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Drudgingly the squirrel feeds itself- Performatively collective action influences oppressive norms:

**Mixed-Method Study on the Subversion of Oppressive Norms
in Activist and Policy Discourse**

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Abstract

Like a squirrel that slowly collects nuts for the winter, this thesis emphasizes the importance of small acts in the collective struggle for a just world. Currently, oppressive norms confine certain ways of being. Therefore, this feminist study addresses means to counteract these norms by analyzing activist discourse in ten environmental conflicts regarding food. Furthermore, I statistically examine the influence of activist discourse on the subversion of oppressive norms in policy discourse. Seemingly small acts of activists are centered in the analysis, since they performatively reinforce and challenge oppressive norms. Focusing on neoliberalism, the results of the analysis underline that not the norm itself is central but its performative presentation. Compared to previous literature, that categorized employing neoliberal discourse as supporting oppressive norms, these results provide a new perspective. While sampling limitations restrict the quantitative analysis correlating activist and policy discourse, the study exceeds boundaries between quantitative methods and discourse analysis. Moreover, with the combination of concepts from discursive psychology and ecofeminist theory I offer two frameworks for the empirical application of Butler's account of performativity. Thus, the study itself aims to take a small step towards a just world by creating knowledge that enhances theoretical and methodological research possibilities.

Key words: oppressive norms, collective action, performativity, mixed methods, feminist research

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1 Drudgingly the squirrel feeds itself- Performatively collective action influences oppressive norms

Drudgingly the squirrel feeds itself is a German proverb referring to the squirrel's tedious but successful practice of collecting nuts, one by one, for the winter. The proverb denotes that small steps are steps after all and can bring one closer to the goal. Furthermore, the saying is applicable to many contexts from collecting points in a game, to learning a new language, to transforming the world. This thesis is concerned with the latter. Therefore, I employ Butler's (1993) account of performativity, which similarly underlines the importance of every, maybe seemingly small, act. Here, it enables me to explain the counteraction of oppressive norms in activist discourse in food conflicts and to relate the subversion of norms in activist discourse with that of policy discourse. However, let me start at the beginning:

As a feminist I depart from the point that the world is unjust and thus in need for change. Specifically, feminists strive to change the injustices deriving from the construction of the world based on for example patriarchy, heterosexism, racism, and classism (Kings 2017, 66). Hence, feminist research has the political aim of "chal-leng[ing] multiple hierarchies of inequalities within social life" (Doucet and Mauthner 2006, 42). Furthermore, feminist research roots in activism (Naples 2003, 13) and aims to maintain this connection by creating knowledge which supports collective action (Naples 2003, 30). Being a feminist researcher I am similarly concerned with the possibility of collective action to bring about change.

Furthermore, I want to approach the problem of an unjust world by looking at injustice and oppressive norms. I focus on oppressive norms in particular because I

understand them to be at the core of the construction of one's position in society. If we identify oppressive norms as a key problem, then it is clear where collective action should aim at to initiate a transformation. However, how does one challenge oppressive norms? This is the problem addressed in this thesis. Albeit, thinking of the slowly eating squirrel again, I take a small step to approach this question by focusing on the specific context of challenging norms in environmental justice conflicts regarding food.

However, why are environmental justice conflicts regarding food, in short food conflicts, a relevant context? Environmental justice describes the "connection between environmental exploitation and [...] social justice" (Tarter 2002, 214). It lays the focus on how humans cause certain environmental conditions and how these conditions influence people differently based on their position in society (Tarter 2002, 219). A prominent example for an environmental justice problem are soy mono-culture plantations in South America which for example deplete the soil, that is a home for and nourishing ground for many species, which others in turn rely on to feed themselves. Despite being a life-securing need and right, one's food security depends highly on one's position in society, which is for example related to gender, ethnicity and geo-political location (Holt-Giménez 2011, 110). In other words, food security is linked to oppressive norms. Since soy is mainly used to meet the needs of a minority of humans in the Global North, the consequences of oppressive norms become visible: While the interests of some are centered, others are rendered invisible (e.g. local people, other species, the soy itself). Due to this political dimension, food's crucial role in the climate crisis and the general importance of food for every being, I consider food conflicts an important context to conduct my study.

Although a lot of activism addresses food justice, change is yet to come. Moreover, as I will present in section 3.2 previous literature indicates that despite collective

action strives to challenge oppressive norms, activist discourse reinforces them as well. This is puzzling, since the steps of activists seem to nourish oppressive norms instead of their aims. But, how should the squirrel feed itself to make small steps towards changing oppressive norms instead of enforcing them? In other words, how can activist discourse in food conflicts counteract and not maintain harmful norms? While the proverb reminds me of the importance of small changes, a feminist study is more helpful to approach this problem. Hence, this research is guided by the question: *How does activist discourse reinforce or counteract oppressive norms in environmental justice conflicts regarding food?*

Another small step to bring about change for collective action is to impact policy. The mentioned problem that one's position in society affects one's food security is acknowledged in activism but also in institutions like the EU (Moragues-Faus 2017, 4). However, it is rarely addressed in policies or not directed at the underlying root problem of social injustice (Moragues-Faus 2017, 4). Yet, to affect policy is one way to bring about change for collective action. While scholars stress the importance of activist discourse in policy-making (Woodly 2015), and the struggle of food activists for social justice (Bradley and Herrera 2016, 4), policies remain silent (Maughan, Anderson and Kneafsey 2020, 281). I think this is puzzling and thus want to shed light on how activist discourse shapes policy discourse in food conflicts. While collective action can influence policy discourse in many forms my focus are oppressive norms. Moreover, due to their range of influence, the counteraction of oppressive norms in policy represents a meaningful step towards their subversion. Hence, this paper raises a second research question: *How does the potential to subvert oppressive norms in activist discourse influence the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse?*

In sum, the concept of performativity lies at the core to answer the two research

questions, namely: *How does activist discourse reinforce or counteract oppressive norms in environmental justice conflicts regarding food? How does the potential to subvert oppressive norms in activist discourse influence the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse?* Besides the academic contribution of applying performativity empirically, the created knowledge on how activists influence oppressive norms with their discourse aims to improve our understanding how collective action can prevent the reinforcement of oppressive norms and instead change them. In turn, the transformation of oppressive norms displays a small step forward in the struggle for a more livable world for all forms of being. Similarly, a better understanding of how the maintenance and subversion of oppressive norms in policy discourse is influenced by activist discourse, assists to deepen our understanding of one factor that changes the use of norms in institutionalized discourse. This constitutes another small step towards the general transformation of oppressive norms.

The paper is structured as follows: The next section lays the foundation for understanding my thesis by outlining my epistemology. To comprehend the importance of small acts for a bigger struggle I introduce feminist interventions in their own field and then present literature of activism in the food context. Both the reinforcement of oppressive norms in food justice movements and the lack of literature in relation to policy indicate the relevance of assessing the articulation of oppressive norms in activist and policy discourse in food conflicts (section 3). To analyze the reinforcement and counteraction of oppressive norms in activist and policy discourse I connect performativity and discursive psychology to a theoretical framework (section 4). Likewise, section 4 theorizes the underlying relationship between the subversion of oppressive norms in activist and policy discourse, thus transferring performativity to a quantitative setting. While this provides the basis for the analysis, section 6 adds methodical aspects how performativity is applied in the empirical context of food conflicts in both the discourse analysis and quantitative analysis. Moreover,

the methodology section 5 addresses concerns regarding the mix of quantitative methods with post-structuralism. Finally the analysis in section 7 demonstrates how activist discourse in the selected food conflicts both reinforces and counteracts oppressive norms affecting colonized and racialized people, gendered people and the more-than-human world¹ by drawing on neoliberalism. These results shed new light on previous literature which is discussed in section 8. Moreover, oppressive norms were challenged and supported in both activist and policy discourse. However, the subversive potential of activist discourse does not stand in a significant relationship with norm-subversive potential in policy discourse, as the correlation analysis shows. Hence, section 8 examines limitations of the analysis and considers opened possibilities for further research through the combination of quantitative and discourse analysis. On this note, the discussion and conclusion sections (8 and 9) portray the contribution of the empirical application of performativity in a discursive and quantitative context as enabled by the theoretical combination of performativity with discursive psychology.

Before starting with the specification of my epistemology in section 2, I want to establish the definitions of food conflict and activists in this paper:

I define an environmental justice conflict as an incident or process with at least two parties where one carries out an action which negatively affects the (connected dimensions of) environment and social justice and thus triggers some form of opposition by the other party. Moreover, an environmental justice conflict is related to food if the inducement for the action causing the conflict is food (plantation, production, packaging or distribution) or if food insecurity or declined access are

¹In my writing I attempt to acknowledge that animals, plants and non-living matter have an inherent value (independent of humans) and can similarly have "agentic capacity" (Emmett and Nye 2017, 141). I accomplish that by including non-human examples in my theory or referring to the more-than-human world instead of using the nature/human-culture divide. I consider it important to decenter the human in order to emphasize humans as part of nature. However, due to data constraints and the scope of this project my analysis focuses on human discourse and agency and address other species at most in relation to human activism.

the consequences of the action. Food security requires "[...] [the] physical and social access to sufficient, healthy, nutritious food to guarantee [...] dietary needs and food preferences for an active and healthy life" (FAO² in Oswald Spring 2019, 441).³ A threat to food access or security is given if activists articulate this to be the case.

Furthermore, I define activists as individuals or groups who carry out acts in opposition to the action that endangers the environment and social justice in the name of food or threatens the activist's food security. In order to meet the definition of activists it is not required to embody a certain form of movement, employ a specific form of resistance or perceive oneself as food movement or food activists.

2 Epistemology

My epistemology grounds in post-structuralism which falls under the umbrella of social constructionism and rests on the proposition that knowledge is not discovered, neither does it reflect an objective truth (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 12). Instead, post-structuralists argue that knowledge is created through discourse. In the diverse field of post-structuralism discourse is defined differently, but generally it can be said that discourses ascribe meaning. Furthermore, the meaning of one thing is acquired by setting its meaning in relation to others. Consequently, meanings are connected, however they are not fixed. (Jørgensen and Phillips 2002, 15f.) Hence,

²Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

³Being aware of the debate between food security and sovereignty, I rely on food security in this thesis because I agree with scholars who perceive it as a necessary basis (Cadieux and Slocum 2015, 4). Food security depicts merely a minimum claim and does not exclude food sovereignty. Knowing that food is attached to cultural identity (Oswald Spring 2019, 373), I underline that for me a healthy life includes that cultural needs and habits are met. Furthermore, I stress that food security entails that its "insecurity arises from inequitable distribution of resources and uneven relations of power" (Cadieux and Slocum 2015, 6).

post-structuralism emphasizes knowledge creation as a social interaction and perceives categories such as gender as constructed. What is of interest is how categories are discursively constructed, what is in- and excluded in the category and how it creates subjects.(Gannon and Davies 2012, 67)

Due to the focus on deconstruction for example of the category women, non-poststructural feminists feared that after fighting for years to make women subjects, post-structuralists abolish the acting subject altogether (Leavy 2007, 92). Nonetheless,

the category of women does not become useless through deconstruction [...] Surely it must be possible both to use the term, to use it tactically even as one is, as it were, used and positioned by it, and also to subject the term to a critique which interrogates the exclusionary operations and differential power-relations that construct and delimit feminist invocations of 'women' (Butler 1993, 5).

Moreover, feminists critiqued post-structuralism asking how feminists can transform the world if everything is reduced to language (Gannon and Davies 2012, 74). However, understandings of the role of the subject, agency and the extent of the discursive vary. I address my understanding of power, agency and boundaries of the discursive in the following subsections, since they build the foundation of my thinking and thus this thesis.

2.1 The power of norms

Foucaults conception of power is central for post-structuralists and the basis of many theories (Gannon and Davies 2012, 72) including those of Wetherell and Potter and Butler, who build my theoretical framework. Foucault (1978, 92f.) theorized power as productive and exercised in all relations, meaning that power is inherent in everything and all relations are power relations. Furthermore, the force of power lies in discursive construction which determines "what [can] be said, thought, [...]"

practiced, even imagined" (Peet and Hartwick in Ashe 2018, 112). Since discourses determine what is possible, power "develops through normalization, through defining what is usual and habitual and to be expected, as opposed to the deviant and exceptional" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 84). Hence, power unfolds through discourse that brings subjects into being and creates their identities. This is called subjectification. Moreover, in some cases the process of normalization, of manifesting norms, can render some forms of beings as superior to others (Foucault 1978, 144). Here, it needs to be stressed again that power acting through norms is a way of organizing life and not always inherently oppressive. However, due to their power of regulating and determining subjects, norms can also be oppressive: some ways of being can become "unlivable" (Butler 1993, xiii) and "unthinkable" (Butler 1993, 59). In other words, because norms are crucial for subjectification and affect what can be imagined, non-conformity to norms can lead to the neglect of one's needs and even existence (Butler 2015, 49). I am interested in the power of norms disciplining life into complying with them and hampering beings who divert from them. I argue that being unthinkable entails a devaluation and thus call those power relations or norms oppressive, which devalue certain forms of being. Furthermore, I would argue that this is unjust and thus define injustice as a consequence of norms which assign a higher value to some forms of being.

To sum up the argument above, power acts discursively by producing norms. The reproduction of certain norms currently results in injustices, because these oppressive norms declassify some forms of being.

2.2 Limits of the discursive

I depart from the point that everything is discursively constructed. However, that does not imply that everything is just language or an idea. On the contrary, saying

that for instance the category gender and who belongs to it is constructed, does not make gendered experiences less real (Leavy 2007, 97). However, "there is no 'versionless' reality" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 62). Humans starve everyday independent of the discourse which attributes these deaths to weather phenomena or unjust distribution. The suffering is real even though the explanations and solutions are originating in discourse. Moreover, stating that everything is discursive does not deny the existence of matter like bodies or rocks. "These things are not just words - but they are not separable from words either" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 63). This is because "language both is and refers to that which is material, and what is material never fully escapes from the process by which it is signified" (Butler 1993, 38). In other words, of course things exist, but as humans we have no means to approach these things apart from constructing them discursively.

Wetherell and Potter (1992, 90) notice a tendency to appoint discourse a status of an abstract, external force. Albeit they prefer to underscore discourse as a social interaction, which leads over to my understanding of the subject in a world that is solely constructed by discourse.

2.3 Discursive subjects

Building on Wetherell and Potter (1992, 79) and Butler (1997, 16) I perceive the subject as constituted by and constituting discourse. Since everything is constructed discursively, the subject is as well. However, this discourse is not an external force but constructed by subjects with agency. Nonetheless, "although this constitutive constraint does not foreclose the possibility of agency, it does locate agency as a reiterative or rearticulatory practice immanent to power, and not a relation of external opposition to power" (Butler 1993, xxiii). In sum, the subject "is itself enabled, if not produced by" (Butler 1993, xxiii) discourse, but at the same time constructing

discourse and thus has agency.

It is important to note that this perception of the subject does not answer questions of a subject's intentional or conscious use of discourse in a situation. However, I argue that the question at hand is not whether discursive practices are used strategically by agents or not, since their effect on norms remain the same. Thus, I agree with Wetherell's and Potter's (Wetherell and Potter, 93) statement who "see it as possible to do perfectly coherent analyses of discourse and its consequences without considering how far actors are in control of what they are doing".

3 Literature Review

3.1 Feminism- how small struggles influence the big

Historically, the feminist movement is characterized by groups struggling to be recognized within feminism. Specifically, the dominant feminist movement was criticized for tackling the problems of white, heterosexual, middle-class women and thus further manifesting their needs as the norm (Mohanty 2003, 18f.). Criticism came for example from black women (Hill Collins and Bilge 2016, 65f.) and indigenous women (St. Denis 2017, 46). Feminism responded to the critique by including intersectional perspectives. Intersectionality, a term originating from the critique of black feminists (Bilge 2013, 420), emphasizes that the constructed categories of gender, ethnicity, sexuality, etc. mutually affect one's position in society (Hill Collins and Bilge 2016, 3). Ecofeminists extended the notion of intersectionality (Lykke 2009, 42) by pointing out the "exclusions of species and ecosystems" (Gaard 2014). However, ecofeminist movements similarly reinforce oppressive norms for example by neglecting the role of sexuality in terms of being differently affected by the climate crisis (Alaimo 2009, 32f.).

With the brief outline of the diverse feminist and ecofeminist movements I demonstrated that even activism aiming to eradicate injustices can reinforce oppressive norms. However, if collective action fighting against injustices, stabilizes oppressive norms instead, a just world gets further out of reach. This is the reason why I consider it important to examine how activist discourse reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms.

Furthermore, the critical interventions already point towards how the creation of oppressive norms is theorized by some (eco)feminists, namely by drawing on certain discourses. Plumwood's (1993, 43) master model shows for example how discursively created dualisms such as "reason/nature, male/female" support western male dominance. The so-called 'master identity' is reproduced with mechanisms of backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalization and homogenization of the other (Plumwood 1993, 42-56), who is depreciated by being "feminized, animalized, eroticized and naturalized" (Gaard 1997, 119). Likewise, Young (1990, 41) proposes a theory of oppression caused by norms. Young's (1990, 49-62) "five faces of oppression", namely exploitation, marginalization, powerlessness, cultural imperialism and violence, enable the analysis of oppression affecting various social groups. Similarly drawing on discursive construction, Butler (2015, 28-32) theorizes all acts as performative, meaning that they enforce or challenge a norm, for example of gendered behavior, by acting in concordance with an existing norm or against it. Attributing collective action with performative power, Butler (2015, 75) offers an explanation how collective action influences norms.

Moreover, feminists stress the importance of connectedness: With her concept of transcorporeality Alaimo (2008, 238) underlines that "the human is always intermeshed with the more-than-human world" (and thus abolishes the nature/culture divide). Correspondingly, Butler (2015, 139) points out everyone's dependency on

on other "humans, living processes and inorganic conditions [...]". This interconnectedness underlines the importance of a general struggle for justice, as opposed to fighting for the rights of one specific group impeding the liberation of others (Butler 2015, 69f.).

Looking at developments in (eco)feminist movements and their theory, the critical interventions revealing the stabilization of oppressive norms appear to be central to enhance the movements' inclusiveness and their counteraction of injustices. This is because the interventions led to an insight of the interconnectedness both in terms of intersecting injustices and transcorporeality. Furthermore, the emphasis on discursive construction of norms and on interconnectedness by feminist theories indicate why discursive practices of locally-based actions matter. I want to contribute to the literature on collective action and its discourse with my empirical study of activist discourse in relation to food conflicts. Thus, the next subsection turns to previous research on collective action and food.

