have necessarily been of any major importance to another researcher. I acknowledge that gender and class became predominant characteristics of my TaTuTa experience not least because of my own, unique positionality as a researcher. By making this statement, I ground my thinking in feminist standpoint theory, giving epistemological privilege to the standpoint of women (Rose 1983; Smith 1974). For example, this positionality suggests that because men occupy a privileged position in patriarchal societies, they can be ignorant of situations that act against the interest of their subordinates. In addition, men might be unaware of the mechanisms that privilege them. Women, however, may have superior access to this information (Collins 1990). In other words, the epistemological privilege of the oppressed—in whichever combination of gender, class, race and other social positioning—comes from the ability to see things from the perspective of the oppressor and the oppressed simultaneously (Harding 1991).

In light of this information, this study aims to contribute to existing literature detailing empirical applications of the concept of intersectionality. In doing so, this research strives to accomplish two things: Firstly, to make intersectionality as "a notoriously ambiguous idea" more concrete (Gopaldas 2013, p. 90). Secondly, to fight against the homogenization of the members of any social category and the construction of fixed identities such as "working class person," "woman," and "Muslim." Thus, in the context of this study, approaching these axes of difference intersectionally means that research participants are not homogenized within any single social category, but are instead allowed to be represented with all their diversities, including the variations amongst individual members along the lines of gender and class.

1.4 Situating Myself / Situating Turkey

A personal friend, who is a human rights and public policy expert from Turkey, with whom I discussed my research topic when I visited her for a couple of days in Ankara after I had completed my fieldwork, made eye opening remarks concerning the importance and influence of individuality in the research field that I find useful to share here:

> If I lived in the places [TaTuTa farms] that you lived, probably I would have experienced only 10% of what you have gone through and reacted 10% of your reactions. I grew up within this [Turkish] culture. I was raised in Konya, I went to Islamic schools, and I know how harassment works in patriarchal cultures and how people see the world from an Islamic framework. If I were there, I could have been with those people in a state of genderlessness [*kendimi cinsiyetsizleştirerek* in Turkish]. I would have understood them really well and I wouldn't attract attention the way that you probably did.

Even though I am Turkish, as are most TaTuTa participants (and my friend quoted above), this does not mean that we do not negotiate different values and interests during our interactions. For example, my friend and a significant number of my research participants come from conservative parts of Turkey, whereas I was born and raised in Istanbul until the age of 15, after which I predominantly lived in Western countries such as Italy and the USA. Therefore, even though I am no less ethnically and phenotypically Turkish (as if there exists an ethnically-typical or phenotypical Turk) than my research participants, we were not exposed to the same discourses and have thus experienced different constructions of the meanings of gender and class. Referring to her field work amongst the Bedouins of Egypt, Lila Abu-Lughod (1999) describes herself as an insider as well as an outsider simultaneously because, just like me, she shares the ethnicity and language of her research participants whilst differing in lifestyle. Inspired by her thinking and my own experience, I describe myself simultaneously as a native and an outsider.

As a consequence, and despite being a Turkish researcher, I was at times confused by some of the acts and comments of the participants. However, most importantly, my astonishment is not read in the same manner as it would have been, had I been American, Dutch, or Italian. For example, if I were a foreigner who was confused about my research subjects' superstitious behavior, they might have

been inclined to approach me with more tolerance.[6] But being a Turk, looking like a Turk, and speaking my research participants' native language, yet not abiding by the superstitious practices that govern their lives, I shocked them at best and offended them at worst. Approaching the issue from my point of view, I can say that there is a difference between being surprised by the acts of people from within my own culture and being surprised by that of people from another culture. There might be less emotional triggers, frustrations and more tolerance towards people who are clearly and openly representing another culture, and with whom there is no space for any kind of competition over definitions of *Turkishness* in certain discourses on gender and class.

Moreover, when conducting fieldwork and soon after it was over, one of the most difficult questions I faced concerned the performative aspects of ethnography. How was an ethnographer to "act" in challenging situations? Was she allowed to be a little confrontational? Could she openly express opposing views when engaging with her research participants, or was there a silent rule to appear approving at all times? For example, a TaTuTa participant addressed me as "you women" in a conversation and made demeaning remarks about the nature of women generally. Should I, as a female researcher, have ignored him? Or did this type of ignorance conflict with the activist side of a feminist ethnographer? After all, was I not conducting feminist research to bring about change? As I worked through these interpretative repertoires in the course of this study, I also tackled these questions. They helped me solidify my feminist outsider-within position with "a peculiar composition of nearness and remoteness, concern and indifference" (Simmel 1921, p. 322). However, I also observe that some of my research participants confided in me more readily specifically because of this position—they spoke almost in confessional tones when I was with them. I listened to their stories, confessions, and perspectives on things that they care about—not only as personal narratives, but also as interpretative repertoires that are informative of wider social and cultural dilemmas.

Similar to the need to situate myself as a researcher, there is a need to situate Turkey in a social context in order to address the problematic issue of applying ecofeminist theory—with its roots in Western philosophy—for a discourse analysis and feminist ethnography taking place in a non-Western context. Ecofeminists agree on the connection between the oppression of women and nature, arguing both are positioned within Western philosophy as passive and possessing nurturing qualities (Griffin 1978). Moreover, Ecofeminists argue that such formations of women and nature make them both vulnerable to male domination (Warren 1990). However, some scholars—especially non-Western feminists—challenge these ecofeminist conceptions and argue that "[t]he association of women and

[6] Examples include associating a problem with their car's engine with their lack of performing a ritual cleansing of their bodies the day before.

nature, however, is not a transhistorical and transcultural phenomenon" (Li 1993, p. 272). For example, Huey-li Li (1993) suggests that the respectful attitude of the Chinese towards nature conflicts with the low status of women in Chinese society (p. 276). This shows that the relationship between women and nature is not a cross-cultural phenomenon—at least not one that works in the same way in different social contexts.

However, when it comes to rural Turkey—the context within which this study was conducted—I have observed that the ecofeminist connection between the simultaneous oppression of nature and women holds true. Turkey provides a capitalist and patriarchal context to which ecofeminism can offer a critique. Firstly, its predominantly Muslim population is guided by the Qur'an, in which God gives permission to humankind to make use of nature without harming it (Ali 2017, p. 108). Scholars suggest that in the Qur'an, the human spirit is placed above the power of nature (ibid., p. 110). Human beings can thus make a choice to use their agency to bring about a sustainable existence in their environment with other sentient beings or not. Juxtaposing this Islamic interpretation with a Qur'anic verse that suggests that men are in charge of women, I reach the conclusion that, both in their affairs with nature and women, men are instructed to do the non-harmful thing (*Surah An-Nisa* [4:34] 2017). However, men are privileged and thus have the power to make choices about their interactions with both nature and women. Women and nature are constructed as passive, without the agency that man are granted, and therefore vulnerable to male domination. In other words, in the context of rural Turkey, in which men sit higher in the hierarchal order than women and other sentient beings, and despite the recommendation that men use their power for good, ecofeminism calls into question prevailing logic of power.

1.5 Ecofeminism / Intersectionality / Pluralism

I turn to ecofeminism as a comprehensive framework that provides ways to understand gendered interactions with the environment as well as social engagements in rural areas that are colored by power differences, such as those that stem from discrepancies in class. A more detailed introduction to ecofeminism appears in the following chapter, in which I cover an intersectional ecofeminist understanding of sustainability as a concept that concerns power relations. However, my reason to touch upon ecofeminism in this chapter is to explain how it informs my methodology and methods. Firstly, ecofeminism is a theoretical framework that is understood intersectionally by many scholars (Davis 2008, p. 7). Because ecofeminism is an area of study that is concerned with understanding the interconnected relationship between the domination of women and the domination of nature, it is argued that ecofeminism was already "intersectional" well before the term came into use (Kings 2017,

p. 70). More specifically, ecofeminism lies within the parameters of what Leslie McCall (2005) has identified as an "intracategorical approach" to the complexities of intersectionality by focusing on "the neglected points of intersection" (p. 1773). This approach is presented as different from anticategorical and intercategorical approaches to intersectionality, which respectively deconstruct social categories themselves and temporarily adopt pre-existing social categories (ibid., p. 1774). Ecofeminism's intracategorical use of intersectionality helps us to recognize the durability of social categories whilst challenging their foundations through the gaps in the structure (Kings 2017, p. 67).

Secondly, ecofeminist theory is contextual and pluralist. Therefore, it is a suitable framework within which to conduct discourse analysis. Scholars recognize that *ecofeminisms* are diverse and "each rooted in a particular intersection of race, class, geography, and conceptual orientation" (Vance 1993, p. 125). Because of this diversity, the ecofeminist framework is flexible enough to suggest different courses of action to tackle patterns of domination (ibid., p. 134). However, one of the consequences of this plurality is that there is a certain degree of uncertainty and disagreement within ecofeminism that prompts some scholars to dismiss ecofeminism as incoherent (Biehl 1991). However, as Judith Butler and Joan Scott (1992) propose, a feminist theory does not have to yield conclusive answers in order to be viable. Rather, its viability has to do with its ability to generate much needed analysis and critical engagement (Butler & Scott 1992, p. xiii). In light of this insight, it is fair to say that ecofeminism's plurality can be a strength both in discourse analysis and ethnographic research, so long as it remains critical towards essentializing claims and open to new ways of understanding how multiple forms of oppression interact.

1.6 Conclusion

In my study, I conduct discourse analysis to help the collective ecofeminist effort to "transform existing social thought to better appreciate the material (if not metaphysical) connectedness between humans and the natural world" (McMahon 1995, p. 163). Assuming that social thought does not exist *a priori* to discourse, but instead gets created and recreated through discursive performances, I position the recognition of important interpretative repertoires for research participants as an important starting point for the emancipation of marginalized individuals, othered species, and, more broadly, the environment. Doing so makes particular sense for ecofeminism as a framework that "starts from lived experience rather than an abstract model," "politically centers the marginalized voices," "and theorizes the social world from the ground up rather than the top down" (ibid., p. 172). Because discourses are fluid and constantly changing, it is important to make sense of them within ecofeminism and to stay open to explorations of other forms of domination that work intersectionally with both the oppression

of women and the degradation of nature (Warren 1990). Hence, the intersectional functioning of class and gender as a form of domination on TaTuTa farms can be viably investigated within an ecofeminist framework.

For this endeavor, I have now carefully situated myself as a researcher, as well as situating Turkey in its social context, to which I will apply ecofeminist insights cross-culturally. I conducted feminist ethnographic fieldwork, did observation of participation, and then analyzed my data intersectionally. I considered that my research question, which sought to understand how the interpretative repertoires of TaTuTa project participants spoke about contemporary embodied experiences of sustainability, would be best answered with this methodology and method. As the following chapters will demonstrate, answering my research question proved more problematic than expected, not least because of unexpected difficulties I encountered in the field and the challenges I faced afterwards, presenting a nuanced narrative on the topic and making fair representations of my research participants. Nevertheless, answering my research question can add to the feminist quest to explore the relationship between "what I do" and "who I am," and, in doing so, to connect the personal and political realms (Seymour 2012).

CHAPTER 2: SUSTAINABILITY FROM AN INTERSECTIONAL ECOFEMINIST PERSPECTIVE

> ***The division of the world defined certain parts of the world as "nature," that is, as savage, uncontrolled and, therefore, open for exploitation and civilizing efforts, and others as "human," that is, already controlled and domesticated. The early capitalists were only interested in the muscle-power of the slaves, their energy to work. Nature for them was a reservoir of raw material and the African women an apparently inexhaustible reserve of human energy.***
>
> ***(Mies 2014, p. 70)***

In the previous chapter, I outlined the topic of this study; the research question that guides the framework of my thesis; and laid out its overall structure. I explained my methodology and methods, positioned myself as a researcher, and discussed the appropriateness of discourse analysis and especially interpretative repertoires to this study. In this chapter, I will firstly provide a theoretical introduction to ecofeminism, structured not only around problems important to the wider project of ecofeminism, but also around other important knowledge that my reader needs to have before reading my analysis in the subsequent two chapters. Secondly, I address the criticism ecofeminism receives from both feminist circles and other disciplines. As I hope to demonstrate, these criticisms will be of vital importance to the intersectional ecofeminist perspective with which I analyze my ethnographic material in the upcoming chapters. Proceeding, I introduce the current debate on topics of sustainability and provide an ecofeminist commentary on the various perspectives addressed within these discussions. In doing so, I hope to disclose and problematize sustainability issues from an ecofeminist perspective. I also present a section that focuses on the intersections between gender and sustainability in these debates by discussing the ways in which gender is used in sustainability discourse as well as the gendered consequences of an absence of sustainability. In the subsequent section, I present the specific form TaTuTa sustainability takes. I take a close look at the language used in the Buğday Association's TaTuTa guide and how that language situates its sustainability ambitions within a larger sustainability debate—one that involves contested meanings. By doing so, I take responsibility for the way I proceed with the analysis of the ethnographic data, and justify why I find the selected interpretative repertoires to be important tools with which to discuss intersectional issues of gender

and class. In the final section of this chapter, I propose an alternative vision for sustainability; one that is formed by an intersectional ecofeminist perspective that is responsive to criticisms.

