

POLITICAL AND SOCIAL OPPOSITION REPRESENTED BY
ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS AGAINST NEOLIBERAL POLITICS IN
CONTEMPORARY TURKEY

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IN CONTEMPORARY TURKEY**

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ABSTRACT

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This Ph.D. thesis analyses recent environmental movements in Turkey within the framework of anti-neoliberal movements, based on field researches carried out in the cities of İstanbul and Artvin in Turkey. Drawing on in-depth interviews and participant observation, this study aims to understand and explain the social basis, organizational characteristics, main motivations and action patterns of environmental movements on the one hand, and emerging forms of new political and social agency representing a significant opposition against neoliberal politics on the other. This study mainly argues that the environmental movements in İstanbul and Artvin show the characteristics of anti- neoliberal movements in three respects. First, they share the common organizational structure. They adopt leaderless and horizontal organizations. They advocate participatory decision-making processes. Second, they represent powerful opposition against neoliberal policies that plunder, commodify, and privatize the nature and ecological commons. Third, they show the characteristics of prefigurative politics through “here and now” practices, creating new subjectivities, developing new relations, and transforming the activists, and everyday life.

Keywords: Environmental Movements, Prefigurative Politics, Commons, Neoliberalism, Turkey

ÖZ

GÜNÜMÜZ TÜRKİYESİ'NDE EKOLOJİ HAREKETLERİNİN NEOLİBERAL POLİTİKALARA KARŞI TEMSİL ETTİĞİ SİYASAL VE TOPLUMSAL MUHALEFET

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Bu çalışma ekoloji hareketlerini, neoliberalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketler bağlamında tartışmayı amaçlamıştır. İstanbul ve Artvin’de gerçekleştirilen niteliksel saha araştırmasına dayanan bu çalışma bir yandan ekoloji hareketlerinin toplumsal tabanını, örgütsel özelliklerini, ana motivasyonlarını ve eylem repertuarını açıklarken diğer taraftan neoliberal politikalara karşı ortaya çıkan yeni öznellikleri anlamayı ve açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu çalışma, Türkiye’de ekoloji hareketlerinin neoliberalizm karşıtı hareketler ile üç farklı açıdan ortak özellikler gösterdiğini savunmaktadır. İlk olarak bu hareketler, lidersiz, yatay, tabandan ve kendiliğinden örgütlenmelerdir. Doğrudan demokrasiyi ve katılımcı karar alma süreçlerini savunurlar. İkincisi, kar odaklı neoliberal politikalara karşı dururlar ve müşterekleri yaşam alanları olarak savunurlar. Üçüncüsü, “şimdi ve burada” gerçekleştirilen pratikler ile, yeni ilişkiler geliştirerek, yeni öznellikler yaratarak ve gündelik yaşamı dönüştürerek bu hareketler prefigüratif siyasetin özelliklerini taşırlar.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ekoloji Hareketleri, Prefigüratif Siyaset, Müşterekler, Neoliberalizm, Türkiye

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AKP	Justice and Development Party
CHP	Republican People's Party
ÇED	Environmental Impact Assessment
HDP	People's Democratic Party
KOS	Northern Forest Defence
MHP	Nationalist Action Party
NIMBY	Not in my Backyard
ÖDP	Freedom and Solidarity Party
YAD	Green Artvin Association

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Despite authoritative efforts to produce a single and monolithic narrative of crisis without alternatives and without heterodoxies, despite state coercion and police brutality, people seek to counteract the sense of helplessness. New political collectivities, such as the Indignados of Spain, the Outraged of Greece, and Occupy Wall Street in the United States, seek to reclaim democracy from capitalism and corporate power. As was the case in different locales and diverse instances of protest, from Tahrir Square and the uprisings in the Middle East and North Africa to Puerta del Sol, Syntagma Square, and Zuccotti Park, the gatherings implicate fundamentally the very condition of corporeal standing in public – in the urban street (Butler & Athanasiou, 2013).

The last decades have witnessed burgeoning global protest waves worldwide. Starting with the 1999 ‘anti-globalization’ movement in Seattle and stretching through Occupy movements in different parts of the world, anti-austerity movements in Europe, Arab Spring in the Middle East, Gezi in Turkey and many more examples from all around the world can be considered as parts of the wider global discontent towards neoliberal and authoritarian politics. These movements recaptured the public spaces, demanded an end to austerity politics, claimed reinvention of democracy with the slogan “we are the 99%!”. While global protest movements dominated the world scene in the last two decades, other grassroots movements, which took place instead of on a local scale, also left considerable marks on the history of political struggles. The movements for “right to water” in Cochabamba, Bolivia, the resistance of local people against copper and gold mines in Indonesia, anti-mine movements in Latin America, resistances towards mine and dam projects in India can be listed as just a couple of many grassroots protests that changed the course of social movements history. Dardot and Laval (2019, p. 59) explain these waves of protests in terms of their opposition to neoliberalism;

The new dominant order that emerged in the 1990s was almost immediately contested by new militant groups and new ways of thinking from all over the

world. These new forms of resistance emphasized the invasive and destructive effects of neoliberalism and spoke of the need to build a new world order based on principles other than competition, profit, and the excessive exploitation of our natural resources. By the end of the twentieth century, the emergent alter-globalization movement testified to the energies of a re-constructed and global anti-capitalist movement made up of ecological activism, traditional social movements, and a range of more specific grievances prompted by neoliberal policies.

These waves of protests represent opposition to neoliberal politics in different respects. They defend the commons against privatization and enclosure. They stand against the exclusion of citizens from decision-making processes and top-down policies. They want to represent themselves instead of being represented by institutional politics. These movements share the common organizational structure based on grassroots, they are leaderless, and they consist of heterogenous and diverse multitude groups. In their work, *They can't represent us*, Sitrin and Azzellini highlight the shared characteristics of global protest waves:

Something new is happening—something new in content, depth, breadth, and global consistency. Societies around the world are in movement. Since the end of 2010 millions of people have been taking to the streets in cities, towns, and villages—assembling in plazas, occupying parks, buildings, homes, and schools, ere is a growing global movement of refusal—and simultaneously, in that refusal, a movement of creation.

Millions are shouting “No!” as they manifest alternatives to what is being refused. People from below are rising up, but rather than going toward the top, they are moving, as the Zapatistas suggested, “from below and to the left, where the heart resides”. Hierarchy and representational democracy are being rejected, ideologically and by default, and in that rejection mass horizontal assemblies are opening new landscapes with horizons of autonomy and freedom (Sitrin & Azzellini, 2014, p. 5).

As stated by Sitrin & Azzellini, these movements are both a movement of refusal and a movement of creation. While they say no to the power, they manifest alternatives to the existing order. This brings me to the main focus of my thesis. In this dissertation, I argue that these new waves of protests go along with a new mode of activism and political opposition, different from the conventional mode of politics and political activism. Rather than focusing on creating a structural

change within society, this new form of activism is geared towards the transformation of society by changing social relations toward new ways based on equality, solidarity, and cooperation. This new mode of activism redefines political orientations, tactics, and actions; occupying public spaces, establishing communal areas, various alternative modes of consumption and countercultural lifestyles are adopted as a way to actualize the future dreams in the present (Yates, 2015; Dixon, 2014; Cooper, 2014). Environmental movements as a part of global uprising waves against neoliberal politics bear the potential to track this new mode of activism emerging from the transformation of everyday life through developing new forms of subjectivities, social relations, and alternative spaces. In other words, environmental movements, which present itself not only as a social confrontation but also a political opposition, bear a potential in terms of creating cracks and ruptures in authoritarian and neoliberal regimes.

Environmental movements have emerged as a part of global uprising waves against neoliberal policies that plunder, commodify, and privatize the nature and ecological commons. Through combining local, national, and global processes, this study examines the cases of environmentalist movements in Turkey against the neoliberal agenda of relentless commodification of commons. It analyses recent environmental movements in Turkey in the global context of contemporary anti-neoliberal movements based on field research in the cities of İstanbul and Artvin in Turkey. In the context of these two field studies, this study argues that new environmental movements in Turkey exhibit the novel characteristics of the contemporary anti-neoliberal movements across the world organizationally and politically. They are horizontal organizations allowing non-hierarchical interaction of diverse groups, and they resist the contemporary processes of commodification, especially of nature and ecosystem.

Moreover, this research also intends to uncover the prefigurative politics practices in both cases. In that, it discusses how the activists, urban and local, have tried to develop new forms of social relations based on cooperation, solidarity, and equality. Herein, this study demonstrates how environmental activism has been

transforming the daily life and how the new subjectivities have been emerging out of the ongoing prefigurative practices.

The central argument of this thesis is that environmental movements in contemporary Turkey show the characteristics of anti-neoliberal movements in three respects. First, they share a common organizational structure. These movements adopt leaderless, horizontal organizations, and participatory decision-making processes. Second, environmental movements represent powerful opposition against the neoliberal agenda of the commodification of commons and especially of nature and ecosystem. Third, environmental movements show the characteristics of prefigurative politics through here and now practices, developing new relations, the transformation of the activists, and everyday life. Therefore, this study argues that environmental movements can be regarded as a part of global anti-neoliberal movements due to their specific characteristics, such as opposing the commodification of commons, having an organizational structure based on leaderless and grassroots democracy, and affirming prefigurative/transformational politics.

This study, in this respect, aims to understand and explain the social basis, organizational characteristics, main motivations and action patterns of environmental movements on the one hand, and emerging forms of the new political and social agency representing a significant opposition against neoliberal politics on the other. The opposition does not mean only reactive practices and discourses against neoliberal politics. It also implies a new mode of performing the political because, as Ertuğrul (2016, p. 263) states, the political is not ontologically given and cannot be limited with the state or public space. Although environmental activists define their activism as “above politics” I want to track a new mode of politics, different from institutional or convention politics, performed by environmental activists. A new way of doing, a new way of relating to others, a new way of acting within the mobilization shows the prospects for a new doing of politics. These new practices tend to remake and recreate new subjectivities and push the limits of existing power relations. Against the existing

hegemonic discourse of neoliberalism, this alternative politics also represents a new claim for truth. This discourse is materialized for example in the motto of both Cerattepe struggle and other anti-mining struggles “*Yerin üstü altından daha değerlidir*”, which has two meanings in Turkish; “the above ground is more precious than the below” and “the above ground is more precious than the gold”, emphasizing the instinct value of nature instead of its exchange value. All these potentials of environmental activism bring us to the question of Dardot and Laval “whether or not there are still social forces, alternative models, modes of organization, or critical concepts that offer some hope for a life beyond capitalism” (Dardot & Laval, 2019, p. 1). In this respect, this study searches for an alternative mode of politics that offers hope for a life beyond capitalism.

1.1. Rationale of the Research

Neoliberalism is widely known for its crisis-driven tendencies. Far from being limited to the economic sphere, the outcome of this tendency can be observed in the political and social spheres as well. The ecological crisis is no exception to such harm caused by neoliberalism. Therefore, there is a close connection between neoliberalism and environmental policies. Neoliberalism goes hand in hand with the enclosure of commons, including ecological commons such as land, water, and forests. As commons are enclosed, privatized, and reduced to a marketable product by the neoliberal logic and capital needs commons to deal with and resolve its crisis, commons have become a crucial terrain of antagonism. Many grassroots movements have emerged to defend the commons against capital’s destruction and to produce new terrains of social relations and social reproduction (Angelis & Harvie, 2014). In the different parts of the world, from the Global South to Western Europe, people stand against the neoliberal destructions of nature and rise to protect their nature and living spaces; people are united around the aim of protecting living spaces in an ecologically encompassing way against the rent-seeking policies of neoliberalism. This study argues that environmental movements defending nature and commons against privatization

and commodification represent one of the most powerful resistances to the neoliberal project.

Many different ecological movements have been rising in contemporary Turkey that oppose the enclosure of commons and extensive environmental degradation. These resistances are booming against ecologically destructive projects of the government, such as dams, hydroelectric power plants, mines, thermal power plants, and nuclear power plants. These projects are not unique to the Justice and Development Party (AKP) governments; however, especially after AKP came to power, ecological devastation through mega projects, infrastructure projects, investment in energy and construction has intensified. Especially during AKP governments, privatization and commodification of living spaces have been a tool to overcome the economic crises. The promise of economic growth based on energy, construction, and infrastructure projects has become the motto of AKP. Moreover, the number of HES constructions has increased as a result of the legal amendments in 2003 that enabled private enterprises to use rivers for energy production. Similarly, many new business licenses have been given for coal mines, especially after the legal amendments in 2004 that facilitated getting the licenses of coal mines for firms. Day by day, urgent expropriation of agricultural lands and commons has been carried out for investments in energy, tourism, and mining sectors in favor of capital owners. All this process, including the project such as Third Airport in İstanbul, hydroelectric power plants, Third Bridge, Green Road, and nuclear power plants, have enormous ecological consequences.

AKP came to power through both long and short-term political and economic crises caused by the neoliberal transformation process in the country. It reproduces repressive and authoritarian state apparatus through the conservative Islamist model (Bedirhanoğlu, 2009). As argued by Tombuş, under the rule of AKP, Turkey has become a country “where fundamental rights and liberties are regularly and systematically violated, political rights are severely restricted, criticism and dissent are considered a crime, and the law is perverted into a tool of oppression entirely detached from the idea of justice” (Tombuş, 2018). As Buğra and

Savaşkan state, during AKP governments, certain segments of the business have prioritized. The government has changed laws for influencing economic relations, and it is at the centre of huge patronage and particularistic relationships. Public procurements are used as the most effective means to create a paternalistic relationship. For example, Public Procurement Law was amended 29 times between 2003 and 2013, and public procurements become the centre-ground of government- business people relationship. Flexibilization of the legal framework which regulates public procurements enables new and non-institutionalized companies to become advantageous in contracts and excludes international companies from this process. In this respect, legal amendments lead small companies to remain ahead of the game in procurements (Buğra & Savaşkan, 2015).

Debate on public procurements is important for this study to the extent that both “mega” projects and ecologically destructive different scale projects are carried out by certain firms. These firms, especially Cengiz Construction, Limak Group, Kolin Group, become important economic actors during AKP governments, and they have been rewarded through public procurements. For example, Cengiz Holding, the mining company in Cerattepe in Artvin, won tenders of many projects such as Ilisu Dam, Yusufeli HES, 3. The airport in İstanbul- with Kolin and Limak Group-, Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant in Mersin. Many hydroelectric power plants (HES), dam and thermal power stations have built by Kolin Group. By the privatization of electricity distribution, Kolin, Limak and Cengiz have become electricity distribution companies. Kolin Group is also responsible for uprooting thousands of olive trees in Yırca village to establish thermal power station. Therefore, the close relationship between the government and private companies is one of the outstanding characteristics of economic relations during AKP governments.

As Akbulut argues, AKP has shown a historically strong commitment to modernization via economic growth and adopted an aggressive neoliberal agenda in implementing it. Regarded as a miracle and praised for its successful realization

of neoliberalism with a Muslim face, Turkey achieved high-growth rates in this period. However, this miracle had a visibly spatial twist: the capitalization of the natural environment, privatization of the realms that had been under public ownership, and the expropriation and redistribution of property through “legal” means have accelerated in the last decade. Monumental projects, such as a third bridge on the Bosphorous, a third airport to be built in Istanbul’s northern forests and a canal to connect Marmara to the Black Sea have served as symbols of progress and welfare, and evidence that the state is working hard for its people. In contrast, their socio-economic consequences have been ignored (Akbulut, 2014: 229). The idea of modernization via economic growth has been worked and reworked to form an indispensable basis of the spatial politics of the AKP. To this end, it has successfully conducted and supported the construction projects of highways, power plants, skyscrapers which served to materialize the ideal of modernization in the most effective way (Akbulut, 2014: 230). These projects go along with massive uprisings, as was the case in Gezi, that unite people against top-down, authoritarian and neoliberal policies of the government, and also pave the way for the uprisings of local people in different localities such as in Ida Mountain to protect the forests and water resources, in Soma to protect their trees, in Rize against green roads, in different parts of the Black sea against HESs, thermal power plants and stone pits in Thrace region.

1.2. The Rationality of the Field Research

As the inertia prevails almost all oppositional movements due to heavy political oppression of the government, environmental movements have mushroomed in different localities to protect the living spaces, livelihood, water, water resources and forests in Turkey. Surprisingly, they also find themselves a space to manoeuvre even in the localities that AKP gets high vote rates. This is the reason why I looked at environmental movements to understand a new mode of politics and opposition against neoliberal politics in the Turkish case. In other words, I aimed to examine environmental movements because they have continued to sustain and emerge in different parts of the country as grassroots movements

despite the authoritarian policies of the government. Sometimes these local movements unite and extend their local characteristics. They bear the potential to become a space for opposing the government's policies that plunder the urban and ecological commons for the interests of private companies. Contemporary environmental movements, in this respect, enable me to recognize "anti-neoliberal/ anti-capitalist stance" materialized in defence of commons against neoliberal destruction of the commons.

Most of the environmental mobilizations in Turkey are short-lived. People can rise against environmentally destructive projects in their localities; however, they are mostly absorbed when the project is withdrawn, or they fail. I chose İstanbul and Artvin cases because they are long-running movements with mass support. And therefore, they are more suitable to find the answers to my research questions.

One of my fieldwork is on the urban-based and network-like environmental networks in İstanbul. Istanbul is a striking case in terms of being the main focus of the government's interventions that have intensified the neoliberal urbanization under the name of mega projects, not only limited with Third Bridge, Third Airport and Canal İstanbul but also including construction, infrastructure, transportation and urban transformation projects. Especially after Gezi, many grassroots movements have emerged to defend the city against megaprojects of the government and small-scale projects that commercialized the parks, coasts, forests and other urban commons in the city.

Northern Forests Defence (KOS) is at the centre of the analysis of environmental networks in Istanbul because it is one of the successor movements of the Gezi protests that has continued so far, coming together in weekly forums in every Friday. Moreover, it is one of the key movements having connections with different movements in Istanbul, in different parts of Turkey and the world. It is a constituent of Ecology Union (*Ekoloji Birliği*), the platform for uniting various environmental movements in Turkey on a national scale, and it is currently the leading actor against the campaign Canal İstanbul, Either Canal or İstanbul (*Ya*

Kanal Ya İstanbul). It has engaged in long-standing demonstrations and activities against ecologically destructive projects including not only mega projects but also many different-scale projects, such as thermal power plants in different locations in Istanbul such as Silivri and Çerkezköy, nuclear power plant in İğneada in Kırklareli, dams, wind power plants, quarries, and destruction of forests in Thrace region. KOS is regarded as “the child of Gezi” not only because of the shared spirit, strategies and motivations, but also it emerged out of the park forum-Abbasaga- after Gezi.

However, interviewing only with KOS activists would have limitations in understanding the environmental network in İstanbul. Therefore, I interviewed with the activists from different movements that can be regarded as a part of this network, namely Validebağ Defence, Validebağ Volunteers, Children of Nature, Ihlamur Park Solidarity, Haliç Solidarity, Earth Association, Freedom to Earth Association, The Right to Water Company.

During the fieldwork in İstanbul, I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 25 activists between January and June 2017, and I participated in weekly forums of KOS that took place every Friday. I also took part in the demonstrations of environmental movements including the one in Maçka Parkı where they declared they would vote no to presidency system under the slogan “Life defenders says no¹”. I interviewed with 17 activists from KOS and 8 activists from different environmental movements.

Another case of this study is the anti-mining struggle in Artvin, the city in the northeast part of Turkey. I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 27 activists from June 2017 to September 2017 and participated in their meetings, forums, demonstrations and press releases during my fieldwork. This struggle started more than twenty-five years ago after a Canadian mining company attempted to construct a mine near the city centre, called Cerattepe. Since then, it

¹ <http://sendika62.org/2017/02/yasam-savunuculari-dogaya-kentlere-yasama-baskan-mi-olur-hayir-405182/>

has become the longest-running environmental movement in Turkey with ups and downs. This movement has achieved an extensive mobilization of the local population comprising a cross-section from different ages, gender, class and political opinions to defend the local ecosystem, which is part of the wider Black Sea and Caucasus ecosystem, against the government-supported mining project in Cerrattepe. The struggle has seen the most dynamic phase in terms of the extensive mobilization of local people against the attempts of a Turkish mining company, Cengiz Company, to open a mine, in collaboration with the ruling party, in 2015. To prevent the mining company from reaching the mining site in the city, 245-days watch started by collective participation of local people, NGOs, unions, political parties and other associations in the city. This long-lasting watch is a unique case in the Turkish context.

1.3. Contributions

Searching for a “life beyond capitalism” is one of the considerable contributions of this thesis. Whereas neoliberalism suggests “there is no alternative”, this study aims to show alternative ways of doings, relations and politics, performed by environmental movements against contemporary neoliberalism. One of the most promising aspects of studying environmental activism is to understand the different kinds of activisms, such as trade union and leftist movements, feminist and LGBTI+ movements and discover their potential to create cracks and ruptures within neoliberal authoritarian regimes. Although this study focuses on environmental movements, the interferences and theoretical framework of the thesis can be helpful to understand different modes of activism both on national and international scales.

As the governments pursue neoliberal and authoritarian policies in different parts of the world, this study aims to understand alternative politics performed by oppositional movements through examining environmental activism in the turbulent times. The resistances against the environmental devastations of neoliberalism are not unique to Turkey. This study, therefore, provides insights

into the connections between the widespread rise of neoliberalism, environmental activism and contentious politics both in Turkey and in different parts of the world through combining local, national and international scales.

The empirical dimension of this thesis is based on the fieldwork in İstanbul and Artvin as two different cases. One field research is on the urban-based and network-like environmental movement in İstanbul, acting on a macro scale, having a different network. In contrast, the second case is the Cerattepe resistance, a long-lasting struggle, that preferred to remain local and achieved wide mobilization of the local population against the government-supported mining projects in Artvin. There are studies examining small-scale movements such as anti-mining struggles, struggles against hydroelectric power plants on the one hand and urban-based, larger-scale environmental movements on the other; but no significant studies are examining these different scale environmental movements together in the Turkish case. Through examining different scale environmental movements from a comprehensive and comparative perspective, this study fills an important gap in the literature on environmental studies and political ecology studies in Turkey.

Prefigurative politics occupies a central place in this study. It refers to a new mode of politics by focusing on “becoming” in terms of how activists challenge the existing hierarchies within the movements, how they put the values such as equality, solidarity, democracy and cooperation into practice and how mobilization changes people’s own lives and ongoing everyday life. Concerning the conceptualization of prefigurative politics, this study aims to understand new subjectivities emerging through mobilization and new forms of social relations based on cooperation and solidarity. This study also deals with how activism changes people’s lives, their political views and their everyday life. This discussion makes an important contribution to the literature on prefigurate politics.

Concerning this, another original contribution of this study to the existing literature is the examination of prefigurative politics from the perspective of

grassroots movements. While prefigurative politics is commonly discussed regarding mass social movements, this study discusses whether the characteristics of prefigurative politics can be detected in the local movements, especially concerning the anti-mining struggle in Artvin, a local grassroots movement. Examining Artvin case in terms of the characteristics of prefigurative politics would also contribute to the social movement literature because no significant studies are working on prefigurative politics concerning local cases. Thanks to this debate, presenting the commonalities between local environmental movements and global/ macro-social movements is also supposed to contribute to the existing literature on prefigurative politics.

As the anti-mining movement in Artvin shows the characteristics of prefigurative politics, both anti-mining movement in Artvin, KOS and global movements are united around the prefigurative politics. When we think social movements on local, national and global scales, local movements are usually associated with being unique and distinct. In contrast, the global movements are believed to have the capacity for exceeding the limitations of local movements. However, the findings of this study challenge the dichotomy between movements on local, national and global scales since the characteristics of global movements can be found in local movements as well. In this respect, this study contributes to the existing literature by showing that grassroots movements can represent alternative characteristics of global movements against neoliberal politics. This study shows that through changing social relations by creating solidarity, friendship and cooperation against commodified relations of capitalism, these kinds of local grassroots movements play an important role in struggling against capitalism. By challenging the dichotomy between the movements at different scales (i.e. local, national and global), it contributes to the slogan of climate movements: “think globally, act locally”.

This study also examines the relationship between the Gezi movement and current environmental movements in terms of similarities and differences based on my field research. Gezi, also exhibiting strong characteristics of prefigurative politics,

is regarded as the turning point for environmental struggles and social movements in the Turkish case. By discussing the similarities and differences between Gezi and my cases from the perspective of the activists, this debate is supposed to detect after-Gezi effects in contemporary Turkey.

1.4. Relevant Literature and Main Discussions

As this study aims to evaluate contemporary environmental movements within the context of anti-neoliberal movements, I examine the literature on anti-neoliberal social movements, developed especially after anti-austerity protests and Occupy movements. The literature on anti-neoliberal social movements is supposed to locate environmental movements in a broader perspective. The literature on the environmentalism of the rich, environmentalism of the poor, community-based environmental movements and global environmental justice movements are used to understand environmental movements in Turkey, in dialogue with different environmental activism in the world.

To evaluate the contemporary environmental movements in Turkey as a part of the anti-neoliberal social movements and environmental movements in different parts of the world, I follow specific themes in the thesis. In this respect, I follow two main paths in this study. One of them is about main discussions of the social movement literature; who, how, why participate in the social movements? From the classical social movement literature to the contemporary one, the socio-demographic profile of protesters/participants, their reasons/motivations for mobilization and their ways of acting are put into question. Following this path, this thesis aims to understand the social basis, protest repertoire and motivations of the actors as a contribution to the primary debate in social movement literature. Besides, this study tries to understand the organizational structure of the movements and connections of the movements with other struggles. When I asked the motivation of the activists, their answers provided rich data. Before the field research, I assumed that environmental movements oppose neoliberal politics through defending commons. During the field research, this assumption was

approved. The discourse “we don’t want our nature to be plundered for the sake of private companies/ the profit of private companies” was the common rhetoric among activists when they expressed their motivation. Protection of the commons, nature, living space, the city is one of the underlying motivations of the actors. This supports my assumption that while neoliberalism leads to ecological destructions by plundering ecological and urban commons through privatization and enclosure, environmental movements rise to defend the nature, forests, lands, waters, squares, that belong to the everyone and they represent powerful opposition against the commodification of commons. These policies of plundering, privatizing, enclosing and commodifying are mostly conducted via state-government- private companies’ partnership. Therefore, environmental movements represent a powerful opposition against this form of neoliberal politics. On this ground, I argue that it is possible to approach environmental movements within the theoretical framework of anti-neoliberal movements.

On the other hand, the second path that I follow in my study is the reflections of prefigurative politics in Artvin and İstanbul cases. One of the purposes of this study is to explore prefigurative politics in environmental movements through examining environmental struggles as a potential space for new mode activism based on the self-transformation of the protesters toward inventing new subjectivities. For this purpose, the question of how the activism/ mobilization produces and reproduces new kinds of subjectivities, new kinds of relations, and new kinds of doing is addressed to understand this new mode of politics performed by environmental movements. Besides, it is intended to understand how activists put their vision and their values into practices; in other words, I ask what are “here and now practices”? What kinds of new relationships emerge among the activists? How does the daily life of activists change through mobilization?

1.4.1. Gezi Movement: The Relevance to Contemporary Environmental Movements

I asked my participants how they see Gezi, a unique example of prefigurative politics in Turkey, and whether they see similarities and differences between Gezi and their activism. Gezi occupies an important place in the history of social movements in Turkey. It is not an exaggeration to argue that Gezi resistance is the turning point for the environmental movements in Turkey. As a ‘occupy style’ peaceful resistance against the destruction of urban commons, the resistance, early on, was organized against urbanism that puts the interests of capital over the interests of ordinary inhabitants of Istanbul (Kuymulu, 2013). In other words, the Gezi movement began as a spontaneous uprising against neoliberal urbanization in İstanbul. By the time, dislocation of the poor, attacks on lifestyles, increasing Islamization in public life and precarious work conditions are included by the movement (Ergenç, 2018, p. 220). Gezi movement turned into opposition to the authoritarian, neoliberal, conservative practices and discourses of the government not only in İstanbul Gezi Park but also in many different localities in Turkey.

According to Sitrin and Azzellini (Sitrin & Azzellini, 2014), occupation of Gezi Park in the heart of Istanbul is a response to the neoliberal privatization of the space—a response insisting that cities belong to the people and not to capital, as the case in many contemporary movements occupying public spaces especially in big cities. As Göle (2013) claims, the Gezi movement marked a new threshold for democracy. The movement created the actors and repertoire of action of its own and instigated a new social dynamic that challenged the established political norms. It was also a defence of commons against the privatization of public spaces. Defending a few trees in Istanbul’s Gezi Park led to a new critical consciousness. The Gezi occupation movement reflects resistance to the extreme urban development of the past ten years. In Turkey, capitalism has materialized mostly through the proliferation of malls; for citizens, the project of constructing a shopping mall in the middle of Gezi Park was an occupation of the public space by private capital. In this respect, the movement was protecting the common from

the commercialization by the state and the transformation of urban life as a way to generate income from rent (Göle, 2013). During the protests, Gezi Park became a space in which an alternative socio-economic order was manifested, and a different sense of community was constituted (Akbulut, 2014, p. 236). In this period, communal areas were established, such as common kitchens, libraries, and markets. As stated in one of the banners saying ‘don’t touch my home, forest, village, city and park’, Gezi was a remarkable defence of commons against the commodification of urban commons.

It is crucial to understand the relation between the Gezi uprising and current environmental movements. Erensü highlights that the source of inspiration of Gezi was ecological local resistances against the natural degradation, which became widespread since the 2000s. The protest repertoire, political language and legacy of ecological movements paved the path to the emergence of Gezi movements. It is also argued that the previous local environmental resistances inspired the civil disobedience in the Gezi movement. This is why Gezi is regarded as the continuation of local environmental resistances in terms of the organizational characteristics, tactics, strategies and motivations within the movement (Erensü, 2013). While the Gezi Park resistance drew inspiration from the previous ecology movements, it also provided inspiration for the later resistances. Many environmental movements, urban or rural, have increased after the Gezi resistance. Gezi became a common ground for social movements who had remained primarily isolated and disconnected from each other despite the close resonance between their struggles. It laid the political groundwork for rural and local environmental resistances and urban movements (Akbulut, 2014, pp. 237-238). The effect of Gezi has continued even after the violent suppression of the movement by police intervention. The local gatherings called “neighbourhood forums” are the remarkable after-effects of Gezi, continued even after the mass protests (Ergenç, 2018, p. 220). These forums, as a practice of commoning, are one of the most significant outcomes of the Gezi, where citizens experience direct and participatory democracy (Çelik & Ergenç, 2018). Because of its remarkable legacy, the discussion on the Gezi movement is incorporated into this thesis.

1.5. Research Questions

Lying at the intersection of neoliberalism, contentious politics and activism, this study aims to understand the opposition represented by environmental movements against neoliberal politics. The main research question of this study is “How do environmental activist groups perform politics in the face of neoliberalism?”. To elaborate on the main research question, the following sub-questions are explored: What kind of relationship exists between neoliberalism and nature? Who are the actors of these environmental movements opposing neoliberalism’s destructive relationship with nature? What are the action patterns, tactics and strategies of the movements? How do they make decisions? Is there a direct or indirect leadership in these movements? What are the motivations of the activists? How do activists define themselves? What are the connections of these movements with other movements? What are the commonalities between the environmental movements and anti-neoliberal movements? What are the transformative effects of environmental activism? How do the activists perceive Gezi?

1.6. Research Methodology

This thesis is predominantly based on field studies carried out in İstanbul and Artvin between January-September 2017. I combined in-depth and semi-structured interviews with participant observation. I conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews with 25 activists in İstanbul and 27 in Artvin. I also participated in their meetings, forums, demonstrations and press releases during my fieldwork.

Fieldwork is a “research-based on personal interaction with research subjects in their own setting” (Wood, 2007, p. 124). It takes place in the social environment of the researched, which the researcher does not control. It is also based on personal relationships that extend beyond formal encounters and the exchange of information (Malthaner, 2014). This study adopts a qualitative research method. This research method refers to “collecting soft data in the forms such as

impressions, words, sentences, rather than the data in the form of numbers” (Neuman, 2007, p. 85). Qualitative research method allowed me to develop a deep understanding of the activists’ experiences and perspectives and investigate the micro-dynamics of activism. As a part of the qualitative research method, I combined in-depth and semi-structured interview techniques with participant observation during my field research.

Thanks to the in-depth interviews and participant observation, I realized the transformative effects of environmental activism and the interconnection between everyday life and activism. The data gathered from the field research contributes to the theoretical framework of the thesis. Prefigurative politics occupies an essential place after observing the transformative effects of activism. During the fieldwork, I realized the transformative effects of environmental activism, the interconnection between everyday life and resistance, the transformation of the individuals and everyday life through mobilization. Field research based on interviews and participant observation contributes to observing how activism transforms people, their daily lives and political attitudes and everyday life. In this respect, this study is both inductive and deductive in terms of combining theoretical framework and findings of field study. The initial research questions and assumptions were derived from the theoretical framework. On the other hand, the data that I gathered from the field research led to shaping theoretical discussions of the thesis. During the fieldwork, I intended to link my findings of the field research with the relevant literature and to establish a dialogue between the theory and the field research.

When I finished my fieldwork, I analysed the data gathered from the field notes and in-depth interviews. I started by listening to the recorded interviews and reading all the transcripts and field notes. Then, I created codes based on the data and the theoretical framework to use during the rest of my research process. I analysed my data by using a qualitative data analysis software program called NVivo.

1.6.1. In-Depth Interviews

According to Blee and Taylor (2002, p. 95), through interviews, researchers can gain insights into “the individual and collective visions, imaginings, hopes, expectations, critique of the present, and projection of the future on which the possibility of collective action rests and through which social movements form, endure or disband”. This was exactly the case for me. Their visions, imaginations, expectations, critiques, and projections of the future occupy an important place in my study, and the interviews helped me to understand these aspects. As argued by della Porta, qualitative in-depth interviews have been very often used in social movement studies to the extent that they both provide a way of overcoming the limited information contained in written sources and answer central questions on the micro-dynamics of alternative forms of political participation. In-depth interviews have been preferred by scholars who pay more attention to people’s interpretations of reality. In social movement studies, in-depth interviews have provided information on activists, their motives, beliefs, and attitudes, as well as the identities and emotions of movement activists (della Porta D. , 2014). Interviews, at that point, helped me to comprehend activists’ motives, beliefs, and attitudes and to avoid creating a hierarchical relationship between the researcher and the interviewee (Okely, 2007) .

During the field research in İstanbul and Artvin between January and September 2017, I conducted 52 interviews in total. I recorded all my interviews in İstanbul and some of my interviews in Artvin with the permission of the interviewees. When I interviewed older people in Artvin, I assumed that it would be inappropriate to ask for permission for the record to older people, so I preferred to take notes. The interviews lasted from one hour to three hours.

The development of a personal relationship and trust with the activists before the interviews contributed to my field research. When I first went to Istanbul for my field research, I did not know anybody from KOS. During that time, KOS posted about their weekly forums on a social media platform. I wrote to them whether

there is a weekly forum for the week that I was planning to participate. I introduced myself shortly and asked for permission to participate in this weekly forum. They replied to my message and welcomed me to their forums. When I participated in their forum, I introduced myself and my research. I asked for permission to participate in their forums. When the forum ended, I continued to chat with some of the participants for a few hours more. Some of them were undergraduate and graduate students; some of them were freelancer, lawyer and professionals. After two days, they organized a walk to Belgrad Forests, which was under the threat of a government project. I joined this walk and participated in the press releases about the project in Belgrad Forests. During these first times, I met with many people and had friendly conversations. After the walk, I sat at a café with my first interviewee and conducted my first interview. In my pilot interviews, I kept to the structure of my questions strictly and did not important elaborate points that the interviewee stated. After realizing this, I tried to be more open to what the interviewee said and elaborate on their crucial points for my study. Between January 2017 and June 2017, I commuted between Ankara and İstanbul because I was working as a research assistant at a university in Ankara. I sometimes stayed for one or two weeks in İstanbul, sometimes stayed three or four days to conduct interviews and participate in weekly forums of KOS. In time, we developed a friendly relationship before the interviews. Thank this relationship, both interviewees and I felt comfortable during the interviews. Most interviews in İstanbul were like friendly conversations.

To better understand the environmental networks in İstanbul, I also wanted to conduct interviews with the activists from other environmental grassroots movements. Meanwhile, in different parts of İstanbul, as an after-effect of Gezi, many grassroots networks emerged to protect their neighbourhoods, parks, coasts, and other urban commons. I also interviewed with 7 activists from different grassroots movements in İstanbul. My connection with KOS activists helped me to connect with these activists. KOS activists were also a part of neighbourhood solidarities and knew each other through common organizations and activities. So, KOS activists helped me to contact with these activists.

I conducted my second field research in Artvin between June and September 2017. I interviewed 27 activists during this field research. Because it was difficult to commute between Artvin and Ankara, I spent most of my summer in Artvin. I paid attention to conduct interviews with people of different ages, occupations and political views to represent the heterogenous social basis of the activists. Some of them were students, teachers, civil servants, artisans, farmer, beekeeper, and tradespeople. Although I didn't want to ask their political affiliation directly, I was told before who were the supporters of People's Republican Party (CHP), Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP), People's House (*Halkevleri*), Nationalist Action Party (MHP) and Felicity Party.

My field research in Artvin was much easier than I had expected. Before going to Artvin, I had participated in a collective meeting in Ankara, in which different activists from Turkey had introduced their organizations, and I met with the activists from the Cerattepe struggle. Before going to Artvin, I wrote to him, and he welcomed me. Because Artvin was a small city, I could meet many people in a short time, and I became friends with some of them. Although my first contacts were activists with left-wing tendencies, reaching and interviewing right-wing individuals was not difficult for me because one can find left- and right-wing individuals in the same family in Artvin. Thus, I could contact with right-wing activists through the help of my first contacts.

1.6.2. Participant Observation

Participant observation is another most commonly used qualitative research methods in social sciences. The term is used to describe the research method “when the researcher goes to the field and spends some time with the subjects, acts like one of them and engages in social interaction” (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Participant observation assumes the idea that “understanding social phenomena is situated somewhere between what people say and what people do—both meanings and actions/practices are important” (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014, p. 166). One of the contributions of participant observation in social movement studies is to “show

all the aspects that take place offstage, behind the scenes, before and after protest actions” (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014, p. 149). This allows researchers to see the tactics used, and also the debates around the adoption of tactics (Balsiger & Lambelet, 2014).

Participant observation was an essential part of my field research. During the field research, I participated in weekly forums of KOS during my stay in Istanbul. I participated in their walking tour in Belgrad Forests, and the demonstration organized by different urban and environmental movements in İstanbul named “Ecology movements say no to the presidency” in February 2017. In addition to political activities and events, I also participated in the social activities they organized.

During my stay in Artvin, I participated in many activities and events of Green Artvin Association (YAD). During my fieldwork, I participated in press releases of YAD and participated in Kafkasör festival. This festival is a traditional festival organized every year by the participation of people from close villages and cities. In this festival, YAD organized a protest and carried a banner saying “We don’t give up Cerattepe”. I could observe how they held and what kinds of reactions they took. Also, I shared everyday life with the activists, which help me to understand the dynamics of the city and the mobilization, which I had no familiarity before. I had never been to Artvin before my fieldwork. Thanks to my participation in daily life, I could understand the culture and political history of the city and the family networks in it. Most people told their stories about police intervention in Cerattepe in 2015. When I participated in the press releases of YAD, I could observe the limitations of activism during the state of emergency rule. For example, during my stay in Artvin, YAD wanted to issue a press release. Until the last day, it was not certain whether the Artvin governor would permit the press release or not. I also observed the active role of women in organizing these events thank the participant observation.

As the literature on prefigurative politics shows, one of the promises of mobilization is its potential to transform ordinary citizens into activists and change their views and everyday life. In addition to the interviews, participant observations helped to realize the transformative effects of the mobilization. For example, in Artvin, I went to a small village, and we were wandering around the forests. At this point, one of the mining trucks passed by and I saw how people felt angry when they saw this truck. In another small village of Artvin, I had a chance to listen to the stories of women about nature, which made me think about the connection between women and nature. During daily conversations, I observed how they reacted negatively to the people working for the mining company. In İstanbul, thanks to participant observation, I realized the connections of KOS activists with other movements and how these networks were interconnected with each other. Thanks to my participation in weekly forums of KOS, I observed their decision-making process and their practices of participatory democracy. In short, participant observation helped me follow the process of activism, the daily life of the activists and interconnection between activism and everyday life.

1.6.3. Positionality During Field Research

The positionality of the researcher has a significant impact on the research process, as debated by many scholars (Harding, 1987; Haraway, 1988; Al-Ali & Pratt, 2006). As reminded by Al-Ali & Pratt, for the fieldwork, the researcher must be aware of his/her “subject position” and how this position affects relationships between the researcher and the interviewee. In their words, “the researcher is by no means, an ‘objective observer’, the gender, class, religion, sexuality, political orientation, nationality, ethnicity, age and geographical location of the researcher, among other factors, may have an impact on the research process” (Al-Ali & Pratt, 2006, p. 2).

In this respect, I was aware of my subjective positionality. For example, being a young woman researcher shaped by interactions with my participants. I believe that being a woman made it easy for me to communicate with older women in

Artvin because I went to their homes with the invitations of younger female participants. I avoid objectifying or orienting the participants and their activism. I followed the critique of positivism that assumes being objective and value-free in social science is not impossible, since we all carry experiences and values that shape our vision and interpretations (Wolf, 1996, p. 4)

During the field research, I sometimes found myself to ask whether I conduct fieldwork as an insider or an outsider. During the fieldwork, I preferred to stay on the researcher side. I did not act as an activist during my field research, although I participated in their activities. Herein, I didn't adopt activists research method; I was as an outsider. However, as I participated in their activities and shared everyday life with the activists, I sometimes felt like an insider. In this respect, from time to time, I felt both outsider and insider. Rejecting insider-outsider dichotomy helps me to explain my positionality during the field research, in this respect. As an attempt of feminist revisiting of the insider/outsider debate, Naples (2003, p. 49) stresses the fluidity of these positions as:

The insider/outsider distinction masks power differentials and experiential differences between the researcher and the researched. The bipolar construction of insider/outsider also sets up a false separation that neglects the interactive processes through which "insiderness" and "outsiderness" are constructed. Outsiderness and insiderness are not fixed or static positions. Rather, they are ever-shifting and permeable social locations that are differentially experienced and expressed by community members.

As Mullings (1999, p. 340) argues, since positionalities are always dynamic "no individual can consistently remain an insider and few ever remain complete outsiders". I was an outsider because I was there as a researcher and did not have any previous environmental activist experience; I was an insider as a participant-observer. This was sometimes challenging for me. For example, when once I was participating in a forum of KOS, they asked me to share my notes that I took during the meeting and I told them that I took notes for my research and could not share them with anyone else. Another time, KOS activists asked me to participate in the meeting of Ecology Union on behalf of them.

During the field research, I avoided asymmetrical power relations with the participants. For this purpose, I tried to build friendly relationships with my interviewees. Wolf referred to “‘friendship-like’ rapport” of the researcher to overcome the power relationship with the researcher and researched. She argues that “attempts to create friendship-like rapport includes having the researcher talk about herself, having the researched ask questions of the researcher or take the lead, and having more of a dialogic interaction rather than a force, unnatural, and formal question and response format” (Wolf, 1996, p. 20). During the fieldwork, I utilized this approach. During the fieldwork in KOS, I developed friendships with KOS activists. After the forums, they went out, and I participated; I had a chance to explain my research in an informal environment and to observe their relationship with each other. During the field research in Artvin, I had become friends with the activists, went to their homes and shared time with them. These enabled me to create a more equal relationship with the activists and overcome the dichotomy between insider or outsider.

1.6.4. Research Ethics

The codes of ethics in qualitative research require that the researcher has the consent of the participants, answer their questions honestly, avoid harming them and should by no means invade their privacy (Flick, 2006, p. 46). During the fieldwork, I tried to be open to my interviewees, avoid any harms to them, and protect their privacy. Especially during the state of emergency, conducting field research required being very sensitive about ethical issues. I always made my identity and purpose clear to the interviewees. I never hid any information, and I replied to their questions honestly. In order not to direct the interviewees, I just avoided using the word “neoliberalism” when they asked about the subject of my research. I presented myself to participants, informed them about my study and obtained informed consent, which Malthaner sees as the basic ethical requirements in social science research (Malthaner, 2014, p. 186). I didn’t use any written document for obtaining consent. I asked for verbal consent from all interviewees.

Before the interviews, I always requested consent from the interviewees to use an encrypted voice recorder.

To avoid any harm to my informants, I do not reveal their names in the thesis, except the name of the president of YAD, Neşe Karahan. I used her real name with her consent because she is a public figure and talked to me in her capacity as president of YAD. Except for her name, all the names in this thesis are anonymized. I have been cautious in not giving too much information, which could have revealed the identity of the participants. As Malthaner states for the field research in the context of violent conflict and authoritarian regimes;

Field relations are in various ways shaped by ongoing violent conflict or state repression because these can create extreme social polarization, and suspicion, as well as tangible personal risks and costs. In particular, respondents who are associated with oppositional movements or give information about sensitive topics may face reprisals from state security services or political opponents, which may require the researcher to undertake quite extreme measures to protect his or her identity and to secure notes from falling into the wrong hands (Malthaner, 2014, p. 175).

I followed Malthaner's suggestion for field research in the authoritarian context. Both KOS and Cerattepe are peaceful democratic oppositions; however, I conducted field research during the state of emergency. Every kind of opposition was criminalized and oppressed during the state of emergency. Especially many Cerattepe activists were on trial at that time. So, I feel mainly responsible for protecting the security and confidentiality of my interviewees.

1.7. Organization of the Dissertation

This thesis is composed of eight chapters. Following this introduction, Chapter 2 provides insights into the theoretical framework of this study. This thesis argues for the presence of interconnected relationships between neoliberalism, commons and nature. At the beginning of the chapter, this relationship is elaborated. Because this study aims to examine contemporary environmental movements within the framework of global waves of anti-neoliberal social movements, this

literature opens a window into anti-neoliberal social movements. Prefigurative politics that lies at the intersection of environmental politics and anti-neoliberal social movements is discussed in detail because the environmental politics assume to show the prefigurative characteristics through here and now practices, creating new subjectivities, and a new way of relations based on solidarity and cooperation. Then, the literature on environmental movements is introduced. In that, four forms have been identified; the environmentalism as a defence of post-materialist values, environmentalism of the poor/Third World environmentalism, community-based environmental movements and global justice environmental movements. The theoretical framework developed here aims to contribute to the examination of the anti-mining movement in Artvin and the urban-based and network-like movement, KOS, in İstanbul in a broader perspective.

The empirical dimension of this thesis is based on field research, whose results are discussed in Chapters 3-6. Chapter 3-4 is based on the data from the field research in Artvin. Chapter 3 starts with the history of mining and mobilization in Artvin. Then, the social basis, protest repertoire, organizational characteristics, connections with the other movements and motivations of the actors are analysed. The discussion on the motivation of the actors provides insightful information on the anti-neoliberal stance of the activists in their defence of the nature against profit-making of the private company.

Chapter 4 discusses the prefigurative politics in the anti-mining struggle in Artvin. While prefigurative politics is commonly discussed concerning massive social movements, this study aims to understand whether the characteristics of prefigurative politics can be found in the case of Cerattepe struggle. This chapter looks at how anti-mining mobilization has changed local activists, everyday life and broader social relations in Artvin. Also, it demonstrates how Gezi resistance, as a part of the movements associated with prefigurative politics, is perceived by the actors of anti-mining movements and how they associate with or differentiate their struggle from the Gezi movement. This debate aims to contribute to exploring the relationship of grassroots movements with the Gezi movement in its aftermath.

Moreover, examining Gezi movement from the perspective of the activists would contribute to understanding the differences and similarities between local movements such as the case in Artvin and large-scale occupy movements like Gezi. This is especially important in Cerattepe case as the activists prefer to stay on a local scale instead of creating international networks.

Chapters 5-6 provide the analysis of my field research in İstanbul. Chapter 5 introduces mega projects and their effects in İstanbul such as 3rd Bridge, 3rd Airport and Canal İstanbul, keeping in mind that ecologically destructive projects are not limited to mega projects in İstanbul. It is argued that Gezi has provided the basis for creating such kinds of networks. Just after the Gezi movement, various organizations and movements that share similar values and motivations, mostly named as solidarity or defence have boomed. This chapter looks at the environmental networks constituted around the opposition against ecologically destructive projects in İstanbul.

Chapter 6 focuses on KOS, the movement at the centre of the environmental networks in İstanbul. It analyses the social basis, organizational characteristics, protest repertoire of KOS, and motivations of the actors and discusses the prefigurative politics in the case of KOS. Since the Gezi movement is associated with prefigurative politics and it has remarkable effects on the successor ecology movements, the assessment of Gezi from the viewpoints of activists and reflections of Gezi on KOS are also examined.

After introducing and discussing the findings of field research in Artvin and İstanbul, Chapter 7 aims to make a critical assessment of the discussion in the previous chapters with respect to the theoretical framework of the thesis. This chapter discusses two field researches together, as examples of a community-based environmental movement and an urban-based network-like environmental movement within the theoretical framework of this study. One of the aims of this study is to contribute to the study of different scale environmental grassroots movements in a comprehensive and comparative perspective. In addition to

discussing these two cases together with their similarities and divergences, these movements are contextualized within the broader literature of anti-neoliberal social movements.

Chapter 8 gathers the main conclusions of the thesis and makes recommendations for future studies.

CHAPTER 2

ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE GLOBAL WAVES OF ANTI- NEOLIBERAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

This chapter explains the theoretical framework of this thesis. This study argues that neoliberalism leads to ecological destructions by plundering ecological and urban commons through privatisation, commodification and enclosure. At the same time, this process is countered with resistances rising up, across the globe, to defend the nature, forests, lands, waters, squares. It is argued that these types of resistances show the common characteristics with anti-neoliberal social movements and share prefigurative characteristics. In this respect, this study aims to focus on the literature on anti-neoliberal social movements to put environmental movements in a broader perspective and focus on the literature on environmental movements as a part of a global uprising against neoliberal politics. In a nutshell, this chapter attempts to open a window into the theoretical framework on environmental movements as a part of global uprising waves against neoliberal politics.

Three distinct characteristics of environmental movements are crucial for this study that enables us to think these types of movements within the framework of global anti-neoliberal waves; first, horizontal, grassroots and leaderless organisational structure; second, representing opposition against the commodification of commons that goes along with state-government- private companies' partnership; third, prefiguration in terms of affirmative actions through creating new subjectivities and "here and now" practices. Because the politics of resistance and transformative politics in environmental movements is the primary concern of this study, the theoretical framework on prefigurative

politics is studied as it contributes to our understanding of the transformative effects of the movements.

In the first section, I will discuss the relationship between the neoliberalism, ecology and commons. This thesis assumes that environmental movements bear the potential to oppose neoliberal policies, which is the trigger of ecological destruction through privatisation and plundering natural resources. Therefore, after a short introduction to neoliberalism, it is inevitable to discuss how the neoliberalism and neoliberal policies affect the environmental and natural commons in contemporary capitalism. The literature covering anti-neoliberal social movements/new social movements and prefigurative politics will also be introduced as a theoretical framework on environmental movements. Later on, this study will categorise the environmental movements in four sub-sections; environmentalism as a defence of post-material values, the environmentalism of the poor/ the Third World environmentalism, the community-based environmental movements and the global environmental justice movements.

2.1. Neoliberalism, Ecology and Commons

Neoliberalism is a “theory of political economic practices” depended upon a reconstitution of state powers through privatization, finance, and market processes (2007, p.22). It is a “contemporary form of capitalism” which is based on the “systematic use of state power to impose, under the veil of 'non-intervention', a hegemonic project of recomposition of the rule of capital in most areas of social life” (Filho & Yalman, 2010, p. 1). This project emerged gradually after the partial disintegration of post-war Keynesianism and developmentalism in the 1970s and 1980s, and it has led to the reconstitution of economic and social relations in those countries where neoliberalism has been imposed (Filho & Yalman, 2010, p. 1). Neoliberal policies aim at the integration of the country's economies with the world market based on financial and commercial liberalisation to eliminate any obstacles to capital accumulation. These policies restructure the legal and political structures of the countries accordingly (Bedirhanoglu, 2009, p. 4). In contrary to

the welfare state, the state withdrew from social services; however, state power has not been decreased. Instead, it has been rearranged in the period of global neoliberalism (Harvey, 2007). As Harvey (2005, p. 117) stresses, “neoliberalism cannot function without a strong state,”, which reflects “the interests of private property owners, businesses, multinational corporations, and financial capital”. Under the veil of non-intervention, neoliberalism involves extensive and invasive interventions in every area of social life. It imposes a specific form of social and economic regulation based on the prominence of finance, international elite integration, the subordination of the poor and universal compliance with dominant international interests (Filho & Johnston, 2005).

There is a close connection between neoliberalism and environmental policies. Last decades of neoliberalism can be evaluated as a wave of enclosure and dispossession process of nature and commons. The enclosure and commodification of nature, natural resources and commons have significantly increased in the neoliberal era and the attacks on nature and environmental commons have accelerated especially in the times of crisis of neoliberalism. Last decades have witnessed neoliberal destructions of urban and ecological commons on the one hand, and grassroots local and massive uprisings against commodification, enclosure and privatisation of commons on the other hand.

Environmental activism at the grassroots level has increased in contemporary times. In the different parts of the world, people stand against the neoliberal destructions of nature and rise to protect their nature and living spaces. In different parts of the world, from Global South to Africa, stand against the rent-seeking policies and government and private companies’ collaboration which is mostly associated with neoliberalism.

The plunder of nature and “living space” for interests of the private company with the collaboration of the state has become outstanding characteristics of neoliberalism. In this respect, the rapid ecological degradation, that goes hand in hand with state- capital partnership, is an inherent part of the historically specific

accumulation process that defines the capitalist society (Foster, 2002, p. 104); in other words, the commodification and privatisation of nature and natural resources is an integral part of the recent capitalism (Harvey, 2004; Werlhof, 2007; Castree, 2010). The recent theory on neoliberalism emphasises “privatisation of nature to maximise the interest of capital through accumulation by dispossession” (Harvey, 2005). Because neoliberalism recognises nature only as a resource that must be exploited (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 2001, p. 1117), and be transformed into commodity/ capital (Werlhof, 2007), neoliberalism involves enclosure, dispossession and commodification process of the nature, natural resources and commons.

Eco-Marxist and Eco-Socialist theory provide profound insights about the relationship between neoliberalism and ecology. According to these approaches, there is a close relationship between the exploitation of human labour and nature under neoliberal capitalism. Human labour has been commodified to produce surplus value as nature has been. Therefore, both human labour and nature are commodified and exploited under capitalism. Eco-Marxist and Eco-socialist scholars regard capitalism as the reason and trigger of ecological destructions and stress the surplus and growth logic of capitalism based on commodification and accumulation. From this perspective, ecological degradation is not merely inevitable: it is necessary to capitalism (Pepper, 1993). The capitalist accumulation model based on competitiveness, profit and growth is the underlying reason behind the destruction of nature; therefore, there is an internal relationship between the capitalist mode of production and ecological devastations. The capitalist regime of profitability, competitiveness and pressure for increased productivity makes capitalism incompatible with the ecology (Kovel, 2007). Especially in the times of neoliberal crisis, - state-private companies partnership attempts to exploit natural and ecological commons because nature is regarded as unlimited and costless for the capital extension. The commodification, privatisation and enclosure of urban and natural commons are regarded as a tool of overcoming accumulation crises in the neoliberal process (Salleh, 1991).

The capitalist mode of production assumes dominance over the environment in a way that the environment has been considered as providing conditions for economic activities (O'Connor, 1994, p. 63). In this respect, capitalisation of nature is inherent in the capitalist mode of production because nature is treated as reservoirs of capital, and treatable in the market place (O'Connor, 1994, p. 126). Moreover, motivated by unlimited resources, capitalism does not respect the limits of growth and ignores the intrinsic value of nature (Kovel, 2007). Prioritising exchange value over use value, capitalism ignores intrinsic value of nature. It treats the nature in terms of its exchange value as the commodity (Eberman & Trampert, 1988) and the nature in the capitalism is regarded as the commodity that can be sold and exchanged in the market. Marxist eco-feminists contribute to this debate by arguing that capitalism exploits not only the woman but also nature. They argue that the common experience of nature, labour and women is their exploitation by patriarchal capitalism (Salleh, 1991; Mellor, 1996; Werlhof, 2007; Mies, 2014).

