GENDERED IDENTITIES OF FEMALE TROPICAL FRUIT GROWERS:

THE CASE OF INSTAGRAM ENTREPRENEURS IN TURKEY

ASLI ASENA TURAN

BOĞAZİÇİ UNİVERSITY

2023

GENDERED IDENTITIES OF FEMALE TROPICAL FRUIT GROWERS:

THE CASE OF INSTAGRAM ENTREPRENEURS IN TURKEY

Thesis submitted to the
Institute for Graduate Studies in Social Sciences
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts
in
International Relations: Turkey, Europe, and the Middle East

by
Aslı Asena Turan

Boğaziçi University
2023

Gendered Identities of Female Tropical Fruit Growers:

The Case of Instagram Entrepreneurs in Turkey

The thesis of Aslı Asena Turan

has been approved by:

Assist. Prof. Irmak Ertör (Thesis Advisor) _____

Assist. Prof. Mert Arslanalp _____

Assist. Prof. İrem Soysal Al (External Member) _____

June 2023

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I, Aslı Asena Turan, certify that

- I am the sole author of this thesis and that I have fully acknowledged and documented in my thesis all sources of ideas and words, including digital resources, which have been produced or published by another person or institution;
- this thesis contains no material that has been submitted or accepted for a degree or diploma in any other educational institution;
- this is a true copy of the thesis approved by my advisor and thesis committee at Boğaziçi University, including final revisions required by them.

Signature…….....

Date …….....

ABSTRACT

Gendered Identities of Female Tropical Fruit Growers: The Case of Instagram Entrepreneurs in Turkey

Many farmers and investors have opted for tropical fruit growing in recent years due to these crops' nutritional and economic value in the global markets. Although agriculture in Turkey is dominated by small-scale family farmers (Başaran, 2020), female tropical fruit growers represent themselves as entrepreneurs, hence decision-makers on Instagram. Scholars working on the nexus of gender and media note that social media channels usually exacerbate traditional gender norms and roles, instead of empowering women (Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017). By merging visual methodologies (Rose, 2016) and discourse analysis methods (Fairclough, 2001) with Goffman's dramaturgical analysis (1959), as well as based on a fieldwork and in-depth interviews, this research has attempted to find an answer to (i) why do female tropical fruit growers prefer using social media over other trade networks?, and (ii) how do they represent themselves around the product they are advertising? Accordingly, it has been found that female tropical fruit growers comply with their pre-given gender roles through posting on (i) healthy eating, (ii) elevated social class, (iii) strong family bonds, (iv) labor-intensive work, and (v) desire for more profits. It has also been identified that producing, selling, and marketing tropical fruits via Instagram is preferred since it ensures flexibility, thus helping maintain women's role overload in rural households (Brumfield & Ozkan, 2016). With these findings, this research has contributed to the intersection of the following two literatures: gender and media, and the neoliberalization of agriculture.

ÖZET

Kadın Tropik Meyve Üreticilerinin Toplumsal Cinsiyet Kimlikleri: Türkiye'deki Instagram Girişimcileri Örneği

Son yıllarda birçok çiftçi ve yatırımcı, küresel pazarlardaki ekonomik değeri ve besin değeri nedeniyle tropik meyve yetiştiriciliğini tercih etmektedir. Türkiye'de tarıma küçük ölçekli aile çiftçileri hakim olsa da (Başaran, 2020), kadın tropik meyve yetiştiricileri kendilerini Instagram'da girişimci, dolayısıyla karar verici olarak temsil etmektedir. Toplumsal cinsiyet ve medya ilişkisi üzerine çalışan akademisyenler, sosyal medya kanallarının genellikle kadınları güçlendirmek yerine geleneksel toplumsal cinsiyet normlarını ve rollerini güçlendirdiğini belirtmektedir (Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017). Görsel metodolojileri (Rose, 2016) ve söylem analizi yöntemlerini (Fairclough, 2001), Goffman'ın dramaturjik analiziyle (1959) birleştirmenin yanı sıra, saha çalışmasına ve derinlemesine görüşmelere dayanan bu araştırma, (i) kadın tropik meyve yetiştiricileri diğer ticaret ağları yerine neden sosyal medyayı kullanmayı tercih ediyorlar? ve (ii) reklamını yaptıkları ürün çevresinde kendilerini nasıl temsil ediyorlar? sorularına yanıt bulmaya çalışmıştır. Buna göre, tropik meyve yetiştiricisi kadınların, (i) sağlıklı beslenme, (ii) yükselmiş sosyal sınıf, (iii) güçlü aile bağları, (iv) yoğun işgücü gerektiren çalışma, ve (v) daha fazla kar arzusu hakkında paylaşımlar yaparak, önceden belirlenmiş toplumsal cinsiyet rollerine uyum sağladıkları saptanmıştır. Ayrıca, tropik meyvelerin üretilmesi, Instagram üzerinden satılması ve pazarlanmasının esneklik sağlaması, dolayısıyla kırsal hanelerde kadınların aşırı rol yükünün devam etmesine

yardımcı olması nedeniyle tercih edildiği tespit edilmiştir (Brumfield & Özkan, 2016). Bu araştırma, yukarıda sözü edilen bulgular ışığında, toplumsal cinsiyet ve medya ile tarımda neoliberalleşme literatürlerinin kesişimine katkıda bulunmuştur.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my thesis advisor, Assist. Prof. Irmak Ertör for her continuous support and patience throughout this academic endeavor. She allowed me to have my own space to question and work through the sociological issues that I found valuable. Furthermore, she guided my thoughts and queries and helped me structure my drafts whenever I needed. This thesis would not have been accomplished without her work ethic and interdisciplinary mindset.

I want to extend my gratitude to my dear committee members, Assist. Prof. Mert Arslanalp and Assist. Prof. İrem Soysal Al. Their insightful comments helped me better my thesis and look at it from a broader perspective.

I am grateful to Dr. Rahşan Nazlı Somel, with whom I have been working in a BAP project at Boğaziçi University. She trusted my scholarly capabilities and let me present my first ever paper in an academic conference. Her passion for and harmony with her work, as well as the tasks she assigned me with motivated my own writing process for this thesis.

I am forever indebted to my family for always believing in and supporting me. Whenever I feel overwhelmed, I know my parents are just a call away. My life-long partner, Kamil, always listened to me, cooked for me delicious meals, soothed me when I was stressed, and motivated me to bring this thesis to an end. Fatma Betül, my sister and friend, my mind twin, thank you for being there for me. Our intellectual chatters and therapy sessions are the definition of best-friends-forever.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to all the female tropical fruit growers, farmers, fruit traders, and officials that participated in this study. Thank you for

letting me examine your lives and talk about your stories through this thesis. I am grateful for your hospitality, warm welcome, and all the fruit plates during my fieldwork.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION 1

1.1 Tropical fruit growing in Turkey 2

1.2 Research Motivation, Significance and Limitations 4

1.3 Structure of the thesis 6

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK 8

2.1 Neoliberal Transformation of Agriculture and Gender in Turkey 8

2.2 Food, identity, and self-representation on social media 16

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY 21

3.1 The Selection of Initial Interviewees 21

3.2 Field Study and In-depth Interviews 24

3.3 The Selection of the Instagram Profiles and Posts 28

3.4 Data Analysis 29

3.5 Researcher's Positionality 31

3.6 Limitations and Strengths of the Methodology 32

CHAPTER 4: AN ANALYSIS OF THE WHY AND HOW OF SOCIAL MEDIA: GENDERED IDENTITIES OF FEMALE TROPICAL FRUIT GROWERS 34

4.1 The Why of Social Media: Women Tropical Fruit Growers at the Intersection of Neoliberalism, Gender, and Agriculture 35

4.2 The How of Social Media: Self-representation through People Photos versus Object Photos 49

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION 69

APPENDIX A: LIST OF INTERVIEWS 72

APPENDIX B: INTERVIEW QUESTIONS 74

APPENDIX C: PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE FIELD TRIP TO ANTALYA 76

APPENDIX D: CODE FAMILIES FOR INTERVIEW AND PHOTO ANALYSIS 80

REFERENCES 83

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Not long ago, I have become a victim of "health mania," which "has been made possible in the context of a capitalistic, neoliberal climate, whereby healthism and neoliberalism mutually reinforce the vision of the responsible, entrepreneurial citizen" (Ayo, 2012, p. 100). By prioritizing some foods above others, I thought I was in control of my body, my health, and my life. Tropical fruits such as avocado and dragon fruit are part of the "normative food trend" with their superfood[1], hence *clean food*[2] qualities, making them "a marker of idealized identity" (Sikka, 2019, p. 1). Recently having got married and working on my thesis, I found myself coping with the neoliberal expectation of *having it all* and *being that girl* through food choices and even restrictions.

Hence, the question of why and how female tropical fruit growers represent themselves on social media has been meaningful to me for three main reasons. First, they market their products by basing their discourse on how healthy eating should be; second, they represent themselves as successful in both *private* and *public spheres*; and finally, they express themselves through selling, producing, and marketing healthy food and making these tasks visible on social media. In that way, coming across to their profiles that addressed my interests and struggles has made me question the truth behind this representation they created, and formed my two main research questions: (i) why do female tropical fruit growers prefer social media over traditional trade networks?, and

[1] According to *Merriam-Webster*, a superfood is defined as "a food (such as salmon, broccoli, or blueberries) that is rich in compounds (such as antioxidants, fiber, or fatty acids) considered beneficial to a person's health."

[2] Here, I refer to clean eating, which is defined on *Cambridge* as "the practice of eating only foods that are regarded as healthy, especially fresh food that has not been processed."

(ii) how do they represent themselves (on social media) around the products they advertise?

In the remaining part of this chapter, I will briefly introduce my research context, i.e. tropical fruit cultivation in Turkey. Following that, I will present my study that aims to fill the gap in gender and media literature by merging offline and online contexts. Before outlining the structure of the thesis, I will also touch upon the limitations this research implicates, and a call for further research in this area for other scholars.

1.1 Tropical fruit growing in Turkey

Through his fieldwork in the southern belt of Turkey, Karsak (2021) found out that contrary to the common perception that avocados have been popularized through global markets, it was the rural entrepreneurs in Alanya, Gazipaşa, and Kaledran region who experienced the state's lessening support in a neoliberal agricultural climate and acted on it. Although avocado's first entrance into Turkey dates back to 1960s (Chapot, 1962), it was not until 2005 that these Southern farmers and entrepreneurs started planting avocados. Since tropical fruits in general require a couple of years to yield their first crops, these growers have only been profiting since 2010 through globalized commerce networks (Karsak, 2021). Although there is no trustable data as to the exact scales and numbers regarding tropical fruits (ibid.), Turkey exported 6 million 461 thousand dollars worth of tropical fruits to 57 countries in 2020, which means that the exports of these fruits increased by 38% in the last three years (Ürer, 2021).

Although there is no sociological study that focuses on other tropical fruits' production and consumption processes, through my field work and in-depth interviews that I conducted with farmers and sector representatives, I have reached three insights on the popularization of tropical fruits in recent years. First, avocado growing in Turkey have 3 separate periods and only the last one intersects with other tropical fruits such as dragon fruits, mango, and passion fruits. Karsak (2021) already mentioned in his study that the first plantings of avocados since the 1960s among villagers had nothing to do with profit-making but only emerged out of curiosity and through trial and error. As mentioned above, the second planting period was between 2005 and 2010 (ibid.), which has alluded the next one, when both the villagers and the outside investors started planting all different kinds of tropical fruits, according to their interests. This third period dates to 2010, just when the rural entrepreneurs started making money out of their first investment in 2005. One of my participants sheds light on this development:

> "We have been living in Antalya, since 2008. Then we went for this business, did lots of research. It's a nice fruit, with a promising future. When we first started this business, everything was dark, we didn't know what to do. But since we thought it had a bright future, we said, let's do this. We started in 2010, and it gave its first yield in 2015, in Gazipaşa […] and these make the first crops." (Devrim)

As Bayram et. al. (2006) and Donat (2020) note, mass amount of tropical fruit production in recent years have been intertwined with global as well as European markets' preferences and needs. Post-2010s also marks the time when superfoods have come to be popularized and spread among the middle classes as a symbol of an idealized identity (Butterworth, 2020; Nizam & Yenal, 2020). My participants are principally specialized in the cultivation of dragon fruits, passion fruits, and avocados, which are

known for their superfood qualities. The second insight thus was the following: although tropical fruit growing in Turkey has not been limited to these three, female tropical fruit growers on social media have focused on the production and selling of these superfoods, due to their visual qualities or *Instagrammabilities*[3], nutritional qualities and health implications.

Finally, the third insight I got through this research is that "the entrepreneur" and "decision-maker" female tropical fruit grower on Instagram is an illusion. Agriculture in Turkey is no different than any other country in that the production is dominated by small-scale farmers and designed and led by the males in the family (Başaran, 2020; Anthopoulou, 2010; Welsh et. al., 2016; Brumfield & Ozkan, 2016). That's why, the fact that my participants represented themselves as entrepreneurs on their Instagram accounts requires a scrutiny of the scholarly debates on gendered implications of social media usage. These three points will be further discussed in the following chapters.

1.2 Research Motivation, Significance and Limitations

> Women go this way mainly because they want to prove they can do something. I finished agricultural engineering with the 1st place, actually, I am successful, but I still have to prove it to people. There is no need for this on Instagram. You're being listened to, you don't have to explain. You can become an advertisement in a second and pop up on the Discover [page]. (Kadriye)

Above is one of my interviewees' answer to why she started marketing tropical fruits on Instagram: *to be seen*. However, this research has found that seemingly empowering social media outlets are in fact gendered, and work to consolidate traditional gender

[3] *Cambridge* defines Instagrammability as "attractive or interesting enough to be suitable for photographing and posting on the social media service Instagram."

norms, roles, and expectations. Scholars that have studied gender on social media go in two distinct directions: the first group finds social media as liberating (Mukolwe & Korir, 2016; Zaid et al., 2021; Kaur et al., 2018; Wendt et al., 2020), while others highlight the significance and persistence of offline contexts such as households and workplaces, through participating in social media (Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017; Oberst et al., 2016; Gölge, 2017). This research has followed the path of the second group, as will be discussed in more detail in the upcoming chapters.

Scholarship on social media and gender needs more research since it is mainly limited to the discussions on either entrepreneurship (Duffy, 2021; Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017; Hossain & Rahman, 2018; Gogar, 2019; Cesaroni et. al., 2017) or self-representation (Çakır, 2021; Oberst et. al, 2016; Caldeira, 2021). To my knowledge, only one study examined women in agripreneurship (Kaur et. al., 2018), which was not interlinked with social media and the resulting gendered inequalities. However, this study is unique in that it aims to merge both fields discussed, by conducting not only a fieldwork but also making use of visual methodologies on social media (Rose, 2016).

That being said, this research is limited in scope, resources and generalizability. It only encompasses the subtropical regions in Turkey that are apt for growing tropical fruits. It has also focused on three towns of Antalya, i.e. Alanya, Aksu, and Gazipaşa, where more female tropical fruit growers market their products on social media. This research also lacks sufficient time, resources, and experience since it is a master's level study with no funding. Nevertheless, it aims to be a call for other future investigations to bridge social media analysis and fieldwork on women farmers, while analyzing a recent phenomenon in society.

1.2 Structure of the thesis

After introducing the research context, key elements and limitations of the study in this Chapter, I will present the relevant literature and theoretical framework to identify the agricultural dynamics in Turkey and the effects of neoliberal transformation on exacerbating gender roles and inequalities in Chapter 2. In the same chapter, I will be examining the discussions on gender and social media, and Goffman's dramaturgical analysis (1959) to interpret how female tropical fruit growers represent themselves on social media.

In Chapter 3, I will lay out the methodology of this research in six parts. Firstly, I will explain how I selected the profiles to be examined through my Instagram account, followed by demographic information regarding the participants. Next, I will describe my field study in three towns of Antalya in Summer 2022, supported by the maps of the region. Followingly, I will touch on the Instagram part of the research, talking about how I selected and analyzed the photographs collected from Instagram. I will end the chapter by discussing researcher's positionality, limitations and strengths of the methodology.

Chapter 4 will discuss the outcomes of this study in two parts. In the first section, I aim to find an answer to why female tropical fruit growers in Turkey prefer social media over other trade networks, by going over the production process and the profiles of the interviewees. Then, I will discuss the interweaving effects of neoliberalism on my participants' *preference* for growing tropical fruits and marketing them on social media. Finally, I address the gendered elements in the farming household and entrepreneurship, based on my participants' narratives regarding motherhood, being a woman farmer, and work-life balance.

