

INDIVIDUAL ESCAPISM OR ECO-COMMUNITY: SELECTED CASES OF
ECOVILLAGE INITIATIVES IN TURKEY

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
OF
MIDDLE EAST TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY

BY

EBRU ARICAN

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

APRIL 2014

Approval of the Graduate School of Social Sciences

Prof. Dr. Meliha Altunışık
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy.

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Saktanber
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully
adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members

Prof. Dr. Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör (METU, SOC)	<hr/>
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç (METU, SOC)	<hr/>
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Necmi Erdoğan (METU, ADM)	<hr/>
Assoc. Prof. Dr. Erdoğan Yıldırım (METU, SOC)	<hr/>
Assist. Prof. Dr. Ersan Ocak (Bilkent, COMD)	<hr/>

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: Ebru Arıcan

Signature:

ABSTRACT

INDIVIDUAL ESCAPISM OR ECO-COMMUNITY: SELECTED CASES OF ECOVILLAGE INITIATIVES IN TURKEY

Arıcan, Ebru

PhD., Department of Sociology

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç

April 2014, 256 pages

The aim of this study is to examine ecovillage initiatives in Turkey by focusing on green lifestyles and community strategies as agents of political change. In Turkey, the first ecovillage initiatives started to appear in the 1990s. Ecovillage initiatives, like ecovillages in the world, are intended to create models of sustainability and self-sufficiency and to promote ecologically sound practices and values. Members of ecovillage initiatives taking part in this study, have concerns about quality of life issues. They associate quality of life with healthy food, physical/spiritual health and well-being, all of which are based upon sustainable ecological principles. Ecovillage dwellers escape from cities to practice an ecological lifestyle in settlements of their choice because they perceive that their basic quality of life is threatened by poor environmental quality in the cities. They emphasize individual actions, not macro-economic, social and political structures, as the major cause of environmental degradation.

This study is a modest attempt to explore whether ecovillage initiatives have the potential to become the kind of human-scale, self-sustaining eco-communities suggested by social ecology perspective. It also addresses whether ecovillage initiatives should be considered as the flight of certain members of the urban middle

classes to rural areas, and whether they should be understood as individualistic and private efforts of educated and propertied (urban) middle classes.

Keywords: Ecovillage initiatives, Turkey, green lifestyle strategies, community strategies, flight of the urban middle classes.

ÖZ

BİREYSEL KAÇIŞ YA DA EKO-TOPLULUK: TÜRKİYE’DEKİ EKOKÖY GİRİŞİMLERİNDEN ÖRNEKLER

Arıcan, Ebru

Doktora, Sosyoloji Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç

Nisan 2014, 256 sayfa

Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de ilk olarak 1990’larda ortaya çıkmaya başlayan ekoköy girişimlerini yaşam tarzı ve topluluk stratejileri üzerinden incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Ekoköy girişimleri, dünyadaki örnekleri gibi, sürdürülebilir ve kendi kendine yeten yerleşim modelleri oluşturmayı, ekolojik pratikleri ve değerleri teşvik etmeyi ve kırsalda edinilen deneyimleri diğer insanlarla paylaşmayı hedeflemektedir. Araştırmaya dâhil edilen girişimlerin parçası olan bireyler, ekolojik ilkeleri temel alan, fiziksel/spritüel sağlık, sağlıklı gıda ve refah ile ilişkilendirdikleri iyi hayat arayışındadır. İyi bir hayatın kentlerde çevresel riskler karşısında tehdit altında olduğunu düşünen bireyler, kentten kaçarak kendi seçtikleri yerleşimlerde ekolojik yaşam tarzını pratik etmeyi alternatif bir yol olarak görmektedirler. Ekolojik bozulmanın nedeni olarak makro-ekonomik, toplumsal ve politik yapılara değil bireysel eylemlere vurgu yapan, girişimlerin parçası olan bireyler toplumsal yapılarda değişim hedeflemezler. Bu çalışma, ekoköy girişimlerinin, toplumsal ekoloji anlayışı tarafından önerilen insan ölçekli, kendi kendine yeten eko-topluluklara dönüşme potansiyellerini araştırmaktadır. Ayrıca, ekoköy girişimlerinin, mülk sahibi, eğitilmiş, kentli orta sınıfların bireysel kaçış girişimleri olarak değerlendirilip değerlendirilemeyeceğini tartışmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekoköy girişimleri, Türkiye, yeşil yaşam tarzı stratejileri, topluluk stratejileri, kentten kaçış.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Helga Rittersberger-Tılıç for the contribution, encouragement, patience and emotional support that she has provided throughout my time as her student. This thesis would not have been possible without the guidance of my supervisor. I also thank the members of my thesis committee, Necmi Erdoğan, Ersan Ocak, Ayşe Gündüz Hoşgör, and Erdoğan Yıldırım for their valuable comments and recommendations, all of which made this thesis better.

To conduct a fieldwork would be an exhausting process without Güler Aydın. I am grateful to her for all the support she provided during this process. I want to express my gratitude to David Hockenbery for proofreading this thesis. I would like to thank Başak Önsal, Özlem Çelik, Sündüs Aydın and Dawn Nowacki for their help. I would like to thank Ali Serdar Gültekin for all his help, support and patience during this writing process. I also thank my other friends for providing friendship that I needed. Thanks also my study participants who shared their opinions and experiences with me during fieldwork. I would like to express my special thanks to Güneşin Aydemir for her invaluable help.

Lastly, I would like to express my heart-felt gratitude to my family for their love and patience. Their support has been unconditional all these years. I am deeply thankful to them for encouraging me in all of my pursuits. Special thanks go to my brother Tunca Arıcan. I owe my deepest gratitude to him for all his help, advice and support that he provided throughout the writing process. He has faith in me and my intellect even when I did not have faith in myself. This thesis was enriched significantly through helpful discussions with him. But most of all, I am deeply thankful to him for his love and friendship. None of this would have been possible without my family.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PLAGIARISM	iii
ABSTRACT	iv
ÖZ	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
CHAPTER	
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
2. METHODOLOGY	14
2.1 Fieldwork Design and Fieldwork.....	15
2.2 Limitations of the Research	25
2.3 Interpretation of Data	27
3. THEORETICAL INSIGHTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF LIFESTYLE AND COMMUNITY POLITICS	28
3.1 Lifestyle Politics.....	30
3.2 Community Politics.....	40
4. HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE ECOVILLAGE MOVEMENT AND ECOVILLAGES	46
4.1 Romantic Conception of Nature.....	46
4.2 The Country and the City	50
4.3 Counterculture and the Hippie Movement.....	53
4.4 Ecovillages as a Form of Intentional Community.....	58
4.5 General Characteristics of the Ecovillages	62
5. ENVIRONMENTALISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOBILIZATIONS IN TURKEY	70
5.1 Pre-1950 and Between 1950 and 1980.....	71
5.2 Post-1980s	74
5.3 Post-2000s	81
6. SELECTED ECOVILLAGE INITIATIVES IN TURKEY.....	92

6.1 Historical Background of Ecovillage Initiatives in Turkey	94
a. Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi	98
b. Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği	101
c. Bayramiç-Yeniköy Grubu	104
d. Dedetepe Çiftliği-Çetmibaşı-Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kültürü Merkezi	107
e. İmece Evi: Doğal Yaşam ve Ekolojik Çözümler Çiftliği	109
f. Güneşköy Kooperatifi	110
g. Ormanevi Kolektifi	111
h. Kardeş Bitkiler	112
i. Kır Çocukları	113
j. İbrim	114
k. Ahlatdede	114
l. Cazgirler	115
m. Alakır	116
6.2 Green Lifestyles	118
6.2.1 Green Networks	120
6.2.2 Green Spaces	123
6.2.3 Green Times	130
6.2.4 Green Materialities	131
6.3 The ‘Ecovillagers’ of the Initiatives	143
6.4 Green Community Strategies	155
6.4.1 Permaculture, Natural Farming and Organic Farming	156
6.4.2 Eco-Technologies and Alternative Economic Systems	165
6.5 Motives for Building Green Communities	171
6.5.1 Anti-Urbanism	172
6.5.2 Anti-Consumerism	179
6.5.3 Individualism/‘Hedonism’	182
7. CONCLUDING REMARKS	190
REFERENCES	200
APPENDICES	
A. LIST OF SELECTED ECOVILLAGE INITIATIVES	211

B. LIST OF INTERVIEWEES	213
C. INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.....	216
D. SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ECOVILLAGE INITIATIVES	218
E. CURRICULUM VITAE.....	234
F. TURKISH SUMMARY.....	236
G. TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU.....	256

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In this thesis, I first ask whether ecovillage initiatives that put green and sustainable lifestyles at the center can form an eco-community as an alternative to current ecological crisis. Second, I ask whether they are individualistic, escapist and private efforts of middle class.

Faced with environmental threats, the problems that have mostly been associated with urban life, some people have reached for an alternative solution –to create ‘dropout’ communities, communes or ecovillages. As the literature reveals, communities have “throughout their history embodied some green principles and practices” (Pepper, 1991: 2, 3). Yet, some communities, especially founded in the 1970s, when the rise of environmental concern was advanced were characterized by green principles and practices. These are the principles, practices and values including anti-materialism, feminism and pacifism which might constitute the ways of prefiguring ecological society as defined by contemporary green thinkers (ibid, 2, 3). It is known that current environmental problems have existed in the past and raised ecological concerns around the world. Nevertheless, it is not easy to specify when ‘modern’ concern about the environment and environmental issues began. While emphasizing uneven development of environmental concern around the world, Lowe and Goyder identify four major periods in the West: 1890s, 1920s, late 1950s and early 1970s (quoted by Pepper, 1984: 14). These are “at the end of periods of sustained economic expansion, when people were inclined to react against highly materialistic values” (ibid). However, it appears that the 1970s stands apart from the others at least in one sense (Pepper, 1984: 14). During the late 1960s and early 1970s, environmental issues gained prominence. This differed from the previous approaches concerned, only, or at least primarily, with participatory and distributional issues. To be more precise, before this period environmental problems were generally perceived as a “crisis of participation whereby excluded groups

sought to ensure a more equitable distribution of environmental goods” such as urban amenities and negatives such as pollution. During the late 1960s new theoretical paths, critiques and sensibilities represented primarily by the New Left and counterculture movements emerged (Eckersley, 1992: 9). What mainly lies behind this is that the struggle against the pollution of air and water, and the encroachment of industry and commerce on open natural space, which have the “physical weight of enslavement, imprisonment,” is a political struggle. The “violation of nature is inseparable from the economy of capitalism” and commercialized nature and polluted nature lead to domination and alienation of humans and nature (Marcuse, 1972: 61, 72). This period of new sensibilities and theoretical paths was marked by anti-Vietnam protests, student movements, campus riots and the hippie movement. The hippie movement was a return to Romanticism in terms of the environmental aspects it had, such as re-establishing the close links with nature and recapturing simplicity that were perceived to have existed in the past (Pepper, 1984: 17). In the early 1990s ecovillages appeared which are accepted as the continuation of ‘dropout’ communities of the 1960s and the 1970s because of the concerns and the class background of most people taking part in the ‘movement’ (Fotopoulos, 2000: 287, Pepper, 1991; Trainer, 2000a). Ecovillages, as formations articulating a different model for confronting environmental problems, emerged in response to ‘real’ or perceived environmental degradation. They emerged from a desire to establish a more simple, self-sufficient and sustainable lifestyle that is centered on community. Nevertheless, ecovillages, Pepper, Trainer and Fotopoulos argue, are mostly not based on a strong political ideology and collectivity. Most do not “have a clearly defined ideology of which they constitute a lived example, nor do they worry much about ideological cohesion” (Pepper, 1991: 201). Rather, the individualism that the 1960s communes displayed emerged in the late 1980s (Pepper, 2001; Fotopoulos, 2000).

In the late 1990s, ecovillages in Turkey began to be initiated to provide concrete examples of ‘alternative’ practices, attitudes, and principles to ‘mainstream’ ones similar to the ecovillages in the West. When predecessors of ecovillages, like hippie

communes and co-housing initiatives, are considered, it can be said that such formations emerged late in Turkey. This can be demonstrated by the fact that concerns about ecological and environmental issues have started to grow only after 1980 in Turkey (see Chapter 4, 5 and 6). As explored in Chapter 5, it is not possible to mention a strong green movement in Turkey. Furthermore, it is an ongoing debate that locally unwanted land-use conflicts in the 1980s (e.g. movements concerning Güvenpark and Zaferpark), struggles against thermal power plants, hydroelectric power plants, gold mining activities of the last three decades and other mobilizations mentioned in Chapter 5 have not developed into fully fledged political activism (Duru, 2013; Adaman & Arsel, 2000). During the 1990s, environmental degradation made evident through these struggles, images and reports of specific problems has motivated a group of individuals in Turkey to re-examine the way they live and to seek some ‘alternatives’, for example, to conventional foods, to industrial products and to urban life. One manifestation of this quest is the attempt to create ‘green’ communities in rural areas. The first known ecovillage project in Turkey, Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi (Hocamköy Anatolian Ecological Communal Life Movement) was formed with these motives. Hocamköy was initiated in 1996 in Central Anatolia to blend the idea of living in harmony with nature with an enhanced sense of community (see Chapter 6). Following Hocamköy, which came to an end in 2001, other ecovillage initiatives have started to emerge. The common declared goal of these initiatives is not to create a societal change but to promote changes in individuals’ lifestyles, characterized by reduction in consumption, self-sufficiency, access to ‘real’ and ‘healthy’ food. To achieve these goals, their members distance themselves from urban life, overconsumption, and start to practice green lifestyles. These ecovillage initiatives seemingly differentiate from other environmental mobilizations in Turkey by offering an ‘alternative’ solution, in perceptions of their advocates, to the current environmental crisis. When existing environmental problems and the ‘insufficiency’ of current solutions are considered, there appears a necessity to analyze ‘alternative’ responses to environmental degradation. There is not any academic work focusing on these initiatives in terms of

their potential for prefiguring ecological society. Thus, this study seeks to make a contribution in this field.

In this study, while examining the selected ecovillage initiatives in Turkey and in what they offer as ‘alternatives’ based on perceptions of their members I apply Andrew Dobson’s classification of strategies for green change. Dobson suggests five approaches to green change, which include action through and around the legislature, lifestyle, communities, direct action and class. Action through and around the legislature, broadly speaking, refers to party political activity and pressure group activity. Direct action is broadly defined as do-it-yourself politics. The class category of the green change refers to the belief that change of consciousness can bring about shifts in social and political life. Certainly, individual actors can adopt different and multiple strategies. Any individual can be a member of a green party as well as a buyer of environmentally-friendly products. S/he might also live in a community (Dobson, 2001). In this study, I attempt to analyze the ecovillage initiatives in Turkey through lifestyle and community strategies because outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that they are centered on these two strategies. Lifestyle strategies concern changes in the patterns of individual behaviour, for example, with the things people buy, the transport they use, the way they interact with other people and so on. It refers to different practices including reduction of consumption, consumption of green products, practice of recycling etc. Community strategies, Andrew Dobson argues, “might be an improvement on lifestyle strategies, then, because they are already a practice of the future in a more complete sense than that allowed by changes in individual behaviour patterns” (Dobson, 2001: 136). It can be said that “they are more clearly an alternative to existing norms and practices, and, to the extent that they work, they show that it is possible to live differently – even sustainably” (ibid). In discussing lifestyle strategies, I also apply Dave Horton’s classification: green networks, green spaces, green materialities and green times. Horton argues that green lifestyles are networked, spaced, materialized and timed. While saying that green lifestyles are networked Horton means that through involvement in some networks (e.g. meetings and protests) people learn how to act.

By green spaces, he refers to certain sites (e.g. vegetarian café) in which people develop their green lifestyles. Horton argues that green lifestyles are materially organized because the absence and presence of some material objects (e.g. television and car) are influential in the development of green lifestyles. Green lifestyles are also timed because certain times are productive of green lifestyles (highlighted times when greens are ‘most radical’). I shall mention and discuss all these but the focus will be on green materialities regarding basically green consumption.

In examining lifestyle and community strategies of the ecovillage initiatives in Turkey, I also apply David Pepper’s classification of first order and second order practices that he uses in his study on green communes. Pepper conducted interviews with more than eighty commune members from twelve communes in England, Scotland and Wales to enquire whether “people in communes do or do not show, through their attitudes, values and deeds, sufficient evidence for us to conclude that communes could be a significant, even major part of a green society” (Pepper, 1991: 2). He argues that despite differences in their political emphasis “most greens would probably agree on a desirable set of ecologically sound ways of daily living.” These can be seen as first order which is “directly trying to behave with, rather than against nature, and minimizing human ecological impact” and second order which is “organizing and behaving socially in a way compatible with the values of green society.” By first and second, Pepper does not suggest that first order practices are more significant than the second ones (ibid, 20). As his definition indicates, in Pepper’s classification first order practices refer to lifestyle strategies and include sharing resources, recycling, walking or cycling where feasible, use of alternative technologies and medicine, etc. Second order practices concern social and work practices and might include less division of labor, more work sharing, democratic participative political structures and so on. By second order practices, Pepper does not refer to systemic change but a kind of reform in existing mechanisms or structures in the direction that they may involve non-hierarchy, consensus decision-making and so on (Pepper, 1991: 23). The fieldwork reveals that members of ecovillage initiatives adopt first order practices. They regard individuals as the main

actors and ask them to abandon or adopt certain practices and bring about changes in personal lifestyles to reduce human impact on the environment. They generally do not have concerns about other issues such as production or consumption processes which refer to second order practices in Pepper's perspective (see Chapter 6).

In discussing lifestyle and community strategies of the ecovillage initiatives in Turkey, I also benefit from Murray Bookchin's distinction between social ecology and environmentalism. Bookchin was among the first to draw attention to this distinction. In Bookchin, like in Dobson, environmentalism is a technocratic, reductionist, managerial and reformist approach to environmental issues. While environmentalism does not focus on the complex cultural, political and historical factors involved in environmental problems, social ecology, as an ecological theory, is "concerned with the relationship between flourishing of individual organisms, species, populations, and larger ecological wholes" (White, 2008; Clark, 2001: 354). Social ecology stresses that current ecological problems stem from socio-economic problems and these ecological problems cannot be clearly understood and resolved without dealing with the problems at the root. To put it in Bookchin's words, "economic, ethnic, cultural and gender conflicts, among many others, lie at the core of the most serious ecological dislocations we face today" and "to separate ecological problems from social problems would be to [...] misconstrue the sources of the growing environmental crisis" (Bookchin, 2001: 436). In asking whether these initiatives can form an eco-community in the sense of being an alternative to the ecological degradation, I use Bookchin's social ecology because the political goal of social ecology is to establish a free, communitarian society in harmony with nature. Social ecologists are advocates of ecological agriculture, housing cooperatives, ecotechnologies, green political parties and the other efforts aimed at social and ecological regeneration (Clark, 2001: 356). These are among the declared goals of the ecovillages in the world and ecovillage initiatives in Turkey. To achieve this Murray Bookchin suggests a new city which is called eco-community. Nevertheless, Bookchin's stress on systemic change and structural transformation does mean that he refuses the significance of personal lifestyle changes. Like Dobson and Pepper,

Bookchin does not underestimate the value of personal changes. As distinct from Dobson and Pepper, Bookchin thinks that “the rudiments of an ecological society will probably be structured around the commune – freely created, human in scale, and intimate in its consciously cultivated relationships” (Bookchin, 1982: 344). He advocates of decentralization of cities into confederally united communities. To meet the regional needs of confederated municipalities eco-technologies, solar, wind, methane, and other sources of energy, organic forms of agriculture, humanly scaled designs are used. For Bookchin, the ‘free nature’ is unattainable without decentralized cities based on these (Bookchin, 2001: 451). It appears that both the ecovillages around the world and ecovillage initiatives in Turkey seek to live self-sufficiently that is centered on these alternative technologies mentioned by Bookchin. They seek, for example, to use renewable energy and alternative agriculture methods and see all these as a means of attaining sustainable ecological society. But the question arising here is whether their declared goals of ecovillages concerning eco-technologies or use of alternative farming methods lead them to form communities similar to Bookchin’s eco-community. Here the other question needing to be posed is that if they do not address production and consumption processes, hierarchical relations, domination systems, exploitation and class relation, this is to suggest that they do not have any political ramification. One of the main criticisms directed towards ecovillages around the world is that most of them ignore political, economical and social realms and they are single issue based (Fotopoulos, 2006). To put it better, they mostly do not address issues of inequality and social injustice in the society. They do not include even animal treatment issues into their agenda. For these reasons, they are considered as ‘a-political’ enclaves (Fotopoulos, 2006; Trainer, 2000a). Most greens tend to think that decentralized communities or green communes can be a vanguard for social change and can be a response to current environmental problems. But it is not possible simply to claim that communities can be a response to overconsumption or materialism as will be discussed in Chapter 3 and 6.

To explore these issues I conducted a fieldwork in selected ecovillage initiatives in Turkey (see Chapter 2). These ecovillage initiatives taking the ecovillage ‘movement’ in the world as a model are not called ecovillages but rather ecovillage initiatives because of two reasons. At first, they do not refer to themselves as ecovillages but ecovillage initiatives or eco-settlements. Secondly, none of them can be qualified as ecovillage according to widely accepted standards such as providing housing, work opportunities and so on.¹ Furthermore, throughout this study, I aim to analyze ecovillage initiatives as part of the ‘imagined eco-communities’² because of two main reasons. Firstly, the members of these initiatives ‘imagine’ achieving communal living according to principles of sustainability and self-sufficiency but as of today it is difficult to talk about a communal life in these initiatives. Most members of current initiatives appear as part of the community, share expenditure of the settlements, participate in some way in the life of the settlements including agricultural activities, workshops and courses but they still live and work in the cities. To live fulltime in rural areas is among their long-term plans but because of some personal or economic issues most of them have not achieved it yet. The second reason to consider them as part of the ‘imagined eco-communities’, in terms of their perceptions, is that there are also other individuals including volunteers, participants of courses, workshops and yoga camps etc., who do not permanently live in rural areas and who are not literally a member of any initiative. But, they appear as members of the same networks and spaces, as constructed their green identity by presence and absence of some green material objects, for example, by purchasing organic foods, participating in workshops and training programs that are offered by the members of ecovillage initiatives etc. until they withdraw to rural areas if they have such a desire. They seemingly rely on similar goals, ideals and practices. “It is not wrong to say that “environmentalism is an important recipient of [...] contemporary search for new forms of community” (Horton, 2003: 66). Therefore,

¹ In fact, as mentioned in Chapter 4, a few of the current ecovillage projects around the world might meet the generally accepted standards which are required to qualify a formation as an ecovillage. In this respect, it might not be accurate to entirely base an analysis on these standards in examining ecovillages.

² This usage is inspired by Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined community.

we can consider members of these ecovillage initiatives along with other individuals, from their perceptions, as constitutive members of ‘imagined eco-communities’ in which like-minded people come together. Nevertheless, whether they can develop a community, either ‘imagined’ or ‘real,’ will be discussed in Chapter 6.

To move back to nature, build a self-sufficient life, live sustainably and in harmony with nature, consume less are among the declared goals of these initiatives. The outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that members of these initiatives use self-sufficiency and sustainability interchangeably without citing sustainable development. As will be explored in Chapter 3, sustainability, in this context, means changing one’s lifestyles to guarantee the lives of future generations whether individually, in a household or in a community. To be more precise, it means reduced or simplified methods of consumption, use of alternative and soft technologies such as solar panel, wind turbines, being able to grow one’s own food by using alternative agriculture techniques which mostly refers to permaculture, natural farming and organic farming and also the use of local materials in constructing houses, etc. To have a sustainable/self-sufficient lifestyle, the members of ecovillage initiatives try to grow their own food according to permaculture, natural farming or organic farming principles, build their houses by using local materials, generate their own energy and seek a ‘natural way of life’ which is considered to have already been lost in the cities.³ They are advocates of the view that people must take responsibility for their own lives and change their lifestyles.

Entering the Field and Contextualization of the Research

The topic of this thesis did not come up incidentally. The reason which first brought me into ecovillage initiatives in Turkey has been a few individuals whom I know personally. They are educated people who are in their thirties and who feel ‘bored’ in

³ In Turkey, a new type of suburbanization has recently emerged. People tend to move away from the city centers to privatized settlements on the peripheries which are called gated communities.

their jobs and their life in the cities which they label as routine. Their future plan is to move to a small town and change their lifestyles because they have started to find city life to be less fulfilling than it used to be. Most people who feel exhausted because of the rhythm of the metropolis might have such plans and desires. But the people who brought me into this topic are different in certain points. What distinguishes them from other people is that they do not necessarily seek to withdraw from the city after their retirement and to live in the coastal regions which are touristic and pensioner's zones of Turkey. On the contrary, they are planning to move to rural areas, where they believe that they can find a 'natural' and 'simple' way of life. Some adopt ecologically sound practices in the city such as yoga or vegetarianism, as they express it, to develop their inner life. Some have a plan of visiting India and some already have in their quest for 'spirituality'. But their quest of spirituality is not usually related to an adherence to Eastern religions such as Buddhism or Taoism. They tend to think that issues of poverty, global warming, and gender inequalities and so on can be solved at the micro-level which, from their perspective, corresponds to individual self-change and also 'inner change'. To put it better, for them, people can change their values and attitudes through learning or being taught different ones. These different values and attitudes can give them a way to redefine themselves as 'good' people instead of mass consumers in the 'rat race'. Most of them aspire to save enough money to allow them to quit their work before moving to a 'simpler' life. This way of life is depicted in a Turkish movie titled *Entelköy Efeköy'e Karşı* (Efeköy is Against the Entelköy)⁴ though depictions and the characters' personalities are exaggerated to a degree (2011, Yüksel Aksu, Galata Film). The movie is about the relations and confrontations between villagers of Efeköy and a group of individuals who move into Efeköy from İstanbul to escape from pollution, alienation and chaos that they associate with the metropolis and to get back to nature. The main goal of the urban dwellers who call themselves eco-anarchists is to form a commune and to create an alternative lifestyle in Efeköy. They buy villagers' abandoned stone houses, which are of no value to the villagers, to

⁴ Efe is a Turkish name and köy means village. Efeköy literally means Efe village. Entel is pejorative use of the word intellectual. Entelköy literally means the village of 'intellectuals'.

engage in eco-tourism and vacant land to practice organic farming. But when a thermal power plant project is brought to the agenda, villagers and ‘intellectuals’ begin to struggle. While villagers want the thermal power plant to be built because it will provide jobs, the intellectuals are against the project because of its adverse effect on the environment. In the end, the thermal power plant project is cancelled due to the efforts of ‘intellectuals’.

This search for ‘alternative’ and ‘natural’ way of life that I try to portray depending on my personal observations and that is also described in the aforementioned movie have made me ask whether their lifestyles are kind of manifestations of what Murray Bookchin criticizes in a preface to the Turkish translation of *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*. Bookchin argues that middle class culture has entirely inclined towards individualism and mysticism and this inclination has started to spread from California, which is the center of such mystic ideological prescriptions, to the US and then to Europe. Bookchin, then, stated that he was shocked when he heard that it has spread to Turkey as well (Bookchin, 1998). Following Bookchin’s criticism, I have decided to do some research on manifestations of the perceived connections between yoga, vegetarianism, ‘natural’ ways of life and the other practices in Turkey. This initial research, based on informal conversations and the Internet, revealed that there are some farms or projects such as Patika Project or Pastoral Vadi Organic Eco-Farm offering workshops on yoga, permaculture, ‘natural’ foods, ecological vacation, etc. in Turkey. They all promise an ‘alternative’ life to urban life and a life in harmony with nature at least during vacations or holidays. They were all established by the people who used to live in the city and who have been aiming to show that another form of vacation, agriculture, architecture and so forth is possible. Their main engagement is ecotourism or agritourism. This pilot research studies revealed that there are some other attempts that are not directly related to ecotourism or agritourism. These are the ecovillage initiatives aiming at showing that an ‘alternative’ life which is more ecological and sustainable is possible. They were initiated by an educated group of people who used to or, still, work and live in the cities. In terms of their educational

and professional background, like the initiators of ecotourism projects, they are usually described as middle class, i.e. well educated, professionally trained and having good earning. As a consequence of this initial research, this study started from a concern with class background of members of these ecovillage initiatives, but ultimately came to focus on their political attitude mainly through lifestyle and community politics. After entering the field the focus of this study shifted from their urban middle class lifestyle and consumption patterns to their lifestyle and community strategies in rural areas. Class background of the people who are involved in ecovillage initiatives is still part of the discussions but it does not constitute the main argument of the study. But it should be noted that their perception of alternative ways of living, their current lifestyle and community politics are an indivisible part of their class background as it is the case in ecovillages around the world (see Chapter 4 and 6).

This study is composed of an introduction, five chapters and a conclusion. The main objective of Chapter 2 is to point out which research methods are used to develop this study. In this study, I prefer to use qualitative methodological techniques. To address questions and issues mentioned above, I conducted a fieldwork in Çanakkale İzmir and Ankara between 2012 and 2013. Also before entering the field, I conducted a pilot research including informal conversations and interviews with experts and also internet searches. Fieldwork involves face-to-face, semi-structured in-depth interviews, interviews via emails and participant observation. The other forms of data come from attended meetings, workshops and visual materials. Chapter 3 explicates important concepts and notions such as sustainability, lifestyle politics and community politics and main theoretical foundations of the study. The literature review on the ecovillage ‘movement’ and outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that lifestyle strategies and community strategies are considered as crucial in achieving an ecological society and sustainable society. Chapter 4 starts with ‘romantic’ conception of nature and the counterculture movement of the 1960s and the 1970s to clarify historical and theoretical roots of the contemporary ecovillage movement and its origins in the West. It also mentions the brief history of ecovillages around the

world and outlines their general characteristics. Chapter 5 outlines the history of environmentalism and environmentalist mobilizations in Turkey both to explore general tendencies and clarify the historical roots of ecovillage initiatives. Finally, in Chapter 6, in the analytical chapter of the thesis, outcomes of the fieldwork are discussed. Utilizing the perspectives mentioned in Chapter 3 and drawing on the findings of the fieldwork, I examine whether lifestyle and community strategies of the members of ecovillage initiatives can form an alternative eco-community or whether they are manifestations of individual escapism of urban middle classes. Attempting to answer the research questions, a specific focus will be given to lifestyle and community politics of ecovillage initiatives which were selected from the Turkish context. In the concluding section, some of the main arguments are summarized and systematized.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Many urbanites in the world and in Turkey have a desire of living close to ‘nature’ permanently or temporarily to escape from pollution, over-consumption, crowds, noise and so on which are typically associated with urban life. People’s motives and the ways they choose to re-establish close relationship with nature are diverse. While some people choose to live in gated communities that are freed from crowds and noise and which provide its inhabitants ‘closeness to nature’ with its gardens, some visit the countryside on weekends. On the other hand, some individuals seek to join a green commune to live permanently. Likewise, in Turkey people act with different motives and choose different ways to be close to nature, to develop alternative ways of living to the ‘mainstream’ ones as explored in the Introduction. As mentioned in the Introduction, the focus of this study is the people who moved to rural areas in order to initiate an ecovillage or an eco-settlement. As the initial literature review and pilot study reveal, they moved to rural areas to change their lifestyles and organize their life around some green principles and practices such as permaculture and voluntary simplicity. Furthermore, it appears that they have a goal to function as a model for self-sufficient and sustainable living. They do this by using different means including organizing workshops on permaculture or a published food manifesto.⁵

Social scientists, Hammersley & Atkinson argue, start their research “with an interest in some particular area of social life” but in time, “the initial interests and questions that motivated the research” are refined and “perhaps even transformed” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 160: 3). As expressed in the Introduction, in the beginning of the study, because of my earlier observations based on daily practices of some urban dwellers, and through initial research, I have tended to focus on class

⁵ <http://www.bayramicyenikoy.com/etkinlik.asp?id=27>.

composition of these initiatives. But over time, as a result of early data analysis and the literature review, the research problem of the thesis needed to be developed and to be transformed (Neuman, 2006: 459; Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 160). Class composition of the ecovillage initiatives is explored in Chapter 6 but it will not be the focus of the thesis. The preliminary fieldwork and data analysis provided a foundation to explore methodology and help refine my research question.

2.1 Fieldwork Design and Fieldwork

In this research, I mainly ask whether ecovillage initiatives in Turkey have the potential of forming eco-communities or whether they are individualistic and escapist attempts of (urban) middle classes (see Chapter 4 and 6). To answer these questions, I conducted a fieldwork between 2012 and 2013 and preferred to use qualitative methodological techniques. The main analysis is based on fieldwork conducted.

Before entering the field, I had an opportunity to obtain information about daily practices of the members of studied ecovillage initiatives through my previous contacts and through internet pages and weblogs of the initiatives.⁶ In this descriptive and critical study, I use qualitative research methods because “qualitative data collection [...] is an open-ended process that encompasses all the contextual information related to the research topic and the research site.” Furthermore, “in some cases, information that was collected for a different purpose or observations that were not originally part of your research might become data” (Silverman & Marvasti, 2008: 50). This study firstly draws on semi-structured in-depth interviews with members of the selected initiatives. The second form of data comes from ethnographic fieldwork. The third form of data comes from the participated meetings

⁶ <http://www.bayramicyenikoy.com/>, <http://ahlatdede.blogspot.com/>, <http://marmaric.org/>, <http://ekoada.wordpress.com/2011/09/23/ayla-seyhun-urun-listesi/>, <http://www.imeceevi.org/can> be cited as examples to these websites and weblogs.

and workshops, from websites/weblogs, mailing lists of the relevant initiatives and groups, and also from visual texts.

As mentioned above, this thesis firstly draws on semi-structured in-depth interviews. “In this format, interviewees are not forced to choose from a pre-designed range of answers; instead they can elaborate on their statements and connect them with other matters of relevance” (Marvasti, 2004: 20). While my list of questions, in some ways, guided my semi-structured in-depth interviews with interviewees, it did not strictly determine them. I started interviews with a set of questions regarding basic characteristics about demographics, interviewees’ motives of withdrawing from the cities, and their daily habits in rural areas. I use semi-structured in-depth interview technique because firstly, this topic has not been academically studied in Turkey and it needs to be addressed from different angles. Secondly, because each initiative has different features, this technique provides me with the opportunity to reformulate interview questions in each case. Thirdly, academic studies and discussions on environmentalism, environmental mobilizations, environmentalists, greens or on related issues in Turkey are lacking in the literature mainly stemming from “slow development of green politics in Turkey” (Adaman & Arsel, 2000: 1). The lack of academic studies on ecovillage initiatives in Turkey, in literature on environmental activism and mobilizations, and in general green themes in Turkey makes the research in a broader context difficult. As a consequence, I had to use largely the websites on the Internet and checked pages of studied ecovillage initiatives or eco-settlements before entering the field. According to the preliminary literature review, I expected to meet more residents in relatively newly formed ecovillage initiatives. But after entering the field I realized that most individuals who appear as members of these initiatives have not yet settled down permanently. They have a plan of settling down in the long term, i.e. when they have suitable conditions. On the other hand, some initiatives like Yeryüzü Derneği (Earth Ecovillage) are listed as ecovillages on The Global Ecovillage Network’s (GEN) website but they have not been initiated as of 2013 May. For these reasons, it did not become possible to discuss most of these land-based intentional communities with regard to living together and ask residents

how they work cooperatively, share responsibilities and ask questions about gender roles and decision-making method(s) in the community and so on.

Additionally, “broader perspective” that is provided by semi-structured in-depth interviews opens to further inputs and allows other conversations to develop. Thus, it provides detailed information. It allows the interviewees to steer discussions toward topics they deem important, clarify their experiences and express themselves. For these reasons, I did an exploratory research. The goal was to design research which relied on a systematic sampling technique achieving female/male balance and by reference to categories of age, education and so on. However, I could not access to representative statistical data since there is not a representative sampling. Therefore, purposive sampling considering age, gender and education was used. I reached the majority of the interviewees by suggestion of experts and by using snowball technique. In this study, the second form of data comes from ethnographic fieldwork. By ethnographic fieldwork, I refer to research based mainly on participant observation and short stopovers in settlements of the initiatives. For the purposes of this study, I define participant observation as a process in which a researcher is in a face-to-face relationship with the observed for the purpose of scientific study. The observer participates with the observed in their daily life and becomes part of the context being observed.

Research methods used during the research

Semi-structured In-depth Interviews	Ethnographic Fieldwork	Documents
Members of ecovillage initiatives	Participant observations, short-term stopover in observed ecovillage initiatives, voluntary work.	Internet pages, weblogs, mailing groups, regularly or one time organized meetings, documentary series

In the beginning of the study, in 2010, I conducted a pilot research with the aim that it could provide me valuable insights before conducting fieldwork. I carried out an informal interview with an expert from Buğday Ekolojik Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği (Buğday [Wheat] Association for Supporting Ecological Living) and an expert from Doğa Derneği (Nature Association). The general overview of the environmental organizations in Turkey and their connection to ecovillage initiatives in Turkey will be explained in Chapter 5 and 6.

Depending on her experiences and observations in the field of nature conservancy, an expert from Doğa Derneği emphasized that changing lifestyles or consumption patterns are not always signs of increasing ecological awareness and they cannot always be considered as a solution to current environmental degradation. To put it concretely in her words, people buying organic food do not always consume these foods because they are pesticide-free and healthy. For some individuals, organic food consumption is a sign of status and prestige because they are expensive and an indication of personal awareness about ecological issues. Many urban dwellers, she goes on to say, who move to rural areas to live self-sufficiently and according to simple ways of living carry the urban to rural with them. For example, they keep using cars or they build their houses without using local materials because they do not feel safe.⁷ During this pilot research period, in addition to expert interviews, I also visited Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kültürü Merkezi (Çamtepe Ecological Life Center) in Küçükkuşu, Çanakkale founded by a few members of Buğday Derneği to establish a rural model sustaining with its own resources.⁸ I also visited the ecovillage initiative Güneşköy in Hisarköy, Kırıkkale of Central Anatolia. I had an opportunity to visit Kerkenes Eco-Center in Yozgat aiming at “promoting

⁷ An interviewed expert gave a couple who moved to rural in Aegean region to live simply as an example. The couple preferred to use local materials in building their houses but in construction of the rooftop they did not want to use local materials because of the belief that this would not be safe. Nevertheless, as the expert mentioned that their house was damaged by the first storm unlike those of local people.

⁸ <http://camtepe.org/?p=798>.

sustainability through environmental studies.”⁹ These visits enabled me to observe some of their daily practices such as growing their own food, producing their own energy by using solar panels or composting. The common point of these two centers and Güneşköy is that no one was living there permanently during my visits. Kerkenes was working as an education center bringing students and other people together in summer. Çamtepe works as a center which occasionally offers courses, workshops etc. (see Chapter 3). Although Güneşköy¹⁰ is member of The Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and appears as an ecovillage it has no permanent resident as of 2014 (see Chapter 6).

After completing the pilot study and doing literature review, I decided to conduct my fieldwork in the Aegean region of Turkey because of three reasons. At first, the permanent and communal living which does not exist, for example, in Güneşköy seems to exist in some settlements such as Marmariç, Bayramiç and Dedetepe which are located in Aegean region. Secondly, Aegean region, particularly the area known as Kaz Dağları (Ida Mountains) which is situated in the northern Aegean appears as the most favored area by urbanites who seek to move “back to the land” because of its climate and closeness to İstanbul. Additionally, the majority of the current ecovillage initiatives in Turkey are located in the Ida Mountains region (Ayman, 2013). Nonetheless, after conducting interviews in this region and with two experts I decided to include as well some other initiatives in which couples live that are located in the Ida Mountains. This was done for three reasons. At first, these couples ostensibly differ from other individuals withdrawing to coastal regions of Turkey as mentioned in the Introduction because their declared goal is to live self-sufficiently and simply, to produce their own food or to generate their own energy. This means that they, like other initiatives which appear as communities, have ecological concerns. Secondly, as couples they might not form a community or they might not refer to themselves as ecovillage initiatives, but in principle they do not differ from

⁹ <http://www.kerkenes.metu.edu.tr/keco/04kecocenter/mission/mission.html>

¹⁰ <http://sites.ecovillage.org/en/user/4443>

other initiatives in which only one individual lives. Thirdly, as a sustainable life consultant who is in close relationship with ecovillage initiatives in Turkey and who visited a few ecovillages around the world said, though the members of initiatives located in the Ida Mountains do not live together they have many features characterizing a communal life. To put it better in her words, they are all in close relationship. They hold regular meetings. Everybody knows each other. They work collectively whenever one needs help. For these reasons, she says, even though these settlements are physically distant from each other, the region of the Ida Mountains should be considered as an eco-community.

As third part of the fieldwork, I included some other initiatives located in different parts of Anatolia such as Güneşköy and Kardeş Bitkiler into the research. These are the attempts which have common ecological concerns with those located in the Aegean region. Furthermore, they are in the same network with them. Fieldwork undertaken only in the Aegean region would ignore other initiatives in other regions of Turkey who declare themselves to live according to the same principles. Here it should be noted that fieldwork involves a few interviews that are conducted in different regions and with different reasons in addition to the ones mentioned above. For example, the Hocamköy movement that is considered as the first known ecovillage project of Turkey and a source of inspiration for following initiatives was included into the research although it came to an end in 2001. I also included Alakır in the study though it is located in the Mediterranean region because the couple living in Alakır and the settlement they developed have become a source of inspiration for other initiatives as well.

I also conducted expert interviews with four individuals. I interviewed an expert calling herself a sustainable life consultant who is a council member and Vice President of the Global Ecovillage Network; with a director who is the scenarist and director of the documentary series broadcasted in documentary channel of Turkish

Radio and Television Corporation¹¹ (13 episodes) entitled *Bir Avuç Toprak* (A Handful of Land) that is about the people who move to rural areas and re-establish close ties with nature in Turkey. I included some interviews in the documentary series into the analysis as well. I also interviewed a member of the former Green Party in Turkey and who was writer for the ecological magazine *Ağaçkakan* which is detailed in Chapter 5.¹² Here it should be noted that I interviewed Güneşin Aydemir¹³ both as a member of Dedetepe/Çetmibaşı/Çamtepe¹⁴ and as an expert though I listed her as an interviewee.

The fieldwork was completed in two years. In 2012 (June, September) I conducted face-to-face interviews with eleven members, one volunteer and with one member via e-mail. In 2013 (May, October, November) I conducted face-to-face interviews with ten members, three experts, one volunteer and with two members via e-mail. I also had small talks with some volunteers during my stay in studied initiatives. Interviews were carried out in Küçükkuyu (Çanakkale), Dernekli (Bayındır, İzmir), Dutlar (Menemen, İzmir), Muratlar (Bayramiç, Çanakkale), Bayramiç (Çanakkale), Biga (Çanakkale) and Ankara. My visits ranged from one to five days. I had an opportunity to stay more than one day in Marmariç, Bayramiç and Ormanevi. Except for three couples' settlements, I visited all the initiatives which are listed in the Appendix A. The interviewees aged from 28 to 62. The real names of the interviewees are not used to maintain anonymity except for those that are revealed with permission. I will refer to these interviewees as the name of their ecovillage

¹¹ The Turkish Radio and Television Corporation (TRT) is the national public broadcaster of Turkey.

¹² It should be noted that this study does not focus on Green Party and ecological magazines. For this reason, I did not interview other members of Green Party or other writers of *Ağaçkakan* [Woodpecker].

¹³ I used the name of Güneşin Aydemir with her permission.

¹⁴ I listed three Dedetepe, Çamtepe and Çetmibaşı in the same line because there is an organic bond between the three. As mentioned above, Çamtepe is a training center and a common field. Nobody lives there. Dedetepe is an eco-farm in which the individuals who join the training programs offered in Çamtepe stay and where three adults with their three children live. Çetmibaşı is a village in Küçükkuyu, in which three interviewees live as of 2013. Also, the owner of the Dedetepe lives in Çetmibaşı, not in Dedetepe.

initiatives 1-4. The names of the initiatives are specified to reveal the variations between them with regard to the number of their members, main engagements, daily practices and so on. All interviews were carried out in Turkish. Each interview ended in approximately one and half hour though some were shorter and longer than this. All interviews were recorded with a digital voice recorder and then transcribed. The interviews in the documentary series and the presentations of some interviewees in a café in Ankara were not transcribed but taken notes. The relevant parts of the interviews were translated into English by me. Original quotations of the interviewees in Turkish are also available in the footnotes. Additionally, quotations from articles and books in Turkish and the other materials in Turkish were translated into English by me.

This study focuses on the outcomes of in-depth interviews conducted with members of ecovillage initiatives. However, because of the shared networks, spaces, goals, practices I tend to consider other individuals, couples and groups having the following characteristics, as part of the ‘imagined eco-communities’: who already bought land to build an ecovillage or an eco-settlement but have not settled yet because of ‘immature’ conditions or personal reasons; who engage in agriculture by using permaculture, natural or organic farming principles on which rural ecovillages are mostly based; who become the parts of same networks and spaces by participating in workshops, meetings and courses about diverse issues including permaculture, composting, etc. By saying this, I do not refer to certain people, for example, who engage in organic food production or practice permaculture. But I mean a group of people who tend to see these practices as part of their lifestyle (see Chapter 6).

As mentioned above, when it was possible I conducted an ethnographic research in selected ecovillage initiatives to collect data.

Developments and shifts in recent decades have
explored the asymmetrical relations in fieldwork

contexts, with attempts to blur and even do away with the boundaries between informant and researcher, to make projects more collaborative and to focus upon experience rather than data collecting (Hellier-Tinoco, 2003: 19-20).

In this context, experience refers to short (one to five days) stopovers within settlements of the initiatives and my active participation both as a researcher and a volunteer in people's lives to observe their daily practices, listen to what was said and to ask questions. Temporary stopovers, participating in daily lives of the members of the initiatives, cooking for them, sharing the responsibility of building or cleaning activities, eating with them helped me to observe their daily routines, production and consumption patterns more closely. Because their claim is to live together and create a self-sufficient life by focusing on 'non-conventional' ideas and solutions, in-situ observation of how they produce their energy, how they recycle, how they grow their own food, how they use local materials for their buildings was helpful. Sharing daily life with them even for a short period helped me to observe how they manage to live according to these principles and how this way of living, in their perceptions, create a societal change on a broader scale.

This stopover within the settlements also allowed me to discover the values and the customs which bind or do not bind them together. To some degree I built 'close' relations with some interviewees because ethnographic study allowed me to have "an access to the life of the group" and my acceptance as a "researcher within the structure of the group to 'share' the reality of the other" (Konecki, 2008: 9). Furthermore, working as a volunteer during these stopovers, when it was possible, facilitated the fieldwork from different aspects. For example, in 2012 I asked to visit the settlement of an initiative to conduct interviews with the residents but because they think that the visits, except for the specified dates which are allocated to the visits, disturb the working routines of the settlers, they did not respond me positively. Whenever I had an opportunity to work as a volunteer there, I both carried out interviews with the members and made a close observation.

It is not possible to talk about ‘deep trust’ and ‘confidence’ of the interviewees in me as a researcher. However, gaining access to private domains of daily life even for a short-term helped me to notice details, biases, ambiguities and uncertainties that interviewees were less likely to reveal to me. To put it better, some interviewees seemed very rigid when they were being interviewed, but in their daily routines they forgot the attitude they took during the interviews and gave some other information they did not share while being interviewed. Nevertheless, this stopover and the experience I had during the fieldwork do not mean that the boundaries between me as a researcher and the interviewees blurred. On the contrary because of the general profile of the interviewees, who are educated people having professional background, and my position as a researcher, the boundaries between us were usually visible and certain.

As part of the ethnographic study, I also had small talks with volunteers and a “naturally occurring group discussion” in Marmariç, Ormanevi and Bayramiç. Because of their working and living pace, i.e. they get up and go to bed very early, I could not play an active role in arranging focus groups for data collection purposes. However, while having breakfast, lunch and dinner together I tried to “direct the discussion” and “acted as an interviewer” that naturally occurred according to my interests (Morgan, 1996: 130). Small talks, informal interviewing and relaxed conversations also helped when I occasionally confronted ‘dislikes’ of some interviewees. I tried to deal with this state by conversing with interviewees informally and also tried to use their conversations with their friends or other people around them.

As mentioned above, the third form of data comes from the Internet (websites/weblogs of the interviewees, other internet pages,¹⁵ and mailing lists of the relevant groups), periodicals/magazines such as *Üç Ekoloji* (Three Ecologies) and *National Geographic Turkey* which contain interviews with some interviewees of this study and articles written by some interviewees, publicly held meetings and

¹⁵ <http://www.dogadernegi.org/baska-bir-dunya-mumkun.aspx>.

presentations, documentary series entitled *Bir Avuç Toprak*, other television programs on Alakır and Marmariç. Between 2012 and 2014, I participated in Permaculture Meetings that were held every Saturday in Tayfa Café in Ankara (see Chapter 6 for more detail). In the meetings I attended, I had an opportunity to listen presentations of some interviewees, in addition to those of other speakers. Additionally, I had some small talks with other listeners. Moreover, between 2012 and 2013 I tried to follow weblogs/websites or internet pages of ecovillage initiatives, if they had them, where they share their experiences of rural life; of the electronic mailing lists of the relevant groups such as permaculture-Turkey. Furthermore, I participated in some events that were organized only for one time such as the meeting titled Ecovillages and Sustainable Communities held in December 2012 at Middle East Technical University and the Seed Exchange Festival that was held in 2013 October in Ankara for the first time.

2.2 Limitations of the Research

Before entering the field pause to assess the personal and cultural biases you bring to the project. There is no purely objective research [...] in any subject. Cultural assumptions and personal idiosyncrasies guide our observations and colour our findings. The scholar who accepts these biases, deals with them as part of methodology and acknowledges their influence produces fine research (Myers, 1992: 32).

In the field, as Helen Myers points out, from time to time I had to deal with my biases as a researcher. Entering the field was not always easy and it was fraught with problems because of a few reasons. At first, in arranging the interviews I was not always going to be welcomed because in some of the interviewees' perceptions being in their settlements as a researcher is something disturbing. For example, in arranging my volunteer work in a settlement I was told that if was planning to interview with residents of the initiative, I should be ready to meet with a fairly 'wild' group who do not want to be interviewed. Some experts whom I reached by recommendation of other experts did not respond to me positively. Before entering

the field, I assumed that some members of these initiatives were not always ‘welcoming’ to me. Though having some difficulties in arranging interviews made this assumption stronger, the majority did not refuse being interviewed.

It is known that in some communities interviewing cannot be conducted without official permissions. Also being overstudied may lead to “resentment among interviewees, who may feel self-conscious and say that the study treats them like “guinea pigs” or “animals in a zoo” –that is, like something to be stared at and studied as if they are freaks instead of human beings” (Bailey, 1994: 210). In gaining entry to the field, I had similar difficulties. I did not need any official permission but sometimes I needed the guidance and recommendations of previous interviewees and experts or I used personal networks. As mentioned above, from time to time I encountered resistance of members of initiatives though they were not overstudied. I was not able to reach out to some residents to convince them to be interviewed. For example, while one resident refused the interview by saying that he is not a “guinea pig”, he told me that after finishing my thesis I am always welcome to their settlement as a guest. The other interviewee after being interviewed said that she does not understand why I and other researchers want to talk to simple-minded people like them. Another member who dropped out his college education because he finds working with land more valuable and useful rather than going to a college did not want to be interviewed, ostensibly because of his personal distance to education. In terms of the thesis topic, the limitation is that when I was not welcomed by some individuals and when they refused interviews, I did not have an option to select another site and individual because in Turkey it is not possible to list innumerable ecovillage initiatives or eco-settlements. Thus, I had to rely on interviewees who were willing to share their time, views and experiences.

The other problem I had to deal with in the field is the control over environment. Because of the interviewees’ living and working conditions, I had difficulties in standardizing the interview environment and making certain that the interview was conducted in privacy. Sometimes I had to conduct an interview in a bazaar which

was very noisy, sometimes while the interviewee was driving a car or having dinner. In addition, because they get up very early and work in the land till the late hours, it was not easy to choose the right time to interview. When they complete their daily tasks, they mostly feel too tired to be interviewed.

2.3 Interpretation of Data

In this study, I do not try to make data “conform to just one theoretical frame” because as Hammersley and Atkinson emphasize that this is always a mistake. As they suggest, “analysis is not just a matter of managing and manipulating data” (Hammersley & Atkinson, 2007: 159). In this study, I do not try to reach any fixed theoretical statements. I do not verify facts but to interpret and explain the data in a general manner. To put it better, I did an exploratory study as a method of arriving at theory from data obtained from field research (Glaser & Strauss, 2006: 3, 4).

In general, *data analysis* means a search for patterns in data – recurrent behaviors, objects, phases, or ideas. Once a pattern is identified, it is interpreted in terms of a social theory or the setting in which it occurred. This allows the qualitative researcher to move from the description of a historical event or social setting to a more general interpretation (Neuman, 2006: 467, italics in original).

In this study, to interpret the data I searched for patterns in data, as Neuman remarks, which correspond to recurrent ideas, behaviors and practices. In doing this I firstly draw on outcomes of the semi-structured in-depth interviews and the observations I made during the fieldwork. Secondly, I draw on sources mentioned above including internet pages of the studied ecovillage initiatives, other websites/weblogs, meetings and workshops some of which were held with participation of the interviewees. Concepts and theoretical framework (see the Introduction, Chapter 3, 4 and 6) were used to structure the data from interview transcriptions, notes taken during the participation to meetings and workshops, observation and small talk notes taken during the ethnographic fieldwork.

CHAPTER III

THEORETICAL INSIGHTS AND DISCUSSIONS OF LIFESTYLE AND COMMUNITY POLITICS

Greens always search for sustainability. Ecovillages, green housing, and settlements engaging in tourism are all designed to promote sustainability. At least, their declared goal is to promote a sustainable life. In a similar vein, the declared goal of most ecovillage initiatives in Turkey is to promote sustainability and a sustainable life. Though a few interviewees cited sustainability or a sustainable life during interviews and none of them cited sustainable development, the majority use the concept of sustainability on their websites/weblogs and in other written documents when expressing their main objectives forming an ecovillage.

Sustainability as a new public discourse, Macnaghten and Urry argue, frames the formal environmental agenda in the 1990s. “The contemporary understanding of green consumption has become tied to the discourse of sustainability” (Connolly & Prothero, 2008: 119). These discursive relations infuse our relation with nature at every turn and such discourses are “important to the extent that they organize our attitudes towards, and actions on nature” (Castree & Braun, 1998: 17). It appears that discourses on sustainability and sustainable life have been influential in organizing interviewees’ attitudes towards nature, environment and ecological issues.

The idea of sustainability can be traced back to the conference on environment that was held in Stockholm in 1972 and to 1970s debates over limits on growth. Environmental sustainability appears as one of the main principles that ecovillages around the world aim to attain. Sustainability has been defined in many ways. “For some, social and environmental sustainability means being able to grow your own food, increasingly out of necessity, or living in a manner consistent with the Brundtland Report’s definition of sustainability” (Chitewere, 2010: 318). According

to Brundtland Report's (the World Commission on Environment and Development) definition, which is one of the often quoted definitions, sustainability is "development which meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998: 213, 215, 216). According to another often quoted definition which is endorsed by The World Conservation Union (IUCN) publication *Caring for the Earth*, sustainability means "improving the quality of life while living within the carrying capacity of living ecosystems" (ibid, 213). Since the United Nations Rio Summit that was held in 1992, all the working definitions of sustainability have been broadly accepted by governments, NGOs and business. On the other hand, policy-making communities have moved away from the questions of definitions and developed sustainability indicators to educate the public, to engender a sense of social responsibility and in turn to encourage people to change their household behavior (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998: 213, 215, 216). It is well-known that "various responses to the problem of sustainability are available, both in political-institutional terms, and also in terms of the social and ethical practices that a sustainable society would need to follow" (Dobson, 2001: 70). Either the reduction of consumption by recycling or the use of renewable energy and population control might be part of the strategy for a sustainable society even though not all of them are considered as green (ibid, 16).