Neoliberalism goes hand in hand with the enclosure of commons including ecological commons such as land, water and forests. Federici argues that according to the Marxist tradition, the starting point of capitalist society is the enclosure, the process that stanching the workers from any means of reproduction and compelled them to work for a wage (2019, p. 27). From the perspectives of different scholars, enclosure and privatisation of commons in contemporary neoliberalism are evaluated as the continuation of primitive accumulation process to the extent that the process of primitive accumulation has never ended but is accompanying capitalist accumulation. The enclosure of the commons has to continue for capital's growth or accumulation. The ongoing process of primitive accumulation that is seen as the basis of the emergence of capitalism has a new phase in neoliberal capitalism that goes along with an "accumulation by dispossession" defined as a re-enclosure/ new enclosure process of commons in neoliberal capitalism, a strategy employed when capital accumulation slows down (Harvey, 2004; Federici, 2010; Angelis & Harvie, 2014; Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 2001). Analysing the rise of neoliberalism in these terms, Harvey argues that accumulation by dispossession caused by enclosures of the commons

represents a strategy employed when capital accumulation slows down or is in crisis. Enclosing of the commons provokes accumulation by calling investment and providing cheap/ costless input supplies. Enclosure and commodification of commons go along with the dispossession process; namely dispossession of local people from their lands, agricultural estates and natural resources. (Harvey, 2005).

2.2. Social Movements between Old and New

The dynamics of collective behaviour and social movements have been studied by a variety of theorists and in various approaches. Early approaches on social movements are mainly inspired by vast upheavals and accompanied social transformations such as the French Revolution or the national independence uprisings and mostly question why individuals act collectively. “Deprivation” and “irrationality” are the main themes of the answer to this question. For example, Gustav Le Bon (1896), takes irrationality and destructive capacity of the ‘crowds’ as his main point of explanation. He tries to understand people’s psychological inclinations to prevent the threat of anarchy and destructive transformation (Bon, 1896, s. xv).

Against the assumption that regards collective action as a sum of irrational sentiments, the opposite argument puts rational cost-benefit calculations at the centre of collective behaviour. According to this approach, people act collectively according to their interest. The reason to be organised is that the organisation provides an inseparable, generalised benefit for its members (Olson, 1965). This approach assumes that individuals act rationally to maximise their interests and minimise their costs. In the Resource Mobilization Theory, it is argued that participation of people in collective behaviour is a consequence of rational calculation of the resources they have and rational consideration of their interests (McCarthy & Zald, 1977).

Especially after the student movement in 1968 and the emergence of feminist, environmental, peace and green movements, the concepts of “new” social

movements are developed to understand and explain the social opposition and participation processes that emerged after 1968 in Europe (Çırakman & Ertuğrul, 2009, p. 241). The new social movements theory emerged as a result of re-examination and re-evaluation of the Marxist theory (Çırakman & Ertuğrul, 2009, p. 242). The main differences between the older and new model of social explanation concern putting “cultural politics” at the centre of sociological analysis in the latter. The term of old social movement is generally used to describe labour movements and the interest-oriented movements, focusing on economic redistribution and economic demands, organised in bureaucratic trade unions and political parties (Nash, 2000, pp. 87-90).

In his work, Offe shows the main characteristics of “old” and “new” paradigms with respect to the difference between labour movements and new social movements. He suggests that the old paradigm was dominant through the post-World War era until the early seventies when issues of economic growth, distribution and security were important. In this period, “specialised, comprehensive and highly institutionalised interest organisations and political parties” were the dominant collective actors. Social and political conflicts were resolved by collective bargaining, party competition and representative government (Offe, 1985, p. 824). On the other hand, the new social movements challenge underlying assumptions of conventional reading of politics. The new movements challenge the dichotomy between private and public sphere. According to him, concerns of new social movements are “neither private nor public; in fact, these movements locate themselves in a third, intermediately category” (Offe, 1985, p. 826).

According to Nash, by the emergence of new social movements “struggle over meanings and construction of new identities and lifestyles” gains importance (Nash, 2000, p. 88). New social movements are oriented toward civil society rather than the state, organised in informal, loose and flexible ways, and they are in a relation with mass media (Nash, 2000, p. 88). The new politics that define new social movements are based on the anti-statism, participation, plurality, non-

violence, decentralisation and grassroots democracy (Çırakman & Ertuğrul, 2009, p. 242). The shift from class politics to this new mode of politics is called as “cultural turn” by Nash. Instead of focusing on relations between the state and civil society as a focus of political society, this cultural turn deals with the politics of social relationships, identities and social life itself (Nash, 2001). This approach focuses on the centrality of the civil society and cultural realm for the new forms of collective action. The literature on new social movements emphasised the centrality of non-class-based identities, culture and lifestyle at the centre of explanation of collective actions.

The literature on new social movements assumes that we are living in a phase where life-styles, culture, and identities constitute the terrain of the struggles. The new phase is called “post-industrial society”, which is based on “symbolic goods, language, information” (Touraine, 1985, p. 778). According to Touraine, in post-industrial societies, the distinction between personal and political sphere disappeared. This blurred distinction between personal and political sphere in post-industrial society leads to the emergence of social conflicts based on identities and lifestyle (1985, p. 778).

Melucci shares the common idea with Touraine that post-industrial society creates new conflicts in current society. His emphasis on the symbolic character of social movements is also significant to understand his approach towards social movements. He suggests that post-industrial societies are concerned with “signs”. The production and distribution of economic goods are even mediated symbolically by the channels of design, advertising and the media. As a result, new social movements are concerned with the struggle for accessing to information, instead of struggle over the material resources (Melucci, 1985). The actors of the new social movements are evaluated as a “new middle class” (Çırakman & Ertuğrul, 2009, p. 242). New social movements theory defines an “intermediate public sphere” as the terrain of the struggle. The function of this intermediate public space, as “a new political space”, is “to “make society hear

their messages and translate these messages into political decision making” (Melucci, 1985, p. 815).

The works of Tilly and Tarrow occupy an essential place for social movements studies. They evaluate social movements as a part of contentious politics. Social movements are one form of contentious politics. Still, they are not alone, contentious politics also includes revolutions, civil wars, riots, strike waves, rebellions, revolutions, civil wars, nationalist episodes, and ethnic strife, a wide variety of other struggles, covering from antislavery campaigns in the 1800s to “Orange Revolution” of Ukraine’ in 2002, whose common point is to draw governments into the action (2015, p. 9).

“Repertoire” in social movements studies was put forward by Tilly and developed through his works with Tarrow on contentious politics. Contentious repertoires/ repertoires of contention are “arrays of performances that are currently known and available within some set of political actors” (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015, p. 14); in other words, they are different ways to make collective claims on the object (Tilly, 2008, p. 14). The petition, demonstration, internet-based call to action and occupation of public spaces are current common forms of repertoires of contention (Tilly & Tarrow, 2015), while social movement repertoire includes an array of claim-making performances that activists usually employ such as “formation of special-purpose claim-making associations and coalitions, public meetings, petition drives, street demonstrations, vigils, rallies, public statements, and lobbying of political authorities” (Tilly, 2008, p. 122).

The term “repertoire” has its limitations as repertoire of contention introduces a set of tactics in any given period and place. However, what social movements promise is more than tactics and strategies adopted by the movement. Through participating in social movements, social relations, and everyday life activists themselves are open to change, which is the basis of prefigurative politics.

Moreover, one of the promises of social movements is the creation of new subjectivities, new relations and new political practices. Although the concept has

these limitations, it is inevitable to introduce tactics and strategies which are adopted in the cases I studied. Therefore, through the thesis, I will examine the protest repertoire of Cerattepe struggle and KOS in the next chapters.

Environmental movements, among others, are debated under the new social movements because the actors of the movement are different from class movement and its organisational structure overlaps with the new social movements to the extent that they are decentralised, grassroots, peaceful and participatory movement, that can be regarded as a part of cultural politics. However, the promises of environmental politics go beyond these considerations. It also represents a significant opposition against neoliberal politics that plunders and privatises the nature and commons on behalf of private companies.

Beginning from classical social movement literature, the social basis, the motivations of the actors, protest repertoire and the organisational structure of the movements have been put into the question by many scholars. Although this classical social movement literature opens a window into the main questions concerning activism, transformative politics is the recent contribution of contemporary social movement literature, which is mostly debated within anti-neoliberal social movement literature. The most crucial promises of social movements are, in this respect, their transformative aspect of the activism in general. Thanks to this contribution, activism does not only cover the process that activists are engaged; it is also related to the transformation of the activists themselves and the transformation of everyday life. Therefore, the transformative politics through the creation of new subjectivities emerging out of ongoing prefigurative practices are explored in this study. This enables us to understand how the activists develop new forms of social relations, new ways of doing things and new ways of life through mobilisation which is based on cooperation, solidarity and equality. For this reason, it is necessary to examine anti-neoliberal social movement literature.

2.3. Anti-Neoliberal Social Movements

The recent literature on anti-neoliberal social movements identifies certain features which are supposedly shared by all social movements around the world: horizontality, spontaneity, non-hierarchical organisation without leadership, demand for direct and participatory democracy and prefigurative politics. Now, I want to introduce how these characteristics are included in the approaches of different scholars studying anti-neoliberal social movements.

Donatella della Porta is an essential figure for social movements theory. She argues that the social bases of contentious politics tended to move from industrial workers of labour movements to new middle classes of the new social movements. However, the middle-class character of new social movements was challenged by global justice movements -such as World Social Forum in Brazil- emerged in the 1990s and 2000s, first in the global South and on a worldwide scale. These waves of protest mobilised coalitions of “white and blue-collar workers, unemployed and students, young and old generations”. For keeping together, a heterogeneous social base and participatory and deliberative model of decision making are adopted. She defines the social basis of contemporary movements as precariat of anti-austerity movements; in other words, losers of neoliberalism. Paying attention to the long-term structural transformations, she defines the new actor as precariat, often well-educated youth with no socio-economic protection often characterised by a sum of insecurity on the labour market and accumulating anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation (della Porta, 2015).

della Porta argues that a full understanding of recent waves of social protests necessitates going beyond mainstream social movements studies which ignore the debate on capitalism. Long term structural transformations shape the nature of social movements. Therefore, recent social movements should be evaluated within the context of neoliberal capitalism as a form of economic liberalism (della Porta, 2015, p. 7). Neoliberal policies of deregulation, liberalisation and privatisation diminish political institutions’ capacity to respond to citizens’ expectations. At the

same time, the neoliberal project can't keep its promise on the separation of state and market; instead, political institutions are dominated by giant corporations and cooperation between business and politics increases. These result in a sharp rise of mistrust in a representative democracy (della Porta, 2015, p. 25). della Porta defines this crisis of legitimacy in neoliberalism as crises of responsibility (della Porta, 2015, p. 119). In this respect, actors of anti-austerity movements demand direct democracy, prefigured in occupied parks and squares as a response to crises of neoliberal capitalism (della Porta, 2015, p. 25). In anti-austerity movements, citizens experience participatory, direct and inclusive forms of democracy in which the structure of the organisation is horizontal without leaders. Instead of institutional politics, prefigurative politics characterises the most visible moments of anti-austerity protests.

della Porta examines spontaneous demonstrations in Tahrir square against the corruption of political class, Indignados movement in Spain with a permanent occupation of Puerta del Sol in Madrid by the slogan "all power to the people" against austerity program, occupation of Wall Street, the demonstrations in Venezuela, Brazil, Bulgaria, Turkey against corruptions of the governments. She locates these movements, including Gezi park protests, within the context of anti-austerity movements mobilising against the crisis of neoliberalism. She assumes certain similarities between these movements and links them to shifts in neoliberal capitalism and its effects on society (della Porta, 2015, p. 3). Movements such as the Arab Spring is regarded as a movement of democratisation; it is much more than this. They are also against specific forms of capitalism. From Tunisia to Southern Europe and the United States, austerity policies led to the decline of welfare provisions which results in much more unemployment, flexibility, non-standard form of employment, inequality, wage reduction and insecurity (della Porta, 2015, p. 28).

According to della Porta, recent anti-austerity mobilisations react both to economic crises with high unemployment and insecurity and to the political situation in which citizens are excluded from the decision-making process. In this

respect, the economic crisis is linked to political crises. Those negatively affected by neoliberal politics suffers from both market order and political order that does not represent them. In this respect, protests mobilise against the economic consequences of neoliberalism and crises of legitimacy that ignores citizens' demands (della Porta, 2015).

della Porta highlights the discovery of the commons as spaces in which common goods are to be managed through the participation of all those affected by them. While institutions claim for technical expertise, protests movements repoliticize commons through an emphasis on practical knowledge citizens hold. The commons are constructed as decommodification of what is essential to life, with the self-management and self-government of these resources through the participation of the community. The idea of re-establishment of the commons and decommodification of public services is bridged with a participatory approach (della Porta, 2015, p. 140). The debate on commons occupies an important place in the literature on contemporary social movements. Federici defines the commons as a “political frame for thinking of alternatives to capitalism” (2019, p. 87). By emphasising that commons are not things but social relations, Federici refers to “commoning”, as solidarity practices produced in the process such as cooperation, discussion, negotiation, reciprocity, respect, learning to deal with conflicts and disagreement. Commons are formed by collective decision-making, through assemblies and other forms of direct democracy. At this point, commoning is “reclaiming the power of making basic decisions about our lives and doing so collectively” (2019, p.115).

Naomi Klein, in the article *Reclaiming Commons*, evaluates social movements in terms of their defence of commons. She describes the anti-globalisation, anti-corporate or anti-imperialist struggles as a coalition of coalitions; in other words, a movement of many movements (Klein, 2004, p. 220). She shows the importance of resistance against the commodification of commons for the mobilisation of the people. In today's movements, people are mobilised against privatisation of every aspect of life and the transformation of every activity and value into a commodity.

Reclaiming commons such as town squares, streets, farms, and plants is the radical spirit that revives wave of protests against commodification. Activists such as students, environmentalists, peasants aren't waiting for the revolution; "they are acting right now, where they live, where they study, where they work, where they farm" (Klein, 2004, p. 221); in other words, they perform prefigurative politics. Klein emphasises the decentralised, non-hierarchical structure of the movement. Movements represent a radical opposition against undemocratic decision-making mechanisms which have taken away citizens' right to make decisions about their own lives (Klein, 2004, p. 225). She appreciates local resistances against neoliberalism and proposes the transformation of anti-globalisation movement into thousands of local movements fighting against neoliberal politics. The local movements struggling against privatisation and commodification must have the right to self-government (Klein, 2004, p. 228).

Another author who places the struggles for commons to the basis of the formation of social movements is David Harvey. According to Harvey, the idea of protecting and producing the commons, as non-commodified spaces, is the entry point for anti-capitalist struggles. The recognition of the commons becomes a framework for resisting capitalism and rethinking the politics of an anti-capitalist transition; in this respect, the return of the commons has to be integrated into anti-capitalist struggles (2012, p. 87). While defining the common as a "social relation" and "social practice of commoning", Harvey argues that "the environment being treated as a common shall be both collective and non -commodified-off-limits to the logic of market exchange and market valuations" (2012, p. 73).

Having placed cities at the centre of capital accumulation as well as of revolutionary politics, Harvey searches for how cities can become the focus for anti-capitalist resistance. Harvey evaluates recent urban movements through their claim, namely "the right to the city", which is described as an attempt to shape power "over the processes of urbanisation, over how our cities are made and remade, and to do so fundamentally and radically" (Harvey, 2012, p. 5). Since the urbanisation is the primary channel for surplus reproduction, the right to the city

is a demand to take democratic control over the distribution of the surpluses through urbanisation (2012, p. 23) and “change the world, to change life, and to reinvent the city more after their hearts' desire” (2012, p.25).

To understand the dynamics of contemporary capitalism, Harvey deploys the concepts of primitive accumulation and commons. He claims that primitive accumulation is not only peculiar to the origin of the capitalistic mode of production. Primitive accumulation through the enclosure of commons still constitutes the basis of capitalist accumulation. Capitalism can only sustain itself on the condition of the maintenance of capital accumulation which requires practices of dispossession. For this reason, he introduces the term ‘accumulation by dispossession’ as a new form of capital accumulation, to emphasise the “continuous role and persistence of the predatory practices of primitive or original accumulation within the long historical geography of capitalism” (Harvey, 2004, p.74). This is how capitalism can survive and overcome its accumulation crises because the circulation of capital is only possible through the privatisation and commodification of commons. In other words, privatisation and commodification of commons make capitalism survive. Accumulation by dispossession involves the destruction of what the ‘collective’ implies. This is why Harvey calls such a trajectory as a “new wave of enclosing the commons” (Harvey, 2004, p.74).

Defining commoning as a “social practice”, Harvey differentiates public goods from the commons. Through the practice of commoning, commons are produced as collective and non -commodified, out of the market logic (2012). In the book *Rebel Cities*, Harvey argues that the loss of urban commons reflects the profound impacts of the recent wave of privatisations, enclosures, spatial controls, policing, and surveillance upon the qualities of urban life (2012, p.68). He states a multitude of diverse urban struggles and urban social movements in the contemporary world against the loss of urban commons; Syntagma Square in Athens, Tahrir Square in Cairo, and the Plaza de Catalunya in Barcelona were public spaces that became urban commons where people expressed their political views and demands. Harvey regards commons as an appropriate means for anti-capitalist struggle and

only through political actions of citizens, public places turn to commons. If public goods become a mere vehicle for private accumulation, self-organisation and self-management to produce and defend commons is the only possible response. At this point, the political recognition that the commons can be produced, protected, and used for social benefit becomes a framework for resisting capitalist power and rethinking the politics of an anti-capitalist transition (2012, p.87). The production, protection, and use of urban commons becomes a central issue for democratic social movements to address (2012, p.88). Harvey also qualifies the forms of organisation of these movements as follows: “the only politically correct form of organisation in many radical circles is non-state, non-hierarchical, and horizontal” (2012, p.69).

In their book, *Common: On Revolution in the 21st century*, Dardot and Laval argue that the common emerges as the central category of contemporary anti-capitalism (2019, p. 59) and it is the new political reason that must replace neoliberal reason (2019, p. 399). They stress the important place of the commons occupied in social movements against neoliberal capitalism as;

In all the manifestos, platforms, and declarations that were published for the better part of a decade on behalf of the “anti-globalisation” struggle, the terms “commons” or “common goods” frequently appeared as a means of articulating various struggles, practices, rights, and ways of life opposed to the intensification of privatisation and commodification that has plagued the world since the 1980s. Whether as an adjective or a noun, singular or plural, the term “common” became a movement flag, a watchword of resistance, and a guiding principle for almost every alternative to neoliberal capitalism. It is in this sense that the contemporary convergence of movements opposed to neoliberalism, in the name of the commons, marks a new and distinctive moment in the history of social struggles against global capitalism (Dardot & Laval, 2019, p. 59).

Dardot and Laval regard the common as a shared ground for struggles against neoliberalism, whose main characteristic is the partnership “between private oligopolies and the state” (Dardot & Laval, 2019, p. 61). The term includes various struggles against neoliberalism, whose common point is the collective and democratic reclamation of resources and spaces that have been captured by private oligopolies and governments including the people in Cochabamba whose motto is

“the water is ours,” and the occupants of public squares in Madrid, Cairo, New York, and Istanbul saying “the city belongs to everyone”” (Dardot & Laval, 2019, p. 60). They also evaluate environmental movements within the context of protecting natural “common goods” from unrestrained exploitation” (Dardot & Laval, 2019, p. 60). The common has a potential to create connections between various struggles based on principles of solidarity, sharing, and respect for the environment and biodiversity against the most harmful aspects of neoliberalism such as commodification, privatisation or climate change (Dardot & Laval, 2019, p. 67).

In the book *Multitude*, Micheal Hardt and Antonio Negri attempt to understand collective action with respect to capitalist relations of production and reproduction. They redefine the class concept with regard to new developments in relations of production. They call the actor of the new social movements as the multitude, as a new anti-capitalist subject. The project of the multitude is the name expressing the desire for equality and freedom, it demands open and inclusive global democracy, and it provides necessary tools for achieving this aim (2005, p.9). According to them, concepts such as working class, people, mass assume unity. However, the multitude is plural; it cannot be reduced singularity. Multitude refers to multiplicity that includes ethnic, racial, gender differences (2005, p.12). Reminding many-coloured Joseph's magical coat, they define the multitude as;

The multitude is composed of innumerable internal differences that can never be reduced to a unity or a single identity-different cultures, races, ethnicities, genders, and sexual orientations; different forms of labor; different ways of living; different views of the world; and different desires. The multitude is a multiplicity of all these singular differences (2005, p. xiv).

In *Multitude*, Hardt and Negri argue that first time in history, the possibility of democracy on a global scale emerges today. The main obstacle to this possibility is the global state of war, which is the characteristic of a new type of sovereignty. They call this “Empire” and the war is its instrument of rule and inevitable in Empire. Empire lives with this state of war; however, this type of network power bears of the possibility of a new kind of struggle. In this respect, they mention two

faces of globalisation; on the one hand, Empire diffuses its networks of hierarchies which enable stability through a new mechanism of control and constant conflict.

On the other hand, globalisation means the creation of the means of cooperation and collaboration that exceeds nations, which give the opportunity for unlimited interactions. This second face of globalisation enables a new type of struggle to emerge. Hardt and Negri describe this new type of struggle;

It (the second face of globalisation) provides the possibility that, while remaining different, we discover the commonality that enables us to communicate and act together. The multitude might thus be conceived as a network: an open and expansive network in which all differences can be expressed freely and equally, a network that provides the means so that we can work and live in common (2005, p.12).

In this passage, Negri and Hardt describe multitude as an open and expansive network that enables different people to communicate and act together freely and equally. Empire acts in network level; however, the subject of struggle can also act in a network level globally by exceeding nation state's borders. According to them, environmental movements, as an open and inclusive network representing many different colours inside, are also part of resistances against the global state of war (2005).

The concepts of the multitude, the common and biopolitical production are interrelated in the approach of Hardt and Negri. Multitude makes the common possible, and the common enable people to communicate and act together. By the labour, we produce the common, and this is the essential feature of today's production, which is called "biopolitical production". The multitude is thus composed potentially of all the diverse figures of biopolitical production. Biopolitical production is about the production of social life; it is "the production of communications, relationships, and forms of life" (2005, p. xv) and "production of new subjectivities" (2005, p.66). What multitude produces, in this respect, is new relations, new forms of life, new subjectivities as the network struggle of the multitude takes place on the biopolitical terrain-in other words, "it directly

produces new subjectivities and new forms of life” (2005, p.83). Network struggle of multitudes directly produces new subjectivities and new forms of life- so it acts within biopolitical terrain (2005, p.99).

Real democracy is based on the biopolitical productivity of the multitude. Hardt and Negri argue that today’s productive resistances and modern struggles are not only motivated by the struggle against poverty, they are also oriented toward the desire for democracy- “a real democracy of the role of all by based on relationships of equality and freedom” (2005, p. 67). This conceptualisation of democracy was the promise of the modernity, but it is not actualised yet. The new characteristics of the multitude and its biopolitical productivity enable the actualisation of real democracy. The multitude is the only social subject capable of realising democracy that is, “rule of everyone by everyone” (2005, p.114).

How would the multitude create an alternative system? The new system is organised form below and based on grassroots democracy through networks. These networks resemble the internet; it is open to everybody. Network struggles do not rely on discipline; creativity, communication, and self-organised cooperation are encouraged. The most important organisational characteristic of various networks movements is their insistence on autonomy and their refusal of any centralised hierarchy, leaders, or spokespeople (2005, p.84). By reminding articulation of different groups such as environmentalists with trade unionists, anarchists, LGBTI+ in global anti-capitalist movements starting from Seattle, they argue that network movements “are not unified under any single authority but rather relate to each other in a network structure. Social forums, affinity groups, and other forms of democratic decision-making are the basis of the movements, and they manage to act together based on what they have in common” (2005, p.86). That is why they are called a "movement of movements" (2005, p.86).

This type of organisational structure overlaps with the desire for more democracy and freedom. Instead of hierarchic one, today’s anti-capitalist movements are organised as network struggles. These democratic network struggles are new

organisational forms of resistance. This centreless network organisation is based on the continuing plurality of its elements and its networks which cannot be reduced to centralised and unified structure (2005, p.99).

In his book, *The City and the Grassroots*, Manuel Castells (1993, p. 305) defines urban social movements as “urban-oriented mobilisations that influence structural social change and transform the urban meanings”; in this respect, urban social movements aim at the “transformation of the institutionalised urban meaning against the logic, interest and values of the dominant class” (1993, p. 305). He analyses social movements according to three respects: the movement’s “identity”, which means “the self-definition of the movement”, “adversary”, in other words, “the movement’s principal enemy”, and “societal goal”, “the movement’s vision of the kind of social order (Castells, 2010, p. 74). He argues that the articulation of collective identity by social movements is primarily shaped by a global condition of “informational capitalism” or “network society,” giving privilege to the primacy of communication and media technologies (Castells 2010, p. 1).

Castells (2012) proposes that a new relationship between space and society occurred through challenging established cultural values and political institutions, and through exploring the social meanings for the city, based on his examination of various urban protests from the Third World to Europe. Castells (2012) in his book titled *Networks of Outrage and Hope* differentiates recent social movements from previous ones in terms of using communication technologies. He defines today’s societies as network societies. He asserts that communication technologies provided ordinary people with a space of autonomy beyond the control of those holding institutional power, leading to the emergence of networked social movements (2012, p. 2). He mentions commonality between social movements in different parts of the world by claiming real democracy, distrust mainstream media, rejecting leadership, and forming local assemblies for collective debate and decision making (2012, p. 4). He emphasises the preservation of autonomy by pointing the capacity of social actors to challenge the power which is embedded

in the institutions of the society. These bring social actors an ability to claim representation for their values and interests (2012, p.5).

Networked movements need to establish public space by creating free communities in the urban space. Occupying urban spaces have played a significant role in the transformation of societies. By constructing an open community in occupied place, social movements create a public space; a space for deliberation and assemblies exceeding formal representations. In this respect, this public space of social movements is a space of autonomous communication. Castells regards autonomous communication as an essential characteristic of social movements because this autonomous communication allows the formation of the movement and blocks the control of power holders over communication power (2012, p.11). Castells stresses determining the role of communication process in the formation and organisation of social movements. He argues this role of communication as;

The characteristics of communication processes between individuals engaged in the social movement determine the organisational characteristics of social movement itself: the more interactive and self-configurable communication is, the less hierarchical is the organisation and the more participatory is the movement. This is why the networked social movements of digital age represent a new species of social movement (2012, p. 15).

Castells evaluates different social movements between 2012-2014 including Gezi Park protests in Turkey, demonstrations in Brazil, student movements in Chile, mass protests in Mexico, Moscow demonstrations, Ukrainian movement in Kiev in 2013, Hong Kong's Umbrella Revolution and the continuing mobilisations in Spain, Greece, and Portugal, and multiple local mobilisations enacted in urban space in several countries. These networked social movements have occurred in extremely different contexts. While in the Arab countries, the revolts were aimed at defeating dictatorships, in Europe and the United States the financial crisis was the trigger for the protest. Castells suggests that networked social movements occurred in very different contexts; however, there should be two major contextual factors necessary for the emergence of social movements. The first is a

fundamental crisis of legitimacy of the political system, regardless of the form of political regime, whether authoritarian or based on democratic elections. This assumption is parallel to della Porta's arguments on crises of legitimacy. According to Castells, political institutions, including parties and governments, take care of their interests and do not represent the people who elect and pay them anymore. Citizens do not find channels of expression and adequate representation. Thus, they intend to find alternative forms of expressing their needs and desires and want to reinvent democracy. They engaged in collective action outside the prescribed institutional channels, to defend their demands and, eventually, to change the rulers, and even the rules shaping their lives. The second major feature common to the context in which all these movements were formed is their autonomous communicative capacity which means being able to connect with other participants and society as a whole via the new social media (2012). Castells gives an example of Gezi Park to demonstrate effective usage of twitter during demonstrations.

Castells states common characteristics of networked social movements. Social movements are "network of networks"; within the movement, with other movements around the world, with the Internet, with the media and with society. Therefore, they do not have an identifiable centre; however, they ensure coordination functions and deliberation, by an interaction between multiple nodes. These social movements are spontaneous and horizontally organised; they do not have formal leadership, command and control centre, or a hierarchical organisation. This decentred structure encourages participation in the movement and shows that these are open-ended networks without defined boundaries. Autonomy is another characteristic shared by networked social movements. According to Castells, social movement is constituted by interaction between the space of flows on the Internet and communication networks, and the space of places of the occupied public places. This hybrid of cyberspace and urban space constitutes a space of autonomy which can only be insured by the capacity to organise in the free space of communication networks. This space of autonomy is the new spatial form of networked social movements (2012, p.250). Castells also

makes a remarkable comment on local and global characteristics of these movements. According to him, movements are local and global at the same time. They start at a local level for their reasons, build their networks, and construct their public space. Meanwhile they are also global because they are connected throughout the world, they learn from other experiences, and they are often inspired by other movements (2012, p. 250). Assemblies are the means of decision making. These movements propose and practice direct, deliberative democracy based on networked democracy. They project a networked democracy based on local communities and virtual communities in interaction. What these networked social movements are proposing is the utopia of the autonomy of the subject vis-à-vis the institutions of society (2012, p. 256).

2.4. Prefigurative Politics

Activists must be the change they want to see in the world

Prefigurative politics is explicitly stated as a significant characteristic of new social movements through their here and now practices and, creating new subjectivities through mobilisation. Now, I want to grow into a topic in detail. The prefigurative politics is the common characteristic of environmental movements and new social movements. As prefigurative politics is mostly debated with reference to massive movements like Zapatistas, the Global Justice Movements, Occupy Movement, the Movement of the Squares or Indignados (Raekstad & Gradin, 2020), examining prefigurative politics with respect to local environmental movements is supposed to contribute to the literature on new social movements.

The concept of prefigurative politics and its associated practices have generally emerged out of the anarchist movements and left tradition starting from the 1960s and matured in 2000s after Occupy and Global Justice Movements (Raekstad & Gradin, 2020, p. 37). This kind of politics refers to creating a new kind of vocabulary through emphasising the now and becoming within the process. It aims

to develop alternative and communal spaces based on mutual respect and cooperation within the occupied spaces, which was also the case during Gezi protests. As Hardt and Negri argue, Occupy movements have led to autonomous governance structures and the creation of communities within and against the dominant society. In recent years, experiences of prefiguration have been multiplied and expanded in different parts of the world from Tahrir to Gezi Park, all serve as inspiring examples, establishing systems of communal life through democratic decision-making in assemblies. These movements not only demonstrate a desire for a different social order but also open avenues for experimentation in the larger society (Hardt & Negri, *Assembly*, 2017, p. 275).

After the global justice or alter-globalisation movements from the end of 90s and especially since the anti-austerity movements from the case of Iceland to Occupy and Indignados movements between 2009 and 2013, the attention is paid to the ways in which activism is incorporated into the everyday life and practices. The form of politics the term indicated has been named differently like “another politics” by Dixon, “everyday utopias” by Cooper, “transformative politics” by Yates or “politics of dignity” by Holloway.

Prefigurative politics has been used to define political orientations, tactics and actions common to new social movements such as occupying public spaces, establishing communal areas, various alternative modes of consumption, or countercultural lifestyles. Yates defines prefigurative politics as “scenarios where protesters express the political ‘ends’ of their actions through their ‘means’, or where they create experimental or ‘alternative’ social arrangements or institutions”. Both meanings share the idea that prefiguration anticipates or partially actualises goals of the movements (2014, p. 2). The core idea is that the way of transformation of the society is importantly related to what that transformed society will be. The means prefigure the ends. Then, to engage in prefigurative politics is to intentionally shape our activities to manifest our vision (Dixon, 2014, p. 85).

Prefigurative praxis is at the core of the political promise of alternative politics (Dixon,2014). It is believed to “create or prefigure utopic alternatives, though on a limited scale, in the present; in other words, it is defined to anticipate or enact some feature of an ‘alternative world’ in the present” (Yates,2014, p.3). In this respect, prefigurative politics is “organising now the way you want to see the world later” (Dixon,2014, p. 85). The ways in which political action is performed and everyday life in social movements is lived are highly substantial because they shape effective struggles for social change and explain the formation and composition of movements, groupings and structures of solidarity (Yates, 2014). Cooper (2014, p. 11) calls these prefigurative alternatives as “everyday utopias”, which are “nondominant ‘minor stream’ social sites, hugely fruitful places from which to think differently and imaginatively about concepts, particularly when such thinking is oriented to a socially transformative politics”. Focusing on building alternatives to dominant practices, Cooper explains everyday utopias as:

Everyday utopias don’t focus on campaigning or advocacy. They don’t place their energy on pressuring mainstream institutions to change, on winning votes, or on taking over dominant social structures. Instead, they work by creating the change they wish to encounter, building and forging new ways of experiencing social and political life (Cooper, 2014, p. 2).

2.4.1. Asking We Walk

The term ‘prefigurative politics describes “materially enacting in the present a dreamed future” (Cooper, 2014); in other words, the practical initiatives for building a world now in line with the dreamed future (Yates, 2015). In this respect, implementation of desired future relations and practices “here and now” is the key to prefigurative politics (Raekstad & Gradin, 2020, p. 10). According to Dixon, prefigurative politics is about “trying to manifest and build the egalitarian and deeply democratic world we would like to see through organisations we build, the organising methods we favour, and the kinds of relationships that we nurture in the struggle” (Dixon, 2014, p. 6). At this point, this kind of performative politics challenges the idea that “the only way to change the world is by taking state power” to the extent that it is an inversion of the traditional revolutionary

perspective that puts the destruction of capitalism first and the construction of the new society second (Holloway, 2010, p. 50). Holloway puts this approach as “We ask no permission of anyone, and we do not wait for the future, but simply break time and assert now another type of doing, another form of social relations; we assert our world” (2010, p. 241). By defining prefigurative politics as a reconstructive dimension of social movements, Dixon argues that what is important for the movement is its ongoing significance and the continuing legacies, instead of its achieved outcomes (2014). Holloway calls this kind of politics “politics of dignity”, and with reference to Zapatistas’ principle of “asking we walk”, he impressively explains “becoming” as:

The idea that the struggle for a different society must create that society through its forms of struggle. The term describes the idea that if you can embody the change you struggle for, you have already won - not by fighting but by becoming... An enormous amount of experience has been gained, especially in recent years, in this prefigurative or other politics, this politics of dignity. This includes both experience in the organisation of the great anti-summit events of the anti-globalisation movement and the organisation of the world and regional Social Forums, but also the less spectacular creation of community gardens, alternative schools, radio station in resistance, street theatre, and so on. The idea is gaining ground that the only way to change the world is to do it ourselves and to do it here and now. And yet, the attempts to create now the other world that we say is possible are never unproblematic: in a society based on the negation of dignity, a politics of dignity is always a struggle (Holloway, 2010, p. 45).

According to Yates, prefigurative politics refers to “scenarios where protesters express the political ‘ends’ of their actions through their ‘means’, or where they create experimental or ‘alternative’ social arrangements or institutions” (Yates, 2015, p. 1). Because prefigurative politics is about commitment to putting vision into practice through struggle (Yates, 2015, p.84), the means are important to the extent that the means of prefigurative politics reflects the ends. In this respect, prefigurative politics rebuffs the separation of ends and means. As Holloway states, “living now the world we want to create with its 'social practices and correspondent relationship breaks the instrumental separation of means and end: the mean is the end” (Holloway, 2010). For Hardt and Negri, prefigurative politics is thus based on a moral and political condition for linking means and ends; in their words, “Activists must be the change they want to see in the world”;

in this respect, the creation and reproduction of the life thus becomes a focus of political action (Hardt & Negri, 2017). How the movements can achieve this; in other words, how do the means reflect the ends? It is about putting their visions into the practice and adaptation of certain norms within the movement. For example, if representative democracy is seen inadequate, direct democracy is adopted in the movement. If they are critical to the patriarchal system, they pay attention to gender equality in the movement. In this respect, certain norms are acknowledged in the movements. Bottom-up/direct/participatory/grassroots democracy, non-hierarchy, collective decision making, horizontal and grassroots organisation, non-hierarchical decision making, anti-authoritarianism, anti-capitalism and direct action, efforts to transform power relations in the movements are norms adopted in transformative politics/ bases of prefigurative politics (Dixon, 2014; Yates, 2015; Raekstad & Gradin, 2020).

2.4.2. *“In the world but not of it”*

Instead of focusing on the revolution that will solve the problems in society, this new mode of politics contributes to the transformation of society through transformation of social relations and developing new kinds of social relationships based on cooperation and solidarity. At this point, it is possible to argue that developing new social relations in the process of struggle is one of the crucial aspects of social movements, with Dixon’s statement, “on the one hand, entirely liberated social relations are never fully possible in the context of domination. On the other hand, developing new social relations is a crucial part of building visionary movements” (2014, p. 17). According to Holloway, the centrality of the quality of social relationships is not new, but in recent years it has acquired a new recognition. Developing new ways of social relations challenges capitalism; in the action processes of the movements 'amorosity' is being created in the struggles; in addition to amorosity, comradeship, dignity, love, solidarity, fraternity, friendship, ethics stand in contrast to the commodified relations of capitalism, which can be seen as anticipating or creating a society beyond capitalism; they stand in contrast to “the commodified relations of capitalism not as timeless alternatives, but as

struggle-against” (Holloway, 2010). In this respect, the production of new subjectivities is directly related to movements’ potential for redefining fundamental social relations. Redefining fundamental social relations and creating new ones bears the potential to think about taking power differently, to achieve a fundamentally new, democratic society (Hardt & Negri, 2017). Through establishing and creating a new social relationship based on these values, new subjectivities emerge from the social movements, that transforms the activists themselves, their social relations with each other and everyday life. In this respect, the transformation of everyday life based on new kinds of social relationships and ways of doing is one of the most powerful aspects of social movements, which is what prefigurative politics is all about.

The transformation of social relations within the movement is crucial because it is related to the transformation of the whole society. As Dixon states, through this kind of politics, the movements can achieve the transformation of social relations within the movement and open the way for the transformation of the whole society. This is why one of the principles of another politics/ anti-authoritarian current is “linking day to day struggle with transformative visions” (Dixon, 2014).

It is through going beyond the existing one and building the alternatives that the transformation of the existing society can be achieved. At this point, prefigurative politics both opposes existing social relations and structures and tries to build their alternatives at the same time, this is why prefiguration is called as the reconstruction (Raekstad & Gradin, 2020). In this respect, prefigurative politics includes both “the combination of the oppositional and the reconstructive”. This politics brings together the refusal of domination with an affirmative commitment to building new social relations and forms of social organisation in the process of struggle. It aspires to fuse the “against”—our rejection of ruling relations and institutions—with the “beyond”—our creation of new ways of being, relating, and doing (Dixon, 2014, p. 83).

Holloway describes this as “struggle in-against and- beyond capitalism”. Linking new kinds of social relations with “crack”, as “perfectly ordinary creation of a space or moment in which we assert a different type of doing”, or, “revolt of one type of doing against another type of doing”, he puts two antagonistic types of doing: “that which we reject and that which we try to create. Cracks as ruptures are not the only response to capitalism but also attempts to create now a different set of social relations” (Holloway, 2010, p.55). Another world can be built through changes/ ruptures/ cracks in current relations; “in the world but not of it,” through pushing and pointing beyond them toward a vision of another world (Holloway, 2010).

2.5. Environmental Movements: From the Environmentalism of the Poor to the Global Environmental Justice Movements

While contemporary environmental movements can be evaluated as a part of global uprising waves, their formations go back to 1960s-70s, in parallel with the identity-based movements such as feminist, black, civil rights movements, as mentioned. Rootes defines environmental movements as the “broad networks of people and organisations engaged in collective action in the pursuit of environmental benefits” (Rootes, 2002, p. 2). Environmental movements are very diverse and complex, their organisational forms ranging from the highly organised and formally institutionalised to the radically informal, the spatial scope of their activities ranging from the local to the almost global, the nature of their concerns ranging from single issues to the global environmental concerns. Such an inclusive conception is consistent with the usage of the term amongst environmental activists themselves and enables us to consider the linkages between its several levels and (Rootes, 2002, p. 2).

As a part of the New Left movements, Castells (1997, p.67) defines environmental movements as “the most comprehensive and influential movement of our time”. Environmental grassroots movements in the contemporary world have ranged from rural peasant movements to global environmental movements; activists rise

to defend their livelihoods in their localities on the one hand and to stop global warming and climate change on a worldwide scale on the other. As Voulvouli states:

Collective actions against the state or private interest companies have become an increasingly common phenomenon in both developed and developing countries... Decisions to initiate large-scale projects such as hydroelectric dams, highways, mines and power plants are often met with opposition from the members of the community in which these projects are planned. Collectivities of individuals publicising their concerns about the effects of the projects on the health, social life and economics serve to motivate the formation of opposition campaigns” (Voulvouli, 2009, p.1).

This picture presents various environmental resistances against the privatisation of water, extractivism, mines, dams, thermal and coal power plants, deforestation and mega infrastructure projects not only in Global South and Third World countries but also in Western and developed countries². Global movements for climate change movements go along with local grassroots resistances in different parts of the world. In this respect, this sub-section aims to open a window into the theoretical framework for environmental movements from community-based resistances to global uprisings.

Ecological conflicts lead to contentious actions of movements against the destructive force of capitalist production on the environment and human health, through a wide repertoire of forms of protest (Temper, Demaria, Scheidel, Bene, & Martinez-Alier, 2018, p. 575). Street demonstrations, non-violent direct actions and boycotts to draw public’s and governments’ attention to environmental issues are a repertoire of contention in these movements (Rootes, 2003, p. 234). Citizen action in defence of the environment, or pursuit of the redress of environmental grievances, takes many forms. In this issue, we consider a range of those forms of political and social action from the relatively institutionalised and conventional to the innovative and non-institutionalised (Rootes, 2013). Direct action is the most

² For a detailed mapping of environmental conflicts, please see the Global Atlas of Environmental Justice (EJ Atlas), available at <https://ejatlas.org>.

striking tactics used by environmental movements. As Heynen and Sant (2015, p. 169) state:

Direct action often occurs when laws and other forms of governance are unable to, by themselves, intervene and mediate social claims on the state (think about for instance the suffragist movement, civil rights movement, gay rights movement, etc.), the political logics and solidarities that result through direct action offer a distinct way of understanding both the state from the outside as well as praxis more generally... Direct action provides a lens into individual activists' efforts working to convince the state of its duty, as opposed to working through the country, which is a more common theme within political, ecological research.

It is possible to evaluate the literature on environmental movements within four primary subtitles: the environmental movements as a defence of post-material values, the environmentalism of the poor/ the Third World environmentalism, community-based environmental movements the global environmental justice movements. The centre of the literature on environmental activism lies at the distinction between the environmentalism of the rich vs the environmentalism of the poor: as can be restated, post-materialist values vs materialist values, which is mostly connected with Western environmentalism/urban activism vs Third World environmentalism/ rural activism. Being aware of the problem in this distinction that both materialist and non-materialist values can be adopted by the same movement and both the protection of nature as a post-materialist value and the protection of the livelihood as an economic concern can motivate the activists, I introduce these approaches to locate my cases within the theoretical discussions of environmental movements.

2.5.1. Environmental Movements as a Defence of Post-Materialist Values

Inglehart's article on "Post-Materialism in an Environment of Insecurity" has been at the core of the debate on environmental activism. Inglehart evaluates environmental movements in developed countries with respect to the quality of life concerns and post-materialist values. The environmentalism in developed Western countries is debated with reference to the importance of post-material

values in defence of nature (Inglehart, 1981). According to Inglehart, after the material concerns are fulfilled, most material concerns such as participation, social equality and the protection of the environment are on the agenda of the people (Inglehart, 1981).

In the above-mentioned article, Inglehart (1981, p.880) argues for the intergenerational shift from materialist to post-materialist values, namely “from giving top priority to physical sustenance and safety, toward heavier emphasis on belonging, self-expression and the quality of life” especially concerning the participation of the young in environmental movements in a Western context. The unprecedented degree of economic security experienced by the post-war generation in most industrial societies has led to a shift from materialist values toward postmaterialist priorities (Inglehart, 1995, p. 62). Based on the survey conducted in six developed countries, Inglehart argues that the post-materialist values, such as participation in decision making, freedom of speech and environmental protection, outweigh the material values after ensuring economic and physical security that prevailed during the post-war era in the advanced industrial societies.

Improvements in the socio-economic environment result in individuals’ shifting their attention from issues of physical subsistence to concerns related to the quality of life; in other words, “people's basic values and goals are gradually shifting from giving top priority to economic growth and consumption, to placing increasing emphasis on the quality of life” (Inglehart, 1995, p. 61). In this respect, there has been a rise in environmental consciousness and a higher priority for environmental protection among the publics of industrialised developed Western countries (Inglehart, 1995, p. 62). The well-paid and increasingly powerful stratum of society, emerging from student subculture in the 1960s and evolving into the ideology of The New Class, is critical of the existing economic and political order and participates in leftist political movements (Inglehart, 1981, p. 895). This new, predominantly middle-class, therefore constitutes the base of support for the Left (Inglehart, 1981, p. 890).

2.5.2. The Third World Environmentalism³ or The Environmentalism of the Poor

The scholars studying on the Third World Environmentalism stress that the environmental concerns are combined with broader social, political and economic concerns. Rootes argues that popular movements in the Third World rarely take the form of purely environmental movements like those of the West, the determinants of their success or failure serve to emphasise the importance of broader political and economic processes (Rootes, 2002, p. 6). Heijden argues that environmental movements in the Third World Countries connect their struggle against environmental degradation with the struggle against capitalist economic structures (2002). According to him, most third world environmental movements are community-based grassroots organisations dedicated to the direct protection of local livelihoods (Heijden, 2002, p. 209). They stand against the global discourse of capitalism, neoliberalism, modernism, scientism, and anthropocentrism. They articulate environmental demands to the wider economic ones in their struggle for the protection of people's access to the resources. By emphasising on the defence of the forests and trees, as is the case in Asia, Latin America and Africa, they locate deforestation as the main issue of the local community, instead of global one (Heijden, 2002, p. 209).

Haynes agrees with the assumption that environmental movements in the Third World are not purely concerned with environmental issues. Still, they are the manifestations of broader political concerns including human rights, employment and development issues. These movements attract unempowered, namely those who do not have the means to address their concern in more conventional ways. Through examining the movements in India, Kenya, Indonesia, Tahiti and Nigeria, he explains environmental groups in the Third World as such:

³ The term, 'Third World', was invented in the 1950s to refer to the large group of economically underdeveloped, then decolonising countries in Africa, Asia and the Middle East and Latin America, mostly independent since the early nineteenth century, but still economically weak (Haynes, 2002, p. 240).

First, they aim to mobilise local people in defence of the local environment against outside interests -usually the state or big business. Second, environmental action groups are usually rurally-based. Third, women often form the core of their memberships. Fourth, while some groups have a narrow conservation focus, many others have wider socio-economic and political concerns. Fifth, environmental groups are more likely to succeed in their goals when they can exploit democratic and legal avenues. Sixth, it helps to enlist important foreign allies, such as Greenpeace International, although this does not ensure success. Finally, environmental groups often do not win their struggles; failures outweigh successes (Haynes, 2002, p. 202).

In this respect, standing against the interests of the business or state, being rural based and women-led, and focusing on broader socio-economic concerns are usually regarded as the main characteristics of the environmental movements in the Third World. For Haynes, environmental activists tend to come from subordinate strata, especially from among the poor, women, the young and national minorities. In this respect, Third World environmental groups often attract young people and women who see these environmental groups as appropriate vehicles to express more general discontent with the status quo. Moreover, Third World environmental groups often build links with transnational organisations - such as Greenpeace - helping them to grow and focus their efforts; cross-border links may help not only to broaden a Third World group's horizons but also support their struggles by supplying welcome publicity. Struggles against the sources of environmental degradation, mainly deforestation and the accompanying loss of livelihood, are emerging as important rallying points for the popular organisation (Haynes, 2002).

The analytical frame of the 'environmentalism of the poor' (Martinez-Alier and Guha 1997; Martinez-Alier 2002) have significant importance in explaining the underlying values and motivations of peasant environmental resistance that can be evaluated under the Third World environmentalism (Arsel, Akbulut, & Adaman, 2015). Martiez- Alier and Guha define the subject of environmental movements as "the poor", and they introduce "the environmentalism of the poor" to describe the struggle to defend the livelihood of the peasants in the rural context of the Global South (Martinez-Alier J. , 2002). By emphasising the material basis of environmental struggles, they argue that the environmental struggles in the

developing countries of the South originate from “unequal ecological distribution”. According to this approach, the primary motivation behind environmental activism is to defend the livelihood of the poor and indigenous people in rural areas against deforestation, dams, mining and resource-extractivism. Guha and Martinez-Alier and Guha (1997) locate the term “environmentalism of the poor” as a form of environmentalism different from the environmental movements in the North which they consider to be based on the quality of life concerns and post-materialist values (Inglehart 1990). By making the distinction between red and green environmentalism, in other words, the environmentalism in South and North, Martinez-Alier and Guha argue that:

Origins and political styles notwithstanding, the two varieties of environmentalism perhaps differ most markedly in their ideologies. The environmentalism of the poor originates as a clash over productive resources: a third kind of class conflict, so to speak, but one with deep ecological implications. Red on the outside, but green on the inside. In Southern movements issues of ecology are often interlinked with questions of human rights, ethnicity and distributive justice. These struggles, of peasants, tribals and so on, are in a sense deeply conservative (in the best sense of the word), refusing to exchange a world they know, and are in partial control over, for an uncertain and insecure future... In contrast, the wilderness movement in the North originates outside the production process. It is in this respect more of a single-issue movement, calling for a change in attitudes (towards the natural world) rather than a change in systems of production or distribution. Especially in the United States, environmentalism has, by and large, run parallel to the consumer society without questioning its socio-ecological basis, its enormous dependence on the lands, peoples and resources of the other parts of the globe (Martinez-Alier & Guha., 1997, p. 18)

While the environmental movements in the South is connected with human rights, ethnicity and distributive justice, the Northern movements are regarded as the attempt to change personal attitudes without questioning economical structures. By emphasising the collaboration between the state and business within the scope of the social justice, Martinez-Alier indicates that:

In many resource extraction and waste disposal conflicts in history and today, the poor are often on the side of preservation of nature against business firms and the state. This behaviour is consistent with their interests and their values, including the defence of indigenous territorial rights and claims regarding the sacredness of particular elements of nature (a mountain, a forest, or even a tree). It is also

consistent with concerns for social justice, including claims to recognition and participation, and builds on the premise that the fights for human rights and environment are inseparable (Martinez-Alier, 2016).

In parallel with the “environmentalism of the poor” conceptualisation, Marxist eco-feminists contribute to the literature of the environmental movement by emphasising the importance of women activism in environmental movements as activism for the defence of the livelihoods and the means of productions. As a social theory, ecofeminism emerged as a response to the ecological crises in the 1970s, during the radicalisation of second-wave feminism and green politics. It became the name of the social movements through Chipko movement where women resisted to deforestation by hugging the trees in India. Marxist eco-feminists assume the interconnected relationship between the subordination of women and the exploitation of nature by patriarchal capitalism, in a sense that patriarchal capitalism is the common ground for their experienced subordination and exploitation (Mellor, 1996; Isla, 2009). Marxist-ecofeminists regard this connection between women and nature as socially constructed, instead of biologically determined (Goldstein, 2006). Assuming that subordination and exploitation of nature and women occurred in a specific period of the history, namely industrial capitalism, they argue that both the liberation of women and nature depends on the struggle against capitalism (Salleh, 1991; Mellor, 1996; Werlhof, 2007; Mies, 2014). In addition to the theoretical framework on woman and nature dialectics relationship, Marxist eco-feminists regard women’s struggle as a resistance for the livelihood and commons in the Third World (Mies, 2014, p. 303).

2.5.3. Community-based Environmental Movements

Within the literature on the Third World environmentalism, the community-based character of the movements is frequently stressed. As Heidjen (2002) explicitly stated, most third world environmental movements are community-based grassroots organisations aiming to defend their local livelihoods. Based on research on Bergama movement in Turkey, Çoban (2004) rightly stated that the

symbiotic relationship between the community and environment is the significant characteristics of community-based environmental movements:

This interconnectedness and symbiotic relationship between the community and the material world is the crucial point at which the specific combination of the constitutive elements of the community-based resistance movement can be seen. Demands, perceived threat, philosophy, actors, aim, targets, strategy and tactics are incorporated into the political project of defending and sustaining the symbiotic relationship between community and environment... The demands of the community do not develop solely around the idea of either 'save the environment' or 'save the community', but, instead, around both. Because community life and the environment are seen, not as two different, independent areas but as interwoven; an effort to protect the local environment is also an effort to protect community life and livelihood, and vice versa. (Çoban, 2004, p. 440).

The motivation of the actors in community-based environmental movements is not only to protect the livelihoods but also to protect the environment and relationship in which community is embodied. The environment, community and social relations are interconnected in community-based environmental movements. Moreover, in these movements, the environmental degradation is regarded as a threat to the community's way of life; "this is seen as inseparable from the environment in the sense that the community lives with and within the environment. An emerging threat as such triggers a resistance movement committed to defending and sustaining the community's way of life. This common aim is then knitted around an understanding of the symbiotic community–environment relationship" as Çoban (2004, p.441) stated. What is significant in tactical terms is that tactics are not used in a symbolic way, with a limited number of participants, but in a massive way, with the participation of a mass of community members (Çoban, 2004).

In the 1990s, the discussions regarding the community-based environmental movements led to a new concept that describes the struggles of the people against environmentally destructive projects in their localities: "Not in my backyard" (NIMBY). It is the name of the movement that activists oppose specific projects because of the negative consequences for the locality but do not necessarily oppose the project's implementation elsewhere (Paker, 2018). Rootes argues that

environmental concerns are most likely to turn into mobilisation in case people are directly affected or their children. This is one reason why NIMBY protests loom so large among environmental contentions; the backyard, at least, is familiar territory: “People who, for one reason or another, are unable to think globally may yet be able to act locally” (Rootes, 2003, p. 294).

In their work “Not in Our Backyards: The Grassroots Environmental movement”, Freudenberg and Steinsapir (1991) examine “the National Toxics Campaign” by the participation of various grassroots environmental groups struggling to protect their communities against some perceived hazard, as a case study of NIMBY approach. They state that members of these local groups include a broad cross-section of class and occupational categories. Women are heavily represented in both membership and leadership. In these grassroots movement, the new leaders, often housewives and mothers with no previous organising experience, emerged. They state that grassroots environmentalists strongly believe in the right of citizens to participate in making environmental decisions. The emphasis on citizen participation in decision making also appears to reflect a mistrust of government, based on their direct experiences with public officials and agencies. Human health, rather than environmental aesthetics, wilderness preservation, or other similar issues, is the primary concern of most grassroots environmentalists. The motivating factor in most of their struggles appears to be a desire to protect their health and the health of their families and future generations against some perceived threat (Freudenberg & Steinsapir, 1991, p. 239).

2.5.4. Environmental Justice Movements: Towards the Global Uprising Waves

As a part of the literature on environmentalism, the concept of environmental justice and environmental justice movements is worth studying. Environmental justice movements can cover all different struggles mentioned before in this study; both grassroots movements, rural and urban environmental movements, community based environmental movements. However, this term has become

much more relevant after the global uprising waves, especially towards global concerns materialised in global justice and climate changes movements in many different localities in today's world. The protests against the World Trade Organization in Seattle in 1999 and the World Social Forums of the 2000s are generally regarded as the trigger for the globalisation of Justice movements. Recent global movements such as Extinction rebellions in Europe, Earth First, Occupy the Earth, The Global Anti-Aerotropolis movements can be regarded as waves of global environmental justice movements.