In the second section, I will intend to interpret the results of my analysis of the most liked photographs posted by my participants using Atlas.ti software. By looking at 5 main themes that came out of the analysis, i.e. (i) healthy eating, (ii) elevated social class, (iii) strong family bonds, (iv) labor-intensive work, and (v) desire for more profits, I try to analyze a representation of a female tropical fruit grower/entrepreneur and discuss its possible repercussions on consolidating traditional gender norms, roles and inequalities. I finish the discussion through a conclusion in Chapter 5, by presenting the main results and key takeaways of this study.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW & THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In this thesis, I aim to answer two main research questions: (i) why do female tropical fruit growers prefer using social media over other trade networks?, and (ii) how do they represent themselves around the product they are advertising? To that end, it is crucial to first understand the patriarchal structure in agriculture in Turkey, and the gendered effects of neoliberal transformation. In what follows, I intend to embed my research topic in the intersections of gender, self-representation, and social media, by providing a synthesis of the literature.

2.1 Neoliberal Transformation of Agriculture and Gender in Turkey

2.1.1 Small-scale family farming

Before I go on to discuss small-scale family farming in Turkey, it is imperative to highlight the distinction between a peasant and farmer. While the former "limit[s] growth to household production," the later "depend[s] on market inputs," and aims "to expand in an entrepreneurial way," (Narotzky, 2016, p. 304). To put it in another way, being a peasant requires "household farming organized […] notably to supply its own […] [subsistence]" (Bernstein, 2010, p. 3). According to Bernstein, small-scale farmers and peasants are interlinked through the development of capitalism. As subsistence got increasingly commodified, "differentiated classes of small-scale capitalist farmers" emerged, instead of a "single 'class' of 'peasants,'" (ibid., p. 4).

To understand the framework surrounding the lead actors in this thesis, one needs to decompose and make sense of the small and family farms. First, small farms are defined either based on the size (usually "less than 2 hectares of crop land"), or "peasant-like attributes," which mean "low levels of technology, reliance on family labor, and a 'subsistence' orientation," and secondly, family farms are "owned, […] managed or worked with family labor," (ibid., p. 4). According to Başaran (2020), although agricultural production is dominated by small-scale farmers in the world, and agricultural productivity -as well as capitalist accumulation- have increased, farmers have not benefited significantly from this process compared to the past (ibid., p. 57).

2.1.2 Effects of neoliberalism on agriculture in Turkey

Any examination of recent phenomena in Turkish agricultural sector necessitates a review of the international food regime literature, which "emphasizes the interrelations among agriculture, states, industry, and the capitalist world economy" (Yenal & Yenal, 1993, p. 19). Although Friedmann (1982) specifies two international food regimes, in this thesis, I first explain the second one which lasted between 1947-1973 and then focus on the ascent of the new (neoliberal) food regime in the 1980s.

The United States has played a significant role in the institutionalization of overproduction, which can be defined as creating an economic system where less developed countries consume, and the core countries overproduce and export (Yenal & Yenal 1993, p. 22-23). American Marshall Aid, of which Turkey had been a recipient between 1948 and 1952, could be a good example of the core's quest for new markets and striving to accomplish or impose foreign policy goals. However, the growing

dependency on imports in developing countries resulted in "rural underdevelopment" and "the extensive use of hybrid seeds, chemical fertilizers, and tractors" (ibid.).

In Turkey, State's support has gradually declined in the agricultural sector since the 1970s' "debt trap and the oil crisis," exacerbated by the structural adjustment policies (SAPs) by IMF in the 1980s (Aydın, 2010, p. 155). Yenal and Yenal (1993, p. 25-27) place an emphasis on the 1980s as the "emergence of a new food regime," during which developing countries had to deregulate their economies and favor global food regimes led by the U.S. and European producers. Aydın (2010) draws attention to the long-term consequences of the neoliberal policies since the 1980s. Accordingly, the de-agrarianization[4] in Turkey has been facilitated by international institutions such as the WTO and the World Bank on the one hand, and transnational agro-food companies on the other. Whims of these institutions and transnational corporations (TNCs) have started to play a significant role in the selection of what, when, where and how much to produce which kinds of products (ibid.). As a result, transnational agri-food companies have been enabled to "develop new crops to control the chains of inputs necessary for specialized agriculture," by replacing traditional crops with "high-value cash crops" and "temperate or synthetic products" (ibid., p. 150-51).

In line with the political and economic developments, as well as neoliberal agricultural policies including Agricultural Reform Implementation Project (ARIP), Turkey has gradually become more dependent on outside financial sources, goods, and products, among which are seed patents, fertilizers, and pesticides (Yenal & Yenal,

[4] According to Bryceson (2002, p. 726), deagrarianization consists of "a long-term process of occupational adjustment, income-earning reorientation, social identification and spatial relocation of rural dwellers away from strictly agricultural-based modes of livelihood."

1993; Samurkaş, 2023). However, agricultural policies have been inconsistent, and depended on political objectives and whether an election has been upcoming in the country. That being said, the Turkish state has facilitated deregulation, international capital flows, and the stratification of core vs. periphery dichotomy.

Although electoral concerns affected the agricultural policies in favor of small-scale enterprises (SSE) and farmers, Turkey, as in the case of other developing countries, "have been forced to restructure [its] agricultural production" through "rapid institutional changes," and free trade and cheap labor (Aydın, 2010, p. 150-56). Neither did the state have a "coherent support system," nor has existed a strong civil society that could affect the too-liberal agricultural policies, as a result of which thousands of people left agriculture between 2004-2006 and the share of agriculture in GDP has dropped nearly by half (ibid., p. 153-80).

Since the state's "presence was now limited to introducing market-friendly policies and rewarding the producers who could more successfully adapt to market conditions" (Nizam & Yenal, 2020, p. 5), any form of rural entrepreneurship research made its entrance into the literature in the 1980s, during a time that was overridden by "changes and crisis in the rural society" (Pato & Teixeira, 2016, p. 1). However, rural employment and remigration in Turkey increased in 2007, and small-scale farmers have endured and adapted to capitalist market economy to this day (Başaran, 2020, p. 60).

2.1.3 Patriarchal norms as a bridge between women and food chains

Although small-scale farming has transformed and come in line with the increasingly neoliberal economic environment, gendered inequalities have remained in a way in

which women have shouldered most of the socioeconomic burden in society (Karaman, 2017, p. 176). Allen and Sachs (2007) stress women's leading role in food chains, which include all material, socio-cultural, and corporal domains. However, they also note that no matter how much "food-related work" they perform, they are absent in the decision-making processes (ibid., p. 1).

According to Whatmore (1991), approaching daily work cycles in family farms as organic and unitary obscures gendered power relations. Hence, she makes a distinction between three types of family farms based on to what extent they are commoditized, which are family labor, transitional, and family business farms (ibid., p. 73). Additionally, she goes on to describe four processes in farm labor (agricultural, domestic household, non-agricultural, and off-farm) to zoom in the gendered division of labor. Although women do not hold any power in either ownership, allocation, or control of economic resources, they bear the sole responsibility of domestic household labor, irrespective of demographic and socioeconomic variables.

Getting to the bottom of the persistency of gendered practices in everyday farm life, scholars draw attention to the wifehood and/or motherhood ideology, which requires women to approach the family property not as a sole economic unit, but a part of the marital bonds with emotional burden (ibid., p. 75; Shortall, 2014). That's why, women tend to employ passive tense for or deny altogether the active labor, resolve the conflicts without resisting the consensus in order to achieve "their social identity as good wives and mothers" (ibid.). Shortall (2014) looks at the gendered dynamics in family farms by reading between the lines of farming, identity, and gender. She acknowledges that in farming households, outdoors is coded as masculine and indoors as feminine by

employing identity control theory, which suggests that there is a hierarchy to identities, and that we can even talk about certain identity losses (ibid., p. 68).

Anthopoulou (2010, p. 394), on the other hand, examines rural family businesses in terms of female entrepreneurs' motives for starting businesses and finds that "the family character of the business minimiz[es] entrepreneurial risk" thanks to "tacit knowledge and know-how, with the small and flexible scale of the production, and the family character of the business" (ibid., p. 397) She draws attention to women's role as "mother-spouse-nurturer of the family" as their nature and concludes that there are both "real and symbolic barriers," in the maintenance of patriarchal norms in farming households (ibid., p. 402).

2.1.4 Neoliberal macro policies and their gendered "micro" consequences

The literature focusing on the neoliberal transformation of Turkish agriculture from a gender perspective is still limited. Below, I will touch upon some main themes and discussions. Croppenstedt et. al. (2013) examine the agricultural dynamics in developing countries, including Turkey. They note that people in these countries, who depend on agriculture for their livelihood, make up approximately half of the workforce (ibid.). What is worthy of notice is that women in these countries do not have as much say as their male counterparts when it comes to "differences in property rights, education, control over resources, access to inputs and services" (ibid., p. 1). Accordingly, gender gaps also increase through state policies and simultaneously with GDP per capita (ibid.). The authors also highlight the fact that lower socio-economic status of rural women compared to men is not specific to developing countries but is

witnessable all around the world. “Individual preferences,” “legal restrictions,” the state, and the market all contribute to the gender inequalities (ibid., p. 8).

Yüksekkaya (2018, p. 122-133) analyzes the transformation of Turkish agriculture through world systems and gender framework. Accordingly, she finds that as the state support for farming households reduced, women’s interests have become of secondary importance, and their work burden increased, while men have made use of the opportunities. Although Turkey is one of the largest agricultural producers in the world, women are invisible at large in small-sized family enterprises (Duban, 2016). Decision-making processes and property ownership are controlled by men, and thus, about 91% of women do not have a landed property of their own (ibid., p. 31).

Examining the gendered implications of ‘Turkish rural social culture’, Al Haik discusses the division of labor, cultural values and power dynamics (2015, p. 4-6). She stresses that farms in Turkey are typically owned by families, fragmented and small due to the inheritance laws, where unpaid domestic labor is utilized (ibid., p. 7). Increasingly neoliberal state policies coupled with fluctuating market economy negatively impacted the agricultural production by small size enterprises (ibid., p. 9).

Focusing on the state’s role, Dedeoğlu (2012, p. 169) notes that “the low female participation in the labor force” has to do with the state policies, which could not be positively impacted on behalf of women through international gender equality policies. Liberalization in agriculture has aggravated the existing gender inequalities in Turkey (Karaman, 2017, p. 176). According to the feminists in Turkey, neoliberal policies supplemented with intentional and selective interpretation of the religious texts have pushed women into the background (ibid., p. 285). Since traditional social norms force

women into unpaid domestic work, “flexible, part-time work has emerged as a solution…to combine work and childcare duties” (ibid., p. 282-83).

Gedikli (2014, p. 3) analyzes the societal and cultural factors that negatively impact female employment, which have been disregarded compared to the individual variables. Gulcubuk (2010a & 2010b) looks at the gender roles in Turkish rural families that restrict women socially and economically. He highlights the social norms that require women to “first be a housewife and mother”, which exclude them from economic resources and decision-making (ibid., p. 143). He finds that “in medium-size businesses, […] women do [the] labor intensive work,” which is “exhausting and wearisome” and as if that were not enough, most of them are considered as “unpaid family worker” (ibid., p. 145-47). Women’s status has gotten worse as families whose livelihood depended upon agriculture have migrated to big cities, since they could not find jobs that are in line with “patriarchal values” (Dedeoğlu, 2012, p. 277).

Scholars draw attention to personal and structural constraints in female labor and rural entrepreneurship (Alston, 2003; Bock, 2004; Welsh et al., 2016). While some highlight the state’s role and macro policies’ impact (Bugra & Cakar, 2010; Dedeoglu, 2012), others look at class, religion, traditions, or marital status (Kurtege Sefer, 2020; Güven, 2022; Atasoy, 2017; O’Neil & Toktas, 2014). Ufuk and Ozgen (2001, p. 96) find that female entrepreneurs experience a “role overload” because “being an entrepreneur conflicts with familial roles.”, which will be further discussed in this thesis with findings from the field work.

2.2 Food, identity, and self-representation on social media

2.2.1 Tropical fruit production in Turkey

Although tropical fruit production is a recent phenomenon in Turkey (Uğurlu, 2020; Yıldırım, 2019), avocado has an older history. According to Chapot (1967, p. 95), the first avocados were imported from California, and planted in Adana around 1942, in order to launch "a new avocado industry […] to supply Western European countries at first." Karsak (2021, p. 4-14) examines this "North-South divide […] within a national setting," and finds that avocado is a "local-historical product" of rural entrepreneurs through "sign-value creation and expropriation," which "typically get obscured by the dominant political economy."

Bayram et al. (2006, p. 3) note that avocado production in Turkey started to increase in the 1980s, at a time when neoliberal policies expanded. Turkey came in sight to replace the countries that led avocado production at the time, since it would be more advantageous for both European countries and Turkey to trade avocados from a capitalist point of view (ibid., p. 6). Hence, it is no surprise that more and more farmers and investors in Turkey have taken up tropical fruit production in 2010s, when they discovered their economic potential (Donat, 2020).

Although to my knowledge there is no research on tropical fruit growing in Turkey from a sociological perspective, other than avocados (Karsak, 2021), one article on dragon fruit smoothie is worth to notice (Karaosmanoğlu, 2020). In this article, the author (ibid.) examines the fruit's symbolic meaning in the polarization between the ruling party and the public. Accordingly, while the "palace kitchen" serves this exotic fruit as a rich culinary item, the government has made mention of much cheaper foods

and beverages while addressing to the "average people" (ibid., p. 1253). Tuncer (2022) highlights this irony, by noting that the middle-class in Turkey cannot afford tropical fruits, but that their export value increased to 10 million dollars, more than 3 times, in just 4 years.

2.2.2 'Healthism' discourse and gendered eating

Many tropical fruits, from mango to avocado, are known for their superfood qualities, which was popularized in the capitalist era, when three interrelated processes emerged: "(1) globalized provisioning of food; (2) global spread of nutritional science discourse —nutritionism; (3) neoliberal-era commodification of the connection between health and eating" (Karsak, 2021, p. 17). Having already discussed the capitalist form of food provision, in this section, I place my study at the intersections of neoliberal rationality, gender, and identity.

Ayo (2012, p. 99) discusses health promotion as a tenet of neoliberal era, in which consumer choice is regarded as an individual responsibility. Scholars utilize Foucault's concept of 'governmentality' to interpret today's health mania in making of the conscious and good citizen (ibid., p. 100; Bilge-Ülker, 2019; MacGregor et. al, 2018; Soysal Al, 2017). Accordingly, the state's role as the protector of the health is transferred to the individuals in the form of health prevention, and by being healthy, citizens "work for the good of society," as well (Ayo, 2012, p. 100). In other words, poor health results from individuals' own irresponsibility and thus is a result of immoral behavior, while consuming superfoods is considered a sign of "morally responsible behavior" (Butterworth, 2020, p. 48).

MacGregor et al. (2021) draw attention to the media's power in promoting superfoods and hence reproducing neoliberal norms. People now search for healthier diets in digital spaces, where there is no single authority but competing personalities and ideas that lead to even more anxiety (Kalderon, 2019; Soysal Al, 2017). Scholars also highlight that it is often women that are targeted by the 'healthism' discourse (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Sikka, 2019; Soysal Al, 2017; Küçük & Soysal Al, 2019). Cairns and Johnston (2015, n.d.) make note of the irony between "embodying discipline through dietary control and expressing freedom through consumer choice." In this scenario, women become objects of attack because they are either "health-obsessed" or "ignorant, self-indulgent, and – perhaps worst of it all – fat" (ibid.).

In her hallmark book *Gender and Food*, Koch (2019) examines the food system from production to consumption and targets the gendered division of labor in all four areas: growing, shopping, cooking, and eating. Accordingly, while it is women that shoulder the "reproductive and caring labor," capitalist forms of food provisioning also exacerbated the division between public/masculine and private/feminine (ibid., p. 6; Küçük, 2016). Feminist scholars note that human health is considered a responsibility of women and hence female morality is determined by whether a woman buys healthy food and feeds her children and spouse with it (p. 49). Finally, although women spend four times more in food preparation and cleaning, their work is taken for granted and thus invisible (p. 8-58).