2.1 Issues Ecofeminism Problematizes

I use "ecofeminism" as an umbrella term with which to pull together the diverse ethical perspectives that highlight nature as a feminist issue by linking women's oppression to the unjustified domination and exploitation of nature (Bile 2011; Warren 2000). In a similar way to other branches of feminism, ecofeminism criticizes prevailing dualisms in Western philosophical conceptual frameworks that set nature against culture, objectivity against subjectivity, and human against non-human. Ecofeminism proposes that such frameworks establish a hierarchal relationship that is discriminatory (Warren 2010). Ecofeminism's project to advance beyond these criticisms involves the exploration of how an alternative solution to such oppressive and male-biased frameworks can be created so that both nature and women can become emancipated. It is important to note that ecofeminism has come a long way since 1974 when Françoise d'Eaubonne (1974 in Code 2006) coined the term "ecological feminism." Now, instead of discussing women in an essentializing way, ecofeminism broadens its scope on sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, ethnocentrism, and the many other ways through which oppressions can and do occur, thus causing injustice (Warren 2010). Ellen O'Loughlin (1993) argues that for ecofeminism's liberatory efforts to succeed, heterosexism, classism, ageism, as well as racism and sexism should be examined as concepts that are all related to naturism (p. 148).[7] Chaia Heller (1993) suggests re-thinking the traditional ecofeminist idea of nature as a "dark, heterosexual, beautiful mother" (p. 231). With new dimensions of ecofeminism—and with the contribution of queer ecofeminism especially—this branch of feminism has come to value sexual diversity and thus made advances towards greater inclusivity (Gaard 1997).

Firstly, ecofeminism problematizes patriarchal language that both animalizes and naturalizes women, and feminizes nature within a larger discourse that gives superiority to men and male-identified culture (Adams 1990; Dunayer 1995; Warren 2000). This use of language helps justify the domination of women and nature. My study of interpretative repertoires exemplifies the ecofeminist problematization of language. It further supports the ecofeminist awareness that symbolic connections between sexist and naturist language exist (King 1981). When women are described in animal terms (e.g., chicks, cats, cows, foxes) and when nature is posited as female though the use of terms such as

[7] Here I refer to "naturism" specifically in order to point to discourses that seek to establish heterosexism, classism, ageism, racism, and sexism and other forms of domination as though they are natural.

fertile, penetrated, and raped, both women and nature's domination and inferiorization takes place (Kolodny 1975; Murphy 1991). This two-sided oppression points to androcentrism (Salleh 1997).[8] Environmentalist groups other than ecofeminists also recognize the problematic aspects of having a human-centered approach in our dealings with nature—one that plays a role in nature's destruction. "Deep ecology" is an example of one of these environmental groups (Birkeland 1993, p. 15). However, whilst deep ecology recognizes anthropocentrism as a barrier to achieving social transformation, it does not address the male-centeredness and sexism that lies beneath human-centeredness (ibid., p. 29). For this reason, acclaimed ecofeminists such as Marti Kheel (1991) and Janis Birkeland (1993) criticize deep ecology for being "abstract, aloof, impersonal, and gender-blind, and it ignores power" (Birkeland 1993, p. 29). In short, ecofeminism is critical of signs of androcentrism, such as the symbolic connections that form through oppressive discourses—connections that do not provide space for self-criticism; the questioning of power relations; and prolonging "power over" attitudes (ibid., p. 50).

Secondly, ecofeminism problematizes the socioeconomic conditions that exacerbate the interconnected injustices towards women and nature (Mies & Shiva 2014; Salleh 1995). This perspective recognizes capitalist patriarchy as central to the systematic disadvantages women face economically in their environments as well as the exploitation of nature as a source of raw material to be used for financial gain (Mellor 1997). Vandana Shiva (1988) goes a step further and gives ecofeminist critiques of capitalist patriarchy a postcolonial twist, arguing that, in colonized contexts such as India, colonizers introduced a gendered division of labor that pushed women into unpaid labor and domestic duties. According to Shiva (1988), this contributed to the "feminization of poverty," as well as to the subordination of both women and nature (p. 169). Thirdly, ecofeminism criticizes contemporary political and ethnical perspectives that offer a narrow definition of democracy (Sandilands 1999). It proposes a feminist-informed "ecological democracy" that recognizes and cultivates the lives of socially and ecologically diverse communities—and not just the lives of those at the top (Hester 2010). Ecofeminism conceptualizes a sense of self that recognizes individual experience as well as the interdependent character of relations (Cuomo 2005; Mathews 1994). This suggests that different narratives can emerge (e.g., the voices of women are not homogenized into a single voice) in an inclusive and pluralist ethic without sacrificing the unity and wellbeing of the communities concerned.

[8] With the term anthropocentrism, I refer to human bias and human-centrism, whilst the term androcentrism refers to male bias, male chauvinism and male-centeredness. The connection between these two concepts is a much-debated topic amongst ecofeminists, and my perspective on this issue is informed especially by Karen Warren's work. Warren (2000) suggests that "for ecofeminists, the historical manifestation of anthropocentrism, at least in Western societies, has been androcentric" (p. 38).

2.2. Main Criticisms Towards Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism has attracted criticism, both from within feminist circles and wider environmental philosophies. To begin with, the argument by some ecofeminists that women are biologically closer to nature, and therefore have the right to claim superior ecological knowledge and care, is found to be flawed (Eckersley 1992, p. 66), not least because men's bodies are as "natural" as women's bodies. Moreover, if women's closer proximity to nature is supposedly supported by reproduction, child-care, and breast feeding, then this mindset poses a problem for women who cannot, or simply choose not to, reproduce and/or care for children. Thus, the ecofeminist message that women's biological processes make them superior to men when it comes to caring for nature could create dangerous inequalities amongst women. Motherly and heterosexual women who embody biological and cultural characteristics registered as feminine could gain prominence within ecofeminist discourse over women who identify as queer, intersexual or in other ways deviate from "normative" womanhood. Following this line of thought, men as well as marginalized women could acquire the status of "other," and ecofeminism would be rendered unable to embrace diverse peoples and help emancipate oppressed groups, non-human species, and the environment (Zimmerman 1987).

Another criticism stems from the ecofeminist construction of a biologically-driven nurturing role for women and their relations within their communities and nature (Biehl 1991). The nurturing role of women, even if deployed in a positive sense within ecofeminist discourse, is far too limiting and essentializing if ecofeminism is to provide enough room for freedom and diversity for all women (ibid., p. 26). Nurturing and caring qualities are thought to promote health and vitality for both the environment and communities (Cuomo 1992, p. 354). However, this does not mean that women should be assumed to possess higher caring abilities than men, or that caring is always an anti-hierarchical and/or democracy-promoting notion (Biehl 1991, p. 144). Moreover, having caring sensibilities does not always correspond to protecting the environment (Nightingale 2006, p. 7).

Yet, ecofeminists do respond to these criticisms and accusations of their use of potentially patriarchal modes of thinking (Birkeland 1993, p. 21). For example, Ynestra King (1981) explains that ecofeminist philosophy accepts all life as interconnected. She asserts that it is not women's biological closeness to nature, or their nurturing attitudes, but the "historical socialization and oppression of women" that shapes notions of women and nature, and men and culture (King 1981, p. 16). One of the ways in which some ecofeminists attempt to fight against the oppression of both women and nature is through seeking spiritual ways to connect with the environment. However, this too is criticized for being irrational (Birkeland 1993, p. 23). The notion of rationality and spirituality is engrained in Western thought as yet another duality, and its examples can be found in Plato's work (c. 428 BCE –

c. 348. BCE).[9] Plato ([c. 380 BCE] 1993) identified the soul as having reason, spirit, and appetite as its divided parts (p. 144). However, such compartmentalized thinking does not seem to justify spirituality as a counter-definition for rationality and vice versa. Moreover, Starhawk (1982), who identifies as a spiritual ecofeminist, proposes that "[e]arth-based spirituality influences ecofeminism by informing its values. This does not mean that every ecofeminist must worship the goddess, perform rituals, or adopt any particular belief system" (p. 174). Thereby, ecofeminists underscore that this philosophy does not propose a rigid, dogmatic or superstitious approach to spirituality, which can be legitimately critiqued for being "irrational."

2.3 Debating Sustainability

Sustainability is an elastic concept with over 300 definitions, some of which are contested (Dobson 1996; Norgaard 1988), and even more recent contributions to the debate do not offer greater clarity (Baker 2006; Carley & Christie 2000; Owens & Cowell 2016; Redclift 2005). Some scholars have argued that more general public discussions about the environment are now engaged with the language of sustainability discourse, causing the term "sustainability" to be used anytime the environment is discussed (Torgerson 1995). This development has prompted a warning from some theorists who suggest that sustainability has become "a broad, easy path where all kinds of folk can walk along together, and they hurry toward it, unaware that it may be going in the wrong direction" (Worster 1993, p. 142).

Nevertheless, this thesis concurs with Tim O'Riordan's (2016) description of sustainability: that at its heart lies "self-regeneration and self-reliance of the soul, as well as of economy, ecology, and society" (p. 52). When different aspects of "life" come together, it is justifiable to wonder which aspects of sustainability matter more, or in what order they might be arranged. To address this issue, three domains of sustainability are recognized (ibid., p. 5). Firstly, there is the legal and institutional domain, involving strategic planning and policy structures. Secondly, there is the cultural and civil society domain, which involves civil rights and issues of empowerment. The third domain is dedicated to technology and economy, and involves initiatives of eco-efficiency and green technology (ibid., p. 6). My interpretation of these statements is that sustainability issues should be addressed legally so that communities—both nationally and internationally—can be held accountable for what they consume and what they produce. Moreover, sustainability should be framed as a right for communities

[9] The dates here approximate the birth and death of the ancient Greek philosopher Plato. More information about his background can be found at: https://www.biography.com/people/plato-9442588 [Accessed 26 May 2017].

of individuals that encompass different genders, races, ethnicities, and other axes of difference: the right to live in a sustainable community should not be limited by inequality. Additionally, scientific efforts and innovation should not hesitate to replace environmentally destructive production and consumption methods with more "eco-friendly" ones.

Sustainability is of vital importance because of the irreversible ways in which the planet is suffering, and how this suffering is unequally distributed across world populations (United Nations Development Program 1998, pp. 66-85). Hundreds of millions of people live in countries incapable of feeding them and dozens of countries in the developing world are now suffering from water availability issues, whilst consumption has increased over 350% in the developed countries (ibid., pp. 66-85). Coupled with this, there are an increasing number and frequency of environmental disasters worldwide, the effects of which are especially felt in developing countries. The unjust use of natural resources and unequal distribution of economic opportunities across "gender, class, and global lines" adds to these difficulties (Perkins 2007, p. 228). This view, however, is criticized for lacking awareness of narratives of intergenerational justice (Barry 1997). Some scholars suggest that sustainability is a necessary precondition for intergenerational justice, because "it would be unjust to let future generations fall below our standard" (ibid., p. 106). These positions seem to assume that our standards today offer the baseline for future generations.

The above-mentioned material shows that the disastrous picture drawn by the UN has an anthropocentric focus—albeit one that recognizes generational, gendered, classed, and other differences. The act of putting emphasis on the economic implications of sustainability in itself is suggestive of the instrumentalization of nature for human good (Plumwood 1993; Sagoff 2004). This is the reason why certain groups of environmentalists (such as deep ecologists) reject working with the terms "sustainability" or "sustainable development" (Giddings et al. 2002, p. 188). They believe that it is unjustified to prioritize the needs of humans over the rest of the planet (Naess 1989). However, the disinclination of deep ecologists to participate in sustainability discourse does not make the term any less recognized or used, and it continues to enable joint discussions on socio-economic and environmental issues (Giddings et al. 2002, p. 189). A legitimate criticism of the way sustainability discourse is evolving is that economic concerns are dominating contemporary societal and environmental discussions (Korten 1995; Monbiot 2004). This means that decision making is not being influenced by questions such as "What is the advantage for the environment?" or "What best secures the wellbeing of members of society who occupy disparate intersections of gender, class, race, age amongst other axes of difference?" Instead, issues of sustainability are discussed and understood more in terms of the costs (and potential profits) of making substantial changes to any given system.

For this reason, some scholars argue that a shift in how humans see the world and position themselves within it has to occur in order to be able to make decisions that can bring about lasting sustainability (Levins & Lewontin 1994). This study, with its intersectional ecofeminist framing, agrees with this thought process and poses its research question in order to argue against the economic emphasis prevalent within current sustainability discourses. By asking how the interpretative repertoires of the TaTuTa project's participants speak about contemporary embodied experiences of sustainability, I seek to contribute to non-financial dimensions of the debate. Ecofeminism has long argued that it can be helpful to address the neglected aspects of sustainability discussions via critiques of male domination in the social structure, and by emphasizing the interrelatedness of oppressive systems as well as that of the inequality of women and ecological destruction (Li 1993, p. 291). Such interrelatedness can be studied and understood by being aware of human to human relationships as well as human to non-human relationships (Vance 1993, p. 134). This awareness can bring about an alternative world view that has the potential to utilize material in sustainability discussions that potentially challenges gender-blind theories, models, and thoughts.

2.4 Sustainability and Gender Discussions

A substantial amount of literature dealing with sustainability issues—including studies conducted by feminist scholars—appear to start with the preliminary draft of the United Nations' World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) from 1987 (Davies 2013, p. 112). This report conceptualized sustainability as a term that should be approached from four angles so that "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" can be achieved (WCED 1987, p. 43). The four angles are: "holistic planning and strategy making;" "preservation of ecological processes;" "protection of heritage and biodiversity;" and the idea that "development can be sustained for future years" (ibid.). This need for development to be mindful of future generations suggests that intergenerational equality and justice matter. However, little is said in these major points about equality for members of those generations—especially those that are placed in different locations along various axes of difference, such as gender and class.