Since the 1980s and 1990s there has been a globalising environmental justice movement that in its strategy meetings and practices has developed a set of concepts and slogans to describe and intervene in environmental conflicts, born from environmental activism (Martinez-Alier J. , 2016). Environmental justice studies, a field that is closely related to political ecology, has been concerned with the unequal distribution of environmental benefits and burdens, and the social struggles that this gives rise to. As a political discourse for the movements and as an analytical framework, environmental justice emerged in the US in the 1980s in the context of the rising struggles of communities of colour and the poor against the disproportionate siting of waste and industrial facilities in their neighbourhoods (Avcı, 2018, p. 52). An environmental justice perspective assumes that “people of colour and/or people of low income bear a disproportionate burden of pollution that is unfair and in need of change” (Kurtz, 2003, p. 887). Environmental justice movements are not only evaluated as oppositional movements, but also propositional and pro-active, as they oppose something for protecting a different way of producing, exchanging, and living. At this point, they are regarded as a part the collective search for an ecologically wise and socially just world (Temper, Demaria, Scheidel, Bene, & Martinez-Alier, 2018, p. 575).

2.6. Conclusion

In this chapter, the relationship between neoliberalism, ecology and commons has been brought to the fore with the point that environmental devastations are part of neoliberalism which is characterised by the plunder of nature and “living space” for the interests of the private companies collaborating with the state. Against the neoliberal destructions of nature, people coalesce with the shared purpose of protecting the living spaces in an ecologically encompassing way against the rent-seeking policies of neoliberalism. Commons, in this respect, has become the terrain in which the logic of neoliberalism and forms of resistance are in confrontation. Through examining the works of della Porta, Klein, Harvey, Hardt and Negri, Dardot and Laval, and Castells, this study intends to understand the characteristics of anti-neoliberal movements and the way these movements defend and reproduce the commons as a terrain of the struggle. These scholars emphasise the specific characteristics of the movements such as horizontality, spontaneity, non-hierarchical organisation without leadership, demand for direct and participatory democracy and prefigurative politics. In this respect, environmental movements can be regarded as a part of global anti-neoliberal movements due to their specific characteristics such as opposing the commodification of commons, having an organisational structure based on leaderless and grassroots democracy, and affirming prefigurative/ transformative politics.

Prefigurative politics is discussed in detail because the environmental politics assume to show the prefigurative actions through here and now practices, creating new subjectivities and creating a new way of relations based on solidarity and cooperation. Lastly, environmental movements are categorised as the environmentalism in defence of post-materialist values, the environmentalism of the poor/Third World, community-based environmental movements and global justice environmental movements. The theoretical frame developed so far will be operationalised to define, compare and assess anti-mining movement in Artvin and urban-based and network-like movement, KOS, in İstanbul.

CHAPTER 3

THE ANTI-MINING MOVEMENT IN ARTVIN: A STRUGGLE FOR LIFE, FUTURE AND HOPE

After the discussion on theoretical framework of the thesis, the following chapters will be based on the empirical narratives of the field research. In this chapter, after a short introduction to mining industry in Turkey, first, I will introduce the mining industry in the world and in Turkey in a nutshell, and then the history of anti-mining mobilization in Artvin, backed to 1990s. Second, I will discuss the social basis, protest repertoire, organizational characteristics of the movement and motivations of the actors. Then, the connection of the movement with other movements will be discussed. Because social basis, protest repertoire, organizational characteristics of the movement and motivations of the actors are the main themes discussed with reference to the classical and contemporary literatures on social movements, I will follow these themes through my thesis.

3.1. Mining Industry in the World and in Turkey

Global investment flows in mining has increased since 1980s in the countries worldwide. Neoliberal transformation of economic policies including opening resources to the private and international companies also affected mining industry. Developing countries adopted neoliberal reforms in the 1980s and 1990s helped investors overcome limitations imposed by national regulations and promoted the rapid expansion of multinational mining capital (Özkaynak & Rodriguez-Labajos, 2017). State owned mining assets have been privatized and under pressure from the IMF and the World Bank more than 70 countries have changed their mining laws to make them more attractive to foreign investment (Moody, 1996, p. 46). It was assumed that mining centred on a strategy of commodity extraction and export will bring economic development. According to this view, economic growth is a

necessary step for sustainable development, and the mining industry will offer new opportunities generating jobs and income. This was the basis on which the World Bank Group and other international financial institutions encouraged developing countries to adopt extractive industry growth as a development strategy in the 1990s (Campbell, 2009).

This process has also directly affected mining policies in Turkey. Until the 1980s, the mining sector in Turkey was controlled and coordinated by the state, and mining activities were overwhelmingly carried out by related state institutions (Üncü,2012, p.201). Encouraging foreign investments in general and gold mining in particular has been part of the neoliberal policies pursued in Turkey since the 1980s, in order to attract capital inflow as an effective tool for economic growth and societal welfare (Çoban, 2004, p. 446). After the implementation of neoliberal economic policies, the state withdrew its direct involvement in mining and encouraged private sector to engage in the mining. In this process, state-run mining establishments were privatized. Additionally, policies aspiring to attract foreign direct investment which facilitated global investment in the mining sector in Turkey were put into force (Üncü,2012, 201). With the change in mining law in 1985, numerous privileges to domestic and foreign capital were granted and with the change in the law in 1994, the state can grant mineral rights to foreign companies as long as the foreign companies are registered in accordance with the laws and regulations of Turkey. As a result, the gold mining industry started to flourish with the activities of gold mining transnational/ multinational companies, such as Eurogold, Cominco, and Tuprag, in Turkey (Üncü,2012, p. 201).

The search of mines by international companies started in the late 1980s in Turkey, firstly in Artvin and then in Bergama. In 1998, Canadian mining company, Cominco was licensed for mineral exploration and preliminary operation in Cerattepe, Artvin while Eurogold was granted an operation license in Bergama in 1989. Both companies faced with local resistances. In this chapter, it is aimed to understand and discuss actors (social basis), motivations, protest repertoire (tactics, strategies), organizational structure and networks of anti- mine movement

in Artvin. In order to understand these aspects of the movement, this chapter begins with an introductory background on the history of mining and resistance against it in Artvin region.

3.2. Artvin

Artvin is the city in the north-eastern corner of the country, on the border with Georgia and located near the Çoruh River. It has a distinct ecosystem surrounded by high mountains and forest with national parks including Borçka Valley National Park, Karagöl Sahara National Park, and Hatilla Valley National Park. According to the report by Chamber of Forest Engineers, 59 percent of the city is forests, 8 percent is agricultural lands and 13 percent is meadow and lea. The city consists of 1900 plant species, including 200 epidemic ones⁴.

Cerattepe is the name of the region in Kafkasör Plateau located just above the city center of Artvin. Cerattepe region has a unique ecosystem in terms of "fauna" and "flora", the only extension of the Caucasian ecosystem in Turkey, hosting the migration routes of migratory birds and many endemic species. This region is just 8km away from the city center of Artvin and its environment has rich and abundant vegetation, clean and fresh air. It also provides the sources of water supply for the town. The region bears the biggest "old growth forest", the forests with great age without significant destruction and having unique ecological features, in Europe and Middle Asia⁵. Hatilla Valley National Park, having one of the oldest forests in the country, is one of the national parks in Turkey among 41 national parks, with 1500 plant species. The national park supplies sources of water for the city and enables agricultural production and beekeeping and also hosts many animals including wild birds and animals. According to reports by the General Directorate

⁴ <http://yesilartvindernegei.org/artvin-ili-cerattepe-ve-genya-dagi-ormanlarinda-planlanan-madencilik-faaliyetlerinin-dogal-kaynaklar-uzerine-etkileri-hakkinda-rapor/>

⁵ <http://yesilartvindernegei.org/artvin-ili-cerattepe-ve-genya-dagi-ormanlarinda-planlanan-madencilik-faaliyetlerinin-dogal-kaynaklar-uzerine-etkileri-hakkinda-rapor/>

of Mineral Research and Exploration (MTA), Cerattepe is rich in terms of reserves of gold and copper as well as the zinc and similar mines⁶. However, this region is risky in terms of geographical conditions. The area consists of volcanic sedimentary rocks and presents a high risk of landslides⁷.

Artvin and Cerattepe are on the agenda of national and international public opinion for a while because of the resistance of the local people against mine project in the city for more than two decades. It is important to stress that mine is the only one aspect of ecologically destructive projects in Artvin. More than one hundred hydroelectric power plants (HES) projects above Çoruh River were permitted and some of them were already constructed. Local people opposed these projects in Fındıklı and Şavşat regions. Dam construction is another problem from ecological perspective in Artvin. Deriner Dam, whose construction was started in 1998 and ended in 2005, leads to destruction of ecological system in Çoruh River and changes the weather of the city. Dam construction in Yusufeli region started in 2013 and, many people were displaced through compulsory expropriation in the region.

In the interview, Nur Neşe Karahan, the president of Green Artvin Association, calls the dam and HES projects and “de-humanization” projects. She argues that these dams and HESs do not produce effective energy surplus. However, all productive lands near Çoruh River submerged, leading to the displacement of peasants from their lands and loss of their means of production. Karahan evaluates this process as a step for plunder of the city through compulsory migration. “Green road” is another destructive project that attempts to combine the plateaus by building roads over the untouched green areas through North Black Sea including 595-kilometer area with flatlands in Artvin. However, mining is the

⁶ http://www.mta.gov.tr/v3.0/sayfalar/bilgi-merkezi/maden_potansiyel_2010/Artvin_Madenler.pdf

⁷ <http://yesilartvindernegei.org/artvin-ili-cerattepe-ve-genya-dagi-ormanlarinda-planlanan-madencilik-faaliyetlerinin-dogal-kaynaklar-uzerine-etkileri-hakkinda-rapor/>

hottest topic in Artvin because of massive long-lasting opposition of local people, which will be discussed in detail.

3.3. The History of Mining and Mobilization in Artvin

The attempt to construct gold and copper mines in Artvin dated back to the end of 1980s, as mentioned before. In 1985, Mineral Research and Exploration (MTA) started the field works at the site, and the first mining license was given in 1987. In 1988, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources issued mineral exploration and preliminary operation licenses to the Canadian company, Cominco, which opened the first gallery in Cerattepe. In 1992, the national park borders were reduced from the two sides and Cerattepe was taken out of the national park zone. The remaining area was declared Hatilla Valley National Park on 31 august 1994. Short time after the exploration and drilling in 1994, the first adverse effects were observed; death of the wild animals due to contamination of water by chemicals.

After the attempts of company to gain consent of the people through public meetings on the benefits of mining to the city economy and increasing drilling activities in Cerratepe, Green Artvin Association (YAD) was established in 1995. The original motivation of the YAD was to be better informed about the mining and participate in the process which was supposed to be above the politics and to include all people in Artvin, as Karahan explained in the interview. In September of the same year, YAD invited many academics from various universities to carry out an investigation in Cerattepe in terms of consequences of mining in the region⁸ and it has become a driving force of the anti-mining struggle since that time. The first public demonstration concerning the environmental consequences of gold mining was held in Artvin in 1997 by the participation of a high number of people. In the same year, 10.000 signatures were collected and with the participation of political parties and the representatives of NGOs for the first time, these signatures were delivered to the Ministry of Environment in Ankara. The project was

⁸ <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>

suspended for re-examination. Facing opposition of the local people in Artvin, Cominco Company left the mine in 2002 and transferred the license to Inmet Mining. The Inmet Mining Company tried to re-start the project which led to the destruction of a part of the forests because of the drilling and exploration works. Another massive protest took place in 2 November 2007, by the participation of local people, civil society organizations, and deputies of Justice and Development Party and Republican People's Party⁹.

Legal process, one of the crucial aspects of anti- mine resistance, started in 2005; the Green Artvin Association and lawyers from Artvin Baro Association took the project to the court. The Council of State cancelled the previous mining license in 2009. Thanks to the favourable court decision, Inmet Mining withdrew from the project. Between 2009-2012 there was no mining activity in Artvin and Cerattepe region. In 2012, the Ministry of Energy and Natural Sources announced new 1344 mining licenses including Cerattepe and Genya. In the case of Artvin, there are 325 mine licenses including the one in Cerattepe. The total mining site announced is 4406 hectare and significant part of the city centre, especially upper neighbourhood, Kaftasör Turizm Development Centre and city forest are included in this mining site.

In this year, to cancel this public procurement and mining licenses, two legal cases were commenced in Rize Administrative Court. In February 2013, the court rejected suspension of execution of positive Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA)- that enabled the company for drilling and exploration works. In response, a new legal case was started by 281 people for the annulment of positive EIA report. Meanwhile, to show the discontent to the court decision, Green Artvin Association organized a demonstration by the participation of thousands of local people, deputies and environmental activists from different parts of Turkey¹⁰.

⁹ <https://www.haberler.com/artvin-de-madene-hayir-mitingi-haberi/>

¹⁰ <https://www.haberler.com/artvin-de-madene-hayir-mitingi-duzenlendi-4502101-haberi/>

Moreover, the expert exploration for the revocatory action for EIA for the underground copper mining was held under 1.5 km human chain of local people. Before court decision, the mining company attempted to transport trucks and construction equipment to Cerattepe via village road. Against this attempt, the local people started a watch of 14 days in Cerattepe in November 2014 in order to prevent the company from carrying out any operations in Cerattepe.

By the cancellation of positive EIA report by Rize Administrative Court, the watch in Cerattepe ended. However, in a short time, in June 2015, the mining company has received another positive EIA report thanks to 2009/7 circular which gives right to the mining company to make changes in EIA and submit it to the Ministry of Forestry through bypassing court process. With the participation of 751 people, making it the largest environmental case in Turkish history, another lawsuit was filed by 63 lawyers in July 2015. Because of new positive EIA reports and attempts of the mining company to carry out mining activities in Cerattepe before the decision of Council of State, local people of Artvin again started to be on watch lasting 245 days and ending with oppressive police violence on 15 February 2016. The Court, which concluded the case, took place on 16 September 2016. Before the court, Artvin governorship declared one-month state of emergency that banned any meetings and public statements in the city. At the same time, on 16 September 2016, Rize Governor announced one day state of emergency in the city; and security forces created a repressive atmosphere to intervenors by establishing many control points in the road from Artvin to Rize. Many intervenors could not reach to Rize because of these conditions. The lawyers of Green Artvin Association demanded recusation of judge because they believed that the court was already designed from the above and lost its impartiality. Regional administrative court withdrew from the case. Thus, the decision of Rize Administrative Court was finalized. As the last step of legal process, Council of State approved the positive EIA report in line with Rize Administrative Court in August 2017. The lawyers of the Green Artvin Association applied Constitutional

Court on the grounds of violation of right to fair trial on 23 August 2017 and will apply to the European Court of Human Rights¹¹.

This long running anti-mine resistance involved both social and legal struggle. It seems that increasing public awareness on mining through public meetings and invitation of academics for scientific research, especially after the establishment of Green Artvin Association, lobbying activities and petition campaigns had been tools for struggling against mining in the city in 1990s, in the phase of Cominco Company. Legal struggle against mine projects characterized the second face of the anti-mining struggle, in 2000s, in addition to protests in the city centre against mining projects. By the announcement of mining license for Cerattepe in 2012, the most vigorous phase of the struggle has been experienced in terms of the extensive mobilization of local people generating a vibrant social movement.

3.4. Social Basis of the Movement

This sub-section aims to respond to the basic question of the social movement studies, who the actors and what their motivations are, in the context of local resistance against the mining project in Cerattepe. The question of defining the actors/bases of social movements is challenging for scholars working on social movements because it also determines how you approach the subject; different approaches name the actors of the movement by different subjects, for example, proletariat is the name of the subject for class struggle; middle class for new social movements and precariat for anti- austerity movements. The social basis of the movement is also disputable in terms of environmental movements, as discussed in the theoretical framework of the thesis. Alier and Guha define the subject of environmental movements as “poor” and they introduce “the environmentalism of the poor” to define the struggle to defend the livelihood, especially with reference to peasant activism (Martinez-Alier J. , 2002). The environmentalism in developed countries is mostly debated with reference to environmentalism of the rich in order

¹¹ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/yesil-artvin-dernegi-cerattepe-icin-anayasa-mah-40560990>

to show the importance of post material values in defence of nature (Inglehart, 1981).

In this respect, I want to discuss social basis of anti-mining movement in Artvin. We can define the social basis of the movement as a broad coalition including both organized and non-organized sections of the society under the leadership of YAD¹² with the slogan “no to mine in Cerattepe”. The anti-mine movement in Artvin depends on a heterogonous social basis due to the participation of people from different age, gender, political affiliations and class. The actors are local people of Artvin who are and will be directly affected by mining in the region. From young people to old people – 93 years old woman named Erzade and 100 years old man named Hacı have become the symbols of the movement and actively participated in the activities of YAD, such as protests, press releases, collecting signatures for petitions¹³-, people from different occupations including teachers, civil servants, artisans, farmer, beepers, people from different unions such as Eğitim- Sen, Eğitim- İş, and both right wing and left wing people from different political affiliations such as CHP, MHP, ÖDP, *Halkevleri* supporters.

In order to reflect this characteristic of the movement, I paid attention to include equal numbers of women and men and make interviews with people from different ages, occupations and different political affiliations such as CHP, ÖDP, *Halkevleri*, MHP, Felicity Party and AKP¹⁴ to ensure balanced representation in this study.

¹² The organizational structure of YAD will be discussed in detail in the following part.

¹³http://www.cumhuriyet.com.tr/haber/cevre/902633/100_yasindaki_Cerattepe_gazisi_madene_karsi_imza_topluyor.html

¹⁴ I also conducted an interview with an AKP supporter who joined protests and watches previously, yet as of today now, he does not oppose the mining because he believes that the legal process was exhausted. Therefore, I did not include this interview in the analysis since he is no longer an activist of the movement.

It should be emphasized that women have become important actors of this mobilization. Apart from the fact that YAD has female president, women have been in the forefront in the movement. For example, after the police attack in 15 February 2016 that finished the watch in Cerattepe, women organized a march to check the situation of mine site in 17 February 2016, which was suppressed again very violently by the police. During the fieldwork, I also observed that mostly women played an active role to announce press releases and meetings of YAD by visiting shops, houses and coffeehouses in the city. Artvin Woman Platform (*Artvin Kadın Platformu*) has played an important role in anti-mine struggle. Melek (27/W), participants of Artvin Woman Platform, stated that after the police intervention, the platform regularly organized creative protests such as handing out *lokma* under the slogan “we share our *lokma*, not our land”. For her, the platform mobilized other groups in Artvin against mining. Female interviewees connected the mobilization of the women against mining to the progressive city culture that gives importance to gender equality in social and economic life, the role of the women in life as breadwinner and women’s relations with the nature. Canan (27/W) expressed her ideas about active participation of the women in the movement as follows:

I believe that the reason for that is Artvin’s being a republican city. Our women do work; they work both in the garden and in the work and make economic contribution. Women have a say in Artvin. There are many artisan and craftswomen, too. The literacy rate is quite high among women and they are equal to men. We already have such a culture. And for the opposition against mines, I may say that women are more maternal and caring as they do have mothers’ soul. Our women stand up to any potential harm to this city.

In addition to the emphasis on being women’s motherhood identity, the mobilization of women is also attributable to their emotional and material relationship with the nature, as Derya (34/W) explains

We are in the nature; we love the nature as we love our child. We know we should care the nature as we care our child. Women know this. They know you cannot take without giving. In this respect, women are more sensitive to the nature.

By emphasizing material conditions of the women with respect to nature and connecting exploitation of women's labour and nature, Melek (27/W) stated:

Here it is always the women who sow and harvest the crops, raise the livestock, bring up their children and deal with their gardens and orchards. That's why women are in touch with nature. They care for our nature and environment very much like care to her child. They assume a greater responsibility for nature as they know the felicities that nature provides them. They are very well aware that they bring up their children or care for their mothers and fathers thanks to this nature. As women have been exploited for many years on these lands and now the exploitation of nature begins, it is natural that women lead the way for defending the nature. That is why it attracted so much attention and created such an overwhelming impression.

This is not only peculiar to the resistance in Artvin; in many environmentalist local movements in Turkey, women have become leading figures; such as "*Havva Ana*" in the struggle against Green Road in Rize, by her words: "who is state? State is us". Moreover, in different parts of the world, women have been the first to come forward against the destruction of environment: against destruction of their lands and livelihoods, forests, against mining, dams and the privatization of water (Caffentzis & Federici, 2014; Jenkins, 2017; Mies, 2014).

Women have been in the forefront in anti-mining movement in Artvin. However, irrespective of gender, age, class and political views, the movement has achieved to unite locals around anti- mine discourse "no to mine in Cerattepe". "No to mine" is the common slogan of the movement. "killer company, leave Artvin" "we don't surrender Cerattepe", "Cerattepe cannot be passed, people in Artvin cannot be defeated", "the above ground is more precious than the below" are the slogans used in watches and demonstrations that has united people around the movement. Hence it can be forcefully contended that the movement has created a collective identity; activists define themselves as the local people of Artvin whose "living space" is threated by mining company and who defend their life, city, nature and environment.

It can be argued that the peculiarities of the city also helped to create construction of collective identity of the movement. For example, the movement could

transcend social cleavages. As many interviewees stated, extreme cleavages between classes is not the case in the city centre of Artvin; mostly civil servants and artisans live in the city; even if there is a cleavage in terms of political preferences, most locals have kinship relations, they know each other very closely so there has been no significant polarization or hostility between different political groups. For example, one of the members of ÖDP¹⁵, leftist political party, introduced me to the ex-chief of *Ülkü Ocakları*¹⁶, right-wing nationalists, which indicates that such differences between people did not hinder personal and social bonding at the local level. In this respect, the movement achieved to create collective identity, which is evaluated as essential to the identification of a movement (Rootes, 2004, p. 610) and as both a necessary precursor and product of movement collective action (Benford, 2004, p. 433). Activists focused on “living space” as a hegemonic discourse uniting people all social classes and political affiliations around the movement. In that sense, the movement seems to achieve a hegemonic discourse by identifying the struggle with the defence of life in the eyes of local community in Artvin. In this respect, the protestors collectively articulated a ‘resistance identity’ of the movement, that Castells defines as “a type of identity-building that constructs forms of collective resistance against oppression, making it easier to essentialize the boundaries of resistance” (2010, p. 9).

Creating collective identity also requires identification of the “other”. At this point, the construction of identity implies a negative identification of those who are not only excluded but actively opposed, in addition to a positive definition of those participating in a movement (Diani & della Porta, 2006, p. 94). Activists defined the opponent “Cengiz”, who want to plunder the nature. The concrete enemy has played a role for identity construction in that respect. During daily

¹⁵ Freedom and Solidarity Party (ÖDP) is a socialist political party established in 1996 by different leftist groups and influential political actor in the city.

¹⁶ *Ülkü Ocakları* is an ultranationalist movement and organization attached to the MHP and is oriented towards Turkish- Islamic discourse.

conservations and the interviews, it was repeatedly stated that the company attempts to conquer Artvin from the inside- which refers to attempts of Cengiz Company to collaborate with local people. Establishing *Bizim Artvin* Association by the proponent of the mining company and government was evaluated as an attempt to persuade local people in favour of mining. The mining company tried to convince people that the mining in the region will benefit the city and region. It was documented that Cengiz Company and *Bizim Artvin* Association signed a contract to “inform local people in Artvin about mining, build a bridge between company and public opinion”. The company also indicates that the mining provides employment opportunities in the city and some local people work for the company in the mine. There are also Artvin origin small companies that work for the mining company. All these were evaluated by the interviewees as enemy of Artvin and those who sell their city for the sake of money. In that point, the movement articulated an alternative discourse, that emphasizes the instinct value of the nature against profit, to confront discourse of the company advocating mining in terms of creating job opportunities and increasing welfare in the city.

In short, the anti-mine movement in Artvin has heterogenous social bases by the participation of people from different age, gender, political affiliations and class, the actors are local people of Artvin who has been and will continue to be directly affected by the mining activities and projects in the region. The social basis of the movements overlaps with the social basis of community-based environmental movements based on symbiotic relations with the nature, discussed by Çoban (2004) with reference to Bergama anti-mining movement. According to Çoban (2004) , community based environmental movements are characterized by the symbiotic relationship between the community and environment, which is oriented towards the idea of both “save the environment” or “save the community” since community life and the environment are interdependent. This symbiotic relationship is significant in Artvin case. It can also be contended that the assumption of della Porta and Piazza (2008, p. 59) which holds that communitarian-based collective identities tend to transcend cleavages of class, gender, ethnicity, or religion is relevant in this case.

3.5. The Motivations of Actors

The question of why people participate in social movements, in other words, what are the underlying motivations of the actors to participate in social movements has attracted scholars' attentions working on social movements for a long time. During the interviews, I aimed to understand why people participate in the protests against mining and oppose mining activities in Artvin, hence I explored the motivations of the movement actors who actively participate in anti- mine movement.

Long-running opposition against mining has created an awareness among local people in Artvin, especially thanks to the activities carried by Green Artvin Association. During the field study in Artvin, I realized that many people are aware of the effects of the mine from a scientific viewpoint; because they have listened to many academics and engineers about the effects of the mine in the region. Environmental risks associated with the mine were repeatedly noted by the interviewees. However, the reasons why people oppose the mine project in Artvin shows diversity; the effects of the mines to the city, to the nature, to the neighbouring countries, villages, to children and to the next generations, political and social culture of the city, to public health, to water resources and to relations of production/ reproduction are mentioned by the interviewees as the reasons why they had been opposing mining in Artvin.

When asked the potential effects of mine, almost all interviewees referred to the mine's long-term potential effects on the city. The most obvious effect of the mine seems that it is going to destruct the Artvin city centre which would make life in Artvin will be unbearable because the mine site in Cerattepe is located on the above and on top of the city. The most obvious danger of the mine to the city is the landslide risk. Artvin is constructed between the mountains with a highly steep wooded slope, consequently the destruction of the forests in this area would increase the landslide risk in Artvin city centre, as expressed by many interviewees. In this respect, "to defend the city where we live" is one of the common discourses among the activists. The discourse on defence of the city

enables actors from different and opposing political identities to act together. A member of the *Ülkü Ocakları*, Utku (23/M) stated that “The only hesitation that our friends have is that we don’t compromise with the left; however, we are struggling for Artvin. The struggle that we were engaged was only for Artvin”. He added that “I am participating in this struggle to save Artvin. Artvin will get worse. The next generation will not enjoy living Artvin. We were born here and we want to stay here”. One of the main themes among interviewees was that mining activities will force local people to migrate from their city and it was claimed that their resistance was for the sake of continuing to stay and live in Artvin, as Utku pointed. Ayten (66/W) explained why she opposes as:

The mine will directly affect our life, it will restrict our life space. It will contaminate our water, and lead to landslides when trees will be cut. Our homes are in landslide site. When mine is extracted, we have to migrate, but there is nowhere to go. We want to continue living here. You cannot find this nature in other place, we don’t pay for the water, we drink tap water.

As Ayten pointed out, leaving Artvin and migrating to other places was evaluated as one of the most serious long-term consequences of the mine. Selma (63/W) explained why she opposed the mine in a similar way: “The mine means disappearance of Artvin. If Artvin disappears, we lose. We are used to live here, we cannot live somewhere else, how we can get used to after this age”. Many interviewees indicated that migration would lead to the disappearance of “*Artvinlilik*” (The identity of being from Artvin)”, which is referred to , as “rootlessness”. During the interviews, I tried to understand the meaning of “from Artvin”, or living in Artvin for local people; in other words, why they insist living in this city. During the field study, I met with many people who are happy to live in Artvin. Some of them had the opportunity to live in another city but they chose to live in Artvin. I realized that people have connections with the city in many various ways. Most people feel strong emotional connections with the city and their defence of their city also means resisting the loss of emotional ties to their city. The 26 years -old Ali explained his emotional tie with the city in the following way:

There we have a moral responsibility in the first place. I cannot resign myself to the destruction of the lands where I was born and grown up. Therefore, it is very precious for me. We would definitely oppose if it were somewhere else too but you have a different perspective when it comes to your own homeland. We cannot resign ourselves to the destruction of the city where we were born and grown up, home to our memories and ancestors, the lands of our grandfathers and grandmothers. That's why I am against the mines.

For local people living in Artvin, the mobilization against mine is also regarded as the defence of those values represented by their city; like solidarity, friendship, trust, social ties, culture of mutual cooperation and ties with the ancestors. Because Artvin is a small city, many people get to know each other. Hence people could form close personal connections with each other and living in Artvin enables bonds of solidarity, trust and support between people. This creates a solidarity culture in the city. Defining the city as “socialist Artvin in capitalist Turkey”, Melek (27/W) explained this culture:

We establish our own communes and we support each other when necessary. That is to say, here we can create an off-the-system life for ourselves and, therefore, we cannot sacrifice. Besides, as Artvin is a city identified with its culture, here we can actualize ourselves off the system. There is no too much class discrimination here and, as we are natives with own lands and capable of sustaining a life isolated of the state and the system, no alternative location or no financial means would satisfy us. Assuming that all these lands have been expropriated, settling to a new life in somewhere else does not make sense to us. We would like to stay here and maintain our culture, grow up our solidarity and live together with our forests and animals.

Living in Artvin provides women with an environment without social pressures indicated by some of the female interviewees. Artvin has social democrat background and the city centre is not dominated by conservative life style. 41 years old Sakine told why she insists living in Artvin in accordance with trust relationship, friendship, and relaxed environment for the women as “I don't want to leave Artvin, I cannot live anywhere else, I cannot find such a safe environment outside, you cannot trust people, I have a life and friends here, I don't want to live nervously, I go to home at 12 pm here, we stay outside with women”.

Especially different from other parts of Black Sea region, leftist organizations and political parties have survived in Artvin and have been influential in the politics in the city. Most leftist interviewees paid attention to this point. They indicated that they feel responsibility of leftist culture in the city inherited from the past, especially after 12 September coup which suppressed leftist movements and organizations in the country. Artvin was known as one of the castles of the left prior to military coup in 1980. Especially, *Dev-Yol*, radical leftist movement, were influential in the city. The interviewees considered resistance to the mine company as their political and moral responsibility, and also as something which represents the tradition or the culture of resistance historically represented by the leftist activism in Artvin. As Ali (30/M) stated:

We feel responsible, Artvin has a tradition of struggle, Artvin is not an ordinary city; Cerattepe and Genya are the mountains where people resisted the 12 September military coup. We can't let these lands to be plundered by the capital, Cengiz company. We have also such a moral responsibility and we have a culture of resistance since 1970s. We have to continue this legacy.

Many interviewees define Artvin as “paradise”, “life affirming city”, and “beautiful city with its nature and people”. Nature is an important complement of the city from the viewpoint of local people. When asked what Artvin meant, another respondent Emre (29/M) said “The most important feature is nature, rather than city. Nature comes to our mind when we think Artvin”, whereas Derya (34/W) defined Artvin as “Our peak is the sky, Artvin means freedom for me, all forests are mine, this is my heaven”. Because the city is mostly associated with its nature and natural beauties, destruction of the city is equalized with destruction of the nature by the interviewees. It was commonly stated that mine will inevitably destroy the forests in Cerattepe and national valleys near Cerattepe, and the city will turn into a desert after destruction of the forests. Actually, the trees were already cut down in the mine site, which can be seen in the distance during my stay. In that respect, to protect the nature is one of the underlying motivations of the actors stressed by many interviewees. Because protection of the nature is repeatedly stressed by the interviewees, I intended to understand the meaning of nature for local people and the way of connecting themselves with nature during

the fieldwork. Nature has various means for the people; it is mostly associated with life, living space, childhood, the homeland with good memories, the place to relax, enjoy and have fun with family members or friends. Many interviewees stated that they don't go seaside for vacations instead they prefer to go to Hatilla Valley for swimming and relaxing. The statements of the interviewees on nature were mostly about how they enjoy and relax in the nature. Sakine (75/W) told that;

We relax when we go to Cerattepe, it is the picnic, rest and leisure area, we don't want to go to the sea in the holidays, going to the forest is much more relaxing for us. However, when this place is destroyed, we cannot find any place to go. These places will be dispossessed.

During the interviews and daily conversations, people became highly emotional when they talked about Cerattape and expressed the meaning of the nature for themselves, as Sakine (75/W) put it:

When court expert came for the first time, we went to Cerattepe, but I didn't feel cold because I was in my nature. There were two or three-month children having three, four leaves; what happened to them now?

However, I should add that this is not totally romanticising the nature; instead, those people possess a material/practical relationship with the nature, as Melek (27/W) stated:

Like the offices and residences of people in metropolitan cities, we do have our nature here in Artvin and the Black Sea region. When we go to forest, we pick up our mastic, mushrooms, nuts and cones. We meet a variety of our houses' needs with these forest products.

Therefore, the protection of the nature is connected with both emotional and material relationships of the people with the nature from the viewpoint of the interviewees. The other aspect about the nature is its identification with the health and remedy. This aspect is commonly emphasized by older people. For example, 93 years old woman, Esma, stated how living in the green area helped her to feel healthy and younger as "The nature here is green, water is clean, the mountains have various kinds of medicine warehouse. The flowers in the mountains are

medicine warehouse. The flowers in the mountains were used as a medicine in the past. Our ancestors used to live in such a green area. I am 93 years old and I owe to this weather. I am coming here, and I am able to breathe. I feel as if I am 15 years old thanks to this weather”. Hasan (65/M) also explained how his wife recovered thanks to the nature;

Your aunt felt sick, I rented a house in the forests and she recovered. People in Artvin prefer Kafkasör to going to sea. Longevity, strength...The weather I breath is healthy. This is our life, we lived here and we will die here.

The notion of “living space” was commonly used by interviewees when describing the nature. In daily conversations and interviews, many interviewees referred to nature, Cerattepe, forests and living space interchangeably. This concept is used to refer to the close relationship with the nature; nature as a life space refers to the place to live, breathe, enjoy, as a space that supplies water and livelihood, and to indicate the feeling of being part of the nature. When I asked Sezen (50/W) “why this nature is so important for you”, she impressively explains;

We have no other place to breathe, no other sea but only this nature. We have nowhere to go, we all belong here, and it is our only living space. Cerattepe is not far from here. You will get to my place in ten minutes just below there. We eat, drink and continue with our daily lives while they drain out our brains out there. It is our living space and, therefore, we care about it very much. It is not a place far away from here that we try to defend. We do not fight against the state and the people or against something beneficial to all. All that we do is to defend our living space. This is my living space where I breathe, eat and drink. This is where I live. I have no chance to survive here without them. As I said, this is our living space. If it were a place far from Artvin region, then you could say “it is none of your business”. But it is our mountain that they excavate. All our food and water come from there, our lands lie there and our animals graze there. It is all the same for us, we have no other area but Kafkasör, Cerattepe and Merzifon. We go to these places for leisure time; we say “let’s go to Kafkasör”.

The identification of Cerattepe with the living space was common among the interviewees so the struggle for Cerattepe against mine is evaluated as the defence of living space. Umut (29/M) defined anti-mine struggle as a struggle for existence to defend their living space, which is conceptualized as the homeland, feelings and memories belonged to the past:

We fight for our survival now. The corporation, the government or the state attacks on our living space where we were born and grown up and they care only for money without any concerns for the people living there. They neglect not just the people but the trees, animals and the cultural heritage, as well. It means the destruction of the place where I was born and grown up, where I had my first contacts with the people, the streets I walked down, my early memories and feelings in my life.

Many activists defined their motivation to participate in anti-mining movement, in this respect, as to defend their living spaces. This concept is also used in press releases of the YAD, for example, “We are struggling to defend our living space in the period without law and justice. The struggle for the right to live is, at the same time, the struggle for right and justice¹⁷”, to protest the decision of Council of State that approved positive EIA report for mining activity in Cerattepe.

In addition to the motivation of defence of living space, the defence of life is another common theme used by the activists to indicate their motivations behind mobilization. As Neşe Karahan, the president of YAD, puts it; “This is a matter of existence or non-existence for Artvin. We are protecting our lives... This is a struggle for the life, rather than being a political struggle”. Similarly, 75 years-old Sakine replies to the question “Why you are opposing mine in Artvin” by replying “Firstly health. Wellness, greens, water and life. One single word, life. I am opposing due to my life. Of course, I want to live a healthy life in old ages”.

Actually, this is not only peculiar to the struggle in Cerattepe; ecology activists have defined themselves “life defender” for a long time across the world and Turkey. The identification of nature with living space or life enables activists to refer universal values, cutting across social, economic and political differences. The theme of life defence in Artvin case is applied to show this characteristic of the struggle. Conceptualizing struggle as a life defence or life space defence refers to the characteristics of the struggle above the politics and enables people from different political views to act together.

¹⁷ 19 July 2007, available at <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/artvin-halkina-ve-ulkenin-butun-cevre-dostlarina-duyurulur/>

Approaching nature as a heritage that should pass to the future generations was another common rhetoric concerning the nature. This is not only about material aspects of the nature; of course, they refer to protecting the trees, but sometimes, this heritage refers to the sense that you live when you are in the nature, or emotions and experiences lived in the nature, as Sırma (54/W) expressed that “Our fathers took us to picnic, we lived our happiest moments there. We ate *döner*, played, enjoyed. I hope I can create such an environment for my grandchildren. I can share this environment and smell this air”. As Sırma pointed out, the destruction of nature blocks future generations to enjoy the nature, as previous generation did. This is often seen as the damages of the mine to the children and future generations as, Derya (34/W) stated: “I enjoyed this nature and I became happy. The next generation should experience this”. This aspect is especially expressed by women interviewees. 65 years old Ayşe told that she is struggling for the future generations and added that “Mine will destruct us, it will destruct the future of our children. We came and we are going, but it is very bad for our children” while 54 years old Sırma indicated that;

I have lived and passed half of the way, now my child is 27 years old, what is the sin of my grandchildren who have not born yet. How I can explain this irresponsibility to my grandchildren in future.

In this respect, to protect children and future generations and to leave the nature as a heritage to children and future generations is another primary motivation of the actors to participate in the movement. Turning now to the impact of mining to the nature, it is important to remind that nature includes natural water resources and animals. Interviewees often emphasized the effects of mine on nature with respect to natural water resources and animals. The mining activity has a direct effect on water pollution in the region because tap water in Artvin comes from spring water in the mountains, which is very close to the mine site in Cerattepe. People do not buy bottled water, as the case in big cities and they get used to drink tap water. Actually, since mine was begun in Cerattepe, pollution in tap water was already started. When I was in Artvin in the summer, I got sick and went to the hospital and the doctor in the hospital told that these medical cases were

commonly encountered because of the pollution in tap water. In the interview with Neşe Karahan, she underlined the complaints of the villagers about the polluted spring water, which starts from mine site and passes across mine villages including beekeeping sites. The villagers informed YAD about the water pollution in the village near to mine site. They went to the village and took sample of the water and made a denunciation, Karahan stated. In the video taken during this investigation, it is clearly seen how spring water are muddied¹⁸. In this video, the villager/beekeeper stated that it is the first time that water became dirty, even previous mining activities did not create such water pollution. In the video, cultivated lands of the villagers are seen and they indicated that they have to irrigate their lands by this water¹⁹. Moreover, one of the villagers asserted that as a result of the infusion of chemicals and oils to the spring water, butterflies, insects, ants and the bees will die if they drink this water²⁰.

In this regard, the water pollution affected not only people, but also animals. In the interviews, it was commonly stated that the world does not only belong to the humans; animals are part of this nature. Sirma stated that the mine will harm not only humans but also animals living in the nature: “I am not worried about only humans. I do not want animals to be hurt, the nature has a balance, I do not want this balance to be destroyed”. By the destruction of forests where wild animals live and polluting of water, mine will harm the animals. In the same video, beekeeper adds that bees, “source of our life” also drink this water and “our life totally depends on this water²¹. By this statement, he refers to the effects of the mine to the livelihoods. In July 2017, it was reported that 27 cows were poisoned,

¹⁸ The relevant video is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UkDabU1Its>

¹⁹ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5fHDvE3bl_Y

²⁰ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UkDabU1Its>

²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UkDabU1Its>

the owner of the poisoned cows related intoxication to the mining activity, because the cows drank muddy spring water. He stated that cattle-farming is their only means of livelihood²². Beekeeping is another important mean of livelihood in the city. Hatilla Valley and Macahel region is known for honey produced locally. According to Artvin Governorship, in Artvin, 1 million 150 thousand tone honey is produced in a year²³. Beekeeper Mehmet (64/M) stated that bees are very sensitive animals, therefore they can die easily because of the pollution in the nature. Another beekeeper Ayten (66/W) stated that it will be the last year that we produce qualified honey (in 2017), if the mining activity in Cerattepe continue. She added that if the mining activity continues, most of the bees will die and the quality of the honey will decrease sharply, because of the water pollution and pollution of the flowers that bees pollinate. Moreover, when the cyanide mixes in water, the honey that we produce will be toxic honey, she indicated. Therefore, they believe that mine will directly affect the means of production and livelihood.

Another major motivation of the actors to participate in the movement is the adverse effects of the prior experience mining in the region and its lived effects to the nature and human health. Utku (23/M) expressed the potential effect of the mine to nature by stating that “Many trees will be cut, it will turn to Murgul or like the other place mine is extracted. It will be moorland, even a grass will not grow”. Many interviewees referred to Murgul, one of the districts of Artvin, to exemplify the region where the effects of mining activities can be seen clearly. The statement of Sirma (54/W) "The people in Artvin did not learn mine from tv shows, they lived, people know from Murgul" indicated such an experience of the local people in the region. During the field study, many people told that before the mine operated, Murgul was lively, colourful and green town, and it totally turned into a “ghost” town after the mine. They had relatives who died young because of occupational illness related to the working in the mine. During the interview, I was

²² <https://www.cnnturk.com/turkiye/cerattepede-korkulan-oldu?page=5>

²³ <http://www.artvin.gov.tr/artvin-ormanlari-ballaniyor>

very impressed by the statements of a 75 -years -old mineworker woman, Sakine, retired from the sales unit of copper operation in Murgul. She lost her brother and father at an early age working in the mine because of the occupational illness. She recounted her living and working experience in Murgul in the following way:

If a bird were to drink from the waters of the mine, that bird would die instantly. I personally witnessed it. Murgul River used to flow black. If a living creature were to drink from that water, that animal would perish... We could not go to office with a pair of socks, it would be riddled. My heart is torn apart, I cried a lot in the morning. Murgul copper factory was established in 1950. I worked there for 16 years in the sales department. The people woke up and they started to revolt. Because, they had no single bunch of parsley as the SO₂ gas from the mine burnt them completely and now that region is a valley... A kind of vapor would arise when it melted. That was a coloured vapor which burns your skin. My father used to work. He died at the age of 50. We had nothing, we had our jobs but my father and brother lost their health. It affects your life one way or another, my friends died of cirrhosis and all those days are like a dream now.

Murgul is not only sole example for the local people. In one of the villages of Artvin, Bakırköy, 16 km far away from city centre, copper factory was active until 1945. Although the factory was closed more than 70 years ago, its effects still continue. Another interviewee from Bakırköy village, Derya (34/W), explained the effects of closed copper factory:

There used to be a cooper factory operating until 1945 in our village. I participated in this struggle on my own, I cannot recall exactly. But I started to fight after witnessing all those happened. Although the factory was shut down in 1945, we still suffer due to the poison today. That factory was said to be an underground mining but...I have a chemist friend who did some research and detected contamination in water more than in soil. That friend of mine warned us not to drink that water although the water comes from a spring above the village and not to eat the crops grown there. We used to pick the berries grown there make jam from them. We have a cancer case in every neighbourhood in our village. For instance, I lost my mom to cancer. My grandmother and aunt had cancer. That is to say, once you see all these, you come realize that there is no return from this.

As this quotation also indicates the previous experiences in the mine towns and villages are generally linked to the health concerns from the viewpoint of interviewees. Mining activity in the region is supposed to affect people's health, which is another reason why people oppose mining activities in the region. In other words, to live in a healthy life is one of the motivations of the actors. Just like in

the case of Chernobyl disaster in 1986, very common cancer cases are regarded as long-term results of mine. Another interviewee, Fidan (30/ W) from Bakırköy villages, explained this:

I have witnessed the remnants of the mine. For the last 65 years, we have been living by harvesting the crops on the lands of the factory shut down in 1945. However, there has been at least one cancer case in every household and we continued to live there. After the incidents in Cerattepe, the samples were taken and analysed from that region and it was said that a cow would melt if you were to throw it into that water. We continued to live there for years without realizing it. After seeing all these, we will not permit mining in Cerattepe.

Another main reason articulated by interviewees pertains to political concerns. The struggle for Cerattepe is evaluated as a hope and destiny for other ecology struggles in both Artvin, Black Sea region and Turkey. As mentioned earlier, Cerattepe is only one of the mining sites; there are 325 mining licenses in Artvin, in addition to many hydroelectric power plants, dams and stone quarry projects. People regarded Cerattepe as a symbol for the struggle against environmentally destructive projects in Artvin, and it is believed that the giving up the struggle for Cerattepe means the loss of the struggle in all parts of Artvin. For example, Ali (30/M) explained the importance of Cerattepe struggle by stating that;

We must ensure that that Cengiz Construction will leave those places. Because, it is a full-fledged attack not just limited to Cerattepe. Cerattepe is a symbol of this. Once they enter from Cerattepe, there are mining permits for all mountains of Artvin including Kafkasör, Atmaca, Orcunk, Dirink, Hod, and the lower villages... I see the mine as our last front. Once they pass Cerattepe, all other environment issues will become hopeless in the future. A failure to occur at the strongest place will inflict pessimism on all of us. If we cannot prevent the project there, then there will be despair for many local areas. However, a success in this region will affect many other places and many other people will internalize the belief that we can win if we resist. Therefore, we have to revive the fight in Cerattepe.

Therefore, the struggle for Cerattepe exceeds the local defence of the forests; it represents a hope for other environmental struggles. Another young men Emre (29/M) explained how anti-mining struggle in Cerattepe would affect other struggles in different localities in Artvin;

There are discussions on a stone quarry in my village and the people there say “look, they have mines in Cerattepe, how can we prevent it here in our village if they could not prevent it even there”. I am afraid that this perception will settle down. It will affect all the places, they will destroy Çoruh completely. There are mining activities even in Borçka today. They have not started to dig yet but they will extract mine in Çayeli, a village of Borçka and the expropriation works have already begun. There are rumors of mining works in Borçka and Ardanuç. Ardanuç remains within the mining zone and many mining permits have been distributed. The region from Borçka to Ardanuç including Şavşat, Ardanuç, Borçka, Artvin centre is a mining site. That is to say, they will destroy this entire region.

In this respect, Cerattepe seems as the first step to plunder the nature; facilitation of other projects in the city is one aspect of effects of mining from the political perspective. It is also thought that mining in the region will change social democratic political culture²⁴ in the city. Emre (29/M) stressed that the political culture in Artvin is attacked by this project to change its socio- economic and demographic structure:

We have political concerns as well. This project will destroy the region politically and it will increase conservatism in this region. If you ask how the project will make the region more conservative, it will change the socio-economic characteristics of the people in the region. People from the neighbouring districts and provinces will come here and the Cengiz Construction Company will influence municipal and local elections in this region through the families of workers they will employ. The works will move together with their families... They try to change the political structure. They try to modify the democratic structure of Artvin and make Artvin conservative city.

The statement that “our nature will be destroyed for the sake of profit of Mehmet Cengiz” is stressed by many people during the field study. Against the discourse of the government and mine company that the mining will offer an employment opportunity for local people and contribute to the wealth of the city, people

²⁴ By social democrat city culture, I don't refer to voting rate of CHP. It is obvious that CHP gets higher vote in Artvin (especially in city centre) compared to country-wide voting rate. What I mean is the political atmosphere in the city. Local people are often proud of education rate and being comfortable city for women. Actually, as a single woman in the city, I did not encounter any difficulties in city centre- this may not be the case for other cities in Black sea region. CHP acts close to the socialist organizations in the city, different from party's nation-wide attitude. Socialist organizations, especially ÖDP and *Halkevleri* were active and influential in politics in the city. This is also about political heritage of the city to the extent that Artvin was known as one of the castles of the left prior to military coup in 1980.

indicate that there is no benefit for the local people in Artvin, and they also stressed that even the state has no benefit from mining in the region. Many interviewees stated that the state will receive 2% of the profit. There was no homogenous and uniform discourse on mining in general; some interviewees stated that they don't totally oppose mining; but they underlined that they are against mining in Cerattepe. All interviewees from different ages and political views agreed that the only one that benefits from mining in Cerattepe is Cengiz Company. However, there is dissensus about what will be the case if the mine is extracted by the state, not private company. Especially right-wing interviewee indicated that Artvin can be scarified for the sake of the state- if state has benefit from the mining. 65 years old ex-president of *Ülkü Ocakları* Hasan argued that:

If they were to say we remove Artvin completely but we must extract this mine here and the money will go to the treasury of the Republic of Turkey, then we would sacrifice. It would be for the benefit of the state at least. Just think of Gallipoli where we had 250 thousand of martyrs and there were people from Artvin among them. No worries if we are to save our state... All our efforts are for Turkish nation and Turkey. If it were the Republic of Turkey that extracted this mine here and it would benefit to our state, then we would sacrifice not only Artvin but ourselves as well. But it is not the case as they grant it to Mehmet Cengiz who swears to me and my family blatantly. So, what is in it for us?

In all interviews, the name of Mehmet Cengiz was pronounced. When asked why you are against mining in Cerattepe, most people indicate that they don't want their nature to be destroyed for the sake of profit of Mehmet Cengiz. It is also important to note that this rhetoric is not peculiar to left wing people, people from different ages and different political views made the same point without exception. For example, 75 years old conservative woman Sakine told that:

We don't want to get poisoned for the sake of Mehmet Cengiz. For the profit of one person, even it is for the profit of ten people, it doesn't make sense. They should not plunder my nature, I don't care the profit. The water will come from Çekirge and I will drink water here. Why; for the profit of Cengiz. There is nothing else. I don't want this, they should leave the nature alone, I am so sad.

During daily conversations, it is frequently stated that the government discards citizens in Artvin and Artvin city, for the welfare of Mehmet Cengiz. 63 years old

MHP supporter Selma stated this opinion in the interview that “They ignore 30.000 people for one person; Mehmet Cengiz”. Duygu (45/W) agreed with Selma by stating that “They will force people to leave their homes, why, just for Cengiz and his followers. They will ignore Artvin and the people in Artvin for the sake of two people”. At this point, the role of the government and its collaboration with the private company were repeatedly stressed by the interviewees. By stating that local people are the real owner of Artvin, Sirma (54/W) argued that:

We are the owners of these lands in Artvin. We have protected all these lands and mountains for centuries. We have not cut down a single tree as we implement the forestry laws here very strictly. However, someone else cuts them down and contaminates the nature blatantly. No fines or punishments when it comes to the corporation. A choice must be made between the people and the corporation. You cannot govern a state like a corporation. You cannot make benefits available to certain people from the state sources.

In this respect, role of the ruling party in the mine project in Cerattepe is pointed out by many interviewees. It can be argued that this is an anti-government stand rather than anti-state. There is a powerful opposition to government policies and collaboration of the government with the private company. However, this discontent does not direct towards the state. In this respect, it can be argued that state and government do not correspond the same unity from the viewpoint of the interviewees. The collaboration between Cengiz construction company and the ruling party has been emphasized by many interviewees and mining in Cerattepe was evaluated as the project of the government. All interviewees indicated that the government directly supported this project. The collaboration between the ruling party and Cengiz Company is also connected to the attack of the security forces in 15 February 2016 to enable the company to carry its heavy equipment to Cerattepe mine site. Many interviewees stated that state’s security forces, paid by the taxes of citizens, worked for Cengiz company²⁵. 64 years old Mehmet expressed this aspect;

²⁵ In Cerattepe near to mine site, police soldiers were still waiting for mine site when I was in Artvin.

Does the constabulary protect private company? It does here. The constabulary came outside, but the constabulary does not protect private sector. We are occupied by our state, soldier and police. The state revealed its nature. It was understood that the security forces serve for Cengiz.

During the interviews and daily conversations, people emotionally expressed how they felt disappointed, lost their trust and faith to the state when police attacked and heavy equipment of the company were passed to Cerattepe. Another respondent, a 34 years-old teacher, Derya explained that moment with reference to the role of government:

What is the role of the state; it should be between people and the company. However, they acted with the company, they opened a road for the company, and then, the cars and containers of the company went under our eyes. I was always afraid of this moment. I didn't want to see this moment. That is the role of the ruling party; it took the people on to make one person rich. These people lost their trust to the state.

In the interviews, many activists drew attention to rising repression in recent years, and they explained how Artvin governorship benefits from state of emergency to repress political opposition in the city. After 15 July coup attempt, Artvin governorship has declared the ban on any public activities such as press statement, meeting and demonstration, since July 2016, which was evaluated as a sign of collaboration between government and Cengiz company by many interviewees. In the interview, Emre (29/M) equalized government, state and private company and stressed the cooperation with reference to the bans of governorship:

The government is directly included in this project. I think Cengiz construction governs this process. The state is Mehmet Cengiz, the state in Artvin is Mehmet Cengiz, the governor is Mehmet Cengiz because the governor obeys Mehmet Cengiz, he approves everything. There have been 1 year since 15 July. The state of emergency extended 12 times in Artvin; there is a state of emergency in Turkey and there is a double state of emergency in Artvin. They don't intervene in other districts except Artvin city centre. There is no state, governor, district governor, the state is Cengiz construction now, what Cengiz say is the rule. That is to say, the state, the governor does not let the activities of Green Arvin Association related to Cerattepe. This means that they are political partner of Cengiz construction. The governor acts as a representative of Cengiz construction rather than being the representative of the state, the representative of the people, the person who engage in dialogue between the state and people.

The discourse “the governor of Artvin is Mehmet Cengiz” was stated by many interviewees during daily life and interviews. By this discourse, the close relationship between the company and government was stressed and it was mentioned that bureaucrats appointed by government party were not working on the behalf of people; but they were working for the private company. The “secret” partnership between the leading figures of AKP and company was also stressed by many interviewees. In addition to the idea that mining in Cerattepe was a project of the government party AKP, the role of personal interests was also emphasised. Ali (27/M) described this as; This is the project of the ruling party as a family and business partnership, the project that the ruling party directly supports. The state uses every means available since it is the matter of excessive surplus”. By referring to the fact that state does not derive a profit from mining, Başak (41/W) explained why the government insistently supports this project despite of powerful local opposition:

The state does not make a profit, it will get 2 percent share. Why does the state support this project? Cengiz is responsible for the project. Another ruling party does not stand behind this project. This insistence is due to the ruling party that has their own profit, they will earn billions. The ruling party supports them. If it does not, the company give up to now.

The government plays role in different ways to support the mine project in Cerattepe. Especially, interviewees underlined the role of the government by intervening in courts’ decisions, changing regulations and EIA on mine by simplification of EIA procedure, and providing the mine company with the services of the municipality. The decision of EIA, positive report by local court and approval of this decision by Council of State are evaluated as the interference of the government to support mining activity, as stated by Selma: “Actually, I don’t believe in courts and justice. We won lawsuits 30 times, we cannot this time. The judges changed when we won lawsuits, they added fake documents and they filled a new suit, and then this happened”, while Ayten indicated that “The previous process was different, there was a judicial process. The company started its activities before the court decision now. This is the role of the ruling party”.

The role of municipality to provide infrastructure and human capital were evaluated as a support to mining activity by the government. The AKP won the last municipal elections after CHP's three terms in power. Many interviewees indicated negative reflections of this change and explained how municipality use every available means to help mine company by providing equipment and workers and blazing trails or extension of the roads. Melek (27/W) emphasized the role of the local government in terms of anti-mine activism:

The atmosphere in the city has changed through the changes in local government; we lost our most important support. We were much powerful in the period of Emin Özgün, our previous mayor, we could do whatever we want; he gave every kind of support in the demonstrations, we could organize demonstrations and express our demands. Kocatepe indicated that he is opposed to mining in Artvin in the first instance and they won the election. The struggle is much more than reading press releases; instead, it has material and moral aspects. It is difficult to achieve in the conditions that the atmosphere of the city is not on your side.

In this respect, the role of government through repression of the mobilization by police attack in 16 February 2016, governor's ban, and mobilization of municipality resources for the mine company are evaluated as the role of the government in terms of supporting mining in Artvin. Neşe Karahan referred to the role of government in terms of protecting the private company through political and legal means as follows:

Security forces of the state swears to protect the homeland, country and future of the country. Unfortunately, they serve for the private company. Since February, the constabulary waited for the company in the mining site. The company has private security and the constabulary also still waits to protect them. There are still prohibitions; Artvin governor extended prohibitions automatically since 19 September. For whom these prohibitions are; just for one company. To torture the people in Artvin, press releases are prohibited; demonstrations are prohibited; everything is prohibited. In the meantime, many people have put on trails including us. The company tried to place a charge blaming me for being a German spy.