2.2.3 Bridging Goffman's self-representation with gendered social media practices

Literature on self-representation, gender and social media intersect with that of female entrepreneurship and women empowerment, and scholars go into two main directions: they either find social media as liberating (Mukolwe & Korir, 2016; Caldeira, 2021; Zaid et al., 2021; Wendt et al., 2020) or suggest that it reinforces traditional norms and exacerbates gender inequalities (Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017; Gölge, 2017; Oberst et al., 2016). According to Duffy and Pruchniewska (2017, p. 1), through "soft self-promotion, interactive intimacy, and compulsory visibility," women conform with their traditional roles as the second gender.

While analyzing online personalities and relationships on social media platforms, scholars make use of Goffman's dramaturgical analysis – to be explained below (Merunková & Šlerka, 2019; Goffman, 1959; Lupinetti, 2015; Çakır, 2021). Although Goffman based his theory on face-to-face interactions, such concepts as self-representation, impression management, discrepant roles and audience segregation are highly relevant for this thesis. Hence, in the following paragraphs, I briefly go over these concepts, in an attempt to fill the gap in the literature, by bringing in the gender perspective as in the case of female tropical fruit growers.

In his book *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life* (1959), sociologist Erving Goffman discusses everyday human interactions by resembling life to a theater and people to actors. Just like an actor in a play, we as humans portray characters, give messages, and follow the rhythm of the audience. Accordingly, everyday interactions are a "reciprocal influence," in which we play our *routines* that we practice in our *backstage* (ibid., p. 15-16). Goffman suggests that these routines conform to our social roles and we can be *sincere* or *cynical* while performing them. Hence, even though our backstage

or private personas might be fluid, the *given social front* represents and consolidates traditional norms and roles in our society (p. 27).

Goffman also makes a distinction between an expression and action. Accordingly, we make such an effort to play a part and create a personal front that we end up not realizing that role (ibid., p. 33). To make things concrete, a female tropical fruit grower might spend so much time creating an online persona that she does not even go to the garden and engage in farming. Parallelly, one can represent herself in a lower status (*negative idealization*) or simply work towards meeting established roles (*idealization*) (ibid., p. 35). In order to impress others, we might conceal some facts about ourselves and correct possible errors beforehand. In this way, like on an Instagram page, we display our "end product," while concealing the "disturbing facts" (ibid., p. 44).

Another important concept in the book is *audience segregation,* through which we play different characters based on the recipients of our performance (ibid., p. 48). Goffman also notes that we need to be sincere while displaying our personal front since we are prone to making errors and thus distancing ourselves from the audience altogether (ibid., p. 51-56-70). Additionally, there exists a line between a team and the others (p. 79). A team consists of actors playing the game, as in content creators working on the social media account to create a persona. Here, Goffman talks about a "reciprocal dependence" and familiarity between the team players (p. 82-83). However, we try to impress our teammates as well, so we do not reveal our true feelings about the play to support ourselves or due to the status or age differences (p. 129-130).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

The methodology of this research has been composed of two main parts: data collection and analysis through (a) interviews and (b) Instagram. In 3.1. and 3.2., I talk about how I have reached my interviewees and conducted the interviews, also providing their demographic information and the map of the region that has been studied. Followingly, in 3.3. and 3.4., I address how I have selected and analyzed the Instagram profiles and posts making use of Atlas.ti. I end the chapter by touching on the implications of positionality and the limitations and strengths in 3.5. and 3.6.

3.1 The Selection of Initial Interviewees

Although I am also a user of other popular social media networks like Facebook and Twitter, I could not have opted for any other than Instagram to investigate this inquiry, where users can perform their identity through not only photos and videos but also captions and emojis. Many of my interviewees have acknowledged that Instagram has been the most popular social network site (SNS) to market and sell their products, although some also have their own websites, or use other shopping sites like Shopier[5].

As a social media enthusiast keen on cooking and sharing recipes, I created a second Instagram account in the Summer of 2021 for the purpose of this investigation. Besides posting food-specific content, I also used this profile to follow and reach out to female tropical fruit growers. I have found some of the Instagram accounts that sell avocados and other so-called superfoods, through the following keywords: “pitaya”

[5] www.shopier.com

(pitahaya), “avokado” (avocado), and “tropik meyve” (tropical fruit). Primarily, I studied 18 accounts that met the research criteria at first sight, which were mainly: (i) being a female entrepreneur, (ii) tropical fruit grower, (iii) living and working in Turkey, and (iv) running an Instagram account for their products’ marketing. I initially followed these criteria to find an answer to one of my research questions: i.e., how these tropical fruit growers represent themselves around the product they are advertising.

After scrolling through their profiles, I contacted some of my participants via telephone to gather some preliminary data and insights regarding my research topic. As it is a sociological inquiry through which I intend to uncover the hidden meanings and stories related to a relatively recent phenomenon on both Instagram and in society, using qualitative research methods has been the most appropriate path to follow. While semi-structured questions helped me organize my thoughts and quicken the interview process, unstructured questions enabled me to have flexible conversations with my participants, now that each one of them has unique histories, demographics, and aspirations that required personalized communication.

Of the 18 Instagram accounts I contacted, only 10 agreed to be interviewed, and have become definite participants in this research. Furthermore, through snowball sampling, I was able to reach not only some key people in the sector but also other female tropical fruit growers who do not use Instagram through BATEM’s (Western Mediterranean Agricultural Research Institute Directorate) contacts, to gather some insights as to why they stay out of online platforms. During a 10-months period between the second of February 2022 to the first of December 2022, I conducted a total of 19 interviews with 21 people: 9 were with female tropical fruit growers who were also the face of the Instagram accounts, 4 with their relatives and 1 with a female employee, 1

with a female organic avocado grower who sells her products to cooperatives, 4 with female tropical fruit growers who do not use Instagram, 1 with a male local farmer, 1 with a male official who works at a local directory of agriculture. Only 1 of the Instagram accounts had been deleted, which I could not reach afterward. Although my research subjects were women, I also interviewed male participants since they have been occupying institutional positions.

Table 1. Demographic Information Regarding the Interviewees

Interviewee	Name	Gender	Age	Children	Level of education	Occupation	Scale
#1	Kezban	F	40-50	1	primary school	housewife	n.a
#2	Nefise	F	30-40	2	primary school	farmer	n.a
#3	Şerife	F	30-40	2	university	biolog	n.a
#4	Hatice	F	50-60	3	primary school	housewife	20 decare
#5	Fatma	F	40-50	2	university	retired white collar	n.a
#6	Kübra	F	20-30	0	university	social media expert	n.a
#7	Aysel	F	30-40	2	university	business owner	10 decare
#8	Nesrin	F	40-50	2	university	engineer	4 decare
#9	Saniye	F	30-40	5	primary school	farmer	18-20 decare, 3 yards rented
#10	Nuriye	F	30-40	2	primary school	housewife	7 decare
#11	Selim	M	30-40	1	primary school	tourism professional and farmer	1-2 decare
#12	Kadriye	F	30-40	2	university	agricultural engineer	7.5 decare
#13	Canan	F	30-40	0	university	farmer	14 decare
#14	Mine	F	50-60	2	university	retired teacher	3 decare
#15	Erkan	M	40-50	3	primary school	marketplace owner and farmer	n.a
#16	Ahmet	M	40-50	3	university	engineer	no land
#17	Devrim	M	50-60	2	university	retired teacher	3 decare
#18	Baki	M	30-40	0	university	economist	20 decare
#19	Hüsnü	M	30-40	0	primary school	farmer	14 decare
#20	Nusret	M	30-40	5	primary school	farmer	18-20 decare, 3 yards rented
#21	Merve	F	20-30	0	university	sociolog	n.a

Source: Author's own compilation

Although most of the initial interviews were conducted through phone calls, 5 of them were conducted during my field visit as well. Since 2 of my previous interviewees invited me to visit their fields, I interviewed them twice, in a more in-depth manner when we met face to face. These 2 participants had also the most followers on Instagram. Interviews lasted from 15 minutes to 2 hours. (See Appendix A) Although

participants were guided through semi-structured questions, I did not intervene during some parts of the conversations so as to better analyze the issue at hand and conduct a detailed discourse analysis. (See Appendix B) I changed the names of the participants into pseudonyms and taped and transcribed verbatim and translated all the interviews.

3.2 Field Study and In-depth Interviews

As I conducted my analysis on Instagram while reading the literature, the research question, and the way to answer it took a new shape and turn in the course of the research. Scrolling through the Instagram profiles of my participants, I have noticed that even though most of them represent themselves as "kadın girişimci" (female entrepreneur) and/or "girişimci anne" (mompreneur), they do not fit into the entrepreneurship literature. They actually form a part of family businesses, which market their products by utilizing a woman or a mom figure. In light of this finding, I decided that a field visit and in-depth face-to-face interviews were necessary to broaden the data gathered through interviews via telephone calls and deepen the insights that I got regarding my research topic.

Although Instagram has allowed me to find out my initial interviewees as well as to have access to the main visual and discursive data for this research, it was thanks to snowball sampling that I have been able to meet some other tropical fruit growers that do not have social media accounts, and such key people as the Head of the Avocado Growers' Association, who has played a significant role in avocado marketing in Turkey by not only publicizing avocado production in national fairs but also leading the stated meetings that gather avocado producers. I have also had a chance to discuss gender and

agriculture in Turkey with other researchers whose focus is on tropical fruits. The connections I built over the months enabled me to visit some of my initial interviewees - whom I had contacted before via a phone call- also in the field, in Antalya. The data I collected through field visits have enabled me to explore my participants in their own environment, and in some instances, I even could meet the family members, which would have been impossible if I had stuck to online communication.

Since this research was not funded in any way, my trip to the south of Antalya had to be restricted to only 3 days. Before the visit, all my hosts warned me about the fact that the research area was too large, and that it would be impossible for me to conduct the interviews without the help of a car. In that regard, I arranged a time schedule that would be appropriate both for the participants and my husband -who accompanied me for the field trip- and myself. My interviewees were kind enough to host both of us and serve us a tropical fruit selection whenever they could. (See Appendix C)

We first stayed at an Airbnb in central Antalya, then moved to a hotel in Alanya, in line with our road trip schedule. As we were passing through the streets, it was hard not to notice the marketing of tropical fruits, and the unique atmosphere created by the sub-tropical climate. (See Appendix C) We saw the ads for the new dragon fruit ice cream, and the tropical fruits being sold like tomatoes at low-income markets. Most people – sellers and buyers – I met through my visits told me that these fruits became indispensable in their lives in a short period of time.

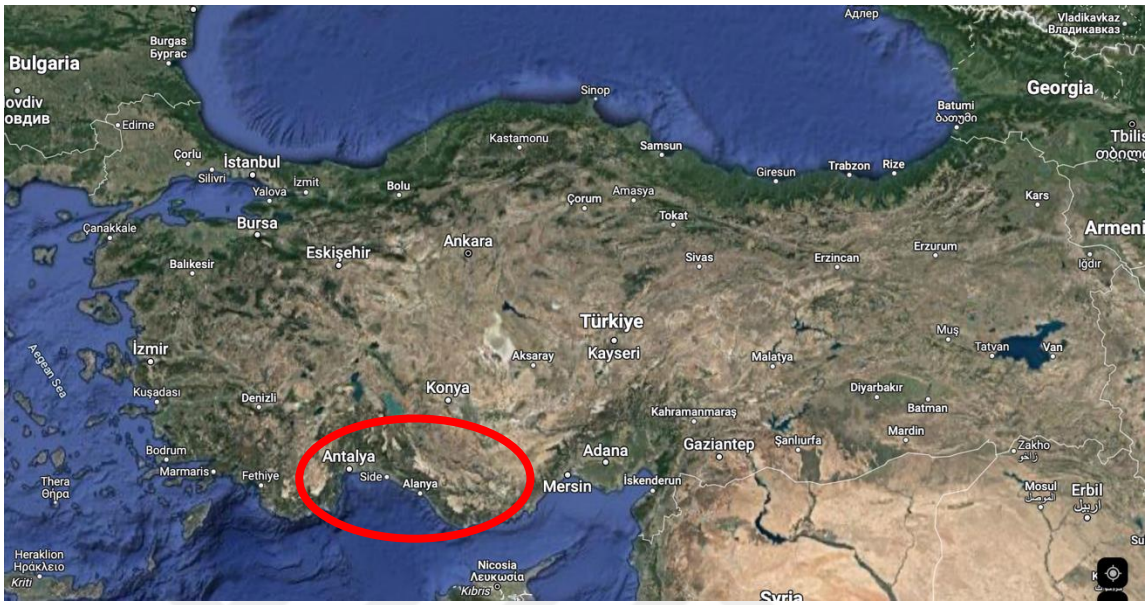


Figure 1 The map of Turkey showing the city of Antalya

Source: Google Maps

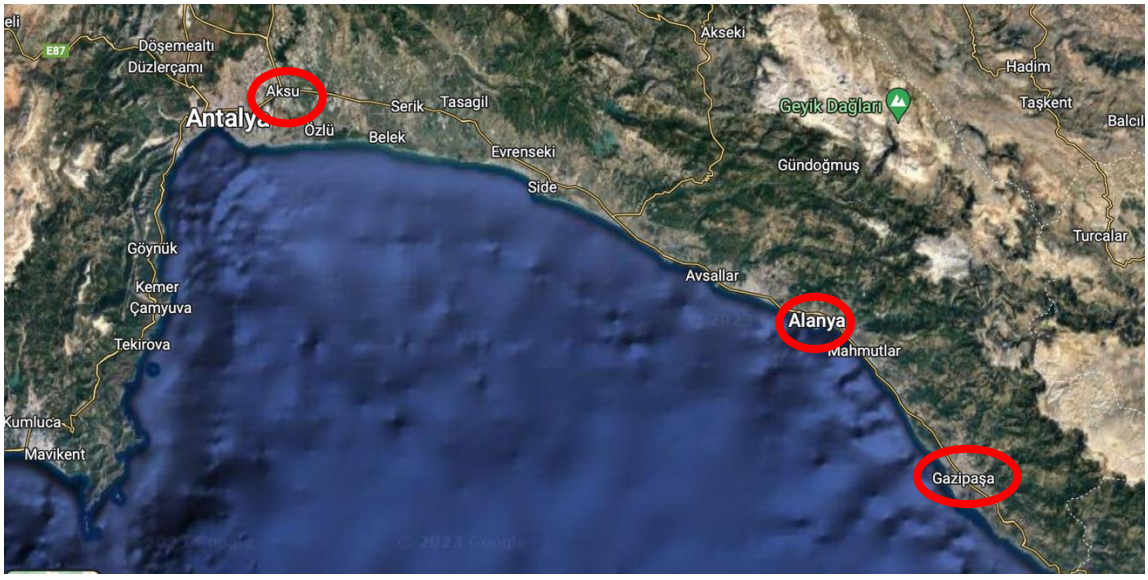


Figure 2 The map of Antalya region showing the field sites Aksu, Alanya, Gazipaşa

Source: Google Maps

Our first stop was Aksu, where I interviewed a female tropical fruit grower and her brother first, and then a retired teacher couple, who moved into Antalya 15 years ago to invest in dragon fruit. The town's primary income comes from agriculture and mainly greenhouse cultivation. As we were driving through the fields, it was hard not to notice dozens of these greenhouses. My interviewees told me that in recent years, almost everybody had taken up dragon fruit growing, since they could not profit by sticking to the old ways, meaning the traditional fruits and vegetables such as eggplants, tomatoes, or cucumbers.

Then we headed to Alanya, "both a tourist hotspot and the capital of avocado," as the locals say. However, we only saw the avocado yards outside the center and all around the town seemed to be surrounded by old hotels and Russian-speaking voices. Here I conducted most of my pre-planned interviews: with 2 female tropical fruit growers, their families, and the Head of the Avocado Growers' Association. I can confirm that this part of our trip was the most beneficial for my research, as I was lucky enough to observe my participants in their daily production and business life.

Finally, we drove to Gazipaşa to interview a former engineer, a mom and a tropical fruit grower. Although this town is also known for greenhousing vegetables and bananas, its climate is not suitable for avocados and tropical fruit growing, due to the steep and uneven form of the land. My participant confirmed that she never grew tropical fruits, but she buys them from the acquaintants to sell it on Instagram. Since it was a village, everyone knew each other, and the form of trade was more flexible compared to the towns and cities.

3.3 The Selection of the Instagram Profiles and Posts

After interviewing all my participants via telephone calls and some in the field, I conducted a preliminary Instagram analysis in December 2022 (see Table 2), through which I listed the accounts, number of posts, date of the first post, and the number of followers. In conclusion, I came up with no regular tendency among the accounts in these 3 elements: the date of the first post ranged from 2014 to 2021; the number of posts in each account from 54 to 3,344; the number of followers from 72 to 131,000.