Sustainability, in this context, refers to humans' interactions with each other and the natural environment in a way that does not threaten the future and biodiversity of the planet. It is typically defined within three pillars: the economic, the environmental and the social. But, the outcomes of the interviews reveal that most interviewees like most greens tend to push for environmental sustainability. Additionally, findings of the fieldwork reveal that sustainability and self-sufficiency is used interchangeably by the interviewees. In this context living sustainably/self-sufficiently manifests itself with some practices including growing food for the community, minimizing resource needs, reducing consumption, using local materials in building houses, enhancing relationships between other people in order to facilitate sharing and so on (time bank, exchange system etc.). In this study, I shall classify strategies adopted by

ecovillage initiatives for green change which ultimately corresponds to sustainable/self-sufficient life in their perception as lifestyle politics and community politics.

3.1 Lifestyle Politics

Lifestyle is an ambiguous concept even though it is widely used. Broadly speaking, “lifestyles are patterns of action that differentiate people” and “it is a very important source of identity.” In their daily life, people can use the notion of lifestyle without having to explain what they mean. “Lifestyles help to make sense of (that is explain but not necessarily justify) what people do, and why they do it, what doing it means to them and others” (Chaney, 1996: 4). Certainly, “lifestyles are set of practices and attitudes that make sense in particular contexts” (ibid, 5).

Lifestyles as individual and collective expressions of differences and similarities result in distinctive lifestyles and different classes exhibit different lifestyles (Bourdieu, 1984). For Pierre Bourdieu, everyday choices in matters of food, clothing, sports, art, and music serve as a vehicle through which individuals “symbolize their social similarity with and their social difference from one another.” To put it better, “through the minutiae of everyday consumption” each individual classifies himself/herself and other individuals as alike or different (Weininger, 2005: 98-99).

As mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter 2, this study is not based on class analysis though the class composition of the interviewees is discussed (see Chapter 6). Nevertheless, based on the research of Dave Horton who applies Bourdieu’s analysis of lifestyles in 1960s France to the green lifestyles developed, it can be said that

environmental activists, distinguish themselves by the ‘austerity of elective restriction’, the ‘self-imposed constraint’ of ‘asceticism’, which is one strategy through which the dominated fractions of the dominant

class demonstrate their freedom from ‘brutish necessity’ on the one hand and profligate ‘luxury’ on the other, and assert the distinctive power of their cultural capital. This provides them with a means of seeing the world differently, and of playing according to a different set of rules to everyone else (Horton, 2003: 67).

Dave Horton argues that distinguished green lifestyles depend on the material objects that greens tend to live with and without. They lead distinctive ways of life by, for example, practicing vegetarianism, favoring organic foods, using bicycles for transportation and so forth (ibid, 63). In addition, green lifestyles depend for their organization on specific networks, spaces, times, and materialities (see the Introduction and Chapter 6).

In this study, while discussing green lifestyles and lifestyle changes I mainly refer to practices and attitudes of the members of ecovillage initiatives in rural areas. In this context lifestyle “concerns changes in the patterns of individual behaviour in daily life” such as caring about the things they consume, the transport they use and so on (Dobson, 2001: 130, see the Introduction). This study examines the changes in interviewees’ patterns of behavior which they consider to be crucial in terms of having a sustainable/self-sufficient life. It should be emphasized that I aim to mention and examine all strategies and practices cited by the interviewees since this thesis can be considered as the first academic work on the subject in Turkey. This is to say that though a few interviewees cited practices like vegetarianism or veganism, I shall discuss these practices along with others like composting or recycling which are cited by the majority. As detailed in the Introduction, I analyze lifestyle strategies and lifestyle politics of the interviewees through the perspectives of Andrew Dobson, David Pepper and Murray Bookchin. Furthermore, I also benefit from Dave Horton’s classification of green lifestyles and his emphasis on the distinguished lifestyles.

The lifestyle strategy, Andrew Dobson argues, has been in the green movement for a long time (Dobson, 2001: 131). In 1973 E. F. Schumacher, a thinker who is dedicated to economic growth, wrote:

Everywhere people ask: “What can I actually *do*?” The answer is as simple as it is disconcerting: we can, each of us, work to put our own inner house in order. The guidance we need for this work cannot be found in science or technology, the value of which utterly depends on the ends they serve; but it can still be found in the traditional wisdom of mankind (Schumacher, 1973: 297).

Schumacher does not deny the necessity of wealth, research and many other things for any civilization but he emphasizes that “the development of a life-style which accords to material things their proper, legitimate place, which is secondary and not primary” can result in some social changes (ibid, 294). In the 1980s, similar to Schumacher, John Seymour and Herbert Girardet claim that “from the point of view of lifestyle changes, the spaces for political action are in principle infinite—even the toilet is a potential locus for radical politics”¹⁶ (quoted by Dobson, 2001: 130).

Certainly, lifestyle strategies may lead to more ecological lives and bringing about change in individual habits can also be considered as a ‘political’ affair. Even the authors who criticize lifestyle strategies such as Murray Bookchin and Andrew Dobson do not reject the significance of lifestyle strategies and changes. Murray Bookchin asserts that as individuals we should change our lifestyles and we can appreciate those who participate in social activities against environmental degradation because they can understand why they have to recycle or why they have to gain ecological sensitivity. He also does not claim that moral and spiritual change is meaningless or unnecessary (Bookchin, 1999: 12, 13). Andrew Dobson makes much the same point. He suggests that as a result of lifestyle strategy some people

¹⁶ After mentioning the amount of domestic water that is used in the toilet authors of *Blueprint for a Green Planet*, namely John Seymour and Herbert Girardet offer an advice: “If it’s brown wash it down. If it’s yellow let it mellow” (quoted in Dobson, 2001: 131).

“do end up living sounder, more ecological lives” and, for example, this means that more bottles are recycled, more lead-free petrol is bought, less harmful detergents are used and so on. All these activities are important and they should not be belittled because “they show it is possible to do something” (Dobson, 2001: 131). Nevertheless, at that point the issue is whether it is possible to claim that lifestyle change is the first and the only thing that should be done and what the disadvantages and traps of lifestyle changes are (Bookchin, 1999: 12, 13; Dobson, 2001; Pepper, 1991).

When the issue is the traps or disadvantages of lifestyle strategy, Murray Bookchin, Andrew Dobson, David Pepper and Cindi Katz focus on consumer strategy or to put it better, green consumerism as an expression of lifestyle. The negative aspects of green consumerism that are discussed by these authors do not differ greatly though each has her/his own emphasis. For Andrew Dobson, “there is nothing inherently green [...] in green consumerism” because of three reasons. First, it does nothing to confront unlimited production and consumption. The problem here is not to make people consume soundly but consume less (Dobson, 2001: 132). Nevertheless, green consumerism does not convey the message of consuming less (Pepper, 1991: 58). For example, corporations like Body Shop, Nature Company, and Mercedes-Benz “urge people to ‘wield their purchasing power responsibly’¹⁷ rather than to wield it less often” (Dobson, 2001: 132; Katz, 1998; Bookchin, 2001). While Body Shop urges people to consume responsibly, Dobson argues, by claiming that it is against animal testing, Mercedes-Benz declaims that it works for environmentally sustainable progress by using the environmental themes such as putting a bison painting in new products. Corporations are skilled at giving deceptive messages by using such ecological images (Bookchin, 2001: 449). Cindi Katz calls this corporate environmentalism, which “sells as well as buys “nature” –whether ecotourism outfits, or shops such as the Nature Company, or The Body Shop” (Katz, 1998: 52).

¹⁷ Michael Maniates who focuses on environmental sustainability, consumption and overconsumption, calls this tendency to ascribe responsibility for environmental degradation and all problems related to consumption to individuals individualization of responsibility. For him this approach ignores social forces and social constraints (Maniates, 2002).

Corporations do this, for example, by packaging their products in environmentally friendly containers or by using recycled materials. These corporations make great money in the process by using nature to trade other goods or trading in nature directly. It might be said that “clean capitalism is better than dirty one” and there is nothing wrong with that but there are other issues that should be addressed. While some corporations focus on individual recycling or consumption practices, others that may destroy natural habitat or wreak havoc on environments fund environmental projects to shield their actions (ibid). Additionally, it appears that there is a “surge in green commercialism that primarily targets women, who are now expected to take responsibility for addressing environmental problems that are largely the result of patriarchal capitalist expansion” (Smith, 2010: 67). Women are seen as responsible for ensuring that their families are living a healthy life and in an environmentally responsible manner. “Certainly, as environmentalism becomes more closely identified with green consumerism, it becomes somewhat less of a threat to powerful corporations” (ibid, 68).

The second disadvantage of consumer strategy is that many people do not have purchasing power. Even if it is taken for granted that green consumption is a strategy of environmental reform, most people do not have the money to spend responsibly. Then green consumerism “can only be practiced by that world minority that has any substantial consumer power” (Dobson, 2001: 132; Pepper, 1991: 58). Third, while consumer-driven culture prevails, green consumerism does not “fundamentally restructure people’s patterns of consumption” (Dobson, 2001: 132). For Dobson, these three aspects of green consumerism make “green consumerism environmental rather than radically green” (ibid, 132). At that point Murray Bookchin and David Pepper make similar points. Bookchin argues that people who change their lifestyles and participate in social activities surely do their best but

it is inaccurate and unfair to coerce people into believing that they are personally responsible for present-day ecological dangers because they consume too much or proliferate too readily. This privatization

of the environmental crisis, like New Age cults that focus on personal problems rather than on social dislocations, has reduced many environmental movements to utter ineffectiveness and threatens to diminish their credibility with the public. If “simple living” and militant recycling are the main solutions to the environmental crisis, the crisis will certainly continue and intensify (Bookchin, 1989: 22).

To the extent that environmental movements and ideologies “merely moralize about the wickedness of our anti-ecological society, and emphasize change in personal life and attitudes, they obscure the need for social action” (Bookchin, 2001: 449). The stress on individual responsibility may be misleading also because the feeling of guilt stemming from the idea that one should do something is “disempowering and politically counter-revolutionary” (Pepper, 1991: 22). Nevertheless,

it is becoming quite fashionable in comfortable middle class circles to adopt many ‘first order’¹⁸ practices which would include such things as recycling wastes, de-emphasizing consumption, growing foods, practicing veganism in a rather minimal and even ostentatious way. ‘Green consumerism’ has always been a waiting trap by which ecological consciousness can become de-radicalised, from the early seventies (ibid, 23).

Likewise, Anthony Giddens argues that such endeavors that urge people to change their consumption patterns and daily habits are both unproductive and based on the unrealistic assumption that “everyone is willing and able to live like the small minority of ‘positive greens’” (Giddens, 2009: 106).

To struggle against ecological problems in the contemporary world, a collective, organized, prospective, political movement is needed (Bookchin, 1999: 12, 13). People deal with the fact that economic growth, gender oppressions, ethnic

¹⁸ As mentioned in the Introduction, by first order practices David Pepper means personal attitude and behavior change and by second order “organising and behaving socially in a way compatible with the values of green society” (Pepper, 1991: 20).

domination and corporate, state, and bureaucratic interests shape the future of the natural world. “These forms of domination must be confronted by collective action and major social movements that challenge the social sources of the ecological crisis” (Bookchin, 2001: 438).

Drawing on the fieldwork and considering the number of shops, farms, centers, festivals, etc. selling/offering environmentally-friendly products and the courses, workshops, and training programs designed to teach to live ‘naturally’, to grow one’s own food, and to compost,¹⁹ etc., I can say that the green lifestyles which refer to ‘first order’ practices in David Pepper’s approach, has been becoming fashionable in middle class circles in Turkey. A 31-year-old male interviewee who moved to Dedetepe after working as an advertising manager in a ‘well-known’ performance center in İstanbul after starting to feel disgust with consumer society explains the increasing popularity of green lifestyles by giving the example of the festival Naturel: Beden, Zihin ve Ruh Sağlığı Festivali²⁰ (Natural: The Festival of Body, Mind and Spiritual Health) as follows:

We ran a booth at that festival too. That is why I was there. I saw a ‘spiritual sector’ there very obviously. Many companies or institutions, large or small, try to fill the [spiritual] gap. I mean personal growth courses, magazines, objects and food. This spiritual gap will be filled anyway. Some will be filled with a stone, some with a book, and some with a course. [...] If you consume them consciously, they may be right. I think that they should not be consumed like a pill. You do not have a perfect life only if you buy that stone, eat that organic food and practice yoga. These are

¹⁹ Composting is a waste management technique used in organic farming.

²⁰ Naturel: Beden, Zihin ve Ruh Sağlığı Festivali (Natural: The Festival of Body, Mind and Spiritual Health) has been organized since 2000 in İstanbul. It defines itself as a festival that aims to “introduce the natural products and services to the people and to teach them all aspects of natural lifestyle” (<http://www.festivaistanbul.com/festival-goster.asp?id=7>).

introduced like a pill. You own all these with your money²¹ (Dedetepe-2).

As the interviewee Dedetepe-2 explained by the example of Natural: Festival of Body, Mind and Spiritual Health, innumerable shops, farms, centers, courses and so on create a ‘naturalization’ effect by offering natural and healthy products and lifestyles. It seems that they create a ‘natural’ feeling after nature has been eliminated in reality as in the case when “a forest is cut down to build a group of buildings, which are then given the name ‘Park Estate’ and a few trees are planted to create a ‘natural’ feel” (Baudrillard, 1998: 89). This is also done by offering a real tomato which is produced on a farm without using chemicals or pesticides, for example, in İpek Hanımın Çiftliği²² (The Farm of Mrs. İpek). Or, this ‘natural’ feeling is created by some courses, workshops or programs offered in Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kültürü Merkezi (Çamtepe Ecological Education Center) such as Şifa Okulu (Healing School) covering subjects like natural remedies and alternative therapies or Yaşam Okulu (Life School) including topics like “the nature of health and sickness”, “the language of the nature”, etc. It seems that the material or spiritual ‘needs’ of people are attempted to be balanced with ecological and natural products or courses, workshops, festivals, etc. designed to teach alternative natural lifestyle practices as Baudrillard argues and as some interviewees state (Baudrillard, 1998). It appears that life itself is treated as a realm to be learned in a school where “simple and ordinary circles of life are taught and where people understand themselves and the universe

²¹ Biz de stant kurmuştuk orada ben o yüzden gittim. Bu şeyi çok somut gördüm ‘spritüel sektörü’. O boşluğu doldurmak için çalışan çok irili ufaklı şirket veya işte kuruluş. Yani kişisel gelişim kursları, dergileri, kitapları, objeleri, gıdaları. O manevi boşluk işte bir şekilde doldurulacak. Kimi taşla kimi kitapla kimisi kursla. [...] Eğer bilinçli olarak tüketirsen aslında belki doğru şeyler. İşte ilaç alır gibi bunları böyle almamak lazım diye düşünüyorum. İşte bu taşı alırsan, bu organik gıdayı yersen, bir de yoga yaptın işte ben artık muhteşem yaşıyorum. Bunları böyle hap gibi sunuluyor işte. Parayla alıyorsun sonuçta işte bunları.

²² İpek Hanımın Çiftliği was founded in 1997 in the Aegean region of Turkey by Pınar Kaftancıoğlu who was formerly a factory owner. After selling her factory to return to “natural life” as she mentioned on her website, she founded İpek Hanımın Çiftliği. The popularity of the farm which sells its products also to Turkey’s well-known persons has been increasing.
http://www.ipekhanim.com/ipek_hanim_ciftligi/sorular_%26_yanitlar.html,
http://www.ipekhanim.com/ipek_hanim_ciftligi/istanbuldan_kacis_%26_ciftligin_kurulus_oykusu.html.

surrounding them.”²³ Life is also treated as a realm that can become more ‘natural’ and more ‘real’ if people can differentiate between his/her ‘real’ and ‘artificial’ needs by themselves or by the offerings of these courses, workshops and festivals which are designed to raise ecological awareness. They offer ‘natural’ and traditional products or methods which were considered to be lost long ago. But as Bookchin claims that retrospective point of views, which means longing for the lost ‘Golden Age’ without being aware of the teachings of history and experience, lead people to be depoliticized. They not only make people estranged from actual pressures that they have to deal with but also open new forms of marketing (Bookchin, 1998: 8). As Bookchin argues, “we live in a highly cooptative society that is only too eager to find new areas of commercial aggrandizement and to add ecological verbiage to its advertising and customer relations” (Bookchin, 2001: 438). In this society, personalistic forms of consumption and investment to challenge the ecological crisis “often go under the rubric of ‘green capitalism’” (ibid, 438).

One can suggest, for example, that it is better to consume food that is grown without using chemicals. It can also be claimed that in the end some people may have more ecological lives and as Katz says there may be nothing wrong with that. Nevertheless, the increasing popularity of all these products or festivals does not simply mean that people are persuaded to change their lifestyles since it is hard to predict “how far the message will spread, and how many people will act on it” (Dobson, 2001: 131). Even if people change their behavior at particular points in their life, they may back on the unsustainable rampage (ibid, 131). Additionally, these farms, festivals, courses and so on as part of green marketing do not urge people to consume less. In addition to these, the discourse of NGOs or environmental formations built around the “idea of simple, painless changes in personal behavior” might support green consumerism (Smith, 2010: 69).

Certainly, green lifestyle strategies and practices are not limited to consuming ‘natural’ products or using of alternative technologies. Rather, they include a variety

²³ <http://camtepe.org/?p=996>.

of things such as sorting/recycling wastes (paper, bottles etc.), not using or reducing the use of pollutants such as CFCs (chlorofluorocarbons), implementing energy conservation measures, walking or cycling, using alternative technology, living according to cruelty-free principles which requires, for examples vegetarianism,²⁴ composting, permaculture/natural farming, voluntary simplicity and so forth (Pepper, 1996; Pepper, 1991; Dobson, 2001; Horton, 2006; Horton, 2003; Bookchin: 1990a). Here it should be noted that for greens it is difficult to attain all these green principles in a coherent way although most greens “admire the internal consistency” of such a lifestyle (Pepper, 1991: 24). To put it concretely, when they try to be vegetarian, they try to use bicycles for transportation and to boycott big banks at the same time. But few are able to achieve this consistency in conventional society. As will be discussed in Chapter 6, it seems that interviewees, either individually or communally, do not have the internal consistency that Pepper mentions. For example, though all of them try to apply alternative agriculture techniques, practice composting and recycle, none of them uses bicycles for transportation but rather use cars. Most do not practice vegetarianism or veganism. “Truly to live out green principles may involve an asceticism more usually associated with monasticism” (ibid, 23). Nevertheless, in this context, the lifestyles of the interviewees appear as “cosy and not too difficult to attain” as suggested by literature like *Home Ecology: Simple and Practical Ways to Green Your Home*²⁵ (Pepper, 1991: 23).

In lifestyle politics, in this context, individuals are primarily held responsible for their own wellbeing. In the same vein, ineffective actions are seen as individual’s faults. The underlying idea is that individuals can and should change themselves to be part of the solution and then influence other individuals to make similar changes. And “if things go wrong (e.g. with their environment), responsibility and repair must

²⁴ Vegetarianism has different meanings to different people. There are several vegetarian practices. For example, people who eat seafood but do not eat other meat known as pescetarians. Vegans are known as the strictest vegetarians because they avoid eating any products derived from animals, such as honey, milk and they do not use any products derived from animals such as leather.

²⁵ *Home Ecology: Simple and Practical Ways to Green Your Home* (1990) addressing food, shopping, recycling, energy, transportation, gardening and so on was written by Karen Christensen.

come through individual (lifestyle) reform” (Pepper, 1993: 18). Chapter 6 seeks to discuss lifestyle strategies and practices which are cited by interviewees utilizing all these arguments.

3.2 Community Politics

Numerous books and articles about the subject show that “innumerable groups, some ephemeral, some more durable, have sought to invent a ‘new life’ –usually a communal one” (Lefebvre, 1974: 379). The reasons of people seeking to create a communal life are diverse. While some groups seek to live communally in search of contemplation, such as monastic communities, some want to create ‘drop out’ communities because of concerns with materialism, pacifism, consumerism and so on.

It is obvious from the literature that many communities have had some green principles and practices throughout their history. Nevertheless, some show the effects of environmental awareness more than others and have been usually defined by the practices, attitudes and values which generally characterize an environmentally sound society (Pepper, 1991: 2). These are generally called green communities or communes. In this study by ‘green’ community, we mean the ecovillage initiatives that represent ecological lifestyles with certain practices including recycling, composting and permaculture. As discussed in Chapter 6, in terms of the strategies they claim to adopt, they can be considered as green communities. Nevertheless, outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that the majority do not adopt most of these strategies in reality.

Green theorists “often imagine that rural and urban alternative communities, or ‘communes’, constitute the best way of prefiguring ecological society” (Pepper, 1996: 317-318). These communes or communities can be a solution to ecological problems and the problems posed by urban life. One of the leading theorists who envisages an eco-community as an alternative to large cities is Murray Bookchin.

Bookchin suggests that large cities can be decentralized into smaller municipalities that would make creating a libertarian municipalist culture possible (Biehl & Bookchin, 1998: 151). Bookchin's decentralized city or town is based on direct democracy. For Bookchin "no ethics or vision of an ecological society can be meaningful unless it is embodied in a living politics," i.e. Athenian politics, the democratic polis of Athens (Bookchin, 2001: 451, 452). In these decentralized cities or towns green spaces could be created and people could cultivate their own food. They could join a healing or caring profession. They could spend their time to develop their talents for pottery or weaving. Others could look after children. This does not mean that all the institutions common to city life are to be replicated in miniature in each neighborhood. For example, universities, hospitals and museums are not replaced with small ones but they would be removed from private ownership (Biehl & Bookchin, 1998: 55). But Bookchin's eco-communities differ from ecovillages around the world and ecovillages initiated in rural areas of Turkey. Bookchin does not suggest isolated rural communities outside 'mainstream' society. He argues that the future of the cities undoubtedly depend on the cities themselves. In his approach, people need to recover communal dimension of urban life and have an ecological approach that carries communes into cities (Eiglad, 2012). Nevertheless, from Bookchin's perspective, what the members of contemporary green communities do is to escape from cities. Bookchin does not underestimate the importance of organic farming, the use of solar power and windpower and composting. For him, organic gardening can meet our basic requirements, bring us into the cultivation of the food chain and closer to the natural world as a whole from which we have been alienated. The use of solar power is ecological because it is based on a renewable energy source. With composting techniques the community's wastes can be recycled into soil nutrients (Bookchin, 1990a: 192, 193). But, for Bookchin, the crucial issue is what kind of social construction we need and how this construction can be reached by political, economic and social means without dismissing society and retreating to a mountain peak in the High Sierras or Adirondaks (ibid, 17). Bookchin criticizes these escapist efforts which can also refer to rural communes and ecovillages where their members do not address what kind of

social construction individuals need and where they do not challenge hierarchical relations and class formations. As mentioned in the Introduction, Bookchin makes a distinction between environmentalism and social ecology. While environmentalism does not target the alteration of social, economic or political structures, social ecology points to the “origins of ecological destruction in social relations of domination” (Tokar, 2008: 64). Social ecology emphasizes that “nature and society are interlinked by evolution into one nature that consists of two differentiations: first or biotic nature, and second or human nature.”²⁶ Bookchin’s social ecology perspective “points activists toward radical, community-centered alternatives.”²⁷ Nevertheless, in his perspective, alternatives that do not approach ecological issues as primarily social issues have no political ramification. David Pepper makes much the same point and says that communes can “provide an institutional context which encourages ecologically sound practices.” But, Pepper argues that

the social behavior which accords with green principles is more difficult to attain, even in a commune. Partly this must be due to the influences and socialization which communards bring in from wider society (Pepper, 1991: 156).

Furthermore, seeing communes as a solution without examining its other aspects have some risks because “this perspective tends to dismiss class struggle, the labour movement and conventional politics.” In addition, “while it searches, idealistically, for a *gemeinschaft* solution, its adherents come from a *gesellschaft* society” (Pepper, 1993: 199; italics in original).

Lifestyle strategies are “arguably an improvement on lifestyle change because they make more ready connections between present practice and future aspirations” (Dobson, 2001: 139). Nevertheless,

²⁶ http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/soc ecol.html.

²⁷ http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/soc ecol.html.

besides easy neutralization, such strategies depend too heavily (like their lifestyle counterparts) on change by example. They may indeed show us that sustainable styles of life are possible, but as agents for political change they rely entirely on their seductive capacity. The problem is that people refuse to be seduced: rather than producing radical changes in consciousness, sustainable communities perform the role of the surrogate good conscience, and we can go at the weekend to see it operating (ibid).

Leaving aside the discussions on ‘apoliticism’ of the ecovillages and rural communes in terms of the perspective social ecology and difficulties with community strategies from the perspectives of Dobson and Pepper, here it should be addressed whether communitarianism, communal living can be a response to current ecological problems and the problems posed by urban life. At first, most ‘modern’ experiments, if not all,

in communal living have diverted an existing space to their own purposes”: bourgeois mansions, half-ruined castles, villages abandoned by the peasantry, suburban villas, and so forth. In the end, the invention of a space of enjoyment necessarily implies through a phase of *elitism*. The elites of today avoid or reject quantitative models of consumption and homogenizing trends. At the same time, though they cultivate the appearance of differences, these elites are in fact distinguishable from one another (Lefebvre, 1974: 380).

Furthermore, ecologists seem to be able to offer either “some return to an urbanization regulated by the metabolic constraints of a bioregional world” or

a total dissolution of cities into decentralized communes or municipal entities in which, it is believed, proximity to some fictional quality called “nature” will predispose us to the lines of the natural world around us (as if decanting everyone from large cities into the countrysides will somehow guarantee the preservation of biodiversity, water and air qualities, and the like) (Harvey, 1996: 427, 428).

But the belief that community can be “created as some freestanding and autonomous entity,” an entity “isolated from ‘others’ and ‘outsiders’” that can be “put to work as an agent for social change” can mislead. Although Harvey does not oppose that the “rhetoric of communitarianism may provide an ideological antidote” to the effects of globalism, he emphasizes that it fails because “it often turns out to be as much a part of the problem as a panacea” because “well-founded communities can exclude, define themselves against others” (ibid, 425). Though Bookchin is an advocate of eco-communities and considers them as cornerstone of his revolutionary strategies, he is aware of these kinds of risks. Bookchin offers eco-communities as a response to the domination of nature and domination of human beings but he also argues that any community “risks the danger of becoming parochial, even racist, if it tries to live in isolation and develop a seeming self-sufficiency” (Bookchin, 1990b: n.p.). Hence, healthy interdependence between eco-communities is essential, rather than an introverted independence (Bookchin, 2001: 452). Murray Bookchin’s confederation of libertarian municipalities is designed to provide this interdependence. But, here another problem arises. David Harvey argues that much of the radical left – particularly of an anarchist and autonomist persuasion– has no answer to the problem of how decentralization can work without hierarchical constraints. State intervention and hierarchy are unacceptable. “Instead there is a vague and naïve hope that social groups who have organized their relations to their local commons satisfactorily will do the right thing.” For this to happen, local groups have to “give up accrued advantages” that are democratically distributed within the social group to “supplement the well-being of near (let alone distant) others,” who are in a state of misery. But “history provides us with very little evidence” that this can work. “There is, therefore, nothing whatsoever to prevent escalating social inequalities between communities. This accords all too well with the neoliberal project of not only protecting but further privileging structures of class power.” Though Harvey criticizes ‘community’ and ‘community values’ to the extent that they are based on relations of inclusion and exclusion, he remarks that Bookchin’s proposal is the “most sophisticated radical proposal to deal with the creation and collective use of

the commons” and is “well worth elaborating as part of the radical anti-capitalist agenda” (Harvey, 2012: 84, 85). Nevertheless, in this context what is crucial is that

the pervasive and often powerful anti-urbanism of much of contemporary environmental-ecological movement often translates into the view that cities ought not to exist since they are the highpoint of plundering and pollution of all that is good and holy on planet earth. The predominant form of radical solutions proposed for ecological dilemmas is a return to some form of ruralized communitarianism. This predominant anti-urbanism is as odd as it is pernicious. It is almost as if a fetishistic conception of “nature” as something to be valued and worshipped separate from human action blinds a whole political movement to the qualities of the actual living environments in which the majority of humanity will soon live (Harvey, 1996: 426-427).

In Chapter 6, I shall examine lifestyle and community strategies and community politics bearing all these perspectives in mind. At first I shall discuss whether and how individual self-change can be seen as a response to ecological crisis. In the community politics part of Chapter 6, I aim at addressing whether individual self-change in a community might be an alternative to existing practices which are not seen as being sustainable and as a response to the problems posed by urban life. In Chapter 6, my main objective is to analyze the lifestyle and community strategies of the ecovillage initiatives in Turkey to reveal their potential to form an eco-community. I aim to address whether these rural ecovillage initiatives might come close to the decentralized structures of Bookchin or rather they are individualistic and escapist attempts stimulated mainly by the anti-urbanism that is criticized by both David Harvey and Murray Bookchin despite their different approaches.

CHAPTER IV

HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE ECOVILLAGE MOVEMENT AND ECOVILLAGES

The ecovillage ‘movement’ committing to raise the quality of life and posing an alternative to ‘mainstream’ society emerged in the early 1990s. In terms of the concerns of people participating in it, its class structure, its goals and strategies, the ecovillage movement is considered as the continuation of the hippie movement of the 1960s and 1970s that has philosophical links with romanticism and the wilderness movement.

To explore the historical roots of the contemporary ecovillage movement and the principles on which it is based, this chapter, first, focuses on romantic conceptions of nature, anti-urbanism and the counterculture and the hippie movement of the 1960s and the 1970s. It should be noted that it is not possible to refer to the same historical and philosophical links in analyzing the selected ecovillage initiatives in Turkey. The ecovillage ‘movement’ in the world and ecovillage initiatives in Turkey have different historical roots because the 1960s and the 1970s in Turkey are different from the 1960s and the 1970s in the West. Nonetheless, to address whether ecovillage initiatives in Turkey, like the ecovillage ‘movement’ in other parts of the world, display some of the sentiments of romanticism and the hippie movement such as ‘back-to-nature’, anti-urbanism, escapism this brief look will be useful. The second part of this chapter focuses on ecovillages. It outlines a brief history of the ecovillages and their general features.

4.1 Romantic Conception of Nature

Romanticism as referring to a nineteenth century American and European cultural movement has ended. The crucial point is that “the end of romanticism did not

however mean the end of universal nature. This vision lives on either in science, in the idealism of the contemporary “back to nature” ideology, or as a mixture of both in the nostalgic wing of the ecology movement” (Smith, 2008: 25). Some of the sentiments, ideals and values which these traditions and movements include are encapsulated by ecovillages around the world and ecovillage initiatives in Turkey as well.

The word nature, as the literary critic Raymond Williams argues, “is perhaps the most complex word in the [English] language” (Williams, 1983: 219). Williams identifies three specific but intertwining meanings:

- (i) the essential quality and character of something;
- (ii) the inherent force which directs either the world or human beings or both;
- (iii) the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings (ibid).

Nature is a “promiscuous concept, in the sense that it is used daily in a multitude of situations by a diverse array of individuals, groups and organizations” (Castree, 2001: 5). Also, “the meanings of ‘nature’ do not grow on trees, but must be constructed” (Beck, 2002: 39). The reading and production of nature is a “cultural process” and “varies greatly between different societies, different periods and different social groupings within any society” (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998: 19). Castree and Braun argue,

[...] now as often as ever before “nature” is seen as a refuge—a “pure” place to which one travels in order to escape from society. Along similar lines, deep green environmentalism shuttles between apocalyptic and melancholy, mourning the loss, or desperately seeking to preserve (or at least witness!), the last remnants of a “pristine” nature. And yet, as Neil Smith (1996: 41) has recently reiterated, this desire to “save nature” is deeply problematic, since it reaffirms the “externality” of a

nature “with and within which human societies are inextricably intermeshed (Castree & Braun, 1998: 33).

Like nature, the term “romanticism has a complexity of meanings and nuances,” but here it is used to “denote the ‘content and character of the Romantic movement of the 18th and 19th centuries” (Pepper, 1984: 76). To elucidate some elements of romanticism as related to the subject of this study is essential before discussing the hippie movement and the ecovillage movement which is considered to have developed from the alternative lifestyle movements of the 1960s and the 1970s (Fotopoulos, 2000; Trainer 2000a).

Romanticism is sometimes used to refer to artistic and intellectual movements but it can also be accepted as a “reaction *against* material changes in society” (Pepper, 1984: 79, italics in original). In romanticism, simplicity and the simpler life of folk societies which were closer to nature were revered. Unlike the Cartesian thought, “romantics held that nature had something *of its own*” (ibid, italics in original.). In other words, in the romantic conception, nature had purpose and meaning in itself. Nature was valued as separated from the main human sphere and was taken to exist on the margins of modern industrial society. Because of this, the romantic conception of nature was “more escapist than visionary” (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998: 13).

Nature in any other sense than that of the improvers indeed fled to the margins: to the remote, the inaccessible, the relatively barren areas. Nature was where industry was not, and then in that real but limited sense had very little to say about the operations on nature that were proceeding elsewhere (Williams, 1972: 159, quoted by Macnaghten & Urry, 1998: 13).

As in Europe, this valuing of nature outside the civilized land, respect for nature and the “love of wilderness which the American Romantics such as Muir, Thoreau and Emerson expressed partly displaced earlier very opposite feelings toward nature” (Pepper, 1996: 196-197; Pepper, 1984: 79). For up to the 17th and 18th centuries, wilderness represented “Satan’s home to be redeemed by improvement and

agricultural cultivation” and agricultural practices such as planting and hedging were welcome as mark of civilization, taming nature was seen as a mark of progress (Demeritt, 2001: 24; Pepper, 1984: 79). But before the end of the 18th century the attitude toward wilderness changed both in Europe and America. Wild landscape became a source of spiritual renewal. “The word *sublime* began to be used to describe mountain scenery. [...] Romantic inspiration thus came from what was grand and remote” (Pepper, 1984: 80, italics in original). People began to travel long distances to visit the lands which were once seen as worthless, to have the opportunity to be alone in the wilderness and to reach to the spiritual plane (Cronon, 1996). In the nineteenth-century, concerns over the loss of wilderness grew. These concerns led eventually to the National Parks movement which was inspired by the phrase “In wildness is the preservation of the world” of Henry David Thoreau who took up the theme of unmediated relationship to nature, which was firstly used by Ralph Waldo Emerson in 1836 and “put it into practice by living alone in the woods for two years, depending wholly on his own labour to do so” (Pepper, 1984: 82; Giddens, 2009: 51).

William Cronon, parallel to Bookchin and Demeritt, asks and argues whether wilderness is what it seems. Cronon criticizes this wilderness idea, which he calls an idea and a human creation, not a thing, as the “fantasy of people who have never themselves had to work the land to make a living – urban folk for whom food comes from a supermarket or a restaurant instead of field” (Cronon, 1996: 78). To be more precise, he argues that the wilderness experience is “enjoyed by those whose class privileges give them the time and resources to leave their jobs behind” (Cronon, 1996: 78). Then Cronon poses the following questions:

Why does the protection of wilderness so often seem to pit urban recreationists against rural people who actually earn their living from the land (excepting those who sell goods and services to the tourists themselves)? Why in the debates about pristine natural areas are “primitive” peoples idealized, even sentimentalized, until the moment they do something unprimitive,

modern, and unnatural, and thereby fall from environmental grace? What are the consequences of a wilderness ideology that devalues productive labor and the very concrete knowledge that comes from working the land with one's own hands? (ibid, 85)

For urban folk, “wild land was not a site for productive labor and not a permanent home; rather it was a place of recreation” (ibid). The other trouble with the wilderness is that it creates a struggle between malign civilization and benign nature and makes all other social, political, and moral concerns trivial. In the last instance, this would exclude the problems of occupational health and safety in industrial settings, problems of poor children poisoned by lead exposure in inner cities, and problems of poverty in the “overpopulated” places of the earth. If one accepts the wild lands as freer, truer and more natural than more modern places, one is inclined to see the cities as confining, false and artificial and tends to disavow any responsibility for the urbanized environments in which they actually live (Cronon, 1996: 69, 77, 84; Demeritt, 2001: 26). Murray Bookchin makes much the same point about wilderness. Wilderness, Bookchin argues, can “give one a sense of freedom, a heightened sense of nature's fecundity, a love of nonhuman life-forms, and a richer aesthetic outlook and appreciation of the natural order” (Bookchin, 1990a: 153). But this wilderness also leads to “a rejection of *human* nature, an introverted denial of social intercourse, a needless opposition between wilderness and civilization” (ibid, italics in original).

4.2 The Country and the City

Romantics, David Pepper stresses, “revolted against ‘excrescences’ of the industrial capitalism, such as vulgarity, poverty, squalor, materialism, pollution and ugliness”, which were symbolized in the 19th century city (Pepper, 1984: 76). While anti-urbanism appeared as major characteristics of this period, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point out, rural life and peasant world were “linked to innocence and naturalness of traditional social arrangements—class divisions, relations of property

and production, and so forth –that were really, of course, neither innocent nor natural” (Hardt & Negri, 2004: 121). These sentiments are associated with romanticism and with European literature of nineteenth and twentieth centuries but they can be traced far back. As Raymond Williams puts it:

On the country has gathered the idea of a natural way of life: of peace, innocence, and simple virtue. On the city has gathered the idea of an achieved centre: of learning, communication, light. Powerful hostile associations have also developed: on the city as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition; on the country as a place of backwardness, ignorance, limitation. A contrast between country and city, as fundamental ways of life, reaches back into classical times (Williams, 1973: 1).

In cultural history, from time to time, one aspect of the duality between the country and the city “surfaces while the other becomes relatively dormant, but the two strands are always there, in fundamental tension” (Pepper, 1984: 85). David Harvey states that

the distinction between built environments of cities and the humanly modified environments of rural and even remote regions then appears arbitrary except as a particular manifestation of a rather long-standing ideological distinction between the country and the city (Harvey, 1996: 119).

We can identify the tension between the country and the city in the hippie movement of the 1960s and in the ecovillage movement of the 1990s as well. The “moral and aesthetic revulsion against city” led to the “escapism of alternative communities which the hippies emulated 70 years later” (Pepper, 1984: 17; Pepper, 1993). Certainly, the production of spaces as countryside or as an ecovillage is very different. But it can be said that the sentiments and the motives underlying their development are not entirely different because, as Raymond Williams argues in his *The Country and The City*, certain images and ideas persist. In *The Country and The City*, Williams addresses the duality between country and the city by drawing on his

personal experiences and his life in the village. He argues that both country life and city life have included different practices which have changed historically, meanings which have changed in feeling and activity, in region and time, and in themselves and in relation to others. The country way of life has included hunters, farmers and pastoralists. Its organization has varied from tribe to the feudal estate, from small peasantry to the rural commune. In the same vein, the city and the idea of the city shows a variation in history. There is nothing in common between cities of medieval times and the modern metropolis. Nevertheless, “certain images and associations persist” and “the ideas and images of country and city retain their force” (Williams, 1973: 1, 2, 289).

It may not be inaccurate to say that what lies behind the ecovillage ‘movement’ and the practices that are associated with the ecovillage ‘movement’ such as permaculture and living simply are these persistent images as remarked by Raymond Williams. It appears that these images constitute a rural myth which is associated with simplicity, human-nature harmony “on the part of people whose original home was urban” not rural and who do not know the reality of the countryside as a place of production. This myth retains its force in the hippie movement and the contemporary ecovillage ‘movement’ (Pepper, 1984: 86; Macnaghten & Urry, 1998).

The most common motive in ecovillage initiatives in Turkey, which seems to stem from the country-city, rural-urban duality is to live in a sustainable and self-sufficient way that is not seen as achievable in the cities. As explored in the Introduction and Chapter 3, in this context to live sustainably/self-sufficiently means to use alternative technologies, to grow one’s own food, to generate one’s own energy, etc. It is not misleading to say that the persisting images of country and city and the “representations of nature and the countryside” are influential in the emergence of these motives because the mediations between town, country and nature “cannot be understood as such by city dwellers without symbolisms and *representations* (ideological and imaginary) of nature and the countryside” (Lefebvre, 1996a: 118, 119, italics in original). The majority of the interviewees, who did not have any

experience of rural life, except for their childhood period, have the ideal of reviving agricultural production of earlier periods which did not rely on chemicals used as fertilizers. The majority holds villagers responsible for disappearing traditional features without addressing production processes. What they tend to overlook is that “urban life penetrates peasant life, dispossessing it of its traditional features” (ibid, 119). Furthermore, as outcomes of the fieldwork reveal, most interviewees do not aim at reviving features of traditional agricultural techniques. They adopt a lifestyle which is not entirely disconnected from or dissimilar to urban life. Though the majority of the interviewees said that they abandoned some of their habits, practices and routines belonging to their former urban life, it appears that they have carried the urban with them because “urban dwellers carry the urban with them, even if they do not bring planning with them!” (Lefebvre, 1996b: 158) This will be discussed in Chapter 6 in detail by drawing on the fieldwork.

4.3 Counterculture and the Hippie Movement

The counterculture of the 1960s and the 1970s is often “seen as major progenitor of seventies and eighties environmentalism.” Counterculture, back-to-nature and the hippie movements of the 1960s and 1970s, David Pepper argues, were a return to Romanticism in terms of the values they rejected and their ideal to create a viable alternative to mainstream culture. This return to romanticism during the 1960s and 1970s has characterized earlier environmentalist periods as well (Pepper, 1991: 31; Pepper, 1984: 16, 17). Intellectuals like Ruskin, Morris and Mill, who all founded environmental groups, and who explored green themes like simple lifestyles saw industrialism as “destroying social order, morality, nature and human health” and “rejected the optimism of economic liberalism” like earlier romantics. William Morris, following John Ruskin, argued that human production could lead to ‘illth’ as readily as to ‘wealth’ if it is not “governed by human standards, rather than by mere profit or convenience” (Williams, 1989a: 215-216). Saying “have nothing in your home which you do not either believe to be beautiful or know to be useful”, Morris goes to the centre of the problem. But Morris was a victim of delusion too, Williams

says, because he believed that there had once been a clean and natural order before industrial production and what should be done is to reconstitute the simple peasant and craftsman order. “This kind of thinking still is within the ecological movement.” For many people, “dropping out from modern industrial society and taking a different course which gives them more satisfaction” is seen as the only way of saving the world (Williams, 1989a: 216, 217).

The late 1960s and the early 1970s marked the beginning of prevalent public concern over environmental problems in the West. Until the early 1970s, the increase in public concern over environmental degradation was interpreted as being only concerned with participatory and distributional issues. But in the late 1960s and in the early 1970s, new sensibilities, tendencies and theoretical paths emerged as well. This period was a “time of theoretical stocktaking and revision for socialist theory—a revision spearheaded by the rise of the New Left” (Eckersley, 1992: 10). Particularly Herbert Marcuse’s views had important influence on the thinking of the New Left in the 1960s and the early 1970s. The New Left’s agenda widened to include questions of life-style, technology, and the exploitation of nature (ibid, 10). During this period Murray Bookchin, being influenced by the Frankfurt School and Theodore Roszak raised many issues, such as the significance of alternative worldviews which remain important currents in modern green thought (Eckersley, 1992: 10). Murray Bookchin’s *Our Synthetic Environment* (1962) and Rachel Carson’s *Silent Spring* (1962) published in this period are still accepted as the two significant landmarks in the appearance of these new sensibilities (ibid, 9). In *Our Synthetic Environment* Bookchin under the pseudonym Lewis Herber surveyed the scientific literature on radiation and human health, pesticides, food additives, processed foods, and cancer and in *Silent Spring* Carson, similarly, exposed the hazards of the pesticides. Though Bookchin did not attract the attention that Carson’s book had received, by focusing on processed food, and the adverse effects of pesticides, etc. as early as the 1960s,

both books raised public concern over these issues and motivated the environmentalist movement of the 1960s and the 1970s.²⁸

What lies behind these new sensibilities is the idea that the development of productive forces leads to domination and alienation of humans and nature. The “spreading values of instrumental rationality increasingly dominates the lifeworld of humans, and their environment” (Pepper, 1993: 66). These ideas were readily absorbed by counterculture and back-to-nature movements of the 1960s and the young found themselves in radical opposition because they felt that

in the established society, the effectively controlled nature has in turn become another dimension for the control of man: the extended arm of society and its power. Commercialized nature, polluted nature, militarized nature cut down the life environment of man, not only in an ecological but also in a very existential sense. It blocks the erotic cathexis (and transformation) of his environment: it deprives man from finding himself in nature, beyond and this side of alienation: it also prevents him from recognizing nature as a *subject* in its own right – a subject with which to live in a common (Marcuse, 1972: 60).

There were varieties in this youthful dissent. “To one side, there is the mind-blown bohemianism of the beats and hippies; to the other, the hard-headed political activism of the student New Left” (Roszak, 1969: 56). To be more precise, the one seeks to “cop out” American society, the other seeks to “penetrate and revolutionize” the political life of society. Nonetheless, there exists a theme and common enemy uniting these two sides and making hippy and student activists recognize each other as allies. For Roszak, the main “underlying unity is revealed by the extraordinary personalism that has characterized New Left activism since its beginnings” (ibid.). In

²⁸ Murray Bookchin, as early as the 1960s, talked about some issues such as food in frozen form, chemical additives in food which are main concerns of most people in this period and also interviewees of this study. His following statement clearly shows that current environmental problems existed in the past: “they [our grandparents] made their own soups, sausage, salad dressing, clothing and countless other items. Such tasks, which a generation ago were part of farm and home life, have been taken over by commercial factories [...]”

http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/syntheticenviron/ose4.html.

other words, “for most of the New Left, there has ultimately been no more worth or cogency in any ideology than a person lends it by virtue of his own action: personal commitments, not abstract ideas, are the stuff of politics” (Roszak, 1969: 57).

The youth believed that straight society, which corresponds to square culture in David Pepper and established society in Herbert Marcuse and Murray Bookchin, was repressive and inauthentic. In their view, the people of straight society did not express their feelings; politicians did not tell the truth; manufactures produced ‘plastic’ products that cannot be recycled; advertisers created false needs; foods contained pesticides and additives (Pountain & Robins, 2000: 77). They were disenchanted with the “ideals concerning technology, power, profit, and growth...Centralization, urbanization, and industrialization appeared as devourers rather than saviors of mankind...” (Nash, quoted by Pepper, 1984: 16-17). As an opposition, they were concerned to “‘rebalance’ instrumental rationality with concern for feelings, emotions and aesthetics; economic to be balanced with non-economic, cultural values; and materialism with idealism” (Pepper, 1993: 66). They attempted to transcend the inauthentic emotions of straight society, to build a new world or at least an alternative economy by opening, for example, vegetarian and macrobiotic cafés or shops selling homespun clothes. They reinvented many aspects of 19th century romanticism including anti-scientific irrationalism, fascination with the exotic and supernatural, and heightened empathy with nature (Pountain & Robins, 2000: 77, 79, 85). “Given this general orientation, the counterculture inevitably discovered wilderness and identified it as something of value” (Nash, quoted by Pepper, 1984: 17). Many young people who were “typically from middle-class households, well-educated, and environmentally conscious” temporarily abandoned metropolitan lifestyles and “middle-class suburbia, to which they were to return after the sixties” (Turman-Deal, 2010: 1; Bookchin, 1990a: 146). They attempted to create alternative, dropout communities to restore the close links with nature that were imagined to have existed in pre-industrial rural society. Their main motivation was to recapture a “simplicity and innocence and gentleness which were perceived to have been lost” (Pepper, 1984: 17).

As mentioned above, most people have sought to create a ‘new life’ –usually a communal one (Lefebvre, 1974: 379). Nevertheless, the communities that were offered by the counterculture in the 1960s and 1970s differ from “the communities of earlier times” which had contemplation, not enjoyment, as their *raison d’être* and goal” (ibid, italics in original). The “movement’s revolutionary potential was quickly dissipated and assimilated into conventional society” (Pepper, 1993: 77). Bookchin emphasizes that the failures of the New Left and the counterculture movement cannot be explained by the lack of ideology and organization alone. “Errors that had been repeated generation after generation over the past century were thus being recycled again: a disregard for theory, an emphasis on action that excluded all serious thought” (Bookchin, 1990a: 150).

[...] The ‘counterculture’ of which communes are a part is not uninfluenced by the mainstream culture it opposes. It is not an independent beacon shining forth with a steady light of unchanging revolutionary values. Its values change as mainstream values change. In the 1980s and 1990s privatisation, individualism, consumerism, managerialism and the values of the market place, of commercial viability and of the nuclear family have all made inroads in alternative communities (Pepper, 1996: 318).

The symbols of counterculture eventually became “the artifacts for a new culture industry” (Bookchin, 1982: 18). Despite these, Bookchin argues, the sixties should teach us that the counterculture is important and we need

firm skeletal structures to support such a new culture — notably, *counterinstitutions*. This confronts us with the need to create a *political* movement that is libertarian and rescues the word “politics” from the ignominy of statecraft (Bookchin, 1986: 51, italics in original).

The lack of literature on how counterculture movements of the 1960s and the 1970s were reflected in Turkey’s political, social and cultural atmosphere, to a large extent, can be attributed to the fact that the 1960s in Turkey was lived differently from the

1960s in the West. As Gün Zileli, an activist departing from Marxism in the 1990s and turning towards anarchism, says, Turkey's 1960s were generally guided by Marxism. Though Herbert Marcuse's books were published in Turkey at the same time with Europe, they were not read by the radical youth except for a few intellectuals. Zileli goes on to say that in that period, being hippie was perceived as negative. There were no such things as ecological struggle and ecological sensitivity. Peter Kropotkin was known in Turkey as the father of anarchism but anarchism itself was not known or discredited (Zileli, 2013). Tayfun Gönül, Ahmet Kurt and Ufuk Ahıska who were among the anarchists that released Turkey's first anarchist magazine *Kara*, which was published between October 1986 and November 1987, explain why the 1960s in Turkey were different from that of the Europe as follows: "something could have been expected from 1968 and this came true. There was a small group in Ankara but the anarchism they represented merged with the hippie movement. Then it disappeared under the influence of Marxism" (Gönül *et al.*, 2013: 80). At that period, the intellectuals and the youth in Turkey did not show interest in counterculture and the New Left because Marxism was influential. While Europe was being disconnected from Stalinism, in Turkey, Stalinism was being credited (Zileli, 2013: 61). In sum, we tend to understand the 1960s in Turkey through Marxist analysis. Nevertheless, other political-cultural approaches like anarchism and situationism might be important to analyze the communities like ecovillage that is generally considered as the continuation of the counterculture movement.

4.4 Ecovillages as a Form of Intentional Community

The ecovillage which is a specific form of intentional community has emerged as a response and an alternative to a tangible decline in the quality of life in the 1990s. Intentional community (sometimes called commune, alternative lifestyle group, sustainable community, and alternative community) is a group of people who choose to live with or near enough to each other to carry out a shared lifestyle with a common purpose. Income-sharing workers in Israeli kibbutzim, families living in cohousing communities, urban communities, spiritual communities, students living

in student housing co-ops, and sustainability advocates in rural ecovillages all live in intentional communities (Christensen & Levinson, 2003: 670; Christian, 2003: xvi).

The intentional community is not a recent phenomenon. The first intentional community, for some scholars, was Homakoeion, developed by Pythagoras in southern Italy in about 52 BCE. During the Middle Ages communal initiatives and community builders seeking to retreat into spiritual and non-material world emerged. In the 16th century, a radical Protestant Christian group called Hutterites formed intentional communities with communal ownership, equality, and a form of anarchism. The religious intentional community known as the Amish which claims almost one hundred eighty thousand adherents today and that champions communal values and rejects some technologies such as the use of motor vehicles, was formed in this period. In the seventeenth to eighteenth century groups from Taborites to Anabaptists set up communes and communities in Europe and North America. These communes were not recognizably green, but rather more often ascetic, pacifist, craft-based, living close to the land. In the 1650s, the social activist group the Diggers that are “praised in green literature for their beliefs and actions supporting land ownership as everyone’s fundamental right” developed (Pepper, 1991: 26). The historical intentional community movement peaked during the mid-to late nineteenth century (Christensen & Levinson, 2003: 42, 671, 673). The New Age movement in the North, the kibbutz movement in Israel, anti-capitalist communes such as Bruderhof in Germany, Spanish communes that come closest to green utopia in terms of its economic, social and political organization, the sixties communes that were often compatible with green values, the cohousing movement launched in Denmark and the ecovillages can be accepted as contemporary manifestations of intentional communalism (Pepper, 1991: 30, 31).

The term ecovillage which is a specific and a new form of intentional community appeared on the scene in 1991 in a sustainability report commissioned by *Gaia*

*Trust*²⁹ which is a Danish-based entity established in 1987 by two activists, supporting sustainability projects around the world such as the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) and Gaia Education. In this report in which twenty-six initiatives were described including traditional villages, alternative communities in both town and country, cooperatives, and a permaculture support project, an ecovillage is defined by Robert Gilman as a

human-scale full-featured settlement in which human activities are harmlessly integrated into the natural world in a way that is supportive of healthy human development and can be successfully continued into the indefinite future (quoted by Dawson, 2006: 13).

In 1991, a meeting was held in Denmark with the participation of twenty people leading the sustainability movement. Momentum, Jonathan Dawson says, developed in the years following this meeting and the second international meeting (1993). The number of new initiatives has grown during this process. In 1996, the *Global Ecovillage Network* (GEN) was formally launched at the UN Habitat Conference held in İstanbul in 1996, which is a

growing network of sustainable communities and initiatives that bridge different cultures, countries, and continents” serving “as umbrella organization for ecovillages, transition town initiatives, intentional communities, and ecologically-minded individuals worldwide.”³⁰

With the formation of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) by twenty five community representatives from around the world, the term ecovillage “found its formal organizational home” (Kasper, 2008: 13) and it was defined as

²⁹ Gaia Trust is a Danish-based charitable entity founded in 1987, supporting sustainability projects around the world such as the Global Ecovillage Network and Gaia Education (<http://www.gaia.org/gaia/gaiatrust>, access in August 2013).

³⁰ <http://gen.ecovillage.org/index.php/about-gen/aboutgen.html>.

an intentional or traditional community using local participatory processes to holistically integrate ecological, economic, social, and cultural dimensions of sustainability in order to regenerate social and natural environments” by the *Global Ecovillage Network* (GEN).³¹

In this study, I do not attempt to discuss ecovillage initiatives in Turkey by using only one of the definitions quoted above, but rather I address them in a broader context, as Ted Trainer, a sociologist working on sustainability and alternative social forms, does. Ted Trainer argues that “a sustainable and just world order must be based on materially very simple lifestyles, a high level of local economic self-sufficiency, co-operative and participatory ways” and a new economic system, that is not “driven by profit or market forces and that does not involve growth” (Trainer, 2002: 143). He proposes working within the Global Alternative Society Movement³² as a way to establish instances of the simpler way. As defined by Ted Trainer, the ecovillage movement, “can be seen as having developed from the intentional communities and alternative lifestyle movements of the 1960s, but has now broadened to include a variety of elements” and initiatives such as community supported agriculture, rural economic renewal, land trusts, local economic development, alternative technologies, voluntary simplicity, farmers’ markets, ethical finance, town banks, LETS [local exchange trading scheme] and permaculture (Trainer, 2000a: 275; Trainer, 2002: 143).

I use to Trainer’s broad definition not because I agree with Trainer and advocate for ecovillages, but because outcomes of the fieldwork call for using such a broad definition. In other words, while most interviewees are concentrated on practicing permaculture, a few adopt gift economy practices and the majority advocates for the use of alternative technologies. These will be clarified in Chapter 6 by drawing on the fieldwork.

³¹ <http://gen.ecovillage.org/index.php/ecovillages/whatisanecovillage.html>.

³² Trainer uses the Global Alternative Society Movement and the Global Eco-village Movement interchangeably.

4.5 General Characteristics of the Ecovillages

Before mentioning the main characteristics of the ecovillages, it might be useful to briefly explain developer-led eco-communities and cohousing initiatives which are accepted as close cousins of ecovillages. The developer-led eco community which is accepted as an urban ecovillage model is “more or less conventional housing development, undertaken by an entrepreneur with the ultimate aim of turning a profit, but intentionally designed so as to be as ecologically benign as possible” (Sevier, 2008; Dawson, 2006: 22). For example, Beddington Zero Energy Development (BedZED) in the UK which was designed to develop an area as a solution to environmental, social and economic needs is a well-known example to developer-led eco community³³ (Sevier, 2008: 40).