Gender and sustainability are concepts that, when used together, signify two main things (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2014, p. 31). Briefly, the first concerns "the differential contributions of men and women to sustainability," whilst the other speaks of "the differential impacts of sustainability or environmental degradation on men and women" (ibid., p. 32). Whilst this study accepts the dyadic analysis of gender and sustainability, it is cautious with regard to the possible essentialization of

women as a homogeneous group and endowing women with spiritual or motherly qualities that assume their care of, and for, nature (Goebel 2003; Leach 2013). As empirical feminist studies have shown, love and respect for the environment do not automatically correspond to environmental protection (Nightingale 2006). Moreover, there are incidences where, due to lack of education and knowledge, women have, relatively speaking, less support for conservation efforts than men (Allendorf & Allendorf 2013). Therefore, ecofeminism should be applied intersectionally in order to reduce essentialist claims and to better acknowledge the complications of contemporary discourses on gender and sustainability.

One example of the necessity to approach the delicate connection between gender and sustainability in a nuanced way comes from empirical studies that suggest women and men may care about different aspects of sustainability (German & Taye 2008). Laura German and Hailemichael Taye's (2008) study of watershed management in Tanzania has demonstrated that women tend to care more about issues concerning their household's access to clean water, whereas men demonstrated more interest in the supply and management of irrigation water (p. 76). In the context of this particular study, men's cash-based concerns depended on the fruitfulness of their farms. Women did not have direct access to that financial capital, and therefore they did not care as much about issues concerning irrigation water (ibid., p. 78). My perception of this finding is that—especially in developing countries where environmental degradation has a higher impact on the survival of communities—people are most concerned about those environmental difficulties that most threaten the work that falls within their own division of labor. For example, if women have no rights or opportunities to own, control, or make decisions about the land in the patriarchal societies that are studied, it is not likely that they would necessarily be at the forefront of debates that concern sustainable farming. Yet these same women might be very concerned with sustainability issues that concern drinking water, because they are expected to cook and provide nutrition for their households.

Gaining an intersectional understanding of gender and class is valuable in sustainability discussions because of the problems limited education and lack of confidence pose to women in patriarchal communities, making it harder for them to speak up and make sustainable decisions. Previous feminist research has shown that especially in patriarchal and developing countries, larger numbers of local men than women are engaged in dialogues about sustainability and reversing the effects of environmental degradation (Zwarteveen & Neupane 1996). Men tend to be more vocal and involved in decision making processes (Villamor et al. 2013). Some studies have further shown that it is not enough to simply place a few women in committees concerned with making decisions on natural resource management: at least 25% of the entire group need to be women in order for this group to speak up, defend their interests, and propose more sustainable solutions (Agarwal 1992). These

findings show me that women face additional difficulties in finding the means to vocalize their perspectives in larger sustainability debates. Even those rare examples of women who do participate in such committees are not as vocal as they could have been because it is culturally not acceptable for them to express strong opinions or to contradict male opinions during the meetings.[10]

In this section, my goal has been to introduce the concept of sustainability in a way that shows how gender matters for sustainability, and how sustainability matters for gender issues. I have demonstrated that an intersectional approach is needed in order not to overlook differences amongst women of differing backgrounds in terms of class, age, race and other axes of social difference. Thus, by employing intersectionality, ecofeminism can better respond to sustainability programs that are gender-blind. A cautious approach, so as not to reinforce gender stereotypes, would help ecofeminism's development as a theoretical framework that is both pluralist and attentive to the effects of the relationships between humans, and between humans and non-humans.

2.6 TaTuTa's Take on Sustainability

The Buğday Association's TaTuTa project exemplifies a gender-blind approach to sustainability. This program has a guide that can be accessed through the TaTuTa website, in which its purposes and aims are listed.[11] The first aim of the project is "to strengthen the communication among groups and individuals in the ecological living movement." The second aim is "to develop healthy models of organic production that constitutes a lasting and environmentally friendly livelihood, especially for rural populations." The guide's third stated aim is "to offer city dwellers the experience of life on an organic farm and thereby awaken and/or strengthen their sense of responsibility with regard to ecological living so that they may incorporate it into their daily lives." Its fourth aim is "to create a venue for the first-hand and hands-on exchange of ecological methods, knowledge, experience and ideas among consumers, farmers and other interested individuals." The fifth and final aim is "[t]o contribute to the healthy continuity of soil, air and water quality, of biological diversity, climate and other natural cycles by supporting environmentally friendly production and consumption models."

Whilst TaTuTa's "Purpose and Aims" might not appear comprehensive or detailed to many, they provide a good starting point from which to gain insights into the Buğday Association's position in the sustainability debate—what they think sustainability is, and what they consider to be the best way to achieve it. Overall, TaTuTa seems to recognize the need for change towards ecological living.

[10] I do not have evidence to support this claim. However, based on my literature review and ethnographic findings, I am inclined to reason this way.
[11] Available from: https://www.tatuta.org/?p=2&lang=en [Accessed 26 May 2017].

However, they do not seem to be particularly interested in making any fundamental changes, such as in decision making processes and the power relations of those who are involved (Rees 1995). For example, the first issue that comes to mind with regard to the above-mentioned purposes and aims is the human-centeredness of the language. The language used in TaTuTa's points is not radical in ways that challenge anthropocentric modes of living. In this vision of ecological living, production is intended to be organic with the least amount of destructive effects on nature. Yet, it still holds true that no cultural paradigm shift seems to happen with regard to re-evaluating "men's" relationship with nature. To be fair, there is an encouragement for the performance of care for the environment through a healthy use of soil, air, and water. However, of more interest is how the environment seems to exist for the benefit and use of people, instead of existing and having intrinsic value regardless of its usefulness for the human population. In the third aim, for example, ecological living is portrayed as a way of being that replaces city dwellers' old ways of life. However, by simply awakening or strengthening their sense of responsibility towards nature, they do not seem to transform their human-centered approach. Whilst seeking ways to be more environmentally friendly (or maybe we can replace this phrase with "less environmentally disastrous"), they continue enjoying and using nature as a resource.

It is critical to situate the TaTuTa project within the wider sustainability spectrum (Pearce & Atkinson 1993). According to Raymond Fowke and Deo K. Prasad's (1996) identification of 80 different sustainability definitions, one important issue that seems to appear is the distinction made between weak and strong sustainability. Other scholars too have followed up on, and reinforced, these terms (Dresner 2003; Neumayer 2003). Pillars of weak sustainability are posited as possessing a human-centered worldview; a growth-oriented approach; and a desire to maintain the status-quo (Solow 1993). According to an extreme interpretation of weak sustainability, "it does not matter whether the current generation uses up non-renewable resources or dumps CO_2 in the atmosphere as long as enough machineries, roads and ports are built in compensation" (Neumayer 2003, p. 1). In the tension between economic gain and environmental degradation, the weak sustainability position favors the former. Proponents of strong sustainability, however, argue to the contrary (Brand 2009; Ekins et al. 2003; De Groot et al. 2003). According to these scholars, natural resources cannot merely be viewed as raw material for capital productions. The key idea behind strong sustainability is that natural capital cannot be easily replaced by manufactured capital, and if it is, there could be irreversible damage to the environment (Mancebo 2013).

In the light of this information, TaTuTa's purposes and aims appear to resonate more closely with strong sustainability, because TaTuTa seems to place a higher value on tradition than on

innovative technology. In TaTuTa's discourse, ecological living sounds like something that could be achieved through the exchange of ecological methods, knowledge, and experience on both the individual and community level. Reading the fourth point above on creating a venue for the first-hand and hands-on exchange of ecological knowledge and experience among consumers and farmers, ecological living does not appear as something of the future, achieved through discoveries in science and technology. Rather, for TaTuTa ecological living is achieved through finding out, re-doing and prioritizing what farmers in rural Turkey have learned from their ancestors. By suggesting that natural resources cannot entirely replace manufactured resources, TaTuTa's discourse comes close to being a strong sustainability discourse. However, by assuming that traditional methods used on farms are sustainable *a priori*, rather than investigating whether—or to what extent—they actually are, TaTuTa's sustainability discourse demonstrates a high degree of human-centeredness.

Furthermore, there is another area of concern with a similarly high degree of human-centeredness, namely the fact that this approach often functions to promote male-centeredness (Warren 2000, p. 54). Ecofeminists speak of the domination of both women and nature operating within the same system. According to this line of thought, if there is a human privilege and power at work over nature, then that human privilege is not gender-blind. Instead, the humans who take charge in human-centered approaches tend to be males. Moreover, ecofeminist philosophy is open to the study of other axes of differences that cause oppression via other "-isms," such as heterosexism, ageism, and classism (Gaard 1997). In the light of this information, TaTuTa's interest in strengthening communication amongst groups and individuals in the ecological living movement could be read in a nuanced way. This agenda seems to operate under the assumption that the functioning of groups and individuals who participate in the ecological living movement is fair and just. Therefore, strengthening the communication amongst groups and individuals and bolstering existing equal power relations between and amongst them would do no harm. In other words, tackling ecological communities as a cohesive group without acknowledging the existence of marginalized populations (or individuals) and their experiences may not be helpful. This can be a limiting factor with regard to how TaTuTa members can participate in this sustainability project.

2.7 Conclusion

When looking closely at the relationship between humans and their environment (and their positioning), it is also important not to ignore their relations with each other as well as with non-human others. In these relations, differences that stem from the experiences of occupying different genders, sexualities, classes, and religions become vital if we are to understand which decisions are made; how they are made; and what their consequences are for the environment, other species, and individuals. Power relations within communities speak about how the environment itself is interpreted and treated. In this regard, the concept of sustainability needs to be understood in tangible and concrete ways to ensure that existing power hierarchies do not cause the marginalization of certain communities, individuals, species, or the environment itself. Tensions rooted in sexism, classism and other forms of dominance should be exposed, questioned, and revealed before they cause further damage. Gender—along with other axes of difference, such as class and race—needs to be added to a critical framework that helps us to understand "the motives, means, and opportunities for men and women to contribute to sustainability" (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2014, p. 29). Meanwhile, it is important to note that the impacts of sustainability (or environmental degradation) are not the same for all groups (or indeed for individuals within those groups). As previous ecofeminist studies have emphasized, environmental degradation in local communities that are already struggling with poverty could further damage women's conditions (Shiva 1988). Therefore, it is important not to treat the participants of sustainability projects as a homogeneous group. Instead, we need to examine each member's relationship with nature and sustainability intersectionally.

This chapter presented intersectional ecofeminist visions concerning sustainability as an appealing alternative to anthropocentric and andropocentric ways of perceiving both women and the environment. I have explained how I see ecofeminist thinking as a toolbox that can help us see how environmental degradation and patriarchal dominance over women do not occur simultaneously by coincidence. Instead, the elements that make the one happen are active agents in sustaining the other. By discussing criticisms towards ecofeminism, I have made it clear that I do not suggest that women (or any other group for that matter) should be treated as a homogeneous group. I also underlined that this study does not propose the idea of "earth mothers" of any sort (Moore 2008). Such modes of thought could mistakenly naturalize womanhood, and essentialize the concept of nature itself (Leach 2007). Outlining an intersectional ecofeminist understanding of sustainability that does not essentialize identities and is thus open to diversity and pluralism, I have argued that situated and embodied experiences "on the ground" matter for both the value and impact of sustainability projects. With an ecofeminist framing, I have discussed how sustainability is debated. Additionally, I have pointed out

the problems that anthropocentric attitudes pose for people of different identities, non-human species, and the environment. I highlighted the justifications for a form of sustainability that does not exclusively care about innovations that lead to technological developments (e.g., weak sustainability) or transforming consumption and production patterns (e.g., strong sustainability) to alleviate the burdens on the environment. In the next two chapters, I will show the origins, uses, and impacts of interpretative repertoires from an intersectional ecofeminist angle. I will discuss the embodied experiences of sustainability as expressed by TaTuTa's participants, and thus move this concept towards a more emancipating destination.

CHAPTER 3: *MAVİ BONCUK*

> ***And I tried to remember any case in the course of my reading where two women are represented as friends. Almost without exception they are shown in their relation to men. [Women in fiction were] not only seen by the other sex, but seen only in relation to the other sex. And how small a part of a woman's life is that.***
>
> ***(Woolf 1929, n.p.)***

In this chapter, I begin to introduce my ethnographic data. Here, my interpretative focus is on *mavi boncuk,* a term that is used in contexts in which women are chastised for flirting with the men around them. I show the ways through which the *mavi boncuk* interpretative repertoire works as a disciplinary tool that emancipates men in their social behavior whilst disciplining and attacking the honor of potentially any woman, especially those who are unmarried. In doing so, I aim to argue that there are limitations specific to women and their participation in environmental struggles for sustainability. I discuss how and why these limitations are detrimental, not only for women, but also for the environment, non-human species, and, curiously enough, for men themselves. Moreover, I situate my analysis of *mavi boncuk* in relation to patriarchal bargaining (Kandiyoti 1987; Kandiyoti 1988) and gender performativity (Butler 1990). Specifically, I show how gender roles (e.g., cultivating, harvesting and preparing food) and performances (e.g., silent, ashamed, and submissive) that are deemed right for, and are subscribed to, women in rural areas of patriarchal societies like Turkey push them closer to nature and play a role in the exploitation of both nature and women within the patriarchal system. As a result, I demonstrate how sustainability projects should work on constructing counter-narratives to *mavi boncuk* that challenge patriarchal dominations over women in order to fight against wider injustices (Petrzelka & Marquart-Pyatt 2011).

3.1 Where Does *Mavi Boncuk* Come From?

The term *mavi boncuk* directly translates to English as "blue bead," a kind of stone from which to make a necklace, rosary or another accessory. Generally, it is used with the verb *dağıtmak*, which means "to distribute." According to the Turkish Language Society's (TDK) definition, *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* means two things: to show love to more than one person; and trying to appear cute to

anyone.[12] There is a heteronormative, sexist and moralistic tendency that is practiced through this term's usage. Supposedly, *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* can apply to both men and women. However, this term is frequently used for women, whilst men engaging in the same behavior are instead described as being social—which has far better connotations.[13] Whilst trying to appear cute to "anyone" is a gender-blind description, *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* tends to refer to flirtatious behavior towards the opposite sex. More precisely, a woman is described as someone who does *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* in men's presence only. Lastly, in practical uses and meanings of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak,* there is something else that is worthy of attention and that is not described in the original description of the TDK, namely the fact that this term signals a lack of sincerity. A woman who does *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* is understood as someone who is not being genuine in her loving expressions—she shows affection not out of care, but in order to gain some sort of advantage.