3.2 Food activism challenging oppressive norms?

My research is not about food movements, but collective action that occurs around environmental justice conflicts regarding food. However, the previous literature connecting justice, activism and food examines food movements exclusively. I decided to outline this literature, firstly because the literature's focus indicates a gap, when it comes to activism regarding conflicts. Secondly, since the reviewed literature shows the possibility of both reinforcing and counteracting oppressive norms when fighting against unjust food systems, I can deduce that this phenomenon can similarly occur in activism related to food conflicts.

Activists fight against food systems in different ways. Similar to Cadieux and Slocum

(2015, 6), Holt Giménez and Shattuck (2011) identify movements under the terms food justice and food sovereignty⁴ as those trying to change the system, opposed to neoliberal movements. However, many scholars stress that even activism aiming to change food systems still fails to consider justice issues (Allen 2010, 269; Cadieux and Slocum 2015, 4; Maughan, Anderson and Kneafsey 2020, 283). This is a problem, since the lack of addressing oppressive norms, the root causes of the system that food activists are criticizing, reinforces these norms (Ashe 2018, 109f.).

One seemingly common example for ignoring the role of oppressive norms is the issue of equating "'more local' with 'more just'" (Cadieux and Slocum 2015, 10). However, access to locally produced food still depends on one's position in society (Allen 2010, 270; Guthman 2011, 270) and is thus not inherently more just. At the same time, concentrating on the local shifts the focus away from global dimensions of food systems (Moragues-Faus 2017, 2), such as international trade agreements and agricultural subsidies. Furthermore, movements often rely on the narrative of individual choice when it comes to food, criticized as neoliberal and as concealing patriarchal, racist, classist and colonial norms that actually affect one's access to food (Allen 2010, 300; Ashe 2018, 108; Passidomo 2014, 393). Moreover, food justice movements reinforce colonialist, patriarchal and racialized norms by pursuing food as a part of identity, which is constructed around others who don't choose correctly (Bradley and Herrera 2016, 5). "These 'unhealthy others' are often women, the poor, the colonized, and conquered" (Bradley and Herrera 2016, 5f.).

While not all movements omit injustices completely, Cadieux and Slocum (2015, 8) criticize that movements referring to justice still lack an engagement with oppressive norms and even reinforce them (Cadieux and Slocum 2015, 11). However,

⁴Food movements are not the focus of my study. Hence, I just want to briefly note here that the food justice movement originated in the US and is mainly concerned with consumption while the food sovereignty movement derived in the Global South with a focus on production. For a detailed account of similarities and the history of those diverse movements see Cadieux and Slocum (2015).

since food systems *are* based on historically built inequalities and oppressive norms (Holt Giménez and Shattuck 2011, 110f.), Cadieux and Slocum (2015, 3) claim that these norms should be the point of departure to accomplish change. Correspondingly, finding a solution for food insecurity without addressing underlying injustices can not be successful according to Moragues-Faus (2017, 3). In other words, in order to change food systems successfully, an approach that challenges oppressive norms is needed.

Due to movement's neglect and reinforcement of oppressive norms, Cadieux and Slocum (2015, 15) call for more analyses of food justice in action. So far this has been done with a local and project-based focus: Ashe (2018) for instance analyzes whether New York food movements reinforced injustice, while Passidomo (2014) focuses on New Orleans. By analyzing discourse in relation to food conflicts in a global context, I shift the angle even more towards justice in action and extend the US-based literature. Since the literature indicates that operating under the term justice does not necessarily imply a challenging of oppressive power relations, I am convinced that an analysis is needed which examines the ideological consequences of activist discourse. In addition, I consider the analysis of *how activist discourse reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms in food conflicts* useful, because existing literature emphasizes the importance of challenging norms, despite movement's failure to address it.

3.3 Influence of food activism on policy discourse

While citizens and social movements around the world are calling for food justice, food sovereignty, and/or food democracy, urban governments rarely seem to be responding to it or adopting these bottom-up movements and their terminology, and when they do, critical and reflexive descriptions of these concepts are often missing (Smaal et al. 2020, 14),

This is how Smaal et al. (2020, 14) conclude their research on justice in food policies of sixteen European cities. In contrast, other research suggests that discourse of environmental activists and policies are related, even though most of this literature is mainly not concerned with food in particular. Instead scholars emphasize the general opportunity of environmental discourse (Sanford 2011; Leichenko and O'Brian 2019) or framing (Nisbet and Newman 2015; Reid 2013) to enable (policy) change.

Only two articles of the reviewed literature explicitly connect policy and food activism, namely Alkon (2019); Campbell (2016)), while Doernberg's (2019) analysis at least implicitly indicates a relation. Campbell (2016, 301) displays that activists in New York influenced the policy discourse in terms of including food as a topic fitting into the city's agenda. Albeit, in order to bring food itself into the urban agriculture policy, the activists adjusted their discursive practices to that of policy-makers, who valued for instance quantitative, measurable results (Campbell 2016, 289).

Despite the fact that Campbell's research indicates the influence of activist discourse on policy (and vice versa), establishing food as a topic does not ensure that following policies will counteract injustices related to food, or underlying oppressive norms. Knowing that, Campbell (2016, 302) calls for further research to examine whether "more radical visions" of activist discourse are incorporated into policy as well. Furthermore, with the introductory quote of this subsection I hint towards a discrepancy between research highlighting the importance of activist discourse for policy (e.g. Leichenko and O'Brian 2019; Reid 2013) and research finding a lack of justice considerations in policy (Maughan, Anderson and Kneafsey 2020, 281; Smaal et al. 2020, 7; Horst 2017, 66; Horst, McClintock and Hoey 2017, 278). However, as shown in section 3.2, food activism does not necessarily operate under justice terms either. Hence, the seeming lack of influence of movement's discourse in policies as

claimed by Smaal et al. (2020, 14) could also be related to the discursive practices of movements, that reinforce oppressive norms. Yet, the little amount of literature connecting food activism or their discourse to policy makes drawing a conclusion difficult. Thus, I want to address this gap by examining *how the potential to subvert oppressive norms in activist discourse influences the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse*.

4 Theory

In this section I outline my theoretical framework in order to answer the questions *how activist discourse in food conflicts reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms* and *how the potential to subvert oppressive norms in activist discourse influences the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse*.

Firstly, I situate and justify the choice of my two main concepts. Before presenting the theory in order to answer the first question, I deepen the definition of oppressive norms (section 4.1). My framework combines two concepts: While Butler's (1993) performativity concept answers the question how activist discourse in food conflicts reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms, Wetherell's and Potter's (1992) concept of ideological discourse assists to assess empirically whether an oppressive norm was reinforced or counteracted. The two concepts will be presented separately (section 4.2 and 4.3) and later on joined together. After summarizing the combined framework (section 4.4), I turn to the second research question (section 4.5). While the mechanism relies on the framework developed beforehand it adds the perspective of policy change and lays the ground for a quantitative analysis.

Butler's account of performativity is my main theoretical concept. Coined by Austin and re-worked for example by Derrida, Butler transferred performativity from speech

act theory to the context of gender and thus feminist studies (Jagger 2008, 3f.). In her work Butler criticizes Bordieu's view that the power of an act depends on one's position in society, because it deprives agency and omits that "[p]erformatives do not merely reflect prior social conditions" (Butler 1997, 158) but always affect discourse. Similarly critiquing Austin's account of the subject (Butler 2010, 150), Butler draws on Derrida who modifies Austin's concept by detaching the speech act from the speaker and emphasizes the performative as citation (Derrida 1998). The empirical literature using Butler's performativity concentrates on identity (Pennycook 2004; Jackson 2004; McKinlay 2010). Yet, performativity explains more than people's identity formation, that is to say it provides a theory for the way societal norms change in general. I argue that this is a fruitful conjunction for gender studies and political science, because the study of injustices can be transferred to research areas of political science, in my case policy-making and collective action.

My second main concept originates in the field of discursive psychology and dates back to 1992. Meanwhile, the field of discursive psychology evolved and split into two domains, namely into the more post-structuralist critical discursive psychology (represented e.g. by Wetherell) and conversational analysis (prominent scholars being e.g. Potter, Edwards and Schegloff) (Weatherell 2015, 16f.). Nonetheless, Wetherell and Potter including their initial concepts remain to be highly influential (Tileagă and Stokoe 2015, 6), which is why I utilize their account of ideological discourse despite its age. Furthermore, theory originating in psychology might not strike as an obvious choice for a political science paper compared to for example Laclau's and Mouffe's (1985) Discourse Theory or Chouliaraki's and Fairclough's Critical Discourse Analysis (1999). While they provide useful theories for analyzing discourse and social change, their understanding of the subject or boundaries of the discursive contrast with my understanding. Nonetheless, this fit is important, because discourse theory comes in a "complete package" (Jørgensen and Phillips

2002, 11), including a certain epistemology.

4.1 Towards a definition of oppressive norms

I ask how activist discourse influences oppressive norms in food conflicts. But what are oppressive norms? In section 2.1 I defined oppressive norms or power relations as those which devalue certain forms of being. However, in order to adjust the scope of my analysis, I define oppressive norms as those which devalue some forms of being while enhancing others by backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalization and/ or homogenization (Plumwood 1993). As mentioned in section 3 Young (1990) similarly defines oppressive norms with a five-point framework. However, Plumwood's master model aligns better with my purpose due to its ecofeminist perspective. Before explaining the five components of oppressive norms, I will provide some background information about Plumwood's master model in the following subsection.

4.1.1 The master model

First of all it is not a coincidence which forms of being are devalued. Rather, oppressive norms maintain the dominance of 'the master' category, that today is mainly based on interrelated western dualisms such as reason/nature or human/nature (Plumwood 1993, 43). Not only does this dualism construct 'the master' as the one with reason, but it also constructed specifically white, western, heterosexual men as possessing reason. While this group is displayed as superior, others are subordinated by being attributed to nature and thus not capable of reason and not fully human. (Plumwood 1993, 4) Extending the master model Gaard concludes that:

From a queer ecofeminist perspective, then, we can examine the ways queers are feminized, animalized, eroticized, and naturalized in a culture that devalues women, animals, nature, and sexuality. We can also examine how persons of color are feminized, animalized, eroticized, and naturalized. Finally, we can explore how nature is feminized, eroticized, even queered (Gaard 1997, 119).

One could add other examples here like class, since according to Plumwood "virtually everything on the 'superior' side can be represented as forms of reason, and virtually everything on the underside can be represented as forms of nature" (Plumwood 1993, 43). Hence, this list is not exhaustive, also because meanings and dualisms can change over time (Gaard 1997, 119f.).

Both Gaard (1997, 132) and Plumwood (1993, 67) come to the conclusion that it is not sufficient to simply affirm those constructed as inferior (e.g. women) but necessary to disrupt 'master identities', for instance the whole concept of reason in opposition to nature. Along these lines, Plumwood critiques post-structuralists (referring to Butler specifically) for abolishing identity categories and states "[a] better route to subversion than that of post-structuralism would treat woman's identity as an important if problematic tradition which requires critical reconstruction, a potential source of strength as well as a problem [...]" (Plumwood 1993, 64). However, I think that Plumwood's critical reconstruction and Butler's account of deconstruction (as quoted in section 2 on page 8) are not contradictory and can still be combined. That is because in my understanding both scholars emphasize that categories should be fundamentally questioned and re-interpreted. At the same time both acknowledge the strategic use of identity categories for some purposes in combination with a consequent re-thinking.

4.1.2 Defining oppressive norms

Plumwood (1993, 48-55) identifies five features that construct and maintain the oppressive dualisms. Translated to the terms I rely on, these five features can be described as norms that construct identities which enhance some forms of being and declare others as non-livable. Hence, the five norms allow me to specify my definition of oppressive norms in order to identify activist discourse that reinforces or counteracts these norms. To be precise, I define oppressive norms as those which devalue a certain form of being through backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalization or homogenization.

Backgrounding means to rest on 'the other' but reject the dependency on or even reality of 'the other' (Plumwood 1993, 48). The stereotypically female household tasks for example are necessary for survival but are often overlooked. In her own words Plumwood (1993, 4) portrays backgrounding like that: "To be defined as 'nature' in this context is to be defined as passive, as non-agent and non-subject, as the 'environment' or invisible background conditions against which the 'foreground' achievements of reason or culture (provided typically by the white, western, male expert or entrepreneur) take place" .

Radical exclusion describes that the other is not only constructed as different, but as completely separate. In order to manifest separation and superiority "I am nothing at all like this inferior other' [becomes] [...] the motto associated with radical exclusion" (Plumwood 1993, 49). This is exemplified with constructed gender traits, such as the active man in opposition to the passive woman (Plumwood 1993, 50).

Incorporation expresses that the other is only defined in relation to 'the master' while 'the master' is displayed as a subject on its own (Plumwood 1993, 52). Women are for example often displayed in relation to their father or husband not as an

individual.

Instrumentalization refers to the objectification of the other who is portrayed "without ends of its own which demand consideration on their own account. Its ends are defined in terms of the master's ends" (Plumwood 1993, 53). An example is the narrative of the extinction of bees as a problem because humans want to eat fruits. Hence, the bees need to be saved to secure humans' needs.

Homogenization labels pretending that the other is one homogeneous group with homogeneous features. In other words, "[t]o the master, all the rest are just that: 'the rest'" (Plumwood 1993, 54).

4.2 Small steps, performative acts

With the established definition of oppressive norms in mind, this subsection addresses how activist discourse reinforces or challenges oppressive norms with performative acts. After reminding ourselves of the way power operates, I explain Butler's concept of performativity first as an individual and then as a collective act.

As described in section 2.1 Butler's theory is based on the understanding of power as a productive force, which determines what is rendered livable, doable and normal. Furthermore, power is not exercised by one actor such as the sovereign but is inherent in all acts, which become meaningful by drawing on certain discourses.

Due to the constant reproduction, norms exercise the power of shaping lives of the human and more-than human world. These norms can be repressive by rendering a certain way of being as impossible. At the same time an act can draw on a norm but slightly modify it, which makes the norm visible, questions the old norm and eventually brings new norms into being. In other words: With every bodily act norms are performed. We reproduce norms by citing them or subvert norms by

citing them with a difference. This is what Butler calls performativity. (Butler 1993, xxi-xxiii)

Since there is nothing outside of discourse, all acts are performative and include for example "speech, [...] gestures, silence, [or] movement [...]" (Butler 2015, 218). Moreover, the acts do not have to be carried out by a human, which can be illustrated for example with the case of Amaranth on soy plantations in Argentina: Amaranth is an unwanted species and supposed to be killed by genetically modified soy. Every time the modified soy succeeds to abolish other species it manifests the norm of human technology controlling the more-than-human world (Beilin and Suryanarayanan 2017, 212). However, amaranth subverts the norm of technology serving the human "by attaching their seeds to agricultural equipment" (Beilin and Suryanarayanan 2017, 206) and thus spreading further on soy plantations. The case of genetically modified soy, which extirpates all species determined as unwanted in its surroundings, also shows how discourse affects what is deemed as livable and what is not.

Just as an individual subject, humans or other species that carry out acts together exercise performative power by citing norms as well. Thus with their collective action, activists reinforce or challenge norms. (Butler 2015, 75) It is not only possible but also necessary to carry out performative acts in collection, because all living and non-living matter is connected, which means that the performative action of one influences the other to the extent that it shapes their living conditions and even brings them into being (Butler 1993, 139f.). Hence, a performative act always has an effect beyond the performing subjects. More precisely, collective action that aims to subvert norms but cites oppressive norms at the same time, supports these oppressive norms. To give a specific example, in her analysis of a food movement in New York, Ashe (2018, 114) points at the citing of neoliberal discourse in their definition of

hunger as "the inability of people to *purchase* enough food". Hence, according to Ashe (2018, 115), by citing neoliberalism the movement manifests oppressive norms.

In short, performativity describes acts which are performed in accordance with norms or not. This way acts stabilize or disrupt norms. Every act is a performative act, since all acts are carried out within the discursive. Hence, activist discourse reinforces oppressive norms by citing them and counteracts oppressive norms by citing them differently.

Butler's feminist adaption of performativity is influential because it discloses the construction of gender, sexuality and ways of being and acting in general and consequently anti-essentializes them (Jagger 2008, 6). However, Butler and her conceptions are critiqued for the exclusion of agency and its inadequacy for a feminist struggle (Disch 1999, 550; Jagger 2008, 8; Nussbaum 1999). This is because feminisms aim to escape oppressive structures whereas Butler would state that one can never overcome power structures (Nussbaum 1999). However, the post-structural claim that there is nothing outside the discursive and thus no possibility to escape power and norms, does not mean that it's impossible to overcome oppression. Hence, in the realm of post-structuralism performativity is acknowledged as a concept of agency and resistance (Disch 1999, 542). I agree and consider performativity a useful concept because it recognizes the world as discursive but addresses the dilemma of a trapped subject. Nonetheless, performativity is also criticized for its abstractness and is rarely empirically applied (Scharff 2011, 213). Thus, in order to transfer performativity to the empirical context of food conflicts I combine it with discursive psychology. Discursive psychology is argued to match well with performativity due to its focus on applied discourse (Scharff 2011; Nentwich and Morison 2017; Speer and Potter 2002). Specifically Wetherell's and Potter's (1992) account of ideology will enable me to detect whether a norm was reinforced or counteracted. While

this facilitates an empirical analysis of performativity in use, determining *whether* a discursive practice maintains or challenges oppressive norms, does not tell me *how* activist discourse reinforces or counteracts injustices. Hence, both concepts are necessary and by merging them I arrive at a framework which can be applied empirically and helps me to explain how activist discourse influences oppressive norms. Consequently, I outline Wetherell's and Potter's approach in the next subsection.

4.3 Judging discourse by its consequences

The question how activist discourse in food conflicts reinforces or challenges oppressive norms includes the question of determining *if* it does. In order to analyze whether movements' discourse actually contributes to food justice Cadieux and Slocum (2015, 14) suggest to examine four nodes, namely trauma, exchange, land and labor. However, these nodes derived from a US-context and cannot simply be transferred to any context (Maughan, Anderson and Kneafsey 2020, 284). Moreover, Wetherell and Potter (1992, 71) stress that defining certain terms or characteristics of ideological (in their case racist) discourse is not helpful for analyzing such discourse. On the contrary a pre-set definition of racist ideology might conceal racism once discursive practices change (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 71f.). While the study's context is racism, Wetherell and Potter (1992, 3) situate themselves beyond that. Hence, I argue that their concept is transferable to other axes of oppressive power relations. Let me illustrate their claim that discourse analysis "should not try to specify the propositional claims of ideology in advance" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 71) with an example from a different context: The statement that women should mainly be responsible for providing food in a family because the society teaches them to be good at cooking, is sexist. This is because it maintains a binary thinking of gender, certain gender roles and heteronormative assumptions of a family.