Cohousing is a form of intentional community, which was first developed in the 1960s in Denmark as an alternative to suburban living. It is defined as a “way of enjoying the benefits of community living and shared facilities in an urban setting still maintaining some independence” (ibid, 38). The cohousing settlement is generally designed and built, but residents can determine the design and take all the responsibility of the project (Dawson, 2006: 22). Cohousing communities are composed of private homes supplemented by a common house which includes a cooking and dining space for shared meals. It may also include a TV room, laundry, etc. (Sanguinetti, 2012: 8). Cohousing model is defined as a mainstream option, not an alternative lifestyle because most residents maintain jobs in the city and retain a degree of privacy. There is no pooling of incomes in co-housing model (Dawson, 2006: 22).

Ecovillages emerged out of the intentional communities and cohousing model of the 1960s and the concept of ecovillage was coined in the 1990s (Dawson, 2006). The relatively new, environmentally focused settlements called ecovillages, as generally claimed, emerged “as a response to the growing sense of the breakdown of

³³ <http://www.bioregional.com/flagship-projects/one-planet-communities/bedzed-uk>.

community in the United States and the burgeoning data on environmental degradation and its social consequences” (Chitewere, 2010: 315). It is not easy to provide a succinct definition of the term ecovillage and to list general characteristics of a ‘typical’ ecovillage (Dawson, 2003: 218). There are varieties of ecovillages around the world and each ecovillage has its own character and varies in size, culture, specializations and engagements. However, it can be said that these settlements which are “made up by those from the upper middle class” and which are reminiscent of the green communes of the 1960s “aim to connect two concepts: a sense of community and environmental sustainability” (Chitewere, 2010: 315). Furthermore, almost all ecovillages have fundamental attributes distinguishing them from the “myriad initiatives in rural and urban eco-regeneration” and “sustainability-related initiatives in more conventional towns and villages” (Dawson, 2013: 34, 36, 219). At that point, Dawson offers five defining characteristics of ecovillages by stressing limitation of Gilman’s definition.

First, community is of central significance and “the community dimension of life in ecovillages is stronger than cohousing projects.” To put it another way, residents have less independence; more residents work in the community; and there is a pooling of incomes (Dawson, 2006: 23). In ‘modern’ world, the argument goes, an increasing number of people, is yearning to live in small, self-sufficient communities because they feel increasingly isolated and alienated. These people are interested in intentional, small, self-sufficient communities because they are aware that they live in fragmented, shallow and dangerous society and want something more satisfying (Christian, 2003; Dawson, 2006). Thus, it is argued that ecovillages emerged as a “small-scale place-based, but yet tightly networked, collective efforts toward self-empowerment in response to the life-alienating forces of technocracy, the administrative state and global capitalist,” to escape the alienation and solitude of the modern condition (Litfin, 2009: 124). Secondly, Dawson argues, ecovillages are citizens’ initiatives. They are more or less entirely reliant “on the resources, imagination and vision of the community members themselves.” In other words, they are alienated from official bodies and the government (Dawson, 2006: 34). A third

defining attribute of the ecovillages is that all ecovillages seek to win back control over their own resources (food, energy, houses, and livelihoods). For Dawson, the fourth characteristic shared by all ecovillages is that they have strong body of shared values, which refer to spirituality, free thinking, tolerant towards diverse belief and like. The last attribute common to all ecovillages is that ecovillages act as centers of training, demonstration, and research (ibid, 35, 36). After listing common characteristics of ecovillages, Dawson offers another definition of ecovillages:

Private citizens' initiatives in which the communitarian impulse is of central importance, that are seeking to win back some measure of control over community resources, that have a strong shared values base (often referred to as 'spirituality') and that act as centres of research, demonstration and (in most cases training) (Dawson, 2006: 36).

As mentioned above, ecovillages around the world differ in size, their major goals, engagements, strategies, standards, the values they implement, and so on. While some of them concentrate on spiritual values, some others seem to be 'politically' engaged or focus on reduction of the ecological footprint. Among goals and engagements of ecovillages, there are designing of low impact settlements, promoting sustainable economies, organic, locally based food production and processing, and earth restoration, as well as a revival of participatory, community-scale governance, social inclusion, peace activism and international solidarity. While some of them mentor in conflict facilitation, some others act as centers for research and training in the field of decision-making. Though there are many other characteristics that could be added including healing, waste management and recycling, and spiritual enquiry, these are, Dawson says, the most notable ones (ibid, 38).

It is impossible to give the exact number of ecovillages and environmentally minded community groups who are interested in the fields listed above. It is estimated that there are hundreds, maybe thousands of communities that are not listed in

Communities Directory.³⁴ Kasper, by using listings of the 2005 Communities Directory and the GEN database, identifies at least one hundred seventy eight registered ecovillages in the United States. Around the world there are three hundred forty seven ecovillages officially registered with GEN, one hundred forty seven in GEN Europe, forty eight in GEN Oceania and Asia, and one hundred fifty two in ENA (the Ecovillage Network of the Americas) (Kasper, 2008: 14). According to Chitewere, in 2010 GEN reported one hundred two ecovillages in the United States and three hundred forty seven in countries around the world. Chitewere points out that the number of ecovillages is increasing, and ecovillages that bring middle class households closer to each other and to nature has become a growing trend (Chitewere, 2010: 315). But it should be noted that while the number ecovillages is growing and they are no longer dissolving as the communities in the 1960s and the 1970s did, the turnover of residents is very high (Garden, 2006). One of the important and the challenging tasks faced by ecovillages is the social dimension of living communally, i.e. “the challenge of finding satisfactory and inclusive forms of community governance and wellbeing.” This lies at the root of the high turnover and collapse of many ecovillages (Dawson, 2006: 54).

The dropout communities of the 1960s and the ecovillages of the 1990s seemingly appeared as a response to industrialization, urbanization and materialism. They were created to re-establish the close links with nature and as viable alternatives to ‘mainstream’ culture (Pepper, 1984; Pepper, 1991). Ecovillages like the communes of the 1960s are developed to be independent from the prevailing culture but the opposition, as happened with the communes of the 1960s, ends up either at incorporation or is assimilated. David Pepper theorizes their absorption into conventional society as a three stage process. Communes at first intend to “bypass the system by setting up an alternative social and economic organization as self-

³⁴ Communities Directory provides the listing of intentional communities, ecovillages, cohousing communities, communes, co-ops, or other cooperative living arrangements around the world (<http://directory.ic.org/>). In the directory Dedetepe Eco-Farm from Turkey is listed (http://directory.ic.org/20073/Dedetepe_eco_farm).

sufficient and independent as possible from mainstream society.” This anarchist approach intends that mainstream society will be changed through more people joining in the process. For this to happen, not to make a financial gain to sustain daily life is held essential. The second stage is intent to use the system as a means of subversive ends. This includes a range of things, from working only in income-generating projects to drawing on social security. At this stage, ends are still clear but it is argued that some compromises are necessary. And the final stage is becoming part of the system. At this stage, the majority seeks to generate financial surplus, abandon collectivity and sharing, and accept liberal values of individualism and privatization (Pepper, 1991: 205, 206). The advocates of ecovillages, like Jonathan Dawson, suggest that “ecovillages have been swimming resolutely against the dominant socio-economic paradigm of our age—globalization” and globalization is one of the threats that ecovillages struggle with because of its specialization, accumulation and trade dimensions (Dawson, 2006: 75, 68). But it is seen that the majority of the present ecovillages cannot stay as independent from what they criticize. They wholesale the organic foods that they produce to supermarkets. They earn money through mentoring and training programs. Their clients are not only the other ecovillages around the world but some organizations that are accepted as non-profit such as Greenpeace and global companies such as Shell, BP and GlaxoSmithKline (ibid, 56). Furthermore, their expectancy is to benefit from official sources of funding and to be in connection with mainstream universities. Thus, while aiming to develop alternatives to ‘mainstream’ institutions, values, and ways of life, it seems that one of their income sources is companies or institutions within ‘mainstream’ society. Here it can be argued that their connection with ‘mainstream’ institutions or companies mean that they are not isolated enclaves as opposed to general opinion and through their connections, they may show other people that sustainable lifestyles are possible. But as stressed, all these make them projects opposing the dominant socio-economic paradigm, not communities staying outside them. “What ‘living outside’ means, and how far it is even possible” is a controversial issue, but most community initiatives “oppose the prevailing culture rather than live outside it” (Dobson, 2001: 139). In principle, in ecovillages simpler

ways of life are promoted to reach sustainable society. For this, there must be small-scale self-sufficient economies, alternative technologies, cooperative and participatory local systems, and a different economic system that is not driven by market forces and in which there is not growth (Trainer, 2000b: 21). But some ecovillages have telephones and a restaurant or they are surrounded by complex technology similar to ‘our’ society. These are not compatible with declared objectives of ecovillages but rather “perfectly compatible with the present system” (Fotopoulos, 2006: 307). Despite this or with these, they might raise an environmental awareness within society but “community initiatives have not brought about the ‘fundamental shift’ because their opposition is easily neutralized (Dobson, 2001: 138, 139).

Advocates of ecovillages suggest that ecovillages prefigure a viable future rather than waiting for the revolution. They argue that focusing on the most practical issues such as food, housing, energy and community, “this movement embodies a kind of hands-on, do-it yourself and politics of “yes” (Litfin, 2012: 131). On the other hand, the ecovillage movement –if considered as a movement– is criticized as a-political and theory-less movement by advocates of systemic change like Takis Fotopoulos because of its commitment to affirmative politics. Fotopoulos, who is highly critical of ecovillages, argues that the ecovillage movement is not part of a political movement for systemic change and

it cannot even potentially play this role, given its nature (most of its activities being outside, or at the margin of society), its basic philosophy (spirituality being one of its main principles of organisation—at least as far as the ecovillages are concerned) and its fundamentally a-political character given that most people involved in this movement are mainly interested in meeting their own needs rather than in changing society (Fotopoulos, 2000: 306).

To strengthen his claim that the ecovillage ‘movement’ is not a political movement Fotopoulos gives the example of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN). The Global

Ecovillage Network (GEN) defines itself as a network of sustainable communities and initiatives that “meet and share their ideas, exchange technologies, develop cultural and educational exchanges, directories and newsletters, and are dedicated to restoring the land and living a cooperative sustainable lifestyle.”³⁵ For Fotopoulos, even “this definition alone makes it clear that the GEN is a single-issue environmentalist movement, which takes no stand at all on the political, economic and social institutions which determine the form of our society.” Therefore, it is “committed to achieving its aims taking for granted the existing socio-economic system” (Fotopoulos, 2006: 3). The GEN network consists either of strictly environmental groups (such as groups teaching/producing environment-friendly technologies) or of urban rejuvenation projects (such as hippie squatters) or spiritualist movements. The members of the network differ in many respects but, Fotopoulos claims, what they have common is that they are a-political and single-issue based projects. In other words, being interested in one aspect of society, most ecovillages ignore political, economical or social realms. Ecovillagers attempt to influence other people by alternative communities but “their influence seems to be concentrated among people who have already solved their survival problems and now worry about the quality of life and their spirituality” (Fotopoulos, 2006; Fotopoulos, 2000: 307). In a way verifying what Fotopoulos says, the interviewees of this study, either explicitly or implicitly, express that to prefer an ecological life a certain income is required (see Chapter 6). Tendai Chitewere criticizes ecovillages with similar reasons. For her, ecovillages do not address “class inequalities in justices that also relate to social or environmental degradation.” They are “socially exclusive in their quest to find solutions to a lost sense of community in twenty-first-century neighborhoods.” To put it better, they “offer suggestions on more sustainable communities but they have not addressed the unequal access these communities yet” (Chitewere, 2010: 315-316). Therefore, the fact that many of those involved in the ecovillage movement do not have concerns about democracy (in fact, about any kind of politics in general) is

³⁵ <http://gen.ecovillage.org/index.php/about-gen/aboutgen.html>.

not accidental, nor is the a-political nature of the ‘movement’ as a whole. The acceptance of democratic procedures in their decision-taking mechanisms and of some kind of ‘anti-authoritarianism’ in their practices does not deny this fact. As David Pepper put it, many of the communards ‘may reject state authority but cheerfully accept that of Gods like Shiva or Gaia’ (Fotopoulos, 2000: 295).

Here it should be stated that even advocates of the movement, like Ted Trainer, claim that the initiatives in the movement do not have concerns about changing society because “many ecovillages simply involve people in trying to build better circumstances for themselves, often within the rich world in quite self-indulgent ways. It is a remarkably theoryless and a-political movement” (Trainer, 2000a: 275).

In this study, my main objective is not to list and then classify ecovillages from around the world in terms of their goals and orientations. I do not aim at making a comparison between ecovillages around the world and ecovillage initiatives in Turkey to address whether some projects in Turkey can be considered as alternative communities. But rather I try to analyze ecovillage initiatives in Turkey through lifestyle and community politics regardless of strategies, goals, main orientations, engagements and concentrations of particular ecovillages around the world. In other words, throughout the study I aim to address whether lifestyle politics and community politics of the ecovillage initiatives might lead to a form of ‘alternative’ eco-communities or rather they are individualistic and escapist efforts of urban middle classes. In the next chapter, I aim to mention, in brief and chronologically, environmentalism and environmental mobilizations in Turkey before discussing ecovillage initiatives in Turkey in Chapter 6.

CHAPTER V

ENVIRONMENTALISM AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOBILIZATIONS IN TURKEY

This chapter addresses the historical and theoretical background of the environmental movement(s) and the current tendencies in environmentalism in Turkey. To convey a detailed analysis of environmentalism and environmental mobilizations in Turkey is beyond the scope of this study but some brief discussion and overview of general tendencies are unavoidable before discussing ecovillage initiatives and eco-settlements in Turkey in Chapter 6.

Environmentalism in Turkey is generally characterized by acts against singular, mostly local environmental problems often associated with energy, mining, conservation, city beautification, public health, animal rights and so forth. The significance of acts, Murray Bookchin argues, against the construction of a nuclear reactor or a new highway to prevent further environmental degradation cannot be disregarded. Besides, for Bookchin, it cannot be claimed that landscapes, wildlife, scenic natural beauty or ecological variety and their preservation are not important. Nonetheless, there is a necessity to analyze deep hierarchical relations, domination systems, exploitation, and class relations since basic problems cannot be solved by reforms that have only one target (Bookchin, 1990a: 16). But, environmentalism as a form of natural engineering, a “mechanistic, instrumental outlook” sees nature as a “passive habitat composed of “objects” such as animals, plants, minerals.” It “seeks to facilitate that notion by developing techniques for diminishing the hazards caused by the reckless despoliation of the environment” (Bookchin, 1982: 21, 22). Environmentalists “are inspired to act by the environmental degradation they observe, but their strategies for remedying it differ wildly” including conservation, pollution control and waste recycling (Dobson, 2001: 34, 202).

If we use environmentalism in the same way with Bookchin and Dobson in discussing mobilizations concerning environmental degradation in Turkey, it appears that most are environmental movements and most people and organizations that can be included in the green movement are environmentalists. Though it is difficult to mention a strong green tradition in Turkey, it is not possible to talk about a single tendency in the historical trajectory and not possible to suggest a homogenous environmentalism in the sense that Bookchin and Dobson argue. For example, some resistances initially starting at the local level gradually turned to national level such as the Bergama movement against the gold mining activity in Bergama. Or some had become a national uprising against government's authoritarian practices like the Gezi Park protests and proved that some resistances extend far beyond the modest issues and the goals of the beginning and become a mass political movement. Additionally, in terms of the historical trajectory, other mobilizations or attempts at addressing environmental issues by developing alternatives to existing ways of living, eating, housing, etc. started to appear such as building eco-settlements or the slow food movement. The focus of this study is ecovillage initiatives, which are one of these recently emerged alternatives. Before addressing them by drawing on the fieldwork in Chapter 6, I shall provide a general outline of environmental mobilizations and organizations, formations and collectives in Turkey in three periods: pre-1950 and 1950-1980, post-1980s and post-2000s.

5.1 Pre-1950 and Between 1950 and 1980

The emergence of interest in environmental issues dates back to earlier years of the Turkish Republic and even to Ottoman times. In the 19th century, İstanbul was the center of the Ottoman industry with around one hundred fifty factories surrounding the Golden Horn. Between 1912 and 1915, thousands of petitions were circulated against the factories and then delivered to the Mayor. The environmental understanding of the period was limited to prevention of epidemic diseases, conservation of forests and historical values, remedying the deficiencies in the utilities and cleanliness. But with the arrival of constitutional monarchy political

parties began to include issues like urban planning, environmental health, and natural beauty to their programs.

In 1909, Constitutional Reform Party proposed the protection of the existing forests; in 1910, People's Party proposed the establishment of a Society for the Protection of Animals and in 1912, the National Constitution Party proposed the regulation of forestation and urban and city planning in compliance with health norms (Baykan, 2013: 8).

The environmentalists of the Ottoman period, Baykan points out, were mainly made up of Ottoman elites (ibid). With the foundation of the Republic, public works and urbanization related issues came into prominence (Baykan, 2013: 8). New organizations concerning city beautification, animal preservation, and forest protection emerged (Atauz, 2000: 199). For example, the Association for the Beautification of Çamlıca, the Association of Protection of Animals, the Society of Bosphorus Lovers, and the Prince Islands Settlement Association were established in this period. "Deforestation, marginal farmland clearing for agriculture, soil erosion, air pollution and forest fires were among the environmental problems" of the period (Baykan, 2013: 8). Though the number of civil organizations, which were mainly volunteer and elitist bodies, increased, the activities met with limited effectiveness because the strong centralist state hindered the progress of civil society (Atauz, 2000: 199; Baykan, 2013: 8). In addition to these volunteer and elitist organizations, professional organizations such as the Foresters' Association of Turkey (1924), the first forestry NGO of the country, emerged.

With the transition to a multi-party period in 1946, state pressure on civil organizations relatively decreased and the number of environmental organizations increased (Atauz, 2000: 199). During the period between 1950 and the 1980s, the state began to actively encourage the foundation of civil organizations. The Turkish Association for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (TTKD) (1955), the Environmental Protection and Greenification Association (1972), the Society for

the Protection of Nature (1975) and the Environment Foundation of Turkey (1978) were established in this period (Aydın, 2000: 57). Here it should be noted that environmental organizations of the pre-1980 period were established either in Ankara or in İstanbul, with the exception of the Nature Protection Foundation which was founded in Samsun (Atauz, 2000: 200). In this period, in addition to encouraging civil organizations, the Turkish state, chronologically speaking, began to address “environmental concerns in an institutionalized manner” with the foundation of the Prime Ministry Undersecretariat for Environment in 1978, which evolved into the Ministry of Environment in 1991. In 2004, the Ministry of Environment was merged with the Ministry of Forestry, “mainly as a response to the European Union’s calls for the better coordination of environmental policies” (Adaman & Arsel, 2000: 4). Following the 2011 general selection, two new ministries were formed, the Ministry of Environment and Urban Planning and the Ministry of Forestry and Water Affairs instead of the Ministry of Environment.

In the 1970s the increase in population, agricultural transformation, changing economic structure, industrialization and rapid urbanization gave rise to environmental problems which more quickly evolved compared to the earlier periods. Especially after the 1970s, along with urban problems air, water, soil and industrial pollution increased. In the late 1970s with worsening environmental problems related to industrialization and urbanization, different segments of the society started to organize protests, which are seen as the first public protests against environmental degradation and which can be called grassroots movements (Baykan, 2013: 8, 9). In 1975, the local people of Murgul sued the Etibank Copper Mining Company for damaging agricultural fields and flora. In 1975, some villagers, whose agricultural products were damaged by a nearby copper plant, organized a rally in Samsun. In 1977, villagers of Elmadağ appealed to official authorities in Ankara against the damage on agricultural fields caused by gunpowder and cement factories (Duru, 2002: 2-3). In 1978, the protest by boats in the Bay of İzmit against pollution was conducted (Baykan, 2013: 9). Between 1976 and 1978, the Fishermen’s Cooperative in Silifke organized a public demonstration against the nuclear plant that

was going to be built in Akkuyu (Duru, 2002: 2-3). These protests are important because they were organized with the participation of local actors and local actors provided the potential of serving as a channel for the emergence of political activities and raising ecological awareness. Nevertheless, “locally unwanted land-use conflicts” which have been common since the 1970s or were “often simple not-in-my-backyard reactions” did not necessarily develop into fully fledged political activism” (Adaman & Arsel, 2000: 1).

5.2 Post-1980s

As above-mentioned, neither environmental problems nor the identification of the environmental problems and issues are recent phenomena in Turkey. Nevertheless, the expansion of environmental civil organizations, the appearance of social movements addressing environmental problems and the politicization of the environmental movement are recent developments, especially taking place since 1980. The rise in the number of civil groups, environmental social movements and the politicization of environmental movement is not a coincidence. On September 12, 1980, the military seized power in Turkey. Following the *coup d'état*, in 1983 the civilian government was founded under Turgut Özal who was the Prime Minister of Turkey between 1983 and 1989, and the President from 1989 to 1993. In the 1980s, Turkey went through important changes through Özal's liberalization policies, not only in the economic realm but also in the spheres of politics, culture and foreign policy. During this period, new economic and societal actors have emerged and new political identities were introduced. “Meanwhile, the earlier reticence to engage in environmental activism has begun to disappear during the 1980s and “the gap in environmental regulation has slowly been filled by civil society initiatives, ranging from environmental social movements to formal non-governmental organizations.” During this period, Turkey-European Union relations and the formal pressures of the EU have started to deepen. “Global flows of capital, goods and information as well as activists have helped invigorate environmental politics in Turkey” (Adaman & Arsel, 2000: 2).

For Zülküf Aydın (2000), Hande Paker (2013) and Bülent Duru (2002), the factor accelerating this growth is that “the post-coup period of political bans created an opening for the people organizing environmental campaigns because the state saw them as relatively ‘harmless’” (Paker, 2013: 12). To put it better, they were not the campaigns or organizations of a class, ethnic, or religious nature that were “deemed to be undermining the cohesive, unitary, and secular nature of the country” (Aydın, 2000: 58). The civil organizations that were supported by the state after 1980 and especially in the 2000s have mostly stressed specific issues not threatening the status quo and not challenging private property (Aydın, 2000: 59, 60). On the other hand, Tanıl Bora criticizes this approach. He argues that according to some left-wing interpretations what lies behind this change is the formerly politicized individuals’ pursuit of substitute activity fields because of the restrictions imposed on political rights following the 1980 Turkish *coup d'état*. Nevertheless, these interpretations are not convincing because even if they were accepted as right, there it would be necessary to explain why individuals sought for substitute satisfactions in this field instead of other activity fields within society (Bora, 1988: 6).

Though, environmental activism dominating the period right after 1980, Bülent Duru (2002) and Hande Paker (2013) argue, focused on campaigns such as creating public opinion for the protection of the environment and raising the awareness of the public, for saving specific parts of nature, solutions concerning pollution, beautification of cities, animal welfare and so on, it is not accurate to define the period after 1980 with a single tendency (Paker, 2013: 12). In the late 1980s, environmental movement(s) in Turkey began to become politicized to some extent. Environmental movements that previously were concerned with nature conservation and reduction of pollution started to concentrate on strong connection between environmental problems and social relations and politics such as the movement to preserve Güvenpark in Ankara from being demolished and converted into a parking lot (1987) or the movements against the Gökova thermal power plant (1984). It is not inaccurate to say that the Yeşiller Partisi (Green Party), claiming to be based on concepts like autonomy and diversity, was established in 1988 following these changes (Baykan, 2013; Duru;

2013; Duru, 2002). Though the Party differed from other political parties of the period by taking part in environmental movements together with the local people, especially during the campaign against the power plant in Aliğa, it usually operated as an association rather than a political party (Ergen, 1994: 60; Duru, 2002). The Green Party of the 1980s collapsed in 1994 because of internal struggles and lack of a common language among party members (Ergen, 1994). In June 2008, a new Green Party of Turkey, was not completely disconnected with the former Green Party (1988) was established.³⁶ The newly founded Green Party adopted some core principles including direct participatory democracy, human rights, gender equality, non-violence, sustainability, preservation of diversities, and harmony with nature.³⁷ In 2012, the Green Party and EDP (Eşitlik ve Demokrasi Partisi - Equality and Democracy Party) have merged into the Greens and Left Future Party, claiming to be based on the principles of democracy, women's rights, LGBTI rights, climate change policies, green economy and so forth³⁸. In the history of the Turkish Republic, a green party has not been elected to government. The Greens and Left Future Party are not represented in the current parliament like in former parliaments because of the ten percent election threshold in Turkey.³⁹ In addition to the Greens and Left Future Party, there are also "formations such as Gönül Birliği Yeşiller Partisi (Harmony Green Party) or Hayvan Partisi (Animal Party), which are the products of narrow circles or function as voluntary organization" (Duru, 2013: 5).

Almost all political parties in Turkey that were established after the 1980⁴⁰ have included environmental problems, sustainable development, sustainability, and the

³⁶ <http://www.yesiller.org/web/yesiller-partisi/yesiller-partisi-hakkinda.html> (last visited September 2011)

³⁷ <http://www.yesiller.org/web/yesiller-partisi/parti-programi.html> (last visited September 2011)

³⁸ <http://yesillervesolgecek.org/belgeler/programatik-metin> (last visited October 2013)

³⁹ In Turkey, political parties must meet the ten percent threshold, which is the highest electoral threshold rate in Europe, to claim seats in Parliament. This rate keeps smaller political parties, including Greens and Left Future Party, out of Parliament.

⁴⁰ After the military coup of 1980, all existing political parties were closed down. They were re-established after 1980 some with their original names, some under different names.

ecological crisis in some way in their programs. The ruling party of Turkey Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi (AKP) (Justice and Development Party) regards itself as a party committing to sustainable development and creating a healthy environment⁴¹; Cumhuriyet Halk Partisi (CHP) (Republican People's Party), which is the main opposition party of Turkey explains the significance it places on environment, sustainable development, ecological balance, environmental sensitivity⁴²; Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP) (Nationalist Movement Party), right-wing political party and the second opposition party of Turkey, mentions environmental sensitivity, sustainable development and biological diversity in its environmental policy;⁴³ Özgürlük ve Demokrasi Partisi (ÖDP) (Freedom and Solidarity Party), which is a left-wing party stresses environmental movements and human-nature balance in its party program;⁴⁴ in the program⁴⁵ of the pro-Kurdish Barış ve Demokrasi Partisi (BDP) (Peace and Democracy Party), a special importance is attached to ecological crisis, protection of ecological balance, sustainability and environmental problems. Nevertheless, it is an ongoing debate that promises of political parties do not qualify them as parties that have environmental political identity.

In the 1990s, again, it is not possible to mention one specific tendency in discussing environmental movements and civil society initiatives. The 1990s can be analyzed “as the period of institutionalization, as professional, project-oriented and urban organizations proliferated” (Paker, 2013: 13). Professionalized, powerful, and transnational NGOs, such as Greenpeace International, the Worldwatch Institute and the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) “have largely supplanted the more activists groups that dominated environmentalism in the 1970s.” They redefined

⁴¹ <http://www.akparti.org.tr/english/akparti/parti-programme#bolum> (last visited October 2013)

⁴² http://www.chp.org.tr/?page_id=70 (last visited October 2013)

⁴³ http://www.mhp.org.tr/htmldocs/mhp_en/2768/party-program/work-life-social-security.html (last visited October 2013)

⁴⁴ <http://odp.org.tr/program/> (last visited October 2013)

⁴⁵ <http://www.bdp.org.tr/devam/17-bdp-program.aspx> (last visited October 2013)

environmentalism and took it “out of the hands of amateurs” and placed its funding, and management into the hands of media, management consultants, and policy experts (Jamison, 1996: 225, 232). During this period, the foundations that recruit professionals like TEMA (Turkish Foundation for Combating Soil Erosion, for Reforestation and the Protection of Natural Habitats), and ÇEKÜL (The Foundation for the Protection and Promotion of the Environment and Cultural Heritage) were established. In the same period, international connections were built by these environmental NGOs as well (Paker, 2013: 13). HABITAT II Conference was held in 1996 in İstanbul. Doğal Hayatı Koruma Derneği (DHKD) (the Society for the Protection of Natural Habitats) became institutionalized, and Greenpeace Mediterranean established an office in Turkey (Öztürk, 2011).

After 1980, environmental problems had widespread media coverage (Duru, 2002). In 1991, The Ministry of Environment was established; universities began to offer courses and create research centers on environmental issues; environment-based units were formed under municipalities; the number of NGOs and civil organizations that were encouraged and supported by the state continued to increase (Atauz, 1994). In a sense, environmentalism and interest in environmental issues have become the ‘trendy’ flows since the 1980s (Duru, 2002: 3).

In addition to this professionalization and institutionalization, in the 1980s and 1990s, resistances which have distinctive places in the history of environmentalism in Turkey and significant environmental campaigns emerged. The struggles against the Gökova thermal power plant, the Aliğa thermal plant, the Yatağan thermal plant, gold mining activities in Bergama, the Akkuyu nuclear power plant, and campaigns against the Ilisu Dam Project and hotel construction at Dalyan İztuzu Beach have distinctive places in the history of environmentalism in Turkey. Certainly, there are many other resistances. Nevertheless, some, like these mentioned ones, have a unique place because they have had immense impact by attracting public attention, by being long-term, by becoming political symbols, and, to a certain extent, by being successful. The Ilisu Dam Project which was threatening the ancient city of

Hasankeyf elicited successful resistance from local people, and social and environmental NGOs, such as Doğa Derneği (Nature Association). The hotel construction at Dalyan İztuzu Beach was stopped with the efforts of local people. The movement against the Gökova thermal power plant organized rallies, festivals and a hunger strike. In 1990, the movement against the Aliğa plant organized a human chain with fifty thousand people from İzmir to Aliğa for fifty kilometers. The energy-related environmentalism exemplified by movements against the Gökova thermal power plant and the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant is at the center of environmental politics in Turkey. But it should be noted that they “either achieve short-lived victories (e.g. the reintroduction of the plans of nuclear power plants) or end-of-pipe solutions that do little to change the overall policy structures (e.g. installation of filters at Gökova)” (Kaygusuz & Arsel, 2000: 162).

The longest and one of the most memorable resistances of this period in terms of its impacts is the Bergama movement. The Bergama movement, which emerged in the early 1990s and mushroomed after 1997 “has become the largest scale and longest running ecological resistance movement modern Turkey has ever seen” (Çoban, 2004: 438). It emerged as a local environmental movement against gold-mining activity in Bergama and subsequently it expanded its geographical scale, when the locals succeeded in gaining public support. The Bergama movement has become one of the important cases showing that environmental movements, in addition to “being manifestations of concern for ecological integrity” have “provided an important outlet for the venting of social and political grievances against the state in Turkey” (Arsel, 2000: 264). The movement has become influential both at the local and national level. Some aspects of local life have changed during the resistance. “The struggle has politicised the community in such a way that almost all the villagers who had not previously participated in any political action became activists.” Furthermore, the “active participation of women in the struggle has also changed some forms of the patriarchy-laden character of women’s role in community life” (Çoban, 2004: 455). Although the movement was led by local people and it has

changed many aspects of local life, it should not simply be considered as a not-in-my-backyard reaction (Çoban, 2010: 575).

Another similarly significant, long lasting opposition was carried out by the Anti-Nuclear Platform and led by local actors against the projected nuclear power plant in Akkuyu. Within the movement, Ümit Şahin argues, anti-imperialist themes were not dominant because members of the Green Party (especially SOS Mediterranean and Ağačkakan⁴⁶ circle) were very active in the movement at the beginning of the 1990s, when the movement was very strong. Furthermore, to a certain extent the philosophy of deep ecology, and partly eco-socialism of the 1970s became influential in the movement. However, in the second half of the 1990s, when some of the ecologists including *Ağačkakan* circle were disconnected from the movement, some others adopted anti-imperialist perspectives (Şahin, 2010: 11, 12).

This period witnessed the formation of a new intellectual platform that also became influential in the Akkuyu anti-nuclear movement. The platform aimed at bringing together people from different views, including environmentalists, greens, ecologists, feminists and anti-militarists (Emek, 1995: 2). These people gathered around SOS Mediterranean which was established in 1990 by a group of people who were concerned about the environment and who declared that they were not aligned with any party or institution. These radical greens were against industrial technology and development because in their opinion, technology was not a proper tool to struggle with ecological crisis and there was no such thing as a clean technology. The people who gathered around SOS Mediterranean shared their views about technology, development and the other issues in Ağačkakan. Meanwhile, the books of leading theorists of ecological thought like Murray Bookchin and E.F. Schumacher were translated into Turkish.

⁴⁶ Ağačkakan (“Woodpecker”), an ecological magazine released by a group of people in 1992 that was aligned with SOS Mediterranean (Nohl, 1994). Ağačkakan expressing that it accepts ecology not as a branch of science but rather as a philosophy of life and politics was closed in 2003 (Emek, 1995: 2).

5.3 Post-2000s

The professionalization and institutionalization starting in the 1980s has continued in the 2000s. In 2002 the Buğday (“Wheat”) movement of the 1990s, which was initiated in a small market selling olive oil, thyme and rice in Bodrum has become institutionalized under the name of Buğday Derneği (Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living). After institutionalizing its activities, Buğday Derneği began to actively participate in lobbying Turkey’s EU accession negotiations, to undertake internationally funded projects and to lobby “efforts in the Ministry of Agriculture in favor of ecological farming and marketing.”⁴⁷ Buğday Derneği has an important place in terms of the main arguments of this thesis. Buğday Derneği is known as a NGO that supports and promotes ecological ways of life. It carries out various projects regarding ecological living. One of them is TaTuTa which is a project on “Eco-Agro Tourism and Voluntary Knowledge and Skills Exchange on Organic Farms.” The other one is community supported ecological city garden project initiated in 2006. This project aims to transform some spaces in the cities such as parks into city gardens. In June 2006, for the first time in Turkey an organic open- air marketplace was established by Buğday Derneği in cooperation with Şişli Municipality of İstanbul. Buğday Derneği implements projects aiming to conserve Turkey’s agro-biodiversity and for the ecological, social and economical sustainability of rural lifestyles as well. With this aim, in 2007 it developed a project entitled The Seed Network to bring all stakeholders, including government bodies, NGOs, universities, etc. together to work in collaboration for the conservation of the agricultural biodiversity of Turkey. Here it should be noted that in the same period the Turkish Seed Gene Bank (TSGB) was established (2010) by the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Ministry to conserve and collect seeds. In 2010, a few members of Buğday Derneği opened Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kültürü Merkezi (Çamtepe Ecological Education Center) that was designed to “serve as a research and education

⁴⁷ <http://bugdayglobal.org>.

center to spread the knowledge and ecological living.”⁴⁸ The meetings, training programs, applied studies and seminars about various topics including nature watching, storytelling, yoga, and homeopathy, started to be organized in the center (see Chapter 3 and 6). In 2011, Buğday Derneği initiated the Seed Bartering Network Project “to set up a monitoring system for each seed variety that has been shared by farmers or hobby gardeners to the network from the beginning of the project to be able to conserve these heirloom seeds for the future.”⁴⁹ Buğday Derneği is also hosting the 18th Organic World Congress taking place on October 13-15, 2014 in İstanbul, Turkey. In 2014, it started a series entitled “What should I do?” which is composed of posters that are shared through social media. The posters are designed to convey the message that simple act of not using plastic bottles or recycling will make a difference in society and in nature. Buğday Derneği is important in context of this study also because the views of Victor Ananias, founding father of Buğday movement and Buğday Derneği, keep inspiring most interviewees of this study who have decided to initiate an ecovillage, and also other people who have seemingly similar concerns about ecological issues. Furthermore, Buğday Derneği appears as an association that works in collaboration with some of the ecovillage initiatives of this study. These will be detailed in Chapter 6.

In 2002, the conservation organization Doğa Derneği (Nature Association) was founded. Doğa Derneği is an independent, membership-based organization. Similar to Buğday Derneği, it undertakes internationally funded projects and works in collaboration with international partners. Doğa Derneği runs different projects that are mainly concerned with conservation. For instance, the goal of Doğa Derneği’s species conservation programme is to “ensure the survival of species in their natural ecological systems.” Its Nature Culture programme seeks to promote lifestyles to minimize the human footprint.⁵⁰ With its Nature School programme, Doğa Derneği

⁴⁸ <http://camtepe.org/?p=798>.

⁴⁹ http://bugdayglobal.org/?page_id=273.

⁵⁰ <http://www.dogadernegi.net>.

aims to serve the wider conservation community in Turkey. Doğa Derneği also supports some local struggles one of which is the local struggle against the Ilisu Dam Project, “which is threatening to flood Hasankeyf in spite of its vast ecological and cultural significance and they succeeded in drawing international attention to this struggle” (Paker, 2013: 13).

The 2000s are also marked by an upsurge in environmental activism at the local level. With deepening environmental problems non-institutional structures like platforms and citizen initiatives started to be created. EGEÇEP⁵¹ (Aegean Environmental and Cultural Platform), BAÇEP⁵² (Western Mediterranean Environmental Platform), AKÇEP (Mediterranean Environmental Platform), DOÇEV⁵³ (Nature and Environment Foundation), DAÇE⁵⁴ (Eastern Mediterranean Environmental Platform), KarDoğa⁵⁵ (Black Sea Nature Protection Federation) can be cited as examples of local platforms. In 2005, TÜRÇEP⁵⁶ (Turkey Environmental Platform) was founded with the aim of uniting these platforms under one roof with five founding platforms including BAKÇEP (Western Black Sea Environmental Platform), DAÇE (Eastern Mediterranean Environmental Platform) DOKÇEP (Eastern Black Sea Environmental Platform) İÇAÇEP (Central Anatolian Environmental Platform) and MARÇEP (Marmara Environmental Platform).

The opposition movement against hydroelectric power plants in the 2000s is another significant moment in the history of environmentalism in Turkey (Baykan, 2013). After the Minister of Forestry and Waterworks declared that out of one thousand five

⁵¹ <http://www.egecep.org.tr>.

⁵² <http://www.bacep.8k.com>.

⁵³ <http://www.docev.org.tr>.

⁵⁴ <http://www.dace.8k.com>.

⁵⁵ <http://www.turcek.org.tr/pages.php?page=calismalarimiz&id=74&item=0,74>.

⁵⁶ <http://www.caldagi.com/?pnun=193&pt=TUR%C3%87EP>.

hundred hydroelectric power plants projects in Turkey with three hundred fifty plants that are already in operation, the environmentalists were alarmed. The massive protests and struggles against the recently mushrooming hydroelectric power plants operating at the local, national and international level have kept growing in the last years with hundreds of court cases against the projects (Sevim & Gürbüz, 2013: 28). The movement against hydroelectric power plants (HES), like the anti-nuclear movement, protests against gold mining activities and the anti-GMO movement, brings together “professionals and grassroots, benefit from a variety of specialties like law and medicine and have different ways of organization, action strategies and ideological tendencies” (Baykan, 2013: 11).

In addition to the professionalization and institutionalization of environmental activism and the struggles at the local level, the 2000s have been accompanied with intense debates on food security, conservation of crop genetic diversity and campaigns against genetically modified organisms (GMOs).⁵⁷ In 2004, to raise awareness against the perceived risks of GMOs the “No to GMOs Platform” was formed. In 2004, the same platform launched a petition campaign to be presented to the Parliament in cooperation with Friends of the Earth⁵⁸ and accompanied by the Monster Balloon.⁵⁹ The petition contained one hundred thousand signatures that were collected from fifteen cities in Turkey. In 2012, Greenpeace Mediterranean launched the campaign “Yemezler” (“we do not buy it”). Over three hundred twenty five thousand people participated in the campaign. In the same year, the Federation of Food and Drink Industry Associations of Turkey (TGDF) withdrew an application to import twenty nine different kinds of genetically modified organisms. It is stated that the campaign launched by Greenpeace Mediterranean was influential in TGDF's decision. Buğday Derneği launched a similar petition campaign in 2013 against a large agribusiness firm for the reason that it misguides consumers. Some other

⁵⁷ GMOs refer to organisms that have been genetically altered.

⁵⁸ Friends of the Earth is a global environmental organization.

⁵⁹ Monster Balloon is one of the symbols of anti-GMO movement in Europe.

NGOs, collectives and initiatives that cannot be mentioned in this study support the anti-GMO movement as well. What lies behind these oppositions is the view that genetically modified foods are endangering the health of people and “the authenticity of nature or the integrity of the seed must not be violated” (Hardt & Negri, 2004: 183). To Hardt and Negri, “this has the smell of a theological argument about purity” while they maintain that “nature and life as a whole are always already artificial.” Certainly, that does not mean that “all changes are good.” Genetically modified crops can be “beneficial or harmful to society” but the primary issue is not that “humans are changing nature but that nature is ceasing to be common, that it is becoming private property and exclusively controlled by its new owners” (Hardt & Negri, 2004: 184).

With increasing interest in the issues of food security and access to good, the slow food movement has started to receive attention in Turkey. The Slow Food movement emerged in opposition to the degradation of culture and the environment in Italy. It was initiated by Carlo Petrini and a group of activists in the 1980s. The movement is based on the idea, as expressed by Carlo Petrini, that “another kind of food could exist, another way to eat, another way to comprehend the pleasures (quoted by Schneider, 2008: 386). Slow Food is based on three interconnected principles: good (tasty, fresh and seasonal), clean (sustainable, not destroying the environment) and fair (accessible prices for consumers and fair wages for producers) (Schneider, 2008: 390). Slow Food has members in Turkey as well. The Slow Food members in Turkey, as around the world, are joined in “local chapters known as *convivia* (singular: *convivium*), autonomous groups that coordinate activities and organize events in cities, towns.”⁶⁰ In Turkey, there are *convivia* in different cities including Kars, İzmir, Adapazarı, Iğdır, Ankara, Aydın, Ayvalık, Gaziantep, Bodrum, Samsun and İstanbul. In big cities, such as İzmir and İstanbul there are more than one *convivium* such as Yağmur Böreği *Convivium*⁶¹ and Fikir Sahibi

⁶⁰ <http://www.slowfood.com/international/154/network-of-members>.

⁶¹ <http://yagmurboreg.blogspot.com.tr>.

Damaklar Convivium,⁶² which is the most populated convivium of Turkey with three hundred seventeen members. Here the Slow City (Cittaslow) movement which was inspired by and built on the ideas of the Slow Food movement should also be mentioned. The Slow City movement was originally born in Italy in 1999 but then many cities from different countries around the world joined the Slow City network. The movement aims to provide an antidote to homogenization created by globalization, to preserve local identities, to promote sustainable, simple lifestyles and so on. Turkey joined the network in 2009 with acceptance of Seferihisar located within the borders of İzmir in the Aegean region. The movement keeps spreading in the country and some other cities and towns including Akyaka, Gökçeada, Yenipazar, Halfeti and Yalvaç were declared and certified as slow cities of Turkey.

In addition to the above-mentioned food-related movements and formations mentioned above, there are other attempts concentrated on access to ‘healthy’ and ‘good’ food in the same way, such as the Tarlataban collective initiated in İstanbul in 2012. Tarlataban is a collective practicing urban agriculture in Boğaziçi University campus. Their main goal is to create a sustainable space in the campus.⁶³ Supporting local economies, producing rather than consuming, the right to healthy food, use of low technologies are some of their concerns. The other example of an urban agriculture project is in Ankara in the Anatolian region. In the Çiğdem neighborhood of Ankara, the Çiğdemim Neighborhood Garden Project was initiated by the Çiğdem Association in 2012 with the purpose of growing organic food. The association carries out some activities in collaboration with some ecovillage initiatives, such as Güneşköy and Kır Çocukları which will be discussed in Chapter 6. Similar to the Çiğdemim project in Ankara, in İstanbul city garden projects to train urban dwellers about planting in the cities and provide them indigenous seeds are being developed.⁶⁴ The other initiative, Başka Bir Gıda Mümkün (Another Food is Possible), was

⁶² <http://www.fikirsahibidamaklar.org>.

⁶³ <http://tarlataban.wordpress.com/biz-kimiz>.

⁶⁴ http://www.yeryuzudernegi.org/haberdetay.php?id=30#UyBB4eN_t_D.

initiated to preserve the genetic diversity of wheat, to expand the ecological agriculture process all over the country, to grow food by using indigenous seeds, and “to build a network that the producers and the consumers can associate with each other individually or as in groups.”⁶⁵ Kadir Dadan, initiator of the project which is centered in Ocaklar-Erdek-Balıkesir in the Marmara region of Turkey, says that as a collective they aim to produce social change and transformation by encouraging slow, local and small scale production and consumption patterns. To achieve this they, for example, have begun to use indigenous seeds and local mills in bread production in Balıkesir of the Marmara Region as a first step. At that point, it should be noted that with increasing interest in ‘good’ and ‘clean’ foods the Internet gives people access to these foods. Besides, innumerable internet services, some ecological farms and some ecovillage initiatives grow and sell organic food, along with other ‘environmentally-friendly’ products.

In April 2011, the citizen initiative Büyük Anadolu Yürüyüşü (We won’t Give Up Anatolia) was created with the aim to protect nature. Environmentalists, activists, and representatives of environmental organizations from all over the country marched towards Ankara, the capital of Turkey, to protest against the nuclear power plants projects, hydroelectric power plants projects, gold mining activities and GMOs. Environmental organizations including Buğday Derneği, ÇEKÜL, Doğa Derneği, Greenpeace, TEMA and WWF supported and participated in the movement.

In the post-2000s while the debates on climate change and the struggles against hydroelectric power plants, and gold mining activities in the Ida Mountains have been continuing, Turkey witnessed another important protest. In 2013, on May 28 in Taksim, İstanbul protests were raised against the urban development plan for Gezi Park, which is located in Taksim square. The protest led largely by educated youth, initially started against the plans for the cutting down of trees to replace the Park with a shopping mall and a residence. The resistance began with occupation of the Park by a small group of protestors to stop the destruction of the green spaces. But

⁶⁵ <http://www.baskabirgidamumkun.org/indexenglish.html>.

the Gezi Park protests, like the Bergama movement, began at the local level and subsequently spread to other cities and finally gained a national dimension. These protests started with a modest goal which was to prevent the cutting down of trees in the park but then grew into broader action against the government's repressive and authoritarian practices.

In the 2000s and the post-2000s, some other attempts that are not directly related to food issues like those mentioned above, but stressing the possibility of developing alternatives forces for individual or social change like them have surfaced. Some efforts are concentrated in cities, while some in rural areas. While some operate collectively, some operate at the personal level. While their main concerns may differ, it may not be inaccurate to say that the shared motive of all these efforts and initiatives is to show the possibility of another or alternative ways of living, cultivating food, education, etc. In this study, it is not possible to focus on all these efforts but I shall mention a few of them. One of them is the collective of Başka Bir Okul Mümkün⁶⁶ (Another School is Possible) that was institutionalized in 2010. Alternative schools are generally advocated by the people who have concerns also about environmental issues because of the declared principles of these schools including democratic governance and ecologically sound values.⁶⁷ One of these schools, Mutlu Keçi İlkokulu (Happy Goat Elementary School), was founded in Muğla of the Aegean region in 2013. The volunteers who were brought together by İmece Evi took part in the construction of the school building. It differs from other schools, for example, through constructing the school building according to ecological principles or by growing the food for the students organically in the school garden. It can be said that in Turkey interest in alternative educational systems, especially in Montessori education and Waldorf education, has been increasing among parents, particularly those who seek to live in rural areas. Montessori education is a method emphasizing creativity, critical thinking and

⁶⁶ <http://baskabirokul.blogspot.com.tr>.

⁶⁷ http://www.bugday.org/portal/haber_detay.php?hid=6474.

problem solving. The basis of the Montessori approach in the classroom is having a mixed age group. Waldorf is another alternative education model that is based on the needs of the child. Güneşin Aydemir expresses that developing alternative educational approaches is crucial for people who seek to move to rural areas. This is crucial for them because of two reasons. At first, because their eco-settlements are mostly located not within walking distance to the closest village, it is not so practical for parents to send their children to the schools in the villages. Secondly, they moved to rural areas in search of alternative lifestyles, so they want their children to be educated in alternative schools. As the interviews reveal, while some members of the studied ecovillages cannot switch to a permanent life in rural areas because of their children's education, some others who live in rural areas move back to the cities due to the same reason.

Here it should be noted that though these alternative schools are introduced as not-for-profit schools unlike private schools, families pay tuition for them as well. They appear as alternatives to the current educational system with their principles and curriculums but they have to be approved by the state like conventional schools. Furthermore, they have the risk of bringing about new forms of social inequality. In this context, this can also be said for collectives or formations mentioned above that seek to develop and provide 'healthy' and 'good' food. The need or desire to eat, drink, breathe, etc., Ulrich Beck remarks, "is becoming a gate that can no longer be barred against hazards." Some may select their foods and thus privately try to avoid the "creeping universalization of hazards." But it should be noted that private efforts to elude the hazards would "bring about new forms of social inequality." The private efforts such as improved opportunities for health and nutritional standards could be "interpreted as a kind of expensive, private counterbalance, available to the individualistic, educated and propertied classes, to the universal hazard that also threatens them" (Beck, 2002: 51). Furthermore, as Murray Bookchin and other social ecologists stress,

alternative institutions “without a link to vital, counter-systemic social movements are cajoled and coerced by “market forces” into the ranks of non-threatening “green” businesses, merely serving an elite clientele with “socially responsible” products” (Tokar, 2008: 65).

There are other collectives initiated in the urban as an alternative to problems posed by urban life without having to withdraw from the city. The well-known example is the initiative Ax û Av Ecological Houses Collective (Toprak ve Su Kolektifi, in Turkish; Land and Water Collective, in English). The collective was initiated in Viranşehir, Urfa of South-eastern Turkey to show the possibility of developing alternatives to isolated apartments in the cities. Ax û Av eco-city project was initiated by Metin Yeğin in 2011 in cooperation with seventy homeless families. The aim was to create a community, an ecological democratic neighborhood consisting of earthquake resistant cob houses, as an alternative to TOKİ houses. TOKİ which stands for Housing Development Administration of Turkey is a governmental project focusing on the housing problem. To solve the housing problem, TOKİ builds cheap, high-rise houses for low-income families far outside the city center, which, for Yeğin, resemble the F-type prisons of Turkey that is based on a cell system, not permitting convicted prisoners contact with other prisoners. Hence, as an alternative to these isolated buildings and as a solution to the housing problems of the poor and to promote alternative agriculture, Metin Yeğin launched the communal setting project Ax û Av. Ax û Av aims to create an alternative space which is designed by future owners of the houses. The purpose is to have a democratic structure that is free of hierarchical structures where people do not feel as alienated (Yeğin, 2012).

Certainly, there are many other alternative projects or efforts that could be mentioned in this study. But in this context, the other alternative response to current environmental problems or the problems posed by urban life appeared in this period are the attempts of some urban dweller groups or individuals to retreat to ‘nature’. As emphasized in Chapter 4, there are differentiations and variations in how people feel towards nature, how they perceive environmental issues, how ecological crisis

affects different groups of people and how people respond to environmental problems. Environmental concerns, Macnaghten and Urry argue, do not exist *a priori*, waiting to be revealed through sample surveys. By contrast, “people make sense of environmental issues within particular localized and embedded identities.” In other words, people are able to understand environmental issues in terms of their sense of identity, for example, as mothers or as urban dwellers (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998: 245). This study focuses on responses of a specific group of urban dwellers to environmental problems.

The belief is becoming widespread that environmental degradation has been increasing and everyday life, particularly in the metropolis, is getting worse. Thus, some groups and individuals, who think that they can be part of the solution by changing their lifestyles, seek an alternative path by moving to rural areas to live according to green principles. These are the urban dwellers who have decided to return ‘nature’ after feeling deprived of ‘healthy’ food and to avoid consumerism and other problems posed by urban life. They claim to change their lifestyles to create an alternative self-sufficient life that is based on green principles and alternative technologies, such as recycling, composting, permaculture, and voluntary simplicity as a response to current environmental crises. In the next chapter, my main objective is to examine one of these alternative ways of living in rural areas that has emerged in the last decades.

CHAPTER VI

SELECTED ECOVILLAGE INITIATIVES IN TURKEY

Environmental degradation and problems that were mostly associated with urban life date back to the earlier years of the Turkish Republic. Nevertheless, the number of individuals and groups who aspire to live in rural areas, in ‘dropout’ communities to escape from pollution, over-consumption or ‘unhealthy’ living conditions has surfaced in recent years. This might be explained either by increased ecological awareness or the rising number of people who feel threatened by environmental burdens because environmental issue has become a populist issue (see Beck, 1992). Additionally, a rhetoric of approaching environmental catastrophe might have influenced this recent tendency (see Harvey, 2000).

In Chapter 5, I portray the historical, social and political frameworks in which we can find the motives that lead people to struggle against environmental degradation or push them for seeking alternative solutions to worsening environmental problems. As discussed there, both motives lying behind environmental activism and the tendencies within environmental mobilizations in Turkey have changed with changing social and political frameworks. While environmental movement(s) of the pre-1980s were mainly concerned with nature conservation or city beautification, environmental movement(s) of the late 1980s have started to address the relation between environmental problems and economic, social and political processes. In the 1990s and 2000s, the movement(s), initiatives, organization and collectives which stress the possibility of another world, another lifestyle, another food, etc. have begun to surface. One of them is the ecovillage initiative which seeks to show the possibility of another ways of living.

Environmental issues and problems are usually discussed and dominated by a natural sciences and a technocrat perspective, that mostly do not address social, economic and political realms and deeper causes underlying environmental problems. In this

context, ecovillages appear as an alternative response to current ecological crises and seek to solve environmental problems through (communal) lifestyles. With respect to their declared goals and principles, ecovillages seek to be part of the solution. It appears that their principles and practices are not only about minimizing the impacts of human actions on the environment, but also about social, economic and political processes in society. This chapter seeks to address individual motives and collective actions of agents, i.e. ecovillage initiatives and to discuss ecovillage initiatives' potential for societal change.

As mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter 2, none of the studied settlements in Turkey call themselves ecovillages. Furthermore, it is hard to talk about communal living in these settlements. It may be more accurate to say that there are group of individuals and sometimes only one individual, who claim to live according to green principles such as simplicity, self-sufficiency and suchlike, but who are not part of an eco-community. They 'imagine' that they form an eco-community or in the long term they will become part of an eco-community. That is why throughout this study I call them 'imagined eco-communities'.

In this chapter, I seek to address the following questions: can ecovillage initiatives based on green principles be considered as a form of eco-community or rather as isolated enclaves of escape? How do individual self-change and changes in lifestyles lead to societal changes on a broader scale in the perceptions of the members of ecovillage initiatives? In addressing the potential of ecovillage initiatives in Turkey for forming an eco-community, I conducted semi-structured, in-depth interviews with members of ecovillage initiatives, experts and volunteers working in these initiatives. The research findings serve as the primary source of information for this study (see Chapter 2). In this chapter after mentioning general features of each initiative, I shall discuss lifestyle and community strategies of selected ecovillage initiatives.

6.1 Historical Background of Ecovillage Initiatives in Turkey

In the 1960s and the 1970s, a prevailing public concern about environmental issues and new tendencies that contributed to development of environmental movements emerged in the West. For this reason, in general, the counterculture of the 1960s and the 1970s that accompanied the development of the New Left is “frequently seen as a major progenitor of environmentalism” in the following decades (Pepper, 1991: 31). As explored in Chapter 4, the New Left was concerned with issues of gender, class, sexuality, and the environment. While the 1960s and the 1970s marked the beginning of widespread public concern over environmental issues in the West, it is difficult to say that the ferment of the 1960s contributed to the development of new theoretical paths in Turkey. This period in Turkey was marked by modernization, rural to urban migration and urbanization in Turkey. Anarchism, ecological struggle and ecological sensitivity and new social movements that would challenge the ‘progressive’ (*ilerlemeci*) character of the left did not emerge in Turkey. The leftist groups of the 1960s and the 1970s did not show interest in the agenda of new social movements and the New Left. Almost all of them, Gün Zileli states, tended to be progressive and their primary concern was not ecology (Kaya, 2013: 292; Zileli, 2013: 64). As mentioned in Chapter 5, only in the late 1970s public protests against worsening environmental degradation caused by industrialization and urbanization began to appear. Therefore, it is difficult to suggest that environmental concern was advanced in the 1960s and the 1970s in Turkey as it was in the West. This can be detected throughout the history of environmentalism in Turkey, as briefly discussed in Chapter 5.