As indicated, the interviewees indicated their opposition to the mining with reference to the discourse that the nature/ Cerattepe/ their life space is plundered by Cengiz company with the help of the government for making profit making. The anti- capitalist stance of the activists manifests itself in opposition to the

profit-making by a private company through plunder of their life space. In this respect, it is plausible to mention anti-capitalist motivations and anti-neoliberal stance of the activists/ the movement. They did not apply the words of capitalism or neoliberalism, but they referred to the dimensions peculiar to neoliberalism such as plunder of nature and life space for interests of the private company or “small and privileged groups”. It is crucial to remind that the rapid ecological degradation, that goes hand in hand with state- capital partnership, is an inherent part of the historically specific accumulation process that defines capitalist society (Foster, 2002, p. 104); in other words, commodification and privatization of the nature and natural resources is an integral part of the recent capitalism (Harvey, 2004; Werlhof, 2007; Castree, 2010). As discussed in the theoretical framework in the previous chapter, the recent theory on neoliberalism emphasizes “privatization of nature to maximize the interest of capital through accumulation by dispossession (Harvey, 2005). Because neoliberalism recognizes nature only as a resource that must be exploited (Mies & Bennholdt-Thomsen, 2001, p. 1117), and be transformed into commodity/ capital (Werlhof, 2007), neoliberalism involves enclosure, dispossession and commodification process of nature, natural resources and commons. Anti- mine movement in Artvin, oriented towards protection of the city, nature, water resources and life space as the commons, can be read as a powerful resistance to this face of neoliberal development that goes hand in hand with state and private company partnerships in Turkish case.

It is possible to trace social movements demanding an end to ecological exploitation and characterized by popular rejections of neoliberal policies struggling against privatization, exploitation and commodification of nature and natural resources proceeding through state- capital cooperation around the world. For example, in Bolivia, indigenous movements mobilized through the contestation over “the means of social reproduction and nature of state” that ended with the acceptance of “rights of mother nature” (Harvey, 2012, p. 149)- the case Harvey evaluates as a tool for examining anti- capitalist movements. Local people in India in Narmada Valley stand against dam buildings on the Narmada River and indigenous people in North Dakota in America rose up to protect Missouri river,

the main water resource, with the slogan “water is life. As stressed before, mining was regarded as natural sources of developing countries and it has privatized since 1980s and 1990s not only in Turkey but also in different parts of the world.

Anti- mining struggles in Artvin and Bergama are grassroots anti-mining movements in Turkey; however, there are many such examples around the world. For example, a local community in a small town in Bangladesh, have been campaigning against a coal mine operated by a multinational mining company since 2005. Resistance against mining activities of Australian company motivated by concerns of the locals about dispossession of lands and livelihoods and environmental destruction in the region. The movement demanded “no open-pit mining, no foreign company and no export of mineral resources” (Faruque, 2017). The work of Faruque (2017) shows that the activists centred on key issues such as protecting of land and livelihood, the environment, cultural heritage, the values of community, social ties, a fear of being homeless and displacement from their homes and lands. This study indicates that the movement united local people despite the differences of class, gender, political affiliation and ethnicity. Moreover, in their work on similar cases from Peru and Ecuador, Bebbington et al. argued that anti- mining movements mobilized against the dispossession of natural resources and the lands to private capital and dispossessions of ways of life or lifestyles (2008). These movements share common characteristics such as being horizontal movements, organized in a flexible way, oriented towards protecting the nature and natural resources, and all adopted non-violent collective action. In this respect, the heterogenous social basis of the movement and motivations of the activists in these cases overlap with Cerattepe struggle in Artvin. In this respect, such cases standing against plunder of the nature gives significant clues about interpreting ecology movements as an opposition to and critique of neoliberalism and examining local grassroots movements in a global context.

By defining nature as a life space and defending life space as the common of local community, the anti-mining movement in Artvin represents collective resistance

against commodification of commons, which is evaluated as one of the key features of contemporary anti- capitalist/neo-liberal social movements (Klein, 2004; della Porta, 2015; Harvey, 2005). Defending the nature of their region as the common belonging to all is the common goal of activists which brings together various people in Artvin. They conceptualize nature as their life space that should not be plundered by the private company because it belongs to everyone, belongs to local people of Artvin; the nature is about their past, their experiences, their emotions; in other words, it is about social relations and social networks of the people. Therefore, they are resisting against privatization and commodification of what is essential to their life. This reminds the argument of Klein that “The defence of their life spaces against the interest/profit of private company at the same time indicates the defence of the common, which is “the radical spirit of new social movements” (Klein, 2004) . While anti-neoliberal social movements defend commons as decommodification of what is essential to life (della Porta D. , 2015, p. 140), activists in Artvin defend Cerattepe as the common as an indivisible part of their life.

3.6. Protest Repertoire of the Movement

Anti- mine movement in Artvin adopted rich repertoires of action and tactics including various modes of protests ranging from traditional repertoire of collective action to non- conventional disruptive forms of action. In all cases, non-violent forms of collective action are adopted; all protest forms have been formulated in a peaceful and massive way; the participation of a mass of community members are aimed to reflect collective character of the movement. Scientific and educational activities are crucial to create counter hegemonic discourse among activists. During the interviews, I realized that local people have considerable scientific and technical knowledge about mining, effects of mining, regulations on mining, EIA process and legal process, thanks to these scientific and educational activities. Since the first attempts of mining companies in the region, activities have been organized to inform local community on mining. Forest engineers, mining engineers, lawyers have been invited to panels, trainings

and meetings. Awareness raising about the effects of mining facilitated initial mobilization of the local community against mining.

The first public meeting of YAD was organized soon after its establishment in September 1995, by participation of many academics from various universities to carry out an investigation in Cerattepe in terms of consequences of mining in the region and these meetings have been used as a tool to keep mining on the agenda. YAD has been in contact with academics and scientists. For example, in 2006, Faculty of Forestry of Kafkas University prepared a report “Impacts of Mining Planned to be Carried out in the Artvin-Cerattepe Forest” which was accepted as the Faculty opinion by General Board of Faculty²⁶. Artvin TMMOB also played an important role to organize these activities. In December 2014, the chamber prepared Cerattepe report which discussed the mining and its impacts on Cerattepe region²⁷. Scientific and educational activities have become important component of the anti-mining activities.

Traditional protest forms such as organizing massive demonstrations, protests, press releases and petition campaigns are another strategy of the movement. Press release is a significant form of collective action in Artvin, especially after the governorship ban in 2016. According to their agenda, YAD issues press releases by participation of significant amount of the people. During the interviews, I had participated in two occasions of press releases. In a state of emergency in the country and in Artvin, press releases are tool to keep mining in the agenda of city and show their continuing opposition to the mining; it is also a way of mobilization of local people and reaching people in the city. Before the public release, the volunteers of YAD went from door to door to houses, workplaces, restaurants, public places, coffeehouses for inviting people to participation in the release. In

²⁶ <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/kafkas-universitesi-artvin-orman-fakultesi-cerattepe-raporu-2006/>

²⁷ <https://www.tmmob.org.tr/yayin/tmmob-cerattepe-raporu>

this respect, public press releases provided ways to bypass the prohibitions in a state of emergency in the city.

Mass demonstrations also have been used for the mobilization of movements for a long time; these demonstrations against mining were organized in 1997 for the first time, by the participation of significant amount of the people, NGOs and representative of political parties, and according to the agenda on mining activities, public protests were organized in different scales. One of the mass demonstrations took place in 2013, one of the massive anti- mine protests in Turkey, by the participation of local people, environmental movements, unionists, associations, NGOs, actors, singers, from different parts of Turkey²⁸, This was a reaction to court decision that did not cancel positive EIA for Cerattepe mine site. Mass protests have been shaped around specific themes underlining a certain aspect of Artvin and Cerattepe. In the demonstrations, local expressions are used in the slogans and banners. Folk dances, such as horon, are performed by the participants.

In addition to these protest forms, lobbying activities are one of the tactics used by YAD. YAD had interviews with ministers in different periods to inform their discontent about mining in the region that can be evaluated as a part of traditional protest repertoire. Especially, petition is regarded as a part of lobbying activity. Petition campaigns are used both to keep mining in the agenda and as a tool to contact with the government to show the discontent in the city. The first petition campaign conducted in 1997, by collection of 10.000 signatures. In February 1998, with the participation of all the political parties and the representatives of NGOs in the city, these signatures were delivered to the Ministry of Environment in Ankara, and the project was suspended for a re-examination²⁹. In line with the

²⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZ244gHyJFc>

²⁹ <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>

attempts of companies to start exploration and drilling, YAD initiated petition campaign to take attention of local community and has used them as a tool to deliberate the project with the authorities. For example, against the attempts of Cominco company's exploration activities, in 2002, a petition campaign was carried out and it was delivered to the Ministry of Environment in Ankara by the participation of all the political parties and the representatives of NGOs in the city³⁰. International networks were also mobilized for the petition campaign in 2016, which was started by Building Workers International (BWI), *Tarim Orman-İş* (Union of Public Employees of Agriculture, Forestry, Husbandry and Environmental Service Line) and YAD. Under a state of emergency, collecting signatures for petition is an effective tool to put this subject on local and national agenda.

In addition to traditional protest forms, activists have performed creative, disruptive actions including direct action strategies, as one of the common protest forms of new social movements/ environmental social movements that is applied mostly to stop the specific projects (Rootes, 2004, p. 610) . In Artvin case, direct actions are used to stop attempts of mining companies to start mining activities in Cerattepe. One of the impressive forms of direct action in the Artvin case is to be on watch. To prevent mining activity in Cerattepe, local people of Artvin started watch, firstly in November 2014³¹, in order to block the attempt of the company to transport trucks and construction equipment to Cerattepe and prevent lumbering. According to interviewees because the previous experienced showed that, even if the court decision is not final, companies can start to cut the trees. This lasted 14 days and ended by the court decision that cancelled positive EIA. However, after the acceptance of another positive EIA in June 2015, the threat of

³⁰ <http://yesilartvindernegi.org/our-history-of-struggle/>

³¹ <http://www.hurriyet.com.tr/cerattepede-agac-kesilecegi-gerekcesiyle-nobet-tutuyorlar-37010175>

mining in Cerattepe was carried out again. In this period, 245 days watch³² started by collective participation of local people, NGOs, unions, political parties and other associations in the city. The 24 hours nonstop watch was collective effort of local people, it was repeatedly stressed that all parts of the society participated in the watch including AKP supporters. Shelter in Cerattepe is collectively constructed to continue the watch in the winter and it became a public sphere for local people, like Gezi Park during Gezi resistance. During the watch, many ecology movements, NGOs, unions, football fans came to Artvin and joined the watch to show their solidarity with the local people. The 245 days lasting watch is very unique example in terms of environmental movements in Turkey.

During the early phase of the watch the trucks of company attempted to reach Cerattepe which was prevented by local people on watch. On the next day, the company tried another road, but they were stopped by the people-the day when the famous photo with the log was taken. The company tried to reach Cerattepe with the police and Regional Director of Forestry many times in the following days, and all these attempts were stopped by the people on watch, which shows that this mode of direct action have been successfully performed by the activists and could only suppressed by police attacks.

In addition to traditional forms of protests, these disruptive actions lead to mobilization of local people against mining and change social relations and ordinary life of the people and increase solidarity among activists. In addition to watches, activists stage many creative protests; for example, in Kafkasör festivals-the famous festival of Artvin that many people from different cities participated for watching bull fight-, they unfurled a banner “We don’t surrender Cerattepe” in July 2017. In expert exploration for mining in Cerattepe, they formed a 1.5 kilometer human chain in July 2014 to show their opposition to mining to commission of experts. These are some examples of creative protest actions that are used by activists in Artvin case.

³² The reflections of this watch on mobilization will be discussed in detail later.

In this respect, in addition to traditional protest strategies such as mass demonstrations and protests, public releases, lobbying activities, collecting signature, the movement also used other mediums such as watches, unfurling banners and forming human chair as a form of direct action, all of which stayed in a democratic and peaceful way of protests and shows rich protest repertoire of the movement.

3.7. Organizational Characteristics of the Movement

The anti-mining movement in Artvin depends on a heterogonous social basis because of the participation of people from different ages, gender, political affiliations and classes; in that respect, it transcends cleavages of politics, class, gender and age, as discussed before. In that point, it is inevitable to discuss how the movement with such a heterogeneous basis is organized and to what extent it has common characteristics with the contemporary social movements.

The social basis of the anti-mine movement in Artvin as a broad coalition comprised both organized and non-organized sections of the society under the leadership of YAD with the slogan “No to Mine in Cerattepe”. YAD became the platform that united the broad sections, organized and non- organized parts of the society opposing the mine; namely locals, unions, political parties³³, chambers, cooperatives, associations, Artvin bar and NGOs in the city. YAD has a formalized institutional structure with its president and, vice presidents; however; it is much more appropriate to regard YAD as a network that can get in touch with all sections of the society and in relation with all parts of the society. Even if personal relations/contacts with every person one by one is not the case, this contact is made through channels such as local authorities (especially *muhtars*) or neighbours, which created a network that can touch all people opposing mine. Pre-existing

³³ It was emphasized that all political parties in the city join YAD; except ruling AKP- which was included in the past and excluded itself recently.

interpersonal networks and trust relationships have provided a basis for reaching different parts of the society in Artvin case.

The anti-mining movement in Artvin has been organized as a flexible network in a horizontal, participatory and non- hierarchical way. Neşe Karahan seems a leading name as the president of YAD, and I also observed that local people in Artvin hold her in high esteem and have confidence in her. However, it should be stressed that she is not regarded as “the leader” of the movement. She is rather considered as its spokesperson. At this point, none of the actors is regarded as the formal leader of the movement, in contrast to hierarchical organizational structure. By rejecting formal leadership, interviewees stressed the characteristic of the movement as a horizontal grassroots movement representing local community in the city.

One of the most common rhetoric among environmental movements is being above politics. During the fieldwork, it is repeatedly emphasized that the broad social mobilization achieved by the movement is connected to having a standing above the conventional politics. This is more than rhetorical because maintaining such a broad coalition necessitates acting independent of any political party, which enables participation of people affiliated with different political orientations in Artvin case. Emphasizing being grassroots movement, the president of YAD, Neşe Karahan, explained this:

This is a grassroots movement in the end. Green Artvin Association is completely independent of all political movements. It is the mechanism to act together and unite people together. The reason why we could make it until today is that we have no direct affiliation to any political movement and that we can bring all together. Our distinctive future is that we act together as the people.

To indicate this nonpartisan characteristic of the movement, many interviewees give the example of watches organized and led by the leftist and rightist organizations together- it was repeatedly stated that *Haziran* and MHP were on watch together. MHP member Utku stated this aspect that “We were nervous when we met up with *Halkevleri*, but we come together in troubled times. For example,

we had trouble in Atmaca, but we stay together in police intervention”. When I saw watch list for Cerattepe in YAD, I have also been impressed by diversity of groups, in terms of not only different political parties but different parts of the society; such as unions, women, peasants, families, neighbourhoods, football fans, artisans. Melek (27/W) explained the diversity and collectivity of the movement with reference to the watches; “We kept 24-hour watch; sometimes with our family, sometimes with organizations. Sometimes we keep watch with MHP supporters, the leftists keep watch along with the rightists”.

It is important to note that activists refer to the discourse of “being above politics” to show that they are not part of the partisan struggles among contending political parties. It is crucial to note that this discourse is not peculiar to anti- mine movement in Artvin; rather, it is common among environmental movements, that puts a distance from institutional politics based on struggle for political power between political parties. However, their struggle for protecting the commons against privatization, enclosure and commodification of the nature, and their mobilization through prefigurative politics embedded in changes in daily life and everyday social relations indicate traces of different kinds of politics standing against neoliberal politics.

Another important characteristic of the movement is transparency and accountability. Neşe Karahan connected this characteristic with the fact that people know each other in the city and this creates a sense of trust among locals: “We neither tell a lie, keep secret, involve in an illegal activity, nor exaggerate. For this reason, there is no unreliability. Our lives are in evidence; there is no difference between our lives and our discourse. Artvin is a small city, everyone knows each other”. In the interview with Karahan, she stressed that every participant of the movement is volunteer and none is paid; therefore, YAD is constituted by voluntary people, instead of professionals. She links this aspect with financial concerns of the organization in terms of avoiding financial issues:

We don't accept financial support, we don't have money, the association has no business with the money. For example, cartoonists drew our posters and the printing house in Istanbul printed them and send us. The members of association pay fees for our costs here. We visit NGOs and political parties for court costs; we are always in solidarity. We can accept donation if we know the source. Everyone in the association is volunteer; we don't have employees. We don't pay money anyone and no one accepts money in the association.

All meetings of YAD are open to public. It was emphasized that all sections of the society are encouraged to participate in the meetings. The decisions are taken in these public meetings by consensus through deliberation, persuasion and common sense which represent collective and democratic decision-making process. For example, in the field work, a French journalist visited YAD and at the end of the interview, he asked about the plans of YAD under the prevailing state of emergency and they replied that we will make a public meeting and act according to the decisions taken in the meeting. The terms of "cooperation", "collective reasoning", "shared decision making" and "creating common sense" are commonly used to describe decision making process by interviewees.

Castell connects communication technologies and organizational characteristic of the movement that the more interactive communication is, the less hierarchical is the organization and the more participatory is the movement. (2012, p.15). In the case of the anti-mine movement in Artvin, it is plausible to suggest that there is an interactive communication between activists. During the interviews, they frequently stated that they use social media such as Facebook or twitter to announce the events and share the news. They have a communication network through YAD, which has a message system that was created during watches. According to interviewees, thanks to this message system, people could be mobilized at any time of day to prevent intervention to Cerattepe. They also indicated that they have whatsapp group that enables interactive and effective communication between actors. In this respect, the movement uses the communication technologies that make "networked movements" possible.

It is plausible to argue that anti-mining movement in Artvin represents the assumptions of new social movements such as horizontality, rejecting leadership, heterogeneous social base, using communication technologies, collective and participatory decision making, and transparency and accessibility (della Porta, 2015; Castells, 2012; Hardt & Negri, 2005). It is a grassroots environmental movement rejecting hierarchical way of organization and leadership. In this respect, the organizational structure of the anti-mine movement overlaps with Rootes's definition of environmental movement as "a loose, noninstitutionalized network, of informal interactions that may include, as well as individuals and groups who have no organizational affiliation, organizations of varying degrees of formality, that are engaged in collective action motivated by shared identity or concern about environmental issues" (2004, p. 610). The movement uses communication technologies, which is unique characteristic of network movements. Transparency and accessibility, key features of social movements, are also noticeable characteristics of anti-mine movement. The movement also complies with the description of grassroots movements combining voluntary participation and heterogenous social basis, that rely on shared concerns in specific issues, instead of a strong ideological attachment (Diani & della Porta, 2006, p. 149).

3.8. Connections with Other Movements

The most important characteristics of networked movements is creating network relations between different movements that has no centre of direction, but has the capacity to act together through connections and interactions with each other. In this respect, it is plausible to explore the connections of anti-mining movement in Artvin with different movements.

This long-lasting resistance created many links with different ecology movements in different parts of the Turkey in the long run. The activists resembled their resistance against mining to the Bergama movement, another anti-mining struggle starting in the beginning of 1990s. The activists stated that they demonstrated a

strong solidarity with Bergama movement in the past. Interviewees emphasised that during watches, many activists from different parts of Turkey, even football fan clubs, visited them for showing their solidarity. Interviewees also noted that they have been supported by many organizations and movements from different parts of Turkey and they have links with other ecology movements, especially active in Black Sea region. As Karahan stated:

Many people from Artvin live in other cities. We have NGOs in different cities and we hold demonstrations simultaneously. Many people came from different cities during police interventions. For example, other NGOs, environmental organizations, and local associations supported us. We also support them. For example, all environmental organizations and Artvin hometown associations can organize demonstrations at the same time for Artvin. For example, associations in Ankara keep company with us. Sometimes they come here, sometimes they hold demonstrations in Ankara.

In addition to the other ecology movements in Black Sea region, the most powerful links of the movement is Artvin associations in different cities, as Karahan stressed; in this respect, hometown associations play a critical role to create networks at the national level. They organized protests, press releases, panel discussions related to the mining and latest developments in different cities. There is also coordination between these associations; recently, twelve Artvin associations organized “Artvin NGO and Platforms Turkey Meeting” on 22 October 2017. This network makes it possible for various organizations to act in a coordinated manner in different parts of Turkey. For example, during police interventions in Cerattepe, Artvin associations organized protests in 35 different cities. YAD is also one of the inviters of Bergama meeting of ecology movements that aimed to form the basis for solidarity, common action, strategy and common struggle among different local ecology movements on 11-12 November 2017. This shows that the networks between local ecology movements including YAD have a potential to expand in the near future at the national level. However, it seems that YAD has reservations about establishing links at the international level.

When I asked international links of the movements, both speakers of YAD, and other activists approached with caution. When I was on the field work, a French

journalist came to Artvin for making news and he asked for establishing international connections. However, the speakers in the name of YAD stated that the international connections are abused by the opponents for counter propaganda, which can undermine the social basis of the movement. Blaming important figures of the movement as “spy” of international powers is one of the counter strategy of pro- mine camp. Local press played an important role in shaping public opinion in the city and any international connections of YAD is reported as spy activities of the association. For example, Neşe Karahan stated that when she participated in the conference in Germany for the EU project about renewable energy, the local press announced her as a German spy. This discourse is not only applied by local press, but also by national press. On 26 February 2016, Sabah newspaper, with the heading “Dirty Game of Germany in Artvin”, called activists “so-called environmentalist tools of Germany” and introduced Neşe Karahan as “collaborator” of German foundations and made news that YAD and local press got environmentalist training in German foundations³⁴. Because of using such links as counter strategy by pro-mine camp, YAD avoids buildings international links and connections³⁵.

3.9. Conclusion

This chapter aimed to introduce the anti-mining movement in Artvin in terms of the social basis of the movement, identity of the actors, the motivations for resistance, the protest repertoire of the movement, its organizational structure and the networks of the movement. We can define the social basis of the movement as a broad coalition that compromised both organized and non-organized sections of the society under the leadership of YAD under the slogan “No to mine in Cerattepe”. The anti-mine movement in Artvin has a heterogonous social basis as reflected by the participation of people from different age, gender, political

³⁴ <https://www.sabah.com.tr/gundem/2016/02/26/almanayanin-artvindeki-kirli-oyunu>

³⁵ Local environmental grassroots movements prefer to stay on a local scale in some cases instead of establishing international connections, for example in the case of anti- mine movement in Andes (see (Jenkins, 2017)).

affiliations and class. The actors are local people of Artvin who is and will be directly affected by mining in the region. Women have played an active role in the movement. The movement has created collective identity; activists define themselves as the local people of Artvin whose living space is threatened by mining company and defending their life, city and nature. In this respect, the movement has achieved to create collective identity/ resistance identity among activists.

This chapter demonstrated that motivations of the actors to oppose the mining and participate in the movement display diversity; however, to defend life and to defend the living space, are two basic themes which are underlined by the interviewees: this is related with the conceptualization of their ties to the city and nature from the viewpoint of locals. It was repeatedly argued that mining will destroy Artvin and turn it into a desert, force them to immigrate with the consequent loss of “*Artvinlilik*” culture identified with social ties, solidarity, trust and friendship. People have emotional and material attachments to the nature; nature/ Cerattepe mainly refers to where they grow up, live, relax and enjoy this is the reason why they call it “living space”. Defence of livelihood, health concerns, feeling of belonging to the city and nature; defence of political culture and protection of children and future generations from potential negative effects of mining and leaving the nature to future generations as a heritage are also emphasized by interviewees. Previous mining activities in the region also affected people’s ideas as they experienced negative consequences of the mining activities like high rate of cancers in the region. Interviewees repeatedly noted that they oppose this project because it will lead to plunder of their nature for the sake of profit of one private company, Mehmet Cengiz. The role of the government was stated as to support the private company in terms of intervening in law, changing regulations and EIA procedures, providing infrastructure through municipalities and creating repressive environment to the opposition in the city through governorship bans. Opposing commodification and privatization of nature represents a powerful resistance to neoliberalism that goes hand in hand with government party and private company cooperation. Activists also show that

powerful anti-capitalist stance by protecting their nature, as the life space and the commons belonging to “everyone” instead of private company, that gives important clues about potential of environmental movements in terms of political and social opposition to contemporary neoliberalism.

The identification of nature with life space or life enables activists to refer universal values, cutting across social, economic and political differences. The theme of life defence in Artvin case is applied to show this characteristic of the struggle. Conceptualizing struggle as a life defence or living space refers to the characteristics of the struggle above the politics and enables people from different political views to act together.

It is argued that anti- mine movement in Artvin adopted rich repertoires of action and tactics including various modes of protests ranging from traditional repertoire of collective action to non- conventional collective action. Non- violent forms of collective action and protests are utilized; all protest forms have been formulated in a peaceful, democratic and massive way. Scientific and educational activities, massive demonstrations, public releases, petitions, and direct and disruptive actions are adopted as the strategies of the movement. Adoption of horizontal form of organization, a heterogeneous social base, the rejection of leadership, use of communication technologies and, collective and participatory decision making are key features of the organizational structure of the movement. The movement retains close links with other environmental movements, especially those active in Black Sea region and with parts of the networks of other environmental movements in Turkey.

CHAPTER 4

PREFIGURATIVE POLITICS IN THE CASE OF ARTVIN

This chapter aims at providing a discussion on the anti-mining movement in Artvin with respect to prefigurative politics. While prefigurative politics is commonly discussed with reference to massive social movements, I want to discuss whether the characteristics of prefigurative politics can be detected in local movements as in the case of anti- mining movement in Artvin. The objective is to understand whether local movements could embody the characteristics of global/ macro social movements. In addition, I try to understand how Gezi resistance in Turkey of the summer 2013, as a part of the movements associated with prefigurative politics, is evaluated by the actors of Cerattepe struggle and how they associate with or differentiate their struggle from Gezi movement.

This debate aims at contributing to exploring the relationship between the Gezi movement, its aftermath and local grassroots environmental movements. Moreover, examining Gezi movement from the perspective of the activists would contribute to enhance our understanding of the differences and similarities between local movements specifically between in Artvin and massive occupy movements as the case in Gezi, especially when we remember that the activists in the movement in Artvin prefer to stay on a local scale, instead of creating international networks. Examining Artvin case in terms of characteristics of prefigurative politics would also contribute to the social movement literature because there are no significant studies working on prefigurative politics with respect to local cases. Examining different scales movements from the perspective of prefigurative politics enables us to locate them within the theoretical framework of anti- neoliberal social movements against the neoliberal agenda of relentless commodification of commons. Thanks to this debate, understanding the commonalities between local environmental movements and global/ macro social

movements shows the potential of different scale movements to unite against anti-capitalist politics materialized under the protection of living spaces against government- private companies' partnership. Moreover, as stated in the introduction chapter, local movements are usually associated with being unique and distinct, whereas the global movements are believed to have the capacity for exceeding the limitations of local movements. However, showing that grassroots local movements illustrate characteristics of global movements challenges this assumption. Besides, through changing social relations by creating solidarity, friendship and cooperation against commodified relations of capitalism and creating new subjectivities through transformation of ordinary citizens to the activists, these kinds of local grassroots movements play an important role in struggling against capitalism.

One of the most impressive aspects of social movements is about their impact on everyday life; i.e., how participation in the movement can change everyday lives and social relations of the actors involved in the movement. In order to understand the reflections of prefigurative politics in Artvin case, I intend to examine how this mobilization has changed actors' daily lives, their political attitudes, and everyday life and social relations in the city.

4.1. The Reflections of Activism on People's Daily Lives and Interactions

One of the remarkable aspects of the anti-mining movement is about its effects on activists' daily lives. During the fieldwork, these effects were so obvious; nevertheless, the narratives of the activists differed from each other to the extent that interviewees mentioned both positive and negative effects of the movements on their daily lives. It seems that the movement has achieved to create new social relations, common identity, and culture of resistance. For example, Ali (26/M) pointed to the significance of the culture of resistance developed thanks to the anti-mining movement: "This struggle is old as I am. It contributes great things to my life. I am intertwined with a culture of resistance. Being involved in this struggle is an honour for me". Many interviewees also emphasized that this culture of

resistance has led to improvement of social relations among activists. For instance, Emre (29/M) expressed the contributions of the movement to his life in terms of forming new acquaintances, friendships and overall new social relations in the city:

I have become acquainted with many new people in Artvin through Cerattepe process. My path crossed with people whom I have not met before and I would not come across normally... We collaborated; we organized protests and events together. When we won the lawsuits, we played *horon* together; we made celebrations. I kept watch with those people I did not know until midnights or even mornings. Social relationships improved. Let us assume I know 100 people from Artvin today, I met 70 of them thanks to Cerattepe struggle.

This is also related with the creation of a common identity, that was also discussed in the previous chapter. This resistance culture has created a common identity transcending age, gender, political differences and created strong networks and social relations among the activists. Melek (27/W) explained the creating of new forms of social relations and solidarity practices among people, especially among women passing the boundaries of age:

Since the struggle began and people living here revolted against the unacceptable things going around, I have been respecting every street and people here. The struggle indeed has strengthened our human relationships. Our connection with our mothers or aunts has changed and the so-called generation gap dissolved. Most of our friends' mothers have become our comrades, fellows. Women aged between 50-60 years old and 20-years old have got together, and they started a collaboration.

In this respect, the resistance created solidarity among activists that exceeded age difference. In addition, this movement created a culture that young people have acquired considerable prestige in the city. While experience and knowledge are connected with being elderly in the society during daily lives of the people, the movement reversed this understanding and has made young people powerful political agents through empowering them. As a young woman, 27 years-old Melek explained how they started to get respect and become influential political figures as follows:

Frankly speaking, we gained status in Artvin. This is because we have been leading supporters of the struggle. We legitimized ourselves along with those opponents and this was a good opportunity to destroy prejudices of people towards us. Before the struggle, they were seeing us as some youngsters, protesting every day and against everything. However, today, we are taken as brave youth of Artvin. The most important thing is legitimizing ourselves and seeing that if we want, things can change. We proved that 24-25 years old young people can also have an opinion and voice. When we as 24-25 years old young people were reading press statement, a 70 years old man was moved to tears. Or the folk was lending the mic to that 70 years-old man. All these demonstrate something significant happening here. And this was indeed a kind of drawing the line to normalized ongoing... In the past, no one paid attention to a 24 years-old young person who just graduated from university. But we ran hard and now people sign a petition unconditionally and unsuspectingly when we request from them.

As Melek pointed, the movement makes young people influential political figure that creates new subjectivities within the movement, which is one of the characteristics of prefigurative politics. During the fieldwork, I realized that people are so decisive to stop mining activities in Cerattepe. Even in a state of emergency, many people participated in the press statements of YAD, one of which I had a chance to participate. The empowerment of local people, in this respect can be seen as one of the impacts of mobilization. Başak (41/W) told that this struggle has taught her to struggle for her rights and the movement made her much powerful person: “My power for solidarity has increased, my courage has increased, I was not like that before, I learned not to be afraid, to defend my right, I do things I could not do before, I say things I could not say”.

In fact, What Başak underlined was related to another aspect of prefigurative politics, which is how mobilization can transform “ordinary citizens” to activists within and through collective action- which is also related to creating new social and political agencies. People without previous activist experience can become political figures, within and through the mobilization. This aspect of social movements can be obviously detected in anti-mining movement in Artvin. The struggle has politicized the local people in a way that the people who were not previously participated in any political action became activists. Almost all interviewees pointed this aspect during the fieldwork. Except for the people who

lived in big cities like the ones who lived in Istanbul and Ankara when they were university students, many interviewees told me that it was the for first time that they came up against the police and experienced police attacks. It is important to notice that this was not only young people who resisted against police attacks; old women and men also participated in the demonstrations and confronted with the police. 75 -years -old woman, Sakine explained her experience in a striking way:

In our Artvin, police, pepper gas, batons, panzers, I have never seen anything like that in my life. I couldn't associate them with my Artvin and my people. When that pepper gas came out, I said, was the rainbow opened, what happened, the coloured things, the nephews' face turned red.

During the fieldwork, people were so willing to tell their stories about their first confrontations with the police, and they got very excited while expressing their encounters during police interventions. Further, most people also explained how much they were shocked when they breathed pepper gas for the first time. The 63 -years -old MHP supporter Selma stated that she would never think that she would ever breath pepper gas. People also stated that they were very much scared by police attacks, however, they did not give up and tried to oppose police attacks. Young member of CHP said in a daily conversation that “When we encountered pepper gas for the first time, we were very scared, but we did not give up, because we believed a lot. The saddest time was when we heard the sound of the construction equipment.

They sometimes recounted funny stories about this situation. The same person told me that because it was the first time that he confronted with gas bomb, he did not notice how capsule of gas bomb looks like. He picked up the capsule and tried to understand what it was. He pressed the capsule and the gas directly sprayed to the face of another person, and he fainted. I also heard another story of a very old man who felt fainting because he ate six lemons instead of dabbing lemons to his face and eyes. Many people told such kinds of stories about how they were surprised by gas bombs and did not know what to do. They added that by time and thanks to the previous experiences of others who came from different cities and

experienced this before, they learned how to cope with these attacks. Emre (29/M) stated although it was not his first experiences to confront with police intervention; however, it was new for local people:

We have participated in many hydroelectric power plants protests. We experienced police violence before because we were organized in the university years. I experienced something I was not a stranger but I also witnessed how the society reacted something they are not familiar. Something they never knew is happening and they did not pull back.

Not only these people gradually figured out what to do during police attacks, but they also learned how to unite and show solidarity during these attacks. The resistance has led people to understand the power of being organized and the importance of organized society. Although there has been an ongoing struggle lasting more than 25 years, to act in an organized manner and mass mobilization of local people started after 2014, as mentioned before. This mass mobilization around an anti-mining discourse has enabled people to feel part of organized society struggling for a common objective. By comparing recent resistance with ex-revolutionary organizations, another interviewee Canan (27/W) explained impressing how she felt powerful in an organized society as follows:

During the protests, I realized the power of society. My father used to tell about the cases before 1980 long ago. But I experience similar things directly. You are not scared when you are together when you are a part of society... We figured out what the organized struggle is, for instance. When you are organized, you are not scared. If you are alone, you may be scared, and you may be incredibly careful while acting. But if you are organized, you are not scared because you are together with your folks and you demand the same thing. You distinguish what is the wrong form what is right, and this makes you feel empowered. Collaborating with your community and society sharing similar thoughts enrich your potential. You can foresee what you are able to do in an organized society... It is quite difficult to make an empowered society accept projects such as mining; for there is a society that believes in themselves.

In this respect, the transformation of non-political people to activists is one aspect of anti- mining movement about creating new subjectivities. Sharing different ideas and learning from each other, changing political attitudes of the activists can be regarded as the characteristic of prefigurative politics. Local people from different ages and political views come together, and this creates public spaces in

which people encounter with differences. For example, Emre (29/M) told that this movement created an atmosphere of sharing ideas, and that he learned a lot of things from different people and questioned his prejudices within the movement:

Through this struggle, we met many people and we gained so much experience... We learned how to listen to people, how to distance ourselves from prejudices, and we witnessed that unexpected people could do unexpected analyses. We became acquainted with people who never read a book and never left their village and region, only occasionally hit the town for shopping. You may assume that those people know nothing but no, we have learned so much from them. Thus, I can say that struggle always emancipates and improves people; we witnessed this.

It can be contended that through changing political attitudes of the activists, the anti- mining movement in Artvin creates new subjectivities. In the field work, I was surprised by the expressions of right-wing people, especially MHP supporters, about their changing attitudes towards security forces during police interventions. Generally right-wing especially nationalist people stated how their political attitudes changed, especially, after the confrontation with police attacks. For example, when asked whether his ideas changed after police attacks, 65 years old, ex-president of *Ülkü Ocakları*, mentioned the dramatic changes which he experienced in his views and also his attitudes towards security forces as follows:

I wish it did not change, but it changed a lot... You are no longer my police, bro! I have done a lot against the intelligence here, but now I am tight-lipped. It has changed, of course; how would not it? Unpredictably it comes. You know that even if you do not deserve it: Well, I am a hundred percent right. However, the man comes and knocks my head off. So, does this not make you ever change? Of course, you will change.

This expression is not peculiar to MHP voters. Although those people with left wing attitudes mostly stated that their political views and attitudes did not undergo any change, some of them asserted that their trust on state and state institutions are lost during this process. During the fieldwork, many people in Artvin stressed that there was a tradition in Artvin that people respected state, state institutions, bureaucracy and bureaucrats, and this was associated with being “republican city”. However, many people told that this approach has also changed. For instance,

Canan, a 27 -years- old CHP supporter, said:

Your trust in the state disappears naturally. You see a capitalist, imperialist system in front of you. You are against a state structure that does not listen to you and makes decisions without asking you. We realized this in that process. Because we faced the police and army of the state.

Many people with different political views emphasized that their image of the state was indeed tarnished. However, especially, left -wing people stressed that this process strengthened and consolidated their political views. Another CHP supporter Ayten (66/W) explained that:

I am already a political person, but this process has intensified my political consciousness. I thought that I should participate in this struggle...I was a CHP supporter before, I was political, but for the first time I got I involved in a social struggle.

Emre (29/M) explained how the movement changed his political attitudes that “I think I became more resistant. I experienced a positive change. We were trying to explain to the people of Artvin how cruel the system, we couldn't do it, but the state told it very well”. During the field study, some of the interviewees and the people in the movement stated in daily conversations that the attitudes towards Kurds and Kurdish political movement also changed after they experienced violent police attacks. Interviewees stated that they started to understand “these people” and they could feel empathy with the people who are oppressed by the state. Başak (41/W) explained her changing attitudes towards Kurdish movement:

I started thinking like this after these mining events. They were willing and they were protecting their own rights. If they were here, maybe even if we had it back. I started thinking like this after these mining events. I was very angry before, now I understand and appreciate.

This was interesting point. During daily conversations in the field research in Artvin, I was told how they could show empathy with Kurdish people when the security forces attacked and people of Artvin were represented as the “terrorist”. Moreover, I was also said that this process made them more sensitive to other

environmental struggles. These points show that the mobilization exceeds not in my backyard perspective through showing empathy and solidarity with different struggles.

Before conducting field research, I used to think that people would speak how the resistance changed their lives in a positive way. But, surprisingly, they also expressed their negative feelings when asked how this struggle has changed their daily lives. Because mining started in Cerattepe despite strong opposition and resistance of local people, this created somehow disappointment, frustration, and despondency among people. For example, Duygu (45/ W) explained how the mine affected her ideas and plans about the future:

For example, one cannot enjoy anything. My home was inherited from my father. I do modifications there but whenever I do them, I think that we do this but what if we will have to leave here and then become regretful? I am harvesting here but I wonder if we will be able to eat it. Or our children will eat it? All these make me upset since you do everything doubtfully. You cannot foresee. For instance, I want a summer place like a mountain house. But the mining process erupted suddenly, I could not act. My land is ready, but I stayed where I am; we could not do anything.

Again, 75 years-old Sakine, an active participant of the movement, explained her feelings emotionally, and stated how she felt desperate because they could not stop the mining activities:

It is not a financial matter; only I feel depressed. I think this situation has a negative impact on my health. I want to find a way to do something, but I simply cannot. I feel incapable; it is tormenting me. I cannot overcome this feeling. Every day I switch on the TV to see if anything happened. In that region, there are thorpes there, you know, where my aunt's son used to live; they have field and garden there. I think of them and feel depressed, broken down. Those mines, nature, springs, all have a place in my heart. I stare at this situation and every day ask myself if those mining works stopped or something positive happened there today.

Almost in all the interviews and daily conversations, people stated how they went through trauma when police attacks suppressed the people and construction equipment of the company passed them and reached to Cerattepe. This created

collective trauma among the activists that every person told how they felt sad when they saw company tracks on the road to Cerattepe. A member of Eđitim-Sen, teacher Ahmet (45/ M) explained how he was emotionally affected in fact traumatized when the work in the mining field started: “When the first intervention occurred, when the work machines started to appear, I had a trauma. It is one thing to be a civil servant and another thing that the watches are over. I felt as if I was fired from my own house. I did not come out there, it was very sad that we had to leave the place of the watch”. It seems this trauma is not ended; it has continued every time when they saw trucks. There are lots of houses between the city center and Cerattepe, that local people called “*mezre*”. The houses looked like modernized village houses; in some of these houses people feed animals such as chicken, bovine and ovine. When I was in one of these mezres, I realized how people were disturbed by company’s trucks. They passed the roads of mezres to reach mine site in Cerattepe, that created a pollution because of the powder that trucks caused. In addition to pollution, every time people saw these trucks, they suffered a trauma again. For example, a female beekeeper, Ayten (66), told me how she felt when she saw the trucks of the company: “As we see the transports of the company, our nerves deteriorate, we see on the way to the village, they make ropeways, they concrete everywhere, and they create environmental pollution”.

In a nutshell, anti-mining mobilization creates noticeable impacts on people’s daily lives. In this sub-section, I explored what sort of changes the mobilization created in the movement activists’ daily lives, their perceptions and political views. In the next section, I want to introduce what kinds of changes the mobilization caused in their daily lives and everyday life in the city.

4.2. Mobilization and Everyday Life

We had a chance to create the world we wanted

Because Cerattepe struggle is a local movement achieved to mobilize the locals of the city, the reflections of the mobilization on the everyday life in the city is

noticeable in many respects. When I asked people how daily life in Artvin is affected and changed by the mobilization process, people stressed the changing perceptions of locals towards the state and security forces, in parallel with the narratives of the people about themselves. For example, Melek (27/W) explained how the confrontation with the police changed local people's ideas in the following way:

People who have never seen any police station or a judge encountered both. They were exposed to pepper gas, nightstick, or swearing. Artvin inhabitants have overestimated the state for years. An authority that they have blessed, and they disillusioned now. Even this disappointment was devastating for these people: The police and the gendarmerie that you have overestimated, respected and trusted take a stand against you suddenly. We perceive the situation as the opponents of Artvin; thus, we were not surprised. In fact, the state showed explicitly what we could not express for years. People in Artvin have tried to justify the police's and the gendarmerie's behaviour towards us for years when we told them about their cruel attitude. However, the police and the gendarmerie tortured them mercilessly, too. And they did not do this as state officers, but the law enforcement officers of that mining company. Because we talk about a project here, which will make the company richer. This disappointment was indeed upsetting for them. We witnessed so many things together with people there and you must have seen the dialogues at that time: Before they cried and then they reacted to the police; they said how we could not see this attitude of the police force for years. Properly speaking, it is like in Gezi protests.

During the interviews and daily conversations, many people stated how the police intervention on the behalf of the private mining company transformed local people's views. Melek (27/W) also explained how this process changed her own mother's ideas:

In the simplest term, my mother has always been very reactive against social protests and very protective of her children. But now she is the one who mobilizes when I hesitate. This is the result of her dedication to Artvin and the state's hostile attitude towards people living here. If I had trained my mother ideologically for 30 years or introduced with other people, I would not have achieved this result. However, they came unexpectedly and changed my mother.

Another interviewee Derya (34/W) explained how the locals' perception of the state was destroyed during police attacks; "Once the perception of the state has changed in Artvin. This means that you can be a terrorist without doing anything in the eye of this state. People wonder if other terrorists were like that, they were

right like us. It created such a perception in the eyes of people, the perception of the state was destroyed”. In addition to changing political perceptions and attitudes of local people, it can be suggested that this mobilization and resistance activism changed every day routine of the people in daily life. One of the important values of prefigurative politics with respect to social movements is about the intervention in the activists’ everyday life. Activism interrupts people’s ongoing everyday routines and it creates new modes of social relations. The anti-mine movement in Artvin has produced profound changes in daily life in the city. Promoting solidarity and collaboration, strengthening personal relationships among activists in the city and exclusion of pro-mining people are certain apparent effects of anti-mining movement in everyday life in Artvin.

During the fieldwork, many interviewees stated that this mobilization created an atmosphere that people showed solidarity with each other. This also leads to creating of collective identity among activists. With reference to the Gezi movement³⁶, another activist Ali (27/M) talked about developing solidarity culture and collective identity in the following way

This struggle, at least, provided a merging of various people. The same thing happened at Gezi; people who had not known each other before came together and similar encounters occurred in Artvin, too. Both in struggle and during the watches, people clamped together. Participating in this struggle created a different feeling within society. A generation of youth had not seen such a struggle in the history of Artvin; there were water cannons, pepper gas, etc. It did not happen like at Gezi here, I mean, like in big cities. People went out on the streets but there was no police intervention. But they faced this intervention of the police and the army at the city centre directly. A traffic tie-up took place, the shopkeepers closed their shops; people witnessed such a massive social resistance that perhaps we cannot see again for many years. In that period, the police officers were evicted from their houses; some shopkeepers did not serve them food; mining company employees could not walk on the streets comfortably for a while.

As the social movement literature indicated, creating a collective identity entails the separation of “we” and “they”. Framing opponent is a part of creating collective identity. It was stated that people were united and took a stand against

³⁶ The interaction with the Gezi movement will be discussed in detail in the next sub-section.

people who were seen as pro-mine camp. This also affected the neighbourhood relationship and friendship in the city. Ayten (66/W) explained how this process affected neighbourhood relations and people united against pro-mine camp as follows:

We did not meet with the neighbours supporting the mining company. The shopkeepers did not sell anything to those who favoured the mining company; the homeowners started to dispossess the police from their houses, and the shopkeepers did not give them food. If there happens any new mine-related event, we gather immediately, especially using social media channels. Being against the mining company became a common ground; we started getting and struggling together with people who do not think as we think. We formed a group including the ones who are against the mining company; we gather at Green Artvin Association and discussed how we would treat the employees of the mining company. In consequence, we began acting together regardless of our political views.

Almost all interviewees stressed how the daily life in the city has been affected during police interventions. Before the police intervention, almost all the shops stuck banners in their windows saying “if there is any intervention in Cerattepe, this shop will be closed”. Many interviewees stated that especially during police interventions, people united against police, the tradespeople said to me that they did not sell goods to the police officers. Restaurant owners told that they did not serve the police officers, and it was stated that homes were not rented to the police. As Melek (27/W) puts it, “every shop hanged a statement that “if there is any intervention in Cerattepe, this shop will be closed” on their walls. At that time, the tradespeople who did not hang this were isolated, people were asking why you did not hang, I would not shop from you. Or we were isolating the shopkeepers who sold something to the police at that time. That kind of opposition strengthened us”. After the police attacks in Cerattepe, protests expanded to city centre. Interviewees indicated that protests lasted for weeks. In the city centre, many protests were organized including “pots and pans” protests, and the whole city life became politicized during this process.

Strengthening interpersonal relations in the city is another common rhetoric among interviews as one of the impacts of the mobilization on the daily life.

Ahmet (45/M) explained how the mobilization changed the atmosphere of the city in accordance with promoting personal relationship and solidarity between people from different political views; “In Artvin, people got closer to each other, people with different opinions got in touch with each other. *Halkevleri* took over the watch from MHP, *Haziran* took from Kamu-Sen. *Çarşı* kept watch with us.” Canan (27/W) told that during police interventions, employees took part in strike and she explained how solidarity between people was promoted:

Our mothers, aunts, friends, altogether showed up and struggled. We got help from many people we did not know before; I also helped many people I did not know... During that period, the shopkeepers in the region took down the shutters. Water was supplied from outside the city; women made pastry, or cooked meals and sent to the people resisting there. Also, patisseries sent pastries, and other provinces supported us. We shared our cigarettes. I brought many mufflers to protect ourselves from both pepper gas and cold. Such solidarity acts occurred. We gave a hand to the ones who fell or could not run. We helped those fainted and took to the hospital. While we saw someone depressed, we went up and soothed them immediately by saying that it will happen, and we will make it eventually. We were in constant solidarity. We helped each other; we influenced each other. We realized that we were strong when we were together. We were strong together.

Most of the narratives about creating new kinds of relationship including promoting solidarity and cooperation between the people were linked to the watches. The 245 -days -lasting watches created strong collective identity and solidarity practices among people. In Cerattepe, after starting watches, people build a shelter that enabled the development of a common life during watches. Many interviewees noted that during the watches, different kinds of solidarity and cooperation practices developed. Duygu (45/W) told me how certain solidarity practices were adopted during watches:

The long-term watch period, which lasted 9-10 months, started in June. Our solidarity practices appeared initially in these watches. At that time, we had nothing and then we built this shelter collectively. We were on watch every day for 24 hours...We realized our own strength. During the watching period, we had a generator. While one of us bought the gas, the other bought the bread. Everyone brought bread, tea, or sugar, as much as they could. For instance, if we kept watch as our extended family, we did not bring pre-cooked food there. My mother and other women were kneading dough and we were making our own bread and we were making our local dishes. While our family was on watch, we always had

guests. The best example of solidarity was that the villagers living there used to bring firewood as they were passing by. Or, another example, everyone who visited the shelter in winter used to leave a pack of tea.

In addition to developing new kinds of relations such as solidarity, cooperation and friendship, Melek (27/W) also indicated that during the watches, conventional gender roles were questioned. As she puts;

There, we were trying to change social roles as much as possible, I was collecting wood, a male friend was washing dishes and cooking. In fact, we had the opportunity to establish the life we wish there. People understood the beauty of sharing.

In addition to changing social relations through transcending traditional gender roles, it also seems that watches enabled one of the most powerful promise of prefigurative politics to happen; change now and here. When Melek (27/W) noticeably expressed that “we had a chance to create the world we wanted” she was reflecting this aspect.

Moreover, the 245 days-long watches promoted collective life and consolidated collectivization of the movement. Ali (27/M) stressed the importance of watches in terms of collectivization of the movement and collectivization of life:

This collectivity was entirely reflected in the watches. Village associations, neighbourhood units, sports fan clubs, union of craft and related trades workers, chamber of commerce, transporters cooperative, forest cooperative, political parties, right-wing parties started to watch permanently in rotation 24 hours a day at Cerattepe. At the same time, a new life bushed out during Cerattepe watches. A collective way of living was constructed based on the division of labour. While one cooked, another cleaned, other one lighted a fire. There was a common solidarity culture there including people of various opinions and excluding money exchange. These watches kept for 24 hours throughout 241 days became a unique experience in terms of environmental resistance both in Turkey and worldwide.

In this quotation, Ali indicated emergence of new life, that is different from commodified relations of capitalism, in which collective life is built in solidarity by the people with different political views. A new sense of community formed around the collective life. While the collective life is the focus of prefigurative

politics, many interviewees stressed the establishment of collective life during the process and told me that “we established our communes during the watches”. For instance, Ahmet (45/M) indicated that:

From the 70-year-old grandfather to housewives who did not participated any demonstration in her life, people contributed to the resistance. They were making bread. A culture of communal life was created. This process taught sharing, communal life. People shared everything.

Other ecology movements also paid attention to these watches and many ecology movements, organizations, and even *Çarşı*, (football fan club), visited these watches to show solidarity with the local people. Umut (29/M) emphasized the reciprocal interaction between the Cerattepe movement and other movements during the watches as follows:

During those days when we were keeping watch, talking with the visitors about local resistances was quite improving in terms of environmental struggles. Sharing experiences among people from various localities provide the opportunity for new knowledge to emerge. Locals from Bergama, Ida Mountains, Antalya came here, and various experiences were shared and discussed. And this is especially something significant. Resistance places are politicized and improved through such conversations or events like film screening, etc.

It seems that building a shelter as a communal place, like building encampments in Gezi Park during the Gezi movement indicates creating a collective life, similar to creating autonomous spaces in public places in Occupy movements. Narratives about the watches in this case clearly indicate explicit development of solidarity practices and changing social relations among the people in Artvin. In words of one of the interviewees “people learned the beautiful life behind barricade”. The narratives of interviewees show how watches became a place in which practices and emotions such as friendship, solidarity, cooperation, fraternity emerged. Moreover, it was stated that gender roles were questioned and challenged such as men cooked while women went for gathering wood. In this respect, changing everyday practices and practices in collective life, developing new ways of social relations and new subjectivities, and efforts to transform power relations in the movement during the watches can be interpreted as one of the defining features of

prefigurative politics. It also indicates a manifestation of the transformative power of social movements.

It also possible to argue that during watches people break the routine of everydayness and create new ways of doings and new social relations .In this sense, autonomous space created by watches can be evaluated as “cracks”, as Holloway puts, “the cracks, the spaces or moments in which we reject external authority and assert that 'here and now we rule” (Holloway, 2010, p. 23). This aspect also overlaps with the “everyday utopias” developed by Cooper. Cooper examines prefigurative politics under the name of everyday utopias, conceptualized as “alternative spaces” or “material practices and spaces” that “condition participants to think, feel, hope, imagine, and experience life differently” (2014, p. 12). She approaches everyday utopias as networks and spaces that perform regular daily life in a radically different way. According to Cooper, everyday utopias generate innovative social spaces through what they collectively do. In this respect, watches in Cerattepe can be thought as practical forms of prefigurative politics generating new experiences of everyday life and new social relations.

4.3. Gezi from the Perspectives of Activists

As mentioned before, Gezi resistance can be read as a turning point in the trajectory of ecology movements in Turkey. It is important to stress a dialectic relationship between Gezi movement and local environmental resistances. It is believed that the source of inspiration of Gezi movement is ecological local resistances which have become widespread since 2000s to the extent that protest repertoire, political language and legality of ecological movements gave path to emergence of Gezi movements (Erensü,2013). The president of YAD, Neşe Karahan, supported this view by stating that “We organized Great Anatolian March. Our friends from this march initiated Gezi. Gezi was correct and positive. People who did not know each other got together”. It is also important to note that in 6 April 2013, anti-mining protests, one of the massive environmentalist protests

in Turkey, were organized in Artvin by the participation of different local ecology and environmental movements, “life defenders”, NGOs, trade unions and political parties. In this respect, this can be evaluated as a first step of uniting different parts of the society around environmental concerns. Once when I was talking with one of the representatives of YAD, it was hinted how Cerattepe struggle inspired Gezi movement and it was claimed that it already achieved at was aimed in the Gezi movement. It was impressively argued by this representative as:

There is no other example where the resistance is collectivized on such a vast scale without any discrimination based on political choices, i.e. the right-wing or left-wing. Right-wing *Ülkücü* and left-wing revolutionaries kept watch together; you cannot find such a collectivity anywhere else. During Gezi protest the same happened but we had been already performing this for 25 years. Cerattepe struggle started in this manner and Gezi realized this later.

In this respect, it can be contended that many local resistances during the first and second decades of the 2000 including anti-mining struggle in Artvin contributed to emergence of Gezi protests in İstanbul. In this sense, it is crucial to explore the relationship between Gezi movement and anti-mining movement in Artvin. Moreover, after examining prefigurative characteristics of Cerattepe struggle, I wonder how the anti -mining activists evaluated the Gezi movement. This debate may also contribute to our understanding of the differences and commonalities between local movements such as the case in Artvin and those mass movements like Gezi, especially when we remember that the activists of the movement in Artvin prefer to stay on a local scale, instead of creating international networks. In this respect, during the field study, I intended to understand how activists approached Gezi and how they connected their struggle with Gezi.

Firstly, I want to focus on how anti- mining activists evaluate Gezi movement. It is possible to argue that right-wing activists and left-wing activists’ in Artvin tend to approach to Gezi differently from each other. However, I want to stress that none of them evaluated Gezi in a negative way. Right- wing interviewees mostly seem indifferent to Gezi while left-wing interviewees appreciated Gezi movement and connected their struggle with Gezi.

In the fieldwork, I realized that the right-wing interviewees tended to not to associate their struggle with Gezi movement because they claimed that they did not closely follow what happened in Gezi; in this respect, right-wing interviewees keep a certain distance to Gezi movement. For example, a member of *Ülkü Ocakları*, Utku (23/M) stated his opinions about Gezi “We do not look back Istanbul. I do not have much information on this subject, I watched it from outside”. However, CHP supporters and socialist interviewees were in a fever about Gezi. Many such interviewees stated that Gezi resistance started with environmentalist concerns and turned to the resistance and opposition to the growing authoritarianism of the government party. Umut (29/M) emphasized this point by stating that;

The starting point was like the environment, but the main purpose was not the environment, the government started to restrict people so people said enough. Those who were against the government suddenly found themselves in Gezi.