Table 2. Instagram accounts selling tropical fruits

Account owner	Number of posts	Date of the first post	Number of followers
Şerife	725	2018	91.500
Nefise	99	2021	209
Hatice	1510	2017	72.200
Fatma	421	2019	2842
Kübra	348	2019	9880
Saniye	3344	2016	135.000
Aysel	343	2021	5791
Nuriye	764	2019	75.200
Selim	54	2020	9896
Kadriye	211	2014	9573

Source: Author's own compilation

To understand the posts' patterns and select them for analysis, I examined all the posts of my participants. I looked for personal narratives in the description of the posts, and I

found out that two of the accounts never shared that type of content, while the ones who shared differed in quantity (from 5 to 346). Hence, I decided to conduct an analysis based on what I have found as common: I examined all the posts beginning from the first post and categorized them with the help of Atlas.ti software to find out which themes were salient.

I examined 40 of the most-liked posts of the 10 accounts, which made a total of 400 posts (texts and images were considered as a whole). Then, I screenshotted these posts, categorized them under the name of the relevant account, and ranged them from the most to the least liked. The most liked photo (4,913) belonged to the account with the most followers, while the least liked photo was posted in the account with the least followers. Following that, each post was attached to one or several codes according to the themes identified. I used the Instagram photo analysis discussed in 4.2., as well as in order to identify the themes in the interviews in 4.1. The analysis of the 4.1. is mainly based on my interview notes, while the results and discussion in 4.2. mostly depended on the use of Atlas.ti software. The main code families were objects and people, which can be seen in the Appendix D."

3.4 Data Analysis

The aim of this analysis has been to understand (i) why female tropical fruit growers prefer using social media over other trade networks and (ii) How they represent themselves around the product they are advertising. Hence, this research is centered on the examination of both texts and images and the interrelation of the two in exacerbating gender roles. In her book Visual Methodologies, Gillian Rose (2016) stresses the

significance of intertextuality between not only images themselves but also discourses and images. Accordingly, all the images and texts might be influential in recreating the power asymmetries and thus the researcher should not take for granted the "details, casual assumptions, [and] everyday mundane routines [...]" (ibid., p. 191).

To examine the meanings behind the texts, I have followed Fairclough's (2001) critical discourse analysis (CDA) for four reasons. First, this approach allows the researcher to study the individual within a larger context. While examining female tropical fruit growers, I contextualized them within the recent political economy of agriculture and its effects on gender. Secondly, CDA contains various approaches and thus ensuring a flexible qualitative methodology. Similarly, its being transdisciplinary is appropriate for analyzing a recent phenomenon because it is not fixed nor pertains to a certain category. Finally, critical discourse analysis studies the relationship between structure and agency, focusing on reiterating everyday practices.

Data analysis consisted of two main parts. Primarily, I transcribed online and field interviews recorded via my personal mobile phone, and read the outputs several times. Then, I coded certain words and sentences in the transcripts and came up with such key themes as "tropical fruit as a luxury," "farming inherited from ancestors," and "problems in farming as a sector." Coding process for both Instagram and interviews took place on Atlas.ti software, as explained above. During coding, I focused on quality over quantity as Rose (2016, p. 206) describes, since "the most important words and images may not be those that occur most often." Finally, I combined all the data outputs under the research aim and questions and interpreted them into five main themes: (i) healthy eating, (ii) elevated social class, (iii) strong family bonds, (iv) labor-intensive work, and (v) desire for more profits.

3.5 Researcher's Positionality

My role as a woman researcher had both advantages and disadvantages throughout the study. Regarding the advantages, I would not be able to receive replies to my invitation from some of my conservative female participants, if I were a man. One of my participants told me that since she was indecisive, she consulted her husband about whether to accept to be interviewed or not, and only after he showed support, she decided to reply to me. This is important because, with the same participant, I had an online interview a couple of months ago, quite quickly, without the lengthy decision-making process.

While I was conducting an interview in the traditional avocado marketplace, I realized that my male interviewee made eye contact as he speaks with my husband, more than me. Besides, the whole place was dominated by middle-aged men, while inside, the homes, greenhouses, and shops were female, where I felt belonged. This comes to the subjectivity and position of the researcher. That being said, it is important to reflect on my own story and talk about why I chose this topic as my thesis.

Studying female tropical fruit growers on Instagram requires an interdisciplinary approach since it contains such issues as healthy eating, social media, political economy, family, work, and gender. In 2019, I developed an eating disorder, which was exacerbated by the healthy eating rhetoric on social media. I observed the increasing amount of content on superfoods, weight loss, and certain body shapes as the norm. 2 years later, I got married and I found myself overthinking about the societal expectations for a married young woman. The worst part was when I realized that I started doing things and falling for habits that I was against my whole life.

I became more alert to conversations on work-life balance, women who left work after they became mothers or the gender gap in the workplace. I was warned "not to marry at a young age (26)" by some, as they believed everything would change after one married. Growing up, I observed that the home was female: as a housewife, my mother was responsible for all the chores inside. However, nothing changed at home as she started working, and her workload suddenly increased. When I looked around – other homes and families – I noticed nothing different: women worked on double shifts.

In a nutshell, this thesis combines my observations, struggles, and analysis of gender inequalities, social media discourses, popular eating habits, the economy's breakdown and neoliberal transformation in agriculture, its effect on the less affluent, and more importantly self-representation. How we represent ourselves in social media is a choice about whether to conform or resist to social norms, roles and inequalities.

3.6 Limitations and Strengths of the Methodology

As a researcher who has been exploring a relatively undiscovered area from an interdisciplinary perspective, I have been aware of some of the limitations and strengths of this study from the start. The first challenge I encountered was finding the right literature for the preliminary analysis and how to build a research question that contains such elements as social media, political economy, gender, agriculture, work, and family. Having said that, the multidisciplinary attitude I have taken in this thesis is what nourished it as a superfood would do.

The biggest limitation throughout the data collection period was setting a schedule with my interviewees, most of whom struggled to spare a time slot as they were busy with taking care of their children, daily chores, farm, or social media. When it comes to the participant observation and field interviews, I was rejected to visit them multiple times: Only three of my former interviewees accepted the invitation, and the other three interviews were planned thanks to snowball sampling. I tried to arrange the best time to conduct the field interviews and visit as many tropical fruit growers as I could; however, either their vacation periods conflicted, or they did not reply to my messages.

Although the size of my research sample is limited, it is diverse in that the participants have different family structures, property relations, age ranges, and levels of education. This particular diversity supplied this study with the necessary tools to understand and analyze some of the gender and class-related differences and inequalities in modern Turkish agriculture, family, and society. I also tried to fill this gap by carefully categorizing and reading the existing interdisciplinary literature in-depth. Having said that, it has not been among the research goals of this thesis to generalize any results but to create a peephole to explore, comment on, and open to discussion a relatively recent phenomenon in Turkish society.

CHAPTER 4

AN ANALYSIS OF THE WHY AND HOW OF SOCIAL MEDIA: GENDERED IDENTITIES OF FEMALE TROPICAL FRUIT GROWERS

In this chapter, I attempt to show and discuss the results of the two main research questions I have set out to answer to. In the first part (Section 4.1.), I analyze why female tropical fruit growers in Turkey prefer using social media over other trade networks, initially by examining their profiles, methods, processes, and perspectives regarding the production phase, and dynamics of small-scale farming. Then, in the sections 4.1.2. and 4.1.3., I continue with discussing the effects of the neoliberal transformation of agriculture on my participants' preference for growing tropical fruits and marketing them on social media. Next, in 4.1.4., I look at the popularization of healthy eating through the neoliberal rhetoric of individual responsibility. Finally, in the section 4.1.5., I address the gendered elements in the farming household and entrepreneurship, based on my participants' narratives regarding motherhood, being a woman farmer, and work-life balance. Additionally, in 4.1.6., I touch on the male gaze on these women, and their look at my research questions. I conclude the first section of the results by discussing in 4.1.7. the reasons why female tropical fruit growers opt for marketing their products on Instagram.

In the second part, I interpret the outputs of the Instagram analysis in 5 parts, as a way to answer the question of how female tropical fruit growers in Turkey construct their identity around the products they advertise: (i) healthy eating, (ii) elevated social class, (iii) strong family bonds, (iv) labor-intensive work, and (v) desire for more profits. While analyzing the discourses featured in their Instagram posts, I utilize Goffman's

theoretical framework for dramaturgical analysis. Before ending the chapter with a discussion of the 'how of social media,' in 4.2.7., I try to interpret the gendered implications of a male presence under the disguise on Instagram in 4.2.6.

4.1 The Why of Social Media: Women Tropical Fruit Growers at the Intersection of Neoliberalism, Gender, and Agriculture

4.1.1 The details of production and the profiles of the participants

After getting the necessary information through the interviews, I examined my participants under two categories. Primarily, I asked them demographic questions (e.g. level of education, number of children, occupation, and age), followed by property relations and characteristics, production methods, and the type and number of products. I asked these questions not only to the ones that have an Instagram account to market their products but to all the interviewees whom I could contact and who have an agricultural property (n=15).

Accordingly, the respondents of this research have varying demographic features, as well as relations of property and production. Of all the participants, 9 were college graduates, while others were primary school graduates. Except for 2, all had children, and their ages ranged from 25 to mid-60s. Some participants' professional backgrounds and prior occupations were also quite different. When asked about their occupation, the participants answered that they were housewives, farmers, biologists, business owners, retired white collars, engineers, seasonal tourism workers, retired teachers, and marketplace owners.

The scale of their yards ranged from 0.1 to 2 decares, and some tropical fruit growers rented additional yards as they expanded their businesses. These lands had been

acquired either through heritage, or investment; usually owned by the males in the family; and run by the family. The division of labor was determined and played a significant role in the success of the business. With exceptions, children helped, the husbands or brothers were responsible for the decision-making processes such as at what price a product is going to be sold, and the physical work on the farm or the marketplace, while women dealt with the interior, social media, and the more organizational work, such as packaging and processing food. Regarding the employment of agricultural workers, some depended upon the labor of the family and/or the relatives, some employed workers seasonally or when needed, and only a couple had permanent/fixed employees working for them.

Farmers not only sold fresh but also value-added products in line with the demand on social media. Although some only grew avocados or dragon fruits, many of them marketed up to 70 products, from tea leaves and spices to breakfast food, featuring their local, natural, and sometimes organic qualities. That being said, only 2 participants had an organic or good farming certificate and most of them used pesticides if needed. Regardless, almost all farmers were knowledgeable about organic and good farming practices and even applied them to some extent; yet considered getting a certificate as useless:

> Actually, here, more than half of the growers engage in good farming practices. As I mentioned, we have small-scale farmers. What does good farming require? You need a toilet in your yard. […] Because you have a small land and a house on that land, you already have a toilet. You need a storehouse for your pesticides: every house that has a yard also has a storehouse downstairs. […] But when you look around, you don't see many good farming certificates, and here is the reason: I don't get any profit just because I have a certificate. For example, this

> avocado here costs 6 liras, and the one with good farming practices also costs 6 liras. You don't tell me it will cost 7 liras if I have a certificate. (Erkan[6])

In line with the total global production, agriculture in Turkey is dominated by small-scale family farmers, who work in their own property to support household income without getting fully integrated with capitalist markets (Başaran, 2020). However, although my participants started their businesses as small-scale family farmers, as their businesses grew, they gradually incorporated more technology, hired permanent or day laborers, and/or rented more lands to increase capitalist accumulation, as will be further discussed in the next subsection.

4.1.2 Neoliberal transformation of agriculture and the advent of tropical fruits

The outputs of my semi-structured in-depth interviews show that none of the participants were engaged in tropical fruit production other than avocados pre-2010s. My interviewers have become involved with farming, marketing, or provisioning tropical fruits either (a) through their ancestors or (b) as an investment. However, even if they had inherited farming activity and agricultural land from the previous generations of their families, they started tropical fruit farming in the face of lessening state support and decreasing profits from more traditional crops such as eggplants and tomatoes:

> For example, last year they [farmers] could not profit from bananas, this year they quit fertilizing bananas. Because when everything became expensive, people couldn't afford to grow it. For example, we used to plant eggplants, and

[6] In this subsection 4.1.1., we mainly see a male perspective for at least two reasons. Firstly, Erkan is the president of the Avocado Growers' Association, and hence he has knowledge and data on small-scale farmers in tropical fruit-growing regions. Additionally, as will be further discussed in the remaining chapters of this thesis, female farmers are usually not involved in decision-making processes, thus sharing no opinions on the details of small-scale farming.

> sell them on the internet, but right now, for example, the seedlings of eggplant are too expensive. Fertilizers are too expensive. We burn coal in winter, coal has become too expensive. The coal we bought for 30 liras has become 100 liras, 120 liras for a bag. (Kadriye)
>
> Why tropical fruit? Because it costs less. It does not have much profit, but the cost is low compared to vegetables, and its yield is good. But in vegetables, bring workers, wrap, prune, seed money, planting money, irrigation, fertilization, spraying… There are already a lot of pesticides. But not so with this dragon [smiles]. (Canan)

My first interview was with the Demir family, all single and more than 30 years old, running a family farm together, without an Instagram account. Although farming had been a family business for decades, they did not plant any tropical fruits until 2017. However, they did not quit traditional food growing for financial motives, since dragon fruit did not yield profits until the third year. When I asked them what they produced now, they told me that they only produced dragon and passion fruits for commercial reasons. However, they also confirmed that they planted both traditional and new crops just for themselves:

> [I told] Hüsnü to plant tomatoes and lemons among [the dragon fruits] as well, to make money. We used ropes on the 6-meter-long fields and planted 2 to 3 rows of tomatoes. We said: "Here we go, we might make some gains." Because you know, [when you first plant] the dragon fruit, the system, and the installation process are costly. (Canan)
>
> We planted lettuce, Peruvian apples… Just as a hobby, though. For example, I planted passion fruit there. I would sell it if I wanted. In fact, my sister sold it. She said: "Let me take them to the farmer's market, they cost 60-70 liras there." She had priced it at 30 liras and told me: "Girl… they did not like the dragon fruit in the market, but there are no passion fruits left!" Because she priced it at 30 liras, there were many buyers." (Canan)

Unlike my first interviewees, the retired teacher couple rented a field as an investment, after they had retired:

> We have been living in Antalya since 2008. Then we went for this business and did lots of research. It's a nice fruit, with a promising future. When we first started this business, everything was dark, we didn't know what to do. But since we thought it had a bright future, we said, let's do this. We started in 2010, and it gave its first yield in 2015, in Gazipaşa. (Devrim)

Accordingly, the quick adaptation and expansion of tropical fruits by the growers are very much related to financial motives. Farmers act like investors since they risk their economic resources to acquire more gains. They are also precautious: they spare some of their space and livelihood in the face of the unknown consequences. Keyder and Yenal (2011, p. 79) talk about globalizing economies' displacing effect on farmers, and their strategies such as "income diversification" in order to cope with market fluctuations. As European countries have an increasing demand for tropical fruits, Turkey appeared as a profitable solution with its proximity and low costs (Khan et. al., 2021; Karsak, 2021; Chapot, 1962; Bayram et. al., 2006). On the other side of the coin, farmers that have not been able to profit from such vegetables as "tomatoes, cucumbers, and peppers" "have been gravitating towards tropical fruits, which are demanded both by domestic and global markets" (Yıldırım, 2019).

4.1.3 Social media and tropical fruits as a source of hope

My interviewees had similar motives for planting tropical fruits, even though that would mean waiting a couple of years to reap the harvest and risking their livelihood, as discussed above. The rapid expansion of tropical fruits can be traced back to two main reasons: (i) the increase in the prices of agricultural inputs, and (ii) the decrease in farmers' purchasing power. Social media accounts that sell avocados and other tropical

fruits exploded with COVID-19, at a time when the dollar reached unprecedented rates and e-commerce became the norm. Some of the accounts that sell tropical fruits on Instagram are older than others. As the early comers achieved a level of success, they influenced others to participate in social media to increase their sales:

> We started [social media] during the pandemic period. At that time, we were idle, and people were interested in buying these things at home. People around us had already opened accounts before us, so we did, too. There was a lot of demand at the time. We couldn't make time for Instagram after we started doing our own business. We do not grow tropical fruit now, either[7]. (Selim)

However, most of the interviewees talked about a certain form of competition between the producers. Accordingly, everyone wants to work for their own good, and disseminating information related to how to grow both tropical fruits and online persona is not common:

> I don't want to get involved [with other growers] because no one here wants anyone to be good, nor the dissemination of information. Here, a friend of mine who sells online like me offered to establish a cooperative. She also consulted with other growers but received a negative response. Everyone just wants themselves to be successful. They do not want the development of our region or our people. (Kübra)

Part of the literature on capitalist agricultural relations state that farmers globally have become more dependent on capitalist market relations as they need income to survive (Bernstein, 2010; Marx, 2003; Başaran, 2020; Chayanov, 1991). Hence, economic relations between producers have been increasingly based on whether they gain or lose

[7] Here, Selim refers to the harvest periods of avocado varieties. Each avocado type is harvested in different seasons or months. For more information: https://www.ishs.org/ishs-article/632_4

money, instead of mere cooperation and interdependence. Jonsson and Pettersson (2016, p. 565-566) state that "agricultural producers encompassed more than just market behavior. They tried to […] maximize, or at any rate to ensure a secure level of profits." This has been shown in my results out of my fieldwork as well. My participants told me that female tropical fruit growers that market their products on social media do not share any information to get ahead of competition and thus losing money.