However, if sexist discourse is defined as drawing on biological differences between genders, an analysis would miss the sexism in the example above. Hence, in order to prevent the omission of oppressive discourse Wetherell and Potter (1992, 70) call for a "shift from studying ideology *per se* to the study of ideological practice and ideological outcomes". For their purpose of examining racist discourse among Pākēha New Zealanders, Wetherell and Potter (1992, 70) define racist discourse as "discourse which justifies sustains and legitimates those practices which maintain power and dominance".

I agree with Wetherell's and Potter's argument of judging discourse by its consequences regarding their influence on power relations. Furthermore, I argue that Wetherell's and Potter's definition of ideological racist discourse can be applied to the impact of discourse on oppressive power relations in general. Hence, their definition of ideological discourse based on its outcome is useful for my analysis as well. This is because it entails a theoretical argument for the determination whether a discursive practice has the "effect of establishing, sustaining and reinforcing oppressive power relations [...]" (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 70). Thus, together with the concept of performativity it builds my framework to empirically address the question how activist discourse reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms in food conflicts.

4.4 Reinforcement or counteraction of oppressive norms?

The connected theoretical framework

This section introduced three theoretical ideas, which I combine in order to analyze how activist discourse regarding food conflicts counteracts or reinforces oppressive norms:

Based on Wetherell's and Potter's argument I evaluate the discourse of activists in

food conflicts by its consequences: Activist discourse with an outcome that reinforces oppressive norms is unjust and vice versa. Since I evaluate discourse by its consequence, I do not define specific themes or terms that characterize backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalization or homogenization. Rather, I chose these five norms as a specification of what oppressive norms are. Thus, they enable me to determine the consequences of discourse. I can, for example, classify activist discourse as reinforcing injustices, because it has the consequence of radically excluding a certain form of being.

While the evaluation of the consequence of discourse assists me to identify whether activists reinforce or counteract injustice, the concept of performativity provides the explanation how this happens: Activist's discourse influences injustices with performative acts that draw on or subvert oppressive norms. Activist discourse that for example points out the diversity of 'the other' who is normally homogenized, cites an oppressive norm with a difference. Consequently, the discourse exposes the norm and opens a possibility for change. Besides helping me to answer both whether and how activist discourse counteracts oppressive norms, I think that Butler's and Wetherell's and Potter's arguments fit well together because citing or performing a norm also has the consequence of maintaining it or not.

4.5 The relationship between the citing of oppressive norms in activist and policy discourse

The way discourse in food policies works can be theorized in the same way as for the activist discourse: Whenever policy discourse draws on oppressive norms these are reinforced, while oppressive norms are challenged when policies use oppressive norms in a differing way. I argue that the discourse of policies is important because as an integral part of the governmental system, policies institutionalize norms. Hence, I

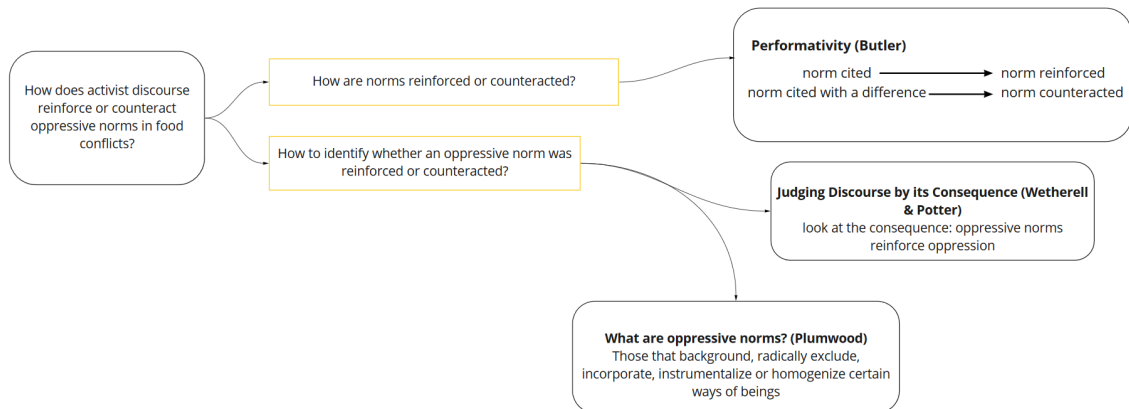


Figure 1: Overview of theoretical framework

claim that policies play an important role when it comes to counteracting or reinforcing oppressive norms. In this paper I want to examine one factor potentially influencing policy discourse, namely the discourse of activists. Thus, in the following subsection I theorize how the citing of norms in activist discourse affects the use of norms in policy discourse. Specifically, I will formulate how the potential of subverting oppressive norms in activist discourse influences the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse. In order to relate the norm-subversive potential of activist and policy discourse I connect the concept of performativity with theoretical insights on policy change (section 4.5.1). Simultaneously, I translate the concept to an empirical setting. Lastly, I will account for other factors that possibly influence the norm-subversive potential of policy discourse (section 4.5.2).

Before, I want to highlight certain points: (Environmental) policy discourse and its change is a wide field and has been assessed from various perspectives (Hajer and Versteeg 2005) for example the role of the institutional setting (Kern 2011) or the discourses employed by different actors (Lee 2013). Albeit, I concentrate on one aspect conceivably influencing oppressive norms in policy discourse. Secondly, my focus is on the citing of oppressive norms in policy discourse and not to assess

whether the policy supports food justice or meets the demands of the activists. Finally, it's important to recall that the citing of oppressive norms with a difference is not equivalent to certainly abolishing a norm. Rather it has the potential to expose and thus eventually subvert the norm.

4.5.1 How does activist discourse shape policy discourse in food conflicts?

As explained in section 4.2, based on performativity, norms are reinforced or counteracted every time a norm is cited (Butler 1993). From this theoretical basis that every performative act generally influences norms, I derive that the maintenance or counteraction of norms by activists can also affect norms in policy discourse. With the exposition of a norm by activists, different ways of being become imaginable and this can possibly affect and then be reflected in policy discourse. Furthermore, performativity relies on the repeated enactment of a norm. Given that a norm is reinforced or counteracted with every citing, I infer that the more an oppressive norm is cited with a difference, the more likely it is to be subverted. Hence, the more activist discourse cites oppressive norms with a difference, the more it counteracts oppressive norms and the more likely it is that the activist discourse influences the norms visible in policy-making.

However, it is hard to theorize and empirically show an effect of activist discourse on policy discourse if the activist discourse does not enter the stage of policy-making. Hence, the question arises how the discourse of activists becomes present in policy-making discourse. One common theoretical explanation for policy change is that change happens when the current definition and solution of a problem is challenged because a competing meaning gains more importance (Schmidt 2011, 110f.; Padamsee 2009, 421). Furthermore, various theories suggest that the possibility to rearrange meanings increases in moments of crisis or disruption. This is because

they expose the failure of the dominant discourse to account for a problem and thus generate a discourse which is more responsive for different meanings (Hall 1993, 285; Schmidt, 2011, 109; Laclau and Mouffe 1985, 142). Moreover, "[t]hese crises can result suddenly from specific events [...] or build more gradually through a series of political attacks on existing policies" (Padamsee 2009, 433). I argue that food conflicts can be considered an incident which destabilizes the dominant discourse and opens it for new meanings. This is because a food conflict questions that current policies (with their underlying ideas and fixed meanings) are sufficient to guarantee food security. As a consequence, the opening of the discourse increases the probability of activist discourse to be recognized in policy-making. Hence, the reinforcement and counteraction of oppressive norms in the activist discourse become accessible to policy-makers and can enact their performative power.

Another factor to consider in the relationship between activist and policy discourse is that a subject's discourse is not necessarily coherent (Wetherell and Potter 2001, 200). However, if activist discourse does not purely reinforce or counteract norms what is the consequence in regard to examining the potential to subvert oppressive norms? Here, it is crucial to consider that acts which counteract norms occur in a discursively created world where the norm is the default, the one which determines what is thinkable (Butler 1993, x). Due to the position of the oppressive norm as the deeply ingrained status quo, I derive that the exposition of a norm is further impeded with every time the norm is supported again. Applied to the context of incoherent activist discourse, I argue that the reinforcement of a norm overrides its counteraction (and vice versa). However, if the number oppressive norms are cited with a difference is higher than the times oppressive norms are cited, the potential to subvert oppressive norms exists. Albeit, if the citing of oppressive norms outweighs or equals the citing of oppressive norms with a difference, the status quo is reinforced. In addition, from the concept of performativity as repeated citing, I deduce that the

potential to subvert oppressive norms is higher, the higher the number of difference is between the counteraction and reinforcement of norms.

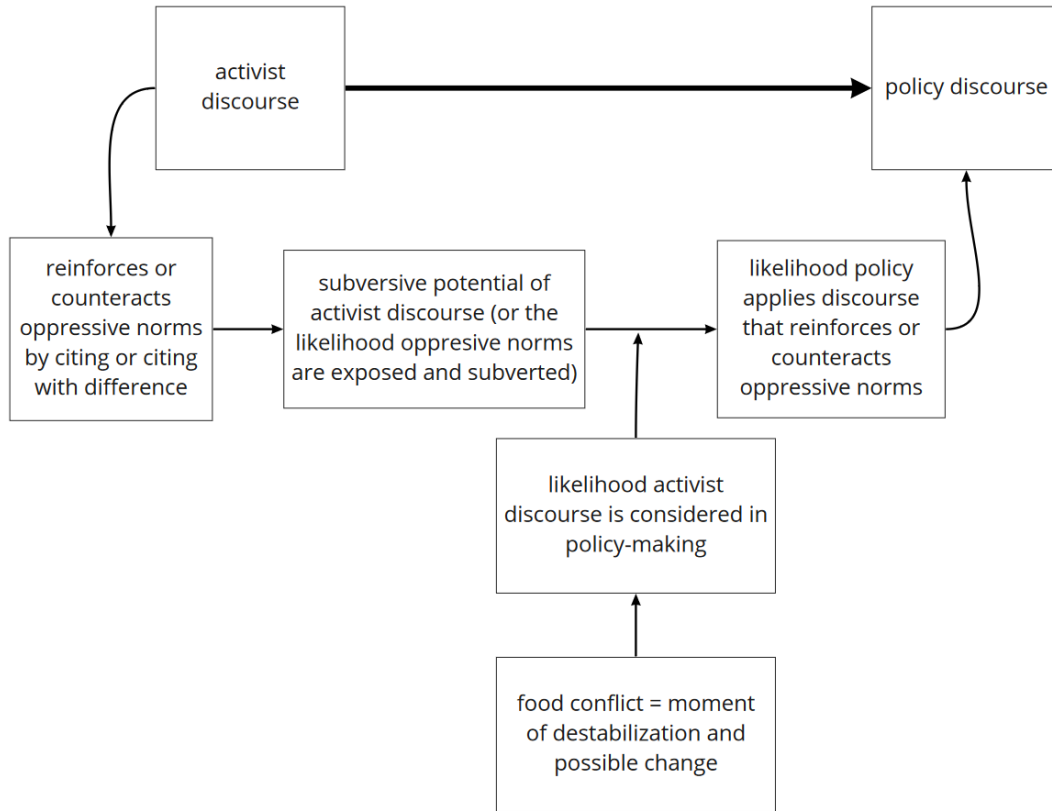


Figure 2: Theorized influence of activist discourse on policy discourse

In summary, since every performative act influences norms, the performative acts in activist discourse can impact oppressive norms in policy discourse. Due to the food conflict being a potential moment of disruption policy discourse is destabilized. This increases the probability of activist discourse to be recognized in policy-making. When activist discourse is accessible, the performative acts in the activist discourse can unfold. Furthermore, the capability of activist discourse to subvert oppressive norms depends on its numerous citing of norms and the proportions it cited norms with a difference or not. The more activists counteract and not reinforce oppressive

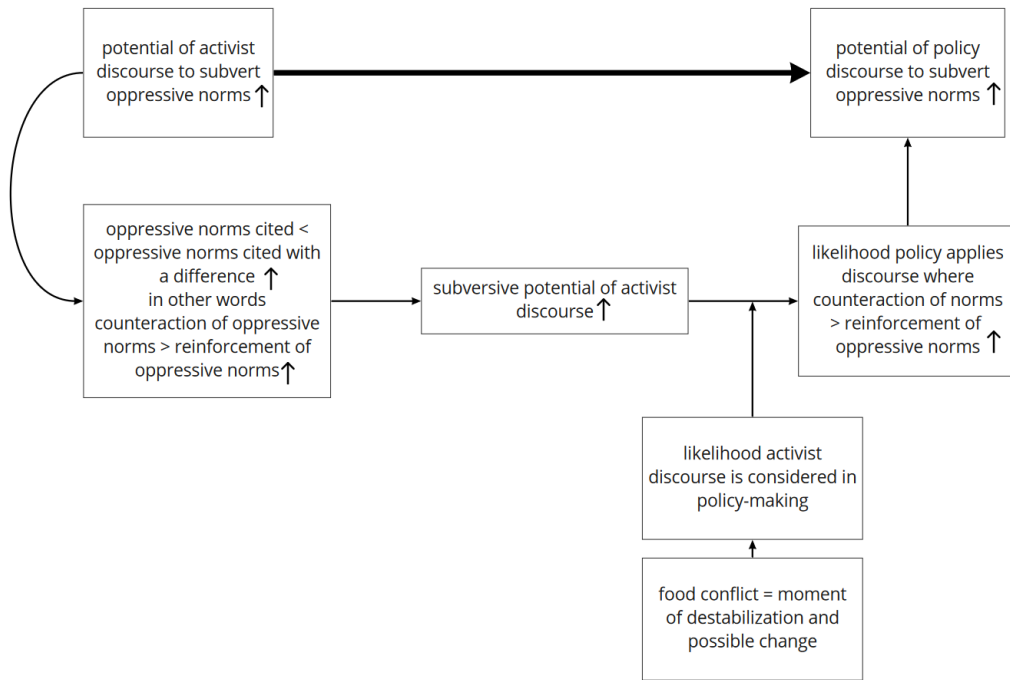


Figure 3: Hypothesis and underlying mechanism

norms, the more likely it is that the norm is exposed and similarly challenged in policy-making discourse. Thus, I expect a positive relationship between the subversive potential of activist discourse and the potential of oppressive norms to be subverted in policy discourse. Moreover, I deduce the following hypotheses from the theory which will be tested in the analysis:

Hypothesis: The higher the potential of activist discourse to subvert oppressive norms in a food conflict, the higher is the potential of policy discourse to subvert oppressive norms.

4.5.2 Other influential factors

Following the concept of performativity, every act bears the same possibility to affect norms. Nevertheless, performative acts need to be seen in order to alter

norms. Although food conflicts fill this gap, the visibility of activist discourse in policy discourse can vary across cases due to other influential factors:

Firstly, the visibility of activists in general probably affects the likelihood of activist discourse to appear in policy-making. The visibility of activist's discourse could differ depending on the numbers of actors, the intensity of the mobilization, and media campaigns. Secondly, some activist groups are possibly more closely affiliated with governmental institutions such as activists who are employed in institutions (Marshall 2000, 132). In addition, activist actions (and thus performative acts) could be targeted towards institutions to varying degrees and for example march in front of the parliament or demand policy change. This increases the possibility that the counteraction of norms is recognized by and influential on policy-makers. What should also be considered is to what extent the policy discourse is destabilized. Here I would argue that the media plays a key role, because it can shape the agenda of policy-making e.g. through underscoring the importance of an issue (Protest and McCombs 2016, 149-151) and thus influence the intensity of the perception of a food conflict as a disruptive moment. Another important aspect is the degree to which policy discourse is attentive to the outside and specifically to public opinion. In comparison to autocratic regimes, democracies should generally be more responsive to changing public discourse, which the activist discourse is part of. However, the term democracy implies a variety of political cultures and traditions of including societal actors in policy-making (Schmidt 2011, 120).

Hence, just as disclosing policy-change in general, unfolding the modification of oppressive norms in policy discourse is complex. However, in this subsection I offered one explanation how norms in policy discourse are affected.

5 Methodology

This section introduces my role as a feminist researcher, followed by an overview of my mixed methods strategy. After, I address possible concerns regarding the combination of a quantitative method and a post-structuralist epistemology.

5.1 A few words on feminism

As a feminist researcher I am inscribed to feminist accounts of knowledge production. While there is no distinct feminist method (Harding 1987, 1), most feminist research is based on the belief "that science is always [...] situated and disinterested knowledge is neither possible nor desirable" (Armbruster and Laerke 2008, 4). Furthermore, the researcher can never be objective in a positivist sense (Harding 1992, 452). Thus, feminists emphasize the need of being reflexive and accountable to one's research, which in the case of feminist post-structuralist research "do[es] not mean a reflexivity that examines the self of the researcher, but one that examines the language being used and its effects" (Gannon and Davies 2012, 67). Since most of my cases entail the context of western colonialism there is a particular need to be aware of the consequences of my language considering my constructed position in a discourse of white western hegemony in order to prevent the reinforcement of epistemic violence.

Furthermore, feminist research is concerned with unequal power relations between those researching and those being researched (Doucet and Mauthner 2006, 40). In this study I utilize material that activist groups deliberately published online to voice their struggle for environmental justice, but not to be assessed by me. Consequently, I stress that I analyze the reinforcement of oppressive norms in the discourse of activists but "want to make a strong distinction between the *psychological moti-*

vations for using these discursive forms and their *social psychological consequences*" (Wetherell and Potter 1988, 181). Thus, I do not imply that any of the organizations or representatives deliberately and intentionally reinforced oppressive norms. Instead I point at these instances of norm-reinforcing discourse with the aim to derive knowledge on how discourse can prevent to reinforce and counteract oppressive norms.

After this short introduction to my role as a feminist researcher, I continue with the description of my methodological choices and mixed methods approach.