Similarly, Ahmet (45/M) stated that “It started as an environmental struggle but turned to a political struggle, after all, something about political power”. Many interviewees also stressed the collectivity achieved by Gezi movements in terms of uniting people from different profiles. For example, Derya (34/W) argued that:

Gezi protests demonstrated to us what solidarity is: there were Atatürk flag and HDP flag side by side and behind them, a man was making *ülküçü* hand sign. My dream is this image, ideological diversity. Various segments of the society are all together, revolting against the cruel, domineering, and authoritative attitude of the state. Gezi is an achievement and it formed the basis of social opposition. I am sad that I was not in İstanbul or Ankara at that time. It was very productive; those improvised songs...Gezi was like a workshop.

As stated by Derya, many interviewees also noted that they wished they could participate in Gezi resistance in İstanbul. Başak (41/W) told that:

I was away from Gezi, it made me upset. We organized activities here, had a walk, we couldn't go to Istanbul. I would like to be there even in 1-2 days. I would like to experience that atmosphere as a resistance person and left-wing person. I want to be more radical, the trip would add a lot to me, when I came I would say to the people here, let's do this. Gezi would add a lot to me.

Just like Başak, many interviewees also stated that they supported Gezi movement in Artvin by organizing demonstrations in support of Gezi. Interviewees indicated that during Gezi protests in İstanbul, people went out on the streets by organizing protests, meetings and activities in Artvin to show solidarity with Gezi protests in Artvin.

4.4. The Reflections of the Gezi Movement on Cerattepe Struggle

It is obvious that the struggle for Cerattepe did not start just after Gezi protests; it has long- lasting history; however, the resistance in the streets is somehow the recent phase of the movement. It should not be a coincidence that the most active phase of the movement-including keeping watches- started after Gezi movement. In this respect, I want to evaluate the reflections of Gezi movement in the Cerattepe struggle from the eyes of the Cerattepe activists. Before the field study, I was expecting that the interviewees would distinguish themselves from Gezi. After all, after the then Prime Minister Erdoğan had called the activists of Cerattepe struggle as “*yavru Geziciler*” (minor Gezi people), the lawyer of YAD had claimed that “we are not *Gezici*, we are settled people of Artvin³⁷”. It then seemed to me that the movement preferred to remain distanced from Gezi. However, during the field research many interviewees stressed the similarities between both movements and indicated the contribution of Gezi to their own struggle. For example, Melek (27/W) explained how Cerattepe struggle was inspired by the Gezi movement and how it would indeed give inspiration to other local resistances:

When we look at the background of the Green Artvin Association or the mining struggle in Artvin, we observe that the methods of resistance were perhaps more basic. Government agencies were consulted, an objection was raised, or a lawsuit was filed. Nevertheless, the last two or three years of the 25-year struggle in Artvin came forward with another breakthrough. It became a pioneer, but what paved the way for this? Before the struggle in Cerattepe started, Gezi protest had already happened. We learned something new from the youth in Gezi and when people here saw the struggle there and what they could do when they wanted,

³⁷ <http://www.diken.com.tr/erdoganin-yavru-gezici-dedigi-artvinlilerden-yanit-geldi-biz-gezici-degil-yerlesik-halkiz/>

in fact, when they realized that they could make those authorities shake from fear, we also said we could do the same here. Another group of people in another city in another forest will gain strength looking back on Cerattepe process.

One of the important aspects of Gezi movement is its unification of people from different political views and different affiliations. In Gezi, people without any political affiliations, LGBTs, feminists, Kemalists, Kurds, football fan clubs came together for the first time. Canan (27/W) identified Cerattepe resistance with Gezi in terms of this heterogeneous social basis. She explained the contribution of the Gezi movement in terms of the collectivization of resistance in Artvin:

To be precise, I can say that Gezi protest served as an example for us. There were some tactics that we borrowed from Gezi process... In fact, there had already been a 25-years struggle here in Artvin; but we have not collaborated that much. Nevertheless, after Gezi, we observed that many people here got together. We said that we can also be in a company; all of us including right-wing or left-wing supporters, people from various political parties. We revolted against this all together. Gezi was a social opposition, too; it was an uprising. It meant “enough, stop!” And in Artvin it meant “We do not want mine here anymore!”

While the Gezi movement achieved to unite people from different political views, as stated, Cerattepe struggle was linked to Gezi movements in terms of broad social mobilization achieved by the movement. By reminding that *Halkevleri* and MHP kept watch together, Kerem expressed how Cerattepe struggle was influenced by Gezi; “We learned how to get together; we observed that friends from *Halkevleri* and *Ülkü Ocakları* kept watch altogether. This is the spirit of solidarity, a reflection of Gezi resistance. We tried to practice the culture inherited from Gezi here, which includes being in solidarity and staying together even if our opinions, beliefs, political identities differ”. In parallel to Kerem’s approach, Ayten evaluated Cerattepe struggle as a continuation of Gezi movement:

When people here noticed that diverse political groups got together at Gezi protests, they exhibit a similar kind of solidarity. Those who used to think differently and could not stand side by side learned to resist together as worries for their lives turned into a resistance itself. Gezi-like acts made society more in solidarity and demonstrated that it could be possible to deal with such things by struggling. The political concept of organized society disappeared after the 1980 coup d’etat, regained its meaning. I believe Cerattepe resistance is part of Gezi.

Gezi resistance made a great contribution to the repertoire of protests in Turkey to the extent that creative ways of protests developed such as standing man or reading book in front of the police, deconstruction of the words or humour in slogans and graffiti. During Gezi protests, social media such as twitter and facebook was effectively used. Melek (27/ W) emphasized how they were inspired by Gezi in terms of protest forms and using social media:

In addition to assuming what to do in case of physical intervention, especially after Gezi, we realized the impact of using humour, intellect or using social media effectively along with producing visuals and remarkable content. We have seen that another struggle is possible. Yes, of course, existing on the street is quite important; but we can use them alternately. If we were not on the street, for example, we did things like communication via social media channels.

Especially, after the police interventions in February 2016, many spontaneous protests were staged in the city centre. “Pot and pan” protests were organized, the slogans such as “this is only the beginning, continue to struggle” were chanted, as has been the case in Gezi. It was stated that one of the well-known slogans of Gezi “don’t be afraid, we are the people” was written in the encampment where watches were keeping. For example, a respondent Emre (29/M) emphasized this aspect with reference to the spontaneity, protest forms, slogans and protection against gas:

I think, here we experienced a micro-scaled Gezi atmosphere. Casserole acts, spontaneous appearance in the streets, people’s constant existence on the street, or at a protest, turning the lights off...We learned all these actions from Gezi process. Protests with a flourish of musical instruments such as *davul* and *zurna*, resistance against the police at the very first day, precautions against the pepper gas and finding remedies, calls for protest, shouted slogans; with all of these Cerattepe reflected Gezi.

Ali (27/M) expressed the inspiration from Gezi movement in terms of both collectivity, legitimacy, protest forms, slogans, women mobilization and creativity. He supported the view that Gezi inspired many local oppositions including Cerattepe as follows:

We observed the core of Cerattepe underlined Gezi. Casserole acts, women's initiatives, creative figures, all existed in Cerattepe process. Above all, there was that sociality. There were people outside with their demand for rights. It is impossible to distinguish these two resistances from each other. Well, there is no need to equalize them completely; however, I think they were two remarkably similar resistance examples in terms of their characteristics. Cerattepe protest also manifested that Gezi was not over after 2013. If those who said that Gezi was over had been here in February during those watches; they would have seen that Gezi is not over; it appears as Cerattepe resistance today and tomorrow it will be in a HES (hydroelectric power plants) resistance somewhere. The slogan "This is only the beginning, the struggle goes on" emerged at Gezi; but in each resistance, people shout this slogan, too. Like in Cerattepe. Those people did not disappear; this energy will come out again and this coming out would bring excellent results.

Another important characteristic of Gezi was the defence of the public sphere as a sphere of commons or communal sphere until the police attacks on 15 June 2013, Gezi Park was occupied by the protesters. Communal areas were established such as common kitchen, library, and a market where money exchange is not accepted. Some of the interviewees likened Cerattepe struggle to Gezi in terms of creating communal areas and defence of commons. During daily conversations, to keep watch to protect Cerattepe was evaluated as similar to occupation of Gezi park to protect the park. Umut (29/M) underlined this aspect; "We were able to bring solidarity, communal life here. We established communal life as established in Gezi. We showed solidarity for food, electricity etc. while keeping watch". Moreover, Gezi is evaluated as having a common feature with Cerattepe in terms of prioritizing environmental concerns. As Melek (27/W) argued:

In Turkey's political history, ecology and women's movements have been idle so far. However, Gezi protest turned the tables. Well, yes, there were several trees there as they say. Perhaps it was very symbolic, but it reminded everyone what should not be touched and what we should revolt against. That is why Gezi Park is incredibly significant in Turkey and its influence on Cerattepe struggle was great since it made us realize something that has been ignored for years. Before that time, environmental issues were not taken that seriously.

As stated, the Gezi movement was initially motivated by a concern for the protection of the so-called "three- five trees". In its wake environmental concerns became the initiator for mobilization even if it was the combination of many different forms of grievances with and opposition against the government.

Especially after the Gezi movement, political parties and organizations started to give more attention to the environmental and ecology concerns.

It is also important to note that the differences between Gezi and Cerattepe struggle was also stressed by the interviewees. According to Ali, Cerattepe was much more organized because of the struggle culture coming from the past. It is also important to remind that except for the last few years, AKP supporters also participated in the movement, protests, watches and meetings of YAD. The representatives of YAD also stated that AKP supporters and members had participated in the meetings until last two years. While Gezi movement can be evaluated as basically an opposition to the government and its policies, the anti-mining movement in Artvin does not directly target the government and its practices, and it also included AKP supporters. Umut (29/M) stressed this difference between Cerattepe and Gezi struggle as:

Unlike Gezi, we were there from 7 to 70, all local people of Artvin, parents, children were coming to the watches. It did not turn into politics like Gezi, our only concern was the environment, government supporters came, right-wing people also came. unlike Gezi, Cerattepe was unifying. Cerattepe was the common point for all. People with different political views came and struggled together.

In sum, heterogeneous social basis, broad social mobilization, protest repertoire, defence of collective life and giving priority to environmental concerns were stressed by the interviewees as common points with Gezi. In Gezi, people without any political affiliations, LGBTs, feminists, Kemalists, Kurds, football fan clubs came together against authoritarian and neoliberal policies of the government. Interviewees connected this heterogenous social bases and broad mobilization with Cerattepe struggle. By reminding that *Halkevleri* and MHP kept watch together, interviewees evaluated Cerattepe struggle as a continuation of Gezi movement. It was also emphasized that protest repertoire of Gezi and slogans of Gezi also inspired Cerattepe struggle especially after the violent suppression of the watches. Moreover, the defence of the commons and prioritizing environmental concerns were evaluated as common points between Gezi and

Cerattepe. On the other hand, the inclusion of government party supporters was emphasized as distinct characteristics of the movement in Artvin. It is commonly emphasized that except for the last few years, AKP supporters also participated in the movement, protests, watches and meetings of YAD.

4.5. Conclusion

In this chapter, the anti-mining movement in Artvin has been explored within the context of prefigurative politics. Although there is an important literature on prefigurative politics, prefigurative politics is mostly analysed with respect to the trajectory and the features of mass social movements such as Occupy movements including the Gezi. In this respect, it is important to inquire into whether we can debate prefigurative politics with respect to local ecology movements in the case of Artvin, as an attempt to examine prefigurative politics from the perspective of the grassroots. It is plausible to suggest that the characteristics of prefigurative politics can be seen in Artvin case in terms of changing activists' daily lives, creating new subjectivities, changing everyday life and social relations in the city, developing solidarity and cooperation, creating new ways of doing and relating and establishing collective and communal life. The assumption that "the power of social movements lies in its capacity to affect the life of actors and ordinary life" (Dixon, 2014) is materialized in Artvin case. One of the promises of prefigurative politics, efforts to transform power relations in the movement, can be seen in this case in terms of changing gender roles and empowerment of young people as political agents. Especially, the experiences and practices during the watches gave important clues to detect these characteristics of prefigurative politics. Watches in Cerattepe became a place in which collective life was established, solidarity, cooperation and friendship developed, and new subjectivities and new social relations emerged. In this respect the watches can be evaluated as a crack or space of dignity by Holloway's words or material practice of everyday utopias, as conceptualized by Cooper.

Because the Gezi protest is evaluated as a part of massive movements which are emblematically characterized by prefigurative politics, and the impact of the Gezi upon local ecology movements is assumed, I tried to understand the approach of anti-mining activists to Gezi movement. The interviews show that left-wing interviewees appreciated Gezi protests while right wing interviewees were indifferent to Gezi. Interviewees underlined a significant similarity between Gezi and their resistance in terms of their heterogeneous social basis enabling a broad social mobilization, protests repertoire, projection of communal life, defence of commons, and giving priority to environmental concerns while they differentiate their struggle in terms of inclusion of government party supporters.

CHAPTER 5

ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORKS IN İSTANBUL

“If urbanization is so crucial in the history of capital accumulation, and if the forces of capital and its innumerable allies must relentlessly mobilize to periodically revolutionize urban life, then class struggles of some sort, no matter whether they are explicitly recognized as such, are inevitably involved. This is so if only because the forces of capital have to struggle mightily to impose their will on an urban process and whole populations that can never, even under the most favourable of circumstances, be under their total control” (Harvey, 2012, p. 115).

As the epigraph indicates, cities have become central to the reproduction and extension of neoliberal urban politics to the extent that urban commons such as parks, squares, forests, coasts have become an essential part of the capitalist accumulation and re-enclosure processes. The land and resources provided by the city have become a commodity for capitalist accumulation through their exchange value. However, they also become places where the contestation of neoliberalism takes place in various forms and intensities; this is why the cities are evaluated as the centre of anti-capitalist struggles (Harvey, 2012). In this respect, urban-based environmental movements that aim to protect urban commons can be read as an opposition to neoliberal politics which aims at capital accumulation through interventions to the urban life and urban commons.

There are many reasons for selecting İstanbul as one of the fields of my research. Examining İstanbul case is vital to understand the dynamics of environmental movements not only because it is the city where the Gezi protests emerged which then spread to other urban centres in 2013; but also, many grassroots movements are still rising to defend the nature and natural commons in the city. Moreover, İstanbul is a striking case in terms of being the main focus of the government’s interventions that intensify through neoliberal urbanization under the name of

mega projects³⁸ in recent times. While megaprojects are used as a tool for hegemony building process for the government, on the one hand, it also generates discontent and opposition on the other. This chapter inquiries into the dynamics of the emergence and the expression of this discontent; namely, the networks opposing ecologically destructive projects in İstanbul.

To examine environmental networks in İstanbul that oppose ecologically destructive projects plundering the urban commons for profit-making, first, I try to introduce both mega projects and small-scale projects that commodify urban commons such as parks, public spaces, urban fabric and the forests of the city. Then, I try to present the networks constituted by the movements at different scales in İstanbul. The case of the Northern Forests Defence is central to this analysis because this is an organization that opposes primarily mega projects consistently and keeps up opposition in the public agenda. During the fieldwork, I have conducted in-depth semi-structured interviews between January and June 2017 with 25 activists, and I participated in many weekly forums of KOS that took place every Friday. I also took part in demonstrations of environmental movements including the one in Maçka Park where they declared they would vote no to presidency system under the slogan “Life defenders says no³⁹”. I have interviewed 17 activists from KOS and 8 activists from different environmental movements; namely, Validebağ Defence, Validebağ Volunteers, The Children of Nature, Ihlamur Park Solidarity, Haliç Solidarity, Earth Association, Freedom to Earth Association, The Right to Water Company.

³⁸ The term ‘Mega-projects’ is used to refer to large-scale projects that involve costly schemes of development and transformation of land uses and they act as a prime strategy for the transformation of urban space (Doğan & Stupar, 2017, p. 282). These projects “transform landscapes rapidly, intentionally, and profoundly in very visible ways, and require coordinated applications of capital and state power” (Gellert & Lynch, 2003, pp. 15-16). According to Baysal, mega projects are necessary for survival of capitalism to the extent that they are used as a solution to capital accumulation crises (Baysal, 2017, p. 42).

³⁹ <http://sendika62.org/2017/02/yasam-savunuculari-dogaya-kentlere-yasama-baskan-mi-olur-hayir-405182/>

Both Validebağ Defence and Validebağ Volunteer are oriented towards protection of Validebağ Grove, the second-largest greenery in İstanbul against the construction projects. This grove is under the threat of construction since the 1990s, and nowadays, it is again on the agenda because, in February 2020, a construction permit was given and recently it is allocated to AKP-governed Üsküdar Municipality. Validebağ Volunteer started an online petition campaign against being zoned for construction. Validebağ Volunteer was established as an association in 2001 to initiate a legal struggle, as the interviewee from Validebağ Volunteer stated. However, especially after the announcement of the mosque project that necessitated cutting trees in 2014, it turned into a social struggle that mobilized many people for protecting Validebağ Grove. Validebağ Defence was organized at the beginning of 2015, to be in solidarity with other urban-ecology movements in the city and to create a public opinion against the Mosque project in Validebağ Grove. An interviewee from Validebağ Defence explained that they collectively established this movement instead of participating in Validebağ Volunteer to protect Validebağ Volunteer from any legal sanctions.

The Children of Nature is a Marxist environmental movement that aims to combine ecology struggle with anti-capitalist struggle. The interviewee from this movement mentioned that they have been active after Gezi and they draw inspiration from Marxist ecology. They mostly organize in the university, but also, they aim to reach different parts of society. Ihlamur Park Solidarity is a neighbourhood network that aims to protect Ihlamur Park in Beşiktaş against its demolition. Haliç Solidarity is established after the announcement of procedures for Haliç Shipyards in 2013 July, just after Gezi. Earth Association aims to learn ecology, and spread ecological consciousness, and support the people in engaging with ecological activities. Urban garden, exchange market, repair cafe (people bring broken materials to be fixed there) and eco-villages are some of the impressive projects of this association. Another organization, Freedom to Earth Association, defines itself as an anarchist-ecologist organization whose motto is “freedom to humans, animal and the earth”. They aim to develop a comprehensive approach to ecology not only through opposing mega projects/ ecologically

destructive projects but also through protecting animal rights through supporting the vegan way of life and protesting any activities exploiting animals. The other organization that is included in this study is “The Right to Water Company”; whose motto is “the water for life not for the profit”. It supports the right to water not only for the people but also for all living species by including the right of water to their agenda.

5.1. Environmentally Destructive Projects in İstanbul

It is commonly stated that mega projects during the AKP governments are used to generate consent from large sections of the urban population through developmentalist discourse and the construction-led growth model (Paker, 2017; Akbulut & Adaman, 2013; Akbulut, 2014). The spatial politics of AKP has been based on the idea of economic growth as a way of modernization that has been materialized in the projects such as highways, power plants, skyscrapers and the mega projects (Akbulut, 2014, p. 230). In the Turkish case, the ruling party represents mega projects as “service to the people” regardless of their possible social and ecological costs. This kind of ‘politics of service’ is used to block any criticism about these projects (Paker, 2017, p. 105). In other words, mega projects are used to underline the position of AKP that what the government does is that it delivers and works for the people (Paker, 2017, p. 109). This framing reinforces the dominant discourse of developmentalism in Turkey, which has long been the cornerstone of right-wing conservative populist parties and governance (Paker, 2017, p. 105).

Paker argues that the way the megaprojects were strategically situated in hegemony building was a part of the process of integration into the neoliberal global economy. Two dimensions of neoliberalism, support for policies that facilitate integration into competitive globalization, and restructuring of the state to accommodate the extension of competition and market forces, are constitutive in this process as they pervade diverse geographies through a similar process that has been accompanied by the intensified commodification of water, forests and

other commons (Paker, 2017, p. 111) . Ergüder agrees with Paker that mega projects have been implemented not in line with public needs but as suggestions of neoliberal economy policies to overcome the crisis originating from the over-accumulation of capital. The period of economic growth experienced for the last 15 years in Turkey has led to significant developments in economic infrastructures, including airports, roads, motorways, and high-speed railways. In this respect, a large-scale urban transformation and renewal step have been taken in many cities, and several projects have been presented as a necessary consequence of the economic development taking place in Turkey (Ergüder, 2017, p. 67). “The 2023 Vision” of the government, published by Republic of Turkey Prime Ministry, Investment Support and Promotion Agency of Turkey, advocates this view to the extent that such kinds of projects, namely infrastructure investments such as highway, railway, airports or dams, are expected to enable the government to achieve their objectives.

It is plausible to argue that this developmentalist discourse is actualized through two sectors; energy and construction. Opening new areas to mining, attempts to construct nuclear, thermal, hydroelectric, wind and coal power plants are supposed to boom energy sector, on the one hand, construction and infrastructure projects including opening urban lands to housing and mega projects are assumed to foster construction sector, on the other hand. In this respect, as Adaman et al. (2017) argue, the rise of energy and construction projects have marked AKP era in parallel with the discourse of growth-oriented modernization and developmentalism that reshaped rural and urban spaces. Energy and construction thus represent fields of investment where the state can control over the required resources, namely capital and natural inputs (especially land) most effectively which are relatively costless to mediate and accelerate capital accumulation. According to Adaman et al. (2017), the reason why AKP paid attention to these sectors is that they could provide channels of financial inclusion and expansion that was needed for Turkey’s integration with global financial markets in a more effective way than other sectors. Construction and energy also reproduce the existence of the state, reinforce the purposes of modernization and development more concretely than

any other economic sector. The uniqueness of these sectors lies in the particular products they deliver, products that will be directly and immediately consumed by the masses, including those that were dispossessed by them. Furthermore, dams, bridges, highways, power plants and other monumental construction and energy investments resonate closely with modernization in the social imaginary (Adaman, Arsel, & Akbulut, 2017, p. 247).

Istanbul, the city that the government party has paid attention to actualize these projects to legitimize its power and acquire societal consent, plays a significant role to implement these construction and infrastructure projects at different scales. As suggested by Ergüder, Istanbul, as the other global cities, is faced with a new enclosure process which destroys the nature through the urban investments (Ergüder, 2017, p. 62). According to Doğan & Stupar, Istanbul's strategic position and geographical features have played a significant role in its global recognition and attractiveness. As an emerging global city and financial centre, Istanbul gets a significant share from the capital investments on urban mega-projects through public infrastructure investments in further economic growth and urban and global development. At this point, political ambitions and the state's policy orientation towards the creation of a “global city” can play a significant role in launching mega projects (Doğan & Stupar, 2017). According to Ekmekci, government-driven, top-down, controversial, gigantic infrastructural projects in Istanbul embody the issues of neoliberal urbanization in the most extreme ways. However, at the same time, these developments generate their adversaries and the reactions towards the dominant top-down planning policies. These are manifested in various forms, ranging from civic platforms to occupation movements in Istanbul (Ekmekci, 2014) .

Amongst the numerous projects, three large-scale urban regeneration proposals are distinct; the construction of the third bridge over the Bosphorus, Canal Istanbul as a new waterway connecting the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara and the Third airport (named as Istanbul Airport subsequently) (Doğan & Stupar, 2017, p. 281).

Describing mega projects as the “pride of the government”, Paker also draws attention to this point by arguing that;

The rule of the AKP has been marked by the endorsement of numerous mega projects in a variety of locations; but the third bridge, the third airport and the canal planned for Istanbul are the most prominent examples of these infrastructural projects due to their size, the prestige they are expected to bring and their being located in Istanbul – a city which has a distinct place in the Turkish economy as the motor of growth (Paker, 2017, p. 105).

Approaching Northern Forests as natural commons, Ergüder examines The Third Bridge, The Third Airport, and link roads in Northern Forests as a continuation of new enclosure movement/ re-enclosure of commons (Ergüder, 2017). According to her, the highways, canals, railways, bridges and airports are great infrastructure investments where the private goals of investors, speculators and the general/strategic targets of the state are joined to encourage new capital accumulation process (Ergüder, 2017, p. 66). In this respect, mega projects should be thought with the creation of the newly rich and the imbalanced distribution of income throughout the society through the formation of new areas of economic rent in the city. The new city planned by the government through such projects and the creation of new housing complexes and living spaces depends on the appraisal and rearrangement of urban land.

The Third Bridge, the New Airport, and the construction of the connecting roads are all projects that have significant economic rent value. While the public interest in these projects has turned to increase the exchange value of Istanbul, they have opened up a vital accumulation field in the construction sector through serving the interests of individual capital groups. This dynamic contributes to the transformation of areas that these projects target (Ergüder, 2017, p. 71). As the Northern Forests have been opened up to urban settlement, mega projects have been causing damage to the environment and forests. Projects that are not conducted within the framework of the Land Use Plan or other land development plans remain to be excluded from the holistic planning of the new urban policies (Ergüder, 2017, p. 70).

Mega projects in İstanbul in the last decades are the project of public-private partnership and part of privatization waves (Sönmez, 2016). They entail considerable expenses, and the state shares the project expenses of the companies that participate in the tender via state banks on the one hand and treasury guarantee on the other. In this respect, the state supports the capital accumulation through infrastructure investments, handling the risks that might appear during and after the project, through several arrangements including treasury guarantee and tax incentives, a value-added tax exception (Ergüder, 2017, p. 73). This means that the state guarantees the profits of mega projects, and the costs are socialized as the losses carry the risk of spreading among various segments of the society with an economic crisis to be faced in the future (Ergüder, 2017, p. 76).

In these projects, the global city discourse is highlighted, tracing the path for a new urban centre with an airport, seaport, tourism facilities, residential and recreational areas, congress and convention centres, and cultural and business facilities (Doğan & Stupar, 2017, p. 284). It is continuously repeated that these projects do not design only for transportation. Instead, it includes “new” city building near the airport, called “Aerotropolis⁴⁰” (Baysal, 2017). Paker argues that they are not merely transportation projects but rather aimed at building an urban complex guaranteed to increase urban sprawl, procedural and legal irregularities and the devastation of ecosystems (Paker, 2017, p. 107). In the report of KOS, *“The Third Airport Project vis-a`-vis Life, Nature, Environment, People, and Law”*, it is stated that these three mega projects are a package program that each one feeds in such a way that mega projects such as the airport, the bridge and the canal built at the Northern Forests is to let the companies plunder the last virgin areas of the city;

Mega transportation and infrastructure projects like the Third Airport, the Third Bridge and Canal İstanbul jeopardize the economic, ecological and social sustainability of the city while completely disregarding the principles of planning and urban science. Rather than their declared purposes, these projects that feed each other as a package program are the last resort to which an economy of

⁴⁰ Aerotropolis: comes from the merging of the words “aero” air and “tropolis” metropolis.

ringing alarm bells has turned; they are the projects of transforming Istanbul into a locomotive that carries Turkey's economy. In order to economy that has quit producing and started to spin its gears on construction and real estate, Istanbul's last virgin areas are sacrificed and the sustainability of the city is risked. (KOS, 2015, p. 11).

It is commonly repeated that these three mega projects are planned as a package program that open the Northeast part of the city, most virgin lands of the city, to the capital investments, rent and urbanization (Sönmez, 2017, s. 32). After a brief introduction to environmentally destructive projects in İstanbul, I want to focus on their effects one by one.

5.2. Effects of Mega Projects

Mega projects are planned to be built on the Northern part of Istanbul having forests, wetlands, water sources, water basins, cultivated areas and pasturelands (TEMA, 2014). The Northern Forests are crucial because they are considered to be among the 100 environmental hotspots in Europe that need urgent protection (WWF, 2017, p. 8), and they can be regarded as the urban commons belonging to the public. While mega projects are designed as a remedy for capital accumulation crises on the one hand and hegemony building on the other, it has many social and ecological costs. Because these projects are planned as a package program by the government party to open up Northern part of the city to construction and urbanization for the sake of profit, it is better to evaluate these three mega projects together while examining the effects of each project one by one in the following part of the chapter. It is essential to remind that ecologically destructive projects are not limited to these three mega projects. In every part of Istanbul, there are attempts to destruct the urban commons, historical and cultural heritage and urban life in different manners. The destruction of green areas of the city such as parks, groves and forests and cultural heritage of the city through the projects such as Taksim Gezi Park Project (Pedestrianization of Taksim area and construction of a commercial and cultural centre), project of the demolition of a theatre building named 'Emek' in Beyoğlu, Haydarpaşa Redevelopment Project, Haliçport,

Galataport, Kabataş “Marti” project, and landfills especially on the coast lines of Istanbul (Maltepe and Yenikapı) are some of the examples of these attempts.

Because these projects are evaluated as the projects that complement each other, it is plausible to address their overall effects. Before going into the details of these projects one by one, I want to introduce a general assessment of their effects. It is commonly repeated that opening Northern Forests to urban settlement has irreversible effects on the environment and forests. As stated in the report of KOS, when the results emerging both during the construction and operation processes and after the launch taken into account altogether, the opening of the North that has so far remained the most intact area in the city to infrastructure and construction projects means that the sustainability of the city is under threat. (KOS, 2015). At this point, mega projects such as 3th Airport, 3rd bridge and Canal İstanbul are the projects that affect the future of İstanbul irreversibly (TEMA, 2014). Moreover, according to Paker, these projects generated contention because people living in construction areas lost their homes, livelihoods, way of life, ecological diversity, archaeological heritage and environmental commons (2017, p.109). In this respect, it is plausible to argue that displacement, loss of livelihood and way of life, and dispossession are evaluated as social effects of megaprojects (Baysal, 2017) while destruction of ecosystem in Northern part of the city is seen as ecological costs of the projects. Besides, ecological costs of the projects can be detected through their adverse effects on the forest ecosystem, marine ecosystem, epidemic species, fauna, fertile lands, water basins, water resources, bird migration routine, climate change, transportation and traffic problems that are discussed in detail in the report of TEMA (2014). The report of KOS (2015) summarizes these ecological and social effects of the projects as:

While the natural landscape of the city changes further each passing day through urban transformation projects and mega projects, its forests, meadows, agricultural lands, wetlands, basins and great divides are destroyed together with the endemic plants, birds and wild life in them, thus not only the rights of the citizens to live in a healthy and sustainable environment but also the right to life itself which is the most untouchable right is violated.

5.2.1. The Third Airport (Istanbul Airport)

We are not just building an airport, we are actually building a victory monument (R.T. Erdoğan, 5 June 2014).

The 3rd Airport, also named İstanbul Airport, announced in 2012 by the Minister of Transportation, claims to constitute one of the biggest airports in the world. It has been operational since April 2019. It builds on an area of approximately 7,500 hectares in the Northern Forests. It spans a field of 10 km by length and 7.5 km by width amongst the Villages Yeniköy, Akpınar and Ağaçlı in the North of Istanbul. 72% of the project area is forests, 8% of it is lakes, 6% of it is meadows, heathlands and agricultural lands and 14% of it are mining fields (KOS, 2015, p. 8). Among the “mega projects”, the 3rd Airport Project has a different feature with its budget. (Sönmez, 2016). The tender for the construction of the third airport for the operation rights for 25 years was won by a joint venture of Turkish companies - Cengiz- Kolin-Limak-Mapa-Kalyon Consortium. The highest amounted tender in the history of the Republic of Turkey, gave the companies the right to build and operate the 3rd Airport of Istanbul for 25 years with an offer of 22 billion and 152 million euro and it is supposed to carry 150 million passengers annually (KOS, 2015). It is planned to provide a guarantee for 150 million passengers for the new airport and hence, it will be obligatory to pay the compensation to the company in case this passenger capacity is not reached. In the new airport project, the revenues to be gained from privatization would be about 20 billion dollars. The government claims the airport, which covers 7,600 hectares, will handle 150 million passengers a year by 2050 (Ergüder, 2017, p. 73).

Furthermore, this project is planned to be extended by an airport city with a central innovation district, hotels, retail and commercial office space, logistic centres, an expo and convention centre (Doğan & Stupar, 2017, p. 284). The designer of the airport, the architectural consortium Nordic Architecture, has revealed that the plan is to build an ‘airport city with hotels, shopping malls, commerce and shopping centre, and food and beverage areas’ (TEMA, 2014; Gürsel & Toru-

Delibaşı, 2013). In this respect, the effects of the airport are not only limited with construction areas; the remaining parts of the area near the airport will be opened to construction projects and especially to commercially functioning projects (KOS, 2015). As stated before, the aim of the project includes building a “new” city near the airport, that can be called “airport city”. Through establishing airport city, the airport surrounding areas will be plundered by the government, and thus pro-government contractors representing crony capitalism materialized in the project (Baysal, 2018).

It is crucial to remind that most of the lands to be used for the airport compose of forests, lakes and meadows. In this respect, the most important effects of the 3rd airport to Istanbul ecosystem is the loss of forests, water sources, wetlands and destruction of fauna and wildlife in the city. In the report of KOS, it is stated that the forests, heathlands, pasturages and meadows, agricultural lands and farms, wetlands and coastal dunes in the construction site are terrestrial ecosystems and habitats of Istanbul. All of these lands will be harmed permanently either by its direct impacts during the constructional and operational phases of the projects or the indirect effects through new development areas and the increasing population. It is also stated that this ecological wealth will be further plundered and the population that will flow into the region, as well as the traffic, will destroy the North Forests irreversibly (KOS, 2015, p. 13). Moreover, Istanbul will be deprived of water as the construction site of the third airport threatens ecologically protected and sensitive areas, including water basins. Further, the area hosts more than one million birds each year because it has been on the important migratory paths of the birds for centuries (KOS, 2015, p. 20). In this respect, the İstanbul Airport project will impact the forests, the unique pattern of the region and the ecosystems negatively, threaten the birds’ natural biotopes (KOS, 2015, pp. 23-24). Related to these concerns, deforestation is a serious concern when the scale of the projects is taken into consideration (Doğan & Stupar, 2017, p. 286).

Another striking effect of the project is the displacement of the local people living in this region. The local community whose livelihood is agriculture and

stockbreeding for years will be aggrieved, and the city will be deprived of a significant agricultural resource (KOS, 2015). In addition to these effects, it is essential to remind that for providing building materials for airport construction, stone pins were opened near the airport through expropriation in the villages such as Ađaçlı⁴¹ and Işıklar, where agriculture and livestock are the livelihoods⁴². Moreover, for the same purposes, two sand pins, 46 hectares in total, were opened in the forests area⁴³. In this respect, the effects of the third airport are not only limited to the construction site; the villages and the forests near the airport construction have been affected in this process.

İstanbul Airport was on the public agenda due to water flooding, occupational accidents/ murders at the construction site and repression against protests of the workers for working and shelter conditions. The workers organized protests to improve working and shelter conditions; hundreds of workers were taken into custody, and 33 workers were arrested. In addition to the ecological and social effects of the project, it thus has proved to be threatening for workers' rights. It is essential to remind that the reports have been approved after İstanbul Airport in operation. As stated in the reports, many problems have occurred, such as cancellation of the flights because of heavy rain and strong winds. Many flights accidents caused by hitting the flock of birds were also reported.

5.2.2. The Third Bridge (Yavuz Sultan Selim Bridge)

The first Bosphorus bridge was built back in 1973, and then the second followed in 1988 while the first attempts to construct the Third Bridge can be traced to the 1995s. In this period, many different social groups vehemently opposed the Third

⁴¹ In different times, the locals of Ađaçlı organized protests against stone pins and opened lawsuits for the cancel of expropriation.

⁴² <http://www.diken.com.tr/ucuncu-havalimani-santiyesinin-yuttugu-agacli-koyluleri-tas-ocaklarina-karsi-yurudu/>

⁴³ <https://www.haberler.com/3-havalimaninin-kum-ihciyaci-icin-2-orman-8091446-haberi/>

Bridge. For example, Erdoğan, then Istanbul metropolitan mayor, was also opposing the third bridge project because this would destroy the remaining lungs of the city for rent, and he claimed that that would be a death bell for the city. The first route of the 3. The bridge was between the historic district of Arnavutköy on the European side and Kandilli on the Asian side. Local people first made objections to the construction of the third bridge across the Bosphorus of Arnavutköy district in Istanbul. Paker states that this mobilization against the construction of the 3rd bridge emerged as a local initiative, namely The Arnavutköy Neighbourhood Initiative, organized by the residents of Arnavutköy in 1998, and the initiative sought the protection of forests and water basins of the city and sustainable urban development and transportation. The proponents of this project commonly emphasize that a third bridge will solve the intractable problem of transportation. On the other hand, opponents emphasize the irreversible ecological impact that the third bridge will lead to the destruction of the urban fabric as a result of rent-seeking pressures from finance capital, and the existence of more sustainable alternatives to the city's transportation problem (Paker, 2018). Between 1998 and 2005, the residents of Arnavutköy rallied against the project through street protests, meetings, festivals, dances, and tea parties, as well as a website, a mailing list, and open discussions (Paker, 2018, p.149).

Following this mobilization, the plan to construct the Third Bridge was suspended until 2005 with the announcement of the new Sarıyer/Tarabya and Beykoz route. This moved the projected direction of the bridge farther north part of Istanbul that also created discontents from groups who lived in the in this area and faced the threat of losing their homes. The initiative established itself formally as the Life Instead of the Third Bridge Platform (LTBP) in 2009 and began activities to increase public support. The Platform remained local at first, and then it included a variety of Istanbul neighbourhoods and organizations. As in the case of Arnavutköy, activists organized street protests, meetings, mini-concerts, press conferences, and street festivals, most intensively between the years 2008 and 2010 (Paker, 2018, p. 150).

In April 2010, the government announced another route for the Third Bridge. This time the site of contention moved farther north, Garipçe- Poyrazköy route, into the heart of Istanbul's only remaining forests and water basins. (Paker, 2018, p. 152). Paker argues that the contention over the third bridge started first at the neighbourhood level, then expanded to form a broader platform that included various neighbourhood organizations, national environmental organizations and professional chambers. The route of the bridge was relocated several times, shifting the focus of the mobilization from the neighbourhood of Arnavutköy to Sarıyer, finally ending up at its current location of the Northern Forests. With each relocation, the framework of contention also somewhat shifted; however, three significant grievances remained central to each wave of contention: environmentalism, the city of Istanbul as a common value for the people and the right to democratic participation (Paker, 2018, p. 153).

The initial motivation behind the mobilization that led to the mobilization of KOS activists is the construction of the Third Bridge. During the interviews, many interviewees stated that the construction of the Third Bridge had become the main reason for the self-organization of people who came together in the forums after the Gezi movement in Abbasaga Park. The bridge, in operation since August 2016, with its approximate budget of US\$2.5 billion, has long been in the midst of controversies because of its dramatic effects on Istanbul ecosystem. As Pouya et al. suggest this bridge could have much more catastrophic and irreversible impacts upon the city when compared to any former structure that has transformed the geography of the city; its route passes directly from natural barriers of the city like ecologically sensitive forests, water reservoirs and catchments. This is highly problematic since the experts point out that it has caused the deletion of 245 thousand trees so far. Probably it will also have adverse effects on the areas of drinking water reserves and lead to an increase in local temperatures and cause the extinction of endemic plants and animals (Pouya, Pouya, & Demirel, 2016, p. 554). In the report of TEMA, it is stated that this project affects not only Istanbul but also all over the country. Connection ways of the bridge are passed over forests, and fertile lands of the city and these areas will be open to urban settlement

(TEMA, 2014). Moreover, the main route for the third bridge and connected ways passes through the northern border of the Belgrade Conversation Forest at the European side. In contrast, the majority of the route passes through the Bosphorus Key Biodiversity Area. It consists of a wide range of habitats such as dunes along the coastline, rocks, marquis communities, pasture lands, forests and lakes, as well as several vulnerable habitats with rare plant species (Doğan & Stupar, 2017). The bridge and its connecting routes are also the last remaining forests in Istanbul and thus an important source of clean air and water. The bridge threatens the whole ecosystem along with the long-term sustainability of city life in Istanbul. This is why it has long been in the midst of controversies. Two-and-a-half million trees were cut down for the project, and it is expected that the area will be open to further urban settlement, as was the case with the second bridge (TEMA, 2014).

5.2.3. Canal İstanbul

Canal İstanbul has currently provoked the controversy between CHP governed metropolitan municipality and AKP government. The project was announced by ex-prime minister, Erdoğan, on 27 April 2011, as “crazy project” that concerns the creation of a ‘new Bosphorus’ in Istanbul. The project aimed at creating an alternative way between the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea through the destruction of Çatalca peninsula (WWF, 2017). The project which is 26-mile length, connecting the Marmara to the Black Sea and expected to be 15 billion dollars cost (Ergüder, 2017, p. 71).

The Minister of Environment and Urbanization also stated in the press announcement on 15 September 2018 that Canal İstanbul project is the most important project of the government⁴⁴. Environmental Impact Assessment (ÇED) for Canal İstanbul was approved in December 2019, and its first tender was held

⁴⁴ <http://www.milliyet.com.tr/kanal-istanbul-tam-gaz-devam-ediyor-ekonomi-2743134/>

in March 2020⁴⁵. İstanbul metropolitan municipality applied to the court for cancelling the favourable ÇED decision. Against positive ÇED report, a petition against the İstanbul Canal project was organized not only in İstanbul but also in different parts of Turkey by Either the Canal or İstanbul Platform – an initiative formed against the project.

According to Doğan & Stupar (2017), Canal İstanbul could be perceived not merely as a large transport and infrastructure project, but as a part of a geopolitical strategy bypassing the Bosphorus Strait. This waterway is supposed to create a gateway connecting Asia and Europe. In the report of World Wildlife Fund (WWF), it is stated that Canal İstanbul is the most significant engineering project that that nature of İstanbul faces that will affect the Black Sea, Sea of Marmara, Bosphorus and Northern Aegean Sea. It is argued that this is not only a transportation project; but also, the urbanization project that will change the future of İstanbul irreversibly. Furthermore, this project is the complement of other two mega projects that will locate the city to the Northern part of İstanbul close to the Black Sea. (WWF, 2017). If Canal İstanbul is indeed built, the waters of the Black Sea and Marmara Sea will be mixed that this will be a disaster for the entire Marmara region, as it would bring the highly polluted waters of the Black Sea into the Sea of Marmara, eating away at the oxygen levels of the Marmara, and cause a new pollution problem (Pouya, Pouya, & Demirel, 2016; TEMA, 2014). The real problem, however, is the new settlement areas and the population boom that will go with it understandably the real purpose of the project (Pouya, Pouya, & Demirel, 2016, p. 553). According to Pouya et al., it has severe threats and various side effects that will put İstanbul under pressure over an extended time. Regarding the proposed canal project and new settlement which are planned to locate on the northern part of İstanbul are likely to cause huge environmental problems in the future (Pouya, Pouya, & Demirel, 2016, p. 550).

⁴⁵ <https://www.duvarenglish.com/environment/2020/03/26/turkey-holds-first-tender-related-to-istanbul-kanal-project-amid-coronavirus-crisis/>

5.4. Environmental Networks Opposing Ecologically Destructive Projects in Istanbul

As Istanbul has been the locus of government intervention through mega projects including construction, infrastructure, transportation and urban transformation projects, there emerged many grassroots movements opposing these projects and mobilized for protection of nature, urban fabric and historical culture of the city demanding democratic and participatory decision making. In this respect, the Istanbul case is worth examining thanks to these vigorous grassroots movements that have risen to against plunder of the parks, neighbourhoods, squares, and forests in the city. Moreover, it is commonly argued that the Gezi movement started in the middle of Istanbul led to the emergence of different grassroots environmental movements, both Istanbul and various parts of Turkey. Examining grassroots environmental movements in Istanbul would be helpful to trace the effects of Gezi uprising on the following movements.

Although there is a tendency to evaluate Gezi uprising like a bolt from the blue, many activists that I interviewed during the fieldwork in Istanbul evaluated Gezi as an accumulation of many dynamics arising from the previous mobilizations of the numerous networks. Before the field study, I had an idea in my mind that Gezi uprising is a sudden and unexpected event⁴⁶. However, during the fieldwork, I realized that before Gezi uprising in June 2013, many different dynamics came into action that provoked the outbreak of Gezi in the city. The statement of one of the interviewees that “we (activists) were very productive between 2008 and 2013, many people were involved in mobilization in this period” shows the background to Gezi protests. At this point, I agree with Akbulut (2014, pp. 230-231) who argued that the Gezi movement was accumulated discontent;

⁴⁶ By arguing this, I don't underestimate the political atmosphere and repressive government policies that lead to emergence of Gezi movement in Istanbul and in many different localities in Turkey and its aftermath political opposition against the government that enabled people from different background to get into action. However, it seems important to understand the connection between previous environmental networks and Gezi movement in Istanbul case.

Turkey stood in the midst of processes of radical urban transformation, massive urban displacement and aggravated ecological destruction in the summer of 2013...In that sense, the revolts that occurred around the demolition of Gezi Park were hardly an isolated case from the larger dynamics of the restructuring of urban and rural space. Thus, the solidity and the rage that the opposition voiced through the revolts are partly due to an accumulated and/or anticipated discontent with numerous similar processes of urban and rural enclosures. The park, however, held further significance as it was implicated in the transformation of Taksim, the most central and symbolic neighbourhood of Istanbul.

So, what happened in Istanbul before Gezi⁴⁷? The protests against urban renewal projects are worth emphasizing which many scholars debated under the title of “the right to the city”. Especially after 2008, there emerged many uprisings against urban redevelopment projects in the neighbourhoods such as Gülsuyu, Güleusu, Ayazma in İstanbul. Moreover, many grassroots movements emerged against different projects in different parts of Istanbul. In 2010, the Platform such as Emek is Ours, İstanbul is Ours (*Emek Bizim İstanbul Bizim*) against the demolition of the historical cinema theatre Emek had been founded. In the same year, the European Social Forum held a meeting in Istanbul. Moreover, as stated, in 2009, The Life Instead of the Bridge Platform (*Köprü Yerine Yaşam Platformu*) was established. The Platform organized mass demonstrations against the Third Bridge by the participation of different political parties, NGOs, environmental movements, professional chambers, trade unions, neighbourhood solidarities, and activists with the slogans “we are saying no to the plunder and destruction of our city” and “we are protecting the life”. One of the interviewees stated the importance of these demonstrations by saying that;

The first demonstration at the city level in Turkey was held 3 years before Gezi, it was very crowded. The northern forests are at the centre of the protest because the Third Bridge was at the centre of the concerns even if Istanbul forests at that time are not called Northern forests.

Taksim Square Redevelopment project was firstly pronounced in 2007, and it was re-added to the agenda during 2012 general elections as the promise of the government. The project involved both pedestrianization of the Square, that

⁴⁷ For the comprehensive mapping of the mobilization against mega projects in Istanbul, see (Köksal & Öztür,2017).

directed the traffic to underground tunnels, and also the demolition of Gezi Park and the construction of a replica of the historical military barracks. In this period, various NGOs, urban planners, neighbourhood associations, labour unions and activists came together to form the umbrella organization of Taksim Solidarity in December 2011. In addition to the legal process initiated against the Project and Gezi Park's demolition, the Solidarity undertook an extensive campaign to raise awareness and support. The solidarity organized a festival in Gezi Park in April 2013, just before Gezi uprising, to revitalize the struggle and to acquire visibility and support (Akbulut, 2014, p. 232).

I believe the declaration of Taksim Solidarity on 29 May 2013⁴⁸ is essential to understand the dynamics behind Gezi to the extent that it points out main motivations and discourse that mobilized the uprising. In the declaration, it is stated that;

This struggle is against all the projects that dispossess our coats, forests and public places. It is against HESs, nuclear and thermal power plants that destroy whole natural areas in the country. It is against rent projects that target various public places not only Taksim Square and Gezi Park, but also Göztepe Park, Haydarpaşa Terminal, and AOC. It is against the 3rd Bridge, whose foundation was laid today, that will destruct all forests of İstanbul and dry water sources. It is against 3rd Airport Project that will attract customers to 3. Bridge and open the Northern part of İstanbul to rent- oriented urbanization. It is against all the projects that will destroy whole natural resources theatres and cinemas, Emek in particular.... This struggle is for our people whose homes and life spaces are taken away. To protect Taksim, the memory of struggle and solidarity means not only protection of our values and rights but also our parks and squares. For all these reasons, we are inviting everyone who wants to protect their rights and freedoms, city, living space and future to Gezi Park.

In the declaration of Gezi Park Solidarity, these projects are evaluated as interrelated projects that plunder public spaces, parks, squares, nature, forests, water resources, living spaces. In this respect, it is plausible to argue that governments' ecologically destructive projects in İstanbul already created discontent before Gezi erupted.

⁴⁸ <http://arsiv.mimarist.org/odadan/3110-taksim-dayanismasi-ndan-basin-aciklamasi-29-mayis-2013.html>

5.5. The Aftermath of the Gezi Resistance

As Gezi can be regarded as the accumulation of experiences and dynamics of environmental networks in Istanbul, it has also given inspiration and laid the groundwork for the following mobilizations to the extent that Gezi park provided the opportunity for the grassroots environmental movements to come together that focus mostly on the defence of urban and natural commons, the city and nature. Park forums- from one of which KOS emerged- can be seen as one of the prominent legacies of Gezi. After the violent evacuation in Gezi Park, people started to gather in parks and continued to discuss and share their ideas. As Akbulut stated;

The seeds of direct democracy in Gezi Park continued to grow in neighbourhood forums in numerous locations all around Istanbul. These forums tackled specific neighbourhood issues, and they aim to keep the Gezi experience alive by problematizing urban transformation and ecological destruction in the city by holding workshops, forming working groups and commissions, and staging protests (Akbulut, 2014, p. 238).

Moreover, just after the Gezi movement, various organizations that share similar values and motivations with Gezi have emerged in Istanbul. These organizations are generally named as “solidarity” or “defence” such as Haliç Solidarity, Validebağ Solidarity, and neighbourhood solidarities such as Kadıköy Kent Solidarity, Sarıyer Kent Solidarity, Acıbağdem Solidarity, park solidarities such as İhlamur Park Solidarity, Yeşilköy Park Solidarity and such as İstanbul Urban Defence, Adalar Defence, Beyoğlu Urban Defence, Bakırköy Urban Defence, Northern Forest Defence. It is evident that Gezi accelerated the emergence of this mobility that can be defined as “network”. These organizations are mostly voluntary, grassroots organizations rejecting leadership and hierarchy. They usually try to remain outside of institutional politics by refusing direct link with any political party, and their activities can be easily thought as prefigurative politics. All these have connections with each other; during the field study, I met many people who are active in more than one organization. This means that there are people who connect the organizations and the organizations themselves are

connected, get in contact with each other, and they organize many activities together. In this respect, I observed during the fieldwork that these different organizations act like networks both with their agendas and based on common agendas. I put KOS at the centre of this analysis because it is the movement that consistently opposes mega projects since 2013. It defines itself as “the child of Gezi” not only because of the shared spirit, strategies and motivations, but also it “literally” emerged out of the park forum- Abbasaga- after Gezi. Now, it is one of the leading actors of Either Canal or Istanbul (*Ya Kanal Ya İstanbul*) Platform, the initiative established by urban and ecology movements, neighbourhood associations, political parties, professional chambers and trade unions to stop Canal İstanbul project. However, interviewing with KOS activists has limitations in terms of understanding the network constituted around the opposition against the ecologically destructive projects. In this respect, I interviewed with the activists from different network movements in İstanbul.

Northern Forests Defence (KOS) emerged from the park forums in Abbasaga to launch a campaign against the destruction of urban and ecological commons in the northern part of the city by the third bridge, the third airport, Canal Istanbul and urban redevelopment projects. The movement defines itself as;

KOS, founded in July 2013, as a part of the rising struggle against the urban and environmental plunder that has become even more visible after the Gezi Park resistance, tries to bring those working to protect their living spaces in their own region against the ‘creative destruction’ of the capital together. At the same time, it tries to ensure that knowledge and experience are shared among defenders of life (KOS, 2015, p. 3).

KOS is at the core of the analysis of environmental networks in Istanbul because it is one of the successor movements of the Gezi protests that has continued so far and come together in weekly forums in every Friday. Moreover, it is one of the key movements having connections with different movements in Istanbul, in different parts of Turkey and the world. It has engaged in long-standing demonstrations and activities against ecologically destructive projects including not only mega projects but also many various scales projects such as thermal

power plants in different locations in Istanbul such as Silivri and Çerkezköy, a nuclear power plant in İğneada in Kırklareli, dams, wind power plants, quarries, and destruction of forests in Thrace region. Although the movement emerged from the park forums in Istanbul and located in İstanbul, it aims to extend its scope by reaching different parts of Thrace such as İğneada or Kırklareli. The reason behind this is that they define Northern forests as an ecosystem whose borders are within the Thrace region. As stated in the report, the Northern forests are defined as “an ecologically interconnected and diverse area extending from Sapanca to Strandzha Mountains consisting of the last forest lands, watersheds, and farmlands along with many endemic plant and animal species” (KOS, 2015, p. 3). In parallel with this, they tried to create connections, and unity between different movements acting within the Thrace region and they build solidarity with these movements that thinks, acts and organizes in accordance with similar goals and tries to strengthen the resistance by standing together with them (KOS, 2015, p. 3).

Social basis, protest repertoire and organizational characteristics of KOS, the motivations of the activists, the politics that they conduct will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.6. Conclusion

This chapter has focused on environmental networks against ecologically destructive projects in Istanbul. In this chapter, I tried to introduce these projects that are not only limited to mega projects such as 3rd Bridge, 3rd Airport and Canal Istanbul, but also different projects plundering urban and ecological commons such as parks, public spaces, urban fabric and the forests of the city, for instance, demolition of Ihlamur Park, Maçka Park, Validebağ Grove, Emek cinema, Haydarpaşa Redevelopment Project, Haliçport, Galataport, Kabataş Martı projects, and landfills in Maltepe and Yenikapı.

It has been emphasized that mega projects are designed as the package program that complements each other, opens the Northern part of the city to the

urbanization and let the companies plunder the last virgin areas of the city. In this chapter, devastating and irreversible effects of mega projects are discussed; whereas displacement and dispossession of local communities living in the rural parts of İstanbul can be regarded as social effects of mega projects, adverse effects of the projects on the forest ecosystem, marine ecosystem, epidemic species, fauna, fertile lands, water basins, water resources and bird migration routes are evaluated as ecological costs of the projects.

Among the mega projects, the 3rd Airport Project has a distinctive character in terms of its budget, with the highest amount tender in Turkish history. Establishing a new airport in the Northern part of the city is an integral part of the package program through building airport city. Loss of forests, water sources, wetlands and destruction of fauna and wildlife, deforestation, and displacement are significant effects that come through construction and starting up of the airport. The 3rd bridge has long been in the midst of controversies. Since the first attempts to construct the third bridge, the opposition has emerged firstly as a local initiative, and then through the creation of a network that includes the participation of different sections of the society. The 3rd bridge is also important to the extent that it gave birth to the emergence of KOS. It has been stated that by the construction of 3rd bridge, a range of habitats such as dunes along the coastline, rocks, pasture lands, forests and lakes, and several vulnerable habitats with rare plant species will be destroyed. Canal İstanbul, announced as the “crazy project” of the government, is the only one whose construction has not yet started; however, the possible route is published by the government. By its establishment, entire Marmara region will be affected negatively.

Mega projects have been paid attention by the government to materialize the developmentalist discourse. Yet it has generated contention and discontent. This chapter aimed to introduce the network opposing these projects in İstanbul case. Gezi uprising has provided the basis for creating such networks to the extent that just after Gezi movement, various organizations and movements that share similar values and motivations mostly named as solidarity or defence have boomed.

During the fieldwork, I interviewed with the activists from these networks; namely, KOS, Validebağ Defence, Validebağ Volunteers, The Children of Nature, Ihlamur Park Solidarity, Haliç Solidarity, Earth Association, Freedom to Earth Association and The Right to Water Company. This chapter briefly introduced the network-like character of these organizations. In the following chapter, I will focus on KOS and its main characteristics in terms of social basis, protest repertoire and organizational structure. The motivations of the activists and alternative way of politics they practice will also be under focus.