In order to understand how this term demonstrates signs of moralistic tendencies, *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* can be read as a text in conjunction with the work of feminist anthropologist Lila Abu-Lughod (1985) and her study of Bedouin women in rural Egypt. In her work, Abu-Lughod writes about the ways through which Bedouin women practice social control over the morality of younger women:

> Modesty, or the denial of sexuality, is the way that women state their morality in order to gain status within the system (sexuality representing the potential for both vulnerability to others and defiance of senior kinsmen). In concert with the ideal of pride, the emphasis on modesty profoundly shapes women's personal development and social style. Flirtation, display of sexual charms, pandering to men, or any sign of orientation toward men achieve little for women besides a bad reputation (Abu-Lughod 1985, p. 649).

In this regard, *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* is a way to label women whose behavior is read in their social context as flirtatious and displaying sexual charms—it is a label that works to damage the reputation of the woman who is accused of doing it. In the context of Abu-Lughod's study, older Bedouin women practice social control over the morality of younger women by disciplining their behavior so that it remains modest in societal terms. In doing so, they deny young women's sexualities. Men are relatively more active and free in their dealings with other men, whilst women's forward behavior with men

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[12] Accessed from: http://www.tdk.gov.tr/index.php?option=com_gts&arama=gts&guid=TDK.GTS.58e509327e1e64.50800340. [Accessed 2 June 2017].

[13] Public discussions of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* on *Eksi Sözlük*, a popular forum, confirm this. More examples can be found at: https://eksisozluk.com/mavi-boncuk-dagitmak--160621 [Accessed 2 June 2017].

carries additional risks and difficulties because these interactions can be read as pandering at any given moment.

There are claims that the use of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* stems from an anecdote concerning Nasrettin Hoca, a beloved fictional character from the thirteenth century who is known for his humorous and wise advice.[14] Nasrettin Hoca in Turkish—or Mulla Nasreddin in English—is a character that appears in thousands of stories that depict him as a humorous wise man whose jokes tend to be pedagogic in nature.[15] Akşehir, a town in the Konya Province in the Central Anatolia region of Turkey, is accepted to be Nasrettin Hoca's hometown, and organizes the annual Nasrettin Hoca Festival.[16] In one anecdote that concerns this interpretative repertoire, Nasrettin Hoca is described as having two wives. Because they are jealous of each other, these women do not get along well. In secrecy, Nasrettin Hoca gives both of his wives a blue bead and tells them not to show it to anyone, especially not to one another. Soon after, the wives fight with each other in the presence of Nasrettin Hoca. They ask him which of the two he loves most. Nasrettin Hoca answers that he most loves the one with the blue bead. According to the tale, both wives calm down, smile, and continue doing their housework.

It seems fair to say that *mavi boncuk dağıtmak*—once a story observing Nasrettin Hoca's resourcefulness in tricking his wives—is now a subtle way to discipline women's behavior and limit their interactions with men. If the person whose behavior can be interpreted as *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* is a man—showing love to everyone and trying to appear cute—he will be considered a Casanova at best, and at worst a very social person. Thus, I recognize a gendered use of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak*—one that denigrates the women to whom it is directed. A woman labelled as doing *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* is below other women in both morality and righteousness, and certainly below all men, who do not face the same consequences from *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* to begin with. In addition, I take issue with the way Nasrettin Hoca and his two wives are characterized in this tale. By doing *mavi boncuk dağıtmak,* Nasrettin Hoca seems to easily fool his wives, who are apparently incapable of understanding there might be something suspicious about them both calming down upon hearing that he most loves the one with the blue bead. Hence, the origin of the *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* story registers men (represented by Nasrettin Hoca) as resourceful and women (represented by Nasrettin Hoca's

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[14] Nasrettin Hoca stories can be accessed in English from: http://www.nasrettinhocafikralari.com/en/fullfikralaren.html [Accessed 2 June 2017].
[15] Nasrettin Hoca stories can be found in "The Turkish Jester or, The Pleasantries of Cogia Nasr Eddin Effendi" at Project Gutenberg and "Extraordinary Adventures of Mullah Nasruddin: Naughty, Unexpurgated Tales of the Beloved Wise Fool from the Middle and Far East" by Ron Suresha. Accessed from: http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/16244 and https://www.amazon.com/Extraordinary-Adventures-Mullah-Nasruddin-unexpurgated-ebook/dp/B00NDF374U [Accessed 2 June 2017].
[16] Accessed from: http://www.aksehir.bel.tr/portal/index.php/nasreddin-hoca/nasreddin-hoca-senligi [Accessed 2 June 2017].

wives) as naive and rather irrational. Nasrettin Hoca is portrayed as resourceful in his ability to control his wives and avoid chaos. In this way, the narrative helps solidify heteronormative and sexist uses of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak*.

3.2 Crisis Points

In my analysis of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak*, I concur with Fairclough (1992) in thinking that crisis moments are especially important for discourse analysis. Points of crisis seem to excel as research objects because they provide material that is far richer than that of the times when there is no emergency, disagreement, or any other source of conflict. Fairclough further describes that discourse analysis should start from focusing on a social wrong (ibid., p. 13). Whilst what constitutes a social wrong is highly debatable, he assets that this term can be understood as referring to "social systems, forms or orders that are detrimental to human well-being and could in principle be ameliorated if not eliminated through major changes in the systems, forms or orders" (ibid.). In this regard, examples of social wrongs may include forms of inequality such as sexism, heteronormativity and restricted freedom, as well as racism, ableism and many other "-isms." From this point of view—of crisis points as moments that point to a social wrong—Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla's farm was rich in suitable data, almost to the degree of a fictional setting in which time is compressed and nothing boring happens in each scene.

I arrived there on the first day of August, 2017 after taking a bus, a minibus, and a taxi. My hosts, Mehmet Abi and his wife Ayşe Abla, were in their vineyard; I knew this because they told me so on the phone when I was on my way.[17] Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla are third degree relatives: his aunt was her grandmother. They told me that they have known each other since childhood. When I visited them in the spring before coming to live with them (Mehmet Abi did not approve his volunteers' stay before meeting them in person), he came to pick me and my mother up in front of a bakery that was close to his village. Mehmet Abi sat in the front, my mother and I in the back. As we entered their home, Mehmet Abi called for Ayşe Abla: *Aşkooooş*. I had never heard this word before, but I immediately recognized it as a derivative of *Aşkım,* meaning "my love." Immediately, I exchanged a glance with my mother. In the days to come, we would talk about how loving and sweet they were as

[17] *Abi* is an informal but respectful way to address someone as one's older brother in Turkish. *Abla* means older sister. When I first met Mehmet and Ayşe in the spring of 2016, I observed that most people in their social circle were calling them Abi and Abla. Therefore, I too went along with these titles instead of the alternative *Amca* ("uncle") and *Teyze* ("aunt"). However, I admit that at times, I was not sure if a better way to show respect to them was through downplaying our age gap by calling them Abi and Abla, or by underlining our age gap with Amca and Teyze. During my stay in their TaTuTa farm, I blurred the lines and used both Abi/Amca and Abla/Teyze. Yet, for the sake of consistency, I will refer to them only as Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla here.

a couple. In addition, Mehmet Abi said he and his wife treated their TaTuTa volunteers as their children. Ayşe Abla confirmed this. She said that she called all female volunteers “Çiçek”—the name of her daughter—as if all of their female volunteers were their biological daughters.

As stated on the TaTuTa’s website, Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla’s farm was in a tiny village an hour’s drive from Izmir, a progressive city in the southwest of Turkey. I was told by Cengiz, a long-term family friend with a background in permaculture who lived with Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla during the time I worked on their farm, that I arrived in the aftermath of a crisis with a TaTuTa volunteer called Pamela. Soon after, I knocked on Pamela’s door and introduced myself to her. We talked and she said that Ayşe Abla had told her that it was going to be hard for her to cook for the two of us, so we had to move to another house and cook for ourselves. Whilst I was not immediately alarmed, I was slightly worried that such an important piece of information concerning accommodation was not communicated to me directly by my hosts.

3.3 Patriarchal Bargaining and Gender Performativity

I observed that Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla’s problems with Pamela were larger and deeper than I originally anticipated. This was surprising, not least because Pamela had only been there for a little less than a week and I had not imagined that problems could have escalated so rapidly. On my first day, Mehmet Abi was complaining to me that Pamela was not socializing enough with him, his family, and the entire village. After my first dinner at the farm, he explained to me that, normally, he only accepted Turkish TaTuTa volunteers, but that he made an exception for Pamela, a native English speaker of Eastern Asian origin, because he was optimistic that they could learn each other’s languages and exchange cultural information. In the end, however, Mehmet Abi was disappointed that Pamela was not actively engaging with him. According to Mehmet Abi, Pamela was on her phone, doing something that he found perplexing.[18] He was struggling to understand why Pamela came to his farm if she was not going to work side by side with him and his wife without counting the hours; be attentive to the villagers when she sold their grapes; and socialize with them in her free time. According to Pamela, the situation could not be more different. It was written in the TaTuTa profile of the farm that participants worked 5-7 hours per day. For Pamela, it was unacceptable that her hosts expected her to work endless hours. “The more I give, the more you want from me,” Pamela complained to Mehmet

[18] On my first night, Mehmet Abi wanted me to explain what Pamela was doing on her smart phone. My answer was that she might be connecting with her friends and relatives through social media like Facebook, or texting them through WhatsApp. However, this situation should not be misinterpreted as indicating that Mehmet Abi lacks knowledge of, and access to, technical resources. Both he and Ayşe Abla had smartphones, and they knew how to use these devices.

Abi in my presence. When she left, Mehmet Abi criticized Pamela for openly refusing to perform small acts of kindness towards him, such as making him coffee and serving it on the terrace, where Mehmet Abi frequently sat on summer nights to cool off in the wind. Mehmet Abi told me that Pamela said to him that she was not some submissive Middle Eastern woman there to serve him. This statement seemed to have offended Mehmet Abi.

A day after I have arrived, Pamela left—or rather, was sent—to another farm. This event had a strong effect on me. I immediately understood that women in this context need to bargain with patriarchy. This concept was also discussed by the feminist scholar Deniz Kandiyoti (1988), who conducted the majority of her research in rural areas of Turkey. She coined the term "patriarchal bargaining" as a response to her growing concern that feminist theory was dealing with the concept of patriarchy as an "unqualified, abstract notion" (p. 274). Kandiyoti wanted to contribute to feminist theory by analyzing the "strategies and coping mechanisms" women use to survive and obtain viable positions within patriarchy (ibid.). It was evident to me that Pamela and I, as women and visitors to Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla's TaTuTa farm, were perceived as though we were daughters-in-law who came to live in their households and work in their farms. It is unlikely that the TaTuTa program envisioned its female volunteers being welcomed by their hosts in this way. However, new initiatives such as that of the TaTuTa project with clear sustainability goals have to build upon the existing structures. If the only culturally acceptable way for rural communities, such as that of Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi, is to receive women on their farms as daughters-in-law, it is not surprising that they treat their female TaTuTa volunteers as such.[19]

Bargaining with patriarchy has further implications within ecofeminist frameworks. As I have discussed in my previous chapter, ecofeminism is diverse and pluralist. This study agrees with Birkeland's (1993) and Warren's (2010) formulations of ecofeminism—that at its heart lies a challenge to the roots of asymmetric power relations. Birkeland (1993) describes that ecofeminism is about "changing from a morality based on 'power over' to one based on reciprocity and responsibility" (p. 18). Bargaining with patriarchy to a certain extent requires using the language of patriarchy—its language, symbols, rules and values—in order to achieve the best deal. Whilst in doing so women may individually search for the best conditions for themselves and reduce the effects of inequality, this would not in itself bring about a systemic change that can challenge patriarchy's power over entire systems. In other words, according to an ecofeminist perspective, patriarchal bargains are important to understand, yet it remains important to remember that at best all they can do is merely redistribute

[19] I reason that the treatment of someone who is registered as though she is a daughter-in-law differs from that of a daughter. The latter is born into the family and is likely to have internalized their norms and manners, whilst the former is new to the family, and therefore needs to find new strategies via which to bargain with patriarchy.

existing power relations. The ecofeminist position is thus to try and change these "power-over" relationships that create hierarchies in order to "move toward an ethic based on mutual respect" (ibid., p. 20).

Nevertheless, because my time spent on the farm was going to be limited and I did not want to cause problems on my TaTuTa hosts' farm, I indeed bargained with patriarchy. I prioritized building good relations with my hosts and therefore took a different path than Pamela did. I did not count work hours; did not object to unsafe working practices; and spent my free time paying full attention to my hosts. I was not irritated by, but rather decided to be happy about, making coffee when Mehmet Abi asked for it. Because I knew that Pamela was judged for not socializing enough, I made extra efforts to be genuinely interested in engaging in conversations with the people around me and participating in my hosts' events. However, little did I know that my social behavior was about to be read as *mavi boncuk dağıtmak.* I was understood as the opposite of Pamela, trying to be loved by everyone. For the most part, except for Ayşe Abla, the participants of my social environment happened to be male. In addition to Mehmet Abi and Cengiz, by this time we also had two other male TaTuTa volunteers, Osman and Hasan. I referred to each of them as *abi* ("older brother") in order to make it clear that I was perceiving them as close family and not as men with whom I could possibly flirt, whereas I referred to Osman as *kardeş* ("younger sibling"), as he was a few years younger than me. When these men were consuming their home-made wine or *rakı* in the evening, I politely declined their offer to join them in order not to risk damaging my reputation.[20] I employed these two strategies—calling the men *abi* and *kardeş*, and abstaining from alcohol consumption—in order to guard myself from accusations of doing *mavi boncuk dağıtmak*.