4.1.4 Avocados and all: For the healthy and the wealthy

My interviewees that live in Alanya ('the Alanya cult[8]') had a common narrative for the early days of avocado. As either their families or spouses had owned agricultural land for some time, they had an earlier experience with avocado before it became a food 'for the healthy and the wealthy':

> Our ancestors are farmers. Our grandfathers planted the avocado. Our mothers and fathers would eat it for breakfast. Papaya, guava, mango, kiwi – they all grow here. At first, there was only avocado, but after that, trial and error. So, there was always avocado. They [our grandfathers] tell us that they used to eat avocado wrapped in yufka bread. (Şerife)

> We had 2 [avocado] trees, but we didn't know avocados at that time. My father-in-law had planted it. We said, "Oh, is this even edible?" Those fruits were always thrown away because we did not like how they tasted. Then we tried it by adding garlic, lemon, and salt gradually. Later, my father-in-law cut down these trees because they shaded the banana. It was around 1988 when they were cut. (Hatice)

[8] I have named my participants that live in Alanya as "the Alanya cult," since (i) they are among the first to participate in tropical fruit marketing on social media, (ii) they have the most followers among all, and (iii) they focus on avocado production.

Karsak (2021, p. 3) examines avocado's localization or naturalization in the South of Turkey long before it has come to be known as a 'superfood' commodity. Unlike the common knowledge, it has been the producers, in other words, the supply side of the market that have popularized this tropical fruit, and not the high-income urban consumers. However, the later adoptions of avocados and other tropical fruits are related to the increasing effect of neoliberalism on the widening socioeconomic gap and individual responsibilities:

> As the agricultural frost lengthened, prices increased tremendously, but it did not affect sales. People are used to it [avocado] being expensive. We do luxury production. It's not bread, it's not water, it's not basic food production. If a person eats it when there are cheaper things, it is for luxury, health, or weight control. The fact that it is expensive does not affect [these] people. At the moment, they buy it when it is 16 TL. There is less yield, but it increases towards the end of the season, so it doesn't make much difference. Everything is so expensive right now. (Şerife)

> For example, the comment they wrote yesterday [on Instagram]: You cut the avocado like it's a cucumber. If only you sold the avocado cheap, we could eat it at our table, too. She says "you chop it like a cucumber, like it's a normal thing." So, I replied to her. I said "hello Madam". I said, "May God grant you what your heart desires. We would like to sell it at a cheaper price, but there are lots of expenditures of cargo, this and that. I said it is cheaper than the internet you buy for your smartphone. So, that phone you are using is a huge luxury. I always say it's a huge luxury. In other words, the worst, worst phone is now 3 thousand liras, 4 thousand liras. But look, she has Nike shoes on her feet, his socks are Nike, Adidas, I don't know what the shirt is, but she has no money to buy an avocado. I don't believe it. (Saniye)

Scholars working on the nexus of gender and neoliberal transformation in agriculture highlight "the neoliberal rhetoric of consumer choice" and its impact on family and gender relations (Soysal Al, 2017, p. 65). Even though prices increased, and the customer was unable to spare a portion of her budget for avocados, my participant acted

as if the decision was made through free will. It is also worth notice that the action of buying was seen as women's responsibility. Koch (2019) stresses the gendered division of labor in all areas regarding food, including shopping.

Individual responsibilization through neoliberalism is also seen in the field of health. As the state's role in protecting people's well-being gradually transformed into personal health prevention, '*healthism'* has become a synonym of being a good citizen (Ayo, 2012). Hence, it is due to this neoliberal climate that we witness conflicting discourses related to how healthy eating should be: either the local and the natural are considered as the healthy option, or there is a scientific and masculine approach on food[9]:

> We use products from the garden, I am not into ready-made food. I buy the kids a hamburger once a month if they want it. If they don't eat zucchini, I make zucchini patty and feed them that way. I try not to buy ready-made foods. (Kadriye)

> We always eat avocados, we actually don't have a table without avocados. If not in one meal, it is definitely included in the next meal. It is a must for breakfast. It gives good energy while working. Most of the time, when we are working in the garden, we even eat the ripe, fallen avocado right there. We don't look for salt. Garlic is indispensable in our life. [I don't know] if we actually eat healthily… We call it bazaar bread. It would be nice if we didn't eat the bakery bread. We make it ourselves as much as possible. In other words, we think that we eat healthy, but these staggers (our children) do not eat very well (laughs). They love coca cola, fanta, and Cheetos. (Saniye)

> Every day, I eat 2 dragon fruits every morning, every day… It makes you restful. First of all, it protects you against cancer. It makes the body strong. Because you complete the missing vitamins of the body with it. I eat two every day. It makes the intestines work. It is very important for the cardiovascular system. It contains

[9] Scientific and masculine approach on food here refers to "the language of scientific legitimacy […] used through the adoption of affirmative language to create support for the consumption of anti-ageing superfoods (Macgregor et. al., 2018, p. 11; Cairns & Johnston, 2015)

> lycopene, which protects against cancer. It contains calcium and potassium. So, for example, there is potassium in bananas. But also in this [dragon fruit]. Look, these seeds have vitamin E in them. Youth Elixir. (Mine)

As can be seen, there are two distinct views on healthy eating: feminine and masculine. Unlike Mine, Saniye and Kadriye have little children in the house, whose nutrition they are responsible for. Hence, they want *safe, local, and natural* food in their houses, while Mine[10] focuses on health prevention and breaks food into parts. MacGregor et al. (2018) talk about how foods with superfood qualities are promoted through incorporating scientific language in the face of health anxiety in the neoliberal age. Soysal Al (2017), on the other hand, looks from a gender perspective and discusses mothers' way of feeding their children in line with their social classes. Accordingly, organic and/or home-made foods are preferred, since ready-made and packaged foods are not trusted, thus causing anxiety. Yet, the results of my analysis show that the use of pesticides is not one of the main concerns while marketing the product as healthy and natural. To exemplify, while most of these women identify their products as local, natural, and healthy, they also see it normal to use pesticides whenever they consider it necessary.

4.1.5 A room of one's own: Between entrepreneurship and the farming household

Female tropical fruit growers usually opt for social media, instead of other trade networks for visibility and/or practicality. Online spheres let these women engage in multiple roles in a more flexible way, and since private household work is mostly invisible, Instagram feels like empowerment for them. However, my interviewees talked about work-life balance as a conflict: They are either very disciplined and plan their day

[10] Mine is a retired elementary school teacher.

ahead calculating every second, or they give up on their sleep, some household chores, or simply free time. In any case, they remain mentally burdened by what they do not or cannot do, since they are still responsible for them.

One of my respondents explain this feeling of being recognized and empowered with the following words:

> The main reason women go this way is that they want to prove they can do something. I finished agricultural engineering with the 1st place, actually, I am successful, but I still have to prove it to people. There is no need for this on Instagram. You're being listened to, you don't have to explain. You can become an advertisement in a second and pop up on the Discover [page]. (Kadriye)

When it comes to practicality, combining livelihood strategies and different employment opportunities was common for most of my interviewees. Kadriye explains this situation:

> But I don't do much. I sell first-hand mostly because the courier fee has increased. I think of it as a side job, because on the one hand, I am auditing, there are children, and I am getting prepared for an exam. If I pass the exam and become an academician, I will think about this job, but frankly, there is a livelihood problem right now. Bananas have not made any money this year. There's a lot of risk in this business. Fertilizer prices have also increased a lot. Farming is hard. (Kadriye)

> Summer harvest ends in May. I leave a few trees for our own consumption, and I no longer send products by cargo. I also do tourism in the summer months. I don’t [spare much time] for avocados in the summer, I just water them a few days a week. Drip irrigation is automatic. All I do is change the irrigation channels. Honestly, I don't have a lot of loads. (Nesrin)

Women’s role overload in farming houses, including but not limited to childcare, cleaning, and food preparation has been discussed in the literature (Karaman, 2017;

Yüksekkaya, 2018; Koch, 2019). Since these private-sphere tasks are mostly invisible (Koch, 2019), neither women nor men recognize the time spent on them and the mental and emotional burden their coordination brings, yet they still aspire to be seen even though it becomes an extra work and mental load.

When it comes to the division of labor, 'private' is women's and 'public' is a male sphere. According to Gavison (1992, p. 5), this distinction lays "between the political realm (involving decisions which concern the welfare of all) and the realms of family and market (involving decisions to promote private interests)." Irrespective of such demographic variables as age and education level, all the female participants were the main responsible for household chores and childcare if they had any child. Men, on the other hand, dealt with all the legal, economic, and physical aspects of fieldwork. However, in spite of this seemingly equal split of spheres, female interviewees discussed about their daily life either by ignoring or resenting work overload:

> It's been a year since we got married. I chose this job for a freer life. I work very hard 3-4 days a week, other days I take time for myself and home. This is the benefit of selling online. I leave the house with my husband in the morning, I come home 1-2 hours before him. Unfortunately, most of the workload is on me, as a woman... My husband also tries to support me in every way, I can say that he tries to help as much as he can. But mostly me, it is very difficult to manage the house on the days I work. I am not a mother yet, but I do not know how it will go when I become a mother. We both work [outside] and work at home. There's also social media in the background. People only look at the sale as it happens, shipped and finished, but I do extra work to attract that customer to myself. The background is not considered. Convincing the customer is the hardest, there is nothing after that. It is important to be able to sell to someone who does not know you and does not trust you. This is too tiring. I usually take out cargo for 3 days, the other days I spend time on social media, and I am at home. When I am at home, I can spare time for household chores. (Kübra)

> It's enough if I work for 3 hours. I mean, I'm working that much in a day. For example, a little while ago, I was sitting down. I looked after the chicken; I fed

> the animals. It was 10 o'clock, I went to the greenhouse. I'm in the greenhouse all winter. If there was a jogger, I would have to wait for him [until he finishes the job]. (Canan)

> I am very energetic. I can't stand still. I sleep 3-4 hours a day. I don't like to sleep. My life is spent reading and researching. I love making things. Frankly, it gives me pleasure, not fatigue. (Aysel)

4.1.6 Unobserved Observers / Outsiders: The male gaze

I also interviewed male figures in the tropical fruit-growing sector for additional perspective in the study. Ahmet works in a public institution, and Devrim is a retired teacher and farmer, while Erkan is a traditional tradesman and farmer. When I asked them their views about female tropical fruit growers on social media, Erkan attached a secondary role and feminine meanings to the online work required. However, while characterizing these qualities, he used words to signify that women's role overload resulted from their abilities for detailed oriented multi-tasking:

> You know, this is already in the nature of women. For example, handicrafts are also delicate works. Now dealing with these avocados one by one, one by one. They wrap the avocado, make a package, for example, put them separately in a case. This is women's work for one. Two, they're at home. They don't have a job, they're bored. And you're in a pandemic. Even more so at home. I can't handle it. (Erkan)

Devrim and Ahmet, on the other hand, drew attention to sociocultural, legal and economic barriers that lead women into marketing tropical fruit growing on social media:

> Women's labor is highly vilified in Turkey. I mean, working in greenhouses and stuff under very harsh conditions... The living conditions are so harsh. Men

> usually go to the market, sell, get money, then come home and throw 100 liras at their wives. The remainder is deposited in the bank. People who are already well off here do not like greenhouse cultivation anyway. They give 1 quarter of the money to the partner. 1/4 is sharecropper's, 3/4 is your own. That's why this is heavy work, they don't want to get into it. Women have such grievances, and they are a little more entrepreneurial. Men are a little more traditional, locksmiths. (Devrim)

> For example, I have a friend, who is the owner of tropiksepeti.com, he is a good investor. He produces and sells. It could also be this, ma'am: the man is probably doing other things. There is nothing commercial on the woman, I don't know, if the man is a civil servant, there is an inflow and outflow of money, he may be making these sales on his wife. I've heard of it too. I guess that since the bookkeeping goes through the bank, the fact that these are run by women gives a little more economic advantage, or at least it is carried out through taxation. I don't know much about it. But of course, the fact that there is a female name makes it a little more attractive, and draws more attention, I guess there is such a thing. Since I don't shop there... I have friends who do, but I never thought about the trust factor. But having a female face on social media seems to increase recognition and visibility. (Ahmet)

According to Devrim, women take up social media marketing because they have nothing to lose. Men, on the other hand, sit in a comfortable space in society, thus fearing to lose and risk what they have. Devrim's point is interesting in the sense that in the traditional entrepreneurship literature, such qualities as taking a risk is seen as masculine (Henry et. al., 2016). Ahmet, on the other hand, does not view female tropical fruit growers as decision-makers and thinks that they are only in this business because their husbands could not be due to legal, political, and economic reasons.

4.1.7 A discussion on the why of social media

When I first started researching female tropical fruit growers, my impression was that they were the decision-makers, entrepreneurs, and farmers, just because it was what was written on their Instagram bio. Only when I started interviewing them, I did realize that

they were small-scale family farmers, but at the same time housewives, or belonged to another profession. Either the males in their family owned the agricultural property and engaged in farming, or they invested in tropical fruit farming through, again, the males in their family in most cases. Anthopoulou (2010) discusses that women rural entrepreneurs prefer small-scale family businesses because it is less risky yet more flexible. However, Whatmore (1991) notes that such terms as family farming make gender inequalities invisible.

On another side of the coin, tropical fruit growing and marketing on social media was popularized in the context of increasing dollar rates, lessening state support, and the surging of COVID-19. In light of this new neoliberal climate, individuals needed to take action for their livelihood, health, income, and eating habits. Butterworth et. al. (2020, p. 49) suggest that the "global commercialization of superfoods" is interlinked with health anxiety and neoliberal rationality. That being said, the culture of '*do diet',i.e.* "consumer choice as a source of empowerment," and "dietary restrictions as positive choices" are gendered (Cairns & Johnston, 2015, p. 155-163). In the Section 2, I examine how the healthy eating discourse is made use of in a gendered way by female tropical growers in more detail.

4.2 The How of Social Media: Self-representation through People Photos versus Object Photos

As a result of my analysis of the most liked photographs posted by female tropical fruit growers, I came up with two main code groups on Atlas.ti: people's versus objects' photos. However, although the accounts I examined mostly represented themselves

through people's photos, there was hardly any difference when it came to the themes these photos entailed and the self-representation techniques they utilized. In conclusion, I reached a representation of a female tropical fruit grower/entrepreneur, who has 5 main tenets: (i) healthy eating, (ii) elevated social class, (iii) strong family bonds, (iv) labor-intensive work, and (v) desire for more profits, which I will analyze below.

4.2.1 Healthy eating

All the Instagram profiles I examined throughout this research were full of discourses regarding the health benefits of consuming tropical fruits. The health-related photos were linked to weight loss, made-up recipes, and child nutrition, among others. The recipes were frequently innovative, in that they combined traditional recipes with novel or newly popularized products. The audience targeted through these posts was specific: mothers and young women. Writing about the nutritional facts of tropical fruits, they went about each ingredient individually. The most common photos included dragon fruit on a plate and avocados on a breakfast table. The audience of the two categories was distinct, in that the former drew attention to weight loss and fitness, while the other was about the profile owner's social role and routines.

The First Instagram account to be examined belongs to Şerife, with many 'spontaneous' reels from the garden, and descriptive posts on *local* and *natural* products. Although her brother is the one who owns the agricultural land, she runs the social media account, often posting content on the value of labor.