CHAPTER 6

NORTHERN FORESTS DEFENCE: THE CASE OF URBAN-BASED AND NETWORK LIKE ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT

Northern Forest Defence (KOS) is the urban based network, struggling against urban or rural projects that ignore and destruct the natural and ecological commons and all kinds of projects that destroy ecosystems, including but not limited to the mega projects such as the Third Bridge, Canal Istanbul, and the Third Airport, within the Northern forests, “ecologically interconnected and diverse area extending from Sapanca to Strandzha Mountains consisting of the last forest lands, watersheds, and farm lands along with many endemic plant and animal species” (KOS, 2015, p. 3). It represents itself as a part of struggles against pillage of nature and city, which have become more visible after Gezi resistance. It defines itself as a movement composed of free and volunteer individuals who defend the protection of ecosystem in Northern Istanbul. The network also emphasizes the cooperation and aim to build common struggle between similar movements sharing the same aims (KOS, 2015). KOS have protested the projects of Third Bridge and Third Airport many times so far. KOS is at the core of the analysis of environmental networks in Istanbul because it is one of the successor movements of the Gezi protests that has continued so far and come together in weekly forums. Moreover, it is one of the key movements having connections with different movements in Istanbul, in different parts of Turkey and in the world. It has engaged in long standing demonstrations and activities against ecologically destructive mega projects and other small-to-medium scale projects in different locations in Istanbul. The debate on KOS, as a movement resisting enclosure and commodification of urban commons, is supposed to contribute to locate the environmental movements into global context of contemporary anti-neoliberal movements that stand against the neoliberal agenda of relentless commodification of commons.

After introducing the networks constituted around the opposition against the ecologically destructive projects in İstanbul in the preceding chapter, I will develop a debate around Northern Forest Defence (KOS) and will further my analysis to social basis, organizational character and protest repertoire of the movement, motivations of actors and the features of prefigurative politics represented by the movement. I also intend to discuss the approaches of activists to Gezi and the reflections of Gezi on KOS. This chapter is based on the semi-structured and in-depth interviews with 17 KOS activists and my participation in their forums, meetings and protest activities from January 2017 to June 2017.

6.1. The Social Basis of the Movement

This sub-section aims at discussing the social basis of KOS; more specifically, it is intended to answer the question that who are the actors of this mobilization. During the fieldwork, I noticed that people from different ages and occupations have participated in the activities of KOS. They were mostly working in white collar jobs; some of them were journalist, freelance interpreter, engineer, lawyer, teacher, academics and student; that can be categorized as middle-class professionals. The interviewees were between 19- 65 years old. The interviewees mostly stated that they participated in Gezi movement. In this respect, the legacy of Gezi is not limited to organizational characteristics of the following movements including KOS; instead, continuation in terms of participants/ social basis is also the case. As I observed during field research, most of the activists have no connection with political parties; instead, they prefer to put distance institutional politics even if there are exceptions; I have also met with people who are the members/ supporters of Halkevleri and CHP. Most of the the activists I interviewed voted for CHP and People's Democratic Party (HDP). None of them are politically conservative or AKP or MHP voter. Based on my observations, the respondents share similar cultural background, educational level, lifestyle, consumption patterns, entertainment habits, and cultural capital. They were mostly close friends to each other, sharing their free times together.

The question of how activists define themselves is one of the crucial questions pertains to creating collective identity within the movement. As many of the scholars studying on new social movements indicated, the creation of social movement requires the identification of “us”. In addition to shared values and norms, the formulation of collective identity is also crucial to identify the social movement. During the fieldwork and interviews, I noticed that activists define themselves as the “life defender”. In the case of KOS, “life defender” is the common rhetoric, that constitutes their collective identity, which is also the case in anti-mining struggle in Artvin. Environmental issues are evaluated as the borderline of the society and environmental activism as the struggle for life including all living species. Along these lines, one of the respondents, Özlem (26/W) stated that they identify themselves as life defender different from leftist opposition and this term covers all the people struggle for the environment. Anil (25/M) regarded the rhetoric of life defence as having potential for encompassing different sections of the society, not only limited to defence of nature. Hasan (27/M) indicated that the ecology resistance united together under the aim of the life defence against the certain monopolized companies that act like the gangs.

According to Uncu (2012, p. 203), bonds of solidarity, respect, and trust constitute the basis of the social movement’s collective identity. He stresses that the formation of collective identity and framing process are crucial for transformation of a coalition of collective actors to a social movement network. More specifically, he argues that:

Conflictual coalitions can convert themselves into social movements with a stronger collective identity and commonly produced frames if their participants a) develop stronger bonds of trust and solidarity, b) exchange information and experiences at intensified and extended levels, c) consolidate mutual recognition/tolerance among their constituents, and d) talk, negotiate, and decide on commonly shared meanings” (Uncu, 2012, p. 194).

In the case of KOS, bonds of solidarity, respect and trust, which constitute backbone of the collective identity of the social movement, are highly visible among the activists; because there is no hierarchical organization and leadership,

collective decision-making process intensified these virtues among the activists; they talk, listen, negotiate and show respect, trust and intense solidarity to each other.

It is important to remind that the existence of a heterogeneous social basis is also the case for KOS in terms of age and occupation similar to the activists of the Artvin-based anti-mining movement. However, it is difficult to indicate the heterogeneity in terms of the political orientation or class. While people from different sections of the society have mobilized under “no to mine” slogan in Artvin, such kind of diversity is not the case for Istanbul case. Moreover, while women have been in the forefront in the movement in Artvin, which is not the case for KOS. Of course, there are women who have also been active in this mobilization; however, the mobilization is not characterised by a strong female presence, as the case in Artvin. In this respect, the social basis of KOS does not correspond to the social basis of community-based ecological resistances that transcend cleavages of class, gender, ethnicity, religion or political orientations.

Instead, the social basis of KOS is composed of middle class professionals who feel threatened by ecological degradation and commodification of urban and ecological commons. Hence, the social basis of KOS overlaps with the assumption of new social movements that emphasize middle class as the actors, and the conceptualization of multitude that plays role in social production. Especially after the rise of urban movements against gentrification and neoliberal urbanization, recent urban movements mostly discussed within the framework of “the right to city” and middle-class characteristics of the urban movement are emphasized by the scholars. For example, Ergenç examines Gezi movement within a broader context of global neoliberalism led by “urban middle class”. The self-identification of this urban middle class “cuts across their economic status and they defend their life style against socioeconomic challenges of neoliberal politics” (Ergenç, 2018, p. 220). According to Keyder, the Gezi protests were primarily dominated by university-educated youth who have benefited from the economic growth and openness to global influences of the past decade. They do

the jobs that require education, skills and knowledge (Keyder, 2014). In a similar fashion, Tuğal argues that professionals constitute the core of Gezi participants (Tuğal, 2013). In this respect, the social basis of KOS overlaps with the conceptualization of social basis of Gezi in particular, urban social movement in general.

6.2. Motivations of Actors

In addition to the social basis of the movement, the underlying motivations of actors to participate in the movement is another key aspect that is aimed to explore in this study. When I tried to understand the motivations of KOS activists, I realized that to stand against neoliberal rent-seeking politics, to protect the nature, the ecosystem, the city and the life go hand in hand. Many interviewees referred these aspects as related with and complementary to each other. For example, Serkan (44/M) pointed out the interconnectedness of these aspects as:

We are struggling for the nature, animals, living species, trees, people, women, we fight for nature, but they are always related to each other, women's rights, animal rights, struggle for thermal power plants, bridges, highways ... The attack is large-scaled because it is related with rent.

Nevertheless, opposition against rent-seeking policies is the common discourse that most interviewees mentioned. The respondents stressed that nature/environment-related issues should be evaluated within the broader perspective that includes the capitalist system destroying the nature for the sake of profit making. Meltem (26/W) indicated;

We entirely refuse to justify such things as people's living in unfair conditions and working in the mining and dying there, just because some will make money or rule nature. Thus, the thing is not just a matter of a tree; it is an issue that has deeper connections.

Another interviewee, Evren (40/M), also expressed the anti-capitalist stance behind the struggle for nature as “We oppose all rent-centered, profit-based projects”. Even if I don't directly use the terms of capitalism or neoliberalism in

my interview questions, the interviewees mostly used these terms when they explained the framework of environmental movements or when they explain why they oppose mega projects. For example, when explaining the characteristics of environmental movements, Evren (40/M) expressed that;

I believe that ecology movements are part of an anti-capitalist struggle, I believe that it has to be because capitalism is a system that is constantly seeking rent, creating rent, it is plundering everything, destroying the last parts of nature, destroying the highlands, destroying running water, forests.

Many interviewees considered ecological devastations in different parts of Turkey as a result of capitalist accumulation and they connected different ecological struggles under the umbrella of the opposition to neoliberal accumulation process. For example, Hasan (27/M) explained the unified opposition against certain companies as:

As an example, I can give Cengiz Holding. If you struggle about Northern Forests, you are already aware of the projects of those companies in other regions, so that you collaborate with those people struggling there. Thus, this becomes a common resistance. This destructive attack is made through one conglomeration, behaving like a gang composed of 10-20 companies. They monopolize and purchase all projects by tender. Thus, all people struggling against these companies unite to defend life.

Connecting ecological devastations with labour exploitation, Erkan (35/M) stressed that the underlying reason behind ecologically destructive projects in different parts of Turkey as the system which prioritizes capital and companies, as:

Because from the very beginning they behave imposing, they strive for the capital and the benefit of these companies, and to facilitate their work, they redefine ecological areas as business areas, they perform workplace homicides, they exploit the laborers unprecedentedly. When everything is for the sake of the capital, everything happens for the benefit of the employers; As such, we experience the most fundamental contradiction of capitalism even deeper...In other words, whatever we experience in Istanbul actually happens in both Artvin and Ankara. Wherever you observe, you see similar reasons; thus, we are against all. This situation destroys the habitats of the animals. While we fight for the buffalos in Istanbul on the one hand; we struggle for nature, for ourselves, for the ongoing of natural life on the other hand. In fact, this is the basis of the ecological

movement.

As indicated in the quotation, in addition to stand against neoliberal rent seeking policies, to protect the nature including all living species is another underlying motivation of KOS activists. As Esin (42/W) indicated;

There is a commodification process, we see this very clearly in the nature ... Nature has its own self value in itself. However, the system measures everything with a profit margin and financializes it. It's like seeing the nature from profit making perspective. In other words, the system does not give value to tree, a bird, a scarf, an insect. There is a system that tells how many buildings be can built here, the profit from here instead of looking the nature from its innate value. I believe this self-innate value of the nature should also be defended.

One of the motivations of the actors in environmental activism is to protect the nature in relation to the emotions and feeling attached to the nature. This meaning attached to the nature is called symbiotic relationship (Çoban, 2004). Even if the symbiotic relationship with the nature is not very powerful rhetoric for KOS case, in contrary to Cerattepe struggle, some interviewees stated their strong relations with the nature. Hasan (27/M) explained how his emotional world is connected with the nature with respect to his motivation to protect the nature as;

There is a really fast transformation, especially in cities and industry, there is a very fast attack and change. The disappearance of the place where you grew up or the stories you used to listen from people in your childhood affects me emotionally at first. The next generation will not see this. This is the most emotional motivation.

Many interviews stressed that the effects mega projects exceed the construction areas; in this respect, the large-scale effect of the projects are stressed that destroy the ecosystem of Northern forests. For example, Meltem (26/W) stated that the effects of the mega project are not limited with construction areas; it also affects neighbourhoods of the construction areas through stone pits and mining sands in the sea. This interviewee explained how mega projects affects the whole ecosystem of Northern forests in the following way:

The Third Airport Project in İstanbul will not be limited to the airport, of course. For this project they opened quarries, they got sand from the sea; all these were the beginning of the destruction. We were primarily against these megaprojects. There were several pieces to struggle with; not only the Third Bridge but also linking roads to the bridge, North Marmara Highway as well as quarry areas and trucks that get sand from the sea. In the Northern Forests remained only 250 million trees. We emphasize this constantly: There is still huge forest land and if these projects are cancelled, there will be a chance for nature to regrow itself. There are animals and other species living here and their home is being destroyed. Migrating birds find less and less place in the Northern Forests to rest. So, this project destroys a transit area of the birds by splitting the forest. We do not want anything to be constructed in the Northern Forests for the income, for the money by no means. We want that region to be protected. There is already enough destructed area.

It was also stated by the interviewees that these projects are related to each other with the aim of opening Northern forests to the construction and extending the city to the North part of İstanbul. By emphasizing an attempt to airport city, Cem (44/M) pointed out the impossibility of sustaining Northern forests in İstanbul by stating that:

The purpose of these transportation projects was not aimed at solving the traffic problem in Istanbul. Last week, the minister admitted that they did not build an airport, they built an airport city, they laughed at us when we said this. They made an airport city, they talk about the city of 1 million people. The sustainability of northern forests is not possible in this circumstance so defending the forest is critical for us.

In the discourses of the activists, the concern with protecting nature goes along with the concern for the city and the lives of the people in the city. Mega projects are seen as threatening both sustainability of the nature and the city. Through opening the city and forests to the construction, many interviewees stated that it will be impossible to live in İstanbul in case of the destruction of water resources and the sources of clean air. The discourse to protect the city and the nature is also related with the protection of life for KOS, activists, as the case in Artvin. To remind, to protect the life is one of the basic motivations of anti- mining movements in Artvin. This discourse is also common among KOS activists, related with the “life defender” discourse, in this respect one of the motivations of the actors is to protect the life. Defining nature as the living space, Esin (42/W)

addressed her motivation as the protection of her living space as;

The matter of nature and the environment exactly represent our living spaces. What we defend is basically your home, the place where we live, this city where hosts us. We are defending the forests that feed this city, the natural resources that feed this region, It is very natural for us to show resistance against their destruction.

Another respondent, Erkan (35/M) points out the struggle against the commodification of ecological commons, which is the living space of the people as:

Through rapid expropriation, ecological areas are now defined as construction sites one by one and hence, we are left without a place to live since our living spaces are commercially presented to these companies as part of a state systematic. What do people who have no place to live do? They start struggling or extend the already existing struggle...Therefore, the characteristic of both the ecological and urban struggle has transformed into an act of protecting people's own spaces.

It was emphasized that living space is not the concept limited with the people, as emphasized in Artvin case; it also includes all living spaces; the nature is conceptualized as the living space belonging to people and other animals living in the nature. For example, Meltem (27/W) stated that "we describe our struggle as defending life as a whole. In fact, the concept 'life defender' came out, because we both defend human beings and other creatures living in the nature". By equalizing ecology movements with life defence, Hande (29/W) stated her motivation as the defence of life with all living creatures; "In an environmental struggle, you are struggling for the life to defend it completely, with all living creatures". The struggle for the environment means the struggle for the life, from the perspective of the activists. In this respect, to protect the life is one of the main motivations of the actors.

In sum, to defend the nature, ecosystem, the city and the life, to stand against rent seeking policies plundering of the nature, natural and environmental commons are underlying motivations of KOS activists to participate in the mobilization. To

stand against neoliberal rent-seeking politics, to protect the nature, the ecosystem, the city and the life go hand in hand from the viewpoint of the activists. Activists emphasized their opposition against neoliberal urbanism, that regards the cities as a locus of exchange value and capital accumulation. The anti-capitalism stance of the activists is reflected in the discourse of defending the city and nature against rent-seeking policies of neoliberalism through commodification and privatisation of urban and ecological commons.

6.3. The Protest Repertoire of the Movement

It is plausible to argue that the protest repertoire of KOS varies; both traditional ways of protests and creative ways of protests are used by KOS activists. Meetings, demonstrations, press releases, petition campaigns are some examples of traditional ways of protests. They organized both mass demonstrations and small-scale demonstrations in front of the companies that are responsible from ecological devastations. They also participated in meetings and demonstrations organized by different urban and ecology movements. During the fieldwork, I participated in the demonstration organized by different ecology movements in Istanbul, named “Ecology Movements Say No to Presidentship” that shows the discontent towards presidential government. KOS also organizes campaigns and nature trips to treated areas such as the planned Canal Istanbul route, Igneada where the nuclear power plant is supposed to be built, and Belgrad forest, that I had a chance to participate and learn about its history and natural beauty. They prepared reports on mega projects and shared these reports with the national and international public opinion. They also organized trips to Thrace villages, that are threatened by thermal power plans and Northern villages to visit the affected areas of 3rd Airport and to get in contact with villagers. For organizing such kinds of varied strategies, they have different working groups such as the photography, media, trip and direct action. Photography working group collects photographs from threatened areas to document these areas. Media working group prepare news bulletin and use social media to announce the news, press statement and other activities and demonstrations.

In addition to these tactics, they use direct action strategies, that can be evaluated as a part of prefigurative politics and protest repertoire of new social movements. As one of the respondents, Hasan (27/M) explained this strategy:

We mobilize extremely fast. We try to calm down and discuss a little bit more: How can a project really be stopped? What could be the most effective way of influencing public opinion? It is crucial to use the right picture in the right place. We intend to be at the place where this crime is committed or to stop it immediately by direct action. Our objective is to prevent the crime such as standing in front of an earthmover or protesting the institution which approves this crime like a municipality. We try to stop the decision instantly on the day when the city council has a meeting on the issue by protesting in front of the building.

As stated by Hasan, direct action aims to intervene in the ongoing process and to stop the projects immediately by different methods. Direct action can be evaluated as repertoire of prefigurative politics in terms of its interruption “now and here”. One of the most impressive examples of this tactic was to stop construction equipment in the construction area of 3rd Bridge⁴⁹, as can be seen in the picture. KOS activists stopped the construction equipment and wrote “Killer Bridge” on the road.

KOS uses many creative protests to draw public attention. One of the most remarkable ones, is perhaps the picnic organized in the construction area of 3rd Airport that showed how the area will be in the future. In order to show the kind of future awaiting Istanbul and destruction in case the 3rd Airport project is completed, KOS activists picnicked at one of the villages in the 3rd Airport area and stated “our picnic as the representation of dystopia may become the future of Istanbul”⁵⁰.

⁴⁹ <https://www.evrensel.net/haber/267461/kuzey-ormanlari-savunmasi-bu-santiye-de-3-kopru-de-kacaktir>

⁵⁰ <https://kuzeyormanlari.org/2016/10/24/welcome-to-the-dystopia-the-new-istanbul/>

6.4. The Organizational Characteristics of the Movement

Horizontality, non- hierarchy, leaderless organization, democratic decision making, grassroots democracy are the organizational characteristics of both anti-neoliberal and prefigurative movements. As discussed in the one of preceding chapters, the only politically correct form of organization in anti-capitalist movements as non-hierarchical, and horizontal” (Harvey, 2004). In these movements, citizens experience participatory, direct and inclusive forms of democracy in which the structure of organization is horizontal without leaders (della Porta D. , 2015). Klein emphasizes the decentralized, non-hierarchical structure of the movement while Hard and Negri explain anti- capitalist movements as; “The groups are not unified under any single authority, but relate to each other in a network structure” (2005, p. 103). These social movements tend to rise spontaneously with horizontal organization hence there is no formal leadership, command and control centre, or a hierarchical organization (Castells, 2010).

Non-hierarchical and horizontal organization without leadership is one of the most significant features of new social movements, that is also shared by KOS. As I observed during the field study, and as almost all the interviewees stressed, KOS adapted horizontal and non-hierarchical organization without leadership. As Hande (29/W) stated “KOS has achieved horizontal organization, we reject all kinds of hierarchy”. The activists also paid attention that no one is regarded as the leader/ leading figure of the movement. They choose different person as the speaker of the organization. Cem (44/M) explains collectivity within the movements that blocks leading figures as;

We neither have a spokesperson nor a president; in fact, we are quite disturbed if the same person represents the movement for two or three times in various platforms. KOS is a self-organized movement. Creating a new way of practicing politics without someone like a president or secretary, who would alienate participants or members of the movement, is quite significant on behalf of us.

In addition to rejecting leadership, KOS activists also refuse any clear division of labour that can create hierarchy within the movement. Respondents also stressed that they refuse any hierarchy based on gender, age or experience. Another respondent, Erdem (46/M) explains the equal says of the participants within the movements as;

KOS represents an ecology struggle in which people from different political perspectives stand together. Everyone's ideas are equal, nobody's ideas are more important than someone. The ideas of the person who came yesterday is equal to the ideas of any person there. The ideas of a person belonging to any organization is equal to that of an unorganized person. We try to apply equality as much as possible. Being above politics becomes a problem when KOS is close to any politics. We should not be close to any politics.

A respondent, who underlined grassroots characteristics of the movement, Serkan (44/M) draws attention to the norms of equal respect and equal say right within the movement as;

Since we have already horizontal structure, we do not have the top, our manager, our chief, our supervisor. everyone's saying is equal. Every participant represents KOS. This is very valuable for me. Thanks to respect we show each other, we have so many forums, meetings, we have sub-groups, we have working groups.

When I asked other respondents, the norms adopted by KOS, it was emphasized that the anti- hierarchical characteristics of the movement was combined by the attempt to practice direct democracy, adaptation of equal right and equal participation of the participants, anti- sexism, anti- racism and opposing any kinds of discrimination. As Meltem (26/W) puts it;

KOS is against hierarchy. It aims at practicing direct democracy. Everyone has an equal say and equal right of participation. It rejects hierarchy based on experience. Besides, it is anti- sexist, anti-racists and against all forms of discrimination. It unites people around the life defence. It adopts democracy in its practices.

Another respondent, Erkan (35/M) argues that refusing hierarchy and being above politics are two unique characteristics of KOS:

There are various branches within KOS and in these branches, we reproduce non-hierarchy, always proceeding in a non-hierarchical way at every step. People from diverse backgrounds may have diverse opinions, experiences, or even different photographic perspectives; all these are valid here. That is why we can invite many different people to participate in KOS...Being non-hierarchical and above-politics are two important characteristics of KOS; by means of these one knows that one is not forced to involve in the movement. Releasing individuals free through an inclusive and embracing politics is probably the most fundamental reason behind its continuation and indeed it is for me the most valuable aspect of KOS.

As in the case of the anti-mining movement in Artvin, KOS activists distinguish the politics that KOS represents from institutional politics associated with party politics. Many interviewees indicated that even if there are activists who have connections with political parties, KOS puts a distance from political parties and they place KOS above institutional politics. Aysun (65/W) told this aspect: “KOS is completely above politics and has an equal distance to all political tendencies. In other words, there is room for everyone, regardless of which party and political tradition they come here, but not with the forms of politics and ideological line they come from”. Besides, Erkan (35/M) also explains KOS and their relations with political parties as;

KOS has done what it has done so far because of being above the politics, it sticks to this principle. Otherwise, it cannot prevent this airport project; another kind of political movement cannot do this. We have seen no political movement have been made for three or four years to stop any major project such as this airport. The reason why KOS can make a move is that KOS is not under the influence of any politics. For example, the propaganda of any political party cannot be made, or any political party flags can not be unfurled in our events. That is why KOS still exists.

As stated in previous chapters, this discourse is common among environmental movements. This discourse shows the dissatisfaction with representative democracy; however, this does not mean that they don't represent any kinds of politics. The politics represented by environmental movements indicate traces of different kinds of politics standing against neoliberal politics and prefigurative politics, as discussed in the following title. Stressing the differences between the political and politics, Evren (40/M) explains the politics represented by KOS as:

Since KOS concerns the entire city inhabitants, it is independent of politics, however, not independent of political decisions. Because eventually bourgeoisie parties mainly execute politics while realizing these projects. Third Bridge was the product of a political decision. Similarly, constructing highways, destroying forests are also political decisions. Thus, KOS is a movement that does not belong to any political affiliations but still make politics. It is a formation that builds its struggle against political decisions by executing a novel political attitude. From this point of view, I think that ecology movements are the ones against bourgeois politics, against political decisions. In this respect, I believe it is a political movement, yes; otherwise is unthinkable.

By defining the politics of environmental movements as political movements against bourgeoisie politics, Hande (29/W) emphasized the relationship between government and private companies as a part of politics and explained the politics represented by KOS as:” All the initiative belongs to the capital in Turkey. The state acts in accordance with capital without asking the people. All this are part of the politics. Giving priority to the ecosystem is also politics at the same time”.

Democratic decision making and participatory democracy are other key features of anti- neoliberal social movements shared by KOS. For KOS activists, forums are regarded as the mechanism of collective decision making and participatory democracy. It can be argued that one of the powerful tools that makes the movement democratic and horizontal is decision making process. Through forums, KOS advocates participatory and deliberative decision-making process. For KOS, forums are the means of participatory decision making. The movement regards every Friday forums as “local assemblies for collective debate and decision making”. It takes its decisions in its weekly forums that are open to everyone. This characteristic of KOS overlaps with Harvey and Negri’s statements that “Social forums, affinity groups, and other forms of democratic decision making are the bases of movements (2005, p.103).

One of respondents, Aysun (65/W) mentioned that the basic activity of KOS is the forums that enables the movement lasting since 2013. Another respondent Hasan also explained the role of forums as;

Forums are the basic decision-making mechanism of KOS. The KOS forums are weekly meetings, they are open to all people. Our weekly agenda is spoken at forum meetings where we announce publicly. In these meetings, there are agendas that KOS has been following since its foundation, and today these main agendas are specific projects, there are subtitles under these projects, these agendas are constantly discussed, and there is a discussion about what to do about them.

In the forums, each individual has equal rights to speak and participate in the decision-making processes. As I observed during the field study, they took the decisions in the forums within the participation of activists; none of them dominates the decision making. As stated by Serkan (44/M);

We meet every week at 7 o'clock every Friday at KOS's place. We decide all our works there. We write the topics first, then everyone tells his opinion, as I said everyone is equal, we make decisions there, we set the agenda once, whatever is on the agenda, the planning of the action is done, the distribution of tasks is made, the content is decided, we work in this way. The decisions are made in the forum.

The rejection of any kinds of hierarchy within the movement is connected with rejection any kind of hierarchy in the forums. Many interviewees stated that even if it is the first time that one participates in the forum, her/his words are equal to others and emphasized the rejection of hierarchy based on labour. Erkan (35/M) explained this;

The suggestion of the person attending that forum for the first time has the right to influence the decisions as much as people like me, who have participated in Kos before. This is actually a result of rejecting labour hierarchy, of which we attach great importance, that is, as KOS, we also reject the labour hierarchy. Now we are eliminating people labour more having a right to speak more.

Emphasis on grassroots democracy was another discourse stressed by many interviewees. They emphasize that the decisions that affects people's lives and their living space should be made with the participants of affected sections of the society. In that respect, they advocate participatory and grassroots democracy based on the participation of local people. Hasan explained this aspect as:

Localization, I think the right word is localization. As I said, the localization of consumption and production in decision-making mechanisms. Because, as we see, growth is observed as the common point of all these projects causing ecological destructions; monopoly and consumption exist there. They think how we can make the entire world consume but that localization gives the answer to all of them; localization gives the answer to decision-making mechanisms...Because people who can actually make the voice of those animals and trees heard are the people living there in connection with them. They are the people who would feel their absence or defend their rights. So, they need to be involved in these decision-making processes more. The city councils must transform their decision-making mechanisms structurally; either dividing the process or encouraging and increasing participation.

The organization of Northern Forests Workshops by KOS is seen by the activists as a tool for grassroots democracy that local people can say their words. A respondent, Meltem (26/W) explains how the workshops can contribute participatory democracy as;

KOS workshops aim at direct representation and direct participation of the local people. This recent KOS workshop is something we have been talking about for 2 years, but in this workshop for example, that fellows from other regions came together and acted on the common ground.

In this respect, it is plausible to argue that KOS shares the common characteristics with anti-neoliberal social movements in terms of horizontality, non-hierarchy, rejecting leadership, participatory decision making through forums and advocating grassroots and participatory democracy. These characteristics also overlap with Castells's "networked social movements" whose "decentred structure encourages participation in the movement and shows that these are open-ended networks without defined boundaries" (Castells, 2010). They are also in accord with Harvey and Negri's conceptualization of a "movement of movements" whose bases are the social forums and other forms of democratic decision making.

6.5. Connections with Other Movements

As argued in the previous chapter, KOS is at the center of urban-ecology networks that has been in touch with different movements in Istanbul. However, the scope

of this network is not limited with Istanbul scale. In that respect, it is possible to introduce local, national and international networks of KOS with other movements.

On a local scale, KOS intends to build relations within different part of Tharce region because they treat Northern Forests as an integrated ecosystem, whose borders exceeds İstanbul. Moreover, the construction of 3rd Bridge and 3rd Airport also has affected Northern villagers. In that respect, KOS organizes village trips to make the connection with villagers. They also visited the areas where thermal power plants is supposed to be builed such as Silivri and Çerkezköy. Moreover, in different parts of Tharce region, there are attempts to construct dams, wind power plants, stones pints. KOS has also connections with the people and organizations against these small scale projects. Two KOS workshops were oragnized in order to build the connections with these people and organizations. I participated the first KOS worshop held in 10 June 2017 and I observed that diffrent urban-ecology movements both in İstanbul and different parts of Tharce region participated in this workshop and showed their solidarity with KOS. Moreover, as I mentioned, KOS activists also mobilize in different neighborhood solidarity networks such as Kadıköy Solidarity, Sarıyer Solidarity or Istanbul Urban Defence. This spotentouesly networks enables to create connections with different solidarity networks in İstanbul. Thanks to Gezi legacy, in Istanbul, there emerged many urban movements and ecology movements, that I tried to introduce in the previous chapter. Many different meetings, demonstrations and activities are organized in İstanbul by the participation of these movements that shows the close relations with KOS and other urban- ecology movements.

On a national scale, KOS has also close connections with environmental movements in different parts of Turkey. KOS has showed solidarity with other ecology movements in Turkey. It is also remarkable that many interviewees stated that KOS visited Cerattepe watches and kept watch to show solidarity with Cerattepe struggle. Melih (19/M) explained the connections of KOS within the country as;

The organizations, which KOS has not been in contact with until now, is very less; because we always try to collaborate and do collective activism ... We try to provide common grounds every time. As a result of this, we contacted many organizations both in the Marmara region and in the entire Turkey. KOS activists went to almost everywhere in Turkey; they went to the protests, gave support to the resistances. In this way, we have had connections and contacts with many organizations that I cannot list here. When an attack happens in any ecological areas in Turkey, I know whom to call; I can reach them through a variety of networks. There is such a communication network.

Different from Artvin case, KOS has connections with international environmental movements in different parts of the world. KOS shares its news, reports and bulletins with international media, and they also follow the activities of international environmental movements and time to time they make statements against ecological destructions in different parts of the world. They have connections with, anti- airport movements in France and England. Moreover, they build connections with global networks such as global climate change movement or global anti-aerotropolis movement that opposes airport- cities all over the world. They also organize protests in front of the embassies in case of attacks against ecology activists in different part of the world. They stressed that they protested in front of the French embassy and British embassy, against anti- airport activists. Hasan (27/M) summarized the connection of KOS on an international scale as;

We also have connections with activists from Europe who fight against airports in the international arena; we have contact with activists fighting against climate change. We are also a part of that communication network, as their relations are based on international solidarity. One of the teams of KOS is about international relations. We build solidarity when they request from abroad. For example, in France, there was an international day of action for solidarity with ZAD members who protected their own fields; we sent support from Fatih Forests by opening banners in the forest. While Plane Stupid activists were on trial, we went to the British Consulate. Or for example, if the project partner of the company here is a foreign company, we can ask them to go to that company for more information or if possible, sue the company for solidarity.

KOS has both local, national and international connections with other environmental movements in the city, in the country and in different parts of the world. In this respect, KOS has diffused connections with diverse organizations in

Istanbul, Thrace, Turkey and around the world. This connection is flexible without a centre; they come together around common objectives and dissolve easily. This enables us to evaluate KOS as a network movement. KOS acts as “open and inclusive networks” in the words of Hardt and Negri (2005). Even if there is no unitary centre, these movements connect to each other on the basis of common agenda. On the other hand, they keep their autonomy and follow their own agenda. As Castells (2010) argues KOS can be regarded as “network of networks” or “networked movement”; as it does not have an identifiable centre; however, it is in interaction between multiple nodes.

6.6. Prefigurative Politics in KOS

We are not part of societal change, we are the change itself

The reflection of prefigurative politics on KOS case can be observed in three respects; through here and now practices, individual transformation and social transformation. One of the promising aspects of prefigurative politics is its deal with the present time, instead of searching alternatives for the future. “Here and now” can be seen as the motto of the prefigurative politics. The collective action itself is supposed to create differences and ruptures in current times. Also called as transformative politics, this kind of politics is based on grassroots activism, non-hierarchical organization and practices, direct action strategies, participatory decision-making process, rejection of leadership and bottom-up democracy (Cooper, 2014; Dixon, 2014; Holloway, 2010). As mentioned, grassroots and horizontal organization, rejection of leadership, participatory decision-making process, direct action strategies, and grassroots democracy are the characteristics of prefigurative politics. In addition to these values, let me focus what kinds of strategies are activists put into practices to create ruptures and changes here and now.

As indicated, “here and now” is key slogan of prefigurative politics. This kind of politics prioritizes the direct intervention to the current situation instead of waiting

for major and radical changes in the society. Defining KOS as “right now movement”, another activist among my respondents, Cem (44/M) explained here and now practices of the movement as:

KOS is a movement embracing the motto “right now”; I mean, it reclaims the world right now. This has been the case since the 60s; this movement does not deal with power; it says “you will give it back right now! Get out of the Northern Forests”, no matter what this demand is pursued. It is not a utopia, not utopic, it is not something that is impossible to happen. While it attempts to organize a literally legitimate movement, it also tries to express its own perspective and why it has chosen this perspective. And while doing all these, it tries to have contact with the public. To give an example, if it believes that the Third Airport project is planned secretly behind closed doors, then it opens its forums to the public as much as possible. Our forums are open to everyone including the mayor or anyone from any political party. To the forums we organized at parks after Gezi protests, many people attended, and they expressed their own opinions. This is the appreciation of all voices. If you do not think it is democratic, you need to create an alternative; democracy is not only defending an organization without a hierarchy but also implementing it.

As remarkably stressed by Cem, putting the shared and committed values into practice is promising characteristics of prefigurative movements. Activists believe that democracy can be put into practice in the movement; for example, non-hierarchical organization and decision-making process are part of democracy; so, the movement adopts these features. Against anti- democratic decision-making process of mega process, the forums are open to participation of the people. This point is also expressed by Erkan as;

KOS follows an inclusive politics; it does not pursue a repulsive, exclusionary politics. The people who come here know that their labour corresponds to something, have the right to speak, and make decisions; because this is our lives and it is us who will determine its course. KOS already reflects this politics in its own way of working.

The transformation in the process of struggle is impressively expressed by Esin (42/W) by arguing that “we are not part of societal change, we are the change itself”. She said that:

We are not part of social change, we are the social change; because, as I said, our organizational structure is different from others and our relationship with each

other is different, too. I think the new society must also something like this; producing itself, owning the living space...I mean, yes, being a producer, being a producer in every sphere of life, also in human relations as well as being a cultivator.

One of the features of prefigurative politics, efforts to transform power relations in the movement, is dignifiedly express by the interviewees. Rejecting leadership, non-hierarchical organization without leadership, participatory democracy, rejection of all kinds of discrimination are the indicators how the activists interiorize the values they defend. Aysun (65/W) indicated this;

There is a more libertarian, egalitarian and collective environment. We are trying to be transparent. There is a democratic decision-making mechanism, we are open to the participation of everyone, these are important principles.

Now, I want to focus on another aspect of prefigurative politics; transformative effect of social movement/activism. Prefigurative politics assumes creating changes and developing new kinds of social relations through mobilization. In this respect, I aim to understand what kinds of relationships they develop in the process of struggle and how the mobilization affects activists' daily lives; in other saying, how the activism creates new kinds of subjectivities. In order to understand the production of new subjectivities through self-transformation, I asked interviewees what KOS meant to them. Most interviewees defined KOS as their second family, the space of solidarity, friendship and struggle. They stated that they learned many things, met with different people and developed friendship between different people. When I asked what is meant KOS for her, Meryem (26/W) impressively stated that KOS is the experience space for alternative manner of life, social relations and communication as:

KOS means a lot to me. I had never organized anywhere before Gezi. Then we experienced something like Gezi. Before that, I had occasionally participated in both global and national environmental actions related to ecology when I saw the announcement. I attended to them completely individually; I was just supporting; I was not involved in the organization of any formation. KOS was not only an environmental movement for me but also a place where various lifestyles and ways of establishing relationships were experienced. Of course, within the system, you might not be able to do this wonderfully in the very middle of the

city; but people participated in the forums after their work shifts on Friday evenings and it demonstrates that people felt relief and stress-releasing after all these chaotic city life and work-life. People in KOS are my friends, I met most of them in KOS and it is also a place that means a lot to me in terms of friendship, too. The people whom I socialize the most are from KOS.

As stated by Meryem, many interviewees said that it is the first time that they feel belonging to the organization. Most interviewees complained about the hierarchical structure of other organizations, especially leftist organizations. As I observed, most KOS activists were participated in Gezi uprising; in this respect, their first activist experience can be back to Gezi. However, almost all the interviewees stated that they felt distanced to any political party or organization having hierarchy and leadership. However, it is the first time that they are in an organized network. One of the most powerful promises of ecology movements, social movements in general, is to transform ordinary citizens to the activists. Prefigurative politics is also about how mobilization can transform “ordinary citizens” to activists within and through collective action- which is also related to creating new social and political agencies. For example, Esin (42/W) expressed her activism as:

Actually, I could not participate in any organization because I always avoided the idea of being managed from the centre, I was against, and when I saw such a horizontal organization, I decided that it was a structure that I could be. In fact, I did not even think that such a structure could be formed because you know that traditional hierarchical organizations are common; delegates, congresses, presidents; long and very serious speeches like small state models. I always stay away from this type of organizations. I never I did not want to be in, I did not even want to be a delegate, the concepts such as election and election, voting were far from me, actually I found myself here, I can say with KOS.

While activists have a strong emotional bond with KOS, this connection also created self- transformation among the activists. The experience of transformation in daily lives of the activists comes along with developing new kinds of social relations within the movement. Holloway stressed improving social relations such as “comradeship, dignity, amorosity, love, solidarity, fraternity, friendship, ethics” developed in struggles against commodified relations of capitalism. During the field study, many interviewees expressed the contribution of the movement to their

lives in accordance with improving social relations through mobilization. A respondent Melih (19/M) expressed friendship and solidarity developed in the struggle: “KOS is my second family, I find very powerful solidarity in KOS. People care each other as humans and as comrades. This is the reason why I find potential in KOS”. When I asked the meaning of being part of KOS movement, another interviewee Serkan (44/M) said that it has many different meanings and continued: “It means the world for me. After participated in KOS, I learn many different things. I met with very nice people. Our friendship developed”. Erkan (35/M) expressed how his life has changed thanks to KOS as:

For the last 3 years, I have been a KOS activist for 7 days and 24 hours a day. It would be exceedingly difficult for me to explain what KOS has added to my life. It is difficult to describe a million experiences, memories, the knowledge I have gained, and the change of perspective. Besides, I reorganized my entire life accordingly. I have always arranged my working hours, sleep patterns, weekly schedule, and private life according to KOS and around it. The centre of my life has been KOS and its activities. By means of being part of KOS, the works we have done together, preparations for protests, various trips to a variety of regions, I have met numerous people from various types, traditions, and backgrounds that I could not normally meet in my life and we performed actions together with these people. In many regions of Turkey, I have always a place to stay. This sounds amazing; for instance, I became friends with people who revolted to save their olive trees. So, it was a unique experience.

Besides, Aysun (65/W) explained the contribution of KOS to her life with reference to gaining knowledge and new experiences, and meeting new people in the following way:

I think I am more liberated. My knowledge has increased, I met different people like peasants, cabbage producer. For example, we will go to eat cabbage this Friday in Kandıra. This are the nice phases of the life. For the first time in my life. I was not interested in photography, now, I take photos and show my friends.

In addition to individual transformation and gaining new subjectivities, transformations on a societal level is another aspect of prefigurative politics. In this respect, I try to understand what kinds of changes the mobilization caused in the daily life. The effects of KOS on the daily life in İstanbul is limited to creating awareness and informing people on the projects and their effects. Because Artvin

is a small town that enable mobilization of local people around anti- mining project, the effects of the mobilization on the daily life is obvious, colourful and stratified, that is not the case for İstanbul case.

Many interviewees stated that thanks to the activities of KOS, people living in İstanbul is informed on the mega projects in the city. In addition to this, Hande (29/W) stated that through campaigns, they can communicate and discuss with the people. Esin (42/W) indicated that KOS is a well- known organization and inform people about what is going on in İstanbul through KOS media. She indicated that one of the important contributions of KOS is to create awareness about Northern ecosystem in İstanbul. Özlem explained the role of KOS in people's daily lives as "I think one of the best things KOS does is to create a public opinion about an issue that concerns. And actually, I think maybe one of the best things we do. The reason for this is to produce information. It actually touches people's lives most".

6.7. Gezi from the Perspectives of Activists

Gezi could be considered as the most unique dissidence experience of dissidence in Turkey in terms of its spontaneity, social basis and protests repertoire. Because Gezi is regarded as the turning point for the social movements in general, environmental movements in particular, and KOS defines itself as the "child of Gezi", it was interesting for me to ask activists about their feelings and evaluations regarding Gezi after a while. Almost all activists interviewed stated that they participated in Gezi protests. They talked about Gezi frenetically, with excitement and enthusiasm. They expressed their happiness and serenity satisfaction during Gezi in the self-reflections of some respondent. Gezi resistance was looked upon as the miracle which created ruptures and changes in everyday life. For example, Meltem (26/W) said that "firstly, we miss Gezi, it was wonderful. I didn't experience such as freedom, comfort, light-heartedness before", while Serkan (44/M) stated that "For example, every time I pass through Gezi park, I send a kiss". He defined Gezi as the best days in his life and impressively expressed how he felt as a hero during Gezi as:

During Gezi, I was working in Merter. I was going to work and then I was going to Gezi. I was always there on Saturdays and Sundays, I was going to work in the morning or something, for example, I was going to the customer, they were welcoming me like a hero. These were the best days of my life, the Gezi was amazing, it was very special for me, I felt like a hero, just do not take it individually, something was happening, we saw hope in Gezi.

Aysun (65/W) supported Serkan's expression on hope arisen during Gezi and she defined the protests as the turning point for both Turkey and for her life because of showing the collective power of the people. Indeed, many interviewees stated that Gezi was the time that they saw the hope for the future and showed the potential of the people to rebel for the better life. For example, Demir (52/M) stated that he was very happy when he saw his child in the protests because by that time, he had thought that his generation was apolitical and self-centred. From the perspective of some interviewees, Gezi protests demonstrated that young generation has a potential for cooperation and solidarity. Moreover, Gezi was also evaluated as the public space of encounters among different people coming from different backgrounds, political views, occupations and affiliations. Defining Gezi as the encounter space for different people, Özlem (26/W) stated that:

When I look at Gezi from today, I feel that Gezi was a meeting point. Now, we get to know each other in Gezi. Most of the people I know from my neighbourhood are actually the people that I met in Gezi. It was not only a matter of socialization, it was an important meeting point, especially for grassroots organizations like us because it is the reference point of grassroots organizations established after Gezi. Gezi showed us different ways. I think that the most important effect of Gezi is the hope and trust it gave us once, that is, even the people who are not on the street now or even the defunct forums are still carrying the potential to come together.

From the perspective of different interviewees, Gezi is identified with the feeling of hope and trust because of the multitude that it bears. Meltem (26/W) also evaluated Gezi as a public space of struggle that enabled the interaction of different people and sharing different ideas and experiences. She defines Gezi as a collective state of mind shared by the people having same concerns and feelings:

Since I witnessed Gezi process, I see things very differently. What we experienced and shared during Gezi was something collective. For me, it was a process that revealed how separate worlds we live in but actually how we look alike, how much common concerns we have, and how much we can understand each other if we are allowed and not intervened and that we can easily come together and make common decisions. It was a mood embracing all of us and making us feel safe. I believe Gezi was neither a beginning nor an end; it was a phase of time. When I look back now, I see that Gezi has neither finished nor started then. We name that 20-days process as Gezi; however, I think Gezi was there years ago; energies accumulated, and then Gezi occurred...It was a spontaneous process, a flow; it was a place where people who would not show any interest in anything normally gathered at the same time. It still has influenced today; I observe this influence on everything I do. Gezi was part of a transformation, an atmosphere that reminds us of something and gives room for talking about it. We did not necessarily gain wonderful results... It was as valuable as every period we struggle; it was neither initiator nor terminator of something. It was just a breaking point and I believe it will continue in the future.

Hasan (27/M) expressed that by adopting peaceful direct-action strategy, Gezi turned to be common concern for protecting the trees against violent repression of the people against by the police:

İstanbul, Beyoğlu inhabitants went to Gezi park immediately and kept watch there. They tried to stop the digger to prevent it from harming the trees there because it was stubbing the trees. That was the beginning of Gezi. When they attacked by beating, people began performing non-violent action, which is the most correct political method from my point of view, and they climbed the trees. Thus, the digger could not work any longer. The protest started in this way and along with the police attack, eventually, it turned out to be a movement where everyone has the right to speak. Besides, all political parties participated in the protest and Gezi transformed into space where every political opinion had a room.

By defining Gezi as new citizenship manifesto that shows the attitude that “we want to change the world now”, Cem (44/M) emphasized that the struggle for protection of Northern Forests did start neither with Gezi nor Northern Forests Defence; however, Gezi was the social movements that all oppositional groups came together for the first time:

Northern Forests Defence also expresses itself as the child of Gezi. Yes, it is Gezi's child, but the struggle did not start with KOS. KOS is indeed a period of maturity after. For example, the first urban meeting was held in Turkey three years ago before Gezi protest and it was very crowded. It was in Kadıköy. The northern forests and the Third Bridge issues were the focal points. They were called Istanbul forests then, not Northern Forests ... Gezi extended the horizon of

this movement. As a social movement, Gezi became an area where all dissatisfied groups met for the first time. New ideological transparency, a manifesto, a citizen manifesto, or organization. The forums were already revolutionary by any means; in fact, in all kinds of social movement processes, the habit of direct democracy is obtained...Did these youth gathered in Gezi establish a socialist power or did they have the power? No, but the transparent, clear thing here was “no, we want it right now” attitude, and this attitude was reflected in the public as a noticeably clear message.

Some activists that I interviewed stressed that Gezi was the accumulation of previous experiences and activities which had aimed at protecting ecological and urban commons in the İstanbul and in different part of Turkey. For example, by defining Gezi as a result of accumulation process of previous urban-ecology and labour movements and collective memory of previous struggles, Esin (42/W) explained the connection between previous struggles and Gezi as;

Perhaps we could not foresee that Gezi would erupt on May 31, but it was not a coincidence either. There is always an eruption point of such movements; however, it does not happen accidentally. Rather, there are always processes behind them. Local groups, who previously worked on the urban and ecological issues, labour resistance, and even Internet marches performed before, all have a share in this eruption. There was an agenda that triggered the movement there, and because people demonstrated practices such as setting up tents, occupying, building a different life, jumping in front of the dozers, defending trees with their bodies, everyone looking from outside perceived their own reflection in the people there. In other words, the practices of urban memory and ecological imagination, even Gerze, and Bergama, are part of this; because there was an accumulated social memory regarding the opposition.

This quotation is critical in terms of showing accumulated experiences of previous activisms. It was commonly stated by the activists that before Gezi, urban-ecology movements had engaged many activities and events in İstanbul. On the other hand, as stated by many scholars, Gezi was the accretion of frustrations and grievances against AKP governments that adopted neoliberal policies and increased its authoritarian and conservative policies by time. In this respect, it is plausible to regard Gezi as both accumulation of frustrations and grievances of the people on a national scale and accumulation of previous urban-ecology movements on an İstanbul scale.

6.8. The Reflection of Gezi movement on KOS

Since Gezi resistance did not arise at a specific moment, its effects and impacts on the society did not end when it was suppressed by the police attacks. It had prolonged effects which have continued with the hope and solidarity. Park forums and diversified urban ecology movements are one of the most significant legacies that inherited “Gezi spirit”. Just after police attacks in Gezi park, people started to gather in parks to talk about neighbourhood’s problems, to share their ideas and communicate with each other. Shortly after the police attack in Gezi Park, Abbasağa turned out to be shared public space for park forums by the participation of many people motivated by participation of decision-making process on a local scale. Abbasağa park forums are important for the history of KOS, because it is the park where KOS emerged. Anil (25/M) expressed the roots of KOS with reference to Abbasağa forums as;

My connection with KOS began in the forums organized at Abbasağa Park. I started to go to their initial meetings. Gezi continued in the parks; Gezi Park had been a unifying entity, an area of struggle, the movement that is above politics...A Park is a public and civil area; so, everyone was there. We discussed what we could defend at a higher level after Gezi, as a unifying factor, covering everyone. Yes, there were Northern Forests, which belong to everyone and something that should be defended by everyone. Therefore, the Gezi movement continued in the Northern Forests. In fact, KOS is the outcome of Gezi. There are also different examples: there are cooperative park forums for instance; but KOS has a strong unifying element, which is the emphasis on nature. For me, its meaning was the element of nature and I think since it is a unifying act and the outcome of Gezi, it is an insight proceeding the Gezi movement.

Ecologically destructive projects in İstanbul have been agenda of the government party for a long time. Even transformation of Gezi Park to the mall was cancelled, the projects such as 3rd Bridge, İstanbul Airport and Canal İstanbul have been carried out by the government party. KOS has become the organization for the malcontent of these projects. Hasan (27/M) explained how KOS became the common organizations for the people concerning the Northern Forests in İstanbul:

KOS has already started its forums after Gezi. Previously, there were platforms organized against the 3rd Airport and the 3rd Airport, they were included in KOS. After Gezi, KOS became a platform where these forums and platforms

were united. Then, KOS became a group formed by individuals and initiatives concerned by the trees in the middle of the city.

Social movements and activism are not limited with achievements, failures and consequences of the movement. Even the social movement in a specific time period ends, its transformative effects has continued. The transformative effects of Gezi are powerful in terms of showing the possibility of solidarity and resistance in an authoritarian context. Aysun (65/W) explained transformative impact of Gezi on KOS by arguing that Gezi empowered KOS by showing the possibility of solidarity as;

KOS would not be like this if we did not experience Gezi. People felt powerful and wanted to continue struggling. We showed solidarity and different ways of living. We want to carry onward what we learned from Gezi.

It was frequently argued that Gezi provided the inspiration for KOS in terms of organizational characteristics of horizontality, non-hierarchy, rejecting leadership, participatory decision making, inclusiveness, all reflected in what the activists referred to as “the Gezi spirit”. Forums are evaluated as a way of democratic decision making learnt from Gezi. Another activist, Serkan (44/M) explained how non-hierarchical organization without leadership and forums emerged and were adopted by KOS as a result of a learning process from participation in Gezi was in the following way:

Gezi was very special moment for me. There was no superior- subordinate relationship. It was horizontal. Everyone is saying her opinion. Many organizations cannot continue without leadership; however, KOS does. KOS is the child of Gezi. KOS has forums and it is horizontal organization. These are learnt from Gezi.

Other respondents made similar same points about the common organizational characteristics of KOS and Gezi. For example, Esin (42/W) also stated that KOS represents the spirit and mentality of Gezi in terms of being non- representative, individual-centred, rejecting leader and openness;

Since KOS is a structure formed after the Gezi process, I think it primarily represents Gezi, the spirit, and the mentality of Gezi. Our arrangement is the same as in Gezi: it is not representative. It is individual-centred, without any president, without any election; an organization that executes itself through the forums it announces, and the decisions made collectively. This was especially the impact of Gezi experience on us: We got together, and we met people who are active in the other city defence movements.

It can be contended that after the Gezi uprising, there has been a growing awareness of the importance to environmental and ecological issues. While environmental concerns are evaluated as the secondary by the societal opposition and political parties in general, it was stated by the interviewees that ecology has become one of the primary concerns of the politics after the Gezi. With respect to this ideological transformation that the political parties and oppositional groups experienced after Gezi, Melih (26/M) stated that:

Most of the ecology movements have made a change in the political movements; those who did not change also felt to change. Most movements began to set up ecology commissions. For example, they showed more interest in the LGBT movement. After Gezi, in the entire Turkey the city and neighbourhood defences appeared; new ecology organizations emerged. It made the issue heard more. If the whole of Turkey talks about Cerrattepe, nuclear power stations or Ergene, this is thanks to Gezi. Gezi started a transformation; There is such a thing as the spirit of Gezi.

After Gezi, environmental issues are added to political agenda; however, the political transformation is not only limited with this. The subjects that were evaluated under the “cultural politics” has become visible. More attention is paid to LGBTI+ movements; Muslim anti-capitalists have become well-known after Gezi. Gezi transform the structural way of leftist tradition that may ignore different kinds of oppression as secondary. Aysun (65/W) explained how Gezi has transformed existing ways of thinking by breeding novel ideas, that also affected socialists:

Gezi was such a powerful wave that revealed all the dissatisfaction. It forced the socialist groups to question their deficiencies and failures at least. If not in the social life of Turkey, it created a tremendous impression on the left-wing of Turkey. How effective it was, how much it changed the current political practice.

Some says it did not change anything, some say it changed a lot, some say it changed a bit; but at least I witnessed some changes during Gezi.

Gezi introduced new way of politics, new organizational form, new way of thinking. KOS emerged and flowered in the colourful atmosphere that Gezi elicited. Especially, after Gezi, people from different political views, backgrounds, life styles got to know each other; Kemalists stood with Kurds, as well as LGBT+ with anti-capitalist Muslims, leftists with ecologists. That encounters improved solidarity and cooperation between different groups. Other respondents such as Meltem supported Özlem by arguing that ecology issues became as primary concern for macro and micro politics which improved solidarity and cooperation between different groups as:

When we met each other, we learned what it means to make an alliance. We may not comply with all our principles, but we may share common goals. We can have a common problem, we can work together. We learned solidarity. Such a spirit of solidarity continues. People share, movements that try to be more out of the system, such as micro movements and autonomous movements do.

Many interviewees stated that the legacy and the impact of Gezi is not limited to KOS: its effect has continued with diversified alternative formations and activisms on İstanbul scale. Diverse grassroots movements that aim to protect urban commons, cooperatives, neighbourhood organizations in İstanbul and grassroots ecology resistances in different parts of Turkey have also maintained what they learned from Gezi. After Gezi, many local struggles to protect their land, water, forests, villages have proliferated and these struggles draw attention to the public. In İstanbul scale, people are organized on a district, neighbourhood and urban scale. Many initiatives to protect the cultural heritage, coasts, parks of the city have emerged. Stressing the significance of rise of urban and ecology movements on local and national scales after Gezi, another activist Erkan talked about the emergence of diverse solidarities in İstanbul in the following way:

After Gezi, park forums appeared. What do we mean with park? Our green spaces in the neighbourhoods where the children play... We started to make forums in these parks; thus, our responses to the problems started to localize. When we got together in the parks, we started to discuss the problems of the neighbourhood

specifically. When we went to the meetings of big platforms such as Istanbul City Defence, we started to talk about the general problems of Istanbul. We became local and urban at the same time and started to produce thoughts on a regional scale. This is the outcome of Gezi. You see a million solidarity groups now; solidarity groups emerged in every district of Istanbul, like Acıbadem Solidarity and so on. Neighbourhood-based solidarity cultures have created their own opposition channel thanks to the urban and ecology movements. Gezi called direct democracy. That was its biggest contribution. Some solidarity and defence groups established after Gezi, at least some of them, are still alive. One of them is KOS, the other is the formation that maintains the mobility around Maçka. They came out of the structures that sustained the mobility initiated by Gezi, and it had such an impact on the large scale in İstanbul.

It is plausible to discuss direct and indirect reflections of Gezi movement on KOS. KOS emerged from Abbasağa park forum and it has adopted organizational form and protest repertoire of Gezi. On the other hand, since Gezi created awareness about the crucial role of environmental and ecological matters and achieved to unite people around “three- five trees”, this awareness has affected successor organizations and formations, not only limited with KOS.

6.9. Conclusion

This chapter has focused on social bases, organizational characteristics, the protest repertoire and the motivations of the actors in the case of KOS while tracing the features of prefigurative politics. In line with the theoretical framework of this study, the chapter inquired into the reflections of prefigurative politics on the environmental mobilizations. Assessments of the Gezi from the viewpoints of activists and the reflections of the Gezi experience on KOS are also analysed in this chapter.

This chapter has demonstrated that the social basis of the movement could be categorized as comprising of middle-class professionals which largely included people working in white- collar jobs. KOS activists are mostly participants of Gezi movement. Most of the activists have no connection with political parties; instead, they prefer to keep distance with institutional politics. Most of the the activists I interviewed voted for CHP and HDP. None of them are are politically

conservative or AKP/MHP voter. Based on my observations, the respondents share similar cultural background, educational level, lifestyle, consumption patterns, entertainment habits, and cultural capital. In sum, the social basis of KOS is composed of middle class professionals who feel threatened by the ecological degradation and commodification of urban and ecological commons.