5.2 Mixed methods approach

A discourse analysis corresponds well with my research agenda, epistemology and theorists, since they underscore the importance of discourse for the construction of norms. However, I am also interested in the influence of activist discourse on policy discourse. Quantitative methods display a suitable tool to examine such relationships and simultaneously control for the influence of other factors. Hence, the question how activist discourse reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms is approached with a discourse analysis. In addition, the question how the potential to subvert oppressive norms in activist discourse influences the same potential in policy discourse, is examined by combining a discourse with a quantitative analysis.

I decided to apply a mixed-method design, because each method offers different advantages and insights: On the one hand, the discourse analysis allows me to examine the reinforcement and counteraction of oppressive norms in-depth. It sheds light on which and how certain discourses are articulated so that oppressive norms are challenged or the opposite. On the other hand, the quantitative analysis enables me to set the activist discourse in direct relation with the policy discourse. As

outlined before, I argue this to be important, since policies play a crucial role in manifesting norms in a society. Hence, the subversion of oppressive norms in policy-making could be an essential step towards the transformation of oppressive norms in society in general.

While the methods are mixed, the two forms of analysis co-exist independently and influence each other to differing degrees. The discourse analysis was carried out first and provides the necessary data for the quantitative analysis. Hence, the discourse analysis is distinct from the quantitative analysis. Nonetheless, the discourse analysis was affected by the quantitative part in terms of sampling. This is because I only included cases which provided data both on activist and policy discourse. In contrast, the quantitative analysis rests on the discourse analysis to a greater extent. At first, the theorized mechanism for the quantitative study relies on the discursive concept performativity and generally builds on a discursive understanding of the world. Secondly, the data for the quantitative analysis is derived from the discourse analysis. However, the quantitative analysis adds another set of data, namely policy discourse.

Knowing that a quantitative analysis based on a post-structural epistemology can be perceived as controversial, I address these concerns and feminist reservations towards quantitative methods in the following subsection.

5.3 Post-structuralism and quantitative methods?!

Quantitative methods are strongly associated with a positivist epistemology. However, Miner-Rubino and Epstein Jayaratne (2007, 296) emphasize that "feminist quantitative researchers actually have many different viewpoints regarding epistemology". I agree and argue that the link between quantitative methods and posi-

tivism is neither naturally given nor a necessity. In line with my epistemological understanding I perceive the connection between positivism and quantitative research as constructed and open for change. One example where such a change happened is ethnography which roots in positivism as well but shifted from that epistemology (Dahl 2010, 151).

I am convinced that the belief of a discursively constructed world still allows me to observe this world. Although meanings are not fixed, they are not constantly changing either (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 78). I could for example measure quantitatively where food is and what people believe to be the underlying mechanisms and connect it statistically. This would not reveal the universal, timeless truth why some people lack food security but it could indicate dominant discourses and its manifestations. Thus, quantitative methods can provide a snapshot of how reality is constructed at the moment. Moreover, since the researcher is constituted by discourse as well this can not be an objective and detached observation. However, I reject that this makes the quantitative data less useful. It is merely important to be aware that the results are partial and created by a discursively constituted researcher in order to interpret them.

Similarly, I consider quantitative methods to be insightful for my thesis, because they enable me to process a lot of data and set it in relation. Albeit quantitative methods do not reveal the truth or objective facts, the results can inform me about patterns. More specifically, I hope for my results to point towards the impact of collective action on the change of oppressive norms in policy-making. While a discourse analysis of policies can indicate a norm-transition already, a quantitative analysis enhances this understanding, because I can connect activist discourse with policy discourse.

One main feminist critique of quantitative research is its contribution to an exclusive

and oppressive science and society (Smith 2012). I acknowledge the importance of this intervention which problematized for instance scientifically based racism and sexism. At the same time, I oppose the claim that quantitative methods have to be inherently oppressive. Rather, I agree with Miner-Rubino and Epstein Jayaratne (2007) that quantitative research can be used for feminist purposes.

6 Method

After establishing the choice of discourse analysis and quantitative methods in the previous section, I now turn to a concrete description of the methods of analysis. Firstly, this section addresses what similarly concerns the discourse and quantitative analysis, namely general information about the gathering of data. In subsection 6.2 I provide information on how the discourse analysis was approached, which was used to answer the first research question and consists the basis for the second. Lastly, I introduce the operationalization and chosen method of analysis for the quantitative part.

6.1 Material and sampling

My research questions require data on activist and policy discourse in environmental justice conflicts regarding food. Therefore, I utilized the Environmental Justice Atlas (EJAtlas) as a starting point to derive my data. The EJAtlas is an open-access database "that documents socio-environmental conflicts" (Temper, Bene and Martinez-Alie 2015, 261). Each documented case fulfills three criteria:

1. Economic activity or legislation that has actual or potential negative environmental and social outcomes
2. Claims by environmental justice organization(s) that such harm occurred

or is likely to occur as a result of this activity, and mobilization
3. Reporting of that particular conflict in one or more media stories (Temper, Bene and Martinez-Alie 2015, 262)

The geo-coded data contains cases from all over the world and "the unit of analysis is the project-based campaign or specific place-based struggle" (Temper, Bene and Martinez-Alie 2015, 262). The database currently comprises 3372 cases and its epistemology and bottom-up methodology rest on a collaboration and co-production of activists and academics (Temper, Bene and Martinez-Alie 2015, 263).

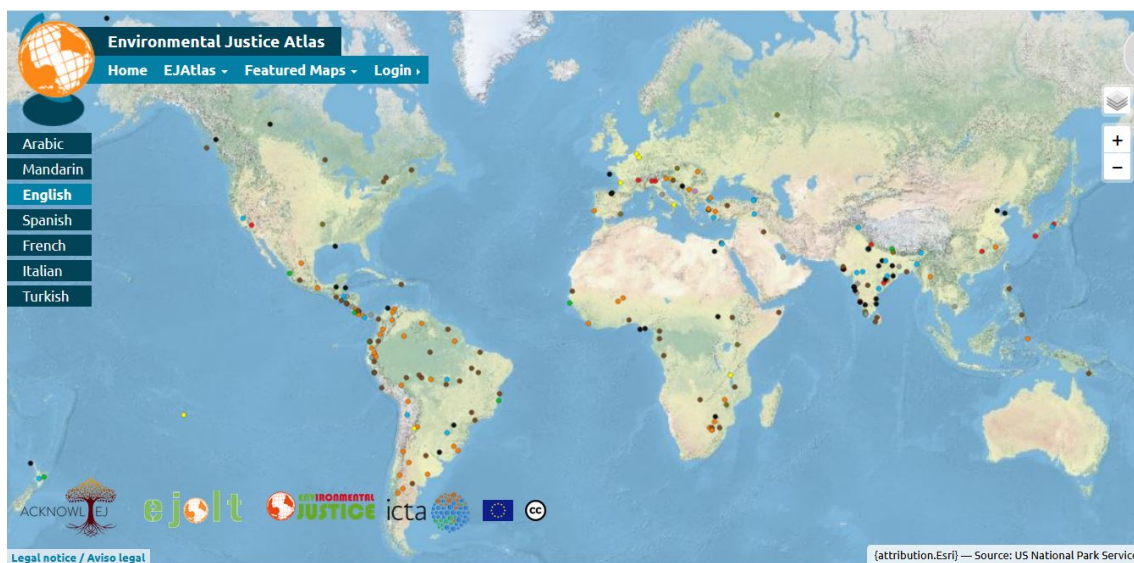


Figure 4: EJAtlas cases filtered for food insecurity and new legislation

I used the built-in filter options of the database, namely "impact: food insecurity (crop damage)" AND "outcome: new legislation", because these were the most appropriate to get data on food conflicts including related policy. This resulted in 216 cases (see figure 4). If the cases fit my definition of an environmental justice conflict related to food, I utilized the provided web-links to detect related policies and activist campaigns. Where links were not available or valid, I searched online for actors and policies named in the case file. As mentioned above the sample of the discourse analysis was affected by the quantitative study, since my cases

needed to provide data on both activist and policy discourse. In order to extend the sampling possibilities I applied a broad understanding of policies, including laws, court decisions and moratoria. (see figure 5 and 6 for a detailed view of my policy-sampling procedure).

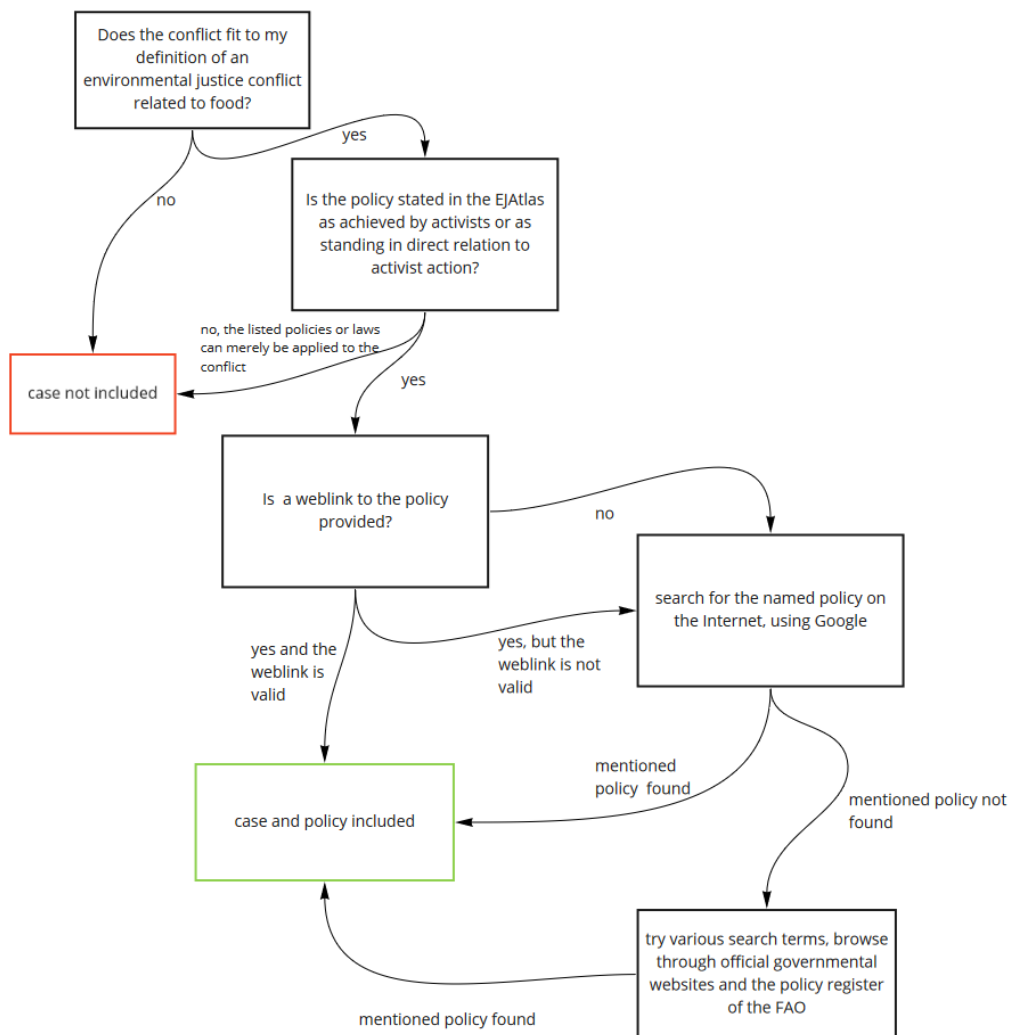


Figure 5: Sampling strategy

In addition, my sample was also limited by my language skills, encompassing English and German. This turned out to severely restrict the sample size, due to most food conflicts being located in Latin and South America. While I only included data

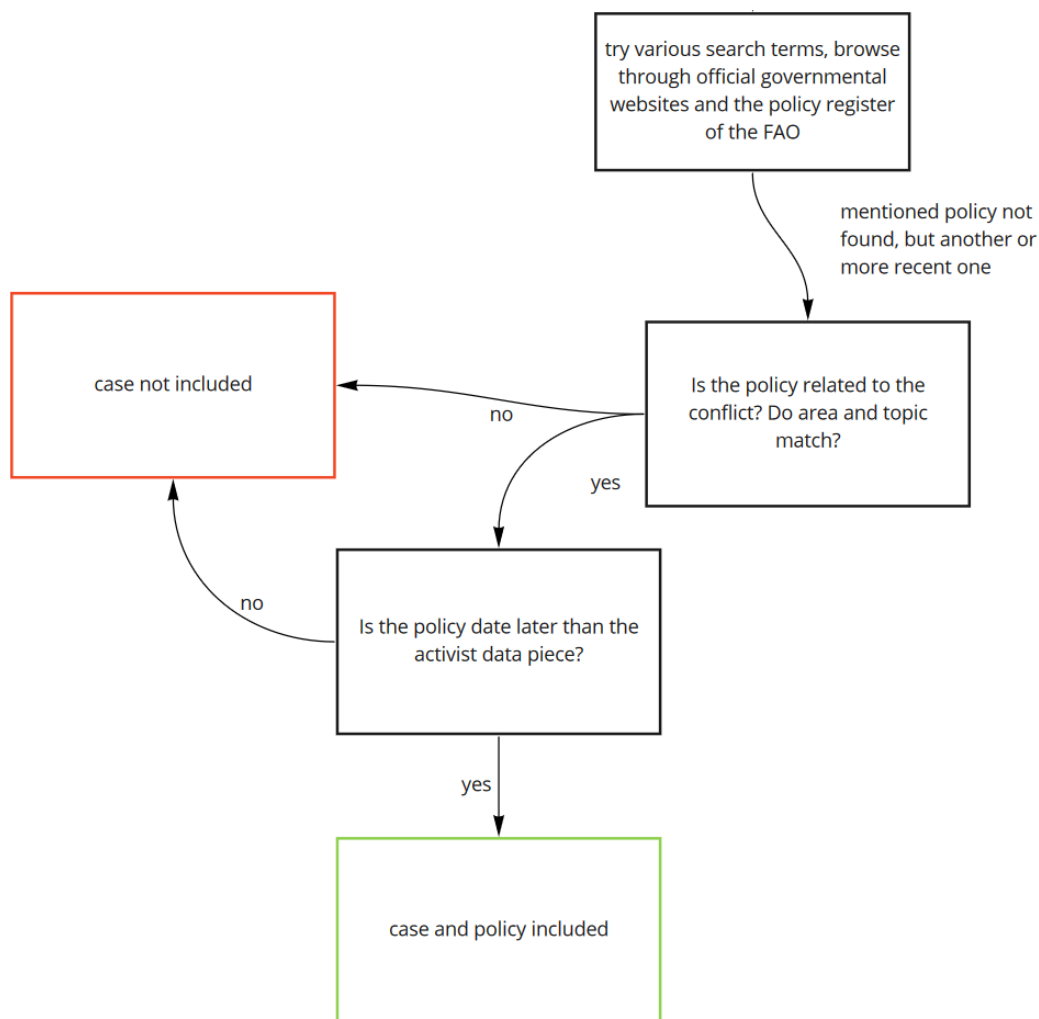


Figure 6: Sampling strategy continued

in English and German, some of the selected cases contain several words in Māori. Although translation was only needed occasionally, the reader should be aware that meaning can get lost in such translation processes (Østmo and Law 2018). In the end, my sample covered ten cases due to a lack of availability, especially on the policy side. The scarcity of material entails a major limitation of both analyses, because the sample size limits my possibilities of quantitative analytical methods. Moreover, I could only analyze one data piece containing the activist discourse per

conflict. Albeit, according to the conflict description of the database, the activist side often included a variety of different actors, carried out a range of actions and thus certainly provided more performative acts to analyze. The cases are summarized in figure 11 on page 53 which indicates a great variety of data, skeptics might even say incomparable data. However, every act is performative, linguistic or not (Butler 2015, 75), because everything relies on the citation of previous norms (Butler 1997, 33). Hence, any data from the activists is feasible in order to analyze how the activist discourse reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms in food conflicts. At first I had several selection criteria in mind to prioritize the data for example activist's demands for the solution of the conflict. However, Maughan, Anderson and Kneafsey (2020) stress that the problem definition indicates one's formulation of the solution, which justified the extension of my search to mission and vision statements of activists. In the end, the scarcity of the data demanded me to stick to two necessary conditions for the inclusion of a piece as activist discourse: The organization or group needed to be mentioned on the EJAtlas case website to ensure that the material related to both the conflict and the achieved policy. Secondly, I required the material to be a direct statement of the activists. Although I could have extracted direct quotes from media coverage on activism, I wanted to base my analysis on discourse the activists deliberately chose to publish themselves.

Clearly, the lack of data is a limitation. However, since all acts are performative and there is nothing outside the discursive, everything articulated by activists is part of their discourse and can thus be analyzed in terms of its influence on oppressive norms. Furthermore, I do not claim to present an analysis of a representative sample of the activist or policy discourse within this paper, neither in the chosen food conflicts nor in general. Rather, while pointing at these limitations, I offer a framework for analysis for further research concerned with the issue of the subversion of norms in activist and policy discourse.

6.2 Process of analyzing activist and policy discourse:

Towards a coding strategy

This subsection consists of an explanation of my analytical approach to the data, which combines inductive and deductive coding. My understanding of coding rests on Taylor (2001, 39) who emphasizes that coding first and foremost refers to "the classification of research data into categories" and does not need to employ a specific coding technique. Instead

[t]he discourse analyst searches for patterns in language in use, building on [...] the assumptions [...] she is making about the nature of language, interaction and society and the interrelationships between them. It is this theoretical underpinning rather than any sorting process which distinguishes discourse analysis (Taylor 2001, 39).

Hence, I outline how I applied my theoretical framework to the material, at first in terms of content. Later, I briefly demonstrate the technical side of the coding process. In between, I introduce interpretative repertoires which I utilized as a complementary analytical tool.

In order to analyze the reinforcement and counteraction of oppressive norms in activist and policy discourse, I firstly determined whether or not a norm was challenged. According to the concept of performativity, a norm is counteracted by being cited with a difference and enforced if re-cited. Hence, I approached the data with the following questions: What is articulated and how? Which norm is cited and in what way? Is the norm exposed by the way it is cited?

I am only interested in discourse which affects oppressive norms. Thus, as a second step I identified whether the cited norm was oppressive, since discourse is generally based on the citing of norms. I distinguished between oppressive and non-oppressive norms with the help of my theoretical framework, namely judging discourse by its consequence and my definition of oppressive norms, and asked: What is the con-

sequence of the citing of this norm? Does the cited norm impede a certain way of being by backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalization or homogenization? Or does it in contrast expose one or several of these oppressive norms?