> We shoot spontaneously from the garden. The products are in the center [of the photo]. For example, we say, let's share molasses. One of the two posts is

avocado. If the atmosphere is colorful, we say "Let's shoot." They are spontaneous. If a channel calls us, we prepare for it, and focus on a tree that has fruits. People like sincerity and natural environment. It could have been different if I was selling clothes. We might broadcast live. (Şerife)



Figure 3 An avocado with her baby

Source: Instagram

Two avocados grew on a sprout, but one grew faster than the other, just as one twin grows up healthy and the other dies. Almost all stages of avocado from flowering to harvest time are like a pregnant woman giving birth to her baby. We strongly recommend it to be consumed by pregnant women, babies who start eating complementary food, and those who want to lose weight. This week we sent the last fruits of Clifton avocados. Early varieties have the lowest fat content among avocados. As the season gets colder, the grown fruits become more delicious. (Şerife)

The content we see through Şerife's post is very common among female tropical fruit growers on social media. If they have children, these women often compare baby avocados to human babies, and the grown ones to mothers. It is striking that Şerife highlighted in the text that one of the twins grows healthy when the other dies. The fact that this statement is followed by strong advice for pregnant women to feed their

children with avocados as a complementary food is a clear indication that the first addressees of these posts are pregnant women.

Followingly, she also speaks to those who want to lose weight: just after addressing pregnant women. Although there is no gender mark here, the fact that two groups come one after another implies that women need to lose weight post-pregnancy. Cairns and Johnston (2015) discuss the "do-diet" imposed on women through the mindset of neoliberal rationality. Women need not only to find a balance between dieting to the extreme but also to abstain from uncontrollably gaining weight. Here, Şerife also implies that mothers must first feed their children with avocados if they do not want them to be healthier and then feed themselves, if they do not want to be *fat.*

To support this hypothesis, below is an extract of Şerife's answer to how social media has affected her life:

> In a good way, absolutely. There are people who use it uncontrollably and get hurt, but I use it completely positively and I love it. I love it. I can follow the authors. As long as it is used for the right purposes… We enjoy it very much. The world is at your fingertips. It should be used with intelligence, not emotion. When I couldn't leave the house, we did activities with my child during the pandemic. (Şerife)

Scholars address the relation between healthy eating and neoliberal rationality (Ayo, 2012; Sikka, 2019; Butterworth et. al., 2020; O'Neill, 2021). Accordingly, people need to take responsibility for their own behaviors, choices, and health, since there is no higher authority to regulate and support one's well-being. With the existence of such an authority, individuals now look for information regarding healthy eating on social media, which is confusing because there are so many *health experts* (Kalderon, 2019).

Finally, through posts like these, Şerife consolidates women's traditional role as caretakers and food providers in the household. As discussed before, women on average spend 4 times more time with childcare and daily chores compared to men (Koch, 2019). Şerife chooses motherhood as her *social front*, which has been provided for her beforehand through society (Goffman, 1959). By employing the rhetoric of individual responsibility, she imposes additional roles on women's nutrition and household responsibilities, instead of resisting the idea of the private sphere as female.

4.2.2 Elevated social class

The participants shared moments of them being filmed in town festivals, on television, or with celebrities. The owners of the most followed accounts also had clients that were famous, and hence they made sure to note their favorite products if they had any. Neoliberal notions of individual responsibility, effort, and success constitute *idealization* (Goffman, 1959), and came to the forefront in the photos where their hard work was noticed and rewarded. They were also aware of the fact that they had followers from different socioeconomic backgrounds, and so they utilized a separate discourse accordingly.

Saniye is the owner of the first Instagram account that specialized in tropical fruits among my interviewees, with the most followers (n=159k). She is popular for her emblematic pink headscarf and breakfast photographs surrounded by family and friends. The recurrent theme in her account is that hard work and discipline pay off. When you access her page, the first piece of information you will see about her is that she is the mother of five, and the first female avocado grower in Alanya.

Below is an extract from her daily routine:

> We normally get up at 05:30. We get up early in the morning. We start work[ing] after we pray. First, we look at messages, then we review what we're going to that day. On the cargo day, I get up at 05:30 in the morning and prepare breakfast until the girls arrive, they come at 07:30 anyway. Employees come from Alanya, from around. Our regular employees… Their number varies between 10-15 depending on the season and workload. Now we have started with olives, some of them attend to [producing] tomato sauce. After breakfast, everyone's task is different. There are those who wrap avocados. Packers are different, weighers are different. We have a helper in the kitchen. In this way, everyone gets busy with their work, and I *have to* follow the posts, I *have to* shoot. I *have to* keep track of the cargo. My daughter and son are responsible for the messages. (Saniye)

Saniye has a very strict daily work schedule, on which she has not made dramatic changes in years. While we were having a chat after the interview, she also told me that she had not had any days off or gone on a vacation since she started marketing on social media, so I started taping her words:

> We were talking the other day (laughs). I said if it goes on like this, I will leave [this job]. This is not [how it should be]. There's no point in doing it if it makes me so disgraced, fall behind on everything, and spend time with my children. (Saniye)

Saniye also appeared on TV and talked about her success story. She posted a photograph from that day and wrote:



Figure 4 There is nothing a woman can't do.

Source: Instagram

> There is nothing a woman can't do if she wants to! It was a really, really good day. With the permission of Allah, I keep climbing the steps that I started with a small step, confidently. Of course, you are my biggest supporter in this journey. You are my biggest family […] (Saniye)

In this post, we see an example of "dramatic realization," as Goffman (1959) refers to. She wears her emblematic clothes and headscarf, with her products displayed on a table in the studio. Goffman (ibid.) states that we can distinguish such professions as doctor, and guitarist through people's outfits, gadgets, and props. To convince people in the role one's playing, such an act is necessary in the absence of status determinating looks. Hence, Saniye prefers dressing like a farmer and creates an ambiance just as in her Instagram posts to preserve her social front.

It is also striking that Saniye does not talk about what it has taken from her to achieve this level of success. Goffman talks about "idealization," and "discrepant roles" (ibid., p. 34-141). Our social roles are determined according to the environment we are in and people we are surrounded by. While we are under surveillance or accompanied by people, we tend to share some facts about ourselves and undercommunicate others.

Here, Saniye idealizes her role as a strong, independent woman in her journey and conceals her daily efforts and grievances, as seen through our interview.

4.2.3 Strong family bonds

Even though they told me that they did not share their private life, female tropical fruit growers frequently posted themselves and/or their family members on Instagram. They shared photos from both the garden and home while they were working, and in their leisure time such as breakfast, coffee, or even holidays. If the farmers worked as a family, the concept of being a team was highlighted. These photos from their private lives were consistent with their given social front as responsible mothers and hardworking family members, in an attempt to show a part of their *backstage*, where it is not always fun and easy:

> Arda comes to the rescue. He supports her mother and sometimes comes to the garden with me. It looks very easy from the outside but actually… very difficult. You see the girls there, they've been busy with social media since morning. It may look very fun from the outside, but… (Saniye)

Although she complains about her job off social media, Saniye does not reflect this side of her life on social media, but instead appeals to *what everyone wants:*

> I share one post every day. [There is] breakfast from the beginning… It is a symbol of me, like an emblem. Everyone wants that anyway. (Saniye)



Figure 5 Breakfast with my daughter

Source: Instagram

> Happy and peaceful Sunday everyone. Ms. Selin [her daughter] is very serious in photos these days. Let's see how the work goes after a Sunday breakfast, and whether we catch up. Let's get to work. [Lord,] Thank you for today. I know that the destiny written by my Lord is more beautiful than our dreams, and I act accordingly. (Saniye)

Scholars talk about women's high workload in farming households (Whatmore, 1991; Shortall, 2014; Bock, 2004). Brumfield and Ozkan (2016, p. 1547) note rural women's "triple role" which consists of "farm activities, household work, and community involvement." Here, Saniye acts in line with her given social front as a farmer, mother, and Instagrammer, and she cannot help but share the burden on her shoulders while trying to catch up with all three roles, including childcare. Even though she mentions that her children help her with fieldwork and social media, she is the main responsible in the private sphere. By attending to everyone's needs on and offline, Saniye does not leave any of her roles behind, nor lessen the time dedicated to each. Instead, she conceals the "disturbing facts" (Goffman, p. 44).

4.2.4 Labor-intensive work

The concept of labor and hard work was highlighted to convey the idea that backstage is not as fun as the front stage. Photos of hands, farming gadgets, traditional farming clothes, and nature were frequently posted. Even though not all the profile owners were engaged in farming, they still posed as if they were working to stress women's labor and the product's local and natural value. "Since fronts tend to be selected, not created," they represented their different identities as engineers, women, mothers, or farmers to reflect the labor-intensive nature of their work (Goffman, 1959, p. 28).

Hatice has one of the most followed accounts on tropical fruits. Although she is the face of the brand, she does not work in the field, nor she is the creative mind behind the scenes. However, she acknowledges the fact that she always reads the comments, checks the DM (direct message) section, and approves the content posted on the account:

> About [the brand] face… I made [the brand face] my mother in the first place. I photographed her face. I would go with that. I was going to have it designed, but my mother didn't want it. Now I call the one in the picture my mother's youth (laughs). I specifically chose this design in the first place. I wanted it to be something permanent. I told my graphic designer what I wanted: a woman with a headscarf, baskets in her hand, filled with avocado, and fruits. I wanted her to smile. (Baki, Hatice's son)

> I was taking pictures when my son was away. My daughter was helping with the videos. We weren't professionals then. For example, I was preparing a plate and I was posting a photo of it. At that time, we had a lot of likes and comments, too. It was beautiful, it was *natural*. (Hatice)

Baki is Hatice's son, who runs the social media account, designs the content, and even takes the photos of his mother. Although Hatice is the face of the Instagram profile, in fact she explains that she poses according to her son's instructions.



Figure 6 During avocado harvest

Source: Instagram

> We wish everyone a nice Sunday. We did our avocado harvest yesterday and today. Before the first cargos, let's share a little information about avocado: Avocado is a stone fruit, whose skin is green, and edible parts are white. Avocado reaches full maturity after being picked. To understand its [real] taste, it is necessary to wait for it to mature. Proteins, minerals and vitamins in its content are essential substances in the balanced and healthy diet of young children and pregnant women. [...] (Hatice)

In our interview with Hatice, she did not describe herself as an entrepreneur or a farmer, but as a housewife. In the first years of her marriage, she lived in the house of her husband's family, who were farmers. For these early days, she talked about her main role as the cooker for the farmers and journeymen in the yard, and she is also currently responsible for food preparation. It is worth notice that while she is narrating the times

she decided how photographs were going to be, she uses such words as beautiful and natural. This is because preparing a plate reflects her daily life, and she has never been involved with any farming activity. To interpret these outputs from Goffman's (1959, p. 142) perspective, Hatice and her son make use of "strategic secrets," to represent the classic female tropical fruit grower. Goffman states that a performer does not need to become the person she is playing because the role only requires one's sincerity. Hence, by posing like a farmer, Hatice achieves a certain level of sincerity, without becoming a real farmer.

Another profile owner is Kadriye, who is an idealist that wants to gather women together around a cooperative and lead them one day, although she is not that active on social media and does not have many followers. However, she prioritizes her children and academic career over farming and Instagram. Instead of other accounts, she stresses her academic background and profession:

> You know, I don't want to put a photo of my children or anyone else in order to bring my profession to the forefront, not myself. To come to the forefront with my profession rather than looking after family issues on Instagram… A lot of questions are asked, a lot of messages are sent. For example, one of them [followers] will be an agricultural engineer. There are people who ask whether they should enter the university with a vertical pass or ÖSYM exam. Some want to ask about the classes. Some want to ask things in the field of education. […] If I write my own name there, they won't know anything about it [my academic profession], but it makes me very happy to help when something happens. (Kadriye)



Figure 7 2 engineers, one capia pepper

Source: Instagram

> Our elders say that there is no food without effort. How about these beauties in [just] a week. 2 engineers, one capia [pepper]. Thank [God] for the reward of my labor. (Kadriye)

It is clear in this post that Kadriye engages in farming, not engineering. In our interview, she resented not being able to do her real job – engineering – after she married and had kids. That's why, although she describes hard work as farming through the photograph, she does not select being a farmer as her *social front.* In this way, she aspires to be seen, and resists her current social role as farmer (Goffman, 1959).

4.2.5 Desire for more profits

All the participants used Instagram not only for marketing but also as a trade channel to sell their products. They attached value to bond with their followers, and thus posting informative and user-engaging content such as draws and competitive games. They also

included contact details in case the followers wanted to order products and did not include price tags but instead directed them to the direct messages (DM) section on Instagram or WhatsApp. In the comments section, they interacted with their followers in an understanding way, and through soft self-promotion (Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017).

Another member of the 'cult of Alanya' is Aysel. Unlike others, her page is dominated by budget-friendly packets filled with tropical fruits. As a mother, she speaks to mothers while marketing, and almost always posts on how to order her products:

> I don't like to share myself. I have a photography program, I take pictures of products. I share them. I use a professional camera, I also have a certificate in photography. I type the product information. Then comes the sale, and I remove the non-demanded ones. (Aysel)



Figure 8 Giveaway for teachers

Source: Instagram

> I'm here with our special giveaway for teachers. The winter package in the image will be given to one of our teachers by drawing a lottery among our teacher

> customers who have shopped from us until 24 November. For this, it will be enough to follow my page and send an ID or document showing that you are a teacher. If you send your teacher ID or document via DM, you will be participating in the draw. (Aysel)

Even though Aysel made clear that she does not like to reflect her private life on her work, she is so busy with her children, house/farming chores and work that her private and work life have become inseparable:

> I have 24/7 messaging traffic, I get orders even at 3 am. There is a Shopier link on Instagram, people can shop there too. We text all day. We also have loyal customers now. (Aysel)

Scholars discuss work-life balance in small family businesses and in rural areas. (Anthopoulou, 2010; Brumfield & Ozkan, 2016; Gulcubuk, 2010a, 2010b). Although family businesses seem flexible, thus leading to less amount of workload, women confront with "many social prejudices over gender role distribution" (Anthopoulou, 2010, p. 395). Hence, while the other profile owners examined above accept or resist their *given social front* in multiple ways, Aysel chooses not to represent any of her social roles by using object photos.

4.2.6 A surprising analysis: the male presence

I initially chose Selim's account assuming that it was run by a woman since on the bio, a woman's name was written as a reference. However, as I reached out to the account holder for an interview, I learned that it was actually the husband who designed the content:

> The state supports women under the age of 29. We took advantage of it for a year, but it's over now. That's why we opened the account in my wife's name. A female entrepreneur sounds good, too. (Selim)

Unlike the other accounts that I examined, this one frequently showed a male's hands, and the dominant discourse was more distant and sales-based:



Figure 9 Passiflora fruit, recently picked

Source: Instagram

> Passiflora fruit, fresh, recently picked. We are waiting for your orders, free shipping to your door with a special price. Product price list is available in the link. (Selim)

There were also many copy-pasted photos inserted into posts that were intended to cater to anyone, instead of only to women or mothers:



Figure 10 Avocado for everyone

Source: Instagram

> For those who fast, those who do sports, [and] those who diet, you can follow @xxx (Selim)

Goffman (1959) describes *negative idealization* as representing oneself at a different status in order to take advantage of an opportunity. Selim also used his wife's name to market their products, since the idea of a female tropical fruit grower on social media sells. However, because his wife is actually not on Instagram, he acts as a woman through "strategic ambiguity," and "crucial omissions" (ibid., p. 62). In this way, Selim guarantees profit-making even though his gender is not apt for the 'female tropical fruit grower image' online.

4.2.7 A discussion on the how of social media

After getting the hang of the reason why there had come up a number of female tropical fruit growers on social media, I started to question how they represented themselves on social media. As I discussed in Section 1, my interviewees are usually not the sole decision-makers, nor entrepreneurs, and did not own the entire agricultural land. Hence, I attempted to figure out if they resisted, accepted, or ignored their social roles and lifestyles through Instagram posts and complemented the analysis with the information gathered from in-depth interviews.

As a result of my analysis of their most-liked Instagram photos, I identified that they represent themselves either with people's and objects' photos, with no clear distinction to divide my participants into groups. Nevertheless, I came up with a representation of a female tropical fruit grower under 5 main themes: (i) healthy eating, (ii) elevated social class, (iii) strong family bonds, (iv) labor-intensive work, and (v) desire for more profits. Across all themes, the neoliberal rhetoric of individual responsibility stood out. The image of a hardworking healthy-food producer and consumer with strong family bonds come from my participants' desire for more profits and higher social level in the face of lessening state support and increasing neoliberal anxiety.