Yet, my social position as someone who did *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* was strengthened when Ayşe Abla took me to their other house, where I (and Osman who arrived a day after me when Pamela left) were to stay. Not only was this other house far from the village center, it was also in ruins. It had no running water, its window was broken, and the furniture inside was ripped. Additionally, the door did not lock properly (which would not have been such an issue if the family had also been living there). I shared my concerns about my safety with Ayşe Abla, but her response made it clear that she was very emotionally sensitive on the issue and she was offended. Ayşe Abla said, in order to defend her decision to have me stay there, that her family used to live there, and her daughter Çiçek liked it very much. When I talked with Mehmet Abi, he said that Ayşe Abla was a kind, compassionate and

[20] *Rakı*, also referred to as "Lion's Milk," is a traditional Turkish alcoholic drink made of twice-distilled grapes and aniseed. More information on this beverage can be found at: http://edition.cnn.com/travel/article/turkey-signature-drink-raki/index.html [Accessed 2 June 2017].

tender person who was uncomfortable putting me into the house in the first place. He told me that my mistake was that I did not fully surrender to Ayşe Abla's authority.

From Ayşe Abla's point of view, the mistake I made was graver than the one Mehmet Abi had recognized. Taking the initiative to speak with Mehmet Abi labelled me as a woman who did *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* and endangered Ayşe Abla's marriage with Mehmet Abi. "I am not a zero;" "I couldn't dump you before because the kids were small but now I can;" and "If you [Mehmet] talk more I will throw you out of the terrace. I will throw Meltem [me] too" were some of the comments Ayşe Abla made. The following day, I heard from the other TaTuTa volunteer, whom I treated and cherished as though he was my younger brother, that during breakfast, right before I arrived to join them, Ayşe Abla was saying that I was doing *mavi boncuk dağıtmak*. Luce Irigaray's thinking helps to deepen our understanding of this situation and see what is at stake here for Ayşe Abla. In a number of her works that aid us in understanding the workings of phallocentric culture, Irigaray asserts that male and female not only stand in opposition, but that women are also lacking *les femmes entre ells*—"female sociality" (Irigaray & Whitford 1996, p. 101). She establishes that a horizontal relation between women through which they might support each other and work towards mutual goals is not happening because phallocentric culture only makes room for one woman at a time. This system imposes a rivalry between women—even if conflict is unnecessary. In light of this insight from Irigaray, I see that Ayşe Abla had been given little option other than to damage my reputation with interpretative repertoires like *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* because in the male economy we temporarily shared, there was no room for both of us.

Furthermore, my gender performance did not fit well with normative perceptions of femininity, and therefore further reinforced the *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* interpretative repertoire. One day, when we were all working in Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's vineyard, I mistakenly did what Mehmet Abi frequently did: I moved away from the group, making myself not fully visible, and urinated. This was necessary, as in the vineyard there were no toilets and we were there from 6am in the morning until 2pm in the afternoon. There was no reaction from Ayşe Abla, Mehmet Abi, Cengiz or the other TaTuTa volunteers, and therefore I thought that there was nothing untoward about what I did. Actually, quite the opposite was true: my mimicking of Mehmet Abi's gendered performance was not within the norm of femininity to which I was subject and therefore was liable to punishment. In *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Butler writes that "gender is an identity tenuously constructed in time... through a stylised repetition of acts" (p. 148). Mehmet Abi's gendered act was constructed through his being at ease in his environment year after year, freely urinating in the vineyard, whilst Ayşe Abla and other local women had to be cautious and not engage in similar acts. These acts might seem trivial and therefore unworthy of attention. However, it is the apparent

unimportance of men's sense of ease in their environment, their freedom and comfort to extend their bodies into nature whilst women must restrain their bodies, that lies at the very heart of the subject. Repetitive and gendered acts of this kind include Mehmet Abi's sitting on the stairs towards the entrance of their living room and enjoying his homemade wine with his friends while Ayşe Abla cleans the house. These gendered performances are not only different; they also demonstrate a double standard in favor of men.

In the aftermath of my imitation of Mehmet Abi's urinating, and in doing so performing in ways that were unexpected and unwanted from my gender, Cengiz shared with me his insights during an informal interview. He told me that part of the reason why Ayşe Abla was cautious about me was because of the female TaTuTa volunteer who came before Pamela. He stated: "And before Pamela, there was Oya, who people say was *cilveli işveli.*" This is an expression that translates as "flirtatious and coquettish," and is not so different in its usage from *mavi boncuk dağıtmak*. When Cengiz introduces Oya as *cilveli işveli,* he assigns to her to a flirtatious and coquettish identity. If he says it repeatedly, along with other people in his social circle, then her identity becomes slowly solidified as such. This issue can be understood through Butler's writing about the way in which a child's gender is proclaimed at the moment of birth, pointing out how naming though discourse is even more powerful than (corporeal) characteristics:

> To the extent that the naming of the "girl" is transitive, that is, initiates the process by which a certain "girling" is compelled, the term or, rather, its symbolic power, governs the formation of a corporeally enacted femininity that never fully approximates the norm. This is a "girl", however, who is compelled to "cite" the norm in order to qualify and remain a viable subject. Femininity is thus not the product of a choice, but the forcible citation of a norm, one whose complex historicity is indissociable from relations of discipline, regulation, punishment (Butler 1990, p. 232).

This shows that discourse both precedes and constitutes the subject. Women are not *cilveli işveli* or *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* oriented *a priori* to discourse, which sets a norm and subjects them to this norm. When women deviate from the norm, they run the risk of facing interpretative repertoires such as *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* that discipline and punish them in order to maintain the status quo. Furthermore, gender performances that are accepted as "normal" in patriarchal culture (the correct, moral, and desired form of femininity) push women closer to nature and play a role in the justification of their exploitation. For example, in Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's TaTuTa farm, women can and are told to

lead, but only within their own households. When a woman steps outside of her household, it is her husband who is supposed to represent and protect the both of them. In one of my informal interviews with Mehmet Abi, he told me this:

> Look at the nature. In nature, men know their manhood and women know their womanhood. When it's the right moment, a woman leads her house like a female eagle, and makes her man tremble. And her man gives her trust; protects her.

This statement resonates with the woman-nature construction in patriarchal cultures, which over-personifies nature and under-personifies women (Dinnerstein 1976, p. 36). When women are merged with nature, their perception as "natural resources" enables men to use them "as an asset to be owned and harnessed, harvested and mined, with no fellow-feeling for her depletion and no responsibility for her conservation or replenishment" (ibid., p. 37). Moreover, this narration of nature, just like the *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* interpretative repertoire, has a profound heteronormative bias. "Female eagles" are coupled with "male eagles;" men are joined with women and its rationale is firmly rooted in nature. This phenomenon is not surprising, as other feminist scholars have already exposed the deep connections between heteronormativity and sexism (Rubin 1975). Gayle Rubin (1993) argues that heteronormativity functions to reinforce a patriarchal gender binary. Scholars who analyze this issue intersectionally see that heteronormativity needs to be studied whilst simultaneously paying attention to other forms of oppression, such as sexism, ageism and ableism in order to see their consequences for our culture and our institutions (Ward & Schneider 2009, p. 435). In this respect, it is fair to say that the heteronormativity engrained in my research participants' narrative is one that gives larger powers of decision making and control to men, especially outside of their households. In Mehmet Abi's depiction of nature, men and women occupy different domains, and those domains do not intersect.

On Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's farm, heteronormativity intersects with a multitude of ideas on masculinity and ableism. For example, not performing well physically causes men to receive derisive remarks on both their sexuality and gender. When Mehmet Abi was not quick enough to go to the vineyard, Ayşe Abla made comments such as: "You are sitting by the stairs like a harridan," and: "You have pulled your underwear all the way to your shirt like a beldame."[21] When Osman did

[21] From Turkish to English, I translate *kocakarı* and *acuze* as "harridan" and "beldame" respectively. According to my dictionary definition, "harridan" signifies "an unpleasant woman, especially an older one, who is often angry and often tells other people what to do" whereas "beldame" means "an old woman, especially an ugly one; hag." Accessed from: http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/harridan; and http://www.dictionary.com/browse/beldame [Accessed 2 June 2017].

not have the strength to carry more than one box at a time across the vineyard (each box weighed 20 kilos and we did not stop until we loaded a truck full of grapes), Mehmet Abi and Cengiz—two older male figures in the vineyard—mocked Osman. Their comments were certainly not gender-neutral. "Osman, even Meltem [me] is carrying heavier boxes than you," or "Osman, even Meltem is more male than you," were some of the criticisms I heard Mehmet Abi and Cengiz make.

Mehmet Abi and Cengiz's comments against Osman made it clear that in their dealings with nature, physical strength was a demonstration of masculinity, and a lack thereof led to ridicule through an association with femininity. Only physically strong men with no fear were allowed to take pride in working hard in the vineyard and thus feel at ease whilst extending themselves in their natural environment. Such men participated in the culture of going to the field at night, drinking alcohol, and socializing through the hunting of wild boar for pleasure. In the sentence "even Meltem [me] is carrying heavier boxes," the word *bile*—translated as "even"—before my name appeared to indicate that a female person, regardless of her hard work, physical endurance, and enthusiasm, is below any man in the hierarchical structure. If a woman over-performs in the field, it is not something to be appreciated or encouraged; instead it is used to set a benchmark and any man who performs below this benchmark is at risk of being feminized. However, women are not at risk of being masculinized, because masculinity is not a category that women can fall into. For example, when Ayşe Abla saw that I was also carrying two boxes at the same time, just like Mehmet Abi, Cengiz, and Hasan, she said: "That's heavy, you cannot carry it. When there are all these men around, is it up to you to carry two boxes?"

Patriarchally driven interactions with(in) environments such as the one I described above receive criticism from ecofeminists (Shiva 1988). To produce more just and less violent practices in our dealings with each other and with nature, ecofeminism addresses the ways in which heteronormativity, sexism, ableism and other forms of oppression are informed and supported by speciesism, and cause unsustainability (Adams & Gruen 2014, p. 1). Ecofeminist projects thus make visible woman-nature connections, and dismantle them when they prove to be harmful (Warren 1987). Patriarchal bargaining and gender performativity in such ways as they currently exist perpetuate the twin dominations of women and nature. For one, interpretative repertoires such as *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* discipline and punish women who do not satisfy the enactments of femininity that are demanded of them within patriarchal societies. Women's subordination, described through language that associates them with nature, also has negative implications for the perception of—and dealings with—nature itself. The following section will focus on *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* related limitations specific to women involved in sustainability projects, such as the one conducted at Ayşe Abla and

Mehmet Abi's farm, and supports my argument that these limitations are detrimental, not only for women, but also for the environment, non-human species, and men themselves.

3.4 Limitations Specific to Women

At first glance, it might appear that Ayşe Abla benefited from sustainability projects such as TaTuTa, potentially expanding her horizons by meeting people from different backgrounds and exchanging knowledge about her environment with them. However, it is not clear if doing so actually advantages her in any way. For example, one day when Ayşe Abla was cleaning her kitchen and Mehmet Abi and Cengiz were at the entrance of the house chatting and smoking, I heard them talking about "making a project for Ayşe." The Turkish government was giving grants up to 150 thousand Turkish liras for entrepreneurs in the fields of farming and husbandry. If these entrepreneurs were women, they had a higher chance to be granted a larger sum of money. To receive this grant, the first step was to take a one month course from İŞKUR (the Turkish Labour Agency), which taught entrepreneurs who were going to apply for this grant the basics of managing their businesses. Ayşe Abla attended the İŞKUR's course. It was likely that for İŞKUR organizers, Ayşe Abla appeared as a woman who had expanded beyond her social class and thus transformed her identity from an elementary school graduate farmer's wife to an entrepreneur with a business of her own. However, in reality, the mindset in her household did not change. Mehmet Abi and Cengiz were constructing Ayşe Abla's project under her name, without even having her join in on their discussions. In the end, Cengiz wrote an application for Ayşe Abla to sign. Because Mehmet Abi could not find her, Cengiz signed the document for her.

Mehmet Abi and Cengiz were motivated to apply for the İŞKUR grant under Ayşe Abla's name in order to make use of the environment for financial gain. İŞKUR made a positive discrimination in favor of women, possibly in order to increase their access to political, economic, and natural resources and decision making power (Rocheleau 1995; Rocheleau et al. 1996). However, because it was conducted through a top-down approach İŞKUR's initiative—at least in the case of Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's farm—does not seem to succeed. From an ecofeminist perspective, İŞKUR's projects and those of other organizations provide further mechanisms through which women can be oppressed and nature exploited, because women become mere commodities used by men to gain access to more money and more land (Bile 2011; Warren 2000). According to Ruth Liepins (1998), who reviews gender relations in agriculture, men and women in agriculture interact via unequal power relations, not least because they are engaged with different objects and in different activities (p. 379). She writes: "Men are assigned a masculinity as strong, knowledgeable and controlling farmers, while women are

assigned a femininity as secondary, caring and domesticated relations to these farmers" (ibid., p. 385). When the gender performances required from farmers such as Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi are such that they force enactments of a secondary and domesticated femininity and a forceful and controlling masculinity, top-down approaches that simply redistribute power do not seem to bring about social justice and sustainability. Furthermore, from an ecofeminist perspective, even if such approaches work to redistribute power such that more women are empowered, the instrumentalist understanding of the environment would stay the same. We would still lack a biocentric view of the world, with an emphasis on the interconnectedness of all life (Birkeland 1993, p.20).