Most likely as a consequence of all these, environmental movements and green principles, values and strategies did not gain public concern until the 1980s. This is not to say that before this period individuals did not attempt to build, for example, more environmentally-friendly lives by recycling or practicing organic agriculture. Nor does it mean that there were no attempts toward communal living in Turkey. Though there is no study on communal lifestyles and green lifestyles in the previous

periods, it can be said that they have surfaced during the 1990s. This might be explained by a variety of reasons including worsening environmental degradation, increasing ecological awareness, anti-urbanism, the commercialization of nature, the marketing of ‘healthy’ lifestyles and so on.

Romanticism, as discussed in Chapter 4, ascribed an integrity and beauty to nature. To live closer to nature meant to live “simpler and more honestly than modern, corrupt society” and rural area which is associated with nature was seen as a place of self-sufficiency, simple living, and better and closer relationships (Pepper, 1993: 191). Nevertheless, contrary to this romantic idealization of the country, rural people, Murat Belge⁶⁸ says, even in the contemporary world do not see nature as the Romantics. As David Harvey puts it, “it is largely a western construction, heavily influenced by the romantic reaction to modern industrialism, which leads to many to the view” that peasants “were and continue to somehow “closer to nature” than we are” (Harvey, 1996: 187-188). But for rural dwellers, peasants or indigenous groups nature is harsh and cruel. On the other hand, in the modern era urban dwellers tend to see nature as a kind shelter in which they can find a purity which has been lost. But, they also get used to urban life and the comforting products of civilization. Thus, any attempt at establishing close links with nature might rupture this romantic conception of nature (Belge, 2004). The history of taking a vacation in the ‘modern’ sense in Turkey elucidates how urbanites have confronted nature and how their romantic conception of nature disappeared. To take a vacation in the ‘modern’ sense in Turkey is a relatively recent phenomenon. It emerged as Turkish intellectuals’ attempt at being closer to nature and visiting the ‘uncorrupted’ places of Turkey, i.e. the places which remained physically and culturally isolated (ibid, 138). It emerged in the 1950s but it has become common especially after the 1960s. As in other fields, Turkish intellectuals took the lead about how to take a vacation. For Murat Belge, the

⁶⁸ Murat Belge is a writer, literary critic, translator, academic and one of the leading intellectuals, who has studies on Turkey’s cultural history. It should be noted that because of the lack of literature on cultural and social environment in Turkey in the 1960s, regarding ‘dropout’ communities of counterculture, I only made reference to Murat Belge and Güneşin Aydemir (chair person of the ecological association Buğday).

passion of being natural may produce unnatural processes, such as using lotion to accelerate the tanning process when being closer to nature became a sign of sophistication. During the Republican period, Belge goes on to say, the tastes of intellectuals changed as a consequence of such unnatural processes. In the 1970s, most of the previously known vacation spots started not to fulfill the expectations. Bodrum, a coastal resort in the southwestern Aegean Region of Turkey, has become one of the new spots, which meets the expectations of the intellectuals because it provides the ‘freedom’ they sought. They could find this ‘freedom’ even in the big cities but what makes Bodrum different is that they can reach this ‘freedom’ collectively. In other words, Bodrum has everything; anything can be done in Bodrum and everybody does it (Belge, 2004). Hence, at that period and in such a milieu, a group of individuals migrated to Bodrum to live communally. According to brief chats and the informal interview I conducted with Güneşin Aydemir⁶⁹ (Chairman of the Board of Buğday Derneği), in the late 1970s a group of people in their thirties who found the hippie movement and bohemian lifestyle appealing migrated to Bodrum to live communally. Their primary goal was not to live sustainably or according to ecological principles but to practice an alternative lifestyle by making their living either through painting or handicrafts. According to Güneşin Aydemir, they did not have ecological concerns because environmental degradation had not been put on the public agenda yet. At that time, Victor Ananias, the founder of the Buğday Derneği, who inspired many people to live ecologically and to change their lifestyles moved from Germany to Bodrum with his family. In the beginning, Ananias’ and his family’s priority was to simplify their lifestyle for personal reasons. But then, to achieve their goal of simplifying their lives they started to grow their own food and to grind their own wheat. Ananias thinks that ecological life is possible also in the cities but in order to talk about it, individuals should remember the cycles of nature, and the working principles of nature both spiritually and mentally (Ananias, 2012: 17, 18, 149). With his ideas and practices Ananias has

⁶⁹ For this study, I conducted a face-to-face interview with Güneşin Aydemir in 2012. Additionally, during writing process, from time to time, I had some brief chats with her on the phone, in her place in Çetmibaşı and via e-mail.

become a source of inspiration for most members of ecovillage initiatives and other people having concerns about ecological life, ‘healthy’ lifestyles and so on.

In the late 1990s and 2000s, we find some projects and initiatives towards communal living that differ from those of the 1970s. These initiatives are different in terms of their concerns about ecological way of living. The main sentiment identified in the initiatives of the late 1990s and the 2000s is the desire to return to nature and to live self-sufficiently in harmony with nature. The first known attempt at this is the Hocamköy Anatolian Ecological Communal Life Movement, a project to establish an ecological village in Hasandede, Kırıkkale of Central Anatolia. Following Hocamköy other initiatives have emerged.

As stressed in the Introduction and Chapter 2, it is difficult to mention any ecovillage in Turkey, which may meet the widely quoted and accepted definition by GEN (see Chapter 4). Nevertheless, the crucial point in this context is that interviewees do not define their settlements as ecovillages but rather as attempts toward communal, self-sufficient living with their engagement in such activities as permaculture, community supported agriculture and so on. Additionally, around the world, Chris Roth suggests, a few of the current ecovillage projects may entirely meet the restrictive definition provided by GEN. Most contemporary ecovillage dwellers around the world, Roth claims, “still need to go to a larger village, town, or city, or into cyberspace, to meet some of their significant needs” and “we don’t know if any of our current ways of living, even in ecovillages, can be “successfully continued into the indefinite future. So, by nature, all “ecovillages in the modern world are *aspiring* ecovillages” and it may be misleading to provide a strict definition (Roth, 2012: 11, italics in original). Here it should be mentioned that the network Ekolojik Yerleşkeler Ağı (Ekoyer) (Turkish Ecological Settlement Network) was launched to serve similar purposes with GEN. Its origin as an idea dates back to the 2000s, i.e. to the beginning of the relationship between Global Ecovillage Network-Europe and Turkey. But Ekoyer was initiated in 2008 by participation of the people who have some connection with

the ecovillage ‘movement’ in Turkey.⁷⁰ Ekoyer was built to support ecological settlements, to contribute to their economies, to build a network between them, to share the experiences and to strengthen the relations between these settlements with regular meetings, workshops and festivals. In 2009, its first meeting was held at the Middle East Technical University with the organization by Güneşköy Cooperative and with support of GEN-Europe. Since then Ekoyer has been organizing bi-annual meetings in different ecological settlements in Turkey. Most of the studied ecovillage initiatives including Marmariç, Bayramiç, Cazgirler, Ahlatdede, Dedetepe, Güneşköy and Kır Çocukları are members of Ekoyer. In the following section, I will provide general characteristics of the selected ecological initiatives which emerged between the late 1990s and the 2000s. As detailed in Chapter 2, I learned about all these initiatives through social network, snowball sampling and from the suggestion of experts.

a. Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi

Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi (The Hocamköy Anatolian Ecological Communal Life Movement) or Hocamköy Hareketi (Hocamköy Movement) as it was called by its members is the first known experimental ecovillage project in Turkey that was initiated in Hasandede, Kırıkkale of Central Anatolia in 1996. The majority who participated in the project was composed of members of Middle East Technical University’s Climbing Team. Members of the Hocamköy collective agreed with their friends in İstanbul on the issue of ‘back to nature’ movement but members of Hocamköy broke with them when the issue came to where the ecovillage was going to be built. While the people in İstanbul who were sharing their ideals of returning to nature tended to build their ecovillages in the coastal areas of Turkey, members of the Hocamköy movement sought to build their new settlement in Central Anatolia with the aim of greening the region’s barren lands (İnce, 2009). Though the number of active members was ten, the interviewee Hocamköy-1 (46, male, an industrial engineer) who is also a founding member of

⁷⁰ <http://ekoyer.org>.

Hocamköy, says that in a broader circle twenty or thirty people were actively engaged in the project and over two hundred people supported the project.

The main goal of the Hocamköy project was to create a rural model for sustainable living by blending traditional knowledge with scientific methods. They aimed to develop a human-scale community that is self-sufficient and harmonious with nature. According to Mete Hacaloğlu, one of the pioneers of the Hocamköy project, ecovillage should not be seen as a trial but rather lifestyles of many people in the industrial world. For him, even if these lifestyles remain as nodes and become widespread as nodes, we still can talk about a total global change (Üç Ekoloji, 2011: 58). To be more precise, he implies that individuals' lifestyles are part of a network of interdependence within a system, which can bring about a broader change. For Hacaloğlu, ecovillage will be a model in the future in Turkey.⁷¹

The starting point of the Hocamköy was the ideal earth notion and the notion re-defining the relation of humans with themselves, with other humans and with nature. The Hocamköy ecovillage was designed according to permaculture principles with the purpose of becoming a model to other subsequent settlements. As expressed by Batur Şehirlioğlu, a founding member of the Hocamköy, the main goal of the Hocamköy was to develop a sustainable structure and to become a life center for people who want to live in an ecovillage, for children, the youth and the people who seek an alternative life based on ecological principles (Şehirlioğlu, 1998: 51). Among its other goals, there were practicing organic farming; building houses by using recyclable local materials and local techniques; and generating energy by using recyclable resources. Additionally, the project, as part of its primary goals, offered different training programs about the small changes that urban dwellers can make in their life in the cities, programs about how ecovillages of the future could be supported and programs for children living either in the city or in rural areas. Hocamköy was a member of the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) from the very

⁷¹ <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/2000/05/22/cevre/cev01.html>.

beginning and the third meeting of the Council of GEN-Europe was held in Hasandede.

In Hasandede, no one from the Hocamköy collective lived permanently. Its members built a house in Hasandede and some visited it often, some occasionally and some only on weekends. Summer camps and some other activities were held in Hasandede. Members of the Hocamköy collective used a consensus decision-making process and shared expenses but they did not follow rigid rules (Hocamköy-1). In the Hocamköy settlement alternative technologies were implemented including solar drier for fruits and vegetables, a biogas collector, and a solar and wind power generator. All these projects were supported by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The Hocamköy ecovillage project ended in 2001 “when their strip of land and newly built mud-brick house were occupied by local farmers who laid claim to the property.”⁷² The interviewee Hocamköy-2 expresses that the land was given to members of Hocamköy by the mayor at the time. But when he was not re-elected, it appeared that Hocamköy was not the owner of the land. The interviewee Hocamköy-1 says that the Hocamköy project ended not only because of the land issue which could not be resolved but also because of some administrative and financial reasons, other plans members had, like career and education together with further factors that they mostly ignored e.g. social and psychological factors.⁷³ He goes on to say that “after the project ended, almost all members of the project returned to their previous lives” not unlike young people of the 1960s. Following the Hocamköy project other initiatives started to emerge. One of them is Marmariç in which a former member of Hocamköy also participated for a period.

⁷² http://gen.ecovillage.org/iservices/publications/genmag-2000/EV_Millennium04.pdf.

⁷³ Sanırım somut bir takım nedenler de vardı (arazi sorunu, para sorunu, katılımcıların kişisel projeleri, iş, okul vs.), aynı zamanda da göz ardı ettiğimiz sosyal ve psikolojik etkenler de vardı. Fakat sonunda bir şekilde sonlandı.

b. Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği

Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği (Marmariç Ecological Life Association) was initiated in 2013 by a group of friends. The aim is to build a sustainable settlement based on permaculture principles and to share the experiences of rural life with other people.⁷⁴ The initiative is located in Marmariç (a neighborhood of Dernekli village in the Bayındır county of İzmir) which was abandoned by its residents in the 1980s because of water scarcity. The land, abandoned school building and teacher's lodge were rented from Dernekli village for forty nine years. Members of Marmariç repaired the school building and started to use it as the centre of the community. Then, they bought two other buildings from the villagers. A couple with two children permanently lives in one of these buildings. The other building is used by another couple with a child, who still lives in the city and visits Marmariç during holidays, vacations and on weekends.

The settlement has both electricity and municipal water. The residents of Marmariç use refrigerator, washing machine, and dishwasher. As of 2012, they were not producing their own energy. The school building and teacher's lodge is connected to a sewer line but in another repaired building in which where a couple with their two children lives a composting toilet was installed. They compost their kitchen waste for their garden as well. They-raise poultry and sell the chicken eggs. Locally grown and produced apples, cherries, olive oil, honey, grape molasses, tomato paste and eggs are the major sources of income in Marmariç. During my stay, they were not growing and producing all they need. They were providing for some of their needs from the closest traditional village or local markets. Furthermore, Marmariç, as detailed in the following sections, offers permaculture design certificate courses which provide additional income. Some members do freelance works. Marmariç is an income-sharing initiative. The income provided by income-generating activities, like permaculture courses offered in Marmariç, is used for Marmariç. Erkan Buğday, a resident of Marmariç, mentioned in a documentary that their relationship is

⁷⁴ <http://marmaric.org>.

different because they do not recognize individualism in Marmariç. For this reason, he goes on to say, they more or less share income and common living expenses (Türkmenoğlu, 2013).

Permaculture is very important for Marmariç but what made members of Marmariç come together was not permaculture in the beginning (Ayman, 2013: 73). Most members of Marmariç were coming together in Nuh'un Ambarı (Storehouse of Noah), a store opened in 1999 by Victor Ananias in cooperation with the Society for the Protection of Nature, and also in a Vegetarian Restaurant. Then, they started to live in a shared building in İstanbul's Kuzguncuk neighborhood. Their co-housing community experience between 2000 and 2003 distinguishes Marmariç from other examined initiatives. The interviewee Marmariç-2 said that their co-housing project was composed of a common kitchen and living room, library, atelier, music studio and nineteen private residences. The number of residents, he said, changed from time to time but on average twelve individuals lived in the shared building. As interviewees from Marmariç and also from other initiatives said, their co-housing experience in İstanbul has motivated them towards a communal life in Marmariç. The number of permanent residents in Marmariç might also be seen as sign of this. With a population of seven adults (two women and five men) and two children as of June 2012 Marmariç has more permanent residents than any other examined initiative in Turkey. Though seven adults and two children live permanently in Marmariç, the number of members who participates in the ecovillage project, Marmariç-2 says, is twenty five. He defines the relationship built among members as loose because they even have a member living in France. He goes on to say that these are the people who are committed to Marmariç and who plan to move to Marmariç in the long term. It is known that a turnover of membership is an inevitable part of the process in ecovillages around the world. This is also the case in Turkey. According to the interviews I conducted with a former resident of Marmariç and a volunteer participating in the activities of Dedetepe, two residents of Marmariç left the settlement in 2013. While one of them joined another ecovillage initiative, the other one has decided to live on his own in his van.

It is known that decision-making processes are one of the challenging topics for ecovillages. Members of Marmariç have stopped using consensus for decisions after being frustrated with the consensus decision-making process which they think that is too unwieldy (Marmariç-2). In Marmariç, decisions are no longer made after everyone agrees. Each member, Marmariç-2 says, is asked to make a decision about the issues regarding his/her responsibilities. Other members' opinions are asked if the issue is important and it concerns everybody. Marmariç-2 also expresses that they might have some problems with the rest of the group whose opinion is not asked, but they, as members living in rural area, do not want to spend all their time in meetings. Though some members, especially those living in the cities, seek to come together to discuss some issues, for the members living in Marmariç to hold a meeting to make decisions is a waste of time (Marmariç-2).

Marmariç hosts volunteers between May and September to share different responsibilities, such as cleaning or cooking. It also hosts trainees, at least for a month, who have a permaculture design course certificate. Furthermore, Marmariç offers a day visit for quests between May and October on the first Sunday of every month during specified hours. They offer a day visit only on certain days and hours because, as a member of Marmariç explains via e-mail, casual visits disturb their working routines. In Marmariç residents and volunteers share responsibilities and take turns cooking, cleaning, eco-building, farming and so on. To conduct interviews and do an ethnographic research I stayed five days in Marmariç in June 2012. During my stay, I worked as a volunteer and supported cooking, cleaning and eco-building activities. Based on my observations, I can say that residents of Marmariç wake up early in the morning. Whoever wakes up earlier than other residents makes breakfast. They prefer to work late in the evening in summer. When I was there I was responsible for preparation of lunch and dinner. But, as they said in our informal conversations, a permanent resident of Marmariç usually takes the responsibility for cooking because he enjoys it. They clean up shared spaces once a week and residents and volunteers are usually responsible for this. During my stay, they were using a local markets to shop because they were not growing all the vegetables and fruits

they need. After finishing their daily activities including working in construction of eco-buildings or working in the garden, they have dinner. They usually eat together in a shared space but they do not necessarily wait each other to start eating. While eating, they prefer to listen to music and discuss their daily routines or their long-term projects, such as the permaculture courses that were planning to be offered in Marmariç. Permanent residents usually go the privacy of their house or room early in the night.

c. Bayramiç-Yeniköy Grubu

Bayramiç-Yeniköy was initiated in 2010 by nine individuals. It is located in Çanakkale, in the Ida Mountains which divides the Aegean Region and the Marmara Region. Members of Bayramiç preferred the Ida Mountains region, the interviewee Bayramiç says, because of its climate and soil. In this region, he goes on to say, local people do not use fertilizers and pesticides because they engage in dry farming or stockbreeding. For him, the Ida Mountains region attracts many people who prefer ecological and natural life because of its special climate and unpolluted soil. The main goal of Bayramiç is to create a self-sufficient and sustainable village based on permaculture philosophy, permaculture design and reclaiming local seeds. To conduct interviews with residents I stayed three days in Bayramiç. But, as mentioned in the Introduction and Chapter 2, while arranging my visit to Bayramiç like my visits to other initiatives, I was expecting to meet more than one resident. Nevertheless, though the community has nine members, as of 2012 only one individual was permanently living there. As the interviewee Bayramiç says, “some members are waiting for their retirement, some are waiting to finish their academic studies, and some have their own plans.”⁷⁵

In Bayramiç, in addition to permaculture courses, various activities are held. Examples of these activities include ecological architecture workshops, seminars on

⁷⁵ Kimisi emekli olacak, kimisi akademik eğitimini bitirecek, kimisi işte kendi planları var.

spirituality, yoga camps and Anadolu Jam, which is defined as a meeting that brings young leaders who have concerns with social change and transformation together.⁷⁶ As the interviewee Bayramiç says that Bayramiç does not host volunteers because of the difficulties in coordinating volunteers. In Bayramiç various types of wheat, tomatoes and vegetables such as broad bean, onion, peas, garlic are grown; cheese and tomato paste are produced. Food and products which are not available in Bayramiç are provided from other farms in an exchange system. Bayramiç is the member of Ankara based Group of Natural Food, Conscious Nutrition (Doğal Besin, Bilinçli Beslenme Grubu - DBB) like some other initiatives. This group is composed of individuals who want direct access to healthy foods that are grown with natural methods. DBB is a model based on the participatory guarantee systems (PGS) and community supported agriculture (CSA). PGS represent an alternative to organic certification. They both serve the same purposes but their methods and basic values differ. For example, as being different from organic certification, in which a disinterested third party is responsible for the verification of products, PGS relies upon the direct participation of consumers and producers in the certification process. It is based on trust.⁷⁷ In a similar vein, CSA stresses a direct connection between producers and consumers. It stresses community or local production. CSA farmers typically use organic farming methods to reduce adverse environmental effect. Like PGS, it is based on trust. Therefore, DBB is a partnership between farmers and consumers based on PGS and community supported agriculture. It does not provide products to its participants and does not operate as a mediator between producers and consumers, but rather it aims to develop trust between producers and consumers. It supports first-hand contacts. Everybody who accepts its terms and conditions can be member of the group.⁷⁸ As of 2014, DBB had five hundred members. Urban dwellers can purchase the products grown in Bayramiç by mail order or through the partnership of Group of Natural Food, Conscious Nutrition.

⁷⁶ <http://www.bayramicyenikoy.com/egitimler.asp>.

⁷⁷ http://www.ifoam.org/sites/default/files/page/files/ifoam_pgs_web.pdf.

⁷⁸ <http://ankaradbb.wordpress.com/ilkeler>.

In addition to the activities mentioned above, Bayramiç organizes a seed exchange festival in cooperation with Bayramiç Municipality. Prior to 2014 three festivals were held, in 2011, 2012 and in 2013. During these festivals seminars and workshops are held on indigenous seeds, ecological cleaning in the houses or on participatory guarantee systems; some activities are organized for children. People also exchange seeds. For example, in the third Seed Exchange Festival Bayramiç the Real Food Manifesto was signed by the participants of the workshop on participatory guarantee systems.⁷⁹

Furthermore, Bayramiç struggles against gold mining activities in the Ida Mountains. The interviewee Bayramiç says that after mining activities began to take place around their settlement, they felt discomfort with the situation and with local residents started to struggle against gold-mining activities in the Ida Mountains. He says that ninety percent of the villagers oppose gold mining while only ten percent of the villagers who work in the mining companies support it. Bayramiç supports struggles against gold mining activities in the region by informing villagers about the environmental degradation that will be caused by all mining activities, either during the seed exchange festivals or directly in the villages themselves. In a permaculture meeting held in Tayfa Café on June 30, 2012, Mustafa Alper Ülgen, a founding member of Bayramiç, described their perspective and understanding of resistance for Bayramiç as follows: “we resist by living. It is meaningful to struggle in the books but struggling by living is more meaningful than this. We resist by producing.”⁸⁰ For him, with their efforts the villagers understood that the real gold is cheese or bread not the metal.

⁷⁹ <http://www.bayramicyenikoy.com/etkinlik.asp?id=27>.

⁸⁰ Biz yaşayarak direniş gösteriyoruz. Kitaplarda mücadele etmek anlamlı ama bu daha anlamlı. Biz üreterek direniş gösteriyoruz.

d. Dedetepe iftlięi-etmibaşı-amtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kltr Merkezi

Dedetepe iftlięi (Dedetepe Eco-Farm), etmibaşı and amtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kltr Merkezi (amtepe Ecological Education Center) are the names of different places but I prefer to cite them under the title Dedetepe because of the organic bonds and relations between them. Dedetepe Eco-Farm registered with the Global Ecovillage Network (GEN) Europe is located in Kkkuyu, anakkale of the Aegean region. It was initiated by a couple who met at yoga camp in India in 2001. After deciding to live in rural area according to ecological principles and with the vision of becoming an eco-community one day, they began to search for land in the Ida Mountains. Before buying their present land, they temporarily lived in a traditional village also located in the Aegean region. As the interviewee Dedetepe-1 says, their initial purpose was to establish a yoga center. But when conservative villagers did not welcome them they bought their present land. In the beginning, they lived in a van, tents and tee-pee. They taught yoga and learned to harvest and press olives, and to make soap. As mentioned on the website of Dedetepe Eco-Farm, “they strived to be as natural as possible, cooking on fire, using only wood and cloth for construction and recycling everything.”⁸¹ In 2005, they moved into a farm close to their land. In time, they have begun to accept volunteers who are responsible, for example, for cooking and cleaning. Dedetepe Eco-Farm also provides accommodations for different groups such as the groups for yoga camp and children for camps. Guests stay in log houses, yurts, tents and an open-air sleeping platform.

As mentioned above, the residents of Dedetepe Eco-Farm try to live as natural as possible. For this reason, they promote recycling, composting food waste, the use of renewable energy sources and natural birth. In Dedetepe Eco-Farm energy is generated by solar panels and wind. On the farm high-energy consuming appliances such as refrigerator, dishwasher, television, air conditioners, etc. are not used. Basically olives and olive-oil are produced on the farm. Dedetepe Eco-Farm has a

⁸¹ http://dedetepe.org/?page_id=251&lang=en.

vegetarian kitchen. Except for in designated places in outdoor spaces smoking is forbidden by the decision of the owner family.

Dedetepe Eco-Farm is closely connected and works with Buğday Derneği. For example, students taking the Ecological Social Entrepreneurship course offered by Bilgi University in partnership with the Buğday Derneği in Çamtepe during summer school are accommodated in Dedetepe. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Çamtepe was founded in 2010 by three members of Buğday to serve as a “research and education center to spread the knowledge and experience of ecological living.”⁸² In the interview Güneşin Aydemir says that the Çamtepe where there is no one living is a meeting place and their common space. As of 2013, the owner family of Dedetepe decided to live in Çetmibaşı, a traditional village close to the Dedetepe because the number of volunteers staying in the farm was increasing and it was more difficult to enjoy privacy. As of 2013, three adults, the founder of Dedetepe, Güneşin Aydemir and another employee of Buğday Derneği were living in Çetmibaşı. As Aydemir says, three adults are planning to move to Çetmibaşı in a year. They live in a traditional village, Güneşin Aydemir says, but in terms of the location of their depopulated neighborhood, they are not in direct relationship with the villagers. In other words, there are not so many houses next to their houses. She says that if they need something, they can ask villagers but otherwise they do not meet many villagers. I visited Dedetepe Eco-Farm, Çamtepe and Çetmibaşı in 2012 and 2013. Drawing on my observations, I can say that their houses in Çetmibaşı are not located at the center of the village. In addition, because they spend most of their time either in Dedetepe or Çamtepe, they do not often meet villagers. The owner of the Dedetepe is a member of Kazdağı Koruma Derneği (Association of Conservation of Ida Mountains). The association functioning at the local level aims to struggle against environmental degradation, to raise ecological awareness, preserve historical and cultural heritage, to promote nature-friendly agricultural methods and so on.⁸³

⁸² http://bugdayglobal.org/?page_id=43.

⁸³ <http://kazdagikoruma.org>.

e. İmece Evi: Doğal Yaşam ve Ekolojik Çözümler Çiftliği

İmece Evi: Doğal Yaşam ve Ekolojik Çözümler Çiftliği (İmece Evi: Farm for Natural Life and Ecological Solutions) is an ecovillage initiative located in İzmir of the Aegean region. It was initiated in 2007 as a farmstead and an ecological camp, but then developed into an education center. As of 2013, two adults and a child permanently were living in İmece Evi. Its declared goal is to live in peace in an unpolluted world. During my one day visit to İmece Evi the interviewee İmece Evi said that they try to live in harmony with nature, to have an ecological awareness and to encourage villagers to use old, traditional, natural agriculture techniques. He says that their water comes from the mountains and they generate their own energy by using solar panels. Nevertheless, the interviewed volunteer (22, female, university graduate) who worked in İmece Evi for a week mentioned that İmece Evi is not self-sufficient in fulfilling its own energy demand. For this reason, for example, they use the house of owner of İmece Evi in the closest traditional village, to charge the batteries of computers, cell phones or for doing laundry.

In İmece Evi, both permaculture and natural farming principles are adopted in the production process. By using these methods, they grow various kinds of vegetables and fruits such as olive, tomatoes, figs, etc. They also produce olive oil, cheese, yoghurt and cleaning soaps, and detergent and then sell these products. The other income source of İmece Evi is eco-tourism. They provide accommodation for guests by claiming that another vacation is possible. İmece Evi also accepts volunteers. As listed on their websites, while accepting volunteers and guests they also have some rules that they want them to follow. They expect volunteers and guests to visit İmece Evi after reading and accepting specified conditions not to be “financially and psychologically burdensome” to İmece Evi. For example, smoking, drinking alcohol and the use of addictive substances are not allowed in İmece Evi. People can smoke outside the physical boundaries of İmece Evi because smoking-oriented socialization

is not desired. People do not have to prove that they are ‘healthy’ but İmece Evi asks people who have psychological or personal problems not to visit İmece Evi.⁸⁴

f. Güneşköy Kooperatifi

Güneşköy (“Village of the Sun”) was started as a cooperative by nine members in 2000. Several members of Güneşköy Kooperatifi (Güneşköy Cooperative) are either from Middle East Technical University or are graduates of the University. Güneşköy is located in Hisarköy village of Kırıkkale in Central Anatolia, next to a traditional village. As of 2013, Güneşköy had nine founding members but no permanent residents. Güneşköy was initiated to experience living sustainably in rural area, in harmony with nature, to “develop and apply a healthy, natural and ecological lifestyle, to educate the children and the people living in rural areas and show them the new ways of sustainable living”, to serve as an example that can inspire people living in villages anywhere in Turkey, and to share their experiences with other people.⁸⁵ Güneşköy is a member of Ecovillage Network-Europe (GEN-Europe). Also, two members of Güneşköy represented Turkey in GEN-Europe’s administrative council between 2003 and 2012.

Güneşköy practices certified organic farming and community supported agriculture. It also cooperates with local farmers and promotes organic farming technique. Up to 2013, a cob house, a straw bale building and a green house were built; drip irrigation was introduced; the first companion planting was tried; the Bahçe Projesi (Garden Project) to grow organic products and then deliver them to subscribed consumers was initiated; and a project for a vegetable oil powered tractor was developed in Güneşköy. In Güneşköy different kinds of vegetables, such as bean, eggplant, potatoes and tomatoes are grown. Some active members of Güneşköy organize, support and participate in workshops covering the social and the ecological aspects

⁸⁴ http://www.imeceevi.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=18&Itemid=30.

⁸⁵ <http://sites.ecovillage.org/gunes-koy>.

of sustainability. For example, they organized three workshops on sustainable living in 2007, 2008 and 2009 in collaboration with two universities, while some members of the Cooperative participated in the workshops as trainers.

g. Ormanevi Kolektifi

Ormanevi Kolektifi (“Forest House” Collective) was initiated in 2005 in İstanbul as a collective by four individuals. In 2012, they moved to Biga in the eastern part of Çanakkale, north of the Ida Mountains in the Aegean Region with the purpose of building a “meaningful, just, self-sufficient micro-society, an ecovillage.”⁸⁶ To gain some experience in rural living and until they could find suitable land to build their ecovillage, they decided to live in a traditional village. They see their temporary stay in a traditional village as a kind of transition period before forming an ecovillage. The collective is planning to start to build their ecovillage in 2014 after finding a suitable land. During my two days stay in Ormanevi I conducted interviews with two permanent residents of the collective. The other two members could not be interviewed because they temporarily returned to İstanbul because of personal reasons. The collective grow their own vegetables, such as pink tomato and walnut and obtain green cleaning ingredients to make their own cleaning products. Because they had recently moved to rural area, their food production has not expanded to include different kinds of crops. As of 2013, they were not generating their own energy but they began to use alternative technologies, such as rocket stove which is easy to build and requires little fuel. They do not practice vegetarianism. They use motor vehicles and internet technologies.

Ormanevi is interested in two specific fields. One of them is the holistic grazing management method developed by Allan Savory. Holistic grazing management aims at restoring and managing grazing, which could in turn help to reduce carbon in the

⁸⁶ <http://ormanevi.org/yol/index.php/2013-10-25-08-48-19/ormanevi-nedir.html>.

atmosphere.⁸⁷ Ormanevi is Savory Institute's representative in Turkey. The institute was founded to empower people to properly manage livestock. Ormanevi is planning to initiate a pilot project in Central Anatolia, Kayseri in 2014. While giving information about this project in one of his interviews in an online newspaper, Durukan Dudu, a founding member of the collective, expresses that they are aware of the animal liberation aspect of the project and they have been discussing this for long time.⁸⁸ The other project of the Ormanevi Collective is OPMIWOHA (abbreviation for Open Minds Working Hands). As one of the founding members of the collective mentions in his article, this model is designed to support young people who want to build ecologically restorative, economically sustainable and socially improving structures in rural areas (Dudu, 2013).

h. Kardeş Bitkiler

Kardeş Bitkiler ("Companion Planting") was initiated in 2008. It is located in Tahtacıörencik, Ankara of Central Anatolia. It has eight members but no permanent resident as of 2013. Kardeş Bitkiler was started to develop models for sustainable agriculture and livestock production in rural areas, for sustainability of local production, to support and promote eco-tourism activities that are respectful of nature, to contribute to protection and certification of natural structures and biodiversity in rural areas, to promote cooperation between individuals, farms and other organizations engaging in natural farming. Regarding these main objectives, Kardeş Bitkiler developed some projects including eco-tourism and ecological education activities, natural farming, and companion planting.⁸⁹ Kardeş Bitkiler is a

⁸⁷ Allan Savory pursued an early career as a research biologist and later as a farmer, game rancher, politician and international consultant.

⁸⁸ <http://yesilgazete.org/blog/2013/07/19/durukan-dudu-politika-yapana-isin-gucun-yama-demem-komun-kurana-da-tek-basina-kurdun-da-ne-degisti-dedirtmem>.

⁸⁹ Companion planting is a technique used in gardening and agriculture. It is based on the idea that certain plants can benefit others when planted next to certain other plants.
<http://kardesbitkiler.blogspot.com.tr/p/amaclarmz-ve-hedeflerimiz.html>.

member of Group of Natural Food, Conscious Nutrition (Doğal Besin, Bilinçli Beslenme Grubu-DBB). Kardeş Bitkiler, as mentioned on its website, engages in agriculture based on companion planting, which is a method of growing plants together with the idea that each plant assists each other. In 2013, they have started to grow wheat, rye, barley and to produce honey.

i. Kır Çocukları

Kır Çocukları (“Children of the Country”) was initiated by three people who were formerly members of Kardeş Bitkiler.⁹⁰ It is located in Tahtacıörencik of Central Anatolia like Kardeş Bitkiler. As of 2013, it had no permanent resident in Tahtacıörencik. According to the definition on its website, Kır Çocukları is a group that aims to adopt living and production practices in harmony with nature and share their experiences with other people. The other declared goal of Kır Çocukları is to develop reproducible models in different fields including small-scale family farms, permaculture, nature protection, peaceful communication and gift economy.⁹¹ They produce and sell ‘natural’ products including pomade, soap, herbal oil, jam on a small scale.⁹² Kır Çocukları is part of the Tahtacıörencik Doğal Yaşam Kolektifi-TADYA (Tahtacıörencik Natural Life Collective) which was initiated in collaboration with Tahtacıörencik villagers. TADYA is a formation searching for sustainable rural development, promoting the preservation of the natural environment, natural life and traditional production techniques which are in harmony with nature.⁹³ TADYA is one of the collectives in the group of Doğal Besin, Bilinçli Beslenme-DBB (the Group of Natural Food, Conscious Nutrition). As of 2014

⁹⁰ The interviewed member of Kır Çocukları was a former member of Kardeş Bitkiler. When he was interviewed, he had just initiated Kır Çocukları with two other individuals. Though during the interview he shared his views by depending on his experiences in Kardeş Bitkiler, I listed him as member of Kır Çocukları.

⁹¹ <http://kircocuklari.wordpress.com/merhaba>.

⁹² <http://kircocuklari.wordpress.com/dogal-urunlerimiz>.

⁹³ <http://tahtaciorencik.wordpress.com/tadya-kimdir>.

February, Kır Çocukları began to build a homestead according to permaculture principles in Tahtacıörencik to engage in organic farming, small-scale livestock production and to produce natural products. They stress that their homestead will not be a villa with a security. Rather, it will be part of an area, in which they will engage in agriculture activities in corporations with villagers.⁹⁴

j. İbrim

İbrim is located in İzmir in the Aegean region. As of 2013, a couple was living in İbrim. After staying in İmece Evi for a period, they have decided to buy their own land, which is walking distance to İmece Evi. When I visited İbrim in 2013, they were trying to finish building their house. They have not begun to grow their own food yet. Their objective is not to build an ecovillage. Thus, İbrim appears as an individualistic attempt. In the beginning, I did not intend to conduct interviews with residents of İbrim because they do not aim at initiating an ecovillage. But when I visited İmece Evi I was directed to İbrim by a member of İmece Evi. I conducted an interview with a resident of İbrim to ask what their motivations for moving to rural area, whether they have an intention to build an ecovillage and why they did not prefer to join İmece Evi. The interview revealed that the interviewee İbrim's previous failed cohousing experience and their temporary stay in İmece Evi made them distance themselves from communal living.

k. Ahlatdede

Ahlatdede is located in Bayramiç. It was initiated to build a self-sustaining community. As of 2012, a couple, who moved there from İstanbul in 2009, was living in Ahlatdede. As of 2013, another couple joined them. I had an opportunity to interview one of its recent members in 2013 in Ankara. For this reason, I listed him as a member of Ahlatdede.

⁹⁴ <http://ciftlikevi.wordpress.com/subat-2014-arazide-hazirliklar>.

Until building a cob house, the couple temporally lived in a van. As of 2012, they were generating their own energy, using composting toilet and growing their own food including tomato, eggplant, beans, corn, pears and cherries according to permaculture principles. They use the local markets and exchange system to provide their other needs. The interviewee Ahlatdede-2 (43, male), who is a university graduate and a translator, said that after starting to live together they, as four individuals, decided to share income and expenses. Only some basic infrastructure expenses are covered by another member of Ahlatdede who is the owner of the land. But, he said that they have decided not to share income and kitchen expenses anymore and to evaluate these two alternatives separately. Because in his opinion they are in the process of building a community but time will tell to where this process evolves.

1. Cazgirler

Cazgirler is located in Bayramiç. As of 2012, a couple was living in Cazgirler, who moved to Cazgirler in 2011. After travelling with a van because they feel tired of excessive consumption in the metropolis, they settled down in Altınoluk, a town on the northern Aegean coast of Turkey. When they decided to live in a small place, they moved into a traditional village. The interviewee Cazgirler-1 said that in Turkey nobody (she meant people who attempted to initiate an ecovillage) lives in a traditional village together with villagers except for them. Here, it should be noted that the couple living in Cazgirler moved to rural area after retirement contrary to the other interviewees to rural area to work less and to live with less money. For them, it is not possible to move to rural area without having any financial guarantee. They decided to live in a traditional village with villagers unlike other interviewees of this study. But this is not to suggest that they do not have any ecological concerns. Cazgirler-1 thinks that “a traditional local village can be easily transformed to an eco-village.” Furthermore, though their declared goals appear to differ from the goals of the other studied ecovillage initiatives, Cazgirler is a member of the Turkish

Ecological Settlement Network *EKOYER*. Also, it regards itself as part of a community which I call ‘imagined eco-communities’ in this study.

Like in other ecovillage initiatives, the couple living in Cazgirler grows their own food including different fruits, wheat, and broad bean but unlike them, they do not call their agriculture technique permaculture or organic farming. But rather, as the interviewee Cazgirler-2 said, they just do agriculture without using pesticides and chemicals. Cazgirler is a member of Doğal Besin, Bilinçli Beslenme Grubu-DBB and it can sell its products through this group. Furthermore, the couple makes body oils, skin care products and cream and then sells these products through the Internet. In 2010, the couple founded Agrida Tarım ve Turizm Derneği (Agrida Agriculture and Tourism Association) in Cazgirler with twenty four members. Other members of Agrida were not living in Cazgirler as of 2012. The aim of the association and its members is both to capture traditional processes and to share their knowledge of other techniques including correct water usage, protection of natural resources, composting and mulch production with the villagers.⁹⁵ For example, the Association organized a workshop in cooperation with a specialist on permaculture in 2010 in Cazgirler. The workshop titled Local Production-Local Consumption: Reduce Your Footprint covered community supported agriculture, an ecological lifestyle based on agro-tourism, and water usage. Cazgirler is a member of TaTuTa and accepts volunteers.

m. Alakır

Alakır is located in Antalya in the Mediterranean Region. In Alakır, a couple who calls their settlement Yuva (Home) has been in existence since 2004. As they mentioned in one of their interviews, until they found a suitable place to settle down they travelled and met other people who have decided to live in nature like them. But because none of those people reflected on an anti-capitalist approach to

⁹⁵ <http://www.agrida.org.tr>.

environmental problems, they decided to inhabit in Alakır and build their own house. In their understanding, anti-capitalism means being honest and people should be anti-capitalist. Thus, after deciding to live in Alakır to “build an anti-capitalist life”⁹⁶ and, as they said in one of their interviews, to show that another world is possible, they bought land with the financial support of their families. On this land, they built their ecological house Yuva based on an anti-capitalist approach and using local and natural materials they obtained from the closest traditional village. They adopt the adage that “another architecture is possible.” They share their experiences regarding the construction of ‘healthy’ houses with little cost on the Internet.⁹⁷ I could not visit Alakır, but I conducted interview with Tuğba and Birhan⁹⁸ via e-mail. As they express it, Tuğba and Birhan grow their own food by natural farming methods and generate their own energy. They think that terms like ecological life, ecological agriculture or environmentally-friendly products are dangerous and green consumption cannot be a solution because these do not make people consume less. They do not prefer to live communally for the sake of conserving natural resources that they have to use, but rather favor living as couples or as individuals within ten or fifteen minutes walking distance or in different regions of Anatolia to be free. They call each attempt to live in harmony with all beings Yeryüzüevi (Earth House) and express what they mean by this in Yeryüzüevleri Manifestosu (Earth Houses Manifesto).

Outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that Tuğba and Birhan, like Victor Ananias, the Buğday Movement and the Hocamköy project, became a source of inspiration for other people, who seek to live in rural areas because they have been living in rural area for ten years. Tuğba and Birhan decided to move to rural area not to live under capitalist system and to avoid isolating urban life. But they express that with

⁹⁶ <http://www.dogadernegi.org/baska-bir-dunya-mumkun.aspx>.

⁹⁷ <http://mithatmarul.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/yuva.pdf>.

⁹⁸ As mentioned in Chapter 2, in this study I do not use actual names of the interviewees. I reveal two residents of Alakır Tuğba and Birhan and also Güneşin Aydemir with their consent. Furthermore, I asked Tuğba and Birhan to reply to my questions separately but they stated that they could not do this even though they tried to do so because they are used to thinking alike.

initiation of the hydroelectric power plant project in Alakır, they realized that they created an isolated world in rural area as well. Tuğba and Birhan state that only after the project was initiated in Alakır, they noticed the existence of ongoing hydroelectric power plant projects in different parts of Turkey. They did not hear about other constructions because until the project was initiated in Alakır Valley, they chose not to use a cell phone, a computer, internet connection and a car. After starting to participate in struggles against the hydroelectric power plant project initiated in Alakır Valley, they obtained all of these technologies. To oppose the project, they also initiated a kind of collective known as Alakır Nehri Kardeşliği (“Alakır River Fellowship”) composed of people who are active in the struggle against the project. They cover their expenses by organizing concerts, activities and exhibitions, and also by selling a music album titled Alakır’ın Sesi (“The Voice of Alakır”). In time, Tuğba and Birhan have become a kind of symbol of the struggle. It might not be inaccurate to say that their reaction was ‘not in my backyard’ opposition.

As this brief history of the features of ecovillage initiatives, and the values and attitudes they tend to embrace indicate, members of these ecovillages have changed their lifestyles to live more simply and self-sufficiently. Though some of them have already started to change their daily practices while living in the cities by purchasing organic food or by not watching television, some decided to move to rural areas. In the next section, I shall discuss their lifestyle changes in rural areas and the political ramifications of lifestyle strategies.

6.2 Green Lifestyles

Most greens adopt the adage ‘personal is political’ saying that by changing their lifestyles, attitudes, values people can make a contribution to societal change. “The theme is consistent: that personal transformation leads to altered behaviour; which in turn can be translated into sustainable community living” (Dobson, 2001: 131). The following statement of the interviewee Bayramiç exemplifies what the majority of

the interviewees tend to think regarding lifestyle change: “individuals who cannot change themselves ecologically cannot create social transformation. They do not necessarily settle down in the Ida Mountains region. People should take care of the detergent they buy or the things they consume”⁹⁹ (Bayramiç). With this belief, most people practicing green lifestyles seek to reduce their negative impact on the environment. In doing this they adopt some green strategies, practices, attitudes and values. While some consume green products, recycle wastes, practice voluntary simplicity, some “favor ‘close-to-nature’ modes of dwelling.” Thus different styles of greens result in distinctive green lifestyles (Horton, 2003: 65).

In this section, I aim at outlining green lifestyles of the interviewees and members of ‘imagined eco-communities’ in Turkey by using Dave Horton’s classification: green networks, green spaces, green materialities and green times. Particular lifestyles, Horton argues, depend for their organization on specific networks, spaces, materialities and times. For Horton, green lifestyles are not learned so much as practiced in green networks, in green spaces, in green materialities and at green times. My aim is both to mention green practices of the interviewees, such as composting, recycling and to analyze the “role of green networks, spaces, materialities and times in the assemblage of interviewees’ green lifestyles” by drawing on data from in-depth interviews with the members of ecovillage initiatives. The analysis strongly relies on the interpretations and perceptions of the interviewees. But I aim to integrate my personal experiences and observations as gained during my stays in some of the ecovillage initiatives with the information I obtained from other sources including websites/weblogs.¹⁰⁰ Furthermore, I shall mention lifestyle strategies adopted by members of the ‘imagined eco-communities’. Here it should be stated that some practices or meetings mentioned under the headings of materialities or networks have become influential in the formation of ecovillage initiatives and in the formation of a green lifestyle community. For this

⁹⁹ Kendi içinde ekolojik dönüşüm yapamayan insan toplumsal bir dönüşüm yapamaz. İlla da Kaz Dağları’na yerleşmek gerekmiyor. Aldığı deterjana, tükettiği şeylere dikkat etmeli insan.

¹⁰⁰ The employed methods are detailed in Chapter 2.

reason, while mentioning some lifestyle strategies I stress their role in the formation of ecovillage initiatives and ‘imagined eco-communities’.

6.2.1 Green Networks

Green networks, Dave Horton mentions, consists of three kinds of intermingling: green meetings, green gatherings and the interactions mediated by information and communication technologies. During the green meetings, the activists who are geographically close temporarily come together to center their green identities. Green meetings may include both formal, planned, regular meetings and informal interactions. While planned and regular meetings include meetings of environmental groups and campaigns, examples of informal interactions include protests, encountering with activist friends in a vegetarian café, chats in the bar and so forth (Horton, 2006).

In Turkey, especially in İstanbul, there is variety of meetings and workshops about environmental issues that are regularly organized and offered by environmental groups, associations, collectives and some other formations. Nevertheless, in terms of the framework of this study it is difficult to mention regularly held or planned green meetings by a particular environmental group or a formation. A second kind of intermingling is the green gathering, which refers to the spatial and temporal meeting of geographically dispersed network members through workshops, conferences, courses, festivals, protests and so on (ibid). With regard to ecovillage initiatives, the meetings and workshops that are offered in Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kültürü Merkezi (Çamtepe Ecological Education Center)¹⁰¹ have special importance (see Chapter 3). In Çamtepe, various workshops, such as on homeopathy, composting, healing, storytelling, and ecological social entrepreneurship are offered.¹⁰² Permaculture design certificate courses are offered in different settlements like

¹⁰¹ <http://camtepe.org/?p=798>.

¹⁰² http://camtepe.org/?category_name=gecmisetkinlikler.

Marmariç and Bayramiç; composting workshops are offered by or in collaboration with Buğday Derneği and Middle East Technical University; permaculture meetings held in a café in Ankara – all these are some of the workshops and meetings that make people come together. A third kind of intermingling, which is significant for both green meetings and green gatherings refers to the interactions mediated by information and communication technologies including email. This is significant for both green meetings and green gatherings. Members of ecovillage initiatives, except for those of Alakır, are not hostile to the computer, internet, email and other new technologies. On the contrary, these technologies are recognized as useful tools as expressed by the following statement:

We are not living in the Stone Age. We are living in the 21st century. We did not come here from caves. We are coming from the cities, from a certain comfort, culture and sociality. It is not sustainable to reject all these. [I say] yes to living in nature but it is a necessity to use technology to a certain degree. You cannot disregard the Internet. The Internet is our communication tool and it is too fast and necessary¹⁰³ (Bayramiç).

The majority of the interviewees share their experiences of rural life through internet pages or weblogs of their initiatives, social networking sites and in group mailings. They receive customers' order of their products via e-mail. They announce meetings, workshops, and courses held in their settlements by using the Internet. Though the interviewees actively use the Internet which makes them get news, the majority distance themselves from the ongoing daily political debates in 'mainstream' society unless they are related to the environmental issues. The majority tend to withdraw from 'public' to the 'private' realm. Furthermore, whenever some expressed or implied that they follow the ongoing political debates, their statements about their

¹⁰³ Bak biz şimdi mağara devrinde yaşamıyoruz. 21. yüzyılda yaşıyoruz. Ve biz mağaradan da çıkmadık şu anda. Şehirlerden geliyoruz, belli bir konfordan belli bir kültürden, belli bir sosyalityeden geliyoruz. Tüm bunların hepsini reddetmek sürdürülebilir bir şey değil. [...] Yani doğada yaşamak evet ama asgari düzeyde teknolojiyi de kullanmak lazım. İnterneti yok sayamazsın. E bu bizim şu anda iletişim alanımız ve çok hızlı ve çok gerekli bir şey.

understanding of political are not always explanatory. While an interviewee Güneşköy-1 saying that there is not any green political movement in Turkey, he only meant political parties. Or another interviewee Ahlatdede-1 who calls herself a feminist having concerns about honor-killings and LGBTI rights expressed that she is not interested in being identified with the feminist movement.

The other channel that makes them share their experiences is the Buğday fanzine. Buğday fanzine was transformed into Buğday bulletin in 1998 and into Buğday magazine in the following years. It soon became “the communication point and the source about any field of ecological living varying from organic agriculture and products to healthy nutrition, self-improvement to natural healing methods and consumption behaviors to ecological architecture.”¹⁰⁴ Buğday Ecological Life Bulletin and Magazine published fifty seven issues between 1998 and 2009. Buğday Magazine was transformed into Buğday Ecological Life Guide in 2009 to reach a wider society.

Horton argues that “within the multiple socialities of green networks the primary orientation of talk is obviously to green issues.” In this context, the other prominent green network binding people together is Açık Radyo (Open Radio) with its programs on environmental issues. From the perspective of people who are interested in environmental issues, Açık Radyo is an alternative media channel that does not manipulate people. The following statement of a 41-year-old female interviewee who studied communication studies explains the place of Açık Radio in the lives of most interviewees and also other people who have similar concerns:

Açık Radio is one of the channels raising our awareness. We have not been watching television and reading newspapers for ten years because we do not believe in the reality of the news we have heard. Everything is manipulated. One of the broadcasting

¹⁰⁴ http://bugdayglobal.org/?page_id=5.

organizations that we believe in its reality is Açık Radyo¹⁰⁵ (Ahlatdede-1).

Açık Radyo is an independent radio station that began broadcasting in 1995. Almost all programmers work as volunteers. Açık Radyo is known for its programs about green issues, ecology, architecture, etc. Different people from different areas of interest, such as Noam Chomsky, Joel Kovel, Victor Ananias and a transgender individual became guest speakers on Açık Radyo. It, as a semi-official radio station, broadcasted bilingually (Turkish and English) for ten days during the UN Habitat II held in İstanbul in 1996.¹⁰⁶ Buğday Derneği broadcasts the radio program – Buğdaydan Hasada Ekolojik Yaşam (Ecological Life from Wheat to Harvest) on every Friday. If we put it in Güneşin Aydemir’s words, Açık Radyo is another entry gate to ecological life because the common point of all these people is that they listen to Açık Radyo.

6.2.2 Green Spaces

Greens meet and perform their green identities, and develop their green lifestyles in certain sites such as a vegetarian café, arts and a community center (Horton, 2006). It is not possible to list meeting sites in Turkey because, as mentioned above, this study was not designed to address green spaces in particular region of Turkey for specific time. Nevertheless, some places, in which members of ecovillage initiatives and members of ‘imagined eco-communities’ come together or used to come together become into prominent.

In Chapter 5, the brief history of Buğday Derneği was outlined. As discussed, “the seeds of Buğday were first twinkled on a small stand selling whole rice, olive oil,

¹⁰⁵ Açık Radyo bizim farkındalığımızı artıran şeylerden bir tanesi. Biz on yıldır televizyon izlemiyoruz, gazete okumuyoruz çünkü ne duyduğumuz haberlerin gerçekliğine inanıyoruz. Her şey birileri tarafından belli amaçlarla manipüle ediliyor. Gerçekliğine inandığımız yegâne yayın kuruluşlarından bir tanesi Açık Radyo.

¹⁰⁶ http://www.acikradyo.com.tr/default.aspx?_mv=a&aid=29178.

sage, thyme and sea salt at the Bodrum bazaar in 1990.”¹⁰⁷ In the following years, this small market was transformed into Başak Café. In terms of the focus of this study the first and perhaps the oldest meeting site is Başak Café. The founding father of the Buğday movement and Buğday Derneği and also the source of inspiration of the ecovillage initiatives was Victor Ananias. He opened Başak Café in Muğla, Bodrum in 1991. Başak Café was a place selling herbal and ‘natural’ products and the venue place for the meetings of environmentalists and nature conservationists. As Güneşin Aydemir mentioned in a meeting held in Tayfa Café in February of 2014, when an increasing number of people began to visit Başak Café and asked Victor Ananias various questions about the lost tastes of Anatolia, Victor Ananias opened Buğday vegetarian restaurant and culture center in 1992 to introduce these tastes to more people.¹⁰⁸ Buğday vegetarian restaurant “had been the place for meetings, seminars, courses and exhibitions for subjects related to self-improvement, nature and ecological life and the small library of local and foreign publications in these fields.”¹⁰⁹ In the same meeting, Güneşin Aydemir mentioned that the restaurant turned into a place where people with similar concerns and interests came together and where many projects were initiated. When Doğal Hayatı Koruma Derneği (the Society for the Protection of Natural Habitats) offered the opportunity Victor Ananias to open Buğday restaurant in İstanbul, he moved to İstanbul and set up Nuh’un Ambarı (Storehouse of Noah) in 1999, which also turned into a meeting site that brought many people together. This place helped spread the issues of ecological living to İstanbul.¹¹⁰ As mentioned earlier, some members of Marmariç came together in Nuh’un Ambarı and as Güneşin Aydemir mentioned in the same meeting in Tayfa Café most people who initiated ecovillages in Turkey met each other in the same place. Nuh’un Ambarı did not last long, Aydemir said, but it became influential.

¹⁰⁷ http://bugdayglobal.org/?page_id=5.

¹⁰⁸ http://www.bugday.org/portal/haber_detay.php?hid=6124.

¹⁰⁹ http://bugdayglobal.org/?page_id=5.

¹¹⁰ <http://victorananias.org/?cat=9>.

In Ankara ,Tayfa Café has begun to become a kind of meeting place for people who are interested in green issues though it is not known as a vegetarian café. In Tayfa Café every Saturday Permaculture Saturday Meetings have been held since 2012. During these meetings, different speakers and experts from various fields including the slow food movement, permaculture, and organic farming have been sharing their knowledge and experiences with other people. By my observations, I can say that Tayfa Café is getting more popular for informal meetings in addition to regular meetings.

Currently, organic and ecological bazaars, especially those in İstanbul, have increasingly been significant meeting sites. “100% Ecological Market” project in Turkey was initiated in June 2006 by Buğday Derneği in Şişli, İstanbul. Şişli 100% Ecological Market is still the biggest ecological market in Turkey. Following Şişli, some other ecological bazaars were opened in different cities of Turkey including Ankara, Konya and Kayseri. People regularly visit these bazaars not only to buy organic products, but also to come together and talk to others having similar concerns with them. As Güneşin Aydemir from Buğday Derneği states:

For instance, in an ecological bazaar people come together not only to buy ecological products. They visit an ecological bazaar mostly to buy organic products but there is more than this. At the same time, people meet other people who think like them. For example, an individual from the slow food movement, Ömer Madra,¹¹¹ a wise farmer Feridun [a Turkish name], Buğday team, an old woman cooking pancake, and a toy seller teaching disappearing games to the kids all go to ecological bazaars. Ecological bazaar has a social dynamic. I think that the ecological bazaar is important¹¹² (Güneşin Aydemir).