After determining whether an oppressive norm was reinforced or counteracted, I thirdly examined how the norm was re-cited or cited with a difference. Therefore I utilized an analytical tool from discursive psychology, namely interpretative repertoires:

Interpretative repertoires (IRs) "can be seen as the building blocks speakers use for constructing versions of action [...] and other processes" (Wetherell and Potter 1988, 172). Furthermore, IRs consist of a variety of "terms [...] [that] are derived from one or more key metaphors and the presence of a repertoire will often be signalled by certain tropes or figures of speech" (Wetherell and Potter 1988, 172). Providing a useful metaphor, Edley (2001, 198) compares IRs with book shelves in a library: In interactions subjects draw on different IRs, in other words they cite IRs from a variety of books. If we apply this metaphor to my analysis, I looked at what activists cited, from which books so to speak, and in what ways they differed from the quotations in these books. In particular I asked: In this context of the counteraction of an oppressive norm, which IRs were cited and how do they differ from the common citation?

In general, there is no particular formula for the empirical distinction of IRs, rather it is a craft skill (Edley 2001, 198; Potter and Wetherell 2002, 55) where by looking at the data one "gradually [...] comes to recognize patterns across people's talk, [...] metaphors or figures of speech" (Edley 2001, 199).

The attentive reader might wonder now what the difference between discourse and IR is. In fact, these two are very similar and the term IR is and can be used interchangeably with discourse (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 92). However, the em-

ployment of IR underscores the (constrained) use of discourse by subjects in contrast to discourse as an abstract force steering the world (Wetherell and Potter 1992, 90). Thus, the term IR shifts the focus on the "human *agency* within the flexible deployment of language" (Edley 2001, 202). Besides, I consider it particularly useful to include this additional term, because it helps to follow the analysis to distinguish between

- activist discourse as a whole, meaning the overall discourse of activists in a specific context,
- and specific IRs that are drawn on within the activist discourse, e.g. in moments in the data.

In sum, IRs, i.e. the building blocks used to construct meaning or books people cite from, were employed to shed light on how activists cited oppressive norms with a difference or not.

Since the policy discourse was solely included for the quantitative analysis, which does not specifically ask *how* the subversion of norms comes about, the coding strategy differed slightly. Nonetheless, the statistical analysis on how the use of oppressive norms in activist discourse influences the use of oppressive norms in policy discourse required me to assess the articulation of oppressive norms in policy discourse as well. Thus, in contrast to the activist data, the policies were only coded in terms of their reinforcement or counteraction of oppressive norms. Yet, the underlying discursive approach remained the same. Additionally, the codes were transferred into numbers in order to be analyzed quantitatively. This is explained further in section 6.3.1.

For the purpose of presentation I displayed the approach to the discourse as a step-by-step process:

1. reinforcement or counteraction of a norm?
2. oppressive norm or not?
3. (in case of the activist discourse) which IRs were cited and how in order to achieve the reinforcement or counteraction?

However, it should be noted that this process was not linear. Instead it consisted of various cycles and the questions to the text were asked simultaneously and/or in changing orders.

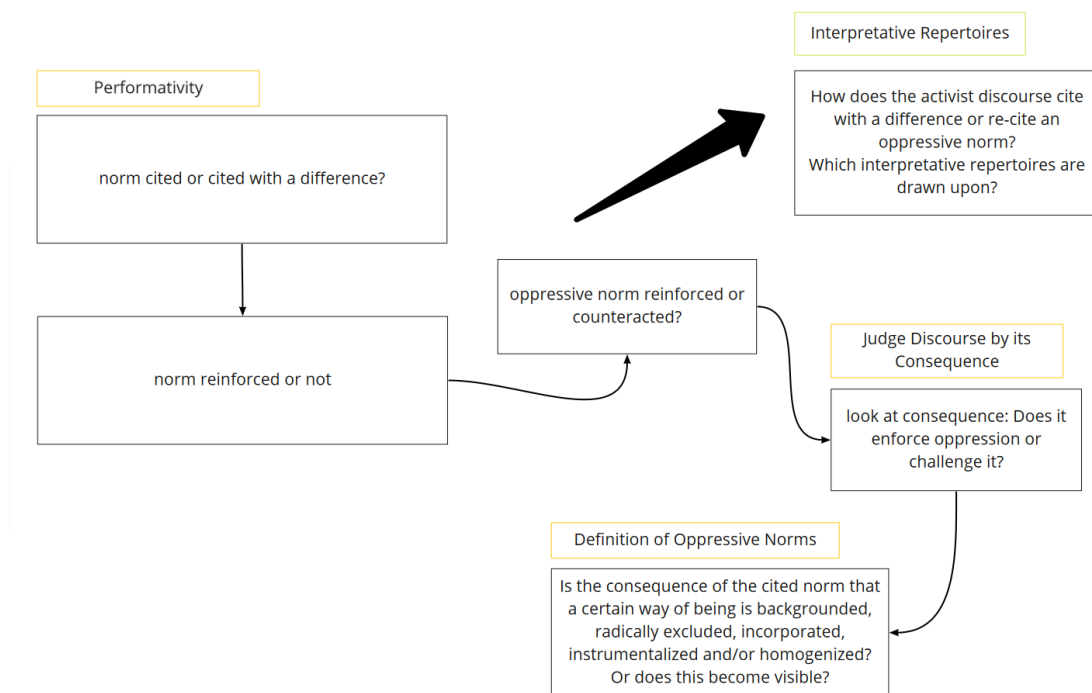


Figure 7: Process of analysis

After this demonstration of the content-wise approach (visualized in figure 7), I proceed with the technical side of the coding process:

Each case was coded separately and with its specific background in mind. Nonetheless, I was interested in similarities and differences of how the discourse influenced oppressive norms in one case but also between cases. Therefore, I utilized the coding software NVivo. Before uploading the data in NVivo I transcribed the two data

pieces which were videos (Global 2000 and ARCHE NOAH; Adeso). As the nature of this analysis is not linguistic, the transcripts remind of normal text (Taylor 2001, 35). However, they indicate pauses of the speakers as well as unspoken action in brackets. Notably, a transcription is not an account of the truth (Taylor 2001, 34f.) but entails my interpretation for example about the gender of the appearing persons or the roles they are embodying (e.g. consumer).

The codes consist of the IRs activists and policies drew on and of codes for each of the five norms defined as oppressive (namely backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalization, homogenization). While these norms originate in my theoretical framework, the interpretative repertoires drawn upon to reinforce or counteract the norms were derived from the data. Hence, the coding process combined an inductive and deductive approach.

6.3 Quantitative method and methodology

The next subsection demonstrates the operationalization of my two main variables. In other words, it explains how the potential of activist and policy discourse to subvert oppressive norms is measured in numbers. This enables me to set them in a statistical relationship to analyze the influence of activist discourse on policy discourse, with the method outlined in 6.3.2.

6.3.1 Operationalization of the potential to subvert oppressive norms in activist and policy discourse

First of all, the concept of performativity requires the performative acts of activists to be visible in policy-making. Due to my sampling procedure this assumption is met, because the sample includes only cases where new policies were triggered by

activist action in food conflicts. Aside from that, the operationalization of both my independent variable, namely the potential of activist discourse to subvert oppressive norms, and dependent variable, the potential of policy discourse to subvert oppressive norms, rely on the discourse analysis. The codes which indicate whether oppressive norms were counteracted or reinforced in the discourse analysis were converted into numbers. I defined oppressive norms as those which devalue a certain form of being through backgrounding, radical exclusion, incorporation, instrumentalization or homogenization. Hence, my concept of oppressive norms consists of five aggregated norms. Thus, I operationalize the potential to subvert oppressive norms as a score composed of five sub-scores. Furthermore, the theory presumes that performative acts build on repeated citing and thus amplify or override each other. Consequently, each sub-score was calculated by subtracting the number of a norm cited from the number of norms cited with a difference (see figure 8 on the following page). Together the five sub-scores add up to the so-called subversion score, i.e. the potential of a discourse to subvert oppressive norms. For each case a score for the activist discourse and policy discourse was determined separately. The transformation of codes from the discourse analysis resulted in a scale where positive values indicate a potential to subvert oppressive norms, whereas values equal to zero depict the reinforcement of the status quo, and values below zero mark the reinforcement of oppressive norms. Generally, the higher the value, the higher is the potential to subvert oppressive norms. This provides the basis to test the hypothesis that the higher the potential of activist discourse to subvert oppressive norms in a food conflict, the higher is the potential of policy discourse to subvert oppressive norms.

My chosen operationalization is sensitive to coding mistakes, since it rests on the absolute number of codes. Nonetheless, it matches best with the theory, which emphasizes the importance and influence of every performative act on the reinforcement

Calculation of Subscore for Potential to subvert one of the five norms

Counteraction of Backgrounding - Reinforcement of Backgrounding = Subscore Potential to subvert backgrounding

$$6 - 1 = 5$$

→ 5 is the potential to subvert backgrounding in the policy discourse in the food conflict in Whanganui, New Zealand

Calculation of the Score of Potential to subvert oppressive norms , consisting of the five subscores

Subscore Backgrounding + Subscore Radical Exclusion + Subscore Incorporation + Subscore Instrumentalization + Subscore Homogenization = Score of Potential to subvert oppressive norms

$$7 + (-2) + 2 + 3 + (-2) = 8$$

→ 8 is the potential to subvert oppressive norms of the activist discourse in the food conflict in Puntland, Somalia

Figure 8: Example of score calculation

or counteraction of norms. Moreover, thanks to this operationalization I derived two variables representing the potential of each discourse to subvert oppressive norms. In the following I present the method which connects them.

6.3.2 Method of analysis

My theory suggests a positive linear relationship between the activist's and policy's potential to subvert oppressive norms. Due to the small sample size (n=10) I refrained from carrying out a multivariate regression. As an alternative I assessed the relationship between my main variables with the help of Pearson's correlation coefficient, which is appropriate for interval variables expected to be in a linear relationship.

Worth mentioning is that the distribution of the subversive score of policy discourse seemed to be positively skewed and suffer from positive kurtosis (see figure 9 on the next page). However, after running a Shapiro-Wilk test I concluded that my variables are normally distributed and thus feasible to be analyzed with Pearson's

correlation coefficient.⁵

However, this form of analysis displays a limitation, since evaluating the impact

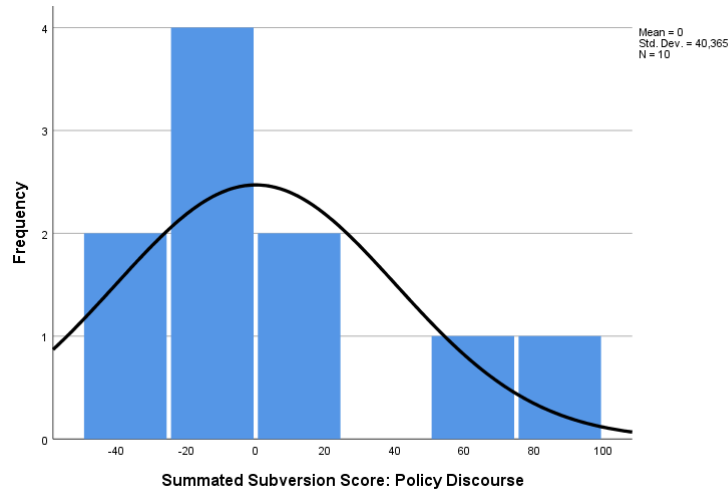


Figure 9: Distribution of subversion scores in policy discourse

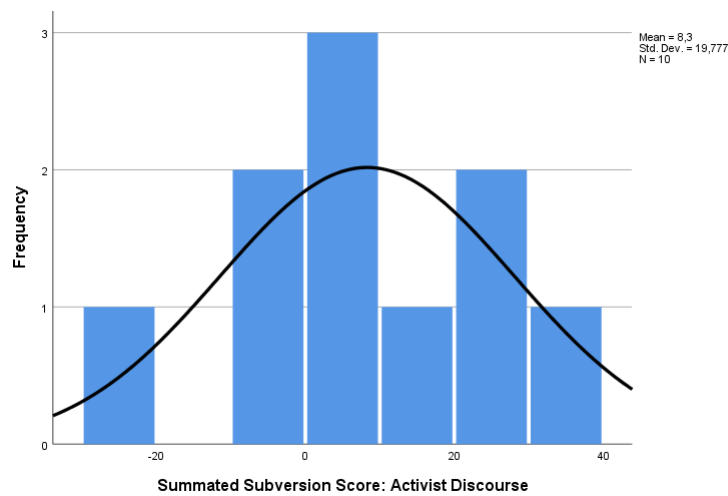


Figure 10: Distribution of subversion scores in activist discourse

of activist discourse on policy discourse while controlling for other factors is not

⁵One assumption to use Pearson's correlation is the normal distribution of both variables. Since the histograms suggested that this assumption might be violated, I utilized a test, which indicates whether a variable is normally distributed.

possible. Moreover, it does not seem meaningful to correlate the control variables (visibility of activism, closeness to institutions, media coverage, political system) with the subversive potential of policy discourse, because I did not theorize them to have a direct influence. Instead the theory suggests that the control variables mediate the relationship between subversive potential of activist and policy discourse. Albeit, it is important to address the influence of other factors on the relationship between the subversive potential of oppressive norms in activist and policy discourse in future projects.

7 Analysis

This section starts with an overview of the food conflicts included in the sample. It consists further of my discourse analysis approaching the question how activist discourse in food conflicts reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms (section 7.2). Whereas subsection 7.3 presents the results of the quantitative analysis connecting the norm-subversive potential of the activist with the policy discourse. The insights from both analyses are discussed in section 8.

7.1 Descriptive introduction to the material

The examined data includes ten cases spread across five continents with information pieces dating between 2002 and 2015. The food security of the activists is endangered due to logging, regulation of seeds, declined access to and the contamination of land and water. The common link between all these activities and the threat to food security of humans is land access and land's fertility for plants to grow healthily. Moreover, complex interdependent ecosystems (including amongst others animals,

plants, humans, soil) are disrupted. This poses a problem to human food security which relies on hunting, fishing and animal food sources in general. At the same time, a lot more species are exposed to food insecurity since their habitats and/or food sources are destroyed as well. Except the conflict in Austria all conflicts take place on land affected by colonialism.⁶ The cases in Haida Gwaii, Grassy Narrows Territory, Whanganui and Te Urewera are food conflicts fought by indigenous peoples against the impacts of settler-colonialism in Canada and New Zealand. While the conflict in Sierra Madre directly affects indigenous people as well, this dimension is not the focus of the alliance of activists in the conflict. Both the activist and policy data encompass a range of different data forms (see figure 11). Moreover, the reader should be aware that all the conflicts included in the material are complex and I do not claim to possess all-encompassing knowledge (for detailed case information see Appendix section 10 on page 87).

⁶I refer to European imperial colonialism after 1500. The consequences of colonialism continuously shape today's world (Smith 2012). While Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Philippines and Somalia are independent nation-states, New Zealand and Canada remain to be settler-colonies.

Conflict Location	Source of Food Conflict	Activist Organization	Form of Activist Data	Form of Policy Data
Austria	Seeds	Global 2000 and ARCHE NOAH	Demands and Embedded Campaign Video	European Parliament Plenary Sitting Report
Bangladesh	Shrimps	Nijera Kori	Activist Science Report	Court Decision
Canada	Seeds	National Farmer's Union	Alternative Law Proposal	Amendment of Law
Grassy Narrows (Canada)	Logging; Timber	Grassy Narrows	Moratorium	Court Decision
Haida Gwaii (Canada)	Logging; Cedar	Haida Nation	Printed Transcription of Radio Interview	Court Decision
Puntland, Somalia	Logging; Charcoal	Adeso	Speech	Policy Programme for Sustainable Charcoal Reduction and Alternative Livelihoods
Sierra Madre, Philippines	Logging; Timber	Sierra Madre Network Alliance Inc. (SMAVA)	Statement on Action, Mission and Vision	Moratorium
Sri Lanka	Land Contamination: Pesticides	Centre for Environmental Justice and Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka	Blog Entry	Amendment of Law
Te Urewera (New Zealand)	Land/ Water Access	Tihoe Authority	Policy Blueprint	Policy: Te Kawa o Te Urewera, Management of Te Urewera
Whanganui (New Zealand)	Land/ Water Access	Whanganui River Maori Trust Board	Negotiation Agenda	Legally binding Agreement between Conflict Parties

Figure 11: Case overview

7.2 Insights from the discourse analysis of activists' performing of oppressive norms

In order to ease the reading of the analysis I want to quickly recall the approach taken: While I shed light on who is affected by the reinforcement or counteraction of oppressive norms, I do not make claims about ways all women or all indigenous people are oppressed. Rather I analyze how activist discourse reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms in these particular data pieces. Therefore, I apply the concept of performativity and look at the employed IRs. Whether it is cited with a difference or not, influences if an oppressive norm is reinforced or counteracted. Whether a norm is cited with a difference or not is not judged by its content but by looking at its consequence. Furthermore, some of the characteristics of the five oppressive norms are:

- Backgrounding: rely on but neglect the dependence on 'the other'
- Radical exclusion: deny any overlap between the 'master's' and 'the other's' attributes
- Incorporation: define 'the other' only in relation to the 'master' category
- Instrumentalization: portray the other only as a mean to reach the 'master's' goals, although this is concealed as beneficial for all
- Homogenization: dismiss any diversity among those constructed as 'the other'

The activist discourse I analyzed originates in very different contexts with their own characteristics and complexities. Still, I identified some similarities, for instance broader patterns under which several IR clustered such as neoliberalism and sovereignty/ self-determination. However, I focus on neoliberalism in the following subsections due to the scope of this paper. My choice was additionally motivated by

the previous literature which highlighted that activism relies on and thus reinforces neoliberal norms (see section 3.2).

Another commonality in my data was that all activist discourse both counteracted and reinforced oppressive norms. Interestingly, the same or similar IRs could evoke opposite consequences, such as the IR more-than-human world as a commodity, which both exposed the norm of backgrounding the more-than-human world and reinforced its incorporation in the campaign video of Global 2000 and ARCHE NOAH. Furthermore, the reinforcement and counteraction of oppressive norms in my data mainly affects three categories: gendered people, colonized and racialized people, and the more-than-human world. I want to stress that several intersections exist between these categories, which also entail a diversity of ways of being in themselves. However, my data does not always allow a more differentiated analysis. I derived at this classification by looking at the aspect which I perceived to be foregrounded. For instance the examples under the section gender originate from activist discourse in Bangladesh, a country which was colonized in its history and is affected by Global North-Global South power relations. Besides, there is a focus on the working class in the activist discourse. While these aspects are present, in the instances portrayed under gender the reinforcement or counteraction of oppressive norms affects people mainly because they are categorized as women.