Despite working together in their vineyard throughout 36 years of marriage, Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla produce grapes that are distributed nationwide with stickers that read "Mehmet Şentürk Organic Farm Number XXXXXX."[22] This organic patent is registered by the Buğday Association. Mehmet Abi thus appears, both legally and figuratively, as the one and only producer. Mehmet Abi said: "If this place [the vineyard] is 20% mine, then 80% belongs to your Ayşe Abla." However, not only are the vineyard's organic patent and the TaTuTa farm itself registered under Mehmet Abi's name; he was also the sole decision maker that chose which line of grapes were to be cut and from where we were to start work. One day, despite arriving at five o'clock in the morning at the vineyard in order to start our work before it got overwhelmingly hot, we could not start work. Cengiz drove the pickup truck that had the material we needed (e.g., boxes, papers, special scissors) and everybody except Mehmet Abi travelled with Cengiz. Because Mehmet Abi did not fit into the truck, he came on a motorcycle that was in need of repair. As it frequently occurred, the motorcycle's engine had a problem and Mehmet Abi came an hour late. Cengiz asked Ayşe Abla what we were going to do. Ayşe Abla said: "What can we do? We will wait." Even though Ayşe Abla had years of experience in the vineyard and knew which grapes were mature enough, as well as how the process worked—just like Mehmet Abi—she could not take ownership and demonstrate her ability to make decisions. This case extends to recording their business affairs as well. It was only Mehmet Abi who took notes on how many kilos or tones of grapes he sold, how much he earned, and what he planned to get his workers to do for the upcoming days.

An ecofeminist sensitivity of the situation requires us to see that women such as Ayşe Abla—who in fact have the capability, energy, and drive to work hard, be present, and co-lead their farms—take passive positions. Men come, do, act, and perform while women do not seem to initiate such acts. This kind of passivity suggests that women in these situations do not co-act in their activities with their husbands or other male heads of their households. Instead, women and nature both take a passive

[22] In order to maintain their anonymity, the real code of their farm has been replaced by a fictional one.

position and are subject to men acting upon them. On this front, the ecofeminist criticism that anthropocentrism actually works as androcentrism (Li 1993, p. 283) finds a tangible example in this TaTuTa farm. The workings of this farm, which takes part in TaTuTa's sustainability project, further demonstrates men's power and drive to construct hierarchal forms of organization (Birkeland 1993, p. 37). Along the way, the environment suffers from being merely taken as a natural resource from which to make financial gain, and women are subscribed to passivity and naturalization. Yet surprisingly, men themselves are also harmed in this process by being overly attached to holding on to power, feeding their egos (as in the case of Osman who received negative treatment from Mehmet Abi and Cengiz when he could not carry the boxes), and lacking the resources to recognize the environment's intrinsic value (ibid., p. 50). Instead of enjoying their interactions with nature, men in this androcentric framework limit themselves to perceiving the environment only as a resource from which to make more money, gain a reputation, and increase their competitive edge. Hence, this logic disadvantages men.

To gain an intersectional understanding of the limitations specific to women in their interactions with nature for sustainability-focused projects and other efforts, it is valuable to further contextualize Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's farm. It is located in a small village where, from a luxurious boutique hotel, popular English dance songs diffuse out into the surrounding countryside in which sheep, goats, chickens and other animals are kept. It is a scene in which Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's animals graze and bleat, the bells around their necks ringing and adding a further layer to the melody of the Western music. Mehmet Abi is native to the village, but he left for a long period of time to receive his high school and university educations, both at prestigious institutions in Istanbul. He has close ties not only with locals from the village—people who might have never resided outside of their village—but also with people originally from outside of the village who chose to invest in it for tourism (e.g. the boutique hotel), and with "Istanbulites" who have tired of city life and want to move to Mehmet Abi's village for their retirement. In summary, Mehmet Abi represents a point of entry for outsiders to feel at home in the village—someone without whom city-dwellers would not feel welcome.

Whilst such connections from outside of the village add to Mehmet Abi's reputation and future investments (he sold some of his land to a friend of the owner of the boutique hotel and produced wine together with this wealthy architect), they seem to have done little for Ayşe Abla. If we look closely into the gendered performances of Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi, we can also gain an understanding of the workings of class in their context. Ayşe Abla's kitchen resembles an open restaurant. People come uninvited and without letting her know in advance; they sit at her table, ready to be served breakfast, coffee, snacks, lunch or dinner. One day Ayşe Abla was planning to go to her garden to collect figs

and other fruits, but she could not do so because four different groups of guests came in quick succession. She had to prepare breakfast again and again, cleaning up after people and then repeating the process for a new group once they had left. The guests Ayşe Abla welcomed and to whom she served food were architects, engineers, businessmen, journalists, and professionally accomplished people. With the exception of two women, they were all men. They all occupied the upper middle class of Turkish society, not only in terms of their education, but also with regard to their mannerisms. They talked, dressed, and thought differently than Ayşe Abla.

In this way, intersectionally speaking, Ayşe Abla has experienced multiple forms of domination, not least as she is both a woman and a member of the lower class. Mehmet Abi is relatively more willing and able to extend himself beyond the confines of his social class because of his educational degrees and the experiences he has gained outside of his farm. He is a man with possibilities to interact with other men in public, and to socialize freely with them without endangering his moral integrity. Ayşe Abla, however, was limited to fulfil a secondary role in her family and household. In an informal interview with me, she lamented what I refer to as her objectification and commodification during her marriage with Mehmet Abi:

> I got so tired when I was younger. Your older brother Mehmet tormented me. The whole day I was collecting okra, grapes, and cleaning the house and all. And he was going away to entertain himself with his friends. I am so tired.

Despite having personal dreams in other directions, Ayşe Abla was put in positions in which she was pushed to participate in projects like that of TaTuTa. Mehmet Abi's desires and wishes were prioritized, both in their dealings with nature and with other people. Moreover, extending outside of their class added a special burden on Ayşe Abla. Therefore, it would be a mistake to register Ayşe Abla's *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* interpretative repertoire as though it originates within her, without recognizing the power relations on the farm that negatively impact her. Ayşe Abla's *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* interpretative repertoire could very well be her rebellion towards her husband, who makes decisions that concern them both without considering her point of view. For example, the major conflict between Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla with regard to TaTuTa was that Mehmet Abi enjoyed, preferred and culturally benefitted from receiving volunteers while Ayşe Abla did not want to have volunteers. Whilst this seemed like a private problem that concerned them as a married couple, it in fact negatively affected the participation of female volunteers in the TaTuTa sustainability project.

For example, Hasan's extrovert and passionate personality was applauded and loved by both Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi. As a male TaTuTa participant, he was not subjected to the *mavi boncuk*

dağıtmak interpretative repertoire. The couple named Hasan *Karapedi* (meaning "black child"), not to insult him for the darkness of his skin tone, but to register him symbolically as one of their children and create an affectionate bond between them. Hasan told me repeatedly during our informal interviews that treating TaTuTa volunteers as their children was not always a valid claim to make for Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's farm, especially not concerning female TaTuTa volunteers. He coined a term to make sense of the *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* interpretative repertoire: *Çük kafası*. Literally meaning "dick head," Hasan used the term to draw attention to patriarchal thinking, stating:

> There is such a mindset in the village. I witnessed a disgusting dialogue between Cengiz and a peasant called Şeref. Cengiz was trying to persuade Şeref to host a new volunteer named Mert [a male] who had applied to Mehmet Abi's farm. But Şeref said: "I want a woman." He said that this woman should be beautiful and single. So they [peasants] do not care about TaTuTa's sustainability philosophy, organic farming or something. According to their mentality, a woman who volunteers for TaTuTa is like a prostitute. This is *çük kafası*. It applies to everyone but Mehmet Abi.

Previous feminist research has shown that, especially in patriarchal and developing countries, larger numbers of local men than women are engaged in dialogues about sustainability and reversing the effects of environmental degradation (Zwarteveen & Neupane 1996). These studies highlight the fact that men and women in rural areas tend to make different contributions to sustainability (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2014, p. 32). The sustainability experience specific to TaTuTa farms demonstrates that female volunteers' social interactions, questions, and public participation in both conversations *about* the environment and activities *within* the environment did not work in the same way as those of male volunteers. When men are engaged in conversations concerning sustainability projects and work in natural environments, they are more likely to partake in those activities without the risk of being marked with the interpretative repertoires of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* or *cilveli işveli*. Furthermore, because TaTuTa's sustainability project at times brought together rural communities with individuals from urban backgrounds or other cultures, nationalities, and axes of difference, there was a higher risk for oppression and discrimination via discernible differences in gender performances. In these cases, women were made more vulnerable when they rejected patriarchal bargaining or when they did not bargain in the correct way.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter is based on the understanding of sustainability as a concept that concerns power relations. When Pamela came to Mehmet Abi and Ayşe Abla's farm, volunteering to work with them in their vineyard and caring for their animals, her hosts were not willing or able—let alone open to the possibility of—adapting themselves, their habits, work environment, or their concept of right and wrong to meet the needs of others. They live in a 'power-over' system that does not provide a social landscape in which to negotiate new roles or perform gender differently. In Kandiyoti's terms, Pamela did not bargain with patriarchy. Conversely, I was in some ways the opposite of Pamela—I was present and responded to the requests of my co-participants. But in doing so, I was associated with the *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* interpretative repertoire. This interpretative repertoire brought consequences to Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's community that—if we invoke an intersectional ecofeminist perspective—reduced the effectiveness of sustainability as an embodied and daily experience.

The *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* interpretative repertoire worked in ways that reduced the motives, means and opportunities for women to contribute to sustainability efforts (Meinzen-Dick et al. 2014). My situatedness as a researcher in this discourse can be read as sensitive and critical because I left the lives of Ayşe Abla, Mehmet Abi, and the other participants as swiftly as I arrived. Hence, I am not in a position to judge them as persons, nor to criticize their acts. I have been immersed in my research participants' lives in order to examine contemporary thinking on sustainability and engagements with nature in a sustainability project in their specific local context. I am aware that the knowledge I produce is situated and thus not divorced from my own emotions, attitudes, interests and values, and background (Haraway 1988). I have come to learn about, and experience firsthand, the patriarchal dominations over women and nature, their consequences, and the need to work on constructing counter-narratives to *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* that challenge the status quo.

CHAPTER 4: *ÖZVERİ*

> ***Very roughly, to speak or write like a man is to assert mastery, to be in control of meaning, to claim truth, objectivity, knowledge, whereas to speak like a woman is to refuse mastery, to allow meaning to be elusive or shifting, not to be in control, or in possession of truth or knowledge.***
>
> ***(Irigaray & Whitford 1996, p. 50)***

In the previous chapter, I dealt with the interpretative repertoire of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* and focused on how heteronormativity and sexism performed with this concept in a rural patriarchal community in Turkey. I have described the origins of *mavi boncuk dağıtmak,* shared a Nasrettin Hoca narrative that is allegedly the source of this interpretative repertoire, and have shown how it was used in crisis points during my stay on Ayşe Abla and Mehmet Abi's TaTuTa farm. By connecting my ethnographic data to feminist theories, I demonstrated the workings of patriarchal bargaining and gender performativity, showing how *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* played a role in both pushing women closer to nature, and justifying the exploitation of nature and women within the patriarchal system. My findings directed me to the limitations specific to women in their contributions to sustainability projects, as well as the impacts of sustainability on women's lives. Furthermore, I have maintained an intersectional lens throughout my analysis. In my conclusion, I argued further that sustainability projects should work on constructing counter-narratives to *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* that challenge patriarchal dominations over women in order to fight injustice and increase true sustainability.

In this chapter, my task is to focus on the interpretative repertoire of *özveri*, a noun that translates from Turkish as "self-sacrifice," "devotion," and "self-denial."[23] *Öz*, the first segment of this noun, means "core," "self," or "essence."[24] *Veri* derives from the verb *vermek*, which means "to give."[25] Building on previously mentioned ecofeminist studies that identified the wrongdoings of capitalist patriarchies for both women and nature, I argue how the regular use of the *özveri* interpretative repertoire works to solidify unequal and unjust economic and power relations in an ecotourism establishment, and also creates detrimental effects on the environment (Shiva 1988). Just

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[23] Translation is made through Turkish-English dictionary Tureng. Accessed from: http://tureng.com/en/turkish-english/özveri [Accessed 3 June 2017].
[24] Translation is made through Turkish-English dictionary Tureng. Accessed from: http://tureng.com/en/turkish-english/öz [Accessed 3 June 2017].
[25] Translation is made through Turkish-English dictionary Tureng. Accessed from: http://tureng.com/en/turkish-english/vermek [Accessed 3 June 2017].

as I did in my previous chapter, I will focus especially on crisis points and see how everyday discourses and performances are used to establish power relations. Two questions lie at the core of my analysis of *özveri*: "Which understandings of the world are taken for granted and which understandings are not recognised" (Jorgensen & Phillips 2002, p. 161)? My findings suggest that the *özveri* interpretative repertoire perpetuates the elite masculinity of the master by assigning low rationality and primitivity to the working classes (Plumwood 1993, p. 23). This chapter will argue that the above-mentioned elite masculinity naturalizes and feminizes the working classes—especially those who are women—and makes them more vulnerable to exploitation without providing the conditions and training needed to help them make sustainable decisions.