¹¹¹ A writer, columnist, one of the founders of Açık Radyo (Open Radio) and lecturer on the effects of global warming.

¹¹² Mesela ekolojik pazar ekolojik pazar da sadece insanları orada birbirine bağlayan şey ekolojik ürün değil. Ondan dolayı oraya geliyorlar ama orada ondan çok daha fazlası oluyor. Orada aynı zamanda bir araya geliyorlar kendileri gibi düşünen insanlarla. Sadece sertifikası değil yani. O işte slow food’cusu da geliyor Ömer Madra’sı da geliyor oraya, işte bilge çiftçi Feridun da geliyor, işte Buğday ekibi de oraya geliyor işte gözleme yapan teyze de geliyor ve onların hepsini işte ne bileyim ahşap

The other important meeting place, Güneşin Aydemir states, used to be Cihangir Yoga¹¹³ because

in the beginning its main purpose was to make everybody exercise yoga. Its motto is yoga for everyone, so it offers very cheap yoga classes. Organic food is an entry gate and the same can be said for Cihangir Yoga. I mean that nature respectful life or life awareness are all overlapping layers. One entry gate is Cihangir Yoga because it has taken yoga from the interest of a specific group and has made it available to other people¹¹⁴ (Güneşin Aydemir).

Nevertheless, two years after saying this, in 2014 Güneşin Aydemir mentioned in her email that Cihangir Yoga lost its earlier importance because it became commercialized. She goes on to say that it was formerly a meeting place where like-minded people came together, but it no longer serves this purpose. Even if Cihangir Yoga has no longer a significant place in the lives of like-minded people, yoga is still an important part of the everyday lives of some interviewees and also some members of ‘imagined eco-communities’. Some interviewees interpret yoga only as a physical exercise and they are not interested in meditation techniques. Some interviewees and volunteers interpret yoga as an additional income source for people who seek to live in a small town as the following statement of Ahlatdede-1 expresses: “I have become a certified yoga teacher, like everybody, to have an additional job and to make a

oyuncakçı da geliyor çocuğuna orada yok olan oyunları oynatıyor ondan sonra filan falan. Yani orda bir sosyal dinamik var, bir şey bu. Ekolojik pazar bence önemli bir şey.

¹¹³ <http://www.cihangiryoga.com/english/homepage/?lang=eng>.

¹¹⁴ Kesinlikle çok çok önemli bir yer çünkü cihangir yoga aslında amacı oydu başlangıçta herkese yoga yaptıracak, herkese yoga zaten onun şeyi o kadar ucuza yaptılar ki herkese yoga yaptırdı. Çünkü o bir giriş kapısı. Ekolojik gıda nasıl giriş kapısıysa bu şeye ne diyeyim doğaya saygılı yaşam ya da yaşam farkındalığı diyeyim hepsi bence üst üste katmanlar. Bir giriş kapısı Cihangir Yoga’dır çünkü yogayı belli bir şeyden belli bir kesimin ilgi alanından herkesin ulaşabileceği bir şeye getirdi.

living as a yoga teacher when I move to another place.”¹¹⁵ Some interpret yoga as a way of life in harmony with nature like the couple living in Alakır:

For us practices like yoga and vipassana¹¹⁶ focusing on awareness of the body are not only exercises practiced at specific times. They became a life spreading to every ‘moment’. We try to live in harmony with nature both physically and mentally¹¹⁷ (Alakır).

As the statement demonstrates, the couple living in Alakır tends to interpret yoga as a form of direct action aimed at the process of the cultivation of ecological consciousness as some deep ecologists do for breathing and writing poetry along with yoga (Devall, & Sessions, 1985). Similarly, Güneşköy-1 who has been practicing yoga and vipassana for six years thinks that yoga helps people to enrich their essence, body and soul. Additionally, Güneşköy-1 engages in nonviolent communication method and lectures on social sustainability. She thinks that nonviolent communication, which she prefers to call communication from the heart, is an important part of social sustainability. She states that everybody can communicate from the heart and when people discover this, they would be happy. For the interviewee Ahlatdede-1, yoga, besides being an additional income source, is an entry gate that raises awareness of people. As mentioned briefly in the Introduction, a sort of spirituality seems to become part of the lives of some members. It appears that the body and nature are attributed spiritual importance. As exemplified by the workshops or courses organized in Çamtepe, the meaning of life question is in the hand of the specialists, even if not in the hand of gurus as Terry Eagleton remarks (Eagleton, 2008). With the correct courses, workshops or the correct technique, as Eagleton says, people could be guaranteed raised awareness on

¹¹⁵ Ben işte herkes gibi aman ben de bir yere gittiğimde bana yedek bir iş, hayırlı bir geçim kapısı diye yoga hocası sertifikası aldım.

¹¹⁶ A meditation technique.

¹¹⁷ Bizim için de yoga, vipassana gibi bedensel farkındalıklar günün sadece belli bir zamanı yapılan aktivitelerden, her “an” a yayılan bir yaşama dönüştü. Hem fiziksel hem de ruhsal olarak doğaya uyumlu olmaya özeniyoruz.

life and nature, on the nature of health, and to communicate from the heart.¹¹⁸ Likewise, for an interviewed sustainable life consultant (female, 35), it is not possible to imagine the ecovillage movement without its spiritual dimension because it is a worldview. In her perspective, this is not simply about clean air or healthy food, but rather about the relationship developed with life. She goes on to say that

people seek to develop a different relationship with life at every dimension. The current relationship no longer satisfies them. [People seek] more real and different relationship. In my opinion, people should change from the inside to shift from conventional agriculture to organic agriculture. Without this inner change, the transition from conventional agriculture to organic agriculture does not happen.¹¹⁹

Her views along with those of the interviewees are compatible with one of the working principles of the ecovillage ‘movement’. For Ted Trainer, who claims that “the fate of the planet depends on the future” of the global ecovillage movement and who believes that the most important thing is to help the movement flourish, “ideas and values must be changed before there can be any change in the big structures” (Trainer, 2000b: 22). It should be noted that spirituality is one of the main components of the ecovillage movement, not just “something characterising some groups within the movement” (Fotopoulos, 2000: 294). In this context, it is not possible to suggest that spirituality is one of the main components of the majority of the interviewees. But it might be accurate to say that it is an important part of the lives of some interviewees.

The other entry gate mentioned by Güneşin Aydemir is TaTuTa – Turkish abbreviation for Tarım (Agriculture), Turizm (Tourism) and Takas (Exchange).

¹¹⁸ http://camtepe.org/?category_name=gecmisetkinlikler.

¹¹⁹ Yaşamla daha farklı bir ilişki kurmak istiyorsunuz artık her boyutta. Bu ilişki artık tatmin etmiyor, kurulan bu ilişki. Daha gerçek, daha farklı bir ilişki. Kimyasal tarımdan organik tarıma geçmek için bence insanın içinde bir değişim olması gerekiyor. O değişim içte olmadan dışta kimyasal tarımdan organik tarıma geçilmez.

TaTuTa “is the name of the project on “Eco-Agro Tourism and Voluntary Knowledge and Skills Exchange on Organic Farms”, organized by Buğday Derneği” (Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living).¹²⁰ Buğday Derneği is the official member of the European Centre for Ecological and Agricultural Tourism (ECEAT) and the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farm (WWOOF) organization of Turkey with TaTuTa. People come together in ecological farms which are members of TaTuTa. Most ecological farms in Turkey are members of TaTuTa. By 2013 September, there were eighty farms¹²¹ registered with TaTuTa some of which are ecovillage initiatives studied in this thesis such as Marmariç and İmece Evi. Either the volunteers who give support with their labour, knowledge or experience during their stay or guests who directly give monetary support can stay in these farms.¹²² Volunteers may be asked to help with a variety tasks such as planting, making compost, gardening in exchange for food, accommodation and learning opportunities in organic farming. Volunteers do not have responsibilities like cleaning the farm. But as the interviewed volunteer who worked for five days in an ecovillage initiative in Turkey said, some farms use volunteers as a free labor source and exploit them. In general, I think, the system is open to exploitation because it is based on legitimized volunteering and the consent of people. Furthermore, drawing on my observations, I can say that some people prefer to work as volunteer on these farms for personal reasons, such as being fired from their jobs, not ecological reasons. Some see the time they spend in these farms as a transition process until they decide what they want to do in the long term. It might be said that these farms appear as convenient places for people who do not have money but who have time.

In addition to volunteers many people seem to prefer green tourism as their “tastes are becoming more differentiated and selective” (Urry, 1995: 180). They choose to have their vacations or holidays on small farms which promise them they will live in

¹²⁰ <http://www.bugday.org/bugdaygil/Tatuta/?p=7&lang=en#tatuta>.

¹²¹ http://www.bugday.org/bugdaygil/Tatuta/?p=1&tc_aratext=&sayfa=1&sayi=61&lang=en.

¹²² <http://www.bugday.org/bugdaygil/Tatuta/?p=2&lang=en>.

buildings in ‘traditional style’ such as Üç Elma Çiftliği in Çankırı at Central Anatolia¹²³ or in ecologically designed buildings such as Pastoral Vadi in Fethiye of Mediterranean Region,¹²⁴ which promises them they will eat local food, get involved in work on the farm or attend workshops. This has two dimensions that are worth considering briefly. “One element of this tourism is to help heighten an environmental consciousness and, indeed, in some cases to improve aspects of the physical environment” (ibid, 183). Similar to other patterns of green consumerism, it can be argued that green tourism is better than mass tourism. Nevertheless, the fact that “the growth of romantic gaze, which celebrates ‘nature’, is helping to spread tourism worldwide and is therefore contributing to widespread environmental deterioration” should be taken into consideration (Urry, 1995: 183-184). Tourists, who appear to have ecological awareness, want to escape from their urban existence into the ‘beauty’, ‘simplicity’ and nature, might support these areas, but negative effects of their travel including pollution and disruption of habitats, should be noted.

6.2.3 Green Times

Green lifestyles are timed and most green lifestyles are “assembled during a relatively time-rich period of the life course.” Typically, greens acquire “culturally appropriate knowledge, awareness and understandings” through the time spent in local, dispersed and virtual green networks, in protests, meetings and green spaces (Horton, 2006). Nonetheless, personal circumstances including career, the birth of a child or active parenthood might prevent green lifestyle from continuing in more or less the same form. People might have some disruptions in their lives because of these reasons. For example, they have to take ‘unsustainable’ jobs or they have some difficulties in attending some meetings because of childcare needs or the demands of full-time work (ibid). Certainly, Horton talks about green activists who do not live in ecovillages. But, similar circumstances can be mentioned when the issue is people

¹²³ <http://www.ucelmadogaltarim.com>.

¹²⁴ http://www.pastoralvadi.com/index_eng.aspx.

who cannot move to rural areas and change their lifestyles even though they are members of ecovillage initiatives. As mentioned in earlier chapters and in this chapter, most members of ecovillage initiatives do not live in rural areas because of personal reasons including concerns about their career, education of their children and dependant elderly persons. They occasionally visit the settlements of their initiatives and engage in some activities. They are waiting for the right time to change their lifestyles permanently.

For the members living permanently in rural areas a different life cycle is operative. During the periods when they have to engage in agricultural activities, they get up early and work late in the evening. Because they mostly feel tired, they usually go to bed early. While having breakfast, lunch or dinner together, they usually talk about their daily routines. These can be considered as the times when they meet each other most often. During some periods, especially in winter which means time off for them, some of them travel and some keep living in rural areas by engaging in various activities, such as watching movies or reading books. Here it should be noted that one of the disturbing questions for the majority is how they spend their time in rural area and whether they feel bored or not because they think that people do not have time to be bored while living rural area.

6.2.4 Green Materialities

Green lifestyles are materially organized as well as being “socially and spatially organised” (Horton, 2006). Green lifestyles are enabled by the absence or presence of key material objects. Like greens, members of ecovillage initiatives have attempted to simplify their everyday lives through the absence and the presence of some material objects. In other words, they seek to minimize their consumption of goods or to consume green products.

Though the interviewees did not cite the term voluntary simplicity, it appears that they seek to practice voluntary simplicity. Voluntary simplicity is defined as a way

of life and being in which people must be conscious of their choices. In this perspective, it is assumed that each individual has different purposes in life and has to determine the degree of simplification they wish to achieve (Elgin, 1993: 24). The people who choose this lifestyle voluntarily minimize their consumption. This lifestyle is considered as different from deprivation because it is considered as a rational act to reduce one's consumption. Voluntary simplicity accepts ecological living as a path of "new growth" not a retreat from progress, and ecological living does not "require moving to rural settings" (ibid, 28). Though practices like permaculture are also considered as ways to simplify one's own life, voluntary simplicity lifestyle involves additional practices including wearing second-hand clothes, buying locally grown and organic foods, driving hybrid car, etc. According to Ted Trainer, an advocate of ecovillages and simple living, living more simply does not mean deprivation. People just need to convert their suburbs into regional economies, produce their own foods by using local resources, practice permaculture, share more things and so on. Thus, they will "develop the 'commons', the community land and resources from which all can take food and materials" (Trainer, 2000b: 21). It can be said that with regard to their practices the interviewed members of ecovillage initiatives have been practicing voluntary simplicity. To put it better, as mentioned throughout this study and as detailed in the second part of this chapter, all interviewees grow their own chemical and pesticide free food according to permaculture, natural farming or organic farming principles. When they are not able to grow their own food, they prefer to provide them from local markets, eco-farms or from other ecovillage initiatives. Nevertheless, only one interviewee cited the term voluntary simplicity in defining this way of living. In his article titled *Voluntary Simplicity*, a 28-year-old university graduate interviewee argues that voluntary simplicity as a lifestyle, a life perception and as a way to reach happiness should be used as a political tool. In his opinion, voluntary simplicity, as a political tool, will be adopted by most individuals who feel themselves as helpless and trapped in modern life. He sees voluntary simplicity together with other strategies discussed in this study as part of micro-politics. One of the main criteria of voluntary simplicity is that people should not determine their needs according to their income, but rather they

should determine the amount of money they will earn, which is sufficient to meet their needs. For him, the best practice of voluntary simplicity is seen in ecovillages because ecovillages are human-scale settlements, in which people build direct and face-to-face relationships (Dudu, 2011). Greens pressing for a life based on voluntary simplicity suggest a middle way between indulgence and poverty and this would be the way of the sustainable society (Dobson, 2001: 78). To give an example, people still can have energy-efficient washing machines but electric toothbrushes and carving-knives are not legitimate objects (Bunyard and Morgan-Greenville, quoted by Dobson, 2001: 78). In a similar vein, interviewees of this study make a distinction between green materialities that are considered as legitimate and others that are not green but they think that people should make their own decisions about their needs.

Specific material objects are accepted as legitimate that “facilitate the greening of lifestyle” including bicycles, organic food, as well as Internet and email. Other objects like television “hinder the greening of lifestyle, and so it is their absence which is important.” If the computer is central to the everyday lives of green activists, the television and the car are absent from the everyday lives of them (Horton, 2006). In this context, likewise, whereas the computer, the Internet, email, weblogs, and websites are increasingly present, the television is absent from the everyday lives of most interviewees. On the other hand, unlike Horton’s green activists, the car is not absent from the everyday lives of interviewees. On the contrary, the car is an important part of their lives. They are reliant on the car because they live far away from the closest town or village though some express their discomfort with this necessity like the interviewee Dedetepe:

How much it is possible to stay outside the [system] this will be a gain. We use car too. Whenever you use car, you are exactly within the system. Oil. But you should evaluate its advantages and disadvantages. For example, we generate our own energy. Actually, we do

not consume electricity. We consume very less. For example, we do not purchase detergent¹²⁵ (Dedetepe-1).

As stressed throughout this chapter, the majority of the interviewees did not cite the capitalist system or whenever they cited it, they mostly define it as supplier of some municipal services. In their perception, not using municipal water or electricity means to be outside the system:

Even if you do not oppose the system, such lifestyles, indeed, are acts against the system. [...] Even living on its own is enough. Rejecting the system is what is not desired by the system. We are actually threats to the system. We do not pay electric bill. We do not pay water bill. These are the most undesired things¹²⁶ (Dedetepe-1).

The statements of Dedetepe-1 quoted above with his stress on the system and with his stress on evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the car which is considered as a tool of the system reflect another working principle of the ecovillage ‘movement’. The advocates of the ecovillage ‘movement’ think that people are not part of the system while living in ecovillages and suggest that ecovillages can benefit from the tools of the system “in order to learn how to use some of its more useful tools to create alternatives to it” and before leaving the system behind (Christian, 2003: xix). Nevertheless, as discussed in Chapter 4, they are committed to realize their goals by depending on the existing socio-economic system. Their values and practices are compatible with the capitalist system not only in the beginning as Christian suggests, but also when they declare that they leave the system behind.

¹²⁵ Ne kadar az dışında kalırsam o kadar kârdır diyorsun bir yerden sonra. Biz de araba kullanıyoruz. Araba kullanmak sistemin tam içindesin. Petrol. Sürekli şimdi petrol ofisine para ödüyorsun falan saçma sapan. Ama yani artı eksisine bakacaksın işte. Ama işte elektriğimizi kendimiz üretiyoruz. Elektrik harcamıyoruz aslında. Tüketimimiz bayağı az. Deterjan almıyoruz vs. falan.

¹²⁶ Yani zaten bu tip hayatlar şey düzene bir şeye yapmasan da düzene karşı bir aktivite aslında. [...] Sadece yaşamak bile yeter. Çünkü düzeni reddediyorsun bir yere kadar. O da düzenin en istemediği şey. Tehdidiz biz aslında düzen için. Elektrik faturası ödemiyoruz. Su faturası ödemiyoruz. Hiç istenmeyen şeyler bunlar.

As emphasized throughout this study, the main motivation lying behind lifestyle change is the belief that everybody should do something and everybody can do something by changing some of their daily habits and practices. To give an example, some interviewees choose to read books instead of watching television, while some prefer to compost or make their own cleaning products. For example, the interviewee Güneşköy-1 (female, 62), an academician at a university, explains why she prefers not to watch television as follows:

I think that not to watch television is a very useful thing because of the television violence. I feel that everybody fights there, people do not listen to each other and at the end, everybody feels helpless. I mean that it is imposed that there are big problems and individuals cannot deal with these problems and we, as individuals, are helpless. But it is not like that. As individuals, we can do many things. We read newspapers, book and listen to music, talk to each other instead of watching TV¹²⁷ (Güneşköy-1).

As mentioned above, some people choose to compost instead of watching television to live according to green principles. Drawing on the fieldwork, it can be said that all interviewees without exception and also some other individuals seeking to practice green lifestyles in the cities are composting. While people living in the cities recycle mostly kitchen waste, residents of some ecovillage initiatives compost human manure into landscape soil in addition to kitchen waste. The collectives like İstanbul Permaculture and individuals organize workshops to teach people how to compost in the cities. As the interviewee Bayramiç (male, 42), a civil engineer, former instructor at a university, professional volleyball player and who occasionally works as a freelance engineer says:

¹²⁷ Yani o, o kadar yararlı bir şey ki izlememek, çünkü ben orada şeyi hissediyorum, yani bize empoze edilmeye çalışılan ve şiddet yönü çok ağır olan bir şeyler var. Herkes kavga ediyor gibi geliyor bana. Yani herkes kavga ediyor, kimse kimseyi dinlemiyor ve sonuçta da şey ekiyor, çaresizlik ekiyor insanlara. Yani çünkü hep sorun var hep büyük sorun var ve bireyler bununla hiç başa çıkamaz, çok çaresiziz eyvah. Yani hâlbuki değil, hepimiz birey olarak çok şey yapabiliriz, çok katkı koyabiliriz. Yani televizyon izlemediğimiz zamanımız bize kalıyor, gazete okuyoruz ondan sonra gazete okuyoruz, kitap okuyoruz, müzik dinliyoruz, birbirimizle konuşuyoruz yapacağımız işleri falan böyle bir şey var.

Certainly, to live according to ecological principles is possible in cities as well. When I was living in İstanbul, my wife and I were using lye¹²⁸ in washing machine, dishwasher and in cleaning the house. We bought our food from organic bazaars or from farms. We did not produce waste. Instead, we were composting our waste in our balcony¹²⁹ (Bayramiç).

He states that people cannot only compost but can make their own cleaning products from simple and natural ingredients like lye. In addition to Bayramiç, in some other initiatives such as Dedetepe, İmece Evi and Marmariç I observed that they use some homemade products. Dedetepe makes its own soap and detergent. During my stay in Ormanevi I observed that they obtained ‘natural’ ingredients like borax to make their own cleaning products. In İmece Evi, as I observed, lye is used for cleaning. But here I should state that during my stay in some initiatives and supporting some daily cleaning activities I observed that industrial cleaning products are also used. As stressed throughout this study, it is difficult to achieve an internal consistency of such a lifestyle although most greens want to achieve it. It is not always practical and easy to keep living coherently (see Chapter 3). What needs to be done is to pay attention to what they do, not only to what they say. The other point that should be mentioned here is that internet-based technologies started to be widely used to access, create and disseminate the information regarding buying products marketed as natural and methods of making environmentally-friendly products. For example, some websites and weblogs giving tips for ecological living started to appear. To give an example, Zehirsiz Ev¹³⁰ (“Non-poisonous House”) or Yeşilist¹³¹ were created to develop alternatives to industrial products and to give tips for ecological life.

¹²⁸ Lye is made from wood ash and used in making soap.

¹²⁹ Kentte de ekolojik yaşam mümkün tabi ki, ben mesela 2 sene İstanbul’da yaşadığımda kül suyu kullanıyordum, hem çamaşır makinesi hem bulaşık makinesinde eşimle beraber, kül suyu hem evin temizliğinde. Organik pazarlardan alışveriş yapıyorduk, kutu sistemiyle işte bu tür çiftliklerden mal getiriyorduk, gıdamızı oradan alıyorduk, çöp üretmiyorduk, balkonda kompost yapıyorduk.

¹³⁰ <http://www.zehirsizev.com/zehirsiz-ev-nedir>.

¹³¹ <http://www.yesilist.com>.

These are one of the well-known websites and weblogs. In addition to websites/weblogs, other sources such as Buğday Ekolojik Yaşam Rehberi¹³² (Buğday Ecological Life Guide) give tips for similar issues including for composting or making cleaning products.

Interviewees and other individuals practicing green lifestyles mostly prefer to consume ‘natural’ handmade products such as soap, pomade, cream, detergent, etc. Typically, where they do not make their own products, they seek to purchase commodities marketed as green, i.e. products of well-known brands, products offered online by retailers or the products of small-scale producers they usually know personally or through recommendation. For example, in our context, members of Kır Çocukları and Cazgirler make and sell homemade products including pomade, soap, body oils, and skin care products. Kır Çocukları regularly organizes “natural pomade making workshop” to teach people to make pomade and soap.

It should be noted that these sorts of mediums (e.g. weblogs, festivals, workshops) hold women, as primary caretakers of families, responsible for addressing environmental problems through their consumption choices and target mainly women as mentioned in Chapter 3 (Smith, 2010). The innumerable websites and weblogs created by women give tips for being an ecological, organic or natural mother. When we look at their language, they target motherhood by using labels green, organic, natural or ecological. All these products might appear as alternatives to mass market products and as supporting small-scale producers but these products have the risk of being commodified. For example, in the beginning Zehirsiz Ev appeared as a weblog guide for producing and consuming healthy products. Then it began to sell its products through its web-based sales channel. As clearly exemplified by Zehirsiz Ev, Naturel: Beden, Zihin ve Ruh Sağlığı Festivali (Natural: The Festival of Body, Mind and Spiritual Health) or composting workshops, there is no reason for capitalist system to be afraid of these expensive, natural products or workshops because they are ready to be commodified (Bookchin, 1991a: 29, see Chapter 3). A

¹³² http://www.bugday.org/portal/haber_detay.php?hid=115.

‘naturalization’ effect is easily created by offering ‘natural’ and ‘healthy’ products to the people who feel that everything which is ‘natural’ and ‘real’ is lost (Baudrillard, 1998, see Chapter 3).

The other lifestyle strategy adopted by greens and which can be discussed under the title of green materialities is the practice of vegetarianism and veganism. But here I should state that the majority of the interviewees do not practice vegetarianism, although meat is not consumed in most of the analyzed ecovillage initiatives. Meat is not consumed in part because some residents or guests residing in settlements of the initiatives might practice vegetarianism and in part, because meat is an expensive product. For example, none of the residents of Marmariç practice veganism but during my stay in Marmariç as a volunteer I did not use animal products while cooking because a vegan volunteer was being hosted. On the other hand, some settlements like Dedetepe announce on their websites that they have a vegetarian kitchen. As mentioned above, most interviewees raise poultry either to consume or sell. They care for the soil but the majority do not focus on animal rights, animal liberation, industrial livestock production or low standards of animal welfare in factory farms. None of the interviewees practice veganism though some intend to do in the near future like Tuğba and Birhan from Alakır:

We never purchased meat or we did not eat the meat of chickens and goats that we raised. Or we did not fish. But in time we began to question raising chicken for its eggs or to raise goat for its cheese. Then, we released our goats and liberated them. We are about to liberate our chickens as well. We have embraced the idea of veganism even if not radically. We know that we can practice veganism. Furthermore, we realized that sincere and harmonious natural life could be reached only by practicing veganism¹³³ (Alakır).

¹³³ Yine hiçbir zaman yemek için et almadığımız gibi yetiştirdiğimiz tavuk ve keçileri kesip yemedik ya da nehirdeki balık dâhil hiç avlanmadık. Ancak bir süre sonra yumurtası için tavuk, peyniri, yoğurdu için de keçi beslemeyi sorgular olduk. [...] Ve sonuç olarak keçileri tamamen ormana bırakarak özgürleştirdik, tavukları özgürleştirmenin arifesindeyiz. Yine radikal olmamakla birlikte vegan düşüncesine, mantık ve duygusuna ulaşmış durumdayız. Vegan olacağımızı biliyoruz. Hatta samimi ve uyumlu bir doğal yaşamın ancak ve ancak veganlık bilinci ve yaşamıyla

In this context, the other crucial lifestyle strategy regards consumption of food. Most interviewees expect individuals to act responsibly by simply choosing not to buy conventionally grown food as exemplified in the following view:

Here the consumers should take the responsibility. If a consumer has twenty Turkish Liras in his/her pocket, the question is which system s/he supports with this money. I mean that a consumer could buy twenty tomatoes that were conventionally grown. Nevertheless, in this case what s/he does is not only to fill his/her stomach but also to support an agriculture model that pollutes nature and everything. Or s/he can buy fewer tomatoes with that money but in this case s/he knows the producer and the seeds of those tomatoes. Thus, s/he can support a self-sustaining system that has a future¹³⁴ (Güneşin Aydemir).

Aydemir thinks that each individual, so each consumer is responsible for ecological damage. She focuses on personal responsibility for ecological reform. Her views, like statements of other interviewees, reflect another working principle of the ecovillages. In general, ecovillages work from bottom up and make “individual lifestyle change the cornerstone of global transformation.”¹³⁵ The interviewees who have attempted to build an ecovillage based on these views tend to think that one can change something in society by changing his/her lifestyle, i.e. by choosing not to watch TV, growing fruits and vegetables instead of buying them, purchasing organic food instead of conventionally grown ones or by practicing permaculture. This

gerçekleşebileceğini anladık.

¹³⁴ Dolayısıyla buradaki tek sorumluluk, şu anda çok büyük bir sorumluluk tüketicinin. Yani cebinde yirmi TL var. Mesele yirmi TL ile hangi sistemi desteklediğimiz. Yani o yirmi TL ile gidip konvansiyonel olarak üretilmiş yirmi tane domates alabiliriz. Ama o zaman desteklediğimiz şey sadece yirmi tane domates alıp karnımızı doyurmak değil bütün doğayı ve her şeyi kirleten bir tarım modelini destekliyorsun aslında. Ya da o yirmi TL ile üreticisini bildiğin, tohumunu bildiğin daha az sayıda domates alırsın ama onunla gerçek, kendi kendini döndürebilen, geleceği olan bir sistemi desteklemek.

¹³⁵ <http://gen.ecovillage.org/iservices/publications/articles/CM117RootsandBranches.pdf>.

perspective assumes freestanding individuals who have control over their choices. It “celebrates the individual as consumer” but tends to dismiss production and consumption processes and hierarchical relations, domination systems, exploitation, class relations (Princen *et al.*, 2002: 319). This is expressed by another interviewee (male, 42), an academician at a university, as follows:

Even low-income people can afford organic food. If they are too poor, there is something to tell them: my friend, just leave that poor life. If you are strong enough, go and produce. Instead of eating conventional food because it is cheap, just try to find a solution. Join the groups, grow your own food. If you still say that organic food is expensive, you may be right but under these conditions you are living the wrong life. You are paid very little¹³⁶ (Kır Çocukları).

The interviewee, like most interviewees, who ascribes individuals with responsibility for their poverty and for their reality preventing them from consuming healthy food, favours non-structuralist and behavioral explanations of what is wrong. It is an ongoing debate whether or not individuals should be allocated responsibility for environmentally-friendlier change. While some greens or environmentalists stressing the role of the individual as a consumer, others argue that encouraging individuals to consume less or purchase products marketed as green, such as organic food is not an effective means of securing social change. It may be misleading to say that green lifestyle strategies and the approaches stressing the importance of lifestyle changes do not have any political ramification because green lifestyles are practiced by people whose attitudes and values center around environmental issues (Pepper, 1991; Chitewere & Dorceta, 2010). Certainly, individuals might help preservation of the ecosystem, for example, by not purchasing conventionally grown food or by recycling. Nevertheless, as stressed in Chapter 3, these kinds of approaches may have

¹³⁶ Hatta çok düşük gelir seviyesindeki insan bile organik gıdalarla beslenebilir. Bunun getirdiği iki kat maliyeti karşılayabilir. Çok çok fakirse söyleyecek bir şey var: arkadaşım bırak artık bu fakir hayatı. Elin tutuyorsa gücün varsa git bir üretim yap ve hatta orta kesimdeki insanlar içinde onları yiyeceğine ucuz olsun diye o sahte gıdaları yiyeceğine bir yol bulmaya çalış gruplara katıl, kendiniz üretim yapın. Bu hala çok pahalı diyorsanız haklı olabilirsiniz de bu koşullarda yanlış bir hayat sürüyorsunuz. Size çok az para veriyorlar.

the danger of individualizing ecological problems, their solutions and responsibilities. For Bookchin, even while changing our lifestyles or struggling against pollution, nuclear power plants, degradation of the soil and so on, we should try to remake whole society. People who believe that New Age morality, approaches based on psychotherapy or the changes in individual lifestyles can be a way to confront the current ecological crisis will be disappointed because society's lifestyle, Bookchin argues, cannot be changed without deep social transformations. When the issue is the existing market economy, there is no difference between trying to make the business world gain ecological sensitivity or at least encouraging it to support ecologically positive activities and asking sharks to eat plants. There is not any difference between these two because we face a social system not individuals (Bookchin, 1999: 12).

The other problem with lifestyle politics is that it leads people to make a distinction between wants and needs. As quoted above, Bunyard and Morgan-Grenville conclude that toothbrushes are legitimate but electric brushes are not. Though there is a theory of need or more likely an intuition here, Dobson argues, it is not obvious how it is persuasively expressed because the distinction between these two is highly controversial (Dobson, 2001: 79, 18). As statements of the interviewees reveal that while some see, for example, the car as a necessity in their living conditions, the others might not. Furthermore, lifestyle politics accepts that everybody on the planet will eventually suffer from environmental crisis and that therefore everybody should bring about a societal change by taking responsibility. At first, environmental degradation does not affect the poor, the villagers or the underprivileged equally. It is not accurate to say that given present conditions, everybody is equally responsible for bringing about a sustainable and egalitarian society because "in many respects environmental degradation is not suffered by everyone equally." For instance, organic foods as an alternative to conventional foods are available in principle but they are not accessible to all because of their relative high price. To put it better, it is not simply a question of education, ecological awareness or willingness "but of

money too” (ibid, 147). A few interviewees accept that these products are expensive and not accessible to all, as the following statement of Ahlatdede-2 reveals:

When the Buğday movement was initiated, I was talking to Victor. I told him that they were doing the wrong thing. I told him what would happen when they open Şişli [ecological] bazaar. All the people go to the bazaar and when they see that [one kilo of] tomatoes costs four Turkish liras, they would say goodbye. And then only the elite people would remain. All these things happened. All the people living in Şişli and Kurtuluş neighborhood, who are lower middle class and lower class people, were curious about the bazaar. They went to the bazaar with their bags and they never went there again. It took three years. Şişli bazaar had some difficulties, many producers ran away [he means that they stopped purchasing their products in the bazaar]. I told them [he refers to people who are responsible for the bazaar] not to use this pricing strategy. The prices can be the same [with the prices of the products in the conventional bazaars] or it can be higher than them a little bit. Let’s say not one lira but one lira five kuruş but reach masses.¹³⁷

Similarly, Hocamköy-1 thinks that higher income households are more likely to purchase organic products with the motivation of having a healthy lifestyle. In his opinion, to a large extent organic farming is a commercial production technique like other methods based on certification and regulations.

Secondly, the trouble with sentiments and statements stressing individual self-change is that they lead to elitist assumptions; “for instance that ‘people in inner cities can also wake up and change their lives. They should grow their own food, so that they

¹³⁷ Buğday başladığında ben Victor’la da ben hep şey konuşuyordum. Bakın yanlış yapıyorsunuz Şişli pazarını açtığınızda Şişli pazarında nolaacağını ben söylüyorum. Bütün insanlar pazara gelecek bakacaklar domates dört lira mı, iyi günler diyecekler. Ve sonra elit bir kesim kalacak, hepsi aynı oldu. Bütün Şişli bölgesi, Kurtuluş’ta yaşayanlar orta altı ve alt sınıf çok merak ettiler. Pazar torbalarını aldılar gittiler ve haa sonra gelmediler. Sonra üç yıl sürdü, Şişli pazarı zorlandı zorlandı, bir sürü üretici kaçtı. Ben de onlara şey diyordum, bakın fiyatlandırmayı bu şekilde yapmayın. Aynı olsun ya da bir tık yukarıda olsun, azıcık yukarıda olsun. Bir lira değil bir buçuk lira olsun. Ama çok daha yaygın bir kitleye hitap edin.

know what's involved” as views of the interviewee Kır Çocukları indicate. Statements like this, Pepper argues, suggest that “the realities of social and political stratification are being forgotten” (Pepper, 1991: 164). Dobson, Pepper and Bookchin argue, lifestyle strategies are complementary and necessary but not enough and sustainable because

they mostly reject the idea that bringing about change is a properly ‘political’ affair – they do not hold that green change is principally a matter of occupying positions of political power and shifting the levers in the right direction. [...] A general problem with the strategy of lifestyle change is that it is ultimately divorced from where it wants to go, in that it is not obvious how the individualism on which it is based will convert into the communitarianism that is central to most descriptions of the sustainable society (Dobson, 2001: 133, 136).

As the fieldwork reveals, interviewees of this study favour lifestyle strategies and their understanding of societal change is based on individualism. In fact, societal change is not part of their motivation in retreating to rural areas to form an ecovillage or an eco-settlement. Here the issue is whether the individualism on which ecovillage initiatives in Turkey are based might convert into the communitarianism. Before addressing this through community strategies of the studied ecovillage initiatives, I shall focus on the class background of the members of ecovillage initiatives that is closely related to their approach to personal transformation as a key factor of change.

6.3 The ‘Ecovillagers’ of the Initiatives

Environment means “totally different things to different people, depending not only on ideological and political allegiances, but also upon situation, positionality, economic and political capacities, and the like” (Harvey, 1996: 428). It is “necessary to analyze and understand the complex social processes which give rise to certain issues being taken collectively as ‘environmental’” (Macnaghten & Urry, 1998: 19).

In the Prologue to *The Nature of Environment* in his book *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference* David Harvey recalls some of his memories about Earthday 1970. One of his memories is about a business journal *Fortune* which celebrated the environmental issue as a “non-class issue.” The other memory comes from a campus rally Harvey attended. Mostly middle class white radicals gathered at this rally to attack the qualities of air, water, food and consumption patterns of the world causing environmental degradation. The following day Harvey went to “Left Bank Jazz Club, a popular spot frequented by African–American families in Baltimore” where the concern was not about the qualities of air and water, but “lack of jobs, poor housing and racial discrimination” (Harvey, 1996: 117). As Harvey explores through his memories, environmental issue means different things to different people. It is either perceived as a middle class issue or as not a concern of the working class.

While the environmental issue is perceived as a middle class issue by the majority, middle class interest in environmental qualities and amenities, “nature” tourism, and deepened concerns about environmental dangers to health” has increased (ibid, 380). In *A Critique of Political Ecology*, which is accepted as one of the first and most influential Marxist responses and in which he “prefigures a central theme in later sociological writing about the ‘risk society’ Hans Magnus Enzensberger claims that environmental destruction is not new (Benton, 1996: 9). What is new is that working and living conditions previously suffered by the working class are now being experienced by the intermediate classes and “the rising tide of affluence in the advanced capitalist countries after World War II increased middle-class interest” in environmental issues (Harvey, 1996: 380).

While this lent an indelible bourgeois esthetic and politics to much of the environmental movement, it nevertheless pushed environmental issues to the political agenda where they could not easily be controlled as a mere adjunct of bourgeois fashion. The health connection, as Hays (1987) points out, became particularly salient and peculiarly open-ended in relation to environmental concerns in the United States

after 1950 or so. Systematic environmental concern for everything from landscape despoliation, heritage, and wilderness preservation, control of air and water quality, exposure to toxics, waste disposal, regulation of consumer products, and the like became much easier to voice given middle-class acceptance of such issues as fundamental to its own qualities of life. This aspect to the problem has been strongly emphasized by Beck (1992) who argues that the costs of the contemporary form of a high-environmental risk society are spread across the class spectrum thereby turning the environmental issue into a populist issue (even the bourgeois can get skin cancer and leukemia) (ibid, 380-381).

Outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that initiating an ecovillage appears as an expression of class-specific lifestyle and a middle class affair like the young people's search for alternatives to greed, materialism and violence of the older generation; opposition to the Vietnam war; and sexual freedom as explored in Chapter 4. These are all expressions of middle class culture (Eder, 1995). The middle classes search for alternatives, Klaus Eder argues, because they live with a traditional notion of the good life and

the good life has been the quest of the middle classes for over a century. [...] Today, the middle classes are obsessed with personal aggrandizement, autonomy and competition. [...] The culture of good life is more than a philosophical idea: it is the expression of a class-specific lifestyle. We can apply such an idea to contemporary social protest and unrest relating mainly to environmental issues: environmental risks and damage are exactly those things that most threaten a good life because they threaten the physical and increasingly psychic world (ibid, 38).

Members of studied ecovillage initiatives, without exception, are educated people who feel threatened in the cities and who seek for alternatives to the problems posed by urban life. They used to be or they still are salaried employees. They all mentioned or implied that to switch new patterns of living like theirs cannot be

achieved without having saving or an income. Some achieved this by selling his/her house in the city, some with financial support of his/her family or some with his/her rental income. Thus, it can be suggested that in terms of their educational and occupational background and their family origins they are middle class people. The question of the middle class in advanced capitalist societies has been referred to as one of the controversial and ambiguous issues of class discussions. Literature on middle classes is full of questions as follows: Is there such thing as the middle class? Do professionals, civil servants, and similar groups constitute a (generic) class? Is middle class an ideological illusion? Is middle class a new class in its own right? (Wright, 1986: 115) In this context, middle class is taken as a class in its own right as it appears to 'self-exclude' itself by "living in exclusive areas" and "engaging in distinctive forms of consumption" and in terms of the education and occupational structure of the interviewees (Bennett *et al.*, 2009: 177). As the discussion held in green networks, spaces, times and materialities reveal, most interviewees seek to position their own consumption as less than or more green than those 'others' in 'mainstream' society. As stressed, the exclusion of television, for example, from their everyday lives or consuming organic food signals green living that is not achieved by 'others' in mainstream society. They are oriented to the green practices because they see them as part of the solution towards sustainable society. But this also stems from a desire to maintain a particular sense of difference as Horton puts it.

Educational and occupational structure is crucial in this study in terms of the outcomes of the field research because of a number of reasons. Most interviewees graduated from the universities of Turkey which are known as 'best'. Some have master's or doctorate degree as well. None of the interviewees used to work as manual laborers before moving to rural areas. Most interviewees who have started to live permanently in rural areas keep their occupational and professional connections in the city and working as freelance employees. That is to say that their life in rural areas is financially not independent from their occupational backgrounds. In this context, their professional jobs (e.g. architect, engineer and web designer) which can be flexible allow them to move to rural areas. Most interviewees get involved in

various projects, for example, as a freelance architect, a web designer or a translator. These findings are crucial because they indicate the fact that people of all educational and professional backgrounds cannot escape from cities.

The other members of these initiatives who have not permanently moved to rural areas yet still live in the cities because of concerns about their careers and education of their children. Whether members of ecovillage initiatives still live in the cities or moved to rural areas, their declared motivations are mostly common. They seek an alternative way of life to urban life by quitting their good-paying jobs in the cities because they are in quest of a good and healthy life which, in their perception, consists of, for example, eating pesticide and chemically free food, not to live in a crowded environment, to live without working hard, to live a green lifestyle, etc. As mentioned, earlier, when environmental problems have started to threaten the physical and psychic world of the middle classes and when it has been realized that even the bourgeois can get cancer, some individuals, like interviewees of this study, have started to think that they cannot get cancer if they retreat to nature. Their impulse to living in rural areas springs from feelings of threatened individuality and health.

The interviewees are educated people who have the income and time to 'voluntarily simplify' their lives, to promote new patterns of consumption and to prioritize the earning of what they produce and what they accept as more eco-friendly. As the sustainable life consultant (female, 35) who specializes in ecovillages asserts, they are educated people who are equipped well enough to earn money. If educational attainment, occupation and income are the criteria for defining middle class, she says, members of ecovillage initiatives are middle class. In interviews I did not ask whether interviewees consider themselves middle class and I did not provide them any categorization of middle class. Yet, despite this, some mentioned that they do not identify themselves with the middle class because of the negative middle class perception. To put it better, in this perspective middle class people are considered as conformist and hedonist. But even the interviewees who do not identify themselves

with middle class expressed that most middle class people have a tendency to escape from cities (Ahlatdede-2). For Ahlatdede-2, though the first group did not know how to act (he refers to people who do not have any ecological concerns) today there is a group of people who know what they do. He added that they are the people saying that they moved to rural areas to grow their own food, to build their own houses and to install alternative energy systems. On the other hand, while stressing the middle class background of members of ecovillage initiatives the same interviewee rejected the category of middle class when he was talking about himself. He said that he used to be middle class but was no longer because he moved away from urban life and its associated practices and values. Like interviewees, he has some prejudices about the middle class that they are self-indulgent people who make their own decisions according to their own tastes and who cannot manage to live in a community with others-who have different tastes (Ahlatdede-2).

As the statements of Ahlatdede-2 reveal, changing living spaces and changing lifestyles by quitting full-time jobs might change some interviewees' class perceptions. For example, in the focus group discussion in Marmariç some members of the initiative who permanently live in Marmariç identify Marmariç-4 who has not moved there yet with being middle class. In their perception, he still belongs to the middle class because he has middle class concerns and values. These concerns are clearly expressed in his following statement explaining why he and his family are not ready to switch to a permanent life in Marmariç:

We have a child who is twelve years old. We are waiting him to start high school in order to move to Marmariç. This is our priority. Furthermore, we want to build second part of our house [in Marmariç]¹³⁸ (Marmariç-4).

Marmariç-4 has not switched to a permanent life in rural area but most interviewees continue to be involved with urban life mostly because of reasons that are closely

¹³⁸ Bir tane çocuk var, on yaşını bitirdi. Onun bir liseye kapağı atması lazım. Asıl konumuz o. Bir de şimdi evin ikinci kısmını yaptırma şeyimiz var, projemiz. Bir de o var yani işte, iyi konular bunlar.

associated with their educational and occupational background. They do not identify themselves with the middle class because they do not live in the cities working in full-time jobs and because they have changed their lifestyles. Nevertheless, this does not change their educational and professional background and the acquired skills that enable them to escape from the cities. It might not be accurate to compare members of ecovillage initiatives who have not moved to rural areas because of their concerns about their jobs, education of their children like Marmariç-4 with other people waiting for their retirement to change their lifestyles with different motivations. However, it can be argued that their ecological concerns and their attempts towards communal living are not always enough to analyze them from entirely different angles. I think that imagining a communal life is seemingly possible only by being ready to give up career, property and comfort that are obtained during lifetime. For the people who have much to lose, being propertyless is not only unpreferable but also impossible. At that point, what is brought to the agenda are financed ecological life experiences as in the case of most ecovillage initiatives (Şahin, 2011: 66). The majority of the interviewees expressed that living ecologically and forming an ecovillage requires money. As the interviews reveal, almost all interviewees have either income or financial support from their families. It appears that what they practice is a financed ecological life, if their motivation is ecological. As Litfin, an advocate of the ecovillage 'movement, admits, ecovillages might "offer a few lucky individuals a socially and ecologically harmonious way of living" (Litfin, 2009: 139).

When the issue is the class dimension of the ecovillage initiatives and its members, the other controversial issue in this context is that interviewees have not only changed their lifestyles by reducing consumption, composting, growing their own food, etc. but they also expect other individuals to change their daily practices by accepting them as freestanding individuals who make their own decisions and choices. For example, informal conversations during the fieldwork reveal that some interviewees cannot understand why villagers working in gold mining factories located in the Ida Mountains region do not search for other means of livelihood to

protect their environment. In their perception, because many environmental organizations or associations at the local level focus on adverse effects of mining activities, villagers should already have abandoned being part of these activities. Nevertheless, Raymond Williams argues, it is not possible to simply say, for example, to miners all around them is an ecological disaster and they should change their lives and certain kinds of production. They already know because they live in it. Or lumberjacks who “are employed to clear-cut a magnificent forest normally have not “hatred” of trees but rather economic needs compel them “to act against their best impulses, even strongly felt natural values (Williams, 1989a: 220; Bookchin, 1990a: 24, 37). Everything will have to be done by “equitable negotiation” and “have to be taken steadily. “Otherwise you will find, as in too many environmental cases [...] that there is a middle-class environmental group protesting against the damage” (Williams, 1989a: 220). For Williams, people who simply say “keep this piece clear, keep this threatened species alive” or “you must save this beautiful wild creature” even “it may kill the occasional villager” are not the allies in the ecological movement. These people do not differ from, for example, the country-house industrialist who “makes money all week from the muck and the spoil” and then “he is spiritually refreshed” by the country in the weekend until he goes back “into the making of smoke and the spoil, which is the precise source for his escape” (ibid). Here it should be mentioned that while criticizing this group of individuals, Williams sees a potential in the movement of a new kind of people into the country, not just the retired or the commuters but people with different occupations. He argues that the presence of doctors, teachers, electricians, plumbers and booksellers, restorer and writers, etc. in the country shows the diversity of a working rural society. They are influential in restoring the fabric of rural society. If the movement is looked at from other direction, it is noticed that farmers have started to provide pony trekking activities, farmhouse bed-and-breakfasts and farmshops and so on. Some of these activities directly aim to attract tourists into these districts. Some are part of the pattern of part-time country living. But overall, Williams argues, this movement has interesting implications for the future of a balanced society (Williams, 1989b: 234). Nevertheless, as discussed throughout in this study, interviewees are not part of rural

society with their professions. While they simply say to villagers around them not to engage in conventional agriculture, agriculture is not their chief source of income. Thus, it is not possible to claim that they are influential in restoring the fabric of rural society.

Though Williams' critique is based on an English pattern and he talks about the people who visit the countryside only on weekends, his argument is not entirely irrelevant to the main arguments of this study. At first, as mentioned earlier, most people have not moved into rural areas yet. They keep living in the city, which appears as their main discontent. Many of them have not discovered the realities of rural living during their short visits. Furthermore, most of the others who have permanently settled do not have to make their living by farming or other kinds of production based on land. If we put it in Raymond Williams' words, for them, rural is not a "place of first livelihood", at least not currently and not under these conditions (ibid, 228). Drawing on the fieldwork, it might not be entirely inaccurate to say that for the majority of the interviewees "rural is a place of rest, alternative enjoyment, withdrawal and consumption" as Williams claims for the people who visit the countryside on weekends but they find their livelihood elsewhere (Williams, 1989b: 228).

Substantiating Williams' view, outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that the majority of the interviewees do not address the problems of production even though they have attempted to grow their own food:

The farmers do not care about nature and the health of his/her children. S/he does not care about what the next generations will have to suffer because of used pesticides and the pollution. S/he uses fertilizers. S/he uses many chemicals and does not care how this will influence other living creatures. S/he does not care even if s/he knows. At that time we ask them that if this is about income why you do not earn your life with drug

smuggling or with white slavery. I mean we try to tell them the right thing¹³⁹ (Marmariç-2).

They tend to think that using fertilizers or pesticides depend on villagers' own decisions independent from the production process and the economic needs compelling them. With this belief, they seek to produce their own food by applying alternative methods and want to be a model to the villagers. As an interviewee (female, 40) from İbrim says, agricultural techniques that are adopted by villagers are not seen as sustainable by members of initiatives:

We know nothing right now. If we are able to learn something, we want to help people and teach them something. We want to guide people and encourage them. For example, villagers in village A use pesticides and fertilizers in production. They polluted their soil with fertilizers and pesticides. We want to learn something and show them that it is possible to grow tomato without using fertilizers and pesticides because they cannot imagine how to plant something and how it grows without cultivation. We want to put theory into practice since till now we have learned only the theory of permaculture and Fukuoka¹⁴⁰ (İbrim).

¹³⁹ Çiftçilere mesela konuşurken şunu söylüyoruz yani. Ulaşmak çok zor çünkü adamın ürün ürettiği piyasanın standartları onu yanlış olan şeyi yapmaya zorluyor. Diyor ki; ben ihracatçıya kirazımı götürdüğüm zaman sapına bakıyor şöyle diyor. Orada kurt olduğuna dair bir iz görürse, yüzüne bile bakmıyor kirazın. Belki içinden bir tanesi öyle diyor. O adam o kirazın o hale gelmemesi için ne gerekiyorsa yapıyor. Umurunda değil doğa, umurunda değil çocuklarının sağlığı, umurunda değil sonraki kuşakların o ilaç birikiminden, kirlilikten dolayı başına ne geleceği, hiç umurunda değil. Suni gübreyi de kullanır, on tane yirmi tane değişik dönemde yapılan ilacı da kullanır, başka canlılara ne etkisi var, umursamaz. Bildiği halde bir de umursamaz. Biz de şunu söylüyoruz o zaman. Ya güzel kardeşim, madem her şey bu kadar kazançla ilgiliyse. O zaman niye bu kadar uğraşıyorsun ki bu işlerle, git uyuşturucu kaçakçılığı yap, git beyaz kadın ticareti yap. Onları niye yapmıyorsun. Yani şeye doğru anlatmaya çalışıyoruz.

¹⁴⁰ Çünkü biz daha bir şey bilmiyoruz. Hani insanlara ne gösterebiliriz. Eğer o kıvama gelirsek, gerçekten bir şeyler öğrenebilirsek çok isteriz tabii insanlara biz de yardımcı olalım, bir şeyler öğretmeye çalışalım vs. Biz de rehber olalım birilerine, cesaret verelim. O köyde mesela şu anda hiç ilaçsız, gübresiz tarım yapılmıyor. Topraklarını şu anda öldürmüş durumdalar. Hani istiyoruz ki biz bir şeyler öğrenelim, gösterelim onlara ilaçsız ve gübresiz de domates yetiştirebileceğini. Çünkü akıl sır erdiremiyorlar o toprak sürülmeden nasıl bir şey ekilir, nasıl büyür. Şu anda biz de onu deneyeceğiz. Çünkü hep teorik olarak öğrendik bunu Fukuoka'dan ve permakültürden ama.

As the statement shows, she, like most interviewees, attempts to teach and guide the villagers who already know how they engage in agriculture without using chemicals. Her and other interviewees' statements imply an "idealist position – the notion that people can be diverted from their set ways, and the ideologies that support them, by the power of example, logical and reasoning and persuasion" (Pepper, 1991: 165).

Here it should be mentioned that a few interviewees who also see alternative techniques as a solution to ecological crisis agree that permaculture and similar engagements is a class issue as the following statements reveal. A 46-year-old male interviewee who was among the founding members of Hocamköy and who organized the first permaculture workshop in Turkey in 1997 says that in Turkey "educated middle class and upper-middle class people are interested in permaculture" (Hocamköy-1). Another interviewee Ahlatdede-2 agreeing with Hocamköy-1 expresses his discontent with this situation as follows:

permaculture in Turkey is definitely a middle class engagement. I feel very uncomfortable with this. Courses and products are too expensive. Actually, this is not my concern. I do not want to be part of this¹⁴¹
(Ahlatdede-2).

It is known that ecovillages around the world, like ecovillage initiatives in Turkey, are allocated mainly to the middle class, "envisioned to promote sustainability" and by design are supposed to "reduce excessive consumption of nonrenewable resources, reduce dependence on private transportation, produce food for the community, and enhance relationships between neighbors in order to facilitate sharing" (Chitewere, 2010: 319). In terms of their declared goals, both ecovillages and ecovillage initiatives in Turkey seek to build a sustainable life outside 'mainstream' culture and based on 'green' themes

¹⁴¹ O anlamda Türkiye'de permakültür bayaa bir orta sınıf karakteri yansıtıyor. Ben bundan çok rahatsızım. Kurslar çok pahalı, ürünler çok pahalı, vs. Açıkçası bu beni hiç ilgilendirmiyor. Bunun bir parçası olmak da istemiyorum.

Their approach should remind us of the quotation from William Morris cited in Chapter 4. William Morris sees reconstitution of a simple peasant order and to have clean and natural order as existed before industrial production as a solution to the destructive modern social order. As Raymond Williams points out, this is the thinking still within the ecological movement. William Morris describes an ecological society that would be recognized by most greens. The green themes such as simple lifestyles and in harmony with nature which are explored by Morris are crucial regarding the main arguments of the study. Nevertheless, what is crucial for the discussion held here is William Morris' admission. Towards the end of his life William Morris admitted that he probably imagined that way "because he was born rich by inheritance and was always able to [...] earn a good living by doing the kind of satisfying work that other people actually wanted done" (Williams, 1989a: 217). William Morris' admission takes us again to the class composition of ecovillage initiatives. We need to take their class composition into consideration not because they also seek to organize their life around the green themes which are expressed by William Morris, but because they are able to earn a 'good' living enabling them to change their lifestyles and live voluntarily according to ecological principles. To change individually to avoid from consumerism or to join communes might seem irrelevant to being able to earn a good living, if we refer to Morris's green themes that are still dominant in green thinking. To put it better, the relationship between living more simply using of low technology in a commune and earning a good living might appear as unrelated because in prioritizing a simpler life the expectation is to earn and to consume less. But this would not be the case because to give up something 'voluntarily' and to build an ecological life necessitates earning a good living.

In the first part of this chapter, I discuss a strategy of lifestyle changes and try to focus on the class composition of members. As the discussions reveal, interviewees' alternative ways of life in rural areas is deeply connected with their class background and can hardly encompass other people, especially the villagers, if their goal is to be model to 'others'. Thus, it is not possible to suggest that they play an important role

in creating a sense of collectivity in rural areas. In the next section, I shall examine their community strategies and community politics to address whether to live in communes produce some changes.

6.4 Green Community Strategies

We need to transform oppressive capitalist society, Murray Bookchin argues, into an ecological society based on non-hierarchical relationships, humanly scaled communities, eco-technologies, organic agriculture and so on. Bookchin goes on to argue that humanly scaled communities, localism, self-sufficiency, eco-technologies and even confederation do not constitute a guarantee that an ecological society will be achieved because the notions of decentralized structures, humanly scaled communities that emphasize “localist isolation and a degree of self-sufficiency may lead to cultural parochialism and chauvinism” (Bookchin, 1990b, n.p.).