Furthermore, it is important to bear in mind that this categorization does not reflect an objective and unchangeable truth. Rather it is an interpretation of data with the aim to point out oppression of humans and the more-than-human world, who are constructed along these lines. Thus, following the approach of intra-categorical intersectionality I rely on these categories for the purpose of analysis while being inscribed to the long-term goal of deconstructing them (Kings 2017, 67).

In the following I present examples from the activist discourse in food conflicts that

reinforced or counteracted oppressive norms.⁷ The first subsection is concerned with oppressive norms which devalue the more-than-human world, while subsection 7.2.2 addresses oppressive norms with an influence on gendered people. Lastly subsection 7.2.3 introduces the consequences of cited norms on racialized and colonized people.

7.2.1 Oppressive norms impacting the more-than-human world

One common IR with an impact on the more-than-human world that falls under the broader category of neoliberalism is the more-than-human world as a commodity. This IR is prevalent for example in the two conflicts around seeds. The performative acts of citing the more-than-human world as a commodity often had the consequence of reinforcing instrumentalization and incorporation. This is because the importance of seed's diversity, thus their very existence, was only linked to humans and seen as a mean to achieve the ends of those earning money with them or wanting to buy them. Austrian activist discourse celebrates for instance that the European Union recognizes that "consumers in Europe want diversity":

Old and rare varieties of vegetables, grains and fruit were labeled as worthless and banished to bureaucratic niches - a farmer would not even have been able to give away seeds for free without conditions. That would have resulted in a significant loss of seed variety. [...]

Hopefully the EU Commission has now understood that consumers in Europe want diversity. In a new draft [of the regulation], diverse plants must have equal access to the market - on a par with modern high-cultivated seeds. This means that the official approval of seeds, which is de facto only open to high-breeding seeds and large companies, must become voluntary. (my translation) (Global 2000 and ARCHE NOAH N.A.)

Note that the connection, or incorporation, between farmer's businesses and plants is so unquestionable that the plants take the grammatical position of a subject

⁷A problem in the presentation of analyses can be that patterns are apparent throughout the material, but some cases display this in more condense quotes (Taylor 2001, 42). It is therefore that my selected examples are unevenly distributed among the cases.

(gaining "access to the market"), despite not being acknowledged agency. Instead it becomes clear that it is not the plants who access and are equal actors on the market, but those who make use of and profit with the plants. This performative act of citing without a difference, indicates an incorporation of plants as seen only in relation to humans.

Similarly, the Canadian farmer's union, which is fighting against a new legislation on seeds, demands the

"regog[nition of] the enormous contribution that the local and indigenous communities and farmers of all regions of the world, particularly those in the centres of origin and crop diversity, have made and will continue to make for the conservation and development of plant genetic resources [...]". (Boehm N.d.)

Of course plant reproduction and resulting seed variety is an interdependent process and involves for example birds. And while humans can play a role in this reproduction as well, the above portrayal of humans as the main creators of seed variety and reproduction ties the existence of seeds to humans. Moreover, the sentence continues to show that seed variety (created by farmers) is a contribution because it "constitute[s] the basis of food and agriculture *production*" (emphasis added). Here it becomes apparent that the purpose of seeds is to support a human-made market. Instead of recognizing that plants have a desire to reproduce and thrive on its own, the IR more-than-human world as a commodity reinforces the instrumentalization of the more-than-human world.

Nonetheless, there are performative acts where drawing on a neoliberal IR counteracts oppressive norms. The IR more-than-human world as a commodity is very present in the campaign video from the activists mobilizing against a seed regulation in Austria. The video envisions the consequences of the planned seed regulation with the story of a tomato purchase by a girl who is accompanied by a woman. While the first shopping experience is pleasant and offers a variety of tomatoes to the girl,

the second shopping experience takes place after the enactment of the regulation inhibiting seed diversity and is depicted as undesirable (Global 2000 and ARCHE NOAH N.A.). The following quote derives from the first shopping experience:

Girl customer: Do you have a tomato?

Male seller: You want a tomato?

Girl customer: Yes.

Male seller: But I have a lot of different tomatoes. (walks towards tomatoes, comes down on his knees to be on the same eye-height as the girl customer)

So, I have one which is long-ish it is very dark red and here I have a huge one, a ox-heart's tomato and here I even have a yellow tomato.

Woman to the girl customer: Well, what are you saying to what nature has?

Girl customer (smells tomato, inhales deeply, smiles): Yellow tomatoes.

Slogan: The EU seed regulation endangers diversity. [...]

(my translation) (Global 2000 and ARCHE NOAH N.A.)

What makes this a performative act, where a norm is cited with a difference is that after the male seller presented the variety of tomatoes *he* has, the woman asks what the girl thinks of "what nature has". Hence, on the one hand, nature is constructed as what is available on the food market for humans. Consequently, again the more-than-human world is not a subject on its own but exists only in relation to humans. On the other hand, the intervention of the woman acknowledges human's dependency on nature as a food source by contrasting the seller: it is impressive what *nature* entails and not what the supermarket or seller supplies. Hence, the dependency of humans on the backgrounded nature is acknowledged and exposed.

While I read the persons in the campaign video in their roles as consumers and sellers and assigned a certain gender and age, I do not think oppressive gendered norms were reinforced or challenged in this scene.⁸ Nonetheless, other activist discourse counteracted and reinforced norms, which devalue a certain way of being based on gender. This is addressed in the following.

⁸Nonetheless, one needs to be aware that to not reinforce an oppressive norms means to uphold the status quo. In the case of gender the status quo currently oppresses cis- and trans*-women, trans*-men, intersex, non-binary and genderqueer people.

7.2.2 Oppressive norms impacting gendered people

At first I want to point out that few moments in the data addressed a gendered dimension (which will be discussed in section 8). However, norms concerning the category of woman are affected by the reinforcement and counteraction of activist discourse in the Bangladeshi conflict where shrimps are 'produced' as an export commodity and impede the local food security. The following quote is derived from a longer passage demonstrating that women "bear the brunt of blow the shrimp cultivation delivers on society" (Nijera Kori 2006):

Shrimp Cultivation and Women

1. Shrimp cultivation has destroyed sources of drinking water in hundreds of villages. Women collect drinking water for the family.
2. Availability of firewood and cow dung has decreased [...]. Women are responsible for collecting firewood and preparing cowdung cakes for fuel. They need to travel further to gather these supplies.
3. Women are responsible for cooking at home. Many ingredients of the staple diet in Bangladesh - rice, fish and vegetables - are in short supply
4. Women have lost an important source of income since homestead poultry cannot drink saline water. (Nijera Kori 2006)

Here women are ascribed in their role as in relation and defined by 'the master': as passive and belonging to the reproductive sphere. Several oppressive norms are reinforced by drawing on the IR of women as desperate housewives. The phrase "[w]omen collect the water *for* the family" (emphasis added) positions women only in relation to the family, not as a subject of their own. Besides this incorporation of women, the quote also shows how they are instrumentalized. By stating that women collect water for someone else, women are depicted as the means to serve the ends of others and not as having needs on their own. Moreover, women are not displayed as actors who would for example use the fuel. Instead women's preparation work is the background, which is necessary for the action of others. Neither are women shown as actively searching for solutions but seem passive and in need for help,

because they can not carry out their tasks, i.e. provide food and warmth. Lastly, with the formulations "[w]omen collect [...] [and] [w]omen are [...]" the notion is evoked that these claims are equally true for all women. However, I think it is fair to state that not all Bangladeshi women are responsible for these tasks to the same degree and are restrained uniformly by the described circumstances. Yet, with their generalized formulation the activist discourse homogenizes the diverse group of Bangladeshi women.

Hence, the passage points out that women are negatively affected by shrimp cultivation and that they are affected differently due to their gender. However, it is not revealed that women are impacted differently due to constructed gender norms. Since the cited IR of women as desperate housewives does not call into question that women have these gendered responsibilities, oppressive norms are reinforced by this performative act, which backgrounds, instrumentalizes, incorporates and homogenizes women.

On the other hand, the discourse of the activists in Bangladesh also counteracted oppressive norms affecting women.

Discriminatory Practices

1. Chores at home do not allow women the time to travel to the shrimp market. Therefore, they sell their catch on location it. Naturally, the middleman can dictate a price lower than the prevailing market rate.
2. Women are paid less than men in weeding in gher. [...] Shrimp processing operations like cleaning and gutting earn women Tk. 25-30. Men earn Tk 30-40.
3. They are not allowed medical leave
4. They face physical, verbal and often sexual abuse by security guards, managers and male co-workers
5. They loose are hired and fired at will ...

Between 30,000-50,000 workers work in processing factories. Eighty percent of these are women. This figure is often quote[d] by government in attempts to "highlight" the positive impact of the shrimp industry - a case where statistics are twisted for petty means. (Nijera Kori 2006)

Accordingly, a lot of women being employed is a positive figure for the government without further explanation. Hence, the government draws on the IR of employment as women's liberation and supports it with statistics, drawing on the IR of quantitative science as the objective truth.

The IR of women's work as liberation has two dimensions: Firstly, money is said as liberating women from the patriarchal family, because it gives them independence.⁹ Secondly, it's a common narrative in the so-called development work, which rests on economic growth. The strategy is to invest in women, because they are said to spend money more wisely, namely on the family and community. (Shah and Saurabh 2015) This construction of women reinscribes their role as caretakers in the reproductive sphere and thus instrumentalizes women to achieve economic growth.

From the context around the quote the industrialized production of a being, shrimps, is described as important for Bangladeshi political institutions, because it is a valuable export good, tied to funds for example from the USA. Hence, it makes sense for the government to justify the practice by drawing on the IR employment as women's liberation. However, activist discourse cites these IRs with a difference by using the quotation marks which hint at irony and indicate that the activists do not perceive this as an highlight. Thus, in this activist's discourse an oppressive norm is counteracted, because it becomes apparent that the women at work accommodate the government's ends to export shrimp and the market actor's ends to produce at a low cost. Moreover, the ends defined by 'the master' are shown to not be beneficial for everyone. (Although this is usually suggested by the IR employment as women's liberation.) This counteraction of an oppressive norm is further achieved by citing

⁹This claim was common during first-wave western middle class feminism and is also sometimes employed by liberal feminists today. It has been criticized early on by working-class and black feminists, because it neglects that paid work is neither a choice for many women and nor does it not automatically free them from a patriarchal society (hooks 2015, 48). Nonetheless, I want to acknowledge that in our current world, economic independence can be a beneficial factor for women, because it can for example help to exit abusive relationships.

the IR employment as liberation in combination with violence against women and unequal treatment based on gender. The instance that women "face physical, verbal and often sexual abuse" contrasts the notion of employment as liberating women from patriarchy. In addition, women are for example depicted to earn less money due to their gender not job performance. This actually challenges another neoliberal norm: The narrative of being assessed only for hard work and performance begins to totter. Hence, the instrumentalization of women is counteracted by drawing on several IRs from the neoliberal theme, namely employment as women's liberation and performance is everything, but also violence and science.

As mentioned in the introduction of the analysis section, the constructed categories of gender, class, ethnicity and so on are diverse and overlap. While I argued that the aspect of gender is foregrounded in the above examples, the dimensions of class and colonial power relations were simultaneously present. The following section similarly starts with an instance where the interaction of various constructed categories become visible, namely gender and ethnicity. Overall, the next subsection outlines the effect of activist discourse on oppressive norms which affect racialized and colonized people.

7.2.3 Oppressive norms impacting racialized and colonized people

In her acceptance speech for the Champions of the Earth prize Jibrell, the founder of the activist group Adeso, explains the problem of charcoal burners in Puntland which threatens the food security of various beings:

Jibrell: That's when I decided that I want to do something about it. At the same time before I did that I looked around and I said what are people fighting about? People are fighting about limited resources destroyed by displaced use ready pool for higher for war lords for uh companies of charcoal for piracy and for every other evil thing that they could find. The young people, especially

males, pastoral males, have also with the influx of city young males coming to rural areas and pastoral areas introduced to mirah a stimulant that's very expensive and devastating the lives of these young men. Wanting to please their addiction every day, at least 5 dollars a day they are burning their homes, their forest, their livelihood the acacia tree that the camel and the goat depend on [...] (Adeso 2014)

Furthermore, Jibrell shares her strategy to stop the illegal charcoal burning:

[...] that's where we all come in and join together to find employment to the young Somali males who are ready pool for hire for anybody and they come from pastoral areas to the cities knowing how to shoot so they're an army anybody who wants to hire them. Now I'm saying lets hire them, lets give them jobs lets employ them as a Adeso is now employing them through the support of EU Environmental Programme that has found Adeso work through Satellite [...] They came to us and offered us 14 million dollars to do more (6 sec. applause from the audience) [...] Now the young charcoal burners are coming back to us bit by bit convincing them and they are growing little forests and Adeso is paying them two dollar and a half per tree. (Adeso 2014)

Even though, the discourse differentiates people, for example in terms of age, it still homogenizes young men. In particular, the consequence of the cited IRs is that men are homogenized as breadwinners and providers and as violent. The category man displays a "ready pool for hire for anybody", because there is no option that others provide for him (although he probably relies heavily on others). Homogenized as that, men are said to do anything to earn money, even turn to violence. One could say that this is not a reinforcement of oppressive norms since man as a category represent the 'master'. However, there is a racist dimension here because young Somali men are homogenized. They are constructed as poor, acting without reason and willing to do anything to earn money. In addition, the context adds another facet to the cited IR of violence, because men are not displayed as an active counterpart to the victimized and passive woman. Instead it draws on the racist stereotype of 'the colonized' without reason (Plumwood 1993, 5). Besides, the discourse on the food conflict in Somalia draws on jobs as the basis and promise for a better world,

belonging to an IR which I refer to as trickle down effect. This neoliberal narrative justifies inequality and claims that the economic growth of some players will trickle down in society and thus eventually benefit everyone (Greenwood and Holt 2010). In this case the money from the EU, a few rich countries, whose prosperity relates to colonialism (Allen 2010, 302), is displayed as benefiting all. However, the performative act of citing the IR violent breadwinners in combination with the IR trickle down effect homogenizes young Somali men. Thus, oppressive norms that affect racialized and colonized people are reinforced.

In contrast, the following example shows how the Grassy Narrows exposed the instrumentalization of indigenous people and the more-than-human world similarly by drawing on the IR trickle down effect: The logging which impedes the Grassy Narrows' "ability to traditionally harvest to feed and support our families" is justified by Weyerhaeuser "by claiming to provide jobs for local people and support to the local economy" (Grassy Narrows 2007) .¹⁰ However, in their moratorium the activists declare:

As we have long warned, Abitibi has now shut down its Kenora mill, putting hundreds of workers out of job. With the closure of that mill, Abitibi has cut the last strands of their claim to logging rights on this land. Abitibi has destroyed our forests and now violated the basic social contract for logging in Canada by abandoning their workers. They are not contributing anything anymore, only taking, depleting and destroying. It is not in anyone's interest to have Abitibi logging in this area.

The hardwood trees are being logged on our territory for the benefit of Weyerhaeuser Corporation from Seattle Washington. [...] Weyerhaeuser consistently clearcuts the best of a region's forests, exports the profits and then abandons the area- leaving behind them a wake of closed mills, devastated communities, and destroyed forests. (Grassy Narrows 2007)

¹⁰ The Abitibi Consolidated Inc. and Weyerhaeuser Corporation are the companies mostly responsible for the logging of trees in this conflict.

In the activist discourse the trickle down effect is cited combined with destruction, pointing out that Weyerhaeuser works for its own profit and despite their promise of economic benefits for the area "leav[e] behind them a wake of closed mills, devastated communities, and destroyed forests". Furthermore, the discourse indicates that this is not a single incident but instead inherent in the capitalist system as the quote continues:

By their very structure and law these companies are bound to think only of profit, and are accountable only to their distant shareholders. Weyerhaeuser has no long term interest or commitment to the people or the forests of this area. We cannot sit by and become yet another casualty of Weyerhaeuser's global profit plans. (Grassy Narrows 2007)

Here the IR of destruction and war is evoked again with the word casualty. Being a casualty in a war is quite the opposite to benefiting from a system which promises a better world for all. Thus, it becomes clear that "the people and the forests of this area" are simply the means to serve Weyerhaeuser's ends for profit. Similarly it is exposed that the profit of Weyerhaeuser rests on backgrounded indigenous people and workers, as well as the more-than-human world. Consequently, by citing the IR of the trickle down effect with a difference, namely in combination with the IR of destruction and war, instrumentalization and backgrounding are counteracted.

Before discussing these insights in section 8, I present the results of the quantitative analysis in the following.

7.3 Quantitative results

The second part of my analysis focused on the influence of activist discourse on policy discourse with a quantitative analysis based on a previous discourse analysis. The analysis was guided by the question *how the potential to subvert oppressive*

norms in activist discourse impacts the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse. Applying the concept of performativity to an empirical context, I arrived at the following hypothesis:

H: The higher the potential of activist discourse to subvert oppressive norms in a food conflict, the higher is the potential of policy discourse to subvert oppressive norms.

Due to the small sample size the hypothesis was tested by executing a pearson's correlation analysis. In line with the theory, the correlation results indicate a positive relationship¹¹ between the subversive potential of oppressive norms in activist discourse and the subversive potential of oppressive norms in policy discourse. The correlation is moderate ($r=0.4$)¹², however not statistically significant¹³. Hence, the hypothesis is not supported by the statistical analysis.

Despite the selection of a sample which assured that activist discourse was related to policy discourse, no significant relationship between the potential to subvert oppressive norms in these two discourses was observed. One reason for the insignificant results could be the small sample-size and the sample characteristics in general. On the one hand the restricted availability of data reduced the options for analysis and especially to control for other influential factors. On the other hand, the scarcity of data hampered the validity of the analysis, for example because the activist discourse was represented by only one data piece. This portrays a problem, particularly since

¹¹A positive relationship between variables is indicated by the coefficient's sign (+.4), meaning an increase of X is associated with an increase of Y.