This research has found that female tropical fruit growers on social media make use of women's and mothers' fear of neoliberal uncertainty to market their products. They do so by emphasizing women's role as caretakers and food preparers and using a scientific language to target the members of the *do diet* culture (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Koch, 2019, Soysal Al, 2017). While emphasizing that hard work can bring someone anywhere, they struggled under the burden of their gradually increasing

workload including household chores and childcare. That being said, the *social front* they selected for their online appearance did not resist but complied with their pre-given social roles (Goffman, 1959).

Another significant finding of this research is that neoliberal anxiety has caused small-scale family farmers to benefit from any market opportunities based on demand. Hence, in this analysis, we have seen a farmer, Selim opening an account based on his wife's name, and acting like a female tropical fruit grower through *negative idealization* and *crucial omissions.* Hence, what is displayed on Instagram, i.e., strong, and independent women/mother/farmer entrepreneurs does not actually empower women yet helps persist the gendered division of labor in farming households. To conclude, the focus on women's entrepreneurship results from the desire for more profits, and will continue as long as it brings benefits, without making any real changes in women's role in society.

Conducting this research in the axis of neoliberalism, gender, and agriculture through Goffman's perspective (1959) has enabled me to conduct a more comprehensive study by taking both the online and offline into account. It has been through in-depth semi-structured interviews and field interviews, as well as visual methodologies (Rose, 2016) that I could attempt to analyze to what extent the online reflects the offline. Guided by a dramaturgical analysis has helped me as a researcher to keep in mind that what we overcommunicate might point out to the hidden realities that are under-communicated (Goffman, 1959).

These conclusions are significant because on the surface level, i.e., social media, these women have been represented as all-accomplishing, independent small-scale laborers when in fact they consolidate the traditional gender norms and roles as

discussed in the literature (Brumfield & Ozkan, 2016; Anthopoulou, 2010; Shortall, 2014; Croppenstedt et al., 2013). As a social-media user myself, I have been shopping fresh and homemade produce from women like my research subjects to support the ideal of female emancipation by contributing to small yet effective amounts. Hence, it is one of the intentions of this research to remind the future readers as well as researchers on the fact that online platforms do not always convey the truth about the offline contexts, and to pave the way for more support for women in social, legal, and economic aspects.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

Through this study, I have aimed to answer two main research questions: (i) why do female tropical fruit growers prefer using social media over other trade networks?, and (ii) how do they represent themselves around the product they are advertising? In this closing chapter, I will explain how the study has achieved these research aims, and how it can contribute to theory and practice, while also noting limitations and recommendations.

To answer the first question, I have paid special attention to understanding the research context through a field trip to the research area, as well as identifying the key literature on the neoliberal transformation of agriculture in Turkey and its gendered consequences. Accordingly, I highlighted that Turkish agriculture is dominated by small-scale family farming, in which women are invisible when it comes to decision-making and ownership (Başaran, 2020; Karaman, 2017; Yüksekkaya, 2018). While agriculture is globally patriarchal (Whatmore, 1991; Shortall, 2014), neoliberalism has made farmers vulnerable to market fluctuations and exacerbated gender inequalities (Aydın, 2010; Yenal & Yenal, 1993; Croppenstedt, 2013; Dedeoğlu, 2012). Hence, this thesis has found that family farmers opted for growing tropical fruits instead of more traditional crops as a strategy to cope with market risks, since they are highly demanded globally and there is less need for any state support (Yıldırım, 2019; Bayram et. al., 2006; Karsak, 2021).

Followingly, I have discussed the reasons behind the popularization and quick adaptation of tropical fruits and found that both their consumption and production are

connected to the neoliberal rhetoric of individual responsibility, and thus they involve gendered practices (Koch, 2019; O'Neill, 2021; Soysal Al, 2017). As Koch (2019) notes, women take more responsibility in all areas related to food and look for flexibility to cope with the role overload (Brumfield & Ozkan, 2016). I have found out that the female participants in this study market their products, i.e. superfood filled tropical fruits, usually to mothers and women like themselves, who act in line with gendered responsibility to protect their children, bodies, and weight against neoliberal anxiety (Cairns & Johnston, 2015; Soysal Al, 2017; Butterworth et. al., 2020).

In the second half of the study, I have tried to identify how female tropical fruit growers represent themselves around the products they are advertising. As a result, I have come up with five main themes from the data analyzed on Atlas.ti, which are (i) healthy eating, (ii) elevated social class, (iii) strong family bonds, (iv) labor-intensive work, and (v) desire for more profits. I have utilized Goffman's (1959) dramaturgical analysis to make sense of my participants' most liked photographs on Instagram, complementing this analysis with the data that I obtained from semi-structured in-depth interviews. By merging visual methodologies (Rose, 2016) with discourse analysis (Fairclough, 2001) methods, I have intended to have a novel approach to understand my research theme as well as to fill the research gap and contribute to the literature on social media and gender – at the nexus of neoliberalization of agriculture -, which has been mostly neglected (Duffy, 2021; Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017; Cesaroni et. al., 2017; Caldeira, 2021).

In line with Duffy and Pruchniewska's work (2017), my results indicated that female tropical fruit growers do not resist their *given social front* (Goffman, 1959), i.e. traditional norms and roles they have been pertained to, but they either accept or ignore

them using people's and objects' photos. Through their Instagram posts, their roles as caregivers, gendered body image, work burden, and neoliberal identities are consolidated. However, even though there has been no structural transformation observable, we can talk about a certain gender empowerment. Through Instagram followers, most female tropical fruit growers feel that they have attained recognition, visibility, and public praise. Another significant finding is that these Instagram accounts are not always necessarily led by women themselves, but their husbands, sons, and daughters. Through such techniques as *crucial omissions* and *negative idealization,* the neoliberal ideology of profit-making has been embraced and incorporated into Instagram profiles.

To conclude, this research suggests that the seemingly empowering portrayal of social media works to exacerbate the neoliberal rhetoric of individual responsibility and its gendered effects. While my participants feel empowered through their online personalities, they also confirm that they are burdened by work-life conflict, that they cannot spend enough time with their children, and question how they can manage traditional norms and roles. In addition, future readers should note that this research has been limited in its scope, resources, and generalizability. However, it encourages future investigations to be conducted at the intersections of social media analysis and fieldwork on women farmers.

APPENDIX A

LIST OF INTERVIEWS

Interview ID	Interviewee	Place	Interview Date	Length
Interview 1	Kezban	Telephone call	2 April 2022 20:56	15 minutes
Interview 2	Nefise	Telephone call	7 April 2022 22:43	33 minutes
Interview 3	Şerife	Telephone call	11 April 2022 21:16	1 hour 43 minutes
Interview 4	Hatice	Telephone call	20 April 2022 23:18	44 minutes
Interview 5	Fatma	Telephone call	28 April 2022 16:04	31 minutes
Interview 6	Kübra	Telephone call	13 May 2022 10:43	44 minutes
Interview 7	Saniye	Telephone call	7 June 2022 17:06	20 minutes
Interview 8	Aysel	Telephone call	20 May 2022	37 minutes
Interview 9	Nesrin	Telephone call	8 June 2022 18:00	27:55 minutes

Interview 10	Saniye	Telephone call	9 June 2022 17:18	29 minutes
Interview 11	Selim	Telephone call	9 June 2022 17:45	22 minutes
Interview 12	Kadriye	Telephone call	15 June 2022	43 minutes
Interview 13	Canan and her brother Hüsnü	Face to face interview	28 August 2022	54 minutes
Interview 14	Mine and her husband Devrim	Face to face interview	28 August 2022	46 minutes
Interview 15	Erkan	Face to face interview	29 August 2022	42 minutes
Interview 16	Hatice, her son Baki, and their employee Merve	Face to face interview	28 August 2022	36 minutes
Interview 17	Kadriye	Face to face interview	30 August 2022	52 minutes
Interview 18	Saniye & her husband Nusret	Face to face interview	30 August 2022	1 hour 21 minutes
Interview 19	Ahmet	Telephone call	3 October 2022	28 minutes

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. Adınız ve soyadınız?
2. Ne zaman ve nerede doğdunuz?
3. Nerede, ne zamandır oturuyorsunuz?
4. Eğitim seviyeniz ve mesleğinizi söyleyebilir misiniz?
5. Eğer üniversite eğitimi aldıysanız, ne zaman ve nerede bu eğitimi aldınız? Üniversite yaşamınız boyunca ne gibi faaliyetlerde bulundunuz?
6. Üniversite eğitimi aldıysanız, onun sonrasında yaşamınız nasıl değişti?
7. Aile yapınızı kısaca anlatabilir misiniz?
8. Aileniz geçimini nasıl sağlıyordu? Şu anda siz geçiminizi nasıl sağlıyorsunuz?
9. Sizi tropik meyve üretimine çeken unsurlar nelerdir ve bu süreç nasıl işledi? Bu tercihinizden memnun musunuz?
10. Sağlıklı beslenmek bir yaşam tarzı olarak size ne anlam ifade ediyor?
11. Ürünlerinizi nerede yetiştiriyorsunuz? Bu yer size mi ait?
12. Üretimin gerçekleştiği alanda kaç kişi çalışıyor?
13. Satışınız Türkiye genelinde midir?
14. Satış için başka hangi platformları kullanıyorsunuz? Geleneksel ticaret ağlarında aktif olarak bulunmakta mısınız?
15. Herhangi bir kooperatife veya üretim ağına üyeliğiniz var mı?
16. Sosyal medya sizin için ne anlamlar ifade ediyor? Kültürel ve sosyal anlamda sosyal medyada nasıl ilişkiler kurduğunuzu düşünüyorsunuz?

17. Kadınların çalışması, iş-hayat dengesi, aile içi ve eve dair sorumluluklar gibi konular hakkındaki fikirlerinizi paylaşabilir misiniz? Kendinizi girişimci olarak tanımlar mısınız?
18. Instagram hesabınızı açarken herhangi biri sizi yönlendirdi mi veya karşı çıktı mı?
19. Sizi Instagram'da satış yapmaya iten ve çeken faktörler nelerdir?
20. Instagram hesabı açmadan önceki iş-hayat dengenizi, sosyal yaşamınızı ve ekonomik gücünüzü nasıl yorumlarsınız?
21. Instagram hesabı açtıktan sonra bunlar değişti mi, değiştiyse ne yönde değişti?
22. Instagram hesabını açarken ve işinizi ilerletirken karşılaştığınız zorluklar (eğer varsa) nelerdir?
23. Takipçi kitlenizi nasıl geliştirdiniz?
24. Instagram hesabınızda hayatınızın büyük çoğunluğunu yansıtabiliyor musunuz?
25. Bir gönderi veya hikâye hazırlamadan önce nasıl hazırlanıyorsunuz?
26. Diğer Instagram kullanıcıları paylaşımlarınızı ne derecede etkiliyor?
27. Takipçilerinizle ve müşterilerinizle iletişiminizi nasıl yorumlarsınız?
28. İş yoğunluğunuz arttı mı? Aile bireylerinizin sizden beklentisi değişti mi?
29. Sosyal yaşantınız iyi veya kötü yönde etkilendi mi?
30. Emeğinizin karşılığını aldığınızı düşünüyor musunuz?
31. Diğer kadın üreticilere de sosyal medya girişimciliğini tavsiye eder misiniz?
32. Instagram'da satış yapmak ve online iletişim hakkında genel düşüncelerinizi açıklayabilir misiniz?
33. Eklemek istediğiniz bir şey var mı?

APPENDIX C

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM THE FIELD TRIP TO ANTALYA



Figure C1 Advertisements for tropical fruit-flavored ice creams

Source: Taken by the author



Figure C2 Dragon fruit in the field

Source: Taken by the author



Figure C3 Dragon fruit served on the plate

Source: Taken by the author



Figure C4 Sliced avocados served with some other traditional foods

Source: Taken by the author

APPENDIX D

CODE FAMILIES FOR INTERVIEW AND PHOTO ANALYSIS

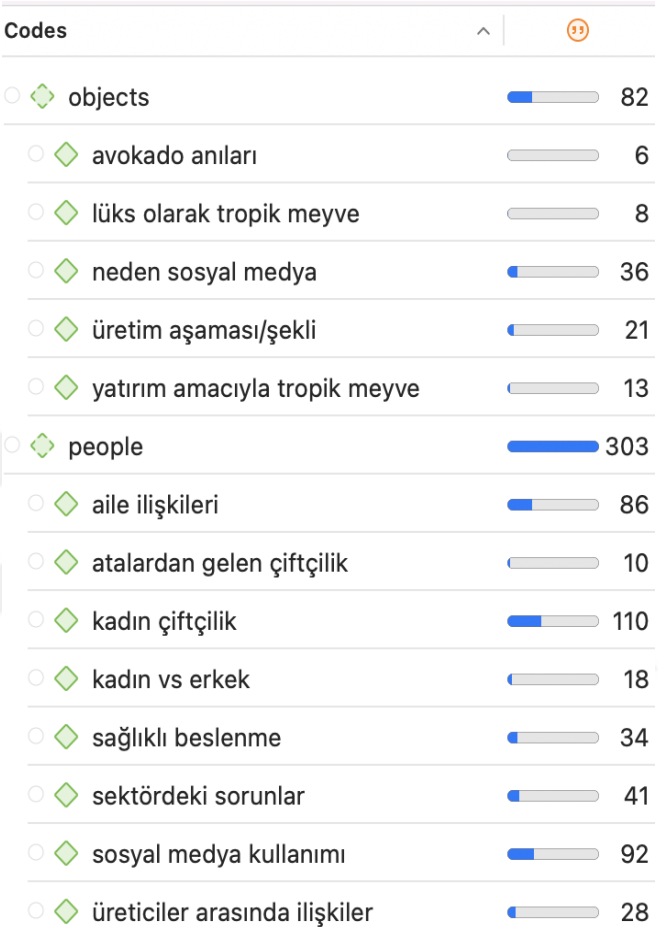


Figure D1 Code families for interview analysis

Source: Author's own compilation

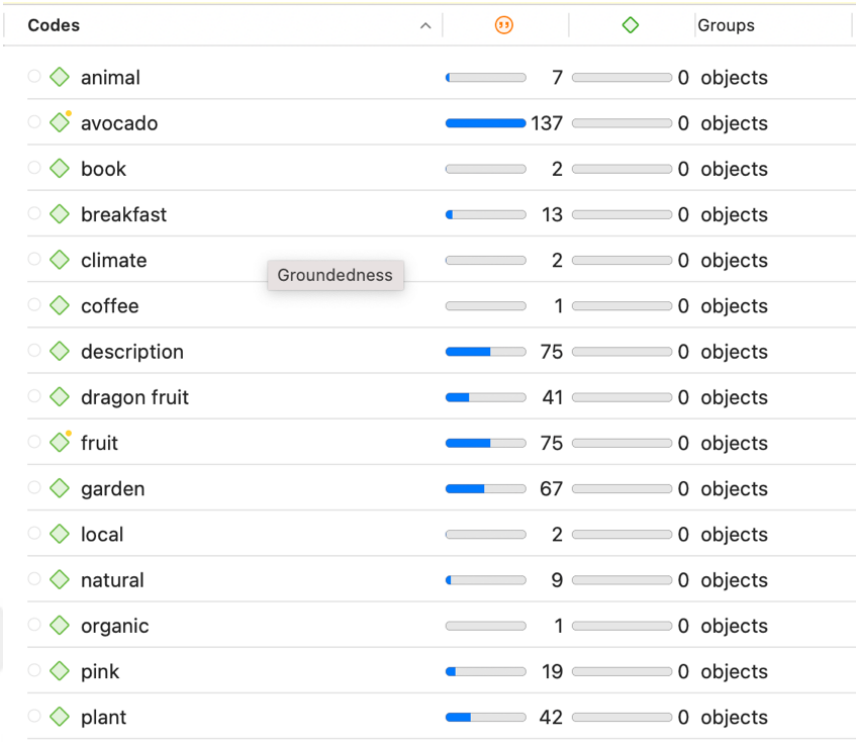
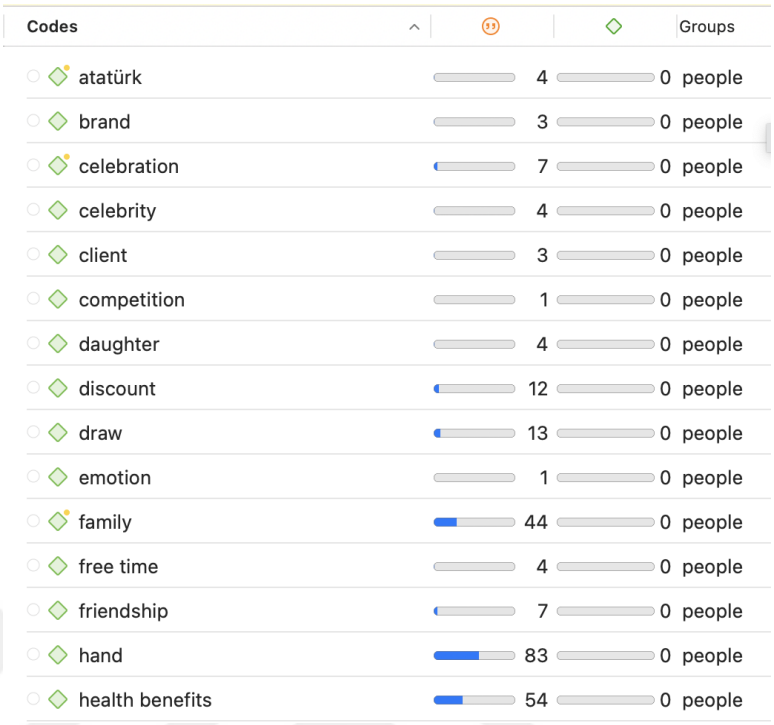


Figure D2 Code families for photo analysis – I

Source: Author's own compilation



Codes			Groups
atatürk	4	0	people
brand	3	0	people
celebration	7	0	people
celebrity	4	0	people
client	3	0	people
competition	1	0	people
daughter	4	0	people
discount	12	0	people
draw	13	0	people
emotion	1	0	people
family	44	0	people
free time	4	0	people
friendship	7	0	people
hand	83	0	people
health benefits	54	0	people

Figure D3 Code families for photo analysis

Source: Author's own compilation

REFERENCES

Allen, P., & Sachs, C. (2007). Women and Food Chains: The Gendered Politics of Food. *The International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture and Food, 15*(1), 1-23.