In this section, mentioning the community strategies of the selected ecovillage initiatives, I shall discuss whether they have political ramifications to constitute a form of an eco-community and to create a sense of collectivity as Bookchin stresses. It should be noted that lifestyle strategies and community strategies might overlap and “to the extent that living the community life amounts in any case to a change in lifestyle it is somewhat specious to distinguish between the two” (Dobson, 2001: 135). Nevertheless, it might not be inaccurate to discuss some strategies requiring a commune as part of the community strategies. I prefer to examine some green practices such as permaculture in this part because ecovillage initiatives started to adopt them after attempting to initiate ecovillages in rural areas.

Outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that in all ecovillage initiatives engagement in agriculture using alternative techniques to conventional ones is the dominant concern. Certainly, they adopt other strategies regarding other aspects of living in ecovillage initiatives such as eco-building or generating one’s own energy. But these are not among their main focuses. I try to emphasize each strategy cited by

interviewees. Because some are mentioned in discussing lifestyle strategies, I only refer to them.

6.4.1 Permaculture, Natural Farming and Organic Farming

Alternative technologies that people living in eco-settlements use vary from environmental building to renewable energy, from eco-sanitation to the use of alternative agriculture techniques. These alternative technologies distinguish ecovillage homes from conventional homes (Kasper, 2008: 18). In this context, the main manifestation of alternative technology is permaculture design system which includes other alternative techniques.

For green theorists, David Pepper argues, “one could start almost with a blank sheet of paper, designing appropriate physical, social and economic [...] structures in accordance with permacultural principles and practice” (Pepper, 1996: 318). Permaculture is a “conscious design and maintenance of productive ecosystems to give them the diversity, stability and resilience of natural ecosystems” (ibid, 316). Permaculture, as an ecological design system and not only an agriculture technique, was presaged by Henry David Thoreau. Thoreau is one of the early nineteenth century preservationists. He fled the city like Ralph Waldo Emerson and spent two years in Walden Pond to experience simple and self-sufficient living. Thoreau advocated “scientific forest management by replanting along natural lines” and “foreshadowed bioregionalism, advocating loyalty to one’s birthplace, where one belongs and can find all” (Pepper, 1996: 198, see Chapter 4). Here it should be mentioned that one of the firsts who was thinking about these issues is Aldo Leopold, a forester, wildlife manager and pioneer of the wilderness system. It is argued that the ‘modern’ nature-first perspective approach was first formulated by Leopold. Leopold argues that the natural environment itself has intrinsic value and human beings, rather than dominating and exploiting the natural environment, should see themselves as members of a biotic community. In *A Sand County Almanac*, Leopold sets forth the concept of land ethic, the “notion of human responsibility to the natural

environment” (Leopold, 1993: 373). Leopold developed ethics in sequence. The first principle, he writes, “dealt with the relation between individuals.” The other “dealt with the relation between the individual and society. The land ethic “simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively, the land.” A land ethic undoubtedly cannot prevent “the use of these ‘resources,’ but it does affirm their right to continued existence” and it changes the “role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member or citizen of it” (ibid, 374, italics in original).

As mentioned above, the origin of permaculture dates back to early nineteenth century with the approaches of Thoreau, Emerson and Leopold. Yet the term permaculture was coined by Bill Mollison, a field biologist and teacher and his student David Holmgren, an environmental designer, author and futurist in the 1970s, i.e. in the period when people were seeking alternative lifestyles. The term derives from ‘permanent’, meaning indefinitely sustainable and ‘culture’, which was originally derived from ‘agriculture’ but now refers to all cultural activity. Permaculture is a vision of sustainable culture based on low-energy technologies designed in harmony with ecosystems (Litfin, 2009: 129). It does not only focus on small-scale sustainable agriculture but rather seeks to minimize waste and loss of energy through alternative technologies such as composting toilets, food and agricultural waste, the use of local organic building materials such as straw bales and the use of renewable energy sources (ibid, 129-130). Permaculture has three principles: care of the earth, care of people, and setting limits to population and consumption. Mollison argues that in permaculture, humanity in its current mindlessness is seen as the one disturbance that cannot be tolerated by the earth. For Mollison, the solution is to learn to respect all life, refuse all authority and accept only personally responsible decisions, and to link science and mysticism as the Gaia hypothesis suggests. The Gaia hypothesis of James Lovelock is an “alternative to that pessimistic view which sees nature as a primitive force to be subdued and conquered” (Lovelock, quoted by Mollison, 1988: 2). Many Gaianists, particularly deep ecologists and New Agers attribute intelligence to Gaia. Deep ecologists argue

that the parts of nature possess a certain independence from humans. This is the intrinsic value of nature (Naess, 1989: 11). It should be noted that social ecology like gaianism and deep ecology addresses the elimination of domination of nature that can be achievable after eliminating the domination of human by human, and the entire hierarchical structure within society (Bookchin, 1990a: 60). But while gaianism lends itself to New Age mysticism and calls for respect for nature's intrinsic worth, social ecology, especially Bookchin, is highly critical of mystical ecologies, particularly deep ecology. Bookchin's social ecology attacks deep ecology because of its emphasis on self-realization, spirituality and because it focuses on social symptoms rather than social causes and provides a standard recipe for a 'sustainable' future involving lifestyles based on austerity (Bookchin, 1990a; Bookchin 1991b). Thus, at first glance, permaculture seems to be influenced by social ecology with its stress on elimination of authority but in fact, it is a perspective that is close to Taoism.

Permaculture which "mostly predates the ecovillage movement" and "powerfully informs it" endorses bottom-up social change, self-reliance, responsibility, and the functions of living things (Litfin, 2009: 129; Mollison, 1998: 2, 10). Permaculture as a design system in which different techniques such as renewable energy, organic agriculture, recycling, etc. are brought together has become more popular within ecovillage initiatives and among 'imagined eco-communities' in Turkey as well, as the increasing number of organized permaculture design certificate (PDC) courses would indicate.¹⁴² In Bingöl Elmas' documentary *Bir Avuç Toprak* (A Handful of Land) (2012) Mustafa Bakır, an architect, a permaculture consultant, designer and also a resident of Marmariç says that in Turkey there are two main projects that attempt to practice permaculture in a large scale namely Bayramiç and Marmariç.

¹⁴² Permaculture design certificate courses have been organized since 2009 in different cities of Turkey with different consultants/designers/teachers. These courses are mostly offered through the The Permaculture Research Institute of Turkey which was founded to "expand the knowledge and practice of permaculture as a whole-system design science and to primarily facilitate the uptake of permaculture throughout the Republic of Turkey."¹⁴² Permaculture Research Institute of Turkey works in collaboration with The Permaculture Research Institute of Australia and other Permaculture Research Institutes worldwide. <http://permacultureturkey.org>.

Bayramiç, as mentioned above, is an initiative to create a self-sufficient, sustainable settlement reclaiming local seeds, based on permaculture philosophy and designed according to principles of permaculture. In a permaculture meeting held in Tayfa Café June 30, 2012 Mustafa Alper Ülgen, a founding member of Bayramiç, said that they organize their lives in Bayramiç according to permaculture principles. For this reason, they took permaculture design courses and, in turn, have started to host permaculture design certificate courses. Likewise, Marmariç Permaculture: Ecological Life Association as an ecovillage initiative is based on permaculture principles. Marmariç is hosting the Permaculture Research Institute of Turkey in collaboration with The Permaculture Research Institute of Australia.¹⁴³ Permaculture has a significant place in the lives of the residents of Marmariç because they see it as a solution to environmental degradation. Furthermore, their permaculture courses are important sources of income. A 45-year-old male interviewee, who studied history and worked in the private sector before moving to Marmariç in 2004 and who lived by himself in Marmariç as a vanguard for five years explains what permaculture means for them:

Permaculture should not be considered merely as an agriculture technique. It is a holistic approach. It is kind of a life perspective. I am a sparing person. I am sparing of my possessions. This is my personality. This is not something special. There are many people like me but a man [Bill Mollison] outlined a theoretical framework of this under the title of permaculture. The first law of permaculture is the Law of Conservative Use. In the second law it is said that you should not use sources unless you really need them. I think that this is very important. Furthermore, whenever you decide that you need them, you should use them carefully. Everybody decides what s/he needs because the opposite is not possible. You should be clever¹⁴⁴ (Marmariç-1).

¹⁴³ <http://marmaric.org>.

¹⁴⁴ Yani permakültürü sadece bir tarımsal üretim yöntemi gibi de düşünmemek lazım. Yani daha bütünsel bir yaklaşım, hayata karşı bir bakış açısı. Tutumluyumdur, iyi bakarım eşyalarım falan hani. Öyle bir karakter durumu oluyor, hani özel bir şey değil. Benim gibi bir sürü insan vardır ama burada

As the interviewee explains, permaculture is not thought of only as an agricultural technique, but instead as a design system which also offers an alternative to conventional agriculture. It is known that the critique of traditional and industrial agriculture, John Vandermeer says, has given birth to alternatives collectively known as the alternative agriculture movement. While some criticize the movement by saying that it is sometimes contradictory and too often romantic, some others defend it. The nature of alternative agriculture, John Vandermeer argues, is not that clear. Even the name used to encompass titles as permaculture is diverse –alternative, holistic, sustainable, ecological, organic agriculture, etc. (Vandermeer, 1995: 201). (Vandermeer, 1995: 201). In this context, the alternative agriculture mostly refers to permaculture along with Fukuoka’s natural farming. As mentioned above, all interviewees without exception use alternative technologies. What they have in common and what constitutes the majority of their daily life in rural areas is the production of their own food. As Masanobu Fukuoka, a farmer, author of *The One-Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming* and source of inspiration of most interviewees, formulates; they want to be the model of the “new farmer” in rural areas while producing their own food:

If you look across the country, you might notice that quite a few communes have been springing up recently. If they are called gatherings of hippies, well, they could be viewed that way too, I suppose. But in living and working together, finding the way back to nature, they are the model of the “new farmer.” They understand that to become firmly rooted means to live from the yields of their own land. A community that cannot manage to produce its own food will not last long” (Fukuoka, 2001: 116).

yani bunların bu teorik çerçevesini yani permakültür adı altında adam oturmuş işte nedir, şeyi yazmış. Law of Conservative Use. Gerektiğinde kullanım kuralı diyor birincisi mesela. İkincisinde de bunu açıklarsak diyor ki; gerçekten ama gerçekten ihtiyacın oluncaya kadar hiçbir kaynağa dokunmayacaksın. Bu çok önemli bir şey bence ve ihtiyacın olduğuna karar verdiğin zamanda o kaynağı kullanırken de son derece tutumlu şekilde kullanacaksın. Bunlara herkes kendisi karar veriyor. Çünkü aksi mümkün değil. Kafanı çalıştıracaksın.

Most interviewees adhere to local experiences and traditions but tend to think that they have almost disappeared. In their perceptions, even the villagers have already abandoned these traditions and started to use chemicals and pesticides while growing food. Along with permaculture, Masanobu Fukuoka's natural way of farming is apparently influential on some interviewees. The main difference between permaculture and natural farming is that permaculture is considered as a conscious design system. But the interviewee Ahlatdede-2 states that this is not the only difference. For him, while permaculture offers a system that can be installed on a broader scale, natural farming is entirely based on personal transformation. It is a spiritualistic approach. Masanobu Fukuoka, who believes that organic farming and factory farming are not natural, suggests a natural way of farming or to put it better, 'do-nothing' agricultural method. In Fukuoka's natural way of farming, there is no need to use fertilizer and insecticide and no need to make compost because nature is in perfect balance. For Fukuoka, when farmers began to grow food to make money, s/he forgot the real principles of agriculture. Thus, if the farmer grows the food s/he needs without thinking about making money, s/he would do much better. His main argument is that if people follow this line of thought, they will have enough to eat without struggling. In his opinion, "this line of reasoning not only applies to agriculture, but to other aspects of human society as well" (Fukuoka, 2001: 16). By this, Fukuoka means the total lifestyle devoting attention to health, nutrition, simple living and so on (Fukuoka, 2001). He sees the necessity of bringing about a complete change in the economic and social structures but, he, like most interviewees of this study, holds producers responsible for creating this change. For example, he suggests that "if crops were to be grown without agricultural chemicals, fertilizer, or machinery, the giant chemical companies would become unnecessary" and the companies would collapse (ibid, 15, 46, 166). As his arguments reveal, he, like most interviewees, does not address the capitalist system and historical, social and economic structures. Though he criticizes corporations or companies, he tends to think that they can be destroyed by individual efforts. In Turkey, as mentioned during one of the sessions in Seed Exchange Festival that was held in October 2013 in Ankara, there is only one farm applying Fukuoka's natural way of farming. Üç

Elma Dođal Tarım iftliđi (Three Apples Natural Agriculture Farm) located in ankırı in Central Anatolia has been producing food by applying principles of natural farming since 2000 and doing this by using local seeds and without using any fertilizers including compost.¹⁴⁵

In addition, some eco-settlements are based on both permaculture principles and natural farming such as İmece Evi: Farm for Natural Life and Ecological Solutions and Alakır. İmece Evi began as a farmstead in 2007 and then it turned out to be an educational center as a resident expressed in a video on İmece Evi created by Yađmur Telli Yücel and İnan Mayıs Aru in 2013. The initiator of İmece Evi (male, 50) studied chemistry and used to do business in İstanbul before moving to rural area. He defines himself as being an activist since he was 14-years-old. Though he did not become a member of the first Green Party of Turkey, he was involved in the meetings held in the beginning. He calls the agriculture technique that they use in İmece Evi a hybrid, a synthesis of permaculture and natural farming. He added that they do not give a specific name to their technique.

Similarly, two residents of an eco-settlement located in Alakır Valley in Antalya on the Turkish Mediterranean coast adopt both permaculture principles and principles of Fukuoka's natural farming. Tuđba (female, 38) and Birhan (male, 39) have been living in Alakır since 2004. After leaving İstanbul for several reasons including to avoid overconsumption, they bought a piece of land in Alakır Valley. As it will be elaborated in the following sections of this chapter, they have changed their lifestyles to show that another world is possible.¹⁴⁶ They built a house by using local materials and started to produce their own food. While doing this they adopted a natural way of farming and permaculture principles:

¹⁴⁵ <http://www.ucelmadogaltarim.com>.

¹⁴⁶ <http://www.dogadernegi.org/baska-bir-dunya-mumkun.aspx>.

Our main concern is to live without damaging any living organism. This means not to intervene into the pace of nature or to intervene in it as little as possible. We produce our foods without damaging the land with “war” tools such as hoe and shovel. We can say that we use the land with the same intention and awareness as Fukuoka. Interpretations of permaculture can also be used for this purpose¹⁴⁷ (Alakır).

They see hoe and shovel as “war” tools much like in Fukuoka’s approach to cultivation. Fukuoka argues that if the soil is cultivated, the natural environment is “changed beyond recognition.” For this reason, cultivation of the soil should be abandoned. Instead of using man-made chemicals and machinery, the modest measures such as spreading straw should be practiced to make the environment gain its natural balance back (Fukuoka, 2001: 20). It should be noted that most interviewees feel close to Fukuoka’s philosophy even if they mostly adopt permaculture principles. As Ahlatdede-2 expresses it, Fukuoka’s approach is more spiritualistic while permaculture operates like a prescription for people who seek to apply alternative agriculture technique. Here it should also be remembered that while the couple living in Alakır see hoe and shovel as “war” tools harming the soil, they have started to use a car, a mobile telephone and a computer to struggle against hydroelectric power plant construction. For them, this is temporary and necessary for their struggle. They explain why they bought all these technological products with financial support from their families as follows:

When we moved to Alakır ten years ago, we did not have a car, a computer, a cell phone and electricity. We needed none of them. We did not go to town. [...] We did not need electricity. The light of living without electricity is unbelievable. The communication with the environment and nature was so satisfying that we did not need computer and internet technologies. But all these were our personal choices. Five years ago when

¹⁴⁷ En ufak bir canlıya dahi zarar vermeden yaşamaya odaklıyız. Bu da olabildiğince az ya da hiç müdahale etmemek demek doğanın akışına. Toprağı çapa ve kürek gibi “savaş” aletleriyle yaralamadan ürün alıyoruz. Fukuoka ile benzer niyet ve farkındalıkla toprağa davrandığımızı söyleyebiliriz. Permakültürün çoğu çözümlmeleri bu niyetle uygulanabilir.

we decided to struggle against hydroelectric power plants, we bought a car to attend meetings and to go to courts and a computer, cell phone and the Internet to make our voice heard. We obtained a solar panel to generate our own energy¹⁴⁸ (Alakır).

Alakır's changing daily habits and practices in rural area show again that it is not easy to achieve the internal consistency that is sought by people who adopt green lifestyles. The other crucial point is that while they explain their use of technology for 'legitimate' reasons, they do not address other social conditions underlying people's use of agricultural tools or machinery or other technological products. It might not be inaccurate to say that their approach to technology is not so much different from that of the Fifth Estate that is harshly criticized by Bookchin. As Bookchin states, "the collective producing "Fifth Estate found it could not do without a computer and was "forced" to purchase one – issuing the [...] disclaimer, "We hate it!" For Bookchin, to disseminate this "hatred" of computers by using them is another manifestation of lifestyle anarchism. From this perspective, individuals adapt to nonhuman nature rather than intervene in it and they live in "harmony" with existing reality, like the couple living in Alakır (Bookchin, 1998: 49).

During the fieldwork, organic farming was not mentioned as much as permaculture and natural farming. Only Güneşköy engages in organic farming and Kır Çocukları is planning to engage in organic farming. Because organic farming is not based on the similar working principles with permaculture, it is generally not preferred by interviewees. For example, while organic farming promotes the use of fertilizers that are not chemical, permaculture promotes recycling of people's wastes as fertilizer.

¹⁴⁸ On yıl önce Alakır'a gelip yerleştiğimizde ne araba, ne bilgisayar, ne telefon nede elektriğimiz vardı. Bunların hiçbirine ihtiyaç duymadığımız gibi şehre bile hiç inmiyor. [...] Elektriğe hiç ihtiyaç duymadık. Elektriksizliğin aydınlığı inanılmazdır. Telefon yada bilgisayar internet gibi iletişim teknolojilerine hiç ihtiyaç duymadık. Doğadaki ve etraftaki iletişimin tatminkar zenginliği ve doyuruculuğunun yanında diğerlerine hiç ihtiyaç duymadık. [...] Ancak bunlar bizim bireysel tercihlerimizdi. 5 yıl önce HESlerle birlikte başlayan saldırılardan sonra aldığımız mücadele kararı doğrultusunda, mahkemelere, toplantılara... gidebilmek için araba, sesimizi duyurabilmek için bilgisayar, telefon, internet.. ve onların enerjisini karşılayabilmek için bir güneş paneli edindik.

Also, advocates of permaculture do not consider it merely as an agriculture technique unlike organic farming. As being different from organic farming and other agriculture techniques, permaculture is accepted as a holistic approach to the design of human and natural systems.

In this part of this chapter, I try to focus on the place of permaculture, natural farming and organic farming in everyday lives of the members of ecovillage initiatives. Certainly, there are other methods they use in their alternative ways of living. While some methods place an emphasis on wise husbandry of energy sources according to permaculture principles, some regard alternative economies. In the following section, I shall discuss other alternatives cited by the interviewees and observed during the fieldwork.

6.4.2 Eco-Technologies and Alternative Economic Systems

The environment, Murray Bookchin argues, is rapidly degrading because of agribusiness, the use of pesticides and synthetic fertilizers, nuclear power plants, and so on. Ecological interests “require that we move toward ecological technologies and render our technological interaction with nature creative rather than destructive” (Bookchin, 1990a:189). Ecological society should also be based on the use of a region’s resources, minerals, soil, water, animals and plants without violating ecological principles and using eco-technologies including solar and wind energy, heat pumps, vegetable fuels and solar ponds (Bookchin, 1986: 141). But the precondition of such a change is social, i.e. the abolition of hierarchy in all its forms (Bookchin, 1990a).

In terms of the framework of this thesis, the majority of the ecovillage initiatives, as mentioned earlier, promote alternative, appropriate and local technology instead of destructive technologies. They adopt similar alternative technologies to those that Bookchin mentions. Some generate their own energy by solar or wind panels. Some others build their houses by using local materials and according to ecological

architecture principles (e.g. straw bales, cob house and stone house). They compost and recycle. A few initiatives use some eco-technologies that are not common among others. For example, in Marmariç, Ormanevi and Ahlatdede rocket stove that is designed to use energy efficiently is used. Güneşköy developed a project for the vegetable oil powered tractor. It should be noted that in these initiatives, there is no trace of ‘romantic’ anti-technologism but rather technology which is accepted as alternative and appropriate is favored. Most use high technology products such as car, computer and smart phones as mentioned in discussing lifestyle strategies. But all the interviewees made their opposition to hydroelectric power plants, thermal power plants and gold mining activities. As mentioned earlier, some interviewees are active in struggles against hydroelectric power plants and gold mining activities.

Besides these, a few interviewees adopt some other alternative practices. Many communities and ecovillages around the world seek to create an alternative economy to the ‘dominant’ economy by adopting varied strategies such as local LETS (Local Exchange Trading Scheme) or gift economy. Local currencies like LETS circulate at a local scale and within a defined space. Money does not change hands because there is no ‘money’ but instead credits and debits are recorded. It has both disadvantages such as inflation or hoarding and some benefits including simplicity, and the personal nature of transactions. In these systems, money stays local and these sorts of community strategies can anticipate the “decentralized communitarian nature of the sustainable society” (Dobson, 2001: 141, 142). In Turkey, especially in rural areas there is a tradition called imece (collective work) which can be considered as an alternative method. It is a kind of solidarity organization based on the idea that some tasks in the village are taken collectively and voluntarily by the villagers such as construction of school building, collective work during weddings and funerals or helping each other in agricultural activities without expectation of money. Though the alternative economy is not novel in Turkey in terms of rural practices, it is recent with respect to practices building a network among the urban dwellers. One strategy mentioned by a few interviewees and also adopted by members of ‘imagined eco-communities’ is gift economy within which people share their possessions, services,

knowledge, skills, and experiences etc. without expectation of anything in return. Some examples of gift economy are time banking, couchsurfing, freecycle, rainbow gatherings and so on.

One practice cited by a resident of Marmariç and by residents of Alakır is Rainbow Gatherings. The alternative spiritual gathering called Rainbow was first formed in the “United States in 1972 by “Flower Children” who were disillusioned by what they saw as the commercialized state of extant festivals. In response, they organized an alternative and free festival designed to celebrate the ideas of “equality and love” (Tavory & Goodman, 2009: 267). Rainbow Gatherings started as an alternative to mainstream popular culture and to practice ideals of peace, love and harmony. The interviewee Marmariç-2 expresses that Rainbow gatherings started to be held in Turkey after 1997. The World Rainbow Gathering took place in Turkey in May of 2005. He goes on to say that even it was loosely organized, Rainbow Gatherings turned into a movement in Turkey that made almost a thousand people come together. After joining a Rainbow Gathering held in Slovenia, in 1994, he joined another gathering held in Hungary, in 1999 together with some residents of the shared house in Kuzguncuk. He expressed that these gatherings became influential on his decision to move to rural area. The Marmariç initiative initially adopted the decision-making of Rainbow Gatherings, which is accepted as decentralized and nonhierarchical. Nevertheless, after a while this method was abandoned by its members because it was dysfunctional. A few members’ participation in some Rainbow Gatherings and their co-housing in İstanbul, based on face-to-face decision-making process motivated them to move to rural areas. But after settling down, they returned to conventional methods. Similarly, Tuğba and Birhan from Alakır were influenced by Rainbow Gatherings because, they say, they found an opportunity to live close to nature with people from different religions or races. They said that their life has changed completely after attending Rainbow Gathering (Rainbow Family of Living Light) held in Turkey in 1997 because they realized that they are not alone. They continue to say that after attending this gathering, they have had a big family

composed of individuals who have similar thoughts and dreams with them, i.e. who seek freedom, peace, love and nature.

Likewise, some other ecovillage initiatives, like Kır Çocukları, try to organize their all activities within gift economy as members of the initiative mention in some mailing groups such as Permaculture Turkey and on its website. They express that their shared knowledge and experiences, time, conversation and a product that is produced during the workshops are their gifts to participants.¹⁴⁹ Nevertheless, they determine their costs and the minimum financial contribution that can be made with participants of the workshops. This means that they are not entirely without expectation of money. Some interviewees emphasize time banking within gift economy. To mention briefly, in time banking, units of time are used as currency instead of money. People voluntarily exchange their experiences, skills, services and so on. In Turkey, people who want to use this alternative “monetary” system come together under Zumbara.¹⁵⁰ Zumbara is defined as an alternative economic system platform within which members exchange their two hours services in return of two hours services of other members.¹⁵¹ In this system, each service has equal value and is valued with time. Some experts from Zumbara organize workshops on gift economy to talk about “how people can build more meaningful lives by focusing on giving more rather than taking more.” The workshops are also organized in gift economy. This means that “participants determine the amount they want to give to the facilitators according to their income and their feeling of gratitude.”¹⁵² A 61-year-old male interviewee, a member of Güneşköy and an academician explains why he sees these kind of systems as an alternative to the ‘dominant’ system as follows:

¹⁴⁹ <http://kircocuklari.wordpress.com/merhaba>.

¹⁵⁰ In Turkish zaman means time and kumbara means piggy bank. Zumbara (Zaman Kumbarası) is created with combination of these two words. <http://www.zumbara.com>.

¹⁵¹ <http://www.zumbara.com/nasil-calisir>.

¹⁵² <http://www.yesilist.com/cms.php?u=armagan-ekonomisi-101&id=948>.

Your time is important. Here the criterion is time. There is a transfer without using money. It starts with a specific group. You include your neighbor into the system and then s/he includes his/her neighbor. It can become widespread like this. This depends on people's eagerness. If people are not eager to be in it, it cannot work. I am not expecting a systemic change. To expect a systemic change is a dream. I am responsible only for myself. I can change only myself¹⁵³ (Güneşköy-2).

The interviewee Güneşköy-2 does not live in a commune but he seeks to live in a commune in the long term. Furthermore, he sees himself as part of a community consisting of like-minded people. David Pepper argues that “communes are seen primarily as a place where members realise themselves” and “this makes them ‘irrelevant to society as a whole’, offering no serious solution for an ecological future” (Pepper, 1991: 55). It may be accurate to suggest that the interviewee's statement saying that he is responsible only for himself reflects Pepper's critique directed to members of ‘modern’ communes. Theirs, Pepper goes on, is a collective escape (ibid).

Alternative economy practices have some benefits as Dobson mentions, but they also come with some problems. The main problem with alternative economic efforts is that in the end they “fit well into a capitalist society” and “they'll become part of the market system, whatever the intentions of their founders.” Although such efforts are important, they “become bourgeois enterprises in their own right” (Biehl & Bookchin, 1998: 160). As mentioned in a meeting about the slow food movement in Turkey (see Chapter 5), held in Tayfa Café in 2013, the main problem with alternative economic practices is that because people live under the capitalist system, their evaluation criterion for their products or their time might still become money, not ‘needs’. Even if some people act as compatible with the logic of alternative

¹⁵³ Zamanınız önemli. Burada kıtas o oluyor. Hiç para dönmeden biri birinden öbürüne aktarım oluyor. Belli kitleyle başlar. Siz komşunuzu dâhil edersiniz, o komşusunu. Böyle bir şeyle büyüyebilir. Bu isteğe bağlı. İnsanlar istemezse olmaz zaten. Benim hiç öyle bir beklentim yok, bütün sistem değişsin. Onu beklemek biraz hayal. Ben kendimden sorumluyum. Ancak ben kendimi değiştirebilirim.

economy system, it might fail because not all the parties embrace its working principle. To give an example, one individual produces olive oil, the other makes soap and they want to exchange their products because one needs soap, the other needs olive oil. It can be argued that because the labour and the time needed to produce them are not equal or not considered as equal, they might have some problems in exchanging these products without considering their exchange value in the market. The following statement of the interviewee Dedetepe-1 exactly clarifies how these alternative systems fail and become part of the market system:

we exchange our products by using their sale prices in the market as base. Otherwise, it will be difficult. I make a discount for you and you make a discount for me. When the issue is production and costs, everything will be complicated¹⁵⁴ (Dedetepe-1).

As Dedetepe-1 expresses, members of alternative economy systems expect that money does not change hands but people exchange their products on the basis of their market values. But this does not prevent them from fitting well into a capitalist system as Biehl and Bookchin argue.

The other strategy that is also based on exchange is TaTuTa project (Eco-Agro Tourism and Voluntary Knowledge and Skills Exchange on Organic Farms) organized by Buğday Derneği. As detailed in discussing green lifestyles, it is based on volunteering on organic farms in exchange for accommodation. While TaTuTa makes volunteers and host farms exchange their skills, labour, knowledge, food, etc. it plays a central role in the constitution of a ‘green’ community. Nevertheless, as mentioned earlier, this project necessitates its being assessed from other aspects in addition to its role forming a green community such as the exploitation of labour.

¹⁵⁴ Onun üzerinden takas yapıyoruz. Satış fiyatı üzerinden yapıyoruz takası. [...] Başka türlü çok zor çünkü. Bana indirim yap ben de sana indirim yapayım falan. Üretim, maliyet falan deyince çok karışıyor işler.

Certainly, there might be other strategies requiring a commune to be practiced and at the same time playing a role in building a green community. I try to mention some of those that are important in the everyday lives of interviewees and members of ‘imagined eco-communities’. In the following section, I aim to examine the main motivations of the interviewees in moving to rural areas and initiating an ecovillage or an eco-settlement.

6.5 Motives for Building Green Communities

Creating ‘dropout’ communities, withdrawing from ‘mainstream’ society or living communally have usually been seen as a strategy and a response to the capitalist system, urban life and the problems associated with them including environmental degradation, materialism and social alienation. The idea of the urban village, David Harvey argues, or some kind of communitarian solution to urban problems is both appealing and powerful and this is not only because of the nostalgia for some lost “mythical world of intimate village life.” It is known that “most of the populist migration out of villages arose because they were so oppressive to the human spirit and so otiose as a form of social-political organization.” The urban village or communitarian solution to urban problems also appeals because it is believed that community, community spirit and community solidarity rescue us from materialism, market-oriented greed and social dissolution lying at the root of all urban ills (Harvey, 1996: 425).

In this context, all interviewees without exception moved to rural areas from the big cities of Turkey, namely İstanbul, Ankara and Antalya. The majority used to live in İstanbul. The other members and interviewees who have not moved to rural areas yet still live in big cities including Ankara, İstanbul and İzmir. As mentioned in Chapter 2, all interviewed members, except one, are university graduates. Some had rural life experience only during their childhood. Others experienced rural life for the first time in their life only after initiating an ecovillage. Almost all interviewees quit their full-time jobs. They decided to live by adopting lifestyle and community strategies

mentioned above. While some interviewees moved to rural areas to build a life based on these green principles and strategies, some adopted them after moving to rural areas. To a certain extent, these principles, practices and strategies give an idea how members of ecovillage initiatives seek to organize their daily lives in their eco-settlements. Nevertheless, these do not always and necessarily clarify their motivations of moving to rural areas and initiating an ecovillage.

In this study, it is difficult to hold a broader discussion on the motivations of the interviewees in initiating an ecovillage because it is difficult to mention a communal life in current ecovillage initiatives in Turkey. Nevertheless, in the following section, as I do in discussing lifestyle strategies, I aim to focus on motivations and reasons cited by each interviewee. While some decided to withdraw from cities to grow their own food, some did so to avoid over-consumption. In addition, when mentioning their goals almost all interviewees stressed the impossibility of achieving these in the cities. Though each interviewee expresses his/her motivation in changing his/her lifestyle differently, the cited motivations and reasons are common and closely connected. To live close to nature or to move back to nature, to avoid urban 'ills' and consumerism, and personal reasons are common to the majority of the interviewees. I shall discuss these under the titles of anti-urbanism, anti-consumerism and individualistic/'hedonistic' motivations. Here I should state that their motivations and reasons are accompanied by their declared ecological concerns. But the main question is whether they can signal the possibility of creating an eco-community and a sense of alternative political collectivity which comes closer to Bookchin's eco-communities or instead whether they reflect the self-seeking reality of communes as Pepper argues.

6.5.1 Anti-Urbanism

Anti-urbanism is a main feature of romantic thought and in town and country dualism, country is often 'romanticized'. As discussed in Chapter 4, the country implies the idea of a natural way of life, peace and innocence. On the other hand, the

town appears as a place of noise, worldliness and ambition. Even if the cities change, certain images and associations persist (Williams, 1973: 289).

In this context, anti-urbanism manifests itself first in interviewees' desire to be close to nature or return to nature. As discussed in Chapter 4, "back-to-nature sentiment has had periodic revivals in the ebb and flow of modern capitalism" (Smith, 1988: 280). Thus, similar to 'dropout' communities of the 1960s and the 1970s in the West, ecovillage initiatives in Turkey seek to restore the close links with nature. The interviewees' past experiences from their childhood period appears as one of their motivations to move to rural areas as the following statement expresses:

It is about awareness. Why do I eat this food? Why do I produce this waste? I do not have to eat this bread. I mean that this is all about awareness. I am aware of this because I grew up with my grandparents. They moved to a village. They had their own chickens and vegetables. They were growing their own food. I experienced all these tastes and lived in peace in a cob house. Now, I try to grow my own food¹⁵⁵ (Bayramiç).

In a similar vein, the interviewee Güneşköy-1 said that even if people think that their connection with nature was lost, eventually the soil will attract them and they remember their need to live close to the natural world because people have this in their memories. Similarly, Güneşköy-2 thinks that everybody longs for returning to nature and reviving life in the villages and people are in need of living harmoniously with the natural world as well as with one another. Most interviewees seek to move back to nature and want to live in harmony with nature as the interviewee Hocamköy-1 explicitly expresses while explaining the major goal of the Hocamköy

¹⁵⁵ Farkındalıkla ilgili bir şey, farkındalık, yani bunu fark etmek. Ya ben niye bu çöpü üretiyorum, bu gıdayı niye yiyorum, bu ekmeği yemek zorunda değilim. Yani bu farkındalıkla ilgili bir şey. Bu temelde vardı bende çünkü ben küçükken dedemin babaannemin yanında büyüdüm. Köye yerleşmişlerdi, tavukları vardı, sebzeleri vardı. Tam şimdi düşündüğümüz anlamda kendi gıdalarını üreterek yaşıyorlardı. Ben o lezzetleri, o tatları, o huzuru, o zaman yaşamıştım kerpiç bir evde. [...] Şimdi ben kendi gıdamı burada üretmeye çalışıyorum.

project: “Our main motivation was to have a communal life based on solidarity and in harmony with nature.”¹⁵⁶

The Hocamköy Project before anything else is a back-to-nature project. It is an attempt to re-find the poetry which disappeared as a result of being disconnecting from nature. Our motto is the love of human being, nature and life. Our way is the poetry of life. The source of our power is the enthusiasm coming from our faith in a more equal and freer world (Buğday Bülteni, 1998: 9).

Here the crucial point is that despite their desire of being “closer to nature”, most of them have not achieved a permanent and communal life in rural areas yet. Furthermore, while expressing their motivations of returning to nature, the majority of the interviewees, except for members of some initiatives including Hocamköy, Kardeş Bitkiler and Marmariç, did not emphasize communal life in rural areas. As discussed earlier, Hocamköy project ended without having a communal life experience in rural areas. Marmariç had a co-housing experience in İstanbul and this made Marmariç being closer to communal life that largely is not observable in other initiatives. On the other hand, it appears that this former communal life experience made Marmariç more introverted as one of its former member, who lived in Marmariç for two years expressed it during interview. As he said, members of Marmariç who know each other from the Kuzguncuk co-housing experience have a settled common language that cannot be easily understood and accepted by other people. Likewise, Kardeş Bitkiler was initiated by a group of people who imagine a world in which people live in harmony with nature. According to the interview I conducted with a member of Kardeş Bitkiler in 2011, four or five members were planning to move to rural area in two years to live communally and to live outside the system. But as of 2013, there was no one living permanently in Tahtacıörencik. As the informal conversations held during some meetings reveal, all members of

¹⁵⁶ Temel itici güç dayanışmacı ortak yaşam ve doğa ile bütün bir yaşam kurgusu hayali idi.

Kardeş Bitkiler keep working and living in the cities and they visit the settlement on weekends and engage in agricultural activities.

While some interviewees do not call their attempt at being “closer to nature” as a ‘romantic’ reaction, some explicitly admit that their initial motivation for moving to rural areas was romantic, like the interviewee Marmariç-1:

We were dreaming at those times [he refers to the period when they were living in the city]. We were dreaming that we had a house on a land like this [he means Marmariç] and we were engaging in rock climbing behind this house. It was completely a romantic thing at those times¹⁵⁷ (Marmariç-1).

In a similar vein, another resident of Marmariç expressed that their initial dreams were romantic and naïve but after moving to rural area permaculture had become an important part of their daily lives (Marmariç-2). The other manifestation of anti-urbanism among the interviewees regards working and living conditions in the cities as the following statement reveals:

We get bored of the system, the work and traffic. Why are we insisting on this damn thing? We are trying to develop different solutions. Our lives are not within reason. You have to work eleven hours, seven hours for sleep. You have four or five hours free time. On weekends you go out for drink. Urban life. I think that we pay a price. I do not want benefits [of the urban life]. I will not pay a price for these benefits or I will pay less¹⁵⁸ (Kardeş Bitkiler).

¹⁵⁷ O zamanlarda böyle hayal kurardık. Bir gün böyle bir arazide bir evimiz olacak, efendim arkasında kaya tırmancaz bilmem ne falan filan. Tamamen romantik bir şeydi o zamanlar.

¹⁵⁸ Sistemden bunaldık. İşten, trafikten. Lanet olan şeyin içinde niye diretiyoruz. Değişik çözüm önerileri üretmeye çalışıyoruz. Yaşadığımız hayatları akıl mantık almıyor. On bir saat git-gel iş, yedi saat uyu. Kendine dört-beş saat kalıyor. Hafta sonu da çık iç. Kent hayatı. Bedel ödüyorum diye düşünüyoruz. Nimetini de istemiyorum. Diyetini de ödemiyorum ya da az ödeyeceğim.

Their discomfort with the rhythm of life in the metropolis can also be detected in the following statement of an interviewee whom I asked whether he misses anything that he used to do in İstanbul, such as socialization:

What does the need of socialization mean? How can you become socialized when you live in the cities? With whom do you converse in the cities? I asked myself with whom I was becoming socialized while I was working. I used to leave my apartment very early in the morning. After two hours I reached my workplace. I spent two hours in the traffic in the evening. There was no such thing as socialization at work. The best you can do is to drink a beer and see a friend before heading home. Such a mentality. That is what we understand from socialization (Marmariç-1).¹⁵⁹

But then he goes on to say that his concern with urban life is not only about its heavy living and working conditions because he believes that people also should think about whom they support or whom they do not with their eating and drinking habits, i.e. with their consumption patterns. For him, when the issue is these kinds of concerns, it is not easy to take a step in the cities because it is more difficult to create a self-sufficient life in the city. Another interviewee from Ahlatdede makes the similar point with Marmariç-1:

I try to be honest to myself because my main concern has been to live consistently since I was twenty. The city has lost its meaning for me. I ask what I can do in the city. Do I go to a bar? From now on the important thing for me is to grow my own food and to be in a green environment. I want to see the products of my labour. You cannot see to what you serve in a waged

¹⁵⁹ Yani sosyalleşme ihtiyacı nedir yani? Şehirde yaşarken ne kadar sosyalleşebiliyoruz çoğumuz? Yani kiminle konuşuyorsun şehirde? Bir düşündüğün zaman hani. [...] İşte çalışırken mesela kiminle sosyalleşiyordum? Sabahın köründe çıkıyordum evden, iki saat servisti, otobüstü işe varıyordum. Akşam iki saat yine yolda geçiyordu. Yani iş yerinde ne sosyalleşmesi. Yani orada bir şeyin yok. İşten çıktın eve gitmeden bari uğrayayım bir yerde bir bira içeyim falan hani bir arkadaşı göreyim. Öyle bir kafa. Yani bu mu yani sosyalleştikimiz?

work. Here I have been building a house for two months. I can see my product¹⁶⁰ (Ahlatdede-2).

Most interviewees, without being asked, said that theirs is not an escape. They mention that they moved to rural areas to be somehow closer to nature, to grow their own food but not to escape from the city:

Our [decision] is definitely not an escape. I really like İstanbul. We used to live in Beşiktaş. İstanbul is a beautiful city. I mean that we left İstanbul not because we did not love it. We took a step to realize our dreams. We took a step towards our dreams. We did not act to escape¹⁶¹ (Ormanevi-1).

It is known that “the moral and aesthetic revulsion against the city led to the escapism of alternative communities” (Pepper, 1984: 18). Most interviewees stress the unsatisfying urban life, but they prefer to see it as an intentional and conscious choice, not an escape. It can be said that in their perceptions to escape has a negative connotation in the sense that it might refer to romantic perception of rural life or a mythical pastoral idyll. Flight to the cities might carry a negative connotation also because it refers to a state that does not imply the existence of ecological awareness. Furthermore, defining their decision as a flight might mask their goals regarding an ecological life in rural areas and thus, implies that their life in rural areas is a temporary stay. But on the other side, some explicitly say that they wanted to escape from the urban life, like a member of Marmariç (male, 45, an architect) who moved from İstanbul to İzmir to visit Marmariç often on weekends:

¹⁶⁰ Tamamen kendine dürüst olma çabasından çıktı. Çünkü benim hep yirmi yaşından beri derdim söylediğim şeylerle yaptığım şeylerin birbirini tutması. Şehrin benim için bir anlamı kalmadı, yani çıkıp napıcam, bara mı gideceğim? Şey çok baskın oldu, ben gıdamı yetiştirmek istiyorum, yeşilin içinde olmak istiyorum. Yani yaptığım şeyin nereye gittiğini görmek istiyorum. Bir işte çalıştığın zaman o şeyin neye hizmet ettiğini görmüyorsun. Ucunu bilmiyorsun. Burada ben iki aydır evle uğraşıyorum, nereye gittiğini biliyorum.

¹⁶¹ Bizim kesin kaçma değil. Yani mesela ben İstanbul’u bayağı da seven bir insanım. Volkan da sever. Beşiktaş’ta oturuyorduk falan. Ya İstanbul güzel de bir şehir. Yani hoşumuza gitmediği için uzaklaşmadık. Hayallerimiz için o tarafa doğru yürüdük. Hayallerimize doğru yürüdük. Bir şeyden kaçarak ilerlemedik yani.

I always wanted to escape from city and I was seeking of escape from city since I was in high school. I mean that let's rescue themselves from this city. It took long (Marmariç-4).¹⁶²

He has not settled down in Marmariç permanently yet because of personal reasons. Nevertheless, he quit his full-time job in İstanbul because he was bored with working conditions. As commented in focus group discussion held by residents of Marmariç, this was a big step for him and his was an escape but others' are not because he has not moved to Marmariç yet. Similarly, the interviewee Ormanevi-2 accepted that he wanted to escape from the hard working rhythm in İstanbul while saying that he moved to rural areas to be closer to the land and nature:

My main concern was to escape from hard working rhythm. By this, I do not mean working hard and feeling exhausted. I mean escaping from enduring and routine working rhythm. If there is a tension in İstanbul, it probably stems from this. [Except for the vacations] you have to work. I did not want this¹⁶³ (Ormanevi-2).

In a similar vein, after mentioning her exhausting working conditions in the city, Ahlatdede-1 stated that she would continue to live in İstanbul if she found another way of living without working hard.

Anti-urbanism detected in interviewees' statements are always accompanied by their ecological concerns such as to grow one's own food or generate one's own energy. But as their statements reveal, their ecological concerns and green practices which are the materialized forms of these concerns mostly follow their personal motivations. Their statements reflect metropolitan type of individuality and the mood

¹⁶² Benim amacım hep kaçmaktı ve liseden beri kaçmanın peşindeydim ben. Şu şehirden bir atalım kendimizi hesabı. Bayağı uzun sürdü.

¹⁶³ Benim asıl şeyim, hayalim birçok yoğun çalışma temposundan kaçmak. O da şey olarak değil hani. Çok çalışma, yorulma değil. Devamlı ve rutin çalışma temposundan kaçmak. İstanbul'da bir gerilim varsa o muhtemelen o şekilde oluyor. [...] Onun dışında hep çalışıyorsun, hep çalışıyorsun. Ben onu istemiyordum.

metropolitan blasé attitude that Georg Simmel argues. For Simmel, “the essence of blasé attitude consists in the blunting discrimination.” This means that the meanings and differing values of the things appear to the blasé person in a flat and gray tone. “This mood is the faithful subjective reflection of the completely internalized money economy.” Cities are the “genuine locale of blasé attitude” because large cities are “main seats of money economy” (Simmel, 1997: 178, 179). It is seen that most interviewees express their discontent with the metropolis as one of the reasons of moving to rural areas. At that point, it might be asked whether they would still withdraw from cities and move to rural areas if they were not individually discontent with their life in the city and were not self-seeking people. As emphasized throughout this study, lifestyle strategies and practices might also be considered as having political ramifications. Nevertheless, the crucial point is that these initiatives have some publicly declared goals such as creating self-sufficient, sustainable eco-settlements, to share their experiences of rural life with other people and to show other individuals that an alternative way of life is possible. Thus, if it is considered that the process of individual self-changing in a commune can show that people can live well while reducing their consumption and waste, the motives of the interviewees which are not primarily ecological might decrease this possibility. It is apparent that because they are primarily motivated by personal reasons, they cannot not elucidate ‘coherently’ how this way of live can be achieved and how ecovillages can be an answer to the sustainability crisis.

6.5.2 Anti-Consumerism

The other motivation of the interviewees that is also closely related with anti-urbanism is anti-consumerism, which is detailed in discussing green materialities. Herbert Marcuse argues that the “inner contradictions of the capitalist system appear today in a new historical form, in the so-called consumer society, which is the highest stage of capitalism” (Marcuse, 1971: 6). The contradictions

manifest themselves in the increasing loosening of the moral fiber and cohesion of the society, the weakening of work discipline, responsibility and efficiency, the complete denial of that spirit of inner worldly asceticism which was, until recently, the mainspring of capitalism. The contradictions assert themselves in the form of drop outs, withdrawals, dissociations not only among the rebellious middle class but also the ruling class itself. In short, in this so-called consumer society we see a largely unpolitical, diffused, non-directed and yet profound non-identification with the system (ibid, 7).

Nearly all interviewees seek to avoid consumerism by withdrawing from the cities. The contradictions in the capitalist system, likewise, assert themselves in the form of dropouts, withdrawals and dissociations. But while focusing on individual change, most interviewees do not address the capitalist system and consumer society as the basis of their consumption patterns. They seek to re-find all lost ‘natural’ feeling and ‘real’ foods by moving to rural areas as the following statement of Ahlatdede-1 reveals:

Climate is changing and we are aware of this. We care about this. The world is changing. As I said, we are aware of this and we care about this. We care what we eat. We know that what we eat is not real. Especially in touristic places, relationships are not real, prices are not real, and foods are not real. It is an artificial situation, a kind of happiness picture. It is kind of a studio where people experience certain things and lives. It is so fun and comfortable, but not real. Let’s take local bazaars. Even the products in local bazaars are not real. Villagers use chemicals to make their products look bigger¹⁶⁴ (Ahlatdede-1).

¹⁶⁴ İklim değişiyor ve biz bunun farkındayız. Biz bunu önemsiyoruz. Dünya değişiyor. Dediğim gibi bunun farkındaydık ve bunu umursuyorduk. Yediğimiz şeylerin ne olduğunu umursuyorduk. Yediğimiz şeylerin gerçek olmadığını biliyorduk. Hele turistik bir yerde ilişkiler gerçek değil, fiyatlar gerçek değil, yiyecekler gerçek değil. O öyle yaratılmış bir durum, mutluluk resmi gibi. Sanki bir stüdyo, oraya giriyorsun, belli şeyleri, yaşantıları tecrübe edip durduruyorsun. Aman ne kadar eğlenceli, ne kadar rahat ama gerçek değil. Sonra köy pazarı olsun, sonra bakıyorsun köy pazarındakiler gerçek değil. Köylü daha iri, daha sağlıklı görünen ürünler için ilaç kullanıyor.

Certainly, Ahlatdede-1 is not the only interviewee who associates consumerism mainly with urban life. In a similar vein, Ormanevi-2 thinks that while living in the city, it is difficult to distinguish needs from wants and to consume less:

Here our main aim is to show that there can be an alternative social life to the social life in the cities. We do not like urban life because it promotes consumption. While living there you cannot know whether you do whatever you want or whatever you are imposed. In the cities, it is not easy to make a distinction between them¹⁶⁵ (Ormanevi-2).

Similarly, the interviewee İmece Evi says that urban dwellers are easily corrupted because they have limitless opportunities in the cities. He goes on to say that he moved to rural area because he also used to have a comfortable life like many people having many opportunities in the city. But, in his opinion, rural areas have a certain capacity, so not all the people can live in rural areas. These statements make us pose the question whether changes in their daily habits stem from a kind of attitude and value change, as they stress, or a kind of obligation resulted from living in an 'isolated' place because the views of the majority imply that they could not be able to reduce their consumption while living in the city. On the other hand, they contradictorily say that to reduce consumption or to access good food is achievable in the city as well. Furthermore, when they say these lifestyle changes are not easily achievable in the cities and rural areas do not have enough capacity to carry all the people, they do not offer a solution that is relevant to society as a whole except for moving to rural areas and to grow their own food, to generate their own energy. To put it better, their alternative solutions manifest their dominant paradigm, i.e. everybody is responsible for his/her well-being.

¹⁶⁵ İlk amacımız şehirdekine alternatif bir sosyal yaşamın olabileceği yönünde. Şehirdekinin hoşumuza gitmemesinin sebebi de temelde tüketim toplumuna yol açması. O süreç içerisinde gerçekten kendi istediklerini mi yapıyorsun yoksa görüp de sana istiyorsun gibi empoze edilen şeyleri mi yapıyorsun? Onun ayırtına varmanın kolay olmaması.

As mentioned above, statements of the interviewees reveal that their ecological motives come after the motives regarding their discomforts with urban life and urban ‘ills’ such as consumerism or ‘unhealthy’ foods. To be sure, the interviewees’ attempts at individual change because of being discontent with consumerist lifestyle, the nature of work, the current foods and scale of cities are not irrelevant to and disconnected from ecological concerns. However, having concerns about these issues might necessitate more than adopting practices, like cutting down on consumption by using less energy, recycling, composting etc. in a minimal way (Pepper, 1991: 21). As David Pepper observes, there is a necessity to be organized “in a way compatible with the values of a green society,” including non-hierarchy, work sharing, consensus-decision making, etc. (ibid). Furthermore, hierarchical relations, class relations, production and consumption processes, as Bookchin argues, should be addressed. But, broadly speaking, ecovillage initiatives in Turkey adopt first order practices such as not watching TV, recycling, composting etc. like the ‘middle class circles’ around the world (see Chapter 3).

6.5.3 Individualism/‘Hedonism’

Outcomes of the fieldwork reveal that the other primary motivation to form an ecovillage or join an ecovillage is individualistic and ‘hedonistic’ if we put it in Bookchin’s words. This is one of the critiques directed towards ecovillages around the world as well. It is argued that

the aims of the communards are purely individualistic, since they seem only interested in changing their way of life for various psychological and related reasons or, at most, because they don’t like the present way of life in cities (Velissaris, 2006, n.p.).

Following the interviews he conducted with communards, David Pepper also concludes that ecovillages hardly form a vanguard for social change because the motives of communards “for communal living are not, today, primarily ecological” but rather personal such as “failed marriages, loneliness and inability to afford rising

house prices” (Pepper, 1996: 318). Drawing on the fieldwork, it is not possible to mention similar motives with Pepper, such as failing marriages or loneliness. Nevertheless, it might be accurate to say that motives of the most interviewees are primarily personal. This is not to suggest that they do not have declared ecological concerns. For example, Durukan Dudu, a member of the Ormanevi Collective, in one of his interviews on a weblog¹⁶⁶ says that he decided to live in a village in part because he wants to be close to nature but in part, because he wants to be asocial to a degree. He goes on to say that he withdrawn from the city because he wanted to reduce the time he spends with other people, to begin again to write stories and novels and to be able to find time for other hobbies. Some interviewees are more explicit about their personal motivations and assert that they were not influenced by any ideology or political view like the interviewee Marmariç-1, who said that not any theoretical perspective became influential on his decision to move to rural area. He goes on to say that he behaved as he wished. The other interviewee Dedetepe-1 expresses that he moved to rural area after his company had difficulties during the economic crisis of the 2000s and his other failed attempts of doing business. When he was asked how and with which motivations he moved to rural area, he replied that he does not exactly know but probably by chance he has changed his lifestyle. Similarly, Marmariç-3 (male, 35-year-old, an architect) who has been living in Marmariç since 2009 says that his motivation is entirely personal when he was asked some questions to explore his reasons of moving to rural area:

Do not stereotype me through Marxism. I just wanted to move to Marmariç and then I moved. Mine is not an escape. I live where I will be happy. Maybe to move to here is not a right decision but this is the life. Mine is entirely personal. We moved to here and then permaculture came. What connects people living here together is not something political. Now we are having fun in a different way. We used to live in a shared building in Kuzguncuk and we were just having fun.

¹⁶⁶ <http://gorunmeyenler.wordpress.com/2013/12/23/durukan-dudu-keyif-almadigin-isieylemidirenisi-yapma>.

Right now we are having fun while using a pickaxe¹⁶⁷
(Marmariç-3).

Here I should mention that while asking my questions I did not cite Marxism or any other perspective. The interviewee Marmariç-3 gave Marxism as an example and said that though he came from a left-wing background, what connects people living in Marmariç is not something political. Not only the interviews with members of ecovillage initiatives but also an expert interview might exemplify in a way that the ecovillage ‘movement’ is characterized mostly by personal motives rather than ecological. An interviewed sustainable life consultant who visited many ecovillages in the world was asked to comment on individuals’ reasons of withdrawing from the cities. In her opinion, they seek to move away from the cities because urban life no longer meets their needs. When she was asked why some individuals attempt to initiate an ecovillage and to adopt green practices, such as composting rather than retreating to touristic zones of Turkey, she replied that some people compost because they want to compost. She does not cite any ecological concern or feelings of threatened health or individual identity. Or an interviewed volunteer (female, 25, a teacher) expresses that she decided to live in an ecovillage initiative after she was fired.

While people are motivated mostly by personal reasons in initiating an ecovillage, personal issues they have among themselves might become an obstacle to living together. As discussed throughout this study, it is difficult to talk about a communal life in these initiatives. The reasons for this are various, such as people’s concerns about their careers and the education of their children. But even if they cope with these obstacles and are able to move to rural areas, it appears that building a communal life is not always and easily attainable. A 40-year-old female interviewee from İbrim, who worked in the tourism sector before moving to İzmir, explains the

¹⁶⁷ Beni Marksizm gibi şablonlara sokma, gelmem bunlara. Sadece gelmek istedim ve geldim. Benimki kaçış değil. Mutlu olacağım yerdeyim. Belki buraya gelmek de doğru değil ama hayat bu. Benimki tamamen kişisel bir şey. Permakültür sonradan geldi. Buraya yerleştik, içini dolduran permakültür oldu. Buradakileri birbirine bağlayan bir şey politik değil bu. Artık farklı şekilde eğleniyoruz. Kuzguncuk’ta ortak evimiz vardı, sadece eğlenirdik. Şimdi kazma sallarken eğleniyoruz.

reasons why she thinks that it is not easy to achieve a communal life in Turkey as follows:

We, as five or six individuals, initiated a [communal life project] in Antalya but it failed before it could not even start. We all have retreated from cities. We all have bad habits. We all have egos. We should be holy persons to live together in harmony. I do not think that this is possible at present conditions. I mean that wherever you live, people's egos are dominating. People try to dominate other people. As I said, people carry their urban habits with them¹⁶⁸ (İbrim).