¹²A common standard to interpret the strength of the pearson's correlation coefficient r, is based on Cohen (1992): values of $r \geq 0.1$ indicate a small, $r \geq 0.3$ a moderate and $r \geq 0.5$ a large effect. The value of r can be found in the table's first row, i.e. Pearson Correlation (figure 12).

¹³I examine the statistical significance by looking at the value of p, which according to common academic standards should be below .05. With a statistical significant correlation one rejects the null hypothesis that there is no relationship between the two variables. If there is a statistical significant relationship, we can be more certain that the relation between the variables did not occur by chance alone.

*Correlation between potential to subvert oppressive norms
in activist and policy discourse*

		Policy Discourse: Potential to subvert oppressive norms
Activist Discourse: Potential to subvert oppressive norms	Pearson Correlation	,380
	p-value	,278
	N	10

Figure 12: Correlation Table: Influence of activist discourse on the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse

the conflicts often lasted for several years with ongoing mobilization and a range of involved actors. Moreover, although I executed various coding cycles and carefully reflected upon the coding choices, the possibility to rely on several coders would enhance the analysis. This is because tests on inter-coder reliability could be run and develop the analysis to be more robust against coding mistakes. Furthermore, I did not differentiate between the goodness of a performative act, but simply distinguished between 'norm reinforced' or 'norm counteracted'. Yet, while all the acts coded as counteracting norms had the potential to expose norms, some acts probably had a higher possibility of exposing a norm than others. Although I expect such a coding to better explain the variation in policy's potential to subvert oppressive norms, a sound theoretical basis is required to operationalize this further. These reflections lead over to the discussion.

8 Discussion

The variety of cases from logging to seed laws show that food is an overarching topic which also connects to many other domains. Due to its role in the climate

crisis which affects the living condition of many and in unequal terms (Alaimo 2009, 32) I stress that food systems and the way they are organized remain a highly important topic. However, the subversion of oppressive norms and not the creation of a just food system are my focus, because norms are at the core of how our world is constructed. Hence, food conflicts merely constitute this paper's specific context and my entry point to the topic of oppressive norms. Yet, the theoretical framework I proposed can be translated to other contexts where oppressive norms are discursively influenced.

In light of the highly gendered notion of food, the absence of gender in the material was striking. Gender was more prevalent in my data than in the reviewed literature which focused mostly on racism and classism. Nonetheless, gender was rarely mentioned in my material and the consequences of the citing of oppressive norms for gendered people thus hard to assess. However, considering gendered dimensions of food, I think it is important for future studies to shed more light on the silence around oppressive gendered norms in activist discourse and to further analyze the reinforcement and counteraction of oppressive gender norms in other contexts.

My analysis is partial and restricted by limitations such as the scarcity of data on food conflicts or the difficulty of coding data individually, especially since the oppressive norms are interlinked and can overlap (such as incorporation and instrumentalization) (Plumwood 1993, 52). Hence, the analysis never aimed at and does not display a timeless truth but is an interpretation of the material carried out by me as a researcher who is situated in certain discourses. While the results of the analysis are "open to dispute by another analyst on the basis of these or other materials" (Wetherell 1998, 56), it still offers fruitful insights, which is suggested by Wetherell and Potter (1987, 171) as one criterion to evaluate research:

In summary, to draw on a certain IR did not necessarily have the consequence of

reinforcing or counteracting oppressive norms in my analysis of activist discourse. Rather, the same IR can be used in different ways and with opposite consequences regarding the subversion of oppressive norms. This was for example visible in the case of more-than-human world as a commodity and the trickle down effect which had the consequence of homogenizing young Somali men, thus devalued the lives of young Somalis and reinforced oppressive racist norms. On the other hand, the IR trickle down effect was cited with a difference and consequently exposed the oppressive norm of instrumentalizing the indigenous people in Grassy Narrows. This stands in contrast to the reviewed literature on collective action and food. Particularly the use of neoliberal discourse by activists was criticized by previous literature, because it was said to enforce oppressive norms (Allen 2010; Ashe 2018; Passidomo 2014). While neoliberalism is also dominant in my data, I conclude that the citing of neoliberal IRs had the consequence of both counteracting and reinforcing norms. One could say that it is an obvious conclusion that the influence on a norm depended on its consequence, since I looked at the consequence of a cited norm and not its content. Yet, it could have been the case that a certain IR always had the consequence of reinforcing oppressive norms. Such a finding could have fixed the meaning of this particular IR as oppressive. However, this was not the case in my data. Hence, I argue that judging discourse by its consequence and examining whether it was cited with a difference, added a new lens to previous literature, both theoretically and empirically.

Moreover, the instance that all activist discourse in my sample reinforced and counteracted oppressive norms, most probably despite the intention to only subvert norms, indicates the need to pay more attention to seemingly small acts. This need gains importance with the feminist idea of interconnectedness in mind which emphasizes the interdependency of all humans but also with the more-than-human world (Alaimo and Hekman 2008, 238). Consequently, "[a]s much as we want our

own rights to be recognized, we must oppose the deployment of that public recognition of our rights to deflect from and cover over the massive disenfranchisement of rights for others [...] (Butler 2015, 69f.).

Despite underlining the reinforcement of oppressive norms by collective action, my study also generates hope for change by looking at the counteraction of norms. While performing acts that cite norms with a difference continuously is difficult (especially since subjects are bound to the discursive), the concept of performativity emphasizes that subversion is possible and proposes a strategy for activist groups to subvert norms. I argue that the empirical application of performativity fosters this hope. Furthermore, the framework I offered can transcend academia because one can examine the performative acts of the discourse of their own activist group by asking: which norms are we citing and how? What is the consequence?

I cannot answer one of the big questions in feminism, namely whether and how it is possible to build an alliance for a unified struggle for justice without neglecting differences (hooks 2015; Lorde 2003). However, with this paper I suggest that activism should be allied in the sense that it strives to subvert all norms that confine beings. Moreover, with my framework resting on performativity and discursive psychology I present a way to achieve that, since small acts in a repeated manner bear the possibility to subvert norms and the analysis points out that in these contexts it's not decisive which category of norms is cited, rather it is the way it is used. Hence, oppressive norms can be counteracted with a multitude of IRs and in various contexts.

Another part in the activist struggle for the subversion of oppressive norms is the influence of collective action on policy. Based on a puzzle in the previous literature which underlines the importance of activist discourse for policy-making but still identifies the absence of justice approaches in policies (see section 3.3), I focus on the use of oppressive norms in activist discourse which was to influence policy.

Although it limited the sampling of activist discourse for the analysis, the mixed methods approach showed that the combination of discourse analysis with quantitative methods is possible and valuable for the creation of knowledge. Despite the non-significant results of the analysis I consider it useful to conduct more mixed-methods studies on the same issue. After all the results indicate that the direction of the influence is positive and it is due to the sampling limitations that the question remains whether the relationship is insignificant because there is actually no connection.

Moreover, although not all collective action is aimed at a policy change, I would argue that the subversion of oppressive norms should be at the core of a struggle for a more just society, since it enables more forms of beings to be thinkable and livable. Consequently, I am convinced that more empirical research is needed to enhance our understanding of the subversion of oppressive norms in policy-making, since policies are a powerful multiplier of norms in the society. Thus the subversion of oppressive norms in policy discourse marks an important step towards challenging oppressive norms in society to ensure a livable life for all beings.

9 Summary

In this paper I aimed to analyze small steps that transform society, following the role model of the squirrel that feeds itself drudgingly, in order to eradicate injustices. I raised the question *how activist discourse reinforces or counteracts oppressive norms in environmental justice conflicts regarding food*. Performatively, activists reinforce oppressive norms by drawing on them in their discourse. On the other hand, activist discourse counteracts oppressive norms by performing them with a difference, because norms are exposed and eventually subverted. In addition to answering the research question theoretically with the concept of performativity, the integration of

concepts from discursive psychology and ecofeminism enabled me to apply performativity empirically to ten food conflicts. In these cases the activist discourse mainly enforced or challenged oppressive norms which affect gendered people, racialized and colonized people and the more-than-human world. On the one hand the activist discourse reinforced oppressive norms by drawing on neoliberal interpretative repertoires. On the other hand, activist discourse exposed oppressive norms by citing neoliberal interpretative repertoires with a difference for instance in combination with destruction and violence.

The second research question combines a discourse analysis with quantitative methods and examines the impact of collective action on norms in policy discourse by asking: *how does the subversive potential in activist discourse influence the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse?* Again, performativity displays one major explanatory factor in my framework, which theorizes that performative acts in activist discourse can unfold their performative power in the area of policy-making in moments of disruption, namely the food conflicts. However, I could not gain confidence in the hypothesis that the higher the subversive potential of oppressive norms in activist discourse, the higher is the potential to subvert oppressive norms in policy discourse. Nonetheless, I am convinced that the concept of performativity, the proposed theory and the combination of discourse analysis with quantitative methods provide a useful basis for further research on the issue.

In conclusion, this paper contributes with insights on how collective action influences oppressive norms in their discourse and in relation to policy in the specific context of ten environmental justice conflicts regarding food. Furthermore, it follows the feminist idea of exceeding academic boundaries (Doucet and Mauthner 2006, 40) by connecting post-structuralism, feminist research and quantitative methods. Consequently, with the combination of methods and theoretical concepts, I provide two

different ways to apply the concept of performativity beyond identity construction but as a theory for societal change. These frameworks can be used and developed in future research which I argue should conduct more empirical studies of performativity to counter the critique that "performativity is more of an abstract potentiality than a concrete possibility" (Jagger 2008, 13). In turn, this created knowledge can provide further small steps for collective action to counter oppressive norms and bring about a just world.

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10 Appendix: Background on selected cases

This section includes background information on the chosen environmental justice conflicts related to food. Each conflict description is derived from the EJAtlas and contains a direct quote. Additionally, the link to every conflict's profile is provided where both the description can be accessed as well as further information on the specific conflict. The conflicts are sorted alphabetically based on their location. All employed data pieces are listed in the reference list and indicated as material. Table 1 presents an additional overview on my material related to each conflict.

Conflict Location	Activist Material	Policy Material
Austria	Global 2000 and ARCHE NOAH	European Parliament
Bangladesh	Nijera Kori	Supreme Court of Bangladesh
Canada	National Famer's Union (Boehm)	Parliament of Canada
Grassy Narrows (Canada)	Grassy Narrows	Grassy Narrows First Nation v. Ontario (Natural Resources)
Haida Gwaii (Canada)	Haida Nation (Mair)	Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)
Puntland, Somalia	Adeso	Federal Government of Somalia and United Nations
Sierra Madre, Philippines	Sierra Madre Network Alliance Inc. (SSMNA)	Aquino
Sri Lanka	Centre for Environmental Justice and Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka	State of Sri Lanka
Te Urewera (New Zealand)	Tūhoe Authority	Te Urewera Board
Whanganui (New Zealand)	Whanganui River Maori Trust Board	State of New Zealand

Table 1: Material Overview

Austria

In this case the activist discourse data derived from the organizations Global 2000 and Arche Noah in a struggle for seed diversity and against a seed regulation. Hence, the policy discourse was represented by a data piece from the European Parliament. The conflict description below is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/seeds-and-the-grey-areas-of-the-european-law-in-austria> [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

The current Austrian seed marketing legislation is not very favourable, but leaves some grey areas that make it possible for farmers and gardeners' associations to sell small amounts of seed. This is a result of the fact that the EU

law left member states some margin for their own implementation and Austrian seed savers' and farmers' organisations had successfully fought for a non-exclusive way of registering traditional seeds at the national level. Although selling these so-called 'conservation varieties' is restricted to a particular geographic area, the result is that many different seed-producing farmers, rather than only one, can register the same traditional variety and sell it legally.

Given this space that they carved out, Austrian seed savers, consumers and farmers have been worked very hard in recent years to oppose the revision of the EU's seed marketing legislation that would have made it more difficult for farmers to make peasant seeds available for sale. According to the proposal, while some seeds could be exempt from the typical DUS industrial seed requirements, there were other hurdles such as registration, certification and record keeping requirements that would have been too costly and bureaucratic for most peasant farmers. One of the central demands of the Austrian seed savers and farmers is that all kind of seeds - DUS and non-DUS, certified and non-certified, industrial and peasant – should be allowed to be marketed on an equal basis. They argue that farmers can decide for themselves what kind of seeds they need. For example, some farmers may want to purchase DUS seeds guaranteed to meet certain standards such as germination rates, purity or yield, while others may want to have access to usually cheaper non-certified and non-uniform seeds. For Austrian seed savers and farmers, it would mean being able to sell their seeds without costly and lengthy DUS-testing and certification, helping to bring back diversity to their fields and gardens. At the same time, they emphasise that they do not simply want a free market for seeds, without rules. For example, in order to avoid cases of biopiracy, they demand an institutional data bank for voluntary registration of peasant varieties. Their aim is to link together the traditional name and the specific characteristics of peasant varieties with as little bureaucratic procedures as possible. This would avoid cases in which the seed industry appropriates names of popular seed varieties, benefiting from their good reputation while making it illegal for other farmers to sell the original variety under the original name.

In order to oppose the EU marketing regulation, the Austrians built large coalitions with farmers, gardeners and seed savers' organisations in Austria and other countries, but also with consumers, cooks, journalists and some politicians. They invited people to reproduce potatoes on a field, made video clips and presented them to school children and they joined forces with the environmental movement to collect more than 800 000 signatures against the law proposal. In 2014, after intense lobbying activities, the European Parliament and the European Council finally rejected the seed marketing law revisions with a large majority. Austrian farmers see this rejection as an important victory that will allow them to advance in promoting farmers' rights to save,

use and sell their seeds.

Bangladesh

The food conflict in Bangladesh evolves around shrimps which are commodified and as a consequence threaten the food security in Bangladesh, because of rising salinity in the water. I analyzed the discourse from Nijera Kori and a decision by the Supreme Court of Bangladesh. This following conflict description is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/forced-aquaculture-destroying-local-livelihood> [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

Cultivation of saline water shrimp on vast part of coastal area started its journey as an industry in Bangladesh since early 80s and reached its boom in the last few years. The sector is an hundred percent export oriented one.

In addition to the total loss of Chokoria-Sunderbans mangrove forest, shrimp aquaculture in populated coastal areas adversely affected land fertility, increased salinity intrusion, contaminated drinking water sources, caused loss of biodiversity and livestock and deprived people of their sources of traditional living. Saline water intrusion affected sweet water fisheries, infested ground water, contaminated ponds leaving villagers with very little or no water for daily uses. Due to expansion of saline water inundated fields, there was no space for grazing and household poultry simply disappeared.

The shrimp farmers are largely outsiders who, in connivance with law enforcing agencies, were applying coercive methods to take and retain control over lands. This was particularly worrying for women.

Although the yearly lease agreements kept provisions for handing over lands for four months to facilitate crop cultivations, the same was never allowed. Leases could not be terminated at the will of the land owners as the entire administration was backing up the shrimp farmers.

All these affected local employment and severely hindered local food production and water supply giving rise to serious public grievances. [...] The Agriculture Division of the Ministry of Agriculture observed (2009) that salinity intrusion has led to loss of grazing fields for cattle and poultry for which

local supply of essentials like milks and eggs went down causing severe malnutrition. This Divisions also reported damage to homestead forestry due to aquaculture which was described as a curse to people.

In addition to negative ecological and environmental effects, the cultivation of commercial and saline water shrimp has also led to severe consequences in social and law and order situation of respective areas. The conflicts about control over and access to lands, abuse of women and children, forced intrusion of saline water, damage to public property and so on have resulted in ever deteriorating law and order situation in the coastal areas under shrimp cultivation. [...]

Canada

The Canadian Farmer's Union proposed a new law for the regulation of seeds to protest against the current and planned regulations. In this environmental conflict related to food production, the policy discourse was derived from the Parliament of Canada. The conflict description below is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/canadian-farmers-struggle-to-keep-using-traditional-seeds-varieties> [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

In 2005, Canadian farmers had successfully fought against a law that would have introduced UPOV '91 into Canada. The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV) is an intergovernmental organisation with headquarters in Geneva (Switzerland). It was established by the International Convention for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants, which was adopted in Paris in 1961 and it was revised in 1972, 1978 and 1991. The organisation claims that it aims at providing and promoting an effective system of plant variety protection, but through the development of new varieties of plants and the protection of intellectual copyright. Yet UPOV's focus on patents for plant varieties hurts farmers, in that it does not allow them to use saved seed or that of protected varieties.

What happened in Canada is that in the current context of free trade agreements with Europe on the one hand and Pacific Rim countries on the other, a new bill, similar to the old one, has been proposed by the government on December 9, 2013 (in particular by the conservative parliamentarian Gerry Ritz) and unfortunately became law on February 25, 2015.

From the government's standpoint the Act will strengthen Canadian agriculture, make it more competitive at home and on the international stage, strengthen intellectual property rights for plant varieties in Canada, and facilitate the aims of mainstream agriculture.

At the same time, the law was obstructed not just by farmers association and civil society, but also by the green part of the parliament and different church organisation, who have used the same hearings as an opportunity to offer a defence of the family farm and individual farmer rights.[...] In fact, the new law will negatively affect the varieties on the market. According to prior regulations, when the monopoly rights of a company over a PVP-protected variety expire, farmers or breeders can apply to maintain the variety and therefore keep it available on the market. Under the new law, when a PVP certificate expires, companies will have the right to cancel the variety, thus creating a market dominated entirely by their varieties that are subject to the restrictions of UPOV '91. Farmers in Canada can continue to grow and sell a variety that is not registered, but the problem is that the harvests of those varieties fetch the lowest prices on the market.

Farmers' organisations in Canada who has opposed this law face a significant problem from other farmers who have been growing GMO crops for almost 20 years and believe that it is 'the only game in town' because they know little else. These farmers are surprised to see that their neighbours who grow traditional varieties without GMOs have also had increases in yields similar to theirs, ignoring that their own GM yields are related to other factors such as chemical fertiliser applications that have gone up in past years. Another problem is that farmers who have been using commercial seed for many years have forgotten how to select their own seeds. Having lost the traditional varieties that their grandparents still used, they have lost the knowledge of how to select seeds and are surprised when they meet farmers who do save their own seeds.

Farmers who fought against the privatisation of seeds have found allies in church organisations and consumer groups who have joined in a public campaign to show that the privatisation of seeds would be a major obstacle for achieving food sovereignty. They were also beginning to find allies among other farmers who continue to support industrial seeds but were heavily indebted. Canadian farmers are now in debt for a total sum of C\$77 billion. This ties them to the industrial system because their creditors are the same companies that sell from the industrial seeds.[...] The debate was huge and lots of actors try to save the farmer possibility to freely use traditional seeds and it is a shame that their voices remained unheard.