4.1 Making Sense of *Özveri*

I arrived at my new TaTuTa farm a month after the first one. Unlike my first TaTuTa farm, which was owned and run by a married couple, this ecotourism facility in the north of Turkey employed local youth and welcomed guests from outside of the region, for example from major cities such as Ankara and Istanbul. Here, my engagement with animals and farming was limited to feeding chickens and turkeys each morning and going to a vegetable glasshouse to collect parsley or other herbs requested by the cook. I was asked mainly to help out at the reception, answering phone calls, making reservations, and disseminating information to our guests. I also helped for at least four hours a day in the kitchen, mostly washing dishes. There were occasions when, along with other interns, I cooked traditional food, kneaded the dough before baking homemade bread, cleaned the rooms, and made marmalade. Nisan—one of my research participants, whose main tasks were running the reception, handling the bills, registering employee salaries, and receiving customer payments—was also bringing milk from her family's farm, helping with cooking, cleaning, and other tasks in the facility even though she was not compensated for this extra work. Moreover, she was planning to get married to Kerem, another worker (and research participant) in the nature house, and to open up their own *çayhane* ("teahouse") in a township nearby. Nisan said that they had informed Fatih Bey (the owner) of their desire to leave, but he had told them to hold on until the facility found someone to replace them.[26]

When I was working with Nisan and Kerem, I asked them why they were delaying their future plans until Fatih Bey found someone else. Their answer was *özveri*. Kerem said that the nature house had been the first place he ever worked, and it was through the nature house that his *sigorta* (national system to receive health insurance and retirement salary) was started off. He told me that back when

[26] *Bey* translates to "Mr." and is used to create distance and show respect.

he started to work there, his uncle was also employed by Fatih Bey. As a consequence, Kerem said that he had *vefa borcu* ("duty of loyalty") to the nature house. Similarly, Nisan said that thanks to the salary she got from the nature house, she furnished the house she lived in with her extended family. She told me that she also financially helped her family with her salary.

Nisan and Kerem were not the only employees who were sufficiently bound to this TaTuTa farm to sacrifice their own desires and future plans. Berk—the ex-cook of the facility who became the manager when the existing manager left—has made *özveri* the tenet of his life:

> I don't have the mindset of a manager. I have the head of a cook. There was a necessity [to find a new manager]. Fatih Bey made me a proposal, and I did not accept it first. He strived for it for two weeks: "Let's do it like this, you will make it!" Fatih Bey knows that I am a hard worker, *özverili* [self-sacrificing] person. I can carry this place, and I might even hurt myself because I fight to make something happen; I wear myself out.

Berk does not register *özveri* as a habit that has negative consequences, but as a necessity for anyone who is given any responsibility at work. During an informal interview, he stated: "If a person is *özverili*, he will do it." And: "If you are *özverili*, you can do everything." Because of the way my research participants used it, the interpretative repertoire of *özveri* framed their professional work experiences in public places as though they were private, emotional, family affairs. Working in a "for-profit" company, working hard, completing their tasks, and receiving payment were not enough for my research participants; they also felt obliged to assign moral meanings to their work. I observed that the employees perceived their participation in this TaTuTa farm as though it were a family institution, and thus it was unethical and unvirtuous not to engage in voluntarily, self-sacrificing acts. For my research participants, self-sacrifice was used in discourses as a parallel quality to those of dignity, virtue, righteousness, duty, and honor.

4.2 *Özveri* from an Intersectional Ecofeminist Perspective

Upon our arrival to the ecotourism facility, my TaTuTA co-volunteer Şebnem and I had a private meeting with the owner Fatih Bey. He was going to leave for Istanbul the next day and therefore he wanted to make sure that we were all "on the same page" with our volunteering duties. He was concerned that Şebnem and I should be put to good use:

> Fatih Bey: Our friends [his employees in the facility] here are not raised with TaTuTa culture or organic culture. They are local kids from here. They don't have bilinç düzeyi ["a level of awareness"]. If it's up to them, they would go ahead and buy bread from the bakery, or use whatever detergent. It's not easy to change their habits. When I'm not here, they do whatever they feel like. (…) Our friends here perceive volunteers as new personnel who will ease their jobs. I don't want to look at it that way. It's possible to tuck you into the kitchen, have you wash the dishes, do the laundry, and clean the rooms. These are tasks too, but I don't want this to be your focus.
>
> Meltem (me): Yes, but it's important also to share the same tasks with the employees so that they don't perceive what Şebnem and I say as tepeden inme ["bolt from the blue"]. Maybe the employees here do not have a holistic approach to ecotourism or the environment, but they still have certain experiences. We need to understand them and be in harmony with them. Otherwise our [Şebnem and me] presence may awaken negative feelings in them.
>
> Fatih Bey: So be it. At the end of the day people who come here [clientele] are not the people at their [the employees'] level. TaTuTa volunteers who come here are all university graduates. They have this level of awareness and that's why they come to volunteer. Otherwise, [volunteers] wouldn't work for free. I don't want this: I don't want them [the employees] to think "Oh there are volunteers anyway, let them do the work."

Whilst, on the one hand, it is admirable that Fatih Bey wants TaTuTa volunteers who work in his ecotourism establishment to get the most out of their experiences and transform their environment for the better—including finding sustainable ways to prepare the food and do the cleaning. On the other hand, the way he describes his employees in this conversation creates a duality between the good and the bad; the educated and the ignorant; urban visitors and rural locals; and clients and workers. Instead of recognizing and counting for socioeconomic conditions that render it difficult for his employees to make more sustainable decisions, Fatih Bey's discourse suggests that his employees are not environmentally friendly simply because they are ignorant and personally resistant to change. This point of view is drastically different from that of his employees, who are motivated by notions of *vefa borcu* ("duty of loyalty") and *özveri* in their engagements with their work.

Ecofeminists have long been using the compound term "capitalist patriarchy" to address the intersecting forms of oppression affecting both women and the environment (Shiva 1988). There is a mutual interdependence between capitalist class structures and male supremacy, and therefore it is vital to employ a term that highlights the interdependent nature of these constructions (Eisenstein 1999). The use of the term capitalist patriarchy helps to intersectionally appreciate how the duality rooted in the distinction made between male and female interacts with the distinction made between the bourgeoisie and the proletariat. According to ecofeminists, one of the tenets of capitalist patriarchy is the necessity for continual economic growth (Bauhardt 2014). Growth in any market economy increases the stresses put upon the earth's resources, as well as on labor capacity (Floro 2012, p. 15). In order to maximize profits and reduce costs, exploitation of nature and labor occur simultaneously. Moreover, the exploitation of labor is never gender-blind: women—and men who are feminized and closely associated with nature through discourse—experience a multitude of intersecting oppressions, such as (but certainly not limited to) sexism and classism.

There are perceptions of sustainability, especially in deep ecology thinking, that might have a positive outlook on self-sacrifice (Naess 1989). Deep ecologists might be in favor of the use of the *özveri* interpretative repertoire, as long as it helps transform human nature—which it accepts to be egotistic—and move it further towards self-sacrifice. However, by situating all humans within a single position, this perspective appears gender- and class-blind. In this TaTuTa farm, situating the *özveri* interpretative repertoire works to solidify unequal and unjust economic and power relations between the male, educated owner of the establishment and his working-class employees—some of whom are women, whilst the rest are men who have become feminized through discourse for being ignorant. The next section will show exactly how the *özveri* interpretative repertoire functions to discursively, emotionally, and physically overburden the working classes on the farm, feminizing them in the process.

4.3 The Elite Masculinity of the Master

We were in the middle of September—high season in the nature house and *kurban bayramı*, which translates as "the Feast of the Sacrifice," had arrived. The origin of this religious holiday goes back to the Holy Qur'an, in which there is a section that discusses the Prophet Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son Ishmael to show his faithfulness to Allah when he is given a test of obedience.[27]

[27] The original statement in the Quran reads: "That they may witness benefits for themselves and mention the name of Allah on known days over what He has provided for them of [sacrificial] animals. So eat of them and feed the miserable

According to the Qur'an, at the moment of sacrifice, God replaces Ishmael with a lamb.[28] Today, Muslims who observe this holiday kill a goat or sheep, or at times a bull, giving the meat to the poor as well as sharing it among family members and neighbors.[29] During the Feast of the Sacrifice, the nature house operated at full capacity: all rooms were booked and the camping area was also full. Normally, Fatih Bey visited the nature house once a month, and left the place under Berk's supervision for the rest of the time. However, I heard from my research participants that Fatih Bey came in every *kurban bayramı*. During this period, all employees—including the TaTuTa volunteers (myself and Şebnem)—were completely overworked from the moment we woke up to the moment we went to bed. Because all of us (except for Nisan, who continued to live with her extended family) stayed in the nature house and did not leave (except once a week), our perceptions of public and private, work and life became diffused. During this time and despite our best efforts, there were moments during which we simply could not resolve all the problems or answer our customers' requests in a timely manner. One day, a large group of campers came and took more than the permitted quantity of wood to make a fire, instead of asking Berk to provide them with the wood himself. Once Berk found out what had happened it was already too late, yet he still wanted to stop the group. As the rest of us were busy cleaning, cooking, running the reception, answering phones, and engaging with other customers, we could not support Berk immediately. Berk was angry at the campers who did not obey the rules, but also at the employees (especially the other men) who did not join him to stop the campers. Fatih Bey witnessed this chaos, so the next day he called a meeting.

Fatih Bey framed the nature house's problem not in terms of it being understaffed or similarly being subject to a deeply rooted issue, but simply as a communication issue amongst his employees. However, he did not say so directly by employing a 'top-down' approach. Instead, Fatih Bey led the conversation with his staff in such a way that his interpretation became the one and only way to think through the issue rationally:

> Our organization model is horizontal, not vertical. Here, there is no such person as an owner, manager or director. The responsibility Berk has taken is for the organization. But he is not your boss or your manager. You need to work here as if this place is your own. But apparently, something is missing in the system. We saw yesterday that this place is not running smoothly. What kind of change should we

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and poor" (*Surah al-Hajj* [22:28]) Available in English from: https://quran.com/22/28-38?translations=20 [Accessed 3 June 2017].

[28] Ibid.

[29] More information on the subject can be found at: https://www.thoughtco.com/eid-al-adha-2004304 [Accessed 3 June 2017].

> bring about so that things can get better? Isn't anybody gonna say something? Your mind isn't used to working this way, that's why you are all silent. This is normal. I'm trying to challenge your brain. What's missing in your existence as a group [so] that, if we replaced it with another way of being, you would become a well-functioning team?

Fatih Bey is a computer scientist who became a business man. He has IT companies in Istanbul, where he now lives, although he was originally from Ankara. The evening Şebnem and I arrived at his nature house, he told us that he was not planning to own such a nature house at first—it began as a hobby. "Money is not an issue," and "I don't run this place to make a profit" were some of the statements Fatih Bey frequently made on the day we met, continuing: "I want to introduce ecotourism to mainstream travelers to show them that staying in five star hotels with all you can eat buffets is not the only way to holiday in Turkey." Fatih Bey's employees ate alongside customers, suggesting that the nature house was an egalitarian place. Yet, the firewood crisis point clearly demonstrated that Fatih Bey had an alternative set of priorities. His employees were paid minimum wage and they did not get any bonus for showing initiative or hard work. However, the most pressing issue seemed to be that employees were not paid extra for working during national (and religious) holidays—times when families traditionally gather together. On top of all the above, employees were also asked to work outside of their job descriptions. The cook Yavuz, Kerem, and myself tried to carefully express that the basic problem was that there was too much work for too few people. There was hardly enough time to do the work assigned to each employee, let alone enough time for employees to help one another.

> Yavuz: Fatih Abi, I cannot answer your question [about changing the group dynamic through cultivating another way of being]. Our work is extremely busy. We don't even see each other except for meal times.
>
> Fatih Bey: What if despite the intensity of your work, you asked each other questions? [What if] people asked you "Yavuz, do you need help?"
>
> Yavuz: Yeah, but what if the man has no time to actually help out?
>
> Fatih Bey: Forget about time.
>
> Yavuz: But there needs to be time to ask these questions.

Fatih Bey: Friends, there is no such a thing as time. Forget about time. Say somebody came and asked to help out. How many seconds does it take to do this? Anyway, life is about existence. It doesn't start with doing, but [with] being.

The nature house charged its guests extra during the national holiday *kurban bayramı,* yet this extra profit did not mean extra income for the employees. Fatih Bey used terminology such as horizontal and vertical organization models as though his employers were business management students, and in doing so he was participating in a discourse that his employees had no tools to make sense of. Except for Nisan and Kerem, everybody else was an elementary school graduate and did not have the confidence to disagree with their male, educated, rich, and older boss.

Previous researchers who conducted studies in rural Turkey have recognized that in domestic and moral relations, it was considered *ayıp* ("shameful") to be upfront about cash-based remuneration (Sirman 1988, p. 83). Instead, people gave reciprocating gifts, helped each other, and expected that others returned the favor (Ilcan 1994, p. 563). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the employees of this TaTuTa farm considered it *ayıp* to request extra payment from Fatih Bey in order to compensate them for their work during a national holiday. Additionally, recognizing two additional issues may be vital here: First of all, in rural Turkish settings, more respect and honor is given to elders (ibid., p. 565). Secondly, gender adds an additional layer of difference to the issue, because men and the work that they do is valued more than women and their work. Because of these reasons, it is not surprising that Fatih Bey's expectations from his employees were not openly questioned, especially by the women. If they left Fatih Bey's nature house, the women living in this rural setting did not have many options to find alternative employment. Their silence permitted Fatih Bey to construct his *özveri* repertoire further:

I'm not talking about a state of doing, but a state of being. Imagine you're watching a movie. And the actors over there keep asking each other "Do you need anything?" and "What do you want me to do for you?" Don't say you don't have time.