The main motivations of KOS activists are to stand against neoliberal rent-seeking politics, to protect the nature, the eco-system, the city and the life. Both aspects are evaluated as related and complementary to each other. The anti-capitalist stance of the activists is expressed through their opposition against rent-seeking policies. It was commonly stated that environment-related issues should be evaluated within the broader perspective that includes the capitalist system destroying the nature for the sake of profit making. They stressed their discontent towards neoliberal urbanization and its consequences. In addition to this, the concern to protect the nature and ecosystem were stressed by the interviewees to explain their activism. In the discourses of the activists, the idea of protecting nature and ecosystem goes along with the concern for the city and the lives of the people in the city. Defining themselves as “life defender”, KOS activists stressed that they want to protect the nature, as their living space and to protect the life against the commodification of ecological commons.

KOS has diversified its protest repertoire; both traditional ways of protests and creative ways of protests are used by KOS activists. Meetings, demonstrations, press releases, petition campaigns are organized from time to time. Activists also adopt direct action strategies such as blocking the road and creative protests such as picnicking on the airport construction area.

The organizational form of KOS shares common characteristics with anti-capitalist social movements and prefigurative politics in terms of horizontality, non-hierarchy, rejecting leadership, adopting democratic decision making and advocating grassroots and participatory democracy. For KOS activists, forums

became the main mediums and sites of collective decision - making and a channel for developing participatory democracy.

The literature on the new social movements assumes that the movements resemble/ bear affinity with networks in terms of their connections. KOS experience fits in with this assumption to the extent that it maintains strong connections on local, national and international scales. As stated in the previous chapter, KOS remains at the centre of urban-ecology networks in İstanbul that shares common agenda and concerns. It works hand in glove with both national and international ecology movements and organizations. These connections of KOS enable us to evaluate the movement as a part of network movements, as has been argued by Hardt and Negri (2005).

The debate on prefigurative politics is crucial to this study to analyse KOS in the global context of contemporary anti-neoliberal movements. It can be argued that prefiguration is the case for KOS through here and now practices, individual and social transformation. KOS is defined as “right now” movement that wants to change the world today, not waiting for major changes for the future. For this purpose, they aim to put the values they believe into practice and to transform power relations in the movement. Rejecting leadership and all kinds of discrimination, adopting non-hierarchical organization without leadership are the indicators that they live today how they dream in the future. Through developing new kinds of relations based on friendship, solidarity, cooperation and equality, and transforming ordinary citizens to the activists, new subjectivities have been emerging out of ongoing prefigurative practices. Social transformation is achieved through creating awareness and informing people on mega projects in İstanbul.

Since Gezi is one of the most spectacular movements in the history of Turkey that affects the following mobilization, I wanted to understand how they evaluate Gezi. Many interviewees stated the feelings of hope for change which is aroused by and in Gezi. Gezi was regarded as the turning point from the viewpoint of the activists, as the manifesto of new citizenship and the space where different people with

different life-styles came together against authoritarian and neoliberal policies. The reflections of Gezi on KOS are significant since KOS emerged from the neighbourhood forums after Gezi. It also follows the “spirit of Gezi” in terms of organizational characteristics, values, norms and protest repertoire.

CHAPTER 7

CRITICAL EXAMINATION OF ANTI-MINING MOVEMENT IN ARTVIN AND THE NORTHERN FORESTS DEFENSE IN ISTANBUL IN THE CONTEXT OF ANTI-NEOLIBERAL SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

In this chapter, two field researches of this study, anti-mining opposition in Artvin and the Northern Forests Defence (KOS), will be assessed in the context of the introduced theoretical framework. One of the aims of this study is to contribute to the study of different scale environmental grassroots movements in a comprehensive and comparative perspective. Through a review of the two cases of field research, as cases of community-based environmental movements and urban-based network-like environmental movements, this chapter attempts to provide such a perspective.

7.1. Organizational Structures

The most obvious overlap between environmental movements and anti-neoliberal social movements concerns organizational structures of the movements. Anti-neoliberal and prefigurative movements adopt a non-hierarchical organizational structure. The structure of the movements is horizontal without leaders. They advocate participatory and direct democracy. Assemblies are the means of democratic decision-making. These movements insist on autonomy, and they refuse centralized hierarchy, leaders, or spokespeople (Hardt & Negri, 2005; p. 86; della Porta, 2015). They claim participatory democracy, use social media, and form local assemblies for collective debate and decision making. They do not have an identifiable centre. These social movements are spontaneous and horizontally organized; they do not have formal leadership, command and control centre, or a hierarchical organization (Castells, 2012).

Both Cerattepe struggle and KOS adopt the horizontal and non-hierarchical organization. The anti-mining movement in Artvin has been organized as a flexible network in a horizontal, participatory and non-hierarchical way. Green Artvin Association, (YAD) that leads the anti-mining struggle has the presidency, but this is a formal procedure of the legal association, and the decisions are taken by the participation of the people. This prevents the hierarchical decision-making process and enables democratic decision making. YAD can be regarded as a network that can get in touch with all sections of society in the city. All meetings of YAD are open to the public. All sections of society are encouraged to participate in the meetings. The decisions are taken in these public meetings. Social media such as Facebook or twitter are used to announce the events and share the news concerning the mining project and anti-mining activities in the city.

Besides, KOS also adopts horizontal and non-hierarchical organization without leadership. No person is regarded as the leader or leading figure of the movement. KOS has spokespersons; from time to time, spokespersons are also rotated. The movement advocates participatory decision making. The decisions are taken by the participation of KOS activists in their weekly forums. Forums are the mechanism of collective decision making and participatory democracy. Through forums, KOS advocates participatory and deliberative decision-making process. KOS activists also refuse any clear division of labour that can create a hierarchy within the movement. They reject any hierarchy based on gender, age or experience. In addition to being leaderless, horizontal and advocating participatory democracy, anti-sexism, anti-racism and opposing any kinds of discrimination are stated as a characteristic of the movement by KOS activists.

Both Cerattepe struggle and KOS are leaderless and horizontal movements with the democratic decision-making process. They advocate democratic decision making and participatory democracy through deciding the meetings open to all participants. In this respect, it is plausible to argue that KOS and Cerattepe movements share the common characteristics with anti-neoliberal social movements in terms of horizontality, non-hierarchy, rejecting leadership,

participatory decision making and advocating grassroots and participatory democracy.

7.2. Self-Identification of the Activists and Construction of the Collective Identity

For both KOS and Cerattepe cases, the bonds of solidarity, respect and trust constitute the backbone of the collective identity of the movements. Because there is no hierarchical organization and leadership, collective decision-making process intensifies these merits among the activists. In Artvin case, creating collective identity coexists with the definition of the “other”, that refers to the government, mining company, and the collaborators of the mining company in the city- those work for the mining company. Another significant similarity between KOS and Cerattepe is their self-definition as “life defender”; the formation of collective identity as “life defender” is the case for both Cerattepe struggle and KOS. Against the “commodification of the life”, actors define themselves as the defender of life. Especially for Artvin case, the identification of nature with living space or life enables activists to refer universal values, cutting across social, economic and political differences and locate their struggle above the institutional politics. This notion of being above politics was commonly emphasized by both Cerattepe and KOS activists. They mentioned they do not have any affiliation with political parties. The self-identification of life defence is not only peculiar to KOS or Cerattepe; ecology activists have defined themselves as “life defender” for a long time across Turkey and the world. “The defence of the life” is the common rhetoric across the struggles all over the world, such as in water right struggle in Bolivia, indigenous peoples’ struggle against pipelines in America, anti-mining struggles in Latin America, anti-dam struggles in India.

7.3. Social Bases

7.3.1. The Social Basis of Anti-Mining Movement and Its Characteristics

The social bases of KOS and Artvin cases show differences. The actors of the anti-mining movement are local people of Artvin who are and will be directly affected by mining in the region. This movement is composed of a broad coalition of the local people exceeding political, ideological and class differences under the leadership of YAD with the slogan “no to mine in Cerattepe”. Heterogeneous social basis characterized Cerattepe struggle due to the participation of people from a different age, gender, political affiliations and classes. From young to older people, people with different occupations and different political affiliations are active participants of the movement. In this respect, the social basis of Cerattepe struggle is in line with the social basis of community-based environmental movements that transcend cleavages of class, gender, ethnicity, religion or political orientation.

According to Çoban (2004), community-based environmental movements are characterized by the symbiotic relationship between the community and the environment. This refers to the interconnectedness and symbiotic relationship between the community and the material world symbolized around the idea of both “save the environment” or “save the community” since community life and the environment are interdependent. This symbiotic relationship is significant in Artvin case. When I asked “why saving Artvin is important to you” and what is the meaning of the city to the interviewees during the field study, they define the city and community life in the city regarding nature; the forests and Cerattepe are mostly associated with Artvin and community life in Artvin.

During the field study in Artvin, I was impressed by the narratives of the people about the Cerattepe; they define Cerattepe as the “childhood, the place where we breathe, the place where I fell in love”; it is mostly associated with life, living space, childhood, the homeland with good memories, the place to relax, enjoy and

have fun with family members or friends. From the viewpoints of local people, Artvin is mostly associated with its nature and natural beauties. There is a powerful emotional connection with nature, that can be one of the significant differences between urban⁵¹ environmental movements and community based environmental movements. It seems complicated to create such a connection with nature in big cities. However, in Artvin, local people have memories of Cerattepe; it is not distant to the people; people live within the environment. In this respect, the interconnected relations of the people, community, the city and the nature are significant in Artvin case. This symbiotic relationship between community and nature enables us to locate Artvin case within community-based environmental movements.

Artvin case does not fit in with either environmentalism of the rich or environmentalism of the poor, introduced in the theoretical chapter. The defence of Cerattepe in the name of life defence is not only motivated by post-material values or material values. The motivations of anti-mining activists in Artvin combines both post-materialist and materialist values. The protection of nature and the quality of life is mostly associated with post-materialist values, which is the case for Cerattepe movement. Although the activists stress a variety of motivations, the most common and shared motivation is to continue living in Artvin within the social networks provided by the city and community that can also be evaluated as the postmaterialist value. The motivations of some interviewees whose livelihood depend on beekeeping and agriculture stated that this struggle is also for the defence of their livelihood, that can be evaluated as a materialist value. However, the concept of “the environmentalism of the poor” is specially used to define the struggle to defend the livelihood of the peasants in the rural context of the Global South.

⁵¹ By stating this, I don't want to indicate that Artvin is not urban; however, the scales of Artvin and İstanbul is different in terms of urbanization. While İstanbul is the capital of economic activities and mega projects, Artvin is a small city where agriculture and beekeeping continue.

The struggle of the anti-mining movement in Artvin can not be reduced to the struggle for defending livelihoods, while it is the case for the agricultural producers and beekeepers. Martinez-Alier defines (2002) the environmentalism of the poor with respect to the communities depending basically on the natural resources of their locality, which does not solely explain the case in Artvin. In this respect, for Artvin case, both materialist and post-materialist values are significantly crucial from the perspective of the activists.

Moreover, the literature on Third World Environmentalism, associated with the environmentalism of the poor, also points out that environmentalism in this context is combined with wider political, social and economic concerns. Haynes (2002) agrees with the assumption that environmental movements in the Third World are not purely concerned with environmental issues. Still, they are the manifestations of broader political concerns including human rights, employment and development issues. These movements attract unempowered, namely those who do not have the means to address their concern in more conventional ways. Through examining the movements in India, Kenya, Indonesia, Tahiti and Nigeria, Haynes states that environmental movements in the Third World, usually rural-based movements characterized by women participation, aim to mobilize local people for defending local environment against outside interests -often the state or big business. While some movements have a narrow focus on the protection of local nature, many others have broader socio-economic and political concerns (Haynes, 2002, p. 202). In this respect, standing against the interests of the business or state, being women-led, and focusing on broader socio-economic concerns are usually regarded as the main characteristics of the environmental movements in the Third World.

The anti-mining movement shares these in Artvin. The anti-mining activists express strong opposition to profit-making of companies with the collaboration of the government, and they complain about the exclusion of local people from decision-making process about their hometown and the fact that the government

ignores the local people to profit private companies. This can be regarded as the criticism towards significant politics of the government and neoliberalism.

In addition to the discussion of environmentalism of the rich and environmentalism of the poor in terms of social basis, it can be added that in the conception of environmentalism of the rich, the social basis of environmental movements is mostly associated with the educated youth in a Western context. On the other hand, in the environmentalism of the poor, the social basis is defined as the peasants in rural context defending their livelihood. The social base of the Artvin case is not compatible with neither of them. Instead, it shows the characteristics of community-based environmental movements that transcends age, gender, class differences.

In order to overcome the dichotomy between the environmentalism of the rich and the environmentalism of the poor, the concept “environmentalism of the malcontent” is introduced by Arsel, Akbulut and Adaman for introducing a type of environmental activism that they find increasingly common in Turkey. Analysing the resistance movement against the Gerze coal power plant project, Arsel, Akbulut and Adaman (2015) explain this concept as:

The mobilization in Gerze was not rooted only or primarily in environmental concerns but animated by disaffection with, among other things, neoliberal developmentalism, disregard of democratic policy-making and violent suppression of societal dissent by the state. ‘Environmentalism of the malcontent’ describes the way in which long lasting dissatisfaction with broader processes marking the development trajectory of the country combined with personal experience in radical political action enabled a group of urban, mostly retired, residents of Gerze to successfully collaborate with peasant activists against the construction of the power plant by deploying arguments regarding its potential negative environmental impact.

Their search on Gerze movement shows the alliances of the peasant activists and urban residents against developmentalist projects of the government, which is not categorized under neither the environmentalism of the poor nor environmentalism of the rich. As they note;

Contemporary resistance movements contain another substantial group, comprising actors whose motivations in resisting development projects cannot easily be ascribed to an attempt to defend their livelihoods. Their motivations are not entirely post-materialist either, as their engagement with the resources and movements they support are far more direct than the category of 'environmentalism of the rich' would allow (Arsel, Akbulut, & Adaman, 2015, p. 2).

In this respect, the environmental mobilization consisted of the alliances of the dissatisfied groups with neoliberalism, which disregards local people's participation in the decision-making process. Environmental activism, thus, is regarded as the political attitudes towards the destructions of the commons combining the defence of livelihood and political discontent against the government policies (Arsel, Akbulut, & Adaman, 2015). However, the social basis of Cerattepe struggle is different from Gerze movement because it is not possible to differentiate the local people as urban and peasant activists in Artvin case, disaffection with neoliberal developmentalism is shared by anti-mining activists in Artvin.

7.3.2. The Social Basis of KOS and Its Characteristics

The social basis of KOS exhibits a different pattern. The social base of KOS is composed of middle-class professionals who are disturbed with ecological degradation and commodification of urban and environmental commons in İstanbul. Activists of KOS are mostly professionals working in white-collar jobs; most of them were journalist, freelance interpreter, engineer, lawyer, teacher, academics and student. Activists I interviewed were between 19- 65 years old. They mostly share a similar economic, social, cultural, and educational background.

KOS case does not fit in with the conception of environmentalism of the poor; because activists are not mobilized for the defence of livelihood. It does not show the characteristics of community-based environmental movements that transcend class, political, ideological cleavages, either. Post-materialist values, such as the

quality of life, environmental protection, demand for participation in decision making, are emphasized. However, their concern with environmental issues is mostly combined with the criticism towards neoliberalism, developmentalism and government policies, which is not the case for environmentalism of the rich conceptualization.

Anti-neoliberal social movement literature, as developed after anti-austerity policies, defined the class character of the movements as the precariat, in other words, losers of neoliberalism, “often well-educated youth with no socio-economic protection often characterized by a sum of insecurity on the labour market and accumulating anger, anomie, anxiety and alienation” (della Porta, 2015). This is not the case for KOS; it is difficult to define the social basis of KOS as the losers of neoliberalism. KOS activists have a certain level of economic capital as well as the social and political capital necessary for the concern for the protection of nature. The social basis of KOS overlaps with urban movements which locate middle class at the centre of their analysis. The rise of contemporary urban movements against gentrification and neoliberal urbanization both in Turkey and around the world is discussed within the framework of “the right to the city” (Kuyumlu, 2013) and middle-class characteristics of the urban movements are emphasized (Ergenç, 2018; Keyder, 2014; Tuğal; 2013). KOS is the urban-environmental movement to remake the city against surplus reproduction through mega projects. It is plausible to define KOS as the urban middle-class movement mobilized against socio-economic challenges of neoliberal politics. In this regard, KOS can be regarded as the movements of those who want to say a word on their localities, their cities and living spaces, with the aim of protection of urban and ecological commons against privatization and commodification process of neoliberalism.

For both KOS and Artvin, activists overcome “not in my backyard” approach because they do not want to implement ecologically destructive projects in their localities but any part of the Turkey and world. They also show solidarity and support to other environmental, social and political movements. In this respect,

both KOS and Cerattepe activists go beyond the defence of their particularistic interests, link their struggle to a broader perspective exceeding their localities and support other movements that transcend the local and particularistic interests.

7.4. Women Participation in Environmental Movements

It is essential to remind that women activism has been central to social movements and popular mobilizations standing for social justice and democracy (Aslan-Akman, 2016). Women activism is also one of the significant characteristics of environmental movements, especially debated in the literature of ecofeminism, rural based environmental movements, and Third World environmentalism (Haynes, 2002). The study of Çoban on Bergama movement also approves the women's leadership as the characteristics of community-based environmental movements (Çoban, 2004). The literature on ecofeminism emphasizes women activism in environmental struggles as a defence of livelihood and the future of the children and future generations. This literature argues that given the assumption that women are disproportionately affected by ecological destructions, they are at the frontline of the struggles to protect nature.

The active role of women in the mobilization is the case in other local grassroots environmental movements, especially in India and Global South. In the work of Mies on women activism in India, she emphasizes the protection of livelihoods and making the community safe as motivations of women in environmental movements (Mies, 2014). In her work, Jenkins emphasizes women's perceptions of nature in relation to the connection to the land as mothers and as women. In her study on "*Women Anti-Mining Activists' Narratives of Everyday Resistance in the Andes: Staying Put and Carrying on in Peru And Ecuador*", Jenkins examines the anti-mining struggles in Peru and Ecuador from the feminist perspective through analyzing women narratives of the struggle. Her study shows that women anti-mining activism in Peru and Ecuador, lacking transnational networks and staying on a local scale, aims at the protection of rural livelihoods in their communities

(Jenkins, 2017). She stresses that women, as a breadwinner and responsible for the agriculture, regard mining project as a threat to their livelihood.

Moreover, the connection of women with nature is not limited to the defence of livelihood. The land and nature represent the connections with the older generations and the next generation. This means that the women activism against mining is also motivated by the survival and continuation of existing social relations, culture and way of living (Jenkins, 2014).

The protection of the livelihoods, especially with reference to women's role in agriculture, is mostly evaluated as one of the underlying motivations of women to participate in environmental activism. Besides, the active participation of women in environmental movements is mainly associated with the motivations such as protection of the children, future generations and the health of the community. As debated before, the women have been at the forefront of the movement in Artvin. Women's active role in the mobilization is highly visible in Artvin case. Women play a critical role during the intervention to Cerattepe and after the intervention as organizers of the events and activists of YAD. The notions of protection of the health, children and future generations are mostly emphasized by women activists of Cerattepe struggle.

During the interviews, it was primarily women who associated the nature with health. They stressed the enjoyment and benefits nature provides, that should be transmitted to the future generations. Some of the women activists also related nature with the motherhood by stating that nature is a giver like us. One of the women associated the protection of nature with the welfare of the children; in her words, "We protect nature as we protect our children". The conceptualization of nature as the heritage from the previous generations that will pass to future generations is also emphasized by women activists. Many women activists also stated that living in Artvin provides them with freedom, that they can not find in another city. The symbiotic relationship with nature, the conceptualization of

nature as a heritage that should pass to future generations and the protection of children are emphasized by women activists in Artvin as the primary motivations.

7.5. Protest Repertoire

Environmental movements represent an extensive repertoire of forms of protest ranging from the relatively institutionalized and conventional to the innovative and non-institutionalized (Rootes, 2013; Temper, Demaria, Scheidel, Bene, & Martinez-Alier, 2018). Both Cerattepe struggle and KOS adopts rich repertoires of action and tactics, including various modes of protests ranging from the traditional repertoire of collective action to disruptive forms of action. In all forms of tactics, peaceful forms of collective action are adopted. Massive demonstrations, protests, press releases, petition campaigns, lobbying activities are applied as traditional ways of collective action. Indeed, for both cases, scientific and educational activities are used to create awareness among activists.

On the other hand, activists have performed creative, disruptive actions, direct actions, which is one of the common protest forms of anti-neoliberal social movements and environmental social movements. Direct action, as a significant characteristic of prefigurative politics in terms of its interrupting “now and here”, is the most remarkable tactic used by environmental movements to show powerful discontent and take the attention of the public and government on a specific subject. KOS and Cerattepe struggle impressively similarly employ direct action strategies. For example, KOS activists stopped construction equipment in the construction area of 3rd Bridge. Cerattepe activists blocked the road and kept 245 days watch to stop the mining project. Therefore, both KOS and Cerattepe activists pursue direct-action strategies to intervene in the ongoing situation.

7.6. Connections with Other Movements; Networked Movements?

In the previous chapters, the connections of Cerattepe struggle and KOS with other networks and movements have been discussed, which gives us clues about the

networks of environmental movements on different scales. Contemporary social movements are mobilized as networks that do not have a centre (Castells, 2010; Hardt & Negri, 2005). The struggles of anti-capitalist movements are organized as open and inclusive networks. These movements are not centralized under any single authority but rather relate to each other in a network structure (Hardt & Negri, 2005, p.86). Diverse, locally rooted struggles can directly link up, articulating around common objectives without compromising their autonomy or specificity (Juris, 2004). The most essential characteristics of networked movements are creating network relations between different movements that have no centre of direction but has a capability to act together through connections and interactions with each other, which is also the case for environmental movements. Environmental movements are also organized as flexible, decentralized, grassroots networks around common objectives while keeping their agenda and their autonomy. To track the connections of anti-mining struggle in Artvin and KOS with different movements can give us clues about the networks created around environmental movements in Turkey.

As I mentioned before, anti-mining activists in Artvin prefer to keep a distance from international organizations. This is mostly because the presence of international solidarity networks is used as an anti-propaganda tool by the mining company. The activists, especially Neşe Karahan, the president, are depicted as “spies” for foreign countries, usually for Germany. They also want to stay on the Artvin scale. They keep a distance to cooperation with organizations from outside of Artvin. The relation to the People’s Democratic Party (HDP) is a case in this regard. Because some people in Artvin have a negative perception of HDP, it can be used as an anti-propaganda tool. The pro-mining camp tends to label the support from outside Artvin as the support by HDP in order to cut off popular support and weaken the movement. During the field research, I was told that Beyza Üstün, environmentalist HDP member, was not welcomed during the police intervention to Cerattepe. Leading agents of the struggle are supposed to be local people of Artvin from the perspective of local people. However, they accept the solidarity of other groups; so, this does not mean that the struggle fully closes itself to Artvin

scale. During the watches, many groups from different parts of Turkey visited and kept watch to show their solidarity with Artvin people. Besides, the struggle has a close connection with other struggles in the Black Sea region, especially struggles against HES, and in different parts of Turkey.

Different from Artvin case, KOS has connections with international ecology movements in different parts of the world. KOS shares its news, reports and bulletins with international media, and they also follow the activities of international ecology movements. From time to time, they make statements against ecological destructions in different parts of the world. They also build connections with global networks such as global climate change movement or global anti-aerotropolis movement that opposes airport- cities all over the world. On a national scale, KOS also has close connections with ecology movements in different parts of Turkey, including Cerattepe struggle. On a local scale, KOS also has connections with the people and organizations against ecologically destructive projects in İstanbul and Thrace region. Against the attempts of construction of Canal İstanbul, KOS recently led “Neither Canal Nor İstanbul” initiative, with the collaboration of different ecology movements and activists in İstanbul.

In this respect, KOS has diffused connections with diverse organizations in İstanbul, Thrace, Turkey and around the world. This connection is flexible without a centre; they come together around common objectives and dissolve quickly. This enables us to evaluate KOS as a network movement. In Artvin case, scepticism towards international and national cooperation makes it difficult to assess this case as a network movement. It is not possible to make generalization that scepticism towards international collaboration is the case for other grassroots environmental movements. For example, Bergama movement had connections and solidarity with other local movements, national, international environmental groups and organizations, as Çoban’s work shows (2004). During the fieldwork, many activists emphasize differences in their struggle with Bergama anti-mining struggle concerning this point. They stated that they prefer to stay local. There are also other grassroots community-based environmental struggles with transnational

linkages, such as anti-mining movements in the Andes (Bebbington, Bebbington, Bury, Langan, & Munoz, 2008) and Third World environmental movements building links with transnational movements and organizations in India, Kenya, Indonesia, Tahiti and Nigeria, (Haynes, 2002). Therefore, it is challenging to make generalization about keeping local or having transnational linkages for local environmental movements. It seems to depend on the political, social and cultural background and characteristics of the movements.

7.7. Motivations

In terms of motivations, there are significant overlaps between KOS and Cerattepe struggle. Both KOS activists and Cerattepe activists stress the protection of nature and ecosystem as the commons belonging to all people which are being plundered for the sake of private companies. Protection of the commons and opposing neoliberal policies, that go along with government-private company partnership in the Turkish case, are underlying motivations of the actors. For KOS activists, the primary motivations are to stand against neoliberal rent-seeking politics, to protect the nature, the ecosystem, the city and the life and both aspects are related and complementary to each other. Anti-mining activists in Cerattepe emphasize the effects of the mine to the city, nature, neighbour countries, villages, children and next generations, political and social culture of the city, health and water resources as the reasons for opposing mining in Cerattepe.

In addition to shared motivations with KOS activists, anti-mining activists mention the protection of nature/Cerattepe as the heritage that should be passed to future generations. The protection of health and children were also stressed by the participants. Insisting on living in Artvin with its nature and existing social relations are pervasive rhetoric among activists. Local people oppose mining activities in Cerattepe because they assume that they will have to immigrate and lose social environment that living in Artvin provides such as social ties, solidarity, trust, friendship. The reason why this notion is significant in Artvin and

not in İstanbul can be about the symbiotic relationship of the people with the community and nature.

As indicated, the protection of nature and ecosystem against rent-seeking policies of private companies is significant motivations of KOS and Cerattepe activists to participate in the mobilization. This aspect shows one of the main assumptions of the thesis. This study assumes that environmental movements bear a potential to oppose neoliberal policies which leads to ecological destruction through privatization and plundering of nature and “living space” for interests of the private companies. The field research that I conducted for this thesis confirms the idea that environmental movements in contemporary Turkey, KOS and Cerattepe struggles in this context, represent anti-neoliberal stance in terms of standing against profit-making of private companies, which is mostly materialized in defence of the commons.

As the neoliberalism attacks environmental commons such as lands, water, water resources and forests, the movements, mainly evaluated as environmental movements, stand against commodification and privatization of commons belonging to everyone. As stated before, uprising for protecting urban commons such as the Gezi Park in 2013, Occupy movements, the mass occupations of squares and plazas in different parts of the world, the resistance against privatization of water in Bolivia, the construction of dams in India and the mining activities in Latin America, and Africa show the global waves of the protests that unite people around the protection of living spaces in an ecologically encompassing way against neoliberal politics. Environmental movements, in this respect, express strong opposition to contemporary neoliberalism by defending commons and claiming that nature belongs to everyone.

How is this claim expressed by the interviewees? Both Cerattepe and KOS activists stated that they attempt to protect the commons against private companies. They described nature as a living space and stressed protecting their living space as the common of the people and other living creatures. It was

emphasized that living space is not the concept limited with the people; it also includes all living species; nature is conceptualized as the living space belonging to people and other animals living in nature.

KOS activists expressed this anti-neoliberal stance more explicitly. In the interviews, they usually referred to the words, such as capitalism, neoliberalism, growth, developmentalism, privatization, commodification. They clearly stated that against neoliberal rent-seeking and profit-making policies of the government through commodification and privatization of nature and urban commons, materialized in mega projects. They are oriented towards protecting the urban and ecological commons. Anti-mining activists did not apply the words of capitalism or neoliberalism. Still, they referred to the dimensions peculiar to neoliberalism such as plunder of nature and living space for interests of the private company or “small and privileged groups”. The name of Mehmet Cengiz, the owner of the Cengiz Holding, a mining company in Cerattepe, was pronounced by almost every people that I talked during the field research. During daily conversations, it is frequently stated that the government discards citizens in Artvin and Artvin city, for the welfare of Mehmet Cengiz. The role of the government and its collaboration with the private company was repeatedly stressed by the interviewees. They show their attitudes by claiming “we don’t want to sacrifice our land, nature, water for the benefit of Cengiz”. Therefore, they show their opposition to the mining regarding the discourse that nature/ Cerattepe/ their living space is plundered by Cengiz company with the help of the government for making a profit. Both KOS and Cerattepe activists also show powerful anti-capitalist/anti-neoliberal stance by protecting their nature against privatization and commodification. Anti-capitalist discourse and stance of the activists provide essential insights about the potential of ecology movements in terms of political and social opposition to contemporary neoliberalism.

7.8. Prefigurative Politics

The politics performed by environmental movements lies at the centre of this study. One of the aims of this study is to deal with the possibilities for transformative politics through examining the potential of the environmental struggles for creating new social and political agencies, new subjectivities and new relations.

The most surprising part of this study for me is to realize the transformative effects of the activism. I had a chance to observe how activism transforms people, their daily lives and political attitudes and everyday life. This also changed my ideas about the social transformation in the society. I discovered the importance of “now” and the changes we can make in our localities.

The literature on transformative/prefigurative politics enables me to locate my views within a theoretical perspective, that opens up a space for discussing a different mode of politics and activism, aiming to create changes now, instead of waiting for structural changes in the future. Rather than focusing on creating a fundamental change within society, this new form of activism is geared towards the transformation of society by changing social relations towards the ideals of equality, solidarity and cooperation. This new mode of activism redefines political orientations, tactics and actions; occupying public spaces, establishing communal areas, various alternative modes of consumption and countercultural lifestyles are adopted as a way to actualize the future dreams in the present (Yates, 2015; Dixon, 2014; Cooper, 2014). In this study, I argue that environmental movements as a part of global uprising waves bear a potential to track a new mode of activism emerging from transformation of everyday life through developing new forms of social relations and new subjectivities.

I argue that the politics represented by environmental movements indicate two modes of politics; positioning itself against neoliberal politics in terms of opposition/resistance and prefigurative in terms of affirmation. In this respect,

resistance and affirmation are two faces of the political performativity of environmental activism. As I discussed, prefigurative movements do not only criticize capitalism and capitalist relations. These movements also enact, prefigure, perform different mode of politics. In this respect, the politics of prefigurative movements are characterized both as opposition to existing structure and construction of a new way of doing, relations and politics. Instead of focusing on concrete results such as establishing a political party or winning the elections, this type of politics is about walking and manifestation. As impressively stated by Sitrin and Azzellini (2014, p. 13):

One of the many beautiful aspects of the new movements is the multiplicity of paths envisaged and created. There is no single static or predetermined goal, but instead a process of walking toward desires, and manifesting the desired future in day-to-day relationships.

This kind of politics deals with how activism is incorporated into everyday life and practices. Transformative politics aims to create alternative and communal spaces based on mutual respect and cooperation within the occupied spaces, which was also the case during Gezi protests and some other environmental movements. Besides, bottom-up/ direct and participatory democracy, non- hierarchy, collective decision making, and horizontal and grassroots organization, anti-authoritarianism, anti-capitalism and immediate action are the characteristics of prefigurative politics (Dixon, 2014; Yates, 2014), that can also be seen in environmental movements.

Creating new social and political agencies, one of the most promising aspects of prefigurative politics, is about how mobilization can transform “ordinary citizens” to activists within and through collective action. People without previous activist experience can become political figures within and through the mobilization. In the words of Dixon, “transformative potential of struggles based in the lives of ordinary, nonactivist people” (2014, p.11). For both KOS and Cerattepe cases, these characteristics of prefigurative politics can be easily tracked. Creating new subjectivities through the transformation of ordinary people to the activists,

changing the daily lives of the activists and their political views, creating new ways of doing and social relations based on cooperation and solidarity are the powerful signs of transformative politics in the cases of İstanbul and Artvin. Both KOS activists and Cerattepe activists mentioned their attempts to put values into practice in the movements. Watches in Artvin creates significant cracks in everyday life through the experience of a strong mobilization. It was commonly stated that watches in Cerattepe became a place in which collective life was established, solidarity, cooperation and friendship developed, collectivization of the movement consolidated, and new subjectivities and new social relations emerged.

There are also specific differences when compared to these two cases. KOS activists are mostly educated, professionals or university students. Almost all of them participated in the Gezi movement. Even if they put distance to political parties, they are most familiar with urban-ecology movements and organizations. Therefore, they are already transformed. Their prefigurative practices may be chosen more self-consciously. In Artvin case, for most of the activists, it was their first time to participate in mobilization and confront the security forces. The mobilization has changed the local people in a way that the people who were not previously involved in any political action became activists. Almost all interviewees pointed out this aspect during the fieldwork. Except for the people who lived in big cities, especially such as İstanbul and Ankara when they were students in the universities, many interviewees told me that it was for the first time that they came up against the police and experienced police attacks. Many interviewees in Artvin stated that their perception of the state, security forces and courts has changed after Cerattepe struggle. Notably, the changes in attitudes of right-wing activists were significant. The most momentous was the statement of ex- *Ülkü Ocakları* member who stated that even though he worked with the police before, his trust was eroded and he stopped informing the police. Many activists also stressed that they develop empathy with other environmental struggles and other struggles such as Kurdish movements in terms of state repression and criminalization of any kind of oppositional activities. Some activists stated that

they could have empathy with Kurdish movement because of the suppression of their opposition by the state ignoring people's local demands. Moreover, in Artvin, the transformation of everyday life is much more apparent; it can be a consequence of being a community-based movement and the fact that mining activities affect the city as a whole.

The reflections of prefigurative politics represent the basic thread in this study to locate different scale environmental movements within the theoretical framework of anti-neoliberal social movements. Prefigurative politics, in this respect, is a theoretical tool to understand these movements in a broader perspective. The findings of field research demonstrate that Cerattepe struggle shares significant characteristics of prefigurative politics. This point opens a critical window for this study. The empirical dimension of this thesis is based on the fieldwork in İstanbul and Artvin as two different cases; one on a macro scale having various networks; the other on a micro-scale remaining in the local. The fact that prefigurative politics provides a link between these two movements at different scales is crucial for this study to think these cases together.

When we think social movements, different levels emerge; local, national and global. Uniqueness and distinctness are commonly attributed to local movements while the global movements are believed to have the capacity for exceeding the limitations of local movements. However, the inferences of this thesis challenge the dichotomy between movements on local, national and global scales to the extent that in local movements, the characteristics of global movements can also be perceived. It seems accurate that the reasons why nature is plundered for the sake of profit should be thought on a global scale concerning the dynamic of unrestrained commodification inherent to neoliberal capitalism. However, the assumption that the struggle against capitalism should be global is challenged because grassroots movements can represent alternative forms of politics against capitalism thanks to their potential of creating cracks/ ruptures within the capitalist system.

This reminds the assumption of Castells that networked movements are local and global at the same time. According to him, social movements start at a local level for their reasons, build their networks, and construct their public space. Meanwhile they are also global because they are connected throughout the world, they learn from other experiences, and they are often inspired by other movements (2012, p. 250). As both KOS and Cerattepe movements started as attempts to protect their localities, they learn from each other. They give inspiration to other movements, and other movements inspire them. Moreover, many scholars stress that capitalism is not just a structure or institution; instead, it is a system of social relations. As Dixon puts, “As something constantly created through social relations, it is also something we can undo. That is, capitalism can be resisted, undermined, and displaced through collective action” (2014, 69). So through changing social relations by creating solidarity, friendship and cooperation against commodified relations of capitalism, such kinds of local grassroots ecology movements play an important role in struggling against capitalism, this is why prefigurative politics is called transformative politics at the same time.

Studying environmental movements and reading on prefigurative politics have also changed me. So the transformation of the researcher herself is also the case. I learned much information about Istanbul, urban politics, mega projects during my field research in Istanbul. On the other side, conducting field research in Arvin has changed my views, opinions and attitudes. When I listened to the stories from older woman, who worked on mining in Murgul, expressing the meaning of the Cerattepe and Artvin to her, I can share her sadness about nature and the city she belongs to. I learned that emotions could be a potent trigger for participating in social movements; before that, I was prone to evaluate the subject regarding the ideas and political views. I also feel thankful to the field research that I had a chance to observe how the mobilization can change one person. I was surprised when the nationalists said that we lost respect towards the state and security forces. All these experiences make me think about the transformation of capitalism through the transformation of social relations. This shows me the power of prefigurative politics that transforms not only activists but also myself.

7.9. Gezi

Prefigurative politics is mostly debated with reference to the Occupy movements. Gezi is evaluated as a localized Occupy movement (Tuğal, 2013) and the connection between Gezi movement and global urban movements is stressed by different scholars (Ergenç, 2018; Kuymulu, 2013). Gezi shows prefigurative characteristics. It is also the turning point for environmental movements and other social and political movements in Turkey. Therefore, it is inevitable to add the discussion on Gezi in this study. Thus, during the field research, one of my aims was to understand the thoughts of activists about Gezi and their evaluations about the effects of Gezi on their mobilizations. Both Cerattepe and KOS activists appreciate Gezi and see the connection with their movements in terms of common concerns, protest forms and defence of commons.

During the field research in İstanbul, I realized that almost all interviewees mentioned Gezi before I asked about Gezi. They connected their activism with Gezi. Most of the activists in İstanbul I interviewed participated in Gezi. Even if I did not ask directly about Gezi, they told about Gezi. The connection of KOS with Gezi is much more apparent if we remember that KOS is born from Abbasaga Forums in İstanbul, in one of the neighbourhood gatherings after the police intervention in Gezi Park in 2013. It is essential to remind that the after-effect of Gezi is not limited to KOS. After Gezi, many urban-based environmental movements have emerged and diversified in İstanbul.

Almost all activists I interviewed in İstanbul stated that they participated in Gezi protests. They had fresh memories of Gezi. They expressed their happiness and hope during Gezi. Gezi was seen as the miracle which created ruptures and changes in everyday life. From the perspective of different interviewees, Gezi was identified with the feelings of hope and solidarity. In parallel to the strong emotional links with nature in the case of Artvin, KOS activists show reliable identification with Gezi uprising. When I was asking about their feelings about Gezi, they reacted very emotionally. Gezi was evaluated as the turning point from

the viewpoint of the activists, as a manifesto of new citizenship, space for different people to assemble and resist against the authoritarian government and express their alternative lifestyles. The reflections of Gezi on KOS are pronounced since KOS follows the spirit of Gezi in terms of organizational characteristics and values and norms. Interviewees frequently argued that Gezi inspired KOS in terms of organizational aspects of horizontality, non- hierarchy, rejecting leadership, participatory decision making and inclusiveness. All these characteristics are reflected in what the activists referred to as “the Gezi spirit”. Forums are seen as a way of democratic decision making learnt from Gezi. Following Gezi, KOS adopted horizontal organization without leadership, participatory democracy and defence of urban commons against the interest of private companies.

The struggle for Cerattepe started before Gezi protests; it has a long-lasting history; however, the resistance in the streets is somehow the recent phase of the movement; the most active period of the movement-including keeping watches-started after Gezi movement. During the field research, some activists stated that they supported the Gezi movement in Artvin by organizing demonstrations in support of Gezi. During Gezi protests in İstanbul, people went out on the streets by organizing protests, meetings and activities in Artvin to show solidarity with Gezi protests. Many interviewees stressed the similarities between Gezi and Cerattepe movements and indicated the contribution of Gezi to their struggle. In the case of Artvin, as stated before, right-wing activists and left-wing activists’ approach to Gezi differ from each other. None of them negatively evaluated Gezi. While right-wing interviewees mostly seem indifferent to Gezi, left-wing interviewees appreciated Gezi movement, and they connected their struggle with Gezi. Many activists liken Cerattepe and Gezi in terms of broad social mobilization.

It was argued that the multitude of Gezi inspired collectivization of Cerattepe struggle. While the Gezi movement achieved to unite people from different political views, Cerattepe struggle was linked to Gezi movements in terms of broad social mobilization achieved by the movement. In order to show reflections

of Gezi on Cerattepe struggle, interviewees reminded how *Halkevleri* and MHP kept watch together. It was stated that specific tactics were borrowed from Gezi process. Primarily, after the police interventions in February 2016, many spontaneous protests were staged in the city centre. “Pot and pan” protests were organized, the slogans such as “this is only the beginning, continue to struggle” were chanted, as has been the case in Gezi. It was stated that one of the well-known slogans of Gezi “don’t ‘be afraid, we are the people” was written in the encampment where watches were being kept. Some interviewees likened Cerattepe struggle to Gezi in terms of creating communal areas and defence of commons. Keeping watch to protect Cerattepe was evaluated as similar to the occupation of Gezi park to protect the park. Moreover, Gezi is assessed as having a common feature with Cerattepe in terms of prioritizing environmental concerns. On the other hand, the inclusion of AKP supporters was emphasized as distinct characteristics of the movement in Artvin. It is commonly emphasized that except for the last few years, government supporters also participated in the activities of YAD.

7.10. Conclusion

This chapter aimed to discuss KOS and Cerattepe within the theoretical framework of the thesis. Exposing the similarities and differences between the two cases has also been a part of this attempt. The literature on anti-neoliberal social movements has mostly developed in an attempt to understand anti-austerity movements across the world. However, rather than being limited to interpret merely anti-austerity movements, this literature also provides us with helpful tools to explain other anti-neoliberal movements. In this chapter, it is argued that horizontality, spontaneity, non-hierarchical decision-making process, direct and participatory democracy and prefigurative politics constitute the nexus between anti-neoliberal social movements and environmental movements. These characteristics are observed in KOS and Cerattepe movements. This literature emphasizes the discovery of the commons as the radical spirit of the protest waves, that is also the case for both KOS and Cerattepe struggles.

KOS is the urban-networked environmental movement to remake the city against surplus reproduction through mega projects. It is plausible to define KOS as the urban middle-class movement mobilized against the socio-economic challenges of neoliberal politics. Activists of KOS are mostly professionals working in white-collar jobs; most of them were journalist, freelance interpreters, engineer, lawyer, teacher, academics and student. The social basis of KOS is composed of middle-class professionals who are disturbed with ecological degradation and commodification of urban and environmental commons in İstanbul. In this regard, KOS can be regarded as the movement of those who want to say a word on their localities, their cities, and living spaces, with the aim of protection of urban and ecological commons against privatization and commodification process of neoliberalism.

The actors of the anti-mining movement are local people of Artvin who are directly affected by mining in the region. This movement is composed of a broad coalition of the local people exceeding political, ideological, and class differences under the leadership of YAD. The heterogenous social basis has characterized Cerattepe struggle due to the participation of people from different age, gender, political affiliations, and classes. The social base of Cerattepe struggle is in line with the social basis of community-based environmental movements that transcend cleavages of class, gender, ethnicity, religion, or political orientation. Moreover, the interconnected relations of the people, the community, the city, and nature are significant in the Artvin case. This symbiotic relationship between community and nature enables us to locate Artvin case within community-based environmental movements.

Women have been at the forefront of the movement in Artvin. Women's active role in mobilization is highly visible in Artvin case. Women play a critical role during the intervention to Cerattepe and after the intervention as organizers of the events and activists of YAD. The notions of protection of the health, children and future generations are mostly emphasized by women activists of Cerattepe struggle. The conceptualization of nature as the heritage from the previous

generations that will pass to future generations is also emphasized by women activists. Many women activists also stated that living in Artvin provides them with freedom, that they can not find in another city. The symbiotic relationship with nature, the conceptualization of nature as a heritage that should pass to future generations, and the protection of children are emphasized by women activists in Artvin as their motivations.

Both KOS and Cerattepe struggle have a similar organizational structure, protest repertoire, and motivations. Both struggles aim to protect nature in their localities; their scale is different, but both are local grassroots environmental movements oriented towards protection of their living space against environmentally destructive policies of the government and its neoliberal policies. Cerattepe movement in Artvin tries to remain local; it is suspicious about connections with international networks, unlike KOS.

In terms of motivations, there are significant overlaps between KOS and Cerattepe struggles. Both KOS and Cerattepe activists stress the protection of nature and ecosystem as the commons belonging to all people, which are being plundered for the sake of private companies. Protection of the commons and opposing neoliberal policies are underlying motivations of the actors. The anti-neoliberal stance of the activists is reflected in their opposition against profit-making of private companies and their defence of the commons.

Prefigurative politics is reflected in KOS and Artvin cases through here and new practices, the transformation of activists and the transformation of everyday life. Creating new subjectivities through the transformation of ordinary people to the activists, changing the daily lives of the activists and their political views, creating new ways of doing and social relations based on cooperation and solidarity are the powerful signs of transformative politics in the cases of İstanbul and Artvin. Both Cerattepe and KOS activists appreciate Gezi and see the connection with their movements in terms of common concerns, protest forms, and defence of commons.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

Dixon starts his book, *Another Politics*, with the sentence “we are in a moment of tremendous crisis and possibility” in 2014. Crises of neoliberalism and possibilities for “another world” are still in the air. Today, we are experiencing the outbreak of the pandemic, which leads to a questioning of ecological crises of neoliberalism. Meanwhile, we are also witnessing “Black Lives Matter” protests which started in the USA and spread in the different parts of the world. Yellow Vest protestors are taking the streets against austerity policies in France. People are protesting against the corruption of the government in Lebanon and uprising for climate justice in Europe. It is difficult to predict what these movements will lead to, but it is inevitable that we will witness protest waves on different scales in different parts of the world against neoliberal politics that exploit labour and nature. These movements may not achieve to change capitalist processes, but the question “what are the political promises of these movements” is still relevant. In this study, I deal with this question through the literature on anti-neoliberal social movements. This literature allows me to conceptualize environmental movements as a space for opposition against neoliberalism and affirmation in terms of creating new relations and subjectivities.

From the classical social movement literature to the contemporary one, the main questions are who, why and how concerning the protesters/participants, their reasons/motivations for mobilization and their ways of acting. In this respect, this thesis contributes to the social movement literature by analysing the social basis, protest repertoire and organizational characteristics of the environmental movements, and motivations of the actors. Moreover, this thesis discusses the environmental movements as a part of global uprisings against neoliberal politics, which enables us to locate the environmental movements within the framework of

anti-neoliberal social movements. The characteristics of anti-neoliberal social movements, for example, horizontality, spontaneity, non-hierarchical organization without leadership, direct and participatory democracy, the defence of commons and prefigurative politics, are also common characteristics of environmental movements. Transformative politics represented by environmental movements is crucial for this study, which is also discussed as a part of anti-neoliberal social movements, especially after the massive Occupy movements in different parts of the world. The transformation of everyday life through developing a new kind of relationships within the movement and emerging new subjectivities through the transformation of ordinary citizens to the activists are the contributions of prefigurative politics to the social movement literature. Instead of focusing on structural changes in the society, this mode of activism prioritizes creating cracks and ruptures in the existing societies. It bears the potential to transform society in a more egalitarian and democratic way. Through creating a new social relationship, based on values such as solidarity, equality, cooperation against “commodified relations of capitalism”, new subjectivities emerge from the social movements. Transformation of the activists themselves, their social relations with each other and everyday life shows one of the most powerful aspects of social movements. This approach enables us to see the challenges that the environmental movements represent against the neoliberal-authoritarian governments. In this respect, whether these movements are successful or failing is not the question of this study. Instead, the focus, here, is on “becoming” in terms of how they challenge the existing hierarchies within the movements, how they put the values, equality, solidarity, democracy, cooperation into practice, and how mobilization changes people’s own lives and everyday life.

This study suggests that environmental movements in contemporary Turkey show the characteristics of anti-neoliberal movements in three respects. First, they share a common organizational structure. These movements are leaderless, horizontal, grassroots and spontaneous organizations. They advocate direct democracy and participatory decision-making processes. Second, environmental movements represent opposition to neoliberalism, especially to the commodification,

privatization and enclosure of the nature for profit-making and they defend commons as living spaces of people. Third, environmental movements show the characteristics of prefigurative politics through here and now practices, developing new relations and new subjectivities, and the transformation of activists and everyday life. Therefore, having horizontal, grassroots and leaderless organizational structure, representing opposition against the commodification of commons that goes along with state-government- private companies' partnership, and prefiguration in terms of affirmative actions are three distinct characteristics of environmental movements that enable us to locate them within the framework of anti-neoliberal social movement literature.

The empirical dimension of this thesis is based on the data gathered from the field research in İstanbul and Artvin in Turkey. I conducted in-depth, semi-structured interviews and participant observation in these cities between January 2017 and September 2017. I analysed the findings of my field research throughout my thesis. I explained these two cases in the light of the theoretical framework of the thesis, and also showed the differences and similarities between these two cases. I argue that they share common motivations, organizational structure, values and norms and protest repertoire. Besides, the politics represented by KOS and Cerattepe struggle is oppositional, at the same time, constructive and reconstructive. The activists of both struggles show anti-capitalist stance by defending the urban and ecological commons and their living spaces. Both struggles produce/reproduce new subjectivities and new relations that give clues about transformative politics. The difference between the two cases lies in the social basis and network characteristics of the movements.

Anti- mining struggle in Artvin has lasted almost for 30 years with ups and downs. The movement is characterized by a heterogonous social basis due to the participation of people from a different age, gender, political affiliations and class. The actors of the movement are local people of Artvin who are and will be directly affected by mining in the region. The movement is built around strong women participation. The movement creates a collective identity; activists define

themselves as the local people of Artvin whose living space is threatened by the mining company and who defend their life, city, nature and environment. Their self-image as life defenders and identification of nature with living space enables activists to refer to collective values, cutting across social, economic and political differences. Conceptualizing struggle as a life defence allows a struggle to locate itself above politics and enables people from different political views to act together.

To understand the motivations of the activists gives rich data to locate KOS and Cerattepe movements within a theoretical framework. For Artvin case, it is difficult to summarize all the reasons and motivations of the activists, but, it is plausible to argue that during the interviews, two main themes are underlined by interviewees to indicate their motivations behind mobilization: to defend the life and to defend the living space, which is related with living in Artvin within nature. The local people oppose mining because they think that it will destroy the city and turn it into a desert, force them to immigrate with a consequent loss of “Artvin culture”. People showed a strong sense of belonging to Artvin and the social environment, which results in strong social ties, solidarity, trust and friendship.

Many interviewees referred to the beauty of nature, but it was not only symbolic attachment to nature; nature/ Cerattepe mainly refers to where they grow up, live, relax and enjoy, this is the reason why they call it “living space”. Mining will destroy nature through the deforestation and pollution of water resources of the city, which will affect not only people but also all species living in the forests. Potential adverse effects of mining on human health, children and future generations are also significant concerns for local people. It is also argued that the mine project will lead to a change in the political culture in Artvin, and the loss of Cerattepe will cause disappointment that will affect other ecology struggles in the region. Interviewees whose livelihood is affected by the mining also argue that because of water pollution, and devastation of nature, mine will cause the loss of their livelihood. Even though activists don't explain their motivations by referring to the words such as capitalism and neoliberalism, their stance towards protecting

their nature against profit orientation of the private company can be read as a powerful anti-capitalist stance. Also, understanding nature as a living space indicates the defence of commons, which is the spirit of the contemporary anti-capitalist social movements. Activists also show powerful anti-capitalist/neoliberal stance by protecting their nature against privatization, commodification and plundering, which provide important insights about the potential of environmental movements in terms of political and social opposition to contemporary neoliberalism. The anti-mining movement in Artvin, oriented towards the protection of the city, nature, water resources and living space as the commons In this sense, it can be read as a powerful resistance to this face of neoliberal development that goes hand in hand with state and private company partnerships in Turkish case.

The anti-mining movement in Artvin adopts a rich protest repertoire. In addition to traditional protest strategies such as mass demonstrations and protests, public releases, lobbying activities, collecting a signature, the movement also adopts direct action strategies such as watches, unfurling banners and forming a human chain. The movement is leaderless and horizontal. They adopt participatory democracy and advocate participatory decision-making process; all meetings are open to the public. They make decisions by the participation of local people of Artvin. They place importance on transparency and accountability.

Prefigurative politics pertains to the transformative effects of the movements. This is why it is also called transformative politics. The reflections of prefigurative politics on Cerattepe movement are twofold; transformation of the activists on the one hand, and transformation of the everyday life on the other. Transformation of the activists is related to creating new subjectivities and new social and political agencies within the mobilization. Cerattepe struggle transformed “ordinary citizens” into activists. The struggle has politicized the local people in a way that the people who had not previously participated in any political action became activists. Moreover, during the field research, interviewees stated that they could develop empathy towards other environmental and political movements, such as

the ecological uprising in different localities and the Kurdish movement. It was also noted that this intervention significantly changed people's perceptions of the state and security forces. Most interviewees indicated that they lost their belief in the state and security forces. The second reflection of prefigurative politics in Artvin is the changes in everyday life in the city. The mobilization interrupts ongoing everyday practices. It creates new social relations and new ways of doing. Anti-mining activism fosters the relationships, solidarity, friendship and cooperation between the activists. On the other hand, the city is divided as the opponents and proponents of the mining. The activists put distance to the people who are working for the mining company. Promoting solidarity and collaboration, strengthening personal relationships among activists in the city and exclusion of pro-mining people are specific apparent effects of anti-mining movement in everyday life in Artvin. The argument that the Artvin case shows prefigurative characteristics is crucial for this study. Finding those prefigurative politics is at the nexus of both Artvin and KOS cases allows me to understand and evaluate different scale environmental movements together. This also shows that local movements can embody the characteristics of global social movements.

Since the Gezi uprising shows prefigurative characteristics through establishing communal life within the occupied spaces and significantly affected the protest waves in Turkey, this study examines how the actors of Cerattepe struggle evaluate Gezi and how they associate with or differentiate their struggle from Gezi. In Artvin, left-wing interviewees appreciated Gezi protests while right-wing interviewees were indifferent to Gezi. Interviewees underlined a significant similarity between Gezi and their resistance in terms of their heterogeneous social basis enabling a broad social mobilization, protests repertoire, projection of communal life, defence of commons, and giving priority to environmental concerns while they differentiate their struggle in terms of inclusion of government party supporters.

The second case study of the thesis is about the urban-based and network-like environmental struggles in İstanbul. This field study is composed of in-depth

interviews with the members of the Northern Forests Defence and supported by the interviews with the representatives of other organizations in İstanbul, which initiate local-neighbourhood movements for the defence of the remaining public parks and commons in the city.

KOS is composed of middle-class professionals who feel threatened by the ecological degradation and commodification of urban and ecological commons. KOS activists also define themselves as “life defenders”. The underlying motivations of KOS activists are to stand against neoliberal rent-seeking politics, to protect the nature, the ecosystem, the city and the life. These aspects are evaluated as related with and complementary to each other. In the discourses of the activists, the concern with protecting nature and ecosystem goes along with the concern for the city and the lives of the people in the city. Defining themselves as “life defender”, KOS activists stressed that they want to protect nature, as their living space and to protect the life against the commodification of ecological commons. Opposition against rent-seeking policies destroying nature for the sake of profit is the common discourse that most interviewees mentioned. Activists stressed their discontent towards neoliberal urbanization and its consequences. The anti-capitalism stance of the activists is reflected in the discourse of defending the city and nature against rent-seeking policies of neoliberalism through commodification and privatization of urban and ecological commons.

KOS is a non-hierarchical and horizontal organization, that rejects leadership. KOS activists also refuse any clear division of labour that can create a hierarchy within the movement. For KOS activists, forums are regarded as the mechanism of collective decision making and participatory democracy. In this respect, KOS shares the common characteristics with anti-neoliberal social movements in terms of horizontality, non-hierarchy, rejecting leadership, participatory decision-making process through forums and advocating grassroots and participatory democracy. The protest repertoire of KOS varies from traditional ways of protests such as meetings, demonstrations, press releases, petition campaigns to direct action strategies such as blocking the road and creative protests such as picnicking

on the airport construction area. KOS is at the centre of urban-ecology networks in İstanbul that shares common agenda and concerns. KOS has local, national and international connections with environmental movements in İstanbul, Turkey, and around the world, that gives the movement network-like characteristic.