Grassy Narrows

In Grassy Narrows the indigenous people mobilize against logging, which threatens their "ability to traditionally harvest to feed and support our families" (Grassy Narrows 2007). The activist discourse is represented by a moratorium, while the policy discourse is derived from the court case *Grassy Narrows First Nation v. Ontario (Natural Resources)*. The following conflict description is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/grassy-narrows-logging-conflict-ont-canada> [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

The Grassy Narrows blockade began on December 2, 2002, when two people stepped in front of a logging truck hauling timber out of clear-cuts in the bands traditional territories. It has now lasted over a decade, becoming the longest running Indigenous logging blockade in Canada. The case has also moved to the courts with an appeal brought in the Supreme Court of Canada by the Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek (Grassy Narrows First Nation) to defend the Whiskey Jack Forest against logging.

The case involved whether Canada or Ontario has the jurisdiction to issue logging permits on the Grassy Narrows territory. In 1997 Ontario issued a forest licence to Abitibi-Consolidated Inc to carry out clear-cut forestry operations in the Whiskey Jack Forest. In 2000 Grassy Narrows asked the Court to set aside those licenses on the basis that they violated the Treaty 3 harvesting clause. In 2011, Ontarios Superior Court ruled the province cannot authorize timber and logging if the operations infringe on federal treaty promises protecting aboriginal rights to traditional hunting and trapping.

Yet in March 2013, the court of appeal said the Ontario government has the jurisdiction over logging in the province, including issuing logging permits after all. The Grassy Narrows Nation have appealed the case to the Supreme Court of Canada who will announce sometime in 2013 whether it will accept the case, otherwise the ruling will stand.

Several forestry companies have stopped logging in the area, including Resolute (formerly AbitibiBowater) (in 2008), Boise and Domtar, but Weyerhaeuser continues to seek access to lands people from Grassy Narrows want to protect.

The Grassy Narrows nation is also been a victim of mercury poisoning in their rivers that led to Canadian Minimata disease (see Grassy Narrows Mercury

Poisoning Case) and that means they could no longer fish. For them the clearcuts and the loss of hunting habitat was the last straw.

Haida Gwaii

The logging on Haida Gwaii disrupts the interdependent ecosystems and thus not only endangers human's food security which rely on the arable land and animals that live on it, but also many other species. While the activist discourse was derived from an interview of the President of Haida Nation, the policy discourse is represented by a court decision, namely *Haida Nation v. British Columbia (Minister of Forests)* (2004). This conflict description is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/haida-gwai-forresty-dispute> [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

Since the mid 1970s, industrial logging on Haida Gwaii, an archipelago of over one hundred islands off the northwest coast of British Columbia, has been contested by the Haida Nation and their supporters. Haida Gwaii is home to the world's best remaining stands of cedar, hemlock and Sitka spruce. Many waves of blockades, popular mobilizations, court battles and inter-governmental negotiations have led to significant wins. Forests have been protected, new forms of co-management have been forged and Indigenous rights have been strengthened. Haida resistance has helped bring about treaty recognition for First Nations in Canada. Conflicts have been sparked again and again over industrial logging, especially of old growth cedar trees. Communities are opposing the flow of logging revenue accruing away from local communities and concerned about impacts to rivers and salmon. The conflict also involves logging companies repeatedly violating existing agreements and quotas. 'From at least the mid-1970's, the Haida have pursued a number of strategies, from participation in cooperative management processes to illegal roadblocks, in order to reclaim control over the forests and waters of Haida Gwaii. [...] Logging companies continue to violate agreements and new blockades and waves of resistance have arisen as recently as 2018. [...]

Sierra Madre

The logging of timber in Sierra Madre endangers the food security of many species by destroying their homes and living ground of other species their food security depends on. This is what the Sierra Madre Network Alliance Inc. (SSMNA) aims to prevent. In this conflict the policy discourse was represented by a document from the President who declared a moratorium (Aquino 2011). The following conflict description is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/illegal-logging-in-northern-sierra-madre-national-park-isabela-philippines> [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

The Northern Sierra Madre National Park (NSMNP), covering an area of 359,486ha, is among the largest protected natural parks in the Philippines and one of the 10 priority protected areas. It is habitat to a remarkable amount of endemic birds and mammals. Around 25,000 people live within the NSMNP, 1,800 of which belong to the indigenous Agta tribe, strongly depending on a healthy environment for their livelihood. Some settlements date back to over 300 years. Outside the park, around 1.5 million people depend on the hydrological services provided by the NSMNP [...].

Illegal as well as legal logging in NSMNP has been, since decades, a serious threat to forests and people. [...] Illegal logging in NSMNP operates as a highly organized network, involving many different actors, such as financiers that advance cash for fuel and supply, local village officials supporting their activities, and small logging teams, who have their own illegal local 'area-area' concessions system, sometimes marked with signposts. [...]

While some locals, particularly young, are attracted by the well paid illegal activities, many others do complain about the irreversible impacts. Large deforestation was related to increased floods and calamities, in particular in 2008, during which four typhoons claimed the lives of 100 people in Isabela and Cagayan province. Biodiversity loss is inevitable. Farmers complain that heavy trucks destroy access ways. Fish catches have declined due to erosion and river siltation, and indigenous worry about disturbed wildlife and degraded forest resources. Women report to be constantly harassed by illegal loggers, who spend much of the earned money on alcohol, tobacco and prostitution [...].

Resistance has taken several forms, starting with campaigns and street protests

against illegal logging. A few legal cases were filed against logging middlemen; however they were either settled or dismissed, due to the deep political entrenchment of the network into local politics. In 2008, pressured by church and environmental groups, the governor of Isabela province set up the Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force, partly motivated to avoid financing of the political opposition through illegal logging revenues. In the following years, more cases were filed, DENR officials were replaced and illegal equipment and supply, such as chainsaws and timber, was seized. However, anti-logging activists are facing strong repression. [...]

As of 2015, illegal logging in the Northern Sierra Madre National Park continues to be a threat to communities and primary ecosystems [...].

Puntland, Somalia

The burning of trees in order to extract charcoal endangers the food security of many species in Puntland, Somalia. Adeso started collective action against it and the Federal Government of Somalia and United Nations launched a program to prevent illegal logging. The following conflict description is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/unrestricted-charcoal-production-in-puntland-somalia> [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

Somalia is mostly desert and only has 2% arable land, making it naturally already prone to drought. However, in the last decades, these droughts have been further exacerbated by mass deforestation [...]. In 1991, Somalia's central government collapsed, resulting in a brutal civil war [...]. Since then, charcoal became the country's only source of domestic energy [...]. Both rural and urban communities depended on it for all their fuel needs [...].

The rampant logging was only exacerbated when Somalian livestock, the nation's former main export, was banned across the Gulf states in September 2000. Consequently, charcoal became the new primary export for markets in Gulf countries and Saudi Arabia [...]. Most of the charcoal came from Puntland State, where it was made mainly from acacia trees that were anywhere between 50 to 500 years old. [...] Black gold [the charcoal] was equally as dangerous as it was valuable when the illegal charcoal production and smuggling industries became the main sources of income funding warlords and terrorist groups such as Al-Shabaab, an Islamist extremist organization [...]. [...]

Illegal charcoal exports contributed not only to political instability and violence, but also environmental devastation. Over decades of mass deforestation at a rate of 2.5 million trees felled annually, Somalia as of 2010 only had less than 10% of its forests left [...]. This deforestation has resulted in desertification owing to how less trees were available to protect the soil from wind and rain erosion [...]. Biodiversity decreased sharply from species' loss of habitats, which held a domino effect reaching even to the mangrove ecosystem along the coast, where marine life was destroyed [...]. As such, not only were human populations facing extreme food insecurity, but villages were also routinely wrecked because of subsequent severe floods and droughts when local ecosystems were no longer able to mitigate heavy rains or retain water, killing dozens, especially children, pregnant women, and the elderly [...]. Burning charcoal during the fabrication process also emitted heavy air pollution, often leaving a black film of ash everywhere [...].

It was around this terrible time in 1990s that Fatima Jibrell, a Somalian native and naturalized U.S. citizen whom joined her father when he immigrated to the United States, returned to her home country after growing up abroad and receiving a master's in social work and starting a family of five daughters with her husband [...]. Horrified by the stark difference between the Puntland of her childhood memories and the desolate state it was currently in, at the age of 62 in 1996, she set up a nonprofit initially called the Horn of Africa Relief and Development Organization (now called Adeso) to alleviate suffering in local communities and fight the illegal charcoal trade [...]. Doing so was a very brave endeavor because Puntland compared to the rest of Somalia was particularly hostile toward all human rights defenders and humanitarian aid workers. Although she is still alive, many people she knew had been kidnapped and/or murdered, and she herself had been raided and threatened many times. However, her positionality as a respected Muslim female elder protected her and gave her authority in a culture that places a lot of value in its elder women. Had she been a man, she explains, her work 'would have been met with much more aggression,' and she 'would have been extorted to pay many more bribes' [...].

Jibrell's grassroots campaign had two main projects: one, to legally ban all charcoal trade, and two, to educate communities (and especially young women) about why charcoal was so harmful and work with them to prevent further environmental damages [...]. In 1999, she and ADESO organized a peace march in Puntland against the 'charcoal wars,' and thanks to her education and lobbying efforts, she successfully convinced the Puntland government to ban charcoal exports and enforce the ban properly in 2000. Consequently, charcoal exports dropped by 80% [...]. The ban was able to completely eliminate charcoal export through Bosaso Port as well as eradicate nearly all charcoal exports through the Mogadishu and Merka ports [...]. Moreover, as someone who in-

timately understood the sociocultural reasons why the charcoal trade was in place, she addressed the charcoal supply loss with solar cooker, tree planting, grass cultivation, and youth rehabilitation projects [...]. Her landmark victories earned her, among many other awards, the Goldman Environmental Prize in 2002 [5, 14]. Various illegal trading groups were convicted for their export crimes and forced to pay heavy fines [...].

However, the ban was not a complete success. [...] Jibrell and the United Nations Security Council thus worked to create another ban of Somalian charcoal among the Arabian states importing it for their markets in 2012, which was unfortunately not so effective as the market value for charcoal rose to more than \$250 million in the two years after the ban was in place. [...] The illegal charcoal trade thus still operates today [...]. [...]

Sri Lanka

Pesticides used for global human food production contaminate the land and water in Sri Lanka and are said to cause severe illnesses of the local population. Hence, activists launched a campaign (Centre for Environmental Justice and Friends of the Earth Sri Lanka 2011/2017) in this environmental justice conflict related to food production. The State of Sri Lanka amended the law against pesticides, which represents the analyzed policy discourse. The following conflict description is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/agrochemical-pesticides-and-kidney-related>. [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

Over the last decade, a new form of kidney disease of unknown etiology has emerged in the dry zone of Sri Lanka. The occurrence is mainly amongst males of age group 30-60 years engaged in agriculture. Almost 80% of these patients eventually die from kidney failure within the first two years after diagnosis. High prevalence of Chronic Kidney Disease(CKD) has become an environmental health issue of national concern in Sri Lanka. [...] The affected area covers approximately 17,000 square km and with a population about 2.5 million in which more than 95% live in rural areas [...] The presence of high levels of fluoride widespread use of agrochemicals, presence of heavy metals like cadmium, lead and arsenic and uranium in soil and water are postulated as contributory factors. Up to now, there is no unequivocal evidence to recognize the possible environmental causative factors. The prevalence of the disease is

mostly among paddy farmers and agriculture laborers. Many of these farmers die simply because they cannot afford the cost of treatment. Apart from the cost, it's the lack of availability of dialysis facilities in nearby hospitals that makes it extremely difficult for the poor to avail treatment. Most cases, people found they are sick at a very late stage, so that it's not possible to reverse the situation.

This grave situation calls for mobilization of public support for fund raising activities as the morbidity and mortality of these patients are often related to their state of poverty [...]. In most households both mother and father suffer from the disease. There is a strong scientific debate regarding the causes of spreading of CKD. Scientists suspect the illness is caused by a combination of factors including chronic dehydration from hard labor in tropical heat, and exposure to toxins such as pesticides. In 2014 Dr. Jayasumana, from Faculty of Medicine of the Rajarata University published a paper [...] where hypothesis, glyphosate bonds with toxic heavy metals in the environment such as cadmium and arsenic, forming stable compounds that are consumed in food and water and do not break down until reaching victims' kidneys. Moreover a study conducted in Sri Lanka in 2013 by the World Health Organization [...] detected both cadmium and glyphosate, as well as other pesticides and heavy metals, in the environment of endemic areas, and in kidney patients' urine. Glyphosate is the active ingredient in Monsanto's top-selling herbicide Roundup. Concerned the chemical may be linked to the kidney disease killing agricultural workers, Sri Lanka's President Mahinda Rajapaksa on March 2014 ordered a ban [...] on glyphosate. Immediately reply arrived from USA's Monsanto, who retaliated, saying that the new studies are based on untested theories rather than hard data.

Facing political opposition and questions about its scientific evidence by sponsored Pesticide Technical Committee, Monsanto and agrochemical industry groups, Sri Lanka's government has placed on hold its decision to ban the top-selling Monsanto herbicide glyphosate [...]. Already in June 2011 an Open Forum on Agro-Chemicals was held at the Hector Kobbekaduwa Agriculture Research and Training Institute, in Colombo, with the participation of over 200 people representing farmers, Trade unions, civil society organizations, academics and researches. This was organized by Vikalpanie Centre for Environmental Justice, Monlar, Sri Lanka Soba Samuhikaya, New Era, Swarnahansa Padanama, and the Buddhist Actions on Nature and other Civil Society organizations. [...]

Te Urewera

The consequences of the appropriation of the land by the Crown led to food insecurity according to the EJAtlas conflict profile. The Te Urewera Board proposed a management plan which I analyzed as policy discourse. Moreover, I selected a previous management plan from the Tūhoe Authority as the activist data because it displays the discourse on how the Tūhoe imagine the land to be, the land that they are trying to access in the conflict. The conflict description is directly quoted from:

<https://ejatlas.org/conflict/rights-of-nature-maori-resistance-results-in-te-urewera>

[Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

Decades of resistance led by Tūhoe Maori has resulted in their ancestral land, Te Urewera, being granted legal personality and Tūhoe reclamation of management rights. Prior to this ruling, Te Urewera was the largest national park on North Island between 1954 -2014. [...] Contrary to other Maori groups, Tūhoe never signed the Treaty of Waitangi, aiming to maintain sovereignty and control over their lands. Nonetheless, they were forced to become subjects of the New Zealand government, which seized control of most of their lands and authority over their affairs. Tūhoe were not consulted in the creation of Te Urewera National Park, and lost significant access for customary use of the land. The government now recognizes that these severe restrictions have contributed to the current situation of 85% of Tūhoe living outside of Te Urewera, with those inside the area struggling economically and socially. [...] Tūhoe argued that only by regaining ownership and control of Te Urewera and their traditional relationship with the land would they be able to exercise their spiritual authority through guardianship. The Crown, however, has refused to transfer ownership of the park to the Tūhoe, instead offering to grant Te Urewera legal personality, thereby 'owning itself'. Tūhoe accepted, and the agreement was settled in March 2013 with accompanying legislation approved in July 2014. [...] Under the Tūhoe -Crown settlement – Te Urewera Act 2014, Te Urewera National Park officially became Te Urewera, a legal entity, on July 27th, 2014, with management responsibilities transferred from the Department of Conservation to a new Te Urewera Board. [...] Tūhoe spirituality must be taken into account in Board decision-making. [...] The Te Urewera Act grants the Board the power to grant activity permits and make by-laws. One new type of permit allows for use of indigenous plants as well as hunting indigenous animals, as long as species preservation is not adversely affected. [...]

Whanganui

Access to land plays an important role in the conflict at the Whanganui river, also because it threatens the food security of the Whanganui Iwi. The activist data comprises the negotiation strategy by the Whanganui River Maori Trust Board. The policy discourse was displayed by the settlement of the State of New Zealand. The following conflict description is directly quoted from: <https://ejatlas.org/conflict/rights-of-nature-new-zealand> [Last accessed on: 16.05.21]

In March 2017, a New Zealand judge's ruling—recognizing the Whanganui River as a living entity after over a century of Māori advocacy—was passed into law. The Whanganui River is the longest navigable river in Aotearoa New Zealand [...] and the third longest in all New Zealand [...]. It flows through Whanganui Māori territory from North Island's center to the west coast. [...] The river is considered 'central to the existence of Whanganui Iwi and their health and wellbeing', providing 'physical and spiritual sustenance', and is seen as the ancestor of the Māori Whanganui Iwi. [...] Whanganui Māori have long protested against their loss of control over the river, including loss of navigation and resource-use rights, and activities such as river bed works, gravel extraction, and water diversion for hydro-electric power, considering that these breach their treaty rights. Though quickly violated, the Treaty of Waitangi was signed by fourteen Whanganui Māori chiefs in 1840, guaranteeing Māori possession and control of their territory, including forests, lands, fisheries, and estates. [...] The Whanganui Iwi's resistance to this loss of guardianship and treatment of the river has included parliamentary petitions, reports by the Waitangi Tribunal and a Royal Commission, and a variety of legal actions resulting in court cases between 1938-2010 that fought for return of guardianship and management to the Whanganui Iwi. [...] In 1988 the Whanganui River Māori Trust Board was established in order to negotiate for outstanding claims by Whanganui Iwi over the river. [...] In 2003 the Board and the Crown agreed to negotiation terms to settle historical claims regarding the river. [...] These negotiations resulted in an agreement intended to resolve grievances between the Iwi and government regarding future river management, reached in 2012 and signed in 2014, creating a new legal entity for the river called Te Awa Tupua. The agreement, called the Whanganui River Deed of Settlement (Ruruku Whakatupua-Te Mana o Te Awa Tupua), aims to uphold the spiritual relationship between the Iwi and the river and its status as a living being. [...] The settlement's legislation, a public act dated March 20th, 2017, brings the 'longest running litigation in

New Zealand's history to an end' [...], and establishes Te Pou Tupua as the human face and representative of Te Awa Tupua. [...] The bill works to establish a new legal framework called Te Pā Auroa, which legally recognizes Te Awa Tupua as a being consisting of the river 'from the mountains to the sea, its tributaries, and all physical and metaphysical elements, as an indivisible and living whole' [...]. [...]