According to Fatih Bey's narrative, it was legitimate that his employers did not earn more than the minimum wage, worked extra hours with no payment, toiled beyond their work descriptions, and still felt as though they owned the nature house. Self-sacrifice was expected from employees as something that they should "naturally" provide, so that the nature house can make its profits. But Fatih Bey did

not ask the same of himself. It was taken for granted that he was not going to do *özveri* himself. It was not openly recognized that he could also actively take actions to alleviate his employees' working conditions. As a member of the upper-middle class, he used language such as "horizontal" and "vertical organization models" as if his employees would understand what he meant. Whilst Fatih Bey said that the nature house had no boss or manager and the employees managed themselves, he silenced them when Yavuz (the cook) and Kerem (the person in charge of outdoor needs) attempted to make counter-arguments. Thus, members of the working classes are forced into situations of self-sacrifice.

Female employees of the nature house—who were less likely to find employment elsewhere should they lose their jobs—were the most silenced of all. I interpret their reaction intersectionally, and propose that the naturalization of unpaid domestic services that are often provided by women—caring work—especially for members of the working class, is part of the reason why they do not find it easy to make counter-arguments to the *özveri* interpretative repertoire. Various ecofeminists have recognized how care—demanded mostly from women in rural communities because of a gendered division of labor—is time and energy intensive, and subject to abuse in a capitalist production mode (Rai et al. 2013). Excessive demands on those who take on caring responsibilities are exacerbated when ecological demands are also placed on their shoulders (Bauhardt 2014). Women, especially from working and lower classes, pay a high cost because of ecological crises (whether concerning global warming, desertification or other problems), for example by walking much longer distances to fetch water (Harris 2006). In the specific context of the TaTuTa farm, female working-class employees are used for time and energy intense work and not given regular training or the means to make sustainable choices. They are being patronized for not making environmentally conscious decisions whilst the rural setting from which they come and in which they work for minimum wage becomes commoditized for the enjoyment of clients and the profit of their employer. The speed with which they are asked to work and produce food, clean rooms, or assist clients all place demands on them that have detrimental effects on their environment.

The writing of ecofeminist scholar Val Plumwood (1993) can be used to frame how *özveri* is used in this TaTuTa farm as an interpretative repertoire that serves the dominance of elite masculinity. As we have seen, the starting point for ecofeminist thinking is that women are generally associated with nature whilst men are associated with culture—the latter being valued very much at the expense of the former. Throughout Western philosophy, women are described as creatures closer to nature, and lacking the capability for rational thought, unlike their male counterparts (Lloyd 1993, p. 64, p. 80). It would not be enough to simply relocate women's constructed association with nature and place women in the symbolic realm within culture, because doing so would not solve the fundamental problem of having nature and culture in opposition in the first place. In addition, placing women in the symbolic

realm within culture would not respond to the conflict of assuming nature's lower position in this hierarchy. As Plumwood states:

> How it is that women and nature have been thrown into an alliance remains to be analysed. This analysis forms the basis for a critical ecological feminism in which women consciously position themselves with nature. The inferiorisation of human qualities and aspects of life associated with necessity, nature and women—of nature-as-body, of nature-as-passion or emotion, of nature as the pre-symbolic, of nature-as-primitive, of nature-as-animal and of nature as the feminine-continues to operate to the disadvantage of women, nature and the quality of human life (Plumwood 1993, p. 21).

Plumwoord criticizes the dualistic model that places the feminine and nature together, and puts them conceptually beneath the masculine and culture. She argues that if we continue to operate in this framework, achieving equality for women would not be sufficient to ensure justice because that action would simply mean that women would gain masculine qualities, leaving nature still below culture (ibid., p. 23). Furthermore, the project of ecofeminism is not limited solely to the problems of feminizing nature, and naturalizing the feminine. Operating intersectionally, ecofeminism also objects to acts of inferiorization through class and race, as it is common to assign low rationality to the lower classes.

In the example of the TaTuTa farm that provides the ethnographic data for this chapter, we see that Fatih Bey provides the "brains" whilst his employees—who unexceptionally make up part of the lower classes—give, so to speak, the "brawn." The *özveri* interpretative repertoire is not used in situations in which creativity and rationality are called for. Instead, it is demanded in situations in which a subject is asked (or asks of themselves) to unquestioningly engage in work, often physically, and without asking anything in return. As Barbara Ehrenreich (1989) suggests, the "working class" thus gets mapped discursively as body, uncivilized and too nature-like to participate in meaning-making. This contributes to the establishment of a certain kind of elite masculinity, represented in this case by Fatih Bey. This kind of masculinity becomes defined by the group that engages in *özveri*.

4.4 Conclusion

> ***For efficient subordination, what's wanted is that the structure [does] not appear to be a cultural artifact kept in place by human decision or custom, but that it appears* natural*—that it appears to be a quite direct consequence of the facts about the beast which are beyond the scope of human manipulation or revision.***
>
> **(*Frye 1983, p. 34)***

In this chapter, I have shown that in the TaTuTa farm that was the focus of my analysis, *özveri* was an interpretative repertoire that brought consequences to its community that, according to an ecofeminist perspective, reduced the effectiveness of sustainability and caused discrimination against the working class—especially its female members. Within conversations, this interpretative repertoire was constructed as true for the employees of the ecotourism establishment. *Özveri* was internalized and influenced the realization of the sustainability project as a daily, lived and gendered reality. I have demonstrated that the *özveri* interpretative repertoire has worked to the advantage of capitalist patriarchy and argued that it gets distributed unequally amongst subjects of different genders and classes. Participating in sustainability, then, with the assumption that all members are the same and equal, may make it possible for one group or member to dominate the other. In order to democratize the use of the *özveri* interpretative repertoire, I propose a richer use of this term in order for participants of all classes and genders in sustainability projects to ask things of each other—and to hold themselves and each other accountable—without facing injustice and discrimination. By doing so, subversion of the elite masculinity of the master would be rendered possible whilst the assignment of low rationality and primitivity to the working classes could be rendered impossible. This would also have a positive impact on the environment, especially because—as ecofeminism emphasizes—all life on earth is interdependent.

CONCLUSION

> ***The crucial fact about sustainability is that it is not a micro phenomenon: There can be no such thing as a "sustainable" house, office building, or household appliance, for the same reason that there can be no such thing as a one-person democracy or a single-company economy.***
>
> ***(Owen 2009, p. 40)***

Sustainability is a vague term without any overarching or mutually accepted criteria amongst academia, policy makers, governmental and non-governmental organizations—let alone amongst the rural communities to whose lives this term gets directly applied though various initiatives. This study has shown that sustainability is a discourse rather than a calculable fact or a fixed formula that applies to localities and their pre-existing power structures. When the concept of sustainability is cited as a goal in ecological projects, it seems to help legitimize their existence and reduce criticism against them. Thus, because "sustainability" as a term is used so frequently yet agreed upon so little, I found it worthwhile to conduct an ethnographic research in selected rural farms in Turkey that were registered under the local Buğday Association's sustainability-driven TaTuTa project (Lafferty 1995; O'Riordan 2016). The intersectional ecofeminist analysis of my data has revealed that there are limitations specific to women's participation in environmental struggles for sustainability. Through working with the *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* interpretative repertoire, I discovered that these limitations were detrimental, not only for women but also for the environment, other species, and men. My research uncovered, in the context of rural Turkey, the wrongdoings of the capitalist patriarchy on both women and nature. I have shown that the frequent use of the *özveri* interpretative repertoire solidifies unequal and unjust (economic) power relations amongst different genders and classes.

The *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* and *özveri* interpretative repertoires of my research participants spoke in subtle ways about their contemporary embodied experiences of sustainability in the context of rural Turkey. I followed existing ecofeminist scholars by proposing that we cannot change what we do not understand, and applied this thought to the patriarchal underpinnings of this particular sustainability project (Kheel 1993, p. 244). I humbly admit that I have done very little. Analyses of more than two interpretative repertoires are needed to show experiences of sustainability in people's lives from different angles. Tracing the journey and significance of other interpretative repertoires used by TaTuTa participants during naturally occurring social interactions is necessary to challenge the patriarchal system currently active in rural Turkey. But even doing so would just be a start towards,

first understanding, and then subverting existing social discourses. Nevertheless, I am still convinced that this research contributes to ongoing debates on both sustainability and ecofeminism, especially in terms of their cultural and historical specificity. By critiquing the dominance of economic perspectives on the sustainability debate, this thesis offers an original contribution to existing scholarship (Korten 1995; Monbiot 2004).

Amongst the many different angles from which to approach the sustainability debate, I have chosen to approach my research from an ecofeminist perspective because of the appeal of its basic premise, namely that the patriarchal ideology that justifies oppression based on class, gender, race, physical abilities, species, and other axes of difference is the same ideology that supports the oppression of nature (Gaard 1997). Whilst there continues to be diversity within the ecofeminist community, it is agreed by many scholars who consider themselves ecofeminists that bridging the gap between feminism and ecology not only provides an intersectional understanding between two concepts, but also helps to create a unified stance from which to fight back against all forms of domination (Sandilands 1991, p. 3). Starting from this principle, I have envisioned a conscious form of sustainability that does not only care about furthering technological development (e.g., weak sustainability) or transforming consumption and production patterns (e.g., strong sustainability) that alleviate the burdens on the environment. Ecofeminism provides the sustainability movement with a sensibility towards social justice that would in return also help developing solutions to environmental problems. Paying close attention to the unequally distributed power relations amongst peoples of different genders, sexualities, and classes is necessary if we are to develop a strategy to work *with* differences rather than assuming or suggesting that these differences do not exist. It would be beneficial to open up space for differences without necessarily placing them in a hierarchal order and thus have them dominate or be dominated. This research has shown that new interpretative repertoires are needed to compete with the existing ones. For example, *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* discourse adds to the devaluation of nature and women, and limits women's movement in space. This shows that there exists an inequality that primarily affects women. *Özveri* discourse potentially lays the foundations for the commodification of the working class and an environmental ethos based solely on financial gain. These interpretative repertoires reveal how women and members of the working class are disempowered in different intersecting ways within sustainability discourses. Infusing counter-discourses that encourage women's active participation in the social and natural environment and respect working-class labor and rights would elevate sustainability projects as lived experiences; foster radical change for social justice; and develop the necessary consciousness to bring about change on both the micro and macro level.

Because the concept of sustainability is to a certain degree abstract, I made the choice to conduct a discourse analysis as well as an ethnographic study of the embodied experiences of my research participants during their involvement in the TaTuTa sustainability project in rural parts of Turkey. This helped me obtain detailed information and situate my research participants in their specific contexts. Both the methods through which I collected my material and built my argument have been innovative because I have taken the risk to work with interpretative repertoires—not in a psychology laboratory where doing so is common—as part of an ethnographic fieldwork project. I had an ethical responsibility both towards my research participants in the selected TaTuTa farms, and towards my reader, whose access to the ethnographic insights from these farms were of course channeled through my writing. I sought to present a nuanced analysis of my material in a way that neither oversimplified nor overcomplicated the contemporary embodied experiences of the concept of sustainability of my research participants.

When sustainability debates speak of intergenerational justice by meeting the needs of future generations at a level comparable to today's generations, they do little to highlight intra-generational justice with a particular emphasis on gender, class, and other axes of difference (Barry 1997).[30] Neither is there an emphasis on human engagements with other species. Therefore, an intersectional approach is needed in order to tackle the above-mentioned three issues from an ecofeminist perspective (Birkeland 1993). Heteronormativity, gender discrimination, classicism, and human-centeredness do not operate in isolation from each other. On the contrary, in some cases their mutual presence creates unique conditions that would not have been understood as completely had they been analyzed separately. Therefore, in this study, I tackled them via the *mavi boncuk dağıtmak* and *özveri* interpretative repertoires by taking into account the individual positionings of my research participants—not just from one angle (e.g., gender), but in relation to other angles as well (e.g., class and sexuality). Unfortunately, this thesis did also acquire a more anthropocentric focus than I had envisioned. Originally, I had prepared another chapter that focused on hunting and the environmental movement's conflicted relationship with it, specifically in the context of the TaTuTa farms (Kheel 1997, p. 93). However, space limitations did not permit me to fully cover this topic, which would have foregrounded ecofeminism's approach to animal rights. Therefore, I suggest that this study is furthered in another research project that specifically looks into how sustainability discourse deals with other species within environmentalist projects.

[30] By intergenerational, I mean between generations while by intra-generational, I refer to within a generation.

Turkey, as the country in which I collected my ethnographic data and the place that is also my home country, was and still is in the midst of substantial social and political problems when I conducted my research. Three weeks before I joined my first TaTuTa farm, the country experienced an attempted military coup.[31] Immediately after, Turkey started to be governed under a continuing state of emergency that has been prolonged and lasted right up to the completion of this thesis.[32] One of the results of this socio-political situation is that the rights of citizens to protest, object, and appeal against any government decisions have diminished.[33] Considering these other problems that pose an urgent need for further research, it might seem less useful to conduct research on sustainability in TaTuTa farms. However, approaching narratives of sustainability in rural Turkey is still valuable in order to explore how the mechanisms of domination that we encounter in newspapers and wider political arenas play out in smaller environments, and how they influence perceptions of nature. After all, from an ecofeminist point of view, all life on earth is interconnected.

[31] This issue is widely covered in the international news media. Examples include: https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/jul/18/military-coup-was-well-planned-and-very-nearly-succeeded-say-turkish-officials [Accessed 31 May 2017].

[32] The Turkish administration has extended the state of emergency for the third time. Media coverage of this topic include: http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2017/04/turkey-extend-state-emergency-months-170418034656371.html [Accessed 31 May 2017].

[33] Civil societies across the world have criticized the unlimited discretionary powers exercised by the Turkish authorities after the attempted military coup in the summer of 2016 for endangering the general principles of rule of law and human rights. Examples of such statements include: http://www.cjfe.org/turkey_state_of_emergency_provisions_violate_human_rights_and_should_be_revoked [Accessed 31 May 2017].

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