The couple living in İbrim stayed for a while in İmece Evi before buying their own land. During the interview, I asked a resident of İbrim why she did not prefer to join the ecovillage initiative instead of making an effort to buy land and build a house. She replied to me that they wanted to be autonomous in their decisions. Certainly, İbrim is not the exception. The fieldwork reveals that most do not want to live together and criticize others' ways of living, attitudes and methods they use. They are critical of other initiatives because of different reasons: they find others so isolated and introverted; think that the main concern of the members of some initiatives is only to earn money; believe that members of some initiatives cannot move beyond their individual ego; or some do not find other people as enthusiastic as themselves or some are against living communally for the sake of conserving natural resources. It appears that they are in relationships with each other or act together when the issue is, for example, seed exchange, organizing a workshop, sharing experiences, or struggling against gold mining activities but most want to be autonomous in their decisions. Where some decided to live together, a turnover is experienced because of the problems in social relations, in decision making processes or pooling of incomes. Therefore, if we take their relationship with the members of other initiatives and their

¹⁶⁸ Antalya'da biz böyle beş altı kişi düşündük. Daha başlamadan dağıldı yani. Ben komünün çok uzun yani belki istisnalar vardır ama başarılı olacağına inanmıyorum. Zor çünkü biz hepimiz şehirden koptuk geldik. Kötü alışkanlıklarımız var. Hala egolarımız var. Hepimizin ermiş insanlar olması gerekiyor ki birlikte, beraberce, çok güzel, uyum içinde yaşayabilelim. Şu anda ben o şeyi göremiyorum. Yani nerede olursan o egolar öne çıkıyor. İnsanlar birbirlerine hükmetmeye çalışıyorlar. Dediğim gibi şehir alışkanlıkları devam ediyor orada.

motivations into consideration, it can be suggested that their lifestyle is safe, privatistic, individualistic and even ‘hedonistic’ (Bookchin, 1995: 27).

The majority live as ‘isolated’ in their quest for personal autonomy. Their relationship with local people reflect their privatistic lifestyle as well. As mentioned earlier, almost all ecovillage initiatives are located physically distant from the closest traditional village. This physical distance is closely related to their goal of having a ‘distanced’ relationship with the villagers. This partly stems from the fact that some interviewees find villagers conservative, and partly because, in their perceptions, villagers are suspicious about their reasons and motivations for moving to rural areas. For example, Tuğba and Birhan expressed that when they settled down the Alakır the most challenging thing for them became the relationship with villagers because they were the only strangers living within the physical boundaries of the village. According to them, because their hair and dress are very different from those of the villagers, in the eyes of the villagers they were aliens. In the beginning, the villagers, they go on to say, could not identify with them because they were the people who moved there to engage in some activities that villagers no longer engage in. In time, some villagers understood them. Some others, who could not understand their intentions called them gold diggers, satanist or missionaries. For these kind of reasons, they sought to establish a kind of ‘balance’ as the interviewee Bayramiç expresses: “here is a kind of republic. We feel comfortable here. Even if we scream, nobody hears us. I mean that we do not meet anybody around the settlement. We are both near to the village and also distant from it.”¹⁶⁹ As his statement reveals, they prefer to determine the degree of their relationship with the villagers themselves. This is also closely related to the activities held in these settlements such as yoga camps and the people participating in these activities. As discovered in casual conversations during the fieldwork I can say that local people find both the people visiting these settlements and the activities held in these settlements ‘strange’. They could not understand, for example, how women can visit and stay in these

¹⁶⁹ Burası bizim cumhuriyet gibi bir şey. Burada rahatız. Çok bağırırız kimse duymaz bile, kimse gelmez yani. Köye hem yakınız hem uzağız.

settlements by themselves. Certainly, the distanced relationship is not to suggest that local people and the members of initiatives are entirely disconnected from the closest traditional villages and the villagers. For example, Bayramiç, though it is located outside the traditional village like most of others, has built relationship with local people and work in cooperation with some of them when it is needed. Nevertheless, the interviewee Bayramiç said that most of the time they do not meet with villagers if they do not want to and vice versa. This distanced relationship is another reason why ecovillages are considered as elitist formations (Pepper, 1991).

In this chapter, I try to analyze lifestyle and community strategies of the selected ecovillage initiatives in Turkey. As discussed, while some members of these initiatives are motivated by faith in the power of the individual to create a societal change through personal lifestyle, some do not cite societal change because this is not part of their motivation. Where some oppose the system and tend to think that they live outside the system by generating their own energy or growing their own food, they keep using most tools of the system, such as the car in which fossil fuel is used. While they promote alternative agriculture techniques and technologies to the ‘conventional’ ones, their statements and changing habits in rural areas reveal that these alternatives are not always achievable or ‘sustainable’. To put it better, some start using high-technology products, such as computers or mobile phones to struggle against construction of hydroelectric power plants; some exchange their products through their market prices because, as they express, they could not find a better solution within this system; some move back to the city because of their children’s education; some have not moved to rural areas because of their careers.

The majority of the interviewees tend to withdraw from ‘public’ to the ‘private’ realm. Furthermore, whenever some express or imply that they follow the ongoing political debates, their statements about their understanding of political are not always explanatory. Saying that there is not any green political movement in Turkey, the interviewee Güneşköy-2 means only political parties. Another interviewee who calls herself a feminist having concerns about honor-killings and LGBTI rights

expresses that she is not interested in being identified with the feminist movement. Though their life in rural areas is not independent from economic, political and social processes contrary to their perception, the majority do not address them. Only a few interviewees hold capitalist system responsible for the current ecological degradation or their living and working conditions with which they are discontent. They stress personal lifestyle reform and in their perception, living in an isolated 'space' without benefiting from the tools of the system is a way of challenging the system. It is known that while individualist approach mistrusts mass revolution and party politics, it "places faith, instead, in a continuous process of individuals changing their values and lifestyles, which should then produce a new aggregate society. [...] This has close affinities with liberal philosophy" (Pepper, 1991: 51). Pepper argues that "overweening [*sic*] individualism seems paradoxical for people who live in communes. But it is understandable when one recalls the middle class liberal backgrounds and upbringing of so many communards" (Pepper, 1991: 201). As Pepper states, this "privateness of existence" is captured in Richard Sennett's following prose:

The obsession with persons at the expense of more impersonal social relations is like a filter which discolours our rational understanding of society; it obscures the continuing importance of class in advanced industrial society; it leads us to believe community is an act of mutual self-disclosure [...] Masses of people are concerned with their single life-histories and particular emotions as never before; this concern has proved to be a trap rather than a liberation (Sennett, 1978: 4-5).

For Pepper, when the issue is green communes, "there may well be what Sennett calls a 'discoloured' sense of community based over much on mutual self-disclosure and a world view posited on the self as starting point, i.e. liberal values of the conventional culture" (Pepper, 1991: 203). I shall conclude this chapter with the following quote from Hans Enzensberger that succinctly summarizes the main concluding remark of this thesis:

“Ecofreaks” are engaged in a kind of systematic flight from the cities, and from civilization. They live in rural communes, grow their food, and seek a “natural way of life,” which may be regarded as the simulation of pre- or post-industrial conditions. They look for salvation in detailed, precisely stipulated dietary habits—eating “earth food” –and agricultural methods. Their class background corresponds to that of the hippies of the 1960s—of reduced middle-class origin, enriched by elements from peripheral groups. Ideologically they incline toward obscurantism and sectarianism (Enzensberger, 1996: 23).

Hans Enzensberger does not use the term ecovillage but his description reveals that by rural communes he refers to ecovillages as well. He is highly critical of these communes and does not see any political potential within them that will bring about societal change. By political potential, Enzensberger does not necessarily mean a systemic change and does not dismiss the potential of middle classes. He sees a potential, for example, in the groups of “concerned and responsible citizens” who are generally members of the middle class or of the new petit bourgeoisie. These people have modest goals such as preserving trees, open spaces or organizing a boycott of nonbiodegradable packaging. This kind of ecological awareness, the argument goes, has two dimensions that should be noted. On the one hand, these ecological action groups express the powerful and legitimate needs of people. On the other hand, they focus on immediate targets that cannot be understood politically. But the “limited nature of their initiatives should not conceal the fact that there lies within them the seed of a possible mass movement”¹⁷⁰ (ibid, 22, 23). But as discussed in this study, as agents of social transformation the potential of ecovillages is questionable. It is difficult to argue that there lies within isolated and introverted ecovillage initiatives which are typically characterized by anti-urbanism, anti-consumerism and escapist and individualistic motives of their members the seed of a possible eco-community and a sense of political collectivity.

¹⁷⁰ Gezi Park resistance can be cited as example to this kind of awareness that Enzensberger suggests. As mentioned in Chapter 5, the resistance started with a concern to preserve the trees, but then it turned into a nation-wide political demonstration against the authoritarian government.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUDING REMARKS

This study was designed to critically analyze the ecovillage initiatives in Turkey with regard to lifestyle and community politics. In this study, first, I have first sought to explore the potential of the ecovillage initiatives to become human-scale, self-sustaining eco-communities as an ecological and alternative form of society. Second, I argued that these initiatives are individualistic, escapist and more private efforts of the urban (new) middle class consisting of well-educated, white collar professionals.

Attempting to examine ecovillage initiatives in Turkey, I utilized the perspectives of Andrew Dobson, Murray Bookchin, David Pepper and David Harvey who developed different approaches to the environmental issues and ecological disturbance. The political goal of Bookchin's social ecology is to establish a communitarian society in harmony with nature. Bookchin offers relatively self-sufficient community based eco-technologies as a response to the domination of nature and domination of human. In a similar vein, Pepper attempts to explore the potential of the communes in the green movement for social change through political ecology and, unlike Bookchin, he concludes that green "communes will not constitute a leading edge of that movement" (Pepper, 1991: 218). Harvey argues that some kind of communitarian solution to urban problems is both attractive and powerful but in his perspective, it turns out to be a part of the problem. This point is also stressed by Bookchin because for Bookchin any community risks the danger of becoming parochial and even racist. Likewise, Dobson argues that communes are an alternative to existing norms and "to the extent that they work, they show that it is possible to live differently – even sustainably" but "their opposition is easily neutralized" (Dobson, 2001: 136). The analysis based on theoretical and conceptual discussions held through the perspectives of Bookchin, Pepper, Dobson and David Harvey revealed that ecovillage initiatives in Turkey hardly become part of the ecological/environmental

movements and nor do they promote ‘alternative’ eco-communities. They appeared as private efforts that are available to the individualistic, educated and propertied (urban) middle classes that are engaged in a kind of flight from the cities and from the ‘ills’ that are associated with urban life.

Throughout the research, qualitative research methods were used. Attempting to examine selected ecovillage initiatives, a number of in-depth interviews with members of ecovillage initiatives, experts and volunteers were carried out. Between 2012 (June, September) and 2013 (May, October, November) the field visits were conducted in Çanakkale, İzmir and Ankara. In addition, I temporarily stayed in settlements of some of the initiatives and participated in the daily live activities of the interviewees. As mentioned, I reached these initiatives through social networking, snowball sampling and from the suggestion of experts. The examined initiatives share almost the same networks and spaces. Here it should be stated that there are other initiatives in different parts of Turkey such as the Yeryüzü Derneği (Earth Ecovillage) and the Eko-Jin Kolektifi (Eko-Jin Collective) which had not been initiated when the fieldwork was being conducted. In this study, along with interviews, my personal experiences and observations are crucial for the analysis. Most importantly, they helped me to understand the daily rhythms, consumption and production patterns of the members of ecovillage initiatives and their relationship with the local inhabitants. Additionally, documentaries about these initiatives, websites/weblogs of some of the initiatives, meetings about the ecovillages and the related issues, and visual materials were included into the analysis.

Theoretical and conceptual discussions in the Introduction and in Chapters 3 and 6 are applied in the research and have proved to be very useful to understand the lifestyle and community strategies as agents for social change. In this study, I applied Andrew Dobson’s categorization for green changes, which is based on the distinction between environmentalism and ecologism that echoes Bookchin’s distinction between environmentalism and social ecology (see the Introduction and Chapter 3). Dobson does not dispute that significant improvements to the environment can be

brought by the green movement. But “the green movement “founded its project on reform of the system rather than its ‘radical overhaul’ and this “simply pushes the problem back one space and the problem remains” (Dobson, 2001: 113). Dobson discusses forms of action that will be supported by most people in the green movement under five headings of action through and around the legislature, lifestyle, communities, direct action and class (Dobson, 2001). This study focused on lifestyle and community strategies of the ecovillage initiatives. The other three strategies mentioned by Dobson were not included into the analysis because the fieldwork revealed that the studied initiatives adopt mainly these two.

As discussed throughout this study, ecovillages are intended to promote self-sufficiency and sustainability through permaculture, organic farming, alternative technologies, green homes, etc. But, most people’s motives for communal living in an ecovillage, like most of the interviewees, are not primarily ecological and should be described much more as the result of ‘hate’ of urban life, a ‘romanticized’ rural life and ‘idealized’ past which is considered as more ‘natural’ and ‘real’. To explore the roots of these sentiments and motives, in Chapter 4 I first focused on the romantic conception of nature, the tension between the country and the city and anti-urbanism. As discussed, romanticism as a movement has ended, cities have changed but certain images, associations and sentiments persist and retain their force (Williams, 1973; Smith, 2008). These sentiments including seeking to live in harmony with nature, to recapture the simple life of an ‘idealized’ past and to move back-to-nature can be detected in the ecovillage ‘movement’ as well. Chapter 4 also focused on the counterculture and the hippie movement of the 1960s and the 1970s to explore the historical roots of the ecovillage movement. As mentioned, the ecovillage ‘movement’ emerging in the 1990s is considered as the continuation of the Hippie movement of the 1960s and 1970s with respect to its class structure, its goals, and the concerns of people participating in it (Fotopoulos, 2000: 287, Pepper, 1991; Trainer, 2000a; Enzensberger, 1996). The ecovillage emerged as an alternative model of living based on ecological, economic, socio-cultural and spiritual sustainability in the West. The ecovillage ‘movement’ is characterized by motives

that ‘good’ and sustainable life can be built in humanly scaled communities where people choose to support each other and where a greener way of life and communal self-sufficiency are promoted. Even though the studied ecovillage initiatives in Turkey are rural-based, an ecovillage can be an urban or rural community that is created as isolated from ‘others’ and ‘outsiders’ (Fotopoulos, 2000). Ecovillage initiatives are something ‘new’ in Turkey and cannot be easily linked to the Hippie movement of the 1960s. The 1960s in Turkey were different that of Europe because the ecological sensitivity and ecological struggle that were advanced in the 1960s and the 1970s in the West were not put in the agenda of Turkey. This period was guided by Marxism in Turkey. In general, the 1980s are generally considered as the period when environmental movements in Turkey were gaining strength. After the 1980s, the number of environmental organizations, associations, initiatives, foundations and so forth began to increase. An increasing number of people started to struggle against nuclear power plants, hydroelectric power plants, dam construction projects, gold mining activities and so on at the local, national and international level. Since the 1980s, there has been increase and changes in parliamentary political activities as well. In addition to these environmental mobilizations, some other ways of dealing with environmental issues have begun to surface especially after the 1990s. Seeking to organize their everyday lives around the green principles, some people, like the interviewees of this study, have attempted to create rural-based models of sustainability and self-sufficiency.

It is known that one of the dominant paradigms that has been in green thinking for a long time is that changes in lifestyle can be translated into sustainable community living (Dobson, 2001). In discussing lifestyle politics in Chapter 6, I first focused on the lifestyle strategies of the members of ecovillage initiatives and other people, who share the same values, embody similar green principles and who also share common spaces and networks with them. I included the latter into the analysis as a constitutive part of the ‘imagined eco-communities’.¹⁷¹ As mentioned, the members of these

¹⁷¹ As mentioned in the Introduction, the usage ‘imagined eco-communities’ is inspired by Benedict Anderson’s concept of imagined community.

initiatives ‘imagine’ that they formed a community consisting of like-minded people even if they have not yet managed to live together. Furthermore, there are other individuals who view themselves as part of these ‘imagined eco-communities’ with regard to their shared ecological concerns. Discussing lifestyle politics, I focused on lifestyle strategies cited by interviewees including vegetarianism, recycling, composting, etc. Attempting to discuss the lifestyle strategies of the interviewees, I applied Dave Horton’s classification of green lifestyles: green networks, green spaces, green times and green materialities (Horton, 2003; Horton, 2006). Horton suggests that green lifestyles are networked, spaced, materialized and timed. The fieldwork has shown that the interviewees are involved in some networks through which they develop their green lifestyles. These include courses, meetings, workshops, etc. on different subjects such as permaculture, homeopathy, composting, healing, ecological social entrepreneurship, the slow food movement, ecological architecture, etc. In this context, by green spaces were meant certain sites where people come together. Some cafés, stores and especially the ecological bazaars and the ecological farms that are members of TaTuTa project initiated by Buğday Association for Supporting Ecological Living have appeared as important spaces in which like-minded people come together. By green times, I emphasized the personal circumstances that might prevent green lifestyle from developing or continuing. To put it better, most members of the studied initiatives have not started to live permanently in rural areas because of their careers and concerns for the education of their children. In addition, some members have had to move back to the cities because of their children’s education or because of other personal reasons. They temporarily visit the settlements of their initiatives during holidays, vacations or on weekends. Finally, I discussed green materialities (e.g. television, car, internet technologies, ‘natural’ products, vegetarianism etc.) whose absence and presence lead to the development of green lifestyles. Discussing green materialities, I mainly focused on green consumerism as a main expression of green lifestyle. The analysis revealed that interviewees adopt practices like recycling, composting, cutting down on consumption, etc. and this is becoming fashionable among comfortable middle class circles “in a rather minimal and ostentatious way” (Pepper, 1991: 23).

Furthermore, they expect other people to adopt these practices, which may lead to 'elitist' assumptions that people can recycle, grow their own food, cut down on consumption by generating their own energy and make their own 'natural' cleaning products, etc.

As discussed in Chapter 3 and 6, Murray Bookchin, Andrew Dobson and David Pepper remind us that individuals should engage in lifestyle changes because lifestyle strategies may show people that ecological lifestyles are possible. Nevertheless, lifestyle strategies, as agents for political change "rely entirely on their seductive capacity." For Dobson, the main problem is that "people refuse to be seduced: rather than producing radical changes in consciousness, sustainable communities perform the role of the surrogate good conscience, and we can go at the weekend to see it operating" (Dobson, 2001: 139). Additionally, isolated, individualistic, self-indulgent and anti-organizational lifestyle politics allow no room for political organizations and social action. Lifestyle politics, "largely because it is concerned with a "style" rather than a society, glosses over capitalist accumulation, with its roots in the competitive marketplace, as the source of ecological devastation (Bookchin, 1995: 34). The fieldwork revealed that interviewees stressed changes in individual lifestyles. Human action, or agency, is considered as important instead of structural conditions. This paradigm suggests that if enough people, i.e. human agents, act in ecologically sound ways, their action may have the consequence of transforming structures. They stress reformist changes rather than revolutionary changes. They mentioned, for example, not to paying electric bills but generating one's own energy as a strategy. This was considered as a form of personal resistance. This approach places "faith in a continuous process of individuals changing their values and lifestyles, which should then produce a new aggregate society" and "rests on an essentially liberal view of society" (Pepper, 1993: 15). It is apparent that this paradigm obscures the need of collective action. But, as I argued throughout this study, this is the 'apoliticism' "where collectivism is denied by spreading the belief that the problems of capitalism cannot be resolved through collective political action but through individual reform" (Pepper, 18). This

privatization of the environmental crisis makes the crisis continue and intensify (Bookchin, 1989).

As stressed in Chapter 3 and 6, some people seek to live communally and adopt community strategies. The reasons and motivations of people in forming or joining a green commune or an ecovillage are varied. People who adopt green lifestyles mostly search for living consistently and see ecovillages as a way to achieve this because they think that the “internal consistency” they seek is not attainable in ‘mainstream’ society (Pepper, 1991). To put it better, “they try to be vegan and get fruit and vegetables from the boxes thrown away by market traders and greengrocers.” At the same time, they try not to use toilet paper and a car. They boycott the big banks and so on. A few individuals are able to achieve the internal consistency and coherence of such a lifestyle for themselves in ‘mainstream’ society. For this reason, they attempt to join a green commune or an ecovillage where they tend to consider that they are able to achieve the consistency they seek (Pepper, 1991: 24). But this is not always achievable in a green commune as well. The motivations and reasons of the interviewees of this study are also varied. As for why interviewees attempted to initiate ecovillages, Chapter 6 has shown three broad categories of motivation. First, they included escaping from urban life and getting closer to the land and being self-sufficient. Second, they sought to escape from the consumerism associated with urban life. Third, the fieldwork has shown that they acted with individualistic and personal motivations. They have ecological concerns but the primary concern of the majority is not ecological but personal including well-being and health. These initiatives were formed by private efforts of educated, salaried ‘complacent middle class’ people (Braun, 2006). Here the crucial point is that rural areas are not a place of first livelihood for them. They do not know the reality of rural area as a place of production because their original home was not rural. All interviewees grow their own food but their life in rural areas does not depend on agriculture as the main source of income. Some of them received financial contributions from their families to finance their initial costs in rural areas. Some interviewees sold or rented their houses in the cities. While some have a retirement pension, the others have enough

savings to move to rural areas. In this context, flexibility of labor also appears as an opportunity to enable the majority to move to rural areas. Some interviewees have temporary contracts and relations with firms and organizations in which work is organized in projects and where freelance work prevails. Besides these, some initiatives generate income by offering courses, workshops and yoga camps, and by engaging in ecotourism and through the retail sale of various products they produce including vegetables, fruits, soap, pomade, herbal oil, jam and so on. The analysis revealed that they have the financial sources to prevail. The attempt to move to rural areas is enjoyed by urban dwellers whose class privileges give them the time and resources to leave their jobs and their urban life behind (Cronon, 1996).

As discussed, it is difficult to mention a communal life in the studied ecovillage initiatives. In most of them, only one or two individuals live in them permanently. The most populated one is Marmariç whose most members had a co-housing experience in İstanbul. It appeared that their co-housing experience made them come close to communal life with regard to the number of permanent residents. While their previously developed relation enabled them the most populated initiative, in some other interviewees' perception this might become an obstacle to other people who seek to join it because the previously developed friendship and decision making mechanisms may potentially exclude other people. Certainly, Marmariç cannot be cited as an example of well-founded communities but it can exemplify how communities might exclude other people. While Marmariç is the most populated initiative, in the Güneşköy Cooperative, Kır Çocukları and Kardeş Bitkiler no one is living permanently. In Bayramiç only one person has been living since 2010. As of 2013, two individuals were living in the Ormanevi Collective. Even though a couple was living in Ahlatdede when the fieldwork was conducted, in 2013 two other individuals joined it. Thus, as of 2013, Ahlatdede appeared as the second most populated initiative with regard to its permanent residents. In other settlements (Alakır, Cazgirler and İbrim) only single couples were living in them when the fieldwork was conducted. Here it should be stated that as of 2013 only the men were living in some of the studied settlements where only one individual lives.

Furthermore, people who seek to live sustainably/self-sufficiently in rural areas mostly do not seek to join existing initiatives and to live together. The analyzed ecovillage initiatives have appeared as enclaves where urban middle class people escaping from the cities reside, rather than attempts toward communal living. They use eco-technologies, organic forms of agriculture, humanly scaled designs similar to that of eco-communities proposed by Bookchin but as Bookchin argues, “small is not necessarily beautiful” (Bookchin, 1990b).

They could not build a commune in the sense of living together, sharing resources or works and pooling incomes because as stressed, most appeared as settlements where only one or two individuals live. They have a different form of social contract and a different understanding of solidarity of the commons. They do not sacrifice personal autonomy for living communally (Pepper, 1991). Members of each initiative had transformed either a neighborhood abandoned by villagers to their own purposes or bought land to serve their purposes similar to ‘modern’ experiments in communal living. They invented a “space of enjoyment” and this “necessarily implies through a phase of *elitism*” (Lefebvre, 1974: 380). It can be concluded that they seek to build for themselves better circumstances and a self-indulgent escape from the metropolis (Fotopoulos, 2000; Fotopoulos; 2006; Pepper, 1993; Trainer, 2000a). The fieldwork has shown that theirs is not a personal liberation but the flight from the cities. But even if people seek personal liberation, personal liberation will not be a “vehicle for social liberation unless these private and particular liberation movements transcend individual and group gratifications” and if they are not subjected to a new rationality and become part of the theory and practice of social change” (Marcuse, 1971: 13).

In this study, utilizing Bookchin’s social ecology, Dobson and Pepper’s political ecology and Harvey’s environmental justice I tried to examine ecovillage initiatives through green lifestyle and community politics without disregarding their advantages for change. The members of the studied initiatives have sought to move to rural areas from the cities to change their lifestyles and to form ecovillages or eco-settlements rather than retreating to the touristic zones of Turkey because of their concerns about

well-being, health, access to good life and healthy food. Nevertheless, these initiatives with their members not addressing the social causes behind environmental problems, production and consumption processes and class relations do not come close to the eco-community that is offered by Bookchin. Instead, they appeared as private efforts of urban middle classes who fled the metropolis. Even if it is possible to conclude that they are enclaves anticipating the decentralized communitarian nature of the sustainable society, rhetoric of communitarianism, as Harvey argues, fails. To conclude in Harvey's words, what ought to be is a productive tension between town and country that is not dominated by a nostalgia for a rural and communitarian form of life.

REFERENCES

Adaman, Fikret & Arsel, Murat (2000) "Introduction," in Fikret Adaman & Murat Arsel (eds) *Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development?*, England: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Ananias, Victor (2012) *Yaşam Dönüşümdür*, İstanbul: Doğan Kitap.

Arsel, Murat (2000) "The Bergama Imbrolio," Fikret Adaman & Murat Arsel (eds) *Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development?*, England: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Atauz, Akın (2000) "Çevreci Sivil Toplum Hareketinin Yakın Tarihi," in Zeynep Boratav (ed) *Türkiye'de Çevrenin ve Çevre Korumanın Tarihi Sempozyumu*, İstanbul: Türkiye Ekonomik ve Toplumsal Tarih Vakfı.

Atauz, Akın (1994) "Çevreci Hareketlerin Türkiye'yi Sarsmayan On Yılı," *Birikim*, 57-58: 17-22. Retrieved 08.09.2012, from <http://www.birikimdergisi.com/birikim/dergiyazi.aspx?did=1&dsid=55&dyid=1585&yazi=%C7evreci%20Hareketlerin%20T%FCrkiyeyi%20Sarsmayan%20On%20Y%FDI%FD>

Aydın, Zülküf (2000) "The State, Civil Society and Environmentalism," in Fikret Adaman & Murat Arsel (eds) *Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development?*, England: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Ayman, Oya (2013) "Ekolojik Hayatlar," *National Geographic Türkiye*, 146: 66-93.

Bailey, Kenneth (1994) *Methods of Social Research*, New York: The Free Press.

Baudrillard, Jean (1998) *The Consumer Society: Myths and Structures*, London: Sage.

Baykan, Barış Gencer (2013) "Environmentalists in Turkey - Who are they?, *The Green Movement in Turkey*, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 4: 8-11.

Beck, Ulrich (2002) *Ecological Politics in an Age of Risk*, trans. by Amos Weisz, Oxford: Polity Press.

Belge, Murat (2004) *Tarihten Güncelliğe*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Bennett, Tony *et al.* (2009) *Culture, Class, Distinction*, London: New York.

Benton, Ted (1996) "Marxism For or Against Ecology?," in Ted Benton (ed) *The Greening of Marxism*, New York: Guilford Press.

Biehl, Janet & Bookchin, Murray (1998) *The Politics of Social Ecology: Libertarian Municipalism*, Montréal: Black Rose Books.

Bookchin, Murray (2001) "What is Social Ecology?," in Michael E. Zimmerman (general editor) & J. Baird Callicott *et al.* (associate editors), *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Bookchin, Murray (1999) *Toplumu Yeniden Kurmak*, İstanbul: Metis Yayınları.

Bookchin, Murray (1998) *Toplumsal Anarşizm mi Yaşamtarzı Anarşizm mi*, trans. by Deniz Aytaş, İstanbul: Kaos Yayınları.

Bookchin, Murray (1995) *Social Anarchism or Lifestyle Anarchism: An Unbridgeable Chasm*, Edinburg: Ak Press.

Bookchin, Murray (1991a) *Özgürlüğün Ekolojisi: Hiyerarşinin Ortaya Çıkışı ve Çözülüşü*, trans. by Alev Türker, İstanbul: Ayrıntı Yayınları.

Bookchin, Murray (1991b) "Will Ecology Become 'the Dismal Science'?" Retrieved 05.02.2013, from http://dwardmac.pitzer.edu/Anarchist_Archives/bookchin/dismal/dismal.html.

Bookchin, Murray (1990a) *Remaking Society*, Montréal: Black Rose Books.

Bookchin, Murray (1990b) The Meaning of Confederalism. Retrieved 05.02.2013, from <http://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/murray-bookchin-the-meaning-of-confederalism.a4.pdf>.

Bookchin, Murray (1989) "Death of a Small Planet," *The Progressive*, 19-23.

Bookchin, Murray (1986) *Post-Scarcity Anarchism*, Montréal: Black Rose Books.

Bookchin, Murray (1982) *The Ecology of Freedom: The Emergence and Dissolution of Hierarchy*, Palo Alto, California: Cheshire Books.

Bookchin, Murray (1980) *Toward an Ecological Society*, Montréal: Black Rose Books.

Bookchin, Murray (1962) *Our Synthetic Environment*. Retrieved 23.03.2013, from <http://www.social-ecology.org/1962/04>.

Bora, Tanıl (1988) *Yeşiller ve Sosyalizm*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1984) *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. by Richard Nice, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Braun, Bruce (2006) "Towards a New Earth and a New Humanity: Nature, Ontology, Politics," in Noel Castree and Derek Gregory (eds) *David Harvey: A Critical Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Buğday Bülteni (1988) "Türkiye’de Bir Eko-Köy Örneği: Hocamköy Hareketi," 2: 9.

Castree, Noel (2001) "Socializing Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics," in Noel Castree & Bruce Braun (eds) *Social Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics*, UK: Blackwell Publishers.

Castree, Noel & Braun, Bruce (1998) "The Construction of Nature and the Nature of Construction," in Noel Castree & Bruce Braun (eds) *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millennium*, London: Routledge.

Chaney, David (1996) *Lifestyles*, London: Routledge.

Chitewere, Tendai (2010) "Equity in Sustainable Communities: Exploring Tools from Environmental Justice and Political Ecology," *Natural Resources Journal*, 50: 315-339.

Chitewere, Tendai & Taylor, Dorceta E. (2010) "Sustainable Living and Community Building in Ecovillage at Ithaca: The Challenges of Incorporating Social Justice Concerns into the Practices of an Ecological Cohousing Community," in Dorceta E. Taylor (ed) *Environment and Social Justice: An International Perspective*, UK: Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

Christensen, Karen & Levinson David (2003) "Intentional Communities," in Karen Christensen & David Levinson (eds) *Encyclopedia of Community: From the Village to the Virtual World*, London: Sage Publications.

Christian, Diane Leafe (2003) *Creating a Life Together: Practical Tools to Grow, Ecovillages and Intentional Communities*, Canada: New Society Publishers.

Clark, John (2001) "Introduction," in Michael E. Zimmerman (general editor) & J. Baird Callicott *et al.* (associate editors), *Environmental Philosophy: From Animal Rights to Radical Ecology*, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Connolly, John & Prothero, Andrea (2008) "Green Consumption: Life-politics, Risk and Contradictions," *Journal of Consumer Culture*, (8):117-145.

Cronon, William (1996) "The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature," in William Cronon (ed) *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, New York: W. W. Norton Company.

Çoban, Aykut (2010) "'Sürdürülebilir Kalkınma' Tartışması Ekseninde Bergama Köylü Direnişi," in Deniz Yıldırım & Evren Haspolat (eds), *Değişen İzmir'i Anlamak*, Ankara: Phoenix.

Çoban, Aykut (2004) "Community-based Ecological Resistance: The Bergama Movement in Turkey," *Environmental Politics*, 13(2): 438-460.

Dawson, Jonathan (2013) "From Islands to Networks: The History and Future of the Ecovillage Movement," in Joshua Lockyer and James R. Veteto (eds) *Environmental Anthropology Engaging Ecotopia: Bioregionalism, Permaculture, and Ecovillages*, New York: Berghahn Books.

Dawson, Jonathan (2006) *Ecovillages: New Frontiers for Sustainability*, UK: Green Books.

Demeritt, David (2001) "Being Constructive About Nature," in Noel Castree & Bruce Braun (eds) *Social Nature: Theory, Practice, and Politics*, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Ltd.

Devall, Bill & Sessions, George (1985) *Deep Ecology: Living as if Nature Mattered*, Utah: Gibbs Smith.

Dobson, Andrew (2001) *Green Political Thought*, London: Routledge.

Dudu, Durukan (2013) Interview, *Buğday Bülteni*, Summer (16): 26-27.

Dudu, Durukan (2011) "Gönüllü Sadelik," *Üç Ekoloji*, Winter (9): 9-32.

Duru, Bülent (2013) "Sustainability of the Green Movement in Turkey," *The Green Movement in Turkey*, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 4: 4-7.

Duru, Bülent (2002) "Türkiye'de Çevrenin Siyasallaşması. Retrieved from 24.05.2012, from <http://acikarsiv.ankara.edu.tr/browse/1421/2038.pdf?show>

Eagleton, Terry (2008) *The Meaning of Life: A Very Short Introduction*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Eckersley, Robyn (1992) *Environmentalism and Political Theory: Toward an Ecocentric Approach*, Albany: State University of New York.

Eder, Klaus (1995) "Does Social Class Matter in the Study of Social Movements? A Theory of Middle-class Radicalism," in *Social Movements and Social Classes: The Future of Collective Action*, London: Sage Publications.

Eiglad, Eirik (2012) "Şehirlerin Yeniden Ortaya Çıkışının Ekolojisi," trans. by Cengiz Apaydın, *Dipnot Ekoloji*, (8): 61-68.

Elgin, Duane (1993) *Voluntary Simplicity: Toward a Way of Life That is Outwardly Simple, Inwardly Rich*, New York: Quill.

Emek, Y. Savaş (1995) "Uzun İnce Bir Yoldayız," *Ağaçkakan*, 21-22: 2.

Enzensberger, Hans Magnus (1996) A Critique of Political Ecology, in Ted Benton (ed) *The Greening of Marxism*, New York: Guilford Press.

Ergen, Melih (1994) *Yeşiller Partisi'nin Olmayan Tarihi*, İzmir: Ege Yayıncılık.

Fotopoulos, Takis (2006) "Is the Eco-village Movement a Solution or Part of the Problem?," *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, 2(3). Retrieved 10.09.2013, from http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/vol2/vol2_no3_Takis_eco_village.htm

Fotopoulos, Takis (2000) "The Limitations of Life-style Strategies: the Ecovillage 'Movement' is NOT the Way Towards a New Democratic Society," *Democracy & Nature*, 6(2): 287-308.

Fukuoka, Masanobu (2001) *The One-Straw Revolution: An Introduction to Natural Farming*, India: Other India Press.

Garden, Mary (2006) "Leaving Utopia," *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, 2(2), January. Retrieved 10.09.2013, from <http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/pdf%20files/pdf%20vol2/Leaving%20Utopia.pdf>

Giddens, Anthony (2009) *The Politics of Climate Change*, UK: Polity Press.

Glaser, Barney G. & Strauss, Anselm L. (2006) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*, New Brunswick: Aldine Transaction.

Gönül, Tayfun, Ahmet Kurt & Ufuk Ahıska (2013) "Anarşizmin Sıfır Yılı: 1986," in Barış Soydan (ed) *Türkiye'de Anarşizm: Yüzyıllık Gecikme*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Hammersley, Martyn & Atkinson, Paul (2007) *Ethnography: Principles in Practice*, London: Routledge.

Hardt, Michael & Negri, Antonio (2004) *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire*, New York: The Penguin Press.

Harvey, David (2012) *Rebel Cities: From the Right to the City to the Urban Revolution*, London: Verso.

Harvey, David (2000) *Spaces of Hope*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Harvey, David (1996) *Justice, Nature & the Geography of Difference*, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

Hellier-Tinoco, Ruth (2003) "Experiencing People: Relationships, Responsibility and Reciprocity," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 12(1): 19-34.

Horton, Dave (2006) "Demonstrating Environmental Citizenship? A Study of Everyday Life among Green Activists," in Andrew Dobson & Derek Bell (eds) *Environmental Citizenship*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Horton, Dave (2003) "Green Distinctions: The Performance of Identity among Environmental Activists," in Bronislaw Szerszynski, Wallace Heim and Claire Waterton (eds) *Sociological Review Monograph Series: Nature Performed: Environment, Culture and Performance*, 51: 63-77.

İnce, Oktay (2009) "Hocamköy" *Doğadan Dönüş Hikayesi*. Retrieved 11.11.2012, from http://www.binyayla.net/i/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=8:qhocamkoy.

Jamison, Andrew (1996) "The Shaping of the Global Environmental Agenda: The Role of Non-governmental Organisations" in Scott Lash, Bronislaw Szerszynski & Brian Wynne (eds) *Risk, Environment and Modernity*, London: Sage Publications.

Kasper Van Schyndel, Debbie (2008) "Redefining Community in the Ecovillage," *Human Ecology Review*, 15(1): 12-24.

Katz, Cindi (1998) Whose Nature, Whose Culture? Private Productions of Space and the "Preservation of Nature" in Noel Castree & Bruce Braun (eds) *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millennium*, London: Routledge.

Kaya, Ramazan (2013) "Qijika Reş, Ulus Meselesi, Bookchin ve Diğer Şeyler...", in Barış Soydan (ed) *Türkiye'de Anarşizm: Yüzyıllık Gecikme*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Kaygusuz, Kamil & Arsel, Murat (2000) "Energy Politics and Policy," in Fikret Adaman & Murat Arsel (eds) *Environmentalism in Turkey: Between Democracy and Development?*, England: Ashgate Publishing Company.

Konecki, Krzysztof (2008) "Triangulation and Dealing with the Realness of Qualitative Research," *Qualitative Sociology Review*, 4(3): 7-28.

Lefebvre, Henri (1996a) "Town and Country," in Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (trans and eds), *Writings on Cities*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Lefebvre, Henri (1996b) "The Right to the City," in Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (trans and eds), *Writings on Cities*, Oxford: Blackwell.

Lefebvre, Henri (1974) *The Production of Space*, trans. by Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford: Blackwell.

Leopold, Aldo (1993) "The Land Ethic," in Susan J. Armstrong & Richard G. Botzler (eds) *Environmental Ethics: Divergence and Convergence*, New York: McGraw-Hill.

Litfin, Karen (2012) A Whole New Way of Life: Ecovillages and the Revitalization of Deep Community. Retrieved 05.02.2013, from http://faculty.washington.edu/litfin/research/A_Whole_New_Way_Of_Life.PDF

Litfin, Karen (2009) Reinventing the Future: The Global Ecovillage Movement as a Holistic Knowledge Community. Retrieved 03.02.2013, from <http://faculty.washington.edu/litfin/research/Reinventing.pdf>.

Macnaghten, Phil & Urry, John (1998) *Contested Natures*, London: Sage Publications.

Maniates, Michael (2002) "Individualization: Plant a Tree, Buy a Bike, Save the World?," in Thomas Princen, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca (eds), *Confronting Consumption*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Marcuse, Herbert (1972) *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, Boston: Beacon Press.

Marcuse, Herbert (1971) The Movement in a New Era of Repression: An Assessment. Retrieved 11.11.2012, from <http://www.marcuse.org/herbert/pubs/70spubs/70MovementEraRepressionBerkeleyJournal.pdf>

Marvasti, Amir B. (2004) *Qualitative Research in Sociology: An Introduction*, London: Sage Publications.

Mollison, Bill (1988) *Permaculture: A Designers' Manual*, Australia: Tagari Publications.

Morgan, L. David (1996) "Focus Groups," *Annual Review of Sociology*, 22: 129-152.

Myers, Helen (1992) *Ethnomusicology: An Introduction*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company.

Naess, Arne (1989) *Ecology, Community and Lifestyle: Outline of an Ecosophy*, trans. and revised by David Rothenberg, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Nohl, Arnd-Michael (1994) "Türkiye'de Hükümet Dışı Örgütlerde Ekoloji Sorunsalı," *Birikim* 57-58: 23-27.

Neuman, W. Lawrence (2006) *Social Research Methods: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Boston: Pearson Education.

Öztürk, Serap (2011) "Yerel ve Ulusal Mücadele Birleşirken," in Özgür Gökmen (ed) *Türkiye'de Hak Temelli Sivil Toplum Örgütleri Sorunlar ve Çözüm Arayışları*, Ankara: Odak Ofset.

Paker, Hande (2013) "The Involvement of the Green Movement in the Political Space," *The Green Movement in Turkey*, Heinrich Böll Stiftung, 4: 12-15.

Pepper, David (1996) *Modern Environmentalism: An Introduction*, London: Routledge.

Pepper, David (1993) *Eco-socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice*, London: Routledge.

Pepper, David (1991) *Communes and the Green Vision: Counterculture, Lifestyle and the New Age*, London: Green Print.

Pepper, David (1984) *The Roots of Modern Environmentalism*, London & New York: Routledge.

Pountain, Dick & Robins, David (2000) *Cool Rules: Anatomy of an Attitude*, London: Reaktion Books.

Princen, Thomas, Michael Maniates & Ken Conca (2002) "Conclusion: To Confront Consumption," in Thomas Princen, Michael Maniates, and Ken Conca (eds), *Confronting Consumption*, Cambridge: The MIT Press.

Roszak, Theodore (1969) *The Making of a Counter Culture: Reflections on the Technocratic Society and its Youthful Opposition*, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc.

Roth, Chris (2012) "An Ecovillage Future," *Communities*, Fall: 11.

Sanguinetti, Angela (2012) "The Design of Intentional Communities: A Recycled Perspective on Sustainable Neighborhoods," *Behavior and Social Issues*, 21: 5-25.

Schneider, Stephen (2008) "Good, Clean, Fair: The Rhetoric of the Slow Food Movement," *College English*, 70(4): 384-402.

Schumacher, E. F. (1973) *Small is Beautiful: Economics as if People Mattered*, New York: Harper & Row, Publishers.

Sennett, Richard (2002) *The Fall of Public Man*, London: Penguin Books.

Sevier, Laura (2008) "Ecovillages: A Model Life?," *Ecologist*, May: 36-41.

Sevim, Semahat & Gürbüz, Özgür (2013) "Hydroelectric Power plants: A Great disaster, a Great Malice," *The Green Movement in Turkey, Heinrich Böll Stiftung*, 4: 28-33.

Silverman, David & Marvasti, Amir (2008) *Doing Qualitative Research: A Comprehensive Guide*, London: Sage Publications.

Simmel, Georg (1997) "The Metropolis and Mental Life," in David Frisby and Mike Featherstone (eds) *Simmel on Culture: Selected Writings*, London: Sage Publications.

Smith, Alexandra Nutter (2010) "The Ecofetish: Green Consumerism in Women's Magazines," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly*, 38(3-4): 66-83.

Smith, Neil (2008) *Uneven Development: Nature, Capital, and the Production of Space*, London: The University of Georgia Press.

Smith, Neil (1988) "Nature at the Millennium: Production and Re-enchantment," in Noel Castree & Bruce Braun (eds) *Remaking Reality: Nature at the Millennium*, London: Routledge.

Şahin, Ümit (2011) "Rudolf Bahro'nun "Komünler Kurma Cesareti"ne Şerh," *Üç Ekoloji*, 9: 61-68.

Şahin, Ümit (2010) "Aliğa Zaferinden Vatan Toprağı Söylemine," *Birikim*, 255: 8-14.

Şehirlioğlu, Batur (1998) "Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi," *Ağaçkakan*, 33(8): 51.

Tavory, Iddo & Goodman, Yehuda C. (2009) "A Collective of Individuals": Between Self and Solidarity in a Rainbow Gathering," *Sociology of Religion*, 70(3): 262-284.

Tokar, Brian (2008) "On Bookchin's Social Ecology and its Contributions to Social Movements," *Capitalism Nature Socialism*, 19(1): 51-66.

Trainer, Ted (2002) "Debating the Significance of the Global Eco-village Movement: A Reply to Takis Fotopoulos," *Democracy & Nature*, 8(1): 143-157.

Trainer, Ted (2000a) "Where Are We, Where Do We Want to Be, How Do We Get There?," *Democracy & Nature*, 6(2): 267-286.

Trainer, Ted (2000b) "The Global Ecovillage Movement: The Simpler Way for a Sustainable Society," *Social Alternatives*, 19(3): 19-24.

Turman-Deal Jinny A. (2010) "'We Were an Oddity': A Look at the Back-to-the-Land Movement in Appalachia," *West Virginia History*, 1: 1-32.

Urry, John (1995) *Consuming Places*, London: Routledge.

Üç Ekoloji (2011) Interview with Mete Hacaloğlu, 9: 51-60.

Vandermeer, John (1995) "The Ecological Basis of Alternative Agriculture," *Annual Review of Ecology and Systematics*, 26: 201-224.

Velissaris, Teo (2006) "Reaching Systemic Change: Some Brief Remarks on Mary Garden's 'Leaving Utopia'," *The International Journal of Inclusive Democracy*, 2(2). Retrieved 02.12.2012, from <http://www.inclusivedemocracy.org/journal/pdf%20files/pdf%20vol2/Reaching%20systemic%20change.pdf>

White, Damien F. (2008) *Bookchin: A Critical Appraisal*, London: Pluto Pres.

Williams, Raymond (1973) *The Country and the City*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Williams, Raymond (1983) *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, New York: Oxford University Press.

Williams, Raymond (1989a) "Socialism and Ecology," in Robin Gable (ed) *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, London: Verso.

Williams, Raymond (1989b) "Between Country and City," in Robin Gable (ed) *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, London: Verso.

Yeğin, Metin (2012) "Kapitalist Kent Anlayışına Karşı Eko-Kent Alternatifi: Eko-Topluluk Üzerine Notlar," *Dipnot Ekoloji*, 8: 111-129.

Zileli, Gün (2013) "68'de İstanbul ve Paris'in Çağları Farklıydı," in Barış Soydan *Türkiye'de Anarşizm: Yüzyıllık Gecikme*, İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.

Documentaries

Elmas, Bingöl (2012) *A Handful of Land*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xCj4Kawc8z4> (Dedetepe)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJVz91Mv3s8> (Permakültür/Marmariç)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3x2xXw5tXnE> (Çamtepe/Güneşin Aydemir)

İslamoğlu, Güven (2012) *Yeşil Doğa*, Alakır

<http://tv.cnnturk.com/video/2012/07/30/yesil-doga/2012-07-28T1415/>

Türkmenoğlu, Fatih (2013) *Hayat Sevince Güzel*, Marmariç

<http://tv.cnnturk.com/video/2013/01/28/programlar/hayat-gezince-guzel/hayat-gezince-guzel-bayindir/2013-01-26T1305/index.html>

Videos

Baloğlu, Bilgenur (2014) Interview with Alakır

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KnBhxrKwVno>

Sökmen, Mehmet (2013) Alakır

Yücel, Yağmur Telli (2013) İmece Evi

<http://vimeo.com/77290378>

Marmariç (2013)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JgL6h5Qfy_I

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvzhsjU9MJU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLrOlxsuOdg>

APPENDIX A

LIST OF SELECTED ECOVILLAGE INITIATIVES

Name of the Initiative	Region/City/District/Village	Initiation Year	Number of Members	Number of Residents
Hocamköy	Central Anatolia Kırıkkale/Hasandede	1996-2001	10	Ended up
Güneşköy	Central Anatolia Kırıkkale/Yahşıhan/ Hisarköy	2000	9	No permanent resident
Dedetepe/Çamtepe/ Çetmibaşı	Aegean-Marmara Çanakkale/ Küçükkuyu	2001	8	8 adults, 4 children and volunteers
Marmariç	Aegean İzmir/Bayındır/ Dernekli	2003	10	6 adults, 2 children and volunteers
İmece Evi	Aegean İzmir/Menemen/ Dutlar	2007	1	2 adults, one child and volunteers
Kardeş Bitkiler	Central Anatolia/ Ankara/Güdül/ Tahtacıörencik	2008	8	No permanent resident
Bayramiç	Aegean-Marmara Çanakkale/Yeniköy/ Muratlar	2010	9	1 adult
Kır Çocukları	Central Anatolia/ Ankara/Güdül/ Tahtacıörencik	2012	3	No permanent resident
Ormanevi	Aegean-Marmara Çanakkale/Biga	2012	4	2 adult and volunteers

COUPLES

Name of the Initiative	Region/City/District/Village	Initiation Year	Number of Members	Number of Residents
Cazgirler	Aegean-Marmara Çanakkale/ Bayramiç/Cazgirler	2009	2	2
Ahlatdede	Aegean-Marmara Çanakkale/ Bayramiç/Ahlatdede	2010	2	4
İbrim	Aegean İzmir/Menemen/ Dutlar	2013	2	2
Alakır (Tuğba & Birhan)	Mediterranean Antalya/Kumluca/ Alakır	2004	2	2

APPENDIX B

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Name of the Initiative	Code	Year	Age	Gender	Education	Profession
Hocamköy	Hocamköy-1	2013	46	M	University graduate	Engineer
Hocamköy	Hocamköy-2	2013	42	M	University graduate	Supervisor (energy sector)
Güneşköy	Güneşköy-1	2013	62	F	University graduate	Academic Chemistry
Güneşköy	Güneşköy-2	2013	61	M	University graduate	Academic Chemistry
Dedetepe Çamtepe Çetmibaşı	Dedetepe-1	2013	31	M	University graduate	Advertising Manager
Dedetepe Çamtepe Çetmibaşı	Dedetepe-2	2012	41	M	University graduate	Business Management
Dedetepe/ Çamtepe/ Çetmibaşı	Güneşin Aydemir	2012	42	F	University graduate	Biologist

Name of the Initiative	Code	Year	Age	Gender	Education	Profession
Marmariç	Marmariç-1	2012	36	M	University graduate	Architect
Marmariç	Marmariç-2	2012	48	M	University graduate	Civil Engineer
Marmariç	Marmariç-3	2012	44	M	University graduate	Historian
Marmariç	Marmariç-4	2012	33	M	University graduate	Architect
İmece Evi	İmece Evi	2013	50	M	University graduate	Chemistry
Kardeş Bitkiler	Kardeş Bitkiler	2012	40	M	University graduate	Architect
Bayramiç	Bayramiç	2012	42	M	University graduate	Engineer
Kır Çocukları	Kır Çocukları	2013	42	M	University graduate	Academic Cognitive Science
Ormanevi	Ormanevi-1	2013	32	M	University graduate	Engineer
Ormanevi	Ormanevi-2	2013	28	M	University graduate	International Relations

Name of the Initiative	Code	Year	Age	Gender	Education	Profession
Cazgirler	Cazgirler-1	2012	55	F	University graduate	Aromatherapy
Cazgirler	Cazgirler-2	2012	57	M	University graduate	Journalism / Hotel Management
Ahlatdede	Ahlatdede -1	2012	41	F	University graduate	Communication
Ahlatdede	Ahlatdede -2	2013	43	M	University graduate	Philosophy
İbrim	İbrim	2013	42	F	University graduate	Tourism
Alakır	Alakır	2013	38	F	University graduate	Economics
Alakır	Alakır	2013	39	M	University drop out	Civil Engineer

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- Cinsiyet, yaş, eğitim?
- Burada sürekli mi yaşıyorsunuz? Önceden nerede yaşıyordunuz?
- Yerleşmek için neden bu bölgeyi seçtiniz?
- Sizi böyle bir yaşam seçmeye iten sebepler, dinamikler nelerdir? Bu süreçte ana motivasyonunuz neydi?
- Neden sizden önce kırsalda hayata geçirilmiş diğer girişimlerin parçası olmayı tercih etmediniz?
- Kentte yaşarken yaşam tarzınızda değişiklikler yaptınız mı? Tüketim alışkanlıklarınız kentte nasıldı? Hayatınızı kentte de sadeleştirme yoluna gittiniz mi?
- Size göre eko-köy ne demek? Bir yerleşkenin eko-köy olması için ne gerekir? Eko-turizm yapan işletmelerle eko-köyü birbirinden ayıran temel dinamikler nedir?
- Parçası olan girişim içinde sizi besleyen, bir arada tutan, paylaştığınız temel değerler, pratikler nelerdir?
- Yeni dalga spiritüel akımlar hakkında ne düşünüyorsunuz? (yoga, meditasyon alternatif tıp vb.)
- Sürdürülebilirlik, kendi kendine yeterlik, sadelik gibi ekolojik yaşam prensipleriyle yeni dalga spiritüel akımlar arasında nasıl bir ilişki kuruyorsunuz?
- Yeşillerle ya da STK'larla ilişkiniz var mı?
- Son dönemde permakültür, organik tarım, TaTuTa gibi uygulamaların, tasarımların vb. daha geniş kitlelerin ilgisini çekmeye başlamasının sebepleri sizce nelerdir?

- Dünyada ekoköyler, alternatif bir yaşam tarzı modellemek üzere kurulmaya başlamıştır. Temel amaçlardan birisi başka yaşam tarzlarının mümkün olabileceğini diğer insanlara göstermektir. Sizce ekoköylerin bu hedefe ulaşması mümkün müdür? Yoksa ekoköyler kapalı, izole topluluklar mıdır?
- Türkiye’de bu anlamda önemli bulduğunuz oluşumlar ya da kolektifler ya da çabalar var mı? Varsa neler?

APPENDIX D

SELECTED PHOTOGRAPHS OF THE ECOVILLAGE INITIATIVES



Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi
Source: www.binyayla.net



Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi
Victor Ananias, Founding father of the Buğday movement
Source: http://victorananias.org/?attachment_id=1585



Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği
Source: Ebru Arıcan



Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği
Source: Ebru Arıcan



Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği

Cob house construction

Source: Ebru Arıcan



Bayramiç-Yeniköy Grubu

Source: Ebru Arıcan



Bayramiç-Yeniköy Grubu
Source: Ebru Arıcan



Bayramiç-Yeniköy Grubu
Source: Tolga Sezgin



Dedetepe Ekolojik Yaşam Çiftliği
Source: Tolga Sezgin



Dedetepe Ekolojik Yaşam Çiftliği
Turkish bath
Source: Tolga Sezgin



Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Merkezi
Source: Ebru Arıcan



Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Merkezi
Source: Ebru Arıcan



Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Merkezi
Composting toilet
Source: Ebru Arıcan



Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Merkezi
Source: Ebru Arıcan



İmece Evi
Source: Tolga Sezgin



İmece Evi
Source: Tolga Sezgin



Güneşköy
Source: Ebru Arıcan



Güneşköy
Source: <http://www.guneskoy.org.tr>



Ormanevi

Source: Ebru Arican



Ormanevi

Building compost grounds

Source: www.ormanevi.tumblr.com



Ormanevi
Rocket stove

Source: www.ormanevi.tumblr.com



Kardeş Bitkiler

Source: <http://kardesbitkiler.blogspot.com.tr>



Kır Çocukları

Source: <http://kircocuklari.wordpress.com>



İbrim

Source: Ebru Arıcan



İbrim

Source: Ebru Arıcan



Ahlatdede

Source: <http://ahlatdede.blogspot.com.tr>



Ahlatdede

Composter

Source: <http://ahlatdede.blogspot.com.tr>



Cazgirler

Source: www.agrida.org.tr



Cazgirler
Source: www.agrida.org.tr



Alakır
Source: Tolga Sezgin



Alakır

Toilet

Source: Tolga Sezgin



Alakır

Source: Tolga Sezgin

APPENDIX E

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Arıcan, Ebru

Date and Place of Birth: 7 November 1974, Ankara

Phone: +90 532 622 62 62

e-mail: ebruarican@gmail.com

EDUCATION

2007 – 2014	Ph.D., Sociology Middle East Technical University, Ankara
2003 – 2006	M.Sc., Media and Cultural Studies Middle East Technical University, Ankara
1997	B.S., Sociology Middle East Technical University, Ankara

LANGUAGE SKILLS	Advanced English
-----------------	------------------

PUBLICATIONS

Ebru Arıcan (2013) “Ebru Yak Bizi, Erit Bizi,” *Amargi* 29: 61-64.