The reflections of prefigurative politics on KOS case can be observed in three respects; through here and now practices, individual transformation and social transformation. Performing direct action strategies, putting the shared and committed values into practice, and efforts to transform power relations in the movement show here and now practices of the movement. Besides, activists have a strong emotional bond with KOS. Interviewees defined KOS as their second family, the space of solidarity, friendship and struggle. Many interviewees said that it is the first time that they feel belonging to an organization. They also expressed the contribution of the movement to their lives in accordance with improving social relations, friendship and solidarity through mobilization. The experience of transformation in the daily lives of the activists comes along with developing new subjectivities within the movement. In other words, through developing new kinds of relations based on friendship, solidarity, cooperation and equality, and transforming ordinary citizens to the activists, new subjectivities have been emerging out of ongoing prefigurative practices. Social transformation is also achieved through creating awareness and informing people on the mega projects in İstanbul.

KOS has its roots in Abassağa forum. Almost all activists were participants of Gezi. Participants talked about Gezi frenetically, with excitement and enthusiasm. Gezi was identified with the feeling of hope and regarded as the turning point from the viewpoint of the activists. It was regarded as the manifesto of new citizenship, space for different people to assemble and resist against the authoritarian government and express their alternative lifestyles. The reflection of Gezi on KOS is significant since KOS emerged from the neighbourhood forums after Gezi. It was frequently argued that Gezi inspired KOS in terms of organizational characteristics of horizontality, non- hierarchy, being non- representative,

rejecting leadership, participatory decision making, inclusiveness, all reflected in what the activists referred to as ‘the Gezi spirit.’

8.1. Suggestions for Future Studies

This thesis aimed to investigate the politics affirmed by environmental movements against neoliberal politics in contemporary Turkey. The conceptualization of prefigurative politics at the outset of this research was not a predominant concept within the study. As the study developed, my findings made the concept more relevant to the study. In this study, I focus on environmental activism. However, through the lenses of prefigurative politics, different modes of activism can be examined in terms of creating cracks and ruptures against the neoliberal authoritarian governments.

Solidarity economics, and its practices such as neighbourhood cooperatives or solidarity farms, lies at the intersection between prefigurative politics and the commons. It would be interesting to examine solidarity economics from this perspective. In the following researches, the gender-specific dimension of the activism can be studied through the perspective of ecofeminism, that provides a theoretical framework to understand women environmental activism. The discourse of women on nature, their relationship and narrative of nature, and their motivations towards the protection of nature provide rich data on studying women activism from an ecofeminist perspective.

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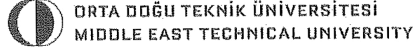
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APPENDICES

A. APPROVAL OF THE METU HUMAN SUBJECTS ETHICS COMMITTEE

UYGULAMALI ETİK ARAŞTIRMA MERKEZİ
APPLIED ETHICS RESEARCH CENTER



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04 TEMMUZ 2017

Konu: Değerlendirme Sonucu

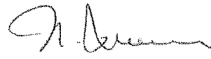
Gönderen: ODTÜ İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu (IAEK)

İlgi: İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu Başvurusu


Sayın Doç.Dr. Kürşad ERTUĞRUL ;

Danışmanlığını yaptığınız doktora öğrencisi Burcu Nur Binbuğa KINIK' in "*Political and Social Opposition Represented by Ecological Movements Against Neoliberal Politics in Contemporary Turkey*" başlıklı araştırması İnsan Araştırmaları Etik Kurulu tarafından uygun görülerek gerekli onay 2017-SOS-120 protokol numarası ile 13.07.2017 – 31.12.2017 tarihleri arasında geçerli olmak üzere verilmiştir.

Bilgilerinize saygılarımla sunarım.


Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil TURAN

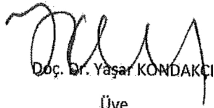
Başkan V


Prof. Dr. Ayhan SOL

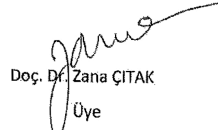
Üye


Prof. Dr. Ayhan Sürbüz DEMİR

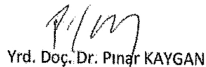
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Doç. Dr. Yaşar KONDAKCI

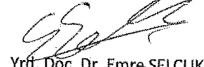
Üye


Doç. Dr. Zana ÇITAK

Üye


Yrd. Doç. Dr. Pınar KAYGAN

Üye


Yrd. Doç. Dr. Emre SELÇUK

Üye

B. CURRICULUM VITAE

BURCU NUR BİNBUĞA KINIK

Date and Place of Birth: 12.06.1987, Ankara
E-mail: burcubbinboga@gmail.com

EDUCATION

Institution	Degree/Position	Year
Middle East Technical University, 2020 Political Science and Public Administration, Ankara/Turkey	Ph. D.	2013-
Middle East Technical University, 2013 Political Science and Public Administration, Ankara/Turkey	M.S.	2010-
Middle East Technical University, 2010 Political Science and Public Administration, Ankara/Turkey	B.S.	2005-

WORK EXPERIENCE

January 2013- September 2019: Research Assistant, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Middle East Technical University (METU), Ankara, Turkey

April 2012-December 2012: Project Assistant, International Labor Organization (ILO), Ankara, Turkey

TEACHING ASSISTANTSHIPS (Middle East Technical University)

ADM 1121 – Introduction to Politics I

ADM 1122 – Introduction to Politics II

ADM 1323 – Society and Culture

ADM 3160 – Political Sociology

ADM3161- Turkish Politics

LANGUAGES

Turkish (Native)

English (Fluent in Reading, Writing and Speaking)

SOFTWARE PROGRAMS

NVivo

SPSS

PAPER PRESENTATIONS

Anti-Mine Movement in Artvin: Struggle for “Life”, paper represented at International Initiative for Promoting Political Economy (IPPE) Annual Conference, 12-14 September 2018, Pula, Croatia

The Promise of Ecological Movements in Contemporary Turkey, paper represented at the 20th Annual Mediterranean Studies Association International Congress, 31 May – 3 June 2017, Valletta, Malta

Gezi Uprising: Resistance to Neoliberal Authoritarianism, paper represented at the How Class Works Conference, 9-11 June 2016, Stony Brook, USA

The Intersection of Nationalism and Hate Speech in Turkish Case, paper

represented at the International Interdisciplinary Conference Racism, Nationalism and Xenophobia, 17-18 March 2016 Warsaw, Poland

Examining Pro-Kurdish Parties from Women Representation, paper represented at the International Conference on Knowledge and Politics in Gender and Women's Studies, 9-11 October 2015, METU, Ankara, Turkey

Hate Speech in Turkey, paper presented at the 13. National Social Sciences Congress, 2013, METU, Ankara, Turkey

RESEARCH PROJECT

2019-....: Researcher in the *Women's Anti-Mining Activism from an Ecofeminist Perspective: The Case of Anti-Mining Movement in Mount Ida, Turkey* funded by Sabancı University Gender and Women's Studies Center

2016-2017: Researcher in the *Political and Social Opposition Represented by Ecological Movements Against Neoliberal Politics in Contemporary Turkey* Project, funded by METU Scientific Research Project

2013- 2014: Researcher in the *Parliamentary System in Turkey Research Project/ Legislation Group*, conducted by The Public Administration Institute for Turkey and the Middle East (TODAI), funded by the Ministry of Development

PUBLICATIONS

Deveci, C. & Binbuga Kınık, B.N. (2018), *Nationalist Bias in Turkish Official Discourse on Hate Speech: A Rawlsian Criticism*, Turkish Studies (Taylor & Francis Online), DOI: 10.1080/14683849.2018.1479961

Binbuga Kınık, B.N. (2016), *Examining Hate Speech from the Perspective of Arendt's Political Theory*, METU Studies in Development, 43: 707-724

AWARDS

September 2019- January 2020: Research Fellowship, Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung, Berlin, Germany

December 2019- Research Encouragement Award, *Women's Anti-Mining Activism from an Ecofeminist Perspective: The Case of Anti-Mining Movement in Mount Ida, Turkey*, funded by Sabancı University Gender and Women's Studies Center (SU-Gender), İstanbul, Turkey

September 2017-January 2018: Research Fellowship, The Centre for Southeast European Studies, the University of Graz, Graz, Austria

C. TURKISH SUMMARY / TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu çalışma ekoloji hareketlerini, neoliberalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketler bağlamında tartışmayı amaçlamıştır. İstanbul ve Artvin’de gerçekleştirdiğim niteliksel saha araştırmasına dayanan bu çalışmada günümüz Türkiye’indeki ekoloji hareketleri, neoliberalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketler literatürüyle tartışılmıştır. Çalışma bir yandan ekoloji hareketlerinin toplumsal tabanını, örgütsel özelliklerini, ana motivasyonlarını ve eylem repertuarını açıklarken diğer taraftan neoliberal politikalara karşı muhalefeti temsil eden yeni siyasi ve toplumsal öznellikleri anlamayı ve açıklamayı amaçlamaktadır.

Bu çalışmada, Türkiye’de ekoloji hareketlerinin neoliberalizm karşıtı hareketler ile üç farklı açıdan ortak özellikler gösterdiğini savunmaktayım. Birincisi, örgütlenme yapısı ile ilgili. Bu hareketler, lidersiz, yatay, tabandan ve kendiliğinden örgütlenmelerdir. Doğrudan demokrasiyi ve katılımcı karar alma süreçlerini savunurlar. İkincisi ekoloji hareketleri, kar odaklı neoliberal politikalara karşı dururlar ve müşterekleri yaşam alanları olarak savunurlar. Üçüncüsü, şimdi ve burada pratikleriyle, yeni ilişkiler geliştirerek, yeni öznellikler yaratarak ve aktörlerin ve günlük yaşamın dönüşümü ile ekoloji hareketleri prefigüratif siyasetin özelliklerini gösterirler.

Bu tez kapsamında saha araştırmamı 2017 yılının Ocak- Eylül ayları arasında İstanbul ve Artvin illerinde yaptım. Saha araştırması boyunca derinlemesine mülakat ve katılımcı gözlem araştırma tekniklerinden yararlandım. İstanbul’da 25 kişi ile Artvin’de 27 kişi ile yarı yapılandırılmış ve derinlemesine mülakatlar yaptım. Alan araştırması sırasında toplantılara, forumlara, eylemlere ve basın açıklamalarına katıldım. Nitel araştırma yöntemi, aktivistlerin deneyimlerini ve bakış açılarını derinlemesine incelememi ve aktivizmin mikro dinamiklerini anlamamı sağladı. Derinlemesine görüşmeler ve katılımcı gözlem araştırma teknikleri sayesinde, aktivizmin dönüştürücü etkilerini ve aktivizm ile gündelik yaşam arasındaki bağlantıları fark ettim. Saha araştırmasından elde edilen veriler

ile tezin teorik çerçevesi, araştırmanın birbirini besleyen iki temel ayağını oluşturdu. Ön araştırma sorularını ve saha çalışmasına yön veren belirli varsayımları teorik çerçeveden yola çıkarak oluşturdum. Öte yandan saha araştırmasından elde ettiğim veriler, tezin teorik tartışmalarının şekillenmesinde rol oynadı. Saha araştırması boyunca elde ettiğim bulguları ilgili literatürle ilişkilendirmeyi ve teori ile araştırma arasında bir diyalog kurmayı amaçladım.

Türkiye’de ekoloji hareketlerini çalışmanın en büyük zorluğu, bu hareketlerin kısa erimli olmasıydı. Belirli bir bölgede yaşayan insanlar belirli bir projeye karşı kısa sürede örgütlenebilirken, projenin çekilmesi ya da hayata geçirilmesi ile bu mobilizasyon hızla sönmülebilmektedir. Artvin ve İstanbul’daki mücadelelerin uzun erimli olmaları çalışma sahasının coğrafi ve metodolojik sınırlarını belirlememde önemli bir rol oynadı.

İstanbul saha çalışmasını Ocak 2017- Haziran 2017 tarihleri arasında gerçekleştirdim. İstanbul Gezi Hareketi’nin başladığı şehir olması açısından önemliydi. Ayrıca İstanbul, Adalet ve Kalkınma Partisi’nin (AKP) 3. Köprü, 3. Havalimanı, Kanal İstanbul gibi mega projelerinin merkezinde bir şehir. İstanbul’da bir ekolojik yıkıma neden olan projeler sadece mega projeler ile sınırlı değil; kentin ormanlarına, parklarına, kıyılarına ve kültürel dokusuna farklı sermaye gruplarının el koymasını sağlayan irili ufaklı birçok proje mevcut. 3. Havaalanı, 3. Köprü ve Kanal İstanbul son kalan yeşil alanını kentleşmeye açan bir paket program olarak hazırlanmıştır Bu mega projelerin kentin dokusuna, su havzalarına, tarım arazilerine yıkıcı ve geri döndürülemez etkileri bulunmaktadır (KOS,2015).

İstanbul’da kenti, ormanı, kentsel ve ekolojik müşterekleri savunmak için ortaya çıkan birbiri ile iletişim ve etkileşim halinde, birbiri ile dirsek temasında olan kent-ekoloji örgütlenmelerinden bahsetmek mümkün. Bu hareketlerin önemli bir kısmı Gezi sonrası oluşmuş, kendini “dayanışma” (Kadıköy Dayanışması, İstanbul Dayanışması) ya da “gönüllü” (Validebağ Gönüllüleri) olarak tanımlamıştır. Bu nedenle İstanbul’u araştırma sahamın bir ayağı olarak seçtim. Çalışmada

odaklandığım ekoloji hareketlerinden biri olan Kuzey Ormanları Savunması (KOS), Gezi Hareketi'nin hemen sonrasında Abassağa formunda doğuyor. Gezi Parkı'na yönelik polis şiddetinden sonra Gezi Hareketi'ndeki toplumsal muhalefet forumlarına kayıyor ve Abassağa formunda şehrin kuzey ormanlarını korumaya yönelik böyle bir inisiyatif oluşuyor. KOS, kendini “Gezi'nin çocuğu” olarak tanımlıyor. 2013 yılında kurulan KOS, mega projelerin yanı sıra İstanbul'un ve Kuzey Ormanları'nın ekolojik yıkımına neden olacak her türlü girişime karşı mücadele eden bir yapı olarak tanımlanabilir (KOS, 2015). KOS' un hem İstanbul'daki diğer örgütlenmelerle hem de Türkiye'nin ve dünyanın çeşitli yerlerinde aynı amaçla mücadele eden yapılar ve inisiyatifler ile bağlantıları mevcut. Ya Kanal Ya İstanbul İniyatifleri'nin örgütleyicisi konumundalar. Bu nedenle KOS, İstanbul'daki kent-ekoloji ağının merkezinde bulunuyor. İstanbul'daki ekoloji ağını daha iyi anlayabilmek için Kuzey Ormanları Savunması üyeleriyle yaptığım derinlemesine görüşmeleri, kamusal parkların ve ortak alanların savunması için yerel-mahalle hareketlerini başlatan İstanbul'daki diğer kuruluşların temsilcileriyle görüşmeler yaparak destekledim.

Saha araştırmasının diğer ayağını ise Haziran 2017- Eylül 2017 tarihleri arasında Artvin'de gerçekleştirdim. Artvin'de Cerattepe bölgesinde yapılmak istenen maden faaliyetlerine karşı 1995 yılında kurulan Yeşil Artvin Derneği (YAD) mücadelenin öncülüğünü yapmaktadır. Bu hareket, toplumun farklı kesimlerini bir araya getirmeyi başarmıştır. Dernek, 2012 yılında Cerattepe 'de maden ocağı açılması için olumlu ÇED kararı verilmesinden sonra en hareketli dönemini yaşamıştır. Olumlu ÇED raporundan sonra Artvin halkı maden şirketinin Cerattepe'ye ulaşmasını önlemek için 245 gün süren nöbete başlamış, bu nöbet güvenlik güçlerinin müdahalesi ile bitirilmiştir. Ancak, müdahale sonrası Artvin şehir merkezinde halk çeşitli eylemler ve etkinlikler ile mücadeleye devam etmiştir. Alan çalışmasını yaptığım 2017 yılında Cerattepe' de maden faaliyetleri kentin önemli gündemlerinden biriydi.

Kısaca tezin bölümlerini özetlemek istiyorum. Bu tez sekiz bölümden oluşmaktadır. Tezin ilk bölümünde, bu çalışmayı neden yaptığım, çalışmanın

katkıları, saha çalışmam, metodolojik yaklaşımım ve araştırma sorularımı ortaya koymaya çalıştım. Bu girişin ardından Bölüm 2, bu çalışmanın teorik çerçevesi ile ilgidir. Neoliberalizm, müşterekler ve doğa arasındaki ilişki tartışıldıktan sonra tezin teorik çerçevesini sunmak istedim. Bu tezin kapsamında yaptığım alan araştırmasını üçüncü ve altıncı bölümler arasında tartıştım. Üçüncü ve dördüncü bölüm, Artvin'deki saha çalışmasından elde edilen verilere dayanmaktadır. 3. bölüm, Artvin'de madencilik ve maden karşıtı hareketin tarihi ile başlar. Ardından aktörlerin sosyal temelini, protesto repertuarını, örgütsel özelliklerini ve diğer hareketlerle bağlantılarını analiz ettim. Dördüncü bölümde, Artvin'deki madencilik karşıtı mücadelede prefigüratif siyaseti tartıştım. Prefigüratif siyaset yaygın olarak kitlesel hareketlerle tartışılırken, bu tarz siyaset biçiminin özelliklerinin Cerattepe mücadelesinde bulunup bulunmadığını anlamayı amaçladım. Bu bölüm, Artvin'deki maden karşıtı mücadelenin aktörleri, günlük yaşamı ve sosyal ilişkileri nasıl değiştirdiğine bakıyor. Ayrıca, prefigüratif siyasetin bir parçası olan Gezi Hareketinin maden karşıtı hareket aktörleri tarafından nasıl algılandığını ve mücadelelerini Gezi Hareketiyle nasıl ilişkilendirdiklerini veya farklılaştırdıklarını gösterir. Bu tartışma, yerel ekoloji hareketlerinin Gezi Hareketi ile ilişkisini anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Ayrıca Gezi Hareketini çalışmaya dahil etmek, Artvin'deki yerel hareketler ile Gezi gibi geniş çaplı işgal hareketleri arasındaki farklılıkları ve benzerlikleri anlamaya katkı sağlayacaktır.

Beşinci ve altıncı bölüm, İstanbul'daki saha çalışmamın verilerine dayanmaktadır. Beşinci bölümde ise, ekolojik olarak yıkıcı projelerin İstanbul'daki mega projelerle sınırlı olmadığını akılda tutarak, İstanbul'daki 3. Köprü, 3.Havalimanı ve Kanal İstanbul gibi mega projeleri ve etkilerini açıklamak istedim. Bu bölüm, İstanbul'daki bu tür projelere karşı oluşturulan ekoloji ağlarına bakmaktadır. Altıncı bölümde, İstanbul'daki ekoloji ağlarının merkezinde olan KOS'a odaklanıyor. Bu bölümde, KOS'un toplumsal temelini, örgütsel özelliklerini, protesto repertuarını ve aktörlerin motivasyonlarını analiz ettim. Ayrıca KOS örneğinde prefigüratif hareketlerin özelliklerini anlamaya çalıştım. KOS aktivistlerinin Gezi hareketini nasıl değerlendirdiğini ve Gezi'nin KOS'a

yansımasını inceledim. Yedinci bölümde, yaptığım alan çalışmasından çıkan sonuçları tezin teorik çerçevesi ile yeniden düşündüm. Bu bölümde farklı olarak iki alan çalışmasının sonuçlarını birbiri ile de karşılaştırma ve birlikte düşünme fırsatı buldum. Sonuç bölümünde ise tezin temel argümanlarını ve gelecekte yapılabilecek çalışmalar için önerileri sundum.

Bu çalışmanın teorik çerçevesi neoliberalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketler literatüre dayanmaktadır. Bu çerçevede della Porta, Harvey, Castell, Klein, Hardt ve Negri, Dardot ve Laval, Federici, Dixon, Yates gibi birçok düşünürün fikirlerinden faydalandım. Bu literatür, küreselleşme karşıtı ya da Avrupa'da kemer sıkma politikalarına karşı gelişen toplumsal muhalefeti açıklamak için gelişmekle birlikte, aynı zamanda işgal et hareketleri, yolsuzluk karşıtı hareketler ve demokrasiyi yeniden çağıran hareketleri de tartışmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu literatür dünyanın farklı yerlerinde farklı bağlamlarda ortaya çıkan taban hareketlerine baktığında kendiliğinden olmak, lidersiz olmak, hiyerarşik örgütlenmeden ziyade taban örgütlenmesine dayanmak, sosyal medyayı aktif olarak kullanmak, doğrudan demokrasiyi ve katılımcı karar alma mekanizmalarını benimsemek gibi ortak bazı özellikler taşıdıklarını görüyor. Bu tür hareketler tabandan ve kendiliğinden örgütlenir. Herhangi bir merkezi hiyerarşiyi veya liderleri reddederler Ağlara benzerler; bu hareketler tek bir otorite altında hareket etmezler; daha ziyade bir ağ yapısı içinde birbirleriyle ilişkilidir. Forumlar ve diğer demokratik karar alma biçimleri hareketlerin temelini oluşturur. Kurumsal siyasetin temsil mekanizmalarına eleştirellerdir, temsil edilmek yerine kendilerini temsil etmek isterler (Klein,2004). Bu hareketlerin toplumsal tabanını Hardt ve Negri “çokluk” olarak tanımlar. Çokluk, tek bir sınıf, kültür, cinsiyet, yaşam biçimine indirgenemez (2005). Bu hareketleri aynı zamanda, Gezi Parkı'nda olduğu gibi, müştereklerin savunulması pratikleri olarak düşünebiliriz. Bu literatürde müştereklerin savunusu, kapitalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketlerin radikal ruhu olarak tanımlanıyor (Klein, 2004; Harvey, 2012). Müşterekler siyasete “kapitalizme alternatifler düşünmek için siyasi bir çerçeve” sunmaktadır (2019, s. 87). Müştereklerin çitlenmesi klasik Marksist literatürde ilkel birikim yolu ile kapitalizmin ortaya çıkmasının temeli olarak görülürken, müştereklerin

çitlenmesi neoliberal dönemde de devam eden bir süreçtir. Bu nedenle müşterekleri savunmak, neoliberalizme karşı bir siyasal projenin temelidir (Dardot & Laval, 2019). Müşterekleri bir sosyal ilişki olarak tanımlayan Federici, müşterekleştirmeyi bir pratik olarak ele almaktadır. Müşterekler, toplumsal ilişkilerde ortaya çıkan bir dayanışma pratiğidir. Müşterekler, meclisler ve diğer doğrudan demokrasi biçimleri aracılığıyla kolektif karar alma yoluyla oluşturulur (Federici, 2019).

Teorik çerçevede odaklanılan bir diğer mesele, neoliberalizm karşıtı hareketlerin siyaset yapma biçimini tanımlayan prefigüratif siyaset. Prefigüratif siyaset ifadesi 1960-70'lerdeki anarşist ve sol hareketleri tartışmak için kullanılmaya başlanmış, ancak özellikle İşgal Et eylemleri sırasında aktivistlerin işgal edilen mekanlarda alternatif alanları kurması ile yeniden literatüre girmiştir. Prefigüratif siyaset, gündelik hayat ile aktivizmin kesiştiği, gündelik hayatın kendisinin bir mücadele alanına dönüştüğü siyaset biçimini tanımlamaktadır. Bu tür siyaset, yaratıcı, olumlayıcı, dönüştürücü ve hemen şimdi'ci bir oluş siyasetidir. Yapısal değişiklikler için beklemek yerine, hayali kurulan veya arzu edilen yaşamı, kısıtlı bir ölçekte “hemen, şimdi, burada” hayata geçirmek prefigüratif siyasetin en önemli vaatlerinden biridir. Doğrudan demokrasi ve katılımcı demokrasiyi benimsemesi, hiyerarşi ve kapitalizm karşıtı olması, yatay örgütlenme modelini benimsemesi prefigüratif siyasetin temelleridir (Dixon, 2014; Yates, 2015).

Prefigüratif siyaset, yapısal değişikliklere odaklanmak yerine, mevcut toplumsal durumda çatlaklar ve kırılmalar yaratmaya öncelik verir. Toplumu daha eşitlikçi ve demokratik bir yönde dönüştürme potansiyeline sahiptir. Aktörlerin kişisel dönüşümü, birbirleriyle ilişkilerinin ve gündelik yaşamlarının dönüşümü ile birlikte gerçekleşir ve bu, prefigüratif toplumsal hareketlerin en güçlü yönlerinden birini betimlemektedir.

Prefigüratif siyaset, aktivizm kavramını bir süreç olarak düşünmemizi sağlar. Böyle bir politika biçimi aslında kişiyi, kişinin gündelik hayatını ve siyasal görüşlerini dönüştüren, dayanışmaya ve birlikteliğe dayanan yeni ilişki biçimleri

oluşturan ve yeni öznellikler yaratan bir süreç. Prefigüratif siyaset tam da bu dönüşümden güç alıyor. Çünkü kapitalizm aynı zamanda bir ilişkiler toplamı, bir ilişki biçimi. Prefigüratif siyaset yeni öznellikler yarattığı ölçüde yeni toplumsal ilişkiler, yeni eyleme ve yapma biçimleri ve yeni siyaset biçimleri oluşturuyor ve böylece bir değişim potansiyelini çağırıyor. Sistemde yarıklar, çatlaklar yaratan anlar bu dönüşümle birlikte ortaya çıkıyor, kapitalizmin metalaşmış ilişkilerine karşı, eşitliğe, arkadaşlığa, dayanışmaya dayanan yeni ilişki biçimleri oluşuyor. Bu bağlamda prefigüratif toplumsal hareketlerin gücü re geçip yeni olanı yaratabilmesinde yatıyor.

Prefigüratif siyaset literatürü ekoloji hareketlerinin eyledikleri siyaset biçimini teorik bir çerçevede değerlendirmemde bana yardımcı oldu. Çünkü bu literatür bir yandan toplumsal hareketlerin neoliberal ve otoriter rejimlere karşı oluşturduğu muhalefete, diğer yandan sistemde yarattıkları boşluklara, çatlaklara ve olumsuz ve yeniden yapıcı (reconstructive) siyaset tarzlarına işaret etmektedir. Bu bağlamda sadece muhalefet siyaseti değil, eyleyen ve yeniden yaratan, gündelik hayata yayılan bir siyaset yapma biçimidir. Bu önerme, ekoloji hareketlerini yeni siyasal aktörler ve yeni siyasal öznellikler yaratmaya olanak sağlayan bir alan olarak görmemi mümkün kıldı.

Türkiye'deki ekoloji hareketlerini incelemek ve tartışmak için yararlandığım diğer bir teorik çerçeve ise çevre hareketleri literatürü oldu. Ekoloji hareketleri, küresel ayaklanma dalgalarının bir parçası olarak değerlendirilebilirken, ortaya çıkışları, yeni toplumsal hareketlerin yükselişine paralel olarak 1960'lardan 70'lere uzanmaktadır. Bu nedenle çevre hareketleri ile ilgili literatürü de dört alt başlıkta inceledim. İlk olarak Inglehart'ın çalışmasına dayanan “zenginlerin çevreciliği” tartışmalarına odaklandım. Bu tartışmalar gelişmiş ülkelerdeki çevre hareketlerini açıklarken, çevrenin korunması, yaşam standartları gibi maddiyat sonrası (post-materialist) değerlere vurgu yapmıştır. Üçüncü Dünya Çevreciliği ya da “yoksulların çevreciliği” olarak adlandırılacak yaklaşım ise kır tabanlı çevre hareketlerine odaklanıyor ve bu hareketlerin temel motivasyonlarının geçim kaynaklarını korumak olduğunu iddia eder. Üçüncü Dünya Çevreciliği üzerine

yapılan çalışmalar, çevresel kaygıların daha geniş sosyal, politik ve ekonomik kaygılarla birleştirildiğini vurgulamaktadır. Sermayeye veya devletin çıkarlarına karşı durmak, kırsal tabanlı ve kadın liderliğinde olmak ve daha geniş sosyo-ekonomik kaygılara odaklanmak genellikle Üçüncü Dünya'daki çevre hareketlerinin temel özellikleri olarak kabul edilir. Topluluk temelli (community-based) çevre hareketlerinde ise topluluğu ve topluluğu oluşturan sosyal ilişkileri korumak ile çevreyi korumak için içe geçmiştir. Bu hareketlerde aktörlerin motivasyonu sadece geçim kaynaklarını korumak değil, aynı zamanda topluluğun içinde yer aldığı çevreyi ve ilişkiyi korumaktır. Son olarak Çevresel Adalet Hareketleri, küresel ayaklanma dalgalarının ardından yükselmiştir ve özellikle günümüz dünyasının farklı yerlerinde küresel adalet ve iklim değişikliği hareketlerinde somutlaşan küresel hareketleri tanımlamak için kullanılmaktadır.

Türkiye'deki ekoloji hareketlerini, dünyanın farklı yerlerindeki neoliberalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketlerin bir parçası olarak değerlendirmek için bu çalışmada iki ana yol izliyorum. Bunlardan biri, toplumsal hareket literatürünün temel tartışmalarını kapsıyor. Toplumsal hareketlere kim, nasıl, neden katılıyor? Klasik toplumsal hareket literatüründe örgütlerin toplumsal tabanı, aktivistlerin motivasyonları ve eylem biçimleri sorgulanmaktadır. Bu doktora tezi, çevre hareketlerinin toplumsal temelini, protesto repertuarını ve motivasyonlarını tartışarak toplumsal hareket literatüründeki temel tartışmaya katkı sunmaktadır. Ayrıca bu çalışma, hareketlerin örgütsel yapısını ve diğer mücadelelerle bağlantılarını anlamaya çalışmaktadır. Bu amaçla peşine düştüğüm ilk soru ekoloji hareketleri aktivistlerin motivasyonları oldu. Bu sorunun saha çalışmasında bulunduğu karşılıklar zengin bir veri skalası sağladı. Saha araştırmasından önce, müşterekleri savunan ekoloji hareketlerinin neoliberal politikalara karşı bir muhalefet motivasyonuna sahip olduklarını varsaymıştım. Saha araştırması sırasında bu varsayımım doğrulandı. Aktivistler motivasyonlarını ifade ederken “doğanımızın özel şirketler veya özel şirketlerin kârı için yağmalanmasını istemiyoruz” söylemini sıklıkla kullandılar. Müştereklerin, doğanın ve yaşam alanlarının korunması, aktörlerin temel motivasyonlarından biri olarak karşımıza çıktı. Bu bağlamda, aktivistlerin ifade ettikleri motivasyonlar, ekoloji

hareketlerinin herkese ait olan doğayı, ormanları, toprakları, suları, meydanları savunmak için harekete geçtiği varsayımını desteklemektedir.

Saha araştırmasının peşine düştüğü bir diğer mesele Artvin ve İstanbul'da yürütülen prefigüratif siyaset pratikleri boyunca oluşan yeni öznellik biçimleri oldu. Prefigüratif siyaset kavramı, çalışmanın ilk aşamalarında tezin merkezinde değildi. Alan çalışması boyunca ekoloji mücadelelerinin aynı zamanda yeni ilişkilene biçimleri de yarattığını, öyle bir mücadele içerisinde olmanın kişileri dönüştürdüğünü ve geleneksel politika ile mesafeli insanları aktivist haline getiren bir süreç olduğunu gördükten sonra prefigüratif siyaset kavramı çalışmamda merkezi bir konuma yerleşti. Böylece aktörlerin mücadele içinde nasıl dönüştüklerini, kişilerin gündelik hayatı ile aktivizm arasındaki bağların nasıl oluştuğunu, mücadele içinde oluşan yeni öznellikleri yeni ilişkileri ve yeni siyaset biçimini incelemeye ve anlamaya çalıştım.

Prefigüratif siyaset kavramı, literatürde büyük ölçüde İşgal et hareketlerine referansla tartışılmıştır. Bir işgal et hareketi niteliğinde olan Gezi Hareketi, işgal edilen alanlarda kurulan komün hayatı ile prefigüratif nitelikler göstermektedir. Gezi Hareketi'nin etkisi, hareketin polisin müdahalesi ile şiddetle bastırılmasından sonra da devam etti. “Mahalle forumları” olarak adlandırılan yerel toplantılar, vatandaşların doğrudan ve katılımcı demokrasiyi deneyimledikleri bir ortaklaşma pratiği olarak bir süre devam etti (Çelik ve Ergenç, 2018). Diğer yandan, Gezi Parkı eylemleri kendisinden sonraki direnişlere de ilham kaynağı oldu. Gezi Hareketi, kırsal ve yerel direnişler ve kentsel hareketler için siyasi zemin hazırladı (Akbulut, 2014, p. 237-238). Aynı zamanda Gezi, Türkiye'deki çevre hareketleri ve diğer toplumsal ve politik hareketler için de dönüm noktasıdır. Dikkate değer mirası nedeniyle Gezi Hareketi tartışması bu teze dahil edilmiştir. Bu bağlamda, görüşmecilere Gezi Hareketi'ni nasıl gördüklerini ve Gezi Hareketi ile kendi aktivizmleri arasında benzerlikler ve farklılıklar görüp görmediklerini sordum. Dolayısıyla saha araştırması sırasında hedeflerimden biri, aktivistlerin Gezi Hareketi hakkındaki düşüncelerini ve kendi mücadeleleri ile Gezi Hareketi arasındaki ilişkiyi nasıl değerlendirmelerini anlamaktı.

KOS ve Cerattepe hareketleri kimi noktalarda ortaklaşan kimi noktalarda ayrılan farklı ölçeklerdeki yaşam savunusu mücadeleleri olarak karşıma çıktı. Bu hareketleri tezin teorik çerçevesi ile değerlendirirken aynı zamanda birlikte ve karşılaştırarak düşünme fırsatı buldum. KOS ve Cerattepe mücadelesi ile neoliberalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketler arasındaki en açık örtüşme, hareketlerin örgütsel yapılarıyla ilgili.

Hem Cerattepe mücadelesi hem de KOS, yatay ve hiyerarşik olmayan örgütlenmeyi benimsemektedir. Neoliberalizm karşıtı prefigüratif hareketler hiyerarşik olmayan, taban örgütlenmesine dayanan, lidersiz ve yatay bir örgütlenmeyi esas alır, katılımcı ve doğrudan demokrasiyi savunurlar. Meclisler ve forumlar demokratik karar alma araçlarıdır. Bu hareketler merkezi hiyerarşiyi, liderleri veya sözcüleri reddederler (Hardt & Negri, 2005; della Porta, 2015).

Artvin'deki madencilik karşıtı hareket yatay, katılımcı ve hiyerarşik olmayan bir şekilde, esnek bir ağ olarak örgütlenmiş durumda. Maden karşıtı mücadeleye öncülük eden Yeşil Artvin Derneği'nin (YAD) dernek olmak statüsünden kaynaklanan resmi bir örgütlenme yapısı var. Ancak bu yalnızca kağıt üzerinde kalan bir prosedür. Kararlar halkın katılımıyla alınıyor. YAD, şehirdeki toplumun tüm kesimleriyle iletişim kurabilen bir ağ olarak örgütlenmiş durumda. YAD' ın tüm toplantıları halka açık olarak yapılıyor. Toplantılara toplumun tüm kesimlerinin katılımı teşvik ediliyor ve kararlar bu halka açık toplantılarda alıyor.

KOS lidersiz, yatay ve hiyerarşik olmayan örgütlenmeyi benimser. Hiç kimse hareketin lideri veya öncü figürü olarak görülmez. Bu hareket, haftalık olarak bir araya gelen forumlarda katılımcı yollardan karar almayı savunuyor. Yani forumlar, kolektif karar alma ve katılımcı demokrasinin mekanizmasıdır. KOS aktivistleri, hareket içinde bir hiyerarşi yaratabilecek her türlü net iş bölümünü reddetmektedir. Cinsiyet, yaş veya deneyime dayalı her türlü hiyerarşiyi reddederler. Lidersiz, yatay ve katılımcı demokrasiyi savunmanın yanı sıra cinsiyetçilik karşıtlığı, ırkçılık karşıtlığı ve her türlü ayrımcılığa karşı çıkılması

KOS aktivistleri tarafından hareketin nitelikleri olarak belirtilmektedir. Bu bağlamda, KOS ve Cerattepe hareketleri yataylık, hiyerarşik olmama, liderliği reddetme, katılımcı karar alma, tabandan ve doğrudan demokrasiyi savunma yaklaşımlarına sahip olmaları açısından neoliberalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketlerle ortak özellikler gösterirler.

Hem KOS hem de Cerattepe örneklerinde dayanışma, saygı ve güven bağları hareketlerin kolektif kimliğinin bel kemiğini oluşturmaktadır. KOS ile Cerattepe arasındaki bir diğer önemli benzerlik, Türkiye ve dünyada pek çok ekoloji mücadelesinde görüldüğü gibi, aktivistlerin kendilerini “yaşam savunucusu” olarak tanımlamalarıdır. Özellikle Artvin örneğinde doğanın yaşam alanı olarak görülmesi ve yaşamla özdeşleştirilmesi, mücadelenin bir yaşam mücadelesi olarak tanımlanması oldukça belirgindir. Bu ortak yaşam alanı vurgusu, aktivistlerin evrensel değerlere atıfta bulunmalarına, farklı siyasi görüşlerden insanların birlikte hareket edebilmesine ve mücadelelerini parti siyasetlerinin üzerinde konumlandırmalarına olanak sağlamıştır.

Hem Cerattepe hem de KOS örneklerinde, geleneksel kolektif eylem repertuarından doğrudan eylem stratejilerine kadar çeşitli protesto biçimlerine başvurduklarını söyleyebiliriz. Her iki hareket de zengin bir eylem ve taktik repertuarları benimsemiştir. Artvin’de gelişen maden karşıtı mücadele, Türkiye’nin farklı yerlerinde kurulmuş Artvin hemşeri dernekleri ile ilişki halindedir. Özellikle Karadeniz’deki diğer ekoloji örgütleri ve Hidro-Elektrik Santrali (HES) karşıtı mücadeleler ile temas halindedir. Uluslararası bağlantılara karşı mesafelilerdir. Uluslararası bağlantılar maden şirketi tarafından, maden karşıtı aktivistleri karalamak için kullanılabilir. KOS ise hem İstanbul ve Trakya’da hem de Türkiye’nin ve dünyanın çeşitli yerlerindeki ekoloji hareketleri ile iletişim ve etkileşim halindedir. Düzenli aralıklar ile Kuzey Ormanları Çalıştayı düzenlemektedir. Bu çalıştay ile hem İstanbul’da hem de Trakya’da taş ekolojik yıkım getiren projelere karşı ortak mücadele etmek amaçlanmıştır. KOS, dünyanın farklı yerlerinde ekoloji hareketleri ile iletişim ve dayanışma halindedir.

Öte yandan, KOS ve Artvin mücadelelerinin aktörleri farklılıklar göstermektedir. Madencilik karşıtı hareketin aktörleri, bölgede madencilikten doğrudan etkilenen Artvin'in yerel halkıdır. Bu hareket, YAD öncülüğünde siyasi, ideolojik ve sınıfsal farklılıkların ötesine geçerek yerel halkın “Cerattepe'de madene hayır” sloganıyla oluşturduğu geniş bir koalisyondan oluşmaktadır. Farklı yaş, cinsiyet, siyasi aidiyet ve sınıflardan insanların katılımı, Cerattepe mücadelesinin heterojen toplumsal tabanını karakterize etmektedir. Farklı kuşaklardan ve mesleklerden olan ve farklı siyasi bağlantılara sahip kişiler hareketin aktif katılımcıdır. Bu bakımdan Cerattepe mücadelesinin toplumsal temeli, sınıf, cinsiyet, etnik köken, din veya siyasi yönelim ayrımlarını aşan, topluluk temelli çevre hareketlerinin toplumsal temeli ile uyumludur.

Çoban'a (2004) göre, topluluk temelli çevre hareketleri, topluluk ve çevre arasındaki semiyotik ilişki ile karakterize edilir. Bu hareketlerde doğa ve toplum yerel halkın gözünde iç içe değerlendirilir. Doğayı savunmak, aynı zamanda topluluğu oluşturan toplumsal ve çevresel ilişkileri de savunmaktır. Artvin örneğinde bu semiyotik ilişki önemlidir. Saha çalışması sırasında “Artvin'de yaşamak sizin için neden önemli?” diye sorduğumda görüşmeciler kenti ve kent yaşamını doğa ile birlikte tanımladılar. Doğa ve Cerattepe daha çok Artvin ve Artvin'deki yaşam ile ilişkilendirilirdi. Topluluk ve doğa arasındaki bu semiyotik ilişki, Artvin örneğini topluluk temelli ekoloji hareketleri içinde konumlandırmamı sağladı.

Diğer taraftan, KOS'u neoliberal politikaların kentsel ve ekolojik yıkımına karşı seferber olmuş kentsel bir orta sınıf hareketi olarak tanımlamak mümkün. Bu bakımdan KOS, neoliberalizm, özelleştirme ve metalaşma sürecine karşı kentsel ve ekolojik müşterekleri korumak, mahaller, kentler ve yaşam alanları hakkında söz söylemek isteyenlerin hareketi olarak değerlendirilebilir. KOS'un toplumsal tabanı kent hareketlerinin orta sınıf (middle-class) özelliği ile benzerlik göstermektedir.

Aktivistlerin motivasyonları açısından KOS ile Cerattepe mücadelesi arasında önemli benzerlikler vardır. Görüşmelerde, herkese ait bir müşterek olan doğayı özel şirketlerin kar için yağmalanmasına karşı koruma isteği hem KOS hem de Cerattepe aktivistlerinin belirgin motivasyonlardan biri olarak öne çıktı. KOS aktivistleri, rant peşinde koşan politikalara karşı durmak, doğayı, ekosistemi, şehri ve yaşamı korumak için KOS'un içinde olduklarını belirttiler. İstanbul'da yapmış olduğum görüşmelerde neoliberal kentleşme politikaları ve bunun sonuçlarına yönelik eleştiriler vurgulandı.

Artvin'de maden karşıtı aktivistler, Cerattepe'de madencilığe karşı çıkma nedenleri olarak madenin şehre, doğaya, köylere, çocuklara, gelecek nesillere, kentin siyasal ve toplumsal kültürüne, sağlığa ve su kaynaklarına yönelik yıkıcı etkilerini vurguladılar. Yerel halk, Cerattepe'deki madencilik faaliyetlerine karşı çıkma nedenlerini açıklarken Artvin'de yaşamının sağladığı dayanışma, güven, dostluk gibi sosyal bağlardan ve madencilğin bu bağları zayıflatacağı öngörüsünden bahsettiler. Bu sosyal bağları kaybetmek ve Artvin'den göç etmek istemediklerini vurguladılar. Yaşamı savunmak ve yaşam alanını savunmak madencilığe karşı çıkışın temel iki motivasyonu olarak karşımıza çıktı. Cerattepe, doğa, yaşam alanı görüşmeciler tarafından birbirinin yerine kullanıldı. Madencilğin insan sağlığı, çocuklar ve gelecek nesiller üzerindeki olası olumsuz etkileri vurgulandı. Maden projesinin Artvin'de siyasal kültürde bir değişikliğe yol açacağı ve Cerattepe mücadelesinin kaybedilmesinin bölgedeki diğer ekoloji mücadelelerini için bir hayal kırıklığı yaratabileceği belirtildi. Tarım ve arıcılık ile uğraşan görüşmeciler madenin su kirliliği ve doğanın tahribatı nedeniyle geçim kaynaklarına vereceği zarardan bahsettiler.

Cerattepe'deki ekoloji aktivistlerinin bu projeye karşı çıkma sebebinin, projenin Mehmet Cengiz'e ait özel bir şirket olan Cengiz Holding'in karı için yapıldığı düşüncesi olması pek çok görüşmede tekrar eden bir diğer veriydi.. Hükümetin ise yasalara müdahale etme, yönetmelik ve ÇED prosedürlerini değiştirme, belediyeler aracılığıyla altyapı sağlama ve valilik yasaklarıyla şehirdeki muhalefete baskı ortamı yaratma gibi yollarla bu özel şirketi destekleyen bir rolde

olduđu grmeler boyunca pek ok kez tekrarlandı. Aktivistler motivasyonlarını kapitalizm ve neoliberalizm gibi szcklere atıfta bulunarak aıklamasalar da, dođanın zel Őirketlerin karı iin yađmalanması ve zel Őirket- devlet ortaklıđı gibi kapitalizme zg unsurlara deđindiler. YaŐam alanlarını zel bir Őirketin kr amacına karŐı korumaya ynelik duruŐları, gl bir anti-kapitalist duruŐ olarak okunabilir. Ayrıca dođayı bir yaŐam alanı olarak anlamak, neoliberalizm karŐıtı sosyal hareketlerin ruhu olan mŐtereklerin savunulmasına iŐaret eder. Bu nitelikler, ekoloji hareketlerinin neoliberalizme karŐı oluŐturulacak siyasi ve toplumsal muhalefet biimleri aısından nasıl bir potansiyel taŐıdıkları hakkında nemli ngrler sađlar.

Bu alıŐmada ekoloji hareketleri neoliberalizm karŐıtı bir muhalefet biimini temsil etmekle birlikte baŐka bir siyasetin imkanları hakkında nemli ipuları verdi. Bu nedenle ekoloji hareketlerinin eylediđi yeni siyaset biimi, bu alıŐmanın ana eksenini oluŐturmaktadır. Bu alıŐmanın temel amalarından biri, yeni siyasal ve toplumsal znellikler ve yeni iliŐki biimleri yaratan ekoloji hareketlerinin potansiyelini inceleyerek dnŐtrc siyaset olanaklarını ele almaktır.

Bu tezde, ekoloji hareketlerinin temsil ettiđi siyasetin hem muhalefet eden hem de yeniden kuran iki farklı siyaset tarzına iŐaret ettiđini ileri sryorum. Bu bađlamda, muhalefet etmek ve kuruculuk/yeniden kuruculuk, ekoloji aktivizminin siyasi performansının birbirleriyle bađlantılı iki farklı yzdr. Prefigratif hareketler sadece kapitalizmi ve kapitalist iliŐkileri eleŐtirmez. Bu hareketler aynı zamanda farklı siyaset tarzlarını da canlandırır, Őekillendirir ve gerekleŐtirir. Bu bakımdan, prefigratif hareketlerin siyaseti, hem mevcut iliŐkiler biimine bir muhalefet hem de yeni bir siyasetin inŐası olarak nitelendirilir. Bu tr siyaset, bir siyasi parti kurmak veya seimleri kazanmak gibi somut sonulara odaklanmak yerine oluŐla ilgilidir.

Hem KOS hem de Cerattepe rnekleri iin, prefigratif siyasetin bu zellikleri kolaylıkla izlenebilir. Sıradan insanları aktiviste dnŐtrerek yeni znellikler

yaratmak, aktivistlerin gündelik hayatlarını ve siyasi görüşlerini değiştirmek, iş birliği ve dayanışmaya dayalı yeni davranış biçimleri ve sosyal ilişkiler yaratmak iki örnekte de dönüştürücü siyasetin güçlü işaretleridir. Hem KOS aktivistleri hem de Cerattepe aktivistleri, benimsediklerini değerleri hayata geçirme çabalarından bahsettiler.

Alan çalışmasında sorularımdan biri, “bu mücadele sizin hayatınızda neler değiştirdi” idi. “Bu mücadele hayatıma çok şey kattı” cümlesini birçok görüşmeciden duydum. Görüşmeciler bu mücadele sayesinde arkadaşlıklarının, dostluklarının geliştiğini, yeni insanlar tanıdıklarını belirttiler. Artvin örneğinde, daha önce siyasi eylemliliğe katılmayan insanların, aktiviste dönüştüğü bir süreçten bahsetmek mümkün. “Hayatımda ilk defa bir eyleme katıldım”, “ilk defa polis ile karşı karşıya geldim, ilk defa biber gazı yedim”, insanlardan sıkça duyduğum cümlelerdi. Bazı görüşmeciler devlete olan güvenlerinin sarsıldığını, polis ve biber gazı ile karşılaşmanın siyasal görüşlerinde, devlet ve hükümet algılarında yarattığı değişimden bahsettiler. Bazı görüşmeciler, ülkenin farklı yerlerindeki ekoloji hareketleri ya da siyasal hareketler ile empati kurabildiklerini ifade ettiler.

“Kendimi daha güçlü, daha inançlı hissediyorum” çokça duyduğum bir cümleydi. Artvin örneğinde, kadınlar ve gençleri güçlendiren bir süreçten bahsedebiliriz. Kadınlar ve gençlerin bu süreçte önemli birer siyasal figüre dönüştüklerini söyleyebiliriz. Diğer taraftan görüşmeciler özellikle nöbet sürecinde ve sonrasındaki müdahale sürecinde dayanışmanın, birlikteliğin arttığını belirttiler. Artvin'de nöbet sürecinin güçlü bir dayanışma ve gündelik hayatta önemli değişimler yaratan bir deneyim olduğunu söyleyebiliriz. Artvin'de yaptığım görüşmelerde özellikle 245 gün süren nöbet sürecinin güçlü bir dayanışma deneyimi ile gündelik hayatta önemli değişimler yarattığı pek çok kez vurgulandı. Cerattepe'de nöbetler boyunca kolektif yaşamın kurulduğu, dayanışmanın, iş birliğinin ve dostluğun geliştiği, hareketin toplumsallaştığı, yeni öznelliklerin ve yeni toplumsal ilişkilerin ortaya çıktığı sıkça dile getirildi.

Cerattepe mücadelesi Gezi eylemlerinden önce başladı. Ancak Cerattepe mücadelesinin dinamik bir toplumsal hareket niteliği kazanması Gezi Hareketi sonrası döneme denk gelmektedir. Ben de bu nedenle kendi mücadelelerinde Gezi Hareketi'nin etkisi oluğunu düşünüyorlar mı, öğrenmek istedim. Gezi'nin Cerattepe mücadelesinin kolektifleşmesine ilham verdiği ileri sürüldü. Gezi Hareketi farklı siyasi görüşlerden insanları bir araya getirmeyi başarırken, Cerattepe mücadelesi hareketin sağladığı geniş toplumsal seferberlik açısından Gezi Hareketi'yle ilişkilendirildi. Görüşmeciler Gezi Hareketi'nin Cerattepe mücadelesine yansımalarını ifade etmek için Halkevleri ve Milliyetçi Hareket Partisi (MHP)'nin birlikte nöbet tuttuğunu hatırlattı. Belirli protesto biçimlerinin Gezi'den öğrenildiği belirtildi. Mesela, Şubat 2016'daki polis müdahalelerinin ardından şehir merkezinde birçok protesto düzenlendi. Eylemlerde ses çıkartmak için tencere-tava gibi araçların kullanılması ve “korkma biz halkız” sloganının tekrarlanması Gezi Hareketi'nin Cerattepe mücadelesine yansımaları olarak değerlendirildi. Bazı görüşmeciler müşterek yaratma ve müşterekleri savunma açısından Cerattepe mücadelesini Gezi Hareketi'ne benzetti. Cerattepe'yi korumak için nöbet tutmak ile, Gezi Parkı'nı korumak için işgal emek arasında benzerlikler kuruldu. Ayrıca Gezi Hareketi'nin ekolojik kaygıların öncelenmesi açısından Cerattepe ile ortak bir özellik taşıdığı belirtildi.

Prefigüratif siyasetin farklı unsurlarını KOS örneğinde de görmek mümkün. Aktivistler, prefigüratif siyasetin “Hemen şimdi hayata geçirelim” ilkesini benimsediklerini ifade ettiler. Doğrudan eylem stratejilerinin uygulanması, ortaklaştıkları değerlerin pratiğe dönüştürülmesi ve KOS içinde güç ilişkilerini dönüştürme çabaları bu ilkeyi hayata geçirmenin bazı örnekleri olarak gösterilebilir. Yine yol kesme eylemleri doğrudan eylem stratejilerinin bir parçası olarak karşımıza çıkıyor. Doğrudan demokrasi, hiyerarşik olmayan örgütlenme tarzı, KOS içerisinde her türlü hiyerarşiyi reddetmeleri ve forumlarını herkese açık yapmaları ortaklaşılan değerlerin hayata geçirilme pratikleri olarak değerlendirildi. Görüşmeciler, KOS'u ikinci aileleri, dayanışma, dostluk ve mücadele alanı olarak tanımladılar. Görüşülen pek çok kişi, ilk kez kendilerini bir yapıya ait hissettiklerini söyledi. KOS'ta yer almanın sosyal ilişkileri, dostluğu ve

dayanışmayı pekiştirdiğini dile getirdiler. Mücadele içinde değişip dönüştüklerini, KOS sayesinde yeni dostluklar kazandıklarını, dayanışmanın gücünü fark ettiklerini ifade ettiler. İstanbul'daki mega projeler hakkında halkın bilinçlendirilmesi ve bilgilendirilmesiyle toplumsal dönüşüme katkı sunmayı amaçladıklarını ifade ettiler.

İstanbul'daki saha araştırması sırasında ise hemen hemen tüm görüşmecilerin Gezi Hareketi hakkında herhangi bir soru sormama gerek kalmadan deneyim ve düşüncelerini anlatmaya başladıklarını fark ettim. İstanbul'da görüşmecilerin neredeyse tamamı Gezi eylemlerine katıldıklarını söylediler ve hatıralarından sıkça bahsettiler. Gezi Hareketi süresince yaşadıkları umutlu ve mutlu anları paylaştılar. Gezi Hareketi, umut ve dayanışma duygularıyla özdeşleştirildi. Artvin örneğindeki doğa ile güçlü duygusal bağlara paralel olarak, KOS aktivistleri Gezi Hareketi bir özdeşleşme kurdular. Gezi Hareketi hakkındaki duygularını sorduğumda oldukça duygusal tepkiler ile karşılaştım. Gezi Hareketi, günlük yaşamda kırılmalar ve değişimler yaratan bir “mucize” olarak değerlendirildi. Gezi Hareketi “bir dönüm noktası, yeni yurttaşlığın bir manifestosu, birbirlerinden farklı insanların otoriter hükümete karşı bir araya gelip direnmeleri ve alternatif yaşam tarzlarını ifade etmeleri için bir alan” olarak değerlendirildi.

2013'te Gezi Parkı'na polis müdahalesinin ardından oluşan mahalle forumlarından birinde, İstanbul'daki Abbasağa Forumu'nda doğduğunu hatırlarsak, KOS' un Gezi Hareketi'nin izlerini taşıması zor görünüyor. Nitekim görüşmeciler de kendi mücadelelerini Gezi Hareketi ile güçlü bir biçimde ilişkilendirdiler. KOS'un örgütlenme yapısı, temsil ettiği değerler ve normlar açısından Gezi Hareketi'nin ruhunu takip ettiği vurgulandı. Görüşmeciler sık sık Gezi Hareketi boyunca ortaya çıkan politika biçiminin yatay örgütlenme, anti-hiyerarşi, liderliği reddetme, katılımcı karar alma ve kapsayıcılık gibi yönlerinin KOS'a ilham verdiğini söylediler. Forumlar Gezi Hareketi'nden öğrenilen demokratik bir karar alma yöntemi olarak değerlendirildi.

Kısaca özetlemek gerekirse, bu doktora tezi bir taraftan ekoloji hareketlerinin temsil ettiği muhalefet biçimini anlamaya çalışırken diğer yandan bu hareketlerin nasıl bir siyaset ürettikleri üzerine bir tartışma yürütmüştür. Lidersiz ve taban örgütlenmesine dayanan örgütlenme yapısı, neoliberalizmin doğayı metalaştıran rant politikalarına karşı müşterekleri savunması ve prefigüratif özellikler göstermesi ekoloji hareketlerinin neoliberalizm karşıtı hareketler bağlamında değerlendirilmesini mümkün kılmaktadır.

Bu çalışmada neoliberalizm karşıtı toplumsal hareketlerin bir parçası olarak ekoloji hareketleri değerlendirilmiştir. Ancak, çalışmanın teorik çerçevesi, günümüz toplumsal hareketlerinin farklı boyutlarını ve biçimleri analiz etmek için zengin bir perspektif sunmaktadır.

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