Alston, M. (2003). Women in Agriculture: The "New Entrepreneurs." *Australian Feminist Studies*, *18*(41), 163-171. Carfax Publishing Company. https://doi.org/10.1080/08164640301726

Anthopoulou, T. (2010). Rural Women in Local Agrofood Production: Between Entrepreneurial Initiatives and Family Strategies. A Case Study in Greece. *Journal of Rural Studies*, *26*(4), 394–403. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrurstud.2010.03.004

Atasoy, B. S. (2017). Female Labour Force Participation in Turkey: The Role of Traditionalism. *European Journal of Development Research*, *29*(4), 675–706. https://doi.org/10.1057/s41287-016-0013-z

Aydin, Z. (2010). Neo-Liberal Transformation of Turkish Agriculture. *Journal of Agrarian Change, 10*(2), 149-187.

Ayo, N. (2012). Understanding Health Promotion in a Neoliberal Climate and The Making of Health Conscious Citizens. *Critical Public Health, 22*(1), 99–105. https://doi.org/10.1080/09581596.2010.520692

Başaran, E. (2020). Türkiye Tarımının Genel Görünümü ve Küçük Üreticilerin Varlığı Üzerine Sosyolojik Bir Analiz. *Anemon Muş Alparslan Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi*. https://doi.org/10.18506/anemon.613779

Bayram, S., Arslan, M. A., & Turgutoğlu, E. (2006). Türkiye'de Avokado Yetiştiriciliğinin Gelişimi, Önemi ve Önerilen Bazı Çeşitler. *Derim, 23*(2), 1-13.

Bernstein, H. (2010). Class Dynamics of Agrarian Change (Vol. 1). Kumarian Press.

Bilge-Ülker, D. (2019). *Neoliberal Governmentality of Health in Turkey, A Case Study of Constitution of "Healthy Woman" as a Subject* [Doctoral thesis, Middle East Technical University].

Bock, B. B. (2004). Fitting in and Multi-tasking: Dutch Farm Women's Strategies in Rural Entrepreneurship. *Sociologia Ruralis, 44*.

Bryceson, D.F. (2002). The Scramble in Africa: Reorienting Rural Livelihoods. *World Development 30*(5), 725-39.

Buğra, A., & Yakut-Cakar, B. (2010). Structural Change, The Social Policy Environment and Female Employment in Turkey. *Development and Change, 41*(3), 517-538.

Butterworth, M., Davis, G., Bishop, K., Reyna, L., & Rhodes, A. (2020). What Is a Superfood Anyway? Six Key Ingredients for Making a Food "Super." *Gastronomica, 20*(1), 46–58. https://doi.org/10.1525/gfc.2020.20.1.46

Cairns, K., & Johnston, J. (2015). Choosing Health: Embodied Neoliberalism, Postfeminism, and the "Do-diet." *Theory and Society, 44*(2), 153–175. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11186-015-9242-y

Caldeira, S. P. (2021). "It's not just Instagram Models": Exploring The Gendered Political Potential of Young Women's Instagram Use. *Media and Communication, 9*(2), 5–15. https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v9i2.3731

Chapot, H. (1962). Avocado Culture in Turkey. *Yearbook of the California Avocado Association, 51*, 93-96.

Chayanov, A. (1991). *The Theory of Peasant Co-operatives*, (D. W. Benn, Trans.). Ohio State University Press.

Croppenstedt, A., Goldstein, M., & Rosas, N. (2013). Gender and Agriculture: Inefficiencies, Segregation, and Low Productivity Traps. *World Bank Research Observer, 28*(1), 79–109. https://doi.org/10.1093/wbro/lks024

Çakır, P. (2021). *Mahremiyet Kavramı Bağlamında Üniversite Öğrencilerinin Benlik Sunumu: Instagram Örneği* [Doctoral dissertation, Kastamonu University].

Dedeoglu, S. (2012). Equality, Protection or Discrimination: Gender Equality Policies in Turkey. *Social Politics, 19*(2), 269–290. https://doi.org/10.1093/sp/jxs004

Donat, İ. (2020, September 4). Küresel Tropik Meyve Pazarının Geleceği. BloombergHT. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://www.bloomberght.com/yorum/irfan-donat/2262759-kuresel-tropik-meyve-pazarinin-gelecegi

Duban, E., Abdurazakova, D., & Kvinikadze, G. (2016). Tarımsal ve Kırsal Geçimin Ulusal Cinsiyet Profili: Türkiye. *Ülke Toplumsal Cinsiyet Değerlendirme Serisi* (Turkey) tur.

Duffy, B. E., & Pruchniewska, U. (2017). Gender and Self-enterprise in the Social Media Age: A Digital Double Bind. *Information Communication and Society, 20*(6), 843–859. https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2017.1291703

Fairclough, N. (2001). *Critical Discourse Analysis.* Int. Adv. Eng. Technol.. 7. 452-487.

Friedmann, H. (1987). The Political Economy of Food: The Rise and Fall of the Postwar International Food Order. *American Journal of Sociology, 88,* 248-286

Gavison, R. (1992). Feminism and the Public/Private Distinction. *Stanford Law Review, 45*(1), 1-45.

Gedikli, C. (2014, August). Female Labour Supply in Turkey: Do Traditional Gender Roles Matter? *33rd IARIW General Conference,* the Netherlands 1-47

Goffman, E. (2002). *The Presentation of Self in Everyday Life*. 1959. Garden City, NY, 259.

Gölge, A. B. (2017). *Online Presentation of Self on Instagram: A Case Study of Yoga Practitioners in Turkey* [Doctoral dissertation, Bilkent University].

Gulcubuk, B. (2010a & 2010b). The Dimensions Of Womens Contribution To The Workforce In Agriculture: The Turkey Case. *International Business & Economics Research Journal (IBER), 9*(5). https://doi.org/10.19030/iber.v9i5.578

Güven, E. (2022). *Experiences of Professional Women who Left Work After Becoming Mothers, The Case of Turkey* [Master's thesis, Middle East Technical University].

Henry, C., Foss, L., & Ahl, H. (2016). Gender and Entrepreneurship Research: A Review of Methodological Approaches. *International Small Business Journal: Researching Entrepreneurship*, 34(3), 217-241.

Johsson, U. & Pettersson, R. (2016). Friends or Foes? Peasants, Capitalists, and Markets in West European Agriculture, 1850-1939. *Review (Fernand Braudel Center), 12*(4), 535-571.

Kalderon, V. (2019). *Neoliberal Subject Construction through Governmentality of Health Discourses: Focus on Organic Food Consumers* [Master's thesis, Middle East Technical University].

Karaman, K. (2017). Changing Economies Unchanging Gender Roles: A Sociological Study about Women Working in the Agri-Food Sector in Turkey. *Fırat Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi, 27*(1), 175-186.

Karaosmanoğlu, D. (2020). From Ayran to Dragon Fruit Smoothie: Populism, Polarization and Social Engineering in Turkey. *International Journal of Communication, 14.*

Karsak, B. (2021). *Peasant Entrepreneurs in the Global Cultural Economy of Superfoods: The Case of Turkish Avocado Growers* [Doctoral Dissertation, Northeastern University].

Keskin, G., Kaplan, G., & Başaran, H. (2017). Türkiye'de Aile Çiftçiliği, İşgücü Prodüktivitesi ve Sürdürülebilirlik, *Harran Tarım ve Gıda Bilimleri Dergisi, 21*(2).

Khan, N., Kakabadse, N., & Skouloudis, A. (2021). Socio-ecological Resilience and Environmental Sustainability: Case of Avocado from Mexico. *International Journal of Sustainable Development and World Ecology,* 28(8), 744-758.

Koch, S. (2019). *Gender and Food: A Critical Look at the Food Syste*m (gender lens). Rowman & Littlefield, Washington DC.

Kurtege Sefer, B. (2020). A Gender- and Class-sensitive Explanatory Model for Rural Women Entrepreneurship in Turkey. *International Journal of Gender and Entrepreneurship*, *12*(2), 191–210. https://doi.org/10.1108/IJGE-07-2019-0113

Küçük, B. (2016). *Labor and Value Creation Processes in the Sector of Natural Food Production in Turkey* [Master's thesis, Boğaziçi University].

Küçük, B., & Soysal Al, İ. (2019). In-between Anxiety and Hope: Trusting and Alternative Among 'Alternatives' in the (Post) Organic Food Market in Turkey. *International Journal of Sociology of Agriculture & Food*, *25*(2), 173-190. https://doi.org/10.48416/ijsaf.v25i2.42

Lupinetti, V. M. (2015). *Self-presentation and Social Media* [Master's thesis, San Jose State University]. https://doi.org/10.31979/etd.zbmv-39zh

MacGregor, C., Petersen, A., & Parker, C. (2021). Promoting a Healthier, Younger You: The Media Marketing of Anti-ageing Superfoods. *Journal of Consumer Culture*, *21*(2), 164–179. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469540518773825

Marx, K. (2003). *Kapital*, (A. Bilgi, Trans.). Eriş Yayınları.

Merunková, L., & Šlerka, J. (2019). Goffman´s Theory as a Framework for Analysis of Self Presentation on Online Social Networks. *Masaryk University Journal of Law and Technology*, *13*(2), 243–276. https://doi.org/10.5817/MUJLT2019-2-5

Mukolwe, E., & Korir, J. (2016). Social Media and Entrepreneurship: Tools, Benefits, and Challenges. A Case Study of Women Online Entrepreneurs on Kilimani Mums Marketplace on Facebook. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science, 6*(8). www.ijhssnet.com

Narotzky, S. (2016). Where Have All the Peasants Gone? *Annual Review of Anthropology, 45*, 301–318. Annual Reviews Inc. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-anthro-102215-100240

National Archives and Records Administration. (n.d.). Marshall Plan (1948). National Archives and Records Administration. Retrieved April 11, 2023, from https://www.archives.gov/milestone-documents/marshall-plan

Nizam, D., & Yenal, Z. (2020). Seed Politics in Turkey: The Awakening of a Landrace Wheat and Its Prospects. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, *47*(4), 741–766. https://doi.org/10.1080/03066150.2019.1708725

Oberst, U., Renau, V., Chamarro, A., & Carbonell, X. (2016). Gender Stereotypes in Facebook Profiles: Are Women More Female Online? *Computers in Human Behavior*, *60*, 559–564. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.02.085

O'Neil, M. Lou, & Toktas, S. (2014). Women's Property Rights in Turkey. *Turkish Studies, 15*(1), 29–44. https://doi.org/10.1080/14683849.2014.891350

Öztürk, M., Topaloğlu, B., Hilton, A. & Jongerden, J. (2017). Rural–Urban Mobilities in Turkey: Socio-spatial Perspectives on Migration and Return Movements. *Journal of Balkan and Near Eastern Studies*, DOI: 10.1080/19448953.2018.1406696

Pato, M. L., & Teixeira, A. A. C. (2016). Twenty Years of Rural Entrepreneurship: A Bibliometric Survey. *Sociologia Ruralis, 56*(1), 3–28. https://doi.org/10.1111/soru.12058

Rose, G. (2016). *Visual Methodologies* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.

Samurkaş, N. D. (2023). *Küreselleşmenin Yerel Gıda Sistemi ve Köylülük Üzerindeki Etkileri Üzerine Yapılan Niteliksel Bir Araştırma.* [Doctoral Dissertation, Maltepe University].

Savran Al-Haik, H. (2015). *Exploring Women Farmers' Experiences: A Case Study of Gender Inequality on Small Turkish Farms* [Doctoral Dissertation, Virginia State University].

Shortall, S. (2014). Farming, Identity and Well-being: Managing Changing Gender Roles Within Western European farm families. *Anthropological Notebooks, 20*(3), 67-81. http://www.drustvo-antropologov.si/AN/2014_3_eng.html

Sikka, T. (2019). The Contradictions of a Superfood Consumerism in a Postfeminist, Neoliberal World. *Food, Culture & Society, 22*(3), 354-375.

Soysal Al, I. (2017). Quotidian Realities of Organic Mothering in Turkey. *New Perspectives on Turkey*, *57*, 61–84. https://doi.org/10.1017/npt.2017.29

Tuncer, G. (2022, September 2). Ejder Meyvesi, Guava, Liçi… Türkiye'de Hangi Tropik Meyveler Yetişiyor, Neden Çok Pahalı, Üreticiye Ne Kadar Kazandırıyor? Independent Türkçe. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://www.indyturk.com/node/548071/ekonomi%CC%87/ejder-meyvesi-guava-li%C3%A7i%E2%80%A6-t%C3%BCrkiyede-hangi-tropik-meyveler-yeti%C5%9Fiyor-neden-%C3%A7ok

Ufuk, H., & Özgen, Ö. (2001). Interaction Between the Business and Family Lives of Women Entrepreneurs in Turkey. *Journal of Business Ethics, 31*, 95-106.

Uğurlu, G. (2020, March 11). Yeni Trend Tropikal Meyve Yetiştiriciliği: Düşük Maliyetle Lezzetli Kazanç. Posta. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://www.posta.com.tr/ekonomi/yeni-trend-tropikal-meyve-yetistiriciligi-dusuk-maliyetle-lezzetli-kazanc-2243423

Welsh, D. H. B., Memili, E., & Kaciak, E. (2016). An Empirical Analysis of the Impact of Family Moral Support on Turkish Women Entrepreneurs. *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge*, *1*(1), 3–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2016.01.012

Wendt, N., Jensen, R. B., & Coles-Kemp, L. (2020, April 21). Civic Empowerment through Digitalisation: The Case of Greenlandic Women. *Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems - Proceedings*. https://doi.org/10.1145/3313831.3376763

Whatmore, S. (1991). Life Cycle or Patriarchy? Gender Divisions in Family Farming. *Journal of Rural Studies, 7*(112).

Yenal, D., & Yenal, N. Z. (1993). The Changing World Food Order: The Case of Turkey. *New Perspectives on Turkey, 9,* 19-46.

Yıldırım, A. E. (2019, April 30). Tarımda Yeni Umut, Tropikal Meyvecilik. Tarım Dünyası. Retrieved March 18, 2023, from https://www.tarimdunyasi.net/2019/04/30/tarimda-yeni-umut-tropikal-meyvecilik/

Yüksekkaya, Ö. (2018). *Rural Women in Turkey (1923-): An Examination of the Transformation of Agriculture and the Environment in Turkey through Gender Lenses* [Master's thesis, Middle East Technical University].

Zaid, B., Shin, D. D., Kteish, S. W., Fedtke, J., & Ibahrine, M. (2021). Gendered Self-sepresentation and Empowerment on Social Media in the United Arab Emirates. *Communication Review*, *24*(3), 199–217. https://doi.org/10.1080/10714421.2021.1957382