Ebru Arıcan (2013) “Senin Annen Bir Naturalistti Yavrum,” *Amargi* 28: 72-75.

Ebru Arıcan (2013) “Yine Yeşillendi Krizin Mağdurları,” *Amargi* 27: 65-68.

Ebru Arıcan (2006) “Kemalettin Tuğcu ve Ahlak Kaybı, Sakat Kalma, ‘Adam Olamama’,” in *Pasaj* 3 (January/July): 109-132.

PRESENTATIONS

Ebru Arıcan (2013, 4-6 December) “Maksat Çalışanlarımız Memnun Olsun: Sabancı Topluluğu’nda Beyaz Yakalı Olmak,” *13th National Social Sciences Congress*.

Ebru Arıcan (September 2012) “Beyşehir National Park and Everday Practices of Local People,” *Karaburun Science Congress*.

ACADEMIC INTERESTS

Human Ecology, Cultural Theory, Popular Culture, Sociology of Everyday Life.

APPENDIX F

TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu tez, sürdürülebilir/kendine kendine yeten yaşam modelleri oluşturmayı hedefleyen ekoköy girişimlerinden örnekleri yaşam tarzı ve topluluk stratejileri açısından analiz etmeyi amaçlamıştır. Bu çalışmada, ilk olarak, Türkiye’deki ekoköy girişimlerinin, alternatif eko-topluluklar oluşturma potansiyelleri tartışmaya açılmıştır. İkinci olarak, söz konusu girişimlerin kentli orta sınıfın bireyci, kaçış odaklı çabaları olarak değerlendiril değerlendirilemeyeceği sorulmuştur. Bu tez, Murray Bookchin, Andrew Dobson, David Pepper ve David Harvey’in teorik yaklaşımlarını temel almıştır. İnsanın doğayı tahakküm altına almasını insanın insan üzerindeki tahakkümüyle açıklayan Bookchin’in toplumsal ekoloji anlayışının amacı, doğa ile uyum içinde ortaklaşa bir toplum modeli oluşturmaktır. Bookchin’e göre, ekolojik bir toplum insan ölçekli, özgürce yaratılmış, görece kendi kendine yeten, izole olmayan, eko-teknolojileri kullanan alternatif topluluklar etrafında yapılacaktır. David Pepper, yeşil topluluklar üzerine yaptığı ve görüşmelere dayanan çalışmasında, yeşil toplulukların yeşil hareket içinde toplumsal dönüşüm için oynayacağı rolü tartışmaya açmaktadır. Pepper’e göre, yeşil toplulukların yeşil hareket içinde öncü rol oynaması çok mümkün değildir çünkü birçok birey için ortaklaşa yaşam zordur. Harvey, kentsel sorunlara getirilecek ortaklaşa yaşama dayanan bir çözümün hem güçlü hem de çok cazip olduğunu ancak bu bakış açısının kendisinin sorunun parçası olabileceğini ifade etmektedir çünkü iyi kurulmuş topluluklar ‘ötekini’ dışlama riski taşımaktadır. Merkezileştirilmiş yapıları ekolojik bir toplumun yapı taşı olarak gören Bookchin de, bu tip toplulukların taşıyabileceği riskler konusunda uyarılmaktadır. Bookchin’e “küçük mutlaka güzel değildir.” Benzer şekilde, Dobson toplulukların farklı ve sürdürülebilir yaşamının mümkün olduğunu gösterebildikleri ölçüde, var olan normlar ve pratikler karşısında bir alternatif olabileceğini ancak bu toplulukların muhalif tavrının kolaylıkla nötrlenebileceğini ifade etmektedir. Kısaca söz edilen teorik yaklaşımları ve kavramsal çerçeveyi temel alan çalışmanın analizi göstermiştir ki, çevresel sorunların altında yatan yapısal

sebepler ve ekolojik bozulmaya katkıda bulunan ekonomik, toplumsal ve politik yapılar yerine birey temelli eylemlere ve yaşam tarzı değişikliklerine vurgu yapan girişimler, ekoloji hareketlerinin parçası olma ve eko-topluluklara dönüşme potansiyeli taşımamaktadırlar. Bu girişimler, kent hayatından ve kentle özdeşleştirilen ‘sağlıksız’ gıda gibi sorunlardan kaçmak isteyen, yalnızca bireyci, eğitilmiş, mülk sahibi kentli orta sınıflar için mümkün olabilecek çabalar olarak görünmektedirler.

Bu çalışmada, ekolojik girişimleri yaşam tarzı ve topluluk stratejileri üzerinden analiz etmek amacıyla, Çanakkale, İzmir ve Ankara’da alan çalışması yürüttüm. Bu çalışmaya, Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi, Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği, Bayramiç-Yeniköy Grubu, Dedetepe Ekolojik Çiftliği/Çetmibaşı/Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kültürü Merkezi, İmece Evi Doğal Yaşam ve Ekolojik Çözümler Çiftliği, Güneşköy Kooperatifi, Ormanevi Kolektifi, Kardeş Bitkiler, Kır Çocukları, İbrim, Ahlatdede, Cazgirler ve Alakır girişimleri ve yerleşkeleri dâhil edilmiştir. Çalışılan ekoköy girişimlerine uzman görüşleriyle ve kartopu tekniğiyle ulaşılmıştır. Söz konusu ekoköy girişimlerinin parçası olan bireylerle, ekolojik yaşam, ekoköy ve ekoköy girişimleri üzerine çalışan uzmanlarla ve bu girişimlerde çalışan gönüllülerle 2012 ve 2013 tarihleri arasında yarı yapılandırılmış derinlemesine görüşmeler yapılmıştır. Bu çalışma kapsamında, bazı girişimlerin yerleşkelerinde kaldım ve girişim üyelerinin gündelik pratiklerini yerinde gözleme imkânı buldum. Görüşme sonuçlarıyla birlikte kişisel tecrübelerim ve gözlemlerim tezin analizinde önemli yer tutmuştur. Ayrıca, girişimlerin internet sayfalarını ve bloglarını takip ettim. Ankara’da ekoköy, permakültür, yavaş gıda gibi birbiriyle ilişkili konular hakkında yapılan buluşmalara ve atölyelere katıldım. Konuyla ilgili diğer yazılı ve görsel malzemeleri (girişimler hakkında yapılan belgeseller, girişim üyelerinin çeşitli dergilere yazdıkları yazılar vb.) analize dâhil ettim.

Bu çalışmada, Bookchin’in çevrecilik ve toplumsal ekoloji arasında yaptığı ayrımı benzer şekilde çevrecilik ve ekolojizm arasında ayırım yapan Andrew Dobson’ın

sınıflandırmasını kullandım. Bookchin, çevreciliği mekanik ve araçsal bir doğa mühendisliği formu olarak görürken, kritik olanın derin hiyerarşik ilişkilerin, sömürü ilişkilerinin, sınıf ilişkilerinin toplumsal ekoloji perspektifiyle analiz edilmesi olduğunu ifade etmektedir. Çünkü Bookchin'e göre temel sorunların, yalnızca tek hedefi olan reformlarla çözülmesi mümkün değildir. Dobson da benzer şekilde, çevreciliğin çevre sorunlarına karşı yönetsel bir bakış açısı getirdiğini, çevre sorunlarının üretim ve tüketim süreçlerindeki mevcut değer ve kalıplarda yapısal temel değişiklikler yapılmadan çözülebileceği anlayışına dayandığını ifade etmektedir. Dobson'ın ekolojizm anlayışı, bireylerin toplumsal ve politik hayatlarında radikal değişimler olmadan bu sorunların çözülemeyeceği fikri üzerinde temellenmektedir. Dobson ekolojizmi esas alarak, yeşil dönüşüm için beş strateji önerir: parlamento aracılığıyla eylem, yaşam tarzları, topluluklar, doğrudan eylem ve toplumsal sınıf (Dobson, 2001). Alan çalışması, girişimlerin temel olarak yaşam tarzı ve topluluk stratejilerini benimsediklerini ortaya koymuştur. Bu sebeple, bu çalışmada Dobson'ın önerdiği diğer üç strateji analize dâhil edilmemiş, ekoköy girişimlerinin yaşam tarzı ve topluluk stratejilerine odaklanılmıştır.

Bireysel değişimlerin sürdürülebilir topluluk yaşamına dönüştürülebileceği düşüncesi yeşil düşünce içerisinde uzun süredir var olan baskın bir paradigmadır (Dobson, 2001). Bu paradigma, bireyin eylemlerinin önemine vurgu yapar ve toplumsal değişim için yaşam tarzı değişimini esas alır. Murray Bookchin, Andrew Dobson ve David Pepper bireylerin yaşam tarzlarında değişiklik yapmaları gerektiğini; Bookchin bu bireylerin takdir edilmesi gerektiğini çünkü yaşam tarzı stratejilerinin, sürdürülebilir yaşam tarzının mümkün olduğunu gösterebilme ve bireylere ekolojik duyarlılık kazandırabilme potansiyelinin olduğunu ifade etmektedir. Ancak yaşam tarzı stratejilerinin avantajları kadar dezavantajları da vardır. Yaşam tarzı stratejileri güçlerini tümüyle, baştan çıkarıcı kapasitelerinden alırlar. Buradaki sorun, bireylerin baştan çıkarılmayı reddetmeleridir (Dobson, 2001: 139). Öte yandan, Bookchin'in ifadesiyle, izole, bireyci, rahatına düşkün ve örgütsüz yaşam tarzı politikaları toplumsal hareketlere ve politik örgütlenmelere imkân vermezler (Bookchin, 1995: 27). Alan çalışmasının sonuçları ortaya koymuştur ki, görüşmeciler bireylerin yaşam

tarzlarındaki deęişimlere vurgu yapmakta, bireyin kendi enerjisini üreterek elektrik faturası ödememesini ve ‘hatta’ yaşamasını kişisel direniş şekli olarak yorumlamaktadırlar. Çok açıktır ki, bu tarz yaklaşımlar kolektif eylem ihtiyacını ortadan kaldırmakta, her bireyin kendi gıdasını yetiştirebileceęi, kendi enerjisini üretebileceęi, kendi ‘doęal’ temizlik ürününü yapabileceęi yönünde ‘elitist’ varsayımlar ortaya koymaktadır. Görüşmeler çerçevesinde tartışıldığı üzere, bu tip yaklaşımlar toplumsal ve politik tabakalaşmanın, toplumsal sınıfların, üretim ve tüketim süreçlerinin göz ardı edildięine işaret etmektedir (Bookchin, 2001; Bookchin, 1990a; Pepper, 1991). Oysa Bookchin’in ifadesiyle “sade yaşam” ve geri dönüşüm çevresel sorunlar için temel çözümler olarak kabul edilirse ekolojik kriz devam edecek ve daha da ağırlaşacaktır (Bookchin, 1989: 22).

Çalışmanın analitik bölümünün ikinci kısmında, ekoköy girişimlerinin topluluk stratejilerine odaklanılmıştır. Yaşam tarzı deęişimlerini toplumsal deęişim için esas alan bazı bireyler ortak yaşam arayışındadır. Bireylerin yeşil bir topluluk ya da ekoköy kurma ya da var olan yeşil bir topluluęa ya da ekoköye katılmadaki motivasyonları farklılık göstermektedir. Yeşil yaşam tarzını benimseyen bireyler alternatif teknolojileri kullanma, geri dönüşüm, vejetaryenlik ya da kompost yapma gibi birbiriyle ilişkili ve yeşil olarak tanımlanan prensip ve pratiklerin hepsini benimseme arayışındadırlar. Pepper’ın ifadesiyle, yeşil yaşam tarzını benimseyen çoęu bireyin aradığı bu içsel tutarlılıktır. Ancak bu tutarlılıęa ulaşmak yeşil yaşam tarzını benimseyen bireylerin algısında, ‘anaakım’ toplumda çok da mümkün deęildir (Pepper, 1991). Tam da bu yüzden, bazı bireyler ‘anaakım’ toplumdan farklı olduğunu düşündükleri yeşil topluluklara katılmayı, hedeflenen içsel tutarlılıęa sahip olmanın bir yolu olarak görürler. Ancak, bu tutarlılıęa ulaşmak yeşil topluluklarda da her zaman mümkün deęildir. Ayrıca, Pepper’ın ifadesiyle, birçok bireyin yeşil topluluklara katılmalarındaki temel motivasyonu öncelikli olarak ekolojik deęildir. Alan çalışması Pepper’ın tespitlerine benzer sonuçlar ortaya koymuştur. Görüşülen çoęu girişim üyesinin ana motivasyonu, kent hayatından duyulan memnuniyetsizlik, kentle özdeşleştirilen kirlilik, sağlıksız gıda ve aşırı tüketim, ‘romantize’ edilmiş kırsal hayat, kırsalda tekrar bulunacağı düşünülen kaybedilmiş ve de ‘doęal’ ve

‘gerçek’ olduđu düşünölen ‘idealize’ edilmiş geçmiştir. Söz konusu motivasyonların kökenlerini romantik doğa kavrayışında, kent ve kır arasında kurulan ikiliklerde bulmak mümkündür. Dönem ve akım olarak romantizm sona ermiş, kent ve kır dönüşmüştür. Ancak belli imajlar, ilişkiler ve duygular varlıklarını devam ettirmişler ve de etkilerini kaybetmemişlerdir (Williams, 1973; Smith, 2008). Doğayla uyum içinde yaşam arayışı, ‘idealize’ edilmiş geçmişin sadeliğini tekrar elde etme ve doğaya geri dönüş gibi mitler, ekoköy ‘hareketi’ni de karakterize etmiştir. 1990’larda ortaya çıkan ekoköy hareketi, yukarıda söz edilen değerlerle beslenen hippî hareketinin devamı olarak kabul edilmektedir. Ekoköy ‘hareketi’, hippî hareketinin içinde yer alan bireylerin toplumsal sınıfları, amaçları ve temel kaygıları esas alındığında bu hareketin devamı olarak kabul edilmektedir (Fotopoulos, 2000: 287; Pepper, 1991; Trainer, 2000a). Ekoköyler ekolojik, ekonomik, sosyo-kültürel ve spiritüel sürdürülebilirliği temel alan alternatif modeller olarak ortaya çıkmışlardır. Çoğu ekoköy, ‘iyi’ ve sürdürülebilir yaşamın, birbirini desteklemeyi seçen, yeşil yaşam tarzını ve topluluk içinde kendi kendine yetmeyi hedefleyen bireylerden oluşan, insan ölçekli topluluklarda mümkün olabileceği fikrine dayanmaktadır. Bu çalışmaya dâhil edilen ekoköy girişimleri kırsal temelli olsalar da, ekoköy, kent ya da kır temelli olabilmektedir. Türkiye’deki ekoköy girişimleri, dünyadaki ekoköy ‘hareketi’nin tarihi dikkate alındığında ‘yeni’ oluşumlar olarak düşünülebilirler ve Batı’daki ekoköyler gibi 1960’ların hippî hareketiyle kolaylıkla ilişkilendirilemezler. Bunun temel sebeplerinden birisi, 1960’ların Türkiye’de Batı’dan farklı yaşanmış olmasıdır. Batı’da 1960’larda ve 1970’lerde gelişmeye başlayan ekolojik duyarlılık ve ekolojik mücadele Türkiye’nin gündemine aynı dönemlerde yerleşmemiştir. Bu dönem Türkiye’de Marxist paradigmanın baskın olduđu ve hippî hareketinin, Gün Zileli’nin ifadesiyle, negatif algılandığı bir dönemdir. Ancak 1980’lerde çevresel hareketler Türkiye’de güç kazanmaya başlamıştır. 1980’lerden sonra çevreci örgütlerin, derneklerin, girişimlerin, vakıfların ve benzeri oluşumların sayısında artış olmuştur. Artan sayıda insan nükleer santraller, hidroelektrik santralleri, baraj inşaatları ve altın madenciliği faaliyetlerine karşı yerel, ulusal ve uluslararası ölçekte mücadele etmeye başlamıştır. 1980’lerden bu yana, parlamenter siyasi faaliyetlerde de artış ve değişimler yaşanmıştır. Bu hareketlenmeye ek olarak, özellikle

1990’lardan sonra, mevcut ekolojik krize alternatif çözümler ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştır. Sağlıklı gıdanın, başka yaşam şekillerinin, sağlıklı beslenme biçimlerinin vb. mümkün olduğu anlayışıyla temellenen girişimler ve kolektifler ortaya çıkmaya başlamıştır. Bir grup birey gündelik hayatlarını kentte yeşil ilkeler ve değerler etrafında düzenlemeye çalışırken, söz konusu çalışmanın odağında olan ekoköy girişimi üyeleri gibi bir grup birey de, sürdürülebilir ve kendi kendine yeten yaşam modelleri yaratmak amacıyla kentten kırsala çekilmeye başlamıştır. Beck’in ifadesiyle, bazı bireyler, çevresel tehditlerin “ürpertici evrensellesmesinden” kaçmak için, yalnızca bireyci, eğitilmiş ve mülk sahibi sınıflar için mümkün olabilecek imkânlarla kırsalda yaşamının yöntemlerini aramaya başlamış, iyi ve sağlıklı yaşam koşulları yaratma peşine düşmüştür. Bu çalışma, söz konusu girişimleri analiz etmeye çalışmaktadır. Girişimlerin yaşam tarzı ve topluluk stratejilerini tartışmaya başlamadan önce, genel özelliklerine değinmek anlamlı olacaktır.

Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi

Hocamköy Anadolu Ekolojik Ortak Yaşam Hareketi ya da üyelerinin ifadesiyle Hocamköy Hareketi Türkiye’nin bilinen ilk deneysel ekoköy projesidir. Hocamköy projesi Orta Anadolu’nun Kırıkkale ili, Hasandede Köyü’nde 1996 yılında hayata geçirilmiştir. Hocamköy projesi, “doğa ile uyumlu, dayanışmacı ortak yaşamın gerçek hayata nasıl aktarılacağı tartışmalarından” doğmuştur. Hocamköy Hareketi’nin çıkış noktası ideal dünya kavramı ve insanların kendileriyle, diğer insanlarla ve doğayla ilişkilerini yeniden tanımlaması fikridir. Hareketin temel amacı, geleneksel bilgiler ile bilimsel yöntemleri birleştirerek insan ölçekli, sürdürülebilir kırsal yaşam modeli oluşturmaktır. Hocamköy hareketinin aktif üye sayısı onken, daha geniş çemberde yirmi beş ila otuz kişi projenin parçası olmuştur. Hocamköy Hareketi’nin kurucularından Mete Hacaloğlu’na göre ekoköy bir deneme olarak görülmemeli, aksine endüstriyel dünyada birçok kişinin yaşam tarzı olmalıdır. Hacaloğlu’na göre, bu tip yaşam tarzları birer nokta olarak kalsa dahi, nokta olarak yayıldıkları zaman küresel bir dönüşümden söz etmek mümkün olacaktır (Üç Ekoloji, 2011: 58). Hocamköy projesi kapsamında organik tarım pratikleri, geri

dönüştürülmüş yerel malzemeler ve yerel tekniklerle konut inşası, yenilenebilir kaynaklardan enerji üretilmesi amaçlanmıştır. Ayrıca, proje kapsamında, kentte yaşayan insanların gündelik hayatlarında küçük değişimler yaratmalarına katkı sağlayacak eğitimler, geleceğin ekoköylerinin desteklenmesine ilişkin programlar ve kırsaldaki ve de kentteki çocuklar için çalışmalar yürütülmüştür. Hocamköy, Küresel Ekoköyler Ağı'nın (GEN) üyesi olmuş ve GEN konseyinin üçüncü toplantısı Hasandede'de yapılmıştır. Proje süresince Hasandede'de Hocamköy girişiminden kalıcı olarak yaşayan üye olmamıştır. Hocamköy projesi 2001 yılında sonlanmıştır.

Marmariç Permakültür – Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği

Marmariç Ekolojik Yaşam Derneği, 2013 yılında İzmir ilinin, Bayındır İlçesi, Dernekli köyünde kurulmuştur. Girişimin yer aldığı arazi, 1980'li yıllarda yerel halk tarafından su sıkıntısı sebebiyle terk edilmiştir. Arazi, terk edilmiş okul binası ve de öğretmen lojmanı kırk dokuz yıllığına Dernekli Köyü'nden kiralanmıştır. Okul binasını tamir eden girişim üyeleri, mekânı topluluk merkezi olarak kullanmaya başlamıştır. Girişimin amacı, yerel değerleri ön planda tutan, sürdürülebilir insan yerleşkesi oluşturmaktır.

Marmariç'te gündelik işler paylaşılarak yürütülmektedir. Marmariç'te girişimi ilgilendiren harcamalar ortak havuzdan yapılmaktadır. Marmariç'in ana gelir kaynaklarından birisi, yerleşkede düzenlenen ve aynı zamanda bazı üyelerin yerleşke dışında verdikleri permakültür kurslarıdır. Ayrıca, girişim, kalıcı olarak yerleşkede yaşamayan bazı üyelerin kentte yaptıkları işlerden ve de kalıcı olarak yerleşkede yaşayan bazı üyelerin dışarıya proje bazlı yaptıkları işlerden gelir elde etmektedir. Çalışılan girişimler arasında kalıcı nüfusu en fazla olan, İstanbul'da ortak yaşam tecrübesi olan Marmariç'tir. Marmariç'teki görüşmeciler ve diğer girişimlerdeki görüşmeciler, Marmariç sakinlerinin İstanbul'da edindikleri birliktelik yaşam tecrübesinin Marmariç üyelerini ortak yaşama daha fazla yaklaştırdığını ifade etmişlerdir. Daha önce kurdukları ilişkiler Marmariç'i kalıcı nüfusu en fazla topluluk yaparken, diğer görüşmecilerin bakış açısından, aralarına katılmak isteyen yeni

üyeler için bu bir engel teşkil edebilmektedir. Çünkü önceden inşa edilmiş arkadaş temelli ilişkiler ve karar alma yöntemleri, topluluğa yeni katılmak isteyen kişileri dışarıda bırakabilmektedir. Marmariç, Harvey'in tasvir ettiği güçlü topluluklardan kabul edilemez ancak bu tip toplulukların 'öteki' insanları dışarıda bırakma potansiyeli konusunda örnek gösterilebilir.

Bayramiç-Yeniköy Grubu

Bayramiç-Yeniköy 2010 yılında, dokuz üye tarafından Çanakkale, Kaz Dağları'nda kurulmuştur. Verimli toprağı ve iklimi sebebiyle Kaz Dağları seçilmiştir. Bayramiç girişiminin amacı, permakültür felsefesini, permakültür tasarımı ve yerel tohumların korunması ilkesini temel alan, kendi kendine yeten, sürdürülebilir bir yerleşke kurmaktır. Alan çalışmasının yürütüldüğü 2012 yılı itibarıyla dokuz üyeye sahip girişimin yalnızca bir üyesi kalıcı olarak girişime ait yerleşkede yaşamaktadır. Bayramiç'te permakültür kurslarına ek olarak ekolojik mimari atölyeleri, yoga kampları gibi aktiviteler düzenlenmektedir. Buğday, domates gibi ürünlerin yetiştirildiği yerleşkede diğer ürünler takas usulüyle temin edilmektedir. Bayramiç, Ankara merkezli Doğal Besin, Bilinçli Beslenme Grubu (DBB) üyesidir. Bu grup, doğal metotlarla elde edilen sağlıklı ürünlere doğrudan erişim talep eden kişilerce kurulmuştur. Bayramiç bölgedeki altın madenciliği faaliyetlerine karşı yürütülen mücadele içinde de yer almaktadır.

Dedetepe Ekolojik Çiftliği/Çetmibaşı/Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Merkezi

Dedetepe, Çetmibaşı ve Çamtepe farklı yerleşimler olmakla birlikte, aralarındaki organik ilişkiden dolayı tezde Dedetepe başlığı altında analiz edilmiştir. Küresel Ekoköyler Ağına (Global Ecovillage Network-GEN) kayıtlı olan Dedetepe Ekolojik Çiftliği Çanakkale'ye bağlı Küçükkuşu'da, Hindistan'da yoga kampında tanışan bir çift tarafından 2001 yılında kurulmuştur. Çift ileride eko-yerleşkeye dönüştürme vizyonu ile kırsalda ekolojik prensiplere göre yaşamaya karar vermelerinin ardından Kazdağları'nda uygun bir yerleşim alanı aramaya başlamıştır. Çiftin çıkış amacı bir

yoga merkezi kurmaktır. Çiftliğin şu anda bulunduğu araziyi satın almadan önce yine Ege Bölgesi'ndeki geleneksel bir köyde geçici olarak ikamet eden çift, kendi ifadeleriyle, muhafazakâr köylülerin çok da misafirperver olmayan tavırları karşısında Kazdağları'nda yaşama kararı almıştır. Dedetepe Ekolojik Çiftliği sakinleri, kendi ifadeleriyle, olabilecek en doğal şekilde yaşamlarını sürdürmeye çalışmaktadırlar. Bu sebeple, geri dönüşümü, yemek atıklarından kompost yapımını, yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarının kullanılmasını ve doğal yollardan doğumu desteklemektedirler. Çiftlikte enerji güneş ve rüzgâr panelleri ile üretilmekte ve yüksek enerji tüketimini gerektirecek buzdolabı, bulaşık makinesi, televizyon, klima gibi cihazlar kullanılmamaktadır. Çiftlik vejetaryen bir mutfığa sahiptir. Çiftliğin sahibi olan ailenin kararı ile açık havada ayrılan özel alan dışında sigara içilmesi yasaklanmıştır. Dedetepe Ekolojik Çiftliği'nin sahibi Kazdağı Koruma Derneği'nin de üyesidir. Yerel düzeyde faaliyet gösteren bu dernek çevre sorunlarıyla mücadele etme, ekolojik farkındalığı artırma, tarihi ve kültürel mirası koruma, doğa dostu tarım metotlarını tanıtmaya gibi amaçlara sahiptir.¹⁷²

Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Merkezi 2010 yılında Buğday Derneği'nin “kendi öz kaynakları ile ayakta duran kırsal bir model oluşturmak ve yöresel, ekolojik ve diğer doğa dostu üretimler konusunda eğitim çalışmaları” yürütmek amacıyla açılmıştır.¹⁷³ Merkez buluşma yeri olarak ve de kurslar ve eğitimler için ortak kullanım alanı olarak tasarlanmıştır. Merkez Dedetepe Ekolojik Çiftliği ile koordineli çalışmaktadır. Dedetepe Çiftliği'nin sahibi olan aile 2013 yılında, kendi ifadeleriyle, çiftlikte kalmaya başlayan gönüllü sayısının artması ve buna bağlı olarak mahremiyet alanlarının kısıtlanması nedeniyle çiftliğe yakın ve geleneksel bir köy olan Çetmibaşı'nda yaşamaya karar vermiştir. Köyde ayrıca Küçükkuyu'da çalışan bazı Buğday Derneği üyeleri de ikamet etmektedir.

¹⁷²<http://kazdagikoruma.org>.

¹⁷³ http://www.bugday.org/portal/haber_detay.php?hid=3776.

İmece Evi Doğal Yaşam ve Ekolojik Çözümler Çiftliği

İmece Evi Doğal Yaşam ve Ekolojik Çözümler Çiftliği İzmir ili, Menemen ilçesinde kurulmuştur. 2007 senesinde ekolojik kamp olarak kurulan İmece Evi zaman içinde çiftliğe, akabinde de bir öğrenme merkezine dönüşmüştür. 2013 yılı itibariyle İmece Evi'nde iki yetişkin ve bir çocuk yaşamaktadır. İmece Evi'nde hem permakültür hem de doğal tarım ilkeleriyle tarım yapılmaktadır. Çiftlikte zeytin, domates, incir gibi ürünler yetiştirilmektedir. Çiftlikte ayrıca zeytinyağı, peynir, yoğurt, sabun ve deterjan yapılmakta ve satılmaktadır.¹⁷⁴ İmece Evi'nin bir diğer gelir kaynağı da ekoturizmdir. “Başka bir tatil mümkün” anlayışını benimseyen çiftlikte, konaklama imkânları sunulmaktadır.

Güneşköy Kooperatifi

Güneşköy Kooperatifi 2000 yılında dokuz üye tarafından Ankara'da kurulmuştur. Güneşköy arazisi Kırıkkale ili, Hisarköy'de yer almaktadır. Alan çalışmasının yürütüldüğü 2013 yılı itibariyle, yerleşkede yaşayan üye bulunmamaktadır. Güneşköy “kırsal kesimde doğa ile uyumlu ve sürdürülebilir yaşam deneyimleri geliştirmeyi ve bunları paylaşmayı” hedeflemektedir.”¹⁷⁵ Girişim bünyesinde ekolojik tarım, yerli tohum kullanımı, yenilenebilir enerji kaynaklarının kullanılması, doğa ile uyumlu ve ekolojik mimari tasarım gibi uygulamalar teşvik edilmektedir. Güneşköy, Küresel Ekoköyler Ağı (Global Ecovillage Network-GEN) üyesidir. Güneşköy'de bezelye, patlıcan, patates ve domates gibi ürünler yetiştirilmektedir. Güneşköy, Hisarköy'deki köylülerle işbirliği içinde çalışmaktadır.

¹⁷⁴http://www.imeceevi.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=blogcategory&id=18&Itemid=30.

¹⁷⁵ <http://www.guneskoy.org.tr/guneskoykooperatifi/genel>.

Ormanevi Kolektifi

Ormanevi Kolektifi 2005 yılında dört kişi tarafından İstanbul’da kurulmuştur. 2012 yılında kırsala yerleşme karar veren Ormanevi Kolektifi’nin amacı “kırsalda anlamlı, doygun, adil, şenlikli ve kendine yeterli bir mikro-toplum, bir ekoköy kurmak”tır. Kolektif üyeleri kırsalda deneyim elde edene ve de kurmayı planladıkları ekoköy için en uygun araziye bulana kadar Çanakkale’nin Biga ilçesine bağlı bir köyde yaşamaya karar vermiştir. Kolektif üyeleri tasarladıkları ekoköyü 2014 yılında hayata geçirmeyi planlamaktadırlar. Kolektif, pembe domates ve ceviz gibi ürünler yetiştirmektedir. Ormanevi Kolektifi’nin kırsalda yürütmeyi planladığı iki proje bulunmaktadır. Bunlardan ilki Savory Enstitüsü’nün “Bütüncül Mera Yönetimi”, diğeri de “şehirli, genç bireylerin kırsalda şenlikli, onarıcı ve adil bir yaşam kurmaları için” gerekli tüm bileşenleri bir araya getiren bütüncül “OPMIWOHA” modelidir (Open Minds Working Hands).¹⁷⁶

Kardeş Bitkiler

Kardeş Bitkiler 2008 yılında Ankara Tahtacıörencik’te kurulmuştur. Kardeş Bitkiler 2013 itibariyle sekiz üyeye sahiptir. Üyelerden kalıcı olarak Tahtacıörencik’te ikamet eden kimse bulunmamaktadır. Girişimin amacı, kırsal alanda sürdürülebilir tarım ve hayvancılık modelleri geliştirmek, yerel üretimin sürdürülebilirliğini, doğaya saygılı eko-turizm aktivitelerini tanıtmak ve desteklemek, kırsal alandaki doğal yapıları ve biyo-çeşitliliği belgelemek ve bunların korunmasına katkı sağlamak, doğal üretimle uğraşan bireyler, çiftlikler ve diğer organizasyonlar arasında işbirliği sağlamaktır. Bu doğrultuda eko-turizm ve ekolojik eğitim faaliyetleri, doğal tarıma ve kardeş bitkiler yöntemine dayanan çeşitli projeler geliştirilmiştir.¹⁷⁷ Kardeş Bitkiler, Doğal Besin, Bilinçli Beslenme Grubu (DBB) üyesidir. Girişim her bitkinin birbirini desteklediği

¹⁷⁶ <http://ormanevi.org/yol/index.php/2013-10-25-08-48-19/ormanevi-nedir>.

¹⁷⁷ <http://kardesbitkiler.blogspot.com.tr/p/amaclarmz-ve-hedeflerimiz.html>.

anlayışına dayanan, bitkileri bir arada yetiştirmeyi teşvik eden kardeş bitkiler tarım yöntemi üzerinde çalışmaktadır.

Kır Çocukları

Kır Çocukları Ankara ili, Gündül ilçesine bağlı Tahtacıörencik'te Kardeş Bitkiler'in üç eski üyesi tarafından başlatılmış bir girişimdir. 2013 yılı itibariyle girişimin Tahtacıörencik'te kalıcı olarak yaşayan üyesi bulunmamaktadır. Girişimin internet sayfasında belirtildiği üzere, Kır Çocukları doğa ile uyum içerisinde üretim ve yaşama pratiklerini geliştirme ve paylaşmayı amaçlayan bir gruptur. Diğer yandan, aile ölçeğinde çiftlikler, permakültür, doğa koruma, barışçıl iletişim ve takas ekonomisini içeren ve farklı alanlarda çoğaltılabilir modeller üretmek de amaçları arasındadır.¹⁷⁸ Girişimin üyeleri pomat, sabun, bitkisel yağ ve reçel gibi 'doğal' ürünler yapıp satmaktadır.¹⁷⁹ Ayrıca Kır Çocukları, Tahtacıörencik köylüleriyle işbirliği içerisinde Tahtacıörencik Doğal Yaşam Kolektifi-TADYA'yı başlatmıştır. TADYA doğayla uyumlu geleneksel üretim tekniklerini, doğal yaşam ve doğal çevrenin korunmasını destekleyen kırsal kalkınmanın yollarını araştıran bir oluşumdur.¹⁸⁰ TADYA ayrıca, Doğal Besin, Bilinçli Beslenme Grubu (DBB) içerisinde yer alan kolektiflerdendir. Kır Çocukları 2014 yılının Şubat ayında organik üretim, küçük ölçekli hayvancılık ve doğal ürün üretimiyle uğraşmak üzere Tahtacıörencik'te permakültür ilkelerine uygun bir ev inşa etmeye başlamıştır. Girişim üyeleri güvenli ve korunaklı bir villa inşa etmeyi değil, köylülerle birlikte işbirliği içinde tarımla uğraşabilecekleri bir alanın parçası olmayı amaçladıklarını vurgulamaktadırlar.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁸<http://kircocuklari.wordpress.com/merhaba>.

¹⁷⁹<http://kircocuklari.wordpress.com/dogal-urunlerimiz>.

¹⁸⁰<http://tahtaciorencik.wordpress.com/tadya-kimdir>.

¹⁸¹<http://ciftlikevi.wordpress.com/subat-2014-arazide-hazirliklar>.

İbrim

İbrim İzmir'in Menemen ilçesinde yer almaktadır. Alan çalışmasının yürütüldüğü 2013 yılı itibariyle İbrim'de bir çift ikamet etmektedir. Bir süre İmece Evi'nde kalan çift, İmece Evi'ne yakın bir yerde arazi satın alarak kendi evlerinin inşaatına başlamıştır. Amaçları bir ekoköy ya da ekolojik bir yerleşke kurmak değildir. Bu sebepten dolayı, araştırmanın başında İbrim alan çalışmasına dâhil edilmemiştir. Ancak çiftin İmece Evi'nde kalma süreleri ve de İmece Evi'ne fiziksel yakınlıkları nedeniyle İbrim çalışmaya dâhil edilmiştir. İbrim'de yapılan görüşmede, temel olarak, çiftin kırsalda yaşama motivasyonları ve önceden kurulmuş İmece Evi'nde ortaklaşa bir hayatı neden tercih etmedikleri sorulmuştur. Görüşme, İmece Evi'ndeki tecrübeleri ve geçmişteki başarısız ortak yaşam deneyimleri yüzünden ortak bir yaşam biçimi ile aralarına mesafe koyma kararı aldıklarını ortaya koymuştur. Çift, ortak bir yaşamın kentten kırsala çekilen bireyler için şu aşamada zor olduğunu ifade etmiştir.

Ahlatdede

Kendi kendine yeten bir topluluk inşa etme amacı ile başlatılan Ahlatdede Çanakkale'ye bağlı Bayramiç'te yer almaktadır. Alan çalışmasının yapıldığı 2012 yılı itibari ile Ahlatdede'de 2009'da İstanbul'dan ayrılarak gelen bir çift ikamet etmekteyken, 2013 yılında ortaklaşa bir yaşam için bir çift daha Ahlatdede'ye yerleşmiştir. Çift, evlerini inşa etmeden önce geçici olarak bir karavanda yaşamıştır. Ahlatdede sakinleri 2012 yılı itibariyle kendi enerjilerini üretmekte, kompost tuvalet kullanmakta ve domates, patlıcan, fasulye, mısır, şeftali ve kiraz gibi ürünleri permakültür ilkelerine göre yetiştirmektedir. Diğer ihtiyaçlarını gidermek için ise yerel pazarı ve takas ekonomisini kullanmaktadırlar.

Cazgirler

Cazgirler Çanakkale'ye bağlı Bayramiç'te yer almaktadır. 2012 yılı itibariyle Cazgirler'de bir çift yaşamaktadır. Metropol hayatındaki aşırı tüketimden kaçmak için karavanla seyahat etmeye karar veren çift, ardından Türkiye'nin Kuzey Ege Bölgesi'nde kıyı şeridinde yer alan Altınoluk'a yerleşmiştir. Çift sonrasında daha küçük bir yerde yaşama kararı alarak bir köye yerleşmiştir. Cazgirler'de yaşayan çift diğer görüşmecilerin aksine emekli olduktan sonra kırsal alanda yaşamaya başlamıştır. Çift, kırsalda yaşamaya daha az çalışmak ve daha az harcamak için karar verdiklerini ve herhangi bir finansal garanti olmadan bunun mümkün olamayacağını ifade etmiştir. Bu çalışmadaki diğer görüşmecilerin aksine Cazgirler sakinleri geleneksel bir köyde köylülerle birlikte yaşamayı seçmiştir. Çift, geleneksel bir köyün kolaylıkla ekolojik bir köye dönüştürülebileceğini düşünmektedir. Cazgirler, Türkiye Ekolojik Yerleşkeler Ağı "EKOYER" üyesidir. Diğer ekoköy girişimlerinde olduğu gibi çift, kendi sebze ve meyvesini üretmekte ancak kullandıkları tarım yöntemini permakültür veya organik tarım olarak adlandırmamakta, ilaç ve kimyasal kullanmadan tarım yaptıklarını ifade etmektedir. Cazgirler, Doğal Besin, Bilinçli Beslenme Grubu (DBB) üyesidir ve ürünlerini bu grup aracılığıyla satmaktadır. Ayrıca, çift, vücut yağları, cilt bakım ürünleri ve kremler imal etmekte ve bu ürünleri internet üzerinden satmaktadır. Çift, 2010 senesinde Cazgirler'de yirmi dört üyesi olan Agrida Tarım ve Turizm Derneği'ni kurmuştur. Agrida'nın diğer üyeleri 2012 itibari ile Cazgirler'de yaşamamaktadır. Derneğin ve üyelerinin amacı, hem geleneksel süreçleri yakalamak hem de doğru su kullanımı, doğal kaynakların korunması ve kompost yapımı gibi konularda yeni tekniklere ilişkin bilgileri köylülerle paylaşmaktır.¹⁸²

¹⁸²<http://www.agrida.org.tr>.

Alakır

Alakır Antalya'ya bağı Kumluca ilçesinde yer almaktadır. Evlerini “Yuva” olarak adlandıran çift 2004 yılından bu yana Alakır'da yaşamaktadır. Çift, kendileriyle yapılan bir röportajda, uygun bir yer bulana kadar seyahat ettiklerini ve kendileri gibi doğada yaşamayı tercih etmiş insanlarla tanıştıklarını, ancak tanıştıkları kişiler “kafalarındaki antikapitalist anlayışa uymadığı için” Alakır'a yerleştiklerini ifade etmiştir.¹⁸³ Çift başka bir dünyanın mümkün olduğunu göstermek için Alakır'da yaşamaya karar verdikten sonra ailelerinin maddi desteği ile bir arazi almıştır. Başka bir mimarının mümkün olduğunu ifade eden çift yakın köyden temin ettikleri yerel ve doğal malzemelerle, antikapitalist bir yaklaşımla ekolojik bir ev inşa etmiştir.¹⁸⁴ Çift, yapılan görüşmede doğal tarım yöntemleri ile kendi ürünlerini yetiştirdiklerini ve kendi enerjilerini ürettiklerini belirtmiştir. Çift, insanları daha az tüketmeye sevk etmediği için ekolojik yaşam, ekolojik tarım ve çevre dostu ürünler gibi terimlerin tehlikeli olduğunu ve yeşil tüketimin bir çözüm olmadığını düşünmektedir. Çift ayrıca, kullanmak zorunda oldukları doğal kaynakların korunması adına ortak yaşamayı tercih etmediklerini ve herkesin özgür olabilmesi için çiftler halinde ya da bireyler olarak, birbirine yürüme mesafesinde veya Anadolu'nun farklı bölgelerinde yaşama taraftarı olduklarını ifade etmektedir.

Alan çalışmasında, Alakır'ın Victor Ananias, Buğday Hareketi ve Hocamköy projesi gibi, böyle bir yaşam arayışında olanlar için ilham kaynağı olduğu görülmüştür. Alakır Vadisi'nde yapılması planlanan hidroelektrik santraline karşı mücadele veren çift, ancak Alakır'daki proje ile birlikte Türkiye'nin farklı yerlerinde yapılan HES'lerin varlığından haberdar olduklarını belirtmiştir. Öncesinde cep telefonu, bilgisayar, internet bağlantısı ve motorlu araç kullanmayan çift, HES projesine karşı mücadele etmeye başlayınca bu teknolojileri kullanmaya başladıklarını ifade etmiştir.

¹⁸³<http://www.dogadernegi.org/baska-bir-dunya-mumkun.aspx>

¹⁸⁴<http://mithatmarul.files.wordpress.com/2012/05/yuva.pdf>

Zamanla bu mücadelenin sembolü haline gelen çiftin projeye karşı ilk tepkisinin, insanların yaşadıkları yerin yakınında yürütülmesini istemedikleri bir projeye ya da faaliyete karşı çıkması anlamına gelen ve “benim arka bahçemde değil” şeklinde ifade edilen bir ‘çevrecilik’ olduğu söylenebilir.

Bu çalışmada, yukarıda özelliklerine kısaca değinilen girişimler/ekolojik yerleşkeler yeşil yaşam tarzı ve topluluk stratejileri üzerinden anlaşılmaya çalışılmıştır. Yaşam tarzı stratejilerini tartışırken öncelikle, ortak yeşil değerleri, mekânları, ağları paylaşan ekoköy girişimi üyelerinin yaşam pratiklerine odaklandım. Ayrıca, ekoköy girişimlerinin parçası olmayan ancak aynı motivasyonlara sahip, aynı ağların içinde yer alan, aynı mekânları paylaşan bireyleri çalışmanın analizine yer yer dâhil ettim. Görüşmeciler tarafından ifade edilen geri dönüşüm, kompost yapma, vejetaryenlik gibi yeşil yaşam tarzı pratiklerine değindim. Yaşam tarzı stratejilerini Dobson, Bookchin ve Pepper’ın yaklaşımlarını temel alarak tartışırken, Dave Horton’un yeşil yaşam tarzları için yaptığı sınıflandırmayı kullandım: Yeşil ağlar, yeşil mekânlar, yeşil zamanlar ve yeşil materyaller (Horton, 2003; Horton, 2006). Horton’a göre, yeşil yaşam tarzlarının örgütlenmesi belli ağlara, mekânlara, materyallere ve zamanlara bağlıdır. Çünkü yeşil yaşam tarzları bu ağlar, mekânlar, materyaller ve zamanlar içinde öğrenilmektedir. Yeşil ağlar yeşil toplantıları, yeşil buluşmaları ve de enformasyon ve iletişim teknolojileri aracılığıyla yaratılan karşılıklı iletişimlerini içermektedir. Yeşil toplantılar sırasında coğrafi olarak birbirine yakın olan aktivistler geçici olarak bir araya gelirler ve yeşil kimliklerini ortaya koyarlar. Planlı ve düzenli yapılan toplantılara çevreci grupların kampanyaları, gayriresmî karşılıklı etkileşimlere de protestolar ya da vejetaryen kafelerde aktivist bir arkadaşla karşılaşmalar örnek olarak verilebilir (Horton, 2006). Ekoköy girişimleri düşünüldüğünde, düzenli olarak yapılan toplantılardan bahsetmek çok mümkün değildir. Yeşil ağların ikincisi olan yeşil buluşmalarda ise coğrafi olarak birbirine uzak ağ üyeleri atölyeler, konferanslar, festivaller ya da protestolar aracılığıyla bir araya gelirler. Bu çalışma kapsamında Buğday Derneği’nin bazı üyeleri tarafından Çanakkale’ye bağlı Küçükkuyu’da kurulan Çamtepe Ekolojik Yaşam Kültürü Merkezi’nde homeopati, ekolojik sosyal girişimcilik, şifalı bitkiler gibi farklı

konularda düzenlenen etkinlikler, Marmariç ve Bayramiç yerleşkelerinde verilen permakültür kursları, Ankara’da her hafta cumartesi günü bir kafede yapılan permakültür buluşmaları yeşil buluşmalara örnek olarak verilebilir. Horton yeşil mekânlarla insanların bir araya geldikleri belirli yerleri işaret etmektedir. Bu bağlamda, bazı kafeler, organik ve doğal ürün satan dükkânlar, özellikle Buğday Ekolojik Yaşamı Destekleme Derneği’nin başlattığı organik pazarlar ve TaTuTa ağına (Ekolojik Çiftliklerde Tarım Turizmi ve Gönüllü Bilgi, Tecrübe Takası) üye olan ekolojik çiftlikler yeşil yaşam tarzını benimseyen ve bu anlamda benzer düşünen insanların bir araya geldikleri önemli mekânlar olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Yeşil zamanlarla yeşil yaşam tarzının sürekliliğini sekteye uğratan durumlar kast edilmektedir. Çalışılan girişimlerin çoğu üyesi kariyerleri, çocuklarının eğitimi, bakmakla yükümlü oldukları kişiler ya da diğer kişisel sebeplerle kırsalda kalıcı olarak yaşamaya henüz başlamamıştır. Kentten kırsala henüz çekilmeyen üyeler, üyesi oldukları girişimleri tatillerde ya da hafta sonlarında geçici olarak ziyaret etmektedirler. Yeşil materyaller ile de, varlığı ve yokluğu yeşil yaşam tarzının gelişmesine yol açan, maddi nesne ve pratikler (televizyon, araba, internet teknolojileri, ‘doğal’ ürünler, vejetaryenlik vb.) kast edilmektedir. Bu çalışmada yeşil materyalleri tartışırken yeşil yaşam tarzının baskın bir ifadesi olan yeşil tüketime odaklandım. Horton, yeşil yaşam tarzını benimseyen bireylerin genellikle araba yerine bisiklet kullanmayı tercih ettiklerini, vejetaryenliği benimsediklerini, televizyon izlemediklerini, organik gıdalar tükettiklerini ifade etmektedir. Bu çalışmanın görüşmecilerinin bilgisayara ya da internet teknolojilerine karşı olmadıklarını söylemek mümkündür. Tam aksine, çoğu görüşmeci bu tip teknolojilerin hayatları için faydalı ve önemli olduğunu ifade etmiştir. Horton, yeşil yaşam tarzını benimseyen bireylerin araba yerine bisikleti tercih ettiğini ifade etse de görüşmecilerin hayatında araba önemli bir yer tutmaktadır. Görüşmecilerin tamamı organik ya da permakültür ilkelerine göre yetiştirilmiş ürünleri tüketmektedir. Çok az görüşmeci vejetaryenliği benimsemiştir.

Bu çalışmada ayrıca ekoköy girişimlerinin ortak yaşam stratejileri tartışılmıştır. Lefebvre ve Pepper’ın ifadesiyle, insanların ortak yaşam kurma ya da bir topluluğa

katılma sebepleri ve motivasyonları farklılık göstermektedir. Bu çalışmada, görüşmecilerin ekoköy kurma motivasyonlarını, alan çalışmasının sonuçlarını temel olarak üç ana başlık altında tartıştım. İlk olarak, çoğu görüşmeci kent hayatından, kentle ilişkilendirdikleri kirlilik, sağlıksız gıda, yoğun iş temposu gibi sorunlardan uzaklaşmak, daha az çalışarak daha sade yaşamak gibi motivasyonlarla kırsala çekilmeyi tercih etmiştir. İkinci olarak, kent hayatıyla ilişkilendirdikleri aşırı tüketimden kaçmak ve kendi kendine yeten bir hayat kurmak için kırsala çekilmeyi seçmişlerdir. Üçüncü olarak da, daha bireyci ve Bookchin'in ifadesiyle "hedonistik" motivasyonlarla hareket etmişlerdir. Ekolojik kaygılarına rağmen çoğu katılımcının öncelikli motivasyonu ekolojik değil bireyseldir. Çalışmaya dahil edilen girişimler, alternatif teknolojilerin kullanımı, gönüllü sadelik, geri dönüşüm, permakültür, organik tarım, doğal tarım gibi pratikleriyle ekolojik yaşam tarzını temsil etmektedirler. Bu pratikler aynı zamanda Bookchin'in önerdiği eko-topluluk modelinin de özellikleridir. Ancak Bookchin'e göre bu pratikleri benimsemek ekolojik bir topluma giden yolda yeterli değildir.

Çalışmaya dâhil edilen ekoköy girişimlerinde ortak bir yaşamdan bahsetmek mümkün değildir. Çoğu girişimde bir ya da iki kişi kalıcı olarak yaşamaktadır. Yapılan alan çalışmasının sonuçlarına göre, çalışılan girişimler arasında kalıcı nüfusu en fazla olan Marmariç'tir. Güneşköy, Kardeş Bitkiler ve Kır Çocukları'na ait arazilerde üyelerden kalıcı olarak yaşayan bulunmamaktadır. Bayramiç'te 2010 yılından bu yana yalnızca bir kişi yaşamaktadır. 2013 yılı itibariyle Ormanevi'nde iki kişi kalıcı olarak yaşamaktadır. Alan çalışmasının yapıldığı 2012 yılında Ahlatdede'de yalnızca bir çift yaşıyorken, 2013 yılı itibariyle girişime iki kişi daha katılmış ve Ahlatdede 2013 itibariyle kalıcı nüfusu en fazla ikinci girişim haline gelmiştir. Diğer yerleşimlerde (Alakır, Cazgirler, İbrim) alan çalışması yürütülürken yalnızca çiftler yaşamaktaydı.

Alan çalışmasının sonuçları ortaya koymuştur ki, kırsal, ekoköy girişimlerinin üyeleri için ana geçim kaynağı değildir. Girişimlerin üyesi olan bireyler yerel halk tarafından susuzluk gibi sebepler yüzünden terk edilmiş arazileri ya da köy

merkezine uzak arazileri almakta ve kendi amaçları doğrultusunda dönüştürmektedir. Fiziksel olarak geleneksel köylere uzak alanlarda yer alan girişimlerin yerelle kurduğu ilişki de genel olarak ‘mesafeli’dir. Çalışılan ekoköy girişimlerinin üyeleri, kırsalda var olan diğer girişimlere katılmayı tercih etmemektir. Bunun temel sebebi, ortak yaşamın zorlukları, karar alma mekanizmalarında yaşanan sıkıntılar ve bireysel otonomi arayışıdır. Çalışılan çoğu ekoköy girişimi, ortak yaşam yönünde atılmış adımlardan ziyade, eğitilmiş, beyaz yakalı, “halinden memnun orta sınıf” bireylerin kentten kaçarak oluşturdukları izole mekânlardır (Braun, 2006). Bu girişimlerin üyesi olan bireyler, kırsala çekilmek için ihtiyaç duyulan gelire ya da gelir getirecek eğitime ve becerilere sahiptir. Sahip oldukları uzmanlıkların esnek çalışmaya izin vermesi kırsalda bu uzmanlıkları sayesinde gelir elde etmelerine imkân tanımaktadır. Girişimlerin yerleşkelerinde düzenlenen kurslar, atölyeler, yoga kampları vb. bir diğer gelir kaynağıdır. Ayrıca, girişimlerin bazı üyeleri kırsalda başlangıç için gerekli olacak geliri elde etmek üzere satılabilecek ya da kira getirisi olacak bir mülke sahiptir. Bazı üyeler ise gerektiğinde ailelerinden maddi destek almaktadır. Kırsalda yürütülen tarım gibi faaliyetler söz konusu girişimler için temel gelir kaynağı olmadığı için, yerel halkın tarımda kimyasal gübre ya da ilaç kullanması, söz konusu girişim üyeleri tarafından mevcut üretim ve tüketim süreçleri göz ardı edilerek değerlendirilmektedir. Raymond Williams’ın örneğiyle, madencilere etraflarındaki her şeyin ekolojik bir yıkım olduğunu, yaşamlarını ve üretim biçimlerini değiştirmelerini söylemek mümkün değildir çünkü onlar içinde yaşadıkları bu durumun zaten farkındadırlar. Benzer şekilde, Bookchin, oduncuların ormanları ağaçlardan “nefret” ettikleri için değil, ekonomik ihtiyaçları onları buna zorladığı için kestikleri örneğini vererek aynı noktaya vurgu yapmaktadır (Williams, 1989a; Bookchin, 1990a). Alan çalışmasının sonuçlarına göre, görüşmeciler birey bazlı yapılacak değişikliklerin, diğer bireyler tarafından örnek alınarak daha geniş kitlelere yayılabileceği düşüncesiyle yapısal değişikliklere değil, bireylerin yaşam tarzlarındaki değişikliklerin önemine vurgu yaparlar. Yapılan analize göre, söz konusu girişimlerin, Bookchin’in ekolojik krize çözüm olarak önerdiği ekolojik topluluk modeline benzeyen alternatif modeller olmadığı ortaya çıkmıştır.

David Harvey, anti-kapitalist ajandanın bir parçası olan Bookchin'in önerisini, ortak kaynakların kolektif kullanımına yönelik radikal bir öneri olarak önemli bulmaktadır (Harvey, 1996; Harvey, 2012). Harvey'e göre, topluluklar küreselleşmenin etkilerine karşı ideolojik bir panzehir olabilirler. Ancak Harvey'e göre kentlerin doğaya yakın olduğu düşünülen merkezsizleştirilmiş topluluklara dönüştürülmesinin, biyo-çeşitliliğin, suyun ya da havanın korunmasını garanti altına alacağı düşüncesi sıkıntılıdır. Harvey'in ifadesiyle, fetiş bir şekilde, "doğa"ya insan eylemlerinden ayrı değer biçilmesi ve "doğa"nın kutsallaştırılması, çoğunluğun yaşayacağı gerçek yaşam alanlarının kalitesini ilgilendiren politik hareketlerin önünü kapatmaktadır. Olması gereken kırsalda yaşama ya da ortak yaşam nostaljisinin egemen olmadığı, kentle kır arasındaki üretken gerilimdir.

APPENDIX G

TEZ FOTOKOPİ İZİN FORMU

ENSTİTÜ

Fen Bilimleri Enstitüsü

☐

Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü

☐

Uygulamalı Matematik Enstitüsü

☐

Enformatik Enstitüsü

☐

Deniz Bilimleri Enstitüsü

☐

YAZARIN

Soyadı : Arıcan
Adı : Ebru
Bölümü : Sosyoloji

TEZİN ADI (İngilizce) : Individual Escapism or Eco-Community:
Selected Cases Of Ecovillage Initiatives In Turkey

TEZİN TÜRÜ : Yüksek Lisans

☐

Doktora

☐

1. Tezimin tamamından kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
2. Tezimin içindekiler sayfası, özet, indeks sayfalarından ve/veya bir bölümünden kaynak gösterilmek şartıyla fotokopi alınabilir.
3. Tezimden bir bir (1) yıl süreyle fotokopi alınamaz.

☐☐☐

TEZİN KÜTÜPHANEYE TESLİM TARİHİ